

**AMERICAN GUERNICA,
OR THE TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY**

BY DAVID GOLDSMITH

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An informal reading of AMERICAN GUERNICA, OR THE TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY was produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Bill Rauch, Artistic Director) in Ashland, Oregon, on December 9, 2017. The cast was as follows:

JOE	Jeff King
KEN	Rodney Gardiner
CAMILLE	Stefani Potter
AMY	Kate Mulligan
ANNE	K.T. Vogt
MARK	Michael Goodfriend
BILL	Brent Hinkley
ESMÉ	Amelia Sorensen
JAMES EARL CARTER IV	Kyle Sanderson

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

JOE, a bartender, 65

KEN, a political operative, 35, African American

CAMILLE, Mark's daughter, 22

AMY, college friend of Mark, 45

ANNE, Joe's wife, 60

MARK, a painter, Joe's son, 45

BILL, a hedge fund manager, 45

ESMÉ, Amy's daughter, 20

JAMES EARL CARTER IV, the grandson of the former president, 35

PLACES

A conference room at a Ramada Inn in Boca Raton, Florida;

The Smithfield-Pike flat in Mayfair, London;

Joe and Anne's apartment in Boca Raton;

The hotel bar at the Ramada Inn in Boca Raton;

The bedroom in Gareth Pink-Pearthree's Flat (in darkness);

Ken's hotel room in Boca Raton;

A lobby in a mansion in Boca Raton;

Ken's apartment in Georgetown

TIME

The action takes place from May through September of 2012.

AMERICAN GUERNICA, OR THE TWILIGHT OF DEMOCRACY

ACT ONE

Scene 1

First, a supertitle:

“The following story is inspired by historical events.”

Then: “May 2012.”

At rise:

INT. Ramada Inn conference room, Boca Raton, Florida—day.

Joe (65) sits before Ken (African American, 35). Joe apprehensive, Ken businesslike, filling out paperwork, mid-interview with Joe.

KEN. The Joe Marshall who resides at 611 Indian River Lane, Hollywood, Florida 33023?

JOE. Yes.

KEN. And you're how old, Mr. Marshall?

JOE. (*Uncomfortable.*) Sixty-four.

KEN. Mr. Marshall?

JOE. (*Like he forgot.*) Agh, sixty-five, I just had a birthday.

KEN. Happy birthday.

JOE. I blocked it out.

KEN. There's nothing to be nervous about, Joe. May I call you Joe?

JOE. Sure, I just—it's so odd, meeting in a hotel room and all—

KEN. I understand.

JOE. I mean, usually the agency just calls me up and says “you got a gig” and I go.

Beat.

Not that there’s been a lot of gigs lately.

KEN. I bet not.

JOE. Not for my age, anyway. Nowadays they all want the Tom Cruise thing.

KEN. Gay?

JOE. No, like, from that movie. *Cocktails*?

KEN. Oh yes.

JOE. That flashy juggling business. I don’t do that.

KEN. No.

JOE. I make drinks. Any drink you have ever heard of, and a hundred and fifty you haven’t. I’ve mixed them all, and if God forbid I am missing an ingredient for the drink you came into my bar for, I will know exactly what combination of iodine, grenadine, and rubbing alcohol it takes to make you think you’re drinking it. These kids behind a bar nowadays, they don’t know what they’re doing, or why they’re there, they’re reading recipes off a card, or a f-freaking iPhone app, or to get laid, but I learned a *craft*. You understand?

A pause.

KEN. You won’t be needing rubbing alcohol.

JOE. I know, I was—

KEN. We’d be very well-supplied, believe me.

JOE. I meant no disrespect.

KEN. And Mr. Marshall, we’re not looking for Tom Cruise. We were very specific with the agency. We’re staffing this event with more seasoned workers.

JOE. Seasoned workers?

KEN. Not children. Or those with significant language barriers.

JOE. (*A beat, taking that in.*) Oh, well that’s good. (*Then.*) So why the interview in the hotel room?

Pause. Ken smiles.

KEN. This is going to be a very exclusive event, Mr. Marshall. To be blunt, the wealthiest fifty or so men in America and their wives will be in attendance. The governor's campaign director has asked me personally to vet every single one of the workers brought in, to make sure that they're of the highest professional caliber.

