

Mornings After the Dream



John Donald O'Shea

“MORNINGS AFTER THE DREAM”

A Modern American Societal Drama

by John Donald O’Shea

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John Donald O’Shea

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“MORNINGS AFTER THE DREAM”

Synopsis

Ethel Jones, a single mother who works as a church secretary, keeps a home where she resides with her teen age son and daughter. Ethel's husband was shot dead when the children were small during an attempted armed robbery. Her son, Terry, is a prejudiced, surly teen age boy. He has begun to repeat the mistakes of his father. He has dropped out of school and is selling cannabis on the street. The play begins when he brings home an expensive television set, and pits Ethel and the police against her disrespectful son, his girl friend and his new attorney.

“MORNINGS AFTER THE DREAM”

Cast List

(1 male and 7 females.)

(Note: one or both police officers, the Assistant Public Defender, and/or the Minister could be males.)

Nicole Jones	Daughter of Ethel Jones
Terry Jones	Son of Ethel Jones
Ethel Jones	A middle age church secretary
Lt. Mary Jackson	A municipal police officer
Sgt. Jane Jefferson	A municipal police officer
Ruby	Terry’s girl. An “enabler.”
Jeanette Hoffman	Assistant Public Defender
Rev. Sarah Black	Pastor of Ethel’s church

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Act I

Scene 1

(At curtain, we discover a living room. The room does not bespeak wealth. It is neat and clean, but the furniture and drapes are well used. The setting suggests a poor, but proud house holder. The front door, is DSL. A door to the kitchen, is USL. DSR there is a stairway to the second floor, and to the bed rooms. For ease of set building, the stairs can be eliminated, and a door DSR can be substituted for the same purpose. It is about 10 p. m. Terry enters. He is a teen age boy, 16 to 18. He wears his hat in gang member fashion. He wears black slacks, and a black sweat shirt. He carries an newer large television

set **[prop]**. He removes the older smaller TV set **[prop]** from its table and puts it on the floor. He then puts the newer TV on the table, plugs it in and turns it on. An evening show comes on **[prerecorded]**. He sits on the sofa and watches)

Nicole. *(Entering from front door DSL.)* Where'd you get that?

Terry. What business is that of yours, girl?

Nicole. *(She crosses half way to him)* Your business is dealing weed. Since when do you do televisions?

Terry. Maybe I got it instead of cash.

Nicole. Maybe you stole it.

Terry. Maybe you should shut your mouth.

Nicole. Maybe you should get a real job before "the man" gets you.

Terry. Nobody's gonna get Terry Jones. I's too careful.

Nicole. That's what you think. They got "Ice," and he was smarter than you.

Terry. The fact that he got got, proves he only thought he was.

Nicole. Your luck's gonna run out, bro. Any day now, it's gonna run out.

Ethel. *(Entering from kitchen USL)* What are you two arguing about now? *(Seeing the TV and crossing to C with Nicole countering to LC)* Where did you get that?

Nicole. Where do you think he got it?.

Ethel. Did you steal it?

Nicole. He says he got it for weed.

Ethel. *(She crosses above Terry to above TV)* I asked you a question.

Terry. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no lies.

Ethel. Don't you talk to your mother that way. I raised you to be good.

Nicole. It didn't do any good. He isn't.

Ethel. I didn't raise you to do drugs. Nor steal folks' televisions.

Terry. You told me I had to get a job. So I got a job.

Ethel. I didn't tell you to sell weed. You did that on your own. What are you going to do when the law comes to the door?

Terry. I ain't gonna do nothing, 'cause he ain't coming.

Nicole. He came for "Ice." He'll come for you, too.

Terry. "Ice" was a fool. I ain't.

Ethel. Tell me that tomorrow. Televisions have serial numbers. What if "the man" comes here and finds that thing? What if the numbers match?

Terry. No "man" is gonna come here. Ain't got no reason to.

Ethel. Whether he does or not, (*referring to the television*) I don't want any stolen TV in my living room.

Terry. How do you know its stolen, woman?

Nicole. 'Cause if you didn't steal it yourself, your customer did. You don't have enough weed in your whole stash to pay for a thing like that.

Ethel. I want it out of here now. Do you understand me, Terry?

Terry. What you going to do, if I don't?

Ethel. I'm going to call your uncle Buzz.

Terry. What you gonna call him for?

Ethel. 'Cause it wouldn't be right for the secretary of the West side Baptist Church to be found with a stolen television in her living room. Do you understand?

Nicole. You want I should call?

Ethel. Are you gonna do what your mamma tells you?

Nicole. If he does, that will be a first.

Ethel. (*No longer gentle*) I asked you a question, Terry!

Terry. I'll move it.

