

SHADY MANOR

Set in a Mid-Western Nursing Home in a mid-size city in the beginning of the 21st Century

Cast

Staff

Janet Dee: Director of Nurses
 Jimmy Fleigen: Certified Nurse Assistant
 Judy Reed: Certified Nurse Assistant
 Richard Wade: Nursing Home Administrator

Family Members

Elizabeth Benson: Housewife and daughter of a resident and Bob's sister
 Bob Benson: Insurance agent and son of a resident and Elizabeth's brother
 Lisa Carter: Small business owner and daughter of a resident
 Veronica Fontaine: Highschool history teacher and granddaughter of a resident
 Paul Lockman: Architect and nephew of a resident
 Freddy Mack: Unemployed son of resident Gertrude Mack
 Douglas Mitchell: Husband of resident Glenda Mitchell

Nursing Home Residents

Gertrude Mack: Resident Room 37
 Glenda Mitchell: Wheelchair bound resident with dementia
 Hank Rosen: Wheelchair bound resident – on portable oxygen tank
 Resident #1: Resident with congestive heart failure
 Resident #2: Resident on Hospice
 Resident #3: Resident with dementia

Law Enforcement

Betty Lane: Rookie Detective working undercover as a Certified Nurse Assistant
 Lieutenant Ralston: Twenty-two years on the force

Doubling Up Possibilities

Jimmy Fleigen could also play Paul Lockman, Lieutenant Ralston or Bob Benson,
 Richard Wade could also play Lieutenant Ralston, Paul Lockman, Douglas Mitchell
 Freddy Mack could also play Lieutenant Ralston or Bob Benson
 Janet Dee could also play Veronica Lane, Lois Carter, Resident #1, #2, or #3

Judy Reed could also play Veronica Lane, Lois Carter, Resident #1, #2, or #3

ACT I - Scene 1

Lieutenant, Betty, Bob, Elizabeth, Judy, Glenda, Rosen, Jimmy, Dee, Freddy, Douglas

[Stage is Black]

Overture

SONG “Mama’s Care” sung by Betty

I remember the day we put Mom in the rest home.
 Her cancer was too bad to operate.
 The doctors they told us they did all that they could
 but soon death would be Mama’s fate.
 Mama’s care. Mama’s care. They were so thoughtful.
 Mama’s care. Mama’s care. It was so good
 and they just couldn’t do enough.
 Just couldn’t do enough.
 Mama was well treated there.
 I remember we’d visit and the staff gave us cookies
 and sometimes I’d play with the little house cat.
 Or sometimes we’d watch something nice on the T.V.
 but mostly we’d sit and just chat.
 Mama’s care. Mama’s care. They were so thoughtful.
 Mama’s care. Mama’s care. It was so good.
 Oh, they just couldn’t do enough. Just couldn’t do enough.
 Why can’t they be like that here?

[Spot Light goes up on Extreme Stage Left. Betty and the Lieutenant are facing each other.]

LIEUTENANT: It’s after Nine. The shift change should be over. Let them sweat for another couple of minutes. They’ll be happier to see you.

BETTY: Right.

LIEUTENANT: Nervous?

BETTY: A little.

LIEUTENANT: You’ll do fine. Just don’t mess up the nurse’s outfit. It’s rented.

BETTY: Ha, ha.

LIEUTENANT: We should have gotten you little matching bedpan earrings.

BETTY: Hilarious.

LIEUTENANT: Ever really wanted to work undercover in a nursing home?

BETTY: No.

LIEUTENANT: Well, better you than me. Good luck, Detective.

BETTY: Thanks, Lieutenant.

[The lieutenant turns and exits towards Stage Left. Betty straightens her uniform then looks towards Stage Right. Stage light dims then Black.]

ACT I - Scene 2

[Stage stays Black during opening dialogue.]

GLEND A: I'm going home.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

JUDY: Leave Glenda alone Mr. Rosen.

GLEND A: I'm going home.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

JUDY: Stop it.

GLEND A: *(Short pause)* I'm going home.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

JUDY: Leave Glenda alone, Mr. Rosen.

GLEND A: I'm going home.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

JUDY: Stop it!

GLEND A: *(Short pause)* I'm going home.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

JUDY: I said STOP!!!

[The Stage light goes up over Center Stage. Stage Set: Lobby Front Desk in the center left of the stage. There is a water pitcher on the desk and a stack full of empty cups. Over the desk is a Call Light Board with four blinking lights. Glenda and Rosen are in wheelchairs situated in front of the Desk. Judy is behind the desk Judy is behind the desk glaring at Rosen. Bob and Elizabeth appear from Stage Right and walk past the Desk. Bob is in front of Elizabeth. Judy rapidly waves her arm at them to get their attention.]

JUDY: Excuse me. You need to sign out.

[Bob and Elizabeth stop and look at Judy.]

BOB: We're in a hurry.

JUDY: Sign out please.

[Bob goes over to the Desk and picks up the clipboard, scribbles on it, and carelessly puts it back down on the desk.]

ELIZABETH: Things seem a little hectic here today.

JUDY: No. Things are just fine.

ELIZABETH: One of your staff said visiting hours are going to be shortened.

JUDY: Well, I haven't heard anything about that. They'll send out a notice if they do.

BOB: Come on Liz, we're late.

[Bob moves towards Stage Left and Liz follows.]

LIZ: What's the matter with you anyway? Nothing starts for another hour.

BOB: This was just a waste of time.

LIZ: Don't you care even a little about visiting her?

BOB: No, I don't. She's probably already forgotten we were ever here. What's the point?

LIZ: The point is she's our Mother. We need to be here to make sure she's being taken care of.

BOB: “We” means you. I’m not coming anymore.

SONG “I’m Not Going to Visit Anymore” sung by Bob and Liz

(B) Well, I just want my life back again.

Is that wrong? Now, is it?

This is just a waste of time.

So, I won’t be back to visit.

Let me make this real clear

I’m never ever, ever coming back here.

(L) Well, you don’t have to come all the time.

Just now and then for me.

You and Mom are all I’ve got.

You’re my family.

I know she wasn’t very loving.

And at times she could be quite mean.

(B) She just sits in that chair with that far-away stare. It’s weird, I swear.

She’s not even aware so don’t ask me to care. It’s just not fair.

(L) Well, visiting isn’t fun but it’s our responsibility.

Why should I be the only one?

Why does it have to fall on me?

So come on, what you’re saying’s not fair.

I know you better and you do care.

(B) I’m sorry for you. But I mean it I’m through.

There’s nothing more I’ll do.

Don’t make me feel bad. This whole thing is sad.

Yes sad. But true.

(L) But this is our Mom and she doesn’t have long.

You know? To live.

I’m doing my part. Can’t you open your heart?

Can’t you forgive?

[Liz squares off and puts her hands on her hips.]

BOB: Forget it!

LIZ: Forget what? That she was a single mother and she did the best for us.

BOB: The BEST for US is costing ME eight thousand dollars a month.

LIZ: That hasn’t stopped your trips to Europe.

BOB: That’s not what I’m talking about. I mean it. I’m done.

[Bob and Elizabeth exit Stage Left. Judy looks down at her cell phone and begins texting.]

GLEENDA: I'm going home.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

GLEENDA: I'm going home.

JUDY: Stop it. Both of you. Or I'll send you back to your rooms.

[Betty enters from Stage Left and goes up to the Desk.]

BETTY: Hello, Um, I'm from Med Mal. The Registry. I'm here to fill a staffing position.

JUDY: You are?

BETTY: Yes. Who should I talk to?

JUDY: Nurse Dee. I'll page her. *(Judy leans down over the intercom)* Nurse Dee to the Front Desk. Nurse Dee to the Front.

JUDY: So, you're from the Registry. What did they tell you about good old Shady Manor?

BETTY: Nothing much. Just that there's an opening here. I hope I get hired.

JUDY: You will. We're short staffed. What shift ya here for?

BETTY: The morning, or afternoon. I'm flexible. Ah, how many residents per shift will I be responsible for?

JUDY: That depends. Fifteen if you work the private pay, and twenty to twenty-five if they put you with the Medicaid residents.

BETTY: I thought the maximum morning load was twelve, private pay OR Medicaid.

JUDY: Not here. We're lucky it isn't thirty.

GLEENDA: Thirsty, I'm thirsty.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

GLEENDA: I'm thirsty.

ROSEN: No, you're not.

[Glenda rolls her wheelchair over to the Desk and tries to reach up for the water pitcher. Judy moves the pitcher away and comes out from around the desk.]

JUDY: That's it. *(To Betty)* Watch the desk, will ya? I'll be right back. *(To Glenda)* Let's go Glenda. Say good-bye to Mr. Rosen.

[Judy pushes Glenda in her wheelchair, exiting Stage Right.]

GLEENDA: I'm going home.

ROSEN: No, you're not! *(To Betty)* Who are you?

BETTY: I'm a C-N-A, a certified nurse's assistant.

ROSEN: I know what a C-N-A is. What's your name?

BETTY: I'm Betty Lane.

ROSEN: Can I have some of that water? *(Betty fills a cup of water and hands it to Rosen)* I'm Hank Rosen.

BETTY: How do you like it here, Mr. Rosen?

ROSEN: What?

BETTY: How do you like it?

ROSEN: How do I LIKE it?

BETTY: Yes.

[Nurse Dee briskly walks in from Stage Right. Betty quickly moves away from Rosen. Dee looks at Betty and Rosen, then looks around at the unoccupied Front Desk. Lights on the Call Light Board are blinking.]

DEE: Do you know where the girl behind the desk went?

BETTY: Yes. She took a resident back to her room.

[Dee shakes her head.]

DEE: Do you need help?

BETTY: I'm Betty Lane. I'm from the Registry.

DEE: Oh, good. Where've you worked?

BETTY: This would be my first hire. I've been trained. I got my certificate. I, I really need this job.

DEE: Un-huh. Well, new's OK. Let's see your card and registry papers.

BETTY: Yes. I have them here.

[Betty opens up her shoulder bag and pulls out her paperwork and hands it to Dee.]

ROSEN: She's a C.N.A.

[Dee ignores Rosen, looks at the paperwork then glares at Judy who enters from Stage Right.]

DEE: What do you mean by leaving your station? How long have those call lights been on?

JUDY: I was only gone a minute. *(Points to Betty)* She told me she's from the Registry. She was watching the desk.

DEE: She's not here for that. Don't you ever leave your station. Do you understand?

JUDY: Sorry.

NURSE DEE: Sorry what?

JUDY: Sorry, Nurse Dee

NURSE DEE: *(To Betty)* Betty Lane, is it?

BETTY: Yes.

DEE: Today you'll work the morning and afternoon shifts. Wait here I'll be back with some papers for you. *(To Judy)* And you. Find out why those call lights are on.

JUDY: Sorry ... Nurse Dee.

[Nurse Dee exists stage right shaking her head.]

JUDY: Well, Betty Lane, welcome to the worst job in town.

