

Papa Joe & Co.

by Herbert W. Franke

English translation by William B. Fischer (©1995)

This radio play was performed in binaural sound by Bavarian Broadcasting. The premiere was in 1976.

Voices



Boris van Feldern — a European diplomat



J. C. Boerk — van Feldern's colleague

Roger Theyly — American diplomat

Jean McEntire — Theyly's colleague (female role)

Papa Joe

Angels

First Priest

Second Priest

Third Priest

Prayer leaders / crowd marshals

Man in the crowd

Woman Teacher

Peddler in subway tunnel

Beggar

Racetrack Announcer

Reporter

Photographer

Nurse

Doctor


Earphone voice

Place: Capital of New America Time: 2000 AD

English version produced at Portland State University in 1995



Scenes and Roles

1. **Hotel room — Boris listens to taped instructions**
taped voice; Boris (non-speaking)
2. **Stadium — Papa Joe celebration**
Boris; Theyly; Jean; Boerk; Prayer Leader; shouts
-  3. **Stadium — Papa Joe celebration (cont'd).**
Boris; Theyly; Jean; Boerk; shouts; man; teacher
4. **Hotel room — Boris listens to taped instructions**
taped voice; Boris (non-speaking)
5. **Abandoned subway — Boris and Boerk speak with an “Outcast”**
Boris; Boerk; Peddler; Beggar
6. **Hotel room — Boris listens to taped instructions**
taped voice; Boris (non-speaking)
7. **Racetrack — Outcasts compete for readmission to Papa Joe’s Great Community**
Boris; Theyly; Jean; announcer; Boerk; Prayer Leader;
8. **Café at the racetrack — Jean persuades Boris to get baptized as a follower of Papa Joe**
Boris; Jean
9. **Sacred grove and baptismal hall**
Boris; Jean; voice (acolyte); First Priest; Second Priest; Third Priest
10. **Sacred grove**
Jean; Boris; Angels
11. **Hotel room — Boris listens to taped instructions**
taped voice; Boris (non-speaking)
12. **Cabin of transit-system car, then observation platform — Boerk and Boris argue**
Boerk; Angels; Boris; Prayer Leader; Papa Joe
13. **Conference room — The Europeans accept the Papa Joe proposal**
Reporter; Theyly; Photographer; Shouts; Papa Joe; Boris; Jean
14. **Street / subway tunnel — Boris is an Outcast**
Boris; Papa Joe; Beggar
15. **Hospital — Boris, near death, is rescued and exonerated**
Nurse; Doctor; Boerk; Boris
16. **Control center — Boerk shows Boris how Papa Joe ruled, even after death**
Boerk; Boris; Papa Joe



1.

Hotel room. In extreme haste, but trying to make as little noise as possible, Boris van Feldern takes a miniature receiver out of a secret compartment of his suitcase. He fiddles with it, making the apparatus ready for operation.

Earphones are put on the synthetic head. For the listener only a hodge-podge of words chopped up by the technology is audible at first. Complicated adjustments of the decoding mechanism. Suddenly the voice in the earphones is clearly understandable.

VOICE

...for this reason it can be surmised that the invitation is based on intentions quite different from the ones given officially. Greatest restraint is urged. Give no information about our government which is not otherwise known in New America!

Behave properly, but in a distanced manner!

Avoid private contacts!

Decline all gifts, favors, invitations, et cetera, that could obligate you to something in return!

Guard against every kind of psychological influence!

Take only those medications that you have brought along personally!

Remain cautious even when you feel that you are unwatched — think about bugging devices, TV cameras and such!

Never forget: you are a country whose social structure is alien to us. The greatest caution is urged.

Stay alert!

2.

Sound setting is a mass gathering outdoors. Location: a balcony above the gathering place. Shouts, choruses of voices speaking, songs. The text and staging directions for this scene can be altered where the sound-effect resources collected for the production make such changes necessary.

Boris van Feldern is the listener's identification-figure. During the entire radio play the listener is in his place. The listener must thus locate van Feldern's voice "nearer" than the other voices. It is, as it were, the voice of the coparticipating listener.

BORIS

I've never seen so many happy people as in these last days.

THEYLY

These people have faith.

BORIS

Yes, that they do. It's great to be together with people who are so united in their trust and confidence. And yet — something bothers me...

THEYLY *attentive*

What bothers you, Mr. van Feldern?

BORIS

Actually it's paradoxical: It bothers me that they are so certain and secure, that they haven't the least doubt.

THEYLY *breaking into a short laugh*

What should they be doubtful of? They are taken care of, and they know that. They feel it.

JEAN

Look, down there on the terrace — the Apostles have marched in!
The cheering of the crowds gets louder.

JEAN

Come over here to the railing, Mr. van Feldern! You too, Mr. Boerk!
You'll have the best view here.

BORIS

Thanks, ...Jean, ...I'm seeing well enough here. But I'm afraid I'm getting dizzy... these proportions, and this sea of people!

JEAN

Today is the biggest holiday of our community; it's the only opportunity to see Papa Joe. Many are seeing him now for the first time. Not everyone gets to participate in this celebration.

BOERK

Not everyone? I thought that there was complete freedom of movement here...

THEYLY

We have to distribute tickets for seats — not everyone can be accommodated. The place holds a million people. Just getting them where they belong is a problem. It takes two hours until they all have taken their assigned seats. But 10 million people live in the city.

The location is equipped with a powerful loudspeaker set-up. One of the loudspeakers is located at the right next to the balcony. When signals or directions are given over the loudspeaker the sound of the crowd is largely overpowered. The loudspeaker set-up is powered up.

Fanfare via loudspeaker. Loud cheers of the crowds.

PRAYER LEADER *via loudspeaker*

Papa Joe!

SHOUTS *from below*

Papa Joe! Papa Joe!

PRAYER LEADER *if technically possible, the crowd chants along*

Papa Joe, my heart is pure
In thy prayer it finds its cure
Hold in blessing now thy hand
O'er our city and our land.

Renewed cheering from the crowd.

BOERK

What's the purpose of the giant video screen? I assume the President intends to appear in person.

JEAN

Don't say "President," Mr. Boerk! He's the sacred and secular head, of course, but "President?" That sounds as though there's some sort of distance. But there is no distance — he's close to us. All of us. Say "Papa Joe" — like we do.

BOERK *using the name "Papa Joe" hesitatingly*

And why aren't we allowed to visit "Papa Joe"? We've brought greetings from our government. It would be an honor for us.

THEYLY

Papa Joe isn't a spring chicken any more. He lives in seclusion — in a distant corner of this building. Only rarely does he receive visitors. But perhaps he'll make an exception for you — but only when you are sufficiently prepared for it. I must ask you to have some patience.

The noise increases pulsingly.

JEAN

The big screen is switched on now. So why the video screen, Mr. Boerk? It's simple: Papa Joe is going to appear down there at the window, and everyone will be able to see him. Above that, magnified 100 times, his live picture will be shown too. That's something we just can't get away from: People are used to seeing pictures on video screens.

Fanfare over the loudspeaker

PRAYER LEADER *via loudspeaker*

Papa Joe!

SHOUTS *from below*

Papa Joe! Papa Joe!

PRAYER LEADER *if technically possible, the crowd chants along*

Papa Joe is our friend.
Hear o people, without end,
Papa Joe has made us one
Papa Joe's there for everyone!

BOERK

How long does it last, Mr. Theyly?

THEYLY

About half an hour. We've got some time. Would you like to mix a little among the people? You can talk with anyone, and everyone will willingly give you information.

BORIS

Won't we be recognized as foreigners? As non-believers? And particularly on a day like this...

THEYLY

Papa Joe's followers are friendly to people and open to the world. They're not religious zealots or fanatics with blinkers on their eyes.

BORIS

But a festival like this is an exceptional situation. It intensifies the feeling of communality, of belonging together. The mood could quickly turn against someone who is felt to be an outsider.

