



FIRST ACT – SAMPLE

By Robert J. Wheeler, 15 Windsor Cres., London, ON N6C 1V6 Canada – Revised Jan. 30/25

Setting – Average living room. Run time -- approximately 90 minutes.

Actors – 5 M – 3 F -- 2

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My scripts are on PGC site.

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Email robwheeler999@gmail.com if you would like to read the play for a possible production and I will send it to you.

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
ALEX MAXWELL	Husband of Emma, programmer/bank loans officer	25-50	Male
EMMA MAXWELL	Wife of Alex. Interior decorator	25-40	Female
DET. SCOTT	Police Detective	50-65	Male
MARG	Mother of Alex	50-65	Female
MR. WEB	Alex's bank manager	50-65	Male

The sound of gunfire can be recorded, produced in the booth.
The playwright can produce any weapons needed (wooden).

ACT 1, SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP ON:

Time: Late afternoon.

Place: Living room of Alex and Emma.

An average contemporary living room.

D.R. is the entrance to the house with a long, narrow mirror and a small table under it.

U.R. is a swinging door entrance to the kitchen.

On the U.C. wall is a 70's bar with a bar fridge, two stools and small radio.

A large print is on the wall above the bar.

U.L. is an exit into the bedrooms and a large window.

D.C. is the living room -- a sofa with end tables with lamps on both ends of the sofa and a coffee table in front. A phone is on one of the end tables. A matching sofa chair with floor reading lamp or swag is SL of coffee table.

A few bars of "Love Will Keep Us Together" plays.

ALEX MAXWELL (25), sophisticated, ENTERS through the DR front door dressed in an immaculate business suit with a gym bag.

Alex drops the gym bag, goes through six letters from the mail table.

ALEX *(looking at mail, sung)* Honey Bunny, I'm home.

EMMA *(O.S. sung)* Alex, Sweetie.

ALEX *(looking at mail, sung)* Yes, Dearest.

EMMA *(O.S.)* Are you ready for your surprise?

A perplexed look from Alex.

ALEX Dearest, if I'm ready, it won't be a surprise.

EMMA *(O.S.)* I've made you something wonderful!

EMMA MAXWELL (25), in a colorful apron that covers a red checked blouse and business attire, RUSHES from the kitchen holding a smoking meatloaf pan with oven mitts (dry ice).

Alex's surprised, throws the mail into the air as she charges toward him, causing him to back up.

(joyous, proud) Voila!

ALEX Whaaaaaaaaaaaaa . . .
Emma backs him into the wall behind him.
aaaaaat?
Alex looks down into the pan.
You made lava?!!!

EMMA *(joyous, proud)* No, silly, it's my very own Betty Crocker meatloaf!

ALEX *(dire, looking at the meat loaf)* Emma!!!

EMMA What, Sweetie?

ALEX *(a dire cringe)* It's burning!

EMMA *(oblivious)* Oh.
Emma blows on the meat loaf.
Better?
Stunned look from Alex.
(joyous) The top's a little crispy, but you'll love the rest.
Alex waves smoke away, squints to see her.

ALEX *(tactful)* It's, it's . . . I'm at a loss for words.
Emma giggles, takes it as a compliment.

EMMA It's my first delicious meatloaf.

ALEX *(trepidation)* I've found a word.

EMMA Wonderful? Spectacular? Fabulous? Amazing? Which one?

ALEX It's a uh, ah . . . a four-letter word.

EMMA *(joyous)* Love has four letters.

ALEX *(dread)* That's not the word.

EMMA *(not hearing him)* Perfect!
Emma tries to kiss him, but smoke and the hot pan are in the way.
Alex tries to dodge the hot pan, gets a finger or two burned.
They fumble around until she holds the meat loaf with one hand from the edge with one mitt, puts the other oven mitt on the letter table, the meatloaf pan on the mitt and the other mitt over the meatloaf.
They kiss.

(MORE)

Missed you.

Emma grabs Alex, bear hugs him hard, turns him facing DS.

Alex's arms fly out, face shows he's breathless.

(joyous) Three months married, and it still feels new, fantastic.

Emma releases the hug. Alex gasps, out of breath and dazed but she does not notice.

Alex?!

ALEX Yes, yes. *(takes a breath)* Dangerous but . . . fantastic.

EMMA How was your day, my Sweet?

Alex gathers himself.

ALEX My day? Right, the day I had. My dear, your loans officer, computer I.T. genius husband had an exceptional day at the bank.

EMMA *(joyous)* That's because . . .

Alex twirls, swings his arms and gym bag around, spins. Emma poses model-like, expecting him to notice her.

ALEX *(interrupting)* The GDNP is above predicted. The threat of recession is over. Our trade surplus is skyrocketing. Mr. Web says it's a dream time for bankers!

EMMA *(annoyed)* Your bank manager?!!

Alex hasn't noticed Emma is miffed it's not her that's making him happy.

ALEX Yes! The economy is heating up!

Emma takes an oven mitt without Alex seeing, holds it behind her back.

EMMA *(frustrated scream)* Ahhhhhhhha!

Alex's stunned, stops spinning.

The economy?

Alex turns quickly toward the meat loaf.

ALEX *(fearful)* The lava loaf?!

Emma whacks him with an oven mitt, throws the mitt over her head and back and holds her arms out to him.

EMMA Us!!!

ALEX *(confused)* Us? *(sees what she means)* Of course, us! Lovers! Definitely lovers, my Sweet.

Alex hugs her.

EMMA It's Friday night!!

ALEX So?

Emma ends the hug, pushes him back.

EMMA *(excited)* Did you get it?

Alex shrugs.

(pleading) Alllleex. It's our plan! The bank's closed until Tuesday because it's the holiday weekend. You didn't forget?

ALEX Maybe I did, and maybe . . .

EMMA *(interrupting, joyous)* You got it! I know you did! You're forgiven!

ALEX The things I do for love.

EMMA It's not like you're stealing anything.

Alex gives her the gym bag and moves US.

Heavy.

Emma holds it to her heart, dances with it DS.

ALEX A million dollars is a lot of paper.

Alex relaxes on the sofa.

EMMA It's got to be turning you on, right?

ALEX *(macho)* Emma Darlin', this man, your man, doesn't have an off switch.

EMMA More than normal?

Alex moves to Emma.

ALEX Having a million dollars of bank money in our love nest, does raise my blood pressure a tad.

EMMA What denominations?

ALEX Hundreds.

EMMA Wow, hundreds!

A few bars of "Money, Money, Money" plays. Emma dances with the gym bag.

