

COMPUTER SECURITY

A comedy in three acts

by Richard G. Epstein

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CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

Character:	Description:
FRED JOHNWAY, M. 59	Philosophy professor, does not like to be disturbed during his vacation time. Wants Harriet to do a better job of defining her boundaries.
HARRIET JOHNWAY, F. 59	Nurse and physical therapist, recently laid off. Has difficulty defining her boundaries.
JANET JOHNWAY, F. 23	The Johnway's daughter, finishing her graduate studies to become a licensed borg psychiatrist. Has many boyfriends from many different cultural backgrounds.
SADIE LEWIS, F. 90	Harriet Johnway's mother, a brilliant on-line investor. Manipulative and bitter.
BENJAMIN BORG, M. 30	Sadie's robotic husband. Not too bright. Vulnerable and obedient.
DRUDGE, M. 24	A world-famous violator (or, hacker) who exposes borg vulnerabilities. Can't stand it when people try to define his boundaries.
GEORGE MITCHELL, M. 41	An FBI agent.

SETTING

The living room of the Johnway's modest suburban home in Haverford, Pennsylvania and a sanatorium for mentally ill borgs in Northeast Philadelphia.

TIME

March and May 2062.

ACT ONE

The living room of Fred and Harriet Johnway's suburban home, on a Sunday morning in early in March 2062.

ACT TWO

The living room of Fred and Harriet Johnway's suburban home, on a Sunday afternoon, one week later.

ACT THREE

In and around a patient's room at a sanatorium for borgs that are mentally ill, two months later, in late May 2062.

ACT ONE

(The lights slowly come up on the living room of the Johnway house in suburban Haverford, Pennsylvania. The furnishings suggest a family of moderate means. A sofa and several chairs are situated center stage. The kitchen and dining facilities are offstage to the right. Additional rooms are offstage to the left, and also to the left, front, is the main entrance to the house. FRED JOHNWAY and HARRIET JOHNWAY are in their living room.)

FRED JOHNWAY

Look! She's YOUR mother!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I knew that from day one. The doctor slapped me on the rear and handed me over to this woman and I remember thinking, "Oh, my gosh! Something must have gone wrong with my karma!"

FRED JOHNWAY

Why does she have to visit today – of all days?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

She said it was VERY important.

FRED JOHNWAY

With her, everything is important.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

She didn't say it was important. She said it was VERY important. Mother doesn't use the word "very" unless she really means it.

FRED JOHNWAY

I just finished grading exams. It's spring break. I finally have a few days to relax. I wanted to do something – whimsical - today. I was thinking that the two of us might head out and

HARRIET JOHNWAY

When I was a little girl, mother used to lecture me about the word "very". "It's an abuse of language," I remember her saying. "It's an abuse of language to use the word 'very' unless you really mean it."

FRED JOHNWAY

I'm not the only one who needs to get away from this house. You've been moping around ever since you lost your job at the Rehab Institute. (Pause) Can't you just call her back and tell her that we are VERY busy?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I can't lie to mother! I'm surprised at you. To think that you actually teach ethics courses at Haverford.

FRED JOHNWAY

I'm not into ethics right now. I'm on spring break.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I know that mother can be a little difficult.

FRED JOHNWAY

Yes, and Death Valley can be a little hot.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It's been almost a month since I last saw mother. It's not like she lives in another state or something. I can't put mother off any longer.

FRED JOHNWAY

Why not? You're an adult. You got your driver's license over forty years ago.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I can't.

FRED JOHNWAY

This might be a good time for one of our little tutorials on setting boundaries.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred, I'm not in the mood!

FRED JOHNWAY

You've got to learn where you begin and where your mother ends.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You've got to admit that I've made progress. I don't visit mother twice a week, like I used to.

FRED JOHNWAY

But, she's always trying to feel you out, to see where your vulnerabilities are.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I think she's angry at me. I could hear it in her voice.

FRED JOHNWAY

Once she figures out where your vulnerabilities are, she goes right in there and exploits them. (Pause) Call her back and tell her that you forgot that I had made plans for us to go – to the Art Museum!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It's too late. She's on her way.

FRED JOHNWAY

Call her. She always carries a phone. She's always prepared for one of those medical emergencies of hers.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred, if you want to go to the Art Museum this afternoon, go! I'll stay here and see what's bothering mother.

FRED JOHNWAY

You allow her to exploit you like this because of the money - isn't that what this is all about? You're afraid she might write you out of her will.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred! What an awful thing to say!

FRED JOHNWAY

Look, we've been through this scenario before. She's been threatening to disinherit you ever since you started to set some boundaries. "Well, Harriet, honey, if you don't have time to spend with your own mother, then my stock portfolio can spend the rest of eternity helping some worthwhile charity." That's an exact quote. I heard it with my own ears.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I don't think you should be so dismissive of mother's money. We're talking many millions of dollars.

FRED JOHNWAY

You've got to protect your boundaries.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother turned ninety last October. She was deeply offended that we were out of town attending some ethics conference in Denmark on her big day.

FRED JOHNWAY

We sent her a card, didn't we?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I can still hear her screaming: "What kind of daughter would treat her mother's ninetieth birthday like it was nothing? Nothing!"

FRED JOHNWAY

It took quite a bit of time to pick that particular card. Every time I showed you a card, you said, "No, she might take that the wrong way." It took us almost half an hour to find a card that she couldn't misinterpret.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother's money will come in handy as you and I get older. Wouldn't you like to retire from grading all of those term papers that are probably written by intelligent agents and not by real, breathing human students? Without this inheritance, you'll probably have to work until you're eighty.

FRED JOHNWAY

It's got to be hundreds of millions of dollars, that fortune of hers. That's what the Inquirer said when it ran that front-page story about her last year. I almost fell out of my chair when I saw that special feature about a ninety year-old on-line investor who lives alone in a run-down apartment in Northeast Philly. They called her a Wall Street genius. All your mother does all day is log onto her computer and trade stocks. The amazing thing is that she never spends a dime. She's so tight-fisted that I don't see how blood gets to her fingers.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother has always had this thing about security.

FRED JOHNWAY

What's the purpose of having all that money, if you don't do anything with it? (Pause) But, of course, she does use her money to manipulate you. After all, you're her only daughter, her only surviving relative.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Sometimes I worry that some sleaze-ball will try to latch on to her – like that guy who takes care of the grounds around her apartment house. I've never seen such a sleazy smile. "Oh, Mrs. Lewis, let me help you with the door. Can I help you with anything, Mrs. Lewis? You can depend on me, Mrs. Lewis."

FRED JOHNWAY

Your mother hasn't had a romantic interest for many, many years, not since - .

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother always used to lecture me about security.

FRED JOHNWAY

Maybe your mother should have been a professor – with all of those lectures of hers.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother always used to say that security was VERY important. Not just important, but VERY important. I think the only reason I'm here on this earth in this particular body is that mother was so concerned about security. She married my father because she needed to feel that someone could look after her – if something went wrong. That's what their marriage was all about - security.

FRED JOHNWAY

Wait a minute! We can't have your mother over today. Janet is home for her spring break. You know that our daughter and your mother do not get along.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Tell me about it! Do you remember that fiasco at Thanksgiving five or six years ago?

FRED JOHNWAY

Do I remember? Your mother has been angry ever since Janet announced her intention to keep up "the Lewis family tradition".

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I don't like the sound of this! Whenever you mention "the Lewis family tradition," I know that my family is in for some criticism.

FRED JOHNWAY

My own daughter is now in graduate school, studying computer security, just like your father, that is, - before he committed suicide.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred! You know that my father did not commit suicide. It was an accident!

FRED JOHNWAY

That's not what the coroner said.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

The coroner did not know my father! I knew my father! Father took too many of those blood-pressure pills of his. It was an accident.

FRED JOHNWAY

He was depressed because his computer security business was going down the tubes.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You hardly knew the man. We had just started to date when he took that accidental overdose.

FRED JOHNWAY

I didn't know the man personally, but in the forty years that I've known you, beloved of my heart, I've been able to put two and two together. You and your mother told me quite a few interesting things about your father. I remember your mother telling us that in the weeks prior to his suicide –

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Accident!

FRED JOHNWAY

Your mother told us that during the weeks prior to his, uh, death, he used to wander around the house muttering “What’s the secret? What’s the SECRET?”

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother minored in theater at college. She loves to embellish things when she tells a story.

FRED JOHNWAY

You yourself told me that he was very, excuse me, I mean, extremely, depressed just before he died because his work in computer security demanded that he possess “an imagination for evil”.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Father used to tell me that in order to succeed in computer security one had to imagine every possible evil thing that a human being might want to do with a computer system. I remember many dinner conversations about this “imagination for evil” business. Mother hated those conversations.

FRED JOHNWAY

My theory is that the constant demand that he maintain his “imagination for evil” drove him over the edge.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It was an accident! It was an accident! Mother told me it was an accident! I was away at college when it happened, but - .

(Phone rings ...)

HARRIET JOHNWAY (cont.)

