

FAME

"Choices"

Prod. #2723

CAST LIST

LYDIA GRANT
BRUNO MARTELLI
BENJAMIN SHOROFSKY
DANNY AMATULLO
ELIZABETH SCHWARTZ
MONTGOMERY MacNEILL
LEROY JOHNSON
JULIE MILLER

CRANDALL
MRS. BERG

MISS POLSDORFER
LARRY FORBES
RICK LEWIS

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SET LIST

INTERIORS:

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
SHORFSKY'S MUSIC CLASS - DAY
CORRIDORS - DAY
CAFETERIA - DAY
MUSIC PRACTICE ROOM - DAY
MAIN ENTRANCE HALL - DAY
DANCE CLASSROOM - DAY
SHERWOOD'S CLASSROOM - DAY
MAKEUP ROOM - DAY
FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY
CHEMISTRY LAB - DAY
DRAMA CLASSROOM - DAY
SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

MARTELLI BASEMENT - DAY
RICK LEWIS APARTMENT - DAY

EXTERIORS:

MARTELLI HOME - DAY
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS - DAY (STOCK SHOT)
MANHATTAN SKYSCRAPER - DAY (STOCK SHOT)

FAME

"Choices"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SCHOOL OF THE ARTS - ESTABLISHING - DAY (STOCK) 1

The steps are empty of the boisterous, boogieing students and the mid-morning traffic is beginning to build up in the street outside. We HEAR a dramatic classical selection being PLAYED. BEGIN OPENING CREDITS, then:

DIRECT CUT TO:

2 INT. SHOROFSKY'S CLASSROOM - ON PHONOGRAPH RECORD - DAY 2

as it revolves slowly on the turntable. Though in fact "day", the room is rather dark, as the shades have been drawn and the lights turned off. As we WIDEN the ANGLE, we FIND SHOROFSKY seated at his desk, eyes closed as the MUSIC pours out of the SPEAKERS. He can't help but "conduct" as he listens.

3 ANGLE TO CLASS 3

BRUNO, JULIE, and MONTGOMERY are seated in proximity to one another in the darkened room. They're all deeply into the MUSIC, Julie taking notes of some sort. She makes a mistake and finds she's a trifle unprepared to adjust. She leans over to Montgomery.

JULIE

(whispering)

Do you have an eraser?

Montgomery moves to dig one out of his notebook, but the simple request doesn't escape Shorofsky's sharp ear.

SHOROFSKY

This is not a social mixer.
This is an opportunity to
concentrate on the composer's
talent and skill. Please do
not waste such an opportunity!

Julie nods at once. Shorofsky's a tough man to get by. The MUSIC CONTINUES as the CREDITS come to a conclusion. A beat, and:

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

SHOROFSKY

(continuing)

Notice that though he is still developing the main theme, each time he states it, he strives to...

Shorofsky's voice trails off as he hears something else amiss. He looks over the heads of his students to a back corner of the classroom.

4 ANGLE - THE CORNER

4

MISS POLSDORFER sits in the rearmost row, her SCRATCHY PEN working its way across the pad on her lap.

5 WIDER ANGLE

5

Baffled, Shorofsky snaps off the phonograph, moves to the door where the light switch is located. As he does so:

SHOROFSKY

Someone in the back get the shades, please?

A couple of students swiftly move to follow his instruction as he snaps the lights on and the illumination is restored. He regards Miss Polsdorfer with a look that is a question, but she clearly feels no explanation is required from her.

SHOROFSKY

(continuing)

Hello...

MISS POLSDORFER

Hello.

SHOROFSKY

I'm sorry. We don't allow visitors in the classroom without permission..

MISS POLSDORFER

(cutting him off)

Oh, I'm not a visitor.

SHOROFSKY

I see. Well, you are not a student, and, in my class, I am usually the teacher, so you are either...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

MISS POLSDORFER

(doing it again)

I'm an Evaluator. From the Board of Education. It's all right, my name is Miss Polsdorfer.

SHOROFSKY

(snapping)

What you are, is an interrupter... and a disturbance in my classroom. Why else would you sneak in under cover of darkness?

He turns and storms over to the door, yanks it open, then turns back.

SHOROFSKY

(continuing)

Martelli -- You're in charge -- but keep the lights on in case they send in reinforcements!

He stomps on out, leaving the class to begin a series of slow turns to look back at the cause of the tumult. Miss Polsdorfer examines her pen carefully...perhaps looking for an oil gauge. Bruno moves to start the phonograph once more.

6 INT. CORRIDOR - MOVING SHOT - DAY 6

Shorofsky strides purposefully down the corridor, John Wayne on his way to the Cavalry Commander to find out why his soldiers get sent out on this rotten mission.

7 INT. CORRIDOR - ANGLE TOWARD STAIRS - DAY 7

LYDIA comes down the stairs, her steps light and fluid, in marked contrast to her indignant mood. She moves toward:

8 CORRIDOR INTERSECTION - DAY 8

She arrives there at the same time as Shorofsky who is coming from the opposite direction. They turn in unison and head down the Main Corridor.

9 TWO SHOT - MOVING 9

as each turns to acknowledge the presence of the other.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

LYDIA

Evaluator?

SHOROFSKY

Spy!

LYDIA

That's what I said.

As they pass the Cafeteria, MRS. BERG opens one of the doors and calls after them.

MRS. BERG

Mr. Shorofsky. Miss Grant.
We're all in here.

The two teachers slow, exchange a questioning look, then turn back toward the Cafeteria.

10 INT. CAFETERIA - TIGHT ON SHERWOOD - DAY

10

looking like she'd just swallowed a spoonful of Cod Liver Oil.

SHERWOOD

Budget cuts!?! Again?!?

11 WIDER

11

LARRY FORBES, a man who will one day grow into a really first-rate bureaucrat, able to "prioritize" an agenda with the best of them, stands next to the steam tables facing twenty-five or so teachers ranged around over several tables. His manner is straightforward, a little ill at ease. Forbes is in his early thirties, not as loose as most of our people, but that's partially a result of his awareness that he's looked upon as the enemy.

FORBES

Okay. Straight talk. Assembly Bill 4792 did not pass the legislature, so we find ourselves unable to move into normal fund disbursement. Instead, we have had to go into a budget cutting posture...

12 ANGLE - SHERWOOD AND CRANDALL

He glances wryly at her.

CRANDALL

Straight talk?

On her answering smile, we return to:

13 PREVIOUS ANGLE

13

Forbes plowing ahead.

FORBES

...necessitating a stiff
examination of those options
available for cost reduction.

(a weak smile)

Trim the fat, so to speak.

SHERWOOD holds up a hand.

FORBES

(continuing;
nodding in her
direction)

Yes?

She rises.

SHERWOOD

What if you don't find any fat?

FORBES

I'm not sure I understand the
question...aaahh...you'll have
to forgive me. I don't know
many of your names.

It's meant as a question and Sherwood responds.

SHERWOOD

I'm Elizabeth Sherwood. My
question concerns the fact
that each year the budget seems
to be less, and less. And
with this less and less we're
expected to do more and more.
Is there a purpose to all this
we don't understand?

FORBES

Certainly. To make the system
work.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

SHOROFSKY

(from his seat)

You are going to make the school system work by cutting back on it? Yes?

FORBES

Well, I wouldn't say it in quite that fashion.

CRANDALL

Just how would you say it? On second thought don't tell me. I'm still trying to figure out that first one.

FORBES

(smile tightening)

Hey, people...don't blame me, I'm just the messenger.

SHOROFSKY

If you're the messenger, who is that person in my classroom, scratching away with that out of tune pen?

FORBES

(pointing)

You're...?

SHOROFSKY

I am damned angry that somebody comes uninvited into my class and interrupts my work.

FORBES

I was referring to your name.

SHOROFSKY

I know what you were referring to. What are you going to do about that spy in my classroom?

FORBES

Miss Polsdorfer is not a spy. She is a highly qualified member of our evaluation team. We decided to come into the school unannounced, thinking it would be a fairer way to watch all of you in action.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

Lydia rises.

LYDIA

I would like to hear what specific measures you have in mind to 'trim the fat.'

She starts to sit, straightens.

LYDIA

(continuing;
impish smile)

And my name is Lydia Grant.

FORBES

Miss Grant, I can't tell you that. Yet. First, we have to collate and then come up with the criteria for reductions. At that point, we'll pass on the information.

14 CLOSE ON SHERWOOD AND CRANDALL

He leans toward her.

CRANDALL

(softly)

And I guarantee you, nobody will understand a word of it.

On Sherwood's cynical nod of agreement, we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

15 INT. PRACTICE ROOM - DAY

Bruno sits at the SYNTHESIZER PLAYING something by Hayden. He stops, changes the configuration of the instrument and REPLAYS the passage. The expression on his face tells us that he liked it better the other way. A cassette player is in evidence. Montgomery and DORIS walk up to the window, smile in at Bruno, turn and move to the door. CAMERA ARCS around as they come into the room looking like proud parents who just got a peek at a report card full of "A's."

