

Florida

An Opera in Two Acts

[Libretto]

Music by
Randall Eng

Libretto by
Donna Di Novelli

2017

CAST

Florida.....Soprano
Marc.....Tenor
One Dead Mother/Judge.....Contralto
Female Redwood.....Mezzo-soprano
Male Redwood.....Baritone
Redwood Daughter/Technician/Defense Attorney/Diane/Cop.....Mezzo-soprano
Redwood Son/Technician/Prosecutor/Bailiff/Sasha/Cop.....Tenor

ORCHESTRA

Flute (doubling Piccolo)
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb (doubling Bass Clarinet in Bb)
Alto Saxophone in Eb (doubling Tenor Saxophone in Bb and Baritone
Saxophone in Eb)
Bassoon (doubling Contrabassoon)
Horn in F
Trumpet in Bb
Trombone
Percussion (1 player)*
Harp
Piano
3 Violins
Viola
Cello
Bass

*Percussion: Vibraphone, Marimba, Drumkit (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, 2 Tom-toms, Ride Cymbal, Crash Cymbal, Hi-Hat), 2 Woodblocks, 2 Triangles, 2 Suspended Cymbals, Tambourine, Castanets, Congas, Shaker, Vibraslap, Slide Whistle, Large Piece of Paper)

Characters

FLORIDA

An ordinary 16-year old suburban girl considered too sexy for her own good.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Her future hangs around her like the pair of panty hose wrapped around her neck. In Act II, once officially dead, she is the subject of a never-ending autopsy.

MARC

The boy-next-door. Wants one thing and one thing only—Florida. Or someone as much like her as possible.

THE REDWOODS

The Neighbors. They live on their deck, cling to their deck. They watch all, know all, tell all. In Act II they become the Jury.

THE REDWOOD CHILDREN

The offspring. One son, one daughter. They live under their parents' deck.

Additional Characters

SASHA, the **BAILIFF**, the **PROSECUTOR**, the **MALE TECHNICIAN**, and the **MALE COP** are played by the **REDWOOD SON**.

DIANE, the **DEFENSE ATTORNEY**, the **FEMALE TECHNICIAN**, and the **FEMALE COP** are played by the **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**.

The **JUDGE** is played by **ONE DEAD MOTHER**.

TIME: The present.

PLACE: Suburban land surrounding a large redwood deck mortgaged to the Redwoods.

Act I takes place on the Redwoods' deck (center stage) and in Florida's bedroom, One Dead Mother's kitchen, and Marc's bedroom. In Act II, the neighborhood is transformed into a courthouse as the setting for Florida's trial.

The deck is the center of the universe.

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1. Uneasy Gray

[26-year old Florida Fandango awaits re-trial on charges that she conspired to kill her mother. The women's room in the courthouse basement. It is an all-gray environment—Battleship Gray water pipes and heating ducts, Gun Barrel Gray walls. She sits on the sink and blows smoke rings.]

FLORIDA

Let the world be black and white.
I'll play in the uneasy gray—
the hard color of cement
ready to break a knee
or camouflage an ash.
I lose myself in this smoky pall
blown by my own phoenix breath.

Here is home.
Here I'd stay if
it were not for the bailiff
who calls.

2. *Florida Fandango*

[As the sun rises on their suburban landscape, the Redwoods put the finishing touches on their deck. He pounds in one last nail. She watches, with hamburger flipper at the ready.]

MALE REDWOOD

We built it ourselves.

FEMALE REDWOOD

We stained it ourselves.

MALE REDWOOD

We sanded it, drilled it,

FEMALE REDWOOD

assembled and planed it

BOTH

ourselves.

Our deck,
our tree house,
our Winnebago,
idling, calling us home.

FEMALE REDWOOD

It used to be surrounded
by an apple orchard.

MALE REDWOOD

Now all the apple trees
have been corralled
into pick-your-own farms.

FEMALE REDWOOD

They cut down the trees
and put in cul-de-sacs.

MALE REDWOOD

Now instead of apple pie,

FEMALE REDWOOD

there's the girl-next-door,

MALE REDWOOD

cooling on the window sill.

[Lights up on 16-year-old Florida Fandango in her window.]

Florida Fandango!

FEMALE REDWOOD

Florida Fandango!

BOTH

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

FEMALE REDWOOD

She's an open invitation!

She's an open door!

She's an Open Sesame!

She's an open sore!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Ahh, ahh, ohh!

Ahh, ahh, ahh, ahh, ohh!

Ahh, ahh, ahh, ahh, ohh!

MALE REDWOOD

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida, Florida, Florida, Florida!

Florida Fandango!

Florida, Florida, Florida, Florida!

Ahh, ahh, ohh!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

BOTH

Florida, Florida, Florida!

Ahh! Ohh!

Florida, Florida, Florida!

Ahh! Ohh!

A name you can dance to,

not a name you can trust.
A name you can dance to,
not a name you can trust.

Florida Fandango!
Florida Fandango!
Florida Fandango!
Florida Fandango!
Florida Fandango!

FEMALE REDWOOD

[spoken]

She had one too many vowels, if you ask me.

3. *There's a Scream Inside Me*

[16-year-old Florida sits at her window seat, applying nail polish and lipstick.]

FLORIDA

There's a scream inside me—
untranslatable.
I think it's true of most girls.
It has a sound all its own.
It has a sound but knows no words,
no words.

So where does the scream go?
So where does the scream go?

To your fingertips,
Roller Coaster Red.
Bite 'em. Paint 'em.
Press 'em into flesh.
Flash 'em. Slash 'em.
Wave goodbye to Fred.

There's a scream inside me—
untranslatable.
Its cry unheard of, but loud.
A silent gasp of pure breath.
Without a voice, without a word,
it screams.

So where does the scream go?
So where does the scream go?

Into the hottest lips—
Run That Red Light Red.
Lick 'em. Smear 'em.
Pucker up and press.
Pout 'em. Tout 'em.
Cover up what's said.

There's a scream inside me—

Untranslatable,
undebatable,
unseatable,
inescapable.

4. Run That Red Light Red

FEMALE REDWOOD

Run That Red Light Red.

MALE REDWOOD

Run That Red Light Red.

BOTH

Run That Red Light Red.