Ethel. I didn't ask you to move it. I ask you to get it our of here. Do I make myself clear?

Terry. I heard you.

Ethel. *(Pointedly)* When?

Terry. When I gets ready.

Ethel. Honey, you call your uncle Buzz. *(Nicole cross behind Terry to phone SR as Ethel fades over Terry's L shoulder)*

Terry. Hold on. By noon tomorrow.

Ethel. By nine a. m. tomorrow.

Nicole. *(She takes a step toward Terry)* How are you going to get rid of it.

Terry. That's man's business.

Nicole. Too bad we haven't got one around here.

Terry. You shut your mouth [bitch] woman, unless you want me to shut it for you.

Ethel. You lay a hand on your sister, and I'll have Buzz teach you enough respect to make sure you don't ever touch her again.

Terry. I ain't afraid of him.

Nicole and Ethel. *(Laugh at him).*

End of Scene,. Lights down

Scene 2

(It is the following morning. Nicole is in the living room, getting her things ready for school)

Ethel. *(Entering from Kitchen USL)* Is your brother up yet?

Nicole. *(She is by phone table, getting here things ready for school)* I don't think so.

Ethel. I've got a breakfast meeting at the church. Before you go to school, wake him up

and remind him about getting that (*referring to the television*) out of here.

Nicole. Yes, ma'am.

Ethel. I don't want to see it here when I get home. (*She exits*)

Nicole. (*Exits SR to bedrooms. Then we hear from off stage*) Terry, Mom says you're to get up.

Terry. Mind you're own business, girl.

Nicole. Mom wants the television out of the house. So get up.

Terry. I'll get up when I'm ready, and I ain't ready. Now get out of here and leave me alone.

(Nicole ceases to bug him. She re-enters the living room from SR. She gathers her things.

Then she has a bright idea. She turns on the television, and turns the volume way up.

Knowing that her strategy will drive her brother from bed, and pleased with herself, she

heads out the door to school. There is a pregnant pause. Then Terry drags himself into the

Living Room from SR to turn down the TV)

Terry. (*Furious*) [Bitch!] Witch! (*He turns down the television, and changes the channel*)

(The phone rings)

Terry. (*Answering the phone [prop]*) Yeah?

(The person on the other end informs him that he's got "police trouble")

Terry. What are you talking about, man?

(The person on the other end informs him that a squad car is sitting in front of the house)

Terry. How do you know there's a squad car sitting in front of the house?

(The voice tells him to go look)

Terry. (*He goes to the front window, sees the cop car. Then crosses back to the phone*)

Thanks, man. (*He hangs up. Then afraid that the cops may be looking for his*

pot, he runs into the kitchen USL, and returns quickly with two small bags of pot.

[props] *He then heads for the bathroom, SR. After a few seconds, we hear the*

toilet flushing. There is silence. Then we hear it flush a second time. Then there is a knock at the front door. Terry re-enters from SR. He notices the television. There is a louder knock. He grabs an afghan [prop] on the sofa and throws it over the television, to hide it. He then opens the door. There are two cops at the door. Terry knows them)

Terry. What you want, copper?

Lieutenant Mary Jackson. *(They step just inside)* We'd like to talk to you, Terry.

Detective Jane Jefferson. Can we come in?

Terry. You got a warrant?

Mary. No. Not yet.

Terry. Then you can't come in.

Jane. In that case, why don't you come out? We can talk out here.

Terry. What you want to talk about, Jefferson?

Mary. We think you might be able to help us find an item that was taken in a burglary last night.

Terry. And why would you think that?

Jane. We got a tip.

Mary. From a reliable source.

Terry. Then your reliable source ain't reliable.

Mary. If that's the case, let us in.

Jane. We'll take a quick look around.

Mary. If we don't find the TV., we'll leave you alone.

Jane. And we'll know our reliable source wasn't reliable.

Terry. Unless you got a warrant, you ain't coming in.

Mary. Why don't you just admit you did it, and quit wasting our time?

Jane. You broke into the rectory over at St. Pat's. You stole Father O'Rourke's Sony.

Terry. Like Hell I did!

Mary. Terry. We have a witness.

Terry. Your witness ain't reliable neither. *(A sudden thought)* How come you ain't giving me my Miranda rights?

Mary. I'm sorry. I hadn't realized that you'd been arrested. Jane, did you arrest Terry, here?

Jane. Not that I recall. How about you?

Mary. Nope. Not me. *(To Terry)* Do you recall either of us saying, "You're under arrest," or "We're taking you down to the station," or anything of the like?

Terry. *(no answer)*

Mary. *(Sharper)* Well, do you?

Terry. *(He sits in chair with his back to them)* Screw you!

Mary. *(To Jane)* Read the lowlife his rights.

