

## THE DORSAL STRIATUM

By Trish Harnetiaux

Well I hope that the train from Carribou Maine  
Runs over your new love affair  
And you walk the floor from door to door  
And pull out your peroxide hair  
You never was my woman, you were never true  
And all in all, if the curtain should fall  
I hope that it falls on you.

- Waylon Jennings, "Mental Revenge"

### CAST

Jack with one arm (JACK 1A)  
Jack with two arms (JACK 2A)

Part I - THE STORY OF THE PEACH

Part II - THE COVER OF POPULAR SCIENCE

Part III - LET THERE BE LIGHT

Trish Harnetiaux  
860 Metropolitan Ave, 3L  
Brooklyn, NY 11211  
917.531.7169  
Trishh@earthlink.net

THE DORSAL STRIATUM**PART I - THE STORY OF THE PEACH**

JACK with two arms (JACK 2A) is sitting with his head buried in his lap. Distraught. JACK with one arm (JACK 1A) is pacing back and forth with a letter in his hand.

JACK 1A  
Don't do this to yourself.

JACK 2A  
Read it again.

JACK 1A  
Jack.

JACK 2A  
Jack - Again.

JACK 1A  
(Reading from the letter.)  
Dear Jack. We hope this letter finds you well.

JACK 2A  
"We"!

JACK 1A  
We meant to write earlier -

JACK 2A  
Ha!

JACK 1A  
I feel I should explain what happened. It must have felt out of the blue to you. I woke up every hour on the hour the night before I left. I would sit up and look over at you in bed (you were drooling slightly) - each time feeling less and less satisfied with our relationship. It began with restlessness which led to boredom. I was uninspired, fed up, irritated, stuck, and finally... hungry. The hunger drove me from bed, gnawed on me as I packed and led me to the door. I just couldn't wake you, couldn't have a conversation, knew I would have to write you a letter.

(JACK 2A groans as if shot.)  
The most amazing thing happened when I went downstairs. I walked across to the deli we love, you know, with all the fruit wrapping the outside. I saw a peach. It was beautiful. I reached for the peach, knowing it was the only thing in the

world I could possibly swallow because I was so upset, and found another hand on it! That hand belonged to John. It was love at first sight (we have since candied the peach.) John and I married last week and are leaving soon for China to pick up the little girl we are adopting. I have never been happier. *Ever*. Enclosed is a sea shell necklace I picked out for you while we were on our honeymoon in Maui. Heard about Jack's arm -

(Pause.)

- it even made the papers in Hawaii! We hope they were able to sew it back on.

(Pause.)

You're lucky to have such a friend as Jack! How brave he was. Thank god you're alive! Glad you are safe and hope your

-

(Pause.)

- "research" is going well. Let's all do dinner when we return, I think you two should meet! Xoxo, Me.

JACK 2A

She signed it "Me."

JACK 1A

I'm sorry.

JACK 2A

I'm going to kill her -

JACK 1A

- no -

JACK 2A

- both of them.

JACK 1A

(Massaging JACK 2A's shoulders with one arm, his only arm.)

Calm down.

JACK 2A

(Shaking his head.)

A fucking peach?

JACK 1A

Do you think she made that up?

JACK 2A

A peach?

(His head slams down on the table.)

Black.

**PART II - THE COVER OF POPULAR SCIENCE**

JACK 1A is holding a silver helmet that is connected by a mass of cords to a light blub on the top of a metal stand. In the corner there is a video camera set up on a tripod and there is a chalk board (or overhead projector) full of mathematical calculations.

JACK 1A

The Dorsal what?

JACK 2A

(Wearing the sea shell necklace from Maui.)

The Dorsal Striatum. It's the area of the brain that's stimulated when you fantasize about revenge.

JACK 1A

What?

JACK 2A

*The Dorsal Striatum.*

(Tapping on his head.)

Here. This part of the brain - it goes wild, releases energy - and that's how we're going to do it.

JACK 1A

I'm not following, Jack.

JACK 2A

*Electricity.*

(Gesturing to the formula on the board.)

This proves it's possible. We're going to show the world a new source. And it's going to make us famous.

JACK 1A

You famous.

JACK 2A

Us. You have to be my right hand!

(JACK 1A has no right hand.)

I can't do it without you. There can be no lulls in thought once I get going.

JACK 1A

You're going to put that on your head.

JACK 2A

I'll have the helmet on, yes, and pure, raw fantasy will get the energy from here -

(Motioning to the helmet.)

- to here.

(Motioning to the light bulb.)

JACK 1A

Are you sure it'll work?

JACK 2A

Of course - I just haven't tried it yet. The cover Jack. *I have to be on the cover of Popular Science.*

JACK 1A

The cover.