(enthused) Feel the power! You gotta feel it! You're sure the bank won't miss it?

Music stops, she stops dancing.

ALEX The safe can't be opened until eight a.m. Tuesday morning. I was the last one out tonight and I'll be the first one in Tuesday morning when I return the money, and no-one will be the wiser.

EMMA What about the cameras?

ALEX Mr. Web wants to save money on hydro so has the cameras turned off before every holiday weekend.

Emma puts the gym bag on the sofa, dances around.

EMMA I feel bad, like I've committed some horrible crime.

ALEX Emma, it's borrowed money. You know the million needs to go back?

EMMA I was imagining. Don't you ever imagine?

ALEX I imagined us married.

EMMA *(incredulous look with sarcasm)* Right.

Emma rushes to Alex, hugs him.

What if we pretend it's Mafia money? Let's imagine dirty Mafia money.

ALEX Dirty Mafia money?

LIGHTS FADE AWAY AROUND THEM, TRANSITION TO ONLY ON THEM, THE SOFA.

EMMA Yeah. We walk the docks at night, the perilous waterfront.

The background sound of waves and gulls creep in softly.

It's a deadly dark and dangerous night! We walk arm-in-arm on the grimy, dim, crime, and rat-infested docks.

Sour face from Alex. Emma pulls Alex along.

Black water surges in. Just a few dingy dim lights to guide us. We go on because we're . . .

Emma indicates she wants him to finish her sentence.

ALEX *(interrupting)* . . . we're mentally unstable?

EMMA We're in love!!! We love the smell of ocean, *(deep breath)* the sound of gulls.

ALEX Gulls at night?

Emma grabs his shoulder.

EMMA Night gulls!

ALEX I've never seen . . .

EMMA *(interrupting)* They're night flyers, black, so they blend in . . . see?

ALEX No.

EMMA *(not hearing him)* Good. *(enlivened)* We're at the murky, churning water's edge, the edge of absolute darkness. Shots ring out ahead! A drug deal gone wrong!

Emma clicks her heels into the floor rapidly -- gunfire.

The unmistakable sound of automatic weapons, so we . . .

ALEX *(interrupting)* . . . run for cover.

EMMA We're unafraid, push on! Your shirt is soaked in sweat, muscles tight, swell, ripple. Muscles want to burst the shirt, so you rip it off.

Alex takes off his jacket and tie, tries to tear off his shirt, but it won't tear, so settles for undoing the top two shirt buttons, throws his chest out, does a he-man pose. Emma runs her hands over his upper body, pulls him along.

We keep moving, step over bullet-riddled bodies.

Sour face from Alex. Emma looks to the sofa.

We see it! A black, machined gunned limo, peppered with bullet holes, engine still idling. On the hood is an open bag of drug money!

Emma takes the gym bag, puts it on the sofa arm and opens it.

A million dollars, waiting for us to take. Two shots ring out . . .

Emma bangs her heels on the floor twice.

. . . tear into the limo! You jump in front of me.

Emma jumps behind him, hides.

My protector from harm, no matter how dangerous.

Alex tries to move but she holds him there.

ALEX You're sure you're with me?

EMMA One of the bodies wasn't dead, shooting at us!

Emma bangs her heels on the floor twice. Alex ducks.

You grab a uzi from a dead hand!

Alex has a confused look.

Machine gun!

Emma makes his hand look like a gun, takes his arm, points it at an imaginary target.

Emma rapid clicks her heels on the floor for the sound of automatic fire.

You took him down hard and for good.

Alex throws and spits out the imaginary uzi.

EMMA We've made our way to the money.

ALEX So, we have the money?!!

EMMA Yes, yes, yes! You pick the money and me up and . . .

Alex picks up the gym bag and her, putting her over one shoulder while holding the gym bag.

ALEX *(interrupting)* And? Run like Hell?

EMMA To our mansion on the cliff and throw me on the bed.

Alex runs around the sofa with Emma over his shoulder, stops DC, dumps her on her onto the sofa.

ALEX Do we count it?

EMMA Scatter the whole mill on me!

Alex opens the gym bag and dumps twenty bundles of money on Emma from the gym bag.

Emma's bombarded, startled, fights them off.

(sits up, surprised) I'd imagined loose bills. *(overjoyed)* We go to it on the cash. That's power! That's my man!

Alex moves to jump on her, pulls back, looks closely at a bundle.

ALEX What about paper cuts?

Emma sits up, holds two bundles.

EMMA We're not afraid! We take what we want! Love every moment of being fully alive!

ALEX Yes!!!

The sound of waves fades out.

ALL LIGHTS UP

EMMA That's what we love. *(looks to Alex)* What do you think?

ALEX Me? What do I think?

Alex stands, paces, big build up.

I see, I see, *(thinking)* a very sexy . . . sensual . . . erotic . . . highly stimulating . . . three-day . . .

Emma hangs expectantly overjoyed on his words "sexy . . . sensual . . . erotic . . . stimulating . . . three-day," then . . .

. . . interest free loan!

EMMA *(disappointed)* Alex, think wild!

Alex pauses to mentally calculate, walks around.

ALEX Em, two days at five per cent interest on a mill, comes to around *(pause while thinking)* two hundred and seventy-three dollars and ninety-seven cents.

EMMA Compounded?

ALEX Before compounding! Now that's wild!

EMMA *(mocking)* Whoopee. I'll work on what you should be seeking. How much in each bundle?

ALEX *(takes a bundle)* This one's twenty-five thousand.

EMMA I've got goose bumps.

ALEX (*smug*) I get used to dealing with large amounts.

Emma takes two bundles and juggles them.

EMMA My fifty-thousand-dollar act.

Alex sits on the sofa, watches her.

ALEX Very nice. Can you get the hips going?

Emma hip gyrates and juggles. Alex applauds. Emma uses the bundles like weights, pushes them over her head.

Alex moves to her, kisses her. Emma puts the bundles into the gym bag and closes it.

EMMA (*enthused*) We'll have my fabulous meatloaf after.

ALEX (*dread*) Our torchered meatloaf.

EMMA (*joyful*) It's Betty Crocker's recipe, so it must be delicious!

Emma happily dances the gym bag into the bedroom.

(*O.S.*) Don't forget our dinner.

Alex picks up the meatloaf pan with trepidation with an oven mitt, moves toward bedroom door.

ALEX What if it explodes?

EMMA (*O.S.*) Money doesn't explode.

ALEX No. The lava loaf!!!

Alex EXITS into the bedroom.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT 1, SCENE 1

ACT 1, SCENE 2

LIGHTS FADE UP.

