

Hamlet 2

by

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AGAINST BLACK:

We hear a VOICE. We can't be sure, but it sounds like DAME JUDY DENCH. We will assume it is.

DAME JUDY DENCH
(narration)
To act is to live...

Out of the black, grainy VIDEO EMERGES with the title:

Dana Marshcz: Actor

CUT TO VIDEO -

We are watching an episode of 'The Facts of Life.' BLAIR and NATALIE are sitting on the couch, drinking sodas.

NATALIE
Blair, get real. I'm the only girl
at Eastland Academy that hasn't
gone to Make Out Mountain with a
boy.

The doorbell RINGS.

BLAIR
Oh Natalie, don't go with a boy. Go
with a man.

The audience roars with LAUGHTER. Tootie comes barrelling down the stairs.

TOOTIE
I hope this is the result of my IQ
Test!

Tootie swings the door open to reveal a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER
Delivery, M'am.

The actor playing the Messenger is terrible. His name is Dana Marchz. The VIDEO FREEZES on his face and we slowly ZOOM IN.

DAME JUDY DENCH
(narration)
To act is to breathe the poet's
breath...

WE CUT TO A DIFFERENT VIDEO -

We are watching an episode of 'T.J Hooker'. In a WAREHOUSE, Hooker and Romano are chasing two THUGS.

ROMANO
Freeze!

Hooker jumps THUG #2 and knocks him to the ground.

HOOKER
Call for backup!

ROMANO
This is Unit 4, Adam 30 with one suspect down. We need backup!

Hooker slaps cuffs on the Thug #2.

THUG #2
Ow that hurts!

WE FREEZE and SLOW ZOOM on Thug #2. It is Dana Marshcz. He has not improved in ability.

DAME JUDY DENCH
(narration)
...It is to embody the dreams of man. To live as an actor is to live a dream...

CUT TO VIDEO -

An episode of 'Falcon Crest.'

In a FANCY RESTAURANT, Angela Channing is having a lavish dinner with Chase Gioberti. She pours him wine.

ANGELA CHANNING
I hope you've enjoyed the new vintage. I believe it is the finest wine in Tuscany Valley.

A French Chef walks by the table.

ANGELA CHANNING
Oh, Pierre...

The Chef stops. It is Dana Marschz, in a giant toque and a moustache.

ANGELA CHANNING
...the chateaubriand was wonderful.

CHEF
(bizarre accent)
Merci, Madame.

Again, terrible. We FREEZE on his stupid smile.

DAME JUDY DENCH
(narration)
But dreams are ephemeral. And
sometimes impossible.

FADE OUT -

DAME JUDY DENCH
(narration)
So where do dreams go to die?

FADE UP - EXT. DESERT -- DUSK

A sign by the highway reads "Welcome to Tucson, Arizona!"

EXT. DOWNTOWN TUCSON - DUSK

This barely qualifies as a downtown. It is neither charmingly rustic nor cosmopolitan.

EXT. MESA HIGH SCHOOL - DUSK

A modest school by any standards.

INT. MESA HIGH CAFETORIUM -- EVENING

Two high school drama students, RAND POSIN and EPIPHANY SELLARS, both 16, stand on stage, mid-scene. Rand is dressed as a biker and Epiphany wears a bustier and a giant red curly wig. They both perform too hard. The effect is grating.

RAND
Well, why don't I take you out to
dinner to apologize for my
rudeness? Huh? Gimme yer number.

EPIPHANY
You want my number? Which number do
you want, George?

RAND
I like the way you say George.

EPIPHANY

For instance, ten. That's how many months old my baby girl is.

RAND

You got a little girl?

EPIPHANY

Sexy, huh? How about six? That's how old my other daughter is. Eight is the age of my son. Two is how many times I've been married AND divorced. Sixteen is the number of dollars in my bank account. And I'm guessing zero is the number of times you're gonna call me.

RAND

How do you remember your bank balance right off the top like that?

IN THE AUDIENCE we spy a Xeroxed program. It reads: "Mesa Drama Presents -- Erin Brockovich."

INT. BACKSTAGE -- CONTINUOUS

We see Dana Marschz with his hands together in prayer, his fingers pressed against his lips, nodding quietly, his eyes closed. He's a few decades older, but doesn't look too much worse for the wear.

INT. ON STAGE -- A LITTLE LATER

It's the curtain call. Dana joins Rand and Epiphany on stage for the final bow. They are elated. For the three of them, this is an electric moment.

ANGLE on the AUDIENCE -

There are only about two dozen PARENTS. They applaud with reasonable enthusiasm.

EXT. LUNCH AREA -- DAY

Rand, Epiphany and Dana are sitting at a table eating hot pockets. Dana holds a hastily printed school newspaper.

DANA

The notices are in. But before you read, remember, *Gone With the Wind* was savaged by the critics.

EPIPHANY

Is that true?

DANA

I don't know.

Epiphany takes the paper.

EPIPHANY

(reading)

"Are Dana Mahrszcs's bi-yearly stagings of popular Hollywood films an ironic gesture? Or is he just profoundly confused? To be fair, this year's 'Erin Brockovich' accomplishes something quite astonishing..."

The three look hopeful.

RAND

...it manages to make last year's production of 'The Shield: Season 2' look sparkling by comparison.

EPIPHANY

What about the acting?

Rand takes the paper.

RAND

"...It is perhaps best not to mention the acting. In the theatre, actors endeavor to simulate human emotion. Rand Posin and Epiphany Sellers flap their lips and wave their arms like malfunctioning wind-up toys..."

Dana grabs the paper and throws it at the ground.

DANA

That's enough! Every trimester we get fisted by this guy! I wish he would graduate already!

EPIPHANY

It's gonna be a while. He's only in the ninth grade.

DANA

I have so much anger! God, I feel like I'm getting raped in the face!

Dana takes the newspaper and charges out of the lunch room.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY

Dana is looking in various classrooms.

INT. SCIENCE CLASS - CONTINUOUS

Noah Saperstein (the 12 year old critic) is talking to friends around the hamster Cages.

DANA

(to the harried Science teacher)

I'd like to speak to Noah Saperstein.

She points to Noah. Dana marches over to him with a stern professorial air.

The STUDENTS make noises like Noah's busted.

DANA

My name is Dana Mahrschz. I'm the drama teacher you so love to rape in the face.

NOAH

Have a drink of water and tell me what's the matter.

Dana bends down to a really low drinking fountain and then sits on the floor.

DANA

What do I need to do to please you?

NOAH

Is that the purpose of your plays? To please me?

DANA

No. Yes. No. But I put a lot of myself into my work. Would it kill you to say something nice about it once in a while?

NOAH

Maybe if you stopped worrying about the reviews you'd start getting better reviews.

DANA

What the fudge does that mean?!

NOAH

Have you ever considered doing a play that wasn't originally a popular TV show or movie?

DANA

No. Why...? Do you think I should be writing my own material?

NOAH

It wasn't what I had in mind, but, sure. Why not?

DANA

There's so much I want to say through my work that sometimes it overwhelms me and I start to feel like I'm going to barf up all my vital organs and...

Dana starts crying and laughing and hyperventilating.

NOAH

I've got to go clean the hamster cages. Are you going to be alright?

Dana waves him off.

DANA

I'm great. Take care.
(through tears)
Thanks for the truth sandwich, my little brother.

Noah just looks at him and walks away.

MUSIC UP - CUT TO BLACK -

SUPERIMPOSE: *Act 1 - The Following Autumn*

FADE UP - INT. DANA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dana straggles in, harried.

This is BRIE MARIE SHEETS WEINBERG MARSCHZ, 33, Dana's wife. She's sitting with a good-looking guy in workout clothes, GARY. Gary eats toast and has a blank expression.

DANA
Morning Brie Bear. Morning, Gary.

GARY
It's really sunny out this morning.

BRIE
(pointedly annoyed)
Great observation, Gary. We live in Tucson.
(then)
Dana, may I have a word with you? Privately.

DANA
Sure, squishy.

Brie grabs Dana and leads him into the hall.

IN THE HALL - We see Gary in the background.

BRIE
I know we're broke and we needed a roommate but I cannot live like this any more.

DANA
It's not forever, baby. It's just until I get an agent and start doing commercials again.

BRIE
Also known as NEVER.

Dana laughs off the comment lightheartedly.

DANA
You keep me honest, lover. I adore you for that.
(then)
(MORE)

DANA (cont'd)

It's not so bad. I mean Gary has a car. That's helped out a lot around here.

BRIE

Yeah, great. He has a car. Maybe I can get him to run me over in it. Put me out of my misery.

DANA

Oh you. What did I do so right to get you in my life?

He kisses her on the forehead and walks out.

EXT. TUCSON - DAY

Dana, now in corduroys and a professorial tweed jacket, skates past a derelict hotel built in the shape of a Wagon Wheel.

EXT. TUCSON - DAY

Dana skates past a cellular tower disguised as a Saguaro cactus.

He appears to be the only pedestrian in all of Tucson.

EXT. TUCSON HIGHWAY INTERSECTION - DAY

Dana stumbles on the pavement just as the light is turning green. Cars HONK furiously. Dana smiles and waves as he gets up.

EXT. MESA HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Dana roller-skates into the parking lot. He just avoids getting hit by a couple of cars entering the lot. His strides are awkward and graceless.

Dana lights up when he sees MR. ROCKER, the principal, pulling up in his light blue Crown Vic.

Dana grabs onto the rear bumper.

Mr. Rocker peers into the rear-view mirror.

MR. ROCKER

What are you doing?!?!

DANA
Living the dream! No limits!

Mr. Rocker slams on the brakes, hurtling Dana onto the trunk.

Dana slides off the car, in major pain. His balls have been crushed. He pats the car and gives a thumbs up. Rocker speeds off.

INT. SCHOOL -- LATER

Dana skates down the hall on his way to the cafetorium. He sees Epiphany and Rand.

DANA
Hey, gang.

He toe-stops on a dime right in front of them.

EPIPHANY
Mr. Mahrsch, have you seen our class yet?

DANA
No. Why?

RAND
Let's just say the class this year is "new" and "different."

DANA
'New' and 'different' are among my favorite words.

Down the hall, we see Dana reach the cafetorium door and with a giant flourish, grab the doorjamb and swing himself into the room with maximum whip. He enters and sees...

INT. CAFETORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Thirty or so STUDENTS, most of them Latino. A BOOMBOX sends out a bass line that people are bobbing their heads to. A guy and a girl are fully making out. And it seems like people are smoking.

Dana turns around and skates out.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He looks at the sign on the door. Looks at his watch. Rand and Epiphany approach.

RAND

I told you.

They enter the class.

INT. CAFETORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Dana smiles as he climbs up awkwardly on the little stage that's under the basketball net and at the end of the lunchroom. He exudes pure enthusiasm. The footing's a little tricky with his skates on.

DANA

Hi everyone. Could we turn down the music? Not off, just down.

(it dips)

Great. Welcome! Wow. It's a full house. Normally I only have approximately two students.

We see Rand and Epiphany nodding.

DANA

So let's go around and find out why Drama is suddenly so popular.

He gestures to a shy girl, YOLANDA, who retreats. Her friend IVONNE speaks instead.

IVONNE

Oh Yolanda doesn't talk, but, like we're from Foothill and they had asbestos in the portable classrooms and so we were transferred here and since this is a shitty public school, drama is the only elective.

DANA

Yeah. The muse works in mysterious ways. And what about you?

He gestures to a stonerish guy, JASON MCHUGH, or VITAMIN J.

VITAMIN J

Oh Vitamin J is not fully aware...
Do you mind if I...?

(MORE)

VITAMIN J (cont'd)
 (he turns off the overhead
 fluorescents and turns on
 soft incandescent
 sconces)
 ...non-harshosity.

DANA
 (thoroughly confused by
 Vitamin J)
 Okay. Who else is from Foothill?

The rest of the class raises their hands -- 25 plus kids.
 Dana starts taking his skates off.

DANA
 Who wanted drama as their first
 choice?

Nobody. Dana sort of dies inside.

DANA
 That's fine...

Just then a very intimidating and rather handsome Latino kid
 comes in. He's dressed like a serious gang banger. His name
 is OCTAVIO. He sits up front, not even slightly embarrassed
 by his tardiness.

DANA
 Hello. Better never than late!

Dana laughs at himself. Octavio crosses his arms and sits
 back.

DANA
 Anyway, has anyone here ever seen
 the movie 'Dead Poet's Society?'
 Starring the always superb Robin
 Williams?

