

SEARCHING FOR ERNIE

by

RON VIGIL

INT SKYTROOPER AIRCRAFT- NIGHT

The flight crew are in position for take off. CAPTAIN KIRKBRIDE DOOLEY and 2ND Lieutenant HARRY SYLAR are in the cockpit. 2ND Lieutenant WILLIAM AUMON is in the ante-room making navigation calculations. Sergeant CLARENCE LUSHA and Corporal CHARLES BEEMAN check the cargo straps. Lieutenants ERNEST ORTIZ and MILTON HOLCOMBE are sitting in the belly of the aircraft.

DOOLEY

Okay, we've been cleared for take off. Everyone take their seats.

EXT JOHN ROGERS AIRPORT - NIGHT

The C-43 Skytrooper accelerates down the runway, its engines ROARING. Her nose lifts and she soon disappears into the low fog hanging over the air base.

INT SKYTROOPER - NIGHT

Captain Dooley YELLS to Lt. Aumon.

DOOLEY

You've got your work cut out for you tonight, Bill. Can't see crap out there.

BILL

Better fly her straight. It's 1242 miles to Christmas Island and this crate has a range of 1350.

HARRY

Not much wiggle room there.

DOOLEY

Just give me the bearings and I'll get us there.

Sergeant Lusha walks to a pinup poster of a scantily dressed woman with her ample butt sticking out.

CLARENCE

Almost forgot to give Annabelle her traditional pats on her, ahem, posterior.

Clarence pats the pinup twice with a smile on his face.

ERNIE

I'm not sure that's regulation, airman. May have to report you.

CLARENCE

It's a plane tradition. Even the  
Chaplain said she was good luck. Who  
are we to argue with God?

Corporal Beeman walks over to the poster and pats it twice.

CHARLES

I don't know about the morale part,  
but she sure makes my hand hot.

Charles shakes his hand and blows on it.

ERNIE

Well, I don't know. Got a girl back  
home. What would she think?

Lieutenant Holcomb gets up and spansks the poster twice.

MILTON

Hey, in this war you've got to play  
the percentages.

CLARENCE

We're going to be flying over  
Japanese held islands with  
anti-aircraft guns, not the mention  
the Zeros.

ERNIE

Men aren't influenced by silly  
superstitions are they?

All the men nod their heads vigorously.

ERNIE

Well, I guess I'd have no choice if  
it was an official order.

CLARENCE

There's always one in every crowd.

Clarence walks to the cockpit, sticks his head in and SAYS  
something to Lieutenant Dooley. He returns with a smug smile  
on his face. The loudspeaker BLARES.

DOOLEY OS

Let it be officially noted that all  
Army Air Corp personnel will  
dutifully fulfill the tradition of  
the Annabelle Serial number  
42-10069, thereby patting our mascot  
Miss Annabelle twice on her ample  
buttocks. That is an order to be

completed expeditiously.

Everyone CHORTLES. Ernie rises with exaggerated annoyance and dutifully walks to the poster, stops and studies it.

ERNIE

Well, traditions are not to be taken lightly and it was a direct order.

MILTON

God, you sure know how to milk em.

Ernie leans forward and kisses the pin up's ass twice. Everyone CACKLES gleefully.

CHARLES

You're supposed to pat it not kiss it.

Ernie messes up Charles mop of hair.

ERNIE

Lighten up, kid. Having me around is all the luck you're gonna need.

MILTON

Just don't jinx us.

ERNIE

Miltie, my boy, in this world you make your own luck.

The plane hits an air pocket and everyone goes flying. They slowly pick themselves up and take their seats.

MILTON

You can charm mere mortals, but not the gods of fate.

INT DORM DEN - DAY

BRETT FREEMAN, a 21 year old athletic student, enters. FATSO MOULTY is glued to the TV set, front and center, zombie like. SPIDER VELASCO, a slender fellow with long limbs, sticks his head out of a phone booth. The year is 1974.

SPIDER

Hey, mellow out, you guys. I'm trying To hustle up some action.

NATHAN HOLMBY, a skinny nerdy student with thick glasses enters wearing a red cape. The room grows quiet as everyone stops and stares at him.

NATHAN  
Is this Craven Hall?

WAYNE WARD, a beefy looking guy approaches Nathan.

WAYNE  
Yeah, and who the hell are you?

NATHAN  
Nate Holmby. I was assigned here.

WAYNE  
You sure? The super hero dorm is the next one over.

The crowd LAUGHS. Nate shows Wayne a piece of paper.

NATHAN  
It says Craven Hall right here, see?  
Spider sticks his head out of the booth again.

SPIDER  
Hey, I got a couple of babes from Hanes who want to bongo tonight.

Spider points to Nathan.

SPIDER  
What's that?

WAYNE  
Meet Galloping Gonzo. Just flew in from Krypto Land.

The students LAUGH again.

SPIDER  
Gee! Just what we need. An outer space wacko. Our reputation isn't too sterling as it is.

WAYNE  
You from the moon or Mars?

NATHAN  
Gemini, the twin constellation. I'm really two people. Really we're all more than one person.

WAYNE  
Oh, really?

NATHAN

If you can go backward in time you confront fundamental issues like cause and effect or the meaning of your own identity. To see if there can be two of you at once.

WAYNE

I see. Well, both of you are beating feet out of here.

More GUFFAWS from the crowd.

NATHAN

I don't understand.

WAYNE

No schizo eggheads allowed, you dig?

Wayne grabs Nate by the arm and walks him toward the door. The students are CHEERING and LAUGHING.

SPIDER

Five will get you ten, he ends up flying out of here.

Brett steps in front of Wayne, blocking the door.

WAYNE

Hey, what's with you?

BRETT

You just stole my line, fatso.

The room becomes quiet.

WAYNE

Move or I'll run you over.

BRETT

Give it a go, big boy.

Wayne takes one step forward, then stops.

WAYNE

You know him?

BRETT

No, but I know you. Big bully with the little guys. Gutless with anyone your own size.

Wayne's face reddens as he licks his lips in hesitation.

WAYNE

Maybe you're thinking you should be wearing the cape?

BRETT  
Maybe, but there you are and here I am with nothing but air between us.

WAYNE  
Bad ass, eh?

BRETT  
There's one way to find out.

Wayne lets go of Nate's shirt.

WAYNE  
You're lame, man. You've always been an asshole.

BRETT  
And you're a mouse studying to be a rat.

Wayne gives Brett the finger and shuffles off.

BRETT  
I'd tell you he's a complete idiot, only some parts are still missing.

Nate extends his hand, smiling.

NATHAN  
Nate Holmby. Thanks.

Brett nods his head as he shakes Nate's hand.

BRETT  
Brett Freeman.

NATHAN  
Hey, I think you're my roommate.

BRETT  
What?

Nate looks at a sheet of paper, nodding his head.

NATHAN  
Yeah, it's right here. Brett Freeman, room 312.

BRETT  
That can't be right. I'm supposed to have a single this year.

Brett looks at the paper and GROANS.

BRETT

Oh, no. Let's boogie over to Johnny  
and get this straightened out.

INT. DORM OFFICE - DAY

JOHNNY CONTRELL, the dorm counselor, is shuffling papers on his desk. He looks up, spots Brett and Nate and continues checking off names.

JOHNNY

Haven't you graduated yet? You're  
like the perennial bad penny that  
keeps coming back.

BRETT

I'm just a junior, but your  
affection's touching.

JOHNNY

Whatcha got?

BRETT

There's been this teensy-weensy  
little mistake.

JOHNNY

I handle mistakes after six.

BRETT

You leave at six.

JOHNNY

Razor sharp mind.

BRETT

I reserved room 312 which is a  
single. Now this guy's saying he's  
my roommate.

JOHNNY

So?

BRETT

Must be a computer glitch or  
something. He's got the wrong room  
and the wrong guy.

JOHNNY

Computer don't make mistakes. People  
make mistakes. Now be a good boy and  
run along.



Brett grabs Johnny's pencil. Johnny looks up startled.

BRETT  
I'm just asking you to check it out.

Johnny looks up and SIGHS and pulls out a notebook.

JOHNNY  
A Junior, eh? You sure you're not on  
an extended graduate program?

BRETT  
And I keep telling everyone what a  
straight up guy you are.

Johnny keeps flipping the pages, runs his finger down a  
column, stops and looks up.

JOHNNY  
Room 312. Brett Freeman and Nathan  
Holmsby. There it is. Satisfied?

BRETT  
But, 312 is supposed to be a single.

JOHNNY  
Look, I've got a blister on my big  
toe that I've got to lance tonight.  
My wife's pissed cause I forgot our  
anniversary and you know what that  
means in the getting any loving  
department. And, finally, some idiot  
kid with no insurance side swiped my  
new car yesterday. And, now you want  
to tell me your troubles?

BRETT  
Not a good way to start the year.

JOHNNY  
I'd love to continue this  
stimulating intellectual discussion,  
but I've got something more  
pressing, like my life.

Brett looks defeated.

BRETT  
Give me the keys. And I don't care  
what anybody says, you're still my  
hero.

Johnny smiles, walks over to a key rack, pulls a couple of  
keys and throws them to Brett.

JOHNNY  
You come back again real soon, hear?  
You know how I look forward to your  
visits.

Nate and Brett exit.

INT DORM HALL - DAY

Brett walks down the hall shaking his head.

NATHAN  
You don't want to be stuck with me,  
do you?

BRETT  
Last two years I roomed with my best  
friend. Now that he's gone I was  
wanting to be alone.

Nate looks pained.

BRETT  
I've only got two questions. Do you  
snore?

NATHAN  
I exude the most gentle brain wave  
patterns when I sleep.

BRETT  
And the capes, you don't wear them  
all the time, do you?

NATHAN  
Only when I need to be more than I  
am.

BRETT  
Gotcha. If you have any extras  
around, let me know. I could use one  
around exam time.

NATHAN  
I do need to tell you I collect  
comic books and bottle tops.

BRETT  
Look little guy, don't take it  
personal, but I'm going to be  
looking for a single.

NATHAN  
I understand. The irony is I end up

in singles when I want a double.

BRETT

Comic books. Hmmm!. Got any of Little Lulu? I loved her.

NATHAN

Of course, Little Lulu comic books have the most interesting plot twists of them all.

BRETT

I had to ask.

INT HISTORY CLASS - DAY

Professor JIM LANGLEY, a middle-aged man nattily dressed is looking over the attendance list. He peers over his glasses with a stern look that soon brings silence to the room.

JIM

Good morning. Welcome to Modern American History.

Nate and Brett enter and begin climbing up the steps to the seating section. Jim looks annoyed.

JIM

There are a few rules I expect you to abide by. Number one. If you don't have the courtesy to be on time, don't bother coming.

Jim raises his head and stares at Brett and Nate.

JIM

Second. I expect nothing less than the best you can give.

Jim slowly walks around to the front of his desk.

JIM

Third, this is my class. I'm in charge. I expect to have your full attention and respect at all times. I think the street expression is "the main man".

Jim raps a pointer into the palm of his hand for emphasis.

JIM

I don't want to be your friend. I don't even care if you don't like me. I just want to be the best damn

History teacher you've ever had.

Many of the students nod their heads.

JIM

Finally, I prefer to be called Mr. Langley. If that's too much to remember, Sir will do. Do we have an understanding?

BRETT

(to Nate)

Gee! This guy should be teaching Psychology instead of History, as in Power Freak 101.

JIM

Alright, everybody get their notebooks out and let's talk about your semester project.

Everyone pulls out their notebooks.

JIM

You'd better pay attention since it represents 50% of your grade.

A few GROANS in the class.

JIM

Your semester project is to pose a question you would ask a modern historical figure. Let me repeat it. I want you to pose a question you want answered from a modern historical figure.

STUDENT #1

We get a list to choose from?

JIM

There's no list. You choose the subject. Anyone living from 1900 to the present.

There's a BUZZ among the students.

JIM

Don't look so worried. I just want you to do research on an historical subject that will explain your question, your method of research and what you conclude from the research.

The students continue to WHISPER among themselves.

JIM

I want you to think about those who came before us and what we might learn from the lives they led.

Nate raises his hand and Jim nods.

NATHAN

Does the person have to be someone famous or noteworthy?

JIM

Good question. It's not so much the status of the person that's important, but more the question asked and what you learn from your researched answer.

The students nod their heads.

JIM

This assignment is about learning the rigors of good research and the elusive questions of what History is all about. Any more questions?

The students shake their heads.

JIM

Good. I want you to submit your chosen subject one week from today.

Brett leans over to Nate.

BRETT

With his ego, he's probably hoping we'll write about him.

NATHAN

One may understand the cosmos but never one's own ego. The self is more distant than any star.

JIM

Any questions?

A student raises his hand.

STUDENT #2

Do you grade on the curve?

JIM

Absolutely not. I don't compromise on grades. And there were no A's in my last class.

BRETT

I know his type. Thinks Captain Bligh was just doing his job.

JIM

Okay, then, open your text book to page seven.

A student two seats over from Nate begins SNORING loudly. The students LAUGH. Jim looks up surprised.

JIM

What's that?

The student wakes up when he's nudged. Jim walks up the steps to investigate.

JIM

What's going on here?

Jim stops when he comes to Brett's row. He addresses Nate.

JIM

You trying to make a fool out of me?

NATHAN

Only you could do that, sir.

JIM

You're impudent and I will note your disruption of this class.

BRETT

It wasn't him, sir.

JIM

Do you feel like talking about it, than?

BRETT

Only if you insist, sir.

JIM

I do.

BRETT

Someone was snoring, I regret to inform you. But don't take it personal. Probably didn't get enough sleep last night.

JIM  
And who is this little friend, pray  
tell, who's been staying up late all  
night?

BRETT  
I can't tell you, sir.

JIM  
Why not?

BRETT  
Haven't you heard, silence is  
golden.

JIM  
And sometimes it's just plain  
yellow. How you comport yourself in  
my class is part of your grade.  
Don't forget that.

Jim walks back to the front of class. Brett shakes his head  
in disgust.

BRETT  
He's the kind of guy you have to  
stand in line to hate.

INT DINING ROOM - DAY

Nate is busing dishes and cleaning tables near the Phi Delta  
Phi fraternity table. MARCUS MARTINI, BARRY GILES, and KIRK  
BAIRD are watching Nate work with smiles on their faces.

BARRY  
Hey, bucko, you missed a spot here.

Nate looks up.

NATHAN  
Are you speaking to me?

BARRY  
I don't see anyone else there  
standing with a rag in his hand.

NATHAN  
What'd you say?

KIRK  
You don't hear so good.

MARCUS  
He said there's a mess over here

that needs cleaning. You're the  
garbage man, aren't you?

NATHAN  
Just buss tables.

Nate walks over to their table.

NATHAN  
Where is it?

BARRY  
Right here. Don't you see it?

Barry nudges a glass of milk over the side of the table. The  
glass breaks and the milk splatters. The gang WHOOPS it up.

NATHAN  
Why'd you do that for? Now I've got  
to mop it all up.

KIRK  
Quit crying over spilled milk and  
just clean it up, you little ninny.

Alerted by the SOUND of the breaking glass, Brett wanders  
over. He's also wearing an apron.

BRETT  
What's going on here?

BARRY  
We made a bubu. So solly Charlie.

The frat boys LAUGH heartily.

NATHAN  
You did that on purpose.

BARRY  
Let's get a hustle on here, could be  
dangerous.

Nate crawls on his knees, moping the mess. Brett lifts Nate  
up and shakes his head. Brett points to Barry.

BRETT  
You dropped it. You clean it up.

The Phi Delts HOOT deliriously.

KIRK  
I don't think so. We're the  
customer. You're the garbage man.



BRETT

I remember you guys now. The gay Bobbsey Twins who the Phi Delts initiated cause their popsies are loaded. Tell me Marcus, have they come through with any donations yet?

KIRK

You know this guy?

MARCUS

We went to high school together. How you doing, Brett?

BRETT

Well, not nearly as well as you. Big man on campus, ladies man. You've come a long way from the wrong side of Springdale.

