

Murray Mednick

Keystone's

The

Hawk

An Improvisational Play

by

Murray Mednick

and

Tony Barsha

Photographs by Ralph Gibson

Designed by Quentin Fiore

The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.

Indianapolis and New York

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THE HAWK was first produced at Theatre Genesis,
St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, on Friday, Octo-
ber 13, 1967. The cast was as follows:

The Chinese Opium Smoker Ching Yeh
The Hawk Tony Serchio
The Double Lee Kissman
The First Victim Sally Sommer
The Second Victim O-Lan Johnson
The Inspector Walter Hadler
The Third Victim Scarlett Johnson
The Fourth Victim Barbara Young
The Dealer Walter Hadler

THE HAWK was subsequently produced by James
Walsh and Dina and Alexander E. Racolin at The
Actor's Playhouse on April 17, 1968 with the same
cast. Both productions were directed by Tony Barsha.
Music was composed by Eddie Hicks.



Introduction

The Hawk is not like other plays. In its very genesis it represents a radical break with the tradition of Western drama, which from earliest times has been primarily a literary form: first someone wrote the play, and then it was realized by actors. *The Hawk* happened the other way around: it was brought into being by the actors and only subsequently written down. It is primarily a theatrical object, in short, and gains its literary existence after the fact, with its publication in this book.

Let me be more specific. *The Hawk* began with an impressionistic scenario (less than two pages, I think) by Murray Mednick. Then Mednick, a playwright, Tony Barsha, a director, Eddie Hicks, a musician, and nine actors spent two months in the summer of 1967 at the Keystone Dairy Farm in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, and together they made the scenario into the play. Its authorship is credited to Mednick and Barsha, but in fact most of the lines were improvised by the actors. The characters, their relationships, the events and very words of the play were formed by and of the people who were to play it. Mednick as writer focused on the language, Barsha as director on the staging, and together, in 24-hour-a-day interaction with the players, they found and refined the emerging formal scheme and structure. For all its initial freedom, the work was exactly disciplined. By the time it reached performance, *The Hawk* was almost entirely set, with only a few openings left for improvisation.

This play is one of the first published examples of a widespread and dynamic new impulse in the vanguard theatre

of this country. The technique of improvisation is only part of it. Improvisational theatre had its latest vogue in the early 1960's, when the Second City players came from Chicago to Broadway and then settled down Off-Broadway, where *The Premise* had already run through several editions. Despite the brilliance of individual performers, both were limited in ambition, doing tricks and playing games within the revue form. Eventually the possibilities wore thin and the revue improvisers faded away.

Now improvisation is reappearing in a new context, as part of an effort toward genuinely communal theatre work. Necessity mothered a breakthrough when the Living Theatre, exiled in Europe, found itself living for the first time as a coherent community of artists and began to derive the work from that experience of community. Their first group product was *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces*, an anthology of exercises and experiments, made in Paris in 1964. The giant step was *Frankenstein*, premiered in Venice in 1965, which was developed from scratch by the entire Living Theatre company, with Judith Malina acting as director and Julian Beck making key choices of design and scenario. *Frankenstein* is a monumental achievement, its consequences incalculable. The Living Theatre went on to de Brecht's *Antigone* without a director, the staging created by the community; and their new work, *Paradise Now*, is communal all the way.

The new impulse is affecting others. The Open Theatre, directed by Joseph Chaikin, has made a new full-evening work, *The Serpent*, deriving its text from the Bible, and conceived not as a drama but as an ensemble performance piece. The Performance Group, formed by Richard Schechner in a garage in lower Manhattan, did an "environmental" production called *Dionysus in 69*, based on Euripides' *The Bacchae* but developing its staging and much of its text in

group workshops exploring interactions among the individual performers. And other such enterprises are appearing fast.

The Hawk will stand as a pioneering use of the communal/improvisational concept to create a thematically and formally coherent fictional drama; and its concise ritualistic structure is a step forward on yet another common front. For, in addition to its peculiar and significant methodology, *The Hawk* is a fine play and functions as well in the ordinary terms: the characters are exotic but sympathetic, their predicaments absorbing, the action provocative in its ambiguity, the lines sharply witty and revealing. Seeing the play in performance was a brilliantly entertaining and deeply exciting experience, at the very least a major event of its season.

To those considering *The Hawk* for production, I would suggest bearing its particular nature in mind. The implication of the method is humanist: the play is for the actors. There's no reason not to cast and produce *The Hawk* like any other play—and good reason to do so. But another possibility might be more interesting: you might take only the frame as given and reopen the seven improvisations, regarding the printed versions only as examples, not casting to type but reimprovising according to your own cast and your own life-style. That would be how to make *The Hawk* your own play and bring life to your stage like maybe never before. *The Hawk* isn't about dope or hipsters or hawks, after all, it's about people.

Michael Smith
Sundance
June 21, 1968

The Hawk

Characters:

THE HAWK

THE DOUBLE

THE FOUR VICTIMS

THE INSPECTOR/DEALER

and

A CHINESE OPIUM SMOKER

Scene:

The stage is bare except for three chairs, center stage, facing the audience, and a single chair, different from the others, placed at an angle, stage left. No props are used.

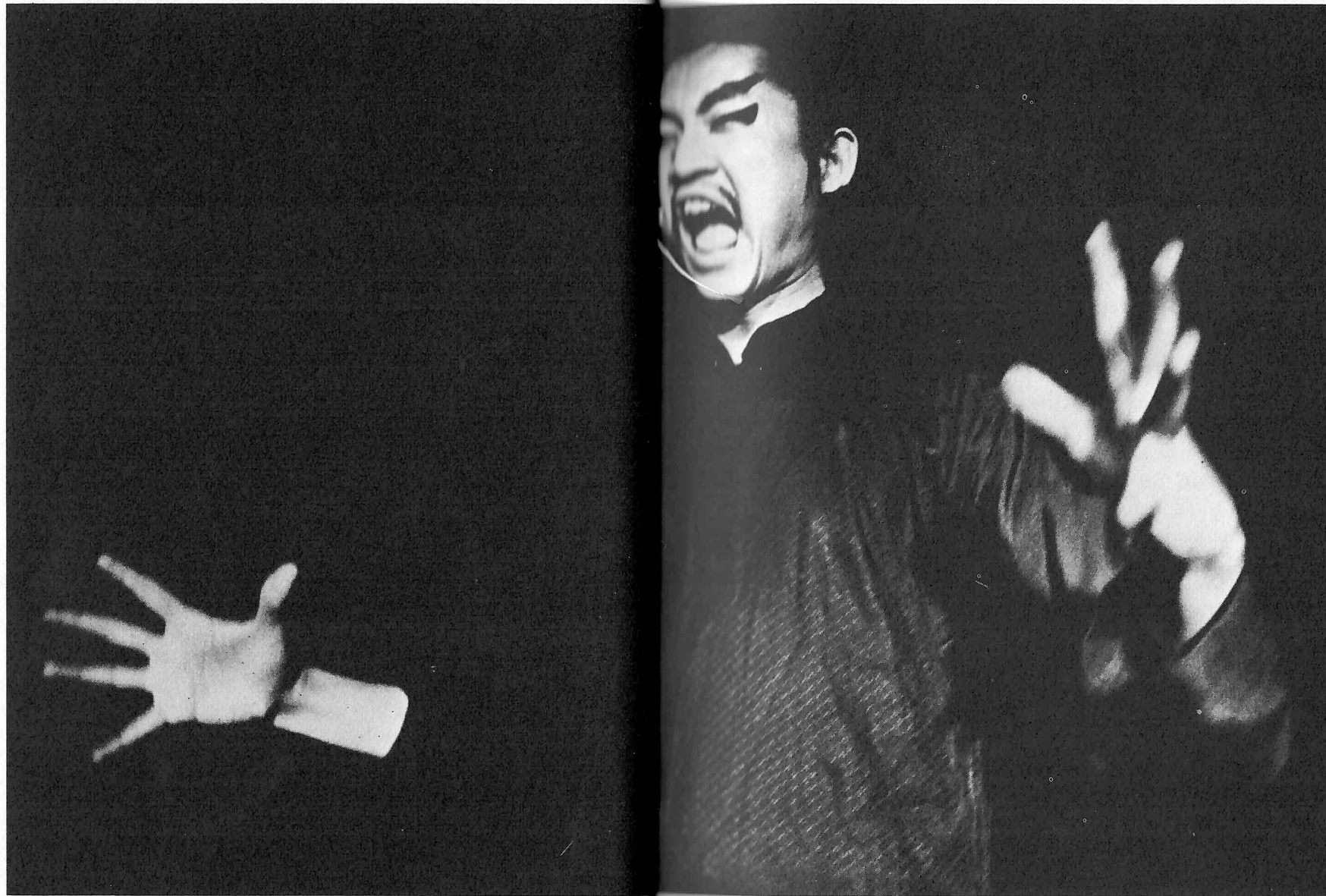
Prologue

THE CHINESE OPIUM SMOKER enters in the traditional Chinese opium smoker's robe. He goes to downstage center, holds, then begins a sound and movement representation of fire. He builds this to a peak, shouts: "FIRE!", then moves to stage left and addresses the audience:

Fire is reality. It starts with a tiny spark and moves through spontaneous combustion from one layer to another. And the color of fire changes from red, to orange, to yellow, and, as the temperature rises, it changes to blue—yes, blue—and from blue the fire rushes to white heat. Fire then ceases to be real. Fire is but the extension of the object which is burning.

He returns to center stage.

I am the extension of the object which is burning! I am the Almighty Fire God! The Powerful Fire God! The Divine Fire God! Ra, ra, ra! Yes! I am the Powerful Fire God! Ra, ra, ra! Get the fuck out of here, you Water God! You get the fuck out of here! Ra, ra, ra! Let me tell you the story of these ra, ra, ra birds that came to the window of my palace. They want to get high. They want to be divine. Then one day along comes this ra, ra, ra hawk! This ra, ra, ra ridiculous hawk! And he stole the fire from me and gave it to the birds! And the birds all get high, and they all get hot, and they all get burn up. Ra, ra, ra. Don't play with me! If you play with me, you play with fire. I am the Fire God. I am the Divine Fire God. Ra, ra, ra. Ra, ra, ra.



He returns to stage left.

Man fears fire. Ever since he is a kid. His parents would yell: "Stanley! Keep your hands off that fire!" So the kid gets a social prohibition. Yet man has a strong affinity for the fire. The heat resembles the warm blood of the body, the flickering flame is the vitality of life; and the blue flame is the phallic symbol, the smoke is the female sex organ. So man gets a complex between the social prohibition and his fascination for the fire. So he goes to the psychiatrist, or analyst. And the analyst tells him to lie down on the couch, and man talks himself out of walking into the fire.

