



The *FINAL* CURTAIN

(A Suicidal, Funny Musical in Two Acts)

Book and Lyrics by Sidney Goldberg

Music by

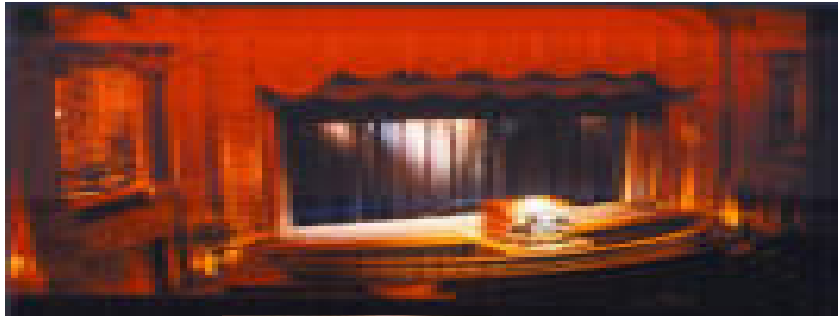
Matt Hill

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The *FINAL* CURTAIN

CAST

TONY.....50ish, Cute, ex-hairdresser,
aspiring Playwright. Feigns
suicide.

MOLLY.....75ish, Tony's Jewish mother.
Has
personality.

FANCY.....50ish. Sells men's clothes.
Always
wears suit and tie.

JOE.....50ish. Sells life insurance.
Italian,
bachelor. Angry.

MIKE.....50ish. High school gym teacher.

60's hippie.

The *Final* Curtain

SONGS

I Miss That Sunny Day (Tony).....1-1-
.2

King of the Hill (All except Tony).....1-1-
6

Tom Mix (All)..... 1-1-12

Are You Ever There? (Molly).....1-1-
16

Have I Gone Insane? (Fancy).....1-2-
21

Have I Gone Insane? (Underscoring).....1-2-
22

I Miss That Sunny Day (Underscoring).....1-2-
26

I Say Screw It (All).....1-1-
27

14 July (All).....1-1-
35

No Matter How You End It (Joe)..... 2-1-
39

Bronx Tones (All).....2-1-43

What Can I Say (Tony)..... 2-2-
47

Worms (Tony).....2-2-50

14 July (Underscoring).....2-2-
51

King of the Hill (Underscoring).....2-
2-53

Are You Ever There? (Underscoring).....2-2-56

Bronx Tones (ALL).....2-2-58

Don't Ask Me Why (Molly).....2-2-59

I've Done It All (Tony).....2-2-61

When I get to Heaven (Tony).....2-3-64

14 July (Underscoring).....2-4-69

You're Supposed To Be Dead (All).....2-4-73

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ACT I

Scene I

WE see a lamppost in the Bronx and ALL, appearing as teenagers are harmonizing.

ALL

(Sings. ♪)

"Forget your trouble come on get happy, you better chase all your cares away. Forget your troubles come on get happy, we're headed for the judgment day."

(To black and then lights.)

Last week:
Saturday Afternoon.

Last week: Saturday
afternoon: Living room: The
kitchen is to the right. The
furnishings are seedy.
bathroom divides both. There
is a barber chair. As We hear
FANCY, who is dressed

immaculate, ring the door bell. TONY, wearing a sweatshirt and jeans, runs to his oven, turns it on and sticks his head inside just as he sees FANCY enter.

FANCY

(Runs to oven and pulls Tony out.)

What are you fuckin' crazy? How many times have you tried killing yourself this month? And, it's only the fifteenth!

TONY

(Gasp.)

How do you know?

FANCY

How do I know? How do I know? Last week, when Mike brought you those books, he said he found you hanging... The week before, I found you with a gun to your head...

TONY

You forgot about Joey the Dick...

FANCY

Well pardon me that I forgot the Dick found you on the window sill about to jump... How can you be so selfish? 'Cause committing suicide is the most selfish thing a guy can do. And if you think Joey's a dick, what the hell do you think you are?

TONY

(Sings)

I MISS THAT SUNNY DAY

I had some fun, without a care.
Now it's all turned to despair.
Drove fancy cars, spent lots of bread.
Now I wish that I were dead.

All my friends said I had it all.
Then suddenly I took a fall.
Just like all those losers.
I'm one of those boozers, losers, boozers.

Everybody got something to live for.
I got my plays, I wrote a song.
It feels like I'm stuck inside a revolving door.
I'm not Samson, I'm not that strong.

My days and nights are killing me.

And my dreams, that just won't be.
My friends and girls have gone away.
Lord, I miss that sunny day.

All my friends said I had it all.
Then suddenly I took a fall.
Just like all those losers.
I'm one of those boozers, losers, boozers.

Everybody got something to live for.
I got my plays, I wrote a song.
It feels like I'm stuck inside a revolving door.
I'm not Samson, I'm not that strong.

FANCY

Poor little baby ain't wrong, you're not that strong. You want me to feel sorry, because you have nothing left to live for? Why, because ten years ago you get hit by a car and you lose everything? Not only don't you have a career, you got 'ugatz!' 'Cause with out money, women don't seem to go for you anymore, do they. Do I know your story or do I know your story, Mr. Cry baby.

TONY

After the accident, I was in the hospital, laying there with a broken tibia plateau, when my mother comes to see me. She said I shouldn't be depressed that I won't be able to work. Everything happens for a reason. Haven't I said that I really wanted to be a writer the past fifteen years? So, now I'll have to be a writer. As far as money's concerned, money's important but chasing a dream is much more rewarding. I guess parking cars, cleaning houses, doing resumes is part of chasing that dream. If you want me to live my dream before I... better get your checkbook.

FANCY

My checkbook? With the wedding and all, I'm embarrassed to tell you what's in my checkbook.

TONY

What's it contagious?

FANCY

I don't know if it's me or what... maybe I'm loosing my touch, but I ain't selling too many expensive suits lately and I still haven't given the band their down payment, but forget about the wedding for a minute. You gonna throw away 40 years of harmonizing together just like that? What, are we suddenly gonna become a trio? Trios are

(Slaps Tony five.)

trios. We're The Bronx tones and what do we do, we trios.
(Sings.)

"Harmonize..." And what about the fact that you're my son's Godfather, and don't think I didn't get any shit from my family 28 years ago for making a Jew my son's Godfather. I'm still paying for it. And he's getting married in two weeks, remember? Don't you want to see him dance with his bride at the wedding, asshole...? And what about Molly, your sweet little mother? What do you think's gonna happen? Another heart attack, maybe? And then, no more mushroom and barley soup? And you know how I dig her soup. Since we were kids.

TONY

I can't take it Fancy. It's not only the poverty, the rejection is even worse. I've been writing more than 25 years and nobody even knows or gives a damn. You know how many plays I've written since my accident...? Nine. Nine plays.

FANCY

What do you mean nobody knows you wrote nine plays? Everyone you meet you tell about your plays and what about Mike and Joey and me? How many readings did we go to?

TONY

Readings don't count. I need an agent. I need a producer, someone to invest in one of my **(Sobs.)** plays before I die... Would you invest in one my plays Fancy? You make a good living at Bloomies. I mean look how you dress. Would you... would you invest to save a life? Someone you know... Me.

FANCY

Please, don't start that shit again. How many times have I told you? I wouldn't invest in yours or anybody's play, no matter whose life depended on it. I hate the theater. I dig movies. They're always perfect. Besides, we all know that 87 percent of all plays fail. You said that yourself. And all my bread's tied up in making my son's wedding. It's costing me a fortune and you better make sure you come to the wedding with a big stuffed envelope, mister. I hear he's your Godson.

(ALL the guys enter laughing. TONY will groan, "You just don't understand" after each statement.)

JOE

Get the glasses 'cause Uncle Joe got the Scotchereenio.

MIKE

And you know what I got.

FANCY

This is no time for laughter, gentlemen. The 'schmuck' tried to do it again, and we all know why, don't we...? Shall we blame it on "*Et tu Brute?*" or "*I coulda been champion. I coulda been champion.*"

TONY

(Acts and speaks spooky.)

Invest... *You must invest in one of my plays if you want to save this tormented soul...* That's s-o-u-l, not s-o-l-e. That S-O-L-E is almandine.

JOE

So, now you want to be funny. You think finding you trying to kill yourself every week is funny. I'll give you funny. Hey, now I got a funny idea. Why don't you write a play about this ex-haircutter that wants to kill himself because nobody wants to do his boring plays. Sounds funny, right? I mean is that a comedy or what? '*Ugatz!*' I got wiped out last week. Yankees, Mets, Boston, Milwaukee and the Dodgers. Lost five hundred smackeroos. I haven't sold a policy in weeks and you don't see me going around trying to kill myself you fuckin' actor. And do you know how much I'm into the book for? How are your wrists feeling? Feel like giving me a little trim? I hated the last butcher I went to and that was over three months ago. Three months, what a '*schmuck*' he was! Feel like trying it again? Go get your scizzors. I'll give you a chance to experiment on me.

FANCY

The gambler does look rather seedy if I say so myself. I vote Tony gives Seedy a trim.

ALL

Here, here for Seedy!

JOE

To you everyone must look seedy, Mr. Bloomingdale. I mean in all these years, I've never seen you in a pair of jeans, or is that too seedy too?

FANCY

Seedy my ass. As far as I'm concerned, there are enough of you broken twigs already. Forget not that I am one of the top men's salesmen this side of Fifth Avenue and that's why I dress this way, Mr. Dick.

JOE

Fuck you and your Mr. Dick, Fancy Dan... Just because you make 40 or 50 grand a year sometimes, and I emphasize sometimes, doesn't mean that your shit doesn't stink sometimes. It stinks all the time. And just remember, your father was part of the '*family*' too, and we were both smart

not going into *their* business. And don't forget I used to make almost as much as you. So, business hasn't been that good, that's all...

TONY

I hope you guys will remember me even when business is better, 'cause I'll be leaving.

JOE

Believe me; I don't understand why this idiot wants to kill himself? There gotta be a million other '*schmucks*' that wrote more than nine plays and they're probably better and they don't go around trying to do themselves in... Fuckin' boss, he's always on my ass and so's the book. I have to come up with a score and fast.

MIKE

What about poor Tony? "*I write to enlighten the world... God gives me these things to say.*" The poor '*bubby*' needs one of his shows to be produced because not only is he's flat broke, he feels hopeless, that's why he's trying to kill himself.

JOE

Yeah, but at least he has the memories of all those models he used to ball when he was making big bread and he was cutting all those famous peoples hair. All those centerfolds...

(ALL except TONY sing.)

KING of the HILL**MIKE**

Remember all those chicks he used to ball?

JOE

That was before he took a terrible fall.

FANCY

Then the poor boy then lost all his money.

ALL except TONY

And now he doesn't seem that funny.

He used to be king of the hill.
Life to him was always a thrill.
He never paid his dues.
Never sang the blues

MIKE

I can't forget when we sang on the street.

JOE

Chicks passing by looked so sweet.

FANCY

We'd start to harmonize as we would flirt.

ALL except TONY

We'd dance and kick up some dirt.

He used to be king of the hill.
Life to him was always a thrill.
He never paid his dues.
Never sang the blues

MIKE

He used to cut Sonnie's hair. Sonnie... we've been living together for twelve years and she still won't marry me. Unless I have the down payment for a house in Tenafly, she won't marry me. Where am I supposed to get a hundred grand? All I got's about thirty. That's it... Or maybe I'm not good enough.

JOE

(To Tony, goes and sits in barber chair.)

Fuck you and your killing yourself, all the broads you used to ball and all your plays, I'm not interested, Tony. Just give me a trim? You need the practice, man. You haven't cut my hair in ten years. So...? Please. This new chic, I think she doesn't like my hair. Its two weeks and we haven't done it yet. And my boss is on my ass about everything, so go on, go get your scissor and you still got that haircutting cape? I don't want to get hair all over me. Jesus, I hate to get hair on me.

FANCY

(To Tony.)

Your lack of fame unfortunately will not be the death of me Mr. Desperate, for once again not only have I detected that your attempted suicide has been once again timed to perfection. A master production if I may say so myself. And you didn't give a shit that you were going to blow up the whole fuckin' building with me in it. I say let's kill him before he kills us. His head was in the oven anyway.

MIKE

(Feigns hanging.)

I wonder why he didn't try to do this again...?

TONY

(Moans.) Because that hurts. There are other ways. Better ways.

(Snaps fingers.)

Soon it will be all over. You have been forewarned of my preordained demise, brethren.

