

THRILL ME

THE LEOPOLD & LOEB STORY

BOOK, MUSIC & LYRICS BY
STEPHEN DOLGINOFF

SHOW PERUSAL

BROADWAY

— **LICENSING** —

06/16/21

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THRILL ME: THE LEOPOLD & LOEB STORY

Vocal Ranges

NATHAN



RICHARD



Thrill Me
The Leopold & Loeb Story

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For Betty and Harold

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Thrill Me: The Leopold & Loeb Story is a dramatic musical about a relationship, not about a murder. The murder is part of the plot of course, but it is not the dramatic focus. The dynamics of the relationship and its twists, turns, manipulations, shifts of power and ultimate surprise conclusion create the true drama and most compelling aspects of the show.

Performed with no intermission, with almost continuous musical underscore and no applause breaks, *Thrill Me* is conceived as a taut and unencumbered theatrical experience.

“Relationships can be murder” read the tag line in the advertising for the Off-Broadway production, which helped emphasize that there is a small but definite amount of dark humor in the script and lyrics. Don’t be afraid of audience laughter. The subject matter is very intense, so a little release now and then won’t hurt the mood.

The characters are more complex than they appear. Nathan may seem needy at first, but he knows exactly what he wants and exactly how to get it. And what he obviously wants is Richard. Richard may treat Nathan badly on the surface, but he truly needs him and finds him appealing (though he may find it hard to admit), or else he could use someone else who worships him as his partner in crime. Remember, they are intellectual equals and have a long history together. It is important that the actors appear youthful, but it is not absolutely necessary to actually cast nineteen-year-olds in these very demanding roles.

To help emphasize the almost claustrophobic feeling of being trapped in a room with Leopold and Loeb, the Parole Board and Radio Voices must be pre-recorded or performed completely offstage. They are never to be portrayed by live actors seen by the audience.

Since *Thrill Me* is essentially Nathan’s story, taking place in his memory as he tells the facts to the Parole Board, he should never completely leave the stage, except perhaps for a few seconds before “Superior” (to represent the murder being committed). This can easily be accomplished with a very fluid, abstract staging concept. Nathan should never have to worry about moving or striking props (i.e., the telephone, typewriter, gas can, bag of murder weapons, etc.) at the end of a scene/before his lines to the Parole Board – Richard should always take care of this, with a hand-off or something similar. It is also possible to simply hide the props around the set so they never have to be taken very far. When it comes time for Nathan to put his prison uniform back on for the last scene (the only time feasible for him to wear it again), it should be a quick and simple move, contingent upon easy access to where he left it after the prologue. Nothing should interrupt the flow at any time.

The piano music should not be approached as a mere accompaniment but as a powerfully played, integral part of the action. The CD recording of the 2005 Off-Broadway/York Theatre production (available from DPS) can be used as a guide to the score.

Thrill Me was performed in a black-box setting in its original festival presentation, and could work well on a bare stage. The Off-Broadway production was slightly more elaborate, and while still abstract, it had the utilitarian look of an abandoned warehouse. It featured a proscenium of dusty industrial windows; a shiny black floor; a few strategically placed battered gray wooden crates of different sizes which were used as a table, chairs and a bench; and three tall, black-tiled columns upstage in front of a black backdrop. Entrances and exits were often made from between these columns, which had prop storage behind them (and were lit from behind and between to stunning effect). The lighting design included the liberal use of a haze machine to add drama and atmosphere to the noir-ish lighting plot (and create the feeling of a “memory” play); a very specific back-lighting effect to illuminate “older” Nathan in front of the parole board; and a headlight effect for the “Roadster” song. Though there were many shifts and changes of lighting, there was never an actual blackout. Each actor had one period authentic costume with additional pieces, and slicked-back hair to evoke the 1920s. There were minimal props, only what was absolutely necessary, and they were all period authentic to the last detail.

Many people have asked me if all of the plot developments in *Thrill Me* are based on fact. I confess to taking a little dramatic license to help make the material “sing” and work with only two characters. But every detail is at least inspired by actual events and facts. Did Nathan really drop his glasses on purpose or was it an accident? Can anyone say for sure? Those glasses were definitely what caused the whole crime to unravel. It is important to remember that no one was there when Nathan and Richard were behind closed doors. No one was in their minds. We only know what they chose to tell the police, reporters, doctors, lawyers, etc., in 1924 and after. No one knows what *really* happened between the two of them, and that is what *Thrill Me* explores and hypothesizes.

– Stephen Dolginoff

THRILL ME: THE LEOPOLD & LOEB STORY was first produced by Jim Kierstead as part of the Fourth Annual Midtown International Theatre Festival at the Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex in New York City, opening on July 16, 2003. It was directed by Martin Charnin; the lighting consultant was Thom Weaver; the musical director was Gabriel Kahane; and the production stage manager was Amy M. Epstein. The cast was as follows:

NATHAN LEOPOLD Christopher Totten
RICHARD LOEB Matthew S. Morris

The recorded voices of Sarah Crowley and Archie T. Tridmorten were featured as the Parole Board; and Sean Kenin was the Radio Newscaster. THRILL ME: THE LEOPOLD & LOEB STORY was produced Off-Broadway by The York Theatre Company (James Morgan, Producing Artistic Director) in association with Jim Kierstead in New York City, opening on May 26, 2005. It was directed by Michael Rupert; the musical director was Eugene Gwozdz; the scenic design was by James Morgan; the costume design was by Jennifer Paar; the lighting design was by Thom Weaver; the sound design was by Joey Morano; the production stage manager was Scott F. DelaCruz; the casting was by Norman Meranus; and the press representative was Helene Davis. The cast was as follows:

NATHAN LEOPOLD Matt Bauer*
RICHARD LOEB Doug Kreeger**

The recorded voices of John McMartin and Stephen Bogardus were featured as the Parole Board; and Michael Rupert was the Radio Newscaster.

* Stephen Dolginoff took over the role of Nathan Leopold on June 27, 2005

** Shonn Wiley took over the role of Richard Loeb on August 1, 2005

CHARACTERS

NATHAN LEOPOLD, 19
(also plays Nathan at 54)

RICHARD LOEB, 19*

VOICES

(pre-recorded)

THE PAROLE BOARD
(2 voices)

RADIO NEWSCASTER

SETTINGS

Chicago, 1924.
Joliet Prison Parole Board, 1958.

** Historically, Richard was seven months younger than Nathan.*

MUSICAL NUMBERS

"PRELUDE"

"WHY" (Nathan)

"EVERYBODY WANTS RICHARD" (Nathan)

"NOTHING LIKE A FIRE" (Richard and Nathan)

"A WRITTEN CONTRACT" (Richard and Nathan)

"THRILL ME" (Nathan and Richard)

"THE PLAN" (Richard and Nathan)

"WAY TOO FAR" (Nathan)

"ROADSTER" (Richard)

"SUPERIOR" (Nathan and Richard)

"RANSOM NOTE" (Richard and Nathan)

"MY GLASSES/JUST LAY LOW" (Nathan and Richard)

"I'M TRYING TO THINK" (Richard and Nathan)

REPRISE: "WAY TOO FAR" (Nathan)

"KEEP YOUR DEAL WITH ME" (Richard and Nathan)

"AFRAID" (Richard)

"LIFE PLUS NINETY-NINE YEARS" (Nathan and Richard)

FINALE: "THRILL ME" (Nathan)

**THRILL ME
THE LEOPOLD & LOEB STORY**

PROLOGUE

(Prelude music begins. The lights slowly fade up on a black, abstract set comprised of cubes, platforms, levels, etc. This set will remain unchanged throughout, with lighting used to indicate the many locales.)

#1 PRELUDE/UNDERScore

(A Parole Board hearing room at Joliet Prison, 1958. The dark, shadowy figure of a fifty-four-year-old man wearing a prison uniform comes into view. It is NATHAN LEOPOLD, who is portrayed for the majority of the play as a young man. Thus, through meticulous lighting, and with a careful gesture, stance, tilt of the head, deepening of voice, etc., this young actor embodies the older version of the character without altering his general appearance. NATHAN addresses an unseen Parole Board, represented by disembodied (recorded) voices.)

NATHAN

I suppose you'd like me to sit down?

(No response. He sits.)

PAROLE BOARD VOICE ONE

We can begin.

(The strike of a gavel is heard.)

For the record: March thirteenth, 1958, Joliet Prison, hearing A9306-D5. Nathan Leopold's fifth appearance before this parole board.

(NATHAN tries to make a joke.)

NATHAN

They say the fifth time's the charm.

(Silence.)

You want the facts again.

PAROLE BOARD VOICE TWO

We already know the facts about the crime you and Richard Loeb committed, from the transcripts, the reports ...

PAROLE BOARD ONE

From the newspapers ...

PAROLE BOARD TWO

The question is, do we have the truth? Do we know everything?

NATHAN

I've been here thirty-four years being punished for what I did as a kid. That's the truth.

PAROLE BOARD ONE

Your punishment was a gift. Thanks to your wellpaid, publicity-hungry Clarence Darrow. Your life was spared —

PAROLE BOARD TWO

(Interrupting.)

He was hardly a kid at nineteen. He committed the crime of the century.

NATHAN

The papers just called it that to sell papers. Far worse crimes had been committed before. And since.

PAROLE BOARD ONE

Every crime has a reason. Sometimes a logical one, sometimes not, but still a reason. It seems you committed your crime for nothing but the thrill.

NATHAN

What is it you want?

(Music begins.)

#2 WHY

PAROLE BOARD TWO

What you've never told us. We want to know why.

NATHAN

Why ...

(He sings.)

I'M SORRY IF I STUMBLE ...

NATHAN (CONT'D)

THOUGH I'M TENSE ... I'LL TRY
TO GIVE YOU WHAT YOU'RE AFTER ...
TELL YOU MORE
I WENT ALONG WITH RICHARD
THAT'S THE REASON WHY
THEY PUT ME HERE
IN NINETEEN TWENTY-FOUR
IT WAS A CHILD WHO KILLED
A CHILD BACK THEN
AN OLD MAN STILL PAYS FOR THAT CRIME

AND I ASK TO BE SET FREE NOW
WON'T YOU TRY TO SEE
THAT NO ONE WOULD BE HURT
AFTER ALL THIS TIME?
AS I'VE SAID SO OFTEN BEFORE!

