

# The Ed Dennehy Story

by

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True Story

As told by Ed Dennehy

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(deceased)

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.

The sounds fade as a British voice emerges.

VOICE (O.S.)

They strike in the dark of night,  
then run away. We can't 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.) (CONT'D)

Harry ... Morant.

A doorbell SOUND resonates to the foreground.

EXT. DREW KIEL'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

ED DENNEHY pounds on a door.

ED

Drew. Wake up. Let me in.  
Something has happened.

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

The marching boots stop. In a gruff, commanding voice--

SOLDIER ONE

Left face.

The SNAP of heels lead to the visual of 4 Military MEN with rifles marching in place. Soldier One has a whip in his hand.

SOLDIER ONE (CONT'D)

Halt.

(pause)

Ready.

The military men hoist the rifles in the 'ready' position. The sound of Ed pounding on the door comes to the forefront.

ED (O.S.)  
Wake up, Drew. We need to talk.  
I need help.

SOLDIER ONE  
Aim.

The four military men take their guns off their shoulders and take aim into the camera.

SOLDIER ONE (CONT'D)  
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

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

EXT. DREW'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

ED DENNEHY thumps his bushy head against the outside front door, looking older than his 40+ years.

ED  
Drew. Wake up, for chrissakes.

ON THE SECOND FLOOR, DREW leans out of his bedroom window and appears to have been woken from a dead sleep. He is the same age as Ed with less hair. Younger looking.

DREW  
Edward, is that you? Are you drunk?

ED  
No! I ...I had another dream, or hallucination, or something.

INT. DREW'S BEDROOM

MARY, Drew's wife, well-groomed for someone being woken up so early in the morning, sits up in bed while Drew talks to Ed.

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

EXT. DREW HOUSE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Drew still has his head out the window.

DREW

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

Drew ducks his head back in and closes the window.

INT. DREW'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Drew takes Mary's hand and holds it.

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  
again. One of the pebbles hit Drew in the face.

DREW (CONT'D)

I was hoping that this was just a  
bad dream.

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

Who knows? Something. Everything,  
maybe. Can't tell with him.

INT. DREW'S HOUSE DOWNSTAIRS

Drew walks into view, opens the front door for Ed to enter and then heads into the den.

Ed enters the house and shuts the front door behind him, then bolts in front of Drew.

DREW

Good thing I'm not a cop. I can  
smell the booze from here.

Ed stumbles into the den and closes the den door.

IN THE DEN

Photos of Drew and Ed acting together line the wall.

ED

(with an accent)  
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 the 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.

ED (CONT'D)

I've found out who Ernest is.

Drew gives Ed a highbrow stare about what Ed just said, as if the men share a secret of the meaning behind "Ernest".

MARY (O.S.)

Drew. What's going on down there?

Drew gets up and walks to the door and opens it a bit.

DREW

Nothing. Go back to bed, Sweetie.

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

ED

I found out who Ernest is.

Drew lets out with a deep sigh - a groan, almost.

ED (CONT'D)

That's right. See? Now you understand. I need a drink.

Ed gets up but Drew pulls him down and gets up ahead of him.

DREW

Okay. I'll get it. Sit down.

Drew makes a drink at the bar and a soda drink for himself. As Drew comes back with the drinks--

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 got a ship that's built as big as the Empire State Building, and just as heavy, and it floats magnificently.

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

DREW

So, you're sinking. I get it. But I don't look into life metaphorically like that. I like things well defined. Literal.

ED

This above all else: to thy own self be true...

DREW

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

ED

I should be rejoicing...

DREW

And floating? But you're sinking.

ED

Exactly. Now you got it.

Drew heads back to the bar, makes himself a drink and places it down on the coffee table. Drew sits.

DREW

You've been welded together, like rivets of a ship.

ED

I'm leaving.

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

Ed, if you'd just stop drinking.

ED

Good evening to you too, Mary.

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

MARY

Is someone dead?

DREW

I'll tell you later. Go back to bed, Sweetheart. It looks like we'll be here for a while.

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

DREW (CONT'D)

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

ED

No. We were talking about Ernest. I finally saw what was in the trunk. Props. Masks. All these years Barrymore was trying to tell me that my father, my brothers, Alice, Sue Anne, all the women in my life, were props. 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 I can  
can find out the last time I had  
control. Maybe I'm just a dream  
being pulled by unseen forces.

DREW

More likely someone's nightmare.

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. Gets up to make another.  
Drew comes back and places his drink on the coffee table next  
to Ed's. Drew sits, shrugs.

Ed points to his own stomach.

ED

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

DREW

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

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

ED

OK! Fine. Yes. My dad. Let's begin  
there. We're in London. It's 1945.

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

The tapping SOUNDS come from EDWIN DENNEHY, 20s, typing on  
his manual typewriter. Edwin wears an US Captain's uniform.

A wall calendar displays AUGUST, 1945. The phone rings. He  
picks it up, listens for a long beat, then hangs up. Yelling--

EDWIN

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

Edwin runs to MR. FLOCK (overweight) who just came out of the editor's office and Edwin hands him the paper he just typed.

ED (V.O.)

My dad was an API correspondent in London during World War II.

An attractive WOMAN (22), Ms. Pringle, enters the room.

MS. PRINGLE

Let's celebrate after work. Are you losing weight, Mr. Flock?

MR. FLOCK

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

She puts an extra swivel in her stride as she leaves.

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.

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.)

The Northern Conquest over, my father summoned his Gaelic family to London right after the war in the summer of '45.

INT. A DOWDY LONDON APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

The SOUND of clanking silverware comes from inside the dreary tenement, up the dingy stairwell, and into a gloomy apartment where HANNAH DENNEHY, (22), a slim and fashionably dressed woman is feeding her sons, MIKE (6) and BRIAN (7).

A fourth plate of food sits on the table without a consumer.

Hannah puts a napkin over Edwin's plate of uneaten food and takes it to the refrigerator, then brings her empty plate to the sink.

She turns on the hot water nozzle and a series of noisy, angry, air-bursts squirt out of the faucet before any water comes out.

APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Edwin enters, takes off his shoes and tip-toes into the dimly-lit kitchen. He opens the refrigerator door, 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 waited.

EDWIN

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

HANNAH

Look around you. Really. The kids  
even noticed the peeling paint. You  
belong here, Edwin. We don't.

Edwin gets up and hugs Hannah. He pulls back and takes two tickets from his shirt pocket. He consoles her (improvise).

ED (V.O.)

My father took mom to the theatre  
often to make up for his  
indiscretions. What better place to  
be than London as theatergoers? 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 each side of her. She loosens her SEAT BELT.

ED (V.O.)

But my father wasn't successful in  
getting her to stay even though she  
was pregnant. She and my brothers  
flew home to Connecticut.

(MORE)

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

She knew my dad was screwing around, and I guess coming home was her way of putting an end to it without a fuss. Dad stayed in London until there was an opening stateside.

EXT. NEW HAVEN AIRPORT - NIGHT

Hannah and her sons deplane to the open arms of her sisters.

SUPER - FOUR MONTHS LATER

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

With suitcase in hand, Edwin comes in the house while Uncle HARRY slouches at the kitchen table, drinking booze. His hair is askew, and his red face bears the marks of Rosacea.

EDWIN

Did she have the baby yet?

HARRY

A toast to the new daddy.

EDWIN

I gotta go to the hospital, Harry.

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD -- LATER

Edwin walks briskly down the hall looking at each name tag on the wall. A little bit tipsy, 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 walks over to Hannah and places Edward bedside.

EDWIN (CONT'D)

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.

SUPER - ONE YEAR LATER

INT. DERBY HOUSE BEDROOM -- NIGHT

DOCTOR MELANO leans over a crib taking Ed's temperature while Hannah stands close by. 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. Hannah comes running into the living room, hysterical.

HANNAH

It's strep throat. We need ICE.

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

HANNA

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

BACK IN THE BEDROOM

Dr. Melano pulls off a pillow case as Hannah runs in with ice cubes. She puts the cubes into the pillow case while the doctor massages Edward's chest to keep him alive. He then puts Ed into the pillow case.

ED (V.O.)

When I was a year old I got  
Scarlet Fever and I died.

Suddenly, infant Edward begins to cry.

ED (V.O.)

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

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

At a family picnic Edwin sits at the picnic table when Harry 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. 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.)(CONT'D)

Oddly, the only person my dad liked on my Mom's side was Uncle Harry. A flimflam man. Dad's antithesis from the other side of the universe.

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

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

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 (CONT'D)

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

Harry motions for silence and quietly sneaks over to a corner of the barn, and pulls up a floor board.

He shines a light and exposes several stacks of money.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Can't claim it to the IRS for obvious reasons. So, I use it for knick-knacks, and food and stuff. Comes in handy on cloudy days.

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

Ed's GRANDPARENTS sit on the porch as little Ed steps up.

ED (V.O.)

I was scared of my father's father.  
He was a 6'4", 300 pound coal  
stoker. Right off the boat.

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.

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

GRANDFATHER

I got your nose, Neddy.

BEGIN SPFX

Ed's face has just nose holes. He wants his nose back but Gramps won't give it up. Instead, Gramps picks Ed up and tosses him skyward; so high, in fact, that Ed sees the two oceans as he and his nose come to a stop.

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 DERBY HOUSE IN CONNETECUT - TWO YEARS LATER

Brian and Mike, tallest two 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 view. According to Ed, the barn is haunted and mysterious.

ED (V.O.)

I remember the family picnics.  
Everyone lived within 9 miles of  
each other. Brian was 8 years older  
than me. Mike was 7 years older. He  
was big too, but a lot skinnier.

Ed waits 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.) (CONT'D)

I'd step up to the plate and say in 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 'Brockenstick' hits a squiggler down the third base line. He runs like lightning and beats the throw to first, then Johnny takes a position at the plate. He points to center field.

INSIDE THE BARN

Cobwebs, a few spiders, and old machine tools fill the barn. Sunlight shines through a small loft window. A cloud passes by the sun, and the loft turns dark.

ED (V.O.)

My uncle had big dusty-old machine tools that stood around for years like sentinels in a ghostly, possessed place called 'The Barn' where spiders and unknown things were crawling and creeping around.

BACK TO THE GAME

Johnny smacks the cork ball deep into center field. It breaks the loft window and disappears into the barn. The other 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

You hit it. You get it.

JOHNNY

No way. There's killer animals in there. Dragons and stuff.

Ed slowly opens the barn door, and looks in. Cobwebs adorn the machine tools like Halloween decorations. Undeterred, Ed walks to the loft ladder. Johnny is right behind Ed.

Cautiously, Ed ascends. He thinks he hears a rustling sound in the loft. He stops briefly, then continues until his head is level with the loft floor.