BARRY

Who is he?

BRETT

Hanging out with these yo-yo's is a high price to pay. Course you always did suck up to anyone who could get you something. Or is it suck off?

KIRK

For a trash man, you sure are mouthy.

BRETT

Look, punk, you're lucky your nose is still in one piece. You thought you could have a little fun at the expense of my friend. You were wrong.

Barry jumps up and chests Brett.

BARRY

Who in the hell do you think you are?

Brett pushes Barry back into his seat. He makes a motion to get up, but Marcus puts a hand on his shoulder.

BRETT

That's right, fruitcake. You'd better think it over.

MARCUS

You always were a stupid fuck. No wonder you're still wearing an apron, cleaning up crap.

BRETT

Better than sitting next to these queers hoping you won't get groped.

Marcus leaps out of his chair and takes a step toward Brett.

BRETT

I whipped your ass in high school once and I can do it again. Or had you forgotten?

MARCUS

(softly)

I haven't forgotten.

Marcus and Brett stare at each other intently for a second. Nate begins sweeping up the glass shards.

MARCUS

One of these days you're going to push to hard.

BRETT

Promises, promises.

Barry starts to walk in the spilled milk.

BRETT

WALK AROUND IT.

Barry detours around the spilled milk.

NATHAN

I owe you again. Thanks.

BRETT

The two fairies are harmless, but that Marcus dude is bad news.

NATHAN

How so?

BRETT

He threw rocks at cats back when we were in grade school and laugh when he hit one, so be careful.

NATHAN

"Help someone and you'll be his friend for life".

BRETT

Okay, okay I get it, I'll take down the notice looking for a single, but only if you stop using those obscure quotes.

NATHAN

"A friend is someone who is there for you when he'd rather be somewhere else." Oops, sorry!

INT BRETT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brett is at his desk by the window looking at a yellow pad.

BRETT

I don't know why I've got a block on this project. And, if I don't pick a subject by tomorrow it'll be the beginning of a long slide into the abyss.

Brett looks over at Nate who is totally absorbed in a book.

BRETT

What are you reading?

NATHAN

An eighteenth century dictionary.

BRETT

Nice book, but they keep changing the subject.

Nate READS from the book.

NATHAN

Dash: a mark of line in writing or printing, noting a break or stop in the sentence, as in Virgil's, "quos ego, dash".

BRETT

I get it. A real page turner.

Brett notices indecipherable faded initials carved into the wood frame of the window, followed by "1941".

BRETT

Gee, some guy from 1941 carved his initial so deep into the wood thirty layers of paint couldn't completely erase it. Like it was his last bid for immortality.

NATHAN  
Sometimes that's the only history  
people leave of themselves. What are  
the initials?

BRETT  
To faded to tell, just that he was  
from the class of 41.

Brett gets up and starts walking around the room, thinking.

BRETT  
I wonder what historical question he  
could answer?

Nate drops his book, Brett freezes and they both look at  
each other with amazed looks on their faces.

NATHAN  
Hey...

BRETT  
No, me first.

NATHAN  
But...

BRETT  
It's my mother project. I say it  
first. PICKING SOMEONE FROM THE  
CLASS OF 41 COULD BE THE ONE.

Nate smiles in agreement.

NATHAN  
He's historical, it'll take research  
to find him...

BRETT  
And the creep said he didn't have to  
be famous.

Brett throws the pencil against the wall, grinning.

BRETT  
Man, I got it. I can't wait to see  
the look on the Fuhrer's face when I  
submit it tomorrow.

NATHAN  
But you don't have a name, just an  
year.

BRETT

We'll pick someone randomly. Doesn't really matter who it is. What time does the library close?

NATHAN

Ten. You've only got twenty minutes

Brett grabs his yellow pad and heads for the door.

BRETT

I gotta get my hands on the nineteen forty one Student Directory. You coming with me?

NATHAN

Of course. It's a classic example of aposiopesis.

Brett rolls his eyes.

BRETT

Gee!

BRETT NATHAN

Or, what's on the other end of the dash.

Brett and Nate rush out the door.

INT LIBRARY - NIGHT

Brett and Nate are hunched over the 1941 Student Directory.

BRETT

The 1941 senior students are listed from pages thirteen through seventy eight.

NATHAN

That's a sixty five page spread.

BRETT

Think of a number between one and sixty five.

NATHAN

The sun, the Moon and Earth align every thirteen years and fourteen days. So if you add all those days and divide by the year 1941...

BRETT

Nathan?

NATHAN  
...multiplied by the day of the  
month I was born, which is the  
eighth you get Nineteen point six  
two two eight.

BRETT  
Gee!

NATHAN  
Now you'll get someone worthy.

BRETT  
Nathan, the number?

NATHAN  
Round it off to twenty.

Brett shuffles through the Directory.

BRETT  
Okay, got it.

NATHAN  
How many names are on that page?

BRETT  
Six across, nine down, fifty four. I  
need a number between one and fifty  
four.

NATHAN  
The distance between Neptune and  
Mars during the Equinox is three  
million, four hundred and eight  
miles divided by...

Brett shakes his head.

BRETT  
Nate, get back to Earth. No  
formulas. It's got to be randomized.

NATHAN  
Okay, I pick...

BRETT  
No, it has to be from someone else.

NATHAN  
But, this place is deserted.

The P.A. ANNOUNCES, "The library will close in one minute".  
Brett sees a woman leaving the library and chases after her.

BRETT

Hi. Excuse me, but could you pick a number between one and fifty-four?

ANGELICA NEWPORT, an attractive student looks startled.

ANGELICA

Excuse me?

BRETT

I can explain later, but the library's about to close and I need an answer now.

Angelica cocks her head and nods.

ANGELICA

Okay, thirty-six.

BRETT

You're a good sport. Thanks.

Brett rushes back leaving Angelica with a quizzical look. Nathan keeps staring at Angelica with a dazed look.

NATHAN

Boy, that girl is elegant, beautiful and aesthetically perfect, all at the same time.

Brett's finger runs down the page, MUMBLING names.

BRETT

Thirty six down and I'll have my man; Frostick, Gibson, Murray. Thirty five, thirty six, Here it is.

Brett looks up at Nate.

BRETT

And a man it is, a senior named Ernie Ortiz.

Nathan is still fixated on Angelica exiting.

NATHAN

What did you say?

BRETT

Pay attention. it's Ernie Ortiz from Sarcillo, Colorado, where ever that is.

NATHAN

Southern Colorado, one horse buggy.

BRETT

Majored in Political Science and lettered in boxing in 40 and 41. Due to graduate in June, 1941.

NATHAN

The school year book should have more information.

The P.A. BLARES, "The library is now closing".

BRETT

The adventure begins. God, I really feel good about this.

Brett walks toward the door with a grin on his face, stops, spins and jumps, pumping his fist into the air screaming YES!. Nate skips to catch up.

NATHAN

And I'm supposed to be the strange one around here.

INT CRAVEN HALL DORMITORY - LOUNGE DAY

JASON BAINBRIDGE, a student, dressed in a tie-dye shirt SPEAKS to gathered students. Fatso Moulty is glued to the TV set, front and center, zombie like. Brett walks in.

JASON

The Joe College festival next week is our chance to let Nixon know what we think of his imperialist, illegal war.

ERIC JAMISON, a 20 something student, scratches his cheek.

ERIC

Yeah, but what about the campus cops? I don't think they're going to be just hanging out with us passing the joint around.

JASON

When the band breaks we've got Vietnam vets lined up to speak out against the war. They won't dare stop us.

The students MURMUR amongst themselves.

JASON



That's when we let our fascist government know where we stand and stick it right up their fat asses.

ERIC

All the way up to their Adam's apple.

JASON

That's the spirit. What say you guys, are you with me? Do you want to be part of the historic action?

Brett steps forward CLAPPING his hands.

BRETT

Hey, let's hear it for the revolution, you guys.

JASON

And who are you, man?

BRETT

A revolutionary like you, man. Just give us the Molotov cocktails and we'll storm the palace gate, rape and plunder, all in the name of peace and love, of course.

JASON

Oh, I see, one of those right wing war mongers who believes in our Manifest Destiny.

BRETT

The war's a crock as most war's are, but than, there's enough propaganda bullshit going around here for everyone.

JASON

Our country's going down the tubes, our brothers are dying by the thousands and you want to just stand around and do nothing?

BRETT

My best friend is missing in action in that war and they're lots of other guys out there right now just trying to stay alive hoping the country's behind them.

JASON

And we are. That's why we want to bring them back.

BRETT

And after your self-righteous strutting around you'll smoke a little weed, hump one of the babes who's juiced up by all the happenings and then later tell everyone how you put your life on the line to save the country.

JASON

You're heavy, man.

BRETT

You can see how impressed I am by your revolution.

JASON

"It is forbidden to kill unless you kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets." (pause)  
Voltaire.

BRETT

"And prejudiced opinions are what fools use for reason." (pause)  
Brett.

JASON

The war is evil and I'm going to do every thing I can do to stop it. Wars doesn't determine who's right, it determines who's left. Peace out, brothers. And don't forget, next Saturday on the main quad.

Jason makes the peace sign and exits.

INT. FACULTY OFFICE - DAY

WINFRED SPENCER, the Dean of Undergraduates greets Brett in his office.

WINFRED

Thanks for coming over.

They shake hands and Brett sits in front of Winfred's desk.

BRETT

I got your message. I don't think I've been here long enough to have gotten into any trouble.

WINFRED

Relax. I just asked you to come as a friend of the family.

BRETT

And not as the Dean of Undergraduates?

WINFRED

I promised your Dad I would keep an eye on you.

BRETT

I appreciate that, sir. Last year was less than stellar so I see your point.

WINFRED

Your grades are average. Over fifty percent of the Fortune 500 CEO's graduated with C averages or less so your grades don't bother me.

BRETT

So maybe there's still hope.

WINFRED

But, you're a Junior now and you still haven't declared a major. Time's running out.

BRETT

I'm torn between declaring for a cripp major to make sure I keep my scholarship or to go for a major I might like.

Winfred opens a file folder and scans some documents. He stops reading and looks up at Brett.

WINFRED

Your SAT's are strong across the board. When you get a newspaper what's the first section you read?

BRETT

I don't read the papers much. It's all ambulance chasing stuff and the war.

WINFRED

I know about your best friend, Jerry Johnson missing in action in Vietnam. It's a tough blow for all

of us, but much more for you.

BRETT

Jerry was my hero, but his idealism wasn't in tune with the times.

WINFRED

Maybe he's the reason you've been drifting?

BRETT

Sir, you're not going to get Freudian on me, are you?

WINFRED

Just trying to get you on track.

BRETT

Do you want me to level with you, Sir, or should I maintain the student Dean formality?

WINFRED

In the end, truth is usually the best course.

BRETT

Okay. What I care about most is a strong comfort zone. You know, the little amenities that make life worth living; happy hour at the pub, poker with the guys, Dylan in the wee hours.

WINFRED

You do show up for classes?

BRETT

Back row, low profile. Sometimes I even catch a few z's.

WINFRED

Is this ignorance or apathy I'm hearing?

BRETT

Sir, I don't know and I don't care.

WINFRED

You're ambivalent?

BRETT

Yes and no.

BRETT

I'm only sharing this with you, sir, since this is just an informal off the record chat.

WINFRED

You're being flippant.

BRETT

No, I'm giving it to you straight.

WINFRED

There's something missing in you. Your shallow cynicism is masking something deeper. I sense anger.

BRETT

Are you asking that as a friend or as the Dean of Undergraduates?

WINFRED

Anyway you want it?

BRETT

Now, to a friend I would say the whole college trip is a huge waste. Eighty percent of the stuff they teach you you'll never use or forget in a few years.

WINFRED

I'm disappointed you feel that way.

BRETT

The truth is most of the guys could care less about classes. It's all just about getting their ticket punched.

WINFRED

I suggest you get yourself together and do some serious thinking about your major and future. You're a disaster waiting to happen.

BRETT

Now are you saying that as a friend or as the Dean?

WINFRED

As the Dean.

BRETT

Thank you, sir.

WINFRED

You've got a long way to go. And you know what, I don't think you're going to make it.

Brett gets up.

BRETT

Is that all, sir?

WINFRED

No. Sit down.

Brett slowly sits down.

WINFRED

One of the things we all eventually have to learn is who we are and what we want out of life.

BRETT

Sir, I don't want to be rude, but I've got a class in a few minutes.

WINFRED

You're going to stay seated until I'm finished.

Brett nods with a SIGH.

WINFRED

It's a deep instinct we all carry within us; consciously or subconsciously it's always there.

Brett looks at his watch.

BRETT

Oh, I see where you're going, sir. The Holy Grail quest for self sermon. Nice.

WINFRED

At some point we all need to break down the real meaning of life to its barest minimal essence...

BRETT

With my budget, that's what I've been doing for the last two years.

WINFRED

...and tap deep into our souls to

learn the life journey we were meant to take, or we'll forever be living off second hand passions and pass them off as the gritty truth of our personal reality.

Brett looks out the window.

WINFRED

Find your true path, follow it and you'll die knowing you lived life to the last notch. Otherwise, one day you'll find too much water has gone under the bridge and it'll be too late.

BRETT

I get it, sir, I really do. And, I'm going to tell my Dad how much you helped first chance I get.

Winfred looks disgusted.

BRETT

Is that all, Sir?

Winfred nods. Brett gets up and walks to the door.

WINFRED

One last thing. Despite everything, that door will still be open for you. Who you are now won't make me renege on my promise. But don't come back until you grow up.

BRETT

Grow up?

WINFRED

Mature. It's what makes you complete.

BRETT

Yeah, if you're cheese or wine.

Brett exits.

INT MUSIC CHAMBER - EVENING

The Stonehill College Quintet is playing classical Chamber music to a small crowd in the Music Room. Brett and Nate are sitting in the very last row by themselves. Nate has his eyes closed in bliss. Brett is focused on a nearby table filled with hors d'oeuvres.

BRETT

How long do these things last?

Nate opens his eyes slowly, nods his head and then closes his eyes again.

NATHAN

If you'd get your mind off the food you might find you like it.

BRETT

Not when I haven't had so much as a cracker to eat all day.

Nathan waves his hand slowly back and forth.

NATHAN

Into the cosmic ether.

The MUSIC stops. Angelica, the violin player, steps forward.

ANGELICA

That concludes our first set. There will be a fifteen minute break. There are hors d'oeuvres and refreshments in the back.

NATHAN

Hey, that's the beautiful girl from the library.

Brett looks over.

BRETT

Yeah. The one I asked for a number.

Brett gets up and rushes to the hospitality table. Nate stays transfixed on Angelica. Brett loads up his small plate. Angelica spots Brett and walks over.

ANGELICA

Wait a minute, aren't you the guy from the library?

By now Brett's mouth is so full he can only nod. Angelica extends her hand.

ANGELICA

I'm Angelica Newport.

Brett smiles, nods his head and points to his bulging cheeks.

ANGELICA



(laughing)  
Take your time.

Brett MUMBLES his name.

BRETT  
Bwethh Fweeman.

NATHAN  
Those spoken words were actually  
"Brett Freeman". It's an eating  
disorder. Very rare. Ironically,  
brought about by not eating enough.

ANGELICA  
(laughing)  
They say you are what you eat.

NATHAN  
In that case, he's fast, easy and  
cheap.

BRETT  
And this is Nathan Holmby, a karmic  
weenie.

ANGELICA  
You've got to tell me what that was  
all about last night?

BRETT  
You mean the number thing?

ANGELICA  
I've got to know. It's been driving  
me crazy.

BRETT  
Just a history class project for a  
wacko History prof.

ANGELICA  
Mr. Langley's class?

NATHAN  
Yeah, how did you know?

BRETT  
Wacko was the operative word.

ANGELICA  
I'm in his class, too.

NATHAN

Really?

ANGELICA

I'm scared to death of that man.

BRETT

He's a pompous phony who leverages his power to nourish his over sized ego.

