Documentation for

THE BRADY BUNCH WERE FUCKING LIARS

A One-Man Show
presented in partial fulfillment
of the MFA degree in acting

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by

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As a child of the sixties, I was brought up watching endless hours of television. My perceptions of life were molded by situation comedies. I believed these sitcoms. I refused to believe that everyone had a darker side. In public situations I saw only the facade of happy families—I never thought about what might happen when these couples went home and the husband hit the bottle, or his wife. Some personal situations recently forced me to confront this mind set. I had thought the Brady's, the Petries, and the Ricardo's were the norm. My feelings have greatly changed. I now question the reality of the nuclear family.

"Sitcoms— and How They Lied to Me" best describes the theme which I will explore in my one-person show. The nuclear family presented so shallowly on mindless situation comedies set a standard for a whole generation of post-war baby-boom families. People came to believe that a major crisis in these television families (and more importantly their families) could be solved with a joke and a cookie. Donna Reed, Robert Young, and Ozzie and Harriet Nelson set superficial standards that new families tried to emulate. These loving T.V. families avoided real issues and the dark side of human nature, settling on a Utopian vision of P.T.A. and Little League. My show will explore this vision to see what might lie beneath the card parties and the meat-and-potato dinners.

As an actor, I tend to deal with purely surface details. I have usually glossed over negative motives, or refused
to "Complicate" a character with the darker side of his personality. Most of my characterizations have lacked the explorations of dangerous edges because I had refused to explore them myself. This has been a problem which I have fought somewhat successfully throughout my career at the Ohio State University. This show will be an extension of that "battle."
KEY FOR MARKED SCRIPT

S.O. = super objective
s.t. = subtext
trans. = transition
// = major beat change
/= minor beat change
___ = emphasis
© = transition
S.O. - to seek advice in order to solve my plight.
s.t. - we all know this right? BUT...
dream haunts even here. give time to weigh images. antithesis
humor helps trans. fondness of memory
specificity of characters passion, love strong for each separate character.
ask question, wait for answer
s.t. they're not anymore
sloppy transition. s.t. lacking.
search for exact word on images
time to establish dream
what I've been leading towards. play objective to end
get image before trans.
disillusionment not comprehended. destruction of your reality. s.t. Isn't it?

"The Brady Bunch" were fuckin' liars. No way could six kids survive with one shower. No way could nine of those "Bunchers" drive across country in one station wagon without someone getting slapped. And sure as hell, no way could five women live in the same house without some major PMS action once a month. (But I never saw those episodes) I mean the one episode where Jan wished she was an only child; she was probably spotting, but you can never really know for sure. We never peeked under figurative dress. I'm sure the healthy Brady boys had to masturbate; but did we hear the bunk beds creak? NO! They were too busy looking for UFO's or sneaking after curfew (With a good wholesome reason, of course).

I can watch the first four seconds of any "Brady Bunch" episode and tell you what it's about, and do most of the dialogue. I grew up with them. They were my family. I had a crush on Greg when he surfed in Hawaii, my voice changed with Peter. I learned it was ok to be small from Bobby. I cried when Carol got her voice back at Christmas. I wanted Cindy to be the next Shirley Temple. I loved Jan's freckles. Who will ever forget Marsha getting hit in the nose with a football before her big date ("Oh my nose!") I loved Alice's "Porkchops and applesauce", and most of all I loved the way Mr. Brady dealt with problems. He was so cool. The kids were using the phone too much, so he put a pay phone in the living room - I loved that! They were home! Lately, I've been haunted by the images of those nine Brads' trapped in those nine boxes in the title sequence of the show. Remember how they looked from box to box lovingly. (Does so) Well now their mindless smiles have turned to horrified screams. They've been stuck in Utopia for too long. (They're all like little mimes stuck in those little air boxes.) I mean Ann B. Davis is fucking screaming "Let Me OUT! I hate Sam the Butcher! And these kids are driving me nuts!" Cindy's got those little sausage curls and she's bawling her eyes out. Greg starts ramming his head against the television screen to break free. Finally he rams his head so hard against the glass that it shatters. I mean it just fucking explodes. It's like a fucking mushroom cloud and all this Brady shit comes flying out of the TV! A split level house zooms by my head, Tiger the dog is catapulted off the screen, the swing set smashes into a million pieces, Carol's short hair cut is just ripped off her head - I mean everything the Brady's own is just pushed out into this fucking mushroom cloud. The ultimate nuclear family. Right?

The honesty of this monologue is crucial to success of the show. Great care must be taken not to play ending of the entire theme in the first four lines. Caution against rushing through images. Because I wrote the piece, I take it for granted. Important to establish a connection with audience. Questions must be asked, begging for a response.
S.O. - to calm myself, in order to begin examination.

internal struggle
self-contained
not confrontational
speak part of song to enforce emotion.
calming throughout.
need to have emotion to calm.
not outer directed.
struggle with shattered past.

talks in cliches.
logical, very ordered.
lists.

discovery - that's what happened, examine and continue.

better take a look at past.
don't ignore.

outer direction begins.
we are all equal now.
I am at the point they were at the beginning.

"NOW YOU KNOW" - MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG by Stephen Sondheim

All right, now you know;
Life is crummy.
Well, now you know. //

I mean big surprise:
People love you and tell you lies. /
Bricks can fall out of clear blue skies. /
Put your dimple down, 
Now you know. //

Okay there you go -
Learn to live with it,
Now you know. //

I mean socks have holes,
I mean roads have bumps,
They make meatheads champs, and nice guys chumps -
I mean even cream of wheat has lumps,
Okay now you know.

//Okay, now you know. (Now forget it)
Don't fall apart at the seams.
It's called letting go your illusions,
And don't confuse them with dreams.

Yes sir, quite a blow -
Don't regret it,
And don't let's go to extremes.

It's called what's your choice?
It's called count to ten.
It's called burn your bridges start again.
You should burn them every now and then
Or you'll never grow! //

Because now you grow.
That's the killers
Now you grow. //

(You're right, nothing's fair,
And it's all a plot,
And tomorrow doesn't look so hot - )
Right? /You better look at what you've got;
(Over here, hello?)
Okay, now you know. /Right?

With this song I begin my journey. I must be careful to make each realization build towards another one. Be extremely careful that song does not preach, but rather evokes self-discovery.
S.O.– to convince Arnie of this idea in order to gain self-esteem
summon up courage to go in.
doesn't remember him doesn't wait for answers.
make amends, overdo apology.
paint picture if you stop he'll cut in.

obstacles easily dealt with– ignored.
clutching at straws
energy under control pacing can't let up

paint Sid's picture
logical for him discovery rapid ideas come
Sid surprised at own realizations finds this very funny
s.t. I've got to stakes upped greatest title ever
first recognition of loss.
anger at past cover. mask slips through out.
saving himself don't play tragedy no self-pity.

"SITCOM"– FUNHOUSE by Eric Bogosian

Arnie! Arnie! Yeah, yeah, listen./ Sid! / You got two minutes? / Yeah, Yeah, listen, I got a great idea for a sitcom... sitcom, Arnie, sitcom!

Situation comedy, what are you doing up there in the office, take that straw outa ya nose for two minutes and listen to me for a second. / Arnie! Arnie! Concentrate! Follow me. /

Scenario: New York City! Apartment building in New York. Black guy lives in the apartment. (Nice black guy, middle-class black guy, buttock–sweater type of guy, smokes a pipe.) Yeah, yeah... harmless black guy. / Benson! Benson! We got Benson in this apartment... Across the hall from him, paraplegic kid in a wheelchair... Huh? (You don't need a real one, you just get any cute kid and stick him in a wheelchair.)

/ What? Fuck the unions! The kid's in a wheelchair here, black guy across the hall. They got a real nice relationship here. Big brother, interracial kind of thing. / Yeah. Mushy liberal stuff.../ a show with meaning. /

Yeah, a show with relevance to the social problems of today... yeah, / yeah, Mary Tyler Moore, Hill Street, MA*SH, Cosby, The Waltons!

Wait, wait, more! / Top floor of the building we got a whorehouse! Hookers going up and down the stairs all time of night and day. Falling over the kid with the wheelchair, sticking lollipops in his mouth, patting his head. / Cute stuff like that, sweet stuff, light humor, family humor... /

Ground floor of the apartment building: gay health club! / Homos working out with weights, building up the pectoral muscles. / See what I'm saying? We got the beefcake down here doing sit-ups while the cheesecakes up here doing push-ups! Something for everybody! / Wait, wait, one more apartment / teen-age kid living with his mother, / OK, this is the humor of the show, / Kid wants to kill everybody in New York City! / One week he makes an atom bomb in his bedroom, next week he puts LSD in the city water supply, then he derails a subway car, who knows? / Crazy stuff, funny stuff, hilarious stuff. / We'll call the show, "Upstairs, Downstairs"... Huh? / Who's PBS? / Fuck PBS!... Those are little people. They don't count. We'll buy the title off of them... / Arnie, what are you busting my balls about this thing for? / Yeah? / That was two years ago! / Yeah, I know what's good for me. What's good for me is what's good for you! / Arnie, we'll have lunch next week and discuss the project, OK? / Huh? / Alright, then you just think about it because I have a very big, a very secret meeting across town... / Think about it... / You're Aces Arnie!