DORIS

(to Montgomery)

He's slick.

(CONTINUED)

MONTGOMERY

(nodding)
Very slick.

DORIS

Not to mention a rat-fink for
not letting us know.

MONTGOMERY

I wasn't going to mention that.

BRUNO

If this is a comedy skit,
shouldn't you be doing it
with Amatullo?

MONTGOMERY AND DORIS

Wakka, wakka, wakka.

BRUNO

All right. What's this all about?

Doris and Montgomery exchange a look, a nod and turn to
Bruno.

DORIS

We're talking about 'Singing
Flowers.'

Bruno looks at them quizzically, still in the dark.

BRUNO

You two are going to sing
'Flowers'? I don't know the
song so if you expect me to
accompany you...

DORIS

(to Montgomery)
Didn't I tell you he was slick?
He even says he doesn't know the
song.

(to Bruno)

We're talking about the City
Limits.

MONTGOMERY

And don't tell us you never heard
of them, because I know you have
some of their records.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

BRUNO

I'm trying to find out who composed the song, 'Singing Flowers.' It's on an album by the City Limits...

We WIDEN OUT TO SEE Doris and Montgomery sitting nearby on the steps.

BRUNO

(continuing)
...called Limiting Factor.
(listens)
Okay.
(to Doris and Montgomery)
They're looking it up.

MONTGOMERY

I still think it would have been easier to go to a music store and look inside a record album.

DORIS

It's faster this way.

BRUNO

And less steps.

Montgomery rises.

MONTGOMERY

Speaking of steps, I've got my evaluation interview. Let me know what you find out.

He heads across the foyer toward the conference room.

DORIS

(to Bruno)
You had your interview yet?

BRUNO

Yeah. Boring.

DORIS

Tell me. Except this time there was something different! Did you notice that the questions were all --

Bruno's attention is pulled back to the phone.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

BRUNO

Yes, I'm still here. Did you...?

(back to Doris)

They just wanted to check and see if I was still holding.

DORIS

How do you figure they got hold of it?

BRUNO

I can't.

DORIS

Who have you played it for?

BRUNO

Nobody. Just you guys and my father.

DORIS

I don't know about your father, but it's a little humbling to be referred to as 'nobody.'

BRUNO

(back to the phone)

Yes? Yes.

(listens; then,
deflated)

Thank you.

He hangs up, turns to Doris.

DORIS

Well?

BRUNO

The name of the composer is Rick Lewis.

DORIS

Rick Lewis! The guy has a condo on top of every music chart ever!

BRUNO

That's the guy.

DORIS

How would someone like that get hold of your song?

(CONTINUED)

18 CLOSE ON BRUNO

18

The look of a man who has just stepped in something that is going to cling steadfastly to his shoe, no matter how many times he rubs it in the grass.

BRUNO

Because -- I played it for him.

We HOLD for a long beat ON Bruno, then, as the sound of CELLO MUSIC begins:

CUT TO:

19 INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY

19

Julie sits alone in one corner of the room PLAYING a bright, lively tune on her CELLO. The notes are there, but her thoughts are elsewhere. She stops playing and leans thoughtfully on the instrument for a moment, then rises and crosses to the door.

20 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

20

lightly populated with students moving without any great haste, but moving along. LEROY is seated near an intersection of corridors, Walkman II headset in position, his head bent over an open book on his lap. Julie exits the Music Room and walks over to Leroy.

JULIE

Leroy, have you had your...

She leans over, gives Leroy a better look, then waves a hand between Leroy and the book. Nothing. She gives his shoulder a push.

JULIE

(continuing)

Hey!

Leroy's head snaps up and his eyes pop open.

LEROY

I'm awake.

He sees it's Julie and gets a mite defensive. As he takes the earphones off:

LEROY

(continuing)

What you want, girl? I'm busy studying.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

JULIE
 (ignoring)
 Have you had your evaluation
 interview yet?

LEROY
 If that's what you want to call
 it.

Julie looks around the corridor.

JULIE
 Can we go someplace and talk?

LEROY
 I can't leave. I'm the hallway
 monitor.

JULIE
 Hey. The job you're doing, it
 isn't really going to matter a
 whole lot. Come on.

Leroy rises and accompanies Julie down the corridor.

21 INT. MAKEUP ROOM - DAY

21

Bruno sits on one of the makeup tables, Doris sits in a
 chair next to him.

BRUNO
 Lewis was a guest lecturer in one
 of Shorofsky's classes about three
 months ago. We were talking
 about how sometimes a melody
 seems to build in a certain way.

DORIS
 And that's when you played your
 song.

BRUNO
 I used it as an example.

DORIS
 So?

BRUNO
 What 'so'?

DORIS
 So, what're you going to do?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

BRUNO

Nothing.

DORIS

Bruno!

BRUNO

Doris! What do you want me to do, take on Rick Lewis and accuse him of plagiarism?

DORIS

If that's what he did, yes!

22 ANGLE TO THE DOOR

22

as Leroy opens the door and checks inside.

LEROY

This a private fight, or can we get into it?

BRUNO

It's not a fight.

LEROY

It ain't a whole lot of friendly either.

Leroy and Julie enter.

DORIS

What's up?

LEROY

Don't ask me. Miller here thinks the evaluation interviews are a crock.

DORIS

Julie never said 'crock' in her life.

JULIE

You've had your interview. What'd you talk about?

DORIS

The usual things...

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

JULIE
Music? Shorofsky's class?

BRUNO
Not really...

JULIE
(to Leroy)
How many questions about dance
class?

LEROY
None.

JULIE
(to the group)
Chemistry? History? Math?

DORIS
A little, but mostly they asked
about Crandall's class.

BRUNO
And English...

LEROY
What?

BRUNO
A lot about Sherwood's class.

23 INT. DANCE CLASSROOM - FAVORING LYDIA - DAY

23

Across a group of heads. There is a trace of skepticism
in her manner.

LYDIA
You want to run that by me
one more time?

24 ANOTHER ANGLE - THE GROUP

24

Composed of Doris, Julie, Bruno, Leroy and DANNY, all of
whom decide Lydia was addressing them. She is hit with
an onslaught of words, and holds up an arresting hand.

LYDIA
(continuing)
Hold it! I had trouble enough
understanding when just one of you
was speaking. Julie. And slowly.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE

The more I thought about the interviews the more I realized they didn't cover the whole school like the last time.

LEROY

And then we got together, and...

LYDIA

Leroy, Julie was explaining just fine.

LEROY

But she was taking too long. Besides, I tell it better.

DANNY

(jumping in)

Miss Grant. When was the last time you had one of those evaluators in your class?

LYDIA

I don't remember. Day before yesterday, maybe.

DANNY

They been in Crandall's class every day. Sometimes for two or three periods.

DORIS

Same with Sherwood's class.

BRUNO

But, I haven't seen any of them in any of my music classes. Not a one.

LYDIA

And you've come up with a theory for all this.

JULIE

Yeah. We think they're planning on dumping a teacher.

25 CONTINUED:

25

JULIE'S VOICE
We think they're going to fire
either Mr. Crandall or Miss
Sherwood.

As the words sink in, she looks toward the kids, and we:

FREEZE FRAME.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

26 INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY 26

Sherwood stands in front of the blackboard lecturing. Behind her on blackboard the names of HAWTHORN 1804-1864, and MELVILLE 1819-1891.

SHERWOOD

...and here we have two men emerging from the mid-nineteenth century and putting America on the world map of literature. Both made good use of symbolism and allegory, but because of a certain degree of pessimism were not that highly regarded in this country at the time.

27 ANGLE - THE CLASS 27

giving Sherwood only half of their attention. The other half, expressed in glances or, in the case of some, outright staring at one corner of the room. We PAN WITH these looks to a corner desk, high up on the top row where Forbes watches Sherwood's teaching, occasionally making a quick note on a clipboard on the desk. OVER THIS:

SHERWOOD'S VOICE

In the case of Melville, he died in obscurity, having been a customs inspector for the last twenty years of his life.

28 RESUME SHERWOOD 28

Very aware of the class' split concentration, and the cause of the disruption, but trying to treat the entire situation like a wart. The more you dwell on it, the more unsettling it can become. So you ignore it, and hope the damned thing will go away.

SHERWOOD

It wasn't until after World War I that any interest in his work was revived.

She is mercifully saved by the SCHOOL BELL, which carries over our:

CUT TO:

29 INT. DRAMA CLASS - DAY

as the BELL finishes ringing, and the class gathers up books and bags and heads for the door, with Danny in the center of the pack. Crandall, over next to the window, is rearranging his briefcase.

CRANDALL
(calling after)
Danny...

Danny stops and turns back to the Drama teacher.

DANNY
You want me?

