

BEAUTIFUL OASIS

by

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FADE IN

EXT/INT. THE MILKY WAY GALAXY/AN OFFICE.

The Galaxy, gigantic, alone, silent, in interstellar space.

We move in toward the edge of the Galaxy, past masses of stars.

In the dark spaces between stars we see a speck.

The Speck resolves itself as the Earth and then further into a long-bearded MAN, wearing sandals, in dungarees and navy shirt. He is covered with dust. He sits motionless, his hands resting lightly on his knees.

We can now see that he is in a curiously long and bare Office. A large Desk and two Chairs at the far end, a Door at the other.

An Interval of Time and Silence passes until it is shattered.

INT. FLAT. DAY.

In the dark, the terrified face of JONATHAN LANDRY, in his early-20's, who has overslept.

Flashing red from the blinking "12:00" of his clock radio lights his face.

JONATHAN

Oh my lord!

He knocks over the radio falling out of bed. He feels his way to the window and parts the dark curtains: broad daylight!

The flat is tiny, dismal, and messy. He snatches up his cellphone from a pair of pants on the floor.

He screams. It is 9:30.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

A Sound at the door brings the Man's face to life.

His eyes lock onto the direction of the sound. His head jerks toward the door.

It is the INTERVIEWER, a late 20-ish woman in smart, modest business attire, entering the Office.

The Man springs out of the chair, attacking the Interviewer, trying to strangle her.

Though surprised, she swiftly and deftly throws him aside. He is wild-eyed. He leaps to his feet, a dust cloud from

his clothes, and dashes out of the Office screaming.

INT. FLAT. BATHROOM. DAY

Jonathan hurriedly strokes the last of the shaving cream off his face. His cell rings, traditionally bell tone. He answers.

JONATHAN

No not yet! How many times---! It's three hours difference and I'm late good-bye!

He is suddenly arrested by his reflection in the mirror enough to wipe the mirror clean for a closer examination.

INT. FLAT. DAY -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan jerks open the closet door. Like the flat, it is a mess, with clothes piled on the floor, with the exception of one fine suit hanging in the center.

INT. FLAT. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

Jonathan, neatly suited, furiously tries to tie his tie but always comes out uneven. A scissors as a last resort to even the tie ends? No.

He scrounges a fake-tied tie from a heap at his feet.

INT. FLAT. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

In stark contrast to his dismal and messy surroundings, Jonathan stands, neat and groomed ready to leave the flat when his cell rings. He checks and answers.

JONATHAN

(angrily)

WHAT!

(relenting)

Yeah, thanks, ma. I'm gonna need it.

He tosses the phone onto a pile of clothes.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

I have to get this job. I can't go back there. I can't.

He takes a deep breath before leaving. As soon as the door closes...

MOTHER'S VOICE

Jonnie, I'm not some voice on the other side of the country. I'm your
(MORE)

MOTHER'S VOICE (cont'd)
 mother. Listen to me. You need a
 bigger place. Jonnie! Are you
 listening to me? Are you there?

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Tugging her dress back into place, the Interviewer calmly closes the door.

She opens the face of a large clock on the wall, advancing the time from 9:45 to 10.

She sits behind a substantial wooden desk. There are several stacks of papers neatly arranged, one thick official book, and a large loose-leaf binder. No personal items.

She carefully returns order to the desktop that the encounter has caused.

INT. OFFICE. -- MOMENTS LATER

There is a Knock at the door. Through the frosted glass we see the silhouette of a man, Jonathan, lurking. He knocks again. After a moment he opens the door a crack and sticks his head in.

JONATHAN
 Is this the place?

INTERVIEWER
 No. This is. Come in.

Jonathan enters. In an effort to neutralize his lurking, he strides confidently to the desk and sits opposite the Interviewer, a large clasp envelope resting on his lap and a small leather satchel at his feet.

He is determined that she break the silence, which she seems in no hurry to do, until:

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
 May I ask you another question?

Jonathan starts to answer but stops. Then...

JONATHAN
 Yes...?

INTERVIEWER
 Have you completed the preliminary forms?

JONATHAN
 Oh.
 (MORE)

JONATHAN (cont'd)
(handing her the
envelope)

Yes. Here.

As she goes through and sorts the papers from the envelope, Jonathan discovers that one leg of the chair he is sitting on is shorter than the others. He experiments with avoiding rocking. That done, he watches her sort the papers.

INTERVIEWER

Jonathan....

JONATHAN

---Landry. Born in Louisiana. Grew
up in North Carolina.

(pause)

"Grew up"?

(chuckles)

Not according to my mother.

No reaction from the Interviewer. It's not even clear if she heard him.

INTERVIEWER

(showing him the page)

And this is your current address?

JONATHAN

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

And you can be reached at this
number?

JONATHAN

Yes. Anytime. Except at this
moment.

INTERVIEWER

I assume it's turned off?

JONATHAN

It's not even here.

His recollection of the incident brings a smile to his face but then he remembers something else, not so amusing.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Did you remember to unplug the
coffee pot?

Surprised, Jonathan looks for the source of the voice.

JONATHAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

You idiot! It's you.

JONATHAN
(whispering)

Who?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You!

JONATHAN
(whispering)

Me? Oh! Did I unplug it? Damn, I didn't. I'm going back to extreme espresso or a smouldering heap.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You don't have to whisper. She won't hear you.

JONATHAN

Really? ... Really? ... REALLY?!

JONATHAN'S VOICE

See?

JONATHAN

Wow. . . . Can she do the same?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

How would you know?

JONATHAN

Kewl. . . .

JONATHAN'S VOICE

So whattaya think? You gonna get the job?

JONATHAN

I feel pretty good. Confident.
(suspiciously)
Waitamminute. You're me, right?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Who else would I be?

JONATHAN

But just now you asked, "Are you gonna get the job?" Why did you say "you" and not "I"?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Because you am I and I am you. I suppose to be entirely accurate I should have asked, "Are we gonna get the job?" but that's a tad pompous, a bit too Papal, don't you think?

JONATHAN
(meekly)
I suppose so...

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Don't suppose, man! Be sure of it!

JONATHAN
WE ARE NOT THE POPE!

JONATHAN'S VOICE
That's better. Got that diploma
ready?

JONATHAN
Yeah, it's right here.
(pats the satchel)

Proper form opened and ready with pencil poised, the
Interviewer launches.

INTERVIEWER
Marital status?

JONATHAN
Single

INTERVIEWER
Were you ever previously married?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Are your parents living?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
Any brothers or sisters?

JONATHAN
One brother: Leo. One sister:
Rita.

INTERVIEWER
Their ages?

JONATHAN
Leo...thirty. Rita:
thirty-two...three. Two.

The Interviewer's eyebrow lifts ever so slightly at
Jonathan's hesitation.

Jonathan shifts nervously.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Calm down. Big deal! So you
couldn't remember their ages. What
difference does it make? Whatta
they gonna do?

INT. ANOTHER OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer huddles with her BOSS, showing him papers.

INTERVIEWER

I don't think we can hire this guy.

BOSS

Really? Why?

INTERVIEWER

He lied about his brother's age.

BOSS

(decreeing)

Anybody who'd lie about his
brother's age is certain to lie
about his sister's age too!

INTERVIEWER

Then---?

BOSS

(Biblically gesturing)

So it has been said. So let it be
done.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan is not certain the Interviewer's eyebrow lifted,
however ever so slightly.

INTERVIEWER

Name and address of nearest
relative not a member of the
immediate family.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

I guess that's in case you die
during the interview.

Jonathan laughs but quickly checks himself, not completely
certain.

JONATHAN

Duck Hebert. One-eleven Mercury
Avenue. Berwick, Louisiana.

INTERVIEWER

Relationship?

JONATHAN

Uncle.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Still doubt me, eh? Go ahead. Try!

JONATHAN

(as in "Uncle!")

Uncle!

(pause)

Uncle Duck! Duck, uncle! I think
I'm going to like this---

A pause of anticipation for her reaction. Nothing. Jonathan springs out of the chair, grabbing some of the papers.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

"Preliminary forms"! Ha! Names and numbers! Numbers and names. Half the night racking my brain for ---trivia. For -- insignificancies! I mean look at this: Elementary school what year to what year junior high school what year to what year high school what year to what year I went to 3 elementary schools 2 junior highs and at least a couple of high schools. I bet that if she added up all these years she'd find that it took me 18 years to get to the ninth grade! What does it matter?