Terry. I thought you said I wasn't under arrest!

Mary. You're not. But it's an uncertain world. Things might change rather fast.

Jane. *(She crosses half way to Terry and Mary counters She pulls out a small tape recorder [prop] , and looks at her watch)* It is *[Insert time and date]* . We are at the front door of the residence of Terrance Jones, 847 5th St. _____.
How old did you say you are Terry?

Terry. I didn't.

Jane. And is Terrance Jones your correct name?

Terry. Yeah.

Jane. Have you been arrested?

Terry. No.

Jane. And you've been told we are investigating a burglary at St. Pat's Catholic Church last night?

Terry. Yeah.

Jane. Ok. You have the right to remain silent?

Terry. Yeah.

Jane. Anything you say to us can be used against you in a court of law.

Terry. Yeah.

Jane. You have the right to talk to an attorney before you say anything to us. Understand?

Terry. Uh-huh.

Jane. Is that a “yes?”

Terry. Yeah.

Jane. And if you can't afford an attorney, you have the right to have a free attorney appointed to represent you before you talk to us. Understand?

Terry. Yeah.

Jane. And is it true that when we came to your door, and asked for permission to enter to conduct a search for a stolen Sony television, you refused to let us search without a warrant?

Terry. Yeah.

(Jane turns off the recorder)

Mary. Are you sure you don't want to let us search?

Jane. *(She crosses from above his L shoulder to above his R shoulder)* It might clear you.

Mary. *(For the first time hinting that she has seen what is probably a TV covered by the afghan)* For example, if what's under the afghan turns out to be a really big pile of baseball cards, we'll be out of your life.

Jane. *(She crosses as if to go above him to C)* You'll be free to go back onto the street and sell your cute little bags of pot.

Terry. I told you, no warrant, no search.

Mary. Have it your way . We'll be back in about an hour.

Jane. And don't waste your time flushing your pot down the toilet.

Mary. We're not interested in your grass. This morning, You've got penitentiary problems.

Jane. And don't try flushing that television. It will jam up you mother's toilet.

Terry. Get lost.

Mary. Actually, we're going to get a warrant. And just so you don't get lonely, we're going to leave a couple of our friends to keep you company. They are the one in the pretty blue uniforms.

Jane. With the cute little badges. One outside your front door, and one around back.

Mary. And if they see you trying to leave with your "baseball cards" over there, they'll have instructions to "bust" you.

Jane. And don't try anything stupid. We like your mother. We wouldn't want to have to tell her you've been shot.

End of Scene - Lights Down

Scene 3

(About 3:15 p. m. School is out. Nicole Enters from the front door. As she does, the phone is ringing. She dumps what she is carrying, and answers the phone)

Nicole. Hello?

(Terry on the other end advises he needs money)

Nicole. What do you need money for?

(Terry on other end says he needs money for bail)

Nicole. What do you need bail for?

(Terry on other end advises they are holding him on burglary charges)

Nicole. For burglary of what?

(Terry advises they are holding him for the Burglary at St. Pat's)

Nicole. Why'd you burglarize a church? Don't you know your mamma works at a church?

(Terry says he didn't burglarize mom's church)

Nicole. What difference does it make if it wasn't mamma's church? How much bail do you need?

(Terry advises it's a \$20,000 bond)

Nicole. Mamma hasn't got \$20,000.

(Terry advises that he only has to post 10%)

Nicole. Mamma doesn't have \$2000 either.

(Ethel enters from front door)

Nicole. Mamma. It's Terry. He's in jail, and he want you to put up \$2000 bond so he can get out.

Ethel. *(She crosses to phone. Nicole counters above chair)* What are you in jail for?

(Terry says for burglary)

Ethel. Burglary of what?

(Terry says he's charged with burglary of the television from St. Patrick's)

Ethel. What's wrong with you? Father O'Rourke's a friend of mine. Why would you steal from a friend of mine? Is that the way I raised you?

(Terry says, he needs her to post \$2000)

Ethel. I'm not posting \$2000 so you can steal from my friends. You are where you belong. You've done the crime; now do the time. *(She hangs up)*

Nicole. Aren't you going to bail him out?

Ethel. He can bail himself out. He can use all that money he's been making selling grass.

Nicole. That money's gone.

Ethel. Where's it gone to?

Nicole. He blows it on his girl friend - "his woman."

Ethel. Then *she* can bail him out. As far as I'm concerned, he's right where he belongs.

(She takes a step toward kitchen, but is stopped by a knock on the door)

Nicole *(She crosses to front door and opens it)* Mom, it's Lt. Jackson.

Ethel. *(From kitchen)* We'll, invite her in. *(She re-enters living room)*

Mary. *(Entering from front door. Jane Jefferson is behind her)* Mrs. Jones, I just stopped by to let you know I had to arrest Terry. We're sorry.

