

A Behanding in Spokane

By Martin McDonagh

SCENE ONE

(HOTEL ROOM, SMALL TOWN AMERICA. WINDOW IN BACK WALL, FIRE ESCAPE OUTSIDE. A LARGE BATTERED SUITCASE ON ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM AND A SMALL BED ON THE OTHER, UPON WHICH SITS CARMICHAEL, MID TO LATE 40'S. HIS LEFT HAND IS MISSING, AND HIS RIGHT HAS BITS OF WHITE TAPE COVERING THE TATTOOS BELOW HIS KNUCKLES. THERE IS A CLOSET STAGE RIGHT BEHIND THE BED, FROM WHICH, ON LIGHTS UP, THERE COMES A KNOCKING, AS OF SOMEONE TRYING TO GET OUT. CARMICHAEL SITS THERE FOR SOME TIME, BLANKLY, THEN REACHES INSIDE HIS OVERCOAT, TAKES OUT A GUN, SIGHS, GOES OVER TO THE CLOSET, AND CROUCHES DOWN IN FRONT OF IT. HE COCKS THE GUN, AND OPENS THE CLOSET DOOR. THE KNOCKING STOPS. CARMICHAEL AIMS THE GUN INTO THE CLOSET. THERE'S A MUFFLED AGITATION. HE FIRES A SINGLE GUNSHOT. THE MUFFLED AGITATION CEASES)

CARMICHAEL: I did say, didn't I?

(PAUSE. CARMICHAEL SHUTS THE CLOSET DOOR THEN SITS BACK IN THE SAME PLACE ON THE BED, PUTS THE GUN AWAY, AND STARES OFF INTO SPACE AGAIN. HE TAKES A CIGARETTE FROM A SILVER CASE, ARTFULLY LIGHTS IT ONE-HANDED, PUTS THE CASE AWAY AND FLIPS THE LIGHTER BACK INTO HIS POCKET. HE PICKS UP THE PHONE AND DIALS A NUMBER)

CARMICHAEL: Hi Mom. Just checked into a hotel someplace called Tarlington, 567 902 9211, room...seventeen. All is well here. Um,.. I hope all is well there. I haven't been able to get you in a coupla days. I hope nothing's wrong. I'm a little bit worried, to be honest, so call me as soon as you get this, ok? Again, the number is 567 902 9211. Room seventeen. (PAUSE) Nothing further to report, really. (PAUSE) Love you.

(HE REPLACES THE RECEIVER, SITS SMOKING A WHILE. A COUGH OUTSIDE THE DOOR OF THE ROOM, THEN A KNOCK UPON IT. CARMICHAEL QUIETLY GOES OVER AND LOOKS THRU THE SPYHOLE)

MERVYN: (OFF) I can see the shadows of your feet, man.

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) Hanh?

MERVYN: (OFF) I can see the shadows of your feet.

CARMICHAEL: You can see the shadows of my feet?

MERVYN: (OFF) So I know you're there.

CARMICHAEL: Well I didn't say I wasn't here.

MERVYN: (OFF) Well you didn't answer me.

CARMICHAEL: Well I'm allowed not to answer a person while I'm looking thru my peep-hole and make sure they check out, aren't I?

MERVYN: (OFF) I guess.

(CARMICHAEL OPENS THE DOOR TO REVEAL MERVYN, HOTEL UNIFORM, NAMETAG, SMILING)

MERVYN: It's me, the hotel guy, Mervyn.

CARMICHAEL: Oh yeah, the receptionist guy.

MERVYN: I wouldn't really call myself a receptionist. Yeah, I work on the reception. I wouldn't really call myself a receptionist.

CARMICHAEL: Yeah I, actually, I kinda got that impression offa you when I was checking in.

MERVYN: Oh yeah? How'd you get that impression? Something my attitude?

(CARMICHAEL IDLES BACK INTO THE ROOM. MERVYN DRIFTS IN)

CARMICHAEL: Your attitude? No. I never checked into a place before, the guy on reception was just in his boxer shorts. I don't know anything about any 'attitude'.

MERVYN: Yeah, well, I was doing some sit-ups, wasn't I? In where the back room is.

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) In where the back room is?

MERVYN: Mm.

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) You mean, "In the back room"?

MERVYN: Yeah, that's where I do my sit-ups in there, because of the carpet, when I don't think nobody's gonna be coming around. Hence the boxer shorts. Except then you surprised me. Y'know?

CARMICHAEL: I guess the reception is unmanned now.

MERVYN: It's temporarily unmanned. We got a temporarily unmanned reception right now, yeah.

CARMICHAEL: What if someone phones? It'll just ring and ring.

MERVYN: Was that a gunshot earlier?

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) Was what a gunshot earlier?

MERVYN: That sound of a gun being shot off.

CARMICHAEL: Oh. No. I heard that too. I think that was just a car back-firing.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) In your room?

CARMICHAEL: No. Outside my room. Outside, where the cars are.

MERVYN: Oh. (PAUSE) What happened to those two kids came up to the room with ya? The black kid, and the white chick?

CARMICHAEL: Oh, they left.

MERVYN: They didn't leave via me.

CARMICHAEL: No, they left via the fire escape.

MERVYN: Oh. Why?

CARMICHAEL: Oh they was just a bunch of no good fucking scum.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) I don't really see how that has anything to do with anything.

CARMICHAEL: Well a fire escape is out of bounds to guests, isn't it?

MERVYN: Yeah. Unless there's a fire or something. Or a drill or something, a fire drill.

CARMICHAEL: And was there either of those two things? A fire, or a fire drill?

MERVYN: No. I'm the one who would instigate a fire drill anyway, with the fire-drill button.

CARMICHAEL: Exactly.

MERVYN: Exactly what?

CARMICHAEL: Exactly that they was a bunch of no good fucking scum going off on your fire escape.

MERVYN: Well,... what are you doing being friends with a bunch of no good scum in the first place for?

CARMICHAEL: Oh they ain't my friends.

MERVYN: What are they then?

CARMICHAEL: Had some business with 'em.

MERVYN: What kinda business?

CARMICHAEL: Oh, you know, some of that none of your business business.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) Drugs, you mean?

CARMICHAEL: Drugs? Do I look like I'm involved in the drug business?

MERVYN: Totally.

CARMICHAEL: Well, I ain't. I can't abide that kinda weakness.

MERVYN: Abide?

CARMICHAEL: Yeah.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) I thought the girl looked pretty but I thought the black guy looked kinda suspicious, if I'm being honest.

CARMICHAEL: I agree with you about the black guy.

MERVYN: You didn't think the girl looked pretty?

CARMICHAEL: I wouldn't know anything about that kinda shit, man. Are you finished nosing around now, or what?

MERVYN: (PAUSE) How come you only got one hand?

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) It's a long story.

MERVYN: Yeah?

CARMICHAEL: Yeah. A long fucking story.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) I got time! (PAUSE) I really do have time, I'm on til six.

CARMICHAEL: Yeah? Well, I don't have time. I don't have time. (PAUSE) Are you going now, Mervyn? Seems like reception's been unmanned for a coon's age.

MERVYN: Man, I knew there was something about you as soon as you came in, man. See, I've had this vision,... not so much a vision as... some other kinda thing, that if I worked here long enough and kept my eyes open, man, something was gonna happen, you know? Something dramatic was gonna happen. Like, if a bunch of guys

wearing cloaks checked in, their only luggage was harpoons. Where's a story like that gonna go? Buncha cloak-wearing harpoon guys? Or some guy from Nigeria checks in, he wants to sell you a rollercoaster. "You don't got no rollercoaster, man, you're from Nigeria!" Y'know? Cos I don't think they got rollercoasters there. I'm not sure. (PAUSE) Or if a giant panda checked in. Talkin' gibberish. Where's a story like that gonna go? Giant gibberish-talkin' panda. That'd be more of a funny story! Or what if a guy checks in and he's only got one hand and there's some pretty girl with him and there's some black guy with her, and ten minutes later the shooting starts and the girl and the black guy, well, they ain't nowhere to be seen. Where's a story like that gonna go? I wonder. (PAUSE) That's kinda more like your story. Than the other ones. (PAUSE) Where's a story like that gonna go? I wonder.

CARMICHAEL: I guess we'll find out as soon as you leave.

(MERVYN STARTS TO GO, KIND OF SHEEPISH)

MERVYN: I haven't upset you, have I?

CARMICHAEL: You didn't upset me none.

MERVYN: I was just checking about the noise, really. They said I'm supposed to do that. Any untoward noises.

CARMICHAEL: Those cars backfiring, man, they'll get ya.

(MERVYN JUST LOOKS AT HIM)

MERVYN: Yeah, well, I know it wasn't a car backfiring, man. I'm not stupid.

(MERVYN GOES TO THE DOOR, JUST AS THERE IS AN URGENT KNOCKING UPON IT. CARMICHAEL GESTURES FOR MERVYN TO OPEN IT, AND MARILYN, A PRETTY 22 YEAR OLD, BURSTS IN, SHAKING, NERVOUS, CARRYING A PACKAGE WRAPPED UP IN PAPER, BANDAGE AND STICKY TAPE)

MARILYN: I got it, okay! I got your fucking hand, okay! Now let him fucking go, you fuck! Where is he? Who's this fuck? Oh, the boxer shorts guy. What does he want?

(SHE TOSSES THE PACKAGE ON THE BED. PAUSE)

MERVYN: I was just checking about the gunshot. I'll be downstairs, if either of you need me.

(MERVYN EXITS SADLY)

MARILYN: He was just checking about the what?

CARMICHAEL: The gunshot.

(CARMICHAEL PICKS UP THE PACKAGE)

MARILYN: (SCARED) Where is he? You promised you wouldn't hurt him.

CARMICHAEL: You wanna know how long I've been searching for this, Marilyn?

MARILYN: I said where is he, ya goddam one-handed bastard!

(CARMICHAEL SLOWLY TURNS TO LOOK AT HER...)

MARILYN: I mean, ya goddam bastard.

(PAUSE. CARMICHAEL SLOWLY POINTS BEHIND HER, AT THE CLOSET THAT HE SHOT INTO)

MARILYN: What's he doing in there?

CARMICHAEL: I tell ya this. He ain't dancing.

(AS CARMICHAEL STARTS CAREFULLY UNWRAPPING THE PACKAGE. MARILYN, TERRIFIED, GOES OVER TO THE CLOSET, TENTATIVELY OPENS ITS DOOR, AND LOOKS INSIDE. SHE CROUCHES DOWN, HAND TO HER MOUTH)

MARILYN: What have you done to him?

CARMICHAEL: I haven't done anything to him.

MARILYN: He's unconscious.

CARMICHAEL: He ain't unconscious.

(CARMICHAEL GOES OVER AND LOOKS IN THE CLOSET)

CARMICHAEL: No, you're right. He is unconscious. I guess he must've fainted when I shot the gun off.

(SHE LOOKS AT CARMICHAEL AS HE GOES BACK TO THE PACKAGE)

CARMICHAEL: Beside his head, I shot it off.

MARILYN: That's a terrible thing to do!

CARMICHAEL: I guess.

MARILYN: Well could you help me get him out, please!

CARMICHAEL: Hey, he's your fucking boyfriend, you get him out.

(MARILYN DRAGS HIM OUT, AWKWARDLY, REVEALING TOBY, A BLACK GUY ABOUT 27, GAG IN MOUTH, A LITTLE BLOOD ON HIS HEAD. MARILYN TAKES THE GAG OFF, SLAPS HIS CHEEKS, AND TOBY STARTS TO STIR PAINFULLY)

MARILYN: Toby, can you hear me?

CARMICHAEL: What a fag.

MARILYN: He is not a fag! Toby?

CARMICHAEL: Well he's got a fag name.

(TOBY WAKES, TAKES EVERYTHING IN, AND STARTS QUIETLY CRYING)

CARMICHAEL: See? Crying. Fag.

TOBY: I am not a fag.

CARMICHAEL: Well you're crying, ain't ya?

TOBY: Well straight people cry too, don't they? When they've been locked up in a wardrope and had a goddam gun shot off at their head!

CARMICHAEL: Did you just say I shot a gun off at your head?

