

# Tomorrow Never Knows

by Jason Lilly

## Act One

### Scene One:

*Fade-in close-up of a man, **Eddie**, about thirty-two, looks as if he were about to be interviewed by the cameraman. He has unkempt brown hair and his face seems more aged than it should be. He looks as if he has not slept in days. He is not smiling.*

**Off-Camera Voice:** Okay, start by telling us your name, and then give us what you remember about George.

**Eddie:** Can I smoke?

**Off Camera Voice:** Sure.

**Eddie:** *(places a cigarette in his mouth. Someone off-camera lights it for him)* Thanks. Okay...George. Jesus, what can I say?

**Off-Camera Voice:** Just tell us something you remember most about him.

**Eddie:** Okay. Well, we'd been pals since junior high school. I dated his sister for a little while and he beat me up when I broke up with her.

**Off-Camera Voice:** No, that's big stuff.

**Eddie:** What? Well, I don't understand what you want. You asked me to talk about George.

**Off Camera Voice:** Just one thing, when you think of George, what really stands out?

**Eddie:** *(takes a puff from his cigarette)* Alright. I remember this night, back in about '97. We were all just twenty-some year olds who thought we owned the world. George wasn't interested in owning the world, though. He was more worried about what he called "the infectious disease of music commercialism." He had some kind of problem with mainstream music. It was so bad that this one night we were all just trying to relax at this little pub down the road, *Bill's*. It was the first bar we went to when we turned twenty-one and we hardly ever went anywhere else.

*Scene changes. A young man, **George** (about twenty-two), hovers over a jukebox. The light from the jukebox illuminates his face. Two other young men, **Eddie** and **Dave** (also in twenties) and **Bill**, the owner of the diner (in his middle forties) can barely be seen in the background, sitting around a nearby table, drinking beer and smoking cigarettes. There is no one else in the restaurant. The lack of light outside suggests that it is some time in the middle of the night.*

**George:** Bill, when are you gonna get a real jukebox? This one has a bunch of crap.

**Bill:** Hey, if you knew how much I paid for that thing...

**George:** You got ripped, then. Look at this. *(in a mocking tone)* Bill Haley and the Comets, "Rock Around the Clock." How many Jukeboxes have that song on it? And the Everly Brothers?

**Dave:** Hey, those are classics. Jukeboxes are made for classics.

**George:** *(turns around and leans his back against the jukebox)* Yeah, but a jukebox is like... life, man. *(other guys chuckle, mumble things like "He's had too much to drink", etc.)* No, I'm serious. Each jukebox should have a life of its own, you know? All this friggin' top ten stuff... you find it on every jukebox.

**Bill:** That's why people pay to listen to it. It's familiar... comfortable.

**George:** Forget that. If you're gonna put a jukebox in a place, it's gotta be unique. It's what separates a place, makes it special.

**Dave:** Wait a minute. So you don't think Bill's place is special?

**Bill:** Yeah, George. Is my place not special? *(All guys chuckle, except George)*

**Eddie:** Ah, here he goes again. Man, that arguing of yours is going to get you in trouble. You guys remember that night at Johnson's? Genius over here *(points to Dave)* left George by himself at the bar. We were in the middle of shooting pool when George starts arguing with some guy at the bar about the song on the radio. *(Other guys laugh, remembering)* Right in front of this guy's girlfriend, George starts arguin', saying...

**George:** You ever get tired of telling this story?

**Eddie:** Nope. George stands up to this big burly guy and says, (*mocking*) “This is not Bob Dylan, you idiot. It’s Velvet Underground. Get it right.” None of us had any idea how the argument started, but both of them are on their feet, staring each other down. George is looking straight ahead at this guy’s chest.

**George:** (*rolling his eyes*) He wasn’t that tall.

**Eddie:** Before either of them can do anything, the DJ on the radio says it’s Velvet Underground and George just grins. I thought the big man was gonna make paste out of him, but he just turned red, grabbed his girlfriend, and stomped out the door.

**George:** Well, he should know his music. (*very serious tone*) Now would you listen to me? Listen you guys. You know how I feel about music. Music is an experience. You hear one song, you’re on cloud nine. You hear another song, those same clouds are pouring out the rain. No two songs make you feel exactly the same.

**Eddie:** (*nudging Bill with his elbow*) Listen to Mr. Musical Science over here.

**George:** (*getting a little angry*) No, just listen to me. Like... to me, a jukebox needs to be like that. It has to be eclectic, like no two should be alike. These songs are great, but I see them everywhere.

**Dave:** (*takes a sip from his beer*) Yeah, but some of that stuff’s been around a long time and I happen to love it.

**George:** And it’s the same music that’s in your car, or packed in a box in your closet, or trashing up the airwaves on the radio. I come in here, a place like this, to get rid of all the clutter. A really good jukebox could do that for me, you know? I’m not saying the Beatles don’t have their place on a jukebox, or Buddy Holly, or even Pat Boone. But if *Joe’s Diner* or whatever has “Good Day Sunshine” then the bar down the street from it should scratch that song from their list and have like “What Goes On” or something.

**Dave:** Well, what about this place?

**George:** Oh, man, what I’d put on this thing. “Tomorrow Never Knows.”

**Eddie:** That’s not much of a jukebox hit.

**George:** That’s it, man. Why do we have to define what’s good based on popularity? Too many people think *if everyone else seems to like it, then it must be a hit*. That’s the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard. What happens when it’s not popular anymore? I say fill them with unique gems that are just plain good. Who cares what the customer wants?

**Dave:** Would you just shut up and freakin’ play something?

**George:** Fine.

**Eddie:** Play some Skeeneerd!

**George:** Forget you! *(turns back to jukebox and puts money in.)* Ah, here we go. Haven't heard this one for a while. *(close-up on George's fingers pressing buttons on the jukebox.)*

*Jukebox begins to play Soul Asylum "Runaway Train". Screen darkens. Credits roll through song.*