

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE FIRST NIGHT PROCEEDINGS FROM THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE OF
UNEMPLOYED NURSES AND TEACHERS

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements

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English

By

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DEDICATION

To Keith Phillips and Grandma Rose

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I am greatly appreciative to those who made this thesis a finished and polished piece.. To my thesis committee, a remarkable group of writers at California State University Northridge, without the three of you and your commitment to this project, I would not be looking at the same thesis (that's a compliment). Rick Mitchell, your constructive criticism pushed me to find an effective form that this thesis desperately needed. Throughout the years you have opened my eyes and ears to wonderful playwrights that have influenced this piece and other works. The stand-up course that I took with you made the thesis what it is today and also changed my life plan. I thank you for your patience and support, which has allowed me to grow and develop as a writer. Dorothy Barresi, you are one of the coolest ladies I've had the pleasure to meet. Unfortunately, I only took one of your courses, but that one introduced me to a wide spectrum of contemporary poets that made me fall in love with poetry. You're an inspiring professor who has given me confidence to write poetry and experiment with form, structure, and question the dark side of things. Mona Houghton, I wish I had joined the Northridge Review years ago. You have a keen eye for stories in poetry, fiction, and plays. Your technique of analyzing and critiquing student's creative works has helped me become a more objective evaluator and editor of my own work.

To my mom, Carol Phillips, I don't think it's possible for you to be more supportive. Throughout my life you've always believed in me and growing up in a loving environment has permitted me to advance as a writer and person.

And to those who have passed, Grandma Rose and my father, Keith Phillips- Both have resilient personalities and a prodigious sense of humor, which is with me always.

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ABSTRACT

FIRST NIGHT PROCEEDINGS FROM THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE OF UNEMPLOYED NURSES AND TEACHERS

By

Stephanie Phillips

Master of Arts in English

I have constructed a thesis, which amalgamates monologues and stand-up comedy to form a one woman performance piece. Victoria hosts the Women's Conference of Unemployed Nurses and Teachers at the Metropolitan State Hospital and introduces seven guest speakers who all have a unique perspective in context to gender and capitalism. The speakers all come from different social economic backgrounds, but they share one commonality, supporting unemployed women. The guest speakers each have a unique story to tell, which covers subjects such as sexuality, religion, economics, relationships, death, and so forth. It's an evening of entertainment, but also a satirical piece that questions our democratic system.

On stage is a podium with a microphone. On the front of the podium is a sign that reads, "Proceedings from the Women's Conference for Unemployed Nurses and Teachers." Behind the podium is a clothes rack on wheels that contains several articles of clothing. Near the edge of the stage is a chair.

VICTORIA walks to the podium.

VICTORIA

Hi everyone. Thanks for being here. Great to be at the Metropolitan State Hospital. Never been to Norwalk before. First-timer. My grandma, Donna, who was at one point a teacher, but in her later days a comic, did many benefit comedy shows. I'm your host, Victoria Principal. No, I'm not that Victoria Principle. I'm obviously much prettier than she is. And she spells her name with "ple" while mine has "pal" at the end. I'm always a noun. She can be a noun or an adjective. Bipolar, if you ask me. She would fit right in. Welcome to the twenty-third annual Women's Conference for Unemployed Nurses and Teachers. W.C.U.N.T. was founded in 1989 by De De Fernbach of Lansing, Michigan after she, her mother Dhalia, her aunt Diedre, her grandmother Daisy, and her daughter Dot all lost their jobs in the recession of that year. De De and Diedre were school teachers, while Dhalia and Dot were Nurses. All four women attended and spoke at this conference until 1998 when they were tragically killed while drag racing on the way to the conference. Dot had a lead foot. We miss them greatly, and we are dedicated to carry on their mission of giving a voice to all unemployed and under employed women, no matter their occupation. Before I introduce the speakers, allow me to go through a few pieces of business. First, our sponsors. We wouldn't be in this beautiful conference room at the Metropolitan State Hospital without a generous gift from Motel 6.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I would like to thank Cracker Barrel Restaurants for providing the food and Wal Mart for covering part of the travel and lodging expenses for the speakers. Also, Augusta National Golf Course provided the browning Azaleas in the lobby. Let's hear it for our sponsors.

VICTORIA sees several AUDIENCE MEMBERS walk out.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Guys, you can go for a smoke break during intermission or you can keep walking--that's cool, too. Undergraduates. I see we have some celebs in the audience tonight.

VICTORIA points to a couple of AUDIENCE MEMBERS.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

The cast of the "Big Bang Theory."

VICTORIA points to a few AUDIENCE MEMBERS.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Cast of "Glee" is here. Hey, I don't watch your show, but my boyfriend does. All together, sexy crowd. Glad I wore my new outfit... Ross. Forget that classy Forever Twenty-One shit. Too expensive.

VICTORIA points to a FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Is that from Forever Twenty-One? Don't deny, girlfriend. You have the money, flaunt it. Let's be brunch buddies. I hate to confess this, but I have a boyfriend. He's twenty-nine years older than me and no he's not rich and his penis size is average. We live together. I was a stay at home daughter long enough. Besides, my mom is such a cock block.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

In the last six months she took off my bedroom door and grounded me for coming home drunk. It's not my fault; Friday's has an amazing happy hour and decent looking bar-backs. Living with a significant older is tough. He's always around. When we first dated he had hobbies. He rock climbed, kick boxed, blogged. Now, he watches "Bourne Identity" twenty times a day. And since he is so much older, he has taken on a fatherly role. At first it was cute, now it's annoying. He'll say things like, "Do your dishes. Don't leave your shoes every where. Make sure you get the toilet paper in the toilet." He's like the Chris Brown of aggressive parenthooding. I thought relationships were about compromising. I'll clean the carpet...When you pay attention to mine. So, enough of me. I am so glad to introduce our first speaker. Rabbi Rebecca was an intimate friend of De De Fernbach, our founder. Rabbi Rebecca has spoken at every conference. She is an activist and champion of women's rights in the workplace, and she runs women's shelters in several cities, which I can't name, because there are a few shady looking (points) men in the audience. Everyone give it up for Rabbi Rebecca.

VICTORIA takes a yamaka from the clothes rack and puts it on.

RABBI REBECCA

Good evening. Great to be here. I've known Victoria for, what, six or eight years, now. She volunteers, helps run a food bank for women in the San Fernando Valley, and when we have free time, which is rare, we have been known to travel together to Puerto Vallarta, Atlanta, and Spokane. Let me begin with this. A habit I've had now for most of my life is to start every day with an inspirational poem. I've brought today's reading to share with you.

