

VIOLATING THE EIGHT SPOT
a one-act

by Dan Trujillo

DIALOGUE SAMPLE

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CHARACTERS

STICKLER, male, 30s-40s, a studio executive

LIZA, female, 20s-30s, a painter

MAE ALABASTER, female, 20s-30s, a fabulous movie star

LIZA and MAE act various roles in the course of the play, but they are always themselves playing the part.

SETTING

A producer's office at a studio complex in Los Angeles: spare and successful. If there are movie posters on the wall, they are framed. If there is a cabinet, there are awards. There is a desk set with a phone, two chairs, and a couch. Two cardboard archive boxes, stacked and sealed for delivery, sit near the desk. At the back, a large window with drapes. It's dark out, 5am. Crickets in Hollywood?

A NOTE ABOUT THE PITCH

LIZA and MAE tear through furniture the office to create the "sets" for the scenes in their movie pitch. They use props and costumes pieces, drawn from the archive boxes. Since they trade roles, use identifying costume pieces for major characters. The production may also use light changes to help tell the story, but it isn't necessary.

"VIOLATING THE EIGHT SPOT"

(A producer's office at a studio complex in Los Angeles: spare and successful. It's dark out, 5am.)

The door snaps unlocked. STICKLER opens it, a little stumbling-drunk, but not gross. He puts his key card back in his wallet. We hear women behind him, offstage, laughing. He flips on the light and strides in.

MAE and LIZA follow him. They wear sunglasses. MAE has a wine bottle. She finishes it. They overdo the drunk-and-giggly routine. STICKLER doesn't mind.)

STICKLER

Here's where the magic happens. Be as loud as you like, no one's in this late...early.

(They all laugh: naughty. He moves around the desk, and stumbles over the archive boxes. Again they laugh.)

STICKLER *(cont'd)*

Goddamn assistant's trying to kill me with the mail.

(STICKLER opens a desk drawer and pulls out a miniature recorder. He loads it.)

STICKLER *(cont'd)*

Not as glamorous here as maybe you imagined, but it's more private than the lounge at the Westwood.

(STICKLER hits record on the player.)

STICKLER *(cont'd)*

Portia and Rosalind. I was...honored...when you asked to see the place. I hope you won't take offense at this next part: whatever happens between us in the next...whatever happens, understand I can't help you. You have a pitch, for a movie. Don't deny it, it's all right, who doesn't? And maybe you think -- maybe not, but maybe you think: we have some fun together, and I'll say, "yes," to your story. I'd like for us to have fun. But tomorrow, I'm not going to say, "yes." I don't string lovely ladies along.

(MORE)

STICKLER (*cont'd*)

I'm not like the other rats crawling around the studio. So. You understand you came here willingly. Anything we do, we do with no strings attached, with your full consent.

(*LIZA and MAE lean in to the recorder.*)

LIZA & MAE

Yes.

STICKLER

All righty.

(*He sets the recorder down on the desk.
MAE unplugs the phone.*)

STICKLER (*cont'd*)

Hold all my calls.

LIZA

I can't believe you don't recognize us. You should at least recognize her. She's famous.

MAE

Look at my eyes, darling. They always wrote about my eyes.

(*She takes off her sunglasses. STICKLER looks at her eyes: recognition, horror.*)

STICKLER

Oh my God, it's -- you're Mae Alabaster.

MAE

I look different in real life than I do on screen.

STICKLER (*to LIZA:*)

And you too, Jesus!

LIZA (*to MAE:*)

Man, I'm just not as famous as you.

MAE

After all, you are in "the fine arts."

(*STICKLER goes in his pocket for his cell-phone. Gone. LIZA waves it in the air at him.*)

STICKLER

What the hell is this?

LIZA

You hit the nail on the head. We want to pitch our movie.

STICKLER

Nothing you have interests me, all right?

(He exits. LIZA pulls out a digital camera and calls after him.)

LIZA

Not even these nice shots of us together in the limo?

(STICKLER reenters. LIZA takes his picture.)

LIZA *(cont'd)*

How would that look, you in the rags, photographed with us? God forbid your boss sees that.

(MAE opens the boxes and pulls strange props and colorful folders from them.)

MAE

I was worried I'd have to lug these in from the lobby myself. We should send your girl some flowers.