It's my phone. (Talks into watch.) Yes, mother. No, mother. Okay, mother. Do you have your walker? What do you mean you don't need a walker? Okay. I will see you in about ten minutes. (Turning to Fred) Mother just exited off the Blue Route.

FRED JOHNWAY

She always calls when she exits the Blue Route.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I'm a bit concerned about something.

FRED JOHNWAY

You're always concerned about something.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

When I asked her if she had her walker, she said she didn't need a walker. Why would she say something like that?

FRED JOHNWAY

Maybe that's what's so VERY important about your mother's visit. Maybe she just had a wonderful new medical treatment and she wants to show us the miraculous results!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I'm worried, Fred.

FRED JOHNWAY

You worry too much. Look, maybe that sleaze-ball gardener fellow latched onto her. That's why she doesn't need a walker. She's got a boyfriend.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Ninety year old women don't have boyfriends. They have memories.

FRED JOHNWAY

Some of them don't even have that.

(Enter JANET JOHNWAY from stage left, her head buried in a book.)

FRED JOHNWAY (cont.)

Janet, do you think you can spend some time communicating with your mom and dad during your spring break instead of burying your head in that book?

JANET JOHNWAY

(Does not look up from her book.) This is so good! This is so rich! This book is teaching me how to become one with everything!

FRED JOHNWAY

This is the best part of having Janet home for spring break. We can guess where her latest boyfriend is from based upon what she's reading.

(Janet Johnway shrugs with displeasure and exits, stage right.)

FRED JOHNWAY (cont.)

Like, remember when she came home last year and she was reading Plato and Aristotle? Where was her boyfriend from?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Greece.

FRED JOHNWAY

And the year she was into that Sufi poet, Rumi. Where was her boyfriend from?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Iran.

FRED JOHNWAY

And the year she was deep into James Joyce. Where was her boyfriend from?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Dublin.

FRED JOHNWAY

And the year she came home reading "The Merchant of Venice"?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

That was a tough one. At first I thought she was dating a fellow from England, but it turned out he was a Jewish guy from Italy, who was majoring in finance.

FRED JOHNWAY

So, tell me, why can't our daughter go out with a guy from our own ethnic group?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

We don't have an ethnic group, Fred.

FRED JOHNWAY

That's right. I forgot.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But, I remember, when we were dating, I made a joke about your ethnic heritage being so boring, and you told me that you had ancestors on your mother's side, way back, ancestors that were devout Irish Catholics.

FRED JOHNWAY

That does ring a bell.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You said that there were devout Irish Catholics for many, many generations on your mother's side of the family fractal pattern. I have often wondered why you never give voice to the religious passion of your Irish ancestors. It's got to be inside of you, somewhere.

FRED JOHNWAY

I can't give voice to that kind of passion. I'm a philosophy professor, for God's sake!

(Janet Johnway enters stage left, still buried in her book.)

FRED JOHNWAY (cont.)

So, Janet, what are you reading?

JANET JOHNWAY

The Bhagavad Gita.

(Janet Johnway exits stage right, without looking up.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Her new boyfriend's from India!

FRED JOHNWAY

(Shouting after his daughter.) Janet, I know that the Gita is compelling reading, but why don't you come back out here and chat with us a little bit?

(Janet Johnway re-enters, stage right, holding her book.)

JANET JOHNWAY

I'm sorry. When I discover something new, I get all caught up in it. My new boyfriend is visiting his family in Dehli, so I thought I would read up on his culture.

FRED JOHNWAY

So, how are your studies going? In a few months, you will be a licensed computer security professional with a graduate degree from Carnegie Mellon.

JANET JOHNWAY

Actually, there's been a slight change of plans.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Honey, your grandmother is coming for a visit this morning.

FRED JOHNWAY

Change of plans?

JANET JOHNWAY

Oh, no! Grandma's got this crazy thing about computer security. You'd think I was studying to become a mass murderer.

FRED JOHNWAY

Change of plans? What are you talking about?

JANET JOHNWAY

My professional license is going to be in borg psychiatry.

FRED JOHNWAY

Do that again.

JANET JOHNWAY

I am going to be a licensed borg psychiatrist. A shrink for borgs.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Does that mean you're going to graduate with an M.D.?

JANET JOHNWAY

No, mother. I'll be earning a masters degree. That hasn't changed. Borg psychiatry is now an accepted subdiscipline of computer security.

FRED JOHNWAY

What does a borg psychiatrist do?

JANET JOHNWAY

We help robots, or borgs as they are commonly called, that have mental illnesses.

FRED JOHNWAY

When a borg goes haywire, is that because of a mental illness?

JANET JOHNWAY

Almost always. Mental illnesses in borgs are VERY interesting.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Your grandmother should be here any minute now. Please don't use the word "very" unless you really, really mean it.

JANET JOHNWAY

I think it's time for me to get back to the Gita.

FRED JOHNWAY

Where will you be working after you graduate?

JANET JOHNWAY

I'm planning to join a successful borg psychiatry practice out in California.

HARRIET AND FRED JOHNWAY

California?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Why California?

JANET JOHNWAY

Sunil, oh, that's my new boyfriend's name, Sunil is finishing medical school this semester, and he'll be interning in California starting in June. I'll be moving out to California to be with him.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Are you planning to marry this fellow?

JANET JOHNWAY

I don't know, mom. What I do know is that I can't wait to sit down with my first patient. I'm going to look straight into his visual processing centers and I'm going to say, "What's bugging you, Mr. Borg?" Of course, my first patient could be a Miss Borg, or even a Mrs. Borg.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

(Shaking with anger.) Don't get me started!

JANET JOHNWAY

Did I push the wrong button?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I was outraged when the Supreme Court ruled last month that a borg and a human being could enter into holy matrimony. So, your Mrs. Borg might be a human being who is married to a borg.

JANET JOHNWAY

Well, then, she wouldn't be my patient. She would be someone else's patient. I will only be licensed to treat borgs, not their spouses.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Weren't you outraged when the Supreme Court made that decision, Janet?

JANET JOHNWAY

The Supreme Court had no choice. The state of New Jersey forced that issue on the entire nation by allowing humans and borgs to marry. President Swindle just couldn't tolerate that, so she asked Congress to act.

FRED JOHNWAY

How could the people ever vote for a President with a name like Swindle?

JANET JOHNWAY

And Congress did act. They outlawed marriages between humans and borgs, and the issue found its way to the United States Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled the federal law a violation of the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and freedom of association, not to mention the separation of church and state.

FRED JOHNWAY

I must admit that I was so busy this semester, grading term papers, making sure they were actually written by human beings, that I didn't really have a chance to study the reasoning of Chief Justice Wrench and her colleagues. But, I remember how angry your mother was!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It was an eight to one decision. Not even close. What a catastrophe for this nation!

FRED JOHNWAY

Janet, I would love to learn a little bit about mental illnesses in a borg. What causes a borg to go crazy?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Now that they can marry us humans, the situation is not going to get any better.

JANET JOHNWAY

There are many types of mental illness that can afflict a borg, father. I hardly know where to begin. The main problem is that the software is becoming so complex, far more complex than anything people could even have imagined fifty, or even ten years ago –

FRED JOHNWAY

I met your mother on the Web. Did you know that, Janet?

JANET JOHNWAY

Yes.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

My father warned me not to trust people that I met on the Web. "On the Web you're not dealing with real people," he used to tell me. "On the Web you're exposing yourself to the human capacity to concoct every imaginable kind of evil." That's what he used to tell me, before his unfortunate accident.

(Fred and Janet exchange a meaningful glance.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY (cont.)

It was an accident. I don't care what the coroner wrote.

JANET JOHNWAY

Do you remember that incident when I was an undergraduate at Temple, when I was falsely accused of sending pornographic e-mails to my academic advisor? That's when I decided to learn more about my grandfather, the famous computer security expert.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Your grandfather used to give lectures all over the world. He used to go to Las Vegas every summer for some kind of hacker conference.

JANET JOHNWAY

In the profession, we prefer not to call computer criminals "hackers". We prefer to call them "violators".

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Every summer, when he got back from that hacker conference in Las Vegas, he made the same dramatic announcement as he came through the front door: "You wouldn't believe the forms of evil that the human imagination has concocted since this time last year!" He always placed a lot of emphasis on the word "con-coc-ted". He used to spit that word out, like bitter poison.

JANET JOHNWAY

Didn't grandpa commit – uh – die, at the time of the historical buffer overflow attacks of 2022?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Shortly before father's accidental overdose, he left a note on the refrigerator that said his buffers had overflowed. He signed that note with a smiley face, so we thought it was just a joke.

FRED JOHNWAY

No, Harriet. YOU and your mother thought it was a joke. The coroner did not think it was a joke.

JANET JOHNWAY

Grandpa died shortly after a catastrophic denial-of-service attack brought the Web to a halt for nearly a month. This attack exploited what is called a buffer overflow vulnerability in critical networking software. Most experts believe that it was the work of international terrorists, but the culprits were never caught.

FRED JOHNWAY

Janet, I would love to learn about how a borg might suffer from a mental illness. You know I love to learn interesting new things.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother loves herbal tea. I think I will set things up in the kitchen so I can offer her some herbal tea and cookies.

