

ARTHUR: Lady's always out and about early. She's an early riser.
 LADY: I got a Big Book meetin'. Down at the Rec Room.
 RANDY: You doing the meetings?
 LADY: What's that?
 RANDY: You're still going to your meetings?
 LADY: Oh, sure. Every day.
 RANDY: How many days sober?
 LADY: What's that?
 RANDY: How many days do you have sober?
 LADY: Just today.
 ARTHUR: Try me tomorrow. I should be open tomorrow.
 LADY: You're fuckin' with my routine.
 ARTHUR: Try me tomorrow.
 LADY: Arthur, you don't look good. What's the matter?
 ARTHUR: I haven't had any coffee.
 LADY: That's a bullshit answer.
 ARTHUR: It's a tough day.
 LADY: That may be, but don't lose your authenticity, for God's sake.
 ARTHUR: Somebody broke in.
 LADY (*Entirely sincere*): Aww. Good for you, sweetheart. Congratulations.

(Lady exits. Silence.)

RANDY: So no, James won't go to the Blackhawks game with me.
 ARTHUR: That's too bad.

(Silence. James reenters, distributes coffee, cigs.)

JAMES: I think it froze, just crossing the street.
 RANDY (*Covering*): You talking about the coffee or your pecker?

(She laughs, too loud.)

JAMES: Wow. Jesus. Are you ready to go?
 RANDY: Yeah.
 JAMES: Arthur. Call us if you have any thoughts.

(Randy takes a card from her pocket, gives it to Arthur.)

RANDY: There's my cell. Give it a ring.

(Beat.)

Maybe you just want to talk.

(Randy and James exit.)

Arthur looks after them, thinks. He locks the door, turns off lights. He studies Randy's card, tucks it behind the phone on the wall. He takes a cookie tin from under the counter, opens it, rolls a joint from the contents inside. He lights the joint, sits in his darkened shop.

Lights shift.)

Start

ARTHUR: My parents. John and Marie.
 They met in a refugee camp, end of the war.
 My dad, John. He was in the Polish army, and he . . . um, he spent most of the war in a . . . as a POW.
 My mom was shell-shocked. She must've seen some . . . she had to see some just . . . Christ, fifteen years old. White Russian farm girl.
 They came here . . . '49, straight to Jefferson Park.
 'Cause of Uncle Wit and Aunt Irene. My parents didn't have any money, couldn't speak the language. Mom was pregnant with me. Borrowed from their brothers and sisters to make a down payment on the shop. They opened in 1950. Year I was born.
 Superior Donuts.

Uncle Wit wanted him to call it Przybyszewski Paczki. Dad said Superior was easier to remember and sounds a little like Przybyszewski. And the sign makers charged by the letter. The old man was tight, like all those people, understandably tight.

I asked him, "Pop, why'd you open the store in Uptown? Why not Jeff Park?" He said there were too many Polish bakeries on the Northwest side, and since Uptown was already on the way down they got a good price.

I don't believe it. I think he liked taking the bus.

Weird.

But I think the bus gave the old man a sense of . . . industry.

Remember him?

I still see him, bundled up. Stepping out of the house, bitter morning, still dark outside. Hunkered against the wind. Clomping down the icy sidewalk to catch the bus.

(A bang on the door.)

End

I'm closed.

FRANCO *(Offstage)*: You're closed.

(Arthur says nothing.)

I'm here about the job.

(Arthur does not respond.)

Hello?

ARTHUR: I'm closed.

FRANCO *(Offstage)*: Why?

ARTHUR: Chemical spill. Very dangerous. Haz-mat team's on the way. Come back tomorrow.

(Long pause. Another bang on the door.)

I'm closed.

FRANCO *(Offstage)*: Haz-mat team. You called about a chemical spill?

(Arthur pinches out his joint, carelessly waves away smoke. He unlocks and opens the door. Franco Wicks, backpack on his shoulder, smiles at Arthur.)

Hey, good-lookin'.

ARTHUR: I'm closed.

FRANCO: I'm here about the job.

(Beat.)

You got an opening.

(Arthur studies Franco.)

What do you do?

ARTHUR: I run a donut shop.

FRANCO: I can do that. *(Enters)* Is it hard?

ARTHUR: No harder than anything else.

FRANCO: How hard is anything else?

(Arthur turns on the light to get a better look at Franco, who takes in the damage.)

Someone fucked up your donut shop.

(Beat.)

I've got work experience. School library, at Truman. I shelve books.