Pre-planning

A Play

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Synopsis:

Four criminals, after having completed their most recent robbery, prepare for a new heist over the course of three days. The heist promises a huge sum of money, but tensions form within the group, and growing suspicions about the group’s shady leader make emotions and jealousy run rampant.

Cast, in order of appearance:

TWITCH: Nervous and aggressive

CHICAGO: Lighthearted

WHISPER: A computer hacker, reserved

JAY: The leader

Note from the playwrights:

This play was written with the intention of giving liberties to the director and actors. Stage directions can be interpreted freely, as well as lines, as long as the intentions of the directions or lines are maintained. The characters were imagined to be men as the play was written, however if the director feels that an actress would better fit any particular role(s), he or she should feel free to cast the actress(es) in question.
Set should be simple. A medium sized room, present day. One or two chairs can be around a table in center. For Day 1, a duffle bag is on the table, filled with takings from their previous robbery.

Day 1:

Lights up, Chicago, Whisper, and Twitch in room, Whisper is on a computer located on the table. Chicago and Twitch are going through the bag of takings, looking disappointed at the take.

TWITCH: *(extremely irritated, at Chicago)* Where the hell is it, you motherfucker?

CHICAGO: *(Confused but calm)* Where the hell is what?

TWITCH: The cash, Chicago. Where the hell is the cash?

CHICAGO: It’s right there.

TWITCH: I mean the rest of it.

CHICAGO: I have no idea what you’re talking about.

TWITCH: I’m not playing one of your damn games. Just get the rest of the take so we can count it up and go home.

CHICAGO: Chill out man, I’m right there with you. I could’ve sworn we got a whole lot more. *(Puts his hand on T’s shoulder)* Twitch, I didn’t take anything. I swear.

TWITCH: *(Nods)* Alright, fine. *(Turns to Whisper, who has his head buried in his computer)* Whisper, is this really all we got? *(Pause, no response)* Whisper!

WHISPER: *(Casually looks up)* Yeah, that’s all we got. It’s less than what we thought he would have, but it is what it is. *(Goes back to his computer)*

TWITCH: *(At no one in particular)* FUCK THAT! We spent weeks tailing this guy, prepping for this take. *(At Whisper)* It took you forever to hack through his security to get in his safe. Jay wouldn’t even tell us what we were doing until we were doing it. And after all this shit, with what we got, we could’ve gotten more just hitting a bank!

WHISPER: *(Sighs)* Jay did his best. He told you guys as much as he told me. We scored some cash and jewelry from a rich museum owner, that was it. The heist still went off without a hitch. No cops, no loose ends, no dead bodies. *(Pause, Chicago and Whisper stare at T)* It was still a good job, so be grateful with what you got.

TWITCH: What we got was half what all this effort was worth.

CHICAGO: What we got was half what your mom is worth.

An awkward pause

TWITCH: *(quietly, to Chicago)* God I love you man.
WHISPER: Sure it wasn’t as much as we wanted, but how could the boss’ve known that?

Jay enters

JAY: How could the boss’ve known what?

No response

JAY: Don’t worry guys, I know you’re upset, but I’ve got a few things to say that should make you guys pretty happy. First, you did a great job last night. Whisper, that was an impressive hack, Chicago, thank you for not waving at the cameras. Twitch, thank you for sparing the dog that growled at you. No alarms, no damage, this all went perfectly. You guys want a drink?

CHICAGO: Anything else, boss?

JAY: Yes, but I’ll get to that tomorrow. For now, we celebrate, and relax. I’ll get you guys some beers.

CHICAGO: You sure about that? You know Twitch can’t really handle his beers.

TWITCH: You kidding me? This coming from the little man who puked last week at the bar?

CHICAGO: Hey, those are big words there, Michael.

TWITCH: (Immediately furious at the mention of his name, runs up and grabs CHICAGO by the shirt) What the fuck was that? (Starts at Chicago, the others try to calm him down) What the fuck is wrong with you? (Lets go and turns to Jay) You gonna let him get away with that?

JAY: Alright, Alright. Calm down, man. Chicago, you know the rules, no names. I know you two are friends, but whenever you’re doing business, names are never spoken.

TWITCH: (backs away from Chicago) He fucking said it to me during the job too!

