

COMPLEX

FADE IN:

INT. BARE ROOM - DAY

A TV flicks from channel to channel. Endless variations on a theme of trashy chat show.

Idents in the bottom corner of the screen reveal the subject matter of each show - "My partner doesn't know I'm HIV", "Mom, why am I black?", "My dog is gay" etc.

Long-lost siblings hug each other. Tearful women confess to infidelity. Rival lovers throw punches.

The audience whoops and hollers and laps it up.

Sitting on a couch in front of the TV is ED KANE. He's 22 and has the blonde hair and defined bones of a once-handsome man. Now he's unshaven and unkempt, lounging in shorts and a dressing gown. The room around him is a pit.

Bars cover the windows.

He stares at the screen with a blank expression. Looking closer, we realize it could only be a blank expression.

Because his eyes aren't there.

In their place are two semi-healed-over holes, seeping blood.

When it finally begins, the voice-over is the weary sermon of a man who has seen too much.

ED V.O.

"I could a tale unfold...

We MOVE IN closer as the flickering of the TV screen reflects across his face.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)

...whose lightest word / Would harrow up
thy soul, freeze thy young blood...

Ed brings his hands up to his face.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)

...Make thy two eyes, like stars, start
from their spheres, / Thy knotted and
combined locks to part / And each
particular hair to stand on end..."

A single tear escapes from behind the mess that used to be his eyes, and rolls down his cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - EVENING

It's Christmas Eve, and the hospital reception is festively decked out with holly, tinsel and a garishly lit tree in the corner of the waiting area.

The clothing, hairstyles and demeanor of the patients and nurses in the waiting area signal that we're stuck somewhere in New York in the early 90s.

ANGLE ON:

JOANNA REGAN, young even for a 19 year-old. She's heavily pregnant and walks with difficulty towards the reception area, carrying an overnight bag.

She looks lost and a little scared. A kindly faced black RECEPTIONIST looks up.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you ma'am?

JOANNA

Yes, I'm er...here for a birth.

A male nurse suddenly lets off a party popper behind the receptionist. She jumps at the BANG, and turns around to SMACK the culprit whilst giving directions to Joanna.

RECEPTIONIST

You carry on down to the end, honey. A nurse will show you where to go.

Joanna walks off unsteadily down the corridor. The receptionist scolds the popper-offender.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

What you doing frightening me and the young lady like that for? We don't want her having her baby in my nice clean reception, do we?

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD - EVENING

Joanna sits on her bed and slowly unpacks her few belongings into a small bed-side unit. Wash bag, a single good-luck card, a raggedy old teddy bear.

In the bed next to her lies a dark-haired woman, her already-greying husband holding her hand. Both look anxious.

Joanna smiles at them. The husband smiles back at her.

HUSBAND

I'd hold your hand as well if I could,
but I'm booked up over here I'm afraid.

Joanna LAUGHS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA

That's alright. I've brought moral support.

She holds up the teddy bear and waves it at the couple, who LAUGH obligingly.

Perched on the edge of her bed, Joanna puts her hands over her large stomach and feels the life inside her. The other woman looks over at her.

WIFE

What are your dilations coming in at?

JOANNA

Twenty minutes.

(beat)

You?

WIFE

Same. Getting close.

JOANNA

Yeah, race you.

Another beat as they all think of something to say.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

(finally)

Joanna. Joanna Regan.

HUSBAND

Oh, excuse me. I'm Lionel Kane. This brave lady is my wife. Another Joanna.

Just then, both Joannas GASP as they are hit by another dilation at exactly the same time. They hold their breath until the moment passes, then turn to look at each other and LAUGH.

As Joanna Kane lets out her breath she WHEEZES a little and COUGHS. She takes out an asthma inhaler and has a few puffs, soon getting over it.

Our Joanna pivots herself around into a lying position and waits for something to happen.

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - EVENING

Our Joanna is lying on her back. The delivery team hover around her, making sure that everything is running smoothly. Joanna SCREAMS in pain.

The handsome young DOCTOR ROBERTS encourages Joanna.

DOCTOR ROBERTS

That's fantastic Joanna. Keep screaming like that and the little one...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)
 (noticing something)
 ...little guy will be out before ... you
 ... know ... it!

With a final movement, her baby boy is BORN to the world. A completely drained Joanna takes gulping deep breaths as she lies on the table.

The baby is brought to its mother, wrapped in fresh blankets.

Joanna bursts into tears of joy when she sees the adoring face and huge blue eyes staring back at her. She holds him close and tight to her chest.

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD - NIGHT

Our Joanna is wheeled down the aisle in a wheelchair, cradling her newborn babe in her arms. She arrives at her bed and is soon tucked comfortably under the covers.

NURSE
 I'll be back in about twenty minutes to
 put the little boy to bed. You might
 like to try feeding him, he looks a
 little hungry to me.

The nurse walks off.

Joanna starts to breast feed her baby. She looks over to the bed next to hers. Joanna Kane is doing exactly the same, as her adoring husband looks on.

All three BEAM at each other. Joanna Kane waves her baby's hand at our Joanna.

JOANNA KANE
 Edward Arthur Lionel Kane, say hello to
 Joanna and...?

JOANNA
 Julius. Beautiful Julius. After his
 dad.

JOANNA KANE
 And where is the proud father?

JOANNA
 With his wife.

The Kings look at each other and let this pass.

JOANNA KANE
 It was worth it, though, wasn't it?

JOANNA
 Oh yes.

Lionel Kane takes his wife's hand and whispers in her ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIONEL

Look at his big brown eyes.

(beat)

I'm so proud of you. I love you so much.
This is only the beginning.

The Kings kiss and enjoy a moment of marital bliss.

Joanna stares down at young Julius, who stares back at her.
The unity of mother and child has never seemed more complete.

Joanna snaps out of her trance and notices Lionel standing by
her bed.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Would you mind taking our photograph?

JOANNA

Not at all.

Lionel hands Joanna an early prototype Polaroid camera and
the Kings POSE for a minute with their baby as Joanna takes
the shot. The camera SPITS OUT the photograph.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Do you think you could possibly return
the favor?

LIONEL

Of course.

Joanna poses with her boy. The image is frozen as the photo
gets taken - a smiling Joanna and her child, alone in the
world but with each other to live for.

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD - LATER

Joanna holds her child to her breast. She's sitting up in
bed, stroking his blonde hair across his brow.

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD - LATER

Two young night nurses come down the aisle in deep
conversation. One of them bursts into giggles. They arrive
at the beds to pick up the babies.

Joanna gives her son a long loving stare before she lets the
night nurse take him away from her.

The baby immediately starts screaming noisily as the two
night nurses walk off down the hallway. Joanna Kane smiles
at our Joanna.

JOANNA KANE

He misses you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The noise of the night nurses' giggling becomes fainter. Lionel Kane whispers something into his wife's ear, kisses her on the forehead and follows the nurses out.

Our Joanna closes her eyes with a blissful smile on her face.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - NIGHT

The two night nurses, SUE and ROXANNE, spill out of the maternity ward into the reception area, where a noisy Christmas party is in full swing. Lionel Kane walks through reception and out into the night.

An orderly wearing a Santa Claus beard comes up to the two nurses with a couple of plastic beakers full of mulled wine. One nurse turns to the other.

SUE

Roxie, I'll look after your drink if you put these two to bed?

ROXANNE

(good-naturedly annoyed)
Jesus Sue, why do I always have to...

Sue presses her child into Roxanne's arms.

SUE

Relax Roxie, it's Christmas! Hurry up and get back here as quick as you can.

She turns her back on Roxanne and begins to flirt cheekily with the orderly.

SUE (CONT'D)

Wanna see me dress up in my nurse's outfit?

Roxanne gathers the new child into her arms and scampers off down the corridor with her two bundles.

INT. INFANT DORM - NIGHT

Roxanne HURRIES into the room and goes over to the two cots. Each has a name on a board at the end of it. She's just about to put one baby into one cot when a moment of doubt crosses her mind.

She starts to put the baby in the other cot instead, but again stops herself. She frowns.

The nurse tries to find the boys' wrist tags. To her dismay, they are both wearing just festive Christmas ribbons, each saying "Joanna's little helper".

ROXANNE

Oh shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She glances anxiously over her shoulder towards the door, behind which the sound of a raucous party is heard.

She stares at the two screaming bundles. Then at the two cots. Then again at the two bundles.

She quickly deposits one baby in each cot and then hurries out of the door, switching off the light as she leaves.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. INFANT DORM - NIGHT

All is quiet in the hospital.

We move slowly in on the two cots, side by side. One baby sleeps soundly. The other stirs, then begins to COUGH and SPLUTTER, first softly and then with increasing fervor until the noise becomes a high-pitched, unnatural SCREAM.

The lights to the infant dorm are flicked on by a bleary-eyed Roxanne, a piece of streamer in her hair. She rubs her eyes for a minute and takes in the situation.

Seeing the state of the screaming child, she rushes over and quickly studies its condition.

ROXANNE

Oh no. This is not happening.

She picks up the child and speeds out of the door. We hold for a minute on the other child, sleeping soundly.

INT. TRAUMA - NIGHT

Roxanne rushes into the ER reception area, a mess in the aftermath of the party. A doctor and a nurse make out in a dark corner. Other revellers lie asleep on the couches.

ROXANNE

(at the top of her voice)

Okay everyone. I've got a newborn's just gone hypo, he's starting to defibrillate.

Groans of complaint from the waking medics.

ROXANNE (CONT'D)

I need saline and I need CPR and I need it quick.

The Emergency Room soon mobilizes into action.

Roxanne and a hastily-assembled team move quickly and noisily into surgery.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY WARD - MORNING

Joanna slowly wakes from a deep, blissful sleep. The morning sun shafts across her bed as she stretches the sleep out of her bones.

Somewhere in the ward a radio plays "Jingle Bells".

Roxanne hovers nearby, looking absolutely terrible. She spots that Joanna is waking and walks quickly away down the aisle.

Joanna glances over at the bed where Joanna Kane lay. She's no longer there. New sheets are tightly tucked into the mattress.

Roxanne returns, walking behind a severe-looking Doctor Roberts. They reach Joanna's bed.

JOANNA
Merry Christmas, Doc.

DOCTOR ROBERTS
Er, yes indeed Miss Regan.

Beat. Joanna looks at Roberts curiously.

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)
Miss Regan, I'm afraid I have some terrible news.

Joanna instinctively knows what he's about to say and all the life drains out of her body. She looks like she's just been punched in the stomach.

JOANNA
No. No, don't say that.

DOCTOR ROBERTS
During the night, your child developed severe asthmatic complications...

JOANNA
(breaking up)
No...

DOCTOR ROBERTS
We steadied his breathing on a respirator for some time. But every time we took him off the machine he would stop breathing and would enter into progressively deeper and deeper comas.

Joanna is still shaking her head, still trying to deny what she's hearing. Roberts pauses for a while before speaking again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)

At five thirty this morning we had no choice but to turn off the life support. We chose not to wake you.

(beat)

I'm so sorry.

Roberts rest his hands on Joanna's. Words fail him and would be useless anyway.

The doctor walks slowly away with Roxanne. As he walks down the aisle, he speaks in a low voice to Roxanne.

DOCTOR ROBERTS (CONT'D)

Get a nurse to sit with her until someone comes to pick her up. And for Christ's sake try and find out why there was no history of asthma recorded on that kid's file. Information like that would have come in rather useful last night.

(beat)

Keep this quiet. I'm not getting sued for fucking negligence on Christmas Day.

He strides off down the corridor. Behind him, still bathed in glorious sunlight, lies Joanna, crumpled and sobbing uncontrollably.

Her WAILS echo painfully in our ears as we leave the maternity ward with Roxanne.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Lionel and Joanna Kane drive through the traffic-less streets of Westchester, singing along to the carols that play over the radio.

The baby in Joanna's arms is CRYING loudly. Joanna is beginning to panic.

JOANNA KANE

I think something's the matter. I think we should take him back to the hospital.

LIONEL

Nothing's the matter, alright? He's just never been in a car before.

They drive on in silence for a short while.

JOANNA KANE

Are you sure?

Lionel is trying to keep his patience.

LIONEL

Remember what you were like when I tried to take you sailing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA KANE

That was different.

LIONEL

You bawled more than he did. He's just taking after his mom.

Beat.

JOANNA KANE

Got your hair, though. Hope he's not grey by the time we get him home.

Joanna giggles cheekily and continues to study the baby for a while.

JOANNA KANE (CONT'D)

He looks so different in the daylight. After he's been washed off and had a good night's sleep. His eyes look so much brighter.

LIONEL

Are you sure we've got the right baby? Quick, I'll go back to the hospital and trade him in for a new one.

Joanna slaps her husband's arm.

JOANNA KANE

Stop that. I like this one just fine. Now come on, I want to get home, get little Edward tucked up in his new bed.

With both parents happy, notwithstanding the ruckus coming from the heap of blankets in Joanna's arms, they drive on.

INT. DOCTOR ROBERTS' OFFICE - DAY

Roxanne nervously hands two medical files over to Doctor Roberts, who's seated behind a desk. He looks them over.

One reads "Julius Regan" at the top. He scans down it. Under "Parents' Medical History" there is a blank column.

His face darkening, he scans the entries on the other file, marked "Edward Arthur Lionel Kane".

And there he sees it.

"Mother and maternal grandmother prescribed Ventilin VS6 inhaler for asthma treatment..."

Roberts looks up from the file and stares at the scared figure of Roxanne.

DOCTOR ROBERTS

Bury it.

INT. CAR - DAY

CLOSE-UP on the baby, finally sleeping sound in Joanna's arms.

EXT. KANE HOUSEHOLD - DAY

The car pulls up the driveway to an idyllic domestic scene. The front lawn is evenly blanketed with fresh snow, which covers the overhanging willows that surround the garden.

The front door is proudly adorned with a large wreath and the welcoming glow of a Christmas tree shines out from behind the curtains of the front room. It's not much, but it's home.

