

The First Picture Show
a silent movie-dance-comedy-drama-musical-history
work-in-progress
written by **Ain Gordon** and **David Gordon**

SCENE TWO: THE INTERVIEW, RETIREMENT HOME/L.A. 1994

(THE CAST FOR THE INTERVIEW ARE ASSEMBLED WHEN ACT TWO
BEGINS. THEY DO NOT MOVE WHEN ANNE 99 SINGS.

ANNE 99, ANNE 38, JANE, THELMA MARCH, CONNIE GARDNER

{EXTRAS}, **HENRY HOOKS** {STUNT MAN}, **PERCY WATERS**
{DIRECTOR}, **BILLY FRIEND** {DIRECTOR})

JANE: Okay, okay. Would you all do me a favor? One at a
time just look into the camera and say who you
are and what you did, would you?

CONNIE: I'll start. I'm Constance but they call me Connie.

I was a bit player, or an extra.

JANE: Could you give your full name, Connie?

CONNIE: Constance Marie Gardner.

THELMA: Thelma March, dancer and actress.

CONNIE: And extra. Like me.

THELMA: Miss Buttinsky.

JANE: Anne?

ANNE 99: Anne First, old lady.

JANE: Come on, Anne, say what you do.

ANNE 38: Why the hell can't you say what you do?

ANNE 99: What I did! You remember so much. You do it!

ANNE 38: Anne First, producer-director.

HENRY: Percy!

PERCY: Percy Waters, producer-director.

HENRY: And writer too, Percy.

ANNE 38:And casting and booking. He did it all.

HENRY:Mr. Waters was more famous than most of us - where
they showed his pictures.

CONNIE:Percy directed "race" films.

HENRY:Pictures for coloreds.

JANE:I'm gonna wanna talk to you about that. You want a
chair, Mr. Waters?

PERCY:No thanks. I fall asleep. Henry, tell about you.

HENRY:Oh, I'm Henry Hooks. Stunt man.

PERCY:Bravest man in town.

CONNIE:Shot down four times in World War I.

HENRY:Figured I oughta get paid to get myself killed.

CONNIE:Henry invented the mattress.

HENRY:Nah. They wanted me to jump out a window and I told
'em to get a mattress.

PERCY:Nobody thought of that before.

JANE:(TO HENRY) I wanna hear more.

HENRY:I don't have too many guys to talk to.

ALL:"Us stunt guys don't live long enough ta brag."

CONNIE:Henry's favorite line. Billy!

BILLY:(ENTERS) Billy Friend, cameraman, director.

ANNE 99:(TO JANE) Are you in this?

BILLY:Sure she is. Say who you are, sweetheart.

JANE:Okay. I'm Jane Furstmann.

ANNE 99:Say what you do.

JANE:I'm the director.

BILLY:Can the audience see you? Can we talk to you?

JANE:Uh, I hadn't thought...sure, okay.

BILLY:Get ya a chair. (JANE SITS, DIRECTS FROM GROUP)

THELMA:I was a boy in INTOLERANCE. (EVERYBODY LAUGHS)

BILLY:Oh yeah? I directed a couple of the battle scenes.

PERCY:Griffith used everybody on that one.

BILLY:One of my first directing jobs.

HENRY:I fell off horses. I died about twenty times.

JANE:Really, could you all look into the camera?

ANNE 99:Why the hell does she want that?

ANNE 38:It's her first job.

HENRY:INTOLERANCE was 1916, right?

BILLY:1916? We "worked" together around then, Annie.

JANE:You all know each other a long time.

BILLY:Even in the biblical sense. Right Annie?

THELMA:Is this gonna be a fuckin' tell all show?

BILLY:Thelma, I didn't know you were in INTOLERANCE.

NURSE:(ENTERS) Medication.

JANE:(TO CAMERA) Ya get that? (TO NURSE) Do that again.

NURSE:You mean me?

JANE:The "medication" thing. I didn't get you in frame.

BILLY:You got her voice.

ANNE 99: She's loud enough.

JANE:I want to see her. (NURSE HANDS OUT PAPER CUPS)

ANNE 99:Come back tomorrow. She yells medication three times a day. (TO ANNE 38) Doesn't she know cameras move now?

ANNE 38:Tell her.

ANNE 99:You tell her.

ANNE 38:Jane, come here. (ANNE 38 NUDGES ANNE 99)

ANNE 99:(TO JANE) We are old. You are young. We can't go anywhere. You can. Get it?

JANE:Got it. Okay everybody. Talk wherever you like. (TO CAMERA) We'll pick them up. Just be loud.

THELMA:(SHOUTS) Mr. Griffith got us a fuckin' brass band.

BILLY:Thelma, honey, she didn't mean you to yell.

JANE:Thanks, Mr. Friend.

BILLY:Billy.

THELMA:Well he did. Real armies always took musicians along to make the soldiers brave. Mr. Griffith told me that. (TO JANE) Is this good?

JANE:Wonderful. The nurse has something for you.

THELMA:(TO NURSE) I didn't have breakfast.

NURSE:Take them anyway.

CONNIE:(TO THELMA) I never knew you were in INTOLERANCE.

(TO NURSE) This isn't mine. I don't take this. Tell how old you are Thelma.

THELMA:A lady don't tell her fuckin' age, Miss Buttinsky.

ANNE 99:Anybody over eighty in Hollywood says they were in

that goddamned picture. (WAVES HANDS IN FRONT OF
HER FACE TO AVOID CAMERA) Where's my pills?

BILLY:Annie, let the camera find you.

JANE:(TO BILLY) Her avoiding the camera is kinda funny.

ANNE 99:(TO BILLY) What's she saying?

BILLY:She thinks you're funny.

ANNE 38:You used to be.

THELMA:Mr. Griffith said music gives you a lift. You
forget about acting. (TRIES TO STAND) You feel -
strong. (JANE HELPS HER. SIGNALS TO CAMERA)

BILLY:Music starts. I whisper through the megaphone...

THELMA:Like he's my fucking boyfriend.

BILLY:Look through the window...(THELMA DOES WHAT BILLY
SAYS)...the flowers...the scent. Reminds you of
being a girl...of your mama. You feel the sting
of tears...your throat's tight. Now lean
forward... gently...hold it...hold it...and...

ALL:Cut! (THELMA LAUGHS SELFCONSCIOUSLY AS THE REVERIE
ENDS. JANE STANDS TO HELP THELMA AND SQUATS NEXT
TO HER.)

BILLY:NO FILM I MADE EXISTS (JANE SIGNALS FOR CLOSE UP)
ONLY TITLES, ONLY LISTS
ONLY YEAR AND CAST AND COST
THE FILMS THEMSELVES HAVE ALL BEEN LOST.

THEY'RE ONLY IN MY HEAD

AND WHEN I'M DEAD AND ALL IS SAID AND DONE

THERE ISN'T ONE FOR ANYONE TO SEE

THE JOKES ON ME

NO ONE WILL EVER SEE THE PICTURES THAT I MADE.

NURSE:(BREAKS SILENCE) You making a show about old movies?

(CAMERA WHIPS TO NURSE)

JANE:(STANDS, HEADS TO CAMERA) The silents.

CONNIE:Did ya know Thelma was the star of INTOLERANCE?

(EVERYBODY LAUGHS)

NURSE:My grandmother's in that one. (LAUGHTER) She was. She
was an extra.

JANE:(BEHIND CAMERA) Your grandmother spoke English?

NURSE:(TO JANE) Silent movies. Just move your mouth. She
could get by. Came to America as a picture
bride.

THELMA:A what?

NURSE:Picture bride. Her real name was Sumiko Sugisaki.

But in pictures she called herself Cindy Su.

