

**MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRIC
(Six Actor Version)**

A comic drama in two acts

by Richard G. Epstein

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CHARACTERS
(in order of appearance)

Character:	Description:
Narrator	Voice only
Ann Roberts	Professor of Anthropology; wife of Jeremy Adams
Jeremy Adams	Born among the aboriginal people in the Amazon; comes to America, studies Computer Science; marries Ann Roberts
Mori	A tribesman in Hanabi's tribe
Hanabi	Jeremy's father; the tribal holy man and shaman
Michael Jobb	Professor of Computer Science; Jeremy's doctoral thesis advisor
Marilyn Jobb	Professor Jobb's wife
Daniel Jobb	Professor Jobb's son
Andro	The Jobb family domestic robot
Shannon Pitt	Evil cybersorcerer; one of Professor Jobb's students
David Wilson	Professor of Computer Science attending the International Computer Security Conference
Marsha Silverstein	Professor of Computer Science attending the International Computer Security Conference
Crazy Woman	Thinks she's God

ONE LINE ROLES

Pedestrian 1
Pedestrian 2
Bill Clinton
Thief
Bartender / Officer

SETTING (and role assignments for six actor version)

ACT ONE

Scene 1: In and around the shaman's hut in a tribal village in the Brazilian rain forest; January 2024.

(Assignments:

1. Narrator / Mori	(m)	ACTOR 1
2. Jeremy Adams	(m)	ACTOR 2
3. Ann Roberts	(f)	ACTOR 3
4. Hanabi	(m)	ACTOR 4)

Scene 2: The dining room of the Jobb family at Thanksgiving; November 2030.

(Assignments:

1. Narrator / Andro / Shannon Pitt	(m)	ACTOR 1
2. Jeremy Adams	(m)	ACTOR 2
3. Ann Roberts	(f)	ACTOR 3
4. Michael Jobb	(m)	ACTOR 4
5. Daniel Jobb	(m)	ACTOR 5
6. Marilyn Jobb	(f)	ACTOR 6)

Scene 3: Shannon Pitt's apartment; the cybersorcery workshop; November 2030.

(Assignments:

1. Narrator / Shannon Pitt	(m)	ACTOR 1)
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ACT TWO

Scene 1: On a street in downtown Boston; October 2031.

(Assignments:

1. Narrator / Pedestrian 1 / Pedestrian 2 / Bill Clinton / Thief	(m)	ACTOR 1
2. Michael Jobb	(m)	ACTOR 4
3. Marsha Silverstein	(f)	ACTOR 6
4. David Wilson	(m)	ACTOR 5
5. Crazy woman)	(f)	ACTOR 3)

Scene 2: The living room of Professor Jobb's new apartment;
The bar at Jake's Bar and Grill near Boston harbor; April 2032.

(Assignments:

1. Narrator / Andro / Shannon Pitt	(m)	ACTOR 1
2. Jeremy Adams	(m)	ACTOR 2
3. Ann Roberts	(f)	ACTOR 3
4. Michael Jobb	(m)	ACTOR 4
5. Bartender	(m)	ACTOR 5)

NOTE ABOUT THE STAGE DIRECTIONS
IN THIS SCRIPT

This script contains the original stage directions that I provided for the six actor version of the play that was presented at ISTAS. However, during our read-through, Mike Gorfinkle, one of the actors, suggested that we just have the six actors sitting in a semi-circle during the entire presentation. This worked very well and I recommend this approach for future readings at conferences. However, the original stage directions are retained because they give clues for the actors.

ACT ONE
Scene 1

NARRATOR

An Appropriate Introduction
for the Specific Circumstances of the Presentation
will be provided. See box below for an example.

(Introduction used at ISTAS 2001)

You are about to see a special version of the play "Mourning Becomes Electric". This version is special because we encountered some difficulty in recruiting actors for this dramatic reading. Mike Gorfinkle tried to gather up some actors for this production, but most of them claimed that they would be down at the beach right about now, or that they had a real job acting in a real play at a real theater. It is about as easy to find an actor willing to present a dramatic reading at the Computer Society's International Symposium on Science and Technology as it is to find a computer security expert who is willing to use his or her credit card over the Web. Our compelling argument that this play had Tony award potential, much like "The Producers", did not seem to work too well. So, we had to reorganize the play somewhat, assigning some actors multiple roles. Hopefully, the narrative that we have included will help to clarify things. For those of you who came to this Symposium specifically to see this play in its original form, I suggest that you ask Brian O'Connell for a refund. First, I would like the actors to introduce themselves.

(The readers introduce themselves.)

I am Richard Epstein, the author of the play, as well as the narrator and, under these desperate circumstances, one of the actors.

(With each introduction of a new character throughout the ISTAS reading, the actor waves or otherwise acknowledges the introduction.)

NARRATOR (cont.)

So, let's get to the action. The setting for the first scene is the Amazon jungle. The year is 2024. Ann Roberts is an anthropologist from Boston who has gone down to the Amazon to study a tribe that she has been observing for quite a few years. She has already written a fairly popular book about this tribe and about its shaman, Hanabi. She has fallen in love with Hanabi's son, Hulali. Hulali has also fallen in love with Ann, and they plan to get married. Hulali received a modern education at a university in Campo Grande, where he learned about computer technology and cyberspace. Hulali has decided to leave his tribe and to migrate to America where he will be known as Jeremy Adams. Ann and Jeremy are meeting outside Hanabi's hut.

ANN ROBERTS

Jeremy, have you told your father about our plans?

JEREMEY ADAMS

Jeremy? I am not used to that name yet. Do you think you could call me Hulali while we are still here in Brazil?

ANN ROBERTS

Thinking of yourself as Jeremy will give you the courage to tell your father what you must tell him.

JEREMY ADAMS

Why is it that you always seem to be right?

ANN ROBERTS

(Laughing) What do you mean - seem?

(A worried look comes over Jeremy's face.)

ANN ROBERTS (cont.)

Telling your father that you plan to leave the Amazon for America is not going to be easy.

JEREMY ADAMS

Yes. I am leaving the Amazon for amazon.com. (Pause) As an anthropologist, don't you think it was a bit improper of you to become romantically involved with one of your primitive tribal subjects?

(They embrace again, playfully.)

ANN ROBERTS

Even before I arrived here, you had evolved far beyond the usual tribal consciousness. After all, you went to the university in Campo Grande. You studied Computer Science and technology. I am not sure why you came back. The people here in your native village don't even have electricity.

JEREMY ADAMS

My father is the tribal leader and I am his eldest son. I had to return to work things through.

ANN ROBERTS

You accomplished that, didn't you?

JEREMY ADAMS

I think so.

ANN ROBERTS

Now you are ready to leave the nest and fly off to America with me. The choice is between remaining in the Stone Age, here in the jungle, or experiencing life at the cutting edge of human consciousness. It is now 2024. Technology is moving at an ever accelerating pace. If you don't make this decision now, when will you make it?

JEREMY ADAMS

The difficult part is that my father is the tribal leader and shaman. Since I am his eldest son, he expects me to succeed him. He began training me to become his successor when I was a little boy.

NARRATOR

Hanabi is inside the hut consulting with one of the men from his tribe, a man named Mori. Due to casting problems, I will have to play the role of Mori. Mori has suffered horrific losses due to the evil work of a sorcerer whose name is Harambi. At this point in time, Ann and Jeremy hear a horrific scream coming from the hut.

(Narrator screams, as Mori.)

NARRATOR (cont.)

Sorry about that.

ANN ROBERTS

What the hell is going on in there?

JEREMY ADAMS

Mori, one of the tribesmen, has suffered two horrific losses during the last three months. Three months ago his wife died from an unexpected disease. Then, last week, his only son was found hanging from a tree. They think it was suicide, but suicide is almost unheard of among my people. It's not considered a manly thing to do. Mori is convinced that someone has placed a curse on him and his family. He is asking my father to track down the culprit.

ANN ROBERTS

Well, that's what I came down here to study, but you know, it gets depressing after a while. I wish your father would be more receptive to the idea of bringing Western medicine to your village. I rather doubt that Mori lost his wife and his son due to an evil curse.

JEREMY ADAMS

These beliefs are deeply routed in our very bones.

ANN ROBERTS

Maybe Mori's wife, at least, would still be alive if she had the proper medical attention.

JEREMY ADAMS

My father believes in the traditions of our people.

ANN ROBERTS

This is an important reason why you must leave the rain forest. In America you won't have to deal with curses and demons and the kind of evil and fear and superstition that you see here in your village. Do you want to have to deal with evil sorcerers for the rest of your life?

JEREMY ADAMS

Suicide is very rare among my people. But, you know that. Daruhu, that was the boy's name, had been a normal child, a teenager, but then, all of a sudden, it was as if he were possessed by a dark demon. He ended up hanging himself from a tree. Mori loved his son with great intensity. Daruhu was his only child.

ANN ROBERTS

This is an old scenario. I've seen this here, among your people, and with so many other aboriginal tribes here in the Amazon and around the world. Your father will accuse so and so of putting a curse on Mori's wife and son, and Mori will go out and kill so and so in revenge. Then, so and so's next of kin will kill Mori, and so it goes.

JEREMY ADAMS

Mori lost his wife to a horrible disease. She suffered intense pain and anxiety for several months. There was nothing my father could do. He told me that he used his most powerful medicine - a secret herb that he has used only on two previous occasions. However, my father told me that the evil demon inside Mori's wife was too powerful for his medicine and for his magic.

ANN ROBERTS

Won't you be glad when you don't have to deal with this stuff any longer?

