

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

ONE ENTERS FROM STAGE
RIGHT AND STARES OUT
ACROSS THE AUDIENCE.

TWO ENTERS AFTER HIM.

ONE: Listen. Do you hear that?

TWO: Hear what?

ONE: Music.

TWO: No. Just the wind.

ONE: There's no wind, that's music.
Listen.

TWO: Don't be daft, it's the wind.
Look, the corn's blowing in
the fields. It's wild down
there, we're just lucky enough
to be sheltered from it.

ONE: No. No, look. That's not the
wind. Look.

TWO: What?

ONE: See, there. Look, there are
rats in the corn.

TWO: Rats?

ONE: Hundreds - thousands of them!

TWO: I don't see.

ONE: There! Everywhere. And-

TWO: What?

ONE: A bright figure leading them.
Look. He looks like a ghost,
the way his coat trails.

TWO: (UNEASY) Perhaps we shouldn't
be here.

ONE: Look how he leads them. Look.
He leaps, they leap. He turns
and they- They're dancing.

TWO: Don't- Don't look any more.
It's getting dark, we should
go.

ONE: They're beautiful.

TWO: Come on, don't look.

ONE WALKS AWAY. TWO GRIPS
HIS ARM, BUT ONE SHAKES
HIM OFF.

ONE: Can't you hear the music?

ONE EXITS STAGE LEFT.

TWO LOOKS OUT AT THE AUDIENCE.

SOFT MUSIC FADES UP VERY SLOWLY.

TWO TAKES OUT A MOBILE PHONE AND DIALS.

TWO: Hello? Police. I'm- I'm just outside Hartbridge-

TWO RAISES HIS VOICE OVER THE MUSIC AS IT SWELLS.

TWO: I want to report a dance.

TWO LOOKS UP ABOVE THE AUDIENCE AS THE MUSIC REACHES CRESCENDO. HE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN, TURNS AND EXITS AFTER ONE.

LIGHTS FADE AND THE MUSIC CUTS OUT ABRUPTLY.

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

OFFICER LENNOX LOUNGES AGAINST A DESK, DRINKING COFFEE.

CHIEF: (OFF) Lennox!

LENNOX: Chief?

THE CHIEF WALKS IN.

CHIEF: Will you please explain to me what I just read?

LENNOX: I can lend you my dictionary if-

CHIEF: Don't get smart with me, Lennox, I'm not in the mood.

LENNOX: Sorry, sir.

CHIEF: What is this?

LENNOX: Sir?

CHIEF: Your report on the disturbance last night. Is this supposed to be funny?

LENNOX: Is there something wrong with it?

"The ragged man from the hills came down, across the valley and through the town. Black and white and pink and brown, the rats danced low and filled his gown." - You tell me. What's wrong with that?

Sounds alright to me.

THREE FACTORY
WORKERS FILE ON AS
THE CHIEF SPEAKS.
THEY FORM A
CONTINUOUS
PRODUCTION LINE IN
MOVEMENT. WORKER 3
DELIVERS EACH FINAL
PRODUCT INTO THE
WINGS.

CHIEF: It does, does it? Well, here's a limerick of my own, tell me what you think.

"There was a young copper from Hartbridge,
Whose report was a pile of garbage.
He saw nothing wrong

With writing in song
Until the Chief said you have two hours to sort this bloody mess out or you can go begging for a job at Brady's."

THE CHIEF STORMS
OFF. LENNOX CALLS
AFTER HIM:

LENNOX: Your meter's a little off in the last line.

LENNOX RAISES HIS
COFFEE MUG AND
FREEZES IN PLACE.

ACT ONE

SCENE THREE

WORKERS: (IN UNISON) The ragged man from the hills came down, across the valley and through the town. Black and white and pink and brown, the rats danced high and they would not drown.

WORKER 1: See my footwork? Quite a hidden talent, eh?

WORKER 2: Ah, that was nothing. You should have seen Ernie Slokum, he was giving it some welly.

WORKER 3: Ernie from the Brewers'?

WORKER 1: Who's that?

WORKER 2: You know, the old guy that's always sat by the fruit machines looking like he just licked piss off a nettle?

WORKER 1: Him? He was dancing?

WORKER 2: As I live and breathe.

WORKER 3: Got to give him some credit. He can't be all bad after all.

WORKER 1: Just goes to show, eh?

A FACTORY WHISTLE BLOWS.

A FOURTH WORKER JOINS THE HEAD OF THE LINE.

WORKER 4: That's the whistle.

THE WORKERS IGNORE HIM.

WORKER 4: Shift's over, you can go.

WORKER 1: Putting in some overtime.

WORKER 4: Oh, are you? On your bike. I need this station.

WORKER 1: There's room for us both.

WORKER 4 ADDS AN ACTION TO THE SEQUENCE IN THE PRODUCTION LINE. NOBODY WILL WORK WITH HIM. WORKER 3 THROWS THE FINISHED PRODUCT OVER HIS SHOULDER.

WORKER 4 TRIES
AGAIN. THE SAME
THING HAPPENS.

WORKER 4: You can't do that!

WORKER 3: It doesn't meet
specifications.

WORKER 4: It's perfect, there's nothing
wrong with my work.

THE LINE GOES BACK
TO WORK WITHOUT HIM.

Foreman! Foreman! What's the
matter with him, why doesn't
he answer? What's going on
here? Have I done something?

(PAUSE.)

Right. Fine.

WORKER 4 PERFORMS
EACH STEP OF THE
MACHINE PROCESS BY
HIMSELF AND DELIVERS
THE PRODUCT. HE
DOESN'T RETURN TO
THE LINE.

SIMULTANEOUSLY:
BLAKE STEPS OUT INTO
CENTRE STAGE AND
VERY SLOWLY AND
METHODICALLY PULLS
ON A PAIR OF WHITE
SURGICAL GLOVES.

THE PRODUCTION LINE
FREEZES.

ACT ONE

SCENE FOUR

MAYOR:

Who is he?

BLAKE:

I don't know, sir. He's not local and the county police don't seem to know him. Nobody involved in the incident will give a straight answer.

MAYOR:

Who is he, Blake, not who isn't he. What do we know? What do the police know?

BLAKE:

Very little. He wears an old frock coat and calls himself 'The Ratsinger'. He escaped arrest for breach of the public peace by dancing with a police officer.

MAYOR:

Dancing. Everybody dancing. I don't understand it. These are rational people. Not the best educated, perhaps, but well cared for. We've never had trouble like this here before. Why now?

BLAKE:

Are you asking me, sir?

MAYOR:

Can you answer?

BLAKE:

Perhaps.

MAYOR:

I'm all ears.

BLAKE:

I think it's crucial to understand that people - like any other physical body - must obey certain laws, however irrational their behaviour might appear to be. Like diagnosing a disease. Symptoms might lead you to the problem area, but they will also mislead you unless you consider the physical laws of the body first and foremost. Do you follow me?

MAYOR:

(AMUSED) You lost me at people obeying the law.

BLAKE:

The laws of nature, sir. People must obey the laws of nature. If they fail to obey the laws of man it is because man first fails to understand the laws of nature.

MAYOR:

What do you mean by that?

BLAKE:

Food and shelter, for example. Everybody wants to gain those things, and everybody wants to

gain them using as little energy as possible. Would you agree?

MAYOR: Hardly relates to life in this day and age-

BLAKE: It relates exactly to life in this day and age.

(PAUSE)

Imagine if you were given a place to live, free of charge for the rest of your life. When you're hungry all you have to do is press a button, and food is provided.

MAYOR: Mm, I could get used to that.

BLAKE: Certainly. But wouldn't you get bored?