She's breaking the law with her lips.

5. *Eighty-Eight Steps*

[Marc begins crossing the gravel driveway that divides their identical suburban homes.]

MARC

It takes me eighty-eight steps
to reach her bedroom door;
to ease my back door shut
with a metal-on-metal click;

to slip onto the blue-violet slate
sunk in the worn-out grass;

to cross the gravel driveway
that twists my every foot
into a rumble of rocks;

to mount the concrete steps
and slowly open an identical door
with identical tattle-tale click;

to take the back stairs in nine strides,
and catch my breath,
catch my breath,
catch my breath,
lose my breath at

zero.

FLORIDA

88,
87,
86,
85, 84,
83, 82, 81, 80, 79, 78, 77, 76

75, 74,
73, 72,
71, 70, 69, 68, 67, 66, 65, 64,

63, 62,
61, 60,
59, 58, 57, 56, 55, 54, 53,

52, 51,
50, 49, 48, 47
46, 45,
44, 43, 42, 41, 40, 39, 38, 37,

36, 35, 34, 33, 32, 31, 30, 29,
28, 27, 26, 25, 24,
23, 22, 21, 20,
19, 18, 17
16, 15,
14, 13, 12, 11,
10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1,
zero.

6. I Should Have Moved

*[Lights up on Florida's kitchen. One Dead Mother stares out the window.
Florida runs in, out of breath.]*

FLORIDA

Mom?

ONE DEAD MOTHER

I've been calling you.

FLORIDA

What is it?

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Will you kindly tell me
what the hell the sun is doing,
setting now?
Every minute in the light counts.
Bring on that ultraviolet.

*[Throughout the following, Florida brings candle after candle to the table
until the kitchen is ablaze with light.]*

Night comes with no regard
for our sentiments.
No sense of borrowed time spent.

I should have moved to a place where you pray
for the sun to plunge into the sea,
so you can dive into its warmth,
as you follow its footsteps in.

I should have moved to a land where the sun
like an orange hangs full and ripe
making you sweat yourself new again
to the sounds of surrounding splash.

New England stone is cold.
Every bit of light
it steals to heat its jagged Pilgrim past.

All rocks it is,
all stone-faced,
scolding,
ultra-granite.

[Florida pulls down the shades through which the Redwood Children stare. As she pulls down the shade of one window, they appear in the next.]

Only the sun
deep in my eyes
warms my insides,
makes me forget.

Florida,
so beautiful the name I named you,
Florida,
don't let it set.

[Florida comes up behind her mother and covers her eyes. In a minute, she takes her hands away and One Dead Mother notices the candles for the first time.]

FLORIDA

Dinner with candles?

[One Dead Mother is mesmerized by the table ablaze in candles. The Redwood Children peer into the last window. Florida pulls the shade.]

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Now you're talking sense.
My daughter.
You know, some day,
you're gonna make some man
a lucky wife.

7. *Imagine This Summer*

[Florida's bedroom.]

MARC

Imagine this summer,
close-knit.
Knit as close as polyester tweed,
right next door, right close by,
right here: blue check plaid.

You and me all summer,
entwined, this tight.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

[overheard by Marc]

Florida!

Imagine this summer,
somewhere else,
somewhere far from here.

I'll stay here with all else.
I'll hold down the fort,
but you, I'm sending
somewhere else.

MARC

Florida,
Imagine this summer.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Florida,
Imagine this summer.

BOTH

Imagine this summer,
Florida.

FLORIDA

Imagine this summer?

Hot.
Cold front meeting hot front,
thunderclouds and kicking off bed sheets
all night long.

Hot.
It's not the heat,
it's the stupidity.

Hot. Stupid.
Hellish. Humid.
Hot.
Hot.

MARC

Imagine this summer,
summer,
close-knit.
else,
Knit as close as polyester tweed,
right next door,
right close by:
blue-check plaid.
Imagine this summer.
summer.
Imagine this summer.
summer.

FLORIDA

Imagine this summer.
Cold front meeting hot front,
thunder clouds and
kicking off bed sheets
all night long.
Imagine this summer.

ODM

Imagine this
somewhere
somewhere far
from
here.
Imagine this
Imagine this

8. Summer, Time to Sizzle

[The Redwoods toast the season. While the Redwoods sing, their offspring experiment with a chemistry set under the deck.]

MALE REDWOOD

Summer.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Time to sizzle.

BOTH REDWOODS

Summer in the suburbs.

MALE REDWOOD

What we've been waiting for.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Why we have a deck.

MALE REDWOOD

Sizzle something...soothing.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Sizzle something...cooling.

BOTH REDWOODS

Sizzle something. Swizzle something. Sizzle, swizzle something.

[The Redwood children produce a red cloud of smoke.]

FEMALE REDWOOD

The sun sets redder here.

MALE REDWOOD

It's the smog from the backyard grills.

9. *Blue and Wild*

[26-year-old Florida, in the women's room of the courthouse, blows smoke rings.]

FLORIDA

When I was growing up—
next to the driveway
next to the...driveway—
I thought that we were all
one big carpool.

I didn't know
I was stuck on the side of the road,
with no one slowing down,
and me, late for school.

I started smoking
during my first trial.
A necessary separation,
like the ditch that divides
the highway from the chicory
growing idle on the side,
blue and wild.

I stood with those
left in the cold, smoking,
as the headlights of the oncoming traffic
sped to their hot-house homes.

Outside is as outside does.
Outside is as outside does.
I became one with them
as we huddled against wind and night,
hands cupped around each other's
to save what little light
there was.

10. Looking Out the Window

[Florida and Marc in bed.]

MARC

Looking out the window.
You're always looking out the window.
Every time we have sex,
you leave the bed
and "X" me out
and look away.

FLORIDA

It's so green.

MARC

Staring into treetops.
You're always staring into treetops.
Every time that we make love,
you disappear,
and shove me out,
and stare out there.

FLORIDA

I remember little buds. Blossoms.
All of a sudden—wham—the leaves are all grown.

MARC

So what's the attraction?
Why do you leave?
Why not stay here
with pillows of me?
What's so great about an oak?

FLORIDA

And the blue.

