Freeze
ESSENTIAL DRAMA 36

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To my wife, Karen, for inspiring me with her creativity and nurturing me with her love.

~
Acknowledgements

I extend my deep gratitude to former Artistic Director of the Centaur Theatre, Gordon McCall, for staging the world premiere of *Freeze* and for his insightful dramaturgy during my year as resident playwright.

I was blessed with a dream premiere cast of Tyrone Benskin, Mark Gamacho, Mary Long, Michel Perron and France Rolland. Their outstanding performances under the insightful directorship of Harry Standjofski, and the exceptional work of our creative crew, supported by Gordon, GM Chuck Childs and the entire Centaur staff, collectively transformed my script on paper into a box-office hit on stage.

I greatly appreciate script feedback I’ve received from friends and colleagues, including dramatists Raymond Villeneuve and Norm Foster, and dramaturg Maureen Labonté for her polishing of my French-Québécois colloquialism.

I applaud Guernica Publisher Michael Mirolla for his artistic vision that promotes drama as an integral component of Canada’s literary canon and for appreciating that good plays delivering compelling stories will captivate readers.

And much thanks to Canada Council for the Arts and Playwrights Guild of Canada for supporting play-readings
of scenes from Freeze at various theatre events and especially to PGC for its invaluable work promoting our playwrights and ensuring that our rights and royalties are respected under contract.

I weathered the Great Ice Storm of the Century on crutches, recovering from surgery at my power-outed cottage in Montreal’s Anglo neighbourhood of Notre Dame de Grace. Living for so long without light, heat, power or transport never became a daily routine, for no one knew when it would all end. Back then in January of ’98, I was a single dad parenting a daughter determined to make the most of her adolescent rebellion, and I was in the midst of a painful breakup with a girlfriend. They were trying times, but there was no room for self-pity, for we were all drawn into the same lifeboat facing the perfect storm.

Others were coping in far worse circumstances and tragically some died. But most were doing their very best to help each other out. Battery-run radio was our lifeline to the ice-coated world outside our frosted windows, and every day new stories were told of heroes on the job—Hydro linemen and health-care workers, firemen and police, ambulance and taxi drivers, neighbours and strangers—rising to the challenge. That’s what kept up my spirits.

In the midst of this dark hour, I sensed that a bigger story was passing through us. It was an extraordinary moment in history, when all Québécois, no matter their
Playwright’s Preface

Freeze is set in Montréal in January of 1998, during the worst evening of the Great Ice Storm of the Century.

This two-act allegorical comedy requires a cast of five actors.

THE CHARACTERS (in order of appearance):

NICOLE GAGNON
A savvy 39-year-old award-winning journalist at Québec’s main pro-sovereignty newspaper, Le Devoir.

MICKEY BRENNAN
A street-smart 50-year-old handyman from Montréal’s Irish working-class neighbourhood of Pointe-Saint-Charles.

CURTIS BROCK
A passionate 40-year-old African-Canadian jazz musician, who twenty years earlier had left Montréal’s neighbourhood of Little Burgundy for a career in Toronto.

RÉJEAN CHARTRAND
A husky 33-year-old Hydro-Québec lineman from Laval.

CLAIRE PERKINS
A bubbly, horny 70-year-old widow, a tenant in the upper duplex.

Stephen Orlov, Montréal, 2016

race, religion, language, birthplace or work, became “pure laine” to the core, as we collectively faced the wrath of nature. For the first time since I had moved to Montreal from Boston 25 years earlier, I finally felt at home. That is what inspired me to write Freeze.

So I chose to pen an allegorical comedy that depicts the historic Ice Storm as a metaphor presaging “cooler” more inclusive times in Québec compared to the separatist firestorms of earlier decades. Now, nearly twenty years later, that vision has been validated.

My goal was to capture with stylized humour the drama and the camaraderie that friends, families and strangers experienced together. But how to project on-stage the intimacy of a big city and warmth of heart that so many felt despite no heat?