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever attended a college or university?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Ah-ha! There you go.

Jonathan eagerly retrieves a paper from the satchel, holding it out to a motionless Interviewer.

JONATHAN

Yes I have. And here's my... Here it is. Here. It is. Here.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Oops. My bad. Anybody with a laser printer can now have a college diploma. Well, put it back. Don't stand there with diploma on your face.

Jonathan slowly withdraws the diploma and sits. An idea comes to him and he starts folding the diploma in halves.

JONATHAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

You know, I suspected that that diploma was not going to help. But it was worth a try. Good thing you never framed it. Let's face it. The thing's useless.

Jonathan uses the neatly folded diploma to even the short leg of the chair. He is pleased at the accomplishment. He takes a deep breath.

JONATHAN

Useless? Oh yeah?

She flips through papers, only the slightest bit seeming to have lost her momentum, until:

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever attended any other schools such as vocational-technical or had service-related training?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Don't you see where this is going? Don't let her be the iceberg to your Titanic.

JONATHAN

What should I do?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Try humor.

JONATHAN

Humor?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Humor. Follow me: Question: "Have you ever attended any other schools such as vocational-technical or had service-related training?" Answer: "Yes. In the Air Force. Radar School".

JONATHAN

But...

JONATHAN'S VOICE

---trust me!

JONATHAN

Yes. "In the Air Force. Radar School."

INTERVIEWER

Did you graduate?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Yes. But I didn't get the part.

JONATHAN

"Yes. But I didn't get the part."

She dutifully, and unsmilingly notes this.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Strike two! Sorry.

She makes an additional note.

JONATHAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. Okay, so we didn't break through but com'on let's try to have a bit of fun---

INTERVIEWER

So --- you have served in a branch of the Armed Forces?

A little hesitant to take the advice but upon quickly calculating, he takes the plunge.

JONATHAN

Yes. The Air Force. The United States Air Force.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Very good but I don't think it got through but who cares?

INTERVIEWER

Type of discharge received?

JONATHAN

Honorable.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

JONATHAN

But of course! How could I not?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

That's the boy! Go for it.

JONATHAN

"Type of discharge received?" eh?
Suppose I was a WAC or a WAF or a
WAVE --- and I got pregnant ---
what kind of a discharge would I
receive?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Oh that's wonderfully naughty---!

JONATHAN

An honorable but spotty
discharge??!

INTERVIEWER

What security clearance did you
have?

JONATHAN

(heard by her and softly)
---- secret ----

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Good boy. I am proud of you. Me.
Us.

She has indeed detected his soto voce "secret" and
calculates, taking an entirely new set of pages from the
bottom of the stack.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever bought anything on
time?

JONATHAN

Yes. All the time.

INTERVIEWER

Borrowed money?

JONATHAN

Sure.

INTERVIEWER

Declared bankruptcy?

JONATHAN

No.

INTERVIEWER

Do you own credit cards?

JONATHAN

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

How many?

JONATHAN

Two. May I have some water?

INTERVIEWER

No.

Anticipating a "yes", this has caught Jonathan with his ass in the air halfway out of the chair.

This She notices. Is poised with pen. Writes but the pen is out of ink.

Should he or shouldn't he? He sits.

She shakes the pen and decides against noting this.

Jonathan notices that the clock on the wall still reads 10. He consults his watch. There is a discrepancy.

She pulls the long drawer of the desk slightly open to exchange the spent pen for a new one. We see, resting on a pack of tissues, a Rosary. She closes the drawer. She seems to subtly gird herself for...

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Names and places of employment beginning with the least recent. Account for all periods of unemployment.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

"Least recent"? "Least recent"?
Who says "least recent"? Why not,
"What was the first job you can
remember"?"

JONATHAN

(somewhat fondly)
Nifty-Thrifty Department Store.

INTERVIEWER

Exact title of position.

JONATHAN

Stock clerk.

INTERVIEWER

Description of duties,
responsibilities, and
accomplishments.

For at least this first couple of jobs, Jonathan tries to duplicate the Interviewer's clinical, almost surgical

directness and emotionless mode.

JONATHAN

I...stocked.

INTERVIEWER

Name of immediate supervisor.

JONATHAN

Uh...

(surprised he remembers)

Lyra Martin.

INTERVIEWER

How long did you work there?

JONATHAN

(clinical again)

About a year. No. Exactly a year.

INTERVIEWER

Reason for leaving.

JONATHAN

Personal reasons.

INTERVIEWER

Would you care to elaborate?

JONATHAN

(spinning it beautifully)

I got tired of the job.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You mean you can't remember, can you?

JONATHAN

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER

Starting and ending salary.

JONATHAN

(seemingly mocking)

Minimum. Minimum.

The Interviewer looks up for a moment. Over Jonathan's shoulder, she sees, in a far corner of the Office, a YOUNG GIRL of 14. The Interviewer immediately returns her attention to the Form.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

If it's not important enough for you to remember why do they have to know?

JONATHAN

Then there was a year and a half of unemployment.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

That was your magazine phase, wasn't it?

INTERVIEWER

Then?

Jonathan dissolves into a certain fuzziness as we move in to the Interviewer's eyes and hand as she transcribes his answers in a shorthand.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

The Beef Palace.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Exact title of position.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

Cook.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Description of duties responsibilities, and accomplishments.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

I --- cooked.

The interviewer carefully peeks again over his shoulder at the corner. The Interviewer has to shift her position to see that the Girl curls up in the corner and falls asleep.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

I think I was evil as a child... I had dreams about The Pope. Good Catholic girls don't dream about The Pope. They should think about The Pope. Pray for The Pope. But once it's just you and The Pope, alone together in a dream --- well...

(speaking)

Name of immediate supervisor at --
The Beef Palace.

JONATHAN

Don't remember.

The Interviewer looks into the corner. The Girl sleeps and is joined by The Pope, also asleep, but in the Papal Bed.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

I had an uncle who was a Protestant and a skeptic and whenever The Pope came up in family discussion he'd always say, "After all, he puts on his pants one leg at a time just like everybody else". And that was the nature of my dream. The Pope putting on a pair of pants. Is that evil? But that's not all the dream.

The Girl continues to sleep but The Pope has arisen as TWO CARDINALS wheel in an Apparatus worthy of Leonardo DaVinci and proceed to enact what the Interviewer describes.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was when The Pope awakened. There was this great, wonderful machine with ropes and straps and pulleys and a crane-like device that was designed to hoist The Pope up and then lower him down into the Papal Pants, both legs at a time!
(speaking)

Is that evil? To dream that? Well, when I told my parents of my dream, they thought so. So, like the good Catholic parents they were, and maybe to atone for the fact that I was an only child, they decided they'd give me to The Church... Like a sweaty, crumpled-up five dollar bill in the basket.

EXT. CONVENT. DAY. -- MORNING

A suspiciously-looking Corporate Building that could possibly be a Convent. A B-movie sign announcing "Convent" rests uneasily over what may very well say something like "East Chatham Bank & Trust". The Interviewer comes into view.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

I was fourteen and I was to become an Ursuline Nun.

She carries a duplicate of Maria's bag in The Sound of Music as she walks toward the building.

INT. OFFICE. DAY -- CONTINUOUS

INTERVIEWER

Name of immediate supervisor.

JONATHAN

Don't remember.

INTERVIEWER
How long did you work there.

JONATHAN
About a year.

INTERVIEWER
Reason for leaving.

JONATHAN
I quit.

INTERVIEWER
Starting and ending salary.

JONATHAN
Minimum.

INT. CONVENT. HALL. DAY

Full of wonder and foreboding, she walks down the long, bare Hall.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I knew they were going to cut my hair. My beautifully long locks. So I had cut them off myself.
(speaking)
Next employment.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Harry's Fill-Um-Up.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Is that "f-i double-l dash u-m dash u-p"?

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

JONATHAN
"...dash u-p". Yes.

INTERVIEWER
Exact title of position.

JONATHAN
Assistant manager.

