

Across The Face

by

Joseph Arnone

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Cast of Characters

<u>MUMFORD</u> :	48
<u>CAROL</u> :	39
<u>DAVE</u> :	38
<u>BOBBY</u> :	32
<u>YOLANDA</u> :	27

Place

A Manhattan Theatre

Time

Late Evening

2.

Setting: A black box styled theatre. It's rundown, with ripped seats and used furniture that was found for the plays set design.

At Rise: Actors Carol and Dave are on stage rehearsing their scene. Mumford, the director, watches them intently. Producers Bobby and Yolanda fidget in their seats while they too watch the actors.

MUMFORD: Okay, let's stop it there for a moment. When Carol approaches you, I want your character's ego to come out. You see, you don't think she would ever smack you across the face, in fact, you almost sort of lean in to it because you even go as far as to tempt her, so when she does smack you, it's like a bomb going off in your mind because your ego gets obliterated in an instant. No one has ever done something like that to you...you see what I'm getting at Dave?

DAVE: Loud and clear.

MUMFORD: Carol what you are doing is working, is it working for you?

CAROL: I'm getting there, exploring.

MUMFORD: Right. Good. Let's have another---

BOBBY: Excuse me, 'scuse me, ah, as producer can I say somethin' about this thing here?

MUMFORD: Bobby, to be honest, it's really not---

BOBBY: Yeah, but I think I can add some value, being as Yolanda and me are sittin' right here in the audience, you know, her and I could bring additional insight.

MUMFORD: Insight?

BOBBY: Like when the actress goes up to him and slaps him, right? She should do it with force, it doesn't seem to be coming across as something she REALLY, REALLY wants to do, you know, so if she just goes at him, like, that would be powerful cause I've had women slap me before and let me tell you, when a woman wants to slap a man, there ain't no hesitation, follow? She needs to let it rip, BAH, right across the chin or cheek or whatever and that's another thing too, she needs to pick a spot, like a location, a TARGET, one time she slaps him in the throat, another time in the chin, another time across the head, she needs to have a target, so this way it has more impact I think, I don't, just my two cents.

MUMFORD (to himself) Christ. (to BOBBY) Bobby, I appreciate you giving me your perspective---

BOBBY: I'm just sayin'.

CAROL (whispering to Mumford): Mumford, please do not let that man give me notes.

MUMFORD (under his breath): I know, I know. (to BOBBY) Thanks Bobby--

BOBBY: And one more thing, Yolanda here just made a good point.

DAVE (quietly muttering): Yolanda?

YOLANDA: I think she should punch 'em.

BOBBY: Wow, that would be somethin'. Ha ha ha! Give 'em a nice WHOP to da nose, right?

YOLANDA: That's what I'm sayin', shit.

MUMFORD: No, no, we don't, no, there is no punch in this moment, it has to be a slap, that's what the writer wrote and a punch would overdo the nature of the scene, it would be overdone. A slap is right where we want to be, it's what the scene calls for.

(beat)

BOBBY: ...Okay. (to Yolanda) He knows what he's doin'. Go with the slap then. Alright.

MUMFORD: Let's ah, let's take it from the top.

(CAROL and DAVE take their positions
and start the scene)

CAROL AS BRENDA: Mark, how can you do this to us, to everything we've ever worked for in our tender lives? This is beyond my worst nightmare, this goes beyond hell, this, this, this---

(CAROL walks up to DAVE and smacks
him across the cheek)

BOBBY: Blammo!

MUMFORD: Excuse me. Ah, Bobby, Bobby listen, you can't distract the actors, if you distract the actors during our rehearsal than I am going to have to ask you to leave.

BOBBY: What?

MUMFORD (swallows hard): I'm just saying, we need to focus.

BOBBY: We're showin' support ova here. Don't you want to imagine that you have a live audience while you rehearse? Like, isn't that a better way to go about it?

YOALNDA (to BOBBY): I coulda got me nails done.

BOBBY: Yeah, she coulda got her nails done but we're here, for you guys.

MUMFORD: You are here, yes, I see certainly see that.

BOBBY: You know, we're supportin' all a you not only financially but through physically being here. What kind of producers ever do that?

MUMFORD: Bobby, you can be here but you need to remain---you cannot distract while the rehearsal is underway.

BOBBY: Alright, I can work with that.

MUMFORD: Thank you. (beat) Carol, Dave, I apologize...let us take it from the top again...thanks.

(CAROL and DAVE take their positions
and start the scene)

CAROL as BRENDA: Mark, how can you do this to us, to everything we've ever worked for in our tender lives? This is beyond my worst nightmare, this goes beyond hell, this, this, this---

(CAROL walks up to DAVE and smacks
him across the cheek. This time Dave
winches in pain)

(YOLANDA laughs as BOBBY tickles her)

MUMFORD: Are you kidding me?!

BOBBY: Wha? We didn't say nothin'.

MUMFORD: Out! Out! I want you to leave!

(BOBBY stands up)

DAVE: Sorry, Mumford that slap, it was a bit of a hard--

BOBBY:(to MUMFORD) Hey, that's no way to talk to your producers.

MUMFORD: You are rude, inconsiderate and disrespectful producers.

