

Daughter of the Juice

A Coda In Time

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DAUGHTER OF THE JUICE

Daughter of the Juice is a father/daughter drama. The main action takes place twenty years after a legal trial.

While Daughter of the Juice appropriates the 'familiarity' and 'publicity' of an infamous legal trial, it explores larger issues within the American psyche and deals with archetypes rather than historical detail.

It is a play about art, media and identity and appropriates an event familiar enough to American society to explore issues embedded within that society. Why are we born into certain lives? How does fate define us? Is it possible to free ourselves from the role which fate has assigned? Is it possible to escape the identity which destiny imposes?

This play concerns itself with issues of race and the American Dream - a dream that descends into classic tragedy.

Caveat emptor: The issue of culpability and crime should not so much be elided as structured as an absence - the play's absence par excellence.

CHARACTERS

OJ NELSON - A well-built, elderly, African-American male who has seen much in life. For the play's main action he is presented in his early sixties. He is a tragic hero who has not yet lost his pride even in the humbling presence of family. We pity and fear him. He is at once a classic Hollywood icon and absent father. His greatest strength is also his weakness. In OJ's case, it is his constructed vision of himself. It does not conform with what is commonly called 'reality'.

LAURA NELSON: The Daughter of the Juice. She is a young, beautiful early-thirties mulatto woman. She wears glasses and conservative attire. They fail to conceal a sexuality that leaks. Until the play's end, Laura attempts to keep herself walled in the world of intellect.

b) LITTLE LAURA NELSON: Laura twenty years earlier. An intelligent nine year old mulatto girl interested in dancing, skipping and stories. She is innocent, unstained by life and full of love, hope and wonder.

INGRID CORLISS: Female, late thirties, Associate Professor of Art History, UC-Berkeley. She wears this position as a badge. Her accent is either British or Southern Colonial. Keyword - 'condescending'. Her language drips with the fact that she is well-born, bred as an academic with a waning era's arrogance. She speaks with a distracted quality. Normal-day-to-day conversation takes away from the important tasks she will accomplish in life.

ANDY KURETOR: Pale white late forties gay male art maven. He is a Warhol-type, a detached figure who has little use for morality. He is only interested in pure art and has little regard for people. One thing is central - his art.

DOLORES and BARBARA- Both these women are quintessential aged Jewish princesses but, simultaneously, the fates from Greek tragedy. They knit and cut yarn with the sense that they are cutting, measuring and guiding lives through simple coffee talk.

NURSE 1 and NURSE 2: These minor roles are doubled by Dolores and Barbara. The baby-blue nunnish nurse outfits are typical eighties - young and sexy.

VIDEOGRAPHER: Assistant to Andy Kuretor. Unobtrusive, black, leather clad woman. The hint of S&M surrounds her.

SCENES

Structurally, this play does not follow a chronological order but begins **in media res** and moves backwards and forwards in time. Because of this, scenic design, the clock and costumes regarding time periods are **especially** important.

ACT I

1. UC Berkeley academic office. **Noon.**
2. L.A. County Art Museum. **Three days later.**
3. UC Berkeley academic office. **The morning of scene 1.**

ACT II

1. L.A. Backyard. **Twenty years back.**
2. UC Berkeley academic office. **Late Afternoon Coffee.**
3. L.A. County Art Museum. **Continued from I, 2.**

ACT III

1. UC Berkeley academic Office. **End of workday.**
2. L.A. County Art Museum. **Continued from II,3.**
3. Waiting Room. St. Vincent's Hospital. **Thirty-three years earlier.**

MUSIC AND NOTES

Before the play's beginning and at intermission, selections from four songs are interwoven:

- 1) Bobby McFerrin's "Sweeter in the Morning"
- 2) Overture to film "Conan the Barbarian."
- 3) Overture to Mahler's Symphony #1 "Frere Jacques"
- 4) Negro Spiritual "Take Me Down to the River".

Directly below the scene notes in the play program, the following motto should be displayed:

Book of Job 30:31

"My skin is black upon me. My bones are burned with heat. My harp also is turned into mourning. My organ into the voice of them that weep."

ACT I SCENE I

(An academic office, University of California, Berkeley. Center stage: Two desks - one large and grand, one small and plain. Right stage front is a photocopier. Centerstage back is a long Chinese painting that hangs from ceiling wire. The painting is on white rice paper. In large black calligraphy is a single Chinese ideogram - "Courage." (This ideogram is made up of a stick figure man walking forward with an ox. In this loose representation, the man may be mistaken for carrying a football and the ox may be mistaken for the endzone posts of a football field).)

To the right of the photocopier is a book case with all manner of books and orientalized curios. Next to these hangs a Noh play's child's mask and simple large clock. The clock reads quarter after twelve. OJ walks in carrying a wrapped basket-shaped present under one arm. PROFESSOR INGRID CORLESS is between desk and bookcase furtively labelling files.)

OJ

Excuse me.

OJ approaches INGRID.

OJ (cont'd)

Ma'am?

INGRID

May I help you?

OJ takes out and reads off a piece of paper.

OJ

Is this the office of INGRID CORLESS?

INGRID

Yes.

OJ

Chair of Art History & Department of Research Archives,
Berkeley?

INGRID

I am she.

OJ

Does Laura Nelson work here?

INGRID

She does.

INGRID points with a pen to a smaller desk. A small placard on the desk reads LAURA NELSON, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE.

OJ

You can help me, then. Yes

INGRID

Well?

OJ

I'm looking for her.

He points to Laura's Research Associate placard.

INGRID

And who might you be?

OJ

Her father.

INGRID

Mr. Nelson? I see. (Pause). At the moment, she's on an errand.

OJ

I'll wait.

INGRID

You'll have to wait outside.

OJ makes no move to wait outside but goes toward Laura's desk.

OJ

Outside, yes. She's not expecting me but . . . I thought I'd surprise her.

INGRID goes to her books.

OJ (CONT'D.)

I'm her father.

INGRID

Yes, you said. Her father. Nice to meet you.

INGRID goes back to her work. She examines a scroll with a magnifying glass.

OJ

I haven't seen her for a long time. A very long time.
(Pause) This is where she works. A University. (INGRID looks up annoyed, nods 'yes') A university library.
Never thought she'd be working in a place like this.
(Pause) She was an imaginative little girl.

Pause. OJ gets up and examines one of the bookshelves.

OJ (cont'd)

You've got all of these books I passed in that hallway.
(Pause) I spent three years in college - never went to the library. (Pause) When do you expect her?

INGRID

She should have already been back.

OJ

I just missed her? What was your name again?

INGRID

Corliss, Ingrid Corliss.

INGRID taps with her pen on a name card which reads INGRID CORLISS, Ph.D. O.J walks to her desk, puts down his present and picks up INGRID'S name card.

OJ

Ph.D. I always wondered what that stood for?

INGRID

(annoyed)
Doctor of Philosophy.

OJ

Thank you. I thought it was Piled High and Deep.

INGRID does not laugh.

OJ (CONT'D)

Get it. P-H-D. Piled High and Deep.

INGRID

I do get it but I fail to see the humor.

OJ

Hmm.

INGRID

If you'll excuse me. I have work to do.

OJ

Don't let me get in the way.

OJ picks up a book lying on the desk and flips through it.

OJ (cont'd)

What sort of work is it?

INGRID

I'm an academic.

OJ

(Pointing to the placard)

I did park in a university lot.

INGRID

I'm an Egyptologist and Orientalist. I study art. I'm interested in scrolls, language, iconography, the representation of women. (INGRID points to a Gustav Klimt poster in the background, 'Danae'). I give lectures to the public. (Pause) I'm working on a book on the representation of women in ancient Egypt.

OJ

How were they represented?

INGRID

Excuse me?

OJ

You said you were working on a book on the representation of women in Egypt. How were they represented?

INGRID

Ancient Egypt. (Pause) It's a large complex answer with no facile explanation. You've hit upon the core question.

OJ

Give it to me.

INGRID

What?

OJ

The core question. I'm a good judge.

INGRID

Mr. Nelson, it would take me too long.

OJ
If you're going to be a snob about it.

INGRID
It's not a question of . . . (she can hardly bring herself to use the word) snobbery. It's a question of time.

OJ nods. INGRID gathers up her things, flustered.

INGRID (cont'd)
(Leaving)
Would you tell Laura I'm on the sixth floor if she comes back?

OJ walks over to another Gustav Klimt "Pallas Athene" poster hanging from the wall but then sits. A few moments later LAURA enters. She is a beautiful young mulatto, wearing glasses that conceal a sexuality that drips. As she enters and notices her father, she drops the photocopies, books and manilas that she carries.

OJ
Laura?

LAURA
Dad?

OJ
Laura.

OJ stands up. They stand across from each other, unsure whether to hug, take a step forward or even begin to pick up the papers.

LAURA
(beginning to pick up papers)
I'm clumsy.

OJ
You're beautiful.

LAURA continues picking up papers.

LAURA
I'm shocked. Seeing you. After all these years.

OJ
You're beautiful.

LAURA

You're . . . here.

OJ

You turned out beautiful. Look at yourself.

LAURA

What?

OJ

My God. You are gorgeous.

OJ begins to pick up papers.

LAURA

How did you find out where I work?

OJ

It wasn't difficult.

LAURA

You've met Ingrid? Isn't she sweet?

OJ

That would be an interesting term. (Pause) These papers. What is this?

LAURA

Nothing.

OJ

I never dreamt my daughter would have some position at a university. Research Associate! I saw that on your card.

LAURA

It's not important.

When OJ speaks, he is going through motions - an actor in a melodrama.

OJ

You were going to be a dancer.

LAURA

Twenty years ago.

OJ

We've got so much to catch up on.

LAURA

For instance.

OJ
Your life.

LAURA
My life.

OJ
(handing papers to her)
Your life, yes, but I don't want to keep you from your work. Just do what you were going to do.

LAURA
Dad? Should I call you that?

OJ
Let me look at you.

LAURA
Dad.

OJ
I want to look at you.

LAURA walks to the photocopier with her paper pile. OJ continues looking her over.

LAURA
Come here.

OJ
I can't believe it.

LAURA
You look . . . the same. It's been twenty years.

