

CONERICO WAS HERE TO STAY

BY

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BLURB

CONERICO WAS HERE TO STAY

(Second play in “The City Scene”, published by Samuel French)

YAM. Hello. I'm calling from the local subway station.

(He leans out of the phone booth.)

I can't see the sign from herewith the station's name, but

GIRL'S VOICE: You saw my number on the poster.

YAM. That's correct. And it says, “For happiness

And thrills, call--”

GIRL. Right. Well, what's your pleasure? Fellatio? Anal gratification? Or the usual?

YAM, conservatively dressed and carrying a briefcase and umbrella, awakens from a doze to discover he is alone on a subway platform. He has amnesia. His hat is on the subway tracks. He calls various numbers written on the posters--to help him get back his hat--and his memory.

While waiting, he avoids making contact with a belligerent blind man, who seeks his help; stands by when a girl with a cello is raped by some gang members; tries to find his courage in a suicidal fantasy and--finally--does find courage when he meets a charming, courageous, volatile Puerto Rican gang member, who, in a climax of violence and escape, helps YAM find his identity and his humanity.

In the original Off-Broadway production (Produced by Edward Albee), the role of Jesús , the Puerto Rican gang member , and YAM's salvation, was played by Jaime Sanchez who went on to win a Derwent Award. In the Off Broadway revival, Terry Kaiser starred as YAM and Raul Julia was featured as Jesús.

Characters

**YAM
Fellatio Girl (over phone)
Male Voice (over phone)
Blind Man
The Girl With A Cello
The Boy With The Eye Patch
Young Hood
Jesus**

Time

1967

Place

A subway platform. New York City.

Scene: *A subway platform
at a rundown subway
station.*

*Posters.
A bench.
A phone booth.
A trash can.*

*At rise: YAM sitting on the
edge of the bench;
looking out over the edge of the
platform. He leans on an
umbrella, which is between
his legs. There is a leather
attachè case at his side.*

*Sound of an express train
coming. Crescendos!*

*YAM sits back and holds his
breath! — as the lights from
the passing train flicker in
stripes and dots across him.
When it passes, and the
hollow subway silence sets
in, he carefully moves
forward and peeks over the
edge of the platform.*

YAM
(Taking a deep breath.)

Still there.

(Pause. SINGS.)

“ . . . I had a hat when I came in.
I hung it on the rack.
And I’ll have a hat when I go out.
Or I’ll break somebody’s back.

YAM

(Continued. SINGS.)

“I’m a peaceful man, I am I am;
and I don’t want to shout.

But I had a hat when I came in.

AND I’LL HAVE A HAT WHEN I GO OUT!”

(Speaks.)

Now, that song came back. . . .maybe other things. . . .

(Looks at his watch.)

Stopped!

(Something catches his eye
out on the tracks.)

A rat!

(He jumps back.)

Is it near my--?!

(Rushes to edge of platform.)

Gone. Thank God.

(He paces nervously; spots
something on one of the posters.

Makes a decision.

Searches his pockets.

Finds coins.

Goes to the telephone,

picks up the receiver,

inserts coins and dials—

all the while looking at the poster.

Suddenly he hangs up!

Paces back and forth in front of the phone.

He makes a decision.

He goes to the phone and dials again—

again looking at poster.

A pause.)

GIRL’S VOICE

(Over. Amplified. Sweet.)

Yeeeeees?

YAM

. . .Hello. I-I’m calling from the local subway station.

(He leans out and looks.)

I—I can’t see the sign from here--with the station’s name, but—

GIRL'S VOICE

(Over. Amplified. Sweet, but all business.)

You saw my number on the poster.

YAM

That's correct. And it says, "For happiness and thrills, call—"

GIRL'S VOICE

(Sweet)

—Right. Well, what's your pleasure? Fellatio? Anal gratification? Or the usual?

(YAM hangs up.

Pause.

Phone rings. YAM picks up phone.)

—also flagellation, anilingus—and kissing—

(YAM HANGS UP AGAIN!

He paces. Stops. Confronts
the scribbling on the posters.
Using the umbrella as a pointer.)

YAM

"I am a devoted Benedict Arnold fan."

(He picks out another.)

"Murray of the Unholy Bishops says NO!"

(He moves on. Reads.)

"Murray is a faggot and don't know how to say nothing else—Dinty of the Sainly Stompers."

(He moves on. Reads.)

"Dinty of the Sainly Stompers and Murray of the Unholy Bishops are Commie-Nazi finks
—Skippy of the Midtown Martyrs,"

(Stops reading.)

I admire this. Why? . . .Direct. Expressive. Condensed. Maybe I'm a copywriter?

(Pause. Then he reads on. Smiles)

Ahhhh. "Honey loves Diego."

(He frowns at the next one.)

Ummmmm. "Michaela eats it."

(He quickly moves on to the next one.)

"The only proper use for a gun is to shoot it."

(Angry.)

Always some spook to depress you!

(Reads.)

"Conerico was here to stay." Hmm—

(Off. Express train heard.
Coming on—FAST!

YAM RUNS to the platform's edge;
looks wildly down at the tracks.)

YAM

(Continued)

IT WILL SQUASH IT!!!

(He covers his face as the train EXPLODES
PAST! . . .when the train passes,
he looks down.

Breathes a sigh of relief.