ANNES:Cindy? (BILLY PUSHES ANNE 99 CLOSER TO GROUP, SIGNALS
TO JANE)

NURSE:Tiptoeing in kimono behind some white lady in slanty
eye make-up. Madame Butterfly type weepies she
used ta call them. Made by some guy named Cedric
Delmar.

WOMEN:Five dollars. No tits.

NURSE:He dressed her up like Cleopatra and she danced
 around Indian temples sacrificing dead chicken to
 the gods.

ANNE 38:She worked on the first picture I ever made.

JANE:Her grandmother? (TAKES NURSE'S TRAY)

NURSE:Cindy Su? (CAMERA MOVES IN) You kidding? Looked a lot like me Miss First. Are you sure?

ANNE 99:Sure I'm sure. She used to be my assistant.

NURSE:I didn't know that. She just told me the acting stuff. DAUGHTER OF SHANGHAI.

ANNE 38:KING OF CHINATOWN.

NURSE:ISLAND OF LOST MEN. Spies and temptresses. She only got exotic parts. (MOVES TO JANE TO GET TRAY)

JANE:(STOPS HER) You were close to your grandmother?

NURSE:She took care of me when we got out of the camp.

JANE:What?

NURSE:The forties. My mother and her mother were dumped in an American internment camp in Utah. I was born there. (BILLY GESTURES TO JANE ABOUT CLOSE UP. JANE SIGNALS CAMERA TO CLOSE IN) The war ended and my grandmother, with me in her arms, followed my mother back to Hollywood. Took care of me while my mom played sexy madames in B pictures. So, I sorta grew up in the movies. "Once upon a time your granny was an actress." "Look honey, that's your mama in the hula number." My baby stories. They acted out everybody's parts. No type casting when those ladies performed for me. My grandmother died thirty years ago.

ANNE 99:Lucky Cindy. (CAMERA PULLS OUT, INCLUDES GROUP)

JANE:Your mother kept working? (NURSE GETS TRAY)

NURSE:Sure. Before she died she played a lot of background
grandmas in technicolor epics.

CONNIE:In the fifties. FLOWER DRUM SONG. I was an extra.

THELMA:THE WORLD OF SUSIE WONG.

CONNIE:(SINGS W/HENRY)LOVE IS A MANY SPLENDORED THING.

BILLY:Cut! (BEGINS SLOW EXIT)

JANE:(TO CAMERA) Not yet. Let's get this little dance
they're doing. (CONNIE, THELMA, HENRY, PERCY
BEGIN SLOW EXIT)

THELMA:Fucking gorgeous Billy Holden.

NURSE:And Jennifer Jones in chinese drag.

ANNE 99:Back to Madame Butterfly. (BILLY COUGHS, JANE PULLS
CAMERAMAN TIGHT ON BILLY, NURSE AND ANNES)

NURSE:Back to being a nurse. Mr. Friend? (HANDS CUP TO
HIM) It's a small world Miss First.

ANNE 99:Smaller everyday. (PUTS HER HAND OVER CAMERA LENS)

JANE:Cut. When Ms. First says you're done, you're done.
(JANE, CAMERAMAN EXIT)

ANNE 99:Second class picture people refrying old beans.

ANNE 38:Who was first to you?

ANNE 99:Not you.

SCENE 3: **LOIS WEBER, CARL LAEMMLE**/L.A. 1916

SIGN: 1916

WEBER:(ENTERS) Mr. Laemmle. I got an idea for a picture.

LAEMMLE:Wonderful.

WEBER>About birth control.

LAEMMLE:Wonderful.

WEBER>About Margaret Sanger.

LAEMMLE:Good looking?

WEBER:A public health nurse, Mr. Laemmle.

LAEMMLE:You're kidding. Call me Uncle Carl.

WEBER:I need your "go ahead."

LAEMMLE:Go ahead, kiddo. Go ahead.

ANNE 99:(TO HERSELF) "Go ahead, go ahead." Memory is fulla
shit. Nothing was so easy and that picture was
banned in New York.

WEBER:Sorry Mr. Laemmle.

LAEMMLE:What do they know? New York, phooey. Without no
goddamn first commandment...

WEBER:First amendment.

LAEMMLE:Whatever. We're sitting geese.

WEBER:Ducks.

LAEMMLE:Take a rest kiddo. (EXITS, ALICE BLACHE ENTERS)

ANNE 38:She opened her own studio. You were jealous.

WEBER:Alice, sweetheart.

ANNE 38:Alice Blache.

BLACHE:Alice Guy Blache.

WEBER:I feel lousy.

ANNE 99:Her picture flopped.

NURSE:(ENTERS) You need a change Miss First?

ANNE 99:A big change. Get outta here. (NURSE EXITS)

WEBER:I'm thirty-eight years old.

WILSON:(ENTERS) She put everything into pictures.

ANNE 38:Margery Wilson.

WEBER:Not just money.

BLACHE:Passion.

CINDY:(ENTERS) What scene should I tell the actors?

ANNE 99:Cindy? Your granddaughter's a nurse. (CINDY EXITS)

SHIPMAN:(ENTERS) Nell Shipman, Anne.

ANNE 99:This is like drowning.

NAOMI:(ENTERS) Breakin' up the three musketeers.

ANNE 99:Oh Naomi, is Ruthie here somewhere? (NAOMI EXITS)

WONG:(ENTERS) Hello Anne. It's Marion.

ANNE 38:Marion E. Wong.

GAUNTIER: (ENTERS) Hello pal.

ANNE 38:Gene Gauntier.

ANNE 99:I know who the hell she is.

ANNE 38:You have her letter.

ANNE 99:I saved it, Gene.

DOCTOR:(ENTERS) How do you feel?

ANNE 99:If I felt any better I'd see an undertaker.

DOCTOR:I'll check you later.

ANNE 99:C'mere. (IN HIS EAR) Is there anybody here?

DOCTOR:Nobody. (EXITS)

BILLY:(ENTERS W/CAMERA) I wanna marry you Annie. (EXITS)

ANNE 99:I'm used ta being on my own Billy. I can't.

BILLY:(ENTERS W/CANE) Ya wanna watch T.V.? Oprah.

(HE MOVES ANNE 99 TO T.V.)

MADISON:(ENTERS) Hello everybody.

ANNE 38:Cleo Madison.

ANNE 99:The snowstorm!

BLACHE:A freak snowstorm in Los Angeles.

MADISON:I was the first to use real snow in a picture.

ANNE 99:Whatta claim to fame.

WEBER:I was the first American woman picture director.

ANNE 99:Nobody cares anymore.

GAUNTIER:Fifty grand a picture and half the profits.

BLACHE:In those days...

ALL:A lotta money!

WILSON:I wrote, produced, directed and acted in the first
picture ever made on location.

ANNE 38:Without a single set. She was twenty four. What
happened to you?

WILSON:I got married. He didn't want me to work.

SHIPMAN:I made GOD'S COUNTRY AND THE WOMAN. The first...

ALL:Feature-length wildlife adventure film in history.

GAUNTIER:I wrote the first serials, right Annie?

ANNE 99:Ya did. Ya did.

GAUNTIER:I acted in them and I did the damn stunts myself.

ANNE 99:She wasn't scared of anything.

ANNE 38:She was a real friend.

WONG:My Mandarin Film Company was the first Chinese
producing company in America.

ANNE 99:You only made one picture Marion.

WONG:I didn't say I was prolific.

BLACHE:I directed the first narrative moving picture in the
whole world.

WEBER:1896! Forget about Melies.

ALL:But she can't prove it.

ANNE 99:I WAS FIRST. NO, I WAS FIRST.

ADD WONG:NO I WAS FIRST.

ADD SH/WI:NO I WAS FIRST.

ADD GA/MA:NO I WAS FIRST.

ADD BL/WE:NO I WAS FIRST.

BLACHE:I had my own studio.

WEBER:Solax.

