

IMPOSTER

A short play

By Peter Snoad

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IMPOSTER

CHARACTERS

EDDIE, a prison inmate

VISITOR ONE

VISITOR TWO

FBI AGENT

SETTING

A prison cell

TIME

Sometime in the near future

IMPOSTER

A bare prison cell. EDDIE is sitting on the floor. The sound of a buzzer as his cell door opens. VISITOR ONE and VISITOR TWO enter. They are smartly and conservatively dressed. VISITOR ONE carries a gym bag. The door closes with a buzz behind them. They silently circle EDDIE, examining him.

EDDIE

Who are you?

VISITOR ONE

(To EDDIE)

Stand up.

EDDIE doesn't move.

Stand up.

EDDIE slowly gets to his feet.

EDDIE

Who are you? What do you want?

VISITOR ONE takes an orange jumpsuit from his bag and tosses it to EDDIE, who instinctively catches it.

VISITOR ONE

Put it on.

EDDIE

Fuck you.

VISITOR TWO

Eddie. Would you like to be a free man?

EDDIE

Yeah.

VISITOR TWO

Then put it on and don't ask questions.

VISITOR ONE and VISITOR TWO stare at EDDIE. Slowly, he dons the jumpsuit.

EDDIE

It's too big.

VISITOR ONE

We'll get you a smaller one.

EDDIE

What is this? What's going on?

VISITOR ONE takes an orange wig from his bag and tosses it to EDDIE. He catches it.

Oh no, no, no. I'm not doing this.

VISITOR TWO

You could walk out that door.

EDDIE

Yeah, and what's the quid pro quo?

VISITOR TWO

We'll get to that later.

A slight pause. EDDIE dons the wig. VISITOR ONE and VISITOR TWO study him intently.

(To VISITOR ONE)

You're right. He's perfect.

EDDIE

Perfect for what?

VISITOR TWO

We need to do something about the jowls.

VISITOR ONE

No problem.

EDDIE

What are you talking about?

VISITOR TWO

We want you to be President.

EDDIE

Okay, okay. What am I selling? Big Macs? College degrees? Ukrainian nesting dolls? Just because I look like him, everybody wants a piece of me. They want to hug me, they want to kill me, they want selfies. Or like you they want to make some stupid commercial. I'm sick of it, okay, it's fucking exhausting. Wait a minute. Donald's going down, his brand is toxic, why would you...? Of course. You want to do a swap.

VISITOR ONE

(To VISITOR TWO)

I told you he was smart.

EDDIE

Shit. Really? But he's in jail.

VISITOR ONE

In this very building.

VISITOR TWO

We'll arrange for you to trade places.

VISITOR ONE

So when he's sentenced—

EDDIE

I'll go to prison for life! That's it? That's your quid? Or your pro or your quo, or whatever the fuck it is.

VISITOR ONE

You'll be out on appeal the same day.

VISITOR TWO

And when they discover you're not the real Donald Trump, they'll have to release you.

EDDIE

Wonderful! I'll be a marked man, I won't last five minutes!

VISITOR ONE

Unless you have a new identity, new location, round-the-clock protection, and a nice fat Swiss bank account.

EDDIE

Promises, promises.

VISITOR TWO

Or you can rot in here for the next fourteen years. Your choice.

VISITOR ONE

Eddie. Think about it. You could be President of the United States of America. The most powerful man on the planet.

EDDIE

Wasn't there a movie about this? Some lookalike guy becomes president because the real one dies?

VISITOR ONE

Dave.

EDDIE

Right! Kevin Kline was brilliant in that.

VISITOR ONE

And you're Dave.

EDDIE

I'm not Dave, no way, I can't act. Everyone would know I'm not him.

VISITOR ONE

Inside the White House, yes, but they're fully briefed.

EDDIE

What about Melania?

VISITOR TWO

What about her?

EDDIE

Well, I'll be, you know, her husband.

VISITOR TWO

No.

EDDIE

I got to play the part.

VISITOR TWO

You think they sleep together?

EDDIE

Okay. But I mean, she and Ivanka and Don Junior and the rest of the family—

VISITOR ONE

They are all fully briefed.

EDDIE

But in public—

VISITOR TWO

You won't appear in public.