BUT YOU'VE ASKED A SIMPLE QUESTION
AND I'VE TOLD YOU WHY
IT WASN'T ON A DARE OR ON A WHIM
IT'S HARD TO COMPREHEND NOW
THAT THE REASON WHY
IS SIMPLY:
THAT I WENT ALONG WITH HIM ...

(The music continues.)

Richard and I were very close – from the beginning. We did everything together. Everything. We both graduated high school at the same time. We were fifteen-and-a-half! Then we went to the same college. But in the middle of our senior year he transferred to Michigan without telling me. It was a game he always liked to play to humiliate me. He'd stand me up, leave me stranded places, go away on a summer vacation without saying goodbye. Things like that. But after graduation, he came back to Chicago ...

(The music gains momentum as NATHAN stands and removes his prison uniform, revealing his 1920s costume underneath as the lights begin to change ...)

SCENE 1

(Jackson Park, 1924. NATHAN adjusts his stance as the brighter lights reveal him to be an average nineteen-year old of the early 1920s, waiting in the park. He checks his pocket watch and is annoyed by the late hour. To keep himself busy, he uses a pair of binoculars to spot a faraway bird. He carefully follows it with his eyes, focusing on it intently. From behind, darkly handsome RICHARD LOEB, nineteen, enters, slowly approaching like a predator stalking his prey, and purposefully startles him.)

RICHARD

Quit watching the stupid birds!

(NATHAN jumps out of his skin, but then turns to see RICHARD and relaxes. The music fades out.)

NATHAN

Bastard!

(He hugs Richard, who remains stiff.)

I was afraid you weren't going to show. I said three o'clock, didn't I?

RICHARD

(Unemotional.)

Hello, Nathan.

NATHAN

I've missed you.

RICHARD

I know.

NATHAN

How have you been?

RICHARD

Excellent.

(NATHAN puts his binoculars away.)

NATHAN

How does it feel to be a college graduate? You look ...

Smarter?
RICHARD

– Older!
NATHAN

RICHARD
(Mocking.)
It's only been six months, but I see you made it through those dark, atrocious, empty days ...

NATHAN
Shut up. I wish you'd gotten into Harvard Law school like me.

RICHARD
How did you know I didn't?

NATHAN
John.

RICHARD
John? My pea-brained brother? John is not only a snitch but a little bastard. I'm extremely happy with the University of Chicago, Nathan.

NATHAN
I'm glad you're happy.

(He puts his hand on Richard's shoulder.)

Now, how about we do a little catching up?

RICHARD
No. I've got a date.

(He pushes Nathan's hand off.)

NATHAN
A date?

RICHARD
With my Nietzsche study group.

NATHAN
Nietzsche? When did you become interested in philosophy?

RICHARD

Since I discovered I am a textbook Superman.

NATHAN

But we haven't seen each other since you transferred.

RICHARD

Nathan, why do you think I transferred?

NATHAN

I have no idea. I've had to get all my information from John and my bribery fund ran low.

RICHARD

I'm sure a genius like you figured it out for yourself.

(NATHAN reluctantly nods.)

I've gotta go now. Unlike you, there are other people I like to spend time with.

NATHAN

I don't care about those other people.

RICHARD

Good for you.

NATHAN

Because I know they don't mean anything to you.

RICHARD

(Moving to leave.)

And neither do you. Now, goodbye.

(NATHAN blocks his path.)

Auf wiedersehn.

(NATHAN moves to block him again.)

Move!

(He pushes NATHAN away.)

The others aren't so fucking annoying!

(Music begins to creep in.)

#3 EVERYBODY WANTS RICHARD

NATHAN

I didn't think I annoyed you. I thought we had something different.

RICHARD

(Mocking him.)

"We have something different"!?

(NATHAN desperately sings.)

NATHAN

TELL ME, WHO CAN YOU HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH?
SHARE YOUR TWISTED OBSERVATIONS WITH?
WHO ELSE HAS A ROUGHLY SIMILAR VIEW
IF NOT ME?

YOU'VE PLAYED AROUND WITH LOTS OF LOSERS
WHO ENDED UP AS CHEATS AND USERS
BUT WHO'S BEEN ON THE SIDELINES
WAITING FOR YOU
IF NOT ME?

OH, I'VE COME TO FIND
EVERYBODY WANTS RICHARD!
BUT THEY DON'T KNOW
YOUR MIND
THE WAY THAT I DO!
I SEE STRAIGHT THROUGH
ANYONE WHO NEEDS RICHARD
THEY MAKE
ME SICK
THEY'RE GOOD FOR JUST A KICK!
THEY WON'T STICK
THE WAY THAT I DO!

RICHARD

(Coldly.)

Have you got a light?

(He pulls out a cigarette case as Nathan's intensity grows.)

NATHAN

WHEN YOU CUT OFF ALL OUR CONTACT
HOW IT HURT

NATHAN (CONT'D)

BUT I KNOW YOU LIKE TO MAKE ME
FEEL LIKE DIRT
NOW YOU'RE BACK AND YOU KNOW I'M BESIDE YOU
YOUR OLDEST, CLOSEST FRIEND
WHO'S SICK OF BEING LIED TO!

TELL ME, WHO'S THE GIRL IN WHICH SORORITY?
I GOT WORD ON GOOD AUTHORITY
HOW CAN YOU ASSUME SHE'S WORTHY OF YOU?
SHE'S NOT ME!

AND I KNOW THERE WERE SEVERAL OTHERS
ACCORDING TO YOUR FRAT HOUSE BROTHERS!
I EVEN HEARD YOU PASSED AROUND ONE OR TWO
NOT WITH ME!

OH, YOUR MOVES ARE FAST!
EVERYBODY WANTS RICHARD
BUT THEY DON'T KNOW YOUR PAST
THE WAY THAT I DO!

(RICHARD puts his cigarette in his mouth. NATHAN pulls out a lighter and, like a slave to his master, lights Richard's cigarette and watches him blow a stream of smoke.)

AND GOD KNOWS WHY I THINK YOU'RE SO APPEALING
OR WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS DOUBLE-CROSSING
DOUBLE-DEALING!
BUT I REST MY CASE —
I'M THE ONE WHO NEEDS RICHARD!
IT'S BEEN TOO LONG
I'VE TRIED TO BE SO STRONG
THE OTHERS ARE WRONG, THEY DON'T HAVE A CLUE
OR KNOW THE REAL YOU!
YES EVERYBODY WANTS RICHARD
BUT NOT
THE WAY THAT I DO!
ADMIT THAT YOU'VE MISSED ME TOO!

(Music continues under. [Note: There is no applause break here or after any song until the very end of the play.]

RICHARD

I've only missed the worship. But, I guess I could change my plans and spend the evening with you –

NATHAN

That's great ... we could go for a ride around the new ...

RICHARD

– I could use your help.

NATHAN

What?

RICHARD

That old abandoned warehouse off Dearborn ... the one we used to meet in before college?

NATHAN

Yeah, so?

RICHARD

Is it still empty?

NATHAN

I think.

RICHARD

Perfect. We're gonna make like Mrs. O'Leary's cow!

NATHAN

Richard, not another fire!

RICHARD

Hey, if you don't want to be with me ...

(He starts to move away. NATHAN quickly stops him.)

NATHAN

All right. But I'm just gonna stand guard like I used to.

RICHARD

Eight o'clock. The warehouse. Now you'd better get busy. You've got to get the gasoline, buy some extra-long matches, collect some old rags ...

NATHAN

All right, I'll meet you. Eight o'clock.

(RICHARD moves to leave but turns to NATHAN and surprises him with a hard kiss on the lips.)

RICHARD

There. Are you happy now?

NATHAN

(Almost embarrassed.)

Yes.

RICHARD

Eight o'clock. And don't be late.

(He exits. NATHAN watches him go and then sings to himself.)

#4 TAG: EVERYBODY WANTS RICHARD

NATHAN

IT'S BEEN TOO LONG!
I'VE TRIED TO BE SO STRONG
THE OTHERS ARE WRONG
THEY DON'T HAVE A CLUE
OR KNOW THE REAL YOU
YES, EVERYBODY WANTS RICHARD
BUT NOT THE WAY THAT I DO!

(Lights instantly change to reflect the distinct look of the parole hearing in 1958. NATHAN speaks to the Parole Board:)

I met him at the warehouse that night. Richard got so excited when he started the fire ... we used "Diamond Matches" — They always lit on the first strike ...

(Lights change ...)

SCENE 2

(In front of the warehouse, that night. In the darkness, the shadowy silhouettes of Richard and Nathan come into view. A can of gasoline is at their side. The burning warehouse glows in front of them.)

RICHARD

It needs more gasoline.

NATHAN

I'm scared.

RICHARD

More gasoline, Nathan.

(NATHAN doesn't budge. RICHARD hands him the gas can and orders him.)

Now!

(NATHAN relents and throws a splash of gasoline off into the distance. This causes immense flames to fully illuminate Nathan and Richard.)

NATHAN

(Panicked.)

Okay. Now let's get out of here.

RICHARD

Get out of here? You chicken-shit! We have to stay and watch.

NATHAN

But ... what if the warehouse ...

RICHARD

Relax, Nathan.

(He pulls NATHAN down onto the ground with him. RICHARD practically sunbathes in the glow of the fire as the music begins.)

#5 NOTHING LIKE A FIRE

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Isn't it beautiful?

NATHAN

It's something.

(RICHARD places an arm around him, pulling him in close.)

This reminds me of high school.

RICHARD

Yeah. The night I torched the records office.

(RICHARD continues to relax in the warmth.)

Look at it smolder! It's breathtaking! And you know what a little misdemeanor does for me, Babe.

NATHAN

You haven't called me "Babe" in a long time.

RICHARD

(Playfully.)

Because I know you like it.

NATHAN

That is cruel, you son of a bitch.

RICHARD

You like that too. I guess the name still fits. You're still awfully tiny.

NATHAN

You'd be surprised how I've grown.

(He faces Richard squarely and makes a demand.)

Touch me.

RICHARD

Ask me nicer.

NATHAN

Fuck you!

RICHARD

Fuck you back!

NATHAN

Please touch me.

(RICHARD softly caresses NATHAN as he begins to sing, keeping one eye on the fire.)

RICHARD

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE
A WARM, ROMANTIC FIRE
TO PUT ME IN THE PROPER FRAME OF MIND
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A ROARING, RAGING FIRE
TO HELP ME UNWIND

(He begins to massage Nathan's shoulders.)

