JIM. Heraclitus would.
MR. HOFFMAN. Touché.
JIM. I wish Socrates didn't die like that.
MR. HOFFMAN. It was kind of beautiful.
JIM. I wish he died after eating spaghetti or something.
MR. HOFFMAN. Why?
JIM. I like spaghetti.
MR. HOFFMAN. Socrates should not have died eating spaghetti.
JIM. I mean, he was a suicide.
MR. HOFFMAN. Not really.
JIM. Yes, he was. Same as Thomas More.
MR. HOFFMAN. Thomas More was not a suicide. He had his head chopped off. He was a martyr.
JIM. But what does that mean? He made the king kill him. Jesus was a suicide, too, really.
MR. HOFFMAN. Egad! Jesus was not a suicide.
JIM. Yes, he was.
MR. HOFFMAN. He was crucified.
JIM. Because he wouldn't play the game and lie about what he believed.
MR. HOFFMAN. Exactly.
JIM. "Thou shalt not lie" isn't even one of the commandments.
MR. HOFFMAN. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."
JIM. Nobody was asking Jesus to rat out his neighbor, just back off the King of the Jews stuff.
MR. HOFFMAN. Jesus was not a suicide.
JIM. Socrates, Jesus, Thomas More, all those stories are the same. Why should you help the killers kill you? Why even give the truth to second-rate people who don't deserve it?
MR. HOFFMAN. We all deserve the truth.
JIM. Why?
MR. HOFFMAN. Because it's important that a hero lead the way.
JIM. Do you believe that?
MR. HOFFMAN. Not really.
JIM. What do you believe?
MR. HOFFMAN. I believe heroes are invented by storytellers.
JIM. I think there are heroes.
MR. HOFFMAN. And I think you're a storyteller.
JIM. I don't know what I am, but Jesus Christ was no hero like I think of a hero. Heroes fight for life. Jesus just handed them his sword and said, "Kill me."
MR. HOFFMAN. For heaven's sake, Jim, whatever you do, don't say something like that about Jesus Christ in front of Mr. Schmitt.
JIM. Why not?
MR. HOFFMAN. Just don't.
JIM. Okay.
MR. HOFFMAN. He won't appreciate it. If you want to talk about your philosophy of heroism, do yourself a favor and confine it to Socrates.
JIM. Socrates had some ideas I don't even know what to think of them.
MR. HOFFMAN. Like what?
JIM. He says we should talk about things because it makes us remember stuff we were born knowing, but forgot. Do you believe that?
MR. HOFFMAN. I don't know.
JIM. Me neither.
MR. HOFFMAN. Socrates prepared for death his whole life. That's why he was good at it.
JIM. Do you do that?
MR. HOFFMAN. I try.
JIM. I don't. No, I do actually. I'm always facing the Nazis. And if I tell them the truth, they'll kill me.
MR. HOFFMAN. So what do you do?
JIM. So far, I just face them. I open the door and they're there, staring at me. And I think: Am I going to tell them the truth and be destroyed?
MR. HOFFMAN. You have the most remarkable mind.
JIM. I do?
MR. HOFFMAN. It's a little scary.
JIM. Are you bullshitting me?
MR. HOFFMAN. Maybe.
JIM. Man, you are murky. You are a murky man.
MR. HOFFMAN. Survival tactic. *(Smiles.)* So. Do you know what *Phaedrus* is really about? *(Jim makes a move.)*
JIM. Check.
MR. HOFFMAN. You bastard. Good one. Socrates is trying to seduce Phaedrus with the beauty of his thoughts. *(Jim acts as if he knew, but he didn't and he's uneasy.)*
JIM. Oh yeah.
MR. HOFFMAN. You got that?

JIM. Yeah.
MR. HOFFMAN. It's pretty amusing when you read it that way.
JIM. Right. *(Mr. Hoffman takes his queen.)*
MR. HOFFMAN. There goes your queen.
JIM. Oh man.
MR. HOFFMAN. Do you want to concede?
JIM. No.
MR. HOFFMAN. What are you going to do on summer vacation?
JIM. I got a job.
MR. HOFFMAN. Good for you. Doing what?
JIM. Unloading trucks.
MR. HOFFMAN. Cool.
JIM. With my dad. I want to apply to Harvard.
MR. HOFFMAN. Bad idea.
JIM. Why?
MR. HOFFMAN. It's Carl Schmitt's alma mater. He only submits, tops, two boys for Harvard each year, so they'll take our applications seriously, and you just don't have those grades.
JIM. Oh.
MR. HOFFMAN. Sorry.
JIM. I thought you thought I might have a chance.
MR. HOFFMAN. It's not up to me. I think you're first rate, but Harvard is not in the cards. You just don't have the grade point, Jim.
JIM. I guess. There's no law against me filling out the application though.
MR. HOFFMAN. Not a good idea. Have faith that I know whereof I speak. Try for NYU.
JIM. Okay. *(Pause.)*
MR. HOFFMAN. The truth is: Mr. Schmitt has reservations about you.
JIM. What do you mean?
MR. HOFFMAN. Let's leave it at that.
JIM. How can I leave it at that?
MR. HOFFMAN. He suspects that you were the thief at Carriage House.
JIM. He does?
MR. HOFFMAN. I tried to dissuade him, but that's the story.
JIM. It wasn't me.
MR. HOFFMAN. I believe you. It's just that you were really artificially casual that night.
JIM. I was not.
MR. HOFFMAN. Look Jim, I think the world of you. People make mistakes. But if there's something weighing on you, for your own good, you might want to unburden yourself.
JIM. I wish you didn't put it to me like that.
MR. HOFFMAN. I think you want to talk.
JIM. You won't tell?
MR. HOFFMAN. I'm on your side. *(Jim fights crying.)*
JIM. Okay. It was me. *(Jim throws himself into Mr. Hoffman's arms. Mr. Hoffman awkwardly pats Jim's back.)*
MR. HOFFMAN. It's okay. It was obvious.
JIM. It was?
MR. HOFFMAN. Oh my God yes.
JIM. Do people know?
MR. HOFFMAN. Nobody knows for sure.
JIM. What should I do? *(Jim wipes his eyes. Mr. Hoffman takes out a handkerchief, and surreptitiously wipes his jacket where Jim cried.)*
MR. HOFFMAN. Nothing. Connell got his stuff back. Given time, the whole thing will blow over.
JIM. You won't tell?
MR. HOFFMAN. You're safe.
JIM. Thank you.
MR. HOFFMAN. You'll go home this summer, and when you come back as a senior, all this will be forgotten.
JIM. You think so?
MR. HOFFMAN. Yes. You just need to stop screwing up, and go ahead and have a great senior year. Can you do that?
JIM. Sure. So you think NYU's my best bet?
MR. HOFFMAN. It's a fine choice.
JIM. Do you think you'd have time to help me with the application?
MR. HOFFMAN. Of course. And I'll write you a wonderful recommendation.
JIM. Thank you. I wish I knew Socrates.
MR. HOFFMAN. He would've liked you.
JIM. I'll tell you this much. I would've talked him out of dying.