

GIVE THE PEOPLE  
WHAT THEY  
WANT

(seven plays for five actors)

by

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A NOTE ON CHARACTER NAMES: The names of the actual five actors playing these roles should determine the character names. For example, if you happen to cast Dustin Hoffmann and Meryl Streep for the Chris Chrisson and Keisha Keishason roles, you should rename the characters Dustin Dustinson and Meryl Merylson.

A WALK IN THE PUBLIC AREA (intro.)

(Keisha enters and stands center stage. She addresses the audience directly.)

KEISHA

Number One: Love.

(She exits. Lights fade.)

A WALK IN THE PUBLIC AREA

(Just after lunch. Micah and Julie stroll casually across the public atrium of a big, big office building.)

JULIE

Oh, Micah, you're such a - - brownny man.

MICAH

Thank you, Julie. That's - - very kind of you to say.

(She takes his hand.)

JULIE

A brownny, brownny, brownny man.

MICAH

Thank you.

(She sighs. The two take in the scene around them.)

JULIE

I love the public area this time of day, just after lunch with everyone burpy and sleepy and the table tops still dusted with crumbs.

MICAH

It's a wonderful place to eat one's lunch.

JULIE

Or even one's own.

MICAH

Wha-? I - - ah ha ha ha ha ha...

(They laugh.)

MICAH

Oh, Julie. I feel so lucky to have you here with me in the public atrium of this big, big office building.

JULIE

I'm the one who's lucky, Micah.

(They come close to kissing then shyly pull away.)

JULIE  
I...um...

MICAH  
I'm sorry, Julie.

JULIE  
Don't be sorry, Micah.

MICAH  
I didn't mean to be so forward.

JULIE  
I don't mind you being forward.

MICAH  
But-

(She puts her hand to his mouth.)

JULIE  
I don't mind you being forward at all. I just want us to enjoy our lunchtime together. After all, we only get a half hour.

MICAH  
Of course you're right, Julie. Thank you.

(They take in the scene again, resettling a bit after their uncomfortable incident.)

MICAH  
A bird was trapped in here the other day.

JULIE  
No.

MICAH  
True story.

JULIE  
A pigeon?

MICAH  
Not a pigeon, smaller than a pigeon.

JULIE

Drawn in by the fountain, no doubt.

MICAH

Perhaps.

(Feeling bold, he takes her hand in his, drawing her close to him.)

MICAH

Seeing you here, Julie, by the fountain as you are, I feel  
- - I feel that you are that bird in some small way.

JULIE

Oh, Micah.

MICAH

Drawn in by the fountain, smaller than a pigeon, beautiful  
and - - flying around.

JULIE

But Micah, I was drawn in by you.

MICAH

Then, perhaps, I am that fountain.

(They kiss at last, then embrace.)

JULIE

I bet you eat your lunch down here alot, Micah.

MICAH

Oh yes, I do. Some days I buy from the salad bar - you know the one - and bring it here, to one of these tables to eat it quietly with perhaps only a magazine or a sports section for company. Some days I pack my own lunch and stare silently into the fountain while I savor my thriftiness: peanut butter and jelly, tuna fish salad, ham and swiss on whole wheat. And some days - some days I buy from the kiosk itself, the one over there, the one that maintains these very tables.

JULIE

So expensive.

MICAH

Yes. But on a rainy day...

JULIE

I understand entirely.

(They hold each other tight.)

MICAHA

Julie?

JULIE

Yes, Micah?

MICAHA

Can I ask you a question?

JULIE

Of course, Micah, what is it?

MICAHA

Earlier - earlier you referred to me as a "browny" man.  
I'm afraid I don't know what that means.

(She pulls herself away from him a little bit.)

JULIE

Do we have to talk about this now, Micah?

MICAHA

No, of course not, it was only that-

(She pulls away from him entirely, trying  
desperately to change the subject.)

JULIE

My, it certainly is beautiful here this time of day, don't  
you think?

MICAHA

Yes. I do.

JULIE

I could stay here all day, I really could. Too bad we only  
get a half hour.

MICAHA

I asked you a question, Julie.

JULIE

I know you did, Micah.

MICAH

Then why don't you-?

JULIE

Can't we just walk and smell the fountain without asking and answering silly questions about words and what they mean? Can't we do that, Micah? Just for today?

MICAH

Of course we can, Julie. It was just that-

JULIE

Micah, please! Don't ask me about it again.

(Beat.)

MICAH

Of course you're right, Julie. I didn't mean to press it, I'm sorry.

