

“Only a bunch of stupid f%#king idiots could mess this up!”

AUDITIONS

For Stephen Adly Guirgis' play,

DEN OF THIEVES

*A violent, R-Rated, Tarantino-esque comedy featuring mobsters,
strippers, kleptomaniacs, compulsive gamblers
...and a chainsaw.*

Presented by The Southern Connecticut State University
Department of Theatre and The Crescent Players

This packet contains information about the SCSU/Crescent Player's upcoming production of *Den of Thieves*. If you are excited by the information here and would like to be involved, please email me at curnsb1@southernct.edu or Production Manager, Professor Mike Skinner at Skinnerm2@southernct.edu. We are very excited to share this story and hope that you will join us on this wild ride. – Benjamin Curns, director.

Important Dates!

Auditions: October 15-16 from 7-10pm, Kendall Drama Lab in the
Lyman Center for the Performing Arts

Rehearsals: Rehearsals will begin Tuesday October 22nd, 2024

Performances: The play will open on November 21st and close on November 24th
2024.

Den of Thieves: A Warning

The subject matter of Den of Thieves includes violence (and specifically gun violence), abuse, addiction, racial humor, and frank descriptions of sex. Weigh this information while deciding to audition.

Den of Thieves: The Story

Maggie is in trouble. She is a compulsive thief and is addicted to junk food. She also has a psycho ex-boyfriend named Flaco, who, despite his name, is an angry young white boy.

But she's getting help! Paul is a reformed thief and conquered his own over-eating issues with the help of several 12-Step programs. He has taken on the role of Maggie's sponsor and means to wean her off a life of thievery.

The plan goes to hell when Flaco arrives with new stripper girlfriend, Boochie, and rants about a can't-fail heist of \$750,000. The lure of such a big score lures all four to team up and steal the cash.

They fail... Spectacularly.

Soon after, they find themselves tied to chairs in the basement of a home belonging to BIG TUNA, the city's most notorious gangster. His son, LITTLE TUNA, is given the responsibility of whacking them, but rather than kill the four would-be thieves, he presents a challenge: Elect one thief to be killed and the rest will be spared (albeit they will get their thumbs chopped off!).

The play then turns to the four of them arguing why they should or should not live before the gangsters return in the morning.

The dialogue is witty, profane, precise, and hilarious.

The characters are wild, believable, and multi-dimensional.

Who will live?

Who will die?

DEN OF THIEVES: Working Backstage

Stage Manager: The SM is present at all rehearsals & performances and works in tandem with the director. The stage manager will also coordinate with any assistant stage managers or deck crews working backstage.

Lighting/Set/Sound/Costume Teams:

Scenic Department builds and paints the set.

Lighting Department hangs, focuses, and designs how the stage will be lit.

Sound Department sets up the theatre for sound effects and music

Costume Department handles the clothes, the dressing room, make up, and wigs.

DEN OF THIEVES: ACTING ONSTAGE

In the section below, you will find a list of characters and a brief description of them. Following that, there are some sections of the play for you to prepare for the audition. You don't have to memorize, but those auditioning should be familiar enough to be able to look up from the paper!

MAGGIE – Compulsive thief and junk food addict. In a bad space in life but has a heart of gold. Wants to do right. (LARGE ROLE)

PAUL – Reformed thief and over eater who now wants to help others fight their addictions. A generous soul with a dark past. (LARGE ROLE)

FLACO – The unhinged and violent ex-boyfriend of Maggie. Presents as Latino. Short temper, still in love with Maggie. (LARGE ROLE)

BOOCHIE – Flaco's new girlfriend. A stripper by trade, Boochie has had a hard life but has learned that she can use sex to get what she wants. (SUPPORTING ROLE)

SAL A lieutenant in the Tuna crime family. Has no problem with violence, but is dispassionate about it. Has a secret. (SUPPORTING ROLE)

LITTLE TUNA – The son of the city's most powerful gangster. Is in the midst of a crisis of conscience about violence and "the life". Falls for Maggie...for real. (SUPPORTING ROLE)

BIG TUNA – The boss of bosses. Old school in his world view and that world view is being shattered. Jovial but menacing. (LARGE CAMEO ROLE)

PLEASE PREPARE YOUR FAVORITE SCENE OR SPEECH BELOW!

MONOLOGUES

PAUL pp 39

FLACO pp. 39-40, 25

BOOCHIE pp 37

MAGGIE pp 10

LITTLE TUNA 32-33

BIG TUNA 53

SCENES start on the next page.