WHISPER: (looks up from laptop, concerned) Wait, when?

TWITCH: I don’t know, when we were taking shit inside the house.

WHISPER: (very serious) What room?

TWITCH: In the living room, I think.

WHISPER: Fuck.

CHICAGO: What’s wrong? Yeah I said his name, but it was just a joke. What’s the big deal?

WHISPER: You said his name in the living room? The one room where there’s a camera and microphone?

CHICAGO: Well, yeah. But you hacked the security, didn’t you?

WHISPER: I hacked the safe, not the cameras. Why don’t you idiots ever pay attention to the blueprints I get you?
CHICAGO: What the hell does it matter? It’s a first name!

WHISPER: All they need is one name, one name, and the cops’l’ll have a field day. I’m just letting you know, if you sink, I’m not going down with you.

Argument grows

JAY: Alright! (The arguments come to a halt. Jay continues, firmly) Screw the drinks. Everyone go home. Take a bath or some shit, anything to get this off your minds. I got some important info for you guys on a new job that could be happening in a few days. But we’ll talk about that tomorrow morning. Ten o clock. Don’t be late. See you then. Walks out.

An awkward silence. Whisper picks up his computer

WHISPER: Uhh, goodnight guys. (Walks out, leaving Chicago and Twitch to look at each other. Chicago looks worried, Twitch stares angrily)

TWITCH: Fucker

Black

Lights up. Jay alone, looking at papers. Whisper Walks in.


JAY: Huh? Theodore?

WHISPER: No, boss. Fyodor, with an F.

JAY: Oh. He’s your contact?

WHISPER: Yup. Take’s ten percent.


WHISPER: Sorry. But he’s good. And I’m not too good at bargaining.

JAY: (rolls his eyes) Fine. It’s too late to find someone else anyway.

Pause

WHISPER: Where are the others?

Another pause

JAY: You didn’t watch any TV this morning, did you? (Whisper shakes his head, curious)

JAY: All over the news. Cops are looking for three or four highly trained thieves, one of which seems to go by the name Michael.

WHISPER: Dammit. So where are they?
JAY: Well, after learning of Chicago’s little slip, Twitch got pretty worked up. He wanted to let off some steam. So I let him.

WHISPER: *(After an uncomfortable few seconds, Whisper lays out the plans)* Well, I guess we’re ready. So, we getting this done?

JAY: Yeah, we’re all set up. You got it all sorted out?

WHISPER: Think so. It wasn’t easy, but I got all the info we needed from the guy’s computer.

JAY: Alright, good. The boys will be coming in pretty soon, so let’s keep it calm. Did they ever ask you about the computer?

WHISPER: Yeah, once. I just said I was unlocking the safe. Boss, I’m not too good at lying like that, can you cover for me if they ask again?

JAY: Yeah, don’t worry about it. We can’t tell them too much, Twitch’ll go off if he knows how complicated this has been, and Chicago… whatever, it’s over and done with.

*Chicago and Twitch enter. Twitch first, still steaming. Chicago comes in after, one black eye and a slight limp. The two are silent, an uncomfortable tension is present that can be cut with a knife.*

JAY: Welcome back boys. Alright, what’s done is done, it’s in the past. I’ve got some important news. We’ve got some nice intel you guys will be interested in. A painting is being moved from one museum to another, tomorrow. This painting is valued at a few million. The company in charge of moving the painting is notorious for leaving their trucks vulnerable. Should be easy for some clever crooks like us to steal what’s inside. We stop the truck, grab the painting, and leave. It won’t be as quiet as our last job, but hopefully it’ll be just as clean. That means you Twitch.

TWITCH: *(Very coldly)* I’m not in the mood boss.

JAY: It’s alright Twitch, you’ve gotten much better at handling things.

CHICAGO: *(Softly, almost a whimper)* I don’t know, the way he looked at that dog…

TWITCH: I said, I’m not in the fucking mood.

JAY: Boys, calm down, that’s enough. We’ll work out the rest of the details tomorrow. Chicago, Whisper, clean things up around here. Twitch, I know you had a rough day, so why don’t you get going now?

TWITCH: *(Afraid of being left out)* If you guys are still talking, I wanna be here.

