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## Line of Action

Jason Cutler  
*University of New Orleans*

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LINE OF ACTION

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
in  
Drama and Communication  
Creative Writing

by

Jason Cutler

B.A. Arkansas Tech University, 2002

May, 2006

# Line of Action

Draft v. 1.0

## Characters:

(In order of appearance.)

TABITHA WAINRIGHT  
TELEVISION PERSONALITIES  
TABITHA's MOTHER  
MAN in a MEMBER's ONLY JACKET  
MISTY  
JOSEF JEFFERSON  
MAN in HOODIE  
TABITHA's FATHER  
TOMMY BAXTER  
BRETT BOLEN  
TERRY WHITE  
KYLE  
THREE STRANGE PROFESSIONAL CRIMINALS with BACKPACKS  
VARIOUS FLAGS AND/OR BYSTANDERS

*(Doubling can be easily accomplished with the various criminals.)*

This production should be designed in a comic book-style manner. Bright colors and stark contrasts are a must. A good reference would be Marvel comics from the 1960s including *The Fantastic Four*, *Spiderman*, and, in the late 1970s, *Daredevil*.

Dedicated to Frank Miller and Alan Moore.

Line of Action: a term used in drawing to indicate where the movement of the action is focused to; or, where the moving action is heading.

# ACT ONE

*The time is the Present.*

*The stage is set with a sofa and a TELEVISION down center, with the sides open and empty, ready for other scenes. The only permanent set piece is a backdrop of a metropolitan cityscape. This backdrop will remain throughout the play, with other pieces being brought in when needed. Doors can be rehearsal doors.*

*A young woman, TABITHA, sits on the sofa watching TELEVISION. SHE is between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three. SHE wears a red apron over a t-shirt and jeans and is not in the best of physical conditions.*

*TABITHA watches the TELEVISION in a disinterested manner. Melodramatic music plays, hereafter to be known as the "Captain Olympus Music."*

## TELEVISION

(Male voice.)

We're under attack! The Insectoids are upon us! Aahhh!

(Explosion.)

(Female voice.)

The shelter is gone!

(Male voice.)

What?

(Female voice.)

The Insectoids blasted it apart with their spatial destruction device!

(Male voice.)

I should have known. It is a good day to die. But the children...no, the children—

(Insectoid voice.)

Put your weapons down. We will spare you.

(Whooshing sound.)

(Female voice.)

Behold! We are saved!

(Insectoid voice.)

Captain Olympus!

(Captain Olympus.)

Get back from these gentle folk, Insectoids!

(Insectoid voice.)

Kill him!

(Captain Olympus)

Eat my Shimmer Fists!

(Sounds of Insectoid blasters and beefy impacts from Captain Olympus's Shimmer Fists.)

(Announcer's voice.)

We are interrupting your regularly scheduled program with an Eternum News Bulletin from our embedded reporter, Michael Martin.

*TABITHA scrambles for the remote control.*

(Martin, panicked, with the sound of muted gunfire.)

Breaking news. Five minutes ago--

(Explosion.)

(Martin.)

Jesus Christ! Five minutes ago an American convoy, this convoy, in the Contested Zone, came under attack by RPG's launched--launched from all sides. The truck in front of us--

*TABITHA finally finds the hidden remote and changes the channel.*

#### TELEVISION

(Male voice.)

--the most recent news of young Tommy Baxter, the boy genius.

(Female voice.)

He overcame poverty, abuse, and yes, pubescent--

*TABITHA turns the TELEVISION off quickly and stares at the screen in boredom. She picks up a Captain Olympus comic book that happens to be next to her and begins to read it.*

*TABITHA's MOTHER enters dressed in a business suit and carrying a bag of groceries.*

#### MOTHER

(With a combustive energy.)

Oh will you put that darn thing down! Don't you have better things to do? What have I told you about--

#### TABITHA

Hi Mom.

MOTHER

What?

TABITHA

Hi.

MOTHER

Hi Dear. Now look, I have this--

TABITHA

I'm about to go to work.

MOTHER

Now? You're working a night shift?

TABITHA

Yes.

MOTHER

I thought Marcus only had you working days?

TABITHA

Not tonight.

MOTHER

Will you put that comic down when I'm talking to you? Please? I don't want to ask you again!

TABITHA

Mom, I'm a little too old for you to be treating me like a child.

MOTHER

You're right, you are. I'm glad you've finally realized it. Now you can move out.

TABITHA

Mom--

MOTHER

(Her high energy seems contrived.)

I am SICK and TIRED of coming home every day to find you lounging about like some boarder. Are you a boarder? No, boarders pay rent. Dad and I have a lot of patience, but it's running thin very quickly young lady.

TABITHA

I'm sorry.

MOTHER

(Almost manic.)

Are you? You'll be sorry when--

(Beat.)

Why won't you tell me what's wrong?

TABITHA

Nothing's wrong.

MOTHER

All right, fine! Clam up as usual.  
(Places HER hands on TABITHA.)  
Sweetie, you know I love you, right?

TABITHA

I love you too Mom.

MOTHER

Thank you. I need you and Dad's support right now.

TABITHA

It's a good one.

MOTHER

What?

TABITHA

It's a good comic.

MOTHER

I don't care if it's a good comic! Would you put that down already?!  
Tabitha, dear Lord.

TABITHA

(Placing the comic down.)  
Okay, sure.

MOTHER

Thank you. I can feel your brain growing already. Did you put the  
electric bill in the mail today?

TABITHA

Yeah.

MOTHER

And did you pick up the phone when it rang?

TABITHA

It didn't ring.

MOTHER

All right. And did you—

TABITHA

Don't you have anything nice to say?

MOTHER

What?

TABITHA

I'm going to work. I'll be back late tonight.

MOTHER

Tabby—

*TABITHA walks offstage. Her MOTHER sighs and turns around.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on TABITHA behind a counter. Upon the counter is a cash register and items of the sort one would find in a convenience store.*

*TABITHA stares ahead, bored out of her mind.*

*A CREEPY MAN wearing a Members Only-style jacket enters.*

MAN

Fifteen eighty-two on pump number two. That rhymed, two and two.  
(Chuckles and counts out exact change.)  
I got exact change.

TABITHA

Thanks.

MAN

I know exact change helps you out a lot. That way you don't have to work so hard, counting out my change.

TABITHA

I appreciate it.

MAN

(Deadpan.)  
You don't look like you do.

TABITHA

(With a big smile.)  
It's always nice to talk to a guy who has manners.

MAN

Are you being insolent?

TABITHA

Of course not. You are one of the nicest people that's come in here all day.

MAN

I think you're talking out of your ass. That's what I think. I think you don't appreciate this one bit. I think you need an attitude adjustment.

TABITHA

Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to leave or I will call my manager.

MAN

Fine. I'm going. Don't expect a tip.

*MAN exits.*

TABITHA

I'm a clerk, I don't get tips!

*MISTY, a pretty high school-aged girl wearing an apron much like TABITHA's, enters from upstage.*

MISTY

What're you yelling about?

TABITHA

Nothing. Just that one guy. You know. The bastard.

MISTY

Yeah, but you *know* Marcus doesn't like us yelling at the customers.

TABITHA

I didn't yell at him.

MISTY

What'd he say to you?

TABITHA

It's not worth it.

MISTY

Was he that guy who always wears the same jacket?

TABITHA

Yeah.

MISTY

I wish we could just shoot him or something. He's a wacko. Well, anyway, I'm clocked in. You can go now. You look beat.

TABITHA

I'm not. I'm just ready to be out of here.

MISTY

Did you get your Mom to understand?

TABITHA

No, she still thinks Captain Olympus is stupid and stuff. I had to lie to her. I told her I was working late tonight.

MISTY

You're old enough that she shouldn't care.

TABITHA

I know. I'm gonna go clock out, smoke a cig, and wait for Josef.

Thanks a lot for coming in for me, Misty.

MISTY

It's nothing. I need the money. Have fun at the show and tell Josef hi for me.

TABITHA

Okay.

MISTY

And don't let all the little kids trample you.

*Triumphant Captain Olympus  
Music. Lights down.*

*Lights come up on the space  
lit for nighttime. A sign  
marked "Bus Stop" is in the  
center of the stage. TABITHA  
and JOSEF, a bit disheveled,  
enter playing with cheaply  
made Captain Olympus capes  
and gauntlets they had bought  
at the show.*

*Sound effects of a crowd and  
cars in the background.*

TABITHA

(Posturing in a heroic manner.)

Back Doctor Deterio, back I say! You and your Insectoid Warriors will head back to the planet Mobeus and leave Earth alone! It's my home, not yours!

JOSEF

(Playing as Doctor Deterio.)

Not a chance, Captain Olympus! You haven't got a *chance* against my horde of evil-doers. Our fashion is better than yours! Surrender now and I may spare your life.

TABITHA

You always tell me to surrender and I never accept! When will you ever learn?

JOSEF

Never, 'cause I'm a Bad Guy! Raagh!

TABITHA

It's time you learned your lesson once and for all, you terrible man. Eat my Shimmer Fists!

JOSEF

No, not the Shimmer Fists!

TABITHA

Yes, oh yes! Eat them! Eat them!

*TABITHA punches at JOSEF who recoils, laughing madly.*

JOSEF

You win, you win! Augh, my spleen! Enough!

TABITHA

Captain Olympus triumphs again!

(Beat.)

I love Captain Olympus.

JOSEF

That was one badass show. The coolest part by far was at the end when Captain Olympus shot up in the—

TABITHA

HELL yes! Did he go out the roof or what?

JOSEF

I dunno! It sure looked like it. Great stuntmen. But how the hell did they do that? All that fire coming from—

TABITHA

Coming from his ass!

JOSEF

Yeah! Why didn't it burn anyone? But what I'm saying is how did they get him up to the rafters? When did they attach the lines to him?

TABITHA

Maybe his rocket pack did it.

JOSEF

His "rocket pack?" PLEASE—

TABITHA

I'm kidding! Look, I'm kidding. I don't know how they did it, but it was damn cool. I mean--

JOSEF

It looked just like the cartoon!

TABITHA

It was more like the comic and the action figures to me.

JOSEF

It was like the comic come to life. This little kid in me was made very, very happy.

TABITHA

You are a little kid.

JOSEF

So are you.

TABITHA

I know.

(Beat.)  
WOW that was cool!

JOSEF  
I know! And, all right, Doctor Deterio was just how he was supposed to be.

TABITHA  
I think he was sexy.

JOSEF  
Sexy? He's the bad guy, of course he's sexy. The bad guys are always sexy.

TABITHA  
No they're not!

JOSEF  
Okay, that's it. You're blushing. Blushing is not allowed!

TABITHA  
I'm not blushing! Shut up! It's cold. I SAW you looking at Lady Dionysus.

JOSEF  
I HATE that damn name. Dionysus was a guy. It's stupid.

TABITHA  
Josef—

JOSEF  
And he was a god of wine and song, not ass-kicking!

TABITHA  
Josef!

JOSEF  
Yeah, yeah, okay, fine: she was hot. She was really damn hot, okay? Hot damn she was hot.

TABITHA  
Pig.

JOSEF  
Harlot.  
(Pause.)  
When you gonna get a car so we don't have to wait for the bus?

TABITHA  
As soon as I can make enough money to get one, Josef.

JOSEF  
When you gonna make enough money to get one?

TABITHA  
I don't know.

JOSEF  
You're still living at your parents' house.

TABITHA  
Don't remind me.

JOSEF  
You probably need another job.

TABITHA  
Don't remind me.

JOSEF  
Okay I get the idea. But, you know, I'm cold.

TABITHA  
I am too.

JOSEF  
(Smiles.)  
I do care. I'll do whatever I can. You need help finding an apartment I'm here for you.

TABITHA  
Thanks. It'll work out.

JOSEF  
Yeah, it will.  
(Pause.)  
(Screams.)  
FUCKIN' BUS!

TABITHA  
Jesus Christ, Josef! What are you trying to do?

JOSEF  
Trying to call the bus.

TABITHA  
God. You're gonna, like—

JOSEF  
Whatever. Boredom.

*A MAN IN A HOODIE comes up to the TWO of them. TABITHA and JOSEF look off to the side.*

HOODIE  
Hey.

JOSEF  
Hey.

HOODIE  
What the hell are you wearing?

JOSEF  
We went to that Captain Olympus show.

HOODIE  
Oh yeah. I read about that.

TABITHA  
It was pretty good.

HOODIE  
Right. I was wonderin' what was up with your capes. It's kinda' weird.

JOSEF  
Yeah, well. That's us I guess.

HOODIE  
Waitin' on the bus?

TABITHA  
We are.

HOODIE  
Okay. Since it ain't here yet I want you to give me what you've got.

*TABITHA and JOSEF look at the MAN quickly but not in a frightened manner. The MAN pulls out a small knife.*

HOODIE  
You got money right? Come on. Do it.

JOSEF  
All right. Sure.