Takes out a piece of paper and unfolds it.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

In the garden of Victory Sara Orangetips gossip with Cloudless Sulfurs around the Isaiah statue that dribbles water through the nose. Outside the garden, Willie the bluegill protects a vending machine ballooned with Ringneck snake socks and red-haired velvet ant Q-tips. Daytime hours, Willie welcomes the residents to snatch a sock, leave a sand dollar. Nighttime hours, the inhabitants must empty their kangaroo pockets like a German cockroach who begs a Jerusalem cricket for mercy. Adjacent to the garden is an arts and crafts cavern, though many are oblivious to its existence since the California Sycamores continue to breed. The only visitors the cavern encounters are the Golden-Mantled Ground squirrels. At the surface the squirrels morph into workers and quilt blankets made from sulphur shelf mushrooms and flip flops crafted out of cauliflower fungus. One spring morning, a new tenant wanders through the garden, a Pronghorn Antelope, Rose. Rose looks resilient and intrepid, yet her lungs resemble Fremont cottonwood, identical to a half-eaten cantaloupe with mold frost that swings from a black widow spiders' hammock. In early years, Rose nested in a Mojave garden infested with aridity. She booked western whiptails and bathed in nearby sewer water. She gambled on a rubber Boa named Joseph. Joseph lost. Chief Chuckwalla commanded Rose to swallow a Red Diamond rattlesnake.

RABBI REBECCA is quiet for a moment. Then she folds the paper and puts it in her pocket.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

I've never taken courses to become registered as a nurse, but I have nursed many sick and dying friends.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

My dear friend, Dhalia, no relation to the Fernabachs of Lansing, the founders of this conference, recently passed. I visited her often until the end. I recall one of the last conversations we had. I tried to get her to drink milk. I told her, "You should be drinking four of these a day. You'll feel a whole loaf of challah bread better. How about you finish off this carton and then we'll zip on out of this muggy room? Dhalia, don't do that. The oxygen tubes help you breathe. I don't know how long. You're going to need it for a while. Dhalia, did you know there are places where people pay to have oxygen tubes? It's so true. They're called oxygen bars. Young people go to oxygen bars and get tied up with oxygen tubes. Say, Dhalia what was it like singing on stage? I bet you got plenty of attention from all sorts of famous men. Don't lie down, come on and let me sing to you. 'I knew a girl and Dhalia was her name/ Since she left me, I've never been the same.' I tried to be a singer, too. A rapping rabbi; I didn't do well. One guy threw a tomato at my head. Who brings a tomato to a concert? Dhalia, if you don't want to go outside, how about I just push you around the cafeteria area and you can sing for your friends? Dhalia, I know you're weak, but if you just get out of this tiny space you'll feel red huckleberry chips better. Walker? You need your wheelchair to go to the restroom."

RABBI REBECCA walks upstage left.

RABBI REBECCA finds the wheelchair.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

My parents were very strict when I was growing up. I remember Elvis performing on "The Ed Sullivan Show," and I snuck out of my room to watch.

RABBI REBECCA walks with the wheelchair upstage center.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

I sympathized with Dhalia. I told her, "Look, I know it's tough. I know things aren't what they used to be. But for the time being, you need the oxygen tube to breathe and the wheelchair to get around. That's just how it is, Dhalia. There is nothing I can do to change it. Dhalia, have you been praying? Why not? Oh, God would love to hear your prayers. Say, Dhalia, why don't you pray right now...With me. Oh...I can step out of the room. When's the last time you talked to God? Twenty-years? You shouldn't feel bad. God is forgiving. Listen, I'll stand just outside in the hall. You sit. You pray. And hit the buzzer beside the door when you two are done chatting. How does that sound, Dhalia?

RABBI REBECCA walks upstage left.

Pause.

A THUMP is heard.

RABBI REBECCA walks upstage center.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

Dhalia, are you okay?...You need someone to put you in the wheelchair if you need to use the restroom. Did you pray?... Alright, I'll be outside.

RABBI REBECCA walks upstage left.

A THUMP is heard.

RABBI REBECCA walks upstage center.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

Dhalia, I told you to use your wheel...

RABBI REBECCA goes down on her knees.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

Oh, Dhalia.”

RABBI REBECCA sits.

RABBI REBECCA stands.

RABBI REBECCA dusts herself off.

RABBI REBECCA (CONT'D)

All of us have nursed loved ones. Dhalia was so special to me. Victoria, you better do this. I have to be alone. I can't bear it any more.

RABBI REBECCA takes off the yamaka and becomes VICTORIA.

VICTORIA

Thank you Rabbi Rebecca for the inspirational poem and especially for that wonderful story of nursing your friend at her death. I'm sure many of you have stories like that. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. And in the past two years I've seen men get extremely involved in bringing awareness to testicular cancer. Any type of awareness is great, but when guys bring ideas to the table somehow the nine-year-old boy within me wants to speak out. Like the Lance Armstrong rubber band bracelets; you've seen the equivalent for breast cancer says, "I Heart Boobies." If you gonna be pervy about it, I say go all out. Let's have those bad boys read, "BITCH, SCAN THEM TITS." I think being direct is the key. Let's have little boobies hanging from the bracelet. It adds flare. Why not match your Bitch, Scan Them Tits bracelet with a couple of edible tit ring pops. Delicious fun for all ages.

VICTORIA pauses.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Oh, more people are leaving for a cig break or is it something I said... The next speaker is a world reknowned authority on feminist psychology. Dr. Kumari Kashmiri has published widely on the topic in peer reviewed journals and she has had two books on the New York Times best seller list. Six years ago, her book *Why I'm Such a Bitch Twice a Month* was number one for forty straight weeks and her new book *Vaginas are People, Too* has been number one for the last twelve weeks. Please give a warm welcome to Dr. Kumari Kashmiri.

VICTORIA puts on a white lab coat and lab glasses.

DR. KUMARI KASHMIRI speaks with an East Indian accent.

DR. KUMARI KASHMIRI

Thank you, Victoria, for inviting me to speak at this conference. Afternoon, my name is Kumari Kashmiri M.D., Ph.D., and LMFT. I studied under John Hughes at Chicago University. There's no relation to the screenwriter and director, although I did play an extra in "Pretty in Pink." I became good friends with Molly Ringwald. Molly and I have been known to travel together to Puerto Vallarta, Atlanta and Spokane. And I studied neuroscience at the University of San Francisco under John Steinbeck... No relation to the novelist. Although when I had my first encounter with Dr. Steinbeck, I told him how deeply I enjoyed *Of Mice and Men*. In fact, I named my rescued chihuahua dogs Lenny and George. Before I discuss my scholarly work and my popular celebrity, I think it is important to provide you with contextual knowledge. I grew up in Bihar, India. My father was a heroin addict and my mother was a prostitute. I mention this because it illustrates the reason I have a passion for helping and pleasing others.