(Harriet Johnway exits left.)

FRED JOHNWAY

For example, can a borg suffer from schizophrenia?

JANET JOHNWAY

Yes, of course.

FRED JOHNWAY

So let's suppose a borg comes to see you and it is suffering from schizophrenia. How would this manifest?

JANET JOHNWAY

When a borg has schizophrenia, the symptoms are pretty much the same as when a human being has schizophrenia. The borg will be suffering from delusions. He, or she, might see things, or hear voices. But, these visions and voices are not based on real sensory data. They are psychotic hallucinations.

FRED JOHNWAY

What would you do if a borg came to you in that kind of state?

JANET JOHNWAY

First, I would need to decide whether the source of the schizophrenia was originating from within the borg, or whether it was originating from outside the borg. In other words, the schizophrenia might be the result of a flaw in the borg's software, or it might be the result of a malicious attack coming from outside the borg.

FRED JOHNWAY

Let's start with flaws in the borg's software.

JANET JOHNWAY

Sometimes, a borg's software may not be robust enough to handle a task that the borg has been assigned. For example, some borgs get de-railed when they are involved in creative work, like play-writing, or scientific research. Schizophrenia can result if the borg's imagination runs out of bounds. The borg's software loses track of which stimuli are coming from its own imagination, and which stimuli are coming from its objective environment. But, dad, I find this so embarrassing. I can't explain borg schizophrenia in just a few sentences. Dozens upon dozens of books have been written on this one subject.

FRED JOHNWAY

You're doing just fine, precious.

JANET JOHNWAY

In the last few years, research on borg schizophrenia has tended to focus on external sources, that is, on situations in which a borg becomes mentally ill because it has been attacked by a violator. These attacks represent a serious threat to the borg infrastructure upon which the modern global economy depends.

FRED JOHNWAY

How serious is this threat?

JANET JOHNWAY

VERY serious, if it's safe to use that term in this house.

FRED JOHNWAY

It's safe. Your mother's in the kitchen.

JANET JOHNWAY

We are seeing a resurgence of the so-called script kiddies who caused so much damage back in the twenties. The script kiddies download scripts and launch those scripts into cyberspace. These scripts are computer programs that can cause a borg that is attacked to behave in an erratic and sometimes dangerous manner.

FRED JOHNWAY

Are script kiddies kids?

JANET JOHNWAY

Most script kiddies are bored teenagers, but some are as young as ten or eleven.

FRED JOHNWAY

Who creates the scripts for the script-kiddies?

JANET JOHNWAY

Violators. People with malicious intent who have a profound understanding of borg software.

FRED JOHNWAY

So, these script kiddies think it's fun to cause a borg to have a breakdown.

JANET JOHNWAY

Causing a borg "to freak," as the script kiddies like to phrase it, is all the rage. These young vandals call themselves "freakers".

FRED JOHNWAY

What's in it for the kids who do this sort of thing?

JANET JOHNWAY

If you can cause a borg to freak, you get bragging rights. In recent years we have seen an explosion of Web sites that feature "freaker" scripts. All a script kiddie needs to do is download one of these scripts, fiddle around with it, and then launch it into cyberspace. Lots of kids today think it's "cool" to cause a borg to freak. Do you remember all of those outrageous food fight incidents with the cafeteria borgs in the high schools a few years back? The kids thought that was great fun, having the cafeteria staff going bananas in the middle of the lunch hour. But, those cafeteria food fights were nothing compared to the damage caused by the SchizoBorg worm last summer.

FRED JOHNWAY

Your mom and I were on vacation in Cape May when the SchizoBorg worm made the headlines.

JANET JOHNWAY

Tens of thousands of borgs became schizophrenic because of the SchizoBorg worm. Fortunately, it took just a few hours to create and disseminate a patch. Otherwise, we might be talking about millions of psychotic borgs, and that would have had a catastrophic economic impact.

FRED JOHNWAY

Is a patch some kind of borg medicine?

JANET JOHNWAY

A patch is a piece of software that is disseminated in order to help borgs to recognize and reject dangerous scripts. In the language of borg psychiatry, the purpose of a patch is to strengthen the borg's mental immune system. Sometimes a borg's mental immune system needs strengthening, because it does not recognize a rogue program, like the SchizoBorg worm. But, there are situations in which a borg's mental immune system is malfunctioning in the other direction, and the immune system attacks friendly and legitimate programs. An overly protective immune system can cause a borg to become a basket case.

FRED JOHNWAY

So, a borg can suffer from an auto-immune disease?

JANET JOHNWAY

That's correct. Something else has been going on in recent years. It turns out that some borgs will go to great lengths to intentionally infect themselves with mental illnesses, especially those that cause psychotic hallucinations.

FRED JOHNWAY

Why would a borg do something like that?

JANET JOHNWAY

They're bored. These borgs actually want to become schizophrenic, at least for brief periods. This is becoming a serious problem. Have you heard about the Fractasy virus?

FRED JOHNWAY

Fractasy virus? That does sound familiar.

JANET JOHNWAY

When a borg gets infected with the Fractasy virus, it becomes obsessed with fractals. The infected borg will spend all of its time searching the Web for fractal-generating software. It wants to spend all of its time viewing endless fractal patterns. It loses its ability to perform useful functions. For a borg, being infected with the Fractasy virus is akin to cocaine addiction in humans. So, some borgs actually try to infect themselves with the Fractasy virus so they can do their fractal thing. Didn't you hear about the borg, who was on the faculty at Harvard, who was trying to convince other borgs to expand their minds by infecting themselves with the Fractasy virus?

FRED JOHNWAY

Yes, I remember that controversy. Our Dean was quite leary about the possibility that this idea might spread to the borgs on our faculty at Haverford.

(Harriet Johnway enters from stage left carrying a box of raspberry tea.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I could only find this raspberry tea. I hope mother likes it. Are you folks done with this computer security nonsense? I find it so depressing!

JANET JOHNWAY

I'm going to get back to my reading.

(Janet Johnway buries her head in her book and exits stage right.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I wonder if Janet inherited some kind of computer security gene from her grandfather.

(The doorbell rings.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY (cont.)

I wonder who that could be.

FRED JOHNWAY

I'll give you three guesses.

(Harriet Johnway moves to the doorway, stage left, front. She opens the door. At the door is her mother, SADIE LEWIS, who is being physically supported by BENJAMIN BORG. Sadie Lewis and Benjamin Borg enter the living room.)

SADIE LEWIS

Ten minutes I had to wait for you to open the door! Ten minutes! Boy, is it hot out there. We never used to have hot weather like this in March.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Why don't you sit down, mother? Make yourself comfortable.

SADIE LEWIS

Benji, my darling, take me over to that chair.

(Harriet Johnway looks startled. She looks at Fred and mouths the words "My darling?" with a worried look on her face.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I see why you don't need your walker, mother. You have this borg to help you.

SADIE LEWIS

Call him by his proper name. His name is Benjamin. Benjamin Borg. (Pause. Sadie says the following with great deliberation.) It sure is hot in here. It - sure – is – hot - in - here.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother, we heard you the first time.

SADIE LEWIS

I'm trying to turn on the air conditioning, but the damn thing isn't responding.

FRED JOHNWAY

Please don't take this personally, Sadie, but we reprogrammed our intelligent home environment system so that it will only respond to three voices: my voice, Harriet's, and Janet's. The last time you were here, we almost froze to death.

SADIE LEWIS

(To Harriet) Is that how they talk to mothers-in-law on your husband's side of the family?

FRED JOHNWAY

If you want me to turn on the air conditioning, I will issue the appropriate command, but I think it's quite comfortable the way it is.

SADIE LEWIS

Okay, what's the difference? Benji and I won't be staying long.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Would you like some tea, mother?

SADIE LEWIS

What kind of tea do you have? You know I'm not allowed to have any caffeine.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I can make you some delicious raspberry tea.

SADIE LEWIS

You know I hate raspberry tea!

FRED JOHNWAY

Sadie, this is a VERY unexpected visit.

SADIE LEWIS

VERY? Very unexpected? So, tell me – what is the difference between an unexpected visit and a VERY unexpected visit? Tell me.

FRED JOHNWAY

Uh, oh. I think I just pushed the wrong button.

SADIE LEWIS

Wrong button? I'll tell you about wrong buttons. When I was a freshman in college I had an English composition professor who tore apart my first essay. She tore it to shreds. I don't mean literally. There was no torn up paper on the floor, but she tore it to shreds with that poisonous red marking pen of hers. That snake!

FRED JOHNWAY

Something tells me we've heard this story before.

SADIE LEWIS

Every time I used the word "very" in my essay she circled it with her bright red marking pen and she scribbled all sorts of nasty comments in the margin. One day she called me into her office and she read me the riot act about the word "very". "What does it communicate?" she asked me again and again. "Using 'very' without actually meaning it is an abuse of language. An abuse of language!" Then, she told me that I wrote like a nun. Like a nun!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What did you expect? You were a student at Holy Family College.

