

SHOW YOUR OWN

An Arguable Novel
and
a Screenplay

BY
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FOREWORD

This book involves a screenplay and its depiction of manic-depressive behavior. The descriptions of mood and emotion are intended to be realistic, but much of the material is written to be funny. The volume begins with the transcription of several tape-recorded conversations. All of these discussions are orchestrated by Moguloid, a film maker who hopes to produce a movie based on the script. He confers with a psychiatrist as well as colleagues and friends of John, the screenplay's author, in an endeavor to enhance the work and to widen its potential audience. In the latter tapes, John reluctantly joins the discussion. He thereafter reviews the transcriptions and produces a revised version of the play that is printed at the end of this book.

The transcriber of the tapes intersperses passages from the original screenplay in the transcriptions to facilitate an understanding of the conversations. It is unnecessary to keep track of all of the characters while reading the screenplay segments. It suffices to remember that the lead is a law teacher who is also named John, that he is married to Martha, and that his best friends are his colleagues Liam and Frankie.

The discussion participants should not be difficult to keep straight. Although their efforts provide background concerning John and the process through which his script was written, they are not trying to write a novel. Nonetheless, their conversations and the screenplay passages arguably comprise one.

Finally, the revised script could provide basis for a comic but realistic motion picture involving a manic-depressive sine wave. Somebody ought to lend Moguloid a hand.

TAPE 1

Transcribe everything you hear, this crap included. There'll be a number of tapes. All of them will concern John's screenplay in one way or another. This one contains my conversation with two of his close friends. Since you're familiar with John's work, I'd like you to print passages from the script in the transcript when they'd help someone follow the discussion. (pause) Try to work out a format that might keep things straight. And thanks for helping me out.

(The recorder is switched off. It is turned on again. There is conversation among the previous speaker and two others. The one whose instructions were just transcribed will be called Moguloid. The others will be referred to as Teacher and Friend.)

MOGULOID: Okay, we're all ready to go. One of these guys teaches English literature. The other's been John's friend since grammar school. (pause) I'll ask them to identify their voices.

TEACHER: I'm the dumb shit who teaches English.

FRIEND: And I've been John's friend since kindergarten.

MOGULOID: Let's talk about a couple of things. First, do you think there's too much booze in the story?

TEACHER: Why should that matter?

MOGULOID: I've got to arrange for financing, so I have to be sensitive to things that might put people off.

FRIEND: I never thought the script was a booze story.

TEACHER: I'll agree with that. Except for his nap in the flower bed, there isn't that much intoxication. Now, he drinks, but he doesn't slur, and he doesn't stumble. And the story's upbeat.

MOGULOID: I agree, but you still have to be careful.

TEACHER: I think teetotalers would like the opening.

(A screenplay segment follows. All such insertions will be made in **bold** type.)

UPTOWN STREET - DAYBREAK (1)

Day is breaking in a tree-lined neighborhood of well-kept Victorian homes. Only a few activities have begun: an extremely attractive **FEMALE JOGGER** runs toward the camera along a sidewalk; a **MIDDLE-AGED LADY** walks from her home to retrieve a newspaper lying on her driveway and waves to an **ELDERLY NEIGHBOR** who is working in his garden; and a kindly fifty-year-old **MAN** and his **FEMALE DOBERMAN** then appear. At that point, the block ahead of the gentleman is shown from his point of view. This angle reveals a fairly large but **UNRECOGNIZABLE OBJECT** in the flower bed of a house located on the far corner of the block. Another angle shows that the gentleman is concerned with what he has seen. He walks faster, and his dog hurries ahead of him. When the dog nears the flower bed, she rushes forward and begins to growl as she examines the previously unrecognized object: a **MAN** lying face down next to a garden bench. The man begins to stir, and he rolls over and rubs his eyes. A low angle **CLOSE SHOT** of the menacing Doberman is followed immediately by a **CLOSE SHOT** of the astonished flower bed occupant, **JOHN**, a very rumpled but respectably dressed man between 35 and 40 years of age. John sees the gentleman and, appearing slightly relieved, pulls himself to a sitting position. The gentleman evidences concern as he looks John over and speaks.

