Serious Money
Caryl Churchill


Zac Zackman (20s–30s) is an American who works for the Klein Merrick Bank. His job is ‘to buy up jobbers and brokers./And turn the best of them into new market makers’. He is a wheeler dealer who trades in people. This is the era of the ‘Big Bang’, megasacle greed and the huge profits called ‘serious money’. Zac enjoys living in London: ‘I go to the theatre, I don’t get mugged, I have classy friends./And I go see them in the country at the weekends.’ He is a sanguine observer of all the ruthless shenanigans he sees in the world around him. In this speech he reflects on the play we the audience have just seen in which the murder of Jake the brother of Scilla, another trader, has been the main action.

ZAC. So Scilla never came back.
She sent me a postcard of the Statue of Liberty saying Bye bye Zac.
She never did find out who killed her brother but I’m sure it wasn’t Corman or Jacinta or Marylou or any of us.
Who didn’t want Jake to talk to the DTI? Who wanted him out of the way?
The British government, because another scandal just before the election would have been too much fuss.
So I reckon it was MI5 or the CIA.
(Or he could even have shot himself, the kid wasn’t stable.)
There’s bound to be endless scandals in the city but really it’s incidental.
It can be a nuisance because it gives the wrong impression.

And if people lose confidence in us there could be a big recession.
Sure this is a dangerous system and it could crash anytime I sometimes wake up in bed
And think is Armageddon Aids, nuclear war or a crash, and how will I end up dead?
(But that’s just before breakfast.)
What really matters is the massive sums of money being passed round the world, and trying to appreciate their size can drive you mental.
There haven’t been a million days since Christ died.
So think a billion, that’s a thousand million, and have you ever tried
To think a trillion? Think a trillion dollars a day.
That’s the gross national product of the USA.
There’s people who say the American eagle is more like a vulture.
I say don’t piss on your own culture.
Naturally there’s a whole lot of greed and
That’s no problem because money buys freedom.
So the Tories kept the scandal to the minimum. Greville Todd was arrested and put in prison to show the government was serious about keeping the city clean and nobody shed any tears.
And the Conservatives romped home with a landslide victory for five more glorious years.
(Which was handy though not essential because it would take far more than Labour to stop us.)
I’ve been having a great time raising sixteen billion dollars to build a satellite,
And I reckon I can wrap it up tonight.

COMMENTARY: Although the speech is written partly in rhyming couplets (Serious Money is a modern parody of eighteenth-century
have a right to expect me to be kind. (*Pulling back*) I'm sorry, I just feel so helpless.

**ED** (Slight relaxing laugh): You helpless?

**ARNOLD** (Laughing too): Dumb, huh? (*Cracking*) I don't understand. I thought... we were so happy. That we were so special. The way we made love... the way you cried in my arms... You said you loved me...

**ED:** I do. I always will.

**ARNOLD** (Desperately): Then what are we doing?

**ED:** I don't know. I'm confused... I'm frightened.

**ARNOLD:** Ed, come over.

**ED:** No, I can't. I have made up my mind. I know what I want. I'm doing what I have to do. I know that you are hurting, but that is my decision.

**ARNOLD:** You can't see what you're doing.

**ED:** Yes I can. I'm not like you, Arnold. I can't be happy living in a ghetto of gay bars and gay restaurants and backrooms, scared that someone will find out that I'm gay and may get me fired. I hate those queens with their bitchy remarks and Bette Davis imitations. I don't want any part of that.

**ARNOLD:** But that's not us...

**ED:** I want more. I've got to be proud of who I am.

**ARNOLD:** How can sleeping with a woman make you proud of yourself if you know you'd rather be with a man? How can you ever get any respect from anyone if you won't be yourself? There's no you to respect!

**ED:** And just where's your self-respect? Huh? I certainly don't see any here!

**ARNOLD:** You wanna see my self-respect? Here's my self-respect! (*He slams down the receiver as the light blacks out on Ed. Then... calmer.*) I fell right into that one.

(*The lights fade out on Arnold as the singer is once again brought into focus.*)

**SCENE FOUR: ARNOLD**

*The bar sounds are heard again as the lights reveal Arnold standing on The Stud platform dressed in denims and swigging from a beer can.*

**ARNOLD:** Look, Murray, I am not that lonely! This here's as far as I go. My standards may lie just left of reactionary, but my limit in a backroom bar is the front room. Maybe I just better go home, huh? Thank you for taking me out but...