OJ
I work out. (Long pause) It doesn't seem that long. You still seem like my little pumpkin. Can I call you that, Ms. Associate?

LAURA
No, you can't.

OJ
Spunky.

LAURA
(beginning to photocopy)
Not quite.

OJ
You're a woman now.

LAURA

Yes, I am and glad to be one.

OJ

I see that.

LAURA

I don't mean it that way. My boss, Ingrid. (OJ nods). They say Hollywood is tough. Someone should try a university.

OJ

I bet. (Pause) You remember those dancing lessons. You were great dancing around. I thought you were going to be a dancer.

LAURA

I don't think about that anymore.

OJ

A little?

LAURA

Not in the slightest.

OJ

Remember the birthday parties we had?

LAURA

Too big, too many people, too much noise. I lead a quiet life now.

OJ

I wanted to bring you this (holds forward present). Remember we took you kids to the Oscars. No babysitter for my kids.

LAURA

God. Dad, I don't even own a T.V. I haven't watched T.V. for the past eleven years.

OJ

How 'bout movies? This is California You go to movies?

LAURA

I haven't gone to a movie since I was in high school. I live in a different world. This department. It allows me . . . to forget things. I'm an (awkwardly) intellectual.

OJ

An intellectual.

LAURA

I live in a world of books - languages people don't speak and past times.

OJ

I didn't think those people existed.

LAURA

They do. I'm one of them, dad. Proud of it. I haven't even felt the need to watch T.V. for the past ten years. It was trash when I stopped. I can't be bothered. I think about other things.

OJ

Well, it's gotten better and what other things?

LAURA

You may think them unimportant. Most people do, but Dad, I'm not most people.

OJ

You were never 'most people', little girl.

LAURA

God, you haven't changed, dad. You're still the same. I'm not a little girl.

OJ

A lot of people say I have.

LAURA

Excuse me?

OJ

A lot of people think I have changed.

Pause. LAURA begins photocopying.

LAURA

Well, Dad, I like where I am. I like working at this university. I like this photocopy machine. It makes me . . .

OJ

Go on.

LAURA

Forget.

OJ

You were saying.

LAURA

It makes me forget things.

OJ

Laura.

LAURA

Whatever.

OJ

I'm sorry if . . . I mean I'm sorry that

LAURA

It's alright.

OJ

Laura, its just that . . . you were such an outgoing little girl. (Pause) It kills me to see you in a place like this.

LAURA

How do you know I don't like it?

OJ

(He picks up an old book.)
How can anyone like this?

LAURA

The past is past. I've left that. I don't think about it.

OJ

Never?

LAURA

Ever.

OJ

We're more alike than I thought.

LAURA

How could we be alike?

OJ

Blood.

LAURA

Blood?

OJ

Kin, family.

LAURA

Our skin's not even the same color. How could we be alike?

OJ

Blood is thicker than water.

LAURA

I spent years distancing myself.

OJ

(under his breath)
You haven't run far enough.

LAURA

Excuse me?

OJ

You haven't gone the hundred yards Laura.

LAURA

Is that a mean thing you're saying after not seeing me for eleven years? What is the hundred yards?

OJ

Farther.

LAURA

Did you say 'father'?

OJ

I said 'farther'.

LAURA

How can you say that, dad?

OJ

You're my little girl. I love you.

LAURA

Please.

OJ

It's true.

LAURA

Ok, you've brought a present and seen me on my birthday.

OJ goes to the bookshelf and starts to look at a black porcelain Degas ballerina sitting on the shelf. LAURA walks away from him, begins another copying task.

LAURA (cont'd)

This job is menial.

OJ examines the ballerina.

OJ

It's respectable.

LAURA

I stand at this photocopier, run from one library to the other, take orders like some slave.

OJ

You work at one of the finest universities in the States.

LAURA

That says a lot.

OJ

You're beautiful.

LAURA

You're the same sweet talking liar.

OJ

I'm telling the truth. I'd say it even if I wasn't your father.

LAURA

I don't need to be reminded.

OJ goes back to examining curios. LAURA gets another stack of papers and starts to collate

LAURA (cont'd)

You're back to acting?

OJ

You do read the papers.

LAURA

(guiltily)

I heard it on the radio.

OJ

What am I supposed to do? It's what I know.

LAURA

Not the only thing.

OJ
I'm a name, a commodity, an old man. It's a game.

LAURA
A game?

OJ
That's right, a meaningless game which lets me pay rent.

LAURA
You don't need to pay rent.

OJ
I have children...

LAURA
I will never take a cent of your money.

OJ
I'm not saying now.

LAURA
Ever.

OJ
Laura. I'm not making anywhere near what you think.

LAURA
I don't think about it. I haven't for twenty years.

OJ
(Long Pause)
I guess I have robbed you of a lot. I've been gone a long time.

LAURA
How about my childhood...?

OJ
Laura.

LAURA
Or my life. I don't know you. (Long pause) Do you know who I am? Do you know my name? Do you know what I'm called?

OJ
No.

LAURA
I am the one referred to as 'the ever more reclusive Daughter of the Juice'.

OJ

'Ever more reclusive Daughter of the Juice'. That's ridiculous. Nobody's called me that name in years. And you've just been saying you don't read the papers. What's that about?

LAURA

I don't, but I do have friends. I can't prevent them from watching T.V. or going to art galleries or reading tabloids.

OJ

What's the art gallery have to do with this? And tabloid trash?

LAURA

You'd be surprised. (Long pause) That's what I should have been, Laura Nelson, trash archivist, gossip librarian. Do you realize how many stories have come out over the . . .

OJ

Please.

LAURA

Please what? You don't know. I've spent the last twenty years trying to empty myself.

OJ

Of what?

LAURA

Your identity for one.

OJ

My identity, and what's that?

LAURA

Jury's still out. Hasn't been decided, yet. Still up for trial. In the public mind. What we in the academy call the 'collective imaginary'.

OJ

'Collective imaginary'. Laura, I just came here to give you a birthday present.

Trying to hide her tears, LAURA begins to weep

LAURA

Thanks, I'm not celebrating. If possible, I'd like to forget.

OJ

Laura.

LAURA

You've given me enough for a lifetime, thank you.

OJ

Laura.

LAURA

I don't think I'll be able to live out what you've given me.

OJ

Don't exaggerate, Laura.

LAURA

Exaggerate! My friends tell me. My therapist tells me. They don't have to walk in my shoes.

OJ

Please.

LAURA

They don't have to see their name in the paper. Family lives picked apart month by month, year by year. They don't have to measure lives through some . . .

OJ

You measure your life?

LAURA

Of course not.

Pause. LAURA starts another task. OJ takes a handkerchief from his jacket and drops it onto the photocopying machine. LAURA picks it up, wipes her tears.

LAURA (cont'd)

So tell me about Genie and Michael. How are they doing? How's their baby?

OJ

Michael's well. Oh, I brought you a picture.

OJ takes out a wallet-card photograph.

LAURA

I still can't believe I'm an aunt. She's so cute.

OJ
Michael's such a proud father. I can hardly believe it.
I'm a grandfather.

LAURA
I'm so happy for him. Is he happy?

OJ
He's happy. How could he be happier? He's got a young
wife, a good marriage, two little babies.

LAURA
I remember. You would take us to Santa Monica and we
would throw around a football.

OJ
You remember that?

LAURA
That football was red. I was so proud of myself.

OJ
You remember that? You could hardly walk. You couldn't
have been older than three or four.

LAURA
I have that football.

OJ
You do?

*LAURA walks over to the case of orientalized
curios and statues. Beside the woman's Noh mask is
a little red nerf football.*

LAURA
Here.

OJ
Wow, I can't believe you kept that. (OJ picks it up)
God, this small football! This was the one?

LAURA
God knows why I still have it.

OJ
What were these called again?

LAURA
Nerfs.

OJ

Think fast.

OJ passes her the football. LAURA misses the catch. She picks it up and awkwardly throws it back.

OJ (cont'd)

Why did you bring this here?

LAURA

I was moving from L.A. . . I kept it. One of the packing crates got mixed up. A case of things ended up here. Do I have to have a reason for everything?

OJ

Now I remember this. (Squeezing the nerf) This was the little red football I bought for your crib. But then Mikey got a hold of it. You guys never wanted to share. I couldn't even get you two to play catch.

LAURA takes the football from OJ, places it back on the shelf and then goes back to her work.

LAURA

You're back to acting?

OJ gravitates around the shelf.

OJ

Oh, yeah, bright and early Monday morning. Remember we used to play catch on the beach together?

LAURA

Movie, T.V.?

OJ

It's commercials, infomercial talk shows. Monday I'm supposed to do some kind of art museum interview, whatever pays the bills.

LAURA

I see.

OJ

I take what I can get.

LAURA

What can you get?

OJ

Laura, I roll with the punches.

LAURA

Roll with the punches.

OJ

Past is the past. Gotta get on.

LAURA

We all gotta.

OJ

Look, I know it must have been hard. (Pause) What can I say? If I could have . . . There's nothing to say. What can I say?

LAURA

Both of us.

OJ

I'm sorry and . . . (Pause) We gotta get on.

OJ walks from LAURA to the Gustav Klimt "Pallas Athene" poster next to the bookshelf.

OJ (cont'd)

I've seen this before.

LAURA

That's Klimt's 'Pallas Athene, Goddess of Wisdom'.

OJ

That's not where I've seen it. It's from a movie.

LAURA

That was done before movies existed.

OJ

No, I'm sure. This is where the designer got his idea.

LAURA

I doubt it.

OJ

Seriously. Have you seen Conan?

LAURA

Excuse me?

OJ

'Conan the Barbarian', old Hollywood flick starring (OJ mimicks a German accent) Schwarteneggah. The Guvanator! Do you remember him?

LAURA

I can't say I remember the movie.

OJ

Look, Conan has a helmet just like this (points to painting) and it will save his ass.

OJ points to the painting and goes through the motions of a sword coming down.

OJ (cont'd)

Great beginning. (Slowly) Drums. Distant sound of horses. Then - the axe will fall. Bum, bum, bum, bum. Black screen dissolves to white. Quote. "If something does not kill you it will make you stronger." How's that for a quote. Then cut to Conan chained to water wheel. Bad ass nigga!

