

"NO, DON'T ASK WHY"

(SCENE: A small, plain room with a bed against the wall by a door.)

(AT RISE: ONE sits cross-legged on the bed. TWO sits cross-legged on the floor in the opposite corner.)

(Silence.)

(One suddenly starts singing quietly.)

ONE

Mott the Hoople and the game of Life.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

(NORMAN, young, male, long hair, with a look that tries to pretend he's a slacker, enters from the audience. He's never seen by anyone else on stage and his dialogue should be treated as action.)

(He points with both arms to the bed.)

NORMAN

A bed.

(He turns a circle, arcing his arms dramatically over his head and around the room.)

NORMAN (Continued)

A room.

ONE

Andy Kaufman in the wrestling match.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

(He turns back and points at One.)

NORMAN

ONE, a man, sits cross-legged on a bed in a small corner of the room. The bed is like a prison bed. The man looks like Jim Carrey in MAN ON THE MOON.

ONE

(louder)

*Monopoly, Twenty one, checkers, and chess.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*

(He turns and points at Two, who
sits in meditative silence.)

NORMAN

TWO, a man, sits cross-legged on the floor in the opposite
corner of the room. The floor is like... a floor. The man
looks like Val Kilmer in THE DOORS.

(Two suddenly starts marking off a
beat quietly.)

TWO

(the whiskey song)

BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum...

ONE

*Mister Fred Blassie in a breakfast mess.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*

(Norman backs slowly toward the
door, watching them with a smile.)

NORMAN

One and Two sit cross-legged and contemplate existence.

TWO

BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum...

ONE

*Let's play Twister, let's play Risk.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*

NORMAN

They're comfortable in their solidarity. In their form.

TWO

BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum...

ONE

*See you in heaven if you make the list.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*

(He turns to look at the door.)

NORMAN

So of course the shit's about to hit the fan.

TWO

BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum BUM bum...

(The door opens suddenly, and THREE is pushed violently in. Norman backpedals with him as he stumbles back.)

NORMAN

(fast)

THREE, a man, is suddenly pushed into the room from a door in the back corner. The door slams, a lock clangs. The man is blindfolded, his hands tied behind his back. He looks like JFK, Jr. in... every picture we've ever seen of JFK, Jr.

(One and Two sing in unison. Louder.)

ONE

*Hey, Andy, did you
hear about this one?*

TWO

*Well show me the way
To the next whiskey bar*

NORMAN

Confused, blind, and panicked, Three hurls his body back toward the door.

(Three slams into the door.)

NORMAN (Continued)

(that's gotta hurt)

Ouch...

ONE

*Tell me are you locked
in the punch?*

TWO

*Oh, don't ask why
Oh, don't ask why*

THREE

Hey! What is this? What do you want?

NORMAN

He seems upset...

ONE

*Hey Andy are you
goofing on Elvis?*

TWO

*Show me the way
To the next Whiskey Bar*

THREE

You can't do this to me! Don't you know who I am?

NORMAN

Why would anyone know who he is?

ONE
*Hey baby are we losing
touch?*

TWO
*Oh don't ask why
Oh don't ask why*

THREE
I'm an important man, damn it!

NORMAN
Why would anyone care?

ONE
*If you believed
they put a man on the
moon
man on the moon.*

TWO
*For if we don't find
The next whiskey bar
I tell you we must die
I tell you we must die*

THREE
You let me out of here right now or my family will--

NORMAN
(simultaneous with One and Two)
One and Two cut him off, singing very loudly.

ONE
*If you believe
there's nothing up my
sleeve
then nothing is cool.*

TWO
*I tell you
I tell you
I tell you we must die*

NORMAN
(cut)
And silence.

(Silence.)

(Norman watches Three.)

NORMAN (Continued)
Three turns around slowly, cautiously. And makes the first
step in his journey.

THREE
(quietly)
What is this place?

(One gets up and creeps over to
Three quietly. Norman watches One,
smiles, shushes the audience with a
finger.)

TWO

(speaking)
Oh tell me where your freedom lies... The streets are fields
that never die... Deliver me from reasons why... You'd rather
cry... I'd rather fly...

THREE

What?

ONE

(in Three's ear)
He does that.

NORMAN

(eyes on Three)
Three jumps and whirls and falls backward. Takes a second,
calms himself.

THREE

Who are you?

TWO

Riders on the storm...

NORMAN

(turning toward Two)
Three turns his blindfolded eyes toward Two.

TWO

Riders on the storm...

ONE

Into this house we're born...

(Three and Norman look back toward
One.)

TWO

Into this world we're thrown...

(And back to Two.)

ONE

Like a dog without a bone...

(And back to One.)

TWO

An actor out alone...

(And back to Two.)

ONE
Riders on the storm...

(And back to One.)

NORMAN
Three sighs.

THREE
Can you untie me?

ONE
I don't know.

THREE
Why not?

ONE
Do you want to be untied?

(A pause. Norman looks down at his feet.)

ONE (Continued)
Deep down in the pits of your soul, do you really want to be untied?

(A pause. Norman looks up at Three.)

THREE
Yeah... Yes... Yes, why wouldn't I?

ONE
You tell me...

(A pause. Norman sighs and backs up a couple steps.)

THREE
There's... I want to be untied.

ONE
I don't think you do...

THREE
Of course I do! Untie me!

ONE
Prove it to me.

THREE
What?

ONE
Prove it to me!

THREE
Untie me!

ONE
Convince me to!