NATHAN

Next time you get scared come sit with us. We'll watch over you.

ANGELICA

Thanks.

A fellow musician HAILS Angelica.

ANGELICA

Gotta go. Time for our second set. See you in class. Hey, maybe we can help each other out on our projects. Bye.

Angelica leaves. Nate looks at her longingly.

NATHAN

"Beauty is an ecstasy; it is as simple as hunger. There is really nothing to be said about it. It's like the perfume of a rose: you can smell it and that is all."

BRETT

Yeah, choice stuff. But, the only way we'd ever go out with her would be on a blind date. And the first date is only to see if there's going to be a second.

NATHAN

How well I know that.

BRETT

You're too young to be worrying about that heavy stuff anyway.

NATHAN

"To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides."

BRETT

Hey, they're starting to take the

food away. Let's get a plate to go.

Brett scurries over to the banquet table and begin loading up his plate with food.

NATHAN

The body doesn't live by food alone.

BRETT

Get your mind off that woman.  
Beautiful woman are one of the  
curses of mankind. Don't even ask  
about the others.

Brett exits with his bulging plate of food.

NATHAN

I just can't take you anywhere.

Nate follows behind shaking his head, looking embarrassed as he catches the food falling from Brett's plate.

INT CRAVEN HALL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Spider Velasco is in the phone booth. Wayne is playing cards with Eric. Fatso Moulty is glued to the TV set, front and center, zombie like. Other students are lounging about. Brett is looking through past Stonehill College yearbooks.

BRETT

From his sophomore year on he lived  
right here in this dorm.

Brett traces his accomplishments in the yearbook.

BRETT

Boxing champ, Student Council  
Officer, Deans list. Homecoming  
King. Man, this guy was a Honcho.

NATHAN

Captain Marvel, Batman and Sergeant  
Rock all rolled in one. I wonder if  
he had a cape?

BRETT

If he did, he earned it.

NATHAN

It would be cool to find someone who  
actually knew him.

BRETT

I've already asked around. He has a

sister who lives right here in town.

NATHAN

Really?

BRETT

A Mrs. Rufinita Chacon. She's our ticket to getting info from the National Military Archives.

Brett studies the yearbook.

BRETT

His last recorded address was his flight training camp in Wasco, California in August, 1941.

Nate smiles.

NATHAN

So he could fly?

BRETT

Gee! For such a high profile guy he did a pretty good vanishing act.

NATHAN

Just like Plastic man could do.

BRETT

I'm hoping Mrs. Chacon will know something. I left our dorm telephone number, if hot shot Spider ever gets out off the phone.

Spider sticks his head out of the phone booth.

SPIDER

Hey, keep it down you guys? I got some cherry stuff on the line here.

Spider ducks back into the booth.

BRETT

He's our resident con man, hustler, promoter, all rolled into one. Always on the make. Anything to get into your wallet.

Brett walks to the booth and RAPS on it. Spider sticks his head out.

BRETT

I'm expecting a call. If you hear

the two beeps for incoming give me a holler.

Spider nods and ducks back into the booth. A collective GROAN fills the room. GIZ MARES, a small wiry Hispanic student with a full mop of unruly dark hair and droopy hanging pants, with his shirt tail hanging out walks in.

NATHAN

What was that noise?

Brett points to Giz.

BRETT

Giz Mares just walked in, the dorm pariah.

Giz gives everyone the peace sign.

GIZ

Love, peace and taco grease.

NATHAN

You know a society by how they treat their misfits. A friend told me that once.

Giz looks around to see if anyone is watching him.

BRETT

Whatever you do, don't look at him. He might take it as a sign of encouragement.

NATHAN

What's wrong with him?

BRETT

Let me be kind and say he would be an interesting study for a psychologist specializing in depravity.

NATHAN

He can't be that bad.

BRETT

Oh, no? You pick a character trait and I'll rate him on it.

NATHAN

Okay, morality.

BRETT

He thinks there are only three  
Commandments.

NATHAN  
Likable?

BRETT  
Did you notice the ten foot pole  
marks all over his body?

NATHAN  
Smart?

BRETT  
Makes you wonder how many angels can  
dance on his head.

Spider hails Brett

SPIDER  
Hey, Brett, an incoming call.

Brett rushes to the booth.

BRETT  
The call I've been waiting for.

Spider hands the phone to Brett.

BRETT  
Hello, Mrs. Chacon. Thanks for  
returning my call. I'm trying to get  
some info on your brother, Ernie  
Ortiz. It's for a history  
assignment. If I can visit with you  
I can elaborate. Yes, I've got a pen  
right here.

Brett scribbles into his notebook.

BRETT  
Thank you. I'll call you before I  
come over.

Brett looks up at them and shakes his head.

BRETT  
That's very nice of you. Just one  
quick question. Is he still alive?

Brett nods at the phone.

BRETT  
I'm sorry to hear that. I'll be

calling you soon. Thanks again.

Brett returns the phone to Spider.

BRETT

It was Ernie's sister.

NATHAN

What did she say?

BRETT

Ernie died in the war. Her family got their last letter from him when he was at Pearl Harbor waiting for further assignment. She never heard from him after that.

SPIDER

Hey guys, got some downtown babes owho are up for a little action later tonight?

Eric, Giz and Wayne raise their hands.

GIZ

I got first dibbies.

WAYNE

No way. One look and they'll be heading for the hills, screaming.

ERIC

Stand down, little man. I got the wheels, so I call the shots.

BRETT

C'mon, let's get out of here before we catch their disease.

NATHAN

Nothing the Phantom couldn't handle.

EXT POOR NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Angelica and Brett approach a modest home. A man in his middle twenties, JOSE CHACON, is raking the yard.

BRETT

I shouldn't have let you come.

ANGELICA

It's my ticket to make sure you help me with my project.

Jose looks up as they approach.

JOSE  
Whacha want, gringo?

BRETT  
We're here to see Mrs. Chacon.

JOSE  
Whatever you're selling we don't want.

BRETT  
We're from Stonehill College.

Jose puts his rake down and walks up to Brett.

JOSE  
Beat it, guavacho, while you're still in one piece.

BRETT  
She knows we're coming.

JOSE  
What, you out slumming today?

ANGELICA  
Porque no estas fregando?

Brett and Jose both look at her surprised.

JOSE  
Well lookee here. The gringita can speak the language.

Jose walks up close to Angelica with a big lecherous smile.

JOSE  
You, my little chiquita, can stay.

Jose flips his thumb out.

JOSE  
But, white bread here's got to go.

ANGELICA  
My mom is Hispanic so spare us your bull taco crap. Now go get your mom like a good little boy.

JOSE  
Hispanic, listen to her. Call me a Chicano, Raza, Indio, anything but



Hispanic.

RUFINITA CHACON, a Hispanic woman comes out the front door.

RUFINITA  
Hello, hello. I've been expecting  
you. Come in, come in.

Rufinita offers her hand. Angelica shakes it.

RUFINITA  
I guess you met my son.

ANGELICA  
Oh, yeah, a lovely boy.

Brett moves toward Rufinita, but Jose blocks his way with a fierce look. Rufinita notices and YELLS at Jose.

RUFINITA  
Let him through or I'll get my broom  
on you.

JOSE  
But, mama, he's from the other side.

RUFINITA  
They're here to talk to me about  
your Uncle Ernie.

Rufinita grabs Brett's arm and they enter her home.

INT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rufinita escorts them into her living room. Jose follows.

RUFINITA  
So why are you digging into my  
brother's business?

BRETT  
I chose your brother as an  
historical person worth researching.  
It's for a history class project I'm  
taking.

JOSE  
Mama, we don't need no college punks  
meddling into our affairs.

RUFINITA  
It's been over thirty years. Don't  
know what you could find.

BRETT

I want to know the man so I can ask him a question. A question that we can both learn from.

JOSE

Shall I throw them out, mama?

RUFINITA

No. There's a lot about Ernie we still don't know. Sit down and I'll bring you some pictures.

Rufinita lays a photo album on the sofa table.

RUFINITA

All of our people from up the river were so proud of him when he was commissioned an officer. He was the first of our race to make it. My poor mother still mourns him.

BRETT

Up the river?

RUFINITA

Up the Purgatory River valley in the placitas where we grew up. Right off the old Santa Fe Trail.

ANGELICA

In Southern Colorado. I know the place.

Rufinita opens the photo album and smiles as she runs her finger over a picture of Ernie Ortiz in his flight jacket.

RUFINITA

This is the last photo he sent us.

BRETT

Anyone know what happened to him?

Rufinita's face turns sad.

RUFINITA

In July 1942 we got a telegram from the Government saying he was missing in action.

Rufinita bows her head down.

RUFINITA

And that's the last we heard. But,

later we got this.

Rufinita opens a folder which reveals a Purple Heart and tenderly strokes it.

BRETT

Mrs. Chacon, the Government has a file on everyone who served in the military. They should have one on Ernie as well.

RUFINITA

What's in it?

BRETT

I don't know but, they'll only release it to an immediate family member, someone like you.

RUFINITA

Me?

Brett nods and pulls out a form from a notebook.

BRETT

I took the liberty of requesting the form necessary for Ernie's record release. If you sign it you should have something back in a couple of weeks.

RUFINITA

Do we really want to open up an old wound?

ANGELICA

There may be something in his file that will reveal new info on him.

RUFINITA

I need to talk to my brothers before I make any decision. But right now I think it may be too painful to relive the past.

Her voice trails off into a SIGH. Brett lays the form on the table and scribbles on a piece of paper.

BRETT

I'm leaving the form here in case you change your mind. You can reach me at this number.

Angelica and Brett exit.

INT CRAVEN HALL - DAY

Marcus enters and approaches Brett who is watching a vacuum cleaner demonstration by a young SALESMAN along with Giz, Wayne and Spider. Fatso Moulty is glued to the TV set, front and center, zombie like.

MARCUS

Cleaning up this rat house should  
make the six o'clock news.

BRETT

It's a free ham for the demo.

MARCUS

A new low even for this dorm.

The WHIRLING NOISE of the vacuum cleaner drowns them out.

SALESMAN

YOU'LL NOTICE HOW EASILY IT SLIDES  
THROUGH THE CARPET PICKING UP  
EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.

The vacuum cleaner clears a path through the black rug revealing an ornate flowered burgundy rug underneath the layered dust and grime.

SALESMAN

WOW! LOOKS LIKE YOU COULD REALLY USE  
THIS MACHINE HERE.

The salesman continues running up and down the carpet. The machine begins SPUTTERING and finally stops. The young salesman looks perplexed.

SALESMAN

Well now, that's strange. Never done  
that before.

BRETT

With this rug, I'm surprised it got  
that far. I mean how much can you  
expect from a mere machine?

The salesman tries to start it again. It COUGHS briefly, kicks up a cloud of smoke and dies. Giz moves closer to the ham tin and rests his hand on it. The salesman kneels and examines the connection. He looks up with a big fake smile.

SALESMAN

I'm a little new at this. Actually  
this is my first day on the job so  
I'm a little nervous.

GIZ  
No really, take your fine.

SPIDER  
Your do-dad thing can really motor.

SALESMAN  
Well, okay. Let's move on. Remember that white filter disc I put in the intake tube? Let's see what its' picked up.

MARCUS  
This isn't going to be pretty.

BRETT  
Just so there are no bodies.

The salesman reaches down and flips open a cover and pulls out a filthy black paper disc dripping with black gook. He displays it above his head with a relieved smile.

SALESMAN  
Look at that, microscopic particles even the eye can't see.

The black paper disc disintegrates in his hands. The salesman CHUCKLES feebly.

WAYNE  
Great. Looks like you covered it. Where's the can opener?

The salesman's SPEAKS in a monotone.

SALESMAN  
This fabulous machine has a 36-month warranty and can be yours for only \$100 down and 12-easy payments.

WAYNE  
What about the can opener?

SALESMAN  
Can opener?

GIZ  
For the ham.

SALESMAN  
No can opener.

The salesman gathers his machine, smiles weakly at the gang and slinks toward the door MUMBLING to himself.

GIZ

Hey, you want some?

He turns, gives them one last weak pathetic grimace, shakes his head, and exits, a broken man.

WAYNE

Hey, somebody go get a can opener before he changes his mind.

Giz runs out.

MARCUS

Touching. Maybe we can get Bangladesh to send some relief.

BRETT

Let's hear it. Knowing you it's either immoral, illegal or both.

MARCUS

No, you're going to thank me. Could be the mother lode.

BRETT

Am I going to get the short or the long version?

MARCUS

You know, you've always underestimated me, Brett.

BRETT

Long version.

MARCUS

We're much more alike than you'd care to admit. What if I told you that I've got a racket that's cranking in a load of bread?

BRETT

Spit it out.

MARCUS

I've got copies of every exam that's going to be given in the next two months in the whole damn university.

BRETT

What, how did you get them?

MARCUS

That's my secret. The important

question is how much will the dumb  
yo-yo's around here pay for a little  
peek?

Marcus's face contorts into an ugly mask and his voice  
EXPLODES.

MARCUS  
AND WE'RE NOT TALKING NO PENNY ANTE  
BULLSHIT HERE, EITHER.

Marcus notices Brett's surprised look and composes himself.

MARCUS  
When their stupid fannies are on the  
line, Mommy and Daddy should cough  
up big time for their little  
darlings. AND I MEAN BIG!

BRETT  
And here I was thinking it was going  
to be purse snatching little old  
ladies.

MARCUS  
Later when they've graduated and had  
a chance to make a few bucks I'll  
remind them of their past  
indiscretion.

Marcus smiles.

MARCUS  
That's when I'll twist the knife.  
I'll bleed em good and as long as I  
want for their indiscretion. Pretty  
cool, huh?

BRETT  
Yeah, you're right, I have  
underestimated you.

MARCUS  
Cream rises to the top, baby.

BRETT  
So does scum.

MARCUS  
C'mon, you can be a part of  
something big for once.

BRETT  
Looks like that grime vacuum cleaner

missed a spot.

MARCUS

You're kind of the leader of the geek pack and I could use their brain power. Like your weird friend with the cape. A genius I hear.

BRETT

Well, he could call you a slime ball in Sanskrit.

MARCUS

The exam only has the questions, not the answers. And some of this stuff is heavy.

BRETT

Now I get it.

MARCUS

Hey, they get a piece of the action too. And it'll be more than a tin of ham.

Marcus reaches into his pocket and pulls out a hundred dollar bill and nudges it toward Brett.

MARCUS

Let's just call it a bonus for signing up. And there's more where that came from.

Brett caresses the bill lightly, but pushes it back.

BRETT

How could I with Ben Franklin looking at me that way?

MARCUS

This is sweet, man. It's as good as it gets. What's not to like?

BRETT

My best friend's missing in action in Vietnam and you want me to blackmail my college mates who may end up there?

MARCUS

Feeling guilty about Nam? Don't make me laugh.

BRETT



He put his life on the line for our country. That deserves respect. Nothing you would know about.

MARCUS

Look around you, man. This war isn't about fighting for God, Country and Motherhood. It's about feeding the war machine, nationalist chest beating, kicking gook ass.

BRETT

Write a letter to your congressman.

MARCUS

Haven't you figured it out yet? LBJ wanted this war and lied to get us into it. That's what they always do when they want to go to war. Those slope heads are no threat to us.

BRETT

Let me see if I got this right. You're indignant cause you were lied to while you're trying to screw over your classmates?

MARCUS

The only cause I'm interested in is the one that's focused on me.

BRETT

Make sure you don't track our clean rug on your way out.

MARCUS

Always playing the sanctimonious fool while at the same time trying to fuck the prima donna babe.

BRETT

What are you babbling about?

MARCUS

Angelica, the ice princess bitch. We both know you'll be strapping her on in two two time first chance you get.

BRETT

Beat it, while you can still walk.

MARCUS

Me, personally? I think she looks a

little frigid.

BRETT

What did she do, put you down, lover boy?

MARCUS

HA! That icicle? I wouldn't fuck her with your dick.

