

SCENE 1: INT. Actors Theatre of Louisville

VARIOUS ANGLES

CU theatrical lights flash on with ZAPPING electrical sound effects. Empty stage at ATL now a blaze as the last few lights come on. A lone figure -- Arthur Miller in a dark suit -- walks slowly to centerstage.

SCENE 2: INT. ATL THEATER, DAY

Cut to medium shot and slow dolly into CU.

MILLER

I'm Arthur Miller. I've been writing plays for sixty years. Playwriting used to be centered mainly in New York City. That's no longer true, really. Regional non-profit theaters around the country are introducing new plays and discovering new playwrights. And there's a lot of creative activity going on here at Actors Theatre of Louisville and in Chicago and Minneapolis -- and in cities all across the United States.

Short plays commissioned and premiered by regional theater are the focus of this television series. I'm very pleased that my new play, THE RYAN INTERVIEW, has been chosen to be the first of what I hope will be a long series of wonderful dramas on . . . AMERICAN SHORTS.

SERIES TITLE DEVICE FOR AMERICAN SHORTS (Animation)

FADE TO BLACK

MUSIC: ATMOSPHERIC, LONELY, WITH A HINT OF AN OLD IRISH TUNE
MUSIC COVERS INTERCUTS OF DAWN IN CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE

FADE IN

SCENE 3

EXT. GLASS BANK BUILDING (THE THIRD FIFTH BANK)
B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

Highly abstract shot of clouds and sun as it reflects off mirrored glass windows. (Camera set up in open end truck

and slowly moves down street. Shot transferred to slo mo during editing. Wide angle lens preferred.) Zoom back to see entire glass mirrored building looming skyward.

PRODUCTION NOTE: This is not an attractive urban environment, but one inspired by Edward Hopper-like images. A sad, lonely city captured with creative photography -- long lens to compress the environment, Vaseline on lens to distort, chroma-reduction to make things less inviting, faster speed to make shadows move across barren doorways.

SCENE 4

EXT. URBAN SKYLINE, DAWN.

B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

The same sun appears behind the buildings of a large city. It's framed by the shafts of skyscrapers, caged and hemmed-in. (Same camera setup on same street shooting opposite direction.)

SCENE 5

EXT. URBAN SKYLINE, DAWN.

(Looking from Bank building back toward Hyatt Hotel)

B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

Empty city street. A solitary old man (Extra #1) limps toward camera carrying a lunch bag. He is dressed in old work clothes. He looks both ways and crosses the empty street.

(Camera dolly/zooms into a CU shot as he looks both ways. 6' plywood or track on street.)

SCENE 6

EXT. URBAN STREET, DAWN. (Location to be found)

B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

Empty doorway as sun and a man's elongated shadow (Extra #1) moves across it. (Speed up or slo mo in post production.)

TITLE: OPENING CREDITS BEGIN --

American Shorts presents

SCENE 7

EXT. URBAN BUS STATION, DAWN.

B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

The city begins to stir. Camera mounted on open-bed truck dollies past lonely people sitting on benches, waiting for a bus. They look tired, defeated. No one talks to anyone. Some smoke, others gulp coffee from paper cups.

TITLE:

The Ryan Interview

SCENE 8

EXT. URBAN BUS STATION, DAWN.

B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

CU of tired faces looking bored as they wait for the bus. An older woman (Extra #2) looks up, sensing a bus passing.

TITLE:

written by
Arthur Miller

SCENE 9

EXT. URBAN BUS STATION, DAWN.

B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

A crowded bus filled with staring, uninterested people passes by our camera. They look out coldly at the city. (Camera zoom into a city bus during busy day. Slo Mo and reduce chroma during post production)

DISSOLVE

SCENE 10

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE:ELMS FARM -- DAWN, LATE SPRING

B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

The morning sunlight silhouettes a rugged ridge. Everything is peaceful, but with a subliminal sense of expectancy. This feeling is enhanced by emerging BIRDSONG, which increases in volume.

TITLE

WITH

(ACTOR)

SCENE 10

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE:ELMS FARM -- DAWN, LATE SPRING
B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

SKY. Birds flit across the lightening radiance.

TITLE

**AND
(ACTRESS)**

SCENE 11

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE:ELMS FARM -- DAWN, LATE SPRING
B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

RYAN'S YARD

The growing light seems to move over discarded junk -- a refrigerator without a door, a backend of an old car, a large concrete pipe, a steeple from an old church, an old gas pump, signs and other amazing things. The yard is filled with the discards of life. Almost a sculpture garden, stark and bold.

TITLE

**Adapted for television by
IRA SIMMONS
AND
FRED BARZYK**

SCENE 12

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE:ELMS FARM -- DAWN, LATE SPRING
B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

A spider web. The web glistens with dew.

TITLE

**Produced
by
GUY MENDES**

SCENE 13

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE:ELMS FARM -- DAWN, LATE SPRING
EXT. RYAN'S HOUSE

The silhouette of its sloping roof against the eastern sky.
Slow zoom into Ryan's house.

TITLE

**Directed
by
FRED BARZYK**

DISSOLVE as music ends

SCENE 14

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE--BEDROOM, DAWN

CU OLD MAN'S HAND

It slowly moves, hurting from arthritis, then grips the side
of a single bed.

SCENE 15

INT. RYAN'S HOUSE--BEDROOM, DAWN (shot from kitchen)

MEDIUM SHOT

A shadowy man's figure (lit by the sun pouring in from the
morning window) slowly and painfully gets up from bed. The
room is stark and simple.

DISSOLVE

SCENE 16

EXT. OF FREDERICKA ROSE'S APARTMENT BUILDING, DAWN
B ROLL (TO BE SHOT DURING SETUP WEEK)

Pan from the street with morning traffic to the apartment
building. The sun moves across its sleek, slick and sterile
facade.