LAURA

That's Nietzsche.

OJ

No, it's (German accent) Conan, Schwartz'e'niggah', low-budget pic. I've seen it a zillion times.

LAURA

No, the quote, it's Nietzsche.

OJ

I'm not sure of the screenwriter but those words . . . I live off those.

LAURA

Frederick Nietzsche. He wasn't a screenwriter but a German Romantic.

OJ

With those lines I'm not sure how romantic that 'neggah' could be.

LAURA

Romantic in the sense of a tradition, a philosophical movement with larger ramifications . . .

OJ

Larger ramifications, Laura? The only ramifications I know is the L.A. ramifications. (Pause) That's a joke.

LAURA

I know.

OJ
You're not laughing

LAURA
It's not funny.

OJ
You sure you didn't see the movie?

LAURA
I'm sure but I know the philosopher. I know the quote well.

OJ
And what about the L.A. ramifications?

LAURA
Nietzsche was the Nazi's favorite. He came up with the idea of 'will to power, superman, ubermensch. He went insane.

OJ
Little girl that uber whatever is out of this ol' buck's territory. The only uber I know is the cab company

LAURA
(under her breath)
I'm not so sure.

OJ
Excuse me?

LAURA
Ubermensch, Nietzsche is coming back into vogue but I would still say there's a lot to be said against him.

OJ
(laughs)
Laura, you are an 'intellectual'.

LAURA
Thanks, dad.

OJ
The new black intellectual.

LAURA
Half black.
(OJ mimes a football halfback.)

OJ
Hut. One. Two. Three. Get it. Half back.

LAURA
Enough.

LAURA goes back to her photocopying. OJ takes a seat.

LAURA (cont'd)
What are you hoping to achieve by coming here?

OJ
Achieve? I dropped that long ago.

LAURA
What about those jobs?

OJ
That's different.

LAURA
Different?

OJ
I gotta stay alive.

LAURA raises the speed of her work.

LAURA
Keep your mind occupied.

OJ
In a way.

LAURA
That's good.

OJ
I'm busy, memorizing lines, back in routine. Keeps me decent.

LAURA
On track. Back in business.

OJ
Would you like to see what I'm working on?

LAURA
What do you mean?

OJ

I've got a copy of the script.

OJ takes out a copy of the script from his jacket.

LAURA

My God, you haven't changed.

OJ

I've got these lines to memorize. I got to keep them at hand.

(OJ tries to hand LAURA the script.)

OJ (cont'd)

Would you read these with me?

LAURA

Really, I'd rather not, dad. No.

OJ

Please.

LAURA

I said I'd rather not. (Pause. She goes back to her work but then changes her mind.) Give me the script.

OJ

No, I'm sorry. (Putting script down on copier) Here, tell me about your studies. What are you studying?

LAURA

Most of my studying is tied up with Ingrid.

OJ

Right, Ingrid.

LAURA picks up the script.

LAURA

(perusing script)

This script seems kind of funny. Comedy?

OJ

Black comedy. Now you and your boss, Ingrid. . .

OJ picks up Ingrid's name card.

LAURA

Dad, you don't have to do this. You're not interested. If you're not interested.

OJ
I'm interested.

LAURA
I said before...

OJ
I know, this is a different world.

LAURA
I belong here.

OJ
I'm glad you found your place.

Pause.

LAURA
What did you hope to achieve coming here?

OJ
This.

OJ picks up the wrapped present.

LAURA
After eleven years of not seeing each other.

OJ
You counting, Laura?

LAURA
Why come here?

OJ
You're my daughter.

LAURA
No.

OJ
What?

LAURA
It's too much.

OJ
You're still talking to me.

LAURA
We are adults. (Pause). There's a part of me . . . I've left it, dad or tried to. I don't like to be reminded.

OJ
If I knew you felt that way.

LAURA
Eleven years of refusing to see you wasn't enough of a hint.

OJ
I thought things could be different, Laura.

OJ tries to reach toward LAURA. She recoils.

LAURA
Look, Dad, you've found me. We can visit with each other. . . this once. I don't want to begin a relationship.

OJ
Should I leave?

OJ puts on his jacket and stands to leave.

LAURA
No. (OJ begins to walk out) I didn't mind when you mentioned those dance lessons.

OJ
You were the best.

LAURA
I was never best. (Pause) But I did enjoy those concerts. I've got about an hour's work left. (Pointing to teapot). Make some tea. I've got to find Ingrid, finish a few things. We'll get dinner.

OJ
How 'bout your present?

LAURA
Later.

LAURA rushes out. OJ goes toward the central back shelf where the little red Nerf sits. He looks at other objects. A gravitational force pushes him toward the football.

Enter INGRID.

INGRID
(surprised)
Mr. Nelson, you're still here.

OJ
Call me OJ.

INGRID
Did you find Laura?

OJ
She went to look for you.

Ingrid notices OJ eyeing the little red football.

INGRID
I don't know why she keeps that here. It doesn't belong here at all.

OJ
Excuse me?

INGRID
That shelf. That's all Tang dynasty infant pottery. Why in the world she keeps that here . . . I don't know. I've asked her to take it home but she's absent-minded. You found her?

OJ
She was here for awhile. (About football) I had completely forgotten this. Going to the beach in Santa Monica with my kids.

INGRID
Excuse me?

OJ
Just a crazy ol' Schwartze'niggah' mumbling.

INGRID
You used to play what they call football here, wasn't it?

OJ
In another lifetime, it seems I did, yes.

INGRID
The Lakers?

OJ
That's a basketball team.

INGRID
I don't follow sports. (Pause) I've never understood it.

OJ
Football?

INGRID
Sports, in general. You were also an actor?

OJ
I didn' know this was going to be "this is your life".

INGRID
Oh, no. It's just . . . Laura doesn't talk about her family, much . . . at all, really.

OJ
I see.

INGRID
Doesn't seem to have much of a personal life, any personal life outside . . .

OJ
Outside.

INGRID
Outside our work together. I was wondering.

OJ
(resigned)
What were you wondering?

INGRID
No need to get defensive, Mr. Nelson.

OJ
What were you wondering, Dr. Corliss?

INGRID
(She walks over to the football.)
Perhaps it's best you take this and leave.

OJ
What do you mean?

INGRID
It can't do Laura any good to see you here. I see it already.

OJ
That's for Laura to decide.

INGRID
I wish you'd leave.

OJ
Are you asking or telling?

INGRID
Asking.

OJ
I see, her boss asking . . .

INGRID
I like to think myself . . .

OJ
Don't.

INGRID
Excuse me?

An aggressive glimmer surfaces.

OJ
Don't think yourself.

INGRID
Mr. Nelson, I'm aware.

OJ
I'm aware also. Leave it.

OJ takes a seat at Laura's desk.

INGRID
If you're going to be that way.

OJ
Could you just let me wait here?

INGRID walks to the football.

INGRID
This doesn't belong here. Now we have a good reason why
it can disappear.

Pause while OJ sits thinking with head down.

INGRID (cont'd)
(holding football)
It's you.

OJ
No, it's not.

INGRID

I knew you were going to be like this if I ever met you. I anticipated.

OJ

What did you anticipate?

INGRID

Don't think I don't keep abreast of affairs, Mr. Nelson. Don't think I don't read the paper like..Laura. I realize the strategy she's taken. The reasons. I'm aware.

OJ

You're aware of less than nothing.

INGRID

I wouldn't be sure. At first Laura was hesitant.

OJ

Hesitant.

INGRID

Yes, hesitant. For the first three years of our relationship. She didn't even let on who she was. I knew from the beginning.

OJ

(with contempt)

You did. . .

INGRID

Yes. The papers kept constant surveillance of her, where she was going, where she was trying to hide.

OJ

Hide?

INGRID

Because of you. (Pause) What was the idea in coming here?

OJ

What do you mean?

INGRID

What could you possibly hope to achieve except causing the girl more pain?

OJ

I'm her father. I wanted to give her a present. It's her birthday.

INGRID

(somewhat shocked)
Her birthday? That's funny. She never mentioned anything.

OJ

That says a lot.

INGRID

Indeed. It clears a few things up about what happened this morning. Why don't you take this football and leave? I'll tell her something came up and you left.

OJ

No.

INGRID

Excuse me?

OJ

I said 'no'. Put that down, go back to your work. Let me sit. I don't want to talk to you anymore.

Long pause. INGRID goes to her desk with the football, goes back to her scroll, puts on her glasses. She realizes she has the football and puts it back on the shelf.

INGRID

You probably think seeing this there are other things at her home. Reminders. That's what I originally also thought but I've been there, on more than one occasion. Would you like me to tell you something?

OJ

No.

INGRID

(placing football back on shelf)
This is the final trace - her previous life. She can't even keep it in her home.

OJ

She's free to do what she wants.

INGRID

You don't know Laura.

OJ

Stop.

INGRID

Should I? You continue to torment her. (Pause) Why?
I'll tell you, it's because she had the misfortune to
be . . .

OJ

Time out.

INGRID

Please. Laura had the misfortune to be born to you. I
see her at the desk, tears in her eyes, trying to lose
herself in her work. Don't think I don't see. I may be
an academic but I do know a few things. I know you have
no regard for our work here. That joke you made. Ph.D.
To me, that's so distasteful. Our work is important to
us. We take it seriously.

OJ

Thank you.

INGRID

Thank you?

OJ

Thank you for laying it out, mastah doctah.

INGRID

What is that supposed to mean? Mastah doctah? Are you
making a racial slur? Is that the analogy? Is that what
you're implying?

INGRID moves so she is in OJ's face.

OJ

(slowly)

Go sit over there. Shut your yap.

INGRID

I won't shut my yap. I'm not going to be accused of
racism in my own office by a man who's completely
destroyed the life of my assistant. I'm not going to .
. . .

LAURA enters carrying another pile of papers.

OJ

Laura.

LAURA

Dad, Ingrid. I guess there's no need for introductions.

FADE LIGHTS.

ACT I SCENE 2

(L.A. COUNTY ART MUSEUM - MEDIA Retrospective. The stage is set-up to resemble a Post-Modern art retrospective. Splashed about stage back in large letters: MEDIA: A RETROSPECTIVE: Made possible by Google and the L.A. County Art Museum." Stage left are large explanatory museum-type posters which remain illuminated throughout the scene.

