

## THE MONROE DOCTRINE

### Cast of Characters

(in order of appearance)

THEODORE (“TEDWARD”) MONROE ..... late 80’s; REAL’s father, Korean War veteran,  
Caucasian

CRANE MONROE ..... early/mid 20’s, musician; REAL’s younger  
son, Caucasian

MADISON BRYANT ..... late 20’s, CRANE’s girlfriend, plays bass  
in his band; African-American

ABBIE (ABIGAIL) JANG..... late teens/early 20’s; Korean-American  
community college student of REAL’s

“REAL” (ROBERT E. LEE) MONROE ..... late 50’s/early 60’s, divorced poet and  
adjunct English instructor at three  
community colleges, Caucasian

DONNA ARNOLD ..... 50’s, community college Administrative  
Assistant, Caucasian (can be any race)

DYLAN (“D”) MONROE ..... late 20’s; REAL’s estranged oldest son;  
a rookie police officer, Caucasian

TIME: Memorial Day weekend, the present

PLACE: REAL’s trailer located off a back road on Hog Island in the  
Chesapeake Bay next to Maryland’s eastern shore

## THE MONROE DOCTRINE

### Act One

(The lights rise on a beat up, ill kept double-wide trailer facing the audience at an angle from USL to DSR. There is a wooden deck across the front of the trailer with wooden steps leading up to the front door. There is a cooler and a couple of lawn chairs on the deck. An American flag hangs vertically from the DS side of the deck railing, the blue field with the stars in the upper, left hand corner.)

(There is a charcoal grill surrounded by lawn furniture DSC.)

(It is late Friday afternoon. As the lights rise, THEODORE ("TEDWARD") MONROE, an 87-year-old Korean War veteran, appears noisily through the trailer's front door. HE has a large white bandage on his forehead and HE carries a portable CD player to the DS side of the wooden deck where HE sets it down on a table. HE presses play and a military band is heard playing "The Star Spangled Banner.")

(As the song plays, HE stands at attention with his right hand over his heart.)

(MADISON BRYANT enters carrying backpacks. SHE stops when SHE see TEDWARD. For a moment, they both are still as THEY stare at each other.)

(CRANE MONROE enters breaking this brief spell. HE also carries a backpack. HE exchange glances with MADISON before THEY cross closer to the trailer where THEY stop and gaze up at TEDWARD who glares down at them.)

TEDWARD

Cap off.

(No one moves)

TEDWARD (cont.)

I said, cap off!

(CRANE and MADISON remove their hats)

(to MADISON) Not you! Him! Ladies keep their hats on.

(MADISON puts her hat back on. The song ends and TEDWARD switches off the CD player)

(CRANE stands at attention and salutes TEDWARD)

CRANE

Permission to speak, Grandpa, Sir!

TEDWARD

Permission denied, smart-ass! Which grandson are you?

CRANE

C'mon, Grandpa -- you know who I am.

TEDWARD

Haven't seen either of you in ages.

CRANE

I'm Crane, Sir!

TEDWARD

Crane. I'll never understand why your father saddled you with a name like that.

CRANE

After Hart Crane, Sir! The poet!

TEDWARD

I know that. I was there the day he gave it to you. I've never understood why. Name you after a man who killed himself. Jumped overboard in the middle of the ocean.

CRANE

In the Caribbean, Sir!

TEDWARD

Knock off that Sir-crap.

CRANE

Yes, S....

TEDWARD

I'm not in the army anymore -- and you -- they wouldn't even have you.

CRANE

Probably not.

TEDWARD

Definitely not. You're too much like your father. Always have been.

CRANE

Maybe he's like you.

TEDWARD

Are you going to come up here and say "Hello" properly or are you going to make me climb down those stairs?

CRANE

We'll come up, Grandpa -- we'll come up.

(CRANE and MADISON cross up the stairs onto the deck and set their backpacks down. CRANE and TEDWARD hug.)

This is Madison Bryant, Grandpa. Madison, this is my Grandpa, Tedward Monroe.

(TEDWARD and MADISON shake hands)

MADISON

"Tedward?"

TEDWARD

My parents named me "Theodore" and my brother was "Edward." People called him "Ed" and me "Ted." But my mother could never get our names straight -- she'd call me "Ed" and my brother "Ted" and we'd ignore her. So, she took to calling us both "Tedward." It worked for her.

MADISON

How about if I call you "Mr. Monroe?"

TEDWARD

No, no, call me "Tedward," too. That way, I'll sure when you're talking to me.

MADISON

Seems disrespectful.

TEDWARD

I like her.

CRANE

So, do I. She plays bass in my band.

TEDWARD

You didn't bring her here because she plays bass in your band.

CRANE

I asked her to come because I like her and she came because she likes me. New relationship, Grandpa. Work in progress.

TEDWARD

Not usually smart to mix business and pleasure.

CRANE

Works for us.

MADISON

So far. I play bass in a lot of bands.

CRANE

None of the others are as good.

MADISON

Maybe not. But at least they pay.

