

THE DAVID DANCE

By
Don Scimé

THE DAVID DANCE

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THE DAVID DANCE

The David Dance was originally produced by Brave Lad Productions at the 78th Street Theatre Lab in New York City for limited engagements (October 21st – 27th, 2002 and May 1st – 11th, 2003) and presented as part of The New York International Fringe Festival (a production of The Present Company) at the Bank Street Theatre NYC August 9th – 21st, 2003. It was directed by Karen Case Cook. Stage manager: Therese Costello. Lighting Design was by Louis Lopardi. The cast was as follows:

Chris.....Christopher Williams/Dean Strange/James Bozer
David PatroneDon Scimé
Kate PatroneTeresa Kelsey
June, Mrs. P., Nun..... Monica Steuer
Margaret.....Chloe Glickman

The regional premiere of *The David Dance* was produced by The Trumpet Vine Theatre Company in Arlington, Virginia, May 18th – June 10th, 2006. It was directed by artistic director Vincent Worthington. Costume design by Cat Martin; sound design by Jeff Kellum; lighting design by Connor Dale. The cast was as follows:

Chris.....John Hefner
David PatroneDon Scimé
Kate Patrone.....Liesyl Franz
June, Mrs. P., Nun..... Anne Paine West
Margaret..... Elena Flores

The David Dance was presented as part of the State University of New York College at Geneseo main stage Theatre department on February 10th–15th, 2015 in the Robert E. Sinclair Theatre. It was directed by Don Scimé. Set design: Steven H. Stubblefield; lighting design: Johnnie Ferrell; assistant lighting: Chris Quigly; costumes: Bonita Stubblefield; stage manager: Lauren Costello; assistant stage manager: Julia Cameron; publicity: Joshua Shabshis; dramaturg: Brodie McPherson. The cast was as follows:

Chris.....Dennis Caughlin
David PatroneConnor McLoughlin
Kate Patrone.....Emily Bantelman
June.....Brittani Samuel
Mrs. P..... Yvette May
NunLea Collazo
Margaret.....Lea Pandoliano
Joe Voiceover Adam Brown
Mom VoiceoverIsabella Dixon

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CAST: 5 Women, 2 Men

DAVID PATRONE	male, 36
CHRIS	male, 30s
KATE PATRONE	female, 39
JUNE HANDLY	female, 30s, a radio evangelist
MRS. P	female, a day care director
NUN	
MARGARET	Brazilian, about 9

The voice-overs in the show can be pre-recorded by actors or have two actors alternating voices.

TIME: The present.

PLACE: Buffalo, New York and Brazil.

Set:

This play has been performed with a set as simple as a bare stage, three chairs and two large blocks. The actors move the chairs around to represent various locales. The action of the play takes place in the past and the present.

Music:

Piano music in the play is by Robert Schumann (1810-56), German composer. They are selections from “Scenes from Childhood” and “Album for the Young”.

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A radio station in Buffalo, New York. Two a.m. in late February. The stage is dark. We hear the following voice-over in the darkness:

DAVID. Goodbye, Buffalo. I guess the powers that be, ruled us out... I'll just say good night as we sign off for the last time. It was... really great talking with you. Stay warm under the covers... have a pleasant night. *(We hear a pre-recorded station identification.)*

RADIO (V.O.). This program has been a broadcast of W.Y.B.R. community radio. Join us tomorrow at this time for "Truck Talk with George and Friends"...

(The lights slowly come up to reveal a dimly lit area stage left. It is a small, messy community radio station with run-down equipment. Sitting motionless in a chair, we see DAVID PATRONE, aka "DANGER DAVE," 36. He is unshaven and wears jeans, a flannel shirt and snow boots. He has removed his headphones. On his desk is a small blue, plastic toy synthesizer and a small box of his stuff. His head is turned away from the upstage area. DAVID is lost in his own world. CHRIS, 38, DAVID's radio engineer and ex-boyfriend, shuts things down in his "booth" upstage. CHRIS crosses down to DAVID and stands at a distance.)

CHRIS. Good show, Kiddo. *(Pause. David looks sullen. Chris places a cheap mug that says "Bon-voyage" with a big bow on it next to David.)* Larry says "Good luck. We'll miss you." He would have told you himself, but... *(Pause.)* OK, I'm lying. He didn't. That's from me... *(Chris looks at David.)* How's it been? You sleeping? Still looking at everyone like your Norman Bates? *(Pause. David looks deadpan at Chris.)* I left a couple of things at your place. I can pick them up later... I guess this is it... I think this is best, don't you? *(Pause. Chris moves to exit stage right, then looks at David.)* If you'd just say one thing... *(David says nothing. Chris sighs and exits off stage right. David's fingers gently touch the keys on the toy*

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synthesizer. Pause. David's sister, KATE, enters stage left and observes David. She is 39, but wears a child's poofy, white nylon snow jacket, knitted gloves and snow cap.)

KATE. Still feeling sorry for yourself, David?

DAVID. *(Smiling.)* You never leave me alone.