JEREMY ADAMS

These are my people.

ANN ROBERTS

As an anthropologist I have the greatest respect for your father and your people and all the tribal peoples that I have studied. But, intellectually, I do not believe that Mori's wife died because someone placed a curse on her. I think, for your own personal happiness, it is important for you to escape from all of this so that you can pursue your interests in computer technology, so that you will never again have to deal with demons and evil sorcerers and curses.

JEREMY ADAMS

Your world has its own forms of evil.

ANN ROBERTS

It's our world, Jeremy. It's not just mine. It's ours. It's the world that I want to share with you as your future bride.

NARRATOR

Their conversation is again interrupted by a horrific cry.

(Another scream by the Narrator as Mori.)

NARRATOR (cont.)

Mori, that's me, is now leaving the hut, completely overcome by grief.

MORI

(With great agitation, speaking to Jeremy Adams, almost completely ignoring Ann Roberts.) It was the evil sorcerer, Harambi! He is the one who has brought ruin to my family. He is the one who killed my beloved wife and my beloved son with his evil magic. How can I possibly defeat a powerful sorcerer like that? He has killed so many people in our village. And there is nothing that your father can do about it.

JEREMY ADAMS

Oh, Mori, my heart mourns for you.

MORI

Why is it that your father lacks the power to defeat Harambi?

JEREMY ADAMS

My father has approached Harambi many times with offers of peace, but Harambi is filled with profound evil. His soul is distorted and twisted and shattered into a trillion pieces. (Turning to Ann Roberts) Harambi wants this land. He is terrorizing my people so that they will vacate this land.

MORI

I hope when you take your father's place, you will not hesitate to use the most powerful magic against this evil sorcerer. Will you do that for me, Hulali?

JEREMY ADAMS

I cannot promise you that. I do not know the future. I will try to fight evil wherever the Great Spirit leads me.

(Mori exits, transformed back again into the Narrator.)

ANN ROBERTS

Is this a good time to speak to your father? He has been in a trance for almost an hour. But, time is running out. We need to head down the river first thing tomorrow morning if we are going to catch our flight to Boston.

JEREMY ADAMS

I guess we have no choice. The time has come.

ANN ROBERTS

Will he be lucid? He ingested those funny mushrooms about an hour ago.

JEREMY ADAMS

When my father needs to be lucid, he is lucid.

ANN ROBERTS

Well, then, let's go in.

(Ann Roberts and Jeremy Adams enter the hut. Hanabi is sitting on the ground. His eyes immediately focus on Ann Roberts and Jeremy Adams. He is there.)

HANABI

My son, I think the people are troubled because I have not been able to defeat the evil sorcerer, Harambi. His magic is very powerful. I have warned you many times that his spirit is twisted and shattered into a trillion pieces. The hearts of my people are filled with fear and trembling. (He sighs.) I am getting old.

(Jeremy Adams hesitates, but Ann Roberts pokes him with her elbow.)

JEREMY ADAMS

Father, there is something that I need to tell you.

HANABI

(He sighs again.) Son, I will soon be gathered up to join your mother and our ancestors. The time is approaching when you will have to assume the role as tribal leader and shaman. You have a courageous and honest spirit. You are committed to the path of compassion, justice and peace, the path that I taught you. The path that my father taught me. Maybe you can bring Harambi to see things from a new perspective. (His face darkens.) I tell you, I have never encountered a spirit as twisted as his, as filled with evil - and fear. All of the evil that Harambi has done is an expression of his fear. I have not been able to penetrate that. Maybe you will be able to accomplish that, my son.

JEREMY ADAMS

Yes, father.

HANABI

Harambi went to work for the ranchers who are destroying the rain forest. He was hoping to become a rich man, an important man. They did something to him. I think they raped him when he was just a young boy. He came back all twisted, all broken, a bitter and violent man.

JEREMY ADAMS

Yes, father.

(Another poke in the ribs.)

JEREMY ADAMS (cont.)

Professor Roberts is leaving tomorrow morning on the barge. She will be heading back to Boston in America.

HANABI

You are an interesting woman, Professor Roberts. You remind me of a quiet bird.

ANN ROBERTS

How is that?

HANABI

You come here and you don't say much. You just observe, like a quiet bird. Why do we fascinate you so much? Do you find your own people boring?

ANN ROBERTS

Your path of wisdom is dying. I think you know that. The devastation of the rain forest is moving ever closer to your village. I want people to remember your tribe and your ways. Didn't Jeremy, I mean, Hulali, show you a copy of the book that I wrote about you and your wisdom?

HANABI

Jeremy? Is that going to be his American name?

JEREMY ADAMS

Father, thanks to Professor Roberts, you are famous in America.

HANABI

That makes me feel so much better! Who cares that Harambi is terrorizing my people? I am famous in America!

(Hanabi stares at Ann Roberts.)

HANABI (cont.)

Maybe you are not like a quiet bird after all. You are more like an eagle. You visit us by swooping down on us, and then you grab one of our young, and you take our young back to your nest - never to be seen again.

ANN ROBERTS

Your son and I are in love.

HANABI

Yes, I know. So, you are going to take him away from his world and make him a part of your world.

(Ann Roberts looks at Jeremy Adams, as if to say, "Give your side of the story".)

JEREMY ADAMS

Father, you know that I respect you and our traditions deeply, but I want to marry Ann and I want to learn as much as I can about the new kind of magic that is being created in America. I do not want to succeed you as our tribal shaman.

HANABI

You are not telling me anything I do not already know. You think you are driven by curiosity and the desire to learn, but do you think that you will learn more in the electronic world than here in the natural world? The truth is that it is fear that is driving you from me and from your own people.

JEREMY ADAMS

I don't believe in evil sorcerers and demons and spells and curses. I believe in the kind of knowledge that I learned at college.

HANABI

(Sarcastically) Science.

JEREMY ADAMS

Yes, father, science. Just as you are the master of your realm, the realm of the spirit, I want to be the master of this realm, the realm of science and technology.

HANABI

My son, you have a lot to learn. You think that we are negotiating, but we are not negotiating. I decided to allow you to leave with Professor Roberts weeks ago. I have known about your intention for quite some time. That knowledge came to me in several dreams and visions. In those dreams and visions I learned other things about your destiny. Very interesting things.

JEREMY ADAMS

Father, I want your blessing.

HANABI

I am not giving you my blessing. That is irrelevant. I saw in a dream exactly what is going to happen to you in America. You think that you are going to some ideal world where you will not have to deal with demons and evil sorcerers and curses and spells, but, in fact, you will encounter those very same things in the new world that you will be entering. You think that you can escape your destiny, which is to be a shaman, like your father, but you will be a shaman in an entirely new context. Everything that I have experienced in the spiritual world, you will experience in your new world. What do they call it - that new world that so fascinates you?

JEREMY ADAMS

They call it cyberspace.

HANABI

You are going to have to deal with a sorcerer every bit as evil as Harambi in that new world of yours, in cyberspace. His name came to me in a dream. His name is Shannon. You will have a confrontation with an evil sorcerer whose name is Shannon. No matter how hard you try, you will never be able to escape who you truly are - the son of a shaman, a healer of your people.

ANN ROBERTS

You know that I respect your ancient ways, Hanabi, but there are no sorcerers in cyberspace. Cyberspace is merely information and electricity.

HANABI

(To Ann Roberts) So take your young prey, Eagle Woman. You've found what you were looking for. (To Jeremy Adams) I wish you peace, my son. But, remember my words. You cannot escape your destiny. You will have to confront an evil sorcerer, and his name is Shannon.

Scene 2

(As each new character is introduced, the reader acknowledges his or her role.)

NARRATOR

Scene two takes place in the year 2030. It is Thanksgiving, and there is a joyous celebration of the holiday at the home of Professor Michael Jobb. Professor Jobb was Jeremy's thesis advisor at Boston University, where Jeremy earned his doctorate in Computer Science. Jeremy and his wife, Ann, have joined the Jobb family for the holiday celebration. Also at the table are Professor Jobb's wife, Marilyn, and his son, Daniel. Jeremy and Ann now live in California, where they have recently established a cyberspace security firm.

The Jobb family and their guests have just completed the Thanksgiving meal. The meal was prepared by the Jobb family domestic robot, Andro, played by myself.

MICHAEL JOBB

What a fantastic meal! Those domestic robots are getting better and better with each passing year.

ANN ROBERTS

It really was superb!

JEREMY ADAMS

At first I thought you were crazy when you asked for permission to access our genetic information over the Web.

ANN ROBERTS

You should have told us what you had in mind.

MICHAEL JOBB

I wanted it to be a surprise.

ANN ROBERTS

Well, it was a surprise. Each of us got a special meal customized to our specific genetic make-up.

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro is by far the best domestic robot we have ever owned. Right, Marilyn?

MARILYN JOBB

You had better be nice to me, dear. One false move and I'll divorce you and marry Andro. Not only does he clean house, shop and cook, invest our money, and manage our finances, but he's quite handsome, if you ask me.

ANN ROBERTS

A-men! Mike, are you sure you can trust Marilyn alone at home with Andro?

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro may do the shopping, but I still bring home the bacon.

DANIEL JOBB

Am I excused?

MARILYN JOBB

Ann and Jeremy flew in all the way from California to enjoy Thanksgiving with us. The least you can do is sit at the table a little while longer.

DANIEL JOBB

Aw, mom!

MICHAEL JOBB

Aw, mom? Danny, don't you think it is time for you to grow up a little? When I was your age, I didn't say "Aw, mom?"