JOE

I think this whole thing with Mr. Loony Tunes trying to kill himself might just be a big crock of shit... I mean, doesn't it seem strange that one of us is always there just when he's about to pull the plug. Doesn't it seem like another one of his brilliant plots to get us to invest in one of his "Great" plays? What's sick about it is he thinks the production of his "Great" plays is the only thing in the world that matters. All you think about is your fuckin' plays. You used to cut hair remember? Give me a haircut Damnit. Do me a favor.

TONY

(Spooky.)

Unless you invest in one of my plays, there can be no hair cuts. Soon, I will tell you when I shall make my *final curtain call*.

FANCY

You are the most selfish person I ever met. You don't give a shit about us or your mother's mushroom and barley soup? What am I gonna do...? You know how I dig it. It's my favorite thing.

MIKE

I thought getting head was? Man, I still dig getting head.

FANCY

My wife says Catholics don't give head. It's "*Sacrilegious*." Tell you the truth; I have a better chance getting the meat that Molly puts in the soup.

TONY

Flanken. It's called flanken.

FANCY

(Sings to "*I Love Paris in the Spring Time*.")

I love it, man. "*I love flanken in the spring time.*"

ALL

(Sings ♪ and will always assume pose as in opening scene.)

"*And I love flanken in the fall. I love flanken in the winter when it drizzles, and I love flanken in the summer when it sizzles.*"

ALL smile and chant, "*Bronx tones*," three times.)

JOE

And this *strunz*, with the sweetest mother that ever lived wants to kill himself... Why don't you ask her to take her Social Security and put it in one of your "*Great*" plays? Go ahead; take your mother's last dollar...

(Aside.)

Lewie the bookie's on my ass too.

MIKE

...I mean what the hell will he think of the next time, Fancy? An atom bomb? What else is left?

FANCY

You may precede Mr. Gym teacher. We await your learned observation...

MIKE

(Takes out joint and lights it.)

Well, in my unbiased opinion, I say he'll try poison next. Right or wrong, Tony?

TONY

No comment.

MIKE

When he takes arsenic, not one of us will be able to save him. Because one, two, three and it's all over. See you later alligator, its *kaputsville*.

JOE

I agree. If arsenic was good enough for Marie Antoinette it's certainly good enough for our illustrious playwright.

MIKE

(Smokes.)

I hate to tell you this Mr. Dick: no offense intended, but I believe Marie Antoinette was beheaded. She didn't poison herself.

JOE

Picky, picky, picky. Smoke your dope Mr. Picky. So, I didn't graduate High School or go to City College like you. And what did all that education get you? You're nothing but a freakin' gym teacher. Teacher. You ain't no teacher. You're not smart enough to teach English.

(TONY moans.)

TONY

No matter what Joe says, he loves you Mike. Even though he

feels inadequate because of his lack of education, no matter what Joe says, he loves you, but hates that you smoke that shit because it smells the place up to high heaven. Now you may opine again if you so desire Smokey.

MIKE

How do sleeping pills sound? Or maybe he'll stick a pipe

(Laughing, coughs from joint.)

Up his ass and choke himself to death. You can cut your dick off if you want. No matter how many sleeping pills you take, just leave me out of it Tony.

(TONY moans.)

FANCY

Sleeping pills? I told you he tried to gas himself.

(Clicks heels.)

Think Auschwitz. *SEIG HEIL!*

(TONY moans.)

JOE

Gas, what a disgusting way to go. Smells terrible.

(TONY moans.)

JOE (cont'd)

Didn't Hitler gas enough of you Jew bastards, Tony...?

(TONY moans.)

FANCY

Yeah, gassing himself! BINGO!

JOE

And not one of them had insurance. Too bad. I could've made a bundle. 'Specially if it was term insurance.

FANCY

Now, do you see why we call you Dick...? He was just talking about the Holocaust and Tony's Jewish, too.

JOE

I'm glad somebody's Jewish around here and by the way Mr. Jew, what do you say? Instead of your mother, how's about making me the beneficiary of your policy? I mean I could sure use the bread, and your mother... how much time does she have left? And who saved you a half-a-dozen times, me or her? At least let's discuss it. We'll do lunch.

FANCY

Tony's trying to kill himself and all you can think of is the almighty dollar. Money, money, money. That's why the name, Mr. Dick is so apropos.

JOE

(Frustrated, he turns to Mike.)

And all you think of is pot. You're not one of your De Witt Clinton high school students, dummy. Why doesn't someone tell this 56 year old hippie that the sixties are over...? They're over, right, Mike?

MIKE

(Smoking.)

Really...? Why didn't someone tell me? I thought you guys were my friends and you used to smoke... We all used to smoke.

FANCY

(To Tony.)

We used to in the sixties.

(Opens bottle of scotch and fixes drinks.)

The good old sixties.

JOE

This is the nineties. We don't get high anymore, we drink ourselves to oblivion.

MIKE

And before we proceed to drink ourselves to as Fancy so aptly implied, oblivion; because I am the only one with a degree, I decree we all bid our dear friend Tony adieu and Sonnie sends her warmest regards. Before you leave, she asked if you would tell us her favorite story. How a guy who's name is Tony Costello, turns out to be a Jew from the Bronx...? She always peed and with all this suicide going around, I think we could all use a little peeing ourselves and a double scotch. What say fellahs? "*We want Tony and his story. We want Tony and his story.*"

ALL

(Drinks and chants.)

WE WANT TONY AND HIS STORY! WE WANT TONY AND HIS STORY!

FANCY

Please Tony...

MIKE

I love that story.

TONY

...All right, all right, but this is the last time... When my grandfather landed at Ellis Island, he wanted to fit in so, he asked a man standing in line next to him, what's a good Jewish name to take. The guy, afraid that there might be more Nazis in New York, trying to protect his fellow Jew,

told my grandfather to say his name was Costello instead of Finkel or Bernstein... Well, it looks like that's the last time I'll ever tell the Costello, Finkel, Bernstein story.

MIKE

Then I think we should have recorded Tony for future Finkels... 'specially if Bernstein can act.

(ALL laugh and chant, "To the future!")

JOE

And if the guy told your grandfather to say his name was O'Reilly or O'Rourke...?

TONY

(Irish accent. Sings.)

My name would have been, "*Oh Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are call-ing.*"

ALL

"From glen to glen and through the mountain side..."

(ALL laugh, chant "BRONX TONES," three times.)

JOE

Yeah, but you never told us how the hell did two immigrant Jew parents name their kid Tony? Tony's a guinea name like Joe, Carmine, Angelo, Lewie the book, and Tony...

(TONY sings ♪ and all join in.)

TOM MIX

Tom Mix...
My father used to love Tom Mix.
He had a horse that did lots of tricks
It was black and very fast.
He named me after a horse's ass.

'Cause my father idolized him.
He was good looking and sorta slim.
Man could he use his six gun.

ALL

The movies in those days were lots of fun.

We used to dream about being movie stars.
We used to dream about racing fast cars.
It's funny how dreams don't come true.
Not for me and not for you, they don't come rue. Tom Mix.

TONY

And his horse's name was Tony.
I swear to God that's no baloney.

He could have named me after Lincoln.
But it rhymed too much with stinkin'.

ALL

We used to dream about being movie stars.
We used to dream about racing fast cars.
It's funny how dreams don't come true.
Not for me and not for you, they don't come true. Tom
Mix.

FANCY

And that Tony is exactly what you are, a horse's ass.
Because only a horse's ass would try and kill himself as
many times as you. What are trying to set the record for
attempted suicides this month?

JOE

Do you know how worried I've been? Sometimes I actually
can't sleep because I'm thinking how you're thinking about
how you're going to try and kill yourself again. Give me a
hint. Tell me before I go crazy.

MIKE

He's not the only one that's going crazy. You have to cut
this suicide crap out immediately. I mean coming to this
neighborhood, it's making me very nervous and I smoke not to
be nervous. I am truly worried about this nervousness, man.
One day you're timing's going to be just a little off and
one of us might be too nervous to save you and that will be
it. Probably from poison 'cause that acts the quickest...
Since you intend on poisoning yourself and we're saying

(Aside.)

goodbye, I'd like to bid thee '*bon voyage.*' All I need's a
hundred grand for the down payment and she said she'd marry
me. I'm 57 years old. Divorced, been alone the last twenty
years. If she won't marry me, who will?

TONY

(Touches pocket.)

You know it's in my pocket, don't you? If the three of you
came up with a measly 15 grand a piece, maybe I wouldn't
poison myself. You know that probably would be enough to do
a little workshop production, don't you? I mean pick any
show you like, anyone... Then, maybe I'd have something to
live for. Is that asking so much? Didn't I have a
production in L.A.? Weren't some of the reviews fantastic?
Just because the audiences didn't like it... It's a great
play. All my plays are great.

MIKE

Does all that horseshit you just said, mean you wouldn't

kill yourself if we produced one of your plays? Is that all you think your life is worth...? You know, for a moment I thought you were going through a mid-life crisis, but we already went through that 15 years ago, and I'm still the same struggling gym teacher with barely enough to pay my rent. Alright, I have a pension coming and I have a few dollars put away, but that's for my old age and what about me and Sonnie? Who knows, if I some how get the down payment; I might even have a kid with her. She's only 43.

TONY

Seeing and hearing the audience respond, is that asking so much for a farewell gift. It will be your farewell gift to a poor friend, Mike. See ya... I'm going to the John.

MIKE

...Alone? You're not going to the John alone, are you?

(Intercom beeps.)

FANCY

Who the hell could that be?

JOE

Two-to-one it's his freakin' mushroom and barley soup...

TONY

(Answers intercom.)

...Who is it...?

MOLLY

(Outside intercom.)

Who do you expect? It's your mother and I brought Fancy his soup... Tell him I put plenty flanken in it this time. Just how he likes it and for you I brought my chopped liver and a little stuffed cabbage to 'nosh' on, and bread. I got a rye bread and half sour pickles. I almost forgot the pickles.

TONY

Good, Ma, but could you bring the pickles back a little later? I'm a little too busy to start 'noshing' right now.

MOLLY (o/s)

You want your poor mother to come back a little later because you're too busy for a 'nosh' and what about me? Maybe I'm in the mood for a little something and maybe I'm tired, and it looks like it's starting to rain, too... And hard, too. If you had a phone, maybe I wouldn't have to walk in the rain.

TONY

(Buzzes Molly in.)

Ma, I'd tell you to come up, but the elevator's not working...

MOLLY (o/s)

You never had an elevator wise guy. And if I can run 26 miles in the marathon, what's six flights? With God's help I'm thinking.

TONY

It's still only three floors and are you sure you want to walk up "Six" floors in this heat?

MOLLY (o/s)

I hope your air conditioner is working.

TONY

Take your time. Don't run, Ma. Remember, you have a bad hip.

MOLLY (o/s)

Are you sure it's still six floors?

TONY

It was yesterday, Ma.

MOLLY (o/s)

So, maybe I won't become a 'Buhbeh,' a grandma like all my friends. Would I complain? Do I ever complain?

TONY

For the last five years you haven't said a word about my celibacy and I want you to know I appreciate it. Through thick or thin, you're the greatest, Ma.

MOLLY (o/s)

So, maybe I'll run up like I always do... Time me. Get set, go!

MIKE

(To All.)

Oh, my God! Get some towels; get the 'spritze...!' You know how she always busts my...

(Panicked, ALL start twirling towels and TONY sprays aerosol trying to dispel the pot smell.)

JOE

(To Fancy - waving towel trying to get rid of smell.)

Every month his mother brings you your fuckin' soup and busts Mike's balls about smoking. I bet he hates that soup more than me. You ever taste it Mike? *Dis-gus-ting!*

FANCY**(Waving towel.)**

Who asked the Dick to come? I mean, who asked him to like my soup? And who needs him and his fuckin' life insurance? He already got me to buy a quarter-of-a-million dollar, term. I mean give me a break.

JOE**(Waving towel.)**

What kind of break? I wasn't trying to sell you anymore insurance. What are you fuckin' crazy?

FANCY

Crazy? Do you know, besides your games, insurance's all you ever talk to me about. Not my kid or the wedding, or that great book Pat Conroy wrote. You got a one track mind, man. One track and it always leads to cash.

JOE

And how many tracks do you got Fancy? All you ever do is wear your "*Fancy*" togs and come on like your Mr. Perfect. You're so... you're always dressed like you're going to his majesty's ball, which only makes his majesty perfect. You'll never be perfect. I mean, its three o'clock, Saturday afternoon, we're all wearing sweatshirts and jeans and look at you. This is your day off, remember? I mean your tie is up to your ears... How can you breathe? You must be suffocating. You can fart, Fancy. Once in awhile you're allowed to pass wind. My father used to say that. He also said all I'd amount to was a cookie or Avon salesman. Said I could never run a business with people like him. He had a fish store on Bathgate Avenue. Had two guys working for him. He was right. I never had a fish store...

