

Juan and Emmett

A Play in Two Acts

By

Alan Baxter

Dramaturge ----- S. R. Anzalone

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JUAN AND EMMETT ----- Play Synopsis

Juan Ortega is a New York City male stripper and hustler who works in a small Gay bar in the upper East-side of Manhattan. He is straight, lives in a Bronx ghetto, and is involved with his girl friend Anissa. Anissa knows what Juan does but is comfortable with his hustling activities as long as he does not get involved with his one-night male clients. Juan has also been involved with serious illegal drug activity, but he decided to leave it and go into stripping instead in order to earn fast money. His room-mate, Eduardo, is still a drug dealer, and he tells Juan that Ariel, the drug king pin of the Bronx, is very upset that Juan will not come back to work for him.

Emmett Watson is a very upper middle-class, overworked upscale corporate lawyer, very even tempered, almost the nerd type, but a responsible husband/father. He lives in a very luxurious apartment building but is left alone a lot of the time by a traveling wife (professional writer) and a playboy son in his senior year at Yale. Emmett's loneliness causes him to seek out a sexual companion at the bar where Juan performs. Obviously Juan and Emmett decide on a paid one-night sexual engagement.

Reluctantly, Juan starts to get more sexually involved with Emmett. Both men from totally different ethnicities and from totally different cultural backgrounds find that when they are in bed, stripped of their everyday clothes, they can then share their true feelings and repressed aspirations that they could not expose in their day-to-day existence. Yet Juan's drug past and Emmett's personal family problems cause a breach in their relationship. A very suspenseful, dramatic ending of the play's story forces both men to acknowledge certain repressed emotions that neither thought they had within them.

JUAN AND EMMETT

ACT ONE

EMMETT WATSON (a slim, distinguished middle aged corporate lawyer, donned in a dress shirt and elegant trousers) stands DOWNSTAGE LEFT.

A SOFT ANGELIC SPOTLIGHT envelopes EMMETT on stage and is always on him when he is addressing the audience, as he is doing now.

EMMETT

Many people, like myself, when they look back through their entire lifespan, often fret about the major wrong decision they have made. I am not sure that is true in my case. I mean I'm not sure my decision was that wrong. Yet there is so much I am unsure about.

Anyway, how did I know such a disastrous turn of events would have occurred that night. How did I know that Juan would aggressively act the way he did.

He crosses a few steps towards the audience.

Don't look at me with that "I told you so, expression." Like those nagging faces I saw at Linda's ridiculous dinner parties. I know. They say that all the young fellas are looking for their "sugar daddies." But you have to believe me. When I was alive then, I couldn't help it. I needed to satisfy those desires we all have, the ones that well up, during those dark moments of suspended silence.

EMMETT crosses.

EMMETT (cont.)

Notwithstanding the dirty dealings in my office, most of my existence was uneventful, very bland episodes loosely connected to a string of causations that added up to nothing. And that is why those depressing moments of suspended silence started to creep up within the arteries of my life.

EMMETT crosses towards apartment STAGE LEFT. Lights up on kitchen table, LINDA enters. It is their New York Park Avenue apartment, early winter 2008.

EMMETT

Oh God, life was certainly erratic. Perhaps a couple of weeks ago, I should have really honed in on those words Linda was hurling at me that morning about my work. But then, I thought, I was no longer Bobbie's father nor Linda's husband. Instead a familiar accountant that they took pleasure in disrespecting.

EMMETT sits at table, hurriedly eating a bowl of cereal, while perusing law books.
LINDA (his wife) rushes up to him, straightening his tie and smoothing out his shirt.

LINDA

Oh God, Emmett. I should tell Doris to better iron your shirt. Can't you buy more colorful ties?

EMMETT

You know what the office likes.

LINDA

That is not true. George tells me they have to liven you up. Not all Republicans are as conservative as you are.

LINDA crosses to the refrigerator.

LINDA

You always used to dress nicely. Now you've gotten so sloppy. I never went out with any man unless he had a nicely dressed shirt and very fashionable trousers.

EMMETT

Next thing everyone will be forcing me to go to the gym twice a day.

LINDA

Well, why not? Why do you always have to act so staid? Wouldn't hurt to spruce yourself up.

EMMETT

Like Eddy?

LINDA

Can I help it if he dresses better than you?

EMMETT

Is that why you like him to go on tour with you?

LINDA

Why are you acting so jealous? You know he's gay---
And why do you dislike him so?

EMMETT

It's just that he's so effeminate. The time you introduced him to me at Bill's party, he was trying to capture the spotlight with his flamboyance.

LINDA

At least he carries himself well, and he manages to work out at the gym at least five times a week.

EMMETT

Next thing you'll be asking me to do the same.

LINDA

Well why not? Why are you always so down on yourself? Wouldn't hurt to build yourself up.

EMMETT

Like the heroes in your novels. When do you leave for your next book tour?

LINDA

Today. After I have lunch with Bobby.

A spotlight picks up **BOBBIE**, dressed in a stylish robe that reflects his youthful good looks. He is laughing at a text message.

EMMETT

No wonder I saw a light under his door.

LINDA

He wants to see you before you leave for work.

EMMETT

I can't possibly guess what for. I'll have to see him some other time. I have an important deposition to make.

LINDA

You keep coming up with excuses to avoid some kind of confrontation with Bobbie.

EMMETT

It can wait.