TABITHA  
(Shaking her head in disbelief.)  
Another prick.

HOODIE  
What?

TABITHA  
What do you need our money for? Drugs?

HOODIE  
Shut up.

TABITHA  
Oh, so it IS drugs. You hear that, Josef?

JOSEF  
Don't use my *name*.

TABITHA  
He's going to use our money for drugs!

JOSEF

(To TABITHA.)  
What are you doing?

TABITHA

(To HOODIE.)  
Didn't your parents ever tell you that drugs are bad?

HOODIE

Lady, you better just—

TABITHA

Lady? LADY? I'm not THIRTY-FIVE. Ladies are at least THIRTY-FIVE.

JOSEF

Just give him your money. *Please.*

TABITHA

Now wait a minute. I'm sick of this. People always talking down to me. I'm not a *child*. Look, guy, I'm not afraid of you. So I live with my parents. Big frikkin' deal. I'm saving up and I'm gonna move out.

HOODIE

I don't care about your—

TABITHA

And now you want to take my hard-earned cash that I make by standing up behind a register all day, every day, doing all kinds of damage to my calves and back, just to buy some damn drugs. Some DRUGS!

HOODIE

I ain't buying any fuckin' drugs!

TABITHA

Sure you aren't!

HOODIE

I ain't a damn junkie!

TABITHA

Whatever! Josef—

JOSEF

Don't use my name!

TABITHA

What would Captain Olympus do?

JOSEF

What?

TABITHA

What would Captain Olympus do if he were here?

JOSEF

You aren't Captain Olympus!

*JOSEF gives HOODIE his wallet.*

HOODIE

(Looking about anxiously.)  
That's more like it. Now listen to your boyfriend. Yell anymore and I'll cut you.

TABITHA

I think Captain Olympus would know when to stand up for himself.

JOSEF

What is *wrong* with you?

HOODIE

Lady, shut up right now or I'm gonna *cut* you.

TABITHA

Oh yeah? What would happen if I screamed, "Fire!" right now? Huh? What would happen? You think all these people would run over here from the coliseum? Huh? You think so? You think they might? Should I scream?

HOODIE

Dammit, bitch!

TABITHA

Give him his wallet back!

*HOODIE lunges at TABITHA half-heartedly with his knife. TABITHA, not expecting HOODIE to attack, tries to dodge out of the way. HOODIE manages to cut her arm and grabs HER about the body. Infuriated, TABITHA grabs his arm and wrestles HIM around for a second or two.*

TABITHA

Fire! Fire! FIRE! FIRE!!

HOODIE

Let me go!

JOSEF

Tabitha!  
(To HOODIE.)  
Get your damn hands off of her!

*JOSEF joins the struggle. HE and TABITHA manage to overpower the MAN and shove*

*HIM* downstage. The *MAN* stands up shakily and looks at *THEM* as a sound effect of a bus horn is heard. Suddenly the lights black out as the effect of a sickening crunch is played. "Ca-runch."

*The lights come up. The MAN is lying in a heap upon the stage. TABITHA and JOSEF look at HIM in horror. Lights dim to black briefly.*

*When they come back up TABITHA and JOSEF, still in their costumes, are on TABITHA's sofa center stage with the TELEVISION in front of THEM. THEY are ghost-faced and trembling in ONE ANOTHER's arms.*

TELEVISION

(Woman's voice.)

And finally, the city of Drachma leaps to its feet tonight to honor two of its own. Josef Jefferson, a line cook at Hudson's Bar and Grill, and Tabitha Wainright, who works a register at the Sidney Avenue Petrol Max, were waiting for a bus after the Captain Olympus show at Peterson Stadium when they were assaulted by a mugger. Not two young people who stand down to criminals, they decided to fight back. In costume.

(TABITHA's voice.)

I-I didn't mean for it to end like that, but I-but I, I think we did the right thing.

(Woman's voice.)

A city agrees with you, Tabitha. Don't we, Peter?

(Man's voice.)

We sure do, Anna. It goes to show that the people have had enough. Look out, bad guys. On behalf of KFEA News, we wish you goodnight.

(Woman's voice.)

Goodnight.

(News theme music.)

*TABITHA turns the TELEVISION off.*

JOSEF

(Frightened.)

What did we do?

TABITHA

(Decisively.)

We fought back.

*Lights dim to blackout.*

*The lights come back up on  
TABITHA and JOSEF asleep on  
the sofa, still in their  
costumes.*

*TABITHA's FATHER enters.*

FATHER

Wake up, sleepy heads! Turn on the T.V.!

TABITHA

(Barely awake.)

What, Dad—what, why are you—

FATHER

Come on, turn on the T.V., change it to channel eleven.

JOSEF

What time is it?

FATHER

It's ten.

TABITHA

Dad, why are you home from the school?

FATHER

I called in a substitute. Your Mom's writing an article about it in the bedroom. Turn on the T.V.

*TABITHA turns on the  
TELEVISION and changes the  
channel to eleven.*

TELEVISION

(Man's voice.)

--of the day. Tommy Baxter, a young man very much in the news lately, and especially today—

TABITHA

Yeah, that kid genius. He needs to die.

TELEVISION

--held a sanctioned press conference in Washington, D.C. this morning. Its subject was held secret until Baxter took the podium.

JOSEF

What, he finally chose a college to go to? Big news!

DAD

Hush, Josef.

TELEVISION

What he had to say has caused ripples of controversy throughout the country.

(TOMMY BAXTER's voice.)

It's time the young people of America stood up for their rights as

citizens. We deserve to live in a country free of violence and prejudice. But it is up to us to wipe our streets clean. It is up to us to take action. The police can only do so much.

(Man's voice.)

BAXTER went on to state that—

DAD

Sound familiar, Tabitha?

TELEVISION

--he is not criticizing the police departments, but rather the young people who take their rights for granted.

(BAXTER's voice.)

The United States of America is an open, festering wound and it needs to be cleansed. A bill was passed early this morning allowing me to head an organization of youth groups who answer directly to the President. Their job will be to combat crime. Directly. I have named this movement for our country's greatest symbol. We will be known as the Flags. The time for heroes is now. We will be those heroes.

(Man's voice.)

At this BAXTER left the stage, leaving a nation speechless. We can only wonder—

JOSEF

Well isn't he full of himself?

TELEVISION

--what all of this will mean in the near future. Speculation runs rampant. What we do know is that an Amendment to the Constitution has been made quietly. The full power of this ghost Amendment is not known at this—

*TABITHA's FATHER takes the remote from TABITHA and turns off the TELEVISION.*

FATHER

They've been playing it over and over since seven-thirty this morning.

TABITHA

(To FATHER.)

So? It's more of the same.

FATHER

No. It's about what you did last night.

TABITHA

(Realizes her costume is still on.)

Dad, I know you and Mom don't like Captain Olympus but—

FATHER

We don't care about that, honey. We received a telephone call this morning. They want you to be in the Flags.

TABITHA

What?

FATHER

Your roommate telephoned here just a few minutes ago, Josef. He says they showed up at your apartment. It's because of what you *did*. Everyone loves you here in Drachma. When was the last time young people fought like you did? The Sixties?

TABITHA

People fight for things all the time.

JOSEF

We didn't push him into the bus on purpose.

FATHER

Of course you didn't kill that man. It was an accident. What is important is that you fought back and you won.

JOSEF

But he could have killed—

FATHER

(Excited.)

Take the power into your own hands. Don't allow the government to decide right and wrong for you. Do you understand what this means? Do you understand your potential?

TABITHA

We can be superheroes.

FATHER

Yes. You can be real superheroes.

(Sighs forlornly.)

Now if I can just calm your damn mother down. She's in a hysterical fit.

*Lights dim to black.*

*When they come back up the sofa and TELEVISION are gone. In their place are four chairs. TABITHA and JOSEF sit in two of them. In the other two are seated BRETT BOLEN, an athletic-looking youth, and TERRY WHITE, a wiry young man (or woman, depending on the director's choice) with glasses.*

*THEY are smiling, excited to be here.*

*A box is off to the side, not drawing focus.*

*TOMMY BAXTER, a young man no older than twenty, enters from upstage. HE wears a*

*suit with a red white and blue tie. HE has the charisma of a movie star, politician, or both.*

*The FOUR look upon TOMMY with wonder and admiration, their faces beaming with excitement and pride.*

TOMMY

Welcome to the first meeting of your local Flags chapter! Are you happy to be here?

ALL

Yeah!

TOMMY

I'm glad to be here too. I'm proud to name the four of you founding members of the Flags Organization here in your hometown of Drachma, U.S.A.! Are you with me?

ALL

Yeah!

TOMMY

Great! I am, as you know, Tommy Baxter. I've looked around myself. Do you know what I've seen? Pimps beating their prostitutes on the sidewalk in front of my home. Incest in basements. Gang members shooting each other in front of their own children. Strip clubs next to churches. Used syringes in teenagers' pockets and track marks on cops' arms. I've seen corruption, corruption, corruption! And do you know how this has affected me? Do you know what this has incited in me? *It made me want to change my community myself!* I organized groups to help the needy, to stop corruption, and to keep undesirable influences from the youth. And I did all this while still in high school. Listen: I see a time, today, right now, for us to take back our cities, our streets, the hovels we call homes! People need leaders in their communities. *You will be those leaders. You will be forceful truncheons of right. You will get this fine city back on its feet. You are what America needs!*

(Pause.)

But who are you? I doubt you know one another yet.

(Takes out a piece of paper. Points to TABITHA and JOSEF.)

Now these two have been famous here and about this part of the country for several weeks now. Tabitha Wainright and Josef Jefferson, the two young people who weren't afraid to fight back against crime!

(To TABITHA and JOSEF.)

You are inspirations to us all.

(To BRETT and TERRY.)

Their bloodstained fists will be the calling card for this movement.

(Pointing at BRETT.)

And this is Brett Bolen—

BRETT

(Standing up.)

Yes, sir!

TOMMY

Sit down, Brett. And call me Tommy.

BRETT

(Sitting down.)

Yes, Tommy.

TOMMY

This is Brett Bolen: athlete, martial artist, and Student President at St. Cecelia University. Brett is not a man to mess with, are you Brett?

BRETT

I can kick some butt, Tommy, and I know there are a lot of criminal butts that need kicking.

TOMMY

There are.

(Pointing to TERRY.)

And this is Terry White, microbiology student at Hart Ridge. Terry is quite adept in his field, along with computer science and forensics.

TERRY

Amateur forensics.

TOMMY

Don't be so modest. It was your "amateur" work that helped convict the South Side Rapist.

TERRY

It was required work. People like him disgust me.

TOMMY

They disgust me too, Terry.

BRETT

The bastard should have gotten the chair.

TOMMY

I agree, he should have. But you four are outside the justice system. If you see someone take an old lady's purse, you have every right to beat him before you turn him over to the authorities. *If* you decide to turn him over to the authorities. Because now *you* are the authority. Yet remember that you are not vigilantes. Though you have permission to work outside the police, you answer directly to the President, through myself. You must use your own discretion. Any questions now?

(Pause.)

Good. Then there is one last piece of business. In order to become a Flag you must take an oath of allegiance to the President and the people of America. Are you willing to take this oath?

ALL

Yes. (etc.)

TOMMY

Then stand, place your hands on your hearts, and repeat after me.

*THEY repeat after TOMMY quite willingly and with smiles on their faces.*

TOMMY

"I, your name, do solemnly swear to, through my greatest abilities, uphold the honor, safety, and laws of this great country, the United States of America. And though through my actions some laws may be broken, may God have mercy on those I deem to be enemy." Congratulations. Welcome to the Flags. You may be seated.

*THEY sit.*

TOMMY

I'm leaving a list of orders and a list of suggestions. Your paychecks will arrive on Thursdays.

JOSEF

Paychecks?

TOMMY

Of course. You didn't think you'd be doing all of this work and not get paid, did you? Now if you will excuse me, I have to make it to St. Louis by six. My helicopter's waiting. Good day, soldiers. You are the best of the best. Hit evil where it hurts.

*The FOUR stand up and applaud TOMMY as HE exits. THEY relax considerably.*

JOSEF

Truncheons?

TERRY

It is an adequate label.

BRETT

I can't wait to get out on the streets and start kicking ass.

JOSEF

The two of you really are accomplished.

BRETT

What do you mean?

JOSEF

I mean, Tabitha and I are just regular people. You're, like, amazing. I'm in awe of you.

BRETT

Well, thanks, that's nice of you to say.

TERRY

No, by working as a team our unique and diverse talents will become apparent. No one of us is better than another.

(Grins devilishly.)  
That's for you to say, bub.

BRETT

I think this will be fun.

TABITHA

It might be dangerous.

JOSEF

Of course it'll be dangerous. So what? We took out the mugger!

TABITHA

That's the spirit!

BRETT

Okay.

JOSEF

(Bending over the box.)  
Tommy left this box here.

TERRY

Do you think he forgot it?

