

DANNY HOCH

HIDVL ARTIST PROFILES

Some People [excerpts]

By Danny Hoch

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BLANCA

[Blanca, a young twenty-ish office worker stops by her friend's house to borrow shoes.]

Listen Lisette, lemme borrow your shoes? The short black ones. No because Manny gets off Footlocker in twenty minutes and I have to take the bus. But I can't be looking ugly in the bus. So find them! Don't stress me more alright. My life is already stressed enough, can I tell you? The other day right? I was at Manny's house, and we was fooling around, and like you know how guys be getting all shy like when they wanna say something really important but they don't say it? Or like they say it, but like their voices be getting all low so you can't hear what they saying? So he was doing that right, and like I don't be playing that. I was like, hello- excuse-me-I can't hear you-what-you-saying right?

So I figure he's doing that because he wants to ask me to marry him cause already we been together one year nine months seventeen days and he aint asked me nothing. So I look, and he got this thing behind his back and I figure it's a Hallmark card or something saying like, hello Blanca how you doing I love you will you marry me. Instead, he got a condom right? ...Right? So I was like, excuse me who's that for? He was like, that's for us. I was like, excuse me-I do not think that's for us. But he goes, no we have to use it, because he said that he had seen some thing in like channel thirteen or something, like some thing. He goes, no you have to be careful you don't know what's out there. I was like, excuse me I know what's out there, I'm talking about what's in here, right? I was like, you aint sticking no fucking rubber shit up inside me I don't know who touched it. You might as well put a rubber glove and do some Spic and Span in that shit, cause I aint having that. ...No cause, one year nine months seventeen days we been together, now he comes to me with it? Now he thinks I'm dirty? I aint fucking dirty.

And he thinks like I don't know nothing. Like he thought that I thought that you could get it from mosquitoes. Plus it aint like I just met him. I know his whole family, his parents, his sisters. They're nice people. If I would have got something, I would have got it one year nine months seventeen days ago, right? ...No, we talked about it but you think we used it? Ps. We started fooling around, I was like, you seen this in Channel Thirteen? He was like, no. I was like, mmm.

...Not those, the black ones you wore last Friday! The short ones with the bows on it. I'm telling you though, Manny be driving me crazy sometimes for the dumb reasons. Like, you know Manny's father's Puertorican and his mother's Spanish. So he's Puertorican right. And he's dark and his last name is Sorullo. So when people ask him, he always says Sorulo. Cause he says he wants to work in business in Wall Street, and that nobody wants to hire a Sorullo. So I be telling him, Manny that's your last name, you can't do that. And he be getting angry at me like, That's my last name, that's how it's pronounced! And like, you got

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it easier than me Blanca cause you're lighter than me, cause you're a woman. And I'm like, excuse me, I'm Puertorican too right? So it was the Puertorican Day Parade, and I had gotten us these T-shirts with the Puertorican flag in the front, and in the back there's a little Coquí and it says Boricua and Proud. So you would think that he would be like, oh thank you Blanca that's so sweet I love you, right? Instead he starts screaming. I'm not wearing this shit! I can't believe you got me this! It's ugly! I was like, excuse me, it's not ugly. So he puts a Ralph Lauren shirt. I was like, Manny, you think somebody's hiring you for Wall Street at the Puertorican Day Parade? So he goes to me, Look Blanca, I might be Puertorican, but I don't have to walk around looking like one. ...I was like, excuse me. You think that people think that you Swedish? You Puertorican. I couldn't believe it. It's like, he wants to wear a condom, but not a T-shirt.

...Not those ugly heels, the short ones with the bows. ...So find them, don't stress me more! It's like I be nice to people and they be having tempertantrums. You're like Lemington. You know my roommate Lemington right? ..I know, his name is Lemington, that's weird right? So you know he's gay right? And you know if you see Lemington, you be like, oh my god this guy is gay. But if you see his boyfriend, you be like, oh my god this guy is not gay. Cause he's like six foot and all muscular. Like when I first had seen him I was like, mmm. Like that, right? But he's gay. And they're not only gay, they're black and gay. Can you believe that? I couldn't believe that. ..No, cause they don't look like those guys from In Living Color. At all. But you know I don't care cause I'm very liberal. But I think that his boyfriend be beating him cause one day Lemington had a cut right here, and I seen those signs in the subway that like if you're gay and your lover beats you call that number.. right.. whatever.

So we be getting along, except this one morning I'm getting ready to go to work. It's like seven-thirty in the morning and I'm sitting there eating breakfast, I look up and he's wearing my skirt. So I was like, Lemington what you doing with my skirt? He was like, That's your skirt? I was like, yes that's my skirt Lemington, where you got it? He goes, In the closet. I was like, well that would happen to be my closet, which would happen to be in my room, so that would happen to be, Ding! ..My skirt right? I was like, Lemington you can't be wearing my skirt. So he starts crying right? And he's like, Fine I won't wear it! And I can't have him crying in my house at seven-thirty in the morning cause then the neighbors be thinking like I'm beating him or something right. So we had gotten over it right. Except that he be leaving me these pamphlets all over the house. Like in the dishes he puts them, in the freezer. So, should I go to get a ice cube, I'll read a pamphlet. Meanwhile I got frozen pamphlets in the freezer. It's this one pamphlet, it's called, Getting To Know Your Body. It's these drawings of these women, looking at themselves, in you know, there, with instructions. Excuse me, but I don't need to be looking there. For what? It's money in there? Plus, what if somebody comes over and they go to get a ice cube, they'll be thinking that I'm looking in there with instructions like, what's this? He thinks that I'm like one of these women that doesn't know nothing about her body and goes and does whatever. [She puts on some lipstick.]