EXT. CONVENT. COURTYARD. DAY.

The Interviewer is led across the hard-surfaced Courtyard by a SISTER. In the course of their crossing several groups of Nuns in Black close-fitting Habits march through.

Though muffled by their long Habits, it sounds as though they may be wearing boots, jack-boots.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Description of duties,
responsibilities, and
accomplishments.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

I --- was night manager of the gas station. I had to supervise another worker. He would fix flats and run the super pumps. I kept up the stock in the food part. We had stuff like beer and eggs and jerky and milk and bread and oil and anti-freeze. I worked the diesel and regular pumps.

INT. CONVENT. CELL. DAY.

In what looks suspiciously like an office cubicle without anything which would identify it as so, Interviewer is putting away the few things from her Maria-Bag into a simple dresser.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

It was the custom that the novitiates be segregated for the first week. My only contact with anyone was with one of the Sisters who brought me food. At the end of the week I was to see the Mother Superior.

MONTAGE OF 2 VISITS OF THE SISTER BRINGING FOOD TO INTERVIEWER

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Every day I was brought food I tried to get the Sister to speak: "What day is this? Is it raining? What's your name? Do you ever dream about The Pope?" She'd never answer. Until the second-to-last day...

INT. CONVENT. CELL. DAY -- LATER

The Sister has entered, deposited the food in silence, and turned to leave as usual but this time she hesitates and turns back into the Cell. Instead of wearing a Crucifix, two pairs of silver Crossed Crosses are pinned on each side of the throat.

SISTER

I never dream about His Holiness. But one time a Monseigneur had a minor role in a dream. He didn't have any lines.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

It was only years later that I realized that a Nun, this Nun, an Ursuline Nun, was making a joke.

SISTER

Now listen to me closely: I am telling you this in the strictest confidence. In two days you are to see the Mother Superior. When you are before her she is going to ask you two questions: "What thing do you love most?" And "What thing do you hate most?" And after you answer she will say that "from this day on you are to forsake for the rest of your life that which you love most and to embrace that which you hate most."

(whispering)

Beware! The Mother Superior is a very shrewd woman.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

INTERVIEWER

How long did you work there?

JONATHAN

Where? Oh -- Harry's? About a year.

INTERVIEWER

Reason for leaving.

JONATHAN

For another...

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Wait! Why dontja try this: the reason you left Harry's Fill-Um-Up was that one night, in a fit of madness, you bludgeoned your fellow employee to death with a tire tool.

JONATHAN

(snickers)

Probably wouldn't bat an eyelash. She'd take out an additional piece of paper, attach it with a paper

(MORE)

JONATHAN (cont'd)
clip and ask, "Was the tire tool of
the two-lug or four-lug variety?"

INTERVIEWER
Reason---?

JONATHAN
---for another job.

INT. CONVENT. CORRIDOR/OFFICE. DAY.

Down what looks suspiciously like the corridor of a major corporation walk Interviewer followed by the Sister.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
On my way to meet the Mother
Superior I could think of nothing
but food. I had not seen the Sister
who had brought me food and told me
to "Beware!" for two days. I
should be thinking about my answers
to the questions.

We see her full-face:

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
(speaking)
If I hadn't been warned, I would
have answered that what I love most
is chocolate and that which I hate
most are vegetables, cold
vegetables. I was fourteen years
old. I was alone. I was confused.
I was hungry.

They have stopped at the end of the corridor at a pair of large doors. The Sister opens them.

The room on the other side is dark but in the distance is a desk behind which sits the Mother Superior. A thin, erect, hard-boned Nun wearing very thick oval-framed glasses.

The desk is bare except for a single sheet of paper on which she is busily writing. On the wall behind the desk are huge Crossed Crosses.

The Sister leads the Interviewer to a spot before the desk and then takes a place to the right-hand of the Mother Superior, who continues to write.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Ten billion bits of thoughts
flooded into my brain. None
complete. None sensible except the
(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 one fear that this... this Nun was
 somehow going to trick me into
 spending the rest of my life
 without chocolate and having to eat
 vegetables, cold vegetables!

The Mother Superior sets her pen down and starts to raise her head.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 At the last second I decided that
 if this Mother Superior was, as the
 Sister told me, shrewd, I could be
 just as shrewd, and at the same
 time assuring myself a lifetime of
 chocolate because...

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We see the Interviewer full-face:

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 ---somehow I knew that she was
 going to try to trick me.

INT. CONVENT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Mother Superior looks the Interviewer straight in the eyes.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 What thing do you hate most?

INTERVIEWER
 Chocolate, Mother Superior. It
 makes me break out.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 What thing do you love most?

INTERVIEWER
 Vegetables, Mother Superior. I
 love them cold, especially cold.

The Mother Superior turns the page over on which she has been writing.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
 (to the Sister)
 Did you inform the novitiate
 beforehand of the questions as I
 asked you to?

SISTER
 Yes, Mother Superior.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

She knew that I knew and wanted me to know!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

From this day on you will forsake vegetables and to eat chocolate every day. Every day you will come before me in this room and eat a chocolate bar.

INT. CONVENT. CELL. DAY.

Interviewer is praying before candlelit Crossed Crosses.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

And even though I went on for another four years I knew that I would never become a Nun. Every day, as I made the long trek to her office I was reminded. Every day as I stood before her and ate that chocolate I was reminded...

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan and Interviewer seated facing each other.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

...that I had taken what should have been a delight and turned it into a torture.

(speaking)

Next employment.

JONATHAN

Triangle Manufacturing Company.

INTERVIEWER

Exact title of position.

JONATHAN

Machine operator.

INTERVIEWER

Description of duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments.

JONATHAN

I operated --- a machine --- that bent small pieces of steel pipe.

INTERVIEWER

Name of immediate supervisor.

JONATHAN
Hercules Broussard.

INTERVIEWER
How long did you work there

JONATHAN
About eight months

INTERVIEWER
Reason for leaving

JONATHAN
I hated the job

INTERVIEWER
Starting and ending salary

JONATHAN
Four twenty-five an hour for
both...

Pause as Jonathan watches her make notations on the Form. He smiles.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
(fondly recalling)
Harry's Fill-Um-Up....

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Whatever became of Harry?

JONATHAN
Whatever happened to Ethyl? By the
time I worked at Harry's, Ethyl
stood alone, oh so tall but rusting
and dry as an old French whore,
supplanted by "Diesel", "Regular",
and "Super". I wonder how it
happened. I suppose it was "Super"
that done her in. I can understand
standing up to "Regular", even
"Premium", but "Super"? How can you
hold out against "Super? What's the
use of this anyhow? It's not how it
works. It's not how it ever works.

INT. ANOTHER OFFICE. DAY.

The Boss sits behind his desk. After a moment he
experiences a hemmoroidal-like discomfiture.

BOSS
(into intercom)
Sarah. I have an opening to be
filled.

Interviewer instantly appears with a stack of papers.

INTERVIEWER

Here are all the current applications.

BOSS

Well then, why don't I go through these and find the person most qualified to get a job with this company. And hire him.

A moment of silence. The Interviewer tosses the applications into the air.

Then both burst into laughter.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan and Interviewer sit facing each other.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever participated in an organized sports program?

JONATHAN

In high school football and track.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever applied for a job with this company before and if so, when.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Are you kidding?

JONATHAN

No.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever been involved in an automobile accident in which the damage to the vehicle or vehicles or to other property involved totaled five-hundred dollars or more or involved the death of a passenger or passengers?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever been convicted of murder?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever been accused of murder?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever screamed bloody murder?

JONATHAN

Not that I can recall

INTERVIEWER

Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party USA or any Communist Organization anywhere?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Are you now or have you ever been a member of a Fascist or Neo-Fascist organization?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Do you now or have you ever held tenure at a college or university?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever reported a UFO sighting to an agency of the Federal Government?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Religious affiliation

JONATHAN

Methodist

(MORE)

JONATHAN (cont'd)
 (jumping up, circling
 her, in her face)
 What could I possibly have been
 thinking of when I walked into this
 room? You sit there with your
 forms and pencils asking me
 questions. Reducing a lifetime of
 experience to a...an answer on a
 page of paper. Yes, I'm a
 METHODIST. I was born a METHODIST
 and have lived METHODIST. But does
 that tell you the real METHODICAL
 me??? I HAVEN'T BEEN TO CHURCH IN
 YEARS!!!!!!!

