To Richard Nelson and Wally Shawn

The world premiere of Edmond was produced by the Goodman Theater, Chicago, Illinois, June 4, 1982, with the following cast:

A Mission Preacher, A Prisoner
Paul Butler

The Manager, A Leafleteer, A Customer, A Policeman, A Guard
Rich Cluchey

A B-Girl, A Whore
Joyce Hazard

A Peep Show Girl, Glenna
Laura Innes

A Man in a Bar, A Hotel Clerk, The Man in Back, A Chaplain
Bruce Jarchow

Edmond's Wife
Linda Kimbrough

The Fortune-Teller, A Manager, A Woman in the Subway
Marge Kotlisky

A Shill, A Pimp
Ernest Perry, Jr.

A Cardsharp, A Guard
José Santana

Edmond
Colin Stinton

A Bartender, A Bystander, A Pawnshop Owner, An Interrogator
Jack Wallace
This production was directed by Gregory Mosher; settings by Bill Bartelt; lighting by Kevin Rigdon; costumes by Marsha Kowal, fight choreography by David Woolley; stage managers, Tom Biscotto and Anne Clarke. The New York production opened at the Provincetown Playhouse on October 27, 1982, with Lionel Mark Smith playing the roles of A SHILL, A PIMP.

Hokey Pokey Wickey Wamm
Salacapinkus Muley Comm
Tamsey Wamsey Wierey Wamm
King of the Cannibal Islands

-Popular Song
Scenes:

1. The Fortune-Teller
2. At Home
3. A Bar
4. The Allegro
5. A Peep Show
6. On the Street, Three-Card Monte
7. Passing Out Leaflets
8. The Whorehouse
9. Upstairs at the Whorehouse
10. Three-Card Monte
11. A Hotel
12. The Pawnshop
13. The Subway
14. On the Street, outside the Peep Show
15. The Coffeehouse
16. Glenna's Apartment
17. The Mission
18. The Interrogation
19. Jail
20. The New Cell
21. The Chaplain
22. Alone in the Cell
23. In the Prison Cell
Characters:

FORTUNE-TELLER
EDMOND, A MAN IN HIS MID THIRTIES
HIS WIFE
A MAN IN A BAR
A B-GIRL
A BARTENDER
THE MANAGER
A PEEP-SHOW GIRL
THREE GAMBLERS
A CARD SHARP
A BYSTANDER
TWO SHILLS
A LEAFLETEER
A MANAGER (F)
A WHORE
A HOTEL CLERK
A PAWNSHOP OWNER
A CUSTOMER
THE MAN IN BACK
A WOMAN ON THE SUBWAY
A PIMP
GLENNA, A WAITRESS
A TRAMP
A MISSION PREACHER
A POLICEMAN
AN INTERROGATOR
A PRISONER
A CHAPLAIN
A GUARD

Setting:

New York City
Scene 1

The Fortune-Teller

Edmond and the Fortune-Teller seated across the table from each other.

Fortune-Teller: If things are predetermined surely they must manifest themselves.
    When we look back—as we look back—we see that we could never have done otherwise than as we did. (Pause.)
    Surely, then, there must have been signs.
    If only we could have read them. We say, “I see now that I could not have done otherwise . . . my diet caused me. Or my stars . . . which caused me to eat what I ate . . . or my genes, or some other thing beyond my control forced me to act as I did . . .”
    And those things which forced us, of course, must make their signs: our diet, or our genes, or our stars.

(Pause.)

And there are signs. (Pause.)
What we see reflects (more than what is) what is to be.

(Pause.)

Are you cold?

Edmond: No. (Pause.)
FORTUNE-TELLER: Would you like me to close the window?

EDMOND: No, thank you.

FORTUNE-TELLER: Give me your palm.

(EDMOND does so.)

You are not where you belong. It is perhaps true none of us are, but in your case this is more true than in most.

We all like to believe we are special. In your case this is true.

Listen to me. (She continues talking as the lights dim.) The world seems to be crumbling around us. You look and you wonder if what you perceive is accurate. And you are unsure what your place is. To what extent you are cause and to what an effect...
Scene 2

At Home

Edmond and his wife are sitting in the living room. A pause.

Wife: The girl broke the lamp. (Pause.)

Edmond: Which lamp?

Wife: The antique lamp.

Edmond: In my room?

Wife: Yes. (Pause.)

Edmond: Huh.

Wife: That lamp cost over two hundred and twenty dollars.

Edmond (pause): Maybe we can get it fixed.

Wife: We're never going to get it fixed,
    I think that that's the point. . . .
    I think that's why she did it.

Edmond: Yes. Alright—I'm going. (Pause. He gets up and starts out of the room.)
WIFE: Will you bring me back some cigarettes. . .

EDMOND: I'm not coming back.

WIFE: What?

EDMOND: I'm not coming back. *(Pause.)*

WIFE: What do you mean?

EDMOND: I'm going, and I'm not going to come back. *(Pause.)*

WIFE: You're not ever coming back?

EDMOND: No.

WIFE: Why not? *(Pause.)*

EDMOND: I don't want to live this kind of life.

WIFE: What does that mean?

EDMOND: That I can't live this life.

WIFE: ”You can't live this life” so you're leaving me.

EDMOND: Yes.

WIFE: Ah. Ah. Ah.
    And what about ME?
    Don't you *love* me anymore?

EDMOND: No.

WIFE: You don't.

EDMOND: No.
WIFE: And why is that?

EDMOND: I don't know.

WIFE: And when did you find this out?

EDMOND: A long time ago.

WIFE: You did.

EDMOND: Yes.

WIFE: How long ago?

EDMOND: Years ago.

WIFE: You've known for years that you don't love me.

EDMOND: Yes. (Pause.)

WIFE: Oh. (Pause.) Then why did you decide you're leaving now?

EDMOND: I've had enough.

WIFE: Yes. But why now?

EDMOND (pause): Because you don't interest me spiritually or sexually. (Pause.)

WIFE: Hadn't you known this for some time?

EDMOND: What do you think?

WIFE: I think you did.

EDMOND: Yes, I did.

WIFE: And why didn't you leave then?
Why didn't you leave then, you stupid shit!!
All of these years you say that you've been living here? . . .

(Pause.)

Eh? You idiot. . . .
I've had enough.
You idiot . . . to see you passing judgment on me all this time . . .

EDMOND: . . . I never judged you. . . .

WIFE: . . . and then you tell me. “You're leaving.”

EDMOND: Yes.

WIFE: Go, then. . . .

EDMOND: I'll call you.

WIFE: Please. And we'll talk. What shall we do with the house? Cut it in half?
Go. Get out of here. Go.

EDMOND: You think that I'm fooling.

(Pause.) Good-bye. (Pause.)
Get out. Get out of here.
And don't you ever come back.
Do you hear me?

(WIFE exits. Closing the door on him.)
Scene 3

A Bar

Edmond is at the bar. A man is next to him. They sit for a while.

Man: . . . I'll tell you who's got it easy. . . .

Edmond: Who?

Man: The niggers. (Pause.) Sometimes I wish I was a nigger.

Edmond: Some times I do, too.

Man: I'd rob a store. I don't blame them.
   I swear to God. Because I want to tell you: we're bred to do the things
   that we do.

Edmond: Mm.

Man: Northern races one thing, and the southern races something else. And
   what they want to do is sit beneath the tree and watch the elephant.
   (Pause.) And I don't blame them one small bit. Because there's too much
   pressure on us.

Edmond: Yes.

Man: And that's no joke, and that's not poetry, it's just too much.
EDMOND: It is. It absolutely is.

MAN: A man's got to get out. . .

EDMOND: What do you mean?

MAN: A man's got to get away from himself. . .

EDMOND: . . . that's true . . .

MAN: . . . because the pressure is too much.

EDMOND: What do you do?

