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Talk To Me

By Michael Genet

Wake up, God damn it!
I know it's hard.
Your eyes is burning,
slowly opening.
You slowly realizing
that this wasn't no dream.
No, this is your life.
Yeah, right about now
you're looking at them
cold walls that surround you,
and you wondering,
"How the hell did I get up
in this joint, Jack?
"And how the fuck
I'm gonna get out?"
(BUZZING)
But you know what they say:
"It's like life, y'all.

PETEY ON P. A. . . :

"Ain't no way to it,
but to do it. "
So reach on up there
and scratch another day
off the wall, man.
But don't be whining.
Uh-uh.
Ain't gonna be no signal fire.
Just take a stand.
Be a man.
It's good to see you, man.
And try to understand.
Hey, listen, man. Listen.
You ain't in here
'cause of the master's plan.
No, you in here
'cause you fucked up!
Look, this is the nigga
that I've been writing
you about. You dig?
Yo, I was reading my court
papers the other day, y'all.
They say, "Ralph Waldo
'Petey' Greene versus

the United States of America."

I say, "Goddamn!

No wonder I'm up

in this motherfucker!"

So I'm gonna dedicate

this next one to my baby.

Man, she gonna be up here

in a minute, and this gal,

Lord have mercy,

she's fine as frogs, yeah.

So while this is playing,

I want y'all to think about

the one y'all love.

And I'm talking about the one

sends you them pictures, man,

not the cat in the next bunk.

I guess you're pretty hard up

for entertainment around here.

Yeah, man. This is prison.

Whatever gets you through

twenty-to-life.

I got a meeting.

You...

You need anything?

I don't need shit.

Okay.

Let me ask you something.

Why do you even bother?

Because I promised Mama.

Don't do me no fucking favors.

(BUZZING)

Hello, Vernell.

That's the booty line.

Conjugal visits.

(VERNELL EXCLAIMING)

Hay. Hey, Radio man! Hey!

So Milo been telling you

about me, huh?

What?

Milo. Your brother?

Said y'all need a new DJ

at that radio station.

Hey, I'm your man.

My brother wouldn't know.

And in case you forgot,
you're in prison.
It's a minor challenge.
You're a miscreant.
That's more than
a minor challenge.
The fuck this nigga call me?
A Miss who?
A miscreant.
A convict.
(LAUGHING)
Listen to this nigga!
I'm a miscreant!
Well, you know what?
I like that shit!
'Cause that makes me sound
like a con with class.
Hey, Ralph Waldo
"Petey" Greene,
miscreant mack
at your service.
You forgot "felon."
"Lowlife."
So do that mean
I got a job or what?
Wait! Wait! Wait! Wait! Wait!
I need you to do me a favor,
sugar. Okay?
I need you to go home
and take this
right on down to Nighthawk
for me, okay?
Here.
Here!
Come on, take it!
Here!
Ain't no padding in there,
sweetie.
You tell him
it's all me, okay?

PETEY:

What?
You don't get your ass

in that room...
Oh, shut up.
It's just a bra.
Hey, radio man!
You better come on!
I'm gonna look you up
when I get out of here, man.
Yeah?
How many years you pulling?
Five to ten.
Nickel to a dime.
It ain't shit, baby.
You do that.
I'm the best there is, baby.
I'm the greatest!
I'm the greatest
of all time, baby!

NIGHTHAWK:

The Nighthawk Show,
doing it for all those
fine young things
down at Howard University.
The Love Hawk
with you all night,
rocking your radio
in the nation's capital.

It's 5:

Sounds of Soul, the big O-L.
We keep losing ground to WOOK.
We can make up the lost ground
on OK, sir. I mean,
we have a very exciting slate.
Great music, talk...
Sounds good,
but it's not working.
What's the problem?
The problem is we've lost
touch with the real DC
in our attempts
to win over the Beltway.
This has always been
a station of the people

and in case you forgot,
most of the people
don't live in Georgetown.
Yeah, but the people who live
in Georgetown
do shop at Giant Foods
and Woody's.
Sponsors that pay your salary.
No. I pay his salary,
and yours.
Maybe I should start paying
your salary to him.
Sir, I think...
I'm serious.
What do you say, Dewey?
You think
you can turn us around?
Yes sir, I do.
Good.
Let's give it a try.
Good afternoon, gentlemen.

MAN:

a minute of your time, please.

PETEY:

I found out today
I ain't a con, y'all.
For real.
I am not a con,
or a felon, or a thug.
No. I am a miscreant.
(LAUGHS)
Now, y'all know what that is?
Good morning.
That's a con, brother.
A felon, a thug.
We ain't in prison.
No, this
a correctional facility.
See, when you broke into
that car, or shot that nigga,
it wasn't 'cause you
a wrong-doing

motherfucker, no.
No, see,
you troubled, brother.
You disenfranchised.

ANNOUNCER:

Starring Johnny Carson.
And now...

PETEY:

so that we don't have
to face the truth.
'Cause the truth is,
no matter how many ways
you try to slice it,
I'm a con.

OFFICER:

And you a con, too.

POOCHIE:

Warden's got a little dick!
Warden's got a little dick!
Yeah! Come on, Warden!
What you got?
You got that little dick?
Who the hell is that man
on my tower?
Braxton, Poochie, sir.
Ten-to-fifteen, armed robbery.
(INMATES YELLING)
Hey, Warden! You got a little,
itty-bitty dick! That's right!
That's you, Warden!
Shoot him.
Sir?
Right between the eyes.
I don't know
if we can do that, legally.
Technically,
he's not trying to escape.
Well, where in hell
can I shoot him, then?
Listen here!

I want Petey Greene!
You hear me, Warden?
I want you to get Petey Greene
out here, right now.
Petey! Petey! Petey!
Petey! Petey! Petey!

POOCHIE:

Where Petey at?
Oh, yo, Petey!
(WHOOPING)
Yeah. Look,
you got a little dick!
Warden! Your dick, Warden!
Look like you got
quite a situation here, sir.
Yes, Mr. Greene, I do.
(SINGING) Warden's got
a little dick!
Can you do anything?
I don't know, sir.
I mean, what you got
in your boxers is God's doing.
Sorry, Warden, you kind of
walked right into that one.
Poochie! Nigga, what the hell
are you doing up there, man?
Yeah! Warden's got
a little dick!
Now look here, Warden.
Poochie crazy.
He's a good kid,
but he got all fucked up
on that narcotic.
Come on, Warden,
what you got?
I can get him down.
Got that little dick!
I can even shut him up.
Come on, what you gonna do?
What you gonna do, Warden?
I'd be very grateful.
Now, exactly how grateful
are we talking about?

(WHISPERING)

All right.

Poochie!

Petey! It's Petey!

Boy, if you don't come down
from there and stop making
all that noise,

I'm gonna call your mama.

(EXCLAIMING)

I'm gonna tell her you
out here acting a fool, man.

Now, come on down. Poochie.

(LAUGHS)

INMATES:

Petey! Petey!

Petey! Petey! Petey! Petey!

(ALL SHOUTING)

We take all necessary measures
in support of freedom
and in defense of peace
in Southeast Asia.

Stop the bombing,
and stop the war.

Come on.

(LAUGHING) Petey!

Yeah.

Ain't this a bitch?

What?

I can't move my legs, baby.

You jiving!

No.

Look here, Petey.

Now, you know I been
with you ten years, right?

Hell, nine of them
you was in jail.

So you know how
I feel about you.

But I didn't get all foxy,
nails done, new dress
to hear you talking
about you can't move.

Now, I know you're scared.

Okay?

Every man is scared.

But baby, I'm standing here
in a girdle
and some tight-ass shoes,
and I wanna meet me
some Nighthawk!

So you best to get your legs
to moving and get in there
and get your job.

What if I ain't good enough?

Hell! Every man I know
ain't good enough, Petey!

But even with all your shit,
you the only one who is.

Now, come on! Look at you!

You the man with the pants!

Yeah.

The shit-talking,
pimp-walking, good-loving man.

Oh, that's right.

The mack that's the head
of the Cool Cat Clan!

Give me some!

Preach on.

And you'll be damned if you
take shit from any black,
yellow, green or white man.

Amen!

Hallelujah!

Baby, did I tell you
how good you look?