BLACHE:My husband bullied me till I gave it up and he
opened Blache Features.

WEBER:Everybody thought he made the damn pictures.

ALL:Because it's his name.

BLACHE:And he divorced me.

WEBER:She got stuck with two kids and no money.

BLACHE:And no job.

ANNE 99:The kind of mess women get into.

BILLY:You don't like Oprah? Wanna watch something else? Uh
oh. Gotta go. Call-a nature. (EXITS)

ANNE 99:A WOMAN DREAMS UP PLOTS AND SCHEMES
TO MAKE THE PICTURES SHE MAKES.

BLACHE:JUGGLING THE LIFE OF MOTHER AND WIFE
TO MAKE THE PICTURES SHE MAKES.

REID:(ENTERS) Annie.

ANNE 38:Dorothy Davenport.

REID:Davenport Reid, Annie.

GAUNTIER:Married Wally Reid.

REID:I like Wally's name and mine together.

MADISON:He overdosed.

BLACHE:She produced that antidrug picture.

REID:I used my own money to make pictures.

ANNE 99:I never had any money.

WEBER:KNOCKED ON EVERYBODY'S DOOR

BLACHE:PART TIME SALESMAN. PART TIME WHORE.

BLA/WEB:HADDA GET THE MONEY FOR THE PICTURES I MADE.

BLACHE:PART DIRECTOR.

WEBER:PART TIME CLOWN.

BLA/WEB:GET IT UP BUT KEEP COSTS DOWN.

ALL: NO MORE MONEY IN THIS TOWN FOR THE PICTURES I MAKE.

SHIPMAN:I worked at Vitagraph Pictures.

MADISON:Vitagraph merged with Lubin and Selig.

ANNE 38:And Essanay.

ANNE 99:That didn't work.

REID:Essanay grabbed Selig and joined up with...

WEB/REID:Edison and Kleine.

WEBER:Lubin shut down.

SHIPMAN:Warner Brothers grabbed Vitagraph.

GAUNTIER:I did five years at Kalem, one year at Biograph.

ANNE 99:They went outta business.

GAUNTIER:I went independent.

ANNE 99:And went outta business.

REID:I worked for Thomas Ince.

ANNE 99:He went outta business.

REID:I went independent.

ANNE 99:She went outta business.

WILSON:I went independent.

ALL:She left the business.

WONG:I disappeared.

ANNE 38:She did.

ANNE 99:She just disappeared.

WEBER:Universal pictures swallowed Victor.

BLACHE:And Rex and Eclair.

WEBER:And Powers

WE/GA/MA:And Nestor.

ALL:And. And. And.

ANNE 99: And Jesse Lasky joined with Famous Players.

ANNE 38:Snatched up Bosworth

ANNES:And Paramount was born.

ANNE 99:METRO MET GOLDWYN.

ANNES:MET MAYER.

ANNE 99:ONE HUNDRED STUDIOS BECAME FIFTY.

BLA/WEB:BECAME TWENTY.

ANNES:BECAME TEN. BECAME FOX. M.G.M., R.K.O.

AND UNIVERSAL.

AND PARAMOUNT.

AND WARNER BROTHERS.

All: NO MORE MONEY IN THIS TOWN FOR THE PICTURES I MAKE.

BLACHE:I WAS SAVAGE, I WAS SMART

IN THE PICTURES I MADE.

WEBER:WORKED MY ASS OFF, BROKE MY HEART

IN THE PICTURES I MADE.

SHIPMAN:MADE MY MOVES

WILSON:MADE MY NAME

GAUNTIER:MADE THE PICTURES

WONG/REID:PLAYED THE GAME

ANNE 99:DIDN'T KNOW WE'D END THE SAME...

ALL:WE WOULD ALL END THE SAME.

WONG/REID:WE TALKED POLITE - THE WAY THAT GIRLS DO

SHIP/GAUN:DIDN'T SHOUT - THAT'S NOT WHAT GIRLS DO

BLA/WEB:HADDA SHOW THAT WE COULD THEN DO

ALL:EVERYTHING THE GODDAMN MEN DO.

WIL/MAD:AND DO IT FASTER AND CHEAPER.

ANNES:AND DO IT BETTER AND BETTER.

ALL:IN THE PICTURES - IN THE PICTURES - WE MADE!

SCENE THREE: **LOUIS AND MAY FURSTMANN**/L.A. 1920

MAY:Louie, where are you?

LOUIS:I'm in here, May. I'm working.

MAY:(ENTERS) Louie, I wanna go home.

LOUIS:You are home. Whattaya mean? Whattaya mean home?

MAY:I must mean I'm hungry. I must mean I want a new
dress. What do you mean what do I mean? I mean
I wanna go home. To Ohio. Where we live. Where
the busybodies in the bungalow colony don't hate
me if I don't play Canasta and Mah Jong. Where
you're a big shot and I'm Mrs. Big Shot and where
there's a synagogue.

LOUIS:You don't go to synagogue.

MAY:You don't go. I'm not you, I go. I wanna go where it
snows.

LOUIS:May, you hate the snow.

MAY:I love ta hate the snow. I wanna go where the kosher
butcher is and my mother. I miss my mother. And
Edith. And Irene.

LOUIS:You fight with Edith and Irene.

MAY:I love ta fight! I don't have nobody to fight with
here. Nobody yells in California. I wanna go
home. Where our life is, Louie. I wanna go home.

LOUIS:May, you're telling me I'm a failure.

MAY:Not in Ohio, ya big ox.

LOUIS:I thought you were happy here.

MAY:I thought you thought that, that's why I'm telling you.

It's no good. Nobody wants us here Louie. You're knocking your head against the wall and I gotta look at the bruises. The kids don't wanna play with our kids. The big boys don't wanna play with you. Your sister don't want you either and she don't like me. We never liked each other Louie. And Louie, you came here to talk high quality family entertainment but everybody here is stabbing everybody else behind their back and it's all about money and politics. Let's get outta here.

SCENE FOUR: TELEPHONE POLITICS/1920

CRAFTS:Hello, Representative Hughes? This is the Reverend
 Wilbur Crafts. Five years since the Supreme Court
 ruled in our favor. Good but not good enough.
 The Christian vote stands behind me, Dudley. We
 want Federal Censorship. A law on the books. We
 want a bill passed and we don't want public
 hearings!

HUGHES:Motion Picture World please. W. Steven Bush.

HELLO STEVEN. DUDLEY HUGHES HERE.

CALLING FROM CONGRESS. HERE'S THE NEWS HERE.

WILBUR CRAFTS IS STILL

HOT FOR THE CENSOR BILL

HE WILL NOT QUIT TILL

THAT DAMN BILL HITS THE HILL. And Steve, he says "No
 hearings!" This is an anonymous leak.

BUSH:Gimme the editor Milly.

BOSS, STEVEN BUSH HERE.

I GOT A LEAK HERE.

ARE YOU ALONE THERE?

AND CAN WE SPEAK HERE?

HUGHES SAYS CRAFTS SAYS "WHERE'S THE BILL?"

AND THAT'S NOT ALL.

HE DON'T WANT HEARINGS. SHOULD I LEAK IT?

OKAY, I'LL CALL. Hello, is this the Massachusettes

Exhibitors League?

MASS:MY PLEASURE MR. BUSH. MY EXHIBITORS ALL READ YOU.

YOUR MAGAZINE IS GREAT

AND WE KNOW HOW MUCH WE NEED YOU.

MY BROTHER-IN-LAW MACFARLAND

AT THE BOSTON TRIBUNE PAPER

WILL BE GLAD TO DO A FAVOR

WHEN I LEAK HIM CRAFTS' NEW CAPER. Hello? Hey Mac, call

Dudley Hughes over at congress.

MAC:HELLO, DUDLEY? YOUR OLD PAL MAC HERE.