Their noses are almost touching.

She is completely aware of their personal proximity. She swallows hard and imperceptibly pulls away, at the same time opening the long drawer of her desk, still holding his eyes, she thrusts a hand into the drawer, rummaging.

In addition to the tissue and Rosary, the drawer is a clutter of loose pages, office implements, a candy bar or two, a purse, and some personal items including a PISTOL, which she momentarily grips, assuring herself of its presence.

The moment passes and she extracts a single sticky-note from the drawer, quickly closing it. She uses the note to mark the current page. She looks him directly in the face.

INTERVIEWER
 Are you a regular church-goer?

His argument completely refuted, his emotion spent, Jonathan sinks back into his seat.

JONATHAN
I haven't been to church in
 years....

INTERVIEWER
 Are you now, have you ever been, or
 do you have friends, relatives or
 acquaintances who are now, have
 been, or possibly will be a member
 of any organizations, associations,
 movement, group, or combination of
 person or persons which advocates
 the overthrow of our constitutional
 form of government or which has
 adopted the policies of advocating
 or approving the commission of acts
 (MORE)

INTERVIEWER (cont'd)
of violence and/or force to deny
other persons their rights under
the Constitution of the United
States, or which seeks to alter the
form of the government of the
United States by unconstitutional
means?

JONATHAN
No...?

INTERVIEWER
Do you have close friends who are
African-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Mexican-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Native-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Would you describe your circle of
friends as exclusively white?

JONATHAN
Well....

INTERVIEWER
Do you have close friends who are
Eskimo-American?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Palestinian-American?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
Oceanic-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Asian-American?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Then your circle of friends is
exclusively white.

JONATHAN
(almost sharply)
Yes....
(then lightly)
I guess the family tradition that
we are descended from a troupe of
mimes is true.... I bet I could
take a carrot out of my pocket,
stick it in my ear, and she would
never notice it.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
What is that in your pocket?

Fearful, Jonathan tries to unobtrusively check. He manages
to do so, leaving his hand in his pocket.

JONATHAN
(whispering)
A melted candy bar. Or....

INTERVIEWER
Do you have or have you ever had
any hobbies?

JONATHAN
Yes, I collected stamps.

INTERVIEWER
Have you ever defaced a unit of
United States currency?

JONATHAN
No. Um, well...
(chuckling)
Once I put a half-dollar on a
railroad track to be flattened by a
train.

The Interviewer opens another drawer. One of the fat ones,
to the left. It is a rat's nest of loose papers of every
sort, color, and variety; colored markers, pens, pencils,
staplers, some photographs, several more candy bars, and a
box of BULLETS.

In her rummaging, we see she she palms several of the Bullets. She finds a blank page and quickly shuts the drawer.

During this, Jonathan extracts his hand and quickly licks the chocolate off, after smelling it first, leaving a hint of a Hitler moustache.

She drops her pen, which Jonathan retrieves, during which she transfers the Bullets into the top drawer.

She writes on the page a lengthy elaboration transcription of all his words regarding this defacement.

INTERVIEWER

Please continue.

JONATHAN

I mean...that was...some time ago.

INTERVIEWER

Can you recall the year?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Stop. Stop now.

JONATHAN

I was a boy. Fourteen. So that would be----

JONATHAN'S VOICE

I mean it. Stop. You're not helping yourself. Stop! And, Adolph, you've got chocolate under your nose.

Jonathan wipes it off.

JONATHAN

Well, maybe twelve. It got...real flat. Come to think of it, it wasn't a half-dollar, it was a quarter...

JONATHAN'S VOICE

STOP!

Jonathan consults his watch. Checks the wall clock. Continued puzzlement.

JONATHAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Before this is over they're going to know everything there is to know about you. Me.... Us----

JONATHAN

Yeah right. Except who I am.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

I'm really starting to get some vibes here and they're not good. Look, just get up and walk right out of that door. Go on! Get up!

JONATHAN

I can't just get up and walk out, I mean, I could just get up and walk out but that would be too complicated.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Complicated or not, do it. Don't take the easy way out which would be to just go along.

JONATHAN

(jumps up)

A moving train! That's it! I am on a moving train. I've missed my stop and the simplest thing, the easiest thing, would be to grab my papers and jump off. People in the movies do it all the time. Just gotta remember to roll. But that wouldn't be the smartest thing. That would be to stay on, until the train slows or stops. Then get off. And in the meantime maybe have a little fun along the way.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

I thought so once but not now. This won't be fun! You've talked yourself into something dangerous I tell you. Besides, it's me you should be listening to! Don't try to rationalize it on the fly like you're doing.

JONATHAN

Don't you think we can have a bit of fun? Just watch. And listen....

There is a pause as Interviewer puts the finishing touches on the railroad track currency defacing incident. She has had to consult a rather thick tome for some cross-referenced notation.

The pause subtly becomes a frozen moment in which we are uncertain who is frozen and who is not until:

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)

You know what you're doing, don't you?

INTERVIEWER

What?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)

Raking leaves.

INTERVIEWER

So what? Don't they need to be raked?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)

In the middle of the forest?

INTERVIEWER

This is a forest?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)

Look around you.

She does, slowly getting up.

INTERVIEWER

It could be. It is. Indeed it is. Dark, impenetrable. I know what you're talking about now. I remember reading that someone once wrote a book exposing the fact that they... burned the leaves. But wasn't that back during the Great Depression? People were starving. People needed work. And there were all those leaves lying around on the ground everywhere.

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)

(secretly)

And what did they do with all those leaves?

INTERVIEWER

(discovering the answer
as she answers)

Well, the leaves were raked into "piles". These piles were gathered into one large pile and were put into "sacks" which were "transported" to a central "depot" where they were put into metal containers with "screen tops"...and BURNED! MY GOD! How could they have gotten away with it? Oh yes, they tried to justify themselves by saying that it had to be done. That organic gardening was still in its infancy. And that it was,

(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (cont'd)
 after all, for the good of the
 nation. That if they didn't do it
 the entire country would be up to
 its third floor in humus in less
 than a generation but still... how
 did they get away with it?

INTERVIEWER'S VOICE (V.O.)
 But they did. They did get away
 with it. As will you. Won't you?

INTERVIEWER
 Of course I will. But this is
 different, oh so different. There's
 no Depression. No harbingers of war
 on the Continent from the
 ever-growing Nazi War Machine. No
 rumblings from the Fanatical
 Japanese Hordes. No Roosevelt being
 re-elected to his eighth term...

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

The Interviewer carefully, ceremoniously, stacks completed
 forms, clearing an ample space for an entirely new set of
 forms.

INTERVIEWER
 Now --- What do you feel is your
 most outstanding characteristic?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
 Where's the fun? I'm watching. I'm
 listening---

JONATHAN
 Well, that I'm a good worker and I
 get along well with people.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
 Ha-ha! That's a good one!
 Hilarious.

INTERVIEWER
 Do you play a musical instrument?

JONATHAN
 Um --- I used to play the clarinet.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
 Why not the bongos?

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any unusual mannerisms in action or speech; any peculiarities in appearance or clothing preference, that distinguishes you from other people?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You're only sinking deeper.

JONATHAN

Dammit! Let me think! And don't mix the metaphor.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

What metaphor?

JONATHAN

The train! The train! A speeding train. You've got me in quicksand.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any unusual mannerisms in action or speech; any peculiarities in appearance or clothing preference, that distinguishes you from other people?

JONATHAN

(a beat)

No. Not really.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You choose the metaphor, you stupid, trapped man.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever worn a mask in public for reasons other than as a part of a costume?

JONATHAN

On Mardi Gras one year I dressed up like a ghost. But that's a costume, isn't it?

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever done anything for which, later, you could find no reason for having done in the first place?

Pause.

JONATHAN

I'm not sure I understand.

INTERVIEWER

(exactly as before)

Have you ever done anything for which, later, you could find no reason for having done in the first place?

JONATHAN

Um...in public or private?

INTERVIEWER

(pointedly looking at him)

Either.