TOBY: Well beside my head, it's the self-same thing!

CARMICHAEL: How is shooting a gun off beside your head and at your head the self-same thing?

TOBY: It was still frightening!

CARMICHAEL: Well that was the object, to be frightening, wasn't it? And it worked. Because then you started crying like a fag.

MARILYN: What's with all the homophobia anyhow?! You've got your hand, haven't you? Let's get the hell out of here, Toby.

TOBY: Did he give you the five hundred bucks?

MARILYN: Toby, let's just get out of here and forget about it.

(CARMICHAEL FINISHES OPENING UP THE PACKAGE. A SEMI-SHRIVELLED, LEATHERY, BROWN-HUED HAND IS REVEALED. CARMICHAEL LOOKS AT IT A WHILE, NODDING TO HIMSELF)

TOBY: No. We had a business arrangement. We got him back his hand. He gives us five hundred fucking dollars.

CARMICHAEL: Don't you even wanna hear the story of how I came to lose my hand, all those years ago, before I give you the five hundred?

MARILYN: I don't wanna hear it, do you?

TOBY: I just want the money.

CARMICHAEL: Well, youse are gonna hear it.

TOBY: Knew it.

CARMICHAEL: Cos twenty-seven years ago, almost to the day, a young lad of about seventeen or so, who lived in a town name of Spokane, Washington, was happily playing catch outside of his momma's house, when six hillbilly bastards he did not know drove up, and they took him and they dragged him to a beautiful mountainside outside of town, where a bunch of railroad tracks crossed over a river there, and for no reason that was ever specified, without even a word in fact, they held this boy's hand down upon those railroad tracks... this boy is me, I'm talking about... and they held him down, him screaming and hollering as any boy would, as a freight train came up from the pine tree distance, and they made him watch this train, him hoping even at this point, somewhere in his mind, that they were only kidding, but they weren't kidding, and he watched the train's thunderous approach, and he watched as it hacked his hand clean off at the wrist. And as he lay there screaming, and the train faded off towards Spokane and points West, they picked up his hand, this hillbilly detritus, and they took it with 'em, and when they were about three hundred yards away they turned, and they smiled, and you know what they did? They waved the boy goodbye. They waved the boy goodbye with his own hand. And that was the last he saw of it, or of them, for quite some time. Do you know what that feels like? To be waved goodbye at, from a distance, with your own hand? Do you know what that feels like?

MARILYN: Not very nice?

CARMICHAEL: Not very nice, you're right. Not very nice at all. Well, the boy stopped crying, quite quickly, he wasn't a fag, and he set his wrist on fire to staunch the awful bleeding, cos he'd read it in a comic book once. It worked too, and as he lay there thinking he was dying, he decided that if he didn't die he would devote the rest of his life to two things; to retrieving that which was rightfully his, and to paying back those backwoods bastards that had done this to a young man for no good reason at all. Well, those hillbillies, they've been gone a long time now and though they might find their skulls, they won't find their faces, but the hand though, as you may've guessed, they

didn't have with them. Before they died, I got them to tell me the name of the man they said they'd sold it on to. I paid him a visit. Of the six hands he had, none of them were mine, but he gave me the name of a man out East who he thought might be of help, who, in turn, gave me the name of a man out West who he thought might be of help. This went on for twenty-seven years, and here is my point that I need you to understand, in order to convey the magnitude of what's happening right now. To have spent one's entire adult life searching for something; haggling with street-scum and shaking down corpse-dealers across the filth-lots and flea-alleys of this sad decaying nation, searching for something that he knows, even if he ever found it, it would be no good to him, he ain't gonna use it, he ain't gonna stick it back on, pick things up with it, he ain't stupid, yet search for it he had to still, because it was his, and it wasn't his no more. And to go thru all that, to have searched so hard and to have travelled so long, and to be standing here in front of you, after one final deal of the dice, and to be presented with what to all intents and purposes is, y'know, the hand of a nigger... it's a little hard to take, I gotta admit. To be presented with a nigger's hand, when what I asked to be presented with was my hand,... it's a little hard to get my head around. It's a little disconcerting, I'll be honest with you.

MARILYN: That's uh, that's not...

CARMICHAEL: To be presented with the hand that got cut offa some colored fella when, what I was asking for, was the hand that got cut offa me, like I'm not supposed to even notice. Y'know, seriously, WHAT... THE FUCK... AM I... SUPPOSED TO DO... WITH THIS!!!

MARILYN: That is not a colored man's hand. That is your hand which has just gone dark over time.

CARMICHAEL: What you've gone and done is... maybe I haven't made myself clear. What you've gone and done is, you've brought me the hand off a nigger. (TO TOBY) You, of all people, should know better. The hand off of one of your own people, like no-one's supposed to even notice.

MARILYN: First off, and I know you're upset and all, but it's pretty offensive you keep using the word 'Nigger' and that's all I'm gonna say.

CARMICHAEL: It's pretty offensive I keep using the word 'Nigger'?

MARILYN: Isn't it, Toby?

CARMICHAEL: I'd'a never used the word 'Nigger' if you hadn't brought me the hand off a nigger!

MARILYN: "The hand off a person of color". And it isn't even the hand off a person of color! It's your hand, what's gone dark! Hands go that way when they've been off of a person long. They go dark. I think.

CARMICHAEL: Yeah, expert? You wanna see how faces go when they've been shot full of bullet-holes?

(CARMICHAEL TAKES OUT HIS GUN)

MARILYN: No way were we talking about faces!

TOBY: See, what I think has happened here, Mr Carmichael? That hand you got there? That isn't your hand.

CARMICHAEL: I know that isn't my hand!

TOBY: That's a ... that's a nigger's hand you've got there.

CARMICHAEL: We've established it's a nigger's hand I've got here.

TOBY: Yeah, that's Tyrone Dixon's hand. Where did you get that hand from, honey? I said the hand from on top of the refrigerator, didn't I?

MARILYN: Huh?

TOBY: Where did you get that hand from, honey?

MARILYN: From in the bedroom. Where it was.

TOBY: Yeah, ohhh, no, I said the hand from on top of the refrigerator. The old hand. That's that dumbass Tyrone Dixon's hand. That's recent. He's right. (TO CARMICHAEL) You're right.

MARILYN: On top of the refrigerator? I don't under... I got the one from in the bedroom.

TOBY: Yeah! We know!

CARMICHAEL: Bullshit.

TOBY: It's okay, honey. Yes, you screwed up, hand-wise, but don't worry about it cos...

MARILYN: I brought the only hand we had.

TOBY: What I'll do is... "She brought the only hand we had". What I'll do is, I'll go get the correct hand. I'll go get the correct hand. Top of the refrigerator. If you want, Marilyn can stay here til I come back with your actual hand, which we promised you.

MARILYN: What did you just say?

TOBY: What's happened, simply, Marilyn has brought you the entire wrong hand. This is easily rectifiable.

MARILYN: You ain't going nowhere.

TOBY: Who screwed up, honey? Hand-wise?

MARILYN: (TO CARMICHAEL) We don't even have a refrigerator.

TOBY: "We don't even have a refrigerator". We have a... deep freeze... thing. Don't we?

MARILYN: Huh?

TOBY: We have a deep freeze thing, don't we?

MARILYN: But that's out in the garage.

TOBY: Yes, it's out in the garage. Out in the garage is where I keep the excess hands.

MARILYN: The deep freeze is broken.

TOBY: I know the deep freeze is broken.

MARILYN: So you're gonna keep a buncha excess hands in a broken deep freeze?

TOBY: I said ON TOP of the deep freeze, didn't I?! I said ON TOP of the deep freeze. It's completely fucking IRRELEVANT, isn't it, if the deep fucking freeze is fucking BROKEN, if you're keeping your excess fucking hands ON TOP of the broken fucking deep freeze, isn't it?! You fucking IDIOT! Are you actually deliberately TRYING to get us fucking killed?! Is THAT what's going on here?!

MARILYN: I'm not deliberately trying to do anything.

TOBY: Well I am deliberately trying to do something! I am deliberately trying to save our stupid motherfucking lives! How about that, pea-brain?!

CARMICHAEL: This hand of mine, top of your broken deep freeze, out in the garage... it got any distinguishing features on it?

TOBY: (PAUSE) Hanh?

(CARMICHAEL PUTS HIS RIGHT HAND BEHIND HIS BACK)

CARMICHAEL: Has it got any distinguishing features on it?

TOBY: Has it got any distinguishing features on it...?

CARMICHAEL: Yeah. Y'know, to distinguish it from, y'know, other chopped off hands. Niggers' hands, Armenians' hands, what have you.

TOBY: Yeah, it's got a distinguishing feature. It's got a word tattooed on it.

CARMICHAEL: (A BEAT) What word has it got tattooed on it?

TOBY: Er... it's got the word... well, it's got the word... er, the word is a four-letter word... and the word that is tattooed on the hand... is the word... 'HATE'.

(CARMICHAEL IMPERCEPTIBLY FLEXES HIS RIGHT HAND)

TOBY: Yeah, it's got the word 'HATE' tattooed across the knuckles there. It's kinda faded a little bit, but it's there. I'll go get it. Be like twenty minutes.

MARILYN: You ain't going anywhere.

TOBY: "I ain't going anywhere". Did I bring a black man's hand along to a white man's hand party?

MARILYN: (PAUSE) To a what?

CARMICHAEL: Yeah, don't start talking gibberish now, Toby, I gotta think a minute.

(CARMICHAEL IDLES TO THE BACK WINDOW, THINKING.
MARILYN AND TOBY WHISPER LOUDLY, RAPIDLY)

MARILYN: You think you're gonna fucking leave me here?!

TOBY: No I don't think I'm gonna fucking leave you here and all you've got to do now is to be quiet, honey, please...

MARILYN: That's the kind of man you are?!

TOBY: It's totally all you have to do right now...

MARILYN: Leave me here with this crazy fuck?

TOBY: Just quiet, just totally quiet...

MARILYN: While you run off and find a hand that we don't got?

TOBY: (LOUD) You don't know about that other hand I got, honey, and (QUIET) that's why it's better to just be quiet now, while he's thinking...

MARILYN: Fucking, what, secret hands all over the fucking place?

TOBY: Yep, yep, even in this situation, wow, cannot shut your fucking mouth for two fucking seconds, how unbelievable, or, no! How very believable! How very believable!

MARILYN: And who got us into this situation in the first fucking place?!

TOBY: Absolutely not the time for this...

MARILYN: Fucking hand-selling now?!

TOBY: Like some kinda pre-menstrual death-wish you got...

MARILYN: WE DEAL WEED!

TOBY: Tell him some more fucking things while you're at it, Marilyn! Tell him some more details so he can maybe inform the newspapers once he CHOPS OUR FUCKING HEADS OFF!

MARILYN: And how come you don't even stand up for yourself, he keeps saying 'nigger' the whole time?

TOBY: (PAUSE) I am actually going to start crying now. I am actually going to start crying...

MARILYN: You even joined in! I couldn't believe it!

TOBY: For the second time today, gonna actually start crying my nigger fucking eyes out...

MARILYN: Let alone the homophobia!

TOBY: (STARTS TO CRY) Just be quiet, it's all you have to do right now...

MARILYN: What are you, crying again?

TOBY: It's all you have to do...

MARILYN: Jesus Christ, Toby...

TOBY: I just wanna get out of here alive, Marilyn...

MARILYN: You think I don't wanna just get out of here alive too?!

(TOBY STARTS CRYING FULLY)

MARILYN: It's all you you you, isn't it? Stop crying! (HIM CRYING) Where's all your Black Panther shit now, cry-baby? Where's all your "Fight the powers that be" now, huh? (HIM CRYING) Stop crying! (HIM CRYING) Stop crying right now! (HIM CRYING) Please, Toby...

(TOBY FINALLY MANAGES TO STOP CRYING)

MARILYN: Jesus! Am I the only grown-up round here?

