

Spoon Millionaires
by Kirk Hiner and Jim Jividen

Production Notes

Spoon Millionaires is an eccentric comedy set in 1986 southern California. It has farcical elements, as—not unlike a Kaufman/Hart play—it features broadly drawn characters constrained within a tightly bounded area behaving in increasingly bizarre ways. More often than not, the oddity of the dialogue and the situations in which the characters find themselves are best contrasted by performances which are smaller and more earnest than are they “theatrical.”

There are a few noticeable devices used throughout the play. The first is that the characters often pull dialogue from various 80s pop hits. These quotes are meant to be slipped into the dialogue. We don’t intend for the actors to sing these parts (ever) or read them knowingly (ever). The final moment of the show, in which a lyric actually is sung, depends on complete fidelity to this device. The climax of the play brings this device to a fever pitch as 80s lyrics are fired off quickly and heavily. To help the audience with this, we’d like to have played a collection of chosen 80s songs over the house speakers before curtain and during intermission.

A note about speed; the cues throughout the play need to be picked up fairly quickly, as pacing is perhaps the most important element of the performance. The aforementioned scene in which a multitude of lyrics are included also consists of a glass of poisoned wine being passed throughout the stage. Ideally, it would be choreographed to death, with each character (wearing a different monochromatic color to provide distinction) maintaining an almost perpetual motion with the wine glass. It’s our big, show-stopping musical number, so to speak.

The second device is the use of Phil. Phil is not a character in the play, but instead someone repeatedly mentioned by the characters. However, the audience does see a stagehand who occasionally walks onstage throughout the play (more about that below). This stagehand does not interact with the characters, nor do they acknowledge his presence. In a climactic joke, it will turn out that the stagehand is the mysteriously aforementioned Phil. The stagehand has one line. We suggest, if possible, he be played by an actual stagehand. Preferably one who bears no resemblance to anyone else in the cast. In fact, were he twenty years older than the oldest cast member, that would be great. Additionally, “Phil” should not be listed in the program, although “Stagehand” may be.

The third device is a large painting on the set that is actually a rear projected slide which will appear to be operated by the Stagehand (the impetus for his appearing onstage). It should be at the back of the stage, filling the available space.

The fourth device is that the fourth wall is occasionally broken in the show with an aside or a set piece which is outside of the narrative.

Spoon Millionaires
by Kirk Hiner and Jim Jividen

Character Descriptions

Archduke Witherspoon:

Millionaire and owner of Spoon Records. The Archduke has grown weary of his family and of the constant fight to stay on top of the record industry, and generally greets all challenges now with arrogant amusement. The Archduke's detachment from his surroundings is balanced by a recognition of the precariousness of his financial condition and his desire to maintain his status. The Archduke is in his 50s. He wears a smoking jacket and carries a filled glass of brandy with him throughout the entire play. The word that one would use to describe most of his line readings would be "wry."

Georganne Y løj gt ur qqp:

A bitter, despondent woman. Georganne married the Archduke at a young age to break into the music business, but he kept "forgetting" to give her a break. Now, in her mid/late 40s, with her looks comparatively fading, she is desperate to maintain her power position within the family business. Georganne dresses in the shoulder padded power suits/dresses of the 80s. She has an overtly hostile relationship to Maya that boils over in a Joan Collins/Linda Evans like catfight in Act II.

Brandon Ray:

A horny mess, filled with false bravado and an unwarranted belief in his own intelligence. Brandon has screwed over and deceived so many people to get ahead that there is absolutely no one left he can trust. He's a drug pusher, murderer and adulterer, but is otherwise quite charming. He's the bad boy, the character you'll love to hate. Brandon's constantly scheming with Georganne to acquire the Witherspoon fortune, but the moment his plans go wrong he panics and loses all sensibility. Brandon's in his mid-20s and looks the Don Johnson type: white linen blazer with the sleeves rolled up, T-shirt (peach or light blue), white pants, loafers without socks, three day beard growth, Ray-Ban sunglasses that he can take on and off for effect.

William Campbell:

An open and likable individual who just happens to be down on his luck. Although William is black, everyone seems to think that he looks just like Paul McCartney, which he of course doesn't. He pretty much just gets a kick out of all those around him and is willing to go with the flow so that he can manage to survive as a black man in Beverly Hills, and maybe make a lot of money in the process. William is in his late 20s and is of average build. He dresses in a trendy but not goofy manner. Members Only jacket, Bobby Brown style haircut. His sole attempt to impersonate Paul McCartney throughout the play consists of the occasional word or phrase associated with Britain; however, he doesn't attempt to speak in an English accent.

Maya Mia:

Maya is an attractive woman who is nearing the age of 30 and approaching it with the same dread that motivates Georganne. One can deduce that she was once a decent human being, but the numerous years with the Witherspoons have taken their toll, and she now exhibits their greedy, manipulative ways. Maya dresses in tight designer jeans and heels, coupled with tight, fuzzy sweaters. She is in a constant feud with Georganne.

Luke Mia/Satan:

Luke is a paranoid man, but only about ridiculous conspiracies, not about the things that should make him paranoid. He doesn't really get human interaction, and therefore can't connect with his wife, Maya. He's easily pushed around and manipulated. In his late 20s, he dresses somewhat elegantly...he's a doctor and he uses that to get respect, because he doesn't get it anywhere else. He is a cocaine addict. He dies in Act I.

Satan is the exact opposite of Luke. He's cool and easily in charge; very laid back. To Satan, being the Prince of Darkness is simply a really good gig. He dresses in current fashions because, unlike all of the other characters, he doesn't live in 1986, permitting him to exist in real time with the audience, and occasionally share the pieces of information about events of which the characters could know nothing. Satan has a job to do, that's to take souls, and he has a lot of fun doing it. He's evil, but if you didn't know that, you might hang out with him on a Friday night as he seems like a fun guy. Satan wears a very casual jeans and a t-shirt outfit, the shirt could bear a contemporary reference. He also wears a blue L.A. Dodgers cap.

Reverend Dirk:

Although he's a Lutheran pastor, Rev. Dirk is also a noted bounty hunter. He's highly respected in both fields. And even though he kills people for money, he can justify this in the fact that all the money he makes goes to the church and that he only kills those who are corrupt in some way. Despite his being a contract killer, Rev. Dirk is a strong, kind, passive human being who still has hope and faith in his religion and the world...even in the face of the Witherspoons. He dresses just as you'd expect a Lutheran minister to dress.

Amber Dean:

Our heroine. Amber is the one character as of yet untouched by the greedy and desperate reality of her surroundings. Amber's more trustworthy than is she bright; she expects the best possible outcome to everything. Amber seemingly bounces through life, going whichever way the laws of physics push her. However, there are hints that she is more resolute than the other characters recognize. Amber is breathtakingly beautiful, and in her very early 20s. Although she doesn't speak like a valley girl, she dresses like one. Short skirt, white hose, heels, maybe even leg warmers. She has the big hair, the big make-up and the big accessories. Ideally, the colors chosen for Amber will draw the eye to her when she is onstage with the other characters.

Steele Witherspoon:

Steele suffers from amnesia, so his character is defined by what those around him tell him. His desire to regain his memory is only equaled by his attraction to Amber (his girlfriend before the “accident”). Because of Steele’s amnesia and the apparent ill-intent of those around him, he’s constantly questioning everyone and is desperately looking for someone to believe. He’s in his late 20s and is of average build, dressing in Izod shirts with the collar up. Pre-accident Steele was pretty clearly a bastard; post-accident Steele’s growing recognition of this and desire to change in order to be worthy of Amber’s love for him is an increasing motivator throughout the play.

Radio D.J.:

Not an actor in the production. He is a typical, loud-mouthed, self-important 80s disc jockey with one recorded line.