I know!

(GASPS)

Good afternoon, good people.

There he is.

You wanted to meet him, go on.

I can't move my legs.

Hello, DC, this is Sunny Jim,
coming back at you.

Well, it's about time

for me to go,

but don't forget to come

to the country fair tomorrow.

I know I'd love me some cotton
candy. How about you, Widget?

(HONKS)

"Oh yeah, I love it,
I love it.

It's sweet, it's fluffy,
"and it's oh-so-satisfying!"

I'm gonna leave you
with the sunny, sweet,
cotton-candy sounds
of The Supremes.

(R&B MUSIC PLAYING)

Have no fear,
The Hawk is here.
You're late.

Oh, I'm never late. The Hawk
is always right on time.

Just hurry on up
and get in there.

What you got?

Better tell these women
to stop calling here for you.
I'm not your social secretary.
Jamming up my phones!
One heifer sent her panties!
Don't blame me.

It's the voice.

In the last six months,
we've seen our numbers rise
with our core audience.

Nighthawk's show,
as you can see,
is winning in its time slot.

But we need to take
another serious look
at our programming.

We need to inject some new
ideas, some new blood, some...

Oh, hell, no.

You all right, Dewey?

Yes, sir.

Anyway, the morning show...

May I help you?

Yeah, sweetness.

Tell your boss that Petey
Greene's on the scene.
May I ask
what this is pertaining to?
I don't know what
it's pertaining. Just tell him
it's about my job.
Go on, get on the horn, sugar.

ON RADIO:

This is the Nighthawk,
(WHOOPING)
Taking you all the way
to the midnight hour.
That's my song!
(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)

FREDA:

I'm sorry to interrupt you,
but there's a Petey Greene
who wants to tell you he's
"on the scene."

PETEY:

with your bad self!
Sir?
...a five-dollar bill
right there.
What in blue blazes
is going on out here?
Did this nigga just say
"blue blazes"?
(LAUGHING) He did!
Who are these people?
Hold it, now. Hold it, man.
We got an appointment,
all right?
Go on, get your boss, sugar.
That is my boss.
No, not Blue Blazes.
I'm talking about the skinny,
righteous nigga.
Young man, there is
one boss here, I am he,

and we don't use that term.

Hey!

Well, right the fuck on, man!

Where you been hiding?

Come on, tell your boss

here about my job.

What?

SONDERLING:

Tell your boss that

I'm your new DJ, man.

Did you promise

this fellow a job?

No sir.

I didn't promise him anything.

Now, you is about

a lying motherfucker.

You promised me a job as

soon as I got out the joint.

Well surprise, I'm out.

You owe me.

Oh my God, he's a convict.

Ex-convict!

I prefer "miscreant."

Freda, call the police.

Now, you ain't calling

a motherfucker!

You know how much bullshit I

had to run to get out of jail?

I ain't never going

back there, man.

Now, you promised me a job,

and I'm here to work

in this funky joint.

And ain't no way

in blue blazes I'm leaving

till I get what's mine.

Right on!

So figure it out.

That's right.

(WHISPERING) Sir,

would you excuse us

for one moment please?

Would you like

to come with me?
Yeah. Talk to me. Shit.
(VERNELL EXCLAIMS)
This is my song!
(R&B MUSIC PLAYING)
Girl, you can't feel that?
What y'all trying
to do to me and shit?
Get your goddamn hands
off of me!
Have you lost your mind?
Are you trying
to get me fired?
Man, I'm trying
to get me a job!
Look, I admire
your determination, okay?
But you do not walk in here
and talk to Mr. E.G.
Sonderling like that!
And where the hell
did you get the idea
you'd be a disc jockey?
From you, brother.
(LAUGHING) What?
I never said that.
I said, "Look me up." Okay?
And even if I could
get you a job,
it would be as a janitor,
or a window cleaner, maybe.
Oh, I don't do windows,
Jack.
I guess that kind of work
is beneath a convict
of your pedigree, huh?
You know what, man? Fuck you.
I thought you was real.
You ain't nothing but another
white boy with a tan.
See, a cat come out
of Hard Time, U.S.A. Looking
to turn his life around...
Shit, I expect

to get rejected by whitey!
So because I'm black,
I'm supposed to ignore
the fact that your only
experience has been in jail
and hire you as a DJ?
You goddamn right.
You sound
just like my brother.
Nigga, I ain't him.
I'm out here trying
to get what's mine.
His ass is back there
in Lorton, cooling his heels.
But you know what?
That's all right.
You Sidney Poitier-ass nigga,
I'm gonna get what's mine.
And when I do, I'm coming
right back here and shove it
in your fucking face!
Sellout!
(HUMMING)
Vernell. Come on, baby,
we're splitting.
All right, baby.
Come on.
All right!
Oh, wait, wait, wait, wait!
One second. Wait.
I'll be right back!
Wait for me, okay, sugar?
That Formica?
Hey, you're...
No, you can't go in there.
(MO ANING ON RADIO)
(KISSING)
You make me so hot.
(GIGGLING)
Bye-bye! Thank you!
It was so lovely meeting
all of y'all.
Bring your ass on!
Shut the fuck up!

I'm coming, God damn it!
Blue Blazes, you so cute!
I'm gonna take this
off your hands, girl.
Power to the people!
(CHUCKLING)

PETEY:

Shut up! Shit!
I told your ass I was coming
up here to see the Nighthawk!
Thanks.
You're welcome, brother.
Hello, brother.
Democratic freedom, brother.
First Amendment, baby.
God bless you.
Go straight to hell!
Go straight to hell!
WOL! WOL!
WOL! WOL!
Go straight to hell!
Go straight to hell!
You're embarrassing
yourselves.

ALL:

You're embarrassing...
You're embarrassing
yourselves!
Go straight to hell!
WOL!
WOL!
Go straight to hell!
Go straight to hell!
WOL!
WOL!
PETEY ON LOUDSPEAKER:
Dewey Hughes is in bed
with the man!

CROWD:

in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is

in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is
in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is
in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is
in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is
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in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is
in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is
in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is
in bed with the man!
Dewey Hughes is in bed with...
Dewey Hughes is
in bed with the man!
There he is!
(ALL BOOING)
Dewey Hughes is a blushing...
Well, does he have blood?
I don't know.
Now, a righteous brother
tries to better himself,
make up for his mistakes...

ALL:

... and WOL slams
the door right in his face.
Now, I ask you,
is that righteousness?

ALL:

Ladies and gentlemen,
WOL would never turn

its back on our listeners.
Our goal is to speak for
and to unite the community,
not divide or hurt.
Did he say WOL speaks
for the community?
Why ain't they speaking
about that black boy
that got shot down
by them pigs the other day?
Yeah!
Yeah!
Do you know why?
'Cause if they did,
Mr. Giant Foods
may not give them any more
of that green stuff.
And as we know, money is
always the real truth!

ALL:

Petey! Petey!
Petey! Petey! Petey! Petey!
Petey! Petey! Petey! Petey!
Petey! Petey! Petey! Petey!
Hell, no!
Petey! Petey! Petey! Petey!
Telephone!
Petey! Petey! Petey!
Let him know!
Petey! Petey! Petey! Petey!
(ALL CHEERING)
(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)

PETEY:

Hey, you a little
out of your element
around here, ain't you,
Mister Tibbs?
Well, I thought you might be
more comfortable
in familiar surroundings.
Yeah, you right.
So, I wanna bring this little

show of yours to an end.
Well, that mean
you offering me a job?
No.
Well, then I'm afraid
the show must go on.
That's entertainment talk.
Listen, man,
since you're here,
wanna play a little game?
A little 9-Ball?
Sure.
Call it, sugar.
Heads. Please.
(COIN DROPS)
Tails.
Rack 'em, chump.
Please.
(CHUCKLING)
Wanna make it
a little interesting?
A little wager on it,
radio man?
You don't wanna just play?
Ain't really playing unless
you got something on the line.
What do you think? About
five hundred?
Rolling kind of heavy for
a man just out of the joint.
Oh, they got
a real nice savings plan.
Okay.
Uh-huh.
I see Mr. Blue Blazes
keeps you happy.
I do okay.
Now, this is just a side bet,
you understand.
Really?
What you say, Tibbs?
How about you play me
for a career?
One game, 9-Ball.