SONG “The CNA Song” sung by Judy

Welcome nurses' aide. Honey, you've got it made.
 Welcome to the hardest job in town.
 No respect or thanks, taking care of cranks.
 Just stay cool and this won't take you down.
 It's all hurry and scurry. Nothing here can wait.
 It's all hustle and bustle. Don't come drunk or stoned or late.
 When your shift here starts pick up all your charts.
 Check to see if any call light's lit.
 Patients all come first; good, bad, best and worst.
 Keep your cool and duck or you'll get hit.
 It's all hurry and scurry. Nothing here can wait.
 It's all hustle and bustle. Don't come drunk or stoned or late.
 Always interface with staff that you replace.
 Check your med tray and your safety kit. All shifts overlap.
 Call-offs cause a gap. Show up late the boss will throw a fit.
 It's all hurry and scurry. Nothing here can wait.
 It's all hustle and bustle. Don't come drunk or stoned or late.
 Welcome nurses' aid. Honey, you've got it made.
 Welcome to the hardest job in town.

JUDY: Oh, and stay out of the community room. The visitors' toilet overflow. That happens all the time.

ROSEN: Yeah. It happens all the time. She's a C.N.A.

JUDY: OK, Rosen. It's back to the room for you. *(Judy leans down over the intercom)* Jimmy Fleigen to the Front Desk. Fleigen to the Front Desk.

ROSEN: Not Fleigen. I don't want to go back to my room.

JUDY: Too bad.

[Rosen puts the cup of water on his lap and wheels his chair backwards towards Stage Left.]

JUDY: Stay away from that door Mr. Rosen! You just stay right here!

[Rosen stops. Jimmy saunters in from Stage Right. He looks at Judy then at Betty.]

JIMMY: What's up?

[Judy points towards Rosen.]

JUDY: Take Rosen back to his room.

JIMMY: Sure.

ROSEN: No! I don't want to go back to my room.

[Jimmy goes over to Rosen and takes hold of the back of his wheelchair, spins him around then begins to roll Stage Right past the nurses' station. Judy comes out from behind the desk and takes the water cup away from Rosen as he passes by. Rosen bows his head down and crosses his arms over his chest. Before Jimmy and Rosen exit, Dee enters from Stage Right with a clipboard and some paperwork.]

DEE: *(To Jimmy)* Hold it, Jimmy. *(Pointing to Betty)* This is Betty Lane. She's a temp from the Med Mal Registry. I'm putting her on the First Floor with you. Get her oriented.

JIMMY: Why? Is she disoriented?

DEE: Jimmy!

JIMMY: Why are you always sticking me with Med Mal temps? Get someone else to babysit her.

DEE: Jimmy! She's with you. *(Dee hands Betty paperwork)* Give these back to me when you've filled them out.

OVERHEAD PAGER SYSTEM #1: *[Wade's voice.]* Nurse Dee to the Administrator's Office. Nurse Dee to the Office.

DEE: Now what? O.K. Jimmy, take her with you.

JIMMY: Uh-huh. Well now, let's stroll down the lane, Betty Lane. So, are you in the "fast lane", or just a "little girl down the lane", Betty Lane?

DEE: Knock it off Jimmy.

OVERHEAD PAGER SYSTEM #2: *[Female voice.]* Nurse Dee come to the Second Floor Station. Nurse Dee to the Second Floor Station.

OVERHEAD PAGER SYSTEM #1: *[Wade's voice.]* No! Nurse Dee come to the Administrator's Office.

[Dee hurriedly exits Stage Right. Betty accompanies Jimmy as he exits Stage Right pushing Rosen who is slumped down in his wheelchair. Judy goes back to texting on her cell phone. Mack walks in from Stage Left and approaches Judy. Judy briefly looks up, then back down at her cell phone.]

FREDDY MACK: Good morning, Judy.

JUDY: Uh-huh.

FREDDY MACK: Have you seen Mother yet this morning?

JUDY: Not today. I was put here as soon as I walked through the door.

FREDDY: If you're here, who's minding the shop? They need more help here.

JUDY: Why don't you apply? You're here all the time. You might as well get paid for showing up.

FREDDY: No thanks. That would make Mr. Wade my boss. Besides, I still have ways to go on my unemployment insurance. *(Pause)* I guess I'll go and check up on Mother now.

JUDY: You are the attentive one, I'll give you that.

FREDDY: *(Freddy leans forward and gives Judy a big smile)* Say, how about a little encouragement?

JUDY: What's that supposed to mean?

FREDDY: You know. You know. Encouragement.

JUDY: I don't have any idea what you're talking about.

FREDDY: Neither does Mother. That's why I hate visiting this place.

JUDY: Life's tough.

FREDDY: I made up a joke. Do you want to hear it?

JUDY: No, I don't.

FREDDY: What do old people prefer most? Hospitals, Rest Homes, or Nursing Homes? *(Pause)* Nursing Homes! They have to be sick to go to a hospital. There's nothing for them to

do in a Rest Home. But they're all DYING to get into a Nursing Home!

JUDY: So long, Freddy. See ya.

FREDDY: Yeah, how about after work?

JUDY: After work what?

FREDDY: How about seeing me after you get off work?

JUDY: No thanks. I've got plans. My cat needs an oil change.

FREDDY: Your cat?

JUDY: Yep. Bye-bye, Freddy.

[Judy looks back down at her cell phone and Freddy slowly walks off Stage Right.]

JUDY: Hey. You forgot to sign in.

FREDDY: I'll sign in when I sign out. *(Freddy exits Stage Right)*.

JUDY: *(Pause)* Jerk.

[Douglas walks in from Stage Left.]

DOUGLAS: Good morning, Judy. I see they've got you on the desk today.

JUDY: Yep. Glenda's back in her room now. I just took her there.

DOUGLAS: How's she doing this morning?

JUDY: She's good. She's having a good day.

DOUGLAS: Did anyone find her shawl?

JUDY: Not as far as I know.

DOUGLAS: You know, that is her favorite shawl. It is very important to her.

JUDY: Yeah.

DOUGLAS: *(Holds up his package)* I had to buy her a new one but I'd like you to find the other

one. Please.

JUDY: I'm sure it will turn up.

DOUGLAS: Well, I hope so. It's important.

JUDY: Okay. I'm sure it will be found.

DOUGLAS: I hope so. *(Pause)* Thanks.

JUDY: You're welcome.

[Douglas exits Stage Right. Three new call lights light up on the Call Light Board. Judy turns and stares at the flickering call lights, then looks down on her cell phone. Stage goes Black.]

ACT 1 - Scene 3

Dee, Wade

[The light over Stage Right goes up. Wade is behind a desk and Dee is standing in front of Wade. Wade is waving a flyer in the air then hands it to her.]

WADE: What's with this? What do you know about this? Veronica Fontaine is starting a family council.

DEE: Veronica? Well, now you're going to have to hire more C.N.A.s.

WADE: What? Why?

DEE: We had a family council in here five years ago. They made complaints. Mostly about staffing. There were big fines. Adam Kingsley was lucky he didn't lose his job over it.

WADE: Who's Kingsley?

DEE: The administrator before Greenfield.

WADE: What did Kingsley do about the family council?

DEE: Nothing. It died out on its own.

WADE: Well, this one is never going to get born. I'm not going to have a Veronica Family Council roaming around in my facility.

DEE: You can't keep them out. The law says families can form councils.

WADE: Well, then we'll limit them. Jimmy made a suggestion to me about cutting visiting hours.

DEE: So, now Jimmy's your policy advisor?

WADE: Don't be an ass. It's a good idea. Visitors get in the way and distract the staff.

DEE: Look, Mr. Wade, you've only been the administrator for a few months. Some of these residents have been here for years. Family visits are all they have to look forward to. Don't take that away from them.

WADE: Dee, I know how to run my facility.

DEE: Cutting visiting hours is not a good idea.

WADE: Why are you arguing with me?

DEE: I'm not. I don't regulate visiting hours, the State does. Just like the State regulates staffing. You're risking fines.

WADE: I'm well aware of how the State regulates, and I'm equally aware of the likelihood of being fined. Zero. Nada. The most they're giving is fix-it tickets. No fines. So there. We're cutting visiting hours. At least until someone complains to the State.

DEE: And that someone is going to be Veronica Fontaine.

[Stage goes Black.]

ACT I - Scene 4

Rosen, Jimmy, Betty, Freddy, Resident #1, Resident #2, Resident #3

[Light goes on over Stage Right.]

ROSEN: *(From off stage)* Don't close the door, please!

[Sound of a door closing. Jimmy and Betty enter Stage Right. Jimmy gives Betty a big smile.]

JIMMY: Now, that was the proper way to do a wheelchair-to-bed transfer. Ya got to do it right. If they fall down on you, you get hurt. We lose more pretty little Med Mal temps that way.

BETTY: Why did you close the door? He wants it open.

JIMMY: There's a draft. He'll catch cold. *(Jimmy gives Betty an over-exaggerated wink. Betty*

looks away.) Alrighty Miss Priss. Orientation time. The even numbered rooms here are the men's rooms. The odd numbered rooms are the women's.

BETTY: Why?

JIMMY: Why what?

BETTY: Why are men in the even rooms and the women in odd?

JIMMY: Hmm, why are the women odd? I suppose God just made them that way. *(Pause)* Any more questions? Remember, the only stupid questions are the ones you ask. Anyway, everyone in this wing is on Medicaid. Private Pay is on the Second Floor.

[Freddy appears from Stage Left. Jimmy waves to Freddy.]

JIMMY: Freddy Boy. Come here a minute.

FREDDY: Hi Jimmy.

JIMMY: I want you to meet Lois Lane. Keep her occupied. I've got something I gotta do. Be right back.

[Jimmy walks towards Stage Right and pulls a flask out of his back pocket, then abruptly exits Stage Right. Betty is looking at Jimmy's exit. Freddy is looking at Betty.]

FREDDY: Umm. How you doing? You're new? Uh?

BETTY: That's right. Are you visiting someone?

FREDDY: My mother is a resident here.

BETTY: And what do you do when you're not here?

FREDDY: What? Oh, well, nothing much. I lost my job so this is pretty much it.

BETTY: I see. So...Freddy, is it? How well do you know Jimmy?

FREDDY: I don't know. Pretty good, I guess.

BETTY: Have you ever seen him get abusive with a resident?

FREDDY: What? No. Hey, Jimmy's a good guy.

BETTY: Really?

FREDDY: Yes.

[Jimmy enters from Stage Right wiping his mouth and putting the hip flask in his back pocket. He comes up to Freddy and pats him on the shoulder.]

JIMMY: Thanks for keeping an eye on things, Freddy Boy.

FREDDY: Ah, yeah.

JIMMY: *(Looks at Betty than back at Freddy)* See ya, Freddy.

FREDDY: Ah, yeah. See ya.

[Freddy exits Stage Right.]

JIMMY: All righty Miss Priss. Where were we? Oh, yeah. It's time to pop in on the sweeties in Room 9. These lovelies can sit up so we just leave their meals by their bedside. Room service. No tips.

