

# Personal Effects

by

**Gary Lee Reed**

**Revision**

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## Characters in the play

Alan Reed – 33, the youngest of the Reed boys

Katie Reed – 31, Alan's wife

Gary Lee Reed – 39, the middle son of the Reeds

Bonnie Bailey Reed – 39, Gary's wife

Randy Reed – 41, the oldest of the Reed boys

Johnna Reed – 36, Randy's wife

Five boxes of Ardis Odell Reed's personal effects – their father

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## Act one

Date: November, 1993, two weeks before Thanksgiving.

Time: 7:30pm

Place: Ft Worth, Texas

Setting: The Living Room of Alan and Katie Reed

In the dark we hear a phone ring. Just as the message machine picks up we hear keys opening the front door. As the message begins Alan and Katy enter. Alan is 33 and he enters carrying a sports coat. Katy, his wife follows behind carrying their 18 month old daughter Erin. It is the living room of Alan and Katie Reed. It is an average, middle class home in a neighborhood in south Ft Worth. Off to one side we see a sliding glass door leading to an outside, covered porch. Upstage of the living room we see a dining room just off a kitchen behind a counter and bar stools that open into the living room.

Phone : Ring, Ring. Ring. VO: This is Alan and Katy-

KATY- (in the background we hear Katy say)V.O. -And Erin

ALAN-V.O...and Erin. Leave a message.

As Randy is leaving a message Alan closes the door behind Katy and she takes Erin to the bedroom. He pauses to listen to Randy's message, not sure if he should pick up or not.

RANDY- VO . Hey Al. Are you there? Pick up if you're there. Well, I guess you're not home yet. Hey listen, I need to come by and talk to you and Gar about something so don't let Gar leave before I get there. I just left moms and Bon and Gar just left so they should be there any minute now and we're not far behind, so-

ALAN – (Picks up the phone) Hey,hey... yeah, we just walked in (beat)Okay, we'll be here. Johnna coming? Okay... cool... Not a problem. I'll put some coffee on. Okay. Bye. (Calling out to the bedroom) Randy and Johnna are coming over too.

Alan heads to the kitchen and begins putting on coffee. Katy enters from the bedroom and immediately begins straightening the house. She is 31 years of age, pregnant and somewhat harried and distracted.

KATY – Use some of that good Hazelnut Crème. I think that's Gary's favorite.

ALAN – You read my mind.

As Katy goes about her straightening the room we hear a light knock at the door as Bonnie and Gary enter.

BONNIE - Katy? Alan?(Startles Katy)

KATY – Oh, hi, (Laughing) Come on in I'm just straightening up. (Katy continues straightening)

BONNIE- Don't straighten up on my account.

ALAN –(From the kitchen) Hey guys. I just put some coffee on. It should be done in just a few.

(Bonnie immediately goes to hug Katy)

GARY– Where's Erin?

KATY – She fell sound asleep on the way home andI just put her in the bed.

ALAN – (From the kitchen) There is a God.

GARY– I'm going to peek in at her. (He goes off into the bedroom)

KATY- This week was so crazy with all that's happened and the funeral today and-

BONNIE -and you're pregnant-

KATY – I am? Oh yeah, I guess that adds to my scatterdness. Were you saying something? (Katy has stopped briefly and then resumes cleaning and “picking up” as Bonnie talks, not really paying much attention)

BONNIE - Oh, just that you don't have to straighten up on our account.

KATY- (She stops again momentarily) Well, Randy called and he and Johnna are coming by, too. (She then resumes her activities)

(Alan has made his way from the kitchen and without words he and Bonnie hug)

KATY – Are you and Gary doing okay?

BONNIE- Oh, Katy, I don't know. The funeral was so weird and so fast. How are you two doing? Alan, how are you feeling?

ALAN – Numb. That would probably be a pretty good word to describe what I'm...well, feeling is the first word that comes to mind but it doesn't really describe it...I'm just numb.

KATY - I saw you guys over at the grave site. Did Gary get to see his father?

BONNIE – Yes. I went up to your Uncle Tiffin and told him Gary had to see Ardis and he said he could get the coffin opened back up.

KATY - OH.

ALAN – I'm so glad you made it. When the “so called” service, was over and they closed the coffin I was about to say stop but-

KATY – Why were you guys so late?

BONNIE – Well, we had a short layover in Vegas but our flight was late leaving. So we were a little late getting into Dallas/Ft. Worth and then it took us three and a half hours drive to Texarkana from the airport.

KATY- How's Gary doing?

BONNIE – You guys. He lost it. He was screaming at his dad and crying. I felt so sorry for him but he had to see his father. I don't think he was even going to ask to get the coffin opened. But I knew he had to see his dad. I just knew- (She hears Gary is coming)

(A door closes down the hallway as we hear Gary returning)

BONNIE – (Changing the subject) Erin was so cute at the funeral today.

KATY – Erin, she's a dream child. I'm worried that six months from now she's all of the sudden going to turn into a "devil child."

GARY – Oh my God, Katy. Erin is adorable.

(Gary and Alan hug)

BONNIE – Why, in six months?

KATY – Thanks, Gary. Well, that's when she turns two. (Counting on her fingers) December, January, February, March, well five months. I hear so many stories. (Cleaning done, now she is listening as she puts candles out to make it nice)

BONNIE – Do you think Erin understands any of this?

ALAN – I think she understood that people were upset.

KATY – Alan was worried about taking her but I think she was fine. She loved the flowers that were all around. She just kept pointing to them and wanting to grab them every time we passed by.

ALAN – How are you doing, man?

GARY – I'm okay now but I lost it at the funeral. When Uncle Tiffin came over and opened up the coffin it was so surreal. It was so... dad looked old. You know? Why wouldn't he, it's been thirty years but he also looked exactly the same. You know what I mean? That was bizarre.

ALAN – I know. As few memories as I have I would have recognized him in a second. He looked like I thought he would look.

GARY – He still had that thick head of hair even though it was gray. One of the few things we didn't get from dad?

ALAN – Yeah, it'd been nice if he'd left that behind wouldn't it?

GARY = How are you doin' bro?

ALAN – I was just telling Katy and Bonnie that I feel kind of numb. I can't really explain how I feel.

GARY – I hear ya. I'm not sure I can put a finger on it either but I feel...light. You know that feeling when you go to an amusement park and your walk is a bit faster and your step a bit livelier because you're excited. I sort of feel that way but in my head I'm thinking this is not a moment to be excited.

KATY – (Heading into the kitchen) Alan, did you make a whole pot of coffee.

ALAN – Gar is here, of course I did. Why?

KATY – Just in case Randy and Johnna want some too.

ALAN – Why don't you guys have a seat.

GARY – Oh! Are Randy and Johnna coming over? (They all sit)

KATY – (Coming back in) Yeah. Just as we walked in the door Randy was leaving a message saying he needed to talk to you and Alan.

ALAN – I picked up and told him to come on over. He just left moms and said he just missed you.

GARY – I may go ahead and pour me a cup of coffee now. I need it strong.

(Alan and Gary rise and head to the kitchen)

KATY – You guys are staying with Mary Nell tonight aren't you? (She sits)

BONNIE – Well, of course we are Katy. We're not going to leave her alone tonight.

KATY – Well, I wasn't sure if you were going to try to go and see your folks in Bonham while you're here.

BONNIE – Well, we'd like to see them of course, but we'll decide that later.

(Gary comes back but stays near the counter to look at pictures with Alan not far behind)

GARY – What did Randy want to come over for? Just to visit?

(Another light knocking is heard as Johnna enters)

JOHNNA - Hello!

KATY- Come on in.

JOHNNA - Hey, Bonnie (going to Bonnie she pays no attention to Katy)

BONNIE - Hey, Johnna. (They hug)

JOHNNA- I don't feel like I even said hello to you at the funeral. How was your flight?

BONNIE - Oh it was great. I say that. It was OK. We had a layover and it's never enough time to do anything but not quick enough to go straight from one plane to another. You know what I mean?

KATY – Bonnie, coffee is ready now if you want some. You too, Johnna.

BONNIE – (To Katy) Do you have cream or half and half? (To Johnna)What I want is a vodka. (She rises and goes to the kitchen)

JOHNNA - We may all be drinking after tonight.

ALAN – (From the kitchen) I'll get your half and half.

KATY - Why? What's gonna happen tonight?

GARY – Where's Randy.

JOHNNA – Well, I thought he was right behind me.



(She goes to the front door to assist Randy)

BONNIE – (With coffee in hand she goes over and opens the sliding glass door)  
Hey Katy, I need to have me a smoke. Will it be okay if I open the door and just step right out here and smoke?

KATY – Yeah, that'll be fine. I don't mind you smoking in here.

JOHNNA - Are you crazy! Besides Alan's allergies, you're pregnant.

KATY-Oh yeah! I forget. (Laughing)

(Randy enters)

RANDY - (Randy enters carrying three boxes)

JOHNNA – What took ya'?

RANDY – Well, Walker I can't carry all five boxes by myself. I know I appear to be super human at times but...there are still two boxes on the front porch. (He sees Bonnie outside the door and waves) Hey, Miss Bonnie.

BONNIE - Hey, Randy.

RANDY –(Goes to hug Bonnie) Hey, sis. Haven't you given up that nasty habit yet?  
Hey, bro.

(Turns to hug Gary)

BONNIE – Oh, God! No!

RANDY - How was your flight?

GARY - It was good. I'll get the other two boxes. What is all this?

RANDY – Well, this is what I needed to see you guys about. (Goes over to hug Bonnie) Glad you guys were able to make it.

BONNIE - (Bonnie steps inside the door to hear this conversation keeping her hand with the cigarette outside)

(There is a quiet in the room)

GARY – (Entering with the two additional boxes) Are these our Christmas presents? Johnna, I know how you like to shop early but...

RANDY – These are boxes Uncle Tiffin gave me.

ALAN – When?

RANDY - Just a few minutes after everyone had left. I had told Tiffin that I wanted to get a copy of the death certificate with cause of death...you know, the medical examiner's report ... just in case. You know, guys, we have no idea of dad's medical history and I thought it might be good to know that.

BONNIE – That's a great idea Randy. (Bonnie takes one last drag, extinguishes her cigarette careful not to destroy what is left of it and enters the room closing the door behind her)

RANDY – So Uncle Tiffin took me aside and told me he had some boxes that belonged to dad. I guess, a couple of them were boxes he'd sent to Tiffin to hold on to and some were his personal remains from prison.

(Gary sets the boxes down as if they may have been dangerous.)

GARY – I hope I didn't catch something. (Bonnie and Alan chuckle)

( Now they are all looking at the five boxes in the center of the room)

RANDY – He asked if I wanted them and I said yes. So now it's up to us to decide what to do with them.

(Silence)

RANDY – Okay.The response is deafening. I guess I could fire up the fire place and use it for kindling. It's gonna' get pretty cold tonight.

GARY – Does mom know about these?

RANDY – Yeah. I dropped by on the way home to tell her. I thought you two might still be there. She said I just missed you.

BONNIE – Yeah, we stayed just long enough for me to pee.

GARY – And she didn't want to be here?

RANDY – She, ever so politely, said she'd pass.

KATY – I wonder why she didn't want to be here?

ALAN - Uncle Tiffin probably would have told us if there was something in here of importance to her.

RANDY – Well, Uncle Tiffin acted like he didn't have clue what was in the boxes.

GARY – You believe him?

RANDY – Why wouldn't I? I think mom thinks we need the closure but I don't think she wants us to go through the stuff.

BONNIE - Well, Randy, she's probably afraid of what you might find. That it'll be something that'll change what all of you guys feel about your daddy.

GARY – I'm not quite sure how much things could change but you're probably right.

RANDY -She pretty much said as much.

ALAN - Plus, mom has her memories which have nothing to do with the person dad later became. At least that's what it seems like to me.

RANDY - I do think she's a little worried about us opening them.

(All settling in)

KATY- Should we give her a call?

JOHNNNA - Oh please, Mary Nell's a rock.

GARY - No. She'd probably be more upset that we were worried about her.

BONNIE - No kidding. Your mom's a saint. Man, it must have been hard for her to see Ardis in the coffin. After almost 30 years?