KATE. I wish I could. But you always think of me – even if you say you don't want to. That's what sisters do – we gnaw on your brains. *(Pause.)* Why is it that every time you think of me I'm wearing this same, dorky, Seventies, white vinyl snow jacket? I haven't worn this since I was fourteen. I feel like a blimp. You couldn't imagine me dead in a better outfit?

DAVID. It's just the way I'll always remember you, Katie. You look fine. Beautiful. You look like you.

KATE. Thank you. I think. I know the reason why, though. It doesn't matter. I'm dead anyway. Who am I going to impress? *(Pause.)* How are Mom and Dad?

DAVID. Dad has started building birdhouses since you left – one for every post on the fence in the back yard. That's all you hear is the hammering whenever I stop over.

KATE. They'll get over it.

DAVID. What does that mean?

KATE. Never mind. Sorry.

DAVID. How could you say that?

KATE. I said I was sorry. *(Pause.)*

DAVID. I just need time to get things together.

KATE. You're thirty-six years old!

DAVID. That's not old.

KATE. I know, but I'm much older than you –

DAVID. Only three years –

KATE. Three and three quarters! Besides, anything close to forty could be too late... I only say that because when I was thirty-six, I still didn't know my ear from my elbow. But you – there are better designs. You already achieved some of them. Remember?

DAVID. What am I supposed to do now?

KATE. You know.

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DAVID. I need you to help me!

KATE. I can't anymore, David! I'm dead. And no matter what you think, I'm never coming back again. *(Kate exits. Blackout.)*

(Flashback. Three months earlier. We see radio stations on either side of the stage. Stage right is a radio station in Florida. Stage left is a radio station in Buffalo. We hear the following voice-over and some newsy sounding music. JUNE enters stage right.)

RADIO (V.O.). You're listening to "Inspiration in the Late Evening" with your host – family and youth counselor, June Handly. Brought to you live from Gainesville, Florida. Tonight we continue our discussion on "Matters of the Heart".

(Lights come up on JUNE in her radio station in Florida. This is much more upscale than the one in Buffalo. We see JUNE HANDLY, 36, an attractive woman, prepare herself, and then speak with calm sincerity.)

JUNE. In a recent ruling, a Miami judge declared, “any attempt to deny children a home headed by same-sex partners should be ruled unconstitutional.” *(Beat.)* Well, my concern, Bob, is only for the children. That's all I care about. These kids will be raised without a complimentary male and female influence, saturated in a lifestyle – *(She stops herself. Beat.)* They just don't have the best chance. I don't mean to be hateful. People will say it anyway. But I have always been compassionate to those not fortunate enough to have the normal, full lives of families and heritage that come with being heterosexual. *(During this we see David digging into a sloppy sandwich, his feet up, as he listens calmly. He dials a number on his phone.)* It hurts my heart and I know it hurts God's heart. That's why I encourage you if you know someone on this path, or if you, yourself are lost in this way of life – especially those in our youth ministry – remember: God can grant you the strength to make you straight – or at least completely celibate. If anyone has any questions, we'd love to hear from you. The number is – *(We see David toss aside his sandwich and is on the phone.)* ... And this is David in Buffalo, New York.

DAVID. Hey, June. This is "Danger" Dave Patrone from my radio show "Gay Talk".

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JUNE. Who? (*June looks out, as if to communicate to her producer, Bob.*)

DAVID. I'm the host of a local, community radio show called "Gay Talk". We have an open discussion and debate of local gay news, topics, entertainment – mostly fluffy stuff – for everyone here in western New York. (*June waves Bob off and decides to take David's call.*) In fact, we're talking live on the air on my show right now and I'm on yours.

JUNE. Clever. Could we get to the point, David?

DAVID. I caught your show yesterday and I was wondering if you'd be willing to answer a few minor questions – just for clarification?

JUNE. What is it you'd like to know?

DAVID. Well, yesterday on your show you told a gay teenager to seek reparative therapy.

JUNE. Yes. For listeners who don't know, that's conversion of sexual orientation.

DAVID. Just wondering, is the kind of therapy you recommend endorsed by the American Psychological Association?

JUNE. Well, up to twenty-five to fifty percent of patients report "significant improvements."

DAVID. But is it a fact that patients must sign a waiver before they're treated because the "significant improvements" are actually clinically unproven?

JUNE. There is some margin of error in all types of therapy.

DAVID. Did you choose to be straight?

JUNE. What?

DAVID. Let's say, just for arguments sake, someone, a group, was trying to convince *you* that you should have an undeniable attraction to... Pamela Anderson.

JUNE. (*Amused.*) Excuse me –!

DAVID. Let's say you *could* change your behavior to lust for Pamela, even change your thinking, but that wouldn't change your real desires for David Hasselhoff. You become depressed... mentally unstable, even suicidal. Because you know deep down you don't have the hots for Pam and on the inside you're about as gay as Donna Reed.

JUNE. With everything there's a struggle. Those who want change in their lives have a right to seek it.

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DAVID. With young people it's very important to give them all the facts.

JUNE. I agree. That's why –

DAVID. So you agree we should give facts?

JUNE. The Bible, David – if you would let *me* talk – clearly states "No man is to lie with another man".