DR. KUMARI KASHMIRI (CONT'D)

The love I have for humanity is unconditional, like a dog's love for its owner. My relationship status on Facebook is single. I repeat, I'm a heterosexual who is single, although I admit to an occasional lesbian tryst. This information allows you, my good audience, to have a better understanding of me as a doctor and a woman. I have no children, nor do I desire to have children. I find children a burden. Although If I met the right man, I'm sure this could be negotiable. Question? (points)... Yes. This is pertinent since we're here as a group of humanitarians investing in the welfare of women and it's imperative to remind you, we're all human beings. What is your name, sir?... Well, Dr. Roth, tell me, why was I chosen to conduct this panel and not yourself? For those who are unaware, I'm a leading consultant for Miss Gabrielle Giffords. Mrs. Giffords is the congresswoman who was shot in the head in Arizona on January 8th, 2011. If anyone else would like to question my capability speak now.

Pause.

DR. KUMARI KASHMIRI (CONT'D)

Let me continue. I reside in Sherman Oaks, California. I enjoy kitchen accessories and I take care of my ill prostitute mother. However, since she is ill, she no longer practices prostitution, but mom is an escort in Bakersfield once or twice a month. Question (points)... You people sure are an inquisitive bunch. Go ahead... More details on Mrs. Giffords? She is a lovely woman. Although, if you play Texas Hold'em with Mrs Giffords she is ruthless. She'll snatch all your money... Repeat the question. I've been Miss Gifford's consultant for approximately a year and four months. Any other questions on Miss Giffords? I'd like to finish the panel before my thirty-fifth birthday.

Pause.

DR. KUMARI KASHMIRI (CONT'D)

I used to invest my money in the stock market, but I'm extremely careful these days and continue to keep plenty of money in bonds and CD's and so forth. Yes. (points)...Are you serious. What does this have to do with I'm letting you into my world so you can know me as a woman and as a professional researcher of women's issues. My vulnerability allows you to be vulnerable. I'll be in the lobby signing my new book *Vaginas are People, Too*. Thanks for coming to the conference. I'll talk with each of you in the lobby.

DR. KUMARI KASHMIRI walks off stage left.

VICTORIA enters as LILLY, a janitor, who sweeps the stage with a broom. At first, she goes about her business without noticing the audience. Then she is aware of all the people watching her.

LILLY

Oh. I didn't realize no meeting was continuing in this venue...What meeting is this?

LILLY walks to the front of the podium and looks at the conference sign.

LILLY (CONT'D)

W.C.U.N.T. Are you serious? I see. This is a lady lovers convention. I got no problema with that. You girls want to do that in your own casa, be my quest. Like I got some say about what you do in your own casa. I love my family. No necesito amar a nadie más. You're now my family. All of you. (Points to male audience member) Except this hombre over here. Why you at a lady lovers convention?

LILLY sweeps, then stops.

LILLY (CONT'D)

My daughter-in-law is pregnant. Her first. My son's second. I tell Shirley, that's my daughter-in-law's name, Shirley, that since it's going to be a boy, she should name him Harrison. Beautiful name, huh? Harrison. A real American man's name. You know, like the Beatles. George Harrison. Doesn't get more American than the Beatles. Her mother, a Jewish woman, suggested something more Jewish, but the baby is American before Jew. Nationality then religion. That is the only way not to confuse the boy. Don't get him caught up in a mixed identity. I don't know what people are thinking nowadays. Mixing everything up like a big crock pot of gluttony. Rice with chicken, chicken with carrots. Everthing has a place. Everything has an order. And what about that President of ours. Obama. My father calls him Obama Your Mama. Sometimes my husband calls him Osama. What is that man, Osama? Black? White? Muslim? Nobody knows. He is a fun house mirror in our White House. That President Obama is one crock pot of a man. A melting pot of a man. And the things he wants to do. For one, he wants to give everyone health care. Me and all of you at the same time. I'm not saying everyone shouldn't have healthcare. My grandson Harrison, of course, should have health care, because he's just a baby and we need to take care of our babies. Somebody the other day told me that babies are better off being born in fifteen other countries than the U.S. Of A. I told them they have to be wrong. Americans care about their babies. I know they do. But the question I need to answer is where do you think that money comes from to pay all this free health care, because there ain't nothing for free. Sure won't come from the president's fun house pockets.

Pause. Sweeps.

LILLY (CONT'D)

All I want is for my family to be happy. And healthy.

Sweeps.

LILLY (CONT'D)

You should see the wedding invitations I made for my son Hank. They're in the laundry room. I'll show them to you after you all eat dinner. Oh, Shirley will be so happy with my son. Whatever he doesn't provide, Hank's father will. Bruce, my husband, has been selling washers and dryers in Culver City for twenty-five years. Twenty-five years. (Point into audience) Older than you. Little Harrison will be taken care of like a king. Shoot. I forgot to order Harrison's invitations for his Baptism... What's that you say?... Of course he needs to be Baptized. Bruce was baptized. Hank. Me.

LILLY claps.

LILLY (CONT'D)

You know, that's a wonderful idea. Shirley and Harrison should both be baptized. She's not really Jewish. I mean really really. She's only Jewish when her mother visits. Believe me, I understand, but she never goes to church, I mean to the temple or synagogue. God has given me a grandson. It's now Shirley's responsibility to give Harrison a life he deserves. If he is a Jew she's sending him straight to the crock pot. The kitchen.

Sweeps.

LILLY (CONT'D)

My grandson. He deserves the best. And between me, Shirley, Hank, Bruce and Obama Your Mama we can take good care of that boy.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Now, come along, let me show you those invitations for the wedding. I crafted all of them by myself. They're beautiful. I got great images from the Catholic Women of Los Angeles website. A gold cup. A white dove. I better finish my work. Shift ends in an hour.

LILLY walks off stage right and beckons the audience to follow.

VICTORIA enters and stands at the podium.

VICTORIA

Every day, women face battles as mothers, lovers, or wives. Each of us has our own crusades and stories. Now, I would like to share with you something that happened to my sister-in-law, Henrietta, while she was trying to get a small business loan for her family business to import tobacco products from India. This is a sketch I performed at The Upright Citizen's Brigade. I call it "Real Housewives Without a House."