The plot? Five quirky characters, a dysfunctional mélange of Québécois from diverse backgrounds, get trapped together overnight, butting heads by candlelight over love, language and politics, as the raging storm forces them to unwittingly bond. And perhaps for the first time on Canadian stage race was never raised as an issue in the relationship of a black and white romantic couple.

My hope is that this story, published on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Great Ice Storm of ‘98, will provoke you to ponder with hits of laughter whether the “two solitudes” of Montreal’s past has become a stereotype in this new 21st century.

Stephen Orlov, Montréal, 2016
Notes on a Set

The play takes place in the lower duplex of NICOLE GAGNON. A long ice-coated branch stretches along the outdoor roof line above. An open living room (stage right) / dining room (stage left) area is furnished in traditional Québec pine antiques. The front door (stage right) opens to a vestibule area with a coat closet. A swinging door (stage left) opens to the off-stage kitchen and back porch. A large bay window on the back wall is sandwiched between a china cabinet (upstage right and a bookshelf (upstage left) stacked tightly with books, journals and an unlit stereo system. A battery-powered boom box ghetto blaster sits on a table near a small fish tank. An entrance way leads to an imaginary offstage back porch. An open-flue fireplace with a large decorative smoke vent hanging from above is located centre stage between a dining room set and a leather sofa and reclining chairs. The stage lighting, often filtered slightly blue, is complemented by natural candlelight.
The Centaur Theatre, Montréal, produced the world premiere run of Freeze from January to March of 2002.

THE CAST

NICOLE GAGNON: France Rolland
MICKEY BRENNAN: Mark Camacho
CURTIS BROCK: Tyrone Benskin
RÉJEAN CHARTRAND: Michel Perron
CLAIRE PERKINS: Mary Long

THE CREW

Director: Harry Standjofski
Dramaturge: Gordon McCall
Set and Costume Designer: Guido Tondino
Assistant Designer: Victoria Zimski
Light Designer: Luc Prairie
Sound Designer: Howard Mendelsohn
Stage Manager: Wendy Rockburn
Apprentice Stage Manager: Daveen Garland
Act 1, Scene 1

About 5:30 in the afternoon. The play opens in the dark to the loud sound of a slow water drip. A howling wind blows and freezing rain patters on a roof, as spinner lights bounce off the theatre walls, revealing frosted tree branches nestled across a cool blue-lit sky line of ice-coated roof tops that envelopes the dimmed interior set below. A slide montage of scenes of the 1998 ice storm in Quebec flash across a horizontal screen above the set, as the outdoor sounds of salt trucks and snow blowers, sirens, spinning wheels and engines not turning over, ambulances and police cruisers, a transformer blowout and sparks of downed power lines cross fade into the indoor sounds of a crackling fire and a whistling kettle. Spotlight on an unplugged battery-powered ghetto blaster that broadcasts static-laced radio storm bulletins, alternating in English and French, and then cross dubs to an interview with an old farmer, as lights rise on NICOLE GAGNON in the double salon of her lower duplex. NICOLE, wearing a fur coat, hat and fur slippers, enters with a lit candle. SHE tries in vain to cut a log into kindling with a cleaver.
RADIO (guest): Once you got the foil on the spoon, I use Reynolds Wrap myself, it’s thicker than those no-namers. You just sit your egg on the spoon, table spoon, not a tea spoon, eh? Something about the shape. Add a few drops of water, not much. And you just keep it there, on top of that flame for a good five minutes. Not in the flame, on top of the flame. Turn it once or twice. Of course, if it’s a small egg, knock off thirty seconds or it’ll end up hard boiled, eh?

NICOLE taps her fish aquarium and then feels the freezing water.

NICOLE: (overlaps with the radio report) Allo Tiger Boy! Comment ça va? Oh!! Il fait froid!! Attends!

NICOLE exits.

