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SF PERUSALS

Radio Golf

August Wilson

A Samuel French Acting Edition



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Please provide ISBN. ISBN 978-0-573-70607-3

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Radio Golf premiered on April 22, 2005, at the Yale Repertory Theatre (James Bundy, Artistic Director; Victoria Nolan, Managing Director) in New Haven, Connecticut. It was directed by Timothy Douglas; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty, the lighting design was by Donald Holder, the sound design was by Vincent Olivieri; the stage manager was Narda E. Alcorn and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Richard Brooks
MAME WILKS . . . . . Michele Shay
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . John Earl Jelks
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

The play was produced on July 31, 2005, at the Center Theatre Group/ Mark Taper Forum (Gordon Davidson, Founding Artistic Director; Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director; Charles Dillingham, Managing Director) in Los Angeles. It was directed by Kenny Leon; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty, the lighting design was by Donald Holder, the sound design was by Jon Gottlieb, original music was composed and arranged by Kathryn Bostic; the production stage managers were Narda E. Alcorn and Mary K Klinger, and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Rocky Carroll
MAME WILKS . . . . . Denise Burse
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . John Earl Jelks
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

The play was produced on January 25, 2006, at Seattle Repertory Theatre (David Esbjornson, Artistic Director; Benjamin Moore, Managing Director) in Seattle. It was directed by Kenny Leon; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty the lighting design was by Donald Holder, the sound design was by Dominic Cody Kramers, original music was composed and arranged by Kathryn Bostic; the production stage manager was Narda E. Alcorn and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Rocky Carroll
MAME WILKS . . . . . Denise Burse
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . John Earl Jelks
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

The play was produced on March 29, 2006, at CENTER-STAGE (Irene Lewis, Artistic Director; Michael Ross, Managing Director) in Baltimore. It was directed by Kenny Leon; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty, the lighting design was by Donald Holder, the sound design was by Amy C. Wedel, original music was composed by Kathryn Bostic; the stage manager was Marion Friedman and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Rocky Carroll
MAME WILKS . . . . . Denise Burse
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . John Earl Jelks
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

The play was produced on September 13, 2006, at the Huntington Theatre Company (Nicholas Martin, Artistic Director; Michael Maso, Managing Director) in Boston. It was directed by Kenny Leon; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty, the lighting design was by Donald Holder, the sound design was by Dan Moses Schreier, original music was composed by Kathryn Bostic; the production stage manager was Marion Friedman, the stage manager was Eileen Ryan Kelly and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Hassan El-Amin
MAME WILKS . . . . . Michole Briana White
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . Eugene Lee
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

The play was produced on January 13, 2007, at The Goodman Theatre (Robert Falls, Artistic Director; Roche Schulfer, Executive Director) in Chicago. It was directed by Kenny Leon; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty, the lighting design was by Donald Holder, the sound design was by Dan Moses Schreier, original music was composed by Kathryn Bostic, the production stage managers were Narda E. Alcorn and Marion Friedman, the stage manager was Joseph Drummond and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Hassan El-Amin
MAME WILKS . . . . . Michole Briana White
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . John Earl Jelks
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

The play was produced on March 18, 2007, at the McCarter Theatre Center (Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Jeffrey Woodward, Managing Director) in Princeton, New Jersey. It was directed by Kenny Leon; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty, the lighting design was by Donald Holder, original music and sound design were by Dan Moses Schreier; the production stage manager was Narda E. Alcorn, the stage manager was Marion Friedman and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Harry Lennix
MAME WILKS . . . . . Tonya Pinkins
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . John Earl Jelks
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

On April 20, 2007, *Radio Golf* opened at the Cort Theatre on Broadway. It was directed by Kenny Leon; the set design was by David Gallo, the costume design was by Susan Hilferty, the lighting design was by Donald Holder, original music was composed and arranged by Dan Moses Schreier; the production stage manager was Narda E. Alcorn, the stage manager was Marion Friedman and the dramaturg was Todd Kreidler. The cast was as follows:

HARMOND WILKS . . . . . Harry Lennix
MAME WILKS . . . . . Tonya Pinkins
ROOSEVELT HICKS . . . . . James A. Williams
STERLING JOHNSON . . . . . John Earl Jelks
ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW . . . . . Anthony Chisholm

CHARACTERS

HARMOND WILKS – real-estate developer seeking mayoral candidacy, well-placed local leader.

MAME WILKS – Harmond's wife of more than twenty years, professional public relations representative.

ROOSEVELT HICKS – bank vice president, Harmond's business partner and college roommate, avid golfer.

STERLING JOHNSON – self-employed contractor and neighborhood handyman, robbed bank thirty years ago.

ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW – recently returned to the Hill District where he was born in 1918.

SETTING

The Hill District. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1997. The office of Bedford Hills Redevelopment, Inc., in a storefront on Centre Avenue.

To Benjamin Mordecai, who was there from the beginning – good company, a friend, a brother

ACT ONE

Scene I

(The lights come up on the office of Bedford Hills Redevelopment, Inc. There are unpacked boxes scattered about. **MAME WILKS** *enters and takes in the office.* **HARMOND WILKS** *enters with his arms full of boxes.)*

MAME. This is it? This isn't anything like the way you described it. This ceiling's what you were so excited about?

HARMOND. Look close. See the embossing on the tin.

MAME. Harmond, it looks raggedy.

HARMOND. See those marks. It's all hand tooled. That's the only way you get pattern detail like that. That tin ceiling's worth some money.

MAME. Then take it down and sell it. At least put some new paint on it. I wouldn't want to do business here.

HARMOND. This is a construction office. It's not to impress anybody.

MAME. Your campaign office cannot look like this.

HARMOND. I'm going to put the campaign office in Reese's old wallpaper and paint store up on the corner of Centre and Kirkpatrick. It's got a lot of windows. People can see inside.

MAME. We decided to open your office in Shadyside. What's wrong with Shadyside? Right there on Ellsworth where that old bookstore used to be. That's got a lot of windows too. What's wrong with Shadyside?

HARMOND. I'm from the Hill District.

MAME. The population of the Hill isn't but thirty-five hundred people. And it's hard to get them to vote.

HARMOND. You don't understand. Politics is about symbolism. Black people don't vote but they have symbolic weight.

MAME. That's what Thomas Brown said when he ran for mayor. You see what he's doing now. Fixing parking tickets.

HARMOND. I have a plan. Thomas Brown didn't have a plan.

MAME. I have a plan too. My plan has your campaign office sitting in Shadyside. You don't want to start out your campaign excluding people. And how am I supposed to get the TV trucks to come up to the Hill? They won't drive up here until there's been a shooting.

HARMOND. This is what puzzles me. You have every step planned out for what I have to do to be mayor but when we do something simple like go out to dinner, you can't make up your mind what to eat. Then whatever I order is what you end up eating.

MAME. I need that copy of your speech to get to the *Post-Gazette. They're* anxious to publish it but they need it by Wednesday. They want to run it in Sunday's paper. And they need to take a photo of you on Tuesday.

HARMOND. I'll check my schedule with Dena.

MAME. I already spoke with her. You're free at eleven.

*(***ROOSEVELT HICKS** *enters. He carries an artist's rendering of their redevelopment project on foam board.)*

ROOSEVELT. Where'd you park at?

HARMOND. There's a lot next door.

ROOSEVELT. Naw. Naw. I got to *see* my car. These niggers be done stole the hubcaps.

HARMOND. What hubcaps? You don't have any hubcaps. They quit making hubcaps in 1962.

ROOSEVELT. That's what I'm saying. They'll get mad there aren't any hubcaps and steal the wheels. One man asked me for five dollars. I told him I'd give him five dollars if he watched my car. He want to know how long I was gonna be. Like he got something to do. He's just lazy. Ain't got to do nothing but stand there and keep the rest of the niggers from stealing my tires and my radio. He worried about how long I'm going to be.

HARMOND. Park in the lot and you won't have any problem.

ROOSEVELT. I can't *see* the lot from here. I told you I got to watch my car.

MAME. Morning, Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT. Hey Mame. You heard anything from the governor yet?

MAME. I told his office I wasn't available until after our campaign. I don't want them to think I'm too available. If they find out I'm too excited about that job they'll determine I must not be qualified.

ROOSEVELT. The governor's press representative.

Wait till you see this. *(reveals the rendering)* I just picked it up from the architect.

MAME. Where's the Starbucks? Don't tell me they're going to put it inside the Barnes & Noble.

ROOSEVELT. No. It's right there on the other side of Whole Foods.

MAME. That apartment building turned out nice. Putting the garden on the roof really works.

ROOSEVELT. That was a good idea you had.

MAME. I saw it in a magazine.

ROOSEVELT. It's still a good idea. I don't care if it was in a magazine.

HARMOND. What's that? Why is it still called Model Cities Health Center?

MAME. Our board hasn't voted yet. We vote on the name change next meeting.

HARMOND. I've talked with most of the board members. I know their vote. They're going to change the name.

MAME. I'm voting it should stay Model Cities Health Center.

HARMOND. Sarah Degree was the first black registered nurse in the city. Naming it after her fits perfectly.

MAME. Model Cities Health Center has been around for twenty-two years. The organization has some history in the neighborhood. Nobody knows who Sarah Degree was.