Brett grabs Marcus by the front of his shirt and throws him against the wall. Spider and Wayne come over and pull Brett away.

SPIDER

Lighten up or Johnny will be here.

Marcus straightens his shirt with a big grin.

MARCUS

My, my, a little touchy. Must have cut a little too close to the bone. Hey look, once you've nailed her a few times you'll have her under your thumb and you can grind her any which way you want to, if you know what I mean.

Marcus grinds his thumb into a table to accentuate his point. Brett lunges at Marcus, but is restrained by Wayne.

WAYNE

Don't do it Brett. That's what he wants.

Brett glares at Marcus. Marcus smiles broadly.

MARCUS

Like I said, we're much more alike than you'd care to admit.

Marcus exits.

INT LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Rufinita, Jose, Angelica and Brett are sitting around a living room table. Brett hands her a manila envelope. Rufinita pulls out a form from the yellow manila envelope and signs it. She hands it to Brett.

ANGELICA

I'm sure it will be a relief to finally know what really happened to him.

Rufinita pulls a folded letter and hands it to Brett.

RUFINITA

Thought you might want to see this.  
It's the last letter he sent us.

Brett reads it SOFTLY.

BRETT

Hickem Air Base, June 9, 1942. Dear  
Mama. I'm writing this on my lap  
with a flashlight since the barracks  
lights are out. I'll be receiving my  
orders soon. We're all excited to  
finally see some action. The word is  
we're headed to New Guinea. Love to  
Papa and my brothers and Sisters,  
Ernie.

RUFINITA

It's like it was just yesterday.

BRETT

One other thing, do any of Ernie's  
old friends still live around here?

RUFINITA

Yes. Jesse Roybal in Walsenburg.

ANGELICA

Just down the road.

RUFINITA

They were the best of buddies.

BRETT

Thanks. I appreciate your help.

RUFINITA

He was the best big brother. Loving  
and protective, the best.

ANGELICA

Did he have a girlfriend?

RUFINITA

Oye! You've heard of the sailor who  
has a girl in every port? Well Ernie  
had one on every block.

Rufinita LAUGHS at the memory then stops suddenly.

RUFINITA

There was this one, though, from

Idaho who got to him.

BRETT  
How did you know?

RUFINITA  
He said he liked the way she  
laughed.

ANGELICA  
laughed? Really?

RUFINITA  
From the way he said it, I knew she  
was the one. And, the day he left  
for boot camp, he asked me to mail  
her a letter.

BRETT  
To Idaho?

RUFINITA  
Boise. I'm sorry I don't remember  
her name.

BRETT  
Thank you. That really helps.

Brett and Angelica shake hands with Rufinita.

BRETT  
I hope my report does his memory  
justice.

They walk toward Jose who is blocking the door to the front  
hall, with a defiant look.

RUFINITA  
Hijo, move out of the way. What's  
wrong with you today?

JOSE  
There's the door.

RUFINITA  
Don't pay him no mind. He's all into  
this Raza revolution stuff. Thinks  
the war in Vietnam is a big  
government conspiracy.

JOSE  
I don't see no Senators sons over  
there. Just us and our black  
brothers.

RUFINITA  
Your Uncle Ernie would have been the  
first one there.

BRETT  
For sure, for sure.

Brett and Angelica wave goodbye and exit.

INT - SPIDER'S ROOM NIGHT

Wayne, Spider, and Eric are smoking a joint. Nate is watching a baseball game on television. The room is thick with smoke and the odor of marijuana. Music WAFTS in the background. Brett enters.

BRETT  
I like these late night study  
sessions.

Spider takes a deep hit and hands the joint to Brett.

SPIDER  
Have a hit, man.

Brett takes a hit

SPIDER  
It's Acapulco Gold. Better than  
Columbian Silver.

ERIC  
But not as good as Purple Skunk.

WAYNE  
Or, as bad as Burbank Brown.

BRETT  
When you get to red let me know.  
Speaking of red where is my red  
caped wonder?

Spider nods toward Nate who's huddled nearby with a big grin on his face.

BRETT  
I thought he might want to know that  
HIS ANGEL called him.

Nate looks up with a giant sappy smile on his face.

NATHAN  
My Angel? But, of course, my  
beautiful Angelica.

BRETT  
You being high on her suddenly has a whole new meaning.

NATHAN  
This dope is quite sumptuous. I'm seeing everything in magnificent new ways.

BRETT  
Let's not get carried away. You're just stoned.

Giz enters with a laundry basket.

GIZ  
The legend of the bad vato continues.

SPIDER  
Oh, no!

WAYNE  
The curse is still with us.

Giz SINGS.

GIZ  
I got a big trig quiz. Now I'm in one mother jam. An idea struck me, Shazam! A med excuse is the best ruse. Off to the clinic I cruise. They thought they had the final say, but hey, I slip slided away.

NATHAN  
I just love his poetry.

SPIDER  
One day they'll wise up to you.

WAYNE  
He's gone through so many illnesses, he could minor in pathology.

ERIC  
Which one did you use this time?

GIZ  
Diarrhea. A cool one, huh? Slip slided right through. Get it?

Giz does a little Chicano jig.

GIZ

They made me drink some white stuff,  
but, hey, I got the excuse slip.

Wayne shakes your head.

WAYNE

You foolish, foolish man.

SPIDER

Your stools are going to get so hard  
you'll be spitting out bullets.

Giz grabs the clothes from his laundry basket and shoves them into a lower drawer. He tries to close the drawer with his foot, but the clothes sticking out prevents it.

WAYNE

The navy fold.

The gang collectively stare at Giz and shake their heads in disbelief as he climbs under his bed covers laden with junk with his clothes on. Giz looks up.

GIZ

What?

INT. PEEWEE'S POOL HALL - DAY

Brett approaches JESSE ROYBAL, a man playing pool by himself. He puts a ball in front of each pocket, and lines them up for a shot. He hunches down, studies the balls, pauses, and then moves one of them slightly. He stoops down again, scrunching one eye, surveying the layout. He notices Brett standing nearby, watching him.

JESSE

Mind moving? Gonna jinx me.

BRETT

Sorry.

Brett backs off. Jesse chalks up his cue stick never taking his eye off the table. He carefully positions the white ball, leans over for the shot and hits it firmly. The white ball careens around the table, knocking each ball into a pocket except for the last one which hangs on the lip of the pocket. He twists his body trying to coax it in.

JESSE

C'mon, baby. One time for Papa.

Jesse stares at it, but the ball refuses to drop. Jesse returns to his stool.

JESSE  
Story of my life.

BRETT  
I think you're allowed three minutes  
to let it drop.

Jesse studies Brett, GRUNTS and turns to Barney.

JESSE  
Hit me, Barney.

BARNEY LATUDA, the bartender brings a Tequila shooter and a  
beer. Brett sits next to Jesse.

BRETT  
(eying the shot glass)  
Looks like you're on your way.

JESSE  
I know where I want to go and I want  
to get there quickly.

Jesse drains the tequila and washes it down with beer.

BRETT  
Like a straight clean shot in the  
corner pocket.

Jesse turns to Brett.

JESSE  
I like to drink alone.

BRETT  
What's your favorite drink?

JESSE  
The fifth one.

BRETT  
Rufinita Ortiz told me I'd find you  
here.

JESSE  
After my first drink I get loud and  
obnoxious. After my second I'm just  
a pain in the ass. By my third drink  
I get downright mean. This is my  
third. Get the drift, kid?

BRETT  
I'm trying to get some info on Ernie  
Ortiz. Rufinita said you might help.



JESSE  
Who in the hell are you and why do  
you want to know?

BRETT  
A student from Stonehill College.  
Brett Freeman. It's for a history  
class project.

Brett extends his hand. Jesse ignores it.

JESSE  
Ernie, eh?

BRETT  
I'm trying to unravel the mystery of  
what happened to the man.

Jesse catches Barney's eye and points to his empty shot  
glass. Barney shuffles over and fills it up.

BRETT  
Actually, it's become more than just  
homework. It's personal now.

Jesse rubs his chin, sizing up Brett.

BRETT  
Being his best friend, I thought  
you'd like to know how he died.

Jesse relaxes, smiles and nods his head.

JESSE  
They broke the mold with Ernie. Best  
buddy you could ever have.

BRETT  
What was he like?

Jesse strokes his graying mustache, thinking.

JESSE  
Let's put it this way. When I first  
met the guy, I hated his guts and  
wanted to kick his ass. First chance  
I got, I called him out and we mixed  
it up pretty good.

BRETT  
Really, your future best friend?

JESSE  
Only problem is the only ass that

got kicked was mine. Hell of a fight, though.

BRETT

Not exactly what friendships are built on.

EXT ALLEY - NIGHT

Ernie and Jesse are circling each other with their fists cocked. Both of their faces are bleeding. Jesse lunges at Ernie who sidesteps him delivering a punch to his head. Jesse falls to the ground breathing hard. Ernie holds out his hand to help Jesse up who looks at it suspiciously.

ERNIE

You're tough and no one can say you didn't put up a good fight.

JESSE

I'll get you next time.

Ernie grabs Jesse's hand and pulls him up.

ERNIE

Sure you will and I'll still be around when you're ready for me, but right now we need to have someone look at that nasty cut above your eye. And in case you didn't know it, the ladies love guys with scars on their faces.

Jesse surrenders a small smile.

JESSE

It'll take more than a scar to have them take a second look at me.

Ernie LAUGHS.

INT PEEWEE'S POOL HALL - DAY

JESSE

Soon as he whipped me, I realized I was just jealous. And when he picked me up off the ground and offered to take me to a clinic, I knew it was I who was the asshole.

BRETT

So, he was your basic bread and butter nice guy?

JESSE

More than that. When God was handing out the good stuff for Ernie, he put the pedal to the metal and didn't pull up on it for awhile.

BRETT

I know he was pretty popular just from his yearbook.

JESSE

Girls would turn and smile when we walked by. And with this puss you know it wasn't me.

Brett LAUGHS.

JESSE

I won't even mention how smart and athletic he was. Easy to hate a guy like that.

BRETT

The butterfly shot where you knock six balls from the center of the table into each pocket.

JESSE

Yeah, you got it.

BRETT

What about his downside? Nobody's perfect.

JESSE

He was reckless. With women, work, his life, everything. He once told me you have to live your tomorrow's today, And that's the way he lived his life.

BRETT

That's not so dark.

JESSE

Well, he was also a taker. A sly taker. Like a thousand little cuts. You wouldn't realize you were a quart low of blood until he was gone.

BRETT

What do you mean?

JESSE

He could size up anyone in two blinks of an eye and figure out what this person could bring to the plate, so to speak.

BRETT

I'm starting to get the picture.

JESSE

Probably not. He was a complicated guy. Always laughing and making everyone feel you were his best buddy. Only no one really knew him, like what was going on inside.

BRETT

Not even his best friend?

JESSE

The only time I got a glimpse into his soul was when that babe from Idaho dumped him. He wasn't used to losing.

BRETT

She dumped him? You sure?

JESSE

I was there when he read the letter. I'll never forget the look on his face.

BRETT

Any clue as to why it happened?

JESSE

Well, for starters, she was a white chick from a rich, prestigious family. He was brown, from the poor side of town, son of a coal miner. I'll let you do the math.

Jesse finishes the tequila shot, but before the jigger hits the counter, Barney is there to fill it up.

BRETT

Do you remember her name?

JESSE

Sue Young. Holy Tamale, I can't believe I remembered her name.

BRETT

If you had one last question to ask  
Ernie, what would it be?

Jesse picks up his tequila shot glass and studies it  
intently. He turns it slowly.

JESSE  
Why did he pick me up off the ground  
after our big fight, when I was  
doing all I could to destroy him?

BRETT  
Maybe he was just one of those cool  
All American guys.

JESSE  
Yeah, he could do the cluster shot,  
the hardest shot in pool, where the  
eight ball is surrounded by six  
balls, call the pocket and knock it  
in, every time.

Jesse shakes his head, smiling, and drains the jigger.

INT JOHNNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Brett enters to find Johnny studying a poster with the  
notation "Fighting for peace is like fucking for virginity."

JOHNNY  
Those crazy hippies keep climbing on  
the founders statue, putting these  
up. Third one this week.

BRETT  
Maybe they think they're Tarzan.

JOHNNY  
Yeah, but they look more like Jane.  
And, smell like the chimp.

Brett nods.

JOHNNY  
This anti-war crap is getting out of  
hand. The school president thinks  
it's unpatritotic.

BRETT  
Naturally. He thinks it's more  
patriotic to bomb the gooks back  
into the stone age.

JOHNNY

I thought that's where they were to begin with.

BRETT  
Great. So what did you call me for?

JOHNNY  
I invited Jason the anti-war leader over. I thought you might help me convince him to tone things down.

BRETT  
I don't think so. He's a fanatic, a self-righteous fanatic, the worst kind.

JOHNNY  
Yeah, but someone needs to call him on his radical propaganda bullshit.

Jason walks in.

JASON  
(pointing to Brett)  
What's he doing here?

BRETT  
Johnny is under the delusion that you're a rational, reasonable man who will listen to an appeal for an orderly protest.

JASON  
As long as he's here we've got nothing to talk about.

BRETT  
What he doesn't realize is that all this chaos makes you king rat amongst the rabble. And we both know you like the feeling.

JASON  
If it takes chaos to tear down the walls of injustice, deception and the war machine, than so be it.

BRETT  
This isn't about the war. It about glory for Jason the Great Revolutionist and, hey, it doesn't hurt with the chicks either. And, isn't that what it's all about in the end anyway?

JASON

In a few years the industrial military complex is going to have us all in concentration camps in Nevada, you know like with the Japanese in World War II.

BRETT

Don't knock Nevada. It has the least incidence of strokes, venereal diseases and Tupperware parties.

JASON

You're the biggest leaping, screaming, gaping, flaming, asshole this side of Nixon's.

BRETT

Second biggest.

JASON

Up yours.

Jason jabs his middle finger in the air.

JOHNNY

Tell your people that the next person who puts up a protest sign on Benjamin Stonehill's statue will be expelled, no if's and or buts straight from the Presidents lips.

JASON

What ever happened to freedom of speech, as in the Constitution?

Jason storms out.

JOHNNY

I like your low key debating style and how you slowly brought him around.

BRETT

Ten years from now he'll be an insurance salesman, fighting traffic, thinking about the cold beer he's going to have when he gets home and the snatch he might get from the old lady if he plays his cards right.

JOHNNY

Why am I suddenly feeling so

contemptuously ordinary?

BRETT

Actually you're not ordinary. You're extra-ordinary in an ordinary sort of way.

JOHNNY

You seriously need to look into an early graduation program.

EXT MAIN QUAD - DAY

The main quad is filled with protesting students with signs, painted faces, and hippie clothes. The smell of marijuana permeates the atmosphere. Jason is SPEAKING on a platform with a band behind him.

JASON

We can speak of pollution in terms of the historical pollution of hunger in the world, the historical pollution of aggressive militarism, and the historical pollution of lies, deception and fear to mislead the people into war.

The crowd WHISTLES, YELLS and CLAPS their approval.

JASON

But, the only solution to pollution is the people's humane revolution.

The students begin CHANTING.

STUDENTS

END THE WAR! END THE WAR!

Angelica her face painted in red, white and blue sees Brett and YELLS to him.

ANGELICA

BRETT! HEY BRETT. OVER HERE!

Brett ambles over.

BRETT

Mingling with the common folks today, are we?

ANGELICA

We all needs to stand up to Nixon's lies so we can end this war.



BRETT  
When you think you're right, truth  
is a minor annoyance.

ANGELICA  
Don't you care about anything?

BRETT  
You put your life on the line for  
your beliefs, and then you find  
you're wrong.

ANGELICA  
So nobody's right?

BRETT  
We're emotional animals. We don't  
base our decisions on carefully  
reasoned facts. We base them on our  
acquired biases and the tribe we  
happen to belong to.

ANGELICA  
There's something missing in you.  
It's sad.