Stagehand:

Phil isn’t a character or an actor. He’s only acknowledged once in the play, but is on stage a lot. He enters from the side of the stage, from the front, from wherever, and is there only to switch the “portrait” on the wall, which will be done with rear-projected slides. Phil should be dressed like a stagehand. If he has tools, all the better.

This is a period show, so costumes and set decorations need to firmly establish that.

See www.inthe80s.com/clothes/index.shtml for other fashion ideas.

ACT I: SCENE 1

The lights are down on the living room of the Witherspoon mansion. When they come up, we see that it is a lavishly decorated, yet somewhat cold entertaining room for the "rich and famous" circa 1986: bar, large silver stereo system in a wooden cabinet, expensive and bright furniture and tables, etc. At the center of the back wall is a portrait that reads "Autumn 1986." This is actually a rear-projected slide that will be altered throughout the show.

Throughout this scene (and the whole play), pacing is extremely important. Pick up cues. Deliver lines quickly.

The lights remain down as a phone starts to ring. After a few rings, an answering machine picks up.

STEELE

(Singing the Lionel Richie song on his answering machine tape.)

Hello? Is it me you're looking for?

(Speaking now. He enjoys himself too much.)

It is if you're looking for Steele Witherspoon at 555-3604. I'm either unable to come to the phone right now, or I'm screening my calls. Either way...

(Raps, exactly like from the old phone recording commercial. He should be serious about the rapping. Not good at it, but serious.)

...wait for the beep! You gotta leave your name, you gotta leave your number! Wait for the beep!

LUKE

(Doesn't wait for the beep.)

Yeah, Steele? This is Luke Mia. I'm -

Tone goes off.

LUKE (CONT'D)

- just...uh...yeah, Steele? This is Luke Mia. I'm just calling to tell you that the shipment of drugs you ordered from me and my new drug dealing partner, Brandon Ray, are in.

Per your exact request, we have two bags of grass, seventy-five pellets of mescaline, five sheets of high-powered blotter acid, a salt shaker half full of cocaine, and a whole galaxy of multi-colored uppers, downers, screamers, laughers...and also a quart of tequila, a quart of rum, a case of Budweiser, a pint of raw ether and two dozen amyls. You know, all of this sounds rather familiar. Perhaps I filled a similar order before? Anyway, you can pick it up tonight at the usual meeting place; the restroom at Panthemom's Pizzeria, third stall in. Meet us there at 11:35 p.m. If you have any questions, feel free to call either myself at 555-6345 or Brandon Ray at 555-9721. Bye.

The machine beeps again and the lights come up on the Witherspoon family living room. A STAGEHAND, onstage, switches the "Autumn 1986" slide to a Patrick Nagel painting, then leaves right off the front of the stage or off the side, not using any of the doors, and disappears backstage. LUKE and MAYA MIA are sitting together on the couch, and GEORGANNE WITHERSPOON is at the bar pouring wine. LUKE rubs his nose throughout the scene as would a cocaine addict. MAYA and GEORGANNE are bored with LUKE, they've heard this before, and are instead fighting each other cattily throughout the scene.

LUKE

(Paranoid. Insistent. But not spastic. He's really angry about the Russians.)

Russia has airplanes in space. Motherfuckers! They're up there now, watching us eat. Watching us sleep.

MAYA

Luke, dear, why would the Russians want to watch us sleep?

Don't play any of the song lyrics (indicated by bold type throughout the script) as if they're lyrics or musically related in any way. They need to be delivered as if common dialogue.

LUKE

They hear the secrets that you keep when you're talking in your sleep! It's true! I read it in the *National Review*.

MAYA

Are you high right now? Did the *National Review* also say why the Russians would care if we talk in our sleep? Will that help them determine when to drop the bomb?

LUKE

The bomb's no longer relevant, thanks to President Ronald Wilson Reagan's Star Wars initiative, like a giant badminton net arched across the heavens. Try to serve through that you Commie bastards!

(Shakes fist at the sky.)

President Ronald Wilson Reagan will shove your shuttlecocks right up your collective Red ass! And they've got it coming, too. They're always trying to get the advantage on us through unfair communistic means. First it was those tiny little dolls that fit inside the other dolls and had other-even more tiny-dolls inside of them, then all that blonde hair, and now this, the bastards.

GEORGANNE

(Handing LUKE and MAYA their wine.)

Yes...but airplanes in space, Luke? Even the Concorde can't fly in space, and I should know. I've been on it dozens of times. Beastly little plane. Like flying to Paris in a closet.

(Aside to MAYA, as if rubbing it in.)

Someone else's closet. Not mine. Mine's quite spacious. Unlike yours, apparently.

MAYA

(Rising to the challenge.)

Yes, well, give me twenty years to reach your age, and I'm sure I'll also have a Concorde full of clothes that no longer fit.

GEORGANNE

(Fighting back.)

And are no longer fashionable, either. Oh, wait...I forgot; *whore* is always in fashion.

MAYA

As long as people such as your husband keep the whores in business, yes, I agree. Of course, I don't know. Do you suppose your husband will be able to afford anything more expensive than a handjob from a prostitute of questionable gender after he's deposed as head of the record company?

GEORGANNE

Deposed? He'll be lucky if he's just be deposed. If he loses the record company, he'll be vivisected. This won't be like when he lost that patent. Then, he had the record company to fall back on. If he loses the company, everything goes with it this time. The money, the house, the wildly opulent lifestyle to which I've become accustomed, and you obviously haven't. But do you think he cares? Of course not. With the Archduke, it's all about the Archduke.

Just this week my ever-supportive and understanding husband had the nerve to suggest I eliminate a few shopping trips. Wants me to start dressing like you, I suppose. And after all I've done for him. I gave him my faith, my support, my virginity.

MAYA

You must be kidding.

GEORGANNE

I never kid, dear girl, but I am lying. I'm lying about faith and support, too, but he doesn't know that, so there's no excuse for the way he treats me.

MAYA

You remember what it's like with men, right? You can think back that far?

(Stares down LUKE.)

You can trust them about as far as you can throw them.

LUKE recoils from her, then recoils from the Russian airplanes with the same take.

GEORGANNE

(Abandoning the fight, she's suddenly nervous.)

Horizontally, you mean, right? Not vertically, like off a cliff in a car on Highway One?

MAYA

(Taken aback by her reaction.)

What? I...it's a figure of speech. I've never really considered which way they're being thrown.

GEORGANNE

(Covering up.)

Yes, of course. Why would you? I would surely never consider throwing a man vertically...from a cliff in a car on Highway One. That would be absurd.

LUKE

Some would have you believe that the Russians having airplanes in space is absurd.

MAYA

That's because it is absurd, Luke. I swear, you'll never change.

GEORGANNE

(Smiling sadistically.)

Perhaps you're just not worth changing for. I could teach you a few things about changing a man.

LUKE

Oh, ho, if it's change you want, wait until the Russian space planes begin to disrupt the weather patterns. 30 days of rainfall. Hail the size of tetherballs. So hot at Christmas you could fry an egg on an elf's ass. Want some hash browns on the side, comrade? Motherfucking Russians.

MAYA

I swear, Luke, sometimes it's hard to remember why I ever married you.

LUKE

For my money. You wanted money, remember? And I needed my green card to stay in the country.

GEORGANNE

Excuse me, Luke, but did you say you had to get married to stay in the country? Weren't you born in San Bernardino?

LUKE

Yeah. That's in Spain, isn't it?

MAYA

Wait a minute. Do you mean to tell me that I -

BRANDON RAY enters through the front door at stage left. He's staggering.

GEORGANNE (CONT'D)

My Lord, Brandon, what happened?!