JOE. That's excellent.

KEN. Now, we cross-check every single name that we get from every agency's list, so we know that you've been a contributor to the governor, and that you supported him in the primaries, and that's of course a very positive thing.

JOE. I made calls too. Do you have that I made calls?

KEN. I don't. Were you in our field office here in Boca?

JOE. No I mean, from home, to people, you know, Independent voters I know. We'd talk it through, it's a ground game.

KEN. It *is* a ground game, it is, and that's very important, Joe. The future of the country is at stake, and we're on a desperately dangerous path. We need someone with the kind of hands-on business experience of the governor to get us back on track, and that's exactly what he's going to do.

JOE. I believe that, I really do. I'm a huge fan of the governor's.

KEN. Well, that's good. Now, there will be a thorough background check on every employee hired for the event. Are you comfortable with that?

JOE. Yes, yes of course.

KEN. Any arrests or criminal record I should know about?

JOE. I don't even have a parking ticket!

KEN. Good.

JOE. I was a veteran of the Vietnam War.

KEN. I know.

JOE. And the Six Day War. You know?

Ken is looking down, paperwork. A beat. Joe tries to make light:

You know I'm a war veteran, but not if I knocked over a Stop 'n' Shop?

KEN. (*Impassive.*) Did you knock over a Stop 'n' Shop?

JOE. No! Look. I haven't worked in...many, many months. More like a year last Christmas. I know you're considering a lot of people for this job, this is a good job, the pay is... (*Ken looks up at him again.*) Very good, the very high end of very good, and from what you're telling me, the chances of very good tipping are also high.

KEN. (*Teasing?*) Well, that's hard to say, rich people tend to be notoriously bad tippers.

JOE. (*Not sure how to take that.*) Yeah, yeah, my point is this. My wife is having medical issues. She's... (*Becoming emotional.*) ...beautiful, and she works hard, and I...her insurance, she needs an operation for her hands, or she can't work, and I... (*Desperate.*) ...do you understand, what it's like...as a man...

He cannot continue. A beat.

KEN. Mr. Marshall.

JOE. Joe. I said you could call me Joe.

KEN. Who did you vote for in the last election...Joe?

Joe is trapped. A beat.

JOE. (*Weakly joking.*) You mean you don't know, already?

KEN. There's no wrong answer, Joe.

Joe searches the patterns on the rug for an answer, for a sign, for anything...then, rhetorically:

JOE. You'd know if I was lying, wouldn't you.

Ken says nothing.

(*Doomed.*) I voted for the president.

Pause. Ken reaches out a hand and places it on Joe's shoulder.

KEN. So did I.

Joe searches Ken's eyes for answers. Nothing. A beat.

(*Patting Joe's shoulder.*) That's all we need right now, Joe.

He stands.

Thanks for coming in.

Blackout.

Scene 2

INT. Smithfield-Pike flat—Mayfair, London—evening.

A stunning, high-ceilinged, tastefully appointed living room in the most exclusive neighborhood in London.

Camille (22), barefoot, seated comfortably on the couch sipping wine, animatedly chatting away to Amy (45), who appears to be the lady of the house. Both American.

CAMILLE. And it was nothing compared to this.

AMY. You're so sweet.

CAMILLE. I had girlfriends in high school who lived like this, back in Los Angeles.

AMY. Film people?

CAMILLE. Their parents I guess. They sure didn't have your taste. *(Pointing to a sculpture in a Lucite box.)* Oh my God, is that *Man Pointing*?

AMY. *(Looking, laughing, a little bewildered.)* Uh, he seems to be.

CAMILLE. *(Bounding up, to get closer.)* No, that's the name. It's a Giacometti.

AMY. *(Looking again.)* Is it?

CAMILLE. You know it was on tour at the Musée d'Orsay.

AMY. I didn't.

CAMILLE. This very piece. I studied it at Tufts.

She looks around at the walls.

I don't recognize anything else.

AMY. Oh well that's a relief!

CAMILLE. Why?!

AMY. It's embarrassing enough! That we could have a museum piece right under our nose and not even realize it.