Feeling one with nature.
I find myself in this abundance.
Strange how sex makes you see
you're on your own,

a part of life, and free,
belonging to no one.

FLORIDA

MARC

Free?
Belonging to no one?
Me! Am I no one?

And I'm supposed to let you go?
Say "Bye" and "Don't forget to write"?
No way, no way you're
leaving for the summer.
No way you're
leaving *me* for the summer.
This is no joke.

FLORIDA

An oak, Marc.
You're jealous of an oak.

11. *My First Champagne*

[Florida, away from home, writing in her diary.]

FLORIDA

Dear Diary,
My first champagne.

[A party is in full swing. Florida chats with guests who ask her about her unusual name.]

No, I wasn't named after a state.
The translation is flowered.
You know, as in de-flowered.

[The guests turn and walk away.]

My mother was thinking of how to deliver
the sound of hibiscus in one name.
The breath of gardenia,
the lilt of a tulip,
a floral effusion I'd grow up to claim.

She started with vowels,
the movement of hips,
the sounds made by F—
Fff. Fff.
Two letters that bite on your lips.

[Florida answers more questions from the partygoers.]

No, he wasn't Brazilian.
No, he wasn't Italian-slash-Egyptian.
No, he wasn't Indo-European.
More like Indian-Arctic-Atlantic-Pacific.

[The guests turn and walk away.]

Mom never knew who Dad might be.
"Perhaps the ocean, or the sea"
was how it was explained to me.

So "father's" not a household word,
and origins are somewhat blurred.

Absentee.
Papa Sea.

[Other guests question Florida.]

No, I wasn't named for castanets.
Actually, my last name is a mistake.
My mother was thinking of the flamenco.

My mother had once seen the heels of a dancer
drumming defiance with every tap.
She named me Fandango
to give me that power,
except her translation was right off the map.

Fandango's a slave dance.
The ankles are bound.
They don't leave the ground.
They keep you circling around.

[Guests walk away. Florida picks up her diary.]

And then I walked out,
into the garden,
where I first met Sasha,
who was playing a violin.
I asked him what it was
that sounded so familiar.

He said,

SASHA

The sounds of night set to a fandango.

BOTH

The sounds of night set to a fandango,
set to a fandango,
set to a fandango,
set to a fandango.

12. Where Are Our Children?

MALE REDWOOD

Where are our children?

FEMALE REDWOOD

Did we have children?

MALE REDWOOD

We wouldn't let that slip us by.

[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]

FEMALE REDWOOD

We must have had two, then.

First one, then the next.

MALE REDWOOD

No.

We would have only produced first-borns.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Ahh!

First-borns!

That's what we had.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Where would they be now, I wonder?

The Ivy League?

MALE REDWOOD

Hmm?

FEMALE REDWOOD

Check our check stubs!

That will tell us!

MALE REDWOOD

Yes! Here!

Two tuition payments!

FEMALE REDWOOD

Oh, I do hope they got into the college of their choice.
Tell! Tell!

MALE REDWOOD

Do you really have to ask?

FEMALE REDWOOD

Oh, I knew it.
But...I wish I could picture them.

[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]

Wait—
aren't they why we're here?
I mean, didn't we move here, for them?

MALE REDWOOD

Who said your memory was going?

FEMALE REDWOOD

And there are two, aren't there!
One for each of us!

MALE REDWOOD

Of course.
That way we do our part in keeping the population at zero.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Zero?
How is two, zero?

MALE REDWOOD

Well, it's not.

Two is not zero.
But we are two, and they are two,
so this way when we two die,
they replace us.
They replace us.

Keeping the net gain,

keeping the total population at zero.

FEMALE REDWOOD

They what?

MALE REDWOOD

Zero.

[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]

Two by two,
Just the way Noah had it planned.
Boarding the Ark,
two by two.

Walking the gang plank,
just wide enough for two.
Two lemurs,
two gila monsters,
two us.
To us.

FEMALE REDWOOD

They replace us!

MALE REDWOOD

In a manner of speaking.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Let's not speak of it!
I don't remember this part being in the Bible.
Where are those little bastards!

MALE REDWOOD

Kids!
Who can keep track?

FEMALE REDWOOD

Well, it's dark.
The street lights are on.
They should be home.
Maybe we should call a cop?

MALE REDWOOD

Cops!
See there's another two.
They only come in pairs.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Ring them up anyway.
I'm worried.

MALE REDWOOD

Whom should I say is missing?

[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]

13. Summer Reading

[The Redwood Children read a book.]

MARC

What are you two up to now?

REDWOOD CHILDREN

Shh.

REDWOOD SON

Remember between Junior and Senior years?

MARC

Yeah.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

The summer reading that summer?

MARC

No.

What are you talking about Summer Reading?

Who read Summer Reading?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Whatever.

Anyway.

There was this book.

REDWOOD SON

The most classic of the classics.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Über Summer Reading Book.

MARC

I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

REDWOOD SON

This book.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

This book here.

REDWOOD SON

In this book.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

All the people in this book.

REDWOOD SON

Once every summer,
all the people gather around.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

They gather in this circle
to perform this thing.

MARC

What thing?

REDWOOD SON

This what-we're-going-to-tell-you-about-thing.
Everyone picks from this pile.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Whoever picks the black dot,

REDWOOD SON

the short straw,

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

the marked note—

REDWOOD SON

We forget the details, but this person,

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

every summer,

REDWOOD SON

this person in this book who loses

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

because of the aforementioned short end of the stick,

REDWOOD SON

gets stoned to death by everyone else.

MARC

It's a book about
stoning someone to death,
about murder
and they assigned it to us
for summer reading?

REDWOOD SON

But it's not about stoning.

MARC

You just said it was.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

It's about healing.

REDWOOD SON

Oh, yes, healing.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

How the community heals itself.
How you need to weed out the bad
in order to heal.

REDWOOD SON

Healing, healing.
Ritual cleansing, ritual healing.
Ritual cleansing, ritual healing.

MARC

Heal itself?
A murder heals them?
I don't get it.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

That's why you're in so much pain.

REDWOOD SON

Here.
It's time you caught up.

[They all read.]

14. Madly In Love

[Florida, away from home, writing in her diary.]