Most important thing to remember is to not let Sid's energy become my energy. Pace must be rapid, but must not overwhelm piece. Objective very active, tactics diverse.
Fucked up cable by Rob

My cable is fucked up, man. Thursday night I sit down at 7:00 pm, as I do every night at 7:00 pm, to watch "I Love Lucy." Only I turn it on this time and Lucy starts bitchin' at Ricky. She starts calling him an alcoholic and shit and telling him he's screwing around. Then she says she wants a divorce because she was the one with the real talent. Ricky starts getting very depressed and who can blame him under the circumstances. Lucy wouldn't act like that. So I'm more than a little confused and upset. I'm like "What is my red-headed girl doing?" So I turn it to the Disney Channel. They're showing reruns of "Ozzie and Harriet." (I was never a big fan of that show but I figure, "What the heck?"). So Ricky is on his way to this singing gig and I'll be damned if Ricky don't pull out this drug paraphernalia and starts free-basing on the plane. "I'm like "Khoa." Then I'll be damned if the plane he's on don't start crashing. I'm like "Ozzie and Harriet, what kind of shit are you putting on TV?" I grab the remote and turn it to CBN. The Christian Broadcasting Network. And I see it's Family Affair. I see Mr. French talking to Cissy. Relief sets in. I only momentarily though, because Jody comes running down the hall yelling, "Uncle Bill. Uncle Bill. Buffy just od'd." I start flipping out. I'm like, "What about Miss Beasley?" I turn to Hogan's Heroes. I think "Nazies, POW's. I can deal with this." Well I'll be damned if this leather dude, I don't know who it is, not Sgt. Schultz, not LeBeau, not even Col. Clink, starts pounding Hogan's head in with a hammer. I'm like, "Ok, this is too much." My cable is fucked up and I start jiggling the wire real hard. But it doesn't do any good. I flip to "Chico and the Man," Chico blows his head off. I turn on "Gimme a Break" and Neil is doing too in the kitchen. I grab that wire and pull it out of the wall. I pull it out so hard sparks are flying like the fourth of July. (I mean I can't let my kids see this shit.) They know as well as I do that Lucy's gotta be married, Ricky Nelson's gotta sing. Buffy's gotta hug Uncle Bill. Hogan's gotta outsmart the Nazis, Chico's gotta piss off the man, and Neil's gotta gimme a break. I mean, If I want real life violence I'll watch the fuckin' A-team. So I figure if TV can't give me what I expect, no deserve, then I'll have to do it myself. So I run down to the basement and get my craftsmen tool kit. And I start taking everything out of the TV and just leaving the shell. I'm cleaning the console like I'm cleaning a crab. I'm pulling out wires and tubes and glass and shit. I go into the foyer and pull down the mirror Aunt Joann gave us for our wedding and I put that in the hole where the screen was. By now my wife and kids are real confused I tell them, "Look, this cable is fucked up. Our television's playing games with us. If they can't show life the way it's supposed to be on TV then we gotta take it into our own hands. We will do the shows the way they were meant to be." So now we act out the shows in front of the TV with happy endings. We can look in the mirror and pretend we're watching TV the way it was. We look at our reflection and we are Lucy and Ozzie and Hogan. It's great and it's what I remember. We started out doing "I Love Lucy." We did that episode where she wrapped chocolate. It was a little rough at first, but we get better each time we do it. I even made up my own little TV Guide. Like tonight we're doing "Father Knows Best." It says here, "Rud wants to borrow the car but he hasn't finished his homework." Who knows how it will end? The way we want we've got sets and costumes, were even thinking of getting a wide screen mirror. It's gotten the family closer together, too. And anyway it reinforces the values that fucked up cable was trying to destroy. You see now my kids know father really does best, they know a woman's place is in the kitchen, and they know a man's home is in his castle.

Important to establish slower rhythm immediately. Lower pitch and lack of gesture important also. Lack of intelligence must not lend itself to caricature. Value system different but must not be mocked. Ideas must be fresh. Slower rhythm must avoid speech pattern.
S.O.-to mask his true feelings in order maintain his image

repetition of word and themes
coloration
clipped language
watch one level of sarcasm.
don't let mask down too early.

efficient/sterile
sexless
set up relationship with other.
are they?
change in music equals character's longing return to initial image escape
build of frustration throughout
mask falls
unable to control anger
plea for help

"PLEASANT LITTLE KINGDOM" - by Stephen sondheim

It's a pleasant little kingdom,
Full of pleasant little things,
Full of scintillating dinners
With neighboring kings. //
There's a castle in the country,
For weekends of rest. //
And we entertain at parties,'
In the little time remaining.
And we're entertained by others,
And it's very entertaining. //

An efficient little kingdom.
The dominion of the queen.
Where at any given moment,
The ashtrays are clean. //
There are many little battles
Which never are fought. //
And if, on occasion, I think about you,
It's a pleasant little thought. //

So, I write another book, /
Or I head another drive, /
Or we take a trip we took, //
And the dinner guests arrive, //
And unless you really look
You would swear that we're alive....
AND God! //

Song has a tendency to play into quality of sarcasm. Character must not be removed from situation, but actively hiding it. In order for the two songs to work in counterpoint, the relationship and location of other must be specific.
"EVERY DAY A LITTLE DEATH" - A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC by Stephen Sondheim

Every day a little death,
In the parlor, in the bed,
In the curtains, in the silver,
In the buttons, in the bread.//
Every day a little sting
In the heart and in the head,
Every move and every breath,//
(And you hardly feel a thing,)//
Brings a perfect little death.

He smiles sweetly strokes my hair
Says he misses me.
I would murder him right there//
But first I die.//
He takes softly of his wars
And his horses and his whores,
I think loves a dirty business!//

I'm before him on my knees and he kisses me.
He assumes I'll lose my reason.//
And I do.//
Men are stupid, men are vain,
Lover's disgustin', love's insane,
A humiliating business!
Oh how true.//

Ah well,//
Every day a little death,
On the lips and in the eyes,
In the murmurs,
In the pauses,
In the gestures,
In the sighs,
Every day a little dies,
In the looks an in the lies.//

(And you hardly feel a thing,)
Brings a perfect little death.

Most importantly avoid self-pity. Character actively reaching
for his love. Bitterness towards self. Obviously a very repressed
passionate woman. Sexual images and self-esteem stifled.
S.O.-to prove my worth in order to regain my self-esteem.

scared they may overhear.

obstacle.

LIE!

pride.

Lost in images set up idyllic past to contrast present

those were the days fabrication must seem real at all costs

helplessness

self-pity, but with plan in mind

stakes terribly high at a point of utter confusion

Pain at admitting fear

Strength building Ozzie's ability to lie world turned upside down

New section has a new very hopeful tone recognition of guitar playing, victory envy of Ricky's naivete

They think they know me and they know nothing. They don't know how I feel.... How I'd like to beat Ricky with my fists till his face is ugly. How I'd like to banish David to the streets.... How I'd like to cut Harriet's tongue from her mouth. Before them all, I was myself. I was Ozzie. I lived in a time before anything they can ever know - a time beyond and separate, and I was nobody's goddamn father and nobody's goddamn husband! I was myself. And I could run. I got a scrapbook of victories, a bag of medals and ribbons. In the town in which I lived my name was spoken in the factories and in the fields all around because I was the best there was. I'd beaten the finest anybody had to offer. Summer.... I would sit out on this old wood porch on the front of our house and my strength was in me, quiet and mine. Round the corner would come some old model T Ford and scampering up the walk this ancient, bone-stiff, buck-toothed farmer, raw as winter and cawing at me like a crow, they had one for me. Out at the edge of town. A runner from another county. My shoes are in a brown-paper bag at my feet. I snatch 'em up. I set out into the dusk, easy as breathing. There's an old white fence and we run for the sun... For a hundred yards or a thousand yards or a thousand thousand. It doesn't matter. Whatever they want. We run the race they think their specialty and I beat them. They sweat and struggle; I simply glide on, one step beyond, no matter what their effort, and the sun bleeds before me. We cross rivers and deserts; we clamber over mountains. I run the races the farmers arrange and win the bets they make. And then a few days after the race, money comes to me anonymously in the mail; but it's not for the money that I run. In the fields and factories they speak my name when they sit down to their lunches. If there's a prize to be run for, it's me they send for. It's to the the-one-sent-for that I run. I could run again if I wanted. I'd.... like.... to want to. And I just stand here, don't I? and let them talk any way they want. And Ricky gets up in the middle of some sentence I'm saying and walks right out and I let him. Because I fear him as I fear her... and David. Because I know the time is close when I will be of no use to any of them any longer. And I am so frightened that if I do no seem inoffensive... and pleasant... if I am not careful to never disturb any of them unnecessarily, they will all abandon me. I can no longer compel recognition. I can no longer impose myself, make myself seen. Harriet... David... Ricky. I'm glad we've gotten finally together here, because the thing I've decided to do - and you all, hopefully, will understand my reasoning-is to combat the weariness beginning in me. It's like stepping into a hole, the way I feel each morning when I awaken, I see the day and the sun and I'm looking upward into the sky with a sense of looking down. A sense of hovering over a great pit into which I am about to fall. The sky. Foolishness and deceit, you say, and I know you're right - a trick of feeling made me being played against me, seeking to diminish me and increase itself until it is larger than me filling me and who will I be then? It. That feeling of being nothing. At first... at first... I thought the thing to do would be to learn the guitar. But that I realized in just the nick of time was a folly that would have taken me into the very agony of frustration I was seeking to avoid. The skill to play like Ricky does is a great gift and only Ricky has it. He has no acids rotting his heart.

