

here, we all do it —

JANET. No —

PALMER. It doesn't make you some kind of monster, Janet. Were you in the city that day?

JANET. Yes, but —

PALMER. See — you do it.

JANET. (*Sharp.*) No — I don't! (*Beat.*) I'd walk by all those people down in Union Square, looking at the handmade signs: "Have you seen so-and-so?" And, I swear ... everyone *knew someone*. They all *had someone*. Someone they lost. And I *didn't*. (*We think she's done but then...*)

There was a consultant at the foundation. His name was Elliot. He'd be there for meetings every other week or so. I'd said hello, nothing more. And then one day someone mentioned his girlfriend. How she'd worked for Morgan Stanley, in the north tower, had tried to call him, but ...

The next time I saw him, I couldn't help it, I just ... mentioned this. It was so stupid — I mean, I didn't know this guy at all, really ... and then he asked if I wanted to have coffee.

It was nice. He talked about her. How much he missed her. We made a kind of regular date of it — coffee or a drink after work, whenever he had business in the building. And it started to get ... a little more personal. I mean, he knew I was engaged, I'd told him about Adam — but he said he just really liked spending time with me, and not since he'd lost his girlfriend had he felt ... you know.

And then I had this thought. It just hit me one night: *He made her up*. This loss. To get all this sympathy from people — from women — and God, that pissed me off — so I went online, to the site, where the victims are listed ... and I looked up Elliot's girlfriend ... and she was there. She was right there. Just like he'd told me.

And right then — I know, I don't care how this sounds — right then I wanted to tell people: "I *knew someone*. I *lost someone*. She died in the north tower and I knew her and I've been helping her boyfriend through his grief." The next time I saw Elliot we were at a bar, in this back booth, and he tried to kiss me — I had *wanted him to*, for weeks, just a kiss, just *that much* — but when he finally did it: I was disgusted. I wanted to be sick. Because *I had NO feelings for this guy at all* — I would never have given him the fucking time of day — except for the fact that he *knew someone* ... and now *I finally knew someone*. *Someone who'd been there*. (*Pause.*)

PALMER. Did you tell Adam?

# YANKEE TAVERN

## ACT ONE

Adam / Janet

Morning. Lights up fast.

Adam is taking chairs off the tables, stocking coolers, etc., opening up the tavern for the day, as —

Janet sits at a table, her jacket still on, staring hard at a large Starbucks coffee cup in front of her.

ADAM. (With a grin.) Is there something you want me to say?

JANET. See, that's it —

ADAM. It feels like there's some *one thing* you want me to say —

JANET. — That's what you do!

ADAM. — And if I can just say that to you, then everything will be *fine*. What is it, Janet? What's the thing you want me to say? (She gives him a long look, then turns away once again.) Things are taking shape, right? The invitations have been sent out, and the —

JANET. (Sarcastic, not angry.) The invitations have *not* been sent out. The save-the-date cards have gone out, but not the invitations —

ADAM. Okay, but still — we're moving forward —

JANET. — And half of yours came *back*.

ADAM. What?

JANET. The addresses you gave me — friends, family on your side — about half the save-the-date cards I sent to your list came back — (Perhaps she removes a stack of these returned cards from her bag.) saying, "No Such Person," "No Such Address." Why would that happen, Adam?

ADAM. I don't know — it's weird.

JANET. That's what I thought, so I called your mom — she was really glad to hear from me —

ADAM. Janet —

JANET. — Since she never hears from you.

ADAM. — Please leave my mother out of our marriage.

JANET. Anyway, we had a little chat and come to find out, you made those people up. Those cards that came back to me: made-up people!

ADAM. You love big weddings — lots of invitations, some huge production —

JANET. Adam, I never once said —

ADAM. — And so Ray and I were sitting here one morning — you know Ray, he does *way better* with the world than's in his mind — and so we just sort of started inventing ... a few ... people. (Janet lifts one of the envelopes.)

JANET. Robbie Marx — your childhood friend?

ADAM. Made up.

JANET. The Willoughbys — Charley and Dana? From the old neighborhood.

ADAM. The old made-up neighborhood.

JANET. You little shit. Even Uncle Seth from Sag Harbor?

ADAM. I always wanted an Uncle Seth. (He moves close to her.) Can't it just be us? (And now they kiss. A nice, long kiss.) Just ... us.

JANET. And Ray. You wouldn't get married without Ray.

ADAM. Ray believes marriage is a global conspiracy engineered by the same people who brought us bar codes and Daylight Savings Time.

JANET. How do those have anything to do with each other?