THEYLY

Oh, for Heaven's sake, Mr. van Feldern. You still seem to regard a confession of religious faith as a means for heating up emotions — a means of getting people into fear and hope so that they can be oppressed with greater certainty. If that were the case, the frustration of the crowd during such events could of course find an outlet and turn against everything unfamiliar and foreign. But you must have noticed, particularly in the most recent days, that it doesn't have to be that way. And that's precisely what's new about Papa Joe's teaching: it makes people tolerant and open. Perhaps you ought to note, especially with regard to your own system of government, how worthwhile it is to have good-natured and satisfied citizens to deal with.

BOERK

I suggest that we take Theyly's suggestion and look at this business from down below. I need to stretch a little. My legs are already...

fade

3.

Sound setting: mass gathering. Location: in the midst of the expectant crowd.

BORIS *somewhat out of breath*

I really don't want to go any further. This crowding is frightening.

JEAN

Give me your hand or we'll lose each other.

THEYLY

Here — this nook. It's calmer here. We wandered right into the line marching up.

Hymn-singing

BOERK

These people are completely out of control. It's like they're going to go bananas every moment.

JEAN

They can't wait to see Papa Joe. Don't you understand that? They can hardly wait to receive Papa Joe's blessing.

BOERK *muttering*

I don't get it.

THEYLY

Do you want to talk to some people. Pick out someone — it doesn't matter who. You'll get the same story from everyone.

BORIS

Well, OK...Maybe the guy over there...

THEYLY

Pardon me, Brother Believer. Could we trouble you a moment? We have some friends here — from Europe. Would you answer some questions.

MAN

Sure — I'll be glad to help. See, my wife is a little under the weather, so we've stayed back here.

BORIS

Couldn't you have watched the celebration from home on TV?

MAN

Sure, we could have. But you see, a person doesn't feel the spiritual power of Papa Joe anywhere as strong as here, right up close to him.

BORIS

So do you belong to his community of believers too?

MAN

Well sure — otherwise I wouldn't be here.

BORIS

But there are people who don't believe in Papa Joe and his teaching. Do you suppose that some of them are among us — maybe out of curiosity or some fascination with sensational events?

MAN

I s'pose that could be.... Maybe a few... Crazies maybe, or degenerates. But they don't count.

BORIS

Thanks a lot for the information!

The noise increases

SHOUTS

Oh it can't be long now!...There's the picture. Don't crowd so much.... Move over! You're ruining my view!

THEYLY

Over there's a teacher with her class. I'll get her. We've still got a couple minutes to go.

BORIS

Yeah, fine. But I can scarcely make my way through...

THEYLY

Hang on, I'll manage it. (*further away*) Excuse me, ma'am. Would you answer some questions? We have some guests here from far away.

TEACHER

Certainly. But make it fast. The kids are really impatient.

THEYLY

Ask your questions, Mr. van Feldern!

BORIS

What school you you come from?

TEACHER

We're from our unified school, of course, District 63.

BORIS

Do you think the kids understand what it's all about?

TEACHER

You're not asking the question quite the right way. You can't *understand* Papa Joe. You have to *feel* him, hear him inside yourself. Of course that happens fully and completely only when the sacrament of baptism has been performed. The most important part of our curriculum is a preparation for baptism, which is also the graduation from school. The children are ready then to enter life and to make their own free decisions.

BORIS

Are the kids also members of Papa Joe's religious community?

TEACHER

No. That's something they become only at baptism. But most of them are voluntaries. Their parents have taken the vow to register them in the Great Community.

BORIS

Do the young people then still have the freedom to decline admission?

TEACHER *astonished*

Decline admission into the church? Who would do that? That would be simply ...absurd, wouldn't it?

BORIS

And what happens to the children of non-believers? Do they attend other schools?

TEACHER

There are no other schools. Papa Joe's party leads the government. Papa Joe has always given priority to a good educational and child-rearing system.

From time to time the noise gets louder. Comprehension gets more and more difficult.

TEACHER

...one of the the first social services that we have him to thank for is the unified school. It is there of course for all children, whether or not they come from believing families.

BORIS

I'm not really sure whether you understand what I mean: If it's this way, there's no possibility of choosing any other path than the one into Papa Joe's religious community. Doesn't that mean a serious restriction of freedom of choice?

TEACHER

Heavens no! Only when you're in Papa Joe's community are you really free. Through baptism you acquire the freedom to do what's right. And what could be more right than to join in the Great Community and entrust yourself to Papa Joe and the Angels and have an abundant life...

Boisterous cheering makes any attempt at conversation impossible.

BORIS *yelling*

Thanks very much!

JEAN *right at Boris' ear*

Watch carefully now. Papa Joe is going to appear. Yes!! I feel him already, I feel him really strong. He'll be among us right away.

Cheering wells up

SHOUTS

Papa Joe, Papa Joe, Papa Joe!

THEYLY

Do you want to ask anyone else? How about you, Mr. Boerk?

BORIS

No thanks.

BOERK *at the same time*

Nope.

The noise gets louder and louder. Added to it via loudspeaker is a fanfare signal.

THEYLY

That's the sign! Look how the window's open already.

The noise becomes deafening.

THEYLY *with solemn voice*

Gentlemen, it is well that you experience this yourselves here in the midst of the people. Here you see that it is genuine.

Cheering surges up.

SHOUTS

Papa Joe, Papa Joe...

THEYLY *yelling*

Yes! We've done it, with Papa Joe's help. An entire people,, millions, joined in peace...

JEAN *screaming*

Papa Joe. I see him! Ohhh, Papa Joe!

Deafening cheers. Abrupt cutoff. Silence.

4.

Earphones back onto synthetic head. Tuning sounds as at start of Scene 1. Carrier tone. Then:

VOICE

For the first time in 15 years an official connection between Europe and America has come about. At that earlier time all contacts were frozen: postal, broadcasting, airlines, ship traffic, etc. Of course it was not possible for the new powerwielders to cut off all contacts at one fell swoop. We learned that the religious group around a certain evangelist who called himself Papa Joe had assumed power in a bloodless coup d'état. Papa Joe was proclaimed President, and he filled all governmental positions with high dignitaries of his church, who were designated "Apostles." Every attempt at contact with the outside was made a criminal offense. International institutions with headquarters within the country were forced to leave, and all other foreigners were deported. Membership in military or economic pacts was renounced. All Americans living abroad were called home or, if they refused to return immediately, stripped of their citizenship.

Soon after the seizure of power there occurred a precipitous interruption of secret radio contacts as well, and also of satellite monitoring. A new kind of technical procedure evidently permitted total protection against traditional methods of observation.

In the meantime we had to depend on the reports of a few refugees, mostly primitive inhabitants of border areas: Indians, Carib••s, Eskimos. All we could figure out was that Papa Joe's system was constantly consolidating itself. Dissidents were persecuted ruthlessly.

The invitation to a cultural exchange came as a complete surprise. According to the information given us, we are dealing now with a peaceful country in which orderly conditions prevail. We have no clear picture of the living standard, the attitude of the populace, their life style, their concerns, their loyalty to the government and thus to Papa Joe's church. Doubtless, of course, they will try to show you the sunny side of life there.

Don't let yourself be deceived!

Be on your guard!

Never forget that they will show you only what they want to show
you!
Don't let them overimpress you!
Watch for any signs of manipulation, oppression, and violence!
But don't let them catch on to you!
Be on your guard!

5.

Street traffic with occasional unusual sounds: the whizzing of electric motors. Sliding sound of railed taxis. Pneumatic driver operation of overhead transit-system gondolas.

If it turns out to be technically impossible to stage the motion of the speakers over a longish stretch, the scene can be produced with abrupt cuts that indicate passage of a stretch. Perhaps thus: inside of a highspeed transit unit, platform, elevator down, escalator, abandoned subway tunnel, etc. The speakers would get through these rapidly-changing settings without long passages of walking.

BORIS *hurriedly*

Is it still a long way?

BOERK

Well, I couldn't bring him into the doggone Hilton.

BORIS

Is someone following us?

BOERK

I know both of the ones that are monitoring us today. We shook them in the department store. — Now down here! It's grotesque the way the escalator still works!

The background noises get more muffled. Now indoors. Escalator sounds.