Ethel. Don't be. If he steals from churches, he's where he belongs. *(She moves to sit on the sofa, and indicates the officers should sit. Ethel sits on the sofa. Jane crosses and sits on the chair. Mary continues to stand CL)*

Jane. Mrs. Jones, I stopped by because everybody who knows you knows how hard you've worked to bring Terry up right.

Ethel. Some boys just have the devil in them. And until that devil comes out, they are nothing but trouble.

Mary. My partner, Jane, and I don't feel sorry for Terry. He's going to get what he deserves. But you didn't deserve this. Not after all you've done for the community.

Ethel. Sometimes when the Lord scatters his seed, it doesn't fall on good ground. And sometimes when a mother does her sewing, her seed falls on concrete. Nicole's been my good ground. Terrance has been my parking lot.

Jane. Are you going to bail your boy out?

Ethel. Do you think I should?

Mary. No. Until he understands that spending time in jail isn't pleasant, he's going to think street crime is a big game.

Jane. This is really his first time in jail. When he was arrested for stabbing the James boy when he was twelve, the judge released him to your custody.

Mary. And when he broke into old Mrs. Ludlum's house, he was put on house arrest

with you because he wasn't an adult.

Jane. So, this is the first time, he's ever really been in jail.

Mary. We're hoping it helps him grow up; makes him realize that jail isn't fun.

Ethel. He needed his father, and his father wasn't here.

Jane. We don't want to see him gunned down in the street like his dad, Mrs. Jones.

Mary. We're hoping that a little jail might drive out his "devil."

Jane. We don't want to tell you what to do about bail.

Mary. But we would like you to make your own judgment as to whether sitting or being bailed out will be better for him in the long run.

Ethel. Will the judge send him to prison?

Mary. With his juvenile record, there is a real possibility that that may happen.

Jane. But if he is sent to prison, he will be given credit for the time he served in the County jail awaiting trial against his prison sentence.

Mary. And he's safer in the county jail, than he will be in prison.

Jane. And if he's already served three or four months in jail before his sentencing, the judge may be more inclined to take a last chance on probation.

Ethel. Thank you for telling me, Lieutenant.

Mary. Mrs. Jones, Terry was arraigned this afternoon. Mrs. Hoffman, from the Public Defenders office, will be representing him, unless he hires his own attorney.

Jane. Hoffman is a first rate defense attorney, and, for reasons which we can't quite understand, she really seems to care about her clients.

Mary. Talk to her about the things we said here. Level with her. Then get her advice.

Jane. We're sorry about all this. We know how it will hurt you.

Ethel. Thank you both for coming. *(Mary and Jane start to exit)*

End of Scene - Lights Down

Scene 4

(The Same venue, about dinner time)

Terry. *(Entering from DSL)* The man is home!

Nicole. *(Seated on sofa)* What are you doing here? How'd you get out?

Terry. My woman sprung me. *(Alluding to Ruby who is entering as he speaks)*

Nicole. *(She rises in place, speaking to Ruby)* What did you do that for, girl?

Terry. 'Cause she loves me.

Nicole. *(To Ruby)* I asked you a question. Why did you do that?

Ruby. What was I supposed to do? Leave him there?

Ethel. *(Entering from DSL)* Why'd you bail him out? So he can steal more televisions?
Sell more weed?

Ruby. I got him out because I loves him.

Ethel. And you don't think we do?

Ruby. If you do, you have a funny way of showing it.

Ethel. Did it ever occur to you to discuss it with me before you stuck your nose where
it doesn't belong?

Ruby. I happen to think when my man's in jail, it does concern me.

Terry. I gotta use the john. *(He exits SR)* You ladies, fight it out.

Nicole. *(A step to Ruby)* And is it gonna concern you if he gets busted again while he's on
bail?

Ruby. What makes you think he's gonna get busted again?

Nicole. Because he hasn't learned his lesson yet.

Ruby. How do you know that?

Nicole. I knew it the minute he came in the door.

Ruby. How?

Nicole. By the swagger. By the attitude!

Ruby. He promised he'd behave.

Nicole. And if he doesn't?

Ruby. He promised.

Nicole. And he promised Mamma here last night that he'd get that television out of here

Why do you think he's gonna keep his promises to you, if he doesn't keep them to his Mamma.

Ruby. 'Cause I got what he wants.

Nicole. So does every other girl in the west end. You're just more convenient right now.

Ethel. (*Ethel crosses to, half way to Nicole. Ruby counters L*) Daughter, I didn't raise you to say things like that. Apologize to Ruby right now.

Nicole. Mamma ...

Ethel. Right now, Nicole.