JOSEF

I haven't the slightest.

TERRY

We should open it, see what it is.

TABITHA

We should probably ask permission first.

JOSEF

Fuck permission. Open the damn thing.

BRETT

All right.

TERRY

*TERRY opens the box and peers inside. EVERYONE crowds around to look into the box. TABITHA's face contorts into an enormous smile. SHE reaches into the box and holds aloft a costume, very similar to a comic book hero's costume. The costume has a small patch on the left shoulder, much like an advertiser's patch on a racecar driver's jacket, reading "Eternum."*

*Lights fade down to black.*

*Lights up on the familiar old sofa and TABITHA's MOTHER and FATHER. FATHER is reading a paper. MOTHER is excited.*

MOTHER

She said she would be home by now.

FATHER

Don't worry.

MOTHER

I have to worry. She went downtown, by herself—

FATHER

Josef went with her. He's part of the team too—

MOTHER

She may as well have gone alone. She said she'd be home by four and—

FATHER

Alice, it's the *middle of the day*. She'll be fine.

MOTHER

But she doesn't know anything about that part of town.

FATHER

Neither do you.

MOTHER

That's why I don't go there! And the only times I do I keep my snub-nose in my purse!

FATHER

There's no need for that damn thing.

MOTHER

You never know when someone might jump out of the shadows to do God-knows-what to me. And it's because of those types of people that I'm worried about our daughter tonight, Richard, even if you aren't!

FATHER

Did you stop to think that perhaps she's made some new friends? That perhaps she's gone out to get a drink?

MOTHER

No, they wouldn't do that. I saw on television today that Flags members can't drink alcohol.

FATHER

Really?

MOTHER

Yes. It was Tommy Baxter on NOW News.

FATHER

That's the channel that Eternum bought out.

MOTHER

Yes.

FATHER

Oh. Well I'll be damned. Before you know it everyone won't be able to drink.

MOTHER

That's been tried already, honey. It was called Prohibition.

FATHER

Such a terrible-sounding word: Prohibition. I hope we've learned something since then. Yet *some--*

MOTHER

Don't go into that again. I'm tired of it. I agree with you, so why do you insist on lecturing to me?

FATHER

I'm sorry. It—it becomes ingrained. It's hard to stop. Anyway, people are strange.

MOTHER

When you're a stranger.

FATHER

But I'm not lonely.

MOTHER

You're not alone.

*THEY kiss.*

FATHER

I'm sorry I lecture at you.

MOTHER

I'm sorry I listen.

(Giggles.)

No, I'm sorry I attack you for being who you are.

FATHER

Apologies are not necessary.

MOTHER

Then let us stop this foolishness and advance to the edible!

(Breaks away from HIM abruptly.)

What do you want for dinner?

FATHER

Oh, I don't know. Do we have any of the spinach artichoke lasagna left over?

MOTHER

Don't you think we should have a big dinner for our daughter tonight?

FATHER  
Yes. Yes, you're right. Any ideas?

MOTHER  
No, that's why I asked you, silly.

FATHER  
She should have meat tonight.

*TABITHA enters. SHE is dressed in her Flags uniform. Her PARENTS look at HER with mouths agape.*

TABITHA  
Hi Mom, hi Dad. I'm a Flag now!

*MOTHER and FATHER trot to TABITHA and hug her forcefully.*

MOTHER  
(Quietly offended.)  
Oh, well, dear, we're so proud of you!

FATHER  
Why look at you in uniform! You look great!

TABITHA  
Thank you. It's just the right size. I don't know how they fit it without ever taking measurements.

MOTHER  
(Hissing.)  
It's the government, sweetie.

FATHER  
How was the meeting? Was Tommy Baxter there?

TABITHA  
Yeah! He talked pretty fast but he has lots of ideas for the Flags. He said we are leaders in the community.

FATHER  
(Smiling, looking at MOTHER.)  
Yes, I suppose you are now. How does it feel?

TABITHA  
It feels great!

MOTHER  
And where is Josef?

TABITHA  
Oh yeah, he went with the others, Brett and Terry, to our headquarters.

FATHER

Your headquarters?

TABITHA

Yeah. I told them I had to see you first, to show off the uniform. So now I gotta go, okay? I have to go be a good citizen!

MOTHER

When will you be home?

TABITHA

I don't know. I don't care. I'm quitting my job at the gas station.

MOTHER

What?

TABITHA

I'm gonna devote myself to fighting crime, Mom! And we're getting paid for it!

FATHER

You're getting paid for it?

TABITHA

Yeah! But look, I said I wouldn't be long so I have to go. I'll see you later. Watch the news 'cause you'll see me on it soon, okay? Bye! I love you!

*TABITHA exits.*

FATHER

(Pause.)

They're getting paid.

MOTHER

They are. How wonderful.

FATHER

I wonder who's paying them.

MOTHER

The government.

FATHER

No way to know for sure.

(Pause.)

Our little girl.

MOTHER

I'm so...proud.

FATHER

Me too. I hope she doesn't hurt herself.

MOTHER

I don't think she will. She's being well supervised.

FATHER

Yes. Yes, you're right. And she's famous now.

MOTHER

She is.

(Pause.)

Spinach artichoke lasagna?

FATHER

Yes. I'll heat it up.

MOTHER

I'll uncork the cabernet sauvignon.

*THEY smile as the lights dim to black.*

*Lights up on the Flags Headquarters. The place is decorated with banners advertising the organization. The feel should be a mixture of the famous "Uncle Sam Wants YOU" propaganda poster and super-modern anime/cyber style that the kiddies might like.*

*BRETT (holding a manila envelope), TERRY, and JOSEF are walking around in uniform, checking the place out.*

*TABITHA enters.*

JOSEF

Hey. Your parents cool?

TABITHA

Yes, you should have seen their faces! They were so proud!

BRETT

What do your parents do?

TABITHA

My Mom's a freelance writer and my Dad's a teacher.

BRETT

Ah.

TABITHA

So this is it? This is our Headquarters?

TERRY

This is our new abode.

TABITHA

It's so cool!

JOSEF

(Putting his arms around TABITHA.)  
I can't believe we're doing this.

TABITHA

I can't either!

TERRY

(Seeing the embrace.)  
None of that in here. If you must grope then do it outside, not in our Headquarters.

BRETT

From now on this is our Church.

TABITHA

Oh please.

JOSEF

(Releasing TABITHA.)  
Hey, it's only right to be respectful of the others.

BRETT

Thank you. Tabitha, now that you're here we can open this packet of orders that Tommy left us.

TABITHA

Oh, I'm sorry to keep you.

BRETT

It's no problem.  
(Opens the envelope.)

TERRY

Our first orders!

TABITHA

It's so exciting!

BRETT

(Looking at the order sheet.)  
First order of business: we are to wear our uniforms at all times. I was going to anyhow. Second order: use the enclosed coupons to buy the following gym equipment for the Headquarters. There's a list. Our third order is to use it. Often. Tommy says we need to be in the best shape we can be.

TERRY

This is understandable.

BRETT

Next is to make five thousand photocopies of the Flags' statement of purpose, which is included in the packet. Then we are to distribute them across the city by foot. He wants us to make our presence known

to the people. And that's it.

TABITHA  
That's the end of the orders?

BRETT  
Yeah, that's it.

TABITHA  
Nothing more exciting?

TERRY  
What do you think this is? Camp?

TABITHA  
No. I just expected more.

BRETT  
These are the orders for this week. We have to carry them out. Next week we'll have more. But it's late now. We should start in the morning.

JOSEF  
So now we go home?

TERRY  
Now we go home. Good night.

*TERRY exits.*

TABITHA  
That's it?

BRETT  
I've got the key. I'll lock up.

TABITHA  
Well this sucks.

BRETT  
(Smiles.)  
It'll get better.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on a bare stage suggesting bright sunlight. TABITHA, JOSEF, BRETT, and TERRY are present. THEY distribute statements of purpose and speak to the audience in this scene as if the audience were a group of delinquents on the street.*

BRETT  
Hey, listen up you pimps, you dealers, you murderers, you thieves, you

rapists!

JOSEF

We're the Flags.

TERRY

We're going to clean this place up.

TABITHA

And we're starting with *you*. You know who you are, scum.

TERRY

It's our job to protect the well-meaning people of this city in whatever ways we deem necessary. We call on all who have a decent conscience to join our cause.

TABITHA

The cause of justice and good.

BRETT

The cause of ass-kicking.

(To an audience member.)

What? What's the matter? You want to start some shit, huh? Do you?

TERRY

We represent the bullied, the poor frightened masses.

JOSEF

Join us and join a growing rebellion of young people. We're fighting to protect our homes from criminals.

TABITHA

From evil.

TERRY

From the growing tide of crime! We represent the justice that the judicial system can't promise! If we find a car thief before the cops do—

BRETT

The sucker's going down!

TERRY

The sucker's going down!

JOSEF

But we're not attacking the police here. Don't get us wrong. But even the police need help sometimes.

TERRY

We live in a democracy. You know what that means? It means power by the people. Do you think we have power in this country? Everything's done for us! We have cowed ourselves into vegetables! Join the Flags and become real Americans!

TABITHA

I'm Tabitha Wainright and this is Josef Jefferson. We're the two young

people who fought off that mugger, the mugger who ended up underneath a bus. He got what he deserved.

JOSEF

It was an accident.

TABITHA

We fought back is what is important! We didn't take things sitting down in piles of our own crap! It's time for a change! We want a change!

BRETT

(To an audience member.)

Shut up? What? No, you shut up! We're under orders from the President. Whose orders are you under, huh? Do you have connections to the President?

TABITHA

God bless America! It is our duty as Americans to spread freedom across the world!

TERRY

There are those who say we should secure the safety of our citizens before helping the rest of the world. This is why the Flags exist. This is our job. We are freeing you from the grip of the criminals who are strangling you.

JOSEF

If you would like to join us, please ask for a personal information form. The only prerequisite for joining is that you are over the age of thirteen and under the age of twenty-five. If you are over the age of twenty-five we thankfully accept donations from Flags Supporters.

BRETT

We represent you. We represent you, and apple pie, and baseball games after school, and tetherball, and hamburgers, and the National Anthem, and the right to bear arms, and orange soda, and Christmas, and the Law. We are the new kids on the block. We are the Flags. You're either with us or against us. Do the right thing.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on the counter and cash register of the gas station TABITHA worked at about thirty minutes ago. MISTY is behind the counter, bored.*

*TABITHA enters.*

TABITHA

(To offstage.)

Do you need anything while I'm in here?

BRETT

(Offstage.)

No.

TERRY

(Offstage.)  
I'm fine, thank you.

MISTY

Tabitha?

TABITHA

Hey Misty! How you doing?

MISTY

Wow, you look great.

TABITHA

Thanks.

MISTY

Marcus said you quit. That sucks.

TABITHA

Yeah, but I have this other job now.

MISTY

I know. You're all over the news. My Mom told me. I don't watch the news.

TABITHA

I don't either. It's too depressing. Though I do watch the news when I'm on it.

MISTY

I would too. Are you having fun?

TABITHA

Yeah, it's great! It feels like we're actually making a difference!

MISTY

Have you fought any crime?

TABITHA

No, not yet.

MISTY

Oh. I hope you get to soon.

TABITHA

Me too.

MISTY

Is Josef okay?

TABITHA

Yeah, he's out there in Brett's SUV. How are you?

MISTY

Hanging in there. Me and Chad had a big fight and I'm waiting for him to apologize.

*The MAN in the Members Only-style jacket enters. HE walks to the counter.*

TABITHA

(Noticing the MAN.)  
Well, anyway, we'll be getting fifty-five bucks gas and a couple large smoothies.

MISTY

Okay. That'll be \$61.45.

TABITHA

Brett's got the money for the gas. He'll be in when he finishes pumping.

(To MAN.)  
You can go ahead, sir.

MAN

You don't work here anymore?

TABITHA

No sir, I'm a member of the Flags now.

MAN

Yeah. I saw you on the T.V. What you plan to do with yourself, prancing around like some kind of whore?

TABITHA

Excuse me?

MAN

I said that costume makes you look like a whore. And it makes your friends look like faggots.

TABITHA

Sir, this is a *uniform*. I deserve as much respect as a police officer.

MAN

You aren't a police officer. You're just some girl who got lucky and now thinks she's hot shit.

TABITHA

What's your problem?

MAN

I don't like being told what to do, *that's* my problem. And I don't like this gay shit that you're pushing.

MISTY

(To the MAN.)  
Are you going to buy anything?

MAN

(To MISTY.)  
Am I talking to you?

*BRETT enters.*

MAN

(To TABITHA.)  
Why don't you take that damn thing off, huh? Who do you think you are? It's something some slut would wear on a street corner. Then you can take your wannabe fudge-packers and go to San Francisco where you belong.

*BRETT walks up to the MAN and punches HIM in the kidney. The MAN falls to the ground. BRETT proceeds to kick HIM repeatedly in his stomach.*

BRETT

Never talk like that to a Flag.