A BIRDY TELLS ME

CENSORSHIP AND CRAFTS ARE BACK HERE.

THAT BUM CAN'T STOP THE GODDAMN HEARINGS.

I KNOW I'M CRUDE.

BUT CRAFTS BE DAMNED, THE PICTURE BUSINESS

IS GETTING SCREWED. I'd hate ta see your name in a Sunday

feature, Dud.

HUGHES:REVEREND CRAFTS? HELLO, THIS IS DUDLEY SPEAKING.

CAN'T IMAGINE HOW THIS HEARING THING GOT LEAKING.

WITH THIS PUBLICITY

THE HOUSE WILL OVERRIDE IT, WILBUR.

EVERYBODY KNOWS.

IT WON'T BE POSSIBLE TO HIDE IT, WILBUR. They won't abide

it.

CRAFTS:So be it. But if there are hearings I want to be the

first speaker and, Dudley, I'm mad as hell.

(FOCUS SHIFTS TO **JANE ON TELEPHONE/L.A. 1994**)

JANE:I'VE GOT A MINUTE, BEN,

YA GOT A MINUTE?

I SAW THE TAPE I SHOT AND I

DON'T LIKE WHAT'S IN IT.

What?

THE NURSE'S STORY. IT'S CONFUSING.

I'M CONFUSED BY IT.

I DO WANT SERIOUS REPORTING, BUT

I WANNA BE AMUSED BY IT.

What?

I THOUGHT THE HOOK WOULD BE ANNE FIRST

BUT SHE'S SO ROTTEN.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO GO FOR NOW.

AND I'M SCARED OF WHAT I'VE GOTTEN -- INTO.

What?

No, of course I don't want nostalgia. But I also don't
want polemics. Okay, I gotta go. I'll pick up
"take-out," oh, Ben - how's your career going?
(LAUGHS) Me too.

SCENE FIVE: THE INTERVIEW, RETIREMENT HOME/L.A. 1994

JANE:Okay. This is the second interview. The subject is
Percy Waters. You're on, Mr. Waters.

PERCY:I DIDN'T USE THE WHITE MAN'S MONEY.

DIDN'T EVER USE THE WHITE MAN'S CREW.

OTHER BLACK DIRECTORS HAD WHITE PRODUCERS

BUT I WANTED TO DO WHAT I WANTED TO DO.

RAISED EVERY CENT MYSELF. SPENT IT ALL MYSELF

ON THE PICTURES I MADE.

I GAVE A REAL LIFE FACE TO THE PEOPLE OF MY RACE

IN THE PICTURES I MADE.

I WOULD NOT ENDURE THE OLD CARICATURE

IN THE PICTURES I MADE.

Blacks had no idea what blacks looked like two towns away.

Hell, it was only forty years since we got the
right to travel. Our picture wasn't on a magazine
cover. No one hung a painting of us in a museum.
I made us be somebody. A doctor. Ya didn't see a
colored doctor in a white man's picture. Black
people could see black people sit down to dinner
like it was normal. See them dishes they could
say. I'm gonna get me some of them dishes.

(TO JANE) What's the problem?

JANE:Sorry Mr. Waters. I'm just not sure...

PERCY:You want nostalgia? You want nice old movie folks

reminiscing. Showing their medals.

JANE:No, I wanna hear the invention. The free-for-all.

PERCY:The free-for-all wasn't free for all.

ANNE 99:I knew it. Just a waitress taking orders for the blueplate special. You don't wanna hear what really happened. You want bullshit.

JANE:Excuse me Miss First but I am interviewing Percy Waters. You are not the director, the co-director, the producer, my conscience - or my friend, which is good because your friendship turns on and off too fast for my taste. (PAUSE) Okay. Okay. In 1915 D.W. Griffith made BIRTH OF A NATION, based on Dixon's THE CLANSMAN (READS) "an historical romance of the Klu Klux Klan." Mr. Waters, would you talk about BIRTH OF A NATION?

PERCY:Nothing new to say.

JANE:What about the protests?

PERCY:Protests worked. We didn't play villains anymore.

JANE:Give me a break Mr. Waters. Wasn't that good?

PERCY:We didn't play heroes either. That left servants, and bug-eyed fools, and half the time in those days, they wanted a black porter or a maid, they blacked up a white actor.

JANE:What about the black companies? There were dozens.

PERCY:Lotsa "race" companies. Not all black owned.

JANE:The ones that were, where did they go?

PERCY:Silents were cheap. "Sound" killed us. Couldn't compete. No investors. Not enough blacks with money. Not enough profit for rich blacks. That's one thing blacks and whites agree about - profit!

JANE:Why wasn't there "enough profit?"

PERCY:Production, distribution, and exhibition all belonged to the white studios. They could keep on cranking out pictures. And distribute them. And show them. One hand washed the other and they scratched each other's backs. I hadda tuck my damn movie under my arm and walk all the way the hell around America begging for a two day run.

JANE:But the government sued.

PERCY:The big anti-trust hoo hah. It directly pushed the so-called integration of southern theaters. Least, that's what I think. After World War II with no separate picture houses "negroes" had to sit "way back there" or "way up there" and watch the white pictures. So who the hell was gonna look at black pictures? Not the white audience sitting down front. I gotta see the podiatrist now. Excuse me ladies.

JANE:Thank you Mr. Waters. (HE EXITS) Cut.

ANNE 99:You don't dress like Heidi anymore.

JANE:I quit that job but after todays interview I better

practice my yodel!

SCENE SIX: **NAOMI** AND **ANNE 26**, TELEPHONE/OHIO, L.A. 1920

ANNE 26:I don't want to talk about it now, Naomi.

NAOMI:I never know when to call you anymore.

ANNE 26:I'm kinda busy.

NAOMI:Well, me and Ruthie don't wanna butt in but it's in
 all the picture magazines.

ANNE 26:(SILENCE)

NAOMI:It's in Moving Picture World, Annie. He's a big
 star, Annie.

ANNE 26:Yeah.

NAOMI:He's got more money than the king of England.

ANNE 26:Yeah, I know.

NAOMI:He's very handsome.

ANNE 26:Yeah, I know, Naomi.

NAOMI:He's married.

ANNE 26:Na-o-mi, I know he's married. The whole world
 knows he's married. He wantsa get a divorce but
 I don't want him to.

NAOMI:You don't wanna marry him?

ANNE 26:No.

NAOMI:(YELLS TO OFFSTAGE) She don't wanna marry him!

ANNE 26:Who are you yelling at?

NAOMI:Ruthie. She's in the toilet. I know it's none-a my
 business but I think you're nuts, Annie
 Furstmann.

ANNE 26:You're right. It's none-a your business.

SCENE SEVEN: THE INTERVIEW, RETIREMENT HOME/L.A. 1994

ANNE 99:What's the verdict?

JANE:I didn't show the stuff to the boss yet. Talk about
the music Thelma.

THELMA:I was married once to an Italian who played the
accordion. He was a handsome fuck.

JANE:The music, Thelma.

THELMA:He played "Sorrento" till it came out of my ears. I
told him, can't you play any other fuckin...

JANE:The music.

CONNIE:Mickey Neilan had a four piece band on his set.

THELMA:I had fun on Mickey's set. Him and Blanche Sweet.

CONNIE:They were married.

THELMA:Blanche Sweet was a big star.

CONNIE:They used to have real big fights. Soon as the
fight started, the band would play...

THELMA:"Poppa Loves Momma, Momma Loves Poppa" and laugh 'em
right out of the fucking fight.

CONNIE:Oh, I was pals with Ben Lyon. If Benny needed
inspiration he liked 'em to play "My Buddy."

CON/THEL:God could he cry.

CONNIE:Oh, I got one. I was a girl in the cigarette factory
with Carmen.

