

PENNI DROPPED – a play  
By Valerie Manahan

*There are two competing settings in the scene: one in a restaurant, one in an emergency room. They gradually merge into one. A woman, Dr. M. (40's,) enters the emergency room as a young man, David (20's), brings a young woman, Penni (20's), into the emergency room. A Nurse (40's) lifts Penni onto the gurney. She is delirious. 'The Brandenburg Concerto No. 4' is playing on the speakers. Penni gets up off of the gurney and she and David begin waiting on tables. As the scene progresses, the music becomes more and more dissonant.*

*In the restaurant:*

**David:** (to Penni) Happy Valentine's Day.

**Penni:** Shut up. Where did he go?

**David:** Who?

**Penni:** That guy. There was a man, didn't you see a man sitting here?

**David:** No. That lady has been waiting for someone.

**Penni:** No, it was, he was reading the newspaper.

**David:** I didn't see anyone sitting there.

**Penni:** David, he was right there.

*In the emergency room:*

**Nurse:** (to Doctor) Here we go.

**Dr. M:** Don't tell me...what time is it?

**Nurse:** Two-thirteen.

**Dr. M:** I can't save him, whoever he is. May as well do away with himself.

**Nurse:** Herself.

**Dr. M:** These prostitutes can't overdose at 2pm?

*In the restaurant:*

**Woman:** You're late.

**Man:** I have a really good excuse.

**Woman:** Sit down.

*In the E.R. Nurse hands her the paperwork. Doctor searching for glasses and a pen.*

**Dr. M:** Where are my glasses? I can't...what's the name?

**David (to Penni) and Nurse (to Doctor):** Penni.

**David:** Hey 'Spill', table six has been waiting for ten minutes.

**Penni:** *(Penni is struggling, carrying a lot of dirty plates)* Where the hell is the goddamn busboy? And don't call me 'Spill', it's bad karma. *(spills something)*.

**Man:** *(to Penni)* Ma'am?

**Penni:** *(sweetly)* Just one second...I'll be right with you. *(to David)* I swear to God, I barely recover from day to day. *(wipes her nose)*.

**David:** You probably just caught something.

**Penni:** What?

**David:** Those dishes...they're crawling with germs. You probably just caught something.

**Penni:** Don't freak me out, David, I don't have the energy to freak out.

**David:** You just got sat again. Table eleven.

**Penni and Dr. M:** They just keep coming in.

**Woman:** Let's hear it.

**Man:** What?

**Woman (to Man) and Doctor (to David):** What happened?

*Penni approaches the table and overhears the following conversation, but is not really paying attention. She is moving slowly, searching for a pen.*

**Man:** I got held up.

**Woman:** *(smiles)* Gunpoint?

**Man:** No, no I got held up. Delayed.

**Woman:** You weren't held up at gunpoint. Just held up.

**Man:** I was just held up.

**Woman:** Not injured, though.

**Man:** Not yet, no.

**Woman:** You're right. That's a really good excuse.

*Penni turns to leave, in search of a pen.*

**Woman:** *(to Penni)* Excuse me, we've been waiting.

**Penni:** Yeah...uh, just a second.

*Penni turns and slams into David.*

**David:** Slam into me, 'Spill'.

**Penni:** I'm sorry, David, I just. I can't concentrate.

**David:** What's new?

**Penni:** Can you help me?

**David:** I'm slammed.

**Penni:** David, I need...

**David:** *(in frustration)* God, what?!

*In the emergency room:*

**Dr. M:** What did you observe?

**David:** She was wandering from table to table, staring at the customers, making strange notes on order pads. People stopped eating.

**Dr. M:** So they noticed she was behaving strangely?

**David:** Well...yeah! She was hovering, taking notes about their conversations. I have them...the order pads.

*(David searches his pockets.)*

I can't believe anyone even got their food.

Honestly, if it had been me, I wouldn't have eaten.

*(David produces several order pads, which he passes to the doctor.)* The busboys were freaked.

*In the restaurant:*

**Penni:** I need, I need...an order pad and...do you have a pen?

*Doctor hands Penni an order pad. Doctor gives a pen to David who gives it to Penni. She approaches the customers.*

**Woman:** I'll have the grilled vegetable plate, but with mozzarella on the side.

**Man:** I'll have the lamb.

**Woman:** I thought you were going to try...

**Man:** *(to Penni)* Medium-rare. *(to Woman)* Look, I'm making major sacrifices in your direction, but I'm never going to go vegetarian. I will occasionally "visit" vegetarian...

**Woman:** Fine. *(to Penni)* Can I have rice instead of potatoes?

**Penni:** Uh...what? *(Penni is having trouble hearing and concentrating).*

**Woman:** Rice instead of potatoes.

**Penni:** Oh...sure.

**Man:** What kind of wine do you have?

**Penni:** I'm sorry? *(Penni stops in spotlight, listening intently to something/radio. Her head throbs..)*

*In the emergency room:*

**Dr. M:** Have you ever seen her like that?

**David:** I've never seen anybody like that.

*Dr. M. examines the order pads, as Penni is seen writing in her order pad.*

**Penni:** "Lamb sacrificed medium-rare to potatoes."

**Dr. M:** Do you know what these phrases mean?

**David:** No idea.

**Dr. M:** Is she hearing voices?

**David:** She's hearing some damned thing.

*Dissonant music is rising in the scene. Dr. M and Penni are both writing in pads.*

**Dr. M:** She was hovering over the customers and writing these phrases...you **do** have lamb at the restaurant, by the way?

**David:** Well, yeah, but we don't sacrifice them!

**Dr. M:** Any other unusual behavior?

**David:** She was stopping in the middle of the restaurant

and staring at the speakers.

*The music is beginning to become distorted. No one but Penni is noticing it.*

**Dr. M:** The speakers?

**David:** In the wall. The radio.

**Dr. M:** Has she been exhibiting paranoia for a long time then, or did you notice a change in behavior recently, suddenly?

**David:** Actually...there was a...trauma, you could call it that, but she was handling it.

**Dr. M:** What trauma was that?

*In the restaurant:*

**Penni:** How does somebody launder money, how does it work?

**David:** Money laundering? I picture somebody's got lots of money and can't...spend it? It's a vague thing for me. Something with banks and tricking the government.

**Penni:** Well, goddamnit, David, don't you watch Law and Order?

**David:** Law and Order doesn't teach you how to launder money! My understanding of laundering...no wait, that's extortion. (*beat*) Okay, you have to get rid of cash because you don't really do the business that you say you do.

