

# **FLYING NINJA**

By

Larry Mitchell

A short play about chance and choice for one performer.

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Production Draft for DMS and NAP

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FROLIAN: 24, m. A buss-boy at an upper scale theme restaurant under the intersection of two major overpasses.

TIME: 2005

PLACE: A restaurant. A theater.

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*AT RISE, there is a bare stage and a chair. Enter FROLIAN, an aging hipster with bright eyes and a lot of hair. He is wearing restaurant garb: an oxford shirt, tie, a pair of dickies, and a dark green apron. HE starts to light a cigarette, notices audience.*

FRO

Oh, you don't like cigarette smoke. You are not alone.

*HE puts the cig behind his ear.*

I don't get to finish it. I don't even know what a whole cigarette tastes like anymore--

*HE checks his watch.*

12:13. Two minutes.

*HE pulls a scrap of paper from his apron, reads from it.*

Sorry, I am unprepared, as usual:

“You fell from the sky during a mid-afternoon rush....Leaving your mark on the wall as you made a final descent...from traffic to urban legend....”

*Glances audience*

This ain't workin'. Is it? I wrote this today, but not yet....I go to these open mic's sometimes. Never read it, though....anything...I just listen. I'm not a rapper or nothin'. I like to write, though, cleans my head up....cleans it out. Any ways, I was over there. Well, hold on.

*Walks over to chair, sits.*

Alright? So, I'm just sitting on this empty beer keg..Use your imagination...sneaking a cigarette in the middle of a Tuesday lunch rush. I'm not lazy. I just need my break. This is a shitty job.

The pay's alright. I like the people.

But, it's like I gotta fight to smoke a cigarette and, Dudes, I'm just taking a drag, looking up at these two massive overpasses, they're like, I don't know what they're like, man, but they are two big, giant hunks of cement about thirty feet up, maybe a hundred... I don't know... that just happen to crisscross right above our restaurant. Or maybe our restaurant just happens to be right below where they cross. I don't know. Maybe somebody thought that was a good idea...Take the two busiest freeways in the state, and build a restaurant underneath the place where they cross up, only you can't get here from either of those freeways. This place has been here for a while...probably built around it...I don't know how we stay so busy. It took me three weeks to find this place, and I work here. I mean--

*HE again tries to light the cigarette and is interrupted by the flight of a motorcycle, the cigarette falls out of his mouth.*

Bam! I hear this squeeeal of brakes, tires, just, metal, steel, cement, and I look up, and there it is. It's a Kawasaki Ninja. I don't know how, maybe he cut off that big ass truck up there; that would explain the sound, but that Ninja is airborne. And, on it, kinda flailed out, half on, possibly trying to decide whether he wants to ride it out or just let go right now, is some dude I'll never meet. Never got a good look at the guy. He was wearing a helmet...Not that that'll do you much good from that high up, but this bitch does damn near a one-eighty, something kinda like it, and crashes into the side of the joint. The guy almost made the roof, but the bike pulled him down....Shoulda just let go in the first place. I don't know. Might have made it...

*Tracing the motorcycle on its descent through the sky, picks the cig back up.*

“You fell from the sky during a mid-afternoon rush....Leaving your mark on the wall as you made a final descent from traffic to urban legend....”

*The motorcycle lands; he approaches, and slowly, kneels next to the body for a second, then, a guilty conscience forces him to address the audience.*

This wasn't me. I never even saw him after he landed. The arc of the Ninja was enough for me. That was more than enough, man. The smoking dock, out back, it only lets you out on this little portion where you can see the overpasses intersect. I tell the story different ways, but with so many of you here, I don't want to get caught contradicting myself, or whatever, so I'll just tell the truth. I can just hear this slight whimpering...not a lot of squirming, or nothing, and the bike isn't running anymore.

It's just, everything is still. It's quiet. You know? And, it shouldn't be. And, I am frozen...for a second, anyhow.

*Back in the scene, yelling at the man over a wall.*

Holy shit! I don't need this, man. Shit! Shit!...Hey?...Are you...Hey!...okay?  
Hey!...Maann, shit! Uhm...

*Runs to open the door to the restaurant.*

Locked! Locked? C'mon! What the hell am I gonna steal out here? A trash can?! A fucking mop?!

*Pressing the buzzer, making the sound.*

Buzzzzzz....Buzzzzzz...Hey!...Yeah...Hey! Open the fucking...No, I know I'm not supposed...There's a fucking guy out here...No I'm not being...NINJA!...FLYING MOTORCYCLE!..Get Marcy! Now! Open the fucking...Get some towels!

*To audience*

You'd think she would've opened the door by now...

*Back at the door*

Can you open the...Beep...Thank you!

