

ABSOLUTION

A Ten Minute Play

By Douglas R. Cannon

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Play Synopsis

I. Locations

There are three locations: (1) a farm near Bloomington Indiana, (2) a lonely seldom used road near Salem, Illinois, where a white van has been overturned in the roadside ditch, (3) a small hillside approximately 500 yards back from the site of the overturned van. All characters located in these separated sites are connected via telephone, landline or cellular.

II. Cast of Characters In Order of Appearance

Carole: Carole is a middle aged, intelligent, attractive female, totally loyal to the Boss. She is sincere and honest. She blindly overlooks her Boss's shortcomings. But, even though she realized the threat Ben poses to her Boss, under no circumstances would she have anything to do with murdering Ben. Rather she would hide him.

Boss: Boss owns a large, secluded Indiana farm and heads an aggregation of loosely affiliated neo-Nazi/racist gangs. He hosts these gangs on his farm where they conduct paramilitary training, exchange information, explore anti-Semitic and racist ideology, and indulge in racist oriented sports. He illegally buys and sells automatic weapons. He is deceptive toward all, distrustful of everyone but Carole, quick to corrupt local officials, and

fearful of exposure of his criminal activities to the point of paranoia. His paranoia justifies the murder of Ben.

Randy: Randy is a former career Green Beret, and fought in Vietnam. He is a tough, hardened anti-Semite. In his mind, Jews and anti-war hippies are of the same ilk. He despises both as draft-dodging cowards whose antiwar activities eroded popular support at home thereby betraying him and his buddy combatants. Ironically, he has respect for African-Americans because he served with many of them in Vietnam. He too, will not murder Ben.

Ben: Ben is a schizophrenic, racist devotee of Boss, at whose knee he learned rabid anti-Semitism and hate-filled antipathy for any ethnic group except the Aryan. However, he retains a residual of his Catholic upbringing despite his constant efforts to repress this dogma. He tries earnestly to realign his thinking to fully assimilate his Boss's credo of legendary Aryan immortality, sacrifice, heroic martyrdom, and suicide as a portal to this Aryan immortality. At the last minute, however, Ben reverts to his Catholic roots and desperately seeks forgiveness and redemption.

Voice: Voice is the evil other half of Ben's schizophrenic personality. Voice has unquestioningly and gladly internalized all the Boss's racist and anti-Semitic precepts. Voice thinks he is the superior racial embodiment of the Aryan ideal and despises Ben. Voice believes in Aryan immortality and accepts suicide as the proper path to achieve this immortality, but only after having made a clear and unequivocal action-statement. Voice instigated

Ben's vicious rampage, which included two (2) racist murders and shooting of nine (9) other ethnically identified and defined persons. To further Voice's plan, he kidnapped a woman and her baby.

Virgin: Virgin is a calm, calming, serene, angelic Virgin Mary. God sends her in response to Ben's urgent partial recitation of a ritual Catholic prayer as he desperately seeks forgiveness at the fearful hour of his death. Ben cannot remember all of the prayer, but his emotional recitation is proof enough that he is sincerely repentant. A loving and forgiving God accepts his prayer. She exorcises the demonic Voice, helps Ben ask for forgiveness, and then announces Ben's redemption and absolution. After Ben's death, Virgin points him towards the light and they move toward it together.

III. Props

One (1) desk and/or table
One (1) landline telephone
Two (2) chairs
Two (2) cell phones
One (1) pistol
One (1) pair of binoculars

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(Stage Right Boss is at his desk his head in his hands Carole enters from behind him and gently places her hand on his shoulder. There is a landline telephone on the desk. Ben lies on the floor center stage propped-up on an overturned chair)

Carole: Boss, Randy is on line 2.

(Boss picks up the telephone, urgency in his voice.)

Boss: Where the heck are you? I need an update now!

(Stage left Randy reports matter-of-factly cell phone to his ear, looking through binoculars he looks into the distance)

Randy: Down here near Salem, Illinois, been trailing Ben, and monitoring the County sheriff on my police scanner. They don't have any real idea about Chicago, all they seem to know is they're chasing a guy who kidnapped a young mother and her baby. They picked that up from a 911 call from gas station jockey who saw Ben kidnap the woman and baby and steal her van. Three cop cars were chasing Ben in this family van, but he had a head start for awhile. Ben let the woman and the kid go. The sheriff's cops picked her up with the baby, took them away in one sheriff's car while the other two cars got after Ben. I really tried to catch-up to Ben, but when I heard the sheriffs' scanner talk about how they were going to cut him off and I could hear the sirens, could see their lights flashing some miles back; I dropped off. It's real flat down here, so I'd be easily spotted.

I dropped back just to make certain that the sheriff didn't tie me to Ben.

(Boss is pleased openly complementary, smiles in relief, Randy puts down binoculars)

Boss: That's using your head. I know what southern Illinois is like .We cannot be connected with Ben, none of us. So, did you have a chance to talk with Ben?