MAYOR: I'm sure I'd survive. I'd take up painting.

BLAKE: But you wouldn't give up that ease of living?

BLAKE INDICATES THE WORKERS. THEY REMAIN

OBLIVIOUS TO THE SCENE.

Look at the average worker in Brady's factory. He learns a routine, the minimum effort to get what he needs. Clock in, work for eight hours, clock out, go home.

(DEMONSTRATING) Press button, receive food. Press button, receive food.

MAYOR: I think we've wandered off the point here. What is all the stir about this...Ratdancer, or Horse-mumbler, or whatever he calls himself?

BLAKE: Conservation of energy. As a society we've become too efficient, and there's nowhere else for the conserved energy to go. People get bored.

BLAKE MOVES TOWARDS OFFICER LENNOX. HE PROWLs AROUND HIM AS HE SPEAKS. LENNOX IS OBLIVIOUS.

They become constrained within a system that offers security.

BLAKE:
(cont.)

And so, when a man comes along
and offers them the excuse to
act like lunatics, they take
it.

ACT ONE

SCENE FIVE

THE PRODUCTION LINE
COMES BACK TO LIFE.
THE MAYOR FREEZES,
BUT BLAKE MAY APPEAR
TO BE WATCHING THE
ACTION FROM WHEREVER
HE STANDS.

WORKER 1: What about the old railway
 station?

(PAUSE)

WORKER 3: Could do. What shape is it in?

WORKER 1: It's not bad. Needs doing up,
 but it's well out of the way.

WORKER 2: I don't want to be well out of
 the way. What's the point of
 that?

WORKER 1: How do you mean?

WORKER 2: How are people supposed to
 find it? Anyone that can't
 drive's going to have a hell
 of a time getting all the way
 out there.

WORKER 3: Look who it is.

WORKER 4 RETURNS TO
HIS STATION AT THE
HEAD OF THE
PRODUCTION LINE.

THE WORKERS CHEER.

WORKER 1: Evening.

WORKER 4: Alright?

WORKER FOUR JOINS THE
MOVEMENT OF THE
PRODUCTION LINE.
THEY WORK TOGETHER
SEAMLESSLY.

WORKER 3: Brought your dancing shoes?

WORKER 4: All my shoes are dancing
shoes.

WORKER 2: (SINGS) These boots were made
for dancing, and that's just
what they'll do-

THE OTHER
WORKERS JOIN IN.

WORKERS:
- one of these days these
boots are gonna dance all over
you!

THEY LAUGH.

WORKER 3: I think he's right. We need to
find somewhere central. The
Ratsinger's not going to come
to us, it's got to be near
where he'll be.

WORKER 4: What's this?

WORKER 2: We need a place we can all get
together to talk about the
dance.

WORKER 4: That's an idea. There's so
many now-

WORKER 2: Right. And I don't know about
you, but I'd rather spend my
evening talking to people that
give a shit - actually doing
something - than knitting my
arse to a bar stool with the
same six sad bastards talking
about nothing until the day I
die.

WORKER 1: That's the truth.

WORKER 4: So where are you thinking?

WORKER 2: Well, we can't use the old
station. It's big enough but

it's too far out, and there's no point us all getting together if it means we miss the dancing.

WORKER 4: So...you need somewhere obvious. Somewhere central to the town, that's always full of people. Somewhere the Ratsinger has been before and might come again...?

THE PRODUCTION LINE CONTINUES IN SILENCE FOR A FEW MOMENTS, THEN THE WORKERS LOOK UP AT EACH OTHER AND FREEZE.

ACT ONE

BLAKE:

MAYOR:

BLAKE:

SCENE SIX

People are a phenomenon. Mysterious when viewed from a distance. Completely predictable in a controlled environment.

BLAKE TURNS TO FACE THE MAYOR.

Nothing is ever as strange as it seems.

I hope you're right. It would certainly be a relief if this turned out to be a fad. But the whole situation is...it's very unorthodox. And you know, you can philosophize all you like, but at the end of the day it's going to be me that people turn to for an answer, and I am going to have to have one ready.

Yes, sir.

PAUSE. THE MAYOR IS HINTING. BLAKE DOESN'T TAKE THE BAIT.

MAYOR: ...so, what is my answer?

BLAKE: It depends on what you deem the question to be, sir.

MAYOR: What do we do about this madman? He's clearly some kind of vagrant or quite possibly escaped from somewhere. He's probably highly dangerous, and everyone-

BLAKE: I disagree, sir. He's really no more dangerous than the next man.

MAYOR: Now I have to disagree with you. He is incredibly dangerous. Look at the influence he has over people. Everybody knows who he is, but nobody has any idea what's going in his head. He could be a psychopath. He could be a pervert. And yet the whole town is just throwing its hands in the air and letting him call the tunes.

BLAKE: Yes sir. In this instance, you would be the next man.

MAYOR: Blake, I am not a danger to public safety. I uphold my responsibility to the people of this town.

BLAKE: And yet, it could be argued that you've let them fall under the sway of a hysterical dancing lunatic.

MAYOR: It is not my fault if people choose to listen to that madman, I can hardly stop them. It wouldn't be ethical.

BLAKE: Let's avoid that word for now, sir, it has a tendency to get in the way of policy decisions.

BLAKE LOOKS OVER THE AUDIENCE AND FACTORY WORKERS.

You're telling me that you are responsible for these people, and that you are not responsible for them.

MAYOR: Yes.

BLAKE: Which is it?

MAYOR: I...I take responsibility...wherever - ah - appropriate measures of responsibility can be...ascertained to exist for the good of...public - of collective responsibility.

BLAKE: Sir, we agreed no ethics.

MAYOR: Well, I don't know! There's no handbook that comes with the job! What am I supposed to say?

BLAKE: Stimulus-response. There is no such thing as responsibility, only control. You create policy - you provoke people and set parameters for them to respond. If you judge their reactions well, you control the outcome.

MAYOR: I really don't think this is e-

BLAKE: The danger is not the Ratsinger. The danger is the public. An uncontrolled, unmeasured reaction. Very, very volatile.

MAYOR: What do I-...what can we do?

BLAKE: Simple. We break up the chain, redirect that energy. A few careful cuts in the right places, and this will fizzle out.

MAYOR: (RELIEVED) Fizzle. Good.

ACT ONE

SCENE SEVEN

THE WORKERS CONTINUE
PRODUCTION. WORKER
1 WALKS AWAY. A
MOMENT LATER, WORKER
3 LEAVES.

WORKER 4: It's almost three o'clock.

PAUSE.

Eh?

WORKER 2: I know.

PAUSE. WORKER 4 IS
WAITING FOR SOME
RESPONSE.

WORKER 4: I don't like it.

WORKER 2: What?

WORKER 4: Where is everyone?

WORKER 2: At home, probably.

WORKER 4: Doing what?

PAUSE. WORKER 4 IS
EXPECTANT.

I said what are they doing at-

WORKER 2: I don't know. Nothing,
probably.

PAUSE.

WORKER 4: What about-

WORKER 2 Just shut up and work.

WORKER 4: But what about-

WORKER 2: Unless you want to lose your
job.

PAUSE.

WORKER 2: The Ratsinger-

WORKER 4: Will you shut up? Look, they've
been laying people off. I don't
know if it's-...just don't
mention it, alright?

WORKER 2: What do you mean? You mean
they're-?

WORKER 4: Foreman!

WORKER 2: Alright, alright.

 WORK CONTINUES.

WORKER 2: Were they caught? After hours?

WORKER 4: No. But...someone's listening.
 You can see who's missing. Add
 it up.

 WORKER 2 LOOKS AROUND
 AND GOES BACK TO
 WORK.

WORKER 2: So that's it?