ADAM. You'll have to ask the expert. (Ray enters through the front door. He wears raggedy clothes [including a very worn cardigan sweater], an old overcoat, and beat-up fedora. He has a kind of low-tech radio headset on his head, connected to an [older style] cell phone, which he wears in a kind of homemade pouch around his neck.)

RAY. (Full of life.) Hello, young lovebirds! — I got my save-the-date card and THE DATE IS SAVED!

JANET. Okay, good.

ADAM. Hey, Ray.

RAY. And just to be clear: I do not believe marriage is a conspiracy. Weddings are a conspiracy — a brutal and pervasive strategy to empty the pockets of guilt-ridden parents and tie up all the good hotels in the month of June.



JANET. Cheers. (And drinks. The bar phone rings. Adam answers it.)  
ADAM. (On phone.) Tavern. (Listens.) Yeah, we're here. Haven't  
torn us down yet. (Adam hangs up the phone.)  
RAY. So: I want to know every last thing about the wedding. Will  
there be an ice sculpture? Some little mermaid with punch flowin'  
over her titties?

ADAM. Jesus.

JANET. We'll see.  
RAY. Shoulda had one a' those when I married Doris. Woulda  
made all the difference.

JANET. How is Doris?  
RAY. She's doin' great — best ex a man could have. I happen to  
know she's very happy with her new — well, what would you call  
it? — Her new ...

ADAM. Mare? Husband?

JANET. Partner? ... Wife.

ADAM. She has a new wife?

RAY. No, I believe this is her first. The first wife she's had.

JANET. Ray, you never said anything —

RAY. Anyway, they're very happy and they found a state that would  
give 'em a license and they lissed and ate cake and went off snorkel-  
ing in Cabo — and so now they are wife and wife and I personally  
think it is just downright frigg'n peachy. (And now Ray is instantly  
back on his cell phone. Into phone.) AM I ON? Okay, good. First of  
all, the question is not, "Was the election rigged?" — The question  
is, "Who RIGGED IT?" — Who was behind all those hanging  
"chads" and all that Floridian hysteria? Who was it that managed to  
keep the sainted Al Gore out of the White House? Well, it was obvi-  
ously the OIL MEN. They clearly rigged the election — not to put  
Bush in the White House, but to put Saint Gore on the road  
toward his Nobel Prize and the Most Convenient Truth imagina-  
ble: scaring the people into "saving the planet." Big Oil has hypno-  
tized the American consumer into thinking that *they alone* can save  
the melting ice caps by recycling their tuna cans and making their  
kids wear hemp! It's outrageous and it's ingenious — (And now Ray  
is headed toward the bathroom —) because the moment the "aver-  
age person" thinks they can "make a difference," at that moment  
Big Oil is always off the hook! So — (Until, still talking on the phone,  
he vanishes. Beat.)

JANET. Adam.

ADAM. Hmm?

JANET. Don't let Ray make a toast at our wedding. (Adam smiles  
and plops his backpack onto the bar — takes out a large book, legal  
pad, highlighter, etc. — and begins to study.) Remember Margaret  
and Rachel? At the foundation?

ADAM. Mm-hmm.

JANET. They've been telling me things I need to do before the  
wedding. Just suggestions.

ADAM. Mm-hmm.

JANET. Like have an affair.

ADAM. (Not looking up.) And how did it go?

JANET. See —

ADAM. Anyone I know?

JANET. — I knew you'd make a joke.

ADAM. (Laughs.) Well, what do you want me to —

JANET. I knew you'd think that was really funny — but they  
weren't joking. They said I'd regret it if I didn't do it.

ADAM. Really?

JANET. (Lightly.) Because you did it. Or you will. The groom  
always has a final fling, right? Or wants to. (He looks up at her.)

ADAM. Why do you listen to these women?

JANET. I don't.

ADAM. Good. (She kisses him.)

JANET. How was your meeting? (Off his look.) With your professor.

ADAM. Former professor.

JANET. She left Columbia?

ADAM. Yeah.

JANET. What's she doing now?

ADAM. She's working in D.C. Was here to do some recruitment,  
I think. I'm not sure.

JANET. She met with a group of you.

ADAM. Just me. We had lunch. She has some people she'd like me  
to meet in D.C. Might lead to something after I get out of school.

JANET. That's great.

ADAM. Mm-hmm.

JANET. Why you? (Off Adam's look, lightly.) Don't take this wrong  
— but why'd she only meet with you? (And Ray bounds back into  
the room, still talking on the phone — on the way, same topic.)