BRANDON

There's been an accident. Steele and I were observantly driving his midnight blue Ferrari 308 GTB/GTS Quattrovalvole down Highway One, obeying all applicable roadway regulations, hands at 10 and 2, textbook defensive driving, when Steele swerved to miss a cat and drove over the cliff. Judging from the size of the explosion, I'm afraid he's dead! I'm afraid Amber is single! Steele is dead! His unbelievably hot and almost certainly sexually unsatisfied girlfriend is single and will need comfort! So, so much comfort!

(BRANDON doesn't change his inflection at the end...his thoughts of AMBER are just as loud and frantic as the rest of the speech.)

GEORGANNE

(In shock.)

Steele is dead? No! Not Steele! Not my only son!

The "Phil" line below and throughout the play should all be tossed off nonchalantly, without a big schticky take.

MAYA

He's not your only son. Don't forget Phil.

GEORGANNE

(Not in shock.)

Oh. Yes. Phil.

MAYA

(To herself, connecting Georganne's comment earlier.)

Over a cliff...

(To Brandon.)

Hold on a minute. Why weren't you in the car with him when it went over the cliff?

BRANDON

I...uh...got out to help the cat.

MAYA

The same cat Steele drove over a cliff swerving to miss?

BRANDON

(Angered by the insinuation, he speaks through clenched teeth.)

No, Maya. A different cat.

MAYA

A different cat? You're saying there was a cat on the road, and Steele swerved to miss it, causing him to lose control of the car and drive off a cliff, but you somehow found the time to get out of the careening car to save a different cat that also happened to be on the side of the Pacific Coast Highway?

BRANDON

That's right.

MAYA

What kind of cat?

BRANDON

A black and orange stray cat sittin' on the fence. It was a calico. Male. They're very rare, so I knew I had to save it.

MAYA

You could tell the sex of the cat from the car while it was spinning out of control?

BRANDON

(Not believing the words as
they come out of his mouth.)

It was a very proud cat?

GEORGANNE

(Nervously interrupting.)

Okay, everyone, now, I know we're all shocked and saddened by the sudden and rather ghastly demise of someone who was dear to some of you all, but that's no reason to get upset. I think we can all take comfort in the fact that the male calico population is one member stronger today. But right now, it's time for my tennis. Maya, will you be joining me today?

MAYA

Depends. Will you and the club pro be working on your continental grip, or will you be gripping something else today?

GEORGANNE

Actually, my punch volley.

(She pushes MAYA through the door at stage left and locks it, then exits upper stage right after giving BRANDON a sharp look.)

BRANDON

(After GEORGANNE and MAYA are gone. He and LUKE are exceptionally nervous and high strung. This scene should zip.)

I think your wife is suspicious.

LUKE

She should be! How can we not be suspicious with those aerospaceplanes up there...watching...taking notes? Motherfucking Russian motherfuckers.

BRANDON

Luke, what the hell? Airplanes in space again? Would you just forget about the damn Ruskies and start worrying about your own ass? I meant that your wife may be suspicious about our drug dealing.

LUKE

Maya? Brandon, I've been doing this for years. She hasn't got a clue.

BRANDON

Bullshit, Luke! I know you. You leave clues scattered like condoms on Madonna's tour bus. But Maya's the least of our worries. How are we going to pay the supplier since Steele died before we could collect? I don't have that kind of money! Do you have any idea how much white linen suits cost? You'll be the one they go after. My name's in no way attached to this deal.

LUKE shifts about nervously, maybe whistling, maybe laughing uneasily.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

What? What're you doing? What's this vibe? Are you vibing me that someone knows I've started dealing the drugs?

LUKE

Kind of.

BRANDON

Who?

LUKE

Steele.

BRANDON

Steele?! Oh, God! He can't be trusted! He's...dead. Wait, Steele's just now dead. That's no big deal if the only person you told was Steele.

LUKE

Well, I didn't actually tell *him*. I told his answering machine.

BRANDON

You did *what*?!

LUKE

Don't worry. I don't think he got the message because he never called back. I even made sure to leave the number because you know how bad Steele is at -

BRANDON

You left your number on a recording about a drug deal?!

LUKE

And yours.

BRANDON

(Punches Luke.)

You stupid son of a bitch! There are rules to a drug deal. You gotta make the money first. Then, when you get the money, you get the power.

Then, when you get the power, you get the Amber. Nowhere in there do you leave messages on people's answering machines for all the cops to hear!

LUKE

Why would the cops be playing Steele's messages?

BRANDON

(Sarcasm.)

I don't know. Maybe to find out what was going on before he was killed this afternoon.

LUKE

Come on, Brandon, I'm not some kind of Russian mind spy cosmo-guy floating up in space. I couldn't have known Steele was going to...

(Makes a hand motion of a car falling off a cliff and exploding.)

BRANDON

Okay, listen. None of that matters right now. All that matters is I get my hands on the luscious, newly single Amber Dean, and that you do nothing until I can find that tape and destroy it.

LUKE

Yes. Good. Nothing.

(To the ceiling, yelling now.)

Hear that, Russians?! I'm not involved in a huge drug deal! I've never done drugs. Never did dope! Never snorted coke! Never shot horse or popped bennies or tripped acid or ate finger-paint or drank vanilla extract or hung out at gas stations or butted my head into refrigerators until I lost consciousness, and I'm certainly not involved in the questionable roadside death of Steele Witherspoon!

ARCHDUKE enters from door at upper left. He's carrying a class of brandy, which he does throughout the entire play. His delivery should be completely dry; nonplussed by virtually all that surrounds him. The STAGEHAND enters with him and stands at his side, unnoticed.

ARCHDUKE

Good day, Brandon. Luke. What brings you to my house? Uninvited.

BRANDON

Your son's death.

ARCHDUKE
(Unaffected.)

Oh?

BRANDON
Yeah, I'm afraid he -

ARCHDUKE
I don't want to hear it. I'm not talking to that boy until he explains why he was expelled from Academy some ten years ago. An academy to which he was only accepted because of my generous financial backing and the fact that my track and field medals remain prominently displayed in the campus trophy room.

On cue, the STAGEHAND switches the portrait from the Patrick Nagel painting to a shot of the Archduke hurdling. He's his current age in the shot, in track uniform with smoking jacket, brandy glass in hand as he's in the air.

BRANDON
Yeah, well, you won't need to worry about that anymore. Steele was killed today in an automobile accident. He crashed his car over a cliff off the Pacific Coast Highway.

The STAGEHAND switches the portrait back to Nagel and then exits.

ARCHDUKE
Steele's dead? Of course. Why not? Drag the family name through the dirt, then bury it with you to make sure there's no one left behind to carry it on.

BRANDON
(Matter-of-factly, as this line should be delivered by everyone throughout the play.)
Whadda ya mean? You've still got Phil.

ARCHDUKE
Oh. Phil. Thank God. For a second I thought I would have to procreate with Georganne again, and you can imagine the unmitigated horror of that.

BRANDON
(Momentarily flustered.)
Yeah. Imagine. Heh heh.

ARCHDUKE

And speaking of procreation, we must notify his longtime girlfriend at once. They've been together for years. She is a member of our family, she has suckled from the Witherspoon bosom, and in times of turmoil, the Family Witherspoon comes together. Does anyone have the slightest idea what that girl's name is?

BRANDON

Girl? Singular? Do you even know your son? You're referring to the breathtaking Amber Dean with luxurious brown eyes and thighs that taste like butter pecan ice cream...

(Sighs.)

...most likely. The others he tosses out faster than yesterday's fish. But hey, you know, I'll talk to Amber. She's going to be crushed over this, so hot and so crushed. Hot, crushed and lonely, and **it's like I told you...**

(To audience with lecherous smile and nod.)