DISSOLVE

SCENE 17

INT. FREDERICKA ROSE'S APARTMENT, DAWN

Camera explores the apartment: a dimly-lit, disheveled place
with newspapers and magazines stacked on the floor. A
computer quietly weaves a geometric screen saver on its
large color monitor. Camera pans to the modern kitchen which
is a mess with dirty dishes piled up in the sink. The camera

continues its search and finds FREDERICKA ROSE lying on her side in bed, still asleep.

Suddenly her clock radio comes to life with OBNOXIOUS BEEPING. FREDERICKA ROSE sits up in bed. We see that she sleeps in an oversized T-shirt. FREDERICKA shakes her head back and forth, like a punchy prize fighter between rounds. She makes a sound and presses a button on the radio. The music stops. Her hair is wild from sleep. She flops back down in bed, groaning.

SCENE 18

INT. RYAN'S KITCHEN--SHORT TIME LATER

Shadowy figure of old man carefully and slowly washing his face with cold water from an old pan near his kitchen sink. FAINT CROW of a rooster in distance. (Stereo: one track only) Dolly into his wet face hardly visible in the shadows.

SCENE 19

INT. FREDERICKA ROSE'S BATH - SHORT TIME LATER

FREDERICKA ROSE is in a hot shower. Steam emanates from a very modern shower head as she adjusts it. Her bathroom contains the latest and newest contraptions from Sharper Image.

SCENE 20

INT. RYAN'S KITCHEN--SHORT TIME LATER

CU IRON SKILLET

Eggs being scrambled. SIZZLE of scrambling eggs.

SCENE 21

INT. RYAN'S KITCHEN

Shadowy figure of old man pouring his morning coffee into a cracked cup. He has not shaved in days. His eyes water as he looks out the bright window.

SCENE 22

RYAN POV

Country scene from window lit by early morning light.

SCENE 23

INT. FREDERICKA ROSE'S KITCHEN-- SHORT TIME LATER

FREDERICKA, now in her robe, opens the refrigerator--not much in it but a bunch of withered celery and two apples past their prime. Also several packages of "quick and easy" meals. She quickly takes out a measuring cup of yesterday's

coffee and puts it in the microwave. Ambulance SIREN wails down in the street. She walks thru the front room to look out from her apartment's balcony.

SCENE 24

EXT. STREET AS SEEN FROM FREDERICKA ROSE'S WINDOW - MORNING

HIGH-ANGLE, ZOOM INTO ACTION

Looking down on EX-HUSBAND, who is opening the trunk of his parked car. He appears to be in a hurry, as though breaking his routine by making a quick stop on the way to the office. The EX-HUSBAND is young, tall and impressive, dressed in a dark suit. He takes out a good-sized cardboard box. The box is battered and torn, like something stored in an attic. He hurries toward the apartment building.

SCENE 25

EXT. STREET, SHOT FROM STREET TOWARD BALCONY - MORNING

FREDERICKA watches for a moment and then immediately goes into her apartment. (Zoom into balcony during action)

SCENE 26

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING

EX-HUSBAND punches an apartment button displayed by the door.

A few seconds later a scratchy voice speaks from the wall speaker.

FREDERIKA

Yes?

EX-HUSBAND

It's me. I've got your stuff.

The door BUZZES and he enters.

SCENE 27

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY, 8TH FLOOR- SHORT TIME LATER

EX-HUSBAND emerges from elevator and strides toward apartment door. He starts to knock on the door, but then a look of hesitation appears on his face.

SCENE 28

INT. FREDERICKA ROSE'S APARTMENT

FREDERICKA ROSE rushes from her bedroom and heads towards the door. She has done a quick fix-up and looks quite together, no hint of having just pulled herself out of bed. Now she peers through the peephole.

SCENE 29
FREDERICKA ROSE'S POV

Distorted, fish-eye image of Ex-husband with box, trying to decide what to do. His mind is like a corporate board split by warring factions. Part of him wants to see her again, and part of him never wants to see her, part of him fears another argument and part of him is eager to score more points.

SCENE 30
HALLWAY

Ex-husband pauses, then puts down the box, turns and heads for the elevator.

SCENE 31
INT. APARTMENT

FREDERICKA ROSE watching through the peephole, then stepping back with mixed emotions on her face. She's sorry, relieved, still baffled, still angry.

SCENE 32
HALLWAY

The door opens. She looks out cautiously as though expecting to be ambushed. She looks down at the box. She pushes the box inside, nudging it with one foot and then the other as she continues to look up and down the hall suspiciously. She goes inside. The door closes.

SCENE 33
INT.FREDERICKA'S APT. FRONT ROOM

FREDERICKA puts on the box on a coffee table and looks at the contents. There are some clothes, some books, a few photographs. Then she finds a bundle of letters tied by a pink ribbon. She pulls out the bundle, looks at it with a puzzled, disbelieving expression.

SCENE 34
INT. FREDERICKA'S APT. KITCHEN

CU Watermelon Pop Tarts springing from a toaster. Camera pulls back to find FREDERICKA entering the kitchen with the bundle of letters in her hand. She sets the microwave for 15 seconds, picks up the Pop Tart, takes a bite as she sits on a kitchen chair/stool. She undoes the ribbon that holds the

letters together and scans the first letter. Her face softens a little.

SCENE 35

CU LOVE LETTERS

Old love letters, some written in verse and some with little drawings, some decorated with hearts.

SFX: Microwave BEEPS.

SCENE 36

INT.FREDERICKA'S APT. KITCHEN

Another angle. FREDERICKA goes to microwave to retrieve coffee. As she passes the kitchen garbage can she tosses in the letters.

PAN to the letters sitting in the trash.

DISSOLVE

SCENE 37

INT. OF RYAN'S HOME FRONT ROOM

The old man walks slowly through the dark front room and pushes open the screen to the porch. His figure is silhouetted against the bright exterior.

SCENE 38

EXT. RYANS HOME PORCH (Jib shot)

RYAN walks slowly to an old chair on the porch. He sits very slowly. We can see him clearly for the first time. Ryan looks thoughtful, philosophical -- as if to say, "Well, I've lived another day, and here it is." He looks toward the eastern rim of hills. The camera pulls up higher and higher, panning to the country side in full morning glow.