Randy: I trailed behind the sheriff cars, maybe a quarter mile or so. They didn't pay attention to me. They caught up to Ben, started shooting. Or Ben fired first, I'm not sure. Anyhow, Ben rolled the van into a ditch. The sheriff's cops got Ben cornered now. He's been shooting from inside the van, strong at first, now not so much.

Sheriff's cops have stopped altogether, they're just waiting for more cops I guess. I'm about 500 yards away on a small rise, just enough for me to see what's going on without being too noticeable.

(Boss is now irritated, pushes back his hair)

Boss: Repeating: did you have a chance to talk with Ben

Randy: Yeah, sure, on our cell phones.

(Boss urgently wants emphatic confirmation Carole, nervous, stands at his side)

Boss: You told him not to talk about the farm, didn't you? That you have ten grand cash for him? That we had arranged for him to link up with the Covenant, Sword, Arm

of the Lord in Arkansas, right? We have some hundred people here at the farm today, it'll get real messy if he tells the cops what we got here! He knows about the shipment, a million bucks worth of AK-47s, stored here. So I hope to God you convinced him not be taken alive, right? He's got to believe we tried our best to save him. He must not be arrested and interrogated, he must not talk!

(Boss is very exasperated)

Randy: Look, I told him exactly what we agreed to tell him; that Woody will hide him with the CSA, the ten grand will get him there. Worse case, I told him he had to be strong, a martyr, you know, for the Aryan race; that he'd be our hero forever, that being executed with a needle in his arm on some prison gurney is no way for an Aryan hero to die.

(Boss is enthusiastic, then frustrated, pounds desk. Carole shows concern, stays behind the Boss her hand on his shoulder)

Boss: Good. Very good indeed. But, how did Ben take it? Look, he shot six orthodox Jews in Chicago, murdered the black ex-basketball coach from Northwestern, shot a black minister, shot at some Koreans, and I just found out he murdered a Chinese foreign-exchange student on the campus of Indiana University, not far from here. He should know there is no way he won't face execution, in either Illinois or Indiana, and had to know this early on. For our part, we simply cannot allow him to take us down with him!

(Randy is sarcastically critical of Boss handling of Ben leading to this jeopardy)

Randy: All your "BS talks" about hero's sacrifice, martyrdom, and glorious death stuff got Ben really hyped for just what he did. But now, I think he's afraid of dying. He's tried suicide, shot himself three times: first in the leg, second shot was angled down from the upper chest; last shot was up under the chin. All shots were with a .22 target pistol. None fatal so far. That ain't real serious suiciding!

(Boss is shocked and amazed)

Boss: Three times? With a .22? I can't believe this, all he has to do is put the gun in his mouth and pull the trigger, instantaneous, no pain, it's so simple. No pain, none at all! Oblivion, peace, rest.

(Randy is indignant, almost disrespectful)

Randy: Well now, he's pretty much scared. He's wrestling with that beer-and-bourbon-bravado martyrdom stuff you filled him with. Part of him says, go ahead, do it, be the hero, kill yourself, be the immortal Aryan legend. But then he hesitates because he's afraid of going to hell! He's reverting back to his Catholicism, fearing hell's fire and damnation.

(Boss is enraged, panic-stricken, fearful, Boss paces and rages that Randy tried to blame him)

Boss: Damn it! He did this all on his own, without telling us. I would have had you stop him any way necessary. As long as he's alive, he's a threat to us. Any decent defense

attorney will plea bargain, have him give-up all of us just to save him.

(Randy is emphatic, voice raised)

Randy: Boss, you know I was career Green Beret, two tours Nam. I know how to kill, but I am no murderer! Ben was the only guy who toughed-out my exercise regime, I can't; and won't, kill him for you.

(Boss turns conciliatory)

Boss: Randy, here's what we'll do. Call Ben on your cell phone, keep me on the line. I'll be on mute. I want to hear for myself what he has to say, and how he's thinking.

(Randy dials his cell phone, looks out over center-stage with binoculars)

Randy: Okay boss, here we go!

(Ben is lying back in a chair screaming in pain as he answered Randy's phone. When Ben speaks, he turns his head to face the audience center-stage.)

Ben: Randy, I'm bleeding bad now inside, like you said belly wounds are the worst. Hurts, really hurts, pain in the gut really hurts.

Randy: I know trooper hang in there.

(When Ben speaks, he turns his head to face the audience center-stage. Ben's voice is racked with fear, he is tortured with pain)

Ben: The pain...can't stand the pain. "Hail Mary full of Grace... pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death..." Randy, I don't want to go to hell... but I've murdered people.

(Randy tries to reassure Ben pointing to a new eternity)

Randy: Ben remember you will always be here with us, you will be immortal with us, our hero, a martyr...