RAY. (On phone.) — Okay, well, true enough! — it's like believing  
in the (quote) Loch Ness monster — that we actually (quote) put a  
man on the moon — yeah, right, it's a cute idea, but — what? (Ray

Janet / Adam



PALMER. (*Doesn't look up.*) Good by me.  
RAY. This is documented, Janet.  
JANET. It's inside a bag or something?  
RAY. No.  
JANET. Some kind of protective sleeve?  
RAY. No. Just lying there, all by its lonesome.  
ADAM. What time?  
RAY. What time?  
ADAM. Yes. What time is it found?  
RAY. Because — wait, lemme see — if it's found at, say, NOON, it seems really weird —  
ADAM. Ray —  
RAY. (*Overlapping.*) — But it's found at FIVE P.M. — well, hey, then it makes perfect sense.  
ADAM. I'm just asking Ray.  
RAY. I don't KNOW, Adam — I have never UNCOVERED the EXACT TIME, all right? —  
PALMER. (*Smiling.*) Three fifty-three. (*Beat.*)  
RAY. What?  
PALMER. Three fifty-three P.M.  
RAY. What'd you get that? (*No answer. Palmer continues to come on, as if he wants to play ball here. Tell me where the number came from. Palmer methodically takes off his battered wristwatch. He hands it to Ray.*) Bullshit. (*Beat.*) You're sayin' you were there? You were there when they found it? (*Palmer just stares at him. Sarcastic.*) Musta had some kind of clearance, huh? — Musta been palling around with the boys from NSA and CSG and all the rest of those spooks!  
PALMER. I was alone.  
RAY. Uh-huh.  
PALMER. And I didn't have any gloves —  
RAY. Sure. (*Palmer [perhaps] uses two straws from atop the bar to illustrate this ...*)  
PALMER. — But I had two pencils in my pocket. And I used 'em kind of like chopsticks —  
RAY. Oh, did you now?  
PALMER. (*A fierce, quiet passion.*) — To lift that passport up, out of the rubble. I had it in my hand ... warm to the touch ... like a limb, like part of a man. And I open it ... and see a face ... a name ... (*Palmer slowly takes off his cap, sets it on the bar.*)  
JANET. That's impossible —

Palmer

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RAY. (*Quick, sharp.*) Shhhhh.  
PALMER. (*Continuing.*) ... And people are running — paper is falling everywhere — like the Yankees had won it again, like there'd been a parade ... and I don't know what to do, so I hold that passport up in the air — to show it to someone, to make someone see. (*Beat.*) But no one's watching. (*Palmer reaches out his hand ...*) No one at all. (*... And Ray gives him back his watch. Silence.*)  
RAY. And next time you bent down, I suppose you found, what? maybe the Lindbergh baby wearing O.J.'s bloody clothes! — I mean, hey fella, you were on a ROLL!  
PALMER. I put it in my pocket. Walked away. Later, I gave it back to them.  
RAY. To the authorities?  
PALMER. Yeah.  
ADAM. (*Enjoying this.*) How about that, Ray?  
RAY. You gave it back to them?  
PALMER. Right.  
RAY. Meaning they had given it to you in the first place?  
PALMER. I placed it there, on the ground — like I was told. Kicked some dirt on it. Then I reached down ... and found it. (*Palmer finishes his beer. Ray is staring at him, intently.*)  
RAY. Jesus — I really want to believe you! I possess an enormous capacity for belief — but sakes-a-live, buddy, you are off the grid now —  
JANET. (*To Palmer.*) Who were you with?  
RAY. (*Laughing.*) He's not with anybody! He's delusional! —  
JANET. I want to know this —  
RAY. (*Overlapping.*) — He's all CANDLES and NO CAKE!  
PALMER. What do I owe you?  
ADAM. Six-fifty. (*Palmer puts money on the counter, then starts for the door.*)  
RAY. (*Enjoying himself.*) Oh, cimon fella, don't leave! — I love nothin' better than a big lie! I was all the time shoutin' to Doris: "I want the lies!" And she'd shout back: (*A la A Few Good Men.*) "YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE LIES." And then we'd laugh our asses right out of our pants! (*— But Palmer is gone. Janet is staring intently at Ray.*)  
JANET. Where's this passport now?  
RAY. It's never mentioned again! Mind you, this is the only existing piece of evidence that places one of the named hijackers on one of the four commandeered flights —  
ADAM. Hey, don't stop there — you better remind me that "New

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**Ray**  
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~~JANET. Adam.~~

~~ADAM. Hmm?~~