

DRIFTWOOD

A New Play

by

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DRIFTWOOD

RECOMMENDED CASTING REQUIREMENTS

CASTING NOTE: There are 17 roles in the play. (5F/12M)
The director can choose to utilize 17 actors or reduce the cast by combining multiple roles under each actor. Using the chart below, as few as 8 actors (3F/5M) could be used.

ACTOR #1: (MALE/AGE 35-40)

DANIEL AT 38: A 1990's moderately successful photographer.

ACTOR #2: (MALE/AGE 60-70)

JOSEPH AT 68: A 1990's husband/dad near death from cancer.

POLICEMAN ONE: A 1920's small-town policeman.

CLARK: A 1960's small-town bartender.

ACTOR #3: (FEMALE/AGE 60-70)

GLORIA AT 68: A 1990's wife/mother with early Alzheimer's.

ACTOR #4: (FEMALE/AGE 18-25)

MARIE: A 1920's young, drunk, downtrodden hooker.

GLORIA AT 18: A 1940's small-town waitress coffee shop.

ACTOR #5: (MALE/AGE 18-25)

POLICEMAN 2: A 1920's small-town policeman.

JOSEPH AT 18: A 1940's Army recruit headed for Europe.

DANIEL AT 18: A 1970's angry teenager.

ACTOR #6: (FEMALE/AGE 35-40)

GLORIA AT 38: A 1960's housewife and mother of Daniel.

WELFARE AGENT: A 1920's small-town welfare agent.

ACTOR #7: (MALE/AGE 35-40)

JOSEPH AT 38: A 1960's factory worker and dad of Daniel.

JIMBO: Age 50's A drunken stranger behind a scrim.

NEIGHBOR GUY An off-stage voice

PULITZER PRESENTER: A speaker at the awards ceremony.

ACTOR #8: (MALE/AGE 8-10) (Can be played by an adult)

DANIEL AT 8: A 1960's Midwest kid on his 8th birthday.

DRIFTWOOD

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

DANIEL AT 38: A 1990's moderately successful photographer.

JOSEPH AT 68: A 1990's husband/dad near death from cancer.

MARIE: A 1920's young, drunk, downtrodden hooker.

JIMBO: A 1920's middle-aged drunken "trick".

POLICEMAN ONE: A 1920'S small-town policeman.

POLICEMAN TWO: A 1920'S small-town policeman.

WELFARE AGENT: A 1920'S small-town welfare agent.

GLORIA AT 68: A 1990's wife/mother with early Alzheimer's.

NEIGHBOR GUY: An off-stage voice

DANIEL AT 8: A 1960's Midwest kid on his 8th birthday.

GLORIA AT 38: A 1960's housewife and mother of Daniel.

JOSEPH AT 38: A 1960's factory worker and dad of Daniel.

CLARK: A 1960'S small-town bartender

GLORIA AT 18: A 1940's small-town waitress in coffee shop.

JOSEPH AT 18: A 1940's Army recruit headed for Europe.

DANIEL AT 18: A 1970's angry teenager.

A PRESENTER: A profession looking award presenter.

DRIFTWOOD

ACT ONE

Scene 1

PRODUCTION NOTES:

Setting and staging descriptions are meant only as suggestions. The play can also be done with very simple sets and/or projections. The actors, when not in a scene, sit along the perimeter of the playing area and observe the stage action.

SETTING:

The stage is dark. A scrim hangs upstage in front the INTERIOR OF THE WOODS' HOUSE set which we can just barely make out as it is only dimly lit behind the scrim.

DOWN-STAGE CENTER, in front of the scrim, is a hospital bed, an I.V. pole with an I.V. reservoir bag and a patient monitoring machine. Also Positioned AROUND the bed are two photo studio lighting tripods. Another tripod at the foot of the bed holds a camera.

AT RISE:

Family photos from 1950-1970's flash across the scrim. Next a projection reading, "CLEVELAND. DAY #39: FEBRUARY 12, 1994" appears and then fades away as the lights rise on the hospital bed.

DANIEL AT 38 adjusts his photo equipment and shoots photos of JOESPH AT 68 who is attached to the medical equipment and is asleep. The head of the bed is raised so JOESPH appears to be sitting up, but asleep.

TIME:

February 12, 1994, 8 p.m.

(DANIEL drops his lens cap. It makes a noise as it hits the floor)

DANIEL AT 38

(Whispering under his breath)

Shit!

(DANIEL pauses and looks to see if the noise woke JOSEPH who moans softly but remains asleep. DANIEL looks relieved. As DANIEL goes to pick up the lens cap, HE accidentally knocks over a lighting tripod. The noise of the tripod hitting the floor awakens a very disoriented JOSEPH)

JOSEPH AT 68

(Startled)

What!?!

(As DANIEL quickly picks up the lens cap and tripod the camera starts to make a beeping noise)

DANIEL AT 38

Dammit!

(DANIEL taps on the camera and the beeping stops)

JOSEPH AT 68

Something is falling...

DANIEL AT 38

It's okay Dad. Nothing is falling. Everything is fine.

JOSEPH AT 68

Something has changed...

DANIEL AT 38

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you. Go back to sleep.

(DANIEL stops photographing and moves to check one of Joseph's monitors)

JOSEPH AT 68

Is everything okay?

DANIEL AT 38

Everything is good. I just dropped my lens cap...and then I just knocked over the tripod.

JOSEPH AT 68

Well, that's not good.

DANIEL AT 38

No, it's not, but everything is okay now... or at least as okay as it can be. Now go back to sleep now.

JOSEPH AT 68

Okay, goodnight.

(JOSEPH immediately falls asleep again)

DANIEL AT 38

'Night, night.

(DANIEL continues to adjust his photo equipment, occasionally taking a picture of JOSEPH. After a couple of beats, JOSEPH suddenly wakes again)

JOSEPH AT 68

(Startled)

Where is Danny?

DANIEL AT 38

What do you mean?

JOSEPH AT 68

Where is Danny?

DANIEL AT 38

I'm right here. Dad, are you okay?

JOSEPH AT 68

He's been gone a long time.

DANIEL AT 38

Who has?

JOSEPH AT 68

My boy. My boy Danny. He's been gone a very long time.

DANIEL AT 38

No, Dad, I'm here. I'm standing right here.

JOSEPH AT 68

Yes?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, I've been right here all the time.

JOSEPH AT 68

What are you doing?

DANIEL AT 38

I'm just finishing up this last roll. I'm about to pack up my stuff for the night... but I'll be back and we'll do it all again tomorrow...okay?

JOSEPH AT 68

Okay.

(After a beat)

So, you are leaving?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes...well, no. I mean I'll just be downstairs. And then I'll be back up here tomorrow.

JOSEPH AT 68

No, I suppose not.

DANIEL AT 38

Yes. Yes, I will.

JOSEPH AT 68

No, I suppose not.

DANIEL AT 38

Ugh. Okay then.

JOSEPH AT 68

He's been gone a long time, that Danny. A long time.

(DANIEL now looks at JOSEPH quizzically)

DANIEL AT 38

No, I am... Pops, what day is it? What is today's date?

JOSEPH AT 68

It's Monday, February twelve, nineteen-ninety-four. Am I right?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, that's right! That is exactly right!

JOSEPH AT 68

Well, of course it is! Why wouldn't it be?

DANIEL AT 38

And how are you feeling today, Pops?

(After a beat)

Pops?

(JOSEPH is asleep again. DANIEL moves DOWNSTAGE to talk the audience. The stage lights dim, but there is still light on JOSEPH AT 68, who remains motionless)

DANIEL AT 38 (Continued)

I always found that so amazing. No matter what state of mind the old man was in... or wasn't in...no matter what impossibly painful place his illness had taken him to... he always knew what day it was... even in those final days. I don't know why or how he knew... but he did. It turns out...he always knew.

(JOSEPH stirs a little and grumbles)

My name is Daniel Woods. I am a *middle-aged, mid-career... middle-of-the-road* photographer. I grew up right here... in this very house...in the *middle* of Wayland Avenue... located in this lower-*middle-class* neighborhood... in this Midwestern city known as Cleveland. Back then, in my "Wonder Years"... I had three goals...or more accurately, three wishes or dreams maybe. First of all, I wanted to be a photographer.

DANIEL AT 38 (Continued)

From the moment I got my first camera on my eighth birthday, I knew that photography had to be my career. And flash forward...pardon the pun...I am a photographer!

(JOSEPH stirs a little and grumbles again)

My second wish was to live in New York. Even back in my early days... and even though I had never been much further from home than the corner store...I always knew I wanted to live **in** and take pictures **of** the most exciting city in the world. And so today...even on my worst days, I think how lucky I am to be doing for a living...exactly what I always wanted to do, and I'm doing it in the city I always I wanted to do it in. Do you know how rare that is?!?

(After a beat)

Oh...and the third dream...or wish...or goal... I also knew, from early on, that I didn't just want to take pictures...I wanted to take photographs that could change the way people think...the way people feel. Photos that tell the human stories. Do you know what I mean?

(JOSEPH stirs a little and grumbles again)

I mean stuff like...the one of Marilyn Monroe on the drafty sidewalk grate... or the two lovers in Times Square kissing on V-J Day or the photo of the Kent State shooting. Just the mention of these and you can see them in your mind's eye...am I right? Well, that what I set my sights on. That's where I wanted to go and that's what I wanted to do.

And so, I fled from Wayland Avenue as soon as I was able to... and headed for The Big Apple. And while today I do take pics for a living, in what is still the most exciting city in the world...the truth be told...my photos are not exactly having the impact on society that I'd once dreamed of. Instead of blushing Marilyn or the passionate lovers, I mostly shoot ads for cheese spreads or mid-market face creams targeted at middle-aged women who want to look younger. No, it's not everything I'd dreamed of... but it pays the rent.

(JOSEPH stirs a little and grumbles again)

DANIEL AT 38 (Continued)

Ah yes! But on this particular day... as it has been for nearly a month now... I'm back in Cleveland... back on Wayland Avenue...back in the house where I grew up. I've come back to tend to a father who is very, very ill. I've come back to tend to a father who is nearly at his end. I've come back to tend to a father who I never really loved.

*(JOSEPH wakes up and begins to mumble something.
DANIEL moves back to his bedside)*

JOSEPH AT 68

You've gotta look deep into the eyes. That's where the real story is.

DANIEL AT 38

Pops? The story...?

JOSEPH AT 68

That's where the soul is. It's all in the eyes. You should never forget it. The eyes. You know that, right?

(HE begins to nod off)

What? No.

(JOSEPH AT 68 falls asleep as DANIEL packs up the last of his photography equipment)

DANIEL AT 38

And he's out. Okay, old man. Sleep tight. Sleep, perchance to dream - ay, there's the rub, for in this sleep of death what dreams may come...

(DANIEL exits. The light on the hospital bed gets brighter as the beeping of monitoring machine get louder. Then the machine noise stops)

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT ONE/Scene 1)

DRIFTWOOD**ACT ONE****Scene 2****SETTING:**

DOWNSTAGE CENTER: JOSEPH'S bed. During the blackout the actor playing JOSEPH AT 68 exits and is replaced with a dummy. The bed now seems to be lit as it would be in an operating room.

UPSTAGE-RIGHT: Behind the scrim, is a dimly lit, gritty, one-room apartment. There is a door leading to the outer hallway, a window, a lamp on a table, an old Victrola. On the floor is a cardboard box large enough to hold a baby.

AT RISE:

A projection reading "YOUNGSTOWN-JANUARY 1, 1926" appears across the scrim and then fades away. The lights dim at CENTER and rise at UPSTAGE-RIGHT. Bessie Smith's "T'AIN'T NOBODY'S BUSINESS" is heard coming from what sounds like a well-worn 78 RPM record being played on the Victrola.

From OFF-STAGE RIGHT we hear an intoxicated MARIE and JIMBO, who are staggering up several flights of steps on an unseen staircase. SHE blows a noisemaker and laughs as HE shushes her. When THEY reach the top of the staircase, THEY enter the apartment wearing New Year's Eve hats. SHE moves to the lamp and turns it on. SHE also turns up the sound on the old Victrola and begins to sing along with Bessie Smith.

TIME:

DOWNSTAGE-CENTER: Moments later.

TIME:

UPSTAGE-RIGHT: Jan 1, 1926, 3AM

MARIE

(Singing)

If I should take a notion,
To jump into the ocean,
T'ain't nobody's business if I do.

JIMBO

You sing it, Baby!

