

THE CORRAL, a Ten Minute Play by Rhiana Yazzie

Setting: 1968 Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota,
December 24, 1968.

At Rise: Two white male police officers in a tight light look up at
the moon.

OFFICER ONE

You know what we're missing tonight?

OFFICER TWO

Christmas Eve?

OFFICER ONE

No. This is a historic night, NASA is orbiting the moon and we're fucking with these goddamn prairie niggers again. Why can't you stay on your reservation?! Goddamn drunks!

The light expands and music bumps up and plays LOUD, *Magic Carpet Ride* by Steppenwolf underscores a tense moment. We can now see two Indian men handcuffed to a streetlamp on Franklin Avenue. The officers kick and punch the handcuffed men. A host of obscenities follow each blow.

EDGAR

I wasn't drinking! Fucking pigs!

MOON

Get off me!

EDGAR

Let me go!

OFFICER ONE

We'll be back for you, soon as we book these Squaws in the back seat...

OFFICER TWO

...gonna take 'em downtown.

OFFICER ONE

They didn't fit into the paddy wagon...

OFFICER TWO

Now we got to give them personal service.

The police laugh.

EDGAR

Personal service? What the fuck? Where are you going?! Aw, fuck. Come back! What the fuck is happening? They're not going to do what it sounds like they are? Are they? Are they?

MOON

You're handcuffed to a street lamp, numb nuts. What else you expect of Shitty-apolis' finest when it comes to Indians?

EDGAR

Don't leave us here! Aw shit. Shit! Now what do we do? Now what do we do?

MOON

One more game, one more game I kept telling myself. On a winning streak. Had to play just one more game in there at that Corral. Shoulda known better.

EDGAR

Least you have an excuse. I'm not even from here. I don't even go to bars back home.

MOON

Welcome to Minne-hoplis. Franklin Avenue. (he shivers) Cold.

EDGAR

Hey! Come back here! Assholes! Fuck, fuck! Damn it's cold! Leaving us out here?!

MOON

Shoulda brought gloves.

EDGAR

I had some mittens but they're in there, on the floor of the Corral.

MOON

Mittens? I'd kick my own ass if I got caught wearing mittens.

EDGAR

Aren't you cold, asshole?

MOON

No. I'm pissed, I lost another fucking tooth! It's probably on the floor by your mittens.

EDGAR

It must be minus ten!

(beat)

MOON

At least we weren't dumped in the river.

EDGAR

What do you mean?

MOON

What do you mean, “what do I mean?” Just wait till those pigs come back. Your rez must be a paradise. Where you from? Ain’t got fuzz there?

EDGAR

Yeah. We got em too. Tacoma. Washington State troopers. Fish and Game. You name it.

MOON

Whatcha doin out here, then? Vision quest at the Corral? No, you look too slick for that. I bet you’re just another lost Indian on Government Relocation.

EDGAR

Relocation, please. I didn’t fall for that one: sending Indians from the rez to the big city on Uncle Sam’s dime! An Indian can’t have a BM without the government dictating where it should happen, if it should happen, how long, what color, and how it smells!

MOON

Ok. Never heard it put like that before.

EDGAR

There hasn’t been a generation of us yet that hasn’t had the US Government’s hand in everything tiny piece of our lives. That’s why I’m here. I’ve heard stories, something different is happening here.

MOON

At the Corral?! Man! You came to the wrong place!

EDGAR

Thought I came to the only place.

MOON

Only place that doesn’t have a “No Dogs, No Indians” sign. Only place that’ll serve us.

EDGAR

Lookin for help.

MOON

Me too. I was just lookin to make some dough from a few cribbage games. Guess I didn’t duck out in time enough ‘fore the pigs showed up. Guess I ain’t playing Santa tonight. I didn’t think them cops would be cold blooded enough to be out on Christmas Eve, their own damn holiday.

EDGAR

Me, I was hoping they had a tv in there. You know they’re sending living pictures of the Moon tonight?

MOON

Wow! You thought there was a tv in the Corral!? (he laughs) Look at you, you’re one of those bourgeois type educated Indians? I bet you never had a nose bleed in your life before. Like I said “Welcome to Murder-apolis.”

(They both look up at a sliver of the moon.)

