

ACT I**Scene I**

AT RISE: The converted ballroom in the early morning hours. Area light rises on Michael Castello dressed in a heavy sweater and wearing winter gloves. He is speaking to a group of students who are in the shadows. He speaks with the authority and conviction of a motivational speaker.

MICHAEL

Good morning!

(Pause. Waits for response.)

I said, good morning, people. *(Silence)* You can do better than that. I can hear you breathing, so why do I get the feeling that I'm in a morgue.

STUDENT

(Timidly)

Good morning, teacher.

MICHAEL

Good! We have a live one! *(Beat)* I'm not your teacher by the way. I'll be your supervisor guiding you through your foray into BOTT. Now lets shake off the cobwebs and get ready to change your life. Welcome to a beginning seminar in the fundamentals of BOTT. *(Pause)* You've all probably heard something about BOTT. Some of what you've heard is positive, some of it negative, some of the things you've heard are downright bizarre, but you've been intrigued, and you've decided to find out for yourself. BOTT is not for the mealy-mouthed or faint-hearted. I repeat BOTT is not for the mealy-mouthed or faint-hearted. If you're a dilettante wanting to spend a quite weekend away from the wife and kids; you may want a place to network...make a few new friends, or you just like having something new to talk about around the water cooler on Monday morning, you're in the wrong place. Pack up your voyeuristic attitude and go see a peep show in Time Square. This is not a course for malleable souls incarcerated by the crushing conformity of a thousand years of human existence. *(Beat)* You are not slaves! You are just the opposite. You can become the master of all you survey or be enslaved by all the dreams you pursue. You have chosen to embrace your innermost essence and journey to the farthest reaches of your potential. You all have your individual reason for wanting to find out more about BOTT. If the world seems especially cold, dark and hostile place, you're not alone. Millions have shade the skin of despair, isolation, and deprivation and discovered new sight through BOTT, a lost sea of awareness—the power within.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Universes of unseen atoms with neutron, proton, electron in perfect harmony and predictable chaos. Molecules spinning racing, colliding and forming who and what you are. We are going to be exploring these unseen worlds not with a microscope, but with an inner eye. The spirit that is essence; truth, which is God.

(Lights rise on the course area down left with three students sitting in a row of chairs. They are facing the audience and are frozen in various expressions of mediation, searching, and trance.)

MICHAEL

Now, there are those of you that have come to improve yourself-image, others, so you can make more money. Still others want to turn themselves into chick magnets. BOTT can help you achieve all these goals. But BOTT can change more than your exterior; it can change your very soul. Let beginning by defining what is BOTT. BOTT is an acronym that stands for Bio organization Temporal Transfer. On the surface it is..

(MICHAEL continues speaking as lights fade on HIM and the STUDENTS. Area lighting rises on the RECEPTIONIST area stage right. There is a desk and chair, sitting at the desk is the organizations RECEPTIONIST/REGISTRAR. SHE is wearing a light coat gloves and hat. COLLON HORTON enters dress in a winter coat, hat, gloves and heavy boots. COLLIN tentatively approaches the desk.)

RECEPTIONIST

(Overly chipper)

Hello, welcome to the BOTT Center of New York. How may I help you?

COLLIN

Hi. How are you doing?

RECEPTIONIST

At peace with the world, myself, and my molecular structure.

(COLLIN looks bit confused by the answer. He shivers.)

COLLIN

Why is it so cold in here?

RECEPTIONIST

The furnace for the building is on the fritz. Wouldn't you know it, coldest day of the year and darn thing says, "I want a break." "I'm tired of working." "I want some attention too."

(SHE Motions for COLLIN to come closer.)

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

We believe that spirits sometime attach themselves to inadament objects.

COLLIN

What?

RECEPTIONIST

Gotcha! (*Outburst of laughter*) Freedom to fabricate is powerful ability.

COLLIN

I see. (*Pause*) There seems to be heat in the lobby.

RECEPTIONIST

We have nothing to do with the lobby, complete separate entity. (*Beat*) What may I help you with today?