MIKE

Hey, I came here to have a good time. Smoke. Maybe sing a song or two. Have some laughs. Save Tony's life.

TONY

Isn't it strange how my mother's mushroom and barley soup brought us all together?

MOLLY**(Enters with two shopping bags and gasps.)**

I ran up six flights and I didn't even stop for a second and you're just going to look at me?

TONY

That's three flights, but who's counting, Ma?

MOLLY

Are my nylons so crooked? And so, nobody helps me with the shopping bags I've been '*schlepping*' all over?

ALL run to MOLLY who always wears sneakers.

MOLLY (cont'd)

(Continues to kitchen area.)

Don't bother. Thank God I can still manage myself.

TONY

(Takes bags.)

Yes you can Mama, you

(Kisses her.)

certainly can. How are you, sweetheart?

MOLLY

(Sings)

ARE YOU EVER THERE?

What do you care?
Do you call me?
Do you come to see me?
Do you need me?
Are you ever there?

How I raised you,
With all my heart.
We have drifted apart.
You think you're smart,
But I still need you.

You will always be my sonny boy.
Because you give so much joy.
In you I always see the Sun.
To me you're number one.
A mother loves her son.
More than anyone, she
Loves her son.

Said you were God.
You were my king.
You were my ev'rything.
I loved how you'd sing.
Nothing was too hard.

You bought me clothes.
You bought me shoes.
You didn't know the word blues.
You couldn't lose.
That's how life goes.

You will always be my sonny boy.
Because you give so much joy.
In you I always see the Sun.
To me you're number one.
A mother loves her son.
More than anyone, she
Loves her, son.

TONY

Ma, I don't have a phone, remember and I've been busy.

MIKE

You should only know how busy your son was. It would *kill* you.

JOE

Should I tell your mother what you've been up to, Tony?

(TONY glares at MIKE and JOE.)

MOLLY

Why is this day different from all other days? You're
(Sniffs.)
always busy. And I see you've been smoking again, Michael.

FANCY

Hi ya sexy...

JOE

Hi Molly

MIKE

Sorry Molly.

MOLLY

Shame on you. Grown man still smoking marijuana. You know even though they legalized it in Arizona and Los Angeles, it's still illegal over here mister, so don't call me up to bail you out. If you does the crime, you does the time. J. Edgar Hoover. A miserable man. He was a sissy.

TONY

Thank you Liz Smith. Err... Liz, this is not the right time.

MOLLY

Why didn't you tell me before I ran up? You know my condition. Hello boys. I hope you're in the mood for a 'nosh?'

MIKE

We know someone is in the mood for 'nosh,' don't we Fancy?

JOE

Do I hear mushroom and barley soup?

FANCY

(Nears Molly.)

You walked up six flights for me, Molly. You shouldn't have sweetheart. I could have waited for the soup. I just

(Kisses Molly's hand.)

don't know how to thank you my princess.

MOLLY

(Pinches Fancy.)

Can Mr. Salesman talk or can he talk? I bet that's why I put extra flanken in the soup.

FANCY

I always thought it was because of the twenty percent discount you get when you shop at Bloomies.

MOLLY

Why else would I still talk to you? Anyway, it's in the blue shopping bag.

FANCY

(Kisses Molly's hand again.)

Again I am indebted.

MOLLY

And you can kiss my other hand next, Michael and then you Joey.

MIKE

(Kisses Molly's hand and sings ♪ to Jolson's "Swanee.")

"Molly, how I love you, how I love you..."

MOLLY

With all this kissing, 'pfeh,' you got it all over me. This old lady has to go to the bathroom and wash up. *"But I shall return."* MacArthur said that. For a general he had a big mouth... He said a lot of **(Exits.)** things.

TONY

Gentlemen, I give you my mother who has also said a lot of things...

JOE

Except for that soup, I'd take your mother in a second. Are You kidding? She's some classy dame and what a personality.

Too bad she doesn't cook pasta primavera.

FANCY

Funny, I was just thinking about my old man. Could he cook and when he did the Lindy, he was hot stuff. Remember my father, Joey?

JOE

A nice guy. Very religious. I remember how he used to make you dress... Jesus, nothing's changed, has it Fancy. You still look like the same altar boy. Bless me father for I have sinned.

FANCY

(Goes to mirror and looks at self.)

It sure doesn't look like I changed that much, Joey.

(Takes off jacket and tie.)

Looks like I'm still papa's little boy, don't it?

JOE

That's what I've been trying to tell you all these years, and your father's dead, so grow up.

FANCY

Yeah, maybe it's time I grew up and became a man.

JOE

All of a sudden you're going to become a man? I like you just the way you are. Dressed up.

MIKE

But, I sure miss my mother too, Fancy... She was our Junior high school librarian, but more important, she went to everyone of my Little League games.

TONY

They didn't have the Little League when we were kids. Not where I lived.

MIKE

Around Claremont Parkway they did. And she even caught a foul once. My foul pop.

(Underscoring of "No Matter How You Did It," we hear later.)

JOE

And my father will be gone four years this April 6th... Ya know, just before he died, whenever I saw him, for some strange reason he'd argue with me. I mean constant picking. Why don't I make a more money. Why don't I have a my own business? Why I get a divorce? Why all my friends make it a big, except me. I tried to tell him that none of my friends made it big. Oh, me and Fancy always had dreams about

making it, but, it seems Fancy barely ekes out a living. I know we live on the same block in Riverdale. I see the shit car he drives. He may dress like a million bucks but believe me, he ain't no better off. He says he lives in Riverdale, but it's still the Bronx and like me, he's still a salesman, and it's mostly commission and I say, how many 56 year-olds does he know that still can sell like me and Fancy, so, what does he do? He brings up Tony the Jew. I told him sure, one time the Jew made a lot of money. All Jews at some time in their life make a lot of money, but that was long ago. Now he's more broke than me and he don't even bet.

TONY

You guys are making me feel guilty that I have a mother. If any of you would like to adopt her for a few months, the pleasure will be all mine. In fact please take her home right now.

MOLLY

(Returns looking at bottle.)

Tony, from running up those stairs, I needed a band aid, because one of my sneakers was bothering me. So I opened your medicine chest and I found this bottle of arsenic. What do you need arsenic for?

(ALL look concerned.)

(Lights.)

End of Scene 1

The *FINAL* CURTAIN

ACT I

Scene 2

The past. Under lamppost ALL sing 🎵.

ALL

"Born free, as free as the wind blows. As free as the grass grows. Born will follow your soul."

(To black and then lights.)

One hour later. MOLLY and TONY are gone.
Wearing T shirt, FANCY is relaxing.

MIKE

(Touches Fancy's muscle.)

Look at this. I thought it was his shoulder pads. The man actually has muscles.

JOE

So, how does it feel to become part of the human race, Mr. Muscles? No tie, no jacket... Letting it all hang out, are you?

FANCY

Thanks to you, I am.

JOE

Thanks to me? For what? I didn't do anything.

FANCY

(Sings ♫)

HAVE I GONE INSANE

When you said I should look at myself.
I did and boy did I need help.
Seems I haven't changed since I was ten.
Sonofabitch, not since then.

When I looked in the mirror I saw.
All-of-a-sudden I knew the score.
My dad died four years ago.
Do you know where I should go?

I still dress like a little boy.
And why does Tony call me a goy?
Inside this rotten pain, I live in vain,
And it's driving me insane?

I lived with an Italian ball buster.
And I was wounded like General Custer.

I guess I'm not much of a man,
Because I never took a stand.

I still dress like a little boy.
And why does Tony call me a goy?
Inside this rotten pain, I live in vain,
And it's driving me insane?

JOE

Personally, I think you've always been *toozie bahts*, nuts.

FANCY

Marie made me like that. I think I married her because my father told me she'd be good for me... Wives, ya know, even though you don't get it like I do, I envy you three bachelors. Now if I was on the scene, I'd show you how to score better than Tony used to and tell you the truth, the least he can do is get his mother a freakin' cab with out bitching about it. You think he was doing it for nothing. She gives him a couple of hundred every month from her Social Security. All right so she has a few bucks socked away. That don't mean he should use it all up, and, maybe call her once or twice a week. Know what I'm saying? I use to call my

mother at least three times a week.

JOE

We know, we know. We heard all about it, remember? And he'll be back any minute, so we better talk and we better talk fast. Now that he has the arsenic back in his possession, like it's in his pocket; He can say he's going to the bathroom and according to our learned gym teacher, going to the John with arsenic means only one thing; we might as well start sitting 'Shiva' on those freakin' wooden boxes 'cause he's Jewish and that's what they do when they die. And they eat, man. Do they scarf it up. 'Minke.'

MIKE

I've been to a few 'Shivas' man, and I sat on a few of those 'Shiva' boxes and I didn't dig them, which means we can't just stand around and watch one of the original Bronx tones have a 'Shiva,' can we? We have to do something.

JOE

And what do you propose we do? Follow him around and wipe his ass. A pigeon flies by, you turn your head and just like that, he can down enough arsenic to kill ten horses. We can't watch him every second, can we?

(WE hear underscoring of "Have I Gone Insane?")

FANCY

Well, I think it's our responsibility to at least keep our eyes open. We can't leave him alone for a second. I'm determined to delay the inevitable for as long as I can and I will. Rest assure, I will. Seems I have a little time coming to me and what better time to take it than for a dear friend. Once I explain to Marie about Tony and how he's going to take all that arsenic, and I have to save the life of my dear friend... and I have to move into Tony's shithole immediately, she'll understand. She'll just have to. And except for the Jew, ain't we all Catholic or what? And like it or not, Jesus was a Jew.

Underscoring ends.

MIKE

...Didn't you two little "Jew" boys have your Communion on the same day at "Our Lady of Victory?" That means you're a Catholic-Jew, Joe, which means you have to watch Tony the Jew, too.

FANCY

And under the lamppost in front of the Sugar Bowl on a 170th

Street, Joe and I started the Bronx tones. Two weeks later, when we met Tony and you Mike at Poe Park, we became singing fools.

(Sings, "*Earth Angel.*")

"*Ear-th Angel, Earth Angel...*"

ALL

(Sing.)

"*Will you be mine? My darling dear, love you all the time.*"

FANCY

(Starts new song for first time. "*Life Can Be a Dream*")

"*Hey narny ding dong, a doopy day...*"

ALL

(Surprised but glad to be singing.)

"*Sha boom ba do, ba dooby do ba day. Oh, life can be a dream, sha boom. If I can take you up in paradise up above, sha boom.*"

(Excited, ALL jump and chant, "*Bronx tones.*")

FANCY

Like '*Twenty-Mule Team Borox,*' we are the last of a dying breed of street corner harmonizers, Bronx style, and if I heard correctly, not that bad... And now that we finally sound so good, this '*stunahd*' wants to end it all? And right under my nose? Never. I guess that means if I have to move in with the dingleberry, so it shall be. I better go home and get my tooth brush, some clothes, you know... If I watch him and he lives three or four more days, that's three or four more days we have him. As St. Peter would say, "*Always do your job and save a Jew.*" After that, the good Lord says it's up to you guys whether he lives or dies. So think about it, Mike, Joe. We did our Communion together. Are you prepared to be called the "*Executioner*" for not trying to save Tony the Jew?

JOE

Executioner my ass! I'm not living with Mr. Dipso Dingbat in this cockroach infested rat-hole because; "*I*" will become his executioner. And besides, I got a job. I have to sell insurance or this Wop don't eat, and Lewie, Lewie the book don't let me breathe. Thank God I beat him for a few last week, and if you want to live with the Dingbat, be my guest. Far as I'm concerned, if he really wants to blow his brains out, then he'll do it no matter what we say or do. I mean, we can't watch him every minute. When he moves his little bowels and if he wants to take poison, he'll take ten doses and shit his brains out. And if he wants to blow his brains out... I say, let him. Let's see if he really wants to kill

himself, that fuckin' part player. Even with the arsenic. I mean give me a break. Can't you see how conveniently he left the '*dreaded arsenic*' in his medicine cabinet, so his mother would find it?

MIKE

She really found it.

JOE

Didn't he tell us she always looks in all his drawers and closets? Can'tcha see? It was all a set up.

FANCY

His head in the oven was no set up. If someone accidentally lit a cigarette the moment before I pulled him out and fortunately I had the presence of mind to shut the

(Snaps fingers.)

gas, the whole building, like this, blown to smithereens. And let us not forget the 45 I found him holding to his head. Does he have a license for that thing or what?