(BEGIN SPFX) Ed looks up and staring at him are eight eyes of a spider, each eye the size of a grapefruit. Ed screams and falls off the ladder and onto Johnny. (END SPFX)

Ed gets up, runs out of the barn while Johnny gets up and cautiously inches closer to the ladder. He looks up and sees a normal size spider walking around on the top rung.

INT. DERBY HOUSE -- NIGHT

Hannah sits at the kitchen table crying. Hannah is consoling.

ED (V.O.)

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

EXT. FISHING BOAT -- DAY

Edwin, Harry and two other MEN are fishing off The shores of Connecticut. Harry snags a big fish. He holds tight onto the pole while furiously trying to bring the fish in.

HARROLD

Someone help me. This is a strong one.

ED (V.O.)

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

He holds tight onto the pole while furiously trying to bring the fish in. He loses the fight, but refuses to let go of the pole and falls into the water. He drowns.

ED (V.O.)(CON'T)

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 eventually washes 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. The trout was still on the other end of the line. Dead, of course.

BACK TO URSULA AND HANNAH IN THE DERBY HOUSE

Ursula talks through her sobs--

URSULA

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 is having one too with that bakery woman in town.

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.

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

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

ED (V.O.)

Dad was tired of commuting to NY and too embarrassed to stay in Derby after what Aunt Ursula was telling everyone. Mom elected for another geographic cure by moving close to Queens where they built apartments that catered to WWII veterans who put their hopes and dreams in little Cape Cods and cheap apartments that were a car or subway ride away from the nation's theatre capital.

INT. DENNEHY APARTMENT -- LATER

The family stand in the middle of the living room.

Hannah looks through the kitchen window and gawks at the bricks of the next house. Ed looks out the living room window and sees a few kids roller skating.

EXT. STOOP OF THE APARTMENT COMPLEX -- DAY

Ed puts on steel roller skates while the SOUND of roller-skates gets louder and louder. A pair of white leather SKATES appear full view before Ed. He looks up and sees a girl with little blonde curls and dimples the size of quarters on both sides of her face.

LITTLE GIRL

Hi. My name is Emily.

BOY ED

Hi. My name is Neddy.  
(stroking her hair)  
You have beautiful hair.

LITTLE GIRL

Thank you.

Ed has a black cape on, remnants of a Halloween costume. The cape blows in the breeze as they skate off into the sunset.

ED (V.O.)

My father promised we'd move after he got a promotion. All I remember about Glenn Oaks is 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.

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

MATCH CUT:

EXT. STREETS OF MINEOLA -- MONTHS LATER

...the SOUND/SIGHT of skates on the sidewalks of Mineola.

ED (V.O.)

Then we moved to Mineola after Dad got his promotion, and I find myself a new world. It's like, kid-batman meets the greasers.

Ed looks up and see a 'gang' of three KIDS who wear tight pants, t-shirts and have the greased-back hair look.

As Brian walks by--

BRIAN

Come on, Neddy. It's dinner time.

KID ONE

Ooo. 'Neddy poo, it's dinner time.'

'Brian comes back and faces Kid Two, who's a foot shorter than Brian, who pokes his finger in the boy's chest.

BRIAN

Got a problem with my bro's name?

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, not Neddy.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

At the dinner table, the Dennehy's are quiet while eating.

BOY ED

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

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.

EXT. STREETS OF MINEOLA -- MORPHING

Snow melting gives way to a change of seasons

BEGIN SPFX

Flowers bud and trees blossom all in a matter of seconds.

ANOTHER DAY

Ed and the Greasers walk down the street wearing leather vests, tight pants and pointy shoes, except for Ed who still wears sneakers, baggy pants and a white t-shirt. Slung over their shoulders are their sneakers and their baseball gloves.

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

END SPFX

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

They approach the field and a handful of KIDS in loose-fitting pants, crew cuts, with Henley shirts, await them.

LATER

Ed steps up to the plate and points to center field just like his cousin did that day in Derby, Connecticut.

ED (V.O.)

Even though I was with the greasers  
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.

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.

ED (V.O.)

Catholic School made us straight-  
shooters. If you wear pointy shoes  
you can be on both sides, like me.  
It's all in the clothes.

INLT. DENNEHY DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

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

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. Dad says you have to go, so you go.

HANNAH

Neddy, Chaminade's a good school. Brian's going there. Michael will going there soon, and so will you.

(pause)

A little help in the kitchen, please.

Ed follows Hannah into the kitchen and comes back 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 as he sits next to her.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I heard you're going to Chaminade next year, Thomas. How nice.

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.

HANNAH (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Brian, stop fooling around and give your brother a bigger slice.

ED (V.O.)

My mother babied me back then. Maybe because I had epilepsy, or because I was the youngest child like her. I think she was unhappy. Her two older sons were too busy in their lives for her. And my father? We all knew what he was up to.

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

Ed watches the buildings go by as he looks out the train window. Edwin sits next to him reading a newspaper.

ED (V.O.)

I'll never forget when Dad took me to New York City.

INT. SUBWAY -- LATER

Ed holds onto a pole in the center of a subway train as a variety of PEOPLE tower over him.

These people have 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 CITY -- LATER

Edwin and his son walk into a deli.

ED (V.O.)

I thought we were going straight to the Museum, but he gets Mr. Hicks, a deli owner, to watch me. He buys a hot-chocolate and hot dog, and gives it to me outside, and tells me to sit on a nearby bench while he attends to business.

Ed bites into his hotdog 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.

AN HOUR LATER

Edwin bolts out of the building, and passes by Ed who is sitting on a bench eating an apple. Edwin sticks his head in the Deli and thanks Mr. Hicks for looking after me then bolts down the street. Ed follows, but must skip to keep up.

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

Ed follows his father's gaze and her eyes meet his. She half-hides behind the curtain and gives a subtle wave of the hand.

Ed does the same.

ED (V.O.)

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

EXT. SOME STREET IN MANHATTAN -- LATE MORNING

While Ed walks along side his father on the streets of Manhattan, tall and short PEOPLE, fat and skinny PEOPLE breeze by Ed who is all eyes looking at their faces.

BUM ONE, who is awkwardly dressed, follows them but Edwin breezes by without a hitch in his step. Bum One tags along for a few strides, then he tugs on Edwin's coat.

BUM ONE

Sir, I got laid off. I'm divorced.  
Won't you help me. Give me a dollar  
so I can buy food for my daughter?

Edwin ignores him and picks up the pace. They finally arrive at the bus stop as BUM TWO, who has a goiter the size of a melon protruding from his neck, steps up and--

BUM TWO

Can't you spare a dime, boy?

Ed jumps back and yelps.

INT. ASSOCIATED PRESS OFFICE -- LATER

Ed sits at a desk watching his father talk to CO-WORKERS.

Ed mimics him with head nods and hand gestures. Edwin picks up the phone and dials. Ed mimics his father while Edwin dials the phone.

ON EDWIN

EDWIN

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

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM -- LATER

Ed struggles up the large steps of the museum.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, MEDIEVAL ROOM-- LATER

The statues are awesomely big compared to Ed. The PEOPLE are all well dressed - more 'types' to memorize.

Ed watches his father talk to a well-dressed LADY. He laughs politely, then turns to Ed and--

EDWIN

Edward, this is Mary, my secretary.

Young Ed nods politely, and then turns to the statue in front of him. It is dressed in a suit of armor. Ed bows to him and holds up his fist as if he's beckoning him for a joust.

FROM ED'S POV (HALLUCINATING) - BEGIN SPFX

The statue moves and jumps down, and another statue close by tosses Ed his gigantic sword, too big for Ed to handle but, magically, it shrinks to a manageable size, Ed picks it up.

BACK TO SCENE

To Edwin and Mary, the statue doesn't move at all. They watch Ed taunting the stationary statue. While watching--

MARY

Your son has an active imagination.

EDWIN

That he does.

Ed battles the moving statue with swashbuckling maneuvers.

The stinging SOUND of clanging steel when their swords meet dramatizes Ed's fight. Ed thrusts the sword into his opponent's groin, and the statue crashes to the floor. THUD!

Edwin and Mary watch Ed raising his arms in a victory pose over an imaginary foe on a bare floor. Mary claps robustly.

LATER

Ed, Mary and Edwin stand by a Van Gogh painting of Marie Julien.

MARY

Van Gogh painted this picture of Marie Julien. 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.

FROM ED'S POV (HALLUCINATING)--BEGIN SPFX

While Mary explains why (improvise - MOS), van Gogh winks at Ed then jumps out of the picture and lands on the floor.

VAN GOGH

Don't listen to her, Neddy.

A chair materializes and Marie Julien also jumps out and morphs into a real person. She sits while a canvas on a tripod magically appears.

END SPFX

Van Gogh begins to paint her.

MARY

One story mentions his brother Theo was going to spend Christmas with his fiancé instead of with Vincent. And Vincent got madly jealous.

VAN GOGH

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

Van Gogh listens while painting--

EDWIN

I thought he cut his ear because of his brother's engagement.

MARY

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

VAN GOGH

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

Van Gogh walks over to Ed while--

MARY

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

While Edwin and Mary talk (improvise - MOS) --

VAN GOGH

I have to admit, Neddy, I had homosexual thoughts of Gauguin, my friend. Maybe you are too young to understand 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, don't you think?

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 (CONT'D)

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

BEGIN SPFX

Van Gogh holds the lower part of Ed's ear between his  
fingers, and the blood drips on the floor.

END SPFX

BOY ED

My ear. My ear. He cut it off.

Ed checks his crotch. Everything is intact there.

INT. DENNEHY'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

A small BAND-AID covers the lower part of Ed's left ear as he  
crouches down in front of a mirror. His arm sways back and  
forth in front of him like an ape.

ED

Sanctuary. Sanctuary.

Hannah, with a suitcase in hand, grabs Ed and they barge out  
of the house and pounce down the porch. A taxi awaits them.

INT. DINER -- A LITTLE LATER

Ed and Hannah sit in a booth. They see Edwin pull up in a car  
through a window facing the outside parking lot,.

HANNAH

You wait here, Neddy. I need to  
talk to your father.

ED (V.O.)

I remember that day at the diner.  
Dad came to pick us up. She seemed  
to have all the power but she caved  
as usual.

FROM YOUNG ED'S POV

Ed pretends a girl sits in the booth next to him as he mimics  
his father - grabs her imaginary hand, touches her hair,  
shoulder, He gently touches her cheek.

BACK TO SCENE

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

EXT. CHAMINADE FOOTBALL FIELD -- WEEKS LATER - DAY

Ed, Mom and Dad watch a Chaminade High School football game. Brian, a linesman, is being tossed around quite easily. Brian trips and falls. Ed looks up at his dad and--

ED (V.O.)