VICTORIA puts on a scarf and speaks with a British accent.

HENRIETTA

Thanks for coming to my house. I must look a fright. I don't want to sound rude. Did Valerie let you in? Must have been Vanessa. The door was unlocked? How silly of me. Let's start over. It's great to meet you... Please, have a seat. Would you like a drink? Do you want some water? What am I thinking, offering you water? You're all businessmen and business women. Is that the way to say it?... You want Wild Turkey, of course. Never mind. I forget... My husband finished the last bottle the other night.

(MORE)

HENRIETTA (CONT'D)

Horse races must have been on...When there's no booze, there was always a horse race, or a football game, or a car chase...I know I said I had the business proposal ready on the phone, but between hanging up the phone and shooting myself up, I've seemed to misplace it... What's that? Oh.

HENRIETTA (CONT'D)

No. No. I have diabetes. I can answer any questions you have about moving forward. I know all of my husband's finances... Video recorder? Well, I don't think that's necessary. I can write my responses down instead. It's just... I don't know if a video recorder is such a... You sure... Only you will see it? I'm just worried... I know Mark, my husband, he knows the law extremely well. I mean, I do as well, but Mark watches all of those CSI programs on the telly. You promise it will stay confidential? Alright, go ahead... England, London. I met Mark in 2000. We were married a few weeks after that. I was seventeen. How is my personal life relevant? We're here to discuss opening a silk screening store, not my family in particular, sir. *Family is business?* Why I've never heard such gibberish. No. Please...I don't want you to leave. Yes. I will be happy to cooperate. Yes, three daughters... Valerie, Vanessa, and Valentine... Mark took over his father's silk screening business in Culver City, which brings us to your investment company. I think Silk City is a wonderful investment. Do I think I'm what? A closer? I'm unfamiliar with this reference. Mamet? Never heard of the lad. What's the title of the play? *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Oh. Why of course, the Alec Baldwin film. I do fancy Alec Baldwin. But we're getting off topic. Silk City can silk screen anything. Shirts. Doors. (Laughs) Not doors... Mostly fabric. A day in the life of me? How does this have to do with my business? Small business loans are difficult to come by. Look, mister...

HENRIETTA looks at her shoes.

HENRIETTA (CONT'D)

Thank you, yes. They are new...My day,
huh...Nothing really. I take care of my girls...

HENRIETTA (CONT'D)

Take them to school, do things around the house
and prepare meals. That's why I don't understand,
why you're so curious...Weekends? Same thing, my
husband works and I'm home. Yeah, business as
usual...Exactly... Yes, three girls, that's right...So
with your loan, I believe Silk City has the capability
to expand. My husband and I want to open eleven
more Silk City stores in five years. No handle on
the fridge?

HENRIETTA looks behind.

HENRIETTA (CONT'D)

Oh, yes, no handle on the fridge. Why it's broken.
My mother-in-law is coming by tomorrow and
we're going to Sears to buy a new one. Lovely lady.
Refrigerators don't come cheap. So like I was
saying, with your loan we will be able to expand
Silk City and of course as a shareholder your stock
will increase by twenty-percent in three years.
What do you mean, *how do I know so much?*...Stay
at home mom? Why, yes, I suppose I am, but I'm
also my husband's business partner. Why are you
laughing...Why is that funny? No, sir, I do not
have a curious sexuality. I am a married woman. I
offered you a drink because that is what one does
when discussing business and money. No money? If
you have no money, then why did you respond to
my ad on craigslist...Sleep with you?

HENRIETTA laughs.

HENRIETTA (CONT'D)

That's every man's answer to everything. Let's have sex. That's ridiculous. Do you really expect me to...Yes, I want the loan...Yes, I love my family...It has been a while since my husband and I have been intimate...You would have to drop the interest rate. No. Two points...Two points...

HENRIETTA (CONT'D)

Good...Not here. Not now....The Ritz Carlton. The one in Santa Barbara...Well then, no deal...Good...Dinner first. Then we do the deed... Then you leave and I have the Ritz for two more days...You make it worth my while, I'll make it worth your while...There will be spa expenses...The weekend after the next. Book it for Friday, Saturday and Sunday night....Let's shake on it. (Pretends a hand shake). Good bye...(Takes out cell phone) Victoria...Yes, we watched it last night. Listen. What are you doing the weekend after next....Clear your plans. I got an all expense weekend at the Ritz in S.B...Just lucky I guess...Unlimited spa...Yes...I'm gonna invite Karen...Good. We're gonna have so much fun.

Victoria takes off the scarf and speaks without an accent.

VICTORIA

Money. Times are tough for us all. I'm in the process of buying my first condo. Nothing to be envious over. I'm a complete money hoarder with no life. The process of buying a condo sucks. Are there any realtors here tonight? (Points to audience) Are all you full of shit? Here's why I'm frustrated- Last week, I found a condo online, the description said, "1200 square feet, spacious, four bedrooms." Great! More pets to collect so I'll never be alone. "Needs a little work." No problem. I like getting my hands dirty (Point) FYI, handsome.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I walk into one room, there's an entire wall mirror encrusted with white dirt and hand prints, which I assume is the multiple purpose room where Mr. and Mrs. Sudafed worked from home, shooting 70's style porn and doing sideways lines of coke.

VICTORIA points to TWO AUDIENCE MEMBERS.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

This "Boogie Nights" couple knows what I'm talking about. You're like a young Burt Reynolds. So, right before I leave this exotic condo, I noticed one of the walls was hollow. That's because it was cardboard painted white. Maybe Mr. and Mrs. Sudafed are on to something. If all the homeless painted their boxes white it'd be crazy classy, like miniature white houses. Good enough for a president. There's an idea: Whoever is president in 2013 should relocate to a white cardboard box, so he can live like real Americans.

Pause.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

For many of us, public transportation is the only affordable way to get to work, high school, college, the movies, or the Getty Museum. My next guest, Edith, practically, maybe literally, lives on the bus.

VICTORIA puts on a leather bomber's jacket and a White Sox cap turned backwards. She is EDITH.

EDITH talks with a New York accent.

EDITH

Yo, hi. Name's Edith. By the way, Victoria, I don't live on the bus, okay? I live at a number of bus stop benches. Big difference. I'm just giving Victoria a hard time. She's a nice bitch. When I moved to Los Angeles, I met her on a bus headed towards Hollywood.

(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)

She told me she had to take the bus because she got one of them D.U.I.'S. I told her, I take the bus because I got no money. I guess. You want to hear my story. I got lots of stories, but I'll just act out what happened to me a month ago. Please don't judge, I'm no Joe Pesci.