The first section of the piece is a total lie, that Ozzie has forced himself to believe. Must not let anyone know. The family's presence should be felt throughout. It is important to get lost in the images of the running section, only this way can you show diversity of Ozzie's emotion. What he was. Defensive in the second section.

Ozzie knows where he's headed.
The last section of this piece David Rabe describes as an advertisement for Ozzie. He must be confident and desperate that his plan must work.

With this monologue as the centerpiece of my show it is important that this mark a transition in the theme. Characters are now aware of their ridiculous patterns and must drastically alter themselves.
S.O. - to force recognition (Little boy leaps off a table pretending to fly.)
from my father in order to bond.
Physicality, lower center speech pattern concerned with father's reactions
impress him!
Need for approval wait for other bonding important seeks reassurance
images taught by father
scared of future
first realization of adulthood and it's trappings.
Influenced by other's opinions build of one image worse than the other makes need for reassurance greater
Father ignores
Build Intensity strength
Hom's terrible
Nigger worst Father's exit major loss

SUPERMAN!!!! Duh-duh-duh duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh

Pssshhhhhhh!!!!!!

Hi Dad! I was just practicing my Superman, Dad!

Am I doin' it right, Dad? Am I doin' it right? Hey Dad, guess what I did today? I ran as fas as I could and I threw a rock at a bird and I killed it!
Pretty good, huh Dad? Hey Dad, when I grow up I'm gonna be just like you, huh Dad? I'm gonna be tall and strong and never make any mistakes and drink beer and shave and drive a car and get a check. I'm gonna be just like you, huh Dad? Dad can I ask you a question? When I grow up I'm not gonna be poor, am I dad? Am I? I'm not gonna be a poor old bum on the street. All smelly and living in a box, am I Dad? I'm gonna be rich like you huh Dad? And... Dad? I'm... I'm not gonna be a alcoholic, am I Dad? Like Mr. Johnson down the street, never cuts the lawn. I'm not gonna be an alcoholic with a big red nose and throwing up. And I'm not gonna be a junkie either, am I Dad? Like on Kojack. And not have a life worth living and OD all the time. I'm not gonna OD, huh Dad, huh? Dad? Joey says I'm gonna be a homo! I'm not gonna be a homo, am I dad? HOMO! We're not homos are we Dad? Dad? NO WAY I CAN BE A NIGGER, HUH DAD, HUH? 'Cause you're not a nigger and Mom's not a nigger, huh? Huh? Huh? We're American, huh Dad? Dad? I got one more question. When I grow up... I'm... Dad Wait...

This piece should begin (as all of the Bogosian pieces) with no portent of the troubling images that are about to come. Transition from Ozzie troubling and unfinished. Change in physicality must be abrupt. Speech pattern and gestural range dynamically different.
"STAY WITH ME"—Into the Woods

S.O.—to convince her to stay
make her realize her folly
protection smothering
confront her idyllic vision
begging
reasoning anger at refusal
reasoning strengthens
too young to understand
Any ground gained?
reasoning
Loss refusal

Don’t you know what’s out there in the world. //
Someone has to shield you from the world.

Stay with me.

(Princes wait there in the world it’s true.
Princes yes but wolves and evil too.)

Stay at Home //
I am home //
Who out there could love you more than I?
What’s out there That I cannot supply
Stay with Me //

Stay with Me the world is dark and wild. //
Stay a child while you can be a child
With Me.

The mother in this song smothers her child. The woman is afraid of intimacy because she wants so much to be a good mother, but plays mind games to force her child to her will.
Polonius has poorly and hastily memorized advice to see his son's voyage. His obstacle that he cannot overcome is his inability to remember. The recognition by Laertes of this forces him to reevaluate his plan. Although Polonius knows it is a sham, he can not think of any sounder advice. His poor ability to talk honestly with his son has him questioning his worth, he ends the scene aware of his failings.

Image of Dick Van Dyke performing Polonius.
"WE'RE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT" - DO I HEAR A WALTZ? by Stephen Sondheim and Richard Rodgers

S.O. - to reassure myself

antithesis
what I've been taught vs.
what I've discovered
antithesis
sense of humor
disbelief, not anger, at believing in the first place.

awfully sure of himself
boastful proud

relaxed
confident of future

manhood in question -
provokes change

unsure of outcome
mini-capsule of show
so far.

s.t. I hope so.

I was told;
Just be faithful and never scold.
Sounded easy,
So I was sold. //
I've been miserable since. //

I was taught
When a prince and a dragon fought,
That the dragon was always caught. //
Now I don't even wince,
When it eats the prince.

If we can just hang on -
We'll have compatibility.
(You needn't worry,)
We're gonna be all right. //

One day the ache is gone. //
(There's nothing like senility.)
(What's your hurry?)
We're gonna be all right. //

Meanwhile relax,
I'll take a lover, you take a lover,
When that's played out -
They get the axe. //
We can retire, sit by the fire
Fade out. //

"" build a house upon,
the rock of my virility; //
We better scurvy,
We're gonna be all right -
Oh boy!
We're gonna be all right.

This piece begins a new section in the show and must be treated carefully. The energy from song to scene must be consistent. It is a return to the first character of the show. It is in many ways an encapsulation of the theme so far. Attention to avoid playing the ending at beginning of song. Self-effacement.
S.O.-to prove to Trigorin and herself, that her decision was correct.

relationship to other laughter throughout to mask uncertainty of decision escape into alcohol and activities must convince him as well as herself Need for his approval great Embarrassment of alcohol must build him up for both approval lost now must salvage self. NO SELF PITY

I'm telling you all this because you're a writer. You can make use of it if you like. All this is just nonsense. Love without hope - it only happens in novels. It's really nothing. You've only got to keep a firm hold on yourself, to stop yourself hoping for... hoping for the tide to turn... If love sneaks into your heart the best thing to do is to tear it out, tear it out by the roots. I'm getting married to Medviedenko. What is the point of love without hope, of waiting whole years for something... one doesn't know what... But when I'm married there'll be no time for love, new cares will drive out all the old ones... And anyway, it'll be a change, you know. Shall we have another? Oh, come! Don't look at me like that. Women drink more often than you imagine. A few drinks openly as I do, but most drink in secret. Yes. And it's always vodka or cognac. Here's good luck! You're a genuine, sincere man - I'm sorry to be parting from you. My schoolmaster is not particularly clever, but he's kind-hearted and poor, and he's very fond of me. I'm sorry for him. I'm sorry for his old mother, too. Well, let me wish you all the best. Don't think badly of me. I'm very grateful to you for your friendly interest... Do send me your books and be sure to autograph them. Only don't write: "To: Maryia, who doesn't know where she belongs and has no object in life."

Good-bye!

Masha is very fragile and looks to others for approval constantly. Her escape into the alcohol is tragic, but for her it's an easy answer. Important to avoid self pity, she deals with obstacles with laughter. Image of Donna Reed gone crazy.
"WE'RE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT" - PART TWO

S.O. - to warn audience

reassurance to Masha

audience secondary in the

first section.

Reference to Masha's

obstacles

audience focus

paint picture

pose question

response

point up ways to escape

clinical textbook

emotional involvement

punch irony

antithesis

this is her way of escaping

confidence in decision

s.t. not answer for everyone

Honey bunch:
Sad to say, but I have a hunch -
Screen romances
Went out to lunch //
That's no reason to pout.

Don't look bleak; //
Happy endings can spring a leak,
Ever after can mean one week.
We're just having a drought. //
Smile and sweat it out.

I know a perfect pair-
Their lives are at the pinnacle. /
But how do we know
They're gonna be all right.

The bride is slightly square .
The groom is slightly cynical;
A little vino. <
They're gonna be all right. /

She aims to please.
She has a baby,
Then though they may be having fine times.
When there's a crisis,
She has another.
(Now she's a mother nine times.)

At all went wrong but where?
[Details are slightly clinical.]
She's out in Reno.
The kids adored the flight. //</
Good show!

She, They're gonna be all right.

The same character from the previous song. Let body feel the
rhythm of the song. Bouncy feel should be physicalized—not so stiff.
The character has a great sense of humor and is relaxed, but always
on guard.
S.O.-to incite her to continue the game.

reaction from other provokes response

antithesis punched up to make "NO" work

goading, teasing enjoyment of game said it at other times but this time he truly means it.

confident of win.

George and Martha have played this game many times, but this time the stakes are life and death. Georgie's physicality must be equal to imagined girth. Game element important but must not seem rote. First time this has gone this meaningful. Image of Jackie Gleason on the Honeymooner's performing this.
S.O.-to calm and reassure audience.

Focus on audience s.t.-yes this is what happens but not to everyone.
Related to Martha and George
Out of sight out of mind
Important to connect and relate to monologues s.t. how can they possibly be?
Joke on V.W.
He may, but that's O.K.

appearances must be maintained at all costs.

Reinforce the three ways to escape

"WE'RE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT"- Part 3

Things will heal;
I know couples who look ideal,
They no longer know what they feel,
They've been practicing charm.

All is well,
Least as far as their friends can tell.
Please ignore the peculiar smell.
There's no cause for alarm. //
Mildew will do harm.

What if her brain is dead?
What if he's ineffectual? //
They look delicious-
They're gonna be all right.

