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THE ALBATROSS 3RD & MAIN

by Simon David Eden

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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The Albatross 3rd & Main was first performed at Emporium
Brighton on 2nd February 2016 with the following cast:

Lullaby.....**GEOFF AYMER**
Gene.....**NICHOLAS BOULTON**
Spider.....**CHARLIE ALLEN**
Designed & Directed by.....**SIMON DAVID EDEN**
Producer.....**HELENA MICHELL**
Costumier.....**NICOLA HOLTER**
Lighting Designer.....**STRAT MASTORIS**

The Albatross 3rd & Main was performed at Park Theatre,
London on 10th January 2017 with the following cast:

Lullaby.....**ANDREW ST CLAIR-JAMES**
Gene.....**HAMISH CLARK**
Spider.....**CHARLIE ALLEN**
Producer.....**HELENA MICHELL**
Directed by.....**SIMON DAVID EDEN**
Set Designer.....**SIMON DAVID EDEN**
Lighting Designer.....**STRAT MASTORIS**
Costumier.....**NICOLA HOLTER**
Stage Manager.....**ISABELLA STRADA**
Deputy Stage Manager.....**BESSIE HITCHIN**
Casting Director.....**CARLA MORRIS**
Set Construction.....**LES DEAN**
Fight Director.....**KEITH WALLIS**

CAST

In order of appearance:

LULLABY – Andrew St Clair-James

In addition to his acting career, Andrew is also Artistic Director of the Moors Theatre, Crouch End, London.

Theatre includes: *The Truth*; *Heramiss Island*; *Enlightened*; *An Ex-Engagement* (Moors Theatre); *Clouds of Grey* (Park Theatre); *Sherlock Holmes in Trouble* (Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester); *Twelfth Night* (Voice Theatre); *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Chicken Shed Theatre & Everyman Voice Theatre Tour).

Film includes: *S.N.U.B*; *the Honeymooners*; *My Feral Heart*.

GENE – Hamish Clark

Hamish Clark is best-known for his leading role as 'Duncan' in 7 series of *Monarch Of The Glen* (BBC1); and 'Roger' in 3 series of *My Wonderful Life* (Granada/ITV). Other TV credits include: *Arrested Development* (Netflix/Fox); *Liz and Dick* (Lifetime); *Rab C Nesbitt* (BBC Scotland); *Small Fish* (BBC); *Blessed* (BBC) and *The Only Boy For Me* (ITV).

Theatre includes: *Almost, Maine* (Park Theatre); *Donkeys Years* (Comedy Theatre); *24 Hour Plays* (The Old Vic); *Haunted* (The Arts Theatre); *The Agent* (The Old RedLion); *The Birds* (Gate Theatre) and *The Demon Headmaster* (NT Studio). Hamish has also enjoyed successful shows on the comedy circuit in Edinburgh with *The Thunderbunnies* and *Hamish Whips It Out*.

Film includes: *White Island*; *The Cocktail Waitress*; *The Decoy Bride*; *The Time Machine - Morlocks*; *Martha Meet Frank*; *Daniel & Lawrence*; *Bring Me The Head of Mavis Davis*.

SPIDER - Charlie Allen

Charlie trained at the Rose Bruford School of Speech and Drama. He won Best Male Lead Performer, Brighton Festival 2012 and was recipient of the Outstanding Theatre Award Brighton Fringe 2013.

Theatre includes: *From Dusk Till Dawn* (Kings Head); *Atrophy* (Etcetera Theatre); *Faster Higher Stronger Straighter* (Scealta Mora); *The Taming of the Shrew* (Festival Shakespeare Company); *Bug* (Brighton Fringe); *No Particular Place To Go* (Chronicle Theatre).

Film includes: *Brothers of War*; *Brighton Rock*.

