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FOGGY BOTTOM  
[EXCERPT]

a play by

Robert Kerr

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## CHARACTERS

A cast of four plays the following parts:

### ACTOR 1

- SEN. ENOCH BELLWETHER, 50s
- GOV. HOWARD CHALMERS, 50s-60s

### ACTOR 2

- TODD BELLWETHER, early 20s
- ENOCH BELLWETHER, early 20s
- TOM SCANLON, 30s

### ACTOR 3

- CEECE CHALMERS, 40s
- JACK LAMPHREY, 40s
- SAM DUNBAR, 40s
- REP. BELLWETHER, 30s

### ACTRESS

- NICOLE KRUGER, early 20s
- VIVIAN WILLIAMS, early 20s
- WOMAN, mid-30s

## SETTING

Sen. Bellwether's apartment in Washington, D.C., late 1998

Sen. Bellwether's home state, 1963 and 1971

Nicole Kruger's dorm room, late 1998

## SCENE ONE

(Senator Bellwether's apartment, 1998. SENATOR BELLWETHER, in his 50s, and TODD, early 20s. BELLWETHER glares at TODD. TODD is looking away. BELLWETHER sighs and goes to the window. TODD looks at him. BELLWETHER turns back toward TODD. TODD looks away.)

TODD

I'm sorry.

I'm said I'm sorry. Like really, really sorry.

For like the hundredth time, I'm sorry. Okay?

BELLWETHER

You don't sound sorry.

TODD

I am. Anyway, it's not like you never screwed up, right?

BELLWETHER

We're not here to talk about me.

TODD

Everybody's got some boneheaded thing they did when they were young. Don't tell me you don't.

BELLWETHER

Nothing like this. Criminy, Todd. I'm starting to wonder if you're even worth the trouble.

TODD

You don't have to be mean.

BELLWETHER

You've always been a pain the behind, but this... What the hell were you thinking?

(TODD shrugs.)

BELLWETHER

Did you go off your meds again? Did you have another episode?

TODD

I was like expressing myself. I was peaceably assembling.

BELLWETHER

You beat him over the head, Todd.

TODD

With a cardboard sign.

BELLWETHER

You threw firecrackers at him. That's assault.

TODD

People feel assaulted by him when he protests funerals of people who died of AIDS.

BELLWETHER

A lot of my constituents are sympathetic to him.

TODD

Gee, I'm sorry if I embarrassed you in front of your constituents.

BELLWETHER

Embarrassed doesn't begin to describe it.

TODD

Sometimes it's embarrassing being the son of Senator frigging Bellwether, so I guess we're even.

BELLWETHER

For someone who wants to apologize, you're not acting very contrite. Todd, I want to stand by you, but you don't make it easy when you pull stunts like this.

TODD

You don't run for Senate again until 2002. In four years nobody will even remember.

BELLWETHER

I've got other things to worry about before then.

TODD

Like what? Wait, are you thinking of running for—

BELLWETHER

That's none of your business.

TODD

You totally are. La Casa Blanca. Holy shit.

BELLWETHER

Watch your language.

TODD

My mind is totally being blown right now. No wonder you're so freaked out. When are you announcing?

BELLWETHER

There's nothing to announce.

TODD

If you say so.

(TODD starts humming "Hail to the Chief.")

BELLWETHER

Enough. Do you have any idea how much trouble you're in?

TODD

Yeah.

BELLWETHER

You don't act like it. Todd, I don't know what your beef is with me, but—

TODD

I don't have a beef with you.

BELLWETHER

You just said you were embarrassed to be my son.

TODD

There's all this peer pressure at school. All the people I want to hang out with hate you, and by extension they hate me.

BELLWETHER

So you're trying to prove you're not like me?

TODD

Maybe a little.

BELLWETHER

It's a pretty shoddy way to treat me after all I've done for you. Who put a roof over your head for eighteen years? Well?

TODD

You.

BELLWETHER

And who got you into Yale?

TODD

You.

BELLWETHER

It sure wasn't you, with your SATs. Who saved your bacon in Disneyland when they caught you with twelve pages of acid in your pocket?

