

EPISODE 18: SCREENPLAY EXCERPT – ADAPTED BY CARLY GREENBERG  
FROM THE NOVEL “GO” (JOHN CLELLON HOLMES)

*Summary: This is an excerpt from the 148-page adaptation of the first Beat novel called “Go” by John Clellon Holmes. [Summary taken from <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-go/#gsc.tab=0>] “Go” was the first novel published by a member of the so-called Beat Generation of the 1950s in the United States. The years immediately following World War II saw America emerge as a prosperous world power, but the Beats, whose name was derived from "beatitude" or "beatific," felt that something was missing. The devastation of the war, followed by a period of calm and order in America, created a sense of formless anxiety among young artists and thinkers. They didn't accept that the world had become perfect now that the carnage of war had somehow solved humanity's problems, and so they searched their lives for a deeper meaning. This search took the form of experimentation with drugs and sex, a fascination with the structural freedom of "modern" jazz, and a constant movement from one place to another, as if the answers these young people sought could be en route to somewhere.*

*“Go” revolves around a group of young friends and acquaintances living in Manhattan in the early 1950s. The men are mostly writers and poets, although the women in the book generally do not work in the arts. The main character, Paul Hobbes, is working on a novel, as is his close friend, Gene Pasternak. Hobbes is married to Kathryn, who works at a job she dislikes, and is uncertain about Pasternak and the other new friends her husband is making. Unbeknownst to her, Hobbes is writing love letters, often unsent, to a woman he met in college several years ago, whom he hasn't seen since then.*

**ACT II: CHILDREN IN THE MARKETS:**

**Scene 1**

*Lights rise on an off-white hallway, a small section of downstage left. Hobbes stands behind Kathryn with his hands bracing her shoulders. Kathryn pays no attention to him and fumbles through her purse for a cigarette, accidentally knocking over the contents of her bag.*

KATHRYN:  
(annoyed)

How you dragged me out to Ozone Park on a Tuesday night,  
I'll never know.

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HOBBS:

*Moves to pick up dropped items.*

KATHRYN:

Stop.

*Bends down to put items back into her purse. She finds the pack of cigarettes and lights one while still kneeling.*

(looking up to Hobbes)

You really should try getting up at six sometime. Might put life into perspective.

HOBBS:

Dear, I didn't mean to bring you out here with any poor intentions, but you haven't been out with me in a month.

(joking)

The others are starting to think I'm back on the market.

KATHRYN:

(unamused)

Are they.

HOBBS:

It was just a joke, dear, I-

KATHRYN:

Alright, just-just open the door.

*Stands up.*

Remember, this is a quick visit. Not another late night fiasco.

HOBBS:

Of course, of course.

*Raps on a black door three times. One beat. Pasternak swings open the door with a cigar hanging out of the side of his mouth.*

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PASTERNAK:

Well, well, well. Look who it is!

*Pulls Hobbes into an embrace, noticing Kathryn.*

And a cameo this evening! Alive and in the flesh.

*Pecks Kathryn on the cheek.*

But lovely as always.

KATHRYN:

*Attempts to hide a blush.*

PASTERNAK:

(motions inside)

Come on in. I have someone very special for you to meet.

***INT. Pasternak's dining area.***

*The group walk stage right as dim lights brighten to reveal a small table with folding chairs. A small floor lamp is placed awkwardly next to an icebox. HART KENNEDY, a man with wiry red toned hair and a crooked nose is hunched forward while drumming his hands on the table, stomping periodically to swig his beer. Next to him is DINAH, a slim, pale, teenager with doe eyes. She timidly picks at a large wedge of bread, forming a small pile of scraps.*

Hart, Hart! Look here at what I found.

*Pasternak leads Hobbes and Kathryn to the table. They pause before sitting in two empty chairs, clearly fixated on the strange activity of Hart and Dinah.*

KENNEDY:

*Abruptly stops drumming the table. A beat. He slowly leans forward, staring at Hobbes and Kathryn. The couple is clearly uncomfortable. Hobbes forces a cough.*

You must be...Hobbes.