But he's sweet though, he got me this cute shirt with all these pictures of famous womens on it. Clara Barton, Nefertiti, Mother Theresa is on the shirt. And he gives it to me and he goes to me, Rejoice in your womanhood Blanca, be good to yourself cause you're a warrior.

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I was like..? This is some black gay thing or something? He called me a warrior. I picture myself like running through the jungle with a machine gun like, lookout it's Blanca coming!

But the thing is, now he got this little dog right? And a)He don't be feeding it, so the dog be eating my curtains, now I don't have no curtains people could just be looking at me naked through the window. And b)He don't walk it. So the dog be shitting all in my house. And let me tell you, I don't know what the dog be shitting because it got nothing to eat but curtains. It's like little curtain shits is in the floor. The other day I'm getting ready to go to work and I get out the shower in my towel, I step in this little macadamia nut shit. So he goes, Wipe it. So I wipe it, I took a Bounty but I don't have time to go back in the shower and scrubbing shit out my foot twenty-four hours. So I go to work. People at work are like, Ooh you smell like shit. And when I explain to them that, excuse me I do not smell like shit naturally, but I happened to step in shit. They're like, Oh you stepped in shit? You must be stupid then. And I'll tell you right now, I can't have people calling me stupid cause I aint stupid.

...No, I wanna kick him out, but then he'll think it's cause he's gay. I mean it's not that he's gay that his dog shits in the floor, it's that he's irresponsible. Things are so complicated. Plus I think he got AIDS too, cause he's all skinny. ...Yeah Manny's skinny too, but Manny's just skinny. Lemington's gay and skinny alright? But them people be getting that shit anyway right? They do though right? ...Right. You got them? Finally, gimme. I hope they fit. I'm telling you, you know what is it? [Blanca puts on the shoes and checks herself in the mirror.] I think my life is stressed because I have to learn to be nice to myself. Cause if you think about it, nobody's being nice to me. you included. But listen, I have to go because you making me late. And these shoes are too tight but I'm wearing them. And let me tell you something. If Manny comes to me with that whole condom thing again, I'm gonna tell him like this, You think I'm dirty? Who do you think I am? Do you even know who you are?

SOME PEOPLE By Danny Hoch ©1994 (EXCERPTS)

FLOE

[Floe, a cool sixteenish, beats hip-hop into the wooden box to supply the music for his rhyme.]

It's the mack motherfuckin, Daddy
Never catch me drivin a caddy
I prefer like a 190E
Imported all the way from Germany
It's the F to the L to the O to the E
I tantalize to tickle your throat like Tetley Tea
I terrorize, stuff tough trash talkers and bluff tykes
Twist the wrist to grab the microphone and I wear Nikes
Color green, style hi-top, to flex the hip-hop
Born to rip the shop and rock the spot like nonstop, yo..
My rhymes are fat, fresh, dumb, dope, down and groovy

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I'm terminatin suckas like Schwarzenegger in that movie Sucker Emcees I consume, my rhymes boom

I knew I was dope walkin out my mother's womb

I'll kick you in the head with my Tims, so I could squoosh ya

See ya on the street punk, word up I'll mush ya

I'm not a pusher, flowin like a gusher

A fucked up motherfucker and I live inside Flatbush -uh

I'm makin dynamite explode, I'm launchin rockets

I robbed George Jetson, stuck up Spaceley Sprockets

My pockets stay fat, with pictures of the presidents

I'm ricochet-bing-bing rockin rhymes for all ya residents

Of Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx

You paid your fifteen dollars, yo I coulda got yaw'll comps

Everytime I rhyme I leave mikes twisted and bent

Never been to Riker's Island but I almost went

I'm out there murfin, not Papa Smurf and

Foamin like a Nerf and yeah, I fucked your girlfriend

I smoke suckas mad fast just like the crack

I drop more fuckin bombs than Bush did on Iraq

I'm stacked and stacked, drink a forty of Similac

Never call me wack because yo, kid I pack

A pistol, so it's no use holdin your crystal

I'll shoot ya point blank in the head, then fuck your sister I'll throw ya down and step on your head just like a RingDing Beat ya ass worse than they did in the Rodney King thing

The rhymes I hit ya with boy, they aint no duds

The microphone's the trigger and boom, I'm droppin Scuds

Yeah, and ya don't stop, keep on till the break of dawn and... [Freestyle]

