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Always the Icarus

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Always the Icarus

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 Arts in Creative Writing
Playwriting

By

Breanna Bietz

B.A. University of South Dakota, 2013

May, 2017

CHARACTERS: 3M, 2F, 1 Infant

CARTLA	Female, late teens—very early twenties, ugly yet beautiful, wears jeans with sparkles on the butt, and a shirt with printed angel wings on the back.
J.A.	Male, late teens—very early twenties, wears Insane Clown Posse t-shirts, Hot-Topic fashionable chain around his neck, and also face paint.
GUY FIERI	Male, early-mid forties, the Food Network guy, wears a button-down T-shirt with flames, bleach blonde hair gelled into spikes.
RON & JILL	Infomercial co-hosts
BILL & JANE	Wild West legends
BUFFALO LEWIS & EAGLE CLARK	Explorers of capitalism
JUGGALO & JUGGALETTE	ICP fans in a family clan
WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 & 2	Underpaid Wal-Mart employee birds
JAILBIRD BIRD 1 & 2	Philosophical birds in orange jumpsuits
DREADED VULTURE 1 & 2	Predatorial birds sporting dreadlocks
JOE	A father by blood
CRACKER	A maternal figure aged more by cigarettes than numbers
MARLEY	A baby

DOUBLING NOTE:

The characters of RON, BILL, BUFFALO LEWIS, JUGGALO, WALLOWING SWALLOW 1, JAILBIRD BIRD 1, DREADED VULTURE 1, & JOE are to be played by the same male performer.

The characters of JILL, EAGLE CLARK, JUGGALETTE, WALLOWING SWALLOW 2, JAILBIRD BIRD 2, DREADED VULTURE 2, & CRACKER are to be played by the same female performer.

LOCATIONS:

Interior, South Dakota. The heart of the Badlands.

A variety of stops. The road-trip adventure kaleidoscope.

TIME:

Let's say... 2008

STAGING:

The scenic descriptions should be considered as a guidepost. Liberties may be taken to establish an abstract representation of the setting in each scene, especially as the play progresses.

MISC. NOTES:

A pizzo is a pipe used to smoke crystal meth.

"THE TRASH OF THE NATION IS STILL OUR RESPONSIBILITY. WE CAN'T KEEP STEPPING AROUND IT. IT'LL PILE UP."

- PRES. BARRACK OBAMA

"I KNOW EVERYBODY CAN GET CAUGHT UP IN THE MUNDANE ROUTINE OF LIFE, BUT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, STOP AND LOOK AROUND AND LOOK AT SOME OF THESE AMAZING THINGS THAT WE'VE BEEN GIVEN ON THIS EARTH. LOOK AT THE STARS AT NIGHT AND LOOK AT THE MOUNTAINS, LOOK AT THE OCEAN. IT'S SOME PRETTY COOL SHIT HERE."

-VIOLENT J., INSANE CLOWN POSSE

"A FIERI IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO IN THE TRASH."

-ANONYMOUS

"THIS METH IS REAL GOOD."

-ANYONE WHO HAS EVER TRIED METH

ACT I: OUTSKIRTS

SCENE 1

SPOTLIGHT UP ON:

GUY FIERI, holding a hot dog with far too many toppings. He addresses his audience.

GUY FIERI

Hey folks! It's me, Guy Fieri here. Holdin' it down in Flavortown, USA.

He takes a big, gratifying bite of the sloppy dog.

GUY FIERI (CONT'D)

Now, for those of you watching at home wondering, "Mama, who's this jabroni stuffin' his face with a big, wet, wonderful weenie?" I should let you know that I'm what they call a "culinary gangster." Hedge fund billionaire Steve Cohen once paid a hundred thousand dollars just to hang out with me for a day. Ha ha! Lordy onboardy, that's good stuff!

(burps)

Woo! Call the sheriff and beg for my pardon; that's some spicy meat!

(beat)

I just downed a fifth of Jack and a bucket of Devil's Cum hot wings from Louisville Lou's Chicken Shacktastic. Seize the day, folks!

He casually adorns himself with raccoon ears, and a raccoon tail to match.

FADE UP:

The semblance of a bedroom. There is a window.

GUY FIERI

I'm what they call a "curious scavenger". Heck, my whole brand is built around the saucy kitchen underdogs and underrated grub-shacks of a tuned-up and tattered America.

(beat, glorious)

Give me your diners, your drive-ins, and your dives. Your puddled masses burning to eat free. The ratchet refuse of your seething stores. Send these, the home-fed, taste-tossed to me, I flaunt my flames beside the golden door.

(beat)

I will be your father of exiles.

(beat)

I offer you, Flavortown.

He makes an awkward raccoon exit through the window.

CARTLA enters, holding MARLEY with her left arm and a cigarette in her right hand. She crams objects both personal and strange into a duffle bag. From the depths of her underwear drawer she removes a handgun and packs it into the bottom of the bag.

J.A. enters, his face painted in the signature clown makeup style of the band Insane Clown Posse.

J.A.

Come on Cartla, you and I both know you're not going anywhere.

She bypasses him to grab a can of bug spray, then shakes it in a test to gage what's left. She whips around to pack other items, including a bible.

CARTLA

Hold my baby.

She thrusts MARLEY toward J.A.

CARTLA

I'm going.

J.A.

Where?

CARTLA

Anaheim.

J.A.

Where?

CARTLA

California.

J.A.

Bullshit.

CARTLA

I have to save Guy Fieri. Have to save him.

J.A.

The food guy?

CARTLA

Yeah, that Guy.

(beat)

Move.

She grabs something to pack.

J.A.

Who gives a fuck about that guy?

CARTLA

Dammit, J.A.! You don't know! I saw him last night, plain as day. Clear as shit. He's going to die!

J.A.

No, you fucking didn't. And more importantly, who cares?

CARTLA

It's a mother fucking premonition! I have to save him. Have. To.

J.A.

Okay, I'll play along. How does he die?

CARTLA

Someone kills him.

J.A.

That's the stupidest thing I've ever--

CARTLA

I'm doin' the Lord's work goddammit! The longer I sit here in South Dakota, nothing happens.

J.A.

Cristy said you're off on another bender.

CARTLA

Don't even bring her name up.

J.A.

She told me what happened between you two.

CARTLA

You mean, she told you why everything is my fault.

J.A.

Look, the whole thing is fucked up. If I had a sister who ditched me, I'd feel like shit-- well if I had any brothers or sisters... if I did, I guess I'd make sure we got along. And I'd probably never take 'em for granted cuz family is fucking important, ya feel me?

CARTLA

Not sisters. Twins. That's closer than family.

(beat)

And fuck that dumb cunt!

She throws something across the room.

J.A.

Chill! You know you 'n' her are gonna fight for... what? A few days... maybe a couple of weeks. Then it'll be all good, lil' chica. It's your semiannual blow-up event!

CARTLA

You don't get it.

(hearing noise)

Wait, what was that?

J.A.

(looking out the window)

There's been this fat fuck of a raccoon out by the dumpster lately. I'm thinkin' maybe he got into your grandma's peroxide, cuz that bastard's tips are blonde.

CARTLA

I know exactly what I saw. I gotta get to Anaheim before Saturday.

(carefully thinking over)

Yeah, Saturday.

J.A. gives a nonverbal "why?"

CARTLA (CONT'D)

That's when the Food Network's having the Celeb Cook-Off.

(pause)

A guy's gonna die!

J.A.

You're just gonna up and leave? Right now?

CARTLA

No. You're right.

(beat)

Gotta drop off Marley with his dad. Then hit the road. Hit it.

J.A.

Jesus, you're leaving your son?! What the fuck is wrong with you?

CARTLA gives him a light slap on the back of his head.

J.A.

Ow!

CARTLA

You know better. My Cracker would not approve of that talk in her house. Jesus is the light and the way.

(beat)

And I'm running out of time! Shoulda left. Shoulda left. Already.

(beat)

Dammit J.A.! You're slowing me down!

He counters to stand in her way.

J.A.

How long have we be friends?

CARTLA

Since Marvin made you smoke that cigarette and you threw up all over my feet.

J.A.

Yeah, since fourth grade. I'm not gonna let you drive cross the country all by your damn self because you had a dream!

(beat)

Christ, you've never even been past Wyoming!

CARTLA goes to slap him again, but he's too quick.

CARTLA

(cautious, startled)

What's that sound?

J.A. looks out the window, she peers out behind him and over his shoulder.

What? You're tweeking.

J.A.

Shut up!

CARTLA

(beat, serious)

No.

(beat)

Trash panda?

J.A.

(back to the point)

Your Cracker's Grand Am is never gonna make it that far.

CARTLA

(thinking)

Your car does better.

J.A.

Fuck yeah, it does! I just spent my last paycheck gettin' that Honda souped-up. New tires, exhaust pipe, fuzzy seat covers, and a sound system that won't rattle.

CARTLA

Come with me.

J.A.

(laughs)

You *are* fucked.

CARTLA

Makhosica Othugwahe.

J.A.

Huh?

CARTLA

Badlands Village. Highway 15, big wooden sign?

(beat, no response)

Come on, you go past it on the way to your old man's garage.

J.A.

How should I know? It's in Lakota! I always thought it meant "get the fuck off this land, hick spawn of Satan!" But like, they told all the cowboys it says "Welcome." Know what I'm sayin'?

CARTLA

Shithead, it says Badlands Village.

J.A.

How would you know?

CARTLA

Cracker made me learn all the Lakota words she knew when I was like, five.

(pause)

I don't want to see that sign for a long goddamn while.

J.A.

So, take the other highway into town.

CARTLA

The world is bigger than that. I'm wasting in Interior, South Dakota. I need exterior.

J.A.

You're wasting because you don't eat anymore.

CARTLA

Move. I'm wasting!

J.A.

Whaddya mean wasting?!

CARTLA

Time! Gotta get a thousand miles from nowhere. That's the only way I can do something about Guy.

J.A.

At least Food Network guys don't get murdered round here.

CARTLA

Nobody gets anythinged here.

J.A.

Fucked?

CARTLA gets intimately close to J.A.

CARTLA

There's so much nothing it scares me.

She reaches inside his pants pocket, grabbing his keys.

J.A.

Wait! You have a job, remember? The Wagon Wheel might not be so forgiving the fifth time you miss a shift.