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE
THE SOUND OF CRACKLING EMBERS
TO CALM ME WHEN MY PULSE BEGINS TO RACE
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE GLOW OF SIZZLING EMBERS
TO BRIGHTEN YOUR FACE

(Music continues.)

NATHAN

Shouldn't we take this someplace else? The fire brigade could be here any minute.

RICHARD

You're the lookout. Tell me if you see anything big and red coming.

(NATHAN giggles and cuddles closer to RICHARD.)

FEEL THE HEAT INTENSIFY
WATCH THE SPARKS BEGIN TO FLY
WATCH THE SMOKE FILL UP THE SKY –
STRAIGHT TO THE STARS!

NATHAN

– STRAIGHT TO THE STARS!

RICHARD

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE
THE SIGHT OF SOMETHING BURNING –

NATHAN

SOMETHING BURNING ...

RICHARD

– TO SOOTHE ME
WITH A HOT SEDUCTIVE LIGHT –

NATHAN

SEDUCTIVE LIGHT ...

RICHARD

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE
THE SMELL OF SOMETHING BURNING –

NATHAN

SOMETHING BURNING ...

RICHARD

– TO START TO IGNITE
MY DESIRE ...

BOTH

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A FIRE!
FEEL THE HEAT INTENSIFY
WATCH THE SPARKS BEGIN TO FLY
WATCH THE SMOKE FILL UP THE SKY –
CLOUDING THE NIGHT!
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A FIRE!

*(As they proceed to get intimate, the glow of the fire grows bigger,
brighter and hotter and finally fades. The lights quickly shift back to
the distinct Parole Board room look.)*

NATHAN

I didn't see him at all the next day. It was torture. Finally I couldn't take it any longer and I showed up at his house real late that night ...

(Lights change ...)

SCENE 3

(Richard's bedroom, the next night. RICHARD is resting and reclining, engrossed in his Nietzsche book. He looks up and sees NATHAN standing in front of him.)

RICHARD

(Startled.)
Who the hell let you in?

NATHAN

Your brother.

RICHARD

John? I'll strangle him.

NATHAN

I thought I'd surprise you.

RICHARD

Why?

NATHAN

So I could thank you for last night.

RICHARD

You're welcome. Goodbye.

(RICHARD turns his attention back to the book.)

NATHAN

What are you reading?

RICHARD

Nietzsche. But I'm finished.

(He puts the book down, and tries to give NATHAN the brush off.)

And now "superior man" must go to sleep.

NATHAN

Great!

RICHARD

Alone.

NATHAN
I told my dad I wasn't coming home tonight.

RICHARD
Why did you do that?

NATHAN
I thought I could stay over.

RICHARD
Who invited you? I didn't.

NATHAN
I'll get John to invite me then.

RICHARD
Fine. Stay. You're welcome to watch me sleep.

NATHAN
Thank you.

(He makes himself comfortable as the music begins.)

#6 A WRITTEN CONTRACT ("SUPERIOR" PART 1)

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Can we talk for a while?

RICHARD
No.

NATHAN
I'm worried.

RICHARD
Now what?

(NATHAN sings.)

NATHAN
HOW COULD I EVER FACE MY DAD
IF HE FOUND OUT WE BURNED THAT
WAREHOUSE DOWN?

RICHARD

IT WAS THE BEST EVENING
THAT WE EVER HAD!
AND NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW

NATHAN

CAN YOU BE SURE?

(Music continues.)

RICHARD

It's right here, Nathan, in black and white. And Nietzsche doesn't lie!

(He hands NATHAN the book and points to a passage as he sings.)

WE'RE SUPERIOR
WE ARE SUPERMEN
SAYS MY NIETZSCHE BOOK
CHAPTERS ONE THROUGH TEN
AND AS SUPERMEN
WE COULD NOT GET CAUGHT
SO DON'T GIVE LAST NIGHT A SECOND THOUGHT
LET'S PLAN NEXT TIME —

'CAUSE WE'RE BOTH SUPERIOR, I QUOTE:
"THE SUPERMAN IS ABOVE ALL OF SOCIETY"
WE'LL HAVE CHICAGO BY THE THROAT
IF YOU HELP ME —
REMEMBER YOU'RE MY LOOKOUT, BABE!

(Music continues. NATHAN feigns thumbing through the book.)

NATHAN

In which chapter does Nietzsche talk about arson? I bet that's a good one! You know if we pull any more of this stupid stuff we can kiss law school goodbye.

RICHARD

With me in charge? We're a productive team. And we should do a lot more than just burn down old warehouses ...

NATHAN

I don't want to do any of it.

(He moves to touch RICHARD.)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Can't we just ...

RICHARD

(Moving away.)

If you don't want to be part of my fun, I'm certainly not going to be part of yours. You know that by now.

NATHAN

I thought our relationship had matured.

RICHARD

You were wrong. And you might as well go home now, Nathan. Have a swell summer. And a nice life.

NATHAN

I'm not trying to stop you, but you don't need my help breaking the law.

RICHARD

(Reluctantly.)

Yes I do ... I ... I screw up without you.

NATHAN

What?

RICHARD

I screw up without you, okay!

NATHAN

You never said you needed me before.

(RICHARD stays silent as NATHAN contemplates.)

#7 A WRITTEN CONTRACT (PART 2)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I can't do this, Richard. You'll double-cross me. I'll do what you want, but you won't do what I want.

RICHARD

I'm really disappointed in you, Nathan. You were making such progress, but now ...

(Music intensifies. He sings.)

YOU'RE NOT FIT TO

RICHARD (CONT'D)

POUR ME BATHTUB BOOZE
YOU DON'T DESERVE ME!
YOU'RE NOT FIT TO
LICK MY WING-TIP SHOES!
YOU JUST UNNERVE ME!
SINCE I HAVEN'T LEARNED WHEN
NO MEANS NO, BABE
I'M GONNA TEMPT YOUR BRAIN
WITH QUID-PRO-QUO, BABE
A WRITTEN CONTRACT!

NATHAN

A written contract?

RICHARD

SPELLING OUT WHAT YOU WILL DO FOR ME:
PARTICIPATION
IN MY CRIMES, NO MATTER WHAT DEGREE!
FOR COMPENSATION, I'LL AGREE
TO ANY TERMS YOU LAY OUT!
SO THAT MEANS WHEN YOU ASK
I'LL HAVE NO WAY OUT
A WRITTEN CONTRACT!
HERE'S YOUR CHANCE
TO MAKE THINGS LEGAL AT LAST
IN PLAIN BLACK AND WHITE
WE CAN LET THE PAST REMAIN IN THE PAST
AND HAVE NO MORE REASON TO FIGHT!

(RICHARD gets a portable Underwood typewriter out from a hiding place.)

I'LL EVEN LET YOU
TYPE THE WHOLE THING OUT –
EACH KEY PROVISION!

(He sets the typewriter down. It glistens in the light.)

WIPE AWAY THAT LOOK OF FEAR AND DOUBT
MAKE A DECISION!
DON'T HOLD OUT, YOU'LL GET
NO BETTER OFFER!
'CAUSE IT'S THE ONLY OPTION I CAN PROFFER!
A FORMAL CONTRACT

RICHARD (CONT'D)

A WRITTEN CONTRACT
WILL HELP TO GET YOU YOURS
AND I'LL GET MINE!
BUT YOU'LL NEVER BE MY EQUAL
IF YOU DON'T PROMISE ME YOU'LL SIGN!

(The music continues as RICHARD sits NATHAN in front of the typewriter.)

#8 A WRITTEN CONTRACT (PART 3)

NATHAN

Isn't this the typewriter you swiped from your roommate freshman year?

RICHARD

Be careful. That's a very valuable Underwood.

(NATHAN types a few strokes.)

NATHAN

It's also busted. The "c" is dropped. And the "t" is really faint.

RICHARD

Shut up and take this down ...

NATHAN

One second, I need my glasses.

(NATHAN pulls a pair of reading glasses out of a pocket and puts them on. Then he types as RICHARD dictates.)

RICHARD

"I, NATHAN LEOPOLD
HEREBY SWEAR TO AID AND ABET
AT RICHARD'S REQUEST
NO MATTER WHAT HE WANTS
I'LL GIVE HIM MY BEST – "

NATHAN

" – BUT ONLY AS MUCH AS I GET!"

RICHARD

Whatever.

NATHAN

(Happily.)

Now it's my turn.

(He sings as he types.)

"IN CONSIDERATION OF
THE ABOVE
I, RICHARD LOEB,
SWEAR TO SATISFY BABE –
WHEREVER IT LEADS
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ABOVE!
I'LL GIVE HIM WHATEVER HE NEEDS!"

(Music continues.)

#9 A WRITTEN CONTRACT (PART 4)

RICHARD

Fine, now finish it off with a couple of whereases and wherefores ...

NATHAN

This is great practice for contract law class.

RICHARD

Type.

(NATHAN types a few closing words and pulls the contract out of the carriage.)

NATHAN

Done.

RICHARD

Great. Now comes the good part.

(RICHARD pulls a sharp-looking pocket-knife out of his pocket.)

NATHAN

Why a knife?

RICHARD

We have to sign in blood.

NATHAN

What are you, a fucking Indian? Why?

RICHARD

Because I said so. And because it's more binding that way. Trust me, you'll enjoy a little pain. Hold out your finger.

(NATHAN doesn't.)

Hold out your finger!

(RICHARD forcefully grabs Nathan's hand then gently sings.)

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS
TAKE THE KNIFE
AND GENTLY PUNCTURE THE SKIN

(He attempts to stab, but NATHAN pulls away. RICHARD grabs his finger again.)

I'VE DONE THIS BEFORE!

(He succeeds.)

NATHAN

Ouch! Shit!

RICHARD

Sign your name.

(NATHAN signs in blood.)

AND ONCE THE BLOOD HAS DRIED
THE TERMS WILL BEGIN!

(NATHAN shakes his finger, RICHARD grabs it.)

TRY NOT TO DRIP ON THE FLOOR!

NATHAN

Do I get to do you now?

RICHARD

No, I can take care of myself.

(RICHARD plunges the blade into his own finger, causing NATHAN to wince. He carefully signs his name. NATHAN grasps Richard's hand to seal the pact.)

NATHAN

NOW OUR LIVES WILL BE –

NATHAN/RICHARD

ENTWINED COMPLETELY!
OUR FRIENDSHIP'S NOW REDEFINED
RETHOUGHT AND REVISED!