CREATIVE

Helena Michell - Producer

Helena trained as an actress at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Her first stage role was in Dario Fo's *Archangels Don't Play Pinball* (Bristol Old Vic) which earned her an Equity card. Many film and television roles were to follow including the Merchant-Ivory productions *Maurice* (with Hugh Grant) and *The Deceivers* (co-starring with Pierce Brosnan); *Sharpe's Enemy*; *Devices & Desires*; *Poirot*; *Miss Marple*; *Jeeves & Wooster* and Michael Palin's feature length drama *Number 27*. As a producer for Shiny Pin Productions Helena has organised workshops and rehearsed readings of new works, and staged Eve Ensler's *Vagina Monologues* at Chichester Festival in aid of Helen Bamber Foundation & Rape Crisis. In June this year she curated a memorial exhibition of her late father Keith Michell's fine art works at the Menier Gallery, London.

Simon David Eden - Playwright, Designer, Director

Simon graduated the Royal College of Art with a MA Distinction Film. Encouraged by the legendary film director Fred Zinnemann, Simon pursued a career as a screenwriter, earning commissions from Hollywood studios Paramount Pictures and Warner Bros. His scripts for television include the award-winning feature length medical-science drama *Bliss* and his debt fantasy novel *The Savage Kingdom* (Simon & Schuster) has been published in translation in Brazil, Italy and Poland. His writing for the stage includes *When The Saintz Go Marching In* (Point Theatre); *The Little Match Girl - Book Musical* (Yvonne Arnaud Theatre); *The Gift of the Gab* (Rehearsed Reading, Cockpit Theatre). He also has a parallel career as a fine artist, and his work has been exhibited in London, Nassau and the Tsinghua Academy of Arts, Beijing.

The Albatross 3rd & Main (pub Samuel French) marks his debut as a director.

www.SimonDavidEden.com

Strat Mastoris - Lighting Designer

Strat studied at Harrow School of Photography. A resident of Brighton, he designs lighting and stage sets for a number of fringe venues in the city.

Design credits include: *Petrushka* (Marlborough Theatre); *A Christmas Carol*; *Reasons To Be Pretty*; *The Arsonists*; *Iron*; *Of Mice and Men*; *Art*; *Hamlet*; *Hay Fever*; *Amongst Barbarians*; *The Winslow Boy*; *Hedwig and The Angry Inch* (New Venture Theatre); *Brewers Fayre* (Brighton Media Centre); *Unwholesome Things*; *Entertaining Mr Sloane*; *Endgame*; *The Tempest* (Emporium); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (The Barn Theatre).

You can see his theatre work at www.seeingstages.com

Nicola Holter - Costumier

Nicola works in theatre, film and television. After completing a degree at the University of Exeter she went on to train at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Nicola has worked in menswear at the RSC and for ITV, and has assisted on embroidery work for Disney's *Pirates of The Carribean* and a new adaptation of *The Mummy*.

TV credits include BBC's *Poldark* series 1; *Cider With Rosie*; and *Good Luck Mr Gorsky*; a web-series she filmed in Iceland earlier this year. Most recently she worked on an adaptation of Phillipa Gregory's *The White Princess* and supervised *FUP* for Kneehigh's summer *Asylum* season. She has previously assisted on shows at the Bristol Old Vic, Theatre Royal Bath and the Tobacco Factory. Recent design work includes *The Shakespeare Cabaret* at The Egg; Theatre Royal Bath and *The Star Seekers* children's touring show for The Wardrobe Ensemble.

Isabella Strada – Stage Manager

Isabella trained as a Stage Manager at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). After graduating Isabella began working for The Last Great Hunt, an independent theatre company based in Perth, where she eventually took on a role as Producer. It was with TLGH that Isabella travelled as Tour Manager to the 2016 Adelaide Fringe Festival. She then went on to work at the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe with Gilded Balloon.

Theatre includes: *Project Xan* (Jedda Productions); *Yoshi's Castle* (Perth Fringe Festival); *Bayswater City of Dance* (City of Bayswater); *Bruce, FAG/STAG*; *Alvin Sputnik* (Adelaide Fringe); *Falling Through Clouds* (Sydney Festival).