(CARMICHAEL GOES OVER TO HIS GRIP BAG, TAKES OUT TWO SETS OF HANDCUFFS, LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM, GOES TO THE RADIATOR ON THE BACK WALL, CHAINS ONE SET OF CUFFS TO IT, THEN GESTURES FOR MARILYN TO COME OVER. SHE LOOKS TO TOBY FOR HELP. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, JUST WIPES HIS TEARY EYES. SHE SIGHS, GOES OVER AND CUFFS HERSELF TO THE RADIATOR)

CARMICHAEL: Sit down.

(SHE DOES SO. HE CUFFS THE SECOND PAIR TO THE OTHER END OF THE RADIATOR, GESTURES FOR TOBY TO COME OVER)

TOBY: But I gotta go get your hand, your Hate hand. From on top of the... deep freeze...

(CARMICHAEL GESTURES AGAIN. TOBY GOES OVER, CUFFS HIMSELF TO IT)

CARMICHAEL: What's your address?

TOBY: Oh what?!

CARMICHAEL: What's your address?

TOBY: No, I ain't telling you my fucking address, man. No. I ain't telling you my fucking address.

CARMICHAEL: (TO MARILYN) What's his address?

MARILYN: 1280 Sycamore.

(TOBY GLARES AT HER)

CARMICHAEL: 1280 Sycamore. And it's in the garage on top of the deep freeze, right? (PAUSE) And it's in the garage on top of...

TOBY: Yeah, it's in the garage on top of the deep fucking freeze.

CARMICHAEL: And you know what'll happen if it ain't?

TOBY: Something fucking bad, I guess.

CARMICHAEL: And you know what'll happen if there's a bunch of your little black friends there, waiting to jump me?

TOBY: Um... you'll die and we'll escape and it'll all turn out alright?

CARMICHAEL: Funny. No, no... I might die, but, no...

(CARMICHAEL GOES BACK TO HIS GRIP BAG, TAKES A CAN OF GASOLINE OUT OF IT, UNSCREWS THE CAP AND PLACES THE CAN IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM FURTHEST FROM THEM. HE TAKES OUT A RAG, STUFFS IT IN THE TOP OF THE CAN, THEN TAKES OUT A LONG, THIN CANDLE)

CARMICHAEL: Hey white girl? How far away is 1280 Sycamore?

MARILYN: Um, 'bout ten minutes?

(HE MAKES A MENTAL CALCULATION, BREAKS THE CANDLE IN TWO AND SETS IT IN THE RAG ATOP THE GAS CAN. FINALLY HE TAKES OUT HIS LIGHTER AND LIGHTS THE CANDLE)

CARMICHAEL: That'll burn down to the gas in forty-five if I'm not back, so then the room'll explode and, y'know? What else? Wallet, yes, keys, yes, gun, yes...

(HE LOOKS AT THE PROXIMITY OF THEM TO THE CANDLE, AND MOVES ANYTHING OUT OF THEIR REACH THAT THEY MIGHT THROW AT IT)

CARMICHAEL: See ya in a bit.

(CARMICHAEL CLIMBS OUT THE WINDOW ONTO THE FIRE ESCAPE, CLOSES IT BEHIND HIM, AND DISAPPEARS INTO THE NIGHT. TOBY AND MARILYN LOOK AT EACH OTHER, CHECK TO MAKE SURE HE'S GONE, THEN SEE IF THEY CAN PULL THEMSELVES FREE OF THE RADIATOR. THEY CAN'T. SO THEY BOTH TRY TO GRAB ANYTHING TO THROW AT THE CANDLE – RUG, BEDCLOTHES, ETC, BUT NOTHING'S WITHIN REACH. TOBY GETS AN IDEA, TAKES OFF HIS SNEAKERS, AND THROWS THE FIRST ONE AT THE DISTANT CANDLE. IT NARROWLY MISSES. HE TAKES EVEN MORE CAREFUL AIM THE SECOND TIME. IT NARROWLY MISSES AGAIN. MARILYN TAKES AIM WITH THE FIRST OF HER SNEAKERS, AND THROWS. IT MISSES SO BADLY IT PRACTICALLY LANDS IN THE AUDIENCE. TOBY STARES AT THE SNEAKER, OPEN-MOUTHED, AS SHE TAKES OFF HER OTHER

SHOE AND TAKES AIM AGAIN. TOBY GRABS HER ARM AND TRIES TO WRESTLE IT FROM HER...)

TOBY: Gimme that...!

MARILYN: Let... fuck...

TOBY: Throw like a fucking... retarded fucking...

(IN THE HEAT OF THEIR STRUGGLE THE SHOE ACCIDENTALLY FLIES OUT OF HER HAND AND LANDS IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM, OUT OF REACH)

TOBY: Now look what you did!

MARILYN: Now look what I did?!

TOBY: Get the case! Can you reach the case?

(CARMICHAEL'S BATTERED SUITCASE IS ON MARILYN'S SIDE OF THE ROOM, POSSIBLY WITHIN REACH. MARILYN LAYS DOWN AND TRIES TO STRETCH HER LEGS ALL THE WAY OUT TO IT – AT FULL STRETCH HER TOES JUST ABOUT TOUCH ON EITHER SIDE OF IT. SHE TRIES TO PULL BUT...)

MARILYN: It's too heavy!

TOBY: Stretch out more!

MARILYN: I'm stretching out, for Christ's sake!

(SHE TRIES AGAIN – ASIDE FROM HER CUFFED WRIST HER ENTIRE BODY IS STRETCHED LENGTHWISE ALONG THE FLOOR – AND THIS TIME HER TOES AND THE BALLS OF HER FEET TOUCH EITHER SIDE OF THE CASE, SEEKING TO GRIP...)

TOBY: "We don't even have a refrigerator".

MARILYN: Excuse me?! I'm trying to do something here!

(PAUSE. SHE TRIES AGAIN)

TOBY: (PAUSE) "We deal weed".

(MARILYN SCRAMBLES ANGRILY TO HER FEET)

MARILYN: Well we do deal weed! We do deal weed! We don't deal hands! We don't know nothing about dealing hands!

TOBY: You don't have to tell that cracker motherfucker that! In the middle of a motherfucking hand deal!

MARILYN: And you were gonna leave me with that fucker?!

TOBY: I was what? Are you an idiot? Our only possible out of this situation at that time, him pointing a pistol in our faces, screaming 'bout being presented with the hand off a nigger...

MARILYN: Which you didn't even call him on...

TOBY: Which I didn't even...? Yeah, I've got a thing about calling a cracker white supremacist motherfucker who's got a gun in my face and my girlfriend's face, who's waving a nigger's hand around like it's a motherfucking Kentucky Fried motherfucking chicken-wing, yes, I've got a thing about picking the dude up upon his offensive mis-usage of RACIAL MOTHERFUCKING EPITHETS!! I've got a thing about that!

MARILYN: Uh-huh?!

TOBY: At that motherfucking stage, our only possible out of this situation was me getting out of this room, go get a gun offa somebody, come back in here motherfucking blasting! The guy ain't some kinda sex pervert, Marilyn. The guy's an amputee goddam racist motherfucking cracker motherfucking HAND-PSYCHO! You were in no imminent motherfucking danger! I motherfucking was! Now we're both in some imminent motherfucking danger!

MARILYN: I coulda gone get the gun, come in blasting.

TOBY: Honey, you can't hit a gas can with a sneaker four feet away! Now can we please try and put this goddam candle out? Please?

(SHE WANTS TO COME BACK AT HIM WITH SOMETHING BUT CAN'T, SO SHE LAYS BACK DOWN AND TRIES AGAIN WITH THE CASE. FINALLY IT STARTS TO BUDGE TOWARDS HER...)

TOBY: You're doing great, honey...

MARILYN: We'll never be able to throw this at it, Toby, it's way too heavy...

TOBY: Yeah, that's kinda why I was thinking we could maybe open it up and throw what's in it at it, y'know?

MARILYN: (SHE STOPS) Any more sarcasm, Toby, I mean it...

TOBY: Just get the motherfucking case, honey, we're gonna go up like Waco in ten fucking minutes here.

MARILYN: (SHE TRIES AGAIN) “Pre-menstrual death-wish”, you’re lucky I didn’t hit you for that one. Really give you something to cry about, frigging cry-baby...

TOBY: The case, honey, concentrate...

MARILYN: And why didn’t you just tell me about that other goddam hand?

TOBY: What other goddam hand?

MARILYN: The hand on top of the deep freeze.

TOBY: (PAUSE) Are you kidding me?

MARILYN: The tattooed hand.

TOBY: There is no tattooed hand. There is no any other kind of motherfucking hand.

MARILYN: Oh, so now there’s no any other kind of motherfucking hand.

TOBY: The case, Marilyn, please...

MARILYN: I’m not touching that goddam case until you tell me what’s the goddam story with the goddam tattooed motherfucking hand, or the goddam whatever kind of motherfucking hand.

(MARILYN SITS. TOBY SIGHS)

TOBY: The guy’s other hand had a buncha stickers covering up a buncha something across the fingers, right? I guessed they was tattoos. It ain’t too big a guess. Cracker motherfuckers get tattoos. And it ain’t too big a guess that what a cracker motherfucker is gonna get tattooed across the fingers of his motherfucking hands is ‘LOVE’ and motherfucking ‘HATE’, okay? It’s what cracker motherfuckers do. It’s the thing about cracker motherfuckers, tattoo-wise, they ain’t gonna come up with a bunch of avant-garde shit that they’ve gone and made up their self. Now, you might wonder, how did I know his missing hand had ‘HATE’ on it instead of having ‘LOVE’ on it...

MARILYN: Yeah, how did you know that?

TOBY: Total motherfucking guess, now can we get this motherfucking case please, honey? Please?

MARILYN: So, wait, let me get this right. He’s run off to our place to get this other hand... and there ain’t no other hand. Which is probably gonna make him even more angry.

TOBY: You're entirely up to speed now, honey, can we try and get the case?

(MARILYN LAYS DOWN AND TRIES AGAIN, AND SLOWLY GETS THE CASE MOVING TOWARDS THEM. ONCE IT'S IN TOUCHING DISTANCE TOBY REACHES OUT AS FAR AS HE CAN GO AND LIFTS IT, WITH QUITE SOME EFFORT, AS SHE STANDS UP...)

TOBY: (STRUGGLING) Jesus Christ, what's in this?!

MARILYN: I told ya, didn't I? Oh my god, it stinks...

TOBY: (TRYING TO OPEN IT) What the hell has he got in here...?

(THE CASE BURSTS OPEN AND OUT SPILL ABOUT A HUNDRED HUMAN HANDS AND THEIR STINKING GLOOP; SOME DECAYED AND WIZENED, SOME RECENT AND BLUE, SOME BLOODY, SOME MOSTLY BONES, SOME WITH A WRIST OR PART OF AN ARM STILL ATTACHED, SOME JUST A COUPLE OF FINGERS HANGING TOGETHER WITH A STRIP OF SKIN, AND SOME THE SAD SMALL HANDS OF LITTLE CHILDREN)

MARILYN: Oh oh oh oh oh oh ohh!

TOBY: Ah Jesus, he's got a suitcase full of fucking hands over here. What is this?

MARILYN: There's a bunch of children's hands in here, Toby! They ain't just shrivelled! They're children's hands!

TOBY: Aw who the hell goes around with a bunch of children's hands and a bunch of other hands in a goddam motherfucking suitcase, man, except some kind of a freak?

MARILYN: Now what are we gonna do?!

(SUDDENLY THE PHONE STARTS RINGING. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, THEN TOBY SLOWLY REACHES OUT, GRABS THE DISTANT PHONE CORD, AND DRAGS THE PHONE TOWARDS HIM. IT FALLS OFF THE BEDSIDE TABLE AND CRASHES TO THE FLOOR, UNHOOKING THE RECEIVER, ENDING IT'S RINGING. HE DRAGS THE PHONE CLOSER, REACHES OUT AT FULL STRETCH, THRU THE HANDS, AND PICKS THE RECEIVER UP)

TOBY: Um, hello?

(HE LISTENS TO THE VOICE AT THE OTHER END FOR TEN SECONDS OR SO, NODDING NOW AND THEN)

TOBY: Um, yeah, could you hold on for a second please? Just for a second.
 Thank you...