DAVID. Yes! That's a fact. Thanks for bringing him up 'cuz... *(He searches through a drawer, pulling aside a sneaker, an old lunch, a "Butt Patrol" magazine. June reacts to the strange noises on the other end. David pulls out a Bible.)*

DAVID. I just so happen to have... A handy dandy Bible. Mind if I quote some other passages?

JUNE. Actually, I'd like to move on to our next caller –

DAVID. Leviticus. Part of the Holiness Code – also includes rules for burning bulls, sheep, goats, doves, pigeons. Burn any bulls today, June?... "Anyone who finds mildew in his house must go and tell the priest about it." *(Mimes phone.)* Hey, God, can't we just use bleach?

JUNE. I suppose now you'll tell me Jesus never spoke against homosexuality.

DAVID. Well, there are parts of the Bible that potentially affirm gay relationships – Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan –

JUNE. Show me where –

DAVID. "The soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul –"

JUNE. Scripture twisting!

DAVID. "Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him for he loved him as he loved his own life..." "Your love for me was more wonderful than that of women"... They kissed each other and wept with each other."

JUNE. Strictly interpretive.

DAVID. But they do kiss. Look, there are gay Christians who probably could argue this better than I could.

JUNE. *(Attempting to close.)* Not true Christians. Thank you, David –

DAVID. I just think instead of potentially harming gay kids – who have enough grief in their lives –

JUNE. Thank you, David –

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DAVID. It might be more helpful and cost effective if fundamentalist therapists sought therapy themselves in order to resolve their heterosexist reproductive superiority issues. (*The "Inspiration in the Late Evening" music comes up.*)

JUNE. (*Calmly.*) And we'll be back with more *hopeful* listeners after this. (*June has cut him off. We see June glare out at Bob. She exits.*)

DAVID. June? June? (*To his listeners.*) Sorry, folks, but that makes me wanna puke... (*David makes a loud puking noise. David picks up a paper with announcements. He puts on country music and slips into a Texas twang.*) Cactus Kickers, Buffalo's own gay country western dancing club, will meet Wednesday, Buddies Bar. 7 p.m.. Latecomers will be lassoed and branded. (*Touches his ass, making a branding sound.*) Well, we're out of time here on "Gay Talk". Please join us tomorrow for our ongoing discussion of "Body Piercing – Fashion or faux-pas?" Be sure to call in with your questions or comments. We'd love to hear from you. This is Danger Dave Patrone. Thank you very much and have a good gay night! (*David turns on loud rap music and dances in his cowboy hat. Chris steps into the studio from upstage, watches David dancing for a moment.*)

CHRIS. Phone call for Danger Dave! (*David stumbles, surprised.*)

DAVID. What?

CHRIS. Phone call. A listener.

DAVID. Oh... uh... Thanks! (*David looks incredulous and slides past Chris awkwardly to upstage area. David picks up phone upstage.*)

DAVID. Hello?

BARTENDER (V.O.). Danger Dave! This is Joe Palermo over here at Buddies Bar and Grill. I don't know who you are, but I just wanna' say – your show rules!

DAVID. Thanks!

BARTENDER (V.O.). So long, Buddy! (*David hangs up. The phone rings again immediately.*)

DAVID. W.Y.B.R..

CALLER NUMBER TWO (V.O.). Is this Danger Dave?

DAVID. Yeah.

CALLER NUMBER TWO (V.O.). Hey, faggot, what the fuck do you

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think you're doing insulting June like that? You are going to Hell, faggot! Faggot! Faggot! Faggot! *(David secretly observes Chris. Chris is preoccupied, turning things off downstage.)*

DAVID. Thanks for listening! I'll send an autograph... *(David hangs up. The phone continues to ring. David pauses and pulls the plug on the phone. David crosses back down to Chris. David avoids Chris's gaze throughout this conversation. David starts cleaning up.)*

CHRIS. That was really good. What you did on your show. I liked it.

DAVID. Really?

CHRIS. Yeah. You had her running scared. You didn't notice?

DAVID. I don't usually do stuff like that.

CHRIS. I know. That was a good surprise.

DAVID. *(Speechless.)* Yeah... well... She gives me a rash. A big, pimply, hairy, butt rash! *(Realizing his over-enthusiasm, embarrassed.)* I... um... I'm sorry... I forgot your name.

CHRIS. *(Offering his hand.)* I'm Chris. Your new technical assistant for the next few months. Tonight's my first night... Mark's on vacation... in Florida.

DAVID. Oh. Oh, God! Yes, I'm sorry. I must not have been paying attention again.

CHRIS. No, it's OK. When I came in you were so intense – working on your "facts" probably – I just figured that I'd introduce myself later. *(Pause.)* I'm a really big fan.

DAVID. Really?

CHRIS. Yeah. It's about time this town got its own gay radio show. You remind people around here that we exist. Yeah – "Buffalo Pride"...

DAVID. I know how hard it can be when you're a little bit... different.

CHRIS. To me you're like Mr. "Super Gay" here. You must be a star down at Buddies.

DAVID. They... uh... don't know who I am.

CHRIS. You're brave to make this happen – right here in little ol' Buffalo.

