

LOGLINE for *The Ed Dennehy Story*, a mini-series screenplay by Robert Gately

Ed always wanted to act or direct in theatre, but a lifelong battle with booze, and the bizarre hallucinations of famous dead people and spiders the size of dogs, led him on a physiological journey where he struggled to find peace between the worlds of the real and the imaginary.

SYNOPSIS for *The Ed Dennehy Story*, a mini-series screenplay by Robert Gately

According to Newsday, in 1991 Ed's bravado performance in directing and acting in *Breaker Morant* was the year's best. However, while people congratulate him for a hit play, he feels like a failure at age forty-two and doesn't know why. Ed reminisces his life story with his childhood friend, Drew, while hoping the flashback might reveal why he feels so depressed.

Ed takes Drew through his bizarre relationship with his womanizing father, which foreshadows what will come in Part II of the story. Ed has a lifelong history of hallucinations not the least of which was van Gogh jumping out of pictures and spiders the size of dogs.

By the age twelve Ed has developed an obsession for acting and directing, and he is talented in both areas. Ed performs skits at his Mineola, Long Island basement with his buddies. One day he is Dracula; on another day he is Dr. Jeckyl or Quasi-modo or the dashing Humphrey Bogart. It is here, in the basement, where he meets Drew's sister, Alice, and discovers his sexuality. He acts out a leading male role with her. These pretend love-making sessions with her are only a natural extension of his philandering father's attitude towards women, and it is the beginning of what will be two decades of hopping from one bed to another without considering such things as commitments or responsibilities or consequences.

At age 16 Ed becomes a professional equity actor, an incredibly intense and talented thespian. Before he even graduates from High School, he rubs shoulders with the theatre elite such as Carol Channing, Shelly Winters and Claudette Colbert. Women twice his age seek intimacy with him. But then something happens which entrenches Ed in the world of make believe. He steps through a curtain on stage while acting in the senior play where he becomes the first under-classman ever to act the lead role at the elite Chaminade High School. This curtain is not the cloth-type that rises and falls for the opening and closing of a play. It is a gauzy curtain that only he can see. His spirit steps through it, while his body goes through the motions of an actor acting.

On the other side of the curtain he meets the spirit of John Barrymore and his side-kick by the name of Deter. These spirits, or hallucinations – or Ed's conscience (in a Freudian sense) – tries to help Ed for the next 20 years (in Part II), a journey of self-discovery.

This cross-over to the unreal side of a curtain scares the hell out of Ed because it feels so genuine, and exciting, and ... a place to be when the 'real' world is just too complicated. It scares him, really, because tomorrow, when he has to perform again, he does not know if the curtain will return. He wonders if this is the life of an actor. What's real? What's imaginary? Part one ends with these questions while part two answers them.