Remains.

Thinks.

Turns. Searches frantically for a number
on one of the signs.

Closes his eyes.

Memorizes the number.

Runs to the phone booth,
digging in his pockets all the while for a coin.

Finds it. Inserts it and dials.

There is a amplified "click"
of a phone being picked up)

MALE VOICE

(Over. Deep. Kindly. Amplified.)

Yes, my child?

YAM

Oh. . . .hello, sir. . . .I'm on the station. Where I saw your message on the poster?--the
neat little sticker? that says, "for help, call TEmpleton 7—

MALE VOICE

(Kindly.)

Yes, my child. I know my number.

YAM

Right. Yes. Well. . . .—I was hoping it wasn't a gimmick. You do really try to help.

MALE VOICE

(Kindly.)

I listen. Yes.

YAM

Right. Yes. Well. . . .—You see

(Taps head.)

. . .a kind of amnesia has set in. . .

(Taps watch.)

YAM

(Continued)

. . .and my watch has stopped.

MALE VOICE

(Kindly.)

Sorry. I don't have a watch.

YAM

Well, no—that's not the problem, really—I don't want the time—I mention it only because I'll have to . . .surmise some things. I guess.

MALE VOICE

(Kindly.)

Yes.

YAM

I guess. . .I must have fallen asleep. . . .There's a bench here on the station . . .

MALE VOICE

You say you fell asleep at a bench on a subway station?

YAM

I must have, yes. And. . .—OH! Something awakened me. . . .a train passing. . . .and the first thing I saw was. . .—my hat.

MALE VOICE

Your hat?

YAM

Yes.

MALE VOICE

Where?

YAM

—At the platform's edge.

MALE VOICE

—And?

YAM

—It was tottering. —Half on. —Half off.

MALE VOICE

— *Tottering?*

YAM

Yes. When I fell asleep, my chin must have rested on my chest. And the hat must have tipped off my head. Fallen onto the platform. And rolled . . .

MALE VOICE

— Yes?! Yes!?

YAM

— Then a train must have passed! — Yes! — And that's when I awoke—!

MALE VOICE

— *To see your hat—!*

YAM

— Tottering!

MALE VOICE

— Yes?! — **Yes?!**

YAM

— It fell!

MALE VOICE

— ***OH MY GOD!!!!!!***

(LONG PAUSE)

YAM

(Still holding phone to ear, he leans out to the tracks)

It's down there now. . .in the shadows. . .the trains haven't been able to get it yet. And before. . .before. . .a rat ran by it and—WAIT! That's it! That's what awakened me—a dream—rats—rats chasing. . .

MALE VOICE

What?

YAM

I don't know. . .something. . .into a closet?. . .alley?. . .—darkness!

VOICE

(Bright.)

Bravo! You remembered that.

YAM

Yes. But my hat is still down there.

(Pouting.)

My head is cold. I must have been used to my hat.

(Very loooooong pause.)

MALE VOICE

Tell me, my son. . .what exactly *is* your problem?

YAM

(Suddenly enraged!)

MY HAT IS DOWN ON THE TRACKS!

MALE VOICE

Yes, my son. I know. So?

(Pause.)

YAM

So I don't know what to do about it. . . and I've been killing time. . .but it stays down there . . .and "I'll have a hat when I go out. . ." And that's the problem. . .

(Pouting.)

And your sticker said, "for help. . .call—"

(BLACKOUT)

Scene 2: The same.

YAM at the poster.

YAM

“Conerico Was Here To Stay.” . . .That one keeps attracting me like a beauty mark. . . .My God, what assurance! Large letters. Looks like it was written with a magic marker and— . . .Now, there. . . .I know what a magic marker is. . . .And see! The letters were written—how? . . .Ah! As one writes a message on a tree— **with a knife!**

(Using the pointed end of the umbrella, he slowly traces out the gauging.)

C-O-N-E-R-I-C-O W-A-S H-E-R-E T-O S-T-A-Y. . .

(Steps back.)

That took time. Yes, Conerico was not afraid to stand here and gouge his message out. . . .sloooooowly. . . .viiiiciously—yes! viciously! —Conerico was daring someone to stop him. My God, there’s a dare in every letter and— . . .That’s strange. The first three words are in one style: “Conerico Was Here.” Then the last two words —”to stay?”—are different. Clear, but more slanted. Different. . . .something. . . .—AH!!! yes, by god—See what Conerico did? —He wrote those last two words **WITH HIS LEFT HAND!** Yes! I’m sure of it! God, what audacity! **WHAT CAJONES, CONERICO!**

(A tapping is heard. YAM, frightened, sits down on the bench and doesn’t move. A BLIND MAN enters, tapping the cane as he inches along.)

BLIND MAN

I’m gettin’ near that spot, goddamnit! The point of no return. Now I gotta go through the crazies. Steady, big boy! You counted the steps and you know where you are. . . .So why are you beginning to shake? —Because you know the crazies are coming on, you stupid bastard! So just concentrate on gettin’ to the other side. There’s no one to help you.

(Listens.)

Is there?

(Pause.)

BLIND MAN

(Continued)

Goddamned antennae aren’t working.

(YAM sits very rigid.

BLIND MAN feels around as he talks— and heads for YAM.)

