

Gloom II: War on Hell

Other Books By John A. Deering:

Sitting At Home All Day, Doing Nothing

My Happy Childhood Memories

Five Miles Over the Speed Limit

This Is Just A Nightmare

Gloom / SodaCorp

Antipod / Raised Consciousness

Gloom II: War on Hell

DEMONS:

Demons are creatures from Hell – and they are *very* unfriendly. There are seven species of demon altogether, one for each of the seven deadly sins.

SPECIES 1 – ZOMBIES.

Former human beings; presently, aggressive, carnivorous beasts.

SPECIES 2 – SHADOWS.

Creatures from Hell, come to Mercury to destroy. All demons generally look indistinguishable from one another.

SPECIES 3 – INVISIBLE DEMONS.

Demons from Hell that are completely invisible to the human eye.

SPECIES 4 – MINOTAURS.

Big, red demons, appearing very much the way one would expect a minotaur to. They have the ability to shoot yellow fireballs from their hands.

SPECIES 5 – CYBER-WASPS.

This species is part wasp-demon, part machine. Their upper body halves are organic, while the lower half is biomechanical – a cybernetic set of spider legs.

SPECIES 6 – ONI.

Big demons with giant iron clubs, found in Japanese mythology . . . except they're also, like, *real*.

SPECIES 7 – GOAT DEMONS.

Isaiah 34:14: “. . . The hairy goat also will cry to its kind;

Yes, the night monster will settle there

and will find herself a resting place.”

Leviticus 17:7: “They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot.”

(New American Standard Bible)

MEET THE PLAYERS.

JOHN GLOOM / GLOOM GUY.

The star of the show – a soldier in the U.S. Army, who, in only a small amount of time in the service, has been to Hell and back . . . *literally*. His experiences in planet Mercury, hunting demons in the hallways and corridors of a science lab, have left him traumatized and unable to easily recover. Although he would love, more than anything else, to just forget it all and move on, he just can't seem to get the themes of war and Hell out of his life . . .

BLING.

Derek Derekson – aka “Bling” – is another one of the eight men who went on the mission to Mercury. (However, nobody else had it *quite* as bad as John, because he was the last, final survivor at some point, and went on plenty of action alone.) Bling is basically the only person who's still alive, and who John still chills with, who knows what it was like to have gone on that Hellish mission.

THE REST OF JOHN'S ARMY CREW:

ANIMAL, ROBOT, BIG BLACK DUDE,
LEAF BLOWER, B-WORD, & SARGE.

The rest of the crew of soldiers who accompanied John to his Hellish Mercury mission. Animal's the obnoxious one; Robot's a mechanical person; Big Black Dude is the *big*, serious, no bullshit guy; Leaf Blower is the tough girl tomboy; B-Word is the scared first-time rookie; and Sarge is the man with the highest rank, the sergeant leading the crew.

PINK DOG.

A hallucinogenic character that John sees for a while during a brief brush with insanity.

PRESIDENT CUSH.

The President of the United States. Although every day of a President's life is loaded with difficulties, Cush has found himself in particularly tough times lately, with all of America looking down the barrel of a global attack and invasion from Hell. No matter what happens, he refuses to give up in the ongoing game of war.

CUSH'S CIRCLE OF FRIENDS:

DICK CHENEY, KARL ROVE, COLIN POWELL, & CONDOLEEZA RICE.

Well they're just the best friends a guy could ask for.

THE U.N. (UNITED NATIONS).

A board of directors – six people in suits – who are the leading authority in the world of global politics.

COFFEE SHOP PEOPLE:

MANAGER, EMPLOYEES #1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

A six-person group of human survivors – the staff that was working at a coffee shop when the Earth invasion struck.

VIDEO EMPLOYEES #1, 2, 3 & 4.

A four-person group of human survivors – the staff that was working at a video store when the Earth invasion struck.

OLD LADY.

An old lady who was in the middle of arguing over a coupon worth 14 cents when the Earth invasion struck.

TOY BARGAIN PEOPLE:

TOY MAN 1, 2, & 3, TOY WOMAN 1 & 2.

The bouncing, happy, energetic people who work at Toy Bargain, and who are filmed for its commercials.

SATAN.

The mastermind behind all of Hell – the master of deception and manipulation, always plotting to conquer the world.

ACT ONE.

Scene 1.

FADE IN on a blank, empty stage. John Gloom / Gloom Guy enters from STAGE RIGHT and, while talking, begins to walk toward CENTER STAGE.

JOHN: They say that war is Hell. They say that Hell is not just a *physical place* that exists down below, where you go when you die, if you're bad – sometimes, Hell is simply the name for the terrible things that happen *during life in Earth*. War. Disease. Pollution. Sexual harassment in the workplace. Coupons that don't work. *Hell*.

The spotlight turns red.

JOHN: My name is John Killington Gloom – and, after joining the United States Army, I found myself in Hell. *Actual Hell*, not just a figure of speech.

The red light fades out.

JOHN: It was just supposed to be an ordinary mission. Seven soldiers of the U.S. Army – me being one of the lucky seven – were sent to planet Mercury, led by our sergeant.

An image of Mercury fades into view.

JOHN: Our mission was to investigate a science lab where "demons from Hell" were reported to be running rampant. Sounded simple enough . . .

The image of Mercury fades out. We hear sounds of screaming. Sounds of demonic roaring. Sounds of blood splattering. More screaming.

JOHN: Yyyyeah. It was some crazy shit.

When they say that war is Hell, they absolutely mean it. The demons were real, all right – and they massacred, slaughtered, and otherwise wiped out everything they saw. In fact, everyone in my team got killed off, one by one, until I was the last survivor.

(walking toward STAGE LEFT) But it had a happy ending. I followed the demons to Hell, where they had come from, to stop the invasion at its source. In fact, I even got my friends *out* of Hell, and back *into* the world of the living!

The image of Mercury fades out; an image of Earth appears.

JOHN: Oh, it was a happy ending, all right . . . Satan was blown up, the gateway to Hell was closed, and me and my friends all got back home to Earth. But *was* it a happy ending? *Does* such a thing even exist? If my experiences in the military have taught me anything, it's that there is no such thing as a happy ending . . . or a sad ending either, really . . . no such thing as an *ending* at all, because every day life goes on, and the story simply continues.
(he EXITS STAGE LEFT)

Scene 2.

INT. MILITARY INSTALLATION

FADE IN on nine people gathered at a table, playing poker: John, Animal, Robot (v2.1), B-Word, Bling, Big Black Dude, Leaf Blower, Sweeper, and Sarge.

A few people gasp, as they turn their head to see President Cush entering the scene.

The soldiers all rise to their feet, and salute.

JOHN: Mister President!

CUSH: At ease, gentlemen. And hey . . . call me Cush.

Chuckling, he sits down at the table.

CUSH: Deal me in. What're we playing, Rummy?

SARGE: Yeah, Rummy 500. Wanna start a new game?

CUSH: (standing up) Oh, well hey, if you're already in the middle I won't bother ya –

SARGE: No, no, sit, sit. (patting the table) I don't care, we're only like a minute or so in.

Cush shrugs, and then, smiling, sits down and joins in the game.

CUSH: So. I've been dealing with *paperwork* all day. I've missed out on all the action – what's been happening?

SARGE: Well, I went to planet Mercury, like you told me to, with my seven-man team.

Cush smiles, nodding his head.

CUSH: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm . . .

SARGE: Lots of dark hallways. Corridors. Dim lighting. Found a lot of crazy stuff – people turning into zombies; people carving pentagrams into their own necks. Boxes and care packages left all over the building, addressed to Gloom Guy, from people who *worshipped* him as their Savior . . . packages of guns and ammo, armor, health packs, scattered around every corner.

CUSH: (eyebrows raising) Oh my!

SARGE: Yeah, crazy stuff. I even got possessed by the Devil at one point! But, yeah, we basically went through all the hallways, killed a bunch of demons . . . eventually, *John* here found the gateway to Hell, plunged in, and fired the Rather Large Gun 20,000 at the Devil!

JOHN: (smiling, raising one hand) Yeah. That was me.

SARGE: . . . well anyway, we got back here safe and sound, as you can tell. Only one of us that didn't make it was Robot. But, as you can see now, he's been replaced with Model 2.6 here.

ROBOT: Uh, that's 2.1, actually . . .

SARGE: Whatever.

ROBOT: Heh. I *wish* I was 2.6, that'd be sweet!

CUSH: Very good, Lungman! I honestly didn't expect *all* of you guys to make it back in one piece! Well – all of you guys with flesh and bone, I mean . . . (to Robot) no offense –

ROBOT: (shrugs) Eh, none taken, I guess.

CUSH: Man. I've always known that Hell was a real place . . . I just never expected to see this sort of attack in our lifetime.

SARGE: Well, thankfully, it was just in planet Mercury – far from our civilian countries here in Earth.

CUSH: Yes, that *is* something to be thankful for. However, now we realize that Hell poses a potential future threat to America.

ROBOT: Uhh – the whole world, actually.

CUSH: And one thing that I *do not tolerate* is people – or demons – who pose a potential threat to America. So, that's why I want some info. You guys have *seen* the demons for yourselves – so I wanna know, what're they like? How many different species are there? What are they capable of? And just what kind of threat do they pose to America?

SARGE: Well, I'm no scientist. I don't know all the technicalities of it.

CUSH: Hey, that's fine, I certainly ain't a scientist myself. But, every little piece helps.

SARGE: Oh, I'm sure me and my ladies will have no problem . . . (eyeing his men) telling you all about it, right?

Reluctantly, everyone agrees.

Scene 3.

INT. BOARD MEETING ROOM

Eight people in suits are gathered at a board meeting, along with John. (Since John is the only one in this scene who was also in Scene 2, all the other actors from Scene 2 can be re-used for this scene, but dressed in suits, with altered hairstyles and mannerisms.)

JOHN: Look . . . I've been telling this story all day. Now how many times are you gonna make me say it?

PERSON 1: Look . . . just . . . try to see it from our point of view. Huh?

A moment of silence.

PERSON 1: First, you openly admit to causing a considerable amount of property damage to the Mercury Airspace Division of Science headquarters –

JOHN: It was trashed already, by the time we got there!

PERSON 1: – and the complete destruction of an entire Rather Large Gun unit, which alone is worth \$72 million . . . that's minus payload, of course. And you further claim that the Rather Large Gun was set to a deliberate self-destruct sequence, *by you*, for reasons unknown!

John shakes his head, agitated.

JOHN: *Not* for reasons unknown. I told you. I was killing Satan! I was blowing up Hell! I was stopping the attack!

PERSON 2: The CSI team that went over the ruins of Mercury, inch by inch, found *no* evidence of the demons you described!

JOHN: (rising to his feet, turning very pissed) Good! That's because I blew it out of the God damn airlock!

After a few seconds, he understands the absurdity of his own words.

JOHN: I mean . . . that's cause I blew em all to kingdom come!

Person 3 turns to Person 1.

PERSON 3: Is it possible that planet Mercury *is* the host to native life? Could it possibly have *aliens* in it that these poor delusional soldiers have – mistaken for demons?

PERSON 1: No. Mercury is a giant mass of rock and lava. Even bacteria can't survive in its extremely-heated conditions. There were *no aliens* there – *and that's final*.

JOHN: Listen. I already told you. It wasn't alien life forms we saw there. It was from Hell itself, it was not *from* Mercury – I was there myself!

PERSON 4: And found something never once recorded in over 300 surveyed planets. Creatures with "horns on their head" –

JOHN: Yes.

PERSON 4: – these are your words – and, in some cases, bright green blood.

JOHN: That's right! Look . . . I see where all this is headed, but I assure you that the demons I've talked about, *definitely exist*.

PERSON 5: Thank you, that will be all.

JOHN: (desperately) Pleaaase, you're not listening! Satan's got more demons than anyone would think. We don't know what size of an attack he's plotting down there, as we speak! Down there in Hell, we saw *hundreds* –

PERSON 5: *Thank you, that will be all.*

JOHN: GOD DAMN IT, that will NOT be all! Because if one of those things gets to Earth, then that *will* be all, (as he starts ruffling papers on the table) then all this, this, this bullshit that you think is just so important, well then you can just kiss all that good-bye!