BOBBIE(on phone)

You probably read Marsha's text. Awesome, isn't it?

LINDA

But he told me it was urgent.

EMMETT

Yes, it's always "urgent" when he has to beg for something from me. He's not getting a new car, especially since he just totaled the last one.

LINDA

But I was the one who bought him the last one, as well as the one who always has been giving him money. It would take the burden off me if you would step up onto the plate and help him out. You should spend a few days together.

BOBBIE

I know sweetheart, but I have to be back in New Haven by tonight. I have this crazy exam tomorrow-----

EMMETT

Linda you know that with everything that's happening, I have to spend a lot of time at that firm.

LINDA

Yes, I know that the firm owns you body and soul. You can't keep burying yourself there. You have a responsibility to your son. He can't be running to me all the time.

EMMETT

That's because he loves and respects you more than me.

BOBBIE

Yeah, get your brother to drive you out of Manhattan. Take care.
See you tomorrow.

LINDA

Stop being so cynical and childish. He loves you a lot.
I hear him brag about you to his friends.

EMMETT

Probably brags more about how much money I make.

BLACKOUT

EMMETT crosses SL to BOBBIE'S BEDROOM (decorated with posters, etc.)

EMMETT

What are you doing home? What about classes?

BOBBIE

Hey, I don't cut that much. Anyway, Jeannie wanted me to drive
her into Manhattan.

EMMETT

How do you have all this time with your tight study schedule?
Are you doing all right up there?

BOBBIE

Awesome. But Dad, I need more money. Jack actually took Jenna Bush
out, and that bitch—

EMMETT

Bobbie—

BOBBIE

Sorry, Dad. You know her, don't you?

EMMETT

But your mother and I want better grades.

BOBBIE

No. You want better grades. I know Jeannie's Dad will help me when I graduate.

EMMETT

But you're going to have to work awfully hard. Like I do.

BOBBIE

But you just let people walk all over you.

EMMETT

Bobbie, will you stop listening to your mother all the time? If you come to the office briefly after lunch, we can talk.

BOBBIE

I can't. I have to take the train back to New Haven as soon as I finish lunch with Mom. (pause) C'mon, Dad.

EMMETT takes out his wallet and gives BOBBIE five hundred dollars.

BOBBIE

C'mon. Another two hundred.

EMMETT

That's all I can do for now. I have to rush to the office.

BOBBIE

(hugs Emmett):

Thanks, Dad. I love you, anyway. You know I'll pay you back when I make my first million.

BOBBIE opens his desk drawer and EMMETT sees a .38 caliber handgun.

EMMETT

Bobbie, don't you know how serious a felony it is for an illegal gun?

BOBBIE

I'm 21. I can do what I want.

EMMETT

Not in my house.

BOBBIE

Don't get silly, Dad. And what makes you think it's illegal?

EMMETT

How come I wasn't notified when you got one?

BOBBIE

Jesus, Dad, you have such a lousy memory! How can you forget? I was captain of the rifle team at Valley Forge. That's how I got to be an auxiliary cop two summers ago.

EMMETT

So why now?

BOBBIE

I need this gun when I walk from the train station. Mugging has gone up in New Haven. Unless you want to buy me a new car? You'll be late for work, DAD.

BLACK OUT

Spotlight on EMMETT. He stays there, even through the beginning of the next scene, staring at Juan.

EMMETT

Now you see why I wasn't in such a hurry to get home. Back then we were supposed to have been happy. But we obviously weren't.

Spotlight on JUAN's apartment STAGE RIGHT.

EMMETT

The situation was quite different in Juan's household. That's why they say happiness is a varied emotion. But I still say that back then Juan was longing for someone like me.

Posters of Pop Culture line Juan's apartment walls, somewhat similar to Bobbie's room, but not as classy. Included in the mix are small framed great art works. Furniture is used, including a dilapidated cushioned chair and a scratched kitchen table.

JUAN ORTEGA (good looking, athletically built young black Dominican in his early twenties) starts to walk into his living room. He is wearing a winter jacket and carries a back pack. He throws his jacket onto the chair and then knocks on the door to Eduardo's room.

EDUARDO

(hearing the knock) What time is it?

EDUARDO walks into the room. He is Hispanic, around 22 years old with a well-toned, lanky swimmer's build.

JUAN

Come here?

EDUARDO notices JUAN's colorful jacket.

EDUARDO

Your jacket, Juan. Don't throw it on this dirty chair.

EDUARDO rubs his hands on the designer fur.

EDUARDO

I love this jacket. Don't ruin it.

JUAN

Isn't that Tommy Calder in your bedroom?

EDUARDO

Muscle man, getting a hard up because I'm with another guy. I love it.

JUAN

I don't care what the hell you do in your bedroom. But just don't bring home guys from The Well.

EDUARDO

I can bring home anyone I want. This is America, land of the free, baby.

JUAN

Not when they're freaked out on Cannon Eight.

EDUARDO

He's one of our best customers. And Tommy wouldn't do that.

JUAN affectionately pins EDUARDO and throws him against the couch.

JUAN

That's just it. I don't want you comin' down with AIDS or any shit like that —especially in my apartment. (Kisses EDUARDO on the forehead) Why I gotta look out for you all the time?

EDUARDO (laughing)

That's 'cause you get off looking at me.

JUAN

No, because you help bring in the money I need.