My dad cried because Brian couldn't defend himself. That was the only time I saw my dad cry. He didn't even cry at his father's funeral which surprised me.

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

There was no mistaking who was in the casket with all the signs and pictures that adorned the walls. Ed's father actually looked like he didn't fit in the casket with his coal-stained hands folded on top of a mountainous belly.

INT. DENNEHY LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The Dennehy brothers watch Dracula Meets Wolfman on TV. Ed watches with them while reading a book on John Barrymore. A particular TV scene frightens young Ed. Mike sees this and--

MIKE

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

INT. DENNEHY LIVING ROOM -- DAYS LATER - DAY

Larsen winds up. Ed winds up and pitches an imaginary ball as Larsen throws the last strike of the game. Yogi Berra runs out, leaps into Larsen's arms, and Ed jumps on Mike, as the Dennehy men go nuts over Larsen's World Series perfect game.

BEGIN SPFX

Snow on the ground OUTSIDE conveys the passage of time.

Flowers bloom - Spring has arrived.

EDN SPFX AS WE TRANSITION TO:

INT. DENNEHY LIVING ROOM TV

While Mike and Ed watch Casablanca--

ED  
Where's Brian.

MIKE  
Working out with the weights in the  
cellar.

TV BOGART  
*Tell me, who was it you left me  
for? Was it Lazlo, or were there  
others in between?*

INT. CHAMINADE FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY

During the first game of the season, Ed and his father watches Brian recover from a block. He then tackles the running back with such aggression that the ball goes flying loose.

A much aggressive Brian is playing football.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

While watching TV, Ed crouches down low and twists his face trying to look different. He looks at his reflection on the TV screen and--

ED  
(a bum)  
*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?*

He changes the channel to The Knute Rockne Story. Ed grabs a pad and pen and writes the words that actor PAT O'BRIEN gives in a locker room speech. Ed recites while he writes.

INT. DENNEHY'S BASEMENT -- LATER

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

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.

ED (CONT'D)

*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.

ED (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

*Make no mistake about it, they'll give the ball to their unstoppable Bellino, their all-American fullback. But remember men, we too have a weapon. 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. What do you say, men?*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT -- TWO YEARS LATER

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.)

He worked hard since freshman year. By the time he was a senior, he was the best player on the team.

(pause)

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

INT. CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

A poster on the side of the stage welcomes everyone to the senior play, George Washington Slept Here. The Dennehys take their seats as the curtain rises, and the play begins.

ED (V.O.)

Suddenly I see Brian on stage and he's acting different. Peculiar.

Brian walks across the stage bellowing his lines (improvise).

Mike also is in the play. Ed watches intently as he too bellows his lines (improvises) as he walks across the stage.

A RINGER SOUND connotes Ed is being affected by what he sees. His eyes widen. Another RINGER SOUND. Ed's hooked.

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

Brian walks down from the stage. Hannah IMPROVISES 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?

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

A bed blanket hangs over a clothes line, dubbing as a curtain. Ed finishes lighting the candles around the 'stage'.

Ed is a little heavy on the makeup, and he's a little over-the-top Dracula. Ed flips his black cape over his shoulder. His pointy shoes, tight pants, and his unusually styled pompadour make Ed a weird-looking Dracula for sure.

ED (V.O.)

(with a Dracula accent)

*Good Evening. My name is Count  
Tribulosso.*

In the audience, a CHILDHOOD FRIEND laughs. Ed goes to him--

ED

What are you laughing at?

JOHN

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

ED

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.

Suddenly, Ed appears from behind a partition. His face muscles and white make-up create a classic Dracula.

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

ED (CONT'D)  
I am drinking your blood.

Bob falls limp and dies (acting).

LATER

Ed is lying on a bench (casket) when Drew sneaks up with a wooden stake in one hand and a rock in his other.

He places the stake on Ed's chest and bangs 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.

Alice cannot take the gore and yells her way up the stairs.

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.)  
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. That was awesome.

ED (V.O.)  
Above all else, the screams. That day was also the beginning of my grandmother living with us.

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

Edwin is by the curb when a taxi pulls up with his mother. Victoria and Edwin slow-step their way 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.

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.

With his pointy shoes and white socks, and with his hair greased back, Ed is confronted by Sister Francis Mary who conspicuously hides one hand behind her back holding a stapler. She pulls it out and staples his tie to his shirt.

SISTER FRANCIS MARY

How many times should I 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 ...

DREW

What's this for?

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?

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. My  
sister got pretty pissed at you,  
though, if I remember right.

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.

DREW

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

ED

(as James Cagney)

*This is the end of the line 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. The blade impales itself into the wood a few inches away from Drew's left arm. As the audience applauds their approval, Alice runs up the stairs and exits.

INT. DENNEHY LIVING ROOM -- ANOTHER DAY

Drew and Ed listen to a recording of John Barrymore reciting HAMLET. Ed stands and poses. He IS Barrymore.

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?

DREW

She thought the ax show we did was dangerous, and too gory. She says she's never coming here again.

(poses)

Oh, this tutu flesh would melt ...

ED

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

(recites)

*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 put on their coats and--

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 his Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER

Oh, Lawrence, you are my Pip.

ED (V.O.)

My grandmother hallucinated a lot  
during this time. Sometimes she  
thought I was Gramps. 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.

ED

You are a sexy woman, Victoria. I'm  
in those coal mines all day, and I  
see nothing but men sweating and  
farting, and I think about you.

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

Is there a basement play today?

ED

It'll just be you and me.

Ed escorts her to the basement steps, and hesitates at the  
top, still in the kitchen. Wearing a tight sweater, and  
appearing older than her years, she saunters down the steps.

GRANDMOTHER

Where is Lawrence?

ED

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

DREW (V.O.)

Whoa! Can we skip this part? It's  
my sister, for crying out loud.

ED (V.O.)

No. This is an important. It was a wonderful thing that happened.

DREW (V.O.)

Oh, good God! Help me. Can we skip this part, pleeeeeeeze?

ED (V.O.)

I'll just say Alice wasn't angry with me anymore, and leave it at that. But I still had to put grandmother to bed. She wanted to know where Lawrence was?

Ed scoops his grandmother up; carries her out of the kitchen and up the stairs to her bedroom.

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

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 lets her down and points to the empty bed.

ED

Your husband is in the bed. See.

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

Drew bolts to his feet and goes and makes another drink.

DREW

My sister is dead, for crying out loud. Just leave her be.

ED

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

DREW

Yeah, well, what you did was a mortal sin. So stop reliving it or you're going to hell for sure.

ED

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

DREW

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

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

INT. BACK TO DENNEHY'S BASEMENT -- FLASHBACK

Alice gets up, pulls the 'curtain' off the rope, places it on the floor, and lays down on it.

ED (V.O.)

It was a beginning of a beautiful relationship, Drew. I know how it sounds. But it was innocent, and wonderful, and caring.

DREW (V.O.)

Ok. 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 (improvise). 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 is waiting outside.

ED

You were right. He said it was a mortal sin, and that I should go see a shrink.

DREW

You see. Told ya.

ED (V.O.)

Sex was not ugly for Alice and I,  
and it was not a mortal sin. I  
don't care what Father Tully said.

DREW (V.O.)

Dear God. They shoot horses, don't  
they?

ED (V.O.)

But then, something happened. I had  
a seizure in a middle of an embrace  
with Alice in the basement. 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 ran down  
stairs, saw both of us fully  
clothed but made it seem like we  
did something dirty anyway. What a  
laugh. Coming from him, I mean.

DREW (V.O.)

Let's move on, why don't we.

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.

ED

Good for you. You made cheerleading  
squad. Now you can cheer for me  
while I tear up the gridiron.

DREW

I don't know, Ed. Chaminade's in a  
very 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. 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?

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 as if it were designed that way.

Ed outkicks the rest of the defense into the end zone.

#### BEGIN 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, improvises 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: snow, growth of flowers and the blooming.

#### END OF SERIES

EXT. SOMEWHERE NEAR MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE -- SUMMER OF 1961

Young Ed is walking down the road to Mineola Playhouse.

ED (V.O.)

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 at the time.

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

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

Desperate Hours was playing at Mineola Playhouse. 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 - LATER

As Ed exits, 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. Another door opens and a MAN and a WOMAN exit.

ED (V.O.)

After the show I snuck in the back. The theatre's technical director, Leon Gursten, appears with Kathy Noble, the theatre manager. So, I ask Leon if I can help out in any way. After all these years, I think about it now, and it's odd that he hired me. But he did, for \$75 a week. I did it all, 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?

ED

Yes, of course ...

ED (V.O.)

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 (CONT'D)

Here. Take 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 got caught because I parked the car in a different spot that I found it in. 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. If you can do that, I'll let you call me 'Legs'. Walter Winchell used to call me that, you know.

ED (V.O.)

They called her 'the fretting frog' also because she worried too much about how she looked during filming. But to me she was one classy woman. A genuine act. A sweetheart of a lady.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

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

BEGIN SPFX

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.

END SPFX

Leon holds out his hand like a traffic cop for ED to hold the curtain. Claudette finishes her monologue and she looks to Ed and nods. He drops the curtain, and lifts it for an encore bow, then drops it again on her cue.

She walks over to Ed, sticks a twenty-dollar bill in his shirt pocket and--

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 with a broom.

HINGLE

I don't cause problems, Leon, but  
I do want my own dressing person.  
And don't give me anyone who uses  
more moisturizers than my wife.

(MORE)

HINGLE (CONT'D)  
I've had a couple of bad  
experiences lately.

HINGLE (CONT'D)  
(pointing)  
Give me that boy. He's fine.

ED (V.O.)  
So, I became Pat Hingle's personal  
dresser. He played On the Water-  
front, and was in the Batman  
movies. I'm 15 years-old putting a  
corset on a man twice my age ...  
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 while ARTHUR LOWE sits  
in an empty theatre watching. As Ed watches from back stage,  
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.

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 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?

CHANNING

Arthur! I must wear my red dress to Duffy's. Do something about this.

LOWE

(to Ed)

You twit. You will pay for this.

LEON

Mr. Lowe. Edward didn't do this. He just 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 go at each other. For all I knew, this was the way of business, in this business.

(singing)

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

(takes a breath)

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

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE -- LATE SUMMER '61

Ed stands outside Leon's office with other wannabees waiting. Leon comes out of the office and waves for Ed to come in.

ED (V.O.)

So it was a new play and Shelly winters comes to town. She was difficult, to say the least. What if I do get the part? I have to go to school in three weeks. Anyway, I go into Leon's office to audition.

INT. MINEOLA OFFICE

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

TIM

Okay, Mr. Dennehy. You're here for the Shore Patrol, but  
 (hands Ed new sides)  
 Read Rick, Kathy here will do Isla. I want you to give the best Humphrey Bogart you got.