RADIO (host): Fascinating. Well, Mr. Jenkins, I can’t speak for all three million Québécois now shivering without power, but I’m sure most of our listeners across the province appreciate your recipe tip. (pause) Mr. Jenkins? (static) It appears that we lost Mr. Jenkins.

NICOLE, a toothbrush in her mouth, enters holding a frozen tube of toothpaste in one hand and a bowl full of water in the other. SHE carefully scoops up a tropical fish from the tank and places it in the bowl.

NICOLE: (overlaps with the radio) Eh Tiger Boy, Viens ... viens ici. Ça, c’est un bon garçon.

RADIO (host): It’s day five of what many are now calling “the storm of the century.” Once again Québec is being pounded by another wave of freezing rain, and Environment Canada’s latest emergency bulletin predicts no end in sight. Over 400 emergency shelters have been set up across the province. Most bridges to Montréal are closed, 46 regional highways shut down. Grocers report short supplies, as people are stocking up on canned food, bottled water and candles. Police are warning people to stay off the roads. So please folks, play it safe, stay at home. And now on a more upbeat note, let’s play a song that’s sure to cheer you up. Here’s her latest.

A song like “My Heart Will Go On,” Céline Dion’s hit from the movie, Titanic, plays. NICOLE feeds the fish.

NICOLE: Oui, il fait froid. Eh, Tiger Boy, t’es un grand garçon, oui. Et t’as très fain? Mmm, c’est bon.

The house phone rings.

NICOLE: Oui, allô? ... Curtis! Attends! (clicks off the radio with a remote) Where are you?! ... Oh, you’ll be here any minute ... it’s that bad? ...Yes, I told you it’s an icebox in here ...We could have survived another week apart, you didn’t need to risk ... Oh, you know I do ... Moi aussi ... Oui ... Take it slow, especially down the hill ... Be careful! ...Okay, à bientôt.

NICOLE hangs up and tries to open the frozen toothpaste tube with her teeth. She whacks it on
the side of the table, and then takes a corkscrew to
it as there’s a knock on the door.

NICOLE: Oh Curtis! Did you lose your keys? Attendez
une seconde! J’arrive!

SHE quickly slips into her heels and shivers as she
yanks off her fur coat, revealing a sexy dress. SHE
checks her hair on the run and swings open the
doors.

NICOLE: Oh, mon Dieu!

MICKEY: I’m afraid not, madame. The name’s Brennan,
Mickey Brennan.

NICOLE: Bonsoir. Est-ce qu’il ya un problème?

MICKEY: Me? I have no problem, thanks. But you
might have one. You mind if I step in? It’s nasty out
there.

NICOLE: I’m sorry, but—

MICKEY steps in and shakes the ice off his tuque.

MICKEY: That’s okay. Christ, it’s hailing bullets out
there. You need a crash helmet, eh?

NICOLE: Monsieur, I did not invite you in. But now that
you are here, you can tell me why you rang my bell.

MICKEY: Wood, you need some?
MICKEY: That’ll be 150.

NICOLE: You said 200 a cord.

MICKEY: That’s right, half is one-fifty.

NICOLE: That’s wrong, half is one hundred.

MICKEY: Plus the kindling.

NICOLE: The kindling’s free.

MICKEY: With a full cord. Who knows how long this storm will last.

NICOLE: Okay, one cord, stack it on the back porch.

MICKEY: Stacked? 250, and that’s a bargain on a night like this. Car keys? (NICOLE hesitates) Look, we got a basic logistical problem here. That’s a hell of a long narrow driveway you got and damn slippery to boot. So I gotta move my truck up to your back porch but that red Jetta of yours, it’s in the way. Now either I move that redhead into the garage at the end of your driveway or I stack that cord on your front steps.

NICOLE: Okay, I’ll pay you—

MICKEY: Cash.

NICOLE: (hands him her car keys) Cash, when you’re done.

MICKEY: Tax free, of course. No need to tip the big boys in Québec City, eh?
NICOLE: Or Ottawa.

