

The Ed Dennehy Story

by

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True Story (two-part mini-series) as told by

Ed Dennehy

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FADE IN:

INT. A THEATRE, HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY - EARLY 1990'S -- EVENING

The SOUNDS dominate: boots marching, STOMPING on hardwood floors, and men SHOUTING military orders, and drums DRUMMING, mixing with the sound of dogs BARKING.

Shadows on the wall represent two armless chairs silhouetted against a white background. A BRITISH FLAG soon comes into view. The sounds fade as a British voice emerges.

VOICE (O.S.)

The enemy mutilates our soldiers in
the dark of night, then runs away.
We can't expect our soldiers to
fight by conventional rules. We can
not judge their actions using past
standards in this nasty Boer War.

The marching sounds pick up again. The hypnotic cadence of boots marching are mixed with shouts of ...

VOICE (O.S.)

Harry ... Morant ...

A new (acousmatic) SOUND (a doorbell) resonates to the foreground while the sight of the flag shifts to the shadows on the wall of soldiers marching with guns on their shoulders.

A second doorbell RING creates a sense of hearing one thing while viewing something very different - a stage play, in fact. Suddenly, there is a sound of someone (Ed Dennehy) POUNDING on a door.

ED (O.S.)

Drew. Wake up. Let me in.

Another ring. More pounding.

ED (O.S.)

Drew, I have to come in. Something
terrible has happened.

The background military sounds resonate to the foreground. The marching boots stop. In a gruff, commanding voice ...

SOLDIER ONE

Left face.

The GRIND of boots turning, and the SNAP of heels, lead the visual of five Military MEN dressed in 1900 British military garb. Four of the men with rifles braced on their shoulders march in place. Soldier One has a whip in his hand.

SOLDIER ONE

Halt.

INTERCUT the VOICES of Soldier One and Ed. The visuals remain on the soldiers.

SOLDIER ONE

Ready.

The military men hoist the rifles in the 'ready' position.

ED (O.S.)

(pleading)

Wake up, Drew. We need to talk.

SOLDIER ONE

Aim.

The four military men aim their rifles into the camera.

ED (O.S.)

I'm coming unglued. I need help.

SOLDIER ONE

FIRE!!!

The military men fire their guns into the camera. As the smoke clears it become obvious this is a stage play.

HOFSTRA STAGE

The sound of marching boots picks up again. Two armless chairs turned on their side are silhouetted against a wall.

THE AUDIENCE

gives a standing ovation as the smoke from the rifles floats in front of them like a mist.

EXT. DREW KEIL'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

As the sound of marching boots continues, we see two armless lawn CHAIRS similar to those silhouetted on stage. The hedged lawn and the bi-level house express a middle-class setting.

The THUD NOISES gradually replace the SOUND of the marching boots. ED DENNEHY's thumping his bushy head against the outside front door, looking older than his 40+ years.

ED

Drew. Wake up, for chrissakes.

DREW KEIL leans out of his bedroom window and appears no worse than Ed for having been woken from a dead sleep. He is the same age as Ed, less hair. Younger looking.

DREW

Edward, is that you? Are you drunk?

ED

No! I ... I had another dream.

INT. DREW'S BEDROOM

MARY KEIL, well-groomed for being woken up so early in the morning, sits up in bed while Drew leans out the window.

MARY

Remind Edward it's three in the morning, please.

OUTSIDE

DREW

We have a hit show, Ed. Why can't you just embrace it like normal people? Go home and sleep.

ED

I can't go on tomorrow.

DREW

You mean, tonight. It's three in the morning, Ed.

ED

Tonight ... Tomorrow ... I can't do a show in my condition.

DREW

Oh, really, now? We don't have anyone to take your place. We didn't have the money for an understudy, remember?

ED

Yes. I know. Forgive me about that,
but I can't go on tomorrow ...

DREW

Tonight!

ED

Tonight, tomorrow, forever and a
fortnight. I can't go on, and that's
that. You don't understand, Drew.

DREW

Go home, Ed.

Drew ducks his head back in and closes window.

INSIDE THE BEDROOM

MARY

What is the matter with that man?

DREW

I've known him my whole life, Mary,
and I still can't figure him out.

PINGING sounds resonate off the bedroom window.

OUTSIDE

Ed chucks several pebbles at once just as the window opens. A
couple of pebbles hit Drew in the face.

DREW

Damn. I was hoping this was a
dream.

ED

You don't understand.

DREW

You're right. I understand very
little about you, Edward.

ED

I can't sleep. I'm overworked.

DREW

You're not the only one who put a
lot of sweat into this show.

Ed kneels on the ground and weeps with a theatrical flare.

ED

I don't know where else to go. I
feel like I'm sinking.

INSIDE THE BEDROOM

MARY

What's the matter, Drew?

Drew closes the window and turns to Mary.

DREW

Nothing ... Everything, probably.

INT. DREW'S HOUSE DOWNSTAIRS

Drew walks into view, opens the front door and heads into the den. Ed enters the house and shuts the front door.

DREW

You've been drinking. I can smell
you from here.

Ed stumbles into the den and leaves the den door open.

IN THE DEN

Pictures of Drew acting line the wall. Most of the photos are of Ed and Drew acting together on stage: Cyrano, Hamlet, etc.

ED

The last drink I had was with you.
That was before midnight.

DREW

Time of day never stopped you.

ED

(with an accent)

Aye. For sure you're right. And
I've never been in more need of a
drink than right at this moment.

(normal voice)

I'm sinking fast, I tell ya.

A large globe on a tall pedestal sits in the corner next to a table which has a coffee maker, a large can of coffee, and a miniature refrigerator. A half-bathroom is off to the right.

The Arts Section of *NEWSDAY* sits on the coffee table accessible from recliner and the couch.

INSERT HEADLINE:

Breaker Morant: Best Play Of The Season

BACK TO SCENE

Drew sits on the recliner and Ed sits on the couch.

DREW

No booze. You have to go on tonight.

ED

Did you not just hear me? Do you not have ears to hear with? I'm not going on tonight.

DREW

Okay. I'll play. Tell me why?

ED

Ernest.

Drew gives Ed a highbrow stare on what Ed just said, as if the men share a secret of the meaning behind "Ernest". Drew waits for additional information. In the distance--

MARY (O.S.)

Drew. What's going on down there?

Drew walks to the door where he sees Mary at the stairwell.

DREW

Nothing. Go back to bed, Sweetie.

Drew closes the door and sits back down on the recliner.

ED

I found out who Earnest is.

Drew lets out with a deep sigh. A groan.

ED

That's right. See? Now you understand. That's something to drink about, mate.

DREW

You've had enough.

Ed gets up but Drew gets up ahead of him.

DREW

Okay. I'll get it. Sit down.

More pictures line the wall of Ed and Drew on stage doing Cyrano, Hamlet, etc. As Drew makes a drink at the bar.

ED

I read somewhere a ship is made up of a billion pieces of metal, none of which can float by themselves. But when you put all these little shits together, the tons of rivets, bolts, the angle iron, the engine, you put it all together and you got a ship that's built as big as the Empire State Building, and just as heavy, and it floats magnificently. We're like a ship, Drew.

Drew places a drink down on the coffee table in front of Ed.

DREW

What the hell are you talking about, Ed? I don't look into life that metaphorically. I like things well defined ... Literal.

ED

This above all: to thy own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not be false to any man.

DREW

Christ! Shakespeare at three in the morning. I'm going to have a drink.

As Drew heads back to the bar to make himself a drink--

ED

(pointing to the paper)

This is what I've been working for all my life. I should be rejoicing, for crying out loud. I should feel whole and alive and well.

DREW

And floating?

ED
Yes. Above all else, floating.

DREW
But you feel you're sinking?

ED
Exactly. Now you got it.

Drew comes back from the bar and hovers over Ed.

DREW
Because your heart, kidneys and
liver haven't been welded together?

Drew places his drink down next to Ed's drink and sits.

DREW
... Like rivets of a ship.

ED
(deadpan)
I'm leaving. I'm not going on
tonight and that's that.

Ed stomps over to the door and opens it. He can't leave because Mary is standing on the other side of the doorway.

MARY
Edward, if you would just stop
drinking ...

ED
Good evening, Mary.

Ed heads back to the couch and Drew rushes to the door.

MARY
Is someone dead?

DREW
Ed found out who Ernest is. I know.
Confusing. I'll tell you later. Go
back to bed, Sweetheart. It looks
like we'll be here for awhile.

Drew closes the door and walks back to the recliner and sits.

DREW
What were we talking about? Ugh,
yes! The Titanic.

ED

No. We were talking about Ernest.

DREW

Okay. You need to talk. Talk.

ED

I finally saw what was in the trunk. Props. Masks. All these years Barrymore was trying to tell me things about me. My father, my brothers. Alice. Sue Anne! All the women in my life. I've been sinking all these years, don't you see?

DREW

Now it all makes sense. You're reaching bottom. Outta control.

ED

At last, we agree. Now, maybe we can explore my life so we can find out the last time I had control. Or maybe I never had control. Maybe I'm just someone's dream being pulled by ... Unseen forces.

DREW

More likely someone's nightmare.

ED

I've never had control of my life, Drew. Barrymore controlled me. Oh, God! I've always been schizophrenic.

Drew breathes deeply and raises his hands and arms, like a maestro, instructing Ed to take deep breaths to calm down.

ED

ACTING CLASS! You're giving me Sandy Meisner breathing techniques?

DREW

You've got until 9 AM. I'm all ears.

Drew downs his drink in one gulp. He gets up to pour himself another drink. Ed's drink remains untouched.

ED

Where? Where do I start?

Drew comes back and places his drink on the coffee table next to Ed's. Drew sits, shrugs his shoulders. Ed pouts.

ED

I've got this cold pit in my stomach. Always had pit right here. I was born with pit in my stomach.

DREW

Blaming genetics? Passing the buck? OK. Fine. Start with your parents then. Go ahead. Once upon a time... Go. I'm listening. Take your time.

The SOUND of a typewriter in the distance has Ed sliding into a somber, reflective mood.

ED

Time? I hate what time has done. OK! Yes. My dad. Let's begin there.

SUPER: "LONDON, 1945"

INT. SOMEWHERE IN A LONDON ASSOC. PRESS OFFICE - DAY

The transition from Ed's face to his father's face, EDWIN DENNEHY, mix with the tapping SOUNDS which come from his manual typewriter. Edwin (20s), tall even when sitting, wears an American Captain's uniform.

A US Flag stands at one corner and British flag stands at the other. A wall calendar displays AUGUST, 1945. The phone rings. He picks it up, listens for a long beat, then hangs up. He pulls the paper from his typewriter and yells--

EDWIN

A second bomb dropped five minutes ago. War in the Pacific is over.

Edwin runs into the editor's office and hands MR. FLOCK the paper. The boss seems pleased.

ED (V.O.)

My dad was an API correspondent in London during World War II. A rather large man; amusing symbol for his appetites and cravings.

An attractive WOMAN (22) enters. With a British accent--

WOMAN

Shall we celebrate at Mooney's
after work, Edwin ... Mr. Flock.

Both men nod, more spellbound than anything else.

WOMAN

Are you losing weight, Mr. Flock?

MR. FLOCK

(while stroking his belly)
This is my awning over the toy
shop, Miss Pringle.

They all laugh. She leaves and Edwin and Mr. Flock take a long look at her as she puts an extra swivel into her stride.

ED (V.O.)

Dad loved working in London.

INT. MOONEY'S BAR, LONDON - NIGHT

Edwin sits at the bar with PEOPLE who are celebrating the end of World War II. Edwin is very chummy with Miss Pringle.

EDWIN

You have beautiful hair.

MISS PRINGLE

You sure know how to make a lady
feel good, Edwin.

Edwin snaps his finger at the waiter for two more drinks.

ED (V.O.)

London was a great place during the
war for American service men ...

DREW (V.O.)

A Dennehy never needed an excuse...

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN LONDON - SUMMER OF '45 - DAY

Post-war construction workers renovate nearby buildings from the effects of German bombardments of the early war years.

ED (V.O.)

That may be true, but The Northern Conquest over, my father summoned his Gaelic family to his palatial flat in London in the summer of '45. The Mother Country. He loved it *Over There* is all I'm saying.

INT. A DOWDY LONDON APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

We follow a SOUND of clanking silverware against dinner plates - inside the tenement, up the stairwell, and into an apartment. Unpacked traveling bags lean against a wall.

HANNAH DENNEHY, (22), slim, fashionably dressed, and sons MIKE (6) and BRIAN (7), are eating at the kitchen table. A fourth plate of food sits on the table without a consumer.

Hannah brings her empty plate to the sink. She turns on the hot water nozzle and a series of noisy, angry, air-bursts funnel out of the faucet before any water comes out.

She takes the plate of uneaten food from the table, lays a napkin over it, and puts it into the refrigerator. Her sons notice the dirty windows and peeling wall paint as they eat.

ED (V.O.)

My mom never spoke fondly of London.

APARTMENT - LATER

Edwin enters, takes off his shoes and tip-toes into the dimly-lit kitchen. He opens the refrigerator, takes out the plate with the napkin over it and puts it on the table. While eating his cold dinner, the kitchen light flicks on.

HANNAH

Our first day in London, Edwin.
Couldn't you have ...

EDWIN

Don't start, Hannah. It was a very newsworthy day. I'm tired.

Hannah looks around the apartment and ...

HANNAH

The kids and I don't belong here.
You belong here, Edwin. We don't.

Edwin gets up and hugs Hannah. He pulls back and takes two tickets from his pocket.

ED (V.O.)
I imagine my dad summoned the family to London hoping Mom would stay. He bribed her with theatre.

INT. THEATRE SOMEWHERE IN LONDON - JANUARY, 1946

Edwin and Hannah sit in premier seats watching a play.

ED (V.O.)
My parents loved the arts. Dad took my mom to the theatre often to make up for his indiscretions. I mean, besides New York, what better place to be than London as theatergoers?

Edwin puts his hand on top of hers, and she pulls away.

EDWIN
You look exquisite.

Hannah faces forward. They laugh at the action on stage and then look at each other. Hannah smiles and holds his hand.

ED (V.O.)
I he tried to keep my mother there by getting her pregnant. During the war of the sexes a peaceful pact was made long enough to produce their third and last child. Me.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Hannah sits in a middle seat, her pregnancy showing, with her sons on both sides of her. She loosens her SEAT BELT.

ED (V.O.)
But he wasn't successful in convincing her to stay even though she was pregnant. The summer over, she and my brothers went back to Connecticut. My mother suspected my dad was screwing around, and I guess coming home was her way of putting an end to it without a fuss.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Dad stayed in London until there
was an opening back in the States.

EXT. NEW HAVEN AIRPORT - DE-PLANING AREA - NIGHT

The five MANION sisters watch PEOPLE exit a plane. They give hearty waves when they see Hannah, Mike and Brian step down the plane's exit stairs.

ED (V.O.)

Mom, my brothers, and a belly-full
of Neddy -- a nickname my mom gave
me before I was even born -- are
greeted by my mother's sisters.

Hannah rushes into her sisters' arms. She seems happy now.

SUPER - FOUR MONTHS LATER

EXT. AUNT URSULA/UNCLE HARRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Edwin appears at the door with a suitcase in hand. He plops them on the front porch and enters the house.

INT. URSULA AND HARRY'S DERBY, CT HOUSE - NIGHT

HARRY, unshaven, slouches at the kitchen table, drinking. His hair is askew, and his red face bears the marks of Rosacea.

EDWIN

Did she have the baby yet?

HARRY

Ursula took her to the hospital
this morning. They just called. She
delivered about a half-hour ago.
Let's have a drink, Pops.

EDWIN

I gotta go to the hospital, Harry.

Edwin exits the house, but re-enters quickly and appears to be confused and excited at the same time.

HARRY

Hannah popped out another boy,
Edwin. Ursula says everyone's fine.
Let's have a drink.

Edwin, giggling, puts his hands on a imaginary steering wheel. Harry sighs and grabs a set of keys from the counter.

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD -- LATER

Edwin walks briskly down the hall looking at each name tag on the wall. Harry lags behind him.

IN HANNAH'S MATERNITY ROOM

URSULA has infant Edward wrapped in a blanket, asleep, in her arms. Edwin and Harry enter. Ursula hands Edwin the baby.

EDWIN

Wow! He's so small.

Edwin places Edward bedside and--

EDWIN

I got the job in New York with
Associated Press. A cut in pay, but
there's promises.

Hannah reaches out for his hand. He takes it, lovingly.

HANNAH

We'll go to the theatre. Give the
children some culture.

SUPER - ONE YEAR LATER

INT. DERBY HOUSE BEDROOM -- NIGHT

DOCTOR MELANO leans over a crib taking Ed's temperature while Hannah stands closeby. The Doctor reads the thermometer.

DR. MELANO

My God! It's a hundred and three.

LIVING ROOM

Edwin sits on the couch reading a newspaper. Nine-year old Brian comes in from the kitchen eating a cracker.

BRIAN

Ned has Strep throat. Is that bad?

Hannah comes running into the living room, hysterical.

HANNAH

Edwin. ICE. We need ice.

Edwin and Hannah rush into the kitchen. Hannah grabs Brian.

HANNAH

Go over to Mrs. Flannagan and tell them we need all the ice they have.

BACK IN THE BEDROOM

Little Edward is having a seizure. Suddenly, he stops moving. Dr. Melano rushes to the bed and pulls off a pillow case just as Hannah and Edwin bolt in the room with trays of ice cubes.

Dr. Melano holds open the pillow case and they pour the ice cubes into it. The doctor hurriedly puts Ed into the pillow case and surrounds his body with the ice. The Doctor then pushes on Edward's chest in pulsating motions.

ED (V.O.)

When I was one I had what turned out to be Scarlet Fever. It developed into seizures, and I died ...

Suddenly, infant Edward begins to cry.

ED (V.O.)

... For a few seconds. Had a petite mal. Turns out I had Epilepsy which was triggered by the fever. Had low magnesium levels which I was going to have to pay attention to for the rest of my life.

EXT. URSULA/HARRY'S HOUSE -- SEVERAL YEARS LATER

At a family picnic several Manion COUSINS run around. Some ADULTS are playing horseshoes off to the side. Hannah and her sisters cook at the grille, laughing. Edwin sits at the picnic table reading the book, Confessions Of An Actor, by John Barrymore. Harry comes over and plops down a six-pack of beer and a bottle of scotch. Harry pours himself a drink, puts an empty shot glass upside down on the bottle's spout, and slides it over to Edwin.

ED (V.O.)

By all accounts, my mom was very happy in Derby. My father wasn't.
(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

According to his opinion the hick-like suburban communities of Connecticut offered little culture.

Edwin looks up and sees Harry smiling at him. Edwin smiles back and then pours himself a shot and cracks open a beer. He drinks the shot, and takes a swig of beer.

ED (V.O.)

Oddly, the only person my father liked on my Mother's side was Harry, Ursula's husband, a flimflam man. Dad's antithesis from the other side of the universe. He was a cock-fighter and a gambler and he made good money at it.

Harry gets up and head-nods for Edwin to follow him. Edwin and Harry both grab their beers and disappear to the barn.

INSIDE THE BARN

Harry looks up and sees the necks and heads of dead cocks displayed on the wall as trophies.

HARRY

They're my trophies. You lose a fight, the bird loses its head.

They walk over to a cage where a rooster is squawking. Harry opens it, takes the rooster by the legs and turns it upside down. He holds it in front of Edwin and Edwin backs up.

HARRY

Doesn't look like much, but he's won me a lot of money, Edwin.

Harry puts it back in the cage, grabs a flashlight, then motions Edwin for silence as he quietly sneaks over to a corner of the barn. He pulls up a floor board and pokes a flashlight in the hole exposing several stacks of money.

HARRY

Can't claim it to the IRS, though.

As the cock squawks, Edwin gawks at the money and trophies.

EXT. GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE - A FEW YEARS LATER - DAY

Ed's GRANDPARENTS sit on the porch looking out at the three Dennehy brothers who stand side-by-side according to height.

ED (V.O.)

My most awesome memory growing up in Derby was my father's dad. He scared the crap out of me. He was 6'4", 300 pounds; a coal stoker. Right off the boat from Ireland. For whatever reason, he adored me. Probably because I was small compared to my brothers. I hated going there, though.

Gramps struggles to get up. Once up, this huge man, covered with soot, THUMPS down the porch heading straight for Ed. The way Ed remembers it, the ground SHAKES. (SPFX)

Gramps reaches out with his coal-stained hand and grabs Ed's nose. He sticks his thumb between his fingers and ...

GRANDFATHER

I got your nose, Neddy.

BEGIN SPFX

Ed's face has just noseholes. He reaches to get his nose back, but Gramps won't give it up. Instead, he picks Ed up, terrorizes him, then tosses him and his NOSE skyward.

FROM ED'S POV, Gramps gets smaller as Ed gains altitude. Gramps eventually disappears, and two oceans appear on both sides of the United States. Ed's nose flies up next to him as their climb comes to a halt.

Ed grabs his nose, puts it back on his face, and then comes tumbling down in a frightful free-fall. Gramps catches him and everyone laughs. Except little Ed.

END OF SPFX

EXT. PICNIC AT A MANION HOUSE IN DERBY - TWO YEARS LATER

Brian and Mike, the tallest of 15 COUSINS, play at a picnic. Brian looks like a big Pillsbury Dough Boy. Mike is leaner.

The older relatives play football on the side property. Six-year old Ed and the younger cousins play baseball in the back yard where a barn dominates the center field. The barn appears old and mysterious. Haunted, maybe. A white chalk line runs across it as a home run mark.

ED (V.O.)

I remember those early years at Derby, the family picnics. Everyone lived within 9 miles of each other. Brian was 8 years older than me. Clumsy, but huge. He was like Gramps but Brian didn't smell as bad. Mike was a year younger than Brian. He was big too. Skinnier.

Ed is waiting to bat next. One of the cousins at the plate smacks a black ball into left field for a single.

ED (V.O.)

My first recollection of trying to do anything remotely tied to acting was done privately in my head.

While the VO explains, young Ed steps up to the plate and looks around the field at each one of his cousins.

ED (V.O.)

We had enough cousins to play six on each side. I'd step up to the plate. I didn't have the courage to speak the words that were running through my mind. *Playing at shortstop is Shanda Lear. At second base is Roman Vass. Lance 'Too Tall' Metropolis is on first. In between left and center field is Kenyon 'The Snail' Packard. And at right center is Lynn C. Doyle. The pitcher is the legendary Lefty Toothpick Turner. And the batter is none other than yours truly, Jim 'Powder Puff' Brockenstick.*

The pitcher throws the ball and Ed hits a squiggler. He runs like lightning and beats the throw to first. Johnny takes a position at the plate. He points to the barn.

INSIDE THE BARN

are Cobwebs, a few spiders, and old machine tools. Sunlight shines through a small loft window. Sounds of people in the barn: a cloud passes by the sun, and the loft turns dark.

ED (V.O.)

Uncle Herman, a retired machinist, had big rusty-old machine tools that stood around for years like sentinels in a ghostly, possessed place. Spiders and unknown things were crawling in there.

BACK TO THE GAME

Johnny smacks the cork ball deep into center field. It breaks the loft window and disappears into the barn. UNCLE OWEN (40) and HERMAN (45) stagger out, yelling obscenities at the boys. Uncle Owen has a whisky bottle in his hand. The children, frightened, disperse in all directions.

LATER - AT THE PICNIC TABLE

While the whole family are in mid-feast, Johnny head nods to Ed. They sneak away without being noticed.

AT THE BARN

Both boys look up at the broken loft window.

BOY ED

The cork ball's up there. Get it.

JOHNNY

No way.

BOY ED

You hit it.

JOHNNY

So. There's all sorts of animals in there. Dragons and stuff.

Ed slowly opens the barn door, looks in. Cobwebs adorn the machine tools like Halloween decorations. He spots a spider crawling up a web. Undeterred, Ed walks to the loft ladder.

He holds on to each rung of the ladder tightly as he slowly pulls himself up one step at a time.

Ed thinks he hears something, a rustling sound in the loft. He stops. Silence. He continues until his head is level with the loft floor.

Ed breathes heavily, sweating. He looks down and sees Johnny who waves him on, urging him to continue.

(BEGIN SPFX) Ed looks back to the loft and there, staring at him, are eight eyes of a spider, each eye the size of a grapefruit. The spider's palp (feelers) reach out and its jaws prepare to shear Ed's head off. Ed screams and falls off the ladder and onto Johnny. (END SPFX)

They both tumble to the ground. Ed gets up, runs to daylight and disappears. Johnny gets up and brushes himself off. He cautiously nudges closer to the ladder. He looks up and sees a normal size spider walking around on the top rung.

INT. DERBY HOUSE -- NIGHT

Hannah and Ursula sit at the kitchen table talking (MOS). Ursula is crying. Hannah is consoling.

ED (V.O.)

Things changed around this time. It all started when Uncle Harry died.

EXT. FISHING BOAT SOMEWHERE OFF LONG ISLAND -- DAY

Edwin, Harry and two other MEN are fishing. The shores of Connecticut are barely visible in the background.

ED (V.O.)

It was a fishing competition. Five grand to the largest catch.

Harry snags a big fish. He holds tight onto the pole while furiously trying to bring the fish in. Harry refuses to let go of the pole as he is pulled into the water. He drowns.

ED (V.O.)

Harry latched onto one and, I'll tell you this, he wasn't going to let go of that pole, no matter how big the fish was.

EXT. ON THE BAY SOMEWHERE ON LONG ISLAND -- DAYS LATER

Two policeman drive down to the bay where Uncle Harry's body lays washed up on shore. He is still holding onto the pole.

ED (V.O.)

He was found the next day still
clutching the pole. He'd be damned
if he was going to lose that prize.

BACK TO URSULA AND HANNAH IN THE DERBY HOUSE

We stay on Hannah's expressionless face as Ursula talks through her sobs--

URSULA (O.S.)

He told me just before they went
fishing he was having the affair.
That bastard. And that's not all.
I'm sorry to tell you, Sweetie, but
he said Edwin had an affair too,
with that bakery woman in town. Men
are bastards, Hannah. Can't trust
them. We can never trust them.

Ursula keeps talking and crying (AD-LIB) as Hannah's stoic, deadpan stare gives way to a transition to ...

INT. DENNEHY CAR -- DAY

The Dennehy family gawk out the car windows looking at the New York skyline while crossing the Triboro Bridge.

ED (V.O.)

Long Island was casting itself as
the hitching post for World War Two
veterans who parked their hopes and
dreams in little Cape Cods and
cheap apartments a subway ride away
from the nation's theatre capital.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE NEW DENNEHY HOME -- DAY

Mike and Brian, both close to six feet, and Ed, pushing five feet, get out of the car and stare at the apartment complex.

ED (V.O.)

My dad was tired of commuting to
New York.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Too embarrassed to stay in Derby after what Aunt Ursula was telling everyone, Mom elected for another geographic cure, I suppose. So, my parents settled in a barracks-like apartment in Glenn Oaks next to Queens.

INT. DENNEHY APARTMENT -- LATER

Edwin seems upbeat, smiling, while the rest of the family stand in the middle of the living room with their mouths hung open. It is a small place and the view from the window shows just how close they are to the neighbors.

EDWIN

I know everyone imagined something better. But we'll only be here for a little while. After my promotion we'll find a house. A nice one.

Ed walks over to the window and peers out into the streets and watches the kids play.

EXT. STOOP OF THE APARTMENT COMPLEX -- DAY

Seven-year old Ed puts on a cheap pair of steel roller skates while he listens to the SOUND of skating all around him. One SOUND of roller-skates gets louder and louder until they come to a screeching halt in front of Ed.

ED'S POV: an expensive white, leather pair of SKATES appear full view before him. He looks up and sees a girl with little blonde curls and dimples on both sides of her face.

LITTLE GIRL

Hi. My name is Emily.

