

THE NORMAL HEART

Written By

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Final Shooting Script

RYAN MURPHY TELEVISION

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1 EXT. APPROACHING FIRE ISLAND PINES. DAY 1

Masses of beautiful men come towards the camera. The dock is full and the boat is packed as it disgorges more beautiful young men. NED WEEKS, 40, with his dog Sam, prepares to disembark. He suddenly puts down his bag and pulls off his shirt. He wears a tank-top.

2 EXT. HARBOR AT FIRE ISLAND PINES. DAY 2

Ned is the last to disembark. Sam pulls him forward to the crowd of waiting men, now coming even closer. Ned suddenly puts down his bag and puts his shirt back on. CRAIG, 20s and endearing, greets him; they hug.

NED
How you doing, pumpkin?

CRAIG
We're doing great.

3 EXT. BRUCE NILES'S HOUSE. FIRE ISLAND PINES. DAY 3

TIGHT on a razor shaving a chiseled chest. Two HANDSOME guys in their 20s -- NICK and NINO -- are on the deck by a pool, shaving their pecs. They are taking this very seriously. Ned and Craig walk up, observe this. Craig laughs.

CRAIG
What are you guys doing?

NINO
Hairy is out. Your turn, Teddy Bear.

Ned puts his arm protectively across his hairy chest.

NED
No, no, I love my Teddy!

NICK
Calvin Klein would not approve.

It's an insult, but Ned laughs, enters the house, sees --

4 INT. BRUCE NILES'S HOUSE. FIRE ISLAND PINES. DAY 4

BRUCE NILES, 30s, very handsome in a clean-cut western way, fiddling with a TV. He is beaming from ear to ear.

BRUCE
The baseball strike is over and my summer has officially begun!

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG

The thing is, he really means it.

BRUCE

Hey Ned, glad you could make it.
Haven't seen you at the gym lately.
Beer?

Craig gives Bruce a kiss hello, Bruce tosses Ned a cool one.
Ned notices an immaculate ARMY UNIFORM hanging on a
doorframe.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Just back from reserves. Once a
month I get to play --
(mock punching him on his
shoulder)
-- a real man.

NED

I like your stripes, Lieutenant. Hot.

CRAIG

Please. Captain!

Nino and Nick enter with their razors, very bossy queens.

NINO

Your turn, Bruce.

They toss him a can of shaving cream. He shakes his head no.

NICK

Brucie, please. Don't embarrass our
house at the beach, hon.

Bruce pauses, grins a huge smile, and lathers up his chest
with the foam. As he marches out to shave, all charisma --

BRUCE

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

He salutes Ned, who laughs.

Filled with a never-ending parade and vista of gorgeous men.
Ned and MICKEY walk and watch Craig and Bruce playing
football with some of the other guys.

MICKEY

Craig was miserable when you
weren't interested. Now look. He's
got Robert Redford.

(CONTINUED)

NED

It shows you there is a God. How's John?

MICKEY

John? Oh, you mean John. I'm with Gregory now. We're celebrating our fifteen-month anniversary.

NED

Fifteen months. That's a long time for you, Mickey.

MICKEY

We're only lovers and live together. We're certainly not faithful to each other, too. He's not even Jewish, but don't tell my Rabbi.

MORTON

(calling from a blanket)

Hey, Weeks. You suck. Why do you even come here anymore? We don't want you.

MICKEY

You made us look terrible in your novel. Sex is liberating. It's always guys like you who've never had one who always go on and on about relationships and fidelity and holy matrimony. How long have we known each other now? You're still acting like a closet straight.

NED

All I said was having so much sex makes finding love impossible.

MICKEY

Do not put your failure to find somebody on the rest of us.

BRUCE

Hey Ned, heads up!

Ned, of course, drops the football. Suddenly Craig doubles over, then gets down on his hands and knees. Ned and Bruce run to him, followed by Mickey. Craig makes himself get up.

CRAIG

I'm okay!

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

Bruce tries to put his arms around him.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
I said I'm okay!

6 INT. BRUCE NILES'S HOUSE. FIRE ISLAND PINES. NIGHT 6

TIGHT ON a birthday cake, blazing with candles. Bruce carries it towards a beaming Craig. There are twenty guys here including Ned, everyone is singing "Happy Birthday."

NINO
Blow!

BRUCE
He's great at that.

Everyone roars laughing. Craig makes a wish and blows. Everyone is joyous and cheers. Bruce downs a shot, then --

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I love this fucking place! I do!
We've got it all, I fucking love
it!

Sound of firecrackers mixed with disco music starts building.

7 EXT. BEACH. FIP. NIGHT/DAWN 7

A big White Party coalescing. Everyone is in white. Billowing sheets on poles. Couples appearing from out of the darkness, walking by the ocean's edge. Bruce and Craig. Mickey and Gregory. Music: "Mighty Real."

From the sidelines, Ned, by himself. He sees Bruce and Craig making out on the dance floor. In fact everyone on the dance floor is in some sort of physical closeness. It's hard not to feel very alone. Ned gets up and starts walking.

8 EXT. DUNES. NIGHT 8

Ned starts the walk home alone. As he passes, he notices figures in the shadows. No one's face is visible. Just shadows. Foggy. Misty. Body parts intertwined.

INSERT: New York Times, Page 20, July 3, 1981. "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals." PULL BACK to REVEAL --

9 EXT. FERRY. DAY 9

Ned, riveted by this article on the way back to the city.

TITLE SEQUENCE.

10 INT. DR. EMMA BROOKNER'S WAITING ROOM. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. 10
DAY

As the title sequence ends, REVEAL Ned waiting. Sanford, 40s, comes out of Emma's office. His face and skin are covered with purple spots...KS lesions. As he walks to a WINDOW to make another appointment, he smiles at a riveted Ned.

SANFORD

I sold you a ceramic pig once at
Maison France on Bleeker Street.
I'm Sanford.

NED

Yes, I remember. Somebody I was
friends with then collected pigs
and you had the biggest pig I'd
ever seen outside of a real pig.

SANFORD

(re: his spots)

They just keep getting bigger and
won't go away. I'm her twentieth
case and six of them are dead.

He exits. Ned is rattled. Buzzy, a nurse, comes in.

BUZZY

Hey, Ned! Won't be a minute.

NED

Hey, Buzzy...I didn't know you
worked here.

Buzzy goes into the inner office with a file. A beat.

EMMA'S VOICE

Who are you?

NED

Ned Weeks. I spoke to you after the
Times' article.

EMMA'S VOICE

Come in and take your clothes off.

11 INT. EMMA'S EXAMINING ROOM. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. DAY

11

Ned going in. We see Emma in an electric wheelchair.

EMMA

You're the writer fellow who's
scared. I'm scared, too.

(CONTINUED)

NED

I only came to ask some questions.

EMMA

You're gay aren't you?

NED

Yes.

EMMA

Then take your clothes off. Don't be nervous. I've seen more men than you have.

CUT TO:

Ned stands before Emma. She is examining him. First with a stethoscope to his chest. Buzzy is putting his blood draws into a rack.

EMMA (CONT'D)

To answer all your questions, I don't know. Never seen or heard of anything like it. Turn around.

(Listens to his back)

Even after we find it -- Cough. Again. Stand still! Cough!

NED

Sorry.

EMMA

-- it takes years to learn how to prevent and cure anything. Turn around.

(She lifts his testicles)

You're a nervous one.

She pats the examining table. He jumps up on it. She grabs his foot and starts inspecting between his toes, carefully. He starts to giggle again. He shrugs.

NED

I'm ticklish.

EMMA

Have you had any of the symptoms?

NED

Yes. Most of the shit the Times said. Amoebas. Gonorrhea. Hepatitis... You don't know what it's been like since the sexual revolution.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

What makes you think I don't know?
Any fever? Night sweats. Weight
loss.

NED

Don't I wish. No.

EMMA

And purple lesions. Open your
mouth.

(as she examines him)

It's a cancer. There's a strange
reaction in the immune system. It's
collapsed. Won't fight. So most of
the diseases my guys are coming
down with are caused by germs that
wouldn't hurt a baby, not a baby in
New York City anyway. And the
immune system is the system we know
least about. So where is this big
mouth I hear you've got?

NED

Is big mouth a symptom?

EMMA

No, a cure. Right now it only seems
to be happening to gay men. Who
cares if a faggot dies? Buzzy says
you're well-known in the gay world
and not afraid to say what you
think.

Ned shoots Buzzy a look, who quickly leaves with the blood.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I can't find any gay leaders. I
call gay organizations. No one ever
calls me back.

NED

Dr. Brookner, no one with half a
brain gets involved with gay
politics. There's no room for
criticism, for looking at ourselves
critically.

EMMA

What's your criticism?

NED

I hate how we play victim when many
of us, most of us, don't have to.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

Then you're exactly what's needed now. Maybe they're just waiting for somebody to lead them.

NED

I don't want to lead them! Wouldn't it be better coming from you?

EMMA

Doctors are even more conservative than Ronald Reagan. They run fast from anything that smells. And this smells. Big time. When you make too much noise you get treated like a fucking nutcase just when you're needed most.

NED

Needed for what? What exactly are you trying to get me to do?

EMMA

Tell gay men to stop having sex.

NED

You think this cancer is sexually transmitted?

EMMA

I think so, yes. Can I prove it yet? No.

NED

Do you realize you're talking about millions of men who have singled out promiscuity as their principle political agenda. How do you deal with that?

EMMA

Tell them they may die.

NED

It's more complicated. They think sex is all they have. We're not exactly allowed to live out in the open like human beings.

EMMA

Mr. Weeks, if having sex can kill you, doesn't anyone with half a brain stop fucking?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (4) 11

EMMA (CONT'D)

You can get dressed. I can't find
what I'm looking for.

Noise is heard from the outer office.

12 INT. EMMA'S WAITING ROOM. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. DAY 12

BRUCE'S VOICE

Where do I go? What do I do!?

Bruce, wearing a business suit, rushes in carrying Craig,
helped by Mickey. Ned is getting dressed quickly.

EMMA

Put him on the table. What
happened?

13 INT. EMMA'S OFFICE. DAY 13

Craig is deposited on the table, Emma examines Craig.

14 EXT. HOSPITAL. DAY (FLASHBACK) 14

Bruce and Mickey head towards the entrance. They stop,
stunned, as ahead they see Craig...pale and shaky, sweating,
almost delirious. Craig starts crying and running towards
them in a panic, but he's like a feral animal near death.

BRUCE'S VOICE

I was meeting him outside and he
started running toward me and
he...collapsed to the ground.

A15 INT. EMMA'S OFFICE. DAY A15

Craig, burning with a high fever, starts to convulse. Buzzy
grabs him; Mickey and Bruce follow suit. Emma takes a tongue
depressor and puts it in Craig's mouth.

EMMA

Hold on to his chin. You the lover?
What's your name?

BRUCE

Bruce Niles, ma'am.

EMMA

(taking the phone)
Brookner. Set up a room
immediately. Niles. You were
Reinhardt Holz's lover?

A15 CONTINUED:

BRUCE
How did you know that? I haven't
seen him in a couple of years.

EMMA
He died three weeks ago.

Ned is now standing outside the room. He and Bruce lock eyes
as Emma CLOSES THE DOOR ON NED.

15 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. DAY 15

Bruce approaches. Ned, Mickey and Buzzy stand. Bruce has been
crying. Everyone has tears in their eyes.

BRUCE
They wouldn't even let me say
goodbye. Kiss him...goodbye.

NED
I'm so sorry.

MICKEY
It can happen this fast?

BUZZY
It just has.

NED
We have to do something. No one
else will. Between us we know a lot
of people.

MICKEY
Bruce knows all the hot numbers and
Ned knows all the guys who can
read.

16 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. NIGHT 16

Emma is speaking to a full house. It's anarchy.

MORTON
You make these assumptions on the
basis of forty-six cases!

EMMA
You wanted to know what I think.
This is what I think: you are all
going to infect each other. Now
only a few of you have.
Unfortunately we can't tell yet
which ones.

(CONTINUED)

Bruce looks nervous, worried, Ned notices.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Long before we isolated the hepatitis viruses we knew about the diseases they caused and how they got around.

MORTON

Where are the medical journals?
The Times?

NED

You know the Times won't write about us. They won't even call us gay. We're still "homosexuals."

EMMA

I sent my first reports to the medical journals over a year ago.

TOMMY

How do you know what to look for really fast when you don't know what you're looking for? I guess that's a dumb question.

EMMA

No it isn't. It's the smartest question of all and the hardest to answer. Doesn't common sense tell you to cool it for a while?

TOMMY

Not much to look forward to. What if it turns out you're wrong?

EMMA

Then the worst that will have happened is you'll have cooled it for a while.

MICKEY

No, that's not all that would have happened. Guys will have become frightened of sex, guys will have lost their gay self-respect, so long fought for, we'll be scapegoated worse than ever, the world will think we're carriers, the Moral Majority will have even more of a field day!

Emma senses the crowd is getting restless. A few are leaving.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA

Wait! I'm seeing more cases each week than the week before. Half of all my patients die!

BELLA

I hope she winds it up. I've got a tiny little orgy in New Rochelle.

JOHN FROM THE BACK

Where's the health department?
Where's the Mayor?

TOMMY

Is every gay meeting like this?
Half the people here just showed up to get laid.

Tommy smiles flirtatiously at Ned, but Ned isn't interested.

EMMA

Please wait! Listen to me!

Others are leaving. Now she gets furious and plows her way through the crowd to the door. Ned is very moved by her. He runs after her.

17 INT. ELEVATOR FOYER. NED'S BUILDING. NIGHT 17

Ned tries to catch Emma before the elevator leaves. Elevator door closes in his face.