That crap about the other senses taking over is CRAP! My hearing’s lousy. Can’t smell for mustard greens! Touch didn’t improve! But I’ll tell you one thing HE sharpened—the big braille bastard in the sky: Pain! PAIN, GODDAMNIT!

(He is almost touching YAM who slides down to the other end of the bench and knocks over the umbrella)

BLINDMAN

(Continued)

There's someone there! Good.

(Gropes in the air toward YAM. During the next, it becomes a dance with the BLIND MAN groping and YAM eluding him)

Now, look. I'm blind. You got that?

(Lifts dark glasses; shows whites of his eyes)

And I want you to grab me by the arm

(Offers his arm to the air)

and lead me out of here. . . — WILL YOU STAND STILL, GODDAMNIT! . . . Now, look. . . I'm always okay up to this point. Then the crazies begin. So help out a guy, will you? — FREEZE, FREEZE, YOU DOUBLE-JOINTED TRANSVESTITE! — Look! The whole goddamned city's changed. They keep rippin' it up. So it's noise. NOISE! And it's done somethin' to my ears. I'm not hearin' right. Right? Not any more. And then, every so often, it goes crazy. I call it "the crazies." It's like my head becomes a balloon and there's bees inside and there's a fingernail scrapin' on a blackboard and then a thousand Johns start flushin' an' then HE mixes in an avalanche of rocks, an' people start gargling an' throwin' up and Maria Callas hits a high C and— I'LL PLUCK OUT YOUR EYES IF I EVER LAY MY GRUBBY HANDS ON YOU! . . . List, list, Oh list; I come down here to get to the other side of the street. I can't cross up there any more. *There's all them cars! THE THIRTY NINE TRILLIONS OF 'EM!* . . . And, anyway, all the old chums are gone, because they ripped everything up and everyone out. So now, *NOBODY WANTS TO HELP ME CROSS UP THERE!* . . .

(Pause)

Okay, you pimple pecker! I'm goin' myself!

(He pulls himself together and, cautiously at first, walks. He walks in the right direction for a few steps.)

Ah HA! I SHALL CONQUER IT!

(Suddenly he holds his head. We hear all the noises he described: Bees, fingernails scratching across the blackboard; Johns flushing, ETC.)

The BLIND MAN panics. He loses all sense of direction. He heads for the edge

of the platform. YAM cringes
against one of the signs, and covers his eyes.

The BLIND MAN almost steps over the edge
of the platform, but stops in time, turns,
finds his balance--loses it; just avoids
falling off again, walks to the ledge, etc.
He resembles a tight rope walker executing
difficult stunts on the wire. In fact, the cacophony
fades a bit and we hear the roll of the circus
drum, accenting the BLIND MAN's turns.

The BLIND MAN falls to the platform.

All noise stops. Pause)

BLIND MAN

(Continued)

You wait. You just wait. If there's ever a God again, he'll punish you.

(BLACKOUT)

Scene 3:
YAM on the phone.

YAM

Why don't they give him a dog? Or a companion? And why don't they teach him humility? Why don't they teach him that the world doesn't owe him a living just because he's blind. And why do they allow him to walk the streets in plain sight of everyone? Don't I have enough to contend with?

VOICE

(Over. Amplified.)

After all: you have a hat on the tracks!

YAM

Yes.

VOICE

And your watch has stopped.

YAM

Yes.

VOICE

And a kind of amnesia has set in.

YAM

Yes.

VOICE

You see, my son; I do listen.

YAM

Yes. But do you have any solutions?

VOICE

Not yet. But we must not give up. If worse comes to worse, we can look into the renting of an IBM computer. I hear they now have most of the answers.

YAM

But do they have the answer for me?

VOICE

What?! My child! IBM now sells for 478 1/2 a share!

(BLACKOUT)

Scene 4

YAM is leaning over the edge of the platform, looking at his hat on the tracks.

A young attractive GIRL rushes on carrying an encased cello.

GIRL

Have I missed a train?!

YAM

No! . . . but there hasn't been one for—
 (Looks at his watch.)
 —for quite a while.

GIRL

(Looking back over her shoulder.)

They haven't stopped running!—have they?!

YAM

The express train is running. . . .So, I would guess the local is, too.

GIRL

Go—I hope so.

(Looks back over her shoulder.)

I'm glad you're here. I guess it's all right.

(Long pause.)

YAM

That's my hat down there.

GIRL

Oh, yes . . .

(Pause.)

YAM

I don't know how to get it.

(Pause.)

GIRL

Have you thought about going down for it?

YAM

—Would you?—if it were yours?

(Pause.)

GIRL

I'd want to. But I have weak ankles. That's why it's hard for me to run.

YAM

It's right near the express track.

GIRL

I was just running, as a matter of fact.

YAM

It's dangerous down there with the trains running.

GIRL

It wasn't a pleasant experience.

YAM

And there's the third rail.

GIRL

I dropped my music. It wasn't mine. I can't always afford to buy a score. So my teacher loaned it to me. But I just dropped it. Because I got frightened! It's up there on the street and I feel guilty about it.

YAM

Sometimes there are those men who work along the tracks. But I haven't seen any of them come out of the tunnel.

GIRL

Of course, now that I'm safe—

YAM

(Turns!)

“SAFE?!”