JULIE

Don't be sorry, Micah, just - just be with me.

MICAH

I'm here for you.

(They embrace. Then)

JULIE

Oh, look!

MICAH

Yes, Julie?

JULIE

The pigeon! The one you saw, there it is, flying near the fountain.

MICAH

So it is, Julie. So it is.

JULIE

So beautiful.

MICAH

Yes.

JULIE  
So free.

MICAH  
That too.

JULIE  
Do you really think of me as being like that pigeon you saw, just flying around and searching for bits of food left by departing luncheoners and what not.

MICAH  
I do, Julie.

JULIE  
So beautiful.

MICAH  
Like you.

JULIE  
Oh Micah.

MICAH  
Julie.

JULIE  
Kiss me.

(They kiss for a good long time, then embrace, her more warmly than he.)

MICAH  
Although I must say that what I saw was smaller than a pigeon.

JULIE  
What's that?

MICAH  
The bird that I saw, it was smaller than a pigeon.

JULIE  
Smaller than a pigeon?

MICAH  
That's right, Julie. Smaller than a pigeon, and therefore not a pigeon.

Oh?

JULIE

MICAH  
You said pigeon. I didn't see a pigeon.

JULIE  
Well, you saw something.

MICAH  
I did see something. It's just that it wasn't a pigeon, it was smaller than a pigeon.

JULIE  
What are you after, Micah?

MICAH  
I said it wasn't a pigeon the first time. Why do I have to keep saying it over and over and over and over and over again?

JULIE  
Now you're angry with me.

MICAH  
I'm not angry, I'm just - well, yes, I suppose I am a little bit irritated.

JULIE  
Don't be angry, Micah. Be happy. We're together now, don't you see? Nothing else matters but that.

(They embrace again, if uncertainly. Realizing now what's wrong, Julie backs away.)

JULIE  
You're still thinking about it, aren't you?

MICAH  
Thinking about what, Julie?

JULIE  
You know what I'm talking about.

MICAH  
But what on earth can it mean? "Brownny"?

JULIE

And now we're talking about it! How is this supposed to continue, Micah?

MICAH

Julie, please, relax.

JULIE

You made a promise to me, Micah.

MICAH

How can I not wonder, Julie? How can I not - How can you ask me not to question? "Brownny"?

JULIE

Oh, Micah, people say things all the time, silly things, meaningless things, what else can people do? You say I said "brownny," so I said "brownny." What difference does it make?

MICAH

You tell me, Julie, what is the difference that it makes? "Brownny"? What on Earth can an expression like that mean?!

JULIE

Oh, Micah, it means many things to many people.

MICAH

It does?! Other than the cakey treat or the old-timey camera or the little girls' organization, I've never heard the word "Brownny" used before in my life! Ever! So you tell me, Julie, what does it mean?!

(Grabbing her now by the shoulders.)

What does it mean to YOU?!

(He holds her hard, waiting her response. Then, realizing what he's done, he steps away from her, horrified.)

JULIE

Actually, I think I'd better go now.

MICAH

No.

JULIE

Yes.

MICAHA

Julie, please, don't leave now, not because of this.

JULIE

I'm afraid I'm going to have to.

MICAHA

I didn't mean to offend you.

JULIE

Well, you did, Micah. You offended me a lot, an awful lot.

MICAHA

Julie.

JULIE

Micah, I think we've seen enough of each other for today.

MICAHA

Julie, please, you're being unkind.

JULIE

Unkind?

MICAHA

Or at least unfair, or perhaps even a little bit - -  
brownny?

(She slaps him hard across the face.)

JULIE

(Hissing)

How dare you.

MICAHA

Julie?

JULIE

"Brownny"? Me?! Brownny?!

(She winds up to smack him again then, at the last moment, stops herself. He stares at her, shocked and wounded. Soon she is as shocked with herself as he is.)

JULIE

Oh, Micah-

MICAH

Stop. Stay away from me, please.

JULIE

I didn't mean to-

MICAH

I don't care what you meant to do. I don't care about- I think you're right, Julie. Our time together is over.

JULIE

It's just a word, Micah. It doesn't mean any thing, it just came out. That's all.

MICAH

Oh, it means something, Julie. It means something very much. And it's something I hope I never hear again as long as I live.

JULIE

Micah.

MICAH

Julie.

JULIE

I hurt you, let me help you.

MICAH

I'd rather that you didn't, actually.

JULIE

Micah.

(She reaches up to touch his face, he turns his face away.)