...only the lonely can play.

(Back to normal.)

ARCHDUKE

Who the blast are you talking to, boy?

BRANDON

(Gives audience lecherous smile and nod again, then returns to the scene.)

Let's go Luke.

ARCHDUKE

It was nice speaking with you two. Stop by again. Uninvited.

LUKE and BRANDON agree to, then exit stage left.

ARCHDUKE (CONT'D)

Georganne!

GEORGANNE enters from upper right. She has a headband on and is carrying a badminton racquet or a jai alai cesta or something else definitely not tennis.

GEORGANNE

Yes, what? I'm working on my grip.

ARCHDUKE

Your son's dead.

GEORGANNE

Oh, suddenly he's *my* son. He dies, and suddenly he's *my* son.

ARCHDUKE

Georganne, our son is dead. I realize this changes little in our day to day activities, but people are going to be asking us questions. Sending us cards and flowers and pies. Do we have room in the kitchen for all the pies?

GEORGANNE

Pies? How wonderful Steele would feel knowing that his death only has you concerned about getting some pie. What better complements family turmoil; pecan or rhubarb? You're incorrigible.

ARCHDUKE

I am? Dear Georganne. My dear, sweet, fatuous Georganne. In case you've forgotten, **you were working as a waitress in a cocktail bar when I met you. I picked you out, I shook you up and turned you around. Turned you into someone new.**

GEORGANNE

I was working as a waitress in a cocktail bar; that much is true. But even then I knew I'd find a much better place either with or without you.

ARCHDUKE

Bah, I don't have time for this song and dance, you nattering harpie. If I don't get a hit single for Spoon Records by the end of the year, we'll both be working as cocktail waitresses for a paltry gratuity, attempting in vain to hold onto a shred of dignity while drunken Japanese businessmen grab for our junk.

GEORGANNE

Yes, well, I'm working to prevent that fate. I suggest you do the same.

A knock comes on the front door and
GEORGANNE exits upper stage left on the
following line.

GEORGANNE (CONT'D)

And you can start by answering the door.

ARCHDUKE

(Sighs. Crosses to the door at
stage right and opens it.)

And what would you...

(Squeals like a teenage girl in
1963.)

Good God! You're Paul McCartney!

BILL (O.S.)

No, my name's William Campbell.

ARCHDUKE

You look just like Paul McCartney!

BILL (O.S.)

Yeah, I've heard that before. Can I come in?

ARCHDUKE

Yes, but don't touch anything. You break it, you buy it.

As BILL enters, we see that he is Black. He's disheveled, and he has a hole in one knee of his pants. He's wearing glasses, and keeps them on throughout the show.

BILL

Look, man, I was damn near run over by a truck out -

ARCHDUKE

(Still totally dry.)

Oh, yes. Tremendous. Paul McCartney is about to favor the Archduke with his tale of misery and woe.

BILL

Yeah, okay, see, I don't want to get into a whole thing here, crazy old dude. You don't care what I've got going on anyway.

ARCHDUKE

Of course I won't care. I'm unbelievably wealthy. You should know I got here by feeding off of unfortunate people such as yourself. Squeezing every last drop of workman's sweat from your laboring back and then selling it back to your overweight, undersexed wives in little pink bottles. These are the go-go 80s, and **I'm lovin' every minute of it**. Greed is Good, the Super Bowl Shuffle, Rosie the Riveter and all of that.

BILL

So, why do you want to know what I got goin' on?

ARCHDUKE

I'm practicing. It pleases the wife. So, go ahead. Make me appear as if I care. It will create the illusion of empathy, particularly if I do this...

(Leans forward into a posture that looks as if he's really focused on Bill.)

BILL

(A bit bewildered by the
ARCHDUKE.)

Well, a while back, I won the Annual Paul McCartney Look-Alike Contest. I won a ton of money, I was engaged to a fine young lady, I was set for life. But then my parents were killed in a freak bus/plane/train accident.

ARCHDUKE

Of course.

BILL

Check this, my parents weren't in any of them. My folks were biking along, right, and bam! The bus, the plane, the train, they all just crashed into them at once. The authorities said nothing like this had ever happened before, but that didn't really help much. I went to my fiancée's house for a little comfort, only to find her with my homeboy, **laughing like children, living like lovers, rolling like thunder under the covers.**

ARCHDUKE

(Not caring at all.)

I guess that's why they call it...whatever it is they call it.

BILL

Yeah. Well, I just left them there, and when I got back to my apartment, everything had been jacked! I had just cancelled my insurance because my so called fiancée and I were about to buy a joint policy, so I lost everything I owned. I went into a daze, wandering aimlessly for what seemed like weeks, before deciding I should just kill myself, so I threw myself in front of a truck. Seems my timing was off, though, as the truck was only moving about fifteen miles an hour and stopped a good 30 feet in front of me. All I did was skin my knees. That was just outside your driveway. I didn't want my knees to get infected, so I came here to see if you have any Bactine.

(Pause.)

Do you have any Bactine?

ARCHDUKE

So, am I to understand that you, in fact, are not Paul McCartney?

BILL

No, man, my name's William Campbell.

ARCHDUKE

Are you certain, because people can sometimes forget who they are. William Shatner forgot who he is, and that's how we end up with Mr. Tamborine Man. So, again, are you *sure* you're not Paul McCartney?

BILL
 Pretty sure. Yeah.

ARCHDUKE
 Damn.

There's a knock at the door. The following lyric bit should go quickly, with a beat, but without singing or acknowledging the lyrics.

BILL
Someone's knockin' at the door.

The doorbell rings.

BILL (CONT'D)
Somebody's ringin' the bell.

Another knock.

BILL (CONT'D)
Someone's knockin' at the door.

Another doorbell.

BILL (CONT'D)
Somebody's ringin' the bell.

ARCHDUKE
Do me a favor; open the door and let 'em in. On second thought. Stay here a minute.
 (Goes to stage left door.)

Yes?

DIRK
 (Enters stage. Doesn't notice Bill.)
 Good afternoon, Archduke.

ARCHDUKE
 Reverend Dirk, hello. Collecting more pennies for the children?

DIRK
 No, sadly, I'm afraid I come bearing bad news.

ARCHDUKE
 They want nickels now?

DIRK
 Your son, Steele, was smashed up something furious in a car accident today.

ARCHDUKE

Yes, I believe someone mentioned that earlier.

DIRK

Not a bright boy, that Steele. Just drove the car right off the cliff. No skid marks, no sign of a blown tire. Just drove right off the cliff like he was pulling into a Jack In the Box. The lad was probably drunk or high or gay or something. That's what happens when you keep the children away from church. They end up drunk or high or gay or Communist or Jewish or left handed or something.

ARCHDUKE

Yes, thank you Rev., but if -

DIRK

It's a cry out to the parents, you know. They long for direction. For guidance. Not money and neglect. You may have driven Steele to suicide.

(Pause. Without humor.)

I believe I just told a joke.

ARCHDUKE

Reverend, why are you here?

DIRK

Oh. The authorities called me in to read Steele his last rights. Hard to do when this was the only intact item I could find.

(Pulls out a cassette tape.)

Well, this and a proud calico cat.

ARCHDUKE

What is it?

DIRK

Oh. Yes. It's a Beatles tape. *Greatest Hits Volume Six*. It must be a rarity because I own every Beatles tape ever made and I've never seen this one before.

ARCHDUKE

(Takes the tape.)

I'm quite a Beatles aficionado myself, and I've never seen this. Paul, when did you release this? Before or after *Rubber Soul*?

DIRK

(Noticing Bill for the first time, he squeals.)

Oh my God, it's Paul McCartney! I'm your biggest fan!