WORKER 4: Keep your mouth shut. We'll
 stick it out.

ACT ONE

SCENE EIGHT

LENNOX SITS ON THE
DESK AMID A SEA OF
PAPERS. HE READS A
REPORT.

LENNOX PUTS THE
REPORT DOWN AND
RIFLES THROUGH THE
PAPERS TO FIND A
MOBILE PHONE.

THE CHIEF ENTERS WITH
ANOTHER BUNDLE OF
PAPER. LENNOX HIDES
THE PHONE.

THE CHIEF MOVES TO
PUT THE PAPERS DOWN,
THEN SEES THE MESS ON
THE DESK. HE THRUSTS
THE PAPERS AT LENNOX.

CHIEF: It's a pigsty in here!

LENNOX: Appropriate, isn't it sir?

CHIEF: Get this cleared up!

THE CHIEF TURNS TO
EXIT. LENNOX MAKES
PIG NOISES BEHIND
HIM. THE CHIEF LOOKS
AT HIM SUSPICIOUSLY,
THEN TURNS AWAY AND
LEAVES.

LENNOX TAKES THE
PHONE OUT AGAIN. HE
DIALS AND SPEAKS INTO
IT. HE BEGINS TO PACE
AS HE TALKS, MOVING
AWAY FROM THE DESK.

LENNOX: Alright? Yeah, it's Lennox.
No, listen. Are you going in
today? Alright, tell
them- ...no, no, listen. You
can't be there tonight.
Someone's tipped off Brady,
he's coming down to the
factory after hours. Ten
o'clock, ten thirty. He's
bringing us down with him, the
chief-...no, it's alright. I'm
on my mobile. Just keep
everyone away tonight, right?
I don't know, go to the
Brewers' or something. Yeah.
Alright, I have to go. Watch
yourselves.

ACT ONE

SCENE NINE

LENNOX HANGS UP.

THE MAYOR PONDERES AT
HIS DESK.

MAYOR: You promised this would
fizzle.

BLAKE: I'm confident that it will,
sir.

MAYOR: When? I'm still waiting! I
don't like this business
of...of persecuting people for
what are, essentially, their
beliefs. And we can only put
so much pressure on Bill, you
know, he does have a business
to run. All they're doing now
is hiding from us, when is
this thing going to fizzle?

BLAKE: You need to give it time, sir.
This is a good sign. For a
large, volatile entity, hiding
is unmanageable. It will be
forced to reduce, to
stabilise, if it wants to
survive.

MAYOR: 'It'?

BLAKE: This cabal that has formed around the Ratsinger, sir.

MAYOR: Yes, yes, I understand that's what we're talking about. This is precisely what bothers me, though, Blake. It's not an 'it', it's a collective. It's a gathering of individuals, and I really don't like it when you talk about them that way.

BLAKE: A nation is a gathering of individuals, sir, but that doesn't keep us from referring to it as a whole.

MAYOR: A nation doesn't act like an individual, though. Not everybody within a nation always agrees with the- the general sweep of centralised decision making. I mean, that's why we have politicians, that's why we have individuals to represent...individuals.

BLAKE: If I may, sir, not every part of you participates in your

central decision making. That's why you have a tea stain on your shirt.

THE MAYOR LOOKS DOWN AT HIMSELF.

Every individual is a composite of parts. Every composite of parts can be delineated and called individual. It's purely semantic, sir. A mechanism for coping with an infinite system.

MAYOR: Why didn't you tell me I had stains on my shirt? I've probably been walking around all day-

BLAKE: The point, sir, is that the more they are threatened, the more they are compressed, the more they will begin to do our job for us. They pull into a confined space where they have no choice but to huddle together and eliminate the weak. Always paranoid, always looking outward. Their ideals become so tangled and knotted and calloused that by the time

they have room to breathe they can no longer operate as individuals. They can't exist outside of this useless tumescent prison, built to repel outsiders. They waste away like that. Problem solved.

MAYOR: Problem...solved?

BLAKE: Exactly, sir.

MAYOR: Problem not solved, Blake. These people are not a problem, the problem is that they're being exploited. They're being manipulated. Now they're losing their livelihoods, you're talking about ostracising them completely - and the Ratsinger is still at large. What exactly does this solve?

BLAKE: Sir, the Ratsinger is not a threat-

MAYOR: Ratsinger, Ratsinger, Ratsinger! Two weeks ago we had everything under control. What has changed since then? What is the single element of

difference between the way things were and the way things are now?

BLAKE: The people are-

MAYOR: The Ratsinger! The Ratsinger is the problem, Blake. People are strange, but they have a right to be strange. Our job is to keep them safe, and we don't do that by persecuting them needlessly. We do it by removing threats to their safety, like the Ratsinger. If you don't see that, you've lost sight of your purpose here.

PAUSE.

BLAKE: With all due respect, sir, I strongly advise against taking public action against the Ratsinger. We agreed to-

MAYOR: 'With all due respect', Blake, you are a clerk. I make the decisions. You write them down.

THE MAYOR SITS.

ACT TWO

Get me the chief of police.
SCENE ONE

A GROUP OF FOLLOWERS
(TOWNSPEOPLE AND
FACTORY WORKERS)
HOLD A MEETING.
THREE SIT IN
CONVERSATION, WHILE
OTHERS STUDY
FOOTWORK CHARTS AND
DEVISE COSTUMES FROM
SCRAPS.

EACH FOLLOWER WEARS
AT LEAST ONE STRIP
OF COLOURED FABRIC
SOMEWHERE ON THEIR
BODY. DESPITE
EVERYTHING, NOBODY
ACTUALLY ATTEMPTS
ANY DANCE MOVES.

FOLLOWER 1: There's no point trying to
bring people like William
Brady in. He doesn't give a
shit. Believe me-

FOLLOWER 2: Bullshit. Bull. Shit. Are you
trying to tell me Bill Brady
couldn't dance, if he heard
the music?

FOLLOWER 1: No, he's-

FOLLOWER 2: You can't make out like he's
not human. So he's a big shot
with a big factory. So what?
If I won the lottery tomorrow
would that be it for me? You
talk like that-

FOLLOWER 1: It's a different thing. It's a
different thing. I'm not
talking about money, I'm
talking about lifestyle.
Alright? He does not live in
the real world. We live in the
real world. The Ratsinger is
about the real world. And in
the real world you get nothing
for free. People like Brady
have to learn that, and that's
what this is about.

FOLLOWER 2: Nah, nah.

FOLLOWER 1: What?

FOLLOWER 2: You've got him wrong. I think
you've got him wrong.

FOLLOWER 1: Believe me, I've known people
like Brady. My father-in-law-

FOLLOWER 2: Not Brady, the Ratsinger. You don't think he's doing all this just for us?

FOLLOWER 1: How do you mean?

FOLLOWER 3: Anyone can open their hearts and let in the music of the Ratsinger. You, me, William Brady. Anyone can join the dance and be cleansed. (SINGS) "Dance, then, wherever you may be, for I am the Lord of the Dance said he--"

FOLLOWER 1: Give me a fucking break.

FOLLOWER 2: No, that - that's my point! I mean, I wouldn't put it that way myself, but look how the town's come together since He showed up. No offence, but I'd never have spoken to you before all this. I never had any reason to. But now, having seen you dance - you know.

FOLLOWER 1: (AMUSED) You're not so bad yourself.

FOLLOWER 2: You see how I mean? I bet you, if the Ratsinger went to Bill Brady, he'd come right down

off his high horse like that. And I'd not think any worse of him.

FOLLOWER 1: If he did come off his high horse.

FOLLOWER 3: And if the Ratsinger went to him. But perhaps it's for people like Brady to come to us?

