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# TRAFFICKING IN BROKEN HEARTS

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## ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

TRAFFICKING IN BROKEN HEARTS was first produced by Bailiwick Repertory, Chicago IL during the 1992 Pride Performance Series.

TRAFFICKING IN BROKEN HEARTS was subsequently produced in New York in 1994 by the Atlantic Theater Company (Neil Pepe, Artistic Director; Joshua Lehrer, Managing Director). The cast and creative contributors were:

PAPO ..... Giancarlo Esposito  
BRIAN ..... Neil Pepe  
BOBBY ..... Anthony Rapp  
*Director* ..... Anna D Shapiro  
*Set and light design* ..... Kevin Rigdon  
*Costume design* ..... Laura Cunningham  
*Sound design* ..... One Dream Sound  
*Original music* ..... Max Shapiro  
*Fight choreography* ..... Rick Sordelet

## CHARACTERS AND SETTING

*PAP0, a hustler, 26 years old*

*BRIAN, a lawyer, 26 years old*

*BOBBY, a runaway, 16 years old*

*Assorted voices that will represent the voices of New York*

*The play takes place primarily in the 42nd Street area of New York City.*

*(At rise: From the darkness neon begins to turn on and off. Voices are heard, some dirty talk, some high-pitched laughter. Drugs and sex are offered. All we see are flashing lights. The lights slowly come up to a dim. A fight is happening somewhere, a siren, someone asking for spare change while another voice is demanding that gentlemen drop their quarters. We see the facade of a peep show. PAPO, his back to the audience, stretches and yawns. He opens his pants and positions his cock to maximum advantage. He clears his throat and spits. He leans against the peep show facade. Lights begin to dim.)*

PAPO: Hey, you wanna see a movie?

*(Blackout)*

*(A third of the stage is lit.)*

PAPO: The first time I walked down Forty-second Street I got scared and turned back. A woman lifted her skirt and started peeing and two cops were standing right there and they didn't do anything. She wasn't wearing panties and she was ugly. I turn around and walk back. I didn't go back for a while.

*(Second third is lit. BRIAN at work. Sitting behind a desk he places a call. Music under.)*

BRIAN: Hello.

VOICE 1: Card number, please.

*(BRIAN fumbles in pocket for wallet. He removes a card.)*

BRIAN: Uh, 0655182.

VOICE 1: Thank you. Go ahead.

BRIAN: Hello.

VOICE 2: Hi.

BRIAN: Hi.

VOICE 2: *(Pause)* You got a real sexy voice.

BRIAN: You too. Can you tell me what you look like?

VOICE 2: Sure. I'm six feet tall, 180, body builder, 9 inches.

BRIAN: Sounds good.

VOICE 2: What are you in the mood for today?

BRIAN: I just want to hear your voice.

VOICE 2: You want me to talk dirty to you?

BRIAN: No, just talk to me.

VOICE 2: Look, what scene do you want?

*(The music builds. Hard. Hypnotic. VOICE 2 fades and BRIAN will speak but won't be heard over the music. BRIAN's phone receiver exchanges hands and his right hand goes under his desk. He opens his pants and begins to masturbate. The music becomes louder and BRIAN is sweating. He moans and trembles as he comes. A second after he does a light from an open doorway appears on him. He freezes. Music stops.)*

SECRETARY'S VOICE: They're waiting for you in the conference room, Mr Ritter.

BRIAN: Tell them I'll be right in.

*(Light from doorway disappears.)*

VOICE 2: Are you still there? Hello.

*(BRIAN hangs up. He pulls a handkerchief from his pocket and cleans himself.)*

*(Last third of the stage is lit. BOBBY is sitting on the floor, hugging himself and crying.)*

BOBBY: Why do you want to marry her, Reggie? What's the matter with me? What's the matter with me?

*(42nd Street peep show. PAPO is leaning against the front. Enter BRIAN from off stage. He slows down in front of peep show. He enters. PAPO waits a couple of seconds then follows. BRIAN is walking past the magazines. He stops to flip through one. PAPO reaches in front of him to get one.)*

PAPO: 'Scuse me.