CARTLA

Brenda's sucha shit giver... I aughta punch her in the goddamn braces. Always going on about some goddamn fucking tip share. She tattles like a tit unless I give her 15%. Really 'cause her boyfriend wants to fuck me. Not my problem.

J.A.

Well I can't just fucking leave. I actually have to work.

CARTLA

Don't give me that shit. Your dad can't fire you. That's bad parenting.

J.A.

He's my foster dad. You know that. And he says he wishes he could fire me.

CARTLA

That's 'cause he's not down with your clown band shit. If I didn't know you so well, I'd think that was for faggots.

J.A.

And I bet your dad doesn't even know half the shit you do--

CARTLA

Which one?

She continues to pack, bouncing between her bag and dresser drawers.

J.A.

Uh, Jack?

J.A. bounces MARLEY. The baby spits up and J.A. cleans up after him.

J.A. (CONT'D)

(recollecting)

The dad that used to take us to the Range Days Rodeo. 'Member that shit?

(laughing)

He'd give you money for the carni games, then we'd ditch him and get your brother to buy us forties.

(beat)

Then you'd ditch me for some cowboy penis.

CARTLA has stopped listening.

J.A. (CONT'D)

I'm talking about the dad who pays your rent! Hello?

She slams a drawer. A picture falls.

CARTLA

What's that sad sack gonna say? He's too happy I didn't cut him off after the divorce.

(laughs)

The man looks like Santa Claus but has no kids of his own. Still keeps our Little Mermaid bedroom the same way it was when we were nine. It's a damn Disney tomb up in there.

J.A.

I've got an asshole who doesn't want me and you have two dads. That's fair.

CARTLA

Four. I have four dads.

J.A.

Wait. Really? Are you counting Jim? I guess he's been around for awhile.

CARTLA

Too long.

J.A.

He gives me the creeps.

CARTLA

You've never had to watch him scrape a wad of chew out of his dip-lip.

J.A.

That's only two.

CARTLA

Can't forget Josh's dad. I have his last name. Somethin' to remember him by.

J.A. grabs the photo.

And your real dad.

J.A.

None of them sound real.

CARTLA

CARTLA steals the photo, pulls out a baggie and dumps the contents onto it. She makes a quick transformation of crystals into pizzo.

You look like him.

J.A.
(points to picture under drugs)

He looks like me.

CARTLA

(pause)
There's definitely something fuckin' around outside. I think it stole my pack of Red's. I thought that dykey neighbor did it, and we nearly beat the shit out of each other in the driveway last night. Drunk bitch.

She lifts her shirt to show a few rather large bruises.

J.A.
Use your fucking head, dude! Someone's not always gonna be around to watch out for you!

She looks at the photo like a mirror.

CARTLA
You know, I almost wasn't a twin. I sucked a buncha nutrients from her in the womb. She nearly died.

(beat)
Come with or don't... I'll get by just fine.

(beat)
But you should come with.

She guides the pizzo to her mouth.

J.A.
Don't do that shit.
(acknowledging baby)

Not around him.

CARTLA

Fuck off and make sure there's nothing out there in that trash.

(beat)

Gotta finish packing.

(beat)

We leave tonight. We leave. Tonight. And I'm not fucking around.

She attempts to light the pizza but J.A. grabs her lighter and throws it across the room.

J.A.

Pipe slave!

CARTLA

Go watch TV!

She retrieves the lighter and scurries into the corner of the room to smoke, like a hunched Gollum.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

(enjoying the world)

It's Saturday. Good infomercials.

J.A.

Come on, lil' dude. Let's see what Ron Popeil can fit in his rotisserie oven.

J.A. exits with MARLEY in his arms.

CARTLA continues to pack. She comes across the picture again, staring at it for a moment.

GUY FIERI sneaks in through the window, still sporting the raccoon ears/tail. He removes them as he speaks.

GUY FIERI

(laughs)

Well folks, we got a great spread for your bread and it's all right here at the Tiki Bar in sunny Anaheim, California. It's the Celeb Cook Off sponsored by Franks Red Hot, and our friends at Tires, Tires, Tires. It's gonna be off the chain! Full-throttle! Get ready to send yourself down to Flavortown!

She lights the bowl again, takes her hit and returns to packing.

GUY FIERI

Welcome back folks, I'm getting ready to try this bacon pretzel bean dip.

(tastes it)

Oh yeah... just what I thought. It's the bomb... dot com!

Gunshots. GUY is wounded and bleeding on the floor as he cries out in pain.

LIGHTS FADE.

SPOTLIGHT UP ON:

RON and JILL mid-infomercial.

JILL

And of course, we're talking about the Showtime Rotisserie & Barbecue. Ron Popeil, you're so famous for your rotating food box. The recent cover of Asshole Weekly gives it nine out of ten stars.

RON

And of course, I build quality machines.

He takes a hammer to the machine.

JILL

Ah! What the shit is wrong with you?

RON

Tempered fucking glass, Jill.

JILL

Wow, Ron! This machine does it all. I don't even have to know how to cook.

RON

That's right! Simply just throw a big ass chicken in there.

JILL

Or two smaller, deformed chickens.

RON

OR five fresh-caught mercury fish.

JILL

A leg of infant lamb.

RON

The loins of any gullible mammal, really.

JILL

Bambi's mom.

RON

Something fleshy from your local butcher.

JILL

Your state bird.

RON

But wait, there's more!

(beat)

A majestic hunk of tatanka, better known as Western Plains bison.

JILL

Okay, hold the phones, Ron. You're telling me that you can fit an entire buffalo in this convenient, rotating hot-cube?

RON

Only the good parts!

(beat)

All you have to do is shove the shit down onto these prongs, cram it in it, close the door, and...

J.A. enters with MARLEY in his arms. He stands directly in front of JILL and RON, watching them.

JILL

SET IT, AND FORGET IT!

J.A.

SET IT, AND FORGET IT!

RON

Set it, and forget it!

RON and JILL freeze. J.A. turns away and sits down, with MARLEY in his lap.

J.A.

I'd buy you one of those. Maybe when you're older.

(beat)

Don't worry. I'm gonna be around.

(beat)

She needs me.

(pause)

I'd be like a real dad. Not one who puts his head down and acts like he doesn't know you when we go to the store... or when we're sitting on the same couch.

(pause)

Ya know, you'd look cute with a little clown makeup and some tiny pot-leaf socks.

He spends a moment doing something playful with MARLEY. He sniffs the air and makes a sour face as he realizes that the baby has just done what babies do best.

J.A. (CONTD)

Oh, you stink something nasty, lil' ninja! Ack!

(beat)

He holds MARLEY away from him like yesterday's trash.

J.A. (CONTD)

Cartla! Baby Bob Marley be jammin' in his pants. Didn'tcha, Buffalo Soldier?

He crosses to CARTLA'S bedroom.

J.A. (CONTD)

(singing)

Buffalo soldier!
Poop-shoot Rasta
There was a Buffalo Soldier
Makin' a fart in America!

CARTLA stares into her vanity mirror, applying heavy layers of makeup. She's lost in an impenetrable moment. J.A. could be Jesus Christ himself and she still would not take notice of him.

J.A. (CONTD)

Cartla?

CARTLA

(mumbling to herself)

Start over.

She vehemently wipes off the makeup from her face, then immediately begins applying it again.

J.A.

(to MARLEY)

Come on, lil' dude. She's not here.

(beat)

I gotcha.

J.A. exits with MARLEY.

JILL and RON resume mobility. There's a shift in their demeanor-- something more somber, like an empty memory.

JILL

You can't just blow into town whenever you want to! You're their father, not the fucking carnival!

CARTLA

(into the mirror)

How do I look?

RON

(to JILL)

God, why can't you let things go?

JILL

You want forgiveness, ask Jesus. I'm done with you.

CARTLA

Can we come with you? I'm ready. Cristy's ready too. We've been waitin' for you since mom said--

RON

Forget it.

RON exits. JILL pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

CARTLA wipes off her makeup, yet again. She shoves everything off of her vanity and puts her head in her hands.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 2

A Deadwood casino constructed from fragmented history and semi-famous deaths (mostly late-1880s). An "All You Can Eat Buffet" banner hangs on the back wall.

GUY FIERI enters with a heaping plate of buffet food. He sits, tasting each individual dish and holding up score cards numbered 1-10 in accordance with his judgements.

CARTLA and J.A. enter.

CARTLA

(to J.A.)

Slots. I told you.

J.A.

All you can eat buffet. Whoop, whoop!

CARTLA

No, dammit! You gotta be my look out.

J.A.

Come on!

CARTLA

Then I'll buy you so much fuckin' crab legs.

J.A.

(pause)

Aight. Cool.

(rapping)

Crab crab crab legs
Please don't make me beg
Mutha fucka
Give 'em to me juicy
While I suck off all that butta
I wanna catch crabs, crabs, crabs
Catch 'em on my plate.
I'm try'na eat right now
But this bitch told me to wait!

GUY makes a noise of scrumptious delight. He holds up the "8.5" card.

CARTLA

Fuck off with that! Look out for me.

She unfurls a length of piano wire from her bag and evil McGuyver's it into the coin slot of a Wheel Of Fortune slot machine.

J.A.

How does that shit work?

CARTLA

It just fucking does. Don't talk.

J.A.

Fuck. This is wrong.

CARTLA

I know what I'm doing.

(louder, innocent)

Damn thing ate my money.

Fast, consecutive dings signaling the conversion of inserted cash to machine credits.

CARTLA

Time to play.

BILL and JANE enter, sporting Wild West regalia. They sit around a vacant poker table while BILL deals cards.

J.A.

A hundred credits? Damn.

CARTLA

(excited satisfaction)

Spin! That! Wheel!

J.A.

(whispers)

There are fucking cameras in here.

CARTLA

No.

(beat)

Used to come here with my mom. They don't have cameras.

J.A.

Nah, look up.

(pointing)

Right there.

Without looking up, CARTLA reaches into her bag and pulls out her handgun.

CARTLA

Don't worry.

She carelessly waves the gun around.

J.A.

(startled, uneasy)

Dude! What are you doing?! This is wack!

CARTLA

(laughing)

Fuck off! It's just in case. You scared?

She fixates her undivided attention on the slot machine, staring at the spinning panels and systematically pushing buttons. He gently and tactfully removes the gun from her hand.

J.A.

I'll just... uh... hold on to this. For now.

He awkwardly conceals the weapon in his pants.