RANDY – Well, I don't want to belabor the moment but what do ya' think?

GARY – Well, I say we open them. All I have from dad is a hat, a pair of oxfords, his navy drafting set and one of those antique guns. Maybe I'll get something else out of this. (Joking) Plus we know he had something to do with the disappearance of Tex Roberts twenty years ago so hey, maybe we'll find out where Tex Roberts is buried and we could collect on the reward money.

RANDY – Well, to be honest I'd rather not. I mean, why stir everything up? I'm not quite so sure he was guilty anyway.

ALAN – What!

GARY – Are you serious?

RANDY – Hey, I'm just saying-

JOHNNA –(Coming to his defense) -Well, you guys! We went to see your dad in prison and Randy and Mr. Reed wrote back and forth together for a while before that. And he wrote all these letters and poems and flat out told Randy to his face he was framed. (To Randy)And you believed him. (Back to the others) I mean you should have read some of the letters. I nearly believed him and I am very skeptical. He was really persuasive. (To Randy) Plus, you trust everyone and never think a bad thought about a person. Not me! No way! Uh uh!

BONNIE - Well you don't have to be a cynic to believe he was guilty. Gary always gives people the benefit of the doubt and he'll tell you he does it sometimes to a fault.

GARY – I do. But please. Ninety-nine, point nine, nine, nine percent of the people that go to prison are guilty and I personally think he is guilty as hell. I mean, for God's sake, he left us when we were kids. I was 9, Alan was three-

BONNIE -and they never saw him again and he never once contacted them. He was running from something.

JOHNNA - Well, we saw him face to face in prison.

BONNIE - Yeah, but who initiated that, Randy or his daddy?

JOHNNA - Oh, it was Randy.

BONNIE – Exactly. It doesn't sound like he was knocking down doors to try to get in touch with his boys. I don't know why he would anyway. He hadn't tried to contact you since he left, what was going to make him change now? I can't believe you even wanted to contact him.

RANDY – Well, I wrote him because the kids were at that age where they were taking notice that they had a grandma and grandpa on one side and only a grammy on the other so I decided to take Shawn and Pat to see him.

BONNIE - How'd that go? I bet that was weird.

RANDY – Well I went to see him three times but only took the kids once. After the first time they saw him I didn't want to expose them again to that environment. It was just so dark and sad. Shaun and Pat were kind of freaked out.

BONNIE – (To Katy) Alan, did you ever go to see him?

ALAN - We talked about it a couple of times but...It was kind of weird to think about going to see someone you really don't even know, even if it was dad.

KATY – You were so young when your dad left. (To Randy and Gary) Alan just doesn't have the memories that you guys have. I think you said once you only have three real memories.

ALAN – Well, I have more than three.

BONNIE - Whadaya mean "real".

ALAN - Well, I have several memories but it's not completely clear if they are actually mine or just memories that I have because people talked about them.

BONNIE – Well we would have gone but Gary never could get approved to go see him. And he'd just decided a month ago he was going to go to see him this Christmas.

GARY – Yeah, and I sent my papers in several weeks ago so that it would have time to clear before we were home.

KATY- Why couldn't you get approved?

JOHNNA - You have to put your name in with the Texas Department of Corrections and they put your request through a long process and when you are OK'd they call you and put your name on a visitors list. We talked about this Katy.

KATY – Oh, we did?

JOHNNA – Yeah, because Alan was thinking about going to see him as well.

KATY – Oh. Ok. I think I remember us having that conversation.

JOHNNA - You guys probably weren't home long enough to get approved.

BONNIE - Exactly!

JOHNNA - It's a maximum security prison so you can't just drive up to the door and say "let me in, my dad's in there".

BONNIE - Oh. That's funny.

GARY – Well, Al. Where do you weigh in on this?

ALAN - I say we all get some coffee and do this. I'm kind of like you Gar. Maybe I can walk away from this with a little more than the handful of memories I have.

BONNIE – Well, before we do or while people are getting situated can someone catch me up on a few things? I don't even know what he went to prison for?

(Randy and Gary go to get coffee)

KATY- I think it was extortion- Randy can you find everything (She follows him to the kitchen)

RANDY – Thanks, Katy. (From the kitchen) It was a whole slew of charges from attempted murder to attempt to do bodily harm, fraud, extortion.

(KT is putting on more coffee)

JOHNNA - Probably would have included domestic terrorism but I don't think the phrase existed yet. Allegedly he'd sent a bomb letter to General Foods that exploded and blew up a secretary.

BONNIE – What did he send the letter bomb for?

RANDY – “Supposedly” sent the letter bomb or “allegedly...”

GARY – (Sarcastic) Right, allegedly.

BONNIE - Was it some wacked out political statement or what?

GARY – I think it was to extort money. We also heard that he poisoned food in Colorado Springs and in Houston.

ALAN – Yeah, and basically it was to say we will continue to do this if you don't pay us such and such amount.

BONNIE – Oh my Lord! That is just...I can't believe that. I'm going to smoke before we do this. (She goes off to smoke)

RANDY – (Coming back in-set's coffee down) Help me move these boxes.

GARY – (Coming back in too. He sets his coffee down on the bar counter) Let's just set em' right here in front of the couch.

(Randy and Gary push the boxes across the floor to where they are situated directly in front of the couch. The boxes have now been arranged in a grouping in the middle of the room.)

(Gary goes to fetch his coffee and sits at the bar. The boys are sitting in temporary, random positions around the room. Johnna has found a permanent place)

ALAN – (Finding him a place center) So, you didn't have to work this weekend?

RANDY - No. As soon as I heard about dad I put in for a week of vacation time.

ALAN - Must be nice to have vacation time like that?

RANDY - Hey, I've earned it. It's been 16 years this past summer. The railroad owes me. Back breaking work! Man, you don't even know.

ALAN - Yeah, back breaking? (He is waving his arms giving hand signals) Man that's tough.

(Katy comes in and settles behind Alan)

RANDY - Hey, you joke. It's more like this. (He shows the real signal-it's no harder) That's my throwin' arm, man!

GARY - (moving over to the couch near the boxes) Is that what you call that?

(Gary settles in opposite Randy and Johnna, closest to the sliding door)

RANDY - Hey, I don't remember you being asked to join in on this conversation. You haven't been home long enough to be jumpin' in on our civil discussions about my work place injuries.

JOHNNA - Oh God, here he goes.

RANDY - (to her) That's right. (To him) For the first couple of days you need to ask permission to speak.

GARY -I'm sorry. I'll just raise my hand.

RANDY - Now you're getting it.

BONNIE - (upon entering) Oh, I hope there's more coffee.

(Bonnie begins making herself a place)

KATY – I just put on a new pot but there's some from the old pot in the thermos next to the coffee maker.



BONNIE – Don't start without me. I'm goin' in.(She heads toward the kitchen)

BONNIE – (Sharing a playful moment)“We're goin in.”      GARY - “We're goin in”

BONNIE - Get out of my head!

GARY – How was mom holding up at the funeral?

RANDY – It's hard to tell man.

BONNIE – (From the Kitchen side of the counter) Well, it was hard for you boys. Can you imagine how hard it must have been for her?

RANDY - She never did show it. Never would have.

ALAN - I don't have any idea what she feels. You would think she'd be a mess after thirty nine years and have a breakdown or something, but nothing. I mean I never see or get any sense of what she has thought these 15 years he's been in prison. She just kind a shakes her head and...

GARY - I know. She's amazing.

BONNIE - (Entering) I'm tellin' ya, she's a saint. I'd a gone to the prison and shot his ass.

ALAN - I don't know...I'd kinda' like to see her lose it just once.

RANDY – I'm with you.

GARY - Now that's a visual. Little ninety two pound Mary Nell, never said a curse word, never had a drink-

BONNIE - Never smoked a cigarette

ALAN - You did that for all of us.  
(she flips him off)

KATY - Alan

(he is laughing moves to hug Bonnie)

BONNIE - Don't touch me. I hate your ass.

GARY - Mom, never got a speeding ticket-

RANDY - Gar, I think living in California has made you a little out of touch with reality, I'm just sayin', but...in Texas...you've got to speed to get a speeding ticket.

GARY - You're right...it kind of goes without saying, doesn't it? I tell ya' - to this day I have never heard her say a negative thing about dad.

ALAN - Oh, I have!

RANDY - Yeah, right!

BONNIE - No, You Haven't

KATY- Alan, you have not

JOHNNA - Ooh, what, tell me.

ALAN – I heard her once. She went... (imitating Mary Nell) “Well, my, my.”

(They all laugh)

GARY - Oh I know. That was a real low moment for mom. Harsh!

BONNIE - Are we going to do this, or what?

GARY – Yeah, really.

RANDY – Man...what's your rush?...Any acting jobs coming up on the horizon?

GARY - I hope so. I am running an acting class and I am going to be working in the Art Department on some films coming up. Probably as a set dresser or something.

RANDY – All that and that's the answer I get.

JOHNNA - What do ya mean? I think it sounds cool.

GARY - It is. Long days but good money-

ALAN - Glorified furniture mover isn't that what you called it?

GARY - Yeah, pretty much...pays the bills

RANDY - I hear ya, I hear ya. Pays the bills, pays for the kids-

ALAN - You're job pays for everything.

RANDY - That's what I'm saying. Pays me so I can play on three softball teams...hey I'm no dummy. You two could have chosen a career on the Railroad but no...you have to do something you like. And that's where we're different. I mean to each his own but, me?...I don't like draggin' my butt up and down off of trains every day for 15 years...but what I do like is playing softball and being able to spend time with my family-

JOHNNA - Too much time!

RANDY - Hey if you want me to be gone more, fine! Your wish is my command, Oh Queen Johnna, I can just do that...I can join another softball team. Hahaaa! You should hear her whining when I come home and tell her I've signed up for another league. (Really hamming it up) "Oh Randy please don't, please. Stay home with us. We all miss you so much.

JOHNNA – I have never said that.

RANDY - Seriously, though man, I don't know how you do it. Not knowin' when you're going to work again or how you're gonna pay rent. I couldn't do it.

JOHNNA - Well, of course you couldn't do it. That's why you chose to work on the Railroad.

RANDY - (this is not a serious argument at all. It is in fact a very endearing way these two show their affection) Johnna Walker...I am telling ya', you are pushing it. I'm about ready to go home and find me another softball team to play on.

GARY - I guess it's the price you pay for doing what you love.

RANDY –Steep price to pay.

BONNIE – Randy!!! If we don't hurry up and get this going, I'm gonna' need another smoke

RANDY – I guess we should. You all probably noticed I've been stalling.

BONNIE - Oh my God! Is that what that was? Are you stalling because you're nervous.

RANDY – I reckon that’s it.

BONNIE – Well, Randy, I’m nervous as hell.

GARY - Might as well get it going

ALAN - Sure why not.

KATY – Anybody need anything before-

BONNIE – Oh good God Katy don’t give them any ideas.

JOHNNNA – Yeah, Katy if you give Randy the chance he’ll order pizza or something.

RANDY – Walker, you read my mind.

(Off all their looks)

RANDY – Just joking! Man!

(The boys situate themselves on the floor around the boxes like a campfire – Gary begins to distribute the boxes amongst them)

GARY - Let me see, there are five boxes. So, I’ll take these two. Al, those two can be yours and Randy can take the small one.

RANDY - Sounds like a good plan. Push it over here to me. (And the two boys take their place on the floor and divide the boxes evenly between them)

(The three wives settle in behind their husbands – close for comfort, each expresses their support in an individual way)

GARY - Well...shall I begin?

ALAN - Go for it.

RANDY - Be my guest.

(In this next segment it is important that the emotions felt...tension, anticipation, fear and ultimate revelation all have differing depth and individual timing. It is as if a wave of emotions is passing over each one so as to actually see the ripple effect.)

(Gary opens the first box and in it appears to be, visible to all, magazines and loose papers. But on top is a simple worn envelope.)

(Gary opens the envelope and pulls out two sheets of paper tri-folded together and opens it so that only he and Bonnie can clearly see what is on the page.)

BONNIE - Gary, what is that?

GARY - Wow!!!!

BONNIE - What is it, Gary?

ALAN - What is it, Gar? Lemme see it.