BORIS

What do you mean, "grotesque"?

BOERK

Down there there's everything that isn't allowed above ground: brothels, beggars, bookstores, bars, antique stores...Watch out you don't trip!

The sound of the escalator gets softer, then stops. Rush of water, gradually getting louder. Audible in between is an ancient, out-of-tune music box.

BOERK

An abandoned subway station. Behind the wall with the break in it is one of the drains of the city sewer system.

BORIS

Nauseating.

PEDDLER

What you lookin' for? I still got some genuine Playboy mags here.

BOERK

No thanks

PEDDLER *behind them, voice getting quieter*

Or do you want a girl? I could...

BOERK *impatient*

Keep moving ••na los. Here we are now.

BORIS

Who is it? One of them?

BOERK

These are outcasts. Dissidents.

BORIS

All of them?

BOERK

I'm back here again. And here's the tobacco I promised you.

BEGGAR

Hand it over!

BOERK

Just a second. Now just tell us: You *are* Samuelson, right?

BEGGAR

Samuelson. Could be right. If you want it that way, I'm Samuelson.
Give me the can!

BOERK

Samuelson. Professor Robert Samuelson. You wrote several sociological studies. Before Papa Joe's time you were read all over the world. Example: ••"America's Second Rise — Opportunities for the Young Generation" — that was the title of one of you books.

BEGGAR

What are you talking about? That has to be long ago. Books...

BOERK

What did they do to you? How come you're here?

BEGGAR

Papa Joe punished me. I got guilty. He withdrew from me because I lacked faith.

BOERK

What did you do? What were you punished for?

BEGGAR

I didn't think "synchronically." Always differently... different from the others. I deserved my punishment. Just leave me in peace. I'm happy just being able to sit here. I listen to the murmuring of the sewer canal. It has a calming effect on me, sort of puts me to sleep. I like sleeping best of all — yes, that's all that's worth living for.

BOERK *demandingly*

Hey, listen up! Try to concentrate! How were you punished? Were you in prison? Did they torture you? Operate on you?

BEGGAR

Papa Joe doesn't talk to me any more. I got guilty.

Pause.

That's all there is. Come on, give me the tobacco! And leave me in peace!

BOERK

What do you know about Papa Joe? What did he do with all the leading thinkers of the country? What methods does he apply to...

BORIS *hushed voice*

Hey Boerk — those two guys. Aren't they...

BOERK

Let's get out of here!

BEGGAR

Wait! The tobacco!

BOERK

Here!

Rapid footsteps. Repeated alteration of the underlying sound.

BOERK

There's the way out!

BORIS

I sure hope so.

BOERK

They didn't see us. They're still looking.

BORIS

Let's just get out of here!

Outdoor sounds in background. Street traffic.

BORIS

Come on! We'll get in here!

Hiss of pneumatic door. Even-paced glide of a railcar. Interior atmosphere.

BOERK *breathing deep sigh of relief*

That was once one of the best-known American thinkers.

BORIS

We shouldn't talk about that here.

BOERK

Do you think they have built-in bug microphones here? We're safer here than anywhere else.

BORIS

Mmm. Maybe you're right. But Samuelson — are you sure that's him?

BOERK

Pretty sure.

BORIS

I really don't know. He sure made a confused impression.

BOERK

You bet. That strengthens my suspicion...

BORIS

Maybe he's just an old wino who can't fit into society. How did you ever find him?

BOERK

I initiated some... contacts. But I don't want to bother you with that.

BORIS

So. You “initiated contacts”... I’m not sure but what you’re not seeing ghosts, Boerk. To me this seems to be a peaceful country. There are asocial elements everywhere. You could endanger our mission with your investigations. Think about the guidelines we were given!

BOERK

That’s precisely why I’m going to keep my eyes open.

abrupt fade

6.

Quick cut in. Again the text is fed in to the synthetic head via earphones.

VOICE

...officially you have no other mission than to observe whatever they are willing to show you. You are guests of the Ministry for Culture and Entertainment of the United American Republics and are supposed to be examining the possibility of exchanging music programs and video recordings. Since we have reason to assume that broadcasts transmitted from the American continent serve the purpose of indoctrinating people with Papa Joe's dogma, we have no interest in such exchanges. You are not authorized to make contractual obligations, though you are authorized to conduct negotiations. Avoid committing yourselves in any way! ••Taktik hinhaltend.

Try to buy time!

Pay attention any information about the political structure, the state of technological development, the communications systems and their organization. Pay special attention to any reference to the attitude of the populace, deviant modes of behavior, indications of dissatisfaction, etc.

But don't take down any notes!

Memorize important information!

Don't take any risks!

Protect yourselves against unknown means of physical and psychological invasion!

Don't let anything deceive you!

You are now in a country whose political aims are unknown to us!

7.

Auto racetrack sounds. Yells of the spectators. Occasionally smashing and shattering during a collision.

BORIS

Impressive.

THEYLY

We wanted to arrange a little fun for you after all this week's stress.

JEAN

It's a 20 km race. The go around the track only once. None of the obstacles repeats. The various tracks run all over each other, so the whole course is crammed into a fairly small space.

ANNOUNCER *via loudspeaker*

Your attention please. The race is now entering its decisive stage. Darn sure there's going to be an exciting finish. Dragonblaster is still in the lead, but Space Arrow still has some stuff to show — he's catching up. So let's show some appreciation for Space Arrow!

Crowd yells. Intermittent boos and shouts of encouragement for Space Arrow. Support also for Dragonblaster.

ANNOUNCER

Space Arrow is getting up there real close, you can bet he'll try to pass on the next turn... No, Dragonblaster defended, with a risky move! Space Arrow doesn't have a lot of time left — he's got to put it all on one throw of the dice. Folks, don't forget the other competitors. Numbers 3 and 4 aren't far behind. Maybe they can get into the action. Greased Lightning was the favorite, and he's in third now, creeping up slow but sure...Is that going to be enough for the win? But there are three more vehicles behind him, right close together, it's a great race for the finish!

Short pause in the play-by-play. The following conversation between Boris and Theyly begins during the previous announcer lines.

BORIS

The crowd is sure paying a lot attention to all this.

THEYLY

That's no surprise. They've all got bets going on something. Betting is obligatory here.

BORIS

So what's the prize?

THEYLY

Free admission to athletic events, musicals, TV shows ••Pop-Shows, quiz games...

BOERK

And whenever you go to these events you have to bet?

THEYLY

Most, yeah, sure. And there's lots of prizes. That's how people stay turned on. You have to offer them something.

BORIS

Panem et circenses - bread and circuses.

THEYLY

What'd you say?

For a while just the car-race sounds

ANNOUNCER

We're getting there now, folks, Space Arrow is gonna try to pass... he's scooting up... but is he gonna be able to do it?

Deafening crash. Explosion

ANNOUNCER

Nope, he didn't make it, but he managed to take Firebird with him when he went. A picture-perfect crackup! Both vehicles blew sky high. Don't worry, folks, the protection screens can handle that. The fire crews and paramedic vehicles are down there right on the accident site, though they're probably too late. But that don't matter, you gotta be able to take the bad with the good, you know what chance you're taking when you race here. That's what makes it all so exciting. Well now they've cleared the track. Who's coming up? Greased Lightning is the next leader, but right behind is Thundersledge. Anybody betting on them? — Ladies and gentlemen, you've got a chance, they both could win, and now it looks like the race is just between the two of them. But it's not over till it's over — there are still some drivers ready to put it all on one throw. Winning the Formula 1 Group — that's hot stuff! Wouldn't anybody risk his life for that? And they're sure outdoing each other today. I think the speed record will be broken, and then broken again several times today. The track conditions are just ideal...

As before, the following dialog is conducted overlapping the racetrack announcer's lines

BOERK

That curve is a deathtrap. Why don't they straighten it out?

BORIS

The crash there was horrendous! Aren't they going to stop the race?

THEYLY

No way, José! ••Keine Spur That's all part of it! None of the drivers knows the course before the race starts, and each time it's set up differently. That's what makes it all so interesting.

For a while just the sound of the race.

