

# "WASTED DAYS"

10 Page Excerpt

by

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## SYNOPSIS:

WASTED DAYS tells the story of four post-college friends as they make difficult life choices during three consecutive years during the early 1980's. We meet Joe, Branden, Areum and Darryl on the December night John Lennon was murdered. We next see the four a few months later on the day Ronald Reagan was shot. Then we see several of them a full year later, the day John Belushi died of a drug overdose. The play shows how the catastrophic events of the eighties all but crushed the idealistic beliefs of equality and tolerance we saw flower in the seventies. And how love and friendship are often the first casualties of cynicism.

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CHARACTERS:

JOE RAGAZZO (22) - An Italian American guy with a tender heart

BRANDEN KAHAN (22) - A spoiled, white guy with limited ambition

AREUM YO (21) - A tough, smart Korean American girl

DARRYL PEARCE (24) - A black street guy who wants a better life

TIME:

Three days during three years in the tumultuous 1980's

SCENES:

Scene 1 - Late in the evening of December 8th, 1980

Scene 2 - The afternoon of March 30th, 1981

Scene 3 - Early evening of March 5th, 1982

SETTING:

A large loft space on the third floor of a building on White Street in Tribeca. It is an unfinished space with few furnishings. There is a stained, creaky couch left over from someone's college dorm room and some other 'found on the street' tables and chairs that are just barely functional. To the far right, near the bathroom door, is a makeshift photographic set-up (a white sheet backdrop with lights hanging from clamps) and shelves piled with camera gear and books on photography. The entire back wall of the space is made up of tall windows looking out at the buildings across the narrow street. Large pipes run along the ceiling near a rusted apparatus once used to lift heavy barrels of tar and paint. It's the last, lingering remnant from the space's industrial past.



ACT I - SCENE ONE

(In the dark we hear the opening riffs of AC/DC's song "Highway To Hell." The lights FADE UP on a messy, lived in loft in Tribeca. Sprawled on the floor, using the couch as a backrest, are two friends, JOE RAGAZZO and BRANDEN KAHAN, both 22. They're taking in the song on the turntable as they alternate tokes on a joint and swigs of beer)

AC/DC (RECORD)

'Livin' easy, livin' free. Season ticket on a one way ride.  
Ain't nothin', leave me be, takin' everything in my stride.  
Don't need reason. Don't need rhyme. Ain't nothin' I'd rather  
do. Goin' down. Party time.'

(Joe's eyes are closed, blissed out, as he listens. Branden watches him)

BRANDEN

Incredible, right?

JOE

Oh yeah. What's his name?

BRANDEN

Bon Scott. Now he's 'Gone' Scott. Official cause of death listed as 'Death by Misadventure.'

JOE

Get the fuck out.

BRANDEN

That's what the paper said. How great is that?

(He lowers the stereo and passes Joe the joint)

JOE

Wild. He's amazing.

BRANDEN

Was. See? If you didn't spend so much time listening to that spineless Billy Joel shit you'd know a few things.

JOE

Don't be knockin' Billy. Gotta support my hometown boy.

BRANDEN

(Pointing at the stereo)

Well that's real music. Right there. Killer.

JOE

I like some harder edge stuff. Blondie and Bowie.

BRANDEN

Bowie can't sing.

JOE

Yes he can.

BRANDEN

Not like that he can't.

JOE

He sings great. It's just...different. He's what you call a 'stylist.'

BRANDEN

(Taking the joint back)

That's code for 'no voice.'

JOE

Shouldn't we get going? It's after eleven.

BRANDEN

I'm gonna wait a bit. We don't want to be early. Early sucks.

JOE

Too late sucks too.

BRANDEN

Kelly said come by after nine. Last time I checked eleven was after nine. We'll go soon. I promise.

JOE

(After listening a bit)

So you're not going to show me the pictures?

BRANDEN

Nope.

JOE

You can't just say 'I met Lauren Hutton at a party, got her high and she posed nude' and then not offer up some proof.

BRANDEN

Do you doubt me?

JOE

No. But I still want to see the pictures.

BRANDEN

(Handing him the joint)

You're not seeing them.