MISTY

Oh my God!

*BRETT stops kicking.*

TABITHA

(Unmoved.)  
I've wanted to do that for so long.

BRETT

(To TABITHA.)  
You're a Flag. Next time you know what to do. Don't be easy on scum like this.

*JOSEF enters.*

JOSEF

Goddamn it's too cold for these uniforms.

*JOSEF sees what has just transpired and is not happy about it.*

MISTY

That was so cool! Hi, I'm Misty.

BRETT

Brett Bolen. I'm gonna take this guy back outside. Did he buy anything?

MISTY

No.

BRETT

Good. Here's sixty bucks for my gas. Pump number six.  
(Hands MISTY the bills.)

Thanks.

(Picks the MAN from the ground and takes HIM to the exit.)

(To JOSEF.)

First casualty.

*BRETT and the MAN exit.*

*JOSEF looks at TABITHA in confusion and sorrow. Long pause.*

MISTY

Can I join the Flags?

TABITHA

Sure. I'll just get you a personal information form.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on the Headquarters. TABITHA and JOSEF are seated, alone, in one another's arms.*

JOSEF

You know, the worst thing about these uniforms is the swamp ass.

TABITHA

Ew!

JOSEF

We're walking around all day, preaching to the masses about our purpose and goals, and, even though it's really damn cold outside, I'm sweating a lot, and there's no ventilation down there. Every now and then I think I feel something crawling around in--Tabitha, I have an entire ecosystem in my pants. It's putrid.

TABITHA

I know. I can smell it from here.

JOSEF

No you can't! Can you?

TABITHA

I'm just joking!

JOSEF

Okay. Good. I'm thinking about cutting a hole in the back of my pants so my ass can breathe.

TABITHA

If you did that everyone would see your tighty-whiteys.

JOSEF

At this point I really don't care.

(Pause.)

Do you think we're making any progress?

TABITHA

How so?

JOSEF

This group. Do you think that we're making a difference in the community?

TABITHA

It's only been a week.

JOSEF

I know. But still.

TABITHA

Sure. People recognize us now. Kids look up to us already. Tommy Baxter's television ad campaign doesn't hurt. We're famous. We're popular.

JOSEF

I just, well I don't feel like a vigilante.

TABITHA

We're not vigilantes. We get paychecks.

JOSEF

Yeah I know. But superheroes are usually self-employed.

TABITHA

Josef, you're thinking we're superheroes now?

JOSEF

How else would you describe us?

TABITHA

I dunno.

JOSEF

Me neither. That's why I'm having trouble figuring out what my job *is* exactly.

TABITHA

What?

JOSEF

I don't know. I guess—okay, when we were at the Petrol Max--

TABITHA

The guy deserved it. You know that he came into that place every day and harassed us? And Brett was right. You can't just go and insult us like that. We answer to the President.

JOSEF

Did Brett *have* to beat him up?

TABITHA

He had to make an example for others.

JOSEF  
There was no one else there!

TABITHA  
Misty was there.

JOSEF  
So?

TABITHA  
Look, when I watched Brett do his duty I suddenly saw what we're capable of. We can shape this country however we want to. We have so much power. The possibilities are endless.

JOSEF  
And we have to use our power to protect people.

TABITHA  
I don't think so. Not for long. I think that pretty soon most every young person will be a Flag. Then who will need protecting? The only people who aren't Flags will be the bad guys.

JOSEF  
Wow.

TABITHA  
Right. We wouldn't have to be afraid to walk into an alley at night because we'd have friends around every corner.

JOSEF  
It would be like a social evolution.

TABITHA  
And we're at the front of it.

JOSEF  
We might even be great leaders somewhere along the line.

TABITHA  
We already are. All Flags are leaders. Right?

*BRETT and TERRY enter.*

TERRY  
Did we interrupt fluid exchange?

JOSEF  
No, we did that already.

TERRY  
Disgusting.

JOSEF  
What's up?

BRETT  
This week's orders have arrived. I just finished printing them out.

TABITHA

Really? What are they?

BRETT

Here.

(Gives TABITHA a copy of the orders.)

As you can see it's almost identical to last week's. Except for one exception. Right here, order number four: take the fight to the enemy.

JOSEF

What does this mean?

BRETT

What do you think it means? We start fighting crime is what it means.

TERRY

I know where a small-time criminal lives on Eighth Street. I've been told what times he's home and with whom he fraternizes. Brett and I have spoken about raiding his apartment.

JOSEF

Raiding his apartment?

BRETT

Yeah. We break in, rough him up a bit, and leave him tied up in front of a police station. Actually he doesn't live too far from you, Tabitha. We'll be cleaning up your neighborhood.

TABITHA

Wow!

BRETT

Yeah. It'll show people who we are and that we mean business.

JOSEF

Don't they know that already from the television ads? Everybody's seen them. Once Captain Olympus himself started endorsing us--

BRETT

Josef, we have to put the fear of God into the criminal element. Our job is to fight crime.

JOSEF

What does he do?

TERRY

Sells methamphetamines. Occasionally cocaine. Various other thuggeries.

BRETT

This asshole produces the speed-heads who walk the alleys at night.

TABITHA

When do we leave?

BRETT  
Now. That okay?

TABITHA  
Yeah! Come on, Josef!

JOSEF  
Is this gonna take all night?

BRETT  
Quit being a pussy.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on KYLE's apartment. It consists of a sofa, chair, at least one cabinet, a TELEVISION, and a dresser.*

*KYLE, a twenty-something crusty neo-hippy, is lying on his sofa watching T.V.*

TELEVISION  
(Male voice.)  
But who are the Flags?  
(Tommy Baxter's voice.)  
We represent the choice to take a stand. We are America.  
(Male voice.)  
But several civil rights groups are criticizing the Flags for being overly zealous. In Detroit a racketeer had both of his legs broken. In Miami a heroin dealer was forced to overdose before being taken to the hospital for emergency treatment.

KYLE  
Fuck that shit, man.

TELEVISION  
In Montgomery a multiple rapist was forced to eat his own severed forefingers amongst other appendages. People are asking, "What right have the Flags to incite such violence against the criminal fraternity?"  
(Female voice.)  
Isn't "eye for an eye" outdated?  
(A different male voice.)  
What about our Occupation? Has everyone forgotten about it?  
(A different female voice.)  
My son is never going to join such a violent club. I'm having him join a better one where he learns Christian values, like the Boy Scouts.

*There is a knocking at the door. KYLE gets up to answer it.*

TELEVISION  
(Male voice.)

Yet even with these complaints, the Flags are enjoying great popularity. Young people identify with the need to take matters into their own hands, especially after the popular superhero Captain Olympus became the Flags' official endorser.

*KYLE opens the door slightly. BRETT rushes in and pushes KYLE to the sofa. The OTHERS file in behind HIM.*

TELEVISION

We must wait and see what the future holds. Are the Flags a blessing or a curse? I think, and you think, too, that they are what we need in this time of crisis. Walter Harrel, signing—

*TABITHA turns off the TELEVISION.*

TERRY

What kind of seedy domicile does not include a peephole?

BRETT

A place a criminal lives in, I guess.

(To KYLE.)

Hi, you didn't expect this did you?

KYLE

Oh shit!

BRETT

Oh shit is right! Terry, Josef, search for evidence. Tabitha, help me out with this guy.

TABITHA

Sure.

*THEY comply. TABITHA holds KYLE down.*

BRETT

What's your name?

(Pause.)

What's your name?!

KYLE

Kyle!

BRETT

Full name, citizen!

KYLE

Kyle Brannigan!

BRETT

Kyle Brannigan, we charge you with the distribution of an illegal substance. How do you plead?

I don't have shit!

KYLE

You don't have shit?  
(To TERRY and JOSEF.)  
Found anything?

BRETT

TERRY  
(Looking under the sofa.)  
I'll tell you when we do.

BRETT  
Well, it appears that right now, Kyle, you're innocent. For the most part. See, we have testimony that you sell speed. What do you know about speed?

KYLE  
It's really bad for you.

BRETT  
How does it make you feel?

KYLE  
Bad.

BRETT  
How does it make you feel?!

KYLE  
Good, it makes you feel good!

BRETT  
And then you get addicted and start selling your body, stealing televisions, and killing people for cash! The people of the United States won't stand for this!  
(Punches KYLE's stomach. Comic sound effect. "Boiing.")  
There. How does it feel, getting what you deserve?  
(Punches again. "Boiing." Looks to TABITHA.)  
Tabitha. Do it.

JOSEF  
Is that really necessary?

BRETT  
Tabitha, do it! He's scum! He deserves no sympathy! His business is to kill people!

KYLE  
I never hurt anyone!

TABITHA  
(With a sudden ferocity.)  
Liar! You ruin people's lives!  
(Punches KYLE. "Smack.")  
This is what you get!  
(Punches KYLE again. "Smack.")

Consider this the people's revenge!

(And again. "Smack.")

You bastard!

(And again. "Smack.")

JOSEF

Tabitha, stop.

TABITHA

This is our job!

TERRY

(Holding up a sack filled with a white substance.)  
Found it. It's meth.

KYLE

Oh, Jesus.

BRETT

Jesus isn't here for you.

KYLE

Don't break my legs. Please.

BRETT

Break your legs? Oh, you would only be so lucky.

TERRY

The plan is to bind him and take him to the police station.

TABITHA

Then hand me the rope.

*TERRY hands TABITHA the rope.*

BRETT

You're getting off so lucky. You know what we should do? We should  
dump all this shit—

(Holds the bag of meth above KYLE's face.)

--down your throat. Would you like that? Would you?

KYLE

No, man, please, don't—

BRETT

Why not? Give me one good reason!

JOSEF

Lay off, Brett.

BRETT

Josef, shut up!

*There is a knocking at the  
door.*

BRETT

Terry, go see who it is.

*THEY are quiet as TERRY goes to the door.*

TERRY  
Ah, the lack of a reliable peephole.

*TERRY opens the door, grasps the PERSON outside, and throws the PERSON into the room close to KYLE. The PERSON is TABITHA's MOTHER.*

TABITHA  
Mom?

MOTHER  
What—what are you doing? Get your hands off of me!

TERRY  
Your mother?

TABITHA  
Mom, what are you doing here?

MOTHER  
Why, what are you doing here?  
(Sees KYLE.)  
What are you doing to him?

TABITHA  
Are you following us?

MOTHER  
No, of course not.

TABITHA  
Then what the hell are you doing here? You know this guy?

TERRY  
(Takes TABITHA's arm.)  
Tabitha, she's here to get her fix.

MOTHER  
Of course not! Why would I buy drugs?

TERRY  
How did you know this is a drug bust?

TABITHA  
Mom!

MOTHER  
(Moving towards TABITHA.)  
Tabby, you have to believe me.

TABITHA

Don't call me Tabby in front of my friends!

BRETT

Don't move, ma'am. We're taking you in along with Kyle here.

MOTHER

For what?

BRETT

Drug possession. Sorry, Tabitha. Josef, search her purse.

JOSEF

I'm sorry, Mrs. Wainright. If you don't have anything in your purse then—

MOTHER

Tabitha!

JOSEF

--you're free to go. So just hand me your purse and—

MOTHER

I'm not giving you anything!

*There is a small struggle between JOSEF and MOTHER for the purse. THEY drop it to the floor. KYLE sees what is inside. HE grasps quickly into the purse and draws out a small snub-nosed pistol. KYLE begins pointing it wildly around in an attempt to frighten everyone, to facilitate his escape. JOSEF heads toward TABITHA. MOTHER cowers on the ground.*

*BRETT and TERRY, after biding their time for a few seconds, see their opportunity and rush KYLE. THEY struggle for only a beat before the gun goes off. JOSEF is hit in his face, spins around, and slams to the floor with a sick thud. HE quivers. While BRETT and TERRY wrestle the gun away from KYLE and proceed to beat him terribly, ("Smack," "Pow," "Biff") MOTHER shakes uncontrollably and TABITHA stares down at JOSEF in disbelief.*

*Freeze. Lights down except*

*for a spot on the TELEVISION.*

*End of ACT ONE.*

## ACT TWO

TELEVISION

(Female voice.)

One member of our local Flags chapter was severely injured and a methamphetamine dealer beaten to hell late last night. The injured Flag's name is Josef Jefferson, the same young man who fought off the bus stop mugger close to a month ago. Tommy Baxter, the head of the Flags, had this to say.

(Tommy Baxter's voice.)

This is a war we're fighting, and in war there are casualties. I can only say that he lost an eye by furthering our cause. We salute him for doing his duty to his country.

(Female voice.)

No comment from the remaining three Flags other than this from Drachma Flag Brett Bolen.

(BRETT's voice.)

We mourn Josef's injury, but the fight goes on. We did arrest the two perpetrators, a methamphetamine dealer and his middle-aged junkie. They will face stiff sentences. This is only a start. The underworld will quake with our vengeance. God bless the Flags.