Pause.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I take this fine quesadilla out for dinner four weekends back... What's that? Applebee's. Real nice spot. Nothing but classy joints for my bitches. We get to the restaurant and she starts talking about the ex, telling me he's locked up at San Quentin for armed robbery. I'm like, man, do I know this prison bitch? Because I did some time at Quentin. But she flashed me a profile pic and I didn't recognize him from the back. She's got a four-year old son with him. I'm thinking, the kid thing I don't mind. I can take it to zoos and shit, and even the ex-boyfriend thing is cool with me... The ex must got a bad temper or some'n for her to just start dating women, right? It's all normal life experience stuff. Hey, at my age you got'a start putting up with maybe not baggage-baggage, but a little carry on luggage...If you plan on getting laid at least. Basically this full lipped chick had nothing I hadn't strapped on before. The date's going strong, except the waiter kept looking at me like I was Scott Peterson with tits and highlights. So I snapped my finger in the air to get his attention... I says to him, "Hey buddy, I don't appreciate getting none of this spaghetti with meat.

(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)

I ordered the meatballs with the sausages." He goes on with the freak'n apologies and fixes it, which took a solid five minutes... So after things gets straightened out... I have my meal, I'm enjoying myself, I got a high-quality convo' goin' on with this sexy looking lady friend in front of me and man, I'll tell you, she's got on one of those spaghetti strap shirts that don't leave too much to the imagination, which I dig cause' I don't got that much imagination anyways.... You must be thinking, what's the twist, or turn?

EDITH (CONT'D)

Get this, I reach for the check after we drank the last drops of our fruit a toot margaritas, and my meatballs are almost digested all the way, and she's squared with her fancy broccoli plate... And the check is blank... Yeah, nothing. So I call the waiter over. I says' to him, "There is a mistake. There ain't nothing on this check." And he says, "Sorry about the wrong entrée earlier. Remember, at Applebee's you're eat'n good in the neighborhood." Then I graciously reply, "That's fine. We're eat'n good. We ate. We're done, and now I'll pay." So my cute, cheesy quesadilla gets involved and says, "Thank you so much." I turn to her and says, "You're thanking him...I'm taking you out to eat and you're thanking the Applebee's guy?" They both team up against me and says, "Relax, relax, relax." I get up...I look that bitch in her eyes. I look that Applebee's coward in his eyes, and I says, "You two go fuck each other. You deserve each other."

Pause.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I thought, I blew my chance with my carry-out chick. But she chases me down in the parking lot and says, "You're a passionate, dominant, and fearless woman." I said, "Bitch, you better believe that."

EDITH points to an AUDIENCE MEMBER.

EDITH (CONT'D)

My crab cake is blushing. I gotta get out of here and join the mile high club in the john on the seventeenth floor of this mental hospital. Keep it real, Norwalk.

EDITH exits.

VICTORIA enters.

VICTORIA

Our next guest is an actress and comedian, so here is a joke for you. I adopted an English Bulldog from a nonprofit, Craigslist. My Vegbo friends (Vegan/lesbian) give me shit for it. "You should've rescued from a shelter." You could have saved a life." F you Vegbo's B.C. I did that once. I adopted one of those chipotle dogs. It pissed and shit everywhere. Got period blood on the carpet, which is pretty amazing because it was a boy. Named it Willie- after my favorite Scientologist. Will Smith. One day, I decided to get rid of it. I opened the door and freed Willie. He got hit by a Prius and died. I probably shouldn't have freed him on the 101. Am I senile at my young age? Please welcome the headliner comedian entertainer for tonight. Relax and enjoy my dear fragile and senile grandma, Donna.

VICTORIA grabs a walking cane and walks slowly to the chair and sits. She is DONNA.

DONNA drags the chair.

DONNA sits upstage left.

DONNA points towards the AUDIENCE.

DONNA

Speaking to strangers at a conference is like a blind date. Which is why I might be rusty because I haven't been on a blind date since the Reagan years.

DONNA points to a MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER.

DONNA (CONT'D)

You look like a Jerry. Hi, Jerry. I took one of my granddaughter's oxy-codeine medicine pills just before I got here. I'm higher than a bumble bee. Pardon me, Jerry? A man should never ask a lady her age. Cup size...Yes.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Thirty-six C and worth every quilt I've ever knitted. My age? I thought we went through this...Oh, page...You mean my online dating page? My granddaughter, Victoria, put the whole thing together. She knows a lot about the computer business. She's an entrepreneur. Filthy? You're very blunt, Jerry. My granddaughter might not shower every day, but I wouldn't call her filthy. Oh...wealthy... Yes, extremely successful. She works in the San Fernando Valley with full-chested women. She's about your age. Not as handsome, though.

DONNA grabs mouth in pain.

DONNA (CONT'D)

These things are killing me. You mind?

DONNA puts dentures in a cup.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Much better. What is it you do, Jerry? Technical writer. That sounds very technical. My career? Sweet gingerale with scotch. Boy George, I retired when you were in pull-ups. I was a stand-up comedian, got a late start in the 80's. Tried to do the wifie thing a decade before, but it wasn't cut out for me. I had a live-in boyfriend once. He demanded I pack him a lunch every morning. Problem was, I was boozing all night and would put used martini olives in between the wheat bread. In the 80's, I lived off cocaine and open mics. I was a foul mouthed, jaws-droppin', panties poppin comic. Opened for the best of them. Andrew Dice Clay. Rodney Dangerfield. Joan Rivers. Never heard of me, huh? No surprise. The press hated me. Never mentioned me. Why? Let's just say, you've seen one reporter's ladybug dick, you've seen them all.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Not going to spread my butterfly wings on a casting couch if I'm not going to see a rainbow at the end of the tunnel. But I'll tell ya, I was the go to opener in my day. I was the handjob that lead to the blowjob opener. I still have most of the costumes I stole as an extra on Jerry Lewis' flick "Hardly Working" if you want to get extra kinky after the conference. What am I into now? Hopefully you. I'm a big flirt. You'll get use to it. I'm into bingo and poker. I like action... Lots and lots of action. Bathroom...I just went. Oh, sure go right ahead, but hurry, my speech is almost over.

DONNA whistles.

DONNA (CONT'D)

"Show him that you care just for him./ Do the things that he likes to do./ Wear your hair just for him." He'll be back...They always come back.

DONNA stands and walks to the podium. She stands erect and is now VICTORIA.

