



Photo by Thomas Lascher
Paul Dillon in a scene from the Tamarind Theatre production
of "Hellcab." Set design by Robert G. Smith.



HELLCAB

BY WILL KERN

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DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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HELLCAB was produced by Bang Bang Productions in association with The Tamarrind Theatre (Suzanne De Walt and Tom Kendall, Producers) at The Tamarrind Theatre, in Los Angeles, California, on December 1, 1995. It was directed by Jennifer Markowitz; the set design was by Robert G. Smith; the lighting design was by Peter Edwards; the sound design was by Rick Peoples; and the stage manager was Bob Howlett. The cast was as follows:

CABBIE Paul Dillon
COULD BE A NICE PERSON, OTHERS Tara Chocol
I AIN'T NO MADAM, OTHERS April Grace
MAKE A LEFT INTO THE ALLEY,
OTHERS Andrew Hawkes
IT'S A FREE COUNTRY, OTHERS Reggie Hayes
THAT'S ME, I'M STEVE, OTHERS Loren Lazerine
I LOVE YOU, OTHERS Laura Kellogg Sandberg

HELLCAB was originally produced under the title HELLCAB DOES CHRISTMAS by Famous Door Theatre (Dan Rivkin, Artistic Director) in Chicago, Illinois, on November 27, 1992. It was directed by Jennifer Markowitz; the set design was by Robert G. Smith; the costume design was by Alberta Warren; the lighting design was by Jeff Pines; and the stage manager was Melissa Moore. The cast was as follows:

CABBIE Paul Dillon
COULD BE A NICE PERSON, OTHERS Tara Chocol
SPACE EXPLORATION, OTHERS Paul Friedman
MAKE A LEFT, OTHERS Andrew Hawkes
AIN'T GONNA CALL NO POLICE, OTHERS ... Reggie Hayes
I LOVE YOU, OTHERS Laura Kellogg

CHARACTERS

WHITE MAN CAB DRIVER

OLDER WHITE MAN RELIGIOUS MAN

AL
HOMER
STEVE

INTENSE MAN
SOUTHSIDE GUY
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2

OLDER WHITE WOMAN RELIGIOUS WOMAN

LOOKER
DRUNK WOMAN
DISTRAUGHT WOMAN

YOUNG WHITE MAN

PAKISTANI MAN
CRACK HEAD
GOOD-LOOKING MAN
SOME GUY
SCARY MAN
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1

BLACK MAN

X-HAT
YOUNG BLACK MAN
FATHER-TO-BE
BOYFRIEND
ARCHITECT

BLACK WOMAN

LAWYER
PREGNANT WOMAN
SHALITA
DISPATCHER'S VOICE

YOUNG WHITE WOMAN

SHOPPER
STONED GIRL
GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN
RECEPTIONIST
SOUTHSIDE GIRL

For my parents

TIME

A couple of days before Christmas.

PLACE

Chicago, Ill.

HELLCAB

SCENE 1

Darkness. Howling wind.

Lights up on the Cab Driver, a tired looking man in his mid-thirties, carrying an electronic taxi meter. He saunters Down Center Stage through the cold Chicago morning to his beat up rattle trap of a taxicab; he opens the door, gets in. The wind dies down once we're inside with him.

For the next few moments he gets comfortable with his surroundings, tries to shake off the grogginess of the early morning. He slowly and sleepily hooks up the meter, checks the dispatch radio, etc., all the while mumbling to himself, something about the cold, something about the early morning hour, something about getting coffee....

He sticks the key in the ignition, tries to start the car, but all he gets at first is the sickening grind of an old, cold engine. Finally, it fires up with a chugging, choking VROOOM!

Earsplitting rock and roll music blasts from the stereo and he fanatically pounces on the volume knob, whipping it down quickly.

He leans back, a little peeved.

BLACKOUT

A Brief Note from the Playwright

These are just a few things to keep in mind when staging a production of HELLCAB:

The ensemble should be as small as possible, the optimum number being seven actors total. Refer to the Characters page for a tried and true ensemble breakdown, but feel free to cast it how the hell you want to unless specifically stated in the script.

The cab can be as simple or as complex as your budget allows. It can be either an entire cab on stage, with the top shorn off of course, or just the suggestion of a car. The original hellcab had two car seats built on a raked wooden platform with the back seat jacked up just a little over three feet higher than the front so the audience could see the passengers. There was an old dashboard and steering wheel built on the inside of the car for the driver, and the front was a wooden frame painted yellow with an old headlight grill bolted to it. We found not having doors on the cab helps with quick entrances and exits (don't mime the doors!), and actors don't have to worry about getting their hands crushed during a blackout. However, having a full car on stage is aesthetically superior, provided that the top is ripped off and the back end raised. Also, the slamming Whoomf! of the heavy metal doors serves to accentuate the beginning and ending of each scene. Finally, what is essential to the show is the pacing, which should be breakneck.

Will Kern
September, 1997

SCENE 2

The Cab Driver picks up his first passengers of the day, a well-dressed religious couple.

CAB DRIVER. Morning to you.
RELIGIOUS MAN. We're going to the Pillar of Fire church on Clifton and Barry. Do you know it?
CAB DRIVER. I know Clifton and Barry. *(He starts the meter, pulls away.)* So how are you good people doing this morning?
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. Wonderful.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Couldn't be better. You?
CAB DRIVER. Fine. I'm a little tired.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Been working long?
CAB DRIVER. Just started.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Well.... Some weather we're having, huh?
CAB DRIVER. Yeah, and the weatherman says it's just gonna get colder.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Is that so?
CAB DRIVER. Uh-huh.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Well....
CAB DRIVER. *(Pause.)* Say, are you guys going to church this morning?
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. Yes we are.
CAB DRIVER. It's Thursday.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. That's right.
CAB DRIVER. It's six-thirty in the morning.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Yes?
CAB DRIVER. Well.... Nothing.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Every day's a good day for church.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. And we like to go before work.
CAB DRIVER. Ah.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Do you like to go to church?
CAB DRIVER. Me? No.
RELIGIOUS MAN. That's too bad. You can come with us if you like.

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CAB DRIVER. Hey, I appreciate the offer, but I gotta work, you know how it is.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Oh, I know how it is. Some things are more important than work, though.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. Like your immortal soul.
CAB DRIVER. You got me there.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. Whether you're going to spend the rest of eternity in a fiery pit.
CAB DRIVER. Ouch.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. Where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.
CAB DRIVER. Boy, I really hate that gnashing of teeth.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. Jesus Christ is the most important thing in life. He comes before work, before family.
RELIGIOUS MAN. He *is* family.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. God the Father.
CAB DRIVER. Must be nice to be so well connected.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. You can't imagine the peace our Lord offers us.
CAB DRIVER. That's great.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. You just can't imagine.
CAB DRIVER. Yeah, well....
RELIGIOUS MAN. You should see our children. Little angels. Lauren was saved when she was six, and Paula was saved when she was only four.
CAB DRIVER. I'm happy for you.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. My husband says they're little angels, and they are most of the time. But they're children, and you know how children are.
CAB DRIVER. Sure.
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. They've been known to misbehave a time or two.
RELIGIOUS MAN. But when they do we just spank their little bottoms, don't we dear?
RELIGIOUS WOMAN. You have to have discipline. You just have to.
CAB DRIVER. Uh-huh.
RELIGIOUS MAN. So we just spank their little bottoms.

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RELIGIOUS WOMAN. Not too hard though.
RELIGIOUS MAN. Oh no. Not too hard. Just hard enough
to make it hurt. (*The Cab Driver pulls over and hits the meter.*)
CAB DRIVER. \$5.70.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

The Cab Driver is driving. A Pakistani Man is in the back seat.

PAKISTANI. We can make the light! We can make the light!
(*The Cab Driver slams on the brakes.*)
CAB DRIVER. No. We can't.
PAKISTANI. Why do you drive your cab so slow? You are
the slowest cab driver I have ever seen.
CAB DRIVER. Right. Like I want to get into an accident so
you can get to work on time.
PAKISTANI. I'm late as it is. You are going to make me
later, buster.
CAB DRIVER. Is that my fault? You should have left earlier.
PAKISTANI. You will never make any money if you always
go this slow. You've got to be quick. Always be ahead of the
other guy.
CAB DRIVER. (*Turns back to the Pakistani.*) What do you know
about it?
PAKISTANI. I drive cab on weekend. I have driven cab for
eighteen years. (*Motions to the light.*) Please. The light is green.
CAB DRIVER. (*Faces forward, pulls away.*) That's great.
PAKISTANI. I can tell you have not driven cab for very long.
CAB DRIVER. Four months.
PAKISTANI. I would have thought less. Please to make turn
here on Lincoln. It is quicker. Much quicker.
CAB DRIVER. You know, that's the major problem I have

with this job is dealing with the other cab drivers. You guys
drive like maniacs.

PAKISTANI. I may drive like maniac, but at the end of the
night I have more money than you. I have three hundred dol-
lars and you have measly one fifty. Because I am more aggres-
sive.

CAB DRIVER. I'll take less money. I don't need the aggra-
vation.

PAKISTANI. Oh, you really sound like a beginner. You will
learn. Someday, you will drive as I do.

CAB DRIVER. My customers complain all the time about the
way the other cab drivers drive. How like when you get in you
got to hold on for dear life and pray you don't die on the
way.