*(BRIAN looks at PAPO out of the corner of his eye. PAPO brushes past him on the way to the booths. BRIAN waits a couple of seconds then fumbles, putting magazine back. BRIAN enters the booth area and pretends to read the display cards on the different booths.)*

PAPO: Psst.

*(BRIAN looks in the booth next to him where the door is ajar. PAPO is inside booth, playing with himself through his pants.)*

PAPO: Hey man, you wanna see a movie?

*(BRIAN stands, watching as PAPO begins to unfasten his pants.)*

MAN'S VOICE: Let's drop some quarters, gentlemen.

*(PAPO gestures with his head for BRIAN to come in. BRIAN is frozen in place.)*

PAPO: C'mon man. I ain't giving no fucking free show.

BRIAN: The sign says one person per booth. What if they catch us?

PAPO: Nobody pays attention to that.

*(BRIAN looks both ways and quickly enters the booth.)*

PAPO: You got some quarters, man? You gotta drop some quarters in the machine else we can't close the door.

*(BRIAN begins to look through his pockets.)*

BRIAN: Yeah, I got a couple.

PAPO: Well, drop 'em in.

*(BRIAN does. The lights go out in the booth and a loop begins to play. They are standing in front of the screen so the film images are on their faces. PAPO leans against the wall, still massaging himself.)*

PAPO: Go ahead and touch it. It ain't gonna bite you.

*(PAPO reaches over and grabs one of BRIAN's hands. He places it over his crotch and moves it up and down.)*

PAPO: You got some money?

BRIAN: Uh-huh.

PAPO: Okay then.

*(BRIAN awkwardly grabs PAPO and tries to kiss him. PAPO pushes him off.)*

PAPO: Look man, I don't kiss no faggots.

BRIAN: Aren't you a faggot?

PAPO: No dickface, I'm a hustler. Look, you got some money, right?

BRIAN: Yeah.

PAPO: Okay, gimme twenty.

BRIAN: What for?

PAPO: To go down on me.

BRIAN: I don't know if I want to do that.

MAN'S VOICE: Let's drop some quarters, gentlemen.

*(BRIAN deposits another quarter.)*

PAPO: Not you. When the lights go up that's when you put in another quarter.

BRIAN: I'm sorry. Look, I've never done this before.

PAPO: Yeah, sure. It's still twenty. No discounts.

BRIAN: Can I kiss you?

PAPO: I told you, I don't kiss no faggots.

*(BRIAN shrugs helplessly and turns to leave. PAPO presses against him. He begins feeling him up, looking for his wallet.)*

PAPO: Hey c'mon, man. Relax.

BRIAN: Do you have someplace else we can go?

*(PAPO does not find a wallet in BRIAN's pants.)*

PAPO: That would be more money.

BRIAN: That's okay.

PAPO: Man, you don't have any money. Don't be fucking bullshitting me.

*(Lights come up in booth.)*

BRIAN: Yes I do.

PAPO: Yeah? Show me.

*(BRIAN is about to reach for his money when a banging is heard on their booth door.)*

MAN'S VOICE: Let's drop some quarters in there.

PAPO: *(Under his breath)* Fuck you.

BRIAN: I don't have any more quarters.

PAPO: Great. *(He reaches into his pocket and pulls one out.)* You owe me a quarter, mother fucker. *(He deposits it.)* Let me go out first. I'll meet you outside then I'll take you to my room.

BRIAN: Okay.

PAPO: Hey man, you owe me a quarter.

*(PAPO exits. BRIAN touches the screen. Outside PAPO is waiting. BRIAN comes out of the peep show.)*

BRIAN: I got more change from a man in there. Here's your quarter.

PAPO: Yeah, look, it'll be fifty for me and ten dollars for the room.

BRIAN: I haven't got much time left.

PAPO: Don't worry, it won't take much time.

BRIAN: Maybe we should leave it for another time.

PAPO: You ain't got the money, right? Goddamn, fucking queer.

BRIAN: Please be quiet. No, I got it. It's right here. *(He takes his wallet from his jacket pocket but when he looks inside he only finds a ten.)* I'm sorry but all I have is a ten.