BOOCHIE | PAUL

BOOCHIE. ... Paul?

PAUL. Yeah.

BOOCHIE. I'm sorry I called you annoying.

PAUL. Oh ... That's nice of you to say. Apology accepted.

BOOCHIE. You're not annoying. Actually, you're kinda cute.

PAUL. Well, thank you. So are you.

BOOCHIE. Can I share something with you?

PAUL. I guess.

BOOCHIE. I think you're very philosophy.

PAUL. Philosophy?

BOOCHIE. You know, like "factual," right?

PAUL. What are you trying to say?

BOOCHIE. Factual men ... make me damp.

PAUL. "Damp"?

BOOCHIE. You know, down there?

PAUL. Oh.

BOOCHIE. Paul?

PAUL. Yeah?

BOOCHIE. I'm getting kinky thoughts.

PAUL. What kind of kinky thoughts?

BOOCHIE. Kinky ones.

PAUL. Like, what?

BOOCHIE. I'm thinking about you being **real** heroic and volunteering to be the **one** who dies. Would you like to volunteer?

PAUL. Why would I volunteer?

BOOCHIE. Because if you volunteer I'll blow you.

PAUL. Blow me?

FLACO. Yo! Take my advice, it's worth it.

MAGGIE. Flaco!

BOOCHIE. Look at my lips. I got nice lips, right? Big, wet, adventurous lips. You see my tongue? I could do a lot of things with it. Look at my throat ... Can you picture it, Paul? I will do it all night long. I'll be getting you so hot and I'll even do it **right** up to the second they pull the trigger. I'll time it so you and **the** gun shoot at exactly the same time ... Could I ax you something, Paul?

PAUL. I guess so.

BOOCHIE. Does Paul Junior like it when he gets fondled and licked?

PAUL. Well, he don't hate it.

BIG TUNA | LITTLE TUNA | PAUL

BIG TUNA. Louis, I'm very disappointed in you. Go take these people out back and shoot them. And when you get back, me and you are going to have a long talk.

LITTLE TUNA. Pop, I can't shoot them.

BIG TUNA. Why not?

LITTLE TUNA. I told them I'd only kill one.

BIG TUNA. So, shoot one, let Sal shoot the rest.

LITTLE TUNA. But Daddy, I made a deal with them.

BIG TUNA. You made a deal?

LITTLE TUNA. Yeah.

BIG TUNA. Spare three, shoot one?

LITTLE TUNA. Yeah.

BIG TUNA. What do you get in return?

LITTLE TUNA. I don't remember.

BIG TUNA. Well then, that's a shit deal, don't you think?

PAUL. Mr. Big Tuna? I'm Paul Abraham Handleman and I'd like to say that you should be proud of your son. There are seeds of compassion and love in him.

BIG TUNA. Seeds, eh?

PAUL. That's right.

BIG TUNA. I always worried about that. He gets it from his mother.

PAUL. You should support him, not berate him.

BIG TUNA. What'd you say your name was?

PAUL. Handleman.

BIG TUNA. I knew a Handleman once. Maury Handleman.

PAUL. Yes, yes! He's my grandfather.

BIG TUNA. Grandfather? Well, knowing Maury, I ain't surprised — liberal bastard. Actually, you two got a lot in common.

PAUL. Thank you.

BIG TUNA. Yeah, He was a preachy little bastard just like you. Always saying I should give more to "charity." I don't like charity ... Maury Handleman ... what a piece of work. One time, your grandpop comes to me with this big score. He was gonna hit the Republican National Committee Campaign Fund safe. Steal all the money. He had it planned perfectly. I was impressed. I was all set to collaborate with his Den a ... What'd they call themselves?

PAUL. Den of Thieves.

BIG TUNA. Right. Den of Thieves. I was all set to do it and I axed him, "What's my cut?" "Nothing," he says. "Nothing"? He tells me we're takin' all the money to fund some book thing, a bunch of trucks with books, goin' to inner-city neighborhoods givin' out books.

PAUL. The bookmobile!

BIG TUNA. Crazy bastard. Hey, is your grandfather still alive?

PAUL. Yes, he is. He has his own locksmith shop in Brooklyn Heights.

BIG TUNA. That's terrific. I'll have to visit him sometime.

PAUL. He'd love that.

BIG TUNA. Absolutely. Okay, Sal. Take them all out back and shoot 'em!

BOOCHIE | PAUL | FLACO | MAGGIE

BOOCHIE. — If you ask me, Paul should be the one to die!

PAUL. Why me?

