

Poison Pawn

By Larry Mitchell

A Solo-Play

Based on the Lives of Bobby Fischer

Using documents, interviews, and pure speculation.

Staged Reading Copy:

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Robert Ford as Bobby Fischer

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“Since all these books so distort what I consider to be the true Bobby, I've become skeptical about chess biography. A hundred years from now no one's going to have the slightest idea what Bobby Fischer was like because very few people today have a true idea of him. --Ed Edmonson

AT RISE, BOBBY FISCHER in a blue prison jumpsuit, There is a jail cell, a chess table, and little else needed. Perhaps a coat rack to hold the hats and jackets that he will use.

NOTE: The scene headings can be relayed by projections or voice overs, or, they can be spoken by Bobby.

SFX: Japanese airport security warnings in Japanese and English.

JULY 13, 2004

(To audience)

On July 13, 2004 at about 5:25 p.m., I was walking through the Japanese immigration department at the Tokyo/Narita airport to catch my outbound flight to Manila, Philippines. Sounds simple enough. Right? I gave the immigration lady my passport, and she stamped my exit visa.

(To Immigration Lady)

What?...Oh, Yes, I'm sorry.

(To audience)

Forgot to fill out the damn immigration departure form.

(To Immigration Lady)

I'll be right back.

HE goes to “fill out the form,” returns.

(To audience)

When I returned, a couple of minutes later, the lady was gone, replaced by some guy. So, I gave him the passport and the form, which he scanned under some special light or something, which made it go, “beep!”

(As immigration guy)

I very sorry Mr. Fisher. You must take seat.

(To Audience)

So, I took a seat, still figuring that this was only a minor mishap, and that I might be on my way. And I sat here for a while, trying to catch a little of the conversation here and there, but all I could catch was, “Hai! Hai!,” over and over, like that, “Hai! Hai!”

(To Immigration)

Hey, guy, what the hell’s the problem, here? I’m gonna miss my flight, you guys keep me here any longer.

(As Immigration)

I know that! Sit down!

(To audience)

So, I sat back down, waited a while, and was led down a long corridor...

(To Immigration)

Where the hell are we going? What’s the problem, here?

(As immigration)

No problem. We go to office to talk

About what?

We just talk.

I’m not moving until I know what this is all about! Am I under arrest?

If so, I demand to know the charges against me!

(As Immigration)

Do you wish to see somebody from the embassy?

No!

You have a right to contact the US embassy. Maybe they can help you?

What is a US embassy? Really? It's just a huge CIA base inside your own country, daily and nightly undermining your own sovereignty... You and I need a US embassy in Japan like we need a hole in the head! The US government is evil, and they are out to get me! Bush is a monster who needs to be stopped!

(To audience)

Even the portly translator was willing to acknowledge the truth in that statement!

So, we waited a bit, and some crazed security official brought out what he said was an arrest warrant, which I was not allowed to touch. I tried to read it, but I could not.

(To Immigration)

Illegally entered and left Japan?! When did I illegally enter Japan? Where's the date I illegally entered? I don't see it on the form. Maybe it's on there in Japanese, but I don't see it in English I don't even see any western numerals on this thing!

(As immigration)

Your passport is not valid, sir.

Not valid?! Since when is it not valid? You mean it was not valid when I entered Japan a few months ago?

That's right!

It wasn't valid when I entered Japan three months ago? Since when hasn't it been valid?

Oh, long before that!

Since when?!