*Lights up on a clear prison conference window. On one side is TABITHA. On the other is TABITHA's MOTHER.*

TABITHA

Hi Mom.

MOTHER

Hello, Tabby.

*Long pause.*

TABITHA

Are you a speed head?

MOTHER

Yes dear, yes I am.

TABITHA  
For how long?

MOTHER  
Oh, six years now.

TABITHA  
Why?

MOTHER  
It helped me get up in the morning.

TABITHA  
A cup of coffee will help you get up in the morning.

MOTHER  
Yes, and someday coffee will be illegal too. I tell you, I am suffering some terrible withdrawals after being in here for two days without my fix.

TABITHA  
(Pause.)  
You're such a bad role model.

MOTHER  
That may be so, but I'm a good mother.

TABITHA  
I just don't understand. Why would you do something like that?

MOTHER  
What?

TABITHA  
You knew it was illegal.

MOTHER  
Yes but I didn't think I was going to get caught. Especially not by you. You never paid attention to the symptoms.

TABITHA  
Symptoms?

MOTHER  
And I *especially* didn't think I'd be *arrested* by you. I'm your *mother*.  
(Pause.)  
I'm sorry about Josef.

TABITHA  
Yeah, me too. A lot more than you are.

MOTHER  
This I won't deny.

TABITHA  
Did you really have to have the gun, Mom? Did you really need it?

MOTHER

Yes I needed it. I had to protect myself.

TABITHA

From what?

MOTHER

Criminals!

TABITHA

You're afraid of criminals and you buy speed from criminals all the time!

MOTHER

I only bought from Kyle.

TABITHA

(Beat.)

It's because of you that my boyfriend only has one eye!

MOTHER

Kyle did it.

TABITHA

Your friend Kyle, with *your* gun. Don't you feel any guilt at all?

MOTHER

Of course I do, honey. But Kyle wasn't my friend. He was my dealer.

TABITHA

You know what Mom? I hope you rot in here.

MOTHER

Tabby—

TABITHA

And don't call me Tabby! I hate that name!

MOTHER

Don't leave like this. You're my child.

TABITHA

Yes I am. And I'm ashamed. There are all kinds of problems with this country and most of them are not because of the young people. It's all the old people's fault. Why did you have to mess up this world as badly as you did? Didn't you stop to think about the damage you were doing? Why don't you think about that while you wait for your trial, okay? I'm going. Have a great time, Mom.

MOTHER

Tabby--

*Lights down as TABITHA exits.*

*Lights up on TABITHA's sofa.  
Her FATHER is sitting upon*

*it, drinking a bottle of wine. HE is not sober.*

*TABITHA enters.*

FATHER  
How is she?

TABITHA  
Hopefully she's dead.

*TABITHA exits the other side of the stage.*

FATHER  
Now Tabitha, that's not a very nice thing to say. Your mother loves you. She's very sorry.

TABITHA  
(Offstage.)  
Sorry doesn't cut it.

*TABITHA reenters.*

TABITHA  
Did you know she was addicted to speed?

FATHER  
Yes. So?

TABITHA  
So?

FATHER  
Did you know I'm an alcoholic?

TABITHA  
(Short pause.)  
Yes.

FATHER  
No you didn't. You had no clue. Perhaps if you had paid more attention and seen, say, the empty wine bottles in the kitchen closet, then you would have noticed sooner, before it was too late. Then you could have done something for me.

TABITHA  
Done what?

FATHER  
Told me to stop. Told Alice to stop. Because you love us. Or some equivalent.

TABITHA  
I can't believe you're blaming me for this.

FATHER

Oh no, honey, I'm not blaming you. Don't misunderstand me. I'm blaming the Flags as a whole. If you Flags think you're so high and mighty then you should try harder to protect your families from the horrors of drugs and alcohol.

TABITHA

*What?!*

FATHER

Exactly.

TABITHA

I don't have to deal with this. I'm leaving.

FATHER

Then you should pick up some cereal on the way home tonight.

TABITHA

I'm not coming home! You can stay here and die just like Mom in her cell! Nobody cares about me! Nobody cares about how I feel!

*TABITHA exits.*

FATHER

Oh. Well.

*(Suddenly reflective.)*

Oh, no.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on the Flags Headquarters. TERRY is reading a book on criminal justice.*

*TABITHA enters in tears.*

TERRY

Tabitha?

TABITHA

What the fuck?

TERRY

What?

TABITHA

What?

TERRY

What is the problem?

TABITHA

How can you ask that question?

TERRY

Oh yes. How stupid of me. Everything's wrong. Do you require a

comforting arm? A welcoming chest to sob on?

TABITHA

No.

TERRY

All right then.

*TABITHA sits on the floor.*

TABITHA

I don't know what to do, Terry.

TERRY

Cry as much as you can and then pick yourself up. That's what helped me when my dad was shot.

*TABITHA stares at TERRY.*

TERRY

We were camping in the forest together and fell asleep in our tent. Dad hadn't finished all of his bacon. The lynx found the bacon and, smelling its residue on my dad's mouth, ripped his throat out with its teeth and claws. My dad woke up and pointed his gun at what he thought was the lynx. He shot himself in the foot. The lynx got away.

TABITHA

That's terrible.

TERRY

My dad lived though.

(Beat.)

But this horrible instance helped me to cement my future ideas about crime scene investigation and propelled me to learn as much as I could about--

*TOMMY BAXTER enters.*

TOMMY

Hello Tabitha. I've been waiting for you.

TABITHA

Tommy!

TERRY

Oh yes. He's come to speak with you.

TABITHA

To me?

TOMMY

Terry, could you leave us please? I'd like to talk to her privately.

TERRY

Yes of course.

TOMMY

Put some work in at the computer.

TERRY

Certainly.

*TERRY exits.*

TABITHA

You've come to see *me*?

TOMMY

Yes. Why are you so surprised?

TABITHA

I didn't think I was that important. You have all the Flags to look after.

TOMMY

Every Flag is important. And you've gone through so much in the past couple days. I'm sorry.

TABITHA

Things happen in the line of duty.

TOMMY

Yes they do, but you must be devastated.

TABITHA

Not really.

TOMMY

I see.

(Places his hand on TABITHA's shoulder.)

Josef is a good soldier. He'll be back in no time.

TABITHA

I love him. I love him so much. It was such a terrible--

(Beat. Begins to break.)

Oh, Tommy, I-I'm trying to be strong, but it's too-it's too-and my Mom is--

TOMMY

(Comes closer and holds TABITHA.)

Yes, yes. You're a tough one. You'll be all right. Everything will be all right. Rely on your fellow Flags for support. We'll always be here for you. We are your family.

TABITHA

You are my family.

TOMMY

We won't ever treat you wrong. But listen, you should take a little vacation don't you think? Perhaps for a month.

TABITHA

But we haven't even--I can't quit now!

TOMMY

Things have been too stressful for you.

TABITHA

I've been sitting on my ass my entire life. I can't go back to that.

TOMMY

Tabby, are you positive?

TABITHA

(Pause. SHE kind of likes that name coming from HIM.)  
Yes. I can put myself to good use here. I have to.

TOMMY

(Smiles.)  
You know what's best. I won't argue with you.

TABITHA

(Short pause.)  
Tommy. I have to tell you. It felt good when I hit that bastard.

TOMMY

Didn't it though? Doesn't it make you feel like you're alive? We are built to fight for ourselves, for our food and loved ones. We've been corralled into living as vegetables. We'll help the people learn to be their true selves, Tabitha. Just you see. With Flags like you we can't lose.

TABITHA

(Suddenly.)  
I want to kill every one of them!

TOMMY

Kill who?

TABITHA

Criminals! Dammit, I-I'm so pissed! I want to kill somebody, somebody responsible!

TOMMY

Hold it.

TABITHA

I can't take it anymore!

TOMMY

Hold it. Keep that anger inside you and focus it into a point, like the tip of a sword. You need to learn some control. Are you with me?

TABITHA

Yes, Tommy. I'm with you.

TOMMY

Good. You're very strong inside and you have a great amount of energy, but you need to learn how to use it correctly. Since you refuse the vacation I've offered you, would you like to accompany me to the gym instead? I need my daily regimens.

TABITHA

(Short pause. Something in TABITHA has changed.)

Yes.

TOMMY

That's the spirit. Focus, Tabitha. Focus.

*Lights down.*

*Lights up. JOSEF is seated in a chair with his back to the AUDIENCE. TABITHA is seated beside HIM. SHE'S holding a Captain Olympus comic book and staring out at the AUDIENCE.*

TABITHA

(Pause. Childish, innocent. Perhaps a little teary-eyed. Rocking back and forth.)

We met when I was fifteen and you were sixteen. Your family had just moved to Drachma and you were the new kid. You were awkward and didn't fit in. Just like me.

JOSEF

Just like you.

TABITHA

We teased you. You didn't care. You never listened to the teachers. You just drew stuff. All the time. I looked once, and you were drawing Captain Olympus characters. I had always liked Captain Olympus but never told anyone. I was afraid They would laugh at me for being childish. That's how we got to know each other, right? Over Captain Olympus. We became friends.

JOSEF

More than friends.

TABITHA

I didn't hang out with my other friends much anymore. I thought they were stupid. You and I hung out all the time. We got along so well. One by one my friends moved away and each one, when they left, said for us to take care of each other. They thought we were going to get married or something. I never thought about it. Until now. Now that I almost lost you. I never told you I love you because I was afraid. Now I know. I love you.

*JOSEF swivels the chair around. HE is wearing an eye patch. HE is no longer JOSEF. HE is a Super Villain.*

JOSEF

I love you too, baby.

TABITHA

(Eyes narrowing into slits, her innocence lost.)  
And I will avenge you. For each hair on your head I will personally see one criminal get what he deserves. You helped change my life for the better, Josef. You made me happy. Now I'm going to change the world.

JOSEF

We will change the world.  
(Feels his patch.)  
I have never seen so clearly.

*THEY place their arms around the OTHER. Melodramatic Captain Olympus music plays.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on KYLE. HE is tied to a chair, blindfolded and gagged. BRETT stands guard.*

*TABITHA and JOSEF enter.*

TABITHA

Is he secure?

BRETT

He sure is. He's not going anywhere.

TABITHA

Do you think we could have some time alone?

BRETT

Huh?

TABITHA

Kyle and me. And Josef.

BRETT

Oh. Yeah that's fine. I'll wait outside. Tabitha?

TABITHA

Yes.

BRETT

Don't beat him up too bad. I don't want to get blood all over me.

TABITHA

I won't.

*BRETT exits.*

TABITHA

Hello Kyle. I'm here to talk about some things with you. Is that okay?

No response.

TABITHA

I should take this gag out, huh. Then you can talk.

*TABITHA removes KYLE's gag.*

TABITHA

So how's prison been for you?

KYLE

Not so great, thanks for asking.

TABITHA

Oh that's too bad. But I don't care. You deserve it. You shot my boyfriend.

KYLE

I didn't mean to. The gun just went off.

TABITHA

Guns don't kill people; people kill people. You meant to shoot someone. You shot Josef. I can never forgive you for that.

KYLE

I'm really sorry.

TABITHA

I don't care. I have some questions for you.

KYLE

My lawyer said I didn't have to answer any-

TABITHA

I don't care about your lawyer either. Listen, you don't have rights anymore, Kyle. You gave them up once you began acting like a criminal. Understand? You're the bad guy and I'm the good guy. Now you're going to answer my questions.

KYLE

I know my rights.

TABITHA

Let me show you something.

*TABITHA reveals a two-foot-long baton colored red, white, and blue. SHE rubs it along KYLE's arms.*

TABITHA

These are the Flags' new assigned weapons, the Minute Sticks. They're called the Minute Sticks for three reasons. One, it brings to mind the brave Minute Men of our country's past. Two, it will only take a minute to break every bone in your body. And three, it doubles as an armored syringe loaded with truth serum that acts within one minute. I

haven't had a chance to try out my Minute Stick yet, but I'd really like to if I got the chance. Will you answer my questions now?

KYLE

All right.

TABITHA

Who you working for?

KYLE

Who?

TABITHA

You're part of a crime syndicate. I want to get to your boss and you're going to help me do it.

KYLE

If I tell you who my contact is they'll kill me.

TABITHA

If you don't tell me then I'll knock out your eyeballs with my Minute Stick and then use its truth serum on you. I call it: Blind Justice.

KYLE

You can't do that.

TABITHA

(Smiles.)

Would you rather your syndicate bosses shoot you or stab you or whatever, or would you rather one really pissed off chick with a stick beat your crotch until your balls are hot cakes?

KYLE

Distribution center is 301 South Debney, apartment twenty-seven.

TABITHA

Name?

KYLE

I don't know their names.

TABITHA

How many are there?

KYLE

Usually three guys there.

TABITHA

What do they sell?

KYLE

Everything.

TABITHA

Like what?