(PAUSE. HE PUTS THE RECEIVER TO HIS CHEST, TURNS TO
MARILYN)

TOBY: Um... yeah. Um, it's his mother. (PAUSE) She seems to be crying
 hysterically. (PAUSE) What do you think I should I say?

(THEY LOOK AT THE HANDS ALL OVER THE FLOOR. BLACKOUT)

SCENE TWO

(PROJECTED CLOSE-UP IMAGE OF A CANDLE BURNING TOWARDS A GAS CAN. MERVYN STANDS NARRATING BESIDE THE IMAGE)

MERVYN: I wish I had a monkey sometimes, don't you? I do. Not so much of a chimp as more of a kind of a gibbon. Or what kind of a monkey? What would you do, let him climb up stuff? Yep. Buy him a buncha bananas maybe? Do they really eat a lotta bananas, or is that what people say about them, about the banana thing, and they don't care either way about bananas? You wouldn't know with the media nowadays. Because I don't go to a lot of zoos, I gotta admit. I used to, in my teens, when I didn't have nothing else to do, but then I began to find them kinda depressing, y'know? So then I'd start going to zoos drunk, but that wasn't right either, so then I'd go to zoos drunk and think about doing a bunch of rescuing, but I never rescued shit, man, that was just the booze talking. All I would sometimes do, for instance if it was a gibbon, I would put my finger thru the bars, and have him or her pull my finger. I wouldn't even be scared about my finger. It was like the gibbon knew and cared that I was drunk and wondered why. But then I thought, to the gibbon, "My god, look what they have done to you. They have put you in a cage you don't wanna be in and make you pull my finger, when what you should be is at home, in a rainforest, and not pulling anything you didn't choose to pull." More likely a banana off a tree or the tail of another gibbon. And then I thought to myself, "My god, is every single monkey in every single zoo around the world going asleep tonight thinking "Man, I don't wanna be in this cage, pulling some drunk guys finger, not knowing what's the hell's going on, I wanna be at home, in Africa, or wherever they have rainforests, swinging from tree to tree, having a banana or what have you." And then I thought, "Oh no, every night when they're asleep they're probably dreaming "I am back there, I am in the rainforest, I am having a banana", and then bam! waking up each day in fucking Arizona. And here comes that drunk guy." Around then is when I stopped going to zoos so much and I started taking a lot of speed. And it was because of a speed arrest that part of the bail conditions was I had to come and work in this fricking hotel. Which leads me onto now. I didn't wanna work in a hotel, man. Who wants to work in a hotel? Some kinda hotel-loving freak? But that's why I'd always hope something exciting would happen, y'know? Maybe a prostitute would get stabbed and I'd have to go rescue her? Or some lesbians would get stabbed? I wouldn't mind they were lesbians, I'd save 'em. You've gotta look out for people, y'know, even if they're different from ya. Maybe I'd get some kinda medal from some kinda Lesbian Association. A protecting lesbians medal. Do they have them? They should have. (PAUSE) Yeah, I always used to hope they'd have one of those shooting massacres at my high school, didn't you? I did. But they never had shit at my high school, they just had lessons. So I'd always kinda, I guess you could say it was a daydream, I'd always kinda daydream that a couple of the more perturbed kids would come in and, y'know, start shooting up the place, cos of whatever it was in their personal life was making 'em sad, y'know, like they wasn't very good at

sports or what have you? Which can get you down. And they'd come in, y'know, as they do, dressed like soldiers, just to be different, and then I'd, y'know, do something brave and save everybody. Well, not everybody, else it wouldn't be a high school massacre, but maybe after they got, say, twelve? And then I'd hold a door shut with my broken leg maybe while the bullets came in through the door and I lay there semi-bleeding to death. Or a window. Y'know what? I wouldn't even mind dying, as long as I got to do something brave. But I definitely wouldn't wanna be one of the ones just got shot in the head at the outset and didn't know what was going on. That'd be lousy. Just sitting there doing algebra and then bing, nothing forever. Waste of being in a high-school massacre. Although I betcha most of those kids who survived, even the ones who did something brave, if you asked them afterwards what they would've preferred, they probably would've preferred the day just played out normal and they went home bored and no-one would've come in their classrooms to shoot them up at all. Or their cafeteria or whatever. (PAUSE) We weren't even allowed in the cafeteria at start of school when I was a kid, were you? We weren't. Cafeteria was for lunchtime. I don't know what's going on these days, cafeteria at nine o'clock in the morning. (PAUSE) Maybe they was having breakfast? (PAUSE) Makes it even more sad. (PAUSE) How did I get onto my high-school massacre thing? Oh yeah, the one-handed man. Yeah, so I guess it was around midnight I seen him hopping offa the fire escape and sprinting off into the night with a gun in his hand. I knew he had a gun, didn't I? I knew it wasn't no car back-firing. Liar. Which of course meant that the pretty girl was still up there, possibly dead or dying at this point. I was hoping dying rather than dead cos then I could maybe staunch the blood with my shirt or something and we could get chatting. Course, if it was a choice between her being dying and her being just tied up or something, I'd choose her just being tied up, y'know? I ain't sick. Course, her colored friend, I didn't know where the hell he was. I did remember where I knew him from, though. He was the little prick that stiffed me in that speed deal, two winters back. I gave him sixty bucks and he told me to wait there and I waited there and he run off and he didn't come back. He just didn't come back. I was standing there for an hour. In the snow. And then the cops showed up. I probably shouldn't have been rude to 'em, it wasn't their fault, but, y'know, I was furious. That little prick, he was probably watching from round the corner or something, laughing. Which is why it really stuck in my craw when he didn't even recognise me on the reception desk, man, he just looked right thru me. Maybe it was the boxer shorts, but I don't know, man, it stuck in my craw. (PAUSE) Anyway, when the one-handed man's mother rang up I just put her straight thru to the room. What else was I gonna do? Say "I'm sorry, your son's not here at the moment, he's just jumped offa my fire escape and run off in the night with a gun in his hand." She mighta gone hysterical. She already sounded a little hysterical. So, yeah, I just put her thru to the room. Let those fucks figure it out.

(BLACKOUT. AND INSTANT LIGHT UP UPON...)

SCENE THREE

(HOTEL ROOM, SECONDS AFTER SCENE ONE. LAYOUT THE SAME; HANDS ALL OVER THE FLOOR, CANDLE BURNING, MARILYN AND TOBY CUFFED TO RADIATOR, TOBY ON PHONE)

TOBY: Yeah, uh, I'm afraid he isn't here at the moment. Uh, may I take a message? (PAUSE) Uh, I'm a friend of his, an old friend. (PAUSE) I sound black? Yes, I am black. I am a black man, yes. I'm a black friend of your son's. (PAUSE) No, there isn't anything fishy about it, I'm just a new black friend of your son's, did I say 'old'? I meant 'new'. Listen, why don't I just get him to call you back as soon as he comes in, why don't I just do that? (PAUSE) You've fallen out of a tree?

(PAUSE. HE PUTS HIS HAND OVER THE RECEIVER, TURNS TO MARILYN)

TOBY: She's fallen out of a tree.

(PAUSE. HE GOES BACK TO THE PHONE)

TOBY: Um...

MARILYN: Ask her if she's okay.

TOBY: Are you okay? (LISTENS) She fell out of it yesterday. Her ankles are broken and her face is bleeding and she can't get up off the floor. What were you climbing up the tree for?

MARILYN: Tell her to call for an ambulance. Hey! And then tell her to call the police and have 'em come here!

TOBY: (PAUSE) A balloon? Who stuck the balloon in the tree? (PAUSE) The wind? (PAUSE) How old are you? (PAUSE) Well you shouldn't be climbing up trees at your age, some balloon up there, should she? That's very dangerous, even for a young person. (PAUSE) I'm not shouting at you, I'm trying to help you. (PAUSE) I'm not shouting at you. (PAUSE) Angela, I'm not shouting at you, am I? (PAUSE) Oh please don't cry. Listen, I think you should telephone for an ambulance now, and then when your son comes back we can tell him... (PAUSE) What? What will the ambulance people find in the house? (PAUSE) You can tell me. (PAUSE) But we are talking about your health here. When you're bleeding from your face, that is bad, Angela, whatever the scenario. On top of your ankles. (PAUSE) Please stop crying. (PAUSE) You are not going to die. (PAUSE) You are not going to die. (PAUSE) Hello?! (PAUSE) Hello, Angela?!

(PHONE CLICKS OFF, DRONES. TOBY IS JUST LEFT THERE, DEAD PHONE IN HAND)

TOBY: It kinda sounded like, uh... It kinda sounded like, uh... First it kinda sounded like she was coughing up a lotta blood, and then it kinda sounded like she... uh, kinda died. Uh. Which isn't good. Whichever way you look at it, it isn't good.

MARILYN: Like we didn't have enough to worry about! With the candle and the hands! Now his mother's dead! Jesus Christ, Toby!

TOBY: Uh, yeah. Let's, uh, let's try and put this candle out?

(TOBY PICKS UP A PRETTY GRUESOME HAND/WRIST COMBO AND GOES TO THROW IT AT THE CANDLE, BUT IS STOPPED BY A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. HE HIDES THE HAND BEHIND HIS BACK, THEN REALISES HOW POINTLESS THAT IS, AND DROPS IT WITH THE REST OF THE THEM ON THE FLOOR)

MARILYN: Er, who is it?

(MERVYN ENTERS. LOOKS AT THEM CUFFED THERE, LOOKS AT THE HANDS ALL OVER THE FLOOR)

TOBY: Hey, the receptionist guy! Thank Christ! Hey man, see that candle in that gas can there? Will you put it out for us please? It's got absolutely nothing to do with us, we swear.

MARILYN: It's got absolutely nothing to do with us.

(MERVYN LOOKS AT THE CAN A FEW MOMENTS)

MERVYN: "The receptionist guy"?

(MERVYN IDLES AWAY FROM THE CAN, THRU THE HANDS...)

TOBY: Ain't he the receptionist guy? The boxer shorts guy.

MARILYN: Yeah, he is, the boxer shorts guy.

(MERVYN SITS ON THE BED)

TOBY: Well what's he... Sir? Your hotel is about to explode any minute now...

MERVYN: "The boxer shorts guy." Hmm.

TOBY: Hey! Am I talking to myself here?! Could you please go and put that goddam candle out please?!

MARILYN: And could you please go call the goddam police please and get us the hell outta here before that freak comes back?! We are completely hand-cuffed to this radiator here!

MERVYN: Yeah. You got a lot of cut off hands all over the carpet here.

MARILYN: Those are totally not our hands.

TOBY: Those are totally that one-handed man's hands. Why would we have a bunch of hands all over a floor?

MERVYN: I don't know why, but you do.

TOBY: Sir, what is your name?

MERVYN: Don't patronise me.

TOBY: (PAUSE) I wasn't. I was asking what your name was.

MERVYN: Oh yeah? (PAUSE) It's Mervyn.

TOBY: Mervyn. Well, you seem like a nice guy, Mervyn, and a smart guy, using 'patronise' and all. So would you please just put the candle out so then we can talk about the hands and everything else in a sensible fashion?

MERVYN: No.

TOBY: 'No'? What 'No'?

MERVYN: No I won't put the candle out.

TOBY: "No you won't put the candle out". That makes... no sense...

MERVYN: I'm assuming whoever put the candle on put the candle on for some kinda reason.

TOBY: But you are in the room here now.

MERVYN: I know I'm in the room here now.

TOBY: And you understand that when the candle burns down to the gas, the gas will explode and the room will explode and the hotel will burn down.

MERVYN: I understand.

TOBY: You understand but you ain't gonna do nothing about it?

MERVYN: I never really liked this hotel much in the first place.

MARILYN: There's something funny about this guy, Toby.

MERVYN: There's something funny about me? Baby, I ain't chained to a radiator in a room full of chopped off hands with a gas can about to explode in it, insulting a guy's boxer shorts. There's something funny about me? I'd say there's something funny about you.

TOBY: Marvin...

MERVYN: Mervyn!

TOBY: Mervyn! Even if you don't like this hotel or like working in this hotel, the upshot of this hotel burning down after the room exploding would be that you, along with us, along with everyone else in the hotel, would die. Right?