BRETT  
You want something sad? My best  
buddy went to Nam cause he believed  
the commie threat propoganda from  
our Government and now he's gone  
nowhere to be found.

ANGELICA  
I'm sorry. I didn't know.

Jason points to Nate who is on the platform.

JASON  
Our caped wonder man wants to speak,  
so listen up.

The crowd starts YELLING and CLAPPING. Nate takes the  
microphone.

JASON  
Speak directly to the swarm.

Nathan RECITES a poem.

NATHAN  
Stumbling in. Yes, we went,  
stumbling in. Foolishly, we went  
with the red, white and blue. Yes,

stumbling in. Their lives were to begin, but now nowhere to be seen. They went stumbling in. They were so young, Not meant to be. Their lives burning within. Foolishly laying their hearts on the line. Stumbling in. Stumbling in.

Nate brings his red cape up giving the V for victory sign. The crowd APPLAUDS madly as he exits.

ANGELICA

Wasn't he wonderful?

BRETT

It wouldn't be the same without the cape.

ANGELICA

At least he's willing to put his feelings on the line.

BRETT

You don't need to wear it on your sleeve, or cape to feel it.

ANGELICA

And what do you feel?

BRETT

Nothing.

ANGELICA

It's ironic that you can't find Ernie, when you're the one who's lost?

BRETT

If you don't care where you're going you aren't lost.

An ex-soldier veteran with a beard and a worn out army fatigue jacket walks across the stage to the microphone.

SOLDIER ONE

My name is John Monroe and here's a bunch of bullshit.

The soldier heaves a medal into the air. Another veteran walks to the microphone.

SOLDIER TWO

My name's Peter Harrigan. I got a purple heart and I hope I get

another one fighting these mother fuckers.

The soldier flings the medal into the air. A third veteran also dressed in an army fatigue jacket and black beret limps to the microphone with a cane.

SOLDIER THREE

Army retired. I've taken three purple hearts, distinguished service cross, silver star, bronze star, Army commendation and a lot of other shit.

The crowd CLAPS.

SOLDIER THREE

This is for my brothers.

The soldier throws the medals into the air and limps off stage. The crowd ROARS. Angelica turns, sees Nate approaching and hugs him.

ANGELICA

I loved your poem. You're so original.

NATHAN

"The sky and the strong wind have moved the spirit inside me till I am carried away trembling with joy."

Brett rolls his eyes. The band begins PLAYING again and many of the students dance and SING with them.

INT CLASSROOM HALL - DAY

Brett opens the door to Professor Langley's office and see's he's talking to Angelica. He leaves it slightly open.

INT JIM LANGLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

JIM

Your progress on your semester project is abysmal to put it mildly. Margaret Sanger is a worthy subject, but you've turned it into a political polemic.

ANGELICA

If you substitute the word controversial for political I will agree with you.

JIM

No matter which word you wish to choose, abortion is still reprehensible and you're dragging your project into the muck by saluting it.

ANGELICA

Her fifty year crusade was to educate women about birth control and her only connection with abortions was to prevent them, sir, with all due respect.

Jim hesitates walks behind his desk.

JIM

I will double check this. I do recall she was indicted by the government for obscenity.

ANGELICA

Yes, she was, unfairly. She believed that each woman needed to be the absolute mistress of their own bodies and had the temerity to voice and publish her opinion.

JIM

You're fighting me here. I'm just trying to help.

ANGELICA

I'm disagreeing with you, sir, not fighting.

JIM

I hope you're not one of those pretty girls who thinks they can get by just on their looks. It doesn't work with me.

ANGELICA

I would be insulted and disappointed if you graded me for anything but my work.

JIM

I think we're finished here.

Angelica nods and exits.

INT CLASSROOM HALL - DAY

Angelica enters the hallway biting her lip, her eyes teary.

BRETT

Don't let him get to you. He's a first class dork head.

Angelica shakes her head, closes her eyes and storms off.

INT JIM LANGLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Brett walks in as Jim is reviewing his history project.

JIM

You've picked an interesting subject for your assignment. But it's highly unusual.

BRETT

In what way?

JIM

Why is this guy, a complete unknown, worthy of recognition?

BRETT

Why not give some average Joe a chance? All the famous people have already been covered.

JIM

But famous people earn their recognition by their accomplishments.

BRETT

The average guy leaves a more subtle mark which maybe doesn't become apparent until later. Jesus comes to mind.

JIM

Okay. than why was your choice randomized? It makes it frivolous.

BRETT

Because I wanted to give everyone a fair chance for immortality.

JIM

But until you find Ernie's final destiny you're in purgatory. So far, Ernie's sitting in Pearl Harbor waiting for his final orders. Do you think that's enough to formulate a

question?

BRETT

As I get to know him better as a man, it will be easier for me to ask the right question. I'm not there yet, but I have a few more rocks to turn over.

JIM

Okay, your call. But you're taking a big gamble when you consider it's fifty percent of your grade.

Brett gets up to leave.

JIM

One more thing.

BRETT

Sure.

JIM

When I first saw you I pegged you as a trouble maker. You know, the can't stand authority types.

BRETT

And now that you know me better?

Jim gets up and walks to the front of his desk.

JIM

Still haven't figured you out yet. You're so quiet in class you're almost invisible.

BRETT

There's an old Mexican saying, *En boca cerrado, no entra moscas*.

JIM

Which means?

BRETT

In a closed mouth, flies do not enter.

JIM

And your caped friend. Why is he always challenging me?

BRETT

Nate's an obsessive intellectual.

Always has to go one layer deeper.  
Don't take it personal.

JIM  
Intellectual? HA! Let's call a spade  
a spade. He's a freak job. Don't  
know why the school let him in. He  
should be institutionalized.

BRETT  
You need to get up to speed. Haven't  
you heard, diversity is the new  
model?

JIM  
I stand by what I said, a "whack  
job".

BRETT  
It's all semantics. You call him a  
freak, I call him eccentric. You  
call yourself "provocative", I call  
you a "prick".

Jim pick up a pencil and moves closer to Brett.

JIM  
Now we get to the truth of it. I  
"turn" you off" I believe is the  
street expression.

BRETT  
Your power base is the grade button.  
You can't see it, but it's there and  
everyone knows it. And you play it  
to the hilt to feed your  
insecurities. That's a euphemism for  
fucked up.

JIM  
Well, well. I must say I didn't  
think you had it in you.

BRETT  
You just naturally bring out the  
best in me.

JIM  
I'm not the kind of guy you or Nate  
want to tangle with. If you cross me  
I'll break you like a stick.

Jim snaps his pencil in half.

BRETT  
Well, at least a pencil.

JIM  
You know, I think I do understand  
you much better now.

BRETT  
Anything else, Jim?

JIM  
That will be just about enough for  
today.

Jim nibbles on his broken pencil as he watches Brett exit.

INT RUFINITA'S HOME - NIGHT

Rufinita, EMILIO ORTIZ, JAIME ORTIZ are all sitting in the living room watching Brett pull Ernie's Deceased Personnel File from a yellow envelope. Brett leafs through the papers, stops and and begins reading from one.

BRETT  
Here it is.

EMILIO  
What?

BRETT  
The Missing air crew report number  
16156 states that Ernie was in  
transit on a Douglas C-53 Skytrooper  
in route to Christmas Island with a  
2ND Lieutenant Mllton S. Holcomb as  
passengers.

JAIME  
Christmas Island. Where's that?

Brett shakes his head.

BRETT  
They left John Rogers airport, in  
Oahu with a crew of five, piloted by  
Captain Kirkbride J. Dooley on June  
16th, at 2135 Hawaii time.

JAIME  
That's 9:35PM.

EMILIO  
Why would they leave at night?



BRETT

The crew consisted of the pilot, a co pilot, a navigator and two enlisted airmen. Type of mission: transporting supplies.

RUFINITA

So they tagged along on a transport plane?

BRETT

Looks like it.

JOSE

How far is it from Hawaii to Christmas Island?

BRETT

Don't know. I'll find out, though.

RUFINITA

Is that all it says?

Brett begins READING from the report.

BRETT

Aircraft is believed to have been lost as a result of...

Brett's finger runs down the sheet.

BRETT

...got lost and ran out of gas.

Brett MUMBLES along for a bit and then READS on.

BRETT

Cause of death, drowning.

Brett stops. Jaime purses his lips, Emilio rubs his face. Rufinita looks up with a vacuous stare.

EMILIO

Well, we finally know. After all these years.

His VOICE trails off.

RUFINITA

I think only God knows what happened to our Ernie.

BRETT

We have the names and serial numbers

of the crew. I'm going to do some more digging.

JOSE  
All this for a stupid grade?

BRETT  
It's not about a grade. I want to know what happened to Ernie. And I'm going to find out, one way or another.

Jose walks in front of Brett.

JOSE  
Maybe, it's time you just let it be. You're just stirring a pot of beans that won't cook.

BRETT  
I'll leave now. You'll want to talk alone.

RUFINITA  
Son, can you walk him to the door without embarrassing us? And thank you, Brett. You gave us something we never had before.

BRETT  
Sure, sure.

Jose escorts Brett to the door. The family just sits there silently, each with their own thoughts.

INT CHURCHILL BAR - NIGHT

Brett is sitting in the Brown Palace Hotel's elegant Churchill's bar when SUE YOUNG BYRON, a classy, beautiful lady enters. She's wearing a formal gown. Brett rises.

BRETT  
Thanks for seeing me.

SUE  
I come to Denver every year around this time so I'm glad it worked out. Besides, Ernie deserves the attention.

BRETT  
We'd all like to think we'll be remembered when we're gone.

SUE

The charity ball is about to start  
so what do you want to know?

A waiter dressed and takes their orders.

BRETT

I thought you'd be interested in  
knowing some facts I've recently  
uncovered about Ernie.

SUE

You mean how he died? Of course I'd  
like to know. I just knew he was  
missing in action and assumed it was  
on one of his combat missions.

Brett shakes his head.

BRETT

Not exactly. He was being  
transported from Hawaii to Christmas  
Island as a passenger on a cargo  
plane when it just disappeared and  
was never heard from again.

SUE

It must be terrible for his family  
not knowing exactly what happened.

BRETT

I'm researching his final fate for a  
history class I'm taking so I'm  
hopeful there's still one more  
chapter to unfold.

SUE

I would be very interested in  
knowing.

BRETT

I'd like to ask you a few questions  
about Ernie the man with your  
permission.

Sue nods.

BRETT

Is it true you broke off with him  
right before he went overseas?

SUE

It's a little more complicated than  
that. After he earned his wings, the

flight command was so impressed with him, they asked him to stay on as a flight instructor.

BRETT

I never knew that. Why didn't he?

SUE

He asked me to marry him then and I said I would if he'd accept that assignment.

BRETT

You told him that?

SUE

It came down to his love for me or going on to fulfill his destiny, and I lost. He loved me, I never doubted that, but he had something to prove in the war.

BRETT

Something to prove?

SUE

He didn't want to let his people down.

BRETT

His people?

SUE

His race. Raza he called it.

BRETT

I'm not sure I understand.

SUE

Times were different back then. Hispanics were looked down on.

BRETT

I think racism is the word you're looking for. What was the one thing that stood out about him?

SUE

If I had to pick one trait it would be his character. It never occurred to him to be anything but straight up.

BRETT

Give ma an example.

SUE  
There was that time we went to a  
movie together right here in Denver.

INT MOVIE LOBBY - NIGHT

Ernie walks into the movie lobby with Sue and hands the  
USHER his tickets.

USHER  
You've got to sit upstairs.

ERNIE  
I prefer to sit on the main floor.

USHER  
No, you've got to sit in the  
mezzanine with the rest of the  
Mexicans.

Ernie grabs the usher by his sleeve and pulls him in,

ERNIE  
Look, Sonny Boy, I paid the same as  
everyone else so I'm sitting where I  
want. And if that's not good enough  
for you get your head guy and I'll  
deal with him.

USHER  
But, you're a Mexican, aren't you?

ERNIE  
No, I'm a third generation American  
and even if I was a Mexican I would  
still sit where I want. Do  
understand what I'm saying?

The usher nods meekly.

USHER  
Just tell me where you want to sit,  
sir.

Ernie grabs the usher's flashlight.

ERNIE  
Follow me and I'll show you.

Ernie, Sue and the usher walk together into the dark  
theater.

INT CHURCHILL BAR - NIGHT

SUE

I was so proud of him. My respect for him grew.

BRETT

One jerk down, so many more to go.

SUE

I don't remember a thing about the movie. All I knew was that he was holding my hand and I was thrilled to be with him. If you've ever been in love you'd know what I mean.

BRETT

I hope you'll forgive me for asking, but you did send him a Dear John letter, didn't you?

Sue slowly nods and turns her head away slightly. The waiter appears and lays down the drinks. She hesitates closing her eyes without responding.

BRETT

If I'm being insensitive let me know.

Sue recovers and shakes her head.

SUE

I felt if he really loved me, he would've taken the safe assignment. If he was sent to a war zone he might never come back. I didn't feel it was fair to ask me to wait for years just to see if I was going to be a widow.

BRETT

It turned out you were right.

SUE

He was a fighter pilot, where the casualties were the highest.

BRETT

"By his dreams, so shall you know him"

SUE

"And, by his fears so shall you control him." I know that quote.

BRETT

What were his dreams?

SUE

He dreamed of becoming a politician to represent his people. He felt they were being treated unfairly and that he was the one who was going to make them realize their political power. If he'd have lived he would have been their voice.

BRETT

And his fears?

SUE

That he wouldn't live long enough to realize his dreams. He often made references to his mortality.

BRETT

Really?

SUE

He once wrote me, "When I have fears that I may cease to be... And when I feel, fair creature of an hour! That I shall never look upon thee more,... than on the shore of the wide world I stand alone, and think till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink."

BRETT

Every woman should have that written to them.

Sue smiles. A man enters and scans the room. Sue sees him and gets up.

SUE

I'm afraid I have to go. It's been wonderful thinking about Ernie again.

Brett offers his hand, but Sue leans in and gives him a hug instead. Sue walks away and then turns to Brett.

SUE

By the way, I should mention that last year I met a war historian at a party who tracks missing planes from World War II. When I told him that there was always a mystery of how

Ernie disappeared he told me he could help if I had the serial number of the aircraft. Since I didn't it never went any further.

BRETT

Really? Do you still know how I can contact him? I have the serial number of the transport plane that Ernie was on when it disappeared.

SUE

No, all I remember is that he was from Castle Rock just south of Denver.

BRETT

And, his name?

SUE

Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, wait, I do remember. It was the name of one of our Presidents.

BRETT

A recent one?

SUE

No it was one of our earlier ones. If it ever comes back to me I'll call you.

BRETT

Thanks.

Sue smiles and exits.

INT NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

Brett and Angelica walk into an office and COLONEL ROBERT DICKERSON motions toward the seats in front of his desk.

COLONEL

I've studied the records of the Army Air Corp personnel you requested. Keep in mind that I'm limited in what I can divulge since you aren't related to the person in question.

BRETT

We appreciate anything you can share with us.

Brett pulls out his personnel record of Ernest Ortiz.



BRETT

According to Ernie's military record he boarded a Douglas C-53 Skytrooper, serial number 42-10069, on the night of June 16, 1942 at John Rogers Airport in Honolulu Hawaii with fellow fighter pilot 2ND Lieutenant Milton S. Holcomb and five crew members.

COLONEL

That's correct.

BRETT

They were passengers in transit to Christmas Island, a small chain of islands known as the Line Islands.

COLONEL

Yes.

BRETT

It says here in Extract Case#2-307 that they got lost and ran out of gas.

COLONEL

True.

BRETT

All evidence was considered and studied and it was unanimously resolved that the remains be declared non-recoverable. June 26, 1948.

COLONEL

And that's the same conclusion reached later in a review conducted by the Office of the Quartermaster Memorial Division in May, 1949 with exceptions noted for the copilot and navigator.

Brett leans forward.

BRETT

What's that? Did you just say something about exceptions?

The Colonel begins READING.