VISITOR ONE

Except for a trip or two to Mar-a-Largo.

VISITOR TWO

Stress from the trial, complete rest on doctor's orders, et cetera.

VISITOR ONE

And TV won't be a problem.

VISITOR TWO

You're his spitting image.

EDDIE

But I mean, I'll still need to behave like him—

VISITOR ONE

Act like a mafia boss.

EDDIE

Right.

VISITOR ONE

Your acting coach has worked with Pacino. In case, you need a little brush-up.

VISITOR TWO

And no need to worry about Twitter, you'll have a ghost writer.

VISITOR ONE

And a little plastic surgery to tweak those jowls.

(Beat.)

EDDIE

This is fucking crazy.
(Beat.)
What about golf?

VISITOR ONE

You'll play a few rounds.

EDDIE

No, no, that's the point, I can't, I can't play. I'm terrible.

VISITOR ONE

He's terrible. He cheats.

EDDIE

I can't cheat.

VISITOR ONE

Eddie, you're serving seventeen years for bribery, extortion, fraud, and racketeering.

EDDIE

Golf is different. My Dad used to play. I don't want to disrespect him.

VISITOR ONE

Fine, no golf. Other questions, concerns?

EDDIE

How long will I have to be him?

VISITOR ONE

Just two weeks. Until your death.

EDDIE

You're going to kill me anyway!?

VISITOR ONE

No, no, you'll have a fake heart attack. And by the time "the president" is buried, you'll be on the beach in Aruba.

VISITOR TWO

Or wherever you choose to start your new life.

EDDIE

What about Trump? Where will he be?

VISITOR ONE

Six feet under.

EDDIE

No, I mean, the real Trump.

VISITOR TWO

Eddie, we don't deal in reality.

EDDIE

Where?

VISITOR TWO

Well, not here obviously. We'll have moved him to a secure location.

EDDIE

I want to meet him.

VISITOR ONE

Meet him?

EDDIE

Or the deal's off.
(Beat.)

VISITOR TWO

Eddie, don't do this.

EDDIE

Do what?

VISITOR TWO

Don't make it hard on yourself.

A slight pause. EDDIE bursts out laughing.

EDDIE

You come in here, you threaten me. You think I'll do whatever you want. No. No fucking way. And you know why? Because you are desperate, and I'm all you've got. I am the next best thing to a clone. And without me, this whole nutso scheme goes nowhere. And you – and the president – are dead in the water.

(Beat.)

VISITOR TWO

Why do you want to meet him?

I want a selfie.

EDDIE

That's it?

VISITOR ONE

And I want to give him a piece of my mind.

EDDIE

What would you tell him?

VISITOR ONE

You're fired!
(Beat.)

EDDIE

We can accommodate that.

VISITOR TWO

And I want a million dollars in that Swiss bank account.

EDDIE

Don't push your luck, Eddie.

VISITOR TWO

Don't push yours.
(Beat.)

EDDIE

We'll get back to you.

VISITOR TWO

He and VISITOR ONE turn to leave.

EDDIE

NO! It's now or never.
(Beat.)

VISITOR TWO

Okay. It's a deal.

EDDIE

Good.

VISITOR TWO

We need to move fast.

EDDIE

I know what you're thinking.

VISITOR TWO

What am I thinking?

EDDIE

This guy's an idiot. We do the switch, we fake his death, we take him to meet Trump, and then we kill him.

VISITOR TWO

Why would we do that?

EDDIE

You know why. So I don't squawk, and you save Trump a million bucks. He's always stiffing people anyway.

VISITOR TWO

Eddie, you're a valuable commodity. It's in our interest to protect you.

EDDIE

Until it's not.

VISITOR TWO

Trust me—

EDDIE

Trust you? Why would I trust you?

VISITOR TWO

We will look after you. I guarantee it.

VISITOR ONE

And anyway, who knows what the future holds?

EDDIE

I do.

VISITOR ONE

Is that right?

FBI AGENT enters.

FBI AGENT

(To THE VISITORS)

That's right. You are both under arrest.

EDDIE

Smile for the cameras! Now I get to leave, and you get to stay. LOSERS!

Blackout.

END OF PLAY