NED

Welcome to gay politics.

Off Emma's face as the doors close --

18 EXT. DRUG STORE. DAY 18

Ned looks at the glass storefront. A few PHOTOS of truly hideous KS LESIONS, the guy in the pics is covered with them. His eyes look terrified. A SIGN is next to them: "SOMETHING AWFUL IS GOING ON OUT THERE GUYS, THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE." Off Ned --

19 EXT. NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING. DAY 19

Ned looks up at it, pulls up his shoulders, and prepares to do battle.

20 INT. LOBBY AND GUARD'S DESK. DAY 20

Ned rushes in past the guard, waving a handful of papers.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

NED
I'm very late for an important
meeting with Craig Claiborne. He's
expecting me. Tell him -- Mr.
Julian Childs.

And he whizzes by and into an elevator.

21 INT. NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING. DAY 21

Ned, walking fast, past cubicles, checking nameplates. At the
end of the row --

NED
I'm sorry. I'm looking for Mr.
Felix Turner.

FELIX
And you are?

NED
My name is Ned Weeks. You're
very...cute.

FELIX
You caught me at a rough moment. I
have a deadline. First Lady's
coming to town.

NED
I've been told he's gay and might
be able to help me get vital
information in the Times...

FELIX
You've been told? And who was it
who told you?

22 INT. NEWSROOM. NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING. DAY. MINUTES 22

Felix is walking, Ned behind in hot pursuit.

FELIX
Why does everyone gay think I run
The New York Times? I can't help
you. With this.

NED
I'm sorry to hear that. What would
you suggest I do?

(CONTINUED)

FELIX

Take your pick. I've got 23 parties, 37 new restaurants, 12 new discos and a police department fashion benefit at Yankee Stadium. Anything sound interesting?

NED

I guess that means you're gay. Listen, no one here wants to write another article! I've talked to half a dozen reporters and the guy who worked on the first piece.

FELIX

Mr. Leather? No, no one here will write about it. And I can't. We're very compartmentalized. You wouldn't want science to write about sweaters, would you?

NED

It is a very peculiar feeling having to go out and seek support from the straight world for something gay.

FELIX

I wouldn't know about that. I just write about...

(whispering each "gay")

gay designers and gay discos and gay chefs and gay rock stars and gay models and gay celebrities and gay everything. I just don't call them gay.

NED

(whispering back)

Isn't it time to start?

FELIX

I really do have a deadline and you wouldn't want me to get fired.

NED

Guys like you give me a pain in the ass.

FELIX

Are you in the book?

NED

Yes.

23 EXT. HARBOR AT FIRE ISLAND PINES. DAY 23

Stacks of a Native article, "Cancer in the Gay Community by Michael R. Marcus." There is a picture of Mickey near the headline. Guys we are beginning to recognize, Ned, Bruce, Mickey, Tommy etc. are trying to pass them out to guys, many of whom won't take them, or throw them in a trash bin or on the ground. Lots of signs "Give to Gay Cancer."

24 EXT. BEACH. FIRE ISLAND. DAY 24

A bleak day. Deserted. A big photograph of Craig held aloft. About twenty guys. Ned, Mickey, etc. A man with a minister's collar hands Bruce (in his uniform) a small box. Bruce starts to scatter Craig's ashes over the water, then, even though he is clothed, wades into the water, scattering more...

25 EXT. BACK DECK. BRUCE'S HOUSE. NIGHT 25

Ned and Bruce sit under the moon, stars. Sam asleep.

BRUCE

Funny -- my mother sent flowers. We never ever talked about me being gay. I just told her Craig died. I guess she knew.

NED

I think mothers always somehow know.

26 INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE. NIGHT (LATER) 26

He and Ned finishing counting out the money from the canisters and lock boxes. They are sitting on the floor.

BRUCE

\$124. From three days and maybe 15,000 guys.

NED

They actually gave us pennies.

Bruce has been looking at something on the other side of the room. His eyes fill with tears. He crawls on his hands and knees and from under the bed he pulls out a pair of jeans.

BRUCE

It must have been six months ago. We were really ripped. Some cleaning lady we pay for, huh?

Ned crawls to comfort Bruce, tries to hold him, awkwardly. Then Bruce pulls away, walks into another room. Off Ned --

27

INT. BEN'S LAW OFFICE. DAY

27

A handsome lawyer's office. Ben is studying a mini model of a palatial HOUSE. He looms above it, like a giant.

NED

Doesn't spending two million dollars on a house frighten you? It would scare the shit out of me. Even if I had it.

BEN

You can have a house anytime you want one. That reminds me.

(gives some papers to Ned to sign)

Your account needs more money. You haven't done badly.

(as Ned signs)

I miss you being in the movie business. I like movies.

NED

Do I detect a note of approval from the big brother who called me Lemon?

(then)

I don't want a house.

BEN

Then why have you been searching in the country for one for so long?

NED

No fun living in it alone.

BEN

Is this Bruce someone you're seeing?

NED

I see him. He just doesn't see me. Everyone's afraid of me anyway. I frighten them away. But thanks for asking. Ben, could your law firm take us on for free -- what's it called, pro bono? We're starting an organization. I told you. There's this new disease.

BEN

You're not doing that full-time! It sounds like another excuse to keep from writing.

28 INT. RESTAURANT. DAY

28

The waiter, Mario, has seated them and handed them menus. The restaurant is full. Ned notices that Mario has tried to cover some of his purple spots with make-up. It's heartbreaking.

NED

Why can't you just say yes?

BEN

I told you. We have a committee that decides this sort of thing.

NED

But you're the senior partner and I'm your brother.

(to the waiter)

Hi, Mario. How's Homer?

Mario shakes his head indicating "not so hot." Ned looks back at his brother with determination.

NED (CONT'D)

If you're not going to help, I have to find somebody else.

BEN

You're more than free to do that.

NED

I don't want to do that! I want my big brother's fancy, famous big deal MAJOR law firm to be the first straight New York law firm to do pro bono work for a gay cause. I'd be real proud of that. And you.

Mario gives Ned a thumbs up.

BEN

I'll ask my partners' approval at the next meeting.

NED

I'll lobby them. You don't seem like a very sure vote.

29 EXT. RESTAURANT. DAY

29

Ned tries to give Ben a hug, which Ben has trouble with, finally giving him a little one back.

NED

You're getting better at it.

30 INT. LAB. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. DAY 30

A bleak underground tunnel. Emma showing Ned, he is taking notes for a piece he is writing.

EMMA

I'm seeing 4-5 new cases a week. I still cannot get any response from the Mayor's office or from our Health Commissioner. Or from our Governor. Or from the New York Times. Or from the AMA. Forget the President.

31 INT. CORRIDOR. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. DAY 31

Ned walking, Emma in her wheelchair.

EMMA

I have 7 in ICU. The whole hospital has room for only 30. I've had to admit some of them under other illnesses. That's a no-no. I've got 20 in private rooms they can't afford.

NED

What about guys with no health insurance? Actors, artists...

EMMA

I've got eight of them in another ward, where I shouldn't put them.

32 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY. DAY 32

Ned and Emma continue to move.

NED

Why don't you wear gloves and a face mask?

EMMA

I never have and I never will and I'm still here.

Ned stops in front of a room with a DANGER SIGN on it. He sees a tray of hospital food in front of the door. Odd.

NED

Why is this out here? It's cold.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

It's always cold because the staff
won't bring it in the room. It sits
there and rots unless my staff
brings it in.

Ned looks in the window, sees Sanford of the Ceramic
Fig...all curled up in agony and hideousness.

NED

Can I go in? I know him.

32 CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA

Only if you wear all the protective
shit.

NED

If you don't, I don't.

He pushes open the door and opens it for her to follow him.

33 INT. SANFORD'S ROOM. DAY

33

He's delirious with dementia. Emma takes his hand as Ned puts
the tray down.

EMMA

How we doing, soldier?

SANFORD

I want my dog. He won't know how to
live without me. Can you please
bring me my dog?

Ned notices that the old TV is flickering. He goes to fix it.

EMMA

Don't bother. The union won't let
them come into the room to repair
them.

SANFORD

Who's going to bring me my dog? His
name's Skip. He'll come when you
call him.

(starts to cry)

Please, I miss him.

34 INT. ANOTHER ROOM. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. DAY

34

Two young men in adjoining beds moved side by side so they
can hold hands. Emma and Ned are revealed outside looking in.

EMMA

Can you imagine this at 19...your
first boyfriend you were going to
spend your whole life with.

35 INT. THAT ROOM. HALLWAY. DAY

35

Emma and Ned start off. Emma spies MIKE the technician up ahead.

EMMA

Excuse me...excuse me!

He turns as she zips up to him.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You're the TV guy, right? Please go into room 407 and fix it.

MIKE THE TECH

No, I won't do that.

EMMA

Fix the TV, it's your fucking job.

MIKE THE TECH

I'm not risking my life for some contagious diseased fairy.

Emma sees his fear, takes a measured beat.

EMMA

Sir --

MIKE THE TECH

If I have to go in there, I fucking quit.

He walks off. Emma turns to Ned.

EMMA

So what exactly has your side been doing?

36 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. EVENING

36

Ned nervously opens the front door. Felix is there, carrying a bottle of wine. Sam jumps up on him. Lights are low. The dining table has been set for a candlelit dinner for two.

NED

Hi. Thanks. You want some of this?
A beer?

FELIX

Beer's fine. Hi pooch.

NED

Her name is Sam.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX

You know I really used to like high-tech. But I'm tired of it now. I think I want chintz back again. Don't be insulted.

NED

I'm not. I want chintz back again, too.

FELIX

So. Here we are. Two fellows who want chintz back again.

NED

This is a date, isn't it?

Felix reaches in fridge and pulls out some food.

FELIX

I'm starving. Are you glad I'm here?

NED

I'm pleased as punch you're here. You're very good-looking. What are you doing here?

FELIX

Do you think you're bad-looking?

NED

Where are you from?

FELIX

I'm from Oklahoma. I left home at 18, put myself through college. My folks are dead. My dad worked at the refinery in West Tulsa. My mom was a waitress at a luncheonette in Walgreens.

NED

Isn't it amazing how a kid can come out of all that and wind up on the Times, dictating taste and style to the entire world?

FELIX

And we were just starting to talk so nicely.

(CONTINUED)

NED

Talking is not my problem. Shutting up is my problem.

(then)

Why do you write all that fancy ball-gown bullshit?

FELIX

I'll bet you gobble it up every day.

NED

I know ten people who have died. When I came to you it was only one.

FELIX

I'm sorry. Is that why you agreed to this date?

(resets Ned's silver)

Fork on the left, knife on the right.

NED

Do you know that when Hitler's Final Solution to eliminate the Polish Jews was first mentioned in the Times it was on page 28. And on page 6 of the Washington Post? They were both owned by Jews! Their very own people. Scholars are finally writing honestly and it's damning to everyone. Where were the Christian churches, the Pope, Churchill, Roosevelt! A few words from any of them would have put Hitler on notice. Dachau was opened in 1933. Where the fuck was everybody?

FELIX

This is turning out to be a very romantic evening. You've never had a lover, have you?

NED

I suppose you've had quite a few?

FELIX

I had a very good one for a number of years, thank you. He was older than I was and he found someone younger.

(CONTINUED)

NED

You looking for a father?

FELIX

No, I am not looking for a father!
God, you are relentless.

Ned suddenly grabs Felix and kisses him. The kiss becomes quite intense when Ned jumps up.

NED

Everybody had a million reasons for not getting involved. The American Jews knew exactly what was happening. Can you imagine if every Jew had marched on Washington? Proudly! Huh!?

FELIX

Ned, you don't remember me, do you?

Felix in only a towel, stands leaning against a wall, watching from a little distance as Ned is cruising a blond number, who finally gives him the brush off.

FELIX (V.O.)

It was at the baths a few years ago. You were busy cruising some blond number and I stood outside your door waiting for you to come back.

Ned returns, sees Felix, gives him a stern examination...

NED (V.O.)

And then what?

Ned opens the door, goes in, leaving the door open a little. Felix goes in.

Ned is sitting on a mattress. Felix sits beside him. Ned closes his eyes and sticks his hand out, touching Felix's chest. Felix takes his own hand and opens Ned's eyes.

NED

And then what?

40 INT. NED'S CUBICLE AT BATHS. NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 40

NED
I have to get up early in the
morning.

41 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. NIGHT 41

FELIX
Men do not naturally not love, they
learn not to. I think you're a
bluffer.

Ned just stares, astonished. Then --

NED
How could I not remember you?

FELIX
I don't know.

A long beat.

NED
Do you think we could start over?

42 INT. NED'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 42

Both men naked on the bed, lit only by moonlight. Ned bends
to kiss Felix and they start to make love. CUT TO:

They are still in bed. Eating ice cream from pint containers,
mid conversation.

NED
When I was at Yale I thought I was
the only gay guy there, swear to
God. I went to a shrink who tried
to change me. Now they have these
Gay Weeks there, and they throw the
best dances of anyone. Imagine
being able to dance cheek to cheek
with your boyfriend during your
bright college days.

FELIX
Did you ever sleep with a woman?

NED
Her name was Delilah. She was a
stand-in on this movie I wrote. She
was very nice and pretty and always
smiling at me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NED (CONT'D)

I asked a straight friend to explain everything, I thought I knew, but just in case, I had her to dinner and afterward, at what I deemed to be a suitable moment, because I'd been communicating to it down there "Are you ready, are you absolutely certain you're ready?" and it seemed Abercrombie was ready, I picked her up, very Rhett Butler, and carried her to my bed, where I couldn't get it up.

FELIX

I certainly can identify with that.