**Penni:** David, I found things in that apartment. I think it might...mean something.

**David:** What kind of things?

**Penni:** Oh...guns. Money.

**David:** People have guns and money, Penni, it just means they're Republicans.

**Woman:** (*to Man*) But do you think, when you meet my parents, do we need to talk about politics?

**Man:** Do we **need** to? All right. You'd like me to keep my political views to myself.

**Woman:** To be quite honest, it's not just my parents. Sometimes I worry...

**Penni:** I'm probably just being paranoid.

**David:** Probably?

**Penni:** And of course, he's very religious, so I'm sure I'm... It's just that I'm beginning to feel...in danger.

**David:** From Danny?

**Penni:** I don't think he's stable.

**David:** Do you think he's into some kind of...?

*Lights change to back to the hospital.*

**Dr. M:** Drugs?

**David:** No.

**Dr. M:** No?

**David:** No! I know it's not drugs.

**Dr. M:** Alcohol abuse?

*We see customers drinking in the restaurant.*

**David:** No.

**Dr. M:** At what point did her behavior turn into hysteria?

**Penni:** But if he **were** dangerous?

**David:** If he were dangerous...?

**Penni:** David. *(beat)* He knows my phone number. He knows my address.

**David:** You think he'll fly up here and show up on your doorstep?

**Penni:** I don't think so. *(David turns to go)*. It's just that...

**David:** What?

**Penni:** I don't think anyone can protect me if he does.

**Man:** *(to woman)* Because you believe the best in everybody, and uh...

**Woman:** Why not?

**Man:** Because it leaves you vulnerable, it leaves you vulnerable...

**Woman:** To what?

**Man:** That guy...that guy who rooked you out of eight hundred... You go to help somebody and it turns out...

**Woman:** *(dismissive)* Oh well...

**Man:** I understand that your motives were noble, but you were vulnerable to that because you instantly assume that people are...good and kind and as nice as you are. (to Penni) Waitress!

**Penni:** Yes?

**Man:** What kind of wine do you have?

*Dr. M. and the Nurse (40's) are reviewing Penni's test results. Penni is talking to the customers. The two settings are becoming one.*

**Dr. M:** HIV.

**Nurse:** Negative.

**Penni:** Merlot.

**Dr. M.:** Pregnancy.

**Nurse:** Negative.

**Penni:** Zinfandel.

**Dr. M.:** Opiates.

**Nurse:** Negative.

**Penni:** Cabernet.

**Dr. M.:** Amphetamines.

**Nurse:** Negative.

**Penni:** Shiraz.

**Dr. M.:** Barbiturates.

**Nurse:** Negative.

**Penni:** Chardonnay.

**Dr. M.:** Cocaine.

**Nurse:** Negative.

**Penni:** Pinot Grigio.

**Dr. M.:** Methadone.

**Nurse:** Negative.

**Penni:** Sauvignon Blanc.

**Dr. M.:** Alcohol.

**Nurse:** Negative. *(They look at each other)* What the hell?

*David pulls Penni away.*

**David:** What is the matter with you? Seth just asked me if Carlos sold you any acid? Did he do that? Are you having a bad trip? He says you aren't picking up any food.

**Penni:** Carlos sells drugs?

**David:** You are so Midwest, Spill. He didn't then?

**Penni:** Carlos has been selling drugs? Here?

**David:** What, did you think he was just a dishwasher?

**Man:** I hate it when they're too busy to take care of you.

**David:** Okay, good. I didn't think so. But get it together. I can't keep covering for you.

**Woman:** Wait a minute, why would my assuming that people are good and kind and as nice as I am be a problem for us? I would think it would enhance...

**Man:** Because it makes me concerned about your vulnerability. *(Penni is delivering the drinks/opening their wine...)* You were at risk because you trusted in these assholes! And you still trust in people!

**Woman:** Of course. If you stop trusting people... I believe... I know, I'm upset that I lost the eight hundred dollars, but I have this theory that what you give out in the universe comes back to you. Now it may take years, but I do believe that someday, someday the eight hundred dollars I lost will come back to me, because...

**Man:** Because the universe is one giant checking account?!

*Penni has finished pouring the wine. The customers haven't tried it yet.*

**Penni:** Is this all right?

**Woman:** *(to Man and Penni)* Yes!

*David rushing through, Penni stops him.*

**Penni:** I need help. I can't handle this many people. I'm...

**David:** I'm already picking up your slack!

**Penni:** Does it seem to you like...these people are watching me?

**David:** Watching you? Who?

**Penni:** *(whispers)* These people...

**David:** The customers?

**Penni:** Shhh! Yeah...

**David:** DUH!! They probably want the check, or a drink or something! Technically you **are**



their waitress, even though I'm doing half of your work.

*Penni is becoming very disoriented and confused/panicking.*

**David:** Hey! Calm down. *(beat)* It's only because you're watching too much Court TV. You do that. Honestly. You watch those news shows and now it's freaking you out.

**Penni:** You think that's...

**David** *(to Doctor):* What's causing this?

**Dr. M:** We need to do tests... She's under observation. *(Dr. M addresses Penni directly)* Penni, Penni...we believe you should be admitted into the hospital.

**Penni:** What? Okay...

*David hands Dr. M an order pad, she hands the order pad to Penni.*

**Dr. M:** We need you to sign this.

*Penni signs the order pad.*

**Dr. M:** Take her to Psyche 6.

*David exits, Dr. M. turns to Nurse. The dissonant music that has been rising in pitch, takes over the scene, overwhelming the sound, and the lighting becomes wild. There is the sound of dishes shattering.*

*Penni screams.*

*Silence. Blackout.*

*A harsh spotlight suddenly cuts the darkness. The spotlight is on Penni, as she lies shuddering. Throughout the scene, more lights are illuminated at various points on the stage, but they are harsh and uneven. We never see the entire stage during this scene.*

*Penni is curled up in a bed in the hospital room. There is a man hovering over Penni, but we can't quite make out what he looks like. Penni is tossing and turning in bed.*

*Two voices, one male and one female, are overheard, echoing and distorted.*

**Male voice:** *(echoing, reverberating)* What's happen...?

**Female voice:** *(echoing, reverberating)* What's my name?

**Female voice:** Did you bring this woman here?

**Male voice:** Yes. What is she still doing here?

**Female voice:** There hasn't been a decision.

**Male voice:** About what?

**Female voice:** About where she's going.

*Long silence.*

**Male voice:** She's under observation.

**Dr. M's voice and the Nurse's voice:** (*whispering simultaneously*):  
Appears...suffering...possible onset of schizophrenia...paranoi...