BILL

(He uses British phrases, but
doesn't adopt a British
accent.)

Thanks, mate. I'm flattered.

DIRK

Will you sign my Bible?

BILL

Certainly, old chap.
(Signs Dirk's Bible.)

DIRK

This is too much. The boys at the church will never believe
this!

(Heads towards door at stage
left.)

ARCHDUKE

Thank you, Rev. Dirk. Good day. Oh, wait. Shouldn't the
authorities retain this tape as evidence?

DIRK

Evidence of what? Your son drove off a cliff. His charred and
smoking remains are evidence enough of that. God. Paul
McCartney.

(Exits stage left.)

ARCHDUKE

(After Dirk is gone, he
applauds.)

Mate? Chap? Most impressive.

BILL

Well, you have to do more than look alike to win a lookalike
contest.

ARCHDUKE

In his soft, tender hands, the Archduke may be holding a
previously unheard Beatles tape. We must partake in it and
partake in it we must!

ARCHDUKE puts the tape in the stereo
and they listen. It's the recording of
the drug deal from Steele's machine.

BILL

(After listening a bit.)

Those Beatles were high all the time, but this is really out
there, even for them.

ARCHDUKE

(Stops the tape.)

I don't know. Throw a sitar over it and it could be another of those damn Harrison songs.

(Scheming.)

I can save Spoon.

BILL

Who's Spoon?

ARCHDUKE

Spoon Records.

BILL

Oh, see, I thought you meant *the* spoon.

ARCHDUKE

No, not since I lost the patent.

BILL

You held the patent on the spoon?

ARCHDUKE

Until recently, yes.

BILL

How did you get a patent on the spoon?

ARCHDUKE

My family invented it.

BILL

Seriously, the spoon? And they were able to prove that?

ARCHDUKE

Yes, Paul, they were able to prove that. I certainly hope you didn't pester John this much, or is that what drove him to Yoko?

BILL

It's William, and I don't see how you could get a patent on the spoon.

ARCHDUKE

It's in the name. Witherspoon. Duh.

BILL

So, the spoon is named for your family? If not for a twist of fate, we'd all be eating soup with our whithers?

ARCHDUKE

Well, I hadn't really considered that before, and I don't have time to consider it now. I need to figure out what to do with this tape. Can you keep a secret, Paul?

BILL

It's William, and yes, I can.

ARCHDUKE

(Searching frantically for a place to hide the tape.)

No, from now on, it's Paul, and of course you can, because, if not, I'll have you arrested and killed.

(Grabs a coffee can from the bar at upper right and puts the tape inside. He crosses back to Bill while saying...)

Listen. Paul, do you see this house? Do you see all the money in here? I'm about two months away from losing all of it.

BILL

And what will I get for helping you?

ARCHDUKE

(Graciously.)

You wanted some Bactine earlier, right? You may have some Bactine.

BILL

We're going to need to work a little on this partnership, I'm thinking.

ARCHDUKE

Believe me, we've got plenty to work on. I've got an idea that's going to keep us very, very rich, so listen well, because here's my pitch.

BILL

Hey, that was a pretty good rhyme. Maybe you should write some songs.

ARCHDUKE holds the coffee can high.

ARCHDUKE

No need to. The Beatles already wrote me one.

(Laughs maniacally.)

Blackout.

ACT I: SCENE 2

It's three days later. The stage is set up the same as before, only now there's a closed coffin at lower stage left. Flowers are set up around it. AMBER DEAN, THE ARCHDUKE (holding his glass of brandy) and GEORGANNE are all standing by the coffin. The picture on the back wall states "Three Days Later," and is then replaced with a portrait of Steele. Text at the bottom reads, "In memory - Steele Kage Witherspoon."

AMBER

(Weeping over the coffin.)

I never got to say goodbye. All that time I spent with him, all those days together, and I never got to say goodbye.

ARCHDUKE

That seems implausible. Surely you must have said goodbye to him at least once. I mean, when you hung up the phone or left his condominium and such.

GEORGANNE

Ugh! Archduke! I can't believe I'm having to explain Amber Dean's thought patterns to someone who didn't have to wear a protective helmet on the playground. She means she never got to say goodbye to him for good.

ARCHDUKE

Who would? Who leaves anybody saying, "Oh, in case you should accidentally happen to grotesquely die horribly in a fiery automobily accident...ly, I want you to know I loved you until the end, but that's just in case."

AMBER

(Weeping angrily.)

Why is it just impossible for your family to be nice to me? You weren't nice to me when I had to get my tonsils out, you weren't nice to me when Goose died in *Top Gun*, and you aren't nice to me now, the Archduke Witherspoon!

ARCHDUKE

(With sympathy.)

I'm sorry, Amber. I truly am. You see, I empathize with what you're going through.

AMBER

(Calming down.)

You do?

ARCHDUKE

Yes, my dear. I, too, the great and powerful Archduke, have lost the love of my life.

AMBER

But Georganne's right there.

ARCHDUKE

(Looks at GEORGANNE and takes a hard drink of his brandy.)

Of this, I am thoroughly aware.

AMBER

I'm sorry. Archduke, Georganne, would you mind if I had a moment alone with Steele?

ARCHDUKE

Why? He's dead.

GEORGANNE

Archduke!

(Grabs THE ARCHDUKE and pulls him towards the bar at upper stage right.)

AMBER

(To coffin.)

Steele, I don't know where you are now -

ARCHDUKE

(Turning back to her.)

He's scattered over the rocks on the shores of the Pacific.

GEORGANNE pulls THE ARCHDUKE to the bar at upper stage right. The STAGEHAND walks back onstage, entering from the front or side. During AMBER's speech, he changes the portrait to reflect what she's talking about: Niagara Falls, Bahamas, cliffs, etc.

AMBER

(Ignoring THE ARCHDUKE, she runs her hand over the coffin and speaks to it.)

Steele, I walk along the city streets you used to walk along with me, and every step I take reminds me of just how we used to be. Like how I'll never forget the time we went to Niagara Falls to...no, wait. It was the Bahamas. Yeah, the Bahamas, and we...you...yeah, you were boating on the river and got caught in the current and were pulled over the falls...so, I guess then it was Niagara Falls, not the Bahamas. But you went over them, and...no, that can't be right.

It's illegal to boat that close to the Falls. It could never happen. But maybe you just wandered out too far and no one saw you. Yeah, I suppose that could happen. It's hardly likely, though, now, is it. I mean, if it happened to you, it could happen to anyone, and I really doubt Canada would allow that. They would be sued, and Canada doesn't have enough money to get sued. Still, accidents do happen. Anyway, I'll never forget that trip, Steele. The cliffs may have taken you away from me, but they can never take away your memories. I mean *my* memories. I mean the cliffs can never take away my memories of you...unless I fall off them, too. So, I guess that technically they *could* take away my memories of you, but it's not really likely. Kind of like you going over Niagara Falls in a boat. I'm still having trouble with that. But anyway, **how can I forget you, Steele, when there is always something there to remind me?**

BRANDON enters from stage left, checking AMBER out in a wildly inappropriate way.

BRANDON

Amber, hey, hi baby.

The STAGEHAND turns the portrait back to Steele, then exits the stage.

AMBER

Hello, Brandon.

BRANDON

(Slides an arm around AMBER.)

Tough break, girl. I know how much he meant to you.

AMBER

(Slides away.)

Thank you.

BRANDON

(Sexually.)

Yeah, you're very, very welcome. Listen, girl, like I said the other day, if there's anything you need-any way I can help-you just call on Brandon Ray, okay? **Call me on the line. You can call me, call me anytime.**

AMBER

Well, there is one thing you can do for me.

BRANDON

What's that, baby?