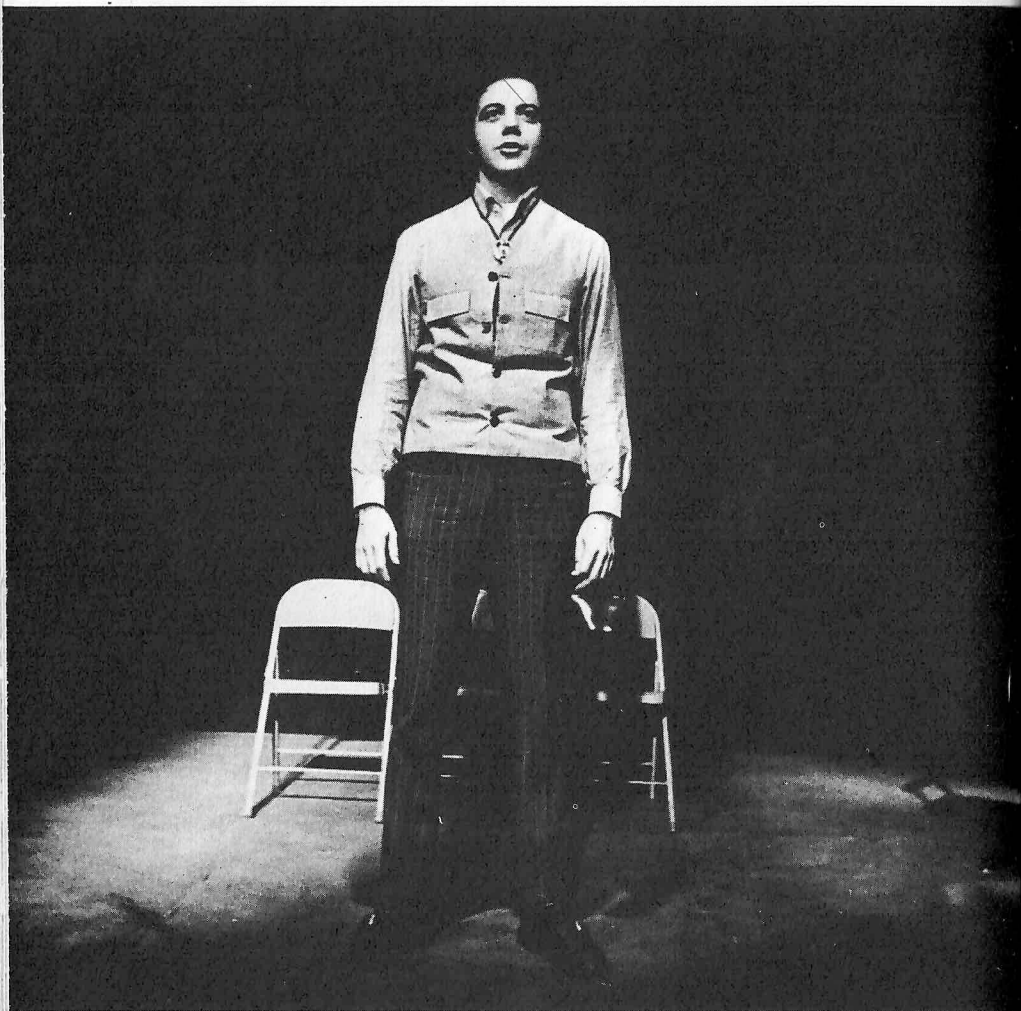
He returns to center stage and walks into the "fire." As his body writhes and struggles as the burning man, his voice describes the event:

The feet burn, the legs burn, the body burns, the arms burn, the skin blisters and peels, the juices burn up, the arms try to push the fire away, the mind tries to control the body, the flames rise, the throat burns, the nostrils burn, the muscles contract, contract, the hair is burning, the head is burning, the eyes pop out, the eyes pop out, the body contracts, contracts, the head! head! head! the mind can no longer control the body, the body contracts, contracts . . . the body falls to the ground.

He goes to stage right.

The body falls down to the ground, yet the fire keeps on burning, and burning, and burning.

He bows and exits.



The HAWK enters.

Hawk: This is not an ordinary apartment. Junkies come here. I don't take junk myself. I sell it. The size of the apartment . . . well, it starts here [*following the edge of the stage*], goes to here, and along here, down and across. This is a wall [*stage right*], it's blue. This is a wall [*upstage*], it's blue. And this wall [*stage left*] is blue. There is a rug which covers the entire floor. Wall to wall. It's blue. It's a nylon synthetic rug. The reason it's synthetic is that if you spill a drink or throw up on it, I can clean it. A sofa [*the three chairs*]. A blue sofa. A modern, conventional, box type sofa. I sit in it. Sometimes I sit here and sometimes I sit there. The table [*in front of the chairs*]. This is a very practical table, in that sometimes it's here and sometimes it's not here. It has a glass top. That's because when you look through you can see the blue rug. I keep the table clean and clear of all things. [*crosses to upstage left, opens a door*] The bathroom is ordinary. Sink, shower, john, and [*facing rear wall*] . . . What the fuck do you call that? It's . . . a medicine cabinet. [*crosses to upstage right*] The kitchen. Refrigerator, sink, stove, cabinets. All in various shades of blue. I keep a lot of food in the refrigerator. Food I eat and food I don't eat. Junkies don't eat much. [*crosses to downstage right*] The liquor cabinet is lined in blue. I keep it refrigerated. For the champagne. [*crosses to the single chair*] This is a very comfortable chair. It's blue. Velvet. A 1920's-1930's barrel chair. When you sit in it your arms rise up. It's the kind of chair Jean Harlow sat in. Nobody sits in this chair. Nobody ever sits in this chair. [*crosses to*

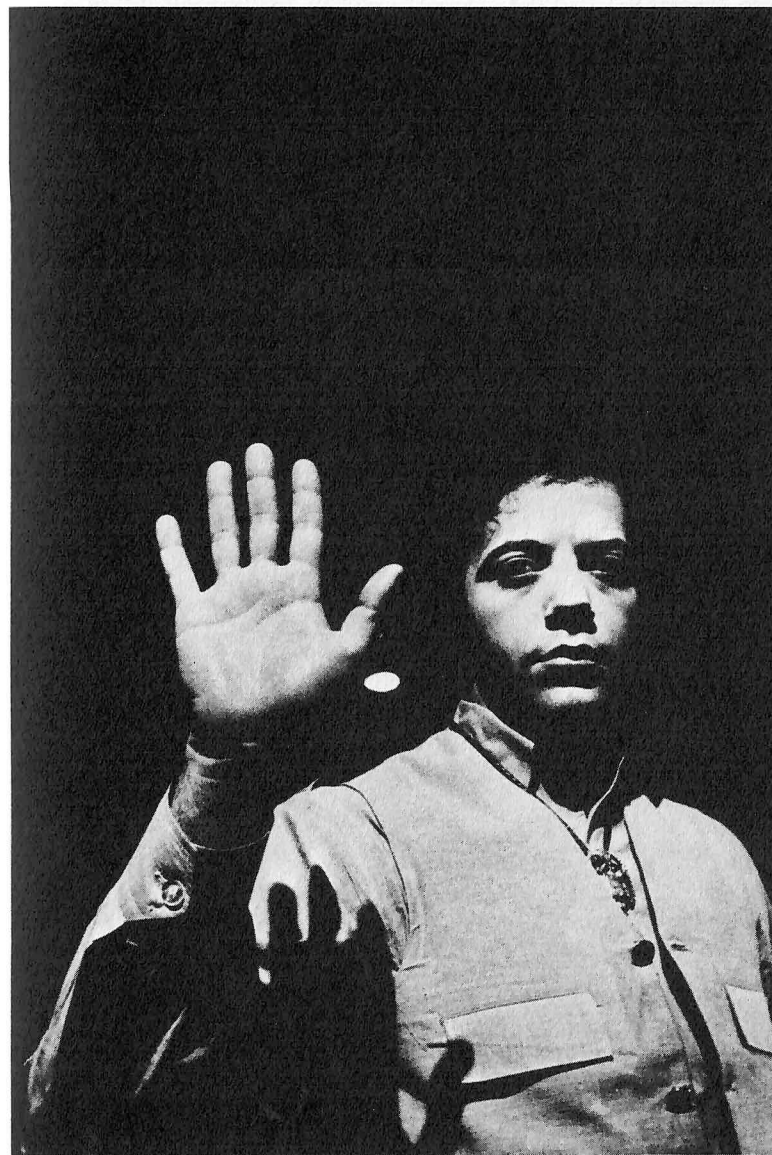
downstage center] This is a mirror. It completely covers this entire wall [the fourth wall], from the ceiling to the floor. [crosses behind the sofa] Well. Do I have everything? Sofa, chair, bathroom, kitchen, rug, walls, cabinet, mirror . . . I think I'll go out.

