As the play opens Jake is calling his brother / sister, Frankie, from somewhere out on Highway 2—he's not sure what state. He has beaten his wife, Beth, and thinks she may be dead. They meet in a motel room, and Jake tries to explain to Frankie why he did it.

JAKE: (Shoving ice away.) I don't want any goddamn ice! It's cold!
FRANKIE: I thought it might help.
JAKE: Well, it don't. It's cold.
FRANKIE: I know it's cold. It's ice. It's supposed to be cold. (Pause. Frankie goes to chair. Sits. Silence between them for a while.) You didn't actually kill her, did ya', Jake? (Jake stays seated. Starts slow, low, deliberate.)
JAKE: She was goin' to these goddamn rehearsals every day. Every day. Every single day. Hardly ever see her. I saw enough though. Believe you me. Saw enough to know somethin' was goin' on.
FRANKIE: But you didn't really kill her, did ya?
JAKE: (Builds.) I'm no dummy. Doesn't take much to put it together. Oils. She was always oiling herself before she went out. Every morning. Coconut or Butterscotch or some goddamn thing. You'da' thought she was an ice cream sundae. I'd watch her oiling herself while I pretended to be asleep. She was in a dream, the way she did it. Like she was imagining someone else touching her. Not me. Never me. Someone else.
FRANKIE: Who?
JAKE: (Stands, moves around space, gains momentum.) Some guy. I don't know. When I finally called her on it she denied it flat. Then she starts tellin' me it's all in my head. Made me try to believe I was crazy. She's all innocent and I'm crazy. So I told her—I told her—I laid it on the line to her. I says—No more wearin' them high spikey high heels to rehearsals. No more a' that shit. Kept puttin"em on. Every mornin'. Then I told her she had to wear a bra and she paid no attention to that either. You could see right through her damn blouse. You could see everything.
FRANKIE: All right. (Pause.)
JAKE: You always liked her, didn't you, Frankie? Don't think I overlooked that.
FRANKIE: Are you gonna' finish tellin' me what happened? 'Cause if you're not I'm gonna' take a walk right outa' here. (Pause. Jake considers, then launches back into the story.)
JAKE: Okay. Then she starts readin' the lines with me, at night. In bed. I'm helpin' her memorize the damn lines so she can run off every morning and say 'em to some other guy. Day after day. Same lines. How she still loves him even though he hates her. How she's saving her body up for him and him only.
FRANKIE: Well, it was just a play, wasn't it?
JAKE: I know what they were doing! I know what that acting shit is all about. They try to "believe" they're the person. Right? So you know what that means don't ya'?
FRANKIE: What?
JAKE: They start doin' all the same stuff the person does!
FRANKIE: What person?
JAKE: The person! The—whad'ya call it? The,
FRANKIE: Character?
JAKE: Yeah. The character. That's right. You shoulda' seen the way she started to talk. I couldn't believe it. Changed her hair and everything. Everything changed. I told her. And you know what she tells me?
FRANKIE: What?
JAKE: This acting shit is more real than the real world to her. Can you believe that?
FRANKIE: So you think she was sleeping with this guy just because she was playing a part in a play?
JAKE: Yeah. She was real dedicated.
FRANKIE: Are you sure? I mean when would she have time to do that in rehearsals?
JAKE: On her lunch break.
FRANKIE: (Stands.) Oh, come on, Jake.
JAKE: Sit down! Sit back down. I got more to tell you.
FRANKIE: No! I'm not gonna' sit down! I came to try to help you out and all you're tellin' me is a bunch of bullshit about Beth screwing around with some other guy on her lunch break?
JAKE: She was! It's easy to tell when a woman gets obsessed with somethin' else.
FRANKIE: She was just trying to do a good job.
JAKE: That's no job! A job is where you work. A job is where you don't have fun. You don't dick around tryin' to pretend you're somebody else. You work. Work is work!
FRANKIE: It's a different kind of a job.
JAKE: It's an excuse to fool around! So she could get away from me.
FRANKIE: You can't jump to that kind of conclusion just be-cause she was—
JAKE: I knew what she was up to even if she didn't.
FRANKIE: So, you mean you're accusing her of somethin' she wasn't even aware of?
JAKE: She was tryin' to hide it from me but she wasn't that good an actress. (Pause.)
FRANKIE: So you beat her up again. Boy, I'm tellin' you—
JAKE: I killed her. (Pause.)
FRANKIE: You killed her.
JAKE: That's right.
FRANKIE: She stopped breathing?
JAKE: Everything stopped.
FRANKIE: You checked.
JAKE: I didn't have to check.
FRANKIE: Well, what'd you do? Did you tell the police?
JAKE: Why would I do that? She was already dead.
FRANKIE: That's what you're supposed to do when somebody dies.
JAKE: Even when you kill 'em?
FRANKIE: Yeah! Even when you kill them. Especially when you kill them!

JAKE: I never heard a' that. (Pause.)

FRANKIE: I mean this is pretty serious stuff, Jake.

JAKE: She did it on purpose too. Always flirtin' around. Always carryin' on.

FRANKIE: She had nothin' to do with it! You lost your temper.

JAKE: She provoked it!

FRANKIE: You've always lost your temper and blamed it on somebody else. Even when you were a kid you blamed it on somebody else. One time you even blamed it on a goat. You remember that goat?

JAKE: Yeah, I remember that goat. I loved that goat.

FRANKIE: Well you kicked the shit out of that goat you loved so much when she stepped on your bare feet while you were tryin' to milk her. You remember that? Broke her ribs.

JAKE: I never kicked that goat!

FRANKIE: You broke your damn foot you kicked her so hard.

JAKE: What was that goat's name? (Jake suddenly falls to the floor, collapses.)

FRANKIE: You all right?

JAKE: Somethin's wrong. My head's funny.

FRANKIE: (Trying to help Jake up.) Come on, let's get you back on the couch.

JAKE: (Pushing Frankie away, crawls on knees toward couch.) I don't need any help!

FRANKIE: You feel dizzy or something?

JAKE: (Crawling to couch.) Yeah. All of a sudden. Everything's-

FRANKIE: You want me to get you something?

JAKE: (Climbing up on couch and lying on his belly.) No. I don't need nothin'.

FRANKIE: Somebody's gotta' find out, Jake. Sooner or later.

JAKE: Why am I missing her now, Frankie? Why am I afraid I'm gonna' lose her when she's already gone?

FRANKIE: It's okay, Jake.

JAKE: You liked her too, didn't you, Frankie?

FRANKIE: Yeah, I liked her. (Pause.)

JAKE: No! Don't leave.

FRANKIE: ( Stops.) All right. (Pause.) You okay?

JAKE: Yeah. Just sit with me for a while. Stay here.

FRANKIE: Okay

JAKE: Don't leave.

FRANKIE: I won't.

(Lights dim to black.)