*Dr. M's voice becomes clear at this point. The man disappears into the shadows.*

**Dr. M.:** Penni? Hello...Penni.

*Dr. M. emerges from the shadows.*

**Dr. M:** Hello...I'm Dr. Michaelson. Do you know where you are?

**Penni:** (*unsure*) The...hospital...

**Dr. M:** Do you know why?

**Penni:** No.

**Dr. M:** Okay Penni...

**Penni:** (*suspicious*) What's my name?

**Dr. M:** Don't you remember your name?

**Penni:** (*haltingly*) Yes... How do **you** know my name?

**Dr. M:** You've been here for twenty-four hours now. Do you remember being brought here?

**Penni:** No.

**Dr. M:** Do you know what year it is?

**Penni:** 2007.

**Dr. M:** Do you know who the President is?

**Penni:** President Obama.

**Dr. M:** Good. Do you remember what happened yesterday?

**Penni:** A little. (*Penni is trying to get up*) I have to leave this hotel...hospital.

**Dr. M:** Relax for a bit. (*Penni settles back into the bed.*) Why are you so anxious to leave?

**Penni:** (*Lowers her voice*) I...uh...I'm in a...um...some...trouble, I think.

**Dr. M:** What kind of trouble?

**Penni:** I think, I think I've been killed.

*Dr. M. looks at Penni, blankly.*

**Penni:** So...I need to call my parents.

**Dr. M:** Penni, who do you think is trying to kill you?

**Penni:** I can't talk about it. I have to call my parents.

**Dr.M:** Your friend (*looks at chart*), David, has spoken with your parents. Your family knows you're safe. It wouldn't be best to talk to them in your condition.

**Penni:** Condition? What do you mean? I'm in a condition?

**Dr. M:** Penni, we've given you some medication...It will help you feel better, but it may have made you slightly...disoriented. Now isn't a good time to speak with your family. I'll speak with them and let them know that you're fine.

**Penni:** I'm...fine?

**Dr. M:** I'm going to let you rest, but we need to do a preliminary interview...

*A tough, street smart teenage girl, Crystal (17) suddenly bursts into the room. Crystal has severe bursts of uncontrollable anger. She is very intimidating.*

**Crystal:** Get out! Get her out of my room!

**Dr. M:** Crystal! Go back to the recreational room. I need to speak with Penni.

**Crystal:** This is my room!

**Dr. M:** We'll settle it later, Crystal.

**Crystal:** I don't want her in here with me!

**Dr. M:** We'll settle it later. Go back to your group. (*Pause*) Go back to your group, Crystal.

**Crystal:** Don't get loud with me! I'm getting my jersey.

*Crystal goes to her bed and grabs her sweatshirt. Penni has retreated into the corner of the room. Crystal slams the door, Dr. M., continues writing in a notebook.*

**Penni:** Is she going to be my roommate?

**Dr. M:** Yes.

**Penni:** Where in the hospital am I, exactly?

**Dr. M:** Psychiatric Ward 6.

**Penni:** I'm in the mental ward?

**Dr. M:** You checked yourself in.

**Penni:** Doctor, I didn't...uh...I shouldn't...

**Dr. M.:** Okay, Penni, we need to assess you, so that we can help you while you're here. Do you understand?

**Penni:** Yes.

**Dr. M:** Now then, Penni, you didn't eat your breakfast this morning. Do you remember why?

**Penni:** No.

*Dr. M. makes notes in her notebook.*

**Dr. M:** Do you remember going to work yesterday?

**Penni:** No.

**Dr. M:** Do you remember anything that happened at work yesterday?

**Penni:** No.

**Dr. M:** Why do you think you're here?

**Penni:** Do I have a new virus?

**Dr. M:** A new virus? Why do you think that? Did a doctor diagnose you?

**Penni:** I was tested for everything. Twice. AIDS, West Nile, flesh-eating bacteria...

**Dr. M:** And you tested positive?

**Penni:** No...negative.

**Dr. M:** You tested negative twice?

**Penni:** Yes.

**Dr. M:** So why are you concerned?

**Penni:** I read in the New York Times...about new viruses...new strains of old viruses. I think I must have one. It's probably undetectable. I think I'm patient zero.

**Dr. M:** Why do you think that?

**Penni:** Because I had a relationship with this guy Danny....

**Dr. M:** Yes?

**Penni:** And I think he...I think he might...

**Dr. M:** Yes? (*beat*)

**Penni:** Nothing.

**Dr. M:** Nothing?

**Penni:** I don't want to talk about it.

**Dr. M:** Are you afraid of him?

**Penni:** Yes.

**Dr. M:** Why?

**Penni:** He's very... He could be very influential.

**Dr. M:** Influential? In what way?

**Penni:** He has a lot of money.

**Dr. M:** Yes.

**Penni:** And he can manipulate... He's dangerous.

**Dr. M:** Why do you think that?

**Penni:** When people are very good at manipulating... It's not like he's a, he's not a fundamentally good..., he's insidious...abusive.

**Dr. M:** Did he ever strike you?

**Penni:** Oh, no. If it had been physical, I would have recognized it.

**Dr. M:** What kind of abuse was it?

**Penni:** Spiritual.

**Dr. M:** Spiritual abuse? What does that mean?

**Penni:** It happens...when someone tries to...replace God for another person. (*beat*) And I'm afraid that he believes it. That's the most frightening thing of all.

**Dr. M:** Believes what?

**Penni:** That he...represents God.

**Dr. M:** (*Beat*) Okay. (*Beat*) He told you this?

**Penni:** Yes. This was toward the end of the relationship, by the way. It's not like I stayed with him after I realized... Anyway, I had to get away, he was going to close in on me. I'm still not sure that I got away in time.

**Dr. M:** What would happen if you didn't get away in time? Would he hurt you?

**Penni:** It wasn't what he would do to me. It was what I was afraid he was planning to do.

**Dr. M:** And what was that, Penni?

**Penni:** He told me that he would assassinate someone.

**Dr. M:** *(beat)* Who did he want to assassinate?

**Penni:** He mentioned people in the news. He mentioned his ex-girlfriend.

**Dr. M:** What is her name?

**Penni:** Susan something, I don't know. I tried to joke with him. I'd never seen that side of him before and I'd been dating him for four months. *(beat)* He can find out where I am, can't he?

**Dr. M:** All of our records are confidential.

**Penni:** If he called here and asked if I was a patient, would they tell him that I was here?

*Dr. M gets up and goes to the door, summons the nurse.*

**Dr. M:** Could we get a block on this patient's information from the switchboard?

**Nurse:** A block? *(beat)* I'll check on it.

**Dr. M:** You're safe here, Penni.

**Penni:** Is that true?

**Dr. M:** Of course it's true.

**Penni:** He has a...strange draw for people, and I think he might...

**Dr. M:** He might?

**Penni:** Be the Devil.

**Dr. M:** *(beat)* The Devil?

**Penni:** Ever since I got away from him, strange things have started to happen.

**Dr. M:** What strange things?

**Penni:** I'm getting really sick and confused. People are watching me and it has something to do with Danny.

**Dr. M:** Are you hearing voices?

**Penni:** Not exactly. It's...on t.v. or books...I hear...things.

**Dr. M:** What exactly are you hearing?

**Penni:** I hear what everyone else hears...I see what everyone else sees. Only it's different.

Stronger. I... ..(*hesitant*)...I can't tell you... He's trying to kill me. (*struggling to explain.*) They're fighting over me.