PAPO: Yeah, well you owe me that for the feel you copped in the booth.

BRIAN: Look, I got a credit card. I could buy you something.

PAPO: I don't want nothing. Fuck the credit card. What you gonna buy me?

BRIAN: I don't know. There's a clothing store over there, pick something.

PAPO: And you buy it for me?

*(They approach store.)*

PAPO: How about that suit?

BRIAN: That's a hundred and twenty-five.

PAPO: Oh yeah.

BRIAN: How about that sweater?

PAPO: That's sixty-five.

BRIAN: It'll look good on you.

PAPO: So will the suit, man.

BRIAN: Wait here.

*(BRIAN enters shop. Lights fade. Up on flophouse. BRIAN and PAPO enter. PAPO is admiring his sweater.)*

BRIAN: Where's the washroom?

PAPO: This fucking sweater is ace.

BRIAN: Where can we clean up?

PAPO: Right there in the sink. They's supposed to give you a little soap and a towel but they won't if you don't ask for it.

BRIAN: Look.

PAPO: Papo.

BRIAN: Yeah, Papo. I have never done this before. With any man. Ever. I just want to be safe.

PAPO: Well, you shouldn't a bought me the sweater first, but it's okay. A lot of guys would have gotten the sweater and skipped but not me. I'll treat you right.

BRIAN: I don't want to get a disease.

PAPO: Excuse me?

BRIAN: I don't know where you've been and I know that's none of my business; but I don't want to die—

PAPO: Hey man, you think I got AIDS?

BRIAN: I'm not saying you do. I'm just saying—

PAPO: I ain't no fucking leper.

BRIAN: I've waited this long I can wait until they find a cure.

PAPO: So fucking wait.

BRIAN: Are you healthy?

PAPO: Jesus Christ, you wanna fucking note from my mother?

BRIAN: I'm afraid.

PAPO: Well look, what the fuck do you want me to do?

BRIAN: I'm afraid.

PAPO: Look, what do you want to do? Do you wanna jerk off?

BRIAN: I don't have to buy you a sweater so I can jerk myself off.

PAPO: Lissen, I ain't got all day and you ain't got all day; so what is it you want?

BRIAN: Just be a little patient. I've never done this before.

PAPO: Yeah yeah, sure sure.

BRIAN: Please don't ruin it for me.

PAPO: What the fuck am I doing? You're the one looking at me like an open sore or something.

BRIAN: I'm afraid to touch you. I'm becoming so obsessed with sex that I'm suffocating. I walk down Forty-second Street and I can't breathe.

PAPO: You ain't missing much.

BRIAN: I'm beginning to fantasize at work.

PAPO: Hey, fucking ease up. Look, I'm clean. You ain't gonna catch nothing from me. I use these. *(He throws a package of condoms on the bed.)*

BRIAN: Great.

PAPO: Let's get this show on the road. I'll pop your cherry and you'll feel like a new man.

*(PAPO carefully takes off his sweater and folds it neatly. BRIAN picks up the package of condoms.)*

BRIAN: I am trusting my life to a piece of rubber that is thin enough to read through.

PAPO: C'mon, mother fucker. They're tropical colors no less.

BRIAN: I can't. I want to, but I can't.

*(PAPO stares at him.)*

PAPO: Fine. Fuck you, too. But I am keeping this sweater.

BRIAN: Don't be mad.

PAPO: Hey, of course not. But lissen, I better not see you on the deuce again 'cause sweater or no sweater I'll kick your mother-fucking ass in.

BRIAN: Don't be that way.

PAPO: Come telling me I'm a fucking walking den of AIDS. What, you work for the *Post*, mother fucker?

BRIAN: Papo, can I just hold you.

PAPO: No.

BRIAN: I just want to feel you next to me.

PAPO: *(Relenting)* Fuck you.

*(BRIAN tentatively approaches PAPO. PAPO smirks, but lets himself be hugged.)*

PAPO: Shit, it was an expensive sweater.