After the reading is finished--

TIM (CONT'D)

Leon? Get this boy an Equity Card.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

Ed watches the rehearsal in the front row in an empty theatre while Director Tim Everett sits with him watching as well.

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

WINTERS

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 (CONT'D)

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 ...

INT. AT A LOCAL MINEOLA BAR - NIGHT

Walker and Ed have been drinking and are in mid-conversation (improvise). 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

James Stewart worked with her and after the movie was filmed he said that she should've been spanked. Can you believe it. James Stewart.  
(thinking)  
Don't pay attention to any of that crap you hear, Ed.

INT. MINEOLA PLAYHOUSE BACKSTAGE -- DAY

Walker and Winters are playing to a live audience while Ed watches the action backstage.

Ed waits to go on stage and is wearing a 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.

Walker leaves the stage through a prop door leaving it open. After a few beats, Ed enters and looks past Shelly Winters and out into the audience to a wall of darkness.

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.

ED (CONT'D)

*May I look around?*

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.

ED

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

Ed starts to leave, but he grabs her instead. He throws her, with some difficulty, onto the bed. He roughs her up (acting). Winters screams and slaps Ed across the face.

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

INT. CHAMINADE CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ed watches Brother JOHN BRADY writing on the blackboard. Ed wears a madras jacket and has his tie tucked into his shirt.

ED (V.O.)

So my summer dreams fizzled. Then I went back to school. Summer is over.

John Brady turns from the blackboard and --

BRADY

Your first assignment: a 2000 word comp on what you did this summer.

ED (V.O.)

There was no way I was writing my escapades of 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.)

Christmas was just around the corner.

(MORE)

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

Tom must've seen *Desperate Hours* at the Mineola Playhouse that summer because he decided to have the play as the senior play project. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the audition notice.

INT. CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- DAY

Tom sits at a table supervising the sign-up process for the audition. Ed steps up on stage to do his audition.

TOM

Ed, I'm not going to discourage you from auditioning, but please don't expect a large role. The primary roles are for seniors. I know you know that. Just so we understand.

INT. DENNEHY 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 ...

ED

(acting as the bum)  
*Sorry to bother you ma'am, but it looks like I lost my way.*

Ed sighs, then 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.

ED (CONT'D)

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 at Mineola, Ed. Ok, why don't you turn to page twelve. Do Winston.

ED

Brother, may I do the character of Glenn. 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. 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.

BEGIN SPFX

While Ed recites the monologue, ghost-like figures loom behind him: Pat O'Brien, John Barrymore, Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, and the NY City bum.

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. He finally hears himself.

ED

*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 calling Mister God. Little punk went to church every Sunday... took it from everybody... licked their shoes...*

Ed's image finally dominates as he finds his own voice.

END OF SPFX

ED (CONT'D)

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

Ed spits in an imaginary napkin and throws it to the floor.

ED (CONT'D)  
*Clickety, clickety, click, You  
 remember, Pop. I could kill you  
 just for kicks.*

INT. CHAMINADE CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ed knocks on the door and enters. Tom is sitting at his desk. Tom, frowning, does not say anything right away.

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.

SERIES OF SCENES: TO FOLLOW ED THROUGH THE REHEARSAL PROCESS:

1) On Chaminade stage Tom addresses all the ACTORS--

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Let me introduce you to three  
 ladies from the Sacred Heart  
 Academy. They will be playing the  
 female parts. Joyce, Lynn and Joan.

2) The rehearsal begin: Ed slings a gun over his shoulder, and crouches down because he's being hunted.

3) At home recites (Improv) in front of the mirror, moving, crouching, expressing. He goes through a myriad of facial expressions that become a language in and of itself to Ed.

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

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 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. 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. Freud understood this principle and led him to believe the mind was divided into 3 parts: the id, the ego, and the super-ego.  
(slowly paces)  
The id is the most primitive force. It causes the want of instant gratification in us. What it wants, it wants now without constraint.

During the teacher's 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.

He points to Ed if he's jamming his finger into Ed's chest.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

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, the thought of embarrassment stops us from peeing in the classroom. In other words fear forces us to wait.

Barrymore points to himself as if to say he he ego.

Ed shakes his head, a double-take, and the figure disappears.

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 (CONT'D)

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.

INT. 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.

INT. CHAMINADE AUDITORIUM -- A LITTLE LATER

Still acting, Ed, with a prison suit on, prowls the stage like he owns it. Ed takes Joyce's face in the palm of his hand, and he tosses it like a shotput.

She goes flying to the floor and a resounding 'thump' has the audience responding with a collective GASP to 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 the 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.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I turned around and looked on  
 stage. It was as if something had  
 washed over me.

BEGIN SPFX

Ed's body rises and leaves behind his spirit self in the  
 chair.

While sitting, Spirit Ed looks to his left and sees the  
 entire stage is a haze. A see-through curtain appears.

Ed's spirit gets up and walks through the curtain to an  
 image, which is 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".

BARRYMORE  
 Well, Neddy, who do you think I am?

SPIRIT ED  
 You look like John Barrymore.

BARRYMORE  
 In the spirit, as they say.  
 (bows)  
 Makes you wonder what's real and  
 what's not, doesn't it? Now listen,  
 Neddy. 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 (CONT'D)  
 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. He tips  
 it upside down and nothing comes out.

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

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)  
 What a waste of good Vodka.

Barrymore puts the flask back in his pocket then points to his head.

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)

The key to it is all up here.

(pause)

Now. Listen to me, Neddy. You're on remote right now. You think an actor is measured by collecting types and mimicking their motions and emotions will get you by? But it won't. You'll need more than that. You know what the wisdom of acting is? Of course, you don't, and neither do I. Just have some humility and leave it at that.

Barrymore looks through the curtain and watches the physical Ed acting.

SPIRIT ED

But Mr. Barrymore, maybe you can tell me. How will I know if I'm any good in this business? Is it a measure of humility?

BARRYMORE

When powers-to-be start returning your phone calls. That's when you'll know you've made it. But first ... you have to pay your dues, and you have to really want it.

Barrymore looks through the curtain and watches Ed acting. Barrymore nods.

SPIRIT ED

I want to act more than anything else in this world.

BARRYMORE

Don't worry about success, Neddy. You're talking to me because you're one of us now. You've crossed over so there's no turning back. For now 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 outside the bubble is the audience clapping.

The Spirit Ed sees himself still acting on the other side of  
the curtain.

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)

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

An unseen force pushes Ed towards the curtain.

SPIRIT ED

But how will I know ...

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.

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

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)

You'll just know it, Ed. 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)

So go, Neddy. Don't let this  
moment pass you by.

Just before Ed is pushed onto the 'real' stage--

RAGAMUFFIN MAN

ERNEST!

END OF SPFX

ED (V.O.)

When I morphed back into my body I find out that the play has gone on without me.

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

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 (improvise). 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.

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

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 motions for Edwin to stop arguing but 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. He goes back to kiss his mother.

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 he holds up his index finger to tell Judy to wait a minute. Brian walks back to his father and gets real close.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

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.

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

ED (V.O.)

Brian didn't say much about that night. But Mike did.

(MORE)

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

He just got hired as an FBI agent and he came down to surprise everyone with the good news at the play. He loved it. Talked about it for years. He was so supportive. I love him for that.

There is a host of people expressing their delight at Ed's performance--

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

I couldn't shift gears. It was as if I was lost, like in a dream. The real world no longer existed for me, or waited for me for that matter. Mike's words, Tom's praise, all their words offered no comfort, or elation. I was scared because what I perceived my whole life suddenly wasn't real. I didn't ask for it to happen. It was an event that came to me by an outside force. Like I was a victim. I couldn't leave the stage or dressing room until everyone was gone. I needed to be alone.

EXT. MINEOLA STREETS -- LATER

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

ED (V.O.)

I needed time alone to decompress, so to speak. My mother allowed me to walk home by myself. As I walked, I thought about the next time I would go on stage. Would I have a normal theatre experience and go home to my real world where I ate dinner in a post World War Two home? Or would I be confronted by this gauzy curtain again, and find myself living in an alien world and calling it my real world? The fact was, 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, Drew. 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, or are residents of looney-bins, or maybe they are 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, actually, like I was sentenced to live my life in a two-dimensional, unreal world.

INT. DREW'S DEN - PRESENT DAY - MORNING

Holding his temples, Drew shakes his head and--

DREW

This is quite a surprise. I always thought you were born with talent. I didn't know you evolved into a psychological nut case.

ED

I was standing on a cliff. Either I fall off and go insane, or I commit my life to a world that, arguably, was insane. However, I realized that I had to go back on stage the next day. YOUR real world, is now my stage. Over the years, the monumental events in life, like getting married, having children, should've been the mile stones of my life, but they weren't . Intellectually, I knew this wasn't real, but there was something inside me that said I must go there anyway, because that's where the art is. My children, or my wife can't come with me either. And it doesn't matter if you lose a spouse to two, or an ear or the love of a daughter or son because the worst of it is, when I go there, I never know if I'll ever return. I'm stuck in this R-Crum carton world forever.

Drew gets up and opens a window--

DREW

I need fresh air. You told me about the curtain already, 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

Maybe you should just continue.

ED

Ok. Mineola library. Remember that?

DREW

Yes. Summer before our senior year.

INT. MINEOLA LIBRARY, BACK ROOM -- NIGHT

A poster on the wall advertises the ZOO STORY: directed by Ed with Drew as Peter and Ed as Jerry.

Ed and Drew rehearse on a make-shift stage. Ed (as Jerry) and Drew (as Peter) read from scripts.

ED

Okay, here we go ... *Nobody's holding you here; remember that.*

DREW

*I know that.*

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 ...

ACTING ED

*THE STORY OF JERRY AND THE DOG!*

BEGIN SERIES OF SCENES -- TIME TRANSITION

1) At St. Aiden: Large posters advertise West Side Story. Brian paces back and forth shouting commands (IMPROVISE).

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 (IMPROVISE) 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) The posters advertise Oklahoma. While Ed acts, Brian watches backstage. Their eyes meet. Brian gives a thumbs up.
- 4) ON TV - at the Dennehy's Mineola house: TV News shows the JFK funeral. The Dennehy family mourns.
- 5) A Christmas tree dominates the living room. Brian grits his teeth while his father gives each present its just due.
- 6) Ed lies awake at night listening to his Dad and Brian yell at each other (IMPROVISE) about Edwin handing out presents.

END OF SERIES

ED (V.O.)

Sue Anne was the only relationship I had at the time. But she was going to Mercyhurst College hundreds of miles away. I loved her but I was going to college just a few miles away from where I lived and I sensed I had a bit of skirt to follow.