Time: Morning.

Place: Living room of Alex and Emma.

The sound of “YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE” plays.

ALEX *(O.S. western accent)* Wowie!

EMMA *(O.S. western accent)* Wowie!

ALEX *(O.S. western accent)* Double wowie. Good Saturday morning Nelly Mae.

Emma ENTERS in an askew blonde pigtailed wig, same red and white checkered blouse tied at waist, cut off blue jeans.

Emma has the gym bag of money, dumps ten to twenty bundles of money from it onto the coffee table in front of the sofa then collapses on the sofa.

EMMA *(western accent)* Triple wowie!!!

Alex STAGGERS in from the bedroom wearing a robe and cowboy hat with a large “Sheriff Star” pinned to robe, crashes onto the sofa beside Emma.

(western accent) Billy-Bob-Tom-John, that was the best.

Alex pulls a one hundred dollar bill from Emma’s hair, admires it, carefully lays it on the coffee table..

ALEX *(western accent)* Nelly Mae, I’ve been a wonderin’ why does Billy-Bob-Tom-John, your fearless Quako County sheriff, have so many names?

EMMA It’s cause o your Moma.

ALEX Moma Daisy Mae?

EMMA She couldn’t decide which beau was your daddy, so . . .

Emma shrugs. Alex has a confused look. She kisses him.

ALEX *(interrupting, western accent)* That makes me one happy Quako County sheriff.

The phone on the end table RINGS. Alex answers it.

(into phone, western accent) Howdie pardner. You’re talkin’ to the big man his’self, Sheriff of Quako County. *(pause)* Who might you be? *(pause)* *(as himself)* Mr. Web? Don’t hang up. *(pause)* Yes, it’s me, Alex. Really, it’s me. If the computer’s crashed again, I’ll be right down. Don’t worry. I’ll . . .

EMMA *(interrupting, eyes gleaming)* Your boss! He knows!

ALEX *(puts hand over receiver, to Emma)* He can't know.

Emma jumps up and down beside Alex.

(into phone) Yes, Mr. Web. *(pause)* Is anything, uh, wrong? *(pause)* You sound upset. *(pause)* Sergeant Kelly? He called, told you to advise the staff about a problem at the bank? *(pause)* Maybe it wasn't robbed. Maybe the money was misplaced? borrowed? or how about an accounting glitch?

Emma stops jumping. Alex jumps up, paces in front of the sofa, the length of the sofa back and forth, listens into the phone for seven seconds.

(covers phone, to Emma) Crooks tunneled into the safe from the laundry next door!! The safe was entirely cleaned out!!

Alex wavers, like he is about to pass out.

The bank's closed! It's a crime scene!

Alex drops the phone, sits on the sofa.

The one million, three hundred and twenty-two thousand, four hundred, sixty-three dollars and thirty-two cents is gone!! We got the mill. Thieves got the rest.

Alex tries to stand, wavers, passes out onto the floor. Emma picks up the phone, speaks into it.

EMMA Hello, Mr. Web. It's Emma, Alex's wife. *(pause)* Alex's unconscious on the floor! *(pause)* That's because Alex loves two things, me and money! *(pause)* Police? *(pause)* They'll want to question us sometime today or tomorrow? Fine.

Emma gives a guilty look.

We've got nothing to hide.

Emma hangs up, helps Alex onto the sofa. He's groggy. She puts her wig and his cowboy hat on the sofa.

ALEX Em, I had a scary nightmare. The worst I've ever had. Mr. Web was hysterical on the phone, telling me . . .

Emma slaps him gently on the face.

It wasn't a nightmare!

EMMA The bank was robbed last night while we were in heaven. And we've got most of the loot in front of us. The cops will be dropping by. They'll want to question us about, you know, the robbery.

ALEX They'll think it's an inside job. We never stole anything, but . . .

EMMA *(interrupting)* . . . having the million makes us look, you know ... very much ... like ...

ALEX *(interrupting)* . . . crooks! I'll confess everything. Make a clean breast of it, take what's coming to me.

EMMA I'll miss my Billy-Bob-Tom-John.

ALEX When will the cops get here?

EMMA Mr. Web said today or tomorrow.

ALEX I'll give up. They can take me away!

EMMA Probably in handcuffs.

ALEX I suppose so.

EMMA I'll miss you.

ALEX I'll get a minimum of ten years. You, maybe a month or two as an accessory.

EMMA We did it for our love.

ALEX For the best sex in my life!

EMMA Our lives.

ALEX Right.

EMMA You'd get ten years, ten hard years.

Alex's horror stricken, turns away from her, DS.

ALEX *(worried)* Hard years?

EMMA Yes. Ten hard years in a prison, surrounded by shiny, treacherous razor wire.

Alex shivers.

ALEX *(fathoms)* Ten hard years and treacherous razor wire?

EMMA Livin' in a small cell with a filthy, never cleaned toilet.

Alex cringes.

 Then there's the cold cement walls.

ALEX *(worried)* Cold walls?

EMMA A window the size of a pizza box.

ALEX Extra-large?

EMMA Small. Tiny window with thick, rigid steel bars.

ALEX *(extremely worried)* No vitamin D!

EMMA A narrow, hard, lumpy cot to sleep on.

ALEX Sleepless nights, tossing and . . . *(extremely worried)* What about bed bugs?

EMMA Big, hairy, hungry prison bed bugs!

ALEX Ouch!

EMMA Tin cups and plates.

ALEX *(winces, new idea)* What about cutlery?

EMMA Plastic! Yes, it'd be plastic knives and forks.
A look of horror from Alex.
It won't matter.

ALEX No?

EMMA You'll be getting corn beef hash. No steak for you!

ALEX Ahhhhaaaa!

EMMA We'll think about something else.

ALEX What?

EMMA *(cheery)* There's the prison laundry.

ALEX *(relieved)* I like clean clothes.

EMMA Working in the steam laundry with *(no cheer)* big, rough deviants.

ALEX *(worried)* Laundry deviants?
Emma turns away with a shrug and a "can't believe you said that" look.

EMMA Something like that.

ALEX *(extremely worried)* You mean sexual de, de . . .

EMMA *(happily interrupting)*. . . viants?

ALEX *(high pitched, squeaks it out)* Yeah.

EMMA But you'd think our million-dollar sex was worth ten miserable, long years in prison, with the . . . you know . . . the . . . the . . .

ALEX *(interrupting)* . . . deviants?

SHIRLEY Yeah.

ALEX Noooo!

EMMA No?