Rand and Epiphany raise their hands. No one else does.

DANA
 Well, it's very good. I was, for
 one week, Mr. Williams' stand-in on
 the fantastic motion picture,
 'Patch Adams' when I lived in
 Hollywood. He once gave me a ride
 to my bus stop after a "table
 read." I couldn't be happier for
 all his success. Nice guys do
 finish first.

Octavio reaches over and turns up the BOOM-BOX. Dana turns the music down and addresses him.

DANA
And what is your name?

OCTAVIO
Heywood.

DANA
Heywood...?

OCTAVIO
Heywood Jablomey

The class explodes with laughter. Dana doesn't get it.

DANA
At any rate, has anyone here seen
the movie 'Mr. Holland's Opus?'

Rand and Epiphany raise their hands. No one else does.

DANA
Richard Dreyfuss plays a music
teacher with a deaf son. The
wildly underrated Glenn Headley
plays his long-suffering wife.

Rand and Epiphany are riveted. The rest of the class is completely bored. Dana is trying SO HARD to maintain enthusiasm.

DANA
What about that Meryl Streep violin
movie? I didn't even see that one.
Well you might want to watch some
of these films because they are...
(writing the phrase on the
dry erase board but mis-
spelling it)
...INSPIRATIONAL TEACHER stories.
And that's what I do. I inspire. It
just happens to be my job.

Absolute silence.

DANA
I hope I'm not freaking you out.
WAIT... I hope I AM freaking you
out!

(MORE)

DANA (cont'd)

Years from now, you will think back on this time, and you'll say to yourself, "Gosh, that Mr. Marchsz really kicked me in the keester."

Somebody FARTS. Everyone laughs. People are moving away from the very gang-bangerish CHUY.

CHUY

It wasn't me!

DANA

Do not apologize. Farting challenges the status quo. Alright. We're going to do an exercise. Who wants to start?

Rand and Epiphany both shoot up their hands.

DANA

Rand. Be an animal.

Suddenly Rand becomes very feline.

DANA

This is one of the most basic dramatic skills a student of drama can address.

Rand starts licking his hands as though they were paws. He starts cleaning the 'fur' behind his ears. The transformation is astonishing. He slinks up against the edge of the stage.

DANA

Gorgeous, Rand.

And just then Epiphany starts panting and YELPING like a little dog, though unnoticed by Dana.

DANA

Can anyone guess what kind of animal Rand is?

OCTAVIO

A pussy.

Big mocking LAUGHTER from the room. Rand stops, embarrassed and angry. Epiphany immediately pretends like she was never a dog.

DANA

Alright then Heywood, what kind of creature can you be?

OCTAVIO

I can be a flaming ass crack. Oh, wait. You're already doing that.

Everyone laughs.

DANA

Fair enough. I don't mind playing the fool... as long as I get my name in lights!

(laughs at himself then stops)

Seriously, theatre has the power to take us on a journey. It has the power to transform not only the actor but the audience. Do you believe that? I DO. With every fiber of my being. Theatre is vital. It is visual. It is alive. If I kick this trash can...

He kicks a trash can. It FLIES OUT towards the kids and hits Shy Yolanda in the head. She's knocked off her ass onto the floor, dazed. Dana rushes over.

DANA

Yolanda! Yolanda are you alright?!?!

She nods and smiles self-consciously.

DANA

Okay she hasn't lost consciousness and she's not bleeding.

CHUY gets mad.

CHUY

Esse. You need to be careful. Know'm sayin?

DANA

I've learned a lesson here. But I hope you all have too. About the vitality of a shared experience. We will all remember that moment for the rest of our lives. It was dramatic. It was visual. It was theatre.

Rand is nodding knowingly. Yolanda looks pale.

DANA

Does someone have a cell-phone?
She's going grey. I'd like to call
911.

SUPER:

Act Two - Having Cheap Mexican Food

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT -- THAT NIGHT

Dana is skating through a Mexican restaurant toward Gary and a very drunk and angry Brie.

BRIE

We started without you.

DANA

Apologies! I had to spend some time with paramedics and lawyers for the school district. But it's all going to work out. No charges will be pressed. There was no brain damage. I think I need a quesadilla!

BRIE

Nothing you are saying makes any sense to me.

DANA

Turns out my class is fourteen times as crowded as it normally is. And I have a real tough nut to crack. A Mexican boy who lives by his wits. I'm going to inspire him this year. I'm going to make a difference I really feel like for the first time that I...

BRIE

(taking a swig of her
Margie)

Woo! I am getting hammered!

DANA

Better watch yourself, Brie bear.
You know how you get.

BRIE
 (instantly
 confrontational)
 No, Dana. How do I get? Please
 tell me, how I get.

DANA
 (terrified)
 Uhh...

BRIE
 (laughing)
 Gotcha!

DANA
 You got me.

Dana laughs. The she laughs harder at Dana laughing.
 Then she suddenly stops laughing. And he suddenly stops.
 That makes her laugh. And he laughs.

GARY
 You guys are laughing so much.

BRIE
 Another gem of an insight from
 Gary. Our bore-der.
 (suddenly remembering)
 Oh Dana. We can't forget. We have
 an A-P-P-O-I-N-T-M-E-N-T with the
 sperm doctor on Wednesday.

DANA
 Right.

BRIE
 I don't like airing our personal
 business in front of you know who --
 Gary -- but if you're shooting
 blanks, I swear to god I'm going to
 stab you to death while you sleep.

Dana laughs.

BRIE
 But seriously, you gotta start
 letting your balls breathe. It's in
 that pamphlet I read. The corduroy
 has got to go. Especially with the
 skating.
 (MORE)

BRIE (cont'd)
This is Tucson for fuck sake.
You're broiling our future babies
that your crotch of yours.

A stoned waiter, DANNY, 19, arrives at the table with a tray of drinks having overheard the last line.

DANNY
Uhhh...

DANA
I had the virgin strawberry. 12
years sober.

DANNY
Awesome.

BRIE
(taking her massive
margarita)
Good for you, honey, but if I had
to give up booze, I'd blow my
brains out living in this shit-sack
city.
(then, raising her glass)
To Dana. My husband. What the
fuck was I thinking? Just kidding.

Dana and Brie laugh. They all clink.

INT. CAFETORIUM -- DAY

Dana stands in front of the class wearing a loose fitting
KAFTAN.

DANA
I re-watched a fantastic movie last
night called 'Dangerous Minds'
starring the gorgeous Michelle
Pfeiffer. It's an INSPIRATIONAL
TEACHER movie. And it's given me a
little insight into your character,
Mr. Tough Guy.

He stands in front of Octavio who's all like whatever.

DANA
Stand up.

OCTAVIO
Why?

DANA
We're going to ka-ra-te.

OCTAVIO
I don't think so.

DANA
Come on.

Octavio reluctantly gets up. Dana takes a karate stance and swings his arms and does really high leg kicks -- flashing his testicles to the entire class.

CHUY
Whoa! Nice freeball, ese.

DANA
(to Octavio)
Okay. Punch me.

OCTAVIO
I'm not punching a guy in a dress.

DANA
This is a kaftan, my friend. It's letting the boys breathe. Now hit me.

OCTAVIO
Don't make me do this.

DANA
DO IT!!!

Octavio punches Dana. He drops like a sack of wet cement. Octavio leans down to help him up.

OCTAVIO
Oh shit. Are you alright?

DANA
I'm fine. Give me a minute.

The class just sits there awkwardly as Dana lies motionless on the floor, on his side, in the fetal position.

EPIPHANY
Way to go. You killed the teacher.

DANA
No I'm good. I'm just gonna lay here and puke for a little bit.

Dana spits. There's a knock on the door, Principal Rocker waves Dana over.

DANA
I can't move.

MR. ROCKER
I don't care. Get out here.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Dana crawls into the hallway.

MR. ROCKER
What is wrong with you?

DANA
I'm fine.

Dana gets to one knee.

DANA
(barely able to speak)
Trying to inspire troubled student.

MR. ROCKER
I thought you should know as soon as possible: Last night the school board, which is facing major financial cuts, decided to cancel drama.

DANA
Cancel how?

MR. ROCKER
Completely. Forever.

Dana's brain goes to mush.

MR. ROCKER
You can finish the term, but after that, get out.

DANA
How do you...? How can you...? You can't have a high school without a drama department.

MR. ROCKER
Sure you can.

DANA

This is obviously a mean-spirited practical joke.

MR. ROCKER

Oh I don't joke. Look, the state is in fiscal crisis. You're just a tiny dot in the scheme of things. All the art programs are on the chopping block. And, quite frankly, we're not producing any Oscar winners here.

DANA

Tony.

MR. ROCKER

What?

DANA

They would be Tony winners. It's the award for theatre.

MR. ROCKER

Listen up, guy. I've seen your plays. This is no great loss. Of that I am sure.

Rocker turns away. Dana is completely shell-shocked. He drags himself, on the floor, back into class.

INT. CAFETORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Dana slides back in on his side. Epiphany is scolding Octavio.

EPIPHANY

You're a dirty violent beaner! You shouldn't have kicked him like that.

OCTAVIO

Shut up, you cow. It wasn't my idea. He made me hit him.

Rand sees Dana struggle to his feet, pale and weaving.

RAND

Mr. Mahrschs? Are you okay?

DANA
 No, Rand! I'm not okay!
 then)
 How does a kid from a dairy farm in
 Manitoba who dreams of acting but
 who can't do it very well, who
 could never get a decent agent so
 he moves on and decides to teach,
 to pass on the love of the craft,
 how does he deal with all the
 disappointing crap the world hands
 him without giving up and wrapping
 his lips around a forty five and
 just blowing his brains out?!?!?
 Can you tell me that!!!!

Everyone is still.

DANA
 I... I... I...

His eyes flutter.

He falls over in a heap, unconscious.

CHUY
 Is he acting?

The group descends on him while Rand loosens his collar,
 Epiphany checks his pulse, etc., The CAMERA HOVERS over Dana,
 perhaps as an omniscient spirit would, gradually lifting up.

DAME JUDY DENCH
 (narration)
 Dana Marschz's wavering
 consciousness led him to believe
 that he was leaving this earth and
 all it's trials...

The CAMERA keeps lifting.

DAME JUDY DENCH
 (narration)
 But the fates had long ago deigned
 that his work was only just begun.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Act 3- At the Fertility Clinic*

INT. COYOTE FERTILITY CLINIC -- DAY

Gary and Brie are in the waiting room. Dana holding a tiny Casio keyboard.

BRIE

Where the fark have you been?

DANA

Staring into the abyss of
nothingness: DRAMA HAS BEEN
CANCELLED!

BRIE

Finally. Now you can go back to
your job at Rite-Aid and start
making some real money.

DANA

But these kids gave my life
meaning.

BRIE

No they didn't.

GARY

Hey Dana, I found a great parking
spot out front. And there was time
left on the meter.

BRIE

Uh.

(to Gary)

They should ship you over to Iraq
and let you talk to people. All
the terrorists would just kill
themselves.

DANA

Well, I for one am very
appreciative that Gary drove you.

BRIE

(off keyboard)

Why did you bring that thing?

DANA

I have no idea. I don't even know
where I got it. Maybe I can work
through my grief in song.

He hits some keys and "tunes up" his voice.

DANA (CONT'D)

Ahhh!

(then)

Aaaaahhh...

(then)

Aiiiiii!

BRIE

Maybe it's a good thing I can't get pregnant. It's best for everyone if your genes don't get passed on.

DANA

This is for you, baby.

Dana launches into a song. He accompanies himself reasonably well on the Casio.

DANA (CONT'D)

(singing)

Am I shooting blanks? Are these testicles an empty tank? When I go kergluge is it all a ruse? Why????????? I want to drown you with my hot buttered love spackle. So put your mouth around my marriage tackle. It's Nuclear War!!!! P.S. DRAMA IS DEAD!!!

The nurse comes back to the front desk and interrupts him.

DANA DELANY

Excuse me, do you have an appointment?

Brie approaches the desk.

BRIE

Uh, yes. Please excuse my husband. He's mentally retarded.

(then)

I'm Brie Marie Sheets-Mahrscz.

DANA DELANY

Right. Mrs. Marsh.

Dana stands up and approaches the desk.

DANA

I'm sorry. That's actually pronounced --

(pronouncing it)

Mar--sczhszh.

DANA DELANY
 (not getting it)
 Mars?

DANA
 No. Mahha-schzzhzhzhzh. With a
 zhc.