AMBER

Well, if you could just tell me...is it possible for someone to take a boat close enough to the edge of Niagara Falls that they might fall over?

BRANDON

(Deflated, but not giving up.)

...Well, I...what? I don't know. Here. Have a cigarette.

AMBER

I don't smoke.

BRANDON

Okay, maybe a glass of wine?

AMBER

I don't drink.

BRANDON

God, Amber; **you don't drink, you don't smoke...**

(Sexually.)

...what do you do?

THE ARCHDUKE and GEORGANNE cross back to center stage.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Archduke, hi, big guy!

ARCHDUKE

Hello, diminutive guy. How are you found this fine afternoon?

BRANDON

(Checking out AMBER.)

I'm...uh...a little preoccupied, actually. I've got a lot on my mind.

ARCHDUKE

(Not checking out AMBER.)

Yes. My thoughts are similarly cluttered this day.

BRANDON

Hardly convenient for calling hours, huh.

ARCHDUKE

Well, timing never was one of Steele's fortes.

BRANDON

(Gesturing towards coffin.)

Neither was his driving, apparently.

GEORGANNE

Would you two please quit? I don't need Amber Dean crying and spoiling the atmosphere at the funeral festivities.

AMBER

Georganne, have you ever been to Niagara Falls?

BRANDON

Amber, baby, all this talk of water has made big Brandon thirsty. I think I would like some hot...wet...punch. Where's the wet punch bowl?

ARCHDUKE

Right here, young man.

(Opens the casket, pulls out a
ladle and pours some punch.)

Do you take your Steele on the rocks?

GEORGANNE

(Mortified, as he pours.)

Oh, Archduke, you put the punch bowl in the coffin?!

ARCHDUKE

Well, it's not as if there wasn't room for it. Obviously, they couldn't put Steele in there, and I'll be damned if I'm spending this much money on a coffin just to have it sit here empty.

AMBER

(Furious.)

Do you mean to tell me that I just poured my heart out to a punch bowl?!

The STAGEHAND enters.

ARCHDUKE

Yes, well, the irony of the situation didn't strike me until just now, but it will no doubt amuse me well into the evening.

AMBER

You have got to be the most awful people I've ever met! Steele dies, and you serve drinks from his coffin? You're more worried about your almighty money than spending just one minute saying goodbye or saying you're sorry or saying you'll try to forgive Steele for so sleeping with all of those other girls right under your nose...

The STAGEHAND rotates rapidly through slides of STEELE with a variety of women.

On the last, we see a slide of an overweight girl with him, then a similar slide where the girl's head has disappeared.

AMBER (CONT'D)

...when you had to pretend you didn't notice because you knew that deep down inside somewhere probably he would just be the best boyfriend ever if he wasn't so screwed up by his awful family that he got a b.j. from that fat girl Stacie on your anniversary and then came home and gave you a dozen roses when you've told him a hundred jillion times that your daddy, God-rest-his-soul, told you that a man who will try to buy your forgiveness with roses is a man who will always need forgiveness for some dumbbutt thing that he can't stop doing and that's why the flowers you like are calla lilies because daddy, God rest his soul, always got you calla lilies on your birthday because that's how you tell your special girl that you'll always love her and not please excuse me for screwing everything up again not that it would matter because you shouldn't be getting a b.j. from some random girl *especially on your anniversary!*

GEORGANNE

My beloved son is dead, and you're talking about calla lilies and fat girls?

AMBER

(Suddenly feels bad, she's sincerely apologetic.)

I'm sorry, but I'm having a hard time coping with this. I need a drink. Is that stuff spiked?

ARCHDUKE

That you would even ask shows how little you know me.

AMBER

I can't drink Steele spiked. Can I get some that's not spiked?

BRANDON

(Seizing the moment, takes a glass from THE ARCHDUKE.)

Speaking of getting some, Amber, baby, this is hard on you. I get that. It's hard on me, too. Hard. On. You know? You with me, Amber? You following Brandon? No, don't answer that. You just don't say a word. Let's step outside for a bit. Get fresh. Air. Get you some fresh air. Get some...just come on. Not that *this* is a come on. I just want to ease your suffering. Outside. Where it's not so hard. Does anyone else think it's hard in here? I mean hot! Jesus, I need a drink.

BRANDON attempts to lead AMBER off upper stage right, but GEORGANNE snaps her fingers, points to the ground and shakes her head. BRANDON slinks back, the ARCHDUKE leads AMBER off stage right. GEORGANNE exits upper stage left.

BRANDON

(After they're all gone, he raises his glass to Steele's portrait as if in toast.)

Well, Steele, here's to plans that come together. Too bad this plan required you to be so dead.

LUKE enters from stage left.

LUKE

Brandon. Good. Did you find the tape at Steele's apartment?

BRANDON

No, I didn't find the tape at Steele's apartment. There wasn't a cassette in his answering machine.

LUKE

So, that means Amber might have it. Or the Russians.

BRANDON

(Sarcastically.)

Or, maybe Amber *is* a Russian. I was just about to pump her -
 (Takes another drink.)
 - for information, but Georganne and the Archduke interfered. Our bigger problem is that we still need to get the money to pay for the drugs. Have you contacted the supplier to see if we can just return them?

LUKE

Yeah, he said to not worry about it, that we can just keep them. I told him something like this would never happen again, and said he was well aware of that. Quite a sweet man.

BRANDON

Oh. Well, good. Looks like all I have to worry about then is getting that tape back before it ends up -

DIRK enters from stage left with a cane.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Reverend, my man.

LUKE

Reverend Dirk, I'm surprised to see you. I thought you'd left the church to pursue other interests. Isn't Reverend Horn our father now?

DIRK

No, Luke, *I* am your father.

BRANDON

Well, I, for one, am glad to see you back. And how are you doing on this beautiful afternoon?

DIRK

(Gestures to coffin.)

I'm doing well, considering.

BRANDON

(Getting that he should be upset.)

Yes, it truly is sad.

DIRK

Truly.

BRANDON

God works in mysterious ways.

DIRK

I wouldn't blame this on God.

BRANDON

I don't mean that God actually committed the murder. God causes hurricanes and wars, sure, and He helps guys score touchdowns, but God doesn't commit murder. That would be wrong.

DIRK

Murder? I heard nothing of Steele's death being the result of murder.

BRANDON

Did I say murder? I meant...murmur! The coroner told me that Steele actually died of a heart murmur on the way down to the rocks.

DIRK

(Not believing him.)

Mm hmm.

BRANDON

(Looks at his wrist, he has no watch.)

Whoa! Look at the time! I have to...go get a watch, apparently. I'll see you two later at the funeral, okay?

BRANDON exits upper stage left.

LUKE

I wonder what he was so uneasy about. I'm certainly not that uneasy. No, if he's up to something, than I most definitely had nothing to do with it. I'm not nervous at all. Look.

(He holds his hand out, which shakes violently. He immediately pulls it back in and laughs nervously.)

Cocaine. I mean allergies!

DIRK

Allergies?

LUKE

Yes, allergies.

DIRK

What are you allergic to?

LUKE

Cocaine.

DIRK

I see.

LUKE

I'll tell you, though, Steele's death?. It really makes you think, doesn't it. I mean, is there really an afterlife?

DIRK

I like to believe so.

LUKE

But how can we be certain?

DIRK

Well, why don't you go check for me?

LUKE

Huh?

DIRK hits LUKE over the head with his cane and LUKE slumps to the ground. DIRK'S about to do it again when he hears a knock at the door. He quickly exits upper stage right.

MAYA

(Knocks again, off stage.)

Hello? Is anyone home?

(Opens door.)

Hello? Archduke? Whoreganne?

(She sees Luke on the floor,
and is more annoyed than
concerned.)