MAN: What do you mean?

EDMOND: What do you do to get out?

MAN: What do I do?

EDMOND: Yes.

MAN: What are the things to do? What are the things anyone does? . . .
   (Pause.)
   adventure . . . (Pause.)
   I think that's it . . . uh, self-destruction . . .
   I think that that's it . . . don't you? . . .

EDMOND: Yes.

MAN: . . . uh, religion . . . I suppose that's it, uh, release, uh, ratification.
   (Pause.)
   You have to get out, you have to get something opens your nose, life is
too short.

EDMOND: My wife and I are incompatible.
MAN: I'm sorry to hear that. (Pause.)
   In what way?

EDMOND: I don't find her attractive.

MAN: Mm.

EDMOND: It's a boring thing to talk about. But that's what's on my mind.

MAN: I understand.

EDMOND: You do?

MAN: Yes. (Pause.)

EDMOND: Thank you.

MAN: Believe me, that's alright. I know that we all need it, and we don't know where to get it, and I know what it means, and I understand.

EDMOND: . . . I feel . . .

MAN: I know. Like your balls were cut off.

EDMOND: Yes. A long, long time ago.

MAN: Mm-hm.

EDMOND: And I don't feel like a man.

MAN: Do you know what you need?

EDMOND: No.

MAN: You need to get laid.

EDMOND: I do. I know I do.
MAN: That's why the niggers have it easy.

EDMOND: Why?

MAN: I'll tell you why: there are responsibilities they never have accepted. (Pause.) Try the Allegro.

EDMOND: What is that?

MAN: A bar on Forty-seventh Street.

EDMOND: Thank you.

(The MAN gets up, pays for drinks.)

MAN: I want this to be on me. I want you to remember there was someone who listened. (Pause.) You'd do the same for me.

(The MAN exits.)
Scene 4

The Allegro

EDMOND sits by himself for a minute. A B-GIRL comes by.

B-GIRL: You want to buy me a drink?

EDMOND: Yes. (Pause.)

   I'm putting myself at your mercy . . . this is my first time in a place like this. I don't want to be taken advantage of.

   (Pause.)

   You understand?

B-GIRL: Buy me a drink and we'll go in the back.

EDMOND: And do what?

B-GIRL: Whatever you want.

   (EDMOND leans over and whispers to B-GIRL.)

B-GIRL: Ten dollars.

EDMOND: Alright.

B-GIRL: Buy me a drink.
EDMOND: You get a commission on the drinks?

B-GIRL: Yes.

( She gestures to BARTENDER, who brings drinks. )

EDMOND: How much commission do you get?

B-GIRL: Fifty percent.

BARTENDER ( bringing drinks ): That's twenty bucks.

EDMOND ( getting up ): It's too much.

BARTENDER: What?

EDMOND: Too much. Thank you.

B-GIRL: Ten!

EDMOND: no, thank you.

B-GIRL: Ten!

EDMOND: I'll give you five. I'll give you the five you'd get for the drink if I gave them ten.

But I'm not going to give them ten.

B-GIRL: But you have to buy me a drink.

EDMOND: I'm sorry. No.

B-GIRL: Alright. ( Pause. ) Give me ten.

EDMOND: On top of the ten?

B-GIRL: Yeah. You give me twenty.
EDMOND: I should give you twenty.

B-GIRL: Yes.

EDMOND: To you.

B-GIRL: Yes.

EDMOND: And then you give him the five?

B-GIRL: Yes. I got to give him the five.

EDMOND: No.

B-GIRL: For the drink.

EDMOND: No. You don't have to pay him for the drink.

    It's tea . . .

B-GIRL: It's not tea.

EDMOND: It's not tea!? . . .

(He drinks.)

    If it's not tea what is it, then? . . .

    I came here to be straight with you, why do we have to go through this? .
    .

MANAGER: Get in or get out. (Pause.)

    Don't mill around.

    Get in or get out . . . (Pause.)

    Alright.

    (MANAGER escorts EDMOND out of the bar.)
Scene 5

A Peep Show

Booths with closed doors all around. A Girl in a spangled leotard sees Edmond and motions him to a booth whose door she is opening.

Girl: Seven. Go in Seven. (He starts to Booth Seven.)

(He goes into Booth Six. She disappears behind the row of booths, and appears behind a plexiglass partition in Booth Six.)
Take your dick out. (Pause.)
Take your dick out. (Pause.)
Come on. Take your dick out.

Edmond: I'm not a cop.

Girl: I know you're not a cop. Take your dick out. I'm gonna give you a good time.

Edmond: How can we get this barrier to come down?

Girl: It doesn't come down.

Edmond: The n how are you going to give me a good time?

Girl: Come here.
(He leans close. She whispers.)
Give me ten bucks. (Pause.)
Give me ten bucks. (Pause.)
Put it through the thing.

(She indicates a small ventilator hole in the plexiglass. Pause.)
Put it through the thing.

Edmond (checking his wallet): I haven't got ten bucks.

Girl: Okay . . . just . . . yes.
      Okay. Give me the twenty.

Edmond: Are you going to give me change?

Girl: Yes. Just give me the twenty. Give it to me.
      Good. Now take your dick out.

Edmond: Can I have my ten?

Girl: Look. Let me hold the ten.

Edmond: Give me my ten back. (Pause.)
      Come on. Give me my ten back.

Girl: Let me hold the ten . . .

Edmond: Give me my ten back and I'll give you a tip when you're done.

(Pause. She does so.)
      Thank you.

Girl: Okay. Take your dick out.

Edmond (of the plexiglass): How does this thing come down?

Girl: It doesn't come down.
EDMONT: It doesn't come down?

GIRL: No.

EDMONT: Then what the fuck am I giving you ten bucks for?

GIRL: Look: You can touch me. Stick your finger in this you can touch me.

EDMONT: I don't want to touch you. . .

    I want you to touch me. . .

GIRL: I can't. (Pause.) I would, but I can't. We'd have the cops in here. We

    would.

    Honestly. (Pause.)

    Look: Put your finger in here . . . come on.

    (Pause.) Come on.

    (He zips his pants up and leaves the booth.)

    You're only cheating yourself. . .
Scene 6

On the Street, Three-Card Monte

A Cardsharp, a Bystander and Two Shills.

Sharper: You pick the red you win, and twenty get you forty. Put your money up.
   The black gets back, the red you go ahead. . . .
   Who saw the red? . . . Who saw the red?
   Who saw her? . . .

Bystander (to Edmond): The fellow over there is a shill . . .

Edmond: Who is? . . .

Bystander (points): You want to know how to beat the game?

Edmond: How?

Bystander: You figure out which card has got to win. . . .

Edmond: . . . Uh-huh . . .

Bystander: . . . and bet the other one.

Sharper: Who saw the red? . . .

Bystander: They're all shills, they're all part of an act.
SHARPER: Who saw her? Five will get you ten. . . .

SHILL (playing lookout): Cops . . . cops . . . cops . . . don't run . . . don't run . . .

(Everyone scatters. EDMOND moves down the street.)


Scene 7

Passing Out Leaflets

Edmond moves down the street. A man is passing out leaflets.

Leafleteer: Check it out . . . check it out . . . This is what you looking for . . . Take it . . . I'm giving you something . . . Take it . . .

(Edmond takes the leaflet.)

Now: Is that what you looking for or not? . . .

Edmond (reading the leaflet): Is this true? . . .

Leafleteer: Would I give it to you if it wasn't? . . .

(Edmond walks off reading the leaflet. The Leafleteer continues with his spiel.)