FOLLOWER 2: Do you think he would?

FOLLOWER 3: If he's open to the music he will. But anyway, it's not for us to question. We should have faith in the Ratsinger. He has a plan for everyone, even Brady.

FOLLOWER 1: It's like a test, you mean? They have to decide for themselves?

FOLLOWER 3: No, there's no decision. Think about your first dance. When was that?

FOLLOWER 1: The second night He was in town. He went by the Brewers' Arms and I heard that

| | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| | music - that was the night we filled up the square, remember? You were there. | FOLLOWER 3: | Has anyone tried it? |
| FOLLOWER 3: | Would you say you made a decision then? | FOLLOWER 2: | I don't know, it's just what I heard. I think it's a nice idea. |
| FOLLOWER 1: | No. No, it was more of a...it was always in me. Just because I never danced before that... it wasn't like I never wanted to. And then everyone was doing it, so... | FOLLOWER 1: | Sickening. |
| | | | (PAUSE.) |
| | | | A FOLLOWER NEAR THE WINGS WAVES AT THE OTHERS. |
| FOLLOWER 3: | Exactly. You heard the call, and you answered. That's all anybody has to do. | FOLLOWER 4: | He's coming! |
| | (PAUSE.) | | EVERYBODY SCATTERS IN PANIC AND THEN COMES TOGETHER INTO A TIGHT GROUP, READY TO BE INSPECTED. |
| FOLLOWER 2: | What do you think of this partners thing? | | OFFICER LENNOX ENTERS. THE FOLLOWERS SLUMP AND RETURN TO THEIR PLACES. |
| FOLLOWER 1: | What's that? | | |
| FOLLOWER 2: | A couple of people have been talking about dancing with partners. Husbands and wives, friends, neighbours, that kind of thing. | FOLLOWER 4: | False alarm! |
| FOLLOWER 1: | Christ. | | |

LENNOX: Where's the Ratsinger? (LENNOX
CATCHES A FOLLOWER BY THE ARM)
You, where can I find him?

FOLLOWER: How would I know?

FOLLOWER 4: Hey, I know you. Officer
Lennox, right?

LENNOX: Lennox to you.

FOLLOWER 4: I haven't seen you at the
dances.

LENNOX: I've not seen you either, so
what?

FOLLOWER 4: What do you want with the
Ratsinger?

LENNOX: What's it to you?

FOLLOWER 4: Don't you get smart with me,
son, I'll fuck you up.

LENNOX: Threatening a police officer?

FOLLOWER 4: Oh, now it's Officer again, is
it?

FOLLOWER 2: Alright. Break it up. He's not
here. What do you want him
for?

LENNOX: There's a warrant out for his
arrest.

THE FOLLOWERS SWARM
AROUND LENNOX.

Not by me! I came to warn him.
If they don't get him this
time around it's only going to
get worse. One way or another
they want him off the streets.

FOLLOWER 1: Ah, they can't touch him.

LENNOX: Maybe they can, maybe they
can't, but they can get to
you. All of you. They know who
you are, I've seen the files.
And do you know what else?
I've heard what they say about
you - about us. Radicals.
Cult. Fucking Jonestown. Half
of you have already lost your
jobs. It's going to get bad
around here. Now. Where's the
Ratsinger?

THE RATSINGER
EMERGES BEHIND
LENNOX. HE'S DRESSED
IN BRIGHT, COLOURFUL

RAGS AND CARRIES A
DECORATED STICK.
THE FOLLOWERS STEP
BACK.

THE RATSINGER
STRIKES HIS STICK
AGAINST THE GROUND.
LENNOX TURNS,
STARTLED.

THE RATSINGER RAISES
HIS STICK ABOVE HIS
HEAD. MUSIC FADES
UP. EVERYONE
RELAXES, ENTRANCED.

THE RATSINGER STEPS
TOWARDS THEM. THE
GROUP RESPOND TO HIS
MOVEMENTS, MOVING
WITH THE MUSIC. IN
THE COURSE OF THE
DANCE HE TAKES THE
HAT FROM LENNOX'S
HEAD, MAKING HIM
INDISTINGUISHABLE
FROM THE OTHER
FOLLOWERS. HE PLACES
IT ON ANOTHER
FOLLOWER'S HEAD.
THIS FOLLOWER NOW
PLAYS LENNOX.

THE CHIEF OF POLICE
WALKS ON AND SITS
BEHIND THE DESK. THE
RATSINGER STRIKES
THE GROUND WITH HIS
STICK AND WALKS OFF.
THE MUSIC STOPS AND
THE DANCE IS
FINISHED.

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

FOLLOWERS
+ LENNOX:

(UNISON) The ragged man from the hills came down, across the valley and through the town. Black and white and pink and brown, the rats danced quick and the walls came down.

THE CHIEF LOOKS UP,
SEEING THE FOLLOWERS
FOR THE FIRST TIME.
LENNOX USHERS HIM TO
THE EDGE OF THE
STAGE, WHERE THE
FOLLOWERS LUNGE AND
GRAB AT HIM
EXCITEDLY.

CHIEF:

What do you want? Lennox?
Lennox! What is this?

LENNOX:

(CHEERFUL) It's alright,
Chief. Just a friendly coup.

THE FOLLOWERS
DESCEND ON THE
CHIEF. THEY SHOUT
AND WOOP AS THEY
LIFT HIM AND BIRL
HIM AROUND. THE
STRUGGLE IS
CARTOONISH.

LENNOX TAKES THE
CHIEF'S HAT AND
PROPS IT ON TOP OF
HIS OWN. ANOTHER
FOLLOWER REMOVES THE
CHIEF'S TIE.

THE FOLLOWERS DRAG
THE CHIEF DOWN. HE
BECOMES A MEMBER OF
THE CHORUS.

LENNOX SITS ON THE
DESK AND THROWS THE
HAT AND TIE TO THE
EXCITED FOLLOWERS.

LENNOX:

The station is ours!

THE FOLLOWERS CHEER.

FOLLOWERS:

The station is ours!

FOLLOWER 1:

Down with the chief!

LENNOX AND THE
FOLLOWERS CHEER.

LENNOX +

FOLLOWERS:

Down with the chief!

FOLLOWER 2:

Death to the police!

THE FOLLOWERS CHEER.

FOLLOWERS: Death to the-

LENNOX: No, no death to the police. Up with the police! Up with Officer Lennox!

THE FOLLOWERS CHEER.

FOLLOWERS: Up with officer Lennox!

FOLLOWER 3: Down with town hall!

LENNOX AND THE FOLLOWERS CHEER AND LEAP INTO ACTION. LENNOX JUMPS DOWN FROM THE DESK AND THEY ALL THROW ASIDE THE POLICE HATS AND TIES.

LENNOX BLENDS BACK INTO THE CHORUS AND THEY DASH ABOUT EXCITEDLY, SHOUTING SLOGANS.

ACT TWO

FOLLOWERS:

MAYOR:

SCENE THREE

BLAKE TIDIES THE DISCARDED HATS AND TIES FROM THE STAGE. HE TAKES THE MOBILE PHONE AND MOVES OFF TO MAKE A CALL.

THE MAYOR HIDES BEHIND HIS DESK AS THE RATSINGER'S FOLLOWERS FORM A PICKET LINE.

Come out, you cowards!

It's our town now!

(CHANTING) Join the dance! Join the dance!

(UNISON) Join the dance! Join the dance!

Dance or die! Dance or die!

(UNISON) Dance or die! Dance or die!

Blake!

BLAKE ENTERS.

BLAKE: Sorry sir, it's not them.

MAYOR: Not them? Who's not them? Who's not who? You called the police?