Lionel and Joanna gently carry their precious cargo from the car and in through the front door. We pull back, as if to leave them to enjoy their happy time in peace.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. KANE HOUSEHOLD - DAY

The snow is gone. The years have passed. And they haven't been kind.

The house looks older, almost dilapidated. The lawn is cut too short and is scorched. The flower beds are overgrown.

As though someone cared about it once but soon got bored and gave up.

Suddenly a seventeen year-old kid on a noisy motorbike SHOOTs out of the front door, JUMPS the three steps down to the drive, SCREECHES across the front lawn and JUMPS AGAIN down onto the sidewalk.

He MOTORS away down the road, a canvas knapsack bouncing around on his back. At the corner he meets up with a load of other kids on motorbikes. They POWER OFF as a group.

Joanna Kane appears at the front door. Time has passed for her as well. And hasn't taken much care of her, either.

She shouts after Edward.

JOANNA KANE

Edward! Edward there's oil all over my kitchen floor. Come back here and help me mop it up goddamnit!

The bikes disappear around the bend.

JOANNA KANE (CONT'D)

Come back here!

INT. KANE HOUSEHOLD - DAY

Joanna, looking sad and tired, walks slowly and stiffly back into the house. She studies the damage wrought to her kitchen floor. A gruff-looking Lionel walks into the room behind her.

They stand in silence for a moment. Joanna Kane weeps with frustration.

JOANNA KANE

What is it with that kid, Lionel? Did we do something wrong?

Lionel walks over to a cupboard and pulls out a liquor bottle.

LIONEL

Boy thinks he can rule the world.

He pours himself a shot, then sits at the kitchen table. Joanna gets out a mop and begins to fill a bucket with water.

JOANNA KANE

I know he's different. I keep trying to think that's not such a bad thing.

(beat)

Maybe you should let him go.

Lionel watches his wife mop. He drinks deeply from his glass and takes his time before replying.

LIONEL

You think I can find ten thousand dollars so that boy can spend four years leaping about a stage in a jump-suit trying to act? Even if I could, I wouldn't.

JOANNA KANE

So what do we do? Do we try to make him like us? Do we force him?

A pause. Joanna looks up at her husband.

JOANNA KANE (CONT'D)

He's the only one we've got left, Lionel. Let's not lose him as well.

Lionel continues to drink with a set look on his face.

EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

Ed and the group of six other kids drive up and stop in the middle of the overpass. They get off and lay their bikes up against the crash barriers.

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CONTINUED:

One kid, BOBBY, who's bigger than the rest of them and clearly the leader, peers over the side of the overpass and sees the headlights of the cars rushing towards and underneath him.

Ed stands on the edge of the group. Now that we get a decent look at him, we see he is a handsome young man, an eager soldier in stark contrast to the shell we saw at the start.

Bobby turns to face the group.

BOBBY

We ready?

They mutter their agreement with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Ed turns away in disgust.

ED

C'mon Bobby, man, this is a stupid idea.

BOBBY

Hey yo, if you don't wanna be here, man, you run on home to your papa. See if he'll let you in on a cut of his liquor.

ED

Fuck you, asshole.

Ed turns away, not wanting to be a part of this. He goes over to his bike and tinkers with the engine.

Bobby addresses the rest of the group.

BOBBY

So. Who's gonna go do it?

No-one.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Always me. Every time. Jesus you guys are such pussies.

Bobby pushes past them all and walks over to the entrance to the overpass, where he pulls a large rock out of the undergrowth. He goes back to the middle of the overpass and rests the rock on the ledge.

Everyone around watches excitedly.

KID

Go for a Jap car. I hate Jap cars.

ANOTHER KID

Nah man, make it a BMW. I love seein' 'em rich guys get it in the face.

Bobby picks out a vehicle approaching them at speed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY
Better still...

The convertible sports car gets nearer...

BOBBY (CONT'D)
The King Kong...

... and nearer...

BOBBY (CONT'D)
The hot rod, the pussy wagon...

Bobby rocks the rock backwards and forwards on the edge of the ledge, Ed watching with distaste but watching nonetheless.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, I give you...

Until, with surgical timing, he lets the rock topple forward, out of his hands.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
The Corvette 3 liter G8...

The rock SMASHES through the windscreen of the oncoming car...

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Turbocharge engine...

...sending the car SCREECHING across the road, hitting another car alongside it, before disappearing under the overpass.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Alloy wheels...

The kids run across to the other side, where they see the two cars reemerge and plough into the side railings.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
And twin air bags...

The cars come to a halt with a sickening SMASH.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
An essential safety feature in this day
of high-risk motoring.

The kids SCREAM with delight and high five each other. Bobby surveys his handiwork.

Suddenly, flashlights from the entrance to the overpass sear their faces. A voice shouts out from behind the lights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

VOICE

Police! Move to the side of the road.

BOBBY

Aw fuck!

The kids look around in terror. Headlights approach from the other end of the overpass trying to block off the exit.

VOICE

I said MOVE!

Ed is the first to react. He kicks his bike into action.

ED

(to the other kids)

This is your shit, you clean it up.

Ed SQUEALS his bike around and CHARGES towards the lights that are approaching the other side of the overpass.

Ed gets there first and FLIES over the road, down a dirt track on the other side. His headlights reach only a few feet in front of him so he's basically riding on instinct.

He eventually SHOOTS OUT onto a main road at the bottom of the dirt track. Another police car is already in pursuit and almost rams into Ed's bike.

Ed SKIDS around it and POWERS OFF down the road. The police car gives chase but soon gets caught up in traffic while Ed weaves in and out of the cars with skill, increasing his lead over them.

He is soon in the clear.

INT. KANE HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Ed, breathing hard and carrying his knapsack, lets himself in noiselessly and tiptoes across the hallway through the pitch black. Just as he reaches the foot of the stairs, he is HURLED against the wall by a figure coming out of the darkness.

ED

Jesus!

He STRUGGLES, but the assailant has him held tight. In the half-light we make out the angular silhouette of Lionel.

LIONEL

Think this is a fucking guest house?

ED

Fuck, Dad!

LIONEL

You and I gotta have a talk my boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED

This is not a good time.

LIONEL

Not a good time? Well excuse me! Won't you let me know when a good time does arise for me to give you the ass-whooping you've been asking for?

Ed finally pushes the old man off of him.

ED

Dad you're drunk. If you've got something to say, say it in the morning, okay?

Lionel grabs hold of Ed's arm.

LIONEL

You wait here you little turd. I got summin' to say alright.

A light comes on from upstairs.

JOANNA KANE (O.S.)

Lionel? What's going on down there?

LIONEL

Just sorting things out with our son, honey. You go on back to bed now.

(to Ed, with menace)

You listen to me and you listen good. Starting tomorrow things are gonna be done differently. You're gonna start treating me and treating your mother with some respect. You're gonna get these stupid ideas of acting school outta your head. You're gonna get a job and start paying your way around here.

Ed walks off up the stairs.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

(after him)

You're gonna grow up, boy!

Ed carries on walking.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

D'y hear me?

Ed goes into his room and slams the door shut behind him. Lionel runs up the stairs and starts pounding away at Ed's door, but it's locked from the inside.

Joanna comes out of their bedroom in her dressing gown.

INT. ED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ed wearily sits on his bed, trying to block out the commotion going on outside his door. His room is covered with movie posters, African art, a world map.

JOANNA KANE (O.S.)
Lionel, let it be.

LIONEL (O.S.)
You stay out of this. This is between me and him. He's gonna look me in the eye and tell me what I wanna hear.

Ed reaches out to his bedside table and picks up a book, which he starts to read.

JOANNA KANE (O.S.)
Lionel, please...

LIONEL (O.S.)
(shouting even louder)
Stay out I said! Stop taking his side for Chrissakes!

JOANNA KANE (O.S.)
(beginning to cry)
He's all I've got, Lionel. He's all I've got left. Please don't do this.

LIONEL (O.S.)
That boy's making no fucking use of his life now. May as well be dead like all the rest of 'em!

JOANNA KANE (O.S.)
(hysterically)
Don't say that! You can't say that!

LIONEL (O.S.)
Will you shut up goddamnit!

A loud SMACK of hand on cheek. In an instant Ed's out of his room...

INT. KANE HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

...PLOUGHING into Lionel, who was turning back to face the door having silenced Joanna.

Ed KNOCKS Lionel to the ground and holds him there by his shirt.

ED
Don't you ever touch her again. EVER!
Do you hear me, you piece of shit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is an intense beat between the two of them, neither one prepared to give ground.

LIONEL

Get out. Get out of this house. Now.

Ed gets up, stares at Joanna briefly and goes into his room. He grabs his knapsack and walks back out onto the hallway.

His eyes BORE into Lionel's face.

ED

You're right, dad. I don't respect you. I don't respect what you've done with your fucked up life, I don't respect what you've done to mom's life and I don't respect what you're trying to do to mine.

(beat)

My life, dad. I'm not your punch bag, you can't get mad at me every time you realize how bad you screwed your own life up. I'm your second chance. You just can't see it.

(beat)

So fuck you. Is that what you wanted to hear?

With a final look at Joanna he jogs down the stairs. Lionel shouts after him with an impotent rage.

LIONEL

Go on! Live your little dream. Join the fucking circus. Try it. I dare you!

(beat)

I'll see you back here when it all comes tumbling down!

JOANNA KANE

(weakly)

Don't go. Edward.

Ed walks out of the house. We hear him kick his bike into action O.S. and gun off down the street. The noise finally dies away. Joanna stares off into space.

Lionel slowly picks himself up off the ground and studies his broken spectacles. He goes to help Joanna up.

JOANNA KANE (CONT'D)

Don't touch me.

Lionel shrugs his shoulders and walks off into his bedroom.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Ed sits on the roundabout, staring without emotion at the lights of the town as he goes round and around. He pulls his jacket tighter around him.

EXT. PARK - DAWN

Ed has nodded off, but the roundabout stills moves him slowly around. He wakes with a start as a dog sniffs his jeans. He shudders with the cold and kicks the dog away.

The dog's owner, an attractive woman on her early morning jog, looks at the dishevelled Ed with some distaste as she runs by, before calling her dog after her.

Ed stretches the sleep out of his body and looks around, wondering what to do. He opens his wallet and pulls out of photograph of his parents and him as a young boy. Happier days.

Ed stares at the photo for a long while.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ed rides home. As he rounds the bend to his parents' house, he sees a squad car parked in front and a police officer speaking to Lionel and Joanna in their porch. His face falls.

ANGLE ON :

Joanna, whose eye is caught by Ed as he rides on slowly past the house. The policeman and Lionel are in deep conversation and don't notice him.

POLICEMAN

So if he does return, please be sure to let us know at once.

LIONEL

You can count on it officer. When you're done with him, I have some business to finish up with him myself.

Ed looks at his mother, then drives on. Joanna follows him with sad eyes.

EXT. STREETS - EVENING

Ed rides off, out of the city.

ED V.O.

Part of me wanted to stay. Part of me wanted to go. In the end, the decision was pretty much made for me.

INT. GAS STATION - EARLY MORNING.

Ed sits at a plastic table, cradling a cup of black coffee as a series of eighteen-wheelers thunder past.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED V.O.

I said to myself this was the kind of opportunity a guy on the cusp of manhood should take. And make the most of.

EXT. ATM MACHINE - DAY

Ed pounds his fists against the machine, clearly fresh out of luck. He turns away from the machine and looks at his motorbike.

EXT. GARAGE FORECOURT - DAY

A dealer gives Ed a bunch of cash in return for the bike.

ED V.O.

So I took the advice of Horace Greely, and went west.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Ed walks along by the side of the road, hitch-hiking. An eighteen-wheeler lumbers past him and pulls to a halt. Ed jogs up and gets in.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

Ed talks amiably with a gap-toothed HISPANIC TRUCK DRIVER.

TRUCK DRIVER

¿Cual es su nombre?

ED

I'm more a Knicks man actually.

Beat.

Neither of them can understand a word of what the other is saying. All the same, they seem to enjoy each other's company.

The driver drinks from a bottle of scotch, then offers it to Ed, who also drinks. They look at each other and LAUGH.

EXT. WORK SITE, SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA - DAY

The truck pulls into a vast industrial complex and pulls to a halt by the entrance. Ed gets down from the cab and bids the driver farewell. The truck kicks up a cloud of dust into Ed's face as it drives on into the worksite.

Ed stands there and looks around. He checks his watch and begins to walk.

EXT. DRAMA SCHOOL - DAY

Edward looks at two large stone reliefs of the masks of Comedy and Tragedy that adorn the entrance to this fine old building. He walks in.

INT. DRAMA SCHOOL - DAY

Ed stares at the snooty ADMISSIONS TUTOR in disbelief.

ED

How much?

He slowly turns on his heels and heads for the door.

EXT. WORK SITE, SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA - DAY

The work site is now a bustle of industry. Forklifts criss-cross as they stack pallets of tiles onto trucks.

Ed, his torso already showing signs of broadening, strains as he lugs stacks of tiles onto the pallets.

ED V.O.

I worked my way around the place, finally starting to live a little.

Ed stops to rest and speak with a fellow-worker.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Ed now works behind the bar at a crowded, young, rocking club. He rings in some change and then turns to face the customers.

ED

Who's next?

Ed scans the room and makes eye contact with a BEAUTIFUL GIRL at the end of the bar. He flashes her a smile and walks towards her.

ED V.O.

Live a lot, actually.

INT. BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT.

Ed and the beautiful girl are the only two left in the bar. They chase tequilas down the bar. Ed wins and immediately takes the tequila bottle and refills all the glasses.

ED V.O.

I took each new day pretty much as it came. Every morning was a blank page.

The girl laughs giddily.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

In a large, stylish bedroom with the windows flung open looking out over a sleeping city, Ed undresses the girl and leads her to bed.

ED V.O.
I'd spend the day doodling all over it.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Ed, his knapsack slung over his shoulder, squeezes the hand of the beautiful girl, who is weeping quietly.