**Dr. M:** Who is fighting over you? (*Knocking on the door*) Penni, who is fighting over you?

*Long pause. Knocking. Pause. Knocking.*

**Crystal:** (*sarcastic*) Can I come in, please?

**Dr. M:** Yes, Crystal...(to Penni) We're almost finished here. Penni, can you tell me what "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" means?

*Penni stares at the doctor, but doesn't answer. Crystal sits on her bed, not really paying attention.*

**Dr. M:** Penni?

**Penni:** It means that guilty people shouldn't judge others.

**Dr. M:** Good. But you aren't hearing voices?

**Penni:** Uh...no. (*Crystal overhears this exchange*).

**Dr. M:** All right we can continue tomorrow, you can rest now, but I'd like to talk more about the people fighting over you.

**Penni:** I don't think I should talk anymore...

**Dr. M:** Maybe we can continue that after you've had a chance to sleep, okay?

**Penni:** Maybe.

*Dr. M, alone, onstage.*

**Dr. M:** Young, thin, white female with poor eye contact, agitated, tearful, flight of ideas, denies any drug use. Appears to be responding to internal stimuli. Extremely disorganized, thought blocking at times, delusions as above, above average intelligence, poor reliability. Diagnosis: Paranoia. Possible post-traumatic stress.

*Penni and David are in Penni's apartment.*

**Penni:** How long have you known?

**David:** A few weeks. You mean, how long has it...?

**Penni:** Yeah.

**David:** Well, there was a mistake, because the HMO doctor misread my chart.

**Penni:** Oh my God. How did that happen?

**David:** He only read the first page of my chart. I'd had a test before and it was negative and he told me it was negative. I think the second page was stuck together.

**Penni:** Oh my God.

**David:** So they tracked me down at work a few days later. They may not even have caught it, but the nurse was adding something to my chart and asked him about my medication.

**Penni:** How are you feeling now?

**David:** I don't feel any different. You know, fine. I have a specialist who's really good. It's mostly a state of mind. That's what the doctor said. I have to keep it together...up here (*points to his head*). I have to stay healthy mentally, and the doctor will do everything on his end...but I need to keep living my life. My life doesn't stop now that I have to deal with this.

**Penni:** It's a big change.

**David:** I can't just change everything in my life, like stop drinking or smoking and go running all of the time and only eat broccoli.

**Penni:** Oh my God, I probably have it too. If you do.

**David:** I'll go with you to get tested.

**Penni:** Oh God, David, I don't even know him.

*Silence.*

**Penni:** You know, everybody has something to deal with. Like alcoholism or cancer...

**David:** It's not a competition, Penni.

**Penni:** I know. I'm just saying...everyone has something...

*Dr. M., alone, onstage.*

**Dr. M:** Psychosis. Patient remains disorganized and paranoid in thought process. Patient is on sedation from medication and initially threw 10am dose in the garbage, then told the nurse. Agreed to take medication once she was given an education regarding the drugs.

*Penni is with Danny (30's). He hands her a pill.*

**Penni:** I can't take this. I don't know what this is. It's dangerous.

**Danny:** (*laughs*) It's dangerous. Look at what you eat! You **need** to relax. Just take it.

**Penni:** Danny, I don't want to hallucinate. I don't like weird shit like that. I don't even like the X-Files.

**Danny:** Penni, Penni, Penni. I want to celebrate. I just won eight hundred dollars.

**Penni:** Congratulations. What business did you say you're in?

**Danny:** I didn't. But it's legal. I don't want to talk business, Penni. Let's go.

**Penni:** Go where?

**Danny:** Atlantic City.



**Penni:** I can't go to Atlantic City! I have to work.

**Danny:** No, you don't.

**Penni:** Yes, I do.

**Danny:** Your friend is covering for you.

**Penni:** What? Who?

**Danny:** David.

**Penni:** David is covering for me? Since when?

**Danny:** Since I paid him.

**Penni:** You paid him? You paid him to cover for me?

**Danny:** No big deal. You can go to Atlantic City now. Relax. I've taken care of it.

**Penni:** How much did you pay him?

**Danny:** Four hundred dollars.

**Penni:** You paid David four hundred dollars to cover for me?

**Danny:** Take it.

*Danny takes a pill. Penni takes a pill. She drops to the floor. Danny hovers over her and gives her another pill.*

*Penni asleep. Crystal enters.*

**Crystal:** Hey, hey. (*Crystal shakes Penni*). What's your name?

**Penni:** What?

**Crystal:** What's your name?

**Penni:** Penni.

**Crystal:** You look like shit, Penni.

**Penni:** (*earnestly*) I'm not...having a very good day.

**Crystal:** This is **my** room, so keep your stuff on **that** side, got it?

**Penni:** Yeah.

*Penni rolls over under covers. Crystal pulls them off.*

**Crystal:** Do you like lesbians?

**Penni:** They're okay.

**Crystal:** Are you a lesbian?

**Penni:** No.

**Crystal:** I'm a lesbian.

**Penni:** Oh. *(beat)* My aunt's a lesbian.

**Crystal:** Do you care that I'm a lesbian?

**Penni:** Uh...no, I just really want to sleep. *(turns to wall)*.

*Penni has passed one of Crystal's tests.*

**Crystal:** Are you a schizo?

**Penni:** A schizo? I'm not sure.

**Crystal:** I don't want to share my room with a schizo.

**Penni:** Me neither.

**Crystal:** You don't even know if you are one.

**Penni:** Are you?

**Crystal:** Fuck no.

**Penni:** Why are you here?

**Crystal:** I tried to kill myself.

**Penni:** Oh. *(beat)* Have you ever tried to kill anyone else?

**Crystal:** No. Why?

**Penni:** Oh, just wondering... It's very nice to meet you, but I should probably sleep now.

**Crystal:** You shouldn't do that. They keep track of that.

**Penni:** What?

**Crystal:** Sleep. You've been sleeping all day. If you sleep too much, you're fucked.

**Penni:** I need to rest.

**Crystal:** They put your name on the chalkboard for group activities. You gotta go to that. It's your passport out.

**Penni:** Why?

**Crystal:** They think you're too sick to leave if you don't go to the activities. That's where they watch you.

**Penni:** I don't understand. What is activities?

**Crystal:** Dance therapy, art therapy, ceramics. They keep notes about you and report to the doctors. You have to prove to them you aren't crazy.