CAMILLE. *(Admiring it.)* Don't be embarrassed. You have a Giacometti miniature. I'd be stoked.

AMY. We're renting this flat, it's not really ours. It came furnished.

CAMILLE. Really?! Someone just left it here!

AMY. I suppose...

CAMILLE. (*To the sculpture.*) You poor man...

Beat. Amy is mortified.

AMY. I'll never look at him the same way again. If that's any consolation.

CAMILLE. It's just amazing to see it up close after studying it in a book.

AMY. Well, growing up, you must have had quite a collection.

CAMILLE. Oh my God no, all we had at home were DVDs.

AMY. Beg pardon?

CAMILLE. Dad collected them. Floor to ceiling, wall to wall, bookshelves full. We didn't have any money for an art collection. And I didn't have a college fund. But we had the best of television and film at our fingertips.

AMY. How did you get to college, then?

CAMILLE. Grants, scholarships, loans. He just took it for granted we'd be able to afford it. I was a good student because I had to be, and he ended up being right. Anyway, all those DVDs made us very popular. All my girlfriends with their big houses, and we'd end up back at our little apartment, huddled up on the couch watching all ten seasons of *Friends*.

AMY. That sounds nice.

CAMILLE. It was. He was the cool dad.

AMY. That doesn't surprise me.

CAMILLE. How close were you in college?

AMY. (*Flushing.*) Oh! We weren't, really. I mean, I had a little crush, I suppose, who didn't? I remember I just sort of looked up to him. We all did. And then *American Guernica* came along.

CAMILLE. Yes.

AMY. I was at a Kroger, waiting in line to buy some olives. There was this *Time* magazine cover. So striking, I picked it up. Just, staring at it. The cashier was smiling at me, and she said, "hometown boy, that's his painting." I looked for the name. Floored.

CAMILLE. Olives?

AMY. Kind of amazing how the time went by, and we all went on with our lives.

CAMILLE. And look at you now.

AMY. I know, it's crazy. But you know, I married well. That's most of it.

CAMILLE. It takes two.

AMY. You're very kind, but still.

CAMILLE. How does your husband like living in London?

AMY. I don't really think he's been here enough to form an opinion! It's like the bank had us move out here just so that he could never be home! We'll go back to America after the election, and things should return to normal.

CAMILLE. That's six months.

AMY. Champagne problems.

CAMILLE. (*Taking in the view out the window.*) I never want to go home again.

AMY. Well, you're welcome to stay here as long as you like.

CAMILLE. I mean America.

AMY. America is still the greatest country in the world.

Camille laughs out loud at this.

You don't think so?

CAMILLE. Are you...serious?! Where do I begin?

Amy is equally baffled.

AMY. I don't know...begin.

CAMILLE. Okay...well, to start with, we have this delusion that we're number one. Which we are. In obesity, gun ownership, and incarceration rates. We're four percent of the world's population and we have twenty-five percent of the world's prisoners. And we use twenty-five percent of the world's energy. We have a political system that's been hijacked by the right wing of the Republican Party whose one stated legislative goal is to block everything Barack Obama proposes, even if it started out as their own idea in the first place. And to legislate against abortion. And repeal voter rights.

And turn back the clock on civil rights. And keep gay people from having equal rights under the law. Shall I go on?

AMY. No that's pretty good.

CAMILLE. Republicans are destroying America. What's left of it. And they're doing it all in the name of Jesus, or family values, which is really just a feint so their flock won't notice that what they're really doing is picking their pockets and lining their own with tax breaks that are decimating the middle class. Calling themselves "job creators" while they sit on the ill-gotten gains they amassed from banking scams and government bailouts. Getting their right-wing salt-of-the-earth constituents to vote against their own best interests by appealing to their fear, bigotry, and religious delusions. And look who they're putting up as their candidates. Rick Perry, Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain? It's a clown car. Right? I mean...you know?

AMY. I'm a Republican.

Camille opens her mouth to speak again, but nothing more comes out.

(Holding up a tray.) Shortbread?

CAMILLE. I'm sorry, and I'm an idiot.

AMY. Yes?