MIKE

And don't forget, when I found him hanging, he didn't show me his license for that noose either. It's over there, hanging. That's funny, the noose is hanging. Why is he saving it...? He was turning purple and so was his fuckin' tongue...Disgusting. What would have happened if I came five

(Feigns pulling noose tighter.)

minutes later? How much purpler would his tongue have gotten? Does purpler sound right? I suppose I should take some time off for this '*meshugeneh*,' after all we've been singing together since Junior High. 43 years. Guess I'm just not ready to say goodbye to Tony... I'm really not.

JOE

Even though I'm not crazy about her cooking, when Tony goes, I swear to Christ, I wish Molly'd adopt me. I mean who can't use an extra two yards a month. The soup you can keep Fancy, I'm really interested in the bread.

MIKE

Even though he gets by working for that cleaning service; does some resumes and parks cars, all Tony really cares about is his writing. I mean, is that idealism or what? Not to give a shit about the Jones and just pursue your dream. Remarkable and that '*putz*' wants to end it all?

JOE

Now that he's back to singing like an original Bronxtone, I think I'm really going to miss the bum.

FANCY

I was right! He was really singing on key for the first time since... I'm not crazy, am I?

JOE

You're not crazy, he finally middle C'd it. How many years have we covered up for his Middle Cs and now, when he finally hits it again...

FANCY

...What do you mean again? He never hit it and now he gonna pack it all in?

MIKE

Didn't he hear how good we sounded today, or is he still really that deaf?

TONY

(Entering.)

Did I just hear you say that I'm deaf...? My big mouth sister finally told you, right...? Well all right. So maybe it happened when I had the accident. So you talk a little louder to me. What's the big deal?

FANCY

If your becoming deaf ten years ago made you sing like that today, then I love you, you deaf bastard, we all do... For the first time since you, you actually sounded wonderful. On key, perfect pitch. We were cookin'.

TONY

I was sort of embarrassed to tell you guys that I became a little deaf, after the accident... And what do you mean I sounded wonderful for the first time? Don't tell me you haven't known? I've been deaf and singing with you guys all these years.

MIKE

Yes, but today's the first time you've hit middle C since
(Laughs.)
you became, what's that you said you were there, mister?

TONY

I did hit middle C didn't I. I thought I did.

JOE

Took you 40 years, but you sure did.

TONY

Rubs pocket with arsenic, melancholy, WE hear Underscoring of "I Miss That Sunny Day."

Forty wonderful years. I've spent forty wonderful years with you guys, but like all good things, this too must

(Starts to go to the bathroom.)

come to pass. I have to go to the bathroom.

FANCY

By yourself?

TONY

Thanks, but I don't feel like company right now.

MIKE

(Aware, rushes to bathroom. Enters and slams door.)

Oh, sorry Tony, but I have to go! I really have to go.

TONY

He thinks I don't know what he's doing. He knows I have

(Shows bottle of arsenic.)

the poison and he's afraid I'm going to take it when I pee. Tell him I will give you all fair warning concerning my inimitable departure. Now, I really have to go, so please tell Mike to hurry up.

JOE

(Runs to bathroom and yells.)

MIKE, COME ON OUT. HE'S NOT GOING TO DO IT; HE REALLY HAS TO TAKE A...

MIKE

(Runs out of bathroom.)

...So, I thought you had to go, Mr. Suicide...? What the hell are you waiting for? Be my guest.

Underscoring ends as TONY enters bathroom.

MIKE (cont'd)

How do you know he won't take it?

FANCY

You know when he gives his word, he gives his word. He said he'd give us fair warning and that's exactly what he'll do.

I SAY SCREW IT

FANCY

And what does fair warning exactly mean?

♪ MIKE, FANCY and JOE sing ♪.

A cop calling, me at three in the morning?
Is that fair warning?
I'm asking you. I'm asking you.

ALL

How do we stop this nutty bastard?

JOE

Do you happen to know this crazy playwright.
Who don't seem all right,
I'm asking you. I'm sking you.

ALL

What the hell can we do?

He'll never send a postcard or a letter.
It don't look like he's getting any better.
Forget about sending us a telegram.
The guy's a lunatic, he's nothing but a sham,

He won't do it.
I say screw it.
He won't do it.
I say screw it.

ALL

He needs a doctor, he needs a shrink!

MIKE

He'll take poison or jump
out the window.
Bet that's how he'll go.
I'm asking you. I'm
asking you.

ALL

What the hell can we do?

He'll never send a postcard or a letter.
It don't look like he's getting any better.
Forget about sending us a telegram.
The guy's a lunatic, he's nothing but a sham,

He won't do it.
I say screw it.
He won't do it.
I say screw it.

JOE

(To Fancy.)

This guy's so flaky; he'll do it any time, so if you're as sincere as you pretend to be. Ten minutes ago you pretended that you were going to save Tony's life for three or four more days. Personally, since you, what should I say, let your hair down, take your jacket off. I mean Fancy is

actually sitting in his T. shirt. I can't believe what a sweetheart you've become.

(Puts hands on Fancy's shoulder.)

How does Tony say it? He's a '*Mensch*,' right?

TONY

(Enters.)

A cheap '*Mensch*.'

JOE

It's like you're taking the burden off of me by going to stick with this bird-brain every second. I really appreciate it. And if I can manage to get my hands on the arsenic, I'm going to cop it just for you Fancy, 'cause you really seem to care, like Mike. Hey, he always cares. That's just the way it is. Mike cares about everything and now, all of you seem to care. What's wrong with me Fancy? How come I only care about me?

FANCY

Hey, sometimes it takes certain people a little longer to get it. Can't you see? Because of you dummy, I just learned to care about the most important person in the whole world, me, my self... and of course you. It's I, me, who should be thanking you, Joe, and I'll never call you Dick again. If anyone was a Dick, it was me. I mean, did you see what I was wearing...? And all the time. Bet that's one of the reasons Marie left. Any way, how long should it take me to go back

(Looks at watch and starts to exits.)

and forth? An hour-and-half or two? There's no traffic now. And thanks, Joe. I really mean it. I'll be right back.

TONY

Right back? Where are you going?

FANCY

Err... I was going home to get a few things. I was thinking of maybe moving in for a few days with Mr. Suicide.

MIKE

Some one to sort of watch over things for a few days...

TONY

(Shows arsenic, tosses it up.)

You mean like this?

JOE

(Grabs arsenic and runs away and tosses it to Fancy.)

Exactly and I ain't giving it back. Here, Fancy.

TONY

Keep it. I have ten more bottles.

FANCY

You do?

TONY smiles.

FANCY (cont'd)

(Tosses arsenic back to Tony.)

He has ten more bottles. The man never lies.

JOE

I don't believe you're going to take it anyway. See I think you timed your suicide attempts at precisely the exact moment one of us would be here to save you. Not only that, the placement of the arsenic, I mean is that not obvious?

FANCY

You got it all wrong, Joe. He's going to do it. Two weeks ago I found him with a gun to his head, and today I found him with his head in the freakin oven. You can close your eyes Joe, but not your nose. Gas. I'm moving into Tony's shithole and that's it. I hope he doesn't have mice...

TONY

We have mice. And big ones; They call them killer mice.

JOE

What would happen if none of us leave? We all move in and watch you and your mice constantly. Every second.

(Sings.)

"The eyes of Texas are upon you."

MIKE

Brilliant! We set up mirrors, so even when you take a dump Joe or Fancy will watch you. That's not the kind of job I ever assign to myself.

FANCY

We're all going to actually move in together? It'll be like when we all went to camp. Let's order...

JOE

...A pie with everything.

MIKE

No anchovies.

JOE

No anchovies. And a few six packs?

TONY

Wait a minute, wait a minute. Who said anything about dinner? You got an hour and you're all out of here.

FANCY

We're not leaving. Wish we could call the pizzeria.

MIKE

And then we'll all bunk in together. Sounds like fun, doesn't it?

TONY

Hey, nobody's sleeping here tonight so don't get any stupid ideas. In fact I think I want you guys out of here right now. You're pissing me off and I don't like it.

JOE

(Grabs Tony by the shirt.)

And you're pissing me off and I don't like it even more. What do you think, all I have to do is worry about you, asshole? You want to kill yourself, kill yourself, just leave me out of it 'cause I'm not staying with you Mr. Looney Tunes.

TONY

Nobody is staying with Mr. Looney tunes. I told you, I want all of you ungrateful '*schmucks*' out of here... What are you waiting for? I want you all out!

FANCY

I'm not leaving, I'm moving in. Unless you give me your word that you will not kill yourself... Mike, would you like to say a few words re suicide?

MIKE

Fancy's going to stay three or four days and then, I suppose I'll come for a couple of days...

ALL look at JOE.

JOE

Hey, don't look at me. I told you already, I'm not coming. Anyway, what the hell are you moving in for? He said he's going to give us fair warning, didn't he? So, what do you have to move in for? It could take weeks.

TONY

Exactly Joe, there's lots of time. No need for any of you to disrupt your lives over little ole me. Since there is nothing I can do to get you to put a measly \$15,000 in one of my shows on, I'll show you the good sport I am. On, what's today, March 14th? Four months from today, April, May, June, July. 14 July, I will become just a memory.

JOE

(Takes out date book.)

I'm writing that in my date book, Tony. Jews make the funeral the following day, right? But he's doing it on Wednesday, 14 July.

TONY

You can book it. And you can also book this. To show how much I care about each and everyone of you, in my last will and testament, I am going to give the three of you my nine plays.

FANCY

I don't want your plays. Give my share to Mike...

TONY

...On one condition. When I depart the said premises, in my honor you will have one of my plays produced. And when my dream comes true, even in posterity, hence forth all my plays will belong to all of you and they will make you a zillion dollars one day soon. I promise.

JOE

Tony, I don't want your freakin' plays either, because I don't want you thinking, not that you'll be doing that much thinking where you're going, that there is even the slightest chance of me ever putting one red cent in one of your "great" plays. I gamble but not on '*The Theater.*'

TONY

You see, I would gladly bequeath my shows to my darling mother, but she's old. What does she need them for? You're the guys that need the bread and with you, I know my shows will go on forever. You don't seem to realize how much money you're all going to make if you get lucky enough to produce one of my comedies. The money. You know that show "*Driving Miss Daisy?*" Oil wells! I'm talking big oil wells. Gushers. And how many comedies have I written? And that's the hardest thing to do. Make'em laugh and comedies make the most money.

JOE

You certainly know how to make them laugh. At everyone of

your readings they laughed, didn't they fellas? I didn't think that "*Daisy*" movie was that good either. Maybe all you really need is a break...? Oil wells, huh?

TONY

Exactly and do you know how much that gusher grossed? 275 Million and all it cost to produce at The John Houseman Theater was about 400 grand. Do I hear any takers?

FANCY

And I suppose you think you have a show as good as that "*Daisy*?"

TONY

...Some people think even better.

MIKE

You know how much I like your shows. Came to every reading, didn't I? That Bronx one is really funny.

JOE

On only a four hundred thousand dollar investment, huh? So, you think you have any plays that could make as much as that "*Daisy*" play?

TONY

All I need is the chance and now if you will excuse me. I'm going to take a shower in anticipation of a lovely evening of despair. In any event, when I return, I shall expect you all
(Tossing the arsenic - laughs and exits to shower.)

to be gone. And don't worry gentlemen; I gave you my word... Bastille Day it shall be.

MIKE

You know, all he wants is to be recognized...

JOE

Don't we all.

FANCY

To us, he was a star. The only one of us that moved to the City and for ten or fifteen years he made some big bucks. At least one time he was sort of famous wasn't he?

MIKE

He sure was a star. All those parties he used to have in his penthouse. Wasn't it on 64th and Lex.?

JOE

All those gorgeous babes. Remember those women? Mmmm! I still have wet dreams about them. Talking about wet dreams. Did you hear the amount of money that was made on that

"Daisy" thing, which I to this day say it was no "Death of a Salesman." A quarter of a billion dollars. That is a lot of bread. I mean a lot of bread. Spielberg country.

FANCY

So?

JOE

So? Correct me if I'm wrong. This idiot says he's going to kill himself on 14 July and we're getting all of his plays and as I recall, some of them were quite good. Maybe better than that "Daisy" thing, which I didn't like. Dig this. If we raise some bread and we time it so his show opens the day after he kills himself. With CNN, ABC, NBC, ABC, blasting it on the news, "*Bizarre ex-hairdresser, playwright blows brains out the day before opening of off Broadway comedy.*" Is that ten million dollars worth of publicity or what? And wait until you see how much money we are going to get for the movie... Block buster deal. And I will smile with great pleasure as I pay off Lewie the book... See ya Lewie.