HARMOND. That's why the Health Center needs to be named after her. So we remember.

MAME. I mean that's nice and I understand the sentiment but it's just not practical to throw all that history away.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *puts up a poster of Tiger Woods on the wall.* **HARMOND** *picks up the phone on the desk.)*

HARMOND. Hey Dena, Harmond here. I need you to get me into the Health Center's next board meeting. Get me in to speak with the board before they vote on the name change. Move whatever you need to in the schedule. *(pause)* Yeah… Roosevelt just brought the rendering but call and tell them we need a new one. Have it say "Sarah Degree Health Center" instead of "Model Cities." *(pause)* No, that's it. *(pause)* I don't know the number yet. Wait a minute… *(rummages around on the desk until he finds it)* 391-7795. Thanks. *(hangs up)*

ROOSEVELT. How much you think Tiger makes a swing? I wish Nike would buy a piece of me.

MAME. Harmond, I need that copy of your speech.

ROOSEVELT. What's this I hear about them putting your speech in the paper?

MAME. I got the *Post-Gazette* to run it on Sunday. They're taking his picture too.

ROOSEVELT. That's all they're talking about down at the bank.

MAME. After his speech, some woman who goes to the annual breakfast meeting of the chamber of commerce every year said to me that Harmond was the first invited speaker who actually had an idea about developing city commerce.

ROOSEVELT. All I want to know is…when you become mayor can I get an office right next to yours? Make me some kind of advisor or something. I wouldn't mind having an office in Mellon Bank and at City Hall.

HARMOND. *(handing* **MAME** *a copy of the speech)* Make sure they get your approval if they want to edit anything.

MAME. Of course I will. *(looks at her watch)* Oh… I got to go. I have to go over to Three Rivers. I'm covering a big photo shoot of Al Frank for *Sports Illustrated*.

ROOSEVELT. See if you can get me an autographed bat.

MAME. Harmond, don't forget we're going to Marcie and Jim's tonight. Six o'clock.

HARMOND. Remind me to take Jim one of those Cohibas I got in Costa Rica. I haven't smoked any of them yet.

MAME. I hope for you it stays warm out tonight. Marcie's not going to let you stink up her house either.

*(***MAME** *exits.* **HARMOND** *holds the rendering.)*

HARMOND. I don't know how "Model Cities" got on there. It should say "Sarah Degree Health Center."

ROOSEVELT. It's not going to say anything if the city doesn't declare the Hill District blighted. How are we going to do this if we don't get the fed money?

HARMOND. What are you worried for? The feds are ready to fund the project. And the city's not going to mess that up. They're not going to pass up five million dollars even if it is for minority redevelopment. They're going to declare it blighted.

ROOSEVELT. We're out two hundred thousand dollars ourselves if they don't. That's real money out of our pockets. We paid the architect fee, contractor's holding fee, surveyor's fee, the demolition fee. It cost five thousand dollars just for the building permits. That's coming out of our pockets. This shit should have been taken care of months ago.

HARMOND. You know it takes six months to get a street light replaced.

ROOSEVELT. If the blight don't come through in six months the bank will have the keys to my house and Arleen's new Saab. I'll have to drive Arleen to work and rent a house from you. They'll have to fight me over my Lexus. I can't afford six months like you.

HARMOND. City council has to go through all that bureaucracy. But the blight will come through. Any fool can look around here and see that the Hill District's not fit to live in. Herm's on top of it.

ROOSEVELT. He's not but so much on top of it. The other city councilmen still want to shake Gordy's hand. It's him that's holding it up. Gordy with his do-nothing ass. When the newspapers started calling him "Do-Nothing Gordy" that's the only time they ever got anything right.

HARMOND. Everybody knows the Democratic Party's looking to dump Gordy. When I announce my candidacy at the groundbreaking ceremony next month you'll feel the ground shift and the wind will start blowing our way. Once the Party's behind me, all the city council will be in line to shake *my* hand. See how fast the Hill District's declared blighted then.

ROOSEVELT. I'll trust you on that. Just don't forget about getting me my office.

(He notices a trophy on **HARMOND***'s desk and picks it up.)*

I see you still got Raymond's trophy. I remember you had that in our room at school. I'm sorry I never met him.

HARMOND. How's the golf camp going?

ROOSEVELT. I signed up two more kids last week. That makes eighteen. I just want these kids to know what it feels like to hit a golf ball. I hit my first golf ball I asked myself where have I been? How'd I miss this? I couldn't believe it. I felt free. Truly free. For the first time. I watched the ball soar down the driving range. I didn't think it could go so high. It just kept going higher and higher. I felt something lift off of me. Some weight I was carrying around and didn't know it. I felt like the world was open to me. Everything and everybody. I never did feel exactly like that anymore. I must have hit a hundred golf balls trying to get that feeling. But that first time was worth everything. I felt like I had my dick in my hand and was waving it around like a club. "I'm a man! Anybody want some of this come and get it!" That was the best feeling of my life.