CAMILLE. I just assumed—

AMY. Why would you assume any—

CAMILLE. Because you and my dad used to—

AMY. No, we didn't, not really. And that was a long time ago. People change. People grow up.

CAMILLE. They "grow up."

AMY. A lot of the idealism you have as a child begins to shift once you have children of your own.

CAMILLE. *(Not buying.)* I've heard that.

Tension. Silence. Then, going for the shortbread:

Yes, thank you. Sainsbury's?

AMY. Fortnum & Mason.

Camille reaches, then hesitates.

Yes, even my cookies are classist.

Camille takes a shortbread and nibbles. Awkward.

CAMILLE. Listen, about what I—

AMY. You had no artwork?

CAMILLE. I'm sorry? You mean...

AMY. Before, you said, in your house—

CAMILLE. Ah yes.

AMY. It stuck with me. Since, you know—

CAMILLE. My father is a painter.

AMY. A *famous* painter.

CAMILLE. Well, we had *his* artworks, I guess. In his studio. He didn't put them up in the rest of the apartment. Or anyone else's.

AMY. No one else's works? Not even for inspiration?

CAMILLE. I think that would have felt odd to him.

AMY. How so?

CAMILLE. Like, I don't know, like having pictures on the wall of the man who'd been screwing your wife.

AMY. Ah.

CAMILLE. You just wouldn't do it.

AMY. No. Might feel awkward.

Another awkward beat.

He's a wonderful painter.

CAMILLE. Thank you. Have you seen his works?

AMY. Other than—

CAMILLE. *American Guernica*, yes—

AMY. Well, no, but—

CAMILLE. Ah.

AMY. I mean I've *seen*. Just not...up close and personal.

CAMILLE. Another *Man Pointing*.

AMY. More than that to me.

Camille smiles at that.

CAMILLE. He's worked very hard.

AMY. You must be very proud of him.

CAMILLE. He earned his way back onto those walls. It hasn't been easy. He ate a lot of shit for a long time, and he never stopped working. A lot of rich people made a lot of promises, and when they were done sucking him dry for the most they could get out of him for the least amount of money, they moved on and left him to figure out how to support himself and *me*. They took his money and his copyrights and his work but they left him his hands. So he kept working. And now he's in London about to put up an exhibition at the Tate Modern. So yeah, I'm proud of him.

A beat.

AMY. I'm sure some of those rich people had something to do with getting him that exhibition at the Tate Modern.

Camille looks at her.

Just a guess.

A doorbell. Camille jumps up, excited.

CAMILLE. Is that him?!

AMY. (*Gesturing, delighted.*) Go ahead.

Camille bounds to the door and opens it to reveal her father, Mark Marshall, 45(-ish).

CAMILLE. DADDY!!!

MARK. Baby.

They embrace. He pulls away to look at her.

This is better than Skype.

They laugh, and hug again. Amy is standing. Mark finally notices.

Amy Smithfield-Pike. You haven't aged a day.

Blackout.

Scene 3

INT. Joe and Anne's apartment—Boca Raton—day.

Anne (60) sits at her computer. Joe enters, slamming the door.

JOE. I didn't get the job.

ANNE. I'm so sorry, my love. Something will—

JOE. No, I didn't get the job because I voted for Obama.

ANNE. What?

JOE. And that's because of *you*. *You* convinced me to vote for that man. And now this.

ANNE. Joe, this makes no sense. They *told* you this?

JOE. They didn't *tell* me, they didn't have to. They asked me.

ANNE. They can't do that.

JOE. It was a simple question, it's a free country. It's *still* a free country, you know.

ANNE. They asked if you voted for Obama?

JOE. They asked *who* I voted *for*.

ANNE. They can't do that.

JOE. They did.

ANNE. You could have said no.

JOE. It was a job interview, Annie.

ANNE. You could have refused. They had no right. They're not allowed to do that.

JOE. Says who?

ANNE. There are laws. There are—

JOE. Laws?

ANNE. Yes, fair use, or—

JOE. You don't know what you're talking about.

ANNE. Religious, ethnic, or political discrimination—

JOE. You are just making things up now.

ANNE. I'm not!

JOE. It wouldn't have mattered! They knew anyway!