GIRL

—The bus broke down and I was waiting for the next one but I didn't like the looks of the two fellows who got off with me and they kept looking at me and one of them had a patch over one eye and they kept looking at me all during the ride so I tried to concentrate on my score but they stared at me and they stopped looking angry when I put away the score and then after waiting a while for another bus one of them who had an eye patch over one eye came up to me and made a sound with his mouth like he was slurping up soup and they all started to laugh even the bus driver so I walked away and they stood there laughing and then and then and then they stopped laughing and I knew they made a decision to come after me and I ran. . . .I'm glad I had a token. There's no operator.

YAM

They chased you in broad daylight?

GIRL

It's not daylight. It's dark out.

YAM

DARK!

GIRL

So I came down here.

YAM

(A beat; then, backing off)

Why did you do that? They might follow you down here.

GIRL

Oh, God—I hope not. —Anyway, you're here.

YAM

. . .look, now. . .you'd better leave here. A train might not come along for some time. I told you there hasn't been one for—

GIRL

I'm very tired.

YAM

Well, you've just got to pull yourself together and move one.

GIRL

Where can I go?

YAM

There's probably another stairway down that way—

GIRL

They might be there—waiting—

YAM

Or on their way down here.

GIRL

Maybe not. Anyway, what could they do—with you here?

(Pause.)

YAM

(Stepping back.)

Say, you are a troublemaker. You've provoked them, right? And now you're trying to involve me and —

GIRL

No, mister I just want to get home because I couldn't I wouldn't provoke anything and I've got to get home because I've got a cat Cherubini and if he's not fed by me Cherubini cries and then I get in trouble with the neighbors because they hate my practicing anyway.

YAM

Look—I'm telling you for your own good. Move on.

GIRL

(Taking her cello out of the case.)

I know, I'll play for you! We'll pass the time together that way. My technique isn't too good, but I'm very musical. I know a beautiful Bach piece. You might have heard it. It was played in that movie—the Ingmar Bergman one, where the sick girl sees God—and He's a spider?

(She plays her cello.)

YAM

. . . This is insanity. Look—what if other people pass? It's embarrassing. *Nobody plays a cello on a subway station!* Besides, you're playing it all wrong. Your tempo is. . . Please stop! I have a feeling you *were* followed. That you provoked them enough to—

(She stops playing. Whistling is heard.
It comes closer. YAM faces the audience
and freezes.)

Two YOUNG MEN appear. One wears an eye patch.
The GIRL looks at them. Then she looks at YAM.
She rises; moves away from her cello.

She backs away slowly off stage.
The YOUNG MAN WITH THE EYE PATCH
follows her off stage..

The OTHER ONE stays. As HE moves to the cello,
he looks at YAM and keeps looking at him.

The YOUNG MAN takes the cello to the bench,
sits--plucks and scratches at the instrument,
never taking his eyes off YAM, who stands frozen,
staring over the audience.

The YOUNG MAN WITH THE EYE PATCH, returns.
HE changes places with the YOUNG MAN
who hands over the cello to him.

As this YOUNG MAN WITH THE EYE PATCH
scratches on the cello, he wraps his legs around it
and rocks the cello back and forth against him
and makes sounds at YAM with his mouth,
as if he were slurping up soup.

The SECOND YOUNG MAN returns.
THEY both exit.

Soon, the GIRL enters, slowly.
She stares at YAM for a long time.
Then she slowly moves to her cello,
slowly picks it up and, hugging the cello
close to her, under one arm,
and slowly dragging the canvas cello case
behind her, she slowly exits.

YAM stands frozen.

Then he suddenly claps his hand to his mouth,
runs to the trash can
and vomits behind it.)

(BLACKOUT)

Scene 5:

YAM on the phone.

VOICE

And so you vomited and now you're stuttering.

YAM

T-t-t-th-th-th-that's right.

VOICE

Can we positively rule out the blind man and the girl as the cause?

YAM

Yes, damnit! Yes, we can. I absolutely handled those situations properly. They have nothing to do with my getting sick or my stuttering. It's my hat. MY HAT DOWN THERE ON THE TRACK That's it. And if you don't stop accusing me of being a coward—

VOICE

Coward? No no, my son, I never mentioned that.

YAM

But you thought it.

VOICE

. . . Say, can you teach me that trick? Reading thoughts? I used to know it. I should again.

YAM

I stopped stuttering!

VOICE

Excellent! Now I can tell you the good news. I called IBM and they're sending a man right over to explain one of the machines.

YAM

Aren't they expensive?

VOICE

The man said no--not when you rent one.

YAM

Still; it must be paid for.

(Pause)

VOICE
Have you no money?

YAM
Only change—lots of change in my pockets.

VOICE
And your wallet? Cash—credit cards?

(Pause)

YAM
I haven't looked in my wallet.

VOICE
Oh.

(Pause)
And your briefcase. You said you had one.

YAM
Yes.

VOICE
Is there a checkbook there?

(Pause)

YAM
I haven't looked in my briefcase.

(Pause)
VOICE
Why not?

(Pause)

YAM
I'm afraid.

(A train passes)

(BLACKOUT)

Scene 6:

YAM sitting on bench,
holding up his umbrella,
which is opened. Near trash
can, newspapers are spread
out on the platform.

YAM

Conerico! Conerico! . . .If Conerico was here to stay, where is he?

(Pause.)