VICTORIA

Let's give it up for my grandma, Donna. Not many years left for the old bitch. Our next guest was born in Iran. And like many middle-eastern born Americans, she is an American citizen. Ara lives in double danger because many people in the United States blame her for 9/11, and the government in Iran wants her punished because she speaks her mind. Listen carefully to Ara's testimony.

DONNA puts on a black head scarf. She is ARA and she speaks with an Iranian accent.

ARA walks upstage center.

ARA sits.

ARA

My name is Ara. Ara means ornament in Farsi. When Victoria first asked me to speak at the W.C.U.N.T, I said to myself, now the Iran government is really going to stone me. Before, I joked, but, now I'm serious...Trust me I'm no Cameron Diaz. About me, I'm the niece of a highly ranked military officer in Iran. And I have top secret information for you.

ARA uncrosses her legs.

ARA puts cigarette in mouth. Lights it.

ARA (CONT'D)

It's an electronic cigarette. My aunt Afshak smokes them, too. We quit together. Afshak's son, ArAm is here in the audience. (Points and waves). Don't worry he isn't paying attention to what I'm saying. All he cares about is his I phone and fast food. ArAm means quiet in Farsi. And trust me he's not. Okay, ArAm, I hear you, I'll take you to Wendy's when I'm done speaking.

(MORE)

ARA (CONT'D)

Anyway, in Iran the military is working on a nuclear cargo for a missile. Tehran has already started mounting machines for a complex uranium supplementation in a concealed shelter.

Pause.

ARA (CONT'D)

What now, ArAm? Yes. We can go to Ben and Jerry's after Wendy's. It's from a valid source. Leave it at that. Okay, okay, calm down. I only want trouble if that means spending the night at your place. My aunt, Afshak, she writes to me.

Pause. She looks left and right.

ARA (CONT'D)

No...That's impossible. Even if the government goes through our letters they won't be able to read our writing. You see, me and my aunt have extremely horrible penmanship. You know how American doctors are known for horrible penmanship? Multiply that by nine hundred and eleven and you still won't be able to read our letters. I apologize. I tried to make a funny. ArAm, get your feet off that lady's chair. Sorry, miss. Yes. Question? Why does my Aunt tell me this? She hates her husband. I know. What's new, right? Another Iranian woman who is beaten every day, verbally and physically, raped, etc. Blah. Blah. Blah. Believe it or not that's not my uncle. My uncle is very passive, always whining and complaining. "Afshak you don't make love to me like you love me. You make love to me like you pity me." He's pathetic. Oh, now you're listening, ArAm? Do me a favor wait outside. Boys. We Iranian women want to be told what to do. We don't mind getting slapped around in a playful manner.

(MORE)

ARA (CONT'D)

I'm not advocating domestic violence, but I would consider it if it's something (Points to audience member) you're into.

ARA winks.

ARA (CONT'D)

Alright, the missiles. So the word on the Iranian street is they're working on things some place in the holy city of Qom. Also, the uranium is drastically enhanced due to a new progressive strainer, not the dated model used in the 1970's. Things are happening. And they're happening quicker than any of you can imagine. Me a threat? They're the threat. I'm not a threat. I'm the one coming to you. Yes. I'm aware it might be peculiar I come to you with all of this information at a unemployed Women's conference. But women use their heads.

ARA (CONT'D)

Men use their heads, too, just not the right ones. I love this country. I love "Jersey Shore," Red Lobster. I shouldn't love this country, but I do.

ARA stands.

ARA (CONT'D)

After 9/11 my mother got a dialect coach and began living her life as a bogus Indian doctor in hopes to of married an American doctor because no one would hire her as an Iranian librarian. This country is full of hate towards my people. I love America. But America does not love me. You'll know what to do with this information.

ARA walks upstage center. She removes the black scarf and walks to the podium. ARA is now VICTORIA.

VICTORIA

Ara, we empathize. The Metropolitan State Hospital must feel like a prison for you with the bars on the windows and guards in the lobby. Our next speaker is no stranger to mental wards. I hope she had her electric shock this week. No telling what will come out of her mouth. Please welcome my very own crazy mother, Diane.

VICTORIA puts on an oversized sweater. She is DIANE.

DIANE has a thick New York accent.

DIANE

My kid forgets to tell people that I'm a registered nurse. I'm unemployed, which I guess is the theme of the conference. I think that's the only reason Victoria invited me. I was laid off before the recession. See, I was dating a doctor at the hospital where I worked. Dr. Greenberg. And one of the anesthesiologists walked in on me giving Dr. Greenberg a blowy in ER.

DIANE (CONT'D)

That jealous bitch told the board. Anyway, that's all negative events. Let's not go there.

Pause.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Holy gefilte fish. There's a Rabbi in the audience. Hi, Rabbi Rebecca. Please forgive my daughter, Victoria. She pretends not to be Jewish. You and I know better. There's so many stars at this convention. I saw John Travolta. Travolta. Schmarolta. I couldn't get close enough to meet that grease hunk from "Welcome back Kotter." I know he's not Jewish, but that nose could pass. Scientology my tuches lecker.

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

I one time welcomed back Chevy Chase to my studio apartment in the meat packing district in New York during my rebellious sexcapades phase of '79. I wasn't a disco queen. No. No. Me, a disco queen? Please. I had too much money to wear bell bottoms. Sorry, Rabbi, you don't want to hear about my wild youth. Rabbi Rebecca. Rabbi Rebecca. I know how I know you. You took care of my mother, Donna. Yes. Rabbi Rebecca from San Fernando. She loved you. You healed her. Thanks a lot. I'm kidding, of course. I'm happy my mother is still alive at eighty-five. But just for future plans, you perform funerals, right, Rabbi? Wonderful. I like more traditional Jewish funerals. Not contemporary ones where relatives go on stage, read poems, sing Lady Gaga songs, and all that garbage. My theory in regards to funerals is say some prayers and be done with it. What's that? Happy stories at funerals? Maybe for some, but not my family, I don't have happy stories. I was pregnant with Victoria at nineteen and my mother completely cut me off. Yes. Financially. What other ways is there... Jesus. Sorry, Rabbi. My mother isn't the easiest person to get along with.

DIANE motions towards her ring.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I'll never forget this one time after my grandmother passed, my grandfather gave me one of her gorgeous rings. A gold band with a large sapphire surrounded by tiny emeralds and rubies. She always wore it to the theatre and opera. I'm sitting with my mother in my grandfather's town car and she starts pulling on my finger. "Give me that God damn ring, Diane. I just want to try it on. Borrow it. Get my jeweler to duplicate it." I'd tell her, "You're sick. This is my ring. It can't be duplicated." She has weird obsessions with me. That family tradition ended the day I gave birth to Victoria.