ED V.O.
The next morning I'd rip it out and start a new one.

With a kiss on the cheek, Ed boards the bus and takes a seat as it begins to drive away.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Ed has the yellow pages in his hands as he speaks on the phone. A load of entries are circled in black. Most have crosses through them.

ED
No, I don't have any prior dramatic training. That's why I'm calling you.
(beat)
Hello? Hello?

He slams the phone back on the hook.

EXT. THEATRE - EVENING

Ed looks at a sign hanging outside a dingy-looking theatre, which reads "Auditions for Much Ado About My Thing, a powerful contemporary gay adaptation of Shakespeare's play. Next Tuesday, 6pm."

Ed thinks about this one for a while then walks off, looking despondent.

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY

Ed, older now, with hair down to his shoulder and a string of beads around his neck, is juggling in front of an appreciative crowd. People toss coins into a top hat that he's put at his feet.

He smiles at a LITTLE GIRL watching him, who grins back.

ED V.O.
Eventually, like all the trash, I ended up at the ocean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Still juggling, he looks over and smiles at a COOL BEACH CHICK who's painting the face of a YOUNG BOY into a tiger. She smiles back at Ed.

A BODYBUILDER comes up to her and tries to put his arm around her shoulder, but she shakes him off and tries to continue with the face-painting.

The bodybuilder keep on hassling the girl. The situation soon begins to get pretty ugly.

Ed stops his juggling and makes his way over to the beach chick and the bodybuilder.

He taps the guy on the shoulder. As he turns around, Ed puts the guy on the tarmac with one punch. But he's immediately SET UPON from the side by another bodybuilder and himself thrown to the ground.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)

I'd get myself into trouble now and then.
Usually had something to do with women.

Ed is outnumbered and ends up being given a good working-over. When they're finished, one of the bodybuilders walks over to where Ed was juggling and takes all the cash out of his top hat. The guy walks off, sticking his tongue out at the bewildered little girl.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Ed, cut lip, black eye and cradling his ribs, sits at the bar with a stiff drink. The girl from the beach sits beside him, but he pretty much ignores her.

ED V.O.

Actually, it always had something to do
with women. Story of my life.

Ed drains his drink and asks for another. The BARMAN leaves him the bottle.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Ed, alone now, grimly sees off his last drink. The barman switches off the last of the lights and helps Ed to the door.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Ed sways on the doorstep, wearily hoists his knapsack over his shoulders and walks off down the street again.

ED V.O.

And after a while, instead of just
floating along...

EXT. DESERTED ROAD, UTAH - DAY

Gradual fade up on a high view of a vast expanse of desert, interrupted only by two endless straight roads, that cross each other in the middle of nowhere.

ED V.O.
...I began to sink.

Ed hobbles down one of those roads, towards the intersection many miles ahead of him. He's older now, about 22, and looks more like a vagrant than the tanned surf-god of just a short while ago.

His eyes are almost closed in a permanent squint from the harsh sunlight. He carries his knapsack limply in his hand.

A sleek black SUV approaches Ed from behind. Ed turns around and sticks out his thumb. To his delight, the SUV slows down and pulls to a halt a few metres past him.

Ed jogs up to the passenger door but is confused to find it locked. He knocks on the tinted window.

The driver electrically lowers the window a few inches. A glimpse of a baseball cap and shades.

DRIVER
Son, is there a shiny little box on the roof here that says TAXI?

ED
What?

DRIVER
Didn't think so.

SUV screeches off.

Ed lets his knapsack fall from his fingers in disbelief.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD, UTAH - DUSK

Ed walks on. Slowly. But surely.

ED V.O.
And at the bottom of the ocean, I came to Utah.

The sun sets.

EXT. CROSSROADS, UTAH - DUSK

At the crossroads is a small gas station and diner. It's almost dark.

Ed stumbles into the car park, a wild look in his eyes from lack of food and sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's only one vehicle parked in the lot. A sleek black SUV, with tinted windows.

Ed stops briefly to gather his breath as he studies the parked car.

He walks slowly up to it and runs his hand along the hood. He cups his hands up against the windows and looks inside, where he can just make out a blinking red LED. Ed curses under his breath.

Ed moves over to the diner. Indistinct guitar music diffuses from within. He peers through a yellowing window and sees the BARMAN and one PATRON.

The patron wears baseball hat and shades. He puts a couple of pills in his mouth and washes them down with some water.

Ed pulls back from the window and into the shadows.

EXT. CROSSROADS, UTAH - LATER

The owner of the SUV walks out of the diner and up to his car. He looks oldish, about sixty, with a wave of grey hair sticking out from underneath his baseball cap.

Ed looks into through the diner window again, quickly, and sees the barman taking the driver's plates into the back to be washed up.

He waits for the driver to disable the alarm system and open the door before making his move.

ED

I think I'll take that lift now.

Ed turns the driver around and throws a PUNCH. But the old guy moves surprisingly quickly and DODGES the punch, returning with one of his own.

He PUSHES at Ed and scrambles into the driver's seat. Ed is caught off-guard and stumbles backwards.

ED (CONT'D)

Goddamnit.

The driver manages somehow to start the engine and begins to pull away. He pulls the door shut behind him as Ed recovers and makes chase.

Ed leaps onto the step of the vehicle and RATTLES the handle of the locked door.

In a rage, Ed wings his left arm, SMASH, right through the driver's side window and connects full-on with the man's jaw on the inside. The SUV skids and screeches across the lot as the man tries to keep control while Ed leans in through what's left of the window and continues to beat at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ed's fist is a mess of blood and shards of glass and flaps of skin, but he's feeling no pain at the moment.

The SUV skids to a halt and Ed HAULS the driver out and THROWS him to the ground.

ED (CONT'D)
Think you're funny? Huh? Huh? Think
THIS is funny?

Ed starts LAYING INTO the man's face with his barely covered feet. The man raises his hands to protect his face, at which point Ed drops to his knees and starts to POUND his ribs with his one good hand.

MAN
(groaning)
Jesus Christ no.

ED
What's that? Got something to say? Got
another joke for me?

The BLOWS keep on raining down on the old man, who suddenly looks very frail.

MAN
Please...

ED
Man leaves a beggar by the side of the
road, he's in no place to be making
requests later on.

The man soon lies prone at Ed's feet, unmoving. Ed circles him, his eyes ablaze and his breathing quick.

ED (CONT'D)
Had to make it tough, didn't you, you
stupid fucker?

He steps over the body and gets into the cab of the still running SUV. Without casting a second glance back at the man, Ed speeds away.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ed drives, groggy. He looks down at his mess of a hand.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

The barman stands at the doorway of the diner, looking out into the dark, perplexed. He suddenly catches sight of a pair of feet poking out from behind one of the gas pumps. He runs towards it.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ed keeps on driving. The road up ahead bends gradually around to the left. But Ed's eyes are closing fast and his head droops. When the road finally turns, the SUV doesn't.

It PLUNGES over the side and rolls down a steep rocky embankment. It is brought to an abrupt stop at the bottom with a sickening CRUNCH. Ed's head canons off the steering wheel, and all is still.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CAR - DAY

The sound of an eighteen-wheeler passing by far above him is enough to wake Ed. The harsh morning sunlight glares through the windscreen. In front of the car is a breathtaking desert wilderness, but Ed's not interested in the view.

He's wondering why he's lying in a smashed up car, someone else's car, in the middle of the desert. He looks around, bewildered.

Ed slowly brings his hands up to his head. He feels blood on his forehead, then notices the blood all over his hand.

In a moment of revelation, Ed realizes what he has done. Suddenly and violently he throws up all over himself and the dashboard of the SUV.

He clambers out of the car and groggily wipes his mouth with his one good hand.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Ed stumbles up the side of the embankment.

ED V.O.
I'm not a bad man.

Ed reaches the top of the slope. A truck approaches him from a good distance away through the haze. He sits down to wait for it to draw closer.

As he waits, Ed bandages up his tattered hand with a handkerchief and blots the blood off his forehead.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
But I'd done a bad thing.

Ed sticks out his thumb and watches as the old pick-up truck slows down to pick him up.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The pick-up truck, with Ed inside, motors down the highway.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

The driver, a good ol' boy in a baseball cap, looks over at Ed.

DRIVER
Y'in a accident?

Ed is silent.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The truck powers along the highway, heading East.

They pass the diner again, at speed. Ed sneaks a glimpse at the goings-on in the forecourt, where a police officer is interviewing the barman. A body lies motionless under a rough tarpaulin.

Ed sinks back into his seat and the car drives on.

INT. GAS STATION, KANSAS - NIGHT

Ed nurses a small cup of coffee and studies his gruesomely lacerated hand.

ED V.O.
So I ran away from Utah, ran away from
the man I'd become.

EXT. GAS STATION, KANSAS - NIGHT

Ed talks to a burly truck driver.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE, NEW YORK - DAY

A truck carrying Ed moves slowly across the bridge with all the other traffic.

EXT. BUS-STOP, THE BRONX - EVENING

Ed bids farewell to the driver. Ed sits in a plastic chair inside the plastic bus stop and lets his head drop.

EXT. BUS-STOP, THE BRONX - NIGHT

Ed is spread across three seats and sleeps, using his old knapsack as a pillow.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. DINER, UTAH - DAY

Detective JACKSON DEWITT, 50s, heavy set and already pissed with this case, squints at the sun and mops his forehead with a handkerchief. He takes a deep draw on a cigarette.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He slides on a pair of shades and looks down at the ground by the petrol pump where a small patch of sandy earth is stained red. He walks slowly over to the diner.

INT. DINER, UTAH - DAY

Dewitt walks into the smoky diner. Sunlight filters lazily through the windows. The barman washes up.

DEWITT

Pete.

BARMAN

Jackson.

Beat.

DEWITT

D'you get a look at him?

BARMAN

Nope.

Beat.

DEWITT

Shit.

Dewitt turns and walks out of the bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS-STOP, THE BRONX - MORNING

Ed is startled awake by the doors of a school bus noisily opening in his face. He looks up at the bus windows. Faces of school children look down on him with curiosity.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Ed walks along, looking around at the hustle and bustle of New York life. His matted hair, tattered clothing and still-seeping hand wound attract glances from passers-by.

A small 5-piece Salvation Army brass band is playing in a small park, and parents and children stand around to listen. A kind-faced, middle-aged female SALVATION ARMY OFFICER walks amongst them with a bucket, into which they drop coins. The officer reaches Ed and looks him over.

SALVATION ARMY OFFICER

Giving or receiving?

Ed smiles back.

EXT. HIGHWAY, UTAH - DAY

Dewitt stands by the side of the road looking over the side, down a steep embankment. At the bottom he can just make out the rear end of a black SUV.

He puts his shades on and begins to slide down the bank.

INT. SALVATION ARMY HOSTEL - DAY

The Salvation Army officer leads Ed into a bare reception area with a small office and a few garishly colored couches clustered around an old TV. They walk through this and down a long, sterile corridor.

SALVATION ARMY OFFICER

You get to stay here for free your first week. After that you pay, \$5 a night.

Ed nods in understanding.

SALVATION ARMY OFFICER (CONT'D)

No drugs or booze allowed inside that aren't already in your bloodstream.

EXT. ROADSIDE, UTAH - DAY

Dewitt examines the wreck of the SUV. He fingers the edges of the smashed glass in the driver's side window.

INT. DORMITORY - DAY

The officer and Ed walk into a small dormitory with two bunk beds.

SALVATION ARMY OFFICER

In by midnight. Out from eight to six.

Three of the four beds are occupied by indistinguishable bundles of clothes, blankets and body hair. Ed wrinkles his nose as the smell hits him.

SALVATION ARMY OFFICER (CONT'D)

These are your new best friends, Ed.
Make yourself at home.

With a last saintly smile, she turns on her heel and leaves the room.

Ed looks around at the room, and at the rise and fall of the three land masses as they continue to sleep soundly. He steps up onto the vacant top bunk, causing a momentary reaction from the guy in the bed below.

Ed lies back. Stares at the ceiling. Shuts his eyes for a moment. Then opens them again.

EXT. STREETS - EVENING

Ed walks, hands tucked into his jacket.

EXT. LYCEUM THEATRE - NIGHT

Ed stands in front of the worn facade of New York's oldest theatre. Former glories are all that this place can claim ownership to now.

A banner, hung between columns flanking the entry, reads "Open Auditions for Fall Hamlet. Prepare a piece. Life experience preferred."

Ed stares at the banner for a long while.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - DAY

Ed stands nervously alone in the middle of the huge stage.

The director, THORBURN KNIGHT, 50s, sits behind a desk set up in the stalls, a small lamp ghoulishly lighting up his face from beneath. He speaks with an English accent.

THORBURN

Name?

ED

Ed. Kane.

Beat.

THORBURN

Well, Ed. Off you go.

ED

Ok. It's Macbeth.

THORBURN

Very good.

(beat)

Speak the truth, Ed. I want reality.

ED

Right.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - DAY

Ed starts to speak. His voice is charged with emotion.

ED

"Methought I heard a voice cry...

INT. SALVATION ARMY HOSTEL DORMITORY - NIGHT

Ed, pale white, lies in his bed, staring at the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED V.O.
'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder
sleep'.

EXT. GAS STATION, KANSAS - DAY

Dewitt speaks to a TRUCKER. The trucker shakes his head but points over to ANOTHER TRUCKER who's walking back over to his rig.

ED V.O.
The innocent sleep, / Sleep that knits up
the ravell'd sleeve of care,

FLASHBACK

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

A blurred, distorted, darkened version of the events that took place at the diner.

Ed pulls the man from the moving car. He kicks the man as he lies on the floor, trying to shield himself.

ED V.O.
The death of each day's life, sore
labour's bath, / Balm of hurt minds,
great nature's second course,

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GAS STATION, KANSAS - DAY

Dewitt shows a rough sketch of a face that might be Ed's, might not be Ed's, to a trucker in his rig. The guy looks at the image for a minute, before nodding his head slowly. Dewitt asks him a question and the trucker points down the road.