Luke! Oh my God, Luke, what have you done now?

(She kneels beside him and
lifts his head in her hands.)

Wake up! Wake up!

LUKE

(Stirring.)

Jessie? Jessie, is that you?

MAYA

Jessie? Jessie?!

(SHE drops his head to the
floor.)

Who the hell is Jessie?

LUKE

(In pain. Starts to stand up.)

What?

MAYA

Who is this Jessie? Some woman you're doing behind my back?

LUKE

**No! Jessie is a friend. Yeah, I know he's been a good friend
of mine.**

MAYA

You're having an affair with a man?

LUKE

No, I'm not of sound mind. Here, how many fingers am I
holding up?

(Holds up four fingers.)

MAYA

Four.

LUKE

See, I thought I was only holding up two.

MAYA

You're not delirious, you're drunk. Only you would pass out
on the floor at someone's calling hours. Just lay there for a
moment.

I'm going to go make some coffee to sober you up before someone comes in here and sees you.

(SHE goes to the coffee can.)

LUKE

(Lies down on the couch as she leaves him, then points to the sky in fear.)

The Russians!

(HE rolls to the floor and bear crawls for a place to hide, ultimately ending up between MAYA and the door at upper stage left.)

MAYA

(Removes tape from stereo.)

The Beatles Greatest Hits Volume Six? That's odd. I thought I owned all of the Beatles albums and I don't remember this.

(SHE puts the tape in the cassette deck and listens for a moment. SHE tries to dance as LUKE notices what it is.)

THE ARCHDUKE comes running in from upper stage left with his glass of brandy and trips over LUKE'S head, knocking him unconscious again.

MAYA (CONT'D)

(Hears the commotion and turns off the tape.)

Hello, Archduke. I'm sorry about Steele.

ARCHDUKE

(Concerned only about the tape.)

Yes, it's a tragic loss, we're all very sad, give me that tape.

MAYA

Why? What is it?

ARCHDUKE

It's nothing. It's a...gift for Georganne. It came directly from the studio. It's a master. Very rare. Ringo's never even heard it.

MAYA

You store Beatles master tapes in a coffee can so you can give them to your wife?

(She drops the tape down her blouse.)

Suppose you tell me what's really going on here.

ARCHDUKE

I see I have clearly been outplayed. That tape is a Beatles authentic. It was given to me by Paul McCartney himself as a special release through Spoon Records for charity purposes.

MAYA

What charity?

ARCHDUKE

The Maya Mia Will Get Really Expensive Things if She Just Hands Me the Damn Tape Foundation...for Children.

MAYA

You're full of shit, Archduke. Listen, I've been trapped in this pathetic family's social circle for far too long, continually forced to put up with a lying, cheating, coke-head husband-not to mention dooming myself with the name Maya Mia. Well, not anymore. Now it's my turn to be in control. All I want is out of here, and this Beatles tape is my ticket to ride. When you shoot the video for this song, I want to be in it. And I don't just mean a lot of tight shots of my tight ass as I dance on top of a car; I want something of substance. I want a duet with Paul. You got that, Archduke?

ARCHDUKE

Damn you, Maya Mia! All right. Fine. Give me the tape and you'll get your duet.

MAYA

I have a better idea. How about if I just keep the tape right where it is?

ARCHDUKE

In your blouse? Maya, you know as well as I that more people will be in there than in the coffee can before this funeral's over.

MAYA

(She removes the tape from her blouse.)

Okay, we'll do that, then. I'll put it right back here in the coffee can, where it'll stay until after the funeral. We'll then take it down to the studio where you can introduce me to Paul so I can verify your story. But I'm warning you; if the tape disappears, everyone's going to know.

ARCHDUKE

Fine. But for God's sake, just keep this quiet. You'll be meeting Mr. McCartney sooner than you may think.

ARCHDUKE and MAYA exit stage right.
BRANDON pokes his head out from upper stage left.

HE doesn't notice LUKE, but smiles and disappears. Bob Segar's "Old Time Rock and Roll" begins to play, and BRANDON then slides onstage in just his socks, underwear and button-down shirt ala Tom Cruise in *Risky Business*. He lip syncs just a few lines and dances around until he trips over LUKE, whom he then kicks on purpose as the music stops.

LUKE
(Awakening.)

Ouch!

BRANDON
Did that hurt?

LUKE
No. I just thought that if I voiced pain, you might quit.

BRANDON
It won't work.

LUKE
Figures.

BRANDON kicks him again.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Ouch! Why are you kicking me?

BRANDON
Because I can't find the tape and it's your fault I'm in this mess and Dirk obviously didn't finish you off so I guess I'm going to have to.
(Kicks him again.)

LUKE
Ouch! Stop kicking me! The tape's in the stereo!

BRANDON walks over to the stereo, sees that it isn't there, comes back, and kicks LUKE again.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Ouch! Why are you still kicking me? You have the tape, don't you?

BRANDON
No, it wasn't there.

LUKE
Maya! I remember that Maya was listening to the tape before I passed out again. She must have it.

BRANDON

Are you sure?

LUKE

Yeah, I'm positive. She was...dancing to it. She thought it was the Beatles.

BRANDON

The Beatles? She thought the answering machine tape where your dumb ass is talking about our drug deal is The Beatles? You know what, Luke? I take back everything I ever said. You two are made for each other, and it touches me deep inside. Hey, do you feel up for killing her? What would you say to going out and killing her?

LUKE

I don't know. Maybe. My head kind of hurts. Dirk really worked me over. Was Tom Cruise here? Did the Russians...hey, wait a minute! Why did Dirk try to -

BRANDON

Here, let me see if I can help that.

(HE starts to massage LUKE'S temples.)

LUKE

Hey, yeah, that feels great. All this death and drugs and answering machine tapes has made me awful tense, Brandon. If you could...yeah. Yeah. My delts are tight, my lats. Can you work on the trapezius a little bit? My traps need a release. Oooh, oh, oh, yeahhhh. I keep forgetting you're a trained masseur. You know, Bran, I don't know that we've ever really gotten to know each other. I, for example, enjoy wearing shorts. **Oh, yeah, sweet dreams are made of this.**

BRANDON

(Snaps LUKE'S neck.)

Who am I to disagree?

Blackout.

ACT I: SCENE 3

Lapse of time is a little over an hour. The set-up is the same as last time, with the coffin still at stage left. The photo on the wall starts with text that reads, "An Hour Later," then changes to the memorial photo of Steele. The chairs have been arranged so they're facing the coffin. GEORGANNE and the ARCHDUKE are on the couch with an empty spot next to the Archduke, MAYA is behind them with an open seat beside her, and BRANDON and AMBER are beside that. All but AMBER are mainly focused on BILL throughout the scene, save for AMBER, who's lost in her thoughts about Steele. DIRK is at a podium in front of the coffin.

DIRK

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to get through this thing called life. Electric word, life. It means forever, and that's a mighty long time. But I'm here to tell you there's something else...the afterworld, and that's where Steele is right now, if you believe in that sort of thing, which I'm quite certain none of you do, so I'm really just going through the motions up here. Still, this is truly a sad occasion that brings us all here, as the death of a loved one is always marked with sorrow and grief. And yet we musn't look at this as Steele leaving the living, but instead as Steele joining the dead. And besides, Paul McCartney is here.

Teenage girl squeals from all the others as Bill enters from upper stage left.

BILL

(Accepting the adulation.)

Thank you.

GEORGANNE

Paul McCartney! This is certainly quite an event! Had I known you were coming, I wouldn't have dressed in black. It's not my best color.

BILL

(Not believing it as he says it.)

That's all right. I think you look lovely in black. I'm Paul McCartney.

