

ADG & TNT theatre:

One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest

Performance draft Paul Stebbings & Phil Smith

NURSE: Good afternoon Ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Oregon State Psychiatric hospital. I am so happy you could make it here to day. The patients really do appreciate visitors. You may feel that some of the patients don't even know t hat you are here, but they do. They care and we care , because here we practice the principle of the democratic and therapeutic community. Have a nice day (smiles and exits).

GUARD : Here's the Chief! The soo pah Chief! It's Old Chief Broom! Old deaf and dumb! Look at him, big enough to eat apples off a tree and he's scared like a baby! You got yer broom? You broom?. Old Red Indian Chief Broom! Thassit baby! Thassa a good loony! That's a cute l'il madman! Start sweepin' baby! Old Broom Bromden, Old Red Indian Chief. Chief Broom!

NURSE: (Enters) Mean old Monday Mornin'. You know, such a lot to get done! And since it is Monday morning, why don't we get a good start by shaving Mr Bromden? See if we can avoid the - ah - disturbance he tends to cause when we get the little whizzing shaver out. Wzz!

Aide: I'll get the straps, Ma'am. Mr Bromden, come on Chief where are you? Shavin' time!

NURSE: Good man.

Aide: Thassa a good old Chief, all smooth like a baby's butt. (exits).

NURSE: We'd best get started, hadn't we? Medication time! All patients to the day room.

TABER: What's this shit!

Nurse: It's just medication, Mister Taber, it's good for you.

Taber: Now you just wait a shake honey! What's in that!

Nurse: (Flirtatiously:) Let's just swallow it shall we, Mister Taber, just for me? Just for Nurse Ratched?

Taber: I ain't swallowing something without knowing what it is!!

Nurse: Now don't get upset..

Taber: Upset!! All I want is to know for the lova Jesus...

Nurse: If Mister Taber chooses to act like a child he may have to be treated as such. We've tried to be kind and considerate with him. Obviously, that's not the answer. You may go, Mister Taber.

Taber: Go?

Nurse: You may go if you're not going to take your medication. (She releases him .)

Taber: (Hardly believing his luck:) I can?

Nurse: You go now.

Taber: Hey!

Nurse: You are free to go, Mister Taber, if you don't wish to take your medicine... orally.

Taber: (Realising) What? Hey, wait... all I wanna know is...

Nurse: Now, Mr Bromden

Nurse: Mr Bromden! (Voice echoes electrically and spell is broken – Nurse or Aide turns the screen and Chief is sitting on the floor in a crumpled version of his camp fire pose).

Nurse: If only you could talk. What would you tell us ,Mr Bromden? (Enter Harding) Good morning, Mr Harding.

Harding: Are you sure it is good? (Goes to booth for pills). Dear Lord, for the tranquillity we are about to receive, we thank you.

Nurse: (To Billy as he enters, affectionate) Billy, dear. I spoke you your mother last night. (Billy halts apprehensively) Well, I had to tell her.

Billy: Whu-whu- why what did you say?

Nurse: (Pulls back sleeve to reveal bandaged wrist). That you were very sorry. And that you would never try to do "it" - lets be direct shall we? Never try to kill yourself again.

Billy:Th-th-thank you, Miss Ratched.

Nurse: Drink it all dear. It will make you happy.

MCMURPHY (OFF): Man, you are so wrong! I do not have to do anything!! Get the Hell away from me or I . Sorry, pal, I didn't mean to hurt you.

McMurphy: (Nodding.) Why this is swell. (To all.) Good mornin', buddies!! Mighty nice day! (He laughs.) Well? Hell Now, you good looking fellahs ain't about to shower me, is yah?

Harding: (Looking up from cards apologetically) It's procedure.

McMurphy: Cos, ya see, I been showered at the courthouse this morning and last night I been showered at the jail and I swear if they could a found the facilities they'da showered me on the taxi ride over! Let a fellah look round his new home. (He does.) I ain't never been in no Institute of Psychology before!

Billy: You g-g-gotta do as t he Nurse , says, Mister.

McMurphy: Sure. I'll make sure o' that, boy. My name is McMurphy, buddies.

R. P. McMurphy, and I'm a gambling fool.

(Sings:) "...and whenever I meet with a deck a card I lays... my money.. down.."

Yessir, that's what I came to this establishment for, to bring you birds fun an' entertainment around the gamblin' table!

Harding: There is a policy of no gambling for money

McMurphy: You gotta straight deck anywhere in here? (No response.) Well, I brought my own deck just in case. (Opens his deck.) Check these pictures, Chief. Every one different. Fifty two positions. Jeez. I got a couple of hassles at work farm, see, and, to tell the pure truth, the court ruled I'm a psychopath. You think I'm gonna argue with the court? Shoo, if it gets me outta those damned pea fields they can call me a sick faggot! Cos I don't care if I don't ever see another weedin' hoe till my dying day! You know what they tell me a psychopath is? A guy who fights too much and fucks too much! You ever heard of a guy getting too much poozle?

Billy: P -p-poozle?

MCMURPHY: OK, who is the bull goose Loony? I said who is the Bull goose? Top madman aroun' here?

Billy: Well, it's not m-me, mister. I'm not the bu-bull goose loony, though maybe I'm n-next in line for the j-job.

MCMURPHY: Well, buddy, I'm truly glad you're next in luh-line because I plannin' on takin' over this whole shebang. Maybe you'd better take me to your leader.

Billy: Mr H-Harding...you're president of the pay-pay-patient's Council.

Harding: Does this...gentleman have an appointment?

Billy: Do you have an appointment Mister..

MCMURPHY: MacMurphy.

Billy: MacMurphy. You see, Mr Har Har Harding is a busy man.

MCMURPHY: Well, just supposin that this bull goose Loony Mr Topdog Harding were here, could you tell him that R.P.McMurphy is waiting to see him and this nut house ain't big enough for the two of us. You tell him to meet me man to man or he's a yellow skunk and he better be out of here by sunset.

Harding: Billy, you tell this young uspsart McMurphy that I'll meet him in the main hall at high noon and we'll fight this one out with libido's a blazin'!

MCMURPHY: Billy, you tell him that R.P.McMurphy is used to being top man in every situation. So if he's bound to be a madman, he figures to be the stompdawn daddy of em all number one madman on the block!

MCMURPHY: There we ain't spilled a drop of blood! Now, who's the rest of these fellers?

Harding: Well, this side of the room we are the acutes.

MCMURPHY: What's acute about you?

HRD: Well, the theory is that we can be cured. Over there are the chronics (points to a wheelchair that has a slumped realistic dummy in it). The chronics are...well.

Billy: Ve-ve..vegetables! Hah ha! (then sinks) Maybe be-be- better off than us because they don't know they're c-c-crazy.

MCMURPHY: Hoo -ee. What have we got here?

Harding: That's Chief Bromden.

MCMURPHY: What's your story, Big Chief?

Billy: He c-can't hear you.

Harding: He's deaf and dumb.

MCMURPHY: Straighten up now. (He pulls him up to full height) I don't like to see a man bow down. It just ain't dignified. Say you are a good size. What tribe is he?

HRD: According to the Nurse he's half Indian, from a tribe that has died out.

Billy: Or been k-k-killed. S-s-sorry, Chief.

MCMURPHY: That right Chief, you died out with your tribe?

Harding: He can't hear a word you say.

Nurse: Mr McMurphy.

MCMURPHY: Howdy, M'am!

Nurse: I hear you have refused to shower and lost your temper with one of our assistants?

MCMURPHY: Me? I was just tryin' to save on your water bill M'am. See, I been showered in the jail, showered in the courthouse and now some slime ass wants to rub a dud dub every damn place, when I know I'm clean, like everywhere? Wanna check?

Nurse: That's quite amusing, Mr McMurphy. You must realise that our policies are engineered for your cure. Which means we need your co-operation.

MCMURPHY: Ma'am I will cooperate from Hell to Thursday. I was just bein' polite and getting aquatinted with my new buddies, such as Billy boy!

Billy: Its true, Miss Ratched, he was being f-f-friendly.

Nurse: I do appreciate the trouble you have taken to orient with other patients. But you must follow the rules.

MCMURPHY: You know, Ma'm that's the exact thing someone always tells me about the rules...just when I am thinkin' of breakin every damn rule.

Billy: Yee hoo!