It just ain't my kind of thing, ya know? I realize you may find this hard to comprehend, you bein' the way you are, but, Murray, I am just not that way inclined. I mean, I'm that way inclined, but I'm not that way inclined. Ya know what I mean, Murray? I mean, maybe I'm old-fashioned but I like my sex in a bed. I don't see sex as a spectator sport. I like that one sneaked kiss in the elevator on the way to a man's apartment. I like the apologies he makes for the mess the place is in. I dig the dainty tour and arty conversation while he's dimming the lights and pouring the drinks. I like never finishing those drinks. See, Murray, to me a lap in the bed is worth three in a bar. 'Cause deep down in my heart I know they do not marry sluts. No, they don't, Murray. And it hurts me, Murray, it truly does, to see this multitude of men so love-starved that they resort to sex in a dirty backroom instead of the way God meant us to be. It is cheap, Murray. And I refuse on moral grounds to support the degradation these men have brought themselves to. Period.

Why is it so important to you that I go into that backroom? Are you a'reared to go in there by yourself? Is that it, Murray? Have I hit on the nail? C'mon, level it, Murray, are you a'reared?

I am not a'reared, Murray. Oh no I'm not.

All right, I'll prove it to you. We'll go back there together. But I'm tellin' you now, I ain't doin' nothin'. Okay?
(As they start to move the piano, the sound of SUTTER's GHOST is heard. DOAKER is the only one to hear it. With difficulty they move the piano a little bit so it is out of place.)

BOY WILLIE: What you think?
LYMON: It's heavy... but you can move it. Only it ain't gonna be easy.
BOY WILLIE: It wasn't that heavy to me. Okay, let's put it back.
(The sound of SUTTER's GHOST is heard again. They all hear it as BERNIECE enters on the stairs.)

BERNIECE: Boy Willie... you gonna play around with me one too many times. And then God's gonna bless you and West is gonna dress you. Now set that piano back over there. I done told you a hundred times I ain't selling that piano.

BOY WILLIE: I'm trying to get me some land, woman. I need that piano to get me some money so I can buy Sutter's land.

BERNIECE: Money can't buy what that piano cost. You can't sell your soul for money. It won't go with the buyer. It'll shrivel and shrink to know that you ain't taken on to it. But it won't go with the buyer.

BOY WILLIE: I ain't talking about all that, woman. I ain't talking about selling my soul. I'm talking about trading that piece of wood for some land. Get something under your feet. Land the only thing God ain't making no more of. You can always get you another piano. I'm talking about some land. What you get something out the ground from. That's what I'm talking about. You can't do nothing with that piano but sit up there and look at it.

BERNIECE: That's just what I'm gonna do. Wining Boy, you want me to fry you some pork chops?
Killing Chuck

Age Range: 20+

Gender: Male

Genre: Comedic

Synopsis: A scene of love accidentally turns into a scene of crime on the roof of a house party. (Warning: Adult language.)

Author: Gabriel Davis

Length: longer than 2 minutes

I just fuckin’ killed Chuck. I think. I mean, he’s just laying out there. He’s not moving. I don’t think he’s breathing.

I mean, there I was just up on the roof with Marissa – talking, laughing, having a great time. I tell her she reminds me of Sandra Bullock. I tell her I loved "Hope Floats." Who knew those would be the magic words? Next thing I know her clothes are off and we’re loosening roof shingles like there’s no tomorrow. And then there’s biting and kissing and touching and suddenly someone starts beating on me, I mean, just pounding on me and growling. Yeah, growling. And I look up and there’s Chuck. And I’m like, "What’s the problem?" and he says "The problem is, dude, you’re fucking my girlfriend."

So I look at Marissa and I’m like “You’re someone’s girlfriend?” And she says “No.” Then it comes out Chuck just wishes she’s his girlfriend but actually she’s his cousin or something, so he’s got these feelings of guilt about wanting her…and then he starts crying.

So that ruined the mood. Marissa puts her clothes on, and she goes back down through the window, back into the party. And I’m left with Chuck. Blubbering, whining, crying Chuck.

And he starts in on how he’s just this total fuck up and maybe he should just throw himself off the roof. And for a split second I’m thinking “YES! Throw yourself off the roof! Do it!” But I don’t say that. I say I “You’re gonna get a girl, buddy, just maybe not your cousin, huh?” And then I give him a friendly pat on the back. A nice manly slap on the back. And he looked heavy, I mean, who knew he’d go flying.

Who knew he’d go flying right off the roof?
Like Dreaming, Backwards
by Kellie Powell

**Yale:** I sold her a ticket that night. I only recognized her because... we played four-square together once. She introduced herself. I don't really remember anything we said, but she seemed sweet. I didn't know her last name until I saw the article in the paper. It said that she was a sophomore and a journalism major. She was from Joliet. She had a younger sister in high school, named Carolyn. I don't know why I remember everything about that article. Her picture... was in black and white and it was right under the "I-D-E" in "suicide." I don't know why I'm telling you this.