ED V.O.
Chief nourisher in life's feast. / Still
it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the
house:

FLASHBACK

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Ed punches the face of the man on the ground, deliberately, repeatedly.

ED V.O.
'Glamis hath murder'd sleep,

END FLASHBACK

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Dewitt drives east, his face set in determination.

ED V.O.
And therefore Cawdor / Shall sleep no
more;

INT. SALVATION ARMY HOSTEL DORMITORY - NIGHT

Ed lies in his bed, rubbing his eyes with his hands as if trying to force them closed if they won't shut of their own accord. One of his hands is still in its bloodied bandage.

ED V.O.
Macbeth shall sleep no more.'"

END MONTAGE.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Ed is silent. Thorburn looks intently at the young man on stage in front of him.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BAR - DAY

Thorburn and Ed sit at a table, a coffee in front of each of them. Thorburn appear intrigued.

THORBURN
No schooling, no experience?

ED
School of life.

THORBURN
Right. That explains a lot about your performance. Very raw. Very... real. So rare these days.

Ed looks slightly embarrassed, not good at taking compliments.

THORBURN (CONT'D)
What about your personal life? Where's home?

ED
I'm currently residing in this fine old pair of fake Nike Airs.

Thorburn raises an eyebrow.

ED (CONT'D)
I ran away from home a few years ago. Parental issues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THORBURN

Oh, this just keeps getting better.

EXT. LYCEUM THEATRE - NIGHT

Thorburn shakes Ed's good hand vigorously and walks away.

Ed stands there, slightly dazed.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - DAY

Ed stands center stage, all alone again. He looks at his watch, which reads five after nine.

ED

(to the darkened auditorium)
Anyone there?

WOMAN'S VOICE

(from the wings)
Can I help?

Joanna Regan steps onto the stage and into the light.

She's now about 40 but is as beautiful and elegant as she ever was. Every inch the Queen of Broadway.

A yummy mummy.

But the old vulnerability is still evident in her eyes and in her gentle smile. She has a melancholy look.

Ed stares at her. Joanna speaks again.

JOANNA

Can I help you?

ED

Oh I'm sorry. I'm Ed.

JOANNA

Not really the question I asked, but interesting information anyway.

ED

Oh, it's just, I'm just waiting for the rest of the cast to get here for the read through. Of Hamlet. They all seem to be a little late.

JOANNA

That'd be you that's a little late, Ed.
And me with you.

(beat)

We don't get on the stage for a couple of weeks yet. They've got to build us a set first. We're in the rehearsal room, backstage. Here, I'll show you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Joanna walks off. Ed follows her.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BACKSTAGE - DAY

Ed and Joanna weave their way backstage, through a darkened maze of huge flats that reach high into the fly-tower backstage.

JOANNA

I'm Joanna. Joanna Regan.

ED

I know. Actually I think I'm your son.

They turn down a long, garishly-lit corridor with rooms coming off on either side.

JOANNA

Excuse me?

Past a costume room where old ladies sit, sewing and chattering to each other.

ED

In the play. I think I'm playing Hamlet.

JOANNA

You think? Isn't that something you might like to clarify before we start rehearsing?

Past the company offices with big plans of the theatre pinned to the wall.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Sure you're not playing Hamlet's young half-brother? The one with slightly fewer lines?

ED

No, no, he definitely said Hamlet.

JOANNA

He?

ED

Mr Knight.

Past the master carpenter's workshop and the screech of the power saw.

JOANNA

Well, good luck. Thorburn's a great one for making actors get right to the heart of their roles. If you're playing Hamlet, you're odds-on to end up in prison or in an asylum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ed remains silent. Joanna notices his bandaged hand.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
You should get that seen to, you know.

ED
(sarcastically)
Thanks, mom.

Joanna laughs as she quietly continues to size up this intense young man.

They arrive at the end of the corridor, where they reach a plain white door. Joanna pushes through.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Inside, seated on plastic chairs in a large circle, the cast of Hamlet is joined. Thorburn is standing in the middle, reading to them from a magazine.

THORBURN
...a moribund shadow of the force it once was." Aha, good morning Joanna, good morning Ed.
(ironic)
I see you've been putting in some early character work and are in fact not late for rehearsals.

JOANNA
Special delivery, one lead male with a slight identity complex.

THORBURN
Have a seat, Ed.

Ed sits next to a young, WAIF-LIKE BEAUTY who fails to return his friendly smile.

THORBURN (CONT'D)
Edward here is one of the people I'm putting a lot of faith in, and my reputation on the line for, to ensure that the Lyceum has seen the last of reviews like this.

Thorburn looks around at the faces surrounding him.

THORBURN (CONT'D)
People say, some critics even are saying now, "Who wants to see yet another dreary Hamlet?" I agree. It is dreary when bored actors stand on stage and grind out lines they spoken a thousand times before.
(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THORBURN (CONT'D)

Which is why I have assembled this unique cast I have in front of me now. Edward here as Hamlet. Never been to drama school, am I right?

Ed nods, catching Joanna's eye . The girl next to him looks over disdainfully.

THORBURN (CONT'D)

Joanna, who's amazingly never before played Queen Gertrude, though her Ophelia is obviously the stuff of legend to you all. Isabella...

He points to the unsmiling waif next to Ed.

THORBURN (CONT'D)

...is also a newcomer to this piece and hot off the fifth season of her very popular daytime drama. She will play our Ophelia. And all the rest of you, all newcomers either to the play or to this theatre.

Thorburn is getting deeply caught up in his opening speech. It's like a mantra.

THORBURN (CONT'D)

Search for the truth. Always search for the truth.

(beat)

This will be the production where, at last, every word of this great play will make sense, every action will be understood, every scene will be real. Because YOU... you will be real. Your relationships with one another will be real. It will all be real.

A silence falls on the room as Thorburn's exhortation comes to an end. ROGER, a burly man in his 50s, with a scarf wrapped about his thick neck, pipes up.

ROGER

But... everybody dies, Thorburn.

The group laughs quietly. Thorburn looks annoyed.

THORBURN

Thank you Roger.

Ed looks around the room and catches Joanna's eye again. She smiles at Ed. He looks away, embarrassed.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - LATER

Ed stands opposite GIOVANNI (22), long-hair and attitude.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED
Hi, I'm Ed. Hamlet.

GIOVANNI
Giovanni. Horatio.

Thorburn walks up to the two of them.

THORBURN
Best friends. Oldest friends. Find something to talk about for a few minutes while I get myself in order.

Thorburn goes back to his chair and fiddles about in his briefcase.

GIOVANNI
Couple of likely lads like Hamlet and Horatio. Only gotta have women on their mind.

ED
A good subject my friend. And whither dost thine eye wander?

GIOVANNI
Right over to that Isabella. She's a honey.

ED
Ophelia. Yeah. I know I know her from somewhere. What's she been in?

GIOVANNI
She was the kid sister ugly duckling with the retainer in that 'My Life So Far' TV show. That was years ago. She's now the grown up graceful swan with a nose job in 'My Life So Far'. Good for getting audiences, but does she sure think her shit smells sweet as roses.

ED
What about The Queen? Joanna.

GIOVANNI
Serious?

ED
Why not?

GIOVANNI
She's still hot I know but ... there's history there, man.

Ed looks at Giovanni curiously. Thorburn walks back up to the two of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THORBURN

Ready? Act I, scene iv. Horatio shows Hamlet the ghost of his dead father. Ever seen a ghost, Edward?

Ed stares at Thorburn. Smiles weakly.

ED

Not yet.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE REHEARSAL ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Ed now stands across from ISABELLA, the waif playing Ophelia who we've just been hearing about. They are completely silent. Ed looks around the room, Isabella is staring at the floor.

Some of the cast members sit at the back of the room watching. Joanna reads a book and occasionally looks up.

Thorburn walks up to Ed and Isabella and watches for a minute.

THORBURN

Good, good, excellent. You're really catching the essential breakdown of communication that is at the heart of these two characters' tragedy.

Ed turns on Thorburn, angry.

ED

What are you talking about? She won't say a thing to me. I've tried favorite colors, pets, tattoos, everything. She's just not playing.

Isabella raises her eyes in disgust.

ISABELLA

I don't want to play games. I came here to act. That is what I am, isn't it Thorburn? I am an act-ress, aren't I? Let me know if I'm wrong here.

THORBURN

(conciliatory)

Okay kids, come on now. Let's get this off on the right foot shall we? You are supposed to be lovers, after all. Let's just go from the top of your scene together, shall we?

Isabella begrudgingly nods. Thorburn pats Ed on the back and whispers in his ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THORBURN (CONT'D)

Keep on at her like that. I'm still
holding out hope for something resembling
a reaction from her.

The two smile at each other. Isabella begins the scene.

ISABELLA

(bland)

"My lord, I have remembrances of yours, /
That I have longed long to re-deliver; /
I pray you, now receive them."

ED

(vehement)

"No, not I; / I never gave you aught."

Isabella's words begin to run tonelessly into each other.

ISABELLA

"My honour'd lord, you know right well
you did..."

Ed steps away. Isabella looks confused, but carries on in
her monotone.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

And, with them, words of so sweet breath
composed / As made the things more rich:
their perfume lost."

Ed takes a drink of water from an Evian bottle and remains
pointedly silent. Isabella stares at him.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

It's your line.

ED

This isn't going to work.

(beat)

She doesn't know what she's talking
about.

ISABELLA

How dare you?

THORBURN

Yes, these are early days, Edward.

ED

That's not the point! She's not putting
any experience, into it, you can tell.
How real is that, Thorburn?

THORBURN

Edward...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The back of the room begin to take an interest in this confrontation, Joanna in particular.

ISABELLA

Experience? I've been acting professionally for almost six years now, six years more than you have. I've read extensively about 14th Century Denmark in preparation for this role and...

ED

Woah, woah, hold on there kitten. I'm not talking about 'preparation'. I'm talking about things you draw on to make your character more believable. Real things. "Life experience"?

ISABELLA

Oh I see. Have I ever gone steady with a guy who killed my father then made me attempt suicide? Gee, let me think about that one for a minute. Umm, hang on. Oh yeah, got it. No!

ED

That's not what I mean.

(beat)

You ever gone out with a guy your parents didn't approve of?

ISABELLA

Yes. Relevance?

THORBURN

Give him a chance, Isabella.

ED

What was this guy like?

ISABELLA

He was the drummer from Axe. Heavy metal band. He was cool, really... intense.

ED

And?

ISABELLA

And what?

ED

What happened?

ISABELLA

Oh. We fell out of touch. You know, schedules and that kind of thing.

Ed looks at her, disbelievingly. Sniggers from the back of the room. Isabella starts to blush.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

It's true! I have a very busy schedule and he just felt that he couldn't... We couldn't... It wasn't...

She trails off. Ed lets the silence sit between them for a minute before picking up again.

ED

So, to recap, you had a relationship with a really intense guy...?

Ed looks for encouragement. Isabella nods her head.

ED (CONT'D)

Who your parents didn't get on with and who ended up breaking your heart. Am I close?

Isabella is about to protest but in the end remains silent, looking miserable. Ed tries to be positive.

ED (CONT'D)

That's great! That's perfect Ophelia. Hamlet : "No, not I; / I never gave you aught." Ophelia : "My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;". Same shit. Different country. You know how it feels. Just show us!

Ed tries to catch her eye to encourage her. Isabella continues to look at the ground. Then she looks up at him, furious.

ISABELLA

Don't tell me how to fucking act, you asshole! Don't even try it!

Isabella storms out of the room. One of the girls from the cast follows her. Everyone else looks at Ed. Joanna smiles at him and carries on reading her book.

THORBURN

Okay people, I guess that's a wrap.

The group puts their coats on and head for the door.

THORBURN (CONT'D)

I shall be in the bar immediately following, and your first martinis are on me.

(to Ed)

Joining us, Edward?

ED

Uh, sure. Just gimme a minute.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Thorburn heads out the door back into the theatre. Some follow him, some leave by another door that gives out onto the street. Ed puts on his coat and hangs around by his chair.

Joanna says goodbye to one of the older actors and heads towards the street exit. Ed moves to intercept her.

ED (CONT'D)

Joanna?

Joanna turns and smiles at him.

ED (CONT'D)

Do you want to get a drink? I know we haven't had a chance to do much together yet but it'd be nice to, you know, find out the real you and all that. I'm sure Thorburn'd approve.

JOANNA

Another time, maybe. I have a date with a hungry cat that I'm already late for.

ED

Oh, okay then.

JOANNA

Good night.

ED

Good night.

Joanna walks out. Ed stands there for a minute, looking after her. Giovanni clocks this and comes over to Ed, swinging an arm around him shoulder and pulling him away.

GIOVANNI

Talk time.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BAR - EVENING

The bar is smoky, noisy and filled with cast members and pre-show theatregoers. Thorburn holds court at one table, with a small group of actors gathered around him. Empty Martini glasses crowd the table.

THORBURN

...and of course you don't just go up to Sir John Gielgud and say "please take off all your clothes and dance with this hatstand", do you? So, you see, I had to come at it from a character angle...

Ed and Giovanni are sat apart from this group, drinking beers and hunched in conversation together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIOVANNI

Whether she's a nice person or not is not my point, my friend. All I'm saying is that, if a chick's boy dies one week, you don't go knocking on her door the next week. Ain't cool.

ED

Man, that's rough. How long were they married for?

GIOVANNI

Oh, she wasn't married to him. I guess you could say she was his mistress. For like twenty years.

ED

Maybe she needs a shoulder to cry on.

GIOVANNI

And a dick to sit on, right?

He LAUGHS loudly, Ed less heartily.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)

Anyway, man, what're you doing speccing after someone like her? She's old enough to be your mother!

ED

I dunno. I always wanted to act and I think I always looked up to her. You know, how she started out so young and had to deal with all that shit about her baby dying and everything.

GIOVANNI

I never heard about that.

ED

I'm sure it's not her favorite topic of conversation. I think I read about it in some magazine years ago. I really loved to come and watch her when I was a kid.