JONATHAN

(smiling)

Of course not.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

What kind of a question is that?

JONATHAN

I guess they're trying to screen out the nuts. But what kind of a nut would answer a question so as to give it away that he was a nut?

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Or maybe it's a trick question.

JONATHAN

But what's the trick?

INTERVIEWER

Are you positive?

JONATHAN

(not positively)

Yes.... No. A real nut would answer something stupid, something inane but not insane, to cover up the fact that he was a nut. On the other hand, by my not answering it could be taken to mean that I was hiding something because, well, I guess everyone at some time or other...

INTERVIEWER

Take your time. We like to be as thorough as possible.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

No kidding.

JONATHAN

(pacing)

Was it a trick question? Should I have made something up? I mean, I've been making up names and places and dates. What's one more? Wait. I know. That was THE QUESTION. There's always one question tucked away that decides whether or not you're suitable. One little question tucked away in the padding and I let it pass without...!

JONATHAN'S VOICE

But you answered it.

JONATHAN

Yes. I did answer it. I've never done anything for which, later, I could find no reason for having done in the first place. There would have been no reason for jumping off the train! It would have been a...senseless... spontaneous --- act. And I didn't. I haven't.... I...couldn't.

Jonathan returns to his chair, unusually calm.

INTERVIEWER

Do you smoke?

His unusual calm resolves itself into a transference of both himself and the Interviewer into:

INT. A BAR. NIGHT.

A rather antiseptic and empty Bar. The kind one finds in a downtown hotel.

The Interviewer is already seated as Jonathan sits next to her. He seemingly not noticing her. She immediately sizing him up.

INTERVIEWER

Do you smoke?

JONATHAN

No ----

INTERVIEWER

Do you drink alcoholic beverages?

JONATHAN

(laughs)

Yes. Sure----

Anticipating this might be something, he turns fully to her.

INTERVIEWER

(sexily)

Which of the following characterizations best describes your drinking habits: Heavy. Heavy-Social. Light-Social. Social. Light. Occasional.

(sultry)

----Infrequent----

JONATHAN

I'd say I fall somewhere between Heavy-Social. And Light.

INTERVIEWER

(intrigued)

Hmmm. That would be. Moderate?

JONATHAN

Yeah, but Moderate implies that I drink Often. But in Moderate. Amounts.

INTERVIEWER

(leaning in to him)

Are you an Infrequently-Moderate. Or Frequently-Moderate.

(supporting her chin)

Drinker.

JONATHAN

I...I don't know.

INTERVIEWER

So --- How often. Do you become.
(drawing it out)

Intoxicated. To the point of...
(moistening her lips)

Drunkenness.

JONATHAN

....Rarely.

INTERVIEWER

Really?

JONATHAN

Seldom?

INTERVIEWER

When you become, intoxicated, to the point of, drunkenness, is it Social. Or...

(whispering in his ear)

Private.

JONATHAN

About Equal.

INTERVIEWER

Type of alcoholic beverage most often consumed.

JONATHAN

Beer. Please.

He turns to get his beer. When he turns back, she is gone.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer seems to be taking a momentary mental break as she shifts papers. Jonathan studies her.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Now! Now's the time to get out. To get off the train. Get out. Jump off!

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Things would be much simpler if he just left.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

If you can just get through to her.

JONATHAN

(trying)

Um...I'd like to...uh, I...

INTERVIEWER

Is there something the matter with you?

JONATHAN

Uh...no. No, not at all.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Maybe it's not quite time. Maybe one more question.

INTERVIEWER

We have to go through a complete medical history now

JONATHAN & JONATHAN'S VOICE

Oh my god....

Jonathan clenches his eyes shut:

INT. OFFICE. NIGHT.

Jonathan's eyes snap open.

The Office is dim. He hears "clickity-clack clickety-clack". Notices lights streaming by through the frosted glass door.

He goes to the Door. Tries to open it but it seems locked. He remembers and tries to slide the door. It slides open. A windy rush.

JONATHAN

And you said it was a pit of quicksand.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

(railroad)

Next station: Redemption! The train doesn't stop so be quick about it! Helmets recommended! Insurance required! GUTS!: useful but optional. So go ahead. Ya wanta push? Remember to roll!

The Interviewer clicks on the desk lamp.

INTERVIEWER

Of course the job here is completely irrelevant I don't know if there even is a job. That's not my job

She snaps off the light.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer turns a page.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any identifying features such as scars or tattoos

JONATHAN

On my right thigh, a birthmark maybe I did answer that ONE QUESTION correctly the first time

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever had Nephritis

JONATHAN

No... I have never done anything
for which I can find no reason for
having done

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Here, unlike life, there will soon
come a time when he will have to
come forward, stand on the SPOT and
make his BIG SPEECH saying, "this
is who I am"

(speaking)

Have you ever had Nephrosis,
Bursitis, or Chlorosis

JONATHAN

No no no... It doesn't mean that
I'm a nut it just means that I'm
normal totally completely
hopelessly normal

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

And they all come in here
pretending

(speaking)

Lumbago

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Pretending to wear a tie
(speaking)

Colitis

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Pretending to not sweat
(speaking)

Pellagra

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Pretending to know each and every
one of the little details, the tiny
bits of their lives

(speaking)

Phlebitis

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

He didn't even tie that tie FAKE
little metal clips I bet he's
scared to death it'll fall off if
he had to jerk his neck around in a
hurry

(speaking)

Lethargy

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Distemper

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Trachoma

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Polio

JONATHAN

No... OH a great big NOthing
twenty-six years and what have I
got to show for it not a single
unmotivated spontaneous act

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever been hospitalized for
Lockjaw Anthrax or Cowpox

JONATHAN

Numbers dates recitation of names
and places that's what my life has
been one long dissertation no peaks
no valleys just plateau

JONATHAN'S VOICE

No no no

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Why do they keep coming some even
pretending to be pretending

(speaking)

Jaundice Measles Rickets Palsy

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 And they're all the same
 (speaking)
 Asthma

JONATHAN
 No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 Of course each one is different but
 they're all different in the same
 exact way
 (speaking)
 Dropsy

JONATHAN
 No

INTERVIEWER
 Hemorrhoids

JONATHAN
 No

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 AND THEY KEEP COMING and I keep
 working
 (speaking)
 Bulimia

JONATHAN
 No

INTERVIEWER
 Acne

JONATHAN
 I couldn't bring myself to just get
 up and walk out that would have
 been THE ACT a spontaneous act but
 I couldn't what a mess... Yes

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
 I do want to eat don't I
 (speaking)
 Cancer

JONATHAN
 No... Yet there must be something
 there has to have been some act
 sometime somewhere for no reason or
 otherwise what is the use of
 continuing...living

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever been stricken with
rabbit fever

JONATHAN

Wait I've never wanted to work here
I... No

INTERVIEWER

Scarlet Fever

JONATHAN

And I don't want to work here do
I... No

INTERVIEWER

Typhoid Fever

JONATHAN

Did I have to come here... No

INTERVIEWER

Spotted Fever

JONATHAN

Do I or did I really want to work
here... No

INTERVIEWER

Rheumatic Fever

JONATHAN

Do I have any reason whatever for
being here... No

INTERVIEWER

Parrot Fever

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

Parrot Fever

JONATHAN'S VOICE

No

INTERVIEWER

Parrot Fever

JONATHAN

No! ... Then have I ever done
anything for which, later, I could
find no reason for having done in
the first place?

INTERVIEWER
Fever?

JONATHAN AND JONATHAN'S VOICE
NO!

INTERVIEWER
No?

JONATHAN
I mean, yes

INTERVIEWER
Would you care to elaborate?

JONATHAN
No

INTERVIEWER
But do

JONATHAN
What?

INTERVIEWER
Elaborate

JONATHAN
Yes when I have a cold or the flu I
get a Fever Sometimes

INTERVIEWER
(coincident with
Jonathan's following
speech)
Do you have or have you ever had:
moles warts piles corns abscesses
scabs boils blobs ... tetter

JONATHAN
I have done something I am doing
something and to know it makes it
possible to continue to sit it
through because I don't have to be
here I'm here for no reason and it
feels good I am acting
spontaneously and it feels so good
I think I might explode!