The very large wall posters read:

Media - Origins

While the work of every artist is distinct, the paintings, video and installations in this retrospective constitute defining examples of the mid-nineties movement known as "'Media Art.'" The works presented here are often described as nonhierarchical works of art concerned with 'mass media', 'mediation' and the icons formed through the representation by mass media inclusive of television, radio and print. One of the originary points of the Mediasts' search for expression has been defined by some as the mid-nineties OJ Nelson trial which became a focal point for several important later works. While the trial literally defined a new term, 'media circus', the Mediasts took the event to explore larger themes."

"This retrospective was made possible through generous donations of Google, Video Pool and the Evhan B. Tischman Foundation."

Three distinct 'Art Installations' are spaced across the stage from left to right:

Installation One: "4X4" 16 television sets set up four by four. On them is broadcast one large image of a looping video of OJ's 4x4 Bronco Ride. Painted on the floor in front of the tv sets is a representation of white football field yard lines. Beside the T.V's. is a placard which reads, "Go Juice Go."

Installation Two: An Andy-Warhol-type large primary color lithograph of a younger OJ posed in profile leaning on a trial chair worriedly looking forward.

Installation Three: An early nineties type living room, carpet, couch T.V. set-up and football. The couch is empty.

OJ walks in stage left followed by ANDY KURETOR and a VIDEOGRAPHER. Both ANDY and VIDEOGRAPHER are dressed from head to foot in black. ANDY also wears dark glasses.

Throughout the scene the VIDEOGRAPHER tapes the interchange between the two men. The VIDEOGRAPHER is as unobtrusive as possible maintaining a static camera position and only moving when OJ goes totally off camera or ANDY gives her signals.)

OJ
This place gives me the creeps.

ANDY
It does. . .

OJ
Nightmare really.

ANDY
You think?

OJ
These are valuable?

ANDY
From museums and collectors around the world.

OJ
No kidding. I can't see anyone wanting these.

ANDY
You'd be surprised.

OJ
What is it you want me here for again?

ANDY
Impressions.

OJ
For that you're going to give me fifty grand.

ANDY
Uhhh. Your time is valuable,

OJ
What am I supposed to do again?

ANDY
Walk around.

OJ
Walk around? Is that thing rolling?

ANDY
It is.

OJ
It might as well be rolling. Fifty grand is fifty grand. What do you want me to say?

ANDY
Say what you wish.

OJ
You don't have a script?

ANDY
No script.

OJ
No script. Fifty grand for one hour.

ANDY
Good.

OJ
Good, what I just said? Fifty grand for one hour of no script or questions.

ANDY
Excellent.

OJ
Well, I can't believe this is the L.A. County Public Art Museum. What a waste of public money.

ANDY
After - Washington, New York, Paris, Munich and then Madrid.

OJ
That takes the cake. Where is this displayed in New York?

ANDY
Guggenheim.

OJ
That place should be a skateboard park.

ANDY
Excuse me?

OJ
That was a joke. I said that place that should be a skateboard park. Snail-like place? I'm not Conan the Barbarian you know?

ANDY
Frank Lloyd Wright was the architect.

OJ
(With contempt)
You look like the type of guy who would know that.
OJ goes to the couch installation.

OJ (cont'd)
Can I sit here? Is it okay if I sit?

ANDY
Sit.

OJ
Like I said, is this art or a couch and T.V.? (Pause)
That was a joke.

ANDY
Amusing.

OJ
You two are a barrel of laughs. (To videographer) How much do you get per hour. Maybe we can party later. (Pause) Does this T.V. work?

ANDY
Try it.

OJ
I think I might.
OJ goes to the T.V.

OJ (cont'd)
I wouldn't mind catching the last quarter of the Lakers game. If you don't have any objections.

ANDY
None.

OJ
What's that? (Pointing to 4X4) Bronco ride?

ANDY
It's called 4X4.

OJ
You know what I'd call that.

ANDY
No.

OJ
A waste of sixteen T.V. sets.

ANDY
I see.

OJ
I bet you do. Now what am I supposed to do again?

ANDY
Whatever you like, Mr Nelson?
(OJ walks and picks up the football.)

OJ
I'll play quartz. Let's set up plays. How 'bout that?

ANDY
Well, uhhh.

OJ
You really got a sense of humor, don't you?

ANDY
Are you being sarcastic?

OJ
You did say I can say anything I like.

ANDY
Yess, uhh, I encourage it.
Pause.

OJ
You encourage it?

ANDY
I do.

OJ
Live action Conan the Barbarian.

ANDY
Mr. Nelson.

OJ

Hike, catch?

OJ throws the football. Andy misses it and it hits him.

ANDY

Oww.

OJ

(pointing to artwork and picking up the football)

You're supposed to catch it. What do you get for one of these?

ANDY

That's inconsequential.

OJ

You're giving me fifty grand for an hour like you shit it out - just tell me. . .What do you get for one of these?

ANDY

Not your concern.

OJ

(Pause) Say for hypothetical reasons, I wanted to buy one.

ANDY

Mr. Nelson.

OJ

Say I was one of your buyers.

ANDY

Really.

OJ

Is that incomprehensible for you?

(Pause)

ANDY

You could never afford it.

OJ

I couldn't afford it.

VIDEOGRAPHER

There isn't a value that could be put on these works. They represent a historical moment gone - finished, dead, fait accompli.

OJ
I'm not dead.

ANDY
That's different.

OJ
These pieces here, as you call them, are about me,
aren't they?

ANDY
Actually, no.

OJ
What do you mean 'actually no'?

ANDY
They're about something larger with which your life
just happened to coincide.

OJ
And miss S&M with video camera and the fifty grand,
with what does that coincide?

ANDY
A Coda.

OJ
Excuse me?

ANDY
The word means addendum, a final passage of a
composition introduced after the essential parts . . .

OJ
A coda.

ANDY
Let me finish.

OJ
(pointing to artwork)
Is this the essential. . .

ANDY
The essential.

OJ
Finish.

ANDY
Excuse me?

OJ

I said finish then. You said let me finish.

*ANDY delivers this as if he has contemplated it
for a long period of time.*

ANDY

Yes, uhh, a coda.

OJ

Go on.

ANDY

Uhh, a final passage of a musical composition
introduced after completion of essential parts giving a
definitive ending.

OJ

I see.

VIDEOGRAPHER

The composer Mahler put it about his symphonic overture
and use of the lullaby, Frere Jacques. "As father
asking the nurse to see his newborn before
eveningtide".

OJ

(with contempt)

How poetic, and a composer yet! How much time do I have
to listen to this for?

ANDY

A little less than a half hour.

OJ

You know which one of these I hate most. Can I tell
you?

ANDY

Anything you like, Mr. Nelson.

OJ

That one upstairs with the home movies of my kids.
Whoever did that stole that footage, ripped it off.
That's a private home movie of my kids playing catch on
the beach.

ANDY

That's not my work.

OJ

Whoever did that.

ANDY

Which one are you referring to?

OJ

That piece of trash on the second floor.

ANDY

You mean "Daughter of the Juice", the Uffizi owns that.

OJ

Whatever. 'Daughter of the Juice'. Is that what it's called?

ANDY

I believe so.

OJ

Those images are from an innocent time. You know what this is. Bullshit. What did you say that one was called again?

PUNCH LIGHTS DOWN.

ACT I, Scene III

(Berkeley office. The morning of scene one. The clock reads quarter after nine. INGRID reads the morning paper. LAURA makes tea.)

LAURA

Ingrid. . . Would it be possible for me to take off early?

INGRID

Early? Do you have a doctor's appointment?

LAURA

No, I just need a couple hours.

INGRID

We have so much work here, Laura.

LAURA

If it's a problem . . .

INGRID

We're behind from last week.

LAURA

We're always behind.

INGRID goes back to her reading. LAURA gathers some more papers and starts photocopying.

INGRID

Would it be a problem running this program down to the museum?

LAURA

This morning?

INGRID

They need it for my lecture. They want it by noon.

LAURA

What about this?

INGRID

That also needs to be finished.

LAURA

I'll try.

INGRID

They said noon.

LAURA

It may be two.

INGRID looks up from her paper as if this LAURA'S behavior is out of ordinary.

INGRID

Laura, come here.

LAURA

What is it?

INGRID

I need to speak to you.

LAURA

What?

INGRID

Come here. I don't want to shout.

LAURA stops copying, walks over to INGRID.

LAURA

Yes.

INGRID

Is anything the matter?

LAURA

Nothing's the matter.

INGRID

You seem to be acting out of the ordinary this morning?
Anything you want to speak about?

LAURA

I can't see how any work will be done if I spend the morning like this.

INGRID

Fine, fine, back to work.

LAURA

I do need those hours.

INGRID

I'll give them to you. If you'll tell me 'what for',
Laura,

LAURA

Why can't you just let me have my privacy? Do you have to know all my comings and goings?

INGRID

We have a lot of work here. I don't know all of your comings and goings.

LAURA

Give me that program.

INGRID

It's not ready.

LAURA

When will it be ready? If you want me to run it down to the museum by twelve.

INGRID

No need to get testy, Laura.

LAURA

I'm not testy. If you'd take less time with the paper perhaps I could run the program down, get this copying done and have time for lunch.

LAURA goes back to the photocopier but sees INGRID is still not working on the museum program. She walks back to the file cabinet.

INGRID

What are you doing?

LAURA

I'm doing the notes. I've seen you do it often enough.
I can finish.

INGRID

You are annoyed about not getting the afternoon off,
Laura.

LAURA

I don't need the afternoon off.

INGRID

If you'd tell me.

LAURA

I don't need the bloody afternoon off. Drop it.

LAURA walks over to INGRID with the file

LAURA (cont'd)

Could you sign this, please?

INGRID

If you'd just tell me, Laura

LAURA

Please. INGRID. Drop it.

INGRID

Laura.

LAURA

Sign - the bloody - release - please.

*INGRID signs the paper. LAURA puts on her coat to
leave. LAURA exits.*

INGRID

(calling after her)

Laura, if you really need it, you may have the
afternoon off. Laura.