EDUARDO

I thought you loved me.

JUAN throws EDUARDO down on the couch and walks over to see himself in the living room mirror as he removes his du-rag.

JUAN

Fuck you!!

EDUARDO

You wish.

JUAN

(unbuttoning his shirt) How you manage when Anissa and I get enough money to move out of this cesspool?

EDUARDO watches JUAN with delight.

EDUARDO

I go with you both.

JUAN

Tell that to Anissa.

EDUARDO

How does she feel about all this hustling shit you've been doin' for awhile.

JUAN

She cool with it, especially when she sees all the money I bring in.

EDUARDO

She don't get jealous or anything like that?

JUAN

Not if I see someone once and never again. I told her I only see someone for an hour or two, and then I'm off. Can't be wasted with all this sentimental shit. Time is money.

EDUARDO

Anyway, when I come back tonight, I come ALONE. Ain't bringin' anyone home. Doing' Action tonight?

JUAN

Yep. Just came home from doin' it last night.

JUAN starts to rub baby powder on his chest.

EDUARDO

(laughing) Then I might come to the Ramrod, and grope you.

JUAN gives him the finger.

EDUARDO

You know, Ariel wants you to come back and pitch for him again at The Well.

JUAN

Why you bring up that Mother-fucker butcher for?

EDUARDO

He's a good guy I guess. He gets us the drugs we need.

JUAN

He wouldn't if he knew what we was doin' to him. That nigguh is MEAN, man. You know that other place he has on the other side of 145th. His manager ripped him off for just \$200. Ariel was pissed and pistol whipped him forever. I saw it, and that's why I quit workin' for him.

EDUARDO

Then I guess we don't need the extra dough.

JUAN

Hell no. With the money I'm makin' as Action and with the sellin' you're doin' at The Well, we don't need him.

EDUARDO

Guess you're right, baby.

JUAN

I know I'm right. I made \$1200 in just one night. Went to his hotel room. Threw in an extra \$200 for a massage.

EDUARDO

With a "happy ending?"

JUAN

Hell. "Happy ending" for all of us.

EDUARDO

“Punyeta para todo mundo.”

They both laugh.

BLACKOUT

Spotlight on EMMETT, SL,

EMMETT

All my life was composed of tedious days in the office. In a sense, Bobbie was correct. As a very senior partner, I should not have had to put up with all the crap I was getting. And I was not happy about representing Monsanto in their class action suits. And anyway, I had had enough sleepless nights with Sharp, and I didn't need another major corporation breathing down my neck. Such a waste.

EMMETT crosses SR.

EMMETT

(cont.)

But I had an escape hatch. Before going home, I would always take a detour through my favorite building in Manhattan---The Met. I always wanted to take a quick glimpse at some of the paintings in the Eakins exhibit, when it was there. But my Met trip also made me realize why those occasional one-night trysts with the ladies were not working out. I still could not get rid of that suspended silence.

EMMETT crosses to apartment, putting on his jacket.

EMMETT

(cont)

Opening the doors of my lonely apartment was always like opening the doors to the dark corridors of my mind. Continually I would take a drink to my penthouse balcony, overlooking those streams of cars below, buzzing to their chosen destinations like speeding fireflies. I was envious. I couldn't quite pinpoint what my life's destination was. Like sitting in a dark room, overhearing the waves of music next door that you know are never being played for you. Watching the rerun movie of your life and somehow you're absent as the main actor.

EMMETT sits at his computer.

EMMETT

Maybe those morbid evenings were the catalyst that made me open certain forbidden areas. Forbidden perhaps only to me.
But even back then, I knew where those online searches were going to take me. I then realized why those many detours to the Eakins Collection were so necessary.

SOUND OF CLUB MUSIC SWELLS.

LIGHTS UP on THE RAMROD BAR, where A MALE STRIPPER is doing sexual gymnastics on a small platform.

EMMETT takes off his jacket and puts on a winter coat. He walks in awe to JUAN.

EMMETT

Little did I know that entering those beaten wooden doors of the club would set me on a course that would forever change my career at Taka and Burns law firm. Many of you are probably saying that that night was the night I gave away my freedom. Not true. That was the night I had to quench my need for romantic excitement, to do away with that suspended silence that threatened to hover over me.

MUSIC continues.

EMMETT

The dazzle of beautiful flesh seemed decadent at first, but instead was fulfilling to my heavily suppressed desires. This was the color that my life was lacking. I was in heaven.

MUSIC changes, JUAN (as “ACTION”) jumps on the platform.

There is grace in the way Juan dances, indicating that he treats it as a genuine art form. EMMETT turns around, arrested by the sight of him.

EMMETT

And there I saw him for the first time. Like a radiant ebony god, sent from the angels. I wanted to go up to him and tip him. But at first I couldn't. I knew I wanted him all for myself. God, was I nervous.

EMMETT slowly takes a few dollars from his wallet and summons the courage to walk up to JUAN.

JUAN does more erotic posturing and slowly moves toward EMMETT. He bends down, and EMMETT shoves a twenty-dollar bill in Juan's bikini bathing suit. JUAN moves in and kisses EMMETT on the neck.

JUAN (ACTION)

Looking righteous, baby. Never seen you in here before?

EMMETT gives him another twenty.

JUAN

Wusup with a Vip?

EMMETT

What's that?

JUAN

For 500 an hour, I go home with you, take off my G string, and get real exclusive.