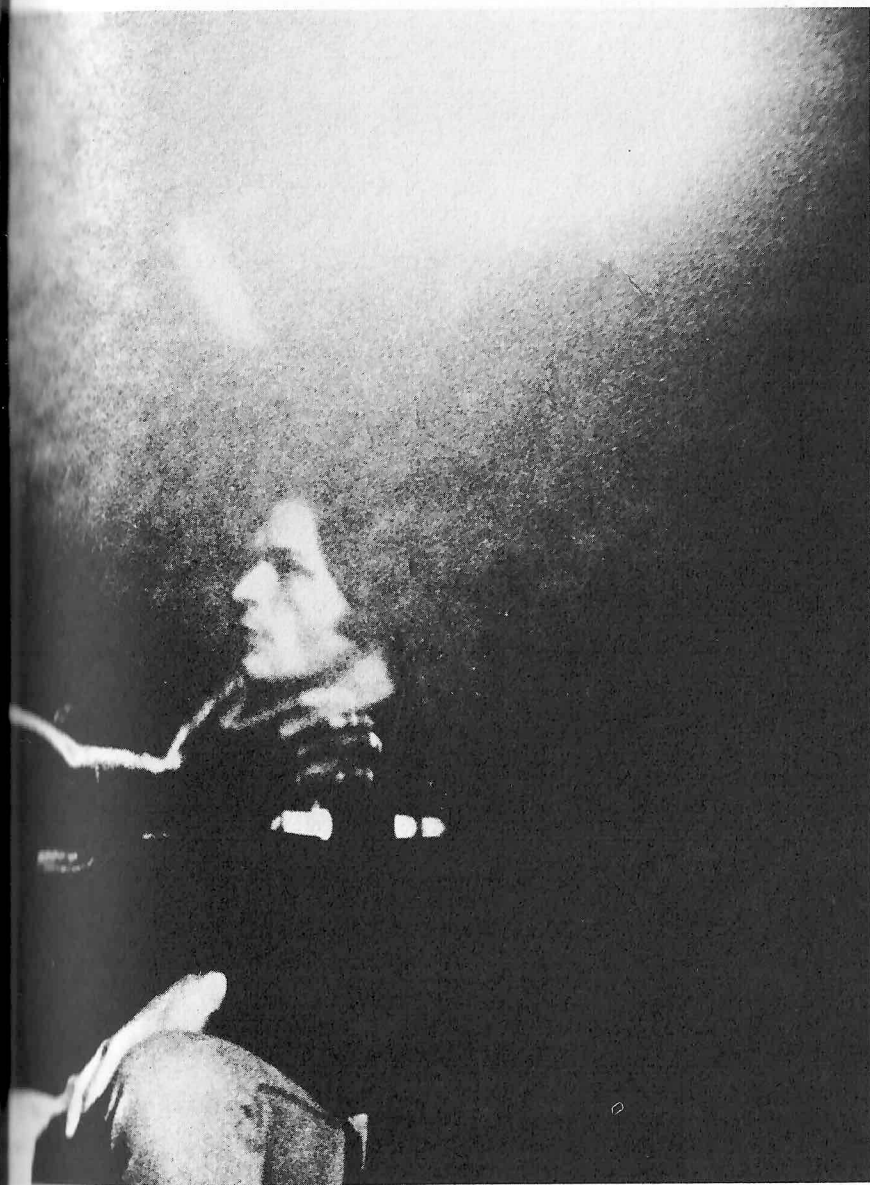
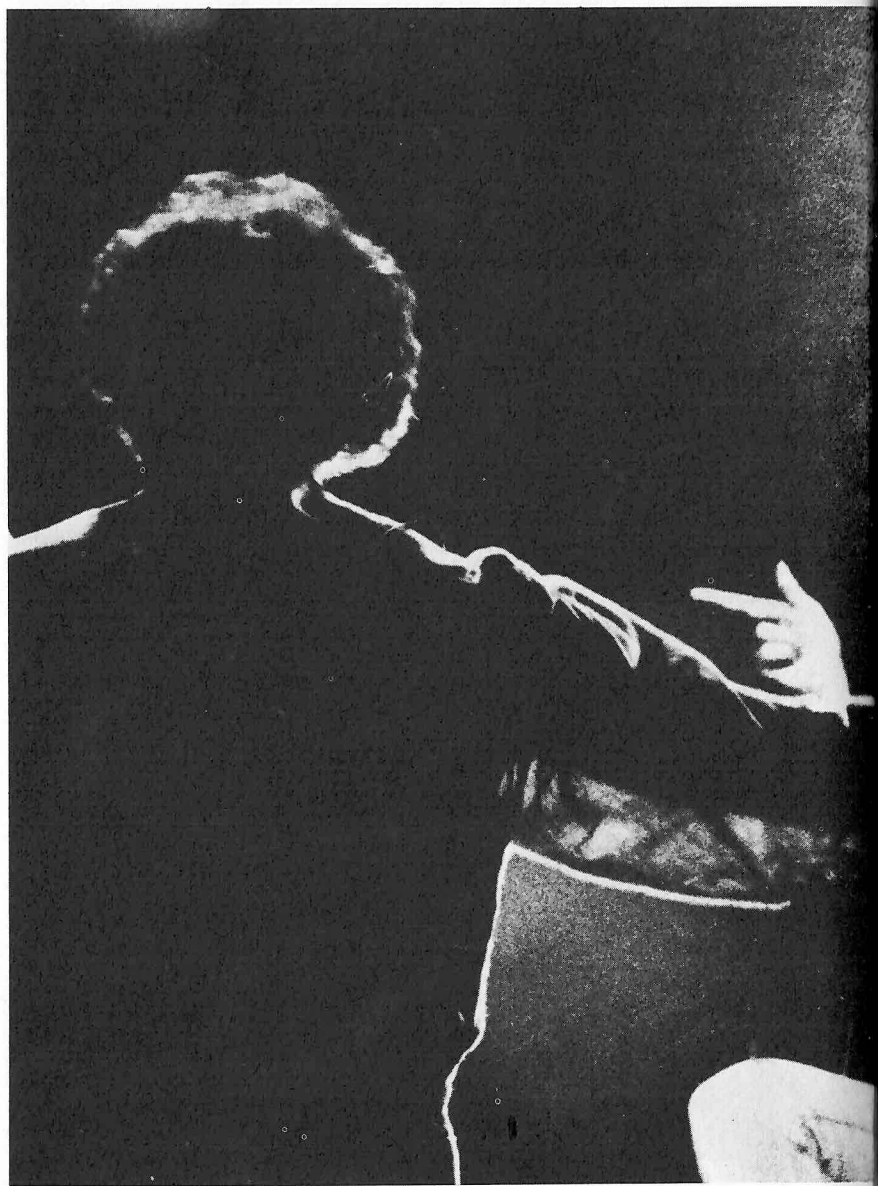
He starts to leave. The DOUBLE intercepts him. They open the door together.

Double: Where are you going?

Hawk: I was going out.

The DOUBLE enters, crosses to the single chair and sits. The HAWK closes the door and sits on the sofa. The DOUBLE begins reciting the HAWK'S litany. The HAWK repeats after him, phrase by phrase. As the litany is repeated over and over the HAWK rises and circles the stage. At a point they reverse—the HAWK recites, the DOUBLE repeats. The litany builds to a peak—the HAWK leading, the DOUBLE subsiding. Finally the HAWK stands before the mirror, loudly reciting the litany by himself.





The Hawk's Litany

The hawk. The hawk is an animal. An animal is hungry. That's why he kills. He kills because he's hungry. The hawk is hungry. He finds a victim. He attacks the victim. He kills the victim. He takes the victim into the sky, back to his nest, and he devours the victim. Because he's hungry. That why he kills. Because he's an animal. An animal is hungry. The hawk is an animal . . .

The HAWK stops suddenly.
The DOUBLE rises.

Double: Did you score?

Hawk: Yeah. I have everything. The heroin. Morphine. Pot, coke, orange soda, champagne, tea, food . . . [sits]

Double: [indicating a box] The box. This is a wooden box. It's from Tangiers.

Hawk: Veracruz.

Double: Veracruz. It's a hand-carved box and in the center there's an engraving of a fire god. The fire god has two blue sapphires for eyes. The inside of the box is lined in blue velvet and contains a syringe and two needles. The syringe has two parts . . .

Hawk: The plunger and the receptacle.

Double: The plunger and the receptacle. Of the two needles, one is long and the other short. One is gold and the other silver. I'll put these back in the box here and close it.

Hawk: Ornithological.



Double: Yes, this is the most important object in this ornithological tragi-comedy of life and death, love and hate, war and peace.

Hawk: O.K.

Double: [returns to his chair] Now, if you ever want this box, if you ever need it, just ask me for it, and I'll give it to you.

Hawk: Now.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: She's coming.

Double: She's coming.

Hawk: She's coming.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: She's coming.

Double: She's coming.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: She's coming.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: She's coming.

Hawk: Wait.

Double: She's coming.

Hawk: She's coming.

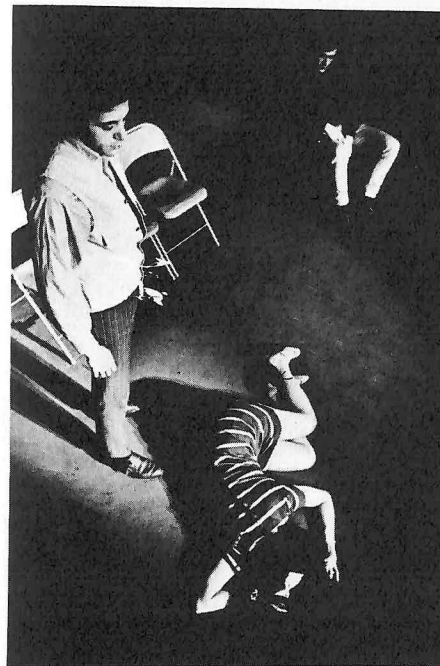
Double: Wait.

Hawk: She's coming.

Double: Wait.

Hawk: She's coming. She's coming. She's coming. She's here.

They both turn and look at an empty space in the sofa as if someone were sitting there.



First Improvisation: The Imaginary Victim

Hawk: She's skinny.

Double: But she has a great walk.

Hawk: A sequin dress . . .

Double: . . . in the early darkness . . .

Hawk: And a certain oriental . . .

Double: . . . roll to her . . .

Hawk: . . . hips. She's anything but cherry.

Double: She has the sweet . . .

Hawk: . . . pale . . .

Double: . . . look . . .

Hawk: . . . of the damned.

Double: Just like . . .

Together: Jean Harlow.

Hawk: But she's skinny.

Double: Yeah.

Hawk: She looks hungry.

Double: Maybe you should give her something to eat.

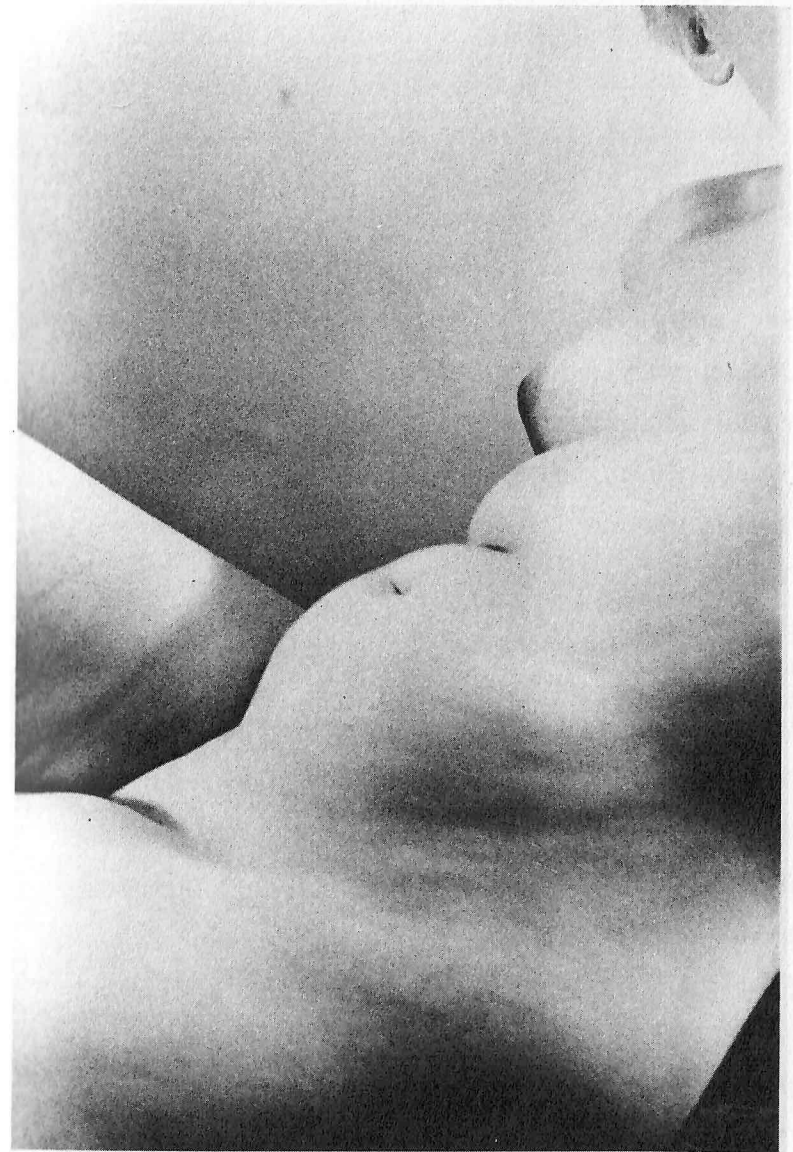
Hawk: Yeah, that's a good idea. [*he feeds her*] There.

Double: She's a fast eater.

Hawk: Scoffs it right up, doesn't she?

Double: You know, not eating is unhealthy, self-destructive.

Hawk: I'll give her some more. [*feeds her*]



Double: Aside from the nutritional value, there's also the simple pleasure of eating.

Hawk: Look, she's filling out.

Double: Sure is. In fact, eating is one of the most important activities that fill our day.

Hawk: She's much healthier looking.

Double: Give her some of that spaghetti there.

Hawk: She Italian? *(feeds her)*

Double: Everybody eats spaghetti. The Chinese invented it.