**Penni:** Can't I just tell them I'm too tired to go?

**Crystal:** Penni, they don't listen to us here. They don't take us seriously. Don't try to reason with them, just do it.

**Penni:** Do I have to go now?

**Crystal:** Now? It's almost midnight. You already missed today. You slept in my room all fucking day. I couldn't do shit in here.

**Penni:** I did? I'm sorry. I think they've given me something.

**Crystal:** Yeah, probably pumped you full of all kinds of chemical bullshit. I'll tell you, before I came here, I did... whatever, crack, meth, but I wouldn't take an Ex-Lax in here.

**Penni:** What time do they come wake us up?

**Crystal:** Come wake us up? A damn fire bell goes off at 8am. It means get up and eat breakfast.

**Penni:** We eat together?

**Crystal:** Yeah.

**Penni:** The whole ward?

**Crystal:** Yeah.

**Penni:** Is that...sanitary?

**Crystal:** (*shrugs*) Probably not. They set out these cafeteria trays of food and you get your choice of an apple juice or a cranberry juice, and only two sugars for coffee. Sometimes you can trade a muffin or a cookie for a sugar or juice from somebody, but not always so don't count on it.

**Penni:** Is there a phone around here?

**Crystal:** There's one payphone for the whole ward, so don't hog it. Do you have any quarters?

**Penni:** Uh...no, I don't...

**Crystal:** Guess you won't be calling anyone then.

*Penni is becoming panicky.*

**Penni:** I have to talk to the doctor.

**Crystal:** You can't.

**Penni:** I have to talk to the doctor right now!

**Crystal:** LISTEN TO ME! You can't trust the doctors here. You can't talk your way out of this hospital. Just get used to it. You're going to be here for awhile.

*A hotel room in Atlantic City. Penni is with Danny (30's), drinking champagne. They are using designer clothes as rugs. Danny is counting out money.*

**Danny:** Five hundred, six hundred, seven hundred, eight hundred... That's for you.

**Penni:** I can't take that.

**Danny:** (*mimicks*) I can't take it. Don't you know where this money comes from?

**Penni:** Blackjack.

**Danny:** (*suddenly angry*) It's not funny, Penni.

**Penni:** Poker...?

**Danny:** God! God is giving you money.

**Penni:** God? What did you do? Pull money out of the collection? You did not do that, did you, Danny?

**Danny:** I'm making a lot of money. And you're not.

**Penni:** I'm not a gambler.

**Danny:** Do you give any money away?

**Penni:** There's nothing to give.

**Danny:** Really? Nothing?

**Penni:** I'm not a selfish person, Danny, I don't make that much money.

**Danny:** And I do, and I'm giving it to you. You are experiencing God's love through me. Do you know what that means?

**Penni:** No.

**Danny:** You have to give half of it away.

**Penni:** What?

**Danny:** You have no right to keep it. He gave it to you, it was God's gift. Get it?

**Penni:** I guess.

**Danny:** That's the secret, Penni.

**Penni:** What's the secret?

**Danny:** The secret to making money. Giving it away. It's true. God is watching. God gives money to people who give it away. Who are you going to give half of your money to?

**Penni:** I don't know...AIDS...research.

**Danny:** What is that, a bargain? Are you afraid of getting AIDS?

**Penni:** Aren't you?

**Danny:** But what if God decided to test you?

**Penni:** Okay, let's not get into this. (*moves to get up, but Danny stops her*). This makes me

really nervous, I don't want to talk about it.

**Danny:** Penni, life is a gift. If God decides to test you, you must accept His test.

**Penni:** No.

**Danny:** No? What do you mean 'no'?

**Penni:** No, I don't have to accept it.

**Danny:** (*very angry*): Do you think you know better than God? How dare you question God's plan for you? When was the last time you looked at the sky? (*Danny drags Penni to the window*) The sky is so blue, did you notice that today?

**Penni:** Danny, please stop it!

**Danny:** Look!!

*Penni is shaking. She looks out the window.*

**Danny:** Thank God, Penni.

**Penni:** Thank you, God.

*Danny pulls Penni to her knees.*

**Danny:** We hope you don't test us, God, but if you do, we accept. (*beat*) Say it.

**Penni:** We accept.

*Danny changes his threatening demeanor. He is charming again. Danny gets to his feet. Penni stays on the floor, shaken.*

**Danny:** Here's your money. (*Holds out the \$800*). Go ahead. Take it.

*Penni stares at the money. She doesn't take it. Danny gets up and walks out the door. A second later, Crystal comes racing into the room, through the same door. She is panting.*

**Penni:** Did you just...did you see a man?

**Crystal:** What?

**Penni:** A man...did a man just walk by you?

**Crystal:** No. That fuckin' Klepto took my cigarettes! You can't trust the freak. (*Crystal unloads items from under her shirt-pens, books, useless stuff...*) He steals sugar packets at breakfast, you notice how you have to use Equal on your cereal? Or that Sweet and Low shit? You know WHY? (*Unloads sugar packets*). When he's around, notice how his eyes dart around...he's lookin' for stuff to take.

**Penni:** How did you get into his room? You're not supposed to...

**Crystal:** (*mimicks*) You're not supposed to...Please! Like they even notice who comes in and out of the rooms!

**Penni:** But you definitely did not see a man out there?

**Crystal:** No! (*pulls more things out-pens*) Son of a bitch has twelve pens under his mattress. This is yours, right? (*pulls out a book*) Can't stand it if you go into his room, fuckin' baby.

**Penni:** I didn't even notice him take that!! Son of a bitch! (*Crystal turns to look at her: foul language seems like a strain for Penni.*) How did he...?

**Crystal:** Girl, you're so sheltered... You know what, though? The guy is good, I give him that. You'll be all payin' attention to the t.v. and it's like...bam...your shit is GONE. I've been watchin' him. (*Crystal demonstrates how the Klepto steals. She uses one hand to distract, while her other hand slides over the cigarettes and pockets them.*)

*Nurse enters.*

**Nurse:** Crystal, the doctor is ready for you.

**Crystal:** I'm not ready for her.

*Nurse looks at Crystal severely.*

**Crystal:** Damn, all right then...

*Crystal leaves.*

*Dr. M is alone onstage.*

**Dr. M:** Patient is able to follow basic routine, eats adequately. Presently denies hearing voices. Behavior is more organized, but still appears pressured. Cooperative, but aloof with peers.