JULIE

Well, I suppose this truly is goodbye after all.

MICAH

You're free again, Julie. You should be happy about that.

JULIE

Like that pigeon you saw.

MICAH

Or some other bird.

JULIE

Yes. Some other bird.

(She starts to leave.)

MICAH

And Julie?

JULIE

Yes, Micah.

MICAH

Don't go back to the salad bar across the street, you know the one. I wouldn't want to bump into you there.

JULIE

No, of course not.

MICAH

Thank you, Julie.

JULIE

Goodbye, Micah.

MICAH

Goodbye, Julie.

(She exits in tears.)

MICAH

Brownny Julie. Brownny, brownny, brownny, brownny Julie.

(Lights fade.)

**FIN**

WEATHER (intro.)

(Chris enters and addresses us directly.)

Chris

Number two: Sex.

(He exits. Lights fade.)

WEATHER

(Dan and Keisha sit with their backs to the audience, addressing unseen cameras upstage.)

KEISHA

We'll be back with more headlines-

DAN

And weather!

KEISHA

After this.

(Lights bump down, Dan and Keisha relax. From offstage we hear)

MICAH(O.S.)

We're out! Sixty seconds!

(Dan turns to Keisha.)

DAN

(Softly)

You were amazing last night.

KEISHA

(Also softly)

Thanks, so were you.

(Dan reaches into his jacket pocket.)

DAN

I got you something.

(Dan hands Keisha a little box. She opens it.)

MICAH(O.S.)

Fifteen seconds!

KEISHA

My God. It's beautiful. Thank you.

DAN

Thank you for finally letting me see what you wear under all those business suits.

KEISHA

Anytime.

DAN

How about tonight?

MICAH(O.S.)

Three! Two!

(Lights bump up. Dan and Keisha turn their attention upstage.)

DAN

In Afghanistan today there was more violence. Chris Chrisson reports from Kabul.

(Chris enters and stands somewhere upstage, facing Dan and Keisha.)

CHRIS

Two members of Afghanistan's government were gunned down today in simultaneous drive-by shootings. And in Khandahar, a suicide bomber drove an explosive laden Humvee into a police station, killing twenty seven and wounding many more.

KEISHA

Chris, on the Khandahar story, did the police think the humvee was friendly?

CHRIS

That's exactly right, Keisha. We've gotten reports that the suicide bomber was wearing an American style uniform, but we haven't gotten confirmation of that just yet.

DAN

Chris Chrisson reporting from Kabul.

KEISHA

Stay safe.

(Chris exits.)

DAN

A fire sweeps through a Brooklyn housing project. That, and weather, after this.

(Lights bump down.)

MICAH(O.S.)

We're out! Sixty seconds!

(Dan turns to Keisha.)

DAN

You like bubble bath?

KEISHA

I love bubble bath.

DAN

I've got a jacuzzi.

KEISHA

I noticed.

(Dan takes out his cell phone.)

DAN

I'm gonna call my help, give her the night off.

(Dan dials, then takes Keisha's hand.)

KEISHA

I'll have to go home first.

DAN

No you won't.

KEISHA

I don't have a change of clothes.

DAN

All the better.

(Micah enters with Julie. Julie notices the hand holding.)

MICAH

You'll do the weather spot from here, Julie. So just stand quietly and wait for Dan's cue.

JULIE

I know the drill, Micah. I haven't been gone that long.

(Micah leads Julie to a spot upstage. Seeing Julie, Dan hangs up the phone and let's go of Keisha's hand.)

MICAH

Thanks for filling in at the last minute. Fifteen seconds!

(Micah exits.)

DAN

Julie.

JULIE

Dan. Hi, Keisha.

DAN

What are you doing here?

JULIE

Covering. You've gone through quite a few weather women in the last few months I understand. But I see you've graduated from meteorologists.

DAN

You shouldn't have come.

JULIE

You should have answered my messages.

MICAH(O.S)

Okay, here we go! Three! Two!

KEISHA

A Brooklyn apartment complex devastated by fire. Chris Chrisson was there.

(Chris enters and stands in his spot.)

CHRIS

Tonight the building is dark, but earlier today it was the site of a deadly fire that claimed three lives and left hundreds homeless. Arson is suspected, and gas cans found near the fire seem to confirm that suspicion.

DAN

Anyone being held?

CHRIS

Oh, I don't really know.

KEISHA

Chris Chrisson in Brooklyn.

(Chris exits.)

DAN

And now weather. Hi, Julie. Welcome back.