ANNE. They—what? They what? How?

JOE. (*Ashamed.*) They just—they *knew*.

A beat.

ANNE. What did they know?

JOE. How old I was.

ANNE. Joe.

JOE. They knew I supported Romney. That I sent money.

ANNE. So? They have a database.

JOE. There's so much money, Annie. They can do anything. They know everything.

ANNE. You're imagining things.

JOE. They *knew* things. It would have been stupid to lie to them. *Why* did I listen to you? *Why!*

ANNE. You didn't listen to me, you voted with your heart, with your conscience.

JOE. That's not true, I voted with *your* conscience, my heart wasn't in it at all. I'm not a Democrat, I'm an Independent.

ANNE. Stop saying that! You're not!

JOE. Well I'm sure not a Democrat!

ANNE. *YOU'RE A REPUBLICAN*. Just admit it. You voted for Bush I and II, *and* Bob Dole. On what planet are you an Independent?

JOE. *I voted for Obama!*

ANNE. And you've been miserable ever since!

JOE. I didn't know I was voting for a tyrant.

ANNE. Joe.

JOE. That's what he is, an authoritarian regime.

ANNE. You've got to stop watching Fox News.

JOE. You don't have to watch Fox News to see that he just does what he wants! Look at Obamacare!

ANNE. What about it, Joe?

JOE. He just rammed it down our throats.

ANNE. Through both houses of congress?

JOE. I can't get a job because of this law! Nobody's hiring!

ANNE. You can't blame the law.

JOE. It's destroying the country!

ANNE. How? It's barely been implemented yet.

JOE. We can't afford it. We need to throw it out and replace it with something else.

ANNE. I agree. Single-payer.

JOE. Annie, don't start with me on this socialist thing, I just lost a job because of Obama!

Pause. Anne tries to get her bearings.

ANNE. So wait, now it's the fault of the *president* that you didn't get a *job*? That's some evil mystical Black man we got in the White House.

JOE. (*Flaring.*) You take that back.

ANNE. I'm sorry.

JOE. I don't have a racist bone in my body.

ANNE. I know Joe, I said I'm sorry.

JOE. I don't hate Obama because he's Black, I hate Obama because of his policies. He's the most corrupt, lying—

ANNE. Wait, lying?

JOE. Well, what about "if you like your doctor you can keep your doctor," what about that?

ANNE. That was *aspirational*.

JOE. That was a lie. I didn't like that "clinging to God and guns" thing either.

ANNE. Was that a lie?

JOE. He's desecrating the office! Those feet up on the resolute desk like that?

ANNE. Oh, Joe...

JOE. Come on, he's the most scandalous president we've ever seen. He's ruining this country, and we need to get it back.

Anne is silent.

ANNE. We shouldn't talk politics.

JOE. I know.

ANNE. It makes my hands ache.

JOE. *(Suddenly sympathetic.)* My love.

He goes to her with concern, and gently takes her hands in his, massaging them. A beat.

ANNE. I couldn't garden today. I would switch hands, but eventually I had to stop. There's still so much weeding to do.

JOE. I'll do it.

ANNE. I made dinner.

JOE. You shouldn't have. I'll order out.

ANNE. We can't afford that. It's okay, it's just macaroni salad, it was easy.

Joe, still focused on her hands:

JOE. You need the operation.

Pause.

Annie?

ANNE. We can't afford takeout Chinese, how can we afford an operation.

JOE. They need to repeal health care.

ANNE. Joe! Listen to what you're saying! Stop—think—

JOE. So I can get a job!

ANNE. *You would have them take away my hands?!*

JOE. *(Bewildered.)* What?

The phone rings.

ANNE. My hands, Joe. If we *had* insurance and they took it away— *(Off the ringing phone.)* I can't pick up the phone right now could you—

JOE. Of course, of course. *(Picks up the phone.)* Hello?

He listens. Stricken. Anne comes to him, concerned. Waits.

Yes, of course. Security check, I understand. Thank you.

He hangs up.

ANNE. Security check?

JOE. I got a second interview.

Blackout.

Scene 4

INT. Hotel bar—Ramada Inn, Boca Raton—night.