EMMETT gets scared and backs away. JUAN jumps off the small stage and slowly walks towards EMMETT.

JUAN

Give me a hug.

EMMETT

No.

JUAN

Come on. Put your head against my hard body.

EMMETT hesitates.

JUAN

Com'on. That's what you came in here for, ain't it?

EMMETT walks towards him.

EMMETT

Yes.

They hug.

JUAN
Wanna go back to an empty bedroom?

EMMETT
(pause) \$300 an hour!

JUAN
\$450

EMMETT
No—No-- (then thinks) OK, \$400. No more.

JUAN
Let's go.

BLACK OUT

EMMETT'S VOICE in darkness.

EMMETT
That's all right, Louis. You don't have to wait here. This young man has to alter the hard drive on my computer. He'll be here awhile.

LIGHTS UP on EMMETT's apartment. Expensive paintings hang on the wall, complementing an elegant interior design.

EMMETT and JUAN enter.

JUAN
Wow. You should have told me you was Jewish.

EMMETT
I'm not. But does that matter? All right here in the bedroom?

JUAN
It's your show. Anyone else here?

EMMETT
If I let out the smallest scream, they'll send somebody---

JUAN

Chill, man. Don't take it so personal.

EMMETT

I'm sorry.

JUAN

I ain't going to rob you. I'm a professional. Relax. Your woman's gone, and this is your first time, right?

EMMETT

Yeah, you could say that? Look, I'll take your jacket, and why don't you wait while I go into the bathroom. All I want you to do is---show me your nude body.

JUAN

That's cool. But I do want all my money, else I don't take my clothes off.

EMMETT

Sure. Here. I'll put your jacket in the hall closet. I kinda like it. Seems to be your signature.

JUAN starts to unbutton his shirt.

JUAN

Right.

EMMETT moves SL to go the bathroom offstage, while JUAN removes his shirt.

JUAN looks around, as if he were casing the room. He takes a hard look at one of the paintings, astounded to discover that it might be an original. He walks up to it and almost touches it.

JUAN looks at his watch.

JUAN

Yo. What's takin' you so long? I ain't into any funny shit.

EMMETT

(from offstage) Just give me a few more minutes.

JUAN looks again at his watch and looks again in the direction of the bathroom. He picks up his shirt to leave then stops at a photo of Emmett, Linda, and Bobbie at his graduation from the Valley Forge School.

JUAN puts down his shirt and looks at one of the paintings.

JUAN
Yo, man—this a Hopper original?

EMMETT
(walking out of the bathroom) Ah---How did you know about Hopper?

JUAN
I'm studying Art History for Computer Graphics at – ye know –ah
--Columbia University.

EMMETT starts to relax.

JUAN eyes another picture of Emmett at a podium, shaking hands with Condoleezza Rice.

JUAN (pointing to pictures)
Yo, whose this black broad you standing next to? I seen her on TV a lot.

EMMETT
Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State.

JUAN
Wow. And the guy in the other is your son?

EMMETT
Correct.

EMMETT stares mesmerized by Juan's beautiful body. He stands head-to-head with JUAN, wanting to embrace him.

EMMETT

Can I touch?

JUAN

You're so fuckin' polite. Of course. You paid for it. You'll love every inch of me.

EMMETT starts kissing JUAN on the neck, then he lowers himself to JUAN's waist.

EMMETT

Sometimes at night, I feel so lonely I want to cry. You know that feeling?

JUAN

Naw. I never want to know nothin' about politics, never voted, and never cried a single tear since I was three years old.

EMMETT again stands up straight, head to head with Juan, affectionately touching him.

JUAN

You'll dream about this moment for years to come.

EMMETT

Let's go to my bedroom.

JUAN

Fine with me.

BLACKOUT

LIGHTS UP on EMMETT'S room, later that night.

JUAN and EMMETT are in bed under the covers, after having sex.

JUAN

This bed should be against the wall, and put some interesting pictures up. Guess your bitch don't like that.

EMMETT

Are you always this blunt?

JUAN

Word---less you wanna get shitted on.

EMMETT

This is my private quarters. Linda and I have separate bedrooms.

JUAN

I gotta teach you how to bang her properly.

EMMETT

But I have your beautiful chest all to myself tonight. And that's all I want now.

EMMETT caresses JUAN's chest and then looks down to his cock. JUAN lays back on the pillow.

JUAN

You can suck it again. You've paid enough. Just don't bite.

EMMETT

It's still hard.

JUAN

When the money's good, it's always hard.

EMMETT continues to caress JUAN.

JUAN

You know. You're a good cock-sucker.

EMMETT stops and lies back, staring at the ceiling.

JUAN

Hey, why stop. You're almost as good as my girl friend.

EMMETT looks over.

EMMETT

Sorry. Things are getting tough at work.

JUAN

Whataya do?

EMMETT

Corporate lawyer.

JUAN

You must be a fuckin' good lawyer to afford all this shit. How did ya do it?

EMMETT

Come again?

JUAN

I'm proud to have you as a client. All these important people you know.

EMMETT

Important? Try crooked.

JUAN

I don't follow man. You said you represent corporations, not government people.

EMMETT

That's it. Corporations are the unscrupulous ones ripping off people around the world.

JUAN

I still don't get it.