BETTY: Are any of them on special diets?

JIMMY: Special? Hardly. Well, yes. They're getting their just desserts. All four of them are Republicans. So here they are. After a life-time of voting to cut the Medicaid program they end up on it! Kind of ironic, don't you think?

BETTY: What if I told you I was a Republican?

JIMMY: I'd tell you not to end up in a nursing home. Anyway, everyone in this Wing is on Medicaid. *(Jimmy waves his arm towards all the rooms)* A Medicaid here, a Medicaid there. Here a Medi, there a caid, everywhere a Medi-caid. Lois, we are truly in the presence of social equality. The place where there is no discrimination. Republicans, Democrats, Independents, MAGAs, no matter. They all get crummy care. *(Jimmy lifts the cover of one of the plates and makes a face)* Oh, no. Looks like breakfast is a little cold.

[Jimmy grabs hold of the tray cart then looks at Betty.]

JIMMY: Ready to deliver the government benefits buffet? Ready set ... Follow me!

[Jimmy opens the door to the residents' room on stage right.]

SONG "Good Morning Ladies" sung by Jimmy

Good morning, ladies it's time to sit up in bed.
 I don't want to hear any "I don't want to I don't want to".
 Breakfast's late no problem. Girls you all get fed.
 Don't give me any "I don't want it. I don't want it".
 Cold eggs, instant coffee watered down. Burnt toast no butter.
 Every day the menu's set so don't complain it's all you get.
 Oh, yummy-yummy it's time for your medication.
 Don't give me any "I don't want it I don't want it".
 Chalky white pills and a lot of striped and colored ones.
 Don't give me any "I don't want 'em I don't want 'em".
 Who knows what they are for? I don't care.
 Your charts say doctor's orders.
 I'm watching everything you do so swallow them and don't turn blue.
 Guess what ladies we're going to have a lot of laughs.
 Don't give me any of your "I don't like you I don't like you".
 It's been weeks now since I gave you all your daily baths.
 Don't give me any "I won't let you I won't let you".
 I do what I have to. It's my job. Don't give me no trouble.
 I do what they pay me for and nothing less and nothing more.
 Good bye ladies it's time to leave you for an hour.
 Don't bother with your "Call my daughter. Give me water".
 Just lie back and watch that nasty milk turn sour.
 Don't beg me with your "Please don't leave me. Please don't leave me".
 Come on Miss Priss, let's go and don't ask why.
 Don't think that you can change things.
 This is where they've come to die and ours is not to reason why.

[Betty and Jimmy walk towards center Stage.]

OVERHEAD PAGER SYSTEM #2: *[Female voice.]* Nurse Dee come to the Second Floor Station. Nurse Dee to the Second Floor Station.

BETTY: What's wrong with you? You should treat them with respect.

JIMMY: "Shoulds" come from the administrator not grubby little Med-Mal temps.

BETTY: Do you care about any of these people?

JIMMY: People? What people? They're just room numbers.

SONG "Just a Number on the Door" sung by Jimmy

Who is the woman in room seventeen?
 Sixty years ago, she was a homecoming queen.

Now she's drooling on herself, drooling on the floor.
 Sits there slack-jawed, staring at the door. She's not a beauty anymore.
 And who is the old man in room thirty-four?
 He won lots of medals in some long-forgotten war.
 Now he wanders 'round the halls. His stories are a bore.
 He can't zip his pants up. Changing him's a chore.
 He ain't a hero anymore.
 Who is that woman in room thirty-five?
 A respirator is what's keeping her alive.
 She's on a feeding tube, has a drip I.V.
 Doesn't know her name. Can't hear, speak or see. Her life's got no quality.
 Who is the woman in room twenty-one?
 She had seven children; it might as well be none.
 They never come around. Never here at all.
 Never think to check in. Never ever call.
 She's been forsaken by them all.
 Is our work important?
 I really do not know. What's the point to caring?
 Time's up they need to go.
 You'll find this place a challenge, Priss, like everyone who's new.
 Caring aides all quit in a week or maybe two.
 Don't bother with who's here, they're just a number on the door.
 Soon they'll be dead and gone,
 and quote the raven nevermore.

JIMMY: Now, let's have some fun. Time to get you changing bedpans. You take the Even Rooms, I'll take the Odd. *(Pause)* Go on now.

[Stage Lights Black. Light goes up over Stage Right. Rosen is in his bed sitting up. Betty quietly enters from Stage Left.]

BETTY: Hello Mr. Rosen. I'm Betty Lane.

ROSEN: I know who you are. You put me in here.

BETTY: I know, I'm sorry about that. You know, we never got to finish our conversation.

ROSEN: What conversation?

BETTY: When I was at the Front Desk. I asked you how you like it here.

ROSEN: How I like it? I'm here because I've been thrown away. *(Pause for breath)* I'm bored out of my skull. I can't do anything for myself. I can't get to the bathroom by myself. I can't

clean myself. *(Pause for breath)* This place is like a cage and I'm like some dumb hamster spinning around in that God Damned wheelchair *(Rosen points to the wheelchair)*.

BETTY: Please try to calm yourself.

ROSEN: I've been thrown away.

BETTY: No, you haven't. Tell me what's wrong.

ROSEN: Everything's wrong.

BETTY: If it's a problem I can fix.

ROSEN: You can't help.

BETTY: *(Betty crouches down in front of Rosen and looks directly into his eyes)* I'll fix it. If can't, then I'll find out who can. I want to help you. And whatever you say will be just between you and me. You can tell me everything.

SONG "Do you really want to know?" Sung by Betty and Rosen

(R) You want to know what makes this place just so horrible?

(B) Yes I do.

(R) You want to know what's going on that's deplorable?

(B) Yes I do. So tell me. Yes tell me. Yes tell me, tell me
'bout the who, what, where, when.

(R) You want to know who on the staff is despicable?

(B) Yes I do.

(R) You want to know why this place is so miserable?

(B) Yes I do. So tell me. Yes tell me. Yes tell me, tell me
'bout the who, what, where, when.

(R) They don't give a damn or care anything about our damned fate.

(B) No they don't.

(R) If they know we talked I'm afraid they'll retaliate

(B) No they won't. Just trust me. Yes trust me. Just trust me, trust me.
Tell me 'bout the who, what where, when, now.

[The Stage light goes out over the center of the stage.]

ACT I - Scene 5

Glenda and Douglas

[The light over Center Stage goes up. Glenda is in her wheelchair next to a bed stand. There is a package and vase with flowers on the bed stand. Douglas is standing in front of Glenda. He is arranging the flowers in a vase.]

DOUGLAS: Look at these flowers. Aren't they're just beautiful?

[Douglas carefully arranges the flowers in the vase on the bed stand.]

GLENDAS: Where's Douglas? I want my husband!

DOUGLAS: I'm here, Glenda. I have a doctor's appointment so I can't stay, but I'll be back later this afternoon. Do you like the flowers?

GLENDAS: You're not Douglas. Who are you?

DOUGLAS: I'm Douglas, Glenda. Do you like the flowers?

GLENDAS: You're not Douglas.

DOUGLAS: Do you remember the Petersons? Jim and Dotty? Their Grandson, Scooter, just applied to Georgetown. Scooter wants to be a doctor like his dad. Do you remember Georgetown? Do remember when you and I met there? Do you remember any of that?

SONG "Flicker of Life" sung by Douglass

You were so young when I met you.
 There was love when I looked in your eyes.
 Is it gone? Do you remember?
 Does love live when memory dies?
 Those still, warm nights of that summer.
 The smell of perfume in your hair.
 In the day we'd stroll in the woods hand-in hand
 and we'd talk on-and-on without care.
 You can't ever know, you will
 never know what we used to have.
 You can't ever know; you will never know what we used to have.
 Now I stand here before you. Who am I looking upon?
 You are lost in a world of forgotten.
 Where are you with everything gone?
 You can't ever know; you will never know what we used to have.
 You can't ever know; you will never know what we used to have.

[Douglas opens the package he is holding. He pulls out a red shawl and lovingly places it around Glenda's shoulders.]

DOUGLAS: Look at this. I bought you a brand-new shawl. They couldn't find your old one. It got lost. This one is even better, don't you think? Besides, I know your favorite color is red.

And red will be easy to find all the time.

GLEND A: (*Glenda strokes the shawl*) Oh, it's soft.

DOUGLAS: Oh, yes. It's lovely, isn't it?

GLEND A: It's red. (*Pause*) I want to go home.

DOUGLAS: I know, Dear. I wish you could.

[Stage goes Black.]

ACT I - Scene 6

Lisa, Wade

[The light over Center Stage goes up. Wade is sitting behind his desk. Lisa is sitting in front of the desk. Lisa has a piece of paper in her hand.]

LISA: Look, Mr. Wade. My mother doesn't appear to be getting cleaned regularly. Her sheets are soiled, her teeth are never brushed ...

WADE: Mrs. Carter, your mother is getting the care that she needs. We have a very professional staff that does everything they are supposed to do.

LISA: The help isn't there when she needs them.

WADE: Mrs. Carter, this facility has the exact amount of staffing that the State requires.

LISA: The food is inedible.

WADE: All of our meals are prepared in accordance with State requirements and served exactly as the State wants us to serve them.

LISA: Mr. Wade, I've talked to other family members here and they are all seeing the same things. It's unsanitary. It's not healthy. It's not safe.

WADE: Now you listen to me and let me remind you of something. Your mother is on government benefits, and the government is not generous. We're not reimbursed at what it is actually costing us. We end up losing money on each Medicaid resident. Mrs. Carter, your mother is getting the best we can give her on what we are given to work with.

LISA: My mother is not a Medicaid resident. WE are paying for her, and WE are paying a lot.

WADE: Oh, Mrs. Carter, I am sorry. *(Pause)* Mrs. Carter, may I call you Lois?

LISA: It's Lisa

WADE: Well, Lois. I am so sorry. Please forgive me. I hope that I didn't come across badly. It's just so stressful trying to provide quality care for everyone when we are given so little to work with. Look, I don't want to bore you with this Medicaid thing, but it is a very difficult situation. It puts a lot of pressure on the private pay residents.

LISA: What is that supposed to mean?

WADE: We only have so many resources to work with. It might seem that we are robbing Peter to pay Paul, but we're not. And rest assured that in the end your mother should be receiving better care than the others.

LISA: But she's not and we expect more.

WADE: I know, and please bear with me a moment. In the future she will be getting better care. I can promise that. The facility is aggressively seeking new staff so the staff levels will exceed the State requirements. In the meantime, I'll personally make sure your mother receives more attention.

LISA: She needs a lot more attention.

WADE: Yes, yes. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to let me know of any problems. This has been a very valuable conversation for me. I want you happy. More importantly, I want your mother happy and well cared for. Is that all you need for now?

LISA: It is.

WADE: Then, good-bye, for now Lois. And I do appreciate hearing your concerns.
[Lisa gets up, turns and exits slamming the door on her way out.]