BOY ED

Hi. My name is Neddy.

Ed has a black cape on, remnants of a cheap Halloween costume. They skate off with the cape blowing in the breeze.

BOY ED

You have beautiful hair.

LITTLE GIRL

Thank you.

Ed continues roller-skating effortlessly.

ED (V.O.)

All I remember about Glenn Oaks is discovering driveways and sidewalks and gliding up and down the block acting like Batman, feeling like the wind would pick me up and let me fly. And holding hands with a little girl who looked like Shirley Temple with dimples and curly hair ... Wow!

The SOUND/SIGHT of steel rollers on cement leads to ...

MATCH CUT:

EXT. STREETS OF MINEOLA -- MONTHS LATER

... To the SOUND/SIGHT of skates on the sidewalks of Mineola. We follow Ed's SKATES which rumble up to a pair of pointy SHOES and stop, as if the skates and shoes are facing off.

ED (V.O.)

And then, like magic, we all moved to Mineola and I found myself skating in a new world. It was like a kid-batman meets the greasers.

Ed looks up and see a 'gang' of three KIDS who are wearing tight pants, t-shirts with the sleeves rolled up, and greased-back hair - the DA look.

KID ONE

Hey, you a sissy or something? Only sissies skate around here.

They continue razzing Ed (AD-LIB) as Brian and Mike walk by.

BRIAN

Come on, Neddy. It's dinner time.

KID TWO

Oooo. Neddy poo, it's dinner time.

Brian comes back and faces Kid Two who's a foot shorter than him, and pokes his finger in the boys chest while -

BRIAN

Got a problem with my bro's name?

KID TWO

No, sir. Sure don't. Neddy. Teddy.
Freddy. All strong Irish names.

ED (V.O.)

He calls me Neddy in front of the
greasers. If I was going to find my
way with these guys, I was going to
do it as Ed, or Edward, not Neddy.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

The Dennehy's are at the dinner table. Apparent are books on
the mantle on Barrymore. One is the Confessions Of An Actor.

A few arty drawings don the wall, one of which is the
caricature of the "Ace Of Hearts" in Alice In Wonderland.

BOY ED

I would just like it if everyone
would stop calling me Neddy.

BRIAN

But that's your name.

BOY ED

My name is Ed. Or Edward.

MOM

I'm still calling you Neddy.

BOY ED

You can. Moms are different.

EDWIN

A guy's got to maintain a certain
level of respect with the locals. A
name has a lot to do with that.

BOY ED

Exactly. Thanks, Dad.

Brian looks at the "Ace Of Hearts" picture and ...

BRIAN

Okay. How about we call you Ace?

Brian and Mike snicker.

INT. DENNEHY HOUSE -- CHRISTMAS -- MORNING

Presents spread out on the floor around the Christmas tree covering most of the living room floor. Hannah and the Dennehy boys are seated while Dad reads a tag and distributes the gift to its proper owner.

Mike's the first one, and he opens the gift while everyone watches. He appears excited and places the gift on the floor. Dad reads the next tag and hands it to Brian who highbrows no one in particular and sighs, as if he hates this process.

ED (V.O.)

Christmas was my father's holiday.
He always had to distribute the
gifts one at a time to each one of
us. It was a major production and
it lasted all day.

Edwin picks up another gift.

EDWIN

From Grandma and Gramps to Neddy.

ED (V.O.)

Each present should get its moment
in the sun.

EXT. STREETS OF MINEOLA -- MORPHING

Snow melts in a fast forward SPFX, and flowers bud and trees blossom all in a matter of seconds.

Ed and the Greasers walk down the street. They wear leather vests, tight pants and pointy shoes, except for Ed who wears sneakers, baggy pants and a white t-shirt. They all have baseball bats and gloves and sneakers slung over their backs. As they swagger down the street the scene morphs to ...

... ANOTHER DAY

Without missing a step, they are all dressed alike. Ed now wears a purple vest and pointy shoes with his hair in a DA -- tough-looking just like the rest of the Greasers.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

As they approach the field, a handful of KIDS in loose-fitting pants, crew cuts, etc., await them.

LATER

Ed steps up to the plate and he looks around much like in a previous scene at the Derby picnic with the cousins. He looks to left, then right, and around the bases. In his mind, we know he is being the announcer.

Ed points to center field with his bat, like cousin John did.

ON DREW IN LEFT FIELD

BOY DREW

What a knucklehead.

DREW (V.O.)

What a knucklehead you were then.

The scan the boys, focus on shoes, pants, style of hair, etc.

ED (V.O.)

As a greaser, I was one of the straight-shooters. I was collecting types in my mind back then. A caped roller-skater to the greaser with nose-picker shoes, to the goody-two-shoes like you.

DREW (V.O.)

You were still a knucklehead.

The pitcher winds up and pitches. Ed hits a ground ball to the second baseman who has a crewcut and black sneakers. He throws to first, but Ed's speed out-kicks the throw.

SECOND BASEMAN

Holy mackerel, he's fast.

DREW (V.O.)

What's a straight-shooter, anyway?

ED (V.O.)

It's all in the clothes. We went to Corpus-Christi Grammar School for chrissakes. That made us straight-shooters. If you wear pointy shoes you can play both sides.

EXT. OUTSIDE CORPUS-CHRISTI SCHOOL YARD -- DAY

Ed's playing dodge ball with PLAYMATES. He's wearing a blue and white uniform with striped pants. A closer look reveals he's also wearing pointy shoes. His hair is in a pompadour.

GIRLS play hopscotch and jump rope off to the side. A couple of NUNS facilitate the school yard activities.

Ed watches a retarded boy, DANIEL, get hit in the head by Philip, a greaser. Daniel doesn't retreat to the end zone. Another greaser flips the ball to Philip who hits Daniel again and yells (AD-LIB) for him to go to the end zone. Daniel refuses, and Philip hits him in the head again.

Ed gets the ball this time and wings it at Philip. It ricochets off his head and knocks a HABIT (nun's hat) off of Sister Francis Mary. She grabs the habit and runs inside.

ED (V.O.)

I guess I felt cool. You know,
'Rebel Without A Cause' kind of
thing. Why did Philip have to do
that to Daniel? Just to look big?
From that day on, I stopped being a
greaser. Those cheesy uniforms
destroyed my image, anyway. Clothes
seem to be the key. The costumes in
life make the man, right?

INT. CORPUS CHRISTI CHAPEL -- LATER

FATHER TULLY sits behind a closed door in the center confessional booth taking confessions. A boy exits a side booth and Ed enters and kneels.

INSIDE THE CONFESSIONAL SIDE BOOTH

After a beat the sliding window opens.

BOY ED

Bless me Father for I have sinned.
It's been two weeks since ...

FATHER TULLY

(yawning)
Yes, yes. Tell me your sins, son.

BOY ED

I knocked a habit off a nun's head
with a dodge ball.

FATHER TULLY

Oh, it's you. I heard about that,
Mr. Dennehy. Sister Francis Mary
was very upset.

BOY ED

But it was an accident, Father.

FATHER TULLY

Well, be more careful, next time.
Anything else.

BOY ED

Just the usual. A couple of curse
words. Dishonored my mother and
father by talking back to them.
That's it.

FATHER TULLY

Okay. Say ... I don't know, three
Our Fathers and three Hail Marys.

INT. DENNEHY DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Michael, and TOM COSGROVE (17), crew-cut, and Brian sit at
the table waiting for dinner to be served.

BOY ED

But Chaminade High School is an all
boys school. I don't want to go.

MIKE

We all have to go to Chaminade. You
got no choice about it.

BOY ED

Says who?

BRIAN

Says Dad, that's who.

FROM THE KITCHEN - While Hannah prepares dinner.

HANNAH

Neddy, Chaminade's a good school.
Brian's going there.

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Michael will be going there and so will you.

(pause)

A little help, please.

BACK TO THE DINING ROOM

Ed scampers in the kitchen and he comes out shortly with a bowl of mashed potatoes. Hannah follows right behind carrying a cooked ham. She places it in front of Brian to carve.

Hannah pats Ed on the head and he sits next to her.

HANNAH

I heard you want to go to Chaminade High School next year, Thomas. How nice. You and Mike will be in the same class.

Mike makes a face as if to say, "big deal".

Brian gives a large slice of ham to Mom, a large slice to Michael and Tom and a small piece to Ed. Brian stares at an empty plate and an empty seat at the head of the table.

BRIAN

Should I carve something for Dad?

HANNAH

No. He said he's going to be late.

BOY ED

Come on, Brian. Give me a bigger piece than that. Mooomm ...

HANNAH

Give your brother a bigger slice than that, Brian.

BRIAN

I was just kidding. Geeze, Mom. You baby Neddy too much.

ED (V.O.)

Back then Mom treated me different than my brothers. Couldn't do any wrong in her eyes. Maybe because I had epilepsy, or because I was the youngest child and so was she. I think she was unhappy.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Brian and Mike were too busy in their lives for her. And my father ... Well, we all kind of knew what he was up to.

INT. TRAIN TO NEW YORK CITY -- A YEAR LATER - DAY

As the clanking train moves, a reflection of Ed's face appears on train's inside window as he looks out. His father sits next to him reading a newspaper.

ED (V.O.)

I'll never forget when Dad took me to NY City. I thought we were going directly to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but ... No. We made a stop.

INT. SUBWAY -- LATER

Ed holds onto a pole tightly while standing next to Edwin. A variety of PEOPLE tower over Ed. People with long and pudgy noses; fat and thin; shabby and well-dressed - a cornucopia of 'types'. Ed is all eyes.

INT. A DELI IN NEW YORK -- LATER

Edwin and his son walk into a deli. Edwin AD-LIBS his hellos and obviously knows MR. BELLINO who is behind the counter.

EDWIN

Hey, Mr. Bellino, watch my kid for a few minutes, will ya?

MR. BELLINO

Sura, Mista Dennehy.

EDWIN

You behave yourself, Ed. I'll just be a few minutes.

Edwin bolts out of the Deli. Ed runs to the doorway and watches his dad cross the street. Edwin looks up and waves. Ed looks up and sees what appears to be a woman veiled by a see-through curtain at a third-floor window.

LATER - OUTSIDE THE DELI

Edwin bolts out of the building and crosses the street not noticing his son sitting on a bench eating an apple.

Edwin turns around, looks up and blows a kiss to the lady at the third floor window.

Ed looks up at the lady in full view blowing a kiss back to Edwin. The eyes of young ED and the woman meet. She half-hides behind the curtain and gives a subtle wave of the hand. Ed, imitating her, subtly waves to the woman and withdraws his hand, capturing the mystery of body language.

EDWIN

Come on, Neddy.

Edwin pokes his head inside the deli, thanks Mr. Bellino (AD-LIB) and leads Ed down the street. Ed looks back and sees the woman peeking out the window.

ED (V.O.)

My father always seemed to have a woman on the side. This one was different, though. I was to find out later from Mike she was dying from cancer and Dad paid her medical bills.

EXT. SOME STREET IN MANHATTAN -- MORNING

While Ed walks along side his father on the streets of Manhattan, tall PEOPLE breeze by Ed. He looks at their faces and they all appear the same: stone-faced, mannequin-like.

Ed sees hundreds of men in every direction wearing gray-flannel suits. Robot-like. He continues watching people coming at him. PEOPLE whiz by and Ed is all eyes.

BUM ONE, who is fairly well-dressed, tries to stop them but Edwin breezes by without a hitch in his step. Undeterred, Bum One tags along for a few strides and--

BUM ONE

Sir, I got laid off and divorced and kicked out of the house all in the same week. Won't you help me out and give me a dollar so I can buy food for my daughter?

Edwin ignores the bum and picks up the pace. Ed must skip a bit to keep up. Ed tugs on Edwin's coat and--

BOY ED

Sir, I got laid off and divorced
... Give me a dollar ...

Edwin smiles as they approach a bus stop. They wait when the face of BUM TWO pops in front of Ed. The Bum is dressed in rags and has a goiter the size of a melon sticking out of his neck. Ed jumps back and yelps.

BUM TWO

Can't you spare a dime, boy?

Edwin pushes the bum back.

EDWIN

Come on. Get outta here.

INT. ASSOCIATED PRESS OFFICE -- LATER

Ed sits at a desk watching his father talk to PEOPLE. Ed mimics him with nods and hand and mouth movements while Edwin picks up the phone and dials. Ed has his hand to his ear, an imaginary phone, and mimics his father by smiling and talking into his hand making puppet-like mouth movements.

ON EDWIN

EDWIN

(whispering in the phone)
It's me. I'll be at the Museum.
Metro. I got my kid with me, so be
nice. You're my secretary, okay?

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM -- LATER

Ed is all eyes as he struggles up the large steps of the museum. The statues are awesomely big. The PEOPLE are all well dressed - more 'types' to memorize.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, MEDIEVAL ROOM-- LATER

Ed watches his father talk to a well-dressed LADY. As she talks, he laughs. There is a touch on the shoulder, a clasp of the hands, and then Edwin introduces The Lady (AD-LIB).

Young Ed nods politely then turns to the statue in front of him. It is dressed in a suit of armor. Ed bows to him.

BOY ED
Shall we joust today?

FROM ED'S POV (HALLUCINATING)

The statue moves. It holds out his sword as if it wants to fight. A statue close by tosses Ed his sword. But the sword is so big it falls to the floor. Magically, it shrinks to a manageable size and Ed picks it up.

EDWIN AND THE LADY

They watch Ed taunting the stationary statue in front of him.

LADY
Your son has an active imagination.

BACK TO ED

Ed battles the moving statue with swashbuckling maneuvers, checking and countering the statue's every move. Ed dodges in and out. The stinging SOUND of clanging steel when their swords meet dramatizes Ed's fight for his life. In an heroic plunge, Ed thrusts the sword into his opponent's groin. The statue crashes to the floor, mortally wounded. THUD!

EDWIN AND THE LADY

They watch Ed raising his arms in a victory pose over an imaginary foe on a bare floor. The Lady claps robustly. Realizing he is the center of attention, Ed accepts the applause, bows and casually moves on.

LATER

Ed and the Lady are standing by a Van Gogh painting of Marie Julien. Edwin is off somewhere observing something else.

LADY
Vincent van Gogh painted this picture of Marie Julien.
(pointing to the side)
That's van Gogh himself over there. One day, just before Christmas, he cut off the lower half of his left ear and gave it to a prostitute.

BOY ED
Why did he do that?

FROM ED'S POV (HALLUCINATING)

While The Lady answers, van Gogh winks at Ed then jumps out of the picture and lands on the floor. Marie Julien also jumps out and morphs into a real person.

A chair materializes and she sits in the exact pose as in the picture. A canvas on a tripod magically appears and van Gogh paints. Ed is wide-eyed and enchanted at his hallucination.

LADY

There are many stories. One story mentions that his brother Theo was going to spend Christmas with his fiancée instead of with Vincent. And Vincent got madly jealous.

VAN GOGH

(while painting)
She's full of dung, Neddy.

EDWIN

Walks over, and from his point of view everything's normal. He listens to his lady-friend while watching young Ed intently looking at the picture of van Gogh.

BACK TO ED'S POV - STILL HALLUCINATING.

Van Gogh is torn between painting and listening to ...

EDWIN

I thought he snipped his ear because of his brother's engagement and because of an argument with his good friend Paul Gauguin ...

LADY

Well, Mr. Dennehy, not to argue with you, but I think he had impure thoughts of Gauguin ...

Van Gogh reels back and looks to the heavens.

VAN GOGH

Oh, good God! How do these rumors start? Somebody hang me right now.

Van Gogh walks over to Boy Ed while ...

LADY

Well, Mr. Dennehy, in Dutch the word for ear is 'lel', and the word for penis is 'lul'. Don't you see what he was doing?

While they talk (AD-LIB) van Gogh gets closer to Ed.

VAN GOGH

I have to admit, I was having homosexual thoughts of Gauguin, my friend. Maybe you are too young. But I like the symbolism with the ear and penis, lel and lul. It was symbolic self-castration to show my love for Gauguin. Very ingenious.

Van Gogh reaches for Ed's ear and grabs it. Symbolic of what Ed's grandfather did, Van Gogh puts his thumb between his index and middle finger and--

VAN GOGH

A piece of ear, no big deal. I got ya ear right here. See.

Van Gogh holds Ed's ear between his fingers, and the blood from the ripped-off ear drips on the floor. Ed yelps and holds his ear. Blood drips through his fingers.

BOY ED

My ear. My ear. He cut it off.

Young Ed checks his crotch. Everything is intact there.

FROM THE LADY AND EDWIN'S POV

Ed has his hand held against the side of his head. Nothing appears to be wrong.

EDWIN

An active imagination indeed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DENNEHY'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Hannah comes down the stairs with a suitcase while Ed is by a mirror.

A small BAND-AID covers the lower part of his left ear. He crouches down and looks into the mirror. His arm sways back and forth in front of him like an ape.

BOY ED
Sanctuary. Sanctuary.

Hannah grabs Ed's hand and they barge out of the house and pounce down the porch. A taxi awaits them.

INT. DINER -- A LITTLE LATER

Ed and his mom sit in a booth of the diner. From the window, they see Dad pull up in a car.

HANNAH
You wait here, Neddy.

ED (V.O.)
I remember that day my mom took me to the. She went outside to talk with Dad. She seemed to have all the power but she caved, as usual.

FROM YOUNG ED'S POV

Edwin does all the talking. He tries to grasp Hannah's hand, but she pulls away. More talking. He touches her hair, her shoulder. He gently touches her cheek.

Ed mimics his father, motions with his hands. He pretends someone is sitting in the booth. A slight gesture, polite. A point of the finger, stern. A stroke of the hair, gentle.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF THE DINER - CONTINUOUS

Edwin grasps Hannah's hand. This time she does not jerk away. He kisses it and then Hannah walks to the diner.

INT. THE DINER - CONTINUOUS

Hannah comes into the diner and takes Ed's hand and they walk out where Edwin is waiting with his car.

ED (V.O.)
I think my mother pampered me a lot because I was the youngest and Mike and Brian were always gallivanting around and were never home.

EXT. CHAMINADE FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY

Ed, Mom and Dad are watching a Chaminade High School football game. Seven high school BOY CHEERLEADERS stand in the front of the seats and start a cheer.

Brian, a linesman, is bigger than all the rest, but is being tossed around quite easily. Brian trips and falls. Ed looks up at his dad and he sees a tear running down his cheek. Ed's face grows somber and a tear runs down his face as well.

ED (V.O.)

When I looked up at my dad and saw
him crying, I felt humiliated
because Brian couldn't defend
himself. That was the only time I
saw my father cry. He didn't even
cry at his father's funeral.

INT. FUNERAL HOME, SOMEWHERE IN DERBY, CT -- DAY

All the Dennehy's sit in a pew while watching OTHERS view the casket. Flowers adorn the room. There is no mistaking who is in the casket. The coal-stained hands folded on top of a mountainous belly indicate that Mr. Dennehy's father died.

INT. DENNEHY LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The Dennehy brothers watch Dracula Meets Wolfman on TV. Everyone is somber, presumably coming off the previous funeral scene. Ed is watching TV while reading a book on John Barrymore. A particular TV scene frightens young Ed.

Brian squeezes a rubber ball as an exercise while watching TV. Ed gets up and tries to get close to his brothers but they push him away - roughing Ed up a bit but not hurting him. Ed must sit by himself. After a beat ...

MIKE

Listen Ed, if you want to conquer
your fears then BE Dracula or the
Wolfman. Don't BE the victim.

INT. DENNEHY LIVING ROOM -- DAY

The Dennehy men are watching the fifth game of the 1956 World Series on TV. Larsen winds up. Ed winds up and fakes a pitch as Larsen throws the last strike of the game.

Yogi Berra runs out and leaps into Larsen's arms, and Ed jumps on Mike, as the Dennehy men go nuts over Larsen's World Series perfect game.

SERIES OF SCENES

- 1) Snow on the ground OUTSIDE conveys the passage of time.
- 2) INSIDE watching Frankenstein on TV. Ed acts like the monster. Mike feigns fear. Ed jumps on Brian's back while he does push-ups.
- 3) OUTSIDE: Spring has arrived.
- 4) INSIDE Brian works out with weights in the cellar.
- 5) A quick shot in the LIVING ROOM shows Ed watching HUMPHREY BOGART on TV playing a cool Rick Blain in Casablanca.

TV BOGART

Tell me, who was it you left me
for? Was it Lazlo, or were there
others in between? Or ... Aren't
you the kind that tells?

- 6) At Chaminade football field: Ed and his father watch Brian recover from a block, then tackles the running back with such aggression that the ball goes flying loose. Edwin jumps two feet, hollering (AD-LIB) like a maniac. Ed mimics Edwin.
- 7) In front of the mirror, Ed crouches down like the bum of the previous New York City scene.

YOUNG ED

I've come under unfortunate
circumstances. Can't you spare a
dime, boy?
(Quasi Modo)
Sanctuary ... Sanctuary.
(Humphrey Bogart)
Tell me, who was it you left me
for? Was it Lazlo, or were there
others in between?

- 8) LIVING ROOM: The Knute Rockney Story plays on TV. Ed writes on a pad while actor PAT O'BRIEN gives a locker room speech. Ed recites (AD-LIB) while he writes.

END OF SERIES

INT. DENNEHY'S BASEMENT -- LATER

Brian, while working out with weights, sees Ed on the stairs.

YOUNG ED

Can I recite a Knute Rockne speech
to you? I changed it a bit ...

Brian motions for him to 'go for it' and continues bench
pressing while Ed prepares.

Ed crouches a bit, holds his left arm close to his body, as
if he is holding a football, and extends his right arm and
points to nowhere in particular, as if he is posing.

YOUNG ED

We're gonna win today boys. We're
going inside of 'em, we're going
outside of 'em. Inside of 'em!
Outside of 'em! And through 'em if
need be. And when we get them on
the run, we're gonna keep 'em on
the run forever. We gonna go, go,
go. We're gonna block and we're
gonna run. And we're gonna run and
block until they wish they didn't
come here today. And don't forget,
men. Today we're gonna win.

Brian stops exercising. He sits up on the bench.

YOUNG ED

Make no mistake about it, boys,
they'll give the ball to their
unstoppable Bellino, their all-
American fullback. But remember
men, we too have a weapon that has
never failed us. Brian Dennehy!
Brian Dennehy against Bellino.
That's the way it should be. That's
how it will be. Bellino against
Dennehy. And make no mistake about
it, men, victory will be ours. The
first platoon, men -- go in there
and fight, fight, fight, fight,
fight! What do you say, men?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT -- TWO YEARS LATER

An slightly older ED stands in front of his FRIENDS in the basement. It is dark, except for a few lit candles. All eyes are on Ed. He is in the middle of reciting the same speech.

YOUNG ED

... And make no mistake about it, men. Victory will be ours. The first platoon, men -- go in there and fight, fight, fight, fight, fight! What do you say, men?

Everyone cheers, and Ed takes a few bows. ALICE, a pretty girl Ed's age, claps the loudest.

EXT. CHAMINADE FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY

The Dennehy family sit in the stands and watch a Chaminade Football game. A banner showing the year (1958 CHSFL Champions) is pinned to the chain link fence.

ON THE FIELD

Unlike Brian's freshman year, he is all over the place, tackling and blocking. A much leaner dough boy.

ED (V.O.)

I gotta give my brother credit. He worked hard since freshman year. By the time he was a senior, he was the best player on the team.

In a series of JUMP CUTS, Brian plays offense and defense making brutal tackles and blocking for large gains.

ED (V.O.)

He was the only player who made all-league on both offense and defense.

INT. DENNEHY DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

The doorbell rings and Ed's father answers the door.

ED (V.O.)

The college recruiters came to the house all the time. Finally, Brian settled on Columbia.

INT. CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

Ed and Mr. and Mrs. Dennehy take their seats in the front row. A poster on the side of the stage says, "Welcome to the senior play, George Washington Slept Here, written by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman.

The curtain rises and the play begins. Brian walks across the stage bellowing his lines (AD-LIB).

ED (V.O.)

I really didn't want to go. My parents force me. But suddenly I see Brian on stage and he's acting different. Peculiar.

A QUICK SERIES OF JUMP CUTS

This series is designed to bring Ed's awareness about acting to a new level. These are all from Ed's POV.

JUMP CUT

JUMP CUT

Ed sees a line of makeup creasing Brian's neck.

ED (V.O.)

I know it's Brian, but he looks like someone else.

JUMP CUT

Mike bows. He is a butler and is behaving unusually; that is, Mike is acting and Ed is taking notice.

JUMP CUT

Young Ed sits forward and watches with great intensity. A RINGER SOUND connotes Ed is being affected by what he sees. His eyes widen. Another RINGER SOUND. Ed's hooked.

JUMP CUT

The curtain comes down and Ed snaps to his feet and claps. Another RINGER SOUND. He claps as hard as he can.

JUMP OUT

Ed sits in his seat, frozen like a statue. After the applause subsides, Hannah nudges Ed.

ED (V.O.)

My mother saw me that night and
knew that's what I wanted to do in
life. No words needed to be spoken.

Brian and Mike walk down from the stage. Hannah AD-LIBS her congratulations to both her sons. Ed looks at Brian and he sees the smudge marks from make up.

BRIAN

Well, did you like it, runt?

YOUNG ED

This is what I want to do in life.
I want to mimic people.

BRIAN

Acting is a little more than ...

Hannah nudges Brian to be silent, but he and Mike laugh anyway at Ed's expense.

INT. BASEMENT -- NIGHT

Ed motions for his FRIENDS to sit. A bed blanket hangs over a clothes line, dubbing as a curtain. He finishes lighting the candles around the 'stage'.

Ed flips his black cape over his shoulder and goes center of the makeshift stage. His pointy shoes, tight pants, and his unusually styled pompadour make Ed a weird-looking Dracula.

Alice Keil, who clapped the loudest in a previous basement scene, comes storming down the steps.

ALICE

Sorry I'm late.

She takes a seat on the cement with the guys.

YOUNG ED

(with an accent)
Good Evening. My name is Count
Tribiculoso.

John laughs. Ed walks up to him and gets in his face.

YOUNG ED
What are you laughing at?

John stiffens. Embarrassed.

JOHN
I ... Don't know. I thought you were supposed to say 'Count Dracula'.

YOUNG ED
(stays with the accent)
All right, if you wish. My name is Count Dracula. There will be no talking or laughing during the show. The thespians who perform for you today have spent years and years studying their lines and perfecting their roles. You in the audience must be silent, like you're dead. We on stage will perform life. We will resurrect you. Now, allow us ...

With that, Ed disappears from view. BOB, another boy standing in the wings, whisks the curtain away exposing the stage and young Drew who has a wooden stake in his hand and garlic about his neck. He looks around as if hunting something.

Alice claps softly and leans into George Lupia whispering ...

ALICE
That's my brother

In the corner of the dark basement, Ed's facial muscles, half visible in the dark shadows, and made up like a white mask, contracts into the character of Dracula. He moves forward, purposefully, so the audience can see him. They gasp in fear.

LATER - Ed chases Bob around the stage, and with a theatrical lunge, he captures him, bites his neck and drinks his blood. Bob hollers with unusual robustness and then giggles because Ed is tickling him. Ed smacks him and ...

YOUNG ED
I am drinking your blood.

Bob falls limp and dies (acting).

LATER -- Ed is lying on a bench which is a substitute for a casket. Drew sneaks up with a wooden stake in one hand and a rock in his other hand.

Drew places the stake on Ed's chest and hammers down with the rock. A spurt of red goop flies all over the audience, and Ed's eyes pop open and he howls in agony.

Everyone in the audience screams. Susan cannot take the gore and yells her way up the stairs and out of the house. Ed stands up with Drew and Bob. They take their bows. Ed holds up a balloon dripping with ketchup. All are in awe.

DREW (V.O.)

The basement stories! I think that's where I got my inspiration for theatre, pounding a stake into your heart and the blood oozing all over and hearing the screams.