JACK 2A

On the cover. With one word - one word beneath the picture of my face - GENIUS. And she'll read the article - she'll see how I harnessed the energy from The Dorsial Striatum, how I used fantasies of revenge - fantasies she inspired, and turned it into electricity. It'll say how my brain is like the goddamn Hoover Dam. She'll feel the sharp, burning pain of having lost her one true love and she'll have to find me. And you - you're my wing-man.

JACK 1A

Not your right hand.

JACK 2A

No, no - my wing-man.

JACK 1A

How.

JACK 2A

Your role, my friend, is to get me there.

JACK 1A

I'm not a scientist.

JACK 2A

You don't need to be. You're like my coach.

JACK 1A

Coach, huh.

JACK 2A

Help me, prod me. Get me in the moment. You get it -

JACK 1A  
I'm not -

JACK 2A  
- Oh, come on! We all know revenge. We've all been there -

JACK 1A  
Jack -

JACK 2A  
- we have. We think about it in the shower, walking down the street, pouring a cup of fucking coffee -

JACK 1A  
- Recovering in the hospital room -

JACK 2A  
Exactly. It's human, it's like breathing.

JACK 1A  
You want her to suffer.

JACK 2A  
I want her world flipped fucking out, rocked. I want her to look at a dog and call it a cat - because she *can't see straight* she's so upset. I want to be on the cover of Popular Science.

JACK 1A  
Alright, I'll try -

JACK 2A  
- That's the spirit.

JACK 1A  
(Pause.)  
Are you ready?

JACK 2A  
I'm ready.

JACK 1A  
ARE YOU READY?

JACK 2A  
(Putting on the helmet.)  
I'M READY. It has to shine brightly -

JACK 1A  
- top of the Chrystler Building -

JACK 2A  
Turn the camera on.

JACK 1A

It's on.

JACK 2A

There she is, standing on the corner next to a newsstand. He's beside her, holding their fucking baby from China. It's windy and her hat blows off her head. She turns to get it and as she leans down to pick it up - something catches her eye. Me. I'm staring at her - tousled hair, goatee, Izod shirt that matches my eyes - from the cover of Popular Science.

(The light bulb flickers.)

JACK 1A

It's working!

JACK 2A

It is?

JACK 1A

Keep going!

JACK 2A

Okay!

JACK 1A

Try harder -

JACK 2A

- Help me!

JACK 1A

It won't end with the Cover Jack.

JACK 2A

No!

JACK 1A

That's just the beginning.

JACK 2A

Right! Morning shows -

JACK 1A

- you and Katie fucking Couric -

JACK 2A

- Endorsements -

JACK 1A

- you with a goddamn can of Coke!

JACK 2A

She's lying in bed, John and the China baby are spooning her.  
She's reading the article, crying silently -

JACK 1A

And?

JACK 2A

She's...

JACK 1A

She's what?

JACK 2A

(Growing frustrated with his  
vision.)

She is...

JACK 1A

She's crying Jack! She's crying and what else - is she  
laughing? Ironically laughing and crying at the same time?

JACK 2A

Shit. I can't see it.

(Taking off the helmet.)

I need a better approach, to regroup.

JACK 1A

You need to focus.

JACK 2A

I need a list! Elements, ingredients. "The 5 Elements of  
the Ideal Revenge." It'll be good for the article.

JACK 1A

OK.

(Flips over the chalk board  
revealing a clean side.)

Number One.

JACK 2A

Number One. The Crime.

JACK 1A

(Writes the list on the  
chalkboard.)

The Crime. Good.

JACK 2A

Two... The Plan.

JACK 1A

Plan...

JACK 2A  
Three - The Methodical Plotting.

JACK 1A  
...Plotting...

JACK 2A  
Four -

JACK 1A  
- Four -

JACK 2A  
- The Music.

JACK 1A  
What?

JACK 2A  
I need a theme song. I need a sound track. It'll pump me up.

JACK 1A  
OK, Music.

JACK 2A  
Five.

JACK 1A  
Five.

JACK 2A  
Cinco.

JACK 1A  
Cinco.

JACK 2A  
The Length. Let's call it "The Length."

JACK 1A  
"The Length." The length you'll go. I like it.

JACK 2A  
I'm feeling better already.

JACK 1A  
That's good, Jack.

JACK 2A  
Oh - Classical! Classical music. I'll match my climax, the bulb throbbing away, pulsing to the music.

JACK 1A  
You're jumping ahead -

JACK 2A  
- I'm not. The Crime has been committed, The Plan is in place, The Methodical Plotting is ongoing, The Music is Classical.