GARY - (taking a moment he drops the piece of paper to his lap and looks at Alan first and then Randy.)

RANDY - What is it, bro.

(After Randy's line a shadow appears stage right emanating from the door running across the floor and ending at the place where Randy sits. It is the shadow of a man. No one is aware of this, except, maybe, Randy.)

GARY - Wow! Well, bro's, we said we were going to do this. I'll let Alan verify or authenticate it but... It's a schematic drawing for a letter bomb.

ALAN - (Randy is silent) Lemme see it. (Gary hands Alan the drawing – Bon and Johnna are comforting their men) It's not just a schematic drawing – it's a "how to" schematic and a materials list.

GARY - Really? I didn't even see that.

ALAN - Yeah! It's all right here. (Pointing to the list of materials on the drawing) And here is the "step by step" guide-

GARY - Wow!!! Lemme see it. (Gary looks at it again and Randy remains silent. Alan moves over to glance over Gary's shoulder) Now, where would he have gotten with this?

ALAN – I think he made it, and, I think it's dad's writing.

RANDY - It's his handwriting? (Randy gets up quickly and goes to see for himself)

ALAN - Yeah. I think so.

GARY - You're right, man.

GARY - Wow!! (Gary turns to Bonnie who is already moving in to hug him. Johnna positions herself to take care of Randy when he comes back to her .) I love you.

BONNIE - Oh, I love you.

(The room goes eerily quiet. Randy goes back to his previous position pushes and kicks the boxes away from him. Making some distance between him and this information. Everyone notices)

JOHNNA - Randy? You Ok.

RANDY - Yeah! I'm fine.

GARY – Say, man, you alright?

RANDY - Yeah, I'm fine. It's just...a lot to...you know...to process.

BONNIE - Well, Randy, what are you feeling? We're all family, here. You can say whatever you want.

RANDY - I know, I know, I'm just... trying to put all the pieces together.

(The schematic drawing makes its way around to Randy and Johnna)

BONNIE - Well, you can talk about it and we can help you put them all together. Hell, we need to put them together ourselves.

GARY - Yeah, bro. What are you thinking?

(Pause)

RANDY – (Looking at the drawing) I'm thinking how stupid I feel. I was totally duped. He lied to me. He lied to me a lot. Over and over again. He wrote all those gushy poems and letters and I believed him.

GARY - Well, of course you did.

RANDY - No, I mean I really believed he was telling the truth. That it was some big "frame up". I took my kids to see him and he was lying the whole time. I was such a fool. I just bought every stinkin' thing he said. I took my kids to the prison to listen to him lie to us...to me. God, I'm stupid. (He throws the drawing down)

JOHNNA - I told you guys. He never see's bad in people.

BONNIE - Well, Johnna, that's Mary Nell coming through.

RANDY - See, I understand, I get it if a marriage falls apart because a person changed or something...I can make sense of that. He changed and the idea of family or marriage just wasn't what he had thought it would be...but all the other charges? I took my kids to see him and he lied to all of us about all of it...and I didn't for a minute question it. What kind of father just...blindly accepts all the crap...after years of deception...and then exposes his kids to it? I believed every bit of it.

GARY - And I probably would have believed him, too.

BONNIE - No, you wouldn't have. We're far more jaded than you guys are. We live in Los Angeles, and people there are already more jaded, plus, we get screwed around by people every week in our business.

GARY - You're probably right. I would have wanted to believe him. But it would have taken him a lot of work to convince me.

RANDY - Man, I was stupid!

GARY - But, Randy, you wanted to believe him even more so because you were taking you kids to meet him. What? Are you going to say "hey, Shawn, Pat, here's your Grandpa Reed and he's an American Terrorist?" (Noticing a grimace from Alan) Sorry, Al; I know you don't like me to say that.

ALAN - Hey, call it what it is.

KATY - Alan. (Wanting to comfort)

ALAN - Hey, it bothered me the first time you said it but-

GARY - I know it did and I was just trying to bring some levity to the moment-

ALAN - but at this point, as much as I like or not, we're trying to find out who our dad really was...good or bad...

BONNIE - Well, we haven't seen any good yet and we just started-

GARY - No kidding. Man I hope this is the worst of it-

ALAN - I hope nothing blows up!

BONNIE - Yeah, I think I'm gonna' move away, I need another cigarette anyway.

GARY - You are kidding me?

ALAN – Be sure not to light it anywhere near these boxes. I'm going to refill my coffee. (Alan gets up and starts for the kitchen)

KATY – That's ok, I need to go check on Erin.(Katy goes to the bedroom)

GARY - Can I join you outside?

BONNIE - I wish you would. (She goes to the patio and relights the remainder of her last cigarette)

GARY - Let me get some more coffee. (Gary follows behind Alan to the kitchen)

(Randy picks up the schematic drawing again and begins looking at it - Gary pours his coffee, then set's it down and hugs Alan- then goes out with Bonnie.)

(Randy and Johnna sit quietly for what seems like forever, saying nothing)

JOHNNA - I love you. You OK?

RANDY – When do I finally get to say I am a grown up? When am I finally going to be able to see when someone is lying to me? Am I that daft? The kids are young now but in a few years if someone is trying to sell them a bill of goods am I going to be able to tell...to help them? I'm so stupid.

JOHNNA - I love you, stupid.



(The shadow fades)

KATY – (enters) Where is everybody? Can I get you anything?

JOHNNA – No, we're fine. (Johnna and Randy stay there comforting each other- Katy goes to the kitchen and hugs Alan)

(Alan hugs Katy and goes to join Gary and Bonnie out on the patio)

(As Alan is going out Gary enters from the porch)

GARY - Ok bro's. Let's get through this and see what other information to put in my screenplay.

(Johnna gets up to give Gary and Randy a moment)

JOHNNA- I'll be right back.

(Johnna sees Katy is in the kitchen and heads to the patio)

RANDY – Man, can you believe this. If you saw this in a movie you wouldn't believe it. The first thing you opened....and it was his handwriting.

GARY – Oh, come on man. You had to have suspected?

RANDY – Yea, well, I'll admit the good memories we had didn't jive with what we'd read and heard, but then you go see him and straight to your face he tells you he's innocent. So I'm sitting face to face with the father who...I wished so many times would come home...and here he was...home. Granted it wasn't the way I'd always thought it would be but he was home.

(Alan has entered and joined Katy who has been inconspicuously listening from the kitchen. Johnna and Bonnie enter close behind and join in on the conversation. Randy and Gary are almost oblivious to their presence)

GARY – Randy, I never knew you wished he'd come home.

RANDY – I don't know if I would have said that at the time. I was pretty angry for a while but then all of the sudden I knew where he was and how to get hold of him and the kids were asking about him and I was beginning to feel a tug.

GARY – I get it bro. I wished all the time growing up. I used to pick up those dandelions, make a wish that he'd come home...and blow them. I did it a hundred times if I did it once.

BONNIE – (Breaking the spell that Randy and Gary are in) Gary, when did you stop doing that?

GARY – It was my first year of college. Dad had already been arrested and released for the forgery charges. We hadn't heard anything yet about the letter bomb. But I think when he first got arrested and we found out he'd been in Irving, thirty minutes away... all those years...something clicked and I think that's when I stopped wishing. I was heading down the back road to the gym and passed a patch of dandelions and I remember feeling a natural urge to pick one up and make a wish and blow it. My first instinct was to pick it up...probably because I'd done it so much, but I remember distinctly making the decision not to pick it up. I just kicked it.

(Gary sits down and continues going through the contents of the first box finding only cook books and prison assignments)

BONNIE – Whadaya say we see if there are any more dandelions to kick.

ALAN – Yeah, let's get on with it.

BONNIE – (From the patio) Wait for me.

RANDY - Yeah, let's do...I can't wait...rather have a root canal.

GARY - Have you ever had a root canal?

RANDY - No...are you kidding? But I've heard how bad they are.

(Bonnie extinguishes her cigarette and enters)

ALAN - Yeah, Randy have you ever been to the dentist.

RANDY - What kinda question is that? Of course I have...once.

BONNIE - You are kidding me...I hate your guts!(She sits)

GARY –Ok, these are just...I don't know it looks like prison assignments. Here, man, take a look. Pass these to Randy. (He hands the papers to Alan who briefly looks at them and passes them on to Randy) It looks like the rest of this box is just cook books.

RANDY - Yeah, for several years dad was a prison cook.

GARY - Oh! Really?

ALAN - Well, Gar, you remember the stews he used to make setting up the pressure cooker in the bedroom-

GARY - Yeah, the question is how do you-

ALAN - I remember-

RANDY - Yeah, you remember.

Bonnie - How old were you?

RANDY - He remembers from the womb!

ALAN - I remember!

RANDY - I know bro. You remember...from the womb.

KATY– (Alan is noticeably upset) There just teasing.

ALAN - No they're not...and I remember.

RANDY - Of course you do man. You-(Johnna punches him) ouch! The queen has ruled. (Looking at the papers) Yeah, these are job requests and grants that you get when you get assigned to a job or task. Dad got to do several jobs while he was incarcerated. Depending on whether you were on good behavior or not you could

put in for certain jobs that paid some money. From what he told me he was on good behavior and got a lot of privileges.

BONNIE - What was considered good behavior?

RANDY - Well, mostly it was not getting into fights and arguments.

ALAN - Like someone was going to fight him? He was a third degree black belt in Kodokan Judo.

RANDY - Yeah, no kidding!

GARY - Yeah, right. I still remember seeing dad at a judo tournament. It was amazing. (Gary gets up to act it out. He is grappling with an imaginary opponent and faking foot sweeps in what looks a tedious exercise and then with almost blinding speed he mimics throwing a person to the mat) So, he was struggling and shifting and then “boom!” He throws the guy to the mat and my dad’s arms are being raised in victory.

BONNIE – Gary, I don’t think you’ve ever told me that story.

RANDY – Gar and I have quite a few of those stories but needless to say our “Leave it to Beaver” memories have taken a back seat. Dad’s crimes and his prison life have been more in the front of our minds these last ten or twelve years than-

BONNIE – Fred MacMurray turned to Dr. Kimble?

(Gary and Alan begin doing their feet and singing the tune to My Three Sons)

GARY and ALAN – (Singing) Ya dada da, ya dada da, ya dada da, ya dada dat, dat, dat, dadat.

KATY – Randy, when you were talking a couple of minutes ago about your dad being in jail you said he got paid? Whatdaya mean”

Randy – Oh, it wasn’t much. Ten bucks a day or a week or something but-

JOHNNA - They were able to buy things like magazines and newspapers and-

RANDY - and TV time, or cigarettes that you could trade with someone for TV time. That's how he got to see your Bonanza movie.

GARY – That's kind of freaky.

BONNIE - No kidding.

KATY – What is Gary? That he watched you on TV?

GARY – Just the thought of it. I mean, I never saw him or talked to him after he left but he was watching me.

KATY – Did you know when it aired that he was watching it? (Gary Nods “no” getting ready to respond as Randy cuts him off)

RANDY – No, Katy. You remember, don't you? I had gone to see him once already and when I took the kids back Gary had already shot the Bonanza movie and I told him that and he said he wanted to know when it was airing so he could watch it.

KATY – Oh, yeah, I guess I remember that.

GARY – (Closing up the first box) That's all that's in this box. Bon would you label that box? I figure we should keep track of what's in the boxes so we don't need to go through them again.

BONNIE - Katy, do you have some paper and a sharpie?

KATY – Yeah, I'll get it for you.

BONNIE - Ok, so tell me the order again for when he was arrested and all the “stuff”. It's so confusing.

(Gary pulls the second box near and opens it)

KATY – I'm with you Bonnie, I can't keep it altogether. (She hands her a sheet of paper and sharpie) Here's the paper and sharpie. Do you need more than one piece of paper?

BONNIE - Yeah, give me several and I'll write it on paper and stick the individual sheets inside each box.

KATY – Good idea. (She hands her more)

GARY – Looks like more books.

RANDY - Yeah, dad was reading several books a week.

GARY -(Pausing a moment to tell the story) OK...So, here is what I remember. You guys may have more details.