SONG "Administrators Lament" sung by Wade

I can't stand the people who come in through that damn door.
Especially private pay.
No matter what I do they're always always always always wanting more.
Their complaints just waste my time. The same things every day.
Especially private pay.
I wish I could get rid of them, they're always in the way.
The God Damn staff's bad but I can control them even though they all hate me.
I don't give them any time-off or sick leave or any more money.
My job's really simple, complicated but simple, just make sure Corporate's happy.

That's what counts. And things are in motion. I could get a promotion.
 If I don't. I'll Quit.
 I can't stand these people who all come in and waste my day.
 I just feed them nonsense until they give up and go away.
 My job's really simple, complicated but simple, just make sure Corporate's happy.
 That's what counts. And things are in motion. I could get a promotion.
 I don't. I'll Quit.
 I can't stand the people who come in and give me ...

[Loud knocking on the door.]

WADE: Yeah, what is it?

[The light goes off over the stage.]

ACT I Scene 7

Dee, Betty, Jimmy, Resident #1, Resident #2, Resident #3

[Center Stage Light goes up. Jimmy and Betty are walking towards Stage Left. Dee appears from Extreme Stage Left and walks towards them.]

DEE: There you two are. Betty, come along with me. Jimmy, go finish your rounds.

JIMMY: Un-huh.

[Jimmy exits Stage Right whistling. Dee is looking at her clipboard.]

BETTY: Nurse Dee. Jimmy is insensitive or worse.

DEE: Not really. He's been at it a long time. He comes off as hard, but that's just so he can keep going. He gets the job done and that's the most important thing. OK? We're all under a lot of stress and overworked. Look, Betty, this is a tough job. It's not just tough some of the time, it's tough all the time. Just try to do your best. No one can expect more than that.

BETTY: Why not?

DEE: Because. *(Pause)* Just remember that the reason you are here is for the residents. You're here for them.

SONG "Love Them Like They Are" sung by Dee

Our job's health care. It's not about being fair.
 It doesn't matter if the world's forgotten them.
 If they need us, we're there. If they need us, we're there. There's more.

Sometimes you won't like someone.
 That doesn't matter. You're not here to have fun.
 We can't make up for others. We're not here to be their sisters or mothers.
 I'll be your guide. I'm by your side.
 Join the team and keep your nose clean.
 Do your job with pride.
 Some days will be chaos and madness.
 Demented elders can fill you with sadness.
 No thanks for all of our caring. Sometimes they're screaming and swearing.
 Our job's health care. It's not about being fair.
 It doesn't matter if the world's forgotten them.
 If they need us, we're there.

DEE. If you have any questions about what you should or shouldn't do, check with me. And never let anyone push you into doing something that you know is wrong. I mean that. (*Dee looks at her watch then looks at her clipboard.*) All right then. Wendy's replacing Judy at the Front Desk. I'll team you with Judy, then put you on the Front at 11.

[Dee continues to look at her clipboard and starts walking Stage Left. Betty follows Dee.]

BETTY: Yes Nurse Dee.

[Nurse Dee and Betty exit Stage Left. The Stage goes to Black. The light goes up over Extreme Stage Right. Residents #1, #2, #3 are standing next to the curtain in nursing home gowns. #1 is looking straight ahead. #2 is looking towards Stage Left and, #3 is looking towards Stage Right. #1 steps forward and looks straight into the audience.]

SONG "I Remember the Time" sung by Resident #1

I remember the time I was little. Waking up in my soft bed.
 Cleaning my room. Setting the table.
 Always doing what Mama said.
 I can't believe it's over now.
 But still somehow, it's so real I can feel it.
 It was such fun in the summers, kick the can and cherry pie.
 Out in the fields, watching freight trains.
 Counting cars as they went by.
 I can't believe it's all gone now but still somehow, it's so real I can feel.
 I remember our move to Chicago when Father took that job with Sears.
 Leaving our home, friends and family. All that brought so many fears.
 And oh, my Lord those teenage years, those growing pains those streams of tears.
 I remember the times we were children. Doesn't seem that long ago.
 All of those folks. All those faces. Why did it all have to go?
 I can't believe it's all gone now. But still somehow, it's so real I can feel it now.

[#1 steps back and looks down. #2 steps forward and looks straight into the audience.]

SONG “I Am of the Mountain” sung by Resident #2

I am of the mountain. High above the plain.
 I was born where the eagle flies and the trees stand in the rain.
 The mountain is my power. That’s where my river began its ride.
 And I know that I’ll go back home some day after I have died.
 I’m not where you see me. I’ve already gone.
 I soar in my dreams of back home again and the rising of the dawn.
 When they lay me down, I’ll already be back there.
 High in the clouds with my mountain. Proud. My soul mixed with the air.
 I’m not where you see me. I’m already gone.
 I soar in my dreams of back home again and the rising of the dawn.
 I am of the mountain. High above the plain.
 I was born where the eagle flies and I’ll go back home again.

[#2 steps back and looks down. #3 steps forward and looks straight into the audience.]

SONG “Damned” sung by Resident #3

Am I screaming dreaming? I am waking shaking.
 I am fearing hearing. Death approaching poaching.
 Useless praying saying secrets staying weighing.
 Sins forgotten rotten.
 Death draws near clearer.
 I’m past healing feeling.
 My will’s reeling kneeling.
 Shake it break it take. Take it break it shake it.
 Betrayed life dismayed me. Come for me I won’t flee.
 I’m not grieving leaving. This is how it should be.
 Help! Help! Help! Help! Help me!
 Marriage was miserable. Just heartache and strife.
 Domestic violence. A horrible life.
 Harold was wicked, corrupted by sin.
 Nobody knows it but I did him in.
 Help! Help! Help! Help Oh, God.
 Am I dreaming screaming?
 Death awake and take me.
 I’m not grieving leaving. Help!

[#1 & #2 step forward and join #3. They all look down and step backwards. The Stage light goes dim. Stage Left spot light goes up. Jimmy is looking directly into the audience.]

SONG “Jimmy the Man” sung by Jimmy

This world is my oyster
 Hard, cold and crusty
 I walk down these hallways
 Like some jail-house trustee
 It doesn't matter who's rich or who's poor
 'Cause I own them all when they come through the door.
 I like it when they beg me
 To change their bedpan.
 'Cause they know that they're dealing
 With Jimmy, The Man.
 From Evening 'till dawn
 And all through the night
 What I say is Gospel
 And I'm always right.
 Yes, I'm in control of their shortened lifespan
 And they know that their dealing
 With Jimmy, The Man.
 One time I cared
 When they cried and they died
 But not any more
 I'm just here for the ride.
 Oh, it's so surreal
 How could this be God's plan
 That the last face they see
 Could be Jimmy, The Man?

[The set goes black.]

ACT I - Scene 8

Freddy, Wade. Jimmy

[The light goes up over the administrator's office. Wade is sitting behind his desk. Standing in front of Wade is the Freddy Mack.]

WADE: I'm not interested in buying a piano, Freddy. It isn't really the kind of thing that is needed here.

FREDDY: Mother loved this piano. Having it here would be good for her and the other residents.

WADE: If you want to donate it, I could have some of the men go out to your house and pick it up.

FREDDY: I'd like to donate it, only, only I need the money. I haven't been working and I need to raise some cash.

WADE: By selling your mother's property?

FREDDY: It's family property.

WADE: I'm sorry, but I really don't need a piano. No one plays it.

FREDDY: It's really valuable. It's a Kimble Upright. All I'd want is four hundred dollars.

WADE: Look, I'll do you a favor. If you want, I'll take it for a hundred.

FREDDY: Two-fifty? Please?

WADE: Two hundred. I'll take it for two and ...

FREDDY: But ...

WADE: And I'm not negotiating. This is an extravagance and I don't have any discretionary funds. I probably shouldn't be doing this at all.

FREDDY: Thank you, Mr. Wade. I really appreciate it.

WADE: *(Pause)* Freddy, let me ask you. Are things all right with your mother's finances?

FREDDY: Yes, Mother's social security with Dad's life pension is enough to cover her.

WADE: Doesn't she also have investments?

FREDDY: Mr. Wade, what happens with Mother if she runs out of money?

WADE: What do you mean?

FREDDY: Well, I mean, it's costing an awful lot. So, if she runs out of money what happens?

WADE: Then she leaves her nice PRIVATE room and shares a room with other Medicaid deadbeats. What's going on with her money, Freddy?

FREDDY: Oh...nothing. I was just wondering. That's all.

MR. WADE: You'll let me know if there are any problems, won't you?

FREDDY: Yeah, sure. I mean, I don't want my mom to be one of those deadbeats.

WADE: That's right. You don't. You know, society is going to have to decide just how long we are supposed to keep some of these Medicaid residents alive.

FREDDY: What?

WADE: Sorry. I didn't mean to say that.

FREDDY: I didn't hear anything.

MR. WADE: Good. And I appreciate you sacrificing your mother's piano for the good of the facility.

FREDDY: Actually, it's not really much of a sacrifice since I can't play the piano. So, could you pick it up at the house today? Maybe at two o'clock?

WADE: No problem. I'll have some staff swing around. They're experts in transferring dead weight.

FREDDY: What?

WADE: Sorry. I didn't mean to say that.

FREDDY: I didn't hear anything.

[Wade and Freddy laugh.]

FREDDY: Do you need Mother's address?

WADE: I'm sure it's in her file. *(Pause)* Just to make sure they get it right, why don't you write it down?

[While Freddy writes down his mother's address, Wade opens the desk drawer and pulls out an envelope containing cash. Wade pulls out two hundred dollars and hands it to Freddy then puts the envelope back into the desk drawer.]

WADE: Here you go. You don't need a receipt, do you?

FREDDY: No need to bother.

WADE: All right then. I'll tell Jimmy to pick up the piano at two o'clock.

[Wade leans over and speaks into the intercom.]

WADE: Jimmy Fleigen, to the administrator's office. Jimmy Fleigen, to the office. *(Pause)* Say, Freddy. By any chance have you talked to Veronica Fontaine lately?

FREDDY: Veronica? No. Why?

WADE: Well, she has this family council thing going. Do you know anything about it?

FREDDY: No. Not a thing. What is it?

WADE: Extortion. The families of Medicaid residents team up and make complaints to the State, and we end up having to divert resources that should be going to the private pay residents.

FREDDY: I had no idea. Can't you stop them?

WADE: No. They've got the liberal laws on their side. So, let me know if you hear anything. I'd appreciate it.

FREDDY: Sure thing.

[The telephone on the desk begins to ring and Wade picks it up.]

WADE: Hello? *(Pause)* Yes, wait a moment?

[Wade waves Freddy towards Stage Left and Freddy turns and exits Stage Left.]