[To his boys] Ah yeah you like that, you like that. I fucked it up though. I made up the part about the Scuds yesterday. I was like tryin to you know, end on some boom shit but at the same time relate it to like current events. ...What? You can't have the sample after my verse man. You already got it after his verse. Cause, that shit is mad redundant. You don't know what the fuck you talkin about ...Aight fine, then have the sample after my verse but then you can't have it after his. ...Oh my god, shut the fuck up. We aint even make the demo yet. Wait till we drop the demo, get a record deal, then when you got cash in your pocket you'll shut the fuck up then. Cause people are gonna listen to it and be like, that shit is mad redundant. You do get money, cause you know you get a advance right? Like I heard Wu-Tang Clan got like two hundred-fifty thousand dollars each before the record even came out! Each yo, each, each! But watch, this be just the motherfucker to like, take that money, and go buy like a five hundred bag of Buddha and ten hookers and shit. ...Cause you're stupid. Hey yo, I get that money, I'm goin to college in two seconds, yup. Cause otherwise they just look at you like another dumb rapper and shit. You got a degree in your pocket, niggas give you respect. For real, I'm gonna roll up like Harvard or Yale or some shit. Yo there's mad honeys at them schools too yo. ...Nah bee, you don't need SAT's to get into that shit. Nah yo. I roll up in Harvard, a hundred thousand dollars in my pocket, they be like, aight you in, you in. Trust me. They be like, Oh Hello, Welcome and shit.

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...What? You don't know what the fuck you're talkin about. You can't even rhyme for shit anyway. Aha! ..My mother can't rhyme? Yo, your mother's so stupid, she climbed up a tree cause she tryin to be branch manager. Yo, your mother's so dumb, she got stabbed in a shoot-out. ...Hah? ...Oh, why you wanna go there man? ...I'm sayin, you dis my moms all you want, but you don't talk about my girl, that's different. ...I know she aint my girl no more, that's not the point though. Yo we broke up, you don't even know the whole story. Nah I'm sayin, she wanna go roll with some other kid cause he got money in his pocket. That's aight though. Cause wait till we get this record deal and I got money in my pocket, you know she gonna be callin me up like, ring ring, hi, I'm sorry. I'll be like, word? Click. ...Nah, actually I can't say that. Cause she aint really the type to do that shit. See, that's why I can't dis her even though we broke up. I mean out of all the girls I been with, I be like, seeya! But it's like that's the first girl that like, I don't know. I think honestly I could say like.. I don't know, some shit.

Nah! I'm serious! It's like, even just being with her, we don't even have to be doing nothing, we just be sitting there. Plus she be schooling me, cause you know she's in college right? She's gonna be a sophomore at Hunter next semester. ...Black and Puertorican studies. So I'm sayin, It's like we just be chilling or whatever. And all of the sudden she'll drop the bomb of knowledge on me. Like check this out, there was this whole civilization, livin on the islands in the Caribbean, mad hundred thousand years before the Europeans came over and fucked that whole shit up. They was called Tainos. They had a whole civilization, architecture, medicine, culture... Tainos. ...You aint never heard of no fuckin Tainos. This nigga aint never heard of Fritos talkin bout you heard of that shit. I'm sayin though. ...Right? Shit was just different with her. That too though. It's like, even when I was fuckin her. Ah, see I can't even say that cause it wasn't like fuckin. It was like, we was making love or some shit. ...Shut up. Stop laughing. Your mother's so fat she jumped in the air and got stuck, shut the fuck up. Nah, shut the fuck up stop laughing though. I'm saying, I'm gonna tell you this cause it still be buggin me out to this day. This happened like once right? ...I'm not saying I fucked her once, but listen. You know when you be gettin busy and like you get all into the moment and shit? Like you get all hot and sweaty and you get into the smells, like you be smelling her neck and shit. You know, you be like, ah lemme smell your neck? So, I'm saying like one time, we was all in it. And I had closed my eyes and this shit had come over me like I can't even explain it. Like in here, and I had like almost started like, cryin and shit. I mean I'm not saying I was crying. I'm saying like, aight. The only thing I could compare it to, is remember last summer we went to Action Park? ...Nah, aight bad example, bad example.

I'm sayin, you ever been on a airplane? ...So you know you be on a airplane and you hit turbulence and the plane drops. And your stomach goes like this, but the rest of your body goes like this. It's like you're separating and you feel like... I'm saying, so they got that water slide at Action Park, and when you go down the slide you be like, wahh. I'm not sayin down there, I'm saying like in here. Never mind man. Nah, forget it, shut up, you're stupid. Watch in like five years, she'll be some college professor, and we'll be on tour at her school. And we'll run into eachother and be like, ching! Nah yo, let me shut up man. I be sounding all sentimental like Sally Jeffrey Rafael and shit. Yo, kick your verse man, kick your verse! Ya big, can't rhyme for your life. ...What? Yo, your mother got no arms on Wheel Of Fortune talkin bout, Big Money, Big Money! Go ahead kick your verse... [Floe pounds the box to his

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homeboy's imaginary verse.]

SOME PEOPLE By Danny Hoch ©1994 (EXCERPTS)

BILL

[A straight outta Jersey pseudo-yuppie with a jeep runs up to his friend's apartment with him for a would-be two minutes. Bill talks while his friend struggles with the locks on the door.]

Alright but just for two minutes because my jeep is double-parked downstairs and I don't want to get tickets. Can I tell you what your problem is? And this is your problem because I know because I'm very good at telling things about people. You, you don't pay attention to things that are going on around you. It's like you're in this shell. You're like this turtle, you know, crawling along the grass in your shell and bombs are dropping like five centimeters away from you and you, you're in lala land. You're like, la la. Can I give you an example? Let me give you a perfect example. Did you watch Ted Koppel last week? Ok well if you would've watched, you would've known that there's little nine year olds running around the street with guns, selling crack to babies for sex. You think I'm exaggerating? If you would've watched, you would've known. You also would've known, get this. There's some guy, he killed all these hookers right? You know, prostitutes? Killed them. But this is the thing, there are all these people and they're in this rage that he shouldn't have killed them. Lemme tell you something, if he didn't kill them they would've wound up spreading AIDS to half the people in this country. ...Because this is a very serious issue of our time and it affects us all indirectly.