THELMA:Me too. Oooh the Bizet music. I hadda move my
shoulders and my hips.

CONNIE:I was an extra on a million movies.

THELMA:Two million. They dress me all up with little
ruffles and sausage curls...

CONNIE:Like Mary Pickford curls. You heard of her?

THELMA:She heard of Mary, Miss Buttinsky. Who the hell
never heard of Mary? Her curls are famous.

CONNIE:Sometimes I was like scenery.

THELMA:In INTOLERANCE for Belshazzar's Feast I posed half
undressed for three days right in the middle of
the fucking Denishawn dancers.

CONNIE:You said you played a boy in INTOLERANCE.

THELMA:I did that too. I was flat as a board.

CONNIE:We were all flat in those days.

THELMA:But I was really flat - no kidding - I was once
married to a wrestler with bigger tits than me.

JANE:Cut.

SCENE EIGHT: **ANNE 26** AND **LOUIS** MEET AT HEARINGS/D.C. 1920

(**ANNE 99** WATCHES, **MAY** ENTERS, SITS)

ANNE 26:Louie, this is not a good place.

LOUIS:We could get rich.

ANNE 26:You're already rich. In Ohio you're a big man.

LOUIS:I need us to be partners, Annie.

ANNE 26:Since I'm fifteen, Louie, I don't have a partner.

I don't need a partner. I make the kinda pictures

I like and so far, knock wood, I'm doing okay.

LOUIS:I'm not. I can't break in to the business here.

Maybe ten years ago when you came but not now.

ANNE 26:I can't help you. (CRAFTS ENTERS AND SITS)

LOUIS:We're family.

ANNE 26:I'm a professional orphan.

ANNE 99:I didn't have to say that.

LOUIS:I'm gonna have to go back to Ohio.

ANNE 38:You sent him away

ANNE 99:I always send everybody away.

HUGHES:(BANGS GAVEL) January 13, 1920. Please everybody sit

down. I'm Dudley M. Hughes. The Committee on

Education of The House of Representatives is

meeting to discuss the re-introduction of the

copyright bill. Mr. Howe of the Motion Picture

Board of Review?

HOWE:Here.

HUGHES:Dr. Crafts of the International Reform Bureau?

CRAFTS:Here.

HUGHES:Hearings start promptly at eight o'clock and finish
ten P.M.

HOWE:We went to a lot of expense and trouble to bring
exhibitors, film makers and distributors from
around the country to testify on our behalf.

CRAFTS:I must have time for rebuttal.

HOWE:And our rebuttal of their rebuttal.

HUGHES:Ten thirty. This bill mandates establishing a
department in the Bureau of Education to be
called the Motion Picture Commission to regulate
motion pictures before they are released.
Reverend?

CRAFTS:The government inspects meat before people eat it to
stop them from getting poisoned. The government
inspects railways for safety before anyone rides.

HUGHES:Keep ten thirty in mind, sir.

CRAFTS:Why then should not the government inspect films
before their release to keep the public safe from
moral poisoning and derailment?

HUGHES:Mr. Howe?

CRAFTS:I'm not done.

HUGHES:I'm sorry.

CRAFTS:My opponents say pre-release inspection is

censorship. I say it is the business of the
 federal government. Thank you.

HUGHES:Mr. Howe, speaking for the opposition.

HOWE:Gentlemen. I have three ways to communicate to you. I speak and you hear. I write and you read, or I make a moving picture and you and twelve million other people go and see my idea. If I say or write something obscene or indecent, immoral or libelous, by law, I am arrested. Arrested after I commit the crime, not before. If this bill becomes law I must submit my picture for approval before it can be made public. Before, gentlemen.

And who's gonna judge? Gods? No, five human beings.

CRAFTS:So, you oppose censorship?

HOWE:Government censorship.

CRAFTS:State censorship?

HOWE:Opposed.

CRAFTS:Municipal?

HOWE:Opposed.

CRAFTS:You demand the right to send any picture that any filmmaker in the United States makes - into any community in the United States. Is that true?

HOWE:It's a free country.

CRAFTS:People of all ages crowding together in feted darkness to be hypnotized by flickering images. Bad for the soul, sir, not to mention the eyes.

HOWE:It's a free country. Anybody can see any picture

after the National Board of Review makes sure the picture won't get us in trouble.

CRAFTS: Trouble, Mr. Howe?

HOWE: Whatta ya got against the pictures?

CRAFTS: Pictures are graphic and overstimulating.

HOWE: Doesn't a picture define what we see and limit it?

CRAFTS: Pictures unleash ungodly impulses of the mind.

HOWE: Are we gonna "pre-inspect" stage plays? It's the same thing.

CRAFTS: It is not, sir. Nowadays every stage play seems to be about safecracking. I don't like safecracking.

HOWE: Who likes safecracking?

CRAFTS: We agree about safecracking but when we buy a theater ticket we buy distance. We only see the suggestion of the crime. Motion pictures assail us with dangerous intimacy. The camera closes in. The criminal's eyes flash with glee. We know what it is to be him! We have as nearly cracked that safe as if we were there. Sir, this is the Devil.

HUGHES: Thank you, Reverend Crafts. Next. Louis Furstmann, a film distributor and exhibitor from Ohio.

LOUIS: Gentlemen, I'm just a middleman. I don't know everything but I know my wife May. That's her over there.

HUGHES:Five to ten Mr. Howe.

HOWE:Mr. Furstmann, please get on with it.

LOUIS:May don't want our children to see what nobody else wants their children not to see but May can't okay every picture so if the National Board of Review says a picture is okay it's okay with me.

CRAFTS:May I ask, sir, about the Ohio censors?

LOUIS:Well, if the Ohio Board goes thumbs down but the National Board gives the okay, the truth is - I don't know who the hell...

ANNE 26:Louie!

CRAFTS:Then one central government body would be best.

LOUIS:I uh suppose so.

ANNE 99:Oh, Louie.

HOWE:Thank you very much Mr. Furstmann. (LOUIS SITS)

HUGHES:Anne First. Independent producer and director. Ten ten. (ANNE 26 AT PODIUM, ANNE 99 IN CHAIR)

ANNE 26:Is the phenomenon of pictures dangerous as Reverend Crafts asserts? I don't think so but I agree it is frightening.

ANNES:The potential sometimes frightens me.

ANNE 26:But does it frighten me more than laying railroad tracks from Washington D.C. to Portland, Oregon; more than illuminating cities after the sun sets; more than the roar of automobile engines drowning out the comforting sound of the horse and wagon?

ANNES: The answer is no.

ANNE 26:We live in a world of change. We fear the loss of moral value and integrity because of change.

ANNES:Accelerating change - a lifetime of change since the turn of the century.

ANNE 26:If I'm afraid it's only because I'm overwhelmed and for that reason I welcome the fear. I make the pictures that matter to me. I make the assumption that I am so usual that what matters to me matters to somebody else. For two bits a man whose life is work and sleep is kindled with wonder. He sees alien people and sees how like they are to him.

ANNES:He sees aspiration and agony and courage and understands himself.

ANNE 26:Who ever expected someone to say, in this country,

ANNES:In our America...

ANNE 26:That words and pictures do harm; that a governing board must tell people what to say or show and what to hear or see? If censorship can be the law in America, the rest of the world is truly lost.

ANNES:If censorship can be the law in America then I may be in the wrong business. (JANE ENTERS)

HUGHES:Ten thirty! (HEARING DISBANDS)

JANE:You really said that?

ANNE 99:I said it. I wrote it. And I kept it in case anyone

ever asked me.

(FOCUS SHIFTS TO **CINDY AND ANNE 28/L.A. 1922**)

CINDY:Miss First, we're ready, but ya have to sign it.

ANNE 28:Sign what?

ANNE 99:The morals clause.

CINDY:The morals clause. Ya can't start filming if ya don't
sign it. I promised the backers.