NED

But in the middle of the night I wake up with this gigantic erection, god knows how, and I shake her, shouting "Please stick it in for me Delilah," I was afraid it would go down while I was hunting for the right place in the dark, and she did and I did and Abercrombie did, and the very next morning, I -- who was under the spell of this shrink who was determined to change me -- rushed into his office and I, who had been fucking with fellows since the 7th grade, hysterically, at the age of 32, proclaimed "Dr. Gillespie, I am no longer a virgin!"

INT. NED'S APARTMENT. MORNING

Ned is asleep. Felix is dressed and bending to say goodbye. Sam is curled up in the blankets.

FELIX

Nice meeting you, Sam.

He leaves. Ned opens his eyes. He hears the front door closing. What is he going to do now?

INT. CITY HALL. ROTUNDA RECEPTION. DAY

Various bureaucrats are milling around. A banner reading Department of Cultural Affairs. A big cake iced, "Good Luck Henry." Henry and Ned talking to the side.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

NED

So I just go over and say hello. He doesn't know I hate him?

HENRY

I told him I invited you, that we went to Yale together. This is my farewell party. What's he going to do? Let's go.

They start walking to the group surrounding the Mayor, Edward Koch. Bodyguards move in closer to Koch. To Henry --

GUARD

His Honor would like your friend to get lost.

NED

(jumps into action,
pushing toward Koch)

Mr. Mayor, you've got to help us. There's this new disease. You must know about it! We need help. Badly.

The whole thing quickly becomes a mess. The closer Ned gets to Koch, the more he's guarded and the harsher the guards' treatment of Ned is. Three guards corner him, twist his arm behind him, and start pulling him away quickly.

NED (CONT'D)

We're dying! What are you doing!
Stop it, you pigs! This is America!

Ned is quickly silenced and out of sight.

45 INT. DISCO. NIGHT

45

Stacks of packed cartons arranged by zip codes. Our group of guys we have come to know are here: Morton, Bella, Nino, Nick, Tommy, etc.

MICKEY

This is what Ned wrote for us to send out.

46 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

46

Ned types furiously on his typewriter. The words and passion are exploding out of him. TIGHT on the words as we hear them:

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY'S VOICE

"I am sick of guys moaning that giving up careless sex until this blows over is worse than death. I am sick of guys who can only think with their cocks. I am sick of closeted gays."

Felix comes in, naked, gets a glass of water.

FELIX

Come back to bed.

NED

In a minute, babe.

MICKEY'S VOICE

"It's 1982 now, guys, when are you going to come out? By 1984 you could be dead."

BRUCE

You're crazy.

NED

Am I, Bruce? Do you really think so?

MORTON

Aren't we supposed to elect a President tonight?

BRUCE

We can't tell people how to live their lives! We can't do that. We just can't do that. The entire gay political movement is fucking. We'd get it from all sides.

TOMMY

I'm very interested in setting up some sort of services for the patients. We've got to start talking about them. And there are a lot of scared people desperate for information. I'd like to start a hotline.

BRUCE

(whispering to Ned)
Who's he?

TOMMY

Oh. He does not know who I am yet.
His name is Tommy Boatwright.
In real life he is a hospital
administrator. He's here to help.
And he's a Southern bitch.

BRUCE

(holds up envelope)
What the fuck is this!? Was this
your idea?

NED

I'm looking. What am I not seeing?

MICKY

What we put for our return address.

NED

You mean because the word "gay" is
on the envelope?

BRUCE

Fucking A. Instead of just our
initials. We can't send them out.

MICKY

Excuse me, but if we want anyone to
show up at the dance, we've got to
mail them out right away.

NICK

We could go through and scratch out
the word gay with a Magic Marker.

TOMMY

Honey, ten thousand times!

A very good-looking blond, Albert, has entered now, crossing
with a box of the letters. Bruce and Albert clock each other.

NED

Look, Bruce, I have sympathy for
kids living at home on Long Island
with their parents, but most guys
getting these -- look at you, you
live alone, you own your own
apartment, your mother lives in
another state...

BRUCE

What about my mailman?

(CONTINUED)

NED

You don't expect me to take you seriously?

BRUCE

Yes I do!

TOMMY

Ladies, behave!

MORTON

Look, it's getting late and we haven't elected our President.

MICKEY

Ned, I think it should be -- Bruce. Everybody knows him and likes him and, I mean, everybody expects you to...

NED

You mean he's popular and everybody's afraid of me.

MICKEY

Yes. He's gorgeous and all the kids on Christopher Street and Fire Island will feel more comfortable following him.

NED

Just like high school.

A BUNCH IN UNISON

Yes!

MORTON

All in favor of Bruce Niles for our first President, raise your hand.

Tommy gives Ned a supportive wink, until he sees EVERYBODY else has voted for Bruce.

BRUCE

I don't think I want this.

NED

Oh, come on. You're gorgeous and we're all going to follow you.

BRUCE

Fuck you, I accept.

(CONTINUED)

NED

Well fuck you, congratulations.

TOMMY

What is it you do for a living, if I may ask?

BRUCE

I'm a vice-president of Citibank --

TOMMY

Nothing to be shy about, sugar. You invented the cash machine.

BRUCE

-- until they hear about this.

NED

Bruce, Citibank won't fire you for being gay. And if they did we could make such a stink that every gay customer in New York...Bruce, you were a Green Beret!

BRUCE

I love my job. I supervise a couple hundred people across the country. My boss doesn't know and he hates gay people. We have to stay out of anything political!

NED

It's going to be impossible to pass along any information or any recommendation that isn't going to be considered political by somebody! Haven't you learned that yet?

Almost without knowing it, a line has been drawn in the sand as these two friends stare at each other. Mickey looks particularly distressed.

CUT TO:

Everyone gone. Bella pulling the last trolley turns off the lights and leaves. One of the switches has turned on the revolving mirrored globe which performs for the empty space.

Ned, Felix, Sam, all in bed and all eating ice cream as they watch "The Way We Were."

(CONTINUED)

NED

Felix -- let's move somewhere far away, just the two of us, on a desert island, with the dog.

FELIX

Don't you dare stop for one single second what you're doing. I appreciate you not yelling at me about what the Times isn't doing, and my not being more political. Why don't you?

NED

It's a relief not to have to talk politics with somebody. That's not the reason.

FELIX

No?

NED

Because you're too good to be true. Because I've wanted a lover like you my whole life and you haven't showed up till now and I'm scared shitless I'll do something to fuck it up. Do you think I'm crazy?

FELIX

Of course. That's why I'm here.

HEAR MUSIC.

49

INT. FASHION SHOW. DAY

49

Male models wind up their finale number, led by Albert, Bruce's new friend. Albert gets a roar of approval, led by Bruce, with Ned in the front row. Felix is seen on the sidelines making notes. Albert is thinner and clearly wearing makeup.

50

INT. NED'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

50

Bruce takes a cotton ball and wipes the makeup off Albert's face. Ned and Felix watch. Albert is exhausted and losing weight.

ALBERT

Did I look okay? Could you tell I was, you know, wearing makeup?

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE
(lying)
No. You looked so great.

Ned is feeling Albert's glands under his arms and in his neck, Bruce watching.

NED
You've got to go see Emma.

ALBERT
Could we forget about this!? I'm all right. And if I'm not I don't want to know because no one will hire me and if I can't work I'd just as soon be dead.
(to Bruce)
I told you not to tell him.
(leaving, he embraces Bruce, but they don't kiss)
Already afraid to kiss me?

BRUCE
That's not true!

ALBERT
Well, I'm afraid to let you. I love you.

He leaves.

Ned and Bruce. Bruce is drunk. It's raining outside.

BRUCE
He's the third person I've been with. Reinhardt. Craig. If Albert has this I don't know what I'm going to do.
(a beat)
I never had a friend like you before.

NED
What do you mean, like me?

BRUCE
Where I come from...I never saw a Jew until I was in the Army. Reads books...isn't...

NED

Isn't muscles, tits, and ass.

BRUCE

Yeah. None of my old friends, they don't talk to me anymore. I depress them, getting involved in this. You don't look Jewish.

NED

You don't look gay. I guess we can both pass for white people.

BRUCE

(starts bawling)

Ned, I really love Albert.

NED

Come on, I'm getting you home.

52 EXT. STREET. NIGHT

52

It's raining hard. Ned supports Bruce as they stumble home.

53 INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

53

CLOSE: Bruce upchucks into the toilet. Ned has a hand on his back, to support him. Vomit gets on Bruce's shirt. He's still so drunk. He peels off his shirt and pants.

He wobbles to the shower stall, turns it on, gets in, starts to slip. Ned protectively races into the shower so he won't fall. Steadies Bruce as the water falls on them like rain. Ned smiles at the irony of the situation.

NED

When I finally get you where I want you I don't want you anymore. Hey, Bruce, I'm in love, too.

Bruce is sobering up. Smiles slightly. Ned grabs his head, looks him dead in the eyes.

NED (CONT'D)

Hey...we're going to beat this. You and I, we're going to find a way to beat it.

54 EXT. DISCO. NIGHT

54

Ned and Felix turning a corner and not believing their eyes. A huge crowd of guys is waiting to get in.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

NED

Holy shit.

FELIX

Queen control. It really works when
it wants to.

Dick Lombardo, a lawyer type, is nearby with a group.

NED

Felix, this is Dick Lombardo. I've
finally got us someone on our board
that isn't a disco dumbie.

DICK

(shaking hands with Felix)
Well, maybe tonight...

55 INT. DISCO. NIGHT

55

Mirrored ball turning. Big sign "April Showers." A huge
dancing crowd. The place is mobbed. Everybody is very up.
Music: Gloria Gaynor, "I Will Survive."

CUT TO:

Bruce delivering a speech to the crowd.

BRUCE

We sure are glad you all showed up!
(loud cheers)
Tonight we're proving we have more
than looks, brains, talent and
heart. Tonight we've raised more
money than any gay organization has
ever raised in this city before.
(Ned hands him a card)
\$53,000!

Huge cheers. Ned and Bruce embrace.

CUT TO:

New York City Gay Men's Chorus singing "The Man I Love."

Ned pulls Felix out to the dance floor where same sex couples
are dancing...like it's the prom they never had.

Everyone on the floor is kissing each other as the chorus
crescendos. It is an amazingly wonderful sight. Even Emma,
with several of her sick patients, sings the song.

Ned looks at Felix as they slowly sway, whispers in his ear.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

NED

All those dances, all those years,
in high school, in college. Can you
imagine if we could have had this?
No shame, no fear.

FELIX

All I was imagining all those
years...was you.

They kiss again, with great fervor and beauty.

56 EXT. HUDSON. DAWN

56

On the piers, couples are sitting and standing and watching
the dawn come up. Ned and Felix are off by themselves.

NED

Would you like to move in with me?

FELIX

Yes.

They sit there as if nothing has happened. Suddenly Ned lets
out a wild whoop, jumps up, waving his arms and running about
like a crazy man as he hollers with joy.

57 EXT. VILLAGE STREET. DAWN

57

A tall man is seen carrying the limp body of another. It is
Nino carrying Nick. He is screaming for help.

NED (V.O.)

We are all walking time bombs,
waiting for whatever it is to set
us off.

58 INT. NED'S WRITING AREA. EARLY MORNING

58

The rattle of the Selectric is insistent.

NED (V.O.)

If this article doesn't scare the
shit out of you, gay men may have
no future here on earth. Our
continued existence depends on just
how angry you can get...

Sound of doorbell.

59 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. MORNING

59

Ned opens the door and lets in Nino, who is carrying the limp
Nick in his arms. Felix is seen in the background.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

NINO

They turned us away from four
emergency rooms. I think he's lost
his mind. Ned, where can I take
him?

60 INT. NED ON TV.

60

Being interviewed by a woman, SaraBeth Clare.

NED

What do I think? I know that the
government is intentionally
ignoring this epidemic.

SARABETH

You're accusing the government of
the United States of a conspiracy
to murder all gay men?

Lettering appears under Ned "Ned Weeks, Co-Founder, Gay Men's
Health Crisis."

NED

Yes. Yes, you could say that. Yes,
SaraBeth, I am. Yes.

61 INT. BOARD ROOM. DICK'S LAW OFFICE. NIGHT

61

Walls shelved with law books. All the guys here. Bruce
presiding. Ned in the hot seat. Mickey is visibly upset by
the fight going on. Tommy looking glacially into space.

BRUCE

You can't go on national TV and
accuse the government of murder!

NED

Why not?

BRUCE

One of these days they're going to
give us money, research, grants...

NED

Reagan still hasn't said the word
in public! Congress still hasn't
appropriated a dime. The Mayor
still hasn't...on and on.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

DICK

Ned, when you go public, you have no right to speak for this organization unless we have approved what you say in advance. In point of fact, you are not even an officer of this organization and shouldn't be speaking for us at all.

NED

Thank you for sharing that with me, Dick.

He walks out.

62 INT. NED ON TV.

62

The interviewer this time is a man, Malcolm Murphy.

MALCOLM

Why do you think New York City is being so slow to acknowledge and deal with this emergency?

Lettering under Ned "Ned Weeks, Gay Activist."

NED

You're implying that the city has recognized and acknowledged this emergency, Malcolm. It has not.

MALCOLM

Why not, do you think?

NED

Because the Mayor is gay and scared shitless out of his panties that it'll blow his cover.

Screen filled with "We are experiencing technical difficulties."

63 INT. BOARD ROOM. DICK'S LAW OFFICE. DAY

63

Ned in the hotseat again. Similar expressions on faces.

NED

You can't tell me what to say when I'm speaking for myself.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Everyone knows you're one of us!
It is totally and politically
incorrect to call people gay who do
not self-identify as being gay.