The picture was small, it didn't look like a school picture, it looked more like a candid shot. She was sort of smiling, but she looked somehow... suspicious. I have a strangely vivid memory... of her face.

That night... she seemed fine. Friendly, and smiling. And I couldn't have done anything different. And I couldn't have known what she was feeling. But then, I didn't ask, did I?

I just never knew anyone who died...
Gilbert or Frank
by Terrence Mosley

Frank: When we moved here, my parents wanted me to go to the best public school available so we got this tiny ass apartment right next to these million dollar homes and I went to school with white kids. Mind you, I’d seen white people. I just never really was friends with one. First day of school. Dressed like I always dressed which was fly. Specially, the first day of school. We’re running late and I didn’t have time to brush my hair. So took my brush with me to class. I’m in homeroom, the teacher leaves, and this kid immediately starts in on me. Talking ‘bout “Why are you brushing your hair?” To which I replied “I know how to take care of myself, so shut the fuck up.” He then takes my brush and the kids start throwing it around the room. One of the kids puts my brush in his book bag. I went to get it and the teacher walks in right as I grab it. I try to tell her “That’s my brush, that’s my brush!” and she said “You have no hair to brush.” So I spat in her face. I got expelled. My dad kicked my ass when I got home. I was fourteen crying like five. I have this theory: No matter how old you are, your parents beating you will always make you cry.

We moved to a neighborhood with a lot more black people, with a lot more space, for a lot less money. I promised my parents, I wouldn’t do that to them again. That I wouldn’t take them through that embarrassment. They understood why I did it, but what’s pride worth when coupled with embarrassment? And I— I sort of agree with them. So I say OK. At least I can keep my pride.
Single Crutch
by Tara Meddaugh

Ben: I’ve been practicing my clarinet all morning and I really thought I was gonna get in this time. I know marching band is competitive, especially for the hockey team, but I had a good feeling about it all morning. Fifth time’s a charm, my mom said.

Then that guy who wears all the jewelry stole my crutch. My mom said it was okay for me to practice my song outside, since it wasn’t raining and I was only playing marches. But he ran up to me from across the street. He was yelling something like, “shut the hell up!” or something. And he knocked my stand over and grabbed one of my crutches. I tried to run after him, but I’m not very fast on one crutch. I didn’t let him get my clarinet though! I had to toss it under the picnic table, and I think one of my keys got bent a little, but at least I saved it.

Anyway, now I have to sort of hop and walk to get anywhere. I don’t think I can make it to the gym on time with only one crutch. And since you have that crutch you used in fourth grade when you were Tiny Tim, I was wondering if I could maybe borrow it. I know you want it to stay in mint condition, but I won’t mess it up. I’d have to bend over a little, since it’s a kiddie crutch, but my mom said I have a strong back. I don’t mind.

Hey, you’re the reason my leg is broken anyway. You’re the one who told me to jump off the truck so Lisa would see and fall in love with me. But since the truck was going 30 miles an hour—and you weren’t supposed to be going that fast—I just got this
broken leg instead. The hospital did have HBO Plus though. My mom and dad don’t get that at home. I saw Austin Powers two times in one day!

But Lisa didn’t fall in love with me and now I have to hop and walk. So I don’t care if you don’t want fingerprints on your Tiny Tim crutch. I think you owe me! This is my chance to get in the marching band and show Lisa I’m worth something. So give me your crutch or I’m gonna tell your mom.

For more about Tara and her work, go to tarameddaugh.com.
Film *The Producers*
Author *Mel Brooks*
Role *Max Bialystock*
Actor *Zero Mostel*

How humiliating. Max Bialystock. Max Bialystock. You know who I used to be? Max Bialystock! King of Broadway! Six shows running at once! Lunch at Delmonico’s. $200 suits. You see this? This once held a pearl as big as your eye! Look at me now. Look at me now!! I’m wearing a cardboard belt! I used to have thousands of investors begging, pleading to put their money in a Max Bialystock production. Look at my investors now. Voila! Hundreds of little old ladies stopping off at Max Bialystock’s office to grab a last thrill on the way to the cemetery! You have exactly 10 seconds to change that look of disgusting pity into one of enormous respect. One, two... Do the books. Do the books...Window’s so filthy, can’t tell whether it’s day or night out there. .... That’s it, baby! When you got it, flaunt it. Flaunt It!
Act II

First Scene

Two weeks or so later.
Dr. Givings and Leo,
in the operating theater.

LEO
And then she left, very abruptly, for Italy.

DR. GIVINGS
I see.