Bessie Hitchin – Deputy Stage Manager

Bessie trained as the technical apprentice at Park Theatre. Theatre includes: DSM: *Carmen* (Blackheath Halls); SM: *Odd Shaped Balls* (Old Red Lion); *The Local Stigmatic* (Old Red Lion); *Three Days and Three Minutes with Larry* (The Lion & Unicorn); ASM: *Rapunzel* (Park Theatre).

Carla Morris – Casting Director

Carla trained at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and The Ward Studio in New York. As a Casting Assistant, Carla has worked with Nadira Seecoomar on various television comedies.

Casting and assisting credits for theatre include *Stoneface* (Finborough); *Moth* (Hightide/Bush Theatre); *The Railway Children* (Kings Cross) and *The Invisible* (Bush Theatre) plus various readings and workshops. Carla spent two years at the Bush Theatre and worked as Production Coordinator for Lee Menzies on productions including *From Here To Eternity*; *Top Hat*; *Journey's End*; *Butley* and *Prick Up Your Ears*.

Les Dean - Set Construction

A one man construction company, Les has provided practical hands-on solutions to the author's wildest imaginings since the PS: Surrealism performance art-rock happenings in the early 1980s. His skills, knowledge and can-do attitude really do reach to infinity and beyond.



About Park Theatre

Park Theatre was founded by Artistic Director, Jez Bond. The building opened in May 2013 and, with two West End transfers, two National Theatre transfers and three national tours in its first two years, quickly garnered a reputation as a key player in the London theatrical scene. In 2015 Park Theatre received an Olivier nomination and won The Stage's Fringe Venue of the Year.

Park Theatre is a neighbourhood theatre with a global ambition.

We present world class theatre, collaborating with the finest existing and emerging talent. We programme classics through to new writing, distinguished by strong narrative drive and powerful emotional content. We produce both in-house and in partnership with the most excellent existing and emerging producers, with whom we endeavour to provide an unparalleled level of support.

With a welcoming and nurturing environment we want Park Theatre to be accessible to everyone, within our diverse community and beyond – and through affordable ticket pricing and outreach programmes we aim to engage with those with little or no experience of theatre.

We aim to be a beacon for all and an ambassador for theatre worldwide.

"A five-star neighbourhood theatre." Independent

As a registered charity [number 1137223] with no public subsidy, we rely on the kind support of our donors and volunteers. To find out how you can get involved visit parktheatre.co.uk

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donors and volunteers**

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Sam Shepard once remarked that not only did he not know what a play was about when he set about writing it, but often, he didn't know even after he'd finished. Now I can't say that of 'Albatross', but it is true that much of what found its way onto the page as I spent time with the characters, came from my sub-conscious. So what's a British writer doing writing an American stage play? Well, all artists reflect the times in which they create their work, and there's no doubt that the subtext of this satire - the repercussions of cultural imperialism - is to be found centre stage in our daily news bulletins. Throughout history, even the most powerful empires – The Persian, Roman, Caliphate, Mongol, Spanish, British etc. – were eventually surpassed and reaped what they had sown, only today, we get to observe every inch of that inevitable fall in the relative comfort of our living rooms, in wide-screen surround sound high definition.

But to take a step or two back...

I'm what you might call a research junkie, and the idea for the play grew out of several seemingly disparate discoveries made a few years apart. The first was that Samuel Taylor Coleridge (whose epic poem *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* inspired the *Albatross* of the title) had, in 1795, given a passionate lecture in Bristol on the barbarity of the slave trade. Nothing unusual in that you might say, for a liberal poet-philosopher of the times. But what struck me, is how deeply troubled Coleridge was by his own guilt by association, of living in a society, in a thriving major port that profited from man's inhumanity to man.

