

<Title>

an original screenplay by

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A rap group at a GLBT community center. Five chairs are set up in a circle. There is a clock on the wall that shows 8 P.M. Greg, 40 years old, enters reading a letter as he enters the room. He adjusts the chairs. He sighs, rips up the letter and sits. Four guys stumble into the room. PHILIP, a fifty-year old attorney. ERIC, a forty-year old writer/ teacher, MIKE, a fifty-five year old accountant, and JACK, a forty-five year old speech therapist. They are mumbling under their breath. Audience can't hear what they are saying until GREG speaks.

GREG

Hey guys. Let's start. I need to leave at 9:30. I have an early interview in the morning. And I have a poetry reading in the evening .

ERIC

We have so much to tell the group.

MIKE

It's all about you Eric. You are such a drama queen.

JACK

We have our own news too.

GREG

Thank goodness we're making some headway. You're supposed to be talking about couple sex, and you've all been so shy. We've been meeting once week for the last month and you guys are just chit-chatting. Let's try to stay on topic and talk about what's bothering you sexually with your partner.

PHILIP

I don't want to be forced to talk about sex.

ERIC

That's why we're here. To talk about sex. Ugh!

PHILIP stands up from his chair.

PHILIP

I'm going to leave. Stop projecting, Eric. Our sex life is private.

ERIC

What sex life? We hardly do it any more.

GREG

Hold on. This is a safe place. Let's try to talk about what we're feeling not what we think our partner is thinking.

MIKE

We did it twice last week. I'm like in shock.

JACK

It was amazing. OMG, it was so hot. Very vanilla, but hot.

GREG

Do you feel like telling us more about it?

MIKE

It was like the scene in the Streisand's *A Star is Born*. We squeezed into the bathtub and had all these candles burning.

PHILIP

Did Jack start singing *Evergreen*?

MIKE

If you call what he does singing. After we towed each other off, we got into bed. We spent a long-time kissing before doing the deed. Then we did each other orally.

JACK

I can't remember the last time that happened. It's the closest we've come to real sex. At least that's what the definition is when I go to the UCLA men's study. They want to know if someone put their mouth on my penis and vice-a-versa.

PHILIP

Why are you still going to the study? You've been negative for ten years.

JACK

I get a free physical and they pay me to go. Plus, I feel like I'm helping research for the AIDS cure.

GREG

Anything happen after the oral sex?

MIKE

Well, I wanted us to come at the same time. I just feel funny talking about it. I just kind of expect it to spontaneously happen.

JACK looks confused and hurt.

JACK

I had no idea. I thought you were enjoying yourself the way we've been doing it.

MIKE

But it's the same old thing. Mutual masturbation. Nothing changes. We're always in bed. We never even change rooms.

ERIC

That's why we have this rule about being able to kiss other guys but not go any further.

JACK

How did you come up with that?

ERIC

When we're at bars we get to flirt, kiss, fondle, whatever. As long as we don't take it any further, and we haven't broken our rules. It really keeps things interesting.

MIKE

Way too scary. I wouldn't trust myself or Jack. It's a minefield out there.

PHILIP

We've been together for twenty years. We trust each other, I think.

ERIC

I wish you trusted me to have anal intercourse.

PHILIP

We've talked about that. I have hemorrhoids. I don't enjoy it. What's the big deal?

ERIC

It would be nice to feel you inside me.

PHILIP

I'm way too uncomfortable talking about this.

GREG

I thought you guys had some news to tell the group.

ERIC

I got a full-time job at San Diego State. I start next semester. Finally, after all this time, a tenured position showed up.

MIKE

Are you going to move? What about your job, Philip? Can't an attorney work anywhere?

PHILIP

I think Eric will rent a room in someone's house. I have too many clients here. I can't just pick up and move. I have a lease on my office.

JACK

Congrats. Thank goodness you never had to move to some god forsaken small town. At least San Diego is only a couple of hours from Los Angeles.

MIKE

I have news, too. My volleyball team is going to the Gay Games next year. It will be my first time competing.

JACK

Yes, he plays volleyball four times a week. And no sex the night before he plays. He says it takes too much out of him.

ERIC

You should be glad he stays fit.

MIKE

It's great for my endorphins. Just be glad we did it twice last week.

JACK

Just because there was no volleyball practice. Susan Miller said it was a good time to be romantic.

GREG
Who's Susan Miller?

JACK
Mike's astrologist. Don't get him started with that B.S. I can't believe a Jewish man believing in astrology. I should tell the rabbi.

GREG
We're off topic again and cross talking. Let's stay with sex.

PHILIP
You know, you never tell us anything about yourself. We tell you all of our dirt. What about you?

GREG
What do you want to know?

ERIC
Have you had a relationship? What do you like to do sexually?

PHILIP, ERIC, JACK and MIKE all start whistling and shouting at GREG.

GREG
I'm sorry but I'm really not supposed to tell my story. As a facilitator it just wouldn't be appropriate. I can tell you it would be X-rated. And I will tell you one thing. He had bad breath.

ERIC
Everyone has bad breath sometimes. Of course, I have no sense of smell so it doesn't bother me.

MIKE
Yes, but it bothers *me*. I see you pretending you can smell.