KYLE

Everything. I got shrooms and pot and Zan-bars and-

TABITHA

Okay. I don't care about drugs. Drugs are nothing. Do they sell guns?

KYLE

(Keeping his eyes on the Minute Stick.)  
Yeah! Sometimes they sell guns, too. Firearms. Launder money. Everything.

TABITHA

I see. The mother lode. Do you think they may operate as thieves or murderers-for-hire?

KYLE

I really don't know.

TABITHA

(Threateningly.)  
You sure?

KYLE

Well they might.

TABITHA

Thank you Kyle.

KYLE

You're gonna leave me now?

TABITHA

Yes. I'm leaving. But I'll be back. Later.

*TABITHA walks to the edge of the stage and hands the Minute Stick to JOSEF. JOSEF walks to KYLE and takes the blindfold off.*

KYLE

Oh shit, not you, you said you wouldn't-

*Lights down. Sound effects of a blunt weapon. It all sounds like dubs for an episode of the 1960s "Batman." "Bim Bam Boom, Wham, Crunch."*

BRETT

(With the lights still down.)  
I thought you weren't going to beat him!

TABITHA

I have a different plan.

BRETT  
Oh? Damn, this is gonna be fuckin' messy.

TABITHA  
*Listen.*

BRETT  
Okay, geez, you're really bossy lately.

TABITHA  
Yeah. I am.

BRETT  
Fine. Damn. Looks like we're gonna have to splint his legs so he can stand trial.

TABITHA  
Okay. Now listen.

*Sound of TELEVISION turned on.*

TELEVISION  
(Captain Olympus.)  
All right, Joey. Put the butt of the ray blaster to your shoulder like this. How does that feel?  
(Joey.)  
It feels great, Captain Olympus!  
(Captain Olympus.)  
Good, Joey! Now look at the first Insectoid. Do you see it?  
(Joey.)  
Yes.  
(Captain Olympus.)  
Now aim down the barrel of your ray blaster. Is the Insectoid lined up in your sights?  
(Joey.)  
Where are the sights?  
(Captain Olympus.)  
They are the little raised part at the end of your barrel.  
(Joey.)  
It's there! I have it in my sights!  
(Captain Olympus.)  
Pull the trigger, Joey!  
(Sound effect of a ray blaster and an Insectoid scream.)

*Lights up on TABITHA's sofa.  
TABITHA is seated, watching  
TELEVISION. A suitcase is  
beside HER on the floor.*

TELEVISION  
(Joey.)  
I did it, Captain Olympus!  
(Captain Olympus.)  
You certainly did! Shoot as many as you can and I will hold the rest off with my Shimmer Fists!  
(Sound effects of a ray blaster, Insectoid screams, impacts from

the Shimmer Fists, and exclamations by Joey and Captain Olympus.)

*TABITHA's FATHER enters with a briefcase.*

FATHER  
Tabitha? You're home?

TABITHA  
Yep.

FATHER  
Are you staying long?

TABITHA  
I just had to get some stuff.

FATHER  
Like what?

TABITHA  
Stuff.

FATHER  
Do you think we can talk?  
(Turns off the TELEVISION.)

TABITHA  
I was watching that.

FATHER  
I'm sorry but I think we need to talk.

TABITHA  
Yeah you're right. I guess we do.

FATHER  
I just want to tell you that I'm terribly, terribly sorry about what I said yesterday. I didn't mean any of it, honey. When Josef was shot and your mother was arrested I didn't know how to cope. I still don't. I turned to the--

(Whispers.)  
--*alcohol*. Then I took it all out on you. You are the last one who deserves that. I hope you can forgive me. Can you?

TABITHA  
Okay. Sure.

FATHER  
Thank you, honey.

*FATHER hugs TABITHA. TABITHA is unmoved.*

FATHER  
I'm sorry I didn't come to the hospital.

TABITHA

It's okay. You weren't invited.

FATHER

Yes, well, I'm sorry anyway. I can't imagine how you feel right now.

TABITHA

Yeah, *well*, you need to stop bringing me down. I'm at the top of my game.

FATHER

I'm not trying to bring you down. I'm trying to talk to you.

*JOSEF enters. HE now wears his old trenchcoat over his uniform. The result is the appearance of evil.*

JOSEF

(Sneering.)

Hello Mr. Wainright. I didn't mean to interrupt anything.

TABITHA

You didn't. Are you ready to go?

JOSEF

All set. Car's out front.

FATHER

You have a car?

JOSEF

The Flag Mobile.

FATHER

Tabitha?

TABITHA

What?

FATHER

You're the light of my life. You're all I have left.

TABITHA

Alice isn't dead. Have some hope. She'll be out of prison eventually.

*TABITHA and JOSEF move to exit.*

FATHER

Honey?

TABITHA

What?

FATHER

I love you.

TABITHA

(Pause.)  
I love you too.

*TABITHA and JOSEF exit.*

*FATHER sits on the sofa sullenly. After a few moments HE picks up the remote control and turns the TELEVISION on.*

TELEVISION

(Joey.)  
Don't be afraid, Dad! I'll hold them off!  
(Sound of a ray blaster.)  
(Man's voice.)  
Nice shot, son!  
(Joey.)  
Thanks!  
(Man's voice.)  
Look out behind you!  
(Sound of Shimmer Fists and an Insectoid being flattened.)  
(Captain Olympus.)  
I've got your back, Joey.  
(Joey.)  
Thanks!  
(Man's voice.)  
Thank you, Captain Olympus.  
(Captain Olympus.)  
That's what I'm here for, citizen.

*FATHER places his face in his hands.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on the BOSS's Hideout. Three MEN dressed in cheap suits and backpacks are seated on the floor. Similarities to Reservoir Dogs are not discouraged.*

MAN ONE

Ninety percent is better than nothing.

MAN TWO

Increased output will only make the ratio smaller. Or would it then be larger?

MAN ONE

I don't know, but we shouldn't change a thing.

MAN THREE

If we're going to expand we have to have a better output. We'll have

to change the system.

MAN TWO

There's no choice.

MAN ONE

I guess not. But we gotta be careful.

*Doorbell rings.*

KYLE

(Offstage.)

Hey, it's me! Let me in!

MAN TWO

(Goes to door.)

Kyle?

KYLE

Yeah, let me in!

MAN TWO

(To the other MEN.)

(Begins to open the door.)

He's all beat up.

MAN ONE

No, wait!

*MAN TWO opens the door and a heavily bruised and splinted KYLE spills in, followed by TABITHA, JOSEF, BRETT, TERRY, and MISTY. The FIVE have Minute Sticks in their hands.*

BRETT

You bastards never expect us to use the front door, do you? What do you expect? The window?

*The FLAGS and the incredulous MEN have a quick struggle as all escapes are prevented. More Batman sound effects. The whole ordeal should look very silly and yet feel strangely menacing. It ends with BRETT, TERRY, and MISTY holding the MEN on the ground with their Minute Sticks. TABITHA and JOSEF stand back.*

TABITHA

That's how it's done. Now let's have a look.

*TABITHA opens the MEN's backpacks and peers inside.*

TABITHA

Ah--drugs, drugs, drugs, a syringe, more drugs, a knife, drugs, and oh, a *pistol*. Why do you need a pistol?

MAN THREE

For protection.

TABITHA

Protection from what?

MAN THREE

Protection from you.

*JOSEF hits MAN THREE with his Minute Stick. "Pow."*

TABITHA

You are not to speak in that tone of voice to Flags! Now when I asked, "Protection from what?" I meant why you would need protection when you have the Flags to look after you. But you deal in illegal substances. And firearms. Who knows? Maybe you carry out hits for the mob. Maybe you sell children into slavery. Doesn't this sound about right for these punks?

JOSEF

That sounds about right.

TABITHA

Terry, what would you call these four guys, counting Kyle over there?

TERRY

I would describe them as four reprehensible young people.

TABITHA

Reprehensible young people. That's good.

MAN THREE

(To MISTY, who's holding HIM down.)

Get the fuck off me.

(To the MEN.)

What, you think we can't take them? They're kids!

(To MISTY.)

Get off me!

*MAN THREE pushes MISTY off of HIM and stands up. MISTY smacks HIM with her Minute Stick. "Whap." MAN THREE makes a move for a gun in one of the bags. EVERYONE watches calmly. MISTY slams HIM again across the skull. "Boiing." HE falls. MISTY smiles at the FLAGS.*

TABITHA

Now that that's over with.

(To MISTY.)

Good job Misty. You're now officially a Flag. Make sure he doesn't get up.

MISTY

Okay!

*MISTY hits HIM again across the skull. "Boom."*

TERRY

Tabitha.

MAN TWO

GodDAMN you Kyle!

JOSEF

You really want to kill him don't you? Don't you?

MAN TWO

(Sarcastically.)

I'm not gonna say.

MAN ONE

He deserves it.

(To KYLE.)

You trapped us!

KYLE

I'm sorry! I didn't have a choice!

MAN ONE

Kyle you're gonna die.

JOSEF

Do you want to do it? Do you want to kill him?

MAN ONE

You bet your ass I do!

JOSEF

Brett, let him up will you?

BRETT

You got it handled?

JOSEF

Yeah.

*BRETT lets MAN ONE rise onto his feet.*

JOSEF

Now go ahead. Beat him. Kill him.

MAN ONE

You're just gonna let me?

JOSEF

Do it. It's open season on Kyle.

KYLE

Man, don't hurt me.

MAN ONE

We're going to jail now! You sold us out!

KYLE

Don't hurt me!

MAN ONE

Quit saying that!

JOSEF

Do it. Pound Kyle into jelly. Do it.

KYLE

Please don't hurt me!

MAN ONE

You bitch!

*MAN ONE rushes at KYLE.  
JOSEF clotheslines HIM with  
his Minute Stick. "Wah-  
rongggg." MAN ONE falls onto  
his back and gurgles.*

TERRY

Josef-

TABITHA

(Smiling at JOSEF.)

All right that's two out of the way.

*BRETT smacks MAN ONE on the  
head with his Minute Stick.  
"Clong." MAN ONE is quiet.*

JOSEF

(Smiling at TABITHA.)

One left.

MAN TWO

(Grinning and unafraid.)

I'm not gonna cause any trouble. Just take me in.

TABITHA

We will. In a while.

TERRY

Tabitha.

TABITHA

What?

TERRY

This behavior is unacceptable. You are taking this too far. Let's just bring them in.

TABITHA

He's going to answer some questions first, Terry. That's enough insubordination out of you.

TERRY

Insubordination?

TABITHA

(To MAN TWO.)

Now listen. I know you're not the top rung in this ladder of evil. You're going to tell me who gives you your shit. Are you going to resist? Please resist.

JOSEF

Then we can beat you.

TABITHA

Then we can do whatever we want to you. Your two friends will look lucky when we finish with you.

*MAN TWO is silent.*

TABITHA

Do you really want to make us hurt you?

JOSEF

Do you want some?

(Pause.)

You don't get it do you?

KYLE

They're gonna kill you!

MAN TWO

They're gonna kill you too!

KYLE

No they're not!

TABITHA

Shut up!

(To the OTHERS.)

Shut them up!

*The OTHERS threaten MAN TWO and KYLE with their Minute Sticks. TERRY turns away and exits.*

TABITHA

Who's going to kill you?

MAN TWO

The guys who drop the stuff off.

TABITHA

(To MAN TWO.)

Where and when is the next drop-off?

MAN TWO

(Grinning.)

I dunno. I haven't gotten the map yet.

TABITHA

When will you get the map?

MAN TWO

I dunno! It's always different!

*TABITHA hits MAN TWO with her Minute Stick, knocking HIM out like the REST. "Bam."*

TABITHA

Brett, when is Tommy scheduled to leave Drachma?

BRETT

Following his speech tomorrow morning.

TABITHA

Come on.

(Triumphantly.)

Let's take these criminals to jail.

*TABITHA turns to JOSEF. THEY embrace and kiss one another passionately. Spotlight on THEM. Captain Olympus Music.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on the Flags Headquarters. The hour is incredibly late yet TOMMY is standing erect and proud, admiring a Flags Banner.*

*TABITHA enters.*

TABITHA

Tommy.

TOMMY

Hello. I heard about your bust. Well done.

TABITHA

Thank you.

TOMMY

It will be all over the papers tomorrow. You killed the center of a smuggling ring.

TABITHA

No I didn't. There's more to it.

TOMMY

What did you discover?

TABITHA

Nothing good enough. I want to know their distributor.

TOMMY

What's your plan?

TABITHA

I tried everything I could think of but he wouldn't tell me. I don't know what to do.

TOMMY

Tell me what you tried and maybe I can help.

TABITHA

Well we started out by breaking both of his partners' heads--

TOMMY

I didn't hear about that. Tabitha--

TABITHA

Don't worry. They'll live.

TOMMY

Our purpose is to fight crime, not to kill the perpetrators.

TABITHA

I said they'll live!