MARIE

If I go to church on Sunday,
Then cabaret all day Monday,
T'ain't nobody's business if I do

JIMBO

You goin' to church on Sunday?

MARIE

Hell no!

(Singing)

If my man ain't got no money
And I say "Take all of mine, honey"
T'ain't nobody's business if I do

JIMBO

So, I can take your money?

MARIE

Ha! If you can find any...it's yours Sugar!

(JIMBO turns the Victrola off)

JIMBO

It's not your money I'm after!

MARIE

Oh my! You is a devil, ain't you!

(MARIE goes to the window and screams out)

Hey! Happy 1926 everybody! Happy fucking New Year!

JIMBO

Shhh! You're gonna have your neighbors calling the cops!

MARIE

Screw the neighbors!

JIMBO

That's not *exactly* what I have in mind!

MARIE

Aw, come on cutie, take off your jacket! Make yourself comfortable.

(HE takes off his jacket)

That's right... get comfortable. And then get ready...because I am gonna give you a happy fucking new year you'll never fucking forget!

JIMBO

Okay Toots...but first...I needs to catch my breath. I don't know how you do that every night!

MARIE

Do what!?!

JIMBO

Climb those steps like that!?! Those steps is murder! I don't know how's you do it! Damn! I'm still winded, but it don't seem to bother you none...

MARIE

Ya get used to it. Go on...catch your breath...and then Mama's gonna make it all feel so much better for you.

JIMBO

I know she is! Okay, hang on. My breath is almost back...

MARIE

Take your time Jimbo. I ain't goin' nowhere.

(After a beat)

It is Jimbo right? That's your name... Jimbo? That's what you said?

JIMBO

Oh, yeah. That is what I said.

MARIE

(Grabbing his crotch)

Or did you say Jumbo!?

JIMBO

Ha! No, no...it's Jimbo.

MARIE

Well, Jimbo, what do you think of my humble abode!

JIMBO

Nice. Really homey. And how handy that your abode just happens to be right atop Jake's Tavern. I'm guessin' that ain't by chance.

MARIE

(A little irritated)

And what exactly is that supposed to mean?

JIMBO

Well Toots, I'm guessin' I'm not your first. In fact, I was wondrin'... does this Miss Pretty pick up stray dogs like me every night?

MARIE

(Very irritated)

Of course, I do not! How dare...

JIMBO

Whoa! Okay. Sorry Toots!

MARIE

Please, do not judge me and do not call me Toots! My name is Marie.

(After a beat...SHE calms down)

And besides...t'ain't nobody's business if I do.

JIMBO

Hey, Angel Face...Marie... I wasn't judging.

MARIE

No? What would **you** call it?

JIMBO

What I mean to say...well, I'm sure I'm not the first John to wonder how often you bring other Johns...

MARIE

Let's stop talking and get down to business.

JIMBO

Okay, but I need another drink. You got a bottle of...

MARIE

I got something better than a bottle...

JIMBO

Oh yeah....

(SHE unbuckles his belt and his pants fall to the floor. SHE gets down on her knees. Suddenly there is a loud pounding at the door)

POLICEMAN 1

Marie Coleman?

MARIE

Shit!

POLICEMAN 1

Marie Coleman! Open up!

(JIMBO quickly pulls up his pants. MARIE rises)

JIMBO

Who the hell is that!?!?

POLICEMAN 2

Miss Coleman! We know you're in there!

MARIE

(Whispering)

Shush now! Don't make a sound.

POLICEMAN 1

Youngtown police! Open up!

JIMBO

Shit! Police!?!?

MARIE

It's okay.

JIMBO

Okay!?!? Are you in trouble?

(More banging on the door)

POLICEMAN 1

There's no sense in pretending you ain't in there. We just watched your sorry ass sashaying up these rickety steps...

POLICEMAN 2

In those hooker high-fa-lootin' heels of yours...

POLICEMAN 1

And we saw you and that poor bastard...that fat-assed, shit-faced trick you're turning... entering the premises.

JIMBO

Fat-assed, shit-faced trick? Is he referring to me...?

MARIE

Forget about it!

(Now screaming at the police)

Go away!

JIMBO

What the hell is going on?

MARIE

It ain't nothin'.

JIMBO

It looks like somethin'! You in trouble with the law!?!?

MARIE

(Again, screaming at the police)

You got no right to be here!

POLICEMAN 1

We've got every right!

POLICEMAN 2

And we've also got an officer from Child Welfare with us...

(BABY is heard crying from the box on the floor)

JIMBO

What the...!?!?

(Again, THE BABY cries)

Was that a baby?!?!?

MARIE

What??? No!!!

JIMBO

Is that a Goddamned baby crying!?! You got a goddamned baby in here?

(More banging as BABY and the music get louder)

POLICEMAN 1

Marie Coleman. You got ten seconds...

MARIE

Go away!

JIMBO

I gotta get outta here! I got a wife! I got a job! I can't be here...

(TWO POLICE OFFICERS bust in the door and grab MARIE holding her hands behind her back. JIMBO raises his hands over his head. THE CHILD WELFARE OFFICER also enters. THE BABY continues to cry. THE WELFARE OFFICER grabs THE BABY from the box on the floor)

JIMBO

You keep your baby in a box on the floor!?!

MARIE

Fuck you, you pansy-ass!

JIMBO

How could you do such...

MARIE

Don't you dare judge me you fish-faced mama's boy!

(THE POLICE handcuff MARIE)

POLICEMAN 1

Marie Coleman, you are under arrest for prostitution, narcotics, and the reckless endangerment of an infant.

MARIE

That is bullshit! You got nothin' on me!

POLICEMAN 2

Yeah, yeah. Just shut up and start walking.

JIMBO

Am I free to go?

POLICEMAN 2

Yeah dirtbag! Get the hell out of here!

(JIMBO grabs his jacket and quickly exits)

CHILD WELFARE OFFICER

I've got the baby. I'll see you boys downtown.

(WELFARE OFFICER exits with baby. MARIE screams)

MARIE

No! No! Wait! Where are you taking my baby? Stop!

POLICEMAN 1

Say goodbye to your baby and your worldly belongings.

POLICEMAN 2

You ain't gonna see either of them again.

MARIE

(Screaming)

Please! Don't! You can't do this! You can't take him!
Stop!!!!

(The scene UPSTAGE-RIGHT fades to black as the Bessie Smith music swells. The light focused on the hospital bed at DOWNSTAGE-CENTER intensifies. The beeping sound of the monitoring machine grows louder and louder all while the Bessie Smith music continues. Then abruptly it all stops)

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT ONE/Scene 2)

DRIFTWOOD**ACT ONE****Scene 3****SETTING:**

Through the scrim we see the interior of the Woods' home which now moves further downstage.

FAR STAGE-RIGHT: (The Exterior)

A stoop, a screen door and a porchlight represent the exterior entryway leading to the kitchen.

STAGE-RIGHT: (The Kitchen) The stove and sink are filled with dirty dishes, pots and pans. On the table are piles of mail and the blaring radio. A door, stage-left, leads to the living room.

STAGE-LEFT: (The Living Room)

A 1940'S couch and chair are covered with old throws. A console TV sits in front of a well-worn recliner. A doorway, Upstage-Left, leads to an unseen bedroom.

PRE-RISE: *A camera shutter is heard. A camera's flash flashes as family photos from the past holiday's appear onto the scrim. A projection reading, "CLEVELAND-DAY 1: JANUARY 5, 1994", appears and then fades. The scrim rises.*

AT RISE: *JOSEPH sits lifelessly in his recliner with his eyes closed. Big Band is heard coming from the radio on the kitchen table. DANIEL enters USR carrying an overnight bag. HE pauses and stares at the house. HE then moves Down-Stage to address to the audience.*

TIME:

January 5, 1994

DANIEL AT 38

Last November, I got hit...all at once... with a number of projects... photography gigs... and as a result...and at the last minute... I couldn't make it home for Thanksgiving.

(HE looks to check the audience's understanding.)

I know right!?! I felt terrible about it, but I had to take the work. There were deadlines. Anyway, I called her as soon as I knew. I tried to explain... and she said she understood, but I could hear it in her voice, she was devastated. We had never not had Thanksgiving together.

(HE stares at the door for a beat)

It got worse when I had to let her know that I was going to miss Christmas too. And again...I felt awful about it...but again, I had to deliver the final photos to an important editor before **he** left for **his** Holiday break with **his** family. There was just too much going on. I think I could hear her crying when I phoned her...but I can't be sure.

(After a beat)

I haven't seen her... or him ...them... I haven't seen **them** for over eight months. It's the longest we've ever gone... well it's the longest that I've ever gone without seeing her.

(HE looks at his watch)

Well, here goes...

(The Big Band music gets much louder. HE tries the screen door. It's locked. HE tries the doorbell. It's broken. Losing patience, HE bangs on the door and yells to be heard over the radio)

Ma! Ma, are you there? Ma! Ma! It's me. It's Daniel.

(A neighbor's dog barks)

NEIGHBOR'S OFF-STAGE VOICE

Hey asshole! Shut the hell up!

DANIEL AT 38

Up yours, Schwartzman!

NEIGHBOR'S OFF-STAGE VOICE

Watch your mouth, pal, we got a goddamned baby over here!

DANIEL AT 38

Mother!!!

(GLORIA AT 68 enters upstage left, running through the living room and into the kitchen. SHE turns off the radio on her way to the door)

GLORIA AT 68

Oh, Danny! You're here! I didn't hear you pull up.

(GLORIA unlocks the door and lets DANIEL in)

DANIEL AT 38

Thanks to Glenn Miller, you wouldn't have heard a Learjet landing!

GLORIA AT 68

Thank God, you are home! Aw, let me look at you! Oh, how handsome my son is!

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah? You think so?

GLORIA AT 68

I'll bet those big city girls are falling all over you... Like bees to honey.

DANIEL AT 38

Oh, hell yeah. They're banging down my door.

GLORIA AT 68

Well, of course they are! Come, give your mother a hug.

(HE hugs HER)

I've missed you so much.

DANIEL AT 38

I've missed you too Ma.

GLORIA AT 68

So, how are you, Danny? How was your flight?

DANIEL AT 38

Good. I'm good. The flight was good. It's all good... and it's Daniel, okay Ma? It hasn't been Danny for about 30 years.

GLORIA AT 68

What?

DANIEL AT 38

(Suddenly aware of an unpleasant odor)

Whoa! Jesus, Mary and Joseph! What is that smell?

GLORIA AT 68

What smell?

DANIEL AT 38

You can't smell that!?! Ugh! Damn! It smells like death in here!

GLORIA AT 68

(Concerned that JOSEPH may have heard that)

Daniel, please!

DANIEL AT 38

Oh, geez, I'm sorry.

GLORIA AT 68

What a thing to say...

DANIEL AT 38

I didn't mean...I just meant it smells like...Goddamn!
I don't know what!?!

GLORIA AT 68

I don't smell anything. It's your imagination.

DANIEL AT 38

It is not my imagination, Ma. Edgar Allen Poe could not have imagined this odor.

(DANIEL opens the refrigerator)

Whoa! It's from in here, whatever it is.

GLORIA AT 68

Forget about it!

DANIEL AT 38

What the hell...

GLORIA AT 68

Close that door!

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, these eggs expired over a month ago...

GLORIA AT 68

Eggs don't go bad... and even when they do...they don't smell.

DANIEL AT 38

No, you're right...it's not the eggs...

GLORIA AT 68

Well, of course not!

DANIEL AT 38

It's this lunchmeat!

GLORIA AT 68

What lunch meat? There's no lunch meat...

(HE takes out some lunchmeat wrapped in plastic wraps and sniffs it and shows it to her)

DANIEL AT 38

What's this then? Jesus! It smells like old socks.

GLORIA AT 68

Don't be silly...

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, I'm serious! You have got to throw this shit out!

GLORIA AT 68

Language!

DANIEL AT 38

Damn! One...two...three...four...five! How many jars of Miracle Whip does one old couple need? This one expired three years ago.

GLORIA AT 68

I don't know what you're talking about.

DANIEL AT 38

You need to be careful... and look here! You've got six bottles of maple syrup, each with a different Aunt Jemima face!

GLORIA AT 68

Well, sure. They update her image from time to time...

DANIEL AT 38

Aunt Jemima through the ages. It's like a Goddamned Aunt Jemima retrospective in here.

GLORIA AT 68

Well, we don't eat as many pancakes as we used to.