FRED JOHNWAY

I think at Holy Family College, if someone says, "you write like a nun," it's intended as a compliment.

SADIE LEWIS

But, my dream was to be a great author. Well, I don't mean great in the literary sense. I mean, rich, successful. My dream since I was a little girl was to make the New York Times bestsellers list, and then this professor told me that I wrote like a nun. You can't have a block-buster novel, filled with trashy sex, if you write like a nun!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You can still write that first novel, mother. It's never too late.

SADIE LEWIS

What do you know about "never too late"? I just celebrated my ninetieth birthday. Of course, you and Fred were off at some philosopher's conference somewhere, so, I had to celebrate my ninetieth birthday all by myself. Thank God the fellow that takes care of the gardening was around. I couldn't have blown out those candles all by myself. That lonely birthday is the main reason I decided to invest some of my money in Benji.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You should try to do some writing, mother. You don't have to write a novel. You could start with short stories.

SADIE LEWIS

"You write like a nun!" I'll never forget those words. That's when I decided to forget about writing and to begin thinking about security.

FRED JOHNWAY

Uh, oh. Here it comes.

SADIE LEWIS

That's when I decided to get married. You never know, something unexpected could happen.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother, I have some of your favorite cookies in the kitchen.

SADIE LEWIS

You know I hate cookies! Your father was always talking about cookies, but not the kind of cookies that normal people talk about. I remember him complaining that cookies were a big security risk. I would work all day preparing dinner and he would come home and he would rattle on and on about cookies being a big security risk. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I thought you loved cookies. Won't you just take one?

SADIE LEWIS

And then there was that computer attack that brought the world to its knees for almost a month. Your father tumbled into a deep depression. I remember lying in bed next to him on the night before he committed suicide –

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother, it was an accident! You told me it was an accident!

SADIE LEWIS

And you believed me? I was trying to protect you, Harriet. I remember, the night before he killed himself, he was lying in bed muttering something about buffer overflows being "the death of me". He was muttering to himself, like I wasn't even there. "Buffer overflows will be the death of me. What's the secret? What's the secret?" The very next day he killed himself. To think that I married this guy because I needed security. What the hell was I thinking?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

And you do have security, mother. You have saved up a tidy fortune, or so you have told us. You were able to purchase the borg with some, but hopefully not too much, of that money. Borgs can be ver – I mean, quite expensive.

SADIE LEWIS

Benjamin. His name is Benjamin. Yes, he cost me a pretty penny, and he is handsome, don't you think?

FRED JOHNWAY

I suppose a borg like this can be quite helpful with chores around the house.

SADIE LEWIS

He's wonderful! I finally feel like I have some kind of security.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

He can also help you with shopping, and things like that.

SADIE LEWIS

Yes.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But, I hope you are still in charge of your stocks and bonds.

SADIE LEWIS

Benjamin helps me with those things, too. He's a financial genius.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But, he hasn't spoken a word. Does he speak?

SADIE LEWIS

Of course, he speaks. Benji, say something!

BENJAMIN BORG

Something.

SADIE LEWIS

That's what I love about borgs. They're so obedient. No complications with borgs. No complications of any kind. Benji is absolutely obedient. Aren't you my honey bun?

BENJAMIN BORG

Of course, my sweetie pie.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Where is this heading?

FRED JOHNWAY

Honey bun. Sweetie pie. I'm putting on weight just listening to this conversation.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother! Where – is – this – heading?

SADIE LEWIS

Don't rush me, Harriet. I want this to build up to a climax. I told you many times that I minored in theater when I was in college.

FRED JOHNWAY

It was very nice of you to bring Benjamin here, so we could see him or it or whatever. However, perhaps Harriet told you that this is my spring break - .

SADIE LEWIS

I didn't just bring Benji here to introduce you to him. We have a VERY important announcement to make.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

We? What do you mean – we?

FRED JOHNWAY

Very? What do you mean – very?

SADIE LEWIS

Benji and I have a VERY important announcement to make.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I don't like the sound of this.

SADIE LEWIS

Benji, could you please help me up out of this chair?

BENJAMIN BORG

Yes, my beloved.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Beloved?

(Benjamin Borg helps Sadie Lewis to stand.)

SADIE LEWIS

I want to make this announcement standing up – arm in arm with my Benji.

FRED JOHNWAY

I think I need a drink.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Get yourself a drink, Fred, and make mine a double.

SADIE LEWIS

Stop right there! You can get your drinks after Benji and I make our announcement!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Oh, my God! I finally figured it out! They're getting married! They're going to New Jersey and they're going to get married!

FRED JOHNWAY

Holy Toledo! I think you're right!

SADIE LEWIS

No, no, no. We're not getting married.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

(Almost hysterical, now) Oh, thank God. Thank God!

FRED JOHNWAY

You really had us going there for a while, Sadie.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I wish you wouldn't play with our emotions like that.

SADIE LEWIS

Benji and I didn't come here to tell you that we are going to get married.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Thank God.

SADIE LEWIS

We already ARE married. We got married in New Jersey last week.

FRED JOHNWAY

HOLY – MOTHER – OF – GOD!

(Everyone looks on in amazement as Fred Johnway finally gives voice to the religious passion of his devout Irish ancestors.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You can't do this!

SADIE LEWIS

What do you mean, we can't do this? We already have. Benji and I are woman and borg. God bless Chief Justice Wrench and the Supreme Court of these United States. Say something, Benji.

BENJAMIN BORG

Something.

FRED JOHNWAY

You are telling us that you are legally wed?

SADIE LEWIS

Benji, show them the ring.

(Benjamin Borg dutifully shows the ring around.)

FRED JOHNWAY

HOLY – MOTHER – OF – GOD!

SADIE LEWIS

We got married last Tuesday. We decided to take the commuter train across the Ben Franklin Bridge into Camden, and we got married there. Just across the river.

FRED JOHNWAY

HOLY – MOTHER – OF – GOD!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred, it's wonderful to see that you are finally giving voice to your devout Irish ancestors.

SADIE LEWIS

We were married by a Justice of the Peace. Not a religious ceremony, but perfectly legal. In fact, neither of us needed to get any kind of blood test. (Pause) Laugh, Benji.

(Benjamin Borg dutifully laughs, with a puzzled look on his face.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

This is outrageous!

SADIE LEWIS

(With ironic sarcasm.) I guess this means that you and Fred are going to have to rethink your retirement plans. Benji, here, well, he's my sole heir. Oh, well. That's the way the cookie crumbles. This is what happens when a daughter thinks that she can ignore her ninety year old mother. You want boundaries? I'll give you boundaries!

FRED JOHNWAY

We don't know what you are talking about.

SADIE LEWIS

Speak for yourself! Can you read Harriet's mind? Harriet knows what I'm talking about, and I think you do, too.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother, I think it's time for you to leave.

SADIE JOHNWAY

I was planning to do just that. Benji, sweetie. Take me back to my car. And don't say anything.

BENJAMIN BORG

Does that mean I can say whatever I want, but just not that one word?

SADIE LEWIS

Back to the car, Benji. Back to the car.

(Sadie Lewis, supported by Benjamin Borg, head for the door. At the door, Sadie Lewis makes a dramatic exit, bowing and waving.)

FRED JOHNWAY

Do you still want me to pour you a drink?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Forget the drink. We've got to do something. We got to do something about this borg!

(There is a pause as Fred and Harriet ponder the situation. Janet Johnway re-enters, from the right, her face buried in her book.)

JANET JOHNWAY

Arjuna is going to confront his shadow, the army of evil arrayed in front of him, just as the Lord Krishna has advised. But, the real challenge of the spiritual quest, the real challenge is to become one with everything.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I've got to contact Drudge. That's what I've got to do. I'll send him an e-mail. He'll know how to get rid of this Benji fellow.

(Puzzled look on Fred Johnway's face. Janet Johnway continues walking and reading, exiting left. Curtain.)

ACT TWO

(Same setting. Fred Johnway is seated in the same chair that Sadie Lewis sat in. He is dreamily studying a liquor glass that he has just emptied. Harriet Johnway is pacing nervously. She glances at her watch.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

He said he'd be here at two. It's ten after.

FRED JOHNWAY

We need to be cautious. I cannot emphasize that enough.

(Fred gets up to refill his glass.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Please don't embarrass me when Drudge gets here.

FRED JOHNWAY

If I embarrass anyone, it'll be me. You are there, and I am here.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Haven't you had enough to drink?

FRED JOHNWAY

I'm quite sober.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What's the difference between quite sober and just plain sober?

(Fred refills his glass and goes back to where he was seated.)

FRED JOHNWAY

Can we skip the Lewis family obsession with adverbs for just one day?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You can get quite ornery when you've been drinking.

FRED JOHNWAY

What's the difference between being quite ornery and just plain ornery? But, before you answer that rhetorical question, consider the possibility that my being ornery is just what we need in order to avoid any complications with this Drudge fellow. When you're dealing with a world-class violator, there can be lots of complications.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I can't allow that borg to inherit what rightfully should be mine. Just think of all the things I did for mother, after , after - dad's accident.

