

**RADIANCE**  
by Howard Meyer

ACT I

*LINDSAY KOUNTZE (pronounced 'koonts') steps onto the stage. Disturbed, disoriented, she gamely attempts to cover this reality. In a pool of light, she addresses an unseen person.*

LINDSAY

I was named after the actress Lindsay Wagner. The Bionic Woman. TV wife to Lee Majors, the Bionic Man. My mother used to say that we're all bionic out here. People wear spare parts like used cars. Glass eyes, prosthetic arms. Drunken driving. It's part of the New Mexican pastime, especially for the locals. Most of them are Indian or Mexican or both, and many live on the 8 or 9 Pueblos that surround Albuquerque & Sante Fe. After they get off from their shitty jobs, in white owned factories, greasy kitchens, uranium mines, before they return to their Pueblos, they drink. They drink and sometimes they crash. Then they end up with new parts. My dad, he was local. Born right here, downtown Sante Fe.... He drank. But somehow he held on to all his original parts. Well I mean, before... before he---... you know.

I loved Lindsay Wagner... Jamie Somers. That was her character's name on the show. But somehow I always felt there wasn't any difference. Her and her character. They were both perfect. She was so beautiful... kind, generous. *(The unseen person interjects, LINDSAY responds)* Yeah, yeah, selfless... absolutely. As a kid, I always believed that the accident, the one that turned her bionic was predestined. So her perfect-ness could be known and celebrated by all of us. I mean she was perfect before she became bionic, but in my mind, back then, her bionic-ness sealed the deal. Lindsay Wagner, she was my Kuchina. *(The unseen person looks confused.)* Kuchina. That's Hopi for spirit protector; sort of. The Kuchina spirits live in Arizona, up on the San Francisco Mountains, part of the year and then come down and live among the people on the mesas for the rest. There are so many of them. They make replicas into dolls and sculptures. They're everywhere in the Hopi mesas. Like images of Jesus and Mary with us white folks... To invite the spirits home, to bring them here, the people put on the appropriate head-dress and costume and then they all gather and dance. They dance, for hours, days, and if they do it right, they become possessed by the actual spirit. That's what the Hopis say. When I was a little girl, Jamie Somers aka Lindsay Wagner, I would do anything to become her. To become possessed by her. Later, I heard she got divorced four times. In real life. Not on TV... That was a hard moment.

*The unseen person asks a question.*

Oh, no, no, never. I don't get drunk. Or high. Never. I'm not even local. I mean I am in the sense that I was born here and I've lived here all my life. But I've never felt like I was from here. That's weird, right? My people. They weren't born here... originally. I mean who's were? Except the natives... I always viewed us more as visitors... Visitors who

take things. We like something and we take them. Or we buy them. Which is the same as taking really when you think about it.

*Responding to another question by the unseen person.*

*Points to her head.* You can't see it... But it's in there. My part... The corner of Paseo de Peralta & St. Francis Drive. Other car came plowing through the intersection. An Indian local. He was drunk. Arrested of course.... It was my mother who ran the yellow. At least she said it was yellow. Called that Indian every name in the book. Thrown through the front windshield, lying splattered on the pavement and my mother's busy cursing. That's pretty definitive, no, being thrown through a windshield? Shards of glass comin' outa' every part of me. She could have been calling herself all those names. Maybe she was, deep down. I mean who takes that chance. Speed through an intersection, yellow or not, with their 12 year old on the passenger side---.... After, after they put in the spare part, things changed with me. You're a "conductor" now. That's what they said. Not premonition really. But I can sense things. Scientific things, mostly. Must be the alloys in the metal, my father said. Hell, Lindsay Wagner was a scientist, worked for the government. It all makes sense, right? ...Before, they say I used to be into art and dance, making things. Withdrawn even. And then after, out went the paints and primers and in came the chemistry sets, the fossils, and books about petroglyphs. Wet my pants to make trips to Canyon De Chelley, visits to the Bradbury Science Museum. Pretty soon, I'm asking my dad about all the atomic tests and research at the Lab. I wanna go there. On field trips. I start winning these science awards at school. Then I get the scholarship to University of New Mexico in Los Alamos. "We will rebuild her. We will make her better than she was before."