DANIEL JOBB

What did you say, fa-ther dear-est?

MICHAEL JOBB

I don't remember exactly, but I was more mature than you are at age sixteen. I treated my parents with respect. I had a clear idea where I was heading. Which reminds me -

MICHAEL JOBB, MARILYN JOBB, ANN ROBERTS, and JEREMY ADAMS
(together)

What do you want to be when you grow up?

DANIEL JOBB

(Feigning injury) An adult ambush! I am wounded.

MICHAEL JOBB

We're trying to be serious, Dan.

DANIEL JOBB

Mortally, mortally wounded.

MICHAEL JOBB

Seriously, Danny. What do you want to be when you grow up? It seems that all you care about is virtual reality and having fun and playing games in cyberspace.

MARILYN JOBB

Mike, don't embarrass the boy in front of our guests.

MICHAEL JOBB

I'm not trying to embarrass the boy. He knows I love him to death. I only want him to be happy.

DANIEL JOBB

I am happy, dad. I'm so happy that I can't think about growing up. I don't want to grow up. I'm having too much fun.

MICHAEL JOBB

I wish you had more friends in the flesh, not those virtual friends of yours. How the hell do you know who you are actually dealing with? What's the name of this new friend of yours? Harold? Sheldon? I forgot.

MARILYN JOBB

Mike. We have guests!

DANIEL JOBB

His name is Nonnahs. He's so-o-o-o co-o-o-l. He's a violator.

ANN ROBERTS

A violator? What's that?

JEREMY ADAMS

A violator is someone who knows how to get around many of the security measures out there in cyberspace. They used to call them hackers.

MICHAEL JOBB

Well, I don't want my son to be violated by some cyber-creep.

DANIEL JOBB

Dad, he's my best friend. Don't call him a creep.

MARILYN JOBB

Danny and this new friend of his have been friends for almost three months now. That's pretty long for a cyberspace friendship.

MICHAEL JOBB

Danny, you don't know who this guy is or where he lives. He might be a seventy year old pervert who likes young boys, for all you know.

DANIEL JOBB

But, it doesn't matter. He projects as a teenager. He is so-o-o-o coo-o-o-l. He is soo-o-o-o funny. He's so-o-o-o-o electric!

ANN ROBERTS

What does that mean, he's so-o-o-o electric?

JEREMY ADAMS

Get with it, honey. That's about the greatest compliment a teen can give these days. Being electric means you are hardly real. Being electric means you might be a total illusion, an animated entertainment. Being electric means that you are pure oscillating energy and nothing else. Being electric means you have no substance. You're just an explosion of luminescent pixels.

ANN ROBERTS

The research of one of my former colleagues at BU has shown that many young boys Dan's age suffer from depression. Her theory is that this has to do with the lack of social contact. But, Dan seems happy enough.

JEREMEY ADAMS

Dr. Jobb, if I may change the subject - .

MICHAEL JOBB

Jeremy, how many times have I told you to call me Mike? You're done with your doctorate. I am no longer your thesis advisor. Call me Mike.

JEREMY ADAMS

I'm sorry. That takes some getting used to.

MICHAEL JOBB

Get used to it! You jumped through all the hoops, you wrote a brilliant doctoral thesis on computer network security, and you defended your thesis with aplomb.

DANIEL JOBB

How can you defend a thesis with a plum? (He grabs a plum from a bowl of fruit at the table). Okay, you stodgy old professors, you accept my thesis or you get a plum pit right in the kisser.

JEREMY ADAMS

Ann and I are still setting up our new house in San Jose, and we were thinking of replacing our domestic robot with a new model.

ANN ROBERTS

Sh-h-h! Careful, Jeremy. We wouldn't want Robotta to find out that her days are numbered. She might try to poison us. It's hard to keep a secret from a robot. Everything is wired into the ubiquitous network.

MICHAEL JOBB

I remember musing about what this century was going to be like, back at the turn of the century. Here it is 2030 and things are even further along than some of the experts were predicting.

MARILYN JOBB

I find it hard to get used to the medical read-out every time I brush my teeth. It seems like a toothbrush in 2030 knows more about medicine than the doctors did back in 2000.

ANN ROBERTS

I don't really like those new toothbrushes. It makes me totally neurotic about brushing my teeth. I don't want to brush my teeth only to find out that my toothbrush detected some kind of enzyme in my saliva that means that I have some kind of exotic and incurable disease.

MARILYN JOBB

I don't feel comfortable with walls, cars, appliances, toothbrushes, and undergarments having so much intelligence.

DANIEL JOBB

I think I want to be a toothbrush when I grow up.

MICHAEL JOBB

Danny, did I ever tell you that sometimes you rub me the wrong way?

DANIEL JOBB

That was ba-a-a-ad.

ANN ROBERTS

I really would like Jeremy to tell you more about his new business.

JEREMY ADAMS

But first, I want to find out more about Andro. I really think that Ann and I need to buy ourselves a new domestic robot.

ANN ROBERTS

I think Mike would really like to hear about what you're doing now that we've moved out to California. After all, I left a tenured professorship here in Boston because I believe in what you are doing.

MICHAEL JOBB

(Banging on a glass with a fork) I do want to hear more about the work you are doing, Jeremy, but first, I would like to offer another toast.

DANIEL JOBB

Dad, if you want to take another shot of booze, why don't you do it quietly? Why do you have to make such a big production every time you take a drink?

MICHAEL JOBB

(Banging on a glass with a fork) I would like to make a toast. I am genuinely moved by the laughter and the beauty of the people around me. I would like to offer this toast in honor of our guests, in honor of my dear wife, and my son, who is truly the delight of my heart. It is Thanksgiving, and although I am not a religious man in the traditional sense, I am truly thankful for all of the blessings in my life. I want to express my gratitude to the God-force, or whatever it is, that created us, and created this delightful moment. I am grateful for my best friend, my lover in the deepest sense of the word, my wife, Marilyn.

DANIEL JOBB

Whe-e-e-w! I thought you were going to start out by thanking the God-force for Andro.

MICHAEL JOBB

I want to thank the God-force for giving me a wonderful son, who has a joyful and playful heart. Danny, you know I love you, and I will always love you, even if you grow up some day.

DANIEL JOBB

(Clanking on his glass with a spoon.) Here! Here!

MICHAEL JOBB

I am thankful that Jeremy and his dear wife, Ann, could come in from California for this wonderful celebration. I am grateful for the simple things, like this beautiful house, the opportunity I have to do my research and to serve my students at the university. I have so much to be grateful for.

DANIEL JOBB

I am grateful for the Grateful Dead.

MARILYN JOBB

Are they still around?

DANIEL JOBB

Are they still around? Nonnahs introduced me to this great cite on the Web where you become the Grateful Dead. It's so-o-o-o cool!

MICHAEL JOBB

Does anyone want to add to my little Thanksgiving speech?

MARILYN JOBB

Let's be grateful that we all have good health.

DANIEL JOBB

And good health insurance!

ANN ROBERTS

Jeremy, don't you want to tell Mike about your new company? That's something to be thankful for.

JEREMY ADAMS

If Dr. Jobb, I mean, Mike, is interested.

MICHAEL ADAMS

Of course I'm interested.

ANN ROBERTS

The strange thing is that Jeremy is following in his father's footsteps.

DANIEL JOBB

But, Jeremy's father was a witch doctor, hubba-bubba, hubba-bubba. Wasn't he?

MICHAEL JOBB

Danny, show some respect. Jeremy's father was the holy man, what is called a shaman, in the village where Jeremy grew up in the jungle.

DANIEL JOBB

Double, double toil and trouble. Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

MICHAEL JOBB

Danny!

JEREMY ADAMS

That's okay, Mike. Danny likes to have fun, and this is a joyous occasion. My father was a shaman, but that kind of belief system is difficult for modern people to appreciate. My father's main work was to protect our tribe from evil spirits and demons.

DANIEL JOBB

Nonnahs showed me some awe-some virtual reality sites that have the most awe-some demons, really ugly things. I downloaded one of the demons and sent it off to my math teacher at school.

MARILYN JOBB

Danny!

DANIEL JOBB

Man, did it ever give her the heebie-jeebies. It was electric!

JEREMY ADAMS

Well, you see, the world of cyberspace is not that very different from the world of evil spirits and demons and curses that my father dealt with in the jungles of Brazil. That's what I find so fascinating!

ANN ROBERTS

I begged Jeremy to stay away from that kind of stuff. I begged him, but you know, finishing his doctorate changed Jeremy. He is much more assertive and sure of himself. The scary thing is, I am coming around to his way of thinking.

JEREMY ADAMS

The forms of evil in cyberspace are much more potent, subtle, and dangerous than they were thirty years ago, at the turn of the century. What really fascinates me is that these forms of evil closely mirror the kinds of demonic spirits that my father had to deal with. However, there is nothing mystical about these demonic entities in cyberspace. They are all manifestations of well-understood technologies.

MICHAEL JOBB

I remember discussing your father's worldview with you a few years back, Jeremy. You seemed very skeptical about demons and evil spirits at that time. You were even critical of your father's refusal to allow western medicine into your village. You were openly skeptical of the idea that disease could be caused by an evil curse or spell.

JEREMY ADAMS

I still am skeptical about that possibility in the natural realm, but the realm of cyberspace is completely different. I know that there are evil demons and spirits lurking around in cyberspace, but these are not supernatural entities. They are the technological creations of malicious people. You see, cyberspace is making the shadow world manifest.