CARTLA

(without breaking eye contact with the machine)

I want that back. It's a Christmas present.

J.A.

Can you hurry up? I wanna check out Kevin Costner's casino. That fool's got all his costumes hangin' up on the walls. I wanna touch 'em.

CARTLA

(without breaking eye contact with the machine)

You can't touch Water World! Not until after I win.

JANE attempts to sneak a peek at BILL's cards, but he denies her.

J.A.

(scuffs)

I hate Saloon Number Ten. 1880 is my least favorite decade. Who wants to relive that shit?

BILL

(to JANE)

I'll skin you an' wear yer boots!

CARTLA

Damn!

(beat)

You're bad luck. Stand over there.

J.A. floats around the room in an attempt to find purpose. He stares at a photo mounted to the wall.

J.A.

Tight! Looks like some old-timey dark carnival shit.

(reading)

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

(beat)

That's the guy who skins fat chicks.

CARTLA

Guy! Fuck, it's not tomorrow yet, is it?

(beat)

(to machine)

Come on... hit it that 10,000! No bankrupt! No bankrupt! No bankrupt!

CARTLA looks around before busting out her trusty pizzo. She balances moments of smoke and game like a diplomat.

JANE

Come on down to the Wild West Show, before we leave town fer good! Get your chance to see the great, grand and heroic!

(beat)

Just ask Bill here. The most famous scout in America.

BILL

(harsh, disgruntled)

Three days only.

JANE

Stupendous, action-packed amusement that keeps our way of life from disappearing.

J.A.

(more reading)

Starring well-known story-teller, and boner giver, Calamity Jane.

(beat)

She kinda looks like you. Same resting bitch face.

CARTLA

(circumnavigating)

Pah!

BILL

(stern)

We got gun fights.

JANE

Five different Bills including Pawnee Bill, Bill Pickett, legendary show-runner Buffalo Bill Cody, *and* the city marshal who's killed no less than one thousand men with the flick of his trigger... Wild Bill Hickok!

She gestures lovingly toward BILL. He brushes away her touch.

BILL

(back to the point)

We got scalpin's.

JANE

Annie Oakly's Peerless Lady Wing-Shot.

BILL

(can't believe this shit)

An injun named Sittin' Bull.

JANE

The Congress of Rough Riders.

BILL
(matter-of-fact)

Reenactments.

JANE
Like the Battle of Little Bighorn and General Custer's Last Stand of Martyrdom.

J.A.
(more reading)
The finale, typically, was a portrayal of an Indian attack on a settler's cabin.

GUY does not like the taste of something on his plate. He holds up a "2.1" card.

J.A. (CONT'D)
They're all a buncha frumpy men with mustaches. Kinda looks like your mom's boyfriend.

(beat)
(no response)

Wild Bill's death chair!

(pause)

It's just an oak chair.

(beat)

So wild!

(rapping)

Aces and eights
Fuck yo haters!
Get shot in tha back,
Over aces and eights.
Ooo it's a dead man's hand!
You got a mustache like a bitch
And a mullet like Billy Rae
Come fo' tha gold
But he foreva gone stay
He's a dead man.

(talking)

That one's good! Did you hear me?

GUY makes a "damn that's good" noise. He holds up a "9.5" card.

CARTLA
Yeah. Mustache rides. Come on, Vanna White! Don't screw me now!

J.A.
(more rapping)

Calamity Jane
Wanted his nuts
But he didn't care
Just left her in the dust
Playin' poker
Tryna win it all
Mutha fucker shoulda sat
With his back against the wall

"You're a winner" buzzer noises sound on
CARTLA's machine.

GUY almost orgasms. He holds up a "10" card.

BILL throws his cards in the air before exiting.
JANE sits, becoming statuesque.

J.A.
We gotta get the fuck out of here, dude.
(beat)
Man! I didn't even get to munch on that buffet.

J.A. exits with haste while CARTLA tries to
collect a waterfall of coins.

BILL enters. There's a shift in his demeanor,
followed by a similar shift in JANE.

BILL
Come on, babygirl! We're all goin' out tonight! On me. Grab your sister.

JANE
You're drunk.

BILL
Hey, you watch your tone.

JANE
Why does mom have a black eye?

BILL
I was thinkin' we could go down to Deer Creek Steakhouse.

It's not bad enough that you--

JANE

I just got paid and--

BILL

That you fucked Mandy Bennett and she squeezed out your bastard--

JANE

I wanna take out my girls.

BILL

But I swear, you lay your hands on any of us again and--

JANE

I wanna take my girls out!

BILL

Don't come around here anymore.

JANE

Money? Is that what you want? Here!

BILL

He lays a stack of cash on the table.

I don't need anything from you.

JANE

You ungrateful cunt! Who takes care of you and your sister?

BILL

I do.

JANE

Where is she? I wanna talk to my favorite daughter. The one who still loves her daddy.

BILL

Don't act like we never gave you a second chance! And a third, fourth, fifth. For some goddamn reason, my sister still fuckin' adores you--

JANE

She needs me around! Where is she? Cart?!

BILL

JANE

She can't see through your shit! I do.

BILL advances toward JANE. JANE takes a step back.

JANE

Touch me and I will call DSS so fuckin' fast.

BILL

Dramatic bitch! Just like your mother.

BILL exits.

JANE breaks into tears before recollecting herself and picking up the playing cards scattered around the room.

CARLTA stares at the over-sized image of Vanna White on the slot machine.

CARLTA

I won. I'm such a mess, but look who's fuckin' winnin' big! Not gonna land on bankrupt. You wish I would. You think I would.

(beat, flustered)

Talk to me, Cristy! You can't just decide to do that!

JANE exits.

CARLTA

You're not better than me! Everyone wants to call you the responsible one, the good one. The way you look at me... that fuckin' way you look at me!

(beat)

STOP LOOKING AT ME!

(beat)

I'm not your dark shadow! You think you're an angel but that doesn't make me the devil, okay?! I'm good... I'm good without you.

(beat)

Found my way out. Without you.

(pause)

I'm doin' the savin' this time.

She exits.

GUY collects stray coins, dropping them into his collection plate.

GUY FIERI

(gently singing)

Everybody's got something to offer
Young and old, the prince and the pauper...

He collects the last of the coins.

GUY FIERI (CONT'D)

Pat, I'd like to solve the puzzle, please.

(beat)

Fortune Favors the Bold Flavor Savors!

"You're a winner" buzzer noises sound. GUY
rejoices. He does a double-take before nibbling
on scraps from a nearby buffet plate.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 3

A western drugstore travel-stop oasis for sore eyes in need of a better mirage. BUFFALO LEWIS and EAGLE CLARK are a majestic part of the taxidermy collection mounted to the wall.

BUFFALO LEWIS

Hello, weary travelers. I am the wandering buffalo spirit of Meriwether Lewis.

EAGLE CLARK

And I'm Eagle Clark.

BUFFALO LEWIS

We realize you could choose any other roadside stop along your tumultuous journey, but we are absolutely tickled that you've decided to take a rest at our kitschy outpost.

EAGLE CLARK

Tickled.

BUFFALO LEWIS

We've cultivated the granddaddy of all tourist traps, built on free ice water--

EAGLE CLARK

My idea. It gets hot in the June-July-August.

BUFFALO LEWIS

And over-sized Jackalope monuments.

EAGLE CLARK

Not my idea.

BUFFALO LEWIS

But where else in the world are you able to see such a fictitious display of... what are they classified as again, Clark?

EAGLE CLARK

Jackrabbits with deer antlers glued to their furry, unsuspecting heads.

BUFFALO LEWIS

A real wealth of eye clutter, if I do say so myself, Clark!

EAGLE CLARK

A discovery for the ages, I'm sure.

BUFFALO LEWIS

Follow the signs to Buffalo Lewis and Eagle Clark's Wall of Merchandise Wall Stop Wall Shop.

EAGLE CLARK

Keeping travelers content in the geographical center of nowhere since the days of obligatory foot-trails and over-romanticized wagon expeditions.

BUFFALO LEWIS

You are most certainly going to need to stop somewhere--

EAGLE CLARK

On your twisted way through nowhere.

CARTLA and J.A. enter.

BUFFALO LEWIS and EAGLE CLARK freeze in place, becoming the statuesque display.

J.A.

Damn! I could eat, like, seven bags of those sour gummy worm bastards right now.
(rapping)

I tear you open
I pull your out
I bite your head off
Thas wut I'm about
Gummy gummy
Gummy gummy!
Suga hungry
Suga money!

CARTLA

Fuckin' shhh!

She pulls J.A. aside in an attempt to be publicly inconspicuous.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

That tatanka was eyeing me on the way in. He's a fed, I know it.

J.A.

Homeboy buffalo? No way. You could trust that fool with your deepest secrets.

CARTLA

Nah, he's definitely on to me.

J.A.

I bet he'd let you whisper right in his ear. I can take a picture for you, if you want?

CARTLA

Just be cool, okay. The one with the eagle-eye was wearing a fuckin' wire.

J.A.

Stealthy. I'm not sure what you want me to do about that.

CARTLA

Take a cigarette.

J.A.

Nah, I'm good.

CARTLA

No! Go out into that field across the highway, breakup the tobacco and spread it around. Offering.

J.A.

You mean wasting.

CARTLA

It's a gift. Makes the eagle happy, or the earth, or some shit like that.

(smoke-raspy voice)

And happy birds bring good luck on sturdy wings.

(normal voice)

Cracker swears it.

J.A.

We do look a little unlucky.

J.A. takes the cigarette and exits.

Brooks & Dunn's "Neon Moon" begins to play.

BUFFALO LEWIS and EAGLE CLARK

resume mobility.

BUFFALO LEWIS

Cart! Baby, come dance with me.

CARTLA doesn't move, but responds.

CARTLA

I--I don't know how to.

BUFFALO LEWIS

Well, 'bout time you learned. If you can play blackjack, you can dance. Get over here.

CARTLA

Okay.

She doesn't move.

EAGLE CLARK

Wait, let me get my camera! You look so cute in your lil' pink cowgirl boots!

CARTLA

(embarrassed)

Mom! No!

EAGLE CLARK

(to BUFFALO LEWIS)

Baby, put your beer down first. You're gonna spill it.

BUFFALO LEWIS

(to EAGLE CLARK)

Hey Tam, I need a pack of smokes. How 'bout you run over to the Sinclair across the tracks 'n' grab me some, would ya babe?