Check it out . . .
Scene 8

_The Whorehouse_

**Edmond** shows up with the leaflet. He talks to the Manager, a woman.

**Manager:** Hello.

**Edmond:** Hello.

**Manager:** Have you been here before?

**Edmond:** No.

**Manager:** How’d you hear about us? (Edmond shows her the leaflet.) You from out of town?

**Edmond:** Yes. What’s the deal here?

**Manager:** This is a _health_ club.

**Edmond:** . . . I know.

**Manager:** And our rates are by the hour. (Pause.)

**Edmond:** Yes?

**Manager:** Sixty-eight dollars for the first hour, sauna, free bar, showers . . . (Pause.)
The hour doesn't start until you and the masseuse are in the room.

**Edmond: Alright.**

**Manager:** Whatever happens in the room, of course, is between you.

**Edmond:** I understand.

**Manager:** You understand?

**Edmond:** Yes.

**Manager:** . . . Or, for two hours it's one hundred fifty dollars. If you want two hostesses that is two hundred dollars for one hour. *(Pause.*) Whatever arrangement that you choose to make with *them* is between you.

**Edmond:** Good. *(Pause.)*

**Manager:** What would you like?

**Edmond:** One hour.

**Manager:** You pay that now. How would you like to pay?

**Edmond:** How can I pay?

**Manager:** With cash or credit card. The billing for the card will read “Atlantic Ski and Tennis.”

**Edmond:** I'll pay you with cash.
Scene 9

Upstairs at the Whorehouse

Edmond and the Whore are in a cubicle.

Whore: How are you?

Edmond: Fine. I've never done this before.

Whore: No? (She starts rubbing his neck.)

Edmond: No. That feels very good. (Pause.)

Whore: You've got a good body.

Edmond: Thank you.

Whore: Do you work out? (Pause.)

Edmond: I jog.

Whore: Mmm. (Pause.)

Edmond: And I used to play football in high school.

Whore: You've kept yourself in good shape.

Edmond: Thank you.
**Whore (pause):** What shall we do?

**Edmond:** I'd like to have intercourse with you.

**Whore:** That sounds very nice. I'd like that, too.

**Edmond:** You would?

**Whore:** Yes.

**Edmond:** How much would that be?

**Whore:** For a straight fuck, that would be a hundred fifty.

**Edmond:** That's too much.

**Whore:** You know that I'm giving you a break. . . .

**Edmond:** . . . no . . .

**Whore:** . . . Because this is your first time here. . . .

**Edmond:** No. It's too much, on top of the sixty-eight at the door. . . .

**Whore:** . . . I know, I know, but you know, I don't get to keep it all. I split it with them. Yes. They don't pay me, I pay *them*.

**Edmond:** It's too much. (*Pause. The Whore sighs.*)

**Whore:** How much do you have?

**Edmond:** All I had was one hundred for the whole thing.

**Whore:** You mean a hundred for it all.

**Edmond:** That only left me thirty.

**Whore:** nooooo, honey, you couldn't get a *thing* for that.
EDMOND: Well, how much do you want?

WHORE (sighs): Alright, for a straight fuck, one hundred twenty.

EDMOND: I couldn't pay that.

WHORE: I'm sorry, then. It would have been nice.

EDMOND: I'll give you eighty.

WHORE: No.

EDMOND: One hundred.

WHORE: Alright, but only, you know, ‘cause this is your first time.

EDMOND: I know.

WHORE: . . . ‘cause we split with them, you understand. . .

EDMOND: I understand.

WHORE: Alright. One hundred.

EDMOND: Thank you. I appreciate this. (Pause.)

Would it offend you if I wore a rubber? . . .

WHORE: Not at all. (Pause.)

EDMOND: Do you have one? . . .

WHORE: Yes. (Pause.) You want to pay me now? . . .

EDMOND: Yes. Certainly. (He takes out his wallet, hands her a credit card.)

WHORE: I need cash, honey.

EDMOND: They said at the door I could pay with my . . .
WHORE: . . . That was at the door . . . you have to pay me with cash. . . .

EDMOND: I don't think I have it. . . . (He checks through his wallet.) I don't have it. . . .

WHORE: How much do you have? . . .

EDMOND: I, uh, only have sixty.

WHORE: Jeez, I'm sorry, honey, but I can't do it. . . .

EDMOND: Well, wait, wait, wait, wait, maybe we could . . . wait. . . .

WHORE: Why don't you get it, and come back here. . . .

EDMOND: Well, where could I get it? . . .

WHORE: Go to a restaurant and cash a check, I'll be here till four. . . .

EDMOND: I'll. I'll . . . um, um . . . yes. Thank you. . . .

WHORE: Not at all.

(EDMOND leaves the whorehouse.)
Scene 10

Three-Card Monte

Edmond out on the street, passes by the three-card-monte men, who have assembled again.

Sharper: You can't win if you don't play (To Edmond:) You, sir . . .

Edmond: Me? . . .

Sharper: You going to try me again? . . .

Edmond: Again? . . .

Sharper: I remember you beat me out of that fifty that time with your girlfriend. . . .

Edmond: . . . When was this?

Sharper: On fourteenff street. . . . You going to try me one more time? . . .

Edmond: Uh . . .

Sharper: . . . Play you for that fifty. . . . Fifty get you one hundred, we see you as fast as you was. . . . Pay on the red, pass on the black. . . .
Where is the queen? . . . You pick the queen you win. . . .

SHILL: I got her!

SHARPER: How much? Put your money up. How much?

SHILL: I bet you fifty dollars.

SHARPER: Put it up.

(The SHILL does so. The SHILL turns a card.)

SHILL: There!

SHARPER: My man, I'm jus’ too quick for you today.
Who saw the queen? We got two cards left.
Pay on the red queen, who saw her?

EDMOND: I saw her.

SHARPER: Ah, shit, man, you too fass for me.

EDMOND: . . . For fifty dollars . . .

SHARPER: Alright—alright.
Put it up. (Pause.)

EDMOND: Will you pay me if I win?

SHARPER: Yes, I will. If you win. But you got to win first. . . .

EDMOND: All that I've got to do is turn the queen.

SHARPER: Thass all you got to do.

EDMOND: I'll bet you fifty.
SHARPER: You sure?

EDMOND: Yes. I ‘m sure.

SHARPER: Put it up. (EDMOND does so.) Now: Which one you like?

EDMOND (turning card): There!

SHARPER (taking money): I'm sorry, my man. This time you lose— now we even. Take another shot. You pick the queen you win . . . bet you another fifty. . . .

EDMOND: Let me see those cards.

SHARPER: These cards are fine, it's you thass slow.

EDMOND: I want to see the cards.

SHARPER: These cards are good my man, you lost.

EDMOND: You let me see those cards.

SHARPER: You ain't goin’ see no motherfuckin’ cards, man, we playin’ a game here. . . .

SHILL: . . . You lost, get lost.

EDMOND: Give me those cards, fellas.

SHARPER: You want to see the cards? You want to see the cards? . . . Here is the motherfuckin’ cards. . . .

(He hits EDMOND in the face. He and the SHILL beat EDMOND for several seconds. EDMOND falls to the ground.)
Scene 11

A Hotel

EDMOND, torn and battered, comes up to the DESK CLERK.

EDMOND: I want a room.

CLERK: Twenty-two dollars. (Pause.)

EDMOND: I lost my wallet.

CLERK: Go to the police.

EDMOND: You can call up American Express.

CLERK: Go to the police. (Pause.)

   I don't want to hear it.

EDMOND: You can call the credit-card people. I have insurance.

CLERK: Call them yourself. Right across the hall.

EDMOND: I have no money.

CLERK: I'm sure it's a free call.

EDMOND: DO those phones require a dime?
CLERK (Pause): I'm sure I don't know.

EDMOND: You know if they need a dime or not. To get a dial tone... You know if they need a dime, for chrissake. Do you want to live in this kind of world? Do you want to live in a world like that? I've been hurt? Are you blind? Would you appreciate it if I acted this way to you? (Pause.) I asked you one simple thing. Do they need a dime?