(Blackout – fog starts electronic sound but with a heavy beat to which the robot patients march – stockings over their faces – wires from skull to skull, they chant:

There's magnets in the floor so we can't walk no way but they want.

We got stone brains

Cast iron guts

And copper where they took out our nerves.

We got cog wheel stomachs and a welded grin

And every time they throw a switch it turns us off and on

They got a network clear across the land!

All America! A machine for fixin' the mistakes they made outside.

The Combine!

MCMURPHY: Heh ya, heh ya! Come on suckers, you hit or you sit. This is blackjack not some granny's whist party. Well well well and with a King up the boy wants a hit, whaddaya know! (Pause) I wish some idiot in that nurse's cage would turn down that mother-fuckin' music!

NURSE: Yes?

MCMURPHY: Would you mind switchin off that god damned noise?

NURSE: Yes, Mr McMurphy.

MCMURPHY: Yes, what?

NURSE: Yes, I would mind. Music is therapeutic.

MCMURPHY: What the Hell is therapeutic about elevator music?

Nurse: Please don't lean on the glass it makes finger marks.

MCMURPHY: Horse shit.

Nurse: Oh Mr McMurphy, I should mention that we have a rule against gambling.

MCMURPHY: We're just playin' for cigarettes.

Nurse: Are you sure those cigarettes don't represent something?

MCMURPHY: Yeah, a Hell of a lot of smoke Y'know you girls oughta laugh it up a little! Lissen that's a good idea she had. How about we sweeten up the game? (makes bank note gesture).

Billy: Where would we get mu-mu-money?

MCMURPHY: Stop kiddin', Kid. I found out a few things about this madhouse before I got sent over. Damn near half you boys pull in compensation, three four hundred dollars a month and it don't draw nothing but dust. All you got to do is sign an IOU for those dusty dollars.

Harding: Very smart, Mr McMurphy. I'll go along with that.

MCMURPHY: OK OK, we're in business! Every cigarette is worth a dime, yeah?

Billy: Ok! Ok! O-o-kay!

Harding: Run 'em pard'ner!

MCMURPHY: (Dealing) OK professor (to HRD) There you sit with a queen showing and here's a pack of Marlboros says you back down! (Electric bell ring) Now what the hell?

NURSE: (Loudspeaker) Group meeting, time for group meeting.

MCMURPHY: What's goin' on?

HRD: Group therapy. Every day at this time.

NURSE: Now Mr Murphy would you like to join us? Now would anyone like to begin?

BILLY: I suppose, I better talk about the ra-ra- ra –

Nurse: Razor.

Billy: It was my mu-mu-Mother. Every t-time she visits I feel b-bad.

Nurse: Billy. Your mother loves you.

HRD: But Billy does not love his mother, I heard him say that to Mr Taber.

Billy: She wanted another baby, not me. I'm not right the h-h-head. She's got to g-g-go away or I'm gonna k-k-kill myself! (Whimpers) C-couldn't we talk ab-bout someone else. P-please!

Nurse: Why do you try to punish your mother. Why are you so cruel to your mother who loves you, Billy. Billy, why are you so bad to your mother?

Billy: No!

Nurse: (Sudden smile) Very well, at the close of Friday's meeting we were talking about Mr Harding. (HRD groans) Mister Harding? Ah, yes... (she consults book) ... we were discussing Mister Harding's problem....concerning his young wife. He had stated that his wife was extremely well endowed in the bosom-

MCMURPHY: Lucky feller! Say Chief, I'll stick with you. Seems like bein' deaf an dumb is a big advantage in this talkshop.

Nurse: Come, Mister McMurphy, surely you can join in for the benefit of your fellow patients rather than make cheap comments?

McMurphy: Jeez, M'am. I just love to help out here with your therapy. So much better than diggin' pea fields on the jail farm. I'd have to be mad not to want to be here and jus' ...fit in, like a glove.

Nurse: Well, that's good, Mister McMurphy. As long as you're not making yourself comfortable at the expense of the comfort of others.

Nurse: We were discussing mister Harding's problem.

McMurphy: (brightly) O yeah?

Nurse: Billy?

Billy: Er... er...

Nurse: What did Mister Harding tell you, Billy?

Billy: Er.. er... .. something... she don't like him.... What he does with his hands.. that thing he does... she says it's.. like a f... f....fag.

Nurse: Faggot? Like a faggot.

Harding: O you the love of.... Do you think I move like that, Billy? Nurse Ratched, my sweet, but illiterate wife thinks that any word or gesture not smacking of brickyard brawn is a sign of ... weak dandyism...

Billy: I'm s-sorry.

Nurse: "McMurphy, Randle Patrick. Committed by the state from the Pendleton State Farm for Correction. For diagnosis and possible treatment. Thirty five years old. Never married. Distinguished Service Cross." You lead an escape from a Communist prison camp, Mister McMurphy. What a shame you had to spoil it. (Backs to the notes:) "Dishonourably discharged for insubordination. Then... a history of street brawls... drunkenness ... and... rape?

Harding: Rape?

Nurse: Statutory, Mister Harding. Mister MacMurdy had sex with a child of fifteen...

McMurphy: Whoah! They never got that to stick. That girl wouldn't testify. And she told me she was seventeen! She was plenty willin'!

Nurse: Well, that is our new admission.

Harding: I cannot understand why anyone should have sent our Mister McMurphy here...

McMurphy: Oh I'm nuts.

Harding: Correct me if I'm out of order here, Mister ... McMurphy... but you haven't any previous psychiatric history. By which I mean... you haven't spent any time in mental institutions, have you?

McMurphy: Nope. This is my first time. But I am crazy. I swear I am. Here. Excuse me, ma'am. There. Says "possible diagnosis of psychopath." Means I fight too much and fu.... O, pardon me, ma'am. Means I'm ... overzealous in sexual relations. Say, Nurse, is that real serious? I mean that.. overzealousnes... that ever troubled you, Nurse .. Wretched?

Nurse: I am not a patient here, Mister McMurphy. And my name is Miss or Nurse Ratched.

McMurphy: Do you think I look like a sane man?

Nurse: Perhaps someone should explain to Mister McMurphy how we behave in Group Meeting? Billy?

Billy: Er.. I... er...

Nurse: You could tell Mister Murphy about how we have to learn to get along in a group so we'll be able to function in normal society..

Billy: yeh...

Nurse: Well?

Billy: Er...

Nurse: Do you have anything to add, Mister Harding? Must we go over past history?

Billy: No!

Nurse: Well?

Billy: I robbed a cash register where I worked.

Harding: I tried to take my little sister to bed.

Billy: I - one time _ I tried to take my brother to bed!

Harding: I killed my cat when I was six. O God!

Billy: I did take my aunt to bed.

Harding: So did I! And my sister!

Billy: So did I! And my sister!

Harding: So did I!

Billy: So did I!!

Harding: So did I!!

Billy: So did I!

NURSE: Yes, yes, yes.

Harding: I have never had anything to do with any other man! Never! Never! My wife's a liar. Dirty liar! Dirty liar!

Nurse: In our therapeutic community you are all free to express whatever you like, to bring up any little gripe. If there's something you would like to change, Mister Murphy, we can have a vote on it. This is a democratic ward. We want you to feel free and at ease so you can openly discuss your emotional problems. We want you to talk. And listen. And if one of your friends says something you want to bring up later, you can write it down in the Log Book. In my station.

McMurphy: I don't think any of my new buddies is gonna squeal on me, Mrs KGB.

Nurse: That isn't squealing, Mister McMurphy. We are all open with each other here. We have nothing to hide.

Harding: I'm exhausted..

Nurse: Mister McMurphy, would you help Mister Harding to put away the chairs please?

McMurphy: We gonna have a dance?

McMurphy Say, buddy, is this how these leetle meetings usually go? Bunch of chickens at a peckin' party?

Harding: A "pecking party", sir? I fear your quaint down-home speech is wasted on me, my friend. I have not the slightest inkling what you're talking about.

McMurphy: Well, you're the big man here, ain't you - let me explain it to you. A flock o' chickens gets sight o' a spot o' blood on some hen and they all got to peckin' at it see, till they rip that hen to shreds.. but usually a couple o' the hens gets a spot o' that blood on them and they gets pecked to death... and more and more, till in a couple o hours that peckin' party has finished every damn chicken. All dead. I seen it, buddy.

Harding: That certainly is a most dramatic analogy.

McMurphy: And that's exactly what goddam meeting right there was! A bunch o' dirty chickens.

