[*Audience responds:* EGO *on stage is running back and forth. The front rows are undulating their arms in the air intoning, 'Maybe, maybe not . . . .' Half the orchestra is repeatedly shouting 'Get thee to a nunnery!' The other half of the orchestra is repeatedly shouting 'Paint an inch thick!' The balconies are yelling, 'Screw you, screw Polonius, and screw the Danish patriarchy!' over and over.* ADAM, JESS *and* DANIEL *are acting as conductors, signaling the different sections, building the tempo, and whipping everyone into a frenzy. Finally,* ADAM *signals that everyone should stop.*]

ADAM: Okay, STOP!

[*The chaos stops abruptly.* ADAM, JESS, *and* DANIEL *gesture dramatically toward the* VOLUNTEER *indicating that she should scream. She is hit with a DRAMATIC RED SPOTLIGHT.*]

VOLUNTEER: Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

[*The audience goes wild.* ALL *thank her.* ADAM *and* JESS *exit as* DANIEL *walks volunteers back to their seats.*]

DANIEL: Let's hear it for Bob. And Bob! [*Shouting to the lighting booth.*] House lights out, Bob? [*The house lights fade out as* DANIEL *returns to the stage.*] Boy, we really shared something there, didn't we? But we digress. Back to *Hamlet*, act three, scene two: the pivotal play-within-a-play scene, in which Hamlet discovers conclusive evidence that his uncle murthered his father.

[DANIEL *exits.* J/HAMLET *enters, pauses, then whips his hands out from behind his back to reveal sock-puppet 'Players' on his hands.*]

J/HAMLET: "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, and hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature. [D/POLONIUS *enters with a puppet theater.*] Will my lord hear this piece of work?

D/POLONIUS: Aye, and the king, too, presently.

[*Trumpet fanfare.* ADAM *enters as* CLAUDIUS, *an evil king wearing a crown and an ugly beard.*]

A/CLAUDIUS: And now, how does my cousin Hamlet, and my son?

J/HAMLET: A little more than kin, and less than kind.

A/CLAUDIUS: I have nothing with this answer Hamlet, these words mine."

D/POLONIUS: Take a seat, my lord.

A/CLAUDIUS: [*Moves into audience.*] Very well. [*He aggressively takes from the show's opening, addressing the adjacent theater-goer.*] What looking at, libtard?

[J/HAMLET *ducks behind the puppet theater.*]

D/POLONIUS: My lord, the Royal Theater of Denmark is proud t *Murther of Gonzago.*

A/CLAUDIUS: A puppet show! [*Yelling to the rafters.*] Hey, Adult Pu Guy, drink liberal tears!

D/POLONIUS: My lord, act one.

[J/HAMLET *performs a romantic puppet dumbshow: the King puppet a meeting, falling in love, and promptly humping.* D/POLONIUS *breaks*

Intermission!

J/HAMLET: How likes my lord the play?

A/CLAUDIUS: The lady doth protest too much, methinks!" [*Laug To the person adjacent.*] She was asking for it, right? [*To rest of au* you all know she wanted it!

D/POLONIUS: [*Chiding.*] My lord, are we forgetting a certain wo movement?

A/CLAUDIUS: Oh, MeToo, boo-hoo!

D/POLONIUS: My lord, act two.

A/CLAUDIUS: Gesundheit. Har har! I'm on fire!

[*The puppet King lies down to sleep. A puppet shark dressed like Cla attacks the King!* A/CLAUDIUS *rises, storms on stage, rips t* J/HAMLET'S *hands.*]

D/POLONIUS: "The king rises.

A/CLAUDIUS: Give o'er the play! Lights! Away!

[A/CLAUDIUS *exits with puppets.* D/POLONIUS *strikes the puppet theater.*]

J/HAMLET: I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound!

D/POLONIUS: My lord, the queen would speak with you in her closet.

J/HAMLET: Then will I come to my mother" who's in the closet. [*Exits.*]

D/POLONIUS: "Behind the arras I'll convey myself to hear the process. [*Hides.*]

[*Enter* ADAM *as* GERTRUDE *and* J/HAMLET, *opposite.*]

J/HAMLET: Now, mother, what's the matter?

A/GERTRUDE: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

[J/HAMLET *draws his dagger.*]

J/HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended.

A/GERTRUDE: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murther me? Help! [*Exits.*]

D/POLONIUS: Help! Help!

J/HAMLET: How now? A rat!"

[J/HAMLET *charges at* D/POLONIUS *with his dagger, then suddenly shifts into slow motion. Lights strobe and we hear the music from the shower scene in* Psycho.]

D/POLONIUS: [*Slo-mo voice.*] Ooooh noooo, thaaaat willllll huuuurt!

[J/HAMLET *stabs* D/POLONIUS *in exaggerated slow motion.* D/POLONIUS *exits as he dies.* J/HAMLET *licks his dagger clean and then snaps out of slo-mo as the strobe effect ends.*]

J/HAMLET: "Dead for a ducat, dead!

[A/CLAUDIUS *enters.*]

A/CLAUDIUS: Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

J/HAMLET: At supper.

A/CLAUDIUS: At supper? Where?

J/HAMLET: Not where he eats, but where he is eaten."

[DANIEL *enters as* LAERTES, *huffing and snarling.*]

A/CLAUDIUS and J/HAMLET: O no, it's Laertes.

A/CLAUDIUS: Son of Polonius.

J/HAMLET: Brother to Ophelia.

A/CLAUDIUS: And a snappy dresser!

D/LAERTES: Why, thanks.
"O thou vile king! Give me my father!
I'll be revenged for Polonius' murther.

JESS: [*Offstage scream imitating* A/OPHELIA.]

[ADAM *realizes he has to change costumes, exits.*]

D/LAERTES: How now, what noise is this?

A/OPHELIA: [*Offstage scream.*]

D/LAERTES: Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

[A/OPHELIA *enters screaming, with flowers.*]

A/OPHELIA: [*Screaming, then singing.*]
They bore him barefaced on the bier
With a hey-nonny-nonny, hey-nonny
And in his grave rained many a tear
With a hey-nonny-nonny ha-cha-cha.
Fare you well my dove."
I'm mad! [*She tosses flowers wildly about.*] I'm out of my tiny little mind!
VOLUNTEER.] See, this is acting.
"Here's rue for you, and rosemary for remembrance. [*She offers a flowe*
audience member.] And I would have given you violets, but they withere
when my father died"—you *creep*! [*She yanks the flower back.*] I'm starti
feel a little nauseous . . .

[*She lurches into the audience and pretends to vomit on people.*]