A moment of silence.

PERSON 6: It is the finding of the United Nations that you, John K. Gloom, are no longer in stable mental condition, and are no longer fit to operate a firearm. You are hereby stripped of your weapon, until the day that we, the U.N., deem it appropriate to lift this ban. You're up for a court martial on Tuesday. It's looking very likely they'll give you an honorable discharge for being cuckoo . . . if you're lucky.

Time becomes slower (i.e. the actor talks in a slower, deeper voice, and applies more emphasis).

PERSON 6: And we taking your driver's license, too. And we're impounding your car.

The crushing, depressing impact of the moment hits John as he realizes it's over.

PERSON 6: Now . . . *that . . . will . . . be . . . a-a-all-ll-ll.*

He bangs his gavel on the table, like a judge.

Fade to black.

Scene 4.

INT. INSANE ASYLUM – PADDED CELL – MORNING

John is in a padded cell, wearing a straightjacket.

Throughout the course of the scene, colored spotlights swing around wildly – red, green, and blue.

John shakes his head around excitedly in his sleep.

JOHN: Oh, I'm killing demons, I'm killing demons.

He shows more signs of excitement, while dreaming.

JOHN: Oh, I'm using voodoo against them. This is sweet.

Suddenly, he wakes up, torn away from dream world.

JOHN: Wha . . .

Reality returns to him.

JOHN: . . . Ahhh, man. Reality. (sigh) In real life, I *did* kill demons . . . and this is how I ended up. Fucking tee-rrific.

An imaginary friend enters the scene from STAGE LEFT: a pink dog.

JOHN: (shaking) S-so – what are you here for today, Lomar?

PINK DOG: Dude, your mind is *fucked up*. Seriously. Look at this. You're seeing a *pink dog* talking to you. You're insane and you know it.

John looks depressed.

JOHN: Why do you do this to me, man?? Why do you just torture me like this??

PINK DOG: Cause you *deserve* it. You're a *freak*.

A doctor enters the scene from STAGE LEFT.

Suddenly, the pink dog is gone.

JOHN: Uhh . . . where'd the dog go?

The doctor frowns.

JOHN: That demon-dog was being just a jerk to me, I didn't deserve that at *all* . . .

DOCTOR: John! Wake up! The President is here to see you!

JOHN: (startled) What??

Cush runs up to John, and shoves him on one shoulder.

CUSH: There ya are, cowboy! What're you doing in the loony bin? You guys just saved planet Mercury! You *killed the demons!* You should be getting medals for what you've done, not thrown in here and forgotten about! This is bullshit!

John thinks about it.

Suddenly, his eyes light up, and he smiles. He starts nodding his head.

JOHN: Wow! Yeah! I just can't believe it! I'm so glad to hear someone say that!

CUSH: (motioning toward the door) Yeaah, come on, man, let's make a couple a horses and ride on outta this place!

The doctor walks up to Cush and starts to sternly enforce the hospital's rules.

DOCTOR: Uh, sir, he can't get released yet. He's still in stage-two psychosis of –

CUSH: (holding up a huge purple card) Uhh, yeah, here. Look at this.

The doctor stares at the purple card, mesmerized.

DOCTOR: What . . . what is it?

CUSH: It's the President Card – means I can do whatever the fuck I want. John leaves.

Cush and John leave the scene. John turns back and sneers at the place.

JOHN: Nyeh. I'm out.

The pink dog looks at John, hopelessly.

PINK DOG: John . . . you're not leaving me . . . are you?

JOHN: Yeah, that's right! I *am* leaving! Finally, I have *conquered* you, my voice of depression – you never existed in the first place! I'm going back to the real world . . .

He turns his head away from the dog, back toward his forward walking.

JOHN: . . . and . . . dear God, I should wipe all of this out of my mind, and never think about it again. Right. Got it.

He walks on, jogging to catch up to Cush. We hear the sounds of a grounded helicopter, as an image of a chopper (seen from a frontal angle) fades into view behind them. If possible, a fan blows in John and Cush's direction, to cause their hair to blow around in the wind. John and Cush sit down on two chairs placed in front of the image of the chopper.

JOHN: (to Cush) Yo. Cush. Where we going?

CUSH: Ahh, ain't it easy to see? To the helicopter. (chuckles)

JOHN: Oh *haa, haa*. Seriously, where *are* we going?

CUSH: Your house.

JOHN: . . . Oh, for real?

CUSH: Want some medical marijuana? Maybe that would stabilize you.

JOHN: No thanks, man, that's all right . . . I just need some *sleep* and some *rest* and some *normalcy* in my life again.

He shakes his head, suddenly alert.

JOHN: Whoa. When did I climb into the helicopter??

CUSH: (chuckles) Are you on something, man?

He shakes his head again, and sighs.

JOHN: I just . . . I gotta . . . I don't know . . .

CUSH: I gotcha, man – you just need some chill time, away from the world, for a while. Get your brain back into gear.

JOHN: *Exactly*.

CUSH: But be ready. Tuesday morning, you and your friends . . . are receiving the Key to the City.

John's eyes light up.

JOHN: What?

Scene 5.

EXT. WASHINGTON, MONUMENT – MORNING

Triumphant music plays as all the soldiers from Project Kill the Demons (as well as Sarge) are awarded medals by the President of the United States himself, President Cush.

CUSH: It is my *honor* to award you with these Medal of Honors. Ahh, damn it, I meant Medals of Honor! Ahh, I always do that!

JOHN: (smiling) Ha ha! Cush, don't ever change!

Cush smiles, and laughs as well.

CUSH: These are the *good times*, my friends. The worst is over. Hell's hold on planet Mercury is no more. Now you observe the happy ending.

He goes back to the microphone.

CUSH: Which reminds me. In addition to these . . . *Medals*, of Honor, they also receive: the key to the city!

More thunderous applause from the audience as Cush presents them with a key that looks identical to the green key Sarge used once in the MAD labs.

An excited two-person news-people crew – a male cameraman and a female reporter – run into the scene from STAGE LEFT.

REPORTER: How does it feel, John? To be a hero?

John Gloom himself widens his eyes, smiles, and becomes excited!

JOHN: Oh, wow! I never dreamed this happy ending would actually happen! I feel great! I feel unstoppable!

REPORTER: So it looks like the soldiers in Operation Kill the Demons are coming home heroes! Mission accomplished!

JOHN: It's like we're in the magical *perfect times*, where everything is just as it should be!

BLING: Yeah . . . now let's just make sure we stay at this level for the rest of our lives!

The group, all huddled together for a group photo, all smile at once. Cush, holding a camera, stretches his hand out and snaps a group picture.

CUSH: Oh, we will. Now say cheese!

ALL: Cheeeese!

White light flashes across the stage for one second, while we hear the sound of a camera's shutter.

Chuckling, Cush walks away from the group, and goes to a microphone to make a solo speech. The soldiers exit the scene.

CUSH: My fellow Americans. Last week, I told you that Operation Kill the Demons was a success. And still, I'm proud to say it was. But today, I tell you that it is *not* over.

People start to talk and murmur to each other again.

CUSH: The battle is over, but the *war* goes on. The Mercury mission is done, but one thing you can be definitely sure of about Satan is that he will not stop trying. The demons are all dead, but they still live on, in Hell . . . waiting to strike us. Waiting to attack. Mercury was only the *first* attack. Next, he will strike Venus. He will strike Neptune. And then, he will strike our own beloved planet, the wonderful fourth planet from the Sun . . . Earth.

Some people gasp.

CUSH: Which is why, effective immediately, I'm calling for a War on Hell. Starting tomorrow, there will be an invasion of Hell, and a pre-emptive strike against Satan, before he wipes us all out. Good day.

Immediately, everyone in the crowd gasps at once. Soon, sudden panic takes over the scene. President Cush, trying to ignore the crowd, walks away.

Fade to black.

Scene 6.

INT. WHITE HOUSE – MEETING ROOM

Cush is pacing around, thinking and talking. Standing nearby are Vice President Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, Colin Powell, and Condoleeza Rice.

KARL ROVE: (outstretching his hands) "The War on Hell."

A moment of silence.

KARL ROVE: You do realize that, by saying this, you *have* essentially opened up the flood-gates, Mister President.

Cush nods his head.

CUSH: I'm well aware of that, Karl. But Satan, he opened up the flood-gates first. We're looking down the barrel of a *global invasion* here, from the forces of Hell itself, if we just stand around waitin. And that ain't my style.

He shakes his head.

CUSH: This ain't World War 2 anymore, Karl. It ain't the 60s. It's not just about *people* now, and *humans* killing each other . . . no, this is about *Hell*. The *ultimate* threat. Satan himself is comin for us. There ain't nothing bigger than him. And we gotta be ready. I got a feelin, Karl – this war ain't gonna be like *any* others that have come before it.

DICK CHENEY: "War on Hell." Well, this will be easy to sell to the people. I mean, right away, we've got the Christian demographics, right? The ones that don't mind the killing, anyway . . .

CUSH: We're talking about *demons* here, Dick, we're talking about *pure evil*. Not human beings. Not foreign citizens, or civilians. You bet your ass this is gonna be an easy sell.

KARL ROVE: Then why not downplay the Christianity themes and focus on this impending attack as being from out of this world?

CUSH: (hitting his desk on the table) *Jesus* is the answer here, Karl! It's the demons that got us *into* this war, and it's *Jesus* that'll get us *out*!

Karl groans, then raises his hand and repeats his point.

KARL ROVE: Mister President, if I may . . . I know it'll be easy to get the Christian demographics all for this war, but think of the bigger picture. Why not downplay the Jesus side to this, and try to reach out to *all* religions that talk about Hell? Judiasm, Catholicism . . . why not try to get *all* of them on our side about this at once?

CUSH: *Every* religion's got demons in it. Christians, Jews, Catholics . . . Islamic, they've got *jinnis*, and Islib . . . the Chinese've got Jigoku, the Chinese Hell . . . the Japanese, they've got *oni demons*, *gaki spirits*, *kappa* . . . I mean Hell, even *Swahili* has their own version of Hell! Swahili! Yeah, every religion's got Hell in it, in some form, and a basic Satan figure . . . we just have to . . .

It suddenly hits him; a figurative light bulb flashes in his head.

CUSH: Yeah! Yeah, you're right, Karl – we've gotta *unite* the focus on all these different demons . . . get Christians, Jews, Catholics, all coming *together* against the same exact same greater threat!

KARL ROVE: And we can only do this by downplaying the use of the name Jesus. You mention Him, and you narrow down our focus to only Christianity. We want *all* the major trains of thought on our side about this. As much as we can get, anyway.

Cush thinks about that. He turns back toward Karl. He thinks some more.

CUSH: Got it. Jesus is out. We re-focus the War on Hell to being a war on Satan, as all the different people see it. We don't say who's right *or* wrong – leave it to the people to fill in the blanks.

COLIN POWELL: Mister President, I'm afraid this is one instance in which I cannot agree with you. The existence of Satan, as described in the Bible, has been heavily debated for over two thousand years, and any such discussions have erupted in nothing but violence. History has shown us how people react when they're told what is right or wrong about religion – what *does*, or does not, exist.

Cush shakes his head.

CUSH: No, no, but I'll get everyone to *agree* about the greater threat of Satan –

COLIN POWELL: (cutting him off, turning very serious) I *understand* that, Mister President. But your war on Satan is surely going to offend those who do not believe in Satan's existence – don't forget the Islamic faith, which believes not in Satan, but in Islib, and in dangerous *jinn*s. Think of how this might come across: a slap in their face.

Cush gulps.

CUSH: Good genies or bad genies?

COLIN POWELL: Broadening the focus to a general image of a threat from Satan won't be enough. We can win one small war, only to find ourselves in a *bigger* war, with all three different thirds of the world in disagreement with one another. Do we really want this? Rioting in the streets? Mass hysteria?

CUSH: Ah, but we don't need anything to convince us that Satan exists, Colin. *We* know it. *We've seen it*. That's all that matters.

Patriotic music begins to build up.

CUSH: I mean, maybe some people in the country need to see more destruction before they're convinced, but not me. I've known Satan was coming *all my life*. What happened in planet Mercury . . .

(looking around the room) . . . and which *stays* in planet Mercury . . .

