

EXT. MIAMI BEACH - DAY

ABE and ASHER sit on the beach in front of ASHER's fishing tackle kiosk, drinking beer and looking out at the ocean.

ABE

Vito Vincenzo!

ASHER

That was it!

ABE

We were gonna unionize the Lower East Side vendors if it kills us, and Vito was the lone holdout.

ASHER

How we harangued that poor man.

ABE

"How could you do this to your fellow fruit-men, have you no shame, sir?"

ASHER

We called him "the one bad apple".

ABE

We put... we put union signs on his lemons!

ASHER

On each individual lemon.

ABE

We had a good deal of time on our hands.

(Beat)

It's so quiet here. Just the ocean.

ASHER

I love it. I just love it.

ABE

You know, I always had a hard time picturing you here.

ASHER

Why?

ABE

You're so New York. A man of the city.

ASHER

I wouldn't survive in that city  
for five minutes now. Look at what  
I have here: sun. Surf. Freedom!

(Beat)

I open when I want. I close when I  
want. I haven't put on socks in  
weeks, and every night there's a  
beautiful sunset, and I never miss  
it. It's paradise.

ABE

You know... I'm not teaching  
anymore.

ASHER

You're kidding. What happened?

ABE

I lost my taste for it. It didn't  
seem important, what I was doing  
there.

ASHER

So what are you doing now?

ABE

I've been trying to figure that  
out. I've been missing the old me,  
the man you knew. I thought I  
could get that fire back, I could  
care about something, be involved  
in something meaningful, you know  
what I mean?

ASHER

I sell bait now, so... no.

Beat.

ABE

I met some young people in a bar.  
They talked a lot like we used to  
talk. Lots of jargon, mentions of  
Trotsky.

ASHER

Trotsky's still a thing?

ABE

They wanted to start a paper.

ASHER

Everyone wants to start a paper.  
We wanted to start a paper.

ABE

I though maybe I could help them achieve their goals, make a difference, but... after a few weeks I realized they were a just a bunch of idiots.

ASHER

All young people are just a bunch of idiots.

ABE

They couldn't focus, or spell, or form a coherent thought. They think "it's the '60s, man" is a manifesto of some sort. To them, all you have to do is not bathe, and you're a rebel.

ASHER

There we differed. We always bathed.

ABE

We did. We smelled wonderful.  
(Beat)  
You really don't miss New York?

ASHER

Not at all.

ABE

Have you been back?

ASHER

You mean since I was blacklisted, and my last play closed without opening? No, no I have not.

ABE

Things are different now.

ASHER

I have a life here.

ABE

You were such a wonderful writer. Do you write at all?

ASHER

Now? No.

ABE

Why not? After all you've been through, you must have a great story in you—

ASHER

Abe. I gave the theatre all I have  
and it sent me away.

ABE

I know, I know, it—

ASHER

I was one of the most successful  
playwrights on Broadway. Every one  
of my shows made money. I won the  
Pulitzer Prize. The critics hailed  
me as the American Chekhov. And  
then one schmuck calls me a  
communist, and poof! Over. My  
friends: gone. My agent, my  
producer: gone. Twenty years to  
build a life, two months to watch  
it go. The theatre broke my heart.

ABE

I wish... there was something I  
could have done.

ASHER

What? Get up in front of McCarthy  
and tell him the fruit stand  
story?

ABE

Tell him you were a good man. Tell  
him—

ASHER

I wasn't a communist? I was. No.  
You were a teacher. You had a  
young family. What good would it  
do to take you down with me?

ABE

I would have happily taken the  
chance.

ASHER

I know.

(Beat)

You know, every night, I lock up  
this kiosk, I go home, I lay in my  
bed, and I think... maybe tomorrow  
when I go back, it won't be there.  
Someone will have stolen it,  
burned it down. Sometimes I don't  
even lock it. Give the thieves a  
fighting chance. But... every  
morning, I get up and when I walk  
back up the beach, there it is.  
Shining testament to my failure.

ABE

You didn't fail. Others failed you.

ASHER

A lot of those people are still there. In New York, in the theatre. And I wear flowered shorts to work. So, New York... New York and I are done.

(Beat)

You know they're doing one of my plays here?

ABE

In Miami?

ASHER

Local community group.

ABE

Which play?

ASHER

Pillar Of Salt.

ABE

This is a very ambitious community theatre.

ASHER

Yeah, they did a rousing production of Bloomer Girl last year, so I'm sure they're very qualified.

ABE laughs.

ABE

You should go see it. I'll go with you, we'll go together.

ASHER

Abe. No.

(Re: the beer)

I believe we need to restock.

(Beat)

It's nice to see an old friend again, Abe. You're still a mensch. Gives me hope.