Nicole. (*Without great conviction*) I'm sorry, Ruby.

Ruby. You should be.

Ethel. And now Ruby, you owe us an apology.

Ruby. Why do I owe you an apology?

Ethel. Because we made a decision that it was best for my son to spend a few months in jail, and you interfered.

Ruby. I don't agree with that.

Ethel. Whether you agree or not doesn't concern me. You haven't had to try and raise him by yourself.

Ruby. I'm trying to help.

Ethel. Don't. I don't want to see my son in a pool of blood on the street like I saw his father. I tried it your way with my husband, and he ended up dead .

Nicole. Your way didn't work.

Ruby. Terry says his dad was gunned down by a white racist cop.

Ethel. His dad was shot dead when he turned and shot at a white policeman who was trying to stop an armed robbery at a liquor store. The policeman was acting to defend himself.

Ruby. That's not what Terry told me.

Nicole. There was an independent investigation. It was all on a security camera.

Ethel. My son doesn't always do what's right. He doesn't always tell the truth.

Ruby. Why aren't you pleased that I put up the bond?

Ethel. Because, girl, I was hoping that a short stay in jail might save my son a long stay in the penitentiary -- or from being found dead in a gutter.

End of Scene. Lights Down

Scene 5

(Terry is sleeping on the sofa. It's a week later. There is a knock on the door)

Terry. *(Dragging himself to the front door and opening it)* My Mamma ain't home.

Jeanette Hoffman. *(Entering a step or two)* I'm not here to see your Mamma. I'm here to see you. Did you forget who I am, or are you just stoned?

Terry. What you want to see me for?

Jeanette. I'm your lawyer, Mr. Jones. Or should I address you as "stupid?"

Terry. Hey, woman, what you call me stupid for?

Jeanette. *(She crosses past him to C)* Do you have a more accurate way to describe somebody who blows off appointments with his lawyer?

Terry. I was busy.

Jeanette. Did it ever occur to you that I might be busy, too? Defending ungrateful street trash like you?

Terry. Who you talking to?

Jeanette. Who do you think I'm talking to?

Terry. You better not be talking to me.

Jeanette. Let's get something straight right now. The next time you blow off an appointment with me, I won't come looking for you.

Terry. Who asked you to?

Jeanette. Did it ever occur to you, that life is a lot easier for me if you're sitting in the County jail? I know where to find you then . All I have to do is cross the sky bridge from my office.

Terry. But I ain't in the county jail, lady.

Jeanette. Miss one more court date, and that will change real quick. This judge isn't going to buy that you were "busy."

Terry. Then get me another judge. I'm entitled to two substitutions.

Jeanette. You've got Judge Knight now. He runs a tight ship, but if you substitute Knight, say bye-bye to probation.

Terry. How come?

Jeanette. Because if you get rid of Knight, you'll get Rubner, and with your record and your attitude you'll end up at the "house."

Terry. I've got two substitutions. Get rid of him, too.

Jeanette. Are you that anxious to visit the penn?

Terry. Just do it.

Jeanette. Do you really want Judge Shields? "Maximum Max" Shields. With Knight, probation's possible. Shields will send you faster than you can flush a bag of pot.

Terry. How you know all that?

Jeanette. Because I handle six hundred felonies a years. Because I've been defending idiots like you for the last five years. Because I spend more time with these judges than their wives do.

Terry. Maybe, I need to get me a real attorney.

Jeanette. Be my guest. I'll be able to devote a little more time to people who will listen.

Terry. I want me a bar association attorney. I don't want no [damn] public defender.

Jeanette. (*Sarcastically*) It really breaks my heart to hear you say that.

Terry. I want Winstein.

Jeanette. I'm sure Sam Winstein will be more than happy to represent you. But when you see him, be sure to take along ten grand.

Terry. You crazy, [bitch] woman? I ain't got no ten grand.

Jeanette. Then Mr. Jones, "you ain't got" no Sam Winstein.

Terry. Get a continuance so I can raise the money.

Jeanette. How much time do you need?

Terry. Six months. A year.

Jeanette. How about two weeks? At the most.

Terry. Then how do I get a lawyer of my choice.

Jeanette. Walk in with the cash.

Terry. I just told you, I ain't got no cash.

Jeanette. Then you aren't going to get the lawyer of your choice. Furthermore, even if you had cash in hand, you're not smart enough to know which bar association lawyer to hire?

Terry. (*He crosses past Jeanette and sits on sofa*) Any one of them has got to be better than a female public defender.

Jeanette. Beside being an ignorant churl, you're a sexist pig.

Terry. What you mean, "churl?"

Jeanette. I mean you are an impolite, mean spirited little boy. You're the type of client who takes all the fun out of being a criminal defense attorney.