TODD

Harvey.

BELLWETHER

Who pays Harvey's bills, smart-ass?

TODD

You.

(TODD snickers.)

TODD

"Pages of acid." They're called sheets.

BELLWETHER

If it weren't for me, you'd still be doing one to three with your pal. I do all this for you, and this is how you repay me.

TODD

Okay, Dad, you're right. I've been a total jerk to you. Do you think you can ever forgive me?

BELLWETHER

Not until I understand why you pulled this last stunt.

TODD

I, uh, I think I might be gay.

BELLWETHER

Oh, please.

TODD

Seriously. I've been like questioning my sexuality, and when you got up the Senate floor and compared gays to crackheads and sheep-fuckers—

BELLWETHER

That's not what I said.

TODD

Oh, excuse me, gayness is, quote, tantamount to bestiality and drug addiction, I took it really personally, you know? So when I heard all those people were going to protest what you said, I had to go to preserve, like, my self-respect. And when Reverend Nutjob showed up with his God Hates Homos sign, that was the last straw.

BELLWETHER

Todd, you are not a homosexual. Last year you wouldn't get out of bed for a month after that girl at school turned you down. You were in such a state I had to send you away.

TODD

I think I was so traumatized it made me gay.

BELLWETHER

Name one man who turns you on.

TODD

What?

BELLWETHER

If you're really a homosexual, there must be at least one man who—

TODD

Dude, you're my father.

BELLWETHER

Name one, and I'll believe you.

TODD

I said I *might* be gay.

BELLWETHER

And I might be the Queen of Siam. Todd, it's time for you to go.

TODD

But I want to like repair our relationship.

BELLWETHER

How? You don't seem sorry. You won't be straight with me about why you did what you did.

TODD

You're the one who hung up on me when I called from jail. I got one call, and you hung up before I could even explain.

BELLWETHER

I've put up with a lot, Todd, but at some point you became a liability.

TODD

So, what, you're cutting me off?

BELLWETHER

You don't leave me much choice. You had explosives outside a federal building. People are calling you a terrorist. It'll cost me too much if I don't wash my hands of you.

TODD

But I need your help.

BELLWETHER

What help? You've got a lawyer. Somehow you managed to post bail. It looks like you've done all right without me.

TODD

I don't know if I totally trust my lawyer.

BELLWETHER

At last, a glimmer of intelligence.

TODD

What do you mean?

BELLWETHER

I've looked into your lawyer. Do you know who he represents? Mobsters.

TODD

Seriously?

BELLWETHER

You retained him, and you didn't even know?

TODD

He was there and you weren't. I didn't feel like I had any choice.

BELLWETHER

How did you get mixed up with him to begin with?

TODD

After you hung up on me, I had to spend the night in jail, no meds, totally afraid I was going to have another episode. Then the next morning the guard came to the cell, called my name and said, "Your lawyer's here." I was thinking maybe you sent Harvey after all. But when I get to the room, it's some guy I've never seen before. Something doesn't feel right, and I'm ready to have the guard take me away, but the guy says, "Son, if you walk out that door you're a dead man." He starts going on about how I set off explosives outside a federal building, and I was like, they were just firecrackers, and he was like, "Explosives are explosives," and he says they could make me out to be the next Timothy McVeigh, and I could get the death penalty. So I'm like, what if I just plead guilty? And he's like, you're still looking at a long time in prison. And I'm totally twiggung out and I can feel an attack coming on, and then he says, "I know how the game is played. If you retain me, I'll make sure the worst you get is a suspended sentence."

BELLWETHER

So you retained him?



BELLWETHER

Possibly.

TODD

Wouldn't it be better for you, too? I mean, how would it look if you let your son be represented by a mob lawyer? Not very senatorial. Or presidential.

(Pause)

BELLWETHER

I've already talked to Harvey.

TODD

You have?

BELLWETHER

I wanted to be prepared in case you came to your senses. We've got a strategy ready to go. But first, you have to promise you'll return to the reservation.

TODD

Totally.

BELLWETHER

You'll do everything we say.

TODD

What's "everything?"