(Pushing the second box aside )The first thing I remember is in 1971 Mom and me and Alan were sitting in the dining room watching TV. The news came on and said something like (imitating a news man) “an Irving man by the name of A.O Reed had been arrested in the disappearance of Tex Roberts.” Something like that.

KATY – That was pretty good Gary.

GARY - And mom said, “Well, Gary, that’s your daddy.”

BONNIE - Now who was Tex Roberts again?

GARY - He was a wealthy man that had disappeared a few years earlier from his house or “mansion” in Dallas.

RANDY - Right. And dad was living in Irving at the time and working as a Notary Public.

GARY - Yeah, and I think what happened was that when Tex Roberts disappeared-

ALAN - He owed two of his employees over a million dollars. So they forged checks-

GARY – And dad notarized them. It was like three million each. (Back to the contents of the box)

ALAN - It wasn't that much.

RANDY - Yeah, remember. It was well over a million dollars. I remember the newspaper said he notarized forged documents for transfer of funds and titles to properties...

ALAN – Yeah, It was titles to eight tracks of land, the North Dallas home of Tex Roberts as well as Power of Attorney. A lot of other stuff as well. And I'm sure all that totaled was well over a million dollars. But it wasn't three million dollars each.

RANDY – (Hands raised in surrender) I'm sure your right, Al.

BONNIE - Man!

GARY - Wouldn't it be nice to find a bit of that in these boxes?

RANDY - Bonnie, reach over and pinch him and wake him up. He is so dreamin!

GARY - (He has now opened the second of his boxes.) Ok, this has more books and a Roget's Thesaurus. Hey, check it out. (As he is flipping through the thesaurus he notices Art Reed is written on several pages all through the book) His name is everywhere.

BONNIE – Wonder why?

RANDY - That's so no one will steal it. If you just write it on the cover they'll rip off the cover and take it. So, you write your name all through the book.

GARY - God, that's bizarre. Hey, check these out. Saucony's. Man these are expensive running shoes. Oooh, size ten. These are mine.

RANDY - Yeah, dad was in great shape. He said he was running three miles a day.

GARY - Ok, I am done with my boxes. Who's next?

(Gary closes his second box and pushes it aside)

ALAN - I'll start, I guess. Might as well make the jump.

(Alan does brief organizing of his boxes and then opens one)

BONNIE - Ok, so go ahead with your story. He was arrested for signing forged checks. But he got out of jail?

(Bonnie's line of questions distracts Alan and he gets involved with the story telling leaving his boxes contents for the moment)

GARY - Someone bailed him out to the tune of 20,000 dollars-

ALAN – -he was charged and arrested three or four times because they kept coming up with new evidence so additional charge would be filed...

RANDY ...and then at one point he fled from authorities and was, basically on the run for two years.

GARY – Basically. He was?

RANDY – Well, he said he ran because he had gotten threats on his life-

GARY – Yeah, right!

RANDY...and I tend to believe him...

GARY – Still? After my boxes?

RANDY – Man, you just won't let it go will ya? I wish you'd gotten to go see him. You'd know what I am feeling. It's a whole different thing when you're sitting in a visiting room of a prison and your dad tells you he was framed and scared for his life...you tend to believe him...you want to believe.

(All noticing the seriousness of Randy's plight)

GARY – I know, man. I know.

ALAN - (Changing the subject) So, it was two years after the disappearance of Tex Roberts and his Aunt that he turned himself in to the FBI in Houston. He went to court to face the four forgery charges and bond was set at five thousand each...or twenty thousand.

BONNIE - Who paid that?



GARY - I have no-

RANDY - Well, who do you think?

ALAN - Roy Browning?

RANDY - Uncle Roy!

GARY - Seriously?

RANDY - Well, who else in our family has that kind of money?

GARY - Well, maybe Uncle Tiffin? Why would Uncle Roy pay it? When dad left Uncle Roy's company he tried to take some of his clients with him-

ALAN - Tried! He did- (he gets back to the contents of his first box)

RANDY -And he took his secretary-

ALAN – (Looking up from his box) Well, whoever paid it, he was convicted of those four charges but got a five year probated sentence.

BONNIE – Meaning that he got out on probation?

GARY – Yeah. No jail time but he had to be a law-abiding citizen.

BONNIE – Yeah, good luck with that. Meanwhile a man and his wife disappeared and were probably killed!

GARY, ALAN, and RANDY – Aunt!

BONNIE – Wife, Aunt, sister, I can't keep it together

ALAN – They never came up with any proof to hold anyone for that. Even Leon Horton, the guy Dad was working with, only got ten years and served just three and a half.

BONNIE - Oh My GOD!!!! I am exhausted just trying to keep up with all this. All this makes me need another smoke. You're gonna' wish you had a tape recorder. (To Gary)It's a good thing you have a steel trap for a memory.

KATY – Does your mom know all this?

RANDY - She does, but you sure wouldn't know it would you?

KATY - How do you know she knows?

GARY – It was, fifteen...maybe seventeen years ago, mom and I had talked about the week dad left. He had not been paying the bills and well, the power got shut off in the house, the car got repossessed, and we almost lost the house-

ALAN – (Pausing for a moment to look up from some file folders he has just found) She went to Uncle Roy and Aunt Ena about all the problems and that was when Roy told her what dad had done.

BONNIE - Do you mean trying to steal clients and stuff?

ALAN - Yeah, and-

BONNIE - Did she ask for help?

ALAN - Nope!

GARY - Uh uh!

RANDY - Nope!

BONNIE - You're kidding me. Wasn't Roy rich or was this before?

ALAN - Roy was always rich. Well, next to us anyway.

RANDY - No. I think the only time mom got any money was when John Holt gave her five hundred dollars to get the electric bill paid so we could get the power turned back on.

BONNIE – Is that Roy and Ena's son?

RANDY – Roy and Ena had Roy Jr. and Beverly. John Holt was Beverly's husband. Anyway...that's the only time Mom got any money and I'm still not sure she asked...I think he just offered it.

GARY - I think your right. Ok, Al, what's in your box?

ALAN - Alright. (Pulling some papers from the file folders) What we have here- (flipping through them)

GARY -"is a failure to communicate."

ALAN - These are documents of ownership to a Security business. There are even business cards. Seems our father was, at some point, head of a Security company-

GARY - Security Chief and American Terror-

ALAN - Don't even...you're such a jerk! Anyway...it was called Security Installation Corporation.

GARY - Oh, that's good. SIC (as in sick) How appropriate. My dad is the president and founder of SICK!!

ALAN - Mostly it looks like its contracts with...lemme see this one is to an insurance company ...to provide security service's-

BONNIE – Security? Alan, isn't that what your job is? Don't you do security for Bass?

ALAN – Yeah. You think I didn't get the connection?

BONNIE - Well, I didn't mean that you're just like him...that sounded horrible...but it's just so weird that there are so many things about your father that every one of you boys share.

KATY – Wait! I'd like to know which one of you is the potential terrorist.

ALAN - Whadaya mean potential? (He makes a menacing cackle of a sound and starts to go for Katy)

GARY - Yeah, it is pretty hard to wrap your mind around. Dad left when I was nine. So the first three years I have just a couple of memories and the last two or three years dad wasn't really around much. So really, the only quality years I had with dad were ages four, five, six and seven. Four years. And yet I am so much like him. That's scary.

RANDY - And dad was a whiz kid as far as all things electrical.

JOHNNA - I didn't know that.

GARY – Where did you think Al gets all those gifts from? (To Alan) Al, you were fixing alarm clocks when you were six.

ALAN - Dad had wired all the rooms in our house with an intercom system-

GARY - Yeah, we'd wake up in the morning with Andy Williams singing-

ALAN -or Ray Coniff playing all through the house.

RANDY - (getting Bonnie's attention) See what I mean about his memory. From the womb! ( Alan is not amused)

BONNIE - And, Gary, you sound just like Andy Williams.

GARY – Yeah, right. Don't I wish?

BONNIE – Well, what I mean is you *can* sound like him.

GARY - Well I sure did when I was in high school and college. Plus, to this day if you asked me what my favorite song was I'd say it was Tammy. My second favorite would be Danny Boy.

ALAN – Do you still have Dad's Andy Williams albums?

RANDY – Yeah, where'd all his albums end up?

GARY – I have them. I took em' out to California with me when I moved out there in '82.

BONNIE - Hey, Randy you love the Tammy movies. We got you the VHS tape of, what was it?

BONNIE - Tammy and the Dr...  
last year for Christmas.

RANDY - Tammy and the Dr.

RANDY – Yeah, I was kinda' hoping we'd just gloss right over that subject. But, no, you had to get back to it, didn't ya? Man, did you have to bring her?

GARY - Sorry, bro. I don't know what got into me.

RANDY - Well, if we could please keep a lid on it? If, that is at all possible. I'd kind of like to keep that detail of my personal life, personal, especially from the guys at the railroad. Man I would be so screwed if that information got out there.

KATY – Bonnie, I remember thinking, and don't take this the wrong way but I thought it was odd that you gave Randy that video. (Giggling) I never thought about it, but, do you think your interest was because of your dad-

RANDY - Shoot, I don't know; but you gotta' admit it's pretty weird that a man as macho as me likes Tammy and the Dr. - something strange is at play here.

GARY – Macho is right. You started playing sports at a much younger age than me or Al. You were like this little Jock. No pun intended.

(several laugh)

RANDY – Man, that hurts. Getting personal now.

GARY - Randy, do you remember this? I have a very vivid memory of Dad teaching you to throw a softball. I was sitting on the banister on the front porch and you were probably seven or eight and you two were playing catch.

RANDY –Yeah. Dad would start about six feet away and he was pitching it to me, underhand, and every couple of throws he would move back a little further until we were almost on both ends of the yard. I taught Shawn to throw the same way and I plan on teaching Pat too. It works man. Shawn's thirteen and he can throw the ball almost as far as I can.

ALAN – I don't know if that's good for Shawn or bad for you.

RANDY – Funny. You're real funny. (a dig) At least I can throw.

BONNIE – Well, Randy that's why you like softball so much.

RANDY –Probably. I've never really thought about it that way.

BONNIE – You're kidding? How could you not?

RANDY – Well. Mainly because that’s what you do as a kid growing up. You start playing ball.

ALAN – I didn’t.

GARY – That’s because we had too many appliances that needed repair. (They all laugh but Alan and Katy)

RANDY - On a serious note, I always thought it an odd coincidence that I ended up on the railroad cause that’s what Grandpa Reed did.

BONNIE – This really is getting weird now. My Grandpa was a Railroad man too.

GARY - Oh NO!!! Say it isn’t so. Please don’t tell me I married my sister.

ALAN - Yeah and I’m my own grandpa.

(They all laugh except Katy)

KATY - I don’t get it.

JOHNNA - You’d have to be there.

KATY – I am here.

ALAN - (Getting back to the box) Ok, I’ve also got some books. More, papers and more books. Louis L’Amour. My God, a bunch of Louis L Amour. Jeez la freeze. (counting) there’s like 12 Louis L’Amour books. It’s like a whole set. Lemme see what these papers are.

BONNIE - He did like to read.

RANDY - Well, when you’re serving a life sentence you’ve got a lot of spare time on your hands.

BONNIE - I guess so.

GARY - No kid.

ALAN - Ok. Now this is interesting. It seems like I have in my possession a marriage certificate between dad and a Patricia C. Reeves, dated 1973.

GARY – So dad got remarried?

BONNIE – Randy, did your dad ever mention that when you guys talked.

RANDY – No. Uh uh.

BONNIE – Conveniently left that part out?

RANDY – We pretty much talked about the present. Mainly the kids...their interests and what they're into...what me and Johnna do...our church.

ALAN – (Still looking at the papers) So, dad remarried in 1973 which would be nine years after he left.

GARY – Officially, left.

BONNIE - Whadaya mean?

GARY - Well, 1964 he had been gone on and off for quite some time when he came home and told us he was leaving to go get a job so that he (Word for word) "can provide for us the way we should be provided for."

KATY – Is that what your mom said or just what you think?

RANDY - That's what *he said*.

GARY - His exact words. I remember it like it was yesterday. I was sitting in that green swivel chair-

ALAN - I loved that chair.

RANDY - We all did.