FLORIDA

Dear Diary,
I am madly in love
with No One.
Oh, there's a long distance relationship
of long-term duration,
plus a close-by
for the short-term.
But madly in love?
But madly in love?
But madly in love, love, love, love, love, love, love?
No one qualifies.

To be madly in love
with No One
contains an insanity clause
that gives one pause,
wondering why
when I'm in bed
and reach for an arm,
no one complies.
No one complies.

But:
No One makes it possible to be Anyone,
keeps the door open and the seat warm,
allows me always to fill-in-the-blank with a new No One.
Oh, Glorious Absence filled to the brim
with Everyone.

I am so madly in love with No One.
I am so madly in love with No One.
I am so madly in love with No One.
So badly, madly, so radically,
so fanatically in love with the No One
who's as romantically
involved with the No One that's me.

So madly, so madly, so madly
in love with No One.
I'm in love with No One.
I am in love,
I am in love.
I am in love with No One,
I am madly in love with No One,
I am in love with
No One, No One, No One, No One, No One,
No One, No One, No One, No One, No One,
No One, No One, No One, No One, No One.
I am in love with No One.

15. Heal Thyself

[The Redwood Children costume Marc in gloves, hat, etc. They begin to throw stones at One Dead Mother's window.]

MARC

I was healed,
then cut open again.
I was healed,
then left to bleed.
I was healed,
then gravel was poured into my wound,
once been healed,
once been healed.

Once a girl
licked my wounds.
Once a girl
bandaged me tight.
Once a girl
made everything right.
Once a girl,
once a girl.

Heal thyself,
the prophets preach.
Heal thyself,
cause there's no one else.
Heal thyself
the only way you know how to
heal thyself.
Heal thyself.

[The Redwood Children hand Marc a pair of black pantyhose. Marc places the spare key in his back pocket and tests the strength of the pantyhose.]

16. *The Shattered Night*

[One Dead Mother sleeps, dreams.]

ONE DEAD MOTHER

I turn around and I'm sixteen.
How can I be sixteen—again?
I have a daughter who's sixteen.
I'm thinking hard about all this
when I hear an odd...

[tap]

It's Walter Donovan
throwing stones at my window
to get my attention.
I guess I am sixteen.

I'll just walk across the room,
throw open the window,
and climb down the drainpipe.
But before I do,
there's another tap.

[tap, tap]

How many stones did W. Donovan throw?
I take a step and triple taps

[tap, tap, tap]

hit the glass,

[tap, tap, tap]

then taps times four.

[tap, tap, tap, tap]

So what the hell is going on?

[Florida, away from home, sleeps, dreams.]

FLORIDA

What are the birds from *Snow White*
doing in my bedroom,
draping me in cartoon clothes?

But before I can protest,

they're dressing me in layers of light,
white puff sleeves like paper lanterns.
A dress the blue of outdoor Christmas lights.

I'm all aglow and waiting
for my date with Sasha,
expert on the sounds of night.

There are always doors in dreams,
doors that never open.
So I wonder if this is one of those.

But then I see the turning
that sets it all in motion.
A brass knob goes into orbit
around a stifled click.

[Marc opens his back door and crosses the 88 steps to Florida's house.]

MARC

I see her body
framed in the light,
the light of yesterday's storm window.
This is how it starts.
This is how it starts.
I remember the first knock at her door,
the new neighbor come to call.
Me—bringing myself as welcome wagon.
Her—jumping aboard.
I want that first knock again.
I want her to open the door.

I want her to open to me.
I want her to open once more.
Open me up.
Welcome me home.

Open me up
and pour me
into a pool of light
outside her window.

FLORIDA

And as the door starts to open,
I know.
I know by the way it swings,
Marc is on the other side.

I try to push the door shut,
but Marc is pushing, too.
As I press against the door with all my weight,
my dress breaks,
tears and breaks,
as I press,
press against his weight,
weight for weight.

MARC

I want her to open to me.
I want her to open and break.
Open me up,
give me her weight,
press my weight against her weight.
Take on my weight,
press me and weigh me down
and break down with weight,
down with weight.

FLORIDA

Weight on weight.
Press against his weight.
But
then
my dress begins to tear,
tear and break.
The dress breaks,
the dress breaks.
It breaks.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

When I hear the sound of a fifth stone,
 [tap, tap, tap, tap, tap]
I stop dead in my tracks.
 [tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap]
Is there a crowd?
Is there a gang?
Where are all of these stones coming from?

I reach the window.
Now there's a shower of stone
so thick, it's all I see.
I can't see out.

[Marc opens the door to One Dead Mother's bedroom.]

ONE DEAD MOTHER

I stand at the window,
shattered by a rumble
of rocks.

I stand at the window,
choking on
the sound of a crash.
Where is my breath?

I stand at the window,
shattered by
a rumble of rocks.
Losing my breath.
Rattle of death.

The window rattles.

The window shatters.

FLORIDA

The dress gives no protection,
shatters into slivers of glass.

The dress falls off and crashes,
sending out a shower of glass,
shatters away

Slivers of glass.

The dress falls off in pieces,
shatters like a shower of glass.
Weight of the crash.

The dress crashes.

The dress shatters.

MARC

I'm broken and I'm
shattered.
Will she ever open me up?

Open to me?
I'm broken and I'm shattered

Will she ever open me up?
Open to me?

Open and break?
I'm halfway to the rumble,
rattle, and the shower of
rocks.
And halfway into the
shattered night
outside her window.

[End of Act I.]

17. In The Dark

[A funeral. Each character holds a long-stemmed rose. They now appear as a community chorus, not as their individual characters—that is, except One Dead Mother.]

FLORIDA

In the dark,
events transpire.
There comes a blackout,
something's gone.

MARC

What is missing
will become all we want.

REDWOODS

Were we not secrets unto ourselves,
the secrets of others
might not hold such allure.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

If we could see inside our skin,

REDWOOD SON

view our ever-pounding heart,

REDWOODS

we might be at peace with what's within.

MARC

And the unknown

MARC & FLORIDA

might lose its

ALL

power to entice,

MALE REDWOOD & REDWOOD CHILDREN

power to seduce.