DANA DELANY
 Maszch?

BRIE
 And I thought growing up with the
 name B.M. Sheets was bad.

Brie takes the clipboard and sits down. Dana goes to sit
 down but keeps looking back at the nurse.

DANA
 Excuse me, I don't mean to be
 forward but you look a lot like one
 of my favorite actresses of all
 time -- Dana Delany.

DANA DELANY
 I am Dana Delany.

DANA
 What? Oh my god. I am SUCH a HUGE
 fan. I loved you in the TV show
 "China Beach" and, of course, the
 wildly underrated "Exit to Eden" --
 what's Garry Marshall like as a
 director he seems totally great.
 What are you doing in Tucson? I am
 freaking out.

DANA DELANY
 Well, I'm a nurse now. I just kind
 of had enough of the Hollywood rat
 race.

DANA
 Mmm hmmm.

DANA DELANY
 I always had the nursing degree to
 fall back on which is great. And I
 love the desert.

DANA
 (super excited)
 Oh my god.
 (MORE)

DANA (cont'd)

I didn't hear anything you just said. I'm too excited.

(then)

Do you think you could come down and speak to my drama class sometime? They would lose their minds.

DANA DELANY

I'm kind of down on acting right now so...

DANA

Well, you don't have to talk about acting if you don't want to. They could use a little morale boost right about now. They would just freak out if to see you.

DANA DELANY

I could talk to them about how it's important to have a degree in something practical to fall back on.

DANA

PERFECT! So what's Val Kilmer like? You were wonderful together in Tombstone. He gets a bad rap in the press but to me he is the ultimate actor's actor.

DANA DELANY

I have to get back to work.

DANA

(hugging her tightly)

OH Dana. Thank you for helping me find my smile again!

INT. DANA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dana and Brie are on the couch, Dana asleep. She is looking at thermometer, nudging him awake.

BRIE

We need to have sex.

DANA

(blurry)

What happened?

BRIE

I'm ovulating. So get your thing in gear.

DANA

I don't think I can at the moment, honey.

BRIE

Don't give me that shit. Whip it out!

DANA

I was having a very sad and scary dream. I was living this life where everything I did was stupid and pointless.

BRIE

Are you sure you were dreaming?

Brie tries to pull Dana's pants down. Gary enters holding something.

GARY

Look, I found a bird's nest in the driveway.

BRIE

So help me God, if you and your nest don't get out of here right now...

GARY

I'll come back later.

DANA

No, Gary, stay. Brie, apologize to Gary!

BRIE

I'd rather apologize to a pile of dog barf.

GARY

(finally insulted)
Jeez Louise.

Dana becomes insistent.

DANA

Gary get over here.

Gary shuffles over. Dana stands Brie up.

BRIE
Don't push me.

DANA
Look at him. He's a human being.
Touch him. He's real. And his
feelings are real.

Dana puts Brie's hand on Gary's chest. He's only wearing a tank top and, being a trainer, he's pretty buff.

DANA
Have you ever given Gary a hug?

BRIE
Why would I?

DANA
Do it...
(she rolls her eyes)
DO IT.

She hugs him. They stay together in an awkward hug.

DANA
Now apologize to him.

BRIE
I'm sorry that.. you seem boring
and stupid. I guess it isn't your
fault.

GARY
Thanks.

DANA
I would be so happy if you two
could love each other.

BRIE
You want me to love Gary?

DANA
I sure do.

BRIE
Okay fine.

Brie feels Gary's ass. Gary makes a sound like he enjoyed it.

Gary kisses Brie on the cheek. Then on the lips.

DANA
This is fantastic. What a
breakthrough.

Brie and Gary sit down on the couch and keep kissing.

Dana sits in a chair and watches.

DANA
This is really something.

Now they are really groping. Brie is tearing Gary's tank top
off. Brie's clothes fall to the floor.

DANA
Hey guys...?

They don't respond.

DANA
This is mildly uncomfortable. Brie?
Honey?

Brie rubs Gary's crotch.

BRIE
How uncomfortable?

DANA
Really uncomfortable. What about
you, Gary?

GARY
I have complicated feelings right
now.

BRIE
That's a first.

She pushes Gary away.

BRIE
That's how it's done, Dana. Now
drag me upstairs and let's get to
bonin'.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRIE AND DANA'S BEDROOM -- A LITTLE LATER

'Putting It Together' from the original cast recording of 'Sunday In The Park With George' is playing. Candles have been lit.

We see Dana and Brie writhing in pleasure behind the gauzy linen drapes of their four poster bed.

And then Dana's face emerges from behind the linen drapery just as he is experiencing one of those life altering orgasms. The song is climaxing too.

DANA
Bravo... bravo... BRAVO,
DANA!!!!!!!

He collapses. On the record we hear APPLAUSE.

INT. BRIE AND DANA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Dana stares at the ceiling, Brie at his side.

DANA
For once in my life, something is
absolutely clear to me.

He actually seems like a serious person for a minute.

DANA
I'm going to save drama.

Brie snores.

INT. SCHOOL BOARD CHAMBERS - DAY

In this big boxy fluorescent chamber, a half dozen stern SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS are just taking their seats behind a dais. The president is very authoritative Latina in her 50's.

PRESIDENT
(into a mic, to the room)
Okay... I believe we're only
waiting for the board vice-
president...

We find Dana in the audience:

He wears a white tux and tails with red piping and lapels. He sits next to a SOCCER MOM with three SQUIRMY CHILDREN. They stare at him.

The door opens and Mr. Rocker rushes in, apologizing to the board.

Dana is shocked.

PRESIDENT

Alright. First order of business, I believe we have an announcement from the Office of City Services...

Dana waves his hand and stands. He refers to a prepared text.

DANA

(in his best stentorian voice)

Art cannot be separated from mankind. Art is not an expression of culture. Art IS mankind. Art IS culture. And culture IS mankind.

He takes a dramatic breath, waiting for some kind of affirmation.

PRESIDENT

Excuse me, you're not from city services are you?

A pale distraught GUY waves a file folder behind Dana. HE is from city services.

DANA

I am not. But I am of this city. And I am here to serve.

MR. ROCKER

I think I know what this is about.

DANA

(starting to lose it)

Please don't cancel drama! Please! PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE!

PRESIDENT

Who is this man?

MR. ROCKER

He's the drama teacher at Mesa. His name is Mahrshcz.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Mahrsczc, this issue is not up for discussion at this time. Please take your seat.

DANA

Just tell me why!

PRESIDENT

It's very simple. We don't have enough money. Drama class is not essential...

DANA

But it is!

She holds up her hand.

PRESIDENT

Don't interrupt me, Mr. Marhszc. Drama is an elective. We can cancel it without losing state funding. Would you prefer us to cancel Mathematics and lose our charter to run a school district? Would you like that Mr. Mahrsczc?

He hangs his head.

DANA

No.

He thinks of something.

DANA

What if I found the money? To run the class. I'll pay for it.

PRESIDENT

The board would certainly entertain such a proposal. Now please sit down.

DANA

Goodnight and good morrow!
Parting is such sweet sorrow!

MR. ROCKER

GET OUT OF HERE!

INT. CAFETORIUM -- DAY

Dana, in a loose-fitting ethnic kaftan, stands at a giant wipe board and writes the phrase "21 K." He underlines it twice and turns to the class.

DANA

Gang, this is the amount of money we need to save drama. How do we get it?

Some hands go up.

DANA (CONT'D)

Yes. Epiphany?

EPIPHANY

Bake sale.

DANA

Not enough dough. Pun intended. Anyone else?

Another hand goes up.

DANA (CONT'D)

Ivonne?

IVONNE

We could knock over a 7-11.

DANA

Nice thought but 7-11's aren't as vulnerable as they used to be. I can't tell you how I know that. Anyone else?

(then)

Chuy?

CHUY

No, I was just stretching.

Vitamin J puts his hand up.

VITAMIN J

I got a little some some.

DANA

Yes?

VITAMIN J

My uncle is all hey, what about helping me out sometime, bro. And I'm all -- what? How? He's rich.

DANA

I'm confused, but go on.

VITAMIN J

Toasters. We move the skeed. 25 grand.

DANA

I heard 25 grand. And toasters. Somebody help?

OCTAVIO

He's saying we could move toasters for his uncle.

VITAMIN J

Yiddly yiddly.

DANA

Well, heck. We could do that.

RAND

I don't know, Mr. Mahrscz, this plan sounds suspect.

DANA

I suspect it might save drama. Okay, gang. Show of hands.

OCTAVIO

Hey. Dumbass. Toaster is street for gun.

The class does an 'Oooooooh!'

DANA

Toaster is street for gun? What a colorful expression! I guess we shouldn't...

DANA'S POV - He sees Noah walk past a window with his lunch tray.

DANA

That little kangaroo rat. Excuse me.

Dana skate-runs out the door.

EXT. MESA HIGH SCHOOL -- CONTINUOUS

Dana catches up to Noah, slightly winded.

NOAH
Hello, Mr. Marshsz.

DANA
(struggling to catch his breath)
Happy? Happy that you've finally
succeeded in taking me down?

NOAH
No. I think it's terrible what's
happened to arts education in this
country. I read about the school
board's decision.

DANA
When I made my case they just shut
me down. Shut me down! I don't
know what to do. Everything's OUT
OF CONTROL.

NOAH
How have you contributed to the
community?

DANA
What?

NOAH
You want someone to save Drama but
you've produced nothing worth
saving.

Dana finally lifts his face off the ground.

DANA
What do you have against me, man?!
It's like my father got
reincarnated into the body of a
little freaking drama critic. If
you were 70, alcoholic and dead,
you'd be twins.

NOAH
All I'm saying is... you need to
inspire everyone to come to your
rescue.

DANA

We were thinking of putting on 'The Lake House' -- that wonderful Sandra Bullock/Keanu Reeves piece.

Noah can barely hide his revulsion.

DANA

There is one other thing. An original piece I've been rolling around in my noggin. I've scribbled down ideas and put them in my inspiration chamber. It's called Hamlet 2.

Noah laughs.

NOAH

A sequel to Hamlet by Shakespeare?

DANA

That's right. Why? Do you think it's a bad idea?

NOAH

Not necessarily. No. Sometimes an idea can be so bad it starts turning good again.

DANA

Exactly my thinking! But what about money for drama next trimester?

NOAH

Forget about the money right now. Put on a play and make it the best thing you've ever done. Use that as a way of drawing attention to the funding issue.

DANA

What if it's not good enough?

Noah shrugs enigmatically.

NOAH

That is the question every artist must ask himself.

Dana starts pacing manically in his skates and kaftan.

DANA

I am an artist, aren't I? Okay, here's the plan -- (A) Put that play on. (B) Blow everybody's mind. (C) Sit tight and wait for the money to rain down! (D) Save drama. (E) There's no need for an E!!! WOW. You've really given me the kick in the pants I needed, kid.

NOAH

Okay. I have to go to recess now.

DANA

(they shake hands)
You're very busy, I understand.
Thank you. Bye!

MUSIC UP - CUT TO BLACK -

SUPERIMPOSE: *Act 4- The Creative Process*

INT. KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

Dana is a wild-eyed maniac staring at the PC, face smeared with spicy wing sauce. There's a bottle of Dayquil next to the keyboard.

His cats, George and Martha sit on the counter and stare at Dana as he rides an emotional roller-coaster.

DANA

(hunting and pecking)
Writing is so hard! I'm lost...
But here's an idea: Margaret Thatcher is the ghost of Hamlet's father... Yes! I'm BACK! I'm gonna live forever!

(a swig of Dayquil)
That doesn't work. She couldn't have been married to Hamlet's mother... Maybe this part should be animated? Wait. You can't have animation in a play... OR CAN YOU?

(then)
Stay with me, Dana!
(MORE)

DANA (cont'd)
 I'm blacking out. No, I'm fine.
 HERE WE GO. Rghghghhhh!!!!!!

The cats just stare at him.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

He takes a swig of Dayquil.

DANA
 The word "the" looks so weird.
 "The." "The." I'm blacking out.
 Stay with me, Dana. Okay, I'm
 back.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

The cats are asleep. Dana is naked and rubbing butter on his chest.

DANA
 I don't understand where ideas come
 from! I have so many feelings
 right now!!! Why does everything
 you love have to die?!!! Ha ha ha!

Dana start laughing and crying controllably.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Dana is dressed again. He types manically.

DANA
 I am the most powerful person of
 all time!!!

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Dana is face down on the kitchen floor. His cat George paws the back of his head, concerned.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Dana laughs and cries and types wildly.