*(BRIAN begins to caress PAPO, who slowly begins to respond.)*

PAPO: Look, mother fucker—

BRIAN: Brian.

PAPO: Brian. You ain't gonna catch that shit from me. I'm clean. Really. No tracks. Look at my arms.

BRIAN: Just hold me.

PAPO: You a virgin, right? I never met a fucking virgin before.

BRIAN: If I'm fucking I can't be a virgin.

PAPO: You know what I fucking mean.

*(PAPO and BRIAN begin to kiss. PAPO begins to undress BRIAN, who panics and tries to break free. PAPO holds him. BRIAN pushes him, breaks free, and runs out. PAPO follows him. On the street.)*

PAPO: C'mon back, man. You still got some time left.

BRIAN: You weren't supposed to do that.

PAPO: Okay. Okay.

BRIAN: I know where you were heading.

PAPO: Jesus fucking Christ. I'm sorry I touched you. I thought that's what you paid me for.

BRIAN: Lower your voice.

PAPO: Look, you turn me on. Not many tricks do that. I gotta fake it with most of 'em. But you, look. (*He points to his crotch.*) I don't wear underwears so I know when something is fucking getting to me.

(*BRIAN is panic stricken. He walks away from PAPO and pretends to look in a store window. PAPO follows him.*)

PAPO: What's the matter?

BRIAN: Will you cover that?

PAPO: C'mon. Nobody gives a fuck.

(*BRIAN walks away, PAPO follows.*)

PAPO: Man, you don't want to see it, you don't want to touch it. Get yourself a fucking woman.

(*BRIAN tries to stretch PAPO's sweater down to cover his crotch.*)

PAPO: Hey, watch it with the fucking sweater.

BRIAN: Uh, look, I thought it was the right time for me but I guess it's not.

PAPO: Hey c'mon. There's no mother-fucking contest going on. We ain't out to break a speed limit or shit like that.

BRIAN: Papo, I am a twenty-six-year-old virgin.

PAPO: You're twenty-six? You look older.

BRIAN: There are not too many of us out there.

PAPO: It's probably 'cause of the fucking suit and tie.

BRIAN: Look, I've got to go.

PAPO: You wanna meet again or something?

BRIAN: I'm...I'm not ready.

PAPO: Give you a discount. I could use some pants to go with this sweater.

BRIAN: And buy yourself some underwear. People are staring at us.

PAPO: Fuck 'em. You wanna get back together again?

BRIAN: I have to get back to work.

PAPO: Hey, I'm not good enough for you, faggot.

(*BRIAN walks away. PAPO follows.*)

PAPO: Look, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. My mouth is like on automatic pilot.

(*BRIAN grabs PAPO's hand and shakes it.*)

BRIAN: Goodbye and good luck.

(*BRIAN hurriedly crosses the street.*)

PAPO: Yeah, you too.

*(PAPO waits for a bit and then follows BRIAN to where he works. BRIAN rushes into the building not knowing he has been followed. PAPO smiles at the building.)*

*(Lights up on BOBBY, who is packing a knapsack full of panties.)*

BOBBY: Dear Reggie, thanks a lot for telling me yourself that you were gonna get married. It meant a whole lot to me that you called even though Mom and Dad were trying to keep it a secret. We both know how they are. Reggie, I think you are making a big mistake. There is no way this Lisa can love you the way I love you and no way you can love her the way you love your Baby. I'm going to save you, Reggie, before you make the worst mistake of our lives. Love, Baby.

*(Lights up on PAPO sitting at a table, drinking coffee.)*

PAPO: I always take a coffee at Blimpie's on Forty-second off Eighth. Right across the street from Port Authority. Pick up some change from the Jersey crowd. I used to hang out at Playland next to the old Anco Theatre, but fuck, the crowd there just kept getting younger and younger. Fucking Menudo convention. One of those snot-nosed little bastards tried to charge me. Waving his skinny ass in my face and then tells me "forty bucks". I broke his head. They don't want me at Playland no more. Fuck 'em. I don't care. I'm here for the duration.