NED

I know it's been that way forever.
But something different is going on
now. We're dying. I don't want to
die because another gay man is too
ashamed of himself to help us stay
alive. I am not going to let him
kill us because he's ashamed of
what I'm proudest of.

(to Dick)

The Mayor -- he's your personal
friend. You want him to appoint you
a judge. Do you have a little
conflict of interest going on here?

DICK

I told you. I sent him a memo.

NED

When?

DICK

Through channels.

NED

When!

DICK

He'll answer me.

NED

When! There were 300 new cases last
month! No meeting with our gay
Mayor. No meeting with his gay
assistant.

He looks at Bruce who has his head down between his legs.

NED (CONT'D)

Do I embarrass you?

BRUCE

Yes, you do.

TOMMY

You get more with honey than with
vinegar.

(CONTINUED)

NED

I've never heard that one, Tommy.

MICKEY

No, obviously you haven't.

TOMMY

I never believed it anyway.

BRUCE

If we get too political we lose our tax-exempt status. That's what Harvey in your own brother's law firm advised us. We got more than we can handle just trying to help patients.

(to Tommy)

Give your report.

TOMMY

(consulting notes)

We've trained 25 crisis counselors to help the newly diagnosed in whatever needs they might have. We have twelve group leaders who meet with these counselors at least once a week to go over all their clients. There are now 17 volunteer social workers, psychologists and/or psychiatrists. I can call on fifteen lawyers. We helped draw up 75 wills last month...

NED

75! Bruce, you were a fighter once. Did you like being a Green Beret?

BRUCE

I loved it.

NED

Have you completely forgotten how to fight?

BRUCE

Don't you fucking talk to me about fighting! I just fight different from you!

NED

I haven't seen your way yet. Bruce -- Albert may be dying.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Shut up! Just you shut up about Albert!

NED

(to Dick)

And you have no right being on this board unless you pressure your friend, the Mayor. That's why I asked you to join us in the first place. And you know it.

An older man, Arthur, stops Ned.

NED

Arthur, how are --

ARTHUR

I think what you're doing is awful.

NED

What am I doing, Arthur?

ARTHUR

You're destroying all our progress. You're painting us as sick. It's not going to happen to me -- do you hear me? It's not going to happen to me or to most of us and you should keep your mouth shut! You're destroying homosexuality forever!

Arthur gets so worked up that, in his fury, he starts pummeling Ned. Ned disentangles himself and Arthur runs off. Ned stands there unbelievably.

Ben and Ned are jogging. We hear:

BEN (V.O.)

No. You got your free legal work from my firm.

Ben and Ned are finishing dressing after their jog.

BEN

I'm not going to be on your board of directors, too.

NED

It's only for the stationery. You don't have to do a thing. That is just an evasion. If you thought this was a straight disease --

BEN

It has nothing to do with your being gay.

NED

What else has it got to do with? One of these days I'm going to make you agree that over twenty million men and women don't require the services of a psychiatrist.

BEN

Look, try to understand. I read stuff. I see TV. You guys in leather and chains, dresses, high heels -- and I say to myself, "This isn't Ned."

NED

You know the media always dramatizes the most extreme.

BEN

You guys have a dreadful image problem.

NED

That's why it's so important to have people like you supporting us. You already have your dignity.

BEN

We better get to lunch. I have an important meeting.

NED

Do you? How important? I've asked for your support.

BEN

In every area I consider important you have my support.

NED

In the only area I consider important I don't have your support at all. In some place deep inside of you you still think I'm sick.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NED (CONT'D)

(No answer.)

Don't you!

BEN

I think you've adjusted to life quite well.

NED

All things considered?

BEN

I saw how unhappy you were!

NED

So were you! You wound up going to shrinks too. We grew up side by side. We both felt the same about Mom and Pop. I'll agree to the fact that I have any number of awful character traits, but not to the fact that whatever awful things they did to us made me sick and gay while you stayed straight and "healthy."

BEN

But we don't all react the same way to the thing.

NED

So you became a lawyer and I became a writer.

BEN

Well, that's the difference of opinion we have over theory.

NED

But your theory turns me into a man from Mars. My theory doesn't do that to you.

BEN

Are you suggesting I did anything wrong sending you into therapy so young? I didn't think you'd stay in it forever.

NED

I didn't think I'd done anything wrong until you sent me into it. Ben, you mean more to me than anyone in the world. You always have. Ben, you've got to say it.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Say what?

NED

I'm the same as you. Just say it.
Say it!

BEN

No, you're not. I can't say it.

NED

Every time I lose this fight it
hurts more. I'm going home.

BEN

Come on, Lemon. I still love you.
Sara still loves you. Sara's cat...

NED

This is not a joke!

BEN

(angry)

You have my love and my legal
advice and my financial
supervision. I can't give you the
courage to stand up and say to me
that you don't give a flying fuck
what I think. Everybody is
oppressed by somebody else in some
form or another. Some of us learn
to fight back despite the opinions,
without the help of others. And
please stop trying to wring some
admission guilt out of me. My
agreeing you were born just like I
was born is not going to save your
dying friends.

NED

That's exactly what will save my
dying friends!

BEN

You make me sound like I'm the
enemy.

NED

I'm beginning to think you and your
straight world are our enemy. I am
furious with you and every
goddamned doctor who made me feel
it's sick to love a man.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (4)

66

NED (CONT'D)

I'm trying to understand why nobody gives a shit we're dying. Three million dollars for a house! We can't even get twenty-nine cents from the city. I know 43 guys who've died and you say it's my cause not yours. You still think I'm sick. I simply cannot allow that for one single second longer. I will not speak to you again until you accept me as your equal. Your healthy equal. Your brother.

67 EXT. BEN'S HOUSE. DAY

67

Ben watches as Ned roars away in his car.

68 EXT. FIRST GMHC OFFICE. DAY

68

A nondescript rooming-house. Bella and Bruce are moving in furniture and aging office equipment. Tommy is supervising.

TOMMY

Be careful, boys, it's a precious antique. Should we put it in the Grand Salon?

BELLA

Have we got a basement? That's where it should go.

TOMMY

Bella, it's about time you moved your filthy mouth above ground. Shove it all in there somehow, I'll decorate later.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(timid)

Excuse me?

Tommy turns to see a PLAIN WOMAN in her 30s.

ESTELLE

Hi, my name is Estelle. And my best friend Harvey died last night. We went everywhere together, you know? Like Broadway and the Rockettes and ice skating...he was a beautiful skater. I'm a klutz, but he didn't care.

She starts to cry.

(CONTINUED)

ESTELLE (CONT'D)

We were like partners in crime. We had so much fun! I want to do something even though all my lesbian friends say what have you guys ever done for us? But I don't care. This is for Harvey. Please...tell me you can use me for something!

Tommy is crying now too. He takes her in his arms.

TOMMY

I need a hotline director. Do you think you could do that?

ESTELLE

I don't know how!

TOMMY

Me neither. C'mon, let me buy you a coffee and we'll figure it out.

They walk off together. While --

INT. FIRST GMHC OFFICE. DAY

TWO GUYS man a TV camera to film a room into which lots of second hand furniture doesn't fit. Bruce comes in, they film him.

BRUCE

What are you doing?

TV ONE

We're from the NBC affiliate.

BRUCE

So?

TV ONE

This is the new Gay Mens' Health Crisis Office?

BRUCE

Please turn that off and leave.

TV ONE

Who are you?

BRUCE

Bruce Niles, I'm the President, I didn't sign any consent form for you to film me. Turn it off!

(CONTINUED)

Ned enters carrying Time and Newsweek "gay" covers. Camera rushes to film this. Bruce gets the picture.

NED

Both of them the same week! Every major network! And now, finally our first office! Bruce, thoughts?

BRUCE

I told you to turn that off. Sir, please turn it off.

Bruce tries to stop the filming. He goes at the cameraman, pulls at the camera, he's furious and feels violated.

CAMERAMAN

Do not touch me! Do not touch my camera!

NED

I'd like to introduce our gay President who is in the closet. And he's so handsome, don't you think? Such a very handsome cover boy going to waste.

BRUCE

Gay, gay, gay, gay -- everything with you is gay!

Bruce pushes him, Ned is shocked, then pushes back.

NED

Oh great, now you fight. Great! Fight Bruce!

BRUCE

You make me sound like a fucking coward. I'm sick of it. You -- you don't have anything to lose! Your brother invested for you so you have income. So you can be gay 24/7! But most of us can't, I can't! So fuck you, Ned.

NED

Fuck you, Bruce!

More shoving, more alpha posturing. It gets heated, pushing and in each other's faces. Bruce starts to circle him.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

What is your problem, Ned? I'm making Tommy executive director, he's worked in hospitals. We held a fundraiser to help pay him! I keep my eye on everything, keep us fiscally responsible! Follow the tax shit your brother's firm warned us about. I am in my office and available to talk to anyone, quietly. But I am not going on national TV, I'm not destroying everything I've built my life on.

Bruce takes a beat, breathing heavily, then stops and addresses the camera guys.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Give me that goddamned film. Give it to me.

NED

Bruce, I look at you and I'm filled with despair. I look at you and I worry we're not going to win. This is ass backwards. How do you think this country was founded? I thought I was starting with Paul Revere.....not some coward!

Bruce has had it. He charges, knocking Ned over a couch and onto the ground. Bruce gets on top of Ned, holds him down.

BRUCE

Look at me.

(takes his face in hands)

LOOK AT ME! We're doomed doing it your way.

Ned stops fighting and looks at him with emotion.

NED

How can they help us if they don't know who we are?

BRUCE

They won't help us if they do.

Bruce stands. Takes a beat. Realizes this was all still filmed. He goes to the camera guys, who have now seen what he can do physically. They are afraid of him. He takes the camera, calmly walks to window, opens the window, throws out the camera. The camera guys race out the door and down the stairs to get it.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (3)

69

Tommy walks in with Estelle, looks at the almost comically heavy breathing guys, the turned over furniture. The phone is ringing. He gets excited, answers it.

TOMMY

You are our very first call, how
can I help you?

(beat)

Sorry, you have the wrong number.

70 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

70

Ned and Felix driving along, with Sam.

71 EXT. A SHACK IN THE HAMPTONS. DAY

71

It's on an inlet surrounded on three sides by water. Felix sees the possibilities, Ned doesn't.

FELIX

We have four hands and two incomes.
You're not getting any younger you
know.

NED

Please leave my age out of it.

Felix begins to unload suitcases from the trunk and take them to the house. Ned reluctantly follows suit.

72 INT. HAMPTONS SHACK. NIGHT

72

Ned and Felix lying on a mattress, watching a movie. Ice cream is being consumed, Sam trying to get her share.

FELIX

Very beautiful, the country.

NED

Very quiet, the country.

The phone rings. As Ned pounces on it --

FELIX

You didn't leave this number on
your machine? You promised!

NED

(on the phone)

Yes, I do think we should picket
the Mayor. Yes, I said that and
stand by that. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

He hangs up, the phone rings again. Felix picks it up this time. He reaches for a copy of The Native.

FELIX

Wait. "And every gay man who is unable to come forward and fight to save his own life is truly helping to kill the rest of us. How many of us have to die before you get scared off your ass and into action?" Thank you.

NED

Who was that?

FELIX

I hear it's being called the Ned Weeks School of Outrage. I did speak to one of our science reporters.

NED

What did he say?

FELIX

It turns out he's gay and won't... Don't yell at me! All those shrinks -- they must have done something right.

NED

(A kiss with each name, as he starts to undress him.)

Dr. Ritvo, Dr. Malev, Dr. Gillespie, Dr. Greenacre, Dr. Patti, Dr. Maxine, Dr. Laverne -- did it have to take so long?

Felix evades his going further and Ned returns to eating ice cream.

FELIX

All you ever eat is desserts.

NED

Sugar is the most important thing in life. All the rest is just to stay alive.

He is quiet for a long beat.

FELIX

What?

(CONTINUED)

NED

That fucking board. They say I'm creating a panic. I'm making myself into a celebrity. Not one of them will be interviewed or appear on TV so I do it all by default.

FELIX

And you're becoming a leader. And you love to fight.

NED

I love to fight. Moi?

FELIX

And you're having a great time.

NED

Yes, I am. It's funny. I didn't want to become a leader. The gay man who could unite us. I'm not doing very well.

FELIX

It's sad how much time we lost.

NED

Felix, we just weren't ready then. If I had it, would you leave me?

FELIX

I don't know. Would you if I did?

NED

No.

FELIX

How do you know?

NED

My mother ran the local chapter of the Red Cross. She put me to work on the Bloodmobile when I was eight. I'm not programmed any other way.

FELIX

Ned, I have something to tell you.

NED

You're finally pregnant.

FELIX

I was married once.

(CONTINUED)

NED

You never told me that.

FELIX

I thought I was programmed to be straight. She said I'd been unfair to her, which I had been. I have a son.

NED

You have a son?

FELIX

She won't let me see him.

NED

You can't see your own son? But didn't you fight? That means you're ashamed. So he will be, too.

FELIX

That's why I didn't tell you! Who says I didn't fight? Ned -- what happens to people who can't be as strong as you want them to be?

NED

Weakness scares the shit out of me. My father was weak and I'm afraid I'll be like him. His life didn't stand for anything and then it was over. So I fight. Constantly. And if I can do it, I can't understand why everybody else can't do it, too. Okay?

Felix gets up and goes out of the room.

NED (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

Ned looks in various parts of the house.

NED (CONT'D)

Hey, you okay? I didn't mean anything... Felix? I'm really scared of lots of things. Really. Heights! I never told you. I'm terrified of heights. I can't go above the third floor or I go bananas. I start to sweat and I get chills and the shakes and... I get really scared...