INT. KITCHEN -- LATER

Dana stabs his hand with a fork. He just sits there. The cats look at him horrified.

DANA
Why can't I feel anything?!?! Am I
not alive?!?!? Ha ha ha!!!

He pulls his hand away, the tines were lodged in between his fingers.

DANA
Now I understand!

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Dana hops in place as eagerly waiting for his dot matrix printer to slowly grind out pages. His teeth are coated in a gross orange Dayquil crust. He's sweating profusely. He holds up an awkward stack of unperforated accordion pages as Brie enters.

DANA
It is done.

BRIE
What is?

She pours herself coffee.

DANA
My original masterwork that's going
to save drama. The thing I've been
working on for the last 47 hours.

BRIE
Oh, is that what you've been doing?
I thought you were having a nervous
meltdown.

DANA
(laughs too hard)
You're not far off, ladypants. Any
creative person will tell ya, you
have to go a little crazy to make
great fucking art.

Brie takes a look at the cover page.

BRIE
Hamlet 2?

DANA
The deuce. Correct.

Brie flips through the pages.

BRIE
"The Lord Jesus Christ kisses Dick Cheney deeply passionately, uncompromisingly." What?

DANA
It's about my troubled relationship with my father.

BRIE
You're doing this with your class? At school?

DANA
That's the plan, Stan. What do you think?

BRIE
I think your enthusiasm is completely unexplainable.

DANA
I will take that. I WILL TAKE IT!

He kisses her on the forehead and zooms out of the house.

INT. CAFETORIUM - DAY

The class is semi-assembled when Dana blurs through the door, arms filled with 30 scripts. He crash lands into a stack of chairs -- WHAM!

DANA
Guess what I've got!

CHUY
Your head out of your ass?

DANA
No.

The scripts fly all over the place.

ANGLE - A copy of the play lands in Rand's lap. We see the title:

"Hamlet II"

He looks over at Dana, more in love with him than ever.

RAND
(mesmerized)
Yes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAFETORIUM -- LATER

Octavio and Epiphany perform a scene from Hamlet 2.

RAND
Why don't you get a real job dairy farming instead of wasting your time with that theatre crap?

EPIPHANY
Take it easy on him, Ray. The boy's sensitive.

RAND
Too sensitive if you ask me. He needs to be a man.

Dana mouths the words as Octavio speaks.

OCTAVIO
Like you, Poppa? Does coming home from work and drinking three six packs of Molsen beer make you a man? Does pushing mom around and calling us all names all day and all night make you a man? Does throwing all your dairy farming wages away on gambling and cheap floozies in town, does that make you a man?!

RAND
I have a mind to put you through a wall little boy.

OCTAVIO
Do it.

Dana is enthralled. Octavio stares down Rand in a way Dana never had the strength to do with his own father. Epiphany flips through her script looking for the line.

EPIPHANY

That line's not in the script.

OCTAVIO

I said do it.

The class is riveted.

Dana stares at Octavio, fascinated, amazed. He sees a raw ability that he never possessed. He's thrilled and a little sad.

RAND

Um, I'm not comfortable with improv.

OCTAVIO

DO IT!

Octavio shoves Rand in the chest and Rand flies backwards.

DANA

Okay, let's stop there. Very powerful, Octavio. Where were you when I was seven? Wow. Class, thoughts?

RAND

I didn't like any part of that.

EPIPHANY

I thought he was AMAZING. I felt this electric charge! He gave me so much more than Rand ever... well, it's stupid to compare.

Rand is quietly devastated.

EPIPHANY

I'm just so surprised that one of you people is such a good actor.

IVONNE

You people?

CHUY

That's some racist shit right there.

VITAMIN J

Wow. I heard that.

RAND

If you don't like this class get out.

CHUY

What else, bitch?

RAND

Don't you call me a bitch!

DANA

(from the floor)

Hey, simmer down, everybody.

Ivonne shoves her chair across the floor, slamming it into Epiphany.

EPIPHANY

You're hurting me!!!

Epiphany shoves the chair back but it hits Yolanda instead. She falls over in pain.

CHUY

Yolanda!

IVONNE

Don't do that to my friend!

Ivonne charges Epiphany trying to slap her. She falls backwards.

EPIPHANY

Someone please help me!!!

RAND

Oh my God!

Chuy takes the opportunity to shove Rand.

Infuriated, Rand tries to scratch Chuy.

Suddenly everyone goes crazy, jumping on desks, throwing things. Instant chaos.

DANA

You've got to do something, Dana...

Dana finally gets up.

DANA
Nachos or pizza!

The kids fall silent, unsure of the meaning of this.

DANA
 I have access to the activities van. We can go to the Fun Zone in the mall. I'll buy everyone a snack. Do you want nachos or pizza?

A beat.

CHUY
 I wouldn't mind some nachos.

EPIPHANY
 (quietly)
 Figures.

CHUY
 You're gonna get it, white girl.

EPIPHANY
 Try it. I'll sue your ass.

RAND
 I'm not doing carbs but maybe they have a salad.

IVONNE
 Anything's better than this.

DANA
 Okay. We're back on track! We're on our way, class! We cannot be stopped!

Dana holds a triumphant fist into the air.

INT. FUN ZONE -- LATER

The entire class is at a moderately crowded Dave and Buster's style kid arcade/adult bar wonderland. Dana and Rand are playing air-hockey. In the background, we see the other students.

RAND
 Mr. Mahrszc, are you mad at me?

DANA
 No. Why?

RAND

I don't know. You've barely spoken to me today. Is it because of my resistance to these gang-bangers?

DANA

Hey, Rand. Just because they're Mexican-Americans doesn't make them gang-bangers. Got it?

RAND

Sorry. I just love class so much. I don't want anything to change.

DANA

Rand, you're teacher's pet. What more do you want?

Dana puts his hand on Rand's shoulder. Rand reaches for it, as if to respond, but Dana takes it down, oblivious to Rand's yearning.

DANA (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's go see what the rest of the gang is doing.

RAND

You mean, Mexican-Americans.

Dana laughs and tousles Rand's hair.

ON THE OTHER STUDENTS --

They are sharing a pitcher of beer. Epiphany is sitting with them, arms crossed.

EPIPHANY

Mr. Marczh, these guys are drunk.

DANA

Hey, you promised no drinking.

CHUY

It's just beer.

OCTAVIO

Yeah, why don't you have one, esse? Maybe you'd stop being such a pinche joto.

The group laughs.

DANA
 Heywood, the truth is, I haven't
 had a drop of alcohol in twelve
 years.

CHUY
 Really?

DANA
 I got the chip on my keychain to
 prove it. From an organization
 called AA.

OCTAVIO
 What would happen if you had a
 drink?

DANA
 My entire life would fall apart.

Octavio throws Chuy and Vitamin J a conspiratorial look.

DANA (CONT'D)
 Alright, who's ready to go home?

OCTAVIO
 But we're just coming together as a
 class. We can't go home now..

DANA
 I'm sorry, Heywood. It's getting
 late and my wife is ovulating.

Epiphany discretely pours herself a beer.

EPIPHANY
 We could go to Karaoke?

DANA
 Oh 'Piff, you know Karaoke is my
 kryptonite... Fine. One song.

EVERYONE
 Yay!!!!

INT. KARAOKE BAR -- LATER

Rand is on stage singing 'Love Hurts', looking directly at
 Dana.

RAND
 ...Love hurts, love scars
 Love wounds and mars--schczch!

Dana is oblivious. He watches with the rest of the class. A lot of them are making rude gestures to Rand who is too into the song to notice.

Vitamin J hands Chuy a SMALL VIAL. Chuy hands it to Octavio who deftly pours it into Dana's drink. Dana takes a huge drink of iced tea as the kids watch and laugh.

RAND (CONT'D)
 Take a lot of pain
 Take a lot of pain
 Love is like a cloud
 It holds a lot of rain!
 Love hurts!
 (then, spoken)
 Love hurts....

Dana claps and drinks more. The kids hide their laughter.

INT. KARAOKE BAR -- LATER

Dana stands center stage, tripping his balls off. 'Somewhere' from West Side Story plays, but Dana can't sing. He remains in one spot, heaving to a fro, laughing and crying.

DANA'S POV -

A RIVER OF FLAMES lies before him. Everyone's head is enlarged by seven times. GIANT LIZARDS are playing Twister on the dance floor.

DANA
 ...my God... the terrible beauty...

Chuy, Vitamin J and Octavio are in the back, watching.

VITAMIN J
 He's about to go through the center
 of the sun.

Rand and Epiphany regard Dana.

EPIPHANY
 Why isn't he singing?

RAND
 (entranced)
 I don't know, but he's so
 compelling like this.

EXT. BANK PARKING LOT -- DAWN

Dana is in the middle of an empty parking lot. His naked
 derriere is up in the air, his skates are gone and his face
 is flat against the asphalt. A policeman shakes him awake.

DANA
 Lllllliiiiizzzzaaarrddsssss!!!

POLICEMAN
 What is your name? Where do you
 live?

DANA
 Who?
 (then)
 I don't know. Where...? What am
 I? I have no memory of anything.
 Time begins and stops NOW.

POLICEMAN
 (into walkie talkie)
 We have a 210 with a 614 in the
 parking lot of Tucson National
 Bank. Over.

DANA
 What do those numbers mean? Are
 you sending me to the gas chamber?
What is happening?

POLICEMAN 2
 You're going downtown, buddy. We
 don't take to perverts ass-up in
 parking lots around here. People
 move to Tucson to get away from
 that kind of thing.

Policeman 2 picks Dana up and helps him into the car.

DANA
 What? Look, my feet are like
 swollen monkeys. Why are your
 hands made out of liquid metal?
 Are you from the future?

The Policemen exchange disgusted looks.

INT. POLICE CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Dana sits in the back seat of the squad car. He licks the bars that separate him from the front seat.

DANA

This tastes like the color blue.

(then)

Wait a minute. I just remembered something. I teach drama! I'M A TEACHER!

POLICEMAN

This is why I home-school my kids.

INT. CAFETORIUM - DAY

Rand flips through the script.

RAND

Um, I'm not comfortable with this. The role of Hamlet's father -- my part -- has been reduced significantly. I thought I was the star.

DANA

There are no small parts, Rand. Just small actors.

CHUY

Hey, peener, looks like you're both.

ANGLE ON RAND - His whole world is imploding. He looks through the play.

RAND

Maybe I'm crazy but there's already been a play about Hamlet. It's called Hamlet!

DANA

Rand, theater is a living thing. Octavio's performance yesterday combined with my impending fatherhood, inspired me to take some bold steps and say some tough things about my own relationship with my father that I've been scared to say up until now.

Rand can't take it any more. He stands up.

RAND

I've given my life to this class
and now that all goes out the
window because of... him? Because
HE inspired you? And all of my
work goes out the window? That is
not okay!

DANA

Rand, it's what's best for the
play.

RAND

It's not what's best for me! I
quit!

And he's out the door. Dana chases after him. The class
snickers and mocks Rand.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dana chases after Rand in the middle of the busy hallway. He
puts his hand on Rand's shoulder.

DANA

Rand, let's talk about this.

Rand turns around and faces Dana. He is SO ANGRY it looks
like his head might explode.

RAND

I HATE YOU, YOU STUPID UGLY
FUCKER!!!!!!!!!!

He slaps Dana, hard. Everyone in the hall freezes, thrilled
and scandalized.

Rand walks away.

Epiphany runs outside. Dana processes. He turns to
Epiphany.

DANA

I guess Rand's angry.

Epiphany just looks at Dana.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Rocker sits behind his desk feeding his pet cockatoo from his mouth.

MR. ROCKER (CONT'D)
Daddy loves his Nibbles. Kisses
from Nibbles.

As Mr. Rocker practically frenches the bird, Rand enters.

RAND
Mr. Rocker?

MR. ROCKER
(caught)
Hah. Just checking the bird's...
(then)
Yes, what is it, Rand?

RAND
Here.

Rand hands a script to Mr. Rocker.

MR. ROCKER (CONT'D)
What is this? Hamlet II?

For once, Rocker actually laughs.

RAND
It's the play Mr. Marchz wrote.

MR. ROCKER
No, seriously.

RAND
It's NO JOKE. I think you should
take a look at it.

MR. ROCKER
(intrigued)
Why?

RAND
Let's just say that... by the time
you get to the scene where Hamlet's
father gives George Clooney a
handjob, you'll see why.

Mr. Rocker blanches.