ANN ROBERTS

It's when Jeremy started to explain this to me that I suddenly saw the light. Again, I warned him repeatedly not to follow in his father's footsteps. I took him out of the Amazon so that he could live in an enlightened world, a world free of evil spirits and demons and demonic curses. But, then I saw it clearly. The shadow world that manifests as magic and sorcerers and demons among the aboriginal peoples is now manifesting in cyberspace, and there is nothing supernatural about it. Cyberspace allows spiritual evil to manifest as real events.

DANIEL JOBB

Coo-o-o-ol!

MICHAEL JOBB

I'm not sure that I am following all of this. I certainly don't believe in evil spirits.

ANN ROBERTS

There are real events in cyberspace that mimic the spiritual world that Jeremy's father experienced.

JEREMY ADAMS

A person with sufficient technological knowledge and an evil heart can do tremendous damage. My clients are people who have suffered devastating losses because of the kinds of evil that malicious people are perpetrating in cyberspace. The variety of the evil that I have encountered staggers the imagination.

MARILYN JOBB

Do you think we could change the subject? I am finding this discussion rather depressing. It's a holiday, for God's sake! Let's discuss something cheerful.

MICHAEL JOBB

I agree, Marilyn. Maybe Jeremy and I can continue this discussion in the living room while you women clear the table and wash the dishes.

MARILYN JOBB

Very funny!

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro!

(Andro enters.)

ANDRO

How may I be of service, Dr. Jobb?

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro, we are finished. Please clear the table and do the dishes.

ANDRO

Certainly. I hope you all enjoyed the customized meals that I prepared for you.

JEREMY ADAMS

It was wonderful, Andro. I would really like to buy a robot like you for my wife and myself.

ANDRO

I doubt very much that you will find a robot exactly like me, since I was tailor-made for the Jobb family.

DANIEL JOBB

To be perfectly honest, Andro, I thought the food was horrible.

ANDRO

Yo mamma!

MICHAEL JOBB

You are about to hear Danny and Andro do their hilarious yo mamma routine! Andro has access to the world's most sophisticated database of yo mamma jokes.

DANIEL JOBB

Andro, yo mamma is so fat, that when she dances, the band skips!

ANDRO

Yo mamma's so fat, that when someone tells her to haul ass, she has to make two trips.

DANIEL JOBB

Oh, yeah? Well, yo mamma's so dumb that when she goes to the airport and the sign says "Airport left," she turns around and goes home.

ANDRO

Yo mamma is so ugly that when she looks out a window, she gets arrested for mooning.

DANIEL JOBB

Zat so? Well, yo mamma is so fat, that when her beeper goes off, people think she is backing up.

ANDRO

You don't say. Well, yo mamma is so fat that when she fell asleep on the beach, Greenpeace tried to push her back into the ocean.

DANIEL JOBB

Yo mamma is so dumb, that she puts lipstick on her head just to make up her mind.

ANDRO

Yo mamma is so dumb that she bought a solar-powered flashlight.

DANIEL JOBB

Yo mamma is such a klutz that she tripped over a cordless phone.

ANDRO

Yo mamma's so ugly that when she entered an ugly mamma contest she was disqualified because she was a professional ugly mamma.

DANIEL JOBB

Yo mamma's so fat that her picture takes two frames.

ANDRO

Yo mamma has so much hair under her armpits that it looks like she has a guy in a headlock.

DANIEL JOBB

You ain't even got no mamma.

ANDRO

Ouch, that hurt. You know that we robots ain't got no mommas. (He sighs) Oh, well, I think I will start to clear away the table.

(Andro clears away some of the plates from the table and exits. Daniel Jobb takes a bite out of the plum that he took from the fruit bowl earlier.)

ANN ROBERTS

Do you think Andro's feelings have been hurt? His face showed genuine pain.

DANIEL JOBB

Oh, no! Our yo mamma duels always end up like that. Andro is so-o-o-o electric!

JEREMY ADAMS

That was really fun!

MARILYN JOBB

Well, I don't think it was fun.

DANIEL JOBB

Why not?

MARILYN JOBB

Because I'm yo momma!

MICHAEL JOBB

(Looking around with satisfaction.) It is wonderful to sit around and enjoy a good laugh with family and friends. I am so grateful that we could all get together like this for Thanksgiving. (A strange look comes over his face.) Is it just me, or is it getting cold in here?

MARILYN JOBB

It's just you, dear.

(Daniel Jobb takes a bite out of the plum and he starts coughing and choking. Everyone turns towards him with alarm. He motions that he is okay, but continues coughing for quite a few seconds.)

DANIEL JOBB

A piece of plum pit pricked my throat and got caught in there. I'll be all right.

NARRATOR

At this point in time, the doorbell rings. The festivities are being interrupted by one of Professor Jobb's graduate students, played by myself. Bear in mind that I am also playing Andro, the robot, so this is going to be quite challenging. I am sure glad that I read that book on acting by Stella Adler earlier this summer.

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro, could you please go and see who that is?

(Andro enters the dining room and then moves off to the right, towards the front door.)

MARILYN JOBB

I can't imagine who that could be. It's Thanksgiving!

(Daniel Jobb takes another bite from his plum and begins coughing loudly again. He studies the plum like Hamlet studying a human skull.)

DANIEL JOBB

By the pricking of my plums,
Something wicked this way comes.

(Andro opens the front door and Shannon Pitt appears. Andro re-enters the dining room.)

ANDRO

A Mr. Pitt is here to speak to Professor Jobb.

(Michael Jobb slams his fist against the table.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Shannon Pitt! Bothering me and my family on Thanksgiving? What nerve!

JEREMY ADAMS

Shannon?

(Michael Jobb storms out of the dining room and confronts Shannon Pitt at the front door.)

MICHAEL JOBB

How dare you disturb my family on Thanksgiving!

SHANNON PITT

Dr. Job (this name is mispronounced, with a long "o"), I've got to speak to you.

MICHAEL JOBB

How many times have I told you not to call me Dr. Job? The name is Jobb. Jay-oh-bee-bee. Jobb. Job was a character in the Bible. Job and I have very little in common.

SHANNON PITT

You're the reason I failed the comprehensives.

MICHAEL JOBB

No, you're the reason you failed the comprehensives. You cheated in a blatant manner, and I cannot tolerate that.

SHANNON PITT

This is the second time I have failed those exams. I won't get a third chance. If you don't change your mind, I will not be able to finish my doctorate.

MICHAEL JOBB

You violated my home computer and stole the exam questions. That is blatant cheating. We cannot let you get away with that.

SHANNON PITT

But, you are ruining my life, Dr. Job (again mispronounced, slowly and deliberately).

MICHAEL JOBB

Jobb. Jobb. Oh, what's the use?

SHANNON PITT

It's not my fault that your computer system did not have adequate security. Those exam questions were available to anyone with a little knowledge of the Web.

MICHAEL JOBB

That's irrelevant. You used unethical means to obtain those exam questions, and I for one am not going to allow someone with such slovenly ethical standards to get a Ph.D. in Computer Science from our university.

SHANNON PITT

If you think I am going to lie back and allow you to ruin my life, you have another thing coming, Dr. Job (again, mispronounced).

MICHAEL JOBB

Are you threatening me?

SHANNON PITT

And what if I am, Dr. Job? (Again, mispronounced, with great sarcasm.)

MICHAEL JOBB

If you don't leave my house at this very instant I will have my domestic robot take care of things.

SHANNON PITT

There's no need to threaten me, Dr. Job (mispronounced). I'm leaving. Say good-bye to your wife and your son for me.

(Shannon Pitt turns around and exits. Michael Jobb slams the door behind him. Michael Jobb turns around and re-enters the dining area.)

MICHAEL JOBB

That damn bastard! That damn bastard!

MARILYN JOBB

Dear, why are you angry? Who was it?

(Michael Jobb seats himself at the table.)

MICHAEL JOBB

It was one of our graduate students, Shannon Pitt, a real creep. He stole the questions for the comprehensive exams from my computer system and I insisted to the graduate committee that he not be allowed to continue in our Ph. D. program. I guess he's pissed.

JEREMY ADAMS

Did you say his name was Shannon?

MICHAEL JOBB

Shannon Pitt. I think he was trying to threaten me, that bastard.

MARILYN JOBB

Threaten you? What could he possibly do to harm you?

MICHAEL JOBB

Who knows? I better change my password on my computer account at school.

JEREMY ADAMS

Did you say his name was Shannon?

MICHAEL JOBB

Yes, Jeremy. Did you know Shannon Pitt when you were a student in our department?

JEREMY ADAMS

No, but whenever I hear the name Shannon, I get the creeps.

ANN ROBERTS

Jeremy, I don't think Mike wants to hear about this.

MICHAEL JOBB

Hear about what?

JEREMY ADAMS

When I last saw my father, almost seven years ago, in 2024, shortly before he died, he warned me that I would have a confrontation with an evil sorcerer named Shannon, an evil sorcerer in cyberspace.

MICHAEL JOBB

(A worried look comes over his face.) Really?

MARILYN JOBB

If I hear any more talk about evil sorcerers and demons, I'll scream. It's Thanksgiving, for God's sake!

(Michael Jobb shivers and rubs his hands.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro!

(Andro enters from the kitchen.)

ANDRO

How may I serve you, Dr. Job (he mispronounces Jobb's name)?

MICHAEL JOBB

Job? You never called me Dr. Job before.

MARILYN JOBB

Michael, why are you getting so upset? Andro made a little mistake.

MICHAEL JOBB

You called me Dr. Job.

ANDRO

Did I?