(holding his head) Ahh, damn, you know what, now I forgot what I was gonna say. That *sucks*.

The patriotic music plays louder.

CUSH: Well anyway, we *do* this war. And this is the War on Hell. The biggest war in all of Earth's history . . . the most important. Cause so far, in all this time, humans have only engaged in wars with *each other* . . . but never Hell. Never yet. This is the one it's all been building up to. The one that matters most of all.

The music begins to turn more triumphant.

CUSH: We do this war. We go to Hell . . . we look the demons in the eye . . . and we blast em all to a place that only God knows where.

He walks to CENTER STAGE.

All the lights fade out, except for a white spotlight on Cush.

He turns to face the audience directly.

CUSH: This is all too much talking . . .
(grabbing guns from his pockets and holding them up) . . . and *not enough action!*

The message "NOT ENOUGH ACTION" flashes on, behind him, a few times.

AGGRESSIVE HEAVY METAL MUSIC immediately begins to play!

CUSH: (singing along) Yeaah, wa-na-nah, wa-na-na naaah!

Scene 7.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM

John is lying on the couch, at STAGE LEFT. He flips on the TV.

At STAGE RIGHT, the spotlight fades in on a new scene, showing us what John is watching on the TV: three scientists, all wearing black suits, seated at a table. Classical music is playing while they talk.

SCIENTIST 1: New wars are always the cause of new weapons, new inventions – and the War on Hell is no exception.

SCIENTIST 2: Already, in preparation for the war, the scientific community has created five new inventions, all with the help of the bodies of demons!

SCIENTIST 3: And this, heh heh, this is gonna be the all-time major-war scene of all!

Scientist 3 walks up to a big gun and holds it up in the air.

SCIENTIST 3: We here at Fireball Gun Industries have created a *new type of gun* that shoots not bullets, not electricity, but *fireballs* – the kind that, so far, have only been shot from the hands of demons.

He puts the machine into motion.

We hear the sound of humming as it charges up a ball . . . and *POW!* Finally, it shoots out a red fireball! (One suggestion: a person throwing a red ball, like the kind used in public school gyms, from behind a curtain.) The fireball hits Scientist 2, who is knocked backward.

SCIENTIST 3: WHOOF –! Watch it with that thing!

Smiling, Scientist 3 blows the smoke off his gun and sets it back down.

SCIENTIST 3: Ha ha. Next time the demons wanna attack, the soldiers and Marines that have *this* baby will be able to give em a taste of their own medicine! Didn't have *that* back in my day! And it's all thanks to *science!*

SCIENTIST 1: And let us not forget that certain chemicals found in the demons' bodies have cured Alzheimer's.

SCIENTIST 2: That's right. I had a couple of relatives with the condition –
(making a "wiping-out" hand motion) *Whoop*. Their memory is all back now.

SCIENTIST 1: So, yeah . . . demons provided the cure for Alzheimer's. Who saw that coming.

John flips the TV off; the lights over the scientist scene fade out.

JOHN: Jeez, it's like I can't stop hearing about the War on Hell *anywhere!* Can't people just stop talking about it??

John's Mom walks into the room.

JOHN'S MOM: John, you never do anything anymore. You just lay around all the time.

JOHN: (groooooaans) I'm just watching TV. Jeez.

JOHN'S MOM: Well I'm just saying, ever since you got home from the demon invasion, you just haven't been yourself.

JOHN: (shaking his head) This is who I've been all along. You just haven't seen it.

JOHN'S MOM: Well if you have time to watch the news then I don't see why you don't have time to apply for a job!

JOHN: Mooom! I applied for that job at the liquor store. I don't know. I don't know if I'm gonna get it.

Ding-dong! John's Mom becomes alert to the sound of the doorbell.

JOHN'S MOM: I'll get it. I wonder who that is . . .?

She opens the door, to reveal . . . President Cush, with flowers!

John's Mom's eyes light up as she sees them!

JOHN'S MOM: Oh, wow, for me?

On the verge of being pissed off, John runs up to the scene.

JOHN: Hey, hey. Hey. What's this about?

CUSH: John, what if I told you I had an offer . . . for the adventure of a lifetime?

John's eyes go wide.

JOHN: Ohhhh, nooo, no, no. Good-bye. (turns away)

CUSH: (putting his hand on John's shoulder) We're going to Hell, John. And we need the most talented, most amazing man I know to guide us through there.

JOHN: (smiling, motioning politely for Cush to leave) Good day, Cush.

CUSH: Are you *sure* I can't change your mind?

JOHN: Oh, yes. I'm sure. Ask someone else . . . ask B-Word. Good day.

He closes the door.

Scene 8.

INT. SANDWICH SHOP – MORNING

John waits in line for a sandwich.

CASHIER: And, what'll you be having on this sandwich?

JOHN: Uhh, nothing, just the meat and the bread, that's fine.

CASHIER: For real? No cheese, no lettuce, nothing?

JOHN: No. Nothing.

Cush swings into view.

JOHN: Ahhhh, noooo . . .

CUSH: Heeey, Johnny! (patting the cashier on the shoulder) Why don't you – why don't you go into the back for a moment, let us have a private little talk?

The cashier hesitantly walks off, not knowing what to say.

CUSH: John, I hope you're not misunderstanding my point. I wanna kill these demons, sure. But I don't know what we're up against. You've *seen* em. *You* know.

JOHN: Yeah, and I don't *want* to know anymore. I want to forget. I want to move on. I want to *do* things again, and have these demons out of my life for good. They've given me nothing but grief.

CUSH: Are you *sure* we can't change your mind?

JOHN: Cush, look . . . my answer is no. And it's gonna stay no. Absolutely no, to all of this! Good day.

John reaches for his sandwich, and heads out. He takes a cup, fills it up with soda, and walks on, slurping directly from the cup, no lid or straw.

Fade to black.

Scene 9.

EXT. SANDWICH SHOP – PARKING LOT

John walks with his food and drink to his car.

Cush follows him, still trying to convince him.

CUSH: You see, what I want to do just *wouldn't be possible* without you there to explain how they work . . .

John starts up the car, puts on his seat belt, and starts to head off. The spotlight over him fades to black. Cush sighs.

The spotlight comes back on; John is back.

JOHN: Wait. (as Cush gives him his full attention) Promise me you're not going there to observe them. To study them.

CUSH: No. No.

JOHN: To kill them. Nothing else.

CUSH: Nothing else.

John stays blank for a few seconds.

JOHN: (extending his pinky) *Pinky swear promise.*

CUSH: (returning the pinky-shake) *Pinky swear promise.*

JOHN: *Sold.*

We immediately hear the loud sound of John being *stamped*.

CUSH: (excited gasp) Come on! Lemme show you the *ass-kicking* new weapons they've been making for this war!

JOHN: Oh, I've seen it on TV.

CUSH: No, but that ain't *nothing* compared to the feeling of holding it in your hands!

John thinks about that, then smiles.

JOHN: Yo, I miss chilling with you, Cush. I really do.

CUSH: (chuckling) Yeah, heh . . .

Scene 10.

INT. JAIL – SOON

John, in full military uniform, walks down the hallways of a jail, led by Cush. White spotlights quickly move from STAGE LEFT to STAGE RIGHT, then fade away, as though caused by ceiling lights overhead.

JOHN: Why are we going through a jail?

CUSH: We're here to pick up your buddies. You ended up in the loony bin? Well *they* ended up in jail.

At last, they arrive at the cell which contains *all* of John's combat buddies. And they are *all* pissed.

JOHN: What did you *do* –

BLING: Don't worry about it!

A moment of pissed-off silence, on behalf of everyone behind bars.

JOHN: For real, what –

B-WORD: (kicking the jail cell) He SAID DON'T FUCKIN WORRY ABOUT IT!

CUSH: (presenting the Demon-Fireball Gun) Folks, this here is the brand-new, futuristic, gas-powered bringer of peace – otherwise known as the Demon-Fireball Gun. John here is about to demonstrate its abilities by busting you out of jail.

John holds up the Demon-Fireball Gun, and fires it. A big fireball launches out of the gun, causing the sound of a small fiery explosion. The fireball hits the jail's bars, and instantly the sound of sizzling is heard – the bars are melting.

BLING: (lifting up his sunglasses to his forehead) Whaaaaat? You just melted the bars??

BIG BLACK DUDE: You can shoot *those*?

BLING: (trying to fit himself through the hole) You just burned us a hole to climb out of!

B-WORD: Hey, thanks, man!

CUSH: Yeah, any time!

LEAF BLOWER: (suddenly walking toward Cush) But President Cush, how exactly do you plan to go to war with Satan? You know that nothing can kill, or even *hurt*, him.

CUSH: Ah, I'll get him. Because you know, as I know, that there *is* one thing, and one thing alone, that can stop Satan.

Leaf Blower waits for it.

CUSH: *Willpower*. You see, killin' Satan ain't *that* hard, you just need to know the trick to it . . . it's just like fightin' Freddy Krueger. See, the only way to kill Freddy Krueger is, *don't believe* in him, and *don't believe* that he has any power, and he has none. No power over *you*, anyway.

B-WORD: (feeling encouraged) . . . Yeah?

CUSH: Well, actually, that's a bad example . . . with Satan, if you *don't believe* in him, then that leaves your mind open, and easy to nab. As long as you're *aware* of how real Satan is, and what threat he poses, then he's got no more control over you.

LEAF BLOWER: But . . . you never know where he is. I mean, he could be anywhere. For all you know, he could even be one of *us*.

CUSH: (chuckling) Well, heh heh, not exactly *any* of us . . .
 . . . ahem. Little lady, you can *rest assured* that I've got my *best* men looking for him. Now that sonofabitch is hard to find . . . but it'll happen. Give it time. You know, I got a good feeling about *this* week . . . I think *this* might be the week we find him.

We immediately hear the sounds of crickets chirping.

LEAF BLOWER: How would you know, when the Devil was near?

Cush pulls a bag of pretzels from his coat, and starts munching away on them.

CUSH: I dunno . . . the smell? (chuckles)

LEAF BLOWER: The Devil is everything. Black, white, male, female, young, old . . . the Devil is *all* of these things, at different times. The Greeks believed in the three-headed Cerberus; the Romans had Kerberos; Christianity believes in the threat of the Devil, also known as Satan, or Lucifer . . . and yet, the Devil, truly, is *all* of these things. Across *all* these times and places. *He is meee*.

A red spotlight is cast on her; grinning evilly, she starts counting on her fingers.

SATAN: When Amelia Earheart and her airplane disappeared . . . yeah. That was me. And the whole Bermuda Triangle, while we're at it . . . that used to be *mine*. Area 51? That was just me *fucking* with people – mixing up some commotion between different worlds.

Oh . . . yeah. God never told you there's other alien planets, did He? Oh, yeah – there's been other worlds living here *all this time*. God's *other* children. The ones He never told you about.

B-WORD: Dude, this guy is freaking me out.

SATAN: The Ebola virus, AIDS, smallpox, an anti-Christ with a reign of power in the 1940s . . . don't you see? I adapt to *any* situation! I'm unstoppable!

A moment of silence for Cush as he contemplates the horrifying truth. He looks down at his pretzels . . . then back up to the audience, both eyes widened in horror.

CUSH: (choking) Umm . . . ahem, I . . . I'm having trouble breathing –

Cush stumbles forward. Suspenseful music plays.

Cush clutches his throat with both hands. Thrashes around. Rolls around on the ground. The music builds up.

JOHN: Cush!! What's happening??

John holds up the bag of pretzels – *steaming hot*. (We hear the sound of sizzling as John delicately holds the bag by the top.) His eyes widen in horror.

CUSH: (throwing one hand up) AVENGE MEEEE!!

Cush dies, in John's arms!

Gently, he lowers Cush to the floor. Then, he looks at Satan.

JOHN: What did you do with Leaf Blower?

SATAN: Oh, she's gone to a worse place, I'm afraid . . . a place *you* are all headed to.

Everyone backs away from Satan.

SATAN: Oh, but I don't wanna kill you just *yet*. I want you to walk outside for a minute – take a look around, and see what I've created.

JOHN: I was over this. I was ready to move on . . .