CRANDALL
Yes. Here.

He takes a book from the case and hands it to Danny.

DANNY
What's this?
(reading)
'Roughing It.'

CRANDALL
Mark Twain. It's an idea I had.
You want to be a stand up comic.
I want you to learn something
about acting. Why don't we combine
the two.

DANNY
You want me to stand up and read
this in class?

CRANDALL
I don't think any of us are ready
for that. What I want is for you
to find something in there that
can be made into a scene, and do
it for class.

DANNY
Where does being a comic come in?

CRANDALL
I think you'll find that Mr. Twain
wrote some very snappy one-liners.

DANNY
Yeah?
(thinks about it)
That's a great idea.

(CONTINUED)

CRANDALL

I can't take credit for the idea. Hal Holbrook has spent a lot of years performing Mark Twain as a one-man show.

DANNY

Really? Wow! Me and Hal Holbrook.

CRANDALL

Just like Tom and Huck.

DANNY

Huh? Oh, yeah.

Danny chuckles at the crack, not so much because it was funny, which is debatable, but because of who said it.

DANNY

(continuing)

That's really nice of you to go to all this trouble, Mr. Crandall.

CRANDALL

Self protection.
(off Danny's look)
Cushions the head bumps.

A private joke and as Danny gives it the laugh it deserves we PUSH PAST the two of them to Miss Polsdorfer, scratching merrily away with the ancient pen.

Shorofsky is arranging chairs and music stands for a chamber sized group. In the b.g., Bruno is arranging music in the shelves along one wall. Shorofsky looks up.

SHOROFSKY

(sharply)

All right -- what is it, Martelli?

BRUNO

I didn't say anything.

SHOROFSKY

But your suffering silence is deafening. Also you have rearranged that stack at least four times.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

Bruno turns to face Shorofsky.

SHOROFSKY

(continuing)

Is it the Chopin, yes? You would prefer playing something more modern, more cacophonous?

BRUNO

It isn't the Chopin.

SHOROFSKY

Good. Because playing the Chopin will help you grow.

Bruno crosses over near Shorofsky and sits in one of the chairs.

BRUNO

Do you remember when Rick Lewis came here and lectured?

Shorofsky sits across from Bruno, and we TIGHTEN IN TO them.

SHOROFSKY

Of course. I invited him. It is very important to hear from former students who have attained some degree of success.

BRUNO

I played one of my songs for him.

SHOROFSKY

So...? Why should playing music several months ago for someone cause such excessive zeal in stacking orchestra parts?

BRUNO

It's now a hit record called 'Singing Flowers'...composed by Rick Lewis.

SHOROFSKY

(beat)

Ah.

BRUNO

Exactly. And I don't know what to do about it.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2)

30

Shorofsky gives this a moment's thought, then:

SHOROFSKY

Something.

BRUNO

Beg pardon?

SHOROFSKY

Do something. That's as good as my advice is going to get.

BRUNO

'Do something.' Think I'll have a bumper sticker made up of that. Really heavy duty stuff. Combine that with 'Have a Nice Day' and we'll have the whole thing licked.

SHOROFSKY

Martelli -- being older doesn't mean we have all the answers. But it usually means we know how to avoid some of the dumber mistakes. You're eating yourself up about this thing. So doing anything... something... is likely to be an improvement. Good day.

Shorofsky gathers up his gear and heads for the door. There is a certain edge in Bruno's farewell.

BRUNO

Have a nice day.

SHOROFSKY

And you do something about your problem.

Shorofsky nods his goodbye and is out the door. We HOLD ON Bruno as he plays it back for a beat, then:

BRUNO

Actually...they do go together rather well.

And a small smile of appreciation plays over his face as we HOLD ON him, and then we:

31 INT. DANCE CLASS - DAY

The dance class is running through something very spirited and very modern, with lots of leaps and contractions. Lydia beats a steady tattoo on the floor with her staff, with a free arm directs traffic. The dance goes smoothly for a while, then one of the dancers jumps a count causing two others to blow an entrance. It also causes Lydia to blow her top.

LYDIA

Stop! Stop! Hold it! Back up!

She fixes one of the dancers with baleful eye.

LYDIA

(continuing)

Michael, honey, the count is eight. Everybody else is dancing to an eight count. I am tapping out an eight count. Why do you wish to be different and go on seven?

Michael may not be able to count past seven, but he is far too smart to even consider a response to ninety pounds of trouble with a stick in her hand. He hangs his head, takes a big breath and in concert with fourteen other dancers, prays for the bell to ring. The answer CLANGS out in the hall.

LYDIA

(continuing)

All right, hit the showers. We'll try again tomorrow. And Michael... remember: eight...eight.

The dancers grab jackets, towels and dance bags and get the hell out of there. On their way out they pass Sherwood on her way in. Lydia's manner undergoes a subtle change.

LYDIA

(continuing)

If you're here for beginning tap class, it's been postponed till we get another shipment of Mary Janes.

SHERWOOD

I'm afraid I did not come in here to sing and dance my way into your heart. I have a question.

LYDIA

Shoot.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

SHERWOOD

Tell me the feeling I have that you've been avoiding me today is wrong.

LYDIA

Me...? Elizabeth...

She lapses into silence.

SHERWOOD

Then I'm not wrong. You want to tell me why?

LYDIA

Elizabeth, it's nothing...

Lydia takes a moment to listen to herself. Friendships are too fragile for this nonsense.

LYDIA

Not here.

She leads Sherwood to the door.

32 INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

32

Lydia and Sherwood enter, look around, and move to one of the tables.

SHERWOOD

Want me to check the place for hidden microphones?

LYDIA

I just want to make sure we don't get interrupted.

SHERWOOD

You make it sound ominous.

LYDIA

Nothing like that. As a matter of fact it's really only a suspicion. Some of the kids put me on to it.

SHERWOOD

I'm listening.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

LYDIA

It's about evaluating, and budget cutting.

33 DIFFERENT ANGLE

33

Crandall opens the door and enters. He carries a brown paper bag, and a book.

CRANDALL

That mob up in the cafeteria was using up all the air. I need a little room.

He walks to a nearby table and sits. He notices that no one has spoken to him.

CRANDALL

(continuing)

I'm sorry. Did I interrupt something important?

Sherwood looks a question to Lydia, whose discomfort level just shot through the roof.

CRANDALL

(continuing)

Did I interrupt something unimportant?

34 ON LYDIA

34

trying her level best to meet the steady gaze of:

35 CRANDALL AND SHERWOOD

35

Both aware of Lydia's discomfort and hoping a helpful smile will encourage her.

36 RESUME WIDE

36

Lydia takes the plunge.

LYDIA

Elizabeth...Greg... I didn't want to say anything about this until I had some better idea of what was really going to happen, but...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

LYDIA (CONT'D)

...well, this budget cutting thing has reached the point...maybe... where they're starting to think about cutting back on the teaching staff...at least, that's the way it's starting to look to me...and I'm sort of picking up vibes about...

Sherwood, moved deeply by her friends' obvious emotional distress, moves to Lydia and reaches out, lifting Lydia's gaze to hers.

SHERWOOD

Lydia...we will not let them fire you.

It requires a moment or two before Lydia can crank it up one more time.

LYDIA

Elizabeth...no one's talking about firing me.

SHERWOOD

Well, surely, they're not thinking about...letting me...go.

LYDIA

(look swinging to Crandall)

Either you or...

Her look moves to Greg just as he's about to take a hefty bite of the sandwich that was at one time destined to be lunch. The sandwich is lowered his sardonic, game smile filling in with:

CRANDALL

Amazing how quickly an appetite can go, isn't it...

On the despairing looks that are exchanged between these three, we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

37

INT. CAFETERIA - ON FOOD PREPARATION AREA -
ON CRANDALL - DAY

37

The hour is after school...

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

...and the food preparation area and steam table are being cleaned out after the day's activities. Crandall is crossing with a tray bearing four cups of coffee. Seated at the table in the otherwise deserted room are Lydia and Sherwood, the new addition being that of Mr. Forbes. There are folders and computer readouts spread on the table in front of Forbes. As Crandall reaches the table and sets out the cups of coffee:

FORBES

Here we are. Now...once I explain the basic concept of the cost-reduction blueprint, I think it should all make sense.

LYDIA

Mr. Forbes, could we cut through all the bureaucratic doubletalk. Does this so-called fat trimming and budget cutting have to mean dropping a teacher?

FORBES

(not unfeeling)
That is a distinct possibility... given the economic parameters.

CRANDALL

(to Lydia)
The answer is yes.

SHERWOOD

And that teacher is either Greg... Mr. Crandall -- or myself?

FORBES

It's a solution that works.

CRANDALL

You must be a lot of fun in a lifeboat.

Forbes looks quizzically at Crandall.

CRANDALL

(continuing; assuring)
It was a joke.