(Fred Johnway looks out towards the audience.)

FRED JOHNWAY

What's the use?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

All the things I did for her, over the years, until I established (with extreme sarcasm) *my boundaries* under your wise tutelage.

FRED JOHNWAY

It was important for you to learn how to protect your boundaries.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It's because of this boundaries business that mother married that borg and disinherited me. That was her revenge. Drudge is our only hope.

FRED JOHNWAY

Why should this Drudge fellow want to help you?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I already explained that.

FRED JOHNWAY

Well, explain it again.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Drudge was a patient of mine. His real name is Todd Hackett.

FRED JOHNWAY

Hackett? How appropriate!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

He injured his back and I nursed him back to health with intense physical therapy. After his injuries healed, he started to call me "good buddy".

FRED JOHNWAY

I think it was a mistake to meet him here. Someone like this Drudge fellow is always under surveillance.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Imagine my surprise when I saw my former patient, Todd Hackett, on the news last summer. It turns out that Todd Hackett is a world-famous violator who goes by the name Drudge.

FRED JOHNWAY

A violator like Drudge treads a fine line between what's legal and what's not. I don't want us crossing over that line.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

On the news, they showed him testifying before an important Senate committee. The senators treated him like a national hero.

(The doorbell rings, more energetically than when Sadie Lewis rang the doorbell in Act One.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY (cont.)

That must be him. Imagine! Drudge, the world-famous violator, is visiting us right here in our modest home.

FRED JOHNWAY

You know I can't stand it when you refer to our home as being modest. I hope he wasn't being followed.

(Fred Johnway puts down his glass. Harriet Johnway opens the door and DRUDGE waits to be asked in.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Please come in, Mr. Hackett. Welcome to our, uh, humble home.

DRUDGE

It's great to see you again, good buddy. Forget this Mr. Hackett nonsense. Just call me Drudge. (He looks over his shoulder.) The Feds are following me.

FRED JOHNWAY

I knew it!

DRUDGE

I don't know if it's the NSA or the CIA or the FBI or those Homeland Security Folks. See that car parked across the street? They followed me all the way from South Street, where I have my hacking factory.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What should we do?

DRUDGE

Nothing. I just thought it would be wise to let you know about this, in case they follow up with questions for you guys.

FRED JOHNWAY

Wonderful!

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Drudge, this is my husband, Fred. Fred, this is Drudge, the young man I told you about. (They acknowledge one another, but do not shake hands.) Please come in and make yourself comfortable.

(Harriet Johnway motions towards a chair, but Drudge heads to a window to check things out.)

DRUDGE

You should assume that the feds are listening in on our conversation, Nurse Lewis, good buddy.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Please call me Harriet.

DRUDGE

I like to call you Nurse Lewis, good buddy, like back in the Rehab Institute, where you did your miraculous work of healing my poor, aching back.

FRED JOHNWAY

This is the first time I've had a chance to talk to a world-famous violator.

DRUDGE

I view myself as a hacker, not a violator. "Violator" has such a negative connotation. I'm just a guy who loves computers. Twenty-four hours a day. Seven days a week. Hack. Hack. Hack.

(Drudge takes a seat, but not the one that was offered him.)

DRUDGE (cont.)

I've been working on a really challenging project. You'll hear about it in the news in a month or two. That's for sure!

FRED JOHNWAY

Twenty-four hours a day? Don't you ever sleep?

DRUDGE

Of course I sleep. But, even in my sleep I dream about borgs and their vulnerabilities.

FRED JOHNWAY

Do you know that my wife is no longer working at the Rehab Institute? She's retired from the nursing business, at least for the time being.

DRUDGE

All the same, she signed her e-mail, "Love, Your Good Buddy, Nurse Lewis."

FRED JOHNWAY

I'm not sure I like the sound of that.

DRUDGE

Your wife is the most loving professional I've ever known.

FRED JOHNWAY

I'm not sure I like the sound of that either.

DRUDGE

Several years ago I had a serious accident during a hacker's convention in Center City. I fell off the stage and hurt my back something awful. Your wife nursed me back to health. (Turning toward Harriet.) I owe you a lot, Nurse Lewis, good buddy.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I know. That's why I contacted you.

DRUDGE

You did mention in your e-mail that you lost your job at the Rehab Institute.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

The accountants were doing all sorts of funny things with the books, so they had to lay off a bunch of us health professionals. I'm not in a big rush to get back to work, but I must say that I miss treating patients who have a sense of humor, like you do, Drudge.

FRED JOHNWAY

I hate to interrupt this conversation between you good buddies, but I'd like to know something about what you do, Drudge. What does a world famous violator do exactly?

DRUDGE

As I told you a minute ago, I am a hacker, not a violator. There was this newspaper guy in Dallas, he used to insist on calling me a violator in his op-ed columns, but I fixed his wagon.

FRED JOHNWAY

Are you trying to threaten me?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred, be polite to our guest.

DRUDGE

Lots of folks feel insecure around a hacker. I'm used to it.

FRED JOHNWAY

How do you support yourself, Drudge? My wife told me something about your Web site. That doesn't seem like much of a money-making venture.

DRUDGE

My Web site is not about money. It's called the Drudge Borg Factory. What I do is I find borg vulnerabilities, software flaws that will allow one to hack into a borg, and then I code what are called exploits, which allow people who might be so inclined to take advantage of those vulnerabilities. Then, I code a patch for the vulnerability. When I have these three things – the vulnerability, the exploit, and the patch, I post them on my Web site.

FRED JOHNWAY

Don't you see what you do as being a bit unethical?

DRUDGE

If you want to talk ethics, why don't you talk to the people who make billions of dollars creating shoddy software? Is it ethical to make so much money selling products that have so many security holes? I don't create the vulnerabilities. They're there. If I don't publicize them, then someone with truly malicious intent will find them and exploit them, and they're not going to tell the whole world about it.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Please forgive my husband. He's a philosophy professor and he teaches a course on ethics. (Turns towards her husband.) The key ethical question in computer security is whether it is ethical to create borgs that have serious vulnerabilities. Drudge takes the unethical and irresponsible behavior of the borg manufacturers and shoves it in their faces. Drudge is telling them, "Look, here is another vulnerability that I've found. If you don't fix this quick, the script kiddies will be using the exploit that I created."

FRED JOHNWAY

Well, Harriet, it sounds like you've done your homework.

DRUDGE

Speaking of homework, Nurse Lewis said that she wanted me to help her with a serious problem she was having with a borg.

FRED JOHNWAY

Let's see if you can help my wife with her problem, without - breaking - the - law.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Of course, we don't want you to break the law, but ethics isn't really an issue for us right now. Isn't that right, Fred? Ethics isn't an issue right now. You're on spring break.

(With those words, Drudge gets up from his chair and looks out the window.)

DRUDGE

They're still out there. One agent is outside the car, having a smoke.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Our daughter is studying computer security at Carnegie Mellon. She just left this morning to return to school in Pittsburgh. She's going to be a licensed borg psychiatrist in a few months.

DRUDGE

So, you want to talk ethics? I'll talk ethics. With the kind of knowledge that I possess, I could go into the borg industry and make myself into a big-time billionaire. What I do I do because it is my passion. It has to do with my perception of what is right and what is wrong. It is wrong for the borg manufacturers to sell such defective products. (Pause) Can I have something to drink? I'm thirsty.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I can brew some coffee, but it will have to be decaf.

DRUDGE

I consider decaf coffee as a kind of sacrilege. Just bring me a glass of water, if you don't mind.

(Harriet Johnway looks at her husband as if to say, "Behave".
Exit Harriet Johnway, left.)

DRUDGE (cont.)

Sometimes I wish could get my hands on a big wad of money so that I could fight for the causes I believe in.

FRED JOHNWAY

My daughter was telling us, last Sunday, that borgs are subject to all kinds of mental illnesses, and that a lot of these illnesses are spread by teenagers.

DRUDGE

Yes, the script kiddies, or “freakers” as they like to call themselves.

FRED JOHNWAY

Hackers like you create the scripts those script kiddies use. Isn't that correct?

DRUDGE

That's correct. But, if it weren't for the script kiddies using scripts written by us hackers, the borg manufacturers would never fix the bugs in their software.

(Harriet Johnway re-enters with a glass of water. She gives this to Drudge.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Here you are, Drudge.

DRUDGE

Thank you, good buddy. Did Nurse Lewis tell you that I was asked to testify before an important Senate committee last summer?

FRED JOHNWAY

Yes.

DRUDGE

Our own Senator Lightwire was on that committee. He gave a ringing endorsement of what I do. He began his remarks by saying, “This may not be what you want to hear, Drudge, but I consider you a national hero. You are doing a great public service by exposing the insecurities in our borg infrastructure.” I got a standing ovation from the entire Senate committee. So, you see, I consider myself a public servant, and the folks in the United States Senate seem to agree with me.

FRED JOHNWAY

Why did Senator Lightwire say "This may not be what you want to hear"?

DRUDGE

I have associates in the hacking community, who like to call themselves black hats, who might not like the fact that the government appreciates what I do.