MERVYN: Don't talk to me like I'm a mongoloid, man.

TOBY: I'm not talking to you like you're a mongoloid, Mervyn. I wouldn't do that...

MARILYN: He's anti- that.

TOBY: I'm anti- that. I'm anti- mongoloid-talk.

MARILYN: No, you're pro-mongoloid.

TOBY: I know I'm pro-mongoloid. I said I'm anti- mongoloid-talk.

MARILYN: Ohh...

TOBY: Don't... (SIGHS. TO MERVYN) What I'm saying is, Mervyn,... it's Mervyn, right? What I'm saying is... you don't know us. And maybe we're deserving of death right now, and maybe we're not. We, not knowing you, definitely don't think you're deserving of death right now, we think you're a great guy, and that's why we think you should just go over to the candle and put the candle out, if not to save our lives, then to save your life, which is definitely a worthwhile life of which to save.

MERVYN: Is that why you run off that time with my sixty bucks that time when all I wanted was a lousy gram of speed, and I was left standing there for an hour, in the snow, like a fucking idiot?

TOBY: (PAUSE) I got absolutely no idea who you are, I got absolutely no idea who this guy is, but it's evident from the things that he is saying, about the snow and all this, that he is some kind of a fucking mongoloid, so what I suggest that we do, Marilyn, is we forget he's even here and we put this fucking thing out ourselves. Okay? Okay.

(TOBY GOES TO THROW A HAND AT THE CANDLE BUT MERVYN STANDS IN FRONT OF IT, MOVES THE CAN TO A SAFER PLACE AND STARTS PUTTING STUFF IN FRONT OF IT. TOBY STARTS THROWING HANDS AT HIM, QUITE VIOLENTLY...)

TOBY: Hey, you fuck...!

(...AND MERVYN THROWS A BUNCH BACK, QUITE VIOLENTLY TOO, SOME ACCIDENTALLY HITTING MARILYN)

MARILYN: Hey!

TOBY: Hey!

MERVYN: Hanh?!

TOBY: Hitting my goddam girlfriend with that shit, man!

MARILYN: Hitting me with those goddam hands, Mervyn!

MERVYN: I was aiming at him.

MARILYN: Those are from human beings, man! What the hell is wrong with you?

MERVYN: I was aiming at him.

MARILYN: Je-sus...!

TOBY: (PAUSE) Put the fucking candle out!

MERVYN: No!

TOBY: You fucking nut-whack! We're all gonna fucking die!

MERVYN: Yeah, well, maybe then you'll learn your lesson.

TOBY: What fucking lesson? What post-death lesson am I gonna fucking learn?

MERVYN: Lesson about not running off on a person with his sixty bucks and leave him standing there in the snow like an idiot.

TOBY: No I haven't learned that lesson, fucker, and I'd do it again, I'd do it again! Even though I didn't do it IN THE FIRST FUCKING PLACE!

MARILYN: Mervyn? Mervyn, look at me.

(MERVYN GLANCES AT HER)

MARILYN: That was 'glancing' at me, Mervyn, you're still not looking at me, are you?

(PAUSE. MERVYN LOOKS AT HER)

MARILYN: Thank you. Listen, I think you're really cute, Mervyn, and I'd like you to put the candle out so I can have a conversation with you.

MERVYN: Oh, you think you can get around me with that cute stuff, do you?

MARILYN: No, I don't think I can get around you with that cute stuff, I just think that you're hot and I'd really like to talk to you. The candle thing would just be a bonus. Do you think I'm hot?

MERVYN: I think you're hot but I think you've got very poor taste in boyfriends, I'll tell ya that.

MARILYN: He isn't my boyfriend. He's just a guy I know.

MERVYN: (PAUSE. TO TOBY) Are you?

TOBY: I'll go with that.

MARILYN: Will you put the candle out for me?

(PAUSE. MERVYN GOES OVER TO THE GAS-CAN, SURREPTITIOUSLY LICKS HIS FINGERS, AND PUTS THE CANDLE OUT)

MARILYN: Wow, the way you put that out was so cool. How'd you do that?

MERVYN: Trick I learned one time.

MARILYN: Did you lick your fingers first or something?

MERVYN: Maybe.

TOBY: I just saw him lick his fingers...

MARILYN: Toby? You got sixty dollars on you?

TOBY: Huh? Yeah. (SUSPICIOUS) No. Why?

MARILYN: Well, even though I think this whole running off in the snow thing is a total case of mistaken identity which I don't know how it happened, I think you should just give the sixty bucks to Mervyn, just to show that we're all on the same side here. The same side being there is a one-handed man gonna come back and kill the lot of us any minute. Whaddya say?

TOBY: What do I say? I say "I ain't giving this mongoloid diddly."

MARILYN: Toby...

TOBY: The man's a fool. And I am her boyfriend, so what I'm gonna do is...

(TOBY STRETCHES FOR THE PHONE)

MERVYN: I knew you were her boyfriend!

TOBY: What I'm gonna do is I'm gonna make a telephone call, get the cops to come on down here, get 'em to arrest the goddam lot of us, throw us into jail, cos I think I'd find it easier to explain to those assholes what a nigger's doing standing in a room full of fucking hands than it will be to explain to my momma why I ain't got no head no more cos that one-handed cracker motherfucker come back here, chopped my motherfucking head off! How about that? What's the number for an outside line, boxer shorts?

MERVYN: Huh?

TOBY: What's the number for an outside line?

MERVYN: Zero. You gotta go thru the operator for an outside line.

TOBY: Thank you. (DIALS. LISTENS TO RING TONE) Operator ain't picking up.

MERVYN: Better try him again then, huh?

(TOBY TRIES AGAIN. MERVYN CHECKS HIS NAILS. PAUSE)

TOBY: You're the operator here, aren't you, Mervyn?

MERVYN: I operate sometimes, yeah. I do a bit of operating.

(TOBY THROWS THE PHONE DOWN ON THE FLOOR, PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HAND AND SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR)

MERVYN: Why is the one-handed man gonna chop your head off anyway, unless you done something wrong?

TOBY: Marilyn, could you just show the guy your tits or something, please, get him to call the cops for us?

MERVYN: What a nice boyfriend you got.

MARILYN: Why are you being such an asshole, Toby?

TOBY: (TEARFUL) Because I don't want to die tonight, Marilyn. I just don't wanna die tonight.

MARILYN: Don't you start crying again!

TOBY: (CRYING) Gonna die now and it's totally unfair.

MARILYN: Stop it!

(TOBY STOPS)

MARILYN: (PAUSE) Mervyn? The one-handed man, we'd never met him before tonight. All we'd heard was there was a guy come to town was going 'round looking to pay top dollar for his own hand, for his own chopped off hand, which got chopped off years ago. Whatever 'top dollar' for your own years-ago chopped-off-hand is.

TOBY: It's five hundred bucks.

MARILYN: Well, we knew, from high school times, that in the Tarlington museum of natural history, they had a hand in there, just lying there, really, in, like, a case. So we kinda took it. But we'd kinda forgotten that the hand was kinda... well... it was kinda... aboriginal? Like, off an aborigine? But at that stage we didn't know what the guy looked like, y'know? So when we met him we was kinda hoping that he might be more, y'know, black. And if he wasn't then what we was gonna do, we was gonna kinda wing it.

TOBY: We was gonna wing it.

MARILYN: We was gonna kinda more of a kinda get the money up front type of situation? Or more of a kinda suggesting it had gone dark over the long period of time type situation. But then he kinda hit Toby all over the head and locked him in a closet and shot at him and, yeah, things have been going kinda downhill since then.

MERVYN: That was your plan? A museum? And he calls me a mongoloid? A museum?

MARILYN: I guess we thought, a guy with one hand, how tough could he be?

TOBY: Tough I can deal with, honey. Tough I can deal wi... It was the homicidal that threw me.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) Well, he's gonna be even more homicidal, isn't he, once he hears you've killed his mother?

TOBY: (PAUSE) I guess you can listen in on calls when you're the Operator, huh?

MERVYN: Operator's allowed to listen in on calls sometimes, yeah. Make sure the guests ain't planning nothing funny.

TOBY: (WORRIED) She sounded like she died, didn't she?

MERVYN: She didn't sound happy.

MARILYN: (PAUSE) Will you call the cops for us, Mervyn? Please?

MERVYN: I gotta say, this whole entire situation, man, well, it strikes me a little bit like y'know there's that phrase "The chickens are coming home to roost"? You know that phrase? It strikes me a little bit like that.

MARILYN: (PAUSE) In a bad way?

MERVYN: Not in a good way.

TOBY: How is this situation like the motherfucking chickens are coming home to motherfucking roost, motherfucker? Explain your motherfucking analogy.

MERVYN: Oh, I'll explain my analogy alright, Mr Big Words...

TOBY: Alright...

MERVYN: Oh, just that, y'know, tonight you promised a guy something that you didn't have, and tried to take his money off him, like he was some kind of a chump, and about two years ago you promised a different guy something that you also didn't have, or that in fact you may have had, I'm not sure either way if you had the speed but what you definitely did, you definitely run off and left him standing there, in the snow, with his ass hanging out, also like a chump. Am I right? How about that analogy? How about those chickens? You know what I think I can hear 'em doing? I think I can hear 'em coming home and fucking roosting.

TOBY: Mervyn, I don't deal speed. I've never dealt speed. I deal weed.

MARILYN: It's true, Mervyn. He's a weed dealer, he's not a speed dealer.

TOBY: I wouldn't even know how to get my hands on any speed.

MERVYN: Yeah, I know. That's why I was left standing there for a fucking hour!

TOBY: It wasn't me, Mervyn. It just wasn't me. You ain't one of these cats who think all black people look the same, are ya?

MERVYN: Pretty much, yeah, but I'm still sure it was you.

TOBY: Oh yeah?

MERVYN: Yeah, your hair was different but you had a skull and crossbones ear-ring and you had a t-shirt with Yoda on it.

(TOBY GLANCES SHEEPISHLY AT MARILYN)

MARILYN: Oh you fucking asshole, Toby!

TOBY: Lotsa black guys got t-shirts with Yoda on 'em! That don't prove nothing! Blacks guys dig Yoda! That shit wouldn't stand up in court!

MARILYN: Well we ain't in court, are we? We're in a room full of dead fucking hands, about to fucking die.

(TOBY TRIES NOT TO CRY BUT CAN'T HELP IT. HE FISHES IN HIS POCKETS FOR MONEY, COMES UP WITH JUST A FEW BILLS AND SOME CHANGE...)

TOBY: I don't quite got sixty, Mervyn, but, uh...

MERVYN: How much you got?

TOBY: (COUNTING) Got... twenty-nine dollars and seventy five cents. (BEAT) And some weed.

(MERVYN ACCEPTS THE CASH, LEAVES THE WEED)

MERVYN: I'll take it, and I'll go and call, but I'll tell you this, buddy, I ain't calling for you, I'm calling for her. Cos she's the innocent party in this sorry state of affairs.

MARILYN: Thank you, Mervyn.

TOBY: Thank you, Mervyn. Technically she was just as much involved in the hand thing as me, but thank you Mervyn.

MERVYN: Well if we're getting on to 'technically's, technically you still owe me thirty one dollars and twenty-five goddam cents, so how's about that for 'technically'?

TOBY: Technically it's thirty dollars and twenty-five cents, but yeah.

(MERVYN GLARES AT HIM)

TOBY: No, you're right, you're right. I mis-added.

(MERVYN IDLES BACK TO THE DOOR)

MERVYN: Yeah, I'll go call the cops, and while I'm calling 'em, maybe I'll try and find out where his momma lives, get 'em to send her a doctor, try to resuscitate the poor devil, which is maybe what you shoulda done and stop thinking about your goddam selfish selves one goddam minute, cos y'know what?

MARILYN: Could you just go make the call, please?

(HE STARES AT HER)

MARILYN: I mean he might be here any minute though! Mightn't he?

TOBY: See? She's just as bad as me.

MERVYN: Hey, just in case he comes back early, maybe I should make sure the room's left just the way I found it, huh?