WADE: *(Wade picks up a note pad on his desk)* Sorry, Tom. *(Pause)* Uh-huh. Got it. *(Pause)* Yeah. *(Pause)* Yeah. I know, I know, but the State isn't going to jump on me for being ten percentage points below the minimum staffing levels. *(Pause)* Yeah, well more or less. *(Pause)* Yeah, actually less. Say Tom, could you contact Legal and get me help on stopping the formation of a family council? *(Pause)* Yeah, I want to be ready with an injunction or something in case they try to disrupt our operation. I need to get some scary legalese to put in a letter to send out to the Medicaid family members. *(Pause)* Thanks. So, on a happier note, I just purchased a piano for the community room. It will give us the homey atmosphere *(Pause)* It's a Kimble Upright. Only SIX hundred dollars. *(Pause)* Plus fifty for delivery. I'll expense it to maintenance. *(Pause)* Whatever. See what you can do with Legal. *(Pause)* OK. Thanks. Bye.

[Wade hangs up the phone then pulls out the money envelope from his desk drawer. He extracts four hundred and fifty dollars from the envelope and puts them into his wallet. Wade then sits back down at his desk. Jimmy walks in from Stage Left and stands in front of Wade.]

JIMMY: What's up?

WADE: You should say, 'What am I wanted for'?

JIMMY: All right, what am I wanted for?

WADE: I need you to run a little errand.

[Wade hands Jimmy the directions to Freddy's house.]

WADE: You're picking up a piano. That's the address and you need to be there at two this afternoon. Take the van with the wheelchair lift. You'll need it.

JIMMY: A piano? Why am I picking up a piano?

WADE: Because I'm going to give you thirty bucks to do it. You can get Jinks to help you.

JIMMY: What's he get out of it?

WADE: Fresh air. He's still on the clock so he's doing all right.

JIMMY: Who's covering the shifts?

WADE: You're on the clock so obviously it's being covered. Don't worry about it.

JIMMY: Anything else?

WADE: Drive carefully.

[Jimmy turns shaking his head and exits Stage Left. Wade looks around the top of his desk then picks up a card. He lifts up his phone receiver and dials a number and waits for someone to answer.]

WADE: Yes. This is Richard Wade of Shady Manor. No one's called me back. I've been waiting for a quote on a broken toilet. *(Pause)* Look, I was expecting a call and no one has called me. *(Pause)* That's what you told me yesterday. *(Pause)* And when will he be back? *(Pause)* You do that.

[Wade slams down the phone. The Stage Light goes off.]

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM: *[Male voice]* Nurse Dee to Room Forty-Seven. Nurse Dee to Room Forty-Seven.

[The Stage Light goes off.]

ACT I - Scene 9

Judy, Jimmy, Betty, Glenda

[Betty and Judy are walking together from Stage Left over to Stage Right. They approach Jimmy who has his back to them.]

JUDY: Jimmy. Jimmy. JIMMY!

JIMMY: Judy, Judy, Judy.

JUDY: Hey. Wendy said Dee said I need to scrub down the community room.

JIMMY: So, who's stopping you?

JUDY: Jimmy. It's your turn.

JIMMY: I got an errand to run.

JUDY: Look Jimmy, you owe me.

JIMMY: Sorry. Busy.

JUDY: Damn it, Jimmy.

JIMMY: You've got Miss Million Questions with you. Get her to stop running her mouth and start earning her wages.

BETTY: I ask questions so I can do my job better.

JIMMY: *(To Betty)* Better job? *(To Judy)* Tell her we don't have an employee of the month award here.

JUDY: Come on, Jimmy.

[Jimmy turns and saunters towards Stage Right while shaking his head]

JIMMY: Do that better job cleaning that toilet, Miss Priss.

[Jimmy exits Stage Right.]

JUDY: *(Pause while Jimmy walks away)* Jerk.

BETTY: Understatement.

JUDY: Watch your back with Jimmy.

BETTY: Why did you say he owes you?

JUDY: ‘Cause last week he loaded up four of my residents with suppositories. I spent the whole morning dealing with that mess.

BETTY: He did that?

JUDY: You bet he did. He’s sack of nuts.

BETTY: Did you report that?

JUDY: Why would I?

BETTY: *(Pause)* Hey, does Jimmy have you call him T.M., The Man?

JUDY: That’s a new one. Jimmy’s got a lot of names. He scrawls them all over the staffing charts. It drives Dee crazy and she’s always yelling about that.

BETTY: Why can’t she make him stop?

JUDY: You do ask a lot of questions.

BETTY: Well, why doesn’t she?

JUDY: Wade. He won’t let her. He told Dee to let him ‘cause it’s harmless, and Jimmy might quit if she cracks down on him for it.

[Glenda appears from Stage Right and rolls right past them in her wheelchair. She is wearing a red shawl.]

GLEND A: Where’s Douglas? I want Douglas.

[Judy and Betty watch Glenda roll past them and exits Stage Left.]

JUDY: There goes Glenda. She needs her wheels taken off. I’m going to write up the request for Haldol.

BETTY: That’s a psychotropic drug. Isn’t that overdoing it?

JUDY: Believe me. Glenda will be a lot easier to deal with if she sticks to one spot.

GLEND A: (*Off stage*) Where's Douglas? Where's Douglas? I'm cold.

BETTY: But that drug will put her in a stupor.

JUDY: So? It's better than having her wandering all over the place. You'll change your mind about chemical restraints after one of them slips out of the building. You'll get written up and they'll dock your pay. Did you know that?

BETTY: No.

JUDY: Yep. One hundred dollars. Believe me, Glenda's not worth it. Come on. Hi ho, hi ho. It's off to the Community Room we go. You're in for a rough one.

[Judy and Betty exit Stage Right. The set goes dark.]

ACT 1 – Scene 10

Dee, Wade

[Stage Light goes up over Center Stage. Wade is behind his desk. Dee walks in and stands in front of him with her hands on her hips.]

WADE: I'm busy.

DEE: I'm more than busy. I need three more C.N.As.

WADE: No, you don't.

DEE: You DO KNOW that the State's been getting complaints? They'll shut us down.

WADE: Nobody is going to shut us down. We're in compliance. We always hit the State's staffing requirements.

DEE: Every shift is out of compliance.

WADE: Take it easy, will you? They're temporary shortages.

DEE: Temporary? We're always understaffed.

WADE: That's not what our records show. Every shift has been adequately covered.

DEE: By what? Ghost staff?

WADE: Stick to what you're getting paid to do, Dee.

DEE: Look. I'm good at my job, but I can't do anything without enough staff. Morale is at an all-time low. I'm ready to quit. Do you get that?

[Wade stands up, places both hands on his desk and leans forward and glares at Dee. Dee glares back. Wade sits back down.]

WADE: *(Pause)* All right, all right. Calm down. Fine, fine. Call the Registry for another Temp. *(Pause)* Now, I'm going to have to ask a little favor from you. I need you to start covering the South Wing.

DEE: Cecilia's Wing? What's going on?

WADE: Nothing. I just need you to do this while things get straightened out.

DEE: You should straighten out Cecilia. She's been gone for two weeks.

WADE: It will be more than that. I'm firing her.

DEE: Without a replacement? You can't do that.

WADE: I'm the administrator and she's fired. There are issues here that don't concern you.

DEE: What issues?

WADE: Doesn't concern you.

DEE: I'm not taking her wing.

WADE: You'll be getting paid time and a half until we get the replacement.

DEE: Time and a half to cover two jobs? That's quite a bargain for you.

WADE: OK. What will it take to get you to cover Cecilia's wing for a week?

DEE: Her wing is probably a nightmare.

WADE: Look. Your Wing is running smoothly. All you'll have to do are quick check-ins at the South. *(Pause)* Since it will only be for a short time, I could put you in for double-time.

DEE: Not good enough. There're thirty beds in the South Wing.

WADE: Dee, *(Pause)* how often can you get double-time? Come on, I'm sure you can use it. Pretty please?

DEE: *(Pause)* Okay, but only for one week.

WADE: Fine. Done. You can start your double shift right now.

[Stage Light goes off.]

Act 2 – Scene 1

Freddy, Gertrude, Betty, Dee

[Stage light goes up on right side of stage revealing Freddy standing next to the bed where Gertrude is sitting up. Freddy has some papers in one hand and a pen in another.]

FREDDY: This is just some nuisance paperwork that has to be signed.

GERTRUDE: What is it?

FREDDY: Just some papers, Mother. I was in talking with Mr. Wade and he said that you have to sign these in order to keep your private room.

GERTRUDE: But I don't want to stay here. I want to go home.

FREDDY: This is your home. I mean, it is home for a little while longer. Just until you get strong enough to be back at the house.

GERTRUDE: I'm ready now. Freddy, get me help and I can live at home.

FREDDY: Not now. It wouldn't be safe. You need twenty-four-hour help and we can't afford to pay someone to stay with you all day. Look, if you were at home, and needed something as simple as getting a glass of water, you could fall and break your hip, or even your neck. Trying to get a drink could cause your death and I couldn't live with that. We'll talk about going home later. Now, let's take care of this paperwork.

GERTRUDE: I'm not signing anything. Those papers are probably to keep me in here forever.

FREDDY: Mother. They're not. It's administrative stuff.

GERTRUDE: *(She pulls the papers close to her face and squints)* This is the deed to my house! Freddy, what do you think you're doing? This is my house! Not my house! You can't do this!

[Gertrude throws the papers and pen to the ground. Freddy bends down, picks up the pen and papers and thrusts them back into her hands.]

FREDDY: It's time, Mother.

GERTRUDE: You can't do this. Stop it! Stop it! Let me go home. I want to go home!

SONG "Well I can't Help It" sung by Freddy

Well, I can't help it if you hate this place.
 It's the best place that I can afford.
 They're giving you around the clock care.
 It's more than just room and board.
 So, Mother let me make this real clear.
 You're getting the best care they give here.
 Well, I can't help it if you hate this place
 and all you do is bitch and mope.
 This is where you're gonna stay
 so you're gonna have to cope.
 You're old and sick and won't get better.
 Ya know you're never getting better.
 My life is on hold 'cause you're sick and you're old.
 I need a break.
 Let's make something clear that having you here
 cost more than I make.
 It's time to talk about some things that I need
 and about what belongs to me.
 I know my sister wants to cut me out
 and get all the property.
 I need you to do this little favor.
 So Mother, you need to sign this waiver.
 Yes, this is your deed and it's something I need,
 now take this pen.
 You need to sign just put your name on this line.
 I'll count to ten.
 If I reach ten, you'll never see me again.
 You'll stay here and be all alone.
 I won't come back and guess what Mom?
 I'll make them remove your phone.
 Now, don't make me angry or I'll have to hurt you.
 Mother, I don't want to hurt you.
 You have to sign this paper right now.
 Don't make me have to hurt you...

[Betty storms in from Stage Left causing Freddy to jump back. Gertrude throws down the pen and papers.]

BETTY: What's going on in here?

FREDDY: This doesn't concern you.

BETTY: What are those papers?

[Freddy quickly bends down and gathers up the papers from the floor and stuffs them into his pockets.]

FREDDY: This is a family matter. Get out!

GERTRUDE: I won't sign those papers. I won't.

FREDDY: This is a private room. Get out!

BETTY: I'm advising you to leave this room or I will call security.

FREDDY: Security? I'm advising you to mind your own business or I'm going to go to your boss. You just lost your job!