Harding: And you think I'm the chicken with the pot of blood? (McMurphy nods.)

McMurphy: And you want to know something else, buddy? You want to know who pecks that first peck?

Billy: Who?

McMurphy: Why. It's that big nurse, that's who.

Harding: We are in the presence of genius, gentlemen. Mister McMurphy has been on the ward for one morning and he has already simplified all the work of Freud, Jung and Maxwell Jones and encapsulated it in one starting analogy: a farmyard chicken fight!

McMurphy: I'm not talking about Freddy Young and Maxwell Jones, buddy, whoever the hell they are, I'm talking about that crummy meeting just now and what that nurse did to you. In spades.

Harding: Did to me? (laughs.)

McMurphy: Sure. Did. Did you coming. Did you going. Seems everybody here's after doing it to you.

Harding: Why, this is incredible. You completely disregard the fact that what Billy and the Nurse were doing .. was for my own benefit. Any question that is raised in the Group is for therapeutic reasons ... you must have heard of the theory of the therapeutic community... or perhaps you have a better idea than a Nurse with almost twenty years experience and an enormous...reputation...with your talent you could no doubt work subconscious miracles, soothe the aching id and heal the superego. You could probably cure the whole ward, vegetables and all

MCMURPHY: You tellin' me this shit is doin' you some kinda..good?!

HRD: Why else do accept it? Miss Ratched may be strict but she is not some giant chicken pecking our eyes out!

McMurphy: It ain't your eyes, she's after, Professor.

Harding: What do you mean? What, pray, is she after?

McMurphy: At your balls, buddy, at your ever lovin' balls!

McMurphy: Don't give me sweet little ol' Miss Ratched, buddy. She fooled me for less than three minutes this morning. Don't tell me she been fooling you for months? For years?

Harding: Why see here my friends, my psychopathic sidekick, Miss Ratched is a true angel. Everybody knows it. She is as unselfish as the wind. Working for our good seven days a week. She has no husband, no life, nothing but her work. Do you think she enjoys being hard with us? Asking questions that probe our wounded and delicate subconscious? Do you think she enjoys that pain? No she only wants us to walk out of those doors healthy and adjusted to the real world. So you are wrong. Miss Ratched is the sweetest, kindest, most wonderful woman that I have. The bitch. The bitch.(Screams) (To McMurphy:) You're right. About all of it.

Billy: No.. n... n... no one ever...ev.. ev... dare ... say that.

MCMURPHY: So why don't you do something?

Harding: Because the world belongs to the strong. We're not chickens. We're rabbits. He(Billy)is a rabbit. The Chief there is a rabbit. I am a rabbit. We're not rabbits because we're here. We'd be rabbits wherever we were put. We're in here because we just can't seem to adjust to being a rabbit. That's why we need a big nasty wolf like Miss Ratched to show us our place.

McMurphy: Jesus, man! You're talking like a fool! You mean to tell me you're going to sit back and let some blue-haired ol' woman tell you you're a rabbit! You're fucking crazy!!!

Harding: Yes, we are mad.

McMurphy: No, no you ain't crazy like in the movies. You're just a bit hung up.. kind of..

Harding: Rabbit like? Go on Billy Bibbit, why don't you hop for Mister McMurphy?

Harding: Hop! Hop!

Harding: He's scared to. Like a scared rabbit.

Billy: L.. l... look here...

Harding: Don't be scared of the truth, Billy.

McMurphy: This place is a helluva lot like a Chinese prison camp.

Harding: No, no, no.. you broke out of there, didn't you? That was a camp for soldiers, this is a rabbit pen. And you joined us in our hippity hoppity Walt Disney world.

MCMURPHY: Shut your mouth!

HRD: (Quiet) All right what would you have us do?

MCMURPHY: Tell her to go to Hell!

Billy: Then they sh-sh-shock you?

MCMURPHY: What?

HRD: Electric shock therapy, my friend. A cross between the electric chair and a sleeping pill.

MCMURPHY: Your kiddin?

Billy: Its u-upstairs.

HRD: (Using Chief) They strap you to a table (upends table) You are touched on each side of the head with wires. Zap! Punishment and therapy in one shocking package. Chief Broom here has had two hundred electric shock treatments.

Billy: D.. dd.. d.. don't you see?

McMurphy: How come you stand for it? What about all that democratic ward shit? Why don't you take a vote?

Billy: What on?

McMurphy: I don't know! Vote on anything! Show you got some guts!! I ain't never seen a scareder bunch o' men! Of a woman!

Harding: She's clever; is Womankind. How do you make yourself boss over her, Mister McMurphy? Hit her? She'll call the cops. Get angry? She'll smile and treat you like a kid. No, Mister McMurphy, Man has only one truly effective weapon against the matriarchy. Know what I mean? Do you think you could use it against our Miss Ratched?

McMurphy: You mean, get a bone up for her? I don't believe I could.

Harding: Then she's won. She's won.

McMurphy: OK. All right. You rabbits think you got a champion behind that glass. Well, how'dja like to put some money on it?

HRD: On what?

MCMURPHY: That I can beat her. That I can be the madhouse champ!

HRD: Hmmm.

MCMURPHY: I am betting that I can put a buzz up that nurses bloomers in a week. I can bug her so she comes apart at them neat little seams and loses her sweet little temper. While I stay so cool she cannot put me in no shock shop. ZZZZ. I'll fry her!

Harding: You'd have to keep your temper, my friend, and with your red hair and black record....

Billy: Or it will be M-M-McMurphy that fries .ZZZZ!

McMurphy: I'll be quiet as a lamb. Cool hand Luke. Here's five dollars that says I'll get her in one week. One week boys - and if I ain't got her where she don't know whether to shit or go blind the money is yours!

HRD: Mr McMurphy this deserves odds. Fifteen dollars to your five that you fail.

MCMURPHY: Hey hey! Step right up, its a spin of the wheel, a turn of the card, the battle of the century, a one week, seven days, no holds barred McMurphy versus the Big Nurse to a knockout

HRD: Dream on, McMurphy. She's the champ.

MCMURPHY: Three to one odds. Three to one. C'mon lets get the whole ward on board.

NURSE: Mr McMurphy, what is this activity?

MCMURPHY: A game M'am. Its kinda therapeutic.

NURSE: You are not gambling are you?

MCMURPHY: (Shocked) No M'am. That would be against the rules.

NURSE: Good. Well done. (Exits).

MCMURPHY: Gamblin'? Hell, I cannot lose.

MCMURPHY's song:

Your horse's and hungry that's what she did say
Come sit down beside me and feed 'im some hay
My horse aint hungry he won't eat your hay-ee
So fare thee well darlin' I'm gone on my way
Oh your parents don't like me they say I'm too poor
They say I'm not worthy to enter your door
Hard livin's my pleasure my money's my o-o-wn
And them that dont like me can leave me alone
She took me to her bedroom and cooled me with her fan
She whispered in my ear :I love a gamblin' man!

McMurphy: Whoah. Watch out, here comes that Big Nurse!

MCMURPHY: You give me a scare just then, Chief. When I told you Miss Ratched was comin'. Y'see, I thought some fellah told me you was deaf? (He laughs.) You really is the Chief!

Nurse: Mister McMurphy!!

McMurphy: Good morn - ing Miss Rat-shit!

Nurse: You cant run around here in just a towel!!

McMurphy: No? (he examines the towel.) I didn't know towels is against ward policy! Well, I suppose there's nothing to do exc...

Nurse: Stop! Don't you dare! You get to your dormitory right now and get some clothes on!! This instant!!

McMurphy: (Hanging his head.) I can't do that man. I'm afraid some ass'ole boosted my clothes in the middle of the night.

Nurse: Boosted?

McMurphy: Stole. Pinched. Swiped.

Nurse: Mister McMurphy, that uniform was for prison. It was taken quite deliberately and properly by a member of staff and replaced with a green hospital uniform. Why are you not wearing that?

McMurphy: (Innocently.) O, was that for me?

McMurphy: (Of the shorts:) Got ‘em from a co-ed at Oregon State. A Liter-rary major .Smart in college and smart in the sack. She gave them me because she said I was a symbol (He sprts water from his mouth like a whale/plus innuendo, exits, grinning. Nurse is furious.)

McMurphy: (Off, sings.) She took me to her parlour,
And cooo_ ooled me with her fan...
Whispered low in her mamma’s ear
I lurve that gamblin’ man..”