Bill (45), a well-dressed white man, drinks with Ken.

BILL. “Who provide services to me.” Four little words.

KEN. Technically, five.

Bill counts them out, one by one.

BILL. Yes.

KEN. But that’s not what they play. That’s not what gets auto-tuned.

BILL. I knew it the second he said it. I could see his soul practically leaping out of his mouth, trying to take the words back in, but he knew it was too late, so he added “who provide services to me.”

KEN. *(Teasingly.)* Mitt Romney has a soul?

BILL. *(Humorless, invested.)* That’s not funny.

KEN. I don’t even mean that.

BILL. I saw it all in a split second. He thought he could limit the damage by adding “who provide services to me.” But it was too late. “I like being able to fire people.”

KEN. What was he thinking.

BILL. *(Pleading the case.)* He wasn’t. He was being off-the-cuff. He’s getting pilloried from both sides for being stiff and wooden. The man is just trying to relax, have fun. So he *stops* editing himself, which he knows makes him come across as fake, and tries to speak from the heart. He wants it to be real. I feel for him, I really do.

KEN. I know, I do too.

BILL. Do you?

KEN. The man is constantly being called a phony by the left-wing media. I'm an African American Republican. You don't think I can relate?

Bill raises his glass.

BILL. To the courage of your convictions.

KEN. I'll drink to that.

BILL. "I like being able to fire people who provide services to me." Taken out of context, it sounds terrible.

KEN. No argument there.

BILL. He was trying to make a broader point. We have created a culture of enablers. Coddlers. Every kid is a fucking genius. Every loser gets a trophy. No one's allowed to feel bad. For one second. And learn from that.

KEN. The tyranny of low expectations.

BILL. This is what leads to incompetence, laziness, sloth, disillusionment, and the downfall of American society.

KEN. You've given this a lot of thought.

BILL. This is what Bush was trying to get at, with "Compassionate Conservative." *I get that you want the government to help you, but what about the part where government help is robbing you of your self-esteem? You think you're so great, but you need food stamps? Isn't that the cycle of poverty? You feel me?*

KEN. I *hear* you.

BILL. That's all Romney's trying to say. He's actually trying to *not* bullshit anybody. (*Facing it.*) The man is just not a natural-born politician.

KEN. No. But he's had a lot of practice.

BILL. And then fucking Fehrstrom has to come out and compare him to an Etch A Sketch. His own advisor!

KEN. The threat is coming from inside the house.

BILL. Also completely misinterpreted.

KEN. Completely.

BILL. Look, he should know better than to say such a thing. But come on. Candidates from the beginning of time, you play to your

base in the primaries and you tack to the center in the general. That's all. He was just stating what everybody knows.

KEN. And using his outside voice to do it.

BILL. And now *that* sticks to him? Like John McCain or, or, or Ronald Reagan was never on both sides of an issue?

KEN. I don't think that's the rap on Romney.

BILL. Then what is?

KEN. That he's on *every* side of *every* issue. That there are sides that haven't been invented yet that he has found to be on. That he defies all laws of sociopolitical physics. That in the morning he will be firmly against the Blunt Amendment outlawing mandatory insurance coverage for contraception, and two hours later he will *clarify* that, "Oh! Of *course* I'm for the Blunt Amendment outlawing mandatory insurance coverage for contraception! I misunderstood the question two hours ago when I was in front of that Midwestern Women's Caucus." For one example.

BILL. He's allowed to clarify.

KEN. He is being *perfectly clear all the time*, and this is what America needs to understand. He will *absolutely* not ban your contraception, ladies, and he will *absolutely* back the amendment banning your contraception.

A beat.

I don't understand the confusion.

BILL. Exactly.

KEN. He is telling you that this is not an issue for him. He is telling you that the *only* thing that matters to him, the *only* issue a Romney administration will pursue, is how to get Americans back to work and get this anemic Obama economy moving again. He is struggling mightily to stay on message, believe me.

BILL. Fact.

KEN. I watch it every day on Fox.

BILL. The Obummer economy.

KEN. That's a good one. I hadn't heard that one.

BILL. And you watch Fox?

KEN. I was being ironic.