GARY - right inside the front door. (To Randy) I think you were standing beside the chair and he was kneeling in front, or squatting down in front of us and mom was standing behind him.

ALAN - Where was I?

GARY - Man, I don't remember.

RANDY - (He shrugs) Me neither, bud.

(Beat)

ALAN – So, he married again in 1973 and, hmmm(Sarcastic)...I don't believe he was ever divorced from mom.

GARY - He wasn't! He tried to get a divorce at some point but I can't remember when it was. But, I know she asked John Holt to look it over and he advised her not to sign it.

KATY – Why?

RANDY - Well, I think the main reason was that it totally released him from any responsibility. He'd not contributed in any way to the family and any settlement should include some kind of compensation or settlement of properties and stuff.

ALAN - I was always told she finally gave him one.

GARY - Well, I was told that too. That sometime in the late 60s she got a letter from a lawyer requesting a divorce and she went ahead and signed it and sent it back.

RANDY - Yeah, right, but...it also said that she would receive documents from all parties involved which meant from dad, mom, both of their lawyers and the court ruling that the divorce was in effect. And she never received anything.

ALAN – A few years back I checked and there's no record anywhere in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area of a legal divorce.

BONNIE - You mean he didn't call or write Mary Nell about a divorce?

GARY – Nope.

RANDY - You're asking an awful lot there, Bon. Man, she's tough!

BONNIE - I can't believe that.

GARY - In fact, after he left neither of us ever saw or talked to him again. Not even Mom.



BONNIE - Well, except Randy saw him in prison-

GARY - Right but before that he'd never once called or wrote any of us. He only saw his own mom, Sybil, twice after he left us. So, between 1964 and 1978 when Grandma died he saw her twice. I'm telling you, when he left...he left.

BONNIE - Nice guy. Sorry, but he was an asshole.

RANDY – Now, Bon...don't beat around the bush, okay. Say what's on your mind.

(Randy gets up to stretch)

BONNIE - I'm sorry you guys. Where are you going? I'm not making you upset, am I?

RANDY – I'm just joking with you. No you're not making me upset. I just need to stretch. Bad knees. Too many slides into second base.

BONNIE – Well, I'm sorry you guys. I just speak what's on my mind.

JOHNNA - Bonnie, we're all right with you. You're just the only one to say it out loud.

ALAN – (Still going through the materials, not paying attention to the previous exchange) Hey, guys. I remember Grandma told me he came over once after he left us and had a woman with him and that she was Mexican. And this would have been during that time.

BONNIE - So what did your Grandmother think?

ALAN – About dad bringing another woman home or leaving?

BONNIE – About him leaving all of you. I'm pretty sure she wasn't happy seeing him with another woman.

GARY - I never talked to her about it. I don't know if any of us did but Mom told me Grandma was brokenhearted.

ALAN – I heard Grandma say on several occasions dad was going to have to answer to God for leaving us.

BONNIE - Oh, yeah?

GARY - Oh, yeah.

RANDY - She was definitely on our side of the issue. (He sits)

ALAN - I stayed with her almost every day for three years so I'd say she was on our side.

BONNIE - Whatdaya mean?

ALAN - We'll mom went to work within a week after he left.

GARY - Yeah, she took the first job she was offered-

ALAN - It was downtown at an Insurance company-

GARY – International Life Insurance or something...

ALAN - and she would drop me off on her way to work. Okay, that's all of that box. One down. One painful box to go.

BONNIE – (To Gary) So, when Mary Nell would leave in the morning to go to work she took Alan to your grandmothers but what did you and Randy do?

GARY - Well, I was almost 10 and in the third grade. I remember walking to school. It was just 300 yards away. Right across the street from the church. And I don't know...I remember playing with kids in the neighborhood after school. And I have a bunch of those memories.

ALAN - Yeah, while you were playing with all the neighborhood kids I was at Grandmas' fighting with Mark and Brianna.

KATY – Who's that?

GARY - Our cousin's.

ALAN - Grandma also took care of them. Randy and Gary were the neighborhood misfits.

GARY - Oh, right!

ALAN - Fighting with Paco and Frank Lemoine, stealing, robbing the paper machines and smoking.

GARY – Well, that was quite a bit later. I wasn't doing that when I was 9 and 10.

ALAN - Oh that's right what were you 13?

GARY - Well...12, 6th grade. Yeah I was stealing cigarettes from the grocery store and selling them at the bowling alley. And I was smoking a pack a day.

RANDY – Man, I never did stuff like that. (Totally selling, nobody buying)

JOHNNA - How in the world were you smoking a pack a day?

GARY - Well, me and one of the Benson kids or whoever would go down to those two sewer pipes on Old Granbury Road, right behind South Hills Baptist Church and smoke for hours...one right after another...until we had smoked a whole pack.

RANDY - Man, you were a bad kid. I was never that bad.

GARY – We heard you the first time and we're still not buying it. Hey, what can I say, I didn't have any fatherly guidance.

BONNIE - Maybe you just had the wrong kind.

GARY - Right.

KATY – How did your mom not find out?

GARY - I never thought she knew-

ALAN -Oh, she knew.

GARY - Oh, I know she knew. That's one of the things about mom that's so amazing. She knew all sorts of stuff we were into.

RANDY - Are you sure? How do you know she knew? She never said anything to me except the time I had a bunch of guys over and we were smoking and drinking cream soda's we stole from the 7-11 and I forgot to clean out that black and gold ash tray we always had.

GARY - Oh, my God. Bonnie. You would love this ash tray and lamp. It would be so collectable right now.

BONNIE - What did it look like?

GARY - The lamp base and the ash tray were black but had gold cracks all running through it. Kind of like tinted mirror with gold cracks-

RANDY – So, come on, come on. Why do you think she knew?

GARY - Cause a few years ago when I came home during one of my show tours I went to Jr. and Wanda's-

KATY – Bon, Have you met Jr. and Wanda?

BONNIE - Oh yeah, they're great. Wanda's a hoot. And you guys, Mary Nell and Junior look just alike. They could be twins. How many years are they apart?

RANDY – Just two years. He's two years older than mom. Junior and dad were best friends.

GARY - Anyway, I was talking to Junior and Wanda about how wild I was when I was younger and how Mom never had a clue...and I noticed this look on her face and I said "What?" Thinking that I had hurt her feelings and she said... (Imitating Mary Nell) "Well, Gary...you think I don't know that you kept all those cigarettes in the back yard where we turn the water on and off? You don't think I knew you kept cigarettes stashed in the sleeves of your daddy's coats in the living room closet?

(Alan is going through papers in the second box)

RANDY - BUSTED!!!!

GARY - All of the sudden I saw Mom very differently. She was so much more “into it” than I ever thought.

BONNIE - Well, why didn't she ever say anything?

GARY - Mom just didn't talk about stuff. I think she always felt that if you didn't talk about bad things or problems they would go away.

BONNIE - My dad would have busted my ass.

GARY – Plus, she didn't have time to do much disciplining. She was so busy going to work every day and then coming home and working around the house and getting dinner ready, she...had to work and provide for us and she just trusted and prayed we'd be alright-

BONNIE - That's it! She trusted that God would take care of you guys-

GARY - Absolutely! Mom is the most faithful person I have ever known.

JOHNNNA - I hate to put a damper on the evening but I have three kids at home who are probably tearing the house apart-

BONNIE - You're absolutely right, I'm sorry I keep asking questions.

KATY – Don't be sorry Bonnie. This is so enjoyable! (She giggles)

(The others are silent in their response not quite sure how to process “Enjoyable”)

ALAN - Glad you're having fun. Me, on the other hand have just found a wedding picture of dad and what appears to be a different woman...(Turning over the picture)...named Hazel. Definitely NOT the first woman. (Reading the picture) Art and Hazel. This is dated 2/16, 1979. (He passes the documents around) And it's attached to a divorce document dated 2/20/80 from Art Reed and Hazel J. of Dallas. So that's a year later. They were married just a year and...(figuring) four days.

KATY – Oh, you guys. He was married again?

ALAN –Yep! So Let me see if these...because...okay, wait! I have another marriage certificate...or no...this is a license...dated 4/4/80... so that's two months later...after his divorce to Hazel and her name is (Reading) *Betty J. Thompson, Rockwall, marriage ...*

RANDY – (Looking at his papers)These are definitely two different women.

ALAN – That makes three women...and mom. (Looking at all the different pictures and papers) Patricia Reeves, Hazel J. and...Betty Thompson.

GARY – Hey, do we know anything about the secretary he was supposed to have taken away from Uncle Roy's business...I assume he was having an affair with her.

RANDY - Yeah, do we have her name or anything?...I've never heard it.

ALAN - Me neither. We could probably get it.

BONNIE - Or keep looking and it might just turn up.

ALAN - You got that right.

(Beat)

GARY – (In a bit of shock) So, we have at least three other marriages, Mom and maybe even the secretary. Good night!!

(The boys are all a bit stunned)

ALAN - Ok, so I got another wedding certificate and license...we should keep all these together-

BONNIE –You mean another wife?!!

ALAN – No, it's just more copies.

BONNIE - Thank God!!! Here, let me get the other ones out-(She goes into Alans first box to retrieve the other papers)

ALAN - Is there room in that box for the books?

BONNIE - Well, let's just do this. (She consolidates the boxes and adjusts the inventory papers) Johnna, you should be doing this. You're the organized one.

JOHNNA - You're doing great but I'll do it if you want me too.

BONNIE - Be my guest. (She gives her the papers and sharpie) Katy? Is there any more coffee?

KATY – Yeah, it's done.

BONNIE - Anybody else want some while I'm up?

GARY - You know me.

BONNIE - No, I don't. I don't know you at all.

(She starts singing)

BONNIE - "You don't know me, ya dee da, da...dadada. That's the only part of the song I know.

GARY - Well actually it's "You don't OWN me." (Singing) "You don't own me; I'm not one of your baby toys.

BONNIE - Oh, that's right. I hate your guts. He knows the lyrics to every song ever written. That's me doing that thing I do. So what is the other song I'm thinking of? God!! Sometimes I just wear myself out.

GARY - (singing) Oh, you don't know the one who dreams of you at night." (She pulls him out of the chair as he begins to sing in an effort to bring him out of his funk) "And longs to kiss your lips and longs to hold you tight." (He is up and singing to her as they dance in an embrace)

(In a staggered fashion Alan joins in then Katy on the next line)

GARY, ALAN, and KATY – "and anyone can tell, you think you know me well..."

(Then Bonnie joins in) "...but you don't know me."

(This last linger lingers just a moment before...)

RANDY - Hey folks, I hate to break up this little musical interlude here. Even though it really was special, I mean you guys got me all choked up but I can't be seen crying... I'm a grown man with three boys and I have to keep my emotions bottled up... So can we please get on with this? Besides we're having such a good time.

GARY – (Pours coffee to all) I take all the blame for our digression. It's just that I have been looking for the title song of the film I'm going to make about this night and I figured "You Don't Know Me" might just be it.

ALAN - (Singing parody lyrics) Oh, I don't know my dad who never said goodbye. I never knew my fa..ther told so many lies.

GARY - (picking up where Alan left off) But now he's died in jail, I thought I knew him wale (trying to rhyme "well" with "Jail")

(They all laugh)

(Together singing)

GARY – I still don't know him.

ALAN – And we don't know him.

RANDY - I think you're on something.

(They have now all gotten their coffee and are back in their places in front of the boxes,)

ALAN - The rest of these papers are just more of the same. It looks like duplicates of the marriages documents.

JOHNNA - Illegal marriages.

RANDY - ...seems like it.

GARY - Yep!

ALAN - OK, now I have several file folders and...Oh, now this will be good. These are newspaper articles...*Leon C. Horton Arrested in Disappearance of Dallas Millionaire...Metro Squad Enters Search For Investor...Correction;* these are copies of newspaper articles about dad's first conviction-



GARY – Official “Correctional Facility” copies?”-

ALAN – Is there any other kind.

RANDY – Not for dad.

ALAN – Alright, the time has come for everyone to get involved. Here take this and flip through it and see if you find anything interesting. (He hands Randy and then Katy a folder)

(Randy immediately hands his to Johnna)

RANDY – Here, Walker. (She doesn’t take it) Walker! Come on, help us out would you? You’re the one with the brains in this family.