ED (V.O.)

Above all else, hearing the screams. It also marked the beginning of my grandmother living with us.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE DENNEHY'S HOUSE -- DAY

A limo pulls up. Edwin rushes down to greet his mother, Victoria (80s), slow moving. (Introduced earlier as one of Ed's grandparents). They slowly walk to the house.

ED (V.O.)

I think my grandmother had a stroke or Alzheimer's, or something. My brothers were out of the house by now. They were both in college, so it was just me, Mom, Dad and now Victoria, my grandmother.

As Edwin walks up the porch with his mother, Ed greets them.

Victoria reaches out to young Ed's face and tries to make the 'got your nose' gesture, but she can't quite manage the routine. They continue into the house.

INT. CORPUS CHRISTI GRAMMAR SCHOOL -- DAY

Ed and Drew strut down the hall wearing Corpus Christi uniforms. Ed's tie is conspicuously tucked in his shirt between the second and third buttons.

ED (V.O.)

Don't know why, but I remember feeling like an outsider at Corpus Christie. Maybe it was because I didn't know how to blend in with my costumes. My clothes, I mean.

Looking like straight-shooters, except for Ed's greased-back hair and pointy shoes and white socks, they approach Sister Francis Mary who is conspicuously hiding one hand behind her back. The Sister stops Ed. She pulls out a stapler from behind her back, grabs Ed's tie and staples it to his shirt.

SISTER FRANCIS MARY

Edward, how many times do I have to tell you not to tuck your tie in your shirt?

INT. THE DENNEHY BASEMENT -- DAY

While Ed sets up the stage for more stories, Drew comes walking down the steps. An ax is on stage and a piece of plywood is up against the wall. Drew picks up the ax and ...

YOUNG DREW

What's this for?

YOUNG ED

Got a new skit. It's going to knock their socks off. Just trust me.

LATER

The usual crowd sits the floor watching a play unfold.

ED (V.O.)

Oh, it was wonderful, wasn't it, the way we scared the living bejesus out of them.

Drew and Ed duel with wood furring strips. Ed swings hard, knocking a piece of wood out of Drew's hand.

DREW (V.O.)

The candles were a good touch.

(pause)

I remember that day. My sister got pretty pissed at you.

Drew runs to the plywood wall and looks left, then right. He has nowhere to go, so he turns around and leans up against the plywood which dubs as an alleyway wall. He has his hands and arms outstretched, as if he's on a cross.

YOUNG DREW

(over-the-top)

Don't do this to me, Nicky. I would never turn you in.

YOUNG ED

(impersonation)

This is the end of the line for you pigeon face. You're a dirty rat, you see, and no one likes dirty rats, you see. Say your prayers, stoolie.

Ed picks up the ax, weighs it, takes aim as Alice jumps up.

ALICE

Edward J. Dennehy. Stop.

Ed tosses the ax and Alice screams as it goes flying, end-over-end. The blade impales itself into the wood a few inches away from Drew's left arm. Alice runs up the stairs. Exits.

The rest of the audience are in awe and applause with gusto.

INT. DENNEHY LIVING ROOM -- ANOTHER DAY

Drew and Ed are listening to a recording of John Barrymore reciting a soliloquy in HAMLET on TV. Ed gets up and turns off the TV and poses. He IS Barrymore.

YOUNG ED

To be or not to be, that is the question: whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ...
Damn. I forgot the rest. Why hasn't Alice been at the basement stories?

YOUNG DREW

She thought the ax show we did was stupid. She says she's never coming here again. She hates you.

(poses)

O, that this tutu solid flesh would melt ...

YOUNG ED

Tutu? It's too too. The character's supposed to feel bad. It's like a 'so so' sorry, kind of thing.

(pause; poses)

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue and ... And skippingly with my legs.

He clowns around skipping in a circle and bows.

INT. IN THE KITCHEN -- DAY

Edwin and Hannah Dennehy are putting on their coats.

EDWIN

You have all the emergency numbers by the phone. We'll be in the city at a play called, The Hostage.

Hannah and Edwin leave. Ed sits alone with Grandmother. After a few beats of silence, she begins to mumble and then ...

GRANDMOTHER

Oh, Lawrence, you are my Pip.

ED (V.O.)

My grandmother hallucinated a lot. Sometimes she thought I was Gramps. Sometimes she thought she was 30 years old again. And sometimes I just pretended to be her husband.

GRANDMOTHER

Oh, Lawrence, you are a sexy man.

Grandmother reaches over the table with her hand and Young Ed obliges her and holds her hand.

YOUNG ED

You are a sexy woman, Victoria.
When I'm in those coal mines
working all day, and I see nothing
but men sweating and farting, I
think about you and I get a boner
harder than an oak.

There is a knock on the door and Ed can see from the table
that it is Alice. Ed runs to open the door.

ALICE

Are we going to have a play today
in the basement?

YOUNG ED

We can if you want. But it'll just
be you and me.

Ed escorts her to the stairwell. Alice looks different today.
She is wearing makeup. A tight sweater. Older than her years.
She starts to walk down to the basement. Ed hesitates at the
top - still in the kitchen.

GRANDMOTHER

Where are you going, honey bunch?

YOUNG ED

(whispers to Victoria)
I'll be right back, my love.

DREW (V.O.)

Whoa! Can we skip this part?

ED (V.O.)

No. This is an important. Alice ...
Is a very important person. She's
... It was a wonderful thing.

DREW (V.O.)

Oh, good God! Help me.

YOUNG ED

(To Alice)
I'll be right back. I have to put
my Grandmother to bed.

GRANDMOTHER

Edward, where is Lawrence?

YOUNG ED
Upstairs, Grandmother.

Ed scoops his grandmother up in his arms and carries her out of the kitchen.

ED (V.O.)
My grandmother's mind snapped in
and out of different realities.
There was no predicting it. I just
had to go with the flow.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S BEDROOM

Ed enters the room.

GRANDMOTHER
Where's Lawrence?

YOUNG ED
Right here, Grandmother.

Ed puts Victoria down. A bathrobe hangs on the door.

YOUNG ED
(pointing to the bed)
Your husband is in the bed. See.

Victoria looks and a loving expression takes over her face.

GRANDMOTHER
(to an empty bed)
Oh, Lawrence. I'll be right there.
(to Ed)
What are you doing here? You can go
now, Edward. Don't be a snoop.

Ed takes the bathrobe from the hook and hands it to his grandmother. She takes the robe and goes into the bathroom.

INT. BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Ed skips down the steps and sees Alice sitting on the floor.

YOUNG ED
I thought you were angry with me.

ALICE
I was. My brother told me you were
sorry, so ... I'm not angry now.

Ed sits down next to Alice.

ALICE

Edward, I saw my parents in bed the other night. They were having sex.

She moves close to Ed and they kiss. A SOUND of vinyl record scratching sends the action back to the den.

INT. DREW'S HOUSE, THE DEN -- PRESENT DAY

Ed is smoking a cigarette. Drew bolts to his feet. While he walks over to the window to open it to remove the smoke ...

DREW

My sister is dead, for crying out loud. Can't you just leave her be. She was only twelve years old.

ED

She was thirteen. I was twelve.

DREW

Whatever.

ED

Cool your jets, Drew. You've known this for over twenty-five years ...

DREW

Yeah, well, It's ... Not right.

ED

It wasn't like that. It was something that just happened. We trusted each other. We experimented. It felt right.

DREW

I'm not in the mood to hear this part of your life.

ED

I got to tell it, Drew. I got to get everything out, and I can't do it by cheating on the story.

Drew falls down in his chair and motions for Ed to continue.

INT. BACK TO DENNEHY'S BASEMENT -- FLASHBACK

Ed and Alice are partially dressed. She gets up and pulls the 'curtain' off the rope and places it on the floor. She lays down on the blanket.

ALICE

Touch me ...

While staying on their faces--

ED (V.O.)

It was a beginning of a beautiful relationship, Drew. I know it sounds dirty or something, but it wasn't that way at all. It was innocent. Wonderful. Caring.

DREW (V.O.)

Okay. So you had your first encounter with my sister. Let's move on.

INT. CORPUS CHRISTI CHAPEL CONFESSIONAL BOOTH -- DAY

A whispering, chatty, two-way conversation is taking place inside the confessional.

After a beat, Ed comes out and wipes imaginary sweat from his forehead and sighs. The center door to the confessional booths flies open. Father Tully sticks his head out and looks both ways. There is no one else on line.

FATHER TULLY

Edward. You come back next week and we'll check on your progress.

As Ed walks out of the church he meets up with young Drew who bolts out of the first pew to walk with Ed. Ed's not talking.

YOUNG DREW

Well. What happened?

YOUNG ED

He said it was a mortal sin.

YOUNG DREW

You see. Told ya.

INT. CORPUS CHRISTI CLASSROOM -- LATER

Two circles are drawn on the blackboard under the word SOUL. The words VENIAL SINS and MORTAL SINS are written below the circles. Ed sits in class watching Sister Francis Mary pound a myriad of dots on the first circle.

SISTER FRANCIS MARY

And this is how your soul looks
when you have venial sins.

She then fills in the second circle completely with chalk. She turns and talks to the class (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

Sister Francis Mary had a way of categorizing sins. Tucking my tie into my shirt was a venial sin.

DREW (V.O.)

I'm just as Catholic as you, and there's no way tucking your tie in your shirt was ever a venial sin.

ED (V.O.)

It was the insubordination that was the sin, numbnuts. Anyway, you'd be happy to know my escapades with your sister would put me in the fires for all eternity. My point is I wasn't buying into all that.

Young Ed raises his hand.

SISTER FRANCIS MARY

Yes, Edward. What is it?

YOUNG ED

Well, I was wondering. If a baby was baptized and then died, wouldn't it go right to heaven?

SISTER FRANCIS MARY

He'd go right to heaven since his soul is clean. You know that. You have another question, Edward?

YOUNG ED

Yes. If I had a baby brother, I'd want him to go to heaven, right?

SISTER FRANCIS MARY
 Jesus, Mary and Joseph, please give
 me patience. Yes, Edward. So...?

YOUNG ED
 Well, what greater love could I
 have than to kill him so he would
 go to heaven for all eternity.
 Wouldn't this act of murder really
 be an act of love?

Sister Francis Mary can't speak she is so horrified.

YOUNG ED
 I mean, if I put a pillow over his
 face and smothered him or
 something, so it didn't hurt, he'd
 have a fast ticket to heaven. If
 someone offered me a guarantee to
 heaven like that, I'd take it,
 wouldn't I? That would be something
 that's good, not bad.

SISTER FRANCIS MARY
 That's enough Edward. Get up. Get
 up. GET UP.

Ed gets up and the Sister comes over with a ruler. Ed holds
 out his hands and the Sister smacks him a couple of times.

INT. DENNEHY'S BASEMENT -- DAY

Alice and Ed kiss. Both are partially naked.

ED (V.O.)
 So, anyway, I didn't see eye-to-eye
 with the establishment. Sex was not
 ugly for Alice and I, and it was
 not a mortal sin. We didn't view it
 that way. And that's that.

Present-day Drew moans (VO).

ED (V.O.)
 But then, something happened.

In the middle of an embrace, Alice jumps up and ...

ALICE
 Ed. What's the matter?

Ed's body convulses in a epileptic fit while Alice screams repeatedly. After a moment, his eyes opens. His body relaxes.

Alice is completely clothed but Ed has his pants down over his ankles. Ed appears confused. Edwin runs down the steps in response to Alice's screams. He sees Ed pulling up his pants and begins yelling (AD-LIB). Edwin kicks a chair and, while his rage continues, Alice runs up the stairs, crying.

ED (V.O.)

This was in eighth grade. It was the last time I had a seizure, and it was the last time Alice and I...

DREW (V.O.)

Shut up. I don't want to hear it.

ED (V.O.)

My point is, my dad made it seem like what we did was dirty. What a laugh. Coming from him, I mean. I was true to your sister, Drew.

DREW (V.O.)

Really, now. Didn't you have a thing for Maria Compos in eighth grade? How honest was that, you poking my sister while trying to seduce Maria.

ED (V.O.)

Ah, yes. I forgot about her

INT. CORPUS CHRISTI -- GYMNASIUM -- NIGHT

The floor is packed with kids dancing. Young Drew and Ed are by the punch table pointing at girls on the dance floor.

YOUNG DREW

That one there. She's very pretty. I think I'll ask her to dance.

As Drew walks off to ask a GIRL, a tweenie in a pony-tail, to dance, a very cute Marie Compos comes up to Ed. They dance.

LATER AT THE DANCE

In the coat room, Marie and Ed are laying down, kissing. Ed has his hands all over her. After a beat--

SISTER FRANCIS MARY

Edward!

There, standing before Ed and Maria, is a stern Sister Francis Mary. Behind her are several CLASSMATES.

INT. CORPUS CHRISTI HALLWAY -- DAY

Ed walks the hallway while male STUDENTS pat Ed on the back.

BOY ONE

Way to go Ed. I heard you got a
good feel ...

Alice is by her locker and Ed heads right for her.

YOUNG ED

Alice. I don't know what you heard,
but I just want to explain ...

ALICE

You don't have to explain anything,
Edward. We live in America, don't
we. It's a free country.

YOUNG ED

I know, but I just want to explain.

Alice turns and faces Edward.

ALICE

Okay. Explain.

ED (V.O.)

You're right, Drew. I wish I
behaved differently. It was the end
of our beautiful relationship.

DREW (V.O.)

Can we move on, please?

INT. CHAMINADE CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ed sits in a classroom in a MADRAS JACKET, a button down shirt and tie. He is now wearing a pair of PENNY LOAFERS.

The bell rings and the STUDENTS (all male school) file out of the classroom. Ed exits the room and meets up with Drew who spins around, showing off a white Chaminade sweater.

YOUNG DREW

I made the cheerleading squad.

YOUNG ED

You look great. You can cheer for me while I tear up the gridiron.

YOUNG DREW

I don't know, Ed. Chaminade's in a tough league. Some very big guys out there. They'll flatten you out, like a pancake.

ED

They gotta catch me first.

DREW

I know you're fast. But you only weigh a 135 pounds soaking wet. You'll get killed.

Ed dismissed Drew with a wave and heads into a class.

EXT. CHAMINADE FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY

A field full of 14 year-old BOYS are running, punting, passing and kicking footballs. Four football COACHES are directing the different disciplines.

Ed and a dozen other BOYS line up on the 50 yard line. BILL FOWTES and his assistant, GEORGE TOOP, are on the goal line. Bill blows his whistle and the boys sprint the 50 yards.

Ed crosses the finish line with DICK NOERING and BOB GATELY.

ED (V.O.)

Dick Noering did a nine-nine in the hundred in his senior year. No one could beat him. Not even Gately.

DREW (V.O.)

Dick weighed less than you did. The pads slowed you both down.

MR. FOWTES

Dennehy! You any relationship to Brian Dennehy?

YOUNG ED

Yeah. He's my brother.

Mr. Fowtes highbrows Mr. Toop.

FOWTES

(to Mr. Toop)

We'll try him at fullback. Should grow into it in a couple of years.

DREW (V.O.)

Gately weighed twenty, thirty pounds more than you and Dick. He gets hit, he gets back up. You get hit, you go in for x-rays.

WEEKS LATER

The team practices on the field with full pads. Ed plays fullback; Gately sets himself at the halfback position.

Ed is given the ball, runs up the middle, bounces off a player, and scampers around in the backfield, dodging the defense. A defensive player barrels through and lays Ed out.

Mr. Fowtes motions for another player to take Ed's slot and motions Ed to take the other halfback slot.

On the next play, PETE GROH, the quarterback, falls back for a pass. He passes to Gately in the flat who is off and running, dodging and weaving.

Gately gets trapped by two defenders and just before going down he flips the ball to Ed. Ed outkicks the rest of the defense into the end zone.

SERIES OF SCENES

This series is intended to take Ed through a season of football and into the next year.

1) On the football field: Ed is given the ball and runs thirty yards sideways to gain ten yards forward. Edwin is sitting in the stands and claps.

2) The Cheerleading TEAM, led by Drew, AD-LIB a cheer.

3) Chaminade gymnasium: Ed, Drew and Gately stand around together at a post game SOCK HOP. A girl walks up to Ed, and he goes into a crazy improvisational Rumba.

4) At a basketball game in the stands some regulars, Gately, Drew and Noering, etc., are cheering.

Chaminade scores and they jump to their feet cheering. Off to the side, Ed sneaks out a flask and drinks in private.

5) A quick shot of winter morphing into spring, then summer.

END OF SERIES

EXT. SOMEWHERE NEAR MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE -- SUMMER OF 1961

Younger Ed is walking down the road to Mineola Playhouse.

ED (V.O.)

I was going to try out for the school play as a freshman. Mike's friend, Tom Cosgrove, went to the seminary and graduated as a Marianist Brother. He came over to teach Drama at Chaminade in the Spring of our freshman year. The lead roles went to the seniors. Still, I was kicking myself for not auditioning for one of the minor roles. Anyway, that summer my mom suggested I go to the playhouse to get some experience. So, I hauled myself over to Mineola Theatre which was owned by Lorne Philbin. He owned five other theaters in the Northeast and rotated the summer shows between them.

Ed walks up to the front door. It's locked. Ed stops in front of billboard advertisement Desperate Hours.

ED (V.O.)

Desperate Hours was playing at Mineola Playhouse. That's when I knew I was in the right place. I already saw the movie version with Humphrey Bogart. The Broadway play was a springboard for Paul Newman. My dad took Mom and I to a later stage production with Sammy Davis, Jr. I remember saying to myself, "I could be that tough hood". Don't forget I used to be a greaser once.

Ed is standing in front of the billboard and the ticket booth lady, ELENOR, waves him over.

ELENOR

It's a little slow for a Saturday afternoon. We got some vacant seats if you want to go in. No charge. Show started already, though.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE -- MORNING

Ed walks into the theatre while the play is well into the first act. He sits in the back row, which is empty. After a couple of seconds, Elenor sits next to Ed.

ED

Her name was Elenor Lopez. A real sexy thing.

She leans into Ed and kisses him.

EXT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE

Ed exits the theatre in the middle of a pack of PEOPLE. He sees Elenor in the ticket booth. She smiles and Ed tosses a half-salute. Ed goes around back and checks the backstage door. It's unlocked, so he walks in.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE

For a few seconds Ed cautiously looks around for someone. The office door opens and a MAN and a WOMAN exit.

ED (V.O.)

Anyway, after the show I snuck in the back. It was dark. Couldn't see much. Then, the theatre's technical director, Leon Gursten, comes out of a room with a good-looking woman who I find out later is Kathy Noble, the theatre manager. Leon sees me and I ask him if I can help out in any way. I told him I was willing to do anything. After all these years, thinking about it now, it's odd that he hired me. But he did, for seventy-five dollars a week. I did everything from cleaning toilets to sweeping floors. I did much more than that.

INT. MINEOLA THEATRE -- DAY

While Ed is sweeping the floor one day, Kathy approaches.

KATHY

Edward, you got a driver's license?

YOUNG ED

Yes, of course ...

ED (V.O.)

NOT. Even at that early age, I knew that telling a lie was okay in order to get ahead. It was a part of the game and no one was going to get ahead by being righteous.

KATHY

Good. Claudette Colbert is coming in today ...

ED

You mean, the Cleopatra ... It Happened One Night ... Imitation of Life ... That Claudette Colbert?

KATHY

I want you to chauffeur her around.

Kathy tosses Ed a set of keys.

KATHY

Here. It's a spare set of keys to my Lincoln. Dent it and I'll hog-tie you and stuff your mouth with your own entrails.

ED (V.O.)

I mean, the only driving I did was when I stole my father's car. And I only did that once, since I got caught because I parked the car in a different spot. My father kind of noticed that. I mean, what the hell, it was three in the morning and I didn't figure some jerk neighbor would come home from a binge and take my father's parking spot while I was out joy riding.

INT. KATHY'S LINCOLN -- DAY

Ed, donning a limousine driver's cap, drives Ms. Colbert who is sitting in the back. Ed eyes Colbert in the rear view mirror while she puts makeup on. Ed rides over a bump.

COLBERT

My dear boy. Do me a favor and find the smooth side of the road while I make myself presentable.

ED

Yes, Miss Colbert.

COLBERT

If you can do that, I'll let you call me 'Legs'. Walter Winchell used to call me that, you know.

ED (V.O.)

Later, I learned they called her 'the fretting frog' because she worried too much about how she looked during filming. But to me she was one classy woman. A genuine act. A sweetheart.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

Ed waits to drop the curtain as he watches Colbert deliver her final monologue (AD-LIB). He looks past Colbert, past the lights and into the audience.

ED'S POV

He sees a veil of darkness due to the stage lights pointing directly at him. He tries to focus. Finally, he sees eyes looking at her. Hundreds of them. Eyes without faces.

BACK TO SCENE

Ed looks to Leon across stage who has his hand held out instructing Ed to hold the curtain. Claudette finishes her monologue and steps back a couple of steps. Leon motions for Ed to drop the curtain, which he does.

Claudette looks to Ed and nods. Ed lifts the curtain, and she bows to the applause.

She steps back, Ed lets the curtain drop and Claudette exits the stage. She walks past Ed and sticks a twenty-dollar bill in his shirt pocket.

COLBERT

Thanks for not dropping the curtain
on my head, Edward.

INT. APARTMENT ROOM -- NIGHT

Ed is in bed with Elenor Lopez and she is leaping around more like a gymnast than a woman having sex. After a beat or two of maneuvering, a knock on the door interrupts their foreplay. The door opens and another WOMAN peeks in.

WOMAN

You guys are making me horny as
hell. Either you quiet down or I'll
come in and make it a threesome.

Elenor motions for her to hop in. The woman accepts the invitation and three of them begin making love to each other.

DREW (V.O.)

A ménage a trios! You gotta be
kidding. You're fifteen-years-old.
In my entire life I've never had
... Forget it. Zip past this.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE -- DAY

Leon and PAT HINGLE are sitting in the front row of an empty theatre while Ed is sweeping the stage.

ON HINGLE AND LEON

HINGLE

I'm not one to cause problems, Leon,
but I want my own dressing person.
And don't give anyone who uses more
moisturizers than my wife, if you
know what I mean. I've had a couple
of bad experiences lately.

LEON

Well, I don't have anyone ...

Hingle points to Ed and ...

HINGLE

Give me that boy. He's fine.

ED (V.O.)

So, I became Pat Hingle's personal dresser. He played On the Waterfront, the Land Before Time ... Was in the Batman movies. I'm 15 years-old putting a corset on a man twice my age so he could play de Bergerac. What a summer this was becoming.

EXT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE -- DAY

The billboard displays Carol Channing's name who is starring in The Millionaires.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

CAROL CHANNING and the CAST rehearse on stage. ARTHUR LOWE sits in an empty theatre watching her while Ed watches from backstage. Leon approaches Ed and gives him money and a ticket stub.

LEON

Go next door and pick up Carol's clothes from the dry cleaners.

YOUNG ED

(pointing to Arthur)
Who the hell is he?

LEON

Art Lowe, Carol's husband. He owns a lot of movie theaters. Now go.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE - LATER

Ed runs in with the clothes and notices everyone is taking a break, so he hands the clothes to Carol. She inspects them.

CHANNING

You little twit. Look at this dress. There's coffee stains all over it.

Arthur Lowe grabs the dress and inspects it.

LOWE

What's the matter with you, boy?
Can't you do a simple thing right?

CHANNING

How am I going to go to Duffy's
house now, Arthur? I must wear my
red dress. Do something.

LOWE

(to Ed)

You twit. You will pay for this.

LEON

Mr. Lowe. Edward didn't do this. He
just went across the street and got
your clothes from the dry cleaners.

CHANNING

Then we must see the proprietors of
the dry cleaners. This is totally
unacceptable. I can not wear this
dress with coffee stains on it.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

The back door flings open. Leon and the dry cleaner owner
walk in. Channing and Lowe are waiting for their prey. While
they discuss the issue of the coffee stain (MOS) ...

ED (V.O.)

I knew I was in the right place
watching these two snipping people.
This uppity witch married to this
billionaire, just as bitchy, and
screaming at this poor Chinaman.

(singing)

Well, hello Dolly, say good-bye
Dolly. It's so nice to see you go.

(pause)

Actually, Channing didn't play Levi
Dolly yet. That was few years later.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE -- LATE SUMMER '61

Leon and Ed stand outside the office and Leon is inspecting
Ed. Ed has a script in his hands. Several other 'wannabees'
are sitting outside the office rehearsing lines.

YOUNG ED

What if I do get the part? I have to go to school in three weeks.

LEON

It's only 5 lines, Ed. And judging from the way Winters is behaving, I think your few lines are going to last longer than the play will.

Ed faces the door and Leon motions for him to go in.

INT. MINEOLA OFFICE

Ed enters with a copy of the script. TIM EVERETT, the director, sits behind a long desk with Kathy, the theatre manager introduced earlier.

TIM

Okay, Mr. Dennehy. You're here for the Shore Patrolman. Read.

IN A SPLIT SCREEN or in an otherwise unobtrusive double image, Ed recites (muted) lines on one image. The other image has Humphrey Bogart reciting (muted) the same lines from Casablanca which Ed studied in series of scenes on page 39 item 5. The mannerisms of Bogart are identical to the mannerisms Ed is giving in this cold reading.

After the reading is finished, the director sits expressionless at the table. Finally, he yells--

TIM

Leon?

LEON

Yes, Tim.

TIM

Get this boy an Equity Card.

SERIES OF SCENES

1) ELENOR'S APARTMENT - Ed and Elenor are in bed. In the heat of passion, Ed whispers into Elenor's ear.

YOUNG ED

Oh, yes, I love you more than anything. Yes, you are my cherub.

2) AT A HOTEL: Ed walks up to room 103; he knocks on the door and Kathy greets him dressed in a loosely tied bathrobe; the theatre manager pulls him in and begins to disrobe him.

ED (V.O.)

I had no idea what was going on.
Unbridled naivety, that's what it
was. I know I'm not good-looking.
I'm getting screwed by older women.
More than one woman. And I'm not
even in tenth grade yet. I didn't
have time to integrate what sex
was, or should be ...

3) AT THE PLAYHOUSE - Ed sits in the front row of the empty theatre watching the rehearsal. Director Tim Everett sits in the back of the theatre watching.

At the rehearsal SHELLY WINTERS, (50s), broad at the beam, acts on stage with ROBERT WALKER. She struts forward and begins reciting her lines (AD-LIB). She stumbles and then tosses the script to the floor.

WINTERS

I'm cold here. I'm cold. I have no
lights on me.

ED (V.O.)

Winters is just into her first
entrance. It was a disaster. Here
she is, this tent-of-a woman, far
removed from her ravishing self of
the nineteen forties, complaining
she was cold in the heat of summer.

WINTERS

EVERETT ...

Tim comes running from the back of the theatre, runs past young Ed, and up the stage steps.

WINTERS

You know, I have won an Oscar. I
have won a Tony. I have won an
Emmy. And you're telling me that
you can't get some heat in here ...

4) AT A BAR - Walker and Ed have been drinking and are in mid-conversation. The BARTENDER drafts up two beers and places them in front of Ed and Walker.

Both men clink their mugs and take healthy swigs, then plop their drinks back down on the bar. Walker laughs, then--

WALKER

You know, James Stewart worked with her in Winchester and after it was filmed he said that she should've been spanked.

YOUNG ED

She's a little bit big for that now, don't you think, Mr. Walker?

They both laugh.

WALKER

Don't pay attention to any of that crap. That's all it is. Just crap.

5) BACKSTAGE AT MINEOLA: Walker and Winters are playing to a live audience while Ed watches the action backstage.

Tim is standing behind Ed who is wearing a pure white shore patrolman's uniform with a white sailor's hat and a black SP arm band with a gun and billy club strapped to his hip.