They both go right to bed
When they feel intellectual; //
No one's suspicious,
They're gonna be all right. //

who's on the skids?
She's going to night school.
If it's the right school he'll permit her. //
They love their kids;
They love their friends too. //
Lately he tends to hit her. //

Sometimes she reads in bed.
Sometimes he's homosexual //
They're serreptitious.
Nobody hears them fight.
HI HO!
They're gonna be all right. //
And so they're gonna be all right. //
I know they're gonna be All Right!

This is the summation of the escape section. Audience must synthesize section in this song. The character has examined the possibilities and must see these are options no longer valid to him. The most important thing is the connection to the other pieces in this section.
S.O.—to force audience to realize the danger of limited vision

warm sound compassion caring

high placement Ruth

England

Mom J. C. Narrator Gorr.

mechanic hoarse

Mom Chicago "A's"

play with range

Intense narrator

Ruth Dennis Parker

Sliding Soap operas Dennis

John Cameron Swayze

Bored with job

Most important thing about this piece is to keep the variety of each character distinct. Images help make immediate vocal placement.
Repetition of routine

Look at my h. We can use the letter h in the word "horse." Here is the word "horse." You all know what a horse looks like. This is what the word looks like. Is there anyone who sees a resemblance?

(click)
I'm getting mixed messages about my sexuality.

Ruth

It affects our children. It affects our friends. It affects the people I work with.

Professor D.

First, keep your dissecting tools in a plastic baggie. Second, get to know your frog. Third--

Oprah


Today

Foam enhancers, stabilizers, conditioners, preservatives.

Dan Akroyd

I think what Jessica is basically saying is that no matter how brief the relationship is, you would want to know something about your partner so you can experience your sexuality without guilt or fear, anxiety or remorse, depression or worry, dread or woe.

(c)click
It affects me. It affects--

(c)click
But you can view the eclipse safely. There are three ways to do this. The first and simplest way is to take two squares of white cardboard, make a pinhole in one square.

(Compassion)

(c)click
Based on actual events in the life.

(c)click
It affects my husband. It affects our relationship. It affects our children. It affects our friends.

(c)click
I have nothing left to give, Richard.

J. Collins

Then stand with your back to the sun and watch the image projected on the white sheet. Some people like to keep the box on their head even after the eclipse is over. Some people never remove the box. Some people live out their days with the box on their head, waiting for another eclipse, or just looking at the sheet of white paper on the inside of the box. Some people say the sheet of white paper is more interesting and educational when there is no eclipse taking place. They remove the box only for eclipses. They look directly into the sun. Remember, the sun is not the same as a paper cutout of the sun. Some people know this intuitively. Some go to night school. Some play checkers on stone tables in the park.

(c)click
Repeat after me. Eeee. Come on. Do it for me. Eeee. Please do it. I know you can do it. I'm right here. I'm ready. If you really try, you can do it. Try hard. Please try. I'm listening. I'm waiting.

The specificity of character continues. The last section about the eclipse contains the kernel of the message and great care must be taken that the humor can sustain the empathy of the piece.
I have no problems. I'm happy with life. Things are fine as far as I'm concerned. I know some people have problems, some people have quite a few. I, fortunately, have none. First of all, I'm in perfect health. I just got back from the doctor's office, he gave me a completely clean bill of health. He checked me from top to bottom. He couldn't believe what great shape I'm in. I guess all that jogging and bran paid off. He even checked my teeth... no cavities... so I'm in perfect health.

I have a good job. It's a, uh... I guess you would call it a "semicreative" job, very little pressure to perform. I put in about forty hours a week... when I want to. I have the weekends off every week, three weeks' paid vacation in the summer. I get paid very well for what I do. It's a good job. I like it.

My wife and I have been married fifteen years. We're very loving and have a very supportive relationship. My wife's a very attractive, a very lovely lady. We have a great sex life, if you have to know. I don't fool around. Wasn't it Paul Newman who said, "Why go out for hamburger when you can have steak at home?" I subscribe to that theory.

Our daughter's eleven and she's doing very well in school. She gets very high grades, has a lot of friends. Besides her school work she also uh... she's also studying modern dance, violin. Next month she starts her Latin lessons. She's a very precocious, very pretty little girl. We like her very much.

Our parents are alive on both sides and uh... we all like each other. None of the "mother-in-law" stuff in our household. We all enjoy each other's company. They're all retired now. They worked hard and saved during their active years and now they're enjoying a ..."golden harvest" so to speak. Certainly no burden on us, we're very proud of them.

The audience must not know where the piece will end up. If they do the piece will seem endless. The specificity of each action must complement each section.
Our friends are all happy and healthy as far as we know.
We usually see them around once a week. We go over to their
house and uh... have dinner over at their house. Or at
our house. I like to cook. I'm kind of a gourmet chief.
I like to cook things like uh... I don't know... uh, tortellini
with sun-dried tomatoes or uh... arugula salad with endives,
something you wouldn't think of... that's my cooking style.
Or we go out and see a movie... something with Meryl Streep
in it or... uh, a play, a Sam Sheard play usually or one
of those one-person shows or magic or juggling plays. We
like them, there's so many to choose from... Or we go bowling.
We all like to bowl. They're very nice people, we've had
a lot of good times with them. //

So that's it, uh.// our neighborhood is safe and clean.
We have an excellent town council, an activist school
committee (and that's important?). Ummm... fire department,
police department, garbage disposal... all top-rated.//

The house is in good shape, just had a new boiler put in
last year, there's nothing wrong with the house.//The Volvo's
running smoothly, nothing wrong with the car. So uh...//

I mean there are times when, uh, I mean, I'll be honest...
there are times I am concerned about all the uh, you know,
all the trouble there is in the world these days. You know,
you turn on the news and uh... it's disturbing, you know...
and nobody likes being disturbed. I make myself watch it
because I know I should. For their sake.//

and I worry about it all.// But then I just think to myself,
there's always been trouble, we didn't invent it, you know,
and uh, I should just be thankful for all the good things
I have in my life. Those people are doing their thing out
there, whatever it is and uh.// well anyway, I ... I guess
this isn't really the point... //

The audience has now become the characters enemy. They are seeing him
at his lowest point. He is struggling. His desperation affects tactics.
"NO PROBLEMS" - Continued

The future looks good. We're going to have the house paid off in ten years. We're buying a little condo down by the water, kind of as an investment/vacation/retirement thing. We're really excited about that...//

Ummmm, we've got money in a pension, so we're cool there... insurance... some stock.//

Like I said I have no problems./ None. /I'm happy. /I'm healthy./ I love my kid./. good job.// no problems.//

That's what it's all about.// I guess.

The ending of this piece is such a radical change that the character must invest everything before losing everything.
R.O.—to force yourself to take
action against the cocoon
I have built.

Keep three sections distinct

watch complaining
not complaining as much as
laughter at what I developed

questioning not accusing

things you are expected/
ordered to do.

Explore options

Past life filled with
expectations

New section
exploration of inventory

laughter at pattern
of past mistakes

s.t. you better right?

escape daily grind

"HAPPLY EVER AFTER"—by Stephen Sondheim

Someone to hold you too close.
Someone to hurt you too deep.
Someone to love you too hard.
Happily Ever After.

Someone to need you too much.
Someone to read you too well.
Someone to bleed you of all
The things you don’t want to tell.
That’s happily ever after in hell.

Somebody always there,
sitting in the chair where you want to sit.
Always. Always.
Somebody always there,
wanting you to share just a little bit.
Always, always.

And then see the pretty girl,
Smiling everywhere from the ads and the TV set.
And why should you sweat.
what do you get?
One day of grateful, for six of regret.

With someone to hold you too close.
Someone to hurt you too deep.
Someone to bore you to death—
Happily ever after.

Someone you have to know well.
Someone you have to show how.
Someone you have to allow.
The things you’d never allow.
That’s happily ever after—
Ever ever after till now.

So quick get little car,
take a little drive.
make a little love.
see a little friend.
do a little work.
take a little walk.
watch a little TV.

And click, make a little love,
do a little work.
get a little drunk.
(You’ve got one little trip,
Seventy years spread it around.)

This is not a whiny song. The character feels his time is running out before
he can ever possibly make a change. Bobby must not be bitter about the past, but must
realize his folly before he can continue.
"HAPPILY EVER AFTER" - (Continued)

Take your pick, buy a little here,
spend a little there,
smoke a little pot,
for a little kick.
Waste a little time,
make a little love,
show a little feeling.

But why should you try?//
Why not sure be a little lonely, but Fly?
Why not Fly? ✓

With none to hold you too close,
None one to hurt you too deep,
None one to love you too hard.
Happily ever after.

No one to know you too well.
None you have to show how.
None you have to allow,
the things you'd never allow.
That's happily ever after (for now)
Ever, ever, ever after
Ever, ever, ever after. //

The most important thing to remember is that the character cannot be wholly optimistic about the end. That cheats the audience of the exploration that have witnessed. It also is as cheap as the sitcoms we've destroyed.
So the Brady Bunch dream continues. Greg has just been exploded off the screen in the mushroom cloud. He's totally scarred from the explosion. His skin is like tissue paper. He leaves a trail of ooze behind him. As he slithers down the street people stare at him. They point and laugh. He's terrified in this world of reality. He's not used to a place with real grass not astroturf, a place where he's not president of the student council, a place without close-ups.

Greg has to discover how to survive without Alice packing him a lunch, without an overbearing mother, an obsessive problem-solving father, and 5 cheerful brothers and sisters. Greg is alone for the first time without the trappings of sitcomland. Greg has been evicted from Utopia.