ANNE 99:The money-men.

CINDY:They said ya don't sign ya don't shoot.

ANNE 28:Where's the goddamn paper?

(WORDS APPEAR ON SCREEN WHILE ANNE 99 SPEAKS)

ANNE 99:"THE ARTIST AGREES TO CONDUCT HIMSELF WITH DUE
REGARD TO PUBLIC CONVENTIONS AND MORALS AND NOT
TO DO OR COMMIT ANY ACT OR THING THAT WILL TEND
TO DEGRADE HIM IN SOCIETY OR BRING HIM INTO
PUBLIC HATRED, CONTEMPT OR SCORN OR RIDICULE
PUBLIC MORALS OR DECENCY, OR PREJUDICE THE
PRODUCER OR THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY IN
GENERAL."

ANNE 28:"No actions in your personal life blah blah.
Comport yourself with high moral blah blah blah.
Goddamn Fatty Arbuckle.

CINDY:He got acquitted.

ANNE 28:Goddamn Mary Pickford.

CINDY:She just wanted to marry Doug Fairbanks.

ANNE 99:America's sweetheart gets a quickie divorce in
Nevada and Hollywood becomes the Sodom of the

west and either Fatty screwed Virginia Rappe or
he didn't but we sure got screwed.

ANNE 28:I'll sign it.

ANNE 99:Stupid.

CINDY:Thanks. I'll take it upstairs. (EXITS)

ANNE 28:In this scene the producer tries to seduce the
young woman who is looking for a job.

THELMA:Do I have lines?

ANNE 28:No Thelma. Mr. Latour, your hand is on her knee.
Tell her about the part you want her to play. She
has to dance around and show her breasts.

LATOURE:My dear, you have to dance around and show your
breasts.

THELMA:Do I say something now?

ANNE 28:No Thelma. Shake your head no.

THELMA:(EMOTING) No! No!

ANNE 28:Just shake your head. (CINDY ENTERS) Mr. Latour,
reach for the buttons on her blouse. Undo the
first button...

CINDY:(ENTERS) Miss First. You can't.

ANNE 28:Go for that second button, Mr...

CINDY:Oh, please stop Miss First. You can't.

ANNE 28:Cut. What is it?

CINDY:The morals clause. You can't. They'll shut you down
Miss First.

ANNE 28:(PAUSE) Take your hand off her leg Mr. Latour.

ANNE 99:And button that damn blouse.

(FOCUS SHIFTS TO **ANNE 99 AND JANE/L.A. 1994**)

JANE:Did they shut you down?

ANNE 99:No.

JANE:You stopped before they could shut you down?

ANNE 99:No.

JANE:You cut the scene so they wouldn't shut you down?

ANNE 99:No.

JANE:So what the hell did you do?

ANNE 99:Why are you butting into the lives of a bunch of
old people you don't give two shits about for the
story of a business that was dead fifty years
before you were born?

JANE:Why are you so absoluteley determined to drop dead
with all your big secrets?

ANNE 99:You're scared because you live in a world that's
changing and you're getting left behind so you
think you'll try the antique business.

JANE:Okay. I did think a bunch of old movie people was a
great angle. I did. I thought I could use you.

ANNE 99:You can't. I'm used up.

JANE:What would happen if you just opened your mouth and
talked? No sneers, no cracks, no cover...

ANNE 38:Just tell her what happened.

(THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER)

ANNE 99:I buttoned all the blouses. I screwed the censors with goddamned metaphor. Trains went into tunnels. Young girls broke pitchers. I worked for ten more years. I stopped for a lotta reasons. I was gonna be forty. The star I thought was in love with me was in love with a script I owned.

JANE:You stopped because of a man?

ANNE 99:You're the first working woman with man trouble? I stopped because the little studios where big things happened were banding together to be big studios where little things happened. I stopped because a guy named Will Hays was gonna be God. I stopped because I used up my talent.

JANE:What the hell does that mean?

ANNE 99:I wasn't good enough.

ANNE 38:The bad review.

JANE:Good enough for what?

ANNE 99:I saw what other people were doing.

ANNE 38:But I was good at what I did.

ANNE 99:Good enough. Good enough as long as we were all just good enough which meant we started and ended on time and made a coupla bucks.

ANNE 38:I was better than that.

ANNE 99:But they got better and some of them got best.

JANE:Who?

ANNE 38: Lois Weber?

ANNE 99:Lois Weber. Alice Blache. D.W. damn Griffith.

They all got better and good old Anne First just stayed goddamned good enough.

JANE:Good old Anne First ran for cover.

ANNE 99:Listen kiddo, maybe there are a few people with great talent who can go on forever but most of us, if we're lucky, get about twenty years. Ya don't start painting till you're forty ya can paint till your dead but I started making pictures when I was seventeen. I just used it up.

JANE:That's crap.

ANNE 99:A good artist has to know what's true. You better practice.

ANNE 38:What's "true?"

ANNE 99:DeMille liked the truth in the Bible and naked ladies. Griffith liked the truth of the old south and teen age girls. Lois Weber loved the truth of issues. I wouldn't know an issue if it reached up and smacked me in the face. I went for comedy. I found truth in the behavior of ordinary people. Coming and going. Shapes and rhythms. Little photos in a big family album. Silent pictures. But how many pictures could I make about the first fifteen years of my life?

ANNE 38:You fell out of love with gesture.

ANNE 99:I never fell in love with sound.

ANNE 38:But you erase everything. Why everything? We did
do something, didn't we?

JANE:Okay. Okay, you weren't Napolean.

ANNES:What?

JANE:You were scared you were just General La Farge.

ANNE 99:Who the hell was General La Farge?

JANE:Exactly. Who the hell was Anne First? Not famous
enough for you. Not serious or profound enough
for you. Only comic. Maybe frivolous. No
politics. No moral lessons. Other people made big
pictures. Colossal stories of life and death.
Two hours, three hours, four hours, sit down on
Friday, don't go home till Tuesday. You wanted
to be them?

ANNE 38:I wanted to be them.

JANE:You didn't stop because you ran out of things to do.
You got scared you weren't doing anything
important enough.

ANNE 38:I wasn't doing anything important enough.

ANNE 99:I had nerve...

ANNE 38:And intuition...

ANNE 99:And raw talent but if I was gonna go on...

ANNES:I needed...something else. More important.

JANE:Why is it so important to be important?

ANNE 99:(TO JANE) Are we talking about me or you?

JANE: (PAUSE) Okay.

(THE ANNES MOVE BACK INTO DARKNESS)

JANE:Okay. Okay. (PAUSE)

OKAY. OKAY. (PAUSE)

OKAY, I GOT HER TO TALK.

I GOT HER TO SAY SHE RAN OUTTA STEAM.

ISN'T THAT GREAT?

BUT WHO WANTS TO HEAR A STORY LIKE HERS?

HELLO BOYS AND GIRLS, THE FUTURE IS LIMITED.

WHERE IS THIS GOING?

WHAT AM I DOING?

OKAY. OKAY.

OKAY, I GOT IT ON TAPE.

A BUNCH OF OLD PEOPLE TOLD ME WHAT THEY DID

I DIDN'T EDIT.

I BOUGHT WHAT THEY SOLD. THEY WERE ONCE YOUNG.

I'M FEELING OLD.

THEY'RE ALL FORGOTTEN. ISN'T THAT ROTTEN?

BUT I'M THE DIRECTOR.

OF WHATEVER THIS IS.

ISN'T THAT GREAT?

WHERE IS THIS GOING?

WHAT DO I DO WITH IT? WHAT HAVE I GOT?

DID I GET WHAT I NEEDED? DO I HAVE ENOUGH?

DO I HAVE AN IDEA?

CAN I MAKE THIS ALL WORK?

