

BLACK BAG JOB

Hollywood Fringe Festival 2026

Gangbusters Theatre Company

AUDITION SIDE: THE LAREDO MONOLOGUE

Scene 4 — "The Word" | April 3, 1968, 5:18 PM

Delta's backstory. His mother. Why he joined the Bureau.

Character: DELTA — Young, sharp, green, clearly nervous. 27. M.

SCENE 4 — "THE WORD"

The reel-to-reel runs. King's voice rehearsing faintly through the wall. Charlie has just stopped himself from finishing a racial slur. The room is frozen.

Delta's pen is on the page. He's not writing. He's reading something he already wrote. He tears the page out. Folds it once.

DELTA

(quiet, not to anyone)

My mother came up from Laredo. 1941. She was seventeen.

No one reacts. He continues. He's not performing. He's just saying it.

DELTA (CONT'D)

Worked in a cannery in Stockton.
Eighteen dollars a week, room included.
She saved four years to send me to school.

(beat)

The school was segregated.
Not officially. Just — the way rooms
understand themselves.

Bravo does not look at him.

DELTA (CONT'D)

She heard him speak once. King.
Radio. In the cannery.
She wrote me: "There is a man on the radio, Alejandro.
He sounds like somebody finally found the right door."

Delta looks at the reel.

DELTA

I joined the Bureau because I thought
I was going to be that door.

A silence. Then:

BRAVO

(flat, final)

The system eats.
Don't make it chase.

Delta folds the torn page again. Smaller. Until it disappears in his fist. He then puts it into his right pocket. Not the same pocket as earlier. Not that note.

BLACK BAG JOB

Hollywood Fringe Festival 2026

Gangbusters Theatre Company

AUDITION SIDE: THE ERASURE

Scene 6 — "Erasure" | April 4, 1968, 12:31 PM

Delta and Charlie alone. King's private confession on tape. A choice.

Character: DELTA — Young, sharp, green, clearly nervous. 27. M. — Two-hander with CHARLIE.

SCENE 6 — "ERASURE"

Delta and Charlie are alone. Delta has been replaying a piece of audio — King's voice, close and private.

King's voice through the recorder:

MLK (V.O.)

"...I wasn't always faithful.
I wasn't always kind.
But I loved her.
And I hate that the world only wants me clean."

Delta leans forward. Presses stop. He stares at the machine.

CHARLIE

What'd he say?

DELTA

(startled)

Nothing.
Background noise.

CHARLIE

(sits up)

Didn't sound like nothing.

DELTA

It's not our business.

CHARLIE

You think the machine cares what's our business?

Silence. Delta rewinds. The line plays again.

MLK (V.O.)

"...I wasn't always faithful.
I wasn't always kind."

CHARLIE

Pause it.

Delta hesitates. Then does.

CHARLIE

Go back — just before "I wasn't always faithful."
Record over it.

DELTA

(alarmed)

What?

CHARLIE

You heard me.

DELTA

You know what that makes us?

CHARLIE

What?

DELTA

The same as them.
Someone who decides what gets heard.

Delta stares at the machine.

DELTA (CONT'D)

(quieter)

First a confession.
Then a name.
Then...nothing.

CHARLIE

Or you save one human thing.

(beat)

Because if Hoover gets that...
He'll play it forever.

DELTA

That's not our call.

CHARLIE

It is if no one else remembers what dignity sounds like.

Delta's eyes flick to Bravo's holster on the chair. Then to the machine. Then to his own hands.

DELTA

(low, to himself)

We record everything. That's the job. We don't decide what matters.

CHARLIE

Somebody always decides.

(beat)

Tonight it's Hoover.

(beat)

Or tonight, just once, it's you.

A long silence. Delta doesn't move.

DELTA

(whispers)

He'd have our heads.

CHARLIE

Maybe he should.
Maybe that's the point.

Delta studies him. A long beat. His hand moves to the recorder. Stops. Trembles.

Finally: he rewinds. Finds a clean stretch of ambient hum. His finger hovers over RECORD.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(quiet)

You don't have to.

DELTA

(doesn't look at him)

Yeah.
I do.

Delta presses RECORD. For five seconds, the hiss swells. The red light burns.