PAKISTANI. Who cares how they feel?

CAB DRIVER. Right.

PAKISTANI. Right!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

*Two Cab Drivers are sitting in the cab line at a large down-
town hotel. The driver behind the wheel, a black man, wears
a baseball cap with a large X on the front. Sitting next to
him is Al, a white man, a real dyed-in-the-wool Socialist type.
They are in the middle of a heated discussion when our Cab
Driver comes upon them.*

X-HAT. All I'm saying is what I do is my business and what
you do is yours.

AL. Yeah, and with that kind of thinking how are things ever
supposed to change? Don't you see what you're doing? You're
segregating your own people.

X-HAT. That's bullshit. (*The Cab Driver hops in the back.*)

CAB DRIVER. Hey Al.

AL. Oh, hey.

CAB DRIVER. Line moving?

AL. Not yet, but it will be. Doorman said there's a lot of checkouts today. Over three hundred.

X-HAT. We ain't moving yet though.

CAB DRIVER. Still a little early.

X-HAT. Not that early.

CAB DRIVER. We got about twenty minutes, probably.

X-HAT. Not everybody checks out at eight o'clock.

AL. Not everybody's going to O'Hare either.

X-HAT. Why don't you tell me something I don't know.

AL. Hey, let's ask this guy.

CAB DRIVER. What?

AL. You pick up black people?

CAB DRIVER. Uh, yeah....

AL. You hear that? I pick up black people. This guy picks up black people.

X-HAT. Jesus Christ, I feel like standing up and saluting the goddamn flag.

AL. So what's your problem?

X-HAT. Hey, it's a free country.

AL. No, really, what's your problem?

X-HAT. Listen, who you guys pick up has got nothing to do with me.

AL. So what's with the hat? That X hat?

X-HAT. Malcolm X....

AL. So what do you think Malcolm X would say about you not picking up your own people?

CAB DRIVER. I read that book.

AL. No, really. What do you think Malcolm X would say about you not picking up your own people?

X-HAT. Malcolm don't drive this cab. Malcolm don't feed my wife and kids. And if he was alive today I doubt very seriously Malcolm X would tell me to pick up somebody I don't want to pick up. And don't be acting like I'm the only one who's like that neither. Lot of drivers don't pick up black folks, especially white drivers.

AL. What does that have to do with it?

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X-HAT. It's my decision. You and this ugly motherfucker wanna pick up black folk, that's your decision. But don't be making it out like it's some kinda race thing and I'm some kinda Uncle Tom, 'cause I'm not. What are ya'll worried about, being politically correct? Fuck politically correct. I take care of myself. You ain't gonna take care of me, are you?

CAB DRIVER. No.

X-HAT. And neither is nobody else. Now if ya'll want to stay on the south side of Chicago and run up and down between 35th and 95th all day and all night long that is totally up to you. But don't tell me how to do my business.

AL. White folk rob cab drivers too.

X-HAT. Well, I gotta pick up somebody.

AL. Swear to God.

X-HAT. And what the fuck you know about Malcolm X? The fuck you know about being black? You can all the time be whining about the poor black man, like, "Oh, I feel so sorry for the poor black man." But the truth of the matter is when you go home at night you are a white man going home in your white skin and I am a black man going home in my black skin. In America. So don't tell me you know anything about it 'cause you don't know shit.

CAB DRIVER. Line's moving.

AL. Yeah. Looks like they got luggage too. Let's hope they're going to O'Hare and not the goddamn Northwestern Train Station. *(Al gets out of the cab, exits. Pause.)*

CAB DRIVER. I am so tired.

X-HAT. It's a free country.

BLACKOUT

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SCENE 5

The Cab Driver is behind the wheel. A black woman is in the back. She is a Lawyer and looks it, dressed in a sharp business suit and carrying a briefcase.

LAWYER. Northwestern Train Station, please. *(The Cab Driver hits the meter, pulls away.)*
CAB DRIVER. You got it.
LAWYER. Got awful cold this morning, didn't it?
CAB DRIVER. Yeah. And the weather guy said snow possibly.
LAWYER. Well, what's a Christmas without snow.
CAB DRIVER. Exactly. So. How you been?
LAWYER. Oh, fine, I guess. I still have a lot of shopping to do.
CAB DRIVER. Time's running out.
LAWYER. I know.
CAB DRIVER. So, what do you do?
LAWYER. I'm a lawyer.
CAB DRIVER. *(Unable to hide his disappointment.)* Oh. Really.
LAWYER. You got something against lawyers?
CAB DRIVER. Well, sure. Doesn't everybody? I mean, let's face it, when it comes to your profession.... Well, never mind.
LAWYER. What?
CAB DRIVER. No, forget it.
LAWYER. No, I want to hear this. What is it about lawyers you don't particularly like?
CAB DRIVER. The fact that they're all sharks.
LAWYER. Why do you say that? Do you know any lawyers?
CAB DRIVER. I know you've seen *Court TV*. What about the lawyers on that show, boy. Make your hair curl.
LAWYER. Well, if you're talking about criminal lawyers —
CAB DRIVER. Yeah yeah yeah. Criminal lawyers.
LAWYER. It's pretty well known the worst lawyers are the criminal attorneys.
CAB DRIVER. Get outta here.
LAWYER. No, I'm serious. They become criminal attorneys because they're not smart enough to do anything else.

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CAB DRIVER. They teach you that in law school?
LAWYER. It's common knowledge in the profession.
CAB DRIVER. What, are you trying to pull my chain here?
LAWYER. No.
CAB DRIVER. I may be a taxi driver but I'm not stupid.
LAWYER. I didn't say you were.
CAB DRIVER. Well, you just can't make a gross generalization like all criminal attorneys are not as smart as the rest of the profession. I didn't just fall off the cabbage truck, you know.
LAWYER. Now hold on a second. I wasn't insinuating that you had.
CAB DRIVER. You tell me what other profession has public humiliation as an integral part of its system.
LAWYER. And how is that?
CAB DRIVER. You're a woman. You ever seen a lawyer get a woman who claims she's been raped up on the witness stand, asking her how many men she's slept with, and how many times, and going into every detail. It's disgusting.
LAWYER. You can't do that anymore. They've passed laws against that kind of cross examination.
CAB DRIVER. That's just it. It was so rampant they had to pass a law just to keep a lawyer's integrity in check.
LAWYER. But that goes back to the criminal attorneys. The criminal attorneys do that.
CAB DRIVER. I take it all back. Lawyers aren't sharks. *(Pause.)* That's too high up the evolutionary chain. Lawyers are cockroaches.
LAWYER. You can let me out on the corner.
CAB DRIVER. Before or after the light?
LAWYER. Before.
CAB DRIVER. Okay. *(He pulls over and hits the meter.)*
Six dollars. I hope I didn't offend you.
LAWYER. Oh, no.
CAB DRIVER. We could continue this discussion over dinner if you like. *(The Lawyer laughs, throws money on the seat, and gets out of the cab.)* Hey, I'm a real stud.

BLACKOUT

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SCENE 6

A young woman, a Shopper, gets in.

SHOPPER. Take me to Water Tower.
CAB DRIVER. The shopping center or the tourist attraction?
SHOPPER. Very funny. The mall. *(Pause. Then, to herself.)*
Goddamn son of a bitch.
CAB DRIVER. What's the matter?
SHOPPER. Oh, I can't get my car started. I'm having car trouble. And I'm late.
CAB DRIVER. What's wrong with the car?
SHOPPER. It won't start. What do you mean what's wrong with the car?
CAB DRIVER. Well, I just thought if it was the battery, I could —
SHOPPER. Listen, I don't know what's wrong with the car and I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to have any little conversation. I just want you to take me to Water Tower.
CAB DRIVER. Okay.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

The Cab Driver is driving, talking to himself.

CAB DRIVER. Man, that's having the real Christmas spirit. If she only knew.... If she only knew.... If she only knew what a lousy rip-roaring cocksucking bitch she was! I mean, at Christmas time too. Like Christmas isn't fucked up enough as it is, I got to have some cunt treating me like I was her fucking spitoon. Goddamn it! *(Pause.)* Fucking people make me sick....

BLACKOUT

SCENE 8

The Cab Driver calls out the window to two unseen people.

CAB DRIVER. Hey! Did you guys call a cab? *(A Crack Head and a really Stoned Girl get in. The Cab Driver hits the meter, pulls away.)*
CRACK HEAD. *(Rapid fire.)* I'm paying in advance, man, I'm paying in advance. *(Throws five dollars on the front seat.)* Don't think we're gonna run out on you, man, we ain't gonna run out on you, man, we ain't gonna run out on you. We pay everything. We pay up. Just don't think we're gonna run out on you.
CAB DRIVER. Don't worry about it. Where do you wanna go?
CRACK HEAD. We're going to a store about five blocks from here. *(He cracks open a beer and it sprays all over the car.)* You don't mind if I drink a beer in your car, do you man? Yeah, a little grocery store about five blocks from here. Go up two lights and hang a left, okay man?
CAB DRIVER. Sure.
CRACK HEAD. Man, that fucking C is kicking my ASS! That was some good shit, some good cane. Richard said if we come up with the dough he'll come up with the shit. We can come up with the dough, man. We can come up with the dough. Hell, that's the easy part. Coming up with the dough is the easy part, man. Coming up with the dough is the easy part. You got any cash?
STONED GIRL. Uh-uh.
CRACK HEAD. Man, what the fuck you mean, 'uh-uh'? I gotta do everything? Gimme those fucking food stamps.
STONED GIRL. I ain't gonna give you all of them.
CRACK HEAD. Just gimme the fucking food stamps. And what about that seven bucks? I thought you said you had seven bucks?
STONED GIRL. I gotta buy a pair of pants.
CRACK HEAD. Man, fuck your pair of pants.