What do I remember? She said it was dark out and I was surprised.
. . .I must have come down when it was light then.

(Pause.)

Free association. Me--alone. Girl--attack. . . .There is something lewd about a girl
playing a cello. . . .—Subway—piss. Hat—trapped.
Umbrella—fallout. . . .Is that why my umbrella's up?

(Pause.)

No. What would I do with my hands otherwise?

(YAM brings the still-open umbrella
down in front of him and slowly
closes it and leans it against the bench;
leans out and calls--slightly more
frenzied.)

Conerico! Conerico!

(Stands. Looks right and left.)

Where is he!? —The tunnel! WITH THE RATS?!

(YAM JUMPS BACK.)

Back to the game! —Me—Coward—NOT TRUE!!!

(YAM stumbles back onto bench.)

That's a difficult game if you play it right.

(He looks at his briefcase.)

Maybe there's something to read in my briefcase.

(Inches toward it. Touches it)

No!

(He picks up a part of the scattered
newspaper he did not use to cover his vomit.)

Coward, huh?

(Reads.)

“Church Bombed. Four Negro Children Killed.” --See? I can read this without flinching.

(Reads.)

“Collusion charged Between Business, Union and Mobsters.”

“Athlete Guilty in Bribe Scandal.”

“Life Too Hard: Boy Ends It At 13.” This! . . .—I can even read this.

YAM

(Continued. Reads)

“On their way home from the parish school, Bobby Leonce complained to his brother Howard that ‘life was too hard.’ Howard tried to cheer him up. But when they got to their empty house, Bobby suddenly seized a kitchen knife and Howard knocked it from his brother’s hand. Bobby ran upstairs and locked himself in their parent’s room. There was a shot. In the room, Howard found . . .—his brother’s body, the father’s revolver . . .and a note: ‘You know I’ve been thinking of doing it for a long time, Howard. Now I can go to a better world.’ ”

(YAM stops reading.)

Oh, my God. Thirteen years old. “Go to a better world.” / must stop him.

(Parental figure voice.)

“Now, look here Bobby. . .” No. *Howard* must stop him.

(Talks to Howard as a teen-age Bobby)

“What is it, Bobby? You haven’t cracked a smile all day. . . .Hey, slow up . . .—It’s not me, is it? You don’t think I told Mother or Dad on you. Hell, Bobby, I do it, too. Can’t help it. It’s nice. And, anyway, I don’t believe it’ll fall off, like they say. . . . ‘Cause it hasn’t.

(Stops.)

Well, sure. . .you can go to hell for doing it.

(Pause.)

Huh? . . . ‘Hell either way?’

(Walks.)

There you go talking so’s I can’t understand you. And can’t you ever say anything with a smile? Always serious. Hell, nothing’s *that* bad. . . ‘IT IS?’

What is? . . . ‘Cancer?’ ‘Heart Trouble?’ ‘Muscular dystrophy?’ God, Bobby, I don’t see how you can have all those? ‘And at the same time?’ Oh; ‘Can get.’ Hell-- sure. Maybe. Planes drop down on you from the sky, too. All kinds of things *can* happen. So what? You gotta die someday.

(Whipped around as if someone had taken hold of his shoulders and turned him.)

‘THAT’S JUST IT!

(Runs after Bobby.)

Hey, Bobby—don’t run away. . . Wait! Wait!

(Stops.)

Bobby! Stop! Put that knife down!

(Grabs at an imaginary upraised arm.

Struggles. Imaginary knife falls:

YAM kicks it away.

YAM falls to the floor and covers the imaginary knife with his body.)

Oh . . . Oh . . . God . . . He wants to kill himself so bad!

(Bobby runs away. YAM rises.

Throws imaginary knife down.)

Bobby!

YAM

(Continued)

(Amplified; door slamming.)

(Amplified; key turning in lock.)

Bobby! He's talked about killing himself before. 'Why?' I'd ask. And he'd always answer with that damned, 'Why not?'

(Listens at imaginary door.)

Bobby? Are you lying in the spotlight again?

(Pause.)

I came on him like that once. . .lying on their bed. . .looking at the ceiling . . .no lights on. . .except for my father's lamp--the goose-neck one--shinning right down on him. . .and a box of my father's condoms spilled out all over his chest. Then, after a long time, he says . . ."This is how it always is. Me in a spotlight and everyone else outside it in the dark—blurred!"

(Realization! Becomes YAM.)

Hey. Hey, that's it! Conerico! Conerico! There's one thing we never thought of. If we turn on all the lights, there'll be no more blur.

(Becomes the teen-age Howard again.

Runs to the imaginary door. Pounds.

Bobby! Bobby ! —I've got the answer—

(A loud SHOT. Himself again.)

I tried. You saw. I tried to save him.

(Blackout)

Scene 7.

YAM sitting on the bench
with his face in his hands,
his elbows on his knees.

A Puerto Rican Boy runs on.

BOY

El Stompo! EL STOMPO! They'll kill me if I don't find him.

(Looks down on tracks)

Hey, there's a hat on the tracks.

YAM

(Jumps up)

It's mine.

BOY

(After a pause)

Arthur?

YAM

(After a pause)

Am I Arthur?

(The BOY pulls out a switch blade knife.

Springs the blade. YAM steps back.