Ed is waiting to go on stage for his day of glory while Robert Walker finishes his lines and leaves the stage through a prop door. After a few beats, Tim taps Ed on the shoulder and Ed walks up to the prop door from back stage. He knocks.

Winters opens the door from the stage side. Ed enters and looks out into the audience, a wall of darkness.

ACTING ED

Hello, Ma'am. I'm looking for Bart West. He is AWOL from the Navy. We have word he is here.

Ed sees a DUFFEL BAG - a prop.

ACTING ED

May I look around?

ACTING WINTERS

Look if you must, but I don't know who you're talking about.

Ed looks in the second room and then comes back.

ACTING ED

Okay Ma'am. If you do see him,
please call the base security
office.

Ed starts to leave the stage, but Winters casts a seductive look and backs up to the bed. He grabs her, throws her, with some difficulty, on the bed. Roughs her up (acting). Winters screams and shouts and thrashes Ed across the face.

The curtain falls as he rips off the top of her dress. The audience responds with a thunderous applause.

END OF SERIES

INT. CHAMINADE CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ed is sitting and watching Brother JOHN BRADY as he writes on the blackboard. Ed is wearing a madras jacket with a checkered tie tucked into his shirt.

ED (V.O.)

So, my summer dreams went from this-
is-going-to-be-a-Broadway-New-York-
City-hit, to a two-week-run-in-
Mineola-flop. Then I went back to
school. And that was that.

John Brady turns from the blackboard where he wrote: "2000 WORDS: WHAT I DID FOR THE SUMMER".

BRADY

Your first English assignment is a
2000 word composition on what you
did for the summer.

The bell rings. Ed chuckles to himself.

ED (V.O.)

There was no way I was going to
write about my escapades that
summer. Mr. Brady wouldn't have
believed me anyway.

EXT. CHAMINADE FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY

COACH FLYNN paces the sidelines in front of his players who are sitting on benches watching the game. He pulls Ed in.

FLYNN

Dennehy. Tell O'Keefe to come out.
Forty-eight option pass.

Ed runs onto the field shouting O'Keefe's name.

On the next play. The ball is given to Ed and he runs around end. Ed passes to Gately for a modest gain.

INT. CHAMINADE HALLWAY -- DAY

Holly and other Christmas ornaments in the hallway establish the time of year. Ed stares at the BULLETIN BOARD - at the words AUDITION for Desperate Hours "Come One, Come all".

ED (V.O.)

Football came and went without much fanfare. Christmas was just around the corner. Brother Tom Cosgrove must've seen Desperate Hours at the Mineola Playhouse during the summer and decided to have it as the senior play. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the audition notice.

INT. CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- DAY

Tom sits at a table on stage supervising the sign-up process for the audition. Several STUDENTS mill around the stage while Ed steps up.

TOM

Ed, I'm not going to discourage you from auditioning, but please don't expect a large role. The primary roles are for the seniors.

YOUNG ED

I know, Brother Tom. But I'd like to audition anyway.

TOM

Absolutely. Just so we understand.

INT. DINING ROOM TABLE -- NIGHT

The script Desperate Hours sits on the table in front of Ed. He opens the script and begins reading. He poses, pulls at his hair, and then looks up to the wall ...

ACTING ED
(the bum; vanquished)
Sorry to bother you ma'am, but it
looks like I lost my way.

JUMP CUT

ACTING ED
(Barrymore; dramatic)
You, Hilliard, I seen what you been
up to! Clickety, clickety, click...

JUMP CUT

ACTING ED
(Cagney)
You, Redhead...keep that pretty
mouth shut today, see...

JUMP CUT

ACTING ED
(Bogard)
You know! You don't know nothin'!

JUMP CUT

ACTING ED
(himself)
... And the bastard walkin' right
up 'n cloutin' me. I can still hear
the way the bone cracked...

JUMP OUT

Ed tosses the script into the garbage just as Hannah opens the door and walks into the house with bag of groceries. Before going into the kitchen, she picks up the script from the garbage and tosses it back on the table.

YOUNG ED
It's no use. They give all the good
roles to the seniors.

HANNAH
Don't let a dumb tradition stop you.

INT. CHAMINADE AUDITORIUM -- DAY

A STUDENT finishes his cold read, then exits. Ed walks up.

Tom sits in the front row reading Ed's resume.

TOM

I didn't realize you did so much over at Mineola, Ed. Okay, why don't you turn to page twelve. Do Winston.

YOUNG ED

Brother, may I do the Glenn character, the monologue at the end? I know, I know, it's the main character. But if I did the monologue it would be more than you asked and more than enough to make a decision on where to cast me.

TOM

If I cast you at all, Edward.
(pause)
Okay. Fine. Go ahead.

Ed looks up and pauses. He tosses the script to the floor.

Ed's vision of the audience is the same 'eyes' looking at Claudette Colbert during her monologue. Hundreds of them. Except now the eyes are looking at him. He plays to the eyes.

SPFX -- Ed's struggle to find his own voice:

While Ed recites the monologue a collage of actors who Ed has imitated loom behind him as ghost-like figures: Pat O'Brien, John Barrymore, Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, the NY City bum, and Brian when he was acting in the High School play.

The procession of the images collide with Ed's image trying to overtake them. His image fails to stay in focus and we go on to the next character's face. The MOS ends as--

ACTING ED

No! You ain't gotta Goddamn, stinkin' thing to say! You, Hilliard, I seen what you been up to! Clickety, clickety, click. I can see them wheels goin' around in there, Pop. Don't ever try that again! You know, I had an old man like you, Pop. Always callin' Mister God. Little punk went to church every Sunday... took it from everybody... licked their shoes...

Ed's image finally dominates the others as he finds his own voice. It's just Ed now.

END OF SPFX

ACTING ED

...be a Punk ...be a nobody...take
it from you shiney-shoed, look-down-
your-noses sonsabitches with white
handkerchiefs in your pockets!

Ed snatches an imaginary handkerchief from the imaginary Hilliard's breast pocket, spits in it, throws it to the floor.

ED

Clickety, clickety, click...you
remember, Pop...I could kill you
just for kicks.

ON BROTHER TOM -- His mouth hangs wide opened.

INT. CHAMINADE CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ed knocks on the door and enters. Tom is sitting at his desk.

YOUNG ED

You wanted to see me, Brother Tom?

Tom, frowning, does not say anything right away.

YOUNG ED

I just want to be in the play,
Brother Tom. I'll take anything ...

TOM

Congratulations, Ed. You're the
first underclassman to win the lead
in a senior play. May God help us.

Tom laughs and extends his hand and they shake.

SERIES OF SCENES: To follow Ed through the rehearsal process:

1) On Chaminade stage with all the ACTORS and Tom.

TOM

Let me introduce you all to the
three ladies from the Sacred Heart
Academy.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

They will be playing the female parts. Joyce Linton, Lynn Donovan and Joan McGuinness.

2) The rehearsal begin: Ed tries to find his position on stage, slinging a gun over his shoulder, crouching down because he's being hunted, etc. ACCENT ON MOVEMENT

3) Ed studies his lines - reciting (AD-LIB) in front of the mirror, moving, crouching, expressing.

4) On stage: Tom tries to get Ed to stand and not crouch.

5) During rehearsal, Joyce slaps Ed in a scene. Ed summons a theatrical face, a contorted, twisted look of anger.

END OF SERIES

INT. CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- AFTERNOON

At rehearsal Ed walks across the stage and takes Joyce's face in the palm of his hand and forcibly pushes her away. She stumbles across the room and onto the floor.

Ed then takes his time revealing his scowling face to the players and the imaginary audience, then sits down on the couch. He slams his foot on the coffee table and the knick-knacks on the table wobble in place.

TOM

Okay. That was terrific, Ed. Good movement, good projection. A little too heavy on the foot though.

(to everyone)

Okay, that's it folks. Let's get some rest. Tomorrow's the big day.

INT. CHAMINADE CLASSROOM -- NEXT DAY

Ed sits in the middle of a classroom biting on a pencil in a nervous, fidgety way. He looks at the clock: 3:45 PM.

The TEACHER faces the CLASS and -

TEACHER

The mind is constantly in conflict with itself.

(MORE)

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Freud understood this conflict as a cause of human unhappiness, and led him to believe the mind was divided into three parts: the id, the ego, and the super-ego.

(slowly paces)

The id is the most primitive force. It causes the instant gratification in us. What it wants, it wants now without constraint.

During the teacher's ego-definition, Ed looks to the left and sees a man who looks like JOHN BARRYMORE with a zoot suit hat and overcoat from another era sitting in a front row seat.

TEACHER

The ego acts as a middleman in the ID's relations with reality. Ego strong-arms the ID, or suppresses its urges until an appropriate situation arises. For example, fear stops us from peeing in the classroom. Forces us to wait.

Ed shakes his head, a double-take, and the figure's not there anymore. As the teacher explains the super-ego, Ed looks to the right and sees a scraggly-looking, RAGAMUFFIN MAN with his head bent and his face painted as if he were a puppet.

TEACHER

The superego uses guilt as a means of enforcing the process already established between the id and ego. For example, if you do something which is acceptable to the super-ego, you experience pride. Conversely, if you do something wrong, you feel guilty, depressed.

Ed does another double take and the Ragamuffin Man is gone. The bell RINGS.

ED

(sighs; to himself)
I'm losing my mind.

A STUDENT comes up from behind and pats Ed on the shoulder.

STUDENT

Good luck tonight, Ed.

INT. BACKSTAGE OF CHAMINADE AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

People are filling the seats in the auditorium. Mike Dennehy and his WIFE sit. Then Brian walks in with JUDY, his wife.

Brian is wearing a military uniform, and Judy shows signs of pregnancy. Hannah and Edwin take seats next to their sons.

FROM BACKSTAGE

Ed peeks out into the AUDIENCE from behind the curtain. Every seat is taken. He sees his family.

Ed backs up against a wall, takes several, quick breaths. Brother Tom walks up and ...

TOM

What's the matter, Ed? Jitters?

ACTOR ED

I never saw an audience of a thousand people staring at me before. The Mineola playhouse had lights in the front. You couldn't see their faces.

TOM

You'll be fine.

INT. CHAMINADE AUDITORIUM -- A LITTLE LATER

In the middle of the first act, Ed, with a dungaree jacket over a prison suit, prowls the stage like he owns it.

Ed takes Joyce's face in the palm of his hand, a little more intense than the rehearsal scene, and tosses it like a shotput. She goes flying to the floor.

A resounding 'thump' has the audience giving a collective GASP, a spontaneous reaction to the horror of the inhumanity portrayed by Ed.

LATER

Ed sits in a chair and repeats the rehearsal scene from the night before and puts his foot on glass table. This time his foot shakes and causes the knick-knacks to rattle badly.

Ed's face begins to sweat. He loses concentration, tries to speak, but can't. The knick-knacks rattle more as he moves.

ED (V.O.)

What happened in the next few beats are as clear as day. I knew I was speaking my lines, but I was in another world. Unconscious almost. I turned around and looked on stage. It was as if something had washed over me.

SPFX

Ed rises and leaves behind his spirit self in the chair. Spirit Ed looks to his left and sees the entire stage is a haze. In this haze, a see-through curtain appears.

Ed's spirit gets up and walks through the curtain, and behind this curtain is the image of John Barrymore, the same image that just appeared in the classroom.

Off to the right, sitting in a corner, is the same Ragamuffin Man as well. A sign in front of him reads, "ERNEST".

SPIRIT ED

Who are you?

BARRYMORE

Well, Neddy, who do you think I am?

SPIRIT ED

You look like John Barrymore.

BARRYMORE

In the spirit, as they say.

Barrymore bows and Ed looks dumbfounded.

BARRYMORE

Come one , my aspiring thespian. Makes you think about what's real and what's not. Doesn't it? Now listen, Neddy. Don't crumble out there. You've just experienced the glory of stage. Something goes wrong, what do you do? Someone misses their cue ... Worse, someone forgets their lines and freezes? Oh, I hate that.

Barrymore gets very close and whispers in Ed's ear.

BARRYMORE

That's what acting is all about,
Neddy. Preparing for the
unpreparable. You've read my book.
You know what I'm talking about.

Barrymore pulls out a flask, takes a swig, and offers Ed
some. Ed takes the flask. He tries to take a drink and--

ED

There's nothing in it.

Barrymore takes it back, tips the flask and liquid pours out.

BARRYMORE

(points to his head.)

It's all up here. The key to it
all, is up here.

(beat)

Now. Listen to me, Neddy. You're on
remote right now ...

Barrymore puts the flask back in his pocket and points. They
both look out beyond the curtain and see Actor Ed performing.

BARRYMORE

You think an actor is measured by
collecting types and mimicking
their motions and emotions? You
know what the wisdom in acting is?

Spirit Ed shakes his head.

BARRYMORE

Neither do I. Just have some
humility and leave it at that.

Barrymore looks through the curtain and watches Ed acting.
Barrymore nods and seems to lose track of time.

SPIRIT ED

Mr. Barrymore?

BARRYMORE

Hmm.

SPIRIT ED

How will I know if I'm any good in
this business? Is it a measure of
humility?

BARRYMORE

Are you trying to trick me, Neddy?

SPIRIT ED

No. No. I want to act more than anything, but when I compare myself to someone like you ...

(puff of air)

If all it is, is humility, then ...

BARRYMORE

Alright, alright, alright.

SPIRIT ED

I can't hold a candle to you, Mr. Barrymore, is all I'm saying.

BARRYMORE

Don't worry your head about success, Neddy. You're here talking to me because you are one of us now. There's no turning back. You've crossed over. Maybe someday you'll find out why. But for now, just go out there and don't over do it. Let them have your character in dribs and drabs. Not all at once.

In the corner, the Ragamuffin Man yells out ...

RAGAMUFFIN MAN

ERNEST!

BARRYMORE

Don't pay any attention to him. He's always there, like a bad dream.

A rumble SOUND is the audience clapping outside this bubble. The Spirit Ed whips around and sees himself still acting on the other side of the curtain.

BARRYMORE

You have to go, Neddy. Can't stay on this side too long. It effects your brain, somehow. Like booze.

An unseen force is pushing Ed towards the curtain.

SPIRIT ED

But how will I know if I'm any good.

BARRYMORE

Good, better, best. Empty words.
Don't listen to all the 'method'
crap. Find the truth in yourself,
my boy, even if you have to lie.

SPIRIT ED

But how will I know ...

BARRYMORE

You'll know it when people start
returning your phone calls. That's
an inside industry joke.

Ed continues to shuffle back to the curtain, but Barrymore
holds his hand out and--

BARRYMORE

You'll just know it. Watch this.

(acting)

To sleep, per chance to dream, there
is a moment in every lifetime when
all the stars seem to gather
together and become as one and that
moment belongs to you. I was there
at night on that dark stage, when
suddenly I saw it could all be mine
if I wanted it, but the moment would
not wait for me. It passed me by.

(to Ed)

Was that good?

SPIRIT ED

Yes! My God, yes.

BARRYMORE

I knew it was good too. So go. Don't
let this moment pass you by.

Just before Ed is pushed onto the 'real' stage, we hear ...

RAGAMUFFIN MAN

ERNEST!

END OF SPFX

ED (V.O.)

So I morphed back into my body and
I find the play has progressed on
without me.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I became painfully aware that my reality was on stage. And all the stuff that happens in your reality was now my fake world. This stage, whether it be a chair, or a room with expressionistic walls, was my home. And my life in Mineola, in school, all of it, was the unreal world where I had to do the real performing. What transpired that night was a powerful, touchable event that just happened to me. I'm telling it to you honestly; it wasn't something I just thought up. It happened to me. It was an event that came to me by an outside force. Like I was a victim, or something.

On stage, Ed moves into another gear, and ...

ACTING ED

No! You ain't gotta Goddamn, stinkin' thing to say! You Hilliard, I seen what you been up to! Clickety, clickety, click. I can see them wheels goin' around in there, Pop...

As Ed continues the monologue (AD-LIB) the faces in the audience are attentive, enthralled. Especially -

THE DENNEHY FAMILY

Their faces: Edwin, Mike and Brian in awe; Hannah, tearful.

BACK TO THE STAGE

Ed acts with furious talent.

ED (V.O.)

I shifted into another gear when I came back from the curtain. I didn't even know there was an audience out there. I'm not talking about a conscious thing here and saying, this is how I reacted. I'm talking about, I have moved into a different place.

LATER

Ed is taking a bow to a standing ovation. The curtain comes down, and everyone clings to each other around Ed. It is like he has scored the winning touchdown in a championship game.

FROM ED'S POV

Ed is being dragged along backstage. Mike comes hustling towards him and pulls him aside. Mike, very excitedly ...

MIKE

That was the best performance I've ever seen from anyone. Your mother is still sitting in her seat. She's crying, that's how good you were.

Ed looks out into the audience and sees Hannah crying. Off to the side he sees Edwin and Brian having an argument.

ON BRIAN AND EDWIN

Brian steps out into the aisle with Edwin.

BRIAN

I have to go, that's all. I have to get back to North Carolina.

EDWIN

Go. Run away. You're good at that.

Brian points a finger into Edwin's face.

BRIAN

What's your problem? You've never forgiven me for enlisting in the service. Is that it, Dad?

Hannah turns and motions for Edwin to stop, to no avail.

EDWIN

It's not just that, Brian. You didn't complete college. You were more interested in partying and fooling around. You enlisted in the service, got your wife pregnant, and now where's your future? Got the whole picture, now?

Brian walks over to Judy, extends his hand and pulls her out into the aisle.

HANNAH

Brian, aren't you going to congratulate your brother?

Brian looks up at the stage and sees Ed peering out. Brian bends down and kisses Hannah.

BRIAN

Let the new golden boy have his time in the sun, Mom. I have to be back to North Carolina.

He leaves with Judy and is halfway up the aisle when ...

BRIAN

(to Judy)

Wait. I'll be right back.

Brian walks back to his father and gets real close.

BRIAN

As far as fooling around is concerned, I had a good teacher now, didn't I?

(looks to Ed; yelling)

Great job, Ed. I'll see you soon.

BACK TO ED

Ed waves to Brian then turns back to Mike and they embrace.

ED (V.O.)

Brian was at odds with my father again. Don't ever remember him saying anything about that night. My brother Mike, on the other hand, just got hired as an FBI agent and he came down to surprise everyone with the good news and to see the play. He loved it. Talked about it for years. He was so supportive. I love him for that.

Mike is whisked away from the commotion that soon takes over the scene. Actor BILL KEAHON pops into view then Tom Cosgrove follows, and a host of others expressing their delight at Ed's performance while -

ED (V.O.)

Billy Keahon was having an opening night party, but I couldn't shift gears. It was as if I was lost someplace, like a dream, let's say. The real world no longer existed for me ... Not the same way. My stage life was now my real world. Mike was in front of me raving how good I was. Brother Tom Cosgrove comes over and tells me I'm a born actor. But their words offered no comfort. I was absolutely frightened because what I perceived was my whole life suddenly wasn't real. I didn't ask for it to happen. I couldn't leave the stage or go to the party. I couldn't leave the dressing room until everyone was gone.

EXT. MINEOLA STREETS -- LATER

As Ed walks by himself, cars whiz by and the bright lights and the clear sky on a Spring night create a philosophical mood. As he walks--

ED (V.O.)

I convinced my mother I needed time alone. So, I walked home by myself to calm down. I wondered what would happen in my next performance. Would I step onto stage and have a normal theatre experience and go home afterwards to my real world and eat dinner in a artistically modern post World War Two home? Or would I be confronted with this invisible, gauzy curtain again, and find myself living in an alien world and calling it my real world? The fact was, and I didn't know this at the time, I switched realities. My stage life became my real world that night, and this was how it was going to be for the rest of my days. Very scary indeed. And that's the reason why ninety percent of all our good actors are hog-tied crazy people.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They're on drugs, booze, or are residents of luny bins or shooting someone. They're all nuts because I assume they all stepped through the same curtain I did. It was the scariest place in the world to be. I was sentenced to live my everyday life in a two-dimensional, unreal world. Do you understand me, Drew?

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

INT. DREW'S DEN -- MORNING

Drew tries to digest what he's just heard.

DREW

I never knew. This is quite a surprise, Ed. I always thought Ernest was a dream. I didn't know you were a psychological nut case.

ED

Well, maybe I was.

DREW

You still are.

ED

Nevertheless, Drew, I'm standing on a cliff. Either I fall off and go insane, or I commit my life to a world that was arguably insane in and of itself. I pitched my tent on that cliff, and that's where I lived from that night on. But that walk home from Mineola that night, I'm saying to myself 'okay, I gotta go home', but going home meant going back on stage the next day. The three-dimensional green and blue world, YOUR real world, is now my stage.

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

Over the years, the monumental events in life, like getting married, having children, should've been the milestones of my life, but instead they were, 'oh, that's kind of nice.' My milestones became the creation of my plays or characters in this new surreal, theatre world. Kind of scary stuff 'cause suddenly you've stepped into a new reality of a R-Crum cartoon world. Intellectually you know this isn't real, but there's something inside you that says you must go there because that's where the art is. Your children don't come with you. Your wife doesn't come either. And it doesn't matter if you lose an ear, or a spouse or two, or the love of a daughter or son because the worst of it is, when you go there, you never know ... You never know ... If you'll ever return.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPERIMPOSITION - White letters

TO BE CONTINUED ...

ED DENNEHY PART II

FADE IN:

INT. DREW'S HOUSE, THE DEN -- PRESENT DAY

Ed puffs away on a cigarette. Drew coughs, then gets up, opens a window and tries to brush the smoke out of the room.

ED

So much for starting from the beginning. I still feel like crap.

DREW

You told me about the curtain already, years ago, but I thought Ernest was part of a dream thing.

ED

What do you mean 'thing'? I'm not making him up. It really happened.

DREW

Ok. Maybe you should just continue.

SUPER: CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL, 1962

INT. CHAMINADE BASEBALL FIELD -- DAY

From the bench Ed watches a PITCHER throw to Coach FOWKES.

ED (V.O.)

I was an actor playing a sports figure going through the motions.

Fowkes waves for the next pitcher to come to the mound. Ed gets up from the bench and swaggers to the mound like Humphrey Bogart. Upon reaching the mound, he throws out dramatic poses and facial expressions at an imaginary crowd.

ED (V.O.)

At the varsity baseball tryouts, I couldn't just walk to the mound as Ed Dennehy, throw some pitches and exit. No. I WAS Sandy Koufax. Or John Barrymore playing Koufax.

DREW (V.O.)

You were Ed Dennehy playing John Barrymore playing Sandy Koufax.

Ed throws. The ball tips off Fowkes' glove. He stands up and just stares out to Ed. Ed seems as surprised as Fowkes.

ED (V.O.)

I reared back and threw a slider. A magical pitch. I made the team based on that one toss. Fowkes soon figured out I was a one-pitch wonder and he used me sparingly.

INT. MINEOLA LIBRARY, BACK ROOM -- NIGHT

A poster on the wall advertises the ZOO STORY: directed by Ed Dennehy with Drew Keil as Peter, and Ed Dennehy as Jerry. Ed and Drew are rehearsing on a make-shift stage.

DREW (V.O.)

Oh, I remember the Mineola Library. The summer before our Senior year.

YOUNG ED

Remember Drew, this is possibly the greatest monologue ever written.

YOUNG DREW

Where do you want me to start?

Brian enters in a full Marine dress uniform; hides from view while Ed (as Jerry) and Drew (as Peter) read from scripts.

YOUNG ED

I'll start. Okay, here we go ... Nobody's holding you here; remember that. Keep that in your mind.

YOUNG DREW

I know that.

YOUNG ED

You do? Good.

Ed prepares himself, as if posing for a still photo. Then, sweeping his arm, as if reading from a huge billboard ...

YOUNG ED

THE STORY OF JERRY AND THE DOG!

Ed sees Brian in full uniform. He bolts off the stage and they hug which leads to the transition to--

INT. DENNEHY DINING ROOM -- DAY

Mike, Ed, Hannah, Brian and pregnant Judy pose while DAMIAN, the photographer, snaps a picture. A FREEZE FRAME shows a broad smile from everyone. They all move from the still positions in the photo. Judy and Hannah go into the kitchen.

ED (V.O.)

Never forget that day. Brian comes home from the military with his pregnant wife Judy to live with us. The media attention made Brian a hero of sorts. It was really my dad pulling strings on of his news affiliations. In reality, Brian got knocked around in Saigon playing football. It was just a police action over there at this time.

YOUNG ED

Where's dad?

ED (V.O.)

We all knew where dad was. Or I should say what he was doing.

To break the somber mood, Mike takes his wallet out and shows Ed his FBI badge. Ed takes it and flashes it around.

YOUNG ED

FBI. Where were you last night?

LATER (IN THE DINNING ROOM)

The dinner finished, Hannah and Judy gather up the plates and head into the kitchen. While the men talk (MOS) -

ED (V.O.)

Dad's empty plate sat at the head of the table the whole time. Brian informs us our neighbor, Walter, got him a truck driver job in his meat packing place. A transition job to get his bearings, Brian said.

Hannah comes back in with a cake and candles.

ED (V.O.)

Ah, yes. Christmas in July.

SERIES OF SCENES

Sue Anne, Ed and Brian and transition to the Sr. year play.

1) At St. Aiden's stage: Large posters sit behind them advertising West Side Story. Brian paces back and forth shouting commands (AD-LIB) at Ed, Drew and OTHERS.

DREW (V.O.)

Brian started a theatre group at St. Aiden's where I got the acting bug playing one of the Sharks. And that's where you met Sue Anne.

Brian barks instructions as Ed and SUE ANNE rehearse a dance together. They embrace. Ed kisses her.

2) A shot of Ed, Sue Anne and Drew performing in front of an audience while Brian watches approvingly.

3) Brian is unpacking his truck at a restaurant, sweating.

4) The posters advertise Oklahoma. While Ed acts, Brian watches backstage. Their eyes meet. Brian gives a thumbs up.

6) ON TV - at the Dennehy's Mineola house: TV News shows the JFK funeral. The Dennehy family mourns.

7) A Christmas tree dominates the living room. Brian grits his teeth while his father gives each present its just due.

8) Ed lies awake at night listening to his Dad and Brian yell at each other (AD-LIB) about that Christmas day.

END OF SERIES

INT. CHAMINADE STAGE AUDITORIUM -- DAY

A poster of Our Town precedes the visual of Hannah, Edwin and Sue Anne in the audience watching Ed act in the play.

ED (V.O.)

Sue Anne was the only relationship I had. She was going to Mercyhurst College, hundreds of miles away.

INT. BEDROOM SOMEWHERE -- NIGHT

Sue Anne is asleep with her head on Ed's shoulder.

Both are under the covers but Ed stares at the ceiling.

ED (V.O.)

I loved her but I was going to college just a few miles away.

INT. HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY -- DAY

Ed sits in a 'mediated auditorium' - graduated seating.

ED (V.O.)

I received scholarships. Hofstra had the best undergrad drama, so I accepted their offer. Their New College Program attracted a lot of good-looking 'girls' and I sensed I had a bit of skirt to follow.

Ed, madras jacket, a cloth tie, etc., sits alone inspecting others with their t-shirts, denim and skull-bone decals.

ED (V.O.)

We made fashion statements that first day. Me with my madras jacket, penny loafers. It was more like a social gathering. I wasn't very good at such events. Even now I don't relate with people. I'm bad at small talk, unless it's about theatre. Then I could go on forever about the most trivial stuff. Like I could answer, who played the third gunslinger role in the only western Humphrey Bogart ever made?

Ed continues to scan the room; PAUL LEVINE, et al.

ED (V.O.)

So, while watching 11 students pass the time I tried to guess where people came from by the way they dressed. My madras look made me the preppy Long Island guy pretending to be rich. Paul Levine, with his army jacket, bandanna, the grunge look before the grunge look. Hair down to the waist. Stoned. Bohemian. White collar in the mid-60s means a gray flannel suit.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If you're a drama student at Hofstra, it means the grunge look. The greaser look, my music, gone forever. Damn those Brits.