(beat)

I guess I've always had a bit of a thing for her.

GIOVANNI

Yeah, and now she's playing your mother, man. That's just too weird.

(calling out to the bar)

Is there a psychiatrist in the house?

Ed waves and smiles as people look around at them.

ED

Asshole. Teach me to tell you anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GIOVANNI

Still, at least you know a bit about her.
Could help break the ice.

ED

What? "Hi, I've been idolizing you since
I was six, wanna go back to your place
and get it on?" Get real.

Ed drains his drink.

ED (CONT'D)

I've gotta be going.

GIOVANNI

Where you living at?

ED

I'm staying in a hostel at the moment.

GIOVANNI

No way.

ED

True.

GIOVANNI

Why don't you move out man? Get yourself
a decent place.

Ed smiles to himself.

ED

Nah. You never know how long a gig like
this could last. Don't want to move all
my shit out and then be asking for my old
room back in a week's time.

Giovanni gives him a look.

GIOVANNI

You're an odd one.

ED

Believe it. Night.

GIOVANNI

Hey, just take my card anyway bro'. For
emergencies.

He gives Ed a card.

ED

Thanks.

Ed buttons up his coat and steps out into the night.

EXT. LYCEUM THEATRE - NIGHT

Ed tucks his hands into his pockets and pulls on a baseball cap before turning and walking away.

EXT. SALVATION ARMY HOSTEL - NIGHT

Ed walks in through the front door of the hostel and notices a MAN standing by the door to the office. Ed walks through reception and is almost out the other side when he's stopped by a voice from the man.

VOICE

Excuse me?

Ed stops and turns around and finds himself face to face with a grim-set Detective Jackson Dewitt.

ED

Yes?

DEWITT

You wouldn't happen to know where I could find the warden, would you son?

ED

No sir. Probably on his rounds.

DEWITT

Jesus shit. You wouldn't believe how many of these fucking places I've been to in the past two days.

ED

Putting together some kind of a guide?

DEWITT

Cute. Utah police. Detective Dewitt.

He shows Ed his badge. Ed's eyes betray the first signs of alarm.

ED

Long way from home, officer.

DEWITT

Some vagrant beat an old man to death in a gas station forecourt. I tracked the son of a bitch out here.

Ed goes very still. His eyes dart around the room.

DEWITT (CONT'D)

I kinda thought he'd put up in one of these places. I've tried all over town and haven't come up with shit yet.

Ed stays silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEWITT (CONT'D)

I don't think I can stand another minute in this fucking city, no disrespect intended. Gonna head back home tomorrow I reckon. Nothing more to be done here.

(beat)

Say, you don't think I could give this to you to give to someone in the morning, do you?

Dewitt pulls out an artist's impression of a face that now looks very much like Ed's.

Dewitt holds out the sheet. Ed stands there, not moving.

DEWITT (CONT'D)

Son?

ED

Uh, sure.

Ed reaches for the piece of paper with his right hand, still covered in a moldy, bloodied bandage.

As he grips the piece of paper, Dewitt notices the state of his hand and holds onto the sheet for a beat before letting it go.

Ed sticks the sheet and his hand back into his jacket pocket. Beat. The two men look at each other.

DEWITT

Something happen to your hand there?

ED

Uh no. I had a...uh...an accident on my bike a few weeks ago.

Dewitt is now studying Ed's face closely for the first time. Ed tries to avoid eye contact by dipping his cap so the brim obscures most of his face.

DEWITT

Uh huh.

(beat)

You been here long?

ED

Just a...uh...yeah, a few months.

Ed moves towards the corridor.

ED (CONT'D)

Okay then, I'll be sure to get this to the right person.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEWITT

Son, could I ask you please to take off
your baseball cap?

ED

Excuse me?

DEWITT

Take off your cap.

ED

Uh, sure.

Ed starts to take off his cap.

Suddenly he DARTS out of the front door of the hostel and out
onto the street. Dewitt gives immediate chase.

EXT. SALVATION ARMY HOSTEL - NIGHT

Ed SPRINTS down the sidewalk, crowded with late-night
shoppers. Dewitt hurries after him but the older man is no
match for Ed and he begins to lose ground.

Ed CUTS across the street, causing taxis to screech to a
halt, HORNS blazing. Ed BOUNCES over the hood of one car
that doesn't stop in time.

He eventually gets safely to the far side and SHOOTs OFF into
a back street. Dewitt, stranded puffing on the other side of
the street, watches Ed disappear before turning around and
kicking the curb in anger.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A door is opened. Giovanni's on the inside. Ed, breathing
heavily, is on the outside in the hallway. Giovanni smiles
broadly at this mess of a man on his doorstep.

GIOVANNI

Couldn't resist me, huh?

He beckons Ed in.

INT. LYCEUM THEATER REHEARSAL ROOM - MORNING

Ed, looking even more unshaven and unkempt than usual, sits
in the middle of the room with Joanna and Thorburn.

THORBURN

I've called just the two of you in this
morning.

(beat)

Your relationship, guilty mother and
volatile son, is the dynamite that's
going to really blow this production up
into something special.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THORBURN (CONT'D)

I want to concentrate some of your time into working on that before we actually get up on stage.

He looks at the two for some reaction. Joanna and Ed just look at each other.

THORBURN (CONT'D)

You were cast for the same reason. You both have this tremendous ability to transform real emotion into powerful, believable performances. I want you to share that emotion with each other, share your experiences, happy ones, especially the sad ones.

(beat)

I'm going to leave you now and work with the rest of the cast. Do what you will for the day. I'll be giving out tomorrow's call at five this evening, so try to be back by then. Apart from that, the day is yours.

Thorburn walks out of the room. The two continue to stare at each other.

ED

Want to get that drink now?

Joanna smiles at him.

INT. DINER - DAY

Ed and Joanna sit opposite each other, drinking coffee out of cheap china in a very unglamorous diner.

ED

What do you make of all this sharing of innermost secrets, then?

JOANNA

Oh, Thorburn's always been a great one for throwing cast members together early on. He's just looking for some gossip. Probably wants us to sleep with each other, now that I'm single.

Joanna looks down at her coffee. Ed's taken aback by her bluntness.

ED

I heard about your loss. I'm sorry.

Joanna plays with her coffee spoon.

JOANNA

You should send lilies to his wife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED

Yes, I know.

Joanna shakes her head.

JOANNA

Yep. Twenty-six year time share with Mrs Julius Hobbs. A woman who affected my life more than anyone else and who I've never spoken a single word to. Not even at the funeral. Funny.

(beat)

He and I had such a bad relationship. So unhealthy. Never really enjoying my time with him but never able to get him out of my mind. Like emotional nicotine. I was addicted for 20 years. All of a sudden it's cold turkey. But it doesn't feel too bad. Not as bad as it should, anyway.

She looks into her coffee and then up at Edward.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Your turn.

ED

Ran away from home five years ago and haven't heard from my parents since. Life on the streets ever since. Basic scum of the earth story.

JOANNA

What brought you to New York?

ED

Circumstances.

(beat)

Look, since we're getting all this out on the table, do you think we should talk about your son?

Joanna's face falls.

JOANNA

How did you know about that?

ED

I think I read about it somewhere.

JOANNA

You thought I'd want to talk about it?

ED

I'm sorry. I thought that maybe after twenty years...

Joanna's eyes grow red.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOANNA

What? After twenty two years I'd have forgotten about him? Twenty two Christmases without my baby, playing a fucking walk-on role in the life of the man I loved?

(beat)

No. I haven't forgotten.

There is an extremely long and awkward silence between the two of them. Joanna is clearly shaken.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

ED

Where?

JOANNA

Somewhere else. I need air.

Joanna gets up and Ed follows her out.

INT. SALVATION ARMY HOSTEL DORMITORY - DAY

A Salvation Army officer opens the door to Ed's room, and shows in Dewitt. The three sleeping figures are there, as always.

SALVATION ARMY OFFICER

And this is where he slept, while he was here.

DEWITT

I'd like to interview his roommates, if that's possible.

SALVATION ARMY OFFICER

Good luck.

Dewitt glances at the sleeping figures, annoyed.

He goes over to Ed's bed, where his few remaining possessions lie in the now-abandoned knapsack. He picks through the contents.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Ed and Joanna walk side by side.

ED

I walked up to him and said - shit, I still can't believe I did this - I said to this massive great black dude "I think the lady just wants to drink on her own."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA
(smiling along)
Very gallant.

ED
Turns out the guy was her boyfriend. And my nose has never been completely straight since... I think it's a problem of mine, actually. Not good at walking away from a situation. Always gotta butt into things that it'd be better if I kept out of.

They walk on in silence.

JOANNA
I'm sorry about earlier.

They get to a bench, overlooking the boating lake, and sit.

ED
Oh no. All me. Putting my foot right in it again. Case in point.

JOANNA
No, no. It's just that I've tried not to think about it...him...for so long, on purpose, you know, that it caught me kind of off-guard to hear him mentioned like that.

Ed stays quiet.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
It always reminds me just what a shit Julius was. Julius, my...er... whatever you want to call him.
(beat)
He wasn't even there when his son was born. Had to go to his wife's parents' house for Christmas. You believe that? Turned and ran, just like that.
(beat)
So I went to the hospital on my own, Christmas Eve, to have this baby and have something special in my life, show everyone I could do it. Maybe I even thought it would make Julius leave his wife.

Joanna shakes her head slowly.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
God, so stupid. He didn't even try to act upset when I called him and told him what had happened. He actually got angry that I'd tracked him down and called him up on Christmas Day.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

He could be such a senseless bastard when he wanted to, not that it made me love him any less.

(breaking up at the memory)

I was so alone. I didn't even have my baby.

Joanna sniffs into a tissue.

ED

(softly)

What did happen?

Joanna dries her eyes and takes a deep breath before continuing.

JOANNA

To the baby? Breathing complications, I think, but I don't really know. Didn't make any difference. He was gone, that was that.

ED

I understand how you feel.

JOANNA

Unlikely.

ED

No really. For what it's worth.

(beat)

I'm my mom's first kid. Healthy and happy, no problems. In the next five years she had three more children, none of which survived for more than a week. She had really bad asthma, my mom, and I guess I was just a lucky little sperm that escaped it or something.

(beat)

So my mom was always in and out of clinics treating her depression. And my dad got this real resentment thing going against me, like I should have died and one of the others should have lived. Like I had some kind of a debt to pay back. To them.

A pause, as the two of them stare at each other.

JOANNA

I haven't had a good talk like this for years.

ED

Me neither. Thought I'd just end up depressing everyone. Actually feels kinda good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOANNA
Talking or listening?

ED
Both.

They continue to stare at each other, a chemistry and a meeting of minds clear to see. They hold the stare for a moment longer than normal, and at the same time begin to move together to kiss.

Ed, flustered, pulls away before their lips meet and quickly stands up.

ED (CONT'D)
Thorburn will be pleased with how far we've come in such a short time.

JOANNA
Yes, we're his star students.
(pause)
We've still got a bit of time before we're needed back at the theater. I live quite close to here. Fancy something hot and strong?

ED
Sure?

Joanna nods.

ED (CONT'D)
Sure.

Joanna gets up and they walk away together.

INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Joanna's got a seriously nice place. High ceilings, big open-plan pine floors, views of the park. The works. A well-groomed Persian cat skits across the floor as Joanna and Ed enter.

They dump their coats on the couch and walk over to the brightly lit kitchen area.

JOANNA
Coffee alright?

ED
A bit cliché, but fine.

Joanna smiles and pulls a pair of mugs down from a cupboard, marked 'Mine' and 'His'. Ed studies 'his'.

ED (CONT'D)
'His'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA

Yours.

She smiles sweetly back at him.

Ed walks back towards the main room, with its commanding Manhattan skyline views. As he passes through the double-doorway, he looks down and notices a Tony award propping the doors open. He picks it up and examines it.

ED

Don't have a trophy cabinet then?

JOANNA

What's that?

ED

Your Tony. Hardly showing it off.

JOANNA

May as well put it to good use.

Ed wanders up to the windows and looks out.

ED

It was for Cleopatra, wasn't it? '81?

Joanna's head appears around the doorway.

JOANNA

Who's been doing their homework then?

ED

You know how it is. You read things.

JOANNA

I'm flattered.

Ed wants to get off the subject.

ED

Yeah, well...

Joanna gets back to the coffee. Ed moves from the window over to the mantelpiece, where a load of framed silver photographs stand. He looks at them in turn.

Joanna with her parents, young Joanna on a pony, Joanna with her arms around some guy, Joanna and her friends...

Ed freezes in his tracks. Backtracks and picks up the photo of Joanna and the guy, a handsome fifty year-old wearing a baseball cap and dark glasses. They're by the sea and Joanna hangs off his arm, clearly in love.

FLASHBACK.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD, UTAH - DUSK

The driver of the SUV lowers the window a few inches. We get a glimpse of a baseball cap and shades.

BACK TO SCENE.

Ed's hands tremble as he recognizes the man in the photo.

FLASHBACK.

EXT. DINER, UTAH - NIGHT

Ed is LAYING INTO the man's face with his feet.

ED
Think THIS is funny?

MAN
(groaning)
Jesus Christ no.

BACK TO SCENE.

Ed clenches his fists and raises them to his head, in complete disbelief at this latest turn of events.

Suddenly, Joanna is there at his shoulders with two cups of coffee and a friendly smile. She hands him a cup.

JOANNA
There you go.

Ed accepts the cup and replaces the photo on the mantelpiece. He struggles to maintain his composure as he points at the photograph.

ED
Is that him? Julius?

JOANNA
Yes. On one of our annual weekends together.

ED
(his voice almost breaking)
What...um...what actually happened to him?

Joanna sadly picks up the photograph and runs her fingers over the glass.

JOANNA
Just one of those stupid things. I haven't been able to get the full story of course, not being close family, whatever that means.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Got into an argument with some bum at a gas station in Utah. He was getting old, had a bad heart. Wouldn't have taken much...