EMMETT

A few months back, a famous CEO sneaked to me an interesting comment: "Economics belong to the people. A collective harmony within nature full of communal spirits, all working for the common good, a human world

yearning to grow, including animals, plants, air, water, rocks, minerals---
the breathing earth where every moment is an investment in forever.” A
wonderful, possible, almost platonic ideal!!

JUAN

Man, you say a lot. Maybe that’s your problem. Instead of banging your
wife a lot like you should, you just talk to her.

EMMETT

This man also said, “--against the trend of Nature, modern corporations have
also discovered the deceptive word-- *mine*. Now economics is synonymous
with the word-- *me*.

JUAN

Now I get it. The Golden Rule.

EMMETT

The Ten Commandments? What’s that got to do with it?

JUAN

That’s what my ma told me, “Those with the Gold make the rules.”

EMMETT

Oh, I forgot. The American Dream!

JUAN

I don’t understand why the people who have the money are the ones always
complaining about it.

EMMETT

(overly dramatic)

“Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end, the more
precious the paper becomes.”

JUAN (mimicking)

There’s ma again: “Money is honey, my little black Sonny-----And a rich
white man’s joke is always funny.”

EMMETT

Now you're acting stupid.

JUAN

Hey, don't disrespect me like that again!

EMMETT

Now, who's being personal?

JUAN

I can't use all those million dollar words like you can. You never know, man. I might wanna learn.

EMMETT

So how did you get into Columbia?

JUAN

I'm black. "Mr. Equal Opportunity, Par Excellence." Also, the Chief Admissions person was this sexy broad. After work, we screwed in her office when the janitor wasn't looking.

EMMETT

I don't believe that, but I'll take your word for it.

JUAN

Just like you have to believe that stuff in the office that you don't want to represent.

EMMETT

All the companies I work for care for nothing but their own greed.

JUAN

But they're all like that.

EMMETT

But like you said, I have to represent them. As Helen says, we're actually helping the bad guys win in this world. And it's a damn shame. We now

live in a world in which total honesty and revelations in regards to advertising and warning labels prove detrimental to profits.

JUAN

Helen! Now we know. You do have another bitch that you screw.

EMMETT

Helen is lesbian, and another litigator in the firm. And one of the best minds in the firm. But she's got the courage to come out. She would also like to leave. But she's like all of us. We need the money. And for me to afford all this, and to afford you, I have to believe all these corporate ethics.

JUAN

Look, if you don't like the shit you have, I'll move in and you can have my crib in the South Bronx.

EMMETT

Crib?

JUAN

Street-talk for "apartment."

EMMETT

But you're a student living at Columbia.

JUAN (taken back)

Yeah, but—but I can't afford to live in those dorms.

EMMETT (laughs a little)

So you're working your way through college.

JUAN

You got it.

EMMETT

I'm sorry.

EMMETT starts to feel JUAN's muscular chest.

JUAN

(laughing again)

There you go again. You're so fuckin' polite.

EMMETT

No. I mean this. I'm sorry you have to do this. I know you really need the money.

JUAN turns to EMMETT.

JUAN

Like I can't understand why people use money as an excuse for doing what they really want to do.

EMMETT

So, you don't mind?

JUAN

(sitting up)

Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to be a stripper. I LOVE doing this. And with clients like yourself, hey the money's fuckin' good.

EMMETT

Aren't you embarrassed? What happens if your friends walked in?

JUAN

To a gay bar? I doubt it. But anyway, I LOVE showing off my "ASSets."

EMMETT

An exhibitionist.

JUAN

I would be uncomfortable being in a G-string on let's say – a nude beach. But when I'm dancing on stage, it's totally different. Up there, I'm not me anymore. The Lights shine up my body. Everyone drools when they stare at me. And I'm not me anymore. I'm ACTION.

EMMETT

Maybe you're trying to run away from yourself.

JUAN

Hey, I would love to continue talking, but as I told you, time is money. And I gotta be somewhere else. And I need money for that Columbia degree.

EMMETT

Let me see you again?

JUAN

Baby, you know that's impossible. Even tonight was something out of the ordinary.

EMMETT

But I got the money.

JUAN

I can't. I promised my woman. I already over the limit with you.

EMMETT

I knew you were straight. I think everyone's really heterosexual deep down inside.

JUAN

I don't know. You seem pretty gay to me. Maybe you ain't never know it.

JUAN finishes dressing.

JUAN

Now, ring up your tin soldier so I can get out of this building.

EMMETT sees JUAN to the door. Just before he leaves, JUAN turns around and kisses EMMETT on the side of the face.

JUAN

I gotta say -- it's been kinda beautiful. Ciao.

JUAN exits. BLACKOUT

SPOTLIGHT on EDUARDO, STAGE LEFT. (Back alley of THE WELL, a bar in the South Bronx.

EDUARDO holds a small vial of crack in his hand, as if he is trying to sell it. He sees someone in the distance and shoves it in his coat pocket.

EDUARDO

Ariel!! Yo man, how ye doin? (getting nervous) Hadn't seen you for awhile, Man.....Juan ? Yea, I'll tell him.....Gotta believe me man, I will.....My pocket?

Takes the small jar out of his pocket.

Yeah.. Ah—Ah---- Torres sold it to me?

Takes a few steps forward.

Hey, whattaya doin' with my sweetheart?

He shutters.

It's cool..... I understand, Ariel. Yeah, OK.....See ye around.