FADE LIGHTS

ACT II, SCENE I

20 years earlier. Light for an exterior Fall setting. The opening "Frere Jacques" tune to Mahler's First Symphony plays in the background until OJ walks in. The stage is bare except for a tree in silhouette which casts moving shadows of falling leaves. A nine year old mulatto girl, LAURA, skips rope.

OJ walks in.

LAURA

(she sings this skipping)

First comes love, then comes marriage then comes little Laura in a baby carriage. A-S-H-L-Y-ing, kissing and a-huggin so Daddy can't see.

OJ

Who's that little natty-haired pumpkin singing to?

LAURA

Ashley.

OJ

Who's Ashley? I don' see no Ashley.

LAURA

She's right here next to me. She's visible.

OJ

You mean invisible.

LAURA

No, visible. She's right here.

OJ

Oh, I see.

LAURA goes back to skipping.

OJ (cont'd)

Laura, come here. Daddy wants to talk to you.

LAURA bends down and pretends to whisper to Ashley.

LAURA

Wait here, OK?

LAURA walks to OJ

LAURA (cont'd)
Yes, daddy.

OJ
Bring Ashley, too.

LAURA
She doesn' wanna come. She doesn' like you.

OJ
She doesn' like me? After all I done for her.

LAURA
You never snuk her a Peanut Butter Buster.

OJ
When you were gettin' ready for bed. Last night? Didn' your gramma bring you any Peanut Butter Busters?

LAURA nods her head 'no'.

OJ (cont'd)
How in the heck is Ashley supposed to sleep without any Peanut Butter Busters.

LAURA breaks off from OJ and picks up a book.

LAURA
I forgot my page.

OJ
What book is that?

LAURA
'The Little Ballerina's Dilemma'.

OJ
What kind of book is that? Those look like a lot of words for a small girl. Where's the pictures?

LAURA
Mommy bought it.

OJ
I see. (Pause)

LAURA
The kids at school tol' me.

OJ
What did they tell you? (Pause) You don' believe that. What did they tell you?

LAURA

They tease me.

OJ

Laura, pay no min'. (picking up the book) When they tease you, just stick your head in "The Little Ballerina's Dilemma" or go tell the teacher.

LAURA

Then I'm a tattletale.

OJ

You ain't no tattletale, baby. You are jus' doin what's right. You tell the teacher and then stick your head in that book.

LAURA

I'm almost finished.

OJ

Ask your gramma to take you to the library. There's a stack a books there. Get yourself some of them fairytales. An every time they say anything, pay them no min'.

LAURA

Ashley says I can play with her.

OJ

You play with her, too. (Pause, Laura goes back to reading) If you read enough of them books, you are going to be smarter than any of those kids in school. It won't matter what they say. (Pause). Laura, pay attention, I gotta tell you somethin'.

LAURA

I know.

OJ

What do you know?

LAURA

Ashley tol' me.

OJ

What did Ashley tell you?

LAURA

You're goin' away.

OJ

That's right but you know daddy's always gonna love you. You jus' stick your head in "The Little Ballerina's Dilemma."

LAURA

The kids at school tease me.

OJ

You don' lissen to those ragamuffins. Don't you listen.

LAURA nods her head no.

OJ (cont'd)

That's good.

LAURA

Except Maria.

OJ

Except who? Who's Maria?

LAURA

My partner.

OJ

That chubby little girl with the pigtails in your dance class.

Laura nods her head 'yes'

OJ (cont'd)

That little chubby girl with glasses who wears her hair natty.

LAURA returns to skipping.

OJ (cont'd)

Laura, you payin' attention? You see this tree?

LAURA nods her head 'yes'

LAURA

The kids tease her, too.

OJ

You see this tree? How many foolish conversations you think it's listened to? How many do you think?

LAURA

(shouting joyously)

One hundred and three.

OJ

At least that.

LAURA

A long long time.

OJ

That's right, ragamuffin. It's been here a long time.
How ol' do you think this tree is?

LAURA

Twenty-two.

LAURA starts counting out the years as she skips

LAURA (cont'd)

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. (Etc.)

' OJ

It's older than that.

*LAURA nods her head 'yes', She skips silently
counting through this.*

LAURA

Are you comin' for my birthday?

OJ

Well, baby . . .

LAURA

Are you gonna bring me a present?

OJ

Laura, you remember on the beach how we played with
your brother.

LAURA

(nods her head 'yes')

He doesn' know how to share.

OJ

Daddy's gonna be gone for a while. And I'm making you
in charge of Mikey. That means you can't be hoggin' no
football.

*OJ plays a catch-me-if-you-can game with LAURA.
He catches her and sets her down in his arms.*

OJ (cont'd)

The way you played I wouldn' be surprise if he doesn'
want to share.

LAURA

Me an' Ashley are gonna be in charge. He's gotta listen
to Ashley, too.

OJ
Listen. You an' Ashley can't be hoggin' that little red football either.

LAURA
It's a nerf.

OJ
You gotta share the nerf with your brother.

LAURA
How come you don' bring me Peanut Butter Busters?

OJ
Laura . . . I'm goin' away.

LAURA
Like the kids at school said. Ashley told me some bad things about you?

OJ
Even Ashley. Well, don' that beat all. After all those Peanut Butter Busters.

LAURA
She said . . .

OJ
I don' wanna know, Laura. I don't believe it and I don't ever want you to believe it.

LAURA
I don' wanna go to school.

OJ
Laura, you have to. You do like I said. Take out "Little Ballerina's Dilemma, start readin' and don' lissen.

LAURA
I don' want you to go.

OJ
I have to go.

LAURA
I don' wan' to stay with gramma and grampa.

OJ
Laura, you jus' take that book. I'm gonna make sure with them you're reading so many books you won' have time to think about anythin'.

LAURA starts to cry.

LAURA

Me an' Ashley wanna be dancers. I don' wanna read any books.

OJ

Laura, listen, I have to go.

LAURA

You don' have to go. You wanna go. I hate you. I hate you. I hate you.

OJ

Come here. Laura, settle down, baby.

LAURA

Me an Ashley don' wanna be your friend. You phoney!

LAURA runs off

OJ

Laura, come back. Laura, I'm your father, not your friend. Laura, come here.

FADE LIGHTS.

ACT II, SCENE II

*Lights up: UC - BERKELEY. The Clock reads 2:15.
LAURA is at the photocopier. OJ sits next to
LAURA.*

OJ

Why don't you take a couple days off?

LAURA

I don't need a couple days off.

OJ

I still have the beach house in Santa Monica.

LAURA

What would I do there?

OJ

Lay on the beach.

LAURA

I don't like the sun.

OJ
Bring some books and read.

LAURA
I read here.

OJ
I just want to spend time with you, Laura.

LAURA
Dad, today, that's it. I said before.

OJ
You meant that?

LAURA
I'm serious.

OJ
You're serious about not wanting to know me. I could introduce you to a couple of friends?

LAURA
I don't want to meet your friends.

OJ
Do you have a boyfriend?

LAURA
What does that have to do with anything?

OJ
I'm curious.

LAURA
Well, curious George, if you must know. I don't have a boyfriend.

OJ
You don't want one.

LAURA
I don't want to meet your 'friends'.

OJ
Laura, I could introduce you . . .

LAURA
Dad, you know nothing about me. For one, I don't swing that way.

OJ
What do you mean?

LAURA
I don't like men.

OJ
In what sense?

LAURA
Dad. Do I have to feed you this, God! I prefer women.
I'm a lesbian.

OJ
You do?

LAURA
I do. And I couldn't take the time off. It's the
beginning of the semester and lecture circuit for
Ingrid and I have work.

OJ
That's all the more reason you need to take a couple of
days. Get your mind off things.

LAURA
That would definitely not get my mind off anything.
What's it been? Two hours.

OJ
Not even.

LAURA
Like I said.

OJ
I didn't think you were serious.

LAURA
I am.

OJ
I'm your father.

LAURA
I'm aware.

OJ
Laura.

LAURA
What?

INGRID walks in carrying a stack of work.

INGRID

Laura, when you get a chance, I need to talk to you about our Egypt project (lifts stack).

LAURA

I'm not even started (Ingrid hands her a stack). Dad, did Ingrid tell you about our Egypt project?

OJ

The ancient women?

LAURA

It's going to be the first book published on the representation of women in Ancient Egypt.

OJ

Exciting.

LAURA

There hasn't been a single book published on the topic.

OJ

Great.

INGRID

Your daughter, Laura, Mr. Nelson, even if it's an embarrassment to her, she's indefatigable.

OJ

Is that good?

LAURA

That's a compliment, dad.

INGRID

It's valorized throughout the academy for a scholar.

OJ

Valorized throughout the academy. (to Laura) So you won't come to the beach?

LAURA

Would you drop that.

OJ

Don't you think it's a good idea, Professor Corliss?

INGRID

(ironically)

Your father could introduce you to his acting friends.

OJ
Please.

INGRID
Parade Laura around.

OJ
Please.

INGRID
Like one of those pageant queens.

OJ
Is that some kind of insult?

LAURA
Ingrid my father is not an academic.

OJ
Thank God for that.

INGRID
Among other things.

OJ
What?

INGRID
Perhaps you two could attend one of those basketball games together. What is that L.A. team called again?

LAURA AND OJ
The Lakers.

INGRID
Yes, the Lakers.

OJ
What's wrong with the Lakers?

LAURA
Ingrid just means that we don't follow sports.

OJ
What do you two follow?

INGRID
I actually mean a little more than that Laura. With Chomsky I take the view that sports such as the Lakers, serves as an ideological tool to turn the citizen's attention from injustice and inequality embedded within late capitalist democracy and turns their attention elsewhere

OJ

You're one to talk.

INGRID

Excuse me?

OJ

About inequality. I've noticed the way you order around my daughter. Any books about Lincoln in this library?

INGRID

Yes, I'm sure there are.

OJ

Reread then - he freed the slaves.

INGRID

I'll have you know, Mr. Nelson, I've spent my entire career investigating issues of race, gender and orientalism.

OJ walks to the JAPANESE Woman's noh mask.

OJ

So Exotic and progressive. Race, gender and orientalism.