STONED GIRL. If I don't come home with a pair of pants my old man's gonna kill me.

CRACK HEAD. Fuck your old man. Do you wanna do this coke or not?

STONED GIRL. I gotta have my pants.

CRACK HEAD. Pull up here! Pull up here! *(The Cab Driver pulls over and stops. The Crack Head jumps out and runs offstage.)*

CAB DRIVER. Jesus Christ. *(A few seconds later the Crack Head climbs back in the cab.)*

CRACK HEAD. He wouldn't do it. He wouldn't do it. Motherfucker! He'd do it if I was a chick. If I was a chick he'd do it. He does it all the time for that gash that goes in there. Son of a bitch! Okay, we got to go someplace else. Driver, go down here. *(The Cab Driver pulls away.)* Take a left on California and go down here about three blocks.

STONED GIRL. You shouldn't say that about my old man.

CRACK HEAD. What?

STONED GIRL. You shouldn't say that about my old man. My old man is a saint.

CRACK HEAD. Hey, fuck your old man.

STONED GIRL. Man, I am telling you. *(The Crack Head grabs her roughly, jams her head into the back of the seat.)*

CRACK HEAD. You hear what I said? I said fuck your old man. And fuck your pair of pants too. I'm trying to score some rock here and I gotta hear about your fucking old man? *(Notices something out the window.)* Hey. Hey, look. It's Homer! Stop the car, man, just stop the car! I'll be right back. Just stop the car! *(The Cab Driver pulls over and the Crack Head jumps out and runs over to Homer. They converse sotto voce.)*

STONED GIRL. This guy's a nut.

CAB DRIVER. What?

STONED GIRL. I said this guy's a nut.

CAB DRIVER. What do you mean?

STONED GIRL. I mean, this guy. He's acting all crazy.

CAB DRIVER. He a friend of yours?

STONED GIRL. I met him about an hour ago in that bar you picked us up at.

CAB DRIVER. What? *(She looks out her window as Homer and*

the Crack Head walk up to the cab.)

STONED GIRL. I don't know this other guy.

CAB DRIVER. You don't? *(The Crack Head and Homer get in.)*

CRACK HEAD. How much money you got, Homer?

HOMER. I think I got five bucks.

CRACK HEAD. Five bucks? That ain't shit, man. You got any food stamps? Hand 'em over. *(Homer gives the Crack Head his money and food stamps.)* You gimme yours too. *(The Stoned Girl starts to give the Crack Head her food stamps, but the Crack Head gives her Homer's food stamps and cash as well as his own.)* Here. Count up this shit. Man, driver, could you turn the heat down? I'm sweating my ass off in here. It's hot as a motherfucker. It's hot as a motherfucker in here and I'm in this T-shirt. I'm in this motherfucking T-shirt. This motherfucking T-shirt. Would you count up that shit, please? *(The Stoned Girl counts up the food stamps and money. Pause.)* I'm feeling good, man. My heart is pumping. What about it, Homer, are we kicking some ass or what? Hey driver, hey driver, if we go over the meter, if we go over five bucks will you take food stamps?

CAB DRIVER. What?

CRACK HEAD. They're just as good as cash, man. They're just as good as cash. *(He looks out at a store on the right.)* Goddamn. Place is closed. Motherfucking place is closed. Fuck this. Take me down to Sacramento and, what the fuck is it? What is it, Homer?

HOMER. I don't know.

CRACK HEAD. Just take me down to Sacramento and what the fuck. *(The Crack Head and Homer really bust out laughing at this scintillating witticism.)* Just drive to Sacramento and I'll tell you what to do when we get there.

CAB DRIVER. Well, okay....

CRACK HEAD. Yeah. Good.

CAB DRIVER. *(Pause.)* Now I don't mean to alarm anybody, but we're already over five dollars.

CRACK HEAD. Yeah? So?

CAB DRIVER. So we got to get this straightened out here. I mean —

CRACK HEAD. What's the problem, man?

CAB DRIVER. There's no problem. It's just that —
CRACK HEAD. DON'T YOU WANNA TAKE ME AROUND
ANYMORE!

CAB DRIVER. Yeah. Sure. No problem. Just tell me where
you want me to go.

CRACK HEAD. Turn right here. Turn right here and go
down about two blocks. Fuck this. I wanna go to the man. I
wanna go straight to the man, get this shit straightened out.
He owes me a little money. He owes me a little money and
he ain't working so I know he ain't home. Or he is home.
Or not. He might not be. He might not be home. He might
be out. He might be out looking for a job or something. Or
he might be home. He could be. You never know. Pull up
here, driver. Pull up here. I'll be right back. *(The Crack Head
jumps out of the car.)*

HOMER. I'm going with him. *(He follows the Crack Head.)*

CAB DRIVER. Man.

STONED GIRL. Something else, huh?

CAB DRIVER. Yeah.

STONED GIRL. He's just all cooked up is all.

CAB DRIVER. Yeah. Hey....

STONED GIRL. Yeah?

CAB DRIVER. I got nothing against you, lady, but this guy
is scaring me. He's acting all wild and shit and I don't like it
and it's scaring me. So I'm gonna have to ask you to take a
hike.

STONED GIRL. No problem.

CAB DRIVER. Nothing against you, you understand.

STONED GIRL. Yeah.

CAB DRIVER. The guy's just scaring me. That's all.

STONED GIRL. I understand. *(The Stoned Girl gets out of the
cab, wanders aimlessly offstage. The Cab Driver turns off the meter,
pulls away. Lights slowly fade to black.)*

SCENE 9

The Cab Driver has picked up a Young Black Man.

CAB DRIVER. Morning.

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Thank you. I need to go to that used
car lot over there on 65th and Ashland.

CAB DRIVER. Okay. *(The Cab Driver hits the meter and pulls
away. Long pause.)*

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Cold as a motherfucker.

CAB DRIVER. Well, it's Chicago. It's winter. It's gonna get
cold, I guess.

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Yeah.

CAB DRIVER. You gonna go buy a car?

YOUNG BLACK MAN. No. I gotta talk to the owner of the
lot.

CAB DRIVER. Yeah?

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Yeah. Motherfucker be fucking me
around, I think. Maybe not. I hope not. He better not be.

CAB DRIVER. What happened?

YOUNG BLACK MAN. I was in the lot two days ago and I
bought me a '94 Honda Civic straight off the lot. Paid for the
motherfucker in cash. I say, what kinda warranty am I gonna
get case this motherfucker break down? He say he fix it if any-
thing go wrong with it in two months. Well I had it out yes-
terday, and I was driving it, and the motherfucking engine
blew up. And I call him back this morning 'cause he tow it
in yesterday to take a look at it, and now he say it's gonna
cost me for the tow and he ain't gonna fix it for nothing. No,
now it's gonna cost me eight hundred dollars. Well I ain't got
eight hundred dollars. And even if I did I wouldn't be giving
it to him no how.

CAB DRIVER. Did you sign a contract or anything?

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Uh-uh.

CAB DRIVER. Well man, I don't know if you have a leg to
stand on. 'Cause if you don't have proof....

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Proof? Motherfucker shook my hand!

Then he say he ain't gonna work on the car 'til I pay him fifty dollars for the tow. I ain't got that kinda money. I just spent two thousand on the motherfucking car.

CAB DRIVER. So what are you gonna do?

YOUNG BLACK MAN. I tell you what I'm gonna do. *(He leans over the seat and taps the Cab Driver on the shoulder.)* I'm gonna go up and splain how he said he was gonna fix my car. I'm gonna remind him. Motherfucking Arab. Don't belong in this country anyway. Am I right or wrong? Am I right or wrong? I'm gonna splain how he owes me a free fix or a new motherfucking car.

CAB DRIVER. Don't touch me. *(The Young Black Man steps touching him, leans back in the seat. Long pause.)*

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Sorry, man.

CAB DRIVER. *(Pause.)* What if he says no?

YOUNG BLACK MAN. He ain't gonna say no. We made a deal, you know what I'm saying? And if he does say no, I got a friend. I ain't saying we're gonna fuck him up or nothing like that, you know what I'm saying, but if he don't do right by me he's gonna be awful fucking sorry. 'Cause I got a friend.

CAB DRIVER. Well be careful. You don't wanna go to jail because of this asshole.

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Oh, he ain't gonna call no police.

CAB DRIVER. You sure?

YOUNG BLACK MAN. Oh, yeah. He ain't gonna call no police.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 10

The Cab Driver picks up a stylishly dressed woman in her early 50s, a real Looker.

CAB DRIVER. Afternoon. Or is it still morning?

LOOKER. I'm going to my apartment on State and Harrison.

CAB DRIVER. Okay.

LOOKER. *(Pause.)* So. You gonna call me "Mama"? You gonna call me "Sugar Mama"? You are going to call me "Sugar Mama," aren't you?