DIANE SWARTZ, a beautiful Polynesian student, eyes Ed.

ED (V.O.)

I know it's not your opinion of me, Drew, but there I was, the cream of the crop, my talent in question. I was with the elite, hovering in the background. Maybe I was girding myself for finding out I wasn't this wonder boy everyone was telling me I was.

Diane gets up and Ed appears enamored at her slender, gorgeous body as she walks towards him. She sits by him.

DIANE

Who's your favorite actor?
(silence)
You must have a favorite actor.

ED

James Dean. Brando. My favorite of all is Montgomery Clift.

DIANE

Oh, yeah. Me too. He's great. You went to Catholic High School.

Ed's mouth hangs open as Diane eyes Ed's penny loafers, white socks, Madras Jacket - faded checks, East Indian print - and a skinny cloth tie with a tiny knot. She fiddles with his tie.

DIANE

Collegiate type 10 years ago, maybe. You have polo shirts in your closet. Deck shoes ... Cloth belt.

Ed tries to laugh, but can't.

DIANE

I'm just kidding. You look fine.

Diane laughs. Ed tries to, but gives a twisted smile instead. Paul Levine eyes Diane. He takes a seat close to her.

ED (V.O.)

This Paul Levine, a real Maynard G. Crebbs kind of character, tries to let Diane know he's interested.

Paul twirls a half-smoked joint between his fingers, an offering. Diane rebuffs him just as MARGO, black boots, 20s, slaps a paper on a desk to a student in front row.

MARGO

Check your name, pass it along. I'm Margo, a grad student, assistant to Miriam Tulin. She instructed me to tell you if you remember anything, remember this: Be on time. And now, here is Miriam Tulin.

TULIN swoops down the center aisle in a black leather skirt, a black cape and pumps, holding a long cigarette holder with nothing in it, wearing sunglasses, and glances at everyone at once, oozing eccentricity. She takes an imaginary puff then--

MIRIAM

Acting is action. Theatre is transaction.

She then saunters out of the room, and Margo immediately gets up before anyone can react and faces the room of students.

MARGO

We'll see you all tomorrow at 1 PM.

EXT. MADISON THEATRE -- LATER

Paul, Diane and Ed are huddled in the theater's alleyway smoking a joint. Diane and Ed laugh. Paul is very serious.

ED (V.O.)

So, to celebrate my introduction to Miriam Tulin, one of the most respected acting coaches on the East Coast, Paul introduced me to pot. He was such a post-Ginsbergian character. Very serious. Intense.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX -- MOMENTS LATER

Ed and Diane hang on each other, laughing while they stumble to apartment door. Ed leans against the door and falls in.

INT. INSIDE APARTMENT

Diane tiptoes across the kitchen and leads Ed past a bedroom.

DIANE

That's my roommate. She's also my
cousin, Barbara. Shhh.

They disappear into Diane's bedroom. A large THUMP sound.

ED (V.O.)

So, my first night at Hofstra, I
passed out.

INT. HOFSTRA MADISON HALL -- DAY

Paul and Diane are center stage cold reading from Zoo Story scripts in front of Miriam Tulin. Paul reads without emotion. Miriam bolts to the stage and--

MIRIAM

Paul, you're trying to get Diane,
i.e., Peter, to kill you. It sounds
like you're reading ingredients of
a ketchup bottle. You got to be in
her face. You're disturbed. Yes?

(to the class)

In class don't be afraid to go over
the top. It can always be toned
down. It's much harder to raise the
stakes especially if you're not a
volatile person. Paul, do it again.

Miriam sits down. Paul begins the monologue with more energy. A beat: Miriam leans over to a student and whispers something to her. The student gets up and walks onto the stage and yawns and stretches, distracting Paul in his monologue.

MIRIAM

No ... No ... No, Paul.

PAUL

She's distracting me.

MIRIAM

Distractions? Think, Mr. Levine. A
chair tips over or your foot gets
caught on the rug, a cup falls off
the counter by accident.

(MORE)

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

You're not on camera where I can yell 'cut'. You've got to work through it. Use it. Get energized from it. Sit down, Mr. Levine. Dennehy! Do Jerry.

Paul and Miriam take their seats. Ed jumps on stage holding his fist high then slowly bringing it back down to his chest. He looks out into the audience and then to Diane. He tucks his chin to his chest. Ed is over the top and he does not appear to be coming down. Diane, reading as Peter -

DIANE

You're full of stories, aren't you?

Ed walks across stage, then back. He gets in Diane's face. He tosses the book to the floor. He knows the monologue.

ACTOR ED

You don't have to listen. Nobody is holding you here. Remember that.

DIANE

I know that.

ACTOR ED

You do? Good ... All right.
(as if reading a poster)
THE STORY OF JERRY AND THE DOG

JUMP CUT

ACTOR ED

All right. The dog, I think I told you, is a black monster ...

JUMP CUT

ACTOR ED

I half opened the door that led into the entrance hall, and there he was; waiting for me.

JUMP CUT

ACTOR ED

I decided: First, I'll kill the dog with kindness, and if that doesn't work ... I'll just kill him.

JUMP OUT

Barrymore in a raincoat sits with the students miming a perfunctory, silent clap. No one sees him except Ed. But A gauzy curtain appears and Barrymore jumps on stage behind it. He waves to Ed who side-steps his way to the curtain. His spirit leaves, as his body continues acting in front of the class. The Ragamuffin Man sits on the floor, lethargic.

SPIRIT ED

I thought you were a delusion since
I haven't seen you for so long.

BARRYMORE

Life is a delusion, Neddy. Become a
Buddhist and you'll find that out.
You're on your way, my boy. That's
a tough monologue you're doing.

INTERCUT ACTIVITY BEHIND AND IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN

ACTOR ED

Don't react, Peter: just listen.

BARRYMORE

You're in the zone. I love that
saying. In my day we said you got
what it takes. I like 'You're in
the zone' better. It implies at
times you're on and at times you're
not. It has a better hook into
reality, don't you think, Neddy?

SPIRIT ED

Mr. Barrymore, why are you here?

BARRYMORE

Look at you. You remind me so much
of myself when I was that age. I
worked for a newspaper as an artist
back then, did you know that?

Ed sweeps the stage and with a swirl of John's hand, Actor Ed fast forwards the monologue then slows to normal speed.

ACTOR ED

He turned his face back to the
hamburgers, smelled, sniffed some
more, and then ... RRRAAGGGGGHHHH,
like that ... He tore into them.

BARRYMORE

Edward Albee. What a playwright. I wish he was around when I was in my prime. What you do in your prime is important. When the world treats you like the dog in your monologue you will ultimately ask yourself if you wasted your life ...

RAGAMUFFIN MAN

ERNEST.

SPIRIT ED

Who's that man? And why is he always calling out to Ernest?

BARRYMORE

Deter is his name. But don't mind him. Look at you out there. You listen to Miriam. She's one of the best. Ah, let's see if we can move this along.

John swirls again. Actor Ed fast motions then slows down.

ACTOR ED

... But it was always the same:
snarl, sniff; move; faster; stare;
gobble; RAAGGHH; smile; snarl; BAM.
(fast, then normal speed)
So, I decided to kill the dog.
(fast, then normal speed)
The day I tried to kill the dog I
bought only one hamburger and ... a
murderous portion of rat poison.

BARRYMORE

Okay. Here we go. Listen to this.
This is funny, Neddy.

ACTOR ED

He smiled benignly, wrapped up the
hamburger in waxed paper, and said:
A bite for ya pussy-cat. I wanted
to say: No, not really; it's part
of a plan to poison a dog I know.
But, you can't say 'a dog I know'
without sounding funny ...

END INTERCUT

BARRYMORE

That was a killer. Wasn't it funny?

SPIRIT ED

I suppose.

DETER

ERNEST.

Ed moves toward Deter.

BARRYMORE

You talk to him, I'm gone.

SPIRIT ED

A little melodramatic, aren't we?
Why is he always here with you?

BARRYMORE

I mean it. Don't talk to him.

Ed reaches Deter, bends and peers into his eyes. Ed looks towards John who has disappeared. Ed turns back to Deter.

SPIRIT ED

Who are you? Deter?
(Deter nods)
Who's Ernest?

DETER

Help me find him. I'm lost without
him. He's my ... My ... Everything.

Miriam stands up to stop Actor Ed's monologue. She's hardly audible, but we know she's giving instructions to Ed. Spirit

DETER

Help me find him?

ON STAGE -- ACTOR ED BLINKS AS HIS SPIRIT REENTERS HIS BODY.

MIRIAM

Love your exaggerated movements,
Ed, but tone it down. This is what
I want from all of you, class. If
you're over-the-top, we can work
with that. The essence is buried in
extravagance, you see. We can trim
the fat, yes? A magnificent
performance, Ed. NEXT!

INT. HOFSTRA CLASSROOM -- ANOTHER DAY

In front of the class, Ed steps widely and flails his hands.

MIRIAM

No ... No Edward. Not so big.
Improvisation is moderation. Tone
it down more. MORE trimming.

ED (V.O.)

No matter what I did on stage, it
always looked like I had a weapon
in my hand. She was responsible for
removing it. I learned how to act
because of her.

SERIES OF SCENES - TO TAKE US THROUGH TIME AND STORY.

1) Ed moving into an apartment, carrying a box.

ED (V.O.)

I convinced my parents I should get
an apartment off campus.

2) Ed and WOMAN ONE are in bed in his new apartment.

3) AT A POOL HALL - A MAN obviously lost as he hands money to
Ed. Ed counts the cash as WOMAN TWO jumps in his arms - Jump
cut to her in his bedroom.

ED (V.O.)

Rent was a 170 a month. My parents
contributed 100. My 70 came from
hustling pool on Biddel Street, our
own little Haight Ashbury in the
middle of downtown Hempstead.

4) ED'S APARTMENT: Diane shows up with a suitcase. As they
stroll into the bedroom and hop in bed.

ED (V.O.)

I was out of control with women,
but Diane was the most steady at
this time. I didn't want to share
her. So, she moved in with me.

5) ON STAGE: Diane is a compelling presence on stage.

ED (V.O.)

I was Mr. Antropus in Skin Of Our Teeth; first big staging. Diane, the boardwalk Beauty Queen, wandered around in a skimpy bathing suit. The start of our long term relationship.

6) ED'S KITCHEN - Diane and Ed are cooking. The apartment doorbell rings. It's BARBARA (Diane's cousin) as described in the VO. She comes into the kitchen, sits and they all eat.

ED (V.O.)

Diane's cousin, Barbara, went to Hofstra. Business major. Gorgeous. They were advanced ladies, already involved in the NY scene by way of Queens. Sexually active. Barbara moved in with us in the spare room.

7) ON STAGE. The ensemble acting (AD-LIB) to an audience.

ED (V.O.)

According to Wilder, Mr. Antropus goes to Atlantic City, meets a beauty queen and has an affair. A far out farce, like my life.

Ed acts less over the top, more refined. Miriam Tulin sits in the first row of the audience.

TULIN

Keep it simple. Less is more.

8) IN THE BEDROOM while making love with Diane, Barbara sneaks in and climbs under the covers. The movement quickens.

TULIN (V.O.)

Slower. Slower. I know it's a farce, but keep it simple. No extravagant moves. Yes. That's it.

END OF SERIES

INT. SCULPTURE CLASS -- DAY

Ed, JESSE GLIGMAN, and other STUDENTS are sculpting a female model posing nude. As the TEACHER inspects their work -

TEACHER

Listen up. I have to pick up my daughter at the hospital. Ed, when the class is over, you lock up.

The teacher exits. The model catches Jesse looking at her. She twirls her fingers around her breasts never losing eye contact. Jesse comes to her. She begins undressing him.

Another couple kiss, get scooped up in the moment and hide behind the dressing divider. This ignites the passion of two other students who come together, content in the open space. Insulted, a couple of students exit, leaving Ed and a female student alone. They begin to undress each other.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Diane is bending over the kitchen sink looking as if she is going to vomit. Ed sits at the kitchen table watching her.

DIANE

You must help me take care of this.

INT. HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY SCULPTURE CLASSROOM -- DAY

Jesse and Ed sit in the back during while a nude model graces the front of the room. Jesse hands Ed a note and--

JESSE

Say you need a 'night appointment'. His daughter died of a wire hanger job. He's obsessed with insuring no one else ends up like her. In case you're wondering, it's 300 bucks.

INT. CAR RIDE -- NIGHT

Liz Mayer, a New College student introduced earlier, drives Ed and Diane to a building. Ed gets out and escorts Diane in.

ED (V.O.)

This was a few years before Wade versus Roe. I went with two girls to New Jersey. Diane was getting the abortion. Liz Mayer was helping us out. It was all very hush-hush.

JUMP CUT -- Ed comes out of the clinic and jumps in the car where Liz is waiting.

ED

It'll be about an hour.

Liz puffs on a joint and hands it to Ed. She moves closer, touches him. Ed goes to object but quickly succumbs.

ED (V.O.)

A fling with Liz, a leading lady in some of my plays, began that night while Diane got an abortion.

EXT. CAR TRAVELING OVER A BRIDGE -- TWO MONTHS LATER

Ed is driving Liz into New Jersey. They are alone.

AT THE CLINIC

Ed pays cash to the doctor while Liz sits and waits.

ED (V.O.)

And two months later I was driving Liz for 'a night appointment' on the sly. Some things you're not proud of. Spent a lot of money in my lifetime, part on booze, part of it on drugs, and part of it on women. The rest I spent foolishly.

DREW (V.O.)

Not funny, Ed. I knew Liz. She had an air of depression after that.

ED (V.O.)

Yeah. I know. Like I said, some things I'm not proud of.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- DAY

Ed and a dozen Drama STUDENTS are on stage rehearsing an improvisational scene while DICK MASON directs them.

ED (V.O.)

So, I transferred to the regular drama department because they spent more time doing and less time in the classroom. Dick Mason's improv class seemed a waste of energy at first, but I'm always a behaved student. Respectful of the process.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- NIGHT

Mason, backstage, takes special notice of Ed performing to a packed audience. Ed moves in conjunction with the VO.

ED (V.O.)

My first foray into the jungle of Shakespeare under Mason's tutelage in the role of Orsino: a sophomore in a major production ... It just wasn't done. But there I was trying to summon all this raw emotion spouting that beautiful language. "Music be the food of love". I didn't have a clue on how to match movement with this grand language. I could do naturalistic movements as long as the speech was natural. But this was entirely different. The improv class helped me find a connection, so I did a Marlon Brando version of Orsino playing with this leather thong that hung from my doublet, delivering my lines through my fingernails.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- DAY

Mason sits in the first row directing rehearsal. A script, He Who Gets Slapped, sits on a seat next to him.

ED (V.O.)

We were doing He Who Gets Slapped which has grandiose language similar to Shakespeare. This was the play where I learned to marry physical movement with language. A crystallizing moment for me. But I struggled. It didn't come easy.

Mason marches on stage, waving his hands like a maestro.

MASON

Now quiet. No action. Stay still.
Now, jump ... Yes. Okay ... Okay.

Barrymore appears, miming Mason who struts across the stage instructing on the art of movement.

Ed struggles, but begins to follow Barrymore and finds a respectable marriage with cadence and the words. As Ed dances across the stage--

STAGE ED

I become happy when I enter the ring and hear the music.

BARRYMORE

No ... No, Neddy. Like this.
 (floating across stage)
 If music be a kind of love ... Play
 on ... Play on ...

INT. ON STAGE -- JUMP CUT

Barrymore is dressed as before while Ed wears a full clown's outfit and a made-up clown's face. The theatre is packed.

ED (V.O.)

Finally, I get it. I'm an acrobatic clown who had a crazy physical thing going, with Barrymore acting like a jerk, and me following his lead. Even to this day I can't stand static on stage. Everyone has to be moving. If I'm standing more than ten seconds I want to move.

While Ed moves across the stage, reciting -

ACTOR ED

I become happy when I enter the ring and hear the music. I wear a mask and feel humorous. I may say anything like a drunkard. Do you understand? Yesterday when I, with this stupid face, was playing the great man, the philosopher ...

With a two-footed thump, thump, Ed lands on his feet striking a monumental pose while looking at Mason in the front row.

ED (V.O.)

I wanted to act by doing and there was no shortage of that with Mason. But directors have to tell me, it's OK, Ed. Don't move. Just stay put.

MASON

It's okay, Ed. Don't move. Just stay there.

ON BARRYMORE - he backs off, watches Ed be still for a few seconds before moving again. Moved by Ed's performance, he smiles, bows and exits the stage.

INT. SMALL STAGE AT HOFSTRA -- DAY

Ed is measuring the stage with Jessy Gilgman. Ed and Jessy also rehearse while taking measurements. Jesse reads lines, takes large steps and marks the stage with chalk.

ED (V.O.)

I'm a success as an actor, but now I want more. So, I tell Mason I want to direct on the main stage. Only one underclassman has ever done that. Seven years earlier, Francis Coppola directed Street Car. Mason tells me to direct a show in the fall of my sophomore year at a smaller stage and if I do well he'd give me a shot at the main stage my junior year. So, I decide to direct Zoo Story. Why not. I knew it well enough. But it needed movement. So, Jesse and I measure every inch of the stage. If I was to choreograph the movement with the language, I needed to know what my boundaries were. But the stage was so bare. Zoo Story takes place in a park. If I was going to impress Mason, I needed to change the stage into a ... Park.

INT. BILL'S MEADOWBROOK -- A BAR IN HEMPSTEAD -- DAY

Ed walks in and sits down at the bar. TANK PASSUELLO, a large man and the owner, drafts up a beer and serves Ed. Several other CUSTOMERS are at the bar. They talk while -

ED (V.O.)

I met Tank through Brian. The Meadowbrook bar was a Jets hangout.

JOE NAMATH and WEEB EWBANK and several other JETS PLAYERS enter. A minor fuss is made as they belly up to the bar. Tank leaves Ed to serve his celebrity customers.

ED (V.O.)

NY Jets worked out at Hofstra, the only stadium with Astroturf back then. Joe Namath, Ewbank, all of them hung out at the Meadowbrook.

Tank leans over the bar and says a few words to Joe and Weeb and then points to Ed. After a beat, Tank waves Ed over.

ED (V.O.)

Tank introduced me as the next Jimmy Dean. Next thing I knew, I was talking to them about my Zoo project and asked Weeb if there was any extra Astroturf laying around. He said he would check it out.

EXT. HOFSTRA THEATRE -- DAY

A truck pulls up to the back entrance of the theatre. Ed opens the backstage door and the driver opens the back of the truck exposing a hundred yards of Astroturf.

INT. HOFSTRA THEATRE -- LATER

The stage is barren for the moment.

But in a TIME LAPSE PROCESS the Astroturf is fitted into place: a slope is built, then a park appears, complete with a rolling hill, lamp posts, benches, etc.

LATER

The curtain rises to a packed theatre. Jesse (i.e. Peter) is seated on the bench SR reading a book. He stands, cleans his glasses, sits back down and continues reading. Ed (i.e. Jerry) enters. He glides across the Astroturf stage while music from the Collector plays. He stops, faces Jesse.

STAGE ED

I've been to the zoo.

(Jesse ignores Ed)

I said, I've been to the zoo.

MISTER, I'VE BEEN TO THE ZOO!

LATER

With music Ed moves in a more stylistic way than ever before.

ED

ALL RIGHT!

(a la reading a billboard)

THE STORY OF JERRY AND THE DOG!

While Ed stands on a bench, climbs up a lamp post, etc.

ED (V.O.)

Albee leaves it up to the director and actors to find the action. Jerry delivers this 10-page monologue while Peter sits on the bench. Well, I don't care who you are, Mr. Albee, you can't just hint at movement. Doesn't work theatrically. So, I had Jerry sit on the back of a bench or climbing the lamp post. He was all over the place.

LATER

The music accents Ed clicking open an ugly-looking knife.

JESSE

You are mad! You're stark raving mad! YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME!

But before Jesse (Peter) has time to think what to do, Ed (Jerry) tosses the knife at Jesse's feet. After Ed makes several menacing moves, Jesse picks up the knife. As the play continues (MOS) the music from The Collector plays -

ED (V.O.)

I saw the movie Collector around this time. The music in it was so haunting. So I used it in the play.

A base-sounding boom, boom ... Boom, boom BELLOWS everywhere, and then the soft SOUND of a flute, and then the music suddenly goes into another BOOM, BOOM ... BOOM, BOOM.

The knife is still in Jesse's hand. Ed charges him, impales himself on the knife and falls on the cue of silence. After a beat, the music plays again and Ed crawls, wounded. Fake blood is all over the place and the lights fade. Ed gets up on one knee.

A pin light glows over Ed as his body falls one last time, curling into a ball. A soft flute SOUND mixes with the distant, happy voices (O.S.) of people and birds chirping. One voice rises above the rest--

VOICE

What a beautiful day in the park.

Then more sinister sounding music. BOOM ... BOOM

MATCH CUT:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT -- NEXT YEAR -- DAY

The BOOM ... BOOM is Ed chopping a cube of hashish at the kitchen table while Diane, Barbara and Paul Levine pass bong to one another. Ed takes a hit and passes the bong to Paul.

Ed snatches a whiskey bottle on the table and fills four shot glasses. They all down it quickly and Ed pours another round. Barbara passes out into Paul's arms. He picks her up, takes her into her room. Ed and Diane escape to their bedroom.

ED (V.O.)

Diane and I are still together my junior year. Barbara's now going out with Levine. She had a room of her own, but spent most nights with Diane and I. Paul, mind you, always had an eye on Diane. Always.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- DAY

Ed rehearses with a host of PEOPLE on stage. LAURA FAYE slaps Ed on the ass as they cross stage. Laura waits backstage.

ED (V.O.)

The Harlequinade is very funny noises-off type British comedy by Terrence Rattigan. I bring this up because I started seeing a girl on the sly. Laura Faye, a senior, who played opposite to me ...

Ed finishes his performance in the scene, then heads backstage. He meets LAURA, finds privacy in the wings. They kiss. She leads him away into the shadows.

INT. DENNEHY'S DINING ROOM - DAY

The Dennehy clan, including the wives of Brian and Mike, sit at the table. The doorbell rings. Ed gets up. It's Sue Anne.

ED (V.O.)

My life is somewhat crazy now.
We're having Thanksgiving dinner
and guess who pops into my life.

DREW (V.O.)

Natalie Wood.

Ed brings Sue Anne into the dining room and everyone makes a fuss over seeing her, especially Brian (AD-LIB).

ED (V.O.)

Sue Anne was a woman I loved and transferred to Hofstra. I thought she'd be a 60s version of Ozzie and Harriet. She goes away to college and I do my Darwinian thing. Then she comes home, but I'm already involved with Diane and Barbara under the same roof, and Laura. Virginia, oh, yes. She was in there, too. I forgot about her. Oh, God! How do I sort through this?

DREW (V.O.)

Take your time. Mary's asleep.

INT. A HOUSE PARTY SOMEWHERE IN MINEOLA -- NIGHT

Ed and STUDENTS party. A JOINT is passed around until Ed takes it from VIRGINIA WALSH, a blond-hair beauty. He inhales and passes it on. Virginia grabs Ed's hand and they meander through the crowd until they reach a bedroom and enter it.

ED (V.O.)

Virginia was a quirky, perky blonde who played opposite me in Romeo and Juliet. Irresistible.

INT. HOFSTRA MAIN STAGE -- DAY

Dick Mason sits in the front row of the theatre watching a rehearsal. Ed walks down the aisle and Dick waves him over. Ed sits next to Dick. As they watch TOM CHESLEIGH rehearse -

MASON

Tom's the best senior actor we have. He has presence, doesn't he?

STUDENT ED

Tom's a brilliant actor, Mr. Mason.

MASON

I'm sending him to RADA. I want to send you too, Ed.

INT. CAR ON ROAD ON LONG ISLAND SOMEWHERE -- DAY

Mason and Ed continue to talk (VO) while Tom drives. LOIS CLARK sits next to him. Ed and Laura sit in the back.

STUDENT ED (V.O.)

Me. To The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts? The London RADA?

MASON (V.O.)

Every year they come to the States and audition hundreds of students for two slots in their program.

STUDENT ED (V.O.)

But they only select Seniors.

Tom turns onto the LIE, grabs a six pack of beer and passes it back. Ed opens a can, shares it with Laura.

MASON (V.O.)

True. This is Tom's gig. Practice for you to win next Spring. The audition is in Richmond. Wanna go?

ED (V.O.)

Like he had to ask. RADA produced all the major English actors ever. Anybody who's was anybody in English theatre had some affiliation with RADA.

LATER - On ROUTE 95, they pass under a sign: "TO RICHMOND"

MASON (V.O.)

I'm concerned about you, Edward. I'm hearing rumors.

Laura leans in to him and they kiss.

LATER -- As Tom pulls into a motel parking lot ...

ED (V.O.)

Mason was like a father to me. He meant well, and I listened to him.

MASON (V.O.)

I see many students tangle with personal matters. They never seem to disengage. Disengage, Edward.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ed and Laura enter a hotel room. Ed falls onto the bed. Laura gently disrobes him.

ED (V.O.)

I asked Laura to come to make it a foursome. I told her we had to keep it quiet because of Diane. We got there on Friday. Auditions were on Saturday, so we drank and had sex all night. So much for disengaging.

INT. ED'S MOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

The sun's rays shoot through the blinds and spray Ed's face. He opens his eyes. The clock reads 8 AM. He bolts out of bed.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND GYMNASIUM -- MORNING

Several lines of ACTORS wait as Ed bolts into the gym. He spots Tom and rushes over to him. They smell each other's breath. Tom hands Ed a piece of gum and takes one himself. An ADMINISTRATOR hands them a number as they sign the register.

ED (V.O.)

Tom's audition was at 3 PM. Thank God mine was at 5. I went right back to the hotel, took a shower. Had sex with Laura, then I slept.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND GYMNASIUM -- 3PM

Tom finds his 'moment before' in front of several judges then-

TOM

*I came down here to keep a promise.
I gave Kayo my word that if he
stood up to the mob, I'd stand up
with him all the way ...*

CROSSFADE (voice) and DISSOLVE (visual) from Tom's face/voice to Ed beginning his HOTEL TELEPHONE MONOLOGUE 2 hours later in front of the JUDGES.

STUDENT ED

*In the hotel room where I lived,
there was a telephone in the
hallway. Sometimes I'd pick out a
number at random from the telephone
directory and I'd wait for someone
to say hello. And I would say,
hello, and I'd hang up...*

INT. HOTEL BAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Tom sits in a booth with the girls. Ed appears waving a piece of paper. Tom takes out his notice and waves it at Ed.

ED (V.O.)

The Saturday audition cut 600 people down to 60 finalists who'd come back on Sunday for another spin. We both made it into the finals. Amazing.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND GYMNASIUM -- "NEXT DAY"

JUMP CUTS takes us past several participants AD-LIBBING monologues to the JUDGES, including Tom, until we jump out when it's Ed's turn. He steps up and nods to the Judges.

Ed sees John Barrymore in the stands in his 1930's garb. Barrymore tips his hat. Ed nods, poses for a moment, then -

STUDENT ED

*To sleep, per chance to dream, there
is a moment in every lifetime when
all the stars seem to gather and
become as one and that moment
belongs to you. I was there at night
on that dark stage, when suddenly I
saw it could all be mine if I wanted
it, but the moment wouldn't wait for
me. It passed me by.*

INT. CAR RIDE BACK TO LONG ISLAND -- NIGHT

Tom drives while Ed, Laura and Lois sleep.

ED (V.O.)

Tom won, and this girl from Texas also won. And for the first time ever, a junior came in as an alternate. And that was me.

Tom eases up to Ed's apartment and pulls over to let Ed out. Ed appears the worst from all the partying.

ED (V.O.)