HARMOND. That's what gets you hooked.

ROOSEVELT. That's why I keep my golf clubs in the trunk of my car just in case I drive by a golf course. I keep looking for that feeling. That's what I want these kids to have. That'll give them a chance at life. I wish somebody had come along and taught me how to play golf when I was ten. That'll set you on a path to life where everything is open to you. You don't have to hide and crawl under a rock just 'cause you black. Feel like you don't belong in the world.

*(***HARMOND***'s cell phone rings. He answers it.)*

HARMOND. Hey Mame. *(pause)* What man? What house? *(pause)* The house on the development site? *(pause)* Yeah…we'll do something about it. *(pause)* Okay, thanks. Talk with you later. *(hangs up)* That was Mame. She was driving by the site and saw a man painting that house.

ROOSEVELT. Why would somebody paint that old ugly house?

HARMOND. She said a man was painting it.

ROOSEVELT. There's a big sign on it says we're tearing it down the first of the month.

HARMOND. Maybe he can't read.

ROOSEVELT. That's the damnedest thing I heard. I'll walk up there and see what's going on.

HARMOND. Tell him not to waste his paint.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *exits.* **HARMOND** *stares at the walls. He picks up a poster of Martin Luther King Jr., and hangs it on the wall.* **STERLING JOHNSON** *enters.)*

STERLING. I been waiting for this office to open a long time. I do construction work. I'm looking for a job. *(recognizing* **HARMOND***)* Hey… Harmond Wilks. Remember me? Sterling Johnson. We used to go to Saint Richard's school together.

HARMOND. Sterling Johnson.

STERLING. Remember that time I punched you in the mouth? I was punching everybody in the mouth back then. It felt good. I was mad at everybody. I don't do that shit no more. You remember that?

HARMOND. Yeah, I remember.

STERLING. Why didn't you punch me back? It wasn't nothing but some fisticuffs. Raymond punched me back. Hey man, I was sorry to hear about Raymond. I felt like crying when I heard that. Somebody told me say, "Raymond Wilks got killed in Vietnam." That made me feel real bad. You remember me and Raymond used to play together? We used to play cowboys and Indians. Raymond didn't like to die. You say, "Bang! You dead." Raymond would say, "You missed." We used to argue over who was going to bethe Indians. We used to take turns. Yeah, I miss Raymond. We was on the football team together. Didn't nobody throw a football like Raymond. He'd throw a perfect spiral every time. Raymond told me he was going to go to Grambling. I was looking for him to make it to the pros. Next thing I know somebody say he got killed in Vietnam. You didn't go to Vietnam, did you?

HARMOND. I was in school.

STERLING. I was in jail. You know I robbed a bank? I don't know if you know that?

HARMOND. Yeah, I heard.

STERLING. People think I'm dumb 'cause I robbed that bank. I just wanted to know what it was like to have some money. Seem like everybody else had some. I said let me get me some. So I robbed that bank. I had some money. It didn't make me smarter. It didn't make me better than anybody else. You can't do nothing with money but spend it. After that you back where you started from. Then what you gonna do? I found out I was looking for something that you couldn't spend. That seem like the better of the two. To me. Everybody got their own way of looking at it but if you ask me… I'd take something you couldn't spend over money any day.

HARMOND. You do construction work?

STERLING. Yeah, I got my own business. They say you fixing to build up around here. That make sense seeing as how your family is in the real-estate business. Say you gonna build a supermarket and put in some apartments on that site up on Wylie.

HARMOND. We're going to bring the Hill back. We're going to rename it Bedford Hills.

STERLING. How you gonna bring it back? It's dead. It take Jesus Christ to bring it back. What you mean is you gonna put something else in its place. Say that. But don't talk about bringing the Hill back. The Hill District's dead.

HARMOND. We're going to bring back the whole area. Get some houses and some stores and shops. We're going to rebuild the whole neighborhood. You say you do construction work?

STERLING. Yeah, I fix houses. I know how to do anything. Sometimes I got to borrow some tools but I know how to fix anything.

HARMOND. Where did you go to school? Did you go to Connelly Trade?

STERLING. I went down there and they told me they didn't have no openings. Asked me did I want a job in the cafeteria. I told them to kiss my ass. I didn't know what to do then. Mr. Jackson say "Pick up that hammer and come on." Mr. Jackson was in the union. He taught me how to be a union man. He say "You gonna learn, you may as well learn right."