The last part of the dream is hazy but I'm pretty sure Greg walks into a trucking company and gets a job as a forklift operator for $5.95 an hour. Everybody's gotta start someplace.

This final piece must return audience to where they began. The show has symmetrically explored options and returned to initial problem. The piece must not cheat the intention of the show. Most importantly, each of these destructions of an icon, must be positive. The last line is not negative, but rather a given.
CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Greg/Rob - Brady Bunch Were Fucking Liars
"Now You Know"
"We're Gonna Be All Right"
The Brady Bunch Dream Continues Next Week

The superobjective for Greg/Rob throughout the show is to discover a new way of life. He also guides the audience through his journey.

Obstacles: the recurring dream of "The Brady Bunch", his discovery that life is not a sitcom, upbringing and expectations vs. reality, humor is preventing him from dealing with the issues head on and slows discovery of solution.

Givens: Age: 25
   Occupation: Student
   Physical Appearance: Very much like a son on a TV sitcom of the 50's and 60's. WASP. Parted Hair. Sweater.
   Background: Cloistered. Very stoic emotionless family. Real issues and problems skirted. Clever and sitcom style sense of humor, but underneath troubled.
   Tempo: Like the pace of the sitcoms-quick.
   Other: Speaks in clichés. Throughout song and dialogue he reassures himself with worn out mottos.

Sid - Sitcom

Sid must convince Arnie of his idea in order to achieve his superobjective.

Obstacles: his incompetence, his ineptitude to pick up on other's dislike for him, his pride, his limited thinking, Arnie's schedule.

Givens: Age: 36
   Occupation: Unemployed ex-copy boy with aspirations.
   Physical Appearance: Gaudy, loud, flashy clothing.
   Beginning to paunch. Italian. Large features and gestures.
   Background: Sid was over-ambitious. Constantly
overstepping his bounds. Arnie only knows Sid from his copy boy days.

Tempo: Continues at a breakneck pace to avoid Arnie's interruptions. Constantly playing his image of the corporate executive. Very slow and methodical when alone. Spends his nights crying.

Other: Incident referred to in monologue painful. Concerned a tasteless idea that Sid presented when he barged into a network meeting. Sid is completely broke.

**Virgil- Cable TV**

Virgil wants to convince others to take the same action he has taken with his television.

Obstacles: The distorted programming of the possessed cable tragedies. His children, his religion, his wife, his intelligence. His inability to distinguish real life from the TV incidents.

**Givens:**

- **Age:** 49
- **Occupation:** Mechanic
- **Physical Appearance:** Heavy set. Dirty clothes. Nails and hands constantly stained. Has television outfit.
- **Background:** Protestant church-goer. Very limited mind set. Ingrained attitudes towards marriage and the proper way to behave.

Tempo: Very slow methodical tempo. Because his brain takes a little longer to formulate ideas he's quite proud of his invention. No excess movement. Limited gestural range.

Other: He actually sees these incidents on the television and deals with them the best way he knows how.

**King- "Pleasant Little Kingdom"**

**Queen- "Every Day a Little Death"**

In both songs the characters are trying to hide their true feelings about their spouse from the audience. The two songs offer male and female perspective.
Obstacles: Their extreme unhappiness in their marriage, their own self-awareness that their marriage is deteriorating, their intelligence, their ties to the community.

Givens: 
**Age**: both 48  
**Occupations**: He is an author, she is a housewife.  
**Physical Appearance**: Both are impeccably groomed.  
Their clothing, accessories, and furnishings are tasteful, but they look like mannequins.  
**Background**: The King and Queen of this song have been married for 28 years. They met in an Ivy League College and married soon after graduating. Their life since then has forced them to grow farther apart. The husband's fame and constant business trips, has turned his wife into a very bitter angry woman. The characters are not only unhappy with each other, they are angry at themselves for letting themselves get into this position.  
**Tempo**: Their tempos are very quick but must be contained. This constant monitoring happens until they both cannot continue the charade at the climaxes of their songs.  
**Other**: The male talks of writing books and heading drives; he uses these as ways to escape. The woman leads a very docile, contained life; her images relate to the home. Their wealth and possessions have made them lazy.

Ozzie- Sticks and Bones

Ozzie is at a breaking point in his life. After years of silence he must prove his worth in order to regain his self-esteem.

Obstacles: His passivity that has developed over the years. His family that he fears. The fact that his past is a total fabrication. His morals, his religion, his view of the world.

Givens: 
**Age**: 56  
**Occupation**: Retired  
**Physical Appearance**: Unthreatening, conservative clothing, small frame, down-trodden body.  
**Background**: Ozzie was the ultimate WASP, he had everything that pointed to the perfect nuclear family. Upon David's return from the War the house has been turned completely upside down. Ozzie has taken great pains to make the perfect family life. Ozzie translates this into
material possessions. Materially oriented. He can only prove his worth through these symbols of success.

**Tempo:** Ozzie is taking a major step (however flawed) by formulating this plan. He is very slow and methodical until he realizes the futility of his work.

**Other:** Ozzie's relationship to the audience is very important. They are the only people who will listen to him. He is constantly aware that his family may walk in on him. When he remembers the past it is an idyllic view. He never ran those races, but this distorted image gives him hope to fight his bleak present state.

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**Superboy- Superman**

The little boy in this piece wants to force his father to pay attention to him. The father obviously has little time or patience to expend on the boy.

**Obstacles:** His father's refusal to acknowledge him.

His enthusiasm, his persistence, what he has learned from his father.

**Givens:**

- **Age:** 8
- **Occupation:** son
- **Physical Appearance:** He is the picture of the healthy normal young boy. He has three teeth missing.
- **Background:** He lives in suburbia, his father is a blue collar worker, his mother also works. The little time that the father does spend with his son is spent doing "manly" things. The son treasures those moments. There has been a history of child abuse.

**Tempo:** Like most 8 year olds his energy and enthusiasm is frenetic and contagious. He does not realize that his constant need for approval is obnoxious.

**Other:** Throughout the piece the boy tries to impress his father with what he has learned from him. These bigoted images are obviously his father's teachings. This young boy admires his father and wants to emulate him.

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**Mother- "Stay With Me"**

The mother's super-objective is to convince her daughter to remain with her. She is desperate to achieve this.

**Obstacles:** Her desperation, her daughter's rose-colored view of the world, and her daughter's defiance.
Givens: Age: 38
   Occupation: Factory worker
   Physical Appearance: She is very unconcerned about her appearance. She is overweight, she has devoted her life to her daughter and would rather buy her nice clothing.
   Background: Her daughter was born out of wedlock and since then the mother has eschewed men and focused herself entirely on her daughter.
   Tempo: She has a very slow tempo. She is desperately trying to formulate her plan to keep her daughter there, her ideas and execution comes slowly.
   Other: She is a very head-centered woman who intellectually, rather than physically, tries to prevent her daughter's escape. Her reasoning tactics fail to dissuade her daughter. The mother is scared of intimacy and touching her daughter is forbidden.

Polonius - Hamlet

Polonius vainly tries to advise Laertes on life in order to bond with him.

   Obstacles: His inability to talk openly with his son, his pride, his bloated self-image, his poor memorization skills, his belief that books can hold the answer.

Givens: Age: 57
   Occupation: Court advisor
   Physical Appearance: With the added layer that Polonius is portrayed by Dick Van Dyke, he is very agile and loose limbed. Very tall and thin. Somewhat disheveled.
   Background: His relationship to Laertes is very strained and removed from intimacy. Polonius is highly respected by the court, and that aspect is more important than family.
   Tempo: As Dick Van Dyke, very quickly paced.
   As he is unable to remember the advice his frustration mounts and he quickens. Tries to be smooth but fails.
   Other: While most of the advice is sound, Polonius states it in such a manner that it appears pompous and self-serving. Polonius is a very learned man but he is unable to express these ideas in a personal coherent manner.

Masha - The Seagull

Throughout this monologue Masha must prove to Trigorin and herself that she is making the right decision to marry Medviedenko.
Obstacles: Her own self-awareness that this is a mistake. Her intelligence, her sense of humor, her unrequited love for Constantin, alcohol.

Givens: Age: 28
Occupation: home-maker
Physical Appearance: With the added layer that Masha is being played by Donna Reed, makes Masha very well kept, with lots of frills and aprons. She wears just enough make-up, so she doesn't look cheap.
Background: Masha is in constant mourning for her life. She is a pessimist labelling herself as a realist. Treplev's refusal has forced her into this compromising marriage.
Tempo: Masha has a very quick pace. She realizes the hollowness and the futility of her musings on the future. She is constantly looking for ways to escape. Masha is well educated and terribly passionate.
Other: Masha as played by Donna Reed constantly laughs off major obstacles and the future picture. She is concerned with the immediate. She escapes through making cakes and alcohol. Problems seem quickly solved and forgotten.

George—Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Throughout this monologue George is trying to incite Martha to meet his challenge. Martha has tried to end the bickering while George wants to provoke her on to the final battle.

Obstacles: Martha, marriage has blurred the line between illusion and reality. George must overcome years of games in order to finish off their son. Her strength versus his weakness, the alcohol they have consumed that evening, Nick and Honey.

Givens: Age: 46
Occupation: University professor.
Physical Appearance: With the added layer that George is being played by Jackie Gleason, makes George very fat. He is disheveled and unconcerned with his messy appearance.
Background: This night the game has been pushed to a new level. Martha has broken the rules and George now has the advantage. He truly means it when he says, "There is no moment anymore when we could come together."
Tempo: As played by Jackie Gleason, George is very volatile and very physical. He must hold back from hitting Martha several times. His gestural range is as broad as his girth. His is very intellectual and very passionate about his ideas.