DELTA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

I'm sorry.

Delta presses STOP.

DELTA (CONT'D)

(soft, almost to himself)

Gone.

Charlie and Delta stare at the recorder.

CHARLIE

(quiet)

Now we're in it.

DELTA

(looks at his hand on the machine)

My fingerprints are on this.

CHARLIE

Then you're a witness too.

The tape light blinks once.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You did one good thing in here. That's more than me.

(beat)

DELTA

You think it helps?

CHARLIE

No.

But maybe it won't hurt.

BLACK BAG JOB

Hollywood Fringe Festival 2026

Gangbusters Theatre Company

AUDITION SIDE: "WE CAN DO SOMETHING"

Scene 11 — "The Last Hour" | April 4, 1968, 5:51 PM

The eruption. Delta tries to stop it. Real time. Six o'clock.

Character: DELTA — Young, sharp, green, clearly nervous. 27. M. — High-intensity ensemble scene.

SCENE 11 — "THE LAST HOUR" (excerpt)

Real time. The reel ticks toward six o'clock. King's voice bleeds through the wall — domestic, warm, oblivious. Delta has been listening.

DELTA

(voice cracking)

I thought I was built for this.

Charlie drops beside him on the floor. Close. Not touching.

CHARLIE

You were.

That's the problem.

ECHO

(automatic)

Five-fifty-three.

— *(time passes)* —

DELTA

He's not going to see it coming.

BRAVO

He's not meant to.

Delta stands — sudden.

DELTA

We can do something.

Right now.

I mean it.

Walk across the hall.

Knock.

One sentence.

"Don't go outside."

Echo freezes mid-note. Charlie watches Delta carefully.

BRAVO

You think that changes anything?

ECHO

(automatic)

Five-fifty-five.

There's always another balcony.

DELTA

Then don't let it be us.

BRAVO

You signed up for this.

DELTA

No.
I signed up to protect something.
And I don't know what that is anymore.

BRAVO

It's America.

A silence. Real time. Fifteen seconds of the reel turning. From 306 — King's laughter. Warm. Domestic. Something about a coat.

ECHO

(automatic)

Five-fifty-six.

— *(time passes)* —

DELTA

I'm not going to sit here while it happens.

BRAVO

Then don't sit.

DELTA

I mean it.
Just knock.

(beat)

No one moves.

DELTA (CONT'D)

(voice cracking)

We can stop this.

BRAVO

No.

Not loud. Not angry. Certain.

DELTA

You don't know that.

BRAVO

I do.

ECHO

(automatic)

Five-fifty-nine.

Silence. From 306 — faint laughter. Keys picked up.

DELTA

(whispers)

I'm not staying in this room.

He moves. Fast. Toward the door. Charlie half-reacts — too slow. Bravo does not move.

BRAVO

Delta.

Delta grabs the handle.

At the console — Echo's hand moves. A technician's reflex. A small auxiliary dial turns. Just a fraction.

Click.

SFX: GUNSHOT FROM SURVEILLANCE SPEAKER — not from 306, not from outside. Inside. Behind them.

Delta screams — claps his hands over his ears. He flinches so hard he collapses to his knees, then the floor.

DELTA

(through speakers, not his mouth)

No...

(barely)

Not like this —

ECHO

Six o'clock.

Three reel ticks. Then —

SFX: DISTANT RIFLE CRACK (BALCONY)

All lights drop except the red pilot light.

SCREAMS. GLASS BREAKING. FOOTSTEPS. SIRENS.

Delta shakes.

BLACK BAG JOB

Hollywood Fringe Festival 2026

Gangbusters Theatre Company

AUDITION SIDE: THE DEBRIEF

Scene 12 — "Cleanup" | April 4, 1968, 7:13 PM

Delta contained. The statement. The pen. The final refusal.

Character: DELTA — Young, sharp, green, clearly nervous. 27. M. — Quiet, internal, coercive.

SCENE 12 — "CLEANUP"

The room mirrors Scene 1 — but something is wrong. Too clean. Wires gone. Recorder gone. Delta sits in a motel chair, center. Not tied. Not gagged. His hands rest on his thighs. A thin strip of duct tape around two fingers — residue from being handled.