(Branden picks up his empty beer and moves to the fridge for a fresh one)

JOE

I'm not asking just to get my rocks off. I'm asking as a journalist.

BRANDEN

Drawing cartoons for The Village Voice doesn't make you a journalist.

JOE

And taking pictures of naked supermodels doesn't make you a fashion photographer.

BRANDEN

Tell that to Lauren Hutton.

JOE

Oh come on. Show me the pictures.

BRANDEN

Not happening.

(Bringing him a beer)

Believe me if they were any good I'd show'em to you. We were both smashed. She loves her vodka, that Laurie.

JOE

Did you two get it on?

BRANDEN

That's my business.

JOE

I knew it! How was it?

BRANDEN

Journalistically speaking...no comment.

JOE

Thanks a lot. I thought we were friends.

BRANDEN

We are friends. But some things you just don't share.

JOE

But I'm not just any friend. I like to think we're best friends.

BRANDEN

Still not seeing the pictures.

JOE

I just realized something. You are my best friend.

BRANDEN

I guess. If you say so.

JOE

And I'm your best friend, right?

BRANDEN

I'm not big on 'best friends.' Never had one. I had a dog once.

JOE

Of course we're best friends. Look at all we've been through. During college and still now. We went through some crazy shit together. I mean, we watched a guy die.

BRANDEN

What guy?

JOE

Carlos. That guy in the band with the girl we both wanted to go out with. We were there when he died.

BRANDEN

We didn't watch him. He was locked in the bathroom.

JOE

We broke the door in. We found him. And we were there, ten feet away when he OD'd. With just a door between us.

BRANDEN

Carlos was a fucking mess.

(Looking at him)

I'm not the one who sold him that stuff.

JOE

I didn't say you did.

BRANDEN

Just so you know. I didn't. Neither did Darryl. I don't know where he got that shit.

(The intercom BUZZES. Branden moves to it and shouts into it)

BRANDEN

Come on up.

JOE

Is that Darryl?

BRANDEN

Probably.

JOE  
Is he going to the party?

BRANDEN  
I think so. Why?

JOE  
Areum might not want him there.

BRANDEN  
Don't start with her racist bullshit.

JOE  
She's not racist.

BRANDEN  
Oh no? What was all that crap she started at the pizza place.  
When she refused to share a cab with him.

JOE  
That's not because of race. She's just afraid of him.

BRANDEN  
Because he's black.

JOE  
No. Because he sells drugs. She thinks he's dangerous.

BRANDEN  
Is that what you think?

JOE  
I don't know. He's more your friend than mine. All I know is  
she doesn't like him. Because of the drugs.

BRANDEN  
You mean anything but pot. Because I've seen her smoke a lot  
of pot.

JOE  
Yeah.

BRANDEN  
And ludes. I know she likes ludes. Right?

JOE  
Well, yeah--

BRANDEN  
And ups. And whippets. She likes it all. So what's her  
fucking problem?

JOE  
It's the coke. And the smack. That shit scares her.



BRANDEN

I don't sell any of that.

JOE

No. But Darryl does.

BRANDEN

Yeah. So? (a beat) Does she think I'm dangerous?

JOE

Not exactly. She says she can't figure you out.

BRANDEN

Well I don't like her fucking attitude. Darryl's my friend. And my partner. He's totally cool. If she doesn't like it--

(The door flies open and AREUM YO (22) rushes in, frantic and breathless)

AREUM

Oh my God. Did you hear?

(Joe gets up and moves to her)

JOE

Hear what? I thought you were at the party.

AREUM

Turn on the radio. It's all over.

JOE

What is?

AREUM

They shot John Lennon.

JOE

What! Who did?

AREUM

(Near tears)

I don't know.

JOE

You said 'they' did.

AREUM

Somebody. I don't know. I was home, listening to N.E.W, and I heard it. He was outside that hotel he lives in and somebody shot him.

BRANDEN

(Moving to the stereo)

That can't be right.

AREUM

Everybody in my building heard it. They were all in the hallway saying, 'Did you hear? Somebody shot John Lennon?'