JACK 1A  
Wagner?

JACK 2A  
No.

JACK 1A  
Schubert?

JACK 2A  
Schubert.

JACK 1A  
Death and the Maiden - ironically appropriate?

JACK 2A  
I don't have it.

JACK 1A  
I do. (Pulling a CD from his pocket.)

(Puts the CD in the player.)  
An old favorite of mine.

(Mimicking the start of the song.)

Daaa Da Da Da Da.

JACK 2A  
- Jack, I need a moment of silence.  
(They are silent. JACK 2A breathes loudly.)

Round two.

JACK 1A  
Round two.  
(The music starts.)

JACK 2A  
Ready.

JACK 1A  
Ok. You've been dumped for the last time. And you have this chance, this chance to bring her back. She'll come to you groveling, ruing the day she left.

JACK 2A

Ruing it, good!

JACK 1A

If you don't get this out, let the anger and the hurt and the loneliness out - name and recognize every fucked up desire you've had to hurt someone or something because *you know* it's the only thing that will make you feel better - then you're lost. Get in the moment Jack.

JACK 2A

I want this.

JACK 1A

You what?

JACK 2A

I want this.

JACK 1A

I can't hear you!

JACK 2A

I WANT THIS!

JACK 1A

Better.

JACK 2A

Read that section of the letter again - the one where she talks about my "research." She never believed in me, that I could do it.

JACK 1A

I'll back up a bit, get you in the moment... "Heard about Jack's arm... It even made the papers in Hawaii... We hope they were able to sew it back on... You're lucky to have such a friend as Jack! *How brave he was.* Thank god you're alive. Glad you're safe and hope your "research" is going well."

JACK 2A

She's so completely self absorbed.

JACK 1A

Is she.

JACK 2A

She didn't even ask how my research was going.

JACK 1A

So completely self absorbed.

JACK 2A  
Imagine if she said that to you.

JACK 1A  
Imagine.

JACK 2A  
I mean it.

JACK 1A  
I would be tremendously upset.

JACK 2A  
Didn't care about you, or how you felt. *Just me, me, me all the way home.*

JACK 1A  
That's cold.

JACK 2A  
Damn straight.

JACK 1A  
I'd do anything.

JACK 2A  
Anything.

JACK 1A  
I'd make sure that I was heard.  
(Pause.)

JACK 2A  
I need a peach. Visual stimulation.

JACK 1A  
(Pulling a peach out of his jacket.)  
I have one.

JACK 2A  
Perfect!

JACK 1A  
Go again -

JACK 2A  
- She starts getting calls. Her parents, friends, acquaintances, they're all asking if she's seen it, if she still talks to me, how could she have been so dumb! Didn't I just look like a million dollars! Did you notice the way his shirt matched his eyes?! You made one helluva mistake they say!

JACK 1A

She missed her chance.

JACK 2A

Missed her chance! "Are those wrinkles dear?" Her mother says - "there - there on your face!" You're looking so old honey -

JACK 1A

"- Doesn't Jack look so young and strong on the cover?"

JACK 2A

"Not a day over 22." Is it working?

JACK 1A

Not yet -

JACK 2A

Is it on Jack?

JACK 1A

No.

JACK 2A

Is it burning brightly?!

JACK 1A

Jack.

JACK 2A

Is it on?!

JACK 1A

No! Open you eyes.

(JACK 1A shuts the music off.

They stare at each other for a moment.)

You're not hitting it.

JACK 2A

I don't know what else to do -

JACK 1A

Is there nothing else?

JACK 2A

I... What?

JACK 1A

You saw the bulb - the limits have to be pushed Jack. You think goddamn Benjamin Franklin was like, no - no - I must stop, that key is going to fucking high?

No. JACK 2A

Hell no! JACK 1A

Well, there is one thing. JACK 2A

Tell me. JACK 1A

I'm not sure exactly how it works. JACK 2A

Is it what I think it is Jack? JACK 1A

It could be. JACK 2A

Are you willing to go there? JACK 1A

Anything - I'm just not sure - JACK 2A

- How it works? Yes, you said that. JACK 1A

Yes. JACK 2A

But - guess what? JACK 1A

What? JACK 2A

(Pulling a Medical Research  
folder out of his coat  
pocket.) JACK 1A

I know. I have it all right here.

You do? JACK 2A

I do. Are you ready? JACK 1A

**PART III - LET THERE BE LIGHT**

The JACKs are sitting at the table.  
There is an axe leaning against the  
front. JACK 2A is eating the peach.

JACK 1A  
(Reading from the "Medical  
Research.")