ANNOUNCER *suddenly excited*

Oboy! Now we're cooking! Watch the green Spider ••Spider (Speeder?), ladies and gentlemen. He's snuck up unnoticed... he's passing Thundersledge, he's passing Greased Lightning and now ... yes... he's crossing the line! Oh wow, that was unexpected, in the last moment, it's Number 11 — a sensation, folks — it's Roaring Stone, and he wins! Roaring Stone's the winner!

Almost without pause, but with a notably altered intonation. Solemn and penetrating.

But now, ladies and gentlemen, two minutes for Papa Joe. Please, gather yourselves together for devotions!

Bells ring.

BOERK

Devotions? What's going on now?

JEAN

We dare not ever forget whom we have to thank for these beautiful hours: Papa Joe. Remain quiet, please.

Fanfare.

If the following litany between prayer leader and the crowd is not technically feasible: Use an antiphony of prayer leader and ••Einpeitscher. The ••Einpeitscher assumes the part of the people and carries the crowd along.

PRAYER LEADER

Ever and eternal, omnipresent on lang, on sea, and in the air, for young and old, for all of us who love him, there shines the light of Papa Joe. Who giveth us the bread and wine?

PEOPLE *rejoicing*

Papa Joe!

PRAYER LEADER

Who guards the country, who protects our lives?

PEOPLE

Papa Joe!

PRAYER LEADER

Who gives to us the joy of competition and game?

PEOPLE

Papa Joe!

PRAYER LEADER

Who is ever there for us — for each of us who needs him?

PEOPLE

Papa Joe!

PRAYER LEADER

Then let us sing, to him be honor and praise.

Fanfare

PRAYER LEADER *singing. The people sing with him:*

Father, thine eyes please rest
on thy children thus so blessed.
We shelter 'neath thy outstretched arm,
happy, safe and free from harm.

Loud applause. Then the howl of motors starts again.

JEAN

The next race has begun.

ANNOUNCER

Attention, please, ladies and gentlemen, attention! As of now the
betting machines are back in operation!

BOERK

May we do some betting? I'd take a shot.

THEYLY

I'll get you a ticket.

JEAN

Are there car races in your country too, Mr. Boerk?

BOERK

That's long past. We had...

BORIS

What I wanted to ask, Jean: What do the race drivers get? Money?
Trophies? Or free tickets to events like other people?

JEAN *breaking into laughter*

No. They get something else. Those are outcasts, guilty people. The
winner gets reaccepted into Papa Joe's community. That's why
they drive like it's life or death. A life without Papa Joe has no
meaning. Every one of them wants to win.

BORIS

I don't like these races. Do you like them, Jean?

JEAN

Not particularly.

BORIS

Then I'll make a suggestion: Let's drink a cup of coffee together.
How about the tower restaurant up there?

JEAN

Fine, Boris. We'll do it. Are you staying here, Mr. Boerk?

BOERK

Yeah. I've bet on the yellow one down there. I think his name's
Happy Day.

JEAN

Maybe you'll be lucky! Bye!

BOERK

G'bye.

Fadeout.

8.

••Trendy / Fern bar (“Drugstore”)atmosphere. The sound backdrop of the race is much muted. Soporific music.

BORIS

You take sugar?

Clattering of cups on a tray.

JEAN

Yes please.

BORIS

It’s very nice to get out of the commotion. The hectic mood, the giant crowds, always in motion — occasionally I need some peace and quiet.

JEAN

Motion — yes. But hectic mood? These people aren’t hectic. It’s no strain for them. It’s the readiness to do things with someone else. Why should people isolate themselves? It’s in the community that human beings are happiest.

BORIS

I’m really not sure... Occasionally I have to be alone. Doesn’t that happen with people here?

JEAN

The person who belongs to Papa Joe’s community is never alone.

BORIS

It’s difficult to understand you. We’ve been together for almost three weeks now, and I know essentially nothing about you.

JEAN

What is it that interests you? I’m afraid I can’t tell you more than Theyly.

BORIS

I’m not talking about the populace, about your religious community. I mean you personally. Do you also believe in Papa Joe’s promises?

JEAN

You say that as though what we are dealing with here is a fairy tale — something like a child's faith — the pious lie about Santa Claus. If you're supposing it's something like that, you're wrong. At age 15 I was baptized, like all the others. I learned to hear the voices of the angels. And a few times I've turned to Papa Joe himself. He answered me.

BORIS

Are you trying to say that you actually got some sort of answer? With all these religious rituals where people enter into a relationship with the gods — it's really just a matter of an activation of lower-lying levels of their own minds.

JEAN

You're seeing it absolutely wrong. But how could you see it any other way — you aren't baptized. No, and that's the basic difference. Before the time of Papa Joe all the religious groups and sects had nothing to show their followers except the path to some inner concentration, some meditational immersion into the self, where occasionally the person involved heard voices — or else didn't. Papa Joe brings us more than a love-your-fellow-humans deception. If you believe in him, you really do hear the voices. You can ask concrete questions, and you get concrete answers. And you don't need to wait for life-threatening situations in order to call on your God — no, Papa Joe is there for the believer in all of life's moments, even right now! If just for a moment I were helpless, even just at a loss for an answer — all I need •• (brauche, not brauchte) to do is concentrate on Papa Joe, and I would be told the answer to the problem. Sure, it takes a certain amount of practice. The voices aren't there immediately after baptism — it's not that way....It takes a few days, often a few weeks, until full communication is achieved. It starts with music, beautiful music, and then you can occasionally understand a word at times, even part of a sentence. And even if it's just that little bit — from that you come to know that the connection is established, that Papa Joe is there for you. That gives you an immense security. You ask a question and you get an answer. Most of the time it's the angels who answer. But when you're dealing with a difficult problem that overstrains your capabilities and knowledge, Papa Joe himself tunes in.

Short pause. Music

BORIS

If you can ask the angels and Papa Joe for information at any time, then answer me this question: How much is 2^{20} ?

JEAN *quick burst of laughter*

You don't believe me! You expect me to call your suggestion blasphemy and escape answering. But I won't do that. Even if the question is stupid, at least at the moment, it can be answered. I just have to concentrate a moment... The answer is... 1,048,576.

BORIS *stuttering*

One million forty-eight thousand... Yes, I think — that could be right. Please excuse me. It's just that ... that I simply can't grasp it. It seems impossible to me...

JEAN

...so since you consider it impossible, it has to be fraud or self-deception. No, Boris, you're wrong. It is the wish of Papa Joe to free all people of their errors. And that is the wish of his disciples as well. We don't force anyone to do that; whoever comes to us does it voluntarily. If you want, you can experience it yourself. All you have to do is have yourself baptized.

BORIS

Would that be possible... for me?

JEAN *quietly and emphatically*

Why, certainly. Papa Joe sets no conditions. You don't obligate yourself to anything. If you pray, you do so by your own decision. If you attend a worship service, that happens voluntarily. You don't even have to make an offering••.

BORIS

Do you mean that seriously?

JEAN *firmly*

Yes.

BORIS

Fine. I believe you. I'll give it a try. What do I have to do? Are any kinds of preparations necessary?

JEAN

No. As an adult you can be baptized at any time. It may be a little harder for you to tune in to the voices, but you'll manage.

BORIS

Great! But this is a matter between the two of us. It's best if we keep Boerk out of the deal.

JEAN

Fine with me. Just between us, between just the two of us. I'll help you. You'll hear from me — today or tomorrow.

Fadeout.

9.

A sacred grove. Parklike atmosphere. Muted murmuring of those waiting. Occasionally chanted vocal music.

BORIS

What do I have to do?

JEAN

Right now just wait. Join this line here.

BORIS

Are you coming along?

JEAN

Just a short way, up to the entryway up front there. From there on you go by yourself.

Pause.

BORIS

I hope it's right for me to...

JEAN *suggestingly*

It is right. Don't worry about it at all.

BORIS

This air, the smell — you can scarcely breathe.

JEAN

Incense. Breathe deeply. It'll be easier then.