One day my mother, she left.... No threats. No endless arguments about my father's drinking and cavorting with Paddy and his other drunken Indian friends. My dad says she just got tired of him. Him and his big screen satellite TV, his Dewers and the San Francisco Giants. But I know the truth. It was a year after the accident. She needed a new start. One that didn't include accidents and daughters... I gradually stopped going with her to the O'Keefe museum, where she'd sit and sketch, stopped going to market where she sold her wares. She painted less and less, stopped making jewelry.... Death, decay. That's how it happens. In increments. It's true in science too. Big changes take millions of years. But each step. As important as any other... And then one day she's gone. Just like that. I come home from school. My dad comes home from the Lab... and she's gone.

## Scene 1

*Lights up on BILLY KOUNTZE's ranch house the outskirts of Sante Fe, New Mexico. PADDY POLEAHLA (pronounced po-lay-la) & BILLY are sitting in the living room, watching a San Francisco Giant's baseball game.*

*Duane Kuip: Kruk and Kuip (pronounced 'krook' and 'kip') back here at A T & T Park for more Giants baseball, and Mike, let me tell you. Bases loaded, and Barry Bonds is about the last guy the Cardinals want to be seeing right now.*

*Mike Kruk: This is the exact situation LaRussa was trying to avoid. You can't give him anything in his wheel house, but you have to throw strikes.*

*Duane Kuip: LaRussa is done with the meeting at the mound. He's staying with the youngster Crudale.*

*Mike Kruk: That's what makes a career. He gets past Barry, that'll carry him a long way.*

*Duane Kuip: No avoiding the inevitable. Barry Bonds steps in. The heir apparent to the all time home run title.*

*Mike Kruk: He hits the salami Duane, I'm buying the beers after the game.*

*Duane Kuip: He delivers, they'll be a lot of fans goin' home happy.*

BILLY

C'mon you oversized steroid injecting hunk of meat. Hit it into the Bay.

*PADDY stares at BILLY*

BILLY (Again)

There. Over there. I'm not the one with a bat in my hand. (*BILLY points to the television*).

*Duane Kuip: Oh... and a huge swinging strike one.*

*Mike Kruk: Beautiful breaking ball. We know where Bonds was going with that one.*

BILLY

Stop jinxing him for damn sakes. Root. Root...

*PADDY keeps staring at BILLY and smiling.*

BILLY (Again)

You don't have to root for him. Root for the Giants. He's a Giant.

PADDY

His father, the great Bobby Bonds. His uncle, The 'Say Hey' Kid. Now those were Giants. The man has shamed his family name.

*BILLY stares at PADDY.*

BILLY

You're one to be talkin'.

PADDY

I get paid that kinda' money, I wouldn't need to be dealin' in shame.

BILLY

He denied it.

PADDY

The body don't lie.

BILLY

Is that more of your ancient wisdom?

PADDY

Broke the single season home run record at age 35. Look at him now. Can hardly lift his arms over his head.

*Kuip: Swinging strike 2...What a nasty change up!*

*PADDY shoots him another look.*

BILLY (Again)

Stop lookin' at me with that evil eye. I got enough evil to deal with, without you givin' me more. (To TV) Shit. C'mon you meat head. Bear down!!

PADDY

That's your country right there Kountze.

BILLY

It's your country too, brother.

*Duane Kuip: High and away. Ball one.*

PADDY

Not my country. Never mine. We're a colony.

BILLY

You sure as hell like our beer.

PADDY

Liked your beer, brother. And anyhow, the good shit's imported from somewhere else.

BILLY

How about Satellite TV? Ten years ago, we had to huddle around a damn radio to listen to these games. Now, look. Just like being there.

PADDY

You know who's going to buy your Direct TV? That billionaire jackass Rupert Murdoch.

BILLY

Not much more he can do to this.

PADDY

He'll find a way.

BILLY

As long as he doesn't take away my games.

PADDY

And your Simpsons and Judge Judy.

*Duane Kuip: Called strike three.*

PADDY

Hah!!