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

This is the exact scene as before.

INTERVIEWER
Do you smoke?

JONATHAN
You've asked that already.

INTERVIEWER
And did you answer?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
Did you know?

JONATHAN
Yes.

INTERVIEWER
What?

JONATHAN
"No".

Satisfied with this bit of wit, Jonathan takes a long pull on his Beer. Their noses are almost touching.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan leans forward over the desk with his arm preparing to stretch out toward her.

INTERVIEWER
He's trying to get over my desk.
This desk. Is a wall. A wall over
which I may not climb if I wish
to...eat. But because it is a wall
doesn't mean it can't be scaled.

She pushes back her chair just a bit. She opens the long drawer. She glances in: her choices are a Pistol, a Machete, and a Meat Cleaver. Puts her hand into the Drawer.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Someone could jump up and down on
the other side waving their hands.
But they don't. And I'd not see.
Someone could stand up on a chair
and peer over. But they wouldn't.
And I'd look the other way.
Someone could even climb the wall,
pull themselves up and squat atop
the desk and stay and talk a while.

Jonathan's hand and arm have been slowly approaching her across the Desk.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Or they could even reach over...

She jumps up with the Machete and deftly hacks off Jonathan's encroached Hand with a single stroke.

It turns out bloodless and rather comical, Jonathan merely staring at the completed deed.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Of course they'd have to answer the questions. They all have to answer the questions. That is the delight and that is the torture of it all.

She turns a page.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Left-handed or right-handed?

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

She resumes her usual position.

Jonathan has relaxed into his.

Several of the hanging incandescent lights flicker and die. Both notice this. The lights remaining cast neat pools of brightness in the now darkish open space of the Office surrounding the Desk.

INTERVIEWER

Has anyone in your family ever been obese?

JONATHAN

Yes.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You've got some power now.

Jonathan wanders from light pool to light pool.

JONATHAN

Yes! How different it is to be doing something for no reason at all.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

What are you going to do with it?

JONATHAN

Well, if it comes to it, my Uncle Dudley can be fat -- or not fat --or the Bishop of Cologne if I choose.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Why, slap me silly! "Bishop of Cologne." How fragrant! But why stop there: how's about Arch-Bishop of Cologne.

JONATHAN

(bowing)

Thank you. Thank you. To continue: I can have a PhD.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Wow!

JONATHAN

Or have been a Captain in the Navy.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

The United States Navy----

JONATHAN

---or a Marine Colonel. With cancer---

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Nice touch.

Jonathan squints up into the light above him.

JONATHAN

Thank you. Thank you.

He takes a bow.

INTERVIEWER

(strongly)

Blood type.

INT. THEATER STAGE. DAY.

Both Jonathan and the Interviewer stand on a bare stage in a spotlight as applause dies down. They are taking short bows.

JONATHAN

Thank you.

She whips out a steno pad and pen, poising professionally.

The Routine begins quite straightforwardly with Jonathan as only slightly serious about facts of the situation but as each gains comfort by the end each is trying to upstage and outdo the other in an effort to put the bit over.

INTERVIEWER

Now, sir, there's only one more thing we need to know.

JONATHAN
And what's that?

INTERVIEWER
Your blood type.

JONATHAN
My blood type?

INTERVIEWER
Yes --- Blood type.

JONATHAN
Really?

INTERVIEWER
Blood type.

JONATHAN
Don't know.

INTERVIEWER
Are you "A"?

JONATHAN
What?

INTERVIEWER
Are you "A"?

JONATHAN
Am I a what?

INTERVIEWER
Are you an "A"?

JONATHAN
"Am I an A?"? Hmmmm....

INTERVIEWER
Are you?

JONATHAN
What?

INTERVIEWER
An "A"!

JONATHAN
Not certain.

INTERVIEWER
Are you a "B"?

JONATHAN
Do I look like a bee?

A lone snicker from the blackness of the audience.

INTERVIEWER
"B"?

JONATHAN
No!

INTERVIEWER
Then you're "O"?

JONATHAN
....Must be.

Another lone snicker.

INTERVIEWER
(starting)
Blood type...

JONATHAN
(finishing)
...O.

INTERVIEWER
Positive?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER
Then you'll have to take a blood
test.

JONATHAN
What for?

INTERVIEWER
To find out your blood type.

JONATHAN
My blood type? I just told you it
was...

BOTH
...O...

JONATHAN
Right.

INTERVIEWER
Positive?

JONATHAN
No.

INTERVIEWER

Then you'll have to test it. Have you ever had it typed before?

JONATHAN

Sure. In the Navy. All Naval Officers gotta know their blood type.

INTERVIEWER

And what type is it?

JONATHAN

O.

INTERVIEWER

Positive?

JONATHAN

No! I'm not positive, I'm...

INTERVIEWER

...if you're not sure...

JONATHAN

...I am sure. I'm positive...

INTERVIEWER

...but you've been telling me you're not positive. Now make up your mind! If you're not positive then we've got to find out so that our records can be correct...

JONATHAN

...look. My blood type is...

BOTH

O

JONATHAN

Right

INTERVIEWER

Positive?

JONATHAN

No

INTERVIEWER

NOW WAIT A MINUTE!

Lone laughter from another voice. Female. We see that the audience consists of Jonathan and Interviewer sitting across the aisle from each other.

All other seats empty. Each oblivious of the other though enjoying the show.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Don't say anything. My blood type
is "O". You got that?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
You said that before.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
I know but do you have it?

INTERVIEWER
Got it

JONATHAN
Good. Write it down. Next to
where it says, "Blood type" : O

INTERVIEWER
O

JONATHAN
So far so good. I am O...negative.

INTERVIEWER
Oooooo-kay. "O...negative". Ohhh,
I see...

JONATHAN
Now she sees....

Outright laughter from both in the audience.

INTERVIEWER
Let me see if I got this right.

JONATHAN
I'm not holding my breath.

INTERVIEWER
Your blood type is...

BOTH
Oooooooo

JONATHAN
Yes-yes

INTERVIEWER
Oooooooo negative

JONATHAN
You gottit!

INTERVIEWER
No mistakes? Perfectly correct?

JONATHAN
Right

INTERVIEWER
As it is here

JONATHAN
Correct-a-roony

INTERVIEWER
Without error

JONATHAN
On the dot

INTERVIEWER
Take a look

JONATHAN
That's it

INTERVIEWER
No doubt?

JONATHAN
None what-ev-er.

INTERVIEWER
Are you positive?

JONATHAN
Yes...
(oops!)

INTERVIEWER
BUT IT SAYS HERE THAT YOU ARE
NEGATIVE!!!

A rim shot from the pit.

Jonathan now stands alone center stage in a light pool.

JONATHAN
I'm positive I'm negative!!!
(dead stop. then softly)
I completely cancel myself out.
(accidently making a sign
of the cross)
I. Do. Not. Exist.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan drags his chair around to the Interviewer's side of the Desk.

JONATHAN

O positive! O negative! O! O! "Oh,
you beautiful doll...!"

She is stunned. Then she reaches for the top page of a stack of papers.

He slaps a hand on top. She grabs the pull of the long drawer but his other hand stops her from pulling it open. He looks directly at her. She turns her head away. Keeping a hand on the drawer, he sits on the desk, on the papers she had reached for.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

(conversationally)

That really helped. I mean, that's
twice in a day! Who would believe
it? I'm actually sitting on this
desk. Her desk.

During this speech she pushes away from the Desk, gets up and moves the hands of the clock back to 9:45.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Until this moment it was like, I
don't know, a kind of game. But now
that I've made real human
contact... Now I feel I want to be
here. I want the job.

She returns.

Jonathan has slipped off the Desk and pushed his chair back to his side, leaning against the back. Upon her return she contemplates opening the drawer but instead takes great care and thought to find a new set of Papers.

INTERVIEWER

Do you drink coffee?

JONATHAN

Yeah, as a matter of fact I do.
(he settles back into his
chair)
Just half a cup -- no sugar.

INTERVIEWER

Are you a heavy drinker?

JONATHAN

Naw, not really. To be truthful, I'd prefer a soft drink or maybe some fruit juice. How about you?

INTERVIEWER

Is this because of a stomach disorder?