Nurse: Mister Bromden. Sweep!!

Nurse: Good morning, Mister Harding. Why look at your fingers all red and raw. Have you been biting them again?

Nurse: And Billy, I saw your mother on the way in today and she told me to be sure to tell you she thought of you all the time and she knew you wouldn’t disappoint her. You won’t will you? Good, good (ruffled).

McMurphy: I’m getting there, boys, I’m getting there! Hey, Billy you remember that time you and me picked up them two girls in Seattle. (Billy looks up puzzled.) Yeh, you do. And that one girl she says: “Are you the Billy Bibbit of the fourteen inches?” (He laughs.) Billy ducks his head down and blushes into his food.) Only thing this damn hospital lacks is a couple o’ girls. Don’t get orange juice in jail! Hey, Chief, don’t time fly when your havin’ fun?

Patients: We cannot move
We cannot breathe
We cannot think
Are we alive?
Buried, buried
Under the sand
A ton of sand.

McMurphy: Jesus! This again!!

Nurse: Yes, Mister McMurphy?

McMurphy: Can you just turn that infernal noise down?

Nurse: No. No, we can’t. I’m sorry.

McMurphy: Just show some mercy with that volume, lady! It ain’t like the whole state of Oregon needs to be turned into a hotel lobby.

Nurse: Mister McMurphy, do you know what I think? (Pauses.)

McMurphy: (Sweetly) No.

Nurse: I think you are being very selfish. Haven’t you noticed that there are others in the hospital apart from yourself? There are old men here who simply couldn’t hear the radio if it

were turned down any lower. Old men who aren't capable of playing cards or horsing around... that music is all they have.

McMurphy: OK, I never thought of that.

Nurse: I thought you hadn't.

McMurphy: So, let's move the table. (He moves down to Billy and Harding.) We're moving the table.!

Nurse: Mister McMurphy, that table is there for a reason. We don't have enough staff to cover you if you take it anywhere else.

McMurphy: Show us some pity here! There must be a quieter room.

Nurse: I'm sorry, Mister McMurphy, but I just don't have the staff to cover another room. Now would you take your hands off the glass, please; they are staining the window. That means extra work for my staff.

McMurphy: You

Nurse: Yes, Mister McMurphy?

McMurphy: Nothing. I'm sorry I wasted your time.

Nurse: No waste. I'm glad to have cleared up your problem.

Nurse: (Over mike.) Group meeting!

Nurse: No one had anything to report today?

Nurse: Well. As I recall, we were making quite a bit of headway yesterday with Mister Harding's problem....

MCMURPHY: Before we get to talkin about matters outstandin' (makes rude gesture). I got some important business to discuss in the ..therapeutic community.

Nurse: I see and what would that be, Mr McMurphy?

MCMURPHY: The world series.

Nurse: I hardly think football (all laugh) is a matter for discussion in a hospital.

Billy: B-b-baseball.

Nurse: Baseball, football. It is not therapy.

MCMURPHY: With due respect, Ma'm, Mr Harding here has explained the principle to me of patient democracy and you can think that the world series ain't that important, I wouldn't hold that against any..chick. But we think watching the World Series this afternoon is rather more important than talkin our asses off about Billy's Mom or Mrs Harding's boobs

Nurse: I see. (weighing up situation).

MCMURPHY: So lets just adjourn this therapy and have a ball!

Nurse: The rule is quite clear. Television can only be watched din the evening.

MCMURPHY: Okay lets change the rule to afternoon.

Nurse: For therapeutic reasons (sweet).

MCMURPHY: Therapeutic as all Hell!

Nurse: Or were you perhaps hoping to bet on this game?

MCMURPHY: Would I?

Nurse: Don't you think it would disturb the schedules to change the television times? Many patient need a routine to feel...normal.

MCMURPHY: Yeah, well its normal for guys to watch a ballgame. How about it guys? Don't you want to watch the world series, Harding?

HRD: Why not?

MCMURPHY: Billy?

Billy: M...M.. M.. M.. Miss R.. ractched s..s..s .s says it's g.. gonna mess up the.. s.. s.. schedule.

McMurphy: Jesus H Christ. The first game is gonna start in ten minutes!!

Harding: Now..now, listen to me, Mack... Billy's got a point. If we change the TV time, well there are shows on that'd we'd miss and , I'm pretty used to seeing those shows. Breaking routine doesn't help my treatment, Mack...

McMurphy: This is the World fucking Series! It ain't ain't on every week like I Love Lucy!! You can get back to your schedule when the Series is over! Come on! Who's gonna vote with me? Chief, watch the baseball? You with me. Well, he don't know shit . Come on, we gonna vote, we're gonna win! Democ-racy! Yooh!

Nurse: You are becoming over excited Mr McMurphy.

McMurphy: Yeah, I'm excited by gettin' my rights. We can have a vote, yeah?

Nurse: Yes, Mr McMurphy. This is not a prison we are here for you...and so are the rules.

McMurphy: OK, let's vote. All those in favour of watching the World Series on TV?
(He raises his hand.) Prof?

Harding: Er.. sure, Mack. (Raises his hand.)

McMurphy: Billy?

Billy: If Mr Harding wants it too.(Billy raises his hand.)

Nurse: Are you sure this is what you Mother would want, Billy? (Billy wavers.) I saw her again this morning. She worries about you. She particularly asked me to make sure that you were keeping to your routine. She knows how it aggravates your... speaking... when you don't keep to your routine.

Billy: O... o... o... kay. (He puts his hand down and buries his head in his lap.)

Nurse: And you, Mister Harding? Has Mister McMurphy here been telling you it's a very manly thing to be breaking with your routine?

Harding: No, but...

Nurse: has he been saying things about the ... feminine programmes you like to watch...

Harding: O my God....

Nurse: You don't need to be shamed to watch those programmes. You're not ashamed are you, Mister Harding. So why do you have your hand up?

Harding: I don't know...

Nurse: Well, Mister McMurphy. It seems there are two against. One for. And the rest I think we can count as abstentions. (The Chief raises his hand.)

Nurse: Mister Bromden.

(Chief is impassive.)

Nurse: He's just copying.

McMurphy: Don't make no difference. He's in the meeting, he's gotta vote! We gotta have a re-vote. Now, come on, boys...

Nurse: That won't be necessary, Mister McMurphy. In the event of a tie the Chairman has the deciding vote. I vote against. Meeting closed. Enjoy your programmes, gentlemen.

McMurphy: What the hell's the matter with you!!

Billy: So.. so.. so.. some of us have b.. b... b..een here f..f..f..ive years, Randle. And s... s... s... some of us g...g...g.. gonna be here a l...l..l....lot longer than that!

(Suddenly they all listen. Offstage and slightly muffled someone is screaming.)

McMurphy: What's that?

HRD: I was informed by one of the Guards that a gentlemen up on the.... Disturbed ward... he cut off his... nuts... last night.

McMurphy: Jesus, you guys! Is that the way you wanna go? Are you gonna always be doing their dirty business for them? You wanna be watching that baby food they put on that TV all your life, Harding? You? Come on, let me see again, how many of you birds will vote with me if I bring up the World Series again?

Harding: (As if presenting a great truth.) This isn't just about baseball is it, Randle? You haven't won your bet yet, have you? We haven't seen Nurse Ratched lose her composure yet and your week is almost up. And are you trying to tell us this is just about a baseball game?

McMurphy: Ah, the hell with you! The hell with you! Jesus! I'll pick that radiator, put it through the window and head off for some beer, ballgame and beaver! I'll just pick it up and throw it through the window! I swear to god!

HRD: You can't lift that thing. It's bolted down.

MCMURPHY: You wanna bet, hey! Who wants to bet. Five bucks, come on you pecker heads. And all your IOU's from poker. Double or quits, c'mon!

HRD: You're on!

MCMURPHY: Stand back, Billy. Get the women and children somewhere safe!

McMurphy: Come on. Come on! Come on!

Billy: Mac, You g-giving up?

MCMURPHY: Hell, no, just warmin' up! You dinky little birds think I can't do this!! Well, by god! (He strains again. But again nothing moves and McMurphy falls back and lies gasping on the floor. The others gather round him. The Nurse moves away relieved. MCMURPHY gets up and hands out the IOU's and the five dollars but no one will take them so he throws them on the floor).

Harding: No man could lift that thing.

McMurphy: I tried, goddamit. I tried.

McMurphy: There's another vote! There's a majority! We want the baseball!