I win, you get me
a job down at that station.
And as you know,
I don't do windows.
And if you lose?
I leave you the fuck alone.
Well, then, let's play.
Well, all right.
I tell you what.
Here's another hundred
says you don't drop
a ball off the break.
(LAUGHS)
Mister Tibbs,
trying to talk a little shit!
I like your style, Tibbs!
Yeah, I'm gonna take some more
of your money.

VERNELL:

I'm about to run this rack.
You're chalking up your cue a
little heavy there, ain't you?
I mean, that ain't
your cellmate's dick
you're holding.
(MAN LAUGHING)
Just for that, I'm gonna drop
the nine ball off the break.
Nigga, you couldn't drop your
drawers to fuck The Supremes
if all three of them was lying
butt-naked on this table.
What's the matter, big time?
You thinking
about all that money
lying in your lady's lap?
Is that why you're sweating?
Or maybe it's all that whiskey
you've been sucking on.
Or maybe you're sweating
'cause you know that even
if you give it your best shot,
you still might

leave 'em standing.
'Cause this ain't
Lorton anymore.
This is the real world.
And you ain't shit out here.
Are you through?
Knock 'em down, champ.

MAN:

Come on. Come on.

PETEY:

MAN 1:

MAN 2:

Damn!
Too bad, big time.
I had faith in you.
(CHATTERING)
One ball, corner.
Two ball, side pocket.
Three ball, corner.
See, negroes always think that
if you speak correct English,
or you wear clothes
other than clown suits,
that you're not real.
Four ball, side pocket.
And to you, what's real is
a nigga loud-mouthing, right?
Telling everybody
how bad he is while
he's looking for a handout.
Five.
But you give him a chance
to take what's his,
and he can't sink
one single ball.
Six.
Lucky seven!
(PEOPLE EXCLAIMING)
Now, you were so busy
running your mouth,

you never really asked
yourself why I chose
a pool hall to meet.
'Cause this uppity nigga
could never have grown up
in these projects,
or made his way through school
hustling dumbass niggas
who thought he wasn't down.
They call me Mr. Hughes.
Grew up
in the Anacostia projects.
This con climbed the tower
in the yard back in Lorton.
He up there, man,
he's talking real...
You know, unflattering
about the warden's dick.
Nobody could talk
this cat down.
So they call Petey Greene,
man,
I talked this cat down
in five minutes, man.
Let's just say the warden was
very, very grateful.
Five minutes, huh?
Mmm-hmm.
But what the warden don't know
is it took me six months
to talk that crazy nigga
up there in the first place!
Let me ask you something.
Why?
Why you want to be on
the radio so bad that you're
gonna go through all this?
Oh, man, it's what I do, man.
It's my thing, you know?
I started off making
them daily announcements
back at Lorton
as part of the work program,
you know?

A reward for good behavior.
Couple years later,
I convinced them
to let me play this record
that my Aunt Pig had sent me,
a Sam Cooke record, man,
A Change Is Gonna Come.
That's an incredible song.
She sent me that record,
you know, to try and give me
a little hope,
and I wanted to play it
for the men in them cells,
you know, give them some hope.
And I'm telling you, man,
it's the only thing that kept
me from going stone-crazy
behind them walls, man.
And now that I'm out,
I still need that.
Why should I put
my ass on the line
to give you a shot, Petey?
Nigga...
'Cause Petey Greene is
the real deal, Jack!
Shit! I swear to God,
I mean, he is the sho'nuff,
I mean, pimp...
Sorry.
It's okay.
See, what this pretty lady
is trying to tell you is that,
man, being a DJ, that's
the only thing I'm good at
that don't involve me
breaking no law.
And shit, since you here
sharing a drink,
I'm gonna assume
that you need a man
of my particular talents.
Three rules.
One,

always know
more than your audience.
Two, you talk shit,
you back it up.
And three, don't you ever,
never, ever,
underestimate me again.
What are you talking about,
man?
I'm gonna give you
one more chance
to knock in that nine ball.
Tomorrow morning, 9:00 a.m.,
WOL, Studio One. Be on time.
Be sober.
And definitely
be by yourself.
(STAMMERING)
You my kind of nigga, Hughes!
You my kind of motherfucker,
Hughes!
We love you!
We love you!
Oh my God!
(EXCLAIMING)
We need to make
a personnel change.
Really? Who?
Sunny Jim.
You're not serious.
Sir, morning shows
are becoming more than
just a leisurely stroll.
We have to compete here.
WOOK is killing us
in the morning.
But Sunny Jim is a DC icon!
Everyone loves Sunny Jim.
He's so sunny.
No sir, you love Sunny Jim.
Sunny Jim is a relic
of a bygone radio age.
We don't play Nat "King" Cole
or The Drifters anymore.

And our DJ's have
to reflect that.
That's why we have Nighthawk
and Soul Papa.
I'm not turning this into
some kind of teenybopper
American Bandstand.
We're a respectable
R&B station.
With all due respect, sir,
this is not
a respectable town.
This is DC.
You see them out
on the mall every day,
protesting the so-called
respectable establishment.
We can't become
the establishment,
or they'll turn on us.
Who do you have in mind?
Well, sir, I found a DJ
from an out-of-town station.
He has a major following,
and he's recently
been released
from his contract.
Jim, come back here, please.
It's nothing personal.
Oh, shit! I'm sorry...
Watch where the hell
you're going!
All right, man.
Oh, no.

PETEY:

You know the drill.
Call your man.
I don't think so.
Let me ask you something.
You ever had anybody
eat your pussy?
Mr. Sonderling!
What's wrong, Freda?

Oh, God.
Blue Blazes.
How the radio business?
I put up with your
shenanigans out front
for a week, Mr. Brown.
Greene.
All right, Mr. Green,
what do you want now?
I'm your DJ, man!
Freda, call the police.
God damn! Y'all got
some hospitality issues
around this motherfucker!
You're cutting it close.
What can I say, man?
Had to get my vine together.
Your vine?
Yeah.
You're going on the...
Fuck.
Mr. Sonderling,
this is our new morning DJ.
I've been hoodwinked!
Come on.
You are out of your mind
if you think I'm gonna put
this person on the air.
Sir, I know
this is unorthodox...
Unorthodox? It's insane!
Sir, hear me out.
This man has a unique voice.
I just have a feeling...
I have much more
than just a feeling.
Sir, we need to put somebody
on the air in the next
two minutes or we go black.
Black, black, black.
Freda, run after Jim, he might
still be in the building!
Sir, we don't have time.
You're just gonna have

to trust me. One show.
One shot.
Our morning show's already
in the toilet.
We don't have a thing to lose.
You don't have
a thing to lose!
FREDA ON INTERCOM:
Sir, it's one minute to air,
and Jim's gone.
Oh, for crying out loud.
It's my own fault
for listening to you.
All right, one show, one shot.
I want you on air with him.
You can introduce him.
I'll be watching and listening
to every word, young man.
You watch your language
on the air.
Scout's honor.
Okay.
Let's go.
You ready?
Yeah.
Okay, remember,
always talk, no dead air.
Talk about your cat, your car,
anything, but no dead space.
And watch your language.
Okay. Now, you're a man
of Washington, so speak
to Washington, okay?
Connect to Washington. Okay?
Yeah.
You watch your language.
This is it, Ralphie.
Okay.
Okay.
We're coming in.
Okay.
Let's do it.
Okay.
Michael, get the door.

MAN:

four, three, two, one...

And hello, Washington.

Welcome to your new

Sound of Soul, WOL.

I'm Dewey Hughes,

director of programming,

here to announce that

Sunny Jim can now be heard

at the midnight hour,

after The Nighthawk Show.

Today I introduce to you

a new voice on the DC scene,

a native of Washington,

a true son of the city,

and some may say,

a prophet of the streets,

here to spin the tunes

that will blow your mind,

Mr. Petey Greene.

Say hello, Petey.

Yeah, hello.

Like the man say,

this is Petey Greene.

And I'm here to spin

the tunes to get you

through your morning.

(GRUNTS)

Your AM morning drive.

But hell, maybe you ain't

driving. Maybe you're walking.

Maybe... Maybe you at work

already, maybe riding a bike.