GERTRUDE: No, Freddy.

FREDDY: Be quiet, Mother.

[Betty side-steps over to the wall and presses the intercom switch.]

BETTY: Immediate assistance, Room Thirty-Seven. Immediate assistance to Room Thirty-Seven.

FREDDY: I'm going to Mr. Wade.

[Freddy turns and hurries out of the room. After he leaves. Betty pushes the button on the call box again.]

BETTY: Cancel assistance to Room Thirty-Seven. Cancel assistance to Room Thirty-Seven.

[Betty goes over to Mrs. Mack's bedside and puts her hand on her shoulder.]

BETTY: Are you alright?

GERTRUDE: Don't let him do this. My house. He wants to take my house!

BETTY: It's okay. We won't let him. There, there. It will be all right.

[Dee hurriedly enters from Stage Left.]

DEE: What's happening here?

BETTY: Her son was just here. He was trying to have her sign some legal document about her house. I made him leave.

DEE: What are you doing here? Why aren't you with Judy?

BETTY: I was looking for her. She told me to find her after I cleaned up the Community Room.

DEE: *(Shaking her head, then turning to Gertrude)* Are you all right Gertrude?

GERTRUDE: It isn't right. He shouldn't be doing that. He shouldn't. No, no, no!

Betty goes over to get Gertrude a glass of water and Dee comes up to Gertrude's bed and takes her by the hand.

SONG "Soothing Procedure" sung by Dee and Betty

- (D)** Clear your mind. Breath in deeply.
Hold your breath. Exhale slowly.
- (D&B)** Clear your mind. Breath in deeply.
Hold your breath. Exhale slowly.
- (B)** Clear your mind. Breath in deeply.
Hold your breath. Exhale slowly.
- (D)** I'm right beside you. I have your hand.
No need to worry. Have no fear. I'm right here.

GERTRUDE: Don't let him take my house.

BETTY: We'll report this to Adult Protective Services

[Dee glares at Betty]

GERTRUDE: Don't get my son in trouble. Please, he doesn't mean it. He's really a good boy.

DEE: I know. I know. Don't worry, Gertrude. Don't worry about anything.

GERTRUDE: Don't make trouble, please. Freddy's a good boy. Don't get him in trouble.

DEE: Never mind. It will be all right.

[Dee takes Betty by the arm and leads her towards Stage Left.]

BETTY: We'll have to do something. Who do you report this to?

DEE: To Mr. Wade. I'll take care of it.

BETTY: Isn't the protocol to report financial abuse to directly to Adult Protective Services?

DEE: That's going to have to be Wade's call. We have enough to do around here without having to fill out reports for the State. Leave it to Wade.

BETTY: Look, Dee, this has to be reported.

DEE: It's Nurse Dee. I've been at this for twenty years. You haven't even been here for one day. Don't you pretend to tell me anything about how to do my job.

BETTY: But ...

NURSE DEE: *(Interrupts)* Enough! Now come with me. I'm going to need you on the South Wing.

BETTY: Yes, Nurse Dee.

[Dee nods at Betty and they exit through Stage Left. The Stage goes Black.]

INTERMISSION

ACT II - Scene 2

Paul, Veronica

[Stage set: A room with a partition separating two beds. Paul Lockman is standing over Resident #1's bed on one side of the partition and Veronica Fontaine is on the other side standing over Resident #2's bed.]

SONG "Hello - Hello" sung by Paul and Veronica

(P) Hello Auntie it's me Paul. I've come to visit.
Are you all right, are you comfortable?
Can I get you something special?

What do you need here?
 I couldn't get here sooner.
 I just heard you were here.
 I sure hope you'll only be here for a short time.
 I'm sure you'll bounce back and then you'll go home.
 How could this happen?
 You don't deserve being in this God forsaken place.
 The smell here is horrible. This is deplorable.
 It's a disgrace.

- (V)** Hello Grandma. How's it going?
 Did they tell you, you can watch the T.V. after dinner
 if you want to? It's O.K. They have to let you.
- (P)** She's asleep. I'll come back.
 What's that smell? Makes me gag.
- (V)** You should rest. I'll come back.
 What a shame.
- (P)** What a drag.
- (Duet)** How could this happen?
 You don't deserve being in this god forsaken place.
 The smell here is horrible.
 This is deplorable. It's a disgrace.
 It's just a sad disgrace.

[Paul looks down at his aunt. He bends down and kisses her forehead then turns and starts walking out from the partition. Veronica as she is coming out from behind the partition that separates the roommates' beds and she bumps into Paul.]

PAUL: Oh.

VERONICA: Oh. I'm sorry. *(Pointing towards Aunt Helen's side of the partition)* Is she a relative?

PAUL: No problem.

VERONICA: *(Pointing towards Aunt Helen's side of the partition)* Is she a relative?

PAUL: Yes. My Aunt Helen. She just got here. Broke her hip and will be here 'til she recovers.

VERONICA: Well, I hope she gets better soon. That's my grandmother. *(Points back towards the bed on the other side of the partition)* She's been here almost a year. Her name's Helen too. That will probably cause them to mix up their medications. I'll track down the Ward Nurse to make sure she's aware of this.

PAUL: Thanks. (*Looking around*) This place seems kind of bleak.

VERONICA: Yes, it is.

PAUL: And dirty.

VERONICA: That too. You wouldn't happen to be a lawyer, would you?

PAUL: Me, no. Why?

VERONICA: Too bad. We're starting a Family Council and we need a lawyer.

PAUL: Who's we?

VERONICA: Family members. There is a whole lot going on here that isn't legal. We have to do something about it. Want to join?

PAUL: No, I don't think so.

VERONICA: Would you like to hear a little bit about it?

PAUL: Ahh. [*Paul looks at his watch.*] I ...

VERONICA: No time like the present. I don't like to be pushy but running into family members is a luxury that I can't pass up. Here's the elevator speech. (*Takes a breath*) Now, the primary purpose of a family council is for relatives of residents to act as a group to influence the quality of resident care. We'll speak up about problems we see and bring them to the attention of the administrator. There's a ton of problems here. Interested?

PAUL: Why doesn't the State step in?

VERONICA: We've tried. We've made complaints to Licensing and the State Police, but they're not interested. I went to Congressman Holden's office and got nowhere. Not much sympathy for seniors in nursing homes, especially when they're on government benefits.

PAUL: Why don't you just move your grandmother out of here?

VERONICA: Where? She's on the so-called Medicaid Long-Term Care Program and Shady Manor is the only nursing home in this area that will take her. We're trapped. There isn't anywhere else to go.

PAUL: Aren't you worried about retaliation for what you're doing?

VERONICA: I really don't think they'd intentionally do anything to my grandmother, or anyone else. It's more a matter of neglect and, quite frankly, it couldn't get worse. If you don't press for improvement, they won't do anything. So...what do you think?

PAUL: Hmmm. I don't know.

VERONICA: Our next meeting is Thursday night. Do you think you could make it?

PAUL: It's really not my kind of thing.

VERONICA: There'll be free coffee. *(Pause)* Ah, come on. You can do it.

PAUL: Free coffee? *(Pause)* Sure why not.

VERONICA: Great! And, ah, what's your name?

PAUL: Paul Lockman.

VERONICA: Nice to meet you, Paul Lockman. I'm Veronica Fontaine.

[Paul and Veronica start to walk toward Stage Left and a disheveled Freddy appears from Stage Left and starts walking past them.]

VERONICA: Hello there, Freddy.

FREDDY: What do you want?

VERONICA: Why the attitude, Freddy?

FREDDY: You're just a trouble maker.

VERONICA: Trouble maker?

FREDDY: You're starting a Family Council.

VERONICA: Family council? What a lovely idea! Are you going to start one?

FREDDY: No, but you are. Wade told me.

VERONICA: Oh, yes. Mr. Wade. He would never listen to me. We're Medicaid. But you, you're private pay. Hey Freddy, I have an idea. You can start a Family Council. I'd join, for sure. He would, too. *(Veronica nods her head towards Paul. Paul is looking perplexed).*

FREDDY: Who's he, your boyfriend?

PAUL: I'm Paul Lockman. My aunt just moved into this facility.

FREDDY: So, what?

VERONICA: C'mon, Freddy, there's problems here and you know it.

FREDDY: The only problem here is you.

SONG "Points of View" sung by Vernonia, Freddy, Paul

- (V) What are you saying? You don't have a clue.
 You don't see problems?
 Well, let me tell you
 you're either crazy or don't know right from wrong.
 Why should you think you're special 'cause you're private pay?
 This place is just a Hellhole.
 If you won't help, go away.
- (F) I know who's right here. I know what I see.
 You take advantage of people like me.
 You should be grateful 'cause you get charity.
 Don't tell me any more how it 'ought to be.
 I'm sick of your complaining.
 Knock it off don't lecture me.
- (P) Hold on a minute. Don't be so uptight.
 We only want what's fair and what's right.
 Let's work together.
 Hey, there's no need to fight.
- (F) Drop dead.

[Freddy turns and storms off existing Left].

PAUL: *(Pause)* Nice.

VERONICA: Not really.

PAUL: Look, I need to eat. Why don't we grab lunch? My treat, then I've got to go back to my office.

VERONICA: Okay, lunch sounds good. I know just the place.

[Veronica and Paul Exit Stage Left. Stage Light goes off.]

ACT II - Scene 3

Betty, Dee, Wade

[The Stage Light goes up over the Center Stage. Wade is behind his desk. Dee barges in from Stage Right with Betty close behind her.]

DEE: One of Cecilia's residents rotted to death.

WADE: What? What are you talking about?

DEE: Robert Felix. Room One-Twenty-Eight. Multiple Stage Four Ulcers. Died of neglect.

WADE: *(Wade spots Betty and point at her)* Who's she?

DEE: The temp from Med Mal we hired this morning.

WADE: What do you mean you hired a temp?

DEE: I told you I did.

WADE: Well, get her out of here!

DEE: *(Pauses then looks at Betty)* Go relieve Wendy at the Front Desk. Tell her to get up to Room One-Twenty-Eight. I'll be up in a few minutes.

BETTY: Yes, Nurse Dee

[Betty exits Stage Right, but hangs back in the shadow and begins to eavesdrop.]

WADE: *(Pause)* Now, what are you talking about?

DEE: Robert Felix in One-Twenty-Eight developed bed sores. They went untreated and he died. He died Wade and he died from neglect.

WADE: So why did you neglect him?

DEE: Why did I what?

WADE: Do you have any idea about the liability you've exposed Shady Manor to?

DEE: That was Cecilia's responsibility. Remember? I wasn't on that wing until this morning so that's on her. And you.

WADE: No, it's on you. You're the Director of Nurses for the South Wing. Remember? Now, what do you intend to do about closing One-Twenty Eight's file?

DEE: His name (*Angry pause*) was Robert Felix.

MR. WADE: (*Pause*) OK, what do you intend to do about closing Mr. Robert Felix's file, Ms. South Wing Director of Nurses?