*In the hospital recreation room. David enters, bringing a container of food. Penni is watching t.v. Nurse is in the room.*

**Nurse:** Penni, you have a visitor.

*Penni leaps up to greet him.*

**Penni:** Loser!

**David:** Hey Spill! Brought you a treat from the restaurant. Tonight's special pasta.

*He opens the container with pasta and meatballs, Penni digs into the food.*

**Penni:** Oh my God...I always hated this one.

**David:** Sorry...

**Penni:** No, it's a question of perspective. It's great...

**David:** Everyone sends their love, and...some receipts to cheer you up.

**Penni:** Receipts?

**David:** See? (*points to the room receipt*) Sadie added the tip, 15% because they stiffed her on a check for \$112...

**Penni:** French?

**David:** Of course, and on this one, Bob added 20%. That was a table of 6 Germans, who left him nothing on \$230.

**Penni:** I just can't believe they don't know... (*looking at the bill*) Especially after the bottle of Cristal, fuck them.

**David:** Right? Anyway, the guys figured it would cheer you up, you know, sense of justice and all of that. (*awkward pause*) You look well. Spry.

**Penni:** Thank God you're here. David, these people...? I mean, c'mon. That girl thinks she's got multiple personalities. I thought they found out the whole multiple personality thing was a hoax.

*On the television: "We're church-going people, Larry. We do not behave this way."*

**David:** Maybe she's just...**really** a Gemini, you know?

**Penni:** After this experience, I don't even like astrology.

**David:** Either way, there's something very wrong there. Probably came from a bad family.

**Penni:** Okay, thank you! Thank you for saying that. That's exactly what I was thinking. They've, seriously David, they've made a mistake! I'm not like these people. I went to BU, okay, it's not Ivy League, but...I'm not the kind of person who... I speak two languages, did you know that? I have a degree in German.

*On the television: "He's not the kind of person who does this kind of heinous act he's been accused of doing. This is a man who served his constituents for thirty years, a family man. Has he made mistakes? Yes. But to even think that he would..."*

**David:** Well, okay, technically speaking I think you really only speak about 10 phrases of German.

**Penni:** Conversationally, but I can translate. I've read the first fourth of Ulysses twice! I'm not the kind of person, I mean, my parents are together, okay? I don't do drugs...

**David:** (*trying to make light of the conversation*): Ha, you do now!

**Penni:** (*ignores his comment*) I wasn't traumatized as a child...

**David:** Ok, hold on...I know what happened in the restaurant, okay? I was there, and well...

**Penni:** I, I'm over that, that was an aberration, a Salvador Dali moment, or something...

**David:** Well...I can't believe how much better you are now. You should be getting out of here soon.

*On television: "All of these people judging before they have the facts...it's irresponsible and it's the media who are to blame for this circus atmosphere... (New voice): And now, to our panel..."*

**David:** *(hoping to change the subject, points to the television):* Oh, watch this guy! He goes on the air drunk.

**Penni:** What?

**David:** This commentator. I used to think he was just acerbic. I finally figured out he was... *(They look at the television). See?!*

**Penni:** He's not drunk.

**David:** Look at the signs. His eyes are bright red. There! He just slurred that, did you hear that?

**Penni:** I guess I just don't...recognize the signs. But he seems fine to me.

**David:** Live with Bob for a month and then talk to me.

**Penni:** What are they talking about?

**David:** Some girl disappeared and there are rumors that the congressman, she was involved with this congressman...

*Penni becomes completely absorbed with the television.*

**Penni:** Oh my God!!

**David:** Penni, are you all right? Penni?

**Penni:** It's my fault! He's coming after me! He's coming here, oh my God...

*Nurse comes over, quickly. Penni is panicking.*

**Nurse:** What's the matter?

**David:** It's the news report, she's saying something about...

**Penni:** Oh my God, he knows where I am, he's coming to get me, it's my fault, it's my fault.

**Nurse:** *(to David)* We have to get her to her room, hurry. Hurry. Okay Penni, Penni, look at me. Now calm down. *(pulls out some pills)* I want you to take one of these pills, okay? Okay Penni?

*Penni looks at David. She isn't sure she should take the drugs.*

**David:** It's okay, Pen. Go ahead. Take it.



*Penni takes the pill.*

**Nurse:** Thank you for helping with this. It's just...you don't understand. If one of them panics, it can spread. We could have a riot. We just don't have the staff to handle...

**David:** I thought she was getting better, she seemed like she was getting better.

**Nurse:** *(to Davey)* It takes awhile, it's not always like it seems...

*Penni is in such pain she doesn't see David anymore. Lights fade out, but we hear, in the dark:*

*On television: "And statistics will bear out, people with a need to control, as we have in this case...(interrupted by another speaker). Oh now Larry, that's just not true. There is not one scintilla of evidence linking him to anything other than poor judgement..."*

*(on the phone) Yes caller? I would like to know, why does everyone blame the man in these cases? She was old enough to know better. Why is there such a desire to protect this girl"?*

*Lights up and we see David and Penni sitting together. All of the others have disappeared.*

*Penni is eating the food David brought.*

**David:** What the hell happened?

**Penni:** I snuck out in the middle of the night. I just...left.

**David:** Why?

**Penni:** He scared me! I've never seen him like that, like some kind of...dangerous...I don't know. It was like I didn't know him.

**David:** You've only known him a few weeks.

**Penni:** Four months. It was strange. He was in some kind of religious reverie thing...

**David:** Four months is when their bad side starts to surface. He's too religious.

**Penni:** No. My mom is religious. This was not religious. This was very David Koresh-Jim Jones. Almost like this cult-like...thing. I snuck out and rode the bus back at 3 a.m. I took sedatives when I got home to calm down.

**David:** You have sedatives?

**Penni:** Theraflu.

**David:** Carlos has stronger stuff, if you really...

**Penni:** The dishwasher? David, listen to me. He was yanking me around the room. I'm afraid of him. He knows my phone number. He knows my address.