SATAN: See, you and I are all playing a little game right now. The arena is Earth. The obstacles are my demons. The game is survival, and you have 24 hours . . . *go!!*

Satan is gone! (One possible suggestion: he runs behind a black curtain, immediately becoming concealed from the audience's vision.)

JOHN: (trying to run after him) Wait – wait, no!

. . . No, he's . . . he's gone.

(looking down at Cush) And Cush . . . Cush is gone too.

Sad music begins to play – the kind of music one would expect to hear in honor of a fallen President. John collapses to his knees and cries.

JOHN: President Cush . . . I swear, on my grave . . . I WILL AVEEENGE YOOOUUU!!!

The music hits a climax as the lights all fade to black or red, leaving all the people as silhouettes. Music filled with Latin chanting plays for at least five seconds.

Fade to black.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO.

Scene 1.

INT. HELL

FADE IN on a red-lit image of President Cush sitting in a chair.

We hear the sounds of total *insanity* – distortion; unreality; disorientation. While the scene is mostly pitch-black, red spotlights sweep back and forth.

VOICE: Do you know where you are, Cush?

Cush shivers.

CUSH: Hell.

VOICE: Do you know *why* you are here, Cush?

Cush shudders.

CUSH: C-cause . . . Satan put poison in my pretzels?

VOICE: Oh, I'm still alive and kicking in Earth. I'm just taking a break for a second to talk to you. I want *you* to see what I've been doing up in God's green planet!

CUSH: No! NOOOOO!!

VOICE: Oh, I'm afraid so. Welcome to Hell, Cush. Welcome to a place where you're the prisoner . . . *of crazy-ass demons*. I'm about to show you: Hell on Earth.

Fade to black.

Scene 2.

EXT. JAIL

FADE IN on the sight of John Gloom and his combat buddies making their way out of jail, through a giant hole burned through a wall. John drags dead President Cush behind him.

ANIMAL: John, what're you doing?? Just leave him there!

JOHN: No! That's disrespect!

ANIMAL: Disre – *man, the man is dead!* When a President dies, you leave him where he was, untouched! You don't touch a dead President! That's like a felony!

JOHN: *What??*

ANIMAL: Yeah!

Animal pulls a pamphlet from his pocket, and unrolls it before John.

ANIMAL: See, Article 5, Section 3, Paragraph 2.

(putting on his bifocals) In the event that the President passes away . . .

JOHN: (knocking the pamphlet from Animal's hands) Oh, bullshit, you probably had Robot print that out, or something!

Animal glances at Robot; looks back at John.

JOHN: Whatever, look . . . let's *review* the situation. We just busted our way *out* of jail, with this new Demon-Fireball Gun. President Cush . . . is dead.

CUSH: *Or is he??*

Cush springs back to life, as a maniacal, carnivorous, gray-skinned zombie! He leaps at John from behind and grabs him by the arms!

CUSH: (leaning in closer) Brains. Brains brains brains. Brains *brains*, brains brains-brains-brains! (laughs)

JOHN: Mister President . . . your Secret Service men personally told me, on the helicopter . . . if the day ever came where you became a zombie . . .

John holds up a cross!

JOHN: To DRIVE THAT DEMON IN YOU AWAY!

Zombie Cush starts going crazy, as though being electrocuted!

He writes his way around the stage, then finally passes out.

JOHN: Good. We got the demon part of him out. Not like he's back alive and well again . . . but we at least got the demon possession out.

B-WORD: Whoa, *that's* what zombies actually are? People possessed by demons?

JOHN: Yeah. And it got into Cush.

John finds the bag of pretzels that just killed Cush.

JOHN: We got back here to Earth. (as he holds up the pretzels) But Satan got here first.

Zombie Cush twitches.

SARGE: Great. The infection has hit Earth. Cush is dead. Leaf Blower is dead.

Big Black Dude suddenly falls to the ground, dead.

SARGE: Great, *and* him, too. Now that just leaves . . .
(counting the heads) Six people altogether, including me.

He sits down on the ground, sighing.

SARGE: Everything we wanted to prevent from happening, happened . . . times ten. Now, who knows how far it's spread – possibly all across the world. Operation Kill the Demons seemed like a victory at the time, but now we realize . . . it was all a great big failure. (sigh)

All the soldiers sigh, and sag their heads, at once.

SARGE: Game over, men. Game over.

He gets up and starts to walk out of sight.

JOHN: No, but Lungman, wait!

John runs up to Sarge, and grabs him by the shoulders.

JOHN: President Cush stood for something. He *believed* that we could win the war! The War on Hell! And though he's down, *we* live on . . . *we* can keep fighting! *We* can win this! We did it on Mercury, even in Hell – why *not* believe we can do this in Earth?

Triumphant music begins to play.

JOHN: Now what do you say we go out there, and we FIGHT THE INVASION HERE IN EARTH! Right here on the streets!

SARGE: (hitting John on the arm happily) Great work, soldier! You're hereby promoted to the rank of E4 Corporal!

An image fades into view of the yellow-and-green insignia of the E4 rank.

JOHN: Ha ha! *Yes!* (the lights all turn red) . . . Whoa, what?
(the lights fade to black) . . . Guys?

The lights come back on; everyone's dead, except for John and Bling.

A moment of silence, as John takes it all in. Then, it all hits him at once.

JOHN: Ahhhh! Not *agaaaiiin!*

He starts walking up to his fallen comrades and taking their weapons from them.

JOHN: Heere I go . . . I'll just take that . . . that . . . this . . .
thank you . . . you won't be needing that . . .

Zombie Sarge pops up and lunges at John!

ZOMBIE SARGE: *BRAINS!*

John leaps up in fright; but then his instincts take over, and he aims and fires his gun at Zombie Sarge, who immediately falls backward, dead.

JOHN: Jesus! Scared the *shit* out of me!

He breathes, exhausted and relieved.

Bling gives him a pat on the shoulder. Startled, John whips around, aims a gun –

BLING: (holding his hands up) Whoa, whoa! Hey! It's just me!

JOHN: ZOMBIE or a . . . demon or a . . . ohh . . . oh, Bling . . . noo . . .

He collapses, crying. Bling catches him.

BLING: It's all right. It's okay. I'm here. Look, it's not just you by yourself this time, this time I survived too, all right?

John nods his head.

BLING: So you and me, we're gonna stick it through, and we're gonna *win* this game. And when we go to Hell, we'll bust *everyone* back outta there. *Everyone*. Okay?

JOHN: Cush too?

BLING: . . . Almost everyone, now come on, let's go!

Bling runs into action; John follows.

Fade to black.

Scene 3.

INT. HELL

Back to Cush, under red lighting, sitting in a chair.

CUSH: HA! See?? They've survived so far!

VOICE: Now tell me, Cush. John and Bling . . . these are both men that you know. *Tell us their weaknesses!!*

CUSH: NEVER!!

VOICE: You will be put through more nightmares if you don't.

CUSH: I don't care what you've got up yer sleeve, Satan. I ain't turning on my men, *or* my country, under *any* circumstances.

Three demons enter the scene from STAGE RIGHT.

VOICE: Welcome to Level 5: the Death Level. When these demons come into the room and kill you, you will die. But you'll just respawn again elsewhere in Hell. And you'll just keep replaying this same level of death.

CUSH: You can *try*, Satan . . . but *we're winning this war!*

VOICE: I'm going to make more moves.

CUSH: *Bring it on.*

Action music begins to play. A strobe light turns on.

The lighting becomes crazy – red, blue, and green sweep back and forth across the stage, lighting a scene that is otherwise pitch dark. There are three minotaurs coming at him! While they run, we hear the sound of their unworldly demonic screaming!

The demons get to Cush; he suddenly jumps backward, grabs his chair, holds it up, and throws it at the demons!

This gets one of them distracted, for the moment . . . Cush runs away.

VOICE: You have nowhere to run, Cush.

CUSH: DAMN YOU, SATAN! I promise you, your days are numbered!

The lights fade to black.

Scene 4.

INT. SHOPPING PLAZA – SOON

FADE IN on John and Bling walking calmly through the area, talking.

BLING: So where are we exactly?

JOHN: Some kind of shopping plaza. I don't remember the name – I've been here before, though.

BLING: Oh, for real? You have?

JOHN: Yeah. I figure, if we're gonna find any people, any human survivors, we might as well hit places like this.

BLING: (nodding his head) True, true. What's your plan?

JOHN: Find all the survivors. Bring them all to one central shelter spot. Protect it.

BLING: Naaah, shit . . . you're getting ahead of yourself. First we gotta figure out what's even *happening* in this place.

JOHN: True. True. Okay, let's see what stores this place has got . . .
 (pointing with one finger, counting one thing at a time:) a coffee shop . . . video store . . . massage parlor . . . restaurant . . . smoothie place . . .
 (shrugs) Let's try the coffee shop.

BLING: Kay.

They exit, together, STAGE RIGHT.

Scene 5.

INT. COFFEE SHOP – SOON

John enters the scene from STAGE RIGHT, and sees six people, all dressed in work outfits, huddled together inside the coffee shop. This is one manager, and five employees. (And, of course, they can all be played by the actors who played the fallen soldiers.)

JOHN: Whoa, there's people in here!

COFFEE MANAGER: (gasp) What . . . ohh . . . you scared the *Hell* out of me.

JOHN: Oh. Sorry bout that. There's a demon invasion or something going on?

COFFEE MANAGER: Get in here, fast. Close those doors. We're locking them.

JOHN: Well . . . how far has the demon invasion gotten?

COFFEE MANAGER: Oh, they're everywhere. My daughter's elementary school is shutting down on Thursday *and* Friday on account of the demons. It's *ter-ri-ble*.

JOHN: Dang. Well . . . (as he whips out a gun) We've got to defend ourselves.

COFFEE MANAGER: (gasp) Tell me that's not what I think it is.

JOHN: Oh, no, no, it's just for the demons, it's all right. I vote I pass one gun to every person in sight, so that we can all defend ourselves when the demons get here.

COFFEE MANAGER: (looking back and forth) You're all 18 years old or older, right?

The employees all nod their heads.

COFFEE MANAGER: Oh, wait, or is it 21?

Knock . . . knock . . .

BOW! A metal door is kicked out of place, and it falls onto the floor!

Three zombies break through!

JOHN: Ohhh, they're here. And we were *just* starting to get to talk.
(turning to face them) Oh – I'm John, by the way.

John runs forth, at the three zombies!

He opens fire! One by one, he kills the zombies!

They all collapse to the ground. His firefight is over.

JOHN: Man . . . I thought it was hard to do this in a science lab . . . in just a series of mazes and corridors . . . now I'm here doing this in an Earth city, no more mazes!
(chuckling) Ya know??

COFFEE EMPLOYEE 1: III – I don't know *what* you're talking about.

One employee, making direct eye contact with the audience, leans over to a co-worker's ear and whispers something slowly, intending to be discreet, but actually being quite loud.

COFFEE EMPLOYEE 2: That guy's on acid.

John shakes his head.

JOHN: What're you talking about, ahhh . . . I've done this before, I – the zombies were in planet Mercury and . . . ahhh, whatever.

Two big demons enter STAGE RIGHT – a type never seen on Mercury, but spotted briefly a couple times in Hell. These are big, bulky, red-skinned demons, with sharp black claws. They break into the scene, and immediately make a noise terrifying beyond any creature in Earth.

JOHN: Dieeee, demons, *dieeee!*

He opens fire on both demons. They both take a step back.

They're not dead; they walk toward John again.

JOHN: Ahh . . . shit . . . hmm . . . gotta think, gotta think . . .

He paces around nervously, thinking.

JOHN: A-ha! Got it!

He shoots the demons again!

COFFEE MANAGER: Yeah, hey, why don't you just heap on more property damage, while you're at it. Please.

JOHN: What? . . . Oh, sorry – did I – did I miss? Did I accidentally hit stuff? Uh-oh.

COFFEE MANAGER: Noo, noo, just . . . whatever.

John throws that gun down and pulls out the Demon-Fireball Gun; the manager rolls her eyes and throws her hands up in the air, as though asking why bother to say anything.

JOHN: (holding the weapon to his shoulder) Don't worry . . . I won't miss.

COFFEE MANAGER: I sure hope not!