CAB DRIVER. What?

LOOKER. Are you gonna call me "Mama"? You gonna call me "Sugar Mama"? If you're gonna call me "Mama" you better hurry up. So. Go ahead.

CAB DRIVER. Well.... Uh....

LOOKER. You don't have to be shy.

CAB DRIVER. I'm not.

LOOKER. That's good. You may proceed. Go ahead and say, "Hello, Mama, I've come to tell you all my troubles."

CAB DRIVER. Uh....

LOOKER. Put your head on my chest and say —

CAB DRIVER. Now wait a second.

LOOKER. What?

CAB DRIVER. I can't call you "Mama." You're not old enough to be my mother.

LOOKER. Oh. Flattery will get you everywhere. But in fact, I think you are old enough to be my son, if I started out at a young age, which I did. Not that young though. Not for lack of trying. How old do you think I am? *(The Cab Driver checks her in the rear-view mirror.)*

CAB DRIVER. Oh, I don't know. Forty? Forty-two?

LOOKER. You're sweet. You're a real sweet boy. You must be trying to get on my good side.

CAB DRIVER. Ah. Well....

LOOKER. Keep it up. You are doing real good.

CAB DRIVER. So, what do you do?

LOOKER. You mean for a job?

CAB DRIVER. Yeah.

LOOKER. I'm a lawyer.

CAB DRIVER. Oh, really. You're my second lawyer today.

LOOKER. Really. Let's hope you're not too tired.

CAB DRIVER. Excuse me?

LOOKER. I'm a contract lawyer and I hate it. It's boring as hell. The only way I can get through all those meetings is by

thinking about sex all the time.
CAB DRIVER. Isn't that nice.
LOOKER. But enough about me. Where are you from?
CAB DRIVER. Rockford originally.
LOOKER. So what brings you to Chicago?
CAB DRIVER. Couldn't find a job in Rockford.
LOOKER. So you drive a cab?
CAB DRIVER. I can't find a job in Chicago either.
LOOKER. I was in Rockford once.
CAB DRIVER. Really? It's a beautiful little town.
LOOKER. I wouldn't know. I spent most of the time in a motel room.
CAB DRIVER. Yeah? You mean like conducting job interviews, right?
LOOKER. You're a funny guy. This is good. Pull over here. *(The Cab Driver pulls over. He turns back to her and their eyes meet. What is between them is unmistakable. The Cab Driver turns away shyly.)*
CAB DRIVER. You're a very sexy woman. I guess you know that though, don't you?
LOOKER. So I've been told. *(Pause. He hits the meter.)*
CAB DRIVER. That's six dollars.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 11

The Cab Driver is driving, talking to himself.

CAB DRIVER. What was that? *(Pause.)* Fucking Republicans. *(Pause.)* You gonna call me "Mama"? You gonna call me "Sugar Mama"? I'll tell you what, I'll call you "hungry." *(Pause.)* Hungry.... *(Pause.)* You gonna call me "Whopper"? You gonna call me "Big Mac"? If you're gonna call me "Big Mac" you better hurry up. I just might take a bite out of you. What am I say-

ing? *(Pause.)* It's too early for this. The weirdos aren't supposed to come out until night. *(Notices something outside.)* No. They're here. *(Pause.)* Welcome to hell. I hate this motherfucking job. I drive a cab for Satan. Yeah. *(Pause.)* Hellcab.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 12

A Good-Looking Woman gets in the cab. She has a scary around her head and wears sunglasses.

GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN. Could you just wait here a second, please?
CAB DRIVER. No problem. *(A Good-Looking Man, also wearing sunglasses, saunters up slowly, trying to look as inconspicuous as possible and failing miserably at it. He gets into the cab. He leans over the seat and says quietly to the Cab Driver.)*
GOOD-LOOKING MAN. Could you take us to the Days Inn on Diversey, please?
CAB DRIVER. No problem. *(He hits the meter and pulls away. Pause. The Good-Looking Man and the Good-Looking Woman speak quietly to each other.)*
GOOD-LOOKING MAN. I can't wait. Look. My hands are shaking. Did you bring the bananas?
GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN. Uh-huh.
GOOD-LOOKING MAN. I can smell it. I can smell you.
GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN. I'm ready. I've been ready for hours. Waiting. Waiting for you.
GOOD-LOOKING MAN. I love you. I love your tits.
GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN. Yes! *(The Cab Driver adjusts the rear view mirror and glances into it. The Good-Looking Man starts to slide down the seat.)*
GOOD-LOOKING MAN. I've got to have you. I've got to have you right here. Right now. *(The Good-Looking Man goes*

down on her and she is loving it.)
CAB DRIVER. Hey man, what are you doing? *(The Good-Looking Woman throws money on the front seat.)*
GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN. Turn around, driver. This is none of your business.
CAB DRIVER. Yeah. *(The Cab Driver flips up the hood of his sweatshirt. Pause. He lights a cigarette.)* Mind if I smoke? *(He turns on the radio.)* How 'bout those Bulls, huh?

BLACKOUT

SCENE 13

The Cab Driver is panicked by what he sees coming towards him. A very Pregnant Black Woman is being led to the car by a Father-To-Be.

PREGNANT WOMAN. Oh God. Oh God. Oh God. *(She struggles into the back.)* Let go my hand! Let go my hand!
FATHER-TO-BE. Please let me help you, Peaches.
PREGNANT WOMAN. I can do it! I can do it! *(He puts her overnight case in the front seat.)* Oh God! Oh God! *(He starts to walk around to the other passenger door.)* Wait a minute! Where you going? Where you going?
FATHER-TO-BE. I'm going to get in the car.
PREGNANT WOMAN. Well come on get in this side!
FATHER-TO-BE. Well, I just —
PREGNANT WOMAN. I can slide over! I can slide over!
FATHER-TO-BE. I can just get in on the other side.
PREGNANT WOMAN. Get in the car! Get in the car! Get in the car! Get in the car!
FATHER-TO-BE. All right, all right, all right, all right! *(He slides in her side. To the Cab Driver.)* We're going to Mercy Hospital. Do you know where that is?
CAB DRIVER. Oh, Jesus. I think so. It's by MLK and the

Drive, right? *(The Cab Driver pulls away and drives frantically through the rest of the scene.)*
FATHER-TO-BE. Yes. Just go straight down this street and I'll get you the rest of the way there. You okay, baby?
PREGNANT WOMAN. Shut up. Nobody asked you anything. Just shut up and don't talk to me. Don't talk to me ever again.
CAB DRIVER. Down here?
FATHER-TO-BE. Yes.
PREGNANT WOMAN. What's the matter? Don't you know where the hospital is?
CAB DRIVER. Well, I think I do.
PREGNANT WOMAN. Jesus. They let anybody drive a taxi these days.
FATHER-TO-BE. Don't hassle him, baby. Just let him drive.
PREGNANT WOMAN. Don't tell me what to do! I'm in pain! I'm in pain and it's all your fault!
FATHER-TO-BE. I know. Just sit tight.
PREGNANT WOMAN. Having a baby is stupid.
FATHER-TO-BE. It's stupid.
PREGNANT WOMAN. It's a stupid idea.
FATHER-TO-BE. It's a stupid idea.
PREGNANT WOMAN. And you're stupid.
FATHER-TO-BE. And I'm stupid. We're gonna be there in a second, okay? Just chill.
PREGNANT WOMAN. Don't tell me to chill.
FATHER-TO-BE. We'll be there in a second. Just chill.
PREGNANT WOMAN. You son of a bitch! Don't tell me to chill!
FATHER-TO-BE. Do you know what that sounds like, talking to me that way?
PREGNANT WOMAN. I know what it sounds like. What do you want me to do about it?
FATHER-TO-BE. I just don't like the way it sounds. It's sounds bad. I'm here. I'm with you.
PREGNANT WOMAN. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. This hurts. This hurts real bad.
FATHER-TO-BE. That's okay. I love you. Take it easy. We'll get there really quick. I promise you.