He tightens his jacket and slowly walks off.

BLACKOUT

SPOTLIGHT ON ANISSA, STAGE RIGHT. She is a very attractive young lady, wearing a new outfit. She is standing in the hallway, outside of Juan's apartment.

She knocks. When JUAN opens the door, she walks in voluptuously.

JUAN

Ah—ah Too sexy. I told them I wanted a hideous broad---and you do NOT fit that type.

ANISSA

Then I'll go.

JUAN

Come here. You do that, beautiful---and I'll screw you right here on this couch.

“ Yo quiero a chingate ahora”

She slips into his arms, and they kiss passionately.

ANISSA

Not a bad idea. (Releases JUAN and shows off her clothes.) You like? I bought it with that 100 you gave me.

JUAN

And there will be more, baby. Dealing with suits now. Mad cheese!

ANISSA

Why bring that up in front of me. You said you never had any regular customers.

JUAN

He ain't. He hit me off with a big tip.

ANISSA

As big as your dick.

Her hands start falling below his pants.

JUAN

It's a nice dress, baby. But I rather see you buck naked.

They make out passionately.

JUAN

Your body is like water on a hot day, after dealing with them fairy motherfuckers.

She starts to break away.

ANISSA

Then stop hustlin'.

JUAN

But honey, the money's great now. At this rate, we'll stack up quickly.

ANISSA

I bumped into Ariel. He's willing to put you to work.

JUAN

(Angry) What the fuck are you hangin' around with that shithead for?

ANISSA

(Pleading) He saw me in the streets and pulled me aside. Whattadya think I was to do? Run away!

JUAN

The son is vicious. I don't want anymore to do with him, and the same goes for you.

ANISSA

But he likes you sweetheart. And many of his guys are doing him dirty.

JUAN

Do you love me, baby?

ANISSA

(Worried) Why ask me that, sugar?

JUAN

(forces himself upon her) Do you fuckin' love me?

ANISSA

(Starting to cry) Why are you hurting me so? I never see you like this before.

JUAN grabs ANISSA and holds her.

JUAN

Listen. Eduardo and me have our own thing goin' that we're sellin'. That's why we live together. Torres don't know nothin' about it. And sure, yeah, we're scamming Ariel. But you know how much that nigguh makes. I would give anything if I could take home in a week what that nigguh does. That's why Eduardo and me do it.

ANISSA

(crying) Juan, why do you do this stupid stuff. Why the fuck are you tellin' me all this?

JUAN

Because, I'm doin' it for us. Why the fuck do you think I'm doin' all this shit for? Baby, with the stripping, the hustlin', and the crack deals comin' in, we're goin' to get that million dollar Florida house real soon. And when you walk out in the front every mornin', there's that smart lookin' BMW lookin' right at you. Just like in those stupid Super Bowl commercials. But then, we'll be the Super Ones now. But you gotta love me, and you gotta trust me.

ANISSA

I want to, Juan. You know I do. But god—you know, you know—with the way you sell yourself, I keep thinkin' you're cheatin' with another broad---

JUAN holds ANISSA'S face in his hands.

JUAN

When we leave for Florida, we're going to leave here alive. That's why I could never pitch for Ariel again. (hugging her) But Anissa, I promise---I promise. When we get to Florida—and get out of all this mess. No more strippin.'

ANISSA

I love ya, baby.

BLACKOUT

A few days later, in front of THE MET.

EMMETT is in his business suit, on his cell phone.

EMMETT

I'm very sorry dear. I haven't heard from him yet.....Probably with Jeannie.....I am listening, Linda. I just don't have the time to call all over New Haven....Anyway, I have sent him a couple of

messages.....I am not that sure he wants to speak with me..... I know.
I'll call you later.

He puts away his cell phone. He speaks in his angelic light.

(To audience) That was the day Helen told me she absolutely refused to help me with the Monsanto case. As she said, "I did have the young lawyers that can help me." And speaking of "young"... all day that day I couldn't get that sexy Juan out of my mind.

JUAN enters and sits down with a notebook labeled "Juan Ortega-New York Technical College."

EMMETT

I thought a short visit to the MET, even at a late hour, would cure me of that.

EMMETT sees JUAN and crosses to him, noticing the notebook.

EMMETT

I never knew Columbia called itself New York Technical College.

JUAN angrily turns around.

JUAN

I don't know you, man. Fuck off!!

EMMETT

(whispering) I'm staying. Call security.

JUAN (whispering)

Lower your voice. Whattaya want me to do? Take my clothes off in the room? They would really like that.

EMMETT

Not a bad idea. You could compete with some of the bodies in these paintings.

JUAN

All right. Now you know. I'm this poor niggah from the Bronx who don't have no money to go to Columbia. Now that you know that, buzz off.

EMMETT

(whispering softly) Please. Let's go somewhere where we can talk at least.

JUAN

(angry) Fuck, no! I gotta get this done. I gotta a ass-hole teach that's gettin' on my nerves. And I donna know how to write. Man, that fucks me up. I can't seem to get the words to get across what I want to say. Fuck it.

JUAN throws the notebook across the museum floor.

EMMETT

Come home with me, and I will do this analysis for you. I know this painting inside and out.

JUAN

Nah, man. I can't----

EMMETT

And I'll pay you—pay you very well. You know I have the money.

JUAN gets up to leave, but EMMETT prevents his weak attempt.