HARMOND. Do you have a résumé?

STERLING. Go up on Bedford and look where I fixed that porch. I fixed up a house around on Webster. 1615. Go look at that. Almost everything you see fixed up around here I did it. I do good work. Go around to Bedford and look at that porch.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *enters.)*

HARMOND. Hey, Roosevelt. This is Sterling Johnson. He does construction work.

ROOSEVELT. How you doing, my man? We could use someone like you. We can put you to work. We can make an opportunity for you. I know it's a hard world. It's hard for everybody. But if we stick together we can do it. We can use a man like you.

STERLING. How much you paying? I'm a union man.

ROOSEVELT. We pay union wages to qualified union members.

STERLING. When do I start?

HARMOND. We'll be getting things started soon. Do you have a number where we can call you?

STERLING. I got one this week. I don't know about next week. You got a pencil. I ain't got no pencil. 365-8216. You got that?

HARMOND. We'll give you a call, Sterling.

(They shake hands.)

STERLING. Call me before the phone company cut off my phone.

*(***STERLING** *exits.)*

HARMOND. Was there anybody up there?

ROOSEVELT. Yeah, there was somebody up there.

HARMOND. What was he doing?

ROOSEVELT. He was painting the house.

HARMOND. What color?

ROOSEVELT. You think it's funny. I don't think it's funny. I think it's sad.

HARMOND. It is funny if you stop and think about it. Somebody actually painting an abandoned house. Did you tell him we owned that house?

ROOSEVELT. Yeah, I told him.

HARMOND. What he say?

ROOSEVELT. He say he didn't care. He kept on painting the house.

HARMOND. Who is he?

ROOSEVELT. Damned if I know. I couldn't get no sense out of him. He don't know how to answer a simple question like, "What's your name?" He'll make that complicated.

HARMOND. Why is he painting the house?

ROOSEVELT. He say it's his property. I told him that was our property and that it was slated to be torn down. That went right over his head. I asked him where his deed was, he say it's on record downtown.

HARMOND. That house has been abandoned for the past twelve years.

ROOSEVELT. I told him he was defacing private property and if he didn't stop I was going to have him put in jail. He told me to go to hell.

HARMOND. How did you leave it? Did he stop painting the house?

ROOSEVELT. When I left he was sitting down resting. Had the paintbrush in his hand. He say he gets tired quick. I told him I was gonna send the police to make him

stop. He started laughing. Now you think anybody who had some sense would understand what that mean. That mean you going to jail. He laughed at me. I want to see if he'll be laughing when the police go by there.

HARMOND. The police will make him stop. Then he'll probably go paint somebody else's house.

ROOSEVELT. I have to run down the bank and pick up my new business cards. I got my promotion and don't have any cards. My boss told me he forgot to order them. They supposed to be ready this afternoon. I don't have no cards to pass out on the golf course. Without them cards they'll think I'm the caddie.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *exits. The lights go down on the scene.)*

Scene II

(The radio is on in the office: "This is WBTZ in Pittsburgh. Running at the hot end of your dial. Ouch! Don't touch it. It'll burn ya!" The lights come up on **HARMOND** *displaying the revised rendering.* **ELDER JOSEPH BARLOW** *enters.)*

OLD JOE. You know where I can find any Christian people?

HARMOND. Find who?

OLD JOE. Christian people. I'm looking for some Christian people.

HARMOND. They all over. Look around. Everybody you bump into is probably a Christian.

OLD JOE. I can't find any. They told me to go to the Mission. I went out there and the missionaries were drilling holes in cups. If you broke one of their rules they'd drill a hole in your cup so the coffee run out the bottom. They had a couple men standing around trying to plug up that hole with their finger. I say I'm in the wrong place. You don't mind if I sit, do you?

HARMOND. No, go ahead. What can I do for you?

OLD JOE. *(sitting)* My dog died.

HARMOND. I'm sorry to hear that.

OLD JOE. Cost me three hundred dollars to bury her. Three hundred dollars for a dog! Used to be you could bury anybody for three hundred dollars. Don't care if he was the doctor or the president. Three hundred dollars would put *anybody* in the ground. They told me to call the dog pound. Say they would take her away for free. I figure she done served two masters she deserve a decent funeral.

HARMOND. You did the right thing. A dog is honest company. A dog doesn't pass judgment. A dog will stick with you no matter who you are. As long as you feed it.

OLD JOE. That was eight years ago. April 4, 1989. I ain't forgot about her.

HARMOND. I got a lot of work to do here. I got a stack of bids to go through.

OLD JOE. Are you a lawyer? I need a lawyer. I'd go see the gypsy if I knew where to find one.