INT. HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY -- DAY

Ed sits in an auditorium that had graduated seating.

ED (V.O.)

We made fashion statements the first day. I was the preppy Long Islander. Paul Levine with his army jacket and his hair down to the waist was stoned. He had the grunge look before the it was popular.

DREW (V.O.)

And what about you. You were very much in your element, if I remember correctly.

ED

Maybe. I know I don't relate well with people unless it's about theatre. Then I could go on forever about trivial stuff like who played the third gunslinger role in the only western Humphrey Bogart made?

DIANE SWARTZ, a beautiful Polynesian student, eyes Ed. She gets up and wiggles her body as she sits by Ed.

DIANE

You went to Catholic High School. I can tell with your Penny Loafers and Madras Jacket. The collegiate type ten years ago, maybe. I bet you have polo shirts in your closet. Deck shoes ... cloth belt.

ED (V.O.)

Then this Paull Levine, Maynard G. Crebbs kind-of character, tries to let Diane know he's interested.

Paul twirls a half-smoked joint between his fingers as MARGO (20s) high-kicks down the stage in her black calf boots. She slaps a paper on a desk to a student in the front row.

MARGO

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

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

MIRIAM

Acting is reaction. Theatre is transaction.

She then saunters out of the room.

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.)

Paul introduced me to pot that day. He was such a post-Ginsbergian character. Very serious. Intense.

EXT. DIANE'S 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 is center stage doing a cold reading from Zoo Story in front of Miriam Tulin. Paul reads his script without emotion. He's reading Jerry, and Diane is on stage reading as Peter.

MIRIAM

Paul, you're trying to get Peter to  
kill you. It sounds like you're  
reading ingredients of a ketchup  
bottle. You got to be in Peter's  
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 (improvise). Miriam leans over to a student and whispers something to her. The student gets up, walks onto the stage and yawns and stretches, distracting Paul in his monologue.

MIRIAM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

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

PAUL

But she's distracting me.

MIRIAM

Distractions? My dear. Listen to  
me: a chair tips over; your foot  
gets caught on the rug; a cup  
falls to the floor. You've got to  
work through it. Use it. Get  
energized from it. Sit down, Mr.  
Levine. Dennehy! Do Jerry.

Ed jumps on stage and waits for the audience's attention. He tucks his chin to his chest. Ed, over the top, doesn't appear to be coming down any time soon.

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.

In a series of jump cuts, Ed acts through the monologue. When he finishes, Barrymore is sitting with the students in the first row miming a silent clap.

A gauzy curtain appears in front of Ed, and Ed's spirit side-steps to the curtain as his his body continues acting in front of the class (improvise).

The Ragamuffin Man sits on the stage floor. His face is painted white like a clown. He is lethargic. Non-responsive.

SPIRIT ED

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

BARRYMORE

Life is a delusion. Become a  
Buddhist and you'll find that out.  
(While watching Ed act)  
Look at you out there. You remind  
me of myself when I was that age. I  
worked for a newspaper as an artist  
back then, did you know that?

Actor Ed sweeps the stage and with a swirl of Barrymore's hand, Actor Ed fast forwards the monologue and slows down to--

ED

*He turned his face back to the  
hamburgers, smelled, sniffed some  
more, and then ... RRRAAAGGGGGHHHH,  
like that ... He tore into them.*

BARRYMORE

What you do in your prime is  
important, Ed. When the world  
treats you, like the dog in your  
monologue, you will ultimately ask  
yourself if you wasted your life.  
(resp. to Ragamuffin's  
moans)  
Deter is his name. But don't mind  
him. You listen to Miriam, though.  
She's one of the best.

John swirls again. Actor Ed fast motions then slows down.

ED

*He smiled benignly 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 ...*

BARRYMORE

...a dog I know... that was funny?  
(as ed approaches Deter)  
Stop. You talk to him, I'm gone.

SPIRIT ED

A little melodramatic, aren't we?

When Ed reaches Deter, John disappears.

SPIRIT ED (CONT'D)

Why are you always with Barrymore, anyway. And who is Ernest?

DETER

Help me. I'm lost without him.

MIRIAM

Love your exaggerated movements, Ed, but tone it down, will yo? 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 always trim the fat, yes? NEXT!

INT. HOFSTRA CLASSROOM -- ANOTHER DAY

In front of the class, Ed steps crookedly & waves his hands.

MIRIAM

No ... No Edward. Not so big.  
Improvisation is moderation. Tone it down more. MORE trimming.

ED (V.O.)

I always looked like I had a weapon in my hand on stage. She was responsible for removing it. I learned how to act because of her.

INT. APARTMENT IN HEMSTEAD, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK - DAY

Ed walks up the steps to his apartment with a box.

INT. POOL HALL SOMEWHERE IN HEMPSTEAD - ANOTHER DAY

A MAN obviously lost as he hands Ed money. As Ed counts--

ED (V.O.)

So, I get an apartment off campus. 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.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

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.

INT. - HOFSTRA STAGE - ANOTHER DAY

Diane is a compelling presence on stage.

ED (V.O.)

I was Mr. Antropus in Skin Of Our Teeth. Diane, the boardwalk Beauty Queen, wandered around on stage in a skimpy bathing suit.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - ANOTHER DAY

Diane and Ed are cooking when the apartment doorbell rings. BARBARA comes into the kitchen and sits. They all eat.

ED (V.O.)

Diane's cousin, Barbara, moved in with us in the spare room. She was a business major at Hofstra. Both of them were sexually active.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE - ANOTHER DAY

The ensemble acting (improvise) 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.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

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.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT KITCHEN -- DAY

Diane is bending over the sink as if she is going to vomit.

INT. CAR RIDE -- NIGHT

LIZ MAYER (20s), a New College student, is driving Ed and Diane somewhere.

ED (V.O.)

Liz, a leading lady in my plays, took us to NJ. This was before Wade versus Roe. Diane was getting the abortion. Very hush-hush.

INT. LIZ'S CAR

Ed walks out of the clinic; jumps in the car where Liz waits. Liz puffs on a joint and hands it to Ed.

ED (V.O.)

So, I wait in Liz's car. Mistake! A fling with Liz began that night while Diane got an abortion.

EXT. ED'S CAR TRAVELING OVER A BRIDGE -- TWO MONTHS LATER

Ed is driving Liz into New Jersey. They are alone.

ED (V.O.)

Two months later I drove Liz for a night appointment. Some things I'm not proud of. I spent a lot of money in my lifetime, part on booze and drugs, and part of it on women. The rest I spent foolishly.

INT. HOFSTRA STAGE -- NIGHT

Mason, backstage, takes special notice of Ed performing.

ED (V.O.)

My first foray into Shakespeare was with Mason. I didn't have a clue on how to match movement with this grand language. I could move okay as long as the speech was natural. But this was different. So I did a Marlon Brando 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.

ED (V.O.)

We were doing *He Who Gets Slapped*. It had grandiose language like Shakespeare. I learned to marry movement with the words. It didn't come easy. But I did it.

MASON

Now quiet. No action. Stay still.  
Now, jump ... Yes. Jump ... Okay.

As Ed struggles on stage, Barrymore appears and Ed follows him and begins to find a respectable marriage with cadence and the words (improvise). As Ed dances across the stage--

ED (V.O.)

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 - OPENING NIGHT - ANOTHER NIGHT

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 physical thing going, with Barrymore acting like a jerk, and me following his lead.

DREW (V.O.)

By default, that makes you a jerk.

ED (V.O.)

Yes, but even today I can't stand static on stage. Everyone has to be moving. Mason and Barrymore helped me be that way.

ED

*I wear a mask and feel humorous. Yesterday, I played the great philosopher. Today I play the clown.*

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 but directors have to tell me what to do.

MASON

Ed. Don't move. Just stay there.

ON BARRYMORE - appears dumbfounded at Ed being so still for so long. He mouths the word 'move', then smiles, bows and exits the stage.

INT. SMALL STAGE AT HOFSTRA -- DAY

Ed and Jessy Gilgman have scripts at their knees and rehearse while measuring the stage(improvise). Jesse takes large steps and marks the stage with chalk.

ED (V.O.)

Only one other underclassman directed a main stage production before this. That was Francis Coppola. Mason tells me he will give me a shot if I do well this year at a smaller stage. 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.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Since Zoo Story takes place in the park, I needed to know what my boundaries were. It also needed to look like a park if I wanted to impress Mason.

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.

ED (V.O.)  
 The bar was a Jets hangout.

JOE NAMATH, WEEB EWBANK and other JETS PLAYERS belly up to the bar. Tank leaves Ed to serve his celebrity customers.

ED (V.O.)(CONT'D)  
 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.)(CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
 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 Astro-turf laying around. He said he would check it out.

EXT. HOFSTRA THEATRE -- DAY

A truck pulls up to the theatre back entrance with a truck load of Astroturf. In a TIME LAPSE PROCESS. a park appears as the workers fits the Astro Turf into place.

LAPSE OUT TO -- Jesse and Ed playing to a packed theatre. Jesse, as Peter, sits on the bench reading a book while cleaning his glasses. Ed, as Jerry, enters and glides across the Astroturf stage while music from the Collector plays.

ED (V.O.)  
 I saw the movie Collector around this time. The music in it was 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.

The knife is in Jesse's hand. Ed charges him, impales himself on the knife and falls. The music plays again and Ed crawls, wounded. Fake blood is all over the place. The lights fade.

Ed gets up on one knee. A pin light glows over him as his body falls one last time, curling into a ball.

A soft flute SOUND mixes with 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 a bong to one another. Ed takes a hit; passes the bong to Paul.

Ed snatches a whiskey bottle on the table and fills four shot glasses. They all down it quickly, Barbara passes out into Paul's arms. He picks her up, takes her into her room.

ED (V.O.)

Diane's cousin had a room of her own, but spent most nights with Diane and me even though she was now going out with Levine. But Paul 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 a very funny noises-off type British comedy. I started seeing Laura Faye, a senior, who played opposite to me.

Ed finishes the monologue (improvise), and he steps back as the curtain falls. He is kissed by LAURA then disappears with her as they progress deeper into the shadows of backstage.

INT. DENNEHY'S DINING ROOM - DAY

The Dennehy clan, including the wives of Brian and Mike, sit at the dining room table. The doorbell rings. Ed gets up.

ED (V.O.)

At Thanksgiving dinner, guess who  
pops back into my life?

DREW

Natalie Wood.

Ed brings Sue Anne into the dining room and everyone makes a  
fuss over seeing her, especially Brian (improvise).

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

I loved Sue Anne. She transferred  
to Hofstra, but I'm still doing my  
Darwinian thing at home with women.  
I'm involved with Diane, Barbara,  
Laura, Virginia. Oh, God! How do I  
sort through this?