JUAN

I don't like you stalking me, man, and I promised Anissa I wouldn't get involved.

EMMETT

That's a nice name, Anissa. You love her a lot?

JUAN

(Loud) Why the fuck you think I sell my ass for her?

EMMETT

Don't you see, Juan? Because I like you in a different way, I want the best for you.

(He spies a guard.) Now you've got to come home with me. The guard is walking in this direction. (beat) Let me help you—you and Anissa. I have the financial means. Please—Come home with me. I'll help you with that painting analysis.

Beat. JUAN closes his notebook.

JUAN

You're on.

BLACKOUT

Outside THE WELL, late at night.

Spotlight on EDUARDO, who very quietly emerges out of the shadows. He sees someone in the distance, and starts to take a few steps away, but he cannot escape this confrontation.

EDUARDO

Hi, Ariel..... How ya doin' Man. Yeah, I told him..... Ye gotta believe me..... I did, I did..... Yeah, he will.....Cao

EDUARDO watches Ariel in the distance. Suddenly a look of horror comes over his face. He panics.

EDUARDO

Oh, my God.....No, No

He runs across the front of the stage, exiting SR.

BLACKOUT

EMMETT'S BEDROOM, the same night.

EMMETT and JUAN are in bed, huddled up to each other, as in a painting.

JUAN

See—I said you was really gay.

EMMETT lays back in bed.

EMMETT

You're not my first homosexual experience. Of course, it's been so long ago, I almost forgot how to do it.

JUAN

Word. I agree with that.

EMMETT

I grew up in a boarding school. My father was too busy traveling and he had divorced my mother.

JUAN

Better than the Bronx.

EMMETT

We always took our showers together. That's the way it was at boarding school. And I LOVED taking showers with Ronnie. And one time I got a hard on. I couldn't help it.

JUAN

Bust a nut in the showers?

EMMETT

We snuck into our rooms after lights out, on the week-ends when our roommates were not there. One night he almost raped me and pulled me into bed with him. Told me how to suck it. I didn't know anything then.

JUAN

Still don't.

EMMETT

Chill, man.

JUAN

Now you're actin' like a real homeboy.

EMMETT

I really loved him. There was so much of him I couldn't get enough of. He had your muscles and startling brown eyes. After graduation I kept leaving him these sexy love messages. But—but—I then realized the truth—

JUAN

He was the school drug dealer.

EMMETT

Don't be silly. No, he only wanted my brain. He cared less about me. I practically wrote his term papers for him. He wouldn't have graduated from school unless I did. I guess his cock was his way of paying me for the writing I did for him. I had a pretty lonely senior year at that school.

JUAN

But you had that beautiful private school to grow up in. Hell, where I grew up, there was no place to go and play, like those stupid kids on TV. You see them running around in their big green backyards, swimming in their safe swimming pools, or rowing in their crystal, clear waters. No worry about creepy drug dealers trying to lure you when you're young and dumb.

EMMETT

But at an early age, you still could get lonely or bullied in those so-called beautiful schools.

JUAN

Growing up in the projects is raw, man. You have three strikes against you before you even try to make it in this world. Everyone thinks you're going to grow up to be a thief or murderer. That's why I had to lie about it to you.

EMMETT

You have to stop lying about yourself and face the truth about your life.

JUAN

Easy for you to say. You don't have to lie about yourself. Look at the palace you have here. Nice rosy smelling corridors, not like the halls I grew up in that smelled like piss and garbage. You got a doorman to escort you in the elevator, but in the projects where I live, if anyone wants to escort you in the elevator, it's probably because they want to mug you.

EMMETT

Don't your buildings have proper security?

JUAN

The gangs and the drug lords. They're our security. Hell, in the Bronx, my mother would try to set me down to do homework against the sound of gunfire heard in the surrounding streets.

EMMETT

But that makes you stronger. Don't you see? You've really lived.

JUAN

But here---here. You don't have to worry about nothin'. It's a regular paradise here. And you made it not doing "the nasty" all the time like I do.

EMMETT

That's not totally true. As you know, one of the companies I represent is Monsanto, which has made money by selling to reservoirs a biotech element that was supposed to clean up everything. Instead, Monsanto's product contaminated a lot of reservoirs. Now, Monsanto has come up with a new filtering device that really works. So now they are charging a lot of town reservoirs a major license fee for using this device. So I am helping Monsanto make a lot of money for cleaning up the mistake that they are really responsible for.

JUAN

But that allows you to make big money. Hell, you represent them. You come out number one. Hell, I'd do the same if I was you.

EMMETT

No—you wouldn't. You wouldn't ass kiss all those fellow rich Republicans like I do.

JUAN

I'd let them suck my cock, for all the money they want to pay me—and I bet I've had some rich Democrats do it too. Anyway, I never cared about politics, never voted, and never will.

EMMETT

(sitting up) You're missing the point. You know, I think you've got the most honest job in New York City—at least you give people what they pay for.

JUAN

I don't dig you, man.

EMMETT

No, I mean it. And that's why I got to see you again.

JUAN

I told ya, man---

EMMETT

Please, just one more time. Same price. I really like you.

JUAN

Emmett!!

EMMETT

I know you have a girl friend, so I'm not going to get hung up on you. How can you say "no" to \$700 an hour?

JUAN lies in bed, thinking for a moment.

JUAN

(turning back to EMMETT) All right. One more night.