AM I NAPOLEAN? WHAT IF I'M NOT?

OKAY. OKAY.

OKAY, IT'S SCARY AS HELL.

I WANNA DO SOMETHING THAT I NEVER DID

BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW.

Okay, they didn't know what they were doing. That sounds

great. Okay, I don't know what I'm doing.

Sounds like shit. Annie didn't get scared till
she did and when she did she stopped. I'm just
scared all the time.

OKAY. OKAY.

OKAY, NOBODY KNOWS

HOW TO DO WHAT THEY DO. NO, NOBODY KNOWS.

SHOULD I TALK TO BEN?

I SHOULD GET HIS ADVICE. DON'T GO RUNNING TO BEN.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND.

I'M JUST GONNA DO WHAT I THINK I SHOULD DO.

IT'S MY FIRST CHANCE.

OR IS IT MY LAST?

ISN'T THIS GREAT?

BUT, WHERE IS THIS GOING? (JANE BEGINS TO EXIT)

SCENE ELEVEN: **CARL LAEMMLE AND LOIS WEBER**/L.A. 1934

LAEMMLE:(ENTERS) Where are you going?

ANNE 38:1934.

LAEMMLE:Long time no see, Lois Weber.

WEBER:I'm in real estate, Mr. Laemmle.

ANNE 38:Managing an apartment building.

ANNE 99:Join the club.

LAEMMLE:Ya picked a good time to get outta the business.

Cost me an arm and a leg to switch over to sound.

Who knows if it will last? That ain't the only
pain in the ass.

WEBER:Will Hays.

LAEMMLE:Sure, Will H. Hays. The H stands for pain in the
ass. After those hearings, remember back in '20?

WEBER:Reverend Crafts.

LAEMMLE:That pain in the ass kicked the bucket and we
thought the censorship crap was off our backs.

WEBER:But you hired Hays for a king's ransom.

LAEMMLE:To police the picture makers.

WEBER:Wink wink.

LAEMMLE:To keep the government outta the way but this week
guess what?

WEBER:I can't imagine.

LAEMMLE:He made all six major studio's sign. We go against
his new list of "do's and don'ts" - we gotta pay

twenty five thousand.

WEBER:Lotta money, Mr. Laemmle.

LAEMMLE:It took thirty years but they finally got us.

WEBER:Always something Mr. Laemmle.

LAEMMLE:You said it. Hey Lois, I got a question for you.

WEBER:What?

LAEMMLE:Ever since I know you I keep asking you to call me
uncle Carl. How come you don't call me?

WEBER:Business. Good luck, uncle Carl, sweetheart. (EXITS)

LAEMMLE:Good luck to you Lois honey. (PHONE RINGS) Hello,
yeah, what? Lois Weber?

(OBITUARY APPEARS ON SCREEN WHILE FIRST ONE READS)

ANNE 38:LOIS WEBER, LONG FORGOTTEN 'THOUGHT FILM' PIONEER,
ONCE THE HIGHEST SALARIED WOMAN DIRECTOR IN THE
WORLD, DEAD AT FIFTY SEVEN. NO SURVIVORS.

LAEMMLE:Oh my God. When? What a shame. A very talented
woman may she rest in peace. What? No money?
Nothing? What a shame. Goodbye. (EXITS)

(JANE, NURSE AND NURSING HOME PEOPLE ENTER)

ANNE 99:What a shame. Goodbye.

ANNE 38:You made that up. You don't know what he said.

ANNE 99:I don't know what he said. I don't know what I
remember. I don't know if I make things up.
Where's Billy?

NURSE:We're almost ready to start the service. The doctor

wants to say a few words.

ANNE 99:Where's Billy? Where's his goddamned T.V.?

JANE:Annie, you know about Billy. You remember.

ANNE 99:If I remembered I wouldn't be yelling my brains
out. Where the hell is he?

NURSE: Billy died over the weekend Miss First and we all
decided to say a few words about Billy today.
It's Wednesday. Now you remember? (DOCTOR ENTERS)

DOCTOR: Well, for sure we are all going to miss Billy. He
was an optimistic fellow and he always gave me
the feeling that...(CONTINUES SPEAKING WITHOUT
SOUND. OBITUARY APPEARS ON SCREEN WHILE FIRST 1
READS)

ANNE 38:WILLIAM FRIEND, CAMERAMAN/DIRECTOR OF 500 LOST
SILENT FILMS, DEAD AT 98.

ANNE 99: Oh, Billy. (MAY ENTERS.

OBITUARY APPEARS ON SCREEN WHILE FIRST 1 READS)

ANNE 38:MARCH 3, 1939.

LOUIS FURSTMANN, JEWISH PHILANTHROPIST, ONE TIME OHIO
PICTURE PALACE MOGUL, DEAD OF HEART FAILURE AT
FIFTY FOUR. SURVIVED BY WIFE MAY, SON NATHAN,
DAUGHTER SOPHIE AND SISTER, ANNE FIRST.

MAY:Louie didn't want a stranger to talk so I'm gonna do it. A synagogue goer he wasn't. He had no love for Rabbis. He useta say there's two kindsa Jews. The "why me?" Jews and the "why not me?" Jews. Louie was a "why not me?" Someone can do this why not me? Someone can get this or make this or think this up why not me? I didn't always appreciate all the whys and the why nots. If I told him a plain story he wanted to know how and who and how and who? It's just a story Louie. I gotta get a lawyer? My Louie. Whatever he made up to do he did it the best. He made up to show the best pictures. He made up to sell candies and do Bingo in between pictures and give a dish to every lady when she came so she keeps coming till she gets a whole set. He made that up!

After the stroke we sold off most of the picture houses. We kept one. The Maytime. The first one. His favorite. He pulled himself together. He put on a tie like a gentleman. I don't know how he made that tie. He never asked for help. He dragged his leg and he held his bad hand in his good hand. He went every day to the picture house. He looked to see the aisles were clean, the children didn't put chewing gum on the seats and he talked with

the customers and he counted the money.

God forbid it didn't come out even. How and who and how and who. He dragged home for lunch and back and back again for supper. Never complained. Every day.

It's true he didn't go to shul. He said his own kinda kaddish for his own parents. But he made up the Furstmann Ohio Educational Alliance and the Furstmann Ohio Maternity Hospital Wing and the Furstmann Ohio Music Center near the school for the children to go to practice with violins and horns and everything. And he made my mother a very rich woman she should rest in peace. Louis was that kinda Jew. I am very proud to be Mrs. Louis Furstmann. Me and my children and Louie's sister Anne First will sit shiva in my house.

(MAY SITS, NAOMI STANDS)

NAOMI: Anne, Annie?

ANNE 45: Naomi. I'm so glad to see you.

NAOMI: I hoped you'd be here.

ANNE 45: I hoped you'd be here. You stopped calling.

NAOMI: Well, the phone works in two directions and anyway me and Ruthie figured you were busy. We got busy too. I'm really sorry about Louie.

ANNE 45: Thank you. Is Ruthie here?

NAOMI:No, she sent her condolences and her love. She hadda go to her oldest daughter. She's gonna be a grandma any minute and she says her daughter is nervous. I think Ruthie is the nervous one.

ANNE 45:So you came by yourself?

NAOMI:No, I came with my roommate Lenny. That's her over there. We have a small house about a half hour from here.

ANNE 99:What are you doing?

NAOMI:In fact I don't have a job right now. In fact I'm living off Lenny. Lenny's a teacher. In fact I'm trying to write a book.

ANNE 99:A book. What is it about?

NAOMI:Us. Ruthie and me and you. If I ever get it done I'll send you a copy.

ANNE 99:She never sent a copy. I woulda read that book.

ANNE 38:You're remembering with me.

ANNE 99:Yeah, and it hurts.

ANNE 38:It's okay Annie, we're together.