**MICKEY checks out the fireplace.**

MICKEY: You dipped into your cookie jar for this baby, eh? That's no Reno Depot job. (checks up the flue and her dress) Skirt's a bit tight, but she's a looker. Christ, you haven't cleaned her out in a while, eh?

NICOLE: Monsieur? The bag of kindling? I need to light my fire.

**MICKEY whips out a hatchet from his holster, provoking NICOLE to do a double take.**

MICKEY: Oh, I'll light her up for you. Looks like you could use a bit of warming up.

**MICKEY splits some kindling.**

NICOLE: Do you light a fire for all of your customers?

MICKEY: The pretty ones, just the women, eh?

NICOLE: And pretty men, they don't get your full service?

MICKEY: Most men I know want to light their own fire. But don't get me wrong, I got nothing against, uh, what do ya call it there ... alternative lifestyles? Some people like vanilla ice cream, others prefer chocolate.

NICOLE: And your preference?

MICKEY: Me? Chocolate chip.

NICOLE: Ah, so you're bi-sexual?

MICKEY: No, I just like chocolate chip ice cream. My favourite, always has been. My sister, on the other hand, she goes both ways. My sister-in-law, to be more specific.

NICOLE: Your sister does it with your sister-in-law?

MICKEY: No, my sister-in-law, she does it both ways, herself. Not with herself, I mean with someone else. Well, maybe with herself, too, I wouldn't know, I never asked. But not with my sister. I don't have a sister. Actually, she's my ex-sister-in-law. Damn good mother, though. Newspaper? (NICOLE checks her watch) Oh, this won't take more than a minute. You can time me if you want. I work best under pressure, that's—

NICOLE opens the closet and a knee-high pile of newspapers tumble out.

MICKEY: Jesus! You lost your recycling bin, did ya?

NICOLE: The plague of a journalist.

**MICKEY looks her over, as she bends for the newspapers.**

MICKEY: A journalist, eh?
NICOLE: I write for *Le Devoir*. I suppose you read the *Gazette*?

MICKEY: *(sets up the kindling)* No, I talk.

NICOLE: You talk? Who do you talk to?

MICKEY: Friends ... the boys down at Hurley’s, they say what’s on their minds.

NICOLE: And journalists don’t write what’s on their minds?

MICKEY: Of course not. You write what’s on other peoples’ minds. That’s your job.

NICOLE: Our job is to offer the public an independent voice about the issues that matter.

MICKEY: An independent voice, you say?

NICOLE: Independent from the celebrities, the politicians, the power brokers. Are all of your friends down at Hurley’s so skeptical?

MICKEY: Jesus, you ask a lot of questions. I feel like I’m being interviewed here. Tell me something, when you write those articles of yours for *Le Devoir*, how many times you write them?

NICOLE: How many times?

MICKEY: How many times you do over your article? You know, rewrite it? Two? Three?

NICOLE: It depends on the subject, the deadline. One story took three months of revisions, the Cotroni case?

MICKEY: Cotroni! You took on Vic Cotroni!

NICOLE: His brother Frank. I didn’t exactly put him away, he was tried in the States, but my feature was timely, lots of rewrites.

MICKEY: Old Frankie, hmmm ... me, only one, first time, every time.

NICOLE: Oh, you write?

MICKEY: No, my job is to light your fire. One match, only one. If it takes more than one, your wood is free.

NICOLE: *Si je comprends bien là* ... If you can’t light that fire with one match, I don’t pay for the wood?

MICKEY: *Gratuit*. Of course if I pull it off, you pay me five hundred, double or nothing.

NICOLE: Do you take VISA?

MICKEY: How about a side bet? Say ... a hundred?

NICOLE: Fifty.

MICKEY: You’re on. It’s a good thing you didn’t go double or nothing ‘cause ... Christ!
RÉJEAN: *Merrie*, I’m sure they taste real good. But me, I’m full up to here with the steamies, *pis les frites là.* And my dog, eh? My neighbour there, good thing he takes him out for the big shit. Mais, Taurus, he don’t like him.