FLORIDA, MARC, & FEMALE REDWOOD

Encased in flesh,

MALE REDWOOD & REDWOOD CHILDREN

hidden from itself,

MARC, FLORIDA, & FEMALE REDWOOD

hidden from our view.

REDWOOD CHILDREN

We cut open others

ALL

to dissect the truth.

[One Dead Mother walks past the mourners. She now wears a dress made completely of pantyhose. She collects the roses and luxuriously inhales.]

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Smells like death to me.

[One Dead Mother sits on a metal autopsy table. She taps on the table indicating Florida should sit with her.]

18. Under Arrest

[As Florida sits, two cops come up behind and handcuff her.]

COP # 1

You're under arrest.

COP # 2

For the murder of your mother.

BOTH

We know an inside job when we see one.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Don't be absurd!
She had nothing to do with it.

[beat]

Unless you count
that I moved here for her.

COPS

One.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Unless you count
that she liked
the red shingles
on the white house
at the cul-de-sac,
and so we bought that particular house.

COPS

Two.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Right next to
the boy-next-door.

COPS

Three.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Unless you count
her dating Marc.

COPS

Don't you worry.
We've nabbed him, too.

[The cops exit with Florida. Lights up on the Redwood deck. The Redwoods simultaneously open envelopes that have come in the mail.]

REDWOODS

Jury duty!

19. Jury Deliberations No. 1

[The Redwoods enter the courtroom.]

MALE REDWOOD

I am agog.

FEMALE REDWOOD

I am in awe.

MALE REDWOOD

To think
we have landed
in such a hallowed hall.

FEMALE REDWOOD

To think
that our voices
echo off the wall.

FEMALE REDWOOD

Help me put on this blindfold.

MALE REDWOOD

First you, then me.

[They tie blindfolds on each other.]

BOTH

We are beside ourselves.
We are ready to do justice.
We are ready to play our parts.
We are ready.
We are ready to part.
We are ready.
We are ready to part ways.

FEMALE REDWOOD

I could use a little room.

MALE REDWOOD

I could use a little space.

FEMALE REDWOOD

I have evidence to consider.

MALE REDWOOD

I have testimony to weigh.

FEMALE REDWOOD

I don't know why we are kept in the dark.

MALE REDWOOD

Is it really necessary
for us to play hide and seek?

BOTH

You think anybody will mind if we peek?

[They peek.]

20. Autopsy No. 1

[The medical technicians, wearing lab coats, enter the autopsy room. They take notes on yellow legal pads. One Dead Mother sits watching them from a parallel table.]

MALE TECHNICIAN

She's dented!

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Dented!

BOTH

Dented all over!

MALE TECHNICIAN

She's dented!

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Dented!

BOTH

Dented all over!

MALE TECHNICIAN

Looks like a car roof left out in a hail storm.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

As if she'd been poked with a barbecue fork,

BOTH

to test if she's done.

So dented!

So dented!

[One Dead Mother removes stones from her skin and hands them over.]

MALE TECHNICIAN

You think it's a clue?

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

I think we should take notes.

MALE TECHNICIAN

I'll measure the radii.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

I'll count up each poke.

BOTH

It's as if her skin broke.

21. *She Begged You To Kill*

[Marc, questioned by the Prosecutor.]

PROSECUTOR

This is how it went.
This is what occurred.

She begged you to kill.
She knelt down and cried,
conspired and lied,
promising love.

She wanted her dead,
her mother no more,
if you did the chore.

[The Prosecutor places Florida's diary on Marc's lap and exits. Marc begins to read.]

FLORIDA

July 15th. Number 7.

Dear Diary, Number 7 was the best so far
because Sasha didn't leave after sex,
but slept with me through the night.
The weight of his leg over my leg
was the best kind of weight.

July 17th. Number 8. Number 9. Number 10.

PROSECUTOR

She begged you to kill.
She knelt down and cried,
conspired and lied,
promising love,
love, love, love.
She wanted her dead.
Her mother no more,
if you did the chore.
Forever, ever, more.

MARC

She begged me.
She knelt down.

Promising love,
promising sex.
She wanted her dead.
Her mother no more,
if I did the chore.
Promising forever and ever and more

MARC

She saw me as pawn,
as her means to an end.
She pulled at my heartstrings,
unraveled and spun me tight
like a ring around her finger.

PROSECUTOR

It could lock her up, my son.

How she provided the access.

You had no chance to think.

You were completely seduced.
You were completely seduced.
Seduced, seduced, seduced.

So:
sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.

MARC

Is this key the smoking gun?

So I could enter the address.

And I swallowed the bait,
hook, line, and sink.

A hit man who's been juiced.
I was completely seduced.
Seduced.
Seduced, seduced, seduced.

Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.
Sentence reduced.

22. Autopsy No. 2

[The Technicians continue with the autopsy.]

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Seek and ye shall find.

MALE TECHNICIAN

Seek and ye shall find
what you sought to seek.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Clues of every kind.

BOTH

Huh!
There's a tongue in her cheek!

MALE TECHNICIAN

We should pursue the implications.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

We should inspect the degradations.

MALE TECHNICIAN

This may indicate a language barrier.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

She may have been a carrier
of a linguistic virus

MALE TECHNICIAN

passed on through ovum and gene.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Cheeky!

MALE TECHNICIAN

Cheeky!

BOTH

If you know what I mean.

23. *Readily Available*

[The Bailiff removes dangerous items from Marc—belt, shoelaces, and finally his wristwatch.]

MARC

I can't even keep time?

BAILIFF

That's exactly what we do.
We keep time.
We take time.
You serve time.
You do time.

We are the keepers,
we are the takers.
You serve.
You are the waiter.
Later.

[The Bailiff exits. Marc stares at his wrist.]

MARC

What to do
when time ticks blue?

When I reach under my bed,
there's a time zone that's mine alone.
in letters begging to be read.

[Marc takes a stack of old love letters from Florida, tied up in a red ribbon.]

Re-read and untied and memorized,
each letter open wide.
Flaunting a lipstick seal,
seeming so real
as to still feel warm.

I feel the time race.
Not forward, not ahead,
But back when, back then.
A time that's always red.

Readily available memories
waiting to be opened up.
Every day, a different shade.
Every shade, a different day.
Every shade.