MR. ROCKER

Did you just say handjob?

Rand gets a pinched nerve in his neck.

RAND

Yes I did. He thinks he's going to save drama with this play. Mr. Rocker, if you care about decency and if you love this country, you will stop Dana Marchz. Take him down. Then take him from BEHIND!

Rand starts crying and puts his hands over his eyes, running out of the office.

INT. CAFETORIUM - DAY

ONSTAGE -

Dana is dressed as Hamlet and Chuy is dressed as Osama Bin Laden. They are watching TV while Ivonne, decked out like a disco-goddess, dances behind them.

CHUY AS OSAMA

(to Octavio)

How can your God allow such suffering?

DANA AS HAMLET

I wonder who killed my dad.

They stare at the TV some more.

CHUY AS OSAMA

Who wins the war on terror?

DANA AS HAMLET

Be quiet. Will and Grace is starting.

IVONNE

(doing a bump and grind)

I've got the will
And you've got the grace!
Between us we shall
Save the human race!
Oh Jesus, rock me with that
swimmer's bod!

Suddenly Ivonne looks at her script and drops out of the scene.

IVONNE (CONT'D)

(to Dana)

Can I ask you something? Is Jesus like a swimmer?

DANA

Jesus is very lean...

Suddenly the kitchen starts rolling out giant metal trays of macaroni and cheese. Dana whirls around the CAFETERIA WORKERS.

DANA (CONT'D)

Can you please wait until lunch to do that!?!?!?! Thank you.

(turning back to the kids)

Where was I?

EPIPHANY

Jesus has a swimmer's body.

DANA

Yes, Jesus has a swimmer's body and while he's one of the more spiritual people on earth, he's also very attractive to you. Physically attractive. What I'm saying is that Jesus is sexy to you.

CHUY

(in Spanish with English subtitles)

We're all going to hell for doing this play.

Octavio arrives, looking worried.

DANA

Okay, you're about forty-eight minutes late. I've had to play you playing Hamlet which was confusing.

OCTAVIO

I can't do the play.

Dana turns to look at him.

DANA

What?

OCTAVIO

My dad's making me quit the play.

DANA

But that's impossible. You're the lead.

OCTAVIO

He said no way.

DANA

God damn macho bastards and their fear of the arts. They just don't get it!

(grabbing his skates)

Come on, Octavio, we're fighting this! Even if we have to take on the whole ghetto!

OCTAVIO

No, wait. What do you mean?

DANA

We're going to your house. Now.

OCTAVIO

I don't think we should do that.

Dana puts his arm around Octavio.

DANA

It's funny, my father stood in the way of my own dreams too. He's dead now. But you could say I'm still haunted by him because he never hugged me and that's why I tried to become an actor which has caused me so much pain.

An awkward beat. They walk out.

CUT TO:

INT. OCTAVIO'S HOUSE -- LATER

Dana IN CLOSE UP -

DANA

You can't let your ethnic narrow-mindedness stop your son from thriving in our culture.

We pull back to REVEAL a vast and beautiful living room in an architecturally significant house. The furnishings reveal a tasteful worldliness.

MR. and MRS. MARQUEZ are perfectly turned out and both very handsome. Octavio sits silently off to the side.

MR. MARQUEZ
I must take exception to your
characterization...

DANA
Heywood's a bad boy. A gang-banger.
A deadbeat. But he also has a
gift.

MRS. MARQUEZ
Who is Heywood?

DANA
Your son, Heywood Jablomey?

Octavio cringes.

DANA (CONT'D)
(realizing)
Wait a minute. Oh I finally got it.

MR. MARQUEZ
Octavio doesn't belong to a gang.
He's got a 3.9. and an early
acceptance to Brown. He reads
metaphysics all night for fun.

DANA
(totally thrown)
He does?????

Dana turns to Octavio who looks mortified.

MR. MARQUEZ
Our concerns about the play were of
a different nature.

DANA
It's the sex and violence. I can
totally tone that down.

MR. MARQUEZ
We are fine with those.

DANA
Then what is it?

MR. MARQUEZ

I'm afraid we think it is a mistake to write a sequel to what is perhaps the greatest play ever written.

DANA

No offense, sir, but what the hockey-puck do you two know?

MR. MARQUEZ

I have published nine novels. I have a PhD in literature. My wife is a painter. She currently has an exhibit at the Guggenheim in Bilbao.

(gesturing behind Dana)

This is one of her works.

Dana's brain scrambles as he looks at the large painting which appears to be a slightly abstracted vagina.

DANA

Oh, okay... then...

(then, desperate)

Help me! Help me fix my play! This is my only shot at saving drama!

MR. MARQUEZ

This thing is so confused.

DANA

I know. Oh God. I'll pay you. I don't have any money but I could do odd jobs and chores.

MR. MARQUEZ

It's not possible.

DANA

Please! I'm nothing without drama!

A long quiet beat. Dana scrambles.

DANA

I could clean your rain gutters.

MR. MARQUEZ

Okay.

Dana jumps up and hugs them. He is still on skates.

DANA
We're gonna do it! NO LIMITS!

Dana hugs Octavio.

DANA (CONT'D)
Hug me! HUG ME BRO!

INT. CAFETORIUM - DAY

DANA
Now, without any further ado, a woman who needs absolutely no introduction, my second favorite Dana -- Dana Delany.

The class just sits there except for Rand and Epiphany who give Dana a standing ovation. A few others join in clapping.

DANA DELANY
Thank you. Hi. I'm a little nervous.

DANA
No, no, no, Dana, I'm way more nervous than you are! Alright. Let's start with questions from the class. Class? Questions?

Silence.

DANA
One at a time. Please.
(laughing at himself then suddenly snapping)
I asked you all to prepare one question. One damn question. How hard is that?

Epiphany raises her hand. Dana Delany points her out.

EPIPHANY
Hi. I just wanted to say I like your blouse.

DANA DELANY
Oh thank you.

Another silence.

DANA
 (to Octavio)
 Maybe Mr. Alpha Male has a
 question?

OCTAVIO
 (to Dana Delany)
 Yeah I was wondering... who are
 you?

The class laughs.

DANA
 She's an actress! 'Moon Over
 Parador!' "China Beach!"
 'HouseSitter!' with a man named
 Steve FUCKING Martin and Goldie
 FUCKING Hawn! Any of that shit
 ring a bell? I'm sorry, Dana.

DANA DELANY
 That's alright Dana. I think I've
 heard the word shit before.

Just then we notice that Mr. Rocker, the Principal, has
 entered the cafetorium. He's standing by the door waving Dana
 over.

DANA DELANY
 ...In Hollywood, you pretty much
 have to swim in it.

DANA
 Ha ha. Bravo.
 (then)
 Please excuse me for one minute.
 Rand, why don't you ask a question?

Rand stands, referring to his index cards.

RAND
 Dana. The casting couch. Sex for
 jobs. Your experience?

Mr. Rocker motions for Dana to step out into the hall.

DANA DELANY
 Well, I didn't want to talk about
 Hollywood, but I do have a pretty
 juicy casting couch story...

DANA
 (pleadingly to Mr. Rocker)
 I'd love to stay and hear this.

Mr. Rocker makes a disapproving face and Dana scoots out the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

DANA
 It's pretty exciting having Dana
 Delany in class.

Rocker steps right up to Dana, holding forth a copy of Hamlet 2.

ROCKER
 Due to its unwholesome content the
 school cannot allow the exhibition
 of 'Hamlet II.'

Dana stares at it.

DANA
 Where did you get that?

ROCKER
 Entirely beside the point.

DANA
 Did Rand give it to you?

ROCKER
 Nudity and pornography are not
 allowed on the school premises.

DANA
 There's no nudity! Or pornography!
 I don't think.

ROCKER
 (shaking the play at him)
 You have the Lord God french
 kissing a known terrorist!

DANA
 It's a parting embrace before the
 moment of damnation. It's part of a
 modernist dance. When all is said
 and done I think you'll find it
 quite moving.

ROCKER
Trust me I won't.

DANA
We're a week away. Things are in motion.
(trying to laugh it off)
Art is happening.

ROCKER
Well stop it.

DANA
You can't stop art!

ROCKER
You're shut down, Marx!

Dana loses it.

DANA
No, you are! You never believed in me! I hate you, DADDY! We're putting this play on and if you don't like it -- tough titties! And it's Marshchshahs, you ass turd monkey raper!

Dana walks back into the cafetorium and slams the door, smashing his finger in the jam. The door is stuck closed. He's paralyzed with pain.

INT. CAFETORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Dana Delany is still answering Rand's question.

DANA DELANY
...I mean, in that case, if I had slept with the producer I probably could have gotten a better part, but he was pretty gross, so I just couldn't.

RAND
I really appreciate your candor.

Dana slumps to the floor, his finger still in the jamb.

DANA DELANY
Are you alright?

DANA

My finger is stuck. The pain is
exquisite. I've never felt so much
feeling... This is it! I've loved
every minute!!!

He passes out. Dana Delany rushes forward. The class jumps
up.

DANA DELANY

Someone get some ice. Let me
through. I'm a nurse.

The students free his hand and Dana Delany kneels next to
him. He comes to, looking into her eyes.

DANA

How do you keep your head held high
when all you try to do is make a
difference with your life and
people keep throwing steaming piles
of shit in your face?

DANA DELANY

I don't know but that's why I left
network television.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SUNSET

Brie pulls up in Gary's car. Dana is sitting on a bench. This
is a low-rent hospital in a low rent part of town. His middle
finger is bandaged with a ten-inch device that looks
alarmingly like a dildo. He's holding his hand upwards so it
appears he's giving the finger to Brie as she gets out of the
car.

BRIE

Well fuck you too.

DANA

No I have to elevate it.

BRIE

Oh. I though you were flipping me
off.

DANA

It was nice of Gary to let you use
his car. I'm glad you two are
getting along.

BRIE
I have to tell you something.

She sits next to him. She looks at him.

BRIE
I'm pregnant.

Dana gasps.

DANA
Really?

She nods. His eyes fill up.

DANA
Are you shitting me?

BRIE
No!

He hugs her belly.

BRIE
Christ in a basket, Dana. That's
too tight.

DANA
And it will always be too tight.
My father never hugged me. And I
will never not hug this unborn
baby!

Dana just stays there, his hands around Brie's belly.

WIDE - Beyond the school we see the vast Coronado Mountain Range and, above it, a rich sunset sky of red clouds parting to reveal a GOLDEN SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT.

Do we hear ANGELS SINGING? Dana clasps his hands together and nods knowingly.

DANA
It's like he's telling me there's
hope.

BRIE
Who?

DANA
GOD!

The CAMERA LIFTS UP ABOVE THEM, REVEALING THE VIEW...

DAME JUDY DENCH

(narration)

At this point, it felt to Dana the air was perfumed with hope. But as Icarus flew high, full of aspiration, on wings of wax, he was unconscious of the possibility of doom as he neared the sun. And so was poor dear Dana Marrschz.

FLASHES OF LIGHTNING!

SUPERIMPOSE:

Act Five: Hope is a Demon Bitch

EXT. TUCSON STREET IN FRONT OF KINKO'S - NIGHT

A gusty storm is moving up from the south. Dana skates up to Kinko's, drenched.

INT. KINKO'S -- NIGHT

Dana is at the counter. He holds up different-colored covers next to a stack of his play.

The Kinko's worker, GLENN, 18, high on weed, brings over more copies.

DANA

Excuse me. Glenn. Which color do you think works best for a controversial piece of socio-political agit-prop theater?

GLENN

Uh... Most people like blue.

DANA

Hold the phone, guy. I'm not most people. What's the least popular color?

GLENN

Uh... Probably orange.

A hideous orange.

DANA

Orange: the color of fire! And of
the poet's harvest moon! Glenn!
We've done it!

GLENN

What?

INT. CAFETORIUM - DAY

Dana is talking to GREG, a handsome man in a light blue sweatshirt. There are about 30 MEN, all in light blue sweatshirts milling about, drinking coffee, chatting.

GREG

We thought the play was...
fascinating. Strange. But we
support anything that challenges
the status quo.

DANA

Wow. Thank you so much.

With a wink, Greg starts intoning a honey-sweet B-flat. All the other men in light blue sweatshirts join in, harmonizing and taking formation. They are very enthusiastic.

Dana turns to the mesmerized class.

DANA (CONT'D)

I am pretty f-ing excited to
announce that the musical
accompaniment for our little play
will be provided by the Gay Men's
Chorus of Tucson!