NATHAN

NO TURNING BACK NOW
SINCE OUR BLOOD'S BEEN COMBINED!

(RICHARD drops Nathan's hand and gives him the contract.)

RICHARD

BUT NOT 'TIL IT'S BEEN NOTARIZED!

(NATHAN folds it and puts it in his pocket. While keeping a close eye on each other, they sing.)

NATHAN/RICHARD

AND NO ONE HAS TO KNOW
OUR BUSINESS DEAL
WE'LL KEEP IT HIDDEN!
ALL ATTEMPTS TO BREAK OUR PRIVATE SEAL
WILL BE FORBIDDEN
IT'S THE SAME OLD GAME
WITH ONE NEW FEATURE
AND NEXT SEMESTER
YOU CAN SHOW YOUR TEACHER
A SIMPLE CONTRACT
A WRITTEN CONTRACT
THE CLAUSES NOT MISLEADING
THE PRINT NOT FINE!
AND I HOPE THE CONTRACT IS THE ANSWER
TO FINALLY KEEPING YOU IN LINE!

(NATHAN removes his glasses and RICHARD snaps his knife shut as the lights change to reflect the Parole Board.)

NATHAN

We kept things simple at first. Just silly crimes really ... nothing that would hurt anyone. For a while he kept his end of the bargain and it was great. But after a few weeks I noticed a change ...

(Lights change ...)

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SCENE 4

(Nathan's bedroom, a few weeks later. NATHAN and RICHARD breathlessly race into the room. NATHAN carries a bag full of stolen loot.)

RICHARD

Not bad, Babe! You were quicker with the signal this time!

NATHAN

(Catching his breath.)

Thank God. Another five seconds and we would have been caught red-handed!

RICHARD

But we weren't.

NATHAN

We've never had that close a call. I knew we shouldn't risk breaking into someone's house while they were asleep. Stores are so much easier.

RICHARD

It was thrilling for me.

NATHAN

How can you be so damned calm?

RICHARD

Because worrying is your department. Give me the bag, let's look at all this junk.

#10 THRILL ME

(NATHAN hands him the bag. RICHARD opens it. NATHAN loosens his tie and starts to get comfortable. Music begins. RICHARD pulls a few things out of the bag, such as a silver tray, candlesticks, etc. NATHAN tries to get his attention by running his fingers through Richard's hair. RICHARD brushes him away.)

Quit it.

NATHAN

(Irritated.)

It's my turn.

(RICHARD rummages through the bag, with growing disappointment, as NATHAN becomes increasingly more annoyed.)

RICHARD

This is all shit. I'm throwing everything away. If you want something, claim it now.

NATHAN

I want you. Hold me.

(RICHARD, having paid no attention, snaps his fingers, getting an idea.)

RICHARD

How about we rob my father's office tomorrow night? That would really be a thrill ... there's this back door that no one knows about, with a really crummy lock. Easy to pick. And he's got a bunch of gold coins and a big stamp collection in his safe ... I think the combination is John's birthday ...

(No longer able to contain his feelings, NATHAN sings.)

NATHAN

(Angry.)

DON'T BORE ME WITH DETAILS
THEY'LL NEVER IMPRESS ME
START PAYING ATTENTION
DON'T TRY TO FINESSE ME!
THRILL ME ... THRILL ME!

RICHARD

Thrill yourself.

NATHAN

DON'T FORGET WHAT YOU PROMISED
ON PAPER –
WHAT YOU'D DO WHEN WE FINISHED A CAPER!
EVERY TIME I DEMAND WHAT'S REQUIRED
YOU COMPLAIN THAT YOU'RE SIMPLY TOO TIRED
THRILL ME!

(RICHARD starts to carefully close up the bag. NATHAN pushes it away.)

DON'T TOY WITH DISTRACTIONS.
WHY FUEL MY FRUSTRATION?
YOU'RE TRYING TO CHEAT ME!
WHAT'S YOUR EXPLANATION?
THRILL ME ... THRILL ME!

RICHARD

I don't feel like it. I feel kinda down lately. It's not exciting anymore. Break the window, pick the lock, steal things we don't need. It's all too easy... there's no "thrill" left.

NATHAN

IF THIS KEEPS GOING ON
I'LL GO CRAZY!
I'M AROUSED, YOU'RE CONVENIENTLY LAZY!
SO MY RAGE AND IMPATIENCE KEEP GROWING
BUT THEY GET MY ADRENALINE GOING!
THRILL ME!

DON'T THINK UP EXCUSES
THEY'LL NEVER PERSUADE ME
LET'S TURN ALL THE LIGHTS OFF
DON'T TRY TO EVADE ME!
THRILL ME!

(NATHAN tries to pull Richard's suspenders down.)

RICHARD

Stop that!

(He sings.)

UNTIL I FEEL ENERGIZED
I WILL NOT BE IN THE MOOD!

NATHAN

I'VE HELD BACK
AND I'VE COMPROMISED
SO, UNLESS YOU WANT TO GET SUED ...

WHY SPOIL MY EVENING?
AND WHY MUST YOU DENY ME?
I'LL STOP MY COMPLAINING
ONCE YOU SATISFY ME!
WON'T YOU THRILL ME?

(Music continues to pulse.)

RICHARD

I said no.

NATHAN

Will you ever be square with me?

RICHARD

Sure. Just not now.

NATHAN

I'm sick of hearing that! The only reason I've been helping you do these stupid things is because we have a contract ...

(NATHAN grabs the contract from its hiding place and waves it in Richard's face.)

... signed in blood! You want me to tear it up?

RICHARD

No. Okay, okay. You win. Let's make it fast though. I've gotta get up early.

(He starts to take off his tie and pull down his suspenders.)

NATHAN

Don't be unfocused, Richard —

*(NATHAN continues to sing while unbuttoning his own vest.
RICHARD throws off his shirt.)*

BUT DON'T TREAT ME WITH KID GLOVES
I'LL ALWAYS OBEY YOU!
ONE PERFECT ACCOMPLICE,
WHO'D NEVER BETRAY YOU
IF YOU THRILL ME!
THRILL ME!

(He reaches for RICHARD as the lights shift ...)

SCENE 5

(Parole Board hearing room at Joliet Prison, 1958. NATHAN once again faces the unseen Parole Board.)

PAROLE ONE

Mr. Leopold, you went along with him every time. What did you think would happen if you didn't?

NATHAN

He'd never see me again. I never really believed that we'd go as far as he wanted. His friendship was necessary to me. I had no choice.

PAROLE TWO

(Skeptically.)

Friendship?

NATHAN

(Quietly.)

We were very close. The point is I would do whatever he asked.

PAROLE ONE

You were not in control of your own actions? That's hard to believe, Mr. Leopold.

NATHAN

I don't know how my conscience worked then.

PAROLE TWO

How exactly did Loeb convince you to commit the crime?

NATHAN

It was a little later that same night ... about five minutes later ...

(The lights shift as NATHAN takes his place with RICHARD ...)

SCENE 6

(Nathan's bedroom, a few minutes later. NATHAN, smiling and pleased with himself, begins to re-tie his tie and button his vest back up. RICHARD slips his shirt back on and lights a cigarette.)

RICHARD

You know what would thrill me, Nathan?

NATHAN

What?

RICHARD

A more important crime. A superior crime. Burglary and setting fires are too trivial for supermen like us.

NATHAN

What do you think would be more appropriate?

RICHARD

Something we could be proud of.

NATHAN

Armed robbery?

(NATHAN giggles.)

RICHARD

Murder.

(Shocked, NATHAN searches for a response.)

NATHAN

You've been reading too much Nietzsche. And way too many detective magazines.

RICHARD

I'm serious.

NATHAN

Murder is a big leap, even for you.

RICHARD

No, no, no. It's a logical progression.

NATHAN

Forget it.

RICHARD

Scared?

(NATHAN doesn't respond.)

As of tonight we're even. Now you have to help me or you'll break the contract.

NATHAN

This is crazy. What would possess you to want to kill somebody?

RICHARD

The challenge, fool. Think of how incredibly significant it would be.

NATHAN

Now you're scaring me.

RICHARD

But that's what you like, isn't it?

NATHAN

Not if it involves the death penalty.

RICHARD

(Cavalierly.)

Forget the death penalty. We're not amateur idiots. We're smart. We're going to be lawyers!

NATHAN

But it's wrong.

RICHARD

Says who?

NATHAN

Says anyone. Society.

RICHARD

(Passionate.)

We are above society. Murder is the only crime worthy of our talents, Nathan. Don't you want to do something important with your life?

NATHAN

(Exasperated.)

I don't believe you're serious. It's the stupidest ... craziest ... who would you want to ... kill?

RICHARD

You know.

NATHAN

No. I have no idea.

RICHARD

Who irks me the most?

NATHAN

Me?

RICHARD

Besides you.

(Music creeps in.)

#11 THE PLAN

NATHAN

Who the hell are you talking about?

(Richard sings.)

RICHARD

IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN
THEN HE'D NEVER TOUCH MY THINGS!
IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN
THEN HE'D NEVER RAT ME OUT
IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN
MY INHERITANCE WOULD GROW —

(NATHAN tries to treat it all as a joke.)

NATHAN

YOU'RE A LUNATIC! COME ON!
CAN'T WE LET THE SUBJECT GO?

(RICHARD pays no attention to NATHAN, who grows more and more uncomfortable.)

RICHARD

WE COULD CHLOROFORM A RAG
AND MAKE HIM BREATHE THE VAPORS
THEN USE IT AS A GAG
TO CHOKE HIM
AND ONCE HIS FACE IS GREEN
WE'LL THROW HIM IN A BAG
FLEE THE MURDER SCENE
THEN READ ABOUT IT IN THE PAPERS

IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN
THEN MY FATHER WOULD DROP DEAD!
IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN
THEN I'D GET THE BIGGER ROOM
IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN
LIKE I'VE ALWAYS YEARNED TO DO —

NATHAN

IF YOU KILLED YOUR BROTHER JOHN
EVERY LEAD WOULD POINT TO YOU!

RICHARD

WE COULD BORROW SOME OLD GUN
AND SHOOT HIM IN HIS SLUMBER
PERHAPS IT WOULD BE FUN
TO TORTURE HIM!
WE'LL MAKE IT LOOK LIKE RAPE!
AND ONCE THE DEED IS DONE
WE'LL MISDIRECT THE COPS
AND WATCH HIS NAME
BECOME A NUMBER!

IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN —

NATHAN

YOU COULD NEVER PRACTICE LAW

RICHARD

IF WE KILLED MY BROTHER JOHN —

NATHAN

YOU COULD NEVER FACE YOUR MOTHER!

RICHARD AND NATHAN

IF WE KILLED MY/YOUR BROTHER JOHN —

NATHAN
COULD YOU LIVE WITH WHAT YOU DID?

(A pause. RICHARD thinks for a moment.)

RICHARD
OKAY, NOT MY BROTHER JOHN.
LET'S GO KILL SOME RANDOM KID!

(Music continues.)

NATHAN
(Sarcastic.)
Oh, that's much better. Much better.

RICHARD
It's perfect. All we have to do is go down to our old elementary school, after the last bell ...

NATHAN
Wouldn't kidnapping be enough?

RICHARD
Brilliant! This man is a fucking genius! We'll do both!

NATHAN
Both?!

RICHARD
We'll kill him, but first find out his name and address then gouge his folks for a ransom. I could write a note. They'll think he's still alive.

NATHAN
What happens if they find the body?

RICHARD
(Oblivious.)
This is perfect. I bet we could get five or ten thousand.

NATHAN
We don't need money.

RICHARD
You don't. But my father's been awfully stingy lately. Come on, Babe ...

(He caresses NATHAN gently.)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You know how excited it'll make me. Let's see ... a ten or eleven-year old ...

(He sings into Nathan's ear, stroking his hair, holding his hand ... drawing him in.)

I'LL LURE HIM TO MY CAR
THEN STRIKE WITH SOMETHING SIZABLE
WE'LL DRIVE OUT EXTRA FAR
TO DUMP HIM
POUR ACID ON HIS FACE
AND EVERY BIRTHMARK, MOLE OR SCAR
THEN STRIP OFF ALL HIS CLOTHING
SO HE'LL BE UNRECOGNIZABLE!

NATHAN AND RICHARD

JUST A BOY WHO'S IN THE PARK –

RICHARD

WON'T BE SMART ENOUGH TO RUN

NATHAN AND RICHARD

JUST A KID WHO'S IN THE DARK –

RICHARD

WON'T BE STRONG ENOUGH TO FIGHT!

NATHAN AND RICHARD

BAIT THE FISH TO FEED THE SHARK –

RICHARD

THIRTY SECONDS AND HE'S GONE

NATHAN

WHAT A WAY TO MAKE YOUR MARK!

(RICHARD gets right into Nathan's face.)

RICHARD

BETTER THAN MY BROTHER JOHN!

(Lights change. NATHAN addresses the Parole Board.)

NATHAN

Richard needed three days to get ready.

(Lights shift ...)

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SCENE 7

(Richard's garage, a few weeks later/the Parole Board room, 1958. Music changes as RICHARD kneels on the ground with the murder weapons in front of him. He talks as if to Nathan. However, NATHAN is still presented in front of the Parole Board on the opposite side of the stage. The lights continually shift back and forth between the two spaces and the two different time periods.)

#12 WAY TOO FAR

RICHARD

Rope, crowbar, acid. That's everything.

(RICHARD inspects the weapons as NATHAN sings to the Parole Board.)

I hope this rope is strong enough. It's not the kind I told you to get.

(Lights shift.)

NATHAN

IT HAD GONE WAY TOO FAR
YET THERE I WAS ASSISTING
IT HAD GONE WAY TOO FAR
I WAS ACTING LIKE HIS PRISONER
MUCH TOO LATE TO START RESISTING

(Lights shift.)

RICHARD

The crowbar, however, is per-fect-o.

(Lights shift.)

NATHAN

HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?
WAS SOMETHING WRONG INSIDE ME?
HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?
IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO RUN AWAY
OR LET MY CONSCIENCE GUIDE ME

(Lights shift.)

RICHARD

This is a damned small bottle of acid. I guess we'll have to find a damned small boy.

(Lights shift. RICHARD packs the weapons into a leather case as NATHAN continues to sing to the Parole Board.)

NATHAN

HE THOUGHT IT WAS FUN
HIS DARK SIDE
WAS DIFFICULT TO SWALLOW
NOT DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW
I TRIED TO STAY CALM
I TRIED TO STAY SANE
THE HEART IS A MUSCLE
THAT I CAN'T EXPLAIN!

WHAT MADE ME FEEL THIS WAY?
AND MADE HIM SO EXCITING?
WHAT MADE ME FEEL THIS WAY?
SHOULD HAVE SOMEHOW TRIED TO MAKE IT STOP
BUT HAD NO USE IN FIGHTING

(Music continues. Lights shift.)

RICHARD

I'm putting you in charge of writing down his address for the ransom note. So, when I've got the rope around his neck, you say, "If you wanna live, give me your address." Then once you have it, I'll crack his skull.

(RICHARD grabs the leather case.)

I'll meet you at the car.

(RICHARD exits. Lights shift.)

NATHAN

IT SOON WOULD BE DONE
AND THEN HE'D BE TIED TO ME FOREVER
I'M SMART; BUT HE WAS CLEVER
TOO LATE TO SAY NO ...
I WALKED TO HIS CAR ...
FORCED MYSELF TO BE MUCH STRONGER
IF FOR JUST A LITTLE LONGER!
THEN I LET IT GO TOO FAR

(Lights shift ...)

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SCENE 8

(Near the schoolyard, a few hours later. RICHARD enters, illuminated only by the glowing headlights of his car, which cast his looming shadow across the yard. Through billows of exhaust, NATHAN can barely be seen watching, horrified, but remaining a loyal lookout. Finally, RICHARD spots a target. His eyes follow an (unseen) young boy on the other side of the yard. RICHARD first gets his attention with a wave and then sings to him.)

#13 ROADSTER

RICHARD

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MY ROADSTER?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO LOOK INSIDE?
IT'S A SHINY, PACKARD ROADSTER
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A RIDE?
A SPIN AROUND THE BLOCK?
I'D BE GLAD TO DROP YOU OFF!

(RICHARD holds out his cigarette case in an attempt to lure the boy, but to no avail. He continues.)

WE COULD CRUISE AROUND THE SCHOOL YARD
BE THE ENVY OF YOUR PALS
IF YOU'RE RIDING WITH ME SHOTGUN
YOU'LL IMPRESS THE PRETTY GALS

SEE IT SITTING IN THE ALLEY?
COULDN'T FIND A PARKING SPACE
WE COULD OPEN UP THE WINDOWS
WIND WILL WHIP ACROSS YOUR FACE!
GO CLIMB INSIDE THE CAR
I'D BE GLAD TO DROP YOU OFF

(As if stopping the boy from walking away, RICHARD quickly tries a different tactic.)

I KNOW — NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS!
THAT'S WHAT MOTHERS ALWAYS WARN
BUT I THINK WE COULD BE BUDDIES
SURE, I'LL LET YOU HONK THE HORN
I THINK YOU NEED A LIFT
I'D BE GLAD TO DROP YOU OFF

RICHARD (CONT'D)

FEEL THE POWER OF MY ENGINE
WHEN IT SPEEDS TO FORTY-FIVE —

(He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the ignition-lock key, holding it up almost hypnotically.)

HERE'S THE KEY TO THE IGNITION
TAKE THE WHEEL, I'LL LET YOU DRIVE!
OR HOP INSIDE THE BACK
I'LL BE GLAD TO DROP YOU OFF

("The boy" has clearly taken the bait.)

JUST TELL ME WHERE YOU LIVE
I'LL BE GLAD TO DROP YOU OFF

What's your name?

(RICHARD crooks his head to listen.)

Bobby's a nice name ...

(He beckons "the boy" to follow as he walks off.)

YOU'LL BE SAFE INSIDE MY ROADSTER!

(After a moment, NATHAN follows. Blackout [or light shift].)

SCENE 9

(The woods near Wolf Lake, later that night (after the murder). As the music pulses, RICHARD and NATHAN rush in. RICHARD carries a blood-stained rag along with the used murder weapons. He is breathless but truly exhilarated. NATHAN holds a bloody rag and the empty leather case. He looks off in horror toward the site of the murder and frantically sings.)

#14 SUPERIOR

NATHAN

ALL OF CHICAGO WOULD GO MAD
IF THEY DISCOVERED WHAT WE DID TONIGHT

(RICHARD draws his attention.)

RICHARD

BUT WE'RE BOTH SUPERIOR, BE GLAD!
HOW COULD THEY EVER CATCH TWO GENIUSES?

TWENTY FEET FROM HERE
IN A CULVERT PIPE
LIES A TWELVE-YEAR OLD
WHOSE TIME WAS RIPE!
JUST A USELESS KID ...

(He waves the empty acid bottle.)

WITH NO FACE, AND THUS
THEY COULD NEVER TIE A THING TO US!

(He hands the bottle to a frozen NATHAN.)

NO EVIDENCE!
AND THAT'S WHY —

BOTH

WE'RE BOTH SUPERIOR TO ALL
WE'VE GOT MORE INTELLIGENCE THAN ANYONE!

RICHARD

WE ROLL CHICAGO LIKE A BALL —

(He snaps the murder rope loudly, making NATHAN jump.)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

AND WE'RE FAR MORE EFFICIENT
THAN THE MOB IS, BABE!

NATHAN

I'M OVERCOME ...
I'M FEELING NUMB!

(RICHARD hands NATHAN the crow-bar.)

RICHARD

WIPE THE CROWBAR CLEAN!

(He throws him the rope ...)

DON'T FORGET THE ROPE!

(... and the bloody rag.)

WASH THE BLOODSTAINS OFF
WITH KITCHEN SOAP!

(NATHAN quickly places all the weapons into the bag.)

THEN DESTROY IT ALL
AND DON'T LEAVE A TRACE!

NATHAN

I'M AFRAID THEY'LL SEE IT
ON MY FACE!

RICHARD

YOU'RE PARANOID!
JUST TELL YOURSELF:

BOTH

WE'RE BOTH SUPERIOR TO ALL!
WE SIMPLY FUNCTION ON A HIGHER PLANE!

RICHARD

WE'LL LET CHICAGO TAKE THE FALL!
THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF PERVERTS
THEY CAN BLAME IT ON!

NATHAN

BUT I TOLD MYSELF
THAT THIS WAS ALL A GAME
I'M STILL IN SHOCK
WHY DON'T YOU FEEL THE SAME?