But irregardless,

I'm gonna play the music

that's gonna keep you going,

and I hope

I don't bore you with...

(GAGS)

With my rambling.

Say the call letters.

The call letters, y'all.

(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)

(VOMITING)

What the fuck is going on?
You didn't come here drunk,
did you?
Oh, shit.

No, man.

I ain't drunk.

It's nerves, man. I'm nervous.

Nerves or not, you better
get your ass back in there.

My ass is on the line!

I don't wanna hear some
fucking Sunny Jim knock off.

I want Petey Greene, damn it!

Stop putting your goddamn
hands on me, man!

I ain't no punk, fool.

Well, stop acting like one
and get back in there
before the song ends!

Move, man.

Here.

Got some bullshit...

(CLEARS THROAT)

Well, that was a little funk
to get you

through your morning

over your yawning,

put the pep in your step,

and a glide in your stride.

Well, over the break,

I was asked to be myself.

So, who is Petey Greene?

Well, I got

an eighth-grade education

with a Ph.D. From the streets.

I'm a recovering alcoholic,

been sober five hours.

But I ain't touched a needle

in over eight years, y'all.

That's right.

Kicked heroin dead in its ass.

I been incarcerated

over half my life,

most recently down at Lorton.
My mama been in jail
for 30 years,
and as we speak my daddy's
pulling 21 in Alcatraz.
I am an all-around hustler,
and some of my best friends
is pimps, whores and gamblers.
But I guess that don't make me
no different than Berry Gordy.
And hell,
that brother own a label!
(LAUGHING)
I'm in pretty good company.
Maybe I'll own a label
one day, y'all. "P-Town."
So this is me, y'all.
And you ain't gotta worry
about me giving you
nothing but the sho'nuff,
'cause that's all I know.
This is P-Town, y'all.
(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)
Are you out of your mind,
saying those things
about Berry Gordy?
Oh, man, I ain't said nothing
that black folk
don't already know.
You will apologize
immediately,
or I pull the plug
on this whole sorry mess.
(SOFTLY) Okay.
What?
I will apologize.
Now!
You said you wanted
Petey Greene, man!
(WHISPERING) Just apologize.
Just apologize.
I'm going by.
I'll tell you what, man.
Open the mike.

Sorry I had to break in now
on you ladies and gentlemen.
I know you was
enjoying it, too.
But in all seriousness, folks,
I gotta apologize about
something that I said a little
earlier that upset some folks.
I gotta apologize
to Mr. Berry Gordy
for making him out
to be a hustler and a pimp.
Mr. Gordy's
a very important man,
and he's done a great deal.
And I love the way
he takes the little
brothers and sisters,
broke-down runaways,
the downtrodden
from the projects,
and he gets them
off the streets.
Then he puts a few dollars
in their pockets, teaches them
how to talk and how to walk,
then sends them right back
out there to bring him
a whole lot of money.
So I'm sorry if in any way
I made him out to be a pimp.
That ain't pimping, y'all!
That's just good
old-fashioned hit-making!
Studio One.
So why don't we hear us
another one of them
good old-fashioned...
Mr. Sonderling,
Motown's DC rep's on the line.
Yeah.
And again, I sincerely
apologize, Mr. Berry Gordy,
from the bottom of my heart.

This is Petey Greene.

SONDERLING:

I'll call you back.

(R&B MUSIC PLAYING)

(DOOR OPENING)

Something like that, boss?

Mr. Greene, you may have just
cost me my FCC license
and a whole lot more. Get out.
And you obviously can't handle
your new responsibility,
so you don't have it anymore.

Call Jim. He's back on
tomorrow. Same time.

What the fuck was that?

Motown is Hitsville, U.S.A.

This is a radio station,
Petey!

We can't afford
to have them angry with us!
"We"?

Did I miss something,
or didn't your ass
just get demoted?

But hey, like Malcolm say,
"When the master sick, house
niggas say, 'We's sick.'"

Oh, you're a self-righteous
field nigga, huh?

You goddamn right!

Well, you just lost a job,
field nigga!

(DOOR SLAMMING)

PETEY:

Hey, man!

At least I know who I am.

I'm Petey Greene, and

I'm gonna keep talking shit!

Yeah?

Yeah.

For all the shit you talk, you
still can't sink a nine ball.

NIGHTHAWK ON RADIO:

We're slowing it down tonight
on WOL.

This is The Hawk,
taking you into midnight.
The Love Hawk...

MAN 1:

I gotta tell you
the same thing, man?

MAN 2:

MAN 1:

baby. Motown!
That nigga this morning?
He was telling the truth!
Come on, man, Berry Gordy
ain't no pimp. Shit!
You see, the problem with
trying to be somebody y'all...
You telling me
a nigga in America,
with that much money...
Why not? You're ignorant.
Oh yeah? You're just
telling it like it is,
just like Petey Greene.
No, I'm telling you.
Why you think they snatched
him off the air so fast
if he wasn't telling
the truth?
C-O-N-spiracy.
See, you're right
about the con part.
That's why they took
his black ass off the air.
Berry Gordy is
a stand-up brother.
Don't nobody want to hear
some con talking mess about
somebody like Berry Gordy.
Right.

Come on.

I would rather listen
to a con than this
sucker-for-love-ass nigga.

Petey Greene was cool,
but that white boy
that was with him...

Oh, God!

(COUGHING)

You okay?

Yeah.

Guys, drinks are on me, okay?

See that, now,

I could get with that.

Thank you, my brother.

Thank you, my brother.

Yo, bartender.

Thank you.

Right on.

How much you leaving, man?

Hey, hey. Keep it coming.

Right on, Kevin.

(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)

You ready to shake up
the world, radio man?

Let me ask you something, man.

Why, huh?

Why should I put my ass
on the line for you?

Why should I give up
all this right here
and take a chance on you?

I guess I need you
to say the things
I'm afraid to say.

And you need me to
do the things
you're afraid to do.

Damn, that was deep.

Yeah. It was, wasn't it?

Yeah. It was good, man.

You should put that shit
on a greeting card.

Go on, chump. Rack them.

See if I can't
teach you something.

SUNNY:

Hey, Jim.

I just wanna apologize
about what happened
and welcome you back.

Come on, let's not fight.

We still gotta work together.

Fan mail.

That's great.

I'm gonna get some coffee.

You want some?

Come on, Jim.

Black. Two sugars.

Okay. Okay.

Dewey! Hey!

Is Jim in his office?

No, I just checked.

He's probably

in the men's room.

You go get him.

I'll stall in there for
a couple of minutes, okay?

I thought that kind of work
was beneath you.

Hey, doing this shit is
how I got thrown in the joint
in the first place.

Well, then this should feel
good. You're on in five!

Wake up, God damn it! Petey
Greene is back on the scene!

And this ain't Washington DC.

No, this is P-Town!

Did you miss me?

Well, I missed y'all, too.

Had to cut it

a little short yesterday.

Man, I don't know

who's worse, though...

Freda, help!

I'm locked in my office!

See, a negro get
a little money in his pocket,
and now we can't talk about it
no more? Shoot!

Look here, man...

Freda! Excuse me, I seem
to be locked in my office.

Could you give me
a hand, please?

... I'm on the air,
which may not be much longer,
so I'm gonna go on ahead
and get my money's worth.

(INAUDIBLE)

They're gonna have to take my
title, just like they did Ali.
And see, that's what
I'm talking about right there.

SONDERLING:

A black man can
only say so much
in this so-called
free country,
till they break you down.

Well, guess what?

I'm telling it.

That's right, and I'm
gonna keep on telling it.

Some of it you're gonna like,
some of it you ain't.

If you got something to say,
give me a call.

If you disagree,
tell me like a man.

Dewey, have you
lost your mind?

Open this door right now!

Even if you're a woman.

Mr. Greene, sir,
you are trespassing!

I'm tired of hearing fools
complaining in barber chairs
and beauty shops.

Let your opinion out.
Come on and give me
a call at this station.
The number is 215-JK5-0199.
Somebody tell Freda
to call the cops.
That number again,
Dewey, this is outrageous.
Open the door!
And now, old Petey gonna play
a little non-Motown for you.
Dewey, open this door.
You're both in trouble.
Do you hear me?
You are in real trouble,
mister!
Come on.
Come out of there
right now.
I'm not kidding!
(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)
Dewey, you're not...
WOL.
Yeah. Yeah.
Putting you through.
Talk to me.