DAVID. "Brave" is... Uh... A pretty strong word.

CHRIS. I don't think so. I mean... you could be working at the Radio Barn.

DAVID. Is... that where you work?

CHRIS. I manage the one in the Boulevard Mall. In my spare time I fill in

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on drums for an all-lesbian rock band. They call themselves Butch and the Cassidys. ... They're still working on the name. I'm not an official member – just until they find another lesbian.

DAVID. That sounds like fun. *(Pause. David smiles, interested, then gets nervous and busies himself, trying to hide from Chris.)*

CHRIS. You don't remember me, do you?

DAVID. What? *(David preoccupies himself.)*

CHRIS. We met once before. A few years ago. You probably don't remember. *(David bends over, hits his head on desk.)*

KATE. God, it's colder than a witch's titty out there! *(Kate comes bursting in. She is dressed as her adult self this time.)* Oh, I'm so sorry. I hope I'm not disturbing –

DAVID. Katy, what are you doing here?

KATE. I know. I'm sorry. I had to speak to you about something. You know me – always in a hurry.

DAVID. Chris, this is my sister, Kate. Chris is our new technical assistant.

KATE. Nice to meet you. You look familiar...

CHRIS. I met you at your wedding. I'm not related or anything. I was just there for other reasons and you ... Never mind.

KATE. Yes! Of course! Now I remember you! How funny – *(Kate gives David a look and mouths silently to him, "He's cute!")*

CHRIS. Your brother was brilliant on his show tonight.

DAVID. No –

KATE. I know, but I couldn't hear all of it this time, David. My car radio conked out on the way down here. It's been like that for a while. I don't know what happened. Mom and Dad will tell me all about it. *(She stands next to David, her arm around him.)* They listen every night and record it. We're all so proud of him. "Our gay son!" they say. "My gay brother!" *(Laughing.)* Well, by the time he told them they already knew. He's a bit of a slow starter. *(David pokes Kate discreetly.)* Ouch. *(Glaring at David.)*

CHRIS. Well, I better get going. Looks like I'll need to dust off the car before it gets buried in snow again.

KATE. *(Piping up.)* You can borrow David's.

DAVID. My what?

KATE. Your scraper. You always keep a spare one in your car. *(To Chris.)*

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He's always prepared. *(To David.)* I can wait.

CHRIS. Oh, no thanks. I have one.

KATE. Oh.

DAVID. Of course he has one. Everyone has one.

KATE. Oh. I just thought maybe you could help each other with... the scraping.

CHRIS. I think I'm fine. Nice meeting you... again. *(Kate and David follow Chris to door of radio station.)* I'll see you same time tomorrow.

DAVID. Right. *(David and Kate walk downstage with Chris and see him off. The lights upstage dim. Chris goes off center.)*

KATE. Goodbye. Drive safe.

CHRIS. I will.

KATE. Good to see you – again! *(David and Kate move to another part of the stage. A diner at night. David and Kate sit in a booth next to a window, eating.)*

KATE. Is he single?

DAVID. I don't know.

KATE. You didn't ask?

DAVID. No.

KATE. Why not?

DAVID. *(Lying.)* I almost didn't notice he was even there... and... I'm not sure if he's gay.

KATE. Are you blind, deaf, and stupid? Of course he's gay and he's got a thing for you. I could tell that when I first met him four years ago.

DAVID. Why did you do that? Embarrass me like that?

KATE. That was four years ago, David. I did it because you need someone to give you a little boost. Otherwise, you sit in your corner and you cry. *(Imitating him.)* "Boo-hoo. My name is David Patrone and I don't have a boyfriend. Boohoo." You're a full-time library assistant. That's all you'd be if I didn't push you to do this show.

DAVID. Yes. You made me. You created me! Anything else I need to give you credit for?

KATE. No. I just don't see what you're afraid of. You place a personal ad and you don't answer any of your responses. You hide behind your work. I don't want you to be alone.

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DAVID. Like you?

KATE. I'm different. I couldn't pick 'em. I gave marriage a fair try three times. You – you've never had a steady boyfriend in your life. And the toy collector who lived in a trailer home in East Aurora who you dated for three months does not count.

DAVID. I'm not meeting the right people. My dating options are limited here.

KATE. Hello! Look what just walked out the door.

DAVID. Give it a rest. I don't know anything about him.

KATE. You know enough to make the first move for once in your life.

(David starts to place money at table. She brushes his money aside and pays for him. He gets up, angry, and exits the diner. Kate follows David out. Lights dim on diner center. They cross to an area downstage right.)

KATE. What surprises me is how bold you can be when you're on the air.

DAVID. That's different!

KATE. Why?

DAVID. Just – because.

KATE. But why?

DAVID. Because when I'm on the air I *have* to be different person – not just *me* anymore. Someone might be listening. That makes it important.

KATE. I just think maybe you should think about yourself more often.

(David sighs, giving up.) God, I hate you, David! *(Kate moves to him.)* Go ahead, say it – I'm a bossy, shrewy witch. I'll feel better if you say it. Even though it isn't true.

DAVID. You are not a witch... And you're probably right about me.