CLERK: No. They don't need a dime. Now, you make your call, and you go somewhere else.
Scene 12

The Pawnshop

The Owner waiting on a customer who is perusing objects in the display counter.

Customer: Whaddaya get for that? What is that? Fourteen or eighteen karat?

Owner: Fourteen.

Customer: Yeah? Lemme see that. How much is that?

Owner: Six hundred eighty-five.

Customer: Why is that? How old is that? Is that old?

Owner: You know how much gold that you got in there? Feel. That. Just feel that.

Customer: Where is it marked?

Owner: Right there. You want that loupe?

Customer: No. I can see it.

(Edmond comes into the store and stands by the two.)
OWNER (to Edmond): What?

EDMOND: I want to pawn something.

OWNER: Talk to the man in back.

CUSTOMER: What else you got like this?

OWNER: I don't know what I got. You're looking at it.

CUSTOMER (pointing to item in display case): Lemme see that.

EDMOND (goes to MAN in back behind grate): I want to pawn something.

MAN: What?

EDMOND: My ring. (Holds up hand.)

MAN: Take it off.

EDMOND: It's difficult to take it off.

MAN: Spit on it. (EDMOND does so.)

CUSTOMER: How much is that?

OWNER: Two hundred twenty.

EDMOND (happily): I got it off. (He hands the ring to the MAN.)

MAN: What do you want to do with this?
   You want to pawn it.

EDMOND: Yes. How does that work?

MAN: Is that what you want to do?

EDMOND: Yes. Are there other things to do?
MAN: . . . What you can do, no, I mean, if you wanted it appraised . . .

EDMOND: . . . Uh-huh . . .

MAN: . . . or want to sell it . . .

EDMOND: . . . Uh-huh . . .

MAN: . . . or you wanted it to pawn. . .

EDMOND: I understand.

MAN: Alright?

EDMOND: How much is getting it appraised?

MAN: Five dollars.

CUSTOMER: Lemme see something in black.

EDMOND: What would you give me if I pawned it?

MAN: What do you want for it?

EDMOND: What is it worth?

MAN: You pawn it all you're gonna get's approximately . . . You know how this works?

CUSTOMER: Yes. Let me see that. . .

EDMOND: No.

MAN: What you get, a quarter of the value.

EDMOND: Mm.

MAN: Approximately. For a year. You're paying twelve percent. You can redeem your pledge with the year you pay your twelve percent. To that
time. Plus the amount of the loan.

EDMOND: What is my pledge?

MAN: Well, that depends on what it is.

EDMOND: What do you mean?

MAN: What it is. Do you understand?

EDMOND: No.

MAN: Whatever the amount is, that is your pledge.

EDMOND: The amount of the loan.

MAN: That's right.

EDMOND: I understand.

MAN: Alright. What are you looking for, the ring?

CUSTOMER: Nope. Not today. I'll catch you next time. Lemme see that knife.

EDMOND: What is it worth?

MAN: The most I can give you, hundred and twenty bucks.

CUSTOMER: This is nice.

EDMOND: I'll take it.

MAN: Good. I'll be right back. Give me the ring.

(EDMOND does so. EDMOND wanders over to watch the other transaction.)

CUSTOMER (holding up knife): What are you asking for this?

OWNER: Twenty-three bucks. Say, twenty bucks.
CUSTOMER (*to himself*): Twenty bucks . . .

EDMOND: Why is it so expensive?

OWNER: Why is it so expensive?

CUSTOMER: No. I'm going to pass. (*He hands knife back, exiting.*) I'll catch you later.

OWNER: Right.

EDMOND: Why is the knife so expensive?

OWNER: This is a survival knife. G. I. Issue. World War Two. And that is why.

EDMOND: Survival knife.

OWNER: That is correct.

EDMOND: Is it a good knife?

OWNER: It is the best knife that money can buy.

    (*He starts to put knife away. As an afterthought:*)
    You want it?

EDMOND: Let me think about it for a moment.
Scene 13

The Subway

Edmond is in the subway. Waiting with him is a woman in a hat.

Edmond (Pause): My mother had a hat like that. (Pause.) My mother had a hat like that. (Pause.) I . . . I'm not making conversation. She wore it for years. She had it when I was a child.

(The woman starts to walk away. Edmond grabs her.)
I wasn't just making it up. It happened. . . .

Woman (detaching herself from his grip): Excuse me. . . .

Edmond: . . . who the fuck do you think you are? . . .
I'm talking to you . . . What am I? A stone? . . .
Did I say, “I want to lick your pussy”? . . .
I said, “My mother had that same hat. . . .”
You cunt . . . What am I? A dog? I'd like to slash your fucking face . . . I'd like to slash your motherfucking face apart. . . .

Woman: . . . will somebody help me. . . .

Edmond: You don't know who I am. . . . (She breaks free.) Is everybody in this town insane? . . . Fuck you . . . fuck you . . . fuck you . . . fuck the lot of you . . . fuck you all . . . I don't need you . . . I worked all of my life!
Scene 14

On the Street, outside the Peep Show

Pimp: What are you looking for?

Edmond: What?

Pimp: What are you looking for?

Edmond: I'm not looking for a goddamn thing.

Pimp: You looking for that joint, it's closed.

Edmond: What joint?

Pimp: That joint that you was looking for.

Edmond: Thank you, no. I'm not looking for that joint.

Pimp: You looking for something, and I think that I know what you looking for.

Edmond: You do?

Pimp: You come with me, I get you what you want.

Edmond: What do I want?
PIMP: I know. We get you some *action*, my friend.
    We get you something sweet to shoot on. *(Pause.)*
    I know. Thass what I'm doing here.

EDMOND: What are you saying?

PIMP: I'm saying that we going to find you something nice.

EDMOND: You're saying that you're going to find me a woman.

PIMP: Thass what I'm *doing* out here, friend.

EDMOND: How much?

PIMP: Well, how much do you want?

EDMOND: I want somebody clean.

PIMP: Thass right.

EDMOND: I want a blow-job.

PIMP: Alright.

EDMOND: How much?

PIMP: Thirty bucks.

EDMOND: That's too much.

PIMP: How much do you want to *spend* ‘? . . .

EDMOND: Say fifteen dollars.

PIMP: Twenty-five.

EDMOND: No. Twenty.
PIMP: Yes.

EDMOND: Is that alright?

PIMP: Give me the twenty.

EDMOND: I'll give it to you when we see the girl.

PIMP: Hey, I'm not going to leave you, man, you coming with me. We goin’ to see the girl.

EDMOND: Good. I'll give it to you then.

PIMP: You give it to me now, you unnerstan'? Huh? (Pause.) Thass the transöctforc. (Pause.) You see? Unless you were a cop. (Pause.) You give me the money, and then thass entrapment. (Pause.) You understand?

EDMOND: Yes. I'm not a cop.

PIMP: Alright.
   Do you see what I'm saying?

EDMOND: I ‘m sorry.

PIMP: Thass alright. (EDMOND takes out wallet. Exchange of money.) You come with me. Now we'll just walk here like we're talking.

EDMOND: Is she going to be clean?

PIMP: Yes, she is. I understand you, man.

   (Pause. They walk.)
   I understand what you want. (Pause.) Believe me.

   (Pause.)

EDMOND: Is there any money in this?
PIMP: Well, you know, man, there's some ... you get done piecing off the police, this man here ... the medical, the bills, you know.

EDMOND: How much does the girl get?

PIMP: Sixty percent.

EDMOND: Mm.

PIMP: Oh yeah. (He indicates a spot.) Up here.

(They walk to the spot. The PIMP takes out a knife and holds it to EDMOND’s neck.)

Now give me all you’ money mothafucka! Now!

EDMOND: Alright.

PIMP: All of it. Don't turn aroun’ ... don't turn aroun’ ... just put it in my hand.

EDMOND: Alright.