BOOCHIE. 'Cuz you're fuckin' tired and annoying.

PAUL. Annoying?

BOOCHIE. Annoying!

FLACO. Amen.

PAUL. You think I'm annoying?

BOOCHIE. Are you deaf? Isn't this guy annoying?

PAUL. Even if I was annoying, which, I think that's very debatable, but even if I was, that's still no reason for me to die. Being annoying was not a capital crime the last time I checked.

FLACO. Yeah, well, it should be.

BOOCHIE. Dass right! Corny-ass scrub!

PAUL. Scrub?!

MAGGIE. Everybody stop the bullshit. That man said we had till dawn to decide who's going, and look out the window. It's almost dawn.

PAUL. I think we should just draw straws and let fate decide.

FLACO. Do you see any fuckin' straws around here?!

PAUL. No, but ...

FLACO. "But"?! But fuck you "but"! We're tied to fuckin' chairs. Even if we had straws, we couldn't draw them!

MAGGIE. Calm down, Flaco.

FLACO. Yo, he's a stupid ass. It's your fault that he's here, Maggie.

MAGGIE. It wasn't Paul who got us into this mess, Flaco.

FLACO. I didn't know it was mob money.

PAUL. You should have staked it out better. You don't just steal 750,000 dollars on a whim!

FLACO. You're a stupid little clown-faced idiot orphan clown!

PAUL. You can call me all the childish things you want to, but the bottom line is that we're in this position because of you!

BOOCHIE. Dag, Flaco, I don't wanna die.

FLACO. You're not gonna die.

PAUL. Someone's gonna die.

FLACO. Well, not me.

SAL | LITTLE TUNA ①

SAL. ~~Lions my ass. (Back to back.)~~ Gimme the Bears, Greek, fifty times ... What?! Just take the fuckin' bet! And Lemme tell you this my friend: The next time you don't know who I am ... you betta know who I am! (Louie "The Little Tuna" enters.)

LITTLE TUNA. Who was you talkin' to Sal?

SAL. My mother.

LITTLE TUNA. That wasn't a bookie you was just talkin' to?

SAL. C'mon Lou, you know I don't gamble no more.

LITTLE TUNA. I hope not ... How is your mother?

SAL. She's indestructible like a — like a — thing that can't be destructed.

LITTLE TUNA. Did you call my father yet?

SAL. Yeah.

LITTLE TUNA. What did he say?

SAL. Said he'll be back from Vegas in the morning.

LITTLE TUNA. What else did he say?

SAL. He said, "Tell the Little Tuna to *handle* it."

LITTLE TUNA. What do you think he means by that?

SAL. Bang, bang, bang. Chop, chop, chop.

LITTLE TUNA. Maybe we should just wait till he gets back.

SAL. He told you to *handle* it, Lou. Handle it means handle it. If the Big Tuna comes home and this ain't handled...?

LITTLE TUNA. You're right, Sal.

SAL. So just shoot 'em. Dinner's almost ready. (Pause.)

LITTLE TUNA. Ya know what? My gun, it's fucked up.

SAL. Whaddya mean?

LITTLE TUNA. I left my gun in my jeans the other night, then when the maid did the laundry, she fucked it up, so now it's all fucked up.

SAL. Use my gun.

LITTLE TUNA. Nice gun.

SAL. Thanks. (Pause.)

LITTLE TUNA. Sally, I don't feel like shooting nobody today.

SAL. Don't worry 'bout it, Cucino. I'll do it myself.

LITTLE TUNA. Thanks, Sal.

SAL. Go back upstairs now, play the Nintendo, I'll call you when dinner's ready.

LITTLE TUNA. Right ... Sal?

SAL. Yeah?

LITTLE TUNA. Got some broccoli in your teeth.

SAL. Oh, thanks. (Sal cocks his gun.)

LITTLE TUNA. So, Sal, do I know these people? Who are they?

SAL. Buncha junkies, I dunno.

LITTLE TUNA. ... Take the bags off their heads, Sal. I wanna see these losers.

SAL/LITTLE TUNA (2)

SAL. Why should you wanna see them?

LITTLE TUNA. Just do what I say.

SAL. C'mon Louie. Don't get soft on me now.

LITTLE TUNA. Soft? You think I'm soft?

SAL. I didn't mean soft.

LITTLE TUNA. Who's the boss here, you or me?

SAL. You.

LITTLE TUNA. Say it.

SAL. Say what?

LITTLE TUNA. Say I'm the boss.

SAL. You're the boss, Lou, no questions about it.