KATE. I have something really good to tell you I've decided to adopt.

DAVID. What brought this on?

KATE. I'm thirty-nine years old. No one wants these eggs anymore.

Besides, I'm sick of men controlling my life – pretending they have to be some kind of knight in shining armor saving me from utter doom. I'm ready to take on something of my own and I don't need a husband to do it.

DAVID. How feminist of you.

KATE. I'm adopting because I'm ready. I have a lot of love to give and I'm tired of waiting for it.

DAVID. This is a lot harder than raising cats. You have to pay for college,

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give up having a sex life.

KATE. I've thought about all that.

DAVID. I'm not saying you can't. I'm just checking to make sure this isn't another passing idea of yours – like rollerblading or opening a Buddhist greeting card shop.

KATE. I've never been so sure of anything else in my life... Can you help me?

DAVID. Help you what?

KATE. You know, if I need help, will you... help me raise him/her – whatever we decide?

DAVID. ... Of course, I will... Don't you need to think this through?

KATE. I'm already halfway through the process. I went through the New Life Adoption Agency in Syracuse. They told me I passed the home study today. I even completed the I.N.S. forms –

DAVID. I.N.S.?

KATE. I'm doing an international adoption. There are thousands of couples who want babies here. They get preference. Singles are at the bottom of the list. *(David looks incredulous.)* Look – Central America, Brazil. These kids have less of a chance. *(David doesn't respond. She looks at him.)* The responsibility is all mine. You don't have to do anything you don't want. I'm just saying just in case he/she needs a father – you'll pitch in, won't you?

DAVID. This is all so sudden. Why does the word "father" give me the heebie-jeebies? *(He moves away and she follows.)*

KATE. You love kids! You always said you thought about having a kid of your own. This'll be like a trial run.

DAVID. I thought about it. I don't know if I'm ready yet.

KATE. When is "ready" for you? You waited until you were thirty before you told Mom and Dad you were gay. And by then you were already passing out condoms on the streets of Buffalo. Besides, it would really just be mine. I just need you to... help me –

DAVID. – With Mom and Dad.

KATE. Defend me against them! They already think I'm a hopeless flake. They'll trust you if you think it's a good idea. If you're somehow in on it with me.

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DAVID. You can do whatever you want, Katy. You're almost forty.

KATE. Don't say the "f" word! And you know that isn't true. I can do what I want, but they'll curse me with the Sicilian evil eye for the rest of my life. I'll never forget what Dad said after my first divorce.

DAVID. Don't start that –

KATE. You know what he said?

DAVID. Yes!

KATE. He looked me right in the eye and he said, "You'll go to hell!"

DAVID. (*Mouthing with her.*) "You'll go to hell!"

KATE. I'll never forget it. The sound of his voice.

DAVID. He didn't mean it. They got older and wiser.

KATE. No, they just lost the ability to fight back. I never bothered telling him about the other two divorces after that.

DAVID. I think he figured it out.

KATE. It was completely different for you. Even when you told them you were gay, it was like nothing.

DAVID. You're exaggerating!

KATE. ... I was the guinea pig. By the time they got to you they just – pooped out.

DAVID. They love you too, Katie. They're almost afraid to talk to you. You burst into flames the moment they say the wrong thing. I just think maybe you should think about this some more...

KATE. It's too late. I'm already committed.

DAVID. (*Studies her, upset.*) What if the child were sick? I read about a couple who adopted a baby girl from China. They didn't find out she had Hepatitis B until they got back to the States. They don't even run those kinds of tests there.

KATE. It's a chance I'll have to take. Are you in this with me or not?

DAVID. Maybe adopting in the States would be better. You could go to a sperm bank.

KATE. You're just like Mom and Dad – always questioning me. I thought I could count on you!

DAVID. (*Bursting.*) Did you ever think maybe you're doing all this just to get back at Mom and Dad?

KATE. (*Floored.*) What? What are you talking about?

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DAVID. Well, maybe –

KATE. What did you mean by that?

DAVID. I don't know, I –

KATE. This whole adoption process isn't easy, David. If I was really doing this for selfish reasons, I could just replicate these fabulous genes with some idiot dweeb at the bank in a one-night stand.

DAVID. I'm sorry. I'm –

KATE. I've already thought this through, and I'm going to do it whether you're behind me or not. *(She storms away.)*

DAVID. Katie –! *(David is left alone. End of flashback. Lights change to dark. Inside David's apartment house, the present, night. David is wearing the same coat from the first scene and enters his tiny apartment down center. David listens to his messages. David lies down on his "couch" with his coat still on in silence. We hear MOM PATRONE, a very tired sounding woman.)*

MOM PATRONE (V.O.). It's Mom... Oh, I forgot why I called... Well, I'll see you tomorrow.

PAMELA HALL (V.O.). Hey David, it's Pamela Hall here... we're very sorry about what happened – *(David cuts off the message. He lies in silence for a moment, then gets up and exits upstage. We hear "Of Strange Lands and People" or "Wilder Reiter" by Robert Schumann. Flashback. Lights change again. Brighter midafternoon. Kate's house, living room. We see Kate intently playing the Schumann piece on her baby grand piano downstage left. David enters silently as she plays. Kate finishes playing. David breaks the silence with applause.)*

KATE. I can never get it right. It sounds better sometimes if I can close my eyes and play.