COLONEL

The facts and circumstances

substantiate the findings of non-recoverability as presented by the Field Board of Review with the exceptions as noted below: Sylar, Harry L. Jr, 2ND Lt. serial#0-659-443 and Auman, William R. 2ND Lt. serial#0-659-859.

ANGELICA

Sir, are you saying that eleven months later they revised their findings?

COLONEL

They must have uncovered additional information. I just read you the report as it is.

BRETT

You have the reports of both, Lt. Sylar and Lt. Auman in front of you, sir. Do they indicate any service for them after June 16, 1942?

COLONEL

As I said earlier I cannot provide any specific information without permission from their next of kin.

BRETT

All you've got to do is take a peek and either shake or nod your head. That's all I'm asking.

ANGELICA

How could it make any difference twenty nine years later?

COLONEL

Regulations are made for a reason. I'm sorry.

Brett leans his head back and rubs his face in frustration.

BRETT

Gees! I can't believe it.

COLONEL

Any other questions?

ANGELICA

Brett, wasn't there something in his medical record?

Brett's face brightens up.

BRETT

Yes. In his medical record, as you can see here.

Brett gets up and turns a paper for the Colonel to see.

BRETT

It shows here that he visited a dentist on November 9, 1941 in Phoenix, Arizona and again in January 14, 1942.

The Colonel follows Brett's fingers and nods.

BRETT

And, then curiously, from December 20, 1943 through January 5, 1944 he is listed as being treated in Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Curious, cause he supposedly died on June 16, 1942.

COLONEL

That's obviously a notation error.

BRETT

Notation error? The Army is anal about their records, Sir.

COLONEL

This is a records center, not a historical research facility. Those are answers you're going to have to uncover on your own.

The Colonel rises, indicating the meeting is over.

BRETT

One last question, sir. Do you think you can contact their next of kin and ask them to contact me?

COLONEL

You know I can't.

BRETT

Than how about information as to where I might locate them?

COLONEL

I know this is important to you, but you've got to realize that we are

not allowed to answer those questions.

BRETT

Than can you at least give me their home towns so I can track them down on my own?

The Colonel hesitates.

ANGELICA

Please, Sir, it's important to Ernie's family.

The Colonel picks up one file. He peruses it.

COLONEL

Auman was from Atglend, Pennsylvania.

The Colonel leafs through a second folder. He flips a page.

COLONEL

And Sylar was from Fargo, North Dakota. And that will be all for today.

BRETT

Thank you, sir.

INT HALL - DAY

Angelica and Brett are walking down the hall.

ANGELICA

Do you think your jalopy can make it back? It was a wing and a prayer getting here.

A button on Brett's shirt sleeve snags on Angelica's sweater.

ANGELICA

Stop, you snagged me.

Brett stops. Angelica works to unravel the snag.

BRETT

I'm curious, too.

ANGELICA

About Ernie?

BRETT

No, about you.

ANGELICA

Me? You need to come in closer.  
You're pulling my sweater.

Brett leans in. Their faces almost touch.

BRETT

Yeah, why you keep hanging around.

ANGELICA

That's usually my line. There. I  
think I got it.

BRETT

Yeah, but I don't get it. When  
something's not right, I get this  
feeling in the back of my neck.

ANGELICA

Meaning what?

BRETT

It's about a pure breed hanging out  
with a mangy mutt. It's not a fit.  
And we both know who the mangy mutt  
is.

ANGELICA

So, what are you saying?

BRETT

You're beautiful and sexy. The kind  
of woman every man fantasizes about.  
Am I a little clearer now?

ANGELICA

Everyone is always telling me how  
beautiful I am. It would be nice if  
anyone ever bothered to dig a little  
deeper to see what's underneath all  
the packaging.

BRETT

I found out long time ago that  
beautiful women are more trouble  
than they're worth.

ANGELICA

You can set your mind at ease.  
You're not my type. I'm just  
interested in unraveling the mystery  
of a certain Lt. Ernest Ortiz.

BRETT  
And, that's it?

ANGELICA  
When I was a kid, we used to play  
hide and seek. And I had a special  
hiding place where no one could ever  
find me.

BRETT  
What's that got to do with Ernie?

ANGELICA  
I can still remember the excitement  
as I waited in this dark place as my  
friends looked for me.

BRETT  
I've had that same thrill in dark  
places, but it's usually with  
someone else.

Angelica CHUCKLES.

ANGELICA  
Now for the first time since I was a  
child I'm having that same feeling  
only now I'm doing the searching.

BRETT  
Maybe you need to find it with  
someone in the present.

ANGELICA  
God, you're tense. You really do  
need to get yourself a good woman.

Angelica smiles.

ANGELICA  
But, I'm not sure you'd would know  
one if she fell on top of you.

BRETT  
Yeah, maybe. Only I like to be on  
top.

ANGELICA  
Please, spare me the details.

INT CRAVEN HALL DORM - NIGHT

Brett is in the phone booth dialing a phone number.

BRETT

Hello, Mr. McSwain, my name is Brett Freeman from Stonehill College in Canon City, Colorado.

Brett nods his head.

BRETT

Yes sir. I got your name from James Monroe, the World War II historian. He said you might be able to tell me something about the crew of the Skytrooper C-53 captained by Lieutenant Kirkbridge J. Dooley since you were part of his outfit in Hawaii in World War II.

Brett frowns.

BRETT

No, sir I'm not trying to pry into anyone's life. I'm just trying to find out what happened to one of the fighter pilots who was aboard their last flight.

Brett TAPS the counter.

BRETT

No sir, it's for a history class project only and not for the public, I can promise you.

Brett bites his lower lip.

BRETT

Sir, I wish you would reconsider. It's important to me and not just for the grade. Are you still there, sir?

Brett scowls.

BRETT

DAMN! DAMN!

Brett hangs up the phone shaking his head.

INT BRETT'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Nate's in his bed under the covers fully dressed in his super hero garb. His face is covered with welts and bruises. Brett enters

BRETT

Did you get the number of the  
freight train?

Nate smiles weakly.

BRETT

What happened, gonzo space man from  
the twin constellations? Or is it  
space men?

NATHAN

We both got beat up.

BRETT

Who did it?

Nate turns his head, and purses his lips.

BRETT

Yeah, you're weird, but not stupid.  
C'mon, spit it out

Nate shakes his head.

BRETT

Was it Marcus and his gay friends?

NATHAN

Not the gay guys. Besides, just  
because they're different doesn't  
make them bad. Sometimes even your  
best friends...

Nate abruptly stops. Brett studies Nate closely

BRETT

I know what you're saying and I now  
know my attitude was way out of line  
and wrong. Sorry.

Nate smiles, nodding.

BRETT

Okay, I'll stop asking who, but at  
least tell me why?

Nate looks away.

BRETT

You know, it's just a matter of time  
before you tell me. Look, you can't  
let them get away with this.



NATHAN  
Why did they hit me so hard, Brett?  
Is it because I'm different?

BRETT  
Some people are just mean.

NATHAN  
But really, Brett, why? .

BRETT  
It's more about them than you. You  
okay?

NATHAN  
I'll be alright if you get me my  
comic books.

BRETT  
Okay, but only if you tell me what  
the fight was all about, nothing  
more.

Nate bites his lower lip.

BRETT  
Well?

NATHAN  
I want the Blackhawk ones, bottom  
drawer.

Brett pulls out the drawer, rifles through a pile and holds  
them to his chest.

BRETT  
Not till you tell me.

NATHAN  
Okay, it was about giving them  
answers for stolen exams. I wouldn't  
do it. And I told them I might even  
tell the school.

Brett throws Nate the comic books and frowns.

BRETT  
Gee, Nate, it's noble, but insane.  
Beam yourself back down to Earth.

Brett rises off of the bed and heads toward the door.

BRETT  
Now I know what I have to do.

NATHAN  
Don't tell Angelica about this.

BRETT  
We both know you secretly want me to, but I'm not going to or she'll be over here with milk and cookies stroking your pointed head.

NATHAN  
I can never fool you. Besides I think she's more interested in you.

BRETT  
She's much happier when you're around.

NATHAN  
Really?

BRETT  
Don't get your hopes up too high. I think she's learned to be pretty selective with all the guys hitting on her all the time.

NATHAN  
You can't blame a guy for hoping.

Nate smiles and then winces. Brett exits.

INT SCHOOL CAFETERIA - EVENING

Marcus is sitting with three other Phi Delta fraternity brothers. Brett approaches.

MARCUS  
Well, lookie here, the commander in chief of the rat pack. They don't take garbage out. They bring it in.

BRETT  
Do you want it here or outside?

Marcus starts GIGGLING.

MARCUS  
You're one stupid fuck.

Marcus turns to his friends.

MARCUS  
He's so dense light bends around him.

Everyone at the table LAUGHS. Brett grabs a string bean from a plate and flicks it into Marcus's face.

BRETT

Nate sends his regards.

Marcus jumps up out of his chair.

MARCUS

WHAT THE HELL YOU DOING? Look at yourself. You're at rock bottom and still digging.

Brett gets a spoon and dips it into some mashed potatoes with gravy and aims it at Marcus like a launch pad.

BRETT

Here or outside?

The fraternity brothers move away from Marcus.

MARCUS

Wait up, let's not get crazy here.

BRETT

I don't know how much longer I can hold this before it goes flying into your face.

Marcus lifts both hands up.

MARCUS

Okay, Okay, but it's got to be off campus.

BRETT

Name it?

MARCUS

Back of the Torch Bar.

BRETT

In the Chicano neighborhood?

MARCUS

On Valparaiso Street.

BRETT

Be there in one hour

Brett grabs Marcus by his shirt and pulls him in.

BRETT

Alone.

Marcus straightens his shirt out and slicks his hair back.

MARCUS

No sweat.

Brett nods and walks out.

EXT TORCH BAR BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Brett approached Marcus who is leaning against a brick wall covered with Chicano graffiti. A faint light shines down on the gritty grimy alley, garbage cans overflowing. The SOUND of muted Tex Mex music drifts through.

MARCUS

What are the rules?

BRETT

No rules. I just beat the crap out of you. Don't look so worried. But, don't count on going anywhere in public anytime soon. Not with the face you're going to have.

MARCUS

All this over a little roughhousing with your kook friend?

BRETT

Roughhousing? What do you call a gang bang, group foreplay?

Brett removes his jacket and walks toward Marcus.

MARCUS

Before we tangle, listen up.

BRETT

Time for talking is over.

MARCUS

I've got some dirt on that History prof who's busting your balls.

BRETT

You're stalling.

MARCUS

No, man, for real, primo stuff.

BRETT

What are you talking about?

MARCUS

The guy's been porking one of his students, a sweet young thing, I hear.

BRETT  
So he's a dirty old man. So what?

MARCUS  
Scuttlebutt has it you're going down in flames. Your dweeb buddy, too.

BRETT  
You're throwing brown stuff at me.

Marcus shakes his head.

MARCUS  
I've got proof that will guarantee you guys aces.

Marcus CHUCKLES.

MARCUS  
I'll even have him put smiley faces on your mother project if you want.

BRETT  
You'd lie just to stay in practice.

MARCUS  
Just plain old bread and butter leverage.

Marcus's face widens into a grin.

MARCUS  
When you've got it you ride down Broadway in a stretch limo. When you don't you take the number three bus.

BRETT  
Yeah, and you're going to be sitting in the back of that bus.

Brett slap Marcus's side of his head. He jumps back.

MARCUS  
OKAY GUYS COME ON OUT.

Five tough looking Chicanos come from around the building and circle Brett.

BRETT  
What's this?

MARCUS

Hey, let's just call it nature's way  
of culling out inferior species.

The Chicanos grab Brett and pin his arms behind him.

MARCUS

I tried to reason with you, but as  
usual you played the stupid "fuck  
me" card.

Marcus backhands Brett across the face. Brett flinches.

MARCUS

You have no idea how good that felt.

Marcus punches Brett in the stomach. Brett buckles over.

MARCUS

Now how does that feel, asshole?

Marcus LAUGHS.

MARCUS

God, I've been waiting a long time  
for this.

Marcus looks at the Chicanos.

MARCUS

Okay. He's all yours and don't hold  
back on account of me.

The Chicanos hesitate. Marcus looks confused.

MARCUS

What the hell you waiting for?

CHICANO #1

Waiting for our chingon. Here he  
comes now.

A lone silhouetted figure approached down the alley. Jose  
Chacon comes into view. Brett looks surprised.

BRETT

Jose? I never thought I'd be happy  
to see your face.

Jose sees Brett.

JOSE

Oh, no. Not you again. CABRON  
COHUDO!

CHICANO#2

Que paso, ese?

JOSE

I know this huero.

MARCUS

What's going on here?

JOSE

He's a friend of my ma.

The Chicano's look deflated and release Brett.

MARCUS

Somebody talk to me here.

JOSE

Deal's off.

MARCUS

Wait a minute. You got half up front. Either give it back or get on with it.

JOSE

You threatening me, little man?

MARCUS

Look, I'll double your take.

Jose shakes his head.

JOSE

Now let's see how big a dick you got.

Marcus backs up looking scared. Brett grabs Marcus and throws him against the wall. Marcus tries to escape but Brett grabs him and throws him against the garbage cans, which go flying. Marcus pulls out a knife.

MARCUS

Get back. I mean it. I'll cut you.

Brett grabs a board lying on the ground and smacks Marcus across the body. The knife goes flying as Marcus falls. Brett grabs the knife and jumps on Marcus. He puts the knife to Marcus's face, hesitates, and then nicks his cheek with it. Marcus SCREAMS as blood oozes out.

BRETT

That's for Nate. Now, every time you look in the mirror you'll remember

what you did to him.

MARCUS  
DAMN, I'M BLEEDING. God, it hurts.

Marcus starts half CURSING, half crying.

MARCUS  
YOU'RE DEAD MEAT, MAN. I MEAN IT!

Brett heaves the knife down the alley. Marcus staggers to his feet and stumbles down the alley, SCREAMING over his shoulder.

MARCUS  
YOU'RE GONNA PAY. WAIT AND SEE!

JOSE  
You screwed things up. When am I going to see the last of your caca face?

BRETT  
Gee, And I thought we had finally bonded.

JOSE  
Next time there's no holding back. Now get your skinny white nalga out of here before we finish the job.

Brett exits.

INT SKYTROOPER - NIGHT

Lieutenant Bill Aumon is making calculations on a map with a ruler and pencil. Captain Dooley BARKS at him.

DOOLEY  
WHAT YOU GOT?

BILL  
I've gone over it a dozen times. We should be there.

DOOLEY  
There's not a cloud in the sky and there's nothing in sight.

BILL  
Try the radio again. We can't be far.

Captain Dooley pulls out a microphone and presses a button.



DOOLEY

This is tango romeo, three twenty one calling Christmas Island Air Base. Do you read me? Over.

The radio CRACKLES with static.

DOOLEY

I repeat, this is tango romeo, three twenty-one calling Christmas Island Air Base. Do you copy? Over.

A VOICE comes through the static.

VOICE OS

This is Christmas Island Air Base. We read you tango romeo three twenty one. Barely. Radar shows you are on course and 59 miles from touch down.

Captain Dooley punches Lieutenant Harry Sular on the arm, smiling.

DOOLEY

Copy. Bearing 321 southwest and on course.

Lieutenant Aumon moves his protractor across the map.

BILL

With the head winds, we should be there in about fifteen minutes.

HARRY

The fuel gauge is near zero. It's gonna be a photo finish.

DOOLEY

Well if anyone's got any influence with the folks upstairs, now's the time to call in your markers.

HARRY

Can we make it?

DOOLEY

Don't know. Get the crew and passengers on alert for a possible bail out. You and Bill, too.

HARRY

I'm staying. Always preferred a three point landing over a one point on my ass landing.

Dooley pressed the speaker phone button.

DOOLEY

Listen up, men. We've made contact with Christmas Island and we're on course. But, we're just about out of gas. There's a chance we may have to ditch.

Ernie, Milton and the crew look at each other grimly.