Hawk: Look at that.

Double: Yeah. Give her some more.

Hawk: *(pries her "mouth" open and stuffs it)* Down it goes.

Double: She's really getting fat now.

Hawk: Yeah.

Double: More.

Hawk: Yeah? Here you go, baby. *(throws it into her)*

Double: Wow. Look at that.

Hawk: *(moving off the sofa to make room)* Fantastic.

Double: Will you look at that flesh!

Hawk: I'm looking at it.

Double: Do you see the flesh on her?

Hawk: It's there all right.

Double: Pink, juicy flesh.

Hawk: Pink, juicy flesh.

They turn and watch her "image" in the mirror.

Hawk: She's huge. Gigantic.

Double: Look at that stomach.

Hawk: Look at that stomach.

Double: Do you see the flesh on that stomach?

Hawk: Look at that stomach.

Double: Look at those arms.

Hawk: They're enormous.

Double: Look at the flesh on those arms.

Hawk: Just hanging there.

Double: Look at those legs.

Hawk: Those legs.

Double: Fat, juicy legs.

Hawk: Oh, legs, legs, big legs.

Double: Look at those breasts. Do you see those breasts? All the meat on those breasts.

Hawk: Mounds of flesh.

Double: Pendulous boobies. Flesh everywhere.

Hawk: Look at it roll! I want her.

Double: Succulent, juicy . . .

Hawk: I want her.

Double: Limitless flesh . . .

Hawk: I want her.

Double: You want her?

Hawk: Yes, I want her.

Double: She's ripe.

Hawk: I want her! I want her!

Double: You can have her.

Hawk: I want that flesh. *(moves to the mirror)* I want it. I want to devour that flesh.

Double: You can have it.

Hawk: I want to rip and tear and bite into every bit of it.

Double: Take it.

Hawk: I want it. I want that flesh. I want it now. Right now. I want it. Yeah! I want it! I want it! Now! Now! Now! *(to DOUBLE)* Now.

(The DOUBLE brings the box. The HAWK prepares an injection and gives it to the "victim." A pause. They watch "her" as she falls to the floor.)

Double: I think she O.D.'d.

Hawk: Easy come, easy go.

The HAWK goes to the bathroom and takes a shower.

The DOUBLE rearranges the materials.

The "VICTIM" lies on the floor.

Double: *(in the kitchen, repeating the gestures of the HAWK'S shower)* A kind of anxiety appearing verbiage. Is what it is. He reassures himself. About the real. But there's something . . . signs . . . there are

signs . . . yes, there are signs, signals . . . yes, signals we give . . . to one another in our passing . . . in order to create warmth . . . light . . . yes, but we must see that the light and the dark and the warm and the cold, the good and the bad . . . the actual pain we suffer . . . between them . . . that's not right . . . not "between," no . . . the actual pain we suffer . . . in the process . . . the process? Is illusory, not real, is the void . . . therefore, a reflection on the surface of the . . . whatever . . . a glance . . . the droplets of meaning adding to a force . . . a power . . . a demon . . . which he confuses with himself. Verbiage.

The DOUBLE escorts the "victim" out.

The HAWK and the DOUBLE return, as before.

Double: She's dead.

Hawk: She was skinny but she had a great walk. A sequin dress in the early darkness and a certain oriental roll to her hips. She was anything but cherry. She had the sweet, pale look of the damned. Just like Jean Harlow.

Double: What do I do with the body?

Hawk: The body?

Double: Her corpse. She's dead.

Hawk: I turned her on.

Double: They'll be looking for you.

Hawk: What do you expect me to do? I can't help it.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't. I can't. I can't.

The FIRST VICTIM appears at the door

Second Improvisation: The First Victim

Hawk: *(opening the door)* Yes?

Victim: Hiya. I'm Joanie.

Hawk: Yeah?

Victim: Marilyn Stein's friend?

Hawk: Marilyn . . . oh, come in.

Victim: *(entering)* Oh, thank you. *(sees the mirror)* Oh, my!

Hawk: You're Joanie?

Victim: Uh, yes. You know, that is the biggest mirror I have ever seen. *(they both look in the mirror)*

Hawk: Sit down.

Victim: *(sitting)* Thank you. Ah, Marilyn said that if I ever wanted to reach her, I should come here and maybe you could tell me where I could contact her.

Hawk: Marilyn Stein?

Victim: Yes.

Hawk: She's a friend of yours?

Victim: Oh, my closest and dearest.

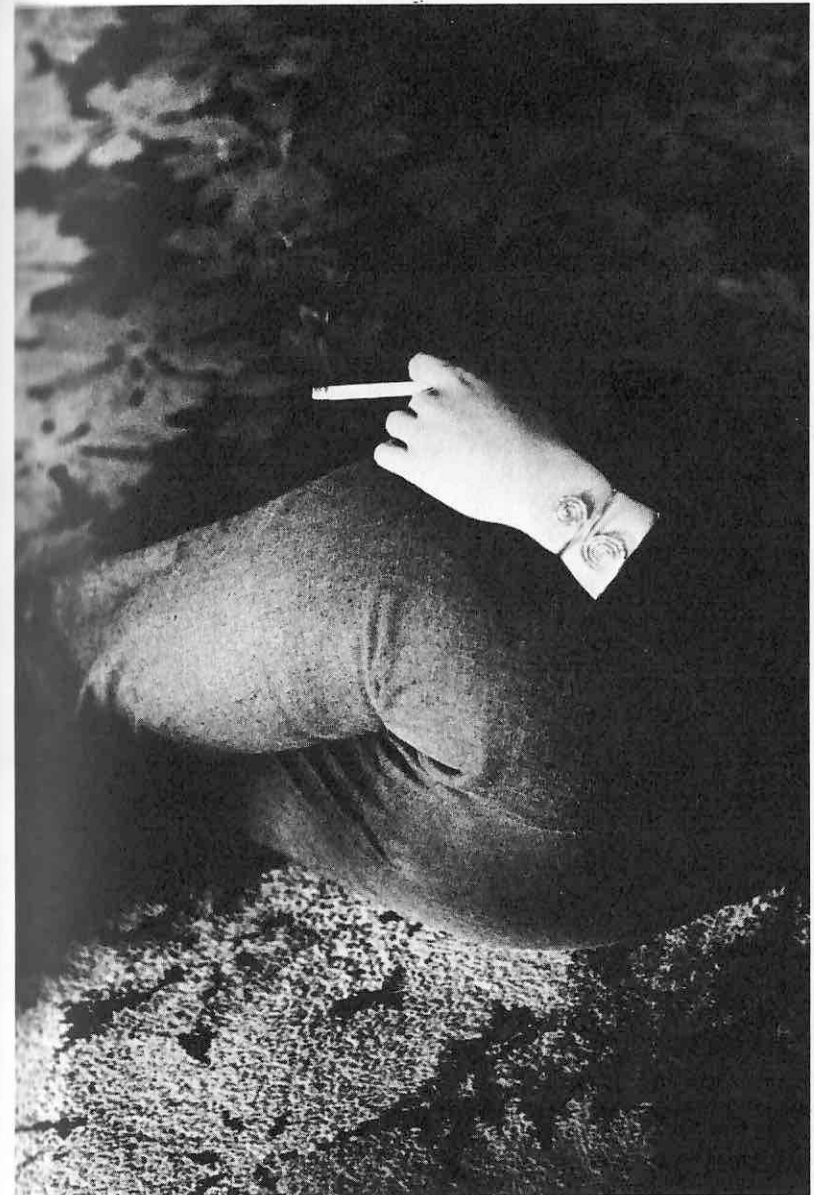
Hawk: Wait here. *(goes to the kitchen)*

Victim: My goodness, it's so blue here, and everything matches.

Hawk: *(handing her a "bottle")* Here.

Victim: Oh, thank you . . . Orange soda! My favorite. *(drinks)* Marilyn said you were a very gracious person. Ah, do you know where I could find her?

Hawk: Excuse me. Your name is . . . ?



Victim: Joanie.

Hawk: Joanie Stein.

Victim: No, Marilyn Stein. I'm Joanie . . .

Hawk: Oh, yes, you're Marilyn's closest and dearest friend.

Victim: Yes. Joanie. Do you know where I could contact her?

Hawk: Marilyn. Ah, let's see, she was living in this pad downtown, but she had to leave for some reason, and I don't know where she is right now.

Victim: Oh? *(disappointed)* Oh. Well, does she ever call you?



Hawk: Well . . . yes, as a matter of fact . . . That's right, she called me this afternoon. Yes, Marilyn called this afternoon.

Victim: Isn't that something. You know, Fate is just playing with me today.

Hawk: How's that?

Victim: Well, when I arrived at the Port of Authority . . .

Hawk: Where?

Victim: The Port of Authority?

Hawk: Fate.

Victim: I mean, it's funny that Marilyn should call you today. You see, I was thinking that maybe Marilyn would put me up until I could find a place of my own.

Hawk: Where are you from?

Victim: Brooklyn.

Hawk: Did you run away?

Victim: Well, I never thought of it like that . . . I just left.

Hawk: Listen, if you need a place, you can stay here for a couple of days.

Victim: You know, Marilyn told me that you were a very kind and gracious person. I can tell why.

Hawk: Do you want to stay here? It's cool . . .

Victim: Oh, no, I couldn't. Really, it would be too much bother . . .

Hawk: No, not at all. One of us could fall out on the floor and the other could . . .

Victim: What did Marilyn say when she called?

Hawk: Oh . . . she said she would be here about 11 or 12 . . . 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . .

Victim: I told you. Didn't I tell you?

Hawk: What?

Victim: Fate.

Hawk: Fate?

Victim: Playing.

Hawk: Right. (*gets up, goes to kitchen, returns*) Have another orange soda.

Victim: That is really very nice of you.

Hawk: You know, I knew this man once who was convinced that his number was up. So he decided to stay in for a week. Then one day he thought he heard someone calling his name. He went to the window, opened it, and looked out. No one in sight. But he kept hearing his name. He

leaned out farther, and then turned to look behind him. His wife was standing there, she had been calling to him from the other room. Then it happened—he jumped up, banged his head on the window, the window broke and severed his head at the neck. It was all over in a flash. Fate. How long have you known Marilyn?

Victim: Oh, we grew up together. Ever since we were kids. We went to high school together, and the dances on weekends, and to Dubrow's . . . We even had a whole cha-cha routine worked out. And Bay Two, and Manhattan Beach . . . Did she tell you anything about me?

Hawk: Well, only that you were a close and a dear friend.

Victim: That is so true. You know, she told me an awful lot about you, too.

Hawk: She did?

Victim: Oh, yes. How terrific you were and what a kind and gracious person you were. And what wonderful times she had here and everything like that. And that sometimes when she came, ah, she would sometimes get . . . high?

Hawk: Get high?

Victim: Ah, yes, and she thought that since I was her closest and dearest friend, that maybe I could come here and get high too?

Hawk: You want some grass?

Victim: Not exactly.

Hawk: Pills? I have uppies, downies, Seconal . . .

Victim: Ah . . . heroin?

Hawk: You take heroin?

Victim: Ah, sometimes.

Hawk: I see. Well, sure.

Victim: Oh, I knew it. I could tell. This really is my day.

Hawk: Oh, listen, I should apologize, I haven't offered you anything to eat. Would you like a little something?