The second discovery concerned those iconic wooden sculptures of Native Americans. The so-called Cigar Store Indians, which gained huge popularity with storekeepers in the US in the 19th century. And these were not mere ornamentation, they encouraged commerce, and were used as a means to communicate to an illiterate customer base, that tobacco products were readily available on the premises where they stood. Born out of the early trade between settlers and the indigenous population – who were masters of cultivating the crop - these figures were often carved by artisans connected to the shipping industry seeking an outlet for their talents when the demand for figureheads for the bows of tall ships was in decline. Today

some Native Americans consider the symbol an offensive reminder of a period in history in which the settler-colonists expropriated their tribal lands and began to eradicate their culture.

The third piece of the creative puzzle was a brief news article that caught my eye during my last visit to Vermont, New England. It concerned Federal legislation relating to the protection of the very symbol of the nation, the American eagle. Or more specifically, the golden eagle, a creature no longer listed on the endangered species list, yet one still protected by the letter of the law. This latter enshrined in the US Constitution, is the reason the tale is set, could only be set, in the United States of America.

Now quite why those three elements would fuse in my imagination and find their way into a fictional general store in Massachusetts I cannot begin to say. But, as a student of human nature, I'm frequently drawn back to the kind of environment that I grew up in, in which the salty cut and thrust of the language and behaviour of the working man pitting his wits against the system, can be closely observed: the workshop, the construction site, the wreckers yard, the cafe, the bookmakers, the billiard hall and so on.

Each of these is imbued with its own set of rules and traditions, and those who frequent them, do so to commune, to strike a deal, to earn a crust, to gamble, to rib one another, to escape. To measure, in short, their own sense of self worth against the next fellow. And nowhere in my experience, can one find sharper wits, and greater insights into the human condition.

This play is rooted in a gritty blue-collar reality then, but by the same token (certainly for the premiere production which I'm also designing and directing) it's also a slightly heightened, symbolic, neo-noir reality. As a playwright, I'm as influenced by the great abstract artists and photographers and film-makers (cinema was a vital touchstone for Tennessee Williams, so it's good enough for me), as I am by theatre. So, if 'Albatross' - as some have remarked - can be said to have a dash of a Kurt Vonnegut or the Coen Brothers about it, you won't hear me complaining.

Simon David Eden, 2017

‘How smooth must be the language of the whites, when they
can make right look like wrong, and wrong like right.’

Chief Sauk Black Hawk
Ma-Ka-Tai-Me-She-Kia-Kiak
Rock Island, Illinois, 1833
*(as dictated to Antoine Leclair
U.S. Interpreter)*

For Dick Ross
the storyteller's storyteller

CAST OF CHARACTERS

All east-coast American

LOUIS ‘LULLABY’ LEE (40S/50S – African-American)

Lullaby is Gene’s right hand man, a friendship born out of their shared passion for long nights deep sea fishing. A heavy-set, ex semi-pro featherweight boxer, he might have been a genuine sporting contender but for the mob guys and family craziness surrounding him in his prime. An avid reader of periodicals, he has an almost photographic memory for facts and figures. That said, there’s no denying he also took one too many blows to the frontal lobe during his time in the ring, and that has slightly scrambled his wires and left him with a mild form of OCD. Loyal, hardworking, genial, Lullaby is also prone to unpredictable outbursts and, well, let’s say, eccentric behaviour.

GENE LACY (40S/50S - Caucasian)

An ex-lobster boat fisherman. A gambler. Redeemed by his genuine affinity for society’s waifs and strays. Now looking and feeling a little ragged in his skin from all that life has thrown at him. Given how little Gene wanted from it – a fishing boat, the chance to make a living from the sea, someone to share his bed whenever he made it back to dry land, his tilt at the American Dream has been shot to pieces by the time we meet him. Landlocked, up to his eyes in debt, he’s a man who senses that time is running out on his ability to hold it all together, and morals aside, that now just might be the right time to do the wrong thing.