PIMP: ... And don't you make a motherfuckin’ sound. ... 

EDMOND: I'm going to do everything that you say. ... 

PIMP: Now you just han’ me all you got.

(EDMOND turns, strikes the PIMP in the face.)

EDMOND: YOU MOTHERFUCKING NIGGER!

PIMP: Hold on. ... 

EDMOND: You motherfucking shit ... you jungle bunny ... (He strikes the PIMP again. He drops his knife.)

PIMP: I ...
EDMOND: You coon, you cunt, you cocksucker . . .

PIMP: I . . .

EDMOND: “Take me upstairs”? . . .

PIMP: Oh, my God . . . (The PIMP has fallen to the sidewalk and EDMOND is kicking him.)

   You shit . . . You shit . . . (Pause.)
   You fucking nigger. (Pause.) Don't fuck with me, you coon. . .

(Pause. EDMOND spits on him.)
I hope you're dead.

(Pause.)

Don't fuck with me, you coon. . .

(Pause. EDMOND spits on him.)
Scene 15

The Coffeehouse

Edmond seated in the coffeehouse, addresses the waitress, Glenna.

   Beer chaser. Irish whiskey.

Glenna: Irish whiskey.


Glenna: You're in a peppy mood today.

Edmond: You're goddamn right I am, and you want me to tell you why?
   Because I am alive. You know how much of our life we're alive, you and me? Nothing. Two minutes out of the year. You know, you know, we're sheltered. . . .

Glenna: Who is?

Edmond: You and I. White people. All of us. All of us. We're doomed. The white race is doomed. And do you know why? . . . Sit down. . . .

Glenna: I can't. I'm working.

Edmond: And do you know why—you can do anything you want to do, you don't sit down because you're “working,” the reason you don't sit down is
you don't want to sit down, because it's more comfortable to accept a law than question it and live your life. All of us. All of us. We've bred the life out of ourselves. And we live in a fog. We live in a dream. Our life is a schoolhouse, and we're dead.

(Pause.)

How old are you?

GLENNA: Twenty-eight.

EDMOND: I've lived in a fog for thirty-four years.

 Most of the life I have to live. It's gone.

 It's gone. I wasted it. Because I didn't know. And you know what the answer is? To live. (Pause.)

 I want to go home with you tonight.

GLENNA: Why?

EDMOND: Why do you think? I want to fuck you.

(Pause.) It's as simple as that.

What's your name?

GLENNA: Glenna. (Pause.) What's yours?

EDMOND: Edmond.
Scene 16

Glenna ‘s Apartment

Edmond and Glenna are lounging around semiclothed. Edmond shows Glenna the survival knife.

Edmond: You see this?

Glenna: Yes.

Edmond: That fucking nigger comes up to me, what am I fitted to do. He comes up, “Give me all your money.” Thirty-four years fits me to sweat and say he's underpaid, and he can't get a job, he's bigger than me . . . he's a killer, he don't care about his life, you understand, so he'd do anything. . . .

Eh? That's what I'm fitted to do. In a mess of intellectuality to wet my pants while this coon cuts my dick off . . . eh? Because I'm taught to hate. I want to tell you something. Something spoke to me, I got a shock (I don't know, I got mad . . .), I got a shock, and I spoke back to him. “Up your ass, you coon . . . you want to fight, I'll fight you, I'll cut out your fuckin’ heart, eh, I don't give a fuck. . . .”

Glenna: Yes.

GLENNA (looking at knife): With that?

EDMOND: You bet your ass. . .

GLENNA: Did you kill him?

EDMOND: Did I kill him?

GLENNA: Yes.

EDMOND: I don't care. (Pause.)

GLENNA: That's wonderful.

EDMOND: And in that moment . . . when I spoke, you understand, ‘cause that was more important than the knife, when I spoke back to him, I DIDN'T FUCKING WANT TO UNDERSTAND . . . let him understand me . . . I wanted to KILL him. (Pause.) In that moment thirty years of prejudice came out of me. (Pause.) Thirty years. Of all those um um um of all those cleaning ladies . . .

GLENNA: . . . Uh-huh . . .

EDMOND: . . . uh? . . . who might have broke the lamp. SO WHAT? You understand? For the first time, I swear to God, for the first time I saw: THEY'RE PEOPLE, TOO.

GLENNA (pause): Do you know who I hate?

EDMOND: Who is that?

GLENNA: Faggots.

EDMOND: Yes. I hate them, too. And you know why?

GLENNA: Why?

EDMOND: They suck cock. (Pause.) And that's the truest thing you'll ever
Glenna: I hate them ‘cause they don't like women.

Edmond: They *hate* women.

Glenna: I know that they do.

Edmond: It makes you feel good to *say* it? Doesn't it?

Glenna: Yes.


Glenna: It's hard.

Edmond: Yes.

Glenna: Sometimes it's hard.

Edmond: You're goddamn right it's hard. And there's a *reason* why it's hard.

Glenna: Why?

Edmond: so that we will stand up. So that we'll be our *selves*. Glenna: *Pause.* Glenna: This world is a piece of shit. *Pause.* It is a shit house. *Pause.* . . . There is No LAW . . . there is no history . . . there is just now . . . and if there is a *god* he may love the weak, Glenna. *Pause.* But he respects the strong. *Pause.* And if you are a *man* you should be feared. *Pause.* You should be *feared.* . . . *Pause.*

You just know you command respect.

Glenna: That's why I love the theater. . . . *Pause.*

Because what you must ask respect for is yourself. . . .

Edmond: What do you mean?
GLENNA: When you're on stage.

EDMOND: Yes.

GLENNA: For your feelings.

EDMOND: Absolutely. Absolutely, yes . . .

GLENNA: And, and, and not be someone else.

EDMOND: Why should you? . . .

GLENNA: . . . That's why, and I'm so proud to be in this profession . . .

EDMOND: . . . I don't blame you . . .

GLENNA: . . . because your aspirations . . .

EDMOND: . . . and I'll bet that you're good at it. . . .

GLENNA: . . . they . . .

EDMOND: . . . They have no bounds.

GLENNA: There's nothing . . .

EDMOND: . . . Yes. I understand. . . .

GLENNA: . . . to bound you but your soul.

EDMOND (pause): Do something for me.

GLENNA: . . . Uh . . .

EDMOND: Act something for me. Would you act something for me? . . .

GLENNA: Now?

EDMOND: Yes.
GLENNA: Sitting right here? . . .

EDMOND: Yes. (Pause.)

GLENNA: Would you really like me to?

EDMOND: You know I would. You see me sitting here, and you know that I would. I'd love it. Just because we both want to. I'd love you to.

(Pause.)

GLENNA: What would you like me to do?

EDMOND: Whatever you'd like. What plays have you done?

GLENNA: Well, we've only done scenes.

EDMOND: You've only done scenes.

GLENNA: I shouldn't say “only.” They contain the kernel of the play.

EDMOND: Uh-huh.

(Pause.)

What plays have you done?

GLENNA: In college I played Juliet.

EDMOND: In Shakespeare?

GLENNA: Yes. In Shakespeare. What do you think?

EDMOND: Well, I meant, there's plays named Juliet.

GLENNA: There are?
EDMOND: Yes.

GLENNA: I don't think so.

EDMOND: Well, there are.—Don't. Don't. Don't.
   Don't be so limited. . . . And don't assume I'm dumb because I wear a suit
   and tie.

GLENNA: I don't assume that.

EDMOND: Because what we've done tonight. Since you met me, it didn't make
   a difference then. Forget it.
   All I meant, you say you are an actress. . . .

GLENNA: I am an actress. . . .

EDMOND: Yes. I say that's what you say. So I say what plays have you done.
   That's all.

GLENNA: The work I've done I have done for my peers.

EDMOND: What does that mean?

GLENNA: In class.

EDMOND: In class.