MARC

Jalapeño Pepper Red.
Cherry Dipped In Chocolate Red.
Overflowing Glass of Chianti Red.
Halfway Down Your Throat Tongue Red.

FLORIDA

Red.
Red.
Red.
Red.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Red.
St. Sebastian Arrow Red.
All the Holy Martyrs,
Needing, Feeding, Bleeding,
Blushing, Rushing, Gushing,
Screaming Tabloid Headline Red.

Red.
Red.
Red.
Red.
Red.

[The Bailiff returns, dragging a large bag.]

BAILIFF

It's a crime.
It's a crime. All the mail with your name on it.

MARC

What?

BAILIFF

Happens in high-profile.
Aren't you going to read them?
They'll help pass the time.

[The Bailiff picks one out. Starts reading it.]

BAILIFF

I loved the picture of you on the front page.
I tacked it to the wall of my bedroom.

DIANE & BAILIFF

Do you mind if I keep writing to you?

DIANE

I want you to know I believe you—believe *in* you.

Yours truly,

Diane.

[Marc checks out the back of the envelope.]

P.S. It's Purposely Pink.

[He picks up one envelope after another. Each one from Diane.]

MARC

Cunning Baby Bunting Pink

Pepto Bismol Soothing Pink.

All the dolls and milkmaids

ribboned in their bonnets,

whining, pining, shining,

sighing, trying, crying Pink.

DIANE

Pink.

Pink.

Pink.

Pink.

Pink.

Pink.

24. A Yellow Legal Pad

[16-year-old Florida takes her place at the defense table where she will sit throughout the second act writing on a yellow legal pad.]

FLORIDA

I can't even defend myself?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

That's exactly what I do.

[The Defense Attorney hands Florida a pad.]

Consider twenty-nine lines.

Consider a yellow legal pad.

Consider two pink lines perpendicular to twenty-nine blue.

FLORIDA

[looking at the pad]

A prison of legality expected to contain desire.

The desire to speak,

the desire to blurt.

The desire to shout,

to leak, to assert.

The desire to howl,

the desire to maim.

The desire to loudly proclaim

my innocence to others.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Don't talk. Don't squawk.

Don't speak.

Don't seem to speak.

Whatever goes on in your head,

don't let your thoughts be read by the jury.

And whatever you do,

don't try to whisper in my ear.

FLORIDA

Don't try to whisper in your ear?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Use this yellow legal pad.
This will be your constant companion,
your confidant and right-hand man.
Anything you desire,
anything you desire,
anything you desire,
write it here.

FLORIDA

[to audience]

But desire defies these twenty-nine blue lines.
Desire defies these twenty-nine blue lines.

I write with such pressure,
I can read the dents on the next page.
I write so quickly, I flood those dents with rage.

I write with big block letters,
the way I learned in first grade

[to Defense Attorney]

“That’s not true!
Another lie!”

[to audience]

Then I proceed to the intricacies of detail:
how, when, what, and why.

Still, the desire to conspire remains,
to lean in close to my lawyer
and whisper aloud all the page contains.

My lawyer has other ideas.
There can be no sotto voce.
No shoulder-to-shoulder secrets,
no permission to lean in.
Whatever happened to attorney-client privilege?
How much more efficient
to tilt my head and whisper,
“Liar! Liar! Hey, Mister:
Let me refresh the jury’s recollection.

I was in bed throughout the incident in question.”

PROSECUTOR

Consider this:

[showing the key to the Jury]

The key Florida planted in the back pocket of Marc’s jeans so the patsy could enter her mother’s bedroom and kill her.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Consider this:

[taking the key]

The key an innocent young girl gave her boyfriend so the boy-next-door could come over and do their homework together.

PROSECUTOR

Consider this:

[showing the diary to the Jury]

The Slut’s diary, where she enumerated her sexual conquests, one young boy after another to do her dirty work.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Consider this:

[taking the diary]

An Innocent Girl's diary, stuck between childhood and adulthood. Fatherless, alone. Madly in love with no one.

FLORIDA

Consider this, I say,
I write like I’m on fire.
I write a blue-pink criss-cross of desire.
A screaming criss-cross of desire.

25. *Jury Deliberations No. 2*

[Jury deliberations continue.]

FEMALE REDWOOD

Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.
He did it but she made him do it.

MALE REDWOOD

Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.
He did it but she made him do it.

MALE REDWOOD

Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.
He did it but she made him do it.
A done deal come undone.
Did it but didn't.

Marc said
he didn't do it.
He did it,
did it, but didn't.
He did it.
He said
she made him do it.

He said he did it.
He said she made him do it,
but he didn't do it.
A done deal come undone.
He said he did it,
but he didn't do it.
A done deal come undone.
She made him do it.
He said she made a done deal
come undone.
She made him come undone.
She made him come undone.
She made him come undone.
She made him come undone.
She made him come undone.

FEMALE REDWOOD

A done deal come undone.
Did it but didn't.
Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.
He did it but she made him do it.

He did it.
He said
she made him do it.
Marc said
he didn't do it.
He did it,
did it but didn't.

Marc said he didn't do it.
He said he did it, but he didn't.
He didn't do it.
Did it but she made him do it,
Marc said.
A done deal come undone.
Did it but didn't do it.
She made a done deal come undone.
She made him do a done deal.
She made him come undone,
come undone, come undone
come undone.
She made him come undone,
come undone,
come undone.

26. Autopsy No. 3

[The never-ending autopsy continues.]

MALE TECHNICIAN

We've weighed the heart.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Busted and useless.

MALE TECHNICIAN

Check.
The liver.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Toxic and suspect.

MALE TECHNICIAN

Check.
The kidneys.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Drowned in their own juices.

MALE TECHNICIAN

Check.
The contents of her stomach.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Not yet.

MALE TECHNICIAN

Then let's get to it,
so that we can conclude
about her eating habits
at the time of her demise.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

What's this?

MALE TECHNICIAN

What's that?

[They begin pulling out pages after pages.]

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

A romance novel.

MALE TECHNICIAN

And another.

A constant and steady diet
of bodices ripped
and bloomers rent.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

A veritable riot
of Victorian suitors
who need to repent.

MALE TECHNICIAN

On the heath and on the farm.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

Girls with curls and girls with charm.