FORBES

Here's the reality...if we selected any of the other courses, say for instance, biology, we might be in danger of losing our academic status.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FORBES (CONT'D)

Now, on the other hand, losing someone in the music department would be counter-productive inasmuch as there would be problems finding someone in the other disciplines to cover for him or her. The same for the dance department.

Forbes pulls out a couple of folders from the small stack.

FORBES (CONT'D)

(to Crandall)

You graduated from college with a major in English...

CRANDALL

Uh, huh, and the reason I went into drama was because I was lousy in English.

FORBES

(chuckling)

That's very good.

CRANDALL

That wasn't a joke.

FORBES

Oh.

(to Sherwood)

Now, your minor was Drama.

(looking through folder)

You even spent a season in Summer Stock.

SHERWOOD

I worked in the box office.

FORBES

(ignoring)

So, you see, each of you could absorb the other's classes with very little disruption to the system.

SHERWOOD

(persisting)

Mr. Forbes, there is a huge gulf between knowing Dramatic Literature and being able to teach the proper approach to acting.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

FORBES

I think you're making a little too much of this. After all, a person either can act or they can't. You merely guide.

CRANDALL

Does that mean if I stay, I work under the assumption that the students either know English or they don't?

FORBES

(taken aback)

Oh, I don't believe that's...

CRANDALL

That one was a joke.

FORBES

Ummm hummmm...

SHERWOOD

When will you...decide?

FORBES

I have to check a few other factors, then...well...it won't be too long.

He looks at his watch.

FORBES

(continuing)

I have a meeting. I'm late.

He gathers up the folders and exits. Lydia moves to the door.

LYDIA

Me, too. I've got to get going.

She winds down with her hand on the doorknob, unable to exit or let go of the knob.

LYDIA

(continuing)

Will you listen. I'm usually running my mouth, and now, when I need to, I can't think of a damned thing to say.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (4)

37

SHERWOOD

It's all right. Really.

Lydia looks over at Crandall, who nods in agreement. Lydia opens the door, walks through, then pops her head back into the room.

LYDIA

(loudly)

No, it isn't! It's a disaster.
It's also a travesty and a crock!
But it definitely is not all right!

She leaves and there is a long moment of silence.

38 DIFFERENT ANGLE - SHERWOOD AND CRANDALL

38

They each need a little timeout to confront the uncertain horizon they're facing. As they start to gather up their gear and move for the door:

SHERWOOD

She's right. It stinks. But...
(pulling her
spirits up)
...I'm a teacher. I can always
find work in the New York City
School system.

CRANDALL

I don't want to sound like a
smart-alec, but it's the New York
City School system that's letting
you go.

SHERWOOD

(slightly deflated)

Yes...well, I meant as a substitute
teacher. There's always a need for
substitute English teachers.

CRANDALL

I notice you stressed English
teachers.

SHERWOOD

Listen, there are some good acting
schools around town. Surely they
could use a Drama teacher.

They have reached the door and move out into the corridor
outside the cafeteria.

39 INT. CAFETERIA CORRIDOR - FULL SHOT - DAY

39

As Sherwood and Crandall come out. The corridor is deserted. Their pace is slow, matching their mood, as they move toward the lobby area. Their voices carry a slight ECHO as they speak.

CRANDALL

(not entirely
convinced)

There's always stage managing.

SHERWOOD

Of course! You've worked Broadway.
Probably a phone call...

CRANDALL

I don't think Broadway. They're
pretty jammed up this late in
the season. I'll have to take a
road company out. There's always
a need...for a good road Stage
Manager.

SHERWOOD

Isn't the road a little...arduous
for...

She pauses and Crandall slides in with:

CRANDALL

If you're thinking of finishing
that sentence with, '...a man
your age,' I wish you wouldn't.

SHERWOOD

I was really thinking of, 'for
someone who hasn't done it in a
while.'

40 INT. DANCE CLASSROOM - ON LYDIA - DAY

40

Standing near the doorway of the dance classroom, tidying up some of the associated paraphernalia, but her mood governed more, much more, by what she's hearing from her two friends as they pass by the open door.

CRANDALL'S VOICE

(O.S., echo effect)

That's very nice of you.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

SHERWOOD'S VOICE

(O.S., echo effect)

I wasn't being 'nice'. I was being
 what we are both being... 'brave.'
 Stiff upper lip. Tough guy.
 Good soldier. And I'm not very
 good at it.

Lydia moves to the door, keeping close to the wall, but
 looking out to:

41 LYDIA'S POV - SHERWOOD AND CRANDALL - DAY

41

As they come to a halt at the far end of the corridor,
 each very well able to appreciate what the other is
 feeling. Fearing.

SHERWOOD

The fact of the matter is...
 teaching is not just a 'job' and
 this school isn't just a school.
 It's a very special place and...
 and I don't feel very brave right
 now, about any of this.

CRANDALL

If you're heading home, I'll
 buy you a glass of wine. Might
 help.

SHERWOOD

(a small smile)

I've got papers to correct. But...
 there's no rule that says I can't
 let you buy me a glass of wine
 and then come back here, is there...?

42 ON LYDIA

42

watching them.

CRANDALL'S VOICE

(O.S.)

Nope. They have special rules
 for special places and special
 people. Come on.

43 POV - SHERWOOD AND CRANDALL 43

He offers his arm with a certain formality and she accepts the gesture in the same manner.

44 INT. DANCE ROOM - BACK ON LYDIA 44

As she turns away from the corridor and moves sadly back into the dance room. She's drawn to the piano, running her hand slowly over its burnished surface. She stands at the keyboard, idly picking out a few notes. A beat, then we HEAR LYDIA'S VOICE start softly singing the opening phrases of THIS IS A SPECIAL PLACE. The Lydia we are viewing is not singing. She looks O.S., not surprised, her smile one that accepts magic without undue inquiry.

45 ANGLE TO DANCE CLASS MIRROR 45

Where Lydia's image can be seen seated on a stool, looking out at her more tangible self as she sings a song that celebrates those special places we're sometimes lucky enough to find, sometimes fortunate enough to create. They are places not made of mortar and stone, but rather constructed out of faith and trust and love, contradictory crossings of strength and fragility, encircling and protective and sadly due to end eventually. More precious because of that fact. As the SONG PROGRESSES, the Lydia seated in the dance classroom joins in with her mirror image, singing HARMONY as the melody builds to:

46 CLOSING SEQUENCE OF SHOTS 46

as Lydia moves closer to the mirror, collecting her dance bag, throwing her coat over one shoulder, as the song comes to an end.

47 ANGLE TO LYDIA IN DANCE CLASSROOM 47

A small gesture of fond farewell toward the mirror as the melody fades...

48 ANGLE TO MIRROR 48

A sad smile, a hopeful wink, from the Lydia there.

49 FULL SHOT - THE DANCE CLASS 49

As Lydia moves to the doorway and out into the corridor, closing the door behind her. We HOLD just a beat on the empty room, allowing the last NOTES of the MELODY and Lydia's voice to properly settle away, until we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

50 EXT. MARTELLI HOME - DAY 50

The cab is parked in front, and we HOLD ON the terrific SECOND UNIT FOOTAGE, for a moment as we HEAR:

MARTELLI'S VOICE

I'll kill him!

51 INT. MARTELLI BASEMENT - DAY 51

Martelli comes raging down the steps, followed by Bruno.

MARTELLI

I will personally break every finger on both hands so he can't write any more stolen music, then I'll kill him.

Bruno leans against one of the instruments as Martelli paces.

BRUNO

Pop, when I told you, you promised...

MARTELLI

I promised I wouldn't get mad, I didn't promise I wouldn't kill him.

BRUNO

Will you stop with the killing talk? You can't go around killing people because they steal my music.

MARTELLI

Yes, I can. It's the unwritten law.

BRUNO

The unwritten law is about shooting your wife's boyfriend or something.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

MARTELLI

That's the other unwritten law.
This one says if a person steals
the fruits of your child's genius
you're allowed to run over him
with a cab.

BRUNO

Will you let me handle it?

MARTELLI

You? You're the guy who let him
steal it in the first place.

That one stings a little.

BRUNO

Then let me have a crack at
correcting the mistake. I have
to start sometime.

MARTELLI

Why? You planning on leaving
home some time soon? Moving out
to L.A. or some other flaky
jungle?

Bruno says nothing, just lets his father wind down a
little. Martelli slows, takes a look at his son. A
good look at a son who is awfully close to full grown.
He sits on the steps.

MARTELLI

(continuing)

You're right. You're getting
big enough to fight your own
battles.

Bruno walks over to Martelli, reaches out and touches
his father on the arm. Just a touch. A way of
acknowledging a feeling.

BRUNO

I don't expect a whole lot is
going to come of it. I just
want to talk quietly with the
guy. Find out how something
like this happens.

He sits next to his father.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (2)

51

BRUNO
(continuing)
If nothing comes of it, then...

