

**The following takes place during Scene iv of “Mic.” By Brenton Lengel**

*Lights up on a back garden, which resembles an alleyway; it is late evening. The ground is stone, and light filters in from above, presumably from apartment windows. There is an old metal table and chair set in one corner, and a fire escape in the other. There is also a small, wooden shed. Ivy crawls up the corner of one wall, and grass cracks through broken stone in a few places, giving the garden an air of urban mysticism. Below the fire escape are steps, leading down to an old metal door a few feet below the stage floor. TUCKER sits on the fire escape, smoking a small, hand-rolled cigarette with a large can of Red Bull sitting next to him. A beat. The door opens, and the muffled sound of a performance taking place within can be heard. Then JOSH enters the garden and closes the door behind him. The noise stops. JOSH walks up the stairs and into the garden, then over to the table. He looks up into the night.*

**TUCKER:**  
*(Whistles to him)*

**JOSH:**  
*(Surprised, looks around, then)*

Tucker!

*JOSH walks to him, they shake hands heartily.*

I'd hug you but—

**JOSH:**

I'm Batman?

**TUCKER:**

You're sort of, perched—

**JOSH:**

Yeah.

**TUCKER:**

So it's hard to—

**JOSH:**

Yeah.

**TUCKER:**

*Half a pause.*

**TUCKER:**  
*(Leans down)*

Screw it.

Awkward hug.

**JOSH:**

*They embrace.*

Good to see you.

**TUCKER:**

You too.

**JOSH:**

*A beat.*

Okay, this is getting painful now...

**TUCKER:**

Should we stop?

**JOSH:**

Yeah. I think so.

**TUCKER:**

*They do. TUCKER sits back up; JOSH wanders toward center stage.*

I heard you might be coming back into town.

**TUCKER:**

Did you believe it?

**JOSH:**

Not for a second...Joshua Redding back amongst us. Haven't seen you in a dog's age, good sir, how have you—?

**TUCKER:**

*JOSH is looking at the sky again.*

Are you waiting for "The Mothership"?

**TUCKER:**

Just looking for the stars.

**JOSH:**

You seen any?

**TUCKER:**

**JOSH:**

Not a one...since I came back.

**TUCKER:**

That's the problem with living in the city. There are too many things going on down here, for you to see what's up there.

**JOSH:**

I suppose so...hey, you want me to get you a beer? I mean—

**TUCKER:**

*(Shakes his head)*

Nope. I'm done with all that.

**JOSH:**

Really?

**TUCKER:**

Nearly six months without a sip. Started right after you left.

**JOSH:**

Good for you. How'd you do it? A.A.?

**TUCKER:**

Do I look like a cultist to you?

**JOSH:**

Well, now that you mention it...

**TUCKER:**

Hey, any port in a storm, but I wasn't about to replace my booze with their Kool Aid.

**JOSH:**

So you went cold turkey?

**TUCKER:**

Just sorta moved my addictions over. From heroine to booze, and now from booze to Red Bull.

**JOSH:**

Red Bull?

*TUCKER holds up the can.*

**JOSH:**

I think you might have been better off drinking the Kool Aid.

Too late now. How was Cody?

**TUCKER:**

Uhh...Wyomingish?

**JOSH:**

How was Wyoming?

**TUCKER:**

...Western?

**JOSH:**

Could you see the stars there?

**TUCKER:**

Yep.

**JOSH:**

Did you find what you were looking for out west?

**TUCKER:**

Nope.

**JOSH:**

You finish your album?

**TUCKER:**

Nope.

**JOSH:**

Fall in love? Rescue a princess? Slay a dragon?

**TUCKER:**

None of the above.

**JOSH:**

So what have you been doing these last six—?

**TUCKER:**

Honestly, I don't want to talk about it...now. I—I just got back into town man.

**JOSH:**

**TUCKER:**  
*(Nods. Extends his cigarette)*

Understood. You wanna hit this spliff?

**JOSH:**

I thought you were clean.

**TUCKER:**

I keep my foot in the gateway. You want a hit or not?

**JOSH:**

I'd be much obliged.

*He walks to the edge of the fire escape. TUCKER hands him the cig. JOSH inhales, coughs, and hands it back to him.*

**TUCKER:**

What number did you get?