MCMURPHY: (to the other patients.) Let her see your hands.

McMurphy: She's gonna blow any second.

McMurphy: She's gonna blow, boys. (Billy giggles.) She's gonna blow.

McMurphy: Hey. What happened there? (It goes off again.) Hey? (He turns. In the booth Nurse is holding up a switch button.) What the hell? (He turns on the TV. Nurse presses the switch and turns it off.) Ok. Ok.

HRD: She's gotta, Mac. She's got the power in there. She can turn off the electric just when she chooses.

MCMURPHY: But she can't turn me on and off, Prof. On no, not me nor you nor any sonofabitch. (McMurphy sits back down, looking at the blank screen.) Hey, looks at that. Look at the swing on that pitch. Whooo, way to go! Come on, boy! Come on, boy, step up to the plate!! Watch out for his swing. Whoo!

Harding: Mac?

McMurphy: Come on, Prof! This is a big moment. Look at that bat, man! That's hit 6 home runs in the last three games! Go man, go!

Billy: Randle... there i..i... isn't...

McMurphy: Sure there is! Look at the crowd crammed in the ballpark!

Harding: (Twigging:) O.. right. Yes, the stadium's really...full.

Billy: O yeh. So many..p-p-peaople!

McMurphy: Will you two madmen stop talking about the crowd, this is a ballgame not a bustop! He's at the plate. Come on, man! Hit it! Hit it! Here it comes, here it comes! (He pauses. The others strain forward.) Home run!!!!

Nurse: Mister McMurphy? Gentlemen? What are you doing?

McMurphy: Now that pitcher has got a betsy bug right deep up his butt! Huh huh! Come on, boys! They're on the run! An' we got our best man coming in next! (Billy and Harding cheers.)

Billy: It's g.. g... going our way!

Nurse: Gentlemen? Gentlemen? (They ignore her.)

McMurphy: Here he comes to the plate. The great man. Anyone wanna beer? (He tears off imaginary beers from a six pack and hands them out. The others drink the imaginary beers.)

Nurse: Billy!!

BILLY: Cheers!

McMurphy: Look at those friggin' arms. They been turned to steel holding loose women in place! (Billy and Harding laugh) And look at the size o' that guy's bat. It's the same size as his... y'know!

Nurse: Gentlemen? Gentlemen? (They ignore her.) Mister McMurphy, I'm warning you. Mister Harding? Please, Mister Harding, stop this. (Harding ignores her.)

Harding: Go on, you Mets!

McMurphy: It's long. It's thick. It's strong. And he's gonna use it now.. he's drawing it back... waiting to...

Nurse: (Shouts:) Gentlemen!!

[McMurphy: Waiting to... waiting to... waiting to....

(Suddenly Nurse loses it. She begins to scream and throws down her back, seizing her books and smashing them on the floor.)

Nurse: You are under my jurisdiction and control! You're committed, McMurphy!! Committed!! I am in control! Stop looking at that television!

McMurphy: Home run!!

ACT TWO.

A game of basketball is improvised in the ward. MCMURPHY, HRD & Billy wear rolled up shirts and boxer shorts in imitation of sports gear. The Chief is positioned by MCMURPHY to hold out his arms and be the hoop - they are loud and having fun).

(In the booth the Nurse is watching but she is also on the telephone - she has forgotten to turn off the sound system and her "private" conversation with the Doctor is broadcast - this inefficiency being a sign of her discomfort).

NURSE: No Doctor we should not I repeat not send McMurphy to the Disturbed ward. (pause - shouts from the game) No. No, I don't agree at all. (Doctor is surprised.) I don't see why we should pass our problem on to another ward. Mister McMurphy is no super-psychopath. Any more than I am. Certainly he is a disturbing influence. But would removing him remove the damage he has already done? I don't think so, Doctor Spivey. In fact, such an action might make a martyr of him. No. Mister McMurphy isn't extraordinary at all. He is simply man and no more. Subject to all the fears and all the cowardice and all the timidity any other man is subject to. Give him a little longer here and I think he will prove that to the other men. I think his noble rebellion will soon blow itself out and then we shall all see him for the braggart in search of a soapbox that he really is. (Pause) I didn't exactly say he was a coward, Doctor. I said he was "subject to" cowardice. You see when you are very fond of someone, Doctor, you can also be very scared of losing them. The person Randle Patrick McMurphy is so fond of is Randle Patrick McMurphy. Eventually, that will bring him down. (Pause) We have all the time in the world, Doctor. Mister McMurphy is committed. The length of time he spends in this hospital is entirely - up - to us. Oh My God the microphone is on!

MCMURPHY, Billy & HRD: Oh my God the microphone is on! (All laugh).

HRD: She's lost it, Mac. She really has lost it!

Billy: You're the ch-ch-champ!

Nurse: (Emerging) This is against the rules. Give me that ball! (But the Chief grabs the ball as its thrown thru his hooped arms and holds it high above the Nurse's head).

MCMURPHY: Sorry Ma'm, but in case you forgot, the Chief here is deaf and dumb. Some of us are just dumb. (Turns and motions to Nurse - Billy howls with laughter).

Nurse: Billy, get that ball or I will have to tell your mother that you are being ...difficult. (He does so - the Chief releasing it). Now go and shower and dress properly or there will be a ban on all games including cards.

MCMURPHY: Whew, yes Ma'am. Sorry Ma'am. At the double. (The three march off behind him as if he were a marine sergeant. The lights change the Chief is in a shaft of green light -).

McMurphy: Nurse Ratched, I wanna thank you for thinking of me when you doled out them toilet cleaning jobs!

Nurse: You're perfectly welcome, Mister McMurphy.

McMurphy: Cos I returned the compliment by thinking 'bout you as I was swabbing down them stains.

Nurse: Your sentimental wit will not be necessary. Just do the job, Mister McMurphy.

McMurphy: Done.

Nurse: Done? I hardly think so. No one could possibly clean latrines in that time!!

McMurphy: Maybe not clean enough for some people, but personally I was planning on pissing on them, not eating my lunch off 'em!

Nurse: You won't have had time to clean under the rims!! (Taking out a compact.) I use a mirror to check under the toilet rims, you know!! (Exiting.)

McMurphy: (Following.) O I know. I know. I seed you.

Nurse: (Enters) This is an outrage!!

McMurphy: No! It's a toilet bowl!

Nurse: And this is an outrage!

McMurphy: No, I assure you, it's a toilet bowl!

Nurse: (Of the piece of paper:) And you can throw that piece of filth away.

Harding: (To McMurphy.) You put this under the rim for her to read? What language is it? (Reading.) ... "tnuc... ruoy... leef..." What language is that? (Or "kcuf annaw").

McMurphy: Pure navy.

Harding: Mack! It's backwards isn't it? "Feel your..." (Gasps.) You got Nurse Ratched to read that! Under the rim! Mack, you're a genius!!

McMurphy: I didn't mean for a lady to read it, but I didn't think any ladies would be poking their heads in men's toilet bowls!! Gee, I guess I'm never gonna make my name as head man

of the shithouse! (He laughs and Chief and Harding laugh.) And he smashes another home run!

Harding: Home run!!

McMurphy: (Suddenly quietly, of Nurse:) I thought the ol' buzzard were tougher than that. I guess all she needed was one big putdown to straighten her out good!

Billy: Yeah.... W... w.. w... way to go.

NURSE: (Over microphone) Medication will be brought forward an hour today. We have had our difficulties, havn't we? But I have faith in you all, you can be cured, Even Mr McMurphy. After all we have weeks, months. If necessary years. (Muzak starts).

MCMURPHY: That years bitc'mon, why she act like she is holding all the aces?

HRD: Well..I guess its because you're committed.

MCMURPHY: Sure I'm committed but my jail sentence has only got five months to run, so...(Looks at the faces, they are uneasy, guilty). Come on gimme the lowdown.

Harding: This is a mental hospital, Mac. Not a prison. If you're committed its the staff who decide if you are cured. Then they let you go

McMurphy: The Doctors, the Doctors like me. They play ball, right?

HRD: No that's a nursing decision.

MCMURPHY: You mean I'm stuck here till she wants to turn me loose? (HRD is silent). Then I got as much to lose as you have, hasslin that old hen.

HRD: More, you lose more. I choose to be here. In fact most of the patients are not committed. The Chief is but not many more.