SCENE 39

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY--LATER

FREDERICKA ROSE now dressed for work and rushing off. She wears a stylish business-like outfit, but there's a thrown-together, frenetic quality about her. Newspaper clippings hang from the top of her purse. FREDERICKA runs into OLDER WOMAN who lives in her apartment building. OLDER WOMAN has a shopping cart obviously going off to or coming back from the super market. They nod "hello" to each other, keeping a safe distance.

SCENE 40

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING PARKING LOT--SHORT TIME LATER

FREDERICKA ROSE quickly approaches her car--an older compact, nothing fancy--opens the door, slides in and starts

it up. The motor cranks in a nasty way and finally turns over. She drives off in a hurry.

SCENE 41

EXT. MODERN NEWSPAPER BUILDING--SHORT TIME LATER

Camera tilts down as FREDERICKA locks her car and heads toward the front door. Other people are arriving as the work day begins.

SCENE 42

INT. NEWSPAPER BUILDING, FRONT LOBBY

FREDERICKA ROSE approaches front desk which has many monitors observing various corridors in the newspaper building. She puts her hand in the hand-ID box. (or runs her card through a scanner) A GUARD watches her.

SCENE 43

CU ID SLOT

Hand going in. The ID box doesn't recognize her hand. BUZZER goes off. Camera pulls back to see her frustrated face. She curses softly and starts to go in. Camera arcs around to see GUARD who has a bored, mechanical voice. Dialogue has a muffled, extemporaneous, "overheard" quality.

GUARD

Wait a minute--

FREDERICKA ROSE

You know me--right?

GUARD

Yeah, but the magic box doesn't know you--

FREDERICKA ROSE

But--

GUARD

Why don't you try again?

She tries and the thing BUZZES again.

FREDERICKA ROSE

Can't we pretend it did recognize me?

GUARD

Can't do that--
Let's see some wallet ID.

She stares at him a moment in disbelief, then starts digging in her purse. FREDERICKA ROSE mutters to herself, finally holding up her picture ID card, poses with it next to her face, smiles to match her card expression.

GUARD

Aw right.

SCENE 44

INT. NEWSPAPER AREA NEAR PRINTING PRESSES - MORNING

FREDERICKA walks briskly into a lane between large rolls of paper stacked against the wall. She is briefly joined by another young woman. They nod in greeting, but keep going their separate ways. Camera pans to watch FREDERICKA rush off to work revealing in the background giant newspaper presses.

SCENE 45

INT. MODERN DAY NEWSROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Long dolly shot as FREDERICKA walks to her cubicle. Other reporters are working at their computers. No one talks to each other. She finally arrives at her computer, sits, puts away her purse in the bottom drawer, and checks her E-mail.

SCENE 46

COMPUTER SCREEN (Need camera with adjustable shutter)

"We need your help. See me regarding
an interview for today.

-- Marty"

SCENE 47

INT. NEWSROOM -

Long dolly as FREDERICKA walks to REGIONAL EDITOR'S office. FREDERICKA enters and is in conversation with the REGIONAL EDITOR -- indicated by a title on the glass wall. His office has glass walls and resembles an aquarium.

Different CU angle.

REGIONAL EDITOR is talking and she listens. We are on the outside and can only hear bits of the conversation. A reporter has set up an interview for today. That reporter is sick, and FREDERICKA has to do it because the paper needs to have the story in tomorrow. The editor is older, a seasoned editor. Now he and Fredericka walk to the door. He is delivering a glib pep talk in a half-mocking monotone. FREDERICKA is given a copy of a letter sent to Ryan, a piece of paper with directions and a phone number and a clip from a little weekly newspaper out in the country. FREDERICKA

leaves the office, looks at the stuff and frowns -- clearly disappointed to have to do such a stupid little feel-good puff-piece.

SCENE 48

FREDERICKA ROSE'S DESK--SHORT TIME LATER

She sits at her cluttered desk. The cork wall beside her desk has clippings and pictures -- crazy stories or stupid polls or photographs of pompous officials to which she has added dialogue balloons containing obscene declarations. There is also a gardening clip with "breeding roses" is the headline. The stuff the Regional Editor gave her tells us what's going on. His typed note says:

"100-year-old man in the sticks. For tomorrow, give us a Millennium quickie. 20 inches on his hopes, dreams and fears -- his whole take on this silly century. Make it sing!"

The newspaper clipping is a column of small-town chit-chat with the headline,

"Mr. R.T. Ryan to Observe Hundredth Birthday."

FREDERICKA stares at a state map, trying to figure out where the hell this Ryan character lives. She looks at the information sheet and decides to call to confirm the interview. Dials his number. As she waits for someone to answer the phone, she pulls out a small tape recorder and some blank tapes. No answer. She hangs up.

SCENE 49

PHOTO DESK

FREDERICKA ROSE with PHOTO EDITOR. The PHOTO EDITOR is a grumpy old soul. He digs in cabinet and gives her a camera. She is already pocketing some rolls of fast film. She looks at the camera critically. We overhear some extempore dialogue.

DISSOLVE

SCENE 50

EXT. CITY STREET--SHORT TIME LATER (Location to be found)

FREDERICKA ROSE in her car fighting traffic.

She now drives through a series of roads which become more and more country, the roads getting smaller and smaller.

SCENE 51

COUNTRY ROAD--LATER (Location to be found)

Two lanes of worn asphalt shimmering as the day grows warmer. The road is surrounded on both sides by meadows and patches of woods, a few houses. BIRDSONG and INSECT BUZZ.

SCENE 52

SMALL COUNTRY ROAD--LATER (Location to be found)

FREDERICKA ROSE'S car comes down the empty road, then stops. FREDERICKA looks around, clearly puzzled and lost. She takes out her map, decides to cross over bridge onto a smaller road. She resumes driving.