Other: The environment in which he lives is one of constant bickering. George and Martha can only come together when bickering. They can only feel truly alive when attacking each other. George's masculinity is constantly questioned by Martha. They have developed a pattern George wants to break.

T.V.- The Day Room

What I have chosen to do with this piece is to label the image I have for each character.

compassion-Speech therapist
Ruth- "affects"
stuff- England
Mom- grocery lady
Joan Crawford- France
narrator- gorillas
Mike Mechanic- windshield
hoarse- grandpa
Dennis- pounds
soap- comas
John Cameron Swayze- detergent
boredom- "h"
girlfriend- sexuality
Oprah- anger
slow narrator- eclipse

Bobby- No Problems
"Happily Ever After"

Bobby wants to discover a new way of life. Throughout No Problems he is trying to mask his frustration until he can no longer. When he begins "Happily Ever After" he reviews his past to formulate his future.
Obstacles: The sitcom-style life he has made for himself. His great effort at self-delusion requires most of his energy. His wife, daughter, parents, friends, and material possessions prevent him from making this transition quickly.

Givens: Age: 37
Occupation: Advertising Executive
Physical Appearance: He is in fine shape for his age. He became part of the exercise craze. His hair is thinning, very concerned with his appearance and clothing.
Background: Bobby's enviroment is quite vividly explained in his descriptions. He has surrounded himself with material possessions only. His relationship with his wife is very boring to him, his friends seem false, his expensive trappings seem to be worth nothing. Bobby does not know who he is. He has been so busy collecting and providing for others, he has forgotten himself. He has always believed the sitcom style of life was the best way to live.
Tempo: His tempo seems very relaxed, but as his frustration build so do his rhythms. the effort extended on keeping the mask in place is great. He gets the image of whirling until his final discovery.
Other: His decision to be alone is terrifying to him, but he knows he must do this for now. While he is not completely resolved he feels at least he has direction in his life.
REHEARSAL LOG

September 20, 1988

Well I am brainstorming my new show. I got rid of that awful Peer Gynt idea (why did I ever?) and decided to use more of myself. A poem I wrote will be the centerpiece. Like Time said, my show needs the personal slant. I want a stage full of TVs. I'm starting on my first monologue talking about corrupting the Brady Bunch. So it's 5 am I can't sleep cause my brain is going so fast. I hope it all works out. I hate mimes.

October 18, 1988

My one man show is coming along. Stephen "God Bless Him" Sondheim sent me all the music I asked for. I am so honored I must send him a thank you note. Dr. Brown said he wanted to make sure I showed style work. So I have added in Hamlet and A Doll's House. It's pretty sloppy and choppy but I'll make it work. Life looms ever closer and I'm scared and psyched.

October 24, 1988

Just had a read thru of my show yesterday. It was quite eye-opening. I thought it all worked well but lacked one strong central piece -- like my Chance from Sweet Bird -- to have a section where it all stops. I looked through Sticks and Bones and I hope it all comes together. Lisa found that my End of the World piece wasn't cohesive with the rest.

I had a run thru for Don Nigro who said "God is that depressing." He gave me good notes. He wanted one more strong piece, (Hurlyburly?) and a comedy piece (Beckett?). So Debi said the show should come back
to me at the end, so I wrote an ending monologue. I'm really looking for one huge piece that will tie it -- but my transitions and structure is so strong that I can't break it or find an appropriate place. Dr. Brown and Rex have feedback today and I don't want to hear it.

Well I got the feedback from Dr. Brown and Rex. They made some valid points and others that I did not agree with. I think the most important criticism Dr. Brown had was that it was too dark, negative. And rightly that none of the characters took action to combat this image. Both were wary of Sondheim music, but I think he is the perfect composer to show what on the surface may look fine, but underneath is all grime and dirt. The perfect metaphor for my show. If I can find pieces that are more combative I think the show will work.

November 2, 1988

I talked to Don Nigro and he made me define my show and make it into an active search for Greg Brady's growth.

November 13, 1988

I ran through my show Saturday - the blocking process was easy enough - I don't think it all flows especially the Polonius piece. I'm really excited about the overall flow. I think the lecture about sitcoms doesn't work well. The Stick and Bones piece works very well. Putting it on it's feet was eye opening. The "Lament" staging was tricky.

December 3, 1988

After being away from the show for a few weeks it helped put things in perspective. I see the things that didn't work. Over
Thanksgiving I read through the show three times and was depressed because the show felt static. This past run through with a little more memorization went much better. It seemed to be very focused except in a few sections. I found a television console and this inspired me to rewrite the monologue that has given me so much trouble. I'm not completely satisfied with it, but the idea is there. I think the show has something to say. I'm discovering my gestures have to really neutralize and then build on that. Perhaps LaBan them all. My movement training is so poor and it is definitely my weakest point. Hopefully variety will be there.

December 11, 1988

Ran through the past 3 days. Memorization is holding me back. Had breakthrough with Polonius. Laertes wants information. Threw out "Lament" and replaced it with "Stay with Me" -- they say the same thing only more actively. Changed my original piece to a Southern dialect - to find variety.

December 22, 1988

My show has been running smoothly actually. Marc's viewing helped me to realize the things I had were in a fine order. The songs I have let go too far. I have no objectives, obstacles, anything - I'm relying on tricks. I'm being very lazy about the thing I want to impress people with.

December 27, 1988

Back at school being away from the show has helped. I brainstormed and ideas have paid off. The best way for me to work is just lock myself away and think about problems. Anyway, the show has thematic and progression problems throughout the last section. Overall the
throughline is lost. I think that mostly the show slows down in the songs and I think that's ok for now. I've left them till last because of Steven's schedule and I have a lot of catching up to do. Overall I'm still uncertain about the final section.

January 2, 1989

The show needs help. I'm finding my vocal pattern monotonous. I think my tempo for each character is too similar. I find my gesturing too similar. I have to remember to take each as a separate entity. I think I'm rushing transitions. But my big problem, from Z, is that they all have the same background or moral background etc. I'm finding that I enjoy working alone and that my time is budgeted so well and it will get better.

January 4, 1989

Steven has learned the songs and we've been working on them. But now (funny enough) we started working on them I have to find objectives. The things I've learned from summer taught me to approach musical numbers exactly as you approach monologues. I've ignored that. "Now You Know" works much stronger as self-discovery rather than confrontational with the audience. The show has to be about self-discovery. Not confrontation. Polonius is working better now that I've added "Bill Cosby." But Masha just gets worse and Virginia Woolf terribly monotonous. The Day Room piece is successful but hopefully the message will come through. I don't want to hit people over the head. No Problems clicked when I got specific.

January 5, 1989

Thank you God! I've decided to change the end. I'm nervous so close to techs but I have to. The Seagull is now a drunk Donna Reed
and Virginia Woolf is now Jackie Gleason. I think that although the message of all the pieces loses something I think it ties into the show thematically. It is sloppy now. I'm hoping I can take them and work them enough before opening.

January 6, 1989

Tech's today. They've lit the show but it's a day away from work.

January 7, 1989

Today's run through was smooth. The show flows so well and the throughline from piece to piece is very clear (to me anyway!) I'm so hyper about everything that I can't get relaxed to go onstage. I'm so manic that it gets in the way of things I do. Also the show is so much direct address that only with an audience can I see what works. I'm pretty confident the show's humor enhances rather than detracts from the message.

January 8, 1989

Had a run through. FINAL DRESS. About 8 people in the audience and I went up 3 times. All in the new section. (That scares me!) I still don't think they're quite ready yet. But I guess it's too late to worry about that. Some thoughts to think about: The more specific and clean, the clearer it is, get myself centered before the show starts, RELAX, don't let my energy affect each piece. Keep gestural range separate. Overall have fun.
THE FAMILY UNITS OF STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Composer/lyricist, Stephen Sondheim has been described as, "The one person I know who truly hates his mother." This resentment was caused by his parent's bitter divorce when he was a child. Sondheim's pent-up anger has had an adverse affect on his songwriting. Until recently, his songs about familial relations have been sardonic, cautionary, or negative. His early lyrics blamed parents for destroying their children's lives. As his attitude towards parental responsibility matured, he began to write songs that explored only the problems and negative aspects of child-rearing. Sondheim's maturation process took another turn as his next few shows viewed the nuclear family with wary apprehension. With his new show though (Into the Woods), Stephen Sondheim has finally reconciled himself with his anger towards his parents and reached a new freedom and deeper maturity in his songwriting skills. By exploring his painful childhood and analyzing Sondheim's lyrics about familial relationships, it becomes evident that a maturing process has occurred and come to fruition with his tender endorsement of families in Into the Woods.

Stephen Sondheim was born on March 22, 1930. His parents were upper-middle class dress manufacturers living on Central Park West in Manhattan. Sondheim was always a precocious child. Craig Zadan reports, "...he skipped kindergarten, read 'The New York Times' in first grade, and even had the sense to be self-conscious about being the smartest kid in
the class." Sondheim himself confesses, "I would purposely drop my 'g's' because I spoke English too well." 

Sondheim's love for the theatre began at the age of nine, when his father took him to see the Broadway production of the Oscar Hammerstein musical, Very Warm for May. Sondheim recalls, "The curtain went up and revealed a piano. A butler took a duster and brushed it up, tinkling the keys. I thought that was thrilling." 