Terry. I don't want no public defender. I want a bar association attorney.

Jeanette. That can be arranged. I'll be delighted to file the appropriate motion for you.

Terry. Which bar association attorney am I going to get?

Jeanette. That I can't tell you. You'll get whoever the judge appoints. It's a crap shoot.

Terry. I just wants one with more experience than you.

Jeanette. This may come as a surprise to you, my surly little burglar, but I am willing to bet that in the last five years I've handled more criminal cases than any lawyer in the bar. In fact, I am willing to bet that in the last five years, I've handled more criminal cases than all your "bar association attorneys" put together!

Terry. How many of them have you lost?

Jeanette. More than all of them put together. But then, I don't get to pick my cases like they do. I have to take every jerk defendant the judges send my way.

Terry. How many have you won?

Jeanette. A lot more than I should have. That's the fun part.

Terry. How do I know you ain't jiving me?

Jeanette. You should have stayed in jail. You could have checked my references there. My former clients keep coming back to see me.

Terry. *(Rises in place)* You talk pretty good. Maybe I'll keep you.

Jeanette. No. If you get that chip of your shoulder, maybe *I'll* keep *you*.

Terry. You're a P. D. You ain't got no choice. You've gotta keep me.

Jeanette. Have you ever heard of a Motion to Withdraw? All I have to allege is that your a jerk and that there's a total lack of communication between us, and you will have you "bar association attorney." Now I've wasted enough time with you. So, who's running the show? You or me?

Terry. You is for now.

Jeanette. In that case, I need to prepare you for your Preliminary Hearing next Tuesday.

(She indicates he should sit on sofa. She pulls up chair and sits) Do you know what a

Preliminary Hearing is?

End of Scene - Lights down

Scene 6

(The main scene is again set in the Jones family living room. It is near dinner time.

Ms. Hoffman is off stage, and she calls using a cell phone. [prop] The telephone in the Jones' living room rings)

Nicole. *(Answering the phone)* Hello?

Jeanette. This is Jeanette Hoffman from the Public Defender's office. Is Terry there?

Nicole. No, he isn't.

Jeanette. Who am I speaking to?

Nicole. This is Nicole, Terry's sister.

Jeanette. Nicole, is your mom around?

Nicole. I'll get her. *(Putting down the phone)* Mom, telephone.

Ethel. *(Entering from kitchen)* Who is it?

Nicole. It's Terry's lawyer, Ms. Hoffman.

Ethel. *(Ethel crosses to phone as Nicole counters UC)* Hello.

Jeanette. This is Jeanette Hoffman from the Public Defender's office. Terry failed to show up this morning for his Preliminary Hearing. Do you know why?

Ethel. Preliminary Hearing? What's a Preliminary Hearing.

Jeanette. It's a hearing to determine if there's enough evidence to hold your son on bond or in jail until his trial. If it's more likely that he's guilty than not, the case proceeds to trial. If not, the case is dismissed.

Ethel. Did they set a new date for the hearing?

Jeanette. No, The judge conducted the hearing in his absence, and found that there was probable cause that he committed the burglary. That means Terry will have to stand trial on the charge.

Ethel. Did he know about the hearing?

Jeanette. Yes, he knew about it. The judge set the time and date of the Preliminary Hearing when he was arraigned. The judge also warned him that if he failed to appear, that the hearing would take place in his absence.

Ethel. Do you think he just forgot?

Jeanette. No. Your son has an attitude problem, Mrs. Jones. I told him more than once when I visited with him at your house. I warned him that the judge would hold the hearing without him, if he was a no show. And I sent him a letter to remind him. It's my judgment he didn't come because he didn't want to.

Ethel. I saw a letter on the table by the door. Let me see if that's the one you sent. *(She gets it and opens it)* I've got your letter. It hadn't been opened. Is this going to get him in trouble?

Jeanette. The judge forfeited his bond, and issued a warrant for his arrest. The new bond is \$100,000. He'll need \$10,000 to make his new bond.

Ethel. Is there anything I can do?

Jeanette. If you get him into my office first thing tomorrow morning, right at eight o'clock, I'll walk him into court to see the judge. If he surrenders, maybe the judge will reinstate the original bond.

Ethel. And if I can't?

Jeanette. There's a warrant out. They'll eventually arrest him.

Ethel. If he comes home tonight, I'll tell him what you said. *(A little pause)* Jeanette, How's your mamma?

Jeanette. She's fine. I'll tell her you asked.

Ethel. Have her call me sometime. Either here or at the church.

Jeanette. Thank you, Mrs. Jones. Good bye. *(She hangs up)*

Ethel. Nicole, what time did you get home?

Nicole. Right after school. Why?

Ethel. Was your brother here?