DAVID. It sounds great. You're my Clara Wieck Schumann.

KATE. You always say that. You were always the nice one.

DAVID. But I hate your cat.

KATE. You've got to stop expecting her to act like a dog, David.

DAVID. I'm better with dogs.

KATE. I know. *(They sit together.)* I thought about what you said.

DAVID. About what?

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KATE. About Mom and Dad – me wanting to get back at them.

DAVID. Forget it.

KATE. No. You're right. I could want this child for all the wrong reasons.

DAVID. I shouldn't have said that. I think I got jealous 'cuz I realized it wouldn't just be you and me paling around. I figured all your marriages would be flops and it would just always be the two of us.

KATE. Thanks.

DAVID. I'm so used to having you there for me – nagging me. I'm not used to sharing.

KATE. David – I told you first because I wanted you to be a part of this so much. You goof.

DAVID. I just needed time to take it all in.

KATE. So are you with me or not? What's the verdict?

DAVID. Some people might find bringing a child from orphan poverty to Buffalo redundant – But, I think it's a great idea! I like it – a lot!

KATE. You do?

DAVID. I'm going to be an uncle! Someone's fabulous, old gay uncle!

KATE. Uncle David!

DAVID. We'll teach each other how to change diapers, watch nonstop reruns of sing-along shows –

KATE. I've always wanted this.

DAVID. Me too. Come on, I'll take you for burritos and a hot fudge sundae. We'll celebrate – "Mommy"!

KATE. *(Laughing.)* Don't say that word. I'm not used to it yet.

DAVID. I can't wait to buy things in bulk! We can shop for baby booties, diapers, mega-strollers –

KATE. We may not need to – look. *(She shows him a folder at the piano.)* They have a child picked out for me already. *(David sees the photo.)*

DAVID. Katy, This girl is almost nine years old –.

KATE. Her name is Margaret. *(In the background we hear "Melodie" from "Album for the Young" by Robert Schumann. We see MARGARET, nine, enter stage right in the orphanage. She wears a flower print dress and plays alone with a doll. Stage right is lit in warm light.)* Some nuns working at the orphanage in Brazil named her. She was abandoned when she was a baby. She was always quiet, so most potential parents just

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assumed she was damaged goods. One day, they find her dancing by herself. So, an older nun starts teaching her the piano. They notice a change. Margaret smiles once in a while, starts talking. (*The NUN enters stage right. Margaret practices piano scales with the NUN sitting beside her. The NUN looks at her and smiles.*) Turns out the old nun dies and the piano goes out with her. But Margaret keeps listening to music by herself. Some of the other kids see her dancing alone and start calling her names... (*Margaret lets out a deafening scream and frantically speaks in Portuguese as the Nun consoles her, embracing her silently.*)

MARGARET. Tive um pesadelo. Estava escuro e eu estava sozinha. Eu vi a minha mae e Meu pai correr atras de mim na floresta. Eu nao quero viver... [I had a bad dream. It was dark and I was alone. I saw my mother and father run after me in the forest. I don't want to live.] (*The Nun and Margaret exit stage left. Lights change.*)

DAVID. Katy –

KATE. But I'm going to change all that. I'm sending her this old piano.

DAVID. You're shipping a piano to Brazil?

KATE. You have to make a donation to the orphanage. And I'm sending her some sheet music with it tomorrow. She can start practicing right away – or not. Whatever she wants.

DAVID. Katy –

KATE. Don't you see this is perfect for me? If I don't adopt her then who will? Nobody else can understand her better than the two of us. (*Happily.*) We are the freaks of Buffalo, aren't we, David?

DAVID. I guess we are... Katy, I think –

KATE. Yes? (*David looks at her and hands Kate back the folder about Margaret.*)

DAVID. I think that's very generous of you.

KATE. I know.

DAVID. I wish I could be that good.

KATE. You are, David. Your work has meaning. This is the first time I've ever done anything like this and I feel like it's just beginning.

(End of flashback. A day care. A sign on an easel right of center reads "Play Time Day Care". There is a small crib also stage right. It's bright

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and we hear the sound of kids. We see MRS P., the day care director, center. She is calmly talking to an imaginary child downstage.)

MRS. P. Jimmy, no you may not stick that crayon up Christina's nose. Don't worry, Christina. Jimmy... OK, I'm counting to three. One. Two. Three – *(David enters wearing the same, old shabby winter coat from scene One. He carries a box. Mrs. P. looks up.)* Can I help you?

DAVID. Hi. I... uh... saw your sign for donations in the library where I work and... um... I brought you this donation of... toys...

MRS. P. Oh... Thanks. We sure could use them. *(To David.)* Do you mind putting them on my desk? Jimmy – thank you. That's better...

DAVID. Sure. *(David places the box stage left. Mrs. P. picks up some toys on the ground.)*

MRS. P. *(Crossing to David.)* I'm sorry... I'm Mrs. Peterston.