He fires the gun. A red fireball launches out of the gun, and into the space between both red demons. Both demons are forced to stagger away at once, hurt, but still not killed.

COFFEE MANAGER: What did you say you were, again?

JOHN: Oh, I'm in the Army, actually. (extending a handshake) Corporal John Gloom!

The big demons start coming back.

COFFEE EMPLOYEE 1: Hey, demons! *Take this!*

He grabs a trash can and holds it above his head, ready to throw it.

COFFEE EMPLOYEE 2: (grabbing him by the shoulder) Hey, no, wait, you don't know what you're doing!

JOHN: (to Coffee Employee 1) Kid, set that down. You don't know what you're doing –

COFFEE EMPLOYEE 1: NEVERRR! Down, demons! Doooooown!

He runs at them with the trash can.

The demons make one fatal claw swipe, and the man is knocked backward, dead.

However, the trash can does hit the demon, and he does stagger backward, dead.

A moment of silence as the group takes in the news: one man, and one enemy, down.

JOHN: That poor, stupid soul. He thought he'd make it.

John sags his head, and starts crying.

JOHN: Every time a man goes down . . . it just . . . gets to me . . .

The second demon, still alive, interrupts the moment by running at John, roaring.

JOHN: DIEEEE!!

He whips out a gun and auto-fires for ten seconds straight. This effectively takes down all the remaining demons.

John blows the smoke off his gun, then plants a flag into the ground with his face on it.

JOHN: I have hereby killed the demons of this area! I now officially promote myself to the rank of E5 – from this day forth, I am Sergeant John Gloom!

An image fades into view of the yellow-and-green insignia of the E5 rank.

Triumphant, celebratory music plays as he holds his hands up high!

BLING: Are you *sure* you can do that, in this situation . . .

JOHN: Oh, yes. Very sure. Because, in fact, I hereby resign my duties as E5 sergeant, and give the honor to *you*. Effective immediately, I, John Killington Gloom, hereby promote myself to the rank of E6 – staff sergeant!

Triumphant, celebratory music plays as an image fades into view of the yellow-and-green insignia of the E6 rank.

JOHN: I guess you could basically say this is the real-life equivalent of saying: "LEVELED UP!"

John exits STAGE LEFT.

Everyone else, armed with a gun and ready to fire, follows shortly behind.

Scene 6.

INT. VIDEO STORE

John leads the way; the restaurant's manager follows shortly behind, followed by the four employees. (John and Bling walk like true soldiers; the others move like ordinary people.)

COFFEE MANAGER: Where are we going?

JOHN: To the building next door . . .

BOTH: . . . the video store.

As everyone enters the scene, the spotlight shines at CENTER STAGE to reveal –
– five people in this video store already, all being teenage employees – all dressed in the work outfits.

John walks around the room in shock. He holds up a cup of liquid. He notices that all the video store employees appear either drunk or stoned. The cup of liquid is a cup of alcohol – half-finished.

JOHN: What are you guys doing here? Drinking? Doing drugs?

VIDEO EMPLOYEE 1: (smiling, shrugging) Hey, why not, man? It's the end of the world. Shit, we're partyin' it up in here.

VIDEO EMPLOYEE 2: Yeah, man, living *every second* like it's our *last!* You feelin me? Our *last!* We got – shit, we got rum, we got vodka, we got liquor, we got weed, we got some of that Purple Cush –

John bangs the cup against the counter.

JOHN: It might *be* your last second, by the time the demons get back here!

(sigh) Look, I'm coming here with *these* other survivors, from the coffee shop next door. Now you're all gonna stay put as me and Derek Derekson, aka Bling here, inspect this scene. Post up in this place and *stay put!* I'm gonna barricade the doors.

All the guys in the video store start hooting and hollering.

VIDEO EMPLOYEE 3: Daaayamn, look at the hot chick!

VIDEO EMPLOYEE 2: Titties!

JOHN: *Listen to me!!* The demons are everywhere! They'll be here before long.

(pointing to the door) You. Bolt the door. You, seal the windows. Make it like a zombie movie, so nothing could ever *possibly* get in. And *don't ever leave*.

Bling appears a little concerned about John's attitude.

BLING: Yo, how can you just be, like, *giving orders* like this . . . (chuckles)

John glares at him. This is no joke.

BLING: I mean, it's just, like, you've never had any *training* on being a staff sergeant . . .

JOHN: Oh, those E6 days are over, I'm afraid.

Proud, heroic music builds up.

JOHN: Because, effective immediately, I am resigning my duties as an E6 staff sergeant, and giving the honor to *you*.

BLING: (throwing his hands up in the air happily) Whoo!

JOHN: And I, John Killington Gloom, hereby promote myself to the rank of E9 – I am now Command Sergeant Major John Gloom!

An image fades into view of the yellow-and-green insignia of the E9 rank; we hear the sounds of a crowd clapping.

BLING: (shrugging) All right, then, I guess . . . look, what's the plan? You got *them* boarding up the video store, but what about me and you? We gonna go out there and whoop some demon ass, or what?

JOHN: (nodding his head) Just me and you, sergeant. Like the old days.

They arm up and run to the exit, one at a time – ready for anything.

Scene 7.

EXT. VIDEO STORE – SOON

John and Bling emerge from the doors, moving slowly.

JOHN: (to the locked door) Remember, the safety word is, blazz-blazz-berg. That's how you'll know it's us.

COFFEE MANAGER: (muffled, from the other end of the door) Kay – blazz-blazz-berg.

BLING: (smacking John) Man, you keep shoutin, you're givin us away!

JOHN: What? It's not like . . .

A rustling sound is heard, as though from the bushes!

The spotlight shines to reveal three tall bushes nearby.

Something is moving through them . . .

Something is approaching . . .

John and Bling communicate with hand motions. They run forth and aim guns at the bushes, ready to fire.

OLD LADY: Watch out! Watch out!

John and Bling are shocked.

JOHN & BLING: Huh??

An old lady walks into view.

OLD LADY: Watch where you're aiming that thing! You're aiming at me and didn't even notice!

JOHN: Whoa! I thought you were one of the demons! Lady, you've gotta get out of here!

OLD LADY: I don't have to do nothing! I have a coupon for 14 cents and I *still* haven't gotten it used yet!

JOHN: (pleading) Lady, you've gotta get outta here! This place has demons *everywhere!*

Two demons enter the scene from STAGE LEFT, sneaking up behind her.

JOHN: (horrified) No! No!

They run; he fires away, shooting them both. Bling joins in. Together, they step forward and keep firing; the demons, backing up, collapse and die.

And the old lady remains completely oblivious.

OLD LADY: It's 14 cents, and I want it off.

JOHN: Okay, listen. If you go indoors, right this minute, and keep the door *locked* until further notice, then you *will* save 14 cents. *15*, even. All right?

OLD LADY: (surprised) Really?

JOHN: I'll explain it all later! (pointing) Make haste!

The old lady walks out of sight.

JOHN: (wiping his forehead) *Whew*. I thought that would never be over.

Both aim their guns forward again.

BLING: You ready, man?

JOHN: Ready! I'm ready for anything!

They walk forward.

BLING: Where you wanna go next, in this plaza?

JOHN: (pointing) I think the toy store over there. Toy Bargain.

BLING: (looking at him funny) The toy store? You serious?

JOHN: (smiling) Yeah! Hell yeah! We can probably play video-games!

BLING: Hell yeah! (high-fives John)

They walk on through the plaza, aiming the guns at everything they see, until at last they are out of sight.

Scene 8.

INT. TV COMMERCIAL

Bright spotlights shine on a white backdrop or curtain!

Happy, energetic people bounce into the scene from STAGE LEFT and RIGHT!

TOY WOMAN 1: Hey Larry, you know where I can find some *great toys*?

TOY MAN 1: No, Sally – where?

TOY WOMAN 1 & 2, TOY MAN 2, & 3: At *Tooooy Bargaiiin!*

TOY WOMAN 1: We've got the coolest new games from Nintendo, Sony, Microsoft . . .

TOY WOMAN 2: Wii, PS3, 360 . . .

TOY MAN 2: The hottest new action figures from the coolest new movies!

TOY MAN 3: Even golf clubs and fishing equipment for Dad!

TOY MAN 1: So if you wanna have a good time, then stop by Toy Bargain . . . and SSSAVE!

Everyone poses for a FREEZE-FRAME SHOT.

Fade to black.

Scene 9.

FADE IN to reality . . . the store lit dimly, with the lights appearing to be functioning at half-power, and the people from the commercial lying dead across the floor.

One at a time, John and Bling move forward, guns aimed, ready to fire. When they get to the dead bodies, they stop; Bling flinches, and jumps back.

JOHN: Dead. All of them . . .

BLING: Who are they?

JOHN: (inspecting the scene) They don't look like customers . . . more like employees. I wonder what the customers did while this invasion hit. (looking around) Could be hiding around somewhere, maybe?

The two walk around, inspecting the scene, looking for survivors.

JOHN: HELLO! IS THERE ANYONE IN HERE?

BLING: ARE THERE ANY SURVIVORS, HANGING OUT IN HERE?
 . . . IF SO, PLEASE SAY "YES" NOW.

SATAN'S VOICE: Yessssss.

A chill comes over John and Bling.

BLING: You heard that too, right?

A red spotlight shines on the corpses on the ground as they rise up.

Four zombies are rising, and coming after John and Bling. They waste no time; screaming and roaring, they all run at the two Army men at once.

BLING: WHOA! Demons can run?

JOHN: Hell yeah, they can run! They're actually quite fast!

They go right into action; they whip out their guns and fire away. While two zombies are in the process of being rapidly shot, two others are running toward John and Bling. They can only handle one at a time; and so they alternate between the targets, for about five seconds straight, until at last they all start to collapse.

John makes the finishing move by holding up a cross. The demons both jump backward.

BLING: (sighing with relief) Ahhhh. It's over.

John swipes the sweat from his forehead.

JOHN: I could really go for a soda right n–

Screaming, every single corpse in the scene pops back up and springs into action!

John panics for one second, then leaps into action again, along with Bling! Together, they shoot the zombies, until at last they're all down again!

JOHN: (holding his knees, wanting to collapse) Haaaa, man. This about takes it all out of me now.

They start walking by the dead corpses.

JOHN: Stupid zombies, what do *you* know –

The corpse pops up again and grabs him by the leg! John, eyes wide, jumps in fright!

Once again, he shoots the zombie. It writhes around on the ground for a few seconds, not quite dead. Two more shots; he's down for good.

JOHN: *Jesus*, these things are *crazy!*

BLING: Man, I thought it was all over in Mercury . . . look at us, we're here in *Earth* and it's still happening!

John groans, shakes his head, sighs . . .

. . . and suddenly notices something he had completely missed before. A care package, lying on the ground.

JOHN: What the . . . (as suspenseful music plays) . . . a package . . . Bling, you don't suppose . . .

BLING: . . . the religious organization? The Church of Gloom Guy?

John shudders.

BLING: What's it say?

JOHN: (opening the package, taking a note) Hmm, it's kinda hard to see in this darkness, but . . .

Bling shines a flashlight on the note.

JOHN: "Dear John and the One Fabled Survivor:

For two thousand years, it has been speculated that you would survive the mission to Mercury, and return to Earth with one other survivor. By the time you read this, we will probably all be dead – or worse."

John becomes clearly disheartened as he reads; he's silent for several seconds, then talks at a slower speed.

JOHN: "You may or may not know that we, the Church of Gloom Guy, once made a generous monetary donation to the Mercury Airspace Division of Science labs."

Oh. I *didn't* know that.

"This money was used to fund the creation of the Demon-Fireball Gun."

Okay, what's this guy's *point*?

"Enclosed in this care package is some food, some drink, and a Demon-Fireball Gun for your survivor friend."

Bling's eyes widen as he pulls some food and drink from the package; he immediately starts wolfing it down. John, however, is too upset to follow.

JOHN: Why me?? Why is all this craziness on me?? This is more than I can handle! I cannot take this burden forevermore!

BLING: Whoa, shit, another Fireball Gun! I knew *you* had one, but now *both* of us do!

JOHN: YES! Didn't have these babies back in Mercury!
(groaning, kicking a dead zombie) Yeah, great timing, *after* the zombies are all d–

ZOMBIE: BRAAAIIIIINS!!