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (4)

72

Finally he finds Felix sitting on the floor, somewhere in a corner. He looks up at Ned. He takes his sock off. He shows Ned a purple spot.

FELIX

It keeps getting bigger and bigger,
and it doesn't go away.

As Ned just stares --

73 INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT. DAY

73

Some Chinese food laid out. CLOSEUPS: The furniture and appliances made low for her. Emma wheels from the kitchen into the living dining area with plates.

NED

Where's your cat?

EMMA

Under my bed. She's afraid of you.
Felix? Who may I ask is Felix?

NED

I've never been so much in love in
my life. I've never been in love in
my life. Maybe it isn't it. Maybe
it's some sort of something else.
It could be, couldn't it? There's
so much death around.

EMMA

Tell him to come to me first thing
tomorrow. 7:30. Ned, goddamn it!

NED

What are we supposed to do -- be
with nobody ever?! It's not as easy
as you might think! Oh, Emma, I'm
sorry.

EMMA

Don't be. Polio was a virus, too.

NED

(delicately)
How'd you get it?

With no sentiment at all as they begin to eat --

EMMA

I was five-years-old. A woman from
the Bahamas came to our town
carrying the Polio virus.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EMMA (CONT'D)

She stayed with friends. Their kid was in my kindergarten class. Four of us in that class got polio. I was all dressed up in my Halloween costume to go trick-or-treating and my mother felt my forehead and put me to bed. In the middle of the night I realized my whole body except my arms and hands was paralyzed. I kept crying out to my mother "I can't move, I can't move."

Ned is getting very emotional, but Emma isn't.

EMMA (CONT'D)

They rushed me to the hospital and said I'd be dead in 24 hours. I fought, I lived.

NED

Were you in an iron lung?

EMMA

I was.

CUT TO:

Emma showing Ned photographs in her scrapbook.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Then I was in bed at home. I was connected to my classroom by a little loudspeaker. All the kids would be required to come and visit me. We'd say hello and then not know what to say next. They were terrified of me. Still are. I scare the shit out of people. The holy terror in the wheelchair.

NED

I'm scaring people, too.

EMMA

Learn how to use it! Don't need everybody's love and approval!

She starts to clear the plates and the cartons, he helps her.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA (CONT'D)

Ned, your organization is worthless. Before a vaccine is discovered, almost every gay man will have been exposed. I've seen over 300 cases -- me; one doctor.

NED

I can't get anyone important on our board. Guys who've made millions out of us...fashion, rock, movies, real estate, forget it. And every time Bruce doesn't agree with me he puts it to a board vote.

EMMA

And you lose.

NED

They won't print what I write! No passing along any sex recommendations, any information that isn't 100% certain.

EMMA

Nothing is 100% certain in science, so you won't be saying anything.

NED

Don't yell at me for what I'm not doing! What the fuck is your side doing? Where's your AMA?

(eying the pastries she's laid out)

Do you think that being Jewish makes you always hungry?

EMMA

I don't know. I'm not Jewish. I'm German.

NED

Everyone thinks you're Jewish.

EMMA

I know. In medicine that helps.

NED

You had to stay in bed all the way through school?

EMMA

I graduated college first in my class. Medical school, too.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

EMMA (CONT'D)

By college I had my first braces
and I could walk a little. I don't
walk so good anymore but that's
because I'm too busy to practice.

NED

You must practice! Right now! Come
on, right now. No, I mean it. Come
on.

He goes to the little stereo and puts on a record.

NED (CONT'D)

May I have this dance?

EMMA

Okay, you asked for it.

Shots of Emma getting her braces and starting to strap them
on. She has trouble reaching and Ned comes to help her,
placing them into even more intimate contact.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Get my crutches. The corner.

He gives Emma the crutches. She pulls herself up and out of
the wheelchair. She hobbles forward clumsily, putting her
feet in front of each other more or less satisfactorily. But
then she makes a misstep and tries to get her balance. She
cannot and falls into his arms. The intimacy of this moment
is thrilling to Ned, to both of them. They dance.

NED

I'm afraid to leave him alone now.
I'm afraid the cure won't come in
time. I'm afraid of my anger. I'm a
terrible leader and a useless lover
and...

EMMA

And a lousy dancer. Put me back.

Ned holds on to her very tightly. She embraces him back
tightly too.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Polio was a virus, too. Nobody gets
polio anymore.

He kisses her, grabs his coat, leaves. She looks after him.
She's alone. Her cat jumps into her lap.

1984

74 EXT. SUBWAY. DAY 74

A dark gloomy winter day. We are ON THE BACK of a person in a baggy black coat. We follow him down the stairs and into...

75 INT. SUBWAY CAR. DAY 75

...as the doors close. The subway car starts moving. CAMERA comes around to reveal it's Felix, now shockingly twenty pounds thinner, swallowed up in his black fashionable coat. He holds a pole, notices --

A MAN WITH AIDS, sitting alone. The man is Auschwitz thin and has Kaposi lesions on his face. He is clearly at the end. Felix just stares at him, at the death skull, terrified this is going to be his fate.

76 INT. UNDERGROUND ROOM. CITY HALL. DAY (PHASE 1) 76

Ned paces back and forth, angry. He, Bruce, Mickey, Morton are like caged animals, looking at their watches.

NED

Where is he? I mean we've been here for an hour and a half. Who are these people? We're in a fucking dungeon here. He can't do this to us! HE CANNOT DO THIS TO US AND GET AWAY WITH IT!

He paces and paces. Tommy rushes in.

TOMMY

Did you start? No. Okay. God. Hey.

BRUCE

Hi.

TOMMY

Jesus Christ what a tomb. Do they not want us to be seen above ground? Where is he? I'm an hour late.

NED

An hour and a half.

TOMMY

Don't start on me, lambchop.

BRUCE

Tommy where were you?

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY

I was up at Bellevue. I had to put a sweet dying child together with his momma. They hadn't seen each other for 15 years and he'd never told her he was gay. He didn't wanna see her. He refused to see her for weeks. Oh he was angry when I waltzed in with her and... It was a real weeper, Momma holding her son. He's dead now.

(CONTINUED)

Hiram Keebler, the Mayor's gay assistant, comes in.

HIRAM

I'm truly sorry I'm late. I'm Hiram Keebler.

TOMMY

Hello. Are you related to the folks who make the crackers? I'm kidding. I'm Tommy Boatwright.

NED

Ned Weeks.

BRUCE

Bruce Niles. I'm the President.

HIRAM

The Mayor wants you to know how much he cares and how impressed he is with how you're shouldering your own responsibilities.

BRUCE

Thank you.

Hiram slips him his card, which Bruce pockets.

NED

Thank you? Responsibilities? Everything we're doing is stuff you guys should be doing. And we need help.

TOMMY

What Mr. Weeks is trying to say, sir, is just that we're swamped. And we're fielding over 500 calls a day on our emergency hotline. And we're providing information that quite frankly the city should be providing, and isn't.

BRUCE

Sir, we need office space. We have one small room and we have over 100 people calling and walking in and out every day and plus it's real hard when people don't want to rent to us because of...

HIRAM

Whoa. That's illegal discrimination.

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY

Yeah we know that to be true, sir.

MICKEY

Mr. Keebler, it is not illegal to discriminate against homosexuals.

NED

We have been trying for 14 months to see the Mayor. It's taken us a year to get this meeting with you. You're an hour and a half late. Have you told the Mayor there's an epidemic going on?

HIRAM

Says who?

TOMMY

The government.

HIRAM

Which government? What our government? An epidemic?

MICKEY

The Centers for Disease Control declared it.

TOMMY

Seventeen months ago.

NED

You can't not know this!

HIRAM

Could you please reduce your level of hysteria?

NED

Certainly. New York City. San Francisco. Los Angeles. Chicago. Boston. Denver... Every single major American city now is showing cases. At least twenty-five foreign countries. But New York City, our home, the city you have pledged to protect, has more than half of everything, half the cases, half the dead. I know 57 of the dead ones. I don't want to know any more! Now. When do we get to see the Mayor? Fourteen months is a long time to be out to lunch.

(CONTINUED)

HIRAM

You wait a minute!

NED

No, you wait a minute! We can't. Time is not on our side. Now if you won't take word to the Mayor, what are we gonna do? Hire a hunky hustler and send him up to Gracie Mansion with a plea tattooed to his cock?

HIRAM

Mayor Koch is not gay!

TOMMY

Oh, come on, Blanche!

HIRAM

(confidentially)

Listen, don't you think I want to help you? I have a friend who is dying of this shit right now in the VA Hospital. But it's very tricky. You can see that. It is very tricky.

NED

Tricky, shit! There are a million gay people in New York. A million and one, counting you.

HIRAM

You know what? A fire goes out in a school furnace on the West Side, I get 3000 calls. In one day. You know what I mean? If so many of you are so upset, why do I only hear from this loudmouth?

NED

That's a very good question.

HIRAM

Okay, so there are half a million gay men in our area. 315 cases doesn't seem too high, considering how many of us -- I mean of you -- there are.

NED

This is bullshit.

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

Ned! Please. Look, I understand
this is tricky, sir, but we need
your help.

(CONTINUED)

HIRAM

(leaving)

I think, that is the Mayor thinks,
you guys are overreacting.

NED

(physically pulling him
back)

You tell that cocksucker he is a
selfish, heartless, son of a bitch!

HIRAM

(To Mickey)

You are Michael R. Marcus. You hold
an unsecured job with the city's
Department of Health. I'd watch out
for your friends if I were you.

As he's exiting, Ned throws his files at him. Stunned
silence.

MICKEY

I don't believe that just happened.

NED

Mickey, I am going on the Today
Show tomorrow and I am telling them
that the Mayor just threatened your
job to shut us up.

MICKEY

The Today Show! You're gonna what?!

Mickey, Morton, then Bruce go out quickly.

NED

They are treating us like shit! And
we're allowing them! You know
politicians. The only thing they
respond to is pressure! You heard
him and his 3000 West Side calls.
We're not yelling loud enough!

Bruce comes back and pulls Tommy...

BRUCE

Get your stuff. Get your stuff.

Ned is left alone in the room.

A77

INT. BLACKNESS. DAY

A77

Hear a PHONE RINGING. Two rings. Tommy answers it.

(CONTINUED)

A77 CONTINUED:

TOMMY'S VOICE

This is Tommy.

NED'S VOICE

Tommy, it's Ned. Nick died.

COME UP to reveal...

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE. DAY

Tommy sits at his desk.

TOMMY

Shit. Goddamn.

NED'S VOICE

I'll call later when I know more
about the memorial.Ned hangs up. Tommy sits there in shock for a bit, then
starts going through a ROLODEX.

B77 EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR. DAY

B77

Men in black, some carrying umbrellas, go up the steps.

TOMMY'S VOICE

I have this tradition...it's
something I do now when a friend
dies.

C77 INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE. DAY

C77

Tommy pulls out a Rolodex card with Nick's name on it. He
stares at it with emotion.

TOMMY'S VOICE

I save his Rolodex card. What am I
supposed to do, throw them away in
the trashcan?

D77 INT. FUNERAL PARLOR. DAY

D77

NICK is dead in a casket. Tommy speaks to a room of MEN.

TOMMY

I won't do that. No, I won't.
That's too final. A year ago I had
five cards. Now I have fifty, a
collection of cardboard tombstones
bound together with a rubberband. I
hate these fucking funerals, I
really do. And you know what else I
hate? The memorials.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

D77 CONTINUED:

TOMMY (CONT'D)

That's our social life now, going to these things, and everybody's trying to outdo everybody else. We don't celebrate life anymore because what's the point? Everyone's on borrowed time. We've become more comfortable with death, sad to say. No hopes and dreams to be dashed with that.

E77 OMITTED

E77

F77 INT. FUNERAL PARLOR. DAY

F77

Tommy pauses.

TOMMY

Nick was a choreographer, I don't know how many of you know that, he was just starting out, he didn't tell a lot of people, he was waiting to invite you all to his debut at Carnegie Hall or some shit so we could be proud of him.

(breaking)

But he was so good. He had such promise.

(then)

We are losing an entire generation. Young men at the beginning, just gone. Choreographers, playwrights, dancers, actors. All those plays that won't get written now. All those dances never to be danced.

A beat, he looks over at the body in the open casket.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Nick, last year you sent me anonymous flowers on Valentine's Day because you knew I didn't have a Valentine. I knew you were the Secret Admirer, but I didn't let on. I wish now I had hugged you and said thank you. It got me through the day.

Everyone is crying now.

(CONTINUED)

F77 CONTINUED:

F77

TOMMY (CONT'D)

In closing, I'm just gonna say I'm mad. I'm fucking mad. I keep screaming inside why are they letting us die? Why is no one helping us? And here's the truth, here's the answer -- they just don't like us.

He sits down next to Ned. Silence.

77 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. NIGHT

77

Ned enters, exhausted from the fight. As he puts his keys on a table and heads toward the bedroom --

NED'S VOICE

Once upon a time there was a little boy who always wanted to love another little boy. All his life that's all he wanted.

78 INT. NED'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

78

Ned enters and stops. We see what he sees: Felix has lost control of his bowels in the bed, the white duvet is stained with shit. A trail of diarrhea heads to the bathroom.

NED'S VOICE

One day he finally found that love, and it was wonderful.

79 INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

79

Ned runs in, Felix is half sitting on the toilet still shitting and half vomiting into the sink. Ned grabs him before he falls over.

NED'S VOICE

I'm supposed to use gloves. I'm supposed to do this. I'm supposed to do that. I'm supposed to not kiss him.

Ned leans Felix into his body, grabs some toilet tissue, wipes Felix's ass. He then grabs a washcloth and wipes Felix's face.