CAB DRIVER. Why didn't you guys call an ambulance?
 FATHER-TO-BE. We called the cab company first because the contractions were real far apart.
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Yeah. What took you so long? You call a cab when you really need it and it takes ten hours.
 FATHER-TO-BE. Not like it's ever easy getting a cab on the south side.
 CAB DRIVER. Oh.
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Yeah. It's not because we're black. That wouldn't be it at all, would it, driver?
 FATHER-TO-BE. Give the man a break now. He's here, isn't he?
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Yeah. He's here.
 FATHER-TO-BE. We thought that once the contractions start you have a long time. So we called the cab company and were just sitting there and then the damn thing started coming. We don't really know that much about it. This is our first.
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Oh Lord, I should have married a doctor, then I'd be with somebody that knows what is going on. Not some raty ass gang bang parole officer.
 FATHER-TO-BE. I am not a parole officer.
 CAB DRIVER. What do you do?
 FATHER-TO-BE. I'm a social worker.
 PREGNANT WOMAN. This ain't career day. Drive the fucking car!
 FATHER-TO-BE. Baby, he didn't do anything. Don't talk to him like — *(The Pregnant Woman screams.)* Hurry up, man!
 CAB DRIVER. She's not going to —
 FATHER-TO-BE. Oh no, she's not going to do that. You can hold it in, can't you baby?
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Kiss my ass hold it in!
 FATHER-TO-BE. I am not the enemy!
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Yes you are. You are the enemy. Always down at that stupid office taking care of some stupid gang-banging kid. What did you do with that kid that shot the cab driver in the face? You let him go? Slap on the wrist?
 CAB DRIVER. In the face?
 FATHER-TO-BE. Yeah. It's some new gang rite. Haven't you

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heard about this?
 CAB DRIVER. No.
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Shut up! Just shut up! Man works all the time. Can't spend any time with his wife and baby.
 FATHER-TO-BE. The baby isn't even born yet!
 PREGNANT WOMAN. Yeah, you always have an excuse for everything! *(The Pregnant Woman screams. The Cab Driver can see the hospital up ahead.)* I don't care! Just get me to the hospital!
 FATHER-TO-BE. Shut up! Shut up! Quit screaming!
 CAB DRIVER. Shut up! Shut up!
 PREGNANT WOMAN. I'm dying! I'm going to throw up! And you don't care! *(The Cab Driver makes a sharp turn up the driveway, comes to a stop.)*
 CAB DRIVER. Here! Here! *(The Father-to-Be throws money on the front seat. He opens his door quickly and jumps out.)*
 FATHER-TO-BE. You need a wheelchair. Hold on, baby, I'll get one. *(The Father-to-Be runs offstage.)*
 PREGNANT WOMAN. I'm not going to throw up. I'm not going to throw up. Thanks for the ride, driver. Sorry.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 14

The Cab Driver hears a loud whistle and slams on the brakes. Steve, mid-30s, and a Receptionist, early 20s, get in.

STEVE. Almost missed us.
 CAB DRIVER. Yeah. I caught you out of the corner of my eye. Hell of a whistler, let me tell you. Was that yours, ma'am?
 RECEPTIONIST. Yeah. My father taught me when I was a kid.
 CAB DRIVER. I'm impressed.
 STEVE. We're making two stops. First, we're dropping her off at the California Pizza Kitchen office over there on Erie

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and Franklin and then we're going to my apartment at 900 North Michigan. Think you can handle that, sport?

CAB DRIVER. Sure can.

STEVE. Good. *(To the Receptionist.)* Do you like to ski?

RECEPTIONIST. Sure.

STEVE. Where do you go?

RECEPTIONIST. Oh, it's been a long time.

STEVE. We should go sometime.

RECEPTIONIST. Yeah?

STEVE. Sure. Have you ever been to Vail? We could go to Vail if you wanted to.

RECEPTIONIST. Vail?

STEVE. Yes. It's really beautiful, especially this time of year. Kind of touristy, but you get that. Speaking of beautiful, you are absolutely beautiful. Did you know that?

RECEPTIONIST. Stop.

STEVE. No, you really are. I guess you get that all the time, eh?

RECEPTIONIST. No.

STEVE. Oh, come on. You do too.

RECEPTIONIST. I do not.

STEVE. Uh-huh. You should call me.

RECEPTIONIST. I will.

STEVE. I mean you should call me more often.

RECEPTIONIST. I will.

STEVE. This is good driver. *(The Cab Driver pulls over and the couple gets out of the cab.)* Don't be a stranger. And I'm serious about Vail. Okay?

RECEPTIONIST. Okay. *(They kiss.)*

STEVE. Goodbye.

RECEPTIONIST. Bye. *(She exits. Steve gets back in and the Cab Driver pulls away.)*

CAB DRIVER. *(Pause.)* Man. She's good looking.

STEVE. Yes. Yes, she is.

CAB DRIVER. And she seems like a real nice person.

STEVE. Yeah.

CAB DRIVER. Is that your girlfriend?

STEVE. No. That's just some little chickie I keep around to fuck every now and then.

CAB DRIVER. Oh.

STEVE. Yeah. She's a receptionist. You know. Whenever I'm in town I like to call her up so I can poke her.

CAB DRIVER. Uh-huh.

STEVE. Yeah. I'm from downstate. I own a chain of delicatessens. Steve's deli. That's me. I'm Steve. You probably never heard of it seeing as how we're only in the college towns downstate. We do got one store up in Evanston though. Yeah. I started this business when I was in college and now it's ten years later and I got six stores and I'm making money hand over fist. *(The Cab Driver stops at a light.)* Yeah, we serve breakfast, lunch and dinner and we keep it open late to catch the kids when they're coming in drunk and they want a late night snack. So we basically end up fleecing them four times a day. *(Gestures towards the light.)* Why don't you go?

CAB DRIVER. I can't. This old lady's in front of my car.

STEVE. Goddamn nigger bitch. And she wonders why she can't get a job. *(The Cab Driver pulls away from the light.)* Yes sir. Took a vacation a while back. Went to Paris. Shit, I could probably retire if I wanted to. I get tired, you know how it is. When you run your own business you're in charge of everything. Something goes wrong it's up to you to clean up after whoever fucked it up. This is good, driver. I want to get a paper. *(The Cab Driver pulls over.)*

CAB DRIVER. \$6.70. *(Steve counts out a five and two singles, hands them to the Cab Driver.)*

STEVE. Here's \$7.00. Keep the change, sport.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 15

The Cab Driver has picked up Some Guy.

CAB DRIVER. So the light turns green and I'm not going anywhere because I got this old black woman walking in front of my cab, you got me? And he says to me, "Why ain't we going?" and I point to the old lady and he goes, "Goddamn nigger bitch. And she wonders why she can't get a job."

SOME GUY. Class A jerk if you ask me.

CAB DRIVER. And the rest of the ride he's going on and on about what a hot-shot businessman he is, how he's making money hand over fist, like he's at the top of this kind of ladder and he spits on all the rest of us down here in the heap. Pisses me off, boy.

SOME GUY. Hey, I know.

CAB DRIVER. But what really pisses me off is what he said about that woman. Man, how do people get like that? You should have seen him. Talking so sweet to her. And she was eating it up.

SOME GUY. Women.

CAB DRIVER. So what do I do?

SOME GUY. Nothing. Nothing you can do.

CAB DRIVER. I could tell her. I know where she works.

SOME GUY. Don't do it.

CAB DRIVER. Why not?

SOME GUY. She probably wouldn't care.

CAB DRIVER. I can't believe that.

SOME GUY. She's probably getting what she wants off the guy and as long as he keeps spending the money who cares what he says behind her back.

CAB DRIVER. I just don't think she was like that.

SOME GUY. When did this happen?

CAB DRIVER. About ten minutes ago.

SOME GUY. Well, you can do what you want, but don't be surprised if you don't get the reaction you're expecting.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 16

California Pizza Kitchen office. The Receptionist is standing up, looking at a file. The Cab Driver comes up to her.

CAB DRIVER. Hi. Remember me?

RECEPTIONIST. Yes.

CAB DRIVER. I'm the cab driver that just dropped you off.

RECEPTIONIST. About a half hour ago. Yes.

CAB DRIVER. Well, I have something to tell you. But let me start out by saying this: I don't want anything from you. I'm going to say what I got to say and I'm going to go out the door and you'll never see me again. Okay?

RECEPTIONIST. What is it?

CAB DRIVER. Because I don't want anything from you. You understand that, right? 'Cause I don't.

RECEPTIONIST. Right.

CAB DRIVER. But I came back here today because ... I just wanted you to know.... That guy you were with today, just now, in the cab? He's a real asshole. And I just wanted you to know that.

RECEPTIONIST. What happened?

CAB DRIVER. Do you know what he said about you? Do you know what he said?

RECEPTIONIST. No.

CAB DRIVER. I said you seem like a real nice person and he said, "Oh, that's just some little chickie I keep around to fuck every now and then."

RECEPTIONIST. *(Pause.)* He did?

CAB DRIVER. Yeah. And I'm sorry. But I just had to tell you. You seem like you're a nice person. Or you could be a nice person. And that guy is a real asshole.

RECEPTIONIST. Well, we're not seeing each other. I mean, we're not dating or anything. We're just friends. We just had lunch, that's all.

CAB DRIVER. I know. And I know it's none of my business. Because it's not. And it isn't. But I felt like, if you were seeing him, or you were thinking about going out with him or something, which is to say, I mean, I know it's none of my business, but the guy's a real asshole. And that's all I wanted to say.

RECEPTIONIST. Okay.

CAB DRIVER. I mean, it's bad enough, it being Christmas time and all, and if you're all alone. It's damn hard. I know it is. Not that I'm saying you're all alone. I'm just saying I know how it is. And it's bad. But... (Pause.) Jesus....

RECEPTIONIST. Are you all right?

CAB DRIVER. Sure. I gotta go.

RECEPTIONIST. Hey!

CAB DRIVER. I hope I didn't bother you.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 17

The Cab Driver is sprawled out on the front seat, talking to himself.

CAB DRIVER. You are so weird. You are so weird! What is the matter with you? That woman probably thinks, man, who is this guy? (A very Intense Man walks up to the car.)

INTENSE MAN. Hey man. I'm only going about three blocks. Can you take me to the corner of Division and Wells?

CAB DRIVER. Fine by me. (The Intense Man gets in. The Cab Driver starts the meter and pulls away. Pause.)

INTENSE MAN. Some weather we're having, huh?

CAB DRIVER. Yeah. Cold as hell.