RICK ‘SPIDER’ RAGNO (30S - Caucasian)

Spider is the slick, ne’er-do-well desperado, born and raised in small town USA, who flunked school and has never held down a proper job in his life. Strangely likeable despite his semi-redneck attitude, (maybe because he doesn’t even realize he’s a bigot), he gets by ducking and diving around the fringes of the hardcore criminal fraternity that he’d like to consider himself a part of. More bark than bite, Spider (his surname is the Italian word for spider) never really thinks beyond the moment, which is both a blessing and a curse: the upside is he doesn’t ever feel he’s failed in any way, the downside, he’s destined to keep reliving the old adage: if you keep doing what you do the way you do it, you’ll keep getting what you get. And for Spider, ultimately, that’s gotta be a lengthy stretch behind bars.

SCENE

GENERAL STORE, MASSACHUSETTS NEW ENGLAND USA

TIME

THE FALL, PRESENT DAY

ACT I

General Store – Morning

Outside it's the 21st century, but this place has hardly changed a lick since the 1800s. Whatever else is on display, there's a life size cigar store Native American in pride of place. A chess set, two chairs and a stack of periodicals by a wood burning stove.

LULLABY *is stacking cartons of bug poison on a shelf.*

GENE *is behind the counter, old style rotary dial telephone in hand.*

LULLABY *(reading label)* Fighting a losing battle? Fighting. A losing. Battle.

GENE *(on the phone)* Press one to connect with...two for... existing customers press...

LULLABY You hear that Cap'n Gene?

GENE Press four to hear these options again –

LULLABY Fighting a losing battle. 'S printed right here side a the pack.

GENE I can't press any... I can't press any goddamn thing I'm on a dial phone.

LULLABY Fighting a losing battle.

GENE *(re the phone)* Don't have to tell me.

LULLABY *(reading label)* Arm yourself against woodlouse, termites, ants, roaches and other annoying pests with

this unique, ready-to-use Bomb-D-Bug-Fog All-in-One Handy Treatment.

GENE (*into phone*) Hello? Hello? Hello?

LULLABY Just shake and tug the tab to activate –

GENE I swear to god, what is it with these sonsofbitches –

LULLABY Will remain one hundred percent effective for up to nine months –

GENE If you can't take the call, don't pick up the phone. You know. You pick up the phone then take the goddamn call –

LULLABY Ideal for crack and crevice treatments, the Bomb-D-Bug-Fog can be used both indoors and out.

GENE (*into phone; measured*) Well. At long last. A real live human being. Deepak. Is that right? Eastern Seaboard? No? Pacific Northwest? No. There's a surprise. Pretty sure you ain't bunked down in Topeka Kansas am I right? Look. Never mind –

(*pause*) What?

(*pause*) Chicago Hope? The TV show?

(*pause*) Too bad they canned the series huh –

(*pause*) I'm sure you will make a fine doctor some day Deepak. And you need a reference (*for*) your Green Card I'm first in line OK. OK. But lookit. Today, right now what we need to deal with –

(*measured*) I appreciate it's not your fault Deepak. No. I fully appreciate that. But here's the thing. These debts I keep getting calls about. These debts you people keep harassing me about. These debts are not mine. They are not mine you un'erstand Deepak. And this must end here. Today. Right now.

(*starting to ruffle*) Would I mind holding? Would I *mind* holding? I've been holding. I just got through holding.

Yes I mind holding. I resent the fuck out of holding as a matter of fact –

LULLABY *heads out back for more supplies.*

(trying not to lose it) Don't, don't, don't, just hear me... don't... Deepak I swear to... Authorized payments? Yes it is a... Was. Was a *joint account* but...no I'm not interested in hearing details a debt repayment plan Deepak. I have no debt. I'm a debt free zone.

(pause) Yes I'm aware there's a forest a bounced checks. Yes I know about the lease on the Lexus GS, the maxed out Amex and Fidelity too. Ironical that don't you think the *Fidelity* card. What's that? Maxed out? It's an expression means...look. Lookit. Deepak. I'd love to spend the whole morning chewing the cud. Really I would. But...