MAN 1:

Sure is.
Petey, didn't I see you
last week down at the
strip club on 14th Street?
Oh, yeah, I was down there.
Wasn't to see no show.
But that don't mean I mind the
company of shake-dancers. No.
My girl, Vernell,
she used to be shake-dancer.
She has a bar down there now.

SONDERLING:

you're trying to prove?
Yeah, I had to go
over there...

WOL.

...and we'll talk about this,

do you hear me?

That's right.

Putting you through now.

Look, don't touch!

Again.

Talk to me.

MAN 2:

I agree with you, man.

All them record guys

are pimps, just like most

lawyers and politicians.

You give them all hell!

You know I will.

SONDERLING:

Come on. Dewey!

No, no, no, no. Put it

straight through on the board.

Line three. On the board.

Dewey?

Talk to me.

MAN 3:

that kid being killed

by the pigs last week?

I'll tell you what I think.

Black folk life

ain't worth nothing.

One day, black folk ain't

gonna take that no more

and when that day happens...

Do you realize

what you've done?

Are you trying to ruin me?

Hot mike, man.

Oh, for crying out loud.

I'm sorry, sir,

it was the only way.

You just let this fellow

ruin your career.

You're finished, Dewey.

You're making a mistake, sir.
You can't see it, but I can.
If you throw us out,
we're gonna walk
straight over to WOOK.
Good! That will help
our ratings.
Gentlemen,
will you kindly escort
these men out of the building?
Sir? I've been trying
to call the police,
but all our lines
have been flooded.
What?
The operator can't handle
the volume, sir.
Are these listener calls?

FREDA:

Wait a minute.
Good morning, WOL.
Yes, ma'am, he is,
but I'm afraid he's real busy
right now. You know,
we're getting a lot of calls.
Yes ma'am, I will,
and thank you.
Keep listening.

DEWEY:

and a talk show,
with a man of the people.
Because WOL is
a station of the people,
for the people,
by the people.
I'm the people.
He'll be a hit, sir.
I promise you that.
All right, thank you all.
Everything's fine here.
Let's all get back to work.
Thank you again.

The next time you decide
to make a personnel change,
at least put it in a memo.
Hold it. You can't give
this thug a job.

Man, I got your thug
right here. Ten inches.

Oh, for heaven's sake.

Be cool, Jim.

What?

We'll talk. We'll talk, okay?

I want him on a short leash.

A very short leash.

And I want a morals clause
in your contract.

Fine, man, whatever.

I'll sign it.

Just let me get back
to work, okay?

Jim, wait up.

Can I get back to work?

All right. But you watch
your language.

All right!

And you keep an eye on him.

Thank you, sir.

All right,

let's get busy here.

(MUSIC CONTINUES PLAYING)

I love that song!

Reminds me of summertime
on the beach

trying to get some foxy coed
to rub some lotion on me.

Mmm. Mmm. Mmm.

Well, in case you been
asleep at the wheel,
this is Petey Greene.

Hello, caller,

what's your name?

And you ain't in Washington,
DC no more, Dorothy.

No, this is P-Town.

All right, Tom, please hold.

Hello, caller,
what's your name?

WOL-AM.

Hello, James.

(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)

My granny,

I call her Aunt Pig,

Aunt Pig say, "Petey,
why you always in jail?"

I tell her I don't know.

"I don't know, Aunt Pig."

Then one day

I read my indictment papers,
they say,

"Ralph Waldo Greene versus
the United States of America. "

I said, "Damn! No wonder

I ain't been winning!"

He's talking about...

And I don't care

what nobody say, ain't nothing
like a black woman.

Now, that ain't to say

I ain't dabbled before.

I mean, I dabbled, man,

I'm a good old dabbler.

But give me a sister

with big hips,

big legs and a big old 'fro,

and you ain't got to worry

about me no more.

NIGHTHAWK:

Fan mail.

How many for The Hawk?

Three?

Sorry.

Gave you one of Petey's.

Y'all listen everyday, huh?

Ain't you, now!

Check it out.

Yeah.

Talk to me, Petey! Talk to me!

Talk to me!

Want me to talk to you?

I'll talk to you.

(SCREAMS)

God damn it!

Oh, baby.

Let me explain.

I'm listening.

Girl, put the bottle down
and let me talk to you.

Go on, Petey. I'm listening.

"Talk to me, Petey.

Talk to me, baby."

Ain't what the bitch said?

You tell this bitch how I was
the only one to give your
sorry ass a place to stay
when you had nowhere else
to go. Tell this bitch!

She took me in.

I cleaned your clothes,
and I cooked your food,
motherfucker!

Oh, shit. Okay! Okay!

Vernell, please. Baby,
listen, now. Don't do this.

You don't wanna

do this here. Hold on.

Listen, I'm sorry.

I fucked up.

Yeah, you fucked up.

I did. I fucked up.

I know it, baby. I know it.

And I ain't trying to make
no excuses for it. But you
don't wanna do this here.

Vernell. Come on, baby,
put the bottle down.

(SOBBING)

Get out.

Nigga, didn't you hear?

I said get out!

This is my joint.

I don't give a fuck, Petey!

Get out!

Let me put some drawers
on or something.
Get the fuck out!
Don't make me say it again,
nigga. I swear to God,
I don't wanna get more upset
than I already am
with this bottle
and get jumpy
and cut your dick off.
You'll be sounding like
Frankie Lyman on the radio.
Get the fuck out!
All right.
Get out.
I'm leaving.
Vernell! Baby...
(KNOCKING)
Help a nigga out, now.
Come on.
Come on, man.
You gotta be shitting me.
Look at me, man!
I don't want to look at you!
I wanna get this image
out of my head.
Dewey, Dewey, Dewey, listen.
Now, Vernell kicked me out
the house. Caught me fucking
some other broad, man.
I ain't got
nowhere else to go.
You should have thought
about that before you let
your snake out the cage.
Listen, man,
my snake's been incarcerated!
I've been jacking off
to girlie magazines
for nine damn years.
Come on, you telling me
you gonna pass up
some fine-ass woman
just throw her pussy

all up on your face?
Hey, Dave.
Hey, Dave!
Get in here. Come on.
Just helping out...
My motherfucking deuce!
Susan, this is Petey Greene.
His girlfriend kicked him out,
so we gotta...
I'll leave you two alone.
No, no, no, no, baby.
No, no, there's no need
for that. You... Just...
Is this what you mean
by taking your work home
with you?
Being married to your career?
Listen, listen...
I should have known.
Come on, help me out here.
No, no, no, no, no... Hey!
Damn!
Man, ain't that a bitch?
Women, man. I'm telling you.

PETEY:

I've been loving you...
too long, Vernell
to stop now
You are...
(WHISPERING)
Shut the hell up, man.
Put that on!
I'm sorry, Dewey.
I fucked up, man.
Oh, shit.
I fucked up, didn't I?
Shit. Just...
Just give her a chance
to cool off, man,
and then you'll talk, okay?
(SOBBING) She don't wanna
talk to me. She mad at me.
She loves you.

She loves you, okay?
Yeah.
Okay?
Yeah. Yeah.
You're a good friend, Dewey.
Okay.
You're a good friend. Yeah.
Yeah, it's... Okay, man.
Thank you, man.
Okay! Okay! Okay. Come on.
Okay.
Get some sleep.
Get some sleep.
I'll talk to you
in the morning, Dewey.
Tomorrow.
Okay.
In the morning, man.
Crazy little...
(CLATTERING)
Shit.
Oh, man.
I appreciate, you know,
you letting me stay at
your place again, bro, but...
Come on, man.
Good night, sir.
Gonna have to give me
some more threads. I can't...
I'm not giving you
any more of my clothes.
Man...
Good night, Mike.
Good night.
Good night, Jim.
Good night.
"Night, Jim.
"Have a nice weekend."
I don't talk like that.
Yeah, you talk
exactly like that.
And you walk like
you got a stick broke off
in your ass, man.