Two zombies spring back up and grab John. He drops his gun.

He's just so locked up in the heat of the moment, the panic of it all, that he can't function right – he just thrashes around, trying to make three different moves at once.

JOHN: Bling . . . rrrrgh . . . HELP!!

John quickly grabs one zombie and makes him spin, to face the opposite direction – facing Bling, holding his new gun.

A LOUD SIZZLING NOISE is heard as Bling fires the Demon-Fireball Gun! A bright ball of energy shoots right out from his direction and hits the zombies that are trying to maul John!

The zombies are flung back, screaming – dead. John gets up, brushing the dust off his sleeves.

JOHN: (sigh) Thanks, man.

BLING: (clapping John's hand) It's all about teamwork, man.

John gets his gun back. The two men keep walking, weapons ready.

BLING: This is a big place. I'm sure there *have* to be *some* survivors. Probably all holed up in a back room or something.

They walk on.

BLING: (eyeing a toy) Ahh, shit, look! They got those gummy ice cream candies!

His eyes light up; he's a kid in a candy shop.

BLING: Those ones with the red and green gummy cones! Oh shit, and *cotton candy*!
(grabbing more candy) Spree, Tic-Tacs – Pop Rocks – oh, shit, s'mores! *Actual s'mores!*

JOHN: Bling, now's not the time . . .

Suddenly, the lights turn red, and we hear the sound of a terrified woman's scream. Both men snap to attention.

The sound of evil, echoing laughter.

The sound of an axe swinging.

John and Bling exchange worried glances. The red light fades away.

JOHN: God, why is all of this such a recurring theme in my life?? Why can't I ever just – just have all this done for? Why must this haunt me to no end??

BLING: What? Hell, or just toys in general?

JOHN: Hell . . . *obviously* . . .

(shaking his head) I mean . . . it's just, like, inescapable, inevitable . . . doomed to constantly repeat, and keep going, and keep going . . . it feels like . . . like I'm in Hell right now. Like this *is* Hell. War. War, in general, is Hell on Earth.

A fog machine shoots fog into the scene. Three figures appear from STAGE LEFT. A strobe light turns on. Techno music starts playing.

BLING: Speaking of Hell on Earth . . .

John and Bling turn to look . . . at the THREE MINOTAURS walking their way! They cock their guns.

The minotaurs run at them! John and Bling grab their pistols and start shooting at them! Their targets are hit, shaking and convulsing while shot, but they don't stop moving!

John and Bling stop shooting – the pistols are out of ammo.

JOHN: . . . Shit.

BLING: Outta bullets!

Blue and green light sweeps back and forth across the scene, while the strobe light is still running. The three demons run at John and Bling, who stay together, side-by-side, getting their guns ready.

Two minotaurs throw fireballs at John and Bling! They jump away, narrowly dodging the attacks.

All of a sudden, the lights all return to normal, and everything becomes calm again.

BLING: Whoa – THEY can shoot fireballs too??

JOHN: Duhhh. They were the FIRST ones to shoot fireballs! These Fireball Guns were made *afterwards*!

BLING: Oh. Right.

The scene snaps back into place as it was before – the black lighting; the colored spotlights; the strobe light; the techno music. John and Bling run back into action, cocking their Fireball Guns and running toward the demons!

At last, both men are at the three enemies! Both men fire more fireballs; both successfully hit their targets, causing them to stumble back! Two of the three demons stumble back, at least; the other one immediately runs at them! Both soldiers run away, backwards, while firing up their gun for more!

The light becomes red and purple, while also fading in and out. John and Bling both fire their fireballs at the same minotaur, who flies back and is down for good. Next, they move in on the other two in one single move. Both remaining demons fly back, finished.

The techno music fades away; the strobe light stops; both men catch their breath.

JOHN: Another victory for us. I think a promotion is in order . . .

Bling groans – great, here he goes again . . .

JOHN: (putting his hand on Bling's shoulder) For *you*, actually!

BLING: (eyes widening) Really?

JOHN: You are hereby promoted to the highest rank of all basic U.S. Army enlistment: an E9 Command Sergeant Major!

Victory! Bling throws his hands in the air as triumphant music plays, and we hear the sounds of a crowd clapping!

JOHN: And I hereby promote myself to a ranking *beyond* basic U.S. Army enlistment . . . to the rank of CW5! Effective immediately, I am a Chief Warrant Officer 5!

BLING: *What?* John, I'm starting to feel afraid that you're becoming . . . I don't know . . . a little *corrupt* with power?

JOHN: *SILENCE!!*

Red light comes onto the scene!

JOHN: The war goes on. We neutralize this threat, by *any* means necessary – no matter *what* it takes!!

Several seconds of silence as Bling contemplates what John is becoming; the red light fades out.

JOHN: Here's the plan. First, we establish a perimeter around the toy store. We barricade it so that nothing – *nothing* – could get in. We establish this place as a safehouse, and get *all* the survivors in the immediate vicinity in here. Then, we use this place's communication resources to contact the outside.

BLING: But what then? What's our offensive strategy against the attackers?

JOHN: Simple . . . we start an army.

Bling's eyes widen.

JOHN: Every survivor we find here – and also every survivor from the coffee shop and video store – will be armed with guns.

BLING: "Guns"? We don't have enough for everyone –

JOHN: The care packages, Bling . . . the care packages.

A few seconds as Bling contemplates this.

JOHN: We go scouting for care packages, and find all the weapons and ammunition we can get our hands on. We promote every survivor we find from shopping plaza employees to rank E8 Master Sergeants. We give them basic training, or at least what we can provide under these circumstances.

(facing the audience, talking dramatically) Because the End Times . . . call for *insane measures*.

BLING: Man . . . (hitting John's fist) Good luck, man, that's all I can say.

JOHN: Thanks, Bling. (cocks his gun, faces the audience) I'm *gonna need it*.

Red light shines on John and Bling. The scene FREEZE-FRAMES.

Epic music, filled with Latin chanting, plays for several seconds.

Fade to black.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT THREE.

Scene 1.

INT. HELL

Back to President Cush, in Hell, sitting on a chair.

VOICE: My time has come. I am now the ruler of Earth!

CUSH: They'll win! They'll track you down and beat you, you'll see!

VOICE: Oh, I wouldn't be so sure of that.

At STAGE LEFT, we see John and Bling – seen with very dim lighting.

The two are talking to each other, but we can't hear their words – we can only *see* them as they talk and make ridiculous, inexplicable hand motions.

CUSH: JOHN! BLING! Can't you . . . can't you hear me . . . ahhh . . .

No luck; John and Bling remain oblivious to Cush's words.

VOICE: See how these soldiers continue the war? What chance do you think *two* little men will have against my *army* of demons?

CUSH: Ahh, come on, guys . . . just . . . just get through this . . . please!!

Fade to black.

Scene 2.

EXT. TOY BARGAIN

John and Bling are walking across the outside of Toy Bargain, guns in hand (starting at STAGE LEFT, moving toward CENTER STAGE).

BLING: John . . . I just keep thinking . . .

JOHN: That's *Officer Gloom* to you, Major.

BLING: Err, right . . . I just keep thinking . . . I mean, I dunno, what if one of us dies?

JOHN: Don't think like that, Major. One thing we don't need is negative thinking.

BLING: No, but we *have* to be prepared for the possibility of unpleasant circumstances. Of course we don't *want* to die . . . shit, we didn't *want* this war to even *begin* in the first place . . .

Two goat demons and two zombies suddenly run into view from STAGE RIGHT!

John is immediately alert – but Bling remains oblivious.

BLING: I mean, I'd rather have everything just be –

JOHN: *Look alive*, Derekson! Demons!

BLING: What? Oh, come on, John, knock it off –

The two demons run up to Bling from behind and twist his neck!

With his head turned to the side, Bling pauses for a few seconds, then falls down!

JOHN: NOOOOOOOO!!

John immediately opens fire on both demons!

The demons run at him and twist *his* head to the side!

JOHN: NOOOO – [khh]

John, too, falls down. He lays there for several seconds.

BLING: John . . . John, come on, it's your turn.

Fade to black.

(The goat demons exit the scene.)

FADE IN on the sight of John laying down, while Bling, alive and well, shakes him repeatedly.

BLING: Come on, man, wake up! It's your turn!

JOHN: (bolting up) NOOOO NOT THE NECK! Not the neck, not . . . not . . .
(feeling his chest, sides, arms) Ohhh . . . it was just a dream . . . just a dream . . .

Bling smiles, extends his hand, and pulls him up.

BLING: Bad dream?

JOHN: The worst. Two demons were killing us.

Bling shudders.

BLING: That *is* bad. What kind, zombies?

JOHN: Actually . . . I dunno . . . they looked more like goats. (chuckling) Weird, huh? It's like, the demons were different in my dream, than in real life . . .

BLING: Well, anyway, look man, you've been asleep for half an hour. It's your turn now to do the crosses.

JOHN: Okay. Thanks, man.

BLING: No problem.

Bling lays down on the ground, to fall asleep.

John plants two crosses onto the ground, next to Bling.

JOHN: Sleep safe. You should be fine, as long as these crosses are next to you.

Bling starts snoring.

BLING: ZZZZZZZZZZ . . . naked chicks . . .
 ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ . . . redheads . . .
 ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ . . . I'm a rap star . . .
 ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ . . . why, Mr. Soap, it would be my *honor!*

John, giving him somewhat strange looks, walks away.

JOHN: Wait a minute. Why are we taking turns sleeping *outside*? Why didn't we just sleep *inside*, so we would know we're safe?

(suddenly remembering) Oh – right! So that, if we had to, we could wake up and spring into action on short notice! Right.

He starts planting more crosses into the ground across the nearby area.

JOHN: Cross number 16. Just four more, and we're done.

Fade to black.

FADE IN a few moments later, as Bling starts to wake up, rubbing his eyes and getting back to his feet.

BLING: How long was I out?

JOHN: Honestly? I can't say for sure. But it felt like a good 30, 35 minutes to me.

BLING: Ah, thanks. Finish the crosses?

JOHN: Yep. There are now 20 crosses surrounding Toy Bargain. I think it's safe to say we can consider this place demon-proof. I *wanted* to put holy water everywhere, but now I realize we can't really find any on such short notice . . . ehh . . . well, whatever, hopefully we shouldn't need it.

BLING: All right. So. What do we do from here?

JOHN: Well, let's see. (holding up a care package) *Thankfully*, while planting those crosses, I found some more of those care packages – so now we've got extra guns and ammo. And a pretty good amount of pizza and soda, too. And now that we've taken our naps, well I dunno about you but *I* feel way better.

BLING: So, what now?

JOHN: Well, *first* we go back inside the toy store, and use its communication resources. We initiate contact with anyone we can from outside.

BLING: Sounds good. Let's go!

Together, they run out of sight, EXITING STAGE LEFT.

Scene 3.

INT. TOY BARGAIN – UPPER FLOOR

FADE IN on a well-lit image of an overhead map of Toy Bargain. (Nothing has to be specifically labeled; just the store's name at the top.) Two green triangles represent John and Bling, and pointing to them is a red arrow, with a caption in red letters reading "JOHN AND BLING ARE HERE".

John and Bling enter the scene from STAGE LEFT.

JOHN: All right! The Communications room! We made it!

BLING: (picking up a telephone) Hello? . . . Hello? (hanging it up) Dead.

John starts pressing buttons and pulling switches.

JOHN: Ahhh, come on, there's gotta be something in here that *works* . . .

We hear the sound of static!

JOHN: (eyes lit up) *Yes!* Something!

BLING: "Locating signal" . . . ahh, come on, come on . . .

The lights flicker on and off for a few seconds.

CUSH'S VOICE: John! Bling! Can you hear me?

John gasps!

JOHN: Who was that?

BLING: It . . . it *almost* sounded like President Cush, but nah . . .

CUSH'S VOICE: John! Bling! Please!! Please hear me!

A spotlight shines on STAGE RIGHT, revealing Cush sitting in a chair.

JOHN: WHOA! You see that, Major?

BLING: It looks like – Cush!

CUSH'S VOICE: Yeah . . . I . . . I can see you right now . . . I'm in Hell . . .

JOHN: Oh, yes!! We've got two-way communication! We gotta make sure it lasts . . .