DEE: What do you mean close his file? I'm going to report this to the State.

WADE: Oh no you won't. Dee, we need to talk. You're going to have to re-do the past few weeks and get this mess straightened out. Once we get past this, we can talk about bringing in one or two more C.N.A.s.

DEE: What do you mean re-do the past few weeks? Once the morgue gets a look at the body it will be a coroner's case.

WADE: There isn't any need to get excited. It just happened and it won't happen again. Got that? What's done is done. Now, let's focus on Mr. Felix's wishes. I'm sure he wanted to be cremated. I'm sure all that is in his file.

DEE: And I'm sure that file is a mess.

WADE: And that's also your responsibility. Look. I'm seeing your license on the line.

DEE: What kind of crap ...?

WADE: Get Felix's file. Chart a plausible health decline.

DEE: That's not going to happen.

WADE: Not going to happen, huh? Let's talk about what I see happening if you don't. This is where your career comes to a crashing end. You didn't report any of the problems in the South Wing, did you?

DEE: I wasn't on the South Wing!

WADE: Dee, your ass is on the line.

DEE: What? Now you're threatening me?

WADE: Threatening you? I'm not threatening you. I'm reading your tea leaves. I'm going to have to turn you into State Licensing for dereliction of duty. You're a goner and so is your

license.

DEE: I'm not gone, you're gone.

WADE: Oh, no, no, no. Not me. I've got plausible deniability. I relied on you and you failed me.

DEE: Plausible? I'll tell you what isn't plausible. Let me explain health care to you, Mr. Administrator. Those bed sores didn't develop in the ten minutes I was on the South Wing. That kind of neglect happens when a bed-bound resident isn't getting repositioned every two hours and ...

WADE: And let me explain nursing home administration to you, Ms. Director of Nurses. The South Wing records show that you substituted in for Cecilia every day for the last two weeks.

DEE: What?

WADE: Jimmy signed in for you.

DEE: You God Damned ...

WADE: Watch your mouth.

DEE: You can't do this.

WADE: Did and done.

DEE: You had Jimmy forge my name.

WADE: Yeah. There's more. I've been pulling money out of petty cash and entering it as payment to you for covering for Cecilia. The money journal, plus the sign-in sheet should be proof enough that you were on the South Wing. Pretty neat, huh? I'm the administrator. Who are they going to believe? Your word or my evidence?

DEE: You can't do this.

WADE: Did and done. *(Pause)* Look Dee. This doesn't have to be a problem. You have it in your power to make this whole thing go away. Who's to know? It's just fixing loose ends, and those loose ends are all in that file. And, I'll be writing you a check to cover those two weeks back pay. How's that sound to you?

DEE: It's illegal. All of it.

WADE: It's survival, Dee. That's all. Save yourself. Get down to the Records Room and pull Felix's file.

DEE: I won't.

WADE: You will.

DEE: I won't touch that file.

WADE: Just straighten it out.

SONG "The Argument Duet" sung by Wade and Dee

- (W)** You're gonna have to go and change his records and charts.
 All parts. Damage control is now job one, Dee.
 Go make it right. Better be listening to me, Dee.
 Clean it up, don't leave a clue. I know you know what to do.
 No one will catch us if you do it right.
 No one's gonna know if the records never show,
 day by day, what happened to him.
 Records should reflect that there never was neglect.
 Show what happened was the work of God.
- (D)** Don't ask me to change his daily records or lie.
- (W)** Why not?
- (D)** Lies and cover-ups fail. Why even try?
- (W)** 'Cause it's easy as pie.
- (D)** A State inspector won't be fooled. I can get my license pulled.
 You need to stop this now. It's cut and dry. We're caught, then we fry.
- (W)** I don't give a damn about your license, fear, or concern. Ya got that?
 Screw this up and I swear I'll see you burn. Listen and learn.
 Catch your breath and keep your cool. Think ahead, don't be a fool.
 Time to get dirty, Dee. It's now your turn.
 No one's gonna know, if the records never show,
 day by day, what happened to him.
 Records should reflect that there never was neglect.
 Do I need a cattle prod?
- (D)** Just back off, Wade. I don't chart what's not true.
- (W)** Oh, yeah?
- (D)** Better back off of me. I can make it bad for you.
 I can put you on the spot. You'd rot in jail with what I've got, Wade.
 I've got a lot on you, so back off now, or you are through.
- (W)** Ya better watch your mouth 'cause I don't need advice. At all.
 Do what I tell you to do, Dee, and do it right.
 Listen. Just do what I tell you to. Do it right and we'll pull through.
 Don't fail, 'cause if you do, you'll pay the price.
 No one's gonna know if the records never show,
 day by day, what happened to him.
 Records should reflect that there never was neglect.
 I won't let this ruin me.
- (D)** Why can't we just let this be?
- (W)** There's no choice. Just do it, Dee.
- (D)** Isn't there another way?

(W) There's nothing more I'm gonna say.

(D) You know your troubles just begun.

(W) Shut-up, Dee, just get it done.

(D) O.K. But this is all your fault.

WADE: Now, get down to the Records Room. Pull that file. Make those changes. And don't forget to sign your name.

[Wade leans over and speaks into the intercom on his desk.]

WADE: Jimmy Fleigen to the Administrator's office. Fleigen to the Office. *(Pause)* One more thing, Dee. This morning I went to get this morning's Sign-In Roster and it was missing. Any idea what happened to it?

DEE: No.

[Dee exits Stage Right. Wade shifts through papers on his desk. Jimmy hurries in from Stage Right.]

JIMMY: We went to Freddy's but he never showed up.

WADE: Yeah, that figures. Never mind Jimmy, I've got something else you need to do. A resident in One Twenty-Eight North died and I need you to transport the body to Jasper's Funeral Home. Use the lift van.

JIMMY: *(Not happy)* Jasper's has their own van, why don't they pick him up?

WADE: It's business, Jimmy. His family didn't get around to signing a transport contract with Jasper's so they won't pick him up.

JIMMY: What a load of

WADE: Jimmy! It's a business arrangement that doesn't concern you. Anyway, looks like for today you're in the transportation business. I'll call them and they'll be ready for you.

JIMMY: You didn't call them yet? They shut down after three. What happens if I go and they're not there? I don't want to ride around town with a body in the back of the van.

WADE: No, no. I'll make the arrangements. They'll be there for you.

JIMMY: Where's the body now?

WADE: Still in his room. You can't miss him. Oh, and Jimmy. Have you seen Veronica Fontaine around the staff lounge?

JIMMY: Her? No. Why?

WADE: Because this morning's Sign-In Roster is missing and I think she took it.

JIMMY: Her? Why her?

WADE: She's starting a Family Council. She's probably trying to bust Shady Manor for staffing violations.

JIMMY: If it's gone, the Med-Mal temp probably took it.

WADE: The new C.N.A.? Why are you saying that?

JIMMY: She's no C.N.A., at least not like I've ever seen, especially from a Registry. They're dumb and lazy and she's not. She asks a lot of questions and is always snooping around.

WADE: Med-Mal! Damn it! I knew there was something about her. That registry is spying on us. They're probably trying to poach our staff. They haven't been talking to you, have they?

JIMMY: Nope.

WADE: You'd tell me if they did, right?

JIMMY: Sure.

WADE: You're a good man Jimmy. Get going, OK?

[Jimmy exits Stage Right. Wade picks up the desk phone and dials a number.]

WADE: Yeah, Tom. It's me. Heard anything from Legal yet? *(Pause)* No, just trying to stay on top of things. Hey, Tom, I've been meaning to ask you, have you heard anything about who's getting the promotion to Regional? *(Pause)* Really? *(Pause)* No, come on, really? *(Pause)* Yeah, baby! *(Pause)* Oh, sure. I'll keep it under wraps 'till it's announced. Thank you. Bye, Tom.

[Wade hangs up the phone. He then leans back and puts both hands behind his head.]

SONG "Possibilities" sung by Wade

No reason to get excited. But I'm so delighted.
 My imagination's ignited with possibilities.
 Oh, wow. I see how the future can be now
 if the fates will allow for those possibilities.

My star's in the heavens, right over the moon.
 Nothing but clear skies. My day's coming soon.
 I'm so elated by what the gods created.
 I've finally made it. Sweet possibilities.
 My star's in the heavens, right over the moon.
 Nothing but clear skies. My day's coming soon.
 The smiles and the laughter. The joy to the rafters.
 The happily ever after because of my possibilities.
 Yeah, my star's in the heavens right over the moon.
 Nothing but clear skies. My day's coming soon.

[The Stage Light goes off.]

ACT II – Scene 4

Betty, Glenda, Rosen

[Spot Light goes up over the Front Desk. Betty has her cell phone up to her ear.]

BETTY: A resident was found dead by the Director of Nurses and she has I.D.'d it as neglect. *(Pause)* Yeah, Criminal Neglect. The administrator's ordering her to falsify the records to make it look like he died of natural causes. *(Pause)* We also got them on staffing fraud. I've got their sign-in sheet and it lists employees who aren't here. *(Pause)* Oh. Yeah. *(Pause)* No. She's probably in the record room now. *(Pause)* But I'm supposed to be watching the Front Desk now. *(Pause)*. Right. I'll go.

[Betty puts her cell phone in her pocket and hurriedly exits Stage Right. After a five second pause, Glenda and Rosen slowly roll in from Stage Right in their wheelchairs. The Stage Light goes off.]

Act II Scene 5

Jimmy, Wade

[The stage light goes up. Wade is at his desk talking on the phone.]

WADE: Yes, Doctor. His death was expected. *(Pause)* Right. Most likely respiratory failure and cardiac arrest. *(Pause)* OK, sure. If you send over a signed death certificate there's no need to do more. Our Director of Nurses will fill it in. *(Pause)* OK, then. Thanks for your time, Doctor Clifton. Good-bye now.

[Wade hangs up the phone and sits back for a moment. He pulls out a card from his Rolodex, hovers his hand over the phone for a moment, then picks it up and dials a number.]

WADE: Hello. This is Richard Wade of Shady Manor. Is Robert Jasper in? *(Pause)* Thanks.

(Pause). Hey, Bob. *(Pause)* Not bad, and you? *(Pause)* Good. Listen, one of our old-timers passed. *(Pause)* The treating physician says it was respiratory failure and cardiac arrest. *(Pause)* Yeah, he quit breathing and his heart stopped. Anyway, here's the situation. His burial fund only has five hundred dollars. What can you do for that? *(Pause)* That sounds good. What do you have for less than five hundred? *(Chuckles)*. Let's do the \$500. *(Pause)* Oh, and the family will want the ashes so we'll pick them up and arrange for shipment to them. Thanks Bob. I owe you, but not more than \$500. *(Chuckles)* Good-Bye.

[Wade hangs up the phone and sits back in his chair looking up at the ceiling. Wade then straightens up, puts the card back in the Rolodex and pulls out another card and dials.]