STICKLER

Look, I don't know who you think you're dealing with here, but there's no way I could get any project involving the two of you off the ground. Everybody in town knows you're *(MAE:)* a monster and you're *(LIZA:)* a liar.

LIZA

You think it's easy, knowing that's what people think?

STICKLER

Then you shouldn't have lied about being raped.

(Beat.)

LIZA

That's why I need some of your time.

STICKLER

Me? It's 'cause of you that the legal guys make us record this stuff now. And I might add it's completely unfair. I had nothing to do with you. I never got near your...show.

MAE

Oh, he's so perfect. Didn't I say he was perfect?

LIZA

Everybody says you've got that thing: integrity.

STICKLER

Yeah...you know...I'm not like the other guys in the studio.

MAE (re: boxes:)

Is it the blue folder that's the most recent draft?

LIZA

Everybody's got the wrong idea about us, but if someone like you helps to tell our story...

STICKLER

Or the red folder?

STICKLER

I don't see how I got the wrong idea about you.

LIZA

If you hear our pitch, you will.

MAE

Yellow was your first draft, orange was my second draft...

LIZA

It's the green folder.

MAE

No, we're not using the green folder.

LIZA

If we're not using the green folder, we're definitely not using the red folder.

MAE

But that's got my crying scene -- that's my Oscar there!

STICKLER

Ladies! At six o'clock, my assistant comes through that door, and she sees me with you, and then I'm screwed.

(He sits in his chair.)

STICKLER (cont'd)

Get on with it.

MAE

Let me work my magic. You're safe in your seat in the theater, surrounded by strangers.

LIZA

Slides on screen: celebrity scrambles and restaurant ads.

MAE

The lights go down...the audience hushes...what wonderful crimes happen in the quiet dark.

(A NOTE ABOUT THE PITCH:

During the narrative sections, MAE and LIZA tell the story to STICKLER, acting out some parts [denoted by a hyphen] but remaining in a storyteller role. During the longer scenes of dialogue, they act the scenes as if "in the movie."

LIZA and MAE tear through furniture the office to create the "sets" for the scenes. They use props and costumes pieces, drawn from the archive boxes.)

LIZA

Exterior. Brooklyn rooftop. Night.

MAE

A view of the Manhattan skyline and the East river.

LIZA

A woman in a paint-stained smock -- Liza -- takes the view in...as she teeters on the edge of the roof. Below on the sidewalk, a crowd forms to see if she'll jump.

MAE - GAWKER

Isn't that the -- the painter who got raped?

LIZA

Police turn searchlights on her. Reporters and photographers elbow one another for position.

MAE - PHOTOGRAPHER

Don't you block my shot now! I wanna catch her in midair.

LIZA - CNN REPORTER

The question here, Wolf, is why is Liza Jones jumping? The jury did just convict her rapist Percy Dobson.

MAE

People scream AAAAA! as Liza extends one leg over the edge.

LIZA

A police chopper hovers -- chaw chaw chaw chaw chaw chaw!

MAE

I descend from it on a cable, as if from heaven -- SSSSSK!

LIZA

It's Mae Alabaster, the movie star!

MAE

Stunningly beautiful movie star!

STICKLER

Look, what is this? I thought I was going to hear a pitch, you turn my office turned into Looney Tunes.

MAE

You can't just tell this story, it needs pizzazz!

LIZA

Anyway, Mae lands on the roof, in heels.

MAE

She extends her hand to Liza.

LIZA

Liza considers the sidewalk, then takes Mae's hand.

MAE

Interior. Stretch hummer. Day.

LIZA

Leather seats, stocked top-shelf bar, hi-def television, Liza curled in one corner. Mae lounges across from her.

MAE (to LIZA, "in the scene")

I'm a big fan of your art.

LIZA

Thanks.

MAE

I think you could go places.

LIZA

Is this, like, a reality show?

MAE

I'd like to pitch you. I've got an idea. A special kind of punishment for Percy.

LIZA

This sounds like something for my lawyer.

MAE

This is better than what the lawyers can get you, love...a performance, starring him, starring you, starring me.

LIZA

I don't like to -- to make a spectacle of myself.

MAE

And so you tried to jump off a building.