DANIEL AT 38

I'll clean it out for you.

GLORIA AT 68

You will do no such thing...

DANIEL AT 38

Do you have a garbage bag?

GLORIA AT 68

No, Danny! We're not going to get into that mess right now. I'm not going to have you come all the way from New York City to clean out my refrigerator.

(DANIEL sees the condition of the whole room)

DANIEL AT 38

Holy shit!

GLORIA AT 68

What?

DANIEL AT 38

Look at this place! Ma??? What is going on here? Ma, this isn't like you. This place looks like a bomb hit it! What on Earth...? Ma, are you okay?

GLORIA AT 68

I'm fine. It's just a little messy. I've been busy.

DANIEL AT 38

And what's with all this mail? How can you eat with all this on the table?

(DANIEL sifts through the piles of mail)

Some of it hasn't even been opened.

GLORIA AT 68

It's mostly my sweepstakes thingies.

DANIEL AT 38

Are there bills in here? You can't let it pile up like this...

GLORIA AT 68

It's fine. Leave it be.

DANIEL AT 38

You could miss an important date...like an insurance premium...

GLORIA AT 68

There's nothing important there.

(SHE takes the mail from him)

I'll get to it in time.

DANIEL AT 38

I think we'd better sort through...

GLORIA AT 68

(Angrily)

Stop it Daniel! You rarely come home. I don't want you to feel you have to work when you do come. I want you to enjoy yourself while you're here.

DANIEL AT 38

I don't come here to enjoy myself.

GLORIA AT 68

What!?!

DANIEL AT 38

I come here to help you...

GLORIA AT 68

And to see us? You come to see us too. Isn't that right?

DANIEL AT 38

(HE hugs HER)

Aw, Ma, of course I come to see you.

GLORIA AT 68

You should go in to see him now.

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah, okay. In a minute.

GLORIA AT 68

He's been waiting for you.

DANIEL AT 38

He has? He knows I'm coming?

GLORIA AT 68

Well of course he knows! Do you think I would keep such an important thing from him? Besides, it was really him that asked me to call you.

DANIEL AT 38

He did!?!

GLORIA AT 68

He wants you to do something for him.

DANIEL AT 38

What? What does he want me to do...?

GLORIA AT 68

I don't know. He wouldn't tell me.

DANIEL AT 38

So, he is coherent? I thought when you called you said he was out of it...

GLORIA AT 68

He's in and out of it. The drugs I suppose. And he's lost some weight of course... well, go on in. See for yourself.

DANIEL AT 38

Come with me Ma. I don't want to go in alone.

GLORIA AT 68

Danny, don't be silly. He's your father.

DANIEL AT 38

Please.

GLORIA AT 68

Okay, okay.

(Lights fade on the kitchen and rise on the living room. DANIEL and GLORIA move to the living room. JOSEPH remains lifeless, staring into space. DANIEL sees JOSEPH and is shocked by his appearance)

DANIEL AT 38

(Whispering)

Oh my God! Ma, he looks awful! Jesus! He's lost so much weight!

GLORIA AT 68

I know Dear. Nearly sixty pounds. That's what the cancer does to you.

DANIEL AT 38

Sixty pounds! It hasn't even been a year! My God, he looks like a corpse.

GLORIA AT 68

Daniel!

DANIEL AT 38

No, but, I mean, eight months ago he was so alive...

GLORIA AT 68

Nine.

DANIEL AT 38

So vibrant...

GLORIA AT 68

Nine months.

DANIEL AT 38

What?

GLORIA AT 68

You said eight but it has been nine months since we've seen you.

DANIEL AT 38

No, that can't be right.

GLORIA AT 68

Yes, it is right. Nine months, one week and three days.

JOSEPH AT 68

You try eating strained baby food three times a day and see how goddamned vibrant you turn out to be!

DANIEL AT 38

Oh, my God!

JOSEPH AT 68

(Imitating an old horror movie)

It lives!

DANIEL AT 38

Oh, Dad...I am so sorry! I didn't... Well, I didn't...

JOSEPH AT 68

Ya didn't think a corpse could talk. Kinda spooky, ain't it?

DANIEL AT 38

I'm so sorry... about what I said...

JOSEPH AT 68

It's okay son. I understand.

DANIEL AT 38

But...so...how do you feel?

JOSEPH AT 68

Only slightly better than I look.

(Suddenly JOSEPH groans from a sharp pain)

DANIEL AT 38

(Turning to GLORIA)

Oh, my God! Is he all right!?!

JOSEPH AT 68

Danny, get me my pain pills...

DANIEL AT 38

(Panicked)

What!?! Where!?!

JOSEPH AT 68

On the lamp table...over there.

(DANIEL crosses to the dozens of pill containers)

DANIEL AT 38

Whoa! What are all these pills?

GLORIA AT 68

Those are his medicines.

DANIEL AT 38

Does he take all of these?

GLORIA AT 68

Not all at once.

(DANIEL reads the various labels)

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, some of these are older than your mayonnaise.

GLORIA AT 68

Oh, stop now...

DANIEL AT 38

No, really! I think we need to sort these out!
Acetaminophen...take two at bedtime. Pomalidomide...take one
with food. Jesus! How do you keep them all straight?

GLORIA AT 68

It's not so easy...

DANIEL AT 38

Holy shit! This one's from Dr. Simmons.

GLORIA AT 68

Who?

DANIEL AT 38

Dr. Simmons! The vet!

JOSEPH AT 68

Oh great!

DANIEL AT 38

They were for the dog... for worms...

GLORIA AT 68

Don't be silly Danny! We haven't had a dog in years.

DANIEL AT 38

That's exactly my point! You should throw out the old ones...

GLORIA AT 68

Okay, so apparently nothing is to your liking. First it was the smell...then the mail... now the medicines...

DANIEL AT 38

(Feeling badly that HE hurt her feelings)

No, but Mom...

GLORIA AT 68

I need to get your room ready. I suppose I should have had it done already.

DANIEL AT 38

Oh, Mom...please... I wasn't being critical...I just meant...

(GLORIA exits as JOSEPH winces in pain)

JOSEPH AT 68

Danny, find the pain pills! Tylenol-something or other.

DANIEL AT 38

Oh Shit!

(DANIEL finds the pills and hands them to JOSEPH)

Here... sorry.

(JOSEPH takes pills with a swig of beer)

DANIEL AT 38

Is that safe...to take those with beer?

JOSEPH AT 68

Safe? Son, look at me. What's it going to do...kill me?

(After a beat)

So, Daniel, how's New York treating you?

DANIEL AT 38

Good. It's fine.

JOSEPH AT 68

And how's the picture-taking business? Have you won that Pulitzer Prize yet?

DANIEL AT 38

Ha! Not yet. I did shoot a couple of covers this month...

JOSEPH AT 68

Well, that's impressive...

DANIEL AT 38

And a spread for US weekly...

JOSEPH AT 68

Cheese?

DANIEL AT 38

No, no...I mean a real two-page spread. That's a magazine term for a two page...

JOSEPH AT 68

Ha! Yes, I know...

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah...but no... no Pulitzer. Not yet anyhow.

JOSEPH AT 68

Well, be patient. You will. How does your Ma seem to you?

DANIEL AT 38

I'm worried about her.

JOSEPH AT 68

Ya are?

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah. I mean... well, how does she seem to you?

JOSEPH AT 68

She's getting a little squirrely, no doubt but she's okay. She gets lonely, what with you gone. She misses you.

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah, I suppose she does.

JOSEPH AT 68

And I'm not much company. I suppose she misses us both.

DANIEL AT 38

She told me you want me to do something for you.

JOSEPH AT 68

Boy, squirrely or not, the old girl doesn't waste any time. I do want you to do something for me Daniel. I want to commission you.

DANIEL AT 38

What do ya mean?

JOSEPH AT 68

You know...I want you to take some pictures for me. Not for free, ya understand.

DANIEL AT 38

No, I don't understand.

JOSEPH AT 68

I want to pay you. I want to pay you your going rate.

DANIEL AT 38

Pictures of what?

JOSEPH AT 68

Me.

DANIEL AT 38

You? You want me to photograph you?

JOSEPH AT 68

Yes. I want you to photograph my death. My last weeks ...

DANIEL AT 38

What!?! I don't understand...

JOSEPH AT 68

Or days...

DANIEL AT 38

Stop! You are not going to die...

JOSEPH AT 68

Please Son, we both know that isn't true.

DANIEL AT 38

I'm sorry. But why would you want... why would I...

JOSEPH AT 68

Hold on...I can explain. Every day I change, Danny.
Inside and out.

DANIEL AT 38

But of course, you do. Dad, you are really ill...

JOSEPH AT 68

Every day when I look in the mirror, a new face looks back at me. I see a new frailty. I see the energy waning. I see...what? Each day I see an unintentional resignation.

DANIEL AT 38

Well, of course you do. With cancer, you've got to expect...

JOSEPH AT 68

No, none of this was expected.

DANIEL AT 38

No, I didn't mean it like that...

JOSEPH AT 68

And I want you to capture that on film.

DANIEL AT 38

I don't understand. This is crazy...

JOSEPH AT 68

Every day, it's a different face looking back at me...but always one that looks both scared... and somehow, relieved.

DANIEL AT 38

It's probably the medication...

JOSEPH AT 68

And as the days go on...and as I get closer to the end...the stranger's face looks a little less scared and a little more relieved. But it's not me I'm looking at...you understand?

DANIEL AT 38

I'm sorry...I don't...

JOSEPH AT 68

It's not me in the mirror...

DANIEL AT 38

Of course, it's you! Pops, you are going through a lot...

JOSEPH AT 68

No! It is not me! I've never seen these faces before.

DANIEL AT 38

Okay. But if it is not you...who do you think it is?

JOSEPH AT 68

It's death.

DANIEL AT 38

No...

JOSEPH AT 68

It's the ever-changing face of death.

DANIEL AT 38

That's just creepy...

JOSEPH AT 68

Someday you will understand... like I do now. It's death all right. We all know it's eventually coming for us. We all know it our whole lives... and yet we don't see it. We don't really see it until it's right upon us.

DANIEL AT 38

Okay...enough...

JOSEPH AT 68

We let it go unnoticed... we disregard it as we would a stranger in a crowd. But finally, in the end, it forces us to stare it straight in the eye.

DANIEL AT 38

It's the cancer and the stress...and the drugs.....

JOSEPH AT 68

And now I'm seeing it...no longer as a stranger...though it still changes every day.

DANIEL AT 38

Damn! This is some heavy shit you are laying on me...

JOSEPH AT 68

I want you to capture this on film.

DANIEL AT 38

No, Pops... I can't.

JOSEPH AT 68

Daniel, I want you to photograph this... each day. These photographs will demystify death.

DANIEL AT 38

I'm not sure that that's a good thing...

JOSEPH AT 68

You'll see what I mean. You'll see the change.

DANIEL AT 38

It's not gonna happen...I can't. I've got a job. I have commitments... I have to be back in New York on Monday.

JOSEPH AT 68

You'll capture it on film.

DANIEL AT 38

I can't! And even if all of what you say is true...why? Why would you want me to do this?

JOSEPH AT 68

Daniel, you spend your life photographing strangers... fashion models...business moguls...sports figures. Look, I think your pictures are really good, but pardon me for saying so...there's something missing.

DANIEL AT 38

Oh?

JOSEPH AT 68

They're detached... impersonal.

DANIEL AT 38

Cold...no heart...no soul.

JOSEPH AT 68

I'm sorry to be so blunt, but in my condition...

DANIEL AT 38

It's okay. The chief editor of the Times agrees with you.

JOSEPH AT 68

Here's your chance to shoot something important and personal.

DANIEL AT 38

But it is so morbid...

JOSEPH AT 68

No, it's part of life! A very big...and vastly misunderstood part of life. Everyone's afraid of it but through these photos you'll be able to show them that it's relief at the end. You'll be able to take some of the fear away.

(After a beat)

Daniel, who you are and what you've got today, you've gotten on your own. I'm proud of you, but I can't take any credit for it. I wasn't there to be a part of it...

DANIEL AT 38

Let's not get into that at this point...

JOSEPH AT 68

No, it's one of my greatest in a long list of regrets. When I take my last breath, I want to know that at last I've done something important for you...

DANIEL AT 38

Look I know we've had a difficult relationship...but I also know that I am only a photographer because of you! It was you who taught me to appreciate what photography could be. How photographs could speak to people.

JOSEPH AT 68

You are giving me far too much credit...