NORMAN
Three lets out a frustrated whine and looks in Two's general direction. He doesn't understand the beauty that binds him. He doesn't understand the purpose of his blindness.

THREE
Will you untie me? Please?

NORMAN
He doesn't understand what happens if they let him in.

(A pause.)

TWO
C'mon c'mon c'mon now touch me babe...

NORMAN
(bowing his head)
Three bows his head sadly.

TWO
Can't you see that I am not afraid?

ONE
What was that promise that you made?

TWO
Why won't you tell me what she said?

ONE
What was that promise that she made?

THREE
(yelling)
What's the matter with you? Why won't you just help me?

ONE
(yelling)
Why won't you help yourself?

THREE
How? How can I?

TWO

You know the day destroys the night...

ONE

Night divides the day...

TWO

Tried to run... Tried to hide... Break on through to the other side...

ONE

Break on through to the other side...

TWO

Break on through... Break on through... Break on through to the other side...

NORMAN

Three sobs.

(A click. Norman turns to the door.)

NORMAN (Continued)

The lock unlocks. The door opens. SHE, a woman, walks in carrying three trays. She's wearing a loose-fitting kimono, black and gold. One runs over and sits on the bed. Three looks up toward the door.

(Norman watches as She circles the room.)

NORMAN (Continued)

She steps over and sets a tray in front of One. He starts shoveling food into his mouth, smiling.

(beat)

She steps over and sets a tray in front of Two. He starts eating slowly.

(beat)

She steps over and kneels before Three, sets a tray on the floor before him, runs a hand across his shoulder to his neck.

SHE

Have they been mean to you?

THREE

(quiet)

Who are you?

SHE

Sshh... Here, let me help you with these bonds...

(Norman looks down and closes his eyes.)

NORMAN

She slowly unties his hands. He pulls his hands quickly in front of him and tears the blindfold from his eyes.

THREE

What is this?

NORMAN

She caresses the back of his neck and stands.

SHE

Eat. I will return.

NORMAN

She leaves. The door closes, the lock clangs.

(Norman looks around.)

NORMAN (Continued)

Three looks around. At One. At Two. His eyes widen.

THREE

What in the fink?

NORMAN

Two looks over at him.

TWO

Time to live... Time to lie... Time to laugh... Time to die... Take it easy, baby... Take it as it comes...

NORMAN

Three bites his lower lip and glances around. He looks at One. He points and moves toward him. One climbs back against the wall.

THREE

Tell me your name...

ONE

(slowly, high pitched)

I do not understand...

NORMAN

Three laughs and backs away.

THREE

(weirded out exuberance)

This... can't be happening... This can't be happening!

ONE

Are you... all right?

NORMAN

Long pause. Three runs his hands through his hair slowly.

(Norman turns slowly back to the door.)

NORMAN (Continued)

The lock unlocks, he whirls to face the door. She comes in carrying a hospital dish with three needles on it. She looks at Three's tray.

SHE

You haven't eaten...

THREE

This is insane.

SHE

You need your protein...

(One starts giggling.)

THREE

I don't know what you're... This is insane.

(Norman watches as She circles the room.)

NORMAN

She walks over to One. Three watches her. One smiles as She injects him with one of the needles.

(beat)

She walks over to Two. Three backs away, next to the door. Two remains passive as She injects him with one of the needles.

(beat)

She stands to face Three.

SHE

You must eat before we can continue.

THREE

I won't.

SHE

Then you will die slowly and painfully of dehydration and malnutrition.

NORMAN

A pause.

SHE

I will return.

NORMAN

She starts for the door.

(Norman watches almost sadly as She leaves. Then)

NORMAN (Continued)

(surprised)

Three springs on her! Grabs her! Pulls her back across the room!

(One starts jumping up and down on the bed.)

ONE

Woo! Woo! Kick her ass! Woo!

(Norman is suddenly intensely interested. He stays very close to the fight as he calls it.)

NORMAN

She puts an elbow in his kidney and reverses his hold. After a moment of stun he swings around and throws her toward the bed, bolts for the door. She lands on her hands and knees, rolls onto her back, pulling a pistol from an ankle holster and firing. Three buckles at the knees and falls. Rolls onto his back. Panting heavily.

THREE

Wha... What...

NORMAN

(calming down)

He swallows.

ONE

Happy juice! Woo! Happy happy... Happy happy...

NORMAN

(back to quiet sadness)

She walks over and kneels calmly beside him. His breathing is incredibly fast. She wipes hair from his face.

SHE

It's all right. You'll be all right.

THREE

What is this?

SHE

This is a stop on the bus route to your dreams... It's where you go when you're ready...

THREE

Ready for what?

SHE

Ready to be a part.

THREE

I... Why are you...

SHE

No, don't ask why...

TWO

No, don't ask why...

SHE

It's okay... Just sleep, and later it will all be clear...

THREE

But...

NORMAN

She stands and looks at Two. Tilts her head. Looks over at One. Smiles. She goes to him and takes his hand. He smiles. They leave.

(Norman breathes deeply and rubs his face.)

NORMAN (Continued)

The door closes, the lock clangs.

TWO

You know that it would be untrue... You know that I would be a liar... If I was to say to you... Girl, we couldn't get much higher... Come on baby, light my fire... Come on baby, light my fire... Try to set the night on fire...

NORMAN

Three looks over at him weakly. His eyes drooping. His defenses falling.

THREE

I... I don't get it...

NORMAN

Neither do I, man. Neither do I.

(LIGHTS DOWN.)