INTENSE MAN. Yeah. It's supposed to be ninety this week-end.

CAB DRIVER. Is that so?

INTENSE MAN. Yeah. That's what the weather guy told me. (Pause.) Say man. You know what this country needs?

CAB DRIVER. What's that, man?

INTENSE MAN. This country is lost. This country has lost its way, am I right about this?

CAB DRIVER. I guess so.

INTENSE MAN. So what do we need? What do we need to focus our energies on to get us back on track?

CAB DRIVER. What?

INTENSE MAN. In a word: space exploration.

CAB DRIVER. Oh, Jesus....

INTENSE MAN. Do you have any idea how many tons of minerals there are on the moon? What, did you think it was made of cheese? It's all minerals. It's all one huge yellow rock, all made of minerals. Enough minerals up there to meet our energy needs until the sun burns out. It's cheap. It doesn't pollute. And all we have to do is go up there and get it.

CAB DRIVER. But it's on the moon.

INTENSE MAN. So what if it's on the moon. You think that would have stopped George Washington? Man, this country was built on 'can do' not 'can't do.' Why do you think everyone is jealous of the American Spirit? It's because we take adversity and we spit in its eye and we roll up our sleeves and we get the job done.

CAB DRIVER. Yeah. I guess you're right.

INTENSE MAN. Hell yes I'm right. Space exploration. It's the wave of the future. You can let me out up here. (The Cab Driver pulls over and turns off the meter.)

CAB DRIVER. \$4.20. (The Intense Man gets out of the cab and hands him money.)

INTENSE MAN. So. What does this country need?

CAB DRIVER. I gotta go with space exploration.

INTENSE MAN. Right. (Looks off in the distance.) Hey look. A funeral. (Jumps up and down and flaps his arms.) Going to the boneyard! Going to the boneyard! (The Intense Man exits, flapping his arms.)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 18

The Cab Driver has picked up a young black woman, Shalita. She is dressed for the night out, though somewhat cheaply.

CAB DRIVER. Evening Madam. Where to?
SHALITA. Madam? Is that what you call me?
CAB DRIVER. Uh, yeah. Madam. You know....
SHALITA. I ain't no madam. My name's Shalita.
CAB DRIVER. Well, hello Shalita.
SHALITA. Hello.
CAB DRIVER. Where are we going?
SHALITA. We're gonna go pick up my boyfriend and we're gonna go out and get something to eat.
CAB DRIVER. And the address is?
SHALITA. 57th and Halsted. *(He hits the meter, pulls away.)*
CAB DRIVER. Nice neighborhood.
SHALITA. No it ain't.
CAB DRIVER. Just kidding.
SHALITA. So how you doing?
CAB DRIVER. Can't complain. You?
SHALITA. Okay. Except my boyfriend's pissing me off again.
CAB DRIVER. Ah.
SHALITA. Seem like he always acting like a asshole.
CAB DRIVER. Uh-huh.
SHALITA. He calls me up and say he don't wanna see me no more. Then I find out it's 'cause he's out there fucking somebody else.
CAB DRIVER. Isn't that nice.
SHALITA. Hell no it ain't. We been going out for five year and he be pulling this shit all the time.
CAB DRIVER. Huh....
SHALITA. Last time he did it to me was about three weeks ago. He wanted to fuck this other bitch and he don't need me no more all the sudden. Then he call me up last week

all apologizing and shit. "I love you baby, and I fucked up," he say. I shoulda told him to kiss my ass is what I shoulda done. Don't you think? Don't you think I shoulda told him to kiss my ass?
CAB DRIVER. Well, I don't know. I don't know your life.
SHALITA. Yeah? Yeah? Yeah?
CAB DRIVER. I'm only getting your side of this thing....
SHALITA. Yeah.
CAB DRIVER. But um, it sounds to me like your situation could be better.
SHALITA. Yeah, it could be a whole hell of a lot better. I mean all he does is treat me like shit and then act real nice and shit whenever he want a piece of ass.
CAB DRIVER. Time to tell this guy to take a hike.
SHALITA. I ought to.
CAB DRIVER. Hell yes you should.
SHALITA. Yeah. Only I don't know. I ain't seeing nobody else.
CAB DRIVER. Well you're not gonna be finding anybody while you're going out with this guy. Unless of course you like taking his shit.
SHALITA. I don't. I hate it. He ain't got no job. And he's borrowing money off me all the time. He's a fucking lowlife. He's good looking and kind of funny sometimes, but ... I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna tell that son of a bitch off. See if I don't.
CAB DRIVER. Good for you.
SHALITA. Pull over here. *(The Cab Driver pulls over.)*
CAB DRIVER. Where? Here?
SHALITA. Yeah. That's him standing over there.
CAB DRIVER. That's him? *(The Boyfriend gets in the cab. He is a big, strapping young black man and he is really pissed off.)*
BOYFRIEND. What the fuck's wrong with you, bitch? I been standing out there for ten minutes.
SHALITA. I told you I might be late.
BOYFRIEND. The fuck you did.
SHALITA. And don't call me no bitch.
BOYFRIEND. What?

SHALITA. You heard me.
 BOYFRIEND. Hey, fuck you. You wanna go or not?
 SHALITA. Yeah.
 BOYFRIEND. Okay then.
 SHALITA. Just don't be calling me no bitch.
 BOYFRIEND. Man, shut the fuck up. Driver, we're going down here about three blocks. I coulda walked the mother-fucker in the time it took you to get here.
 SHALITA. Well maybe you just should have.
 BOYFRIEND. What?
 SHALITA. Nothing.
 BOYFRIEND. What did you say to me?
 SHALITA. Nothing.
 BOYFRIEND. Don't ever talk to me like that.
 SHALITA. *(Pause.)* Well, you shouldn't talk to me like that. I didn't do nothing.
 BOYFRIEND. You catching this shit, driver? Fucking bitch be back talking me.
 SHALITA. You don't love me. You act like you don't even like me.
 BOYFRIEND. Look, me and you just be fucking and shit and that's it. I don't know why you always gotta be tripping about that, girl, 'cause you know that.
 SHALITA. I cannot believe you would say some shit like that to me. *(Pause.)* Even this man says it. Even this man says I ought to drop you like the piece of shit you are.
 BOYFRIEND. You call me a piece of shit?
 CAB DRIVER. Uh....
 BOYFRIEND. No, you call me a piece of shit, driver? Driver? I'm *talking* to you, motherfucker.
 SHALITA. Why you always gotta be —
 BOYFRIEND. Shut your fucking mouth. You call me a piece of shit, man?
 SHALITA. You shut your fucking mouth! Why don't you just try being nice to me for a change instead of always treating me like shit, talking shit to me and acting like I was some kind of ho. 'Cause I ain't no ho. Not yours or nobody else's and fuck you if you think I am! *(He turns back to hit her. She screams:)*

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You touch me and I'll scratch your motherfucking eyes out!
 BOYFRIEND. Stop this ride, driver. *(The Cab Driver pulls off to the side of the road.)*
 SHALITA. Where you going?
 BOYFRIEND. Home. Call me when you get your head out your pussy.
 SHALITA. I ain't gonna call you. *(The Boyfriend gets out of the car.)*
 BOYFRIEND. Well, fuck you then. *(He exits.)*
 SHALITA. Yeah, well then fuck you too! *(The Cab Driver pulls away. Long pause.)*
 CAB DRIVER. Well ...
 SHALITA. I hate the motherfucker. *(She begins to cry softly.)*

LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK

SCENE 19

A Southside Couple get in the cab.

CAB DRIVER. Good afternoon. Or should I say evening?
 SOUTHSIDE GUY. Yeah, it gets dark pretty early, don't it?
 Mind taking us to the south side?
 CAB DRIVER. Oh man, I just got back from the south side.
 SOUTHSIDE GUY. It's a good fare, man. Bridgeport. 3505 South Emerald.
 CAB DRIVER. Okay. *(He hits the meter, pulls away.)*
 SOUTHSIDE GUY. Good deal. So. How ya doing? Making a living?
 CAB DRIVER. Trying to. It's a little slow, it being the holidays and everything. People getting off work, taking vacations and all that. *(The Southside Guy points to the radio.)*
 SOUTHSIDE GUY. Use that Gandalf much?
 CAB DRIVER. You a cab driver?
 SOUTHSIDE GUY. My brother is. Drives for Yellow. You can

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probably use that thing to get you a ride back downtown.

CAB DRIVER. I don't use it all that much anymore. A lot of times it just takes me too far out of my way, away from the areas I know, and I get lost. Been thinking lately about just getting rid of it.

SOUTHSIDE GUY. Yeah. *(To the Southside Girl.)* So what's the matter with you?

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. Like you don't know.

SOUTHSIDE GUY. Oh, so now I'm a mind reader, is that it? I'm a fucking mind reader? Like that jag-off on Carson when Carson was on? The Amazing Fucking What's-His-Name? Now I'm supposed to be the Amazing Fucking What's-His-Name.

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. I don't wanna talk about it.

SOUTHSIDE GUY. Fine. *(To the Cab Driver.)* So how 'bout those Bulls, huh?

CAB DRIVER. Yeah.

SOUTHSIDE GUY. What do you think of that guy, that new guy?