Nicole. No, why?

Ethel. He missed his court hearing. The judge revoked his bond and put out a warrant on him.

Nicole. This is the first place they'll look for him. What will we do?

Ethel. If he comes in, his attorney wants him to come to her office first thing tomorrow morning. If he surrenders himself, she thinks the judge may reinstate his bond.

Terry. *(Entering two or three steps in from front door DSL and saying nothing)*

Ethel and Nicole. *(Say nothing. They just look at him)*

Terry. What you two looking at?

Ethel. *(She takes a step toward Terry)* Why'd you miss your court hearing?

Terry. 'Cause I didn't want to go.

Ethel. Then, I'm looking at a fool.

Ruby. *(Entering to DSL)* Why you calling my man a fool?

Nicole. Because that's exactly what your "man" is.

Rudy. *(Ruby crosses to Nicole. Terry fades DL)* Why do you talk that way about your brother?

Nicole. Who else but a fool would risk spending four years in prison for a stupid television set?

Terry. I ain't gonna spend no four years. If I goes, I gets day for day credit. So, four years is two.

Ruby. And Ms. McBride says everybody gets an extra 90 days good time credit.

Terry. And another 90 day credit if I takes educational courses.

Nicole. Oh! I stand corrected. What sort of a fool would risk a year and a half in prison for a stupid television set? *(She crosses to Terry. Ruby counters to C)* Heavens, boy, you can take all the educational courses you want at the high school. And they're all free! And you're out at three.

Ethel. How much does that set cost at Best Buy?

Terry. About two grand.

Nicole. I see why he did it. A year and a half of his life isn't worth a nickel.

Ethel. Who is this Ms. McBride?

Terry. She's my new attorney. My new white attorney.

Ethel. Where'd you hear about her?

Terry. Ruby told me.

Ethel. Ruby, where'd you hear about her?

Ruby. She represented "Six."

Ethel. *(She crosses to Ruby)* Who's "Six?"

Ruby. He's "King Crack." "Mr. Big" around here.

Terry. McBride got him off.

Ruby. She found an alibi witness for him.

Nicole. *(To Terry)* I didn't know you had an alibi.

Ruby. He's got me! He was at my place the whole time.

Ethel. What's wrong with Ms. Hoffman?

Terry. McBride's better.

Nicole. How do you know that?

Terry. She got "Six" off, and I don't want no black woman lawyer telling me what to do.

Nicole. Does this Ms. McBride work for nothing?

Ruby. She said she'll take the case for \$2000. He can assign his bond, and pay the rest later.

Ethel. He doesn't have any bond anymore.

Terry and Ruby. What you talking about?

Nicole. Ms. Hoffman called.

Ethel. You didn't show up for court this morning.

Nicole. The judge forfeited your bond. You haven't got any bond any more.

Terry. That don't make no difference. I is still out.

Nicole. Well, you aren't going be.

Ruby. What you mean?

Ethel. Ms. Hoffman said, the judge issued a warrant for your arrest. She wants you at her office first thing tomorrow morning to go and see the judge. She thinks, if you do, maybe the judge will reinstate your bond.

Ruby. *(To Terry)* Let's get out of her, honey. You can stay with my step-dad for a while. They ain't ever gonna find you there.

(Terry heads for the front door with Ruby right behind him. As he opens the door, and takes one step out, he immediately finds Mary and Jane, with guns drawn)

Jane. Stay where you are. We have a warrant; you're under arrest.

Terry. *(His body posture sags in defeat)*

End of Scene - Lights down

Scene 7

(Sometime later. The same living room. Ethel sits on the sofa. Reverend Black sits on the stuffed chair)

Reverend Sarah Black. You amaze me, Ethel. How do you cope? I've never seen you lose your composure.

Ethel. I try to help him. As much as I can. But in the end, it's up to him. I can only try to teach him what the Lord asks. I can't make him do it.

Sarah. Is there anything I can do to help?

Ethel. Just pray for him. Pray that he changes, before it's too late. Before he ends up like his daddy.

Sarah. Why do you suppose he does the things he does?

Ethel. I think he feels white folks are unfair to black folks. He knows the facts as well as I do, but he still blames the white policeman for killing his dad.

Sarah. Do you?

Ethel. No. I know that policeman did only what he had to do. It was all caught on a security camera. Terry's dad came out of the liquor store. The tape showed he turned and saw the officer, and shot at him. He shot twice, and missed. Then the police officer returned fire. The camera showed it all. I must have watched it twenty times.

Sarah. Has Terry watched the tape?

Ethel. Yes, he's watched it. But he sees things that aren't there, and which aren't ever going to be there.

Sarah. Are you saying your son is prejudiced.