DANIEL AT 38

You even bought me my first camera...

JOSEPH AT 68

You remember that?

DANIEL AT 38

Of course I do! For my eighth birthday? You were my hero...

JOSEPH AT 68

No, I was a machine operator in a Chevy plant.

DANIEL AT 38

Bullshit! And it's actually you who is the real artist. You're the one with the eye. You taught me! Christ, you'd have been another Ansel Adams or Richard Avedon or Yousuf Karsh if you had had the chances I had.

JOSEPH AT 68

Daniel, stay here. Do this.

DANIEL AT 38

I can't.

JOSEPH AT 68

Please. Take the pictures.

DANIEL AT 38

Dad, I've got a job. I've got responsibilities.

JOSEPH AT 68

I need you to do this for me and I need to do this for you.

DANIEL AT 38

I really wish I could...

JOSEPH AT 68

Your mother needs you here too.

DANIEL AT 38

You're killing me!

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT ONE/Scene 3)

DRIFTWOOD

ACT ONE

Scene 4

SETTING: Faintly lit behind the scrim is the INTERIOR OF THE WOODS' HOUSE set but now circa 1963. It is as it was in Scene 3, except everything is newer. The throws are off the furniture. A "Happy Birthday" banner hangs on a wall.

PRE-RISE: *A camera shutter is heard. A camera's flashbulb goes off as a series of the family's photos from the 1960's flash on the scrim. From behind the scrim we can see DANIEL AT 8, wearing a cowboy hat and studying the instructions for his new camera. We can see JOSEPH AT 38 is intently watching the news on T.V.*

AT RISE: *DANIEL AT 38 enters the dimly lit stage in front of the scrim and moves to the proscenium to address the audience.*

DANIEL AT 38

I knew it was going to be hard to see him, but not because of his illness. Or rather, not **just** because of his illness. It's never been easy for me to see him... or be with him. Well... not never. There was a time when I thought he was a superhero. No, it wasn't always so bad. But it turned bad, right around my eighth birthday. That infamous birthday when I got my first camera. Remember...I told you about that? Anyway, it's as if my whole life...for better and for worse...began that day. That day that was my eighth birthday.

(A projection reading, "CLEVELAND: November 24, 1963" appears on the scrim and then fades. The scrim rises. GLORIA AT 38 enters wearing a hat and coat and clearly anxious to get DANIEL AT 8 and JOSEPH AT 38 moving. JOSEPH'S eyes are fixated on the T.V.)

GLORIA AT 38

Okay, the stove is off, the windows are shut. Is the front door is locked?

JOSEPH AT 38

(Not taking his eyes off the T.V.)

Yes. Now please, just hush up a second.

GLORIA AT 38

Danny, did you brush your teeth?

DANIEL AT 8

Yes Mom.

(SHE picks up newspapers near JOSEPH's chair)

GLORIA AT 38

What are these newspapers doing here? I leave the room for two minutes...

JOSEPH AT 38

Gloria please! I wanna hear this ...

GLORIA AT 38

Joe, turn off the T.V. It's time to go.

(SHE gets no response)

JOE!!!

JOSEPH AT 38

(Irritated with the interruption)

What!?!?

GLORIA AT 38

Turn off the T.V.!

JOSEPH AT 38

Just a minute! This is important shit.

GLORIA AT 38

Language!

DANIEL AT 8

Ma, can I take your picture?

GLORIA AT 38

Not now Birthday Boy.

JOSEPH AT 38

(Under his breath talking to the TV)
Come on already! Bring him out!

GLORIA AT 38

It starts at two. It's going to take us an hour... By the time we park and get through the gate...

JOSEPH AT 38

I can do it in forty...

(Referring to what is on the T.V.)
Jesus! This is incredible.

GLORIA AT 38

Joseph!

JOSEPH AT 38

Hold on a minute. They are just about to bring him out.

DANIEL AT 8

Dad, can I take your picture?

JOSEPH AT 38

Not now Son.

GLORIA AT 38

Who Joe? Who are they going to bring out?

JOSEPH AT 38

The guy...

GLORIA AT 38

We are never going to make it! I want him to see it from the beginning...the big opening. It's like a parade. Danny, get your coat on. Joseph!!!

(Heard is the actual broadcast from the day that Lee Harvey Oswald was shot by Jack Ruby)

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

So, they are just about to bring him in...here he is now...

JOSEPH AT 38

God damn! Look at him! He looks like a derelict.

DANIEL AT 8

Who Dad?

JOSEPH AT 38

He's got a gash over his eye.

DANIEL AT 8

Oh wow!

JOSEPH AT 38

Right?!? It looks like he got roughed up pretty good..

GLORIA: AGE 38

Oh, dear me.

JOSEPH AT 38

And look at those eyes. Danny, really look at him! Look at his eyes.

(DANNY goes up to the TV and looks closely)

The eyes...they tell the whole story. They always do.

GLORIA: AGE 38

No, Joe! Turn that off now!

JOSEPH AT 38

He's the guy who assassinated the President.

GLORIA: AGE 38

Joseph!

JOSEPH AT 38

Lee Harvey Oswald is his name.

GLORIA: AGE 38

I don't care what his name is..

JOSEPH AT 38

I was telling Danny!

GLORIA: AGE 38

He should not be seeing such stuff at his age..

JOSEPH AT 38

This is history! We are seeing history in the making here.

GLORIA: AGE 38

Well, history will have to wait to be made because the Ringling Brothers won't. Come on Danny. Get your coat on.

(GLORIA goes to turn off the T.V. just as the gunshots of Jack Ruby are heard)

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

He's been shot! He's been shot!! There's a man with a gun...

JOSEPH AT 38

Holy shit!

GLORIA: AGE 38

What was that?

DANIEL AT 8

What happened, Dad?

JOSEPH AT 38

He shot him.

GLORIA AT 38

What!?!

JOSEPH AT 38

That guy shot him... that guy with the hat.

GLORIA AT 38

Oh, dear Lord...

DANIEL AT 8

Cool!

GLORIA AT 38

Oh, my goodness. Danny don't watch!

DANIEL AT 8

But I never saw a shooting...

GLORIA AT 38

Joe, turn it off!

JOSEPH AT 38

You've got to be kidding me...

GLORIA AT 38

Now!

JOSEPH AT 38

This is unbelievable!

GLORIA AT 38

It is horrible!

JOSEPH AT 38

I can't believe we're seeing this!

GLORIA AT 38

Come on! Turn it off!

JOSEPH AT 38

Gloria...how can you even think we can turn this off?

GLORIA AT 38

He doesn't need to see this. And besides, we have to go.

JOSEPH AT 38

There is no way! We can't leave now!

GLORIA AT 38

We have to leave now! It's the circus and it's Danny's birthday. Oswald Harvey has nothing to do with us.

JOSEPH AT 38

Look at them all! What are they doing? They don't know what to do. This is unbelievable and it's happening right before our very eyes...right here in our living room!

DANIEL AT 8

It's okay Ma. I can just play with my new camera. Dad can watch the shootings.

GLORIA AT 38

No, it is not okay. We have had these tickets for two months! We are going to the circus!

JOSEPH AT 38

You're not serious!??!

GLORIA AT 38

I am deadly serious! It's bad enough the President had to be shot just two days before Danny's eighth birthday. We don't need this now! Come on, turn it off!

JOSEPH AT 38

Gloria! Listen to me! They will probably cancel the circus anyway.

GLORIA AT 38

They will not! Why would they...

JOSEPH AT 38

They just shot the guy who assassinated our President for Christ-sakes.

GLORIA AT 38

They will not cancel the circus...not on Danny's birthday!

JOSEPH AT 38

Danny, I'll tell you what... how about you and me go out tonight, after this thing whole thing is over? Just two guys out on the town. What do you think?

DANIEL AT 8

Sure Dad. Can I take my camera?

JOSEPH AT 38

Well of course you can. Where should we go?

DANIEL AT 8

We could go to the movies.

JOSEPH AT 38

(Not taking his eyes off the TV screen)
Okay, if that's what you want.

DANIEL AT 8

"How the West Was Won" is playing at the Variety.

JOSEPH AT 38

Great. Then "How the West Was Won" it is. And you aren't sorry to miss the circus?

GLORIA AT 38

He is not going to miss the circus!

DANIEL AT 8

It's okay Mom.

GLORIA AT 38

He and I will take the bus if we have to! How could you even think about not going to the circus like you promised on your son's birthday?

JOSEPH AT 38

Goddammit, stop babying him. He's eight years old! He'll learn a hell of a lot more by watching this...this history in the making...than he will by watching a bunch of assholes in tights swinging from bars.

(DANIEL giggles)

DANIEL AT 8

He's right Ma. Besides, I would rather stay here with dad and play with my camera.

(GLORIA appears hurt by DANIEL'S statement)

Dad, can I take pictures of the T.V. screen? Will it work?

GLORIA AT 38

Great! Fine! We won't go! I ask you to do one thing...one thing as a family. To act as a father and a husband..

JOSEPH AT 38

Oh please, don't start that shit again. Not now.

GLORIA AT 38

One thing is all I ask! Is that so difficult? You work all day and when you come home, we don't see you. All you ever want to do is watch T.V. or sleep! Anything that will allow you to avoid having to spend time with us. Well fine, watch the G.D.T.V.!

JOSEPH AT 38

That's what I'm trying to do.

GLORIA AT 38

Daniel can play with his camera. Go on and have your boys' night out. I'm going to the circus, with or without you.

(GLORIA pauses and then exits. DANIEL AT 38 enters and moves downstage to talk to the audience. HE says his first line to JOSEPH AT 38, who doesn't hear him or acknowledge him)

DANIEL AT 38

(To JOSEPH)

She never really got it, did she Dad?

(To the audience)

As the years passed... I would often look back on this day... and I would wonder why she was so insistent that we go to the circus... despite the wildly shocking current events that were being broadcast into our living room.

I thought...maybe she insisted we go to the circus that day because she just wanted to make my birthday special. And then I thought... maybe she insisted we go to the circus that day because she thought I was too young to have such violence coming through the TV into our living room. Or maybe it was because the tickets to the circus were expensive and she couldn't imagine us just wasting them. We didn't have money to waste.

(After a beat)

But none of those were her reasons for choosing the circus over the tragic events happening in Dallas that week. She simply could never really see that there was more than just the three of us in the world. In her eyes...in her world... there was just the three of us. She couldn't see it otherwise and she certainly could not have foreseen what was to come next.

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT ONE/Scene 4)

DRIFTWOOD**ACT ONE****Scene 5****SETTING:**

The CLARK'S BAR SET moves in DOWN-STAGE LEFT. It is a typical neighborhood bar with neon beer signs and a bowling machine.

AT RISE:

A projection reading, "CLARK'S BAR: November 24, 1963, 8:00 PM" appears on the scrim and then fades. JOSEPH AT 38 and DANIEL AT 8 step off of the WOODS'HOUSE SET and move to the CLARK'S BAR SET. DANIEL, still wearing his cowboy hat, carries his camera. CLARK is behind the bar. DANIEL looks around the bar fascinated. DANIEL AT 38 observes it all from a seat at the end of the bar.

TIME:

November 24, 1963 8 PM.

CLARK

Well, well, well...look what the cat dragged in. And who is this, your bodyguard?

JOSEPH AT 38

No, smart-ass. This is my son, Daniel. It's his eighth birthday today and we've come to celebrate.

CLARK

And where better to celebrate a young man's eighth birthday than right here at Clark's Bar! Happy birthday Cowboy Dan!

JOSEPH AT 38

Danny, say hello to Clark.

DANIEL AT 8

Hi Clark.

(DANIEL looks around the bar through his camera)

JOSEPH AT 38

And thank him. He wished you a happy birthday. Daniel! He's a little shy. Daniel! He's a little shy.

DANIEL AT 8

Thank you, Clark. Can I take your picture?

CLARK

Sure, ya can. Everybody wants to get this mug on film.

JOSEPH AT 38

No Daniel! That would be evidence. Remember, we made a secret pact not to tell your mother we came here. This is our secret spy mission control headquarters, remember?

DANIEL AT 8

Oh, right Dad. No pictures. I forgot.

CLARK

What'll it be, gentlemen?

JOSEPH AT 38

A Schlitz and Danny will have an orange pop. He's driving.

CLARK

Coming right up.

(CLARK puts drinks on the bar)

Lily was asking for you today Joe.

JOSEPH AT 38

She was? Lily was here?