(DAVE sits at a nearby chair and holds
a handkerchief to his nose)

BOBBY (to YOLANDA): You believe this guy? (to BOBBY) Hey, should I come down there and smack you? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Lighten up, I'm only playin'.

MUMFORD: Please, leave.

BOBBY: Hey, you know, I spent a lot of time listening to you for weeks on end about this new play you wanna make and how you need money to cover the opening costs because you think there's a hit on your hands and it's gonna make a ton a money and blah blah blah here

BOBBY (cont'd): we are and now you wanna behave all nasty and I'm sittin' here wondering if my investment was worth the investment cause yes, I invested in this show you wanna put up but I also invested in you and you really aren't showin' a whole lotta professionalism ova here and now I'm startin' to doubt the whole thing and LOOK, your actress can't even smack the guy right and it comes off fake to me and I might not know a whole bunch about acting with all this stage stuff, with the lights and that weird guy in the booth constantly turning the lights on and off, like a pain in the ass that he is and I'm sittin' here, with Yolanda, who by the way also put in some money and this whole thing looks like a zoo, looks like wildlife to me. Actually, the more I think about it, the more unhappy I am as your producer because one has to ask what exactly am I producin' when I got you ranting and ravin' and no progress is being made? Huh? How about that? Like, what the fuck is this play even about? Honestly---

YOLANDA: No, baby don't, you getting' yourself all upset---

BOBBY: I'm getting' upset cause this whole thing looks like a disaster to me.

YOLANDA: Sit back down, baby. You made yo point.

(BOBBY sits)

(pause.)

MUMFORD: Okay...this uh, this, this is an fucking real to tell you the truth, actually...ummm, I, I, you're a construction worker, right?

BOBBY: I build houses.

MUMFORD: Build houses, right and Yolanda, what do you do?

YOLANDA: I freelance.

MUMFORD: For what?

YOLANDA: Anything really, whatever pays the bills, shit.

MUMFORD: Whatever pays the bills...right. Okay---

BOBBY: You know, if you wasn't my sister's ex-husband I don't think I would have invested.

MUMFORD: Please, leave Elaine out of this.

BOBBY: No wonder she left you.

MUMFORD: That was a long time ago.

BOBBY: Not long enough to ask me for money though, right?

MUMFORD: The money you invested will promptly be given back to you, the second we sell tickets.

BOBBY: I hope so, cause I'm taking a big risk on you. I always felt sorry for you Mumford. I mean, I know you a long time and I always saw you struggling with this theatre thing and I always wondered what exactly it was that you did and I know my sister was a hard case and till this day I still don't understand how the two of you were together, I mean it was night and day, right? But I always felt sorry for you like cause I don't know, your face, you always have this droopy face and it kind of makes me feel bad for you like, I look at you and I think to myself, "Look at this poor bastard ova here." Cause if I looked like you, I'd want somebody to give me a shot.

MUMFORD: Well, thank you for that encouraging speech Bobby. If you don't mind, I'd like to continue with rehearsals.

YOLANDA (to BOBBY): Let's get out of here baby, I'm hungryyyy.

BOBBY: You hungry baby cakes?

YOLANDA: Famished.

BOBBY: Awww, baby why you don't say nothin'?

CAROL (to MUMFORD): Are you fucking serious?

MUMFORD (to BOBBY): Go eat and we'll wait for you to exit, this way we can work.

DAVE (out-loud): Never in my life...

BOBBY: Let's go eat. (baby voice) (to EVERYONE) Hey, you guys want me to bring back some donuts and coffee?

(BOBBY and YOLANDA walk down the theatre steps towards the stage)

MUMFORD: Whatever you like.

BOBBY: I'll get you all some good pastries, okay? I know the best place not far from here actually. Be back in an hour. That good for you people?

MUMFORD: That's fine.

BOBBY: Alright, (to MUMFORD) go get 'em tiger.

(BOBBY slaps MUMFORD on the shoulder,
MUMFORD winces.)

YOLANDA (to Mumford): And my money, too, right?

MUMFORD: Excuse me?

YOLANDA: You gonna pay me back too, right?

MUMFORD: Yes, of course.

BOBBY: He knows his legs will be broke if he doesn't. Ha ha ha.

YOLANDA: Okkkkaaaay.

(BOBBY and YOLANDA exit)

CAROL (to Mumford) There is no fucking way in hell I am doing this play if they are involved!

DAVE: Neither am I. Who are those people?

MUMFORD: It was the only way I could launch this production.

CAROL: That man is dangerous. Mumford, can't you see that? I want no part of this, I'm sorry.

(CAROL grabs her belongings off from
a theatre seat)

(DAVE casually follows her)

MUMFORD: If you both walk out on me now, I'm doomed.

CAROL: You are putting us in danger, Mumford.

DAVE: That guy is crazy, how do we know he won't turn violent on us.

MUMFORD: He won't. I have known him a long time. He's never raised a hand, he's all talk.

CAROL: Well, I don't, I just don't trust it.

DAVE: Yeah, this isn't safe. I'm sorry.

MUMFORD: Please don't leave.

(CAROL and DAVE exit)

Damn it!

(MUMFORD sits down)

END OF PLAY