ALEX I'd be doing hard time! Hard labor! Breaking rocks! Making license plates! The sweaty steam laundry, with the . . .

EMMA *(interrupting)* Then there's the showers with the . . . you know.

ALEX Deviants?

EMMA Yeah.

ALEX I'll need a ton of wet wipes.

EMMA Alex, listen. What's important?

ALEX Staying away from the deviants?!

EMMA No!

ALEX No?!!

EMMA Knowing we've got each other and tonight. (*new idea*) What if we don't confess?

ALEX Lie?

EMMA Don't lie. We could overlook telling them we've got the million. They won't ask if we borrowed the money. They'll ask if we stole the money.

ALEX There'll be questions. A lot of questions.

EMMA Where were you on the night of the robbery? Did you rob the bank? Did you conspire with anyone to rob the bank? Alex, we're borrowers, not thieves.

ALEX We don't look like tunnellers.

EMMA They'll search the place.

ALEX They need a warrant . . .

EMMA (*interrupting*) . . . and are on their way here with it!

Stunned looks at each other.

Hide the money!

Emma jumps on the sofa and bounces, hands in hair, thinking. Alex throws the money into the gym bag, jumps up, runs in circles around the room. Five seconds elapses.

Emma points into the kitchen.

The garbage can!

Emma runs into the kitchen, comes out with the garbage can and two new plastic garbage bags.

She dumps the money from the gym bag onto the coffee table, takes the full plastic garbage bag from the garbage can and puts it into the gym bag.

She lines the garbage can with a new plastic bag, throws the money into the garbage can.

She takes the second new garbage bag and puts it over the money in the garbage can.

She throws a little garbage from the gym bag into the garbage bag that covers the money in the garbage can.

She zips up the gym bag and closes the lid on the garbage can, then flops on the sofa exhausted. Alex plops down beside her.

Emma talks like Nelly Mae and Alex talks like Billy-Bob-Tom-John.

Emma puts on her wig.

EMMA What happened to my Billy-Bob-Tom-John, my sheriff o Quako County, who'll stand up to cops, crooks or grizzly bears?!

Alex puts on his cowboy hat.

ALEX County line's at the bedroom door.

EMMA So, we're not in Quako County no more? We're in a different county?

ALEX Yup.

EMMA What county's that?

ALEX Terrified-out-of-my-mind County.

EMMA I noticed something about my Billy-Bob-Tom-John.

ALEX What's that?

EMMA With blood going to his lower region, my sheriff, my Billy-Bob-Tom-John, don't think so straight.

She unpins and takes his badge.

Sheriff Billy-Bob-Tom-John's goin' on vacation!

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act 1 Scene 2

ACT 1, SCENE 3

Time: The next morning.

Place: The same.

LIGHTS UP ON:

The song "OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING" plays.

Alex's gym bag sits on the coffee table.

The sound of birds singing.

Light streams in the window.

Emma, wearing a large apron, looks out the front door, towards the driveway.

EMMA I'm happy you liked the brownies, Detective Wilson. Thank you for the visit, Detective Det. Scott. *(pause)* You're very considerate officers. I'll call your office and say how well the search went. *(pause)* I hope we've been of help.

Emma waves out the door. The sound of a car door slamming, car starting and driving away. Emma closes the door, locks it and fastens the chain lock.

ALEX *(O.S.)* Are they gone?

EMMA Yes!

ALEX *(O.S.)* Good.

EMMA Alex. What are you doing?

ALEX *(O.S.)* They left the bedroom a mess. The bed, my dresser. Then, guess what?

EMMA What?

ALEX *(O.S.)* They put my socks in my underwear drawer and my underwear in my socks drawer!

EMMA *(sarcastic)* Those bastards!

ALEX *(O.S.)* This will take a while to straighten out.

EMMA They believed us!

ALEX *(O.S.)* You're sure they're gone?

EMMA Yes.

ALEX *(O.S.)* Did you see their car drive away?

Emma rushes to the front door, opens it and looks out. She slams the door and turns toward the bedroom area.

EMMA They are definitely gone. No car. Nothing. We did it!

Alex, dressed in casual wear, rushes out. They sing the next part.

ALEX *(singing)* We did it? We did it! I didn't think we could, but . . .

EMMA *(interrupting)* . . . we did it!

ALEX We did it!

EMMA You thought we'd end up in jail, but . . .

ALEX *(interrupting)* . . . we didn't! We didn't! I'll miss steel bars, tin cups, bad food, making licence plates, sweaty laundry, and thank God, most of all . . .

EMMA *(interrupting)* . . . the deviants?!

ALEX The deviants!

They stop singing, collapse on the sofa, a passionate kiss.

EMMA Wow!

ALEX The money! The adventure! It's a definite high! You feel it?

EMMA I'm floating, in Heaven.

ALEX Maybe we can have Heaven in the bedroom.

EMMA I need to look at our beautiful money.

Emma races into the kitchen and brings out the garbage can, puts it on the coffee table.

Emma takes out the garbage bag that is partially full of garbage, lays it by the can. They hold each other, stare into the can.

Isn't it cute?

ALEX All cuddled together in soft, white plastic.

EMMA Like a babe in swaddling white plastic. Our babe that we saved from the Money Gestapo.

ALEX Yeah.

EMMA Who want to march it into the cold, bank safe concentration camp.

ALEX We take care of our own.

EMMA You don't mind if I call the million our babe do you?

ALEX Not at all. The babe's a member of the family now.

Emma puts the garbage bag over the money, closes the lid, EXITS with the garbage can into the kitchen.

EMMA *(O.S.)* Sleep tight little babe.

ALEX The babe is safe and sound.

Emma ENTERS without the garbage can. They sit on the sofa.