CLARK

Who's Lily, Dad?

JOSEPH AT 38

Just a friend, Danny. She's a spy too, so don't say nothin' about her to your Ma.

(JOSEPH takes a dollar out of his wallet)

Clark, give the boy ten dimes for the bowling machine.

(CLARK hands JOSEPH the dimes)

Danny, go play the bowling machine.

DANIEL AT 8

But Dad, it's no fun playing it alone.

JOSEPH AT 38

Sure, it is. Go on. Do as I say.

(DANIEL moves to the machine and begins to play)

CLARK

Handsome kid. Must take after his mother.

JOSEPH AT 38

So, what did Lily say?

CLARK

Joe, what are you messin' around with the likes of her for? You got a great kid... and probably a great wife...

JOSEPH AT 38

So, what if I do?

CLARK

Then you shouldn't mess it up with Lily. She's trash, Joe.

JOSEPH AT 38

Please don't say that. Don't talk about her that way.

CLARK

But she is...

JOSEPH AT 38

Clark...you're my best friend.

CLARK

No Joe, I'm not. I'm just the guy who pours drinks for you. I am not your best friend.

JOSEPH AT 38

Okay, so you're not. But since I ain't got no friends, you're as close as it gets.

CLARK

Well, that's just plain sad...friend.

JOSEPH AT 38

I need to talk to you...about me and Lily.

CLARK

I don't wanna hear this. Not with your kid right over there. Not on his birthday.

JOSEPH AT 38

Come on, I gotta talk to someone. I'm going nuts here. I really think we belong together.

CLARK

Who does?

JOSEPH AT 38

Me and Lily.

CLARK

Are you outta your mind? You're are gonna screw everything up over her!?! Are you crazy? You've got it made! You got a good job, a nice family...

JOSEPH AT 38

A good job!?! I run a machine, Clark. For ten hours a day I run a machine... punching the same Goddamned hole into the same Goddamned piece of sheet metal, over and over again. And if I don't do something about it, I will be running that same Goddamned machine for the next thirty years. Then I'll retire and then I'll die. That is not how I want to spend my life. That's just not how I want it to go.

CLARK

And what about him? Have you thought this through!?! You're what? You're gonna move in with her? You're gonna leave him and his mother? And what's he supposed to do? A boy needs a father, Joe.

JOSEPH AT 38

His mother is raising him anyway. He'll be fine.

CLARK

He will not be fine! Do you not see how he looks at you? He worships you!

JOSEPH AT 38

No, ya got it wrong. I'm not doing anything for the kid. He'll be better off without me.

CLARK

That's bullshit Joe! You can't really believe that.

JOSEPH AT 38

Gloria will find someone else. Someone who can teach the boy something. Someone who is not a factory worker...

CLARK

Someone else is not his father. Listen to yourself!

JOSEPH AT 38

No, just hear me out... Please Clark...

CLARK

No! I can't talk about this anymore. No, I'm done with it!

JOSEPH AT 38

But I need to talk to somebody about...

CLARK

You wanna talk? Okay, then...tell me this! What do you think Lily is gonna be able to do for you? What magic do you think is going to come from you running off into the stinking sunset with that tramp?

JOSEPH AT 38

Clark please...

CLARK

What's gonna be your future?

JOSEPH AT 38

I don't know...

CLARK

Without your son? Without your...

JOSEPH AT 38

That's between me and Lily. It has nothing to do with you.

CLARK

I'd say it's between you and Lily and the kid and the wife. It's between the four of you. But you're right, it has nothing to do with me.

(JOSEPH puts some dollar bills on the bar)

JOSEPH AT 38

Well, it's getting late Clark, take care of yourself.

CLARK

Ugh! Joe...wait!

JOSEPH AT 38

C'mon Danny, we'd better go.

CLARK

I hope you know what you're doin', Joe.

JOSEPH AT 38

I do, Clark. Danny, you didn't finish your orange soda.

DANIEL AT 8

I don't really like orange soda, Dad.

JOSEPH AT 38

What do ya mean? Everybody likes orange soda!

DANIEL AT 8

It burns my throat.

JOSEPH AT 38

Fine time to tell me! That's like pissing money down the drain! Why didn't you say something before I ordered it?

DANIEL AT 8

Sorry Dad.

CLARK

You didn't ask him Joe. You just did it...but you didn't ask him.

DANIEL AT 8

It's okay Dad. It's fine.

(DANIEL painfully the last of the orange soda. HE and JOSEPH walk off of the CLARK'S BAR as it flips around and becomes the front EXTERIOR ROXY BURLESQUE THEATER with a lit marquee reading, "THE ROXY BURLESQUE THEATRE". Below the marquee are large black and white photos of scantily clad female burlesque dancers. DANIEL at 38 moves near the proscenium and observes as DANIEL AT 8 and JOSEPH AT 38 walk by the theatre)

JOSEPH AT 38

See those pictures Daniel? Do you know who took those?

DANIEL AT 8

Yes.

JOSEPH AT 38

You do? You know?

DANIEL AT 8

Yes. You took them Dad.

JOSEPH AT 38

How did you know that?

DANIEL AT 8

You told Jimmy Benko's dad and he told Jimmy Benko's ma and she told Jimmy Benko and then Jimmy Benko told me.

JOSEPH AT 38

Why didn't you ever say anything about them?

DANIEL AT 8

I asked Ma and she said not to tell you that I knew. She said you'd would be upset if you knew that I knew...

JOSEPH AT 38

I'd be upset???

DANIEL AT 8

Maybe she said ashamed. Yeah, that's it. She said you'd be ashamed. She said you take these pictures of these bad ladies so as to earn a little extra money...to make the ends meet, she said.

JOSEPH AT 38

Danny, it is true...I made a few bucks taking these... but that's not why I took them. And I'm not ashamed at all. I'm proud of these.

DANIEL AT 8

You are?

JOSEPH AT 38

Yes. It is not just snapping the shutter. You'll learn this Danny. There's a certain precision needed...a certain skill... maybe even an artistry behind photography...at least photography when it's good.

DANIEL AT 8

And these have that? These have this artistry?

JOSEPH AT 38

Yes, I believe they do...if I do say so myself. And if you can see them...I mean really see them for what they really are...

DANIEL AT 8

See them for what they are?

JOSEPH AT 38

Danny, look at these pictures. What do you see?

DANIEL AT 8

What do you mean?

JOSEPH AT 38

Well, if you are going to be a photographer, you have to develop a certain eye. What do you see?

DANIEL AT 8

I see pictures of almost naked ladies. Bad ladies. Is that what I should see?

JOSEPH AT 38

No, that's what your mother sees. Look closer. Look deeper.

DANIEL AT 8

Okay. Hey, look! Her name is Lily, just like your spy friend that came in the bar looking for you...

JOSEPH AT 38

Yeah, so it is. But never mind that now. As a photographer, you've gotta see beyond what others see. You gotta see what others can't see with just a first passing glance.

DANIEL AT 8

How do I do that?

JOSEPH AT 38

You've got to look deeper... to see her for what she really is.

DANIEL AT 8

I'm not sure how...I mean, what do you mean?

JOSEPH AT 38

Look at her hand...see how she clutches that curtain...like she's afraid of something. Like she's hanging on. And see how she holds her right hand over her heart...like she's suffering inside. Can you see it? Most of all, look into her eyes. That's where the story is. You can almost see her soul in her eyes, can't ya?

DANIEL AT 8

I think so.

JOSEPH AT 38

Yes, if you study her eyes, you will see a terrible sadness. You'll see she's struggling, maybe wishing to find a better life? Look hard, Danny. The way she stands. Her hands. The angle of her head. Can't you see there is more to her than just a flimsy costume. There is a human being who has hit a hard road. A woman with flesh and bones and desires. Can you see it Danny?

DANIEL AT 8

I don't know Dad. I guess I can.

JOSEPH AT 38

You've got to look for it, Danny. That is what will make your pictures really special. You gotta find the soul the others can't see. And you will, Son. I know you will. Well, c'mon, we better get home, Birthday Boy. Did you have a good time tonight?

DANIEL AT 8

I had a great time, Pops.

(DANIEL AT 8 becomes DANIEL AT 38 again)

JOSEPH AT 38

Oh yeah, Pops, happy birthday to me!

(DANIEL AT 38 moves down to address the audience)

That was it. On the night of my eighth birthday...on the night of the day that Lee Harvey Oswald was shot to death...on the night of the day that the circus had come to town...my father and I had our last conversation for what would be a very long time. That night, after I'd gone to bed, he and my mother had an argument.

JOSEPH AT 38 (Continued)

It wasn't a surprise...and it wasn't so unusual. It was just another of their nightly tussles, which I had grown so accustomed to.

But... what I didn't realize that night...as I dozed off in my Roy Rogers permanent-press pajamas under my Lone Ranger all-cotton flannel sheets...what I didn't know...was that the next morning he would be gone...and I wouldn't see him again for over a decade. That never even entered my head. No, for me it was just another night on Wayland Avenue...except now I was eight years old and I had a camera.

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT ONE/Scene 5)

(END OF ACT ONE)

DRIFTWOOD**ACT TWO****Scene 1**

SETTING: INTERIOR OF THE WOODS' HOUSE as it was in Scene One except it has been straightened up. The piles of newspapers, mail, etc. have been cleared away. The pill bottles have been greatly reduced and are now in a neat row.

PRE-RISE: *A camera shutter is heard. A flashbulb flashes. Family photos appear on the scrim, but this time without JOSEPH. A projection reading, "DAY 2, CLEVELAND, JANUARY 6, 1994" appears and then fades. The scrim rises.*

AT RISE: *DANIEL is cleaning the countertop.*

TIME: JANUARY 6, 1994 9 a.m.

(GLORIA wearing a bathrobe and slippers enters)

DANIEL AT 38

Morning sleepyhead! I was wondering if you were ever gonna get up. I've never known you to sleep until nine o'clock.

GLORIA AT 68

Gracious sakes! It's nine o'clock! Oh, mercy me! I never sleep till nine o'clock! Why didn't you wake me!

DANIEL AT 38

It doesn't matter Mom. I tried to keep the noise down so as not to wake you. You clearly needed your sleep.

GLORIA AT 68

I suppose I did.

DANIEL AT 38

Does he howl in pain like that every night?

(SHE doesn't seem to hear this question but does suddenly notice that everything has been cleaned up.)

GLORIA AT 68

Holy crip-crap! Look at this place! What have you done?

DANIEL AT 38

I just straightened it up. I thought you'd be happy...

GLORIA AT 68

Oh, Daniel, of course I'm happy...

DANIEL AT 38

Oh good 'cause I wasn't hearing happiness in your reaction...

GLORIA AT 68

I mean...I do appreciate it...

DANIEL AT 38

Well good then. I'm glad...

GLORIA AT 68

But you didn't have to do that.

DANIEL AT 38

I know I didn't *have to*...

GLORIA AT 68

And what all exactly have you done?

DANIEL AT 38

Well, let's see...I organized the pills...relabelled them for normal humans. They should be a lot easier for you now. And I sorted the mail.

GLORIA AT 68

You did?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, but don't worry...all your sweepstakes thingies are in a neat pile over there. I threw out the ones that were past the date...

GLORIA AT 68

Okay.

DANIEL AT 38

And I cleaned out the refrigerator...

GLORIA AT 68

I knew I was going to be able to stop you there...

DANIEL AT 38

And I tied up the newspapers and put them out on the curb...
and in general...I just reorganized stuff...

GLORIA AT 68

Oh my. I hope I can find everything.

DANIEL AT 38

Oh, and I found your checkbook buried under the newspapers,
so I paid the bills that were there and balanced your
checkbook.

GLORIA AT 68

You did?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, Ma'am.

GLORIA AT 68

Well, thank you. I do appreciate it Danny. You're a good
son.

DANIEL AT 38

He's been sleeping peacefully for the past several hours.
In fact, it's almost too quiet now. The silence made me
want to go in and check on him...but I didn't.

GLORIA AT 68

I'm sure he's fine.

DANIEL AT 38

Want some coffee?

GLORIA AT 68

Yes, I could use some...

DANIEL AT 38

There's still a little left from what I made earlier... or I
can make a fresh pot.

GLORIA AT 68

You already drank a full pot of coffee? You must have gotten up very early. What time did you get up?

DANIEL AT 38

First one o'clock...from the noise...

GLORIA AT 68

The noise?

DANIEL AT 38

The howling. Then again at two-twenty.