FANCY

The whole thing sounds great, I always wanted to be a Broadway producer, but every cent I have is tied up in my kid's wedding, so, I guess Hal Prince won't have to worry about me out producing him but I wish you guys all the best.

JOE

Hey, wait a minute. You're the one that said to me to invest in his plays. So, I say let us invest, but dependent upon Tony giving us his word that's he's going to pull the trigger on when, gentlemen...?

ALL

(Chant.)

14 July! 14 July! 14 July!

MIKE

Man, if we could time it so we can open his play the day after all that media, we'd sell out every ticket for a year. What a brilliant concept. Tony dies and we clean up.

JOE

And then we'll move it to Broadway, Fancy. In the playbill, of course it will say, this hit play, in memory of Tony Costello, is produced by his close friends, Fancy Dan Manganno. Michael Gould and Joseph Santucci. So, how does it sound?

FANCY

Great, it sounds great. Now tell me how to get the money. That will even sound greater.

MIKE

I'd like to be a producer too. You're not the only one, you know what I mean? There's more to life than being a high school gym teacher... I became a teacher because I always said I would have a steady paycheck coming in, not like my father who could never hold a job. He died like Willy Loman, a loser. This could be the chance I've been waiting for. Are you saying, all of a sudden I should be rooting for Tony to blow his brains out in some bizarre way on 14 July? For publicity? Is that what our friendship is all about? The all mighty dollar? Does that mean I'm a Dick like you Dick?

FANCY

It certainly seems like that, Dick number two. No offense intended Dick *numero uno*, but it's greed. Written about in the Bible; Man's oldest sin; Cain and Abel. And just because of a couple of hundred million dollars you would throw Tony away just like that.

JOE

Are you kidding? Forget about a hundred million. I'd throw him away for a half-a-mil. Do you think I have any scruples when it comes to bread?

FANCY

You, never. But what happens if I can't borrow the money? Does that mean I'm out?

JOE

We go to the bank and you co-sign a loan for me and I do the same, and Mike, he got the bread. And then I suppose we better find a director real fast. What about Nichols or Scorsese...?

MIKE

(Excited.)

By Jove, I think he's got it. I'll invest in the show and I'll make a hundred grand and I'll put a down payment down and I'll marry Sonnie and I'll live happily ever after.

ALL

(🎵 Sing 🎵)

14 JULY**ALL**

14 July, 14 July starts our hay day.
14 July gonna be our pay day.

We'll be richer than the richest king.
We'll be so happy that we'll always sing,'
cause...

14 July, 14 July's gonna be our pay day.

MIKE

I'll make enough money to marry Sonnie.
Buy a house in Tenafly.

JOE

I'll pay off ev'ry debt and then I'll really bet.
Move and then I'll get real high.

FANCY

And me and my Marie will go to Paree.
She'll want me and she'll know why.

ALL

14 July, 14 July starts our hay day.
14 July gonna be our pay day.
We'll be richer than the richest king.
We'll be the happy that we'll always sing,'cause,

14 July, 14 July's gonna be our pay day.

MIKE

Hate to see Tony go, but I need the dough.
Time to start a family.

JOE

Never wanted to sell, selling was like hell.
I got to find the real me.

FANCY

Sharp as I dress, inside I'm a mess.
Someday I'm gonna be happy.

ALL

14 July, 14 July starts our hay day.
14 July gonna be our pay day.
We'll be richer than the richest king.
We'll be the happy that we'll always sing,'cause,

14 July, 14 July's gonna be our pay day.

(Curtain.)

End of Act I

The *Final* Curtain

ACT II

Scene 1

One month later.

TONY's typing as we hear
buzzer. TONY buzzes back
and resumes typing. After a
beat, a forlorn MIKE enters.

JOE

I came a little early because I... because I... wanted to
talk to you.

TONY

Shoot.

JOE

Seems I lost my job. They replaced me with a 23 year old. I
can't believe it. A 23 year old. I've been with them for

thirty years. Thirty years and now, I don't have a job. Like what am I supposed to do? I sell life insurance and I bet, looks like I'm not too good at either one.

TONY

I'm sorry to hear that Joe...

JOE

Hey, but who am I to complain. You're going to kill yourself in less than three months, right. Today's the 17th.

TONY

I gave you my word, didn't I?

JOE

Just remember, a promise is a promise and you promised that you were going to pull the plug.

TONY

Unless someone produces one of my plays which seems highly unlikely, comes 7/14 I shall bid you all adieu.

JOE

We're sure counting on it. In fact, I think I'm going to tell the guys that we should have a hugh party on the day of your funeral. I mean, I want to have a giant celebration, like an opening night, celebrating you and your 'Great' plays. Hey, who deserves it more?

TONY

An opening, wow. I am touched by how you feel about me and my work. I never knew you really cared about my plays...

JOE

Not plays, your "*Great*" plays. Like it's the most important thing...

TONY

...The most important thing, huh...?

JOE

...Me, if I didn't get paid, I would never have sold an insurance policy. I hate it, I did it for the bread. That's why I bet, the bread. But you've been writing all the years for nothing, because you love it and I guess when you really get down to it, what the hell's life all about if you don't love it? I wish I had something I loved beside gambling. I guess I'm jealous of you and it's not only because of your

plays, Tony. I'm jealous because you said you can't take it anymore and come 14 July, you won't take it anymore. I can't take it anymore, Lewie the book, my job. I'd like to pack it all in and say goodbye too, but I ain't got the '*Guillones*.'

(Buzzer sounds.)

TONY

(Buzzes back.)

Gotta be Mike and Fancy. Listen Joe, if you want a hand, I mean about saying goodbye, I got plenty of arsenic. Bottles. We can hold hands if you like... Tell you the truth, I think I'd like company. So, what do you say, *buhby*?

JOE

Hey, do you think I would kill myself when I suddenly have all these things going on? I didn't tell you, but I've become a major investor in a happening. Gonna pay off Lewie, everybody. I can't tell you what it's all about; sworn to secrecy, but I sure have to thank you, brother. We all believe in your word, your '*Great*' plays and your brilliant talent, but most important, 14 July. We believe in your word.

TONY

Thank you, Joe.

JOE

Think nothing of it, but enough's been said about your brilliant talent. I'm more grateful that you kept your word and did not try to kill yourself the past month. You kept your word like a good piggy should. July 14th, right?

TONY

Promise.

JOE

I know, your word is your bond. It's who you are...

TONY

Amen, to who you are. I never go back on my word.

JOE

YES! NEVER! That's what I like about you Tony... You're a man of your word.

(*Joe* JOE sings *Joe*)

NO MATTER HOW YOU END IT

He's a man of his word.
When he says he gonna do it, he does it.
And when he does it, I'm gonna love it.

I'll make some bread.
Hallelujah he'll be dead.

It will be my dream.
I'm gonna scream.

14 July's the date.
I can't wait.

Tony Costello, you're one lucky fellow.
You'll do what you say and you're so mellow.
Promise me it will all come true, and...
Tony Costello, I'll always love you.

He never hit middle C.
All along I never knew that he was tone deaf.
I told him to turn right and he turned left.

I'll make some bread.
Hallelujah he'll be dead.

It will be my dream.
I'm gonna scream.

14 July's the date.
Man, I can't wait.

Tony Costello, you're one lucky fellow.
You'll do what you say and you're so mellow.
Promise me it will all come true, and...
Tony Costello I'll always love you.

TONY

Hey Joe, what's this new thing about you becoming a major investor? Investor in what and maybe I could get into it too? I mean if it's that's good and I know it's got to be red hot for you to invest in anything, what about me?

JOE

Why would you invest in anything? You won't be here to collect, remember?

TONY

Oh, yeah, I almost forgot.

JOE

Well don't forget. 14 July means July 14th, understood?

TONY

Understood captain.

(Underscoring of, "King of the Hill" throughout as

FANCY with bag and MIKE enter unlocked door.)

FANCY

Climbing these six floors... murder. Mount Everest...

TONY

I do it all the time and it's only three floors.

FANCY

If your mother says it's six floors, it's six floors.

(FANCY and MIKE eye JOE, who grins and wink.)

FANCY (cont'd)

I hope everything is okay...?

JOE

Splendid. Everything is right on schedule.

MIKE

Sounds good to me.

FANCY

I just happened to find a bottle of Chivas in the back of my closet, gentlemen. Shall we...?

TONY

(Exits to kitchen.)

I know, I'll get the glasses.

(ALL will whisper.)

FANCY

So?

JOE

What a director. He happens to know everybody. I mean everybody, and the cast, he said he thinks he can get us some real heavy and I mean heavy actors. He loves the show. Says it's "*Great*," can't miss...

MIKE

...Hear that Fancy? Can't miss. Didn't I say can't miss?

JOE

Listen, we got to get rid of him so we can talk. We'll say we want some Chinks and we'll choose who goes. We all put out paper. He puts out rock and we win. If he puts out scissor then all three of us lose and we'll go to get the Chinks and we'll talk...

(TONY brings glasses and pours.)

TONY
(Lifts glass - laughs.)
'L'chaim.'

ALL
To life.

MIKE
To life. That's funny, isn't it Tony?

TONY
Hysterical, just hysterical.

JOE
(Drinks.)
I'm hungry.

FANCY and JOE
Me too.

MIKE
What are you in the mood for?

FANCY and JOE
Chinks.

MIKE
Tony, some ribs, sesame chicken?

TONY
Yeah, I think I could go for something.

JOE
We'll choose who goes...

(ALL put hands behind back.)

JOE
...One, two, three...

(TONY bares fist, ALL bare flat hand.)

MIKE
Paper covers rock. Looks like the good guys win. You go Tony.

(EACH give TONY a \$20 bill. Underscoring ends as TONY exits.)

FANCY

(Loud, to a departing Tony.)

And don't forget to take plenty of mustard and soy sauce.

MIKE

And noodles.

FANCY

And now gentlemen, for our business report; Joe, would you be so kind?

JOE

My pleasure. I got us this director. His name's Bruno Bank. Never made it big, but he's been directing for thirty years. Knows e-ver-y-body...

FANCY

Like...?

JOE

Like he knows people. With him, I believe it will all fall
(Takes paper from pocket and shows.)
into place, because he knows how to direct. Here, wait'll you see his credits. Ya know DeNiro, Pacino, he directed them off-off Broadway. When they were nothing, but he knew. He knows talent and he believes our show is magnifioso. It can't miss and we're going to be rich and not a moment to soon... because, I got fired, fellas. I don't have a job, not to mention my bosom buddy Lewie.

MIKE

You're kidding.

FANCY

What a fuckin' drag.

JOE

Hey, I'm not doing anything, and somebody has to get involved with the play. Act like the producer, right? Why not me?

FANCY and MIKE

(Slap each other five.)

Perfect!

(🎵 FANCY, MIKE and JOE sing 🎵)

BRONX TONES

JOE

The play's what's important right?

FANCY and MIKE

It always is, it always was.

JOE

Comes 14 July at night.

FANCY and MIKE

Take arsenic. He always does.

JOE

Or a bullet to the brain.

FANCY and MIKE

Or maybe he will hang himself.

JOE

I think he's always been insane.

FANCY and MIKE

All the '*schmuck*' needed was some help.

(♪ JOE, FANCY and MIKE sing ♪)

JOE, FANCY and MIKE

So long, you tone deaf Bronx tone.
After you're gone, we'll just sing alone.
When we think of you, after you die.
We won't cry, we'll laugh, ha, ha, ha and here is
why.

(They dance.)

We'll be rich, ha, ha, ha. We'll be rich.
Sonofabitch, ha, ha, ha will make us rich. Ha,
ha,
ha.

MIKE

Like it's going to change our whole life, right?

FANCY

(Again five.)

It better. I borrowed the bread from my kid's wedding presents. He made some piece of change.

JOE

Anyway, if you guys want me to put the whole deal together, which means hiring a director, sets, make up, lighting, costumes, publicity, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. I think I should get just a taste more than the both of you.

FANCY

What a worm. What a finagler. I thought you changed, but the only thing that changed is you're now unemployed and you

want me and Mike to support you. I thought we were all partners? Even-Steven.

JOE

We 'Are' all partners, but just to pull off getting Bruno, I mean I can't tell you how many times I called and begged him to read the play. The time, the phone calls, being a producer is a full time job. If either of you guys want the job, be my guest. I'll give you 40%. Otherwise, I want 40% and you get 30. It's up to you, and I'll even give you Bruno's number.

MIKE

Tell you the truth, if you put the whole thing together, you deserve 40%

FANCY

What's the difference? We'll be making mega bucks. So you make ten million and I make eight. Does it matter? Since Joe's putting the whole thing together. I vote he deserves it.