(pause) We may have been Deepak. We may still have been man and wife at the time but –

(pause) Thirty. Thousand. Dollars. Let me...let me just dig around in my pockets here, take a look the cookie jar under the bed...well what do you know. I don't have thirty thousand dollars Deepak! I don't have it. I don't have it and if I did I wouldn't toss it into the hellfire that bitch warms her fanny by anyhow.

LULLABY *returns with more bug poison and continues to read the details on the pack.*

(pause) Re-establish the trust? Re-establish the trust? Is this what they teach you... This an intervention? You a marriage guidance counselor now? There was no trust the first place Deepak. That's the whole point. There was no trust. Now there is no union in the eyes a the law. And there is no debt I'm liable for you un'erstand me.

(losing it) What's that? No. No. Don't...do not transfer me! Stay on the line. Stay on the line. Stay on the line

Deepak. You. You. No you... YOU ...anymore a this harassment and I shall file suit –

LULLABY Smoke ‘em out a doors, windows, porches and screens. Eaves, patios and stairways –

GENE (*into phone*) Email? Did you just say email? Well why didn’t you say so before. I’ll have my footman hop to it soon as he’s Simonized my Jag-whar –

LULLABY ...log stores, attics and playsets –

SPIDER *enters carrying a large cardboard box which he sets down on the counter.*

GENE (*into phone*) Responsibility?

(*pause*) **RESPONSIBILITY.** What? What? If you...if you came into my store and a...and a...and a Mason jar of... of pickled beets fell off the shelf smacked you upside the head, you’d be looking to me for compensation am I right? Am I right? You’d be giving ME grief. Right? Right? Not the soda-lime glass manufacturer, not the beet farmer, not the guy cranks out the steel-pressed screw top lids.

(*pause*) What’s a Mason jar?

(*pause*) No. Do not put me on hol –

Seeing that GENE is wound up, SPIDER makes for the coffee pot on the stove in back.

SPIDER (to **LULLABY**) Hey Champ.

SPIDER *engages in a little mock sparring. LULLABY doesn’t respond in kind, he just gives SPIDER a look and continues with his train of thought.*

LULLABY ...barns, lean-tos, driveways and crawl spaces and other locations where pesky pests like to hide.

SPIDER Say what?

LULLABY Other locations where pesky pests like to hide?

SPIDER *pours himself a coffee.*

SPIDER Porches –

LULLABY Said that

SPIDER Patios –

LULLABY Said that –

SPIDER Eaves –

LULLABY Said that –

SPIDER Upholstery.

LULLABY Upholstery? You think?

SPIDER What is this *Wheel of Fortune*?

LULLABY What say you Cap'n Gene?

GENE What?

LULLABY Other locations where pesky pests like to hide?

GENE Other locations where pesky pests like to hide? I'll tell you other locations where pesky pests like to hide.

(into phone) IN GODDAMN DEBT COLLECTION CALL CENTERS IS WHERE THEY LIKE TO HIDE. AT THE OTHER END OF THIS DUMBASS PHONE IS WHERE THEY LIKE TO HIDE. And you can play that shitty middle-of-the-road *escalator* music all you want! I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME! I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME MISTER-CALLS-MAY-BE-RECORDED-FOR-TRAINING PURPOSES. WELL RECORD THIS OK! I – Deepak?

(reins in his temper) No I'm not mad at you personally, though you did put me on hold again when I specifically requested you not do that. But hey, you're just doing your job right. I 'ppreciate that. They're paying you what, a buck an hour to work in a shithole white collar outsourcing sweatshop middle a fuckin' nowhere New

Delhi. You're mailing rupees back home to your family in the boonies. That's commendable. Really it is my friend. But don't let the schemin' leeches fool ya.

(picks up a magazine)

You get the National Geo-graphic your neck of the woods Deepak? Huh? The magazine. No. Well listen to this. What I'm going to tell you now, commit it to memory. Learn it by rote. Burn it into the back of your eye sockets. Those reruns a *Little House on the Prairie* in the tinpot Punjab branch of Bucket-O-Burger, that ain't cultural assimilation. It ain't. It just ain't. Now I want you to share this with your friends and family and all those you hold dear. You ready? You ready? Here it is:

(reading) A passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favored nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists.