BELLWETHER

You have to trust me on this.

TODD

Dude, I already got in one bad situation because I didn't ask enough questions. I'm not doing that again.

(Beat)

BELLWETHER

First you have to apologize.

TODD

I already did, like six thousand times.

BELLWETHER

Not to me.

TODD

To who? Reverend Asswipe?

BELLWETHER  
Yes.

TODD  
God, no.

BELLWETHER  
You might wish you had once you're sitting on death row.

TODD  
Fine. What else?

BELLWETHER  
Harvey thinks the best way to get leniency is to show you weren't responsible for your actions.

TODD  
Like temporary insanity?

BELLWETHER  
You were sick. When you went to the protest, you missed your meds. You had an episode, and you weren't yourself. The other protesters were egging you on and you lost control.

TODD  
That's all?

BELLWETHER  
Basically.

TODD  
Basically?

BELLWETHER  
We don't have all the details worked out yet.

TODD  
Yes you do. What else would I have to do?

BELLWETHER  
You might have to go away again.

TODD  
Dude! No way!

BELLWETHER  
Just for a little while.

TODD

I am not going back there. I am not crazy.

BELLWETHER

That's what we'll have to tell the prosecutor if we want to strike a deal.

TODD

Couldn't I just like start seeing Dr. Bell twice a week?

BELLWETHER

If you're going to plead insanity, you're going to have to follow through.

TODD

Dude, that place is *scary*. You think I do a lot of drugs now? You should've seen what they had me on in there. Half the time I didn't even know my own name.

BELLWETHER

Would you rather go there for six months or to prison for five years?

TODD

You wouldn't really let me go to prison.

BELLWETHER

According to Harvey, those are the alternatives.

TODD

That's *cold*. Don't you love me?

BELLWETHER

Maybe what you need is tough love.

(Pause. TODD starts to cry. BELLWETHER just watches. TODD stops crying and stares into space. BELLWETHER goes to the window and looks out. While BELLWETHER's back is turned, TODD considers him for a moment. He throws himself across the couch and starts to wail.)

BELLWETHER

Todd, what is it? What's wrong?

TODD

I don't want to go to prison! Don't make me go!

BELLWETHER

(awkwardly patting TODD's shoulder)

You don't have to. There, there.

TODD

I mean, one night in jail was bad enough. It was the worst night of my life.

BELLWETHER

I can imagine.

TODD

No you can't. It was even worse than TV.

BELLWETHER

Did something happen? Did someone hurt you?

TODD

No, but they wanted to.

BELLWETHER

Who?

TODD

The other guys in the cell.

BELLWETHER

Did they threaten you?

TODD

No, but... This is gonna sound like totally racist, but... but I was the only white guy in there, you know? There were six other guys in the cell, and every single one was black. And they had this *look*, like *anything* could set them off, you know? So I curled up on the floor and tried to sleep, but all I could hear was the sound of black guys breathing and looking for some excuse to kick the white guy's ass.

BELLWETHER

Hey, tiger, it's all right. You're here now.

TODD

That's probably what I deserve.

BELLWETHER

Nobody deserves that.

TODD

I do. I mean, I could've really hurt that guy, you know? I could've given him a concussion when I hit him, or if a firecracker would've went off in his face... Oh, God.

BELLWETHER

He was just shaken. That's all.

TODD

And I've been just such a total dick to you. You give me all this stuff, you get me into the best school in the world, no matter how many times I screw up you save my butt. You do all that, and I just keep fucking with you. I'm shit.

BELLWETHER

Todd, no. Don't say that. You're not.

TODD

You're right. I'm not. I'm worse. If shit could take a shit, I'd be that shit.

(beating himself rhythmically on the head)

I *suck*, I...

BELLWETHER

(overlapping TODD)

Todd, stop. Todd. Stop it. Todd. *Todd*. You do not suck

TODD

Yes, I do. I'm the suckiest piece of shit in the history of the universe.

BELLWETHER

Everybody makes mistakes.

TODD

Not you.

BELLWETHER

Believe me, I have.