WADE: Hello? This is Richard Wade. The Administrator at Shady Manor. Listen, I have an important plumbing job and I've been waiting for a call back for over a week. *(Pause)* No, I don't know what happened to your mother at Shady Manor. *[Holds the receiver away from his ear for a moment, shakes his head then talks into the phone.]* I want to speak with your boss. *(Pause)* Hello? Hello?

[Wade slams down the phone. The door opens and Jimmy walks into the office.]

WADE: *(Wade looks up)* Ready to get going?

JIMMY: We'll have him wrapped up and ready to roll in about an hour.

WADE: It needs to happen sooner than that. I just spoke with Jasper's. They're closed but they'll wait if you can make it in less than an hour.

JIMMY: Dee hasn't given me the release.

WADE: Nurse Dee is running way behind schedule so you're going to have to cut some corners.

JIMMY: Why are we rushing this?

WADE: We need that bed for a private pay patient who's being discharged from Mercy Hospital. If we don't have that bed available then Mercy will send him over to Oak Villa. We need every private pay resident we can, so get going. You're drawing easy duty here. Or would you rather scrub down the community room?

JIMMY: Judy's doing it.

WADE: Whatever. Go on. Get going Jimmy.

[Jimmy exits Stage Left.]

ACT II – Scene 6

Betty, Dee

[Dee is sitting at a table in front of an open file cabinet. She is shifting through the files, taking out some papers and making notes on them. Dee is unaware of Betty who is peering at her from the shadows on Stage Left.]

SONG “Trouble, Trouble, Trouble” sung by Dee

I shouldn't be here. The neglect was clear.
 How can I fake these damned records,
 or make them disappear?
 Or make them disappear?
 Too late to undo past mistakes.
 Life happens one time. There never are retakes.
 It's bad altering these charts.
 It's so wrong and it breaks my heart.
 This is my neck. My life's a wreck.
 Even if I don't get caught for this.
 I've lost my self-respect.
 I've lost my self-respect.

[Dee shuts the folder, gets up and throws some papers into the wastebasket, then walks back to the file cabinet and puts the file in it. Betty disappears into the shadow at Stage Left. Dee slowly exits Stage Left. After Dee exits Betty enters from Stage left and retrieves the papers Dee threw away.]

BETTY: Oh, Dee. How stupid. I want Wade, not you.

SONG “March to What's End?” sung by Betty

I'm the one who will bust Dee. She'll go down 'cause of me.
 I'm the one who will bust her. But what good will that be?
 Does this bring any change here? Wrong things don't disappear.
 When you get rid of a bad guy what's next, who's coming here?
 Oh, I'm the one who will bust Dee. She'll go down 'cause of me.
 Does this achieve any justice? The truth is hard to see.
 Oh, will this make any difference? What's next after she's gone?
 In the game of corruption, Dee is only a pawn.
 Oh, I'm the one who will bust Dee. She'll go down 'cause of me.
 A shame I'll have to bust her. But that's how it has to be.

[Stage Light goes off.]

ACT II - Scene 7

Wade

[Stage light goes up. Wade is at his desk and the phone is ringing. Wade picks up.]

WADE: Hello? *(Pause)* Hey, Tom. *(Pause)* What!? What do you mean State inspectors are coming here? How do you know that? *(Pause)* You've got a mole in Licensing? *(Pause)* What will they be looking for? *(Pause)* Oh, you scared me for a second. *(Pause)* No, nothing. This won't be a big deal. Everything is in order here. Anything else? *(Pause)* No problem. All good. Thanks Tom.

[Wade hangs up the phone and looks off into the distance, then picks up the desk mike.]

WADE: All staff to the First Floor Nurses' Station. All staff to the First Floor Station. Now!

[Stage light goes off.]

Act II Scene 8

Wade and Dee, Jimmy, Betty, Ensemble

[Stage light goes up over the Nurses' Station in center left of stage. Dee, Jimmy, and the Ensemble are milling about and talking among themselves. Wade walks in from Stage Left and faces the group.]

WADE: All right. All right all of you. All right, all right. As you know, we are having a series of temporary problems. Some staff has been calling in sick and we've been low on supplies. State inspectors are on their way. If the State sees these things they are going to overreact and fine us. Fines would deplete Shady Manor's emergency cash reserve. That reserve is your bonuses. Blitz through the facility and make sure everything is in its proper place. Let's move it.

SONG "The State is Coming" sung by Wade

Go to the store room. Open the linen closet.
 Bring out those new sheets. Sweep up the hall.
 Get with it. Step on it. Get going. Get on it. Move!
 The State's coming. I just got the call.
 Fill in your charts and make up some daily entries.
 Fill up the water pitchers. Run man, don't crawl.
 Get with it. Step on it. Get going. Get on it. Move!
 The State's coming. I just got the call.
 We've got to cover up what we don't do.
 We've got to cover up and not leave a clue.
 We've got to leave them guessing, deaf, dumb and blind.

They can't bring us down for what they don't find.
 We're running short of staff. Go call back last night's shift.
 Tell them to get back here fast as they can.
 Get with it. Step on it. Get going. Get on it. Move!
 The State's on the way. Get with the plan.
 Go to the rooms and check out the residents
 and make sure there's no one soiled or wet.
 Sponge them and shave them. There's no time to bathe them.
 Move. The State's coming and they're bringing the net.
 We've got to cover up what we didn't do.
 We've got to cover up and not leave a clue.
 I hope to heaven that they're deaf, dumb and blind.
 They can't bring us down for what they don't find.
 The pressure's on now. Our backs are to the wall.
 They'll try to close us for nothing at all.
 Get with it. Step on it. Get going. Get on it. Move!
 The State's coming. I just got the call.

[The staff starts to disperse. Wade signals for Jimmy to come to him.]

WADE: Jimmy, get that body over to Jaspers then get back here right away.

JIMMY: I'm on it.

WADE: Hurry. I need you here.

JIMMY: I'll be back in a flash.

[Jimmy exits Stage Right and Wade exits Stage Left. Judy enters from Stage Right and looks at Jimmy hurrying past her. Dee intercepts Judy who is holding a red Shawl.]

DEE: Where the Hell have you been?

JUDY: Looking for Betty.

DEE: She's at the Front Desk.

JUDY: No, she isn't. Nobody's at the Front Desk. I was just there.

DEE: What! You get over to the Front Desk! Now!

[Judy drops the Shawl and runs off Stage Left. Dee bends down and picks up the Shawl. Betty strides in from Stage Right and comes up to Dee. Dee looks up at Betty.]

DEE: You're fired!

[Betty pulls out her wallet, flips it open and holds it in front of Dee's face.]

BETTY: And you are under arrest. Read the badge. State Police.

[Dee freezes. Betty holds up a folder.]

BETTY: Recognize this?

DEE: No.

BETTY: Robert Felix's file. You falsified a dead man's medical chart.

[Dee turns and takes three steps towards Stage Left.]

BETTY: Halt!

[Dee stops.]

SONG "Get Over Here" sung by Betty

Hold it right there.
 You're not gonna flee. Turn and look at me.
 Think about it Dee. What's it gonna be?
 Help me with this one detail. Help me or you'll go to jail.
 Come over to my side. You can save your hide.
 You know how he died. I know how you lied.
 There's no playing safe and sound. Cooperate or you'll go down.
 I'm giving you a chance. Time to take a stance.
 Think about it, Dee. What's it gonna be?
 Help me here and you stay free. 'Cause your boss Wade is history.

[Dee covers her head with her arms.]

DEE: Let me go. Please! *(Looks at Betty)* Don't do this to me.

[Betty hands Dee a folder.]

BETTY: You want a break? Take out your cell phone and put the recorder on. Clip it to your clipboard. OK?

DEE: Why?

BETTY: Here's your chance. You go up to Wade. You say, "Richard Wade you ordered me to

falsify the chart of a resident who died of neglect.” Say it slow, loud and clear. Got that?

DEE: I, I’m not sure I can do it.

BETTY: You don’t have a choice. You brought this on yourself.

[Betty grabs Dee’s arm and leads her off Stage Left. Stage Light goes off.]

ACT II scene - 9

Wade, Dee, Betty, Judy, Glenda, Rosen, Ensemble

[Stage Light goes on. Wade is at his desk arranging a stack of files. The phone rings and Wade picks it up.]

WADE: Hello, Tom? Now what? *(Pause)* What do you mean, bad news from Legal? *(Pause)* What? What do you mean Cecilia Sanders is suing me? *(Pause)* NO, NO, NO! Now listen Tom, I’m a married man. There’s no way *(Pause)* Yeah, but my promotion. *(Pause)* Tom, please, wait a minute. *(Pause)* Yeah, yeah. Fax it over to me. *(Pause)* Okay, *(Pause)* Okay.

[Wade slowly hangs up the phone and slumps in his chair and stares at the floor. Dee marches in from Stage Left with Betty following three steps behind. Dee stops right in front of Wade. Wade doesn’t look up.]

DEE: Mr. Wade. You make me change Robert Felix’s file. He died of neglect. You know that, and you ordered me to change his file. I hate you.

WADE: *(Looks up at Dee)* Who cares?

[Betty gets in front of Dee holding her badge over her head.]

BETTY: State Police. You’re under arrest. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say or do may be used against you in a court of law.

[There’s the sound of running and shouting off of Stage Left. Judy bursts in from Stage Left.]

JUDY: There’s been an accident in the parking lot! Glenda and Rosen!

DEE: What?

BETTY: What?

JUDY: They were outside. The van. Jimmy backed over them. Glenda and Rosen. They’re dead.

[Betty puts her hand over her mouth. Dee and Judy look at Betty. Dee drops the Red Shawl. Everyone freezes, then the light over the stage slowly dims into a half-light. A spot light on extreme Stage Right goes up showing Rosen and Glenda who begin a slow walk towards Stage Left. As Glenda reaches down and picks up the Red Shawl as she passes by Dee. Glenda and Rosen continue slowly, exiting Stage Left. Glenda turns towards Rosen.]

GLEENDA: I'm going home.

ROSEN: Yes, you are.

[The stage goes dark.]

NARRATOR: Epilogue. There were plea bargains, fines, and ruined careers, and an arrest on a parole violation for A.K.A. Jimmy Fleigen. Corporate put in a new administrator, and for a while there was an increase in staffing. It wasn't long before things settled back into a normal routine. Residents came and went. Some got better care than others. That's just the way it is at Shady Manor.

[The stage light goes up and the Ensemble is on the Center Stage.]

SONG "Winter Is Here" sung by ensemble

Winter is here our Fall's over.
 Summer and Spring are a far away past.
 The fruit is long off the vine.
 The bottle's empty of wine. Our die is cast.
 All of our history's gone.
 It just came and went.
 All that we were is played out.
 All our time's been spent.
 Who knows what all of this meant?
 Winter's arrived cold and sober.
 There's nothing more that we can expect.
 Life will end as it must.
 Soon what we are will be dust.
 Death comes to all.
 All of our history's gone.
 It just came and went.
 All that we were is played out.
 All our time's been spent.
 Who knows what all of this meant?

[The stage goes dark.]

End