

PIG FARMACT I
Scene 1

(The large, eat-in kitchen of a struggling pig farm somewhere in America. Tom, a strong, weather beaten man, sits at a table looking over a letter from the federal government. A door opens to the front yard, barn, and pig pens beyond. A window looks out onto the same. Stairs descend from bedrooms above; a door enters into the wall beneath the stairs leading down to the basement below. The kitchen is sparsely equipped with long outdated appliances. Outside we hear the distant cacophony of pigs, thousands of pigs. Thunder rumbles in the distance, a storm is on the way. Tim, Tom's hired hand, enters from the front yard, filthy from his morning's work.)

TIM

Tom.

TOM

Tim.

(Tim waits for more, but Tom is clearly deep in thought. Finally)

TIM

Pot-bellied clouds up there today, Tom. Looks like it's gonna rain.

TOM

That right?

TIM

Looks like it. Gonna turn the whole God-damned farm into mud.

TOM

Yeah. Well, that's what happens when it rains, Tim.

TIM

So they say.

(Tom crosses to look out the window.)

TOM
How are them pigs doing?

TIM
Still there.

TOM
Count 'em?

TIM
Tried to.

TOM
What do you mean, "Tried to."

TIM
Kept moving around.

TOM
You're supposed to count them, Tim.

TIM
I know that, Tom. About...
(Long pause as he thinks)
...fifteen thousand, I'd say.

(Pause.)

TOM
"About"?

TIM
Thereabouts.

TOM
You think the EPA fellow will go for that, Tim?
"About fifteen thousand"?

TIM
I don't know.

TOM
"How many pigs you got for me today, Tom?" "About fifteen thousand." "Well, that's great, Tom. Just great. No fines for you today." You think that's how it's gonna be when the G-men come around? All sweetness and candy?

TIM

Tony says they're not coming.

TOM

Tony?!

TIM

From down the road. Says they would've been here by now if they were.

TOM

Don't listen to Tony.

TIM

Says he's got a feeling.

TOM

(Snapping)

I've got a feeling!! Got a lot of feelings!! Too many!!

(Regaining his composure)

Look, Tim, I don't like riding you any more than you like being ridden. But the feds are gonna be here. Today. Tomorrow at the latest. They'll have their counting men, so I need my counting men, which is you. So I want you to go out there and count every God damned pig I own. You understand me?

TIM

Sure, Tom, I understand you.

TOM

Good, Tim. That's real good.

TIM

God damned federal government. Why do they need a count, anyway?

TOM

It's the law, Tim, federal law, that's why. Time's come when a farm has to farm about fifteen thousand pigs to make a dollar in this world - what with the price of pork and all - and the feds've got their own ideas about that. Oh, we'll be done with the feds one day, with their laws and taxes and what-not. But until that day we play ball. Get me?

TIM

Sure, Tom, I get you.

(Tom takes a large, black magic marker from his shirt pocket and offers it to Tim.)

TOM

Look, Tim, here's my marker. Take it.

(He does so.)

TOM

Now, when you count a pig you just give it a mark, right on the snout, just like that. Okay? That way you'll know which pigs you've counted and which you haven't.

TIM

Okay.

TOM

You got your pad?

TIM

Yeah, I got it.

TOM

Okay, then.

TIM

I'm just one man, Tom.

TOM

The day you count my pigs is the day I call you a man.

TIM

And there's fifteen thousand of them.

TOM

Thereabouts, Tim, thereabouts. Let's find out exactly how many.

(Tina, Tom's wife, beautiful but already a little worn out, enters from the basement carrying a huge basket of freshly laundered clothes. She drops the basket on the table.)

TINA

Tom. Tim.

TOM

Tina.

TIM

Tina.

TINA

Pot-bellied clouds up there today.

TOM

So I heard.

TIM

Gonna turn the whole God-damned farm into mud.

TINA

Yeah, well, that's what happens when it rains. New wash today?

TOM

Naw, I'm good.

TINA

How about you, Tim?

TIM

Naw, I'm good. I have to go back out anyway. Got marker work to do.

TINA

Marker work?

TOM

Tim'll be doing the count today.

TINA

Awful lot of pigs out there.

TOM

Yeah, I know how many pigs are out there. Roughly.