SCENE 53

ROAD OUTSIDE OF ELM'S FARM--LATER (Jib shot)

FREDERICKA'S car sways down small country road, passes through the frame and disappears. The camera holds for a few seconds and then her car backs up into frame. She gets out, checks the mail box number, and then opens an old wooden gate which leads to a gravel road. She gets in car and drives over the bumpy road in front of a cloud of dust. Camera pulls up and reveals a deserted and weed covered field.

SCENE 54

MED. SHOT, FENCE--SHORT TIME LATER (Jib shot)

The car approaches a rusting wire fence or some other large unmoveable object. She gets out of car taking her camera, tripod, hand bag, tape recorder and pad and pencil. A hand-lettered sign is tacked to a post: "KEEP OUT -- Ryan." FREDERICKA stands by the sign and suddenly sneezes violently. She coughs, clears her throat. Then she looks up and blinks her eyes.

SCENE 55

FREDERICKA ROSE POV

RYAN'S farm house with a porch wrapped around it lies across the field. In the hazy light, the house has an ephemeral, dream-like quality. In the field between her and house sit the massive hulks of Ryan's junk.

SCENE 56

MED. SHOT FENCE.(Jib shot)

She ignores the sign and steps over the sagging fence or around the large object. Camera pans as she walks over to a stone wall.

SCENE 57
GRAVEYARD

Camera dollies past old gravestones. In background we see FREDERICKA enter the graveyard. She takes pictures of the graveyard and tombstones for her article.

SCENE 58
CU OF GRAVESTONE

On this gravestone a hand points up to Heaven.

SCENE 59
EXT. OF GRAVEYARD (Jib shot)

FREDERICKA leaves the graveyard and heads toward the house. She passes the first of the junk pieces in the yard. She sneezes again, coughs.

SCENE 60
JUNK IN YARD IN FRONT OF RYAN'S HOUSE

FREDERICKA walks past the junk -- old bathtubs, sinks, bicycle wheels and handlebars -- parts of tractors, cars and boats. It's the refuse of a century. (Long dolly shot)

SCENE 61
MONTAGE OF JUNK

Dolly shot revealing delicate close-ups of junk -- metal curves and scrollwork, trademarks of long-forgotten companies, etc. Sound of more SNEEZING from FREDERICKA.

SCENE 62
RYAN'S HOUSE (Continuation of Sc. 60)

FREDERICKA ROSE walks toward the house, looking back at the junk as the sun beats down on her. She opens a gate of his old wooden fence and enters his front yard which is clear of junk.

SCENE 63
RYAN'S HOUSE (Another angle)

Wide shot as she enters the yard. There is a small garden, some rabbits in a cage, a old tree trunk that has fallen, and on the porch are some chairs, a table, a bed, etc. The house is falling apart, no repairs have been done for many years.

However, it is at least orderly in its distressed state. (Dolly shot over fence, zoom into FREDERICKA as she approaches house.)

SCENE 64
 FREDERICKA'S POV...PORCH

The camera approaches the front porch. We now see that the old man is in his chair, eyes closed, head down. Is he dead? Asleep?

SCENE 65
 YARD IN FRONT OF RYANS HOUSE

CU of FREDERICKA as she approaches the house. Her face is etched in fear as she approaches the old man.

FREDERICKA ROSE
 Mr. Ryan?..... Mr. Ryan?

SCENE 66
 RYAN'S FRONT PORCH

Mr. Ryan does not move. She approaches him gently afraid of what she has discovered.

FREDERICKA ROSE
 Hello....Mr. Ryan?

Mr. Ryan doesn't move. She gathers up her strength and she touches his hand to see if he is alive. Suddenly his eyes open. He does not say anything. She looks relieved that he is not dead.

FREDERICKA ROSE
 Thank God! I'm sorry if I startled you....
 I didn't mean to sneak up on you.. I mean...

Ryan looks at her with great curiosity. He doesn't get many visitors, and never one like this one. He just looks at her. She now tries to respond as a newspaper reporter..

FREDERICKA ROSE
 (loud)
 I'm Fredericka Rose. I'm a newspaper reporter.

Ryan gives her a look that says, "Well, good for you." She gestures with her notebook at the tape recorder and camera. Then she extends her hand. They shake hands.

FREDERICKA ROSE
 (very loud)
 I'd like to thank you for agreeing to
 talk to us, Mr. Ryan.

He leans back a little from her voice, to indicate his hearing isn't as bad as she presumes it to be.

RYAN

I never mind talking.

Ryan's voice is reedy, but edged with ironic humor. He sits in his chair and gives her an appraising look. He never minds talking -- that was a generic statement -- but he can't think of why a newspaper reporter named FREDERICKA ROSE would call on him. He doesn't know what this is all about, but it's surely interesting.

FREDERICKA fidgets with her tape recorder. He gestures to a chair.

RYAN

What'd you want to ask me?

She sits, puts her tape recorder on the table, glances down at her notes and opens her mouth for the first question--but Ryan interrupts.

RYAN

I didn't know they had ladies doing this.

The FREDERICKA ROSE swallows her question, stiffens a little.

FREDERICKA ROSE

Oh there are lots of us, yes. Do you mind?

RYAN

No, I don't mind--I worked down a lot of basements but never inside the house. That's women's work. But I guess that's all changed by now -- go ahead, I'm not due anywhere.

The FREDERICKA ROSE gathers her thoughts, tries to begin, but Ryan breaks in again.

RYAN

This is my hundredth birthday, you know.

FREDERICKA ROSE

Yes, I know. That's why we thought of interviewing you. We wrote you a letter.

Ryan thinks, looks back at the FREDERICKA ROSE, scratches his head--he smiles, a little embarrassed.

RYAN

I guess I have it on my bureau. Is this going to be in the paper?

FREDERICKA

Oh yes. You don't mind, do you?

RYAN

Well, I guess it won't do any harm. I lost my glasses, but I'll read the letter some other time.

FREDERICKA ROSE nodding.

RYAN

You're probably surprised I'm a hundred.

FREDERICKA

You certainly don't look it.

RYAN

I got stuck at sixty and never looked any older. When I was seventy they thought I was sixty, when I was eighty and ninety they still took me for sixty. But I sure feel like a hundred. You got any idea what it feels like to be a hundred?