HARMOND. This is a redevelopment office. You have to go down to Hill House. They'll help you get a lawyer down there.

OLD JOE. Somebody sent me by *here*. Say you was a big man. I always wanted to be a big man like you.

HARMOND. I ain't a big man. I'm going to run for mayor. If I win I'll be a big man.

OLD JOE. They ain't gonna let no black man be the mayor. Got too many keys. The mayor got more keys than the janitor. They ain't gonna let you have that many keys.

HARMOND. Look… If you want a lawyer go down to Hill House. Tell them I sent you. Tell them Harmond Wilks sent you.

OLD JOE. I know you. You one of the Wilks brothers. I knew your daddy and I knew your brother. You had a brother named Raymond. A twin brother. Everybody know the Wilks Twins. Harmond and Raymond Wilks. You probably got places to go and people to see. That's what I told my mama when I left home. And I been some places and I seen some people. I seen Muhammad Ali. In Louisville, March 5,1978. I left Nashville with forty-six dollars and eighty-four cents. And ended up in Louisville with a hundred and sixty-eight dollars. I ain't gonna tell you how that happened. I thought I was a rich man. That was like a perfect day. A perfect day is the saddest day. You know why? 'Cause it has to come to an end. I've had many perfect days. I thought they were going to last forever. But they all come to an end. The only problem is you never know if you're going to have another one. I had a nice little old ride on that hundred and sixty-eight dollars till I ended up broke and in the poorhouse. I been in the poorhouse ever since. You got green money but I never

did turn my money green. That's just the way it turned out but it could have turned out another way. You sure you ain't a lawyer? I need a lawyer like you. We got a nice rapport.

HARMOND. What you need a lawyer for? They have some good lawyers down at Hill House.

OLD JOE. They had me charged with fraud. Tried to put me in jail.

HARMOND. Fraud? What did you do?

OLD JOE. I didn't do nothing but walk the dog.

HARMOND. Naw…naw. They weren't going to put you in jail for walking a dog. Why were they going to put you in jail for fraud?

OLD JOE. 'Cause Mr. Douglas died. Mr. Douglas was a blind man. He lived downstairs from me. He had a dog named Cindy. When he died Cindy ain't had nothing to do so I let her lead me around just so she be happy. They tried to put me in jail for being a fake blind man. I didn't do nothing but walk the dog. I will tell the truth though. The sun was shining so I did put on some sunglasses.

HARMOND. Did you solicit money from anybody?

OLD JOE. That's a ten-dollar word with a five-dollar meaning. I ain't never asked nobody for nothing. But the people give me all the time. They don't want to see me want for nothing. They been giving me for years. I used to go around singing songs and the people like that. They take care of me. If I had my guitar I'd sing one for you. But my guitar's in the pawnshop. It's been in the pawnshop since January 22, 1970.

HARMOND. I can't help you. You have to go down to Hill House.

OLD JOE. Is you really running for mayor? They ain't gonna let you be mayor.

HARMOND. This is 1997. Things have changed. This is America. This is the land of opportunity. I can be mayor. I can be anything I want.

OLD JOE. But you got to have the right quarter. America is a giant slot machine. You walk up and put in your coin and it spits it back out. You look at your coin. You think maybe it's a Canadian quarter. It's the only coin you got. If this coin ain't no good then you out of luck. You look at it and sure enough it's an American quarter. But it don't spend for you. It spend for everybody else but it don't spend for you. The machine spits it right back out. Is the problem with the quarter or with the machine? Do you know? Somebody running for mayor ought to know that.

HARMOND. If it don't take all the quarters you fix it. Anybody with common sense will agree to that. What they don't agree on is how to fix it. Some people say you got to tear it down to fix it. Some people say you got to build it up to fix it. Some people say they don't know how to fix it. Some people say they don't want to be bothered with fixing it. You mix them all in a pot and stir it up and you got America. That's what makes this country great.

OLD JOE. I say get a new machine. What you say?

HARMOND. We fixing it. We're going to redevelop this whole area. We'll get the Hill District growing so fast people from all over will start moving back.

OLD JOE. If you do win mayor they gonna change the rules and only give you half the keys. You know that, don't you?

HARMOND. Naw, I'm going to have all the keys and they're going to have to make me some new ones. We are going to build up everything. Look at this. *(shows* **OLD JOE** *the rendering)* We finally get a supermarket in the Hill District. New apartments. The Sarah Degree Health Center. Do you know Sarah Degree was the first black registered nurse in Pittsburgh? This is just the beginning.

OLD JOE. You gonna put some lights up on Kennard Field?

HARMOND. We're going to put a golf driving range up there. Make it part of the CitiParks project.