BRUNO
(in unison)
...we'll run over him with
the cab.

MARTELLI
(in unison)
...we'll run over him
with the cab.

52 INT. ENGLISH CLASS - EVENING

52

It is early evening and Sherwood is about to toss in the towel on the paper correcting. Forbes enters, walks to one of the desks and sits facing her. His smile and manner are more relaxed than we've seen before and more appealing.

FORBES
Tough day?

SHERWOOD
They're all tough, Mr. Forbes.

FORBES
Paul.

A beat while Sherwood looks at Forbes calmly.

FORBES
(continuing)
It's my name. Paul.

SHERWOOD
I assumed you meant that. I just
wasn't sure what you meant by it.

FORBES
(easily)
Nothing. I mean, school's out,
so to speak, and...we are
colleagues, after all...and
Paul and...Elizabeth seemed to
sound less...

SHERWOOD
(finishing)
...formal?

FORBES
Exactly.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

Sherwood begins stacking papers prior to shoving them into her case.

FORBES

(continuing)

Don't you ever feel the need to...
just let go? Unwind?

SHERWOOD

Please?

FORBES

You know. Find a way to take the edge off the stresses that build up in our jobs. Let off some steam.

SHERWOOD

At the end of a day teaching here, I rarely have any steam left.

FORBES

At least we could have dinner.
Maybe a drink.

53 ON SHERWOOD

53

Where the hell did that come from? Talk about abrupt!

54 RESUME PREVIOUS ANGLE

54

as Sherwood frames a suitable reply.

SHERWOOD

Mr. Forbes, I'm...

FORBES

(breaking in)

Paul...

SHERWOOD

(ignoring)

I'm not sure it's really the right thing to do, under the circumstance.

FORBES

I think you're wrong. It could be exactly the right thing to do.

55 ON SHERWOOD

55

Now she's gotten the message. She's gotten it, and she doesn't like it. Not one damn bit.

FREEZE RAME.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

56 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

56

The start of a new day. A goodly number of people and scurrying about seen. Shorofsky stands next to the mail slots examining a sheet of something administrative, regarding the form with the same enthusiasm he would a traffic summons. Sherwood enters and moves directly to the counter, where Mrs. Berg is trying unsuccessfully to sort out a pile of papers.

SHERWOOD

(very calmly)

Mrs. Berg, do you happen to have a form for reporting sexual harrassment?

The last part of that question pulls Shorofsky's head out of his reading with a snap.

MRS. BERG

(still with the pile)

I don't believe so. These are curricula confirmation forms... I think.

SHERWOOD

I didn't mean those. I meant over in the files someplace.

MRS. BERG

Oh. Let me see.

Mrs. Berg walks over to the file cabinets. Shorofsky moves next to Sherwood who acknowledges his presence with a pleasant smile.

SHERWOOD

Hi.

SHOROFSKY

What did you ask about? A sexual harrassment form?

SHERWOOD

There must be one. We have forms for everything else. Studies progress, ethnic balance, insurance, job description, extra-curricula involvement...

(CONTINUED)

SHOROFSKY

Miss Sherwood...

SHERWOOD

...withholding, attendance,
non-attendance, projected
attendance...

SHOROFSKY

Miss Sherwood, you're rambling.
Who are we talking about?

SHERWOOD

(still calm)
That master of our fates,
Mr. Paul Forbes.

SHOROFSKY

(slightly bantering)
Forbes? A sexual...? The way he
talks, how could you tell?

SHERWOOD

No problem whatsoever. He made
himself perfectly clear as to how
I could keep my job.

Mrs. Berg looks up from one of the cabinets.

MRS. BERG

That was sexual advancement?

SHERWOOD

(loudly)
Sexual harrassment.

Throughout the office, heads turn toward Sherwood.

SHOROFSKY

I hope you gave proof. You
know you're going to have to
prove something like that.

SHERWOOD

(goodbye, calmness)
I'll prove it! And I'll nail
that son of a --

SHOROFSKY

(quickly)
Gun.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (2)

56

SHERWOOD

(biting it)

Gun... if it's the last thing
I do here.

Environmental laws to the contrary, Shorofsky decides
to pour a little oil on troubled waters.

SHOROFSKY

Be careful.

SHERWOOD

Why?

SHOROFSKY

Because you don't want it to
really be the last thing you
do here.

57 ON SHERWOOD

57

like Jack Benny and the robber, she's thinking about it.

58 INT. CHEMISTRY LAB - DAY

58

Doris and Bruno stand working at a lab table. Spread
out in front of them are a couple of beakers, an
Erlenmeyer flask, a rack of test tubes and a buret.
On a shelf above the table are several bottles of in-
teresting looking powders. Doris reads from a textbook
while Bruno works with the equipment. Beyond them,
further down the table, Julie and Montgomery are engaged
in much the same activity.

DORIS

(reading)

'...ad three drops of
phenolphthalien solution.'

Bruno dips the pipet into one of the test tubes, draws
out a small amount of the liquid, and adds it to the
Erlenmeyer in front of him. Both stare at the flask
for a beat, then:

BRUNO

Nothing happened.

Doris throws her attention to the textbook, and reads
slightly for a beat.

(CONTINUED)

DORIS
Go. Now add exactly ___ cc.
of NaOH.

Bruno holds the flask under the buret and measures out the required amount. During this:

DORIS
(continuing)
So what happened when you called
ASCAP?

BRUNO
Nothing. They were very polite,
but they are not allowed to
give any information out about
their members. It turned pink.

He holds the flask for Doris to see. She turns back to the book.

DORIS
Good. Now... 'swirl the solution.'

As Bruno hesitates, Doris mimes "swirling." Bruno starts swirling. During this:

BRUNO
They told me I could leave a
message, and they would 'see
to it that Mr. Lewis got it.'

DORIS
(checking)
What'd you leave? 'Dear Rick
Lewis. Please contact me about
the song you stole.'

BRUNO
It disappeared.

DORIS
The message?

BRUNO
The pink. It's gone.

Doris goes back to the book.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (2)

58

DORIS

Good.

(reading)

'...Now begin adding NaOH by drops...' You did leave a message, didn't you?

Bruno holds the flask back under the buret, and begins measuring out the NaOH.

BRUNO

No, I didn't.

DORIS

Bruno....!

BRUNO

It wouldn't have done any good.

Montgomery moves over next to Doris and we TIGHTEN IN to exclude Bruno.

MONTGOMERY

How you guys doing?

DORIS

(heavy accent)

Mr. MacNeil. My partner and I are on the virge of discovering the cure for...

(dramatically)

Pia Zadora.

BRUNO (O.S.)

Doris, it's changing color again...

Doris returns to the book.

DORIS

Good.

(reading)

'The solution in the flask should be a strong, permanent pink color...'

59 ANGLE - BRUNO

59

His back is turned and whatever he is doing with the flask is hidden from us.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

DORIS (O.S.)

'...that persists when you swirl it.' You swirling?

BRUNO

I'm swirling, but...

60 RESUME - DORIS AND MONTGOMERY

60

Doris still has her head in the book. Montgomery, however is looking toward Bruno, an apprehensive look on his face.

MONTGOMERY

Doris...

DORIS

'...up to ten seconds...'

'The pink color...'

(to Montgomery)

What?

Montgomery inclines his head in Bruno's direction.

61 ANGLE - WIDE

61

TO SEE Bruno holding a flask that now contains a brilliant green liquid.

BRUNO

It turned green.

DORIS

You killed it! The great experiment is ruined!

She turns toward Julie.

DORIS

(continuing)

Julie. How'd you do?

Julie moves over to the trio, holding a flask of a light yellow, cloudy substance.

JULIE

I think I've discovered the formula for mayonnaise.

The four students stand for a second contemplating their failure, then:

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

JUILE

(continuing;
brightening)

And I also think I know a way
to get Rick Lewis' address
for Bruno.

On the reactions of the other three, we:

CUT TO:

62 INT. CAFETERIA - ANGLE ACROSS CASH REGISTER - DAY

62

Leroy COMES INTO VIEW in front of the cash register and hands the Cashier a bill. She places the change on his tray and he moves off, checking the tables for company. CAMERA TRUCKS alongside. He passes a table where Sherwood sits alone, and more absorbed in the book she is reading than in the food she is absently eating. Leroy pauses, then takes his tray over and stands across the table from her.

LEROY

You heard anything yet?

Sherwood looks up from her book.

SHERWOOD

No. Would you like to sit down?

Leroy puts the tray on the table and sits across from her.

LEROY

You worried?

SHERWOOD

I'm not sure worried is the
correct word. There's a
certain amount of concern,
and...

Her voice trails off, she thinks about it. Then:

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Yes. I am worried.

LEROY

Why does that Mr. Forbes and his
team got to come in here messing
us up anyway?

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

SHERWOOD
It's their role in life.
(off his look)
To 'mess us up.'

LEROY
Tell me.