JOE

You're both agreeing that I'm the producer. I make the decisions. Agreed?

FANCY and MIKE

Agreed.

MIKE

This is some little power play you pulled Mr. Dick.

JOE

He called me Dick. He called me Dick. I thought you said you wouldn't call me Dick?

MIKE

Fancy said he wouldn't call you Dick, Dick. Not me. I'z calls 'em as I'z sees 'em Dick... Need I say more?

(TONY holding two shopping bags and MOLLY holding Chinese food, enter. WE hear Underscoring of ARE YOU EVER THERE?" throughout.)

TONY

You'll never guess who I met. Marathon Molly. She ran right by me. I tried to keep up, but she actually beat me here.

MOLLY

(To ALL.)

Even with my hip I'm still faster than my son. Did you hear that fellas?

TONY

You don't have to rub it in Flo Jo.

JOE, FANCY and MIKE

(THEY sing. ♪)

"Hello Molly, well hello Molly, it's so nice to have you back where you belong."

MOLLY

(gives shopping bag to Fancy and Tony)

Now, you sound like the old Bronx tones that I used to love.

(Chants - slaps Fancy five.)

Bronx tone, Bronx tone, Bronx tone.

FANCY

I was hoping we would meet at our secret rendezvous.

MOLLY

This is for your secret rendezvous.

FANCY

(Takes bag and kisses Molly's hand.)

'*Merci beau coup, mon cheri...*'

MOLLY

(kisses Tony - gives)

'*Feh,*' again with the kissing? And here's the *kashe and varnishkes.*' So, how are you and tell me the truth.

TONY

What can I tell you ma, after living in a penthouse in Manhattan all those years, and then moving back to the Bronx, it ain't been easy these last ten years. My whole life, it's a bitch, Ma. I'm so frustrated.

(JOE nears MOLLY and we see HIM overhear.)

MOLLY

I know. I wish I had enough money to do one of your "great" plays, because you deserve it. You're a true artist, '*buhbaleh.*' Maybe I could give you \$5,000. Would that help?

TONY

I can't tell you how much I appreciate the offer, Ma, but it wouldn't help. You keep that money for yourself.

MOLLY

If I can't help my Tony, who should I help? The Bosnians? You ever met a Bosnian? You're my only son. Why else do you think I run up six flights for, my health?

TONY

I know Ma.

MOLLY

That play about the Bronx is my favorite.

TONY

I know Ma.

MOLLY

That's always been my favorite, 'Too.'

TONY

I know Ma.

JOE

(Aside to Mike and fancy.)

Can you believe it? She has five grand to invest and she loves the play we're doing.

MIKE

Of course she loves it.

MOLLY

(Sniffs.)

What's the matter Michael? Can't get any smoke...?

MIKE

Nothing good.

MOLLY

I'm sorry.

MIKE

So am I.

MOLLY

So, I thought you mentioned food?

TONY

It's chow time! Ma, would you please have a seat. I got well done ribs for you and some moo shu.

(TONY gets dishes, ALL open bags and nosh.)

(Lights fade.)

End Scene 1

The *Final* Curtain

ACT II

Scene 2

Back in time
singing.

ALL under lamppost,

ALL

(*♪ Sing ♪*)

"Pack up all my cares and woe, here I go, singin' low, bye,
bye blackbird."

A month later.

TONY's apartment.

(TONY stops typing. HE gets large knife feigns
stabbing self then sings ♫)

WHAT CAN I SAY

Always pulling shtick.
We call Joe the Dick.
Fancy was up-tight.
Mike smoked day-and-night.

Thank you for the past.
It's sure been a blast.
Singing with you guys.
Laughing at your lies.

What can I say, except all good things must come to an
end.

I bid thee *au revoir*, *auf wiedersehen*, ta ta my friend.
Don't know where or when.
But, I hope we meet again.

We met we were teens.
Milk shakes and blue jeans.
When we'd meet a girl.
She became our world.

One day we grew up.
And life became tough.
'Stead of making bread.
Dreams we had instead.

What can I say, except all good things must come to an
end.
I bid thee *au revoir*, *auf wiedersehen*, ta ta my friend.
Don't know where or when.
But, I hope we meet again.

(Looks at watch as buzzer sounds. As He sees door
open HE starts to sharpen knife.)

TONY

Somebody's early...

FANCY

(Opens door and enters.)

Hey, what the hell are you doing with that knife?

TONY

Sharpening it. I want to make it real sharp. Here, want to

feel how sharp it is? You know, I still haven't decided how I'm going to do it and this knife, once I get it nice and sharp, who knows, I just might be in the mood to slit my wrists. They say bleeding to death can be beautiful. You start to get weak, woozy, some even hallucinate and when

(Sings.)

your dead you're done... "So let the good times roll..."

FANCY

(Sings. ♪)

"All you gotta do is get together and let the good times roll."

TONY

(Hugs Fancy.)

So, let the good times roll, huh...?

FANCY

Deaf or not, you sound great T.

TONY

(Puts knife to wrist.)

I do, don't I?

FANCY

Hey what the hell are you trying to do? cut your wrist in front of me? At least wait for the guys. And what about your word and listen, I came early 'cause I wanted to talk to you.

TONY

(Takes grenade from under couch pillow and tosses it up.)

So talk!

FANCY

Oh, my God. Is that a grenade?

TONY

(Tosses grenade to Fancy.)

Here, catch and it's live.

(FANCY juggles grenade.)

TONY (cont'd)

Just pull the pin.

FANCY

Are you crazy?

TONY

That's a good question. A very good question.

FANCY

This thing could blow up and we'll both be dead.

TONY

Come to think of it, I could use a little company when I go.

FANCY

First the sword and now a grenade?

TONY

Tell you the truth, I have mixed feelings about the grenade. You know I donated all my organs... especially my penis. The card's in my wallet

FANCY

Don't be stupid. They transplant hearts and livers and kidneys, but a penis? Who ever heard of a transplanted dick?

TONY

When they see mine, trust me, with all those impotent 'putzes' walking around, I assure you, I won't, but my 'jlambo' will surely survive and I couldn't be happier. That 'devil' is so adorable.

FANCY

Can we please get off of you and your "adorable" and talk about me? Marie says, now that Danny Jr. is married, she's sick and tired of putting up a front for everybody. She wants a divorce and she wants me out of the house immediately. Says I'm a stuffed shirt loser. The divorce part, we haven't been getting along in years. Ten, fifteen. So, where am I supposed to go? And you know what I figure? You. Hey you got a couple of months left before you say goodbye... and this couch is a convertible. What more could I ask for? After you're gone, things are supposed to get better. Much better and I'm sure Marie'll change her mind, so don't worry about me. Come 7/14, forget about everything. You just do your thing.

TONY

(Shows bottle of pills.)

I think sleeping pills are definitely a possibility. Take eight or ten of these babies and I will sleep forever and anon.

FANCY

(Takes pills.)

Give me those!

TONY

There's plenty more where that came from. And what's the big

deal if I kill myself sooner.

FANCY

Because you gave your word.

TONY

My word. I'll be dead. Six feet under. You think I'll care about my word when I'm dead. It's the worms. I'm more

(Sings. 🎵)

concerned about those fucking worms.

WORMS

The worms crawl in.
The worms crawl out.
They crawl in your stomach and out of your mouth.

Won't hear a sound.
No Chinese food.
It's too bad I'll say, because I'm in the mood.

Maybe I'll go up.
And I'll meet St. Nick
Nectar in my cup.
I'll never get sick.

The music sounds great.
The angels all smile.
The girls that I'll date,
All gorgeous with style.

I'm sure that I'll meet
All those movies stars.
I'll kick up my feet
And then fly to Mars.
I won't have a care.
With no rent to pay.
I'll just comb my hair
And then write a play.

The worms crawl in.
The worms crawl out.
They crawl in your stomach and out of your mouth."

Won't hear a sound.
No Chinese food.
It's too bad I'll say, because I'm in the mood.

FANCY

Please tell me I'm not hearing what I'm hearing, Tony. When you gave your word, unless there was an earthquake, your word was your bond. Always, and now, all of a sudden you're going

to become like everybody... a fuckin' liar? You never lie...
Not my Tony.

(Buzzer rings and TONY answers it.)

TONY

Mike, Joe?

JOE (o/s)

You got it.

(TONY buzzes them in.)

FANCY

I'll talk to you about moving in when you're in a better mood.

(Sings, sad)

Now I'm more concerned about, "*Maria, I just left a girl named Maria...*" And if that's not bad enough, I got you and your suicide bullshit again. Didn't you give us your word that you wouldn't try any of this shit until you actually pulled the plug on, your day, you picked 14 July, not me.

(WE hear musical refrain of 14 July throughout.)

TONY

Again with 7/14.

FANCY

Are you going to wait for July 14th, or are you going to do it before? And I want the God's honest truth you lying cocksucker. You promised 14 July and we're all counting on it.

TONY

My integrity tells me to honor my commitment of 14 July, but the pain... of being unrecognized. The pain of once making it big and now living in my cockroach infested rat-trap. The pain of not kissing a woman, I mean really tonguing it for five years. What's there to wake up for any more. So, I finish the play I'm writing. I'll have ten plays. Big deal.

Who gives a shit? I'm trying not to take a handful of these sleeping pills right now, or using the knife or the grenade.

Should I go to the Sheep Meadow, put the grenade next to my heart and pull the pin? KA-BOOM! I'll be blown from here to Kalamazoo into a million pieces. All the squirrels and birdies and of course those black crows would be eating me for lunch. And I will no longer be tormented.

FANCY

On 7/14 is when you will no longer be tormented. Not before and not after. Please. Will you please remember July 14, July 14!

(Buzzer and TONY goes to it.)

TONY

(Intercom.)

You rang?

JOE (o/s)

Come on, it's me and Mike.

TONY

(Buzzes them in.)

Have you spoken to Joe this past month?

FANCY

Yeah, err, I spoke to him a couple of times.

TONY

Boy, he must really be busy, because that Dick hasn't seen me even once. Since I gave my word that I'm going to do it on 7/14, suddenly, nobody comes to see me. It's like, unless I'm in the process of killing myself, nobody seems to give a shit about me. I call it callousness and if that's the way you guys want it, just to show you, maybe I'll kill myself tonight, or maybe after I have a little oat meal for breakfast. I'll fix all of your confident asses. From now on, all bets are off. I'll do it when I, not you are ready to say goodbye. And it shall be farewell, not goodbye. I always liked the way farewell sounds.

FANCY

You remember "*A Farewell to Arms*?" Dana Andrews? Tony, you can't be serious about calling off 14 July, can you?

TONY

I most certainly can. Unless you guys start hanging around again, I'll, I'll probably do it... I'll just do it.

FANCY

Hey, don't be stupid. You gave your word. You want us to go around saying you broke your word? Do you know what people will say about you? To your mother? Well, do you? I wonder how Mike and Joe are going to feel when they find out you're a fuckin' liar like them. You were always different.

(Underscoring ends. MIKE with bag, and JOE open door

and enter.)

MIKE

(Shows bottle - sings. ♪)

I'm sure you remember? "*Tequila. Da dada da dada.*"

FANCY

Am I glad you guys are here. This fuckin' idiot just tried to kill himself again. Didn't he say Bastille Day, or what?

JOE

You gave us your word that you were going to end it all on July 14th. Your word Tony, we're counting on your word.

MIKE

So, how'd he try killing himself this time, Fancy? Did he have a bazooka up his ass?

FANCY

Show them your machete, Tony.

TONY

(Dangles knife - over veins.)

Want to see how sharp it is...? One slit, right here, watch a little T.V. and you fall asleep.

FANCY

He also has a live grenade. Tony, you want to show them your little toy?

TONY

Is this what you're talking about? Here Joe.

(TONY tosses grenade to JOE, who tosses it to MIKE who is frightened. Underscoring, "King of the Hill," as HE looks at grenade.)

MIKE

It looks like a real grenade. It has a pin and it's heavy.

FANCY

First, it was that knife. He was sharpening it. Real scary. I thought for sure he was going to do himself in. I manage to talk him out of it. I did enough, right? Then, out-of-nowhere, he tosses me that grenade. I don't know how you guys feel about it, but I shit, he wants to blow himself up and become fodder for a few fuckin' pigeons. He could take me with him and feed me to the pigeons. I want you to know, I finally talk him out of the pigeon bit. After I catch my breath, he takes out these sleeping pills. He says he's not waiting. I'm telling you, Tony don't give a shit about us or

(To Joe and Mike.)

his 7/14. Well, Jew? Do you? What are we going to do if he goes back on his word?