Bill chuckles in spite of himself.

BILL. How is the entire American media so in the tank for this guy? Is it because he's—

Bill stops himself—

KEN. A socialist Muslim? (*Off Bill's relief.*) That's all right, my friend. Lotta white guilt out there.

BILL. I know! And I have none of that. I don't care if the man is Black, white, or green. I don't like him because I don't like his *policies*. That does not make me racist. *He's* the racist.

KEN. (*Impassive.*) How ya figure?

BILL. "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon"? Really? Who said anything about race?

KEN. I don't know, the guy who shot him?

BILL. We don't know that for sure. He deserves the benefit of the doubt. Innocent until proven guilty.

KEN. The Black guy, or the white guy?

BILL. (*Getting befuddled.*) The white, the, the, either one of them of course, you know what I mean, we don't know the facts of the case.

KEN. Right.

BILL. It's not like we've got it on video.

KEN. Well, we've got it on audio.

BILL. Yeah, but come on.

KEN. Yeah?

BILL. Let the system work itself out.

KEN. Yes. Because it always works out so well for Black people.

Tension. A beat.

BILL. It worked for OJ.

KEN. Did it? Because that motherfucker was guilty as sin.

They smile slightly at each other, tension released.

BILL. I'm just saying. As one citizen to another. I'm allowed to think Obamacare is the worst legislation in the history of America without being called a racist.

KEN. Have you read what's in the bill?

BILL. I do not have to.

Ken just nods.

Nancy Pelosi said we didn't have to, and she was the one *selling* us on it. We're supposed to just pass the thing and *then* see what happens. "Just trust us." Yeah, thank you no. *Trust THIS.*

KEN. So then, maybe, you should read it and make up your own mind?

BILL. Whose side are you on? The fucking thing is destroying America!

KEN. I know. I've read the fucking thing.

Bill is impressed. Engaged.

BILL. Jesus, you have? All two thousand pages?

KEN. Every word. Some of it is like, indices and tables and whatnot.

BILL. And you, you think it's bad? As bad as we're saying?

KEN. I unambiguously do.

BILL. Why? In ten words or less.

KEN. (*Amused.*) I can't have twenty-five?

BILL. I'm serious.

KEN. (*Formulating.*) It perpetuates a cycle of dependency fomented from class warfare.

Bill counts.

BILL. That is fucking excellent.

They laugh, clink glasses warmly, and share a drink. Pause.

(*Musing, sadly.*) "Who provide services to me." He was just trying to be himself. He's a good man, Ken. Ken, that's your name?

Ken drinks, measuring Bill.

(*Deeply personal.*) He's trying to navigate incredibly rocky shoals. *HE* knows what a good man he is. What a strong, competent leader he is. How transformative he can be for the country. He just wants to figure out how to get that message across. He's not an Etch A Sketch, Ken. He's no phony. He's a human being. Trapped in this lie

of who he really is versus who the world wants him to be. Trying to figure it out.

KEN. We all are.

Carefully, Ken lowers his glass beside Bill's hand so that their fingers touch. Bill freezes. Ken holds it there for a few beats. Then, he picks up the tab folder and begins to sign.

BILL. *(Dry mouth.)* You don't have to.

KEN. Of course I do, you're the reason we've come to Boca, you're the reason we have a war chest that's gonna rescue America, you and your people. Besides, campaign'll take care of it, I'll just charge it to my room. *(He finishes signing; then.)* 1715.

Ken rises from the bar stool. Looks at Bill. Then:

You here until the event, Bill?

BILL. *(Dry mouth.)* Yeah.

Ken and Bill look at each other, unreadable. Then Ken exits. A beat. Then, Bill grabs one last sip, and follows out after Ken.

Blackout.

Scene 5

INT. Smithfield-Pike flat—evening—later.

Amy and Mark with tea and Camille, glass of wine. The energy is high, Camille is observing the adults, delighted.

MARK. *(Teasingly.)* Well, there was that one time.

AMY. *(Scandalized.)* Mark!

MARK. You don't remember?

AMY. I most certainly—okay.

CAMILLE. You two *did it*?

MARK. Well...

AMY. No!

The play doesn't end here...

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