TOBY: The room is just the way you found it.

MERVYN: Well, no, the room just the way I found it would be, y'know...

(MERVYN TAKES OUT THE CANDLE, LIGHTS IT WITH THE LIGHTER, AND MOVES TOWARDS THE GAS CAN)

TOBY: Get the fuck outta here, Mervyn!

MARILYN: Please, Mervyn, Jesus!

MERVYN: I'm just goofing around! Jesus! I'll go make that call.

(MERVYN BLOWS THE CANDLE OUT, SMILES, AND EXITS WITH IT AND THE LIGHTER, LEAVING TOBY AND MARILYN HANGING THERE, DRAINED. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AFTER A WHILE, SCARED)

TOBY: I kinda fucked everything up again, didn't I?

MARILYN: Kinda?

(THEY SMILE)

MARILYN: Hey, it was my fault too.

TOBY: I just wanted to get some money to take you off someplace, y'know? Someplace pretty. Someplace fun. Someplace that cost 'bout five hundred bucks. And look where we ended up. Hand central.

MARILYN: Do you think he bought all these hands or do you think he chopped 'em offa people or what?

TOBY: I think some kinda combination of the two? (PAUSE) And what the hell is in his mother's house she didn't want the cops to see, if he's happy to walk around with a suitcase full of fucking hands?

MARILYN: Did you believe all that Spokane stuff? How he got his hand cut off and all?

TOBY: I kinda had the feeling I saw that in a TV movie one time. That had Lee Majors in it. But maybe I'm getting it mixed up with the Bionic, I don't know.

MARILYN: That'd be pretty mean, wouldn't it, somebody waving goodbye to you with your own hand?

TOBY: That would be pretty mean, but I'll tell you this, there's some pretty mean people in the world. And I ain't lying.

MARILYN: Are you thinking 'bout those kids who took your momma's cactus?

TOBY: Kids don't need some sixty year old woman's cactus, man. What they need it for? They probably just left it on some street corner, laughing.

MARILYN: I'll say this though, some bunch of guys waving goodbye to you with your own chopped off hand that they chopped off? It's gonna make you determined, man.

TOBY: I'll tell ya, as much as I don't like the guy? That is one determined motherfucker. I ain't seen a motherfucker more determined. If the guy set his sights on doing something good, cleaning up the environment, motherfucking environment's gonna end up clean. You ain't gonna spill some oil-spillage on the head of some seal, from your boat, this motherfucker around! This motherfucker gonna come on your boat and kill you! You ain't spilling no more shit. There ain't no negotiation! Your head just come off! Seal'll be sitting there clapping, your head'll be rolling round the motherfucking deck, just looking at the seal, not comprehending! And I'll tell you another thing about that motherfucking cracker motherfucker...

(SUDDENLY THE WINDOW SMASHES IN FROM THE METAL BAR THAT CARMICHAEL HAS THROWN THROUGH IT FROM THE FIRE

ESCAPE. HE LEAPS INSIDE AND OVER TO THE GASCAN. THE
'LOVE' TATTOO IS NO LONGER COVERED BY STICKERS)

CARMICHAEL: Where's my candle?!!

TOBY: The... the receptionist took it!

CARMICHAEL: And who put my fucking hands all over the fucking floor?! That's
even fucking worse!!

TOBY: Yeah, I know, the receptionist guy! He came in, he just went crazy!

CARMICHAEL: Uh-huh? Well I'll deal with him later, won't I?

TOBY: Deal with him now!

MARILYN: Deal with him now!

CARMICHAEL: Oh, deal with him now, huh?

TOBY: Or don't! It's up to you!

MARILYN: Did ya... did ya find your hand where we said?

CARMICHAEL: Did I...? Does this answer your question?

(CARMICHAEL PICKS UP THE GAS CAN AND STARTS POURING
THE GASOLINE ALL OVER THE TWO OF THEM)

TOBY: A 'No' would suffice!

(HE CONTINUES POURING THE GAS OVER THEM AS THEY
COUGH AND SPLUTTER AND WRITHE)

CARMICHAEL: You know how many people have tried to fuck me over the last
twenty-seven years, Marilyn? Do you know how many people think
it's funny, some guy with one fucking hand, and all he wants to do
is get his hand back, do you know how many people think it's funny
just to fuck with him cos they think he's ridiculous, just because he
wants back something that is rightfully his?! Do you know how
many people he's had to deal with like that in this country the last
quarter of a fucking century?

MARILYN: A lot?

CARMICHAEL: Yeah, a lot! A heck of a lot! And you're another two of 'em!

MARILYN: We ain't another two of 'em! We didn't think you was funny!

TOBY: We just wanted to make some money, man! We didn't mean to upset ya!

CARMICHAEL: Well I am upset!

MARILYN: We can see you're upset. It's an upsetting thing.

TOBY: But we don't usually deal with this sort of thing...

MARILYN: We deal weed!

TOBY: We deal weed. We don't deal hands.

MARILYN: We got it from the aborigine section in a museum.

TOBY: We weren't trying to be mean. We was just trying to scam ya a coupla hundred bucks.

MARILYN: We wasn't even being exorbitant. We don't deserve to die for it, do we?

CARMICHAEL: Well obviously if I'm pouring gas all over ya.

MARILYN: We deserve to die for trying to scam ya a coupla hundred bucks?

CARMICHAEL: That's right!

MARILYN: I gotta say it, man, you are totally over-reacting. (PAUSE) Isn't he, though?

TOBY: You are, kinda.

(CARMICHAEL TOSSES THE GAS CAN ASIDE, AMBLES THRU THE HANDS, SEES THEIR SHOES)

CARMICHAEL: What did you take your shoes off for?

TOBY: We was trying to throw them at the candle. Sorry.

(HE PICKS UP AND TOSSES THEM BACK THEIR SHOES, GESTURES TO PUT THEM ON)

CARMICHAEL: Funny thing about shoes, I always think. Sometimes I'll be lying on my bed, looking at my shoes laying there in the dark, and I'll wonder, "Is that the last pair of shoes I'm ever gonna wear?" Y'know? "Is that the pair of shoes I'm gonna die in?" Cos nobody ever knows, do they, when they put them on of a morning, if they're putting on the pair of shoes they're gonna die in. Nobody usually knows. But, y'know what? You two know. You two know. So,

yeah, why don't you both just finish up putting your shoes on there and we'll get this inferno shit over with.

(CARMICHAEL STARTS FISHING IN HIS POCKETS AS THE TWO STAND AND TRY TO STALL FOR TIME, TOBY GLANCING OUT THE WINDOW FOR THE COPS NOW AND THEN...)

TOBY: Um, a guy who's gonna go commit suicide knows. A guy who's gonna go jump off a bridge or something? He knows what shoes he's gonna die in.

CARMICHAEL: Yeah, a guy who's gonna go commit suicide knows, I guess.

MARILYN: And a guy who... thinking of a guy who ain't got no feet but that don't work. How about a guy who, maybe he got his shoes glued to his feet one time. Like by accident, one time, if it was really strong glue...

TOBY: Like Crazy Glue or something...

MARILYN: Like Crazy Glue or something and it got on his feet and he didn't know and then he put his shoes on and soon after that he died or something?

CARMICHAEL: Look, I didn't say nobody knows. I said nobody usually knows, okay? And the whole shoe thing I was just saying to make you scared before you died, okay? I wasn't looking for some big kinda fucking shoe debate.

MARILYN: Well how was that nice?!

CARMICHAEL: Well I ain't nice, am I? Have either of you kids got a match?

TOBY: (PAUSE) Uh, I don't have a match. Do you have a match, honey?

MARILYN: A match?

TOBY: Just say "No", honey, it's the only answer...

MARILYN: No, no, yeah, no, I don't have a match. No, I was just thinking we could to say to him there's a bar on the corner has matches, buy us some time or something...

CARMICHAEL: I had a lighter here someplace, I know I did. I had it right here to light the candle... (REALISING) That fucking receptionist!

TOBY: He was opening things, he was stealing things! Go down and get him!

(CARMICHAEL GOES TO THE PHONE AND DIALS)

TOBY: Don't call him...

CARMICHAEL: Is that the receptionist guy? (PAUSE) Man, I don't care if you call yourself a receptionist or what the fuck you call yourself! You've got some property of mine that you took from my room while I was out and I would like it back right fucking now! (PAUSE) You got a candle of mine and you got a lighter of mine. (PAUSE) Well sorry isn't good enough, is it? I would like them back immediately. (PAUSE) Well... thank you. (PAUSE) No, no, I came up the fire escape. (PAUSE) I know it's out of bounds, but I was angry, wasn't I? (PAUSE) It's none of your business what I was angry about. Just bring that stuff up, okay? (PAUSE) Thank you.

(CARMICHAEL HANGS UP, SITS ON THE BED. LONG PAUSE, TOBY AND MARILYN LOOKING AT HIM AND EACH OTHER...)

CARMICHAEL: What? Oh, yeah, no, he's coming up with the stuff, he said he'd just be a minute.

TOBY: (PAUSE. QUIETLY) Take your time, Boxer Shorts, take your ti...

(THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. TOBY'S HEAD DROPS)

MARILYN: Go away!

TOBY: Go away!

MARILYN: Run away!

(CARMICHAEL TAKES OUT HIS GUN, SHUTTING THEM UP, OPENS THE DOOR AND USHERS MERVYN IN WITH IT. MERVYN LOOKS OVER THE DRENCHED KIDS...)

MERVYN: Jeez! It gets worse!

CARMICHAEL: Where's my stuff?

MERVYN: Hanh?

CARMICHAEL: Where's my stuff?

MERVYN: Oh yeah...

(MERVYN GIVES CARMICHAEL THE CANDLE AND THE LIGHTER. TOBY'S JAW DROPS)

TOBY: Just tell me you spoke to those people you were going downstairs to speak to, Mervyn?

MERVYN: Which?

TOBY: Those people you were especially going downstairs to telephone and to speak to?

MERVYN: I knew I was going downstairs for something!

(THEIR HEADS DROP)

MERVYN: Yeah, no, I got side-tracked. I was doing some computer stuff, and then the next thing ya know... Lousy. What is that, the gasoline?

TOBY: Yeah it's the fucking gasoline!

CARMICHAEL: Yeah, why don't you just go stand over there with 'em?

MERVYN: I ain't standing over there with 'em, I'll get gasoline all over me. What happened, anyway? Did you tell him about his mother?

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) What about my mother?

TOBY: You just keep killing us, don't you? Just, over and over again, you just keep killing us.

MERVYN: We think she died. Toby was talking to her... It's Toby, right? Yeah, Toby was talking to her, kinda heated, I gotta admit, and then, yeah, it sounded like she kinda died.

TOBY: No, no, I was trying to help her...

MERVYN: (OVERLAP) Kinda rude, really, and I don't know if it was blood she started coughing up, but it was definitely something she started coughing up. I'd guess blood.

(CARMICHAEL PICKS UP THE PHONE)

TOBY: Oh, I think you gotta go thru the operator for an outside line here, Mr Carmichael, and I think the operator's gone home now.

MERVYN: No, no, you just dial nine for an outside line, you know that...

CARMICHAEL: I know that.

MERVYN: Everybody knows that.

TOBY: (PAUSE. TO MARILYN) Did you know about this nine thing?

MARILYN: I never been to a hotel before.

TOBY: If we ever get out of this one, I'm gonna set Mervyn's face on fire.

CARMICHAEL: Shhh. It's ringing...

(RING RING. RING RING)

MERVYN: Be ringing a while.

(RING RING. RING RING)

TOBY: I'd say maybe she got up and gone to the bathroom, Mr Carmichael, can't hear the phone in there, maybe?

MARILYN: Yeah, or maybe she's playing a buncha music loud, or something, a buncha loud music?

MERVYN: Or maybe she can't come to the phone because she's dead.

(RING RING. RING RING)

TOBY: Mister Carmichael? Listen, Marilyn didn't have anything to do with any of this. I roped her into all of this. So why don't you just let her go and you can do whatever you want with me?

MERVYN: Oh he's just saying that so you'll think he's nice!

CARMICHAEL: Shh...!