BLAKE: Yes, sir, but it's not them. They aren't in.

MAYOR: How can they not be in? They're the police. It's their job.

BLAKE: The man on the phone said to tell you that they're not in, but that if we need protection we need only open our hearts and minds to the music of-

MAYOR: The Ratsinger.

BLAKE: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: This is a nightmare. Blake, you have to do something. Go out there and speak to them.

BLAKE: Sir, I may be overstepping the mark here, but shouldn't you-

MAYOR: You, Blake. I have every faith in you. You know these people,

don't you? You understand them. Talk to them.

BLAKE: Yes, sir.

BLAKE PAUSES, THEN LIFTS THE MAYOR'S DESK FORWARD AND STANDS ON TOP OF IT. THE FOLLOWERS JEER AT HIM.

FOLLOWER: Piss off.

BLAKE: A lot of familiar faces here. Yes, that's right. You - and you. You used to come to our community council meetings, didn't you? So nice to see that you've continued to take an interest.

BLAKE SURVEYS THE FOLLOWERS.

You there - you. Pardon me, could you just tell me- Quiet, please. You, sir. The Mayor's a little busy, but I'll take a message. What is it exactly that you want?

FOLLOWER: (HESITANT) We want...we want him to come out here and face

up for what he's let this town become.

THE FOLLOWERS AGREE
LOUDLY.

BLAKE: Ah - no, no, quiet please. Let him speak. Why don't you come up here?

BLAKE STEPS DOWN FROM THE
DESK AND HELPS THE
INDIVIDUAL UP. BLAKE JOINS
THE OTHER FOLLOWERS AND
SPEAKS UP TO HIM.

Now. What is wrong with the town that you and your friends and the Ratsinger want to change?

INDIVIDUAL: Well, the...things aren't right. Anyone can see that. Prices going up, taxes going up. The only way you can get by is working your fingers to the bone at Brady's place. Even that doesn't pay like it used to, and...with the school going downhill and no other work about there's less and less jobs for us anyway. People just aren't leaving,

and then you get newcomers moving in all over the place. Its alright for the likes of you, and for anyone with a bit of money, but for the rest of us - us real people that have to work every day of our lives to put food on the table - things have gone from bad to worse around here and it's about time something was done.

THE FOLLOWERS CHEER.

BLAKE: I agree. Yes, absolutely, I agree. There are a huge number of problems to be dealt with in this town. So - tell me, what do you plan to do about them?

INDIVIDUAL: Me? What would I do?

BLAKE: You, your friends, the Ratsinger. Collectively, what do you propose?

INDIVIDUAL: Well, we- We've had it with being ignored, right?

FOLLOWERS: (UNISON) Yeah!

INDIVIDUAL: (WITH GROWING CONFIDENCE)
We've had it with coming
second to bureaucrats and fat
cats. We've had it with coming
second in our own town.

FOLLOWERS: (UNISON) Yeah!

INDIVIDUAL: We want a fairer society where
the poor don't pay for the
mistakes of the rich! We want
to own the wealth we create
with our own two hands! Enough
of these parasites! Enough of
the Mayor and enough of
William Brady! We have nothing
to lose but our chains!

THE FOLLOWERS MUMBLE.
THEY'RE LESS SURE ABOUT
THIS.

BLAKE: Fascinating. A new era of mass
prosperity, where the common
good outweighs the private
good.

INDIVIDUAL: Exactly! To each according to
his need, from each according
to his means! Everybody is
equal in the dance. The
Ratsinger has shown us the
strength of a united people.

The future holds no divisions
- the future belongs to us.

INDIVIDUAL 2: Get down from there, get him
down!

THE FOLLOWERS PULL THE
INDIVIDUAL DOWN FROM THE
DESK. BLAKE GESTURES
INVITINGLY. INDIVIDUAL 2
CLIMBS ONTO THE DESK.

INDIVIDUAL 2: You're an embarrassment. What
do you know about chains?

THE FOLLOWERS HOLD THE
FIRST INDIVIDUAL BACK.
BLAKE COVERS HIS MOUTH.

The Ratsinger brought us
freedom - freedom to dance,
freedom in the dance - and
you'd have us all dancing step
by step, one and the same, a
pack of automatons! That's no
kind of freedom. It's hardly
even a dance!

THE FOLLOWERS CHEER. THE
FIRST INDIVIDUAL IS
RELEASED.

This is a precious opportunity. We can't let people like that twist it to suit their own agenda. That's been the problem all this time. That's the problem in town hall. The mayor doesn't see us as people at all. He doesn't see our hopes or our dreams. He just sees numbers for and numbers against. But the Ratsinger sees us! And the Ratsinger says Enough!

THE FOLLOWERS CHEER.

Too long we've been led by false promises. Too long we've been guided by other people's visions. And now, finally, we've learned to dance. Every man for himself, every dance unique and true. No more compromise. No more nations. No masters, and no grand social lies to hold us back. What the mind can conceive, the body can achieve!

THE FOLLOWERS MUTTER
AND BOO. TWO FIGHT TO
PULL HIM DOWN AND
CLIMB UP IN HIS

PLACE. ONE INDIVIDUAL
FINALLY WINS OUT AND
THE PREVIOUS SPEAKER
IS PUSHED BACK DOWN
AMONG THE OTHER
FOLLOWERS WHERE HE
BLENDS BACK IN.

BLAKE: Calm down, now. Please. If town hall is to work with you, we'd like to get an idea of just what the Ratsinger stands for.

INDIVIDUAL 3: These people do not speak for the Ratsinger. They're speaking for themselves, they have nothing to do with the rest of us.

BLAKE: Well then, can you tell me what the Ratsinger does stand for? Will anybody speak for him?

INDIVIDUAL 3: I'll speak for him. Not for these small town half-wits.

THE FOLLOWERS SHOUT
AND BOO.

Oh, come on. There's a reason we follow the Ratsinger - because he's not one of us.

He's not tainted with all the petty shit the rest of this town is wrapped up in. he's not concerned about himself, or his pride. He's concerned about us. About justice and community and our well-being. For once we have one person willing and able to lead us without falling back onto rhetoric or half baked party loyalties, and here are all of you trying to claim him for yourselves. You should be ashamed.

THE FOLLOWERS MUMBLE,
MOSTLY IN AGREEMENT.

This isn't the time for old ideas. We can't move forward with everybody squabbling over their pet politics - and that goes for town hall too. We have to put prejudice behind us and be ready to embrace a new leader. A real leader who wants and chooses to do right!

THE FOLLOWERS AGREE.

BLAKE: A leader who wants and chooses to 'do right' - as opposed to the current Mayor?

INDIVIDUAL 3: The Mayor is only human. He may want to do right, but we all know that he comes from the old system - a corrupt and flawed system. But the Ratsinger - the Ratsinger is different. He doesn't have to second guess and fake his way through his decisions. The Ratsinger acts, and through his actions he guides us to paths that are right for each and every one of us. The Ratsinger is a blessing and the Mayor must accept his leadership!

THE FOLLOWERS CHEER.

BLAKE: But how can you be so sure of the Ratsinger? How do you know he really has your well-being in mind?

INDIVIDUAL 3: Because the Ratsinger isn't like anyone else - he's pure, he's dedicated. He is what every leader in history has yearned to be. He's come to lead us into the light, and we are destined to follow!

THE FOLLOWERS GRUMBLE.

Together we move forward into
the dawn of a new age, with our
great and most holy prophet who
leads us in the dance-!

THE FOLLOWERS DISAGREE
VOCALLY. THEY TRY TO PULL
INDIVIDUAL 3 DOWN AS HE
CONTINUES TO DECLAIM.