TINA

Thought you were gonna do the count yourself.

TOM

Thought I was, too. Got to go down to the river to do another dumping.

TIM

Dumping?

TINA

Sludge dumping.

TOM

What we cleaned out from the pens.

TIM

That's a lot of sludge.

TOM

Leave it for the rain and we'll be swimming in it.

TINA

All ready are.

TOM

Yeah, well, fifteen thousand pigs makes for a lot of sludge.

TIM

Fifteen thousand - - or, thereabouts.

TOM

That's right, Tim. That's exactly right. Now, get on out there, and don't forget about the marker trick I taught you.

TIM

I won't forget about it. And I won't forget about what you said about the end of the federal government, either. Because when the federal government is gone then so will the count. And on that day I'll have a bottle of beer, I can tell you that much. I'll have a tall bottle of beer.

(Tim exits. Tom crosses to the stove to pour himself a cup of coffee. Tina starts folding the laundry.)

TINA

Good kid.

TOM

Yeah, he's all right.

TINA

Real good kid. Keep filling his head with hateful stuff about the federal government we'll see how long he stays good.

TOM

Doesn't need me to fill it. Spent time in a federal detention center for juvenile delinquency. Juvie Hall. Knows the feds better than we do.

TINA

Better than any kid should.

TOM

That's the truth of it. Well, he's with us, now. Until he turns eighteen, that is.

(Pause.)

TINA

When are we gonna have a kid, Tom?

TOM

Aw, not this whole song and dance, again.

TINA

Is that what it is to you? A song? And a dance?

TOM

Tina-

TINA

I want a kid, Tom. My own kid. Our kid.

TOM

Tina! I got the feds on my back, I got feed meal to buy, I can't spend time on this right now.

TINA

You promised me.

TOM

I know what I promised.

TINA

Clean wash I've been giving you, every day, just like I promised. How about your promise?

TOM

I'm good for it. Just not now.

TINA

When?

TOM

I don't know, when things settle down.

TINA

But that's just the thing, isn't it? Things never do settle down.

TOM

Maybe they do and maybe they don't. But the thing is it's got to be about the farm right now. The pig farm. And that's all it's got to be about.

TINA

Yeah, I know what it's got to be about.

TOM

God damn it, Tina! I've got feed meal to buy! I've got fecal sludge to cart down to the God-damned river! Where's a baby supposed to fit into all that?

TINA

Baby's are small. Fit most anywhere.

TOM

A Baby's an explosion! Don't try to tell me different!

TINA

A baby's an expression of love, that's the main thing.

TOM

Yeah, I know what a baby is.

TINA

You do love me, Tom, don't you?

TOM

Of course I do. You know I do.

TINA

No, Tom, I don't. Not for sure I don't.

TOM

I just need time, Tina, that's all. Time to get things right.

TINA

What you need is to get right with me.

(A truck horn sounds outside.)

TOM

Now, who the Hell would that be?

TINA

Forget it, Tom. Forget about all of it. Just be with me for a second.

(Offstage we hear Toby, the feed meal man.)

TOBY(O.S.)

Feed meal!

(Tom crosses to the door.)

TOM

Toby?! That you?!

TOBY(O.S.)

Feed meal, God damn you! Pot-bellied clouds up there, so get on out here before it wets us all!

TOM

All right, Toby, give me a second, will you?!

(To Tina.)

Feed meal's here.

TINA

Awful early.

TOM

I asked him to come early. Feds love feeding time, I want some extra meal on hand in case they want to see a show. Nothing like seeing all them animals eating at the same time.

(Tim enters.)

TIM

Feed meal man's here.

TOM

Yeah, I heard him, Tim.

TIM

Wants to see you right away. Got a lot of deliveries today, trying to beat the rain.

(The truck horn sounds again.)

TOM

His truck is full of sacks, Tina. Got to get them over to the slop house.

TINA

Go on, Tom. Go on out to the God damned feed meal man.

(Tom exits to deal with Toby, Tim lingers.)

TIM

Tina.

TINA

Tim. Feed meal man's a real son-of-a-bitch, isn't he.

TIM

He's all right. He's a hard man, but he's fair once you get to talking to him.

TINA

How about you, Tim? Are you a fair man?