I don't know if I'm Arthur! I don't know who I am! Who's Arthur?!

BOY

(Advancing)

Cut it, man—you look like Arthur and you talk like Arthur and you looked over your shoulder the way Arthur looked over his shoulder whenever he came to screw my mother. You are Arthur!

YAM

No!

BOY

(Moves in on YAM)

And you knocked her up and cut out! Man, you knew she really liked you! Why did you cut out, Arthur!?

YAM

(Backing up to edge of platform)

—But I didn't! —I could never—

BOY
 (Still advancing)
 What? Knock you a PR?!

YAM
 No! Knock up anybody!

(YAM starts toppling off
 the edge of the platform.
 The BOY drops the knife, grabs YAM)

BOY
 Hey! Hey, I believe you!
 (Steadies YAM)

YAM
 You do?

BOY
 Sure.. I have a feeling about you.—Poignant. . .
 (Smiles)
 Poignant. That's a nice word, isn't it.
 (He kicks the knife onto the tracks)

YAM
 Why did you do that?

BOY
 I didn't like that picture.

YAM
 Picture?

BOY
 I'm very good at taking pictures of myself. And I develop them right away
 —in my mind. Like sometimes I'm at a party—right? I'm holding a drink and I'm talking
 to a stunning girl. Click! I'm Cary Grant. But then I'm some place else and I'm holding a
 knife. Click! Christ! I hate that picture! So I kicked it onto the tracks.
 (He looks down at the knife on the tracks)

YAM
 (After a pause)
 Are you Conerico?

BOY

No, my name is Jesus.

(He pronounces it the Spanish way.
Then, with a twinkle)

But you can call me —Jesus.

(He pronounces it the English way)

El Stompo! You didn't see a Chimp.

YAM

A Chimp?

JESUS

A Chimpanzee.

(Hand to waist)

—about this high.

YAM

No.

JESUS

Dressed like a girl.

YAM

No. Why is he dressed like a girl?

JESUS

Because some people are stupid, that's why! Look. We're called "The Cavorting Chimps." El Stompo is our mascot. He got his name because he always imitates a stomping he once saw. He does it like a kind of dance. He shows all his teeth. Makes a lot of screeching noises.

(Makes screeching noises)

Everyone loves it. . . .I did, too. . . .Anyway, somebody gets the bright idea to "chick" him. . .

YAM

"Chick him?"

JESUS

Dress him up like a chick—a girl!

YAM

What for?

JESUS

You know how the cops began dressin' like the chicks? To put the finger on the muggers? Well, everybody thinks that's pretty funny, see. Some of the guys start doin' it

JESUS

(Continued)

—for kicks, you know? Anyway, somebody gets the shitty idea to “chick” El Stompo and send him to The Chimp Twats.

YAM

“The Chimp Twats?”

JESUS

They’re a girl gang with a girl chimp. Well, when that girl chimp spots El Stompo—decked out like a jungle whore—she starts to laugh her head off. El Stompo. . .he just stands there with his mouth open and gets smaller and smaller. Then that girl Chimp takes one leap—lands in front of him—and bashes him RIGHT ON THE HEAD! El Stompo takes off. So, now it’s my job to find that chump Chimp. And I’m the one who said, “Don’t chick him.” Christ! They’re so stupid!

(Pause)

YAM

Why do you put up with them?

(Pause)

JESUS

Well. . .for one thing, you can’t just cut out. They don’t like it. Then, too . . .what else can I do

(SINGS)

When you got
the dropout.
minority blues.

(Laughs. Speaks))

Ha! That drives them crazy.

(SINGS)

My singing like that, I mean.

(Speaks)

You know what else bugs them, Arthur? --My MCB girlfriends.

YAM

MCB?

JESUS

Middle Class Bourgeois. Like Brenda Mannheimer. Poor little thing. Brenda’s titless. That embarrasses her. But I tell her she has something better—two big eyes. —All my MCB’s have big eyes.

(Slight pause)

JESUS

I guess I'm a big eyes man. --What kind of man are you, Arthur? —I mean . . .like. . .are you an ass man? Hot for stomachs?—Oh,man, I hope you don't flip for stockings or shoes. I know guys like that.

(Snaps fingers)

I know what you dig! Brainy chicks—right?! I do, too. Brenda Mannheimer's brainy. Studies English. You notice how I have hardly no accent? Brenda teaches me. And she uses all kinds of great words about me.

(Savors each word)

Mer-cur-i-al. —Nice, huh? . . .Pic-ar-esque. —That one gives me the chills. And this—extra-ordinary vir-il-ity. —Impressive, huh?! —Hey, Arthur, *you* come up with a word—one that describes me—one you like—gotta be —fast! “Jesus.” —Fast!—Fast!

YAM

—Spontaneous.

(Pause)

JESUS

Spon-tan-e-ous. I know that word. “Spontaneous; Spontaneity!” Right?!

YAM

Right!

JESUS

(Pumps YAM's hand vigorously)

Good show, Arthur!

(Wants to repay YAM)

Looks onto track)

That's your hat, huh?

YAM

Yes.

JESUS

I'll get it for you.

YAM

No!

JESUS

Why not?

YAM

The local will come by and kill you!

JESUS

(Laughs)

Ha! You sound just like Carol.

YAM

Carol?

JESUS

One of my MCB"s. My favorite. Carol always expects bad things to happen.