MALE TECHNICIAN

Men with swords and boys with lace.

BOTH

Overcooked and underpaced.

ONE DEAD MOTHER

You seemed to have forgot:
there's a trial going on.
Shouldn't you hasten your report?
Enter it into the record?
Categorize and sort?

MALE TECHNICIAN

Go on, go on.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

“He whispered in her ear.”

[One Dead Mother picks up the yellow legal pad.]

ONE DEAD MOTHER

Here! Here!

[She exits.]

MALE TECHNICIAN

And then? And then? And then? And then? And then?

FEMALE TECHNICIAN

“She could no longer stand the suspense.
She had to know the answer to their questions.”

[They continue to read.]

27. *Over and Over*

[26-year-old Florida, in the Women's Room of the courthouse, blows smoke rings. Sings to a woman in a hospital bed. It is revealed to be One Dead Mother at the end of the song.]

FLORIDA

Twice a week, after school,
in my strawberry pinafore,
I moved from bed to bed.
Smoothing a forehead,
soothing the sick—
any Florence Nightingale chore.

One old woman, lost in pillows,
half-out, half-in delirium,
stopped me from my duty,
stopped me cold.
She would hardly live long enough to breathe again.
Still, she raised his empty hand to her lips.

Over and over,
to her lips and back.
She traveled this ancient, classic arc.

The slow curve of comfort,
hand to lip,
flesh to flesh.
Forgetting all else
but hand to lip,
skin to mouth,
flesh to flesh.
Drawing a red-flared arc,
waving in the smoke-filled dark.

Over and over and over and over,
to her lips and back.
Over and over and over and over.
Over and over and over.

I thought it my duty to save her, so I said,

"Psst! Missus! Psst!
Missus, it's death touching your lips."

She looked at me and said,

[One Death Mother sits up. Grabs her arm.]

ONE DEAD MOTHER

"That's where you're wrong, little girl.
This—this is mother's milk to me."

*[One Dead Mother hands the cigarette to Florida, who takes a puff. ODM
gets up and leads Florida into the courthouse.]*

28. Judgment

[One Dead Mother appears blindfolded with her own pantyhose. She holds the demeanor/image of Justice.]

What justice cannot see—

what justice will not see—

[One Dead Mother removes the blindfold.]

what data cannot indicate:

a voice stifled,
a scream smothered,
a breath taken.

What the autopsy could not measure:
a hollow beneath the ribs,
a womb emptied,
where once the defendant was kept,
where once she swam.
Where once a daughter in the darkness leapt,
mother and daughter once leapt.

[She takes off the blindfold.]

Has the jury reached a verdict?

MALE REDWOOD

We have...

FEMALE REDWOOD

...not.
We have...

MALE REDWOOD

...reached an impasse.

REDWOODS

We're split down the middle.

JUDGE

Do you think more time
will help you to agree?

MALE REDWOOD

Yes.

FEMALE REDWOOD

No.

JUDGE

I see.
Then I declare this a mistrial.

I believe
there is no reasonable hope of
getting a conviction in this case
where reasonable people differ.

Florida, Florida, Florida.
You look at me,
but you're not sure who you see.
Your nerves are frayed.
Your fear is warranted.
I release you into the world again.
Again.

Now starts your real trial,
where you not only are freed,
you are only free,
you are only free,
you are only free.

As you embark upon this journey,
may good fortune be with you,
and Godspeed.

*[One Dead Mother walks off into the sunset. Florida starts to walk off, but
runs smack into a wall of people hidden behind newspapers.]*

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

[lowering her newspaper]

Not so fast, Miss Goody Two-Shoes.

29. Sea of Newspapers

[The Redwood Children physically restrain Florida from leaving.]

REDWOOD SON

Do you hear the buzz?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

See the news?

BOTH

Listen to your local talk show host?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Read the papers?

REDWOOD SON

Watch TV?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

You're on at six.

REDWOOD SON

You're on at five.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

ABC!

REDWOOD SON

CBS!

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

NBC!

BOTH

Full court press!

FLORIDA

Excuse me, I was just leaving.

REDWOOD SON

Here.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Here.

REDWOOD SON

Here.
It says here.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Here.

REDWOOD SON

Here.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

The jury foreman winked at you.
He blinked a wink
to make a link with you.

REDWOOD SON

When the Judge was speaking,
and the court room was reeking
with anticipation,
the old shark sent you
a lover boy wink.

BOTH

The headline reads:

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

“She seduced the jury,
like she seduced Marc.”

REDWOOD SON

“She seduced the jury,
like she seduced Marc.”

BOTH

“She seduced the jury,
like she seduced Marc.”
“She seduced the jury,
like she seduced Marc.”

She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.
She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.
She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.
She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.

FLORIDA

Get out of my way.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

It says here:
you should be re-tried.

REDWOOD SON

It says here:
you should be refried.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

The sheriff cometh.
The jig is up.

REDWOOD SON

We all know your M.O.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

You seduced Marc.

REDWOOD SON

You seduced the jury.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Who's safe from your seductive ways?

REDWOOD SON

Who's next?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Who's next?

REDWOOD SON

Who's next?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Citizen's arrest!

REDWOOD SON

Citizen's arrest!

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Citizen's arrest!

REDWOOD SON

Citizen's arrest!

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Citizen's arrest!

REDWOOD SON

Citizen's arrest!

[Florida attempts to run away but runs smack into the Bailiff, who escorts her to the women's room where she will await her second trial. The Redwood Children look at their newspaper.]

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Hey! Check out the society page.

REDWOOD SON

In a jailhouse wedding yesterday, Marc and Diane were united!

BOTH

Married. Forever.
And we weren't invited!

30. Family Meeting, Part I

FEMALE REDWOOD

Time to call a family meeting.

REDWOOD SON

Because we need to know:

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Because we are perplexed

FEMALE REDWOOD

The question we need answered is:

What were you thinking?

REDWOOD SON

Why were you winking?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

What were you thinking?

ALL

Why were you winking?

REDWOOD SON

Explain your behavior.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

If you don't mind.

FEMALE REDWOOD

We really are curious.

REDWOOD SON

And so is the press.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

They also want to know:

What were you thinking?

FEMALE REDWOOD

Why were you winking?