He turns back to his tray.

SHERWOOD
However, I would think there are
worse tragedies for you than my
leaving.

Leroy looks up from his tray. A slow, appraising look.

LEROY
What...?

SHERWOOD
There are other things that...

LEROY
You saying I'll be glad to see
you get the ax?

SHERWOOD
No...

LEROY
You think I'm sitting around
hoping they fire you?

He rises angrily, and picks up his tray.

LEROY
(continuing)
You don't understand nothing.

SHERWOOD
Leroy, stop. Please.

As he pauses:

SHERWOOD
(continuing)
I would never accuse you of
hoping that anyone lose their
job. I meant that my going
wouldn't be as...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

SHERWOOD (CONT'D)

...unfortunate for you as if
Lydia -- Miss Grant left...

Leroy sits down. He struggles a bit, searching for the right words to express his feelings.

LEROY

You got to understand...Miss Grant,
she gets on me, and I might not
like it, but I know it's going
to make me a better dancer. You
get on me...you do that a lot...
I'm still not sure what good
it's doing for me...but, I'm
learning. I'm reading, I'm
writing...

He looks over at her, daring her to disagree. She nods.

LEROY

(continuing)

So, don't go telling me what's
good for me and what ain't.

SHERWOOD

(a long beat; then)

Isn't. Not ain't.

LEROY

Don't fuss with me, woman, I'm
on lunch.

SHERWOOD

Sorry. English teachers never
rest.

LEROY

(a small smile)

Don't I know it.

There is quiet for a moment. There's a communication
in the looks between them.

SHERWOOD

Thank you, Leroy.

LEROY

That's okay.

(looks up)

I didn't say I like you fussing
at me. Just...that I'm learning.

They both return to their lunches.

63 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

63

Bruno works the combination on his locker. Julie approaches cloaked in a conspiratorial air.

JULIE

Got a paper and pencil?

BRUNO

Somebody rip off your notebook?

JULIE

You want Rick Lewis' address or not? I told you I could get it for you...

BRUNO

How...?

JULIE

I had office duty. While I was filing, I just happened to notice his address in the 'guest lecturer' file.

(beat, then:)

Well?

64 ON BRUNO

64

Decision time. Either play the music or get the hell off the piano stool. He opens his notebook, pulls a pencil out of his shirt pocket as:

JULIE'S VOICE

(O.C.)

264 East 68th Street...

65 INT. MAIN CORRIDOR - DAY

65

Sherwood comes down the corridor, crosses the Entrance Foyer and over to the door to the Faculty Lounge.

66 INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - ANGLE TO THE DOOR - DAY

66

Across Forbes seated at the table. The door opens and Sherwood starts in. She sees Forbes and stops dead still.

SHERWOOD

Oh...sorry. I didn't know the room was being used.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

FORBES

No, no. Come in. Please.

SHERWOOD

I have nothing to say to you.

She starts back out. Forbes jumps up and rushes to the door.

FORBES

But I have something to say to you. And it's something you probably ought to hear.

Sherwood hesitates.

FORBES

(continuing)

Have you sent in your harassment complaint yet?

(off her look)

It's a small school. Good news travels fast.

SHERWOOD

I'm still working on it.

FORBES

Of course you realize that nothing was implied in my simple offer to share a meal.

SHERWOOD

The offer was to share more than a meal, and I believe the Board will find that 'more' as objectionable as I did.

He crosses over to the table, picks up several type-written sheets that are stapled together. He holds them out to Sherwood, who regards them much as she regards Forbes: like a bug crawling up her arm.

FORBES

Our evaluation report.

Distrust is replaced by a certain amount of curiosity as Sherwood takes the report. She glances through it.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (2)

66

FORBES

(continuing)

Read it. Then decide if you want to have your charges of improper conduct connected to the recommendation that we retain you as the new English/Drama instructor. It might appear as if you took me up on this 'alleged' offer.

67 ON SHERWOOD

67

as she comes upon the pertinent paragraph.

SHERWOOD

(reading)

'...recommendation of this panel that Elizabeth Sherwood, who is presently instructor in English be retained...'

DIRECT CUT TO:

68 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

68

Shorofsky stands at the counter reading another copy of the document to Mrs. Berg. Behind her are Doris and Danny engaged ostensibly in some other business, but listening with all their worth.

LYDIA

(reading)

...in newly created position of instructor in Drama-slash-English, and that the present instructor in Drama, Gregory Crandall be relieved of his responsibilities.

DANNY

(butting in)

What does that mean, 'relieved of responsibilities'?

SHOROFSKY

(angry)

It means he got fired!

DANNY

(angrier)

Fired!

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

Danny charges out of the office.

DORIS
(calling after)

Danny!

She pursues him.

69 INT. LOBBY - ANGLE TOWARD STEPS - DAY

69

Leroy is headed down toward the lobby, passing by Julie, who is moving upward. She reaches out and delays him.

JULIE
Hey, Leroy -- did you hear?

LEROY
Hear what?

JULIE
They decided to let Crandall go
and keep Sherwood.

70 DIFFERENT ANGLE

70

As Danny, with Doris in semi-hot pursuit, comes into proximity of the conversation taking place between Julie and Leroy. Leroy's smile is worthy of the victory circle at Indy 500.

LEROY
All right! Finally, somebody
made a good decision! Hey -- I
feel a whole heck of a lot better!

Danny hears that and moves to Leroy, grabbing him by the shoulder and spinning him around.

DANNY
You feel better?

LEROY
(smiling; innocent)
Yeah. Good news always makes
me feel better.

DANNY
Well, let me know how this makes
you feel.

With that, he hauls off and pops Leroy right in the mouth.

(CONTINUED)

70

CONTINUED:

70

It is a sudden, thoughtless, and thoroughly unprofessional punch, probably hurting Danny's hand as much as Leroy's chin. Leroy's reaction is part surprise, part bafflement, then pure pissed, and he launches himself at Danny. The fight, if you want to call it that, is in no way the studio-tour slugfest of roundhouses and fancy moves designed to tickle the tourists. Leroy grabs Danny, and Danny grabs hold of Leroy, and they wrestle their way around the corridor, grunting and groaning, inflicting a minimum of damage other than to their clothing.

71

ANGLE TO OFFICE DOOR

71

As Shorofsky, drawn by the commotion of the fight and the attendant ballyhoo that erupts from the students crowding around this attraction create, comes out of the office. Seeing the combat o.s. he starts for it, pushing a number of students out of the way.

72

ANGLE TO FIGHT

72

Doria and Julie are doing what they can to pull Danny and Leroy apart, but that's like attempting to separate spaghetti in a blender. Shorofsky bulls his way through the circle of onlookers.

SHOROFSKY

Stop this! Johnson! Amatullo!
Enough!

No apparent effect. Then:

DORIS

(loudly, shrilly)
Look! His fly's unzipped!!

Danny and Leroy separate quickly, each checking it out, and this allows Shorofsky the brief interlude he needs to step between them.

SHOROFSKY

All right! Done! No more!
(to those about)
Anywhere else but here. Auf
Weidersein. Move-move-move.

The kids move off reluctantly, Doris and Julie hanging close at hand.

(CONTINUED)

SHOROFSKY

You two are supposed to be friends.
What's this all about?

LEROY

Ask him.

Shorofsky turns to Danny, who is in no mood for discussions. He's just made an ass out of himself and he knows it.

DANNY

I'm busy.

He strides past Shorofsky, moving around the corner of the staircase and out of sight.

LEROY

(calling after)
Busy being a jerk!

SHOROFSKY

Mr. Johnson, stop. Now, what's this about?

LEROY

I don't know.
(off Shorofsky's stern look; a protest)

I don't!

JULIE

It just happened. I was telling Leroy about Crandall being fired and Miss Sherwood being...

Her voice trails off, aware that she has very probably answered the question.

SHOROFSKY

They come in here with their budget reports, and they treat us like digits. They have to do that, because everyone knows digits do not bleed when 'cut'.

He inhales a chestful of air, and expels it as if it tasted foul.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (2)

72

SHOROFSKY

(continuing)

And the final result is that they
end up pitting friends against
each other. They are without
merit.

(beat, and...)

But they are winning, damn it...
they are winning.

He turns and walks disgustedly down the corridor, and
we:

FREEZE FRAME.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

73 INT. MAKEUP ROOM - DAY

73

Julie, Doris, Montgomery and Bruno sit around eating their various lunches. Their mood is slightly edgy, and they eat in silence for a beat.

JULIE

When are you going to see
Rick Lewis?

BRUNO

This afternoon, probably.

DORIS

Probably?

BRUNO

(snapping)
I'll take care of it, okay?

Silence again. An uneasy foursome, they are.

JULIE

When does Coco get back?

MONTGOMERY

Tuesday. They all get back then.
Why?

JULIE

She has a way with Leroy. He
listens to her.

MONTGOMERY

But she can also aggravate Danny
in about four seconds flat.