JULIE

I got the blood tests back, Dan. You're the father of my child. I told you that in voicemail messages, email messages, texts, and certified letters. Now I'm telling you in person.

(Beat. Lights bump down.)

MICAHA(O.S.)

Thirty seconds!!

KEISHA

Oh my God.

(Micah storms on.)

MICAHA

Are you out of your mind?!

JULIE

I'm sorry, Micah.

MICAHA

What the fuck are you doing bringing your personal shit in here?! Our viewers don't care about your children, they care about the weather!

JULIE

I didn't know we were on.

MICAHA

(Calling off)

Did the delay get that?!

CHRIS(O.S.)

Caught most of it.

MICAH

I thought you said you were up for this.

JULIE

I did. I am.

MICAH

What a major fuck up this turned out to be.

JULIE

I made a mistake. That's all.

KEISHA

I could deliver the weather report.

JULIE

That would be fun to see.

MICAH

We'll take it again. No more mistakes.

(Micah exits. Julie turns to Keisha.)

JULIE

You have no idea what you've gotten yourself mixed up with, do you, Keisha?

MICAH(O.S.)

We'll go to Chris at the kennel, then you, Julie! Got it?!

KEISHA

Try any shit and I will fuck you up. I swear to God I will.

JULIE

Try your best.

MICAH(O.S.)

Three! Two!

(Lights bump up.)

DAN

We've got weather for you coming up, but first Chris Chrisson would like to share a very special birth story. Chris?

(Chris enters.)

CHRIS

I'm at the Happy Day animal shelter where Daisy, a Golden Lab, gave birth to a litter of seven golden pups. So this year, Happy Day will be offering this golden dog tag to the lucky owner who will claim both Daisy and her golden pups.

DAN

Thanks Chris.

(Chris exits.)

KEISHA

And now weather.

JULIE

The DNA matches, Dan. It's yours. So maybe you should leave your bimbo co-anchor and be a father to at least one of your children, not that you don't have others.

KEISHA

Hey! You're the bimbo, bimbo! You got knocked up?! You take care of it!

JULIE

You're probably knocked up, too, bimbo! You're just too much of a bimbo to know it yet!

MICAH(O.S.)

THIRTY SECONDS!!

(Lights bump down.)

KEISHA

You couldn't hold onto him?! Too bad, go home and cry into your fucking pillow!

JULIE

He puts holes in his condoms!

KEISHA

What?!!

DAN

That is not true! That's your lawyer talking, Julie, and you know it!

(Micah storms on again.)

MICAH

(To Julie)

You, out! Security, get this woman out of the station!

(Chris rushes on as a security guard. He struggles to drag Julie off as the shouting match continues.)

JULIE

He's a psychopath! He tried to do it without a condom, right?! He tried to, didn't he Keisha?! You know he did!

DAN

I'm sterile! I'm sterile AND I had a vasectomy! What do I need with a condom?!

JULIE

Compromising protection is how he gets off! Ask any woman who's worked here for the past ten years! He's fathered ten children at this station alone!

DAN

That's a lie!

JULIE

My lawyer has his condom collection! I took it when he broke up with me and then got me fired!

DAN

You put the holes in my condoms!

KEISHA

You have holes in your condoms?!

DAN

She's trying to entrap me! We had a fling, so what?! She's the psychopath, not me!

MICAH

Get her out of here!

JULIE

Think about it, Keisha! Think about what happened to you last night! Did you see the needle on his night stand?! How it was in a kind of shrine?!

(Chris drags Julie out, Micah exits.)

DAN  
Women. Crazy. They're all crazy.

(Beat.)

KEISHA  
I think I'll take a pass on tonight.

MICAH(O.S.)  
Three! Two!

(Lights bump up.)

DAN  
I'm not saying you're crazy. Her. Julie. And the others. And if I put holes in my condoms with my special needle, so what? There shouldn't be more little Dans in the world? More beautiful little Me's? Men gotta sow their oats, baby. Wild oats. Wild. So, yeah, I put holes in my condoms with my needle, my God-needle. And I'll do it again. And again. Until I die, or until they put me behind bars. Again.

(Beat. Keisha turns to the "camera".)

KEISHA  
Have a great weekend, everybody. We'll be back tomorrow morning with news, sports -

DAN  
(Realizing he's still on.)  
And - - weather!

KEISHA  
Goodnight.

(Lights bump down. Keisha runs out. Dan is left utterly alone. Lights fade.)

**IT IS THE END**