

## ***Junk Audition Monologue Choices***

Male #1: If the work is deemed of a journalistic standard. We will spend a fair amount of time and money showing, of course, that it isn't that. Showing that your relationship - if that's the word - with a certain Leo Tresler compromised both your journalistic clarity and integrity. Let me ask you a question, Ms. Chen. How many copies do you think this could sell? I mean, if you hit it out of the park. Crazy numbers. (She does not speak) What, fifty thousand? Right? The most you could expect? What would you make off that at sixteen ninety-five a book? With, what - a fifteen percent royalty? Not quite a hundred and thirty thousand dollars? What if we paid you that? Right now. No. Let's say the book did twice that, no, ten times that? Five hundred thousand copies. Unheard of for a book like this. You net one point three million. Let's say for some reason they want to make a movie...Highly unlikely, but let's say it happens. Another fifty thousand towards an option? Let's say it's a hit, you make another half-million in royalties. Takes us up to around two million? Let's round it up to three. How about that? You take three million dollars, you go back to your publisher and say it's all unsubstantiated. It was a big mistake. You don't want to publish it anymore. Hand them back their tiny advance and go home a rich woman.

Male #2: Their parents, or grandparents get off a boat, swim across a river, I don't know - they get here, start their lives - and they look out for their own. I don't blame them. I'd do the same if I was in their shoes. My loyalties would be divided too. I mean they're all thinking about some other place first. What's going on in Cuba? Israel...China. The only place I'm thinking about? This one. The USA. But see these people come here and think opportunity means elbowing their way to the front of the line. Using the system to figure out how to make it for their group, their tribe, their special corner of the world. Until they've been here, three, four, five generations—until they've stopped feeling like they belong to some other place, then we can start talking about their investment in this one. Until these people really feel like they're Americans and Americans only, until they really feel like they belong, it's up to those of us who really do belong to make sure this blessed ship doesn't sink.

Male #3: There is a blindness out there right now. And it is not the blindness of those who see nothing but dollar signs. No. It's the blindness of a nation unwilling to question itself, unwilling to learn from the evidence of the

marketplace. Because, see, the marketplace is telling us that our steel isn't as desirable as steel made in China. It isn't as cheap, as quickly produced, or superior in any way. The same with our cars, appliances, electronics. The Japanese? Making all these things more cheaply. And better. That's the truth. Honda is a better car. That's why I drive one. But what do we hear in this country? "We're Americans. We invented the automobile. We built the greatest steel mills the world has ever known. God bless America." Let's set aside the revolting assumption that God doesn't bless other nations, or that somehow an American father's job is more important to his family than a Chinese father's job is to his. Let's just set aside those lies. Those delusions. And let's stick with the facts. Fact: They are winning. Fact: We need to understand why. Fact: We need to change. When you stay blind, you can't change. When you can't change, you die. And that is what is happening in this country right now.

Female #1: That man disgusts me. He is not looking out for anybody but himself. Climbing all over you to get into the mayor's office. You've done more good for this country than Joe Addesso ever will. I cannot wait to expose that hypocrite in court. When you get in front of a jury, when you lay it out, and show them the good you have done for this country? America is back. Everybody knows it. They feel it. You opened faucets that were rusted shut for generations. What poured out was wealth. And not just for you. Not even mainly for you. They will get it. In their bones. They will understand.

Female #2: This is a story of kings, or what passes for kings these days. Kings, then! Bedecked in Brooks Brothers and Brioni, enthroned in sky-high castles, and embroiled in battles over, what else? Money. When did money become the thing - the only thing? Upgrade your place in line, or your prison cell, for a fee. Rent out your womb to carry someone else's child. Buy a stranger's life insurance policy - pay the premium until they die - then collect the benefit. Oh, and cash. Whose idea was it to start charging us to get cash? The mid-80's. 1985 to be exact. I'd been writing for Forbes, the Wall Street Journal. And yes, I was used to being surrounded by talk of money. But '85 was when I sensed something new. The rollick, the rage - the ravenous zeal in people's eyes. It was like a new religion was being born...

Female #3: Access. I wanted Access. Tressler took me to the Metropolitan Club that night, where the Walter Wristons and the Brooke Astors were trading blandishments with then little-known nebbishes like Alan Greenspan. But I was surprised to find painters and poets - even playwrights - "working" the room. The age of speaking truth to power was coming to an end. But the book I wanted to write was taking shape inside me, and in it, I would torpedo every piety of this new faux religion of finance. On the way out that night I passed the great Joan Didion. She was arguing with a broad, dour, bald man. The name Robert Merkin was going back and forth between them. He thought Merkin a visionary, paving the way to a new America. Didion laughed so hard, she spit up her drink. Merkin was the name on everyone's lips. I'd been trying for months to get an interview. I lingered in the foyer until Didion was done, and then I approached the dour man myself. He knew Merkin personally. Merkin's junk had financed his latest skyscraper - a much-reviled new eyesore on Third Avenue. I begged for an introduction. He took my card and the next day, Merkin's office called. Access, indeed...