The FREDERICKA ROSE hesitates, seems to be uncomfortable not to be the one asking questions.

FREDERICKA

That's one of the things I wanted to ask you.

RYAN

Well, there's nothing like it. Not even ninety-nine.

FREDERICKA

Could you describe it?

RYAN

Well, let me see.

Ryan thinks a moment -- 2, 3 seconds tick by -- he's really thinking.

RYAN

No, I don't guess I could--you can ask me more if you like I'm not due anywhere.

FREDERICKA ROSE pauses, then continues brightly.

FREDERICKA
Gonna have a party?

Ryan smiles gently.

RYAN
Oh, no, they're all dead and gone.

Awkward pause, and then she presses on.

FREDERICKA
You were never married, I understand.

RYAN
Never met anybody who'd have me.

FREDERICKA
Why not? Even now you're a good-
looking man.

RYAN
I was always good-looking, but to
tell you the truth, women mostly
made me nervous.

FREDERICKA
Really. Have you any idea why?

RYAN
Well, let's see.

Nope.

FREDERICKA
But there must be some reason.

RYAN
I always thought they was . . .
peculiar.

FREDERICKA
In what way?

RYAN
(pauses, smiles)
Oh, I don't know--the usual way
How about you?

FREDERICKA

Well, no, not really. I mean, no, I'm not. I mean, I was until a few months ago. So I'm still not used to saying I'm not married, I mean.

RYAN

I didn't mean--

FREDERICKA

No, no, that's okay.

A little exasperated, FREDERICKA ROSE clears her throat and shifts directions.

FREDERICKA

Could I ask you about the area? This was mostly farmland, wasn't it?

RYAN

That's right, they mostly made milk. And apples, too, and pears. Sheriden had the big orchard. But it was mostly pasture and milk.

FREDERICKA

And did you ever farm?

RYAN

I worked for farmers, but never run a place of my own, no.

FREDERICKA

How come? I'm told your family once owned thousands of acres.

RYAN

That's right, six thousand more or less. . . . I had five sisters, you see.

FREDERICKA

I don't understand.

RYAN

Well everytime they wanted a new hat they'd sell a couple hundred acres . . .

Ryan relates this cheerfully, as though it were totally logical.

RYAN

. . . We ended up with a whole heap of hats but all I've got left is this

three acres I'm settin' on.

Ryan stares at her sharply.

RYAN

Who'd you rather work for, Jew or
I-talian?

FREDERICKA hesitates.

FREDERICKA

I have no idea. Who would you?

RYAN

Jew. Jew'll pay you.

FREDERICKA

I'm Jewish.

RYAN

Oh? Well, no offense. You couldn't
help it.

FREDERICKA

I guess you're of Irish descent.

RYAN

I guess so--my name's Ryan.

FREDERICKA

I believe your people first came here
around the potato famine of 1848?

RYAN

No, before that--the regular famine.

Ryan sighs and abruptly gets up, slowly heading for the front door. FREDERICKA watches him for a moment with a puzzled expression.

RYAN

Time for my morning snack.

She gets up and follows him inside the house, taking her camera, purse, tape recorder, pad and pencil.

SCENE 67

INT. HOUSE, FRONT ROOM

RYAN moves slowly through the sparsely filled room.
FREDERICKA follows, looking around at the small,

irregularly-shaped door and the other odd details of the house. She notices a framed photograph of young Ryan and his family sitting on the fireplace mantel.

SCENE 68

PHOTOS ON MANTEL

(B roll shot on Friday before shoot)

Pan this and other photos on the mantel. The melody of an OLD SONG is heard in the background as if played on an old phonograph.

SCENE 69

RYAN'S KITCHEN

Ryan has taken down two cups and placed them on the table along with some dried apples and crackers. FREDERICKA enters the kitchen loaded down with her paraphernalia.

RYAN

Help yourself. Coffee?

FREDERICKA

Yes . . . that would be nice.

Ryan brings the coffee pot to the table and pours. They both sit at the old kitchen table. FREDERICKA sets up her tape recorder again. She clears her throat and puts on her business-like expression, determined to take charge of the interview.

FREDERICKA

I understand you worked right into your nineties. What were you doing?

RYAN

(deadpan)

That would depend on who was watchin'.

She stares at him, not understanding what he means.

RYAN

After the farms give out I mowed lawns for the city people, rakin' leaves come Fall. Last few years I mostly worked for Doctor Campbell--first house bottom of the hill.

FREDERICKA

You suppose I could talk to him?

RYAN

(deadpan)

You could try but he died three years ago.

(lowers his voice)

Won't be missed.

FREDERICKA

Oh . . . He treat you badly?

RYAN

Campbell never treated anybody. He was tighter than a witch's . . . well, no use goin' into that.

FREDERICKA pauses, tries to figure out where to take the interview.

FREDERICKA

I'm interested in how it was, living here fifty years ago. Could you talk about that?

RYAN

Fifty wasn't too different; seventy was, though, eighty, ninety . . .

FREDERICKA

You can remember ninety years ago?

RYAN

Sure I do, what do you want to know?

FREDERICKA

Well . . . for instance--I suppose these roads were all dirt.

RYAN

Oh yes--they only paved the State Highway in 1932, 33 . . . that was the WPA. My brother worked on that.

FREDERICKA

And how did you get to town when it snowed--there were no plows then, were there?

RYAN

Never bothered with the roads once it snowed; you went right across country with the horses. It was quicker. Had to bring the milk to town every three days, y'see.

FREDERICKA

But in really deep snow?

RYAN

You'd start up here and shovel out in front of the horses till you got to the woods. Snow never gets real deep in the woods.

FREDERICKA

How far'd you have to shovel?

RYAN

Depends--half a mile, mile.

FREDERICKA

God! Takes about thirty minutes to town now, how long'd take you then?

RYAN

In Winter?--about four, four and a half hours. But comin' back up was faster, bein' you had your path all cut.

FREDERICKA

Bet you were hungry when you got down there.