OLD JOE. You need some lights. Kennard Field's the only football field in the city ain't got no lights. The city say they ran out of electricity. That's what they say in 1952. I could still run up and down the field then. You gonna put some lights up there?

HARMOND. You don't need any lights. All the parks close at dusk.

OLD JOE. See? You ain't even got to be mayor and you acting like one. The first word come out your mouth is "no." The people been waiting fifty years for some lights. Why can't we have some lights? Everybody else got them. They had some kids go blind playing up there at night without no lights. They started going blind in 1959. The people been trying to get some lights up there since 1952 and they ain't got them yet. I'm gonna die and they still ain't gonna have no lights up there.

HARMOND. There's nobody using that field now except for a few kids.

OLD JOE. That's what I'm saying…they don't want to go blind. If you put some lights up there the people will come. They ain't gonna come for nothing. But you put some lights up there and watch the people come from all over. They'll come dancing. They gonna throw a big party. You put some lights up there and the people will hang a picture of you in their living room.

HARMOND. You teach the kids how to play golf and they have all the rules they need to win at life. You ever play golf?

OLD JOE. Don't you need some grass? Ain't no grass around here. Archie had a golf club. He used to carry it around in case somebody messed with him. That's the only time I ever seen a golf club. I asked myself then what good was it? Time Archie draw back to hit somebody they be done stabbed him five times.

HARMOND. Look here, I got to get back to work.

OLD JOE. Is you gonna be my lawyer? I need a lawyer like you.

HARMOND. How come you don't want to go to Hill House? You got something against the lawyers down there?

OLD JOE. I hate to go down there. They tell you, "Sit over there and wait." "Fill out this paper." "Turn over." "Jump up and down." I tried to tell them I wasn't no dog but they wasn't listening. Told me to go down to the Animal Rescue Society if I wanted a license for my dog. I told them I wanted to see a lawyer. They told me, "Fill out this form." "Sit down over there and wait." "Turn over." "Jump up and down."

*(***ROOSEVELT** *enters.)*

ROOSEVELT. *(to* **OLD JOE***)* What you doing here?

OLD JOE. I'm talking to this gentleman right here. He's my lawyer.

ROOSEVELT. You should be in jail. Defacing private property. You're going to need two lawyers. Harmond, this is the man who was painting the house. Try and get some sense out of him.

HARMOND. You were painting our house up on Wylie? Why were you painting our house?

OLD JOE. My daughter say she wanna live there. I was fixing it up for her.

ROOSEVELT. I told you we're tearing down that house. That's abandoned property. That house belongs to Bedford Hills Redevelopment.

OLD JOE. That's my house. I got the deed on record down at the courthouse. My mother put it down there in 1925.

ROOSEVELT. You going to jail. They got a senior citizen jail near Harrisburg. That's where you heading. Defacing private property. What the police tell you?

OLD JOE. They say, "How you doing, sir? If anybody mess with you…you just call us, sir. We here to serve and protect, sir." That's what it say on their cars: "Serve and Protect." They must have thought I was a white man.

ROOSEVELT. See what I'm talking about, Harmond? What's your name?

OLD JOE. I'll take the Fifth Amendment. I know my rights.

ROOSEVELT. But do you know your name? That's the question.

OLD JOE. I don't know yours. If I knew yours maybe I'd tell you mine. Then we'd be even.

ROOSEVELT. My name is Roosevelt Hicks.

OLD JOE. Pleased to meet you.

ROOSEVELT. What's your name?

OLD JOE. I ain't got to tell you. If you was the police I'd have to tell you. I know my rights. If my lawyer ask me I'd tell him. But I ain't got to tell you nothing.

HARMOND. What's your name?

ROOSEVELT. Harmond, you can't get no sense out of him.

OLD JOE. My name is Elder Joseph Barlow, but the people call me Old Joe. They been calling me that since I was ten. My mama called me Old Black Joe but I don't let nobody else call me that. I ain't never ran into anybody that special.

HARMOND. What did the police tell you?

OLD JOE. They say they was gonna charge me with vandalism for painting my own house. They gave me this. *(hands* **HARMOND** *a complaint summons)* That's why I come by here to get me a lawyer. Is you a Christian? If you was a Christian I figure you would see that I was falsely accused like Jesus Christ and maybe you wouldn't charge me as much. I can't pay but so much anyhow. Don't care how much you charge. But if you only charge a little maybe I can pay you all of it. That way I won't be in debt.

HARMOND. Did you stop painting the house?

OLD JOE. Yes, sir, I stopped painting it. That's a lot of work and I get tired easy. The policeman told me to stop and I stopped.