'It is proven that when people are forced to give something  
up, make some sort of self-sacrifice in order to achieve the  
ideal revenge there is a direct correlation to the Dorsal  
Striatum increasing stimulation.'

JACK 2A

Wow.

JACK 1A  
'In a massive roundup of data, conducted by top professionals  
during a joint study between the Medical School and students  
belonging to on-line dating organizations such as Match.com,  
it was found that 10 out of 10 participants agreed to  
personally sacrifice something if certain revenge was, well,  
certain.'

JACK 2A

Of course!

JACK 1A  
We're going to kick that up a notch.

JACK 2A  
Electricity. The light has to shine.

JACK 1A  
Are you sure?

JACK 2A  
Yes.

JACK 1A  
Just so we're on the same page - you're there, you're revved  
up, you're in the heat of the fantasy -

JACK 2A  
- Right -

JACK 1A  
The bulb is on, the bulb is off -

JACK 2A  
- this is when you do it -

JACK 1A  
You're a step away from the Cover of Popular Science - but  
you're not there yet.

JACK 2A  
Yes.

JACK 1A  
That's when.

JACK 2A  
Exactly. It has to be.

JACK 1A  
It has to be. No one's ever done this before - you'll become  
legend.

JACK 2A  
*Legend.*  
(Pause.)  
It doesn't bother you, really?

JACK 1A  
We're born with two, we grow up with two, it's what we know.  
All it is, is adjustment.

JACK 2A  
Adjustment.

JACK 1A  
I carry less.

JACK 2A  
A small price.

JACK 1A  
*You're a genius.* And now everyone will know.

JACK 2A  
Alright.  
(Takes off his shirt.)  
Just make sure it's quick.

JACK 1A  
Won't feel a thing.

JACK 2A  
Camera's on?

JACK 1A  
Been on the whole time Jack. She shouldn't have left you.

JACK 2A  
She'll be begging to come back.

JACK 1A  
That's right.

JACK 2A  
I'm all she's ever wanted. Jack Glasshaus - he was on the cover last month, and he's just been nominated for the *National Medal of Science*.

JACK 1A  
Sky's the limit -

JACK 2A  
Goddamn *National Medal of Science* Jack!

JACK 1A  
(Picking up the axe.)  
Hey - what do you call a guy with no arms and no legs that holds up your car?

JACK 2A  
(Closing his eyes.)  
Jack.

JACK 1A  
Yes.

JACK 2A  
Are you sure Jack?

JACK 1A  
Cinco. The Length.

JACK 2A  
Of course.

JACK 1A  
You made the list.

JACK 2A  
The Length.

JACK 1A  
It's the final element.

JACK 2A  
Do it at the height!

JACK 1A  
It'll be good for the article.

JACK 2A  
The Cover of Popular Science.

JACK 1A  
National Medal of Science. A Hero. Now stretch your arm  
across the table.

JACK 2A  
(Gathering momentum.)  
She keeps calling me Genius -

JACK 1A  
- Grab the far edge -

JACK 2A  
- like it's replaced my name.

JACK 1A  
And what do you do?

JACK 2A  
I laugh!

JACK 1A  
You laugh in your Izod shirt -

JACK 2A  
- I laugh into the mother fucking camera -

JACK 1A  
- She has no clue who she has fucked with, you're the goddamn  
Hoover Dam -  
(Stands behind JACK 2A, the axe  
resting on his shoulder.)

JACK 2A  
- I have reinvented science!  
(The bulb pulses rapidly.)

JACK 1A  
Yes!

JACK 2A  
And I say -

JACK 1A  
- And you say, "Thank you all for coming -"

JACK 2A  
- I say - *"thank you all for coming, it is an honor to  
accept this award -"*

JACK 1A

- it is our honor to bestow it. And you would like to thank -

JACK 2A

*"- I would like to thank each and every fucking bitch that pissed me off, allowing me to get to this point -"*

JACK 1A

- and at the top of the list -

JACK 2A

*"- and at the top of the list -"*

JACK 1A

- it'll burn bright Jack -

JACK 2A

At the top -

JACK 1A

- At the very fucking top -

JACK 2A

*- and I will say, "at the top of the list - "*  
 (JACK 1A raises the axe high in  
 the air with his one arm.)

JACK 1A

- is her -

JACK 2A

*"- is YOU -"*

JACK 1A

- is you -

JACK 2A

*"- and you will always remember -"*

JACK 1A

You will always remember -

JACK 2A

Because I am -

JACK 1A

- Because you're what!?

JACK 2A

BECAUSE I AM FAMOUS!

The axe falls. Black. Sound of  
axe/arm hitting the table. A Scream.  
Light bulb on at full.

END OF PLAY