Victim: Oh, no, thank you. I couldn't, really. See, when I was at the Port of Authority, I had a frankfurter at the Nedick's they have there. I wasn't really hungry or anything, but my mother said never to go with an empty stomach. And with the excitement of the day . . . ah, do you think I could have my shot now?

Hawk: You look like you should eat more. You look skinny.

Victim: No, I'm just slender . . . if I could just have my shot . . .

Hawk: You know, it's not very healthy to be as thin as you are. You really should make an effort to eat more. I happen to have some food here and I would feel much better if you ate something.

Victim: Oh, I couldn't, really . . .

Hawk: I have some salami, potato chips, frozen pizza, pickled herring, peanut butter; or something more substantial, like pastrami, canned ravioli, Spam . . .

Victim: Really, I just ate. If I could . . .

Hawk: You know, eating is very important. It is one of the most important activities that fill our day. Besides the nutrition it brings, there is also the pleasure it gives. Not to eat is unkind, unhealthy, and self-destructive. Besides, I won't give you the shot unless you eat something first.

Victim: Well, maybe I could force down a bite or two.

Hawk: Good. *(he gets up and brings the food to her)*

Victim: *(eating)* You know, this is very strange, but it really reminds me of a dream I had the other night. I dreamt that I was starving . . . oh, barbecued chicken. My mother always makes boiled. This is my favorite. Mmmmmm. Delicious. As I was saying, in this dream, I was so hungry that I had these terrible pains in my stomach. But I couldn't find anything to eat. And there were all these people around handing me Care packages, only when I opened them up they turned out to be full of garbage! Coffee grounds, rinds, potato peels . . . and then, all of a sudden, I was in my mother's kitchen, and there was my mother at this huge stove cooking chicken soup in a great big pot and I asked her for a kreplach, so she reached into the soup and pulled out a kreplach and she threw it on the floor. I bent down to pick it up, and, what do you think? She stepped on it! "Mother," I said, "could I have another kreplach, please?" and she took out another one and threw it on the floor and when I reached for it she stepped on it again and when she took her foot away, underneath was my sister and the kreplach went into her mouth, so I went right in after it and, what do you think?, I was sucked into my sister's mouth and there I was suspended in this dark room, and all of a sudden the lights came on and I was at a dance where everyone was wearing tunics and eating turkey legs and on the cha-cha they would bite into the turkey legs and on the cha-cha-cha they would throw the bones at me! Then I started running away through a dark corridor that changed into a refrigerator, one of those enormous wholesale meat refrigerators, and there were these huge sides of beef hanging all over, and I knew that, at last, here was my dinner. So I went over to a side of beef and I started eating and eating and eating, and I started to get fat. And I got fatter and fatter until the flesh was hanging from my body layer

after layer and I tried to walk but I could only waddle. That's when this small white duck came waddling up to me and as it was waddling it lost its feathers and then it lost its skin and then there was this raw duck waddling beside me as I waddled to the next side of beef and I ate and ate and I got fatter and fatter until the only thing I could move was my mouth. *(pauses, eating)* Then I woke up. Oh, seedless grapes. I thought they were out of season. They're my favorite.

Hawk: Here, have some tomato juice.

Victim: Do you have a piece of lemon?

Hawk: Of course. *(he gets the lemon)*

Victim: This is really so nice of you. I just wish I was a little hungrier. Do you think Marilyn will be here soon?

Hawk: Marilyn? Oh, no, I don't think Marilyn is going to make it tonight. I just remembered, she's a dyke.

Victim: I beg your pardon?

Hawk: I said, "I don't think Marilyn will be here tonight. I just remembered that she's a dyke."

Victim: That's what I thought you said.

Hawk: You see, she has this new lover uptown and she was concerned about your coming here because she knew that if you met this person it would make you unhappy . . .

Victim: I do not comprehend what you are saying.

Hawk: I said that she is making it with this new chick now and she doesn't want to see you.

Victim: This is not a very funny joke.

Hawk: Besides, you can't depend on dykes to come when they say they're going to do.

Victim: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I cannot sit here as Marilyn's closest and dearest friend and listen to you cast aspersions . . .

Hawk: Oh, come on, she told me about the two of you. Don't play dumb with me. Your lover's making it with someone else. I told you you can't depend on dykes, not for anything. They're just unreliable.

Victim: . . . on my closest and . . . I mean, you've been very gracious up till now and a joke is a joke, but I will not sit here and listen to you go on damaging the character of my closest and dearest . . .



Victim: I'll just have to leave. *(goes to the door)*

Hawk: What about the heroin?

Victim: *(stops)* Do you think I could have my shot now?

Hawk: Sure. You ready?

Victim: Do you think . . . ?

Hawk: Sit down there, on the rug. *(to DOUBLE)* Now. *(the DOUBLE delivers the box and returns to his chair. The HAWK slowly and methodically prepares the injection.)*

Victim: *(sits)* I don't understand why you're saying these things. I mean, Marilyn and I are the closest and dearest friends, and just because two human beings happen to be able to be close and communicate with each other doesn't mean what you said. I mean, if I don't know Marilyn, who else could know her? We're the closest and dearest of friends and you don't find a friend like Marilyn every day of the week. I mean . . . I mean, she was such a good friend to me. She would do anything in the world . . . like the time her Uncle Max invited her up to the bungalow colony and she wanted me to have just as good a time as she did. And that was the best time I ever had . . . Marilyn and I did everything together . . . that's what matters, when two people can care about each other . . . and communicate . . . and do things together. I mean, Marilyn is the best friend I ever had, and, I mean, she's really a good friend, and . . . and I understood . . . I mean, when she started taking heroin . . . I understood . . . and when I was just a little afraid at first . . . I mean, she understood . . . and that's . . . and even when we had this plan about leaving Brooklyn together and she left a little before me . . . I understood. And I'm sure she understands now . . . that's what a friend is. That's what it's all about, not what you said. When two people can talk to each other and understand each other. And be together.

Do everything. You don't find that every day in the week! I mean, Marilyn and I . . . I . . . I mean, I would do anything in the world . . . and she would do anything in the world for me, and that's what is really important. That's what really matters . . . when it's all one . . . when two human beings can care and understand and communicate and be together . . . that's what it's all about! That's what . . . *(he gives her the shot)* . . . really matters . . . what really matters . . . when it's all one . . . *(She starts to get up. A flash. She slumps to the floor, dead.)*

The HAWK takes another shower.

The DOUBLE rearranges the materials.

The VICTIM lies on the floor.

Double: *[in the kitchen, repeating the gestures of the HAWK'S shower]* He is overcome by the abstract gestures of animals. Snouts . . . scurrying . . . feet in the hallway . . . wings knocking . . . Birds fly out of networks of trees, shrieking. Straight down. Heading straight down. Images exploding. "That's where it's at," he says to himself. He grabs a piece and runs. He's still heading straight down. He screams. He doesn't hear himself. Someone is laughing at him. The laughter is slow, hollow. He forces. He claws. He grabs. He dries himself in the sun.

The DOUBLE escorts the VICTIM out.

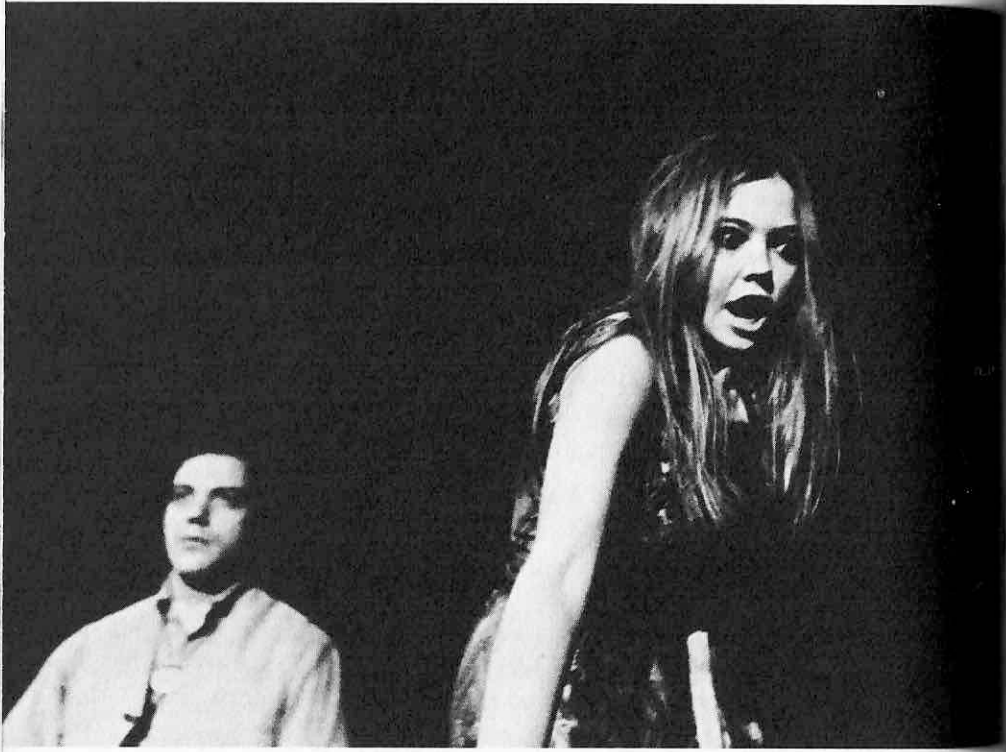
The HAWK and the DOUBLE return, as before.

Double: She's dead.

Hawk: She was skinny but she had a great walk. A sequin dress in the early darkness and a certain oriental roll to her hips. She was anything but cherry. She had the sweet, pale look of the damned. Just like Jean Harlow.

Double: What do I do with the body?

Hawk: The body?



Double: Her corpse. She's dead.

Hawk: I turned her on.

Double: They'll be looking for you.

Hawk: What do you expect me to do? I can't help it.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't. I can't. I can't.

The SECOND VICTIM appears at the door.

Third Improvisation: The Second Victim

Victim: *(breezes in wearing a psychedelic outfit, checks herself out in the mirror) What's happening?*

Hawk: I give up.

Victim: Hey, I brought you a present. *(outlining a large box) It's a big present.*

Hawk: Should I open it?

Victim: Yeah.