EAGLE CLARK

(defeated)

Okay.

EAGLE CLARK shifts her gaze toward the ceiling and closes her eyes, as if shutting down entirely.

Without physical proximity to one another, CARTLA and BUFFALO LEWIS share a father-daughter dance.

BUFFALO LEWIS

Hop up here on my feet, darlin'.

CARTLA

That won't hurt?

BUFFALO LEWIS

Hun, there ain't nothin' that hurts me.

(whispers)

I'm a tough sonofabitch.

(beat, proud)

There ya go! Look at that. You're a natural just like your old man.

They move independently, though synchronous,
through a few flourishing moves as the music
plays.

BUFFALO LEWIS

Now, since I showed you how to dance... you think you can do daddy a favor?

CARTLA

Sure!

BUFFALO LEWIS

Be a doll and grab me the little orange bottle with the white top that Cracker keeps in her
purse.

CARTLA

But... that's her medicine. Doesn't she need that?

BUFFALO LEWIS

She's got a lot. More than she needs, trust me.

CARTLA

Cracker says Jesus is always watchin' and I don't think Jesus would want me to steal--

BUFFALO LEWIS

Jesus also said, "honor thy father."

CARTLA shares the complex expression of a
child navigating morality for the first time.

CARTLA

I don't know...

BUFFALO LEWIS

Look, pumpkin. We're born alone and we die alone. Gotta take what you want 'n' don't
spend time thinkin' twice about it. Otherwise you ain't alive 'n' you might as well be dead.

(beat)

Want a sip of my beer? Go ahead, it's okay! Don't tell your mom. It'll be our lil' secret.

(smiles, winks)

'N' sweetheart...

CARTLA

Yeah dad?

BUFFALO LEWIS

Go ahead 'n' take one of them pills for yourself while yer at it.

The music stops abruptly. BUFFALO LEWIS shifts his gaze toward the ceiling and closes his eyes, as if shutting down entirely.

CARTLA freezes for a moment, breathing heavily.

J.A. enters.

J.A.

Cartla? You okay?

CARTLA

Fine.

(whispers)

Not in front of the eyes!

She attempts to pack her pizzo with the few remaining crystals in her meth-baggie.

J.A.

We should go.

CARTLA

No, no, no. You don't get eagle-luck and then just skip out without even buying a scratch-off.

(beat)

You broke the cig. Pick a lotto.

J.A.

Damn, that's a lotto pressure.

CARTLA slaps him.

CARTLA

Jesus doesn't care for puns.

She focuses her sights on a nearby isle of goods, pulling items from the shelf, one by one.

J.A.

(carefully looking)

Okay... *Diamond Eyes*? Nah, that sounds like it'll hurt the lids when ya blink.

(beat)

Second Chances... nothing special about those. *Nothing to Lose*? Yeah, well there's always something you forget about.

(pause)

Hmm... eeny, meeny, miny, miz-o. Catch a tiger by his tiz-o. If he hollers, pay that gangsta fiddy dollas. If that tiger wants to stay, paint his stripes all red and gray. If he sneaks out after dark--

CARTLA

Just pick a fucking ticket!

J.A.

(quickly)

My. Foster. Mother. Told. Me. To. Pick. The. Very. Best. One. And. You. Are. It.

He reads the ticket.

J.A. (CONT'D)

Aces & Eights? Fuck no! That's a dead man's hand. Nuh-uh! No way!

CARTLA scrutinizes the cans on the shelf.

CARTLA

You would think that they'd have chili. Hello?!

J.A.

(overwhelmed)

Um... okay, let's think regionally. *Wyoming Hot Slots* or *Iowa BINGO Bonus*? Is there a difference? What's the difference between Wyoming and Iowa?

CARTLA

I don't care. Nobody cares.

(beat)

Get both.

J.A. looks around for the absent store clerk.

J.A.

Hello? Anybody work here besides the wildlife?

CARTLA rushes over to J.A.

CARTLA
(whispers)

J.A., don't antagonize them!

J.A.

Nobody's home. Nobody cares.

CARTLA

You sure?

CARTLA thrusts herself half-way over the counter to check for the clerk.

She grabs an entire ream of lotto tickets.

J.A.

What are you doing?

CARTLA

Eagle blessings. Told you!

J.A.

We gotta get the fuck outta here.

CARTLA doubles back toward the shelf of goods.

J.A. (CONT'D)

Come on! What are you doing?

CARTLA

You wanted gummy worms.

She tosses a bag to J.A.

They quickly exit.

GUY enters carrying a bottle of hot sauce. He blesses a wall of knickknacks and stuffed animals with the sauce while singing "Neon Moon" a cappella.

GUY FIERI

(singing)

Oh, if you lose your one and only
There's always room here
For the lonely
To watch your broken dreams
Dance in and out of the beams
Of a neon moon

Watch your broken dreams
Dance in and out of the beams
Of a neon moon

Oh, watch your broken dreams
Dance in and out of the beams
Of a neon moon

He makes the sign of the cross.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 4

A back alley of desolate circumstance, outside a bar of seasonal defective disorder. There is a torn-down, misspelled banner that reads "Karoke Humpday." CARTLA and J.A. enter, out of breath and checking over their own shoulders.

J.A.

Fuck that!

CARTLA

Did you see that son of a bitch come at me?

J.A.

You hit him over the head with a beer bottle.

CARTLA

The fucker thinks he can beat the shit out of my friend?

J.A. assesses his facial damage.

J.A.

Damn.

(makes I-just-touched-my-owie face)

Cowboy doesn't play around.

(beat)

His fist got my eye real good.

CARTLA

It's okay.

J.A.

I know. My face will be fine.

CARTLA

No. The baggie.

She produces a zip-lock bag of crystal meth.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

I got it off him right before you started throwin' punches.

J.A.

Jesus Christ, Cartla! That's all you think about?

She goes to slap him.

J.A. (CONT'D)

(irate)

Slap me one more fuckin' time and I swear to Jesus fuckin' God Christ dammit I will dump that bag in the toilet and flush.

CARTLA

Rude!

She sticks her finger in the bag, pulls it out and tastes it, like a child sneaking mom's homemade pudding from the bowl.

GUY FIERI enters wearing a cowboy hat. He carries a wooden cross and proceeds to mount it. CARTLA and J.A. do not see him, and should not pay him any attention.

J.A.

I was waiting outside that bar all damn night!

CARTLA

It wasn't that long. And it's not my fault you don't have an I.D.

J.A.

You said twenty minutes.

CARTLA

Karaoke was fun. I played my hits.

J.A.

You stumble out piss-drunk with some huge cow-jock, Garth Brooks, Chris Gains lookin' motherfucker.

CARTLA

His name was *Jesup*!

J.A.

The *guy* was fucked out of his mind. I saw it in his veiny eyes!

CARTLA
(stricken with I-just-remembered
syndrome)

GUY!

GUY FIERI turns around for a brief moment,
then continues to erect the cross.

CARTLA (CONT'D)
Come on, we gotta get back on the road!

She produces a pizzo and begins to load it with
the chunks from the bag.

CARTLA (CONT'D)
Oh, we're so fucking behind!

She lights the pizzo and smokes.

J.A.
Jeez! That shit. STOP IT!

She doesn't.

J.A. (CONT'D)
Guy Fieri's just some cooking school frat boy who thinks he's got a monopoly on flavor.
He's CAN'T take you, or me, to Flavortown, and he IS NOT going to die.

CARTLA
(blowing out a mouth-full of smoke)
But... chili!

J.A.
Get your head on straight, dude! For once in your life.

CARTLA
(offended)
For once in my life? You don't know a damn thing about *my* life.

J.A.
(prepared for this moment)
I know there's a long chain of unforgiveable shit trailing behind you. And I know it's
always gonna trip you up and pull you down, no matter how far you run.

CARTLA
You're so fulla shit.

J.A.
Tommy Nielson's barn. Halloween.

GUY FIERI pounds the cross into the ground. It is a loud and resonating sound.

CARTLA
So what--

J.A.
Ray Paulson's Christmas party!

Loud pounding, again.

CARTLA
Okay, so I--

J.A.
Eighth grade graduation!

More loud pounding.

CARTLA
I--

J.A.
YOU make shit up!

(pause)

Dwayne never fucked his sister! You said it, but I was in that basement the whole time and they never even touched each other! You were just mad he broke up with you. And to this day, people still call him "sister fucker."

CARTLA
He is a sister fucker!

(so serious)

J.A., that's incest.

J.A.
No one pulled a knife on you on your way to Tommy's party that night. You said that so you could keep all the crank for yourself! You had those dudes on a manhunt.

CARTLA

(scripted)

He was about five nine, hundred sixty-eight pounds, scar-neck, dark eyes, big hands--

J.A.

I watched you smoke their stash the next day!

CARTLA

Different stash. That one was a gift.

J.A.

And what about Ray?

CARTLA

How dare you bring that bastard's name up in front of me.

J.A.

You... you sat there, on Christmas Eve, and told him he was gonna be a father. Then you demanded money. You lied to him, Cart.

CARTLA

How the fuck would you know--

J.A.

Dumbass, you barged into the bathroom while I was in there. And, high as a fucking kite, you changed your tampon! You even told Ray you'd show him a sonogram.

CARTLA

Oh yeah? Well, the jokes on you because after that I really did get pregnant, with Marley.

J.A.

Oh, that's right! When you cheated on Ray with his brother! And still the one word you never had the guts to say was "sorry." He took all those pills tryin' to... you didn't even--

CARTLA

You don't even know how fucked up he was to me...

J.A.

Stop! Remember who you're talkin' to right now.

CARTLA

What's the truth, J.A.? What should I have done? You seem to fucking know!

J.A.

Act like a human being. Not your dad.

CARTLA

'Least I know who my parents are! Wait, my bad. You do too, thanks to the sign-in sheet at the Department of Social Services!

J.A.

You're toxic.

CARTLA

I'm tryin' to save a Guy's life!

J.A. turns his back to her.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

Fine. Fuck you! Don't need you slowin' me down none anyway. You don't think I can find my own way to Anaheim?! 'Cause I sure as fuck can, J.A.!

J.A.

No, Cart. You don't get it!

CARTLA

(rambling)

I don't need anybody. I never needed anybody, especially not some Jack Wayne Gacy lookin' motherfucker.

J.A. turns to confront her.