What's your name? MOON

Edgar. You? EDGAR

Moon. MOON

Serious? EDGAR

Yeah. MOON

Really? EDGAR

Uh, huh. MOON

So you ain't on your moon, are ya Moon? Might be too powerful for me... EDGAR

Asshole... MOON

... to be standing right here next to you! Huh, Moon?!! (laughing) EDGAR

Like I never heard that before. MOON

Oh, well, nice to meet you, anyway, Moon! EDGAR

The pleasure is all mine. Boozhoo. MOON

Mucho gusto. EDGAR

Enchante. MOON

BOTH

Aye!!!!

(They both laugh a bit.)

MOON

So you a salmon eater, then?

EDGAR

Yep. On good days. I'm Puyallup. Timber cutter.

MOON

Oh yeah? Us too.

EDGAR

Damn, what'd I give for even a hack saw right now.

MOON

Heck yeah! I know!

(they laugh a moment)

Me, I'm. Anishinabe.

EDGAR

Groovy. Rice eater? Rabbit eater!?

MOON

Ever, yeah!

EDGAR

How the hell do you stand this cold?

MOON

It's in our blood. It's home.

EDGAR

It's cold.

MOON

Ever.

EDGAR

Probably warmer up there on the moon, huh Moon?

(They both look up again.)

MOON

Hey, Edgar, know why the white man is trying to go to the moon?

EDGAR

Why?

MOON

Cause he thinks Indians have land up there too!

EDGAR

Shheee!

MOON

They'll never own this Moon.

(They laugh for a moment again staring up at the moon. Then laughter subsides. A wind gusts. Edgar shivers. He pulls at his cuffs and kicks the street lamp.)

MOON

You're making it worse. You couldn't take on a cop, I doubt you can take on that street lamp.

EDGAR

Where did the rest of them go?

MOON

Those in the paddy wagon?

EDGAR

Downtown?

MOON

Hopefully, but the river first probably.

EDGAR

What do you mean the river?

MOON

Do you know which cop cars are faster? Saint Paul or Minneapolis?

EDGAR

What?

MOON

Come, on. Which are faster?

EDGAR

I don't know.

MOON

Minneapolis, their cars also got two Injuns in the trunk. Get's them to the river faster. Unload our brothers and sisters beat em and dump em in the Mississippi.

EDGAR

Holy shit! Is that what we're waiting here for?

MOON

Probably.

EDGAR

Oh, god. I wasn't even drinking! (looking up) You hear that, moon?! I don't drink!

MOON

Which Moon you talkin to? Me or her?

EDGAR

Don't matter at this point. Oh, god. Oh, Jesus. Oh, Christ.

MOON

You religious?

EDGAR

Apparently.

MOON

Your vision quest!?

EDGAR

What a way to end the year.

MOON

It wasn't all bad.

EDGAR

Are you kidding me? Not a good year for the Indian. But then again, is any year?

MOON

It wasn't all bad.

EDGAR

Not all bad? I got two brothers, uncles, cousins, all in jail. Fishing. Trying to eat to live. Indian tribes being terminated, land being taken away to make National parks, back home white folks hunting Indians, saying they want the river to run red with our blood. Nebraska's got a bounty on Indians, get paid for every Indian arrested. And here in Minneapolis, I'm handcuffed to a goddamn streetlamp!

MOON

You're negative you know that? I can tell you're prone to dwell on the bad stuff.

EDGAR

Kinda hard not to given the circumstance!

MOON

You can't try?

EDGAR

You give me something. Name one good thing.

MOON

I got an honorable discharge from the army, ain't going back to Vietnam.

EDGAR

That's great, man.

MOON

I'm having a second baby—second as far as I know, I was stationed in Japan for a couple months, aye!—and I won \$10 from cribbage tonight!

EDGAR

So what about the rest of us?

MOON

It's gonna get better.

EDGAR

It's gonna get better? Hopefully before we get frost bitten, loose our fingers and toes.

MOON

And other stuff.

EDGAR

And I'm not looking forward to a night in jail.

MOON

A night? You kidding? If we get booked we got a whole frickin week at the workhouse.

EDGAR

What?!

MOON

Come on man, who are you?!

EDGAR

Sorry! I don't know, I ain't from around here.

MOON

It's free labor courtesy of the Chippewa and Sioux. That's why they surround the bars. 9pm, just about could set my watch to it. If I had a watch. If I did, I wouldn't be standing here with you either. They come in here bang on the walls, knock a few heads, load 'em into the paddy wagon, and Mr. Minnesota

Attorney General gots new license plates, and stadium sweepers for the Vike-queens over the next 5 days.