TOMMY

Stand down!

(Pause.)

Am I not your superior? We, as Flags, have an honor that we must not break. If our honor is broken then we are no better than the evil we fight. You are now on a forced leave for the remainder of the week. I suggest you get your thoughts and allegiances in order during this time. Do you understand?

TABITHA

I'm not going to become a monster.

TOMMY

Do you understand?

TABITHA

What do you expect me to do? Meditate?

TOMMY

If it works then yes! Remember what I said about focusing? Do it or you're fired!

TABITHA

Tommy—

TOMMY

Are you trying your best to destroy all that I've created?

TABITHA

Of course not.

TOMMY

Then prove it to me!

TABITHA

(Spoiled brattish.)

Aren't you going to at least help me interrogate this guy again? I'll do it the right way.

TOMMY

Right now you are going to do what you're told. I was considering making you Flag Captain for the city of Drachma. Your recent behavior has all but convinced me otherwise.

TABITHA

Why are you holding me back from these guys?

TOMMY

Report back at the Headquarters next week. Until then consider yourself on probation.

*TOMMY exits.*

*TABITHA stands in amazement.  
Lights down.*

*Lights up on the clear prison  
conference window. TABITHA  
is seated on one side of it.*

*TABITHA's MOTHER enters and  
sits down on the other side.*

MOTHER

Tabitha? It's the middle of the night. Visiting hours have been over for—

TABITHA

I'm a Flag, Mom. The rules don't apply.

MOTHER

Oh yes. How could I forget. So how are you?

TABITHA

Okay, you?

I've been better.

MOTHER

Me too.

TABITHA

I knew it. You always came to me when you were sad.

MOTHER

Shut up. I still consider you a criminal. Don't get me wrong.

TABITHA

Of course. Why should I expect my daughter to show some compassion?

MOTHER

I need information.

TABITHA

What about?

MOTHER

You're a writer, a journalist. You know things.

TABITHA

Why don't you just ask your new friends?

MOTHER

Shut up and tell me about the underworld.

TABITHA

Why?

MOTHER

Because it's always been there. I've always seen its name but I don't know what it does. And now it's what I'm fighting.

TABITHA

It's no big mystery.

MOTHER

Then tell me!

TABITHA

I don't see why I should.

MOTHER

Mom—

TABITHA

You don't know what you're doing!

MOTHER

*TABITHA makes a hand signal.  
JOSEF appears brandishing a  
Minute Stick behind MOTHER.*

TABITHA

I was hoping I wouldn't have to do this, Mom.

MOTHER

Josef, deary? Is that you?

*JOSEF sticks the end of the Minute Stick into MOTHER's neck. Truth serum time.*

MOTHER

Ah!

TABITHA

Josef, let's give it a few seconds to take effect.

JOSEF

Okay. So how you doing here, Mrs. Wainright?

MOTHER

You stuck me!

JOSEF

You're not used to being stuck? Wow, I'm surprised. Learned a lot by looking through your dossier.

MOTHER

What's that supposed to mean? Oh God Tabby, I'm feeling dizzy. Get me out of here, please!

TABITHA

No, you're going to answer some questions first.

MOTHER

There's nothing I can tell you!

TABITHA

Shut up and listen. The underworld is like one big company, owned by lots of people, that owns many smaller companies. But what does it do?

MOTHER

That *is* what it does. It buys companies and controls them. It's a conglomerate, a huge corporation. It's one of the biggest in the world. Please let me go, Josef.

JOSEF

Sorry Mrs. Wainright. No can do.

TABITHA

And that's what distributes drugs.

MOTHER

Yes.

TABITHA

But if they have so much money and power then why would they do illegal stuff that could destroy their empire?

MOTHER

(Completely dazed. Truth serum is in effect.)  
Illegal activities aren't taxed, and if you have all the money in the world you don't have to fear the police.

TABITHA

Well the police are dead. The Flags won't be afraid of any big business in the underworld.

MOTHER

Religion is the opiate of the people.

JOSEF

Communist.

MOTHER

Marx was saying that religion is a drug used to subdue the populace. The religion now is money. Then underworld business is like the Pope. How can you put the Pope in jail?

JOSEF

I think I gave her too strong a dose.

TABITHA

It's okay. Where do they get their money, Mom?

MOTHER

Eternum?

TABITHA

(Looks at the patch on her shoulder.)  
What about Eternum? What does Eternum own? What companies?

MOTHER

NOW News? And music. The Captain Olympus franchise. They own the Flags too.

TABITHA

Shut up! We're owned by the President!

JOSEF

Just because she's telling the truth doesn't mean it's really true.

TABITHA

Yeah, why listen to a damn speed freak anyway.

MOTHER

I only blame myself. I made the wrong decision. Perhaps I'm a bad person because of what I did. But I'm your mother and I love you. Had I any idea what you were getting into when you joined the Flags then I wouldn't have let you.

TABITHA

Mom—

MOTHER

But, I know, you're old enough to make your own decisions. So do it.  
Make the right decision.

TABITHA  
I'm sick of you telling me what to do!

MOTHER  
"Do what thou wilt."

TABITHA  
That's Aleister Crowley.

JOSEF  
Who?

TABITHA  
I read it in a comic book.

JOSEF  
Oh.

MOTHER  
You have all the power in the world, sweetie.

TABITHA  
(In deep thought.)  
I'm gonna go home now.

MOTHER  
Okay.

TABITHA  
I'll see you later.

MOTHER  
Bye honey. I love you.

*TABITHA exits.*

JOSEF  
Goodbye Mrs. Wainright.

*JOSEF slips into the shadows,  
leaving MOTHER alone to  
contemplate what has  
happened.*

*Lights down.*

*Lights up on a Flag rally.  
TOMMY BAXTER stands at a  
podium with TERRY, BRETT,  
MISTY, and JOSEF. A few  
other FLAGS may stand beside  
HIM.*

TOMMY

(Addresses the AUDIENCE.)

People of Drachma, hello! My name is Tommy Baxter!

(Sound effect of applause and cheers.)

How do you feel today?

(Applause and cheers.)

Good! It's a great day to be alive! This is the beginning of a new age of prosperity, of purity. We have all but left the restrictive and overpowering United Nations, that New World Order, to set out on our own path, an American path, a path not dictated to us by the rest of the world!

(Applause and cheers.)

I look out into this sea of beautiful people before me and I see thousands of loyal Americans. I'm a loyal American, too. Because I'm a loyal American, the state of this country makes me want to vomit.

(Applause and cheers.)

But don't get me wrong. We've come a long way. Look at your sidewalks! Look at your neighborhoods! But now that we are fat and gluttonous, we want more. We complain constantly. Where is this selfishness coming from? Where? We have everything, why should we want more? What we need is a unity of purpose. Are you with me? What we need is a common goal. This goal is—

*By this time TABITHA has  
joined the group.*

TOMMY

Excuse me.

(Turns to Tabitha.)

What are you doing here? You're on probation!

(To the OTHER FLAGS.)

She's on probation!

*The OTHER FLAGS shrug  
innocently. JOSEF glares.*

TABITHA

(Gesturing to the AUDIENCE.)

Are you going to kick me off the stage?

*TOMMY fumes.*

TOMMY

We are going to speak later.

(To the audience.)

Are you still with me?

(Sounds of cheering.)

Good! You must forgive me. We have been joined by Tabitha Wainright of the bus stop mugger fame and, more recently, known for several Flag arrests. Let's have a hand for Tabitha!

(Sounds of applause.)

What I was going to say, though, is our new goal as a nation. First let me tell you the difference between a nation and a country. A country is a joining of many people of different cultural identities into one large group. A *nation* is a joining of many people of the *same* culture. We, the United States of America, have been a country. Now we will become a *nation*.

(Applause and cheers.)

One nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all. We will work together for the common good. We have the means, the will, and the power to give this world the righteous kick in the pants that it needs!

(Applause and cheers.)

And here in Drachma, these Flags you see before you will help this noble idea into reality. Terry White!

TERRY

(Walks to the microphone.)

Liberty and Justice!

TOMMY

Brett Bolen!

BRETT

Help us help you, Drachma!

TOMMY

Misty Jurgenson!

MISTY

Go Flags!

TOMMY

Josef Jefferson!

JOSEF

Let us lead you into a brave new world.

*TOMMY pauses and looks to TABITHA. TABITHA stares back at HIM. HE relents.*

TOMMY

Tabitha Wainright!

TABITHA

(Into TOMMY's microphone.)

Eternum controls the media, the Flags, and possibly the underground as well. Do you like to be leashed, Drachma?

*TOMMY grabs TABITHA as she's speaking and shoves HER away from the microphone. SHE falls to the ground. Sound effects of booing.*

TOMMY

Tabitha has been having mental problems lately and—

*Boos continue. TABITHA stands.*

TOMMY

(To the GROUP.)

Will someone get her off the stage, please? Hurry!

(To TABITHA.)  
You're out of here, Tabitha! You're fired!

TABITHA

No, we quit.

*JOSEF comes up behind TOMMY and injects truth serum into HIM. A lot of it. TABITHA shoves TOMMY to the ground. Her fellow FLAGS rally behind HER.*

TABITHA

(At the microphone.)  
How you like that, Drachma? He's Eternum's stooge. Hell, we're all Eternum's stooges. Eternum is the enemy! Eternum is crime! What do you say, Tommy?

*TABITHA brings the microphone down to TOMMY's level.*

TOMMY

(Into the microphone. Dazed.)  
I'm not a bad guy. I'm trying to help everyone.

TABITHA

(Into the microphone.)  
I'm helping them better. I'm not trying to pull any wool over their eyes. We need to start a real Flags, one that isn't backed by people with a lot of money, a Flags that is founded by the people, for the people. What do you say about no longer getting a paycheck from Eternum, Tommy?

TOMMY

(A strange look of anguish upon his face.)  
It was only twelve million over five years!

*TOMMY realizes what HE's said after HE's said it.*

TABITHA

Bye Tommy. Have fun with your audience.  
(Into the microphone.)  
Do the right thing, Drachma. Follow me.

*TABITHA leaves the stage with JOSEF close behind. BRETT follows suit. TOMMY stands, dizzy and uncomfortable, with the help of TERRY.*

TERRY

She's lost it, Tommy.

TOMMY

(Wide-eyed and crazy.)

I know. So have I.

(Into the microphone.)

People of Drachma, I am sorry about that outburst. My God. Tabitha will receive psychiatric help soon I assure you. And so will I. I mean, don't believe a word of what she said. Or what I say. No, please believe what I say, even though everything I say is a twisted version of the truth carefully formulated to register positively with the greater majority of the people. Where was I? Oh, yes. I was trying to convince you that I am your heaven-sent savior and Tabitha is the ultimate enemy of the people because she is a direct threat to me personally. Um. I can't seem to get my thoughts straight, excuse me. We need to...um, we need--hello?

(Pause.)

Where are you going? Don't leave. Where are you going? Is it because of me? Do you hate me? I love you. I just want to control you. Drachma—Drachma?

*TERRY appears very concerned.  
Lights down.*

*Lights up on TABITHA's living room. TABITHA, wearing her Captain Olympus gauntlets and cape over her Flagg uniform, is sitting upon her sofa much as SHE was in the first scene of the play except the TELEVISION is not on. BRETT enters briskly. HE is now TABITHA's lap dog.*

BRETT

They're still at the door.

TABITHA

I'll come out when I'm ready.

BRETT

Is there anything you want me to tell them?

TABITHA

No. They'll wait as long as it takes regardless.

BRETT

Okay. So, what now?

TABITHA

We take things as they come.

BRETT

Your dad is going crazy.

TABITHA

All right. Send him in.

*BRETT exits briefly and returns with TABITHA's*

*FATHER.*

FATHER

Tabitha--

TABITHA

Leave us, Brett.

*BRETT exits.*

FATHER

Tabitha, this is my house. I don't mind when you bring your friends over but this is preposterous. And those photographers outside are stepping all over your mother's flowers.

TABITHA

Those aren't Mom's flowers. You planted them.

FATHER

But she loves them.

TABITHA

Dad, sit down here next to me. Come on.

*TABITHA's FATHER sits next to HER.*

TABITHA

Okay. You're just going to have to deal with some changes now. This was the only place I could come back to. I have to have a base of operations, you understand? We'll be out of here soon and we'll make it worth your trouble.

FATHER

But the flowers--

TABITHA

Don't you see the flowers don't matter?! This is a war, Dad, and there have to be casualties. You better be glad it's just the flowers right now and that nobody's being hurt.

FATHER

What war? Honestly, I don't understand you anymore. When you joined the Flags your mother said--

TABITHA

Mom's in jail, which is where she should be.

FATHER

But she loves you, dear.

TABITHA

That doesn't cover the fact that she's a criminal and she should be behind bars. And I don't want you to talk about the Flags anymore. I'm done with them.

FATHER

You are?

TABITHA

Yes.

FATHER

But you're still wearing the uniform.