GENTLEMAN

(with sincerity)

I'm sorry I disturbed you, but I needed to see if you were hurt.

Both John's expression and voice show that he appreciates the gentleman's kindness. As he gathers himself and manages to

rise, he speaks.

JOHN

(with a slight smile)

I think all the injuries were self-inflicted.

The gentleman laughs. John cautiously reaches to pet the dog. She growls. John quickly draws back his hand. The gentleman calls his dog to his side. John turns his attention from the dog to the gentleman.

JOHN (cont'd)

(sheepishly)

Do we know each other?

GENTLEMAN

(upon reflection)

No. I don't think we've ever met.

John appears relieved. He smiles slightly as he continues somewhat awkwardly.

JOHN

I hope you'll understand if I don't introduce myself.

The gentleman responds with a laugh, and then he pats John on the shoulder. . . .

John, the gentleman, and the Doberman begin to walk down the street the gentleman has been traveling. When they reach the street corner, John stops and extends his hand. The gentleman smiles and does likewise. After they shake hands, John turns and walks down the street intersecting the street where the flower bed is situated. After walking perhaps thirty feet, John turns and sees that the gentleman is still looking his way. John waves, the gentleman smiles, and he and his dog move

out of view. John shakes his head as he laughs at himself and **RETRACES HIS STEPS** to the side door of the house with the flower bed. **CREDITS BEGIN** as he removes a key from his pocket and enters his own home.

INTERIOR OF JOHN'S HOUSE - SEVERAL ROOMS (2)

John locks the door, removes his shoes, and makes his way to a pleasant **KITCHEN**. He is greeted by an appealing **MALE MUTT** half the size of the Doberman. The dog jumps up to be petted and lets out an affectionate whine. John grimaces and quickly stoops to pet the mutt with one hand while he closes its mouth with the other. After the animal has been quieted, John moves to a kitchen counter and plugs in an electric percolator. The mutt sniffs enthusiastically at the legs of John's pants.

.....

John walks over to an adjoining **LAUNDRY AREA**. The dog follows him and continues to show interest in the pants. John laboriously undresses to his shorts. He tosses his socks into a washing machine and then carefully examines his slacks and shirt. The slacks pass muster, and they are tossed in with the socks. The front of the shirt is **VISIBLY MOIST**. John, as the dog watches, picks up a bottle of spray-on detergent and gives the soiled area several careful shots. He then reaches into the washer and pulls out an armful of its unwashed contents. He puts the soiled shirt deep into the washer and covers it with the clothes he has removed. At this point, the **DOG WHINES** as he **STANDS** on his hind legs and puts his front paws up on the washing machine. John, whose agony is still obvious, speaks to the animal as he closes the washer.

JOHN

(smiling slightly)

I don't think she's your type.

John removes a pair of pajama pants from a laundry basket, slips them over his shorts, and walks into an attractive DEN that is beginning to be lit by the sun. He collapses onto a sofa and closes his eyes. . . .

The den is now FULLY LIT. John is asleep on the sofa. His wife MARTHA, who is attractive and is no older than John, walks into the room. She is tastefully attired so that she looks ready for work at a white-collar job. She stops and somewhat critically assesses her spouse. CREDITS CONCLUDE. John, responding to her footsteps, opens his eyes and abruptly sits up. He smiles as he tries to contain his sheepishness.

JOHN (cont'd)

Hi.

MARTHA

(firmly)

What time did you get in?

JOHN

(somewhat hesitantly)

I'm not sure.

MARTHA

(with moderate disgust)

I know it was after midnight.

John relaxes.

JOHN

(smiling)

I'm sure you're right.

Martha also smiles slightly, and a somewhat guarded affection for her husband begins to show. . . .

MOGULOID: Did John ever get pissed on by a dog?

FRIEND: Not that I know of. He was a lawn ornament a time or two in college.

TEACHER: I wouldn't leave any doubt about the flower bed. I'd have a male dog lift his leg, but I'd let you professionals decide about showing the piss.

FRIEND: You lose a good line if the dog's male. John tells the mutt the female's not his type.

TEACHER: Shit, these are New Orleans dogs. Just change the pronoun.

(Moguloid and Friend enjoy the quip.)