BORIS

It doesn't smell like incense. My skull is buzzing. I feel like I'm anesthetized.

JEAN

You mustn't think now.

BORIS

But if... I ought to... Will will Boerk say...

JEAN

Nothing. He won't find out a thing. You decided to be baptized. It's your private decision.

BORIS *whispering*

Yes.

JEAN

In your country religion is a private matter. It's nobody's business what faith you are. Isn't that right?

BORIS

Yes, it is.

JEAN

Then everything's fine.

BORIS

You're so sure. Stay with me!

JEAN

Your turn's coming right away. It'll be wonderful for you. Good luck, Boris! Good luck!

BORIS

Thanks, Jean.

VOICE *softly*

Come along this way.

Pneumatic door.

Go down this corridor.

Boris goes down a corridor. To right and left occasionally the sound of aerosol jets. Boris enters a small reception room. In the distance: sound of a cymbal struck at regular intervals. During the rest of the scene Boris' heavy breathing can be heard.

FIRST PRIEST

Are you ready, my son, ready for baptism?

BORIS *struggling with speech difficulties*

Yes, I am.

FIRST PRIEST

Good. When this door opens, you will enter and go up to the altar. Did you understand?

BORIS

Yes.

FIRST PRIEST

You will kneel down and bow your head. You will close your eyes.
Will you do that, my son?

BORIS

Yes.

FIRST PRIEST

Then enter. My blessing is with you.

Pneumatic door. Boris finds himself now in a giant ceremonial hall. Cymbal sound louder.

The baptismal ceremony is actualized above all by sounds, music and chant. They should create a confusing impression. An acoustic disorientation, which corresponds to the mental state of the baptismal candidate, who was deprived of willpower through an anesthetizing aerosol. If possible: constant rotation of the synthetic head.

Excessively loud footsteps, echoing.

Abruptly upwelling music: choral chant, but atonally recited prayers — alienated•• verfremdet, incomprehensible.

SECOND PRIEST *distant, solemn*

Kneel down, my son.

THIRD PRIEST *near, more prosaic*

Forehead onto the metal plate.

The synthetic head is grasped and pressed against a metal plate. Further manipulations which immobilize the head.

SECOND PRIEST

Papa Joe's angels baptize you.
Through the sacrament of baptism you shall enter into the great
community of Papa Joe.
Boundless is his goodness...
Infinite is his wisdom...
You will think in his thoughts...
You will act in his name.
Unto you shall be given his unselfish help.
And now give yourself up to him completely.
Papa Joe's angels baptize you...
With water...
With fire...
...and with lightning.

At same time as the above text: Clatter of surgical instruments. Manipulations on the synthetic head. The listener must feel as though a probe were being introduced into his head. If possible: clear whirring of a drill, changing from external to inside-the-head localization.

THIRD PRIEST *along with lines of Second Priest. Still nearer to the synthetic head.*

Here... here above the last vertebra... Careful — he's not exactly young any more... *Hissing.* Careful, I say!...Now in!...And now close. All set.

A moment of absolute silence.

THIRD PRIEST

Switch him•• on!

Slow upsurge of inside-head music. The music intensifies to pulsing cascades of tones, subsides and finally dies out. In the head there remains just a soft throbbing.

The external sounds resume; cymbal beats.

Abrupt cut.

10.

Back to outside atmosphere. The sacred grove.

JEAN

Boris, hey, Boris. I waited for you.

BORIS

Oh, Jean.

JEAN

Now we two belong together, Boris. The two of us — in Papa Joe's Great Community.

BORIS

Yes, Jean.

JEAN

How do you feel?

BORIS *hesitantly*

Somewhat confused, somewhat tired... But I feel good. Yes — I do... feel good.

JEAN

There's a bench. C'mon — we'll sit down.

BORIS

I'd love to.

JEAN

Are you hearing anything, Boris?

BORIS

What?

JEAN

Music, singing, the angels or Papa Joe.

BORIS *after short hesitation*

I don't hear anything... but it seems to me as though something were...

Throbbing in head.

JEAN

What?

BORIS

I can't express it.

JEAN

You've got to be patient. Close your eyes. Listen in on yourself.

You must concentrate. At the start it's not so easy. Be absolutely still and give me your hand. I'm being absolutely still too.

Suggestively. Close your eyes. Listen in on yourself...

Humming in Boris's head. Then soft music. Singing.

Angels inside-head localization

You are no more alone.

We are with you.

You belong to us.

We are here for you.

You will never more be alone.

You will never more be alone.

BORIS *whispering*

I hear the angels, Jean, I hear them. It's incredible, it's wonderful...

JEAN

Be still!

ANGELS

We will help you through your times of need.

We will care for you.

You will never more be alone.

We will never leave you.

The voices overlap each other. The sentences are repeated several times. Sometimes clearly, sometimes blurred. Slow fadeout.

11.

The following text is played into the synthetic head via earphones as before.

TAPE

...that we have only sketchy information about the state of scholarship and technology. Certain indications suggest that no scholarly research, in our sense, is being conducted. On the other hand, the attitude of this government is by no means hostile to technology. That shows particularly in the technological investment that is undertaken in the highly developed pleasure industry. Moreover, there are indications that the state of communications technology and data processing is high. Special attention should be given to all references that could reveal any information here.

But maintain your reservation!

Show yourself to be interested, but never curious!

Act in a loyal and proper manner!

••Goodwill leads to•• successful investigation!

12.

Cabin of high-speed transit line car

BOERK

We can talk here. No one can listen in on us. Come on and sit down.

Footsteps on the hollow floor of the gondola.

ANGELS *inside-head localization*

Can you hear us, Boris? We're with you — Papa Joe's angels. Boerk is suspicious. You have to reassure him. *Insistently*. You have to reassure him.

BORIS *hesitant*

Do you really think that such precautionary measures are necessary?

BOERK

Listen! — have you forgotten our instructions?!...

ANGELS *inside-head localization*

Boerk is not capable of offering trust. He's suffering from his lack of contact. Try to help him. Try to talk him out of his suspicion...

BOERK

...necessary or not — in any case, here in the gondola we're safe from bugging devices. We can't be careful enough.

ANGELS

...Try to reassure him... Try to dispel his distrust...

BORIS

Have new causes for suspicion come up then? I ask myself oftener and oftener... this distrust... it hinders us more than it helps us. So friendly the way we were received. We've got the run of the place.

BOERK

Listen! — we're being watched over constantly.

ANGELS

You have got to change his attitude. You have to win him over to peace and friendship...

BORIS

The people here are open and benevolent — no sign of oppression.
I'd be happy if our own people were so loyal!

BOERK

I have no proof... Some vague indications, rumors from questionable sources... And still: The longer I'm here, the more uneasy I feel...

ANGELS

Not a word of that is true... He's suffering from paranoia... Talk to him in a friendly way, try to convince him.

BOERK

There's no such thing — an entire people so inspired•• by the government. That can't be done with normal means. It's precisely this harmless surface that upsets me...

ANGELS

He doesn't understand anything... His thoughts are bad... Try to change his attitude... Try to convince him!

BORIS

Maybe it's just the difference in worldview that causes this uneasiness. Maybe it comes from the faith in Papa Joe that frees these people of all doubts and reservations.

ANGELS

That's the way! That's right! He too has to learn to comprehend it.

BORIS

Maybe there's indeed something in it, in a religious conviction. A human being needs something, something he can believe in. That gives meaning to life. Papa Joe has given these people meaning.

ANGELS

That's the right way: the truth will convince him!

BOERK

Well, I don't know... To me the situation doesn't look like a religious internalization. Just look what's happening around us! These people are called on 100 percent — don't talk to me about freedom! Their so-called freedom — they're literally forced into entertainment and pleasure!

ANGELS

He doesn't understand anything — he doesn't comprehend a thing... But you understood, you comprehended... Try now to convey to him a little of your conviction. Try to win him for the truth, for the path of salvation. try to lead him over to our side. You're in a position to sweep other along, to transfer inspiration••. Boerk is an important man... Work really hard on him. Work hard to win his trust.