J.A.

I've always known that you're toxic. That's why I *have to care so damn much*.

CARTLA and J.A. stare at each other for an extended moment.

CARTLA

(changing tone)

Get in the car. We took too long already.

(inspired)

I'm drivin'! Feel like I could go all night. I bet we can make it to Cali by dawn.

(she sings)

Delta dawn, what's that flower you have on
Could it be a faded rose from days gone by?
And did I hear you say
He was a-meeting you here today
To take you to his mansion in the sky!

J.A. sits down on the ground.

J.A.

I lied. My face really fuckin' hurts.

CARTLA offers her pizzo.

CARTLA

Here.

(pause)

I promise you won't feel a thing.

J.A.

You know me, dude.

CARTLA

Yeah, but I never understood why you don't... get spun. Fly high.

J.A.

Yeah, okay... I'm the freak for not smoking crystal.

(beat)

You wanna know why? Because I've sat there and watched everybody else do it.

CARTLA

Everybody gets a fix on somethin'. Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, prozac, adderall, speed, weed, LSD, PCP, fuckin' Coca-Cola.

J.A.

But you're on all of those.

CARTLA

Don't think you're better than everybody.

J.A.

Nah.

(contemplating)

I mean, I've thought about it.

CARTLA

You're scared you'll like it. Oh, and you will! Trust me.

(pause)

Your dad's not here to beat your ass for fucking up. It's all you out here.

J.A.

He's my foster dad and you know that.

CARTLA

Everybody's got daddy issues.

J.A.

(more contemplative)

You cunt your way into everything.

CARTLA

You pussy your way out of everything.

(beat)

Take it or leave it. I'm tryin' to help.

(pause)

What was that? Is someone out there? I swear I heard--

J.A.

No one. Goddamn NO ONE, YOU TWEEKER!

CARTLA

Yeah? Well, 'least my face isn't bleeding.

She frantically checks to make sure her face isn't bleeding.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

(inspecting J.A.)

I think that son of a bitch split your eyelid. God, he really don't like clowns.

(snickers)

(beat, serious)

Why wear that shit when you know people will kick your ass up and down?

She rummages through her duffle bag.

J.A.

He fought me 'cause of you.

(beat)

And it makes me feel powerful.

CARTLA

This makes me feel powerful.

She takes a hit off the pipe, enjoys it, then frantically sprays bug spray at invisible bugs on her body.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

You fought him because you love me.

(beat)

And I broke a beer bottle over his face because I love you. You're my best friend. Even if you are a fuckin' outcast. Juggalo.

J.A.

I belong because I'm a juggalo.

CARTLA

(laughs)

Not with anyone around here.

J.A.

No shit. You wouldn't say that at the Gathering of the Juggalos. Nothing but family.

CARTLA

You call a bunch of weirdos you don't know your "family" because you listen to the same shitty music?

J.A.

Fuck off. There, nobody expects shit from you except to hang out, share a two-liter of Faygo, hit a bong, listen to music, and eat some dank food. And no one fights. They don't hurt each other, Cartla.

CARTLA

Their songs are all about murdering bitches with an axe. Why are they always talking about murdering bitches with an axe?

J.A.

That's not what it's about. We're about freedom, respect, and inner fuckin' peace!

CARTLA

(matter of fact)

By murdering bitches.

J.A.

Nah! It's not real. We don't want violence, it's just fun to sing about it.

(beat)

Johnny Cash is always singin' about murdering people.

CARTLA

Don't you fuck with Johnny Cash. His murder songs were more like that Clint-Eastwood-rebel-hero, driven-by-revenge, had-to-do-it kinda murder. That's just good song writing.

J.A.

Look, it's not about the music. Or even the face paint. I'm talkin' instant love for anybody who needs it. Whoop, whoop! Old grandmas, little kids, dropouts, brain surgeons, cock holders, tit bouncers, gay, straight, fat ass, skinny ass, black, white, brown, red, yellow, or fuckin' blue! Don't matter. You have that clown love wherever you go. As long as you claim the J-U-double G-ALO... you're accepted, buddy!

CARTLA

That's a cult. J.A., you're in a cult. I'mma pray to Jesus for you.

She begins a silent prayer.

J.A.

We could go!

CARTLA

Where?

J.A.

Death Valley.

CARTLA

Hello?! Third Annual Celebrity Cook Off! Saturday. Saturday! SATURDAY!

J.A.

We'll make it, I promise. It's on the way. We have to go! I don't know when I'll get another chance.

(beat)

The biggest party you've ever been to! Like... Woodstock at the circus!

CARTLA

Yeah?

J.A.

You can get your hands on all kinds of stuff. Anything you want.

She thinks about this as she lights her pizzo. She exhales the smoke.

CARTLA

Remember that time Dirk Benny told you that your real parents came to school to pick you up? So you followed him back behind the track shed, and there were just two dead raccoons he'd found layin' there.

(laughs)

They were all bloated and one of 'em had an eyeball, like, popped out 'n' hanging down it's cheek!

Any excitement drains from J.A.'s injured face. Out of frustration, he rubs his face with his hands.

J.A.
(shrieking with pain)

Ah! FUCK!

J.A. leans back and very briefly passes out from the pain of his injuries. He comes to and stares at CARTLA's pizzo.

Powerful?

J.A.

Unstoppable.

CARTLA

J.A. motions for her to give him the pizzo. She does. She lights it for him as he smokes. He coughs.

JUGGALO and JUGGALETTE enter, wearing knee-length shirts with the ICP hatchet man logo. Neither one wears face paint. JUGGALO wears his hat sideways and JUGGALETTE has her hair fashioned into three pigtails.

Damn, son!

JUGGALO

Your shit's twisted!

JUGGALETTE

Whoop whoop!

JUGGALO

I could fuck so good right now.

CARTLA
(to the sky)

J.A. looks at the horizon like he owns it.

J.A.
(alive for the first time)

I've always wanted to go.

GUY FIERI painstakingly erects a rack of BBQ ribs on his cross.

JUGGALO and JUGGALETTE proceed to present a low-budget commercial.

JUGGALO

Get yo' self to the gathering, biotch!

JUGGALETTE

It's gonna get wacked out, jizzy style. Ah yeah!

JUGGALO

We got entertainment for fifteen days. Including all the dope bands of Psychopathic Records.

JUGGALETTE

With special guests like 80s hiphopper, Vanilla Ice. And 2000s crazy person, Charlie Sheen!

JUGGALO

We got monster truck motocross.

GUY nails chipotle-smoked chicken wings on his cross where wrists and feet would be.

JUGGALETTE

The Funky Bunch, minus Marky Mark.

JUGGALO

A wallet-eating contest.

JUGGALETTE

Pop N' Fresh.

JUGGALO

P.O.D with special guest, Biz Markie.

JUGGALETTE

Hatchet signings.

JUGGALO

A four-hour tilt-a-whirl ride.

JUGGALETTE

Comedians Pauly Shore and Bobcat Goldthwait.

JUGGALO

The venom-spitting dinosaur from *Jurassic Park*.

JUGGALO uses his hands to mimic a
dilophosaurus opening its frightening neck
flaps.

JUGGALETTE

The one that killed Newman from *Seinfeld*? Ah shit, son! Betta look out, ninja!

JUGGALO

But that's not all! We got kimono rentals.

JUGGALETTE

A high school algebra teacher.

JUGGALO

To throw shit at!

JUGGALETTE

Four Loko malt beverage energy drink. On tap!

JUGGALO

Butt painting.

JUGGALETTE

And a *Carrie*-oke stage where you can sing your favorite songs while we dump a bucket
of fresh pigs' blood on your head!

JUGGALO

Right on yo' dome! What what!

GUY adorns the ribs with a crown of jalapeno
popper thorns.

JUGGALETTE

And you don't wanna miss that shit!

JUGGALO

It's a family reunion.

JUGGALETTE

Where do you belong, homie?

JUGGALO

At the 10th annual gathering of clown love.

JUGGALETTE

Formally held in the cornfields of Ohio!

JUGGALO

We've been partying down in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and muthafuckin' MICHIGAN!

(beat)

But this year we're movin' to the sacred grounds of Death Valley, Californ-i-a.

JUGGALETTE

(for show)

Why do juggalos want to meet in the middle of the desert?

JUGGALO

'Cause dat name is killah! Whoop Whoop!

JUGGALETTE

And the state provides us with a mad tax incentive, dog!

Pulling out a *Sam's Club* sized bottle of BBQ sauce, GUY squirts it in waves across the meat. He admires his work.

JUGGALO

So don't be trippin' on some--

Both JUGGALO and JUGGALETTE notice GUY simultaneously and proceed to fan gush over him.

JUGGALO (CONT'D)

Oh! Snap my good ass with Italian nachos for ages!

JUGGALETTE

That ninja's Mac Daddy Mac n' Cheese is tha hizzy!

Humbled, GUY breaks off a rib and gives it as an offering to JUGGALO.

GUY FIERI

Peace be with you.

He breaks off another and holds it out for JUGGALETTE.

GUY FIERI

Peace be with you.

They eat like rats.

J.A. sits straight up, as if God has opened a portal of communication with him directly.

J.A.

(possessed)

What lies behind us, what lies before us, small compared to what lies within us. Miracles each and everywhere you look, nobody has to stay where they're put in this world yours to explore, nothing but miracles beyond the door to the Dark Carnival the invitation to witness them without explanation, behold this fine creation for to enjoy it better with appreciation.

CARTLA stands and slings her duffle bag over one shoulder.

CARTLA

Shut your dick hole. We gotta get back on the road!

She grabs J.A.'s hand, pulling him to his feet.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

Gotta go. Now. Go. Should left already. Should left.

They exit.

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF ACT I

ACT II: INSKIRTS

SCENE 1

The one Walmart isle that both cures and causes depression, depending on the day.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 and
WALLOWING SWALLOW 2 stock shelves.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

Well, I heard that he's a profit.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2

I heard he's a savior.

She sits while continuing to stock the lower shelves.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

He's a father, that's for sure.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2 opens a bottle of Robotussin, looks around to make sure no one is watching, then guzzles it down her gullet.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 (CONT'D)

Either way, it's nice to have a legend around these parts. Haven't had one since the one-and-only doctor. And we all know how that ended.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 mimes chugging a bottle.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2 opens a second bottle of Robotussin, then hands it to
WALLOWING SWALLOW 1.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 (CONT'D)

Cheers!