JONATHAN

(realizing)

No. You mean--? Oh. I just don't care for coffee that much.

He resumes his seat.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Okay focus now. The job. This is the hoop you've got to jump through to get the job that lies just ahead in the distance. You can almost see it now.

INTERVIEWER

Do you daydream?

JONATHAN

What?

INTERVIEWER

Do you daydream?

JONATHAN

Yeah. Sometimes.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever been under the care of a psychiatrist or book psychologist?

JONATHAN

No.

INTERVIEWER

Do you pick your nose?

JONATHAN

What? ... No. Oh, I see.

His informality has completely worn off.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Watch it -- watch it. Play the game to win!

JONATHAN

No. I have never picked my nose.

INTERVIEWER

Do you like classical music?

JONATHAN

Not really.

INTERVIEWER

Should you like classical music?

JONATHAN

Probably.

INTERVIEWER

Could you like classical music?

JONATHAN

No.

Is there the slightest signal of satisfaction from the Interviewer that she is back on course? Yes.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever stolen anything?

JONATHAN

No.

INTERVIEWER

How would you define stealing?

JONATHAN

Oh, I see what you are getting at...

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever stolen anything?

JONATHAN

Yes.

She makes a small show of noting this.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any phobias?

JONATHAN

"Phobias"?

INTERVIEWER

Fears

JONATHAN
(irritated)
----- No.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Reconsider! Reconsider!

JONATHAN
But I don't!

JONATHAN'S VOICE
You're not afraid of anything?

JONATHAN
Sure but I'm sure they mean some
sort of syndrome and I'm not going
in that direction.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Tell 'er you've got...
kleptophobia: fear of steel.

INTERVIEWER
You have no fears no fears
whatever---

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Or how about Phobiaphobia: fear of
fear - itself- or, fear of Franklin
Delano Roosevelt. Look, buddy, they
want something. Why not give it to
them?

JONATHAN
Well, I...

INTERVIEWER
...I have before me a list of
one-hundred and fifty-seven
clinically verified varieties of
phobias. Shall I go through them
or shall I repeat the question?

JONATHAN'S VOICE
What did I tell you? Give it to
them. And maybe you'll get
something in return.

JONATHAN
Yeah. A straight jacket. Repeat the
question. Please.

INTERVIEWER
Do you have any phobias?

JONATHAN

....Fear of dying. I'm afraid to die.

A rather long pause as she scans through the list, several pages long.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

That's good! That's safe. I mean, who isn't afraid to die?

INTERVIEWER

There is no such category here as "fear of dying". Perhaps you mean fear of death or dead bodies? or the grave? or of darkness? Is that what you mean?

JONATHAN

I suppose that's what I mean

JONATHAN'S VOICE

But that's not what you mean, is it?

INTERVIEWER

Is that what you mean?

JONATHAN

Yes. No! That's not what I mean. I'm not afraid of death. Because you can never know death. But dying you experience. You feel the pain. It is real. You can never know death. It does not exist. But dying...All phobias are fears but are all fears phobias? I'm afraid I'll be stabbed. I'm afraid this tie will fall off. I'm afraid I won't get this job. I'm afraid I will get this job. If there is a job. In that case I'm afraid I'm making quite an ass of myself. I wonder what kind of a phobia that is?

For the first time he ventures to examine the papers on the desk.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

She's down to the last few pages. And look at my answers: "no-no-no-no-no." I've got to start being more positive.

The Interviewer opens the long drawer and pulls a single, long page out and a new, unsharpened pencil, which she proceeds to sharpen with a small hand-held sharpener like a butcher stropping his knife for a slaughter.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

That's you she's grinding up. How does it feel? Gnawing off the last little bit of self-worth and confidence you've managed to cling to.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever engaged in sexual activity with another person who is the same sex as yourself?

JONATHAN

....no

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever thought about having sex with a person who is of the same sex as yourself?

JONATHAN

Thought about?

INTERVIEWER

Just "yes" or "no". No elaboration is necessary. These questions are completely scientific. "Have you ever contemplated...?"

JONATHAN

....Yes

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever engaged in sexual activity with an animal such as a sheep a deer or a dog.

JONATHAN

No.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever contemplat...

JONATHAN

No!

Interviewer makes a final short note on the page and thence to another set of Pages.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever engaged in a medical self-diagnosis for the purpose of determining the nature of an illness?

JONATHAN

What?

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever...

JONATHAN

"Self-diagnosis"? Sure. If you mean...

INTERVIEWER

---your answer is "yes"?

JONATHAN

It is....

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever self-prescribed DRUGS for the purpose of treating a self-diagnosed illness?

JONATHAN

That's the same thing. Yes. Yes, I have...

INTERVIEWER

The nature of these self-prescribed DRUGS---

JONATHAN

...there's nothing wrong -- I mean aspirin, cold tablets, cough syrup, laxatives, all over the counter...

INTERVIEWER

Please describe the method and/or methods used to acquire these self-prescribed DRUGS with particular emphasis on the location and nature of this acquisition.

JONATHAN

(mimicking her style)

I went to the DRUG STORE on the CORNER, handed over a quantity of MONEY and received DRUGS in return.

There is a pause. She keeps her head down but does not write on the paper.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Did she hear you?

JONATHAN

I'm not sure.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You know, you shouldn't have said that.

JONATHAN

Possibly. But it's the truth.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

(laughs)

"Truth"?

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever been involved in the use, possession, or sale of marijuana, heroin, L.S.D., cocaine, or any other hallucinogens, hypnotics, or other known or unknown, harmful, non-harmful, or habit-forming DRUGS and/or CHEMICALS... or sniffed glue?

JONATHAN

(emphatically)

No.

INTERVIEWER

Then if I asked you what glue smelled like you could not in all honesty answer?

JONATHAN

Well, I...

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever sniffed glue?

JONATHAN

....yes.

JONATHAN'S VOICE

Bye now. I'm leaving.

JONATHAN

No!

JONATHAN'S VOICE

You're on your own.

JONATHAN

Haven't I always been?

(pause)

Haven't I?

(pause)

I have.

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan and the Interviewer sit opposite each other at the desk.

She gathers together all her previous work into a neat stack and folders it. Remaining are two long pages of paper which she precisely aligns before her.

Jonathan gets up.

JONATHAN

Okay. I know what this is. And I know... That spot over there. Crackling in the corner. That's for me. That's the Place and this is the Moment everything has been building towards.

(he steps into the
spotlight.theatrically:)

To be or not. To be, that is. The question? It's not a question. Or an answer. It's supposed to be some kind of self-revelation. Some story, some incident that suddenly makes everything make sense. I think it's the dying thing that got me. It's not that I'm afraid to die. It's that I will die as I have lived. As nothing. There's no story to tell. No ---- nothing. Nothing that says it all. Or even says anything.

INT. THEATER. DAY.

Jonathan stands center stage in a similarly crackling spot of light. He has said all his lines but cannot leave the stage. An uncomfortable pause. We see that the audience consists only of the Interviewer.

JONATHAN

(now more to himself than
theatrically)

I am trapped. Trapped. In a room. Locked in. But not a small room. No. Not small.

The Interviewer reaches down to retrieve her purse from the floor, setting it on her lap

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Trapped in a cell? No. You can always escape from a cell. You can... you can put your hands to the wall. You can push. Claw. Break!

She reaches into her purse.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

I am trapped in a room so large I can never break out.

She takes the Pistol from the purse. She takes a nervous aim using both hands.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

A room so large, that no matter how far and how fast I run, I can never reach the walls of...this... room ---But wait! Maybe literal escape isn't the way out of this. Maybe if I were to somehow make simple, human contact. Maybe that's how this whole thing is supposed to be...

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Yes, it is the same Bar.

Jonathan ambles in, surveying the place. He spots the Interviewer at the Bar.

He approaches her.

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

The Interviewer looks up at Jonathan, lost in his Bar scene contemplation.

INTERVIEWER

(smiling)

What if----?

INT. BAR. NIGHT. -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan slips onto the stool next to the Interviewer.

JONATHAN

So, how did you come to be here?

INTERVIEWER

I'd say we are both here by...
mutual imagination.

JONATHAN

(a little taken aback)
Ah --- so, what's your name?