JOE

Maybe it's just another 'Paul Is Dead' rumor thing.

AREUM

I don't think so. This is so messed up.

JOE

Yeah. God. I hope it's bullshit.  
(Offering the joint)  
You want some of this?

AREUM

No. You got any wine?

BRANDEN

In the fridge. Help yourself.

(Areum moves to the fridge and finds a bottle of white wine on the door and pours herself a glass. During this Branden tunes in a radio station with a John Lennon song playing)

BRANDEN

Here's N.E.W. They're in full tribute mode. Must be true.

JOE

Shit.

BRANDEN

Sorry, pal.

JOE

It's the fucking government. They got him. They wanted to deport him but they couldn't. So they took him out.

AREUM

Don't start that.

JOE

It's true. You never want to believe it but I'm telling you. They were after him. He said it in 'Ballad of John and Yoko.' "They're gonna crucify me."

BRANDEN

You're nuts.

JOE

The world is nuts. This is what happens when you elect a shitty, B-movie actor to be president. He's turning the country into the God damned wild west.

BRANDEN

You're saying Reagan did this?

JOE

He was after him. So was Nixon. They both hated him.

AREUM

Joe, don't get yourself worked up.

BRANDEN

(Turning the radio off)

Yeah. Come on. Let's go to the party.

JOE

I can't go to a fucking party. How can you think of a God damned party at a time like this?

BRANDEN

'Cause I'm hungry. Kelly said there'd be food.

JOE

I can't believe you. This is a crisis!

BRANDEN

What do you wanna do? Sit here all night and sing 'Let It Fucking Be?' I'm going.

JOE

(To Areum)

I never got to meet him. I always thought I would. I'd be walking down the street and there he'd be. And we'd talk. But now, that's not gonna happen.

AREUM

(Taking him in her arms)

Maybe he'll be okay. Maybe you'll still get that chance.

JOE

Maybe. Maybe.

BRANDEN

(Getting his coat)

Maybe we should go to the party. Be with other people. It'll be better than sitting around here.

JOE

(Breaking the embrace)

I'm going up there.

Up where?  
AREUM

Where they live. The Dakota.  
JOE

No. Don't go up there.  
AREUM

We have to go.  
JOE

It'll be a mob scene. I'm not going.  
AREUM

(The downstairs buzzer BUZZES. Branden moves to it and pushes the intercom)

We have to show support for Yoko and little Sean.  
JOE  
(To Areum)

Don't start that with me. You know how I feel about that.  
AREUM

This isn't about you. It's about showing respect.  
JOE

I'm not going. If you want to go, then go!  
AREUM

Why don't you want to go?  
BRANDEN

Because she hates Yoko.  
JOE

I never said that.  
AREUM

Yes you did. You said you hate her art and her music.  
JOE

She irritates the shit out of me. All that wailing and screaming Plastic Ono band bullshit. It's horrible.  
AREUM  
(To Branden)

This has nothing to do with that.  
JOE

AREUM

(To Branden)

She made my life miserable. Me and every other Asian girl I know. We all had to take shit from people about her awful singing. And how she broke up the Beatles. Like we were all in on it. And took a vote.

BRANDEN

That's ridiculous.

AREUM

No. It's not. You didn't grow up having kids follow you down the hall going--

(Imitating Yoke screaming)

'Ay-iy-yi-iy-yi' at the back of your head. I'm sick of her. John was great. No question about that. I love John. But I'm not going up there. Not for her.

(The door opens and DARRYL PEARCE (24) lets himself in. He has a sizable Afro and wears an open shirt and chains. Ready for action and very jolly)

DARRYL

Yo Brandy-man.

(To Joe)

Yo Rigatoni.

(To Areum)

Yo Miss Yo. Are we ready to party?

BRANDEN

No. We're not.

DARRYL

Why? What's up?

JOE

John Lennon was shot.

DARRYL

Yeah. I heard. I was watching Monday Night Football and they busted in. Crazy shit, right?

BRANDEN

They interrupted the game?

DARRYL

They kept playing but that announcer with the bad toup, Cosell, said he got killed in front of his house.

JOE

He's dead?