DAVID. Dave Patrone.

MRS. P. That name sounds familiar. Do I know you from somewhere?

DAVID. "Hello! My name is Danger Dave and welcome to –"

MRS. P. "Gay Talk"! You're the guy from "Gay Talk"! *(Crosses and shouts offstage to "Donna".)* Donna, look who we have here – it's Danger Dave!

DAVID. Well, not anymore. It's been canceled. *(Surprised.)* You listened?

MRS. P. When my husband was asleep and no one else was awake to keep me company, sometimes I listened. You were very funny.

DAVID. Thank you. *(Mrs. P. crosses to the "baby" in the crib. David follows.)* He's so small...

MRS. P. This one... He's a little sick, but he's with foster folks for now, so he's doing fine. *(To baby.)* Aren't you? His name is Albert. Sometimes we just call him Poo-poo.

DAVID. "Poo-poo"?

MRS. P. Oh, crap... Jimmy stuck another crayon up his... *(To David.)* I'll be right back. Don't you steal him, now! *(Mrs. P. crosses downstage left and talks to "Jimmy". David stands awkwardly near crib.)* Jimmy, what did I say? Christina's crying up a storm...

DAVID. *(Looking at baby.)* What are you looking at? *(David moves closer to crib. He adjusts the baby's blanket.)* Hello. Hello, little fellow. My name

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is David. Goo-Goo? Gah-Gah? Yes. Goo-Goo. Gah-Gah! Yes! David! (*All of a sudden, we hear the baby start to cry wildly. David panics.*) Mrs. Peterston! I think we have a problem here!

MRS. P. What's the matter?

DAVID. He doesn't like me. I scared him. Did I choke him? I probably put his blanket too tight or was tickling him too strong or – (*She crosses down to the crib and takes the baby out of his crib.*)

MRS. P. Don't be ridiculous. He just did poopy in his pants. (*The baby quiets. Mrs. P. picks up the baby.*) That's our Poo-Poo! He always cries when he does that. In fact, I think he likes you. Look – He's looking at you... (*Lights dim. David crosses upstage and Mrs. P. exits. We hear transition music. We are in the radio station again. It is the past. The on-air sign is lit up. David is in the studio reading a letter from a listener.*)

DAVID. "Hey, Danger Dave. My ten-year-old son, Hector, wears miniskirts and sings at the top of his lungs. Do you think he's gay or just having an identity crisis?" (*David puts the letter aside and talks in his mic.*) I don't know. You don't need me to tell you to sit him down and let him know that you love him for whatever he is. Be patient. You might also want to buy yourself some ear plugs. (*Chris signals to David. Chris is on top of things.*) OK, we're going to take a call next. Hello, welcome to "Gay Talk". (*We hear the voice-over of the phone caller.*)

GIGGLY GIRL (V.O.). We'd like to know where we can find a... dildo. (*We hear two girls giggle in the voice-over.*)

DAVID. I *could* tell you... if you were old enough. (*We hear the GIGGLY GIRLS giggle uncontrollably and hang up the phone.*) Just more of the usual here on "Gay Talk", folks. But now time for my personal favorite part of the show. We have some very special listeners out there who I think deserve a ringa-ding-ding from Danger Dave. (*David dials. Interrogating.*) Is this Pete? (*We hear PETE, an older sounding man.*)

PETE (V.O.). Yes.

DAVID. You live with a gentleman named Mel?

PETE (V.O.). Yes.

DAVID. You are known to your friends and family and everyone in the town of Blasdell as 'Pete and Mel' for the last forty-six years?

PETE (V.O.). Yes. Who is –?

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DAVID. This is Danger Dave from "Gay Talk". A little birdy told me you have a special day coming up. And this song is just for you. *(David plays "Lullaby and Good Night" on his toy synthesizer, singing the following lyrics.)*

DAVID. *(Singing.)*

Pete and Mel,
your love is swell
and grows stronger in Blasdell.
Your broken parts and midnight farts,
won't make your love go to hell.
You've been bonded so long
you can't recall another shlong.
Not always does great lovin'
put a bun in the oven.
Pete and Mel your love is swell...

(David has Chris smiling. Pete and Mel laugh on the phone.)

DAVID. Have a great day.

PETE (V.O.). Thank you.

DAVID. There it is, folks. Just when you thought we couldn't get any gayer. This is a little song by a new, hot group called "Butch and The Cassidys". With our very own multi-talented technical engineer, Chris, on drums. *(A quiet song comes up. David lounges as he looks at the "Butch and the Cassidys" cd cover.)* Good night, everyone. Keep singing, Hector. Good-night, dildo-lovers. Sleep tight, Pete and Mel... I hope all your anniversary dreams come true and you have many, many more...

(David spins in his chair. Chris posts a handwritten sign through the booth "window". It reads "Coffee?" David looks at it with some apprehension and smiles.)

(Lights change. David and Chris move downstage to a diner at night. Two chairs and a block between them. Chris and David sit face to face. David and Chris sit together at a table.)

DAVID. You did a great job tonight.