TODD

You never went to jail. You've probably never even had a parking ticket. You don't know how it feels when you've fucked up so bad you've totally ruined the rest of your life.

BELLWETHER

Yes, I do.

TODD

Liar.

BELLWETHER

Believe me. I know exactly how you feel right now.

TODD

You're a *senator*. How bad could you have fucked up?

BELLWETHER

Pretty bad.

What did you do?  
TODD

I took care of it. And I'll help you take care of—  
BELLWETHER

No, how did you fuck up?  
TODD

There was a girl.  
BELLWETHER

And?  
TODD

I broke her heart.  
BELLWETHER

That's *it*?  
TODD

You of all people know what a broken heart feels like.  
BELLWETHER

I could've crippled that guy. I almost made him blind. You don't know how that feels.  
TODD

Yes, I do.  
BELLWETHER

The worst thing you ever did was dump someone.  
TODD

I led her to believe we'd be married. When I broke it off, I was unspeakably cruel.  
BELLWETHER

You're lying.  
TODD

Why would I lie?  
BELLWETHER

You want me to like trust you so I'll use your lawyer, and then you're going to tell him to screw up my case on purpose so they'll execute me and I won't embarrass you anymore.  
TODD

BELLWETHER

How can you say that? Todd, all I want to do is help. And I think deep down you really want my help.

(BELLWETHER puts his hand on TODD's shoulder. TODD jerks away. BELLWETHER sits down and holds TODD. TODD breaks down crying. He doesn't return the embrace, but he doesn't resist.)

BELLWETHER

Sh. Sh. Just trust me.

TODD

All my life I've watched you make shit up. How can I trust you now?

BELLWETHER

Look at me. You can trust me. On your mother's memory, I swear.

TODD

Dad?

BELLWETHER

Yeah?

TODD

This chick you say you screwed over? Does she really exist?

BELLWETHER

Of course.

TODD

Does she have a name?

BELLWETHER

Vivian.

TODD

Vivian who?

You are so full of shit.

BELLWETHER

Okay. Her name was Barbara. Barbara Burliss. God as my witness. I broke her heart. She threatened to slander me to my family, to the town, to everyone I knew.

TODD

What was she gonna tell them?

BELLWETHER

That's not important. The point is, I thought my life was going to be over before it had even begun. But I asked for help. I got a friend to talk to her and calm her down. And look where I am today. I'm not doing so bad, am I? Am I, tiger?

TODD

I guess not. So I'm not necessarily totally fucked?

BELLWETHER

Not if you let me help you.

TODD

I'm not totally convinced I deserve it.

BELLWETHER

Yes, you do. You do.

(Pause)

TODD

Okay.

BELLWETHER

I should call Harvey?

TODD

Yeah. And like the apology...

BELLWETHER

Yes?

TODD

Do I have to call him, or can I like write a letter?

BELLWETHER

A letter would be fine.

TODD

Hey, it's time for my meds. Can I have a glass of water?

BELLWETHER

Sure. Anything else while I'm up?

TODD

Do you have like butter and cinnamon?

BELLWETHER

I think so.

TODD

'Cause some cinnamon toast would be totally awesome right now. Do you remember how Mom made it?

BELLWETHER

Help me out.

TODD

With the toast really brown, like almost black? And a ton of butter? And just *coated* with cinnamon?

BELLWETHER

I'll see what I can do.

(BELLWETHER exits. TODD makes sure he isn't being observed. He finds a pen and a pad of paper. He writes something down, and puts the paper in his pocket. He makes sure BELLWETHER is still occupied offstage, then goes to the door, opens it quietly, slips outside, and closes it behind him.)

BELLWETHER (off)

Todd, I'm out of butter. All I've got is Don't Tell Me That Ain't Butter. Is Don't Tell Me That Ain't Butter all right? Todd? Todd?

(BELLWETHER enters. He considers the empty room, then notices the pen and pad of paper where Todd left them.)

Son of a bitch. *Todd?*

(He dashes out the door.)

(offstage)

Todd! Todd!

(He walks past the door.)

Todd!

(He reenters the apartment, thinks for a moment. He dials the phone.)

Jack, it's me. I need you here now.