CLaire: Doris?

RÉJEAN: He’s the dog, not the neighbour.

CLaire: You named him, Doris?

RÉJEAN: Taurus, not Doris.

CURTIS: Pit Bull?

RÉJEAN: Chihuahua. The neighbour, Boris, he likes Taurus, but Taurus, he don’t like Boris. Woa, *Fucké!* I talk like the Looney Tunes now!

CURTIS: Let’s move out those trucks.

NICOLE: And then come back for dinner!

MICKEY: Thanks but the ice ghosts are calling.

NICOLE: Réjean?

RÉJEAN: *(shakes his head)* *Merrie, mais* …

MICKEY: *Salut!* And *bonne nuit!*

MICKEY opens the door. A horn honks and car breaks screech.

MICKEY: Holy shit!

RÉJEAN: *(Looks out the door)* Aie, attention!

MICKEY: Mary, Mother of God!

A car crashes, drawing all to the door and window, as headlights beam into the room to the constant sound of a blaring horn. Blackout.

～
Scene opens in the dark.

RADIO: ... reported that Montréalers made over 5,000 emergency calls to 911 on Tuesday alone. Today’s figures are expected to surpass that number. Via Rail announced that all trains throughout Québec and Eastern Ontario remain cancelled until further notice. Here in the city, the Montréal Canadiens have postponed their home game until later in the season. The Rolling Stones concert scheduled at Olympic Stadium was also cancelled. Contrary to rumours, the roof of the Big-O has not collapsed ... yet.

Separate spotlights rise first on RÉJEAN talking on the house land line, then on CURTIS talking on his cellphone, and then on MICKEY talking on Nicole’s cellphone.

RÉJEAN: Ouiain, c’est fini. Kaput.

CURTIS: CAA? ... Parlez-vous anglais?

MICKEY: I told you, I’ll get it to you tomorrow.
CLAIRE hands MICKEY a cup of coffee.

CLAIRE: Bitch. I’ve heard the expression.

CURTIS: How long?!

MICKEY: The bastard hung up on me.

RÉJEAN: (shakes the phone) The line, it’s dead ... Madame.

RÉJEAN checks the Yellow Pages, as Nicole takes her cellphone from MICKEY

CURTIS: (on the phone) I know there’s an ice storm but I need it towed!

MICKEY: (shouts into CURTIS’ phone) Tonight!

CLARIE: Oh no, my phone line is probably dead too.

NICOLE: (displays her cellphone to CLAIRE) Now you’ll have to stay here tonight, no excuses.

MICKEY: Yeah, Rocco, I know how much I owe ya.

RÉJEAN: Ouain, c’est correct je comprends mais ...

CURTIS: CAA, triple-A, what’s the difference? One hour max.

MICKEY: Tomorrow, same time, same place.

RÉJEAN: Allô? (checks the phone)

MICKEY: Goddamn son of a ...

NICOLE: (displays her cellphone to CLAIRE) My boss, he thinks the Ritz, it’s cheaper than a taxi back home to Laval.
NICOLE: The Ritz?

RÉJEAN: Ouain.

CLAIRE: (to NICOLE) They’re putting him up at the Ritz.

RÉJEAN: (on the phone) Motel St-Jacques? Avez-vous une chambre?

CURTIS: (on the phone) He told me if anything happens to his brand new Jaguar, you’ll be hearing from his lawyers in one hour max.

RÉJEAN: Merci. (hangs up and dials again)

NICOLE: Lawyers?

RÉJEAN: (on the phone) Motel Kama Sutra?

CURTIS: Salut!

RÉJEAN: Câlice.

RÉJEAN hangs up and dials another number. CLAIRE takes CURTIS’ cellphone and steps away to dial.

MICKEY: One hour max?

CURTIS: One day minimum.