LITTLE TUNA. Okay well, the boss says take the bags off their heads so I can see them. You got a problem with that? (*Sal takes the bags off their heads.*)

LITTLE TUNA. *Maron*, these two women were involved?

SAL. Dass right.

LITTLE TUNA. Ladies, why do you put me in this position? I don't wanna kill you. That's not my style. I prefer making love to you; wining and dining you, watching a lovely sunset over an expensive brandy with you. But you ladies, you leave me no choice. It's a good thing Sal here don't have a problem killing women.

SAL. The cross I bare.

LITTLE TUNA. *Death*, my friends, death is the sentence when you rob from Al "the Big Tuna" Pescatore, or me, "the Little Tuna"!

PAUL / FLACO

FLACO. Okay fine. 300 grand for me, 150 each for the three of you equals 750.

PAUL. You must be joking.

FLACO. Yo, I'm the leader, son! I found it, I planned it, I'm the most visible suspect, I'm taking the biggest risk. 300 grand for me — and I'm doin' y'all a favor!

PAUL. Forget it. I'm out.

~~MAGGIE. M~~

~~PAUL.~~ I don't know what came over me. I'm retired. I'm 682 days theft-free. I'm outta here.

FLACO. Yo! You never heard of negotiating?

PAUL. My soul is not negotiable. *(Paul starts to leave.)*

FLACO. Okay okay, you little dick! What'd you have in mind?

PAUL. Nothing.

FLACO. C'mon, just give me a figure.

PAUL. You're not gonna like it.

FLACO. Try me.

PAUL. Number One, take out your gun and put it on the table.

FLACO. Yeah, right.

PAUL. You wanna make money tonight? Put the gun on the table. *(Flaco very reluctantly complies.)* I'm taking this gun and throwing it in the sewer ... Now, here's the deal: half the money goes to charity.

FLACO. Charity?! As in, like, what: "Give the money away" charity?!

PAUL. 375,000 dollars goes towards building a new library right here in this neighborhood. A place where kids can read and learn without bullets flying past their heads.

FLACO. Kids? What Kids?

PAUL. The kids in the neighborhood.

FLACO. Yo, fuck the kids! ~~Let them build their own damn~~

MAGGIE / FLACO

FLACO. Oh, ma Gawd! Am I glad to see you, baby!

MAGGIE. What do you want, Flaco?

FLACO. Yo, what kind of a greeting is that?

MAGGIE. Look, I was just about to go to sleep —

FLACO. — Well, wake up! We got a lot of work to do, and not much time to do it.

MAGGIE. Flaco —

FLACO. Yo! ... What's that smell?!

MAGGIE. What smell? (*Flaco sniffs.*)

FLACO. Old Spice ... I smell Old Spice!

MAGGIE. I don't smell anything —

FLACO. — Why your apartment smell like after-shave?!

MAGGIE. Well, the super was here yesterday —

FLACO. No, this is a fresh scent! ... Yo! Whose bag is that?!

MAGGIE. What bag?

FLACO. "What bag"?! That bag right there! That "looking like a man's bag" bag!

MAGGIE. Go home Flaco; I'm not your girlfriend no more.

FLACO. You got a man in here don't you?!

MAGGIE. No.

FLACO. Deceit! You deceiting me! ... Yo, Motherfucker! Come out of your hiding place! I know you're here!

MAGGIE. Get out my apartment, Flaco! (*Beat.*)

FLACO. You don't got a man in here?!

MAGGIE. No!

FLACO. Then that must be a prowler under the table. (*Flaco takes out a gun.*)

MAGGIE. Flaco!

FLACO. Get out from under that table, mothahfuckah! Are you a prowler, or are you fucking my girlfriend?!

MAGGIE. Flaco! Put that gun down!

FLACO. Identify yourself: prowler, or girlfriend fucker?! (*Paul emerges from under the table.*)

PAUL | MAGGIE

MAGGIE. Paul?

PAUL. Yes.

MAGGIE. Here.

PAUL. That's my...! You stole my wallet?

MAGGIE. I'm *deeply* sorry.

PAUL. How'd you steal my wallet?

MAGGIE. Remember on the elevator?

PAUL. What?

MAGGIE. I brushed up against you?

PAUL. I thought you were flirting.

MAGGIE. I wasn't.

PAUL. Wow! I must be slipping.

MAGGIE. No, I'm just good. *(Beat.)*

PAUL. Can I ask you something?

MAGGIE. What?

PAUL. Do you think it's possible that by stealing my wallet you were maybe, I dunno, subconsciously trying to get my attention?