NED'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I'm not supposed to be only 45 years old and taking care of a 35-year-old young man who's 100 years old and dying.

(CONTINUED)

79	CONTINUED:	79
	Clean up done, Ned tenderly kisses the top of Felix's head and hauls him to a standing position and walks him back to bed.	
80	OMITTED	80
81	INT. NED'S BEDROOM. NIGHT	81
	Ned has put clean sheets on the bed, Felix is in the bed, facing away from Ned as he cleans up the diarrhea on the floor. Sam the dog watches quietly from a corner and Ned scrubs, on his hands and knees.	
	NED'S VOICE	
	Emma calls it a seesaw. He's fine, he gets sick, he gets better, he gets sicker.	
82	OMITTED	82
83	OMITTED	83
84	OMITTED	84

84 CONTINUED:

84

85 INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

85

Ned and Felix (in his pajamas) watch an old movie as they pet Sam. Felix turns to silently look at Ned.

NED'S VOICE

He's afraid I'll leave him. I told him I wouldn't leave him. That I never for one second think of leaving him. But he doesn't believe me.

Felix suddenly stands and heads for the bathroom. Ned sees he's had an accident in his pajama bottoms.

NED'S VOICE (CONT'D)

It's hard to believe in much these days. But we must never stop believing in each other.

86 INT. SHOWER. NIGHT

86

Ned is giving Felix a shower, Felix holding onto a bar installed for this. We see now the wreck and tragedy that is his body, from head to toe, as Ned with a hand shower cleans him off. Felix starts to sob, he is so helpless.

87 INT. LAUNDRY ROOM IN APARTMENT BASEMENT. NIGHT

87

Ned puts Felix's shit-stained pajamas in the laundry machine, feeds the quarters. He suddenly breaks, starts to cry, months of pain exploding out of him.

NED'S VOICE

I'm a mess. That's what I am. You cry and you cry until you think you can't cry anymore and then you cry some more.

88 INT. NED'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

88

Ned crawls into bed and holds a sleeping Felix.

(CONTINUED)

NED'S VOICE

Not only for yourself and Felix but
for all the little boys who finally
found their other little boys
they've wanted all their lives, now
that we're men.

INT. EMMA'S EXAMINING ROOM. DAY

Felix stands in an examining gown. He looks very vulnerable
and heartbreaking. Emma examines him.

FELIX

I'm going to beat it.
I've always been lucky.

EMMA

Good. That's the right attitude.

FELIX

I wanted a job on the Times, I got
it. I wanted Ned... Have I given it
to Ned?

EMMA

I don't know.

She opens the back of the gown, sees his back is covered with
the KS lesions now. She's rattled, heartbroken, but moves
forward with the exam.

FELIX

Can he catch it from me now?
Did he give it to me?

EMMA

One person has a cold, hepatitis,
sometimes the partner catches it,
sometimes not.

FELIX

Some doctors are saying it's okay
if we use condoms.

EMMA

I know they are.

FELIX

Can we kiss?

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

Felix, you have nothing to fight back with. You have no immune system to speak of. Your body is now open to every conceivable kind of infection. You must be careful. I'm going to do my damndest. So must you.

FELIX

I bet you say that to all the boys.

EMMA

As a matter of fact, I do.

Ned wakes up. Felix isn't there. Ned bolts up to look for him. Felix, dressed, is taking his coat from a hook. A small suitcase. Ned practically tackles him.

NED

No way. There will be absolutely no argument or discussion on this matter. None. N-O-N-E. I promise you I'm going to tie the Mayor up until he calls the President and screams Help. We're going to live to be grumpy old men! Now promise me you won't do this again.

Another big tacky shabby office. Commissioner Sencer, a burned out case, sits facing an audience of a dozen or so scattered attendees. Mickey sits beside him, embarrassed to be here. A few familiar faces -- Buzzy, Morton, busy making notes, Bruce...Ned is sitting bored out of his mind, with his eyes closed.

COMMISSIONER

I have been assured by the Centers for Disease Control that this has not and most likely will not enter the General Population...isn't that right, Marcus?

MICKEY

Yes sir. That's what you said they said, sir.

Ned's eyes open and he will now go ballistic. He grabs a newspaper out of his attaché case.

NED

Whoa! Wait a minute, Commissioner Dr. Sencer, if you please. You have just uttered one fat fucking lie. And what's more you know it! I hold up evidence to present to this stupid useless Inter-Agency Task Force the Mayor has called into being to show the city that he is doing something, this copy of the London Observer newspaper which has the following headline, and I quote, "One out of every four new cases is now occurring in a heterosexual."

He runs through the aisles shoving the Observer in front of everyone's faces.

NED (CONT'D)

See! One out of four. Straight people. Men and women who fuck with each other. Het-er-o-sex-u-als... Infecting each other. Commissioner Sencer, have you talked to your friends in London? In Washington? Isn't there some oath you swear in medical school? To honesty, to truth?

He rams the paper into Sencer's face and leaves. After he's gone a second, he comes back in and literally pulls Lee and Buzzy out by their clothes. Morton pushes him away, staring at him as if he's staring at a crazy man.

NED (CONT'D)

Don't you stay here listening to this shit one more minute! Come on! Get up off your asses! Get!

BRUCE

Stop it, just stop it!

Ned is startled, gathers himself. He realizes his guys aren't following him.

NED

(to Dr. Sencer)

By the way, Doc. I like to think I am part of the General Population. A lot of us do. Don't we, Mick? You might want to make a note of that.

92 OMITTED 92

93 INT. FIRST GMHC OFFICE. DAY (**PHASE 1**) 93

A madhouse. Everyone on never-stopping-ringing phones. Tommy with a couple more -- Grady and Lenny, two young volunteers. Estelle and her older friend Gloria.

ESTELLE

Estelle speaking. How may I assist you?

(to the room)

Someone needs a will.

MICKEY

Another will!

TOMMY

Give him this number.

Bruce comes in from the street in a suit, with attaché case.

GRADY

(picking up ringing phone)

GMHC.

LENNY

GMHC.

GRADY

I only joined to find a boyfriend.

TOMMY

Good luck.

GLORIA

(to Tommy)

I know just the boy for you.

TOMMY

Boy? I want a man!

ESTELLE

Tommy, I think I got us maybe four qualified social workers to volunteer. They're all lesbians.

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY

Thank God for the lesbians.

Mickey is going nuts on the phones.

MICKEY

Your anus? Oh the planet Uranus.
Thank you for sharing.

BRUCE

Mickey, why aren't you in Rio?

PHIL

I put the phones on service. You
guys should get some rest. We don't
want any burnout.

TOMMY

Goodnight, Phil. Thanks.
(Phil leaves)
Phil got diagnosed today.

Silence. Then --

BRUCE

Mickey, why aren't you on vacation
in Rio?

MICKEY

I was in Rio. Gregory and I, we
just got there, day before
yesterday, I get a phone call, from
Hiram's office, I'm told to be in
his office, right away, this
morning --

BRUCE

From Rio? What kind of meeting?

MICKEY

I get to City Hall, Hiram keeps me
waiting forever, finally the
Commissioner comes out and says
Hiram doesn't want to see me
anymore. I wanted to scream "I
haven't slept in two days, you dumb
fuck!" but I didn't. Instead I
said, "Please sir, then why did he
make me come all the way back from
Rio?" He says, "I'm afraid he
didn't take me into his
confidence," and he walks away.

(waving a copy of the
Native)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Ned's article attacking Hiram just came out!

Ned is seen having entered, standing on the side, listening.

NED

What about it, Mick?

MICKEY

You keep trying to get us to say things we don't want to say! And I don't think we can afford to make so many enemies before we have enough friends.

NED

We'll never have enough friends.

MICKEY

We can't like magic all turn into nuns!

NED

Terry Spalding is calling all his friends from under his oxygen tent to say goodbye. Tibby Maurer took an overdose. Hal Schecter has stumps for feet. Frannie Santuzza has lost his mind.

MICKEY

STOP IT!

TOMMY

Mickey, are you all right?

MICKEY

I don't think so. Why can't they find the virus?

TOMMY

It takes time.

MICKEY

I work all day for the city writing stuff on breastfeeding versus formula and how to stay calm when you have herpes and I work all night on our newsletter and my health column for the Native and I can't take it anymore. I've written about every single theory. Repeated infection by a virus. New appearance by a dormant virus.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Single virus. New virus. Old virus.
Multi-virus. Partial virus.
Latent virus. Mutant virus. Retro
virus.

TOMMY

Take it easy, honey.

MICKEY

And we mustn't forget fucking,
sucking, kissing, blood, voodoo,
drugs, poppers, needles, Africa,
Haiti, Cuba, blacks, amoebas, pigs,
mosquitoes, monkeys -- what if it
isn't any of them!

TOMMY

I don't know.

MICKEY

The Great Plague of London was
caused by drinking water from a
pump nobody noticed. Maybe it's
predisposition or the theory of the
herd -- only so many of us will get
it and then the pool's used up.
What if it's monogamy? Bruce, you
and I could actually be worse off
because of constant bombardment
from a single source -- our lovers!
Maybe guys who go to the baths
regularly have built up the best
immunity. I don't know what to tell
anybody. And everybody asks me! I
don't know -- who's right? I don't
know -- who's wrong? I feel so
inadequate. How can we tell people
to stop when it might be caused by
-- I DON'T KNOW!

BRUCE

That's exactly how I feel.

MICKEY

But maybe he's right! And that
scares me, too. Neddie -- you scare
me! Do you think the President
really wants this to happen? Do you
think the CIA really has unleashed
germ warfare to kill off all the
queers Jerry Falwell doesn't want?

NED

Mickey, try and hold on.

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY

To what? I used to love my country. The Native received an anonymous letter describing top-secret Defense Department experiments at Fort Detrick, Maryland, that have produced a virus that can destroy the immune system. Its code name is Firm Hand. They started testing it in 1978 -- on a group of gays. I never used to believe shit like this. They are going to persecute us! Cancel our health insurance. Quarantine us, put us in camps. And you think I am killing people!

NED

That is not what I said!

MICKEY

You did, you did, I know you did! I've spent fifteen years of my life fighting for our right to be free and make love wherever, whenever... and you're telling me that all those years of what being gay stood for is wrong -- and I'm a murderer. We have been so lonely and oppressed! Don't you remember? I don't think Ned likes himself very much! Can't you see how important it is for us to love openly, without hiding, without guilt? Can't you see that? Can't you? I went to the top of the Empire State Building...

TOMMY

I'm taking you home.

MICKEY

You can jump off when no one is looking.

TOMMY

Let's go home.

MICKEY

Ned, I'm not a murderer. All my life I've been hated. For being gay. For being short. For being Jewish.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Ned...someday someone is going to come along and stick the knife in you and tell you everything you fought for all your life is SHIT!

Mickey lunges furiously for Ned, only to be caught in time by Tommy and Bruce.

TOMMY

I'm taking you home.

MICKEY

Take me to St. Vincent's. I don't want to go home.

TOMMY

We're all real tired. We got ourselves a lot of bereavement overload.

(snatching coats Bruce hands him)

You two best start accommodating each other now, or we're in real trouble.

MICKEY

We're the fighters, aren't we?

TOMMY

You bet, sweetness. And you're a hero. Whether you know it or not. You're our first hero.

Tommy takes Mickey out. Ned and Bruce are alone.

BRUCE

Do you want to be President?

NED

I just want Felix to live.

A phone rings. Finally Ned picks it up.

NED (CONT'D)

Hiram, old buddy, how they hanging?

(Listens. Hangs up.)

You ready? The Mayor has found a secret little fund for giving away money secretly. We're not allowed to tell anyone where we got it. If we tell we'll never get anymore.

BRUCE

How much?

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (6)

NED
Nine thousand dollars.

BRUCE
Ned, Albert is dead.

As Ned just stares at him --

94 INT. BAR. NIGHT (**PHASE 1**)

94

Ned and Bruce at their hangout.

NED
I didn't know he was so close.

BRUCE
He wouldn't tell anyone. I think I
loved Albert best of all, and he
went so fast. His mother wanted him
back in Phoenix before he died,
this was last week when it was
obvious, so I got permission from
Emma -- and took him to the
airport.

95 OMITTED

95

96 OMITTED

96

97 OMITTED

97

98 INT. PLANE. DAY

98

The plane packed. Bruce and Albert seated together. Albert, under blankets, stares into space. Bruce, nervous and upset, notices that the pilot and the stewardesses are looking at them, talking about them.

BRUCE (V.O.)

The pilot wouldn't take off and I refused to leave the plane. You would have been proud of me.

99 OMITTED

99

100 INT. PLANE. DAY

100

Another pilot enters, the stewardesses look at Bruce and Albert with disdain.

BRUCE (V.O.)

So finally they get another pilot.

101 OMITTED

101

102 INT. PLANE. DAY

102

The plane is in flight. Albert tries to stand up, with his seat belt still on. When Bruce tries to keep him seated, Albert starts hitting him. Bruce tries to hold him in an embrace.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Then, after we take off, Albert loses his mind, not recognizing me, not knowing where he is or that he's going home, and he becomes --

Shot of Albert's feet as urine and diarrhea seep down his legs and on to the floor. Vomit is coming out of his mouth. Bruce grabs a bag and pulls out clothes and a towel, anything and everything to mop Albert up and then to wrap him in the blanket. Albert is very uncooperative.

BRUCE

Please, Albert. Please, no more. Hold it in, man. I beg you, just for us, for Bruce and Albert --

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

Albert collapses back into his seat, eyes filled with tears. Bruce is stuffing the soiled stuff back into the suitcase. Nearby passengers moving away fast.