*Slowly resumes drumming his fingers on the table.*

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Yes...Yes! That's it! Hobbes! Couldn't be anyone else. You don't want to know the things I've heard about you, do you?

HOBBS:

Only positive details, I would ho-

KENNEDY:

-only the most positive details. You bet your bottom dollar it's the One hundred percent God's honest truth! Besides, anyone close with this guy-

*Grabs Pasternak by the waist. Pasternak chuckles.*

-is doing something right. You're a writer?

HOBBS:

Yes. Fiction mostly. And my wife, Kathryn-

KENNEDY:

Your wife?

*Dramatically clutches his chest.*

Oh, god, my heart.

DINAH:

*The chunks of bread she pulls become noticeably larger.*

KENNEDY:

Pleased to meet you, my dear.

(turns to Pasternak)

Say, you got any more beers? Dinah checked the icebox twice-

DINAH:

(quickly)

Three times-

KENNEDY:

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And nothing but crickets.

PASTERNAK:

You gonna save any for Hobbes and Kathryn, my man? I'm sure  
Maman left me some cash somewhere and I could make a run.

KATHRYN:

I shouldn't drink. I have to be up at six for work.

KENNEDY:

Hmmmm, work! Dinah, you hear that? What an idea.

*Grabs the remainder of bread from Dinah's hands, slamming it on  
the table with a smirk.*

Well? Don't forget your manners, now.

(to Hobbes and Kathryn)

She's a bit shy.

KATHRYN:

(Noticing Dinah's timidity)

I'm Kathryn.

*Reaches her hand across the table with a worried smile.*

DINAH:

(without moving)

My name is Dinah.

KATHRYN:

Nice to meet you, Dinah.

PASTERNAK:

(ignoring uncomfortable exchange)

Wonderful, just what I like to see. Friends meeting friends.

HOBBS:

Dinah, you came from California too?

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DINAH:

Yes, Hart brought me. We were meant to stay with Pasternak, but I think we're staying with someone named Stansky. But, I'm not sure, I'm just not sure.

*Picks up the bread.*

HOBBS:

Stofsky?

KATHRYN:

Why on earth are you staying with him?

PASTERNAK:

Unfortunately, Maman was not too keen on long-term visitors. Plus, look around, sweet Kathryn. I'd never stuff my love and his lover in a walk-in closet. There's no room. But once the 'script gets flipped...ha, well.

KENNEDY:

Oh, but it's all fine! We're shackled up on a little cot in the living room like a regular Tracy and Hepburn. Just peaches.

PASTERNAK:

Ain't she sweet?

KENNEDY:

Two years in the making, this one.

HOBBS:

You two are, married?

KATHRYN:

(under her breath)

*Fifteen...*

KENNEDY:

Sweet little something, she is. Oh my, my, my! Yes, she is. Oh, yes, yes, crossed the road with this dream in my head and girl in my hands and we're in it.

HOBBS:

What brings you to New York?

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KENNEDY:

People, dirt, newsstands, all of it! I'm meant to be a writer,  
Pasternak says, but I'm really here because I can *jive* with it,  
he mentioned you could show me the next great American novel  
and how to throw some words on a page and **BOW!** I'd really dig  
that, I'd really dig that, you know.

PASTERNAK:

You still a whiskey man, Hobbes? I know you can take the McKenna,  
Hart, but we don't want to kill sweet Hobbes, over here.

*Retrieves a bottle of Whiskey and three glasses from a cabinet.*

HOBBES:

I suppose I could.

PASTERNAK:

And none for you, Kathryn...one for Hart, Hobbes, and me. Alright.

*(sets down the glasses on the table)*

HOBBES:

You don't drink, Dinah?

DINAH:

*(shakes her head)*

No.