LIZA

Look I won't be part of any publicity stunt. Pull over.

MAE (to STICKLER:)

She tries to get out.

LIZA (to STICKLER:)

Mae holds the door shut.

MAE

Tell me why you tried to jump tonight. He's about to be sentenced. What went through your head?

LIZA

I want an end to the frenzy.

MAE

You'll never get it. You're a part of the show now, a name in the paper, an answer to trivia questions.

LIZA

I just want to paint.

MAE

I can help you with that. I can fly you to heaven with me, make you an artist so famous that the kid in Ohio playing X-Box knows your name...but only if you spin this straw into gold with me.

LIZA

My life isn't a show.

MAE

Of course. What could be the good of that?

LIZA (to STICKLER:)

She adjusts her fur coat and kicks off her Pradas.

MAE

The limo accelerates across a bridge, zhoom! Over the river, into the lights of the city -

(LIZA pulls a page from the green folder.)

LIZA *(reads:)*

*"It's bigger than life
A suicidal painter plucked from death
A movie star with mystery on her breath - "*

MAE

Oh God in heaven please, I told you this is a movie, not a café on the lower east side.

LIZA

This could be the theme song lyrics -- or a rap.

STICKLER

The real problem here -- I see it already: you're exaggerating to make yourselves look good. Movie stars to the rescue, dropping from helicopters -- who'd believe that?

MAE

The fans want that from me, and I'm the reason they come to see movies.

STICKLER

Not anymore.

(Beat.)

MAE

No.

(LIZA sits in his lap.)

LIZA *(seductively:)*

That's why we need you so bad on this project. We're a couple of girls just aching for your notes.

STICKLER

I didn't mean your story doesn't have possibilities.

LIZA

Good, so shut up and listen.

STICKLER

God you're -- you're sending me mixed signals.

MAE

Don't confuse the poor love. Kiss kiss.

LIZA (*reads:*)

*"Give us more of that magic Mae!
Give us more of your gorgeous eyes
Your superstar sunshine that lights up the sky
Give us a feeling -- what it's like to be you!"*

MAE (*to STICKLER:*)

We're not married to the poetry.

LIZA

Interior. Courtroom. Day. The sentencing hearing for the rapist, Percy Dobson.

MAE

The defendant sits at his table, a silky smile on his face, disdain running from head to loafer.

LIZA

A Judge listens to Mae Alabaster -

MAE

A stunningly beautiful actress!

LIZA

As she speaks to the court, Liza at her side.

MAE

Your honor, we're concerned that the state doesn't take into account the full extent of Liza's distress. This man did more than rape her. He stole her name.

LIZA - NEWS ANCHOR

Our top story: The Trial of Percy Dobson, who stands accused of raping a Brooklyn artist.

MAE

It's as if he recommitts the crime with each publication.

LIZA - COMMENTATOR

Let's go over the timeline again: eleven o-eight, the victim stepped out from her gallery party into a dark, secluded stairwell.

MAE

From now on, everyone who sees her will say:

LIZA - BYSTANDER

Hey look, it's Liza Jones! Ain't she the one Percy Dobson done it to?

MAE

She's no longer herself, your honor. She's the crime.

LIZA

The Judge plays with his gavel.

LIZA - JUDGE

That's true, Ms. Alabaster, but it's not as if the jail time's the full extent of his sentence. That Ivy boy will also be the bitch of every thug on his block.

MAE

But where are the cameras? His humiliation remains unaired, while she's exposed on everything from the cover of the Times to talk radio. That's why I'm here, to provide the kind of punishment you can't. Release this man to my jurisdiction: a show, a show where he's made the world's bitch, banged in front of a million viewers.

LIZA - JUDGE

Good God!

MAE

That's what the fans really want, that's the actual wage of Percy's sin, so why not make it fun?

LIZA - JUDGE

Ms. Alabaster, are you saying you want to publicly broadcast live sex?

MAE

But your honor, rape isn't sex, it's violence.

LIZA - JUDGE

Oh, that's okay then. And the sentence fits the crime.

MAE - PERCY

She's lying! I never touched her! This is cruel and too unusual!

LIZA - JUDGE

Bang bang bang the gavel! This court is granting Ms. Alabaster's request for jurisdiction over the defendant.