BRUCE (V.O.)

And when we get to Phoenix --
there's a police van waiting for
us, all the boys dressed up like
fucking astronauts --

103 OMITTED

103

104 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. PHOENIX. DAY

104

Attempts have been made to make the room cheery. Albert's mother stands watching as the stretcher bearing her son, followed by Bruce, is wheeled in by the attendants, still in their protective masks and clothing.

BRUCE (V.O.)

-- and by the time we get to the
hospital, where his mother had
fixed up the room real nice --

Shot of Albert.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Albert is dead. The hospital
doctors refuse to examine him to
put a cause of death on the death
certificate. And without a death
certificate the undertakers won't
take him away. And neither will the
police. Finally some orderly comes
in and --

105 OMITTED

105

106 INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR. HOSPITAL. PHOENIX. NIGHT 106

As Orderly and Bruce stuff Albert in huge Glad Bag.

BRUCE (V.O.)
-- stuffs Albert in a heavy-duty
Glad Bag and he --

107 EXT. HOSPITAL MAINTENANCE AREA. PHOENIX. NIGHT 107

Orderly rolls Glad Bag over an edge so it falls right beside the garbage cans and trash waiting for removal.

BRUCE (V.O.)
-- puts him out in the back alley
with the garbage.

ORDERLY
Hey, man, I've done you a favor. I
got him out. I want fifty bucks.

Bruce, beyond any understanding of anything, pays the guy automatically. Bruce and Albert's mother drag the Glad Bag to a car and heft it into the back seat.

108 EXT. FUNERAL HOME. DAY 108

A black undertaker hands Bruce a small box. Bruce hands him a wad of bills, which the Undertaker counts.

UNDERTAKER
One thousand dollars. No questions
asked.

109 INT. BAR. NIGHT (**PHASE 1**) 109

Ned takes Bruce's hand from across the table.

BRUCE
Would you and Felix mind if I spent
the night on your sofa? Just one
night. I don't want to go home.

110 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. NIGHT 110

Ned is typing furiously. We hear Felix in the bedroom, coughing.

NED (V.O.)
I AM TELLING YOU THEY ARE MURDERING
US AND WE ARE LETTING THEM!

TYPING SOUND continues as Ned goes into the bedroom, feels Felix. He's soaking wet.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110

NED (V.O.)

"We are going to die and we are
going to die very soon unless you
get off your fucking asses and
fight back!"

111 EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM. NYU MEDICAL CENTER. NIGHT

111

Ned and Felix get out of a cab. Emma is there to meet them.
Felix is wrapped in a blanket so we hardly see his face.

112 INT. FELIX'S HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

112

Flowers already wilting. There are two beds. Ned's stuff is
here, too. Ned, lying next to Felix, is feeding him some ice
cream. Felix is connected to an IV.

FELIX

Have you talked to your brother
yet? I'll remember that about you --
that you don't talk to the people
you love most in the world. You are
a hard, unyielding man, Alexander.

(no answer)

You want me to get better and I'm
not getting better and I feel so
fucking guilty.

Ned pauses, stands, grabs a pen, takes Felix's fancy leather
work calender. Starts flipping through it.

NED

(dry)

You have a lunch meeting with Bill
Blass on Friday. Fancy.

FELIX

I'll call with my regrets.
(as Ned starts scribbling)
What are you doing?

NED

Making a date with you. Two months
from now. I've been invited to
speak at Yale's Gay Week and we are
going. Remember, I told you about
those dances they have now?

(then)

You're my date.

They both get emotional for a beat. Then Ned gets into bed
and holds him.

(CONTINUED)

NED (CONT'D)

I want you to live so much. I'm not
supposed to say that.

FELIX

Please God, give us one more year.
I promise I'll eat my spinach.

113 INT. FELIX'S HOSPITAL ROOM. VERY EARLY MORNING 113

Ned, in p.j.s, and Felix are asleep in each other's arms. Emma opens the door on her early morning rounds. She looks at them both sleeping.

114 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. DAY 114

Tommy, carrying suitcases and packages, helps Ned bring Felix back home. Sam goes crazy. Felix is weak but stops to play with Sam.

TOMMY

Estelle made you stuffed cabbage.
Come on, Tommy's going to put you
back to bed.

Tommy helps Felix to the bedroom. Ned stands alone, watching them, he is slowly becoming undone.

115 INT. NED'S APARTMENT. NIGHT (LATER) 115

Ned and Tommy pour over medical literature. Lit only by desk light. Ned vibrates with determination.

NED

There's this new drug in Paris.
Kessler's lover just flew over to
get it.
(pulls out newsletter)
Here is it. HPA-23.

TOMMY

Ned...he looks awful.

NED

You think this is anything? Or just
a shit drug like all the rest.

TOMMY

Ned, I think you have to prepare
yourself for letting go.

NED

No. No, no, no! You can't stop
fighting for the ones you love.
Haven't you ever had to fight for
someone you love?

Tommy just looks at him. Then he begins to cry. Ned takes him in his arms.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

NED (CONT'D)

You've got to start putting
yourself out there so everyone can
see what I see.

TOMMY

I measure them all against you.
That's the problem. I'm just a hick
from Alabama. What the fuck did I
know about the big city? You've
been my teacher. And what you and
Felix have is so beautiful...

NED

You have to find your own Felix.
Teacher's orders. And I do love
you. You know that, don't you?

TOMMY

Yes.
(pulling himself together)
What kind of fucked up love scene
is this?

The phone rings. Ned looks at his watch, picks up the phone.

NED

Yes? Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am, 4:30
tomorrow. Yes ma'am.

He hangs up the phone and let's out a shriek.

NED (CONT'D)

THE FUCKING WHITE HOUSE! FUCK THE
MAYOR! I've been summoned to the
White House! They're going to do
something!

116 EXT. WASHINGTON. ESTABLISHING SHOT. DAY 116

117 EXT. WHITE HOUSE. DAY 117

Ned at the gate, having his ID checked. He looks up at the
place. He strides confidently forward.

118 INT. OFFICE OF JOHN BRUNO. DAY (**PHASE 1**) 118

A sign on his desk "John Bruno, Advisor to the President".

NED

So just so I understand. What
exactly does your title mean? In
terms of our plague?

(CONTINUED)

BRUNO

We prefer not to use negative terms. It only scares people.

NED

Well there's 3,339 cases so far. 1,122 dead. Sounds like a plague to me. I'm scared. Aren't you? What does what does your title mean again?

BRUNO

I come up with ideas for the President about what he ought to be doing and not doing.

NED

OK good, got it. So the money's there, right? It just hasn't been spent. So there's this new drug in France. Why doesn't the NIH study it? I mean what I want...what we want...what we desperately need is for somebody to help us cut through all this red tape.

BRUNO

I can assure you that not a week goes by that I don't bring new information and reports to the President. The progress that's been made on this disease is unprecedented...

NED

But it's contagious! Can't you see that because it's contagious you have to work faster?

BRUNO

Do you really believe that anybody in a serious public policy position, in their heart of hearts, or even in their most closeted meeting, says to each other "Hey guys, let's not get too upset about this."

NED

Yes. Your boss hasn't said the word AIDS out loud.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (2)

BRUNO

(closes door to office)

Answer me one question. Um. This
shit, can can hookers get it? Or
someone who had a one night stand?

NED

Of course!

BRUNO

You can't prove that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (3)

BRUNO (CONT'D)

I mean from what I understand, from what I've read, female to male transmission through normal vaginal intercourse does not seem to be very efficient.

NED

That simply isn't true. It's a virus. It doesn't discriminate.

BRUNO

Yes but it's very difficult isn't it? It's almost impossible for a straight you know regular heterosexual guy to get it, am I right?

NED

I'm sorry?

BRUNO

There's no documented cases, am I right? There's not a single documented case of a heterosexual man getting it. Not from fucking or a blow-job...

NED

I don't have that information.

BRUNO

Great, that's what I thought.

(walks to phone on desk)

Susan, call my meeting. I'll be about 15 minutes late. Thanks.

(hands Ned his card)

Thank you so much.

Ned realizes in this moment this is the ONLY reason Bruno is seeing him.

NED

Wait.

BRUNO

Call me anytime.

NED

Sir, wait.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (4)

118

And he's out. Ned follows Bruno into the hallway, stunned as he realizes this entire meeting was granted only to soothe a straight man's fears. A beat, he looks at the closed door, where the President sits.

NED (CONT'D)

(loudly)

100 million predicted and no one is
paying any attention!

SECRETARY

I need security on the second
floor.

119 INT. OLD BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MEDICAL AMPHITHEATER. DAY 119

A huge, ancient amphitheater used for med school lectures. Emma is finishing a presentation. She faces a group of doctors who sit behind a long table covered with papers. She's been coughing and wheezing and will use a nebulizer to control it. Various slides of impressive and incomprehensible data are flicking on the large screen overhead. The hall is filled with various observers -- staff from the hospital and medical center of course, but also a group of Emma's patients, in various stages of health, sitting up front with Buzzy. Ned sits beaming in the front row with Tommy and Bruce and holding Felix's hand.

EMMA

(finishing)

I am taking care of more victims of
this disease than anyone in the
world. We have more frozen blood
samples, more data of every kind,
and much more experience. I am
confident that all this will yield
results.

Emma finishes her remarks, smiles, and nods to the table of doctors. There is wild applause.

CUT TO:

The audience has left. The doctors have not. Buzzy, Ned and Tommy remain.

EXAMINING DOCTOR

(Looking up finally)

Dr. Brookner, the government's
position is this. There are five
million dollars in the pipeline,
for which we've received over 55
million dollars worth of requests.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

Five million doesn't seem quite right for some two thousand cases. The government spent three million investigating 7 deaths from Tylenol. We are entering the third year...

EXAMINING DOCTOR

Unfortunately President Reagan has threatened to veto. As you know he has gone on record as being unalterably and irrevocably opposed to anything that might be construed as an endorsement of -- homosexuality.

EMMA

It looks like we continue to have a pretty successful stalemate.

EXAMINING DOCTOR

We have voted to reject your application for funding.

EMMA

Oh? I would like to hear your reasons.

EXAMINING DOCTOR

The direction of the research you're suggesting is imprecise and unfocused.

EMMA

Oh, it is, is it? You don't know what's going on any more than I do. Could you tell me precisely why you're blocking my efforts?

EXAMINING DOCTOR

Dr. Brookner, while we pay tribute to you as a pioneer, there are now other investigators. It's no longer just your disease, though you seem to think it is.

EMMA

Oh, I do, do I? And you're here to take it away from me, is that it? Well, I'll let you in on a little secret, Doctor. You can have it. I didn't want it in the first place.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EMMA (CONT'D)

You think it's a privilege to watch young men die? Oh, what am I arguing with you for? You don't know enough to study boiled water. How dare you come and judge me!

EXAMINING DOCTOR

We only serve on this peer review panel at the behest of Dr. Murray.

EMMA

Another idiot. And by the way, a closeted homosexual doing everything in his power to sweep this under the rug. And I vowed I'd never say anything like that in public. How does it always happen that all the idiots are always on your team? How can you not fund my research or invite me to participate in yours? Your National Institutes of Health received my first request for money two years ago. It took you one year just to print up application forms. It's taken you three years from my first reported case just to show up here for a look. The paltry amount of money you are forcing us to beg for, from the four billion dollars you now receive each and every year to protect the health of the American People, won't come to anyone until only God knows when. A promising virus has already been discovered, in France. Why are you refusing to cooperate with the French? Why are we told not to cooperate with the French? Just so you can steal a Nobel Prize? While something is being passed around that causes death! Women have been discovered to have it in Africa -- where it is clearly transmitted heterosexually. It is only a question of time. We could all be dead before you do anything! You want my data?

(Hurls out files)

You want my ideas?

(Hurls out more files)

You want my patients? Take them! TAKE THEM! Just do something with them!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: (3)

119

EMMA (CONT'D)
You're fucking right I am imprecise
and unfocused. And you are all
idiots!

She breaks down. Ned and Buzzy race to her.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Don't touch me!

She is sobbing.

120 EXT. LENOX HILL HOSPITAL. DAY

120

Pouring rain. TV camera covering Ned and a few others. We see the signs. OUR BACHELOR MAYOR LETS GAY MEN DIE. COME OUT OF THE CLOSET, MAYOR KOCH, AND SAVE YOUR DYING BROTHERS!

121 INT. NEW (SECOND) GMHC OFFICE. DAY

121

A raw space, empty. Bruce, Joey, Dan, Morton all here, trying not to look at Ned, who stands alone.

BRUCE
This is perfect for our new
offices.

DICK
You organized that picketing of the
Mayor?
(Ned nods)
And those signs?
(Ned nods)
Your next play is about a First
Lady who gave the best blowjobs in
Hollywood?
(Ned nods)

Sounds from outside, down on the street.

122 EXT. STREET. NEW GMHC OFFICE. DAY

122

People of all ages, carrying signs KEEP YOUR DISEASE OUT OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. COCKSUCKERS DESERVE TO DIE. I THANK THE LORD EVERY TIME HE KILLS ONE OF YOU. I HOPE THEY NEVER FIND A CURE. GOD LOVES YOU. KILL A QUEER FOR CHRIST TODAY. Tommy comes hurrying toward the building. One of the picketers tries to prevent him entering. Tommy hauls off and decks him.

123 INT. NEW GMHC OFFICE. DAY

123

As Tommy enters.

(CONTINUED)

NED

The Mayor has 4 more hours before we carry out our threat of civil disobedience if he doesn't meet with us. Don't worry, a bunch of us are doing this on our own.

BRUCE

Tommy got the call.

NED

Why didn't you tell me? You see, it works! What time?

BRUCE

We can only bring two people.