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 downs the bottle.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2

(slurred)

I... uh... I can't help but wanna follow when someone can lead.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

(slurred)

We could use that. Especially since always.

CARTLA enters, frantically moving up the aisle, then down the aisle, then back up again. At this point, J.A. is a bundle of suspicion and doubt.

J.A.

What are we doing here? That kid is looking at me!

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2 stares blankly at J.A.

J.A. (CONT'D)

GET BACK IN YOUR SHOPPING CART WHILE YOU STILL HAVE A MOM AND DAD!

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2

I don't... uh... I don't have anything deep and encouraging to say.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2 looks to WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 for help.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

(to WALLOWING SWALLOW 2)

Come on, man. Smoke break.

They exit.

CARTLA, now on her knees, riffles through every size cans of various foods.

CARTLA

No. No.... No! Can't fuckin' find it. Chili only works with kidney beans.

J.A.

You can't have mine! I need to use 'em still. Sell 'em on the black market. Buy you a ring.

CARTLA

Did you get the tinfoil?

J.A.

No! What do I look like? A fuckin' eyelid? I'm not even mouth-hungry.

CARTLA

Me either! It's called Midwestern courtesy.

(beat)

If I show up empty handed, that's a real slap in the face, J.A.

She slaps him in the face.

J.A.

(at a loss)

I didn't even say Jesus.

CARTLA

We're almost there. Almost.

(beat)

Gotta line the trunk with something, otherwise it'll stick. It's gonna stick. You don't want it to stick! IT WILL RUIN FUCKING EVERYTHING.

J.A.

Can I take some to my family reunion? Trunk chili might sell!

(beat)

Get you everything, baby. I'll get you ANYTHING!

CARTLA

GET ME Reynolds Wrap!

J.A.

I'm sorry! I love you.

(beat)

I'm sorry? I love you!

(beat)

I'm sorry I love you.

CARTLA

Get me more bug spray too-- the good kind. None of that water-based shit.

J.A.

(feeling himself from the outside in)

My heart hurts.

He exits the aisle.

GUY emerges with a 40-ounce bottle of malt-liquor.

GUY FIERI

Send in the clowns down to Flavortown! Cause this deep-fried rotisserie pizza is good enough to make you wanna stick a hatchet in your own face! I'm down here at the 10th annual Gathering of the Juggalos and it's insane in the membrane. Later on, I'll be giving a motivational speech on the main stage. Full-throttle!

(beat)

Waffle tacos? I can't say jugga-no. I feel bigger than Jesus right now. Whoop whoop!

(beat)

When we come back, a lady urchin is going to teach me how to smoke a funnel cake out of a bong!

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 and
WALLOWING SWALLOW 2 enter. They gush
at the sight of GUY.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2

It's him!

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

Oh my Guy! Praise be to Flavortown!

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2

I need to be saved. Please!

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

We've been waiting for someone like you.

GUY baptizes WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 &
2 with his malt beverage.

GUY FIERI

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and flavor, for they shall be satisfied.

(on to the next)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and flavor, for they shall be satisfied.

(beat)

You can take that all the way to the bank!

He drinks from the bottle.

J.A. enters the aisle, obsessing over a jar of baby food.

J.A.

My baby eats this stuff!

CARTLA

Marley's not yours. You know that.

J.A.

Look! He's even on the label. He's got my beautiful eyelids. And your crooked smile.

(beat)

I'mma raise you right little man. Be there for you and shit.

CARTLA

Not yours!

J.A.

Do you think he misses us? He knows we'll be back. I hope his first word is dad! Or dada. Dada is good.

CARTLA pushes him.

CARTLA

Fuck off, you goddamn tweaker!

A brother-sister like fight ensues. J.A. drops the baby food jar.

J.A.

You broke him!

CARTLA

I didn't mean to! I--I don't ruin everything I touch. I didn't! I DON'T! I DON'T!

J.A. holds her close.

J.A.

You do.

GUY picks up the broken jar.

GUY FIERI

(singing)

And he will raise you up on eagles' wings
Bear you on the breath of dawn
Make you to shine like the sun
And hold you in the palm of his hand

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1 & 2 praise his
song with lifted wings.

GUY FIERI (CONT'D)

I am the fixer of the broken.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

Amen!

GUY FIERI

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the
wretched refuse of your teeming Middle America.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2

Halle... hallelujah!

GUY FIERI

Send those, the homie-less, temper-tossed to me, I lift my chain-wallet beside the golden
door.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 1

Your eternal light is the way. Resound! We hear your call.

WALLOWING SWALLOW 2

Your eternal light is the way. Resound! We hear your call.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 2

A jail cell made of light and darkness. CARTLA and J.A. sit in cold silence. There is a Bible nearby.

CARTLA

I can't believe you didn't get away--

J.A. throws non-verbal blame at CARTLA.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

Oh me? You wanted to come along.

J.A.

It's your fucking fault we're in this mess!

A silence falls.

J.A. (CONT'D)

Counting cards! I don't even know how you do that shit!

CARTLA

What? Count?

J.A.

Cheat.

CARTLA

Easy. Dad taught me.

J.A.

Oh! Daddy number one; the wicked gambler! I forgot.

(beat)

Glad he taught you something useful.

CARTLA

The money, fucknuts!

J.A.

And we only needed the money because YOU blew everything we had. Which wasn't a lot.

(beat)

Next time you gotta rescue a guy, save up first!

CARTLA

It was divine intervention! Nothin' to be done 'bout that shit. And I didn't hear you complain when I turned that little wad of cash into crystal. I'm mother fuckin' magic.

J.A.

Okay, that was a miracle.

(pause)

We need another.

CARTLA paces.

J.A. (CONT'D)

Anytime you're ready.

(beat)

(heavy)

Fuck.

CARTLA

God, I could use a bump!

J.A.

Ugh! Me too!

CARTLA

No, I was praying.

(beat)

If you're there, God... I could use a bump. It doesn't even have to be that good shit, just the mediocre stuff that Bill sells. That would do. In your name, I pray. Amen.

(beat)

It's been... been...

J.A.

(meticulous)

Ten hours and fifty-six--fifty-seven minutes.

CARTLA

Look who knows how to count.

J.A.

I fished your earrings out of a puke-toilet one time.

JAILBIRD BIRD 1 and JAILBIRD BIRD 2 enter, casual and breezy. JAILBIRD BIRD 2 is eating Flaming Hot Cheetos.

CARTLA

A gang of insane killers talkin' 'bout dead bitches. Why are they always talkin' about dead bitches?

J.A.

It's called Horrorcore! Leave me alone.

CARTLA

Why do you listen to that shit?

J.A.

I don't know! Shit's all I've ever known. Shit's always been there. I like believing in shit.

CARTLA

Did you have to sell your soul? Do they, like, force you sell it? Or maybe they make you think you wanna sell it. Mind control.

J.A.

I have a goddamn soul, okay?! Not mind-control, not brainwashing... I'm fine! I believe in God. I also like to imagine what happens after this life is over... maybe it's like one big-ass carnival. That's cool shit. Makes death more fun.

(beat)

There's six joker cards, all with different meanings, and the joker cards are carnival attractions in the afterlife. They help determine whether you go to Shangri-La --Heaven-- or Hell's Pit--Hell.

CARTLA

You better get right with God. When Jesus comes back and you're still stuck up your own ass about some Tilt-a-Whirl bullshit, he'll leave you behind.

J.A.

(over it)

Good.

CARTLA

(relentless)

The Lord is *not* pro-axe.

J.A.

(accusatory)

You think you're better than me!

She doesn't deny it.

J.A. (CONT'D)

You do, don't you?! Hey, I've never hurt anybody... unless I was defending myself or defending you! Every time my foster dad laid a chubby hand on me, I turned the other painted cheek. When his wife drank, and got mean, I didn't say shit. Same with every Lynyrd Skynyrd lovin' prick we grew up with. Know why? KNOW WHY?! 'Cause I knew I wasn't alone. There's a bunch of rejects like me listenin' to the same stupid, weirdo music and tryin' to get through the same shitty things on this same shitty plane of existence. We're not outcasts when we're together.

CARTLA

You can't invent a family! Especially a weird murder-sex one with clowns.

J.A.

(defensive)

It's not your family so WHY DO YOU GIVE A FUCK?! Fuckoooff!

CARTLA

You kinda are my family.

J.A.

You're afraid.

CARTLA

(laughs)

Of what? You? Or inbred clowns?

J.A.

Of life.

CARTLA

I'm not afraid of anything.

(whispers)

Imma tough sonofabitch.

J.A.

Lies so good.

CARTLA

Hills shouldn't call mountains small.

J.A.

The fuck does that mean?

CARTLA

What's your face paint tryin' to cover up, huh? Jerald Anthony?

J.A.

Same thing your makeup hides.

A silence falls.

J.A. (CONT'D)

Fuck this. I hurt. Fuck this. I want CRANK! I'm alone. It's dark. Tell me something. Cartla, tell me anything before I get all WACKED out. I'M LOSING MY SHIT!

CARTLA

When I get to Anaheim and save Guy's life, he's gonna be so grateful that he'll take me to all the fancy Food Network parties. And he'll use my recipe for Buffalo taco burgers. And we'll get matching leather jacket tattoos!

J.A.

You gotta stop the bullshit. Tell me something real.

A silence.

CARTLA

Me and Cristy share the same memory. Our first one, anyway.

J.A.

Really?

CARTLA

Yeah. We were babies-- maybe one. I remember being alone in the dark. Feelin' how empty my world was, like... it was always gonna be that way, or whatever. Then Cristy climbed out of her crib, took her stuffed animals, one at a time, and put all of 'em into my crib. "One Cabengo." We had our own language, too. Ours. No one else could understand. No one else knew. I called her Poto. She called me Cabengo. "Snup-aduh Cabengo!" Poto always fixed the emptiness.

J.A.

Damn. Wish I was a twin.

CARTLA

No, you don't. We share the same worst memory too.

J.A.

(realizing)

You can call her! I've seen movies, you get one call in here. She'd help us. She'd be the only one to help, now.

CARTLA ignores him by looking out, beyond the space (an unseen cell window to the world outside).

CARTLA

Look! A sparrow. Lucky fucker can fly all he wants.

JAILBIRD 1 begins to page through the bible.

JAILBIRD BIRD 1

(quoting)

Love gives you wings.