GLENNA: In class or workshop.

EDMOND: Not, not for a paying group.

GLENNA: no, absolutely not.

EDMOND: Then you are not an actress. Face it.
   Let's start right. The two of us. I'm not lying to you, don't lie to me.
   And don't lie to yourself.
   Face it. You're a beautiful woman. You have worlds before you. I do, too.
Things to do. Things you can discover.
What I'm saying, start now, start tonight. With me. Be with me. Be what you are. . .

Glenna: I am what I am.

Edmond: That's absolutely right. And that's what I loved when I saw you tonight. What I loved.
I use that word. (Pause.) I used that word.
I loved a woman. Standing there. A working woman. Who brought life to what she did. Who took a moment to joke with me. That's . . . that's . . .
that's . . . god bless you what you are. Say it: I am a waitress.

(Pause.)

Say it.

Glenna: What does it mean if I say something?

Edmond: Say it with me. (Pause.)

Glenna: What?

Edmond: “I am a waitress.”

Glenna: I think that you better go.

Edmond: If you want me to go I'll go.
    Say it with me. Say what you are. And I'll say what I am.

Glenna: . . . What you are . . .

Edmond: I've made that discovery. Now: I want you to change your life with me. Right now, for whatever that we can be. I don't know what that is, you don't know. Speak with me. Right now. Say it.

Glenna: I don't know what you're talking about.
EDMOND: Oh, by the Lord, yes, you do. Say it with me. *(She takes out a vial of pills.)* What are those?

GLENNA: Pills.

EDMOND: For what? Don't take them.

GLENNA: I have this tendency to get anxious.

EDMOND *(knocks them from her hand)*: Don't take them. Go *through* it. Go *through* with me.

GLENNA: You're scaring me.

EDMOND: I am not. I know when I'm scaring you.

  *Believe me.* *(Pause)*.

GLENNA: Get out. *(Pause)*

EDMOND: Glenna. *(Pause)*

GLENNA: Get out! GET OUT GET OUT! LEAVE ME THE FUCK ALONE!!! WHAT DID I DO, PLEDGE MY LIFE TO YOU? I LET YOU FUCK ME. GO AWAY.

EDMOND: Listen to me: You know what madness is?

GLENNA: I told you go away. *(Goes to phone. Dials.)*

Edmond: I'm lonely, too. I know what it is, too.

  *Believe me. Do you know what madness is?*

GLENNA *(into phone)*: Susie? . . .

EDMOND: It's self-indulgence.

GLENNA: Suse, can you come over here? . . .
EDMOND: Will you please put that down? You know how rare this is? . . .

*(He knocks the phone out of her hands. GLENNAl cowers.)*

GLENNa: Oh fuck . . .

EDMOND: Don't be ridiculous. I'm talking to you.

GLENNa: Don't hurt me. No. No. I can't deal with this.

EDMOND: Don't be ridic . . .


EDMOND: . . . You're being . . .

GLENNa: . . . HELP!

EDMOND: . . . are you insane? What the fuck are you trying to do, for godsake?

GLENNa: HELP!

EDMOND: You want to wake the neighbors?

GLENNa: WILL SOMEBODY HELP ME? . . .

EDMOND: Shut up shut up!

GLENNa: Will somebody help you are the get away from me! You are the devil. I know who you are. I know what you want me to do. Get away from me I curse you, you can't kill me, get away from me I'm good.

You're nuts. . . .

*(He stabs her with the knife.)*
Are you insane? Are you insane, you fucking idiot? . . .
You stupid fucking _bitch_ . . .
You stupid fucking . . . _now_ look what you've done.

_(Pause.)_

Now look what you've bloody fucking done.
Scene 17

The Mission

Edmond is attracted by the speech of a Mission Preacher. He walks to the front of the mission and listens outside the mission doors.

Preacher: “Oh no, not me!” You say, “Oh no, not me. Not me, Lord, to whom you hold out your hand. Not me to whom you offer your eternal grace. Not me who can be saved. . . .”
But who but you, I ask you? Who but you.
You say you are a grievous sinner? He knows that you are. You say he does not know the depth of my iniquity. Believe me, friends, he does. And still you say, he does not know—you say this in your secret soul—he does not know the terrible depth of my unbelief.
Believe me friends, he knows that too.
To all of you who say his grace is not meant to extend to one as black as you I say to WHO but you? To you alone. Not to the blessed. You think that Christ died for the blessed? That he died for the heavenly hosts? That did not make him God, my friends, it does not need a God to sacrifice for angels. It required a God to sacrifice for MAN. You hear me? For you . . . there is none so black but that he died for you. He died especially for you. Upon my life. On the graves of my family, and by the surety I have of his Eternal Bliss HE DIED FOR YOU AND YOU ARE SAVED. Praise God, my friends. Praise God and testify. Who will come up and testify with me, my friends? (Pause.)
(Woman from subway walks by. She sees Edmond and stares at him.)

Edmond (speaks up): I will testify.

Preacher: Who is that?

Edmond: I will testify.

Preacher: Sweet God, let that man come up here!

(Edmond starts into the church.)

Woman (shouts): That's the man! Someone! Call a policeman! That's the man!

Preacher: . . . Who will come open up his soul? Alleluia, my friends. Be with me.

Woman: That's the man. Stop him!

(Edmond stops and turns. He looks wonderingly at the woman, then starts inside.)

Policeman: Just a moment, sir.

Edmond: I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . I'm on my way to church.

Preacher: Sweet Jesus, let that man come forth. . . .

Woman: That's the man tried to rape me on the train. He had a knife. . . .

Edmond: . . . There must be some mistake. . . .

Woman: He tried to rape me on the train.

Edmond: . . . There's some mistake, I'm on my way to church. . . .

Policeman: What's the trouble here?
EDMOND: No trouble, I'm on my way into the mission.

WOMAN: This man tried to rape me on the train yesterday.

EDMOND: Obviously this woman's mad.

PREACHER: Will no one come forth?

EDMOND: I . . . I . . . I . . . have to go into the church.

POLICEMAN: Could I see some identification please?

EDMOND: Please, officer, I haven't time. I . . . I . . . it's been a long . . . I don't have my wallet on me. My name's Gregory Brock. I live at 428 Twenty-second Street, I own the building. I . . . I have to go inside the church.

POLICEMAN: You want to show me some ID?

EDMOND: I don't have any. I told you.

POLICEMAN: You're going to have to come with me.

EDMOND: I . . . please . . . Yes. In one minute.
    Not . . . not now, I have to preach. . . .

POLICEMAN: Come on.

EDMOND: You're, you're, you're making a . . .

EDMOND: Please. Let me go. And I'll come with you afterward.
    I swear that I will. I swear it on my life.
    There's been a mistake. I'm an elder in this church.
    Come with me if you will.
    I have to go and speak.

POLICEMAN: Look. (Conciliatorily, he puts an arm on EDMOND. He feels something. He pulls back.) What's that?
EDMOND: It's nothing. (The Policeman pulls out the survival knife.) It's a knife. It's there for self-protection.

(The Policeman throws EDMOND to the ground and handcuffs him.)
Scene 18

The Interrogation

EDMOND and an INTERROGATOR at the police station.

INTERROGATOR: What was the knife for?

EDMOND: For protection.

INTERROGATOR: From whom?

EDMOND: Everyone.

INTERROGATOR: You know that it's illegal?

EDMOND: No.

INTERROGATOR: It is.

EDMOND (pause): I'm sorry.

INTERROGATOR: Speaking to that woman in the way you did is construed as assault.

EDMOND: I never spoke to her.

INTERROGATOR: She identified you as the man who accosted her last evening on the subway.
EDMOND: She is seriously mistaken.

INTERROGATOR: If she presses charges you'll be arraigned for assault.

EDMOND: For speaking to her?