'Cuz I mean, I've seen you staring at me before, tonight even —

MAGGIE. — I was starin' at the money you were counting at the beginning of the meeting — it looked like a lot of money.

PAUL. Damn, I am slipping: flashing my wad in a room full of fuckin' kleptos! I mean, Maggie, don't get me wrong —

MAGGIE. — No, you're right.

PAUL. No I'm not! I am wrong and I need to make an amends to you immediately! I apologize ... See, that's the *old* me that made that "klepto" remark. The *new* me wants to trust. And I'm working to trust One Day at a Time. I trust you, Maggie. I want you to know that. You stole my wallet, but than you returned it, no harm, no foul. *(He looks inside the wallet.)* Where's my fucking money?!

MAGGIE. I'll pay you back —

PAUL. Pay me back?! Just give it back.

MAGGIE. They were gonna kick me outta here, Paul — I needed it for rent!

PAUL. I had 800 bucks in there! I was planning to attend a holistic wellness retreat in Vail, Colorado!

MAGGIE. Look. I got a TV, some stereo equipment, I got a new microwave. Take it! Take all of it! I'm a fuck-up, I don't belong in the program! I thought I did but I don't. I'm incurable. I'm sorry, Paul.

PAUL. Maggie —

MAGGIE. — No! I gave this self-help thing a try. I went to meetings, got my "chakra's aligned"; I became real familiar with the personal growth section of Barnes & Noble. I tried, and I'll never be better, I'll always be like this! I'm a bad person and I can't be saved, and even if I could, I'm not worthy of a better life, I'm not worthy of anything! I'm going to bed now. Take what you want, just, leave the food and close the door behind you. *(Maggie picks up the Yodels from the pile of stolen goods and starts heading for her bedroom.)*

PAUL. Maggie!

MAGGIE. Goodbye, Paul.

PAUL. Put the Yodels down, Maggie!

MAGGIE. What?

PAUL. Gimme the Yodels.

MAGGIE. No!

PAUL. Maggie, you don't wanna eat those!

MAGGIE. Yes I do! ... And I want that Heathbar too!

BIG TUNA

~~BIG TUNA. Don't push your luck, Headman. (Beat. Big Tuna grabs another donut.)~~ You kids today, you baffle me with your problems. Nah, really, I'm standing here in a state of bafflement. You think we didn't have problems in the old days?

~~LITTLE TUNA. We know you did, Pop.~~

~~BIG TUNA.~~ Forget about it. Our problems made your problems look fuckin' ridiculous! When I was you people's age, I had three paper routes, I drove a fruit truck, worked part-time at the barbershop — all those jobs I did before noon. Then I went to the trade school. Took classes, got out of school, worked at your Uncle Marco's restaurant till midnight, went home, slept three hours and did it all over again. One day I says to your Grandpa Pepe, "This is too much for me. I got unhappy problems. Life's getting me down." You know what Granpa Pepe said to me?

~~LITTLE TUNA. Was it?~~

~~BIG TUNA.~~ — Grandpa Pepe said to me — I'll never forget it — "Life ... is like an artichoke."

~~BOOCHE. An artichoke?~~

~~BIG TUNA. That's right, honey.~~ See, an artichoke's got the sweet meat inside. But it's small. The rest of the artichoke, you can't do nothin' wit' it. Anyways, Grandpa Pepe, he says; "Life is like an artichoke: you take the sweet meat. The rest? You throw it away." Now, that's what you young people gotta friggin' learn.

Little Tuna

LITTLE TUNA. Apologies? This is new. Well okay: I, myself, apologize to you for having to kill youse all, but this is business. I got a reputation to uphold. Someday, I'll be a boss, and how's it gonna look if people think they can just apologize and call it a night?

(A warning.) Sal —

— You wanna know what these fuckin' people said to me?! They said: "Sal don't seem ta lissen to a fuckin' word you say — maybe you should give Sal's job to your cousin Dino, and Sal

should go back to runnin' numbers in Miami since he loves fuckin' Spanish people and HUMIDITY so fuckin' much"! *(Sal skulls off.)*

~~LITTLE TUNA~~. Now look here, I'm gonna make this short and sweet: I need one body, and three thumbs. You can decide the who's and the wherefore's among yourselves — and believe me — this is a deal you're gettin' over here! The person who dies will get two in the back of the head. Quick and painless. Maggie, I hope you live: I got two in the fifth row for Mariah Carey next week ... Anyway, at the stoke of dawn, I'll come back here with Sal. I'll expect your decision then. Goodnight. *(Louie exits Pause.)*