I walk with confidence,
like Johnny Carson.
You could learn something
from him. Good night...
Those are my gators, man.
This all my...
Is she still here?
Now we're even.
Oh, no, she didn't.
Hold on. Hold on.
No, she...
You don't understand.
Calm down, Petey.
Move, Dewey, move!
Calm down.
You enjoy yourself, nigga?
Don't blame me.
It's the voice.
Oh, is it?
Oh, fuck. Okay,
hold on, now, let me...
(MEN SHOUTING)

PETEY:

Mr. Sonderling,
he tried to kill me!
He tried to kill me.
I'm gonna need you
on the air, right away.
What is it?

PETEY ON RADIO:

Once again, this just in.
Oh, man...
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
winner of
the Nobel Peace Prize
and chief orchestrator
of the Civil Rights Movement,
was shot and killed
by an assassin's bullet
outside a Memphis motel
this evening.
They got him, y'all.

They got him.
Only 39 years old,
Dr. King leaves behind
his wife, Coretta, and...
I'm sorry, y'all.
I'm just tired of this.
I don't know
if I'm more sad or angry.
I'm tired of them
taking our leaders!
I know you are, too.
This is WOL, 1450 AM.
They're burning down DC.
What?
They're burning it down.
They're burning it down.
(VEHICLES HONKING)
(MOB SHOUTING)
Come on!
Come on!
(EXCLAIMING)
(EXCLAIMS)
My store.
My store!

DEWEY:

Hold it, man!
Get out of here, man!
Come on! Come on!
No, stop. Stop! Stop!
Stop it, man!
Y'all! Run!
Thank you.
Now, go on. Go on.
I got to get back
on the air, man.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.:
I may not get there with you,
but I want you
to know tonight,
that we as a people
will get to the promised land!
Coming to you, Petey,
in five, four, three, two...

Yeah, buddy,
it's a dark day in America.
Got to be one of the
darkest days I ever seen,
and I seen more than most.
WOL. Yeah, hold for Petey.
In Washington,
this is Petey Greene.
Talk to me.

MAN:

like that, Petey.
Somebody's gonna have to pay,
I'm gonna tell you right now,
somebody gonna pay tonight.
I know you're hurting.
We all hurting.
He the only one we had, Petey.
I know how angry you are.
You want revenge,
you want that quart of blood,
and I don't blame you.
But I want y'all to just go
take a look out your windows.
I mean,
those of you that got them.
Just take a look outside
and tell me what you see.
You see a city on fire.
Now, that's your city.
Our city.
And that's not what Dr. King
would have wanted.
Now, I ain't nothing, man,
I ain't nothing
but a con and a thief.
So I ain't up here trying
to be nobody's preacher.
I'm just trying to tell
the truth to y'all,
like I promised I would,
and the truth is,
I went to jail
'cause I was a knucklehead.

Dr. King went to jail
for what he stood for,
fought for, and died for.
And this ain't it, y'all.
This ain't it.
The man was a giant. Now,
if they could do that to him,
don't think for a minute
they won't cut you down
like a dog, too.
So look here. If you at home,
please, just stay home.
And if you out in these
streets, man, go home.
Put your anger away till
we can sort all this mess out.
I ain't saying I know
how we gonna do it.
I just know that we will.
We shall overcome.
Hold on a second, now.
Petey, there's a free concert
tomorrow night.
You and James Brown,
Georgetown University.
Okay, I've just been told
that tomorrow night,
Mr. James Brown,
the Godfather of Soul,
is gonna be giving a free
show, that's capital-F-R-E-E,
at Georgetown University.
Bring your heartache,
bring your anger,
just bring all that to me,
and we gonna work it out
together. We gonna get
through this, people.
WOL. Hold for Petey.
Talk to me.

WOMAN:

crying and crying. I just...
WOL. Yeah, hold for Petey.

Well, the clock on the wall
says it's time to go.
That's the end of my show,
and there ain't no more.
But before I go,
I wanna leave y'all with this.
"The ultimate measure of a man
"is not where he stands
in moments of comfort
and convenience,
"but where he stands
in times of challenge
and controversy."
And no, those ain't words of
advice from old Petey Greene.
Those are pearls
of wisdom from
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
(ALL CHEERING)
Like the brother said,
I'm Petey Greene.
Good evening, Washington,
and welcome to P-Town!
I'm happy you could make it.
I'm glad you could show.
But the government's the most
happy, 'cause y'all ain't
burning down shit no more.
On my way over here,
this white man say,
"Mr. Greene, why them niggers
lose their mind
"and burn their shit down
that way?"
He called me "mister,"
but called us "niggers."
I say, "Hey, we ain't the ones
that pulled that trigger!
"And if you keep
calling us niggers,
"your mothers, fathers,
sisters and brothers
"gonna have to call
the grave digger. "

I say, "Mr. Charlie,
"I ain't seen
no niggers last night.
"I saw a bunch of beautiful,
angry black folk,
down for the fight. "
But I'm here to tell y'all,
we ain't filled with hate.
(ALL MURMURING)
And the killing of our
great King ain't gonna seal
this kingdom's fate.
We're gonna pray together...

ALL:

... stay together...
Yeah!
... jump up and sing...
Yeah!
... as we celebrate the memory
of Dr. Martin Luther King!
Now I want y'all to give
a big old P-Town welcome
to a bad motherfucker.
Oh, he's a bad, bad man!
Ladies and gentlemen,
please welcome to the stage
the hardest-working man
in show business,
Mr. James Brown!
Look here, baby.
You gonna open me
whenever I come to town.
James Brown!
Do your thing, yo!
(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)
(SINGING) Say it loud

ALL:

and I'm proud
Say it loud
I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud
I'm black and I'm proud

Say it loud
I'm black and I'm proud
(VOMITING)
But I say we won't quit moving
till we get what we deserve
I worked hard on a job
with my feet and with my hand
But all the work I did
was for the other man
Say it loud
I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud
I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud
I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud
I'm black and I'm proud

REPORTER:

faced with angry, disgruntled
citizens of the United States,
while the flag flew
at half-mast
for Martin Luther King.
Amid the chaos today,
two local radio broadcasters,
Dewey Hughes and Petey Greene
are being credited
with restoring calm
to the nation's capital.
PETEY ON LOUDSPEAKER: Now,
DC is Chocolate City,
y'all know that's right.
Now they wanna keep us down,
'cause they afraid
of what's gonna happen
if we stand up.
Why do you think
they send our boys off to war
instead of keeping them
in school,
where they can learn to score?
Yeah!
Yeah!

Because the white folk know
that if we stand tall,
oh, buddy, we gonna
have something called
Black Power, y'all!
Right? All of y'all
look beautiful today.
Psychologist asked me
what I thought about
the word "nigger." I said...
Lady, "nigger" is the greatest
stress reliever ever invented.
See, white man say "nigger,"
he ready for a six-month
hibernation, am I right?
But, see, a black man,
he could say "honkey," "ofay,"
"cracker," "peckerwood"
a million times,
still wanna go out there
and kill somebody.
You're gonna to have
to tone it down, Petey. I've
got the FCC all over my rear.
Well, with all due respect,
sir, the FCC can kiss my ass.
I ain't saying nothing
but the truth.
As long as the people
wanna hear it,
I'm gonna keep telling it.
I'm gonna talk it
on the radio,
and I'm gonna talk it
on the streets.
I'm gonna talk it
to the police,
and even that sucker,
Tricky Dick!
This is P-Town, baby.
Talk to y'all tomorrow.
Now, that was a good one, Dew.
That was a great show, Petey.
Right on.

That was a great show.
Look at them.
They're still calling.
Oh man, what a day.
That was a hell of a day.
Thank you, man.
Man, you're incredible,
you know?
I just see the things you do,
the effect
you have on people...
It's amazing to me.
You got a gift.
You know? Something people
like me could only dream of.
I think you could go
all the way.
Let me be your manager.
Let me guide your career.
I'm talking stand-up,
records, TV, movies...
I want the whole world
to be a part of P-Town.
Well, I don't think
the whole world is ready
for a nigga like me.
Well I think you're wrong.
I think the world's
been waiting
for a nigga like you.
What you say?
(LAUGHING)
All right.
All right.
(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)

VERNELL:

ever been to vote?
How you doing, young brother?
Okay, vote for Shirley
Chisholm. Shirley Chisholm
for President, 1972.
Over here, young man.
Is your mom registered?