GARY – Speak for yourself!

ALAN – Thanks, bro!

RANDY – (indicating he and Johnna) I mean this family. Man, when’d you get so darn sensitive? You’d think I was dealing with an actor or something.

BONNIE – Alan, I’ll take one too.

(They all begin reading the titles aloud and then silently reading the articles)

JOHNNA – *Lawyer held In Alleged Stock Fraud Case*

KATY – *Notary Charged Again in “Tex” Robert’s Mystery.* Would that be your dad?

ALAN – The very one.

JOHNNA – *Wanted Man Reported Ready to Surrender*

RANDY – Walker? Have you already read the other article?

JOHNNA – I just skimmed over it but it was a short one.

RANDY – Man! Evelyn Wood! I’m still trying to figure out which side is up.

BONNIE – *Fugitive Surrenders.* Gary, is this Ardis? (Shows Gary the picture)

GARY – Yeah, it sure is. (Taking it in – shows it to Alan)

ALAN – (Taking the picture) I think this was the picture in the Dallas paper.

GARY – Ok, now what is this about? *Mystery of Missing Landlady Marks Seventh Year.*

ALAN – Yeah, that's the so called aunt or, whatever she was that disappeared with Tex Roberts.

GARY - No, because the article's dated 1976. Forsyth was the name of the lady that disappeared with Tex Roberts. This is a Mrs. Farley. Ok, Listen. (He reads) *A sack of groceries, soggy from melting frozen food, was the last trace of Anna Farley. It's been seven years since a tenant in Mrs. Farley's large, East Dallas house came to pay his rent and saw the groceries but couldn't find his landlady. It was Nov. 22, 1969, when the 72 year-old woman disappeared from the now demolished house.*

RANDY - So that was a year before Tex Roberts and Forsyth disappeared?

GARY – Yeah. Now listen to this. (Continues reading) *The Roberts mystery has eclipsed Mrs. Farley's case since the link between the two was discovered at a 1971 court of inquiry into Roberts' disappearance. The link was...drum roll, please...Leon C. Horton, who met Roberts shortly before Roberts' and Forsyth disappeared from his North Dallas Estate. So Horton and Dad were partners and were both involved to some degree in the disappearance of now, another person?*

RANDY – Guilty by association, maybe?

GARY – Yeah, right. Now who won't let it go? I haven't heard any of that.

ALAN – I sure hadn't heard about anyone else disappearing or anything regarding the forgery case other than, you know, Roberts and Forsyth.

RANDY – Hmmm. I kind of hate to admit it now but I think I remember Dad talking about or mentioning something about a third person that had disappeared but it didn't make any sense to me at the time because I

hadn't heard anything else. But, I'll tell ya', he would go on and on at times. Talking in circles.

GARY – Circle dialogue?

BONNIE – Stream of Conscious?

RANDY – I don't know what either of those are...but, both. I found myself just kind of nodding "yes" a lot.

JOHNNA – Randy, you came home a couple of times not really having a good sense at all about what you guys had talked about. Well, except for the fact that it was very clear that he was very self-involved.

RANDY – I guess you're right.

GARY – (reading) *It was also discovered that twenty five thousand dollars of Roberts' money had been used by Horton to pay off a mortgage on Mrs. Farley's property after she had disappeared and that Horton had been her attorney.*

JOHNNA – Alright, now listen to this one. It relates to the same woman. *Metro Squad Enters Search For Investor.*

ALAN – Well, that would be "Tex" Roberts.

JOHNNA – I know but give me a second to read this.

RANDY – Al, bro, tread carefully man.

JOHNNA – Shut up. Both of you. Ok, (Reading) *Dallas police closed the missing person's case on Roberts and Mrs. Forsyth when Horton identified himself as Tex Roberts' attorney and said he knew the whereabouts of the two people.*

ALAN – That's all still about Tex Roberts.

RANDY – Al. Let Johnna get to it.

JOHNNA – (back to reading) *A.J. Bergeron, a longtime associate of the elderly investor...*

ALAN – A.J Bergeron was Tex Roberts bodyguard.

JOHNNA - *...said he went by the home on Aug. 15<sup>th</sup> and found that it was unlocked. All of Roberts' clothing appeared to be untouched in the house. You guys. This sounds just like the other case. (Again, reading) Police tracing Mrs. Farley's disappearance said they also found things unharmed in her East Dallas residence. Friends of Mrs. Farley and Roberts have maintained that none of the missing people were the type who would suddenly depart without leaving word with someone.*

RANDY – Man! I don't know about you guys...but I think common courtesy says if you're going to kill someone and take all their money and bury them somewhere where nobody will see them...the least you could do is put away the groceries and lock the door when ya leave. I mean, please!

JOHNNA – Randy!

BONNIE – Hey, guys? I have an article here with Leon Hortons' picture on it and it says your dad lived in Grand Prairie and was arrested at a carpet repair center.

GARY – Well, read it.

BONNIE – *Reed, who resides at 533 Dickey Rd.*

GARY – Well, that's Grand Prairie.

BONNIE – Yeah. (Continues reading)- *in Grand Prairie, was arrested hours later at a carpet repair center. He has been released on bond. I thought he was living in Irving and working as a notary.*

ALAN – He was. (He is reading away but interjects a bit and goes right back to reading) But he had held several jobs-

GARY – and he'd been arrested several times. Who knows which time this was.

ALAN – Ok, I have something here that also talks about the Farley woman

(continuing) *Witness Refuses to Take The Stand*. Hold on a second and let me figure out what I want to read.(Scans the article under his breath)  
 Okay... *Leon C. Horton refused to..blahblahblah... Here we go.*  
*Implications of violence surrounded other testimony Thursday as the DA attempted to develop further information concerning the three disappearances. A Dallas attorney, who acted as an impartial witness to a conversation between Horton, and Horton’s attorney said that when Horton received the power of attorney documents to the Roberts estate he had advised them that “they better have some Christmas cards sent or friends and family of Roberts will get suspicious.”*

BONNIE What does that mean?

GARY– It means that if friends and family members of Tex Roberts don’t receive Christmas cards they’re going to know they’re dead.

BONNIE - Boy, I hope you are all keeping this together. I’m sure not.

ALAN – (continues) *In questioning Horton’s associate The DA also asked if he knew Ardis Odell Reed had received injuries while working for his brother, who owns a cemetery in Texarkana, in August, 1970. He admitted having met Reed, but denied knowledge of the cemetery accident. Reed, a Grand Prairie...blahblahblah. So, dad worked for Uncle Tiffin?*

GARY – News to me.

RANDY – Same here.

GARY – I mean, that is awfully convenient.

ALAN – You think?

RANDY – A little too convenient for my convenience if you know what I mean.

GARY – Ok, so this is what we got. Horton, dad's partner, makes his living pulling scams on elderly people wherein he gets them to turn over power of attorney...of what?

ALAN – Stocks, cash, property, or whatever it happens to be “case specific.”

GARY – Oooh, Alan. You sound so legal. So, he is transferring funds and gaining rights to property, among other things, from at least three people but to do that he needs someone who can access the properties he is getting power of attorney over.

ALAN – Enter A.O Reed aka dad/electronic engineer and ...(Giving this weight)security company owner-

RANDY – Then he needs someone who can produce legal documents-

ALAN – You mean like a Dallas Attorney? Hmm, Let me think. That would be Horton's Dallas attorney and associate.

GARY – then once the documents are generated he needs someone to verify they are indeed legal like a notary-

ALAN – enter again dad/ electrical genius/notary and security chief-

RANDY – Then all you need is someone with the ability to “off” certain parties and make certain they disappear and can't be found-

BONNIE – Well, your daddy could do that with all his Kung Fu shit.

GARY – (Laughing) But, now Horton's got a mess on his hands with dirty carpet and all so Dad, takes a job as a carpet repair man so that it raises no suspicion when he's replacing carpet.

RANDY – (Trying to get into it)Still, you gotta' lot of work to do because transfer of funds and power of attorney need to be legally notarized-

JOHNNA – Randy, Gary just said that.

GARY - Man, you gotta' keep up or keep out. (Continuing)Dad, jack of all trades, who also happens to be a notary, put's his stamp of approval on the forged documents and-

ALAN – GUYS! Is this really what we're saying? (Almost ludicrous to believe) Dad gets his security business going so that he can legally access the security systems at the properties in question. Then he “offs” the people in those properties and takes a job working at Uncle Tiffin's cemetery so he can get rid of the bodies where nobody could ever find them?

BONNIE - And gets hurt while he is working there, probably because he was working at two in the morning, without lights so no one would see him.

GARY – (Standing up to give this dramatic emphasis) Ladies and gentlemen may I introduce to you, security company owner/electrical genius/notary public/carpet repair man/grave digger-

ALAN – 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt

GARY – Oh, my God!!! I forgot that. Slash, 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt slash, husband-

(Gary heads toward kitchen to put his coffee cup in the sink)

RANDY – of several...and chef.

( As Gary Gets to the kitchen the same shadowy figure from earlier, this time in silhouette appears outside the window above the sink. No one see's it except, maybe, Gary)

GARY – (He turns) absconder, deserter and dead father...Ardis Odell Reed.

(silence– that this is plausible really begins to sink in – individually the three women offer support – a touch, a look, a noise-discover these each performance)

RANDY – Man, I wish I drank.

GARY – You may after tonight. I know I will.

(The silhouette fades. He returns to his seat)

BONNIE – He didn't even go to jail for all this, did he?

RANDY – Horton went for two and a half years and dad's was probated but still...

ALAN – Well the bodies were never found and it sounds like in all the investigations, as much as they were trying to come up with evidence, dad and Horton and whoever else was involved was really good at covering their tracks.

RANDY – But they were so stupid about other things.

KATY – What do you mean, Randy.

RANDY – Dad died serving twenty years in prison. He got lucky the first time around and got a probated sentence and all he has to do is be good. You know, it's like he just couldn't let it go. But he was stupid and got involved again in other stuff and here we are. Going through a bunch of crap that does nothing but inform us as to how much of a jerk our dad was.

GARY – Yep! And Randy, we still have your box.

RANDY – You think I don't know. Why do you think I was talking so much? I don't even know if what I said made any sense or not. I just knew my box was next.

JOHNNA – Believe it or not, it actually made sense.

ALAN – Man, I was wondering what had happened. I don't think I've ever heard you string that many words together.

RANDY – And just for that mister "I'm the only Reed boy with a degree" ...you never will again.

(The cold that had covered the room is beginning to thaw)



RANDY – So, Al, without talking too much so as not to incur any more of your harsh comments while I am feeling so fragile...before I open my boxes can you politely point me to the razor blades.

(They all laugh)

BONNIE – To, slit your wrists or to cut the tape on the boxes?

RANDY – Oh, that's good. Where'd you get her?...Don't tell me. I can guess. Now for the small box.

BONNIE – Big things come in small packages.

RANDY – Don't I know it? (Bragging)

JOHNNA– I think I'm going to be sick.

RANDY - (Pulling the box closer to him) Goodness! This is heavy. Ok, looks like more magazines and cookbooks. Oh, well maybe just a few. (He hands a stack of magazines to Johnna) Johnna, just flip through those to make sure there's nothing sandwiched in between. Here are some medical or, I don't know, pharmaceutical books. American Outdoorsman. He was dreamin' there.

ALAN – What do you mean? He was out doors...every day. (A joke) For about an hour.

JOHNNA – Here ya go. Nothing there.

(Johnna hands the magazines back to Randy and he sets them aside)

RANDY – Ok, moving on. We have file folders. (Reading)*U.S v Horton*. (Next one) (On to the next one) *Federal Circuits. Docket number yadayada. United States of America, Plaintiff-Appellee, V Leon Cordell Horton and Ardis Odell Reed. Southern District of Mississippi*. Mississippi. Hmm. Wonder why Mississippi?

ALAN – Well, let's read them and find out.

RANDY – Thank you, Alan. What a great idea. You know guys. We should go through the boxes and see what’s in them. What do you say? Thanks Al, for the great idea. Knucklehead!

ALAN – Well, we could do it today.