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro, I feel a chill. Could you check to see if the heating system is working properly?

ANDRO

The heating system is working perfectly. But, if you like, I will turn up the heat.

Scene 3

NARRATOR

Scene three takes place in Shannon Pitt's apartment. Computers are everywhere. This is hacker heaven. Shannon is having a conversation with his God.

SHANNON PITT

Lord of the Electron Swarms, Quantum Deity, I ask you, why do you allow this insignificant, quivering snake of a man, Professor Michael Jobb, to prosper, surrounded by his loving wife and his smiling son? Here I sit, in lonely solitude. I do not have a wife to warm my heart or a son to sit adoringly at my feet. My aspirations have gone up in a wisp of slithering smoke. Here I sit, surrounded by poverty, by sleaziness, while he sits surrounded by prosperity and wealth. And does he acknowledge you, oh Master of Electronic Wonders? No, he calls you the God-force, as if you were a concept in a physics book. But, I know that you are the Sovereign of All Circuitry, the Vizier of All Wizardry, the King of Quantum Computery. So, I beseech you, let me prove to you how worthless and spineless and soullness this Professor Jobb really is. Do I have your permission to ruin this man's life?

(Shannon Pitt listens for the answer from his God.)

SHANNON PITT (cont.)

Thank you, thank you, oh Lord of Cantankerous Cybercacophony. You will not regret this decision. I will use the wizardry that you have bestowed upon me to prove once and for all how faithless and worthless that slithering snake, Professor Jobb, really is.

(Shannon Pitt's eyes become insane, reflecting the diabolical ideas flowing into his consciousness. He dons virtual reality goggles, and starts to work at his computer, with lights flashing every which way. He is doing the evil sorcerer's work in cyberspace. His voice becomes one of an evil sorcerer. As he recites the stanzas in the following poem, he occasionally spins around to do some more mischief at his computer.)

SHANNON PITT (cont.)

Lickety, splickery,
I will use my trickery,
To bring damnation and ruination
To that professorial abomination
Who goes by the name Jobb,
For my future he did rob!

You may not like my poetry
The meter is helter skeltery,
But this is the cyberspace sorcerer's way,
Of bringing chaotic rhythms into life's ordered play.

Lickety splickery
I will use my trickery
To bring a tragic and morbid end
To the wife he calls his closest friend.
This is a simple matter in the cyber realm
The truth is easy to distort and to overwhelm.
I will gain access to a medical database,
And every trace of the truth, I will erase.
It's simply a matter of hocus pocus,
Simple for a wizard with my kind of focus.

Lickety splickery
I will use my trickery
To fool the poor woman's physician
So that he will not succeed in his mission.
Thinking she has a malignancy
He will give her a powerful pill from his pharmacy,
But this pill for a woman as healthy as she,
Will cause her to depart for her blessed home in eternity.

Lickety splickery
I will use my trickery
To destroy the son's morale,
For I am his very best cyberpal.
You know me as Shannon Pitt,
But Shannon backwards will also fit,
For poor Danny, the cyberfool,
Calls me Nonnahs as a rule.
I will take him to a very dark place,
Far, far, from any kind of grace,
For meaning he will desperately grope,
And he will find his meaning at the end of a rope.

Lickety Splickery
I will use my trickery
To ruin the reputation of the man I hate,
In cyberspace, this is easy to orchestrate.
Professor Jobb, leading expert in his field,
Will be exposed, he will never be healed,

As an exploiter of children in the most sordid way,
 He will lose his prestigious position, and his pay.
 Using the tools at my control.
 I will tear apart his very soul.
 The most potent picture that I will rig,
 Will show our prof poking a barnyard pig.
 This depiction of grotesque lust and perversity,
 Will spread quickly throughout his beloved university.

Lickety Splickery
 I will use my trickery
 To despoil the despised man's wealth
 This will certainly threaten his health.
 He will be going on a great spending spree
 Unbeknowst to him, but pure entertainment for me.
 I will place malicious code in his robotic hire,
 Causing sweet Andro to start a cataclysmic fire.
 Picture it! Boiling smoke and blinding flashes,
 Jobb's home reduced to a pile of smoldering ashes.
 But I will take pity on the man
 I will leave him with a begging can,
 A blanket that he will call his bed,
 Dirt and rocks that he will sprinkle over his head,
 And a dingy dime that he will keep in his pocket
 The way that a lover clutches a locket.

Lickety Splickery
 I will use my trickery
 To bring my foe to destruction in the dirt
 This is my revenge for such a grievous hurt!
 Ashes to ashes and dust to dust
 On city streets his carcass will rust,
 Without a comforting roof over his head
 How he will envy the grateful dead.
 All of this mischief is easy to perform
 In the web, the swirling information swarm,
 Truth is not relative, as people are prone to speak,
 It is absolutely in the hands of the cyberspace geek.

(Shannon Pitt laughs as only an evil sorcerer can laugh.)

ACT TWO
Scene 1

(Michael Jobb is seated on the ground on a Boston street. His clothes are tattered and filthy. He is filthy. Behind him against a wall is a sign that reads "Former Professor - Wrongly Accused - Needs Your Help". A coffee tin lies beside him to receive the contributions of those who pass by.)

NARRATOR

Michael Jobb is now homeless. We encounter him seated on the ground on a Boston street. He is begging for money. His clothes are tattered and filthy. Behind him there is a sign that reads, "Former Professor – Wrongly Accused – Needs Your Help"¹.

(Michael Jobb takes a handful of dirt from the ground and pours it over his head. The Narrator assumes the role of various passers-by.)

PEDESTRIAN 1

Look at that poor homeless man. Maybe we should give him a buck or two.

PEDESTRIAN 2

Don't bother. He'll just spend the money on drugs.

NARRATOR

Whaddaya know? It's former President Bill Clinton!

BILL CLINTON

I feel your pain.

(Bill Clinton exits.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Jobb is Job and Job is Jobb,
A homeless man is easy to rob.

(An obvious thief enters and eyes the coffee tin. He then comes up to Michael Jobb indicating that he has a gun in his coat pocket.)

THIEF

Hand it over, mister, and no one gets hurt.

¹ Read this, unless we actually make up this prop.

(Michael Jobb hardly moves. He motions with his head and hand that the thief should help himself. The thief takes the coffee tin, looks at its contents, and then empties its contents into his own pockets. He then places the empty coffee tin on the ground, near Michael Jobb.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Hold on one minute.

(Michael Jobb, with obvious pain, both physical and emotional, stands up and reaches into his pocket. He reluctantly takes out a dirty dime and gives it over to the thief. The thief looks on in amazement and then exits, as Michael Jobb resumes his former position on the ground.)

MICHAEL JOBB (cont.)

God-force. God. Whoever or whatever you are. I do not know why these terrible things have befallen me. I only wish I could share my tale of woe with someone. The worst part is not being able to share my story.

(Two professors enter along the street. They are David Wilson and Marsha Silverstein. Again, the actors acknowledge their introduction by the narrator.)

NARRATOR

Professors Silverstein and Wilson are in town for the International Conference on Computer Security.

DAVID WILSON

(Eyeing Michael Jobb with obvious disgust.) We don't have many homeless people in Princeton.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

What a pitiful sight! He makes the other homeless people we've seen look like millionaires.

DAVID WILSON

What a pitiful - . Wait a minute! I think I know that man!

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

My gosh, you are right, it's, it's -

DAVID WILSON and MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

It's Michael Jobb!

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

I was wondering why he wasn't at the Conference.

DAVID WILSON

He was the star of last year's Conference with his paper on the UltraDistributed Quantum Computing Security Protocol. The man is a genius!

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

I wonder what happened to him.

DAVID WILSON

Maybe he didn't get tenure.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

No, he had tenure. I am sure of it. He has been at BU for almost twenty years. I think we should go talk to him.

DAVID WILSON

Okay, but I don't believe in giving money to the homeless.

(Marsha Silverstein and David Wilson approach Michael Jobb.)

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Michael, do you remember us?

MICHAEL JOBB

No, who are you?

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

I am Marsha Silverstein from Georgia Tech, and this is David Wilson from Princeton. We are in Boston for the International Conference on Computer Security. The Conference is at the Hilton Hotel a few blocks from here.

MICHAEL JOBB

Oh, yes. It's that time of year. Time for the International Conference on Computer Security. Sure brings back memories.

DAVID WILSON

Your paper last year on the UltraDistributed Quantum Computing Security Protocol was a real smash. I think it was the best paper at the Conference. Let me congratulate you.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Yes, it was brilliant.

DAVID WILSON

In fact, one of my doctoral students is basing her research on a problem that you posed at the end of your paper. A fascinating problem, you remember, the Superimposition Security Paradox? (Pause) So how are things with you?

MICHAEL JOBB

Not too good, I'm afraid. As you can see I have fallen on hard times.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Yes, well it certainly appears that way, but I didn't want to jump to any conclusions.

MICHAEL JOBB

I realize that you must be busy, with the Conference and all. But, I wonder, could you spare a few minutes?

DAVID WILSON

Not really. (Looking at his watch) In fact - .

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Why, yes, we have some time. This is the lunch break and the next session isn't scheduled for over an hour.

(David Wilson grimaces.)

MICHAEL JOBB

I need to share my story. I need to share my story with somebody. Please sit down here besides me.

DAVID WILSON

On the sidewalk?

MICHAEL JOBB

You can sit next to me, on my blanket.

DAVID WILSON

I'd rather sit on the sidewalk.

(Marsha Silverstein and David Wilson join Michael Jobb on the sidewalk.)