Oh, did we party. We were knocked out from booze and pot. I called Diane and told her we had to stay one more night and wouldn't be back until sometime mid-day Tuesday. But ... we got back on Monday night.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ed walks in sees a familiar bandanna and army jacket.

ED (V.O.)

I had forgot I told Diane I'd be home on Tuesday. As I found out later, Diane learned about Laura Faye. So, with Barbara out visiting family, or something, she calls Paul Levine. Certainly, justifiable.

IN THE BEDROOM

Ed follows the line of clothes to the bedroom only to see Diane in bed with Paul. He attacks him and Diane gets into the thick of it as the shadows on the wall show the battle.

A view out the window: the calm night sky and a FULL MOON provide an abrupt contrast to the fight inside. CLOUDS start to cover the moon. Voices become half-muted sounds as--

ED (V.O.)

I get all self-righteousness on Paul. I don't remember a thing, except later I find out I broke his nose.

The SOUND of a door SLAMMING indicates Paul has left.

But a struggle continues inside. A slapping NOISE and SOBS provide a somber mood while clouds half-cover a FULL MOON.

ED (V.O.)

She said I forced myself on her. I was so angry I blacked out.

DREW (V.O.)

You mean you ... Raped her?

A cloud passes over the moon entirely. More SCREAMS.

ED (V.O.)

I just don't remember much about that night, Drew.

Scratchy-sounds of a vinyl record sends the action back to--

INT. DREW'S DEN - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

As Drew gets up from his recliner and heads to the mini-bar.

ED

Diane transferred to Queens College that very week. So did Barbara. I never saw them after that. Ever.

Drew pours himself a drink and walks back.

DREW

How convenient denial is.

The ice cubes in Ed's glass are melting. Drew sits and ...

ED

(contrite)

I haven't told anyone this, Drew. Ever. I'm so ... Totally sorry.

DREW

Shouldn't be telling me you're sorry.

ED

What happened then was a shocking end to an empty existence.

DREW

Empty? Lying to 4 or 5 women at a time. English fails me right now. Insane would be an understatement.

ED

I didn't know how to break out of this craziness. I truly wanted to have a sane relationship with only one woman.

DREW

Really. Which woman might that be?

EXT. SUE ANNE'S HOUSE -- FLASHBACK BEGINS -- DAY

Transition back to Ed's story: He walks up to the door and knocks. Sue Anne answers and lets him in.

ED (V.O.)

I was shaken by what happened with Diane. All my dalliances kind of dallianded out of my life. Sue Anne danced back in. I wanted a long term relationship with her, but I was afraid I'd screw it up with her too. I needed to restructure my life. Disengage. So, I went over to her house and told her I was going away for the summer. This was the summer before my senior year.

EXT. PENN STATE CAMPUS -- DAY

Ed emerges from the middle of a pack of STUDENTS and walks up the steps and into the Drama Department building.

ED

Because of my third place finish at RADA, Mason got me a paying gig as a resident actor at Penn State.

INT. PENN STATE DRAMA OFFICE

A student-worker greets Ed at the reception area. The tag on the office door reads: DRAMA ADMISSIONS: LOWELL MANFOLD.

STUDENT ED

Is Mr. Manfold in? Ed Dennehy.

STUDENT WORKER

You're the RADA chap, right? Lowell mentioned you were coming. The whiz kid from Hofstra. You have company.

Virginia Walsh sneaks up on Ed and ...

VIRGINIA

Surprise!

Ed steps back and holds his chest. He can't speak.

VIRGINIA

I heard you were coming for the summer, so I asked Mr. Mason to put a good word in for me and viola ... Isn't this fantastic?

As they sit down and talk (MOS)--

ED (V.O.)

So much for restructuring my life. I mean, every time I'd get chummy with a woman it would end up ... Like my dad, I guess, trying to make a woman feel like a queen for a day. Actually, I think it was related to Alice somehow. I was trying to retain the naive devotion we had for each other.

DREW (V.O.)

Please. Somebody shoot me.

STUDENT WORKER

You can go in Mr. Dennehy.

INT. LOWELL MANFOLD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ed enters. LOWELL MANFOLD greets Ed, and they shake hands.

MANFOLD

I don't know how much they told you but State has a Theatre Company. We do 6 shows over the summer. It's a Equity company. I see you worked Equity at the Mineola Playhouse.

ED (V.O.)

Manfold thought I had my Equity card from the Days Of Dancing gig, the Shelly Winters' fiasco, but it expired. I was going to tell him it expired but just then this flaming fag pops his head into the office.

BOB REIFSCHNYDER, 50s, totally gay, pops his head in.

MANFOLD

Come in, Bob. I asked Bob in to meet you. Bob, Ed Dennehy. Ed, Robert Reifschnyder.

Bob offers his fingertips and they gingerly shake hands.

MANFOLD

As part of our mentoring program, Mr. Reifschnyder was picked to show you around campus.

EXT. PENN STATE DRAMA BUILDING -- LATER

Ed and Bob walked down the hall. Ed stops and faces Bob.

STUDENT ED

No offense Mr. Reifschnyder, but I can find my way around here myself. Thank you and good day.

Bob Reifschnyder is left standing alone.

ED (V.O.)

I'm not homophobic. I was just a snot-nose kid. I didn't want to be hanging around ... I mean, he was trying to hide it. You could tell he was a flaming fag, and ... It was 1960-something, for crying out loud. People weren't coming out of the closet yet. I was ... a jerk.

INT. PENN STATE THEATRE, THE PAVILION -- NIGHT

Ed and other ACTORS are in a rehearsal on stage.

ED (V.O.)

So, I played Nick in Who's Afraid Of Virginia Wolf in a converted milk barn that ended up as the model for the Mitzi Newhouse in NY. A perfect theatre-in-the-round.

Lowell storms on stage and stops the rehearsal. He grabs Ed and puts his arm around him and they casually walk away.

MANFOLD

Guess who I just talked to? The head of Equity in New York. Steven Grey. He says you haven't paid your Equity dues in four years.

ED (V.O.)

It was too late for a student deferment, and Grey threatened to close the theatre if he didn't get my dues. Mason was nice enough to pay the fee.

INT. PENN STATE PAVILION -- NIGHT

The curtain falls to a packed theatre. Ed and the LEAD FEMALE in Wolfe wait for their cue. They bow to the accolades. In the audience, ROSE MARIE HAYNES sits in the front row clapping hard. Ed spots her. She blows a sensual kiss at him.

DREW (V.O.)

Oh, good grief. Why don't we move on to your senior year at Hofstra.

INT. HOFSTRA CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ed sits in a class. The words STRUCTURE/PLOT boldly appear on the blackboard next to the words, STANLEY YOUNG.

STANLEY

There's a turning point here. The point of no return.

Ed spots Deter outside the classroom while Stanley AD-LIBS.

ED (V.O.)

It was in my senior year playwright class when I saw Deter outside the curtain for the first time.

Deter peeks through the glass window and waves to Ed. Ed's spirit slides out of his body and walks over to him.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

SPIRIT ED

What are you doing here?

Deter walks out the doors to a hallway. Spirit Ed follows.

EXT. HOFSTRA CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Deter and Ed walk to the edge of the cement stairs. Subway noises emanate from the gauzy curtain in front of them. Deter takes Ed's hand and they walk through the curtain to--

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ed and Deter appear on the subway platform just as a train passes by. The train's raucous rattle wanes as Deter leads Ed to a bench. They sit. It is dark, scary and mysterious all at once. Ed looks around. Danger hides just around the corner.

DETER

I think Ernest is in my apartment.

Ed starts to speak but Deter puts his finger to his lips.

DETER

Shh. Don't speak. Love's first duty is to listen ... You have too many lovers, Neddy. All your life you've been learning to smile at mailboxes and lampposts. Must be confusing.

(looks around)

Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; May the outward and inward be one.

A distant train rattle gets progressively louder. Beads of sweat appear on Deter's face. The train doesn't stop. Deter seems relieved. He looks at Ed, smiles, and then disappears.

INT. FORTUNOFF'S STORE -- DAY

Virginia is looking in a jewelry case at rings.

ED (V.O.)

I don't know what's going on with the Deter thing, but soon it's Gin's birthday. I still had money in my pocket from the summer job, so I buy her this 300 dollar ring.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- NIGHT

While Ed performs on stage in a main-stage production.

Virginia is backstage showing her ring to fellow students.

VIRGINIA

Ed bought it for me. We're engaged.

ED (V.O.)

ENGAGED! It was a birthday present,
for chrissakes. A friendship thing.

INT. DINER -- NIGHT

Ed and Sue Anne sit opposite each other, eating.

ED (V.O.)

Sue Anne and I went to the same
diner my mom took me when I was a
kid when she going to leave my dad.

SUE ANNE

I'm pregnant.

Ed sits back in the booth as if he were punched in the chest.

SUE ANNE

I'm going to have this child.

ED (V.O.)

I remember the look on her face.
Sadness. Maybe it was strength.
That day reminded when my dad came
rushing to get my mom at the same
diner. The way he touched her.

Ed leans over the table. He strokes Sue Anne's hair, her
cheeks. She responds, grabs his hand, kisses it.

ED (V.O.)

I loved Sue Anne. There was only
one thing to do. Get married.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- DAY

Ed is acting on stage with Virginia.

ED (V.O.)

Now this is my senior year. I'm
acting in four main productions. And
remember I'm engaged to Virginia. I
had to end that affair, which was
going to be very difficult.

INT. HOFSTRA MAIN STAGE -- DAY

Ed is talking to crew members who are sitting in the first row in front of an empty stage.

ED (V.O.)

Most of my time was spent preparing to direct Brig. Keep in mind, only professors or graduate students directed main stage productions. Mason liked what I did with Zoo Story so I became only the second underclassman to direct one. This was a big deal. I was in charge of money, costumes, everything.

INT. A DINER SOMEWHERE IN MINEOLA -- NIGHT

Ed and Virginia are sitting in a booth in mid-conversation.

VIRGINIA

Sue Anne Senff is pregnant? Are you saying you are the father?

Ed nods and Virginia slaps him and leaves.

SERIES OF SCENES

1) VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT - ambulance's lights are flashing. Virginia is brought out on a gurney. Her wrists are bandaged.

ED (V.O.)

Two nights later she cut her wrists.

2) AT VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER DAY - An ambulance light's are flashing. Virginia is brought out on a gurney.

ED (V.O.)

Days later, it was sleeping pills.

3) A MOVIE THEATRE - Ed and Sue Anne, cozy, watching a movie.

ED (V.O.)

I love Sue Anne dearly, but I'm committed to Virginia because ... Well, she needed to be committed.

4) AT VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT - Virginia stands on the ledge of the balcony when Ed bursting through the door.

He bolts onto the balcony and takes her into the living room.

ED (V.O.)

She calls. Says she's going to jump to her death if I don't marry her.

END OF SERIES

INT. ED'S CAR - DAY

Virginia sits next to Ed while he drives.

ED (V.O.)

She eventually calms down. Now, all this is happening at Thanksgiving time. My plans were to wean her off me after the holidays. I still haven't told my parents about Sue Anne, and I wasn't about to do it during Thanksgiving dinner. I told Virginia she could come with me to dinner under one condition.

Ed pulls up to the house. He leans into Virginia.

YOUNG ED

Remember. Do not to say anything about Sue Anne or the pregnancy.

VIRGINIA

I know. I swear. I won't.

INT. DENNEHY HOUSE -- DAY

Ed escorts Virginia in. They are greeted by Brian and Judy and their TWO CHILDREN, and Mike and his WIFE, and Hannah and Edwin. Everyone AD-LIBS their good spirits.

ED (V.O.)

By this time Mike was married. Brian had two kids. Everyone loved Virginia. Even the kids loved her. What was there not to like? She was a gorgeous blonde creature, a real pixie with great sense of humor.

LATER - At the table, Ed seems nervous because of Virginia's congenial attitude. And then, Virginia taps her glass with her spoon. The clinking noise is followed by silence.

VIRGINIA

I have an announcement. I don't know if Ed told you yet, but Sue Anne is pregnant, and Ed's the father. And he's breaking off our engagement to marry Sue Anne.

Ed slams his elbows on the table like daggers. His head falls effortlessly into his hands, hiding from the commotion.

EDWIN

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? Are you insane?

ED (V.O.)

My father was always the one to yell then later try to figure out the mess. Yelling is all I heard.

BRIAN

What the hell's the matter with you?

ED (V.O.)

Self-righteous Brian liked Gin but was partial to Sue Anne from directing her in West Side Story at St. Aidans. He was unhappily married with two kids. I mean, what the hell was he trying to prove?

Everyone is yelling except for Hannah. Virginia takes her time reviewing the turmoil.

ED (V.O.)

My mother just smiled and nodded. And Virginia? She smiled, patted me on the hand while everyone else talked trash about me in third person like I wasn't even there. I noticed that Gin didn't have the friendship ring on.

VIRGINIA

I hocked it. And now we're even.

INT. CHURCH -- DAY

Ed and Sue Anne stand before the priest. Immediate family sit in the pews. Brian stands in as Best-Man. Tempers are cooler. Under the direction of the Priest, Ed kisses Sue Anne. The family mingles. Hugs and kisses.

ED (V.O.)

So, there I was, a 21 year-old wannabee actor, a soon-to-be father scared out of my wits. Sue Anne and I moved in with my parents. I was no more prepared to be a dad than I was to be a neurosurgeon.

INT. MASON'S OFFICE -- DAY

Ed and Dick Mason are in mid-conversation (MOS). Mason appears extremely disturbed.

ED (V.O.)

I tell Mason I can't go to the RADA auditions. My mind couldn't prepare. Even if I won I couldn't go to England. I had responsibilities now.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- DAY

Ed coaches movement to the actors who are dressed as inmates.

ED (V.O.)

So, I put all my effort into The Brig that spring. I rehearse the inmates separate from the guards like a drill sergeant.

A STUDENT/ACTOR walks in late. Ed yells--

DIRECTOR ED

Hit the deck and give me twenty. Everyone gives me five pushups for every minute anyone is late.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- NIGHT

Ed draws three chalk lines across the stage. He moves Brian and the other GUARDS to their proper positions and ...

STUDENT

Prisoner number one requesting permission to cross ...

BRIAN

Prisoner number one may cross ...

ED (V.O.)

I recruited Brian and 4 other guards who were ex-marines as big as Brian. I rehearsed them by night and the students by day. Wanted to keep them apart as long as I could.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- DAY

Ed is directing the students (IMPROV).

ED (V.O.)

I rehearse the inmates and guards only one time together. The day before opening night.

Brian and the three ex-marines walk out on stage shouting orders (AD-LIB). The student/inmates appear frightened for real. Brian BANGS his stick on the table.

ED (V.O.)

The Brig's an exercise in behavior. It's just a day in a US marine brig. Grueling, vicious male treatment.

INT. HOFSTRA MAIN STAGE -- NIGHT

The BANG of Brian's stick brings the action right into the actual performance on opening night. As they perform:

INMATE ONE

Permission to cross the line, sir.

JUMP CUT:

BRIAN

This place is a pigsty ...

Brian hits the prisoner in the leg with a billy-club.

JUMP CUT:

A guard commands a prisoner to do 'twenty' on the spot.

JUMP OUT:

to a prisoner who is running from the yelling guards. He jumps to a barbed-wire fence and gets caught on the wire. The guards catch up and beat him. (Music as described in VO)

ED (V.O.)

There's no plot per se to The Brig except for the daily repetition of violence. The only dramatic arc is a soldier who breaks. What I keyed on was the juxtaposition of the music to the action. The haunting soft music mixed with obvious times when the drums were needed.

Some people in the theatre leave early.

ED (V.O.)

Some of the audience left before the end because it was so gruesome. I knew subconsciously that in real life I ought to be punished for my own behavior. I was transferring that feeling into my work, I guess.

INT. PENN STATE PAVILION -- DAY

The Resident ACTORS, some recognizable from the year before, rehearse on stage. Ed walks in and they stop to greet him. He jumps on stage and is greeted by Lowell Manford who enters from backstage. He shakes Ed's hand and gives him a script.

ED (V.O.)

So I become a Hofstra graduate. Sue Anne was due, and she moves in with her mother while I go to Penn State for another summer gig.

INT. THYRSST BAR -- NIGHT

Penn State actors sit at a table drinking. Ed sits next to SUSAN MARTIN. She ignores him.

ED (V.O.)

I had the lead in She Stoops To Conquer. The female lead, Sue Martin, a pretty brunette, didn't want anything to do with me.

The actor-friend raises his drink and ...

ACTOR FRIEND

To Edward, who'll be a Daddy soon.

Susan throws a quick look at Ed, as if she's interested all of sudden. She moves her chair closer to him.

ED (V.O.)

Not many people knew Sue Anne was pregnant, so some were surprised.

The BARTENDER holds up the phone to Ed. Ed goes to the bar and takes the call. After a beat he comes back to the table. Ed holds his hands high in the air.

ACTOR ED

I am the proud father of a healthy nine pound baby girl.

Everyone cheers. Susan moves closer to Ed.

ED (V.O.)

The call was my mother to tell me Courtney was born and ... Suddenly Susan was my best friend. That night we slept together.

ON JILL SODENBERRY - She holds up her glass as a toast.

ED (V.O.)

I also had a heated affair with Jill Sodenberry ...

DREW (V.O.)

The lawyer from that drama series?

ON DONNA RADER 20, lively - She holds up her glass as a toast and throws a seductive look Ed's way.

ED (V.O.)

And then there was Donna Rader ...

DREW (V.O.)

Good, God. What kind of man are you?

ED (V.O.)

I didn't say I was proud of it.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Sue Anne is burping COURTNEY in the living room of a tiny apartment while Ed sits in a chair reading. She gets up and puts Courtney into an open drawer that is made up as a crib.

ACTOR ED

This is only a summer gig. When it's over we'll move back to Long Island and I'll find work. We'll get the baby what she needs then.

INT. SUE ANNE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE -- A FEW WEEKS LATER - DAY

Ed enters with a suit case in hand and is greeted by Sue Anne with Mrs. Senff standing in the background, hovering.

MRS. SENFF

You went to school to be an actor?
What kind of work is that?

SUE ANNE

Mother!

ED (V.O.)

So, Sue Anne and I moved in with her mother who was a lovely lady of Gestapo persuasion. One of those motivational kind of people.

EXT. A BROOKLYN APARTMENT COMPLEX -- DAY

Ed lugs a trunk up the stairs while Sue Anne has Courtney.

ED (V.O.)

I made well over 5 grand that summer what with Equity and playing pool which paid for my booze and other living essentials. The first thing I did with the money was get an apartment in Brooklyn.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT -- LATER

Ed and Sue Anne unpack clothes while Courtney cries nearby.

SUE ANNE

I think she needs to be changed.

Reluctantly, clumsily, Ed changes her.

INT. AMITYVILLE THEATRE -- NIGHT

Ed hands out scripts to Brian and other ACTORS.

ED (V.O.)

Brian had 3 girls at the time. Still driving a meat truck. Good money, but he felt trapped, as I did, and needed to assuage his muse. He started the Amityville Theatre Group. He knew I was idle so he asked me to direct.

Two ACTORS get up and move according to Ed's instructions. Brian is off to the side watching. Disgruntled.

ED (V.O.)

I drove to Amityville every day for a community production of Street Car for a big \$500. Brian hired me expecting I'd put him in the role as Stanley. But I cast someone else as Kowalski and cast Brian as the upstairs neighbor. I don't think he ever forgave me for that.

INT. MEAT FREEZER -- NIGHT

Ed weighs meat on a scale. He grabs a drink hidden behind a side of beef. He repeats these two actions while ...

ED (V.O.)

Brian got me a meat scaler job. I went in at 4 AM, worked to noon, and auditioned in afternoons. I'd go in the freezer to get warm with my bottle of brandy. They told me beer was better. The carbonation would make you warmer. Not for me. Brandy and whiskey was my recipe to get through the winter.

INT. APARTMENT -- ANOTHER DAY

Ed sits on the couch watching the Jets on TV. Sue Anne adjusts her coat over a swollen belly. She kisses Ed.

ED (V.O.)

What I'm about to tell you is something no one knows, except Sue Anne and I. Here she is pregnant again, with Brendon. And she's leaving me alone with Courtney.

SUE ANNE

I'm going to Jennifer's. I'll be home after the game.

IN THE KITCHEN

After Sue Anne leaves, Ed bolts to the kitchen, takes the garbage can top off, and pulls back the plastic bag. He reaches down and pulls out a bottle of vodka and pours a drink and mixes it with orange juice. He takes a swig directly from the vodka bottle before putting it back.

LATER -- in the living room

A drink sits by the table as Ed watches football on the TV. He ignores a far-off, ominous sound of a baby's cry. Suddenly, Barrymore appears and sits in a chair opposite Ed.

ED

Hmm. Where have you been?

BARRYMORE

Could ask you the same question.

ED

What's that supposed to mean?

BARRYMORE

Well, let me see. You're in Middle Village with a wife and a baby. You're a meat scaler, whatever that is, with no acting prospects.

ED

I'll get some.

Courtney's wails has Ed scrubbing his head with his fingers.

BARRYMORE

Is that anger at yourself? At Sue Anne? At an innocent baby girl, perhaps? Or maybe at an unborn boy?

ED

SHUT UP.

Ed gets up, leaves and comes back with Courtney who's still crying. He lays her on the couch and runs to the kitchen. He comes back with a bottle and shoves it in Courtney's mouth. But she continues to wail.

ED
Shut up. Shut up. SHUT UP!

Unexpectedly, Ed has a seizure of sorts. His eyes roll back in his head and the scene transitions --

FREEZE FRAME - to BLACK.

ED (V.O.)
To this day I don't know what
happened except I went into a rage
and I blacked out.

BACK TO SCENE

Ed opens his eyes and gets up.

ED (V.O.)
When I came to her face was blue.
She was silent and wasn't breathing
or moving. I freaked out.

Ed frantically nudges her, turns her over and finally he blows a puff of air in her mouth and she starts breathing again. She starts crying. And so does Ed.

ED (V.O.)
I walked her around the room to
calm her down. Thought she died. I
thanked God a 100 times. Barrymore
left. He couldn't take the heat.

Ed puts her into a play pen. It is eerily quiet except for Ed's heavy breathing. He sits, frozen. Courtney grabs her blanket, and sucks on her pacifier and falls asleep.

ED (V.O.)
I knew I couldn't be left alone with
Courtney. Sue Anne was 3 months
pregnant with Brendon, and I'm a
failure as a father and ... What can
I say. I was mortified. Frightened.

DREW (V.O.)
And sinking, right? Good God!

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY STATION -- DAY

Ed sits in a subway car with a script on his lap. The train stops and the door opens letting passengers on.

ED (V.O.)

After I told Sue Anne what happened it was the end. Our marriage didn't last much longer and I was going nowhere as an actor. Zanuck hadn't offered me a job yet. Tennessee Williams wasn't pounding on my door. None of the great things I dreamt about were happening to me.

As the door closes, Ed sees Deter sitting on a bench. They make eye contact briefly before the train moves.

ED (V.O.)

And the cameo appearances of Deter and Barrymore? What was that about? Ah, who cares. Shortly after the Courtney incident I won the "Circle In The Square" play-writing contest with For All Those Who Hide Away. My Senior project with Stanley.

INT. AN OFF-BROADWAY THEATRE OFFICE -- LATER

Ed sits with the PRODUCER and SAMANTHA, the director. Ed's VO dominates while they converse (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

They loved it. They asked this Samantha woman to direct it. The play's about a transvestite and she was talking about using muscular types. That's not the way I wrote the characters. Anyway, they wanted a public reading to gauge the audience, to test the waters first.

INT. CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE THEATRE -- DAY

Ed enters a village theatre and watches the ACTORS rehearse.

ED (V.O.)

So, I travel the City to watch this woman butcher my play doing this super realistic interpretation. Quick dialogue, very theatrical. She had these budding James Dean and Marlon Brando types playing the torn t-shirt school of acting.

INT. BAR -- NIGHT

Ed gulps a beer and is swaying a little bit.

ED (V.O.)

So, I go to a bar near The Square.
The more I drank the angrier I got
at this woman who was treating my
script like it was her own.

He gets up with his attaché case and staggers out of the bar.

INT. CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE THEATRE - BALCONY

He sits in the balcony front row and takes out his camera
from his case. He begins snapping photos. As he listens to
Samantha give directions and the actors performing--

Ed gets up and marches down the stairs to the mezzanine. He
hops on the stage, grabs the scripts out of the actors' hands
and, one-by-one, he puts them into his case and walks out.

ED (V.O.)

I wouldn't've minded if they were
doing a good imitation of Brando.
Ah, who am I kidding. Another big
mistake. I was beginning to walk
toeless, because I was shooting
myself in the foot so often.

INT. AUDITION ROOM AT EQUITY THEATRE -- NIGHT

Ed auditions in front of the DIRECTOR and casting PEOPLE.

ED (V.O.)

At this time I land the lead role
in the Equity Library production of
Much Ado About Nothing.

INT. STAGE AT EQUITY THEATRE -- NIGHT

Ed is rehearsing (AD-LIB) with the other ACTORS.

ED (V.O.)

This was my first job with New York
actors. The read-thru was going OK.

DIRECTOR

All right, take a break.

Ed walks over to the DIRECTOR and ...

ACTOR ED

When's pay day.

DIRECTOR

This is just a showcase production,
Edward. It's the Equity Library
Theatre. We don't pay the actors.
We can give you travelling money.

Ed puts the script down on a nearby table. As he walks out -

ACTOR ED

You need to find another Benedict.

EXT. OUTSIDE EQUITY LIBRARY THEATRE

Ed bolts out of the theatre and charges across the street.

ED (V.O.)

When you're young and told you're
gifted, you become cocky and think
in time you'll be discovered. You
think you can change the world if it
doesn't conform to your standards.
It led me to commit a series of
mistakes from which I never
recovered. Quitting the Equity
theatre was a big mistake. Anyway, I
was on a roll. I walk briskly across
the street to the Actor's Equity
Building. I never met Steven Grey.
But he was about to meet me.

INT. STEVEN GREY'S OFFICE, RECEPTION AREA

Ed storms in and sees the Grey's name stenciled on the door.
He bolts in. STEVEN GREY, 33, shirt/tie, glasses, business
all the way, is sitting at his desk.

INSIDE THE OFFICE

ED

What the hell's the matter with you
people here. You were going to shut
down a very prestigious regional
theatre at Penn State because you
didn't receive dues from me?

STEVEN

Ah, Mr. Dennehy, I presume.

ED

You sponsor a theatre across the street where you don't pay the actors. Are you people nuts? You threaten to close theaters down when actors can't find jobs...(MOS)

ED (V.O.)

It was one of my finer moments in life. Don't have many of them. But Steven was terrified as I was Dante going through my second stage of hell. This was a bad thing I was doing, actually. He could get my name out there and blackball me. I mean, most actors struggle for their card to get to a position where I was. Up until that point, I got things handed to me. But my real education was coming at me rapidly. Cynicism was creeping in. It's so absurd the way the business functions. Actors will do anything. Act for free. Hate the process. But love the business. What can you do?

Ed storms out of Grey's office.

ED (V.O.)

I was drowning in remorse. I mean, I was a lousy father. A worse husband. I couldn't find work.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN -- ED'S DREAM

Ed is on the train with a camera around his neck. The train stops. Ed looks through the window and sees Deter who is slouched like Rodin's The Thinker. Ed storms out of the car, snaps a picture of Deter and sits next to him.

ON THE PLATFORM

DETER

Do you know who Ernest is?

Ed shakes his head.

DETER

He lives with me on Bleeker Street.
But I can't go home. I can't face
him any longer.

(pause)

We seem to search in all the wrong
places for answers ... Don't we?

Ed shrugs. He looks down the tracks and sees a train's light.
The NOISE gets louder as it approaches. They both stand.