The sounds of static play. They're breaking up.

JOHN: Hey – hey, shit, no!

CUSH'S VOICE: John . . . research . . . demons . . . Wikipedia . . .

The communication goes dead. The spotlight over Cush fades out.

The sounds of static become the sound of a heart flatlining.

John is angry – the transmission is dead now!

BLING: Wait a minute. What'd he say, exactly? Research . . . demons . . . did he say – Trickapedia?

JOHN: Hmm . . . I'm taking a chance, but . . . I think he said *Wiki*. *Wikipedia*.

John starts typing on some keyboards.

JOHN: (excited gasp) *Yes!* It works!

BLING: What? What does?

JOHN: Wikipedia! It's got all kinds of info about the demons! *Thank* you, Cush!

Fade to black.

Red light shines just on STAGE RIGHT – we're back to Cush in the chair.

CUSH: HA!! See? They heard me!

VOICE: It is still too late, Mister President. They cannot stop what I have begun.

CUSH: You'll see, Satan! I'll show you!

The spotlight over STAGE RIGHT fades out – we return to John and Bling.

JOHN: (typing) All right, let's see. Wikipedia . . . hmm . . . "demons".

Bling peers closer to what John's looking at (actually, both are facing the audience).

JOHN: "There are many different uses . . . for the mythological creatures, see . . . for the real-life creatures from Hell, see *demons [disambiguation]* . . ." Hmm, okay!

BLING: Dude. You know *anyone* can edit that?

JOHN: Ahh, hush. Oh, see? Here it is. There's seven species of demons! Back on Mercury, we only encountered like three or four of em, but there's seven altogether!

BLING: Seven species? Why's there seven?

JOHN: Becauuuse, silly . . . (facing Bling) because there's *seven different sins!*

Bling's eyes widen – he now understands.

JOHN: Seven species of demons, one for every sin. Let's see . . .

As John and Bling read on, what they see on the screen walks into the scene from STAGE RIGHT: a zombie.

JOHN: This is Species 1: the zombies. Yes, you see, zombies are actually one species of demon – the lowest kind.

BLING: Ahh. I didn't realize they were demons.

JOHN: Yeah, they're basically just people who are possessed by evil spirits, I guess. You see, the sin of *pride* transforms people into these beasts. This is simply the punishment for *pride*. People with too much *pride* are shrunk down into these mindless, carnivorous things.

BLING: Ahhh!

The zombie exits the scene; a Shadow enters in its place.

JOHN: This is Species 2: the Shadows. Dark, shadowy demons. This is the species that people turn into for the sin of *wrath*. Yes, *wrath* turns people into these pure-evil things.

The Shadow exits the scene, nothing new enters.

JOHN: This is Species 3: the Invisible Demons. This is the species you turn into for the sin of *lust* – you see, you *lust* for people so much that you inherently become nothing yourself. . . . Yep. Totally invisible.

A minotaur enters the scene.

JOHN: This is Species 4: the Minotaurs – the big red demons, who shoot fireballs from their hands. This is what people turn into for the sin of *sloth*. Yep, this is the punishment for *sloth*.

The minotaur exits the scene, STAGE LEFT; a Cyber-Wasp enters (looking exactly like the demon that Middle Finger, MAD Science's tech guy, transformed into).

JOHN: This is Species 5: the Cyber-Wasp. Whoa! It says this is a cyborg species – part demon, part machine! Like, every member of this species has cybernetic spider legs!

BLING: Whoa! That's crazy! But . . . that doesn't make any sense. How does that work?

JOHN: Yeah, it *doesn't*. Let's read on.

Hmm . . . I remember how that one guy in the science lab on Mercury, the guy who had lost his legs, had biomechanical spider legs as replacements.

An image of Middle Finger – in human/cyborg form – comes into view.

JOHN: And then, when he was transformed into a demon, his upper body transformed, while the lower part remained the same - mechanical.

The image of Middle Finger transforms into the demonic image.

JOHN: A-ha! It says here that Satan was so interested by this, so *fascinated* by the concept of cybernetic body parts, that he decided to apply the same thing to the *entire species* in Hell!

BLING: . . . *How?* How would he go about doing that?

JOHN: Easy . . . he just took some of the evil geniuses in Hell – the rocket scientists that were evil – and forced them to build thousands of cybernetic legs for him. He created a factory environment somewhere in Hell, and forced them to build these mechanical constructs for him all day long. That's how.

BLING: Oh! It all makes sense now!

JOHN: Oh, and this is what you become for the sin of *gluttony*; you become so indulgent, you just *have it all* . . . and you end up like *this*.

BLING: All right. Two more species.

JOHN: Yes. (as the Cyber-Wasp exits the scene, and an oni enters)

This is Species 6: oni. They come from Japanese mythology. But they're also, like . . . real. They're *huge*, muscular, wear black loincloths, and hold giant iron clubs to smash stuff. (shudders) Yeah. Not good. This is the punishment for the sin of *greed*. You become so *greedy* that you, uhh, become an oni demon.

The oni exits the scene; a goat demon enters.

JOHN: And now, finally, Species 7 . . . (as his eyes bulge open) WHOA! Goat demons??

BLING: What? What's the big deal?

JOHN: *I saw these guys* in my dream!! Remember?

BLING: Whoa! That *is* incredible!

JOHN: Says here that transforming into a goat demon is the punishment for the sin of *envy*. Hmm. Yes. *Envy*.

He breathes deeply, exhausted.

JOHN: That took a while.

BLING: You're tellin me! Well, at least now we know.

They cock their weapons again.

BLING: All right. Now we understand the threat. *What's our plan?*

JOHN: We go back to the video store!

They both exit the scene, STAGE LEFT.

Scene 4.

EXT. TOY BARGAIN

John and Bling walk together across the outside of the toy store.

BLING: All right. So now we go back to the video store.

JOHN: Yes. We find all those survivors from earlier. We give em all some guns and ammo, and get them armed and ready for battle. We promote em all to Master Sergeants.

BLING: (nods his head) Right. Got it. What does that make *you*, then?

JOHN: An O-9 Lieutenant General, of course.

He stops Bling from walking.

JOHN: Actually . . . from this moment on, *you* are the O-9 Lieutenant General, Derekson. For I am promoting myself *past* the ranks of an Army officer . . . and I am hereby electing myself the *mayor of the city!*

BLING: Whaaaat? Are you on crack?

JOHN: That's no way to speak to a mayor!

BLING: The city is like all blown up and destroyed – how you gonna tell me you're the new mayor? With no election, and no votes . . . I mean, you don't even have any *experience* in things!

JOHN: The city is *not* dead! As long as there's *some* people around, it's alive – and so all hope is *not* lost! The city *can* live on – as long as we can push through this mission, and see it to the end! It's important that we uphold the traditions of the military and politics, even in this, our darkest hour – just like George Washington throughout the cold, miserable winter! Yes, I'm the mayor . . . and the first action I'm taking as mayor is killing the demons!

BLING: (looking offstage) Looks like you're gonna get your chance!

Suddenly, two Shadows run into the scene, screaming and roaring!

John and Bling are ready. They open fire at the demons, who, as they're running, are suddenly flung back!

John's gun is suddenly knocked out of his grip! He stumbles back!

JOHN: (gasp) An invisible demon!

BLING: Invisible demons? NEVERRR!!

Bling shoots a fireball – and immediately we hear the sounds of three demons at once, screaming as they get hit!

Four new demons enter the scene, from both sides of the stage at once: two oni, and two goat demons!

The lights start fading in and out as John and Bling run forth, going into action!

The demons run at the soldiers! John blasts a fireball at one demon, spins around, and fires another shot at a second target! Bling, meanwhile, is firing away at his own targets – he waits for them to get a little closer, to one exact distance, then shoots a fireball!

Soon, all four targets are down for good.

John, exhausted, takes a second to catch a breather.

Then, he walks to Bling in a very confrontive tone of voice.

JOHN: Now what was that about a lack of experience??

BLING: (backing off, holding his hands up) Hey, hey! It's all right!

JOHN: See? It's not always about the *amount* of time a person has spent being the mayor. Within only one minute, I've experienced more, as a mayor, than what others have experienced within decades!

(as heroic music builds up again) And *that* is why I'm taking things to the next level! No longer will I be just a lowly mayor! No, from this day forth . . . I am *Senator Gloom!*

BLING: All right, yo. Now you're just getting crazy.

JOHN: And AS the Senator . . . I *declare* that our next order of business is to find that video store! And to

JOHN & BLING: arm them with guns, and

BLING: promote them all to Master Sergeants. Right. I got it.

JOHN: . . . *Fine.*

Fade to black.

Scene 5.

EXT. VIDEO STORE

FADE IN on the sight of John and Bling standing near all nine shopping plaza employees – five from the coffee shop, four from the video store. All are armed with pistols, and looking ready for battle.

BLING: Well. That was fast.

JOHN: You're telling me!

John looks at his new army.

JOHN: ALL right, men . . .

He suddenly starts giggling.

JOHN: Whoa. Check it out. They look kinda like our fallen comrades from the Mercury mission.

Bling looks for a few seconds, and tries to see what John means . . . but doesn't quite get it.

BLING: (tilting his hand back and forth) Nyeeeee . . .

JOHN: Well, anyway. We've got our army of 9 now – 11, including us. They're armed, dangerous, and ready. *Right*, men?

ALL NINE: (raising their weapons) *Ho!*

JOHN: And now that you're all here . . . it is my honor to announce to you fine ladies and gentlemen that I, Senator Gloom, am now receiving, and giving to myself, an official promotion! No longer am I merely a lowly, lousy Senator . . . no, now I am to be addressed as *Governor!*

BLING: (throwing his hands up in the air) Oh, right, of course, you're the Governor now.

JOHN: (stepping toward Bling) You got a problem with that, Senator?

BLING: Oh, no, hey, I mean anything can happen, right? *Anything*. No rules.
Nah. Whatever. It's fine.

JOHN: Good.

BLING: So, I'm the Senator now, I take it?

JOHN: Yes. You're the Senator.

BLING: Yesss! I can do whatever I want now!

VIDEO EMPLOYEE 2: (raising her hand) Umm, Governor Gloom . . .

JOHN: (pointing to her) Yes. You there.

VIDEO EMPLOYEE 2: Now that we're all E9 Master Sergeants . . . umm . . . I was wondering, what *is* our first order of business? Our first mission, I guess you could say?

JOHN: Good question. Listen up, ladies and germs – these orders go to *everyone*. The mission is search and destroy. If you see any zombies, or any demons, *kill them*. Immediately. And don't hesitate . . . you hesitate, people *die*.

(a moment of silence)

In the event that you find any human survivors: escort them back to Toy Bargain. Make sure they stay put there. I'll promote them to the E9 rank when I see them.

(pointing to three people) You, you, and you: you're now the Alpha Team. Your orders are to branch off and head north. Sweep the area within a three-kilometer radius, terminate any enemies, look for survivors, and if nothing is found, report back here at 0200 hours.

(pointing to three more) You, you, and you: you're the Beta Team. Head south-west. Search and destroy. Look for survivors. Rendezvous back here at 0200 hours.

(pointing to the final three) You, you, and you: you're the Gamma Team. Head south-east, search and destroy, look for survivors, rendezvous back here at 0200 hours.

. . .

. . . Well what're you waiting for? Go, go, go!

All three teams depart at once.

Once all three teams are out of sight, Bling walks to John and talks to him again.

BLING: What about you and me, Governor? What're we gonna do?

JOHN: Simple, Bling . . . we're going to Hell.

Bling gasps. The spotlight over the two becomes red.

BLING: Why?

JOHN: Need I remind you, Senator, that the *whole point* of this war, from the beginning, was to lead a pre-emptive strike against Satan, and an invasion of Hell. So far, all we've really done is walk around in Earth. Seriously, all we've done so far is walk through a shopping plaza – a freakin *shopping plaza!*

He turns away, and sounds more serious when he talks; the red light fades out.

JOHN: Yes, the whole point of this war was to invade Hell and stop the invasion at its source. Looking back, I . . . I can't see *how* I managed to become so sidetracked.

(turning back to Bling) Well – that all ends now! You and me are tracking down the invasion to its starting point! We're going to Hell!