*(Lights come up on BOBBY, who is holding a carving knife. PAPO remains lit, drinking his coffee silently.)*

BOBBY: No, not a whole set of knives. I think all my sister-in-law needs is a carving knife. The whole family is getting together for her birthday and I'm always giving her clothes and stuff so I figured this year I'd give her something for the house. She likes cooking so I'm sure she'll be able to utilize it. My sister-in-law really is gonna be surprised. I think mine is gonna be the best gift of all.

*(Lights out on BOBBY.)*

PAPO: And anyways right outside of Playland there's this girl preaching to everybody with a mother-fuckin' bullhorn. Yeah, that bitch. Goddamn. It's like, is Jesus Christ deaf?

*(Lights up on BRIAN. He is at his desk, lost in thought. The phone on his desk rings seven times without any sign of BRIAN hearing it. After the phone has stopped ringing there is a pause, BRIAN suddenly talks into the intercom.)*

BRIAN: Did the phone just ring?

PAPO: After I recharge my batteries at Blimpie's I head to P A. You gotta be careful though 'cause they put mothe-fucking cops everywhere. Keep moving and keep looking at the schedule so it looks like you got someplace

to go. I once got pinched after I sucked a cop dry. Hell, yes! He starts in to read me my mother-fucking rights and I looked at that mother fucker and I started yelling "Rape" and he got nervous and he left.

*(Lights up. PAPO and BOBBY meet—the men's room at the Port Authority, five p m on Friday. BOBBY looks like what he is, lost. He is wearing a jacket that is too hot for the weather and carrying a knapsack. In his right hand he carries the knife in a brown paper bag. He is hot and tired. He squats down on the floor and puts his knapsack between his legs and the paper bag on top of it. He is removing his jacket when PAPO enters and walks right into him.)*

PAPO: Hey mother fucker, you couldn't find someplace else to park?

BOBBY: You bumped into me.

*(PAPO does not listen and continues walking.)*

BOBBY: You did.

*(PAPO has walked down the length of the stalls and returns. He is upset. Again he bumps into BOBBY.)*

PAPO: Goddamn it, kid. Get the fuck outta my way.

BOBBY: You bumped into me.

PAPO: What?

BOBBY: Last time too.

*(PAPO grabs BOBBY's face.)*

PAPO: If I see you again I'm gonna kick your fuckin' ass in.

*(Someone clears his throat in the last stall. PAPO releases BOBBY and washes his hands.)*

VOICE: Psst.

BOBBY: What's that?

PAPO: Why don't you go over there and find out, cunt?

VOICE: Psst, hey kid.

PAPO: He means you, white boy.

BOBBY: He dropped some money.

PAPO: No, fool, he's makin' an offer you ain't gonna refuse.

BOBBY: I'm hungry.

PAPO: Tell him that. Maybe the mother fucker will buy you dinner.

BOBBY: I spent all my money on a gift.

VOICE: Psst.

BOBBY: You wanna see?

PAPO: Show it to the guy with the leak.

BOBBY: What do I have to do for the money?

PAPO: Nothing you haven't done before, only now some fool mother fucker's gonna pay to help.

BOBBY: I could use the money.

PAPO: So go ahead.

BOBBY: Can I?

PAPO: Hey faggot, I ain't your father.

*(BOBBY begins to inch toward the stall.)*

BOBBY: I'm sorry I bumped into you.

*(PAPO watches BOBBY's slow progress in the mirror.)*

PAPO: Oh, what the hell.

*(PAPO grabs BOBBY's arm and steers him out of the men's room.)*

PAPO: Come on, Georgie, we don't want you to miss your mother-fucking bus. You know how ma gets.

BOBBY: Bobby.

PAPO: Yeah, just move it, white boy.

*(Outside of the men's room)*

PAPO: Let's circulate. That guy in the last stall. The one you was going to is a cop. The second you touched that twenty he was gonna pinch your lily-white ass.

BOBBY: Why would a cop wanna pinch me?

PAPO: Arrest, fool. Fuck. Straight off the mother fuckin' bus. He'd have you for soliciting and as a runaway.

BOBBY: How do you know he's a cop?