*Opens door. Runs into the restaurant. Sees the manager, Marcy.*

Hey! There's a guy out there! He fell off of the overpass....Yeah, on a motorcycle...I think he's still alive. He's not making a lot of noise, no. I don't know! I can't see him!...It can't be good, no. No.

*To audience*

Then, Marcy goes into this total martial law shit, like she's a general or something...

*As Marcy the manager, on a walkie talkie, who runs out the doors, toward the body.*

Hey, Bill, we've got something going on out back. I don't know! Flying motorcycles or something! We need towels! Linens! Anything!...Fizz, pop, fizz...Has somebody called "911?"...Fizz...pop...fizz...Call "911!" Now!...Fro! Go on back in! I got it. Thank you...

*He goes back to the poem, reading*

"I never saw your face. But, it was etched into the eyes of the ones who returned."

*To the audience*

I had to go back to work. There were iced tea and water glasses to fill, dirty tables screaming to be changed-over in less than 60 seconds. I'm not a doctor. I just buss tables, man. That's all they trained me for. So, I go back in.

*In the restaurant*

Hey! Yeah, I'm back. Sorry... Yeah, no, there's a guy wrecked his motorcycle out back...He fell off of the overpass....No bullshit. Would I make that up, man?....Sure, you can go out there if you want, but I ain't...Fuck no I didn't see him...I mean. I saw him fly ...Yeah, a fuckin' motorcycle, man....Yeah, I got 23, 37, and 13. You got that six top over there?

*HE goes to work, miming the bussing and talking to the audience.*

Then there was an announcement. "Attention, all Gene and Jerry's guests. If there is a doctor in the building, could you please make your way to the front desk?" Like I said, I ain't no doctor. So I kept workin'.

*To his co-worker*

Hell of a Tuesday, yeah?...You bet....Nah...I don't know...It doesn't seem like Shaq and Kobe are gettin' along these days....No way! I think they should trade Kobe. I don't like his attitude. He's a liability, anyway s....Me? No, I'm a Raiders fan...I don't know. I guess I always have been. I think my dad was.

*To the audience*

So, we go on with this for days. I catch a sound or two from the halls as I'm dropping my tubs off, and things seemed to have settled by the end of the rush. So I go back out to puff one, thinking things oughta be about wrapped up.

*Back out, starts to light the cigarette, looks up, has a look of horror.*

What the fuck is...Yeah, Brody's covering me. It's cool...What the, what is that? What's going...His foot?...What?...You kidding? Jesus.

*To the audience*

Well, he almost made the roof, but his foot did. The shoe was still on it, man. Needless to say, I never got that cigarette in. That was enough of a break for me.

*Back at work, talking with Brody*

Hey, man! They got this guys foot out there....It fell off, man! On the roof...I know. Crazy Tuesday, man. Crazy ass Tuesday.

*HE goes on working for a bit, smiling,  
waving to customers.*

Yo!...You bet! Yeah, get out of here, man. I got this....Me?...I did alright. I think I made sixty, sixty-five....Right on. Pieces!...Yeah, I'll try to swing by. Ten o'clock?...Maybe...Fucker.

*To the audience*

So that was pretty much it. I mean, we were all in here, working. Kenny and Marcy, the managers, they took care of most of it. I mean, the paramedics showed up, but I heard they couldn't really do anything for him. You know? Free-fall from an overpass, I guess. I don't know. You could try talking to Marcy, but she's never mentioned it to me, and I was there. She never said anything about me sneaking that smoke break either....They say there was someone else died in our parking lot a couple years before that...suicide. Some lady parked her car and just jumped off the overpass...law of averages, I guess.

*He takes off his apron, pulling the poem  
out, reading it.*

“You fell from the sky during a mid-afternoon rush, leaving your mark on the wall as you made a final descent from Traffic to Urban Legend...I never saw your face. Instead, I heard your fate over hand-held eavesdroppers between the fizz...pop...fizz of confusion...  
“Attention all Gene and Jerry's guests, If there is a doctor in the building, could you please make your way to the front desk?”...I never saw your face. It was etched in the eyes of the ones who returned. I was the one who saw you first, heard you drop, while sneaking a smoke...Then I was gone. Back to the ladies who lunch. The ones who never knew...By the time I left, all that remained was your scar, on the back of our building. A puddle of stained water, where we washed away everything we could.”

*HE pulls out a cigarette, goes to light it,  
then throws it down, along with the pack.*

*HE lights the poem on fire, drops it by the  
cigarettes, walks out as the lights go down  
on the burning poem.*

Hey, Kenny. You help that guy out, today?...Yeah, I saw him come off the overpass...He make it?...Damn...Didn't think so.

THE END