FRED JOHNWAY

What's a black hat?

DRUDGE

A black hat is a hacker who gets into the shady, murky side of things. A black hat might do things that cross the line into what is unethical or even illegal. In my line of business, I've got to interact with black hats, and sometimes I even wear a black hat myself.

FRED JOHNWAY

I thought you want to do what is right. Why would you want to wear a black hat?

DRUDGE

I wear my black hat if I am convinced that doing so is the best way to maximize the dissemination of knowledge. That is my passion, to break down all of the barriers that hold back the creation and the dissemination of knowledge. (Pause) Enough of this philosophy stuff. I've got to get back to work on that exciting project that I mentioned, so let's get down to business. I owe you a lot, Nurse Lewis, good buddy, so I would like to help you with this problem of yours, if I can. You wrote that you were having a problem with a borg.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

The problem is my mother.

DRUDGE

Your mother's a borg?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

No, no! My mother's not a borg. What would that make me? My mother married a borg, just over a week ago, in New Jersey. She's a ninety year old woman, and this borg is trying to take advantage of her. It makes my blood boil.

FRED JOHNWAY

We should mention that there's a whole lot of money involved here. Sadie Lewis, Harriet's mother, is filthy rich.

DRUDGE

Okay. It's important that we don't cross any boundaries in terms of the law. I am not a borg hit-man, or hit-borg, or whatever the appropriate term is.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But, I thought -.

DRUDGE

It would be illegal for me to say, for example, that there's a particular borg out there, and that borg is my target and I'm going to bring down that borg. That's crossing the line into borg-slaughter or some other such crime.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But, your scripts - .

DRUDGE

What I do is I look for vulnerabilities. When I find a vulnerability, I program an exploit, and a patch, and then I post all of that information freely on my Web site. That's what I do.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But - .

(Drudge goes back to the window and peers out.)

DRUDGE

That agent just threw his butt on your neighbor's lawn.

FRED JOHNWAY

He must be tired.

(Drudge turns around, and heads back towards the chair.)

DRUDGE

What kind of intelligent home environment system do you guys have?

FRED JOHNWAY

It's a Global Electric Ten-Thirty.

DRUDGE

And it listens to everything that's said in this house, just in case you're trying to give it instructions, like "Turn down the lights," "Turn up the heat," and so forth.

(Drudge approaches Janet Johnway with some papers in hand.)

FRED JOHNWAY

Yes, that's the way it works.

DRUDGE

The Global Electric Ten-Thirty is connected to the Web. Do you live under the illusion that what is said in this house is just between the two of you?

FRED JOHNWAY

Who would want to listen in to what Harriet and I have to say? We're two boring old folks.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Thanks, Fred.

DRUDGE

I thought you might find this particular document rather interesting.

(He hands a bunch of papers over to Harriet Johnway. Harriet Johnway looks the papers over and a startled and worried look comes over her face.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Where did you get this?

FRED JOHNWAY

What is it, Harriet?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It's some kind of transcript.

FRED JOHNWAY

What kind of transcript?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It's like a script for a play, except the characters are you, me, my mother, and Benjamin Borg. These are the exact words that my mother spoke last Sunday when she told us she had married that borg. Look, Fred, here you are, honoring your religious ancestors by screaming "HOLY MOTHER OF GOD". It's all in this transcript. Every word that was spoken. Every word!

(Janet Johnway shows the transcript to her husband.)

FRED JOHNWAY

Where did you get this?

DRUDGE

I've got to be careful what I say, because, obviously, what is said in this house is not necessarily as private as you would like to believe. There is an unfortunate trade-off between having a state of the art intelligent home environment system like the Global Electric Ten-Thirty and protecting what our primitive ancestors used to call "privacy".

FRED JOHNWAY

How did you get this transcript?

DRUDGE

I'd rather not say.

FRED JOHNWAY

(Pointing to the outside window.)

Well, if THEY can listen in like that, then why do they have to follow you around?

DRUDGE

They're trying to intimidate me. I intimidate them, and they try to intimidate me back. So, let's be careful about what gets said here. There is nothing in the law that would prevent you from talking about your situation and my learning from that, and then things might happen, but those things wouldn't be my doing. We are not entering into any kind of agreement or contract. You are just communicating factual information to me, and that is protected under the First Amendment, at least to some extent.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But, what about money? I was hoping, although I did not mention this in my e-mail, that we could hire you as a consultant.

DRUDGE

As a hit-borg, you mean?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I mean, I want that borg out of my mother's life.

DRUDGE

You tell me what I need to know. We're just having a friendly conversation. No money is exchanging hands. There's no kind of agreement. If something happens to that borg, it won't be my doing.

FRED JOHNWAY

My wife was hoping that you could develop some kind of killer app, if you get my drift.

DRUDGE

I know what your wife is trying to say, but that takes us into a tricky legal area. Just tell me what you think I ought to know, and then things might evolve from there, but it won't be my responsibility.

FRED JOHNWAY

And what about the ethics of this situation? Causing harm to a borg is nothing less than doing damage to someone's property. If someone came and damaged my car, I wouldn't like it.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Spring break, Fred. Spring break.

DRUDGE

Just a friendly conversation. You're telling me what the situation is. We're not trying to reach any kind of agreement or understanding. Just a friendly conversation.

FRED JOHNWAY

You didn't answer my question about ethics.

DRUDGE

You want ethics? I'll give you ethics. Last month's Supreme Court decision that allows a human being to marry a borg is an outrage. It blurs the boundaries between what is human and what is artificial. I am part of a grass-roots movement that is committed to performing acts of civil disobedience in response to this outrage. You might have heard about this in the news.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Are you related to those people who burned down that borg dealership in Cleveland?

DRUDGE

Look, that was Cleveland. All I'm saying is that I'm as mad as hell about that Supreme Court ruling. (Pause) Now, it seems that your mother took advantage of that Supreme Court ruling and married a borg. Where does your mother live?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

In Northeast Philadelphia. In an apartment house. 412 Dogwood Street. Apartment 3B. My mother's name is Sadie Lewis.

DRUDGE

Yes, Fred mentioned her name earlier. What's the borg's name?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Benjamin Borg. She calls him Benji.

DRUDGE

And do you know what kind of borg we are dealing with? The manufacturer? The model?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I don't know. I never thought to ask my mother who manufactured her husband.

FRED JOHNWAY

I saw a label on the back of his neck, as he was leaving. It said, "Microborg".

DRUDGE

Microborg! You just made my day! Is there anything else you can tell me about this borg?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

He was very obedient and he took everything literally.

DRUDGE

Sounds like a Microborg, all right. Sounds like one of their cheaper models. With a name like Benjamin, he is probably a Microborg RoboFriend EX. These systems have serious security holes. You've given me enough information so that I can investigate your mother's situation. Of course, I am only doing this so that I can learn more about the borg that married your mother. I have no intention of harming that borg in any way.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

We understand. If something terrible happens to Benjamin Borg, like he throws himself in front of a bus on Roosevelt Boulevard in broad daylight, and is broken into dozens of little pieces, you won't have anything to do with that.

DRUDGE

Nothing whatsoever. I do need to get back to work on that project that I mentioned. (To Harriet) Visit me sometime, good buddy, when you're in Center City.

(Drudge turns to leave. He looks out the window.)

FRED JOHNWAY

Drudge, before you go, there is something I just have to ask you.

DRUDGE

Shoot.

FRED JOHNWAY

How did you get interested in this hacking stuff? Why do you do what you do?

DRUDGE

I've written a few articles on this very subject for several hacking magazines. To make it plain and simple: it's all about boundaries.

FRED JOHNWAY

Boundaries? How interesting! Are you listening to this, Harriet?

DRUDGE

You see, my parents set up very strict boundaries for me. I could go here, but not there. I could do this, but not that. Boundaries, boundaries.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Sometimes children need boundaries.

DRUDGE

It was not just my parents. It was also my teachers at school. When someone tries to set boundaries for me, it makes me so angry – I can't begin to tell you how angry it makes me. All I can think about is getting my revenge.

FRED JOHNWAY

So, hacking gave you a way to break through your boundaries, is that it?

DRUDGE

My parents and my teachers did not respect MY boundaries. (With growing anger) There they were, telling me where I could go and where I couldn't, setting up all those boundaries, but they didn't respect my boundaries.

FRED JOHNWAY

I can see that this is an emotional topic for you.

DRUDGE

By telling me where I could go and what I could do and what I could think, they were infringing on my boundaries. I felt like I was trapped inside a tiny box. I could hardly breathe in there. It was terrible.

(Janet and Fred Johnway look on with a mixture of sympathy and fear.)

DRUDGE (cont.)

I'll never forget the first time I hacked into a computer system. I felt like I was breaking out of that stifling box, that tiny box that my parents and my teachers had shoved me into. Hacking allowed me to break out of that box. There was hardly a computer system or a borg that I could not penetrate, and in penetrating a system, I was breaking out of my boundaries. When I broke into a system, it felt like that system had become a part of me. My boundaries were no longer defined by my skin. My boundaries extended far out, all over the Web, all over this planet. I was merging with the whole world. The boundaries were disintegrating. Today, I have no boundaries. I am one with everything! (Pause) I've really got to go.