You get that? Huh. You get all that?

SPIDER *settles in a chair and buffs his cowboy boots with a cloth.*

(into phone) An illusion of an imaginary common interest, where no real common interest exists. You know who said that Deepak? Huh? You know who said that? George Washington is who. Seventeen nine'y six. George fuckin' Washington!

SPIDER *(amused)* George Washington.

GENE Now you can work the phone 'til you're blue in the face my friend, you can hound poor schmucks like me to their graves fifteen thousand miles away other side a the world, but you ain't never gonna walk in my shoes. Nor I yours.

SPIDER Prob'ly don't even own a pair shoes.

GENE My point Deepak. The thrust of my dissertation here, is how YOU gonna help ME you don't even know where I live?

(pause) Not the address! I know you got the goddamn address! It's a figure of spee – He put me on hold! He put me on fuckin' hold!

GENE *looks around for something to act as a perfect payoff, the perfect punctuation. He comes up short, so instead, he slams the phone into its cradle, again and again and again.*

YOU GETTING THAT? HUH?! YOU GETTING THAT FOR TRAINING PURPOSES?! YOU GETTING THAT IN 3.D STEREO WRAP-AROUND HIGH DEFINITION TECHNICOLOR YOU BLOODSUCKING MOTHERFUCKERS!

GENE *slams the phone down one final time.*

Debt repayment plans. Bridging loans. Life insurance. Who are these fuckin' people. Hah! What life? What life do I need insurance for? Deepak's making out better'n I am.

Pause.

SPIDER Good morning Gene.

GENE *(still smoldering)* Looking forward to the goddamn day I don't have to draw breath in this stinking hellhole.

SPIDER You want some coffee?

SPIDER *picks up the National Geographic and flips through. LULLABY crosses and takes it from him.*

GENE Would I mind holding? Would I mind holding? Where does he get off? I mean either fish or chop bait!

SPIDER You know they say that anger is a problem-solving emotion.

LULLABY Who says that?

SPIDER Talkin' to Gene.

(to **GENE**) They say it gives us energy and motivates us to act.

LULLABY Motivates us? Motivates us how?

SPIDER Talkin' to Gene.

(to **GENE**) But intense unresolved anger...well you just don't wanna go down that road.

LULLABY You don't?

SPIDER No you don't. You know why?

LULLABY 'Cause it's unresolved?

SPIDER 'Cause it's the sure fire way to drive a nail into your own coffin. It's gonna eat away at your insides just like the worse kind a disease. We're talkin' high blood pressure, anxiety, coronary whatnot, co-less-stral off the chart –

LULLABY Cholesterol? Just from being mad –

SPIDER Talkin' to Gene.

(to **GENE**) But if you harness that sucker. You harness that rage...that simmering resentment...that balls out, fuck you, I will not take it anymore attitude. Well, then life is the grit in your fat juicy oyster my friend. 'Fore you know it, you've ground yourself a pearl.

LULLABY (*re the box*) UPS been and gone.

SPIDER That right?

LULLABY Pickup's 'fore eight thirty, A of the M, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

SPIDER UPS. Forget UPS. I'm talking 'bout potential –

LULLABY Potential?

SPIDER Potent...shall. Potent...shale. I'm talking mining the bedrock of your very being. I'm talking jacking, big dog fracking and blazing like a forest fire!

Pause.

GENE You keep on puffing Smokey Bear.

SPIDER Only thing smoked is in that there box. And that's *elevator* music. Not *escalator* music.

GENE Say what?

SPIDER Like you said before. I mean it was sweet, don't get me wrong. But it's the finer details. I got an ear these things you know. Never miss a beat.

GENE You got an ear?

SPIDER Yessir I do.

GENE Van-fucking-Gogh.

SPIDER Better believe it.