McMurphy: (Taking in Billy) Are you guys bullshitting me? This is a friggin' joke, right. (Realises it isn't.) O my god! O - my - god! Holy shit!! You can just walk out of here? (Harding nods.) O - my - god! (Sudden thought.) Billy, you must be committed, boy? (Billy looks away.)
For Christ sakes?

(Billy just shakes.)

McMurphy: Why? Why? You're a young guy! You oughtta be running around in a convertible, bird-dogging girls! All of this... why you.. stand for this.. why do you choose this? (No response from Billy who just looks down and shakes.) I don't believe this! You guys bitch and whine about the nurse and.. you can just walk out!! You don't need to be here! Hell, I know plenty o' people out there.. they see visions o' angels.. they believe the planets is doing somethin' to 'em.. shit, they don't lock 'emselves away! You're no more nuts then them!

Billy: You think I w.. w.. w... want to stay here? You th.. th .. th.. think I w.. w.. ww... w..
.wouldn't like a girl? You d.. d.. don't have people l.. l... l.. laughing at y..you. You're b ig.
You're t.. t.. tough. W..w..w..well, I'm n.. not. N.. n.. neither is Harding. Y.. y.. y.. o, it's
n..n..n.. no use!

McMurphy: Jesus.

Billy: No use. No use. No use. N... .. n..... no use.

(Suddenly Billy explodes and starts to run about the stage crashing into the walls as Chief and Harding try to catch him. Then Billy falls to the floor in an epileptic fit).

McMurphy: O, Jesus, what's happenin' to him?

Harding: I would say he's having an epileptic event, mister McMurphy, if you ask my professional opinion..

McMurphy: Chief? Do something!

McMurphy: Jesus. Nurse! Nurse! Nurse!

Nurse: Stand back please, gentlemen.

McMurphy: What do we do?

Nurse: Get back, Mister McMurphy. This is the result of Billy not taking his medication. He has been asserting to us that since you arrived on ward, Mister McMurphy he feels that he no longer needs it! This is the result! This is your fault!

McMurphy: What's he got wrong with him?

Nurse: He is sick, Mister McMurphy. That's why he's here. But he insists on acting foolishly. (She bends over Billy and places something in his mouth to stop him biting his tongue.)

Harding: I'm going to leave this stinking place!! (He shakes his fist at the Nurse.) You bastards are making us all worse!! That isn't Mack's doing! That's you! You poison him! You make him take things! You make his see things!! This whole place is a conspiracy against people like William Bibbit and myself! We are lambs to the slaughter! You mind-butcher barbarians!! Let me out of here! Let me out of here! Let me out of here.

Nurse: That's OK, now, Mr Harding.

Harding: (Wails.) No, no! You're going to crucify Billy for something you made him do!!

Nurse: (Reassuringly.) Your friend Mister Bibbit is going to be just fine. Once he takes his pills things will be back to normal.)

Harding: Yes, well... yes, well... (His fist is unclenching.) You don't have to come in shouting and blaming everyone except yourself...

Nurse: I think we can move Mister Bibbit now. Come on, Mister Bibbit. (Nurse starts to help Billy up, but Chief intervenes to take him from her and carry him off in his arms, followed by the Nurse.)

McMurphy: You were using me! You know what I'm talking about, Harding! Why didn't you tell me she could keep me committed in here for as long as she likes?

Harding: I just did, my friend.

McMurphy: A lot of friggin' good that is, now, you creep! I should a realised! You were tryin' to get me to lock horns with her the moment I stepped in this place! It's not about her!

Harding: No Mac.

(Billy enters, and unsteadily seats himself at a table. Chief coming on behind, watching that he doesn't fall.)

McMurphy: You damn betcha. You bastards! If that don't beat it all. You conned ol' R. P. McMurphy into holding your bag and fighting your fight! You clever bunch o' lunatics!! Well, I don't mean nothing personal, buddies, but; screw you! I want out of this and out of here. I'm gonna be as good as gold.

Harding: Why, you're becoming sly. Like the rest of us.

MCM: Yes, Siree!

Harding: A rabbit?

MCMURPHY: Yep, fluffy tail. (Jumps).

Nurse:(Enters with Billy on her arm, she sits him down and smooths back his hair. He is vulnerable) Very well, boys, very well... Please understand: we do not impose rules and restrictions for the sake of it or without great thought. A good many of you are in here because you could not keep the rules of society in the Outside World. Perhaps at some time - when you were children you broke a rule. You wanted.. you needed - to be punished, to be.. dealt with... but no punishment came. And when you grew that foolish kindness on the part of your parents had become the seed of the illness that has brought you here. So what I say now, I say exclusively for your own good: there will be no more television, no more cards and no more gambling.

Nurse: Good.

Nurse: Good. Mister McMurphy?

McMurphy: Yes, Ma'am.

Nurse: Well, with no cardgames, what will you be doing today, Mr McMurphy?

MCMURPHY: This, Ma'm. (Grabs brush and Salutes).

Nurse: What are you planning to do with that?

MCMURPHY: Plannin' to use it, Ma'am. Plannin' to scrub them urinals/toilets so clean we gonna have to wear sunglasses every time we take a piss.

HRD: Join the rabbits. (HRD Exits and Nurse leads Billy off).

McMurphy: Goddam bitch. What' do you say, Chief?

Chief: Sure. (McMurphy does a big double take. Then silently watches Chief for a few moments.)

Chief: (Coughs, then:) Sure.

McMurphy: Why, Chief, you dark horse you! (he laughs.) I thought you fooled us one way, but you fooled us every way!

Chief: Thank you.

McMurphy: You sound a bit rusty, Chief. You must be a bit out of practise after eight years.

Chief: Yeah. (Tries to laugh, but it comes out a little oddly.) Huh huh.

McMurphy: You don't have to rush, man. You must have a helluva lot saved up to say. (Chief tries to think what to say. Can't. So he nods.) What I was wonderin' Chief; are you biding your time towards the day you decide to kill 'em?

Chief: No. I couldn't do that.

McMurphy: It ain't so difficult to lay into them y'know?

Chief: You're a lot bigger than me.

McMurphy: Me? Are you kidding? Look at you? There isn't a man on this ward you wouldn't turn inside out - patient or staff.

Chief: No. I'm way too little. I used to be big, sure. Not any more. You is twice the size of me.

McMurphy: Hoo, boy! You is twice as crazy talkin' as you is listening! Look, boy, you're a big man.

Chief: My papa was a full Chief, his name meant Pine Standing Tallest on the Mountain. He was real big when I was a kid. And my mama, she got twice his size.

(McMurphy whistles in admiration.)

Chief: She just kept getting bigger. She was a white lady, my papa was an Indian. And he just kept getting smaller.

McMurphy: Was that your mama worked on him?

Chief: They all worked on him. The Combine worked on him. Just like they all work on you now.

McMurphy: The what?

Chief: The Combine, big thing, McMurphy. It's a big machine. It reaches down alleys. It cuts a man's hair, it beats him up. Takes his land if he got any.

McMurphy: You talkin' about the government?

Chief: Bigger than that.

McMurphy: What do they do, this Combine that's so big? They bust you like a mustang?

Chief: They took away our land. They gave us money sure, but what can you pay for a man's right to live like an Indian. The tribe took the money and the Combine took the land. Papa tried to tell them that the money was worth nothin' but he couldn't shout loud enough 'cos he was too little. And too drunk.

MCMURPHY: What happened to him?

Chief: He kept drinkin' till he died. They found him in an alley and threw dirt in his eyes. The Combine whipped him, the Combine beats everybody.

MCMURPHY: Now wait a minute-

Chief: You fight, they lock you up and - (He starts swinging and fighting around the stage then collapses exhausted). Papa! Papa!

McMurphy: Shh. They'll hear you.

Chief: I been talking crazy, ain't I?

McMurphy: Yeah. Yeah, you have, Chief. But that don't mean it don't make sense.

(McMurphy stands and thinks. Chief reaches out to touch him.)

Chief: Shh listen?

MCMURPHY: What?

CHIEF: Geese, flyin away. Away to Canada. See them out the high window? I should fly with them. Away.

MCMURPHY: One day, when you get big you can, Chief. You can just smash down that wall and fly away.

Chief: Sure. When I'm big, I'll fly with the geese. Know the old rhyme:

Wire brier limber lock

Three white geese in a flyin' flock

MCMURPHY: One flew east

Chief: One flew West

Both: One flew over the cuckoo's nest.