(commenting)

Don't try to fly to high.

JAILBIRD BIRD 2

(mouth full of snack)

HUBRIS!

CARTLA expresses bodily discomfort. She reaches into the front of her pants. Her face glows with excitement. She pulls out a zip-lock bag containing a considerable amount of crystal meth.

J.A.

Magic!

CARTLA

(to God)

Thank you!

(to J.A.)

This's the shit I got off of the dude in Cheyenne. He called it Wax. Good shit. They always give the good shit names like that.

JAILBIRD BIRD 1

(quoting)

If they look unpinned, forget the wax and feathers and do a better job on the wings.

(commenting)

Don't forget about structure, eh?

JAILBIRD BIRD 2

(eating)

Basics.

CARTLA

I've gotta get out of here and save Guy before it's too late. But you need to go with my plan.

J.A.

Gimme!

CARTLA

Listen, dude! We crush this and snort all of it. Right now. Then we get out of this cell and go to that fucking cook-off.

J.A.

Will that kill me? Is your plan a suicide pact?

(loses it)

Fuck it! Let's do it then, I guess.

(cry-sings)

Home, home on the range

Where the deer and the antelope play-ay-ay!

Won't you give me a home

Where the buffalo roam

And the skies are not cloudy all day!

CARTLA

No. No!

(beat)

Trust me.

J.A.

I have no reason to.

CARTLA

Nothing to lose.

J.A.

I've heard that my whole life, but there's always something you forget about.

CARTLA

We break out.

CARTLA crushes the chunks into snortables.

JAILBIRD BIRD 1

(quoting)

Thus, Marlowe posed the silent question: could aspiring Icarus be happy with a toilsome life on land managing a plough with plodding oxen having once tasted the weightless bliss of flight?

JAILBIRD BIRD 2

That's in the Bible?

JAILBIRD BIRD 1

Bird Bible.

(beat)

Gideon's Bird Bible.

JAILBIRD BIRD 2

I always forget the Icarus stuff.

(beat)

Crock of bird shit, if you ask me.

JAILBIRD 1 is perplexed in all directions.

JAILBIRD BIRD 1

Those who forget always become the Icarus! Flight is fun, but too much fun and it's flight for none!

JAILBIRD BIRD 2

Kids'll always cause ya heartache. Sounds like daddy just needed better beta testers.

JAILBIRD BIRD 2 rips pages out of JAILBIRD
1's hands as he begins to create a nest.
JAILBIRD 1 watches it all go down.

J.A.

It's never been about trusting you. You are family. Doesn't matter how or why. Most of the time I don't trust a damn thing about you.

CARTLA

You should. I find myself to be right.

J.A. sneaks a little taste of the powder.

J.A.

Why's it called Wax?

CARTLA

'Cause it melts into your body like warm candle drops.

(beat)

It's church on Christmas Eve.

J.A.

Ya lost me.

CARTLA

Candle light service.

(beat)

When I was a kid, I could give a damn less about baby Jesus. Forgive me, lord.

(beat)

They'd pass out candles and it was magic. The church; completely dark except for little flames dancing slow. I'd get my candle lit then use it to pass the light on to the next person. When I held it, I could feel the warm wax running down my hands. It never hurt. It was the warmest thing in winter.

(singing)

Silent night, holy night

All is calm, all is bright

(end of singing)

(pause)

The world became this other exciting thing. Somewhere bigger. For a few minutes.

CARTLA and J.A. snort the snortables. We see them feel it.

J.A.

Drop me off at the gathering. I wanna go. Need to go.

(thinking it over)

Yeah. Death Valley.

CARTLA

(somewhere else)

I could fuck so good right now.

She moves closer to J.A. They stare into each other's eyes for a moment. CARTLA kisses J.A. with a passionate beauty unbeknownst to the world.

GUY emerges with a guitar.

JAILBIRD BIRD 1

Look! Ha ha ha! Look who has returned! Just like the good book says. Soaring high on bird-grace, it's the flavor innovator in full rescue flight!

JAILBIRD BIRD 2

Miracles!

GUY tips his hat to JAILBIRDS and begins to serenade J.A. and CARTLA.

Sexual things ensue between J.A. and Cartla. Clothes come off. Sweat and face paint smear on both bodies.

GUY FIERI

(singing)

(a Garth Brooks style country rendition)

Now somewhere in the black mountain hills of Dakota
There lived a young boy named Rocky Raccoon
And one day his woman ran off with another guy
Hit young Rocky in the eye
Rocky didn't like that
He said I'm gonna get that boy
So one day he walked into town
Booked himself a room in the local saloon
Rocky Raccoon checked into his room
Only to find Gideon's bible
Rocky had come equipped with a gun
To shoot off the legs of his rival
His rival it seems had broken his dreams
By stealing the girl of his fancy
Her name was Magil and she called herself Lil
But everyone knew her as Nancy
Now she and her man who called himself Dan
Were in the next room at the hoe down
Rocky burst in and grinning a grin
He said Danny boy this is a showdown
But Daniel was hot, he drew first and shot
And Rocky collapsed in the corner, ah

JAILBIRD BIRD 1 and JAILBIRD BIRD 2 join
in song and dance.

D'da d'da d'da da da da
D'da d'da d'da da da da
D'da d'da d'da da d'da d'da d'da d'da
Do do do do do do
D'do d'do d'do do do do
D'do d'do d'do do do do
D'do d'do d'do do do d'do d'do d'do d'do
Do do do do do do

Now the doctor came in stinking of gin
And proceeded to lie on the table
He said Rocky you met your match
And Rocky said, doc it's only a scratch
And I'll be better I'll be better doc as soon as I am able

And now Rocky Raccoon he fell back in his room
Only to find Gideon's bible
Gideon checked out and he left it no doubt
To help with good Rocky's revival, ah!
Oh yeah, yeah

The height of weirdness and stimulation, both
musically and visually.

D'do d'do d'do do do do
D'do d'do d'do do do do
D'do d'do d'do do do d'do d'do d'do d'do
Do do do do do do
D'do d'do d'do do do do, come on, Rocky boy
D'do d'do d'do do do do, come on, Rocky boy
D'do d'do d'do do do d'do d'do d'do d'do
The story of Rocky there

Tableau of CARTLA and J.A. in ecstasy.

GUY and JAILBIRDS exit chirpily.

CARTLA lights a cigarette. She picks up the
Bible and pages through it.

CARTLA

I want more.

J.A.

We deserve more. I'll get you more.

CARTLA

Great. I want great.

J.A.

Will you settle for good?

J.A. searches the floor for his pants. Reaching into one of the pockets, he pulls out CARTLA's gun.

CARTLA
(elated)

You fuckin' clown!

She takes the gun from his hands.

J.A.
Yeah, yeah! I FORGOT! I pinched it off you after the uh... rest-stop fiasco in Colorado.

CARTLA
No! This is good. This is real good, J.A. No. This is great!

J.A.
YEAH. YES!
(beat)
Just scare 'em though. Don't shoot anybody?

CARTLA
I wouldn't. WON'T. Will not.

J.A.
Yeah, you wouldn't.

CARTLA
(shouting)
HEY! I want my phone call!

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 3

SPOTLIGHT UP ON:

GUY standing behind a carnival booth pulpit.
He is on the mount, preaching his sermon to the masses.

GUY FIERI

You are the tasty, delicious light of the world. No longer rejected, never again to be refused. Here, you are welcome.

DREADED VULTURE 1 and DREADED VULTURE 2 enter. They sport festival-savvy dreadlocks, and stand on either side of GUY. They proceed to paint his face with black and white clown makeup as he preaches.

GUY FIERI (CONT'D)

This, a gangsta city set on a hill, cannot be hidden. We shall be made a full-throttle story and an off-the-chain by-word through the world. For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, where people of all twisted kinds live in har-money and Flavortown peace.

He holds up his hands, making a "W" with his left hand and a "C" with his right, then crossing his wrists to complete the "wicked clown" hand sign.

DREADED VULUTURE 1

Whoop! Whoop!

DREADED VULUTURE 2

Whoop! Whoop!

SPOTLIGHT DIMS.

LIGHTS UP ON:

A twisted carnival of loosely-related family carnage... with snacks! Carnival music underscores.

GUY FIERI

Say hello to this pineapple bacon Jell-O, and taste Guy's not-so-willi-nilli chili here at the 10th annual celeb cook off! Sponsored by diesel, the flavor your D1 pickup savors.

DREADED VULTURE 1 crowns GUY with a cowboy hat.

GUY FIERI (CONT'D)

And trust me, you're gonna need to load up on that diesel when we ride the bus to Flavortown! But don't take my word for it! Talk to some of the kids in Flavortown! Let's see what the people think about Rachel Ray's lemon butter pound cake pasta.

CARTLA enters.

CARTLA

(to herself)

Fuckin' clowns.

She pulls out her gun and cocks it.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

Gotta find my way outta this sludge park, so help me Jesus.

GUY FIERI

'Scuse me, miss! You there, licking her lips!

CARTLA

Do I fucking know you, dick-sneeze?

(realizing)

(highest of highs)

GUY FIERI! Oh my god! I--I... finally!

GUY FIERI

(chuckles)

Ya caught me!

CARTLA

Wait. You're here? I's on my way to save you. But you're here... at the cult party. I'm supposed to be savin' you. You don't know, but you will. Wouldn't let you die.

GUY FIERI

Why don't you tell America where you're from, little lady?

CARTLA

(void)

A Lakotan desert that time has betrayed.

(beat)

(new life)

Here! I'm from here, now.

(beat)

I flew.

(beat)

Will you sign my bug spray?

GUY FIERI

Whoa there! Calm down and try a bite of this pepperoni pudding pocket.

GUY presents her with a pocket of food from behind his pulpit.

CARTLA

No, thanks. I'm not hungry.

She tucks her gun into the back waist of her jeans.

GUY FIERI

Suit yourself, jabroni.

GUY takes a sloppy-huge bite.

GUY FIERI

Mmm! Holy-moly, Stromboli! This sauce is money! I could put this on a flip-flop and it would taste good. Chicken diner, it looks like we have our winner winner! A little something to help you get down in Flavortown today. Trust me, you don't wanna miss this!

GUY shares a bite with DREADED VULTURE 1 & 2, then offers the food to CARTLA a second time.