INTERROGATOR: You admit that you were speaking to her?

EDMOND (pause): I want to ask you something. (Pause.)

INTERROGATOR: Alright.

EDMOND: Did you ever kick a dog?

(Pause.)

Well, that's what I did. Man to man. That's what I did. I made a simple, harmless comment to her, she responded like a fucking bitch.

INTERROGATOR: You trying to pick her up?

EDMOND: Why should I try to pick her up?

INTERROGATOR: She was an attractive woman.

EDMOND: She was not an attractive woman.

INTERROGATOR: You gay?

EDMOND: What business is that of yours?

INTERROGATOR: Are you?

EDMOND: No.

INTERROGATOR: You married?

EDMOND: Yes. In fact. I was going back to my wife.
INTERROGATOR: You were going back to your wife?

EDMOND: I was going home to her.

INTERROGATOR: You said you were going back to her, what did you mean?

EDMOND: I'd left my wife, alright?

INTERROGATOR: You left your wife.

EDMOND: Yes.

INTERROGATOR: Why?

EDMOND: I was bored. Didn't that ever happen to you?

INTERROGATOR: And why did you lie to the officer?

EDMOND: What officer?

INTERROGATOR: Who picked you up. There's no Gregory Brock at the address you gave. You didn't give him your right name.

EDMOND: I was embarrassed.

INTERROGATOR: Why?

EDMOND: I didn't have my wallet.

INTERROGATOR: Why?

EDMOND: I'd left it at home.

INTERROGATOR: And why did that embarrass you?

EDMOND: I don't know. I have had no sleep. I just want to go home. I am a solid . . . look: My name is Edmond Burke, I live at 485 West Seventy-ninth Street. I work at Stearns and Harrington. I had a tiff with my wife. I
went out on the town. I've learned my lesson. Believe me. I just want to
go home. Whatever I've done I'll make right. (Pause.) Alright? (Pause.)
Alright? These things happen and then they're done. When he stopped me
I was going to church. I've been unwell. I'll confess to you that I've been
confused, but, but . . . I've learned my lesson and I'm ready to go home.

INTERROGATOR: Why did you kill that girl?

EDMOND: What girl?

INTERROGATOR: That girl you killed.
Scene 19

Jail

EDMOND Wife is visiting him. They sit across from each other in silence for a while.

EDMOND: How's everything?

WIFE: Fine. (Pause.)

EDMOND: I 'm alright, too.

WIFE: Good. (Pause.)

EDMOND: You want to tell me you're mad at me or something?

WIFE: Did you kill that girl in her apartment?

EDMOND: Yes, but I want to tell you something. . . . I didn't mean to. But do you want to hear something funny? . . . (Now, don't laugh. . . .) I think I'd just had too much coffee. (Pause.)

I'll tell you something else: I think there are just too many people in the world. I think that's why we kill each other (Pause.) I . . . I . . . I suppose you're mad at me for leaving you. (Pause.) I don't suppose you're, uh, inclined (or, nor do I think you should be) to stand by me. I understand that. (Pause.) I'm sure that there are marriages where the wife would. Or the husband if it would go that way. (Pause.) But I know ours is not one
of that type.
(Pause.) I know that you wished at one point it would be.
I wished that too.
At one point. (Pause.)
I know at certain times we wished we could be . . . closer to each other. I can say that now. I'm sure this is the way you feel when someone near you dies. You never said the things you wanted desperately to say. It would have been so simple to say them. (Pause.) But you never did.

WIFE: You got the papers?

EDMOND: Yes.

WIFE: Good.

EDMOND: Oh, yes. I got them.

WIFE: Anything you need?

EDMOND: No. Can't think of a thing.

(The WIFE stands up, starts gathering her things together.)
You take care, now!
Scene 20

The New Cell

EDMOND is put in his new cell. His cellmate is a large, black PRISONER. EDMOND sits on his new bunk in silence awhile.

EDMOND: You know, you know, you know, you know we can't distinguish between anxiety and fear. Do you know what I mean? I don't mean fear. I mean, I do mean “fear,” I, I don't mean anxiety. (Pause.) We . . . when we fear things I think that we wish for them. (Pause.) Death. Or “burglars.” (Pause.) Don't you think? We mean we wish they would come. Every fear hides a wish. Don't you think?

(Pause.)

I always knew that I would end up here. (Pause.) (To himself:) Every fear hides a wish.
I think I'm going to like it here.

PRISONER: You do?

EDMOND: Yes, I do. Do you know why? It's simple. That's why I think that I am. You know, I always thought that white people should be in prison. I know it's the black race we keep there. But I thought we should be there. You know why?

PRISONER: Why?
EDMOND: To be with black people. (Pause.) Does that sound too simple to you? (Pause.)

PRISONER: No.

EDMOND: Because we're lonely. (Pause.) But what I know . . . (Pause.) What I know I think that all this fear, this fucking fear we feel must hide a wish. ‘Cause I don't feel it since I'm here. I don't think the first time in my life. (Pause.) In my whole adult life I don't feel fearful since I came in here. I think we are like birds. I think that humans are like birds. We suspect when there's going to be an earthquake. Birds know. They leave three days earlier. Something in their soul responds.

PRISONER: The birds leave when there's going to be an earthquake?

EDMOND: Yes. And I think, in our soul, we, we feel, we sense there is going to be . . .

PRISONER: . . . Uh-huh . . .

EDMOND: . . . a cataclysm. But we cannot flee. We're fearful. All the time. Because we can't trust what we know. That ringing. (Pause.) I think we feel. Something tells us, “Get out of here.” (Pause.) White people feel that. Do you feel that? (Pause.) Well. But I don't feel it since I'm here. (Pause.) I don't feel it since I'm here. I think I've settled. So, so, so I must be somewhere safe. Isn't that funny?

PRISONER: No.

EDMOND: You think it's not?

PRISONER: Yes.

EDMOND: Thank you.

PRISONER: Thass alright.
EDMOND: Huh. (*Pause.*)

Prisoner: You want a cigarette?

EDMOND: No, thank you. Not just now.

PRISONER: Thass alright.

EDMOND: Maybe later.

PRISONER: Sure. Now you know what?

EDMOND: What?

PRISONER: I think you should just get on my body.

EDMOND: I, yes. What do you mean?

PRISONER: You should get on my body now.

EDMOND: I don't know what that means.

PRISONER: It means to suck my dick. (*Pause.*) Now don't you want to do that?

EDMOND: No.

PRISONER: Well, you jes’ do it anyway.

EDMOND: You're joking.

PRISONER: Not at all.

EDMOND: I don't think I could do that.

PRISONER: Well, you going to try or you going to die.
   Les’ get this out the way. (*Pause.*)
   I'm not going to repeat myself.
EDMOND: I'll scream.

PRISONER: You *scream*, and you offend me. You are going to die. Look at me now and say I'm foolin’. *(Pause.)*

EDMOND: I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . I can't, I can't do, I . . . I . . .

PRISONER: The mother*fuck* you can't. *Right* now, missy.

*(The PRISONER slaps EDMOND viciously several times.)*

*Right* now, Jim. An’ you bes’ be nice.
Scene 21

The Chaplain

Edmond is sitting across from the Prison Chaplain.

Chaplain: You don't have to talk.

Edmond: I don't want to talk. (Pause.)

Chaplain: Are you getting accustomed to life here?

Edmond: Do you know what happened to me?

Chaplain: No. (Pause.)

Edmond: I was sodomized.

Chaplain: Did you report it?

Edmond: Yes.

Chaplain: What did they say?

Edmond: “That happens.” (Pause.)

Chaplain: I'm sorry it happened to you. (Pause.)

Edmond: Thank you.
**CHAPLAIN** (*pause*): Are you lonely?