(When Ben speaks, he turns his head to face the audience center-stage. Ben is all but hysterical, writhing on the floor)

Ben: I don't want to go to hell, don't want to be a martyr. "Hail Mary full of Grace... pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death..." Randy,...got to stop the pain, stop the pain, don't want to go to hell..."Hail Mary full of Grace... "

(Voice sits up, turns his head to the right as if he is talking to Ben. Voice is forcefully accusatory, demanding)

Voice: You wanted to be a hero, you wanted Aryan honor and glory, now when you need to show some real courage, some real guts, you wimp out. You're a disgusting, nauseating, real little coward. Put the gun in your mouth now, squeeze and it's over in instant! Your pain will be gone.

(Randy is desperately inquisitive, he is looking through binoculars to see what is happening)

Randy: Ben, is that you talking? Ben is someone else with you? Who's that talking?

(Ben is insistent and now sobbing)

Ben: Randy, I'm alone. All alone. "Hail Mary full of Grace... pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death..." God forgive me, Mother of God intercede for me...I don't want to go to hell...The pain is terrible!

(Voice sits up, turns his head to the right as if he is talking to Ben. Voice is even more forcefully accusatory and demanding)

Voice: You are just a revolting, sniveling fraud, I had to do all the work, you didn't have the guts to kill anybody including yourself, and you will be remembered as an Aryan hero. Martyr my butt. I want to vomit.

(Randy is still probing, pushing Ben demanding to know who's there)

Randy: Ben you can't be alone, I'm hearing another voice. Who's there?

(Voice sits up, turns his head to the right as if he is talking to Ben. Voice is still demanding, ordering suicide)

Voice: Put the gun in your mouth and squeeze, Ben. Do it now!

(When Ben speaks, he turns his head to face the audience center-stage. Ben begging, remembers only part of the prayer)

Ben: "Hail Mary full of Grace... pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death..."

Randy: Ben, Ben, Ben and...? I lost the signal, did you hear all that?

(Boss is confused and frustrated but still giving forceful strict orders while pacing)

Boss: Yes, don't understand what happened there. It sounded like only Ben's voice. Was he just hallucinating or was someone forcing him into suicide? That'd be great for us frankly. Randy, stay there until you know whether Ben is dead or alive, but don't get involved with the cops, no matter what even if you must leave before your certain. Call me as soon as you know, one way or the other.

(Randy looks through the binoculars again)

Randy: Yes sir. Wait a minute, more cop cars coming down the road, will pass right by me. I'm outta here!

Boss: Yes go, go!

(When Ben speaks, he turns his head to face the audience center-stage. Ben is screaming in pain)

Ben: "Hail Mary full of Grace... pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death..." Arggghhhhh!

(Voice sits up, turns his head to the right as if he is talking to

Ben. Voice sharply denounces Ben.)

Voice: Damn your prayers!

(The Virgin appears from within the audience walking down the center-stage to where Ben is laying, her voice is calm, even, and serene)

Virgin: I came to help you Ben. I came because you've asked me to Ben, and because the Father still loves you, He sent me.

(When Ben speaks, he turns his head to face the audience center-stage. Ben is begging, hysterically)

Ben: Save me, help me please, please save me!

(Voice sits up, turns his head to the right as if he is talking to Ben. Voice is snarling and viciously autocratic)

Voice: Shut up, you're done for, at least die like you're a man, fake it. She cannot help you, you're a murderer, maggot! How can you be saved after all you did?

(When Ben speaks, he turns his head to face the audience center-stage. Ben is in emotional collapse)

Ben: I killed people, I'm damned to hell.

(Voice sits up, turns his head to the right as if he is talking to Ben. Voice is extremely arrogant)

Voice: Damn right you did, now own up to it, you're an Aryan.

(Voice sits up, turns his head to the right as if he is talking to Ben. Voice is extremely arrogant)

Virgin: My Son paid your debt Ben, the Father forgives you.

Voice: Too late for all that superstitious nonsense...you are an Aryan, you don't need that.

(Virgin commands Forcefully, Voice slinks away down as Ben is cleansed and exhibits a repentant radiant visage)

Virgin: Go demon, leave him, demon be gone, go now!

Virgin: Ben, you were possessed by a demon, he is called schizophrenia. He is gone now. You are free now. It is the hour of your death, Ben close your eyes and be at peace.

(Ben lays back, closes his eyes, he dies, almost immediately Ben opens his eyes in astonishment and stands up, he looks down and sees his body, he looks in amazement at the Virgin)

Ben: Am I dead? I see myself down there. I am dead. I am floating above my own body.

Virgin: It is time for you to move to the light. See the glorious radiance ahead of you Ben, that is your destination. Move to the light.

Ben: Are the people I killed waiting for me?

Virgin: Yes they are, they have forgiven you, even as the Father forgave them and you. Look toward the light and

you will see them. They are at peace as you are. Move to the light. You have absolution.

Ben: I see them in the light.

Virgin: Do you feel at peace?

Ben: Yes!

(She points with open hand, serene smile, Ben stares at her, then smiles serenely himself and moves toward the light, center-stage the Virgin slowly guides Ben by the arm through the audience)

Virgin: Then go to the light, embrace forgiveness, embrace your victims as they will surely embrace you, show them the same love the Father has shown unto you. Come, come with me let us move to the light.

- - THE END - -