DETER

Well, my friend. There's really
nothing much more I can do now.

Ed shrugs, not knowing what that means.

DETER

You must trust Barrymore now. You
and he are so much alike, you know.

The NOISE of the oncoming train gets louder, more menacing.
Conversely, Deter is calm. Suddenly, he kisses Ed on the lips
and jumps in front of the train. Ed SCREAMS.

MATCH CUT

INT. ED'S BEDROOM - END OF DREAM

Courtney SCREAMS: Ed awakens abruptly, sweating. It takes him
a beat to realize where he is. He turns to Sue Anne.

ED

Do you want me to get her?

SUE ANNE

No. I will.

Sue Anne gets up while Ed lies in bed wide awake.

ED (V.O.)

I hallucinated in my dreams now.
Barrymore was absentee mostly. I
thought he was pissed because I
talked to Deter. But Deter killed
himself, so I was expecting JB to
show himself soon. Sue Anne didn't
trust me. Couldn't blame her. I had
to do something. So I ran away.

INT. PENN STATE DRAMA OFFICE -- DAY

Ed sits in Manfold's office. They are in mid-conversation.
Ed's hair is really long now. Time has passed

MANFOLD

The Arts Company pays Equity scale to 12 actors who perform here and satellite campuses. Two positions opened up and so did a spot on the undergraduate staff. You're the first person I thought of. You can teach, and be one of our resident actors. And you can go for your Masters degree at the same time.

ED

You mean, I'll be collecting two paychecks for acting and teaching plus getting my Masters for free?

DREW (V.O.)

But didn't you end up in a scandal--

ED

Yes, yes. I'll get into that.

INT. ED'S PENN STATE OFFICE -- LATER

Ed walks into a two-person office while Bob Reifschnyder straightens out his desk even though it doesn't need it. They hesitate a beat before shaking hands.

BOB

We don't have to get along, Ed.
Just keep the room clean.

ED

Sure, Bob. Whatever you say.

While Ed gets settled at his desk -

BOB

Why do you wear your hair so long?
You'll be giving a bad example.

ED

I'm an actor too, Bob, and you'll never know when you'll need it.

ED (V.O.)

Bob was a dance teacher, very gay. I'm this long-haired hippy-dippy guy rooming with an old, proper academic fairy where everything had to be neat and his way. We were two people who shouldn't have been sharing the same space. He was pathetic, in a way, yet there was something mystical about him; as if he had been through a world of hurt and knew something that you didn't.

LATER - OUTSIDE ED'S AND BOB'S OFFICE.

As Bob appears he hears moans coming from the office. The door is ajar and he peeks through the crack and sees a naked woman waist down and her legs are wrapped around Ed's hips. Ed maneuvers her and sits her bare butt down on Bob's desk.

TEACHER ED

That's it, baby. Move it around. Whew! Okay. We have to stop. Bob will be coming soon. That's enough.

Ed points to a red line on the floor separating Ed's space from Bob's. Ed's side is a mess. Bob's side is neat as a pin.

ED (V.O.)

He complained Manfold about me so ... It was payback time.

INT. ED AND BOB'S OFFICE -- ANOTHER DAY

Alone, Bob sprays the top of his desk and scrubs. He sniffs until he finds a pair of panties wedged between the desk and the wall. He takes a pointer, lifts the panties and tosses them on Ed's chair.

INT. BOB REIFSCHNYDER CLASSROOM -- DAY

Bob writes the words "HISTORY OF THEATRE" on the blackboard while his students yawn, appearing bored, lethargic.

INT. PENN STATE THEATRE -- NIGHT

Ed has a wig on and acting at stage-left to a packed house.

ED (V.O.)

I was doing Ionesco's Exit the King
who says in the stage directions
"By some theatrical trick the
king's hair suddenly turns white".
Now how the hell do you do that?

An actor SR causes a ruckus (AD-LIB) misdirecting the audience's attention. While they are distracted, Ed flings off his wig exposing his natural hair, which is dyed white.

ED (V.O.)

That's when I learned misdirection.
Dyed my hair pure white and then I
wore a wig over it. I distracted
the audience, then I slipped my wig
off and threw it behind the throne,
and suddenly I had white hair.

IN THE AUDIENCE

Bob Reifschnyder nods his approval at Ed's misdirection.

INT. ED'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Two students stand in front of the class reading from the scripts. Ed queries them.

STUDENT ONE

Jonathan Frakes. Bethlehem. Major's
psychology but switching to Theatre.

STUDENT TWO

Nathan Cook. Philly. Engineering.

Ed calls on another couple to do a scene (AD-LIB).

ED (V.O.)

My students all came from different
backgrounds. Some already had their
Equity cards. Others never stepped
on stage before. I had to find a
common ground to teach. Trust was
going to be a key factor. How would
I get that? I didn't have a clue.

INT. ED'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ed stands in front of the class ready to give a lecture.

TEACHER ED

Constructive criticism is vital in the learning process whether you're getting it, giving it, or listening to someone else receive it. All criticism is positive, but how does one learn trust? One way is by making the classroom a place to relax. Create a social atmosphere.

Ed leaves the room and comes back seconds later with a cooler and sets it in on the desk. He waves for the students to come up and as they do he passes out beers.

INT. CLASSROOM -- ANOTHER DAY

Jonathan Frakes is finishing a monologue to the class.

FRAKES

For your own sake, Jeff, and for the sake of my friendship with your father, please, don't say a word.

Ed calls on one of the students with a raised hand.

STUDENT TWO

Overall I liked it. But I think it lacked emotion where it was most needed. I didn't feel any empathy.

INT. BOB REIFSCHNYDER'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Bob asks a question (AD-LIB). Hands go up quickly. He appears thoughtful as the students seem energized - in contrast with a previous scene in his class where they were lethargic.

INT. ED'S CLASSROOM -- ANOTHER DAY

Some students are drinking beer. Two others are by the window smoking pot. Nathan Cook mugs the class and then recites ...

NATHAN COOK

Sir Thomas, I'll be plain with you.

Ed flies out of his seat and ...

ED

No! No, class. We act within the line, not between the lines.

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

To be or not to be, that is the question.

(pause)

Sense the pause before going into
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind.

Versus this: *To be or not to be ...*

(mugs the class)

See the difference?

Student Two sits by the window smoking pot. He throws the stubble out the window and -

STUDENT TWO

Stella ...

ED (V.O.)

The party atmosphere was an experiment to take some barriers down. It was working. Students went on to be successful, like Jonathan Frakes of Star Trek fame. And Nathan Cook, of White Shadow.

IN THE HALLWAY -- Bob Reifschnyder sniffs and follows the odors into Ed's classroom. He shakes his head and leaves.

INT. PENN STATE AUDITORIUM -- DAY

Ed and a few other ACTORS mill around the stage. Ed grabs his bag as LIZ PRICE kisses him. Ed pats her on the butt and she retreats in one direction as he leaves in another.

ED (V.O.)

At this time, I was seeing Liz Price, a knock-out who could double for Candice Bergen. She was a student who sometimes took bit parts in the resident company.

EXT. PENN STATE AUDITORIUM -- DAY

Ed, in a denim Cloud Suit flips his long pony tail over a bright scarf, and puts on his sun glasses. A cigarette dangles in his mouth. He throws a backpack over his shoulder and saunters down the steps with a beer in his hand.

A man in the shadows across the street comes out of hiding with a camera. The SOUND of the shutter CLICKING gives way to the caption under one FREEZE FRAME that reads "UP IN SMOKE".

A series of clicks ends with an unflattering photo of Ed with the caption "DRAMA PROFESSOR LEAVING CLASS".

ED (V.O.)

Fact was, I was leaving rehearsal. This experiment blew up because some disgruntled student or jealous peer reported I allowed marijuana in my classroom. Stories snowballed to orgies and me having sex with students. I was accused of being a druggie and that was that. I was the center of a scandal. Next thing I knew I was threatened over the phone. I had to leave my apartment.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX -- NIGHT

Ed has a suitcase in hand, climbing the stairs. He puts the luggage down, knocks on the door and Liz answers.

ED (V.O.)

I moved in with Liz. The papers said I was sleeping with a student, but she was not in any of my classes. Liz was 21 but that's not what was reported. They were doing a Svengali on this girl. She was very mature and took it in stride. She was a knockout. I was in love.

INT. PENN STATE CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Lowell Manfold, Bob Reifschnyder, DUQUEY and ADLEMAN sit at a desk in front of BOARD MEMBERS. It looks like an inquisition is taking place. All that is missing are the white wigs.

Ed opens the door, walks in, and sits next to Bob. As they wait for someone to speak--

ED (V.O.)

I was brought in to confront the key members of the Drama Department and the Board of Trustees.

Newspapers with the unflattering photos lie on the table.

ED (V.O.)

A victim of yellow journalism.

DREW (V.O.)

Really, Ed? You were smoking pot with your students and drinking to excess. Yeah, you were a real victim of the First Amendment.

ED (V.O.)

It was only two weeks when we did anything. A tenth of what was reported really happened. Don't give me that look. That's it. I'm leaving.

DREW (V.O.)

Come on. Sit back down. With all the crap I put up with you over the years. I'm just screwing around with you. Continue. So the President of the Drama club is about to, what, Fire your ass?

ED (V.O.)

I was in front of the board, my colleagues: Adleman, Duquey, Manfold, and Bob - teachers or department heads. They all had to do an assessment on my teaching methods as well as my character.

Duquey gets up and puts a folder in front of the President then steps back and begins to speak (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

Funny who you think your friends are. Duquey was an ultra arch liberal who wanted me out. Said I used questionable teaching methods, and I didn't belong at Penn State.

Duquey sits and Lowell Manfold gets up. He talks (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

I felt if anyone could bail me out, it was Manfold. But in his effort to not say anything negative, it really came out negative because he wasn't saying anything positive.

Next, Richard Adleman stands in front of the board. (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

These cowards, my friends, were just trying to make sure their own jobs were secure. I wish I had a crystal ball so they could see how many of my students went on to great careers. The list is long.

Bob lays his folder on the table. He looks at Ed, then to the board. It doesn't look good.

ED (V.O.)

Then comes Bob Reifschnyder. The twif. I remember saying to myself, oh, boy, here we go, the gigs over.

BOB

President ... Chairman. Ed and I are office mates. People think we don't get along very well. Fact is, we tolerate each other. He has different methods. Different is not always bad. Did you know 3 of Ed's undergraduate students auditioned against graduate students and Equity actors, and beat them for acting jobs here at Penn State? Gentlemen, that never happened before. Don't get me wrong, I have issues with Mr. Dennehy. His things are strewn all over the place in my ... Our office. He's unkempt most of the time, or appears to be.

(thinks)

Oh, yes, at times he's rude, disrespectful, and arrogant. But gentlemen, is there jealousy at play here? Perhaps. I want to leave you with some important issues. First, I have seen the results of this man's work on stage and in the classroom. He is one of the finest actors and directors this University has ever seen. Secondly, and even more impressive, his students have become better actors because of him. A teacher can only dream of getting the results from students that Mr. Dennehy has gotten from his. It would be a sin if we let Ed go.

The stoic faces of the board members show them unmoved.

ED (V.O.)

This 60 year-old faggot dancer who couldn't dance anymore, who had been at loggerheads with me all along, went toe-to-toe with the President of the University. Stood up for me and didn't flinch. He had more guts than all the others put together. I guess when you live his kind of life during the '40s and '50s you developed a certain amount courage. I wish I was half the man he was.

Bob turns and shares a moment with a tearful Ed, then exits.

INT. ED AND LIZ'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Liz sobs in the bedroom as Ed leaves with two suitcases.

ED (V.O.)

They allowed me to resign. So, I left. I loved Liz, but what was I supposed to do? I couldn't stay.

SERIES OF SCENES

1) Ed climbs the steps of a Brownstone in NYC

ED (V.O.)

The stories hit the API center so my Dad knew the spin. He believed my version and helped me find an apartment on the lower west side.

2) NYC - A BROADWAY STAGE - Ed cold reads (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

So, I do the audition thing. Make the casting rounds to no avail.

3) A different NYC stage; Ed reads from sides (MOS). A MAN whispers in the CASTING DIRECTOR's ear.

CASTING DIRECTOR

NEXT!

4) SMALL THEATRE IN NYC - Ed performs for a small audience.

ED (V.O.)

I work where I can get the work.
There's not much money involved.
Hardly pays for the transportation.

5) ANOTHER CASTING DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - Ed reads from sides.

ED (V.O.)

But I keep at it. What else could I
do? The die has been cast, and I
will die for this profession.

END OF SERIES

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY -- ED'S DREAM -- DAY

In this dream within a flashback, Ed shows a watch-peddler on the street a picture of Deter taken in a previous dream scene. The peddler points to a building across the street.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR OF APARTMENT COMPLEX -- MOMENTS LATER

Ed stands in front of Deter's apartment door. It's slightly ajar. He pushes it open and he walks in to see a vacant room except for a TRUNK with the word labelled on it. Ed approaches it and lifts the lid. A bell RINGS.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - END OF DREAM WITHIN THE FLASHBACK

Wakened from a dream, after several RINGS Ed answers.

ED (V.O.)

In my dream, Deter's quest to find
Ernest became mine. Guilt, I guess,
like I had something to do with his
suicide. Something always woke me
when I opened the trunk. This one
evening it was Liz calling me.

INT. TRAIN -- DAY

Ed is sitting in a train car looking out to nowhere.

ED (V.O.)

She told her parents she was married
to me and they wanted to meet me.
Since Sue Anne and I are already
divorced, I proposed to Liz.

EXT. JUSTICE OF PEACE -- DAY

Liz and Ed are standing in front of the JUSTICE of the Peace (MOS). He motions for Ed to kiss the Bride. He does.

INT. LIZ'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ed, Liz and MR. And MRS. PRICE, (50s), eat at the dinner table. The mood is accepting, but somber (MOS). Ed acts like his father, tapping Liz's hand at the appropriate times, smiling, engaging in polite talk, etc.

INT. THE BROWNSTONE APARTMENT -- MORNING

Ed takes a swig from a vodka bottle while he rummages through the BACKSTAGE newspaper. Liz saunters into the bathroom. Ed watches Liz in the bathroom putting her makeup on.

ED (V.O.)

She pursues a marriage with me in lieu of college. I'm still living off my savings while I look for a job. She finds work easily. Smart Gorgeous. One look at her and she's in-like-Flynn wherever she goes.

INT. A GRAMMAR SCHOOL GYMNASIUM SOMEWHERE IN NYC -- DAY

Ed is in the middle of doing his Hotel Telephone Monologue.

ED (V.O.)

So, I finally go to the URTA and audition with 600 other wannabees for jobs with the country's best theatre groups in the country.

ACTOR ED

You'd be astonished the different ways people say hello. Some people say it to you as if they were willing to give you a million dollars. And then others say it to you as if you'd be doing them the greatest favor if you'd drop dead at your earliest convenience ...

As the monologue fades, we see that packed gym with hundreds of wannabe actors ready to audition.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Ed walks into the office and greets LEE YOPP. (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

I got 25 offers. Bucks County Playhouse was the most prestigious regional theatre in the country and Lee Yopp was the most ambitious theatre owners outside of NY.

DREW (V.O.)

Oh, for crying out loud. Everything has to be the best with you. 'Yopp was the most ambitious. Bucks was the most prestigious. Tulin was the best acting coach in the Universe.'

ED (V.O.)

One of the best on the East Coast, I said. And all I'm saying now is, Lee brought in big names, and had his own stable of actors. He hired me to do three shows that summer, and it turned into a four-year gig.

DREW (V.O.)

I can't believe I'm drinking so early in the morning.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE STAGE -- NIGHT

In the middle of a play, Ed walks on from stage right and recites a line (MOS) and exits stage left.

ED (V.O.)

Anyway, Lee liked my performance of Richard The Lion Heart in Lion In Winter. So, I was invited into their resident company immediately.

CHRIS WEATHERHEAD, an actress, kisses Ed on the cheek backstage. To her, it was more than just a kiss.

ED (V.O.)

Liz stayed in NY to save money. She was faithful. On the other hand... I mean, we got married on a lark. Back then men were expected to...

DREW (V.O.)
 You rationalize a lot, Ed. You're a
 hard person by any standard.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE --STAGE -- DAY

Ed rehearses with the other resident ACTORS while Lee Yopp
 sits in the first row watching.

ED (V.O.)
 One month I'd have the lead in
Julius Caesar playing Brutus ...

ANOTHER NIGHT -- BACKSTAGE -- Ed waits for his cue. Once
 given he rushes on stage with a tray in his hand.

ACTOR ED
You called, sir?

ED (V.O.)
 Next month I'd have a bit part and
 with one line. It didn't matter.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- DAY

GEORGE C. SCOTT struts in with a raincoat draped over his
 shoulders. He throws his coat on a chair.

ED (V.O.)
 Lee jobbed big stars in from NY and
 LA around a core of 12 actors. He
 got George C. Scott there. This was
 before Patton when he began making
 more money than the Kennedys.

SCOTT
 Sorry I'm late. Where are we boys?

Scott hops up on stage. A Twelve Angry Men script lies on the
 table. Ed hands Scott his opened script. As Scott reads it--

ACTOR ED
 I'm off book. I'm Juror three.
 (reciting)
*The kid's a dangerous killer. You
 could see it. He stabbed his own
 father, four inches into the chest.
 They proved it a dozen ways in
 court. Like me to list them for ya?*

SCOTT

*This is about somebody's life here.
We can't decide in five minutes.
Supposin' we're wrong.*

(to Ed)

That was good. What's your name?

ED (V.O.)

I was learning to act with the best of 'em. I was paying my dues, so to speak. Cara Duff was in the show.

CARA DUFF-MCCORMICK wears a purple scarf. She takes it off and slides it over Ed's face softly, seductively.

ED (V.O.)

I didn't want to hurt Liz. I did everything in my power not to.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The purple scarf starts the line of hastily thrown clothes on the floor that trail to the closed door of the BEDROOM where lovemaking sounds from Ed and Cara dominate the sound.

DREW (V.O.)

Your restraint is palpable.

ED (V.O.)

I know I'm not this sexy, wonderful guy. She was away from home. Lonely. She won a Tony for best supporting actress for Moonstruck, and she wanted to be part of the group. She seduced me so I'd throw my influence to get her into the company, not that she needed it.

A KNOCK on the apartment door, which is slightly ajar, causes it to SWING open. Liz walks in holding two suitcases. She sees the clothes on the floor and slowly follows the trail.

ED (V.O.)

Anyway, Liz quit her job in the city to be with me, only she came at the most inopportune time.

ON LIZ - AT THE BEDROOM DOOR

She sees Ed's impropriety and she turns and leaves.

ED (V.O.)

Last I heard she was manager of the famous Lawrence Ferlinghetti Book Store, City Lights, in San Fran. It was a very short-lived marriage.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- DAY

JOHN CARRIDINE, Ed and COMPANY are on stage rehearsing.

ED (V.O.)

John Carridine came through. A great actor. Much better than his sons.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- NIGHT

Ed, TONY IDONZA and several actors rehearse with Carridine. Lee Yopp sits in the first row of the audience, directing.

ED (V.O.)

I was Hornbeck in Inherit The Wind. John was Darrow from the old school. Measured pauses and line delivery.

Tony Idonza walks across stage and sits next to the Judge. Tony has a Brooklyn accent. Resident Actor One walks up.

RESIDENT ACTOR ONE

State your name and occupation.

TONY

George Sillers ... I work at the feed store.

RESIDENT ACTOR TWO

If you had a son, Mr. Sillers ... or a daughter.

JOHN

I Object! Objection!

The Actor-Judge glances at his script. Lee looks at his script and appears confused. Lee stands and bellows ...

LEE YOPP

No objection, John. We're supposed to be choosing jury members ...

JOHN

I know the bloody script, Lee. I'm objecting because I have two complaints. First, this is my travel day. It's against my principles to rehearse on my travel day. And second, you have a lot of bloody pauses in this play. I think we can do with less pauses, don't you, Lee?

LEE YOPP

Okay, everybody. You heard from the master. Less pauses.

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER REHEARSAL

Ed is standing next to John on stage, acting.

JOHN

Poor slob! You're all alone. When you go to your grave, they'll be no one to pull the grass up over your head. Nobody to mourn you. Nobody to give a damn. You're all alone.

ACTOR ED

*You're wrong, Henry. You'll be there.
(long pause)
You're the type. Who else would defend my right to be lonely?*

ED (V.O.)

I purposely gave the line with a long pause. It felt so right but he was the only one who took pauses. I gave it to him in a rehearsal two days before the show. He didn't say a word to me until later.

LATER - a break in the rehearsal. John makes his way over to Ed. He coughs loudly and everyone pauses and listens.

JOHN

Edward ... Edward. That was absolutely beautiful. Don't lose that pause towards the end there.

(turns to the cast)

Too many goddamn bloody pauses in this play, but you leave that one in there, Lee. Good job, Edward.

EXT. A STREET IN NEW HOPE, PA -- DAY

As Ed walks down the street, several RESIDENTS wave. Ed turns the corner, peeks inside a store front. The OWNER waves.

ED (V.O.)

For the first time in a long time,
I was free, unattached. I bought a
house and lived in this gorgeous
town of New Hope. I was treated by
its residents like I belonged.

The SOUND of a toilet flushing provides a transition to--

INT. DREW'S DEN - END OF FLASHBACK TO PRESENT DAY

Drew exits the bathroom to the SOUND of the toilet filling.

DREW

So, what's your point in all this?

ED

I was part of the community, that's
my point. I wasn't this peculiar
thing wearing leotards spouting
poetry on my tiptoes. Everyone in
town appreciated art without
getting weird about it. I went to
Harry's bar and I'd hear him yell
out, "Hello, Sally", who was a
seamstress; "Hello, Joe", the
mailman; "Hello, Ed", the actor,
all in the same breath. All equal
billing. I had found my home, and
was terribly comfortable. And my
work as an actor there was probably
the best it's ever been.

DREW

And Ernest. What about Ernest?

ED

It was very quiet on that front. No
Barrymore either. Very confusing.

EXT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE, BACK TO FLASHBACK -- NIGHT

Tony Idonza and Ed exit the theatre and walk next door. The store front sign reads: Playhouse Inn.

INT. PLAYHOUSE INN

Ed and Tony enter and walk downstairs to The Menagerie Room.

The BARTENDER drafts up two beers without them asking. They slap money on the bar, take hefty swigs and then head for the pool tables. While they play pool -

ED (V.O.)

So many actors came through Bucks.
I remember Tony, an Italian from
Brooklyn. Charming guy. Great pool
hustler like me. Learning to act.
We became friends at the Playhouse.

TONY

I'm going to Hollywood. Be a TV star.

ACTOR ED

Save your money, Tony. They don't
want actors with New York accents.
You'll end up doing commercials for
the rest of your life.

TONY

I'll take voice lessons. Come with
me, Ed. We'll do a movie together.

ED (V.O.)

I tried to discourage him. Most
wannabees I met during this time
fizzled away. Not him. He changed
his name to Danza. Two years later
I see him on a sitcom. Sweetheart
made it. Did I ever tell you about
my big meeting with Pachino.

INT. AN APARTMENT COMPLEX IN NYC, FIFTH FLOOR LOBBY -- NIGHT

The elevator door opens and Ed and Cara walk out.

CARA

Please do me a favor. Don't drink
much tonight. Not tonight. Please.

ED (V.O.)

It was at a party in NYC. I went
with Cara Duff who was supposed to
be the new Julie Harris.

Cara and Ed walk up to the door and knock. While they wait...

CARA

Pachino was great in The Mafia Don.

Ed mumbles as the door opens to a party already in progress.

INT. NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT -- LATER

While Ed fixes himself a drink at the booze table, he eyes AL PACHINO who has a group of PARTY-GOERS surrounding him.

ED (V.O.)

This was around 1973. Pachino was going out with Carol Kane at the time, the hostess of the party.

A circle of admirers surround Pachino and Ed slowly saunters towards the entourage, then mingles and listens to Pachino.

ED (V.O.)

They were discussing Hoffman's performance in Lenny. Now here's the thing. I was trained in the British discipline. Everything happens on the line, so when I pause it has meaning. As opposed to the bastardization of the Stanislavsky method that people like Stella Adler misinterpreted.

PACHINO

Brando is a brilliant method actor. His interpretation is ...

ACTOR ED

It's all psycho-babble. Actors were ruined by Adler or Meisner who taught them that research trumps acting. It's just an avenue to get the proper result, that's all. Strasberg started it. He gave his own spin on Stanislavsky. Then Adler and Meisner twisted it...

Pachino just stands there wide-eyed while Ed salutes.

ACTOR ED

Ed Dennehy, king of horseshit.

PACHINO

Well Ed, I suppose you think Brando is a hack ... Suffers from using method or motivational training?

Ed must wait a moment for the laughs to subside.

ACTOR ED

Adler had an astounding talent in Marlon Brando who took what was good from her misinterpretations and spit out the rest. If there were no Brando, Adler and Meisner would've been laughed out of theatre.

PACHINO

Oh, I see. Us dumb actors don't know how to differentiate ...

ACTOR ED

All I'm saying is Brando would've emerged anyway and because of his success, Adler and Meisner managed to screw up thousands of actors. 'Why do I have to do this? Why do I have to do that?' It's all psychobabble. All this motivation for everything. If you have to open a window on stage, you get up and walk across the stage and open the damn window. "Oh, I have to do it because I have asthma or I'm claustrophobic." You do it because the author or the director told you to do it. It's not complicated.

The wannabees seem to be hiding behind the veil of silence.

PACHINO

And, coincidentally, you feel Dustin Hoffman is a psychobabblist?

Everyone laughs, except Ed. The crowd is getting larger.

PACHINO

If you look at 'the method', you look at preparation and interaction with other actors ... Wasn't that the goal of Hoffman in Lenny?

ACTOR ED

Where was Lenny Bruce on screen. Hoffman has the feeling thing going when the roles call for it. Rizzo in *Midnight Cowboy*. Nobody does it better. But when playing a real person there's documentation, and you should use it and just do it. I mean, Bruce had that nasally thing going on from too much cocaine. And he stuttered, and he tugged on his ear this way. It's right there in the films. Hoffman didn't use it.

Pachino takes a deep breath, prepares for the moment before.

PACHINO

"To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ..." I could have never competently recited that unless I prepared myself totally. If not right now, then some other time where I've integrated the 'moment before' so cogently I can borrow on the memory of it whenever I want to.

ACTOR ED

... Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep no more; and so on, and so forth.

Ed is really good, silencing the crowd.

ACTOR ED

I was just copying a John Barrymore recording I heard years ago.

PACHINO

Hoffman studied Bruce for months...

ACTOR ED

Hoffman pulled on his ear with his right hand. Lenny Bruce was a lefty.

Someone walks past Ed and hits his elbow causing Ed to thrust his drink on Al by accident. Pachino wipes his face, sees Ed's impenitent face, and begins swinging.

ED (V.O.)

It was an accident. And all I was trying to say was this motivational training can be helpful at times. It's merely a tool, not to be used for every damn activity on stage.

Cara bursts through the maddening crowd and tries to pry them apart, as do a few others.

ED (V.O.)

Cara stopped seeing me after that.

Ed is thrown in a chair. Transition to ...

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- DAY

Ed is sitting in a chair on stage to a packed audience. Brian Dennehy appears at the rear of the stage and watches Ed act.

ACTOR ED

Do you know what happens to a man who works all his life, retires and finally gets to do what he wants?

VOICE (O.S.)

No. What?

ACTOR ED

He dies.

The curtain falls to the thunderous roar of the audience applauding. Ed jogs off stage and bumps into Brian. They hug.

BRIAN

I got fired.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- LATER THAT DAY

Brian sits looking out to an empty house, except for Lee Yopp who sits in the front row. Brian has a script in his hands.

ED (V.O.)