TIM

I don't know. I do what I do, I suppose. Never thought about it much.

TINA

Suppose you should think about it, then.

TIM

Suppose I should.

TINA

Get the Hell out of here. Do your counting. Do it before the God damned feds show up.

(Tim exits as Tom rushes in.)

TOM

Son-of-a-bitch feed meal man's charging me emergency rates again.

TINA

Yeah, that's how it is around here, isn't it.

TOM

Won't unload the meal without it, without the extra.

TINA

Purse is in the bedroom.

(Tom runs upstairs. Tina goes to the window.)

TINA

Hey! Hey, feed meal man! You're a real son-of-a-bitch, aren't you?!

TOBY(O.S.)

Who said that?!

TINA

Over here, you God-damned, no-good, emergency-rate-charging son-of-a-bitch!

TOBY(O.S.)

You want your feed meal, do you?!

(Tom returns in a hurry from upstairs, now holding Tina's purse.)

TINA

You know what I'd like to do?! I'd like to take that feed meal and- !

TOM

TINA! What the Hell do you think you're doing?!

TINA

What's it look like?

(Honking sounds.)

TOM

Were you yelling at him?! He's the God damned feed meal man!

TINA

Yeah, and who am I, Tom?! Who the Hell am I?!

(Tim rushes in.)

TIM

He's leaving, Tom.

TOM

I thought I told you to start counting!

TIM

He's leaving, Tom, he's starting to turn the truck around!

TOM

Well, go stop him, then!

TIM

For crying out loud, that's what I was trying to do!

(Tim rushes back out.)

TOM

Yell at me if you need to, Tina. But don't yell at Toby. He's the feed meal man.

TINA

(Exploding)

MAYBE I'M TIRED OF YELLING!!

TOM

Tina-

TINA

All these years I've been giving you clean clothes, birthing pigs, cooking food. All these years I've stood by you, kept you going so you could keep this farm going. So now you stand by me. You give me a baby, God damn you, and you do it now - and I mean right now!

(A loud clap of thunder sounds, the storm is close.)

TOM

God-damn pot-bellied clouds.

(Tim runs in.)

TIM

Last chance, Tom.

(Tim rushes back out. Tom crosses to the front door and calls out.)

TOM

Be right there, Toby!

(To Tina.)

I'll be back, Tina.

TINA

Take your time.

(Tina storms up the stairs with her basket of laundry and disappears into the basement.)

TOM

(To himself)

What does one man have to do to run a God damn pig farm around here.

TOBY(O.S.)

You call me a son-of-a-bitch?!

(Tom exits out into the yard. Tom and Toby talk as lights fade.)

TOM(O.S.)

Emergency rates, Toby. It's a little hard to swallow.

TOBY(O.S.)

Tell you what, Tom, no emergency rates. No rates at all because you aren't getting any feed meal at all, not from me you're not!

TOM(O.S.)

Toby-

TOBY(O.S.)

Pot-bellied clouds, Tom! Pot-bellied clouds, and it's
a son-of-a-bitch you're calling me?!

(Thunder sounds just above the house. The
rain is on the way.)

TOM(O.S.)

Pot-bellied skies, Toby. Pot-bellied world if you ask
me.

TOBY(O.S.)

Said something there, Tom.

TOM(O.S.)

Pot-bellied world.

(Black out.)

ACT I
Scene 2

(Late that night. Rain drums softly outside. Tina sits alone in the darkened kitchen with a glass and a bottle of scotch. She's freshly scrubbed after a late night bath, lightly covered in a worn but spotlessly white nightgown, waiting for the laundry to finish up. Tim, thinking the kitchen is empty, sneaks in noiselessly from the front yard. He turns on the light. We see now that he's completely covered in mud.)

TINA

Tim.

(Hearing Tina, Tim freezes, then quickly regains his composure.)

TIM

Tina.

TINA

Where's Tom?

TIM

Down by the river with the truck. Had quite a payload, I can tell you that much.

TINA

Hard night for a dumping.

TIM

Hard night for a lot of things. Whole damn farm's turned to mud.

TINA

He'll come back drunk, you can count on that.

TIM

Yeah?

TINA

If it's a dumping he's coming from. Keeps a bottle in the glove compartment.