GLORIA AT 68

Oh, you poor thing...

DANIEL AT 38

Then finally three. But at three, it was not from the noise, but from the silence. It was very quiet by three. I couldn't get back to sleep so I just got up.

GLORIA AT 68

Oh, I am sorry. That's not right.

DANIEL AT 38

It's fine Mom.

GLORIA AT 68

But, you need your sleep too.

DANIEL AT 38

I couldn't sleep Ma.

GLORIA AT 68

So, you cleaned my house at three in the morning?

DANIEL AT 38

I just straightened things up.

GLORIA AT 68

You shouldn't have had that ice cream so late last night. You never did sleep right if you ate chocolate too late.

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, it wasn't the ice cream.

GLORIA AT 68

Ever since you were a little boy...

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, it was not the ice cream! It was Dad. And you.

GLORIA AT 68

Me!?!

DANIEL AT 38

I couldn't sleep thinking about the two of you.

GLORIA AT 68

What are you thinking about us for?

DANIEL AT 38

I worry about you Ma.

GLORIA AT 68

Well don't.

DANIEL AT 38

Easier said than done.

GLORIA AT 68

You'll just get yourself sick over worrying.

DANIEL AT 38

I just wish I could help more...

GLORIA AT 68

There's nothing anyone can do... and losing sleep isn't going to help anything. Danny, your father is dying of cancer. That's it. There's not a thing we can do about it.

DANIEL AT 38

I know but... Mom, we need to start to think about the future...

GLORIA AT 68

The future? What about it?

DANIEL AT 38

I want to talk to you about what happens when... when he finally...

GLORIA AT 68

Let me make you some breakfast.

DANIEL AT 38

No, Ma, you sit. Today, I'll make you breakfast. What would you like? Pancakes? Waffles? An omelet perhaps? I'm quite the omelet maker, ya know.

GLORIA AT 68

Absolutely not! You are not making breakfast! Cooking... that's my job.

DANIEL AT 38

But Ma, I can...

GLORIA AT 68

(Firmly)

I'll do it. I need to do it. Scrambled?

DANIEL AT 38

(Concerned)

Okay, yes, scrambled.

GLORIA AT 68

(Under her breath, looking around the kitchen)

I do hope I can find everything...

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, we do need to talk. I mean we do need to talk about the future.

(GLORIA gets the eggs and the pan from the cupboard and begins to make breakfast)

GLORIA AT 68

You did say scrambled?

(HE nods)

Scrambled it is.

DANIEL AT 38

Seriously Mom, have you thought of what you are going to do...?

GLORIA AT 68

Yes, I'm gonna make breakfast...

DANIEL AT 38

No, I mean, have you thought about... I mean...I think we need to face the facts. He is going fast. I think you need to start thinking about what you are gonna do when he's gone.

(No response. DANIEL begins to set the table)

I mean you can't stay here. You can't stay in this house all alone.

GLORIA AT 68

Bacon?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, bacon. Thank you. Ma...

GLORIA AT 68

This reminds me of the old times Danny. When you were a little boy... well, when we both were younger, and life was so much simpler. We weren't ruled by our aches and pains.

DANIEL AT 38

Well sadly, those simple days are gone, and it doesn't do much good to look backwards.

GLORIA AT 68

I'd fix breakfast from this very stove and you'd sit there in that very seat and tell me of your dreams from the night before or you'd tell me what test you were worried about taking or what pretty new girl had caught your eye.

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, about the future...

GLORIA AT 68

Wheat, white or rye?

(End of ACT TWO/Scene 1)

DRIFTWOOD

ACT TWO

Scene 2

SETTING:

The WOODS' HOUSE set moves upstage as the 1940's TROLLEY DINER set moves DSR. There is a lunch counter with stools and a counter-top jukebox from which Big Band music is playing.

AT RISE:

A projection appears on the scrim reading, "TROLLEY DINER, CLEVELAND, November 15, 1943". GLORIA AT 18, wearing an apron, is behind the counter. JOSEPH AT 18, wearing a U.S. Army uniform, is seated at the counter. GLORIA AT 68 sits a few seats down from JOSEPH AT 18 with her back to the audience. DANIEL AT 38 sits at the far end of the counter and observes.

TIME:

November 15, 1943, 10 AM

GLORIA AT 18

Wheat, white or rye?

JOSEPH AT 18

Don't change the subject, Gloria!

GLORIA AT 18

I'm not, Joseph! Your choice of toast... that is the subject!

JOSEPH AT 18

Come on! What will it be?

GLORIA AT 18

That's what I am trying to determine here. Wheat, white or rye?

JOSEPH AT 18

No, I mean *who* will it be?

GLORIA AT 18

Who???

JOSEPH AT 18

Yes, who? Bob Peters...that panty-waisted sissy boy with the bad skin and breath to match... or me?

GLORIA AT 18

When you put it that way...who could resist Bob Peters?

JOSEPH AT 18

(Whining)

Gloria!

GLORIA AT 18

(Imitating HIM)

Joseph!

JOSEPH AT 18

Time is running out. I need to know your answer.

GLORIA AT 18

Ugh! Where's the fire?

JOSEPH AT 18

Just tell me straight!

GLORIA AT 18

So much pressure!

JOSEPH AT 18

This can't be this hard! Is it gonna be Peters or me?

GLORIA AT 18

Eenie, meenie, miney, moe... Oops! I need to fill the sugar bowls.

JOSEPH AT 18

And I need an answer! I'm sure Peters does too, so he can get on with his plans, as pathetic as those plans may be.

GLORIA AT 18

You think you're the only two fish in the sea?

JOSEPH AT 18

What!?! What are you sayin' Gloria?

GLORIA AT 18

How do you know I don't have a whole troupe of Army recruits asking for me to wait for them?

JOSEPH AT 18

Jeepers! Do you!?!

GLORIA AT 18

And there are the other wings of the Armed Forces too, you know.

JOSEPH AT 18

How do you mean?

GLORIA AT 18

The Navy...The Air Force... The Marines...

JOSEPH AT 18

The Marines!?!

GLORIA AT 18

Yeah! You've heard of them, right?

(GLORIA refills the salt and pepper shakers)

JOSEPH AT 18

Well do you?

GLORIA AT 18

Do I what?

(SHE bats her eyelashes at him teasingly)

JOSEPH AT 18

Do you have a whole troupe of these other guys? Am I competing with more than just Peters?

GLORIA AT 18

(Angrily)

Well of course you are not!

JOSEPH AT 18

Well geez...

GLORIA AT 18

What do you take me for anyway!

JOSEPH AT 18

Don't get all sore! I just thought for a minute...

GLORIA AT 18

Don't get sore!?!?! That's the problem with you boys!

JOSEPH AT 18

What is?

GLORIA AT 18

You're always thinking.

JOSEPH AT 18

Well sure but...

GLORIA AT 18

Well, Joey, I have been thinking too!

(GLORIA refills the ketchup bottles)

JOSEPH AT 18

You have?

GLORIA AT 18

Well sure I have!

JOSEPH AT 18

About what?

GLORIA AT 18

I've been thinking about you and all those fascinating European fräuleins over there with their high cheek bones and their dangling cigarettes and sultry bar room songs.

JOSEPH AT 18

No, the fräuleins are in Germany. I'm going to be in somewhere called Palermo.

GLORIA AT 18

That's not the point!

JOSEPH AT 18

Aww, Baby, you shouldn't give them a second thought. You are the only one I care for.

GLORIA AT 18

Oh, sure! You say that sitting here in Cleveland, Ohio...

JOSEPH AT 18

No, I could never...

GLORIA AT 18

But once you get over there and see what's available...

JOSEPH AT 18

No really...

GLORIA AT 18

I see how you stare at the movie screen when that Dietrich woman is up there!

(GLORIA begins to cry)

What are we girls back here supposed to do while you are over there... cavorting?

JOSEPH AT 18

There'll be no cavorting...

GLORIA AT 18

What are we supposed to think?

JOSEPH AT 18

Oh, don't ya start crying.

GLORIA AT 18

(Shooing him away)

Leave me be!

JOSEPH AT 18

Oh, you know I hate to see you cry.

GLORIA AT 18

I can't help it.

JOSEPH AT 18

But at least you are crying for me and not that Peters guy.

GLORIA AT 18

Joey, tell me it's going be all right.

JOSEPH AT 18

Well, sure it is, Baby Doll.

GLORIA AT 18

Tell me you're going to come home to me, okay?

JOSEPH AT 18

Of course, I am.

GLORIA AT 18

Tell me you are going to come home to me in one piece..

JOSEPH AT 18

I will...I swear...

GLORIA AT 18

And without an Ingrid or a Helga hanging off your arm.

JOSEPH AT 18

Scout's honor, Gloria. I will. And as for Helga, she doesn't stand a chance with me...not with you waiting here for me.

GLORIA AT 18

Are you sure?

JOSEPH AT 18

Abso-positively! You've gotta believe me!

GLORIA AT 18

I do believe you.

JOSEPH AT 18

And you've gotta trust me!

GLORIA AT 18

I do trust you Joey.

JOSEPH AT 18

And when I come home, we'll get married..

GLORIA AT 18

Yes?

JOSEPH AT 18

And I'll get a job...

GLORIA AT 18

You should probably get the job first.

JOSEPH AT 18

Oh, all right, job first and then marriage.

GLORIA AT 18

And we'll start a family, right? We'll have children?

JOSEPH AT 18

Sure! We'll have dozens of them.

GLORIA AT 18

Oh my!

JOSEPH AT 18

And we'll get a house.

GLORIA AT 18

Nothing too fancy...but cozy.

JOSEPH AT 18

And we'll invite your folks over on Sundays.

GLORIA AT 18

And I'll make curtains for the windows...

JOSEPH AT 18

I'll build a white picket fence all around the yard...

GLORIA AT 18

I'll plant rose bushes... lots and lots of rose bushes.

JOSEPH AT 18

And we'll have a mailbox with our name on it.

GLORIA AT 18

Yeah?

JOSEPH AT 18

"The Woods Family" it will say in big red letters.

GLORIA AT 18

Oh yes!!!

JOSEPH AT 18

And at Christmastime, I'll make plywood cutouts of Santa Claus and his reindeer for the front lawn...with the jigsaw the kids bought me for Father's Day.

GLORIA AT 18

Oh, that would be grand!

JOSEPH AT 18

We'll light the whole street with our Christmas display.
People will come from miles around to see it!

GLORIA AT 18

And Joey, when we do all this...when we have the home and
the kids and the mailbox, you must promise that you will
never ever leave me.

JOSEPH AT 18

But why would...

GLORIA AT 18

I know you have no choice today...but you have to promise...
once you come back from this war... from then on... we will
always be together, no matter what.

JOSEPH AT 18

Well of course, Honey. Of course, we will always be
together. I won't ever leave you again. Ever.

GLORIA AT 18

I love you Joey Wood.

*(THE WOODS' HOUSE replaces the TROLLEY DINER set
and GLORIA AT 18 AND JOSEPH AT 18 exit. GLORIA AT
68 stands frozen with a blank stare on her face
and DANIEL AT 38 looks at her with concern)*

DANIEL AT 38

Ma? Are you okay Ma?

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT TWO/Scene 2)

DRIFTWOOD**ACT TWO****Scene 3**

SETTING: Through the scrim we see the interior of the Woods' home as it was in ACT TWO/Scene 3.

PRE-RISE: *A camera shutter is heard as a flashbulb flashes. Photos of ailing JOSEPH flash across the scrim. They are from the recent DANIEL/JOSEPH sessions. A projection reading, "DAY 14: JANUARY 18, 1994", appears and then fades. The scrim rises.*

AT RISE: *DANIEL AT 38 is preparing dinner.*

TIME: JANUARY 18, 1994, 6 P.M.

(DANIEL AT 38 steps out of the kitchen and moves downstage to talk to the audience at center)

DANIEL AT 38

So...I've been here a couple of weeks now and other than sorting some things out a bit for Mom, I'm not sure I've accomplished much...or enough. I finally did agree to take the photos that my father has asked me to take...although I'm still not comfortable with the whole thing.

(HE moves to talk to the audience at his left)
It took almost ten days for my photo equipment to arrive from my office...but it's here now and I've already shot a couple of rolls... but I'm not yet happy with the results.

(HE moves to talk to the audience at his right)
As far as the folks go...some days Mom seems in a total fog... and I'm sure she is at the beginning stages of Alzheimer's or Dementia.