**David:** You can stay with me if you're really afraid of him.

**Penni:** Maybe if I just get call answering...

**David:** If you think he won't show up on the doorstep, angry, like you betrayed him or something.

**Penni:** No, I don't think he would...

**David:** You have to be very, very careful. You can't trust people and just go off with them...

**Penni:** I know. I just thought I knew him...

**David:** Sometimes there are no signs... I still don't understand exactly what happened.

**Penni:** He threatened me. Spiritually.

**David:** Pen, you aren't even a religious person. How could you be threatened spiritually?

*David picks up her fork and eats some of her food. Penni looks at him.*

**David:** Go ahead. You can't get it that way.

*David tries to hand her the fork. Lights change. Lights come up and Penni is sitting with Sammy the Klepto (20's). Sammy is holding a fork.*

**Sammy:** Hurry, hide this. They're coming.

*Penni puts the fork under the covers. Sammy (20's) is sitting on the bed and Penni is in bed. Crystal races into the room. Throws cigarettes at Penni.*

**Crystal:** Hurry, hurry, hurry!! Put these somewhere!

**Sammy:** What? What is it? (*looks at cigarettes*) Nailed you smoking in the bathroom, huh?

**Crystal:** Controlling Hitler bitch, it's bullshit.

*Penni puts cigarettes under the sheets. Nurse enters.*

**Nurse:** Where are they?

**Crystal:** What are you talking about?

**Nurse:** What are we always talking about, Crystal?

**Crystal:** You seem really upset about something. Too bad I can't help you out. (*Crystal turns away from the Nurse*).

**Nurse:** Give them to me...Now! First of all you're not allowed...

**Crystal:** You're just getting way too much on my case! Coming in here and accusing me...

**Nurse:** Crystal. (*beat*) I'll tell you what I'm willing to do. If you give them to me now, I won't put this in your report.

*Crystal refuses to acknowledge her.*

**Nurse:** Fine, then. *(Nurse points at Crystal's bag).*

**Crystal:** Fine, then.

**Nurse:** Give me your bag. *(Crystal tosses her bag at the Nurse).*

*Nurse searches Crystal's bag, then searches her bed and the drawers of her dresser.*

**Crystal:** Open the drawers. *(Looks through the drawers).*

**Nurse:** Remove the sheets. *(Looks through bed).*

*Sammy and Penni exchange glances. Voice calls through the door.*

**Voice:** Sammy, Dr. Michaelson wants to see you now.

*Sammy reluctantly leaves.*

*Nurse has continued to search, but has not found anything.*

**Nurse:** Give me your bag, Penni.

**Penni:** I didn't have anything to do with it.

**Nurse:** Penni, don't try to protect her. Give me the bag.

*Penni hesitates, but then gives her the bag. The Nurse doesn't find anything in the bag. She moves to the drawer and opens it. She searches the drawers.*

**Nurse:** Lift up the sheets.

*Penni looks at Crystal. She doesn't lift the sheets.*

**Nurse:** Penni, lift up the sheets.

*Penni slowly lifts up the sheets. The cigarettes are gone. Both Penni and Crystal look, amazed. Nurse gives up frustrated.*

**Nurse:** Don't let it happen again, Crystal. *(leaves).*

*Penni is really confused about where the cigarettes have gone. She thinks she's hallucinating.*

**Penni:** But...I... *(Penni frantically looks all around her bed for the cigarettes)*  
Um...okay...okay *(Trying to calm herself down).*

*Crystal and Penni look at each other. A slow smile spreads across Crystal's face.*

**Crystal:** Damn. What did I say? Is he good or what?

*Penni realizes that Sammy has taken the cigarettes.*

*Dr. M is alone onstage.*

**Dr. M:** Unidentified man got into the nursing office without introducing himself, borrowed the chart book, took the patient's chart and attempted to read it. Informed charts are confidential and escorted out of the unit. Refused to identify himself. Left without incident.

*Penni and Crystal are in their room. Danny walks by the door. He looks at Penni and continues on. Crystal has her back to the door and doesn't see him. Danny's appearance has caused a violent reaction in Penni.*

**Penni:** Close the door!

**Crystal:** Why?

**Penni:** Close the door! *(Crystal closes it)* Lock it!!

**Crystal:** I can't.

**Penni:** What?

**Crystal:** There's no lock. We're not allowed to lock ourselves in.

**Penni:** Oh God.

**Crystal:** What?

**Penni:** Who was that man?

**Crystal:** What man?

**Penni:** That man! That man that just walked by...

*Crystal peaks out of the door.*

**Crystal:** It's just the guard.

**Penni:** He was looking at me.

**Crystal:** Like sexually?

**Penni:** No...Someone is trying to kill me.

**Crystal:** Whoa! Seriously?!

**Penni:** Oh God. He's going to get in here.

**Crystal:** Nobody can get onto this floor. It's locked. Even the doctors have to get

buzzed in.

**Penni:** If he traced me here, he might already be in here. He could change the medication on my chart...no one would ever know. I think Danny sent a guard to kill me.

**Crystal:** Fuck!

**Penni:** Oh God, oh God....

**Crystal:** Okay, calm down. Tell me why this guy wants to kill you.

**Penni:** I know too much. He's very powerful. Very powerful.

**Crystal:** What do you know?

**Penni:** What he's going to do. Please. I need your help. Is there a way he could have found out which room I'm in?

**Crystal:** I guess, yeah. There's a chart...it's in the nurse's station. It has all of our names and room assignments.

**Penni:** Oh God. He knows I'm here. He knows I'm in this room.

**Crystal:** Oh fuck...

*Penni falls to her knees. The lights dim, except a spotlight that erratically travels across the stage, catching parts of the actors' bodies.*

**Voices:** (*whispering*) She knows too much.

**Male voice:** Scaring her...

**Female voice:** Scarring her...

**Male voice:** Don't bow out on us just yet...

**Female voice:** Leaving here so soon?

**Male voice:** A month, a week, tomorrow?

**Female voice:** Today?

**Male voice:** Now?

**Female voice:** What is the name?

*Another spotlight on Penni.*

**Penni:** I can't hear... I wasn't supposed to be the one who found out...

**Male voice:** What is her name?

**Penni:** I'm not even sure that...that I'm seeing...

*Door swings open. Unidentified man enters the room.*

**Penni:** Crystal! Crystal!

*Crystal doesn't see anything.*

**Penni:** Crystal! He's here. He's here.

*Crystal joins Penni in the spotlight.*

**Crystal:** What's happening? Penni...

**Penni:** I can see him, don't you see him, I can see him...

**Crystal:** Penni, I'm here.

*Crystal holds her. Penni is scrambling onto the floor, getting lower and lower on the floor. He's coming closer to them. Circling around them.*

**Penni:** I'm failing! I'm sorry! Oh God! Oh God! Please! I failed you. I failed you. Please! Give me another chance! Please, God! Give me another chance.

**Voices:** Didn't want to accept it. What's the name?

**Penni:** I can't do it! I'm not the one, please, please! I can't do it. It's not me! I can figure it out. I can figure it out. Please don't come for me, please. Please don't come for... Help! I need help!!!