MIKE blows into his hand and then lifts it up to his nose.

GREG
Oh shit. OK, I might as well tell you some of what's been going on. He said it turned him off. I stole the excitement of sex. My habit of not shaving on the weekend killed his sex drive.

MIKE

So, you made him move out?

GREG

No, I tried to compartmentalize what happened. I kept telling myself we both loved each other. But no matter how many times I talked to myself, I couldn't get over it. I couldn't trust him. If I wasn't enough to hold his interest after ten years, what would the future course hold for us. And then he was gone. No contact. None of that bullshit of 'oh, we can still remain friends'. I kept looking for those trace elements of our love that were hiding somewhere. Maybe in those dark crevices in the closet that Gladys our housekeeper, never dusted?

ERIC

Aren't we getting poetic? So, you never heard from him?

GREG

Not for the last six months. And I haven't filed for divorce so we're still married. But I love living alone. I can pretend not to miss him. I eat when I want. See the guilty pleasure films and theater I want to see. No heavy weight discussions. It's all good. Well, I miss the cuddling in the morning. But I thought I could get a dog, and I'd have all the unconditional love I'd ever want. And then yesterday I got an invite to a gallery opening of his work. OK, that's enough about me

JACK

You know, Mike doesn't live with me. That means I'm only with Mike on the weekends

MIKE

Why are you bringing that up. It has nothing to do with sex.

JACK

I want you to stay at my place at least once a week.

MIKE

I thought you loved my unit in West Hollywood. It's too hard for me to stay at your condo. It feels like a museum. Everything in perfect order. You can't tell that anyone lives there.

ERIC

Uh oh, trouble in River City. Jack sounds like a control freak.

GREG

Hey guys. Remember, keep it safe. We want to hear your feelings not what you think about the members in the group. Unless they ask for an opinion. You know the rules.

ERIC

Sorry. I know. Talk about control freaks. Philip is the master manipulator. Expecting things to go a certain way. He thinks by taking care of me that I'll be in his debt. That's partly why I took the teaching position in San Diego. I want to succeed on my own without his clutches steering me down a specific path.

PHILIP

I worry about you and about money. What if you got sick like my ex, Scott. When he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he died within a few months.

ERIC

I'm not dying. Don't try to mold me into something, Philip. I'd like to take care of you for a change.

PHILIP moves from his chair and starts hugging ERIC. The rest of the group starts clapping.

GREG

You're going to make us all cry. It seems like you guys are doing everything to distract yourself from talking about sex. That's what we're here for. Stay focused.

LOOKING AT ERIC

PHILIP

Yeh, with your move to San Diego our sex life will hit zero.

ERIC

But think about how exciting it will be when we get together on the weekends. It'll be a reboot.

PHILIP

Really? You're going to be fighting the traffic from San Diego on the weekends. I can just see that.

ERIC

C'mon! You have your Melolagnia, you know, getting turned on by music. Yeah, it really is a thing. You jack up the sound and get physically excited by the voice, the beat, the repetition. I know you masturbate, but I can't take it when the volume is blasting.

PHILIP

That's a secret. No one is supposed to know about it.

ERIC

Oh, please! Everyone has fetishes or fantasies. Right, guys?

GREG

Philip are you o.k. with this conversation? What ever happens in here is confidential, but I want you to feel comfortable. Not like we're ganging up on you.

PHILIP

I'm embarrassed about it. I told Eric in confidence. I feel like I've been betrayed.

ERIC

I don't want you to feel ashamed. No one cares. They still love you.

JACK

He's right. It makes you special. Not some boring fantasy like feet, wrestling or stuff like that. It's

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

fascinating. I've never heard about someone into that sort of fetish. You know speaking of masturbation. We haven't really talked about that. How many times do you do it? I've caught Mike doing it. At first I was kinda's hurt . That he would rather play with himself than have sex. But then I figured, why not? It allows me to do the same thing.

GREG

I think we're out of time, but that's a good suggestion, Jack. We'll devote our next session to jacking off.

After everyone leaves, GREG, stays behind and addresses the audience.

GREG (CONT'D)

I wanted so much to share my feelings with the group even if it wasn't professional. All the talk about sex was affecting me. I'm still recovering from yesterday when I went to Tim's gallery opening. When I walked into the gallery, I couldn't find my husband. I don't know why I keep calling him my husband since he left me. Usually, the painter is there greeting the visitors and then I saw him. Tim was dressed in women's clothing and, I couldn't help it, I gasped out loud. It was like Tim had died and, in his place, there was a woman. I ran out of the gallery trying to catch my breath. I leaned over and almost vomited.

GREG (CONT'D)

Processing what had happened. This man who I've been married to for ten years was no more. I wondered about the sex we'd been having. Was it as a woman or as a man? And this letter he left for me made me think about how immature he really was. He told me that he was afraid to explain about being a cross dresser. That he wasn't transsexual. Just that he liked dressing in women's clothes. That it made him feel comfortable. To not even talk to me face to face, and then to just shock me like that. Without any warning. And, of course,, I'm disappointed in myself for not realizing what was going on. This makes me realize that I need my own therapist. Maybe what I've learned is that everything doesn't revolve around sex. That the lack of communication about sex isn't the be all and end all. There can be more important things we keep hidden.