PAPO: They all wear the same fucking shoes. All the time. Like the whole fucking police force gets a discount if they all buy them. Ugly-ass shoes.

BOBBY: I'm still hungry.

PAPO: So, go earn some money, bitch. Just watch out for the shoes.

*(BOBBY takes out a cigarette, lights it, and begins to smoke. PAPO immediately takes the cigarette from his mouth, throws it on the floor, and steps on it.)*

PAPO: Babies don't smoke.

*(He walks away; BOBBY follows.)*

PAPO: Goodbye, Kid.

BOBBY: I'll give you my jacket if I can stay with you for a while.

PAPO: I don't want your fucking jacket.

BOBBY: I want ice cream.

PAPO: Bitch, what is your problem. Lookee here. *(He goes to trash basket and takes out a piece of paper.)* Pencil.

BOBBY: I got a pen.

PAPO: Whatever.

*(BOBBY reaches into his pocket and gives PAPO a pen. PAPO looks at the arrival board and writes down a number.)*

PAPO: Okay, Kid, every time you walk up to somebody you tell him this is the bus you're waiting for. He'll tell you it ain't due for hours you tell him you're waiting for your mother and you haven't got any money and you're hungry. With a face like yours, Baby, they'll buy you something. Don't go with one of them unless they show you money. First get the money then find out what you gotta do to earn it. Capiche? Keep your eyes on their shoes, too. If a cop stops you show him this piece of paper and point to the fucking sign. Then just tell him you're gonna sit down and read comic books. They should leave you the fuck alone.

BOBBY: Who am I waiting for again?

PAPO: Your mother, asshole.

BOBBY: Right. You want to wait with me?

PAPO: You are a fool. This is just pretend so the cops don't get you. Gimme back the paper. You're gonna fuck it up.

BOBBY: I won't. Honest.

PAPO: Shit. I should just let them drag you down to juvenile. Trade down there rape you ragged.

*(BOBBY begins to tremble. He drops his bag.)*

PAPO: Hey shithead, don't go having a fucking seizure on me. You a fucking epileptic or something?

BOBBY: I'm just hungry, Reggie. Buy me some ice cream.

PAPO: Sure, Baby, sure. They got some Howard Johnson shit on the second floor.

BOBBY: My mother's not coming to pick me up. Can I stay with you?

PAPO: What the fuck. I ain't scored and I'm horny and you're cute. Okay. One night. One. Uno.

*(BOBBY picks up his bag. Blackout. Light up on BRIAN in a cap and gown, holding a diploma. It is his graduation day.)*

DEAN'S VOICE: ...class valedictorian, Brian Ritter.

BRIAN: Esteemed professors, honored guests, fellow students—

*(BRIAN's taped voice will continue but his mouth will stop moving.)*

BRIAN'S VOICE: We have before us what appears to be a horizon with no borders, no limits. Our education and our potential guarantee us entrance to—

BRIAN: To nothing. My tie is too tight. I remember I was angry because the gown wasn't long enough to hide where my mother had lowered the hem of my cousin David's "perfectly good suit, and we can't afford a new one anyway." I am the class valedictorian in a hand-me-down suit. Voted most desperate to fit in. I always knew I was different and I always hid it. Ever since my parents caught me playing doctor with a neighbor boy. They wouldn't speak to me for a week. I was dirty. I didn't exist. Sometimes I would get so crazy I would kiss my G I Joe doll. Or I would cry and stand in a corner, praying that God would make it all better. That I would be like everybody else. What kind of parents wouldn't talk to a seven-year-old child for a week? I am getting out of here. I will become a somebody. I will win my independence. I will buy my life back from you. And when I have I'll get myself a man. A life-sized G I Joe. If I can just wait. If I can go hungry just for a little while I'll be all right.

BRIAN'S VOICE: ...and in closing—

BRIAN: There's no reason anyone should know. Don't make the world angry at you, Brian. Wait.

BRIAN'S VOICE: Wait.

BRIAN: Wait.

BRIAN'S VOICE: Thank you.

*(Blackout. Lights up on flophouse.)*