RICHARD

HOW MANY TIMES MUST I ADDRESS YOUR DOUBTS?
WE'VE VANDALIZED
BURGLARIZED
AND NEVER LEFT A CLUE
THIS WAS NO RISK –
AND FUN TO DO!

(He moves toward NATHAN.)

SO, LET ME EASE YOUR MIND
TRY TO UNDERSTAND
AND ENJOY THE FACT
IT WENT AS PLANNED

(NATHAN tries to back away.)

NATHAN

YOU'RE SCARING ME!

(RICHARD grabs him.)

RICHARD

THEN DON'T FORGET –

BOTH

WE'RE BOTH SUPERIOR TO ALL!
WE'VE GOT A BOND
WE'LL TAKE IT TO THE GRAVE!

RICHARD

WE'VE BACKED CHICAGO TO THE WALL!

NATHAN

AND YOU'RE SURE THAT WE WEREN'T SEEN?

RICHARD

YES!

NATHAN
THERE'S NO CHANCE WE'LL BE ACCUSED –

RICHARD
NO!

NATHAN
YOU GUARANTEE OUR HANDS ARE CLEAN?

RICHARD
YES!

NATHAN
TELL ME WHAT'S NEXT, I'M ALL CONFUSED!

RICHARD
WE'LL WRITE THE RANSOM NOTE, ALL RIGHT?

NATHAN
ALL RIGHT!

RICHARD
WHEN WE'RE AT HOME AND OUT OF SIGHT!

NATHAN
ALL RIGHT!

RICHARD
MAKE SURE YOU DUCK IF YOU SEE LIGHT –

NATHAN
ALL RIGHT!

RICHARD
NOW LET'S CAP OFF ONE SUPERIOR ...

(He beckons NATHAN towards him.)

RICHARD
NIGHT! –

(He pulls NATHAN in for a tight embrace.)

NATHAN
THIS HAS GONE WAY TOO FAR!

(Lights change. NATHAN solemnly addresses the Parole Board.)

NATHAN

I had never seen him so ... happy. We went back to his house ... I was shaking the whole way ... he got out the Underwood ...

(Lights shift ...)

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SCENE 10

(Richard's bedroom, later that night. RICHARD sits at his typewriter, typing the last few strokes of the ransom note as NATHAN nervously paces. Music pulses.)

#15 RANSOM NOTE

RICHARD

How do you spell "valise"?

NATHAN

V-A-L-I-S-E.

(RICHARD types the last word and, with a flourish, pulls the paper off the carriage.)

RICHARD

Not bad. Read it with me, Babe.

(NATHAN fishes in his pocket.)

NATHAN

That's strange.

RICHARD

What?

NATHAN

My glasses?

RICHARD

Your glasses what?

NATHAN

I can't imagine where I ...

RICHARD

Come on, just squint!

(NATHAN goes to him. RICHARD puts his arm around NATHAN, and puts the document close to his face.)

(They sing slowly in unison:)

RICHARD AND NATHAN

IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR SON
THEN YOU'LL FOLLOW EVERY RULE
HE IS SAFELY HERE UNHARMED
AND, SO FAR, WE'VE NOT BEEN CRUEL
GET TEN THOUSAND IN SMALL BILLS
AND MAKE SURE THERE'S NO POLICE
THEN DRIVE STRAIGHT TO JACKSON PARK
AND WAIT THERE FOR HIS RELEASE!

RICHARD

IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR SON ...

NATHAN

IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR SON ...

RICHARD

MAKE THE NIGHTMARE QUICKLY CEASE –

NATHAN

MAKE THE NIGHTMARE QUICKLY CEASE!

RICHARD

LEAVE THE CASH IN JACKSON PARK

NATHAN

LEAVE THE CASH IN JACKSON PARK –

RICHARD

IN A BRAND-NEW BLACK VALISE!

NATHAN

IN A BRAND-NEW BLACK VALISE!

(Music continues.)

RICHARD

Perfect so far.

NATHAN

Perfect so far.

(RICHARD rolls the paper back into the typewriter.)

RICHARD

I wonder what my father would do if I was kidnapped.

NATHAN

He'd pay.

RICHARD

Maybe he'd pay.

NATHAN

Of course he'd pay. He's loaded.

RICHARD

Maybe.

NATHAN

I know my dad would pay to get me back.

RICHARD

Of course. You're his precious little Nathan. My father and I don't have that kind of relationship. He'd only be worried about bad publicity for him.

NATHAN

(Compassionately.)

He wouldn't let you die.

RICHARD

Well, let's hope I never have to find out.

(He continues to type the final lines as they sing.)

BOTH

IF YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR SON ...
BE ALONE WHEN YOU ARRIVE

RICHARD

DO EXACTLY AS WE SAY —

BOTH

THEN YOU'LL GET HIM BACK ALIVE ...
YES, YOU'LL GET HIM BACK ALIVE ...

(RICHARD removes the note from the typewriter and hands it to NATHAN to deliver.)

BOTH (CONT'D)
YES, YOU'LL GET HIM BACK ALIVE ...

(NATHAN takes the note from him as the lights shift ...)

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SCENE 11

(Nathan's and Richard's houses, the days following the murder. The sound of static then a radio broadcast is heard in the darkness.)

RADIO NEWSCASTER

... reached a record 102 degrees in Cicero.

#16 MY GLASSES/JUST LAY LOW

RADIO NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

In local news, last night the disfigured body of what is believed to be a young boy, was discovered half-dangling from a culvert pipe at Wolf Lake. Police warn the public to stay out of the woods near that area after dark. In sports, Chicago's Cubbies once again were beaten by the New York ...

(The radio fades out as the lights come up on NATHAN, isolated in a pool of light, with a candlestick-style telephone. Music pulses.)

NATHAN

(On phone.)

Hello John? May I please speak to your brother? Tell him it's important. Very important.

(RICHARD is discovered in another pool of light, also with a candlestick-style telephone.)

RICHARD

Hello, Nathan.

NATHAN

Richard, have you seen the Tribune?

RICHARD

Yes.

(NATHAN sings.)

NATHAN

HOW COULD THEY HAVE FOUND THE BOY? I'M SHAKING!
I THOUGHT YOU SAID WE HAD THE PERFECT SPOT!
COULD I HAVE DROPPED MY GLASSES THERE?
WHY CAN'T I FIND THEM ANYWHERE?
THEY WERE INSIDE MY POCKET, NOW THEY'RE NOT!

RICHARD

So they found the body. That's all they have. They can't even be sure who it is! His face is gone.

(He sings.)

WE'LL LAY LOW A FEW DAYS LONGER
AND YOU'LL SEE, THEY HAVE NO CASE
THIS WILL ALL DIE DOWN EVENTUALLY
THERE'S NOTHING THEY CAN TRACE!

NATHAN

IF WE WAIT A FEW DAYS LONGER
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN COPE!
IF WE TURN OURSELVES IN NOW ...

RICHARD

THEY'LL STICK OUR NECKS INSIDE A ROPE!
DON'T EVEN SUGGEST THAT
THEY HAVE NO LEADS
SO WE'RE STILL FINE!

NATHAN

BUT, MY GLASSES ...

RICHARD

FORGET YOUR GODDAMNED GLASSES
AND GET OFF THE GODDAMNED LINE!

*(They both hang up. The lights change to reflect the passage of time.
Music continues. Another radio broadcast is heard.)*

RADIO NEWSCASTER

... following up on yesterday's gruesome discovery, the mutilated boy has been identified as Bobby Franks, son of the wealthy Chicago family ...

(NATHAN, on the phone, speaks to RICHARD again.)

NATHAN

They know its Bobby Franks!!! They identified a birthmark on his back. Why didn't you turn him over?

RICHARD

I forgot, okay?!

(He sings.)

RICHARD

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE LOST TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS
THE RANSOM SCHEME'S A BUST, THE PLANS ARE DEAD!
DON'T SHOW UP AT THE DROP TONIGHT –
I'M SURE THAT THEY'LL STAKE OUT THE SITE!

NATHAN

I KNEW IT WOULDN'T WORK
THE WAY YOU SAID!
AND I'M CONVINCED I MUST HAVE DROPPED
MY GLASSES
I KNOW I HAD THEM ON INSIDE YOUR CAR ...

RICHARD

I PLANNED THIS ALL OUT PERFECTLY
I NEED YOU TO STAY CALM FOR ME –

NATHAN

– I WISH I COULD REMEMBER
WHERE THEY ARE!

RICHARD

JUST LAY LOW A FEW DAYS LONGER
AND YOU'LL SEE THEY'LL HAVE NO CLUES
THERE IS NO NEED TO BE NERVOUS
THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE GONNA LOSE
JUST LISTEN TO ME, BABE!
YOU'RE NOT ALONE!

NATHAN

BUT MY GLASSES ...

RICHARD

OH, SCREW YOUR GODDAMNED GLASSES!
AND GET OFF THE GODDAMNED PHONE!

(They both hang up. The lights change to reflect the passage of time again. Music continues. Another broadcast.)

RADIO NEWSCASTER

... And the Chicago police believe that the pair of eyeglasses found near the scene may provide answers in the shocking murder of Bobby Franks. In other news ...

(NATHAN is discovered in a true panic.)

NATHAN

THE HERALD SAYS THEY FOUND A PAIR OF GLASSES
I THINK THAT IT'S A VERY SCARY SIGN!
THEY GAVE IT SEVEN PARAGRAPHS
AND PRINTED LOTS OF PHOTOGRAPHS
THE GLASSES LOOK AN AWFUL LOT LIKE MINE!

(The music stops dead. RICHARD practically drops the phone. Then he calmly and slowly sings to NATHAN.)

RICHARD

BUT THEY'RE JUST A PAIR OF GLASSES
NOT THE MURDER WEAPON!

NATHAN

TRUE
BUT IT MEANS THEY FOUND A LINK TO US ...

RICHARD

NOT TO "US," BABE, BUT TO YOU!

NATHAN

(Horried.)

Richard!

(Music continues in full tempo.)

RICHARD

JUST LAY LOW A FEW DAYS LONGER
AND THE NEWS WILL FADE AWAY
WE JUST HAVE TO PLAY IT SAFE
NO MATTER WHAT THE PAPERS SAY!

NATHAN

I'M CONVINCED I MUST HAVE
DROPPED MY GLASSES
THERE MUST BE THOUSANDS
OUT THERE JUST LIKE MINE
BUT I HAD THEM ON
INSIDE YOUR CAR AND

NOW I DON'T KNOW
WHERE THEY ARE!