BLING: But – but *how*?

JOHN: Easy. How did we do it back in Mercury?

BLING: Well – that was different. In Mercury, there was a *machine* that could open up the gateway . . . or at least that's how you always told the story. Here, we've got . . . nothing.

JOHN: Yes, but it happened somehow, right? I mean, *somehow* Satan managed to bring himself here . . . all we've gotta do is find one of the demons and force it to bring us to its home.

BLING: But . . . how?

JOHN: *Shhhhh* – I think I see one coming!

John and Bling run away, ducking out of sight.

A goat demon starts casually strolling by the area.

John and Bling remain hidden as it walks by.

Suddenly, the two leap out of hiding, and ambush the monster!

JOHN: Now TELL US WHAT WE WANNA KNOW!!

The creature roars, and screams, and thrashes about!

BLING: Yo. This thing can't talk. What are we gonna find out about –

SATAN'S VOICE: *Silence, mortals.*

The two freeze like a deer in headlights.

SATAN'S VOICE: It is I, Satan – in the body of this small demon!

JOHN: Possession . . . (smacking his forehead) of course!

SATAN'S VOICE: You want to enter Hell? Then so be it. But be warned that you may just be entering the point of no return!!

A bright blue light illuminates the entire stage.

JOHN: (gasp) Good Heavens, he's opening up a vortex to Hell!

BLING: So *that's* how it happens! Come on, Governor – let's go!

JOHN: No . . . not just yet.

(walking away) There's one last promotion in order . . . one final revelation.

Heroic music plays as John gives his big speech.

JOHN: Today . . . I am bringing myself to a rank greater than any other I have ever previously thought *possible*. As you know, President Cush has fallen . . . but today, I seek to fill the gap created when he departed. For today . . .

. . . I hereby promote myself . . .

(reaching into his pocket, and holding up Cush's purple President Card)

. . . to the highest rank of all: *the 44th President of the United States of America!*

BLING: Where'd you get that?

JOHN: Found it on Cush. Had it this whole time, actually.

BLING: Oh.

JOHN: Now come on, Governor Derekson – *LET'S GO TO HELL!*

Bouncy "80s teen movie" music begins to play as blue light takes over the entire scene. John and Bling leap out of sight, EXITING STAGE RIGHT, as we hear some kind of sound effect that sounds like the entering of a vortex.

Scene 6.

INT. HELL

Back to the blank, empty setting, filled with red light, of Cush sitting in a chair.

JOHN: Wow. And I promised myself I'd have nothing to do with Hell, ever again . . .

Cush jumps, squealing in fright.

JOHN: WHOA, hey, relax! It's just me!

Cush looks at John and Bling, somewhat confused.

CUSH: . . . John?

JOHN: That's *President* John to you!

CUSH: President? . . . Dick Cheney's the President, I thought, since I died . . . or did something happen to him?

. . . John's buzz is killed as he contemplates this.

JOHN: For real?

CUSH: It's all right, though, you could still become Governor . . .

JOHN: Oh, yeah! Totally –

CUSH: Oh, no, wait, there's *already* a Governor.

Another buzzkill; John just can't win.

CUSH: Well whatever, how we gettin out of here? Did you bring a chopper with you or what?

JOHN: (to Bling) Ahhhhhh, *that's* what we shoulda done, we shoulda brought a *chopper* with us!

BLING: And do what, genius? Fly around in Hell?

JOHN: . . . Oh. Right.

Well, Cush, there's really only one thing left *to* do – one last option to try. Just close your eyes, and get your hands together . . . it's time for a prayer.

Cush does as told. Soon, John does the same. Cush and John both sit there silently, praying. After a few seconds, Bling joins in as well.

JOHN: Oh, Jesus . . . I know that I've asked for a lot of things in my time . . . and, yes, I know that I've asked for way too many things, and gotten a little ridiculous about it. I realize that I've been kind of a selfish jerk for a while, and I got a little corrupt with power there for a minute. But I truly am sorry, and I truly do want another chance from you. Please, Jesus . . . please find it in your hearts to help us out in this, our darkest hour.

White light shines over the scene, as harmonious music plays.

John's eyes light up, and he becomes happy as heavenly light covers the stage!

JOHN: Oh, wow! Jesus, is that you?

The Beatles' song "Here Comes the Sun" (track 18 from the Love album) begins to play.

SONG: Sun, sun, sun . . . sun, sun, sun . . . ahhhhhh, ooooooh . . .

As the instrumental part of the music plays, the three men in Hell dance around happily, blissfully!

Three zombies enter from STAGE LEFT, and immediately start going for the attack. John, Bling, and Cush spring into action – but there is not a sound from anyone, no sound at all but the harmonious song playing.

Behind them, the heavenly image of the sky, clouds, and the Sun appears!

For the first time, there is action going on at a calm and silent pace.

No panic. No worries. Everything is all right.

They're armed, they're loaded, and they have nothing to lose. Everything continues in a carefree, blissful way for an indeterminable length of time; they generally stop focusing on the passage of time.

Once they kill the zombies, two Shadows appear, one from STAGE LEFT and one from STAGE RIGHT.

With not a care in the world, the three action heroes take down both demons.

Once they're gone, the heroes shoot at what appears to be nothing – they are fighting the invisible demons.

Once they're gone, two minotaurs enter the scene. The three action heroes continue to spring to calm, carefree action, killing the minotaurs.

A Cyber-Wasp enters from STAGE LEFT.

Just as they start to take the demon down, an oni demon appears at STAGE RIGHT. Cush goes for this one, while the other two go for the Cyber-Wasp.

As the music still continues to play, John and Bling fight the Cyber-Wasp.

Soon, the oni is down. Cush joins the other two in their fight. Soon, the Cyber-Wasp is down.

The oni gets back up. A goat demon appears at STAGE LEFT and runs at the heroes.

They jump backward while the oni swings its club at them. He smashes it into the ground, and they jump away. Uh-oh. He gets stuck. He uses his free hand to try to free his stuck arm.

The three heroes are just about to take advantage of this moment – they start to run toward the stuck demon – but at the last second he frees himself. He swings his club their way again; once more, they jump back.

Cush tries one particularly clever trick: he jumps in front of the goat demon, waits for the oni to swing at him, and then jumps away. The iron club smashes into the goat demon!

That one is down. The heroes bounce up and down, fists raised in the air, happy.

The goat demon seems to run at the heroes . . . they jump away, startled . . . but then he turns out to shoulder-ramp the oni, who is knocked back. Right now, all the goat demon can focus on is how he pissed he is at the oni.

The heroes shoot at the goat demon some more. He moves backward while shot.

The oni runs at the goat demon and hits it with the club once more. The goat demon is down for good.

JOHN: (facing the audience) This is called "monster infighting", basically.

Bling shoots the oni. That demon is now down for good too.

BLING: Whooo! That bout takes it all outta me!

Peaceful white light comes across the entire stage!

The image of the clouds becomes brighter and brighter – *pure, total whiteness!*

Scene 7.

INT. EARTH – GARDEN

The image of paradise appears behind everyone: a beautiful sunrise, with a red Sun and orange sky; lush green pastures; purple mountains; a rainbow!

If possible, the instrumental to the Beatles' song "In An Octopus's Garden" (Love album, track 16) begins to play.

JOHN: Woooow! Where are we now?

BLING: I guess we just put so much *energy* into it that Hell spit us out!

JOHN: Oh, yeah! Like it could no longer contain our happy energies!

CUSH: All thanks to our prayer to Jesus!

More people appear from STAGE LEFT – everyone from the Toy Bargain commercial!

TOY MAN 1: Wow! I can't believe we're alive again!

TOY MAN 2: We went to Heaven when we died, so . . . well, I'd rather be *there* than in Earth again, but . . . well, still, we're back!

They exit the scene STAGE RIGHT.

Soon, John and Bling's fallen comrades from Mercury appear from STAGE RIGHT: Animal, Big Black Dude, Leaf Blower, B-Word, and Sarge!

SARGE: You did it, John. And, for that, I must congratulate you.

JOHN: Yeah! I busted everyone out of Hell! Ha ha! Yeah!

BLING: But . . . the war isn't over. It can just go on and on for all eternity. I have learned this important life lesson now.

CUSH: No, but see . . . now we understand. We just have to spread the message of Heaven, and things will stay peaceful between Earth and Hell. Observe:

Cush walks up to a podium and begins to talk. Immediately, everyone else gets out of view.

Scene 8.

An image of the Washington Monument appears behind Cush. He's giving a speech.

CUSH: My fellow Americans. I am back from the dead. I have returned from captivity in Hell. And let me just say . . . it's great to be back home.

We hear the sound of a crowd clapping.

One person boos him.

CUSH: Ah, you know what . . . I'll just let it go. I ain't even gonna get bent outta shape about this. The guy that just booed me, I'll pray for even *his* well-being tonight.

(into the microphone) My fellow Americans . . . I'm gonna surprise you by *not* saying that I, President Cush, have the answer to all the problems. This conflict with Hell is bigger than what one person alone can solve. It is not up to just one person. It's up to *you*, America. It's up to the millions of little people, the people with jobs, and homes, and lives, to do their part in keeping the peace. Each person makes a difference.

One person begins a slow clap: *clap . . . clap . . . clap . . .*

Two people start clapping.

Three.

Soon, everyone is roaring with applause!

CUSH: (ending the applause the instant he starts talking) The War on Hell only has one real solution. You just need to be aware of just who Satan is, and just what threat he poses to America . . . and you can see him as Satan, or the Devil, or Lucifer, or Beelzebub, or el Diablo, or Scratch, or Islib, or any name you can see fit, any form you can imagine. Just *be aware* of his existence, and the reality of his threat, and just think lots of positive, happy thoughts and feelings all the time. That's the only way to win this game – the only way to win the War on Hell.

More roaring applause.

CUSH: I'm telling you, *go* out there, *be* happy! Don't spend your whole life in fear! Go out and live your life, and keep that Heaven energy in your head!

. . . Thank you, America. God bless. (he walks out of sight.)

John walks up to the microphone.

JOHN: Wow. I've been a lot of things in my time . . . starting out as a soldier of the U.S. Army, the lowest possible rank, E1 . . . then slowly making my way up through E2, E3, E4, all the way up to E9 . . . Chief Warrant Officer 5 . . . mayor, Senator, Governor . . . even, for one perfect minute, the President of the United States! But now, at the end of my journey, I find myself back to where I originally started . . . just one average, ordinary citizen. And, as one person, I have one little piece of the greater power, the greater authority, of the country.

John walks away from the microphone, and a reporter, aiming a camera at him, follows him.

JOHN: And, see, that's exactly what it's all about – all the little people are gonna have to work together now. Everyone – let's all get together and create a giant cross, one so big it'll repel demons from *the whole world!*

John walks out of sight, the reporter following; he keeps talking, but we can't hear him. Once more, if possible, the instrumental to the Beatles' song "In An Octopus's Garden" (Love album, track 16) begins to play.

NARRATOR: And so, everyone got to work. Little John Gloom had not actually killed Satan, or even hurt him – but he made sure that he and his friends thought lots of *positive*

thoughts, all day long, so that Satan could no longer exist in that area. And together, he and his friends erected a statue of a cross, the size of the Statue of Liberty!

An image of the giant cross fades into view.

NARRATOR: In fact, *taller* than the Statue of Liberty! And this giant cross guaranteed that the world would stay peaceful and demon-proof forever! And they all lived happily . . . ever . . . after. The . . . end.

Over the image of the giant cross, giant letters fade into view, displaying:

DIRECTED BY
[DIRECTOR'S NAME]

The image of the giant cross fades to black. More credits continue to play in white letters over the blackness, as though this were a movie. (This isn't too hard to pull off, if an electronic screen is available – a PowerPoint slideshow is all that's needed, each slide containing one piece of the credits, with a "dissolve / fading" transition between slides.)

[ACTOR'S NAME 1]
as
JOHN GLOOM /
"GLOOM GUY"

[ACTOR'S NAME 2]
as
DEREK DEREKSON /
BLING

[ACTOR'S NAME 3]
as
PRESIDENT CUSH

And this goes on for whatever length of time is appropriate.

END OF ACT THREE.

END OF PLAY.

The

End!