REDWOOD SON

What were you thinking?

ALL

Why were you winking?

[Microphones descend.]

31. There, There

MALE REDWOOD

An exact translation would be,
"There, there."
What I meant was,
"It will all be over soon."
But not quite.
What I really meant was,
"There, there. There, there. There."

As she stood, I could see her shake.
I could see the fear in her eyes.
I have a daughter.
I know the words that comfort are
"There, there. There, there. There."

The long charge was read by the judge.
"Hear ye, hear ye."
We knew the verdict.
We knew her future.
Why shouldn't she?
Why shouldn't she?

"There, there. There, there. There."
What I really meant was,
"There, there. There, there. There."
Can't really translate,
"There, there. There, there. There."
Untranslatably,
"There, there. There, there. There."
A body's gesture
can send a message through the air.

On my own, I would stop her pain,
try to soothe from across the room.
I have a daughter.
I know the feelings of despair.

So slightly, so slowly,
I gave her a sign.

"There, there."
I winked.

"There, there. There, there. There, there. There, there. There."

32. Family Meeting, Part II

FEMALE REDWOOD

There!
There!

MALE REDWOOD

What?

FEMALE REDWOOD

My wedding ring.
(grunt)
It's embedded in my flesh.
(grunt)
My skin has grown around it.
My bones won't let it go.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Try a little soap.

REDWOOD SON

Add a little water.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Try some soap.

REDWOOD SON

Add a little soap.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Try a little water.

REDWOOD SON

Add some soap.

FEMALE REDWOOD

There.
Let's start again there.
You can stay here.
I'm leaving for elsewhere.
I'm leaving for elsewhere.

I'm leaving for...

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Elsewhere sounds good.

REDWOOD SON

Except tomorrow's a school day.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

So looks like we stay.

[The Female Redwood exits.]

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

There goes Mom.

REDWOOD SON

Bye, Mom.

There goes Mom.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Bye, Mom.

REDWOOD SON

What were you thinking?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Why were you winking?

REDWOOD SON

What were you thinking?

REDWOOD CHILDREN

Why were you winking?

MALE REDWOOD

Perhaps I'll reassess,
reconsider,
sell my story to the press.

REDWOOD SON

Perhaps you should do that somewhere else.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Go off on your own.

REDWOOD SON

Get some perspective.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Distance.

REDWOOD CHILDREN

We're told it helps.

REDWOOD SON

Drop us a postcard.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Now and then.

[The Male Redwood exits. The Redwood Children alone on the deck.]

REDWOOD SON

We built it ourselves.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

We stained it ourselves.

REDWOOD SON

Our deck.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Our deck.

REDWOOD SON

Our deck.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Our deck.

REDWOOD SON

Our deck.

BOTH

Our deck.

[As the Redwood Children become their parents, we see 26-year-old Florida walk into the women's room. The bailiff stands outside, guarding the door.]

33. De-Voweled

FLORIDA

In a new place where nobody knows me,
I wait for the gavel to call me.

A new life needs a new name.
Born again, I will harness my hips.
I will swallow the vowels
that mark me.
For there's no need of vowels,
less need of lips.

I pull off an "A" and turn "florid".
I lose an "I" and am "flor'd".
Take away the "F" and I'm "lord".
Lord of what?
Just myself and how I wait
in this new town,
hoping to go unnoticed till it's over.

I trash the "go",
and try to stay put as "fandan".
But it isn't enough,
so I toss the "fand",
and turn into "an".
Ann Lord.

A simple girl with a simple name,
no longer round, but abbreviated.
Like the gray walls of this women's room
where I wait and pace,
captive, domesticated.

I remember a life lived once before.
What it was like to let loose
that vowel of pleasure,
that brought me wisdom
that once taught me the truth.

[As the vowel of pleasure escapes, the Bailiff enters to take her into the courtroom for her second trial. She stifles the vowel.]

Ahh.

34. Coda: Seduction Chorus

[Everyone re-enters as a community chorus.]

ALL

Seduction.
Who seduced you?
Seduction.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Sexual tension seeps,

FEMALE REDWOOD

sexual longing cries out to be heard.

FLORIDA

Seduction.

MARC

Who seduced you?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Sexual tension seeps,

FEMALE REDWOOD

sexual longing cries out to be heard.

MARC

Seduction.

FLORIDA

Who seduced you?

FEMALE REDWOOD

She had a way with men.

MALE REDWOOD

She telegraphed her sighs.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Sexual tension leaps,

FEMALE REDWOOD

sexual longing

REDWOOD SON & MALE REDWOOD

defies laws and boun-

FEMALE REDWOOD & MARC

-da-

FLORIDA & REDWOOD DAUGHTER

-ries.

REDWOOD SON

She fooled us all at once.

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

She hid behind her lies.

MARC

Right here in the courtroom.

Right before your eyes.

GROUP I

Sexual tension creeps,
sexual longing resides
under it all.

Sexual tension creeps,
sexual longing resides
under it all.

GROUP II

Seduction, seduction.
Who seduced you?
Seduction.

Seduction, seduction.
Who seduced you?
Seduction.

WOMEN

Who seduced you?

MEN

Was it Marc with his dimple?
Who seduced you?

WOMEN

Was it Mrs. Redwood in her nightie?
Who seduced you?

MEN

Was it the Father Figure?

ALL

Or was it the Queen of the Trial?

Who seduced you?

Who seduced you?

Who seduced you?

Who seduced you?

MALE REDWOOD

Was it the Judge?

FEMALE REDWOOD

Was it the jury?

REDWOOD SON

Was it the stranger who never spoke?

REDWOOD DAUGHTER

Was it the Judge?

MARC

Was it the jury?

FLORIDA

Was it the headline marching cross the page?

MARC

Was it her bedtime taking center stage?

FLORIDA

Was it the headline shouting loud with rage?

MARC

Was it her bedtime frankly underage?

ALL

Who seduced you?

Who seduced you?

Who seduced you?

Who seduced you?

Sexual tension creeps,
sexual longing resides under it all.

Ahh.

Ahh.

Sexual tension creeps,
sexual longing resides under it all.

Ahh.

Ahh.

Who seduced you?

FLORIDA/ ODM

Ahh.

[End.]