*(beat)*

Two years ago I was lush and drank about a quart a day. I even  
tried to kill myself once.

*(looking down)*

But Hart's looking after me now.

KENNEDY:

*(standing)*

Her mother! The absolute bitch! How could I not take her away?  
Wanted her to settle down with some Johnny Square. Am I right?

*(sits down)*

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DINAH:  
Right.

KENNEDY:

*Reaches into his shirt pocket and removes a bag of marijuana and rolling papers. He proceeds to roll a joint on the table.*

She'll be dead one day. Yes-sir-ee.

*Reaches over to grab lighter on Dinah's lap. Hobbes and Kathryn stare in surprise.*

(with joint in mouth)

Right-in-the-ground-o.

(looking up at Kathryn and Hobbes)

You smoke?

HOBBES:  
Well, I- I did after I was discharged, but that was once and quite a while ago...and Kathryn hasn't-

KATHRYN:  
-I have work.

PASTERNAK:  
Come on, Kathryn. Give it a go. It might take the edge off a bit. Besides, this stuff's from California. The crème-de-la-crème.

DINAH:  
It's swell.

KENNEDY:  
A virgin! A real, honest virgin who works! What a *place* New York is! He-ho-ha!

KATHRYN:

*Eyeing the joint and then the group.*

HOBBES:



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Maybe it's not such a bad idea, dear. Pasternak could be right.

PASTERNAK:

It's nothing like drink. You'll just get a little lift, is all.

HOBBS:

But no pressure, of course.

KENNEDY:

What are you, her keeper? Let the woman live a little!

*Finishes rolling the joint. Lights it and hands it to Kathryn.*

Ladies first.

KATHRYN:

*Nervously looking around at the group.*

(exhales)

I suppose it has been a long couple of weeks at work.

(inhales)

KENNEDY:

That's it...That's right! Right, yes, yes, you got it!

(laughs, mouthing to Dinah)

*Isn't she great? What a keeper.*

KATHRYN:

*Coughs violently and hands the joint to Kennedy, who inhales.*

HOBBS:

*Pats Kathryn on the back.*

Are you alright? Kathryn?

KATHRYN:

*Shakes her head.*

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PASTERNAK:

She'll be fine. It's just a spot of tea.

*Hands Kathryn a glass of water.*

KENNEDY:

Ha! Spot of tea! You are the true gentleman, Pasternak. I should be taking notes. Better yet, I should have my secretary do her job. Oh, Di-nah!

*Inhaling more of the joint. Passes it to Dinah.*

But you can't have a scribe with a stiff hand. No, no, no!

DINAH:

*Proceeds to smoke a large quantity.*

KENNEDY:

(slamming his hand on the table, wildly grinning)

Yes! Yes! That's it, baby. That's *right*. **Go!**

DINAH:

*Passes the joint around the circle and everyone smokes, including Kathryn. Lights slowly fade to a magenta tint.*

PASTERNAK:

(leaning back with eyes closed)

You know- I wish we had some-

*Benjamin Devigne's "Nostra Riva" begins to play.*

Ah...that is nice.

KENNEDY:

It's like we should always say-

KENNEDY, DINAH, AND PASTERNAK:

If you can dream it, it can be done!

(laugh hysterically)

HOBBES:

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(to Kathryn)

How did they...

KATHRYN:

*Shrugs. Begins to stare at her hands.*

PASTERNAK:

Ke-Kennedy. Say, you know what I see when I see in you? It's that bop. You look like bop.

KENNEDY:  
(wide-eyed)

You don't say?

PASTERNAK:

Feels! You look like a tune outta one of Charlie Parker's notepads.

DINAH AND PASTERNAK:

He's pure character!

(laughing)

HOBBES:

(jittery, pointing to the joint)

What was in that?

KENNEDY:

It's a little crossover, my man! Man! Man, it's my treat-

*Pulls a vial of ground Benzedrine out of his pocket.*

Always my little. Treat.

*Lights deepen to violet.*