ANNE 99:Easy mark. (EXTENDS HAND)

ANNE 38:Pot kettle. (THEY SHAKE HANDS, SHE EXITS)

SCENE TWELVE: **DOCTOR AND NURSE SATO**/L.A. 1994

DOCTOR:She's in a lot of pain.

NURSE:She insists on doing this last interview. I don't
 know whether I should tell her niece or not.

DOCTOR:She's taking the pain killer?

NURSE:She's talking to people who aren't there. She's
 calling me by my grandmother's name and she keeps
 asking if the actors are ready but she wouldn't
 take the painkiller today. Says she wantsa know
 what's happening.

SCENE FOURTEEN: THE INTERVIEW, RETIREMENT HOME/L.A. 1994

ANNE 99:Are we rolling? Do we have sound? Where's Henry?

NURSE:He's coming Miss First.

HENRY:(ENTERS) I'm here, Annie. I'm not dead yet.

PERCY:(ENTERS) Where do you want me?

CONNIE:(ENTERS) Thelma, you're over here with me.

THELMA:(ENTERS) I need a fucking chair.

NURSE:I'll get a chair.

ANNE 99:IN THE OLD DAYS THEY SAID

"COULD YOU DO THIS, HONEY?"

"COULD YOU DO THIS, PAL?"

WE ALL SAID SURE.

PERCY:I SAID "SURE." I CAN DO ANYTHING.

"WE NEED A GO-FER" - I SAID I AM ONE

"WE NEED A DIRECTOR" - I SAID I COULD BE ONE

"WE NEED A WRITER" - I PULLED OUT A PEN

AND THEN I SAID "SURE."

ALL:SURE.

ANNE 99:I SAID "SURE." I CAN GO ANYWHERE.

"ONE SCENE IN PARIS" - I WOULDN'T MIND IT

"TWO WEEKS IN PANAMA" - I BET I CAN FIND IT

"ONE YEAR IN CUBA" - I ONLY ASKED WHEN

AND THEN I SAID "SURE."

ALL:WE SAID SURE.

CONNIE:AT THE STUDIO I HOVERED

THELMA:KEEPING ALL MY BASES COVERED

BOTH:WORKING HERE WORKING THERE

WORKING HARD TO BE DISCOVERED

HENRY:DRAGGED BY A HORSE - OF COURSE

CRASH THROUGH THE ICE - HOW NICE

FALL DOWN THAT HILL - I WILL

DO IT TODAY. OKAY.

All:OHHHKAY.

CONNIE:I SAID "SURE." I CAN PLAY ANYTHING.

"WE NEED A COWBOY" - I SAID YOU GOT ONE

"WE NEED A COUNTESS" -

THELMA:TELL THEM YOU'LL GET ONE

ANNE 99:"WE NEED AN ELEPHANT"

I'LL LOOK IN MY TRUNK AGAIN

CO/TH:AND THEN I SAID "SURE."

HEN/PER:AND THEN I SAID "SURE."

ALL:AND THEN WE SAID "SURE."

SURE!

ANNE 99:Cut! (SILENCE)

PERCY:(TO JANE) You okay?

ANNE 99:Don't you remember what this is like Percy?

JANE:Thank you. That was great. Everybody. I have to admit...I didn't know what I was doing when we started and I...I still don't exactly know but you were great...and I learned from you. I can hardly wait to start editing and look at you all up on the screen...soon as I get a rough cut I'll...

ANNE 99:(INTERRUPTS) Don't take too damned long.

NURSE:(ENTERS) Lunch!

CONNIE:What day is this?

NURSE:Tuesday.

THELMA:Fucking chicken.

PERCY:I hope it doesn't have red sauce.

CONNIE:I really hate the white.

HENRY:Yeah, white's the worst. (THEY EXIT)

ANNE 99:(TO JANE) Don't look at me with my brother's eyes.

JANE:Do I?

ANNE 99:Louie sent you to haunt me, the bastard. You gonna marry whatsisname?

JANE:Ben?

ANNE 99:Eat your cake while ya still got teeth. I'm glad you came.

JANE:Me too. (THEY EXIT IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS)

SCENE FIFTEEN: LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS/L.A. 1995.

STAR:Ladies and gentlemen, we're back at the fifty-third annual Motion Picture Institute Award ceremony. This year's Carl Laemmle Lifetime Achievement Statuette is awarded to Anne First.

(APPLAUSE)

Anne First was one hundred years old on Tuesday. She wanted to be here to accept this award in person but, sadly, on Tuesday night, she passed away. Jane Furstmann, her great great niece, creator of the award winning CD ROM "THE FIRST PICTURE SHOW" wanted to be here as well but she's in Alaska interviewing adult children of Eskimos who were in NANOOK OF THE NORTH for a new CD ROM, NANOOK: DOCUMENTARY OR SNOW JOB.

Accepting this award, tonight, for Anne First will be her great great nephew-in-law Ben Newman.

(APPLAUSE, BEN COMES TO THE PODIUM)

BEN: Last week Anne made a list of things to say. (READS)

Number one: Thank Connie, Thelma, Henry, Percy who are my co-workers, my good friends and the oldest people I know and thank Nurse Sato for keeping us alive.

Number two: I had a lifetime. I had achievement. I even knew Carl Laemmle but I never woulda had an award without Jane and her CD thing.

Number three: Dedicate this award to Billy Friend who made five hundred lost films, and also to all the other lost films and the lost people who made them.

Here's Jane's list: Thank Millenium Dot Com Media but really thank the Women's Film Collective for the money to finish.

Thank Anne for telling me "not to button the damn blouse." Tell them you said "history doesn't happen, something becomes history." I said that? That's good. And Benny honey, (LAUGHS) whatever you do, do not get emotional. You know how you...I'm sorry...I got emotional.

We have a clip from THE FIRST PICTURE SHOW. Jane said let Anne First talk for herself.

(VIDEO STARTS, ANNE 99 IN A CHAIR AT THE HOME)

ANNE 99: Is it on?

JANE:(OFF CAMERA) It's on. Go ahead.

ANNE 99: What? I don't hear you.

JANE:(POKES INTO FRAME) You can start, we're ready.

ANNE 99: Do I look okay?

JANE: You look great. You're sure you're up for this?

ANNE 99: Get me while the getting's good.

JANE:(LEAVES FRAME) Okay. Action.

ANNE 99: My name is Anne First. I was one of the first women producer directors in Hollywood and there were many of us. I want to read you something. I saved this letter for sixty-five years. It's one of the only things I brought with me to this retirement hell hole. (CAN'T UNFOLD LETTER) Goddamit! It's stuck. Jane!

JANE:(JANE STEPS IN AND UNFOLDS LETTER) Okay?

ANNE 99: Good. Get outta here. So this letter was from my friend Gene Gauntier. I know you never hearda her. She was another one like me. Wrote me this letter in 1928 after she got pushed outta the business. I'll read it.

December 16.

"Dear Annie,

So our family of pathfinders disbanded,
as pioneers will do when the long trail is ended. As

settlers in a new land,

some were submerged

while others

went blithely on to the top crest of popularity.

Life never stands still,

nor would we wish it to.

Suffice for us

the memories of that epoch in our lives,

with its joys and its sorrows,

its thrills and adventures,

its affections and achievements.

We would not live through them again,

nor, yet, would we desire

to part with the memories of those days

when we were blazing the trail."

That's it. Hold the camera on me for a minute.

(FOLDS LETTER, SMILES INTO CAMERA) Okay, cut!

(FILM IMAGE IS REPLACED BY A TEXT SLIDE)

SLIDE: IN 1952, AFTER THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS, THE UNITED

STATES SUPREME COURT REVERSED ITS DECISION,

GRANTING MOTION PICTURES CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

THIRD DRAFT

SEPT 97

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(THE END)