RANDY- Knucklehead! (To Gary and Bonnie) You guys see what I put up with?

JOHNNA – (Indicating Randy) Do you see what *I* put up with?

RANDY – Ok, enough “dump on Randy” take this Walker. (Hands a file folder to Johnna and one to Alan.)

(Through the next section Johnna reads her material and marks her papers as she listens periodically)

RANDY (Cont.) Al, here. I’m gonna’ need my reading glasses.

ALAN – (As Randy is fumbling in his jacket) I’ll go. *Third Conspirator sentenced. Jackson Mississippi API. A third conspirator in a nationwide extortion scheme- Ok, these must be the documents that got him the 20 years- third conspirator in a nationwide extortion scheme has been sentenced to a five year suspended sentence. Hmmm. The names whited out. Anyway... a Colorado farmer who admitted putting rat poison on Colorado store shelves had pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against partners Ardis Odell Reed and Leon Cordell Horton, both of Texas, in the bizarre extortion case. Fox was the name signed to more than one hundred and eighty extortion letters mailed to corporate officials from Jackson Post Office between 1975 and 1977 some of which contained diseased ticks, letter bombs and assassination threats. His testimony was crucial n getting a conviction for Reed and Horton.*

KATY – Assassination threats?

GARY – Well we knew about the one bomb letter to General Foods that blew up a secretary. But this said “letter bombs” plural and assassination threats. Now, I have never heard that one.

BONNIE – Gary, do we know if the letter bomb killed the secretary?

GARY – Well, it didn't because dad and Horton would have been charged with murder. But on one of the indictment charges it said something like "causing severe bodily damage."

ALAN – (Continuing) *Horton is a former Dallas County Prosecutor and Reed was a purchasing agent for a Texas Firm.*

GARY – So now we can add "Purchasing Agent" to the long list of dad's occupations. Purchasing agent...and assassin.

RANDY – So that's where we get our Mississippi connection.

GARY – And it's where we get our Colorado connection. Several reports had mentioned that he poisoned food in Colorado and there it is.

ALAN – (Still perusing the material –looks up) And so far it's the first mention of Fox. Remember the extortion letters and the bomb letter that blew up the secretary for General Foods were signed B.A. Fox.

BONNIE – Be a fox! How stupid. Do you think it's a play on words or is it the actual name of a person?

ALAN – I always thought it was a joke. Like, they were being "sly" or something. (Back to reading) *Horton, 53, was driven to a Federal Penitentiary in Reno, Oklahoma and Reed, 50, was taken to a federal Prison in Texarkana, Texas.*

GARY – I wonder why he was sent to prison in Texarkana? It's another odd coincidence that that is where Tiffin lived.

BONNIE – Well, what's weird to me is that he ended up in Ft. Worth. Not even five minutes from your house.

ALAN – (Reading) *Texarkana, Texas DA said that Horton and Reed who were sentenced to maximum terms will have to serve at least 7 years before the Federal Parole Commission will consider their cases. The District*

*Judge sharply criticized Horton and Reed for their roles in the plot and described the case as one of the most bizarre, demented, perverted and heinous criminal plots he had heard in his 17 years on the bench.*

BONNIE - You guys, did anyone ever say that there was a clue or any signs of this behavior?

GARY - I remember years ago when we were still at Gideon Baptist that someone told me (Quoting) "this church is built on three pillars, and your daddy is one of those pillars and if any one of these pillars falls out...the church will crumble." Well, dad was the pillar that fell out-

ALAN – and Gideon Baptist isn't even a church anymore.

BONNIE – I just don't get how you go from being a pillar in the church to what is being described here.

GARY – I know. When he left he was a great father and husband; to us and to mom anyway. You just have to believe that something went really wrong somewhere.

BONNIE – Well, I tell you what. In death he is the luckiest son-of-a-bitch ever lived. He should have died alone and been buried alone. But he had all of his family show up by his side. After all he did to others and didn't do for your whole family...he had everyone in his family who ever cared for him come to his funeral. He didn't deserve you guys. He didn't deserve the family God gave him.

RANDY – (Breaking this tough moment) AlrightyO! That's all in that folder. –

RANDY – (Getting the magazines he'd set aside) Here, put these in the other box.

GARY – Let's put them in the box of cook books and such. Or we could just toss them? I don't have any desire to keep them.

ALAN – I say get rid of them. I think the other box is pretty full anyway.

BONNIE – (Checking the weight of the previous box with the cook books) Yea, it's full. Do you guys think you should go through them though, just in case he's hidden anything important in them?

KATY – I doesn't seem like he was worried too much about hiding things. (Giggles)

RANDY – Good point Katy. I'm for tossing them. Bon, since your close, take these and toss them? (Tosses the magazines to Bonnie)

BONNIE – Oh, thanks. Make me do all the dirty work don't you?

KATY – Here, Bonnie. I'll get them.

BONNIE – Oh, Katy, I'm just giving them a hard time. I'll do it. And I'm not going to have another cigarette. I don't want to miss anything.

GARY – You're probably getting low on cigs aren't you?

BONNIE – Well, there's that too. (She carries the magazines to the kitchen trash)  
(Gary is slapping the back of his hand as if to say "I know you like the back of my hand")

JOHNNA – (Noticing something in the box) Look, Randy.

RANDY – I know. I'm getting to it. (He is gathering and somewhat organizing some letters in the box) These are letters that I wrote Dad while he was in prison.

KATY – Wow, he saved them.

RANDY – It would appear that way.

GARY - How many are there?

RANDY – (Counting) One, two, three...six.

ALAN – You think that's all of them?

RANDY – Yeah, probably. I don't really remember. It's not like I was keeping count. He wrote me a lot more than I wrote him.

ALAN – I didn't even know you were writing him. Except for telling him you wanted to come and visit and bring Shawn and Pat.

BONNIE – Why didn't you know? Why didn't you tell him Randy? Gary did you know?

ALAN – (Gary nods yes) He never tells me anything. The only time we see each other is when you guys come home for Christmas.

RANDY – Oh, come on Al we see you nearly every Sunday at church (Trying to make light of it) and Thanksgiving and Easter.

ALAN – Oh yeah, that is you I wave at from the sound booth at church isn't it? Who are all those little rug rats sitting next to you...Oh, your children...my nephews!!!

RANDY – (Now taking it personally) Hold on. I didn't tell you because conversation about dad was not a regular topic around the house. Al, I'm sorry, but to be honest I wasn't even sure how I felt about contacting him in the first place. And I really didn't know what you or Gar thought about him or about me contacting him. This was a deal between me, dad, Johnna and the kids and I really didn't want to involve you guys and especially mom. Telling you and anyone else meant it might get back to mom and I sure didn't want to mess with that or make her upset.

ALAN – (Trying to act as if it's no big deal but failing) Well. Thanks for trusting that I can keep a secret.

RANDY – It's not that. I didn't want you to have to keep a secret from Katy and Mom. And I know how things are. You accidentally let something slip or someone hears a conversation or sees a note and then people feel like they've been lied to or kept in the dark and such.

GARY – I totally get it. I don't keep anything from Bon and there's always that worry that something will slip.

BONNIE – No, kidding. God, I'm horrible about letting stuff outa the bag. I'd rather not know.

RANDY – Plus, Al...I'm still trying to reckon with the facts here and have been since the first time I talked to dad. I am much clearer in my mind after tonight about what I believe and feel about dad than I ever was back when we were writing and I was visiting him.

BONNIE – Randy, you said he wrote you a lot more than you wrote him? Why?

RANDY – Oh, I don't know.

JOHNNA – Randy! Yes you do; because, his letters were weird. He was writing all these poems and...

RANDY – You're right again Walker. Man, I hate it when she's right.

JOHNNA – (Smiling) He must have a lot of hate because I'm always right.

(Johnna takes the box as Randy is looking at and organizing the letters)

RANDY – See, she's right again. He would write these poems and go on these religious soap box banterers or whatever you call it and it was just plain weird. I let Gar read one of them.

BONNIE – Oh, so he found Jesus in prison?

GARY – Growing up we always thought he knew him.

BONNIE – Well, I bet he also found Bubba in prison.

ALAN – Yeah, I'm sure of it and probably put him on the concrete with a round house.

GARY – (Quoting a line from Billy Jack)" I'm going to put this foot and Wop you on this side of your face..."

(Alan joins in just a little behind Gary)

GARY -...and there's not a damn thing you can do about it."

ALAN - ...and there's not a damn thing you can do about it"

(Alan and Gary laugh)

KATY – What is that?

GARY – It's a quote from Billy Jack. Just another remnant of my dad's effect.  
Besides seeing Enter The Dragon 35 times I've seen Billy Jack at least eleven times.

JOHNNA – Hey people, here is a few pages of your dad's poems and writings.  
Anyone want some reading material?

ALAN – Yeah, let me take some. I'll put it with my devotion book next to the toilet.

GARY – Al, that's a great idea. I know the first time I read one of them it just about made me shit.

RANDY – So are you saying I shouldn't read it now? I'm not wearing depends yet.

(Finally some levity is brought to the situation)

BONNIE – I'd like to hear one...if anyone else would.

GARY – Yeah, go for it bro. (Fatigued from sitting Gary stands and moves to a stool. Once he arrives the shadowy figure out of the kitchen window reappears)

RANDY – Okay. I'll just read part of it because this one is seven pages long. I have no idea what I am reading but here goes. This is not a poem but a dissertation by Art Reed.

(Reading) *What is in a Heart?...Have you ever wondered what's in a heart? Just what does it have in it except its life giving properties? What fills the*



*Human heart? Surely you have heard it said, "He has hate in his heart." Well, it is true that the human heart has the ability to contain many things. There is a hate filled heart, a heart of deception, of fear, of anger, of covetous heart, a lying heart, a cheating heart, a sadistic heart. But all these things do not really describe the human heart for it is a wonderful piece of equipment designed by God to perform the task of supplying our bodies with life producing and sustaining blood. So when you hear someone has one type of heart or another, just what are they talking about?*

*It has been said that, "MAN IS A BODY THAT HAS A SPIRIT AND A SOUL." The body is obvious because it is seen by all, but the spirit and soul are of a different nature. A man's soul is in his mind and it will provide him with the power to discern right from wrong, and to choose one or the other. But where is the spirit? Well, it is in the heart of man. No, not the blood pumping heart, for in this vernacular the heart means the center of man, and it is this heart, this center, that all human conflict begins and ends. Okay. I think that's where I stop. This thing just keeps going and going and that's what it was like talking to him. This things beginning to get a little weird.*

GARY – I'm with you now bro. It's pretty out there.

(The silhouette fades)

RANDY – Now you get my quandary here? You guys are finally putting it all together? I was beginning to think...am I really that STUPID? When I went to see him he was pretty self-absorbed, thought I would be taller, very non-apologetic for everything he had done. And he accepted absolutely NO responsibility in his legal, parental, or marriage vows, or the demise of all of it.

BONNIE – It sounds like your dad was trying to put some pieces together himself.

GARY – Yeah, a little self-examination going on? Trying to determine what's in *his* heart?

RANDY – Maybe he should have started some of that self-examination a little earlier.

BONNIE – Yeah, like maybe sometime within the first ten years after he left you guys?

(Johnna has now pulled out three file folders)

JOHNNA – Randy, you need to try to make sense of these. They're marriage and divorce papers.

RANDY – (Looking over at the papers with Johnna) When are they dated?

ALAN – Are they just copies of the ones we saw earlier?

JOHNNA – No. These are different. These are from *Jurisdicion de Mexico*. From Quidad Juarez, Mexico.

RANDY – (He hands it to Gary and Bonnie looks over his shoulder) Here, Gar. Take a look at this.

GARY - Yeah, this is 1962. (Trying to translate) This is a document to dissolve...whatever...this was dad filing an application to be granted a divorce from mom in 1962.

BONNIE – (Confused) Well, wasn't that before he left? I thought he didn't even leave you until later...like 1963.

GARY – Yeah, this is April of 1962 so that would have been at least a year and a half before he actually said he was leaving.

KATY – I'm so confused.

ALAN – He was trying to get a divorce a year and a half before he even told us he was leaving us.

BONNIE – I'm with you KT. I'm confused too.