BORIS

Ultimately it's a matter of making human beings happy and satisfied. There is indeed nothing better than to bring the interests of the state into harmony with those of the people. The pleasure industry is an important factor in the economy of this state.

BOERK

But that's just it: superficial entertainment, pleasure... We back home — I think we took the right path. Concentration on values of the mind, culture instead of consumption.

ANGELS

His thinking is destructive... His deliberations are wrong.

Henceforth the voices change intonation a little. They sound more prosaic••, making observations more than suggestions••.

The entertainment industry is only an external phenomenon. With Papa Joe's religion an inner purification also occurred. Loving one's neighbor, positive attitude, social behavior. Aren't those inner values?

BORIS *repeats word for word*

The entertainment industry is only an external phenomenon. With Papa Joe's religion an inner purification also occurred. Loving one's neighbor, positive attitude, social behavior. Aren't those inner values?

BOERK

Are you serious? The whole racket about Papa Joe serves no other purpose than sell and more sell.
Papa Joe is an apostle of consumption. His world is this world, his heaven is on earth.

ANGELS

His views are absurd. His reason is clouded. You will have to invest a lot of patience. You must keep on trying. Be nice to him. Be friendly to him. Drop it for today. Try it some other time instead.

BORIS

Aren't you seeing things a little too darkly? I think we should discuss it another time. We'll be up there on the view terrace right away.

Hissing of a sliding door. Steps on a platform. At the other end of the platform some other people. Boerk and Boris now speak softly.

BOERK

C'mon. We'll ride back down with the next car.

BORIS

No, let's stay a little while. I need to grab some fresh air. The view is wonderful. *Now somewhat scornful.* Or are you afraid of bugging equipment?

ANGELS

He's blind. He's deaf. He's obsessed with his evil thoughts. Don't bother yourself about him. Give yourself over to the love of Papa Joe. Strengthen yourself for your task. You have an important mission. With Papa Joe's help you will do what is right. Remember always: Papa Joe is with you.

BOERK

Listen, van Feldern... ••wrong line?Let's keep still a moment.

BORIS

Let's keep still a moment.

PRAYER LEADER

Papa Joe is the founder of the great community. The great community is our homeland. They who carry Papa Joe in their hearts can never miss the right path. Now let us sing, to him be honor and praise.

ANGELS

You are especially chosen. You are especially blessed. Papa Joe is tied closely to you. He is ever there to help you, ever there to strengthen you, ever there to give you counsel...

Fanfare via loudspeaker.

PRAYER LEADER *singing. Some people at the other end of the platform sing along.*

Papa Joe, my heart is pure
In thy throng it finds its cure
Hold in blessing now thy hand
O'er our city and our land.

BOERK

What's with you, van Feldern? Since when are you sentimental?

BORIS

A little respect for others' convictions can't hurt us.

BOERK

Quick! Here's the next car. I have absolutely no desire to talk in the midst of loudspeakers. And I've got something else to say to you.

Hissing of a sliding door. Inside the gondola.

ANGELS

Speak with him again! Try to convince him. You have to work harder on him. It's got to be possible for you to win the trust of your coworker. Be human to him. Let him be a friend in you.

BORIS

We've seen a lot in these last weeks. In view of all that I would welcome the assumption of relations with this country. I don't think that my impression is deceiving me: This government is humane and progressive. Closer contacts would be useful for us all.

ANGELS

That's the right way. That's good. Even if he resists, he'll be converted yet. Even if he tries to defend himself, he still can't avoid the insight that ultimately...

BOERK

I fear you've gotten totally under the influence of these people. Now listen: Up to now you've been content with what they showed you — and what they wanted to show you. That is totally in order. You are the official leader of this delegation.

BORIS *somewhat harsh*

What else was I supposed to do?

BOERK

I've got no objection there. But they can't put things over that easy on me. I can't believe that millions upon millions of human beings so willingly follow an old demagogue like this Papa Joe.

ANGELS

He's an eternal doubter. He doesn't believe what he sees with his own eyes. *From now on the voices again somewhat matter-of-fact.* It is impossible to fail to see that the inspiration for Papa Joe is genuine. No one forces these people; they follow their free decision. Or is everyone in this country supposed to be an actor?

BORIS *repeating*

It is impossible to fail to see that the inspiration for Papa Joe is genuine. No one forces these people; they follow their free decision. Or is everyone in this country supposed to be an actor?

BOERK

Certainly not. But perhaps there are people who are not convinced by Papa Joe's spiel. People who don't hit the streets to cheer at him. Where is the intelligentsia of this country? Have you met anybody at all who expressed independent thoughts? What's with the scientists? With the ••scholars and writers and artists?

BORIS *hesitant*

That sounds logical. Might you be right after all?

PAPA JOE *also inside-head localization. Kindly, benevolent, convincing*

Don't weaken, my son. This is Papa Joe speaking. I'm with you. I won't leave you. I'll help you out of your doubts. His speculations are wrong. All good people are for us.

BOERK

I've succeeded in establishing contact with a group of people that live in the underground. There are frightening things I've learned know about. I think the time has come to open your eyes as well. *Somewhat warmer and more personal.* You know me, van Feldern. I'm no fantacist — you know that you can believe me.

BORIS *whispering*

It can't be. It's impossible. My God, what am I supposed I do?

PAPA JOE *also inside-head localization.*

He's wrong. He's lying. Who knows what his confused brain is putting over on him. But don't contradict him. Appear to agree to his suggestions. We want to get to know his screwy thoughts. We want to help him. He'll learn from personal experience. Let him talk. Don't contradict him.

BOERK

These people live in conditions unworthy of human beings, in hidden places. I suggest that we withdraw from our handlers this afternoon. I'll bring you together with some contact men. Then you'll believe me.

BORIS *whispering*

I can't believe it. No. It can't be true.

PAPA JOE

Go with him. Have a look at these people. I want to know who they are.

BORIS *still whispering, but louder and more excited*

No! No! I can't!

BOERK

What's wrong with you?

BORIS

No. I can't do it. I can't manage it. I want out! Let me out!

BOERK

Van Feldern, what's wrong with you? Are you sick?

BORIS

I've got to be alone. Excuse me...

Hissing of sliding door. Outdoors. Sounds of street traffic. They sound alien. They make a fear-arousing atmosphere.

PAPA JOE

You shouldn't have refused. You acted without thinking. Do you intend to set yourself against my commands?

Gradually becoming louder.

You failed to obey Papa Joe. You were disobedient. Don't you have any fear that I could leave you? Don't you fear being cast out? You made yourself guilty! You made yourself guilty!

Fade.

13.

Sound setting is a conference room. Jumble of voices. Camera clicks. Shouts.

REPORTER

Just one more question, please.

THEYLY

Later, after the conference.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Could you please shake hands again?

THEYLY

Gentlemen, we have to begin now finally. The timeline...

SHOUTS

How do you view the chances?

Will Papa Joe be there?

When is the press conference?

A door closes. The reporters' voices are cut off. Footsteps. Chairs move. Clinking of glasses. Pouring of drinks.

THEYLY

Is everyone taken care of? Do you want cola or mineral water? *Louder.* Then we can begin. Ladies and gentleman, please let me have your attention. Surely you have already guessed that with our invitation we had in mind more than just a mutual process of getting to know each other. Your stay here is nearing its end, and I may be permitted to offer you a proposal which, as I believe, serves the intentions of both sides.

PAPA JOE *inside-head localization*

Boris, do you hear me? Boris, do you hear me? Papa Joe here. Papa Joe is speaking with you. I'm giving you a last chance. Now you can prove that you're loyal. Now you can show that you're worthy of the great community.

THEYLY

Our own interests are plain to see: We are oriented toward growth, toward expansion. We are convinced that we can offer something that can benefit humanity far beyond the territory of America. And we are ready to let others as well share in it.

BORIS

What interests are you talking about?

THEYLY

Perhaps you don't know, but we are very well informed about the situation in your country. In your view it is necessary to curb technological development, to throttle down growth. But it will be as clear to you as it is to us that this principle is untenable. If you yourselves don't abandon it, you will be forced to do so by other parties in your country.

