

## SOFA THINGS FOR JAZZ MORTICIANS

### Dramatis Personae:

**That One Guy**, a total so-and-so

**Mister Man**, every bit the such-and-such that That One Guy is a so-and-so

### The Scene

There's a very real sofa on the stage. At some point, the characters will pull improvised items from the sofa.

Anything else that makes it look dude bro welcoming is encouraged, but unnecessary. Same with anything visually patriotic.

THAT ONE GUY sits alone, remote in hand. He is worked up.

THAT ONE GUY

That can't be right! Oh, this makes me so mad! Will this thing not go any louder?!

While That One Guy is mashing on the remote, enter MISTER MAN.

MISTER MAN

Hey, get up. I think my thing fell into the sofa cushions.

THAT ONE GUY

What? This thing?  
(pantomimes pulling out something long and spongy)

MISTER MAN

No, not that. Is this yours?  
(pantomimes holding an article of clothing up to his chest; That One Guy takes it)

THAT ONE GUY

What about this?  
(pantomimes jangling car keys)

MISTER MAN

I'm looking for my Ouija board.

THAT ONE GUY

Oh.  
(pantomimes tossing a discovered item over his shoulder)  
Found it.  
(pantomimes setting the board down on the sofa, dusts it off with his hand)

MISTER MAN

(pantomimes placing the planchette on the board)  
Do your finger like mine.

That One Guy obliges.

THAT ONE GUY

How do we get it started?

MISTER MAN

Like this.

(raps with the anger and accuracy of Pharoah Monch)

We summon you, dread dark lord/Cuz 1990 till today has been hard  
My in-laws connections got flattered/Still my expectations got shattered  
I was a shoo-in to move ten tax brackets/So what the shit is this racket?  
People bring bodies, I make graves/Where the fuck are my Yelp raves?  
Rams lock horns to express dominance/My man milk expressed in my underpants  
Marriage made me masturbate/Haters gonna hate. Let's celebrate  
How my grandfather fought in a war/Cuz his grandfather fought in a war  
Cuz his grandfather fought in a war/So I can play Halo till A.M. of four  
The safest place I found...I made it/What it was before...I graded  
Black criminals like Willie Horton/Rained down like the salt of Morton  
But I saw those thugs as slugs and/Got em desiccated; actually relocated—  
(no longer rapping)  
Damn it, he's not gonna show up.

THAT ONE GUY

Oooh, but that was peppy.

MISTER MAN

Thank you.

THAT ONE GUY

It's got a crackling thing. What do you call that?

MISTER MAN

It's called jazz.

THAT ONE GUY

Me likey. You got another one?

MISTER MAN

Maybe, but everyone's got jazz.

THAT ONE GUY

Ain't that the God's truth. Can I get an amen, brother?

They high five.

I like that one line: haters gonna hate, let's celebrate.

MISTER MAN

Me too. People can be so negative; hating is one of my loves.

THAT ONE GUY

What else can you do with jazz?

MISTER MAN

Say again?

THAT ONE GUY

Well, what does jazz do? It didn't bring the dark lord out.

MISTER MAN

No, it didn't. Still, it's a skill. It's a thing. It's a gift.

THAT ONE GUY

I had a tutor who always said keep one in the chamber. Is this your in-the-chamber thing?

MISTER MAN

I guess so. I had a tutor who said you have today powers and you have future powers.

THAT ONE GUY

Man, we both had tutors. What do you think happened to those ladies?

Mister Man shrugs. That One Guy goes in for a high-five. Mister Man shakes his head.

MISTER MAN

So, check it out. We're morticians, right?

THAT ONE GUY

Oh yes. You hit on that in your jazz.

MISTER MAN

Well, mortician work, that's my future power. And, jazz, that's my today power.

THAT ONE GUY

But earlier this week, you made a dead body look like a sleeping person.

MISTER MAN

Sure did. It's my job...and my American duty.

THAT ONE GUY

Right. But, the future can't be earlier. See that was earlier.

MISTER MAN

Yeah...so, being a mortician cannot be my future power. It's my today power.

That One Guy shake his head grimly.

Well, I can't live in a world where jazz is my future power. I'm gonna go check on that dead girl in the corpse room. Make sure she didn't turn into a sleeping person.

That One Guy keeps a watchful eye on Mister Man until he exits the stage. Once Mister Man is fully gone, That One Guy gets out his phone, frantically searching through something on Wikipedia.

Mister Man returns after a few seconds,  
armed with a revelation.

So, I was staring at that dead girl. Watching the life stuff drain out of her and the death stuff drip into her. I think my tutor must have been bullshit. I mean, today powers and future powers. How crazy is that?

THAT ONE GUY

Um-hmm. So, I looked into that jazz business.

MISTER MAN

Yeah?

THAT ONE GUY

Online says, it is:  
(quoting)

Jazz: a type of music of black American origin characterized by improvisation and a—

MISTER MAN

That's what I did.

THAT ONE GUY

Well, sorta. Hold on.  
(quoting)

a regular or forceful rhythm. Brass and woodwind instruments and piano are singularly associated with jazz.

(waiting)

You see, you used your mouth.

MISTER MAN

And?

THAT ONE GUY

And, you used your mouth. Hard stop. That's not jazz.

MISTER MAN

It's jazz enough.

THAT ONE GUY

Go on.

MISTER MAN

You know that TV show about the one-time big shot corporate lawyer? I mean, this guy, he was the biggest shot lawyer. He was to lawyers what we are to morticians. He designed the office he lawyered in.

THAT ONE GUY

Medical board won't let us design our workplace. That's something we could deregulate.

MISTER MAN

Don't get sidetracked. On that show, the credits open with a really sad country-and-western song. Sung by a black man.

THAT ONE GUY

What is this show?

MISTER MAN

Not important. What's important is how that song manipulates us to believe this ex-corporate attorney has it so bad.

THAT ONE GUY

Oh, right. I get it. How bad is a corporate attorney gonna have it? Even an ex one. I mean, they start at six figures.

MISTER MAN

They sure do. Let's count together.

BOTH

Zero. Zero. Point. Zero. Zero. Zero. Zero—

MISTER MAN

Hold on. Uhh, I lost my train of thought. There was that song that made us pity someone we should disdain... Now, I'm all backwards.

THAT ONE GUY

(tonal shift)

Hey, was any of that stuff we pulled out of the sofa real?

MISTER MAN

At this stage...does it even matter?

Mister Man pantomimes tucking the Ouija board under his arm, and he exits.

That One Guy returns to the sofa. Casually, he peeks under the cushion beside him.

**END OF PLAY.**