JAY: No, I’ll head out with you. I’m tired too. *(To everyone)* We’ll meet back here same time tomorrow morning, so get some rest. We got a big day tomorrow. *(Leads Twitch out)*

CHICAGO: Hey Whisper, this guy we scored from a couple days ago. He’s a museum curator, right?

WHISPER: Yeah.
CHICAGO: So, we rob a museum owner, and then all of a sudden we come across this plan to get a huge painting going from one museum to another?

WHISPER: *(Slightly concerned, but trying to keep cool)* What’re you getting at?

CHICAGO: Look, I’m just saying that seems kind of convenient. I mean, I wouldn’t say the boss would be hiding anything, but it just feels like there’s something he’s not telling us.

WHISPER: *(His voice wavers)* Yeah, it’s, it’s kinda weird.

CHICAGO: *(Now very suspicious)* There wouldn’t be anything you’re not telling me, would there?

WHISPER: What? No, of course not. I’ve told you everything I know.

CHICAGO: Whisper, we spent so much time planning this last robbery out. Getting the blueprints, finding out the guy’s schedule so he wouldn’t see us. Why all this effort for a simple robbery we could’ve done anywhere?

WHISPER: I don’t know, I-

CHICAGO: That vault. I’ve seen you crack hundreds of electronic codes like that before in seconds. I’m no expert but that one didn’t seem any different. Why did it take you so long? What the hell are you not telling me?

WHISPER: Alright! I got the transport info from the guys computer. The money and jewelry didn’t matter. Jay’s known about the transport for weeks. We just needed to know when and where we could hit that truck.

CHICAGO: *(Somewhat awestruck)* Why did he tell you all this?

WHISPER: He didn’t want to tell me, but I needed to know what I was looking for on that computer. Look, keep this between us, please. If they found out, Twitch would kill you, and Jay would kill me.

CHICAGO: I swear to god, after this job I’m done.

WHISPER: After this job, you won’t need to stick around.

*Black*

Day 3

*Lights up. Twitch and Chicago in the house, alone. Tension still remains between the two, but they feel a bit more comfortable*

TWITCH: *(struggling to find conversation)* You…you catch the game last night?

CHICAGO: Ha, I wish. My roommate was hogging the TV all last night.
TWITCH: You still living with that prick?

CHICAGO: Yeah, we get along a little better. As long as he’s not breaking my shit.

TWITCH: What’d he do this time?

CHICAGO: Christ, last night he dropped a quarter behind my desk, and crawls his fat ass underneath it. He decides to fucking sneeze. He knocks over the table, my shit goes everywhere. Desk lamp, books, my fucking computer.

TWITCH: (Laughs) Serves you right.

CHICAGO: (Smiles) Yeah, whatever. You know all he had to say for it? He just looks at me, shrugs his shoulders, and goes “oops”

TWITCH: (Laughs, then stops) Wait, did you say oopsh? Is that was he said?

CHICAGO: What? Yeah, he just said oops.

TWITCH: No no no, you didn’t say oops. You said oopsh, like with an S-H.

CHICAGO: What? I’m pretty sure I said oops.

TWITCH: No, you totally didn’t. You fucking said oopsh.

CHICAGO: Alright, Alright, fine, I fuckin’ said oopsh. Jesus. Can we move on?

TWITCH: (still giggling) Yeah, yeah, sure. It’s fine. Everyone makes mistakes. *Twitch walks a few steps, takes his wallet out, drops it.*

TWITCH: Oopsh.

CHICAGO: God dammit, man! Gimme a break!

*The two laugh it off. The tension has finally left between the two.*

TWITCH: Look man, I- I’m sorry, about…yesterday. I got a little worked up, but we’re fine now. Right?

CHICAGO: Hey man, no problem. We both made mistakes. *(A smile starts to come on, then he shrugs his shoulders)* Oopsh.

*Jay comes back in, in a hurry. Whisper follows*

JAY: Alright guys, we don’t have a lot of time, so as soon as we discuss the plan we’ll get going. The truck with the painting in it is en route as we speak. In two hours, more or less, it’ll be right at the crossing of Main and Park, and that’s exactly where we’ll be hitting it. We’ve contracted a sniper that’s gonna take out the driver as soon as the truck stops. Chicago, you’ll be doing the stopping. You’re gonna disguise yourself as a crossing guard and get the truck to stop as soon as it hits the intersection. When it does, Twitch, Whisper and I will be waiting in an alley on motor
bikes. As soon as we hear the gunshot, we’ll drive out. Whisper will plant explosives and blow open the doors, and I’ll carry out the painting. Then we head out, and ride off into the sunset.