GUY FIERI

Do yourself a flavor favor and get in on this blissful dish while you still can. It's 100 % miraculous, and that's a Guy Fieri percentage... so you KNOW it's legit.

She accepts and takes a bite.

CARTLA

Holy Jesus-stuffed gluttony, Batman! This is gangsta! Out of bounds! Off the hook! Shut. The. Front. Door.

GUY FIERI

I will not! You're in the depths of Flavortown now, darlin'.

CARTLA

(mouthful)

It's like... wow! It's like heaven had an angel-baby with a wet dream! I've never tasted anything so fuckin' good!

DREADED VULTURE 1 & 2 snicker.

CARTLA devours the rest of it, with pleasure.
She licks her fingers trying to get a little more of that sweet, sweet flavor.

GUY FIERI

That's right! Food so good, you'll forget you were abandoned by your father and disowned by your sister.

CARTLA

The fuck did you just say to me?

GUY FIERI

Here.

He hands her an ominous bowl. DREADED VULTURE 2 thrusts a spoon toward her.

GUY FIERI (CONT'D)

A perpetual chili bowl of flavor emotion.

(beat)

Tastes like you were never molested when you were twelve.

CARTLA

What's GOING ON Guy?!

GUY FIERI

Who would've guessed? That lonely, Santa-looking prick stick.

CARTLA

SHUT UP!

GUY FIERI

Don't worry. He is *definitely* not welcome in Flavortown.

DREADED VULTURE 1 & 2 shake their heads
in disgust.

DREADED VULTURE 1

Uh-uh. No way, shawty.

DREADED VULTURE 2

Not a chance.

CARTLA

Why? How... you DON'T know what the fuck you're talkin' about!

GUY FIERI

I'm the keeper of the broken, Cartla.

She picks at her skin, forgoing the bug spray
this time.

CARTLA

I came here to save you. I--I saw it, clear as shit. I had a premonition.

(beat)

I save you.

GUY FIERI

Like how you *saved* that bathroom blowjob for your sister's prom date? Mmm! Now
that's saucy!

(beat)

Or how you *saved* Cracker's emergency cash so you could get you and your boyfriend
loaded?

CARTLA

It was an emergency!

She aims her gun at GUY.

GUY FIERI

Whoa! Take it easy, little miss cheesy. You are going FULL-THROTTLE!

(beat)

I'm here to help you. To save *you*.

DREADED VULTURE 1

Free yourself.

DREADED VULTURE 2

From yourself.

GUY FIERI

You'll feel better when you let. It. All. OUT. Let go. Spew the truth. Purge the word.

(beat)

I can't give you my blessing until ya do! So, let's get this truck a-rollin'!

DREADED VULTURE 1

Eat the chili. You gotta let it go down your gullet.

DREADED VULTURE 2

Then you'll fly free!

DREADED VULTURE 1

Acceptance. It's hard for some to digest.

CARTLA

Screw you and your ugly-ass birds!

DREADED VULTURE 1

Okay, that was mean!

DREADED VULTURE 2

(to DV 1)

That's her M.O. It's not about us. She's deflecting...

CARTLA

Deflect my bullet, punk-ass turkey. I'm not eating that.

GUY FIERI

Hey-o! I think we got off to a bad start-la, here Cartla.

(chuckle)

You have to take a bite. There's still a couple wicked acts floating around out there.

CARTLA

Fuck you, Guy.

(thinking it over)

Yeah. Fuck you.

J.A. enters, with his back to everyone on stage.
It's as if he's talking to someone offstage.

J.A.

(elated)

Cartla! This is insane! Whoop whoop! I could stay here forever!

(beat)

(chanting)

Fam-i-ly! Fam-i-ly!

GUY FIERI

(to CARTLA)

Let's talk about who Marley's real father is.

GUY makes a subtle gesture toward J.A.

CARTLA

(horrified, exposed)

NO.

DREADED VULTURE 2 picks up the chili bowl, handing it to DREADED VULTURE 1, who then hands it to GUY.

GUY FIERI

The chili will make it painless. Come on, now.

CARTLA

I won't tell him. WON'T. I won't.

J.A.

(rapping)

Nothin's gonna hurt me now, I got my family
I'm finally where I'm meant to be
Got best friends standin' on either side of me
And I got nothin' but love for my best lady
Though sometimes she might drive me crazy
We're gonna go home 'n' raise her baby
Life is good, if you can learn to see--

CARTLA

J.A.? What happened to your face?

J.A.

Huh? Oh, that! My dude over at the tattoo booth, I think his name is Legs. Yeah, Legs. Well, Legs helped make me legit! No more paint. I'm down for life!

DREADED VULUTURE 1
Whoop! Whoop!

DREADED VULUTURE 2
Whoop! Whoop!

CARTLA
You tatted your fucking FACE? Oh fuck...

J.A. ignores her and blissfully glides offstage.

CARTLA (CONT'D)
(to GUY)
He tatted his fucking face. He's a freak.
(beat)
No! My son won't have a clown-face as a father. No. NEVER!

GUY FIERI
It doesn't have to feel like this. One bite will make it all okay.

DREADED VULUTURE 1 & 2 team up to snatch
CARTLA's gun out of her hands.

GUY FIERI (CONT'D)
You want it the hard way. Of course, you do. YOU. You. You!

DREADED VULUTURE 1 removes the cowboy
hat from GUY's head. DREADED VULUTURE 2
hands GUY his raccoon ears and tail. GUY
adorns the raccoon regalia as he talks.

GUY FIERI
You're great at bluffing. Been doin' it your whole life, huh?
(beat)
Who showed Dirk Benny those dead raccoons? Who told him it'd be funny to tell J.A.
that those were his parents?

DREADED VULUTURE 1
(imitating CARTLA)
Dirk, go get J.A. and tell him we found his parents.
(laughs)

GUY FIERI
Let's play a liar's game, then. Poker. Wild Six Card Draw. I win, you eat.

He slowly reaches into his pocket for a deck of
cards. He shuffles them a bit.

CARTLA

If I win?

GUY FIERI

This all goes away. Cartla gets what she wants.

CARTLA agrees. GUY deals the cards.

DREADED VULTURE 1 & 2 begin to circle them as they play. They laugh, mock, and taunt CARTLA. They toss her gun back and forth to one another.

CARTLA

These cards don't make sense. There's six jokers. You cheat!

GUY lays down his cards.

GUY FIERI

Mmm mmm! Aces and eights. Now, that's gangsta! Full-throttle!

In a quick panic, CARTLA grabs the gun from DREADED VULTURE 1. She fires, shooting GUY in the chest.

GUY FIERI

(smiling)

You win. Like you wanted.

"The Last Cowboy Song" by Johnny Cash/Waylon Jennings/Willie Nelson begins to play.

DREADED VULTURE 1 & 2 solemnly drag GUY offstage while singing.

DREADED VULUTURE 1 & 2

This is the last cowboy song
The end of a hundred year waltz
The voices sound sad as they're singin' along
Another piece of America's lost.

They exit.

CARTLA collects herself for a moment. She reaches for the chili spoon, which has now fallen to the ground. It looks like she might eat the chili, but instead she stares at her reflection in the spoon.

CARTLA

Fix the emptiness. Can you hear me? Poto? Poto and Cabengo! You're the only one who can fix it now. Talk to me!

She speaks in a secretive twin language as she comes undone in every way possible.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

Won ehmes in kalb ningem poto. Poto and Cabengo! Dugon, haus you dinikin, du-ah. Snup-aduh ah-wee diedipana, dihabana. Poto and Cabengo!

She drops the spoon.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

One enol Cabengo. One Cabengo.

She huddles in the fetal position.

CRACKER enters, a woman aged more by cigarettes than numbers.

JOE enters. He and CRACKER carry on a phone conversation, as each of them holds a land line phone (the kind with the curly-cue cords). JOE holds a photo, which he glances at from time to time.

CRACKER

(with venom)

Joe.

JOE

This weather, huh.

CRACKER

Talk about your kids. Cristy will be fine, maybe, but not her. She's always in so much trouble. Like it's marked right on her face. She's breakable. A little bird flapping brittle wings.

(pause)

I guess you can forget what you don't see.

JOE

Yeah.

CRACKER

Fuck you. Where's the money? You promised to help. You promised.

JOE

Work. Working... on it.

CRACKER

Dammit, Joe!

(beat)

Jesus can forgive you, but I don't!

JOE

This isn't why I called.

CRACKER

They need school clothes! Clothes, for fuck's sake!

JOE

Christmas.

CRACKER

You fuckin' better. The only fingers I have are always gonna point at you.

JOE

My mom will help with things.

CRACKER

Thank her for me, will you?

JOE

Gotta go.

CRACKER

Asshole!

JOE

Mm hmm. This is why phone's slam.

He slams his phone as he exits.

CRACKER

This is why hearts break when they shouldn't have to.

She slowly hangs her phone on the receiver. She exits.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 4

A real and desolate coldness. Sunshine on Badlands dunes. Items from CARTLA's duffle bag scattered around. A sign post reading 'Makhosica othugwahe', though the words have been crossed out and it now reads 'Anaheim' J.A. lies motionless, eyes closed indefinitely and facing out to the audience. His bullet wounds are sticky-wet yet beginning to cake over with dried blood.

CARTLA staggers up from a sleep avoided for weeks, ignoring the gun that lay next to her. She recollects, feels the cold, and assesses her surroundings with question.

CARTLA
(discovering words)

The fuck?

She grabs a bottle of vodka and takes a large drink. Finally noticing J.A., she looks at him then looks away. She makes a valiant search for a cigarette, but only finds an empty pack.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

J.A. wake up. We're lost. We can't be back?

She throws items from her bag, including her bible.

CARTLA (CONT'D)

J.A.?!

She notices J.A. as corpse, staring at him for a moment before searching his pockets. She finds her trusty pizzo. She searches him again to find a lighter. She flicks the Bic, but struggles to ignite the flame. Victory! She moves the flame to meet her pipe, inhales deeply, and slowly turns her back to the audience. The printed wings on her shirt are strikingly visible. She exhales.

LIGHTS DIM.

END OF PLAY.

VITA

The author was born in Albert Lea, Minnesota and raised in Rapid City, South Dakota. She obtained her Bachelor's degree in English from the University of South Dakota in 2013. She joined the University of New Orleans Creative Writing Workshop program to pursue a M.F.A. in playwriting, and has had her plays produced in Louisiana and Texas.