DOOLEY

Get your chutes on over your Mae West's and stand by for further instruction.

ERNIE

CRUMB BUM! I hate cold water.

MILTON

Not to mention the sharks.

ERNIE

(to Clarence)

Do you have any inflatable life rafts?

CLARENCE

Just one. I'll get it ready.

Clarence pulls a folded orange rubber raft off the bulkhead. Dooley comes on the loudspeaker again.

DOOLEY OS

I'm taking her down to 1,000 feet and slowing her down to 100 miles per hour in case we have to jump.

The radio CRACKLES with a clearer voice.

VOICE

Tango romeo three twenty-one. You're on course. Approach your landing on the north side. Will you need any assistance? Over.

DOOLEY

We're out of gas so we request an assisted emergency landing.

VOICE

We read you. Keep in contact until you're on the ground. Over.

Captain Dooley crosses his fingers.

EXT WYOMING HIGHWAY - DAY

Brett is speeding down the highway as Angelica white knuckles the door handle.

ANGELICA

You're going to kill us if you don't slow down.

BRETT

The turn off should be coming up. Look for Terry Ranch Road.

Angelica points to a sign.

ANGELICA

There it is. Aren't you taking a chance here. I mean cowboys don't take too kindly to rude city folks.

Brett turns into a dirt country road.

BRETT

According to my research it should be the first ranch on the right.

Brett slows into the driveway and parks in front of a ranch style home.

ANGELICA

Are you sure it's Lee McSwain's home?

BRETT

He confirmed it until I told him I was trying to find out about some guys in his outfit and then he just hung up on me.

ANGELICA

A lot of vets don't like to talk about the war. I think we just made a long trip for nothing.

LEE MCSWAIN comes out of the house and GREETs them.

LEE

Can I help you?

BRETT

Yes sir, I'm the college guy that talked to you on the phone

yesterday.

LEE

I thought I made it clear that subject was off limits.

BRETT

I'm just asking that you hear me out, please.

LEE

Better make it the short version.

BRETT

There was a fighter pilot named Ernie Ortiz who was on that last flight. I have spend four months finding everything I can about him and it's important to uncover anything that will reflect on his final destiny.

LEE

I know nothing about that man.

BRETT

But, the crew was part of the 19th Troop Support Squadron that you belonged to so you knew them.

LEE

They were all friends of mine. We were a tight knit bunch of guys.

BRETT

So what did you do when they didn't come back?

LEE

It's a closed chapter, son. I don't see what good it will do to stir things up.

BRETT

No person should die without his family and loved ones knowing what happened to them. And, right now Ernie is still "missing in action" and will continue to be until we shed some light on his final day.

Lee motions them to come up to the porch.

ANGELICA

It's more important to us than just a grade. It's about closure for the family.

LEE

Okay, I'll tell you everything I know, but it's not much.

BRETT

All we know from the records is that it took off on June 16th, 1942 from Rogers Airport in Honolulu and was never heard from again.

Lee sits on the porch swing.

LEE

We called the Cassidy Air Field in Christmas Island when Lt. Dooley and the others never returned, but they only told us that even though they made radio contact of their approach, they never showed.

BRETT

How could that be?

LEE

There was a report of enemy in the area and a blackout and radio silence was called just about the same time.

BRETT

Bad luck. The gods were not with them on this one.

LEE

They did report a low flying aircraft go by about the time they calculated they would arrive, but it kept on going away from them.

BRETT

So close and yet so far.

LEE

Christmas Island is just a speck in the vast Pacific Ocean, but it was situated perfectly as a refueling stop for aircraft from Hawaii to Australia and other Pacific Islands.

BRETT

Were any fighter squadrons based there.

LEE

Just the 55th fighter squadron from the 20th Pursuit Group. They flew the P-39 fighters.

BRETT

That was Ernie's outfit.

LEE

There was some scuttlebutt that two of the crew were picked up by a Jap sub and rescued from a POW camp at the end of the war.

BRETT

Really, which two?

LEE

Bill Aumon and Harry Sylar.

Brett jumps off the seat.

BRETT

Damn. I can't believe it.

ANGELICA

Those were the same two who the Colonel at the St. Louis Military Records office pointed out in their Recoverable Report.

BRETT

This is incredible. It matches up.

LEE

And, at our last reunion some of the guys said they heard that Harry made it back and was living in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

BRETT

Santa Fe, shouldn't be too hard to find him. Sir, you've been a tremendous help.

LEE

If you find him let me know. We were like brothers.

BRETT

Yes, sir. I promise

Brett and Angelica shake Lee's hand and exit.

INT DEANS OFFICE - EVENING.

Brett enters. Jim Langley is sitting in front of Dean Winfred Spencer's desk. Winfred rises.

WINFRED

Come in, come in. Have a seat.

Brett sits.

WINFRED

I called you into my office because Mr. Langley has made some serious allegations against you.

BRETT

Allegations? What allegations?

JIM

I knew he'd deny it.

BRETT

What are you talking about, sir?

WINFRED

There are rumors circulating about Mr. Langley.

BRETT

Rumors? You'd sooner catch a moon beam than find where rumors come from.

WINFRED

Do you have any idea what we're talking about?

BRETT

Sir, I've been out of town for two days working on his history assignment.

WINFRED

Someone posted some bulletins around the campus impugning Mr. Langley's character.

JIM

Stop pussy footing around. These cowardly posters are telling the world I'm a pervert having sex with young girls.

WINFRED

Now, let's get a hold of your emotions, Jim.

BRETT

Sorry to hear that, but what has that got to do with me?

WINFRED

Well, that's the point. Two students say they saw you posting them.

BRETT

THAT'S A LIE! I'm not that stupid.

JIM

I want him expelled. I'm looking into possible legal action. There are laws about these sort of things. And if I have my way you'll end up in the "Slammer", I believe is the street expression.

WINFRED

(to Brett)

Is there any truth in this or not?

Brett gets up looking distraught. He starts to say something, then stops.

WINFRED

If you've got something now's the time. Your college career's on the line here.

BRETT

I'm no lawyer, but what you have here is hearsay.

WINFRED

Are you saying you had no idea about this?

BRETT

Sir, there's a little truth in every lie. The true part is that a guy I know did tell me Mr. Langley was having sex with one of his students.

WINFRED

Who told you?

BRETT

What difference does it make? It's



all only hearsay once again.

WINFRED

If grasping at straws is all you have, you'd better start grasping.

BRETT

Sir, you know ratting someone out is despicable to me, even if I hate the bastard. I'd like to keep what's little left of my tattered reputation.

WINFRED

We're beyond your reputation. You're into a survival mode here.

BRETT

I was about to duke it out with this guy a few days ago. As a way out he said he could blackmail Mr. Langley into giving me a good grade. I turned him down.

JIM

Isn't he the noble one.

BRETT

I ended up knocking him around a bit. He said he would get his revenge. Looks like he's succeeded.

WINFRED

And, that's your story?

BRETT

It is.

JIM

Prove it than.

BRETT

I can't.

JIM

There it is. What else do you need?

WINFRED

And the students name?

BRETT

I'd rather not say.

WINFRED

I suggest you reconsider.

BRETT  
I need to think about it, sir.

WINFRED  
You have until tomorrow Eight  
o'clock, here in my office.

JIM  
You're not going to let him buffalo  
you with that little act, are you?

WINFRED  
If you choose not to come, you may  
as well pack your bags. Do we  
understand each other?

BRETT  
Perfectly.

EXT BRETT'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Brett is packing his clothes into a suitcase. Johnny enters.

JOHNNY  
Where do you think you're going?

Brett continues packing without looking up.

BRETT  
You'll be happy to know I'm finally  
blowing this joint. Joining up like  
I should have done with Jerry in the  
first place.

JOHNNY  
And be VC cannon fodder like he was?  
Smart.

Brett continues packing.

JOHNNY  
I heard about your tangling with El  
Deano.

BRETT  
Than you know why I'm leaving.

JOHNNY  
I'm going to tell you something  
about Jerry, your so called best  
friend that may change your mind  
about wanting to follow his legacy.

BRETT  
What are you talking about?

JOHNNY  
Jerry was a hot shot kind of guy. I mean who didn't like him.

Brett nods his head slowly.

JOHNNY  
Football star, ladies man, quick with a joke, the All American boy. Isn't that pretty much it?

BRETT  
What are you getting at?

JOHNNY  
If you ever got past his empty smile, you'd see him for what he really was. A lying manipulative phony.

BRETT  
You'd better be careful what you're saying or I'll pop you.

JOHNNY  
You never saw it, but there was something missing in him, deep down missing.

BRETT  
Missing?

JOHNNY  
I could say troubled, maybe even disturbed if I were a shrink, but I think "fucked up" probably sums it up best.

Brett grabs Johnny by the collar and pulls him in.

BRETT  
I'm warning you, Johnny.

JOHNNY  
Go ahead and hit me. Maybe it will finally make you face the truth.

Brett relaxes his grip on the shirt, looking perplexed.

JOHNNY  
No more denial. You're going to hear

it all before you leave.

BRETT

I've heard enough. You wouldn't know the truth if it slapped you in the face.

JOHNNY

The truth you want? Okay, how about he knocked up a woman on the other side of town, a married woman. He was dealing hash and got caught cheating on his exams. Shall I go on?

BRETT

He was a little reckless. So what? He always pulled back at the last minute. It was part of his charm.

JOHNNY

Bullshit. He used people like so much toilet paper. Whoever he could get to do his bidding. You too. And you know what, I'm not sure he even really liked you that much.

Brett picks up Johnny and slams him against the wall.

BRETT

YOU'RE A LYING MOTHERFUCKER!

Brett releases Johnny who crumples to the floor.

JOHNNY

LISTEN TO ME, FOR ONCE. Just listen.

BRETT

If you get up I'll put you down again.

JOHNNY

He was a guy living on the edge, a desperate edge.

BRETT

He had some tough breaks. I knew that.

JOHNNY

It was more than that. Deep down, there was a self loathing you couldn't see, didn't want to see.

Brett looks down thinking with a frown.

JOHNNY

He found in you the one guy who believed his bravado bullshit and he ran with it. The funny thing is he's still controlling you with his war hero crap.

BRETT

They don't pass out medals unless you've got some pretty heavy stuff hanging between your legs.

JOHNNY

Maybe. Maybe he conned them too. But his shadow has held you back long enough. It's time for you to get on with your own life.

Brett looks at Johnny.

BRETT

When did you get so smart?

JOHNNY

Since he stiffed me for the five big ones he needed for bail on his drug bust.

BRETT

So that's why he had to leave so suddenly?

Johnny nods.

JOHNNY

He dueled with the devil and the devil won.

BRETT

We all have our dark sides.

JOHNNY

Everyone thought Jerry was the strong one, but they had it all wrong. You are. You kept him above water.

Brett SNAPS the suitcase shut.

BRETT

Maybe you're right. Maybe you're not. Doesn't matter. It's time for

me to be moving on.

JOHNNY  
You're running away from yourself.  
It doesn't work.

BRETT  
It's too late.

JOHNNY  
If you want to play the solitary  
man, then go for it, but it's a long  
lonely ride. And there's nothing at  
the end of the road.

Brett offers his hand to Johnny and pulls him off the floor.

BRETT  
All the time playing the warden when  
you're really the den mother.

Brett smiles and nods at Johnny. He picks up his suitcase  
and walks toward the door.

BRETT  
Take care of yourself.

Brett exits.

EXT STUDENT PARKING LOT DAY

Brett reverses his car out of his parking spot. It's  
raining. Angelica comes running down, out of breath and puts  
her hands up blocking his exit. Brett leans out of the  
window.

BRETT  
GET OUT OF THE WAY.

ANGELICA  
NO. Not until you talk to me.

BRETT  
Not you too. Why won't everyone just  
leave me alone?

ANGELICA  
You might as well run over me. I'm  
not moving.

He turns the ignition off and gets out of his car.

BRETT  
Make it quick before I drown.

ANGELICA

Don't do this.

BRETT

There's no other way. The hole's too deep.

ANGELICA

So you're going to just cut and run?

BRETT

I've been drifting for three years. Sometimes you have to take an honest hard look at yourself and accept the obvious truth that's been in front of your face the whole time.

ANGELICA

You want the truth? Okay. When I first met you, I liked you right away. Maybe cause you didn't try to impress me like all the others. You were like a brother. Someone I felt comfortable with.

BRETT

Great, I'm feeling much better now. Maybe we can be pen pals. Now can I go?

ANGELICA

No, not until you give yourself a chance to be the person you're meant to be.

BRETT

I've had an emptiness deep inside of me as long as I can remember and it won't let go.

ANGELICA

Than why were you always wanting to take care of everyone else, first Jerry and then Nate...

Brett looks away from Angelica and shakes his head.

ANGELICA

...but all the time forgetting to take care of someone else, yourself.

Brett turns to leave, but Angelica grabs him by his shirt.

BRETT

You see a loser.

ANGELICA

We haven't found Ernie, but the funny thing is I found someone else, you. And no, Brett, you're not a loser, you're a winner.

BRETT

I'm lost. I've always been lost just like Ernie.

ANGELICA

No, you're going to find Ernie and along the way yourself too.

BRETT

Please, let me go. Too much water under the bridge.

Angelica grabs Brett by the shoulder and shakes him.

ANGELICA

No. You're not leaving this way, with you're tail between your legs. It'll take something out of you that you'll never get back. I don't know how I know this, but I do.

BRETT

I can't rat out Marcus. It's the one code I won't break.

ANGELICA

Fine. Then go see Dean Winfred and tell him just that and take your lumps.

BRETT

What will that prove?

ANGELICA

Just that you have character and that will make all the difference.

Brett stares at the concrete. He closes his eyes and covers them with one hand and rubs them in frustration. Then he slowly nods his head. Angelica smiles. The rain pours down their faces looking at each other tenderly.

ANGELICA

You know I'll always be your friend.

Brett finally looks up and surrenders a sad smile.



BRETT  
(softly)  
Yeah, I know.

Angelica gets on her toes and gives Brett a short kiss on the lips.

ANGELICA  
For good luck.

She hesitates and leans in again and gives him a longer deeper kiss. She suddenly backs off looking at Brett with wide eyes, starts to say something, but instead looks confused, turns and runs off. Brett puts his fingers to his lips and rubs them softly.

INT DEANS OFFICE - DAY

Jim greets Brett as he enters. Jim is sitting by the desk.

WINFRED  
Come in.

Brett stays by the door.

BRETT  
This won't take long.

WINFRED  
Have you decided to give us the name?

BRETT  
I'm afraid I can't, sir.

WINFRED  
And you're willing to suffer the consequences?

BRETT  
I am. I'm already packed.

WINFRED  
Anything to say, Jim?

JIM  
One of the lessons of life we all learn is that we eventually suffer the consequences of our actions.

WINFRED  
Excellent point; one to remember.

Winfred walks to his desk, pulls out a folder and sits down.

WINFRED

Actually, we've uncovered some new evidence from the students who fingered Brett.

Winfred motions Brett to the chair and Brett slowly crosses the room and sits.

JIM

New evidence?

WINFRED

We asked them why Brett wanted to hurt you. Sensible question, don't you think, Jim?

JIM

I'm curious myself.

WINFRED

Apparently, it was payback for the low grade you were going to give him on his history project.

JIM

How would they know that?

WINFRED

Well, was he going to get a passing grade?

JIM

No, unfortunately, he chose a subject that was difficult to track, and even more so to formulate a question.

WINFRED

A 1941 graduate of this fair institution itself, I understand?

JIM

I told him right from the start it was a poor choice. Can you imagine one of our graduates as an historical figure?

WINFRED

Isn't that's what we mold them to be?

JIM

Oh, you know I didn't mean it that way. It's just that the subject was

unworthy of the attention.

Winfred pulls out a sheet of paper from a file.

WINFRED

Well, according to your syllabus  
lesser known figures were fair game.

Jim pulls out a handkerchief and mops his brow.

JIM

Regardless, he never came up with a  
question to ask his historical  
person. Until he does he can never  
complete his assignment and receive  
a grade.