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

Take your time. Mary's asleep.

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.

ED (V.O.)

Mason tells me he's sending him to  
RADA to audition and he wants me to  
go as well. Anybody who was anyone  
in English theatre had some kind of  
affiliation with The Royal Academy  
of Dramatic Arts. Every year they  
come to the States and auditioned  
hundreds of students for two slots  
in their program. This year it's in  
Richmond. Since they only select  
seniors, he tells me he's not  
sending me to win. He's sending me  
to get experience for next Spring.  
Of course, I said yes, and Tom and  
a Texas girl won, and for the first  
time ever, an underclassman came in  
as an alternate. Moi.

DREW (V.O.)  
Wow. What did you have to do?

INT. VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY GYMNASIUM - RADA

CROSSFADE (voice) and DISSOLVE (visual) from Tom's face/voice at Hofstra to Ed beginning his HOTEL TELEPHONE MONOLOGUE.

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...*

ED (V.O.)  
The judges loved my *Telephone to  
God* monologue.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND GYMNASIUM -- "NEXT DAY"

Ed steps up to the Judges and improvises his monologue.

ED (V.O.)  
*So, first I go back and make mad,  
passionate love to one of the Long  
Island girls we brought with us,  
and then I take a nap. I give a  
different monologue that afternoon,  
but guess who shows up to help me.*

Ed walks into the gymnasium and sees John Barrymore in the stands in his 1930's garb.

Barrymore tips his hat. Ed nods, poses for a moment, then begins his monologue (improvise). He ends with--

ED  
*...There is a moment in every life  
when all the stars seem to gather  
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 leans on the Long Island girl and sleeps.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Tom lets Ed out. Ed appeared the worst from lack of sleep with his Einstein hair and his walk - always acting.

ED (V.O.)

After dropping the girls off, Tom drops me off at me apartment, but I forgot I had told Diane that I wouldn't be back until Tuesday. Quite unexpectedly, 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 found out later that Diane learned about the Long Island girls. So, she calls Paul Levine. Certainly, justifiable.

IN THE BEDROOM

Ed follows the line of clothes on the floor to the bedroom. The shadows on the wall show the battle Ed has with Paul.

EXT. VIW OF THE NIGHT SKY

A FULL MOON provides a contrast to the fight inside. CLOUDS start to cover the moon. Voices become half-muted sounds as--

ED (V.O.)

But I get all self-righteousness on Paul. I don't remember a thing. Later I find out I broke his nose.

Paul leaves the apartment, but a struggle continues inside.

A slapping NOISE and SOBS provide an audio background while a white cloud covers a FULL MOON.

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

I just don't remember much about that night. All I know is that Diane and Barbara transferred to Queens College that very week. I never saw them after that. Ever.

DREW (V.O.)

How convenient denial is.

ED (V.O.)  
 I truly wanted to have a sane  
 relationship with only one woman.

EXT. SUE ANNE'S HOUSE -- FLASHBACK BEGINS -- DAY

Ed walks up to the door and knocks. Sue Anne lets him in.

ED (V.O.)  
 I truly wanted a long term  
 relationship with Sue Anne, but I  
 was afraid I'd screw it up with her  
 too. I needed to disengage, so I  
 went over to her house and told her  
 I was going away for the summer.

EXT. PENN STATE CAMPUS -- DAY

Ed walks up the steps and into the Drama Department building.

ED (V.O.)  
 Because of the RADA results, Mason  
 got me a paying gig as a resident  
 actor at Penn State, the summer  
 before my senior year at Hofstra

INT. PENN STATE DRAMA OFFICE

As Ed walks in, he notices the tag on the office door reads:  
 PENN STATE DRAMA ADMISSIONS: LOWELL MANFOLD.

Virginia Walsh sneaks up on Ed and--

VIRGINIA  
 Surprise! I heard you were coming  
 here for the summer, so I asked Mr.  
 Mason to put a good word in for me.  
 and viola ... Isn't this fantastic?

ED (V.O.)  
 So much for restructuring my life.  
 I guess, I was trying to make a  
 woman feel like a queen for a day.

DREW (V.O.)  
 Please. Somebody shoot me.

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, but it had expired. I was going to tell him that, but this flaming fag came strolling into the office.

BOB REIFSCHNYDER, 50s, comes in and offers his fingertips and he and Ed 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 Bob and--.

ED (V.O.)

I told Bob later he didn't need to show me around. I'm not homophobic, but he was trying to hide the fact he was gay, and it wasn't working.

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.

ANFOLD

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.)  
 Grey threatened theater closures 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 Woolf 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. See it?

Ed spots Deter outside the classroom at the door window.

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 as Ed's  
 spirit slides out of his body and walks over to him.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Deter puts his finger to Ed's lips before Ed speaks.

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.

The SOUND of subway train rattle gets progressively louder.

DETER (CONT'D)

I must go.

Deter leaves.

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.

ED (V.O.)

She thought we were 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 a diner and she broke the news to me that she was pregnant.

Ed leans over the table. He strokes Sue Anne's hair, her cheeks. She responds, grabs his hand, kisses it.

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

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.)

I'm engaged to Virginia. I had to end the affair. But how?

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.

EXT. VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The ambulance's lights are flashing. Virginia is brought out on a gurney. Her wrists are bandaged.

EXT. VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER NIGHT

Ambulance lights flash again.

ED (V.O.)

Days later, it was sleeping pills.

INT. VIRGINIA APARTMENT - BALCONY AREA - ANOTHER NIGHT

Virginia stands on the ledge of the balcony when Ed comes bursting through the door. He bolts onto the balcony, takes her off the ledge and leads her into the living room.

ED (V.O.)

She calls me and says she's going to jump if I don't marry her.

INT. ED'S CAR - DAY

Virginia, calmer now, sits next to Ed while he drives.

ED (V.O.)

I wanted to wean her off me after the holidays. I hadn't told my family about Sue Anne yet. I didn't want to do it during Thanksgiving dinner. I told Virginia she could come to dinner under one condition.

Ed pulls up to the house. He leans into Virginia.

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 and Virginia sit next to each other. Brian and Mike are sitting next to their wives.

ED (V.O.)  
 Everyone loved Virginia. What was there not to like? She was a gorgeous blonde creature, a real pixie with s 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. 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.

ED (V.O.)  
 My father yelled the loudest. He was always the one to yell then later try to figure out the mess. Yelling is all I heard. Brian liked Gin but was partial to Sue Anne from directing her in West Side Story at St. Aidans. He yelled too.

Everyone is yelling except for Hannah. Virginia takes her time reviewing the turmoil.

ED (V.O.)(CONT'D)  
 Virginia just smiled, patted me on the hand while everyone else talked trash about me in third person. I noticed that Gin didn't have the friendship ring on. She hocked it.

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.)  
 We moved in with my parents. I felt  
 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 couldn't go to the  
 RADA auditions. I had to take care  
 of my responsibilities now.

INT. PENN STATE PAVILION -- DAY

Ed walks on stage and is greeted by the resident ACTORS.  
 Lowell Manfold enters from backstage and gives Ed a script.

ED (V.O.)  
 So I graduate Hofstra. Sue Anne  
 moves in with her mother. I go to  
 Penn State for another summer gig.

INT. THYRSST BAR -- NIGHT

Ed sits next to SUSAN MARTIN and drinks. She ignores him.

ED (V.O.)  
 I had the lead in She Stoops To  
Conquer. The female lead, Sue  
 Martin, didn't want anything to do  
 with me. At first, that is.

ACTOR FRIEND  
 (raising his glass)  
 To Edward, who'll be a Daddy soon.

Susan throws a quick look at Ed, as if she's interested all  
 of a sudden. She moves her chair closer to him.

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.

ED  
 I am the proud father of a healthy  
 nine pound baby girl.

Everyone cheers. Susan moves closer to Ed.

ED (V.O.)  
 Suddenly Susan was my best friend.  
 That night we slept together.

DREW (V.O.)  
 Please! It's better I don't know.

ED (V.O.)  
 Don't say anything, Drew. I didn't  
 say I was proud of it.

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?

ED (V.O.)  
 (Sarcastic)  
 So, Sue Anne and I moved in with  
 her mother who was a lovely lady. A  
 motivational kind of person.

EXT. A BROOKLYN APARTMENT COMPLEX -- DAY

Ed lugs in a trunk upstairs, huffing and puffing all the way, while Sue Anne carries baby Courtney behind him.

ED (V.O.)  
 The first thing I did with the  
 extra money I had from the summer  
 job was get a Brooklyn apartment.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT -- LATER

Sue Anne unpacks while Ed clumsily changes Courtney's diaper.

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.)  
 She is pregnant again 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

Ed takes the garbage can top off, and pulls out a bottle of vodka. He mixes a glass of it with orange juice and 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 scrounging around for jobs with no acting prospects.

Courtney's wails has Ed scrubbing his head with his fingers.

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)

Are you angry at an innocent baby girl, or at yourself perhaps?

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 (V.O.)

What I'm about to tell you, Drew, is something no one knows, except Sue Anne.

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, turns Courtney over, and pats her back.

ED (V.O.)(CONT'D)  
When I came to, she wasn't moving  
and her face was blue.

Finally, he blows a puff of air in her mouth and she starts breathing again. She starts crying. And so does Ed.

ED Z(V.O.)(CONT'D)  
I walked her around to calm her  
down. I thanked God a 100 times  
that she didn't die. Barrymore  
left. He couldn't take the heat.

Ed puts her into a play pen. She grabs her blanket, and she sucks on her pacifier, and falls asleep.

ED (V.O.)(CONT'D)  
Sue Anne was three months pregnant  
with Brendon. I was mortified.  
Frightened to be a father. Again.

DREW (V.O.)  
You were sinking, right?

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.)  
We didn't last much longer after I  
told Sue Anne what happened. And  
Zanuck hadn't offered me a job yet.  
None of the great things I dreamt  
about were happening to me.

INT. CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE THEATRE -- DAY

Ed enters a village theatre and watches the ACTORS rehearse.

ED (V.O.)  
After the Courtney incident I won  
the "Circle In The Square" writing  
contest with my senior project with  
Stanley. They asked this woman to  
direct it. So, I travel to the City  
to watch her butcher my play. She  
had these budding James Dean and  
Marlon Brando types playing the  
torn t-shirt school of acting.

INT. BAR BY THE SQUARE -- NIGHT

Ed gulps a beer and is swaying a little bit.

ED (V.O.)

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, takes out his camera from  
his case and starts snapping photos.

He listens to her give directions. He gets up, marches down  
the stairs. hops on the stage, snatches the scripts out of  
the actors' hands, puts them into his case and walks out.

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 (improvise) 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 ...

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 traveling money.