RYAN

Well, you might carry a chunk of smoked bacon in your pocket. --Might not, though.

FREDERICKA

That's very interesting.

RYAN gets up and takes both coffee cups to the sink even though she hasn't finished.

RYAN

Time to feed the rabbits.

He takes an old coffee can and heads back outside. FREDERICKA picks up all her stuff again and follows him.

SCENE 70
 RYAN'S FRONT PORCH.

RYAN opens the front door and heads to the rabbit hutch in his front yard. FREDERICKA follows, dropping her camera and purse on the table. (Long dolly shot)

FREDERICKA
 --I notice you have quite a bit of junk out front there.

RYAN
 Oh no, that's not junk, that's just nothing.

SCENE 71
 CUTAWAY OF YARD, JUNK
 (B Roll done on Friday before shoot)

SCENE 72
 FRONT YARD NEAR RABBIT HUTCH (continuation of Sc. 70)

RYAN
 I used to have real junk, but I got to where I couldn't lift. Anyways, the State Police give me so much trouble I had to give it up.

FREDERICKA
 Why'd they give you trouble?

RYAN
 Well, you supposed to have a license to sell junk, especially auto parts.

FREDERICKA
 Couldn't you get one?

RYAN
 Never tried; don't believe in it. Never wanted the Government to have my name. They wanted me to mow lawns for the school one time, but I'd have had to put my name down for social security. Next thing they'd be comin' around for income tax or something.

FREDERICKA

You're really not on any government form?

RYAN

Nope. U.S. government don't know I exist. Not the FBI, not the CIA; here I've been around a hundred years and none of them even knows I was born.

FREDERICKA

Well, that's . . . kind of wonderful.

They arrive at the rabbit hutch and RYAN feeds them.

RYAN

Dr. Campbell used to say he'd have done the same thing if he'd thought of it in time. Well . . . I thought of it in time.

FREDERICKA

Don't you believe in any tax?

RYAN

Well, let's see.

Can't think of any.

FREDERICKA

Tell me, were you in any of the wars?

RYAN rests on the tree trunk after the long walk to the rabbit hutch.

RYAN

Nope, missed every one of them. I was always too young or too old. But you might have heard what old man Cartwright said--

(points north)

--he had that big farm on the North side of Route . . .

(realizes)

Well, it's gone now, but it was way back in the woods, y'see . . .

FREDERICKA

What did he say?

RYAN

Well, the first War had just started--
back in . . . was that 1914?

FREDERICKA

Yes, the First World War.

RYAN

Yes, well, Cartwright had only come down
into town every couple of months or so, and
this time he stepped off his wagon in front
of the store and met a fella and they got
talking and the fella said, "Ain't it a
terrible thing the way they're killing each
other by the thousands over there in Europe?"
And old man Cartwright says, "What are they
doin' that for?" And the fella says, "Haven't
you heard?--they've got a world war goin' on
over there."

Well, old Cartwright looks up in the sky--
it was a beautiful summer's morning, and
not a cloud up there, and not too hot
either, and he says, "Well, they've got
a nice day for it!"

RYAN chuckles and heads back to the porch. FREDERICKA
follows with an involuntary smile on her face.

FREDERICKA

It must have been pretty isolated up here
in those days . . . did it seem that way
to you?

RYAN

Personally? I don't know--

RYAN stops to recall an event.

RYAN

--I tell you, my best friend for a long
time when I was a young fella was Fred
Thompson, used to live over there by
Haven's Bridge? And he was a couple of
years older and they took him for the
first War. And when he come back I asked
him, and he'd been to New York and France
and all over . . . and he said I hadn't
missed much.

RYAN continues his walk.

FREDERICKA

But you must have felt some attraction for

the city as a young man.

RYAN

I went to _____ once, but there was
no place to sit down.

FREDERICKA

But didn't you want to see shows in the
city? And what about the women there?
Weren't you curious?

RYAN stops again.

RYAN

Well I don't think I can say a thing
like this in front of a woman.

FREDERICKA

Don't be shy, go ahead.

RYAN

Well, they used to say they was all
dancers, the women in New York City.

FREDERICKA

Dancers?

RYAN

Dance on one foot, then dance on
the other and make a living between
them--

FREDERICKA stops smiling, a little grossed-out in spite of
herself.

RYAN

--Sorry, I didn't mean any offense . . .

FREDERICKA ROSE

(a bit rigid)

Well, I asked you to tell me and you
did.

RYAN continues his walk to the porch.

FREDERICKA

What about newspapers . . . did you
get to read any?

RYAN

Oh, every few days.

RYAN climbs up onto the porch, tired. He moves to a chair to sit down, placing the coffee can next to him.

RYAN

Of course I got up to _____ more often in later years when I was selling my junk there, and I did see one or two of those old fashioned shows they had there.

FREDERICKA

What do you mean?

RYAN

Well, you know--where these actors come on the stage and talk.

FREDERICKA

You mean not-movies.

RYAN

The old-time shows.

SCENE 73

RYAN'S PORCH

The scene continues as the two are seated.

RYAN

I see one or two when I bring my junk up to _____.

--Had a awful time avoiding the cops, though. But one day . . . I was in my eighties then, or just about . . . and I had this great big Oldsmobile rear end sticking out the back of my trunk 'cause it was too long to get into the car. And I stopped at the store for a loaf of bread, and when I come out this State Cop, John Burnside, is standing behind the car looking down at this rear end . . . naturally he knew I didn't have no license for auto parts. And I come to get into the car, and he says, "Hya Bob," and I said, "Hya John," and he says, "Nice Day," and I said --"It was."

(Laughs)

And that was the end of my junk business.

FREDERICKA

NOTE: SHOULD CUT FIRST LINE

*I'm trying to visualize the area
without so many houses up here--
What'd you used to see from this
porch?*

RYAN

Well, Isaacson's farm was down
there about a mile and nothing
between here and his barns; and
Jonas Bean's place was out that
way but you couldn't see it
through the trees fire
a rifle pretty near anywhere
and no danger to anybody. I
made my living hunting fox
through World War II. Four
dollars a skin.