(HE moves to talk to the audience at his center)
I did a little research, and it turns out her inability to smell is an early indicator.

DANIEL AT 38

And just when I think it's time to bring in some professional help for her... she suddenly seems in fine...even in control. He, however, just seems to be getting weaker and weaker.

(GLORIA enters and DANIEL AT 38 moves to the kitchen and continues to prepare the dinner)

GLORIA AT 68

He is finally asleep. I didn't think he was ever going to fall asleep. I don't remember ever being so talkative.

DANIEL AT 38

What's he talking about?

GLORIA AT 68

You mostly.

DANIEL AT 38

Me? What about me?

GLORIA AT 68

He is so impressed with your work... your skill. He's just very proud of you...

DANIEL AT 38

He's proud? Let's not even go there.

GLORIA AT 68

What?

DANIEL AT 38

Never mind. I'm surprised he is so talkative with you... at the end of our he seemed exhausted... totally drained. Each day I think, we are getting closer to the end.

GLORIA AT 68

It's probably just the change in his daily routine...

DANIEL AT 38

No Mom! It is more than that. I'm sorry, but we've got to face the facts. We are getting closer to the...

GLORIA AT 68

No, I'm telling you, your father has always been like that. Once the sun goes down...he's ready for bed. I remember when he'd come home after working all day on those machines...

DANIEL AT 38

Mom! Stop it! You cannot keep dodging this. It just going to make it harder in the end.

GLORIA AT 68

Well...maybe you should make the sessions a little shorter? Maybe it's too much for him.

DANIEL AT 38

Why? Did he say something?

GLORIA AT 68

No, of course not. He loves his time with you.

DANIEL AT 38

Okay then. Well, take a seat. Dinner is just about ready.

GLORIA AT 68

Thank you for making dinner.

DANIEL AT 38

Thank you for letting me. I know how you feel about others in ***your*** kitchen. It's nearly ready. Lasagna Daniel.

GLORIA AT 68

It smells delicious.

DANIEL AT 38

Well don't let that fool you.

(THEY sit, HE serves it and THEY begin to eat)

GLORIA AT 68

So up to this point, I haven't pried...but I am curious to know...how is it going? The photo sessions with your Father.

DANIEL AT 38

It is going fine. I've got about three rolls so far.

(After a beat)

GLORIA AT 68

And so in this time you and your father have had together... have you been able to resolve anything yet?

DANIEL AT 38

Resolved anything? What do you mean?

GLORIA AT 68

I mean...have the two of you been able to come to terms with any of your issues from the past?

DANIEL AT 38

My issues!?!

GLORIA AT 68

Well, your misgivings. Your concerns. Your ... issues.

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah. No. Not so much.

GLORIA AT 68

Oh, that's too bad.

DANIEL AT 38

No, it's okay. I really wasn't anticipating that we'd resolve nearly thirty years of bad blood created from over a decade of his selfish neglect, his reprehensible paternal irresponsibility and his shameful fatherly betrayal.

GLORIA AT 68

Well, there is still time. I'm still hopeful.

DANIEL AT 38

Ma, I really don't think...

GLORIA AT 68

Oh Danny... you are always so glum.

DANIEL AT 38

I'm just being realistic. *(After a beat)* But I must admit...he was right about one thing.

GLORIA AT 68

What's that?

DANIEL AT 38

He *is* changing Ma... every day.

GLORIA AT 68

I know...you said he's getting weaker...

DANIEL AT 38

No, but beyond that...he is changing. I mean...I can finally understand what he meant... you know, when he told me on the first day, that every day that every day he saw a different face in the mirror. I now know what he means. I now see them too. And every day they seem less afraid. And every day they seem more relieved...more ready.

GLORIA AT 68

(Clearly not following or concentrating)

Well, good then. This lasagna is delicious.

DANIEL AT 38

(Realizing she isn't really listening)

Oh good. I'm glad you're enjoying it.

(THEY just look at each other for a moment)

GLORIA AT 68

Danny, I'm so glad to have you home. I'm so glad you decided to stay and take the pictures.

DANIEL AT 38

I know you are Mom.

GLORIA AT 68

And I know your Dad loves spending this time with you. Thank you for doing this. It means a lot to him.

DANIEL AT 38

I know it does, but you need to know, I'm not doing this for him.

GLORIA AT 68

Yes, but Danny...

DANIEL AT 38

No, I want you to understand...I am really *only* doing this for you. I'm staying here for you.

GLORIA AT 68

Well sure, but...

DANIEL AT 38

No Mom! I'm doing this strictly for you.

GLORIA AT 68

Well thank you Dear...but he is still your father...

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, of course he is...biologically...but I don't owe him a thing and he knows it.

GLORIA AT 68

Danny, let's not get into that all again. There's enough sadness in this house right now.

DANIEL AT 38

I'm sorry. You're right. Maybe I'm just tired too...

GLORIA AT 68

Look Danny, I know it hasn't been easy for you, but it was a long time ago. We need to try to let some of that go now.

DANIEL AT 38

Really Mom? I don't want to upset you...but really!?! So, as the years pass...we are just supposed to forget what that bastard did to us. Did to you!

GLORIA AT 68

Daniel! He's dying now. So, you've got to forgive him.

DANIEL AT 38

No! No, I do not. I don't forgive him and I won't forgive him. Ever! *(After a beat)* Look Ma, you forgave him, despite all of the shit he made of your life...you forgave him.

GLORIA AT 68

Yes, I did... And I've had many happy years with him since.

DANIEL AT 38

And that's great. You deserved some happy years. And as far as your forgiving him...that was your choice to make. But I won't forgive him. Ever.

GLORIA AT 68

But you should...

DANIEL AT 38

I can't.

GLORIA AT 68

Okay Danny. I just hope you don't regret not having made your peace with him.

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah, okay Mom, but that's just not going to happen. Let's talk about something else. Okay?

(THE LIGHTS SHIFT TO SHOW A CHANGE OF TIME. It's twenty years earlier. DANIEL AT 18 and GLORIA AT 48 enter as DANIEL at 38 and GLORIA AT 68 freeze)

DANIEL AT 18

(Excitedly)

Mom! Oh my God! Mom!

GLORIA AT 48

What Daniel? What is it!?! What's the matter?

DANIEL AT 18

(Waving an envelope)

Nothing's the matter! I got accepted. It just came! In the mail! I got accepted!!!

GLORIA AT 48

Oh my, that's wonderful! Where? Which one?

DANIEL AT 18

Just the best one. The one I have dreamed about...

GLORIA AT 48

Wait, don't tell me! Wait till your father gets here.

DANIEL AT 18

My what? Oh, you mean that bastard who lives in our house? That slimy creep you sleep with?

GLORIA AT 48

Daniel! Shush up!

(Calling off-stage)

Joe, come here a minute. Danny has something to tell us. Come, sit.

(JOSEPH AT 48 enters wearing work clothes)

JOSEPH AT 48

Sorry, I just wanted to get washed up. Okay, okay. So, what is it? What's the big news?

DANIEL AT 18

It's not a big deal. Ma's making a big deal out of it...

GLORIA AT 48

Nonsense. It is a huge deal and you know it. You've been racing to the mailbox every day for weeks... waiting to hear.

JOSEPH AT 48

You've heard from a school?

DANIEL AT 18

Yes. I've been accepted. And with a full scholarship.

JOSEPH AT 48

Fantastic! But which one?

DANIEL AT 18

The Art Institute of Boston.

JOSEPH AT 48

That's great! That was your first choice.

GLORIA AT 48

But Boston. It's so far away.

JOSEPH AT 48

It's one of the finest institutions in the country for photography. One of the finest in the world!

DANIEL AT 18

So they say.

GLORIA AT 48

I hate to see you go so far but I have to say, I am busting with pride right now Danny.

DANIEL AT 18

Thanks Mom.

JOSEPH AT 48

Yes, me too. I am so proud of you Danny.

DANIEL AT 18

(Spitefully to JOSEPH)

Why are you proud?

JOSEPH AT 48

What? Well, of course I am proud of you Son...

DANIEL AT 18

But why!?! You didn't have a fucking thing to do with it!

GLORIA AT 48

Daniel!

DANIEL AT 18

You were nowhere to be found during most of my upbringing... during my "Wonder Years"! And don't you dare call me your son!

GLORIA AT 48

Daniel! Hold your tongue boy!

DANIEL AT 18

You gave up that right when you walked out of here eleven years ago and you fucking well know it!

(DANIEL storms off)

GLORIA AT 48

(Shouting to DANIEL who is now off stage)

Daniel! Daniel, you get back here this minute and apologize to your father. Daniel!

JOSEPH AT 48

It's okay, let him go. I deserve whatever he's got to dish out.

GLORIA AT 48

I'm sorry Joe. I'm sure he'll come around eventually.

JOSEPH AT 48

Yes, well maybe he will. We'll see.

(The lights shift as GLORIA and JOSEPH AT 48 and DANIEL AT 18 exit. DANIEL AT 38 and GLORIA AT 68 resume from where they left off)

GLORIA AT 68

Okay, let's talk about something else.

DANIEL AT 38

You know the thing that still amazes me about him...

GLORIA AT 68

I thought you wanted to talk about something else.

DANIEL AT 38

I do, but I just have to say... what really still amazes me is... that even after all this time...what's it been like over twenty years...he has never once has made an attempt to explain his actions.

GLORIA AT 68

I'm sure he's wanted to.

DANIEL AT 38

If he wanted to...he would have. He always done what he wants to do.

GLORIA AT 68

No. I'm sure it was just too painful for him.

(A moaning is heard from the bedroom)

DANIEL AT 38

There he goes. What a way for a person to die.

GLORIA AT 68

I hope I go in my sleep.

DANIEL AT 38

Mom, please...

GLORIA AT 68

No, really, I hope I just doze off and never wake up.

DANIEL AT 38

Ma!

GLORIA AT 68

I don't mean tonight or tomorrow...I mean when it's my time. I hope when it's my time I just sleep my way into it.

(Another groan is heard from the bedroom)

I better go check on him.

DANIEL AT 38

No Mom, you sit. I'll go.

(DANIEL exits. GLORIA sips her tea deep in thought. There is another moan heard and she begins to cry)

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT TWO/Scene 3)

DRIFTWOOD

ACT TWO

Scene 4

SETTING: UPSTAGE, through the scrim we see the interior of the Woods' home as it was in ACT TWO/Scene 1...kitchen straightened up, etc.

DOWN-STAGE CENTER the stage is set as it was in Act one/Scene 1...the hospital bed surrounded by the photography equipment. Near the bed is an I.V. pole with an I.V. reservoir bag and a patient monitoring machine.

PRE-RISE: *A camera shutter is heard. A camera's flashbulb flashes. Photos of only JOSEPH from various stages of his life (boyhood, teen, young army man, middle-aged, old) flash across the scrim. A projection reading, "DAY 23: JANUARY 28, 1994", appears and then fades.*

AT RISE: *The scrim rises as JOSEPH AT 68 sits raised up in bed and proudly watches DANIEL AT 38 setting up more camera equipment. JOSEPH AT 68 seems to have a bit more energy than in ACT ONE/Scene 4. (It could be a result of the drugs being sorted out...no more dog pills.)*

TIME: January 28, 1994 Mid-Morning

(At the top of the scene and then throughout the scene, DANIEL AT 38 adjusts the tripods, lighting, shadows, etc. HE is irritated with the set-up as he looks into his camera. HE then makes more adjustments. Each time looking into his camera after each change. HE steps out of the scene and moves downstage to talk to the audience at center)

DANIEL AT 38

So...what was supposed to be a weekend, has turned into nearly a month. And what was supposed to be "taking a few pics of dear old dad", has become a defining quest... a pressing pursuit...my most important mission. I am obsessed with getting it exactly right. I can't explain it. It is as if nothing else matters at this point. And for some reason, despite the fact that I have taken thousands of photographs of world leaders, fashion models and sports heroes in the past...I am finding this particular assignment to be extremely difficult. I cannot seem to get it just right.

(HE returns to the stage and adjust his camera again)

DANIEL AT 38

I'm sorry this is taking so long.

JOSEPH AT 68

Don't worry about it.

DANIEL AT 38

It's a slow process...

JOSEPH AT 68

There's no rush Son. I ain't going nowhere.

DANIEL AT 38

It's just that the lighting has got to be exact or we are not going to be happy with the results.

(HE moves a tripod)

I just feel bad that you have to...

JOSEPH AT 68

It's okay. I know... it is not just snapping the shutter.