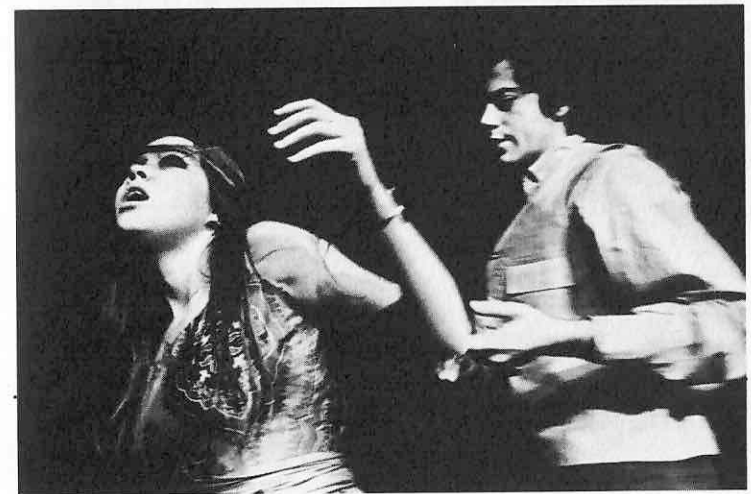
Hawk: *(opening the "box") What's in it? (victim stands in place of the box . . . shrugs . . . they turn away)*

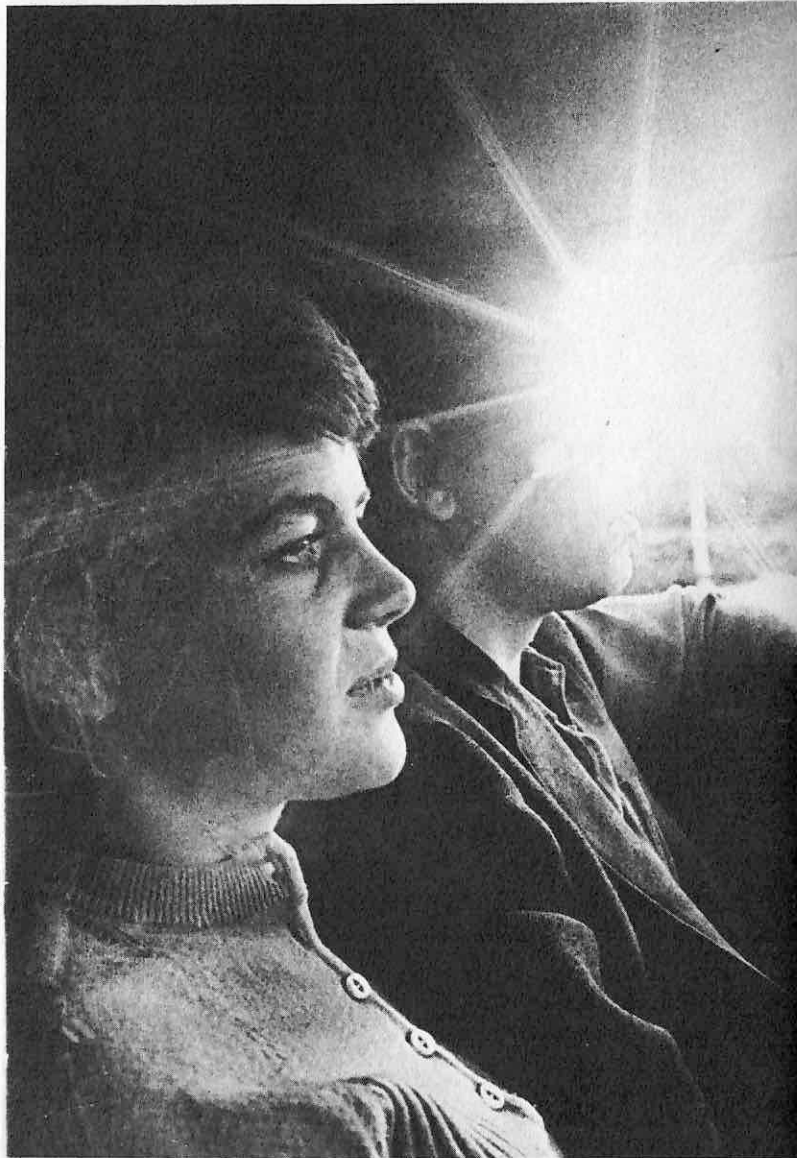
Hawk: How about a Coke?

Victim: No, that's O.K. I've got one here. *(outlines a Coke)*

Hawk: Have a real one.

Victim: No, I'm getting to like these. Do you want one?





(She makes him a "coke". He takes it. She puts hers in a "cabinet" and begins doing a thing with the cabinet, changing it into various objects.)

Hawk: Not bad. You got any root beer in that thing of yours? *(no response)* Just Coke. Coke, Coke, Coke.

Victim: *(stops)* You know, I did the funniest thing the other day. I was just like walking down this street. I'm walking down this street, and I see this fat man. *(outlines the man)* This little fat man. And he looks terrible. Really down. So I say to him, "Que paso, little fat guy?" And he says, "I want to get high." So, I think, if he wants to get high, he should get high. But, like, I don't have any grass on me. So, I say to him, "Come with me, little fat guy." We start walking down the street and he's kind of, like, waddling next to me and we keep walking until we come to this narrow little alley. And at the end of the alley there's this . . . ah . . . door. Yeah, door. *(makes a door)* So, I open the door and I look around and it's very dark. But, it's O.K., because I've got my candle *(makes a candle)*, and I light my candle, and I see . . . two boxes. We sit down on the boxes and the little fat guy says, "I want to get high." Well, I still don't have any grass, right, so I go . . . *(makes a joint and smokes it)* . . . you know how I do . . . and I go *(smoking the joint)*, and I pass it to him, and he smokes it, and I go *(makes another joint, smokes it, passes it)* . . . like that. And we sit there for a while, doing that. Nothing happens. Then, I look over at him, and he's not just a little fat guy anymore, he's a stoned little fat guy. I mean, like he's smashed out of his head. I can hardly believe it. That's cool, because it's all an illusion anyway.

Hawk: *(rolling a joint)* Care for a smoke?

Victim: Yeah. *(takes a toke, holds it)* Dynamite. *(another*

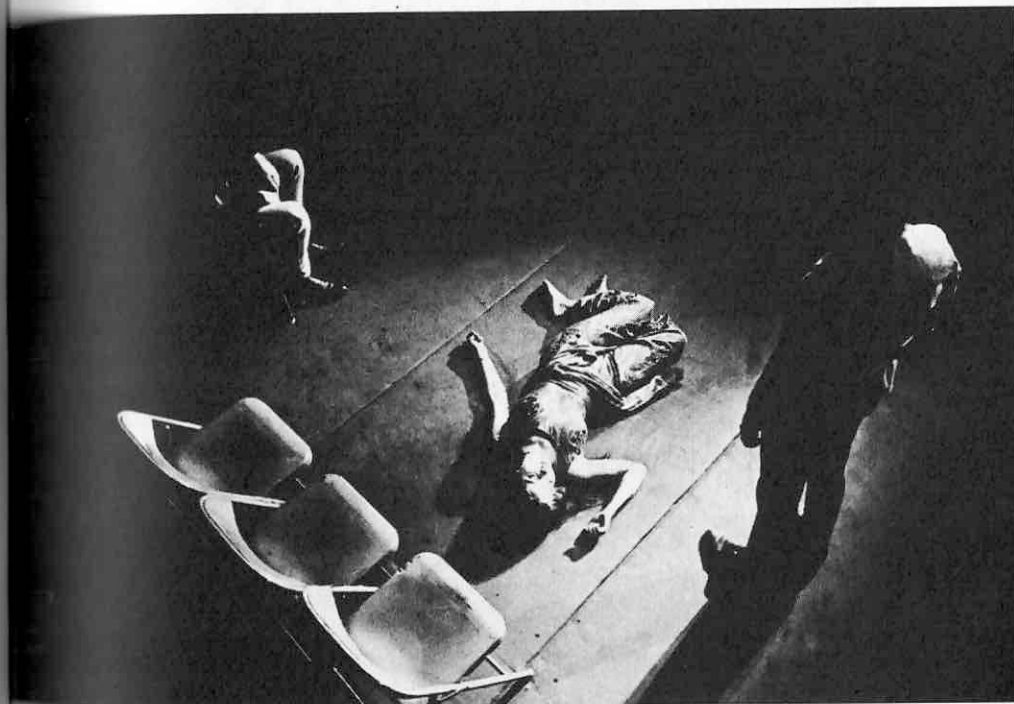
toke, looks toward the door) Was that somebody at the door?

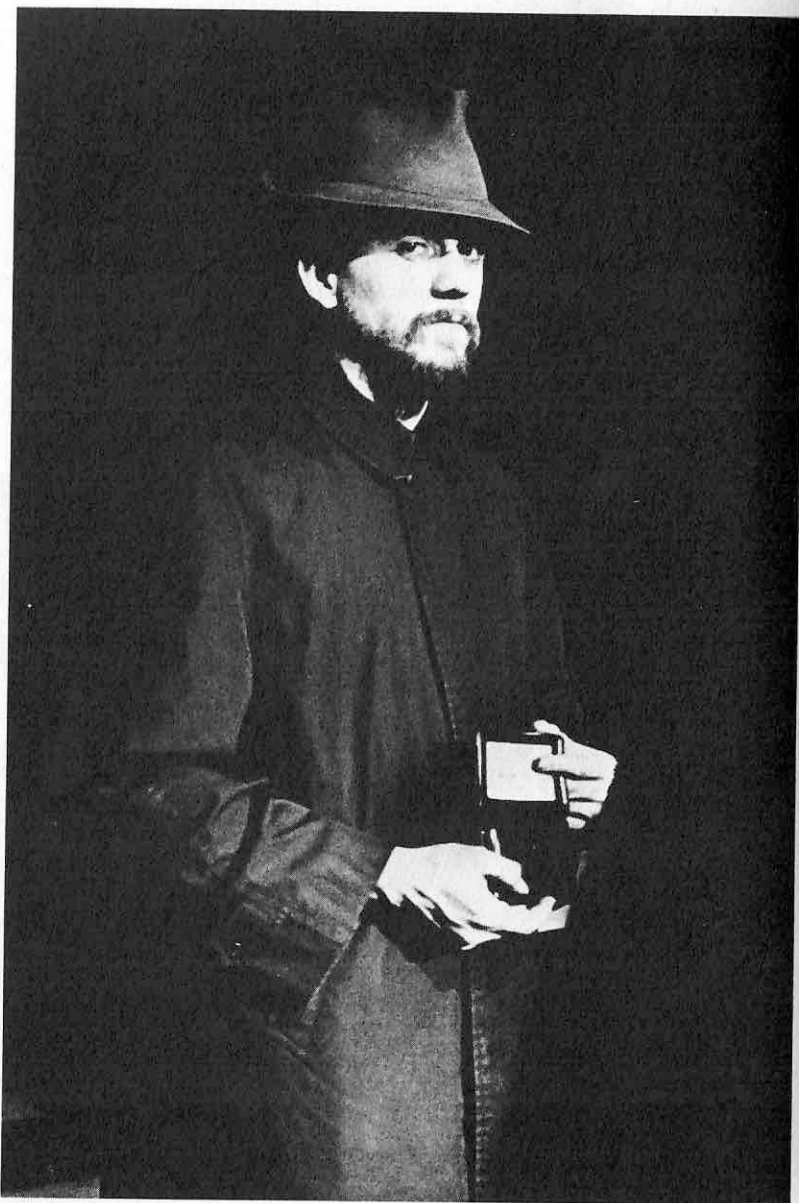
Hawk: No, there's no one at the door. If there was someone at the door, I'd be the first to hear it.