INGRID

Much more so than the majority of African American males in this country. You have had more than two hundred years to get your act together. Why is it that the majority of jails are filled with . . .

OJ

(to Laura)

Our kind? Do you mean niggers? Gee, Laura, you didn't tell me this was the Berkeley base of the Klan.

INGRID

Ridiculous.

LAURA

You're twisting everything, Dad and Ingrid, I think you're also way out of line.

OJ

Yes'm, I reckn' this ol' knotty-boned Schwarze-neggah has a way of twistin'.

LAURA

Dad. Ingrid may have a British accent and at times is.
. . .

INGRID

Please, Laura, I'm capable of fending for myself.

OJ

Two against one now, is it?

INGRID

Mr. Nelson, I fail to see what this is achieving. If you wished to disrupt our day, you have succeeded quite well.

OJ

Just another ol' Tom causing trouble. Maybe it's time to call the Berkeley campus police. Black male near white women.

INGRID

Please.

OJ

Please yourself, Dr. Ph.D. I knew about you when I walked in.

INGRID

Did you now?

OJ

How you told me I couldn't wait here.

INGRID

I said no such thing.

OJ

I know when I'm told there's a separate waiting room for niggers.

INGRID

Well, Mr. NFL, have you achieved what you set out to?

OJ

Excuse me?

INGRID

If you haven't noticed yet, Laura's crying.

OJ

Laura.

INGRID walks over to the little red football on the shelf.

INGRID

Why don't you just take this and leave.

OJ

What's that have to do with anything?

LAURA

Put that back.

OJ

Yeah, put that back on Laura's shelf and get your nose out of my business.

INGRID

Laura's welfare is my business.

LAURA

I don't want to go to your beachhouse, Dad.

OJ

You don't have to. I was trying to be nice.

LAURA

You were trying to control me and turn back a clock.

OJ

Laura.

LAURA

What makes you think you can come here after twenty years?

OJ

I'm your father, Laura. That's what makes me think it.

INGRID

That doesn't mean you have the right to come. . .

OJ approaches INGRID with malevolence.

OJ

I've heard enough out of you. Butt out.

LAURA

Ingrid's right, Dad. You can't just come in here with a birthday gift and expect me to throw the last twenty years away and come home with you.

OJ

Laura, I'm not asking you to come home with me. I was simply asking if you needed a couple days off.

LAURA

I don't.

OJ goes over to the little red football.

OJ

And why does this bother you so much, Professor?
Because it sticks out like a sore thumb among
your 'artifacts'.

LAURA

Dad.

OJ

Because it's something good Laura remembers about me?

LAURA

Dad.

OJ

Hold on for a second, Laura, I'm talking to your boss.

INGRID

Go on.

OJ

My race and gender theory about this (holding football)
is that you hate to see it so much because this
represents a black man's attempt at dignity.

INGRID

Ridiculous.

OJ

Let me finish.

LAURA

Dad.

OJ

Laura, you've had your chance. (to INGRID) I think the
reason you hate this so much is because it's a reminder
that the black man does have a field of dignity. That
he does have respect, success and achievement in some
arenas and you can't stand it.

INGRID

Completely ridiculous.

OJ

Everything else here is. . . museum lectures.

INGRID

I've heard enough. Laura, I'll be at my desk.

Exit INGRID. Long Pause

OJ

Are we still on for supper?

LAURA

Dad.

OJ

Unless you're going out with 'someone else', Laura.

LAURA

Maybe I should just go home.

OJ

I want to take you out. It's my one night.

LAURA

You don't have to.

OJ

That's why I came, I needed to spend time with you.

LAURA goes back to photocopying wiping tears from her eyes.

LAURA

You certainly come in style. Do you always make such an entrance?

OJ

Not always.

LAURA

You sure impressed the Hell out of Ingrid.

OJ

Why do you need this trouble?

LAURA

It's usually quiet around here. I haven't seen her that mad in years.

OJ

Really.

LAURA

'Repression' is a big word around white folks. (laughs while weeping).

OJ
I had this feeling a minute ago you were going to kick me out on my ass.

LAURA
I can't say it didn't cross my mind.

OJ
It did?

LAURA
Yeah, but some things you were saying were true.

OJ
Not all just black rage.

LAURA
That part about the football was a bit much.

OJ
Taking it a bit far.

LAURA
You can say that again.

OJ
Taking it a bit far.

LAURA
You're the same.

OJ
Are you sure you won't come to the beach house?

LAURA
Exactly the same.

OJ
You were just joking about that Lesbian rap, right?

LAURA
Totally serious.

OJ
Totally?

LAURA
Exactly the same.

OJ
Can I ask you a question?

LAURA

I don't see what more damage you can do.

OJ

Why do you work at a place like this?

LAURA

It pays rent.

OJ

You can find other jobs that pay rent.

LAURA

It allows me to be on campus.

OJ

You couldn't find a less abusive campus?

LAURA

Dad, Ingrid's not that bad. She might be a bit of a closet racist, taskmaster, workaholic and condescending to everyone but put that aside, she's not bad.

OJ

That's house slave mentality, Laura.

LAURA

Ever think maybe I might want to be a slave.

OJ

Want to be a slave? Who would ever wish something like that on themselves? (Pause) I spent my entire life fighting to get out of the ghetto, Laura.

LAURA

For what?

OJ

For what?

LAURA

I realize what Ingrid's doing. Most of the time I don't mind it. Takes my mind off other things. She's so busy thinking of things for me to do, she gives me no time to think.

OJ

She gives you no time to think?

LAURA

It may be a strange thing to want but that's what I want.

OJ
Laura, I'm sorry.

LAURA
There's no need to apologize. I'm happy.

OJ
You are?

LAURA
Yes, dad, I am. In her strange way, Ingrid was just showing how much she cares about me.

OJ
She was?

LAURA
Academics are a breed unto themselves.

OJ
I learnt that this afternoon. (Pause) Laura, don't you have dreams anymore?

LAURA
No, dad, or I nightmare or I go home and sleep easy and wake up in the morning and go to a normal job.

OJ
You had big potential, Laura.

LAURA
You did, too, dad. Where did that get you?

OJ
That's different.

LAURA
Is it?

OJ
You shouldn't work here.

LAURA
That's for me to decide.

OJ
Are you almost finished?

LAURA
I might have to put in a few minutes overtime.

OJ
On your birthday?

Enter INGRID with a stack of papers.

INGRID
Sorry, Laura. I completely forgot this.

FADE LIGHTS.

ACT II, SCENE III

L.A. COUNTY ART MUSEUM - MEDIA Retrospective. Continue from Act I, Scene two. OJ sits on the couch with ANDY. The VIDEOGRAPHER stands and tapes.

OJ
You know what I think?

ANDY KURETOR
What do you think?

OJ
You really want to know?

ANDY
If you want to tell me.

OJ
You're a sick man.

ANDY KURETOR
Is that right?

OJ
Damn right. I've got one sick puppy here. (Pause, to VIDEOGRAPHER) How much you getting?

The VIDEOGRAPHER does not respond.

OJ (cont'd)
I bet it's not even close to fifty G's. You probably work for peanuts or his abuse. (pause) This is awful.

ANDY KURETOR
That bad?

OJ
You run with the best.

ANDY KURETOR
The best.

OJ
Agonizing.

ANDY KURETOR
That bad.

OJ
Do you always repeat yourself or what anyone else says?

ANDY KURETOR
Not always.

OJ
(laughs))
This place gives me the creeps. You know what it
reminds me of?

ANDY KURETOR
No.

OJ
It reminds me when I was playing for the Bills. The
owner's wife had crazy idea.s

ANDY KURETOR
Ideas?

OJ
I've got you interested.

ANDY KURETOR
Slightly.

OJ
The players had to dress in white tuxedos with baby
blue ties and pour tea.

ANDY KURETOR
Go on.

OJ
That skinny white bitch could care less about football.

ANDY KURETOR
So?

OJ
I know so.

ANDY KURETOR
Me too, sounds like one sick puppy.

OJ
I wouldn't be here talking to you and Ms. Bondage if I wasn't one either. Isn't that part of the reason why you want me on tape? Will we get art?

ANDY
Will we?

OJ
If we're alike, if you are a pale-skinned faggot artist and I'm a sports' has been.

ANDY
I'm not so sure about the has been.

OJ
Look around.

ANDY
Yes.

OJ
You said, these works were about something larger with which my life just happened to coincide.

ANDY
Yes.

OJ
We're on the same level, Andy.

ANDY
Go on.

OJ
Works though like that piece of crap up there on the second floor make me mad. They causes me pain.

ANDY
Daughter of the Juice.

OJ
I saw my daughter last week. She's hurting. (Pause) And then I see that stolen footage of her as a youngster playing catch with her brother and mother and me. I want to smash that thing. (Pause) How much time now?

ANDY
Five minutes.

OJ
Follow me.

ANDY

Mr. Nelson.

OJ

Keep it camera sister.

ANDY

Mr. Nelson.

OJ

Tell it to the judge.

VIDEOGRAPHER

Should I call security?

ANDY

Keep taping.

*OJ rushes offstage followed by ANDY and the
VIDEOGRAPHER. We hear the sound of something being
smashed and an alarm.*

FADE LIGHTS.

ACT III, SCENE I

*UC Berkeley. The clock reads quarter after five.
OJ sits leafing through a book. INGRID enters.
Startled, he closes the book.*

INGRID

Where's Laura?

OJ

She just went down to the sixth floor to finish the work you gave her.

INGRID

Is that one of my books?

OJ

As a matter a fact, it is.

INGRID

I thought you weren't interested in research academics.

OJ

Know thine enemy, that's my motto.

INGRID

I was going to finish some work here but I'll come back later.

OJ

By all means, stay. Laura's working overtime on her birthday, why not the boss?

INGRID

I prefer to think our relationship collegial.

OJ

What does that mean?

INGRID

I'll come back later.

OJ

I insist. I promise to be quiet. (OJ goes back to the book) It is your office.

INGRID

It doesn't feel like it.

Pause, INGRID tries to do some work.

OJ
What does this, 'Presence Africaine' mean.

INGRID
Is that my Orientalism book?

OJ
Why can't you ever give a straight answer?

INGRID
Why are you always trying to argue?

OJ
Will you answer the question?