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

I have the respect to stay out of my kid's life. I'm her mother, not her locker pal. I tell my kid there's one things to live by: Never turn down a man who can afford to buy you a drink.

Pause.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Say, Rabbi, if you wind up performing at my mother's funeral you can play Sammy Davis Junior in the background. Mom loves Sammy, but hates Sinatra. God forbid my mother loves something everyone else loves. When she got into stand-up comedy, I wouldn't see her for months at a time. She'd drop me off at my Grandfather's and be on the road. No postcard. No phone call. Now, in her eighties, she tries to reach out, but it's too late. Hobbies? She has this bizarre fetish for serial killers. Always watching those "Unsolved Mystery" shows. Ah. If you talk about my mother's hobbies at her funeral change it to "Murder She Wrote." My mom is a chain smoking, gambling, serial watcher and dater. She loves dating young men. And Moses and Mary when this cougar trend came along my mother hijacked that band-wagon and will ride it to her grave. See, I'm funny, I can be funny like my mother.

DIANE (CONT'D)

My mother always tells me humor skips a generation. Bullshit. Too bad I believed her all these years, I could've made it as a comic like her and my kid. Three generations of comedians. That would've been something.

DIANE picks up a cigarette.

DIANE (CONT'D)

If you do perform at my mother's funeral make it short. Short and broad.

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

That's how my mother would like her funeral. I better be going. Victoria, call me a cab.

DIANNE removes the oversized sweater. She is VICTORIA.

VICTORIA

Mom, you're a cab. I know. I know. I must be crazy inviting my mom, but I do love her, despite her insanity. She talks about Grandma Donna like she's dying. (Donna's voice) "I'm alive and well thank you." Would someone admit my mother to the Mental Hospital?

Pause.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Someday's I feel that I'm one Bloody Mary away from being on the streets.

VICTORIA points to an AUDIENCE MEMBER.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You look like you live somewhere where you don't have to carry a gun in your fanny pack. I live in Northridge, which is okay, but I figure if I become homeless I'm moving to Ventura. Perfect place to be homeless, right? I wouldn't starve. That's for sure. For lunch, I can hand pick strawberries in the fields. Late afternoon, I can get my tan on at the beach.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Just because I'm homeless doesn't mean I have to have pale skin. And maybe I'll meet a military man. Point Magu Naval Air Station. You can fly me, honey. Where are all my navy men? (points at a guy) I can totally see myself as a military wifey. But, I'm no gold digger... More like my grandma and mother, a stability chaser. Trust me, I'm not going to even try to marry rich in this economy. I'll marry armed. Cocked and loaded. Fire in the hole. I could be a lesbian military wifey, too.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Hey, better odds trying to put a ring on it going after both genders. But I do like men. You know what they say, "Dick is quick." Women are too picky. Don't get me wrong, I do like to cuddle and have my hands massaged by a pretty blond girl. For those of you who are sexuality challenged, our next guest is straight, no pun intended, out of a Judith Butler text or John Water's flick. Please welcome Bertha.

VICTORIA grabs a sweater and ties it around her waist. She is now BERTHA.

BERTHA walks upstage center.

BERTHA

I'm super shy speaking to cowards. I mean crowds. But if my girlfriend, Edith, who talked earlier, can speak out then I can, too. It's funny because at first when Victoria asked if I could participate at W.C.U.N.T. I thought I'm really not a lesbian-lesbian. I'm more of a new com-er. And then Victoria explained that it's a conference for women who are unemployed. And then, I thought, well I work at Jamba Juice. And she said, "No, Bertha. The speakers support unemployed women." And I can relate to that because I support my unemployed girlfriend and we'll be happy to support all of the women here. I don't make much money, but I'm happy to help. I'm twenty-seven years old....It's actually mine and my son's half b-day tomorrow.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

Am I too old to celebrate my H.B.D.? I have to admit, I still get uber excited. I'm not saying I'd have a tea party... On the other hand, why not? Prior to 2010 my dating life consisted of laser tag and pepperoni pizza with my four year old, Georgie, and Aunt Thelma. Now, Aunt Thelma is in San Quentin State Prison with my ex-husband. He used to sell meth.

(MORE)

BERTHA (CONT'D)

Kind of like that show "Breaking Bad," but my ex is a total idiot. And my Aunt is in prison because she murdered this guy. It's not what you think. She's totally innocent. He tried to slap her ass and Aunt Thelma is a big believer in women's equal rights, so she just evened the score with her butterfly knife. Aunt T always tells me, "If you don't stand up for yourself, I will." She's really supportive. A week before she was arrested we were at Howie's Bowling Alley and Bunky, the bartender, tried to put bowling shoes on my feet. I thought it was sweet. I felt like Cinderella of Canoga Park. But Aunt Thelma didn't see it that way. She took her butterfly knife and stabbed the guy in the ear. She's usually not that protective, but I'm her favorite niece. She's the one who suggested I start dating women. A month ago we shared a green tea frap during family visit hours and she says, "Bertha, once you attach the dildo to the hip bone there's really no difference. Look at your mother. She has been a widow for fifteen years and refuses pussy. That woman will be alone the rest of her life because of her stubborn sexuality." At first I was hesitant, but I'm glad I trusted my Auntie because Edith is the best thing ever. My aunt met Edith at group therapy at San Quentin. My Aunt T said, "Bertha, you're going to fall head into pussy in love with this woman. She was named after Edith Bunker from 'All in the Family.' She's not as annoying as that character, but she's as gullible." Edith was at San Quentin for grand theft.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

But that's in the past. And I believe everyone deserves at least ten chances. Before I met Edith, I was an orgasm virgin. Yes. I had sex. I've a son. But I never allowed myself to enjoy sex. It was always a chore, like going to the gym.

(MORE)

BERTHA (CONT'D)

Edith says, "I ain't going to stop till you cum, woman." Now, whenever we make love, I can orgasm freely. I know it sounds super cheesy, but it's like my mind and body are connected and I feel whole. She does that to me. This is weird talking about my sex life, but if I can let my body experience an orgasm, I can talk about anything. After the conference, Edith is taking me to a porn shop to buy dildos. I've never used a dildo before, so I'm totally excited.

Pause.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

I do have dildos, but they were a gift from my Uncle Tony. Easter basket present. He got me a dozen rabbit dildos and half a dozen egg vibrators. He isn't a creepy uncle. Uncle Tony got shot in the head in 2002. A meth deal gone bad and now he's slow, but imaginative. Clearly. Anyway, this time I'm experimenting with my lover. It was great to share my story. I feel like a new woman now. A fresh woman.