MCMURPHY: You could lift that heater and put it clean through the window.

Chief: I'm too small.

MCMURPHY: I'm gonna make you big, Chief. Big Chief Flyin' Goose!

Chief: (Loud) Make me big again!

MCMURPHY: You follow my training programme. And here's what'll happen. Here'll be you It's the Big Chief Bromden, cutting don the boulevard - men, women, kids rockin' back on their heels to peer up at you. "What a giant!" Takin' ten feet strides, duckin' under telephone wires... stopping just long enough for virgins... man, you'll have women trippin' you and beatin' you to the floor, women with tits like muskmelons, big strong legs to wrap round your back It's already workin', Chief. You just grew'd a foot right there!

Nurse: .Well, well, Mr Bromden. I hope you enjoyed that conversation as much as I did. I think its time to call a meeting. We should all like to congratulate Mr Bromden on the recovery of his speech. And receive an explanation as to why he lied to all of us for eight long and silent years. Group meeting.

Nurse: I think we'll dispense with the big book for today.

HRD enters and the Aide (played by Billy actor) pushing the wheelchair back to audience).

Nurse: Gentlemen, I am pleased to say that the ward is a quieter and more healing environment now that the gambling and card playing is ended. Even Our new patient, (nods to MCMURPHY) is settling down and seeing the benefits of a therapeutic routine.

MCMURPHY: That's me, Ma'am. Good as gold.

HRD: (aside) Rabbit.(Then to Nurse) Is that all?

NURSE: Not quite. There is one more matter we must consider. The behaviour of a patient who has been here almost as long as I, longer than any of you. (Smiling) Of course, you know to whom I refer? Mr Bromden. Mr Bromden was long ago diagnosed as catatonic. The word means...I think you can define it, Mr Harding?

HRD: (Mechanically) An advanced form of schizophrenia, marked by stupor, loss of speech and hearing.

Nurse: Exactly. And because we assumed that we could not communicate with Mr Bromden, we gave up. We forgot him. That was wrong of us. But Mr Bromden acted wrongly too. He pretended to be deaf, he pretended to be dumb. Mr Bromden lied to us. Lied to us all, his doctors, his nurses and his fellow patients.

Now that we know that Mr Bromden can speak, would it not be correct and proper if his first words to a general meeting were: I am sorry?

Chief: Mac...(plea).

Nurse: Mr Bromden! We are waiting!

Chief: (In terror) McMurphy! (Nurse snaps fingers and Aide puts strap around Chief from behind. MCMURPHY stands to defend Chief).

Nurse: Perhaps a little adrenaline will loosen your tongue? (Removes syringe from bag and advances on Chief).

MCMURPHY: Let him alone! (blocking her path).

Nurse: Mr McMurphy do not interfere with other patient's treatment.

Chief's voice: Fight the Combine Papa! Fight the machine Fight 'em Chief, Sitting Bull, Geronimo, fight! Save the land, Papa, save the tribe! Papa! Papa!

(But the shocks administered to MCMURPHY pulse through the big Chief too and he falls, he is dragged off - music having changed from wardance to triumph of the machine that gives way to electric Combine sound/music).

Chief: (Clutching medicine bottle) Put the bottle down, Papa, put the bottle down. You got small, Papa, where's my big Papa gone? Why are we so small?

(MCMURPHY is placed in a straight jacket. The lights change, Big Nurse vanishes - the ward is re-established. HRD and Billy playing ludo. Nurse pushes Chief on in wheelchair).

Billy: Where's M-M-McMurphy?

Nurse: He will be out of the recovery ward soon enough. I thought I would take advantage of his absence to discuss a certain element of his case. This gentlemen is a record of Mr McMurphy's gains in the short time he has been croupier of this little Monte Carlo. His winnings amount to over three hundred dollars. (Billy whistles). So much for your Saint. (pause) Any questions? No. There really is nothing more to say about that...card sharp, or shall we say...thief. (Marches off to booth on triumph).
(Pause)

Billy: (To HRD) I.. I.. I.. is it t.. t.. t.. true? (Chief shakes his head.) I.. I... I... d.. d.. don't want to believe her. B.. b.. b.. but she ... got f.. f.. facts.

Harding: So, what? Let's be honest! What's wrong with him making a little profit? The man's got a capitalist talent! Good luck to him! I'm all for Mack and I'm all for the dear old capitalist system and I'm all for the flag and the Fourth of July!

Billy: G-G-God bless America!

Chief: I am not blessin' no combine. Mac, bless Mac.

Billy: Wh-where is he?

(McMurphy enters in straight jacket.)

HRD: Oh no.

MCMURPHY: (low) Help me, Mamma...(Then snaps out of it with a laugh). Stand back dickheads! Here comes the champ (throws off straightjacket). Oi McMurphy the ten thousand volt psychopath! The electric champ! ZZZZ. Watch it Billy it'll give you a hard on like an elephant! Or a bull, hey Sitting Bull! Get out of your wheelchair! Zzzzz. (Uses finger as if charged and raises Chief out of Chair smiling). They gave me crown of thorns and now I'd doin' miracles. Phew that juice is good!

Chief: You're bigger than ever Mac. Big as Papa!

MCMURPHY: Yeah, an I gotta a big plan I bin cookin' up in the shock shop. All that time thinkin'. I bin plannin' somethin' special. A party, specially for Billy.

Billy: A p-p-party?

HRD: Mac, I should warn you that Nurse Ratched has a plan for you too. Should you exhibit any more...disruptive behaviour.

MCMURPHY: An what would that plan be, more electricity? I know I got volts in me now that could light her up! I bet if we doubled the charge I could send her into orbit! (Sings Fly Me To the Moon a la Sinatra) C'mon Billy its time to dance! You gotta dance tonight 'cos Candy's comin' to see you.

Billy: Candy?

MCMURPHY: You can't have a party without a girl. An you need a girl more than I do. And she needs you, Billy, she wants you!

Billy: How do you n-nuh-know?

MCMURPHY: Cos I spoke to her on the telephone. They let you phone out in Recovery. I got it all arranged, the booze, the girl and ...the key! (Produces key).

HRD: How in God's name did you get that?

MCMURPHY: Money talks, Mr Harding. Even in a nuthouse. An, now I'm talkin money. The booze is ten dollars, the girl fifteen and the key twenty. That's fifty dollars.

HRD: Forty five. So what's the extra five for?

MCMURPHY: Call it a service charge.

HRD: Mac, I am happy to contribute to this...recreation but it is my duty to warn you that Nurse Ratched's plan for you is not an increase in voltage but a cut. (Marks Mac's forehead).

Billy: L-l-lobotomy.

HRD: Castration of the brain.

MCMURPHY: What's it do to you?

HRD: They say he used to be a real rough character. (Makes cuttin' motion on dummies' forehead). We think you should break out of here, Mac.

Chief: We gotta a plan to get you out.

HRD: But now you gotta key you can just walk out.

MAC: I ain't bought this key, its borrowed.

HRD: Don't hang around for us, Mac.

MCMURPHY: OK, OK, I'll get out tonight but first, I got my farewell party and I got to get Billy laid.

Chief: Night. Too dark to see anything.

Billy: What.. wh.. wh.. wh.. what's that?

McMurphy: Chief? (Chief nods.) Help her in. Wait! (He jumps up to look out the window on tip toes.) She walks like beauty in the night. Lift her in Chief.

Billy: Look, McMurphy..m..m..m..mm..Murphy, wait... (Backing off.)

McMurphy: Don't you mamamamurphy me, Billy Boy! It's too late to back out now! I'll tell you what. I got five dollars here says you burn that woman down. Lift her in, Chief.

(A woman's arm reaches through the window and passes a bottle of whisky in a brown paper bag to Chief. He passes it to McMurphy who takes off the top and swigs and hands to Billy who swigs.)

McMurphy: Good girl, Candy!

Billy: Hooo!

Candy: You damn McMurphy! (She hugs McMurphy) You damn McMurphy!

McMurphy: You're late, doll.

Candy: Gee, Mack, this isn't on the main drag y'know. I had to keep asking directions at every bar I came to. (She laughs.)

McMurphy: You never needed no directions to nothing. (Harding has appeared.)

Harding: (kisses Candy's hand much to her surprise) Madam, an honour. Are you real? No you must be a fantasy! That drink isn't real. None of this exists! Let's carry on! (laughs.)

McMurphy: Shush, Prof.

Candy: Hello, you must be Billy? I brought you a present.