COLLIN

I'm here for the beginning seminar on BOTT.

RECEPTIONIST

Excellent choice. Excellent! It's a real life changer. How did you hear about us?

COLLIN

A flier.

RECEPTIONIST

(*Quoting from the flier*)

"Don't let yourself be stuck in a world of doubt. You are the answer. Stand up and shout!" (*Beat*) I love that flier.

(The RECEPTIONST collects the proper forms, course pack for COLLIN, and hands them to him.)

RECEPTIONIST

That will be two hundred and seventy-five dollars for the seminar.

COLLIN

Check okay?

Fine. Just need a picture ID.

RECEPTIONIST

(COLLIN takes out a checkbook and drivers license. He shows his license to the RECEPTIONIST. He looks upward to the skylight overhead.)

Wow! That's some skylight.

COLLIN

(COLLIN writes a check out.)

This space was an ornate ballroom in the twenties and thirties. They don't make 'em like this anymore.

RECEPTIONIST

(COLLIN hands her the check.)

Did the course myself several years ago. It changed my life.

RECEPTIONIST

For the better, I hope.

COLLIN

(The RECEPTIONIST hands COLLIN some papers to fill out.)

Take it from one who knows, you'll wonder how you ever managed to live in your putrefied state once you've experienced the power of BOTT. It's like a cleansing wave washing over your being, awaking your second sight.

RECEPTIONIST

Second sight? Any relationship to the third eye?

COLLIN
(*sardonic*)

Fill out the registration form and your classroom is right over there.

RECEPTIONIST

Through those door?

COLLIN

Yes. Enjoy the seminar.

RECEPTIONIST

(COLLIN takes his paper and crosses down stage to the class area. Lights rise on MICHAEL who is still speaking to the class. COLLIN stands at the edge of the area and waiting to be noticed.)

MICHAEL

...the physical trauma and for that matter extreme emotional trauma that you've accumulated in your life has caused most of you to suffer from amnesia. Growing more and more unconscious with each waking hour. You've become so use to being...

(MICHAEL notices COLLIN standing.)

MICHAEL

You here for the seminar?

COLLIN

Yes, I've been looking...

(MICHAEL grabs COLLIN'S registration papers. MICHAEL signs the form and hands COLLIN a copy.)

MICHAEL

You're late! Class begins at nine sharp. You'll be expected to be on time every day. You'll get a ten-minute break in the morning and the afternoon, half-hour lunch. There is no smoking, eating, drinking or talking in the classroom. The bathrooms are down the hall to your left. Find a set and open your manual to chapter two and start reading.

(COLLIN hesitates.)

COLLIN

Excuse me.

MICHAEL

What?

COLLIN

Don't you have space heaters? It's pretty cold in here.

MICHAEL

(*Irrated*)

What does this look like the Helmsley Palace? Leona won't be coming around to put a mint on your pillow, buddy. If you want pampering, you've come to the wrong place. If you want to unlock your unlimited potential, sit down, shut up, and start reading chapter two.

(COLLIN is offended by Mike's tone, but finds a seat and settles in. The immobilized student intrigues COLLIN. He gives them the once over, takes out his manual, and begins to read. JOSIE enters in a hurry looking disheveled and preoccupied. SHE crosses to the course area.)

Sorry, I'm late.

JOSIE

Josie...Josie...Josie...

MICHAEL
(Exasperated)

I said, I'm sorry. (Beat) Mike, don't be a hard ass. Not today.

JOSIE

You've got to start getting here on time.

MICHAEL
(A much softer tone)

I over slept.

JOSIE

Fine a new excuse. That one is getting old.

MICHAEL

(MICHAEL senses that JOSIE is upset about something.)

You okay? (Pause) What's wrong?

MICHAEL

Nothing.

JOSIE

You look like you've got something..

MICHAEL

I'm fine.

JOSIE

(MICHAEL begins writing on a clipboard.)

I should have wrote you up weeks ago.

MICHAEL

You're not a hard nose prick like the rest of these assholes.

JOSIE

MICHAEL

Josie!