JULIE

It takes very little to
aggravate Danny.

BRUNO

You think Crandall getting fired
qualifies as 'very little'?

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

DORIS

Now, don't get uptight...

BRUNO

(very uptight)

I'm not uptight, but I know how I'd feel if they decided to dump Shorofsky.

JULIE

Would you go out and punch somebody?

DORIS

He couldn't help it. It's a typical male response.

MONTGOMERY

Typical male response! What's that supposed to mean? You can't generalize like that.

JULIE

Of course you can. Who starts all the wars? Men!

BRUNO

Now that's really dumb.

DORIS

Oh really? You know, Julie and I are bummed about Crandall leaving but have you seen any of us punching somebody out?

MONTGOMERY

Maybe you don't care as much as Danny.

DORIS

First Julie's dumb and now I'm shallow!

MONTGOMERY

If the shoe fits...

DORIS

I'll give you a shoe! Right up your nose!

BRUNO

Typical female response.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (2)

73

JULIE

(a cry)
Heeeellllp!!!

The other three turn to her, the argument forgotten.

JULIE

(continuing)
Listen to us! We're fighting
about a fight!

A short moment of uncomfortable silence, then:

DORIS

Didn't we start out trying to
find a way to bring peace between
Leroy and Danny?

MONTGOMERY

Maybe we ought to make peace
between ourselves, first.

He rises and crosses to Doris, and as he begins to hug
her, Bruno joins them. Julie watches, beaming, then:

JULIE

Hey. Wait for me.

She joins the hug.

DORIS (V.O.)

(from somewhere deep
inside the hug)
This is really nice, but I think
you should know...when we started
this hug I had an egg salad
sandwich in my left hand.

DIRECT CUT TO:

74 INT. DRAMA CLASSROOM - DAY

74

Crandall sits in front of one of the cabinets, rearranging
the rehearsal play library. Danny enters and walks over
to Crandall.

CRANDALL

Don't you have a class this
period?

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

DANNY

Study Hall.

CRANDALL

That's a class.

DANNY

I got nothing to do.

Crandall indicates a large group of plays stacked in a lower corner of the cabinet.

CRANDALL

You do now. See that pile of loose plays? Hand them to me one at a time; and I'll file them away nice and neat for Miss Sherwood when she takes over.

Danny picks up a play, reads the cover.

DANNY

'Camino Real'. Williams. Wait, there's another one.

He hands the copies to Crandall who searches along a line of plays, then fits them into their proper niche.
DURING THIS:

DANNY

(continuing)

You got anything lined up?

CRANDALL

I got a call to teach part-time at the American Theatre Academy.

DANNY

That school any good?

CRANDALL

Very good. Next.

DANNY

'Chamber Music.' Kopit.

He hands the play to Crandall who puts it in its place.

DANNY

(continuing)

I'm thinking of dropping out of this place.

(CONTINUED)

Crandall gets frosty around the eyebrows. He turns slowly to Danny.

CRANDALL

What?

DANNY

I think I could do better at some other school.

(beat, then)

Like that academy you're going to.

CRANDALL

Uh, uh.

DANNY

How come?

CRANDALL

Two reasons. I'd recommend to the admitting board that you be turned down because you don't have a high school diploma.

DANNY

But, I'd be going there so I could study with you.

CRANDALL

That's the second reason. I'm not a guru, Danny. I'm just a teacher. If you decide to stay in this business, you're going to have lots of teachers. Get through the bad ones as fast as you can, but don't get hung up on the good ones. And if you're smart, you'll learn from all of them.

DANNY

But, Sherwood is...

CRANDALL

(jumping in)

...an excellent teacher. She'll be different, but she has something to teach you.

DANNY

You ever hear her tell a joke?

75 ON CRANDALL

75

What do you do? When you're not looking, someone sneaks past your carefully constructed tutorial facade with a good one. Crandall hangs tough, with only a smile betraying just how close he is to cracking up at Danny's observation.

CRANDALL

Life is a little more than telling jokes, Danny.

76 RESUME PREVIOUS ANGLE

76

as Danny jumps on that one.

DANNY

Not to me.

CRANDALL

(back in control)

You want to hand me the next play.

Danny reaches over, selects one from the top of the pile.

DANNY

'The Apology'. Robinson.

He hands it to Crandall, who starts to put it in its place, then turns and hands it back to Danny.

CRANDALL

Maybe you'd better take a crack at this.

DANNY

Good play?

CRANDALL

Good idea.

He looks over to Danny, waiting for the message to set in. Danny looks down at the title page of the play, mulling this over. A beat, then he nods, hands the play to Crandall and heads for the door, as we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

INT. SHERWOOD'S ROOM - FULL SHOT - DAY

Sherwood is the sole occupant of the room, busying herself with going over some lesson plans, cross-checking materials needed to bring those plans to reality. She initially doesn't react as the door is opened quietly and Forbes comes in. He holds by the door waiting to see if she's going to react. When she does not, he TAPS lightly on the door WINDOW. She looks up.

SHERWOOD

Usually people do that from the other side of the door. It's called knocking. What you're doing is announcing you're here. There's a difference.

FORBES

I know.

SHERWOOD

So, if I ask you to leave...

FORBES

I'll just stay here until I've said my piece.

SHERWOOD

That seems about your style.

FORBES

Look -- I am not sure whether or not you're going to believe a word of what I'm about to say...but I'm determined to say it...and what you think, you think, but...I'll have said it, at least.

SHERWOOD

I hope the concerto is shorter than the fanfare.

She sits back, hands folded, obviously going through the motions of giving him a fair hearing.

ON FORBES

knows how she feels and is committed to going ahead, nevertheless. He smiles uneasily.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

FORBES

I have a theory...that you may have forgotten what this place is like for a newcomer. It's really kind of overwhelming. It's a candy store with no one at the cash register. And when a person like me...kind of traditional and by the numbers... when that kind of person comes into a place like this...it can throw you off stride.

79 DIFFERENT ANGLE

79

Sherwood's look softened somewhat, viewing him increasingly as a human being, an image that tends to dilute the one previously fastened onto.

FORBES

What I did was dumb, I guess... ill timed. Subject to misunderstanding...but I'm not one of the bad guys, Miss Sherwood. I'm just a guy who's got a bad job to do. And that can separate you from people and...I wanted to talk to somebody who is very much at home in a world that seems as strange and wonderful to me as any place ever could be.

(beat, and)

End of concerto.

He moves to the door, pauses just a beat looking back.

SHERWOOD

I'm honestly not sure whether or not I want to say anything to stop you, so you might as well keep on going.

He nods. Takes that at face value. It's a fair enough assessment of where they are right now. He moves on out of the room as we HOLD a beat, and then we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

80 INT. DANCE REHEARSAL ROOM - FULL SHOT - DAY

80

A number of dancers are in the class warming up, Leroy principal among them. He stands at the barre through a series of stretches, then gradually becomes aware of Danny standing just inside the door, looking on. Leroy ceases his warmup. Their gazes hold a beat.

LEROY

You here to fight or talk?

DANNY

Figure it better be talk.
Hitting you hurts my knuckles
too much. You've got a
jaw of stone, man.
(beat, and)
And I got a brain of lead.

It's not much, but it is an apology, and Leroy's smile welcomes it with a kind of relief and delight that brings a similar grin to Danny's face, and as they exchange a high five, we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

81 EXT. MANHATTAN SKYSCRAPER - ESTABLISHING - DAY (STOCK)

81

As we PUSH IN toward the upper stories, where the number of floors relates directly to the amount of cash involved in the lease, and we HEAR:

LEWIS (V.O.)

Martelli, I'm not sure what you
expect me to do, because the
truth is, I'm not going to do
a blessed thing.

DIRECT CUT TO:

82 INT. LEWIS' APARTMENT - DAY

82

It's about what you'd expect the apartment of a successful New York composer to look like. The grand piano over near the large window could even be backed by a piece of the Queensboro Bridge peering past one of the other Manhattan Towers. RICK LEWIS is also about what you'd expect a successful, arrogant, thirtyish, New York composer to look like. He stands across a chrome and glass coffee table from Bruno, quite undisturbed by the fact that he has just been lumped together with various members of the Dalton Gang.

(CONTINUED)

LEWIS

So I ripped off your song.
So...?

BRUNO

You admit it?

LEWIS

Not a chance. Listen, you know
how many times a composer hears
that complaint? The more
successful you are, the more
you hear it. Fact of life.

BRUNO

Mr. Lewis -- no way I can go
up against you and make it stick.
But that was my song. It came
out of me. I didn't steal it
from anybody.

LEWIS

You sure?

BRUNO

I'm sure.

LEWIS

You want to be a composer, right?

BRUNO

I am a composer. 'Singing
Flowers', remember.