Victim: Well, I don't know. I get paranoid sometimes. And there's a lot of bad shit happening lately. Like, just the other night I was sitting over at a friend's pad. A quiet evening. There was someone in the kitchen doing some stuff, and the rest of us are hanging out in the living room smoking some nice hash. A quiet evening with friends. And I'm just sitting there grooving. And all of a sudden I hear this sound



outside, this kind of tapping sound, like, tap, tap, tap. Well, I can't figure out what's happening, so I open the window and I look out, and what I see, over on the corner, is this cop. And he's standing there with his nightstick (*makes a nightstick*), just kind of tapping. Then I look down at the other end of the block and there's this other cop and he's tapping with his nightstick, too. Then I look up and down and around and the street is full of cops tapping with their nightsticks. So, while I'm trying to work out whether it's Morse code or something, I hear someone yell "Hey, man, they're coming through the fucking windows!" Then there's this whole scene with people running into the bathroom to





flush their lives away, and needles breaking and all like that, and I crawl out on the firescape to see what's happening. And, man, there's cops everywhere, thousands of them, rushing up and down dragging people out into the street and throwing them into wagons. I mean, they don't care who the fuck it is, they're just grabbing people. Like there's this cat just walking down the street, you know, minding his own business, and he gets his head smashed by a cop with a nightstick and there's blood pouring all over the place and across the street this chick is screaming her head off, and there's people smashing bottles and slashing and hitting and kicking and this wild scene, I mean they got bricks and garbage and shotguns and teargas, and there's blood and gore and people screaming and dying (*thrashes about on the floor*) in the gutters and it's horrible and nobody knows what to do. Like, it's blood and people's insides and gore and screaming, wow! (*stops*)

I mean, like, you can tell why someone would get paranoid. (*sits*) Are you sure there's no one at the door? (*goes to the door*) I'd better check.

Hawk: It's cool. Nobody's there.

Victim: Yeah, you're right. There's no one there.

Hawk: Listen, I've got your stuff. Why don't you . . .

Victim: You know what you need?

Hawk: What do I need?

Victim: You need a radar set.

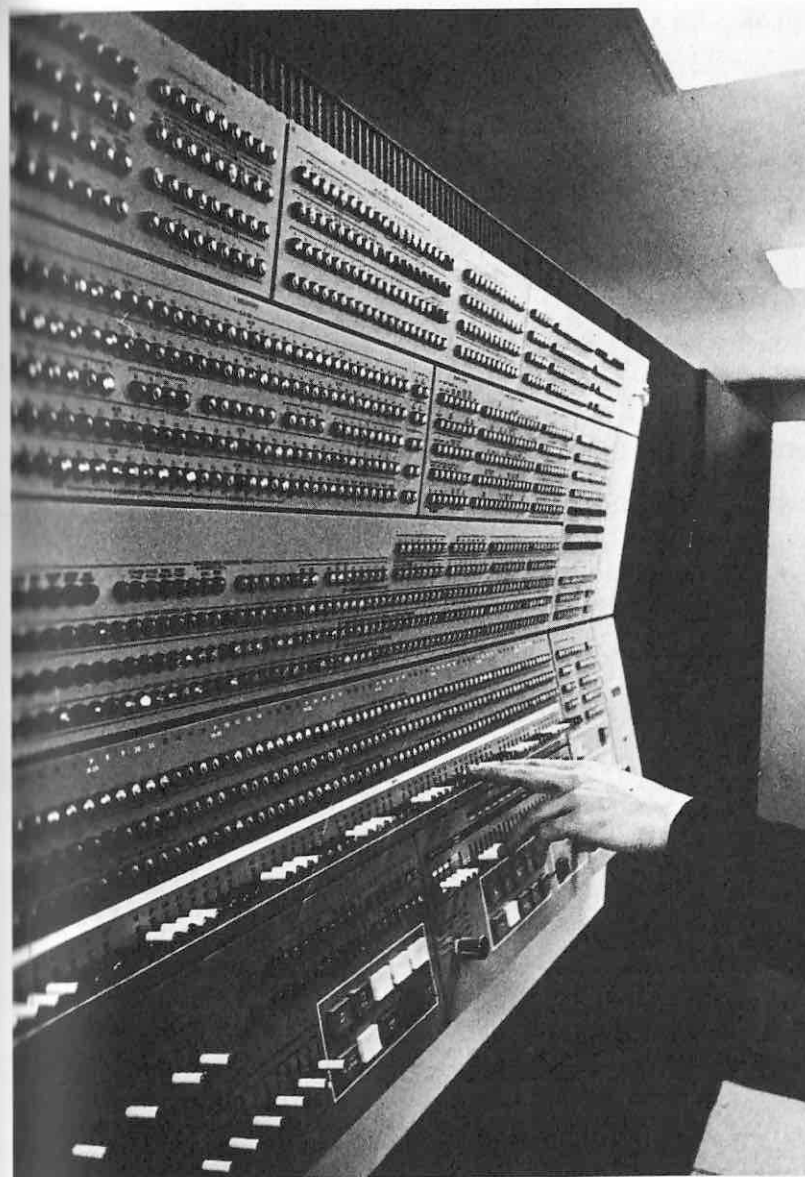
Hawk: Listen, I have to go out . . .

Victim: (*making the radar set*) With that whoosh, whoosh, scanning device, and in your case a camera; yeah, a camera.

Hawk: Look, I'll give you a box and you can take it with you.

Victim: And you put this on the roof, see, and bring down an extension cord and attach it . . . ah . . . here, to this control panel (*outlines a control panel*), and up there (*the mirror*) you have a huge screen. Now you just sit back and wait . . . when something's happening you'll get a beep, beep, beep thing and . . . there it goes. OK. That means somebody is coming, right? So, switch to the roof . . . ah, do you know those two people? Well, that's all right, they look involved. Zoom to the hallway. No one in the hallway. The stairs. Up the stairs, down the stairs. Oh, and the fantastic thing about this model is that you can get an entire aerial view of New York. Let's see. Switch to aerial . . . wow. Now let's move in closer. To 37th St. and Seventh Avenue . . . oh . . . zoom in on that yellow cab . . . and in the back seat . . . wait a minute . . . do you see that? The taxi-cab driver isn't the same as his picture! This is unbelievable. What you could do with this machine. You could spy anywhere. Rule the world. You can even get this very room. You can see everything that's happening in this fantastic blue room. In the kitchen, the bathroom . . .

(The Hawk makes a tool kit and attempts to dismantle the "set." She maneuvers to avoid him)



Victim: Right in this very room. And you can get a close up or move way back and you can get a side view, three quarter, full face. And you can make it bigger than life or *(he has a hammer now)* you can make it smaller than life and you can even make it very, very small, so like nobody can get to it. But, sometimes you want to change the image. Like it's not very cool to have the same image all the time. *(tries to change the "image," continues hammering at the "set.")* I mean, it's a drag, man, you want the image to change, right? You don't want to always have the same image, the same stupid image. *(they both beat the set)* You want to change the image. To . . . change . . . the . . . image . . . wow! Ah, I think I'll take my bag and split, OK?

Hawk: Sure. *(makes a needle and hits her arm)*

Victim: What's that?

Hawk: Junk. *(hits her again)*

Victim: Yeah. Could you give me my junk?

Hawk: Here. *(hits her again)*

Victim: No man, that's nothing. I want some junk. *(he hits her again)* I mean, that's nothing. If that worked, do you think I'd come to you? Look! *(she makes a needle and hits him)* See, that's nothing. *(he hits her)* Wow! *(she hits him)* I just want some junk. *(he hits her, she hits him, they fight with the "needles")* OK. All right. I'll fight for my junk. Here! No, man, that's nothing. Fingers, you dig? I mean, nothing. All right. Yeah. OK. No, that's nothing, nothing. I don't want that. I want junk. OK. *(she makes a huge needle and pushes it into him, he continues hitting her)* No! That's nothing! *(they face the mirror, he pounds at her body)*

Victim: That's nothing. I want junk. I mean, what's that? That's nothing, man! No. I want junk. I don't want that, no, junk, I want junk. I don't

Hawk: Here, junk. My entire supply: heroin, morphine, Methadrine, Demerol, acid, Seconal, mescaline, DMT, peyote, junk, shit, opium, hash, junk, junk, cocaine,

Victim: want acid or Demerol, I want junk. I don't want any coke! Junk! Junk!

Hawk: Here, coke, more coke, Coke, coke, Coke!

Hawk: Coke, coke, Coke, coke . . .

Victim: *(heading for the door)* Just give me my bag and I'll split.

Hawk: *(stops)* Sit down on the rug and I'll straighten you here. *(to DOUBLE)* Now.

The DOUBLE delivers the box and returns to his chair. The HAWK prepares the injection.

Victim: *(sits)* You're a fucking drag. I mean, like it's very hard to make it when people fuck with your thing like that. Like you got your thing and I got mine and you could have the exact same one if you wanted it. Like . . . people . . . like they're really stupid and vicious. Like when somebody just goes and claws out a piece of your thing. And then . . . like, yeah, they start thinking that someone else makes up all the rules for their little games and they think there's some great almighty thing up there that really cares what the fuck they do with their stupid games . . . and who cares . . . like animals . . . yeah, animals know what to do. They got one thing and they go out there and they go after

it. But people, they get all hung up . . . with objects . . . yeah, like you don't see a lion stalking through the jungle in search of a double boiler. Or a bird checking his watch. Animals really know . . . and then people, like they put them in zoos. But they don't say, "Dig the groovy animal, he's doing his thing." No, they say, "Look at the funny animal." People get so fucked up, I can't believe it. It's crazy is what it is . . . it's really crazy. It's a whole crazy mess. You got to be crazy to stay here. I mean, like I'm going away. Yeah, I'm going away. But you can't just *(makes a car)* drive to Connecticut or someplace like that . . . you got to *(makes a train)* take a train to the coast . . . or *(makes a boat)* a boat to Tangiers or Ibiza . . . or . . . Oh, no man, I'm going to take a jet *(makes a jet)* . . . yeah, a jet. A big silver jet, with wings and windows, no, no windows, just one big window in front and inside there's this control panel *(makes the panel)*, and I can just get into it . . . because it's my jet, yeah, it's not anybody else's jet. It's all mine. It's all my thing. Like I can get into anything I want to . . . and I can just be up there and a lot of sky and blue and clouds and go anywhere and leave all that pink people babble and just stay up there and go and do anything and be alone *(the HAWK gives her the injection)* . . . and not have any stupid games bumping into me . . . and be there . . . and go . . . just go . . . wow *(a flash, she dies)*

The HAWK takes another shower.

The DOUBLE rearranges the materials.

The VICTIM lies on the floor.

Double: *(in the kitchen, repeating the gestures of the HAWK'S shower)* There was once a musician who, each night at nine, would blow his horn out the window of his apartment. He was all right. He could get into it. He had a good dramatic sense. He was playing for a chick he dug—she lived in the building

behind his, on the other side of a small cemetery. It was a routine, a serenade. First he fiddled around a bit, announcing his presence, working himself up. When he found a riff he could play with, he got louder and came on with the vibrato. It started to get painful. He must have really had it in for that chick. After a while, he gave up on the music part altogether—the horn yelped and moaned and got all frustrated. Finally, he went into this one, long, screaming high note . . . and fucked it for all he was worth. Which was enough to blow your brains out. I guess he got his nut off, but he was doomed to repeating it . . . each night at nine . . . until she split or he busted his lip . . . or something.

The DOUBLE escorts the VICTIM out.

The HAWK and the DOUBLE return, as before.

Double: She's dead.

Hawk: She was skinny but she had a great walk. A sequin dress in the early darkness and a certain oriental roll to her hips. She was anything but cherry. She had the sweet, pale look of the damned. Just like Jean Harlow.

Double: What do I do with the body?

Hawk: The body?

Double: Her corpse. She's dead.