**EDMOND**: Yes. (*Pause.*) Yes. (*Pause.*) I feel so *alone.* . . .

**CHAPLAIN**: Shhhh . . .

**EDMOND**: I'm so *empty.* . . .

**CHAPLAIN**: Maybe you are ready to be *filled.*

**EDMOND**: That's *bullshit,* that's *bullshit.* That's pious *bullshit.*

**CHAPLAIN**: Is it?

**EDMOND**: Yes.

**CHAPLAIN**: That you are ready to be filled? Is it impossible?

**EDMOND**: Yes. Yes. I don't know what's impossible.

**CHAPLAIN**: Nothing is impossible.

**EDMOND**: Oh. Nothing is impossible. Not to “God,” is that what you're saying?

**CHAPLAIN**: Yes.

**EDMOND**: Well, then, you're full of *shit.* You understand that. If nothing's impossible to God, then let him let me walk *out* of here and be *free.* Let him cause a new *day.* In a perfect land full of *life.* And *air.* Where people are *kind* to each other, and there's *work* to do. Where we grow up in *love,* and in security we're *wanted.*

(*Pause.*)

Let him do that.
Let him.
Tell him to do that. (*Pause.*) You *asshole*—if nothing's impossible . . . I
think that must be easy. . . Not: “Let me fly,” or, “If there is a God make him to make the sun come out at night.” Go on. Please. Please. Please. I'm begging you. If you're so smart. Let him do that: Let him do that. (Pause.) Please. (Pause.) Please. I'm begging you.

**Chaplain:** Are you sorry that you killed that girl?

(Pause.)

Edmond?

**Edmond:** Yes. (Pause.)

**Chaplain:** Are you sorry that you killed that girl?

**Edmond:** I'm sorry about everything.

**Chaplain:** But are you sorry that you killed? (Pause.)

**Edmond:** Yes. (Pause.) Yes, I am. (Pause.) Yes.

**Chaplain:** Why did you kill that girl?

**Edmond:** I . . . (Pause.) I . . . (Pause.) I don't . . . I . . . I don't . . . (Pause.) I . . . (Pause.) I don't . . . (Pause.) I don't . . . (Pause.) I don't think . . . (Pause.) I . . . (Pause.)

(The Chaplain helps Edmond up and leads him to the door.)
Scene 22

*Alone in the Cell*

**Edmond,** *alone in his cell,* writes:

**Edmond:** Dear Mrs. Brown. You don't remember me. Perhaps you do. Do you remember Eddie Burke who lived on Euclid? Maybe you do. I took Debbie to the prom. I know that she never found me attractive, and I think, perhaps she was coerced in some way to go with me—though I can't think in what way. It also strikes me as I write that maybe she went of her own free will and I found it important to *think* that she went unwillingly. (*Pause.*) I don't think, however, this is true. (*Pause.*) She was a lovely girl. I'm sure if you remember me you will recall how taken I was with her then.

(*A Guard enters Edmond's cell.*)

**Guard:** You have a visitor.

**Edmond:** Please tell them that I'm ill.

(*Guard exits. Edmond gets up. Stretches. Goes to the window. Looks out.*)

**Edmond (to himself):** What a day! (*He goes back to his table. Sits down. Yawns. Picks up the paper.*)
Scene 23

In the Prison Cell

EDMOND and the PRISONER are each lying on their bunks.

EDMOND: You can't control what you make of your life.

PRISONER: Now, thass for damn sure.

EDMOND: There is a destiny that shapes our ends. . . .

PRISONER: . . . Uh-huh . . .

EDMOND: Rough-hew them how we may.

PRISONER: How e'er we motherfucking may.

EDMOND: And that's the truth.

PRISONER: You know that is the truth.

EDMOND: . . . And people say it's heredity, or it's environment . . . but, but I think it's something else.

PRISONER: What you think that it is?

EDMOND: I think it's something beyond that.
PRISONER: Uh-huh . . .

EDMOND: Beyond those things that we can know. (Pause.) I think maybe in dreams we see what it is. (Pause.) What do you think? (Pause.)

PRISONER: I don't know.

EDMOND: I don't think we can know. I think that if we knew it, we'd be dead.

PRISONER: We would be God.

EDMOND: We would be God. That's absolutely right.

PRISONER: Or, or some genius.

EDMOND: No, I don't think even genius could know what it is.

PRISONER: No, some great genius, (pause) or some philosopher . . .

EDMOND: I don't think even a genius can see what we are.

PRISONER: You don't . . . think that . . . (Pause.)

EDMOND: I think that we can't perceive it.

PRISONER: Well, something's going on, I'll tell you that. I'm saying, somewhere some poor sucker knows what's happening.

EDMOND: Do you think?


(Pause.)

EDMOND: You think?
PRISONER: Yeah. Maybe not him . . . but someone. (Pause.) Some fuck locked up, he's got time for reflection. . . .

(Pause.)

Or some fuckin’ . . . I don't know, some kid, who's just been born. (Pause.)

EDMOND: Some kid that's just been born . . .

PRISONER: Yes. And you know, he's got no preconceptions . . .

EDMOND: Yes.

PRISONER: All he's got . . .

EDMOND: . . . That's absolutely right. . . .

PRISONER: Huh? . . .

EDMOND: Yes.

PRISONER: Is . . .

EDMOND: Maybe it's memory. . . .

PRISONER: That's what I'm saying. That it just may be. . . .

EDMOND: It could be.

PRISONER: Or . . .

EDMOND: . . . or some . . .

PRISONER: . . . some . . .

EDMOND: . . . knowledge . . .

PRISONER: . . . some . . .
EDMOND: . . . some intuition. . .

PRISONER: Yes.

EDMOND: I don't even mean "intuition." . . . Something . . . something . .

PRISONER: Or some animal . .

EDMOND: Why not? . .

PRISONER: That all the time we're saying we'll wait for the men from space, maybe they're here. . .

EDMOND: . . . Maybe they are. . .

PRISONER: . . . Maybe they're animals. . .

EDMOND: Yes.

PRISONER: That were left here . .

EDMOND: Aeons ago.

PRISONER: Long ago . .

EDMOND: . . . and have bred here . .

PRISONER: Or maybe we're the animals. . .

EDMOND: . . . Maybe we are. . .

PRISONER: You know, how they, they are supreme on their . .

EDMOND: . . . Yes.

PRISONER: On their native world . .

EDMOND: But when you put them here.
PRISONER: We say they're only dogs, or animals, and scorn them. . . .

EDMONT: . . . Yes.

PRISONER: We scorn them in our fear. But . . . don't you think? . . .

EDMONT: . . . It very well could be. . . .

PRISONER: But on their native world . . .

EDMONT: . . . Uh-huh . . .

PRISONER: . . . they are supreme. . . .

EDMONT: I think that's very . . .

PRISONER: And what we have done is to disgrace ourselves.

EDMONT: We have.

PRISONER: Because we did not treat them with respeck.

EDMONT (pause): Maybe we were the animals.

PRISONER: Well, thass what I'm saying.

EDMONT: Maybe they're here to watch over us. Maybe that's why they're here. Or to observe us. Maybe we're here to be punished.

(Pause.)

Do you think there's a Hell?

PRISONER: I don't know. (Pause.)

EDMONT: Do you think that we are there?

PRISONER: I don't know, man. (Pause.)
EDMOND: Do you think that we go somewhere when we die?

PRISONER: I don't know, man. I like to think so.

EDMOND: I would, too.

PRISONER: I sure would like to think so. (Pause.)

EDMOND: Perhaps it's Heaven.

PRISONER (pause): I don't know.

EDMOND: I don't know either but perhaps it is. (Pause.)

PRISONER: I would like to think so.

EDMOND: I would, too. (Pause.)

          Good night. (Pause.)

PRISONER: Good night.

(EDMOND gets up, goes over and exchanges a goodnight kiss with the
PRISONER. He then returns to his bed and lies down.)