(THE RINGING STOPS AS THE OTHER END IS PICKED UP)

CARMICHAEL: Hello?! Hello, Ma?! (PAUSE) Well what took you so long to pick up the phone, Ma, I been standing here a fucking hour? (LONG PAUSE) A tree? Which tree? (SHOOTS A LOOK AT TOBY) No, he didn't tell me you fell out of a tree. He must've forgotten that. (PAUSE) Of course I don't have any black friends, what the hell are you talking about? And what the hell were you climbing up a tree for in the first place at your age?

TOBY: That's what I said. Isn't it?

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) A balloon?! Ma, that's the most insane thing I ever fucking heard, a seventy year old woman climbing up a fucking tree to take down a fucking balloon. The most you would need to do, if you needed to do anything, you would throw a sharp pebble up there and try and pop the balloon. And who minds a balloon being in a tree anyway? Coupla days it woulda just been carried away by the wind. That or it woulda just deflated of its own accord. (PAUSE) Well it got carried into the tree by the wind, didn't it? So why couldn't it get carried out of the tree by the wind? (PAUSE)

Snagged? (PAUSE) Yeah, I'll tell you what your problem is, Ma, you wanna know what your problem is? You're anal, that's what your problem is. (PAUSE) Yes you are anal. Who cares if the neighbours see a balloon in your fucking tree, what are they gonna think less of you? They're not gonna think less of you, they're gonna think "Oh, the wind carried a balloon into Mrs Carmichael's tree, but I bet pretty soon the wind's gonna carry the balloon out of Mrs Carmichael's tree, cos that's what the wind does. That or it'll deflate of it's own accord, but, either way, no way are we gonna look less on Mrs Carmichael, because, y'know what, that balloon doesn't have a fucking thing to do with her!" (PAUSE) Nobody thinks you're a crazy lady.

(HE GESTURES TO THE THREE, WHO ALL SHAKE THEIR HEADS)

CARMICHAEL: They might now, crawling all over the floor of your fucking kitchen, your ankles broke, clutching a fucking balloon! They might now! (PAUSE) Exactly! You didn't even get the balloon, so now don't you feel like an idiot? And why didn't you just call for an ambulance when all this happened in the first place? And, in point of fact, why didn't these people call for one for you, instead a just leaving you to lay there and fucking bleed to death...? (PAUSE) What? What didn't you want the cops to see? (PAUSE. QUIETLY) No, tell me what you didn't want the cops to see? (PAUSE, HIS FACE AND ATTITUDE CHANGES) Well who said you could go snoop around my room in the first place, Ma? That trunk was locked. That trunk was locked, Ma. You musta had to break that trunk open with your stinky hands, you nosy hag, and listen! The cops do not care about twenty goddam porno magazines, alright Ma?! The cops do not care! You can buy 'em on a newsstand! The cops've probably already got 'em! (PAUSE) Oh, so you've been thru the whole lot of them, have ya? You're a lesbian now, as well as a snoop. (PAUSE) Finally legal, Ma. Finally legal. The clue is in the title, Ma. All those girls are eighteen or above. (PAUSE) What, are you lying there going thru 'em?! (TO THE GUYS) She's lying there going thru 'em!! (PAUSE) So, you actually just crawled into my room and you're lying there? Maybe those ankles aren't quite so broken after all, Ma, how about that? Maybe those ankles aren't quite so broken after all. I'm thinking 'Swollen'. (PAUSE) She's flipping thru another one! I can hear her flipping! I am not defending myself to you, Ma. It's a magazine, okay? Alright, yes I do find some black women attractive, I do find some black woman attractive. That doesn't mean I'm not a racist. It's a magazine. Look, I'm standing here right now, okay, there is a black man chained to my radiator and he's covered in gasoline, now that's hardly Affirmative Action, now is it? (PAUSE) He is not a friend of mine. He is not a friend of mine. Why would I chain a friend of mine to a radiator, cover him in gasoline? What would either of us get out of that? (PAUSE) He said what? (PAUSE. TO TOBY) Did you tell my mamma you were a friend of mine?

TOBY: Um, by accident, maybe? Back when I was scared?

CARMICHAEL: (SIGHS) Just tell her the truth, okay?

(CARMICHAEL GIVES THE PHONE TO TOBY)

MERVYN: Can I go back to reception now?

CARMICHAEL: No you can't go back to reception now.

MERVYN: If youse are just gonna be chatting...

TOBY: (INTO PHONE) Hello, Angela? Yes, hello again, how are you?
(PAUSE) Well, no, he's not really my friend at all, no. He's kinda...
he's more kinda just the opposite, really.

(CARMICHAEL NODS IN AGREEMENT)

TOBY: Well, I guess I just kinda said that because, you know, I was in his
room and all, and you rang and I guess I just didn't want to worry
you, y'know, "Who's this strange man in my son's room, answering
my son's phone when he's not there", type of thing. Especially
when, y'know, you'd fallen out of the tree and all. (PAUSE) What
was I doing in his room if I wasn't his friend? Uh...

(CARMICHAEL GESTURES TO CONTINUE WITH THE TRUTH)

TOBY: I was trying to sell him a hand. (PAUSE) No, as it turns out, no, it
wasn't his hand, unfortunately, which is kinda how all the... how all
the trouble started. (PAUSE) Uh, yes, yes I did know it wasn't his
hand at the outset. I got it from a museum with my girlfriend. It was
off of an aborigine man from Australia. Long since passed away.
(PAUSE) Well, that isn't very nice, is it, when I was nice to you
earlier? (PAUSE) I was nice to you earlier, I said you should call for
an ambulance, didn't I, and that you'd be alright if you just held on.
(PAUSE) Listen... uh-huh? (PAUSE) Listen, I'm gonna pass you
back to your son now, Angela, cos I don't think what you're saying
is very constructive right now, in fact it's pretty hurtful so I'm
gonna pass you back now. (PAUSE) I'm allowed to pass you back
now if I want to pass you back now! Jesus!

(TOBY GIVES CARMICHAEL BACK THE PHONE)

CARMICHAEL: What she say?

TOBY: She, uh, she called me a 'Nigger' and she says that she hopes that I
die now.

CARMICHAEL: Oh she did, did she? Hey Ma, I'm the one decides if the niggers die around here, okay? I don't need your goddam racist advice! Sitting on your fat ass chasing fucking balloons all over Spokane. You never lifted a finger to help me in twenty-seven years, so why should you start giving advice now, huh? No you didn't, you never encouraged me once, you never did shit, you just left me to look for it all on my own, you never even did anything to stop 'em taking it in the first place so why don't you just butt out, Buttinski? Why don't you just butt out, why don't you put my magazines away, and why don't you call yourself a goddam ambulance like a normal person who fell out of a tree would, okay? Tell 'em if they can't see the number of the house from the street, just look for the balloon outside cos I hear it's like a fucking beacon. And stop coughing. Stop coughing. You are not dying, we have been thru this before, haven't we? (PAUSE) Thank you. (PAUSE) No I will not kill him. No I will not kill him. I don't care if he's black, you've put me off the entire fucking thing now. Why don't you just go to bed, Ma? Why don't you just go to fucking bed?

(CARMICHAEL HANGS UP, THROWS THE PHONE ON THE FLOOR AND SITS ON THE BED WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HAND, SIGHING)

MERVYN: I like your mother! She's got spunk!

CARMICHAEL: Maybe I was being too harsh on her, but sometimes she just gets on my nerves, y'know?

MARILYN: You wasn't being too harsh. You was being exactly the right amount of harshness. Wasn't he?

(TOBY NODS. CARMICHAEL FISHES IN HIS POCKET, TOSSES TOBY AND MARILYN THE TWO HANDCUFF KEYS. THEY START UNDOING THEMSELVES QUICKLY)

MERVYN: What did I tell ya?! Not even a thank you!

TOBY: Thank you!

MARILYN: Thank you!

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) I felt good about it this time. I had this feeling this time. I thought it was all gonna be okay. And I could go home. (PAUSE) That was a pretty mean thing you two kids did, you know that?

TOBY: We're totally sorry, and we'll definitely never do it again.

MARILYN: Definitely we've learned our lessons and everything.

MERVYN: They'd do it again in a heartbeat.

TOBY: Hey man! I'm still gonna get even with you, man! This ain't the end of this shit between me and you!

MERVYN: What have I done?

TOBY: What have you...? We could start with a telephone call you were supposed to make?

MERVYN: Oh that.

TOBY: "Oh that".

MARILYN: Why did you want us to die so bad, Mervyn?

MERVYN: I didn't want you to die so bad. (PAUSE) I didn't want you to die so bad. No, I just got caught up in my computer stuff. I was looking up this 'chopped-off-hands' website.

MARILYN: They have chopped-off-hands websites?

MERVYN: They've got six of 'em but the one I was looking at was just statistics. And the craziest statistic they had was of all the people who, for whatever crazy reason, go and chop off one of their own hands, 83 percent of them... get this... 83 percent of them chop off their left hand...

(CARMICHAEL LOOKS UP AT MERVYN DURING THIS EXCHANGE. UNLIKE MERVYN, TOBY NOTICES AND STARTS GETTING NERVOUS)

MERVYN: And I thought, wow, that's a high percentage, but then I think I worked out why it's the left hand they chop off and not the right...

MARILYN: I've worked it out too!

MERVYN: Ooh, tell me your theory!

TOBY: Or don't!

MARILYN: Something like 80 or 90 percent of people in the world are right-handed, right?

MERVYN: Ah-ha!

MARILYN: So if a right-handed person is gonna chop off one of his hands, he's gonna chop off his left hand, right? Cos he's gonna haveta use his right hand to hold the, y'know...

MERVYN: Meat cleaver...

MARILYN: Meat cleaver, or the knife, or whatever...

MERVYN: Meat cleaver.

MARILYN: Yeah, or the knife or whatever!

MERVYN: I think you've hit the nail on the head there, Marilyn!

TOBY: Yeah, I always hated statistics, didn't you, Mister Carmichael? They don't tell you one goddam fucking thing. So anyway I guess me and Marilyn'll be toddling along home now...

CARMICHAEL: (TO MERVYN) What exactly are you trying to say, man?

MERVYN: Hanh?

CARMICHAEL: What exactly are you trying to say?

MERVYN: About what?

(CARMICHAEL TAKES OUT HIS GUN)

CARMICHAEL: About all this 83 percent of people chopping their left hand off shit?

MERVYN: Cos I was looking it up on my computer.

CARMICHAEL: Are you trying to say I chopped off my own hand?

TOBY: No way is he trying to say that.

MARILYN: He is totally not trying to say that.

TOBY: No way is he trying to say that in a room where if that gun goes off the entire room is gonna explode, no way is he trying to say that, are you, Mervyn?

MERVYN: I'm... not trying to say anything.

TOBY: Brilliant! See? He's not trying to say anything!

CARMICHAEL: My hand got chopped off by a bunch of hillbilly bastards outside o' Spokane, Washington, twenty-seven years ago. And was waved at with it goodbye to myself from a distance. Are you trying to say, now, after all this searching, after all this... trauma... are you trying to say that I chopped off my own hand? Is that what you're saying?

MERVYN: Mr Carmichael, I gotta say, you are totally barking up the wrong alley.

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) I'm totally barking up the wrong what?

MERVYN: You're totally barking up the wrong alley... Is that right? (PAUSE)
Yeah, it is right. You're totally barking up the wrong alley. The entire wrong alley.

CARMICHAEL: If I'm doing anything, I'm barking up the wrong tree.

MERVYN: The wrong tree! That's it! I knew it was something! Yeah, you're totally barking up the wrong tree! Kinda like your mother! (PAUSE)
Yeah, kinda like your crazy mother.

(CARMICHAEL AIMS THE GUN AT MERVYN. SUDDENLY THERE'S THE SOUNDS AND FLASHING LIGHTS OUT THE WINDOW OF A COUPLE OF COP CARS APPROACHING AND STOPPING OUTSIDE)

TOBY: Um,... I think that might be the cops.

(TOBY SLOWLY GOES OVER TO THE WINDOW AS THE STAND-OFF CONTINUES AND LOOKS OUT, THEN SURVEYS THE HANDS AND THE GAS ALL OVER THE FLOOR...)