- EMMA Did you notice Detective Det. Scott react to the garbage in the gym bag?
- ALEX I'm sure he thought he'd reveal a body part and put two sick serial killers behind bars.
- EMMA He thinks we're crazy to keep garbage in a gym bag. You came through with . . . what was it?
- ALEX My fear of bacteria. I forgot to tell you. I suffer from bacteriophobia.
- EMMA You almost blew it when you washed your hands after the handshakes.
- ALEX I didn't know where their hands had been.
- EMMA Alex, they're cops.
- ALEX They could have come from a murder scene! Cops come across all kinds of kooks.
- EMMA (*a "can't believe my ears" look*) Thankfully, your kookiness didn't faze them.
- ALEX Kookiness and phobias are not the same. Although it was nice of Detective Det. Scott to take the garbage out.
- EMMA After you went on and on to educate them on how you've been devastated by your phobia they practically begged to be set free. Bacta . . . what?
- ALEX Bac . . . ter . . . i . . . o . . . phob . . . i . . . a. Haven't you noticed the yellow rubber gloves I wear when I take out the garbage?
- EMMA No.
- ALEX Actually, the doctor's not sure if it's bacteriophobia, the fear of bacteria or the fear of germs. If it's germs, then it'd be verminophobia.
- EMMA Verma what? Sounds crazy.
- ALEX Ver . . . min . . . o . . . pho . . . bia. Or the other option . . .
- EMMA (*interrupting*) Alex, stop!!!
- ALEX Why?
- EMMA You're giving me a phobia phobia!
- ALEX A fear of being afraid? That's a new one.
- EMMA My particular phobia today is called the babal . . . on . . . a . . . lot . . . pho . . . bia. The fear of long words that bore people to death!
- ALEX I know all about phobias and that's not . . .
- EMMA (*interrupting*) Stop!!! (*about to hit him with a cushion*) My phobia phobia is turning physical! Alex, you pulled off the perfect crime.

Emma moves to the radio and turns it on. "You Are My Sunshine" plays. She dances to him, jumps into his arms.

That's a major turn on!

They dance.

ALEX An unintentional crime isn't a real crime. Whatever it was, we did it together.

EMMA Dance us over to the babe. I want to look in on our babe.

They dance into the kitchen and dance out each holding one side of the open garbage can.

Then Emma and Alex take the garbage can and dance with it into the bedroom.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act 1 Scene 3

ACT 1, SCENE 4

Time: The next morning.

Place: The same.

LIGHTS UP ON:

The song "OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING" plays.

Alex reads from a magazine on the sofa.

Emma ENTERS from the kitchen wearing an apron.

EMMA While you were busy recovering from last night, I took the babe shopping.

Emma EXITS into the bedroom.

ALEX You went shopping with the garbage can?

EMMA Not the can, silly. I slipped the babe into my shopping bag and zipped it up. I got some very nice items for the babe.

ALEX You know the police are still looking for our babe?

EMMA I know, but the babe is very vulnerable. I wanted to make our babe safe and secure. I've got a surprise.

ALEX If it's another Betty Crocker surprise I'm surprise proof.

EMMA You'll like this surprise.

Alex has a bewildered look.

ALEX As long as I don't have to eat it.

EMMA I'm getting it. Spoiled sport.

Emma EXITS into the bedroom. When she RETURNS, she pushes a child's stroller in.

ALEX *(throws magazine over his head)* Earth to Emma. Come in Emma. Are you there? We don't actually have a child. We didn't adopt one, and you didn't give birth so . . .

Emma zooms the stroller into the bedroom.

EMMA *(interrupting (O.S.))* It's a perfect new home for the babe, but you don't like it, so . . .

ALEX Emma!

EMMA *(half sobbing O.S.)* You don't like my surprise.

ALEX Emma. I like it. It's just . . .

Happily, Emma wheels the stroller back out.

EMMA *(interrupting)* Good. Now I can take the babe for walks.

ALEX Emma! You can't be serious!

EMMA I was thinking, the recorded serial numbers make the babe illegitimate, right?

ALEX In a manner of speaking.

EMMA I'd like the babe to be legitimate, equal to all the other bills. Isn't there something you can do about it?

ALEX I'll think about it.

EMMA Good. You're behaving like a real dad.

ALEX There could be a problem, a discovery regarding the robbery.

EMMA You know who the thieves are?

ALEX Other than us, no?

EMMA What's the problem?

ALEX You know I have a background in accounting. That's why I became a banker and not a sky diver or jet pilot.

EMMA I like you as an accountant.

ALEX Accountants don't think the same way other people think, don't always do things other people do. Like what sky divers do. I wouldn't know the first thing about folding a parachute or how to jump out of a plane.

EMMA My God man, spit it out.

ALEX I left an IOU in the safe in place of the our babe . . . the million.

Emma jumps up.

EMMA A you owe who what?!!!

ALEX It's an IOU! Accountants, me, I've always needed the books to balance.

EMMA The books?!!

ALEX Yes. With an IOU where the million would be, until Tuesday morning, was the intention, then everything balances.

EMMA The books?!!

ALEX When I return the money, I take the IOU and leave the money. But that didn't happen.

EMMA So you wrote out an IOU to the bank for a million? Why?

ALEX I just told you! Because I'm not a thief, not even a weekend thief! Everything needs to balance! When everything balances, I feel fine! Otherwise, I feel like a crook! See?!

EMMA Okay. Settle down. I understand. What's the problem?

ALEX The IOU hasn't turned up. It's possible the thieves have it.

Emma contemplates, jumps up.

EMMA You mean a bunch of dirty, grimy, low life tunnel crooks could come busting in here looking for our babe?!

ALEX Yes, that could happen.

EMMA We have to protect the babe! With our lives if necessary!

ALEX I'll put more locks on the door!

EMMA Good. *(fondly)* It's play time.

Alex goes to hug Emma. She turns to the stroller.

The babe! I love juggling our babe.

Emma reaches into the stroller and takes two bundles of money out, moves toward the bar, juggles the money.

Miffed, Alex moves to the mirror by the door, admires himself in the mirror.

EMMA You're perfect.

ALEX Thank you, my love.

A KNOCK on the door. Alex opens it.

DETECTIVE SCOTT (64) storms in. Detective Det. Scott is a typical detective in a trench coat.

Emma has her back to the front door as she juggles the money.

Detective Det. Scott!

DET. SCOTT The garbage! It's in the garbage can!

Emma turns, drops the bundles, stands in front of them as Det. Scott, head down, storms into the kitchen and comes out with the garbage can turned upside down. Det. Scott knocks on its bottom, inspects it then puts the can down, looks to Alex.

It occurred to me if you keep garbage in a gym bag then the money had to be in the garbage can!

ALEX It's my high-efficiency garbage disposal system. I hope to phase out the garbage can entirely.

Emma eases herself down, picks up the bundles of money, scoots to the stroller, deposits the bundles into the stroller, reaches in.

The sound of a SCREAMING BABY comes from the stroller. Alex and Det. Det. Scott jump.

EMMA *(to Det. Scott)* Look what you've done.

Alex is aghast.

ALEX *(horrificed)* Our babe's developed lungs?

EMMA Alex!

ALEX Yes, my love.

EMMA I'm taking the babe for a feeding.

ALEX Good, good idea, Love.

Emma pushes the stroller with screaming baby sounds into the bedroom. The screaming stops.

DET. SCOTT Something's going on here. I can smell it. I've been smelling it for over thirty years. It's here, in this room, somewhere.