GEORGANNE

Oh, you're so charming. Favor us with a clever British phrase. The British have always been so witty, and I feel it's important to bridge the gap between cultures, and here we are with a tremendous opportunity for us to learn about your way of life, for us to reunite our two countries once torn apart by war and Benny Hill.

MAYA

I can't believe this.

BILL

(Pauses.)

Piss off. Bollocks. God save the Queen. Manchester United, 2. Chelsea Football Club, nil.

GEORGANNE

Yes, that's so great, so insightful. That's why I've been a fan of yours for so long.

MAYA

You're not a fan. You hate the Beatles.

GEORGANNE

What do the Beatles have to do with this?

MAYA

Oh my God.

GEORGANNE

(Taking offense.)

Maya, where's your husband? High again, I suppose? You'll have to forgive her, Paul. She gets like this. Her husband's a coke addict, you see, so he often misses engagements because he's running naked through the woods being chased by giant, rainbow butterflies with Charles Nelson Riley's head.

ARCHDUKE

(Interrupting.)

Ladies, please! We're at a goddamn funeral! Show some tact, for Christ's sake!

BILL

And I thought John Lennon's family was weird.

DIRK

Moving along, friends or family, we're here today to honor and remember one Mr. Steele Kage Witherspoon. For although he's dead, having been rendered unidentifiable by a mysterious and seemingly calculated auto accident, there'll always be a piece of him within all of us. And if you hurry, I'm sure you can still find quite a few pieces of him on the rocks off the cliffs of the Pacific Coast Highway.

ARCHDUKE

Reverend, please, a little less imagery. I'd rather not remember my son as food for seagulls. Actually, let me rephrase that. I'd rather not remember my son...

(He leaves that as if to say more, but quickly moves on to...)

You may proceed.

DIRK

Steele Witherspoon. What can we say about him that hasn't already been said?

Everyone raises a hand.

DIRK (CONT'D)

Archduke?

ARCHDUKE

That he was respectable? No one's ever said that about him.

The hands go back up.

DIRK

Okay, Brandon.

BRANDON

That he could handle his liquor?

DIRK

Yes. Georganne?

GEORGANNE

That he was faithful to Amber.

DIRK

Ooh. Paul, do you have anything to add?

BILL

(Reluctantly. Bemused by how weird this family is.)

Uh...he wear no shoeshine? He got toe-jam football? He got monkey finger? He shoot coca-cola.

DIRK

Well, no, plenty of coke, but three out of four's not bad for your first try. Anyone else?

ARCHDUKE

(Moving things along.)

That he had four arms and could eat his own weight in baked beans. Can we wrap this up, Padre? There's a reason I'm not Catholic, you know.

DIRK

Okay, yes, well, we'll all miss Steele. Some more than others.

BRANDON

And some of us a hell of a lot less than you'd think.

GEORGANNE & ARCHDUKE

Amen!

They all stand up. BRANDON goes to comfort AMBER as she makes her way to the coffin, and he tries to grab her ass, but GEORGANNE grabs his arm and pulls him to center stage with BILL, allowing MAYA to slip over to the coffee can and clandestinely retrieve the tape. AMBER and the ARCHDUKE go to DIRK near the coffin.

ARCHDUKE

(To Dirk.)

Excellent sermon, Reverend. I learned a lot. That Jesus...quite a fellow.

DIRK

It wasn't really a sermon, it was -

AMBER

Reverend, do you think Steele is in a better place?

DIRK

No.

ARCHDUKE

Well, obviously not, because this is where the pies are.

(Points to door at upper stage left.)

Look at all the pies, for the *love of pie!*

MAYA

Archduke?

ARCHDUKE

Good day, Reverend. Amber.

(Crossing to MAYA.)

Yes?

AMBER and DIRK exit together stage left. BRANDON gets away from his group and heads to the coffee can, but doesn't find the tape.

MAYA

I was just telling Georganne, here, about how I've been picked as the primary dancer for Paul's video. Isn't that true?

ARCHDUKE

(Uneasy.)

Of course. Congratulations.

GEORGANNE

But dear, you've been telling me for years how I have the body of a video model. I think I would be perfect for one of Paul's songs.

MAYA

Yeah, like "When I'm Sixty-Four," maybe.

GEORGANNE

Why, you -

MAYA

Oh, dammit! I think "I Am the Walrus" was the better joke, there.

GEORGANNE makes as if to lunge for her.

ARCHDUKE

Well, yes, this is all wonderfully entertaining, like the Concert for Bangladesh...or Altamont...but Paul, we have to get that flight to London so we can work on the song. Maya, will you be accompanying us to the airport?

GEORGANNE

Why is she going along to the airport?

ARCHDUKE

She can easily catch a cab from there to her house. Airports are where taxicabs go to rest up, and since Luke didn't show, she doesn't have a ride home.

GEORGANNE

Oh, I'm sure Luke will find his clothing and turn up eventually.

BRANDON

Yeah, uh...Georganne? I wouldn't count on Luke coming back any time soon.

(Makes a snapping motion with his hands, then stretches it into a yawn to hide the gesture from the others.)

Cocaine makes him very sleepy.

GEORGANNE

(Assuming he just wants to get
her alone, she smiles, then
turns to the ARCHDUKE.)

And how long will you be in London?

ARCHDUKE

Hard to say. With booking the studio, laying down tracks,
mixing, tossing in some of that patented Archduke Witherspoon
magic dust...about a month, maybe more if I have one of my
Vietnam flashbacks.

BILL

You served in Vietnam?

GEORGANNE

He owned sweatshops in Vietnam. It's where we made all of the
official Spoon Records children's apparel.

ARCHDUKE

A lot of good men died sewing the baby Ts.

GEORGANNE

Goodbye, Paul. It's been a delight.

BILL

Cheers.

ARCHDUKE

I'll phone you if I'll be more than a month.

GEORGANNE

That'll be fine. Yes, please phone. Bye, Paul.

BILL

Cheers.

GEORGANNE

(Adoringly.)

Cheers. See? With such witticisms, it makes you wonder why we
ever threw all that tea overboard.

ARCHDUKE, MAYA and BILL exit stage
left.

BRANDON

(After they're gone.)

I'm not sure I like the way you're sucking up to Paul.

GEORGANNE

What should I be sucking, you naive, young, firm boy?
(Kisses him.)

BRANDON tries to pull away
without her noticing that he's
trying to pull away.)
It's my big chance, Brandon. You want out of this place,
don't you?

BRANDON
Well...yes, but -

GEORGANNE
You're jealous, aren't you.

BRANDON
Jealous? No. Georgie, we have to talk. Our plans have been
altered a bit.

GEORGANNE
(Seductively.)
Shhh! Enough about the plans. The hard part is over.
(Cups his groin.)
Well, hopefully, not entirely over. Let's celebrate. Let's go
away while the Archduke is gone. Let's retreat to
our...uh...what's the word?

BRANDON
Retreat?

GEORGANNE
Yes, that's it. You're sort of smart. I like a man who's sort
of smart.

BRANDON
Georgie, we need to figure out -

GEORGANNE kisses him.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
(Pulls away.)
But our plan's falling apart. Luke would've -

GEORGANNE kisses him again, this time
with more passion.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
(Finally gives in.)
Okay, where?

GEORGANNE
(Points to the coffin.)
There.

BRANDON
In your son's coffin? I can't do it in the final resting
place of a man I killed.

GEORGANNE

(Leading him to the coffin.)

I'll make it worth the years of therapy you'll need.

BRANDON

Is the punch bowl out?

GEORGANNE

(As they begin to climb into
the coffin and the lights
start to fade.)

Brandon, dear?

BRANDON

Yes?

GEORGANNE

Shut up.

Blackout.