Billy: G..g.. gee, thanks.

Harding: This is wish fulfilment!!

McMurphy: Shush, Professor, you'll wake up those bastards! (He looks about.) OH! Is that lock still bust? It is now. (To Billy and Candy.) There you go. The honeymoon suite is now available.

HRD: One moment! Shall we send them off without the benefit of a ceremony? Come children – here before me. Dearly beloved we are gathered in the sight of Freud to celebrate the end of innocence and cheer on its passing. Who gives away this couple?

MCMURPHY: R.P.McMurphy.

HRD: Very well. Do you Candy Starr take this man to love and cherish for such brief time as the rules and regulations of this loony bin allow?

Candy: I (laughing) d-d-ddo!

HRD: Do you Billy Babbit take this young woman to have and to hold until the night shift at the hospital ends?

Billy: I duh duh do.

MCMURPHY: He does

HRD: Dear and merciful God we ask that you accept these two into heaven and keep the door open so we may peek inside. For tomorrow morning judgement will be upon us. Go my children, sin while ye may for tomorrow we shall be tranquillised. In the name of librium, vallium and opium. Amen.

(He holds the door open. Candy takes off her coat as she leads Billy into the booth. McMurphy darts in after them.)

McMurphy: S'cuse me.

McMurphy: Reading from label.) "Artificial flavour, colouring, citric acid. Seventy per cent inert materials." That must be water. "Twenty per cent alcohol." That's fine. "And ten per cent codeine. Warning Narcotic May Be Habit Forming". (Unscrews the top and takes a taste.) Well. If we cut a leetle bit with the whisky, I think it'll be all right.

Harding: This isn't happening. It's all a collaboration between Kafka, Mark Twain and the Chronicles! This is one of their delusions. (He drinks.)

McMurphy: Aw shuttup, Prof. Drink up.

Chief: I ain't been drunk like this since I was in the army! (Stands to attention and salutes). I feel big, I'm an Injun an' I'm the US cavalry all in one! Big chief Custer and General Sitting Bull! (All repeat and laugh. All three drink)

McMurphy: Why don't you two guys get your clothes and make it out of here with me?

Harding: I'm not quite ready yet, Mack.

McMurphy: What makes you think I am?

Harding: No you don't understand. I'll be ready in a few weeks. I want to do it the right way, the forms, the.. wife in a car at the front door. I want them to know I can do it their way.

McMurphy: (nods, then.) Chief, what about you?

Chief: I figure I'm all right here for a little while. Someone ought to stay on after you've gone. To keep an eye on the Combine.

McMurphy: (Unconvincingly.) That's bullshit. Shoot I'm whacked. (Lights dim then rise The men close their eyes. So do the others. Candy appears from the booth and sees the men all asleep).

Candy: Wake up, Mac, it's time to go. Wake up! You gotta get out of here, Mac! (shakes him) Aw shit. I gotta go. See yer, dream boy.

BILLY: Oh oh C-C Candy, sweet Candy!

McMurphy: Aw, Christ.

Harding: Why? Why?

McMurphy: I gotta get out of here..Candy...Candy where are you? (Sees/hears Nurse off).. Aw shit. (None of them moves. Harding groans again. The nurse enters.)

Nurse: So we have had a party? Thrown no doubt by Mr McMurphy. Where's Billy?

McMurphy: Mornin', Miss Ratched.

Nurse: We know, Mister McMurphy. A girl was found wandering in the corridors this morning, tryin to get out! You brought a woman on to this ward!

McMurphy: Well... there's a first time for everything.

Nurse: Where is Billy?

(Billy stands in the booth, half naked. He sees Nurse and smiles. Waves. Beaming. Bottle in his hand.)

Billy: (Shouts) Morning, Miss Ratched!

Nurse: William Bibbit! William Bibbit!

Billy: Where's Candy?

Nurse: O, Billy, Billy, Billy, I'm so ashamed of you. With a woman like that! A cheap, low, painted...

Harding: Courtesan.

Nurse: What worries me, Billy, is how your poor mother is going to take this.
(The others chuckle.) Her son with a ..whore.

Billy: (Desperate.) You wouldn't tell her wuh..wuh..wuh..wh..would y..y..you?

Nurse: You've always been such a disappointment to your Mother, Billy, but at least you were a good boy. But now... this.

Billy: Nuh,, nuh, nuh... y.y.y..you d.d..d..don't need t...to.. t..t..tell her...

Nurse: Billy, Billy, Billy, your mother and I are old friends!

Billy: No!!! No!!

Nurse: Billy, I don't want there to believe a thing like this. But what am I to think?

Billy: (terrified::) Duh, duh,duh, don't tell!

Nurse: I have to tell, Billy. I can't yell your mother a lie.

Billy: (A howl.) I didn't do anything!!

Nurse: I spoke to the girl, Billy. I don't think she forced you...

Billy: Shh..sh..shh.. she did! And M..m.. m.. m.. m.. McMURPHY! (He points a finger at McMURPHY from behind the glass.) They... m..m.. m.. made me! Please, M..m..m..miss Ratched...

Nurse: It's all right, Billy. No one is going to harm you. I'll explain to your mother.

Nurse: Poor boy, poor little boy, poor little boy.

Nurse: I didn't know you had it in you to be quite so childish, Mister McMURPHY. You must be feeling so ashamed of yourself now!

MCMURPHY: You're sick, YOU are sick. I'm, getting out of here.

Nurse: (Leaving booth). The window is open, Mr McMURPHY. There's no reason to stay, you have already stolen all these poor people's meagre money. Just go!

(Billy appears in the booth, a pair of open scissors in his hand. Book streaming from his neck. He slumps forward and onto the glass and blood streams down it. Nurse rushes into the booth and hits an alarm bell. A guard comes running in. Chief and McMURPHY stand, shocked. Nurse re- emerges from the booth, the Guard behind her still looking into the booth, shocked.)

Nurse: This is what happens when you play with ... this is what happens when you gamble with other people's lives. Did you think you were God!

Guard: Come on you stupid stiff! Come on! Come on!

Chief: That you, Harding?

Harding: Yeah.

Chief: What you doing here?

Harding: She can't do anything now. I'm going to leave. I've signed the papers. Vera is picking me up in the morning. What about you?

Chief: Not yet. I think there's still one more round to go in this fight.

Harding: Shush.

Chief: Who's that?

HRD: It's McMurphy.

Harding: It says it's McMurphy. It can't be. (reads.) "McMurphy, Randle P., Post-operative, Lobotomy." (pause) Aah, what's that old bitch trying to pull! That isn't Mack.

(Chief gets up from his seat and goes and looks.)

Chief: No, that's nothing like him. Mack is a giant.

Harding: How crazy does she think we are?

Chief: They done a pretty good job on the face though, they got the eyes, and the scar and they got the hair right...

Harding: My friend, they do not have the McMurphy look.

Chief: This one is ... blank.

Harding: They even did his tattoos.

Chief: Mack's arms were big!

Harding: Let's go back to the dormitory. Before anyone comes.

Harding: (Pausing.) Chief?

Chief: I'll join you in a minute, Prof.

(Harding takes a few steps back into the shadows, but he doesn't exit. The Chief leans over McMurphy's body. Stares into his face.)

Chief: You wouldn't have left something like this with your name on it, Mack? So that Nurse can use you as an example? Not a chance, Mack!

(Chief reaches under the head and taking out the pillow puts it over McMurphy's face and begins to suffocate him. McMurphy thrashes about, but is finally still. He withdraws the pillow. Then shuts the eyelids. Then steps away).

Harding: Steady, Chief. Steady.

Chief: Get out of here.

Harding: Is it finished?

Chief: Yeah.

Harding: Christ. She'll know. If I were you, Chief, I'd hightail it out of here.

Chief: Maybe.

Harding: Take it easy, friend. (Harding exits).

(Chief looks at McMurphy's corpse. Makes a decision. He goes to the radiator, lifts it and put it through the barred window, the set hangings fall revealing a forest of trees behind.

Creeping, as if hunting birds, he disappears into the trees as a gentle shady green light floods the stage and the sounds of birds and wolves is heard echoing in the forest – the Chiefs father appears and waves from rear of stage. The Indian chant or the children's song reasserts itself.)

Voices: One flew East

One flew West

One Flew over the Cuckoo's nest.

THE END

TNT theatre tntpaul@aol.com Copyright Stebbings & Smith 2001