INGRID
Which one?

OJ
'Presence Africaine'.

INGRID
It's a term used by an English Marxist critic, a black man, Stuart Hall, in an essay on Representation and Identity.

OJ
You still haven't answered the question.

INGRID
Hall was one of the founders of cultural studies.

OJ
Cut the intro, professor. Can you answer the question or can't you?

INGRID
'Presence Africaine' means a foundation of an African root identity which Hall calls fallacy.

OJ
Okay, lost. . .

OJ tries to slam the book shut and INGRID interrupts taking the book.

INGRID
In the context I'm using it it refers to the notion of an essential African American identity rooted in America and not in some far off long ago country.

OJ
Like how you treat Laura?

INGRID
What do you mean?

OJ
Come on. You treat her as if she just got off the slave ship.

INGRID
That's ridiculous.

OJ
I spent my life trying to raise myself and take my children. . .

INGRID
Mr. Nelson. I can't see what you're driving at and your use of the term is incorrect.

OJ
Do you know where that term has brought me?

INGRID
No.

OJ
For one, this office where a white racist academic can write about 'Presence Africaine' and tell me she treats my daughter right when I see her working overtime on her birthday.

INGRID
I'm sorry for that but I'll have you know Laura chooses to work for me.

OJ
That's the saddest part.

INGRID
Mr. Nelson, you said you'd be quiet.

OJ
I should leave.

INGRID
Good idea. You've burned enough bridges today. I, for one, have been unable to get any work done and I must tell you, you've succeeded in shaking my confidence in our project. Maybe I shouldn't be working on the representation of Women in Ancient Egypt. After all, I'm not Egyptian.

OJ
You do look and sound ancient.

INGRID
Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

OJ
You're welcome, Professor Corless.

INGRID continues her work. OJ makes no effort to move.

INGRID
Don't think I haven't thought about these projects.

OJ
I'm sure you have.

INGRID
Don't think I haven't agonized whether an African American Woman or even American woman should be doing my work.

OJ
Someone's got to get tenure.

INGRID
I'm in it for more than tenure, Mr. Nelson.

OJ
Well, a job where you look down at people's noses isn't half bad either.

INGRID
I'm not trying to look down anybody's nose.

OJ
Except my daughter. You know what I think of your work? You want to know?

OJ goes over to the stack of books published by INGRID.

OJ (cont'd)
This is what I think.

INGRID
Those are my books. Put those down.

OJ
I'll put them down. Right here.

He drops them directly into the garbage.

INGRID

You beast. Take those out of the garbage now.

OJ

Me? I'm no garbage picker. What do you think I am? Some homeless black garbage picker?

INGRID

Take those out!

OJ

No, ma'am.

INGRID

You are incorrigible. If you do not take those books out of the garbage this instant, I'm going to call the police.

OJ

I'm shaking.

INGRID

Take - those - out - of - the - trash - now.

OJ

No.

INGRID

Now.

OJ

No.

INGRID

Now.

OJ

No.

(INGRID walks over to the football.)

INGRID

(louder)

Take this and get out.

OJ

Put that down.

INGRID

No.

OJ

Give me it then. Put it down.

*(They chase each other around one of the tables.
INGRID runs behind the Chinese Ideogram poster. OJ
pulls it down with a crashing thud.)*

INGRID

Take the books out of the garbage and promise to leave,
and I will give you this.

OJ

You bitch.

INGRID

You, you. . .

OJ

Say it, it's on the tip of your tongue,

INGRID

Nigger.

LAURA walks in carrying a stack of papers.

LAURA

What is going on?

OJ

You heard it. Your boss just called me a nigger.

INGRID

Your father just dumped our last seven years
of work into the trash.

OJ

Racist bitch.

INGRID

Old bugger.

LAURA

Settle down.

OJ

Give me the damn football. I'm leaving. If this is what
you want, you can have it.

*OJ dumps the trash upside down so the books all
fall out onto the floor.*

LAURA

What happened?

INGRID

(she starts to weep)

Your father is . . . terrible . . . terrible.

LAURA

Dad, if you want to go, go. Perhaps you should go.

OJ

I don't want to go except for that natty bitch. (To INGRID) If you think shedding a few tears is going to get you any sympathy.

LAURA

This is too much.

OJ

It's too much for me, too. I'm going.

LAURA

You're going? You left me twenty years ago. You're not leaving now. (To INGRID) You, Ingrid, stop crying. Get a hold of yourself.

OJ

It wasn't easy for me to come.

LAURA

Spare me right now.

OJ

That's the God's truth.

LAURA

I don't want to hear the God's truth. I don't want to know about truth. Do you think I would have taken this job if I was interested in truth? Do you think I could face myself if I wanted to face any kind of truth? Please, enough stories. Things heat up. You leave.

OJ

I thought it would be easier.

LAURA

Thought it would be easier to come into my life, remind me of things I have been trying for the past twenty years to forget and then leave?

OJ

Laura, I wasn't trying to hurt you.

LAURA

Ingrid doesn't try to hurt me either but there's work to be done. Who cares if it's Laura's birthday? Who cares if she hasn't seen her father in the past eleven years?

INGRID

Laura.

LAURA

(to INGRID)

Don't Laura me Ingrid. And don't think you know me because you read a few newspapers about what happened in my past. Asking my father to take the red football like some symbolic gesture with yourself as Joan of Arc.

INGRID

I didn't think that, Laura.

LAURA

I've been working with you too long.

LAURA wrenches the football from her.

INGRID

I need to pull myself together. You talk this out with your father.

INGRID leaves the room

LAURA

(yelling after her)

Neither of you know anything about this. Neither of you.

OJ

I gave you that football, Laura.

LAURA

You cursed me with it, you bastard.

OJ

It was a present, a gift.

LAURA

Some gift. Now you have the audacity, after all this time, to come here with another present.

Laura walks over to the present and tries to give to OJ.

LAURA (cont'd)
Take it back.

OJ
No.

LAURA
Take it back.

OJ
No. Aren't you even going to open it?

LAURA
God, no!

OJ
If I knew how you felt, I wouldn't have come.

LAURA
Twenty years wasn't enough to think it out.

OJ
Laura.

LAURA
Don't Laura me! You don't know me. If you knew me, you wouldn't have come.

OJ
That's not true.

LAURA
It isn't? If you're looking for a little girl, why don't you go to the L.A. County Art Museum.

OJ
What are you talking about?

LAURA
Maybe it is time for you to leave.

OJ
Is it?

LAURA
It is. You've seen me. What more do you want?

OJ
I wanted to give you a hug.

LAURA
Daddy's going to bring a Peanut Butter Buster.

OJ
I didn't mean that.

LAURA
What did you mean?

OJ
I don't know.

LAURA
If you don't know now, you're never going to know.

OJ
I'm an old man.

LAURA
I know - an old black buck, blah, blah, blah, I don't want to hear it. It's the same song and dance.

OJ
What's that?

LAURA
Get out of here, daddy, OJ. You're giving me a breakdown. Get out. Get out! Get out!

OJ
Calm down. Another time I would have grabbed you, tried to calm you down like your. . .mother. You're the same, you've got the same stubborn streak. I know how to handle this. I wish it was wiser twenty years ago. I can't take this.

INGRID reenters.

OJ (cont'd)
You stay out of this.

LAURA walks over to him with the football.

LAURA
Take it and go.

OJ
Are you sure, baby?

INGRID
You heard her, go.

OJ
You stay out of this.

LAURA

Ingrid, this is between me and my father.

INGRID

Laura, he threw my books in the garbage.

LAURA

That doesn't matter to me.

INGRID

What are you talking about? It's our life.

LAURA

Your life. It's my paid job.

INGRID

Laura.

LAURA

Stay out.

INGRID takes the football from Laura.

INGRID

Take this and get out.

LAURA

Put it down.

INGRID

No.

LAURA

Yes.

INGRID

No.

LAURA walks over to INGRID, forcibly takes the football from her and places it on the desk.

LAURA

(To OJ)

Pick it up and go now.

OJ

I'm not coming back if I take this.

LAURA

I know.

OJ

(to INGRID)
I pity you.

INGRID

I pity you, too. (Pause) Laura, I'm sorry.

OJ

Baby, I'm sorry too.

OJ picks up the Football.

LAURA

I'm not. This needed to happen. I don't think I can work here any longer. There's a line between a Santa Monica pier and this birthday. A football thrown long ago. Caught today. Touchdown. Spell broken.

INGRID

You're hysterical, Laura

LAURA

No, I'm not. I'm sane. Thirty-three years old today and sane. I was dead for a long time but now I'm back.

FADE LIGHTS.

ACT III, SCENE II

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ART MUSEUM. The lighting suggests the 'uncanny'. DOLORES and BARBARA, two elderly Jewish princesses, hobble in stage left. The strangeness of these black-clad well-kept, elderly women suggests the comfort of old people but also the sister fates from Greek tragedy. DOLORES carries a cane, BARBARA a library book and bag for knitting. They hold each other for support. DOLORES walks past the front of the MEDIA write-up to the couch installation. Barbara stops and tries to read.

DOLORES

What are you reading?

BARBARA

It's interesting. Come here.

DOLORES

I need to sit. My feet are killing me.

BARBARA

Come here. Read this.

DOLORES

I need to sit. I never read those.

BARBARA

What was that racket?

DOLORES

There were police upstairs. Did you see police?

BARBARA

It was another one of those homeless black men.

DOLORES

I think there was a television crew. Did you see the camerawoman? (Pause)

BARBARA

What time is Stanley picking us up?

DOLORES

He said he'd give us some time. He's so good to me.

BARBARA

I've got to return this library book.

DOLORES

Stan'll drive us. What is it?

BARBARA

It's called, "The Myth of Beauty's Daughter."

DOLORES

Worth reading?

BARBARA

Sad. (Pause) But I like that sort of thing.

DOLORES

No, I like it, too. I'll have to take it out. What did you say it was called?

BARBARA

"Myth of Beauty's Daughter."

DOLORES walks ahead of BARBARA ignoring the art installations.

DOLORES

I need to sit down. Are we allowed to sit here?

DOLORES sits in the couch T.V. set-up.

BARBARA

I think this is one of those art set-ups.