JOE

We still go ahead with our plans. It's good and I predict
(Feigns whisper.)
a hit show!

TONY

What's a hit show?

FANCY

From now on we ain't telling you shit, Tony, because you lied about 7/14. We can't trust you.

MIKE

Nor me.

JOE

Or me.

TONY

What are you guys making such a big deal about 7/14? I know how important my word is to you and I appreciate it. So, I was only teasing... 7/14 is D Day!

(ALL romp and chant "*Bronx tones*".)

JOE

(With back to Tony, whispers to Joe and Mike.)

We have to get rid of him. Thai, rock.

FANCY

I'm in the mood for a little Thai food...

TONY

I could go for a little Thai myself.

MIKE

Yeah, I could go for some Thai. Let's choose who goes.

(ALL put hand behind back.)

MIKE (cont'd)

One, two, three...

(TONY shows two fingers, 'scissors' and THEY bare fist, 'rock'.)

MIKE (cont'd)

Looks like the good guys win again.

TONY

Hey, wait a minute. There's something fishy going on. For the last two months, every time we choose, I lose. And what's more amazing is you guys always throw the same thing. I think this is a set up.

JOE

Would we do such a thing? You're just on a losing streak, Tony.

TONY

Don't I know. Nine plays and one nibble, soon it will be ten plays and one little nibble. That's why... that's the reason why I must keep my date with destiny...

JOE

...Which is when...?

TONY

(Underscoring ends as he exits with mock tears.)

11/14... And even though I feel like doing it sometimes earlier, I gave you my word... 11/14.

JOE

NOT 11/14!

FANCY

What are you crazy?!

MIKE

11/14?!

TONY

I know. I was just teasing. 7/14. July 14, are you
(Exits.)
satisfied?

FANCY

So, lay it on us Mr. Producer. We got the lights and sets and what about the logo?

JOE

The lights, the set, we got three very good actors, everything, everything is falling into place. The only problem we have is we need another five thousand.

MIKE

Another five grand.

FANCY

Where are we going to get it?

JOE

Wait a minute. Didn't I hear Molly offer Tony five grand for one of his plays? Isn't this one of his plays? We just tell her we've already invested \$45,000 of our own money in Tony's "*Bronx Bombshell*."

MIKE

I think that's her favorite play.

FANCY

I'll tell her we want to make it a surprise. We're keeping it a secret from him, and would she either lend us or invest in our secret production of her beloved son, Tony's favorite play, "*Bronx Bombshell*." We believe this is his chance to be recognized. She'll melt in my hands like she always does.

MIKE

(Laughs.)

Tell her it's our secret... We have to keep it a secret.

(WE hear Underscoring, "Are You Ever There," as buzzer rings and FANCY answers it, "Yeh?")

MOLLY (o/s)

It's me. Fancy? Is that you Fancy, darling?

FANCY

Who else, my beloved. Shall I fetch you the elevator?

MOLLY (o/s)

You and my son; two comedians. Tell him to get his stop-watch and time me. Even with the shopping bags I'm running all the way. On your mark. Get set. Go!

MIKE

That Tony doesn't know how lucky he is that he still has a mother that runs.

FANCY

Especially since she's going to invest in his play and our **(Mimics Molly's accent.)**
play, right 'boichic?'

JOE

That's why she brings you that soup. You're so Jewish, you Catholic ass-hole.

FANCY

(Sings with Jewish accent)

Aren't we all? Even J.C.? "I love flanken in the Spring time..."

JOE

...I'm trying to fill you in on our show and you're singing about flanken? What am I here for? Do you want me to tell you or what?

MIKE

Of course Joe. We're both real anxious to find out how things are progressing, aren't we Fancy?

FANCY

All I think of is the show. Like to me, it represents the only chance I ever had to make it. Everyday, I struggle to make a sale; Now, at last I have a shot at the big time. I'm jealous of you Joe. You're involved with the show everyday. I love the show too and I wish all I had to do was talk to, to everybody like you're doing. It's got to be exciting, man. Me and you Mike, we made an investment, but Joe's actually involved with making the decisions. He's making a dream come true. Too bad our Mr. Dream-come-true won't be around to enjoy the fruits of his "*Bronx Bombshell*," but we will, won't we?

(Underscoring ends. ♪ **THEY** sing reprise of "**BRONX TONES**" chorus ♪)

MIKE, JOE and FANCY

So long, you tone deaf Bronx tone.
After you're gone, we'll just sing alone.
When we think of you, after you die.
We won't cry, we'll laugh. ha, ha, ha and here is why.

(**They dance.**)

We'll be rich, ha, ha, ha. We'll be rich.
Sonofabitch, ha, ha, ha will make us rich. Ha,
ha,
ha.
The sonofabitch, will make us rich.

JOE

We better be rich, because I sold the last 200 shares of I.B.M. my father left me... How else was I supposed to get the fifteen grand and I gave a few to Lewie. I'm running out of money and I'm not working. This has to work or not only will Tony be finished, so will I.

FANCY

Me too. I borrowed the money from Danny Jr. I think that's another reason Marie left me. She said I was a low-life for

taking my son's money. I told her I was only borrowing it so I could invest in a sure winner. This is a sure winner ain't it Joe?

JOE

It better be, or my ass is in big trouble.

MIKE

(Sings)

Don't worry. As long as Tony does it on 7/14, "We're in the money, and I'll have my Sonnie."

(Doorbell rings.)

FANCY

(Goes and opens door.)

Molly, you shouldn't have. I could have waited for the flanken.

MOLLY

How could you wait? It's been a month.

FANCY

Has it been that long? Why it feels like I just saw you yesterday, '*mon cherie*.'

MOLLY

You are such a talker. Hello boys and where's my Tony? Don't tell me. He went to get lunch... I hope he gets something good.

MIKE

Thai. He went to get Thai.

MOLLY

I like Thai. Even when it was called Chinese food and this
(Gives Fancy bag and Mike package. Sings.)
is for you Fancy and this is for you, Michael.

DON'T ASK ME WHY

Did you think I'd forget?
I got you a cigarette.
Don't ask me why.
And I won't lie.

I once called you my rabbit.
Smoking is a habbit.

So did my son.
You call that fun?

I guess I'm too old to understand.
Why most people need a helping hand.
People used to drink to get away.
Today they smoke, what can I say.

Even though you're not a Jew.
I have always loved you.
I think you're nuts.
I call that guts.

I guess I'm too old to understand.
Why most people need a helping hand.
People used to drink to get away.
Today they smoke, what can I say?
Here, have a good time.

MIKE

You really got me a few joints? Really? Who's better than you, Molly?

MOLLY

My girl friend Frieda is taking Chemo, so she smokes. Says she doesn't get so nauseous. I remembered that you said you couldn't get anything, so I asked her for a few joints.

MIKE

(Lights joint.)

I can't thank you enough, Molly. I haven't smoked in months.
Ooh, this is pretty good.

MOLLY

You mean there's good and bad?

MIKE

Exactly. And this is pretty good.

MOLLY

And pretty good is good?

MIKE

Very. Would you like to try it?

MOLLY

I didn't try when my son smoked it and hid it in his sock drawer. I should try it when I'm an old woman?

MIKE

(Demonstrates then gives Molly joint.)

Here, just take a puff and hold it in like this. You'll really like it.

MOLLY

(Takes big puff on joint,)

All right. What do I have to lose... How'd I do?

MIKE

Very good, but you have to hold the smoke in for as long as

(Demonstrates and gives joint to Molly.)

you can. Watch.

MOLLY

(Puffs and holds it longer then laughs.)

Better?

MIKE

Much...

MOLLY

(Puffs again - puffs again - laughs.)

By Jove, I think she's got it... and she likes it... and she doesn't even have cancer. I'm gonna start hanging' around with Frieda. Beats Martinis anytime. And you know what, Michael, when you smoke it, it doesn't smell that bad.

FANCY

(Nears Molly.)

Something smells gosh awful disgusting around here wouldn't you say, Joe?

MOLLY

Never mind you. You saw me take a puff on that joint, and I

(Laughs.)

think I feel silly. Michael, do you feel silly?

MIKE

No, but I'm getting there. Hey Joe, didn't you say you wanted to speak to Silly about our 'joint' venture?

JOE

I guess I did, Molly. You see, because we believe so much in your son, each of us has put up \$15,000 and we are secretly going to produce Tony's smash new comedy, "*Bronx Bombshell*."

It's going to be our gift to him for being a true Bronx tone all these years, but remember, we are all sworn to secrecy.

MOLLY

(Laughs.)

We are all sworn to secrecy, now, how much is this secrecy

going to cost me?

FANCY

A mere five thousand and your son's dream of being discovered will come true. Molly, all we need's another five. We already put in forty-five. We got a great director '*mon cheri.*' The set, the lighting, costumes, actors, everything's going '*perfecto mundo.*'

MOLLY

What do I get for the five?

JOE

Exactly what you should get. You're putting up, theoretically one tenth. Five thousand plus forty-five equals fifty. You get ten percent.

MOLLY

Ten per cent, my name as co-producer and we got a deal.

JOE

As long as it remains a secret.

(ALL put finger to mouth and make Shhh sound as door opens and TONY enters with bags.)

MOLLY

Mum's the word...

ALL

...Mum's the word.

TONY

(Looks at ALL and sings ♪ "I'VE DONE IT ALL." ♪)

With friends like these,
I'm the happiest guy in town.
Without enemies,
Ready to do the town up brown.
I'm having a ball,
'Cause I've done it all.

Before I disappear,
Everyone I love is here.
Who wants to be sad or gloomy.
Won't you listen to me.

Thanks to you I'm grinning.
Apologize for sinning.
To you my friends it's goodbye.
I know it's sad, but don't cry.

With friends like these,
I'm the happiest guy in town.
Without enemies,
Ready to do the town up brown.
I'm having a ball.
'Cause I've done it all.

I'm grateful that I was a star.
Out to L.A., went really far.
I'm so happy that I could burst.
I have this hunger and thirst.

With friends like these,
I'm the happiest guy in town.
Without needs enemies,
Ready to do the town up brown.
I'm having a ball.
'Cause I've done it all.
I've done it all...

End of Scene 2

The *Final* Curtain

ACT II

Scene 3

Back in time.

Under lamppost ALL sing.

ALL

(*♬ Sing. ♬*)

"Earth angel, earth angel, will you be mine? My darling dear, love you all the time. I'm just a fool. A fool in love with you."

(To black and then lights.)

One month later.

FANCY in pajamas is sprawled out in the convertible bed, making lots of noise eating sunflower seeds, watching T.V. Pacing, **TONY** seethes.

TONY

Where the hell did you put my knife? And where is my grenade? Since you moved in here, I can't find a Goddamn thing and those nuts are driving me crazy! I find them everywhere I look.

FANCY

Stop being so picky. You only got one more month to go, remember? and then I'll give you back your knife. So, why do you want the knife now?

TONY

To slit my wrists, because I can't live with you, your sunflower seeds, your sports. With you, it's either sports or clothes and always nuts. I don't know who I hate more? The Mets, those nuts or the fact I don't have space in my own closet. How many suits does a person need?

FANCY

To keep up my front, I guess I needed a lot of them. Unfortunately, clothes do not make the man...

TONY

...Tell me something I don't know...

FANCY

Not according to my mother, "You are who you dress like" she said... I've worn a jacket and tie since I was two.

TONY

Your mother's been dead a long time and you've changed. Look at you, in jeans and a sweat shirt. You're a new man.

FANCY

You know, for as long as I can remember, Marie's been after

me to dress like this; to be natural. She always said that I was so stuffy and it's because of my mother. She did it to me... Here I am in jeans and a sweat shirt and Marie's no where to be found. She doesn't understand that this old horse can change. I'm wearing jeans and I finally took a shot with...

TONY

...You took a shot with what?

FANCY

I didn't take a shot? I'm Mister conservative, remember? What kind of shot? Joe gambles, I don't gamble.

TONY

I thought I heard you say you took a shot and to tell you the truth, I was glad for you. How long have you been selling 'schmates?' And you never made it. That's why, if you're taking a shot on something, then I hope you make it real big, and anything I can do to help out, name it.

FANCY

7/14?

TONY

(Gives five and sings. ♪)

WHEN I GET TO HEAVEN

July 14th is my due date.
Let me tell you I can't wait.
One of my plays got produced.
So I have deduced.
No one likes my work.
That's why I feel like a jerk.

I've lived in pain noon and night.
Nothing seems to turn out right.
Thought everyone cared for me.
Pity, woe is me.
I must say goodbye.
For me it is time to die.

When I get to heaven,
Guess who will do my plays.
Gonna roll a seven,
Say hello sunny days.