(beat, looks at Ed)

I should really take this down, get on with things. Should've taken it down and gotten on with things long before he died, come to think of it.

Ed looks at Joanna, then back at the photograph. He puts his coffee down on a nearby table and heads for the door.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Ed?

ED

I have to... I forgot I've got to...

JOANNA

Where are you going?

ED

I'll see you later. I'm sorry, I can't stay.

Ed walks out of the front door. Joanna looks equal measures confused and pissed off.

EXT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ed rushes out of the smart front door of Joanna's apartment block. He walks quickly away down the sidewalk, taking strangled, frantic gulps of air.

Passers-by pass him by.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Thorburn and Joanna stand in the middle of the rehearsal room. Thorburn looks at his watch, then at Joanna. She shrugs her shoulders glumly.

THORBURN

Well, I guess we'd better press on without him for the time being.

They begin to prepare for rehearsals.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - EVENING

Ed sits hunched on the same park bench that he and Joanna sat on during their tell-all conversation of a few days ago. He stares blankly and breathes out mists of cold air.

ED V.O.

It was like someone was playing a game with me.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dewitt stares at the artist's impression of Edward as he sits at a desk in a drab motel room.

The TV plays noiselessly in the background.

ED V.O.

Like I'd get so close to what I wanted.
Whatever that was. Happiness. Success,
maybe. It'd be like a feather floating
in front of my eyes.

Dewitt rubs his eyes and puts the picture down. He goes into the bathroom, flicking the light on as he pushes the door shut behind him.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - EVENING

Ed carries on walking as night closes in around him.

ED V.O.

Every time I'd stretch out my hand to
grasp hold of it, it would just drift
gently out of reach again. Like it was a
game of tag I couldn't win.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

Thorburn and Joanna wait. Joanna looks really worried. Thorburn pulls a cellphone out of his pocket and dials.

THORBURN

(into the phone)

Where is he? ... Well find him for fuck's
sake. ... No, I know it isn't. ... Okay,
if you do see him, alright, will you
please tell him that we're all looking
for him and that if he doesn't show his
sorry little arse up at rehearsal
tomorrow morning he can consider himself
uncast. Clear?

Thorburn snaps the phone shut.

THORBURN (CONT'D)

Jesus. Serves me right for not working
with pros.

Joanna looks miserable.

INT. GIOVANNI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Giovanni hangs up the phone. He turns to face Ed, who's sitting on the floor in a corner of the room, his back against the wall. Looking like shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIOVANNI
You gotta do it, man.

No response from Ed.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)
You don't wanna lose it now, do you?

Ed runs his hands through his hair in frustration.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - NEXT DAY

Thorburn, Joanna and some of the other cast members walk into the auditorium, chattering away. As they all unpack their stuff, Joanna stands motionless, looking at Ed, who's standing in the middle of the stage, dressed all in black and with a long, black overcoat.

Even his blonde hair and stubble seem dark. He keeps his eyes on the ground.

Gradually the other members of the room realize that the prodigal Hamlet has turned up. Thorburn looks relieved.

THORBURN
Right. Act III. Scene one.

Joanna walks up onto the stage until she's facing Ed. She stares at him. He looks up at her with anguished eyes. Ed's voice-over begins between them.

ED V.O.
"To be, or not to be: that is the
question:

BEGIN MONTAGE

The Lyceum production develops - costumes, props, scenery all coming together - as the montage progresses.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - DAY

Ed stands on-stage, a far-off look in his eyes. Set-builders move about in the shadows behind him.

ED
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
/ The slings and arrows of outrageous
fortune,

EXT. LYCEUM THEATRE REHEARSAL ROOM - EVENING

Ed walks out of the theatre and strides off down the street. A few moments later, Joanna bursts out of the door and looks both ways. She sees Ed, but he's crossing the street and walking too fast for her to catch up. She throws her hands up in exasperation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED V.O.

Or to take arms against a sea of
troubles, / And by opposing end them?

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Ed rest his head against the window of a bus as the lights of
the city flash by him.

ED V.O.

To die: to sleep; / No more; and by a
sleep to say we end / The heart-ache and
the thousand natural shocks / That flesh
is heir to, 'tis a consummation /
Devoutly to be wish'd.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ed sits at the end of his bed in Giovanni's apartment,
looking out of the window.

ED V.O.

To die, to sleep; / To sleep: perchance
to dream: ay, there's the rub; / For in
that sleep of death what dreams may come
/ When we have shuffled off this mortal
coil, / Must give us pause.

Electric sparks thrown up by a subway train illuminate Ed's
face.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - DAY

Ed, now in costume, continues to speak. He's watched by a
crowd in the auditorium, in particular by Thorburn and, next
to him, an anxious-looking Joanna.

ED

There's the respect / That makes calamity
of so long life; / For who would bear the
whips and scorns of time,

Thorburn leans over and whispers into Joanna's ear.

ED (CONT'D)

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's
contumely, / The pangs of despised love,

Joanna nods, never taking her eyes off Ed.

INT. DINER - DAY

Dewitt sits at a Formica table, eating a fried breakfast.

ED V.O.

The law's delay, / The insolence of
office and the spurns / That patient
merit of the unworthy takes.

EXT. STREETS - EVENING

Ed walks on. He passes a young girl as she pulls at her mother's coat and he stares at the sight.

ED V.O.
 But that the dread of something after
 death, / The undiscover'd country from
 whose bourn / No traveller returns,

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Dewitt stands in a traffic island in the middle of the street, surrounded on all sides by the towering structures of Manhattan's skyscrapers, going on seemingly for ever.

ED V.O.
 Puzzles the will / And makes us rather
 bear those ills we have / Than fly to
 others that we know not of?

Dewitt looks around and around and around.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BAR - MORNING

The cast and crew are having a coffee break. Ed sits apart from everyone, staring blankly ahead and smoking a cigarette.

ED V.O.
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us
 all;

Joanna is in conversation with another actress, but her gaze rests on the sad figure in the corner.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
 And thus the native hue of resolution /
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of
 thought, / And enterprises of great pith
 and moment.

Ed looks up and finally meets Joanna's stare.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
 With this regard their currents turn
 awry, / And lose the name of action."

Joanna smiles at Ed, but he looks away once more.

END MONTAGE.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - DAY

Ed finishes his soliloquy. The auditorium is silent.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - EVENING

The entire cast are assembled on the stage. Thorburn addresses them.

THORBURN

No big speeches. No final notes. We're there and we're ready. Tomorrow night you're going to show this town what they've been waiting for.

(beat, stares at Ed)

The real thing.

EXT. LYCEUM THEATRE - NIGHT

Ed comes out of the door into the snowy night, but is intercepted by Joanna, who has been waiting for him.

JOANNA

Talk to me.

Ed walks away.

ED

I can't.

Joanna grabs him by the hand.

JOANNA

Talk to me, goddamnit! What is the matter with you? We both finally find someone we can speak to and the next minute you're out the door.

(beat)

The only words you say now are written for you.

Ed turns on her.

ED

You want to know the truth? You want that?

Joanna stares back at him.

ED (CONT'D)

Yes, I felt it too. Yes, I want to be with you too. But I can't. I can't do it. And that's what's killing me. And I can't apologize because you won't understand and I can't tell you because... I can't. I'm stuck.

JOANNA

Is it about Julius?

Ed remains silent. Joanna's eyes blaze.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Is it because I still had his picture up
in my apartment? Forget about him. He's
gone. I loved him but he's dead. You're
not. We're not.

ED

(anguished)
I can't...

JOANNA

You can...

They stare at each other. Joanna gently strokes Ed's cheek.
Ed screws up his eyes.

ED

I can't.

He walks away. Joanna lets her hand fall to her side.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Ed rounds a corner and SCREAMS in anger and anguish. He
stops and buries his head in his hands.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - EVENING

A PAN around the auditorium reveals that it is packed with
the great and the good and the otherwise wealthy of
Manhattan. Joanna is on-stage with an actor playing LORD
POLONIUS. We hear Ed's call from off-stage.

ED (O.S.)

"Mother, mother, mother!"

JOANNA

(to Lord Polonius)
"I'll warrant you, / Fear me not:
withdraw, I hear him coming."

Lord Polonius withdraws, Ed enters. This is the first time
that we have seen them act opposite each other. The
exchanges between them are quick and highly charged.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

"Why, how now, Hamlet?"

ED

"What's the matter now?"

JOANNA

"Have you forgot me?"

ED

"No, by the rood, not so: / You are the
queen, your husband's brother's wife;
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED (CONT'D)
/ And--would it were not so!--you are my
mother."

The audience is spellbound by the performance.

JOANNA
(in tears, shouting at Hamlet)
"What have I done, that thou darest wag
thy tongue / In noise so rude against
me?"

ED
"Such an act / That blurs the grace and
blush of modesty, / Calls virtue
hypocrite,

Ed comes nose-to-nose with Joanna and strokes her cheek
gently.

ED (CONT'D)
(tenderly)
Takes off the rose / From the fair
forehead of an innocent love,

He suddenly GRASPS her jaw in his grip, causing Joanna to
scream involuntarily.

ED (CONT'D)
(shouting)
And sets a blister there!"

Cast members, including Isabella and Giovanni, gather off-
stage to watch this compelling performance.

Joanna tears herself away from Ed's grip, looking at him with
wild eyes.

JOANNA
"No more! Hamlet, thou hast thy father
much offended."

ED
"Mother, you have my father much
offended. A King of shreds and patches,-

An actor playing the GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER enters.

Ed stares up at him and, from his POV, we see instead the
pale figure of JULIUS HOBBS, dressed as he was that night in
Utah, caked in mud and blood.

The ghost points at Ed. Ed falls to his knees in terror.

ED (CONT'D)
"Save me, and hover o'er me with your
wings, / You heavenly guards!
(beat)
What would your gracious figure?"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOANNA
"Alas, he's mad!"

Ed frantically scrambles away from the figure as it approaches him across the stage. We cut back and forth from seeing the actor to seeing the figure of Hobbs.

ED
"Do you not come your tardy son to chide."

Joanna holds Ed in her arms.

JOANNA
"To whom do you speak this?"

Ed points at the ghost.

ED
"Do you see nothing there?"

JOANNA
"Nothing at all; yet all that is I see."

ED
"Nor did you nothing hear?"

JOANNA
"No, nothing but ourselves."

ED
"Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!"

The ghost walks slowly backwards off-stage, staring at Ed all the while.

ED (CONT'D)
"My father, in his habit as he lived! /
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the
portal!"

The ghost exits. Joanna holds Ed's face in her hands, real worry again evident in her stare.

JOANNA
"This is the very coinage of your brain."

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER IN THE SAME SCENE

Ed is dragging a body off-stage.

ED
"Indeed this counsellor / Is now most
still, most secret and most grave, / Who
was in life a foolish prating knave.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED (CONT'D)
/ Come, sir, to draw toward an end with
you."

He stops and looks at Joanna one last time.

ED (CONT'D)
"Good night, mother."

He exits. Joanna falls to her knees. The curtain comes down. A ROAR of applause begins from the audience.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BAR - EVENING

The bar area has been grandly decorated in commemoration of this first night, and the post-show party is well under way.

Ed is pinned into a corner by an exultant Thorburn and a radiant Isabella. He stands underneath a larger-than-life-sized promotional cardboard cut-out of him holding Joanna's jaw, as we saw him do earlier.

He looks utterly drained and hardly hears the words being spoken to him as he sips his champagne.

THORBURN
What a night! What a show! They're already calling you the savior of Broadway! Edward Kane! My boy! I don't know what awful kind of shit you had to summon up to give us that performance tonight, but whatever it was, I want it every night.

ISABELLA
You know, Ed, we didn't really get off on the right foot at the beginning.
(taking his hand)
I'd love to spend some time working with you on some of our scenes. Why don't we get together tomorrow?

THORBURN
Edward will be far too busy with me tomorrow, Isabella darling.

Ed sees Joanna emerge from the back-stage door. Their eyes meet. She smiles weakly at him.

Ed pushes past Thorburn and Isabella towards Joanna, leaving the two of them standing there, open-mouthed.

Ed speaks quietly to Joanna.

ED
Let's go.

They walk out of the bar together.

EXT. ELLIS PARK - NIGHT

Joanna sits on a grassy bank, looking out over the Hudson, the Statue of Liberty and the lights of the city beyond. Ed stands at a distance, fidgeting.

He takes a while to find his words. Finally, he speaks.

ED

You ever notice how, in movies, a girl and a guy will get together and everything's cool and they're really in love. Properly in love. But then the girl finds out that someone actually bet the guy to date her in the first place, or the guy finds out that the girl slept with his brother when she was drunk once? And then, even though they still love each other and even though nothing has actually physically changed between them, everything goes to shit?

They sit in silence for a beat.

ED (CONT'D)

And you can never understand why they don't tell them, because it's just making things worse?

A long beat. Joanna looks at Ed.

ED (CONT'D)

I've got something to tell you. I don't want to, but if I don't I lose my mind. So I have no choice.

JOANNA

Ed, what's the matter?

ED

Try to remember, after I've told you, that nothing has changed between us. Nothing.

JOANNA

Get to the point.

Beat. Ed looks deep into Joanna's eyes.

ED

I killed Julius.

JOANNA

You...?

ED

In Utah, before I got here. It was me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Joanna shakes her head, still looking into his eyes.

JOANNA
No, I don't believe you.

ED
It's the truth.

Joanna looks at Ed and waits for him to explain himself. He doesn't.

JOANNA
Why are you doing this?

ED
(his voice breaking)
Because I love you.

Joanna begins to cry. Ed tries to hug her. She pushes him away.

JOANNA
Go.

ED
Joanna.

JOANNA
Go. Now.

Ed stares at Joanna as he gets to his feet. He walks away. Joanna is left alone, destroyed.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Joanna lies in bed, asleep. She is gradually awakened by a knocking at the door. Opens her eyes.