TIM

Can't say as I blame him, turning all that crystal blue water brown with that sludge.

TINA

Fecal sludge.

TIM

Dumping it into the river like that. And from his own truck, too.

TINA

Gotta go somewhere.

TIM

Yeah, that's the truth of it.

TINA

Anywhere but here.

TIM

That's the God damned truth.

(Pause.)

TINA

Finish your count?

(Tim tosses Tom's magic marker onto the table.)

TIM

Fourteen thousand, two hundred and twenty...

(He thinks)

...two.

TINA

Is that right?

(He tosses his muddy counting pad onto the table.)

TIM

By my count.

TINA

Well, that's a lot of pigs.

TIM

Damned right it is. Might be off by a pig or two, but it's close.

TINA

Get yourself a glass.

TIM

Yeah?

TINA

Calls for a celebration.

TIM

Don't mind if I do.

(Tim crosses to the sink to find a glass.)

TINA

What happened to the G-men?

TIM

Didn't show.

TINA

Heard vans coming and going, thought that was them.

TIM

(Sharply)

No. That wasn't them.

(Regaining his composure)

Anyway, Tony says they're not coming.

TINA

Tony?

TIM

From down the road. Says they would've been here by now if they were.

TINA

Don't listen to Tony.

TIM

Says he's got a feeling.

TINA

God damned G-men, making us jump.

TIM

Only one man making us jump tonight, and he's down by the river.

TINA

Yeah, that's the truth of it.

TIM

Don't mind jumping, though. Not as long as he keeps me out of Juvie Hall.

TINA

Do as he says and he'll keep you out.

TIM

He's the one who work-released me, so he's the one who gets to ride me.

TINA

Ride you hard.

(The washer buzzer sounds from downstairs. Tim sits at the table and slides his glass to Tina. She pours him a nice, stiff drink.)

TIM

Let him. The day I turn eighteen is the day I walk out of here, and on that day I'll have a bottle of beer, I can tell you that much. A tall bottle of beer.

(She slides the glass back.)

TINA

Have this in the mean time.

TIM

Don't mind if I do.

(They drink.)

TINA

Wouldn't mind walking off this farm myself some days.

TIM

Oh no?

TINA

Wouldn't mind it, not a bit.

TIM

Why don't you, then?

TINA

I don't know. Maybe I will. Someday.

(Tina pours more scotch, they drink.)

TIM

Got slippery, those pigs, slippery as fish. Especially that old sow, the one from the South Pen. What's her name?

TINA

Ol' Bess.

TIM

Ol' Bess. Every time I tried tackling her she'd slip out of my hands like a greased watermelon, or something. Like a big ol' watermelon greased with - - grease. But then the rain stopped for a time, the clouds parted away from the moon, and those pigs became about as sweet as a bunch of well fed babies. Even Ol' Bess. No running. No squealing. All eyes watchful and wide. So I just went down the line with my marker, bop bop, just like that, finished the job up quick. It was like God himself saying "Be still, pigs. Tim's got his counting to do." And they stood still, God damn it. Still as stones. Still as a bunch of God damn stones.

TINA

Sounds like you've got the fire in you tonight.

TIM

Yeah, I've got the fire.

TINA

Better water it down a little, then.

TIM

Don't mind if I do.

(She pours more scotch, they drink.)

TINA

Remind me of Tom when he was about your age.

TIM

That so?

TINA

Had the fire in him then. Burned so bright you could feel the flames lick out of his fingers when you held his hand. A woman could love a man like that, Tim, she really could. Trouble is, a fire burns too long in a man's body it tends to rot. Rotten fire. And a fire like that stinks. Stinks worse than eggs.

TIM

Yeah.

TINA

The man made a promise to me, Tim. So what am I supposed to do about it now?

TIM

I don't know, Tina, that's a good question.

TINA

Yeah, it is, isn't it.

(They drink.)

TINA

You ever held a baby in your arms, Tim? It's hair so thin, you can see right through it. It's body so light, like a balloon. It's love, is what it is. Pure love.

TIM

Yeah, well, I got my own ideas about love.

(They drink.)

TINA

You're a good boy, aren't you, Tim.

TIM

Who says I'm a boy at all.

TINA

Counting all them pigs makes you a man, is that it?