GENE You gonna paint me a picture Vincent?

SPIDER Oh this is my masterpiece. This is my signature work. This is the one you gonna remember me for.

GENE Fuck you talkin' about?

SPIDER *(to LULLABY re his coffee)* This freshly brewed?

LULLABY What day is it?

SPIDER What day is it? Thursday. What day is it.

GENE Then it's freshly brewed. From Monday.

LULLABY *enjoys the joke.*

SPIDER Jocularly. Mirth. Truly, my sides are splitting. But you know, I worry about you Gene I really do.

GENE That's touching.

SPIDER You may jest, but I kid you not.

GENE Well that's something for my tombstone.

SPIDER No seriously. I come in here, what every other day
the last what ten years –

GENE Every other day –

SPIDER Every other week anyways and I see you –

GENE I'm right here –

SPIDER And you're just –

GENE Putting in a shift –

SPIDER You're just –

GENE Open for business –

SPIDER I'm sorry to say it –

GENE You're sorry to say it? You didn't say anything.

SPIDER You've weighed anchor and you're treading water
my friend. You're dead in the water and you don't
even know it. That's what I'm saying.

GENE That's what you're saying?

SPIDER That's what I'm saying. Been floatin' 'round here
so long you got barnacles 'stead a balls. You're taking
on water Gene, I know it, you know it, Father Time,
well he sure as hell knows it.

GENE But now you gonna throw me a lifesaver, is that what
you're saying Spider?

SPIDER You know what I'm saying.

GENE *I* know what you're saying? *I* know what you're
saying? Even *you* don't know what you're saying half
the time.

SPIDER You might think different when you see what I
brung gift wrapped and set in your lap today.

LULLABY UPS has already dispatched.

SPIDER You said that.

LULLABY Pickup is 'fore eight thirty. Eight thirty on the button. Man's already been and gone.

SPIDER Man's already been and gone.

LULLABY You best believe it.

SPIDER (*pause*) Well we can all take comfort in that don't you think. It's a beautiful thing. The wheels of commerce and industry well greased and grinding on, rumbling right on past our windows we sleep sound at night, tucked up tight as bugs in a rug.

LULLABY Bugs in a rug?

SPIDER Say what?

LULLABY That's it. Bugs in rugs.

SPIDER Are you on any heavy meds?

LULLABY Other locations where pesky pests like to hide –

SPIDER ...'cause you should be.

LULLABY Arm yourself against woodlouse, termites, ants, roaches and other annoying pests with this unique, ready-to-use Bomb-D-Bug-Fog All-in-One Handy Treatment...

SPIDER (*to GENE*) A word in your shell-like.

GENE Shoot.

LULLABY Just shake and tug the tab to activate. Will remain one hun'ed per cent effective for up to nine whole months –

SPIDER Does he have to... I mean this is *business*...a business thing so...

LULLABY Ideal for crack and crevice treatments –

SPIDER Gotta love a crack and a crevice –

LULLABY Bomb-D-Bug can be used both indoors and out –

SPIDER (to **GENE**) A word in *private*. Maybe there are errands –

GENE Errands?

SPIDER You know, for...you know...so we can talk. Matters concerning. We can speak of things.

GENE Speak of things?

SPIDER Openly...candidly. Business. Cramping my style.

GENE Right.

(to **LULLABY**) Hey boss. Mister Ragno here wants to speak openly and candidly about some business. Are you OK with that?

LULLABY Business?

GENE So he claims.

LULLABY Openly and candidly?

GENE Seems to be the play.

LULLABY Fine by me.

SPIDER Boss?

GENE You should drop in a little more Spider. I signed over the whole kit and caboodle to Louis a good three months back. I work for him now.

SPIDER (*a moment to consider*) Get the fuck out.

GENE I got the fuck out.

SPIDER Then why the fuck you still here?

GENE Where would I go?

SPIDER You...?

(*pause*) Wait a second here. You...? What the fuck? What the fuck is that? You get out but you stay in?

GENE Free country.

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