ALAN – (Frustrated) Well, basically, it's all been a lie.

GARY – Yeah, when he came home and told us he was leaving “to go get a job so he could provide for us the way we should be provided for...”

ALAN – (Anger starting to build) It was all a lie. He knew he wasn’t coming back.

JOHNNNA – And here is another divorce document. It’s dated September 16<sup>th</sup> 1960 and he was in Mexico filing for a divorce.

RANDY – (Serious) You have got to be joking?

GARY – Man, how did everyone miss all this?

ALAN – (To Johnna) Let me see that. (She hands him the document)

RANDY – I don’t know man. But you have to wonder if anyone else knew what he was doing.

BONNIE – Like who? You mean your Grandmother or Ena and Roy or Tiffin?

GARY – Well, I mean like Mr. Kyle or Mr DelValley.

BONNIE – Oh, my God! Who are they?

RANDY – Mr. Del Valley lived across the street and he and dad were pretty tight.

GARY – And Mr. Kyle owned Kyle’s Drug Store.

BONNIE – Oh, yeah, you’ve told me about him.

GARY – It’s where I used to steal 45LPs. I just can’t believe someone didn’t know something.

RANDY – Yeah, like the people at Gideon Baptist.

BONNIE – Yeah, I just don’t get it. Why did he just, out of know where...leave?

GARY – Yeah, why then. When he came back and told mom he was leaving and she made him tell us...at least that’s what we always thought...why was it then he decided to never contact us again? Something must have sent him over the top.

RANDY – Yeah, but Gar, it was something years before that because we now know he was trying to get out of the family as early as September in '60.

GARY = You're right. What was it? I don't get it.

ALAN – (Almost matter of factly) Oh, I do. It was me. I was the reason it all went south. I was the straw that broke the camel's back.

GARY – Oh, right!

RANDY – (Getting a kick out of this) What the heck are you talking about? Do you remember something else you heard from the womb? Please share.

KATY – (Sensing Alan's seriousness) What is it Alan?

ALAN – (Beginning to take some weight) Dad was in Mexico trying to get a divorce from Mom when she was 6 months pregnant with me!

(Silence)

ALAN – I'm the reason he left.

BONNIE – Oh Alan-

ALAN – (More weight) Oh, I'm sure there were a lot of other factors but the bottom line is mom getting pregnant with me was the deal breaker.

GARY – (Trying to make it better) Or maybe two kids was already an issue and for some odd reason three was-

ALAN – You don't have to try to make it better.

RANDY – So, I wonder if Mom knows this.

GARY – I can't imagine that she knew.

ALAN – (On top of this argument – Not letting it go. He stands to get some distance) I can't imagine that she didn't. You always said she always knew more than you ever thought she did. She knew. And I blame her!

GARY - Blame her?

BONNIE - (Trying to figure out Alan's thinking) You blame Mary Nell for your dad leaving and becoming what he became?

ALAN –(Momentum building) No! But I never heard her say that she thought dad had misgivings about this family because she never said anything. I never heard her say if he was happy here or not. I never even heard her describe him or talk about his interests or dislikes. No, I don't blame mom for what he became. But it was her fault I never knew my dad. It's her fault!

(Katy goes to him – he pushes her away. They are all a bit in shock)

GARY – Alan, bro, dad flipped out. He was surrounded by people who loved him and thought the world of him and he threw it all away. Mom was as surprised as everyone was. How can you blame Mom? That doesn't make sense.

ALAN – (In control now) Well, Gar, maybe it doesn't make sense to you. Maybe it just doesn't mean as much to you as it does to me to not have a father and to never have really known a father. You're glad he's dead. You feel lighter. You don't have a kid with another one on the way.

GARY - And you think I'm happy about that? (He rises from his sitting position)  
That it's taken me thirty nine years to get my shit together enough just to get married?

ALAN – She kept him from me. It's her fault I don't know how to be a man; to be a father.

(As Gary crosses to Alan the shadowy figure reappears)

GARY – (Taking the baton) Yeah, well I never knew how to be a husband and I may never be a father. And I have dad to thank for that. The first three serious relationships I had ended after a year and a half almost to the day because I wanted to make sure I didn't do to my wife what dad did to

mom and us. And that's why I was thirty six and single. And I'm still trying to figure out who I am and what it means to love and commit and stay. Even as late as two years ago I was still leaving. I've been leaving all my life; leaving my girlfriends, leaving school to go to boot camp. Do you know I didn't tell anyone I was going to boot camp until two days before I left?

I left college to go on tour; I left Actors Alley to go on tour when things got unbearable. I left this family to go to California. So basically for thirty years I've been leaving and it has scared the hell out of me since dad left that I may end up being just like him. So, yes, I am glad he's gone. And I do feel lighter. I feel like I weigh ten pounds because the weight of my father's burden is off. It's gone. He can't leave me anymore. For the past thirty years every day was another day my father didn't call me. For the past thirty years every day was another day my dad left. And that ended today.

(The shadowy figure fades)

ALAN – (Now it's his turn) Well good! I'm glad it all ended for you. But I would have liked to have known or at least been told something about my dad. Mom would never talk to me about him. To this day, she has never told me anything about him. (The rage is building) Why did she marry him? What made him a man she wanted to marry? Why did she think he would make a good father. What does she think it takes to be a good man? A good father? A man of God? Nothing! She kept him from me. She kept me from knowing anything! Like what he was like that he and I shared. What talents he had that I had. What qualities...good or bad that we had in common. Did he like me? I don't know this man at all. I never knew my father. I was never even told any good things about him. So now I'm left with three good memories of my dad and a thousand bad ones... because she kept him from me. And now...here I am. (Realizing his child is asleep down the hallway) I've got an eighteen month old in there sleeping. I've got another child on the way and I don't know the first

thing about being a father, much less a *good father*. His dying feels like the beginning of something horrible for me and now I will never know my father.

(They are all silent. Letting Alan vent. The rage is winding down)

She could have told me about him.

She could have shared him with me.

But she kept him from me. I feel so cheated.

GARY – Alan, she didn't keep him from you.

RANDY – Alan, come on man. That's not Mom.

GARY – Alan, she didn't keep him from you or from us.

(They are both close to Alan now)

RANDY – Yeah, man. If Mom did anything she protected you from him.

GARY – That's it bro. She protected all of us from him. I am convinced, and I will go to my grave believing the reason she has never once to this day, said a negative thing about dad was not just because she still loved him. Even after what he became. But Mom wanted to preserve that what we felt and believed about our dad, was good.

RANDY – Al, she may have known things. But she didn't tell us for our protection, man. She knew right away she was going to have to be father and mother to all of us. And to start talking about dad...I don't know...maybe it would just make us ask a lot of questions that she couldn't answer.

BONNIE – Yeah, Alan and she just picked right up and took over. And she took care of you boys.

JOHNNA – And as much as I hate to say it she did a heck of a job. (Nudges Randy – They kiss)

(Alan is silent)

KATY – Alan, say something.

ALAN – You all had your father figures. Who did I have? No one!

GARY – Sure you do. You have Melvin now and Pastor Burton. And there are probably others I don't know about. You may not know for years to come the impact they've had on you. I know that after we left Gideon, Jim Rollow, Gina's dad, was amazing. He was my first Sunday school teacher at Wedgewood. And here it is twenty seven some odd years later and it's just hitting me how important it was that he listened and talked to me.

RANDY – I keep having men in my life that I feel a special bond with. It's a little embarrassing at my age.

GARY – I've known for years that I was drawn to certain men because they filled a void. Mr. Love. Of course Mr. Woodring-

RANDY – Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Cox...man the list goes on and on.

ALAN - Your list goes on and on.

(There is a pause-the brothers don't know what else to say)

KATY – (Coming to Alan's rescue) I think that's about it for tonight.

ALAN – (Trying to be strong) I'm Okay. Let's finish this.

JOHNNA – Well, actually that's all of it. That's the last of the small box.

(KT is straightening up and trying to comfort Alan as well)

BONNIE – Man, big things in small packages. Who said that? (She is scanning the crowd) Had to go and jinx it didn't you?

JOHNNA – I think you said it Bonnie.



BONNIE – Did I? Really? Damn it all to Hell! I did, didn't I? I had to go and open my big mouth. Gare, just shoot me and put me out of my misery. God, I need a cigarette.

JOHNNA – Come on old man. Let's go see if our house is still standing.

RANDY – Ok Walker. (Struggling to stand) Man, if I can get up. Hey Al, is it okay to leave these boxes here for now? I'll pick them up tomorrow and put them in my attic. I've seen your garage. I've got more room in my attic.  
(Goes to Gary and they embrace)

ALAN – Just leave them.

RANDY – Gar, call me when you get up and around tomorrow.

GARY – Will do.

(Randy goes to Alan-they hug)

RANDY – You sure you're Okay bro.

ALAN – Yeah, man. I'm fine.

JOHNNA – Bonnie, if you're not doing anything and you want to go to Coldwater Creek, call me.

(All exchange hugs and goodbyes)

RANDY - Love ya, Al. (To Katy) You too, sis.

(Randy and Johnna exit)

GARY – Well, man, I guess we're outa here too. You sure you're okay leaving these boxes here.

ALAN – Yeah, bro. They're fine.

(Bonnie goes to hug Katy)

BONNIE – We love you guys so much.

(Alan starts to get up but Gary gets to him before)

ALAN – We love you too.

GARY – You okay, buddy? I'm sorry we kind of went at it. All I know is if we let him...*he* wins.

ALAN – (Stiff upper lip) I'm fine, bro. (Changing the subject) What are you guys doing tomorrow?

GARY – Haven't made any plans. I'm sure Mom will want to go with us to Koomer's or Montgomery Street antique mall. She always likes to do that. It'll be a nice distraction. Right now I'm just going to go home tell her I love her and try to sleep.

ALAN – I hear ya.

BONNIE – Are you two going to be alright?

ALAN – Yeah. We're good. (They exchange goodbyes)

KAT Y– (A stirring is heard in the back bedrooms) Yeah, Thanks Bonnie. Oh, I think I hear Erin. I love you guys. Bad reason to have to come home but I'm glad we're going to get to see you some. Bye. (She exits the bedroom)

BONNIE – Bye Alan.

( Bonnie exits)

GARY – See ya tomorrow bro. I love you, Al

(They hug )

ALAN – Love you guys. (Gary exits)

(Alan watches them leave then closes the door. He stands a moment and sits back down on the couch. He begins to cry. The shadow of a man now appears emanating from stage left and runs across the floor ending where Alan sits on the couch, alone. )

KATY – (She enters) Have they gone? (No answer. Then noticing Alan) Oh, Alan, what's wrong. (She goes to him and he crumbles into her lap as she sits)

ALAN – What do I do? What do I do?

KATY – What do you mean Alan?

ALAN – How do I raise my kids? What do I do?

KATY – Oh, Alan, you're going to be a wonderful dad. You already are. Erin loves you so much and you're going to be the kind of father to both of our kids your dad never was to you. All three of you boys grew up trying to emulate the father you remembered...but you didn't end up being like him at all. You ended up being like your mom. Good. So good.

(As she is comforting Alan the phone rings. It rings a second time and the answering machine picks up. It's Alan's voice on the message)

Answering machine V.O. Phone : Ring, Ring. VO: This is Alan and Katy-

KATY- (in the background we hear Katy say)V.O. -And Erin

ALAN-V.O...and Erin. Leave a message.

MARY NELL – (beat) *Well, hello. Anybody there? (Beat) This is your mother...I wasn't sure if Gary and Bonnie were still there but it's getting pretty late and I'm going to be turning in soon and...well, I wasn't sure if Gary remembered where we keep the spare key...maybe I'll stay up a few more minutes...I hope you're all okay and that you had a nice visit (Beat) Okay, I'll hang up now. I love you...Hi, Katy. I hope you're feeling better...Okay...bye for now...call me tomorrow...I love you, Alan...Love you too Katy...Hi, sweet Erin...Bye now. (She hangs up)*

(Alan has gathered himself just enough to listen to the call. He loses it again)

(The lights begin to fade as Danny Boy sung by Andy Williams begins to play)

(The shadowy figure lingers last)

(Blackout)

End of play.