...Ok, I'll give you a perfect example. Let's say, some guy he makes a mistake. Not me, but some guy. He goes and uses a prostitute right. She gives him AIDS, cause she's got AIDS, she gives it to him, he goes home to his wife, he gives it to her, she has no idea. Are you following the progression of the story? Then they get a divorce, because of course they're gonna get a divorce because why is the guy with the.. Anyway, she's out there, you know on the single scene, whatever you wanna call it. I'm thirty-five years old, I'm a single man. I meet her, she gives me AIDS, I'm dead. You're asking how it affects me? ...Use a condom? I'm thirty-five years old, I think I'm a little old to use a condom, anyway you're missing the whole point of the story. Listen, I thought we're coming up here for two minutes so you could shave, this is turning into a whole ordeal here with getting into your apartment. What's with the five locks on your door, what are we in Harlem? Heh. ...It's a joke, you got five locks on your door, you know, Harlem, it's all these people up there? ...Alright, so it's not funny, so now you're a Black Panther all of the sudden? Jesus, it's a joke. Mr. Medeco here. You make me very uncomfortable sometimes.

[Bill enters apt.] Oh, this is nice. ...I said this is nice, your place. How much do you pay for this? ..Not bad. Who's the guy that owns the building? The same guy that owns the building on the corner? What's his name? ...Mohammed? Is he Moroccan? ...But is he Moroccan? ...Yeah but is he Moroccan though? No, I bet he's Moroccan. Because all the Moroccans, they bought up all the real estate, from the Jews. ..No, yes, trust me. They did a whole in-

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depth report on MacNeil Lehrer, I saw the whole thing. You didn't know the Jews are going poor? Not just that they had to sell.. Trust me, my friend who's Jewish. He wanted to get for his daughter.. what do you call it when they get their own.. her own phone line. He couldn't get it for her, that's all I'm saying. Anyway that's not the point of the story. The point of the story is that all the Moroccans bought up all the real estate, and all the Baskin-Robbins. And I don't know this just because I watch TV and I'm socially aware, paying attention unlike you-you're in lala land, but I know this from empirical observation. I was in a Baskin-Robbins last month and I'm standing there paying for the cone, and I ask the guy his name. You know I'm always taking advantage of these little small-talk opportunities, you get to know people really well. So the guy says Mohammed. ...The guy's Moroccan, so he's Moroccan, Libyan, Hindu, Iraqi. They're all connected. They're all in the same little terrorist boat there.

Let me ask you something, do you watch Dan Rather? From now on, you have to watch Dan Rather just for educational purposes. Because on Dan Rather, you get the whole complete story. Let me explain something to you. They got this whole Shiite cult, the Buddhists right? And the thing is they name them all Mohammed, so they can't tell the difference between eachother. It's like brainwashing. They're brainwashing them into thinking that they're all this one common organism floating around the earth, and they're gonna take over other organisms, and the other ones are innocent law-abiding countries, like ours. I mean they didn't say that exactly on Dan Rather but you could figure it all out. The Shiites are sort of like the Moonies, it's all interwoven. Anyway that's not the point, the point is just be careful there's not a bomb in your building. You think these guys got real estate on their minds? I'm thinking not. ...Where'd you get this, Ikea? ...This table thing here, I thought it was Ikea. Heh.

Listen, hurry up because if I got tickets on my jeep you're paying for them. Hey you know I'm thirty-five right? Yeah, I turned thirty-five last week. ...Thank you thank you. Anyway, you know I'm old enough to be president right? You know what I'd do if I was president? You know, to solve all the problems, hatred, racism, killing, stuff? Now keep in mind I'm not prejudice or anything, I'd teach everybody how to speak English. Because that's the problem. I mean, if you don't speak English, how are we supposed to communicate for you know, peace? Let me give you a perfect example. The other day I finish work, I'm hungry, I feel like having Chinese food. So I go to the Chinese take-out in my neighborhood, I order what I always order. Four fried chicken wings, it comes with a small roast pork fried rice. So this day, me, I'm feeling hungrier than normal, so I order a large roast pork fried rice instead of a small, you know? I'll pay for it. So I say to the guy, can I have a large instead of a small? So the guy goes yeah, like he understands what I'm saying. Mistake Number One, the guy doesn't know what the hell I'm saying. You wanna hear Mistake Number Two? Me, I'm looking out the window making sure my jeep isn't getting ripped off by you know, crackhead murderers in the street. Meanwhile, I should be watching, who knows what the hell they're putting in my food? Poison, whatever. ...You don't know what they put in, they have their little jars of stuff. So that's not even the thing. This is the thing. The guy goes to put it in the bag with the Duck sauce and everything. Get this, he puts it in the bag behind the counter. So you can't really see what he's putting in the bag, it could be a bomb. ...Ep, you're laughing? You're very unaware.