The GUYS launch into a sparkling, Broadway-style rendition of 'Beast of Burden' by the Rolling Stones.

The class watches the performance in stunned silence.

The SONG CONTINUES over the following:

EXT. OCTAVIO'S HOUSE -- LATER

Dana is up on the roof, cleaning out the gutter, precariously balanced on a ladder. Octavio's father comes out and looks up. He can see up Dana's kaftan. It makes him look away uncomfortably.

DANA
I'm almost done with the gutters!

MR. MARQUEZ
I finished reading the latest draft.

DANA
So, what do you think?

MR. MARQUEZ
It's not a total disaster.

DANA
(to himself)
Right on, Dana.

MR. MARQUEZ
When you're done up there, come around back -- the fountain needs draining.

DANA
You got it.

INT. CAFETORIUM - DAY

We see an elaborate series of wires that drop down and connect to harnesses. The kids are wandering around them, intrigued.

Dana talks with two pimply white trash guys, HORACE and VIRGIL.

DANA
Thanks so much for donating your wire-work services. How did you guys get started?

HORACE
Uh, we seen them Kill Bill movies about twenty times and so we said shit, we got wire, we got harnesses. So we get to work in the backyard and next thing you know, we're in show business.

DANA
(finally realizing)
Oh. So this is your first... attempt?

HORACE

Yessir.

We see shy Yolanda being buckled into a frightening leather harness. She has an uncomfortable smile on her face.

HORACE (CONT'D)

Hold on, girl.

Horace unties a rope which allows a heavy weight to fall from the ceiling. Simultaneously, Yolanda is lifted off her feet at a tremendous velocity and flies diagonally into a wall.

WHAM!

VIRGIL

That's cool!

INT. CAFETORIUM -- DAY

Dana talks to PANEER, the Indian Metal Shop teacher. Beyond, some KIDS from his shop class who are welding a metal set. The drama class is there, too, bustling around.

DANA

Great job, Paneer. Who said shop class was useless?

PANEER

I don't know. Did someone say that?

DANA

No, no. Figure of speech. Walk me through your work.

PANEER

Okay. This is the Danish castle slash porno theater.

DANA

It's fantastic, Paneer. I think it's the best set I've ever seen.

Chuy approaches Dana.

CHUY

Hey, Mr. M., I was thinking, what if me and my homies drive our lowriders on stage in the third act?

DANA
It seems dangerous.

CHUY
(giving up)
Maybe so.

DANA
Which is why I want to do it. We
are not making safe theater!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE CAFETORIUM - DAY

The door won't open with Dana's key.

He notices a MEMO when Chuy and some of the class walk up.

DANA
Jesus Jones! Rocker's changed the
locks. This is the first shot
across the bow, boys and girls.
Just like that movie "Master and
Commander" starring the
terrifyingly real Aussie badboy,
Russell Crowe.

CHUY
Thirty seconds, holmes.

Chuy whips a tiny file out of his wallet, kneeling before the
lock.

DANA
(hesitating)
Chuy, I really think breaking and
entering is neither cool nor
terrific --

But Chuy's already done. The door swings open.

DANA (CONT'D)
Oh. That skill raises some
questions. But not for me. Not
now. We have work to do.

CAMERA SWINGS AROUND to a single file line of SEVENTH GRADERS
on their way to the library. The last one along is Noah
Saperstein, the drama critic.

He has just witnessed this episode.

It gives him pause.

CUT TO -

A stack of the most recent issue of DATELINE MESA is dropped into frame.

Students grab copies.

CUT TO -

CLOSE UP - An article entitled 'THE PRICE OF FREE SPEECH' by Noah Saperstein.

We PULL BACK to reveal:

INT. CAFETORIUM -

Dana is reading the article while the class listens.

DANA

(reading)

...What about Hamlet II could possibly offend Principal Rocker to such a degree? Or is offense the offense at all? Truth is a nebulous commodity. As Roland Barthes tells us, multiple perspectives cannot ever coalesce...

(he lowers the paper)

Does anybody understand this?

Epiphany rushes in waving a paper.

EPIPHANY

Did you see this article in the paper?!?!?!?

OCTAVIO

We're already reading it, woman.

EPIPHANY

Not the school paper. The News Press. I stole it from Starbucks.

CHUY

You think you're pretty street, don't you?

EPIPHANY

You want a piece of me, homey!?

CHUY

NO THANKS.

Dana's eyes bug out at the paper. He holds it up.

DANA
There's a picture of me!

EPIPHANY
(reading)
"Why is the school board afraid of
this man?"

Epiphany holds up the PHOTO: Dana in combat fatigues and headband, holding an automatic weapon.

DANA
I was an extra on Magnum PI. What a
wonderful experience. Tom Selleck
is a real pro.

EXT. SCHOOL LAWN - DAY

The class and Dana are having an al fresco read-through.

MAN
Dana Marsha?

DANA
Marzsh. Yes?

The Man hands Dana an envelope. Dana takes it.

MAN
Consider yourself served.

DANA
But... hah!

Dana jumps and throws the envelope like it's made of fire.

DANA (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?

Octavio crosses over and picks it up. He opens it and reads.

OCTAVIO
It's a cease and desist order from
the School Board.

EPIPHANY
What does that mean?

OCTAVIO

The state can arrest Mr. Mahrhsz if
he puts on this play.

Dana grabs the envelope and runs after the guy.

DANA

I don't want this! Unserve me!

Dana jumps onto the hood -- as you would in an 80's Cop Drama
-- and the guy swerves hard to the right. Dana is violently
slammed onto the pavement but he rolls out of it.

DANA (CONT'D)

I'm okay!

(then)

Remember, always tuck your head in
and roll into the fall. Bill
Shatner taught me that.

INT. CAFETORIUM -- DAY

Dana is going over the LIGHTING SCHEME with Vitamin J.

DANA

So what's your overall lighting
plan?

VITAMIN J

Yeah.

DANA

Yeah. What is it?

VITAMIN J

With the lighting, it's gonna be so
totally akin to... so...
(he drifts off)

DANA

So totally akin to what?

VITAMIN J

What?

DANA

You were just talking. You didn't
finish your sentence.

VITAMIN J

I didn't?

DANA
No.

VITAMIN J
Did you?

DANA
Did I what?

VITAMIN J
What?

DANA
I respect your process.

Dana looks worried. V.J. moves to the Lighting Board.

A WOMAN approaches.

TOVA
Mr. Mahrasscchka?

DANA
It's Marschz. Thanks.

TOVA
Tova Friedman. ACLU. I help the
powerless.

Suddenly the LIGHTS CHANGE to blinding WHITE.

DANA
Ahhhh! My eyes!!!!

TOVA
It's my understanding, sir, that
forces are trying to keep you from
performing Hamlet II.

DANA
I have never been in this much pain
in my life. Vitamin J! I can't see
you!

TOVA
You were served a cease and desist
in regards to the performance?

DANA
Yes.

TOVA

I think we've got a first amendment case on our hands, Mr. Mahazhza.

DANA

It's Marschz. You really think so?

TOVA

Abso-fucking-lutely. No one's shutting this play down. That piece of shit Alberto Gonzales and the entire Justice Department can suck my balls.

DANA

What do they have to do with this?

TOVA

My balls?

DANA

No, those people you mentioned.

TOVA

I like throwing names around -- makes good press. So what do you say, Dana?

DANA

Hey, are you one of those left wing people who wants to exploit me?

TOVA

Yes I am. Do you have a problem with that?

DANA

Not at all. Let's do it.

INT. SCHOOL BOARD MEETING -- NIGHT

Mr. Rocker stands in front of a room filled with angry parents and members of the community. Mrs. Nardi stands behind him, officiously.

MR. ROCKER

Rest assured, we have the situation under control. A cease and desist order has been served. Hamlet II can not and will not be performed on school grounds.

One parent stands holding a flier.

PARENT

Well, what the hell do you call this?

MR. ROCKER

I can't see that far.

PARENT

It's a flier I found on my car. It says the ACLU has been granted an injunction that blocks your cease and desist order.

There's a rumble throughout the room.

MR. ROCKER

What?

Rocker grabs the flier.

MR. ROCKER (CONT'D)

Hippies with law degrees! They just unleashed a world of hurt on themselves!

Mrs. Nardi smiles. She knows just what to do.

INT. CAFETORIUM - DAY

The cast is rehearsing. Octavio is center stage dressed as Hamlet, spinning at two DJ TURNTABLES, Epiphany, as Christina Aguilera.

OCTAVIO AS HAMLET

I'll spin your phat licks, little girl.

He's very good. Epiphany writhes to the BEAT.

EPIPHANY AS CHRISTINA AGUILERA

Thank you, Hamlet!
To be or not to be?!?!
Thank you, Hamlet!
Produce my next LP!

She turns to us.

EPIPHANY

(turning to Dana)
What's an LP?

OCTAVIO

Come on. Stay in the play...

(then)

Christina Aguilera, I got no problem with the ho's. But why you frontin, baby girl?

EPIPHANY

Whassup wityou Hamlet??? Why you always getting up on my junk, hunhh???

OCTAVIO

Shut up, girl!!!!

Dana waves his arms.

DANA

Octavio, why are you yelling like that!?!?! Show respect to your fellow thespians!

OCTAVIO

That's the line. I'm doing the play.

DANA

OH! It was just so real, I thought you were... Okay, I'm a stupid idiot.

(then)

Take five, everyone!

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dana has just finished tightening his skates. He gets up and sets out but stalls in the gravel.

DANA

Uhhh. When are they gonna pave this thing?

Suddenly headlights flash on, blinding Dana.

DANA (CONT'D)

Excuse me... Brights...! Can't see!

The headlights start moving --- STRAIGHT AT Dana!

DANA (CONT'D)

Hey!

And he can't skate. He DIVES out of the path of the car, a GIANT-WHEELED HIKED-UP BLAZER painted with camouflage, a rifle rack in back. It fishtails around and points at Dana again.

DANA (CONT'D)
What are you doing!?!?!?

He's running away on his skates, damn awkwardly too.

The Blazer comes after him another time.

VOICE
(from inside the door)
Get him with the door, baby-doll!

DANA
Please let me live!!!

We hear a CHILD laughing and the passenger door swings open. BANG! Knocking Dana over. The Blazer swings around one more time.

Coming right at him! He rolls right into the path BLAZER passes right over him ---with several feet clearance underneath.

The Blazer stops and a big FAT MAN in a John Deere hat leans out IN SILHOUETTE.

FAT MAN
You'll git it worse if you put on yer gay commie play! You hear?!?!

DANA
(on the ground, panting)
I hear what you're saying and I'm going to seriously consider your point of view.

The guy throws an empty Schlitz can at Dana and takes off.

EXT. DANA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dana skates up.

INT. DANA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He falls in the front door.

DANA

Hi guys! Don't worry, I'm only
bruised, not broken. Turns out my
play has divided the community but
I shall not be deterred.

Brie and Gary come out of the bedroom and stand there
awkwardly.

BRIE

Dana...

DANA

Hi, Brie. I think I'm going to go
run myself a big bath. I've had
the worst day ever.

BRIE

There isn't really a delicate way
of saying this except, Gary and I
are together. We're a couple. And
we're moving out. Sorry.

Brie goes back in the other room.

DANA

Yeah, a big Arthur style bath with
bubbles. And I'm gonna put on my
top hat and I'm gonna wish all my
troubles into the cornfield.
That's what I'm gonna do.

Gary is silent. Brie comes back out.

BRIE

Didn't you hear what I said?

DANA

Yes I did, funny bunny.

BRIE

Dana, we are leaving. We are
packed. We are going to San Diego.

DANA

God, I almost believe you.

BRIE

Believe it!

She points to a pile of boxes and bags by the door.

DANA

But... but why? You're my wife.

BRIE

Your wife is leaving you. Gary and I have been getting closer for a while now. We're very compatible. As long as he keeps his mouth shut.

Gary smiles. Dana finally wraps his head around what's happening.

BRIE (CONT'D)

Look. You've been busy with your play. These things happen. Don't sweat it. You'll be so much happier without me.

DANA

What about the baby?

BRIE

The doctor told me a while ago. You're shooting blanks. I should have said something.

DANA

But that must mean...
(a beat)
...oh my gosh.

He looks at Gary. Gary looks at the floor. Dana stands up. He takes a long time to say this:

DANA (CONT'D)

Brie, I'm starting to think that you are not a very nice person.

Brie bends over and laughs.

BRIE

Dana! Wake up!!!! I'M A BITCH!!!