**Crystal:** I'll help you, Penni. I'll help you. I'm right here.

**Penni:** Oh God! Get him out of the room! Help me! Help me! Get him out of the room. I won't fail again.

**Voices:** What's the name? What's the name?

*Ominous figure is almost on top of them.*

**Crystal:** I'm right here, Penni. I'm right here. I'll protect you. Don't you understand? I'm right here.

*Penni is shaking in Crystal's arms. Slowly she turns, as if seeing Crystal for the first time.*

**Penni:** (*Pause-stillness*) What is your name?

*The bell begins ringing. The lights suddenly go on. The figure in the room has disappeared. We hear people running outside the room. Penni has collapsed in Crystal's arms. Nurse enters.*

**Nurse:** What happened?

**Crystal:** I don't know. I think...she had a nightmare...

**Nurse:** The alarm sounded, but there was no one there.

**Penni:** (*coming to*) Crystal.

**Crystal:** You're okay. You just had a nightmare.

**Penni:** I heard the bell.

**Nurse:** There was no one on the security camera. It was a...malfunction.

**Penni:** It didn't happen.

**Nurse:** Nothing happened. It was a mistake.

**Penni:** Crystal stopped...

**Crystal:** What?

**Nurse:** You're okay, Penni.

**Penni:** It was Crystal. Crystal... Crystal, you have to stay...

**Crystal:** I'm not going anywhere.

**Penni:** No. You can't. You...you **have** to stay...

*Sammy shows up in the doorway.*

**Sammy:** What happened?

**Crystal:** Get him out of here! I don't want him in our room!

**Sammy:** I didn't do anything. Why did the bell ring?

**Nurse:** Go back to your room, Sammy. It was nothing. False alarm.

*Nurse escorts Sammy out of the room.*

*Dr. M is alone onstage.*

**Dr. M:** Discharge notes: Patient feeling much better, has been compliant with medication, presently not delusional. Patient has attended groups and activities on the unit and shows much improvement, denies feeling depressed. Patient is not a danger to self or others. She is being discharged today.

*In the restaurant. Penni is waiting tables again. There is someone sitting at a table with a magazine in front of face. The man and woman we saw in the first scene are back.*

**Man:** You were our waitress before.

**Woman:** We haven't seen you for awhile.

**Penni:** Vacation.

*David walks by and snorts. Penni looks after him, annoyed.*

**Man:** This steak isn't rare. It's well-done.

**Penni:** I'm so sorry, sir. You should have it the way you want it.

*Takes the steak away, and drops it on the table in front of the person with the magazine. Lowers the magazine, and we see Crystal.*

**Penni:** Just cut off the part he tried. It's like, \$28.

**Crystal:** Is that sanitary?

**Penni:** Seriously. You can't get anything that way. Just cut off the part he touched. We do it all the time.

**David:** (to Penni) Seth is pissed. He says you put the steak in the computer as well-done.

**Penni:** People change their minds.

*The music rises and we hear the Brandenburg Concert No. 4.*





New Scene

*Crystal storms back to room. Stops short.*

**CRYSTAL OBSERVES WHAT'S WRONG WITH PENNI. (Penni is lying to the doctors and Crystal notices.)**

*Penni is leaning in toward the radio. (Use actual sounds, media...) She is listening intently and scribbling notes. She is very intent and almost in a reverie. She moves over to Crystal's side of the room. She picks up her (??book.) Crystal comes in abruptly. (we think she's going to attack Penni).*

Crystal: HEY!

*Penni turns suddenly, as if waking up. There is a stand-off for a beat.*

CRYSTAL: You're hearing things. (beat) Aren't you? (*this is more of an accusation/confirmation than a question*). You just heard something on that radio, and it's been freaking you out. Hasn't it? (beat)

*Penni looks at her, startled, confused.*

CRYSTAL: You just lied to that doctor (**her**). Didn't you? (Penni stares at her.) Hell, girl, you can hear me right now, can't you? (Penni nods). Okay, then. We getting somewhere. What exactly are you hearing? (Penni bursts into tears). Hold up, just hold up now. Shut up!

PENNI: Crystal...(sobs) I'm so scared. I, I don't know what's happening to me... I've never felt like this, and...I don't know...

CRYSTAL: You lied to her because you scared, huh? You scared your crazy, huh? (*Penni sobs, nodding in agreement*) What are you hearing on that radio?

PENNI: Signals. (beat) Special...signals.

CRYSTAL: Well, damn girl!

PENNI: I'm hearing things I can't block out, Crystal! It's TALKING to me!!! I can't tell anyone. Oh my God, please don't tell anyone, please don't tell them! They'll think I'm crazy, Crystal, they'll keep me here. I'll be all right, I think I'll be all right if I can just...get out of here. If I can just get home...

CRYSTAL: What do you think going to happen when you go home and the damn radio or t.v. starts talking to you?

PENNI: I CAN FIGURE IT OUT!! Just...let me figure it out! I have to think. I just need to think...who's (*Crystal looks up sharply*) capable of making this happen to me? (beat) I mean, what's capable of making this happen to me? There has to be a logical explanation. (*Defensive*) I was fine for YEARS, Crystal, for YEARS!! (*Frustrated*) This Never Happened to ME!! (beat) And now...I'm...

CRYSTAL: WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOU?!?!

PENNI: I watch television, or listen to the radio, or, or the computer and...it...it's talking to me.

CRYSTAL: Ookay. So when you turn on the radio, it talks to you. Just to you?

PENNI: No, not JUST to me, but it has special messages for me.

CRYSTAL: Special messages?

PENNI: (*defiantly*) YEAH. Special messages.

CRYSTAL: Like WHAT special messages? What's so damn special about these messages to you?

**SLOWLY REVEAL THINGS THAT PENNI HAS BEEN EXPERIENCING. MAYBE NOT ALL AT ONE SCENE. STARTED WITH THE RADIO. SOUNDS OF PEOPLE AROUND. THEN TELEVISION, PRETTY SOON IT'S EVERYWHERE...TELEVISION, RADIO, NEWSPAPER, CRYSTAL...IT'S OUT OF CONTROL AND IT JUST GETS WORSE AND WORSE AND WORSE...**

PENNI: like I'm listening to the radio and I'm hearing things. Things I didn't hear before. And talking to people. I HEAR things I didn't hear before.

CRYSTAL: LIKE WHAT?!?!?!?

**PENNI: Like the basketball game saying East is more powerful than West, and I'm controlling it on every point. And I can't do it, Crystal. I can't do it. It's overwhelming me, and things just keep happening.**

Crystal: What kind of things?

Penni: There was a shooting at the Empire State Building.

Crystal: Yeah?

Penni: I think I had something to do with it because the guy who did it...

Crystal: Yeah?

**Penni: He was just like the guy I dated. Just like him. He was from the same area, he was the same religion and the same description, and...it's him. He's after me next!! POSSIBLE EXPLANATION TO BE RESERVED?? \*\*And he told me he wanted to assassinate someone. He told me that once. Right before...\*\*\***

(continuation of other scene).

**>>>>>ADD THE ONE ACT SCENES HERE?**