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Can I just tell you, 20/20 did a whole four-part series on bombings and Barbara was explaining that these bombs went off, and nobody would have ever guessed that there was a bomb... Then why do they put it in the bag behind the counter then? They got a whole top of the counter, the top of the counter's clean. Everything is behind the counter, behind the counter. ...They're very sneaky. So the moral of the story is, I take the bag, I drive all the way home, four blocks. Meanwhile, I could blow up on the way home. I sit down, I take off my shoes, I turn on the TV. I wanna relax, you know. I worked hard all day, I don't know about these people. I open the bag, they gave me a small. ...A small roast pork fried rice, are you listening to the story? Alright. So me, I'm angry. I'm flustered. I'm looking into the bag and it's like looking into this tunnel of frustration and anger. So I put it back in the bag, I drive all the way back, four blocks, so now it's eight blocks I've driven for this thing already.

I walk in to the guy, see now the guy's not there anymore. Now it's his sister, or his mother, or his wife, his aunt..they're all in the family there. ...Because I know, because I know. So I say to her, look I ordered a large you gave me a small. So she says, What? Already we're having miscommunication. So I tell her, I-want-a-large. She says, \$2.50. I say, no, no, hello, before, earlier.. I'm trying to think of all the possible adjectives, I'm like a thesaurus. You know, prior to the time when I'm standing before you here now, I already, then, ordered a large. You made a mistake. You know, I mean I'm a man, I'm thirty-five years old, I'm not a kid. I want service, you know? So she's going, dut dut dut dut dut dut dut dut dut. Like I'm supposed to understand what she's saying? She's supposed to understand me, thank you! So then she turns to her brother or her husband or her uncle... Because just trust me, they are, I know the people in my neighborhood. And she's saying something to him very fast. So I'm trying to listen to what she's saying, she's telling him to blow me up for all I know. So then cause I'm listening, cause I'm a listener, I hear her say this thing and I recorded it in my brain and I want to do it for you so shut off the water. She says, something something, and then she says.. "beaow". What does mean? That's not a normal sound. ...Because I went to college I have a Master's Degree in business thank you, I think I know a little something about languages if you give me the benefit of the doubt.

Look, the point of the story is this, these people have got to go through some sort of assimilation program before they come to this country so they can, a) learn how to speak English, and b) learn how to function like normal human beings, like us. ...Because how are you gonna run a business and not speak English? Look at the guy who owns the Seven-Elevens, he's from India, he learned how to speak it. Look at the American Indians, they learned to speak it when they came over here. But see these people, they come from out of nowhere, and in twenty-four hours they get a license to open a restaurant. That's like giving a woman, a license.. to fix trucks. I mean not that I'm saying women can't fix trucks, it's just.. I don't really know what I'm saying actually. The bottom line is this, if you took all these people, from the cleaning people, the nannies, and the maintenance people, the housekeepers, and the kitchens, the guys that work at the place where I get my jeep washed. If you took all of them and you sent them back to all of their little terrorist countries, we wouldn't have all this suffering here and just, things wouldn't be as hard.

...Trust me, I'll get somebody to wash it, there'll be somebody. Oh, you have a cat. I didn't see before. It must have just come out from wherever it was. That's funny how all of the

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sudden they just decide to run out of nowhere. You don't seem like the cat-type. You know it's my favorite animal? Is it a Persian? ..I bet it's name is Mohammed. ..Hi kitty cat. Hiya ya big cutie. Ooh too too. What are you looking at? What are you doing? Where are you going? Ooh too too. Moo moo mama. Come here cutie. I'm gonna get you. I'm gonna get you. ...Oh I got you. Oh. I. Got. You. Oh you're so heavy you little small kitty cat. Let's go look in the mirror. Oh, look in that mirror. Look. In. That. Mirror. Who's that guy behind you? I don't know. Some guy. Gimme that paw. Gimme that paw. Lemme see that paw. How you doing? I'm ok. Hah. Oh ribbit ribbit. Moo. Gobble gobble. Meow...Ep. Look at all this shit I got all over me now. Listen, I'm going downstairs. I got a hundred and fifty tickets on my jeep already, or they towed it. ...Trust me they're giving out tickets. I just read, they hired all these whatever metermaids, all they do is hand out tickets all day. Because I read it. What do you think they write it for nothing? These guys they got this whole thing connected to those hate groups that were on Sixty Minutes. What they do these guys, they see my jeep, they see the Jersey plate, automatically they assume that I'm white. I mean I am, but that's not the point. The point is that they think that Jersey's all white people. Let me tell you it's not. You come to my neighborhood, I gotta get five locks on my door. Listen I'll see ya downstairs. [Bill exits.]

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CÉSAR

[César is fifty-ish and is at his first visit to a psychotherapist. He wears a traditional guayabera and hat, and carries a cowbell and stick. He sings the first verse of Eddie Palmieri's Te Palo Pa Rumba and tries to accompany it with the cowbell.]

...I don't play, I just hit it. Because is very difficult if you want to play that. Is not just that you hit it. You have to know what's the rhythm, the music, you have to be musician. Lotta people thinking is just that you hit it. No no. I don't sing also but that song, my favorite song. Te Palo Pa Rumba. The guy who make that song is very famous guy. His name is Eddie Palmieri. That guy, hooh, famous. You ever listen to salsa music? He play piano, and also he tell all the musician what to play. So, if is the trombone, or the trumpet, or the drum or whatever. He gonna explain to them, he's a composer, he compose all the music there. He very famous that guy. ...So you tell me to bring something that I gonna remember what happen, so I bring that. [cowbell and stick] That I buy to my son when he have only one year old. He never really play because he never listen to salsa music. He only wanna listen to the fast music I don't know how you call it.