CHRIS. Thanks. You too. *(David looks down, adjusts his glasses. Pause.)*

CHRIS. I can't believe you don't remember having met before. At your sister's wedding?

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DAVID. My sister's been divorced three times.

CHRIS. This was maybe four years ago. We danced.

DAVID. (*David busies himself with his food.*) I would remember you if –

CHRIS. Well, it was very brief and kind of awkward situation. I really wasn't a guest there. I happened to be at a convention in the hotel and your sister asked me if I would dance with you.

DAVID. (*A bit of acting.*) Oh, my God! That was you?

CHRIS. I don't usually do stuff like that, but your sister pointed you out and said you were a decent guy, so I said, "Sure, why not?"

DAVID. I'm so sorry about that. I think my sister was a little – (*Makes a goofy drunk gesture.*) that night. She shouldn't have done that. I'm sorry.

CHRIS. I'm not. I mean... it was fun.

DAVID. (*Pause, surprised.*) Yeah. It was fun.

CHRIS. You ran off for reasons I perfectly understand. I think you were embarrassed, distracted. It wasn't your fault.

DAVID. It wasn't you –

CHRIS. It's funny that we should be running into each other again this way. (*David is unable to speak. David smiles, looks down. Chris observes.*) You're very shy when you're not on the radio. (*David smiles, looks at Chris. Lights change. They get up and start to stroll downstage.*)

DAVID. When I'm alone in the studio I feel safe and I can say what I want... I wish I could be more like you all the time.

CHRIS. Like me?

DAVID. Yeah. ...You're... ballsy.

CHRIS. Ballsy?

DAVID. Yeah... I like it.

CHRIS. Well... you're ballsy just sometimes... me, all the time. That's a good start...

DAVID. Yeah... Yeah... I think so too... (*David smiles.*)
(*The lights change. We go to a tight spot on David in the dark. We are back in the present. David's apartment. David has his old coat on. He is speaking on the phone. We hear the muffled, tired voice of Mom Patrone over the phone.*) How are you and Dad?

MOM PATRONE (V.O.). Oh, fine... fine.

DAVID. We could take some of the things out of her house today...

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MOM PATRONE (V.O.). No. I don't think I'm ready..... Not today.

DAVID. OK. Get some rest, Mom.

MOM PATRONE (V.O.). I will. I will....

(David hangs up phone. David crosses upstage. The lights change to full on the set. We are in the radio station. Chris enters as David crosses upstage to hang his coat.)

CHRIS. Hey, Shy Guy. Did you see this? Page six. *(Chris shows David a small newspaper.)*

DAVID. *(Reading.)* "Gay host goes head-to-head with June Handly".

CHRIS. Larry arranged for you to have another live debate with her in two weeks.

DAVID. What?! That's not my thing. We never get serious. "Gay Talk" is about lesbian hockey team scores... Madonna... Madonna.

CHRIS. Larry says it's good for ratings.

DAVID. I only called in to her show because I didn't want her turning out ex-gay, teenage zombies!

CHRIS. Most people like what you say.

DAVID. She'll be prepared this time....

CHRIS. So will you.

DAVID. The woman is nuts!

CHRIS. So are you .. David, this is important. *(David groans and flops down on desk. Pause.)*

DAVID. You ever think about having kids?

CHRIS. Yes.

DAVID. You do?

CHRIS. Yes.

DAVID. Really?

CHRIS. Yes! Does that shock you?

DAVID. No... It's just... most gay men don't usually think about those things.

CHRIS. Who says?

DAVID. No one... I mean, I'm just saying it's not common – that's all.

CHRIS. Well, obviously *you* do. And you are gay aren't you? *(Pause.)*

DAVID. Sometimes I imagine this little face looking right at me. . *(Beat, looking at Chris.)*

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DAVID. Maybe I need a dog.

CHRIS. Maybe... you should get one.

DAVID. *(In other room)* A dog? I can't. I'm a slob. *(David rummages through a grossly untidy area, drops his coat.)*

CHRIS. You are a slob.

DAVID. What if those people were right?

CHRIS. What do you mean? *(Chris sits shoulder to shoulder with David.)*

DAVID. What if it were wrong for people like us to have kids?

CHRIS. Are you turning into June Handly? Two women in the band have a baby girl. She's happy.

DAVID. That doesn't answer my question. How would you feel if you were the kid? Wouldn't you be like, "Oh, god. Why do I have to be 'Heather With Two Mommies'?" Everyone calling you names...

CHRIS. I don't know. I think I'd be happy just to have someone.

DAVID. I have a confession to make... I actually did remember you from four years ago... I don't think I ever forgot.

CHRIS. Me neither. *(They look at each other.)*

DAVID. ... Of course, it's so hard being single and wanting certain things and trying to find other people who want that too, you know?

CHRIS. Uh huh. *(Pause.)*

DAVID. I mean, don't you hate everything you have to do in this world just to get a date?

CHRIS. Uh huh.

DAVID. Bars?

CHRIS. No more smelly bar-flies. Been there – *(Chris hands David a pile of letters.)*

DAVID. They suck... Club parties –

CHRIS. Personals –

DAVID. Totally sucky... Internet dating –

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