Ed puts the script down on a nearby table. As he walks out -

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. You think you can change the world if it doesn't conform to your ideals. It led me to a series of mistakes. I was about to make another one. I walked across the street to the Equity Building. I never met Steve Grey but he was about to meet me.

INT. STEVEN GREY'S OFFICE, RECEPTION AREA

STEVEN GREY, 33, shirt/tie, glasses, business all the way, sits at his desk as Ed in and--

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. But this was a bad thing I was doing, actually. I mean, most actors struggle for their card. 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.)(CONT'D)

There I was: I was a lousy father.  
A worse husband. I couldn't find  
work, mainly because I was shooting  
myself in the toe so often.

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 sits on a bench like Rodin's The Thinker. Ed storms out of the car, snaps a picture of Deter, then sits next to him.

ON THE PLATFORM

DETER

Ernest lives with me on Bleeker  
Street. But I can't go home. I  
can't face him any longer.

Ed looks down the tracks. He sees the train's light, and the NOISE gets louder as it approaches.

They both stand. 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.

INT. ED'S BEDROOM - END OF DREAM

Courtney SCREAMS: Ed awakens abruptly, sweating. It takes him a beat to realize where he is. Sue Anne gets up.

ED (V.O.)

I was hallucinating in my dreams  
now. With Deter gone I was waiting  
for JB to show himself. Sue Anne  
didn't trust me with Courtney  
anymore. I had to do something. So  
I ran to Penn State.

INT. PENN STATE DRAMA OFFICE -- DAY

Ed sits in Manfold's office. They are in mid-conversation. Ed's hair is really long now.

MANFOLD

The Arts Company pays Equity scale  
to 12 actors who perform here and  
satellite campuses. Two positions  
opened up as well as one on the  
undergraduate staff. You can teach,  
be a resident actor, and go for  
your Masters all 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 (V.O.)  
 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.

BOB  
 We don't have to get along, Ed. All  
 I ask is to keep the room clean.

While Ed gets settled at his desk, they shake hands.

BOB (CONT'D)  
 By the way, why do you wear your  
 hair so long? Aren't you giving a  
 bad example.

ED  
 I'm an actor too, Bob. You'll never  
 know when you'll need your hair.

ED (V.O.)  
 I'm this long-haired guy rooming  
 with an old, academic fairy who  
 taught The History of Theatre. We  
 shouldn't have share the same  
 space. 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.

Bob hears moans. The door is ajar, so he peeks through the  
 crack and sees a woman naked from the waist down.

Ed maneuvers her and sits her bare butt down on Bob's desk. A  
 line separates his messy space and Bob's, which is tidy.

ED (V.O.)  
 He complained to Manfold about me  
 So, it was payback time.

INT. ED AND BOB'S OFFICE -- ANOTHER DAY

Bob sprays the top of his desk and scrubs imaginary dirt. He sniffs. He takes a pointer from his desk and lifts a pair of panties from under the desk, then tosses them on Ed's chair.

INT. BOB REIFSCHNYDER CLASSROOM -- DAY

Bob writes the words "HISTORY OF THEATRE" on the blackboard while some of his students yawn, appearing bored, lethargic.

INT. PENN STATE THEATRE -- NIGHT

Ed has a wig on and acting to a packed house.

ED (V.O.)

I was doing Ionesco's Exit the King and it said 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 improvises a ruckus and while the audience is distracted, Ed removes his wig exposing his dyed, white hair.

ED (V.O.)

I dyed my long hair white and wore a wig over it. When the audience was distracted, I slipped my wig off, threw it behind the throne and magically 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 (improvise).

STUDENT ONE

Jonathan Frakes. Bethlehem. Psych major, but switching to theatre.

STUDENT TWO

Nathan Cook. Philly. Engineering.

ED (V.O.)

Some of my students had Equity cards. Others never stepped on stage before.

(MORE)

ED (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 They all had diverse backgrounds. I  
 had to find a common ground to  
 teach, and trust was key.

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  
 get it, give it, or listen to  
 someone else receive it, but how  
 does one learn trust? You need to  
 relax. Create a social atmosphere.

Ed sets a cooler on the desk and 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. ED'S CLASSROOM -- ANOTHER DAY

Some students are drinking beer. Nathan Cook stands in front  
 of the room while Ed sits in the front row, observing.

NATHAN COOK  
*Sir Thomas, I'll be plain with you.*

ED  
 No! No, class. We act within the  
 line. When you have pauses, make  
 them count. *To be or not to be,  
 that is the question.*  
 (pause)  
 Sense the pause before going into  
*Whether 'tis nobler in the mind.*

Student Two sits by the window smoking pot. He throws the  
 roach out the window and he yells--

## STUDENT TWO

Stella ...

ED (V.O.)

I was trying 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. 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. A cigarette dangles in his mouth. While he puts his sunglasses on, he saunters down the steps.

A man with a camera comes out of hiding. One of the photos he takes has a caption that reads "UP IN SMOKE". Another photo caption in the paper reads: "DRAMA PROFESSOR LEAVING CLASS".

ED (V.O.)

Some jealous peer said pot was a daily routine in my classroom. Stories went from orgies in the classroom to me having sex with students. Not true on all counts.

INT. PENN STATE CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Lowell Manfold, Bob Reifschnyder, DUQUEY and ADLEMAN sit at a desk in front of Ed like an inquisition is taking place and with unflattering newspaper photos on the table next to them.

ED (V.O.)

I was hung out to dry by the Drama Department and Board of Trustees.

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.)

I did a tenth of what they said I did. Don't give me that look. Let me continue. So there I was, in front of the board, Adleman, Reifschnyder, Duquey, and Manfold, teachers or department heads. They all had to do an assessment on my teaching methods and 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 liberal who wanted me out. Said I used questionable teaching methods, and I didn't belong at Penn State. I felt if anyone could bail me out, it was Manfold. But in his effort to not say anything negative, He really became negative because he wasn't saying anything positive. Adleman et al, my so-called friends, were just trying to make their own jobs more secure. I wish I had a crystal ball so they could see how many of my students had great careers. The list is long. Anyway, then Reifachnyder gets up.

Bob Reifachnyder gets up and faces the president.

BOB

Ed and I are office mates. People think we don't get along. Fact is, we tolerate each other. He has different methods, and I learned that different is not always bad. Did you know 3 of Ed's students beat Equity actors for Equity acting jobs? Gentlemen, you've never seen that before. Don't get me wrong, I have issues with Mr. Dennehy. His things are strewn all over the place in our office.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

(thinks)

Gentlemen, I've seen the results of this man's work. He is one of the finest teachers, actors and directors Penn State has ever had. Even more impressive, his students are better actors because of him. I wish I could get the results from my students that Mr. Dennehy has gotten from his. It would be a sin to let Ed go. End of story.

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.

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 with her under the circumstances.

INT. NYC APARTMENT IN NEW YORK CITY - DAY

Ed lugs trunk up the steps of a Brownstone.

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.

INT. BROADWAY STAGE IN NYC - NIGHT

Ed cold-reads for the audition with other actors - MOS.

ED (V.O.)  
 So, I do the audition thing. Make  
 the casting rounds to no avail.

INT. A DIFFERENT STAGE IN NYC - NIGHT

As ED reads from sides (MOS). A MAN whispers in the CASTING  
 DIRECTOR's ear.

CASTING DIRECTOR  
 NEXT!

INT. ANOTHER STAGE IN NYC - NIGHT

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.  
 But I keep at it. What else could I  
 do? The die has been cast, and I  
 will die for this profession.

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

Deter's apartment front door is opened, so Ed walks in and  
 sees a vacant room except for a TRUNK with the word 'EARNET'  
 labelled on it. Ed lifts the lid just as the telephone RINGS.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - END OF DREAM

Wakened from a dream, Ed answers the phone.

ED (V.O.)  
 Something always woke me when I  
 opened the trunk. This one evening  
 it was Liz calling me.  
 (pause)  
 Since Sue Anne and I are already  
 divorced, I proposed to Liz. She  
 told her parents of our upcoming  
 marriage. They wanted a to meet me.

EXT. JUSTICE OF PEACE -- DAY

Liz and Ed stand in front of the JUSTICE of the Peace. He motions for Ed to kiss the Bride. (improvise)

INT. LIZ'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

The mood is accepting, as Ed, Liz and her parents (50s) eat at the table. Ed acts like his father (improvise), at the appropriate times, smiling, engaging in polite talk, etc.

INT. THE BROWNSTONE APARTMENT -- MORNING

Ed swigs from a vodka bottle while watching Liz saunter into the bathroom. Ed can see Liz through an opened door.

ED (V.O.)

So she marries me in lieu of college. 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 go to the URTA auditions with 600 other wannabees for jobs with the country's best theatre groups.

ED

*You'd be astonished the different ways people say hello. Some 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...*

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 Playhouse was the most prestigious theatre in the country and Lee Yopp is one the most ambitious theatre owners...

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 ...

ED (V.O.)

All I'm saying now is, Lee hired me to do three shows that summer, and it turned into a four-year gig.

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 in Lion In Winter. He hired me to their resident company. 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're rationalizing.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE --STAGE -- DAY

Ed rehearses with the other resident ACTORS while Lee Yopp sits in the first row watching.xx

ED (V.O.)

One month I'd have the lead in Julius Caesar playing Brutus ...

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. Ed hands Scott a 12 Angry Men

ED

I'm off book. I'm Juror three.

(reciting)

*Kid's a dangerous killer. You could see it. He stabbed his own father. 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. Cara Duff was in the show.

CARA DUFF-MACCORMIC wears a purple scarf. She takes it off and slides it over Ed's face softly, seductively.

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

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 guy. She let me have my way so I'd help her get her into the company is all.

A KNOCK on the apartment door causes it to SWING open.

Liz walks in holding two suitcases and sees the clothes on the floor. She follows the trail.

ED (V.O.)(CONT'D)  
 Anyway, Liz quit her job in the city to be with me, only she came at the most inopportune time. She Should've called.

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 was there. A great actor. John had the lead part.

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. He was from the old school; measured pauses and line delivery.

Tony Idonza walks across the stage and sits next to the Judge. Tony has a Brooklyn accent and appears uneasy.

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 ...

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 object because it's against my principles to rehearse on my travel day. And there's a lot of bloody pauses in this play. We can do with less pauses, Lee?

LEE YOPP

Okay, everybody. You heard from the master. Less pauses.

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER REHEARSAL

Ed stands 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.*

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.)

It felt so right to give the long pause but he was the only one who took them. I gave it in 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 listens.

JOHN

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. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE, -- NIGHT

Tony Idonza and Ed exit the theatre and walk next door. The store front sign reads: Playhouse Inn.