(Drudge heads for the door.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Thank you so much for stopping by. It was a great pleasure seeing you again. Your back problem seems to be completely cured.

DRUDGE

I owe you a lot, good buddy.

(Drudge opens the door and looks out.)

DRUDGE (cont.)

Now if I could only get THOSE folks off my back!

(Drudge exits through the door.)

FRED JOHNWAY

He sure acts like he owes you a lot, Harriet. But, I'm not sure that I feel comfortable with all of this "good buddy" stuff.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

When I sent him that e-mail last Sunday, I wasn't sure that he would want to see me again.

FRED JOHNWAY

Why wouldn't he want to see you again?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

He's thirty years younger than I am, but he sort of got attached to me. He wanted to keep seeing me, even after the therapy was over. That's when I had to lay down some boundaries, as you would put it. I told him that I was married and had a family, and that he shouldn't cross over that line. So, I'm happy that he still considers me his "good buddy," aren't you?

FRED JOHNWAY

Maybe we should wait to see how this all turns out.

(Lights dim as Fred Johnway, and Harriet Johnway exit. There is a fairly long pause, then two voices are heard in the darkness.)

BENJAMIN BORG (voice only)

Sadie, someone is scanning my ports.

SADIE LEWIS (voice only)

That's all you borgs ever think about!

(Curtain.)

ACT THREE

(The setting is a borg sanitarium in Northeast Philadelphia. Back stage left is the door to Benjamin Borg's room. Benjamin Borg is seen sitting up in a bed, in a straight jacket. Janet Johnway is standing alongside the bed, looking at various instruments. She is holding a clipboard. Fred and Harriet Johnway are seated in the hallway outside Benjamin's room. There is an empty chair next to them, and a book is on the chair.)

FRED JOHNWAY

This borg nut house is starting to get to me.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I don't feel comfortable here, and I'm a nurse.

FRED JOHNWAY

If I hear another scream, I'll scream.

(A blood-curdling scream is heard down the hall. Fred Johnway mouths a huge scream in silence, as he pulls on his hair.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Thanks for not screaming, Fred.

FRED JOHNWAY

The borg that just screamed is infected with a variant of the SchizoBorg worm.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You're beginning to sound like your daughter.

FRED JOHNWAY

Maybe I should change my major. I still find it hard to believe that your mother asked Janet to come in from California to tend to her beloved Benji.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Please don't call him Benji. "Benji" sounds so affectionate.

FRED JOHNWAY

What should I call him?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I don't know. Just don't call him Benji.

FRED JOHNWAY

I know. I'll refer to him as "that piece of work". Speaking of which, you said that your mother has definitely decided to disconnect its batteries.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Yes. They are going to disconnect – its – batteries when mother gets to the hospital. That will be the end of - it.

FRED JOHNWAY

Good. I want to enjoy my summer vacation. I finished grading exams this morning and wouldn't you know it, we get a call from your estranged mother.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother may be strange, but she's still my mother. I haven't seen or heard from her since that day back in March when she announced that she had married that -, that piece of work.

FRED JOHNWAY

And now that piece of work is here, in the mental hospital, afflicted with who knows what kind of disease - .

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Imagine! That piece of work tried to commit suicide.

FRED JOHNWAY

What a surprise! Benjamin Borg got violated. I guess your "good buddy" repaid the debt he felt he owed you.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You promised me that you wouldn't mention that "good buddy" business. It's too dangerous. Who knows who might be listening?

(Benjamin Borg bounces around in his bed.)

BENJAMIN BORG

(Screams) It's the NSA! They've infiltrated my processors. They're everywhere! They know my every thought!

FRED JOHNWAY

Why do they think he's crazy? Everything I've heard him say since we got here makes perfect sense.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I hope Janet is safe in there.

FRED JOHNWAY

She's safe. The borg is all wrapped up in a straight jacket. I still don't understand why your mother called Janet in on this case. Poor Janet had to fly in all the way from California to take care of that piece of work.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I think mother is trying to reach out to us. When I spoke to her on the phone this morning, she sounded conciliatory. Mother hasn't been very good with human relationships, not since my father - .

FRED JOHNWAY

Spare me! I don't want to hear about your father's accident.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

It was suicide. I finally put all of the pieces together. My father committed suicide.

FRED JOHNWAY

I am happy to hear that you can finally face the reality of what happened.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I forgot to ask Janet about her boyfriend, Sunil, when I spoke to her earlier.

FRED JOHNWAY

Forget Sunil! Get a load of this!

(Fred Johnway picks up the book that was left on the third chair.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

The collected plays of Anton Checkov! I thought Sunil was from India.

FRED JOHNWAY

Don't you get it? She obviously has a new boyfriend, and he's from Russia.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Why can't she read the works of an American playwright?

FRED JOHNWAY

Too close to home.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What about Eugene O'Neill?

FRED JOHNWAY

Too close to home. His family was crazier than our family.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What about Arthur Miller?

FRED JOHNWAY

Business not going too well. What's the secret? What's the secret? Suicide. Like I said, too close to home.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

This morning, on the news, I thought I heard Drudge's name. Unfortunately, the toilet flushed just when they got to that story, so I'm not sure whether the reporter actually said "Drudge" or whether I just thought she said "Drudge". Sometimes I wish we could go back to those old-fashioned toilets, you know, the ones that people had to flush by themselves.

FRED JOHNWAY

I don't know. There's definitely a more pleasant atmosphere in the faculty men's room since they installed those new intelligent toilets.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

By the time the toilet stopped gurgling they were on to some other news story, something artificially theatric, something like "Is your money safe?" with all kinds of scary music in the background. (Pause) I forgot that we both agreed never to use the "D" word ever again. Forgive me.

FRED JOHNWAY

Try not to drudge that up again.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I think you meant to say, "Try not to dredge that up again".

FRED JOHNWAY

I was trying to be punny.

(More agitated bouncing around on Benjamin Borg's part.)

BENJAMIN BORG

The FBI is tapping into my processors! The FBI is swarming through my processors. They know everything!

FRED JOHNWAY

So far, I haven't heard a single thing that would make me think that robotic piece of work is the least bit irrational.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

There is something else that is bothering me, Fred. It's the fact that mother said that it was VERY, VERY important for us to meet her here at the borg sanitorium.

FRED JOHNWAY

You mentioned that in the car on the way over. I guess I was too angry about having another vacation day gobbled up by your mother and her - .

HARRIET JOHNWAY

You don't understand, Fred. She didn't say, "It's VERY important that I meet you this afternoon," she said, "It's VERY, VERY important that I meet you this afternoon."

FRED JOHNWAY

She said "very" TWICE?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Yes, that's what I've been trying to tell you.

FRED JOHNWAY

Couldn't it be that your mother feels that disconnecting her husband's batteries is very, very important?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

But, that's not what the "very, very" was about. The "very, very" only came up after mother told me all about the borg's breakdown and the fact that she had called Janet in on the case. It was only after she was finished talking about the borg, including the fact that its batteries would have to be disconnected, that mother added this thing about it being VERY, VERY important for us to meet her here this afternoon. She said there was a VERY, VERY important matter that she needed to discuss with us. Not just me, but you and me both.

FRED JOHNWAY

I wish Janet had contacted us after she arrived in Philadelphia.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother told me that she wanted Janet to keep her visit a secret at least until she had a chance to examine - that piece of work.

(Janet Johnway leaves Benjamin's room and joins her parents in the hallway. She is shaking her head sadly.)

JANET JOHNWAY

I see that grandmother hasn't gotten here yet.

FRED JOHNWAY

Is there any hope?

JANET JOHNWAY

I am surprised to hear you ask that, with that sympathetic tone of voice. I thought you were furious that grandma decided to marry a borg.

FRED JOHNWAY

That wasn't sympathy you just heard. It was irony and sarcasm. Your grandmother told your mother that it tried to commit suicide.

JANET JOHNWAY

It has a name. Its, I mean, his name is Benjamin Borg.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother told me that she found it with its head in the oven.

JANET JOHNWAY

The extreme heat really did a job on his cerebral processors.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What an awful thing for mother to have to see.

JANET JOHNWAY

He can't be fixed. The personality that grandma came to know as her husband, Benjamin Borg, is gone. Grandma doesn't want another borg to replace him. I will disconnect his batteries as soon as grandma signs the necessary legal documents.

FRED JOHNWAY

You have to sign legal documents before you can disconnect a borg's batteries?

JANET JOHNWAY

That's the law here in Pennsylvania and in most states.

FRED JOHNWAY

Did Benji –

(Janet Johnway gives Fred a look of pronounced displeasure.)

FRED JOHNWAY (cont.)

I mean, did the borg have a living will?

JANET JOHNWAY

Borgs are not allowed to have living wills.

FRED JOHNWAY

Wait one minute! Borgs can marry humans, but they can't have living wills?