Sondheim's family unit disintegrated at the age of ten as his parents went through a bitter divorce. This separation confused the young Sondheim: "... it literally did not occur to me that other people had a family life. I saw my parents occasionally at night and on weekends, and I thought that every child in New York lived that way."

The custody battle for Stephen between his parents was vicious. His mother won and became obsessed with keeping Stephen away from his father. Sondheim recalls, "She would have family members follow me to see if I met him in secret. She would telephone his apartment to see if I answered, then hang up. I was a substitute for him, and she took out all her anger and craziness on me." Although Sondheim can now rationalize her actions, at his young age he was bewildered by her mistrust.

During the summer of 1942, Sondheim and his mother traveled to Doylestown Pennsylvania for a weekend visit with one of Stephen's friends, Jamie Hammerstein, the son of Oscar Hammerstein. This short visit turned into a summer vacation which lead to Mrs. Sondheim's purchase of a farmhouse in
Doylestown.

The move to Doylestown had a significant effect on Sondheim's relationship with his mother. She would commute into Manhattan for work during the week, leaving Stephen alone, and then bring guests home on the weekend. The alienation begun as a lack of trust was heightened by the physical separation.

The destruction of his family and his need for nurturing lead him to spend more time with the Hammerstein's. Sondheim admits that, "... they gradually became surrogate parents for me." Jamie Hammerstein agrees: "By Christmas, Stephen was more a Hammerstein than a Sondheim."

Sondheim's musical talents blossomed. His writing and composing skills were shaped by Hammerstein, much like a father passing on a trade to his son. Stephen began working as an assistant stage manager on a few Hammerstein shows.

The destruction of Sondheim's family, though, left deep scars on him. Sondheim has not forgotten his parents and he seems to have inherited the worst traits from both of them. He says, "From him I get my tendency to pessimism. He always looked at the black side, imagined the worst that could happen... From her I get my tendency to hysteria. It was not a great relationship."

His father's pessimistic outlook makes Sondheim partially blame himself for his father's death. He recalls: "Eventually my stepmother and I forced him to retire and I'm sorry to say I think it killed him- he missed the worry." His mother is still alive, but their relationship is hardly amicable. William A. Henry reports, "Sondheim has helped his mother
finacially, but has gone through long periods of not speaking
to her, and regales friends with darkly comic tales of her
attempts to rile him." Mary Rodgers recalls a thank you
note from Sondheim that said: "Dear Mary, Thanks for the
plate, but where was my mother's head? Love, Steve." Whether blaming himself for his father's death, or venting
the anger he feels towards his mother; Sondheim never recovered
from his latch-key adolescence. The traumas he experienced
in his childhood left an indelible mark on his work.

The roles that his parents played (the dominant mother
and the weaker silent father) are characters that occur in
most of Sondheim's musicals. All of the families in his
shows are troubled; either with each other, by their situations
in life, or by their temptations. Sondheim refuses to gloss
over the intricacies and dynamics that make a family real.
By not pandering to an artificial familial bliss Sondheim
has pushed the musical into new territory.

In the same year as the homespun American musical *The
Music Man* opened (1957), *West Side Story* (with lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim) unsparingly painted it's grim picture.
The show was a ground-breaking musical that fused dance,
music, and drama into a hybrid form.

It was a gritty dangerous piece. The show dealt with
warring gangs on the streets of New York. Like it's source
material, *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story* places blame
for the senseless deaths on the prejudice of parents and
community. No character's parents are seen in the show.
"The Adults" (as labeled in the program) are mocked. They
are out of touch with that day's society. They are unaware of the injustices their offspring must contend with daily.

Although Sondheim now scoffs at his lyrics, they were daringly inventive at the time. It is through these lyrics that one can best understand Sondheim's feeling towards parents at the time of the show's writing. Although he is speaking through the characters, Sondheim's finger-pointing, self-blameless attitude seems almost naive. The characters parallel Sondheim by blaming their parents for the wrongs they have suffered.

The culmination of this is "Gee Officer Krupke". In this song the blame for a generation's suffering is placed on "The Adults":

"My father is a bastard,
My Ma's an S.O.B.,
My Grandpa's always plastered,
My Grandma pushes tea.
My Sister wears a mustache.
My Brother wears a dress.
Goodness gracious,
That's why I'm depressed."13

Sondheim's second show, Gypsy, opened May 21, 1959. Arthur Laurents (librettist) describes the theme of the show as, ".. parents who live their children's lives."14 Momma Rose (the lead character) smothers her children with her dreams.

In the character of Momma Rose, Sondheim created an eerie likeness of his mother; the stage mother obsessed with her children's lives. In his lyrics Sondheim depicts a vicious dynamo oblivious to the harm she is causing through her selfishness and numerous marriages. In the song "If Momma was Married," her children dream of a perfect lifestyle; a nuclear family with pets and no divorces. But they realize:
"Momma gets married
And married,
And married,
And married,
And never gets carried away."15

A painful image is cleverly hidden in the rhyming scheme.

The finale of the show is "Rose's Turn." In this unsettling number Momma Rose has been abandoned by her children and sings unapologetically of her lifestyle. This number is the bitter and sad climax Rose has been heading for throughout the play:

"Well someone tell me, when is it my turn,
Don't I get a dream for myself?
Starting now it's gonna be my turn.
Gang way world get off of my runway.
Starting now I bat a thousand.
This time boys I'm taking the bows.
And everything's coming up Rose.
Everything's coming up Roses'
This time for me.
For me."16

Sondheim admits the tirade of this song resembles the outbursts of his mother. Jack Klugman (co-star of the show) recalls Sondheim's initial interpretation of the song: "Steve and Jule (Styne, the composer) announced they had just finished 'Rose's Turn'... Steve got up and sang it with such feeling and such awareness of what it was about that I just fell apart and bawled like a baby. It was so brilliant. I will never forget that moment, when Steve did 'M-m-momma, M-m-momma,' and couldn't get it out, Ethel and I just burst into tears."17 Sondheim, again, seemed to be pointing a finger of blame at parents for scarring their children.

With this show Sondheim also discovered an important lesson: that at some point his own dominant mother would become dependent on him. Sondheim continues; "Gypsy says something pretty hard to take; that every child eventually has to become responsible for his parents. That you outgrow your parents
and eventually become your responsibility... they become your children."^{18}

Sondheim's next show also contained a domineering wife/mother. In *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, which opened on May 8, 1962, Sondheim and his librettist, Burt Shevelove, adapted Plautus' farces into a musical comedy burlesque show featuring the character Domina. Domina was Momma Rose exaggerated to hilarious extremes. Domina dominates her family with an iron fist. She orders her husband, son, and slaves around with gleeful aplomb.

Domina's Act II solo, "That Dirty Old Man," shows the mistrust and jealous obsession the character feels for her husband. Sondheim's lyrics slyly echo the frustration he must have felt during his mother's tantrums:

"That dirty old man is here somewhere,  
Cavorting with someone young and fair.  
Disporting in every shameless whim.  
Just wait till I get my hands on him.  
I'll hold him.  
Enfold him.  
Where is he?"^{19}

The lack of family unit exposed in *West Side Story* and explored in *Gypsy* recurs in "Forum". In this show he presents a father whose sexual needs are more important than his faithfulness, and a mother who must control all elements of the family's life. The parents have little interaction with or understanding of their offspring.

*Anyone Can Whistle* opened April 4, 1964 and ran for nine performances. The show, now a cult classic, dealt with, as Martin Gottfried says, "... non-conformity and the delightfully insane."^{20} It was an inventive indictment that proclaimed conformists were insane, and the insane were liberated.
The show's most famous sequence, "The Cookie Chase," satirizes life commandments that parents have taught their children. Each mental patient has their watchcry. An example:

"A woman's place is in the home,
A woman's place is on the shelf.
And home is where she hangs her hat,
And that is where she hangs herself." 21

The score contains several numbers which refute the ordered and "proper" way to behave. Like a misbehaving child, Sondheim writes about breaking the rules in "Everybody Says Don't" and "With So Little to be Sure Of." The entire show had an impetuous tone which critics labelled condescending.

Sondheim's next show was an odd departure from the groundbreaking work he had performed on other musicals. Through the advice of his mentor (Hammerstein) Sondheim accepted the lyric-writing task of Do I Hear A Waltz? The show was a musicalization of Arthur Laurents The Time of the Cuckoo, about a woman's discovery of love in Venice.

In this show Sondheim was not writing for a domineering woman character. The character (Leona) was a frail inexperienced bookworm who blossoms in romance. Sondheim had great trouble writing the show; especially the weak female character. He explains,"... it's about a lady who metaphorically can't sing." 22

Sondheim collaborated with one of the greatest composers in musical theatre history, Richard Rodgers. The two men were diametrically opposed in their interpretation of Leona. Choreographer Herbert Ross explains, "There was a total conflict as to how the role should be played. Steve wanted a dry tough interpretation and Rodgers wanted a sentimental
one; therefore the show lacked any positive quality."
Sondheim was trying to force his personality and feelings into the character of Leona.

Martin Gottfried remarks, "...Sondheim's lyrics were craftsmanlike, but only one song, 'We're Gonna Be All Right,' had any life." This song in its original form was a darkly sardonic look at married life. It was full of bitter marital scenes and hollow reassurances:

"They both go right to bed,
When they feel intellectual.
No one's suspicious,
They're gonna be all right.
Sometimes she drinks in bed,
Sometimes he's homosexual,
But why be vicious,
They keep it out of sight.
Heigh Ho! They're gonna be all right."  