PAPA JOE

Listen well to what he says. He's right. He merits agreement. Now you have the opportunity to achieve something big, the opportunity to carry out a grand mission. He's going to make you a proposal, and you will agree. You will agree to his offer.

THEYLY

Over the long haul one cannot restrain the human urge to achieve things. If you do that, you suppress hope and confidence. And your people, too, will not rest content for long with the temptations of an imaginary heaven. We offer more: heaven on earth.

PAPA JOE

It's a one and only chance. You're carrying out an important mission. You will make millions of people happy. You will bring them peace and salvation. You must accept his offer.

BORIS

Heaven on earth? I don't know. What's that supposed to mean?

JEAN

Perhaps I can explain it. In Europe there are huge segments of the population that live in slums and suffer from hunger. They represent a potential furnace of dangers. You're sitting on top of a volcano that can erupt any moment. It's high time that you get some idea of how to satisfy the needs of these people.

They need better nourishment, new and healthy housing. And they need leisure to be able to pursue their chosen pleasures. If one gives them a healthy foundation, then the positive attitude toward life results automatically. If we help you to achieve this goal, then we have accomplished something for all of humanity. And for peace.

BORIS

What do you think, Boerk?

BOERK

Certainly it would be best if Mr. Theyly would say in concrete terms what he is offering. Then we could answer in similarly concrete terms.

PAPA JOE

Don't hesitate. Don't delay. You could be throwing away the big chance of your life. You could go down the wrong path. What are you waiting for? What more explanations do you want? What's there to discuss? We're putting out our hand to you. We want the unity of all people. We'll take you into the great community...

THEYLY

OK. I'll try another approach. By training — and maybe this will surprise you — I'm an ••MBA Industriekaufmann. Papa Joe is not only the religious head of our movement. He's also the major stockholder. To put it more plainly, at first he was just that: an industrialist and financier. With a small team of creative managers he thought long and hard about new forms of marketing and consumption. And he discovered an ideal system. Everything that has happened since then is nothing other than the result of his plan, which was worked out down to the last detail by this team. And thus we have everything that a politician can wish: we have a thriving industry, we have work, we even have a certain level of prosperity. Above all, we have a satisfied populace.

BOERK

But here in this country there can indeed be other people than just satisfied ones. The way the people live, the goals they set themselves, the values they acquire, the hopes they have — perhaps that keeps the large majority of the populace satisfied. But not everyone, not the person who is capable of intellectual and spiritual accomplishment. In this country there must also exist creative people, special talents, that fall ••through the cracks — geniuses. How do you satisfy these people? Don't they matter?

PAPA JOE

There's nothing that can help this guy. You didn't figure out how to convince him. So why are you letting him talk? Why do you let him even get a chance to speak? Why are you letting him carry out his destructive mission?

THEYLY

Of course in this country there are also people who stand out because of special intelligence or creative imagination. But we have to distinguish here between conformists and nonconformists. Everywhere there are persons who, by principle, are against anything and everything. Often enough they are highly gifted, but their giftedness is destructive. It is unable to adapt to social goals and thus remains without relevance. Our system is ready and able to employ intelligence and creativity and to give them real work – indeed, our system needs these powers – probably more than you do. On the other hand, the professional nitpickers and protesters find no realm of effectiveness here.

These are people with degenerate attitudes. From their ranks revolutionaries and spies are recruited. As long as the populace is satisfied, they have no function or purpose at all, and that is the case here with us. But now with regard to you yourself, Mr. Boerk: We have observed with a certain benevolence that you were trying to establish contact with asocial elements of our population. We were able to look upon those efforts quite calmly, since we have nothing to fear. Certainly you have convinced yourself now that the influence of these groups is not worth mentioning.

BOERK

Maybe – yet maybe not. I did indeed try to establish some contacts, and that led to quite interesting conversations. Your country is large, and in your cities there live a lot of people who don't belong in the ranks of your government's sympathizers. Certainly: considered on the surface your system makes the best impression of practicability and functionality. But is it as perfect as you think? Is it something we can use? You want to export – that we could well be discussed. But I have to ask once again still: What are you offering? And what do you want in exchange?

PAPA JOE

Don't you realize how he's destroying everything? Don't you realize that he couldn't care less about values of the spirit? He talks about practicability and export! Don't let him negotiate for you. You have to take the strings back into your hand. You have to make your own decisions.

THEYLY

The matter is quite simple. You allow us to establish mission posts in your country. Then everything else proceeds on its own. We have the greatest confidence in the penetrating power of Papa Joe's ideas. You need do nothing more – it's sufficient that you let it happen. Other than that we ask nothing.

BORIS

Happy people, in our country too... *now whispering*. It would be possible to...

PAPA JOE

You must agree! That will be Europe's salvation. All you need to do is say Yes, and you'll make millions of people happy.

BOERK

And what advantages for yourselves do you expect from that?

THEYLY

The introduction of Papa Joe's ideas means a consciousness of the principle of growth. You will have to adapt. You'll need industries, you'll need to purchase machines, you'll be training the populace. And you'll need to teach the people that a person doesn't just meditate, do yoga, or pursue • • tantra. The people will have to learn to be athletically active – and to do that they'll need a lot of things. So what do we expect for ourselves? We expect new markets. If you accept our proposal, Papa Joe's community will become a world religion.

PAPA JOE

Happy people, satisfied people... Members of the great community. You must agree! You must agree to this proposal.

BORIS *hesitant, as though talking to himself*

But I can't... I'm not authorized... *Now louder*. I won't let myself be forced into anything. I am the representative of a free country.

PAPA JOE *threateningly*

You must agree! I command you to do it. You must, you must...

BORIS *with firm voice*

I regret having to decline this proposal. I am sorry, but the decision stands: I decline. Personally I may add though that a closer relation between our countries is something I...

Papa Joe's voice has vanished with a click.

BOERK *interrupting*

Just a moment! I have an announcement to make that will appear somewhat surprising, especially to you, van Feldern. If I may, I'll ask you to look at these papers

Rustling of paper.

If I might explain in advance: In the context of another mission area which is not open to discussion here, I serve in a higher function than does my colleague van Feldern. Thus it is I who am authorized to decide about accepting or declining your proposal. There would have been no reason to inform you about my function if something had not happened to make this step unavoidable:

You have succeeded in subjecting my colleague van Feldern to the so-called baptism. Thereby you have gained influence over him to such an extent that he is no longer capable of carrying out his duties.

BORIS *agitated*

For God's sake, Boerk, what are you doing? A scandal here could have horrible consequences!

BOERK

Please calm down. *He waits until the excited tumult of voices has died down.* I have no intention of conjuring up a scandal. It is indeed clear that the exertion of influence on van Feldern far exceeds the bounds of diplomatic propriety, but I have no intention of making this matter public. All that need be done here is to establish the fact that under these circumstances any acceptance or refusal on van Feldern's part would have no validity. Therefore it is I who must respond. And here I will be permitted to inform you that I intend to agree to your proposal. You understood me correctly: I agree. Of course an approval from my government will be necessary still, but I believe there is no longer room for doubt here: All over the earth people will soon be talking about Papa Joe's religion.

Excited reaction in the chamber

I believe we don't have much more time. You should use the final hours and days to do as much as possible to furnish us the extensive information. What interests me is the organization of your system. It is clear to me that up to now we have not seem much more than the surface. How does it operate? What control features have you built in to it?

BORIS *softly, but with determination*

Just a moment! What further purpose do I have here? I think my job is finished. I am resigning my office. I ask that you excuse me now.

BOERK

And what do you want to do now, Boris?

BORIS

As things stand, I don't want to return to my home and country. I indeed failed. What I'd like most is the stay here — with Jean.

THEYLY

Of course you would, van Feldern. You can stay here as long as you want. But I'm afraid you'll have to get along without Jean. Her diplomatic skills are irreplaceable — we can't do without her. I hope you'll understand that.

BORIS

Is that true, Jean?

JEAN

Yes, Boris, it's true

Footsteps. A door opens and closes.

THEYLY

OK! Let's get to work!

14.