**JOSH:**

What?

**TUCKER:**

What number did you get?

**JOSH:**

*(Still coughing)*

Thirty-seven.

**TUCKER:**

Ouch.

**JOSH:**

I came late. *(Coughs again)* That's good.

**TUCKER:**

No it's not, you just haven't had any for a while.

*TUCKER draws on the cigarette and hands it back to JOSH. JOSH inhales.*

**TUCKER:**

You going to stay for it?

**JOSH:**

I dunno. Probably not.

**TUCKER:**

Cyn might move you up...

**JOSH:**

I don't want to depend on that.

**TUCKER:**

You've been out of the city for six months.

**JOSH**

Then, one more week won't matter.

*He hands the cigarette back to TUCKER.*

**TUCKER:**

These late slots keep up, we'll have to start calling you "The Lord of Darkness."

**JOSH:**

Think I'm cool enough to pull that off?

**TUCKER:**

Not at all. That's why need to remedy the situation.

**JOSH:**

It's random, what the hell am I supposed to do?

**TUCKER:**

Just do what I do.

**JOSH:**

I'm not sure Cynthia would be up for that.

**TUCKER:**

Who are you to say what Cyn is and isn't up for?

**JOSH:**

Wait, what, you mean—?

**TUCKER:**

*(Grins)*

Relax. Just cause you're back doesn't mean we're suddenly lookin' for a "Josh sandwich," and besides, that's not what I meant.

**JOSH:**

Oh—

**TUCKER:**

Though that does say all kinds of weird things about you.

**JOSH:**

Thanks.

**TUCKER:**

You're lucky I don't take offense to the accusation that I get better time slots by banging the hostess.

**JOSH:**

Sorry, that's not—

**TUCKER:**

I know. Anyway, I'm talking about improving your odds.

**JOSH:**

Improving my odds? What are you—?

**TUCKER:**

I mean you should write your name on a bigger slip of paper, genius.

**JOSH:**

Oh. Yeah. That, that makes sense.

*TUCKER non-verbally tells him: "Duh."*

**JOSH:**

Why did I never think to do that?

**TUCKER:**

Because you have no imagination.

**JOSH:**

Good to know.

**TUCKER:**

I'm here to help.

**JOSH:**

When are you up?

**TUCKER:**

Fifteenth.

**JOSH:**

What are you gonna do?

**TUCKER:**

I don't know. I haven't decided yet. Any requests?

*He drinks.*

**JOSH:**

I always liked Holes.

**TUCKER:**

Really?

**JOSH:**

Yeah.

**TUCKER:**

What, do you hate me or something?

**JOSH:**

No, it's funny.

**TUCKER:**

Glad you enjoy hearing about my pain so much.

**JOSH:**

You're a comic; everyone enjoys hearing about your pain.

**TUCKER:**

Au contraire, people like hearing about the kind of pain they're used to: "I'm a loser, I can't get a girlfriend, there are enough bumps on my dick that a blind man can read them like brail..."  
Holes...Holes didn't go over so well the last time.

**JOSH:**

When was the last time?

**TUCKER:**

The first time.

**JOSH:**

Six months ago?

**TUCKER:**

Yep.

**JOSH:**

You haven't done that routine in six months?

**TUCKER:**



Nope.

**JOSH:**

Why not?

*TUCKER glares at him.*

**JOSH:**

It's a little dark.

**TUCKER:**

It's a fucking black hole.

**JOSH:**

It's honest.

**TUCKER:**

If you want to call it that...

*Pause.*

**JOSH:**

Six months ago you were thirty-first.

**TUCKER:**

What?

**JOSH:**

You were at the end of the evening; you were thirty-first.

**TUCKER:**

I can't believe you remember that.

**JOSH:**

Why not?

**TUCKER:**

Because I don't remember that.

**JOSH:**

If I recall, you hit the bottle pretty hard that night.

**TUCKER:**

Yeah...I've been meaning to apologize for that. Cyn told me you guys carried me home.

**JOSH:**

We did.

**TUCKER:**

And I yelled obscenities all the way back to the apartment.

**JOSH:**

You did.

**TUCKER:**

And I stealth-barfed behind the couch.