TEDWARD

(to CRANE) Didn't know you had a band. Know you play guitar.

CRANE

Write songs, too.

TEDWARD

Like your father.

CRANE

I don't write poetry. Music and lyrics...

TEDWARD

Lyrics rhyme don't they?

CRANE

Yeah...

TEDWARD

That's poetry. If you're thirsty, there's beer in the cooler. Help yourselves.

(CRANE opens the cooler and hands a beer to  
MADISON who opens it and drinks.)

CRANE

(offers a beer to TEDWARD, opens it and drinks)

Where's Dad, Grandpa?

(CRANE opens a beer for himself)

TEDWARD

Teaching. He's got classes at three different community colleges now. If he's not teaching, he's driving. Except today 'cause I wrecked the car. He got a ride. He's hard to keep track of.

CRANE

We saw the car on the way in. What happened?

TEDWARD

What's it look like?

MADISON

Like someone wrapped it around a tree.

TEDWARD

That would be me.

CRANE

Is that how you banged your head?

TEDWARD

Brilliant deduction, Sherlock.

MADISON

Are you all right?

TEDWARD

This bandage is mostly tape. Couldn't get the damn thing to stay on.

CRANE

Should you be driving?

TEDWARD

It wasn't my fault. One of those damn pigs ran out in front of me...

CRANE

Pigs?

TEDWARD

Damn woods are full of wild pigs.

MADISON

Wild pigs?

TEDWARD

Why do you think they call this place Hog Island? I think some lady used to raise pigs out here and then a bunch of them got loose.

CRANE

Did you hit the pig?

TEDWARD

Why're you worried about the pig? I'm the one who got hurt. Help me fold the flag.

CRANE

Uh... I don't...

TEDWARD

What?!

MADISON

I do! I learned in the Girl Scouts.

(SHE gives the Girl Scouts salute. TEDWARD returns the salute)

CRANE

You were a girl scout?

MADISON

Merit badges and cookies and everything.

CRANE

I do like peanut butter Girl Scout cookies.

(TEDWARD and MADISON hold opposite ends of the flag and fold it properly during the following.)

TEDWARD

(to MADISON) Your parents must be students of American history -- name you after James Madison?

MADISON

Don't think so...

TEDWARD

Fourth President of the United States of America?

MADISON

You must be a student of American history.

TEDWARD

I'm 87 years old. I AM American history. It's important to remember! How in hell can you know where you're going if you don't know where you've been?

CRANE

I read that on a bumper sticker somewhere...



TEDWARD

(to CRANE) Smartass. (to MADISON) Why are you wasting your time with this smartass?

MADISON

I don't think I'm wasting my time.

TEDWARD

Time will tell. And I didn't get that off a bumper sticker. My father taught me that. Welcome to Hog Island.

MADISON

Thank you.

(THEY finish folding the flag and TEDWARD takes it)

TEDWARD

(to MADISON) Thanks for your help. These fingers give me trouble sometimes.

MADISON

You're welcome.

CRANE

Is "D" coming, Grandpa?

TEDWARD

I don't know. He doesn't call. He doesn't answer his phone. Just like you.

MADISON

I didn't know you have a brother.

TEDWARD

He didn't tell you about his brother?

CRANE

It hadn't come up yet.

MADISON

Older or younger?

CRANE

Older. We call him "D." His name is Dylan, but he hates it.

MADISON

For Dylan Thomas?

CRANE

I was sure you were going to say Bob Dylan.

MADISON

Bob's not in my lane. I read Dylan Thomas in college.

TEDWARD

Another God damn poet.

MADISON

"Dylan" is what you name a Labrador retriever with a red bandana around his neck.

TEDWARD

Hah!

CRANE

That's why he hates his name.

MADISON

Which one's the good son?

TEDWARD

Both are bad. Oh – you do remember to cash the checks your Dad sends for Christmas and your birthday.

CRANE

I remembered Memorial Day. I know it's important to you.

TEDWARD

Only cause your father begged you to come. Shouldn't have to beg. It's important to keep up family traditions.

CRANE

What family tradition?

TEDWARD

The Memorial Day Monroe Family Picnic!

MADISON

(to CRANE) You talked about Memorial Day being important when you asked me to come.

TEDWARD

(to MADISON) We used to do it every year. And then the boys got older, moved away... I want to believe this won't be the last. (to CRANE) Promise me you won't let go of this.

CRANE

Grandpa...

TEDWARD

Well?

CRANE

It's not just up to me...

TEDWARD

You can make things happen.

CRANE

I don't know what's going to happen when I wake up in the morning.

TEDWARD

I don't know if I'm *going* to wake up in the morning!

MADISON

You look good to me. That bandage makes you look tough.

TEDWARD

(to CRANE) I'm liking her more and more. Better than you. You can stow your gear and stay in the back bedroom.

CRANE

How many bedrooms does this mini-mansion have?

TEDWARD

Twelve – not including the wine cellar.

CRANE

We'll get a hotel room. My brother can stay here.