FREDERICKA

How many could you get in a day?

RYAN

Many as three a night, maybe--hunt
at night for fox: in fact, I was
walkin' down that road out there
one night looking for fox: and I
had this bright moon, and I remem-
ber thinking how they were bombing
London at the time especially when
the moon was bright--and I hears
this sawing.

FREDERICKA

Sawing?

RYAN

That's right---zim, zim, zim--and
I come around the pond up there,
and it's gettin' closer. Who
could be sawing wood in the middle
of the night? And then I see this
Polack in the moonlight, sawing off
this horse's head right there in
the middle of the road.

FREDERICKA

Good God--why!

RYAN

Well, it'd dropped dead and he had
no horse or tractor to move it
with, so he cut it up for his pigs.

FREDERICKA
And where was this?

RYAN
Opposite the pond, where that piano
player lives

SCENE 73A
CUTAWAY OF A LARGE HOUSE ALONG THE COUNTRY

NOTE: SHOULD CUT HER RESPONSE. HOW WOULD SHE KNOW IF SHE HAD
GOTTEN LOST COMING OUT HERE?

FREDERICKA
Sokolow's house!

SCENE 73B
Continuation of scene of two on porch.

RYAN
*Well yes, but it was no mansion
like it is now . . . the Polack
kept pigs under the porch.*

FREDERICKA
No pigs under that porch now.

RYAN
Oh, no pigs allowed at all in
town. No roosters either,
y'know--liable to wake people
up before noon.

Ryan chuckles in reminiscence.

RYAN
I don't know why it reminds me,
but just up the road from there
Bruce Tynan had his farm. And
he decided to get married when
he turned sixty. His father
was Charley, about in his eighties
then and ate nothin' but smoked
oysters . . . had no teeth, y'see.
Old Charley stank a lot,
specially in summer carryin'
those oysters around in his pocket,
but that's here nor there. But
old Bruce got married and one
weekend he had this shivaree . . .

FREDERICKA

What's a shivaree?

RYAN

Don't know a shivaree?

FREDERICKA

I never heard the word

RYAN

Wedding celebration. It goes on
. . . well, till everybody drops out.
They kept going a night and a day
and on the second night . . . Bruce
was kind of proper, you know, went
to church and all . . . makin' up
for all the men he killed in the
first War. And I turned around,
and my arm knocked over this bottle
of whiskey, and old Bruce stood
there lookin' at this puddle on
the floor, and he says,

(Gruffly)

"I'd rather see a church burn than
waste good whiskey."

(Laughs, shaking
his head)

Old Bruce . . .

FREDERICKA

And what about church, were you reli-
gious?

RYAN

Well, my father was in the Winter.

FREDERICKA

Only in the Winter?

RYAN

Well, there was too much to do in
the good weather
One winter was so cold--before I
was born, this was--my father
didn't show up in church four
or five Sundays so they sent
up a committee to see if there
was something wrong . . . And when
they got there they found my
grandfather laid out in the front
parlor.

He'd been dead for three weeks
but the ground was frozen three
feet down and my father couldn't

dig a grave.

FREDERICKA

It must have been pretty cold in your house.

RYAN

Oh, you could say that.

FREDERICKA

Still, it sounds like a pretty good life around here.

Ryan looks wistfully at his junk-strewn yard.

RYAN

Well, we certainly had a lot of characters. There was somebody peculiar in darn near every house. Maybe there still is but I don't know them anymore . . . Like old Stanley Beach, who ran the general store . . . This woman . . . Russel Pound's widow . . . they were well-to-do, and she always had to have her stuff delivered. This was way back before the first War, and I was a young fella and I'd worked for Beach now and then when he was short-handed . . . And one morning she comes in--Russel Pound's widow --and orders a spool of sewing thread. And Stanley Beach says, "Will that be all?" And she says, "Yes. Will you deliver it?" And Beach says, "Why certainly, Mrs. Pound, I'd be happy to."

Well, she leaves, and he goes out to his team, those horses must've been fifteen hands high, and hitches them to his big lumber wagon that was at least twenty feet long--they used to carry logs to the sawmill on it--

RYAN

and then he sets the spool on

the wagon bed and drives up to her house and doesn't he back that enormous wagon right up to her front door; and he knocks and she comes and opens it and he sort of raises his arm up toward the spool and says, "Where do you want it?"

FREDERICKA reacts warmly to this story.

RYAN

I don't know why, but you just don't hear things like that anymore.

FREDERICKA looks over and sees her tape recorder cassette needs to be flipped over. But she just turns off the recorder.

SCENE 74

ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE PORCH.

She stands and walks to the porch's edge and stares into the distance.

FREDERICKA

Tell me, Mr. Ryan, when you look out at all the cars going up and down the road out there, and all the people around . . . what goes through your mind?

RYAN

Tell you the truth, I do wonder sometimes--being there's so many of them . . . and they're movin' so fast.

I wonder how they get to meet anybody.

She slowly turns and smiles at Ryan. She picks up her camera.

FREDERICKA

May I?

RYAN

Don't bother me none.

She takes several pictures as RYAN sits and poses.

FREDERICKA
 Would you mind if I took a
 picture of us together?

RYAN shakes his head no. She sets her camera on the table and then arranges her chair next to his. RYAN watches her preparations. She sets the timer on her camera, then runs back to the other chair.

FREDERICKA points straight ahead, toward the unseen camera lens, then smiles broadly and takes RYAN'S arm.

RYAN looks at her in mild surprise, then copies her smile and turns toward the camera. ZZZT of camera shutter as

FREEZE FRAME

ZZZT of camera.

FREDERICKA (VO)
 Happy Birthday, Mr. Ryan . . .

RYAN (VO)
 Thank you.

DISSOLVE

SCENE 75

RYANS FRONT YARD, NEAR FENCE- SHORT TIME LATER

FREDERICKA with her equipment, is about to go to her car. RYAN has walked her to his gate to say goodbye.

FREDERICKA
 Thank you again . . . and goodbye.