**JOSH:**

You did.

**TUCKER:**

Is that why you remember my slot number?

**JOSH:**

No.

**TUCKER:**

Then why?

**JOSH:**

Some nights are just burned into your mind.

**TUCKER:**

Okay, but if not because of my drunken antics...?

**JOSH:**

How should I know? Maybe it was because it was one of my last nights in New York, maybe it was because Cyn and I carried you home...maybe it just is. I just know I remember it. I remember the color of the lights, I remember I drank two St. Peters and one glass of red wine. I remember I ate one-and-a-half pot cookies, and I remember, you were thirty-first.

**TUCKER:**

And the significance of this is?

**JOSH:**

It was late, the crowd was drunk, and the ones that weren't drunk were tired—

**TUCKER:**

High.

**JOSH:**

That too.

*A beat.*

**JOSH:**

It's a good routine.

**TUCKER:**

I'm sure it is. So long as it's never played to a crowd that's drunk, high, or tired.

**JOSH:**

Tucker—

**TUCKER:**

Think my act would go over well with tee-totaling lunch crowds?

**JOSH:**

It's funny... What's Cynthia doing?

**TUCKER:**

What are you doing?

**JOSH:**

Nothing. I'm not staying.

**TUCKER:**

You got anything better to do tonight?

**JOSH:**

Tomorrow. I've got an interview.

**TUCKER:**

What for?

**JOSH:**

A job.

**TUCKER:**

Well, then by all means, do not be late for that.

**JOSH:**

And after that... A couple more appointments.

**TUCKER:**

School?

**JOSH:**

Nahh, I'm done with that...Apartments. (*Looks up at the sky*)

**TUCKER:**

Where are you staying?

**JOSH:**

Huh?

**TUCKER:**

Where are you staying?

**JOSH:**

Uh, Hostel. White House.

**TUCKER:**

Our couch isn't good enough for you then?

**JOSH:**

Oh god, no. I mean you guys are—

*TUCKER begins to laugh to himself.*

**JOSH:**

More than amazing, and lord knows without you two I'd have gone...but, it's just that—

**TUCKER:**

Relax, Mr. Redding—

**JOSH:**

I came into town on really short notice, and I didn't really want to impose or anything and—

**TUCKER:**

Josh.

**JOSH:**

I've got some stuff I'm bringing back and I didn't know if you still had room or if your place was still open to me—

**TUCKER:**

Josh.

**JOSH:**

I'd just prefer it if I was staying by myself till I get things settled.

*TUCKER smiles.*

**JOSH:**

What?

**TUCKER:**

Nothing, it's just, kinda cute.

**JOSH:**

What are you talking about?

**TUCKER:**

You, you haven't changed. You leave town for six months and you're still rocking the  
*(Mocking bravado)*  
I'm a-gonna make it on my own! I'm a-gonna kick this city in the balls and take its wallet...

**JOSH:**

I don't sound like that.

**TUCKER:**

*(Tapping his head with his finger)*

You do up here.

**JOSH:**

Wonderful.

**TUCKER:**

Also: you're a hell of a lot uglier.

**JOSH:**

Good to know.

**TUCKER:**

We are living in a *society*, my friend; there's no shame in receiving help.

**JOSH:**

Think I should start pan-handling in the subway then?

**TUCKER:**

Let's not get ahead of ourselves. You'd never get into that union. Not with your resume.

**JOSH:**

I just feel like I need to hit the ground running, ya know? Myself. You understand?

**TUCKER:**

Yeah. I do.

*A beat.*

**JOSH:**

*(Looking up)*

So you never see the stars?

**TUCKER:**

They're faint, elsewhere, but from this garden? Never.

**JOSH:**

Not a glimmer?

**TUCKER:**

*(Shakes his head)*

Not once in six years have I seen anything sparkle up there that wasn't an airplane or part of that sixth floor drag queen's undergarments.

**JOSH:**

I never used to pay attention, but now that I know they're not there...It bothers me.

**TUCKER:**

You'll get used to it.

**JOSH:**

I hope so... 'cause right now, it makes me feel pretty uncertain.

**TUCKER:**

Welcome back to New York. We live with uncertainty, we sleep with uncertainty, and then we raise its bastard children.