She moves to a row of suitcases and grabs a few.

BRIE (CONT'D)

Come on, Gary.

Gary jumps to, picking up a huge box and heading out the door.

GARY

Gee, this box is...

BRIE

Pssht.

Gary is instantly silenced.

Dana stumbles over to the couch and flops down.

Brie comes back in for a last load, laying some envelopes down on the hall table.

BRIE (CONT'D)

Here's the electricity and phone bills. And the rent is due on Thursday.

Dana hasn't moved.

BRIE (CONT'D)

Good luck with the play.
(a thoughtful pause)
You really will be better off without me.

And she's gone.

EXT. DANA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gary's car pulls away.

INT. DANA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dana sits on the couch alone. He holds his Casio keyboard on his lap and he stares off into the middle distance. He absently plays a pathetic and tinny version of 'Maniac' from 'Flashdance.'

DANA

(singing, lost and sad)
I'm a maniac, maniac... oh yeah...
And I'm dancing like I've never danced before....

He looks over: the liquor cabinet is open. There's a bottle of peach schnapps that is half empty.

Suddenly Dana dives for it, drinking it down with psychotic abandon.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE PARKING LOT -- LATER

Dana skates drunkenly into the lot. He misjudges his turn and collides with a parked car. He slides across the hood of the car and lands painfully on the blacktop. An ASIAN GROCER helps him up.

INT. LIQUOR STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Dana skates in and slams into a wine display. He picks himself up and crawls to the counter. An old dude is at the register and watches America's Funniest Home Videos.

DANA

I need something to make the pain
go away.

The old dude turns and pulls a huge scary bottle off the shelf.

OLD DUDE

Grain alcohol.

Dana sees a flier for his play. He points to it.

DANA

This is me. I'm famous. And now
I'm going to drink myself to death.
Just like Nicolas Cage in Leaving
Fucking Las Vegas!!! What a
performance!

He shoves the flier in the old Dude's face.

DANA (CONT'D)

I'm Leaving Las Vegas!

The Old Dude just looks at him. The cash register dings.

OLD DUDE

One dollar and seven cents.

CUT TO

EXT. STAGE DOOR BEHIND THE CAFETORIUM - DAY

Epiphany pulls up in the activities van. Chuy is waiting at the loading dock.

EPIPHANY

You guys, we have the TV's.

CHUY

(peering into the van)
There's a hundred sets in there,
woman! Where'd you get those, huh?

EPIPHANY

Stole 'em from white folks, dog.

WE MOVE THROUGH THE DOOR INTO THE CAFETORIUM:

The place is a serious hive of activity: A giant armature of speed-rail is being built on the stage by several guys from "Ramon's Chop Shop." Octavio and the rest of the class are helping. Yolanda (left arm in a sling) is meticulously painting giant mod-graphic words all over the cafetorium walls: PAIN - LIFE - HATE - PRAY - HEAR - VAIN. Epiphany and Chuy stream in with TV sets.

IVONNE

...I think Marcshz has got this thing my cousin has which is like bipolar but she takes these pills.

CHUY

He's not bipolar. He's just a freak.

IVONNE

I just wish he wouldn't wear leg warmers. I can't eat lunch when he does.

OCTAVIO

And would it be possible for him not to flash his balls at us for one second?

EPIPHANY

Yeah that's bullshit.

IVONNE

I don't even understand this play. Why does he have Hamlet travel through time with Jesus and Snuggles the fabric softening bear?

OCTAVIO

My dad says he's never seen anyone more singularly untalented.

EPIPHANY

Pundejo!

CHUY

Who you think you are talkin' like
that, white girl?

Epiphany throws him a gang sign then turns and gasps. Dana has been standing there. And he's quite drunk. He cannot get to his feet.

DANA

I heard everything.

The class stops cold. Endless silence.

DANA (CONT'D)

I don't even get paid for this job,
did you know that?! There is no
funding for arts education in this
country! I work for gas money --
which is why I skate! Well, that
and the DUI. I live off of gas
money!!!

(then to Octavio)

My life is a parody of a tragedy!
My wife just left me, the baby
wasn't mine, people keep trying to
run me over.

Everyone is embarrassed and tense.

CHUY

Is that barf on your shirt?

DANA

Yes it is. I'm a dirty dirty dirty
drunk just like my dirty drunk
dairy farmer father. Next question.

EPIPHANY

What should we do with all the TVs?

DANA

It doesn't matter. We'll never get
this play on. Let's just stop now.
I'll just go home and open a vein
and die quietly like everyone wants
me to!

OCTAVIO

What?

Dana breaks down crying and half runs/half skates out of the classroom. The kids all look at each other, bummed out and feeling super shitty.

CHUY

He works for gas money?

IVONNE

Ooh, that is harsh.

OCTAVIO

I shouldn't have said that thing about his balls.

EPIPHANY

I called him a pundejo! I don't even know what that means.

Octavio heads out. The others follow him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

The sun is setting and a wind is kicking up. Dana is sprawled on the pavement, whimpering, his skate stuck in a drain grate.

The class gathers around him.

DANA

Go away you devil bitches!!! Let me die in peace....

No one quite knows what to say.

A GIRL'S VOICE

Pussy!

Everyone's head turns to see who said this. The students step back to reveal: YOLANDA.

IVONNE

Yolanda. You talked.

Yolanda bears down on Dana.

YOLANDA

You come in here and tell us all to be artistic and put on your crazy ass play and when things get a little rough you act like a fucking pussy?

She throws her paintbrush down on the ground dramatically.

DANA

Yolanda honey, you don't say much
but when you do it sure packs a
wallop.

OCTAVIO

She's right. Okay, it sounds like
you've had a pretty bad day, I'll
give you that -- but you can't give
up.

DANA

Why not? Nobody cares.

OCTAVIO

Yeah, we do.

DANA

I don't want your pity!

OCTAVIO

You keep talking about making us
extraordinary.

DANA

That's from Dead Poet's.

OCTAVIO

Well, you're teaching us something
really important.

DANA

I am? What?

OCTAVIO

It doesn't matter how much talent
you lack, if you have enthusiasm.

DANA

Oh my god. That is so true.
Because I lack talent.

YOLANDA

The football team and the wrestling
team and all the seniors are gonna
be like security and kick the asses
of anybody who tried to stop the
play.

CHUY

And I got some friends to work the parking lot in case we have any trouble, you know what I'm sayin'?

DANA

No. Not at all.

IVONNE

Also we're sold out.

DANA

What?

IVONNE

Like every ticket was bought. And like channel five is coming. And you got a message from this guy at the New York Times.

She hands him a slip of paper. He stares at it.

EPIPHANY

Plus, Mr. M, I just jacked a van-load of hot T-for-the-V's. Don't tell me I did that shit for nothing.

Octavio steps up to Dana.

OCTAVIO

This play means something to us.

Long pause. Dana starts crying.

DANA

I was just scared. Whenever I go for something, my heart gets stomped on. But that's no reason to give up. Or maybe it is. Wait no, it's not.

He stops and looks at them.

DANA (CONT'D)

You guys are the most important thing in the world to me.

He raises a clenched fist in the air.

DANA (CONT'D)

TRIUMPH STARTS WITH TRY. Total emotional 180, guys! WOOOOOOOOO!!!

Everyone is glad.

DANA (CONT'D)
Let's get to work!

The class heads back to the cafetorium but Dana can't move.

DANA
My skate's stuck. Anyone want to
lend a hand??

SUPERIMPOSE:

Act Five: No Turning Back!!!

EXT. MESA HIGH SCHOOL -- EVENING

Principal Rocker looks out at the parking lot with Mrs. Nardi. They stand in front of some open double doors. The parking lot is filling up with LOWRIDERS with attendant GANG BANGERS.

PRINCIPAL ROCKER
What the hell is this?

MRS. NARDI
I believe this is the security
detail for the play tonight.

PRINCIPAL ROCKER
Oh really? They think I'm going to
be intimidated.

MRS. NARDI
What are you going to do?

PRINCIPAL ROCKER
I'm calling in the reserves.

MRS. NARDI
You mean, the parents?

PRINCIPAL ROCKER
No. The actual Army reserves.
These fuckers seems to forget that
this is a Red State! Red as in
Republican, not Communist!

MRS. NARDI
I understand.

A half dozen GANG BANGERS are walking by Rocker and Mr.s Nardi when they deftly grab Rocker and whisk him off into a nearby idling VAN.

MR. ROCKER
Call the Army!!!

The VAN doors slam shut and it peels out of the lot.

MRS. NARDI
What's their number?!?!?!?!?!?

INT. BACKSTAGE -- LATER

Octavio and Dana and some of the other kids are facing a group of PARENTS including Octavio's father.

MR. MARQUES
I am revoking my permission for my son to appear in this play.

PARENT
I am too!

ANOTHER PARENT
And so am I!

DANA
But why now?

PARENT
I heard the play was disgusting!

DANA
If you haven't seen it, then how could you know?

MR. MARQUES
I am not interested in seeing my son used as a political pawn. He is not an object.

OCTAVIO
I'm not an object. I'm a man. I decided to be in the play myself.

Octavio and Mr. Marques lock stares.

TOVA

According to the ninth circuit court of appeals, this is still a public school activity and you have given tacit approval to allow participation. Unless any of you has legal representation present and are willing to present me with documenta....

ANOTHER PARENT

You don't control our kids!

DANA

WAKE UP CALL: YOU DON'T CONTROL YOUR KIDS!

(stunned silence)

Now get off my stage before I have security remove your sorry asses.

We see a group of BANGERS off to the side.

The Parents retreat.

CHUY

Whoa! How did you have the balls to do that?

Dana puts his hand on Chuy's shoulder.

DANA

I'm still a little drunk.

INT. CAFETORIUM -- LATER

The audience is percolating with anxiety, anticipation and a certain amount of fear from all the chaos. People jockey for mere standing room.

A giant sheath of sheer fabric wraps around the stage.

Epiphany takes center stage.

EPIPHANY

Welcome to the Mesa High drama's farewell performance. Tonight we present Hamlet II, a new play by Dana Marszch.

Parents are in the audience shouting and shoving each other.

EPIPHANY'S MOM
Good job Epiphany!

EPIPHANY'S DAD
Break a leg!

REDNECK PARENT
Eat shit and die!!!

Epiphany's Parents go after the guy.

ON STAGE --

EPIPHANY
...and thank you for not using
flash photography. Enjoy the show.

ANGLE ON GANGBANGERS --

Who maintain an intimidating crowd control presence around the edges of the stage. They have gang bandanas and tears tattooed on their faces. Mrs. Nardi sees them and listens to her Nextel.

IN THE WINGS --

Dana stands with Octavio and Ivonne. They hear SIRENS.

IVONNE
What the hell is that?

EXT. MESA HIGH SCHOOL -- CONTINUOUS

Cops peel into the parking lot, sirens blaring.

INT. CAFETORIUM -- CONTINUOUS

Octavio looks out a window.

OCTAVIO
It's the cops, man.

DANA
Johnny Law. Right on time.

Dana talks into his theatrical headset.

DANA (CONT'D)
(into headset)
Secure vectors 1 through 12.

EXT. CAFETORIUM -- CONTINUOUS

Two dozen LOWRIDERS pull into the lot, blocking the incoming cops.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Epiphany is just coming offstage when she bumps into Chuy.

CHUY
Watch it.

EPIPHANY
You watch it, nacho bell-grande!

CHUY
Why are you such a racist bitch to me, huh??!?!?

EPIPHANY
I'll show you why, vato.

She jumps him, open-mouthed, knocking him down on the ground. Insane spit-swap action. Clothes come off.

INT. CAFETORIUM - NIGHT

Suddenly the lights go out. A wave of SHRIEKS and hoots. Is this a power failure?

But no... STRANGE LIGHTS at the base of the stage are slowly fading up, like old fashioned footlights. We discern a long undulating line of bodies. And then we realize:

Everyone looks naked.

A frisson of surprised laughter ripples through the audience.

Mrs. Nardi rushes the stage.

MRS. NARDI
That's it. It's over. The police are here. This is shut down!

But five INSANE GANG BANGERS close in on her.

GANG BANGER
Relax, sister. Enjoy the show.

She takes a seat, terrified.

EXT. CAFETORIUM -- CONTINUOUS

We see members of the football team barricade bleachers and cars against the doors just as the cops descend on the school.