RICHARD

JUST LAY LOW A FEW DAYS
LONGER AND THEIR CASE WILL
LOSE ITS STEAM
THERE'S NO CHOICE YOU
MUST BE STRONGER
HAVE TO TAKE ONE FOR THE
TEAM!
JUST LAY LOW
JUST LAY LOW, JUST LAY LOW

NATHAN (CONT'D)
IT SENDS AN ICY CHILL
RIGHT DOWN MY SPINE!

RICHARD (CONT'D)
JUST LAY LOW, JUST LAY LOW
JUST LAY LOW, JUST LAY LOW!

(RICHARD listens as NATHAN tries not to go to pieces.)

NATHAN
THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A WITNESS NEAR THE LAKE ...

RICHARD
No ...

NATHAN
WE MIGHT HAVE LEFT A FOOTPRINT IN THE MUD ...

RICHARD
We didn't ...

NATHAN
SUPPOSE WE WEREN'T TOO CAREFUL WITH THE BLOOD ...

RICHARD
We were careful ...

NATHAN
OR MAYBE MADE SOME OTHER HUGE MISTAKE!

(They put the phones down and sing their internal thoughts.)

NATHAN
IT'S ALL STARTING TO
UNRAVEL

THE NEXT SOUND WE HEAR

WILL BE THE STRONGER
GAVEL!

RICHARD
JUST LAY LOW A FEW DAYS
LONGER
AND THEIR CASE WILL TURN TO
CRAP
THERE'S NO CHOICE. YOU MUST
BE
DON'T YOU FALL INSIDE
THEIR TRAP!

(They bring the phones back to their ears and sing to each other.)

NATHAN AND RICHARD
CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND THIS SITUATION?

NATHAN

I THINK I UNDERSTAND AND CLEARLY SEE!
THEY FOUND MY GLASSES
AND IT WON'T TAKE LONG
BEFORE THEY FIND ME!

RICHARD

JUST LAY LOW!

NATHAN

WE NEED A PLAN "B."

RICHARD

JUST LAY LOW!

NATHAN

JUST LAY LOW?

BOTH

JUST LAY LOW!

(They both hang up forcefully. Lights change to illuminate the Parole Board room as NATHAN takes his place.)

SCENE 12

(The Parole Board hearing room, 1958. NATHAN stands in front of the Parole Board. Music punctuates the scene.)

PAROLE BOARD ONE

All of the books that have been written about you go into considerable detail about the crime. But there's not a lot about your police interrogations. Not even in your book.

NATHAN

It didn't seem important.

PAROLE BOARD TWO

Not important? I suppose it's true that the Chicago police in 1924 were not what you would call the world's most thorough law-enforcement agency.

PAROLE BOARD ONE

Of course, they hadn't had much experience talking over sordid details like those –

PAROLE BOARD TWO

– With homicidal degenerates ...

NATHAN

(Interrupting.)

That's not how I would characterize it.

PAROLE BOARD ONE

Tell us about the police investigation ... how you were caught ...

NATHAN

After they found the glasses, the police wanted to see me. It was shocking how fast they found me ...

(Lights change ...)

SCENE 13

*(Nathan's bedroom, a few days later. NATHAN nervously waits.
Finally RICHARD calmly enters the room.)*

RICHARD

I got here as soon as I could. Tell me exactly what the cops said.

NATHAN

(Frantic.)

It was all about the frame hinges being rare. How only three people in the state have them. My show-off dad wanted me to have the latest thing. The cops traced them through my optometrist.

RICHARD

See what having "the best" gets you? And you said what?

NATHAN

I said "oh." Then they asked if I had lost them. And I said yes.

RICHARD

You said yes?

NATHAN

I had to.

RICHARD

And ...

NATHAN

And they're gonna pick me up tomorrow morning to identify them. If it wasn't for my dad's reputation they wouldn't be so accommodating. They must've wanted me to have time to get a lawyer.

RICHARD

(Coolly.)

You've got a lawyer — you've got me. I'll tell you what to say.

NATHAN

What can I say? They've got my glasses ...

RICHARD

The fact that they were there doesn't prove they have anything to do with the kid. You'll explain you were with your bird-watching class last Sunday and you must have dropped them then. It's a perfectly reasonable explanation.

NATHAN

What if they want to know where I was Wednesday night? My dad knows I wasn't home.

RICHARD

Nobody can be expected to rattle off exactly what they were doing on an ordinary weeknight. So don't offer the cops too much or it'll sound fake. Just pretend to keep trying to think. Remember, cops are dumber than dirt! And whatever you do, don't you mention me.

NATHAN

I'm scared shitless, Richard.

(Music begins as RICHARD sits NATHAN down.)

RICHARD

You're gonna be fine.

#17 I'M TRYING TO THINK

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I'll tell you precisely what to say when they stare you down with their big pasty faces ...

(RICHARD sings while coaching NATHAN.)

RICHARD

YES I REMEMBER THE NIGHT –

NATHAN

– THE NIGHT

RICHARD

LAST WEDNESDAY I WENT FOR A DRIVE

NATHAN

– FOR A DRIVE!

RICHARD

I STOPPED FOR A CHEAP LITTLE BITE –

NATHAN

– FOR A BITE

RICHARD

AND PICKED UP SOME GIRL IN SOME DIVE

NATHAN
— AND PICKED UP SOME GIRL IN SOME DIVE!?

RICHARD
YOU'RE TRYING TO THINK!

NATHAN
I'M TRYING TO THINK!

RICHARD
THEY'LL WANT THE DETAILS

NATHAN
YOU WANT THE DETAILS?

RICHARD
SHE WORE SOMETHING PINK —

NATHAN
SHE WORE SOMETHING PINK
AND HAD PAINTED NAILS!

RICHARD
That's good!
YOU'RE TRYING TO THINK ...

NATHAN
TRYING TO THINK!

RICHARD
TRYING TO THINK!

BOTH
TRYING TO THINK!

NATHAN
They'll wanna know about the girl.

RICHARD
Okay ... okay ... let me think ...

(He sings.)

NO, I DON'T REMEMBER HER FACE —

NATHAN

– I DON'T REMEMBER HER FACE!

RICHARD

AND SHE NEVER TOLD ME HER NAME!

NATHAN

– SHE NEVER TOLD ME HER NAME

RICHARD

I WISH I COULD HELP WITH THIS CASE –

NATHAN

– I WISH I COULD HELP WITH THIS CASE!

BOTH

BUT ALL OF THOSE GIRLS ARE THE SAME!

NATHAN

I'M TRYING TO THINK!

RICHARD

KEEP TRYING TO THINK!

AND DON'T ACT LIKE YOU'RE HOLDING SOMETHING BACK

YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO HIDE

YOU'RE NOT GONNA CRACK!

Now, the most important part, the cop'll probably say –

WERE YOU ALONE WITH THE GIRL? –

NATHAN

– WE WERE ALONE, SHE AND I

RICHARD

YOU'RE NOT ONE TO LIE OR PRETEND? –

NATHAN

– I'M NOT ONE TO LIE OR PRETEND!

RICHARD.

SO IS SHE YOUR SOLE ALIBI? –

NATHAN

– I GUESS SHE'S MY SOLE ALIBI!

BOTH
THE WRONG TYPE ON WHICH TO DEPEND!
BUT A GIRL THERE'S NO NEED TO DEFEND!

RICHARD
KEEP TRYING TO THINK!

(NATHAN starts to lose his concentration. RICHARD tries to remain patient.)

NATHAN
I REMEMBER ... THE NIGHT?

RICHARD
KEEP TRYING TO THINK!

NATHAN
DON'T REMEMBER ... HER NAME?

RICHARD
KEEP TRYING TO THINK!

NATHAN
NO, WE WERE ... ALONE?

BOTH
KEEP TRYING TO THINK!

NATHAN
KEEP TRYING TO THINK ...

(Music continues.)

Are you sure that I can do this?

RICHARD
Yes. Remember Nietzsche. You're superior to them all.

(RICHARD starts to leave. NATHAN attempts to stop him.)

NATHAN
I wish you could be there with me.

(RICHARD tries to be as tender to him as possible.)

RICHARD

I can't be connected to it. You'll be okay, Babe. You'll convince them. And meet me at Jackson Park when you're through.

(RICHARD exits. NATHAN nervously sings as a lighting transition suggests he is being questioned by the police under a harsh interrogation light.)

NATHAN

I REMEMBER THE NIGHT!
DON'T REMEMBER HER NAME!
NO, WE WERE ALONE!
I'M TRYING TO THINK ...
I'M TRYING TO THINK!

(Lights change. NATHAN speaks to the Parole Board.)

The next morning at the police station was the most ... I'd never gone through anything like it before ... But I got through it and needed to be with Richard more than ever ...

(Lights shift ...)

SCENE 14

(Jackson Park, the next afternoon. NATHAN, who is now much more relaxed, waits in the park. RICHARD arrives, barely hiding his nervousness. He approaches NATHAN.)

RICHARD

How did it go?

NATHAN

I had to come up with a version of the whole thing to tell my dad first. He wanted to know everything.

RICHARD

Did anyone follow you here?

NATHAN

I don't think so.

RICHARD

Tell me about the police.

NATHAN

I did exactly what you said. You were right. They believed me.

RICHARD

Or they just wanted you to think they did.

NATHAN

That's crazy. They let me go.

RICHARD

You didn't mention my name at all, did you?

NATHAN

It never came up. I told them I dropped the glasses when I was birdwatching.

(RICHARD anxiously looks around behind him.)

RICHARD

And you're sure they aren't trailing you?

NATHAN

Yes! Aren't you proud of me?

RICHARD

Yeah, sure I'm proud of you.

(NATHAN moves to touch him, RICHARD snaps. Enraged:)

Jesus! You and those stupid glasses! You ruined the whole thing, Nathan. You are not superior!

NATHAN

(Shocked.)

What do you mean? Yesterday, I thought everything was fine. Yesterday you were helping me ...

RICHARD

I had to protect myself. But, the police aren't gonna let up on you. I can't get into trouble, Nathan.

NATHAN

The papers say they're checking several leads.

(RICHARD, getting more and more angry and scared, grabs NATHAN by the collar and shakes him.)