CAB DRIVER. You mean —

SOUTHSIDE GUY. Yeah. The new guy. *(To the Southside Girl.)* Don't pull this shit on me. What did I do? Just tell me what I did?

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. I heard what you said at Mary's party last night.

SOUTHSIDE GUY. What? What did I say?

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. I don't wanna talk about it. I can't believe you... *(Pause.)* You were standing around with Tony and Billy and that asshole Jim Carrelli, and Carrelli says to you, "Yeah, Brenda used to fuck everybody on the block. She was all the time fucking everybody on the block." And what did you say?

SOUTHSIDE GUY. You are taking this whole conversation completely out of context.

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. And what did you say? You say, "Yeah. And she's probably fucking everybody on the block now."

SOUTHSIDE GUY. It was a joke.

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. You're my boyfriend. You're supposed to defend me.

SOUTHSIDE GUY. *(Pause.)* Well, you did fuck everybody on

the block.

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. Man, fuck you!

SOUTHSIDE GUY. Well, you did.

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. *(Pause.)* If that bothers you so goddamn much then why did you ever ask me out for in the first place? You knew who I was. You know what I've done. Why did you ever ask me out if you think I am such a slut?

SOUTHSIDE GUY. Brenda, it's just the way guys talk. If you was a guy you'd understand. It's just the way we talk.

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. I can't believe I know you. I can't believe I associate with you. *(Pause. She climbs into the front seat.)* I don't want to ever speak to you again. After we get out of this cab I want you to go your own way, and I don't want to see you or smell your big fat ugly ass ever again. You're disgusting. *(Pause.)* I hate my life.

SOUTHSIDE GUY. Brenda... *(The Cab Driver looks at him, shakes his head. Better let this one cool. The Southside Guy leans back.)*

SOUTHSIDE GIRL. I wish I was dead.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 20

The Cab Driver checks the address on the Gandalf. He keys the hand microphone.

CAB DRIVER. 4873 come in.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE. Go ahead, 4873.

CAB DRIVER. I'm down here at 3508 King Drive and there's nobody answering the horn. In fact, I can't really see it very well because it looks like somebody shot out the street lights, but I think the address you gave me is a burned-out building.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE. 4873, what the hell are you doing? Get out of there! Now! Go! *(The Cab Driver throws it in gear and peels out.)*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 21

The Cab Driver is driving.

CAB DRIVER. What am I, stupid? Am I insane? I'm a white man. I should not be driving on the south side. This is the south side. Of Chicago. The south-east side to be exact. Fuck that. I'm heading north. *(He stops the car at a light and cranks up the radio. Loud rock and roll guitar booms out of the speakers and he jams his air guitar right along with it. After he's had ample opportunity to make a real spectacle of himself, he notices he's being watched offstage by a car load of brothers who have pulled up next to him. He turns away from them, embarrassed. Then, after a long pause, he then turns back to them, shouts:)* The fuck you staring at? *(The second the words tumble out of his mouth he knows he's made a mistake, and his reaction changes from defiance to panic. He jerks the steering wheel, mashes the gas, and peels out.)*

BLACKOUT

SCENE 22

The Cab Driver has picked up a disheveled Scary Man.

CAB DRIVER. Evening. *(Pause.)* Where we going? *(Pause.)* Hello? Where we going?
SCARY. *(Pause.)* Up the street.
CAB DRIVER. Up the street. Okay. But where up the street?
SCARY. Up the street.
CAB DRIVER. Okay. But where? *(Pause.)* I need to know where up the street.
SCARY. I'll tell you when we get there.
CAB DRIVER. Well, uh, is it past Division? *(Pause.)* Say....
SCARY. *(Pause.)* Just keep going.
CAB DRIVER. Yeah, but I need to know where we're going.

SCARY. I told you. Up the street. *(The Cab Driver turns around and looks at the Scary Man for the first time, then continues driving. Now he knows he's in real trouble.)*
CAB DRIVER. I need to know how far we're going. I told somebody I'd pick them up in fifteen minutes so I can't be going too far.
SCARY. It's past Division.
CAB DRIVER. How far? *(Pause.)* How far past Division is it?
SCARY. It's past Division. *(Pause.)* About four blocks.
CAB DRIVER. So it's up by North Avenue? *(Pause.)* It's up by North?
SCARY. Make a left here.
CAB DRIVER. I thought you said it was up by North.
SCARY. Make a left here.
CAB DRIVER. Okay. *(Pause.)* Dark street. *(Pause.)* Are we getting close to where you want to be?
SCARY. Just keep going.
CAB DRIVER. Couple blocks?
SCARY. Just keep going.
CAB DRIVER. Okay. I'll keep going. But I don't know where you want me to go.
SCARY. *(Pause.)* Make a left into the alley. *(The Cab Driver slows the car to a stop.)*
CAB DRIVER. I....
SCARY. Make a left into the alley.
CAB DRIVER. I don't want to.
SCARY. Make a left into the alley. *(The Cab Driver turns into the alley.)*
CAB DRIVER. I got to be back pretty soon. I told them I'd be back in fifteen minutes. *(Pause.)* Here?
SCARY. Here. *(The Cab Driver turns off the meter.)*
CAB DRIVER. Six dollars. *(The Scary Man reaches over and drops seven bucks on the front seat, then quickly whips his other hand from behind his back, startling the Cab Driver. The Scary Man's hand is now extended to shake.)*
SCARY. Merry Christmas. *(The Cab Driver takes his hand and the Scary Man tightens his grip. The Cab Driver winces.)*
CAB DRIVER. Yeah. You too. *(The Scary Man lets go of the*

Cab Driver's hand and gets out of the cab. The Cab Driver's body crouches with tension.)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 23

The Cab Driver has picked up a Drunk Woman. She is old, toothless, and very, very drunk.

DRUNK. Take me over to the Wooden Nickel Lounge over there on Wilson and Broadway across from Truman College.

CAB DRIVER. Okay.

DRUNK. I been drinking.

CAB DRIVER. I know.

DRUNK. Fuck it. It's Christmas. Can't I have a drink if I want?

CAB DRIVER. No law against it.

DRUNK. Hell no. Saw my old man today.

CAB DRIVER. Husband?

DRUNK. Father. I asked him for some money. He gave it to me. That tight old son of a bitch! I'm on welfare.

CAB DRIVER. Uh-huh.

DRUNK. Money can get pretty tight.

CAB DRIVER. Boy, I know it can.

DRUNK. Say, what's your name, pal? I like you. You're a good guy. That old fat son of a bitch. All he ever does is sit around all day. Fuck him! I hate him! I appreciate you picking me up.

CAB DRIVER. No problem.

DRUNK. You know, you're a good guy, you know that? You married?

CAB DRIVER. No.

DRUNK. Well you ought to be. Say, why don't you come and have a few drinks with me. I'm buying.

CAB DRIVER. I'd love to, but I got to work. You know how it is.

DRUNK. No. I'm on welfare. Say, you're pretty nice looking too.

CAB DRIVER. Thanks.

DRUNK. I really appreciate you picking me up, man. You look like a guy I went out with in junior high. Kevin Shaw. Old Kevin. Say, you don't mind if I call you Kevin, do you?

CAB DRIVER. Uh, yeah. Don't call me Kevin. It's not my name.

DRUNK. Okay, okay, don't get sore. *(Pause.)* I love you. You know that?

CAB DRIVER. That's great.

DRUNK. No, I really do. And I'm gonna give you ten bucks for this fare because I love you.

CAB DRIVER. Well, whatever. *(She reaches over the seat and touches his shoulder.)*

DRUNK. I do love you. I love you very much. I wish you were my boyfriend.

CAB DRIVER. Well, you know, you can't have everything.

DRUNK. I love you.

CAB DRIVER. Man, what are you touching me for? *(She stops, leans back in the seat.)*

DRUNK. Well you don't have to get mad.

CAB DRIVER. I just don't like people touching me, that's all. A guy was touching me earlier today. A fucking guy. I just don't like it. It bugs the shit out of me.

DRUNK. Are you a homo?

CAB DRIVER. I'm just taking you to the Wooden Nickel Lounge. That's all I'm doing. And I'm not like this guy you knew in junior high school. I'm not like him. I'm not him. At all. Do you understand that?

DRUNK. Of course I understand that. What's the matter, you think I'm stupid or something?

CAB DRIVER. I didn't say that.

DRUNK. *(Pause.)* I love you.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 24

The Cab Driver has picked up Two Obnoxious Drunk Guys.

OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Well what do you know. A white cab driver. Boy, are you a sight for sore eyes.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. Speak English?
CAB DRIVER. Yeah.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Yeah! We got a fucking bonanza here.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. Where are we?
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. We're in Chicago, dipshit. We're going to Hooters, man. *(The Cab Driver hits the meter and pulls away.)*
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. I don't know where we are.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Shut the fuck up. You're drunk. *(Obnoxious Guy #2 looks out the window.)*
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. Hey look, that guy's got a Cubbies hat on. *(He rolls down the window and they yell.)*
OBNOXIOUS GUYS #1 and #2. Cubs suck! Cubs suck! Cubs suck!
CAB DRIVER. You guys from out of town?
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. We're from New York City.
CAB DRIVER. Oh, I'd never guessed that.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. You know why they call this place the Windy City?
CAB DRIVER. You're going to tell me why, aren't you?
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Yeah. It's because Chicago blows.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. Yeah. Face it. New York is great and Chicago sucks.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Yeah. We're great and you guys suck. And all your sports teams are a bunch of pussies.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. Yeah. When was the last time the Cubbies took the series? 1900?
CAB DRIVER. 1908.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. See? You guys blow.