LEO
It was a terrible shock.
I had been studying in Florence for the year. They are exacting masters over there—the line must be just so—the proportion just so—there is no freedom—you sharpen your pencil with a knife, as Leonardo sharpened his pencil. It was heaven. Not to have freedom. No freedom in art, but in life, life! The peaches there tasted like peaches, the rain like rain. I met the woman in question in Florence. A very beautiful woman. (I know. No one ever said: I fell in love with a woman in Italy—a very ugly woman.) But she was beautiful. Perhaps not classically, but never mind ... We met at the Uffizi. She was looking at the sculptures with no embarrassment, no embarrassment at all. I painted her face all summer. When she kissed, she kissed with her whole body, not like American women who kiss only with their lips.

DR. GIVINGS
Mm.

LEO
You are perhaps shocked, Doctor, that I kissed her before marriage. I am a devotee of nature and I wished to avoid the fate of my boyhood friend. On his wedding night he was repulsed by his wife's body. He said, when she disrobed for the first time, he saw something monstrous. What, what? I asked. She had body hair, he said, down there! Like a beast! You see, he had seen the female form only in marble statues—no body hair! You are a scientist, that must amuse you.
Angels in America by Tony Kushner

LOUIS: I was never ambivalent about Prior. I love him. I do. I really do.
BELIZE: Nobody said different.
LOUIS: Love and ambivalence are... Real love isn't ambivalent.
BELIZE: "Real love isn't ambivalent." I'd swear that's a line from my favorite bestselling paperback novel, In Love with the Night Mysterious, except I don't think you ever read it.

(Pause.)

BELIZE: You ought to. Instead of spending the rest of your life trying to get through Democracy in America. It's about this white woman whose Daddy owns a plantation in the Deep South in the years before the Civil War—the American one—and her name is Margaret, and she's in love with her Daddy's number-one slave, and his name is Thaddeus, and she's married but her white slave-owner husband has AIDS: Antebellum Insufficiently Developed Sexorgans. And there's a lot of hot stuff going down when Margaret and Thaddeus can catch a spare torrid ten under the cotton-picking moon, and then of course the Yankees come, and they set the slaves free, and the slaves string up old Daddy, and so on. Historical fiction. Somewhere in there I recall Margaret and Thaddeus find the time to discuss the nature of love; her face is reflecting the flames of the burning plantation—you know, the way white people do—and his black face is dark in the night and she says to him, "Thaddeus, real love isn't ever ambivalent."

(Little pause. Emily enters and turns off IV drip.)
Glengarry Glen Ross (1992)
by David Mamet

Ricky: You stupid fucking cunt.

You, Williamson. I’m talking to you, shithead. You just cost me six thousand dollars. Six thousand dollars and one Cadillac. That’s right. What are you gonna do about it? What are you gonna do about it, asshole? You’re fucking shit. Where did you learn your trade, ya stupid fucking cunt? You idiot. Who ever told you that you could work with men? Oh, I’m gonna have your job, shithead. I’m going downtown, I’m gonna talk to Mitch & Murray! I’m going to Lempkin! I don’t care whose nephew you are, who you know, whose dick you’re sucking on. You’re going out. I swear to you, you’re going out!

Anyone in this office lives on his wits. What you’re hired for is to help us. Does that seem clear to you? To help us. Not to fuck us up. To help men who are going out there to try to earn a living. You fairy. You company man.

I’ll tell you something else, I hope you ripped the joint off. I could tell our friend a little something that might help him to catch you.

You wanna learn the first rule you’d know if you ever spent a day in your life: You never open your mouth til you know what the shot is. You fucking child.
Sweet and Twenty
by Floyd Dell

It’s as though I had been groping about in the dark, and then – sunrise! And there’s a weird feeling here.
*(He puts his hand on his heart)*
To tell the honest truth, there’s a weirder feeling here.
*(He puts his hand on his stomach)*
I know now why men used to fall on their knees when they told a girl they loved her; it was because they couldn’t stand up. I’ve never spoken to you before, and heaven knows I may never get the chance to speak to you again, but I have to say this to you now. I love you! I love you! Love you! Now tell me I’m a fool. Tell me to go. Anything – I’ve had my say... Why aren’t you saying anything?
Callimaco’s Monologue

The Mandrake Niccolo Machiavelli

That's when I asked her to marry me. I know! I know! She's already married! But Calfucci's getting old. He can't live much longer. Right? So I asked her to marry me the second he kicks it. In the meantime, I explained how we could very easily continue our affair right under his nose. She stared at me for a long time. Finally, she said, "Since my husband's stupidity, my mother's selfishness, and my confessor's greed have conspired to force me into something I never would have done under normal circumstances ... I have no choice but to accept it as the will of God." Then she swore her undying love and sealed it with a ... well ... something special. As they were pulling us apart, she slipped me a key. Come and go as I please. It's perfect. Perfect. I couldn't be happier.