(Proudly)

She's an artist. Carol plays the cello.

(MUSIC: Bach cello piece played before.
VERY LOUD.

At the same time, an express train
EXPLODES past!

The loud music continues as YAM rushes
over to Jesus and quickly mimes the Girl
and what happened in the cello scene.
Jesus clenches his fists as he listens.

The Music is very very loud
and now becomes the plucking and
scratching that the Boys produced
in the cello scene.

Suddenly, The Boy With The Eye Patch appears.

YAM sees him and quickly moves away
from Jesus.

MUSIC: Out.)

BOY WITH THE EYE PATCH

El Stampo. Where is he?

(Jesus shrugs)

Find him.

(The Boy With The Eye Patch turns
on his heels and quickly exits.

MUSIC: Up again. LOUD.

YAM rushes to to Jesus.
Mimes that The Boy With The Eye Patch
had been there with Another Boy and Carol.

YAM falls back on the bench.

The loud cello music continues for a few beat
--then suddenly cuts out!

Jesus returns)

YAM

What happened?

JESUS

I smashed his other eye! —the goddamned mother—

YAM

—He'll. . .—come back! He'll bring other

JESUS

—That's right!

(Paces)

And I'll take them all on!

(Almost in tears)

Oh, Christ. . .that beautiful bird. . .Carol. . .I get a pain right here. . .

(Punches his chest)

And she didn't make a sound. Right? I know she didn't make a sound.

YAM

You've got to run!

JESUS

No!

YAM

They'll find us and—

JESUS

(sits on bench)

I'm waiting. If you want to go—GO!

YAM

Go? How can I?

JESUS

You move your legs. . .in that direction or in that one and you—GO!

YAM
Go! Without my—?

JESUS
I told you I'd get that goddamned hat for you!

YAM
No! The local—!

JESUS
(Rises; heads for the platform's edge)
I'm not afraid of any local!

YAM
(Grabs his arm)
No!

JESUS
Why, Arthur! *DON'T YOU WANT YOUR HAT?!*

YAM
Yes!

JESUS
Then let me get it!

YAM
BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DO?
(An express train explodes past!)

JESUS
(Looking down)
Problem solved. The express took the hat into the tunnel.

YAM
Rats!

JESUS
Right. Fighting to chew up your HAT!

YAM
Ugh!

JESUS

Can't take them, huh, Arthur?

YAM

Please!

JESUS

I've fought them off the twins a couple of times. And I even split one with a butcher knife.

(Slices the air)

Schwang! Schwang! Splat!

YAM

STOP IT!

JESUS

If you can't stomach them, Arthur. LEAVE!

(Pause. YAM stays)

JESUS

(Continued)

Well, let us do something worthwhile!

YAM

What?

JESUS

(Going to attachè case)

find out who you are!

YAM

No!

(YAM tries pulling attachè case away.
Case opens and papers fly out.
Jesus scoops them up before YAM
can get at them.)

You don't want to bother with that. They'll be here soon. You really must--

JESUS

Your name is YAM!

(Pause)

YAM

Yam?

JESUS

Y-A-M. YAM. I wonder what your first name is? — YIM?

YAM

Yam? That doesn't sound like a name. What are those papers?

JESUS

Private memos from BOP.

(Reads)

“To YAM. From BOP. Subject: IGY's birthday party. Bringing your mother to IGY's last to-do was a master stroke. IGY has a real old-fashioned thing about parents. But for this shindig, I would strongly suggest that you bring a young woman--”

(Stops reading)

He wants you to to bring a chick, YAM.

(Reads again)

“IGY also has a thing about members of his team being married. A word to the wise, YAM.”

(Stops reading)

Man, I gotta tell you; reading this, I've got a terrible urge to bop BOP, YAM.

(Reads another one)

“Subject: That matter: It's true the company has a policy of paying for Psychiatric treatment of personnel--but IGY is against it. So, let's just forget that idea, YAM. Because that headshrinking thing is the bunk. I've submitted your name for membership at my athletic club. Believe me, YAM, a good workout will do wonders for you.

(Stops reading)

Say, YAM, would you like to read some of these?

YAM

No.

JESUS

Good. I love to read! — Right! — I want to be reading when they come. Because that's another thing that used to bother them: My reading! — Say, here's one from IGY himself.

(Reads)

“To BOP, BLB, IP, TIP, AG, GIG, ING.”

(Stops reading)

Say, YAM, you work with a lot of swinging names.

YAM

(Distantly)

Those aren't names. They're initials.

JESUS

BOP has a circle around him.

(Reads)

“Subject: YAM. I just want you all to know that I consider that YAM has been doing an exciting, exacting, excellent job. Trail period is over. I hereby acknowledge him as a full-fledged member of the team. One thing, though, boys. I wish one of you would clue YAM onto the value of wearing a hat.”

(Stops reading)

Hat is underlined. And here’s a hand-written note:

(Reads)

“Enough of that boyish crap, YAM. Wear a hat! Congratulations teammate!”

YAM

GIVE ME THOSE!

(YAM grabs the papers from Jesus and tears them into small pieces. There are lots of papers scattered about. YAM rushes around scooping them them and ripping them to shreds.