ALEX Garbage from the gym bag?

DET. SCOTT No.

ALEX Poopy diapers in the bedroom?

Det. Det. Scott looks around as he strolls in the living room.

DET. SCOTT Diapers?

ALEX The babe.

DET. SCOTT It's something else.

Det. Det. Scott moves toward the front door.

I've met some strange people in my time, but let me tell you this, Alex Maxwell, you're absolutely crazy!

Det. Det. Scott EXITS the apartment. Slams the door.

ALEX *(shouts)* You don't know the little woman!

Emma pushes the stroller in from the bedroom.

EMMA Why can't men close a door without slamming it?

ALEX You've kidnapped an actual baby and you made it cry!!

EMMA You think I forced it cry?!

ALEX How else could we get those sounds?

EMMA I spent a hellish hour recording a screaming baby in the maternity ward at the hospital! I told them my sister just had one.

ALEX Boy or girl?

EMMA The loudest!

ALEX Whew. I thought you'd really lost it.

EMMA You know I wouldn't break the law. I had to endure actual baby screams! You know how sensitive I am.

ALEX God knows I know.

Emma goes to the stroller, brings a portable tape recorder out of the stroller, shows it to him.

EMMA Hold it like this. Press the play for screams and stop for no screams.

Emma holds the recorder underneath, pressed the play button with her thumb. The sound of screams.

For relief.

Emma presses the stop button with her thumb. The sound of screams stops.

Alex takes it, holds it underneath, presses the play button with his thumb, gets screams, presses the stop button with his thumb, screams stop.

Emma puts the tape recorder into the stroller, and they sit on the sofa.

EMMA Have you legitimized our babe? Is this simple task too much for you?

ALEX Changing the recorded numbers on file for the babe is not simple. I'm writing a program to search for numbers like threes or sevens, then on and on, changing them to random ones.

EMMA I'm counting on you.

ALEX I'll come through my Sweet.

Alex picks up a newspaper, silently reads it as he talks.

EMMA I got some nice things for the babe while you were "recovering".

ALEX You didn't spend any of our babe?

EMMA I'd never spend the babe.

Emma reaches into the stroller, takes out a DOLL WITH ARTIFICIAL SCARY ROSY CHEEKS.

It looks like a BABY in a large, white red dotted fleecy zippered sleeper. Little arms stick out. Emma holds it up. The sleeper bulges with money.

I did the cheeks myself. What do you think?

Alex glances over the newspaper, sees the doll, throws the newspaper over his head behind him and jumps up.

ALEX An obese, weird Voodoo doll?! Who are you trying to kill?

EMMA No!! Can't you see? It's our beautiful million-dollar babe!

Emma unzips the sleeper, takes a bundle of money from inside the sleeper, shows it to Alex and tucks it back inside with the other bundles and zips it up again.

I saw the doll in a toy store window and the sleeper in Walmart. Isn't the babe cute?

Speechless, Alex staggers around, flops on to the sofa.

ALEX Emma, dearest. We're getting into an actual Twilight Zone episode here. Aliens will drop through the ceiling and take you, me and the babe away!

EMMA We'll keep the babe safe, won't we?

Emma walks around the room with the babe in her arms.

ALEX *(numb, defeated)* At all costs. *(pause)* We've created an actual monster! *(pause)* I need a drink.

Alex goes to the bar, pours a drink, gulps it down.

I'll run through the program again. I don't want last minute bugs.

Alex sits at the bar, brings a briefcase from under the bar, takes out the clipboard and a pen, studies papers on the clipboard.

EMMA Good.

Emma strolls the room with the babe over her shoulder, hums, rocks it periodically like a real mother would.

Alex studies a flow chart on his clipboard. Emma goes to the stroller, puts a hand in and pulls out a big, angry-looking-clunky handgun.

She strolls around the room with both the babe and gun.

I got another surprise for the babe yesterday.

Alex studies the paper on the clipboard.

ALEX That's nice Em. That's great.

Emma aims the gun at a lamp, pretends to pull the trigger.

EMMA *(quietly)* Bang. *(normally)* Aren't you interested in what I got our babe?

ALEX *(absentminded)* A soother. All babes need soo-soos.

EMMA No. I'll get one tomorrow.

Emma points the gun at the door.

(quietly) Bang. Bang. Bang.

ALEX A little babe pillow?

EMMA No. I'll get that tomorrow.

ALEX Em, what is it?

Emma slides the gun under the sofa chair cushion as he turns to her.

EMMA It's a secret.

Alex pretends to faint. She jumps up.

ALEX Send your loser brother to the bank tomorrow. I'll get him the loan he's been hounding me for.

EMMA Why the change of heart?

ALEX With him sitting in my office I'll be free to complete the serial number switch.
No-one interrupts a loan application.

EMMA What if he doesn't pay it back?

Alex stands, stretches.

ALEX I expect him to, but if he doesn't that's okay.

Emma joins him, hugs him.

I've got a perfect record on loans. A bad one makes me seem human.

EMMA I know something else that makes you seem human.

Emma turns on the radio. "Money, Money, Money" plays. Alex turns off the lights.

LIGHTS DIM

Emma dances Alex to the stroller. They push it into the bedroom area. The song ends.

LIGHTS OUT

END ACT 1, SCENE 4

ACT 1, SCENE 5

LIGHTS UP ON:

Time: Morning.

Place: The same.

The sound of birds chirping. The song "Here Comes The Sun" plays.

There are four bolt locks on the inside of the door into the house.

LIGHTS FADE UP ON

Alex's groggy, disheveled as he ENTERS from the kitchen in a robe, with two mugs of coffee and a newspaper under his arm. He carries them carefully, sits on the sofa and puts one cup on the coffee table, sips the other and reads the newspaper.

Emma, disheveled, staggers in from the bedroom wearing a housecoat with the babe, turns off the radio, sits on the sofa, sits the babe between her and Alex, sips the coffee from the coffee table.

- ALEX *(as Long John Silver)* Captain Long John's a happy captain.
- EMMA *(as damsel)* Rescuing me and the treasure on the desert island made my life complete.
- ALEX The babe supercharged our lives.
- EMMA Thanks babe.
- ALEX Thanks babe.
- EMMA And the thieves.
- ALEX And Mr. Web making me pass out.
- EMMA And Detective Det. Scott.
- ALEX That was a close call.
- EMMA It all helped.
- ALEX I've been thinking. You know what we are?
- EMMA Well, we're . . . uhm, not really.
- ALEX We're adrenalin junkies. It's our aphrodisiac.
- EMMA But . . .
- ALEX *(interrupting)* Why else would we go through what we've been going through?
- EMMA You're right!
- ALEX *(stunned)* I am?
- EMMA But we won't dwell on it.