The knocking becomes more insistent. Joanna leaps up and out of her bed, putting on her dressing gown as she hurries towards the door.

JOANNA
I'm coming, I'm coming.

She reaches the door and flings it open.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
Ed...?

She catches the name in her mouth as she realizes the man at the door is not Ed.

It's Detective Jackson Dewitt.

DEWITT
Miss Regan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA
(disoriented)
Um, yes. Can I help you?

DEWITT
(showing his badge)
Jackson Dewitt, Utah Police.

Joanna looks at him with searching eyes.

JOANNA
Yes, what's the matter?

DEWITT
Ma'am, I'm investigating the murder of Julius Hobbs, who I believe you were acquainted with. Can I come in?

JOANNA
Um, no, sorry, I have someone here.

DEWITT
Okay. That's okay. I'm following up a few leads and I noticed that no-one's actually taken a statement from you. So I thought I would stop by and ask you a few questions, but if now is a bad time...

JOANNA
What do you think I could know? I only saw him occasionally.

DEWITT
Well, that's all part of the process. Lots of little pieces might come together to give us the full picture. Your testimony may be the missing piece, it may not.

JOANNA
I'm sorry, I don't think that there's any way I can help you. Try his wife.

DEWITT
Okay. You're probably right.

He pulls out the hand-drawn picture of Ed.

DEWITT (CONT'D)
You might also be interested and... reassured to know that we do have a suspect in this case. Young guy, 'bout a hundred sixty pounds.

Joanna looks hard at the image staring back at her from the paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEWITT (CONT'D)

Some things happen for a reason. We don't know yet if there was a reason for what this guy did to your friend Mr Hobbs. But we're gonna keep looking. And if you do think of anything we should know about, please gimme a call.

He gives Joanna his card. Joanna looks at it.

JOANNA

Sure.

Dewitt touches his hat good-bye and walks off down the corridor. Joanna shuts the door quickly behind him.

She looks at his card, then looks away from it. Looks at it again, then purposefully walks over to her writing table, where she rips it up and throws it into the trash.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - EVENING

Mid-show again. Another full-house. The court is assembled. Ed walks on-stage, avoiding eye contact with Joanna.

THE King addresses Hamlet.

KANE

"How is it that the clouds still hang on you?"

ED

"Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun."

Joanna walks up to Ed and looks him straight in the eye. Then she smiles softly at him.

JOANNA

"Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off. / Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die, / Passing through nature to eternity."

Ed realizes what she's telling him. Their eyes meet in each other's souls. Ed smiles back at Joanna.

ED

"Ay, madam, it is common."

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BACK-STAGE - LATER

The characters file off. Ed grabs Joanna and pulls her behind a piece of scenery. The next scene can be heard starting over their whispered exchange.

ED

Did you mean that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA

I let him screw up my life when he was
alive. I'm not going to let him carry on
doing it now he's dead.

They hold each other close.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Nobody's perfect.

They pull apart and study each other for a moment. And then,
as all around them goes quiet, they move towards each other.

And kiss.

Tenderly at first.

Then with passion.

INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joanna and Ed kiss in the middle of the room, the city lights
twinkling behind them through the window.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They make love on the large bed, two bodies in harmony.
Complete understanding, complete love.

We move up their bodies. Joanna's BREATHING becomes more
erratic, more frantic. Her hands grab Ed's back tightly.
She shudders with delight as Ed kisses her harder.

LATER

Ed and Joanna lie facing each other on their sides, staring
into each other's eyes in silence.

LATER

Ed lies, asleep at last, his head in Joanna's breast. He has
an angelic look. Joanna is stroking his hair across his
brow, echoing her actions with the baby in the maternity
ward.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - TWILIGHT

Joanna and Ed walk hand in hand through the trees.

Ed, clean shaven for the first time in a while, looks better
rested, more healthy and more full of life than we have seen
him before.

JOANNA

How old are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED
Does it matter?

JOANNA
Not really. Just curious how much of a
toyboy you're actually being.

ED
You're a beautiful woman. I'm powerless
before you.

JOANNA
My God. If your mother could see you
now. Flaunting yourself in public with
an old maid.

Ed smiles wryly.

ED
My mother ...

Joanna notices Ed's change of mood and pulls him tighter
towards her.

JOANNA
Hey. That's all past now. You've got to
look forward. Look forward with me.
Their loss. My gain.

She looks at him with loving eyes. They kiss again.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - DAY

Ed acts opposite Lord Polonius. Hamlet is in high spirits
and making fun of the old man. Ed is on a roll and the
audience laps it up.

LORD POLONIUS
"My lord, the queen would speak with you,
/ and presently."

ED
"Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in
shape of a / camel?"

LORD POLONIUS
"By the mass, and 'tis like a camel,
indeed."

ED
"Methinks it is like a weasel."

The audience LAUGHS as Ed toys with the old man.

LORD POLONIUS
"It is backed like a weasel."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED
"Or like a whale?"

LORD POLONIUS
"Very like a whale."

ED
"Then I will come to my mother by and by.
They fool / me to the top of my bent. I
will come by and by."

LORD POLONIUS
"I will say so."

ED
"By and by is easily said."

The audience loves it and APPLAUDS.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BACK-STAGE - LATER

Ed bursts off stage, into the arms of the waiting Joanna.
They kiss each other sweetly.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Dewitt drives over the Brooklyn bridge, leaving the lights of
Manhattan behind him. His expression is grim.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE MAIN STAGE - EVENING

Another audience stands to an ovation as yet another
performance comes to an end.

The cast, headed by Ed and Joanna, take the bows.

EXT. LYCEUM THEATER - DAY

A large poster advertising the production has a white banner
pasted across the top of it : "Run extended due to
overwhelming demand."

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ed and Joanna lie in their customary position, on their
sides, eyes open, their faces almost meeting.

JOANNA
I love your eyes. Like the sea. Big and
blue. Calm on the surface. But you're
never sure what they're hiding down
below. What was that line? "Know the
eyes, know the man."
(beat)
I know the man.

She closes her own eyes and pulls Ed closer to her.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BAR - EVENING

The cast enjoy drinks after the show. Ed and Joanna talk sweetly to each other, slightly set apart from the others, which include a sour-looking Thorburn and Isabella.

THORBURN

Look at them carrying on like that.

ISABELLA

I think it's unnatural, if you ask me.

Giovanni arrives, carrying some more drinks.

GIOVANNI

Will you two shut up for chrissakes?
Look at them. They were made for each other, it's obvious. You're jealous.

THORBURN

Oh don't be so ridiculous.

ISABELLA

Yes, please give me some credit. I'd like to think I could beat a forty-two year old woman if I wanted to.

Giovanni takes a sip of his drink and shrugs his shoulders.

GIOVANNI

If you say so. Wish I was as happy as those two, I can say that.

All three look over at the couple wistfully.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joanna looks through her bag and emerges with a yellowing envelope, folded in half. She opens it and pulls out the faded old Polaroid taken of Joanna and her son. Ed lies in bed, watching her.

JOANNA

Here it is.

She gives the Polaroid to Ed.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I could never throw it away, but it's hardly mantelpiece material.

She runs her hands over the Polaroid.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

It's all I have left of him.

Ed stares into the face of the baby.

LATER

They lie in bed, almost asleep. Ed strokes Joanna's hair.

ED
Do you feel it?

JOANNA
What?

ED
This was meant to be.

JOANNA
I know.

She kisses his nose and closes her eyes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ed and Joanna walk past a jeweller's shop. Ed tries to pull inside. Joanna laughs but shakes her head. Ed finally wins the day and pulls her in.

INT. JEWELLER'S SHOP - DAY

Ed picks out a pair of brooches for Joanna, the masks of Comedy and Tragedy. He pins the Comedy mask onto Joanna's shirt. She takes the Tragedy mask and puts it in her bag, still in its box.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BACK-STAGE - EVENING

Joanna is visible on-stage, talking to the Lord Polonius character. Ed is hopping gently on the spot, warming himself up. He hears a couple of voices whispering on the other side of a back-stage flat.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)
Did you hear about Joanna?

VOICE 2 (O.S.)
No.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)
Vicki in wardrobe was up all last night taking her costumes out an inch around the waist.

Ed turns to the flat in surprise.

VOICE 2 (O.S.)
Oh my God, you think she's...?

VOICE 1 (O.S.)
Well, I don't see her eating any cream cakes, do you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Smiling goofily, Ed gets a sharp prod in the back from the STAGE MANAGER, indicating that it's his cue.

ED
"Mother, mother mother!"

MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Joanna responds in character to Ed's line off-stage.

JOANNA
"I'll warrant you, / Fear me not:
withdraw, I hear him coming."

Polonius withdraws, Ed leaps on-stage, barely disguising his delight.

He runs up to Joanna and kisses her full and deep.

The audience is amazed. Much peering over glasses, nudging one another etc.

BACK-STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The stage-manager frantically flips through his stage directions binder to see if he can figure out what's going on on-stage.

MAIN STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Ed finally lets go of Joanna, who's had to do everything she can not to melt into Ed's arms.

JOANNA
"Why, how now, Hamlet?"

Joanna smiles back, knowing he knows and sharing his happiness.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Ed and Joanna stand at the altar, a priest in between them. Giovanni is Ed's best man, one of the girls from the cast is Joanna's maid of honor. Thorburn and Isabella and a few other cast members make up the small congregation.

Joanna wears the comedy brooch on her pure white wedding dress. The first hint of a bulge is evident.

Ed kisses the bride.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

As Ed and Joanna leave the church, they are surprised to see twelve of the extras from the production dressed up in their costumes as Danish soldiers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all raise their pikes and form a tunnel, through which Ed and Joanna, LAUGHING, pass.

At the other end of the tunnel, light bulbs POP as a few photographers snap the happy couple on their big day. Ed looks back at Thorburn, with a "Was this you?" expression.

Thorburn opens his palms and shrugs his shoulders, returning with a "Well, what can you do?" gesture.

The bride and groom kiss for the cameras.

INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ed carries Joanna across the threshold and they collapse in a giggling bundle on the couch.

ED

How was the first day of the rest of your life, Mrs. Kane?

JOANNA

Better than all the days of the start of my life put together, Mr. Kane.

Ed lays a gentle hand on his wife's stomach.

ED

We should make the most of our time alone together. Three is a crowd.

They smile and disappear from sight behind the back of the couch.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Joanna, Ed and a KIND-FACED DOCTOR sit in a sparsely-appointed office. Joanna is now noticeably pregnant.

JOANNA

And so this time I want to be as sure as possible that the baby's going to be alright.

The doctor studies some charts.

DOCTOR

To be honest with you, Mrs. Kane, we can't find anything in you or, I'm happy to say, in the baby to indicate any hereditary breathing problems that might complicate the situation at birth.

(beat)

Obviously, given your age, we do want to make sure that the run-up to the due date is as smooth as possible to ensure that everything goes according to plan. So...

(to Ed)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

...no surprises for your wife please, Mr Kane. Haha.

The doctor gets up and extends his hand. Joanna, then Ed, shake it and leave the room.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE BAR - MORNING

A DELIVERY-BOY drops off a packed-together bundle of the New York Times. SOMEONE scurries over and picks them up.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE GREEN ROOM - LATER

One of the CAST hands copies of the paper around to other actors and actresses who are lounging about back-stage. They all reach for the culture section and there, on the front page, is a picture of Joanna and Ed on their wedding day. The caption reads "Love on the boards".

Joanna and Ed walk into the Green Room and are greeted with WOLF-WHISTLES and good-natured APPLAUSE.

INT. DINER, SALT LAKE CITY - EVENING

Dewitt sits on a stool at the bar, pensive. An OLD GUY reads a copy of the same newspaper at the other end of the bar.

Dewitt stares at the photofit of Ed as he holds up his glass for a refill.

His eye is suddenly drawn to the cover of the paper, showing a picture of a man and a woman in wedding clothes. He looks closer.

He stares intently at the front cover.

DEWITT

Son of a bitch.

INT. KANE HOUSHOLD - DAY

An old, tired, lonely Joanna Kane trembles as she sets down a copy of the same newspaper. Her eyes brim with tears as she knocks back a measure of gin.

Composing herself, she walks over to a worn wooden dresser, unlocks it and pulls out a crinkled letter in an envelope.

She reads, as she's clearly done so many times before, the tidily written words on the faded page. We catch fragments : "My confession..."; "a terrible mistake"; "your son..."; "can no longer bear the guilt of my silence..."

The letter is signed Dr. William Roberts.

Joanna Kane folds the letter up. Takes another drink.

INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joanna sits on the edge of the bed and puts her hands on her stomach, again mirroring her actions from the hospital at the beginning.

This time Ed comes up to her and puts his hands over her hands. They kiss gently.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. LYCEUM THEATRE DRESSING ROOMS - EVENING

Joanna is now very heavily pregnant. Ed is busy taking make-up off in front of a row of mirrors.

Joanna reads from the same National Enquirer. On the front page is a wedding picture of Ed and Joanna with the title "SHE'S HIS MOM - AND SHE'S PREGNANT WITH HIS BABY!":

JOANNA

(quoting)

"In what is fast becoming a record-breaking run for a Shakespearian production on Broadway, the main talking point is still the off-stage relationship between Edward Kane, who plays Hamlet, and Joanna Regan who, in a perverse twist, plays Hamlet's mother, Queen Gertrude."

She maneuvers herself unsteadily to a chair, one hand supporting her back. Ed looks up from the mirror.

ED

You alright?

JOANNA

Yeah, yeah I'm fine. This little guy's just impatient.

(she continues to read)

"Kane and Regan married four months ago and are expecting their first child blah blah blah."

(she glances at Ed)

Here we go. "While some found it distracting, not to say disturbing, to know that characters playing mother and son are in fact somewhat closer than the bounds of filial morality would dictate, other simply responded saying that the sexual charge is between the two characters is indicated by Shakespeare in the script and that it's refreshing to see this complex Oedipal emotion finally brought to the stage in such a realistic fashion." Thorburn will be pleased.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a KNOCK at the door. The stage manager pokes his head around the door.