CHICAGO: Wait, how am I getting out when you grab the painting?

JAY: Oh, you’re hitching a ride with Twitch.


JAY: Hey, don’t worry about it. Our gunman’s heading out with Whisper. You’re not the only one without a bike.

CHICAGO: Yeah, and the sniper’s gotta head down the whole building. That’s gonna take time. What happens when the cops show up before he makes it? You’re gonna head off without him, right? (No response) What happens if you think you need to leave me? You guys take the painting and I’m doing time to cover your asses?

JAY: Chicago, relax. We’ve got it all timed out. There’s no way the police are gonna come before we’re long gone.

CHICAGO: How the hell do you know that? Things have taken longer than we thought all the time. You made us wait ten minutes in that house because it took forever for Whisper to get that vault open and steal the transport files from the computer!

Twitch takes immediate notice at the mention of files

JAY: Chicago, no one’s leaving without you. Just relax, we’ve gotta leave soon and-

TWITCH: (Cutting Jay off) Wait, what? Files? What files?

Chicago realizes his mistake. Chicago, Jay, and Whisper all look at each other, not knowing what to say.

TWITCH: Was Whisper taking files from the guy’s computer? Is that why you took so long to crack that?

Whisper stutters

TWITCH: You told me you were just opening the vault. Cracking the code. What- why would you not tell me this? (Speaks to Jay now) Why don’t you tell us anything? Why is it that we always have to figure this shit out by ourselves?

More silence

TWITCH: Wait, Chicago knew this? Why the fuck did he know? And Whisper, you knew all along?

WHISPER: No, I-
TWITCH: Why am I the only one in the dark about this? Why don’t you fucking trust me? How long have I been the only one to not know about what’s going on? Are you guys…are you trying to get rid of me?

JAY: No, Twitch, we need you-

TWITCH: You need me? NO YOU FUCKING DON’T. What do I even do? What the fuck is my job in all this? I’m just following you guys around and watching you take the painting, (points at Chicago) then hauling his ass back with us?

*Beat. Twitch turns to Jay*

TWITCH: Why are you running off alone with the painting? What’s your plan after that? Come back to the safe house? Or run off to your isolated paradise with your newly acquired millions- with OUR millions.

WHISPER: Twitch, calm down. Jay does his best-

TWITCH: And what do you do, you quiet little prick? You sit around and let us do all the heavy lifting, while you push a few buttons and kiss Jay’s ass. *(Turns to Chicago)* And you. You selfish, loud-mouthed motherfucker. I thought we were friends. After everything we did together, *(points at Jay)* you’re going to let this piece of shit tell you what to do? But what do you care, you’re just in it for the money. You sicken me, I should kill you where you stand.

JAY: Twitch, you’re crossing a line-

TWITCH: Shut up! I’m crossing a line? I’ve done exactly what you’ve told me to do for years. I’ve shown up, done what I had to do, taken my cut, and gone home. I never questioned your methods. I’ve never asked for more. I never asked for any of this shit. It’s my name that’s plastered all over the news. I should be laying low, away from all this. But I’m not, because I’m still here trying to help you guys make a fucking living. Even after all this, you’re trying to keep me out of the know, cut me out of the profits. And I’m the one crossing the fucking line.

*Long pause.*

JAY: You’re out.

TWITCH: *(suddenly confused)* What?

JAY: You’re not going. You’re too angry to keep your head straight. At this point, you’re only a liability.

TWITCH: B-But, I…

JAY: You stay here. We’ll take care of this. Don’t move until we get back. We’ll figure this out later.

*Twitch sighs. Sits down, hangs his head.*

TWITCH: *Without lifting his head* So, am I out…for good?
JAY: (Looks at others) Let’s go.

Jay and Whisper exit. Chicago lingers for a moment, opens his mouth to say something to T-

JAY (offstage): Chicago!

Chicago exits, reluctantly.

Twitch sits alone, for a few moments.

TWITCH: So, I’m a liability…Okay.

Twitch pulls out a phone, dials.


Fade to Black.

The End