...Also I bring that. [hat] That I buy to my son when he have ten, eleven years old. He put in the head and he go in the street and he pretend that he Cary Grant. You know Cary Grant? The famous guy? He put in the head for one week and then he throw in the shelf and he never wear. But I keep it because that's my son. So, I supposed to talk to you forty-five minutes, I don't know what you want me to say. No because my wife, she make me come here. Because in my place if you have a problem, you never talking to a therapist. Forget it. In my place if you go to a therapist, they say you crazy in the head. If my friends know I coming here, forget it. They gonna say, César go crazy. But I trust my wife. She's very

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modern, moderna, you know, modern. Very up to date. She reading all the magazine. She gonna look the magazine, she gonna tell me what I has to do.

..Because in my place, if you have a problem, you has to go and talking with un santero o una santera, is like, una consejera. Is a woman, or man, is depend. And she have power, and she take you hand, and she looking you hand, and she tell you what's you problem. Then she tell you you has to take some plant, some herbs, some spices. And you put in the pot. And then you put fire, or some flame there, and you make all the bad thing go out the whole place. Or maybe you put some water, is depend what's you problem. ..So, my son, he always have a good heart. He never say bad words to nobody, he never punching to nobody. I remember when he have maybe five, six years old. I'm walking to him, with him en the Prospect Park, allá en Brooklyn. And it's the bird. Some bird, the pigeon, is laying in the floor because it's some truck or something gonna come and hit the bird. So the bird laying there in the floor. So my son, he running the bird. He wanna fix it. He say to the bird, Hey bird, what's the matter with you? You has to get up from there. Is no good that you laying there. You has to go fly..up in there. But the bird is only looking in the sky, because the bird know in five minutes, it's no more. He wanna take the bird home. I say, you can't take it, the bird is dirty, is from the street. Quería poner como un Bandido. But he have a good heart. ..Maybe when he get a little older, he put some fancy clothes. Not fancy, pero whatever. He put some cologne. ...Lotta cologne my son putting there. He go with the girlfriend in the high school. Because he very handsome. He like me, very handsome. I told to my son, Be careful. Also I told him, César I love you. His name is César like my name is César. I make sure I gonna tell him to that.

Because I see in the TV en Oprah Winfrey, is some people. They have five kid, three kid, seven kid. Never say I love you. Only they put the hand, throwing out, and what's the kid? Drug, in the street, problems, whatever. Me and my wife, we only having one kid, César. I Always making sure I gonna tell to him César I love you. ..He say to me all the time, Papi I know. Because he don't wanna hear. He wanna be man. But I telling that to him anyway.

..When he have one year old, I have a big party for him. I invite all the relative from my family, my wife family. They coming all the way from Puerto Rico. Also we have some people from Dominican Republic. New Jersey, Long Island, Connecticut. All coming to my house in New York City for my son gonna have one year old. Almost one hundred people in my house coming. My wife and her sister is cooking. If you ever taste what they cooking that day, you gonna be like, Oh My God, forget it. It's alotta dancing in there. It's one place in the party I say to all the people, shut up you mouth. Because my son César gonna play Te Palo Pa Rumba. That song that I told you before. Because that song is come in the spanish radio station, en ese mismo tiempo when he have one year old. Maybe fifteen, sixteen years ago. Fifteen years.

So I putting him the lap. I put the bell the hand. Because is very heavy, he can't lift it he only have one year. I put the hand the stick. And everybody is looking. And we play Te Palo Pa Rumba. The whole song. And it's a long song. And everybody is, wow! I never forget that moment there. Because it's very special to me, that time. That whole time, I taking that time, I put it in here. [he points to his heart] ...Four months ago, he come to me, he say, Papi I'm going out. I say where you going? He say, to the movie. I say ok, be careful. I told

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him, César I love you. He say, Papi I know. ..That's when I lose him. ..Is very difficult because the police told is some accident that he's running, the police shooting to him but, whatever. No because, my wife she working and then she coming home always cry. And I working, and in the night, I never sleep. How I gonna work if I never sleep? She told me, you better go to sleep. I told her, well you better stop cry entonces. She told me, César if you feeling bad, you has to take all the people in the whole world that love you, and you putting those people here [he points to his heart again] and it's gonna making that you feeling warm in here.

So I thinking, who love me? My wife love me, put it here. My sister love me, put it here. My two brother love me.. My César love me, put it here. And I know that he love me because that day when he go to the movie he say, Papi I love you too. It's the only time he say that, but I hear that. Pero very cold in here. ..I told my wife, you has to get some better magazine because that's no working. All the time I thinking that he's sitting there and play that, but whatever. I miss him. Maybe I should never coming here, maybe I go talking to some people because maybe you don't listening to me... [César sings the first verse of Te Palo Pa Rumba as lights fade out.]

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KAZMIERCZACK

[Kazmierczack, handyman for this tenement building, comes to fix the stove in a tenant's apartment in the afternoon. He knocks on the imaginary door. No one answers. He sees a familiar face down the hall and waves.]

Any! Yakshemash! Viglondash bardzo wadnye gishe. ...Dopshe, dopshe.