ALEX That's sweet, my love.

EMMA We should get breakfast.

ALEX I only hunger after you.

A LOUD BANGING on the door. Alex jumps up, runs to the door. Emma grabs the babe and puts it into the stroller.

ALEX Who is it?!

MARG *(O.S. deep female voice)* Open up!

ALEX What do you want?

Emma rolls the stroller behind the sofa, does a front roll over the sofa, lands on her knees in front of it, grabs the gun from under the sofa chair cushion, rests her arms and heel of the gun on the coffee table, points it at the door.

Alex faces the door, doesn't see Emma or her gun.

MARG *(O.S. deep female voice)* Is Alex Maxwell in there?

ALEX W-w-what do you want?

EMMA Stand away from the door!

Alex moves to the side without looking back.

ALEX *(louder)* What in God's name do you want?

MARG *(O.S. deep female voice)* Aleeeex, it's me!

ALEX No!!!

Emma cocks the hammer on the gun.

EMMA Cops?

ALEX Worse!

EMMA Crooks?

ALEX Worse!

EMMA What?

ALEX Mother?!!!

Emma returns the hammer and slips the gun under the sofa chair cushion while Alex unlocks and opens the door.

Emma pushes the stroller through to the bedroom area.

MARG (62) ENTERS with a suitcase in one hand and a set of golf clubs in a bag over the opposite shoulder.

Marg is dressed like a bizarre, middle-aged country girl -- white rhinestone blouse, cowboy hat and skirt -- a rhinestone light show. Her accent is western, sounds like a country girl.

ALEX Hi Mom.

MARG Gimme some skin, ma boy.

Alex and Marg hug. Alex takes the suitcase and clubs, puts them at the end of end table.

Emma ENTERS from the bedroom.

EMMA Moma Marg?

MARG In the flesh.

Marg twirls, does a short tap dance.

ALEX After Dad died Mom sort of freaked, passed out. When she came to she had a desire, more of a persistent yearning to . . . uh, herd cattle. She's a genuine cowboy-girl-womanish person now.

MARG Yup. My overwhelming urge to herd cattle got me hired onto a ranch, and the rest is history.

EMMA You said she was an aide worker in an underdeveloped country.

ALEX Herding cattle in Redknife, way north into the Yukon?

MARG I was born to be wild! I'm a chilln' with you and your misses on a bunk o yourn, son o mine.

A perplexed look from Alex and Emma.

You cool with me crashin' in your bunkhouse?

More perplexed looks from Alex and Emma.

You dig my drift?

EMMA Bunkhouse?

ALEX Our bunkhouse?! We don't have . . . you mean HERE?!!!

MARG Yup. I'm the lead hand, bean counter, bronco buster, calf roper, bill payer, the works, the whole caboodle. You got room for your Calamity Jane Mom, don't you, son o mine?

ALEX Absolutely.

MARG Dy-no-mite!

ALEX You'll join us for breakfast.

Emma EXITS into the kitchen.

MARG *(loud)* There's this far out cloggers competition in town. So we girls decided to win it. What you think of our costume?

Emma ENTERS with milk, plates, utensils, cereal on a tray.

We're the Quad W Ranch Wonders. You otta see our brand.

(MORE)

Marg writes four joint "W"s in the air with her finger.

Cattle beasts don't cotton to it none, but it's damn distinctive.

EMMA What's cloggin'?

ALEX Think Celtic Dancers. See old ladies with arms.

Marg does a few clogging steps.

MARG We have a hoedown of a good time dancin' up a storm.

ALEX *(looks to golf clubs)* We don't golf?

MARG The clubs remind me of good times with your father. Was the only thing he was real good at doin'.

They fix and eat cereal.

ALEX We've got a spare bedroom.

EMMA Although, we have a babe staying with us.

MARG A tot?

EMMA My, my, my, uh, girlfriend had to go in for an operation. She's a single mother, so . . .

MARG *(interrupting)* Balderdash!

EMMA The father's an alcoholic drug addict, who's sworn to steal the babe back.

ALEX That's why all the locks on the door.

MARG How old is it?

ALEX I had them put on last night. Had to pay a locksmith double time.

MARG Block head! The babe! How old is the child?

Emma and Alex look at each other, a loss for words, then say the following simultaneously.

ALEX Three months. EMMA Six months.

MARG Say what?

EMMA &
ALEX *(slowly reading each other's lips)* Four . . . and . . . a half months.

MARG Can I see it?

EMMA It's sleeping.

MARG A boy or a girl?

Emma and Alex say the following simultaneously.

EMMA Girl. ALEX Boy.

Emma and Alex say the following simultaneously.

ALEX No, it's a girl. EMMA No, it's a boy.

MARG Talk about livin' sheltered lives!!! You're psyching me out. Where's the kid? I'll tell you what it is.

ALEX In the bedroom.

EMMA Marg, to be frank, you might not be comfortable here. There could be some loud crying. It sometimes lasts all night.

Emma, behind Marg, imitates pushing the tape recorder button as she did earlier for Alex. Only Alex sees her.

ALEX But I'm sure the crying can be controlled, when necessary, right, Em?

Alex motions like he's pressing a button on the tape recorder. Marg sees him, is horrified.

EMMA Babies cry whenever they feel like it.

Emma imitates pushing the recorder button. Only he sees her.

ALEX But the babe won't, will it, Em?

EMMA I hope not. So, even though the babe could cry, you'll stay?

ALEX Of course Mom will stay.

EMMA What about the babe's incessant, loud crying?

Emma imitates pushing the tape recorder button. Alex motions like he's pressing the button with his thumb. Marg sees them both.

ALEX We'll stifle the babe!

To Marg it looks like he's strangling an imagined babe.

MARG Alex! You wouldn't choke a defenseless baby to get a night's sleep? You're talkin' weird dung. I've a notion to go back to the ranch and try to forget I ever had yu!

ALEX Once the babe has had enough to eat it'll settle down fine and sleep like a baby, won't it, Em?

MARG A baby that age has formulae!

Marg gets up, starts for the bedroom.

 Give me the child. I'll see to it.

Alex stops her.

ALEX We don't want to wake the babe. She's a mean screamer.

MARG So, it's a girl.

ALEX I'm talking about Emma.

MARG What's the babe's name?

(MORE)

Alex and Emma blank look each other.

You must at least know the poor child's name.