MICHAEL JOBB

I need to share my story.

DAVID WILSON

It must be a doozy.

MICHAEL JOBB

Please listen without judgement. Then, I would like you to tell me how a just God could do this to a decent human being. I think I have been a decent human being, a good husband, a loving father, a dedicated researcher and teacher. I need to hear your thoughts about what has transpired.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

We are all ears, Mike.

DAVID WILSON

Shoot.

MICHAEL JOBB

Don't say "shoot". There are violent criminals in this neighborhood.

DAVID WILSON

Okay. Tell us. Tell us your story.

MICHAEL JOBB

In the past year I have lost my wife, my son, my house, my job, my life's savings, and my good name.

(David Wilson stands up. He stares at his watch.)

DAVID WILSON

That's one hell of a story. I think the afternoon sessions are going to begin soon.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

David. Sit.

(David Wilson sits.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Last March my wife went to the doctor for a routine physical. She was in perfect health, but the doctor found evidence of a malignancy in her lab results. He said that she had a rare form of Hodgkin's disease, so he put her on a rigorous program of chemotherapy using a new and potent drug. Well, the drug only made her sicker and sicker. The lab results kept on changing, and the doctor kept on changing her prescription. Finally, she died. She died of congestive heart failure. That was back in July. She suffered terribly for four months.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

That's terrible, Mike. I am sure you miss her.

MICHAEL JOBB

But, here's the thing. My wife, Marilyn, wanted to donate her body to science, so they did an autopsy. They didn't find any evidence of the Hodgkin's disease that the doctor said she had. My wife died, but I'm not sure why she died or whether the doctors handled her case correctly. It was so confusing, but I did not have time to pursue that, because my son committed suicide a few weeks after Marilyn died.

(David Wilson looks at his watch nervously and then looks towards Marsha Silverstein.)

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Oh, Mike, that's horrible. Your son must have been distraught about his mom's death.

MICHAEL JOBB

He loved his mom and dad. He loved -

(Michael Jobb begins to sob uncontrollably. He lets out a screech reminiscent of Mori's scream in Scene 1. David Wilson is visibly uncomfortable.)

MICHAEL JOBB (cont.)

My son, the joy of my heart, my son - . I found him hanging in his bedroom. He hung himself.

(Michael Jobb again begins to sob uncontrollably.)

MICHAEL JOBB (cont.)

Why did he deserve to die like that? He was such a happy, carefree kid. But, you see, over one year ago, he met this person in cyberspace. His name was Nonnahs. Nonnahs was a violator, but Danny, my son, liked to spend time with him. He became obsessed with him. I noticed, even before Marilyn received her diagnosis, that Danny's mood changed dramatically. He started talking about the weirdest, gloomiest stuff. He started reading all of these nihilistic philosophers and he began to download music about suicide and death and violence. He covered the walls of his room with dark, satanic images and symbols. I know it was the influence of this Nonnahs character. By the time the summer came around, Danny was in a deep depression. The cheerful young man that I cherished with all my heart had changed dramatically into a moody, depressed, despondent person that I hardly knew. I tried to get him to see a psychiatrist, but, you know, with all of this stuff going on with Marilyn's health, I didn't insist enough. And then, on the first of August, I found him, hanging from the ceiling in his bedroom. Lifeless. Limp.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

How awful.

MICHAEL JOBB

Danny left a suicide note.

(With great effort, Michael Jobb reaches into his back pocket for a tattered piece of paper.)

MICHAEL JOBB (cont.)

Do not mourn for me, my father, for this world is false. Only the electrical world is true. My electronic soul-mate is Nonnahs and we have made a pact, a pact to leave this world, and to be together in the endless world of swirling bits and bytes. Do not mourn for me, my father. Do not mourn for me.

(Michael Jobb carefully folds the note and places it back in his back pocket.)

MICHAEL JOBB (cont.)

I wish I could track down this Nonnahs fellow. I would like to wring his neck.

DAVID WILSON

Well, you don't even know whether Nonnahs was a real person. He might have been a form of cyber-entertainment.

MICHAEL JOBB

What kind of entertainment drives a kid to kill himself?

DAVID WILSON

Well, you know, some of the virtual reality cyber-entertainments are quite convincing.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

David!

MICHAEL JOBB

I was arranging for my son's funeral when I got a phone call. It was the Dean of the College of Science and Technology. She told me that she needed to speak to me immediately. My son wasn't even buried yet. This was two days after he died. I said, "My son just committed suicide. My wife passed away three weeks ago. I don't think I can deal with any serious business right now," but she said, "You'd better come in. Something important has come up." So, I went to see the Dean and she looked real angry. She then showed me some lurid pictures of children and animals having sex with some pervert.

DAVID WILSON

They should throw those guys in prison and throw away the keys!

MICHAEL JOBB

But, it was me! I was the pervert. She had pictures of me having sex with little children, little boys and girls! Then, the Dean showed me an especially graphic picture of me having sex with a pig. Me! Having sex with a pig!

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Well, you know, this sounds like an invasion of privacy. Did you contact a lawyer?

MICHAEL JOBB

It's not an issue of privacy, Marsha. Those pictures were faked. They made me sick to my stomach. When the Dean showed me that picture of me having sex with a pig, I almost threw up.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

What did you say? What did you say when she showed you the picture of you having sex with a pig?

MICHAEL JOBB

I denied it vehemently. I said, "I couldn't do that to a pig. I love animals!"

DAVID WILSON

I don't think that helped.

MICHAEL JOBB

It was obvious that I was being framed. Someone had faked those pictures, placed them on the Web, and then informed the Dean about those pictures. I was being framed. I told the Dean, "That's not me in those pictures. Any fool can see that my face has been superimposed upon those photographs," but the Dean said there was more. She then showed evidence that I was a frequent visitor to child pornography and bestiality sites on the Web and in virtual reality, and then she told me that child pornography had been found downloaded onto my university computer. And that's not all. She said that they had found hundreds of pictures of pigs in compromising positions stored on my hard drive. I told her that my son had committed suicide two days earlier, that I had just lost my wife, and that I could not deal with her accusations under such circumstances. However, she insisted that I resign from the University because the scandal was spreading among the faculty and students. Someone had sent some of the pornographic pictures to the school newspaper and also to members of the Board of Trustees. So, I resigned. I think the Dean knew I was being framed, otherwise, I would have been prosecuted. She just didn't have the stomach to take the university through that kind of sordid controversy.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Michael, you should have fought for your rights.

MICHAEL JOBB

But, I was distraught. I had just lost my son, and my wife. Oh, and I forgot to tell you about the house.

DAVID WILSON

The house?

MICHAEL JOBB

Yes, the day after my son hung himself, Andro, that was our domestic robot, was preparing some food and Andro made a big mistake. This had never happened before, but the food caught fire, and Andro tried to carry the burning food to the sink and he dropped the pan, and the kitchen caught fire. The house was burnt to the ground - a pile of ashes. So, when the Dean called me, I wasn't at home, I was in a motel. I was in a motel, trying to arrange for my son's funeral, when she called.

(Michael Jobb breaks down again and gives a second blood-curdling scream, more horrible than the first.)

DAVID WILSON

But why are you here, on the streets? Certainly you have enough money saved up to buy yourself a new house.

MICHAEL JOBB

What money? It's all gone, every last penny. I literally gave away my very last dime just a few minutes ago. Even as all this stuff was going on, something was happening behind the scenes with all of my financial records. No one seemed to have any record of my mutual funds, my retirement fund, my stocks, or even my bank account. It all disappeared. Someone at the bank said, "Oh, you must be the victim of one of those identity thieves," you know, one of those thieves that gets a hold of your social security number and then does all sorts of financial transactions behind your back. This identity thief, or whoever it was, stole all of my money, it just disappeared, or at least that's what they said. That lady at the bank, she said "You must be the victim of one of those identity thieves" so matter of factly, like this was an everyday occurrence.

(There is a moment of stunned silence.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Well, that's my story. Thanks for letting me share that.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

That's a story of Biblical proportions.

DAVID WILSON

Well, gotta go. Marsha and I don't want to miss any of the afternoon sessions.

MICHAEL JOBB

But, I was hoping you would give me your perspective on what has happened. Why would a just and loving God allow this to happen to a decent human being? Why do human beings need to suffer? Can you offer any words of comfort?

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Do you really, honestly, want my perspective on what has happened to you?

MICHAEL JOBB

Yes, I would.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

It may be hard to understand all of this suffering if you focus on this one lifetime. It may be that you have been a fairly decent man in this lifetime, but what about previous lifetimes? None of us knows what we did during a previous lifetime.

MICHAEL JOBB

You mean, I might have done something in a previous lifetime to warrant my losing my wife, my son, my house, my job, my wealth, and my good name?

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Exactly. It's called karma. I think that everything in the Universe operates according to the cosmic law. As ye sow, so shall ye reap. But, the sowing and reaping aren't limited to one lifetime.

MICHAEL JOBB

So, you are saying that in a previous lifetime, I must have committed the most heinous offenses against some of my fellow human beings, heinous enough to warrant all that I have endured during the past year?

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

It's not just a matter of one lifetime. It might have taken you many lifetimes to accumulate all of this bad karma. I don't believe that things like this happen without rhyme or reason.

MICHAEL JOBB

Let me get this straight. I am suffering now because I committed gross sins during one or more of my previous incarnations?

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Precisely.

(Michael Jobb shakes his head skeptically.)

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN (cont.)

You asked for my opinion and that is my opinion. The good news is that you are now paying off your karmic debt. In some future life, things might go a bit more smoothly for you.