MOGULOID: John was afraid people would think the play was a booze story. He even wrote an alternative opening.

FRIEND: I remember. He wanted to de-emphasize booze so he began the story in a bar.

ALTERNATIVE BEGINNING (TO PRECEDE SCENES 1 AND 2)

BAR WITH POOL TABLE - NIGHT (A-1)

The bar is upscale and attractive in appearance. The average age of all patrons is about thirty, and the males outnumber the females at least two to one. Some of the guys are watching an eight ball game that involves two extremely attractive ladies, **TWENTYISH** and **THIRTYISH**. The younger girl is wearing tight jeans and a tank top. Her opponent is dressed in well-tailored slacks and a knit top or sweater. After the scene is established, **JOHN** and **FRANKIE** enter the bar. John is aged between thirty-five and forty, and Frankie appears about ten years his senior. They are wearing tasteful but conservative sport clothes. John has on a blazer. At first, he doesn't appear

particularly happy to be in the establishment. However, as he and Frankie turn their attention to the game, his spirits seem to improve. . . .

The girls shoot lousy pool. When the younger one manages to sink a ball, she and her MALE COMPANION exchange hugs and kisses to celebrate her accomplishment. The older girl, to the interest of many patrons, has no such counterpart to share her occasional successes.

FRANKIE

(to John)

That girl needs a coach.

JOHN

You're the one whose wife's left. Offer to help her out.

FRANKIE

I'm still awkward with this stuff. Come give me a hand.

JOHN

(smiling)

If I'm gonna pimp, I wanta be compensated.

(a beat)

Go get us a drink.

Frankie nods and heads to the bar. John watches as Thirtyish misses a particularly easy shot and cannot hide her frustration. John seizes the moment. He walks to her, smiles, and extends his hand. She somewhat hesitantly extends her own hand, and as they shake, John speaks.

JOHN (cont'd)

Hi. My name's John Gilbey. My friend
(gesturing to the bar)

and I think we could help you win.

THIRTYISH

(with a little frustration)

My name's Carrie, but how can I win? I've got five balls to go, and she's only got two.

John surveys the table and responds.

JOHN

I doubt she'll make any of the shots she's got now, and if she misses the one she's lining up, you'll be set

(gesturing to table)

to make the red or the green ball.

THIRTYISH

(almost with surprise)

I think you know what you're doing.

Frankie approaches John and Thirtyish.

JOHN

(smiling)

Sometimes. But my friend's a lot better at pool. Here he is now.

John takes his drink from Frankie and performs introductions.

.....

A very handsome **METICULOUSLY DRESSED MALE** in his early thirties, who has been visible in the background among the onlookers, moves a few feet to stand close to John. John keeps his attention on the game. When Thirtyish misses a shot, the meticulous one speaks.

METICULOUS

Guys have been after her all night. What'd you say?

JOHN

(after a short silence)

Nothing much.

John's expression indicates that he doesn't want to talk.

METICULOUS

Come on.

JOHN

I said we could help her out.

METICULOUS

You don't expect me to believe that?

John's expression suggests that he might tell Meticulous what to do with his beliefs. John then shows a slight smile. He looks Meticulous in the eye and speaks with apparent seriousness.

JOHN

I told her that my friend coached Tom Cruise in "The Color of Money."

Meticulous laughs excessively. John turns his attention to the pool game and sees an errant shot by Twentyish sink the eight ball while she has remaining balls on the table. Thirtyish jumps with excitement and hugs Frankie appreciatively. Twentyish has difficulty hiding her disappointment. Her companion evidences some resentment. John walks over to the pool table to talk to the victors.

....

John heads toward a pay phone located near the exit door. Meticulous follows him. Meticulous slows as he approaches John, who is now standing at the phone. Meticulous continues past John and pauses at the door. As he pushes the door open, he turns to John and speaks.

METICULOUS

I'm leaving if you need a ride.

John looks up, turns toward Meticulous, and recognizes him. John declines.

JOHN

No.

(a beat)

Thanks.

METICULOUS

It's no trouble.

John starts to say no again but instead grimaces as he puts his hand to his abdomen. He then continues.

JOHN

(reluctantly)

Well, okay.