JOSIE

You're taking being class supervisor too serious. Loosen up!

(COLLIN has raised his hand.)

MICHAEL

It's hard to loosen up with Ondrick breathing down my fuckin' neck about my stats.

(TOM ONDRICK enters with EMMANUEL cross to the center office. TOM is dress in a unkempt, threadbare suit. EMMANUEL wears a cheap suit, shirt and tie, and beat up shoes.)

JOSIE

Speaking of assholes. Numero uno has just step through the door.

MICHAEL

(Looks up to see TOM and EMMANUEL)

Shit! He'll be over in a minute to bust my balls.

JOSIE

At least you have some.

(COLLIN is still waving his hand.)

MICHAEL

(To COLLIN)

I see you, mister. (To JOSIE) Can you see what mister it's-cold-in-here wants?

(JOSIE is fixated on the conversation that TOM is having with EMMANUEL.)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Now, Josie!

(JOSIE crosses to COLLIN and begins to talk to him. SHE remains distracted by TOM. Lights dim on the classroom area.)

EMMANUEL

(To TOM)

It's looking bad.

TOM

I don't want problems. I want solutions.

EMMANUEL

I don't think we're going to make payroll this week.

TOM

I don't like your defeatist attitude. What has father said about similar situations?

EMMANUEL

I know. I'm well aware of the...

TOM

Then put it to use.

EMMANUEL

Our revenue stream is in the toilet.

TOM

Then dive in and get it out. Do I have to do everything myself, goddamn it! Listen, if I have to I'll declare a state of emergency, and you know what that means.

EMMANUEL

Eighteen-hour days.

TOM

Then make it happen, man. Get on these slackers ass and demand result. Don't take any flack. I'll back you up all the way. (Beat) When is the heat going to be turned back on?

EMMANUEL

As soon as I find the money to pay the bill.

TOM

Remember the ultimate test.

EMMANUEL

Spirit over molecular structure.

TOM

Father is going to be here in less than a week, and I want every divisional stat to be through the roof.

(JOSIE appears in the area and gets TOM'S attention.)

TOM

Josie, what are you doing away from your post?

JOSIE

I need to talk to you.

(TOM puts on a show for EMMANUEL benefit.)

TOM
You need to talk to me? Then go through the proper channels.

JOSIE
You didn't say anything about going through...

(EMMANUEL clears his throat halting JOSIE'S rant. HE doesn't want to be draws into a potential conflict and excuses himself.)

EMMANUEL
I better get back to work.

(EMMANUEL starts to cross to his office.)

TOM
(To EMMANUEL)
You get any resistances--send 'em to me. I'll straighten them out.

(EMMANUEL crosses to the middle door and enters. TOM demeanor immediately changes.)

TOM
(To JOSIE)
What in the hell do you think you're doing?

(TOM grabs JOSIE by the arm and drags her down right.)

TOM
I'm a grade 2, and you are--

JOSIE
This is important.

TOM
What so important that it can wait until we're off duty?

(There is an uneasy pause. JOSIE crosses to TOM and whispers in his ear. TOM'S reaction is one of shock and anger. HE grabs JOSIE and leads her stage left and they go through the balcony doors.)

ACT I**Scene II**

AT RISE: The balcony outside the ballroom. The stage is seamlessly changed into a balcony. There is a stone railing that runs cross the length of the balcony. A few potted plants, and lawn furniture decorated the balcony. Up center is the double door that leads into the ballroom. JOSIE stands downstage against the rail and TOM paces up stage. A low rumble of street noise can be heard. TOM stops pacing and confronts JOSIE.)

Does anyone else know?

TOM

No.

JOSIE

You haven't blabbed this to any...

TOM

I said no! All you ever think about...

JOSIE

(TOM continues to pace and turns to JOSIE.)

I thought you were on the pill.

TOM

I thought you'd be happy.

JOSIE

Happy? What are you out of your mind?

TOM

You know, you can be a real bastard sometime.

JOSIE

Being a bastard is what got me where I am today. I don't need complications right now. (Beat) What are you planning on doing?

TOM

I don't know.