FLACO

FLACO. ... Yeah well ... I may not be perfect. I'm man enough to admit it. I may not even be a "good" person. I might even be a "bad" person. I steal, I do crimes, I deal a little dope, I don't do any of those things you just talked about. None of them. I smoke, drink, do alotta drugs, fuckin' curse — if I see something I want, I take it. I mugged a nun once. Two nuns! ... I admit it. Up until now, I've been pretty selfish and bad — and I don't apologize for it! 'Cuz if you grew up how I did, you might be the same, maybe worse. You might be dead right now. Maybe I didn't have the

opportunities you had growing up, but I ain't making excuses. I take full responsibility for who I am. I did what I thought I had to do and here I am, still alive, still standing ... That's right. I am standing here with the one gift no one's ever taken away from me and no one ever will because I won't let them! I'm standin' here with a world full a *potential* still coursing through my veins! Look at me. I'm young, good looking, highly intelligent, charismatic! I got charisma, baby! I'm a natural born leader, always have been. Can you deny it? I think not! I got so much potential, yo! I could be president. I could be a leader of my people. Some day soon, I'll be a force for *righteousness* and when that happens, I'll move mountains! War is coming, yo, and when it does, the good guys gonna need people like me, 'cause people like me, we're rare! You're right about one thing, Paul. Up until now I haven't done much to make a difference but my time is coming, son — my time is coming! If I die now, the world may be losing the next Che Gueverra, the next Malcolm X and shit, and they'll never even know I was here! I would hate for the world to suffer such a devastating loss, wouldn't you?! I'm a let your conscience be your guide, people. Finito!

BOOCHIE

BOOCHIE. ~~Thank you.~~ (She clears her throat.) Society would suffer if I die for many multiples of reasons. Number one: As an exotic dancer, I bring smiles to the faces of many sad lonely mens, and sometimes womens too if they into that. Number three: I am extremely fly — as you definitely noticed — maybe in the top ten of flyest womens in the city, and if they serious about keeping New York beautiful then they gotta need me around, right? ... I'm also a sexual surrogate, which means I fuck for educationalism, which is important to society since I teach mens to fuck better, and God knows womankind could use more mens who fuck better — right, Maggie? I provide that. I also teach fellatios to the womens which I'm sure most mens could appreciate ... Number eight: I believe in charity. When I get famous, I plan on donating a lot of money to the Ronald McDonald House so sick children of all ages could always eat McDonald's for free, so even when they die, they'll die happy. Oh, also I belong in the A.S.P.C.A ... (Pause.) One more thing, which, I don't even know why I'm saying this, but, I got abused a lot as a child, people. A lot. And I ain't sayin' that for you to feel sorry for me, even though I wouldn't mind if you did feel sorry so I could be one a the survivors, but, the point of this is that everyone in my family called me "garbage can," including my mother, which I think dat ain't very nice, but also I think is very false 'cuz I ain't no fuckin' garbage can! And even though I gots lots and lots of talents which make me definitely a big bargain for the society, even if I didn't have *any* of those amazing skills and dreams which I, like, process — even if I *was* a garbage can — which I'm not — I'd still be valuable 'cuz where you gonna put your garbage if you don't got no can? Someone's gotta be that can, right? So, for all these ideals and many more, I feel I am a valuable ass to society and many, many peoples of all the five boroughs, and maybe even the world, would have their lives be more messed up if I wasn't around to be around ... Dass it. Thank you. ♣

PAUL

PAUL. Lemme tell you *why* society would suffer if I died, Flaco. It would suffer because, unlike you, I *contribute* to society. I am a group leader in more than a dozen 'Self Help' organizations. I don't tear down other people's self-confidence and self-esteem, I help rebuild it. Also, unlike you, "Flaco," I have a job. I pay taxes. I give to charity. I go to temple. I vote. I donate my time to volunteer agencies. I make it my responsibility to know what's going on politically. I work with children. I work with the elderly. I try to treat people with *respect* and *kindness*. Do you, Flaco? Do you do any of these things? I am trying, a day at a time, to be a good person. To "live in the solution." Now, maybe that's not "exciting" or "sexy" — maybe it's even "nerdy" — but it works for me. I am not afraid to go out and try and make a difference in this screwed up world. I say "hello" to my neighbor if I see him on the street. I lend a hand. I contribute. If nothing else, I care. I am not ashamed to say that I am a good person and that I love me and that I *care*. ♣