INT. PLAYHOUSE INN- CONTINUOUS

They walk downstairs to The Menagerie Room, and 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.

ED (V.O.)

I remember Tony, the Italian from Brooklyn. Charming guy. Great pool hustler like me. We became friends at the Playhouse. I tried to stop him from going to California. Most wannabees I met during this time fizzled away. Not him. He changed his name to Danza. Two years later, He's on a TV. Sweetheart made it.

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.)

I went with her to a party in NYC.

Cara and Ed walk up to the door, which is unlocked and enter.

INT. NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT -- LATER

While Ed fixes himself a drink at the booze table, he eyes AL PACHINKO who has a group of PARTY-GOERS surrounding him.

ED (V.O.)

They were discussing Hoffman's role in Lenny. Here's the thing. I was trained in a different discipline. Everything happens on the line, so when I pause it has meaning.

Ed walks close to where Pachinko is speaking.

PACHINKO

Brando is a brilliant method 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...

Pachinko just stands there wide-eyed while Ed salutes.

ED (CONT'D)

Ed Dennehy, king of horseshit.

PACHINKO

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.

ED

It's all psycho-babble. Adler and Meisner wouldn't have been laughed out of theatre if it wasn't for Brando, and he would've emerged anyway because of his talent. Adler and Meisner managed to screw up thousands of actors. 'Why do I have to do this? Why do I have to do that?' 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.

The wannabees seem to be hiding behind the veil of silence.

PACHINKO

And, coincidentally, you feel Dustin Hoffman is a psychobabblist?

Everyone laughs, except Ed. The crowd is getting larger.

PACHINKO (CONT'D)

If you look at 'the method', you look at preparation and interaction with other actors ... Wasn't that the goal of Hoffman in Lenny, anyway?

ED

Hoffman can character act when the roles call for it. Nobody does it better. But when playing a real person you should use the documentation. 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.

PACHINKO

Hoffman studied Bruce for months...

ED

Hoffman pulled on his ear with his right hand. Bruce was a lefty.

Someone hits Ed's elbow and causes him to thrust his drink on Pachinko who 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 a cure all.

Cara pried the maddening crowd apart to reach the foray.

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

Anyway, Cara stopped seeing me after that ... display.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- DAY

Brian appears and steps up to the stage and looks out to an empty audience except for Lee Yopp who sits in the front row.

ED (V.O.)

At this time Brian lived sort of a Lomanesque existence on his severance pay. No prospects. Most people got out of theatre to make money. Not Brian.

Lee motions for Brian to read from the script.

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

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 the middle of a monologue.

ED (V.O.)

The Playhouse took over the Lambertville Music Circus tent 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.)(CONT'D)

So, Brian played 'The Barber' in Man Of La Mancha and got an Equity card for it. Joel Jons, a resident actor with connections, led Brian to NY. Got him an audition, which Brian nailed, for a supporting role of the Drunken General in Ivanoff. It was a scene stealing role, where he lands an agent who got him an acting job in *Semi-Tough* as a southern pro football player whose career was going to seed.

INT. BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE -- LATER

While Ed rehearses, Lee comes in and places eviction papers on the stage and walks out. Ed begins reading the papers.

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 (improvise) 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 doing re-reruns. 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.)(CONT'D)  
 Steven Grey got wind of me drinking  
 so he sent someone to check me out.  
 I got caught mumbling my lines.  
 Steven fined me a thousand bucks,  
 and 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.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Ed enters. EVERYONE including the bartender looks like Barrymore to Ed. He shakes his head. Back to Normal.

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.

DREW

When Plummer doesn't want to go on  
the road, you jumped at the chance.

ED

I knew it would work with movement.  
Our rendition became a physical  
interpretation. You were a great  
Frank. Frank was the catalyst.

DREW

Nah. It was all you, Ed. You were  
the show. You always were the show.

ED

What I remember is you, I mean  
Frank, trying to get Barrymore to  
say his Richard III lines. 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 a cane close by and  
theatrically duels and flails it at no one in particular.

ED (CONT'D)

Humor me, Drew. I mean, Frank.  
*Yolanda from Kalamazoo once  
strolled after dark by the zoo. 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 (CONT'D)

*Have you ever had delirium tremens?  
Blah, Blah ... He died at sixty-  
two. Hank drank a quart of whisky a  
day, Blah, blah...*

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... I mean, Frank.  
Start me off.

DREW

*Now.*

ED

Now is as good a time as any.

DREW

No, *'now' is Frank's first word.*

EXT./INT. TREMONT THEATRE IN BOSTON - BEGIN FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A billboard reads: *Barrymore, starring Ed Dennehy.* And in smaller print: *"produced by Drew Keil, playing Frank".*

Ed is on stage. Drew is sitting down at a desk between the stage and the first row of the audience reciting his lines.

ED (O.S.)

*Oh. Now is the first word. Now is the what ... Now is what?*

DREW (O.S.)

*Now is the winter of ...*

ED

*Of course. Now's the winter of our discontent. I just said that. Maybe I should do Hamlet. No, too old. Alas, Richard is the only role worthy of my age. Middle age actors should never play Hamlet.*

Ed sees Barrymore in the audience in the back, but continues.

ED (CONT'D)

*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.

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, the blinding light.  
Barrymore was a wonderful play. We  
took it to New Orleans, remember?

INT. PALACE THEATRE IN NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

Actor ED is on stage doing *Barrymore*.

ED

*I was a political cartoonist for  
the Evening Journal.*

DREW

*Really?*

ED

*(now 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.

ED DOING JB

*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*.

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.  
 But it paid well, and that, my  
 friends, is the narcotic.xx*

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.

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 sunburn (acting). 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 (acting).

One woman cackles hideously at Ed's antics which causes the audience to laugh even harder.

SANDY DUNCAN comes out on stage and joins the fray. The audience quiets some. Ed tries to hide a cough (ominous in real life). The Barrymore continuity remains.

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 a new round of 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, and the woman in the third row can't stop cackling.

INT. THEATRE IN LOS ANGELES -- NIGHT

Ed performs Hadrian the 7th swarming the stage as he puffs on a cigarette and performs his lines (MOS). The acting Ed is doing Barrymore as the VO continues.

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 ...*

INT. THEATRE IN BOSTON -- NIGHT

Ed is roaming the stage, acting.

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

*... The river Arno, the Uffizi Gallery, the Santo Croce Church of the Franciscans where Galileo and Michelangelo were buried.*

INT. THEATRE IN TEXAS -- NIGHT

Ed is roaming the stage, acting. He puts his cigarette out in his hand. The audience gasps. Barrymore is in the audience, awe-struck. He starts singing.

BARRYMORE

*... Pardon me boy. Is that the Chattanooga Choo-Choo; Track 29, Boy, you can give me a shine...*

EXT. A BAR IN LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

JB joins in with present-day Ed as they walk. Their in-sync VOICES prove Ed has mastered the role of *Barrymore*.

BARRYMORE

(and Ed - VO)

*He said only the weak have to be carried home. He used to drag me along on his nightly binges ...*

Ed stumbles. Barrymore waits a beat then--

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)  
 (and Ed - VO - in sync)  
*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.*

As Ed's voice fades, Barrymore takes over

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)  
 (and Ed fading - VO)  
*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 IN THE US -- 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.

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)  
 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 is dressed as Betty Davis, recites (improvises) 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 has his hands on hips.

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)

Betty Davis was anything but fruity. You didn't get much help on being a woman, 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.

They pause to listen to Ed playing Betty Davis (improvise). Included in this monologue is the foreshadowing cough.

BARRYMORE

The hardest thing about doing Betty Davis is getting into the makeup. Where there's documentation, you should use it and do it. Right?

Spirit Ed furrows his brows at Barrymore before jumping back in 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. I did a unique Bogart.

DREW (V.O.)

Actually, you did Ed Dennehy doing 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 (IMPROVISE) and before long the Producer gets up 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.

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.)

That marked the beginning of a ten-year road tour.

BEGIN SERIES OF JUMP CUTS

To establish Ed's performance around the country. Improvise where necessary.

JUMP CUT

To a stage 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 performing on a stage somewhere in America.

ED (V.O.)  
Simon Stimpson ... Our Town.

JUMP CUT

Ed performing on a stage somewhere in America.

ED (V.O.)  
Vladimere, Waiting For Godot.

JUMP CUT (IN QUICK SUCCESSION)

Ed performing on different stages somewhere in America.

ED (V.O.)  
*Twelve Angry Men... Willy Loman ...*  
*Richard The Third .... Hamlet...*  
*Darrow ... Harlequinade ...*

JUMP OUT TO:

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. Now you  
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 out of here.

BARRYMORE  
Yeah, yeah. What clued you in that  
you had a problem? The blood on the  
pillow, perhaps?

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 haven't.

BARRYMORE

Open that trunk. The truth is in it. Blinding as it is.

Ed puts the book down as the two NURSES enter,

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)

Soon. You'll find out soon.

NURSE ONE

It's time, Edward.

She strokes Ed's arm, smiles, then injects him.

NURSE ONE (CONT'D)

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 stop you?

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 fallen 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 (CONT'D)

A *Newsday* critic says it's the best play in the five boroughs, but I'm still depressed. I know why now.

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 masks, hats, and other props used to disguise or change the 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, you know.

BARRYMORE

And then there was Smith Tooson who directed *Of Thee I Sing*. That was a great audition you gave.

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. Anyway, John. What what was Deter trying to tell me in that dream?

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? Deter is Ernest. Ernest is Deter. And 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.

ED

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. That's something.

ED

What has that gotten me?

BARRYMORE

You're a great actor. Besides, what has your series of romantic encounters gotten you?

Barrymore takes both drinks, hands Ed his soda. They toast.

BARRYMORE (CONT'D)

Freud would be proud. To you, my ID friend. And to me, the EGO.

ED

And to Deter, our super-ego

Ed drinks, puts the glass down and then stretches his legs.

ED (CONT'D)

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 (CONT'D)

Why did you bother with me, John?

BARRYMORE

Theatre is about distractions and movement. Most actors don't get that. You did. Right away.

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, isn't it?

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 for some time that Gene Kelly was a much better Hornbeck than you.

ED

And I've noticed that the people who are late are much jollier than the people who wait for them? 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 (CONT'D)

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 (CONT'D)

No. There's nothing else to say.

(smiles lovingly)

Except 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 as hell, 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 (CONT'D)

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 gives her a peck on the cheek and leaves.

INT. HOFSTRA THEATRE -- STAGE -- NIGHT

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

Ed and another ACTOR sit in the two white chairs. Both have military uniforms on.

Ed looks out into the audience and sees Barrymore in the back row of the theatre.

VOICE

Ready!

ON BARRYMORE

He gets up and watches the finale while standing.

VOICE (CONT'D)

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 -