MICKEY: No way!! Listen, me and my truck, we gotta get out of here tonight.

CURTIS: Oh, I hear you, man. You’re not staying here, that’s for damn sure.

MICKEY: That six-figure jalopy is pinning two cars and two trucks in that skinny driveway. We got three men, we’ll nudge her out.

NICOLE: Where? Into the road?

MICKEY: You bet.

CLAIRE hangs up the phone and checks her watch.

NICOLE: And what happens if that Jaguar gets stuck in the road at the bottom of that icy hill? If it’s hit, I am responsible, moi, comprends-tu?

CLAIRE: And don’t forget Réjean’s truck. I don’t think you fellas can push that one out.

CURTIS: One night in a hotel, it’s not the end of the world.

MICKEY: Oh, is that where you’re staying tonight?

CURTIS: It’s a good thing you and your big mouth are leaving here tout de suite!

RÉJEAN: (hangs up) Tabarnac! The hotels, they’re all booked. Puis les petits motels sont fermés, maudit crisse!

CURTIS: What?! (grabs the Yellow Pages)

RÉJEAN: Les petits motels … sont fermés … maudit crisse!
CLLAIRE: I’m not much of an interpreter, Curtis, but I think he’s out of luck.

RÉJEAN: *Tourisme Québec,* I call them just now. They check the big computer there, still runs on the generator.

MICKEY: That’s just dandy!

CURTIS: A hundred hotels and you’re telling me there isn’t one single room available in this entire city?

RÉJEAN: *Ouais, c’est ça.*

MICKEY: Sure, everybody’s jumping ship to the big hotels, they got generators.

NICOLE: No problem. I have plenty of blankets and thanks to Mickey, firewood for a week.

**Uncomfortable silence.**

CLLAIRE: It could be fun.

MICKEY: *(ziplocks his wad of bills in a bag)* I don’t think so.

NICOLE: *Ben oui.* Of course, you’ll spend the night, all of you. You have no choice. It will be our pleasure, won’t it Curtis? Curtis?

CURTIS: *(puts on his coat)* I’ll find them a taxi. Réjean will be a lot more comfortable at Mickey’s.

RÉJEAN: *(points at MICKEY)* Chez lui?!

NICOLE: A taxi? In this storm?

**CURTIS exits.**

MICKEY: *(puts on his coat)* Sorry, Regie, but I’m not into male bonding tonight. In fact, I gotta make a prolonged detour stop.

RÉJEAN slumps into the chair and shuts his eyes.

CLLAIRE: Even if you found a taxi, Mickey, you’d just sit there watching that meter run for hours.

NICOLE: Half the gas pumps don’t even work.

MICKEY: That means the other half are pumping overtime.

CLLAIRE: Where are you going?

MICKEY: The Casino. You gamble, Regie?

RÉJEAN: *(pops open his eyes)* Non, no. Me, I stay with my truck. In this storm, you tell them ‘tow it to the shop,’ it ends up in *Lac St-Jean!*

CLLAIRE: And most of the bridges are still closed, Mickey, according to CBC.

NICOLE: You’ll never make it off the island.

MICKEY: I’ll take my chances. I’ll be back for my truck tomorrow, and for that 200 you owe me plus interest. Pleasure, Claire, sweet dreams, Regie.
MICKEY exits, but slips on the icy steps, as we hear a sheet of ice crashing from the eaves.

MICKEY: (Offstage) Ahhhhh!

NICOLE: Mickey?

NICOLE dashes out the door and CLAIRE nudges RÉJEAN to follow.

CLAIRE: Go on, help him!

NICOLE: Are you okay?

RÉJEAN casually holds the door open, as NICOLE and CLAIRE help MICKEY hobble back to the sofa.

CLAIRE: Easy does it.

MICKEY: My back, ohh ... no, don’t touch me! Don’t ... Ohhhh! I told you ...

CLAIRE: Get some ice, quick!