DANIEL AT 38

Ha! Yes, I know you do!

JOSEPH AT 68

What's that supposed to mean?

DANIEL AT 38

I just mean that it was actually you who taught me that.

JOSEPH AT 68

What!?!

DANIEL AT 38

I remember as a kid...you used to teach me...

JOSEPH AT 68

Ha! I used to teach you about photography!?!

DANIEL AT 38

No, really. I think I remember every word you said about photography. I used to hang on every word.

JOSEPH AT 68

Wow! I'm flattered. But I think you are imagining things. For me it was just a hobby. How could I teach you...?

DANIEL AT 38

But you did! You told me, "There's a certain precision needed...a certain skill... a certain kind of artistry behind photography...at least photography when it is good."

JOSEPH AT 68

I said that?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, and I'll never forget it.

(HE unpacks more equipment from a shipping box)

Shit! The office sent the wrong tripod clamps. Where the hell are the flexible goosenecks?

JOSEPH AT 68

A question that has been plaguing mankind for centuries!

DANIEL AT 38

I'm going to have to try to make what they sent work.

(HE looks into a box holding more equipment)

And they sent a Photek diffusion cover for the thirty-six-inch soft-lighter when I distinctly asked for the sixty.

JOSEPH AT 68

Ugh! I hate when that happens.

DANIEL AT 38

No...but really...I hate wasting your time...

JOSEPH AT 68

What else do I have to do?

DANIEL AT 38

Even so...

JOSEPH AT 68

Besides, I'm really enjoying watching you set it all up. It's like watching a master at work. I really had no idea it was this complicated.

DANIEL AT 38

That could just be my own incompetence.

JOSEPH AT 68

No, no. It's really very impressive.

DANIEL AT 38

Ha! I'm glad you think so.

JOSEPH AT 68

And I'm glad you agreed to do this...

DANIEL AT 38

Do what?

JOSEPH AT 68

I'm glad you agreed to take this commission.

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah, well...

JOSEPH AT 68

I really do appreciate it.

DANIEL AT 38

I must admit...doing a series of portraits of you was the last thing I would have thought I'd be doing...

JOSEPH AT 68

But that's not what this is.

DANIEL AT 38

What do ya mean?

JOSEPH AT 68

I don't want a series of portraits of me.

DANIEL AT 38

Wait! I thought that was exactly what you wanted.

JOSEPH AT 68

No, no. A series of portraits of an old man posing is not going to win you that Pulitzer.

DANIEL AT 38

Okay, so what then? I'm a photographer. That's what I do.

JOSEPH AT 68

What I mean is...when someone is being shot for a portrait, they pose for it. They posture. They perform. They can't help it...it's human nature. They want to look their best. So, they suck in their cheeks to look thinner than they are and they put on a fake smile to look happier than they are.

DANIEL AT 38

So, what then?

JOSEPH AT 68

We need to keep in mind the purpose of these particular photos. You are going to demystify death. It's not me your shooting...

DANIEL AT 38

I know. I'm to shoot those faces looking back at you in the mirror each morning...

JOSEPH AT 68

That's right! I know you don't understand it yet, but you will. You'll see them too...eventually... and your camera will capture them.

DANIEL AT 38

Actually, I have begun to see them.

JOSEPH AT 68

You have!?!

DANIEL AT 38

Not every day. Not always... but often. And I do understand what you were saying. The faces do change. So far, however, I don't think I've been able to capture them on film. It's like they vanish just as I'm about to take the shot.

JOSEPH AT 68

Yes, I understand. You can't plan for them. For me too...the faces that I see in the mirror... they catch me off guard. They still startle me, each and every time.

DANIEL AT 38

So, what do we do?

JOSEPH AT 68

Well, it seems clear...if I continue to just pose for a series of portraits, that's what we will end up with. The faces will not appear, and we will not create what we set out to create. We will have wasted your time.

DANIEL AT 38

Okay, what then?

JOSEPH AT 68

You just need to catch the changing faces off-guard.

DANIEL AT 38

But how am I going to do that...when you are sitting right in front of the camera?

JOSEPH AT 68

You'll sit with me. We'll talk...and you'll take pictures without telling me.

DANIEL AT 38

But you are here...in the room...you'll see me.

JOSEPH AT 68

Yes, and so as we talk...you will continue to snap the camera...but I won't know if you are taking photos or just making the camera's light go off...and soon I won't care. Once I'm totally relaxed...unaware... you'll see the faces.

DANIEL AT 38

And in the meantime, we talk...

JOSEPH AT 68

Yes, of course...

DANIEL AT 38

Okay...but what do we talk about? Let's face it Pops, we've never really talked.

JOSEPH AT 68

Yes, that's true but...

DANIEL AT 38

I wouldn't know where to even begin.

JOSEPH AT 68

No, I know. You're right. We haven't ever really talked. Not since you were a little kid.

DANIEL AT 38

Let's not candy coat this thing. There are reasons for that. There are reasons I am never going to be able to just brush aside. I can't just erase the past...

JOSEPH AT 68

I know that. You've made that very clear over the years. And I cannot expect you to.

DANIEL AT 38

That's right, you can't.

JOSEPH AT 68

But even so... there's so much I don't know...but want to know about you. And I suppose you must have some things you are curious about.

DANIEL AT 38

Oh yeah. I've got a slew of unanswered questions lodge way back in my brain.

JOSEPH AT 68

Well, maybe we could talk about some of that while there is still a chance. While there is still time.

DANIEL AT 38

I don't know. I mean, really...what's the point in digging through all of that...

JOSEPH AT 68

Well, maybe if we give it a chance...we can find out if it is worthwhile.

DANIEL AT 38

Yeah...I don't know...

JOSEPH AT 68

Okay, but let's try. And if we try...and if nothing comes of it...well, no real harm done I suppose.

DANIEL AT 38

Okay. We'll see.

JOSEPH AT 68

Where should we start.

DANIEL AT 38

How about at the beginning? How bout with your parents.

JOSEPH AT 68

My parents?

DANIEL AT 38

Yes, how is it that I am thirty-eight years old, and I have no idea who my paternal grandparents are...or were?

JOSEPH AT 68

I'm afraid that is going to lead us into an empty alley. Who my parents were is a question that we plagues us both.

DANIEL AT 38

You don't know...?

JOSEPH AT 68

I only know I was taken from my mother as a baby.

DANIEL AT 38

Why?

JOSEPH AT 68

I'm not sure.

DANIEL AT 38

Was she ill?

JOSEPH AT 68

I don't know.

DANIEL AT 38

What about your father?

JOSEPH AT 68

I don't know. I've never known.

DANIEL AT 38

I can't even imagine that.

JOSEPH AT 68

Eventually you have to just accept it.

DANIEL AT 38

So, what do you think?

JOSEPH AT 68

As a kid I would try to convince myself that she had left me for what was to be a moment. She left because she just had to take care of something. She had planned to come back for me. As a kid I was sure she'd be back soon...and soon became someday. And someday never came. I never knew why...

DANIEL AT 38

But what about neighbors? Or other family? Aunts, uncles.

JOSEPH AT 68

I had none. So, from when I was an infant to when I was a teen, I was bounced from orphanage to foster home to orphanage until I was old enough to join the army. Well, in truth, I lied about my age. I wasn't old enough to join the Army...but I joined.

DANIEL AT 38

But why so many different foster homes?

JOSEPH AT 68

It's just the way it was.

DANIEL AT 38

But why? Were you a bad kid?

JOSEPH AT 68

I don't think so. I was an okay kid. But it was the depression. Families took in kids to get money from the government...so they could feed their own kids.

JOSEPH AT 68 (Continued)

They never really meant to raise us...they took us in, just to get the money.

DANIEL AT 38

What a terrible time...

JOSEPH AT 68

The worst of it... what made it all that much harder for me... was that I never gave up hope that my mother would come back and take care of me.

DANIEL AT 38

I understand.

JOSEPH AT 68

I would stare out the window for hours at a time, hoping to see her coming down the street...coming to take me back. But, as the years went on, I lost hope. Today, I really have no idea.

DANIEL AT 38

I'm so sorry.

JOSEPH AT 68

It's hard on a kid. A kid can't help but wonder... what if I'd been different...what if I'd done something differently... if I'd been a better son? What if...? What if? Would...?

(JOSEPH AT 68 is now asleep. HE snores softly)

DANIEL AT 38

Would he have stayed?

(DANIEL AT 38 snaps a few more photos of JOSEPH AT 68 as the lights dim at CENTER-STAGE. As DANIEL AT 38 continues to take pictures and adjust his photography equipment on the dimmed stage, the lights rise UPSTAGE-RIGHT, and we again see MARIE'S dimly lit, gritty, one-room apartment from Scene 2. Bessie Smith's "AIN'T NOBODY'S BUSINESS" is again heard coming from what sounds like a well-worn 78 rpm record being played on the old Victrola as an excerpt from Scene 2 is repeated)

MARIE

Let's stop talking and get down to business.

JIMBO

Okay, but I need another drink. You got a bottle of...

MARIE

I got something better than a bottle...

(Suddenly there is a loud pounding at the door)

POLICEMAN 1

Marie Coleman? Youngtown police! Open up!

JIMBO

Who the hell is that!?!?

(More pounding on the door is heard)

JIMBO

What the hell is going on?

POLICEMAN 1

Marie Coleman!

MARIE

(Now screaming at the police)

Go away! You got no right to be here!

(Baby cries are heard from the box on the floor)

JIMBO

What the...!?!?

MARIE

Shhhh!

(Again, THE BABY cries)

JIMBO

Was that a baby?!?! Is that a Goddamned baby crying?!?

(More banging at the door as the baby's cries and the music gets louder)

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT TWO/Scene 4)

DRIFTWOOD
ACT TWO
Scene 5

SETTING: The stage is bare except for a speaker's podium at CENTER.

PRE-RISE: *A camera shutter is heard. A camera's flashbulb flashes. Photos of the Wood's family, flash across the scrim covering all the decades of the play. A projection reading, "May 17, 1996-Columbia University's Low Library.*

AT RISE: *A spotlight shines on the podium.*

TIME: May 17, 1996, 9 AM

(DANIEL at 38 enters from STAGE RIGHT and moves towards the podium. Before reaching the podium, he instead come to the stage apron to talk to the audience AT CENTER)

DANIEL AT 38

Dad died on Valentine's Day in 1994. Wow! It's been almost two years already. During those final two weeks, we did continue our daily meetings...our photo sessions...and we did continue our talk. I could feel that he was getting weaker...closer...but as he did he seemed more content than I had ever known him.

(HE moves to address audience AT RIGHT)

And in those two final weeks we did resolve a lot of what my mother referred to as "my issues". Miraculously, after nearly three decades of wondering... unsettled questions that that had troubled me for as long as I can remember...were suddenly answered. It all became very clear to me. Why did he leave us? Why didn't he love us? Why didn't he care? He couldn't. He never learned how. I now understood that after his own childhood of neglect...a childhood of wondering why his mother cared so little about him that she abandoned him...a childhood of bouncing from one institution to another... he couldn't possibly have known what to do.

(HE moves to address audience AT LEFT)

DANIEL AT 38 (Continued)

He comes back from the war, still a child himself and suddenly finds himself with a house, and a wife, and a kid and a job...

Well, this is what I have convinced myself of at least. He did what he did because he didn't know how to do it any better and he was scared. I don't know if it is exactly right...but it is enough...and now after decades of declaring it an impossibility...I forgive him.

(HE moves BACK to address audience AT CENTER)

Mom went within the year. It was attributed to dementia, but I really believe it was truly due to a broken heart. Another question answered. How did she ever forgive him for what he did to us? To her? She couldn't help herself. He was the only man she ever loved. Well, she loved me too of course...but I was always still her boy, Danny.

A little over two years have passed since Dad left us, but somehow, I can feel his presence here today. I have no doubt they are both looking down on this ceremony with pride. And they both have every right to it.

(The photo portraits of Joseph flash across the screen behind the podium.)

PULITZER PRESENTER

Daniel Wood's striking portrait series of his father transcends its deeply personal source material and brings all of us closer to both the father and the son. Photographic portraiture is an extremely challenging medium. It is particularly difficult when the photographer and the subject know each other well. Daniel's portraits of his father are a deeply moving record of their relationship and an incredible example of break through photographic art. We congratulate him on his Pulitzer Prize.

(BLACKOUT)

(End of ACT TWO/Scene 5)

(END OF PLAY)