LEWIS

(ignoring)

You better learn to live with
the fact that you'll hear
something today, or tomorrow,
and it won't mean a whole lot
to you. But two years from now,
you'll be writing a song and that
tune will sneak in somehow, and
you will be absolutely positive
that it's yours.

BRUNO

Maybe. Maybe that's the way it
is...for you.

LEWIS

You're going to be different, huh.

(CONTINUED)

BRUNO

I'm going to try to be.

LEWIS

Well, I wish you luck, but as for 'Singing Flowers', no way I'm going on record saying I stole it from a high school kid.

BRUNO

I didn't ask you to.

LEWIS

Then we have nothing more to talk about.

He starts herding Bruno toward the door.

LEWIS

(continuing)

But I'll level with you, kid, though it won't make you feel any better. I truthfully do not remember you playing that day. Matter of fact, I don't even remember that day.

Bruno pauses.

BRUNO

I think you do.

The PHONE RINGS, Lewis moves over next to it, but pauses with his hand on the instrument. The PHONE CONTINUES to RING as:

BRUNO

(continuing)

I don't think you sat down and decided to rip me off. I'm even willing to believe that until right now it never occurred to you that you did. But, you remember.

LEWIS

If it makes you feel better.

BRUNO

What makes me feel better is knowing that you know the song is mine. We both know who wrote the song... and that's enough.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: (3)

82

BRUNO (CONT'D)
 (beat, then)
 You want to answer the phone.

Lewis picks up the phone.

LEWIS
 Hello. Speaking.
 (listens)
 Yes.
 (to Bruno)
 Talk about pushy. It's for you.

He extends the phone to Bruno.

BRUNO
 (flustered)
 But nobody knew...

He walks over and takes the phone from Lewis.

BRUNO
 (continuing)
 Hello.

83 INT. SCHOOL FOYER - WALL PHONES - DAY

83

Julie leans against the wall, the phone to her ear.

JULIE
 Bruno, where'd you put the
 cassette?

In the b.g., we can see Leroy and Danny mock-wrestling and "fighting" and laughing throughout, obviously having bridged the gap created by Danny's punch.

84 RESUME CO-OP - INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

84

Bruno still very confused.

BRUNO
 How'd you get this number?

JULIE
 Same way I got the address. The
 cassette, Bruno?

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

BRUNO

(with a glance to
Lewis)

It's in my locker. Danny
knows how to pick it. Wait a
minute! What do you want it for?

JULIE

We're throwing a party for Crandall.
Isn't that a super idea?

85 INT. CAFETERIA - ON CRANDALL - DAY

85

looking like he has a cactus in his back pocket, and
the trousers are tight.

CRANDALL

This is a repulsive idea.

86 WIDER

86

TO SEE the cafeteria decorated with streamers and festoon-
ed with balloons. A sign bids: FAREWELL, MR. CRANDALL.
There are teachers and students standing around in knots
throughout the room. The bandstand is set up, and
there is a microphone on the small stage. Lydia and
Shorofsky, who is wearing a Cheshire grin under the
greying whiskers, stand next to Crandall.

LYDIA

(firmly)

Will you stop. This party isn't
for you.

(pointing to the
rest of the room)

It's for them.

CRANDALL

If it's for them, why am I here?

SHOROFSKY

They wish a chance to say auf
Wiedersehen to a friend. And to
do it with a little grace.

CRANDALL

How is it, you make something
as distasteful as this seem
pleasant?

(CONTINUED)

SHOROFSKY

The advantages of a European education.

Sherwood joins them, a little tightness around the edges of her mouth. Lydia and Shorofsky look to her expectantly. She shakes her head in reply. The byplay is not lost on Crandall.

LYDIA

No word?

Another head shake.

SHOROFSKY

Does that mean, 'No'? or, 'No word'?

CRANDALL

What's going on?

There are uncomfortable looks all around.

CRANDALL

(continuing)

Come on. You have to tell me. I won't be around to find out on my own.

SHERWOOD

You know the new contract gives us all a five percent raise...

CRANDALL

Uh, huh. We all went out on strike to get it. So...?

SHERWOOD

Now, even with you gone, there are still twenty-two teachers left in the school. So. We all got together and asked the board to postpone the raises for one year. The money they'd save would be slightly more than one teacher's salary...yours.

Crandall looks around at his friends, unable to speak for a moment.

CRANDALL

I... I can't find words...

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2)

LYDIA

You don't have to.

CRANDALL

(biting)

...to tell you how much I hate the idea. Who was the genius who came up with this brilliant idea?

SHOROFSKY

(biting back)

Me. I am the genius.

CRANDALL

You must have known I'd be opposed to such a move.

SHOROFSKY

Of course I knew that.

CRANDALL

Then why?

SHOROFSKY

Because I am even more opposed to your leaving. I thought we might make a compromise.

87 ANOTHER ANGLE - THE BANDSTAND

87

Student musicians begin filling up the seats, adjusting music on the stands. Danny steps up to the microphone, gives it the customary tap.

DANNY

Can I have your attention, please? Mr. Crandall, could you come up here and have a seat, please.

He indicates a row of several chairs behind him on the stage.

88 ON CRANDALL

88

becoming resigned to the ordeal. He walks over to the stage, accompanied by Shorofsky, Sherwood and Lydia. As they sit, a group of students line up near the stage in a choir formation.

89 ANGLE TO DOORWAY

89

as Larry Forbes edges in from the corridor, making himself as inconspicuous as possible. He finds a niche toward the rear of the room.

90 ANGLE TO STAGE

90

as Crandall reluctantly takes his place next to Danny.

DANNY

Mr. Crandall, members of the faculty, it isn't easy to find a way to let you know how sorry we are you're leaving, and... how...how...

(stumbles for a second, then, strong again)

...much we'll miss you. So we decided to do it the way we know best. We'll show you.

He nods to Bruno, who gives a downbeat to the orchestra.

91 MUSICAL NUMBER

91

More than simply a song of farewell, the orchestra and choir join together in a hymn of gratitude to Crandall, and, by extension, all the teachers of the school, for the special graces they bring to the daily chore of teaching. Crandall fights hard to keep the mask of the curmudgeon, but the MUSIC, the earnestness of the students, the poetry of the words cut through his reserve, and a smile softens his look. At the end of the number, the APPLAUSE is less hooting and stomping than it is a huge outpouring of love. Crandall rises and crosses to the mike.

92 ON CRANDALL

92

clearly uncomfortable.

CRANDALL

Thank you very much. I uh...

(gathers his thoughts)

To tell you the truth, I planned on getting out of here with a minimum of fuss, because I'm really terrible at saying goodbye.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

CRANDALL (CONT'D)

I tend to dawdle at the door a lot. When Lydia dragged me in here, it wasn't that I didn't want to be here. It was more that I knew I wouldn't want to leave.

(pauses)

In the last several days I've been trying to figure what makes this place, this job so...so joyous. I finally figured out it's not what we teach, it's who.

He begins to speak directly to the kids, one at a time.

CRANDALL

(continuing)

We mold talent into skill, and at the same time we impart some degree of integrity, so that you deal with all that talent in a way that makes you proud of the profession you've chosen. Then you guys turn around and reward us with song and dance and magic.

(beat; change)

And, here I am again, dawdling at the door...

Forbes moves out from the shadows at the back of the room, his voice carrying to the front.

FORBES

Perhaps I can help, Mr. Crandall.

CRANDALL

I'm already unemployed, so I'm not sure I can stand any more help from you, Mr. Forbes.

FORBES

(smiling)

That was a joke, right?
(off Crandall's nod)
See. I'm catching on.

He turns to the audience.

(CONTINUED)

FORBES

(continuing)

I've just come from a meeting downtown, where the rather... unique proposal you people came up with was the topic of discussion.

(simply)

Your compromise offer was turned down flat. It would set a bad precedent and also serve to embarrass the Board terribly. The Board does not like to be embarrassed.

(beat, and)

One of the items earmarked in next year's budget was a new lighting for the auditorium. Well, the Board got a little mad at you people and cut it out of the budget. You're not going to get a new lighting system.

(a nice smile)

You're going to get an old Crandall, instead. I hope I didn't spoil the party.

The room erupts. Laughter, whoops and hollers. All of which tends to unnerve Forbes, who turns to Sherwood for help.

SHERWOOD

Now that's what I call a concerto, Mr. Forbes. Welcome to the School of the Arts!

And what a party it becomes. The students boogie, and sing, and stomp, and shout. Lydia dances, Sherwood laughs, and claps happily. Forbes unbends and becomes quite human, and several of his handclaps even manage to be in time to the MUSIC. Shorofsky finds a pencil someplace and TAPS it in rhythm to his humming. And Crandall beams, and grins with joy as the earlier outpouring of love turns into an exuberant celebration. At the high point of the rejoicing we take a moment, a near-to-bursting moment for Crandall, and we FREEZE that moment, so that the rest of us may savor some of his happiness and be warmed by it. Then we:

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END