NED

What time!

BRUCE

Tommy is the Executive Director.

NED

I'm going.

BRUCE

I polled the board.

NED

I wrote that letter to the Mayor. I got 60 gay organizations to sign it. I organized the picketing when the prick didn't respond. That meeting is mine! It took me 21 months to get it and goddamnit I am going to go to it representing this organization that I have spent every minute of my life fighting for and that was started in my living room or I quit.

(No response. Dawns on him)

You'd let me quit? Just when you need me most? In the whole world our Mayor is the one person most responsible for letting this epidemic get out of control and grow into a plague. And now you're going to kiss his ass?

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE

(takes out a letter)

The board wanted me to read you this. "We are circulating this letter widely among people of judgment and good sense. We take this action to try to combat your damage, wrought, so far as we can see, by your having no scruples whatever. You are on a colossal ego trip we must curtail. To manipulate fear as you have done repeatedly is to us sheer barbarism. To exploit the deaths of gay men, as you have done on television and in publications all over America, is to us an act of inexcusable vandalism. And to attempt to justify your bursts of outrageous temper as "part of what it means to be Jewish" is past our comprehending. And, after years of liberation, you have helped make sex dirty again for us -- terrible and forbidden. We are more angry at you than ever in our lives toward anyone. We think you want to lead us all. Well, we do not want you to. In accordance with our by-laws as drawn up by Weeks, Frankel, Levinstein, Mr. Ned Weeks is hereby removed as a director of Gay Men's Health Crisis. We beg that you leave us quietly and not destroy us and what good work we manage despite your disapproval."

Note, during above we notice that Morton's lips are moving as Bruce reads. He is the writer of this letter.

Ned is clearing out stuff from his cubbyhole corner. Some volunteers watch nervously. Ned is pushing Tommy away. More volunteers will come in as the scene builds, until by the end the room is filled with people staring at Ned.

TOMMY

The Executive Director isn't on the board! I didn't have a vote! What could I have done?

(CONTINUED)

NED

You didn't support me! You're all nothing but undertakers! This organization is a funeral parlor! All you do is take care of the dying! Who's fighting so the living can go on living? Who's fighting for Felix?!!

He comes across an almanac of famous gay people. Bruce enters.

NED (CONT'D)

I belong to a culture that includes Marcel Proust, Walt Whitman, Tennessee Williams, James Baldwin, Byron, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Cole Porter, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, so many Popes and Cardinals you wouldn't believe.

(Grabs Bruce)

Hey, Mr. Green Beret, did you know it was an openly gay Englishman who was responsible for winning the Second World War? His name was Alan Turing and he cracked the German's Enigma code. After the war was over he committed suicide, he was so hounded for being gay. Why don't they teach any of this in the schools? A GAY MAN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR WINNING WORLD WAR TWO! If they did, maybe he wouldn't have killed himself and you wouldn't be so terrified of who you are. That's how I want to be remembered -- as one of the men who won the war. Bruce, I know I'm an asshole. But, please, don't shut me out.

Tommy's eyes are filled with tears. Bruce holds his arms out, not to Ned, but to the room, to follow him, which they do. He looks at Tommy, who exhales, shrugs, and starts out, only to change his mind and stay with Ned.

125 OMITTED 125

126 EXT. HAMPTONS SHACK. SUNSET (**PHASE 1**) 126

Ned gets out of his car, retrieves several bags of groceries, and goes inside. Sam is eating a bone on the porch.

127 INT. HAMPTONS SHACK. SUNSET 127

Felix is sitting in the middle of the floor. He's been eating from a bag of potato chips, and there are some Twinkie wrappers near him. Ned comes in with the bags of groceries. The place is furnished a little more. Some chintz is in evidence. Two desks and two typewriters, both obviously unused.

NED

Why are you sitting on the floor?

FELIX

I fell down trying to get from there to here.

(Ned tries to help him)

Don't touch me! I hate it when you look at me.

NED

I'm hungry. How about you?

FELIX

I looked in all my date books. No one else I slept with is sick. Maybe you're the carrier.

(CONTINUED)

NED

We don't have to do this to each other.

(beat, optimistically)

You're going to get better, Felix. You are. And you're coming with me to Yale, it'll be a blast. After my speech, I'll show you the dorm I almost jumped off the roof of when I was a freshman...

FELIX

Whoever thought you'd die from making love?

NED

Emma says the NIH is finally starting some research. We have to hope.

FELIX

Oh, do we?

NED

Yes, we do.

FELIX

And how am I supposed to do that? You Jewish boys who always think you can make the world a better place.

NED

(noting junk food)

Why are you eating this shit? You know how important it is for you to watch your nutrition.

FELIX

I have a life expectancy of ten more minutes, I'll eat what I want to eat. Ned, it's getting messier. I don't want to make you see it.

NED

Nobody makes me do anything. You should know that better than anybody. Are you going to sit on the floor for the rest of your life? Do you hear me?

(CONTINUED)

FELIX

That guy Sanford who sold you the pig on Bleecker Street finally died. They say he looked like something out of Auschwitz. Do you hear me?

NED

No.

FELIX

No?! I've had over 40 treatments. No?! I've had 3, no 4 different kinds of chemo. No! I've had 3 different experimentals. Emma has spent more time on me than anyone else. And it hasn't done a thing! Emma has lost so many patients they call her Dr. Death. You cannot force the goddamn sun to come out.

NED

I am so sick of fighting, and everybody's stupidity and blindness and intransigence -- and guilt trips! You can't eat the food. Don't eat the food. Take your poison. I don't care.

(Hurling grocery items one by one to the floor)

Fish is good for you; we don't want any of that, do we? No green salad. No broccoli; we don't want any vegetables, no sir. No bread with seven grains. Who would ever want any milk. You might get some calcium in your bones.

(the milk carton explodes)

You want to die, Felix? Die!

Ned retreats to a far corner, shaking. Felix sits in the big puddle of milk and groceries. Finally, with great effort, he begins to crawl, to somehow pull himself through the mess and over to Ned. Ned grabs him and holds him tightly.

NED (CONT'D)

Felix, please don't leave me.

The regular conference room with the guys ready to take their places. One of them, Dennis, comes to speak to Bruce.

(CONTINUED)

DENNIS
Niles...Bruce. Could I speak to you
confidentially?

BRUCE
Sure.

DENNIS
So, my wife was at a memorial
service for her fag hairdresser
friend and she said she saw you.

BRUCE
I'm sorry?

129 EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR. DAY (FLASHBACK) 129

A WOMAN APPROACHES, stops. SNAP ZOOM, HER POV across the way:
Bruce comforts a friend who has lost it on the steps. The
woman stares as both men break down.

DENNIS (V.O.)
She said she saw you and another
guy crying in each other's arms.

130 INT. CITICORP EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM. DAY 130

DENNIS
Is that true? Was that you?

Bruce just stares. A long pause, then --

BRUCE
You fucking bigoted asshole of a
rotten person!
(starts backing him up)
What do you know about dying
friends and men you love in your
arms? What do you know about losing
every good faithful noble decent
dear friend you ever had?

He has tears in his eyes, rolling down. He's finally let
loose. He's possessed, ready to beat this guy's ass.

130 CONTINUED:

130

BRUCE (CONT'D)

You can go to fucking shitass
ratfuck hell, you useless fuck of a
human being!

TIGHT NOW on Bruce's face. We realize this outburst was all
in his head.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Wrong guy, Dennis. Tell your wife
to get new glasses. Not my scene.

FOLLOW Bruce as he walks away. His emotions building and
building, he's about to erupt.

131 INT. EXECUTIVE TOILET. DAY

131

Bruce rushes in and looks at himself in the mirror. He can
barely keep it in. He starts sobbing and heaving, he pulls a
hand drying device off the wall, he's so ashamed and angry
with himself. He pauses, hears someone coming.

He goes into a stall, shuts the door. No one enters but we
hear his soft gentle moans of pain coming from inside.

132 OMITTED

132

133 INT. BEN'S LAW OFFICE. DAY

133

Ben is at his desk.

FELIX'S VOICE

Your brother and I are lovers.

Ben looks up and sees Felix, whom he doesn't know or know
about, walking toward him.

FELIX

I'm dying and I need to make a
will.

Ben stands and indicates Felix should sit.

FELIX (CONT'D)

It's a little hard on us, isn't it,
his kind of love? But it's love. I
hope you know that. I haven't much
time left. I want to leave
everything to Ned.

He hands him a piece of paper.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

(reading it)

Do you have any family, Felix?

FELIX

My parents are dead. I had a wife.

BEN

You had a wife?

FELIX

Yes. Here's the divorce.

(hands him a document)

And I have a son. She has custody.

(hands him another)

BEN

Does she know you're ill?

FELIX

I called and we said our goodbyes.

She was actually rather pleasant.

Although she wouldn't let me talk
to my son.

BEN

How is my brother?

FELIX

Well, he blames himself, of course
for everything from my dying to the
state of the entire world,
flagellating himself awfully
because he thinks he's failed some
essential test. All that plus you
two still not talking. You must be
as stubborn as he is.

BEN

I'll call him right away.

FELIX

Do, he's at home, packing. We're
going to Yale in a few days. For
Gay Week. He says he can't believe
it.

BEN

He tried to kill himself there when
he was a freshman.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED: (2)

FELIX

He just said he was very unhappy
because he thought he was the only
gay man in the world.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Felix, I wish we could have met sooner.

FELIX

I haven't much except a beautiful piece of land on the Cape in Wellfleet on a hill overlooking the Atlantic. Ned doesn't know about it. It was to have been a surprise. For when we'd live there together, writing away, happily ever after. I also have an insurance policy with the Times. I'm a reporter for the New York Times.

BEN

You work for the Times?

FELIX

Yes. Fashion. La de da. It's meant to come to my next of kin. I'm afraid they might not give it to him.

BEN

If he's listed as beneficiary, they must.

FELIX

But what if they don't?

BEN

I assure you I will fight to see he does.

FELIX

I was hoping you'd say that. Can I sign my will now, please, in case I don't see you again?

BEN

This will be quite legal. We can stop and get it properly witnessed as you sign it.

FELIX

My little piece of paper is legal? Then why did you go to law school?

BEN

I sometimes wonder.

134 EXT. BEN'S OFFICE. DAY 134

A very rattled moved Ben is helping Felix to the street to get a cab. Felix is having trouble walking. A beat, he pauses, bends down, faints. Off an alarmed Ben --

135 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. DAY 135

A door flies open, Ned races down the corridor to Felix.

He stops, stunned. There is his brother Ben, just standing there. Waiting for him. Ned doesn't know what to do. Then --

Ben begins to cry. He moves toward Ned, envelopes him in the hug Ned has always wanted. Off the two men --

136 INT. FELIX'S HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY 136

Curtains drawn so light is dim. Felix is almost dead. Ned comes to him.

FELIX

I should be wearing something
white.

NED

You are.

FELIX

It should be something Perry Ellis
ran up for me personally.

For the first time, Ned is speechless. He tries not to break down.

(CONTINUED)

NED

What am I ever going to do without you?

FELIX

Finish writing something. Okay?

NED

Okay.

FELIX

Promise?

NED

I promise.

FELIX

It better be good. Ned, find a way to fight again. Don't lose your anger. Just have a little more patience and forgiveness, for yourself as well.

Emma comes in, followed by Ben. Felix sees that his illness has brought the brothers together and he chokes back a sob.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Emma, could we start please?

EMMA

(Taking Felix's hand)

We are gathered here in the sight of God to join together these two men. They love each other very much and want to be married in the presence of their family and friends before Felix dies. I can see no objection. This hospital is my church. Do you, Felix Turner, take Ned Weeks...

FELIX

Alexander.

EMMA

-- to be your --?

FELIX

My lover. My great true love. I do.

NED

I do.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: (2)

136

They kiss, passionately, both crying. Emma is as emotional as they are. A beat, then --

EMMA

Quit making out so I can take a picture.

They all laugh. Ned is on the bed with Felix. She takes the picture. It FREEZES.

A137 INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE. DAY

A137

The phone rings. Tommy answers it.

TOMMY

This is Tommy.

A long beat. Tommy begins to cry, he says nothing. He can't speak. He simply nods and hangs up the phone.

A beat. He reaches in his desk drawer, pulls out the now noticeably larger collection of rubber-banded ROLODEX CARDS.

He flips through the Rolodex. Pulls out a card: FELIX TURNER. Adds it to the pile of cardboard tombstones.

B137 EXT. YALE. LATE AFTERNOON

B137

Silent and snow-covered. Find Ned. Alone. He takes a beat in the silence, moves forward.

137 INT. YALE DINING HALL. NIGHT

137

A dance is in progress. The music continues. We see two guys dancing cheek to cheek, eyes closed. Then we see more guys dancing the same way, until the camera opens up fully and we see an entire dining hall filled with couples, dancing...men with men...women with women. We see a big banner: GAY WEEK AT YALE. This is a youthful room, innocent even.

Ned, quietly crying, watches the kids do what he could never do when he was here. He eyes a young couple on the floor that reminds him of him and Felix...what they could never be and never have.

CUT BACK to Ned, tears streaming down his face. And yet, somehow, he smiles slightly, hopeful of a world that may be as we SLOW PAN OUT.

END CARDS:

President Ronald Reagan mentioned AIDS publicly for the first time on September 17, 1985, vowing in a news conference to make AIDS research a "top priority."

Reagan's proposed federal budget for 1986 actually called for an 11 percent reduction in AIDS spending. By the end of 1986, there were 24,559 reported deaths.

Since the epidemic began in 1981, over 36 million people worldwide have died from HIV/AIDS.

More than 6,000 people are newly infected every day with HIV.

THE END