HARMOND. I'll call down and see if I can get this summons dismissed. *(picks up the phone and dials)* Sergeant Griffin, please. *(pause)* Harmond Wilks. *(pause)* Hey Jimmy… *(pause)* Thanks…thanks a lot. They're going to run the whole speech in the *Post-Gazette* on Sunday. *(pause)* Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. Listen, I need to get a summons complaint dismissed on a man who was painting the house on our site at 1839 Wylie. *(pause)* A misdemeanor summons. Number 201E6594. *(pause)* Elder Joseph Barlow. *(pause)* Yeah… Thanks, Jimmy. I appreciate it. *(hangs up)*

*(***HARMOND** *tears up the summons.)*

OLD JOE. I knew you was a big man. But what I'm gonna tell my daughter? She say she wants to move back in my house.

HARMOND. Tell her she has to move somewhere else. She should be able to find a place. Have her go up to Wilks Realty on Centre and Herron and tell them I sent her.

OLD JOE. Everybody know Wilks Realty. Right up on the corner there. I used to know your daddy. I ain't gonna say nothing about him. My mama told me if you can't say something nice about somebody don't say nothing. Your daddy was a big man like you. He didn't have no truck with the little man. He always drew a line like that. He put the little man on one side and the big man on the other. My mama say everybody on the bed or everybody on the floor.

HARMOND. Look here, Mr. Barlow…

OLD JOE. You can call me Old Joe.

HARMOND. Look here, Old Joe.

OLD JOE. What do I call you?

HARMOND. You can call me Harmond.

OLD JOE. I remember you when you was a boy. Used to see you riding in the car eating ice cream. Everybody else was walking.

HARMOND. Look here, Old Joe. I called down and had the summons dismissed. If you still feel you need a lawyer go down to Hill House. Your daughter will have to find someplace else to live other than the house that we own.

OLD JOE. What about my deed? It's got my name on it.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *tears through some files to find the demolition order. He hands it to* **OLD JOE**.*)*

ROOSEVELT. The property at 1839 Wylie is owned by Bedford Hills Redevelopment and is slated to be torn down the first of the month. Can you read? This is a demolition order. It say it right there. Anybody painting it is trespassing and defacing private property.

OLD JOE. You act like you a rooster. You the King of the Barnyard. You strut through the barnyard during the day. At night you roost high up on the rafters. But when you get to the bottom of it a rooster ain't nothing but a chicken.

ROOSEVELT. Hey look, old man. You don't own the house anymore. That's what the man is trying to tell you. That can't be that hard to understand.

OLD JOE. I got my deed on record at the courthouse!

ROOSEVELT. Well, go down there and get it! See what they tell you. They'll tell you the same thing we telling you. We busy here. We got work to do. Go on down the courthouse and tell them down there.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *goes to the door and holds it open.)*

OLD JOE. My mama taught me manners if she ain't taught me nothing else. You supposed to say, "Have a good day."

ROOSEVELT. Go on now, we're busy.

*(***OLD JOE** *exits.)*

ROOSEVELT. I don't know how you put up with him. I ain't got no patience for that kind of shit. The man is crazy. I don't understand why you called and had the summons dismissed.

HARMOND. The man hasn't done anything but waste his paint. Come the first of the month it'll be a pile of bricks.

ROOSEVELT. Hey, Harmond. Guess what? I got a call from Bernie Smith. Invited me in on a round. Wants me to complete his foursome on Friday.

HARMOND. What does he want?

ROOSEVELT. Who cares? This is Bernie Smith. Whatever it is means some money. Bernie Smith don't play golf with just anybody. He play with millionaires. I ain't there yet but playing golf with people like Bernie Smith will get me there.

HARMOND. Do you read the newspaper? The fallout over that Duquesne Light deal just hit. Bernie Smith's got seventeen people suing him.

ROOSEVELT. If he's got that many people suing him must mean the man's making some money.

HARMOND. Watch yourself.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *takes out his business card.)*

ROOSEVELT. Look at this.

HARMOND. *(reads)* "Roosevelt Hicks. Vice President. Mellon Bank." Man, this is long overdue. Now you can afford to take me out to lunch.

ROOSEVELT. That's the second card I gave out. I gave the first one to John Albrecht so he won't forget I'm a Vice President at Mellon Bank. He's still pissed it came from above him that he had to promote me. He had somebody else in mind. Wait till Bernie Smith sees that. This is the big time. Nothing but blue skies. *(singing:)*

BLUE SKIES SMILING AT ME
NOTHING BUT BLUE SKIES DO I SEE
NEVER SAW THE SUN SHINING SO BRIGHT
NEVER SAW THINGS GOING SO RIGHT.

*(***ROOSEVELT** *suddenly notices something out the window and bolts for the door.)*

Hey! Hey! Get off my car!

(The lights go down on the scene.)

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