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CAB DRIVER. What about the Bulls?
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. What about them?
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Michael Jordan is a six-foot-six bald-headed faggot.
CAB DRIVER. Man, leave Michael out of this.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Or what?
CAB DRIVER. Or I'm going to cry. *(The Obnoxious Guys laugh wildly.)*
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. He's going to cry. Hey man. You're all right. You're cool, man.
CAB DRIVER. Thanks.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Hey, why don't you come to Hooters with us?
CAB DRIVER. I got to work.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. Come on, man, take a little break.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. Yeah, man, we're gonna go and get some pussy.
CAB DRIVER. I can't. I got to work.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #1. *(Offhand.)* Well, fuck you then.
OBNOXIOUS GUY #2. *(Points out the window.)* Hey look, there's another one!
OBNOXIOUS GUYS #1 and #2. Cubs suck! Cubs suck! Cubs suck!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 25

The Cab Driver is driving. He is wasted, groggy, dead tired. He sees a fare and considers it a moment, then pulls over.
CAB DRIVER. What the hell. One last one. *(A quietly Distraught Woman gets in. She is blank, shell shocked. The Cab Driver hits the meter and pulls away.)*
DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. I'm only going about three blocks

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from here. Take a right on Berywn and then the first left.

CAB DRIVER. Okay.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. *(Long pause.)* I just got raped.

CAB DRIVER. What?

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. I just got raped.

CAB DRIVER. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry. *(Pause.)* Did you call the

police? *(She holds up a crumpled police report.)*

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. What do you think this is?

CAB DRIVER. I'm so sorry. *(Pause.)* Did you know the guy?

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. Yeah. And I'm going to kill him.

I'm going to kill that son of a bitch. *(Pause.)* Have you ever

been raped?

CAB DRIVER. No.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. It's bad.

CAB DRIVER. *(Pause.)* Are you all right?

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. No. I am not all right.

CAB DRIVER. Do you want me to take you to a hospital?

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. No. I don't have any insurance any-

way.

CAB DRIVER. Why didn't the police take you home?

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. I don't know. *(She begins sobbing.*

Pause.) I didn't do anything.

CAB DRIVER. I know, ma'am. I wish it hadn't happened to

you, ma'am. I'm so sorry.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. You don't have to be sorry. You

didn't do anything.

CAB DRIVER. I know. But I'm sorry anyway.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN. This is good. Right here. *(He pulls*

over, hits the meter.)

CAB DRIVER. \$4.20. *(She pulls a crumpled wad of bills from her pocket and peels off a five dollar bill. As an afterthought she peels off an extra buck and hands it to him.)* I'll stay out here 'til you get inside. *(She gets out of the cab and runs offstage. The Cab Driver watches her go.)*

LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK

SCENE 26

The Cab Driver is staring out the window, lost in thought. A well dressed black man walks up to the cab and gets in. He is an Architect.

ARCHITECT. How are you this evening?

CAB DRIVER. Where do you want to go?

ARCHITECT. I was wondering if you'd do me a favor. I'm

only going about three blocks from here, up to that diner on

Melrose and Broadway. I'm going to go in for a minute and

pick up some to-go food and then I want you to bring me

right back here. You don't mind waiting, do you?

CAB DRIVER. No. *(He hits the meter and pulls away.)*

ARCHITECT. Great. So how has your day been?

CAB DRIVER. I'm really tired. I've been working all day.

ARCHITECT. Me too. I'm working right now, in fact. This

is kind of a late dinner and then I'm getting right back to it.

CAB DRIVER. What do you do?

ARCHITECT. I'm an architect.

CAB DRIVER. That's cool.

ARCHITECT. It can be. *(Pause. Then, slowly, sings:)*

"Deck the halls with boughs of holly

FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA

"Tis the season to be jolly

FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA ..."

CAB DRIVER. You're in a good mood.

ARCHITECT. Yes. Yes I am.

CAB DRIVER. Must be nice.

ARCHITECT. Yes, it is.

CAB DRIVER. That's a good way to be during the holidays.

ARCHITECT. Nothing you can count on, though. You can

just let me out right here. *(The Cab Driver pulls over.)* I phoned

it in so this shouldn't take too long. I'll be right back. *(The*

Architect exits.)

CAB DRIVER. I'll be here. Where the hell am I going?

(Pause.) God. That poor woman. (Pause.) Why does everything have to be so fucked up? I just don't get it. (Pause.) Why do I feel like I want to just crawl out of my skin? (Pause.) I live in a desert. (Pause.) Jesus, there was nothing I could do about it. Since when can I ever do anything about anything at all. (The Architect gets back in the cab. He is carrying a sack of food.)

ARCHITECT. Okay, you can just take me back where you found me. (The Cab Driver pulls away.)

CAB DRIVER. Will do. It's going to take me a little longer to get there because of the one-way streets.

ARCHITECT. No problem.

CAB DRIVER. I just didn't want you to think I was jacking up the fare.

ARCHITECT. I wasn't going to think that. (Pause. Then, slowly, sings:) "Oh Tanenbaum, Oh Tanenbaum ..."

CAB DRIVER. You going home for Christmas?

ARCHITECT. Me? No.

CAB DRIVER. I am. Going to Rockford.

ARCHITECT. This is going to be kind of a tough one for me this year. The Holidays, I mean. It'll be the first one I ever spent without my mom.

CAB DRIVER. Oh.

ARCHITECT. She died of cancer last February.

CAB DRIVER. I'm sorry.

ARCHITECT. What are you going to do? She was a good woman and she had a good life. I'm going to miss her terribly though. And it's a lot harder around Christmas, as you can imagine.

CAB DRIVER. Yeah.

ARCHITECT. Your folks still alive?

CAB DRIVER. Mine? Yeah.

ARCHITECT. You're a lucky man.

CAB DRIVER. Last year my mom called me up and told me she had a lump in her breast. And when they got the test results back they were inconclusive. And right in the middle of it all the doctor had to go out of town for a week so it was just taking that much longer. Man. Thought I was going to have a nervous breakdown.

ARCHITECT. She okay?

CAB DRIVER. It was benign. But I kept on asking myself, what if it hadn't been? Because there was nothing I could do. Everything, it all comes out of nowhere. Like one day everything is fine and the next day you don't know if your mom is going to die.

ARCHITECT. And you feel helpless. (The Cab Driver pulls over, hits the meter.)

CAB DRIVER. Yeah. Like this woman I just picked up. She had just been raped. Just now. And there was nothing, there was nothing I could do for her. I could tell her how sorry I was, but I couldn't do anything for her. I couldn't tell her it was going to be all right because I knew it wasn't going to be all right. And it wasn't.

ARCHITECT. There isn't anything you could have done for her.

CAB DRIVER. I know. But I wish I could have.

ARCHITECT. But you couldn't.

CAB DRIVER. I kept telling her over and over how sorry I was for her....

ARCHITECT. What else could you do?

CAB DRIVER. Nothing. I couldn't do anything. That's the point. Goddamn it....

ARCHITECT. You probably did a lot for her by just being there at that moment.

CAB DRIVER. It's not enough, though. It's never enough.

ARCHITECT. When my mom got sick we didn't know what it was at first. I walked into her hospital room and we were chatting a little and then she said to me, "It looks like it's the Big C." And by the time they got to it it was inoperable. And my mother hated doctors, you see, so for the next few months it was her coming in and going out and coming in and going out. Until she died. And all I could do was love her. In the moments she was awake and recognized me, all I could do was give her my love. And that's all any of us can do. That's all any of us can give.

CAB DRIVER. I kept that woman's money. Her fare was \$4.20 and she gave me six dollars and I kept it. I could have

let her keep it.

ARCHITECT. You're a cab driver.

CAB DRIVER. *(Pause.)* I'm sorry. You have to go back to work. \$6.40. *(The Architect gives him a twenty dollar bill.)*

ARCHITECT. Keep it.

CAB DRIVER. I can't.

ARCHITECT. Sure you can. It's Christmas.

CAB DRIVER. I know, but....

ARCHITECT. Go ahead. *(Pause.)* Take it. *(The Cab Driver takes the money, holds out his hand.)*

CAB DRIVER. Well, Merry Christmas to you. *(The Architect takes his hand, and they shake.)*

ARCHITECT. And you. Merry Christmas to you. *(The Architect gets out of the cab, walks offstage. The Cab Driver looks at the money, then pockets it. He puts the NOT FOR HIRE sign on the dashboard and turns on the radio, which blasts out a rocking tune. After a moment he changes the station, fiddling with the dial until he comes across a Christmas carol. He listens to it for a moment. Then he puts the cab in drive, checks over his shoulder for oncoming traffic, and pulls the cab out into the street.)*

LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK

PROPERTY LIST

Briefcase (LAWYER)
Money (paper and coins)
Can of beer (CRACK HEAD)
Food stamps (HOMER)
File folder and papers (RECEPTIONIST)
Crumpled police report (DISTRAUGHT WOMAN)
Sack of food (ARCHITECT)
Sign, NOT FOR HIRE (CAB DRIVER)