DOLORES

It looks like Kleiman's living room. Have you seen their living room?

BARBARA

That shag? God awful. You're right though. It is like this - tacky. (Pause) Do you mind if I finish this knitting?

DOLORES

Mind? Why should I mind? I need to rest my feet. Look at this. They call this art.

BARBARA

I'm knitting these booties for my grand-daughter. Aren't they cute?

DOLORES

Very cute. I love the color. How'd you pick the color? How old is she?

BARBARA

(taking out picture)

Eighteen months - walking. It's an orange brown. They call it Ochre. Look at this picture. My daughter-in-law is so proud.

DOLORES

Babies are cute. (Pause) I wonder if the police arrested that man?

BARBARA

There was certainly enough noise. Take these scissors. Will you help me cut this?

Barbara holds out the yarn. Dolores begins to snip.

DOLORES

I think the police arrested him. I heard him yelling.

BARBARA

It serves him right.

DOLORES

I don't like this. (Pointing to art) Do you like this?

BARBARA

I can't say I prefer it.

DOLORES

I like something like, "Gustav Klink". I think that's his name. Did you see that show here?

BARBARA

I don't think so.

DOLORES

Stanley took me. I still have the program.

DOLORES reaches into her purse and takes out a brochure and hands it to BARBARA.

DOLORES (cont'd)

His name is Klimt. Or "Women of Ancient China?" Did you see that exhibition? Take a look.

BARBARA

(looking at Brochure)

I've seen this one before. I don't know where. What is this called? It's written here but I can't see without my glasses. I'm practically blind.

DOLORES

Let me see.

BARBARA

I'm not even good for cutting yarn anymore.

DOLORES

It says, "Pallas Athene". That's Greek I think? Some woman's name. The Goddess Athena, I think. Do you want to look at this?

BARBARA nods her head 'no'. DOLORES puts away the brochure.

DOLORES (cont'd)

Stan takes me to all of these but he doesn't come in. He drops me off at the museum and then goes for coffee and donuts at the 'El'. Picks me up later.

BARBARA

He's so good to you. You're lucky. (Pause) I need help with the yarn again.

DOLORES helps BARBARA. Emphasis is on snipping lines.

DOLORES

I don't know too much about art but I like what I like and I like to look. And if Stan doesn't mind driving .

. .

BARBARA

Sure. It's nice.

DOLORES

I was reading in the paper there's going to be an exhibit at Berkeley on Women in Ancient Egypt next week. Are you interested in that?

BARBARA

Like Liz Taylor in Cleopatra?

DOLORES

With Richard Burton. I remember that one.

BARBARA

Sure, I'll go with you. Will Stan drive us?

DOLORES

Of course he will. We'll make an afternoon of it. There's usually a lecture, too. Do you ever go to the lectures?

BARBARA

They're so booooring.

DOLORES

But sometimes you learn something. Usually it's some professor. Or sometimes it's interesting if it's a graduate student who gives a guided tour.

BARBARA

We had this delightful mulatto girl once.

DOLORES

She was interesting? If they're boring you probably go back to your knitting.

BARBARA

Why not?

DOLORES

I dragged Stan last week to a lecture on old Hollywood costumes and set design.

BARBARA

Was it any good?

STAN

I didn't much care for it but Stan liked it. He showed the set design and costumes from Conan the Barbarian. I thought it was going to be older costumes. Do you remember that movie, Conan?

BARBARA

I can't say I do.

DOLORES gets up and examines one of the installations.

DOLORES

Stan knew all about it. (Pause, looking at the art) I don't think I understand this.

BARBARA

No one does. That's the point.

DOLORES

Like all of these TV sets. Let's see. (She walks over and reads the name description) '4x4'. What is that supposed to mean?

BARBARA

I'm not sure. It has to do with that OJ Nelson trial. Read the write up. You can go over there to that explanation and read it.

DOLORES

My eyes are bad. I just want to sit for a bit.

DOLORES sits back down.

BARBARA

The sign said it has to do with the OJ NELSON trial. Do you remember that?

DOLORES

Twenty years ago?

BARBARA

Quite a while ago.

DOLORES

I can hardly remember. I was still single and working as a nurse at St. Vincent's.

BARBARA

Help me cut this.

DOLORES

I don't really understand. (Pointing to the art)

BARBARA

Don't worry yourself. Just enjoy it.

DOLORES

How can I enjoy that? And I feel like I'm in Kleiman's living room. (Pause) So you were saying the baby's walking.

BARBARA

Soon she'll be playing catch with her brother. Then school. Hold the yarn. (BARBARA snips the thread but misses). Hold still. You made me miss that.

DOLORES

Cut it here. Come on. Let's take a look upstairs.

BARBARA

Should I finish later? I'm almost out of yarn.

DOLORES

There'll be enough time for snipping those later. Stanley's going to be here soon.

BARBARA

Do you think it's all right to go up there?

DOLORES

We can look at the damage.

BARBARA

That man. Did he look homeless to you? He didn't look homeless.

DOLORES

They all dress nice now. And how can you see anything with those thick glasses?

BARBARA

The doctor says he's surprised I can see at all.

(FADE LIGHTS.)

ACT III, SCENE III

St. Vincent's Hospital Baby Delivery Waiting Room. Thirty-Three Years Earlier. The pacing on this scene must be slower than everything else in the play suggesting a different time. It is played in innocence with little regard for irony. The lights rise approximating dawn and the song "Sweeter in the Morning" plays background. A younger OJ is radiant and with the mannerisms and nervousness of new father. He is dressed early seventies.

The previous scene's elderly Jewish matronly fates are now youthful and dressed in nunnish baby blue sexy nurse outfits. Intermittently through this scene, they walk from stage left to right, carrying little bundles in and out - babies!

There is a large rectangular window center stage back - the baby holding room but simultaneously suggesting a huge painting frame.

OJ

Oh my God, this is amazing. I can't believe we've had a baby. My baby. We were getting ready for a Laker's game.

Nurse #2 walks by carrying a little set of wool socks.

NURSE #1

For your baby, Mr. Nelson.

OJ

My baby! You got that right. Is everyone alright?

NURSE #1

Mama's fine, exhausted and sleeping, but fine. Would you like to see your baby?

OJ

Of course, I'd like to see her. I've been waiting nine months.

NURSE#1

Stand by this window.

OJ

Right here?

NURSE#1

I'll bring her to the window.

NURSE #1 goes around the wall and brings a little wrapped bundle to the holding tank frame.

OJ

Oh, my God! She's beautiful, like a little picture.

OJ searches around his jacket pocket.

OJ (cont'd)

I forgot those cigars. I have to go home. Why didn't she tell me she was going to have a baby?

NURSE #2

She probably didn't realize it until she was having one. It has a way of creeping up on you.

OJ

(looking through window)

Little girl, sweetness, baby doll, Hi. There's so many little babies in there but you're all mine. I made you.

NURSE #2 walks over to the window.

NURSE #2

And right now they're all beautiful without any worries. Have you picked out a name for her yet?

OJ

If it was a boy, that was my pick, but my wife, well, you know, it's a girl . . . I wanted..well, we're going to call her Laura.

NURSE #2

Laura, so beautiful.

OJ

Yes, she is. Laura Christina Nelson.

NURSE #2

Is this your first?

OJ

I feel like I've scored a touchdown. I'm trembling. I haven't felt this good since Superbowl. Oh, she's beautiful. I'm going to take her to the beach and my wife will bring her to my games. I'm going to teach that girl to throw.

NURSE #2

She's too small for that right now.

OJ

Did you say 'smart'?

NURSE #2

That, too, but I said 'small'.

OJ

I'll buy her a small football then, junior size. We'll put it in the crib with her. Just let it sit with her.

NURSE #2 starts to walk off

NURSE #2

You won't find one that small.

OJ

Maybe we'll have to wait a couple months. That's nine months of your mom carrying you around. I still can't believe it. I know you're going to grow up beautiful now.

NURSE #1 comes around with the baby.

NURSE #1

Do you want to hold her?

OJ

Oh, do I! Are you sure it's all right?

NURSE #1

It's alright. You're her father.

OJ takes the little girl.

NURSE #1 (cont'd)

She's a baby girl though not a football, Mr Nelson.

The nurse adjusts the Way OJ is holding his baby.

OJ

I've never held one before.

NURSE #1

Like this.

OJ adjusts the baby again, nervous.

OJ

Is this right?

NURSE #1

Better.

OJ

How's my wife?

NURSE #1

Tired. She's sleeping. It's no easy job being cut open like that.

OJ

I can believe that. It sounded like murder in there.

NURSE #1

It wasn't an easy birth but now mother and child are fine.

OJ

I had a sign. I know you're going to be beautiful little dancer. When I brought my wife in, this little boy said, "That lady's going to have a baby."

NURSE #1

What kind of sign is that?

OJ

That wasn't all. His mother was singing a Negro spiritual. She was singing, (OJ sings) "Take me down to the river." Do you know that one?

NURSE

I don't think so.

OJ

It was in that movie 'The Wild Bunch'.

NURSE

I haven't seen that.

OJ

I knew when I heard that song this little baby was going to be talented, beautiful and wild - like me. No books for her, that's for sure.

NURSE

Wasn't that one of those shoot 'em up westerns?

OJ

My wife and I went to see that movie the night she was conceived.

NURSE #1 is embarrassed.

NURSE #1

Mr. Nelson!

OJ

Good lovin! (About baby) She's probably going to be a movie star.

(Pause)

OJ (cont'd)

And now, from that night, I'm in the hospital - here.

NURSE

The miracle of life.

OJ

That's right. A miracle. When I started playing football, dating her mother.

NURSE #1

You are very lucky, Mr. Nelson.

OJ

I know I am and I hope that this little daughter of the Juice . . . (to baby) I hope that the Good Lord gives you the same luck as me.

NURSE #1

She'll get it. Now go home. I've got to take Laura back to the baby room.

The NURSE walks around the other side of the baby holding tank.

OJ

Bring her to the window one more time. Please bring her to the window. (Knocking on window) Let me have one last look.

NURSE #1 brings the baby to the window frame creating a painterly composition.

OJ (cont'd)

Just like a picture, like one of those little China dolls.

FADE LIGHTS.

THE END.