RICHARD

Goddamn it, that's just cop bullshit. They have nothing except for your "fancy-rich-kid's-gotta-have-special-glasses" – five feet from the body! Your story'll only keep them off for a few days at most.

(He lets him go.)

NATHAN

(Frightened.)

If they suspected me I would be in jail this second.

RICHARD

Did they give you your glasses back?

NATHAN

No ... they said they needed them.

RICHARD

Then they still think they're evidence! You are so stupid! And not only because of the glasses, you must not have shoved the kid far enough up the pipe or he never would have been found!

NATHAN

(Exasperated.)

I did exactly what you told me to do!

RICHARD

You couldn't have!

(NATHAN desperately tries to calm him.)

NATHAN

There's nothing to worry about. Now let's go back to my house.

RICHARD

I'm not going to be within a million miles of you ever again.

NATHAN

What are you talking about? What about our contract?

RICHARD

(Furious.)

I couldn't have foreseen anything like this, Nathan. And I'm not going to have my law career ruined because of you. The cops are gonna start watching every move you make.

NATHAN

No they won't!

RICHARD

(Finally screaming.)

I can't take that chance. I didn't drop my glasses.

*(Richard pushes him violently to the ground and turns to leave.
Nathan yells to stop him.)*

NATHAN

Richard!

(RICHARD turns back to him.)

I'll go to the police!

RICHARD

(Mocking him.)

Right. You'll "go to the police."

(He starts to leave.)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I'm leaving and I'm never coming back.

NATHAN

How could you do this to me?

(RICHARD clenches his fist and moves in for a final threat, causing NATHAN to recoil in fear.)

RICHARD

Fucking idiot.

(RICHARD exits. Music begins. NATHAN gets up, brushes himself off, and sings.)

#18 REPRISE: WAY TOO FAR

NATHAN

HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?
IS SOMETHING WRONG INSIDE ME?
HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO RUN AWAY
OR LET MY CONSCIENCE GUIDE ME

(Lights change. NATHAN faces the Parole Board.)

I was serious. I went straight to the cops. I knew Richard would think I was a lowlife, a snitch ... a rat. But I didn't care. The next time I saw him was at the police station. I sat there watching as they led him into the holding room with me ...

(Lights shift ...)

THIS MUSICAL IS NOT OVER!

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THRILL ME

THE LEOPOLD & LOEB STORY

BOOK, MUSIC & LYRICS BY
STEPHEN DOLGINOFF

SCORE SAMPLE

BROADWAY

— **LICENSING** —

06/16/21

Broadway Licensing Perusal

NOT FOR PRODUCTION

Why

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Dolginoff

UNDERScore Cue: NATHAN: What is it you want?

Ballad (Flow in 2) $\text{♩} = 74$

Nathan

1

PAROLE: What you've never told us,
we want to know why. I'm sor - ry if I stum - ble... though I'm

NATHAN: Why....

p

(Vamp/ad-lib) Fm in Fm in Cm in

(8vb sustain notes)

6

tense. I'll try to give you what you're af - ter, tell you

Fm in Eb Fm in Eb

10

more. I went a-long with Rich - ard. That's the rea - son

Fm in Cm in Fm in Cm9 Cm in Fm in

14

why they put me here in nine - teen twen - ty four. It was a

Bb Fm in Bb Fm in

18

chi - ld who killed a chi - ld back then. An old man still pays for that

mf

Bb Fmin Bb Fmin

21

crime. And I ask to be set free now. Won't you try to

mp

Eb Fmin Cmin Fmin

25

see that no one would be hurt af - ter all this time? As I've

Eb/Bb Fmin Bb Fmin

29

said so of - ten be - fore! But you've asked a sim - ple

mf *cresc.* *f* *p*

Eb C Fmin

A TEMPO

33

ques - tion and I've told you why. It was - n't on a

Cmin Fmin Bb Fmin

37

dare or on a whim. It's hard to comp - re - hend now that the

Eb Fmin Cmin

41

rea - son why is simp - ly that I went a - long with

Rubato

Fmin Eb Fmin Bb Eb

45

A Tempo

him. NATHAN: Richard and I were very close from the beginning.

pp

Fmin

(UNDERScore MONOLOGUE)

3

Everybody Wants Richard

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Dolginoff

Underscore Cue: RICHARD: The others aren't so fucking annoying!

Driving and Bright ♩ = 165

Nathan

Song Cue: RICHARD: We have something different? Tell me, who can you have

p (Vamp) *mp*

B Em in

con - ver - sa - tions with? Share your twist - ed ob - ser - va - tions with? Who else has a

D Em in

rough - ly sim - i - lar view, if not me? You've played a - round with

A B Em in

poco accel.

♩ = 170

13

lots of los - ers who end - ed up as cheats and us - ers, but who's been on the

D Em in

17

side - lines wait - ing for you, if not me? Oh, I've come to

A B Em in D

21

find ev - 'ry - bod - y wants Rich - ard. But they don't

Em in A Em in D

25

know your mind the way that I do. I see straight

Em in A B Em in D Em in D

29

through an - y - one who needs Rich - ard. They make me

Em in A Em in D Em in D

33

sick. They're good for just a kick, they won't stick the way that I

Em in Em in/A Em in D B rit.

37 RICHARD: Have you got a light? *A TEMPO*

do. When you cut off all our con - tact, how it hurt!

Em in A/D

42

But I know you like to make me feel like dirt.

B Em in A

Nothing Like A Fire

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Dolginoff

UNDERScore CUE: RICHARD: Relax Nathan.

Romantic Ballad (Flow in 2) $\text{♩} = 62$

Richard

NATHAN: It's something...ETC...
RICHARD:....Fuck you back!

(UNDERScore DIALOGUE/AD LIB)

(Cue for song intro bar 5:
NATHAN: Please touch me.)

There's

nothinglike a warm, ro-man-tic fi - re. To put me in the prop-er frame of

mind. There's no - thing like a roar - ing, rag - ing

fi - re to help me un - wind. There's no-thing like the

A little brighter (but not faster)

(occasional)
(Vamp)

Em in G6 A Em in G6
F#m in 7 G Em in 7
A D G Em in

22

sound of crack - ling em - bers to calm me when my

G6 A Em in

26

pulse be - gins to race. There's no - thing like the

G6 F#m in 7 G

30

glow of sizz - 'ling em - bers to bright - en your face.

Em in 7 A D

NATHAN: ...the fire brigade
could be here any minute.

RICHARD: You're the lookout, tell me
if you see anything big and red coming!

34

(UNDERScore DIALOGUE) (Fill Last time only:) Feel the heat in - ten -

G D G Em in *mp*

38

si - fy, watch the sparks be - gin to fly. Watch the smoke fill

G Emin A Bmin

42

Richard

42 up the sky. Straight to the stars! Nathan There's

Straight to the stars!

G A

46

46 no - thing like the sight of some - thing burn - ing to

Some - thing burn - ing

p Emin G6 A

10

Thrill Me

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Dolginoff

UNDERSCORE CUE: RICHARD: Let's look at all this junk.

Slow and Free (Rubato) ♩ = 90

1

UNDERSCORE (Very slow and free, 8va, etc)

CUE TO GO TO BAR 3:
RICHARD: A Bunch of Gold
Coins...

pp

Fm (vamp) Em Cdim/E♭ Dm B♭m/D♭

Up Tempo (and forceful) ♩ = 165

3

RICHARD: ... And a big stamp collection ... I think the combination is ... John's Birthday.

p

Nathan

7

Don't bore me with de - tails. They'll ne - ver im - press me.

mf

Fm in E♭ D♭ Csus4

11

Start pay - ing at - ten - tion, don't try to fin - esse me.

Fm in Eb Db C

15

Thrill me. Thrill me.

Fm in Db C Dm C/E Fm in

19

RICHARD: Thrill yourself. Don't for - get what you prom - ised on pa -

Eb *mf* Fm in

21

per. What you'd do when we fin - ished a cap - er. Ev - 'ry

Bb Fm in/Db C

24

time I de-mand what's re-qui - red, you com - plain that you're simp - ly too

Fm in B \flat E \flat E \flat /F

27

ti - red. Thrill me! Don't toy with dis - trac - tions. Why fuel my frus -

C D \flat C Fm in E \flat D \flat

31

tra - tion? You're try - ing to cheat me. What's your ex - plan -

C Fm in E \flat D \flat

35

a - tion? Thrill me!

C Fm in D \flat C Dm C/E

21

Life Plus 99 Years

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Dolginoff

CUE FOR UNDERSCORE: NATHAN: I'm a Superior Human Being. RICHARD: What?

NATHAN: I'm superior to you. After all, I stayed one step ahead of you.
 RICHARD: What do you mean "ahead"? You followed me ... all the way here.
 NATHAN: Is that what you think? It's funny how the whole world keeps saying the murder had no reason.
 Because it did have a reason. For me to have you all to myself. Even in prison. You know that's what I've always wanted.

Slow ♩ = 125

RICHARD: But, you dropped your glasses ... otherwise we never would have ...
 NATHAN: Don't you get it? I dropped them on purpose.
 RICHARD: You wanted to get caught?!

p Dm in (Vamp/underscore) A

CUE FOR SONG: NATHAN Yes.

Moderate ♩ = 180

Nathan

You thought that you used me. And thought you con -
 fused me. So I did what was - n't ex - pect - ed you

A *mp* Dm in C/D Dm in/Bb Gm in

17

nev - er sus - pect - ed and now, we'll be to - ge - ther for

B \flat F/D A *mf* Gm in *poco rit.*

23

life plus nine - ty nine years! I'll keep you fo - cused.

Dm in B \flat C F Dm in

p.

TEMPO

29

No out - side for - ces. For life plus nine - ty nine

B \flat Dm in Gm in C

p.

35

years. Who's in con - trol now? Who's got re - sour - ces

F Dm in B \flat

p.

40

once the smoke clears? Not for - ev - er, but for life plus

C Dm/B \flat C

46

nine - ty nine years! Life plus nine - ty nine years!

Dm in C Dm in

RICHARD: But...I talked you out of your deal.
 NATHAN: Exactly like I knew you would.
 RICHARD: What if we got the death penalty?

Richard

52

NATHAN: As long as we were together.
 RICHARD: This is crazy. You fin - al - ly topped
 NATHAN: Am I scaring you?
 RICHARD: You son of a bitch ...

p (Ad-lib/VAMP) *mf* Emin

A

58

me. You fin - al - ly stopped me. And

D/E *cresc.* *f*

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