TOBY: Yeah. Um,... you guys don't need us any more, right?

(TOBY USHERS MARILYN OVER, AND CLIMBS ONTO THE FIRE ESCAPE. MARILYN LOOKS MERVYN OVER, SADLY, BEMUSED, THEN MOVES TO THE WINDOW. MERVYN'S SIDE OF THE STAND-OFF IS BROKEN FOR THE FIRST TIME. CARMICHAEL STAYS FOCUSED)

MERVYN: You're leaving?!

MARILYN: Yeah, I'm leaving.

MERVYN: With him?

MARILYN: Yeah, with him.

MERVYN: But... oh. I thought you were starting to like me.

MARILYN: I was more, kinda, getting more and more scared of you, Mervyn.

(TOBY HELPS MARILYN OUT ONTO THE FIRE ESCAPE)

MERVYN: But... I saved your life.

TOBY: You saved my life too and I don't wanna fuck ya.

(MARILYN GESTURES GOODBYE, AND SHE AND TOBY EXIT
DOWN THE FIRE ESCAPE. SADLY, MERVYN TURNS BACK TO
CARMICHAEL)

MERVYN: What a bitch!

CARMICHAEL: Repeat what you just said about my mother.

MERVYN: Huh? Oh, listen, I ain't being brave no more if there ain't no chicks around, okay? I didn't say anything about your mother. I said she likes to look up a tree or something and she does like to look up a tree, doesn't she? If there's a balloon in it. Doesn't she? We've established this. That isn't anything bad. And no way was I saying you chopped off your own hand. That would make you some kind of a fucking idiot. "Chop off your own hand, go looking for it twenty-seven years." Wouldn't it? A fucking idiot. Who chopped it off, did you say? Hillbillies?

CARMICHAEL: Hillbillies, yeah.

MERVYN: Black hillbillies or white hillbillies?

CARMICHAEL: You can't get black hillbillies!

MERVYN: No? Oh. That doesn't seem fair. What did they use, a meat cleaver or something?

CARMICHAEL: No. A train.

MERVYN: A train? They used a train?

CARMICHAEL: Yeah, they used a train!

MERVYN: Well, that doesn't sound very plausible.

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) What?

MERVYN: You're saying they went and got a train, and they...

CARMICHAEL: They didn't went and got a train. They didn't went and got a train. They held my hand down over a bunch of railroad tracks and a train came up. From a distance.

MERVYN: Ohh...

CARMICHAEL: Why am I even having this conversation with you? There's a bunch of fucking cops about to come up, man.

(CARMICHAEL PUTS THE GUN AWAY AND STARTS CLEARING
THE HANDS INTO HIS SUITCASE)

MERVYN: So, wait, they held your hand down, train comes up, train chops off your hand...

CARMICHAEL: (SIGHS) Train chops off my hand, they pick up my hand...

MERVYN: After the train has gone by...

CARMICHAEL: After the train has gone by. Obviously. They wave goodbye to me with my own hand. From a distance.

MERVYN: And your hand wasn't just mush?

CARMICHAEL: My hand wasn't just mush, no. My hand was a perfectly normal chopped off hand. I would not spend twenty-seven years of my life searching for a hand that was just mush.

MERVYN: And the rest of your arm wasn't just mush?

CARMICHAEL: Does the rest of my arm look like just mush? Look at the rest of my arm.

MERVYN: I'm looking at the rest of your arm.

CARMICHAEL: Does it look like just mush?

MERVYN: No, it doesn't look like just mush.

CARMICHAEL: Thank you.

MERVYN: So what were the wheels of this train made out of? Razor-blades?

(CARMICHAEL STOPS AND STARES AT HIM)

MERVYN: And the rails? Razor-blade rails?

(CARMICHAEL TAKES HIS GUN OUT, AIMS IT AT MERVYN'S HEAD AGAIN AND COCKS IT. MERVYN DOESN'T EVEN FLINCH. OR CARE. CARMICHAEL LOOKS MERVYN OVER A LONG LONG WHILE, THEN REALISES SOMETHING, AND EASES UP)

CARMICHAEL: How come you wanna die so bad, Mervyn?

MERVYN: Hanh?

CARMICHAEL: How come you wanna die so bad?

MERVYN: I don't wanna die so bad. (PAUSE. TO HIMSELF) Do I? (PAUSE) No, I don't wanna die so bad. I guess I'm just not all that interested either way.

(CARMICHAEL LOWERS THE GUN)

CARMICHAEL: Don't you got nobody who'd care if you weren't around no more?

MERVYN: There used to be somebody. Not no more.

CARMICHAEL: Oh. Did she die?

MERVYN: (PAUSE) I just came in one evening and she was just lying there, doubled-up, at the back of her cage.

CARMICHAEL: At the back of her what?

MERVYN: At the back of her cage. I tried to get the zookeepers to do something but nobody seemed to give a damn. I guess life just ain't all that precious in the monkey house.

CARMICHAEL: Listen, I'm not gonna ask any more questions about this monkey stuff, okay? I'm gonna move on and I'm gonna pack up my stuff and I'm gonna get the hell out of here but this monkey shit, I just don't fucking need it right now, man. I'm very fucking tired right now and I don't mean to be insensitive but I just don't need any of this fucking monkey shit! Okay?!

MERVYN: Okay. You asked. But okay.

CARMICHAEL: Fuck, man! Monkeys now?! Fuck...

(CARMICHAEL SIGHS AND STARTS THROWING THE HANDS INTO THE CASE AGAIN . MERVYN HELPS WITH A FEW)

CARMICHAEL: (STOPPING) There is one thing I do want you to know, though. And it's important to me, somehow, that you know it.

(MERVYN NODS)

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) They took my hand. (PAUSE) They took my hand. And they shouldn't've. And I want it back. I just want it back.

(MERVYN NODS)

MERVYN: Seems fair to me. (PAUSE) You know if you ever do get it back, you won't be able to do nothing with it, y'know? Like, draw.

CARMICHAEL: I know. But, y'know... it's mine. (PAUSE) It's mine.

(MERVYN NODS. CARMICHAEL CONTINUES WITH THE HANDS, MERVYN HELPING)

MERVYN: I don't know, man, this should be grisly, throwing real people's hands into a suitcase, man, but you know what? It isn't! It's kinda fun! (PAUSE) Except for the little kids' hands. They're less fun. They're more kinda disturbing. Or, are they little kids' hands or are they just hands that have gone shrivelled over time?

CARMICHAEL: No, they're little kids' hands.

(MERVYN NODS, GRIMACING, AND THROWS THEM IN THE CASE WITH THE OTHERS. HE THEN FINDS A SPECIFIC NORMAL-SIZED HAND AND LOOKS IT OVER)

MERVYN: Here's a cool one.

CARMICHAEL: What's cool about it?

MERVYN: It's got 'HATE' tattooed across the knuckles of it.

(MERVYN TOSSES IT TO CARMICHAEL AND CONTINUES CLEARING UP THE OTHERS. CARMICHAEL STOPS, QUIETLY EXAMINING IT)

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) That ain't a... That ain't a tattoo. That's pen. I think.

MERVYN: Oh yeah?

CARMICHAEL: Yeah. It's, uh... Yeah, it's just that black kid fucking with me.

(CARMICHAEL LOOKS AT THE PROXIMITY OF THE RADIATOR TO WHERE MERVYN FOUND THE HAND, AS MERVYN GLANCES OUT THE WINDOW. COP CAR LIGHTS ARE STILL FLASHING)

MERVYN: That goddam black kid. Y'know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna go down, tell the cops I just saw some black kid hopping offa my fire escape, chasing after some white girl. He thinks his night this far's been bad.

CARMICHAEL: (DISTRACTED) You do that, Mervyn.

MERVYN: I'd better get them out of the lobby, anyway. I got a coupla pot plants down there I don't want them sniffing around, if you get my drift.

CARMICHAEL: Weed?

MERVYN: No, I got this little cactus down there I got off some window when I was drunk one time and, man, I don't really need it, and it's kinda dying but you know what, I ain't gonna beat myself up about it. I like the little fella!

CARMICHAEL: It's dying? I thought a cactus, you hardly had to water it at all.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) Water it? Oh, okay...

(CARMICHAEL TOSSES THE FINAL FEW HANDS INTO THE CASE)

CARMICHAEL: How you gonna explain all this gasoline?

MERVYN: (PAUSE) I'll say we had musicians.

(FINISHED, CARMICHAEL CLOSES THE CASE AND STANDS IT UPRIGHT, LEAVING THE 'HATE' HAND ON TOP OF IT)

MERVYN: You're a real nice guy, Mister Carmichael, you know that?

CARMICHAEL: And you're a very brave receptionist, Mervyn.

(MERVYN NARROWS HIS EYES AT THE 'RECEPTIONIST' BIT. CARMICHAEL SMILES, MAKES A GUN OF HIS FINGER AND FIRES. MERVYN SMILES)

MERVYN: Maybe this'll be the start of a beautiful friendship, huh?

CARMICHAEL: No. No, it won't.

MERVYN: Oh. I didn't mean in a faggy way...

CARMICHAEL: I know you didn't. But no.

MERVYN: (PAUSE) Do you really think I'm brave though?

CARMICHAEL: I'm not sure if it's bravery if the person has an actual death wish, but, uh...

MERVYN: But it kind of is, huh?

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) Yeah. It kind of is.

(THEY SHAKE HANDS WARMLY A WHILE, DURING WHICH...)

MERVYN: (QUIETLY) It was a gibbon. That died.

CARMICHAEL: (LONG PAUSE) The king of the monkeys.

MERVYN: Are they really?!

CARMICHAEL: (PAUSE) It's probably gorillas, it's not really my area.

(MERVYN NODS AND GOES TO THE DOOR)

MERVYN: Guess I'll go head those cops off, then.

CARMICHAEL: Good luck to you, Mervyn.

MERVYN: If you need me I'll, uh... I guess I'll be on reception.

(MERVYN EXITS. PAUSE. CARMICHAEL SITS ON THE CASE BESIDE THE HAND, LOOKING IT OVER. HE CHECKS HOW IT LOOKS AGAINST HIS LEFT WRIST. IT'S NOT A BAD MATCH, BUT NOT PERFECT. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD DISMISSIVELY, PUTS THE HAND BACK DOWN ON THE CASE BESIDE HIM. PAUSE. HE LOOKS AT THE HAND AGAIN, THEN SHAKES HIS HEAD DISMISSIVELY AGAIN. PAUSE. HE GLANCES AROUND AT THE MESS OF THE ROOM AND THE GASOLINE AROUND HIS FEET. HE SNIFFS THE GAS ON HIS FINGERS, WIPES THEM ON HIS OVERCOAT, AND FEELS SOMETHING IN HIS POCKET THERE. HE TAKES OUT HIS SILVER CIGARETTE CASE, LOOKS AT IT A MOMENT, THEN ARTFULLY TAKES A CIGARETTE OUT, PUTS IT BETWEEN HIS LIPS, PUTS THE CASE AWAY... AND TAKES OUT HIS LIGHTER. HE LOOKS OVER THE HAND AND THE ROOM AGAIN, FLIPS UP THE TOP OF HIS LIGHTER, AND TRIES TO LIGHT IT A FEW TIMES. NO SPARK, NO FLAME. HE TRIES AGAIN A FEW TIMES. NO SPARK, NO FLAME. HE SHAKES IT; IT SEEMS TO BE OUT OF FLUID NOW. HE TRIES TO LIGHT IT AGAIN A FEW MORE TIMES, CLOSER TO THE GASOLINE THIS TIME – NO SPARK, NO FLAME. HE TOSSES THE LIGHTER AT THE DOOR OF THE ROOM, TAKES THE CIGARETTE FROM HIS LIPS, AND PUTS HIS CHIN IN HIS HAND, THE WORD 'LOVE' CLEARLY VISIBLE)

CARMICHAEL: Fucker.

(AS HE SITS THERE MOTIONLESS, CHIN IN HAND, THE LIGHTS, VERY SLOWLY, FADE TO BLACK)