TABITHA

You know what, you're right.

*TABITHA removes her cape, gauntlets, and top, revealing a plain tank-top underneath. SHE gazes in distaste at the Eternum logo on the shoulder of her top.*

*BRETT enters with a telephone.*

BRETT

Tabitha, Terry's on the phone for you.

TABITHA

Tell him I'm not going to talk to him anymore.

BRETT

I did. But he won't listen.

TABITHA

Then tell him again.

(To FATHER.)

You know, I have the best parents possible. You encouraged me to be my best. When I screwed up you frowned at me. When I did well you congratulated me. And you're just simple-minded enough that I want to be better than you.

FATHER

Why are you being like this? I love you.

TABITHA

I love you too. Now get out of here.

FATHER

What?

TABITHA

Go into your bedroom and read or something. We have official business to do.

BRETT

Tabitha, Tommy's coming to talk to us.

TABITHA

Is he bringing anyone with him?

BRETT

(Into the phone.)  
Is he bringing anyone with him?  
(To TABITHA.)  
Terry.

TABITHA

Is Misty still covering the back door?

BRETT

Yes but she's not doing too well with the pressure. The reporters keep trying to talk to her.

TABITHA

Then go stand next to her. I'll handle Tommy.

BRETT

You sure?

TABITHA

Yeah. Go.

*BRETT exits.*

TABITHA

Dad I told you to get out!

FATHER

It's my house!

TABITHA

Not anymore!

*After a brief standoff  
TABITHA's FATHER exits.  
TABITHA stares at the door in  
silence for several seconds.  
The doorknob turns, but the  
door is locked. TABITHA  
walks to the door and opens  
it. TOMMY and TERRY enter  
through the sound-effects of  
a journalist mob. TABITHA  
closes the door.*

*TOMMY appears as if he has  
been severely electrocuted  
within the past few hours.  
HE is now dressed in a white  
suit with a red, white, and  
blue tie. HE's terrified of  
everything. TERRY appears  
calm.*

TERRY

(Noticing TABITHA's lack of a shirt.)  
Is the heat in here unbearable?

TABITHA

No. It's a fashion statement.

TERRY

Yes. Well.

TOMMY

(To TERRY.)

Tell her about me.

TABITHA

What?

TERRY

He cannot say it himself because there are aspects of his condition that he would prefer to hide from you, but because of his condition he cannot. Tommy is not well. That injection of truth serum was so great that he cannot come close to compromising any of his values. He is a cruel ironic joke, a politician doomed to only speak the truth. I've done tests. He not only speaks what he feels to be the truth but speaks it openly and blatantly with complete disregard for the situation. This effect on his personality will be permanent. He has postponed his flight so he can deal with your insurrection personally.

TABITHA

Insurrection? Wow, I'm honored. But it's not an insurrection. It's evolution.

TOMMY

Will you listen to what I have to say?

TABITHA

Of course I will. You're my friend.

TERRY

(To TOMMY.)

Choose your subjects carefully.

TOMMY

Tabitha, it has taken me years to get the Flags where they are now. I had to suck a lot of dicks.

(Realizes what HE said.)

Dammit. In one outburst you have effectively destroyed everything I have ever wanted. No one trusts me anymore and what I want more than anything is for the people to love me.

TABITHA

All I did was speak the truth.

TERRY

Excuse me. No, you spoke your mind, not the truth.

TABITHA

You're too smart to realize you're stupid.

TOMMY

What do you know about politics and international economics?! Nothing! Less than nothing! But I thought you believed in the cause of justice and right, and that makes up for being dumb. By destroying the Flags you are helping the criminals win and me lose. What's not clear here? For two months we had the streets of Drachma cleaner than they'd ever been. The people were *terrified* of you. Through your obscene ignorance of the powers that be, poof, it's gone!

TABITHA

Is that all you have to say?

TOMMY

(Anguished.)

No. I also want to tell you I think you are better than this and you look better with your hair up. Dammit.

TABITHA

Anything else?

TOMMY

I don't like cauliflower.

TABITHA

Anything else?

TERRY

Leave him alone!

TABITHA

All right, look, I like being honest too. This time tomorrow we will have already stormed Flags Headquarters and broken anyone who stands in our way. And once we do that we will storm City Hall and break anyone *there* who gets in our way. I don't care if Eternum's the enemy because now *I* have power. Look outside. People listen to me, Tommy. You saw the news crews. I'm glad I killed that mugger and I'm glad I was a Flag because *now* I'm *famous*. Wherever I say corruption exists we're moving in and taking over.

TOMMY

You will have to conquer the entire world then.

TABITHA

That's the point. Are you with us or against us?

TERRY

This is insanity. You will never succeed.

TABITHA

We already have.

TOMMY

(Gravely.)

Eternum will kill you. You know that, don't you? Everyone else does.

TABITHA

(Pause.)

The truth always prevails.

TOMMY

(Losing it.)

The truth? There is no such thing as truth! Why can't you realize this? I know there isn't any truth because I always have to speak it! Truth is subjective! I'm limited! My power can't grow! I can't tell the people what they want to hear because I can't break through my own opinions! You have turned me into a political monster!

TABITHA

Get out. Your time's out.

TERRY

Tabitha--

TABITHA

You too, traitor! Get your education and get out!

TERRY

I'm not the traitor.

TABITHA

You are if you're not with me.

*BRETT enters.*

TOMMY

I don't think you understand--

TABITHA

*Get out!*

BRETT

You'd better do what she says.

TOMMY

(Temper completely lost. Hello *Richard III*. To BRETT.)  
*YOU?! They got you too?! Brett, I knew I could always count on you to follow me!*

BRETT

(Shrugs.)

Tabitha's a stronger personality.

(To TABITHA.)

I just wanted to tell you that the new recruit is here. He just came through the back.

TABITHA

Oh, good.

BRETT

They all got his picture.

TABITHA

Bring him in.

*BRETT exits. TOMMY is in*

*silent hysterics.*

TABITHA

Hold on a minute, Tommy. Terry, I want you to see your replacement.

TERRY

You don't understand any part of what is going on, Tabitha.

TABITHA

The power is all in my hands.

*BRETT enters with KYLE. KYLE is still in splints and uses crutches to move around. HE is dressed in a purple shirt and black pants with combat boots. BRETT carries a cardboard box.*

TOMMY

Who is this?

TABITHA

Good leaders know how to make friends out of their enemies.

KYLE

*Goddamn* it hurt putting this shit on, but I'm here and I'm ready to kick some ass!

TERRY

(To TABITHA.)

I will see you tomorrow at Flags Headquarters. Goodbye.

*With a quick glance to BRETT and KYLE, TERRY exits dutifully. TOMMY's basically broken.*

TOMMY

You've really hurt me. Luckily I still have Terry. He'll know what to do. If you want to apologize I'll be waiting in my room. You can expect a bullet to the head this evening after eleven. All of you. Goodbye.

*TOMMY exits. BRETT locks the door behind HIM.*

BRETT

Always thought he was a smart-ass anyhow.

KYLE

Was that Tommy Baxter?

TABITHA

Yes it was.

(To offstage.)

Dad, Misty, get in here! Now!

(To KYLE.)  
Is the stuff in the box?

KYLE  
Yeah! You know I won't let you down!

TABITHA  
Yes I know that for a fact. Put it on the sofa please, Brett.

*BRETT places the box on the  
sofa as MISTY and TABITHA's  
FATHER come in.*

MISTY  
You sure it's okay that we leave the door unguarded?

TABITHA  
We don't have anyone worthy to guard against.

MISTY  
I locked it, but won't the Flags try to come in and arrest us?

TABITHA  
There are no more Flags here, Misty. We're all that's left and soon  
we'll be running things.

BRETT  
But who are we?

TABITHA  
We are the Righteous.

*TABITHA opens the box and  
holds aloft purple shirts,  
black pants, and combat boots  
just like KYLE's.*

BRETT  
Wow.

KYLE  
Are we all Brothers?

TABITHA  
(Looks at KYLE sharply and HE looks at the floor.)  
No. We are soldiers. Everyone put these on.

*EVERYONE begins the process  
of taking off their Flags  
uniforms and donning the  
cheap Righteous uniforms.  
KYLE watches excitedly.*

MISTY  
I've never gotten dressed in front of guys before.

TABITHA

I know what you used to do in the storeroom at the Petrol Max.

MISTY

Tabitha!

KYLE

(To MISTY.)

Do you need any help?

MISTY

No!

KYLE

Okay.

TABITHA

(Seeing her FATHER is not donning a uniform.)

There's one in there for you too, Dad.

FATHER

This is not my business.

TABITHA

Yes it is.

FATHER

I'm just a schoolteacher. Politics are not my thing.

TABITHA

Anyone can be Righteous.

FATHER

Yes but I--

TABITHA

Put it on! Do you want to be Righteous or do you want to be Left Behind?

FATHER

Young lady, I am your father and--

BRETT

She's the leader of the Evolution. She doesn't have a father.

KYLE

Quit being a dick and put on the uniform. It's one size fits all.

*TABITHA's FATHER relents after a few beats and, red-faced, strips down and dons the uniform.*

*JOSEF enters. HE is dressed in a black cape and bondage gear.*

JOSEF

How do I look?

TABITHA

Incredibly sexy.

KYLE

Why he no wear uniform?!

TABITHA

Because he's my sweetie.  
(Kisses JOSEF.)

JOSEF

Always thought the bad guys had better fashion sense.

MISTY

Let's see if we're on T.V.!

TABITHA

Surely we are.

*TABITHA turns the TELEVISION  
on.*

TELEVISION

(Male voice.)  
--a sound since Tommy Baxter left.

TABITHA

Yep, that's the house. Thank you NOW News. Now the people will finally see the truth.

TELEVISION

But we are still anxiously awaiting the emergence of the renegade Flags led by Tabitha Wainright. And no word yet--

JOSEF

Someone needs to tell them we're not Flags anymore.

TELEVISION

--on Wainright's father, Richard Wainright, who owns the house. But all seems--

TABITHA

All in good time.

TELEVISION

--peaceful here, serene.

(Female voice.)

The calm before the storm, Dave.

(Male voice.)

You may very well be right, Janice.

(Female voice.)

The President's time is running out.

(Male voice.)

I cannot offer any reason why these renegades have not yet been arrested.

TABITHA

Maybe it's because we're in the right? Hey guys, watch this.

*TABITHA exits in her  
Righteous uniform, pulling  
JOSEF along with HER.*

TELEVISION

No one knows what is going on.

(Female voice.)

All we can do now is question.

(Male voice.)

Wait, the front door has opened! It's Tabitha Wainright! Tabitha! She's wearing a different, cheaper uniform! And this is Josef Jefferson with her? In a cape? Tabitha, tell us what's going on! What are your plans for the Flags?

(TABITHA's voice.)

The Flags are dead. America belongs to the Righteous!

(Male voice.)

What do you mean by--she's gone back inside! The only message received from the Drachma Flag Insurrection all day has been this: The Flags are dead, this day is for the Righteous!

*TABITHA and JOSEF reenter,  
laughing like mad and necking  
one another. THEY are still  
children.*

TELEVISION

(Female voice.)

What does this mean?

TABITHA

Everybody sit down and relax. Let's watch some T.V.

TELEVISION

(Male voice.)

It appears Wainright has formed a new group in direct opposition, and to replace, the Flags. What we will witness now I cannot say, but--

*TABITHA flops on the sofa and  
changes the channel. By now  
EVERYONE has changed into  
uniform.*

*They ALL sit on the sofa or  
the floor and stare at the  
TELEVISION obediently like  
zombies. MISTY is giggling  
and wide-eyed; KYLE is  
excited beyond belief with  
his new "friends;" BRETT is  
cracking his knuckles;  
TABITHA's FATHER occasionally  
gazes at TABITHA fearfully,*

*afraid to cross HER; and  
TABITHA is seated like a  
queen upon her throne, her  
eyes those of a tyrannical  
young warrior, with her man,  
JOSEF, holding HER close.*

*Lights dim slowly.*

TELEVISION

(Sound effects of ray blasters and Shimmer Fists.)

(Captain Olympus.)

You cannot take my world, Insectoids! You will have to get through me first!

(Insectoid.)

Gladly, puny human!

(Captain Olympus.)

You forget I am not human. I am a Super Hero!

(Insectoid.)

Super Hero or not, I have a shield against your Shimmer Fists! They cannot harm me!

(Captain Olympus.)

Then try its might, foul creature. I would rather destroy my planet myself than let it slip into your filthy hands!

(Insectoid.)

Die!

(Captain Olympus.)

You first!

(More sound effects of ray blasters, Shimmer Fists, and futile impacts against an energy shield.)

*Lights down.*

*End of play.*

Jason Cutler was born on Pea's Air Force Base, New Hampshire, and raised in Freeport, Maine, and Dover, Arkansas. He received his B.A. in Speech with Emphasis in Theatre from Arkansas Tech University.