They shake hands. She starts to leave, but his question stops her.

RYAN
 Will this really be in the paper?

FREDERICKA
 (smiling)
 Most of it.

Then she leans toward him; reaches out, touches his face and kisses him firmly on the cheek. She steps back, then abruptly turns and walks purposefully down the road. RYAN

watches her go with a thoughtful, neutral expression. (Dolly into ECU of his face as he thinks about his 100th birthday)

SCENE 76

CU RAIN FALLS IN THE CITY -- NIGHT
(B Roll to be shot sometime in April)

SCENE 77

WIDE SHOT OF RAIN IN THE CITY--NIGHT
(B Roll to be shot sometime in April)

SCENE 78

INT. NEWSROOM--LATER THAT NIGHT

FREDERICKA working at her computer, starting to write her story of the interview. There are no other reporters in the room.

SCENE 79

FREDERICKA'S COMPUTER SCREEN (need camera with adjustable shutter)

Words quickly appear on the screen, forming a paragraph. Then the curser skips a few lines. Another paragraph takes shape. FREDERICKA is trying out leads for her story, comparing different versions. She's looking for the perfect way into the story, something that will set the right mood.

We see some of the reporter's words -- "amazing junk -- bathtubs, wheels, etc. bits of the century piled up. but he also collects memories -- a resource . . . witness of a past age . . . "

SCENE 80

LAYOUT DESK

FREDERICKA continues to work at her computer. We hang on this shot as she relives all of the events and her emotions. Some how this man has made a difference to her and her life.

SCENE 81

EDITOR'S COMPUTER SCREEN

The photos FREDERICKA took appear on a computer screen. Ryan by himself, RYAN and FREDERICKA together. The un seen Editor manipulates the images, plays with ideas for the layout.
Someone types in a tentative headline.

SCENE 82

ANOTHER ANGLE OF FREDERICKA AT COMPUTER

Long dolly in as FREDERICKA thinks. She's not looking at the screen, but gazing at some interior scene, a memory

inside her head. A smile flickers across her face, then fades. Finally she starts typing with energy. We again hear the OLD SONG song that played in Ryan's front room when we looked at the photos on the mantel.)

SCENE 83
CU SCREEN

Sections of the story appear:

"He collects junk.

Old bathtubs and pieces of cars. Bicycle wheels and rusted bedframes. Products of long-forgotten companies, shards of a passing century.

He also collects bits of wisdom.

Observations made over a long life, fragments of conversations, memories of a lost time.

Bob Ryan turned one hundred yesterday. He greeted the dawn of that birthday as he meets every new day, from the front porch of his home near _____, the family house that was more than a century old when he was born.

"Fifty years ago wasn't too different," said Ryan.

"Seventy was, though, eighty, ninety . . ."

DISSOLVE.

SCENE 84
EXT. OF NEWSPAPER BUILDING - RAINY NIGHT
(B Roll to be shot in April)

At night, thru the rain covered glass windows, we see the giant newspaper presses churning out the morning paper.

SCENE 85
INT. NEWSPAPER BUILDING, NEAR GIANT PRESSES - NIGHT

FREDERICKA, now dressed in casual clothes and a yellow rain slicker walks past the presses and heads to where the papers are being assembled.

SCENE 86
INT. NEWSPAPER, PRESS AREA - NIGHT

Montage of presses running. RYAN'S picture is seen going by on lots of different pages.

SCENE 87
INT. NEWSPAPER, PRESS AREA -- NIGHT

ROAR of presses growing louder. FREDERICKA pulls one of the first papers off the presses. She reads quickly, with a smile on her face.

DISSOLVE

SCENE 88
RYAN'S JUNK YARD -- RAINY NIGHT

The junk yard again, this time at night and in the rain. FREDERICKA makes her way past the junk. (Long dolly shot with fire department. Need cover for people and equipment.)

SCENE 89
COVER OF RYAN'S HOME-- RAINY NIGHT

FREDERICKA'S POV as the camera moves toward the porch. There are no lights on inside. The area is lit only by "moonlight."

SCENE 90
RYAN'S PORCH--RAINY NIGHT
(This will be shot during day, need black tent over porch area)

FREDERICKA comes onto the porch and places the first copy of the newspaper on his porch chair. Her yellow slicker glistens from the rain.

SCENE 91
CU FREDERICKA ROSE'S NOTE AND NEWSPAPER

"I'M AS 'PECULAR' AS ALL THE OTHERS, MR. RYAN.
BUT I'M VERY GRATEFUL TO HAVE MET YOU. HAPPY
ONE HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY!

-- FREDERICKA ROSE"

SCENE 92
RYAN'S PORCH-- RAINY NIGHT
(Continuation of Sc. 90)

She quickly leaves. Camera tilts up to the darkened windows. From behind a window, a pair of eyes looks out, watching FREDERICKA leaving.

SCENE 93
RYAN'S JUNK YARD -- RAINY NIGHT
(Continuation of Sc. 88)

FREDERICKA hurries through the rain and disappears into the darkness and rain.

SCENE 94

RYAN'S PORCH-- RAINY NIGHT

(same as Sc. 90 and Sc. 92)

RYAN appears on the dark porch, picks up the paper. He puts on his glasses, the ones he lost earlier. He reads the note, looks at the photo and story about himself. The camera dollies into his face. He turns slowly and goes into the house. A single light goes on inside.

SCENE 95

EXT. RYAN'S HOUSE--RAINY NIGHT

FREDERICKA'S car moves out splaying headlights through the rain.

SCENE 96

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- RAINY NIGHT

Her car lights move across the tombstones.

SCENE 97

EXT. GRAVEYARD--RAINY NIGHT

CU of tombstone with hand pointed to the sky. The car headlights disappear but the night light illuminates the glistening tombstone.

DISSOLVE

SCENE 98

EXT. RYAN'S HOME -- RAINY NIGHT

Cover of the house in the rain with one window glowing. Slow zoom back revealing the large junk pieces in the yard.

ROLL CREDITS

FADE OUT