PARKING LOT - NIGHT (A-2)

JOHN and METICULOUS approach a car with a distinctive silhouette. A PEUGEOT would do very nicely. Meticulous walks to the driver's side, unlocks the door, and gets in. The sound of a power lock is heard. John opens his door and takes a seat. Both doors are closed. John then speaks.

JOHN

I'm sitting on somebody's coat.

Meticulous begins to chuckle.

METICULOUS

It's not a coat. It's a fleece, a seat cover.

John's voice gives a hint of trepidation.

JOHN

Oh . . .

**INTERIOR OF METICULOUS' CAR / VIEWS FROM
CAR DURING RIDE THROUGH CITY - NIGHT (A-3)**

**The car is traveling no more than 20 miles per hour. There is
silence for nearly five seconds before METICULOUS begins
conversation with JOHN.**

. . . .

John appears to be in pain. He looks at Meticulous.

JOHN

(with exasperation)

**Can't you drive any faster? I've gotta get to a
bathroom!**

**Meticulous puts his right HAND on John's CROTCH as he
speaks.**

METICULOUS

You can use the bathroom at my house.

**John is flabbergasted. He quickly removes Meticulous' hand
with his own left.**

JOHN

Stop the g'damn car.

Meticulous reaches for the crotch again. John slips his left arm around Meticulous' right arm to get a wrist lock. Meticulous' expression shows discomfort, but he still doesn't stop the car. John squeezes hard. Meticulous SLAMS on the brakes. John is thrown forward, and he attempts to shield his head as it strikes the dashboard with a THUD. John quickly opens the door and steps onto the street. As he gets out of the vehicle, Meticulous exclaims loudly in frustration and disgust.

METICULOUS

God!

Meticulous steps on the gas while John tries to maintain his balance by grabbing the car's open door. He starts to fall as the car squeals away. He stumbles for a few steps and lands on the nearby lawn. Meticulous' car door is slammed, and his car is shown clearly as he drives away. John lies still.

TEACHER: I really like the alternative opening. John wanted a nonalcoholic explanation for the flower bedding.

MOGULOID: Did he think gays might be offended?

FRIEND: He never showed anybody these scenes when he was trying to sell the script. He knew that people might be turned off by the crotch scene, and he couldn't ever decide what to do with Meticulous.

MOGULOID: What was he thinking?

FRIEND: That his character wouldn't have a clue as to how he landed in the bushes. But later on, he'd see Meticulous' car and have his memory jogged.

MOGULOID: I know a Peugeot's appearance is distinctive, but you can't expect the audience to recognize a car it's only seen once.

FRIEND: I'm not sure what John had in mind. I think he was

going to have his character see another Peugeot. That way he could say the car reminded him of something. Sometime after that, he could find the actual car and look at the interior.

TEACHER: (with enthusiasm) I remember him telling me that, too. He said there'd be a fleece on the driver's seat but not on the passenger's.

MOGULOID: I think I know what's coming, but the script will need adjustment if the joke's going to work.

FRIEND: I believe I've got it. John told Meticulous he needed a bathroom, and Meticulous screams "God!" as John dives out of the car.

MOGULOID: I don't think the audience would link the missing seat cover and John's diarrhea.

FRIEND: (laughing) Our boy wasn't sure either. He thought his character might try to reconstruct the missing evening. There'd be a vague recollection about a Peugeot and a sheep.

TEACHER: I think I was with you when John said that. He had another idea. He thought you could set things up in the scenes with the doctor. The doctor asks what's happening and whether anything's different. John thought the actor might respond with something like, "Well, I'm sure it's insignificant, but I'm having this dream where I shit on a sheep."

MOGULOID: (chuckling) I don't mind it, but scatology puts some people off. I think John was probably right to keep it like it is.

TEACHER: I don't believe anyone would be that bothered. It's funny. You could show a fleece on the driver's seat and then the passenger's seat without one. John can get tickled and say something like, "Oh, thank heaven. It wasn't a sheep. It was only a Peugeot."

MOGULOID: (laughing) If you can lay your hands on a few million dollars, we'll put in all the scat you want. But for now,

I don't want anyone saying the story's about a drunken professor who shits in his pants.