Are you registered?
Now the judge say,
"Petey Greene,
"why you rob everybody
in the house?"
I said, "Well, your honor,
they all seemed
like such nice people,
"I didn't want anybody
to feel left out. "
And I'm looking out
amongst y'all,
and there's some good old
robbing motherfuckers
out here tonight.
Watch your purse, baby.

DEWEY:

at the dates right now.
I got him at the Howard
Theater then the Crystal Room.
He's booked.
Well, I can get you
a time next month.
Can't wait?
Y'all see the paper
this morning, P-Town?
Say "Petey Greene goes
to the White House
and steals some silverware."
Now, come on,
that don't make no damn sense.
Imagine that,
a negro like me, ex-con,
get invited by the President
to the White House,
and I'm gonna run up in there
and take something?
Come on, y'all.
I ain't that crazy.
(CHUCKLING)
Well that's all we got.
There ain't no more.
My time is tight,

and that's the end of my show.
So grab your head
and make a fist. Listen to me
and remember this,
I tell it to the hot,
I tell it to the cold.
I tell it to the young,
I tell it to the old.
Don't want no laughing,
don't want no crying.
And most of all,
no signifying.
Tune in next week. This is
Petey Greene's Washington.
Be cool, y'all.

DEWEY:

MAN:

Great show, everybody.
Great show.

MAN:

We love it.
We'll pick you up
for 26 episodes.
Congratulations.
Thank you, sir.
(LAUGHING)
They loved it. They loved it.
Local, then national.
We did it, man!
What?
I know it sounds crazy,
man, but I...
I kind of miss
that little old radio station
back at Lorton, man.
And I know it wasn't nothing
but a room and a turntable
with about 58 records
in crates, but I...
Pete, you're...
You're a different man now,

okay? You're not gonna be...
You're not going to be defined
by your prison time.
Not you, Petey!
This is Petey Greene.
Oh, we got a good one
for you tonight.
My guest is the funniest man
I know besides me,
Mr. Dick Gregory.
How you doing, Dick?
My guest tonight
is Reverend Jesse Jackson.
Now what is the state
of the dream, Rev?
(INAUDIBLE)

PETEY:

I've always had a special gift
for making people angry.
"P.O.P." Pissed-Off People.
Man, sometimes I feel
like I should have
a Ph.D. In P.O.P.
And ain't that
a wonderful expression, y'all?
"Pissed off"?
As opposed to what, man?
"Pissed on"?
Speaking of which...
I gotta apologize again.
Now, I know some of y'all
heard that I lost
my mind last night.
Or as my Aunt Pig would say,
"Boy, you're crazy!"
And I was, too.
I was, I ain't lying.
See, I drank about
four gallons of Cold Duck,
and then I just walked
right up on stage
and started pissing, just...
(GRUNTING)

Didn't even bother grabbing
it, just walked and...

(GRUNTING)

Started skipping with it.

I said...

(IMITATING LAUGHING)

By the time I was through,
the stagehand was drunk.

(ALL LAUGHING)

And we had a whole row
of white folk too,
all the way across.
Real important people, now.

We talking about
the big shots, you know,
the muckety-mucks.

Not like you, sir, but...

I'm telling you,
them crackers dropped dead
right on the spot.

All of them. Looked like a row
of albino dominoes, just...

Judge say, "Mr. Petey Greene,
we charging you
with using your dick
"as a lethal weapon.

Now how do you plead?"

I said, "Your Honor!

Not guilty,

Your Honor, not guilty!

"Come on now, I don't want
no parts of this. I use my
dick to make love, not war!

"Shit only look lethal
to white folk. "

Good evening, Petey.

This is Petey Greene's
Washington.

DEWEY:

let's try that again.

For what?

You said, "Good evening,
Petey Greene. This is

Petey Greene's Washington. "
No, I didn't.
Yeah, you did.
Dewey, I didn't say...
That's some stupid shit.
How many times
have we been doing this show?
I'm gonna say some stupid
shit like that? Come on, man.
Okay, my mistake.
I didn't say,
"Good evening, Petey."
That's stupid.
Okay, let's try it again.
Please.
Are you ready?
Born so.
Good evening...
Okay, let's try it again.
Let's try it again.
See what you did?
I fucked up, is what I did!
Yep.
I gotta stop drinking.
God damn!
Maybe.
Good evening, Washington.
My guest tonight is a pimp
that I wouldn't trust
to wash my car,
but y'all done
elected him city official...

DEWEY:

Jesus Christ, Petey!

DEWEY:

(LAUGHING) Freda!
I love my job!
I love... Where's Petey?
Where's Petey, huh?
Lay it on me, now!
Lay it on me!
Right on with the right-on!

You're not gonna
believe what's happening.
You're not gonna
believe it, man.
Was it Free Pussy Day
or something?
You are looking at the baddest
manager on the planet.
You, my man,
are doing The Tonight Show.
Next Tuesday, New York City,
live and in living color.
They had an act cancel
on The Tonight Show, baby!
You, me, Carson.
This is it, my man.
Yeah.
This is that moment that
I've been telling you about.
Yeah. Yeah!
Yeah, that's great, man. Yeah.
Yeah?
"Here's Petey!"
Yeah.
Yeah. Okay.
Yeah.
Okay.
New York, New York, y'all.
Like they say.
If you make it here...
I'll be a bitch-ass nigga.
(SCREAMING)

DEWEY:

Dewey Hughes?
Yes, sir.
Fred De Cordova.
I know.
Glad you could make it
on such short notice.
If you called us
twenty seconds ago, sir,
we would have been here.
And you must be Petey.

Hey.
Heard a lot about you.
Johnny's looking forward
to hearing your routine.
Well, I just hope
I don't disappoint him.
Oh, you'll be fine.
Oh, that's Vernell.
Hi.
So, dry run's at 10:00,
we're live at 11:30.
(LAUGHING) Hi!
Oh, thank you.
No, no, please...
(LAUGHING) That's
very interesting.
Oh, no!
Hey.
Don't worry. Everyone does it.
Should've seen Elvis.
Really?
(CHATTERING)

MAN:

cable noise from boom 1.
Yeah.
Yeah.
So Bette's going to do
two songs, eh? Bette Midler?
You should see
all the food...
Would you two relax?
Carson's gonna give you
the thumbs-up,
he's gonna sit you down,
and then you
are gonna be a star.
Yeah, well, I don't know
about that, dude.
I don't know if I'm ready, is
what I'm trying to tell you.

MAN ON P. A...:

to the stage, please.

Bette Midler to the stage.
You're ready.
And in exactly 30 minutes,
this whole country is gonna
know what I already know.
That Petey Greene is
the baddest comic in America.
Just keep it real,
like you do,
you'll be fine.
Excuse me.

MAN:

Where's the green room?
Oh, sure thing, sir.
Just follow me.
It's only New York, baby.
Just a suburb of P-Town.
Relax!
Over here, to your left.
Thank you.
Dewey!
Yeah?
You have to get him
out of this, man.
What? Are you nuts?
Listen to me, Dewey.
I know that man.
Hell, you know that man.
And I know you saw that look.
I didn't see shit.
I saw nerves.
Dewey, baby. I know
how important this is to you.
He does, too! That's the
only reason why he's here!
To me? It has nothing to do
with me. Bullshit, Vernell.
Bullshit! I mean, Cosby,
Gregory, Pryor, they've
all been on that stage.
What comic in the world
doesn't want to be
on The Tonight Show?

You see, he ain't a comic.
He ain't a comic, he ain't
a television personality,
he ain't a civic leader!
He's just a regular-ass
nigga from DC who...
He's just a regular-ass nigga
from DC who likes
to run his mouth.
And for some reason,
people respond!
Vernell?
Vernell, you're wrong, okay?
Look where we are.
Look where we are.
He doesn't want
to be here, Dewey.
I can see it in his eyes.
Just keep an eye on him.
Make sure he doesn't leave
that room. Okay?
Petey?
Oh, no! No, Petey.
(THE TONIGHT SHOW
THEME MUSIC PLAYING)

McMAHON:

The Tonight Show
Starring Johnny Carson.
This is Ed McMahon,
along with Doc Severinsen
and the NBC Orchestra,
inviting you to join
Johnny and his guests,
Gig Young, Joe Garagiola,
Bette Midler,
Los Indios Tabajaras,
and comedian Petey Greene.
And now, here's Johnny!
Make sure you're watching him.
We'll be right on
after Bette Midler.
Yeah. He's gonna be
the greatest thing

to ever hit The Tonight Show.