[She leaves. He tries the door again.]

Halo! Is Kazmierczack! ..Halo. Kazmierczack. ...Halo eh, You something broke? Something you break? Something you always never very good? Ah! Kazmierczack, Rama-me, coming you fix. Ah, I fix. Thank You.

[He enters the apt.] What you break? Sink good, no good? Ah, good. I no fix. ...Ah? Cook? Never coming hahh? Only bad? Never this ahh? I look. Maybe you many cook ...Ah, is no good. I fix. You many cook? Many cook you? You Chodak cook? Chodak. Eh..chodak..dook dook dook. Ah, Chicken. Never chicken cook? Ah. Is good. You bread cook? Bread? Ah, is good. America, bread, good. Never bad dollar money bread. Ah, America-dollar, My Poland-zwodzhe. Dollar, zwodzhe is all mm, eh. You wish pay money bread this one Key Food. You maybe, Halo-can I please one bread? This Thank You Very Key Food Bread You. My Poland you wish pay money bread, never good dollar. My Poland you wish pay money this, automobile, good dollar, you wish pay money bread, bad dollar, is no good. ...You look? [He motions to the steel putty in his hand.] After take ten, eleven minute put ahh, after make aghh! Is go aghh, metal, pa! Is good. ...You work? What you work? ...Teacher? Oh, I know teacher..this..small people. You teacher good money? ..Bad. My wife teacher, this small

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people. My Poland, teacher good money. America teacher no money. Is no good. Never money teacher, all small people is go ahhh! Is bad. ...You cat? Cat. Eh, cat ..meow.. Ah, cat. Kazmierczack never look you cat. Only look you cat...box. Cat go ahhh. Ah. ...Two cat? Oh, bad. My wife cat. One, small. Maybe, one week, after Kazmierczack finish this work, me go this home, for small ten eleven minute sleep me. This shoe go ahh for ah. Cat, one, small, my wife, coming this-ehha. Only maybe this one week, cat only always never very good. This one week, cat every ahhhh. Only ahh. Ah, throw! Throw! This cat is throw, my shoe. After Kazmierczack finish this sleep. Me, go this- ah. Look shoe. Ey, cat! Why you throw this my shoe? Cat look me, Ahh Never this shoe throw nothing me you this. Is no good. ...Ok, I fix. Ah, maybe you stop fifteen sixteen minute for hwooh. After come metal. Ok I fix. You this bread cook, you this Chodak cook. Ah, Chicken cook. Ok... Thank You. Dozobachenia. [He exits.]

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DORIS

[Doris, a mother of one in her fifties, is in her kitchen, using her power-tool, the phone, to communicate with some people.]

Will you shush! So shah! Martin, the guy is coming in five minutes. So leave the thing alone! In five minutes he'll be here and he'll fix the whole thing. ...I know the phone is ringing, I'm letting it ring. ..So let me let it ring!

..Hello? Who is this? Who? Oh, Hi! How are you? No, what are you interrupting? You're interrupting nothing. Uy, no, no. I'm sitting here, I'm..What wire Martin? What wire? I'm supposed to know what wire you're talking about? Oh, that wire, sure. Keep futzing with the wire and blow yourself up. You're not blowing me up!

..No, I'm fine. Martin's fine. David's fine. Yeah, in fact, I'm supposed to call my sonny boy in five minutes so I'll talk quick. No, no he's fine. How's your daughter? Gonna marry to who? Not the same Nigerian guy? Does she love him? So, she loves him and she'll be happy and they'll be happy. Listen, did she make sure he's all tested with all whatever he needs with shots and everything? No, I'm just saying, because especially with he's from Africa, she should make sure cause I saw in the Times. How terrible. Isn't it? He's a doctor the guy? And he's from Nigeria? Eh, well still. No, he doesn't see her anymore. Eh, Roz, to tell you the truth, I had a bad feeling about her when I first met her. She's a sweet girl, and she's attractive, but there was something creepy about her. She had a creepy aura. Anyway. Did I tell you what he's doing now my son? Oh Roz, he goes with this group of people and they go into all the bad neighborhoods, and I gotta tell ya, I am so.. Yeah, I think it's like the Peace Corps, but in New York. Who? David? Hold on, let me ask...

Martin! Does David get insurance with the job? ...David your son. Does he get insurance with the job, the thing with the.. Never mind, you're not understanding me. ...You're not understanding me, never mind! Listen, I'll ask him when I'll call him. Listen mamala, I gotta go darling ok? I'll call you back after. Ok, bye.

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[She clicks the phone only to make another call.] Martin! How do I do the memory with the phone, I forgot? The memory, for David, I know I put for number one, but after I do the star button or before? ...The pound button? There's no pound button Martin... There's no pound button, I'm looking at the phone! Uhh, I'm doing the star! ..Alright shush, it's ringing! It's ringing and I can't hear! Will you keep with the wires, keep breaking the thing more, more break it!

..Hello David sweetheart, it's your mommyface listen...Hello? Hi, you're there? So what are you screening your phone calls, someone's after you? So pick up the phone, it's your mother calling, it's a secret that you're there? Uhh, you make me nervous with this machine, one day I'll call it'll say, Hi this is David I'm not here from they killed me on the train or wherever. Alright, I'm relaxed, I just worry with you in all these..uch. Yes David, but not everyone takes the trains by theirselves to the South Bronx or wherever. Sure the people that live there, but they're different..I mean not that they're different, they're the same as us, everyone is the same, but, alright, never mind, it's just different you don't get it, forget it. You can't take a cab sometimes? So let everybody else take the train, you're not them, you have to do what they do? Alright I'm relaxed.