Hawk: I turned her on.

Double: They'll be looking for you.

Hawk: What do you expect me to do? I can't help it.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't.

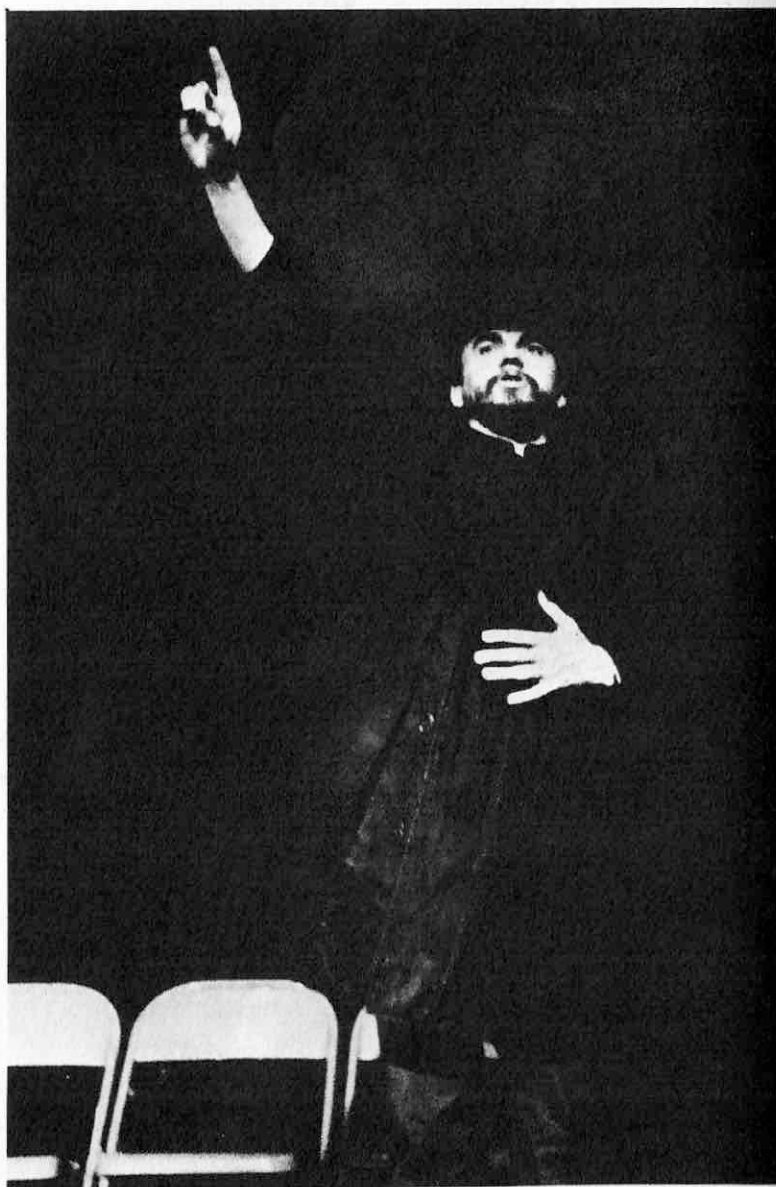
Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't.

Double: Get rid of the body.

Hawk: I can't. I can't. I can't.

The INSPECTOR appears at the door.



Fourth Improvisation: The Inspector

Inspector: *(enters wearing a trench coat and hat. He flashes a badge in the mirror, inspects the room, then encounters the "body")* The body. *(inspects it)* No pulse . . . incipient rigor . . . dead two and a half hours . . . overdose of heroin. *(rises, begins a reconstruction of the crime)* He is sitting here *(couch)*. He's five feet tall, brown hair, blue eyes, 185 pounds . . . there's a knock at the door. She enters . . . five foot three, 120 pounds, 27 years of age, blue eyes, green feet. She crosses over and sits down. He brings her an orange soda. They begin to talk. Does he know Marilyn Stein? Yes, he knows Marilyn Stein and she . . . *there's a knock at the door.* She comes in. Five foot two, 127 pounds, 17 years of age, red hair, red eyes, psychedelic jump suit . . . sits down. He hands her a Coke . . . *there's a knock at the door.* She enters. Five foot three, 185 pounds, 47 years of age, Indo-Eurasian graduation gown . . . crosses over and sits down. He gets up and goes to the bathroom and gets her a cup of tea . . . *There's a knock at the door.* She comes in, five foot three, blond hair, blue eyes, black dress, 285 pounds . . . crosses over and sits down. He comes back, hands her the orange soda. She drinks the tea. She asks him if he has a headache. "No, I don't have a headache." "Would you like something to eat?" Yes. She goes to the television set, turns it on. He goes into the bathroom, takes six aspirin, comes back out, sits down. She gets up, goes to the kitchen, comes back with six eggs, eats the eggs. He goes into the bathroom and brushes his teeth. Marilyn Stein . . . a possibility. She goes to the champagne, takes a sip of champagne, he steps on her foot, she sits down, looks in the mirror, the mirror collapses on her face, she runs into the bathroom, the medicine cabinet jumps to the floor, closes, opens, slams in her face, she runs into the kitchen, takes the sink, flushes it down the commode, comes out and spits

in his face. He goes into the bathroom and returns with a dead baby sandwich. He eats the sandwich. Uh, huh. He turns around in the form of an anopheles mosquito, buzzes about, flips over the couch, lands on a horse, rides into the bathroom, back out dressed in cleats, stands on her face, kicks her, she doesn't like it, jumps over the couch, he takes a lasso, lassoes her hair, drags her into the kitchen and slams her head in the refrigerator door. Oh . . . There's a knock at the door. A car drives in, the chauffeur gets out, opens the door, nine Packer football players come out, run into the bathroom, turn on the radio, take off their clothes, run back out, get in the car and drive off. Marilyn Stein, Jeffrey, Packers . . . possibilities. She's lying on the floor now, doing a hula dance, in a hula skirt, with a hula hoop. Red Ryder is sitting over here, he throws a spear, it gets Little Beaver, who falls on the floor and turns into 47 Mexican bongo players, the bongoes turn into saxophones which turn into 78 exact replicas of Jean Harlow humming Beethoven's 24th Sonata. She gets up, goes to the mirror, the mirror splatters, the room turns blue, he swims toward her in a scuba suit, takes a harpoon and gaffs her ear, her ear turns into a cornucopia. Coins fall out, he picks them up, goes into the kitchen, takes out a frying pan, beats on it, hears the sound of the frying pan, she's beginning to bleed, her heart is throbbing on the floor, he takes a nine iron and chips it into the wall, the room turns red, the iron turns into a snake, coiling into her ear, eating her, digesting her, he goes into the kitchen, takes some Saran Wrap, wraps her head in it, her head leaps from her body, bounces on the floor, bouncing up and down. He leaps in the air, grabs a vine, swings back and forth, dressed as Tarzan, lands over here, where he keeps his stash, starts swinging again, she's lying on the floor, throbbing, begging, pleading . . . yes, that's it, yes, she's here for dope. The kitchen runs

into the bathroom, the bathroom into the kitchen, the medicine cabinet jumps back on the wall, the mirror decollapses. He swings over to her, she's here, dressed as Dale Evans, burning up, he grabs a pen wiper, cuts the vine with the pen wiper, grabs her arm, the vein is throbbing, pulsing, he vines her vein with the vine, raises the pen wiper and is about to insert it into her vein . . . Which is where we come in. (*addressing the mirror*) There's really no need for this kind of thing. None at all. We have a situation set up, which is comparable to this only it's under more beneficial, controlled circumstances. He proceeds in this amateuristic fashion, thus convicting himself, I'm afraid. There's no need for it. If he wanted to see us, if he made an effort, if he had something on his mind, some sort of desire, some sort of feeling, some sort of lust, some need, flesh need, hair need, eye need, soul need, mother need, father need, rock, tree, earth, sun, sound, sky need . . . he could have come down and seen us. It's a simple matter. You take the cross-town shuttle. The building's 87 stories high, black, no windows, you can't miss it. This particular crime is very common, *homo sapiensis romantismus phantasmagorias*, RP for short—it's located on the 13th, 22nd, 34th and 88th floors. We have miles and miles of files, prints, charts, graphs, ideograms, caligraphrams, telegrams, every conceivable aspect dealing with this particular operation, desire, need, felt emotion, whatever it was, we have it for him. You see, he has something on his mind. Something that he is seeking. We know what he was seeking, don't we? Some sort of fulfillment. What was it? Some supreme emotion? The feeling of his body moving through space, weightless like a bird? We have birds on tape, he could have been a bird. If he wanted to learn Chinese we could have transplanted the head of one of our Chinese people. There's no problem. We could have done this, done it all, for him.

That's what we're there for, to help. Help, help, help. But, no, they insist on going about it their own way, you see, and this is where they fall short. Then we're called in. And more's the pity, I'd say. It's bothersome. For me, for us, for everybody involved. And yet, it's so simple. So easy. He could have come in and sat down, given us his name, his number, his need, whatever it was, we have it. We check his print, his chart. We have his cellular development, his genetic background, his father's, mother's, sister's, his son's, heirs' to come, their genetic background, their cellular divisions, the history of his cells, chromosomes, past, present, future, their evolutionary development, on film, as they're developing in his body. Everything that he is, will be, hope to be. Everything that has been. We have all this. We could have done this for him. But, no. No, no, no! He proceeds in his own shoddy, little, amateuristic way. Insisting on his own method, flipping and flopping about. Why did he do this? Why? Why? Why? So simple a matter, so simple a matter. Was it love? Love? Love? Or hate. What? What was it? Images? Sounds? Did he want to hear the sound of a liner meeting the dock? The longshoremen singing at night? We have that. We have World War II on tape. We're working on World War III. What was it? A baby's cry? Hob-nailed boots? We could have given him this! Charts, prints, graphs, files, miles and miles of files! Anything! In perfection! Control! Whatever it is. Come in, give us your number, we have it for you. Anything you want! The world in the palm of your hand! The universe! Equations! Arithmetic! Alice! Method Alice! The birth of a star! A galaxy moving through space! Space moving through a galaxy! What is it? We have it! All of it! We have it! All! . . . controlled . . . (stops)! We left him here. Our friend, the bird. He inserts the needle into the vein. The heroin, an overdose, in this case, courses through the vein,

12 seconds of time, into the heart. The victim experiences a flash of joy . . . 13 seconds later, death. He gets up, goes into the bathroom, undresses himself, looks in the mirror and steps into the shower. Well, this concludes the case. Except for the motive . . . the motive. Oh, there's someone in the kitchen. There's someone in the kitchen and he's eating. He's eating. Yes, yes, of course. The motive is hunger. (leaving, stops) Odd, she resembles a K109BC . . . a saint. (exits)

The DOUBLE addresses the mirror.

Double: Yes, I have known a lot of psychopaths—bad amphetamine heads, bad junkies, father haters, killers, hard guys, slow talkers from Texas, droolers, silent tea heads, schizoid dykes, cokeys, racial fanatics, flipped out husbands . . . The one thing they all have in common is a certain freedom of action—they just don't give a shit. They have their thing to get them off, whatever it is, in the head . . . And I should say also, for your information, that drugs do not make psychopaths, psychopaths make drugs, as they make war, as every man is a potential psychopath. . . .

End of Part I