BERTHA looks at watch.

BERTHA walks towards AUDIENCE MEMBER.

BERTHA hands an AUDIENCE MEMBER a card.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

I'll leave my business card with you ladies. Feel free to call me if you want to go to a Melissa Etheridge concert.

BERTHA removes the sweater from around her waist. She is VICTORIA.

VICTORIA

Ladies, unless you're lesbian like our guest speakers, Edith and Bertha, you are going to hook up with a man. Maybe even marry the son-of-a-bitch. I say that with tremendous affection, mother.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You didn't know dad was a bitch till your honeymoon. (Looks towards the ceiling) RIP, Pops. Some women have developed the extraordinary skill of marrying into money. Especially in today's economy, stability is difficult to find. Unfortunately, your surprise guest speaker, Ivana Trump, couldn't make it to this year's W.C.U.N.T., due to a scheduling conflict. I suppose she chose "Dancing with the Stars" over us. Taking her spot is my grandma, Donna. And yes, she's already spoken. But perhaps Grandma Donna can teach us how to marry rich just like Ivana Trump. Grandma Donna informed me that the first time I introduced her, I forgot to mention she teaches numerous courses at the Learning Annex Center blending comedy and capitalism. Donna's traveling seminar, "Diamonds are My Only Friend," ran from 2002 to 2011. Who knows what is in store for us, but I'm sure it will be useful and entertaining. Welcome for the second time my grandma, Donna.

VICTORIA grabs a walking cane. She is now DONNA.

DONNA

Hello again. Hi, Jerry. You still look good. Victoria, sweetie, you forget to point out that I also teach at Chatsworth's Comedy Traffic school every Saturday morning. It's on DeSota and Devonshire. That pays for my monthly smokes and scratchers. Jerry, now that I febrezed my reading glasses, I have to say, you look a lot like my ex-boyfriend, Michelangie, same potbelly. We dated in the seventies. I was in my forties, but I looked good, like a lollypop. White stick with juicy hips. A skinner and prettier version of Victoria.

DONNA (CONT'D)

After six years of dating Michelangie he didn't propose, but I was optimistic till the nineties.
(MORE)

DONNA (CONT'D)

And by then he was living with two exotic dancers in Paris. He would say, "My sweet, Donna, we were made for each other. Our first encounter is something you'd find in a romance novel." I knew better, even back then. Our first time meeting was mapped, sketched, and outlined. He thinks we met at a car show benefit in Beverly Hills. The truth is, I was stalking his ass ever since I spotted him getting out of his 1965 Mercedes Benz at Beverley Hills Hotel. What a beauty. The Benz..Not him. The car show was for this fund-raiser for cancer or alcohol awareness. The details are irrelevant. He couldn't take his eyes off of me. I was wearing this Oscar de la Renta fur get-up...Total fake, but he couldn't tell... Back then I had no choice but to buy from flea markets.... Basically, where the lower middle class shop. (Points towards Audience) And, ladies, we know men can't tell the difference between fake McQueen and the real shebang. And having boobs that stick out like Scarlett Johansson in "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" always helps. Thanks to the ex for these grapefruits. Michelangelie came up to me...I know what you're thinking, but his parents were into the arts...Not in a philosophical and intellectual way, like those yuppies who sip their cappuccinos and get all hot and heavy over the fall of true art. Michelangie's parents were more of the Andy Warhol groupie type. So he says, "Shopping spree on Rodeo?" I said to myself, "Donna, God has finally been listening to your prayers." To tell you the truth between us girls, it doesn't matter that I hate cars. I hate engines. I hate transmissions. It doesn't matter that I don't know what a cylinder is or how many a car gets.

DONNA (CONT'D)

All that matters is that forty something years ago Michelangie believed I did. People change.

Pause.

DONNA (CONT'D)

My mother was the reason I landed myself my Mickey in the sky of Jaguar XJS'. My mom went from living in a condo in Santa Monica to a gorgeous house in Bel Air. She captured my stepfather who was a retired executive consultant slash Rockefeller type. When my step father was eighty-five he'd regularly buy her escargot and Valentino. What more could a girl ask for? Want to know a secret? Like something I'd only tell fifty of my closest friends? Get this. So, my stepfather was a widower, and to prove his love to my mom he went to the funeral home where his dead wife was buried and paid the grave digger twenty-five k's to dig her up, so he could take back her wedding ring. It wasn't even to propose. My mom and step pops had already been married for five months. It was because my mom wouldn't shut up about his first wife having a more expensive ring...If that isn't love...So my mom told me, "Donna, think of marriage as a business deal.... Would you go into business with some sour patch in debt, who's hung up on maintaining a healthy relationship with a few bratty kids?" No. My mother was a wise woman...I use to work. Teacher. What a waste of time. Professors fail to mention that High School teachers don't buy property in Los Angeles. They rent crappy studios in Burbank. You think I could've treated my daughter Diane to dinners at the Cheesecake Factory and still pay the water and electric bill? And I realize no kid is perfect. But mine is really fucked up. Ever since she was a kid she's been obsessed with New York.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Talks with a fake New York accent. My daughter has never left California. But regardless of my kid's problems she still deserved her mother to treat her once and a while to a cobb salad. What's that? Why didn't I ask my mother for money? If it were that simple, don't you think I'd have done that? You Republican, rich bitch women want women like me to do it all and believe me, bitch, I'm trying, but fuck you if you think I don't deserve nice things...Fuck you if you think I'm worthless because I'm still on the hunt for a man with a big spatula and bank account. This is real life. That's why I'm here...Trying to give unemployed women the advice they need to survive. This shit right here is Darwinism. You think I don't realize that Michelangie traded me in for a newer model after I my lease expired? Speaking to you people, is not a tune up to build my self-esteem. My transmission blew out years ago. I'm here to get you paid off. Okay, go find that buyer. Fine I will.

DONNA puts down the walking cane. She is VICTORIA.

VICTORIA

That's it for the first night of the Women's Conference for Unemployed Nurses and Teachers. Dr. Kumari Kashmiri will be in the lobby signing her latest best seller *Vaginas Are People, Too*. There is an open bar at the Shakey's Pizza across the street. Let me make one note about tomorrow morning's meetings. UCLA professor Bonnie Jackovitch will begin her talk "Be a Gangsta Teacher in the Classroom" at nine in the morning. Not ten. And I'm sad to say our keynote speaker, Jodie Foster, will not be here until Sunday lunch. Something about snakes on a plane. Be safe. And if you can't be safe, get it while you can, and don't be sorry.

THE END