WINFRED

Brett?

BRETT

I now know Ernest, the man, well  
enough to finally ask that question.

WINFRED

Well you'd better ask it if you want  
a grade.

Brett reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a  
photograph of Ernie. He gazes intently at the picture.

BRETT

What was the meaning of your life  
Lt. Ernest Ortiz and will you be  
long remembered? Or will you just  
fade away into the dark abyss of  
nothingness?

JIM

But the question hasn't been  
answered by Ernie and can't be.

BRETT

Oh, but he has answered. He most  
definitely has.

JIM

Oh, a first in historical research,  
making the dead talk.

BRETT

Ernie left an indelible footprint in  
the sands of history and they speak  
for him. They're smaller than

Gandhi's or Lincoln's, but they exist none the less.

JIM

He's a nobody who accomplished nothing.

BRETT

One day at a home town dance a bully threatened his smaller friend. Ernie stepped in and fought him instead and was beaten badly. Two weeks later Ernie walked five miles to the bully's home, called him out and they fought for thirty-five minutes in the rain and mud. The bully spent three days in the hospital. Ernie walked back home after the fight; the same five miles.

JIM

That's not historical.

BRETT

Ernie was only sixteen years old.

JIM

Really? This is the most shallow and meaningless...

Jim stops when he sees Brett get up and approach him. His eyes are wide and fearful.

BRETT

You know, I always thought you were a pompous, mean prick who got his jollies putting other people down who couldn't fight back. But now I can see you for what you really are, an insignificant, frightened little man.

Jim appeals to Winfred.

JIM

He threatened me. You heard it.

WINFRED

That's enough, Brett.

BRETT

But, ironically, I also need to thank you.

JIM

You what?

Jim looks at Winfred and then back at Brett confused.

BRETT

Your history assignment made me ask Ernie that question and learn a truth in asking it.

JIM

What truth?

BRETT

That our lives can be more than just our own selfish, mundane day to day nothings. We can all leave something behind for those who follow.

JIM

HA! Shakespeare said it best.  
"Life's nothing but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more. A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying NOTHING."

Jim SPITS out the last word.

BRETT

I used to believe that, but I was wrong. Ernie showed me that if you live your life with character, you deserve to be remembered and will be. So the answer, Mr. Langley is no, he will not be lost to anonymity like some wind swept dust on a back country road. The life he chose and lived guarantees it.

Brett pauses and looks contemplative.

BRETT

In a larger sense the character we each display in our lives determines our own legacy.

WINFRED

Well, I certainly think that question and answer deserve a grade, don't you, Jim?

JIM

I'd have to see it in a written format before I make any judgment.

WINFRED  
I know you'll make the right decision.

Winfred pulls out a sheet of paper.

WINFRED  
This is a written statement by two students saying they fabricated the story on Brett and that they were paid to do so by a certain Mr. Marcus Marini, who is now, as we speak, being escorted off campus. Any comments, Jim?

Jim shakes his head.

WINFRED  
(to Jim)  
And these are written complaints from students who have taken your classes in the last few years. They say you are intimidating...

Winfred lets the sheet float down onto his desk.

WINFRED  
sarcastic...

Another sheet floats down.

WINFRED  
verbally abusive.

Another sheets floats down. Winfred looks at Jim.

WINFRED  
I think the street expression is "asshole".

Jim stands up outraged.

JIM  
I'm tenured. I know my rights. I'll sue if I'm forced to.

WINFRED  
SIT DOWN!

Jim slowly sits down.

WINFRED

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Other evidence has come to our attention as well. I think you know what I'm talking about.

JIM

What are you insinuating?

WINFRED

This Marcus character tried to plea bargain with this information. It's about your relationship with one of our students.

JIM

What student?

WINFRED

Regina Phelps.

Jim's face turns ashen, but quickly turns into a mask of rage.

JIM

What I do with my private life is none of your business. And you'd better have cold concrete facts before you start making any wild accusations.

WINFRED

We're gathering that evidence as we speak. You'll be the first to know.

JIM

I don't scare easily.

Jim gets up and walks toward the door.

WINFRED

Yes, you were right, Jim. We do eventually suffer the consequences of our actions.

Jim storms out without looking back and SLAMS the door.

BRETT

A governor's reprieve at the eleventh hour. Thank you, sir.

WINFRED

Your folks knew all along you were going to be the good person you were

meant to be. Myself? I would've bet my pension you'd have taken the first stagecoach out of Dodge City.

BRETT

I can now finally declare my major. It's funny. It took an exercise in studying the past to find the future.

WINFRED

And History is not a bad way to know the future, either. Good luck to you.

BRETT

Thank you, sir. And I haven't given up on a certain 2ND Lieutenant Ernest Marcellino Ortiz from Sarcillo, Colorado, yet. There's a final chapter to be uncovered.

Winfred watches Brett exit smiling.

EXT MAIN QUAD - DAY

Jason is painting a sign showing a young man bleeding on the ground with an American soldier with blood on his guns bayonet hovering above him. Brett looks over his shoulder.

BRETT

Just a little over the top, wouldn't you say?

JASON

Is it over the top when the National Guard kills four students at Kent State University and wounds nine more for protesting the war?

BRETT

You're lying.

JASON

Check the news for yourself, war lover.

Brett grabs a student who's jogging by.

BRETT

Hey, what's this about Kent State?

STUDENT

It's bad, man. They just opened fire



on them. It's bad, man.

The student breaks free from Brett and keeps running.

JASON  
Two of the students were just  
walking to class. The filthy pigs.

BRETT  
Why would they do it? I don't...

Brett leans back closing his eyes. After a pause he turns to Jason.

BRETT  
Let's put this where it can be seen.

Brett grabs the poster and walks toward the nearby stature of Benjamin Stonehill.

JASON  
HEY!

Jason follows Brett as he rests the poster on the statues lap. Jason scratches his head and smiles.

JASON  
Welcome to the struggle.

Brett points to Jason's tie-dye shirt with a wry smile.

BRETT  
I like your shirt almost as much as  
the last two times you wore it.

Jason's smile gets bigger as Brett walks away.

JASON  
I'll make sure I'm still wearing it  
the next time I see you.

INT SKYTROOPER - NIGHT

The engines are MISFIRING and the plane begins to shake. Dooley hits the microphone button.

DOOLEY  
We're not going to make it. Prepare  
to bail out.

Ernie, Milton and the crew line up at the bay door in their full parachute rig.

CLARENCE

Line up over here in this order.  
Milton. Then the raft. Ernie you'll  
follow the raft, then me.

Everyone gets up and files toward the bay door. Clarence and  
Charlie drag the raft near the entrance.

DOOLEY  
Flares are in the life raft. I'll  
call in our position. Let's hope the  
bastards can find us.

ERNIE  
(to Clarence )  
We'll never find that raft in the  
dark. Tie it to one of us. It's our  
only chance.

CLARENCE  
Good idea. I've got some rope in the  
back.

Clarence runs to a box in the back and returns with a rope.

ERNIE  
(to Clarence)  
I say this raft's got my name on it.  
Besides I'm a good swimmer.

CLARENCE  
Everybody okay with that?

MILTON  
Who are we to argue with a hero.

CLARENCE  
Don't forget the flares.

Clarence ties the raft to Ernie. Charlie fiddles with his  
chute and calls to Clarence in a quivering VOICE.

CHARLES  
Hey, Clarence you sure I got this  
thing on right?

ERNIE  
Here, let me check it for you.

Ernie inspects the chute and notices Charlie shaking.

ERNIE  
Chute's A okay. Look kid, when you  
hit the water pull the rip cord on  
your Mae West and it'll bring you

right up.

Charlie lifts his panicked face to Ernie.

CHARLES  
(whispering)  
Lieutenant, I'm so scared I can barely talk.

ERNIE  
You kidding? This is the best thing that ever happened to us. They'll have to give us two weeks leave when they pick us up; regulation.

CHARLES  
(perking up)  
Yeah?

Ernie walks over to the pin-up poster of Annabelle, pulls it down, folds it and brings it to Charlie.

ERNIE  
Stick this in your jacket. With this babe snuggled up against you, you probably won't even get wet.

Charlie smiles when Ernie punches him playfully. The loudspeaker BLARES.

DOOLEY OS  
PUT A HUSTLE ON IT, SERGEANT. We're running on fumes. Losing altitude.

Clarence and Charlie slide the bay door open. A loud air blast WHOOSH fills the plane.

CLARENCE  
Get in position, Charlie. Jump on my command. READY? GO!

Charlie goes out the door.

CLARENCE  
MILTON. READY?

Milton positions himself in front of the open door.

CLARENCE  
GO!

Milton goes out the door.

CLARENCE

ERNIE? READY?

Ernie positions himself in front of the open door.

CLARENCE

GO!

Ernie goes out the door with the raft right behind him. Clarence positions himself in front of the open door, hesitates for a moment and jumps out the door.

DOOLEY

Okay, you guys are next.

Bill moves to the rear. Harry lingers.

HARRY

I'm staying.

DOOLEY

JESUS CHRIST. I SAID GET  
GOING. THAT'S AN ORDER.

Dooley looks back at Harry.

DOOLEY

NOW, MOVE IT. I can't control this  
baby much longer.

Harry makes his way back to the open door where Bill is waiting and one by one they jump out. Dooley turns his Army cap around and white knuckles the steering wheel.

DOOLEY

C'mon Annabelle. You can do it.  
You've never let me down before.

The plane engines COUGH and SPUTTER as the plane begins to lose altitude. Dooley punches the radio microphone.

DOOLEY

This is tango romeo three twenty  
one. Losing altitude fast. Out of  
gas. Laying her down on the water.  
Bearing 321 southwest. All personnel  
have bailed out. Request emergency  
rescue ships. Over and out.

The plane dives and disappears into low clouds. A few last MISFIRES from the now distant engines and then only silence.

INT CRAVEN HALL DORMITORY - LOUNGE DAY

Brett is on the phone.

BRETT  
Hello, is this Harry Sylar, past  
co-pilot of the Windy Lou C-53 Sky  
Trooper?

HARRY OS  
Yes, it is. Who's calling?

Brett smiles, nodding his head.

BRETT  
Brett Freeman, a college student at  
Stonehill College in Colorado. You  
have no idea how excited I am to  
have found you, sir.

HARRY OS  
Oh, so, what's this all about?

BRETT  
I'm on an assignment for a history  
project and my chosen historical  
person is Ernie Ortiz who was a  
fighter pilot on your last flight  
to Christmas Island.

HARRY OS  
You picked a worthy subject. He was  
an extraordinary man.

BRETT  
Is he alive, sir?

HARRY OS  
No, he survived our bail out from  
the plane and two years of torture  
in a Japanese prison camp, but  
eventually succumbed to his many  
injuries in a military hospital in  
Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

BRETT  
Are you sure he's dead?

HARRY OS  
I was at his bedside when he died.  
His last words were "Bury me in the  
San Juan cemetery in Weston,  
Colorado.

BRETT  
Did you?

HARRY OS

Yes, but we only inscribed his rank and first name on his gravestone, since he had brain damage from his beatings and his dog tags had been long lost.

BRETT

His last name was Ortiz and I will notify his family and we will give him a proper burial and I hope you will join us, sir.

HARRY OS

Just give me the date and I'll be there.

BRETT

You've brought closure not only to my project, but more importantly to his family. Thank you, sir.

HARRY OS

It's closure for me, too. Thank you, for your doing the research that made it possible.

EXT SAN JUAN CEMETERY - DAY

Brett, Angelica, Nathan, Harry Sylar, Jose and Rufinita Chacon are gathered around Ernie Ortiz's grave site. An Army Captain in full dress pulls a cover that was over the gravestone that's engraved "Ernest M. Ortiz 1st Lieutenant, Army Air Corp, 4/18/17 - 10/22/45. All the medals earned by Ernie are painted on the gravestone. The Captain addresses the crowd.

ARMY CAPTAIN

We are here to bury and honor 1st Lieutenant Ernest M. Ortiz for his duty and bravery displayed in his service to our country.

The Captain pauses looking at the crowd.

ARMY CAPTAIN

Does anyone else have any comments to make?

Mrs. Rufinita Chacon stands.

RUFINITA

There was something special about Ernie. It wasn't just his kindness and intelligence it was more than

that. He was just blessed with a personality that touched everyone who knew him.

ARMY CAPTAIN

Anyone else.

Brett steps forward.

BRETT

I'm not family so With Mrs. Rufinita's permission I would like to say a few brief words.

Rufinita nods her head.

BRETT

I never met Ernest or heard one word spoken by him. Just photos and stories told by those that who knew and loved him. But, it was enough for me know who he was and I'm a better man having known of him.

A bugler plays TAPS. The Army Captain presents a folded American flag to Rufinita.. She rises and places flowers next to the grave site. Rufinita embraces Brett and Angelica. Jose puts his hand on Brett shoulder. The crowd slowly disperses.

INT CRAVEN HALL - DAY

Brett is on a couch with Angelica and Nate, Wayne is playing cards with Eric. Fatso Moulty is glued to the TV set, front and center, zombie like. Other students are lounging around. Spider sticks his head out of the phone booth.

SPIDER

Hey, guys, got a couple of hot chiquitas from Chicano town on the line. Says they like college guys. Anybody up?

WAYNE

Same old Spider. Always on the hustle.

ERIC

One of these days people are gonna wise up to you.

SPIDER

Where's Giz? Maybe he'll go?

ERIC

He's been pushing and straining on  
the crapper for the last three days;  
One humongous blockage case.

WAYNE

He'll be lucky he doesn't bust a gut  
before it's all over.

SPIDER

C'mon Wayne, they're waiting for an  
answer.

WAYNE

You can fool some of the people all  
of the time and all of the people  
some of the time...

SPIDER

And, those are pretty good odds.

ANGELICA

I feel sad and I don't know why.

NATHAN

That's funny, cause I'm feeling kind  
of blue, too.

BRETT

It's like a movie you don't want to  
end but has to.

Giz comes bursting through the door with his pants down to  
his ankles, tears streaming down his cheeks. Everyone stops  
and stares.

GIZ

I DID IT. I HAD IT.

WAYNE

What the hell...

Giz hobbles over to Wayne, his face a picture of ecstasy.  
Fatso Moulty slowly turns his head toward the commotion.

GIZ

I did it Waynie. It came out. I'm  
free again. I'm so happy.

Giz hugs Wayne. Fatso slowly gets out of his plush chair and  
waddles over observing Giz with obvious curiosity.

WAYNE

Well, stupe, what did you think was



going to happen when you drank all that anti-diarrhea gook?

GIZ  
Man, it's one big hard mother like the Hope diamond.

WAYNE  
We're happy for you.

GIZ  
You've got to see it. It's a deep beautiful brown. Special.

WAYNE  
Thanks for sharing that with me.

FATSO MOULTY  
I want to see it.

Fatso swaddles his 250 pounds out the door. Giz suddenly looks panicky. He goes hopping, tripping toward the door trying to pull his pants up at the same time.

GIZ  
DON'T FLUSH IT. DON'T FLUSH IT.

Giz exits. Spider shakes his head.

SPIDER  
He's grown attached to it.

WAYNE  
Maybe he can put it up for adoption.

Spider and Wayne exit. Brett pulls out photo of Ernie's grave stone.

BRETT  
Somehow I think Ernie deserves more than just a notation in a history project.

NATHAN  
Write a story about him and send it to a publisher.

BRETT  
A story, script, movie, something.

ANGELICA  
Okay, you start it and we'll help you finish it.

BRETT

We?

ANGELICA

I'm in this for the long haul, or  
didn't you know?

BRETT

And who are you?

Angelica jumps on top of Brett.

ANGELICA

Just a good woman's who's falling  
for you.

Nate jumps on top of Angelica and Brett, GIGGLING.

NATHAN

Falling from the fourth dimension.

A loud FLUSH is heard next door.

BRETT

Looks like everything's going down.

Nate, Brett and Angelica LAUGH heartily.

FADE OUT