RÉJEAN: Ice? Où ça? I don’t see no ice.

MICKEY: Fuck the ice, give me a Molson! Don’t just stand there!

RÉJEAN sits down.

NICOLE: Les bières sont en arrière.

RÉJEAN exits.

MICKEY: Christ, did you see that sheet of ice! Slid off that roof like an avalanche. Another two inches, my head would be rolling down the steps.

CLAIRE: It’s another W-W-Two out there.

MICKEY: I gotta get out of here now ... Oh, my freakin’ back!

RÉJEAN enters with a beer.

NICOLE: You’re not going anywhere tonight, not in your condition.

CLAIRE: Take it as a sign, Mickey. You were meant to spend the night with us.

RÉJEAN: You want his sign? His left glove, pull it off.

MICKEY: What are you waiting for, a tip?

RÉJEAN: (hands MICKEY a beer) Heineken, it’s all she got.

MICKEY: Heineken, eh? That’s what I like about you, Nicole, pure laine to the core. (takes a swig) Ah! It even hurts when I take a swig.

MICKEY lies back and CLAIRE gets aroused caressing his head on her lap, as CURTIS enters.

CURTIS: No taxis anywhere. Man, it’s a ghost town out there. You need a Ski-Doo to drive on those streets. What happened to you?
RÉJEAN: One step out the door, ka-boom! Right on his ass!

MICKEY: On my back, Réjean, my back! My ass feels fine. Now will you—

The sound of a tree limb crashing down with a thud draws CURTIS and RÉJEAN to the window. NICOLE is afraid to look.

CURTIS: What the hell?! Oh, shit!

RÉJEAN: (whistles) That one got it good, eh?

NICOLE: What? What?!

CURTIS: That Jag hardtop? It’s now a convertible.

NICOLE dashes to the window. Claire gets up to check and Mickey’s head bangs on the floor.

MICKEY: Ahh!

NICOLE: Oh, my god!

CLAIRE: Look at that piece of tin, flatter than a can of tuna.

MICKEY: (on the sofa) I warned you.

NICOLE: That man, he’s going to sue me!

CURTIS: Calm down, it’s not your fault.

NICOLE: So what, he’s from New York City. He’s probably a lawyer.

RÉJEAN: Ben non, ben non, the guy, he said he’s a ... voyons là, un juge?

NICOLE: A judge!!

RÉJEAN: Ouain, c’est ça.

MICKEY: No sweat, Nicole, he abandoned his car—

NICOLE: In my driveway, under my tree.

CURTIS: You’re not legally responsible.

MICKEY: No sweat, Nicole, he abandoned his car—

NICOLE: This has nothing to do with the law, he’s a judge from New York City!

CLLAIRE: Now listen, sweetie, you’re not the only one here with big concerns, so you might as well set yourself down and let that stew and those meat pies warm up, because nobody’s going anywhere and we’re all getting mighty hungry. Mickey, on the floor, lie down flat and bend those knees, good for the back. Réjean, pull over that chair.

MICKEY lies down and CLAIRE raises his feet onto the chair. MICKEY pats the floor for RÉJEAN to join him.

MICKEY: Don’t be shy. (wincs in pain) Ohhhh.
Act II, Scene 1

The sound of a crashing surf and calypso music cross fade into a radio interview, as a spotlight rises on the boom box.

RADIO (host): So Jeff, there you are sitting on a sunny beach in Cuba working on your latest screenplay, and then?

RADIO (guest): Well, I walk into the hotel lobby and I see a crowd of people huddled in front of a TV, watching this CNN report live from Montréal. I couldn’t believe my eyes. I called home, spoke with a few friends and that was it. I hopped on the first plane back to Montréal, direct flight. I wasn’t going to miss this for the world.

RADIO (host): You were able to catch a direct flight into the middle of this storm?

RADIO (guest): Sure! The only problem was they grounded us in Toronto. I’ve been stuck in this damn airport for nearly two days and nobody has a clue when—