Jesus laughs and joins him. They rip together until there is no more paper to rip. Then Jesus runs to one of the posters that is beginning to peel and rips part of it off)

JESUS

Hey, look what it says here—”If you can piss this high, join the Fire Department.” Ha!

(He laughs and rips at the poster. YAm joins him. They rip at what they can tear loose from the backing)

YAM

NOT THAT ONE! Conerico wrote it.

(Now a series of voices begin to echo through the station)

VOICES

“Jesus! We’re coming!”

“You ready for us, Jesus?!”

“We’re going to kick your head in, Jesus!”

(The Voices continue. YAM is backed up against a poster. Jesus stops laughing, crouches and looks around)

YAM

It's them. Now what do we do, Jesus?

JESUS

(Trapped animal!)

What do we do? What do we do?

(Suddenly laughs)

Oh, man, all that before—that was—what's the other great word? Bravado! What do we do? YAM, you're looking at a cat who wants to survive.

(Holds out his hand)

Come on, YAM.

YAM

(Backing away)

Where?

JESUS

Into the tunnel!

YAM

(Backing away)

No! Rats!

JESUS

What do you think those guys are?

JESUS

(Softly)

please. please, jesus. must i?

(Pause)

JESUS

No, Arthur. No.

(The voices come nearer)

But I've got to go.

(He jumps down to the tracks)

Don't worry! They don't want you! Just me!

(He's gone)

Play it coooooool!

(The Voices stop.
 Three Young Men rush in.
 The Boy With The Eye Patch
 is among them.
 They look around and approach YAM.
 YAM points to the tunnel--
 opposite the one Jesus ran into.
 Two of them run down onto the tracks
 and disappear. The Boy With The Eye Patch
 waits--looks at YAM—then ignores
 him as he waits.

Pause)

YAM

(Sings)

I HAD A HAT WHEN I CAME IN.
 IT'S SOMEWHERE ON THE TRACK.
 AND I NEED MY HAT WHEN I GO OU—-

JESUS

(Off. From the tunnel)

Arthur! I found your hat!

BOY WITH THE EYE PATCH

(To his Buddies)

Hey! Hey! He's in the other one!

YAM

—OR I'LL BREAK SOMEBODY'S BACK!

(He stretches out his arms,
 flexes his palms, runs at the
 Boy With The Eye Patch and
 pushes him over onto the tracks.

Pause)

Oh, my God! He's laying there! He's down on the track! Laying there! And he's not moving!

(YAM leans over)

He's breathing.

(YAM looks up and down the track.
 Closes his eyes. Swerves a little.
 Opens his eyes)

YAM

(Continued)

Yes.

(He jumps down to the tracks and, with great difficulty, lifts the Boy With The Eye Patch, who is unconscious, onto the platform. YAM has great difficulty breathing. He looks around. He's in a panic. Finally, he digs into his pockets, comes up with some change, goes to the telephone, dials)

MALE VOICE

Yes?

YAM

Sir? It's me.

MALE VOICE

Well, my boy, I've been waiting for you to call. I have news for you.

YAM

So do I. I know my name. It's YAM.

MALE VOICE

You am?

YAM

No. YAM. Y-A-M. YAM.

MALE VOICE

Well, I'm "sweet potato." Ho! Ho! Ho!

YAM

DON'T LAUGH AT ME!

MALE VOICE

Of course, my boy. But listen: I've got news, too. Just before you called, my buzzer rang. The IBM people are on their way up.

YAM

Forget about IBM! There's something else! Those murderers in the tunnel will be coming back soon and they'll see The Boy With The Eye Patch and they'll know and they'll come after Conerico and he's alone in the other tunnel and shouldn't I go to him and shouldn't I tell him I stood by when the Girl With The Cello—

MALE VOICE

Whoa whoa whoa! I can't follow this, YAM. But I've got to tend to the IBM people. They're just about up. They're coming through the door. They're-- . . .—OH, THE DEVIL TAKE THEM—

YAM

What's the matter!

MALE VOICE

They're a sham, YAM. It's those same people. Come to take me away again.

(SOUND: Loud click, then dial tone)

YAM

(Slowly hangs up the receiver)

. . .alone.

(YAM picks up the attachè case.
Stuffs it into the trash can.
He takes the umbrella. Does the same.
Suddenly remembers something.
Takes out his wallet.
Nods his head.
Opens his wallet.
Takes out what looks like credit cards,
driver's license, other cards.
Look at them.

Shrugs.

Throws the wallet and its content
into the trash can)

YAM

Yes. . .now I can go. . .into the tunnel.

(YAM takes a deep breath,
jumps down to the tracks)

Conerico!

(YAM disappears into the tunnel
as THE BLIND MAN comes on)

THE BLIND MAN

The millennium! The millennium! Somebody up there helped me across the street!
That's the end of the crazies!

(The Two Boys run down the track
from the tunnel and climb up to
the platform)

Hey! Whoever you are! Did you hear— ?!

(The Boy With The Eye Patch
has revived. He points to the
other tunnel)

The millennium—

(As The Blind Man approaches, The Boys
knock him over; jump down to
the track and disappear.

The Blind Man painfully gets to his knees.
Clears his head. Steadies his breath.
Looks out over the audience)

The Blind Man
Sons of bitches. . .Mark me. . .If there's ever a God. . .ever again. . .He'll punish you. . .

CURTAIN