-forever in the kingdom beyond
the mountains! The lame will
walk and the blind will see!

THE FOLLOWERS FIGHT,
PLAYING 'KING OF THE
CASTLE' OVER THE DESK.
THEY FINALLY DROP DOWN
FROM THE DESK TO FIGHT
OFF-STAGE.

BLAKE DRAGS THE DESK
BACKWARDS AND RETURNS TO
THE MAYOR.

MAYOR: What was that? What did you do?

BLAKE: I spoke to them, sir. We had an
exchange of views.

MAYOR: You've only made them worse!

BLAKE: (irritated) Sir, I-

BLAKE PAUSES AND THEN
TRIES A NEW TACK.

You're right, sir. I am completely
hopeless. Perhaps you'd like to
show me how it's done?

MAYOR: Me? Oh, no. No, Blake, I'm sure
that was quite satisfactory. It's
really not necessary for me-

BLAKE HAULS THE MAYOR
OUT FROM UNDER HIS
DESK.

BLAKE: You did insist that we arrest the
Ratsinger, sir. It seems
appropriate that you should be the
one to placate his friends out
there.

THE MAYOR FALLS INTO
HIS CHAIR HELPLESSLY.

MAYOR: Is he-...is he...?

BLAKE: Nowhere to be seen, sir.

MAYOR: And they-...?

BLAKE: Volatile, directionless. Hard to contain, but easy to divert.

MAYOR: And I...?

BLAKE NODS. THE MAYOR IS STILL RELUCTANT.

BLAKE: Perhaps you should let them know exactly why the Ratsinger is wanted by the police.

MAYOR: Because he's a public nuisance? They won't accept that.

BLAKE: No, sir. Why he's really wanted by the police. Why you in particular would like to see him off the streets.

MAYOR: Because...he's very annoying?

BLAKE FETCHES A LARGE PILE OF PAPERS AND BRINGS THEM TO THE MAYOR'S DESK.

BLAKE: Sir, allow me to introduce you to the county archives.

ACT TWO SCENE FOUR

THE FOLLOWERS RENEW THEIR FIGHT. THEIR MOVEMENT BEGINS TO SHOW SIGNS OF BEING DISJOINTED - BROKEN.

AFTER SOME MOMENTS, BLAKE BRINGS THE DESK FORWARD.

BLAKE: Quiet, please. The Mayor is on his way.

THE MAYOR CLIMBS UP TO ADDRESS THE TOWNSPEOPLE.

MAYOR: (HESITANT) Hello...eh...ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to speak to you just - just now about, obviously, the...concerns you seem to have.

STANDING BEHIND HIM, BLAKE BEGINS TO PRE-EMPT THE MAYOR'S GESTURES.

MAYOR: (INCREASING CONFIDENCE) As your Mayor, it is my first duty to hear, to respect and to act upon your views. After all, this office is here to represent you, the people. I am here to work for you, to deliver the change that you want.

Your voices do not go unheard. When this town has something to say, you won't find me hiding under my desk. No, I'll be here. I'll be here listening, and working for the results you want - whatever some people might want you to believe.

My second duty is, of course, to protect this town. To protect the families who live here. We have to take great care who we put our trust in. We have to carefully question the motivations of anybody who appears overnight, who has no known background, and who then asks us to lash out at our own way of life. Sad to say, this is not a world where we have luxury to trust simply in a person's ideals. This is a world where actions matter, and where actions must have consequence.

Two years ago this week, six-year-old Jennifer Brown was taken from outside her school in Northcot, fourteen miles from here. Eight years earlier, Daniel and James Scott went missing from a playground in Roundal - only six miles from here. To our neighbours

in the county, these tragedies are still fresh. They are actions that must have consequences.

And so I stand before you today, in part to reassure you - the people of Hartbridge - that you are in good and willing hands. However, I also stand here on behalf of your local police force, to appeal for your co-operation and vigilance. We must find the Ratsinger.

MAYOR:

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

A HANDFUL OF FOLLOWERS SIT
AROUND, BORED AND MOROSE.

AFTER SEVERAL MOMENTS:

FOLLOWER 1: Do you remember that tango?

FOLLOWERS: The tango! / That was amazing.
/ Oh my god, that was when -
ah, yeah. (etc.)

FOLLOWER 3: Me and my friends, and this
guy that I knew from the one
before, right, we all got up
on the roof-

FOLLOWER 2: I was there, I remember that!
And they were all-

FOLLOWER 3: I know, and when he almost
fell, and she goes - this girl
that was there, she caught the
guy, and it was-

FOLLOWER 2: And do you remember? Someone
says something about 'dancing
on the ceiling' and we were-

FOLLOWER 3: Yes! Oh man.

FOLLOWER 1 LOOKS BLANK.

FOLLOWER 3: You had to be there.

SILENCE.

Do you think he'll be
back?

FOLLOWER 2: Of course he'll be back. He
wouldn't leave us. He's
just...just...

FOLLOWER 3: Testing us.

FOLLOWER 2: Yeah, it's a test! And when he
comes back he'll see, we were
the ones who stuck around.

FOLLOWER 1: Don't be stupid. He's not
coming back.

FOLLOWER 2: Says who? He always came back
before.

FOLLOWER 1: He never went away before.
You're deluding yourselves if
you think this is normal. And
just look at us. Out of the
whole town, three people still
bother to show up. I don't
blame him for fucking off.

FOLLOWER 3: We're loyal. He'll see that,
and when he comes back he'll
reward us.

FOLLOWER 1 SHAKES HIS
HEAD.

He will. And what are you
doing here if you think
otherwise? The dance wasn't
all about you, you know.
You're as bad as everyone
else.

FOLLOWER 1: Everyone else who? Look
around. It was great while it
lasted, but the Ratsinger has
gone. If anything else is
going to come of this, it's
going to be down to us.

FOLLOWER 2: Us?

FOLLOWER 3: See? You're self-centred,
that's your problem. You can't
begin to imagine that there
might be something better in
store for us. Something that's
worth taking a leap of faith.

FOLLOWER 1: Are you deaf? What did I just
say? It's down to us. Of
course there's something

better in store for us, the
Ratsinger showed us that, but
we can't just sit here
expecting miracles. We have to
make it happen.

FOLLOWER 2: The three of us?

FOLLOWER 1: Do you see anyone else?

FOLLOWER 3: Who do you think you are?
Who's going to listen to you?
You're not the Ratsinger.

FOLLOWER 2: Just the three of us?

FOLLOWER 1: Yes, just the three of us!
There was just the one of him!

FOLLOWER 3: You. Are not. The Ratsinger.

FOLLOWER 1: Who needs to be the Ratsinger?
He was only human. What he did
- we can do that.

FOLLOWER 2: Are you joking? I can't get
myself to the gym most days,
forget getting other people to
dance.

FOLLOWER 3: The Ratsinger wasn't human.

FOLLOWER 1: Oh, right? The Ratsinger wasn't human. What was he then?

FOLLOWER 3: Something else.

FOLLOWER 1: You are out of your mind.

FOLLOWER 3: I'd rather be out of my mind than close it to the truth.

FOLLOWER 1: The truth that he's a magical monster? A fairy tale? A creature from another world?

FOLLOWER 3: Maybe! You can't tell me it's impossible.

FOLLOWER 1: It is impossible!

FOLLOWER 3: You saw him with your own eyes. He was different. Free. Superhuman. You can't deny something that happened right in front of you, that you were a part of.

FOLLOWER 1: I'm not denying it, but I'm saying there's no reason to go putting the whole experience on a pedestal. We can do what he did. The Ratsinger proved what we're all capable of.

FOLLOWER 2: Look, does it matter where he came from? We can all remember him, right? We can do that. We can learn from him.