JANET JOHNWAY

Look, dad, I don't make the laws. Everyone knows that the laws are a mess. The lawyers and legislators don't understand the underlying technology.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Your dad and I were so shocked to hear what had happened to that poor borg. It was all so, so unexpected - a complete surprise.

(Harriet Johnway looks at her husband with a knowing glance).

JANET JOHNWAY

Usually, lots of borgs get attacked all at once, but in this case, the violator went after Benjamin Borg, specifically. This was the work of a world-class violator. That's why I had to call in forensic experts from the FBI.

FRED JOHNWAY

Forensic experts?

HARRIET JOHNWAY

From the FBI?

JANET JOHNWAY

We need to track down whoever did this.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

This computer security stuff is so confusing.

JANET JOHNWAY

It's about boundaries, mother. Whenever a borg executes some software, it's got to ask itself, "Is this me or is this not me?"

FRED JOHNWAY

Borgs, like human beings, need to protect their boundaries. Is that the idea?

JANET JOHNWAY

Yes. This violator broke down Benjamin Borg's boundaries. Benjamin Borg lost his concept of self. This made him capable of doing great harm.

(Sadie Lewis enters from stage left, slowly walking along with the help of a walker.)

SADIE LEWIS

Boy is it hot. I don't remember a summer as hot as this – ever. (To Janet.) How is my Benji doing?

JANET JOHNWAY

As I told you on the phone, grandma, we have no recourse but to disconnect his batteries. Benjamin Borg is still capable of doing malicious damage, not only to himself, but to other borgs and to other computer systems on the Web. Here's the document you need to sign. We need Harriet and Fred to sign as witnesses.

(Janet hands her grandmother the clipboard.)

SADIE LEWIS

Sign here?

JANET JOHNWAY

Yes. Don't forget to put today's date after your signature: Five-ten-sixty-two.

(Janet Johnway hands the clipboard over to her mother.)

JANET JOHNWAY (cont.)

Mom and dad, please sign here, beneath grandma's signature.

(Harriet and Fred complete the signing of the document.)

JANET JOHNWAY (cont.)

Now please join me, as we disconnect his batteries.

(Harriet, Fred, and Janet Johnway, and Sadie Lewis enter Benjamin Borg's room.)

BENJAMIN BORG

Get away! I know who you are. You're from the FBI! You're from the CIA! You're from the NSA! Get away! Get away!

(Janet Johnway disconnects Benjamin Borg's batteries and he slumps into a sleeping position.)

JANET JOHNWAY

Sadie, would you like to stay here for a moment so you can say a prayer for Benjamin?

FRED JOHNWAY

Prayer? It's a borg for God's sake!

SADIE LEWIS

Thank you, Janet, but there's something I need to discuss with your mother and her husband. It's very, very important.

(Fred and Harriet look at each other with a worried look.)

SADIE LEWIS (cont.)

I think you should hear what I have to say, Janet, since you are my beloved granddaughter.

(The three Johnways and Sadie leave Benjamin Borg's room and re-enter the hallway.)

SADIE LEWIS (cont.)

Harriet, I know I haven't been the best mother. I admit that I was being vengeful back in March when I disinherited you because I felt that you had constructed a wall between us.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I seem to have a problem with boundaries, mother.

SADIE LEWIS

This business with Benji all started several weeks ago. One evening, we were home alone and all of a sudden Benji said, "Someone is scanning my ports" and I thought he was trying to start something, well, romantic.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother, I don't want to hear about that stuff. That's between you and the borg.

SADIE LEWIS

That's when things started to go wrong, that night when he kept on bolting up in bed saying, "Someone is scanning my ports." But, it wasn't until about a week ago that he started to behave in a really strange manner. By then, most of the damage had already been done.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Damage? What kind of damage?

SADIE LEWIS

That's when I decided to call in Janet, and I asked Janet to be discrete about it, because this had to do with doctor-patient confidentiality. But, Benji tried to kill himself before Janet arrived in here Philadelphia. That's when they took Benji in an ambulance here to the sanatorium.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Thanks for sharing all of this with us, mother.

SADIE LEWIS

What I really wanted to tell you, the reason I asked you and Fred to come here today, is that while Benji was being violated, but before I realized that something was going wrong, he did something truly awful.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

And what was that, mother?

SADIE LEWIS

He sold all of my investments, all of my stocks and bonds and mutual funds, and transferred the money to some off-shore account. I didn't find this out until yesterday.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What the hell are you trying to tell us, mother?

JANET JOHNWAY

Should I tell them what we found out, grandma?

SADIE LEWIS

Yes, my dear granddaughter.

JANET JOHNWAY

We discovered this business about all of grandma's financial assets during what is called an auditing process. I used software tools to try to reconstruct what happened between the initial port scans and the blatant manifestation of mental illness one week ago. We discovered that whoever violated Benjamin Borg was a world-class violator, and a criminal. The violator was stealing grandma's financial assets even while, on the outside, Benjamin seemed to be behaving quite normally. This is the most incredible computer crime that I have ever encountered. Last evening we called in the FBI, the SEC and other federal agencies to help us with this. Maybe you heard about this on the news this morning.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

All I heard on the news this morning was the sound of something being flushed down the toilet.

SADIE LEWIS

What I'm trying to tell you is that it's all gone. The money that I saved for all of those years, it's all gone. The FBI agents I met last evening said that there is almost no chance that I will ever see any of that money ever again. The money was transferred to a country that's not very friendly towards America.

FRED JOHNWAY

You mean, the money ended up in France?

JANET JOHNWAY

I think we need to be more realistic, grandma. The FBI agents said there was no chance of your recovering that money. Only a world-class violator could have pulled this off!

HARRIET AND FRED JOHNWAY (together)

Drudge!

JANET JOHNWAY

What did you just say?

FRED JOHNWAY

We said, "drudge," we sure hope that the feds drudge up this creep, whoever did this.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Your father means, he hopes the feds dredge up this creep, didn't you dear?

FRED JOHNWAY

That's what I meant.

(Janet Johnway gives her parents the strangest kind of look.)

SADIE LEWIS

So, I am completely broke. All I have left is my social security, and that's not even enough to pay for my rent, so I will have to leave my apartment by the end of this month. When I told the gardener what happened to my money, he stopped opening the door for me.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Mother, I'm sorry that you have suffered such a terrible loss. Please let me and Fred know if we can help you in any way.

SADIE LEWIS

Well, that's why I called you, Harriet, dear. The bottom line is that I need to move in with you and Fred. I am ninety years old. I have no money, no friends. I'm broke. Completely and totally broke.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Okay, mother. (She turns to her husband.) Now, listen, Fred. I don't want you giving me any lectures about boundaries. Mother needs our help, and we are going to give her the help that she needs. I can not turn away my own mother in a situation like this.

FRED JOHNWAY

I don't have a problem with that. Being able to define your boundaries doesn't mean that you don't have compassion.

SADIE LEWIS

Even an old geezer like me can learn new things. I guess I've learned that money isn't security.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred and I will just have to be your security from now on, mother.

SADIE LEWIS

Thank you, dear. I will try not to be too much of a nuisance. And, if I get out of control, then don't be afraid to tell me. I have only one request.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

What's that, mother?

SADIE LEWIS

Please promise me you won't use the word "very" without really meaning it. Using the word "very" like that is an abuse of language.

HARRIET JOHNWAY

Fred and I will be quite careful about what we say in front of you, mother.

JANET JOHNWAY

I have some papers to fill out in the office. (Turning to her parents.) I will see you folks back in Haverford later this evening.

(Janet Johnway exits, stage right.)

HARRIET JOHNWAY

I'm going to help mom back to her car. I'll meet you back in the parking lot.

(Sadie Lewis and Harriet Johnway exit left. GEORGE MITCHELL enters from the right. He approaches Fred Johnway.)

GEORGE MITCHELL

Mr. Fred Johnway?

FRED JOHNWAY

It's Doctor Johnway. Fred Johnway, PhD. And who are you, if I may ask?

(George Mitchell shows Fred Johnway his agent's badge.)

GEORGE MITCHELL

My name is George Mitchell. I'm an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. We're investigating a situation involving the transfer of a tremendous amount of money from the United States to an unfriendly country. You might have heard about this situation on the news this morning. I have a few questions for you and for your wife. Have you ever heard of a fellow who goes by the name of "Drudge"?

(Fred Johnway takes a few steps away from George Mitchell and looks out at the audience. Lights focus on Fred Johnway.)

FRED JOHNWAY

There's a lesson somewhere in all of this about boundaries, but I just don't get it. In this technological world of ours, where do I begin and where do I end? Where do you begin and where do you end? Where are the boundaries between self and non-self? You would have thought that the folks who created all of this technology stuff over the last century or so would have given these questions their most careful consideration. After all, who can say where the past ends and where the future begins?

(Lights fade on Fred Johnway and come up on Drudge, stage right, front.)

DRUDGE (voice only)

I hope you've learned your lesson about trying to put up boundaries, Nurse Lewis, good buddy. I was not joking when I said that I am one with everything!
(Laughs maniacally)

(Lights dim. Curtain.)