EMMA There was a problem with naming the child.

ALEX It was a big problem with the alcoholic, drug addicted father.

EMMA Very big.

ALEX He wanted to call it something horrid and the mom, Emma's friend, the mother, wanted to name it something lovely.

MARG A no-name child of undetermined sex.

EMMA So we call it our babe.

ALEX Is that wrong?

MARG It's a shade better than hey you. I need a cold shower.

LIGHTS OUT.

(END OF ACT 1 SCENE 5)

ACT 1 SCENE 6

Time: Evening.

Place: The same.

LIGHTS UP ON

The light outside the window is dim. The golf clubs stand in a corner near the window.

A KNOCK on the door, sounds like the Little Teapot Song.

Emma, wearing an apron, ENTERS from the kitchen, races to the door, unlocks, opens it.

Alex wears a business suit as he rushes in with two half full plastic bags, drops them on the coffee table, races into the bedroom area.

Emma holds her nose. The sound of RUNNING WATER. Alex returns to Emma, dries his hands on a towel. Emma looks for an explanation.

ALEX For the babe.

EMMA Smells horrid.

Alex puts the towel down.

ALEX I saw a woman pushing twins in a stroller. Paid her ten dollars for two poopy diapers. She thought I was crazy. It was torture, but I thought they would keep the babe safe.

EMMA Smart move, my love.

Emma inhales, makes a face.

It's . . . distinctive.

Emma takes the bags into the bedroom area and returns without them.

They're in the hall closet.

ALEX Thank you, my love.

Emma tries to kiss him. Alex looks at her hand that had the diaper. Emma runs into the bathroom/bedroom area. The sound of RUNNING WATER. Emma returns.

Thanks.

They have a sensual kiss.

With Mom staying here it adds a whole new dimension to the drama of our lives.

EMMA Drama?

ALEX The babe, thieves, Detective Det. Scott, Mother, adrenalin. My blood pressure!

EMMA Tonight sex will be out of this world.

Little Tea Pot KNOCK on the door. Alex moves to the door.

Wait.

Emma goes to the bedroom, comes in with a baby bottle and the stroller, positions it near the door, leans into the stroller, then the sound of a SCREAMING BABY comes from the stroller.

ALEX Perfect.

Alex unlocks and opens the door. Marg ENTERS.

MARG That baby's hungry. I need to see it.

EMMA Go right ahead, Mom, have a look.

MARG Groovy.

Alex blocks Mom from the stroller.

ALEX Em, that might not be a good idea.

Emma takes a pair of reading glasses from her apron pocket and holds it above her head. Only Alex sees them. Emma puts the glasses in her apron, bends into the stroller with the bottle. Crying stops.

Emma stands aside so Marg can see the babe.

Marg bends in for three seconds, jumps back, gives a horrific look, is shaken.

MARG My God!

EMMA So?

MARG It's sort of . . . sort of . . . cute . . . and . . . oddly proportioned.

EMMA The babe will sleep better in the bedroom.

Emma wheels the stroller into the bedroom.

Dazed, Marg collapses on the sofa chair and Alex sits on the sofa.

ALEX How was your hoedown?

MARG Hoedown? Oh, right. A bronk buster! The eight of us danced great. Didn't win. Came second. Totally awesome. Me and the girls were born to be wild. We were way wild tудay.

ALEX It's good you're having fun.

MARG Right on, greenhorn. We're goin' with the flow.

Marg high fives Alex. Alex secretly wipes his hand.

ALEX Have you ever thought about finding someone to share your life with?

MARG Son, I don't want to be held back by an old square dude looking for a Jane to nurse him into the afterlife.

ALEX Or nurse him better.

MARG As sure as the sun'll shine tomorrow, I'd finish him off.

Marg sniffs the air.

MARG That smells like a diaper.

Marg stands, sniffs, EXITS into the bedroom area and ENTERS with two diaper bags.

Alex, are you still afraid of germs?

ALEX *(lying)* No.

Marg starts toward Alex with the diaper bags.

And yes. In the closet they're fine, but in my face, I'm terrified.

Marg changes direction, goes toward the bathroom.

Where are you taking them?

MARG The bathroom. They need to be washed out.

ALEX Mom. I don't want to see those diapers ever again. Garbage! The gym bag!

Alex points toward the kitchen. Marg EXITS into the kitchen with the diapers then ENTERS without them.

MARG Son, I tied the bags and tucked them into the gym bag with the other garbage and closed it up tight. Don't open it . . . ever.

Alex gives her a look.

I washed my hands.

Marg sits on the sofa chair. Emma ENTERS from the bedroom.

EMMA The babe's asleep.

MARG There's something under . . .

Marg is uncomfortable, reaches under the sofa chair cushion.

Emma tackles Marg. They roll off the sofa onto the floor.

ALEX *(to Emma)* That's my mother!

MARG I'm okay.

EMMA I've got a birthday surprise for the babe under the cushion.

They stand.

MARG It's not our birthday. You can show us.

EMMA I want it to be a surprise for everyone.

ALEX Ever since the babe arrived it's been one ongoing surprise.

MARG I've never been so boshed out. I'm going to bed.

Marg moves toward the bedroom area, stops, turns back.

I've misplaced my reading glasses. I hope I didn't leave them at the competition.

ALEX I'm sure they'll turn up.

Alex gives Emma a look.

Marg EXITS into the bedroom.

Alex sees a few letters on the table by the door, goes through them and stops at one.

This one is different.

EMMA The crooks?

Alex opens the letter and silent reads it.

What do you think?

ALEX It's from the thieves. They've got the IOU. They're after our babe. Want us to switch the babe for the IOU. Money bag for IOU bag.

He lays it on the coffee table. Emma reads the letter.

EMMA Take the babe to the Pizza Shed on Main Street, five p.m. tomorrow night. We exchange the money bag with the IOU bag that will be under the table in the far corner.

ALEX If the IOU is sent to the police, we could lose the babe and go to jail.

EMMA *(indicates the letter)* It's signed the mob. Does the mob sign demand letters? Seems hoakie.

ALEX We'll be dealing with dangerous thugs. I'll wear my ultra-intimidating power suit.

EMMA In this corner, desperate crooks, and in this corner, Alex in his ultra-power suit.

ALEX I find it very intimidating at the bank.

EMMA Does the note sound like it's written by the mob?

Alex shrugs.

We take the gym bag with garbage and diapers and exchange it for the IOU bag. It'll let them know we're playing hardball. Your Mom could babe sit.

LIGHTS DOWN. END ACT 1 – END OF SAMPLE