FOLLOWER 3: Exactly. We can learn. We can teach others. We can preserve the dances he taught us and pass them on so they're not forgotten.

FOLLOWER 1: We can show others. We can keep bringing people together to dance new dances and achieve the things we want to achieve.

FOLLOWER 3: New dances?

FOLLOWER 2: (excited) New dances?

FOLLOWER 1: Of course, new dances.

FOLLOWER 3: And who's going to come up with them?

FOLLOWER 1: Anyone.

FOLLOWER 3: You?

FOLLOWER 1: I could.

FOLLOWER 3: Go on, then.

PAUSE.

FOLLOWER 1: What, now?

FOLLOWER 3: Yes, go on. Show us something.

FOLLOWER 1: With the two of you watching?

FOLLOWER 3: Why not?

FOLLOWER 1: Maybe later.

FOLLOWER 2: What if we all dance at once?

FOLLOWER 1: All of us? Alright.

THE FOLLOWERS PREPARE TO
DANCE, ALL WATCHING EACH
OTHER.

FOLLOWER 3: All together.

FOLLOWER 2: All three of us.

FOLLOWER 1: One...two...three!

NONE OF THEM MOVE. AFTER A
MOMENT THEY SLUMP.

FOLLOWER 1: We need more people!

FOLLOWER 3: No, we need the Ratsinger.

FOLLOWER 2: All that stuff people are
saying about him...it's not
true, is it?

FOLLOWER 1: Of course it's not true. Do you
listen to everything people
say?

FOLLOWER 2: Well, no, but the paper says-

FOLLOWER 3: The paper! The paper's even
worse. It's all biased.

FOLLOWER 2: Well who should I listen to?

FOLLOWER 1: Us!

FOLLOWER 3: It's all political.
Everything's political these
days.

FOLLOWER 2: And we were so close to
changing that.

FOLLOWER 1: We still could.

FOLLOWER 3: Oh, come on. Give it a rest.

FOLLOWER 1: No, I mean there's an election
not far off, isn't there?
They're supposed to be

| | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|--|
| | launching their campaigns today. Maybe we can't get people dancing again, but we can get a change in the Mayor's office, can't we? | FOLLOWER 1: | You've got just the face for it. |
| FOLLOWER 2: | You're right. People are sick of him. I've been sick of him for years. | FOLLOWER 2: | Oh, well..I...I don't know. |
| FOLLOWER 3: | Oh yeah? Voting for who? | FOLLOWER 3: | We can't run. It's too late. There are forms and applications and things. You have to register. You can't just turn up and make a speech. Especially if you don't have any policies - which, by the way, we don't. |
| FOLLOWER 1: | Anyone. | | |
| FOLLOWER 2: | Anyone but him. | FOLLOWER 1: | Even better, a protest. We can show up when they're making their speeches and - and dance! |
| FOLLOWER 3: | Have you seen who's even running this year? Same old Mayor we know and hate, versus one independent who hasn't even bothered to fill in his name. Call me crazy, but I don't fancy having him run our town. | | SILENCE. |
| FOLLOWER 1: | So one of us can run. We can form a party, the Ratsinger Party! You can run, people would love you. | FOLLOWER 2: | It could work. |
| | | FOLLOWER 3: | It's a terrible idea! |
| | | FOLLOWER 2: | That's what I thought. Honestly, what were you thinking? You can't even dance in front of us- |
| FOLLOWER 2: | Me? | FOLLOWER 1: | Oh, make your mind up. Talk about me being here for |

selfish reasons, what are you still here for anyway?

FOLLOWER 2: Me?

FOLLOWER 1: Yes, you. Let's see you come up with a better idea - or, wait - even one idea!

FOLLOWER 3: Leave him alone. He doesn't agree with your way of doing things, and that's that.

FOLLOWER 1: Oh, right, is that so?

FOLLOWER 2: Well, I-

FOLLOWER 3: Yes, it is. And frankly I agree with him. We don't think you're welcome here.

FOLLOWER 2: I never said-

FOLLOWER 1: Oh, you agree with him. You think the Ratsinger was a magical pixie?

FOLLOWER 2: No, of course, that's ridiculous-

FOLLOWER 3: It's ridiculous, and it's not what I said, so-

FOLLOWER 1: Oh, now it's ridiculous? He said so, and that's perfectly reasonable-

FOLLOWER 2: I don't think-

FOLLOWER 3: What do you think?

FOLLOWER 1: I'd like to know that myself, what do you think, do you think anything at all?

FOLLOWER 3: Did you even care about the Ratsinger?

FOLLOWER 1: Do you care about the dance?

FOLLOWER 2: No, I don't! I don't care! You're both obsessed, and you're both wrong, and I don't care any more. It's done.

THE FOLLOWERS SPLIT
UP AND BREAK AWAY TO
OPPOSITE CORNERS OF
THE ROOM TO SULK.

ACT THREE

SCENE TWO

THE MAYOR SITS AT HIS
DESK, RELAXED.

MAYOR: How long now, Blake?

BLAKE: Twelve minutes, sir.

MAYOR: Twelve minutes. Twelve. Speech prepared, not a protester in sight, a brand new tie, and ten minutes to spare. I'm back on top, Blake.

BLAKE: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: Ratsinger, eh? Who's he? A flash in the pan, like I always said. Look at them all out there - waiting for me. Waiting for the man who made this town work. You know, I don't know why I ever worried, Blake. These are my people. You wouldn't understand that, coming from the city. There's something about a community like this one. There's a loyalty - thicker than water, thicker than blood. They know that underneath it all, I'm

one of them. Ich bin ein
Hartbridge...er.

PAUSE.

MAYOR: How long now?

BLAKE: Eleven minutes, sir.

MAYOR: Eleven minutes. How about a cup of tea?

BLAKE: No, thank-

THE MAYOR LOOKS AT BLAKE.

Yes, sir.

BLAKE GOES TO MAKE TEA.

MAYOR: And Blake - two sugars today. The wife's out of town.

THE MAYOR LOOKS OUT AT THE
TOWNSPEOPLE + AUDIENCE.

It's funny, you know. One moment they're rioting on the front step, the next they're out there cheering for me, welcoming me back with open arms. A week in politics, eh? You know, not many men could

| | | | |
|--------|--|--------|---|
| | make a comeback like that. You could learn a thing or two. | MAYOR: | And he has no...no political background? |
| BLAKE: | What about this opponent, sir? | BLAKE: | No local background at all, in fact, sir. Most unusual. |
| MAYOR: | What about him, indeed? He hasn't even bothered with a campaign. That's how bleak his outlook is. | MAYOR: | No campaign, no coverage, no...no press? |
| BLAKE: | Yes, sir. He's quite an unknown quantity. | BLAKE: | Yes, sir, almost as if he were- |
| MAYOR: | Unknown quantity. Unprepared quantity more like! No campaign, no party affiliation, no publicity...no... | MAYOR: | - avoiding publicity. Oh god. |
| | PAUSE. MUSIC PLAYS VERY FAINTLY OUTSIDE. | | THE MAYOR SLIPS DOWN UNDER HIS DESK. THE MUSIC IS LOUD NOW. |
| | Remind me, Blake. When exactly did this fellow register as a candidate? | | Oh god, Blake. It's- |
| BLAKE: | I should say three weeks ago, sir. | BLAKE: | THE RATSINGER EMERGES AND JOINS THE TOWNSPEOPLE. |
| | THE MAYOR BEGINS TO SINK DOWN IN HIS CHAIR. | BLAKE: | Who sir? |
| | | MAYOR: | The Ratsinger, Blake, it's the Ratsinger. |
| | | BLAKE: | The flash in the pan, sir, are you sure? |
| | | MAYOR: | What do we do? What do we do? |

BLAKE: I don't know, sir, perhaps you could teach me.