Brian just got a job as a broker but it didn't work out. He lived sort of a Lomanesque existence on his severance pay. No prospects. But he wanted to act. Most people get out of theatre to make money. Not Brian.

Lee motions for Brian to read from the script. (MOS)-

ED (V.O.)

This was my 4th year. By this time Lee and I were good friends. He saw right away Brian's talent. And being this big, burly type, well...

INT. LAMBERTVILLE MUSIC CIRCUS -- NIGHT

Brian roams the stage in middle of a monologue.

ED (V.O.)

... At this time, the Playhouse took over the Lambertville Music Circus and opened it across the river to use for shows and concerts.

LATER -- Brian and the ENSEMBLE are playing to a half-full tent. Joel Jons acts opposite Brian (MOS) while--

ED (V.O.)

So, Brian played 'The Barber' in Man Of La Mancha and got an Equity card for it. Joel Jons, a resident actor with connections, leads Brian to NY. Gets him an audition.

INT. A THEATRE OFF-BROADWAY NYC -- NIGHT

Brian is playing to a packed house on stage. SUSAN SHANE, an agent, is in the audience taking notes.

ED (V.O.)

He has the supporting role of the Drunken General in Ivanoff. A scene stealing role. Susan Shane was in the audience and notices Brian, this hulking guy stealing scenes.

LATER - BACKSTAGE

Susan walks in and heads straight for Brian.

ED (V.O.)

So, she comes backstage, finds out he needs an agent, hands him her card and tells him to come her office on Wednesday.

BRIAN

Ma'am. Could you lend me 20 bucks until Wednesday? I live out at West Gilgo Beach and I lost my wallet...

ED (V.O.)

So, she gives him \$20 and leaves. He immediately goes to a bar and drinks it up. Smart thing actually, because now she has a financial stake in him, albeit only 20 bucks.

INT. BRENT AGENCY, SUSAN SHANE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Susan walks into her office to find an urgent message on her desk. She immediately picks up the phone (MOS).

ED (V.O.)

Now here's the stroke of fate. Walter Bernstein is casting in NY for Semi-Tough. He's looking for a hulking white guy to play a southern pro football player whose career is going to seed. They'd been auditioning forever and can't find their type. So, she sets up a Wednesday audition for Brian.

INT. HALLWAY OF PLAZA HOTEL, 4TH FLOOR

Brian walks up to room 420. Knocks. WALTER BERNSTEIN answers and ushers Brian in. MICHAEL RICHIE is sitting at a desk.

ED (V.O.)

So, Susan tells Brian to go to the Plaza to room 420 and after he auditions don't agree to anything, just have them call her then come right back to the office. Walter and Michael introduce themselves and they hand Brian the script and ask him to read for Lambert with the best southern accent he has.

BRIAN

I'm just a southern farm boy and all I wanted to do in life was play football. I don't lead a complicated life. I don't know ...

Walter looks to Richie who gives a single nod.

WALTER

Excellent. We start shooting in Dallas in two weeks. How does thirty-five thousand sound.

BRIAN

No disrespect intended, Mr. Bernstein, but can you call Mrs. Shane and deal with her.

ED (V.O.)

And then Brian makes his polite exit and fast walks back to Susan's office. To him \$35K sounds like a gift from the gods. But when he gets there the offer was up to 250 grand. Two weeks and one night later he's drinking with Burt Reynolds and Kris Kristofferson at the hotel bar. Now Brian will be the first to admit that his physique was the reason he got his start. But I got the bum his Equity card. I got him his start.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- LATER

On stage rehearsing. Lee comes in and places eviction papers on the stage and walks out. Ed comes over and begins reading.

ED (V.O.)

Ironically, while Brian's career takes off, mine flounders. Grant reductions plus the financial disaster to revive the Music Circus forced Lee to declare bankruptcy.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- NIGHT

Ed says his last words of a monologue and exits the stage. He walks over to a hideaway spot, retrieves a flask and takes a swig. Then another. He puts it back and returns to the stage.

ED (V.O.)

The theatre went from the best Equity Regional Theatre Company to a community theatre playing ...

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*Oklahoma where the wind comes
sweeping down the plain.* Towards
the last days, I drank a real lot.

Ed begins to stumble on stage and slurs his words. He looks out to a half-filled audience and sees a MAN who is standing up taking notes while watching the play.

ED (V.O.)

Steven Grey got wind of my drinking and sent someone to check me out. I got caught stumbling, mumbling my lines. Steven fined me a thousand bucks, suspended me for a time.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF A BAR -- DAY

Ed pulls into the lot, parks and gets out of the car.

ED (V.O.)

So, I leave Bucks. My first stop?
My favorite gin joint back home.

As an imaginary Barrymore exits the bar, he tips his hat and gives a two-finger salute. Ed blinks and Barrymore vanishes.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Ed enters and bellies-up to the bar. EVERYONE including the bartender looks like Barrymore to Ed. He shakes his head and the PEOPLE change into regular-looking folks.

ED (V.O.)

Some see pink elephants when they
drink a lot. I see John Barrymores.

Drew sneaks up from behind and pokes Ed. Ed turns, sees who it is, and they embrace. Drew sits and they talk (muted).

ED (V.O.)

That's when we reunited, remember?

DREW (V.O.)

My life has never been the same.

INT. A BROADWAY THEATRE IN NEW YORK CITY -- NIGHT

Ed and Drew sit in the front row watching CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER perform Barrymore. Plummer sits. Moves very little on stage.

ED (V.O.)
 Plummer did Barrymore, a one-man
 show on Broadway. You wanted to
 take it on the road. Coincidental.

DREW (V.O.)
 Serrreendippity-dopity.

A screech and then transition back to--

INT. DREW'S DEN -- PRESENT DAY

Where Ed and Drew sit opposite each other.

ED
 You should stop drinking, Drew.
 Mary's going to kill me.

DREW
 Never mind about her. So, Plummer
 doesn't want to go on the road, and
 you jumped at the chance.

ED
 He performed OK, but didn't move at
 all. I knew it would work with
 movement. Our rendition became a
 very physical interpretation. You
 were a great Frank. Frank was the
 catalyst. He made things happen.

DREW
 Nah. It was all you, Ed. You were
 the show. You always were the show.

ED
 What a night! You, I mean, Frank,
 tries to get Barrymore to say his
 Richard III lines, remember? But he
 doesn't want to do it. Barrymore's
 been doing it for a 1000 years and
 just wants to chat and booze it up.

While the coffee brews, Ed picks up cane closeby and
 theatrically duels and flails it at no one in particular.

ED
 Humor me, Drew. I mean, Frank.
*Yolanda from Kalamazoo once
 strolled after dark by the zoo.*
 (MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

She was seized by the nape and humped by an ape, and sighed 'what a heavenly screw'.

Ed stands and walks to the coffee urn while--

ED

Have you ever had delirious tremens? Blah, Blah ... He died at sixty-two. Hank drank a quart of whisky a day for what we say in New York was a natural cause. He was hit by a cab!

Ed laughs while he pours a cup of coffee. He brings it over to Drew who is holding his head, in pain. He takes a sip.

ED

Start me off, Frank.

DREW

I'm not playing. I have a headache. This happens to me every time I'm with you, whether I drink or not.

ED

Come on Drew ... Frank. Start me off.

DREW

Now.

ED

Now is as good a time as any.

DREW

No, now is the first word.

We transition in time and to a theatre in Boston.

EXT./INT. TREMONT THEATRE IN BOSTON - BEGIN FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A billboard reads: "Barrymore, starring Ed Dennehy". And in small print: "produced by Drew Keil, playing Frank".

NOTE: The 1970's Ed and Drew recite OS picking up where present day Ed and Drew left off in the den.

ACTOR ED (O.S.)

Oh. Now is the first word. Now is the what ... Now is the what?

ACTOR DREW (O.S.)
Now is the winter of ...

INSIDE - Ed is on stage. Drew is sitting down at a desk between the stage and the first row of the audience.

ACTOR ED
Now is the Winter of what?

ACTOR DREW
... OUR DISCONTENT.

Ed moves across stage - always moving.

ACTOR ED
*Now's the winter of our discontent.
 I just said that, don't you listen?
 Maybe I should do Hamlet. No, too
 late. And too old. Alas, Richard is
 the only role worthy of my age and
 my condition. Besides, middle age
 actors should never play Hamlet.*

Ed sees Barrymore in the audience in the back, but continues.

ED
*I tend to stagger. My whole family
 staggers. My father, God rest his
 soul, was a great staggerer.
 'Staggering is a sign of strength,
 Jackie boy', he would say. Only the
 weak have to be carried home.*

Barrymore now sits in the first row quietly clapping.

ED (V.O.)
*Interestingly, Barrymore came back,
 the apparition, I mean.*

DREW (V.O.)
*What about Deter? Ernest? It's what
 started you on this expedition.*

ED (V.O.)
*Deter's dead, remember? But Ernest?
 That's a whole different story.*

INT. DETER'S APARTMENT - DREAM

Ed tiptoes in and opens the trunk. Bright light spews out.

ED (V.O.)

I kept dreaming about the trunk and the word E-R-N-E-S-T. Whenever I opened it to the blinding light... No Ernest. Anyway, Barrymore was a wonderful play. I loved it. Next we went to New Orleans, remember?

INT. PALACE THEATRE IN NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

Actor ED is on stage doing *Barrymore*.

ACTOR ED

You may know this. For a period of time I was a political cartoonist for the Evening Journal.

ACTOR DREW

Really?

ACTOR ED

(playing JB's boss)

Come here, Jacko, my boy. Why is it you're always drawing Teddy Roosevelt standing in tall grass? Why is that, Jacko?

(back to playing JB)

Because, my dear fellow, I never learned to draw feet. I also had a fatal flaw which got me fired. All my drawings looked like me ... That bad boy in me who I always loved.

Ed stops and picks up a hidden bottle of booze. He sneaks a swig, unnoticed. He faces the audience and continues.

INT. A THEATRE SOMEWHERE IN NORTH CAROLINA -- NIGHT

The billboards advertise Ed performing as Brick in Cat On The Hot Tin Roof. On stage as Ed and other ACTORS rehearse (muted), the VO continues with 1970 Actor Ed doing Barrymore.

1970 ACTOR ED DOING JB (V.O.)

Acting is a scavenger profession. A junkpile of all the arts. It's just we three were trapped in a family cul-de-sac. The Drews and the Barrymores. The Barrymores and the Drews. Hell, they even wrote plays about us.

INT. A THEATRE SOMEWHERE IN OHIO -- NIGHT

The Prince Theatre billboard: Ed performing Mark Twain. As Ed stomps across stage like a gazelle as Twain, the VO dialogue continues with 1970 Ed doing Barrymore.

ACTOR ED DOING JB (V.O.)

We were the royal family of American Theatre. And I was the Clown Prince. Somewhere along the way, the public got tired of us. Not that I can blame them. But it paid well, and that, my friends, is the narcotic.

INT. A DINGY HOTEL SOMEWHERE IN JACKSON, MI -- NIGHT

Ed tosses and turns in bed, moaning. An empty Vodka bottle sits on the night table. He rushes from his bed to the bathroom. The sounds of him vomiting compete with the VO.

ACTOR ED DOING JB (V.O.)

Things are beginning to click for me. I don't feel old yet. They say that man isn't old until regrets take the place of dreams.

INT. NEW STAGE THEATRE - JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI -- NIGHT

The billboard: Ed and Sandy Duncan in Star Spangled Girl.

The audience laughs at Ed walking oddly due to a staged sunburn. He dials the phone but it drops in the garbage. He is unable to retrieve it because the clothes rub against his skin and it hurts. One woman cackles hideously at Ed's antics which causes the audience to laugh even harder.

SANDY DUNCAN comes out on stage and the audience quiets some. Ed tries to hide a cough (ominous in real life). The Barrymore continuity remains.

ACTOR ED DOING JB (V.O.)

Agh, Katherine, my curse. Blue mirrors for eyes. A tatty-haired debutante. Every vowel, a diphthong. "Oo-oh. Deee-ar. Whyyyy-eye." Katherine and I were ecstatically happy for twenty years. Then we met.

Sandy back-slaps Ed a 'hello' and Ed does an over-the-top Jackie Gleason pain routine. The cackling lady lets out a hideous laugh igniting the audience's in non-stop laughter. Sandy sits down on the edge of the stage and waits for quiet. Ed does the same. But the audience can't stop laughing.

INT. THEATRE IN LOS ANGELES -- NIGHT

Ed performs Hadrian the 7th swarming the stage as he puffs on a cigarette and AD-LIBS his lines (MOS). The Ed doing Barrymore VO continues.

ACTOR ED DOING JB (V.O.)
*Our last night in Florence, on the
 cupola, on the roof of the hotel
 where we stayed, we watched the
 sunrise, and as the dawn broke,
 there it was, in all its glory ...*

JUMP CUT - same show visually, but Ed reciting JB--

ACTOR ED DOING JB (V.O.)
*... The river Arno, the Uffizi
 Gallery, the Santo Croce Church of
 the Franciscans where Galileo and
 Michelangelo were buried.*

JUMP CUT - Ed (Hadrian) puts his cigarette out in his hand. The audience gasps. Barrymore is in the audience, awestruck.

JUMP CUT - The curtain falls, then comes up with Barrymore on his feet applauding. Ed bows, the ominous cough still present.

BARRYMORE
*... Pardon me boy. Is that the
 Chattanooga Choo-Choo; Track 29,
 Boy, you can give me a shine...*

JUMP OUT and transition to -

EXT. A BAR IN LOS ANGELES -- LATER

Ed swaggers out of the bar. Only Ed sees Barrymore who walks alongside. Ed's VO (doing JB) is his voice on a stage somewhere in America. JB chips in and their VOICES are in sync, proving Ed has mastered the role of Barrymore.

ACTING ED V.O. AND JB
*He said only the weak have to be
 carried home. He used to drag me
 along on his nightly binges ...
 Then he'd slogger home without me.*

Ed stumbles. Barrymore waits a beat then--

ACTING ED V.O. AND JB
*People used to comment on how much
 I looked like my father. Yeah,
 well, I'll be damned if I would be
 like him. The lunatic.*

(Ed fades; JB takes over)
*He was a madman. And he got worse.
 He had nearly killed Ethel. It's
 true. It's all pathetically true.
 Agh, Neddy boy, some mistakes are
 too much fun to only make once.*

INT. BEDROOM SOMEWHERE -- NIGHT

Ed, in bed with a woman, has trouble making love to her as Barrymore sits in a chair in the same room and--

BARRYMORE
*Hello from Hollywood, Luella
 Parsons with a scoop about Bad boy
 JB. His latest indiscretion? Last
 night at the fashionable Jason's
 grille where Mr. B relieved himself
 in a potted palm next to a table of
 delegates from the Daughters Of The
 American Revolution...*

Ed sits up, lights up a cigarette and coughs (ominous). He gives Barrymore a deadpan stare while the woman sits up.

WOMAN
 It's okay. Don't be ashamed.

BARRYMORE
 Ooo! Sorry, pal. I didn't mean to
 cause you ... Performance problems.

INT. A LONG ISLAND THEATRE -- NIGHT

Me And Jezebel appear on the billboard. Ed's picture, made up as Betty Davis, dominates the billboard.

ON STAGE

Ed, dressed as Betty Davis, recites a monologue (MOS).
Barrymore shares the stage with Ed.

BARRYMORE

What are we doing, my boy? Betty
Davis never waived her hand like
that. She did it thusly.

Barrymore is dainty with his movements. Ed continues acting
on stage while Spirit Ed comes out and confronts JB with--

SPIRIT ED

I do not discuss acting.

BARRYMORE

Ah, yes. Ever since the Pachino
incident. But you do look a little
awkward there, Neddy, as if you're
trying to be fruity. You didn't get
much direction on that, did you?

SPIRIT ED

I'm a choreographer. I provide the
movement. Motivations will come from
that. A good director conveys what
he wants not how he wants it. The
'what' gets you a Tony. The 'how'
gets you mediocrity. Get with it JB.

BARRYMORE

Me thinks you protestith too much.
Agh. How in the hell does a guy do
Betty Davis, anyway?

They pause to listen to Ed playing Betty Davis (AD-LIB).
Included in this monologue is the foreshadowing cough.

BARRYMORE

You better get that cough checked,
Neddy. Anyway, the hardest thing
about doing Betty Davis is getting
into the makeup, am I right? Where
there's documentation, you should
use it and do it. Right? Say yes.

Spirit Ed takes a growling look at Barrymore before jumping
back into Ed's body. The curtain falls to a roaring applause.

INT. A STAGE SOMEWHERE ON LONG ISLAND -- NIGHT

Ed performs (AD-LIB) twirling two steel balls between his fingers. He roams the stage with two other male ACTORS.

ED (V.O.)

Anyway, the years rolled on and wise-ass Barrymore comes and goes as he pleases. I did a unique Bogart.

DREW (V.O.)

Actually, you did a Ed Dennehy doing a Marlon Brando doing a Bogart.

INT. ANOTHER THEATRE ON LONG ISLAND - BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

Ed appears anxious as he climbs a ladder reminiscent of the old barn in Derby. He takes a swig from a flask hidden in a nook. Spiders crawl out, just like years ago. He yelps.

ON STAGE

Ed jumps out of nowhere from the top of the hill, which is built to the rafters, and rolls down to the stage screaming because he is drunk and afraid of the phantom spiders.

Ed sees Brian and a PRODUCER walk in and take a seat in the audience. Ed staggers, slurs his words (AD-LIB) and before long the Producer gets up to leave. Brian tries to sway him to sit back down, but the Producer waves Brian off and exits.

ED (V.O.)

One of the rare times I'm drunk on stage. Wouldn't you know it. Brian comes in with a big-wig movie guy. Didn't try to help me much after that. I guess I can't blame him.

INT. A THEATRE SOMEWHERE IN NYC -- NIGHT

Ed is ending his Hotel Telephone Monologue in front of a DIRECTOR in an audition.

ACTOR ED

... The telephone is a marvelous invention. Imagine if you could make a long distance call direct to God. Know what I'd say? I'd say, "hello", and then I would hang up.

ED (V.O.)
Beginning of a ten-year road tour.

JUMP CUT

To a stage somewhere in America where Ed is performing.

ED (V.O.)
I did, Henry the Fifth, and a very
good one, I might add.

JUMP CUT

Ed performing on a stage somewhere in America.

ED (V.O.)
Freddy Treeves in The Elephant Man.

JUMP CUT - GETTING FASTER

ED (V.O.)
Simon Stimpson ... Our Town.

JUMP CUT

ED (V.O.)
Vladimere, Waiting For Godot.

JUMP CUT (IN QUICK SUCCESSION)

ED (V.O.)
Twelve Angry Men... Willy Loman ...
Richard The Third Hamlet...
Darrow ... Harlequinade ...

JUMP OUT

INT. HOSPITAL PULMONARY WARD -- DAY

Ed is in a hospital bed reading the novel, Billy Bathgate. He coughs just as Barrymore walks in. Ed puts the book down.

BARRYMORE
I told you to stop smoking ...

ED
I have a drug resistant TB.

Barrymore walks over to the closet and opens it. He pushes the clothes aside and exposes a makeshift bar.

ED

A man gets bored being cooped up.

Barrymore picks up an empty cigarette pack from the night table, inspects it, and then puts it back down.

BARRYMORE

What's the use talking to you anymore. You don't listen.

Barrymore picks up the script on the night table, titled, Breaker Morant. He reads it while he talks to Ed.

ED

I'm to play the lead in Breaker Morant if I ever get of here, but--

BARRYMORE

Yeah, yeah. Virus's drug resistant. What clued you in that you had a problem? The blood on the pillow?

ED

The infection's small. They'll take out just a little piece of my lung.

BARRYMORE

You'll be out of pocket for over a year. No acting and no directing. You find out who Ernest is yet?

ED

You know I didn't.

BARRYMORE

Well, you should. Keep that dream going. Open that trunk. The truth is in it. Blinding as it is. Sometimes we can't see the truth even when it stares us in the face.

Ed puts the book down and--

ED

Who is Ernest?

As two NURSES enter,

BARRYMORE

Soon. You'll find out soon.

NURSE ONE

It's time, Edward.

She strokes Ed's arm, smiles, then injects him.

NURSE ONE

This will make you very relaxed.

(leans in and whispers)

I know what else will relax you.

BARRYMORE

Have you no shame?

ED

Hey, it gets very lonely around here. Bug off. I'm not married now.

BARRYMORE

Since when did that matter?

Nurse One looks confused as to who Ed is talking to.

ED

Agh ... Just practicing my lines.

Barrymore follows Ed as he is wheeled out of the room.

BARRYMORE

You're getting more like me every day, Chum. Do you think you'll die?

ED

(reacting to the drugs)

This is good stuff. Gotta try this.

BARRYMORE

This Breaker Morant script! A bit boring, but I have an idea. Have Drew play the defense attorney. You direct it and play Morant. You can change it a bit. I can see it now. First scene: Morant and Hancock are being executed; the boots marching; dogs barking, commands are shouted; then what you see are four soldiers marching on stage. The music and the marching boots ... Can't you envision it? A holy moment.

The gurney breaks through double doors. Barrymore disappears.

INT. DREW'S DEN -- PRESENT DAY -- MORNING

Ed lays on the couch, as if he is talking to a shrink. He is oblivious to the fact that Drew has fell asleep.

ED

So, I got permission to make changes to Breaker Morant. Now I had plenty of time to change it. I must've done something right.

Ed picks up the paper from coffee table.

ED

The Newsday critic says it's the best damn play in the five boroughs and Suffolk and Nassau Counties, but I was still depressed and now I know why. Last night I found out who Ernest is in my dream.

FLASHBACK DREAM

Ed opens the door to Deter's vacant apartment. He stands over the steamer trunk and opens the lid. Instead of blinding lights, the trunk is filled with costumes, hats and other props used to disguise or change the appearance of an actor.

One by one Ed takes out the costumes and disguises. On the back of one gown are the letters E-R-N-E-S-T.

END OF FLASHBACK DREAM -- BACK IN DREW'S DEN

Barrymore appears in the other chair. He nods at Drew and Ed turns around and looks. Drew is sound asleep. They chuckle.

BARRYMORE

God, Neddy, there's so much good stuff you left out: Sir Lawrence, Peckinpah, Joe Flynn, Pat Paulson, Chester Morris. Oh, he was a great Captain Queeg, wasn't he? And the country tour of you and Joe Namath. And the tryst you had with Rose Haynes, the underwear heiress? She proposed to you, for Chrissakes. You'd be on a yacht smoking a joint and sniffting cognac right now if you made different choices.

ED

As hypocritical as this sounds, I was married. I do have priorities.

BARRYMORE

And then there was Smith Tooson who directed Of Thee I Sing. That was a great audition up gave singing--

(singing)

With your drums and guns and drums and guns, hurroo, hurroo; With your drums and guns and drums and guns; The enemy nearly slew ye; Oh my darling dear, Ye look so queer; Johnny I hardly knew ye.

ED

I was drunk and gave so much Irish sentiment I almost made Smith cry. It was like that slider pitch I threw to Coach Fowtes. A once-in-a-lifetime-thing. When they found out I couldn't sing they recast the part with a guy from the city.

(pause)

What about my dream, John? What was Deter trying to tell me?

Ed waits for an answer. Barrymore sings.

BARRYMORE

I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

ED

That's it, isn't it? The props. Deter is Ernest. Ernest is Deter. I retreated to my stage life to avoid my responsibilities in this life.

BARRYMORE

What's real? What's fake, Neddy.

ED

My denial was literally blinding me. The light was my denial.

BARRYMORE

Very good, Edward. Now, at last, I can have a drink. Want one?

Barrymore gets up to make himself a drink.

ED

Soda's fine. Now, listen to me,
John. I went through that curtain
and I sacrificed my personal life
all these years. I ignored people
who mattered. Family. Children

BARRYMORE

You met me. What am I, chopped liver?

ED

What has that gotten me?

BARRYMORE

What has your series of romantic
encounters gotten you?

Barrymore takes both drinks, hands Ed his soda. They toast.

BARRYMORE

To a job well done. To us. And to
Deter. Freud would be proud. To you
my ID friend. And to me, the EGO.

Ed drinks, puts the glass down and then stretches his legs.

ED

I languished as an unrecognized
artist for so long, but I've always
been able to make choices few
artists make. God, I feel so giddy.

Ed hops around the room then stops.

ED

Why did you bother with me, John?

BARRYMORE

Theatre is about distractions and
movement. Most actors don't get
that. You did. Right from the
beginning you did.

ED

Why do I feel so light on my feet.
Haven't felt like this in ...

(jumps on the couch; sits)

You know what I've noticed, John?

(MORE)

ED (CONT'D)

I noticed that people with family
seem happier. Family is important.

Barrymore points to everywhere in the room.

BARRYMORE

This is the cartoon life.

ED

The hell it is! I want a den and
walls to pin pictures on. I've
avoided it for too long. I avoided
my responsibilities ... My
children. I want Sue Anne back.

BARRYMORE

Please. Next thing you'll tell me
is that I'm the ghost of the past.

ED

You cynical bastard ...

BARRYMORE

I've seen you in Inherit The Wind,
and I've been wanting to tell you
this for some time. Gene Kelly played
a much better Hornbeck than you.

ED

And I've noticed the real world
people who are late are much jollier
than the people who wait for them? I
get that now. I was always afraid I
was going to miss the curtain call.

BARRYMORE

Some mistakes are too much fun to
only make once ...

ED

Yes, you've told me that before.
You're repeating yourself.

BARRYMORE

I suppose I am. That's a sure sign
that it's time to go. Well, Neddy, I
guess there's nothing else new for me
to say. It's time to say good-bye.

Ed goes to object, but Barrymore holds his hand out and ...

BARRYMORE

This is it, my friend. We've been on a long journey together. You don't need me anymore. Just the memory of me should do.

Ed goes to object again, but Barrymore stops him again.

BARRYMORE

No. There's nothing else to say.

(smiles lovingly)

I just had an inspiration. When you finish tonight, at the end of the play, just before you get shot, look out into the audience and stare through them and say...

"Shoot straight, ya bastards. Don't make a mess of it." That would be exciting, I think.

There is a hard knock on the door and Barrymore vanishes. Mary walks in and ...

MARY

It's seven in the morning, Edward!

Ed walks over to Mary who retreats at his effort to hug her.

ED

I'm sorry for disturbing you so early in the morning, Mary. It will never happen again. Really.

They both look at Drew sprawled out on the recliner.

ED

I know I'm not the only one in this world, but I'd like to be considered the world to one person. You two have so much. So, much.

He kisses her and leaves.

INT. HOFSTRA THEATRE -- STAGE -- NIGHT

Similar setting as in the first scene, the SOUNDS dominate: boots marching, STOMPING on hardwood floors, and men SHOUTING military orders, and drums DRUMMING, mixing with the sound of dogs BARKING.

Two white armless chairs are the sole props. Ed and another ACTOR move into the shot and sit in the chairs. Both have military uniforms on. Ed looks out into the audience and sees Barrymore in the back row.

VOICE

Ready!

ON BARRYMORE

He gets up and watches the finale while standing.

VOICE

Aim!

ON ED

He reaches out to Barrymore and clenches his fist and withdraws his arm. Ed's eyes fill with tears. He shouts ...

ED

Shoot straight, you bastards. Don't
make a mess of it.

VOICE

FIRE!

Ed falls from the chair, tipping it over.

The THUDS of bodies hitting the floor provide context to shadows on the wall of the two chairs on their sides.

The scan down the wall to the floor stops at the actual fallen chairs, and to Ed who is facing the audience. His eyes, tearing, are open with a deadpan stare into nowhere.

ON BARRYMORE

Standing in the aisle, he gives a two-finger salute and then exits the theatre.

ON ED

A tear falls and hits the floor. His eyes close and he dies (acting). We pan back from his body and watch the curtain fall as the audience applauds exuberantly.

FADE OUT

- THE END -