CARSON:

and if you have
a few hours a week,
you could be a Big Brother
to somebody like me.

Move.

Did you see him?

Did he come out?

MAN:

Petey? Petey!

Thank you!

You're hot! You're hot!

You know, I said it before
when you were first
on the show, and I mean it.

I said, "You are going
to be someone to contend with.

"You're going to be a big star
in this business,
"because you are unique,
and you're different. "

Hey, man.

Fuck! Petey,

where have you been?

I'm here, ain't I?

(AUDIENCE APPLAUDING)

CARSON:

we're back.

Now, ladies and gentlemen,
from Washington, DC,
Petey Greene.

(AUDIENCE APPLAUDING)

Y'all gonna have to forgive me
if I'm a little nervous,
I just ain't never been
in front of this many
white folk before.

(PEOPLE LAUGHING)

I know my manager, Dewey,
is backstage right now

about to have a heart attack,
saying, "Oh Lord, please don't
let this fool go out here
and say something crazy."

But he knows

I always speak the truth.

Yeah.

Well, the truth is,

I'm just an ex-con, y'all.

And the people that live
in the world that I come from,
well, most of them
can't even afford TVs.

They listen to me
on the radio, and they do that
because I keeps it real.

When they out there laughing,
I know they laughing
with me, not at me.

But I look out here at y'all,
and all I see a room full
of white folk waiting to hear
some nigger jokes.

I ain't got nothing
to say to you people.

Y'all ain't ready for P-Town.

Sorry, Johnny.

I was being real, Dewey.

You motherfucker!

VERNELL:

Fuck you, man! Fuck you!

(GRUNTING)

What the fuck you doing?

Fuck you, man!

Fuck you!

PETEY:

as far as jails go,
this one ain't too bad.

Dewey, man, I'm sorry, man.

Get the fuck

away from me, man.

Look here. I ain't never

asked for this shit.
All I ever wanted to do was
my little thing on the radio.
All this other shit, this
Tonight Show, come on, man.
That ain't me.
I tried to tell you that.
The whole
fucking world
was yours.
I could've
taken you right to the top.
But you just fucked it up.
You're nothing but a con.
That's all you'll ever be,
just like Milo.
Just another no-good,
low-life
con.
I ain't your brother, man.
I also ain't the one
got us thrown in here tonight.
That was you.
So if I'm a con,
baby, you a con, too.
You two. You got bailed.
Quit trying to change me,
Dewey.
Hey, baby, let's just go home.
Carnac is attempting to
divine an answer while you're
sitting here, giggling.
May I have silence, please?
Yes. You've had it
many times before.
(AUDIENCE LAUGHING)
(TV SWITCHES OFF)
What the fuck?
(WATER RUNNING)
You don't need Petey Greene.
You've got your own voice.
You've been on leave
for months, and our ratings
are in the toilet.

But you want to come back now
and take a shot as a DJ?
Morning, DC, this is
Dewey Hughes, with a morning
jam for your traffic jam.
Or if you're one of a whole
lot of folks that can't
afford to fill your tank,
or don't even have a car
to put that jacked-up gas in,
give me a call.
I'm here for all y'all.
So whether you're in your car,
at work, at home,
or pissed off at the pump,
pump up the volume
and give me a shout!
The woman said, "Listen,
"if you think I'm gonna gargle
with that shit after she's
through washing her ass,
"you out of your mind."
Congratulations.

ON RADIO:

it's Sunny Jim...
...Sounds of Soul.
I mentioned Oliver North...
If you want to let it out,
you give me a shout.

CATHY ON RADIO:

from the '70s and '80s.
This is The Cathy Show...

DEWEY ON RADIO:

Good morning, DC, this is WOL.
I'm Dewey Hughes, rocking
you to work this morning,
so take your hand off the horn
and turn up the volume,
'cause at WOL,
we love music.
Talk to me, Ralph!

PETEY:

That's right, DC.

Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene
is back on the scene.

Morning, everybody.

Hey, congratulations
on your show, there, Dewey.

Man, I gotta tell you,
I never would've believed it,
but you turned out to be
one hell of a DJ, man.

What you in the mood for,
Petey?

Why don't you play me
some of that old Sly Stone?
If You Want Me To Stay.

(PHONE HANGS UP)

Hung up.

It's all right.

(FUNK MUSIC PLAYING)

What's your job, man?

What's your job, man?

I'm sorry, man.

Screen the calls!

Shut up! Screen the calls!

God.

(KNOCKING ON DOOR)

One minute.

How much is it?

Priceless,

but the pizza's on me.

I ran into

the delivery guy in the hall.

Nice!

So I hear you're
the man up in here now.

Cathy Show was a hit.

I bought the station.

Congratulations.

Is that enough milk?

Oh, that's fine, honey.

To your success.

Aren't you gonna

ask me how he is?

How is he?

Come on, Dewey.

He helped you build this
place. You can say his name.

How's Petey?

Well, you know,
all those years
of hard living'll catch up
to you one day.

His time is tight.

He misses you.

(CHATTERING)

You see this show?

My whole fucking life
is this show.

I learned to walk,
talk and dress
watching The Tonight Show.
I can tell.

(BOTH LAUGHING)

It showed me that there was
a world far away from
the Anacostia projects.
He reminds me of my brothers.
Loud-ass shit-talkers.

Funny as hell.

Always had me cracking up.

Milo was the funniest.

He was my hero.

He could say anything,
do anything.

He could've been a...

Well, he's at Morgan's
every Tuesday night,
waiting for somebody
to give him a good game.

Thanks for the drink.

I love you, Dewey.

You take care
of yourself, okay?

(R&B MUSIC PLAYING)

Tails.

So you the new

Blue Blazes, huh, man?

That's right.

You sure did it, Dewey.

Took that little old
two-bit radio station
and turned it into
a powerhouse, man.

I couldn't have done it
without you.

No.

I could've never did
that shit you did.
Like you said, Dew,
I needed you
to do all the things
that I was too afraid to do.

What about the other part?

What other part?

The part

when I said that I need you
to say all the things
that I'm afraid to say.

Oh, that part.

(COUGHING HOARSELY)

Not now.

Well, the truth is,
you ain't getting
no younger, man.

So I decided I'm gonna
cut you some slack.

Go on and forgive you.

Forgive me.

I love you
like a brother, man.

I know you love me, too.

Now, you too stubborn
to say it,
but I think you miss
old Petey Greene.

So I'm gonna give you
one last shot.

That's deep.

(CHUCKLES)

Yeah it was, wasn't it?

I might put that
in a card someday.

(PETEY CHUCKLES)

(POOL BALLS STRIKING)

Good shot, Petey.

(CHATTERING)

Everybody come back
to the shop
with their eyes fucked up...

Stop it!

(INAUDIBLE)

PETEY:

I ain't nothing
but a con and a thief.
So I ain't up here trying
to be nobody's preacher.
I'm just trying to tell
the truth to y'all,
like I promised I would.

DEWEY:

that he was just a con.
Telling it like it is.
But he was more than that.
He said the things
that we were afraid to say.
I'm sorry, man.
He was the bravest man
that I ever met.
He was, and still is,
everything I'm not.
And that's why I love him.

MAN:

So, in the words
of my best friend,
"That's all we got.

MAN:

"There ain't no more.
That's right!
"Time is tight.
"It's the end of the show.

"So grab your head
and make a fist. "
"Listen to me
and remember this. "
...and remember this.
I tell it to the hot,
I tell it to the cold.
I tell it to the young,
I tell it to the old.
Don't want no laughing,
don't want no crying.
And most of all,
no signifying.

DEWEY:

This is
Petey Greene's Washington,
ladies and gentlemen.
This is P-Town!

ALL:

Petey! Petey!
Petey! Petey! Petey! Petey!

PETEY:

PETEY:

VERNELL:

for President, everybody!
Vote Shirley Chisholm
for President, 1972!

PETEY:

they send our boys off to war?
Look here. I ain't never
asked for this shit.