INTERVIEWER

Tell me, if you could be any part
of a cathedral, what part would you
be?

We notice sitting to the Interviewer's immediate right, is
The Boss, who interjects immediately:

BOSS

(Irishly)
I'd be the Precious Blood of Our
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

He lifts a glass of Red Wine.

BOSS (CONT'D)

For obvious reasons.

Sitting to the right of the Boss is the Sister.

SISTER

I'd be the Squint ---

She lifts a shot glass of Whiskey.

SISTER (CONT'D)

---huddled together with the lepers
and other dregs.

Sitting to the right of the Sister is the Mother Superior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I'd be the Stoup---

She lifts a large bottle of Fancy Water.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

--so I could withhold or grant
access to the Holy Water as I saw
fit.

And to the right of the Mother Superior is... wait for
it!...The Pope.

THE POPE

I am the Pinnacle below which
almost all else exists.

He lifts a huge martini glass which, in place of the expected umbrella, is an ornate 4-legged Canopy.

Glasses lifted, the Quartet rises and turns to Jonathan expectantly.

Jonathan stands and lifts his beer ---

JONATHAN
Mazeltoy---!

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Both the Interviewer and Jonathan are smiling, facing each other. The Interviewer returns first to the task.

INTERVIEWER
Tell me one thing about yourself
you wouldn't want me to know.

A rather strained pause, as Jonathan comes down.

JONATHAN
I just daydreamed of you.

Another pause as the Interviewer decides, reluctantly, then enjoyingly to say...

INTERVIEWER
.... I know

The Interviewer makes a notation on the Form. Then looks up. We see her face fully and directly.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Have you ever stood in an
unfamiliar shower stall, directly
under the nozzle, ready for your
shower, with complete confidence
that the faucets with the "H" and
the "C" on them really were what
they proclaimed to be?

She again looks off into the far corner and sees herself, this time in a towel and shower cap standing beneath a large showerhead, hand poised to turn on one of two faucets facing her.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I wanted hot water. Instinctively,
my hand went to the faucet with the
"H" on it. But wait! Other people
than myself use this shower. In
public showers the faucets are
always reversed so if I wanted
(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
"hot" I would have to turn the
"cold" on.

The Interviewer is seen full face and directly.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
You see, I had to know before
turning on the water what I was
going to get and I had to know by
figuring it out myself. Not simply
by standing out of the way and
turning on a faucet.

Interviewer stands still beneath the nozzle but her
concentration is upon the two faucets, so prominently "H"
and "C" before her.

She gently pulls on one of the faucets. It easily would come
off.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Okay. This is a public shower. So
hot is not hot and cold is not
cold. Therefore, hot must be cold
and cold must be hot. Simple!

The Interviewer exchanges the pencil on the desktop for a
pen from the long drawer.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Too simple. I mean if it was as
simple to figure out as a mere
reversal who would be fooled except
fools? No me. No. Not me. This
was...Deep. Suppose someone
knowing that hot was cold and cold
was hot and that this was fooling
no one decided to return them to
their original positions so that
hot was hot and cold was cold. Now
this would certainly confuse any
number of people after all who
would expect hot to be hot and cold
to be cold? Not me. Certainly not
me.

The Interviewer's anxiety makes her push at the seemingly
close walls of the tiny "shower stall".

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)
Okay! In the beginning hot was hot
and cold was cold then hot was cold
and cold was hot but became hot
again and cold became... but
suppose?

Her hand trembling reaches towards the "C" faucet.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

NO!

At her Desk, the Interviewer's hand is stretched out as though to turn on the faucet.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

NO! No matter what I chose nothing would be more than a guess. It cannot be known! And I will not guess!

In the corner, her hand outstretched, she grips a faucet. But pulls back, covers her face.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

I AM NOT GOING TO BE TRICKED AGAIN!!!!

INT. THEATER. DAY.

The Interviewer cannot pull the trigger. Though she lowers her aim from Jonathan on the stage, her finger remains poised on the trigger.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

The Interviewer's hands are resting palms down on the desktop.

INTERVIEWER

I didn't shower. I couldn't shower. I dressed. And simply left. Which is what he should have done. But now----

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

The lights suddenly and sequentially right themselves. The Interviewer switches off her desk lamp.

There are only the two long pages remaining on the desk. The folder of previous pages is full and fat, the pen is resting nicely and precisely, and the lighting is as it was in the beginning.

INTERVIEWER

Is there any thing, person, or idea without which you feel you could not continue as a viable and functioning member of the human race?

JONATHAN

....toilet paper.

INTERVIEWER

I am going to say a word. After the word you will name it's opposite. For instance, if I say "black" the correct response would be "white". If I say "left" the correct response would be "right". If I say "up" the correct response would be "down". Is this clear?

JONATHAN

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

No.

JONATHAN

Um ---- Yes?

INTERVIEWER

White.

JONATHAN

Black.

INTERVIEWER

Right.

JONATHAN

Left.

INTERVIEWER

Down.

JONATHAN

Up.

INTERVIEWER

Clean.

JONATHAN

Dirty.

INTERVIEWER

False.

JONATHAN

True

INTERVIEWER

Mountain.

...Valley. JONATHAN

Table. INTERVIEWER

...Chair? JONATHAN

Good. INTERVIEWER

Bad. JONATHAN

Day. INTERVIEWER

Night. JONATHAN

Knight. INTERVIEWER

--um, day. JONATHAN

Knight. INTERVIEWER

Oh, ah -- peasant? JONATHAN

Poor. INTERVIEWER

Rich. JONATHAN

Sickness. INTERVIEWER

Health. JONATHAN

Handkerchief. INTERVIEWER

Ah... JONATHAN

Handkerchief. INTERVIEWER

Ah, I...don't know. JONATHAN

INTERVIEWER

Mailbox.

JONATHAN

...eh, sorry. I don't...

INTERVIEWER

Sawhorse.

Jonathan shakes his head "no".

The Interviewer curtly rises.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Thank you.

JONATHAN

You're welcome?

She sharply goes to the door.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Oh, I mean, that's all?

INTERVIEWER

Would you mind waiting in here please?

JONATHAN

Sure, I....

She has left.

Pause.Pause.Pause. . . .

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

No spotlight now but I've got..
I've got my story now. It's not
personal or anything. It's, um,
sort of made-up. Sort of.

(laughs)

But it's a short one. Two
travelers were lost in a great,
vast desert.

He looks around to confirm its desert-like quality.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Their supplies were gone. They had
no water. They had no food. They
were totally and completely lost.
But they did know where they were.

He looks around again. Goes to the Desk, placing the palms
of both hands on top.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

They were on the Edge of
Desperation. At length they came to
a Door.

Keeping his hands on the Desk, he looks at the Door,
longingly.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

On the other side of the Door -- on
the other side of the Door... was a
Beautiful Oasis.

(pause)

While not going to the Door, he mimes poised to open a door.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

A sign on the Door said, "Beautiful
Oasis. No Trespassing."

(he pulls back. laughs)

One of the Travelers opened the
Door and... Trespassed. The other
Traveler bypassing the Door,
continued on. And on. And....on.
Until....Until

He returns to his chair at the other side of the Desk. He
sits.

INT. FLAT. DAY.

The coffee maker, of the "mister" variety, has boiled down
the liquid to a thick layer of black goo and is starting to
smoulder dangerously.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Jonathan is still trying to get a comfortable position and
posture in the chair, still anticipating the Interviewer's
return.

JONATHAN

Until. Continued on until. . . .

INT. FLAT. DAY. -- MOMENTS LATER

The pot smokes and bursts into flames.

MOTHER'S VOICE

...and from what you said it sounds
like a good company that'll offer a
real long-term job security. Oh!
And be sure to bring your diploma.
And don't forget posture! Sit
straight. Don't slouch. And...

INT. OFFICE. DAY. -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan lightly rests his hands on his knees.

A great relief and satisfaction comes over him.

As we move away we see that He is seated not in a small Office, or, if indeed that he is even inside. He is in a room whose walls are infinitely in the Distance.

We continue to pull away from him until he is the merest speck in

EXT. THE MILKY WAY GALAXY.

Gigantic, alone, silent, hanging in the blackness of interstellar space