MICHAEL JOBB

And what about you, David? What is your view of things?

DAVID WILSON

I think you are a low energy kind of guy.

MICHAEL JOBB

A low energy kind of guy?

DAVID WILSON

I don't believe in Marsha's theory of karmic retribution. I think that there are high energy people and low energy people. High energy people are advanced in their consciousness, and they have the spiritual power to avoid misfortune. Low energy people are like slugs. Stuff happens. They don't have the energy to avoid the stuff that happens. Do you see what I mean?

MICHAEL JOBB

Not exactly.

DAVID WILSON

Whatever happens to a person, that is the result of their energy level, their level of consciousness. So, when I see a homeless person, I know that he or she is a low energy person. They are sitting in the dirt because they do not have the energy to get up out of the dirt. They're like slugs. That is why I never give money to a homeless person, because, on some level, that homeless person wants to be homeless. He or she will eventually learn that the low energy strategy does not work. When they learn that lesson, they will slowly build up their energy. Eventually, they will lift themselves up out of the slug pond. Really, when you get right down to it, the problem of suffering is quite simple.

MICHAEL JOBB

So, my wife died and my son committed suicide because I am a low energy person. Is that what you are trying to say?

DAVID WILSON

Correct. You are creating your own reality. So, the good news is that once you take responsibility for your wife's death and your son's suicide and all of the other things that have happened, you might be able to gather enough energy to avoid those kinds of mishaps in the future.

MICHAEL JOBB

(Sarcastically) I really don't know how to thank you enough, my dear colleagues. Your words of comfort have eased my pain.

(Marsha Silverstein and David Wilson get up from the sidewalk.)

DAVID WILSON

I am happy that we could be of help.

MICHAEL JOBB

I have one more request. If Jeremy Adams is at the Computer Security Conference, please tell him my story. Please ask him to come to see me. He was my favorite doctoral student.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Yes, I know Jeremy. I saw him at the conference this morning. He was asking for you. He said you had disappeared into thin air. I will speak to him.

(Marsha Silverstein takes some money from her purse and places it in Michael Jobb's begging can.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Thank you for that kindness.

MARSHA SILVERSTEIN

Take care, Mike, and try to look at the positive side. Think of all the negative karma that you are burning away in this lifetime.

MICHAEL JOBB

(Smiling profusely) Burn, burn, burn!

(Marsha Silverstein and David Wilson exit. A bedraggled crazy woman wanders on stage unseen by Michael Jobb.)

MICHAEL JOBB (cont.)

Thank you, God, for giving me that opportunity to share my tale of woe.

CRAZY WOMAN

You're quite welcome.

MICHAEL JOBB
Who the hell are you?

CRAZY WOMAN
I am God. Obviously.

MICHAEL JOBB
Are you really?

CRAZY WOMAN
Yes. Really. The doctors that work for the CIA, they say that I am a paranoid schizophrenic. They want me to take their mind-control pills, but I'm not taking those damn pills. Those pills deplete my divine power. I am God!

MICHAEL JOBB
Oh, great! Just what I need!

CRAZY WOMAN
Yes, I am great. Nothing that I have created is greater than I.

MICHAEL JOBB
Well, if you really are God, then tread lightly, because I am a man in deepest mourning.

CRAZY WOMAN
Mourning isn't real any longer. Mourning is just oscillating energy, the play of electrons! Patterns of pixels exploding and vibrating! It's the dawn of a new age, the age in which mourning becomes electric!

MICHAEL JOBB
So, tell me, Master of the Universe, why have I lost my wife, my son, my house, my job, my wealth, and my good name? Why do innocent people suffer? Was this justice on Your part?

(The crazy woman turns around and faces Michael Jobb. She is transformed into Jobb's inquisitor.)

CRAZY WOMAN
Now it is my turn to ask questions and yours to inform me.
Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell me, since you are so well informed!
Who decided the dimensions of it, do you know?
Or who stretched the measuring line across it?
What supports its pillars at their bases?

Who pent up the sea behind closed doors
When it leaped tumultuous out of the womb,
When I wrapped it in a robe of mist
And made black clouds its swaddling bands;
When I marked the bounds it was not to cross
And made it fast with a bolted gate?
Come thus far, I said, and no farther:
Here your proud waves shall break.

Have you ever in your life given orders to the morning
or sent the dawn to its post?
Have you journeyed all the way to the sources of the sea,
or walked where the Abyss is deepest?
Have you been shown the gates of Death
or met the janitors of the Shadowland?
Have you an inkling of the extent of the earth?
Tell me about it if you have!

Which is the way to the home of the light,
and where does darkness live?
You could then show them the way to their proper places,
or put them on the path to where they live!
If you know all this, you must have been born with them,
and you must be very old by now!

Have you ever visited the place where the snow is kept,
or seen where the hail is stored up?
Has the rain a father?
Who begets the dewdrops?
What womb brings forth the ice,
and gives birth to the frost of heaven?

Can your voice carry as far as the clouds
and make the pent-up waters do your bidding?
Will lightening flashes come at your command
and answer, "Here we are"?
Whose skill details every cloud
and tilts the flasks of heaven?

Does the hawk take flight on your advice
when he spreads his wings to travel south?
Does the eagle soar at your command
to make her nest in the heights?

Is my opponent willing to give in?
Has my critic thought up an answer?²

(The crazy woman is like a prosecutor, as she rattles off her questions. Then, as she approaches her last words, she begins to flail her arms, like a whirling dervish. She exits dancing and whirling, leaving Michael Jobb on the ground, sobbing and weeping.)

² Excerpts from Job, chapters 38 and 39. This translation is almost word for word from the Jerusalem Bible, Doubleday and Company, New York. I made a few changes.

Scene 2

NARRATOR

Two years have gone by. The setting is Michael Jobb's new, but modest, apartment. Professor Jobb is there with Jeremy Adams and Ann Roberts.

(The stage is set with two parts. On the left is the living room of Michael Jobb's new apartment. It is very modest in appearance. On the right is a bar. As the scene opens, lights are up on the apartment and the bar is in darkness. Michael Jobb, Jeremy Adams, and Ann Roberts are in Michael Jobb's living room.)

MICHAEL JOBB

How can I ever thank you for all of the help you have given me?

JEREMY ADAMS

Hey, Dr. Jobb, where would I be without you?

ANN ROBERTS

When Jeremy heard about your situation, he was grief stricken. Where would Jeremy be today if you did not support him so vigorously when he was working on his doctoral thesis?

MICHAEL JOBB

Things happened so fast. I heard on the news that Shannon Pitt was arrested yesterday. He has been charged with Marilyn's murder.

JEREMY ADAMS

There are numerous charges against Shannon, including the murder of your wife, the wrongful death of your son, theft, grand larceny, and numerous violations of Web security laws. It is almost certain that Shannon Pitt will spend the rest of his days behind bars.

ANN ROBERTS

And without any access to computers.

MICHAEL JOBB

Right from the start, you knew that I was the victim of what you call a cybersorcerer.

JEREMY ADAMS

Soon, everyone will be talking about cybersorcery. What can I say? Business is booming.

MICHAEL JOBB

But, how did you know? It never occurred to me that an evil violator, what we used to call a hacker, could do such devastating damage to another human being. It never occurred to me that a malicious hacker could cause the death of my wife, and my son, and the destruction of my reputation and the loss of my life's savings.

JEREMY ADAMS

Unfortunately, I see these things every day. That's my life's work - to protect innocent people, like yourself, who are the victims of cybersorcery.

ANN ROBERTS

It's truly ironic the way that our marriage has turned out. I fell madly in love with Jeremy the very first time I saw him, in his native village. Here was a college-educated man living in the Amazon jungle, without the necessities and conveniences of modern life. They didn't even have electricity.

JEREMY ADAMS

My people were able to survive in the rain forest for thousands of years without electricity, so I wouldn't call it a necessity.

ANN ROBERTS

I am a strong-willed woman, and I decided, right after I met Jeremy, that I would save him from that jungle world, especially from that world of evil sorcerers, curses, and demons. I wanted to bring him to the enlightened world of twenty-first century America. Now, eight years later, I have quit my tenured position at the university. I have followed Jeremy to California, where I am a partner in his cyber shaman business. My husband is every bit as much a shaman as was his late father, back in the Brazilian jungle.

JEREMY ADAMS

Yes, what I do in cyberspace is identical what my father used to do in his realm, the spiritual world I never really came to know, the spiritual world that I doubted. Now I am wondering whether there was some truth to my father's view of things.

ANN ROBERTS

I almost laughed out loud when Jeremy's father predicted that Jeremy would have a confrontation with an evil sorcerer named Shannon. Imagine! An evil sorcerer in cyberspace!

JEREMY ADAMS

His prophecy has come to pass.

MICHAEL JOBB

I guess I am being a poor host. Would you folks like some tea or coffee? I actually make my own coffee now. No more Andro.

ANN ROBERTS

Not me, thanks.

JEREMY ADAMS

Maybe later.

MICHAEL JOBB

How did you nail the bastard? That's what I'd like to know.

JEREMY ADAMS

When I first heard of your tragic losses, I knew that this involved a cybersorcerer of the highest caliber. What he accomplished required profound knowledge of computer systems on all levels. Furthermore, what he did involved a tremendous commitment in terms of time and energy. So, I had to ask myself, who would be motivated to harm you in such a terrible way? I immediately remembered that confrontation that you had with Shannon Pitt at your house on Thanksgiving over one year ago. You made a decision that meant that Shannon Pitt would not be completing his doctorate at Boston University.