*Duane Kuip: Bonds is down on strikes. Wow. You've got to give the kid credit Kruk. Beat Bonds with his best stuff.*

*Mike Kruk: Go grab some pine, meat!*

*Duane Kuip: And at the end of six, it's still the Cardinals, 2 and the Giants, 1.*

BILLY (To TV)

You better shoot yourself up with some more of that poison you big lump of shit. *(Turns the TV down)* That was terrible. It's like he was pissin' up a damn rope.

PADDY

Repaying injustice with justice.

BILLY

Don't give me that Great Spirit crap. The kid overpowered him.

PADDY

Tiny repayments. Every day.

BILLY

All the shit you've injected, you'd think you'd have a little sympathy.

PADDY

Look at yourself. It's a miracle Lindsay didn't come out with webbed feet. All those neutrons crashing into your testicles.

BILLY

Spewing your garbage about Bonds, my Satellite TV. That's fine. No daughter talk. You can talk whatever shit you want, but not that.

PADDY

You know how much I love Lindsay. I was just---

BILLY

---You want to start talkin' daughters---?

PADDY

---Holy shit---

BILLY

---That huge stinkin' mess you made?

PADDY

That stupid shit was stupid, alright?! I deserved everything I got. You don't think I know that?

BILLY

You weren't admitting that then, were you? Busy bitching and lying.

PADDY

Your boy Bonds over there. Maybe years from now, he's sitting around with a beer belly watchin' some other cheating millionaires, he'll be able to admit the same damn thing.

BILLY

This belly's not from beers. (*BILLY stares at his own belly*) It's a paunch, OK? Too many tostadas.

PADDY

Pretty soon we're going to take you out to sea. Return you to your ocean people.

BILLY

You really got yourself goin' tonight chief. All because I didn't get you into that, that---

PADDY

I give you shit every day, you dumb ass.

BILLY

Management and their families only.

PADDY

And enlisted men.

BILLY

Honorably discharged.

PADDY

The only reason they'd want me at their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary circle jerk is for the photo op. Have Bill Richardson shake the hand of the make-good Indian. Some bullshit like that. Maybe they can get the 90 year old WWII Navajo code talkers. They're always willing to whore themselves out for something like this.

BILLY

Holy Jesus. Here we go.

PADDY

You put my name in every year for a damn promotion and every year they come back with the same horseshit. Attendance, lateness.

BILLY

Fighting. The disciplinary actions.

PADDY

Sending me down into that radioactive hole with the other dark skinned grunts. What kind of bullshit is that?

BILLY

This is an important assignment. You're the best assylist we got.

PADDY

I could give a shit about that fucking celebration, OK. What I want is to be a supervisor.

BILLY

You are a supervisor.

PADDY

Supervising a mound of radioactive shit ain't supervising... They're scared. Scared of what we'll do if they give us authority... Give us Casinos. That's the best they do. Keep us drunk and gambling.

BILLY

Hopis don't have Casinos.

PADDY

That's right. We didn't get suckered.

BILLY

Pissin' away free money like that? That's just stupid.

PADDY

Let me tell you, just because you got money, superior technology doesn't make you a superior people. Strength isn't about mite. It's about conviction. Why do you think your people keep looking for ways to be strong? Because they are inherently weak. A weak people... Look at your Bonds there. One of the greatest players of our time. If he could have found a way to split an atom inside his bicep he would have been the first atomic man by now. You all need more. All you Americans. You and your metals and your closet full of guns. You're scared Billy. Just like them. Los Alamos. Just a toy factory for all the scared whites. You know when you'll finally be able to relax? When everyone else is dead. Let me tell you something. Even death, even death doesn't take away our strength.

BILLY

You get that damn promotion, this rant goes right out the window.

*BILLY gets up. Goes to the bathroom. Silence.*

PADDY (Again)

Cardinals are in the field... The guy is done with his warm up tosses.

*BILLY re-emerges with syringe. PADDY sees. Looks away.  
BILLY lifts his pant leg. Starts preparing himself for the  
injection.*

PADDY

Do you think you can do that somewhere else?

BILLY

I live here. Where else would you like me to go?... Turn your fucking head. You don't care what happens to the Giants.

*BILLY injects. Swabs the skin at the needle's point of entry. Goes into the walk-in  
kitchen, throws the needle out in a medical supply disposal bin. Sits back down.*

BILLY (Again)

It's done.

*PADDY turns back.*