Echo kneels at the nightstand assembling an envelope — paperwork, carbon copies, a stamped form. Bravo wipes prints from the doorknob.

BRAVO

You're breathing.

DELTA

(rough)

Yeah.

BRAVO

(without looking at him)

Then it worked.

Witnesses don't survive paperwork.

DELTA

This is paperwork pretending to be...

ECHO

(doesn't look up)

Delta. We're going to do this clean.

DELTA

Clean.

Did they hear that?

ECHO

That sound never left this room.

Bravo crosses to the nightstand. Picks up the motel notepad. He writes something. Tears it off and slides it to Echo.

ECHO

(automatic)

Subject: DELTA

Status: contained

Disposition: pending

DELTA

Contained.

BRAVO

You want to be a hero?

DELTA

(eyes flash)

I wanted to be ten seconds earlier.

Echo stands. Holds a folder. Offers it.

ECHO

We're going to need a statement.

(beat)

Preferably yours.

(soft, procedural kindness)

It reads better that way.

Delta doesn't take it.

DELTA

No.

ECHO

(expected)

Then we're going to need to make one for you.

DELTA

You can't do this.

ECHO

We already did.

Echo places the folder on the nightstand. Opens it. Points at a line.

DELTA

(reading aloud, refusing it)

"...No anomalies observed..."

"...subject attempted to exit but was restrained..."

"...agent Bravo prevented the breach..."

"...incident audio complete..."

Delta looks up — eyes wet now, furious.

DELTA (CONT'D)

None of this happened.

ECHO

It's a record.

DELTA

(points to the page)

I tried to warn him.

Bravo takes a step toward Delta. Slow.

BRAVO

And how'd that work out?

Delta goes still. Echo speaks — almost instructional.

ECHO

Listen carefully.

Delta looks at him.

ECHO (CONT'D)

You can leave this room.
But you don't get to be a witness.
(pause)
Witnesses complicate outcomes.

DELTA

Then what am I?

Echo slides a pen across the nightstand. It stops directly in front of Delta's right hand. Perfect placement.

ECHO

You're a clerical correction.

Delta stares at the pen. Bravo turns away — already done with Delta emotionally.

BRAVO

Sign it.

Delta's hands shake. He doesn't touch the pen.

DELTA

No.

Bravo turns back. Steps closer. Low voice.

BRAVO

Then I put you in the file for men who don't sign.

DELTA

You gonna shoot me now?

ECHO

No.

That's messy.

DELTA

(realizes something worse)

You're going to...

ECHO

Make you unavailable.

DELTA

(broken laugh)

That's...that's it?

ECHO

That's policy.

Delta's breath quickens. He looks at the door. Then at the folder. Then at the pen. His voice drops.

DELTA

They already wrote me.

Beat. Something has broken and reset in him — not courage, not defeat. Recognition.

BLACK BAG JOB

Hollywood Fringe Festival 2026

Gangbusters Theatre Company

AUDITION SIDE: "HE THANKED YOU"

Scene 8 — "The Visit" | April 4, 1968, 3:38 PM

Bravo returns from Room 306. Delta witnesses. Short reactive side.

Character: DELTA — Young, sharp, green, clearly nervous. 27. M. — Listening/witness scene.

SCENE 8 — "THE VISIT" (excerpt)

Bravo has just returned from Room 306, where he posed as a maintenance man and planted a secondary bug in the lamp base — while speaking directly with King. He strips off the hotel shirt. The surveillance room is quiet.

ECHO

Secondary active.
Cone is clean.
Gain plus twelve.

DELTA

(quiet, horrified)

He...thanked you.

Bravo doesn't look at him.

CHARLIE

He told you to be careful.

Bravo puts on his FBI jacket. Button by button.

ECHO

We've got his jokes, his cough, his prayers.

Delta stares at Bravo — seeing him clearly for the first time.

DELTA

You were in the room.

BRAVO

No.

(beat)

The room was in here.

He taps his temple — once. Hard.

The tape hiss rises — the new bug finding its voice.

From 306, faint and distant:

MLK (V.O.)

"...Lord, give me strength to walk through it one more..."

Lights fade on 306. Only the surveillance room remains. The reel glows red center-stage. Turning.