Street traffic as in Scene 5. But now the sounds are threateningly alien. Boris's footsteps traverse various acoustic settings. Once there is also a worship situation: hymns and murmured prayers.

BORIS *whispering*

What should I do? Doesn't anyone hear me? Papa Joe — What should I do?

PAPA JOE *inside-head localization. Voice now fulsome and booming.*

I put you before a test, and you have failed. I gave you a problem, and you didn't find the answer. I commanded you, and you did not obey. From today on you are cast out from the great community. From today on you are alone. You have become guilty... become guilty...

Continue acoustic parallels to Scene 5. Escalator. Abandoned subway tunnel. Sound of sewer murmuring. Out-of-tune music box

BEGGAR

Got any tobacco?

BORIS

I'm an outcast. I'm one of you now.

BEGGAR

What you saying?

BORIS *whispering*

I've been cast out... I'm alone...

Murmuring of sewer. In between the music box. Fade

15.

Hospital sounds. Often ••alienated: anxiety-inducing, chaotic, occasionally in the midst of that clearly understandable human voices.

NURSE

It's looks like it's getting toward the end with the old guy. He refuses food, there's no will to live at all.

DOCTOR

Who is it? Where does he come from? He looks as though he'd once seen better days.

NURSE

Didn't have an ID... from the slums.

DOCTOR

Where's the chart?

Rustling of paper.

DOCTOR

Looks lousy, hopeless... I think we'll not bother with artificial feeding.

NURSE

We can use every free bed.

BOERK *inside-head localization*

Attention! Attention! Van Feldern, report in. Attention. We are calling Boris van Feldern – report in! We know you hear us. The probe in your brain is still capable of functioning. Wherever you may be, report in! You don't need to say a word. It's enough if you think the reply. Report in...

BORIS *whispering*

What's going on? Who's talking there?

BOERK *inside-head localization*

Where are you? Give us the address!

BORIS

I don't know.

BOERK

Please concentrate. This is Boerk. You just have to know where you are. Give us some starting point. Where are you?

BORIS *moaning*

Where am I? Looks like a hospital. Just old people here, old and worn out like me.

BOERK

Van Feldern, you've been ••reinstated/exonerated. We want to get you out of there. You'll get the best care. Someone there has to get in touch with us right away. Call a caregiver! Call a doctor! Have someone call immediately the telephone number 6 06 00 05. Note that carefully: 6 06 00 05!

BORIS *struggling to make his weak voice louder*

Hey! Nurse!...Hey! Please come here! Please, just for a moment!

NURSE

What is it? How do you feel?

BORIS

Please call this number: 6 06 00 05. Tell them that I'm here. My name is van Feldern. Boris van Feldern. *He breathes heavily.*

NURSE

Do calm yourself. Lie back down. You're exerting yourself too much.

DOCTOR

What's up?

NURSE

The man seems to be in a coma. He's raving.

BORIS

6 06 00 06. Please call them up.

DOCTOR

I know that number. It's a secret number. A government number for special emergencies. *energetically* How did you get this number? Who are you?

BORIS

My name is van Feldern. Please call them up.

DOCTOR *hesitant*

Van Feldern... Oh yeah, that was this guest of the government who... *now firmly*. Right, of course! I'll call. I promise you I will.

BOERK

Good job, van Feldern. It won't take long till we get you out of there. You are completely ••reinstated. No culpability remains with you. It was a desperation move. We're sorry we had to harm you to do it. But the freedom of millions was at stake. In the meantime everything has turned out for the good. I got into touch with representatives of the underground part. There was a revolution in the American government, a liberation from Papa Joe's pseudoreligious dictatorship. Everything went according to plan. You are not held culpable in any way. We need you now again as a coworker in the diplomatic service. You can be sure that the sacrifice you made will be honored in...

16.

acoustics: large, animated entry hall

BOERK *approaching the synthetic head*

I hope you're not angry with me, van Feldern. I acted at the express direction of the president. The game we had to play with you gave me no enjoyment. We suspected what would happen to you. But we needed the proof.

BORIS

I never would have thought that I am psychologically so vulnerable. I suckered out for the most primitive manipulation.

BOERK

It wasn't psychology, it was bioelectronics. A tiny needle with a miniaturized automatic transmitter-receiver. In its tip a cavity filled with genetically active material. The baptismal candidate is locally anesthetized and receives the needle application. Out from the cell material there grow axons, ••cell extensions that bring about the connection to important brain centers. Through their chemotropism they find the relevant locations with dead certainty. In this way the electronic system becomes an appendage of human consciousness, in particular of the center of volition. And thus all emotionally tinged content elements get into the transmitter. The waves that are sent out are just weak ones, but they suffice to reach the dense net of receivers that are installed everywhere in the country. And from there the information gets to Papa Joe and his angels.

BORIS

Who is Papa Joe?

BOERK

Come along — I'll explain everything to you. Come along - to Papa Joe!

Footsteps. Multiple change of acoustical setting. Scraping of pneumatically-operated doors.

PAPA JOE *externally, that is without inside-head localization*

Faith is what it's all about. You must believe in me, and we will transform the world. I will make humankind happy, and I will draw everyone — everyone — into the Great Community...

BORIS

What's that? A computer?

BOERK

It's a system for artificial speech generation, tied into a giant data bank. That's how they were able to use a preset program to give an answer to everything, and answer that fit the ideas of the organizers. A computer and a holographic image - that's how Papa Joe was able to display himself to his followers when a holiday demanded it.

BORIS

But who has behind it all?

BOERK

Papa Joe did really exist. His center of operations was here. From this table, with the aid of these transmitters and receivers, he governed his empire. No need to worry; the transmitters are switched off now. The computer filtered out all the unimportant bits of information, so only the really essential stuff was passed on to him. That's how he was always informed about everything that could damage or help him. That's the way he governed.

BORIS

What happened to Papa Joe?

BOERK

Papa Joe is long since dead. But in contrast to a lot of other powerful men he didn't put off too long arranging for his successorship. And he selected them in such a manner that the continued his work the way he conceived it.

BORIS

So that's the key to power.

BOERK

Yes. We managed to seize the operations center in a raid. And that itself finished the revolution right then. That's because whoever sits here guides and controls millions of people.

BORIS

A perfect system.

BOERK

At least the system of monitoring was. But not Papa Joe's economic system. The ideals that he preached to people were based on the principle of consumption. It didn't matter the least to him, whether in his country the air and water were polluted worse and worse, or whether the sources of raw materials were exploited with no restraint. In the final days it had gotten so far at last that the country found itself on the edge of ruin. To be able to keep existing, an expansion of the sphere of influence was necessary — more people, larger power facilities, new sources of raw materials. Then the game could have gone on a while longer, in the larger expanse. Van Feldern, did you ever seriously think of siding with this system, of opening the gates of our country to this?

BORIS *after a short time*

I don't believe so. As long as I was OK in my head, I noticed pretty well the ••bad things. My mistake was that I let myself get duped fairly early on. It started even before the baptism. They employed the old means, always so effective again, and I fell for it. I was too sure of myself.

BOERK

They were virtual masters at the skills of manipulation. Their method was to sneak into the psyche and shape the will to their liking. They stole humanity's free will and degraded it. It's no light matter to take part in a revolution in a foreign country, but we had to. But anyhow. Now we have to begin from the beginning. I hope you'll be back in on it with us, van Feldern.

BORIS

I really don't know. I guess if I can make a meaningful contribution. What's supposed to be the next step here?

BOERK

The first job is this operations center. It's a shameful monument to human society. Every memory of Papa Joe must be wiped out.

Shifting of a chair. Clicking of some keys.

BORIS

Look, the setup is still operational.

BOERK

That's a fact.

BORIS *thoughtfully*

It's scarcely believable: Millions of brains are tied to this communications net. With this system it's possible to oppress, blind, silence entire peoples...

BOERK

There are also governments that are searching for means to make people more intelligent, freer, and happier.

BORIS

You're right. The thought is compelling. But the issue•• can't be escaped: Need we really destroy this system?

BOERK

••Dare we destroy it?