EDGAR

Not courtesy of the Puyallup people! I hope.

MOON

Unless they're out tonight.

EDGAR

Who?

MOON

The patrol. AIM.

EDGAR

Shit, are you serious? American Indian Movement. Got a lot of bad stuff happening back at home. That's who I wanted to find.

MOON

What a way to do it. Oh, hey, listen to this one:

"For all the treaties that were broken"

"For all the land that was stolen"

"Custer died for your sins!"

"Custer died for your sins!"

"Custer died for your sins!"

Groovy!!

EDGAR

Where'd you learn that?

MOON

Dennis and Floyd!

EDGAR

Who?

MOON

Dennis Banks and Floyd---the Red Crow Flies, aye!--- Westerman!

EDGAR

Who else is making this AIM happen?

MOON

Them.

(He points across the street with his lips.)

Right there on the corner of 11th, that's the Patrol office.

EDGAR

What? You mean that place with the card board sign?! Shit, I was right next to it this whole time?!

MOON

I think they got a tv in there too.

EDGAR

Why didn't you say something you asshole!?

MOON

Their light wasn't on. What was the use?

EDGAR

Maybe someone is the back!?

MOON

I guess we could find out.

EDGAR

You asshole.

MOON

Hey!!!! (yelling to across the street)
Clyde! Vernon! Belly-courts you in there?! Frannie! Alberta!

EDGAR

Frannie!!

MOON

George!!

EDGAR

George!!

MOON

Dennis!!

EDGAR

Dennis!!

MOON

Hey? What are you doing? You don't even know them?

EDGAR

I don't care! Belly Courts!!! Come on out!! Any one in there!!!!

MOON

That's Bellecourt.

1/4/12

EDGAR

Alberta!

MOON!

Hey Downwind! You in there?!

(to Edgar)

You know it's her, Alberta Downwind that named them. Get this, they was at first calling themselves, "Concerned Indian Americans." Funny hunh?

EDGAR

That sounds good.

MOON

No, it's funny.

EDGAR

I don't get it?

MOON

You're so serious. "Concerned Indian Americans?"

EDGAR

CIA?

MOON

Yeah!

EDGAR

Oh, shit, that won't work.

(They laugh)

(They stop a moment, wait, listen. Look up at the moon.)

MOON

Yeah, Alberta. She says as American Indian people, we can't stop moving. No one else will do it for us. I believe it. I do.

EDGAR

Don't think any one's home. George, Dennis, Frannie! Cops don't bust them?

MOON

Well. AIM's taking pictures, shooting film, trying to prove to the judges this kinda stuff is wrong. Cops, judges, never believe till they have the evidence right in front of them. And even then, they don't want to. But they gotta. Bringing in lawyers too. Good black and white folks, seeing there's a red man for the first time. Still here. Still alive. Still needing to find justice. Right?

I hope they come back tonight.

EDGAR

Yeah. It's cold.

MOON

You're bleeding bad.

EDGAR

I don't feel right.

MOON

Oh, shit. Help! Somebody help!

EDGAR

(More silence and Moon breaks down a little.)

So cold. I want to get home.
I WANT TO GET HOME!!

MOON

(trying to comfort) Hey. Hey, man...

EDGAR

I need to be home. My lady is waiting for me! Shit. Shit. Not again, not like this. She needs me. Our baby's due any minute. And I'm gone again. It's always something, ain't it? Always, always, shit.

MOON

Moon.

EDGAR

Goddamn, don't you sometimes get tired being an Indian.

MOON

We ain't gonna stay like this forever.

EDGAR

I hope not.

MOON

Course not. (beat)
Cause, you keep crying like that everyone is gonna think you're on your rag, Moon!

EDGAR

Gawiiin. (he lets loose a smile finally) You're one to talk, snowballs! I saw where that pig kicked you. That can't be feeling too good right about now.

MOON

(They stare up at the moon.)

MOON

Just a little sliver of Moon over Mine shota.

EDGAR

A little sliver of light.

MOON

So cold.

EDGAR

So right.

(They stare up at the moon again.)

(A few agonizing silent beats.)

(Then a flash bulb, two, three.)

OFF STAGE FEMALE VOICE

Niiji! Brothers, we're here. Damn Moon, you shit birds look rough.

OFF STAGE MALE VOICE

Get 'em some food, get 'em some blankets.

(The two men look at each other then say together.)

BOTH

Get us a hack saw!

End of play.