STAGE MANAGER

Hi Ed. Oh, hi there Joanna.

JOANNA

Hi Nick.

STAGE MANAGER

Ah, Ed, someone here to see you. Says it's really important.

ED

Can't it wait?

STAGE MANAGER

She says she's your mother.

Ed looks up. Looks at Joanna in the mirror.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Ed and Joanna sit, holding hands on the table. Joanna Kane sits opposite them.

Her eyes are puffy from age and crying and her skin is drawn. Unrecognizable from the young woman she was in the hospital twenty-five years ago.

There's a silence around the table. Joanna Kane drinks deeply from her wine glass.

ED

(finally)
When?

JOANNA KANE

Three years ago.

ED

What was the... What happened?

Joanna drinks some more.

JOANNA KANE

He had one attack. Then they thought he was getting better and the day before he was due to check out he had another one. Dropped down dead right there. I held his hand when he went.

Ed looks stony-faced.

JOANNA KANE (CONT'D)

Aren't you sorry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED
 There's a lot of things I'm sorry about.
 This isn't one of them. I'm sorry for
 you. I'm not sorry for him.

Beat.

JOANNA KANE
 Didn't invite your own mother to your
 wedding?

ED
 Mom, I'm not going to apologize, if
 that's what you've come here for.

Joanna Kane collects herself. She finally speaks with the
 voice of a lonely old lady.

JOANNA KANE
 So you've really done it. You proved him
 wrong and you're happy now. Even if you
 couldn't do it with us, or even let us
 know what you were up to, I'm glad my
 boy's happy.
 (beat)
 My boy...

She trails off. Ed squeezes his mom's hand and looks over at
 Joanna, who looks back at him sympathetically.

ED
 Mom are you okay? Let's find you
 somewhere to stay for the night.

Joanna Kane fixes Ed with a brave smile. She digs in her
 purse for something.

JOANNA KANE
 You'll always be my boy...

She breaks down as she hands over Dr. Roberts' letter of
 confession to Ed.

ED
 What's this? Mom?

Ed's not getting anything out of her. Bemused, he opens the
 letter. His face is a conflict of emotions as he reads its
 shattering contents.

He finally looks up. The letter slips from his fingers.

ED (CONT'D)
 Mom?

Joanna looks up, smiles weakly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOANNA KANE
Better find a new name for me.

JOANNA
Ed? What's going on?

ED
I need air.

He gets up and walks out of the restaurant. Joanna looks at Joanna Kane with a blend of curiosity and concern.

JOANNA
Should I leave?

JOANNA KANE
No. Stay with me.

Joanna Kane pours them both another drink. She continues to rifle through her purse until she brings out another photo - THE PHOTO JOANNA TOOK OF HER IN THE HOSPITAL. Joanna doesn't see it yet.

JOANNA KANE (CONT'D)
On his deathbed, some crackpot doctor writes to me, telling me there was a mix-up at the hospital where Ed was born. That a baby died. My baby. Like all my others. And that I went home with the wrong one. Someone else's baby.
(beat)
I try to tell myself nothing's changed, but it has, hasn't it?

Joanna stares at her sympathetically. Joanna Kane fiddles with the photo.

JOANNA KANE (CONT'D)
I kept this little picture of him with me wherever I went. Now I find out I was carrying a stranger around with me. You might as well have it now. You're more family to him than I am.

She slides the photo across the table to Joanna. Joanna smiles understandingly at her namesake and turns over the photo.

She looks at the picture for a moment, a strange look on her face.

Suddenly, her body begins to deflate, her face drain of color, her composure flee.

Disbelief. Comprehension. Horror.

JOANNA
Oh my God...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Joanna suddenly grasps her stomach and lurches forward onto the table. Joanna Kane gets to her feet.

JOANNA KANE
Edward! Somebody? Help!

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - LATER

CRASH! Swing doors fly open as Joanna is wheeled down a corridor by a team of doctors and nurses. Ed jogs alongside her, holding her hand.

ED
(short of breath)
You doing alright?

Joanna doesn't reply. A doctor inspects her on the move.

DOCTOR
Okay, she's going into the turn, we're gonna have to do this quickly.

They push Joanna through another set of doors into the delivery room and pull up alongside an operating table.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Ready everybody? One, two three...

The doors slam shut in Ed's face. He looks through the perspex circles into the delivery room as the doctors lift Joanna onto the delivery table.

Joanna tilts her head to face Ed and opens her eyes a crack. They stare at each other.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Ed paces up and down the waiting room, frantic with worry.

LATER

Ed sits on a chair, his head in his hands, almost asleep. The doctor from the delivery room walks in and taps him on the shoulder.

DOCTOR
Mr Kane?

ED
(looking up)
Yes? What?

The doctor smiles gently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR
Congratulations. You have a baby
daughter.

ED
My wife? What about my wife?

The doctor's expression becomes more serious.

DOCTOR
Due to Mrs Kane's age and the early
delivery date there were some
complications in the delivery.

Ed stares at the doctor with anguished eyes.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
It's alright. It'll be alright. She's
going to be okay.

Ed relaxes fractionally.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
She lost a lot of blood during the
procedure and so we have to keep her in
overnight while we readminister body
fluids. She's in intensive care, but
she's stable.

Ed's relief is palpable and he allows himself a smile.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ed holds a baby girl in his arms as he walks slowly down the
hospital corridor.

Ed coos at the child adoringly.

They arrive at the door to the intensive care ward. Through
a glass window in the door Ed can see Joanna lying in her
bed, unmoving and attached to a number of machines.

ED
There's mommy. There's your mommy. What
a clever girl she's been.

Ed looks at his wife, looking pale but beautiful.

ED (CONT'D)
She's gonna be the best mommy you could
wish for.

The doctor comes up behind Ed and places a reassuring hand on
his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

Mr Kane, we should take the baby in for observation now, just to be sure all the fingers and toes are there, that kind of thing. Why don't you go on home and get some rest. We'll call you at home as soon as there are any developments.

Ed nods and hands the baby over to the doctor. He takes a final look at his wife and walks away down the corridor.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - MORNING

An ELDERLY NURSE flings back the curtains, letting sunlight shaft in across the ward. Joanna's steady HEART BEAT can be heard from one of the machines.

The nurse checks on Joanna, who appears to be still unconscious, and then walks away.

JOANNA

Can I see my baby?

The nurse turns around to see Joanna's eyes open.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - LATER

Joanna holds the baby close to her. She weeps uncontrollably.

INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

A fully-clothed Ed sits, sound-asleep, in an armchair. He is awakened by the ringing of a telephone. He sleeps through it for a beat but then comes to his senses and grabs the receiver.

ED

(into the receiver)

Hello? This is Ed. ... Okay. ... That's great, I'll be right over.

He grabs his jacket and runs out the door.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE JOANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ed runs down the corridor and heads for the grand, winding staircase.

Taking the steps three at a time, he's almost at the bottom when he rounds another corner and SMASHES straight into a man rushing up the stairs. He sends the man flying.

Ed rushes to pick him up. He pants breathlessly as he speaks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED

I'm so sorry. My wife's just had a baby
and I'm off to the hospital.

The man dusts himself on the floor briefly before looking up
at Ed. It is then that we, and Ed, recognize the man.

It's Detective Jackson Dewitt, out of breath as well.

DEWITT

That's alr...

His eyes narrow as he in turn recognizes Ed. They hold each
other's stare for a split second. In a flash, Ed LEAPS over
Dewitt and sprints for the door.

Dewitt is quickly on his feet and charges out of the building
after Ed.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - DAY

Joanna holds the two Polaroids, taken twenty-five years ago,
in her hand. The Kings with their child. Joanna with hers.

EXT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dewitt comes out in time to see Ed, on the other side of the
street, getting into a car parked on a meter and driving
away. Dewitt hails a passing cab and gets into it, following
Ed's car.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - DAY

Joanna stares at the Polaroids. Her eyes dart from one to
the other, willing the truth away.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ed drives like a madman, running a red light and causing
chaos in the streets. He looks in his rear-view mirror -
Dewitt's cab is still following him.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - DAY

Joanna has a look of death on her face. It speaks of
ultimate weariness. Too much heartache. Too many tears.

She puts the two Polaroids down on her bed. She opens her
purse, which sits on a table next to her bed, and pulls out a
small jewelry box and a pen.

She looks over at her heart meter, still BEEPING away with a
regular, if faint, pulse. A last, single tear rolls down her
cheek and she looks away.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ed's car screeches into the hospital car park. He leaps out and sprints into the hospital. A few moments later, Dewitt's taxi pulls up.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - DAY

Ed charges through reception, startling the NURSE in charge.

NURSE
Excuse me, sir!

Ed runs off, ignoring her protests.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Ed sprints down the corridor towards the intensive care unit. He gets to the door and knocks on it for someone to let him in.

The old nurse's face appears at the window. She recognizes Ed and unlocks the door.

NURSE
Mr. Kane, I'm afraid I can't let you in
for the time being.

Ed pushes past her roughly.

ED
I don't have time.

NURSE
(vainly)
She's resting...

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - CONTINUOUS

Ed runs up to Joanna's bed, where she lies motionless. The nurse chases after him. A soft, continuous SOUND rings in the air.

Ed shakes Joanna gently.

ED
Joanna. Jo, it's Ed.

Joanna doesn't respond. Ed shakes her harder.

ED (CONT'D)
Jo?

He notices the two Polaroids and the tragedy mask brooch lying on her stomach. He picks them up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The nurse arrives at the bed. She immediately senses something's wrong. She hears the SOUND. She looks to the heart meter.

Flat.

She pushes Ed aside and looks at Joanna's arm. The tube from the IV. drip has been pulled out.

The nurse shouts an order to another nurse.

NURSE

Get a doctor in here, quickly!

Ed reels back as the other nurse runs off.

ED

What's going on?

The nurse is frantically trying to find a pulse from Joanna's neck.

NURSE

Sir, you'll have to get back.

A resuscitation team RUSHES into the ward.

ED

What do you mean?

The nurse tries to guide Ed away from the bed.

NURSE

Come on now...

ED

No!

He rushes back to Joanna's bedside.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Dewitt jogs down the corridor towards the Intensive Care ward.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - CONTINUOUS

Ed hugs his wife with all his strength. The nurse and the CPR team pull Ed away from Joanna and he eventually lets go, completely defeated.

The CPR team take over. A DOCTOR coordinates their efforts.

DOCTOR

Time?

NURSE

Five seconds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR
Give me room.

The nurses clear an area around the bed as a nurse readies the defibrillators.

Ed staggers back until he lands on the bed next to Joanna's. He sits there and blankly watches the efforts of the doctors to bring his wife back to life.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ready?

NURSE (O.S.)
Ready.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Clear.

The Doctor fires twelve thousand volts into Joanna's body. Her chest hugs the defibrillator pads for an instant, before being released to fall back lifelessly onto the bed.

Her pulse remains flat.

Ed looks down into his hands and looks at the Polaroid of Joanna with her baby. He numbly flips it over. There is a message written in a weak scrawl on the back of it.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Give it to me again.

NURSE (O.S.)
Five seconds.

Ed reads the note on the back of the Polaroid.

"Know the eyes, know the man".

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Dewitt gets to the Intensive Care ward door, now wide open. He sees the commotion going on by Joanna's bed and walks deliberately towards them.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD - CONTINUOUS

Ed turns the Polaroid over and looks closely at the picture again.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Ready again?

NURSE (O.S.)
Ready.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Clear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

More voltage. The line stays flat.

Ed stares at the other Polaroid of Joanna Kane and her child, then at the original again.

He looks closely at the eyes of the babies in the two pictures.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(with increasing desperation)
Ready again?

NURSE (O.S.)
Ready.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Clear.

Flatline.

Close-up of the eyes in the one Polaroid. Brown. Close-up of the eyes in the other. Blue. Like the sea.

ED
No.

A wave of realization sweeps over Ed and he gasps for breath.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Again. Clear.

Flatline.

Ed picks up the small tragedy mask and stares at it. He rolls it around in his hand.

The gaping eyes and downturned mouth stare back at him like a ghoul.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
That's enough.

Dewitt appears behind Ed.

DEWITT
Edward Kane?

Edward looks up at Dewitt blankly.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Record time of death, nine thirty four in the morning...

Ed squeezes his shaking hand around the brooch. His eyes are closed, his head shaking slowly from side to side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEWITT

Edward Kane, I'm arresting you for the murder of Mr. Julius Hobbs in the State of Utah on the thirteenth of August 1999.

Ed opens his eyes again and looks at the brooch once more. He turns it over.

DEWITT (CONT'D)

You have the right to stay silent. You have the right to an attorney.

The Doctor begins slowly to pack away his resuscitation equipment.

The pin of the brooch glints in the morning sunlight.

DEWITT (CONT'D)

Anything you do say can and will be used as evidence against you in a court of law.

ED

(ashen, to himself)
"Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended."

Beat.

Dewitt lays his hands on Ed's shoulder. Ed looks at the prone figure of Joanna one last time as a nurse covers her face with a white sheet.

DEWITT

(softly)
Do you understand these rights as I have...

As Dewitt speaks, Ed, in one movement, flicks open the pin on the back of the brooch and then PLUNGES the pin straight into his left eye and then, SCREAMING, into his right eye.

Dewitt reels back. A nurse screams. Ed collapses to the floor in agony.

The doctor is the first react and he pushes forward and kneels down beside Ed's shuddering body.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BARE ROOM - DAY

Ed sits as before, staring at the TV screen. Images continue to light up his face and reveal the holes where his eyes used to be.

His face as blank as ever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED V.O.
(softly)
So that's me.

We slowly pull back from his face.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
The original motherfucker.

Beat.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
They've kept my daughter away from me.

Pull further back.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
Just as well. Wouldn't want to end up
fucking her, too.

Beat.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
To be or not to be?

Further back.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
After this?

Fading out.

ED V.O. (CONT'D)
Not to be.

Beat.

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

FADE OUT.