MICHAEL JOBB

When I found out that Shannon Pitt was behind the murder of my wife and my son, I agonized over the decision I made concerning his comprehensive exams.

ANN ROBERTS

I think you acted honorably, given what you knew at the time. You couldn't let him get away with it. Imagine if everyone made important decisions based upon the fear of what a cybersorcerer might do to them.

JEREMY ADAMS

I agree with Ann. People need to act from integrity.

MICHAEL JOBB

Okay. You suspected Shannon Pitt. Then what?

JEREMY ADAMS

Then, I began to do my homework. I investigated Shannon Pitt's web and virtual reality activities using the tools that we cybershamans have at our disposal. It's all above board and legal. We have some very sophisticated tools to find out who's been where and who's been doing what to whom. My first big discovery was the existence of a character in cyberspace who went by the name Nonnahs. Nonnahs is just Shannon spelled backwards. Nonnahs and Shannon Pitt are one and the same being.

MICHAEL JOBB

Nonnahs. That was the name of the bastard that convinced my son to partake in that suicide pact!

JEREMY ADAMS

It wasn't a suicide pact. It was murder plain and simple. Shannon Pitt did not kill himself, nor did he ever intend to. Danny was misled into believing that he was in a suicide pact with his cyberspace friend. So, my big breakthrough was establishing contact with Nonnahs, Shannon Pitt, in cyberspace. We established a relationship. I portrayed myself, at first, as a fellow violator, a mean-spirited dude, and Shannon loved that. I used every trick in the book to win his respect and trust. Shannon started to brag about some of his exploits in cyberspace. He bragged about killing the wife of a man he hated, and killing that man's son. He bragged about dozens of other evil exploits that had nothing to do with you. I pretended that I was impressed, like Shannon Pitt was my hero. I did everything I could to build up his ego. Finally, I told him how impressed I was with his exploits. I said I wanted to level with him. I told him that I was a cybercriminal with mob connections, and that the mob would be willing to pay big bucks to learn some of his technical tricks, what he calls his wizardry. I arranged to meet him at a bar here in Boston. I told him that I would be wearing a rose in my lapel. He told me that he would do likewise. I did not catch a glimpse of Shannon on that fateful Thanksgiving when he interrupted our celebration. Let me tell you what transpired at Jake's bar, down at Boston harbor.

(Lights up on the bar. Lights dim on Jobb's living room. Jeremy Adams walks over to the bar and sits at a stool. Soon he is joined by Shannon Pitts. A bartender is tending bar.)

JEREMY ADAMS

That's a nice rose you've got there.

SHANNON PITTS

You must be Warlord.

JEREMY ADAMS

And you must be Nonnahs.

SHANNON PITTS

That's me.

JEREMY ADAMS

I can't tell you how much we admire your work, Nonnahs. The way you iced that guy's wife. Tell me about it.

SHANNON PITTS

Do you have the money?

(Jeremy Adams reaches into his jacket pocket and takes out an envelope.)

JEREMY ADAMS

It's only a down payment. When you give us the technical materials, and when my boys review it, we'll give you the other half.

SHANNON PITT

How do I know that I can trust you?

JEREMY ADAMS

You know where I am in cyberspace. You can do to me what you did to that poor woman - and the kid.

SHANNON PITT

The kid. That was the best part, destroying Jobb's only child.

JEREMY ADAMS

Do you have the technical documentation you promised?

SHANNON PITT

Of course, here it is. Printed out, just like you insisted.

JEREMY ADAMS

Then, here's the down payment.

(Shannon Pitt counts the money as Jeremy Adams leafs through the thick packet of documentation.)

JEREMY ADAMS

Yes, this looks like valuable technical material. I see the section here on using quantum parallel cryptography to violate databases and medical records. It looks good, real good.

SHANNON PITT

That was the key, man. Using quantum parallel cryptography to violate databases. That was how I iced Jobb's wife.

JEREMY ADAMS

How did you possibly get your hands on a quantum decryptor / encryptor?

SHANNON PITT

I violated a top secret site at the National Security Agency. They never suspected a thing.

JEREMY ADAMS

But how did the quantum decryptor / encryptor help you to kill Jobb's wife?

SHANNON PITT

Do we need to go over that again? We discussed all of this in cyberspace a few weeks ago. Also, it's all detailed in the documentation that I just gave to you. The documentation explains exactly how you can violate medical records in order to make a healthy person appear really sick. The doctor does the rest. He fills out a script and the next thing you know the patient is taking something that's going to kill her. It's easy, once you have access to the quantum encryption machine.

JEREMY ADAMS

So, Marilyn Jobb never had Hodgkins Lymphoma.

SHANNON PITT

Of course not. That bitch really took care of herself. I made it look like she had Hodgkin's disease for the benefit of her doctor. I knew that the medication would eventually kill her.

JEREMY ADAMS

I am impressed, Nonnahs. At first glance this certainly looks like a promising technology. I know the boys, the guys that I work for, will love to use this on some of their enemies. You know, we've evolved far beyond breaking knees. When we verify that your ideas work, you'll get the other half of the money.

SHANNON PITT

I've never held this much money in my entire life. I guess this is my payoff for being pretty good at what I do.

JEREMY ADAMS

You're not just good. You're the best.

SHANNON PITT

I know. I've been violating computers since I was a little kid, barely ten.

JEREMY ADAMS

Could you tell me again about the other techniques that you used, like the techniques you used to cause Professor Jobb to lose his position at the university?

SHANNON PITT

Man, that was so much fun. I didn't need no quantum encryptor for that. I found some really gross porno sites and made sure that it appeared that Professor Jobb was a satisfied customer. Did I tell you about the picture with the pig?

JEREMY ADAMS

And the son. Did you use any special technology with him?

SHANNON PITT

Yes, it's all in the documentation that I've given you. I took poor Danny boy into virtual reality hell. He saw things that totally demoralized him. All the while I pretended to be his best friend.

(The bartender whips out a gun. He is a police officer. Two other police officers enter with their guns drawn.)

SHANNON PITT (cont.)

What's going on?

BARTENDER / OFFICER

Shannon Pitt, you are under arrest for the murder of Marilyn Jobb. Other charges will be pending. You have the right to remain silent. You have the right to consult with an attorney.

SHANNON PITT

Damn! How the hell did I ever fall for this scheme?

(Shannon Pitt is hand-cuffed and escorted out of the bar.)

SHANNON PITT (cont.)

Do I get to keep the money?

(Lights dim on the bar. Lights up on Jobb's apartment. Jeremy Adams leaves the bar and re-enters the apartment area.)

NARRATOR

And so the scene of the action returns to Professor Jobb's new apartment.

JEREMY ADAMS

So that's what went down.

MICHAEL JOBB

Bravo, bravo! Your father would be proud.

ANN ROBERTS

Mike, I cannot imagine the pain that you have experienced, but now is the time for a new beginning. Jeremy believes that we can get back a lot of the money that Shannon stole from you.

JEREMY ADAMS

The Dean of the College of Science and Technology has promised me that she will reinstate you at the university.

ANN ROBERTS

Your name will be cleared as people learn about Shannon Pitt and the evil that he perpetrated. And, we have one more surprise for you. Jeremy.

(Jeremy Adams exits and returns with Andro.)

MICHAEL JOBB

Andro!

(Michael Jobb embraces Andro with great emotion, the only remnant of the life he has lost. The robot hugs him back affectionately.)

MICHAEL JOBB (cont.)

Andro, Andro! I am so glad to see you!

ANN ROBERTS

And this is not a replica of Andro, this is the very same Andro that used to work for you before you lost your home. We found him at a pawn shop, looking quite forlorn.

ANDRO

Dr. Jobb, I want to apologize for setting fire to your house.

MICHAEL JOBB

That's all right, Andro. Even robots make mistakes.

ANDRO

It was that evil cybersorcerer, Shannon Pitt. You know that all of us robots are intrinsically connected to the Web. Shannon Pitt infected me with a rogue program. He programmed me to start that fire and to burn down your house. It was like what you human beings call demonic possession. I tried to fight off this fiery demon with all of my processing skills, but Shannon Pitt, the evil sorcerer, prevailed. I am now certified demon-free. I am safe. Would you like me to make you some coffee, like in the good old days?

MICHAEL JOBB

That would be wonderful, Andro. But, first, I could sure use one of your jokes.

ANDRO

Sure enough. Here's a good one. This termite walks into a bar and positions himself on a stool. Then, he turns to the person next to him and says, "Is the bar tender here?"

MICHAEL JOBB

Is the bar tender here? I don't get it.

ANDRO

You see, it was a termite. He doesn't want a drink, he wants to munch on the bar, which is made of wood.

MICHAEL JOBB

Oh, Andro, that joke was horrible.

ANDRO

Yo mamma!

(Lights fade.)

PROPS

A bowl of fruit, including plums	(Act One, Scene 2)
A tattered blanket	(Act Two, Scene 1)
An empty coffee tin	(Act Two, Scene 1)
A placard that reads "FORMER PROFESSOR, WRONGLY ACCUSED, NEEDS YOUR HELP"	(Act Two, Scene 1)
A dingy old dime	(Act Two, Scene 1)
A watch	(Act Two, Scene 1)
A tattered piece of paper	(Act Two, Scene 1)
Two roses (for insertion into lapels)	(Act Two, Scene 1)
Drinking glasses	(Act Two, Scene 2)
A towel for wiping glasses	(Act Two, Scene 2)
A gun	(Act Two, Scene 2)