No one will be happier than me.

I'll be a star for eternity.

I don't want to live anymore.
Through the mill I've learned the score.
Say goodbye to my old mother.
And to you brother.
It sure has been swell.
I hope I'm not going to...

When I get to heaven,
Saint Pete will do my plays.
I will roll a seven.
Say hello to sunny days.
No one will be happier than me.
I'll be a star for eternity...

Now close the couch, get dressed, the guys are going to be here any minute.

FANCY

You forgot about your mother.

TONY

No I didn't. She'll be here too, so get a move on.

FANCY

(Salutes - close couch.)

Aye, aye sir.

TONY

Aren't you going to brush your teeth?

FANCY

(Exits to bathroom.)

Aye, aye sir...

TONY

(Throws sunflower seeds in garbage can.)

I'll give him sunflower seeds. Hasn't even brushed his teeth and he's eating this shit. They make me nervous.

(Yells to Fancy.)

He makes me nervous... I want you out of here, you understand Fancy? O-U-T...!

FANCY

(Enters.)

...And where should I go, to the Y? You agreed I could stay until 14 July. So, I'm staying. I'm paying half the rent, ain't I? So, what do you want?

TONY

You know, I have one month before it's goodbye and I want to live it the way I've always lived it, alone. You are just too much of a pain in the ass. Tell you the truth, I don't know how Marie took you for 29 years. She must be a saint.

FANCY

She sure is... Went on three vacations in all that time. Imagine that and it was all because I never had enough money. No matter how hard I tried, when you're selling, it's always a struggle. I think that's one of the reasons Marie left me. Tired of struggling. If she only knew what was going to happen. That I was going to make a lot of bread. She'll beg me to come back.

TONY

You're going to make a lot of bread with something and you won't tell me what it is?

FANCY

I can't tell 'cause I'm sworn to an oath of secrecy.

(Finger to mouth.)

Remember, mum's the word?

TONY

Tell me the truth Fancy. Have you guys been setting me up when we choose?

FANCY

(Finger to mouth.)

Mum's the word.

(Buzzer sounds and FANCY answers it.)

FANCY (cont'd)

Costello residence.

JOE (o/s)

I'll give you Costello residence. Will you let us in?

(FANCY buzzes them in.)

FANCY

With only a month left, I suppose you don't want me to tell them that you me asked for your knife. This past month, you were doing so good. What happened? What triggers it off?

TONY

You forgot about the grenade, and I don't give a shit what

you tell them, because I'm pissed, at all of you. One of the reasons I'm going to do myself in is because my supposed best friends wouldn't come up with a few measly dollars and produce a play. To tell you how disgusted I am, I could end it all right now. Fuck 7/14. Right now, because my own friends wouldn't save my life, I couldn't give two shits about it!

FANCY

Hey, take it easy. Don't get so emotional. You said you were going to do it on 7/14. We agreed, so, let's not jump to conclusions. Don't make any rash decisions about you keeping your word. You always keep your word, because you're Tony.

TONY

Well just don't be too sure and just remember, I still got
(Tosses pills in air and laughs.)
plenty of Arsenic.

FANCY

I see you sitting at your computer, typing away. It's like you're in dream world. You really don't want to kill yourself, do you.

TONY

No comment.

FANCY

Hey Tony, remember what you said about us and your will?

TONY

That I would give you all my plays, including the one I hope to finish before... providing one of my plays is produced? Remember, it's all dependent upon your production.

FANCY

Did you write it and sign it?

TONY

Top drawer in my desk.

FANCY

Would you mind if I took a look at it?

TONY

Be my guest.

**(FANCY is looking at will as JOE and MIKE enter.
HE shows the will and they are delighted.)**

MIKE

(Shows bottle

-

nostalgic.)

We all chipped in and bought this bottle of Dom to sort of say goodbye while we still have a chance... There was a time, when you had your run and you were king of the hill. Had all those gorgeous babes around, I was jealous of you. But now, knowing the pain you must be in to plan your own funeral on 14 July, I'm not jealous of you anymore, but I'll still miss you... Want to take over Joe?

JOE

You know your leaving us is very emotional. We know when you blow your brains out, which is what I say you're going to do, by yourself, alone. That's why we all want to say goodbye while we're still together.

(ALL hug TONY.)

MIKE

So I say let's open the suds and lets say our goodbyes to the best Bronxtone there ever was and that includes you Fancy. Joe, would you like to do the honors?

TONY

(Exits to kitchen.)

I'll get the opener and glasses.

JOE

(Whispers.)

There's so much I have to tell you. Rehearsal started and is it exciting.

MIKE

We have to get rid of him. Paper and heroes. I'm in the mood for some egg plant.

TONY

(Returns with tray and drinks.)

Gunga Din has returned.

(ALL lift glasses and toast.)

MIKE, JOE, FANCY

14 JULY!

TONY

(Sad.)

Yeah, 7/14.

JOE

Tony, why so remorseful? We're celebrating your death.

(Raises glass and sings.)

"To life, to life, 'L'chaim..."

ALL

(Sing. ♫)

'L'chaim, L'chaim to life.

MIKE

That 'L'chaim' just got me hungry...

FANCY

Me too.

JOE

Me three...

TONY

I suppose you want to choose as to who goes for it, right?

JOE

You got any better ideas?

TONY

Hey, I know the bit. I'll show rock and all three of you'll show paper. I know it's a set up and I'm going to lose, so give me the bread, tell me what you want and I shall depart.

MIKE

Heros. I want egg plant.

FANCY

Make that two egg plant, but I want parmegian.

JOE

You know what, make that two parmegians and get two six packs, I mean the champagne's almost gone.

TONY

I know you guys are getting rid of me so you can talk. I know all about the deal the three of you are in cahoots with. I know what it is, but I'm not saying, so there.

(Laughs exits.)

I shall return with your ham and cheese, gentlemen.

(As TONY opens door, MOLLY enters with bags.)

MOLLY

(Kisses Tony.)

I didn't buzz because the super let me in. So, how are you my darling? and how is your new play coming along? And

(Winks to Mike.)

hello, fellas. I have something for you, Michael.

MIKE

Again? My cup runneth over.

MOLLY

The A and P bag is for you Fancy and this is for my Tony. Where are you going?

TONY

The guys are in the mood for heroes, want anything Ma?

MOLLY

Maybe I'll have an egg plant parmegian.

TONY

That makes it unanimous. You heard of Labor Day? Today's egg plant day. I'll be right back. Ma, behave yourself. I know

(Exits.)

what you did the last time and I'm proud of you.

MOLLY

I'm proud of him and he says he's proud of me. For what? I smoked a joint? 75 years old and I finally get high? I should have gotten high 50 years ago instead of drinking all

(Gives to Mike.)

that crap. Here, Michael, four more, and I think it's better than the last time. Not that I'm a 'maven.'

MIKE

Gee, that's really sweet of you Molly.

MOLLY

Shut up and let's start smoking before my son comes back and Joseph, I believe a report is in order.

JOE

Well, all I can tell you is rehearsal started and it's fantastic. I've never been through this before, but let me tell you it's "Ex-cit-ing." I'm seeing Tony's play actually come to life.

FANCY

What about the set and the logo? I keep asking you about the logo because it's important.

JOE

The set is being built right now. As far as the logo is concerned, I have a couple of advertising agencies trying to come up with something, but don't worry, we still got another month.

MOLLY

S.Goldberg

The *Final* Curtain

1-1-76

The opening is still the fifteenth, isn't it?

JOE

It most certainly is, and, wait until you see the show. It's so funny, so sensitive... You know how I say "Prisoner of Second Avenue" is Simon's best, well let me tell you...

MOLLY

...To me "Bronx Bombshell" was always his best. I can't wait to see his face opening night.

(To black.)

End of Scene 3

The *Final* Curtain

ACT II

Scene 4

Back in time.

ALL under lamppost, singing. 🎵

ALL

"Got a date with an angel. Gonna meet her at seven. Got a date with an angel. Tony's on his way to heaven."

(To black and then lights.)

11/14 - D DAY.
11:30 P.M.

FANCY looks at watch and paces.
Musical refrain of 14 July.

FANCY

Where the hell could he be? Today's the day. 14 July. It's 11:30 at night and he's supposed to be dead. It's 14 July! It's 14 July! He gave us his word and tomorrow's the opening. The fellas are supposed to be here any minute. Joe has an in with CNN and ABC. They're supposed to take pictures of the body. The dead body. After that, all the stations will pick it up. And the headlines in the papers are supposed to say; "Ex-bizarre hairdresser, turned playwright, with new comedy opening tomorrow, July 15, kills self."

(Refrain ends. Buzzer. **FANCY answers it, "Yeah?"**)

JOE (o/s)

Yeah my ass. Let us in.

FANCY

(**Buzzes.**)

They'll blame this whole mess on me. It's my fault Tony didn't do himself in, they'll say. I should have known, when he said he was going to the museum of Modern Art, he... no one in their right mind goes to the museum the day they're supposed to... What does he need culture for when he's gonna kill himself. It's my fault they'll say. If we didn't need the publicity, I would have let him cut his balls off long

(**Picks up knife.**)

ago... But this show means too much to me. I thought I finally found a way out. Instead of me struggling until I can't struggle any more, and it's getting harder, everyday is getting harder. Thank God for this show, it's gonna put me on easy street. Ain't never been on easy street... Even when we first got married, it wasn't easy. Then Danny Jr. was born and things got a little tighter. College was murder and then he gets married. Thirty years go by just like that. Seems my father never understood me and neither did... With Marie gone, Tony's show seems to be the only thing that matters, which reminds me, I wonder where that lying bastard is? He doesn't know Joe arranged to have a private ambulance pick up his body and bring it to the morgue. What a bit. He figured to save time, they'll take some stills on the way. I mean this Tony is fuckin' ridiculous. He's screwing

everything up.

(JOE and MIKE enter on beat.)

JOE

What's ridiculous and who's screwing up what? The ambulance is going to be here at 12:30 and I don't see the body. Where's the body, Fancy? There's supposed to be a body. CNN and ABC should be here about the same time. Fancy, we need Tony's body.

TONY

(Opens door and almost dancing enters on beat.)

Did someone mention my name?

JOE

I certainly did asshole. Where the hell were you? And you're supposed to be dead hours ago. You gave us your word.

TONY

Well, you can forget about my word because I am in love. I met her having coffee at the Met.

FANCY

The Met? I thought you said you were going to the Modern, you lying sonofabitch.

TONY

I changed my mind and lucky for me, because I met the most beautiful woman that ever lived. Better than Ava. She has a smile... and these eyes and this body, what can I say. We spent the entire day in her apartment, the Dakota 'Schmoozing.' Is she interesting and is she gorgeous. It was meant to be.

**(FANCY picks up knife. MIKE gets gun.
JOE picks up noose and all will surround TONY.)**

TONY (cont'd)

Just imagine this fantastic penthouse in one of the most beautiful buildings overlooking the park. We drank the best French wine I ever drank. Played Mozart as she read three of my plays. Calls me Tennessee. She has so much bread you wouldn't believe it. CBS... Her father used to own CBS or was it RCA? Says she wants to produce my plays.

JOE

(Menaces with noose.)

Really? Anyone in particular? you fucking liar!

TONY

"*Bronx Bombshell.*" Said she loved that show and yes I lied, so, sue me, shoot me Mike. Stab me Fancy. Better yet, hang
(Laughs.)
me Joe... And Molly told me about her investing in my play. See you at the opening fellas.

FANCY

You knew all along.

MIKE

And we fell for it.

JOE

You just strung us along so you'd get your play produced.

TONY

(Laughs.)

Exactly. I swear I'll kill myself, really.

MIKE

(Menacingly waves gun.)

I say we kill him before the ambulance gets here.

FANCY

(Menaces Tony with knife.)

I second the motion.

JOE

(Tries to put noose on Tony, who flees.)

Well, what are we waiting for?

(THEY chase TONY and sing ♫)

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD

You told us you were on your way to hell.
What's gonna happen to our Bronx Bombshell?
With you alive we won't have a hit show.
And like *shmucks* we put up all our dough.

Let's put a bullet in his head.
You're supposed to be dead.
And we're supposed to be rich.
You lying sonofabitch.

You swore you never lied.
We told the papers you died.
You gave us your freakin' word.
Supposed to lay there like a turd.

S.Goldberg

The *Final* Curtain

1-1-80

You told us you were on your way to hell.
What's gonna happen to our Bronx Bombshell?
With you alive we won't have a hit show.
And like *shmucks* we put up all our dough.

(Chasing TONY, ALL exit apartment.)

(Curtain falls.)

THE END