JUAN jumps out of bed and starts to undress. EMMETT sits up.

JUAN

But no more chasin' after me in the museum.

EMMETT

I can't. I have too much work.

BLACKOUT

JUAN'S APARTMENT. LATER

EDUARDO rushes into the apartment and heads for the bathroom, vomiting. The door flings open and JUAN comes in. He hears EDUARDO, who re-enters.

JUAN

Man, you gotta clean up your shit tonight.

EDUARDO

Ariel wacked Torres tonight. He's dead. I saw it all.

JUAN

What can I tell ya? It happens all the time.

EDUARDO plops himself down on the couch.

JUAN

My jacket, man.

EDUARDO slowly gets up and tries to put his arm around JUAN

EDUARDO

Don't you feel nothin' for Torres? He took the blame for what we did. Deep down, he was a really good guy, you know?

JUAN

Ever since I was three, I never cried for no one!

EDUARDO

With Ariel hard on us, we can't do any sellin.'

JUAN

We stay on the down low for a while. Look, I got this real lonely client that's willin' to pay me a lot of money. I see this guy again Thursday night.

EDUARDO

Action is in love. I know it. Anissa will be pissed when she hears about it.

JUAN

Love's got nothing to do with it. I'm just doing it for the money. And the money's good.

EDUARDO

You met this guy at The Ramrod?

JUAN

Yeah. He lives at Park and 75th. He'll pay me more in the nights ahead, and that will take care of us for awhile, until we start business again.

EDUARDO starts back to the bathroom.

EDUARDO

I hope you're right, man.

JUAN

Don't worry. We just don't pitch right now.

EDUARDO

But what about the money!

JUAN

I told ya I take care of it---

EDUARDO (screaming)

But I know Ariel's gonna raise the price. You got to get me enough money for my own stuff?

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EMMETT'S KITCHEN. Late morning, a few days later.

EMMETT is tying his tie when his phone rings.

EMMETT

(nervously) Yes, Linda.....No that is quite all right. I am going to the office late because I will have to stay late to catch up on some business.....I failed to check..... No, I did not talk to him last night, and I left a note telling him I did not want to be bothered today. We have a very important meeting at the..... Yes, yes....No, Linda, I am not giving it to him.....I.....No, I am not avoiding.....I'll talk to you later.

BOBBIE enters, holding a small overnight bag.

EMMETT

Bobbie, I left you a note under the door telling you not to bother me this morning.

BOBBIE

You and your stupid notes. I am not going to be long.

EMMETT

You're taking more of your personals back to Yale?

BOBBIE

I'm going to Cancun.

EMMETT

Cancun! This time of year. Your classes.

BOBBIE pulls up a chair.

BOBBIE

A thousand. That's all I need.

EMMETT

Bobbie, you've really gone too far this time.

BOBBIE

That's nothing for you. I know you gave Bush tons of money for his last campaign.

EMMETT

That's not the point. You have to earn the money. If you want money for Cancun, then you have to work for it.

BOBBIE

But I am. The money's gonna let me spend a fabulous weekend at Cancun with Jeanne for President's Day. She told me all the big shots from Smith-Barney will be there.

EMMETT

You still don't get it. You really don't get it. It was good scores on the LSAT that got me into Harvard Law School—and good grades that I sweated like hell for—not contacts.

BOBBIE

That's not what mother says.

EMMETT

Bobby, I love you. I do. And I'm trying to help you learn that that charm of yours that won over your instructors in Valley Forge is not going to work in the corporate world.

BOBBIE

I know you like to give these pious lectures of yours so you can pontificate on how to run my life. And I know you mean well. And I love you for that. But in the end you always come through. So are you going to give me the money or not?

EMMETT

(nervous) I'm—I'm---I'm not going to. Not now—

BOBBIE stands, upset.

EMMETT

Look—let me explain—

BOBBIE

I don't want another one of your idiotic sermons—

EMMETT

But don't you see, Bobbie? My giving you the money is not going to help you. Get some part-time job.

BOBBIE

Yeah, being broke is a real big help. Thank you, Dad. Mother says you're a partner and you give all the work to the poor guys right out of law school. You're buddy-buddy with all the rich execs 'cause you're constantly defending them. And you still can't help me out.

EMMETT

Your mother wouldn't last a day in the corporate world. She doesn't know anything about obtaining a partnership in a major firm.

BOBBIE

Look, Dad, as I told you before, I'm trying at Yale. I don't have your brains, but I'm trying. And I am improving. You gotta give me credit for that.

EMMETT

You are, and I'm proud of you for that---

BOBBIE

But I'm still one of the few freshmen at Yale whose father denies him a simple automobile and a very simple credit card. But that's not enough! You gotta punish me some more by not giving me this money. I have a wimp of a father who doesn't even care about his son.

BOBBIE exits.

Beat. EMMETT calls JUAN on his cell.

EMMETT

You have to see me tonight. You promised....I know, but we have to change it for tonight.....I don't care if you have to do that Action crap.....I'm paying you far more than what you get for dancing. Yeah.....Yeah.....I'll call....OK.....I get it. You don't take your cell phone with you when you're stripping.....No, No. I'll leave you a note when I arrive. You know. "When you fix my computer." It's better that way. I don't want them to think there is anything personal.....But tonight.

BLACKOUT

THE WELL, EARLY EVENING