INT. CAFETORIUM -- AUDIENCE -- CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, amid wafts of smoke, the bodies all DEFLATE! They were inflatable sex dolls. And the white curtain falls to reveal a tableau vivant: HAMLET, LAURA BUSH, A LITTLE GIRL, SMOKEY THE BEAR, as well as CRAZY LESBIAN DISCO DANCERS.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Chuy and Epiphany are getting down to the nasty when she stops.

EPIPHANY
The curtains up!

They jump up!

ONSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

The giant metal framework is absolutely covered in the stolen TVs all of which are synchronized to a picture of EXPLOSIVE FLAMES.

And beyond that is the Gay Men's Chorus of Tucson, belting out 'Isn't It Ironic?' by Alanis Morissette in the style of a Gregorian chant.

ANGLE - BACK ON THE AUDIENCE

Everyone is absolutely stunned into silence. We see flickers of lights dance in the eyes of various audience members:

Paneer, Mrs. Nardi, Octavio's Father and Glenn from Kinko's. They are all riveted.

GLENN
Cool.

CUT TO -

Mr. Rocker, blindfolded and bound, is being carried by the BANGERS and placed in a chair. LOUD MUSIC and FLASHING LIGHTS.

ROCKER

For the love of God, you boys will go to prison for this. Kidnapping is a mandatory sixteen years in the great State of Arizona...! WHERE AM I!?!?!

The Bangers pull off the blindfold and run out.

WIDE - We are in an extremely LOW RENT STRIP CLUB. There's only one ASIAN STRIPPER onstage and one other comatose PATRON.

The stripper notices Rocker and dances over toward him, smiling.

STRIPPER

Hi cutie.

ROCKER

Untie me!

STRIPPER

You like it kinky, huh? That's hot!

EXT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

There are NEWS VANS and HANGERS ON ROAMING about.

We can see inside ONE NEWS VAN. All the TECHNICIANS and PERSONNEL are hypnotized by the images on their little TV screens.

EXT. SCHOOL -- CONTINUOUS

A TELEMUNDO REPORTER is reporting her live team coverage back to the station.

JULIA DE LA HUERTA

(in Spanish with subtitles)

It's madness down here, Bob.

(MORE)

JULIA DE LA HUERTA (cont'd)
 Teachers and students, cops,
 parents and local gang-bangers have
 all converged on Mesa High School
 for Dana Mahrsssh's controversial
 new play --
 (in English)
 Hamlet II.
 (back to Spanish)
 With me is Tova Friedman from the
 ACLU who represents Mr. Mahsrhss.
 Tova?

TOVA
 (beat)
 Look. I took French at Vassar. I'm
 not understanding a thing here.

INT. CAFETORIUM - A LITTLE LATER -

OUT OF TOTAL BLACKNESS we see candles, hundred of candles,
 which are, in fact, images of candles on the TV screens.

And BODIES ARE FLOATING in front of them, absolutely still.

Suddenly strobe lights illuminate Octavio, dressed as Hamlet,
 and seven black-robed NINJA WARRIORS. They begin an elegant
 slow-motion kung-fu FIGHT while the CHORUS SINGS 'SPACE
 ODDITY' by David Bowie.

ON THE AUDIENCE --

An HYSTERICAL WOMAN stands up.

HYSTERICAL WOMAN
 Hamlet doesn't do Kung Fu!

A man near her and takes her on.

MAN
 It's allegorical!

HYSTERICAL WOMAN
 It's retarded!

MAN
 You're retarded.

She sits down.

ONSTAGE -

ON THE TV SCREENS - We see footage of ATOMIC WARFARE and STARVING CHILDREN edited with clips from 'Smokey and the Bandit' and NFL highlights.

Octavio as Hamlet, holding a skull, waves his arms and the screens go black.

ANGLE - IN THE AUDIENCE

Rand is sitting far in the back, crying.

He suddenly gets up and runs toward the stage, slipping behind a curtain on the side.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is standing in the wings, amazed at how well it's going, most of all Dana who's changing into his Ghost-of-Hamlet's-Father costume. Rand runs up, exhilarated.

RAND

This is the most important theatrical event in the history of Tucson. I have to be a part of it!

DANA

Oh Rand. What a brave and generous thing to say.

They hug.

DANA (CONT'D)

I hit Yolanda with a door and she's in a lot of pain. I think you might fit into her costume. Would you mind playing a woman?

RAND

I've been going to therapy five days a week and I started on anti-depressants so I'm feeling much more comfortable with my sexuality.

DANA

That's wonderful, Rand.

Dana holds up a blue dress and a beret.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Dana steps out in his Ghost-of-Hamlet's-Father costume which looks weirdly like a Canadian Dairy Farmer.

DANA
 (singing, in a
 surprisingly good
 baritone)
 I am the ghost of Hamlet's Father!
 I'm a drunk dairy farmer. I think
 I know everything! Where's that
 piece of crap actor son of mine?
 He'll never add up to anything. I
 drink Molsen beer and yell a lot--

Dana turns to a giant wall of mirrors at the back of the stage and sees himself, freezing.

DANA (CONT'D)
 Poppa!? What are you doing here?

BACKSTAGE - Ivonne is waiting for her entrance, standing next to the STAGE MANAGER who follows the TEXT.

IVONNE
 What's he doing? That's not in the
 script.

CLOSE ON DANA'S FACE - He's awestruck. WE SLOWLY PULL BACK TO REVEAL: We find ourselves in a real

CANADIAN DAIRY FARM - EARLY MORNING

Dana faces his real FATHER, a craggy sullen old farmer, clutching a shovel. The image is SEPIA.

Now we see the Ten Year Old Version of Dana, his breath visible in the frigid Canadian air.

TEN YEAR OLD DANA
 (high pitched and
 plaintive)
 Poppa, is that you? Where am I,
 Poppa?

FATHER
 Yer in the barn, ya piece of shit.
 Now go clean the mold off them cow
 tits before I cuff ya.

TEN YEAR OLD DANA
Poppa, why didn't you ever hug me?

FATHER
'Cause I don't love ya. Yer just a
little piece a fuck trash.

TEN YEAR OLD DANA
Hug me now, Poppa. There's still
time.

FATHER
Ain't gonna hug ya.

Ten Year Old Dana walks toward his father with arms
outstretched.

Dana's Dad smacks Ten Year Old Dana in the head with the
shovel. The little boy lifts himself up and pleads.

BACK ON STAGE - Dana slams into the mirror.

DANA
I forgive you!

He slams again, hugging his own reflection.

THE AUDIENCE is rapt in the moment.

DANA DELANY
Wow.

Then Dana awkwardly karate chops the glass into a million
little pieces.

DANA
I love you, Daddy! I forgive you!
I forgive you!

Suddenly, HEADLIGHTS FLASH ON towards the audience!

There are two glistening CHOPPED LOWRIDERS on the stage.

Between them is a giant CRUCIFIX composed of TV screens. The
TV screens flicker with footage of WARFARE and TAPDANCING.

Octavio in a flowing DAY-GLO robe holding a DAY-GLO skull,
floats in the air.

The LOWRIDERS start their cars jumping up and down on their
hydraulics, the headlights cutting a swath up and down across
the audience.

Octavio raises his arms and looks to heaven and SCREAMS in a spine-rattling way that jolts everyone within earshot.

And everything goes black.

The audience starts to CLAP but a candle is lit.

It's a tiny child singing 'SOMEONE SAVED MY LIFE TONIGHT' by Elton John.

Another child lights a candle from that child and joins in singing. And then another. And another.

PARENT

My god!!! Theater can be
meaningful!!!

The SMALL CHILDREN, dressed as acolytes bearing candles are assembling in front of the GAY MEN'S CHORUS.

Then out steps Rand in a MONICA LEWINSKY MASK and dress. She is flanked by students in masks representing MAHATMA GHANDI, ALBERT EINSTEIN, JOHN WAYNE and the cast of FRIENDS. Removing his mask, Rand joins the crescendo of the song in a piercing SOPRANO. Octavio, still holding his dayglow skull, walks in with an American flag. All the characters join together and thrust the flag Iwo Jima style into a huge mountain of TV's. They hold their marines at Iwo Jima pose for a couple of seconds. Then...

The place goes BLACK.

Silence, then finally some clapping. Then more. And MORE.

Finally it is THUNDEROUS.

The footlights come up and the cast takes a giant bow en masse. Cheers. People are yelling 'Bravo!'

It's overwhelming for Octavio, Ivonne, everyone.

Finally Dana steps out on to the stage and the ENTIRE AUDIENCE jumps to it's feet.

ON DANA DELANY --

She speaks into her phone.

DANA DELANY

Marty, it's me. It's Dana Delany.
I'm fine. Listen... I'm ready to
act again.

A DOUBLE DOOR bursts open and the TUCSON POLICE thrust in led by ANGRY PARENTS.

PARENT
You're going down, Marschehss!!!!

They storm the stage, throwing Dana down on the ground and slapping on handcuffs.

DANA
It's Mahrscz!!!! It's Mahrschz!!!

The audience reacts violently.

MR. MARQUEZ
No!!!! What are you doing!?!?!?

TOVA
I think this is part of the show.

A Tucson Police Officer slams into her, knocking her on her ass.

TOVA (CONT'D)
I guess it's not part of the show.

FIGHTS are breaking out. Audience members are trying to pull Dana away from the Cops. He's lifted up onto the crowd, rock-star-style. He's got a crazy smile on his face.

DANA
I... AM... DELIVERED!!!!

FLASH! FLASH!

FADE OUT -

FADE UP - INT. LOW RENT STRIP CLUB - LATE NIGHT

The Asian STRIPPER is giving Rocker a lapdance.

STRIPPER
I'm super serious. I like your type. You seem normal but then you're a tiger in the sack, huh?

ANGLE ON ROCKER - He's untied, just sitting there, entranced.

ROCKER
My God, you're beautiful.

He runs his hand up her leg.

STRIPPER

I'm gonna snap you in half.

FADE OUT -

FADE UP - INT. JAIL -- NEXT DAY

Dana sits behind Plexiglas and speaks into a phone.

DANA

Do I have regrets? Sure. We jumped some of our cues and, on review, animals and children and candles are not a wise combination.

We see a reporter, RON, on the other side of the Plexiglas partition. Tova sits next to him.

RON

You're an original, Mr. Mahrschz.

TOVA

The ACLU does not back crackpots, Ron. Okay? Dana is a true American hero.

DANA

Where did you say you were from again?

RON

The New York Times.

DANA

I hear it's a terrific paper.

TOVA

This bitch has gone national, Dana.

DANA

Wow.

Dana stares off in a reverie.

TOVA

And we're gonna get you out of this shit-heap ASAP. If the state even tries to press charges I'll be so far up their asses I'll be able to chew their food.

DISSOLVE -

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dana is strolling along in a dramatic flowing coat with a fur collar. It is cold. And we cannot see with whom he is conversing:

DANA

...I'm just so flattered. I've never been in the position of having to say no. Or no thank you.

ENGLISH WOMAN

You'd better get used to it.

DANA

There were always these voices telling me I was a no-talent loser.

ENGLISH WOMAN

Your subconscious?

DANA

No, actual people: my wife, co-workers, pretty much everyone.

They come to a stop and we finally see who it is: DAME JUDY DENCH.

JUDY DENCH

You're not a loser. You're wonderful. And I perfectly understand if you don't have room for me in your play.

DANA

Oh Dame Judith...

JUDY DENCH

Please call me Judy.

Dana Delany pops out of a shop and puts her arm through Dana's, interlocking fingers.

DANA DELANY

He won't let me be in it either. And I'm his girlfriend!

Dana and Dana kiss.

DANA

I'm sorry. I want to preserve the original cast.

JUDY DENCH
Bloody artistic integrity!

They all have a laugh.

JUDY DENCH (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil...

WIDE ANGLE - We finally see where we are: in the heart of LONDON'S WEST END, the theatre district.

Octavio, Chuy, Epiphany, Rand, Yolanda and Ivonne are crossing the street toward them, all in hip new outfits, all with exhilarated expressions. Beyond them we see a THEATRE MARQUEE emblazoned with: Coming Soon: Hamlet II.

CHUY
Mr. M! London's pretty cool
compared to Tucson.

Dana puts his arm around Chuy.

DANA
Oh Chuy. You're going to have a
magical life. Because no matter
where you go, it will always be
better than Tucson.

Judy and Dana's mix into the gang and they all head off somewhere--- somewhere fantastic. As we pull up and away...

In booms the thrilling strains of 'There Is Nothing Like a Dame' as sung by the Gay Men's Chorus of Tucson.

END