MAYOR: Oh god, we have no time! My speech!

BLAKE: Your speech, sir, in nine minutes exactly.

MAYOR: Oh god, Blake-

BLAKE: Perhaps it's time to withdraw, sir. Or shall I bring the PA up here, and you can address them from under your desk?

THE RATSINGER STRIKES THE GROUND WITH HIS STICK. THE MUSIC STOPS. EVERYTHING FALLS SILENT.

ACT THREE SCENE THREE

THE MAYOR RISES. BLAKE USHERS HIM TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE TO MAKE HIS SPEECH.

THE MAYOR IS WATCHED WITH INTEREST BY THE RATSINGER. EVERYBODY ELSE WATCHES THE RATSINGER.

MAYOR: I have always believed that...that leadership is not a quality, but a privilege. A privilege that any man can- or woman - can earn. It doesn't take a great man - ha ha - luckily for me!

THE MAYOR LOOKS FOR A LAUGH. NOBODY RESPONDS. AWKWARD.

But- er...it does take a good man, and I have always strived- striven- strived. I have always strived to be that.

Recent weeks have taught us the value of honesty in politics. The world is full of...of pretenders, pretending that they know what's good and right, when they are no strangers themselves to deception and lies. But...but when somebody

builds his prestige on a lie, it only takes one honest person to reveal him for what he is. And I say you...you deserve better.

THE MAYOR STANDS DOWN.
BRIEF, SCATTERED APPLAUSE.

THE RATSINGER HOPS UP TO TAKE HIS PLACE. EVERYBODY WAITS WITH BATED BREATH.

THE RATSINGER RAISES HIS ARMS AND SPEAKS FOR THE FIRST AND ONLY TIME.

RATSINGER: We will dance!

THE TOWNSPEOPLE ERUPT WITH CHEERS AND APPLAUSE.

ACT FOUR

MAYOR:

BLAKE:

MAYOR:

MAYOR:

SCENE ONE

I used to be just like him, you know. Fire, dedication. Good looks.

BLAKE WALKS TO THE DESK, UNMOVED.

It's time to go.

I worked my way up from the bottom, just like him. Never apologised, never said thank you. I had the power of conviction behind me then, and everybody knew my name. Everybody knew what I stood for, and they loved me for it.

A PAUSE. BLAKE WATCHES THE MAYOR.

It's not my fault, Blake. It's not. I've worked for this town from the very beginning. But the job changes. I can't help that! He has the luxury of choosing his battles now. I can't do that, the Mayor can't do that! I used to - of course I used to. I fought for

everything that makes this town work.

BLAKE MOVES TOWARDS THE MAYOR.

MAYOR:

When I was elected-! When I was elected, do you remember how bad things were? People were suffering. Houses being repossessed, William Brady on the verge of closing down that factory - that ff- factory, which I fought tooth and nail to keep! I brought people together, people who had never cared before. I set up - I set up community council meetings, do you remember? The first few months, we didn't have enough chairs. *We didn't have enough chairs!* I did that! I made people care. I made it count that they cared! We used to set aside a budget for that meeting, just so that there would always be custard creams.

PAUSE.

And then they just stopped coming.

BLAKE:

It's time to go.

MAYOR:

(SADLY) You've stopped calling me sir.

PAUSE.

MAYOR:

He's a total fraud, he won't last! You and I know that. Tell them, Blake. He knows nothing about politics, he's just a dancer for the love of-

THE MAYOR GRABS
IMPLORINGLY AT BLAKE.
BLAKE RECOILS, RECOVERS,
AND THEN LOOMS OVER THE
MAYOR.

HE TAKES HOLD OF THE
MAYOR'S FACE WITH A GLOVED
HAND.

BLAKE:

Listen.

THE RATSINGER'S FOLLOWERS
CHANT, SING AND CHEER
OUTSIDE.

That is the sound of a society
sluicing its skin. That is the
sound of change, vital to

adaptation and growth. That is
the sound of your irrelevance.

BLAKE TURNS THE MAYOR'S
HEAD TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE.

Look at these people. You
believe so much in their
strangeness. But I've told
you: People aren't strange.
There's no such thing. Do you
know what strange really
means?

BLAKE TURNS THE MAYOR BACK
TOWARDS HIM.

It means fear. It means
fear of reality. This process
has nothing to do with you.
You're the old way, the dead
end. It doesn't matter who you
are or what you've done.
Without change there is
stagnation. You exist to be
overthrown, and people like
the Ratsinger exist to
overthrow you.

BLAKE RELEASES THE MAYOR.
MUSIC STRIKES UP.

Now get up. It's time to go.

THE MAYOR STANDS AND MOVES TO
THE EDGE OF THE STAGE. HE LOOKS
OVER, BUT CAN'T BRING HIMSELF
TO STEP DOWN.

THE RATSINGER STANDS BELOW. THE
FOLLOWERS SURGE OVER THE STAGE
AND GRAB THE MAYOR. THEY PULL
HIM DOWN AND STRIP HIM OF HIS
CHAIN. THE MAYOR INSTANTLY
BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE CHORUS.

THE RATSINGER STEPS UP ONTO THE
STAGE. HE SURVEYS THE DESK,
THEN TURNS TO HIS FOLLOWERS AND
RAISES HIS ARMS. FOLLOWERS LEAP
UP AND TURN THE DESK AROUND.
THE RATSINGER SITS IN THE
CHAIR, STIFF AND STILL WITH HIS
BACK TO THE AUDIENCE.

ACT FOUR

SCENE TWO

THE FOLLOWERS ARE IGNORED AND DOWNCAST UNTIL THEY REMEMBER THE RATSINGER'S PROMISE. THEY BECOME INCREASINGLY EXCITED ABOUT THE DANCE.

THE RATSINGER REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEM. EXCITEMENT TURNS TO DISTRESS.

THE FOLLOWERS STAND IN A PICKET LINE, FULL OF NOISE AND MOTION. THEIR MOTIONS ARE DISJOINTED AND ANGRY. SOME MIMIC MALFUNCTIONING MACHINERY, SOME ARE VIOLENT, SOME CLIMB OVER EACH OTHER AS THEY SHOUT FOR ATTENTION.

BLAKE FORCES HIS WAY BETWEEN THEM.

BLAKE: Alright, that's enough!

THE MOB GRAB AT HIM, NOT LISTENING.

BLAKE:

The Mayor is-
BLAKE LOSES PATIENCE. HE THROWS ONE OF THE FOLLOWERS TO THE GROUND.

SILENCE.

ALL LOOK AT THE FALLEN FOLLOWER AND THEN AT BLAKE.

BLAKE ADJUSTS HIS GLOVES.

BLAKE:

Mayor Ratsinger is preparing in his office. He will be out in a moment to lead you. Go away now.

THE FOLLOWERS CREEP BACK FROM BLAKE TO COWER AMONG THE AUDIENCE. BLAKE STANDS STILL FOR A MOMENT AND SPEAKS WITH HIS BACK TO THE RATSINGER, WHO SITS UPRIGHT AND STILL AT HIS DESK.

Sir.

SILENCE. BLAKE TURNS.

Mayor Ratsinger.

SILENCE.

BLAKE WALKS TO THE
COLOURFUL FIGURE AT THE
DESK. HE TOUCHES IT ON THE
SHOULDER. THE JACKET FALLS
OVER - EMPTY.

BLAKE LIFTS THE
RATSINGER'S HAT FROM THE
BACK OF THE CHAIR. THERE
IS NOBODY THERE.

BLACKOUT