Ethel. He isn't only prejudiced, he's "*post-judiced.*"

Sarah. So what's the answer?

Ethel. I think the answer is time. We've got a black President now. And he didn't get there with just black votes. A whole lot of white folk voted for him, too.

Sarah. (*She rises and crosses thoughtfully DSC*) I see the difference. You believe in Dr. King's dream. Your son doesn't.

Ethel. Not yet, he doesn't. I'm hoping that he will. But first, he's got to live long enough. If

he doesn't get shot coming out of some house carrying a TV set by another policeman.

Sarah. So you believe racial prejudice is a thing of the past?

Ethel. *(She rises and crosses DSL thinking)* No, I realize there are still racists out there. But I also know millions of white Americans put race behind them and voted for President Obama. The Lord says "do unto others." They reached out to us; now it's our turn to reach out to them.

Nicole. *(Entering from DSL)* Hi, mom. *(Seeing Sarah Black)* ' Afternoon, Rev. Sarah.

Ethel and Sarah. *(Sarah crosses to Nicole and warmly takes her hand)* Hi, Nicole.

Ethel. Sarah, would you like a cup of coffee?

Sarah. If it isn't too much trouble.

Ethel. Nicole, will you pour us two cups of coffee, both with a teaspoon of sugar.

Nicole. Sure, mom. *(She exits to kitchen, USL)*

Sarah. Ethel, would you consider telling our congregation the things you have just told me, next Sunday morning? I'll skip my sermon.

Ethel. I've never spoken in church before. I'm not sure I can give a sermon.

Sarah. Just tell them, what you just told me. If it only takes two minutes, they need to hear what you just said. And if it only takes two minutes, they'll want you to take my job every Sunday.

Scene 8

(Again we are in the living room, There is a knock on the door)

Nicole. *(Entering from kitchen, USL. Goes to the front door and opens it).*

Ruby. *(Stepping in)* Terry asked me to stop by.

Nicole. For what?

Ruby. He wants me to talk to you and Mrs. Jones.

Nicole. About what?

Ruby. Is your mother home?

Nicole. *(She crosses to C and calls of USR)* Mom!

Ethel. *(Enters from USR and seeing Ruby)* Yes?

Ruby. Terry asked me to stop by and talk to you.

Ethel. About what?

Ruby. Can I come in?

Ethel. *(Gestures for her to come into the room)*

Ruby. *(She crosses to C; Nicole counters L)* Terry says he need the two of you to testify for him.

Nicole. Testify about what?

Ruby. About him being here with us at the time the television was stolen over at St. Patrick's church.

Nicole. And when exactly was that?

Ruby. Between seven and eight o'clock - the night Terry brought the television home.

Nicole. He wasn't here with "us" that night, and neither were you .

Ethel. *(She takes a step toward Ruby)* Why are you asking us to lie, girl.

Ruby. His attorney, Ms. McBride, is afraid the jury won't believe just one alibi witness.

Nicole. Why won't they?

Ruby. 'Cause there was a security camera.

Ethel. Does the security camera show Terry with the television?

Ruby. Ms. McBride says it shows somebody. She thinks with enough alibi witnesses she can prove it's somebody else.

Nicole. Which somebody else?

Ruby. Terry is gonna testify it's the guy who traded him the television for cannabis. He's gonna testify he didn't know the guys name.

Ethel. *(She takes a step or two DSR, thinking)* Is it Terry on the tape?

Ruby. What difference does that make?

Ethel. It makes the difference between telling the truth and lying.

Ruby. *(She crosses to Ethel. Nicole fades L)* Would you let your son go to prison over a nothing thing like that?

Nicole. Would you try to keep "your man" from going to jail by telling a lie?

Ruby. If that's what it takes, that's what I am going to do.

Nicole. Why does it make a difference, whether Terry stole the set himself, or bought it from someone who did? It's theft either way.

Ruby. No it ain't. They've got him charged only with Burglary. If we can prove he didn't enter the building, but merely bought the set later, it's only theft and jury will have to find him not guilty.

Nicole. They'll just try him again.

Ruby. They won't be able to. Ms. McBride says it would be double jeopardy.

Nicole. So because he may only be guilty of theft, and not burglary, you want us to make up an alibi for him? To lie.

Ruby. That's all. The three of us can say he was here with us from seven to eight, that we was watching television, and that he only went out on the street about nine.

Nicole. I'm not lying for anybody.

Ruby. How about you, Mrs. Jones? Your son needs you.

Ethel. *(Crosses DSR, thinking as she moves)* Was this Ms. McBride's idea? Was she the one who came up with the idea that we should lie to the judge?

Ruby. No. All she said was she could use more witnesses. The rest was Terry's.

Ethel. And what if you're his only alibi?