Anyway boobala what I wanna ask ya.. Does your job, do they give you health insurance? So you'll pay the ten dollars and you'll have it. How much more? That's ridiculous, are you sure? Alright, so I'll pay it. David, I'm not an extravagant person that I'm saving for a yacht, I'll be happy to pay for it. Or if you want you could go on the plan your father and I have, hold on.

..Martin! What's the deductible on the insurance? What's that noise? Now you're drilling? What are you drilling? The guy is coming Martin! ..The deductible! On the Blue Cross, the Blue Cross! ...That's what I'm asking you how much! ...Uh, forget it. Forget! It! ...Listen David honey, we'll call the 1-800, wait, I'm on the phone with David! Hello..which David? Wait one second.

Martin! when the guy comes for the thing, you're staying with him right? ...What do you mean you're going for a walk? Martin, I'm not letting these people into my house I don't know who they are, the minorities or whoever. Uy, you hear this from your father? Where is he walking? In front of a truck he'll walk. You're right David, they could be anybody. They could be Jewish, whoever, I'm just saying I'm not staying here alone. While he'll be going for a walk they'll be drilling me in the head for the television. ..Alright. David. I said they didn't have to be minorities. Uy, you're such a mensch, you're a sweetheart, you're very caring, I'm very proud of you, Mmwa! So listen Tatala, do you wanna do with the Blue Cross? What no? Everyone has to have health insurance David. So fine, thirty-six percent of the country doesn't have it, you're not thirty-six percent, you're my son. So David, let the thirty-six percent sit for ten hours waiting in some dirty emergency room somewhere bleeding to death with flies and urine and five hundred sick people with tuberculosis.

My son...my son is not gonna sit waiting in some clinic full of people's phlegm all over the floor and everyone's coughing with no air. No David. God Forbid. David, God Forbid I should be concerned already enough that my son doesn't get shot by some black kid, or white kid

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in one of these places, but that he should go to a professional Jewish hospital? ...I know white people shoot people with guns David, but not on the train. David look, I know I raised you to believe that everyone's equal, and not to be into materials, and to accept people no matter who they are, but David I am your mother and I know you're an adult, but there are some things about reality that you're not understanding. I can't be concerned about my son? I'm not the one yelling, you're yelling! I just want you to be happy and not dead.

David, don't hang up, I want to talk to you. I am proud of you. I brag to all my friends and they all can't believe it. They all say I can't believe it. Is it too much to ask for you to have health insurance? How do you know nothing'll happen? You have a crystal ball? ..David, they'll have one of their riots these people and you'll be the first one they'll shoot. They shoot people David, I read the New York Times, not the Post, the Times, and I see them. They shoot eachother. And let me tell you something David, I feel very bad. I wish these kids didn't have to grow up with all violence and uhh..a mess, and my heart goes out to them, it does, but let them shoot eachother and not you, that's the way I feel.

..I am not racist David! Don't you dare call me racist! Because if you remember, I let you have all your Black and Puertorican and Iranian friends at your Bar Mitzvah, and I treated them just like I treated your Jewish friends. You wanna see racist? Go read with this guy in the paper, Bloodsuckers he said. ..I am not a Scared-Liberal-Complaining- Reactionary. What does that mean? When they'll wanna stick you in an oven you'll still defend this guy? You wanna be a another martyr David? You wanna be one of the Jewish kids in Mississippi with the voter registration and they killed them, them and some black guy? How is it possible for Jews to be prejudice when everyone is prejudice all the time against the Jews? David, we had lots of black neighbors, before we moved and we got along fine. My friend Roz's daughter Cynthia is marrying a Nigerian guy and he's a doctor! ...No David, the difference is, did I call them Bloodsuckers? I said they shoot people, I didn't call names.

..How am I guilty? I'm guilty of reading the New York Times? David, how come you'll never defend the Jews? You're Jewish but you'll never empathize with your own people. What is there to empathize? David, six million... The Jews are still victims. ...How am I a victim in the suburbs in 1994? ...Not because I have a juicer and an espresso machine makes me a vict... Black people have juicers and espresso makers too! What are you screaming? What bad thing did I do? I did something bad to them? David, I'm not crazy. You ask people if they'll be in these neighborhoods on the train. ..whatever people. You ask them if they'll defend this guy. The black kid who's in jail for murder I should defend? For what? Where do you get this from? Why are you so angry, you're not even black? Why are you angry at your own people? Why are you so angry at me, I'm your mother? ...Uy, alright calm down. Stop yelling! Listen to me. Are you still coming to the Seder on Thursday? Your Aunt Barbara's coming and so is your cousin Mark. Mark, the high school principal, gay Mark. And I promise I won't start an argument with you, or Mark. Ok, stop yelling. Are you coming? Well if you don't I'll be very upset. Fine, listen, I'm not angry at you. Are you angry at me? Alright well it's alright I'm your mother. Ok , I love you. Bye. ...Ok stop screaming. Ok bye, Mmwa! [Doris hangs up the phone.] Martin.. I'm going for a walk. [She exits.]

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