JOSIE

TOM
You've got to get rid of it.

JOSIE
I won't kill my baby.

TOM
Don't be stupid. It's not a baby, goddamn it! It's a collection of amino acid, peptides, and inconsequential cellular matter.

JOSIE
It's a part of you and me.

TOM
Leave me out of your idealist plan of motherhood, family and the house with white picket fence on Normal Lane.

(JOSIE breaks down crying. TOM disposition softens and crosses to her.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Don't do that. Come on...there's a solution to every problem. Father has stated...

JOSIE
(*Angry*)
I don't care what father has to say! I'm sick of every other word out of your mouth being a quote from the Supreme leader!

TOM
You're hysterical.

JOSIE
I'm not hysterical! I'm pissed!

TOM
You're just a little...

JOSIE
Don't you dare tell me how I feel!

TOM
Josie please. If this gets out, it would ruin my career at BOTT.

JOSIE
That's all you care is Tom Ondrick. Tom Ondrick, the next district director of the BOTT organization.

TOM

You've never fit in here. Never realized the enormous responsibility and privilege that you've been given working to bring sanity to the planet. You're just a selfish, silly dreamer, a would-be-artist. *(Beat)* I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. *(HE tries to touch JOSIE and she shuns him.)* We're both here to facilitate Father's vision of the world and all our personal desires and dreams are secondary.

JOSIE

And you're manifesting the character traits that you once despised.

TOM

I'm not going to stand for...

JOSIE

I'm leaving the organization!

(Pause)

TOM

You can't leave without the council's review and clearance.

JOSIE

Fuck the Council! I'm going to pack my bags and walk out that door.

TOM

You'll be abandoned.

JOSIE

I'm already abandoned. I'll at least be in control of my life.

TOM

The path to spiritual and molecular harmony blocked.

JOSIE

I don't care.

TOM

You're saying that now.

JOSIE

I want me and my baby to have a life.

TOM

(Gesturing to the New York skyline)

What kind of life are you going to have living out there with those flesh robots? They don't know have a cue. Do you think they're happy?

JOSIE

I don't know, but I'm gonna fine out.

TOM

Fine...fine. (*Beat*) Why did I get myself mixed up with a level 5?

JOSIE

You didn't get involved with a level 5. You got involved with me.

(JOSIE turns away from TOM and gazes out over the Manhattan skyline.)

JOSIE

It's all so massive and inhuman. Monuments to man's conquest of nature. We weren't meant to dwell in stone canyons and ride in boxcars underground. Slivers of blue sky is our only connection with a higher plain. (*Pause*) I use to have these flying dreams when I was a kid. I would jump off our back porch and swoop down skimming perilously close to the ground, before I began to fly. I remember feeling this overwhelming joy like I was an angel. I would soar over rows of apartments blocks, over rivers, highways, crowded street. I'd fly until the city faded, and I reach green meadows and clean air. I always experienced this incredible sense of freedom. I thought I had found a way to feel like that all the time.

(TOM grabs JOSIES and shakes her.)

TOM

Listen to yourself. Do you hear what you're saying? Life is not a dream, this life is a waking nightmare. We all here to reach a higher plain, but we can't do it alone. You're like that character in Greek mythology. (*Thinking*) Icarus, that's his name. Thought he could fly. He tried to escape his prison with wings made of wax. His only instruction was not to fly to close to the sun. He disobeyed his father instruction, flirted with the sun, melting his wings, and fell into the sea. We can only fly to stratospheric heights, attain ultimate freedom through the guidance of father. Don't be a fool, Josie.

(JOSIE pulls away from TOM.)

JOSIE

No. No, I'll show you. One day you'll...

TOM

I want you to report to the office of Ethics and Justice. You'll have to be disciplined. (*Beat*) You'd had better keep your mouth shut about being pregnant! You'll eventually see that I'm right, that the timing is wrong to bring a child in this world. Adherence to the words of father is the only way we can safely traverse the skies.

(JOSIE exits the balcony in tears.
Lights dim as the stage is quickly
reconfigured.)