

**JOHN WHITE**  
**Couch Plus**  
**San Francisco Art Institute**  
**San Francisco, California**  
**February 22, 1983**

This piece needed a close audience; I chose a room in the upstairs gallery that could provide a sense of intimacy. The audience was instructed to wait downstairs, where an image of a couch is projected on the wall, as well as other clues about what is to follow.

As the audience enters the upstairs gallery, they are greeted by a video tape of me at eye level. "Hi, Hi ya, How are you doing?" The performance space is arranged with props that serve as references – a visual script for the audience to follow. The performance begins as I remove a black cloth from a log. The room is dimly lit with a spotlight on the log. As I roll the log (log roll/roll call), I read off the names. The names read first names first, then last names, then causes of death. As the audience comes to the realization that these people have died. I begin a "death whistle."

The lights go up as I simulate car crash sounds. I pick it in my crotch. I tell about a car accident that I was involved in several years ago and having red raspberry tarts spill onto my crotch . . . giving the appearance of blood. As an off-duty paramedic approaches me, he yells "Don't move! Your *visceral* is coming out!" The *vis a vis* is a play on the words visceral (which he said) and viscera (which he meant.) I take out a mirror, and while looking at myself, try to imitate the expression on his face when he saw me scoop up some of the tart and put it in my mouth.

The audience hears a recording of a child's voice singing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." As I open an envelope labeled "Baby Powder," baby powder comes out. Enclosed are suggestions that my wife and I have received to assist us in achieving pregnancy. One suggestion relates to the missionary position: I suggest an alternative which I call the "mercenary position." Throughout the performance, visual as well as verbal puns and word plays, such as these, are utilized.

The next segment begins with a recording of a song that was written for me by a friend, describing a recent experience I had. While visiting the San Francisco Municipal fishing pier, I encountered a bum seeking handouts. He was bothering an elderly couple, so I went over and gave him a quarter I had found earlier in the performance couch at SFAI. I had hoped this would make him leave, but instead he continued to pester me until I turned around and yelled "Ha-eeeeeech" It scared him sufficiently to run off. I suggested a possible commercial use of the yell could be titled "Separation H."

For the final vignette, I flip a coin (quarter) to help decide which ending to do. I go to the wall and incorporate dance-related movements while making marks on the wall. Eventually, the marks emerge to read "The End."

-J.W.