Richard Rodgers censored Sondheim's lyrics and forced him to write a watered down version that would be acceptable to the theatre parties already booked. Once again Sondheim's upbringing had interfered with the success of his work.

Sondheim continued his theme of marital unhappiness in his next musical, the ground-breaking Company. The show which opened April 26, 1970 explores the situations of a bachelor and his married friends; exploring both pros and cons of married life. The show's form was revolutionary. The exploration of a single theme through dance, music, and dialogue without a conventional plot established as a form the concept musical.

Many found the show negative and downbeat. Although Sondheim has never been married, he and director saw the show as a realization of the problems relationships can
cause, without condemning marriage. Prince continues, "There are those admirers of Company who refused to believe we intended the show to be pro-marriage. I assure them not only was that our avowed purpose, but to this day we regard it as a fervent plea for interpersonal relationships. For those who still consider it an indictment, I can only drag out the old defense that some people are simply afraid to acknowledge the manifest difficulties of living together." 26 Sondheim's upbringing has tainted the musical though, and forced critics to this assertion that Company condemned marriage.

The show contains several typical Sondheim characters. The females all seem to dominate their men. Whether in a karate demonstration, trying to manipulate a groom at the altar, or a one-night stand; the women in this musical show great strength. The character of Joanne once again echoes Sondheim's mother as she sings about marital boredom in "The Ladies who Lunch."

In Company, Sondheim's view of families had matured (he was no longer mocking them), but now he concentrated mainly on the negative aspects of familial relationships. The character of Bobby is very similar in tone to Sondheim himself. William A. Henry reports,"In almost all his shows at least one character stands apart from the world and comments, and that is Sondheim himself." 27 Bobby, like Sondheim, has trouble understanding and committing to a relationship. Both are unable to make a lasting commitment. Henry confirms that Sondheim admits,"... despite diverse infatuations, he has always lived alone, and says, a little sadly, he has 'never' been in love." 28
The finale of the show, and Bobby's climactic realization occurs in the song "Being Alive." At this point Bobby discovers that, "You've got to love somebody, not just somebody." 29 Hal Prince discusses the revisions he and Sondheim went through in order to achieve the proper ending for the show. The first song Sondheim wrote for the climax of the show was called "Marry Me a Little", but Prince says the song, "...expressed the opinion that living with someone was hell. 'Marry Me a Little' was brilliant and harshly cynical. Robert had covered no distance, learned nothing in the course of the evening. He would marry someone and they would go their separate ways, which isn't exactly what we had set out to say about marriage." 30 Sondheim's negativity had interfered with the message of the show.

The next revision Sondheim wrote for the final position was entitled "Happily Ever After." This song details the components of marriage describing them as, "happily ever after in hell." 31 Prince reveals Sondheim's frustration at his inability to put aside his feelings about marriage: "Steve had produced a lyric which intended to say that Robert was lying, that what we were observing was empty bravura, but the audience took him at face value, and the statement defeatist." 32

The final revised song, "Being Alive", was still a trouble spot for it's collaborators. The song sounded hollow in it's endorsement of marriage. Sondheim's past had again affected his writing skills. Prince remains unhappy with the song. He writes, "I am afraid it imposed a happy ending on a play which should have remained ambiguous...but people
who go to the theatre are frustrated by it." 32 From his first draft to his final revision it is obvious that Sondheim had matured, through Prince's urging, by delving deeper into a familiar subject. Sondheim no longer mocked marriages, but with Company, he could only focus on the negative aspects of betrothal.

Follies opened on April 4, 1971. Abe Laufe describes this difficult show in a precise fashion: "The story deals with four principal characters—two couples whose marriages are breaking up. A beautiful former actress is married to an unfaithful politician and diplomat. The second actress who has married a travelling man, is still in love with the politician-diplomat. As the play progresses, the four principals are depicted as they were in their early twenties by four young people. The title referred to the foolishness and heartache of it's characters."

Once again Sondheim had written a musical exploring the intricacies of relationships. This time he used the past as a reminder of the grim present. The message of the show was that we must look at our past in order to continue in the future. This was enhanced by the setting (a decaying theatre). The bleakness of the message seemed to overshadow the leading characters. The couples marital squabbles bored theatregoers who wanted spectacle. Hal Prince writes, "The extent of realism diminished it's size, reduced it's four leading characters to selfish, over-indulged pains in the ass; where as they might have represented the misplaced
American Dream. (We never really licked that problem.)"35

Sondheim's music and lyrics reveal that he has not examined his past in order to overcome his ingrained feelings of family. Most of the numbers in the show are pastiche numbers, which lightly mock or sentimentally recall earlier numbers from the Ziegfield era. Through this device, Sondheim has distanced himself from the emotions of the characters.

The numbers for the unhappily marrieds echoed earlier Sondheim themes. Gottfried concurs claiming,"These songs, written in a modern style, have a tone similar to Company."36 Like earlier Sondheim work, the show contained dominant women and misguided men. James Goldman (librettist): "It's a woman's show, I'm afraid."37

In one blistering number, "Could I Leave You?", a woman sings of the smothering life she must escape:

"Could I leave you?
And your shelves of the world's best books.
And the evenings of martyred looks,
Cryptic sighs,
Sullen glares from those injured eyes?
Leave the quips with a sting,
Jokes with a sneer?
Passionless love-making once a year?"38

Gottfried claims, "Sondheim has no contemporary who could outdo such verbal flamboyance. Probably none has the taste for such vitriol anyway."39 Sondheim's pent-up anger mirrors his character's frustration at the inadequacies of marriage. He is able to write such biting commentary because it is the negativity he feels.

Sondheim tamely rehashed old arguments in this new show, only this time the score was in three-quarter time. The plot concerned a famous actress who was the mistress to two unhappily married men. Again the women dominated; again the men were confused; and again Sondheim brilliantly explored new variations of an old theme.

The piece seemed emotionless to many. Critic Kevin Kelly said the show, "... suffers from a kind of complicated simplicity that stirs admiration but not much feeling... It's distinctive, charming, pleasurable, and remote... [I] wish it had the power to make an impression on my emotions since it is a musical dedicated to the mystery of emotions." 40 It seemed that Sondheim's retaliations of familial relations was wearing thin.

Only in one song did Sondheim delve realistically into the despair of his character. Again, a woman valiantly tries to mask the pain of her marriage:

"Every day a little death.
In the heart and in the head.
Every move and every breath,
And you hardly feel a thing,
Brings a perfect little death." 41

Gottfried agrees noting, "When he speaks of life's daily pinpricks nobody is more eloquent. 'A perfect little death', it is hard to imagine anyone but Sondheim writing that." 42

Sondheim decided to tackle a new subject in his next musical, Pacific Overtures, which opened January 11, 1976. The show dealt with the commercialization of Japan by Americans. The clash of culture was indeed new ground for Sondheim.

Despite their lofty intentions, many critics found the show a bore. Some still complained of Sondheim's emotionless
songwriting. Gottfried contends, "These songs have so intellectual an intent, that they lose the visceral appeal of music"43

The relationships dealt with in the show are unmistakably Sondheim. In "Chrysanthemum Tea" a mother slyly prods her Shogun son to commit suicide to save Japan. In "There is No Other Way" a woman begs a naive husband to ignore his duty. The bawdy whores of "Welcome to Kanagawa" manipulate their men with ease. Though Japan's culture dictates the role of the woman to a lowly position, Sondheim had allowed his prejudices to affect his songs by making all of his women strong leaders.

The family that takes shape in Sondheim's Sweeney Todd is a gruesome one. The show which opened on March 1, 1979, told the tale of a revenging barber and his baker accomplice who sell their victims in meat pies.

The barber and his accomplice form an unlikely sort of husband and wife team. Mrs. Lovett (the baker) constantly tries to seduce the myopic Sweeney (the barber) during their murdering sprees. Later in the second act they adopt a son, of sorts, from one of their victims. It is this combination that forms one of Sondheim's first true family units.

The song "Not While I'm Around", is a beautiful reassuring ballad sung by the baker to her "son":

"No one's gonna harm you,
Not while I'm around.
Other's may desert you.
Not to worry, whistle I'll be there.
Demon's will charm you,
With a smile,
For a while,
But in time,
Nothing can harm you,
Not while I'm around."44
The lyrics are very tender and one would suspect Sondheim of sentimentalism, but he makes this emotional investment a joke. The song later is used comically as the baker and barber set out to kill the adopted boy because he discovered their secret. Sondheim has written an involving song only to mock the audience for becoming involved with this family.

Sondheim's next show, *Merrily We Roll Along*, was a disaster. Critics, audiences, and the creators agree the show was not ready to open when it did on November 16, 1981.

The show's major character, Franklin Shephard, is a successful songwriter who has sold out his values to the establishment. Throughout the play we see him graduate from high school, marry, divorce, remarry, and evaluate his life. But, through the fault of his creators we never become involved or care about his tribulations. James Lapine (director of the highly successful revival) agrees, "It's called the cipher in the middle. You have a Franklin Shephard, and he's mostly defined by the people around him." 45

The score contains some of Sondheim's most, "...crushing and beautiful songs. But the show that contains them is a shambles... The book's tone often seems as empty as the character's... What's really being wasted here is Sondheim's talent," 46 according to Frank Rich. The show itself was a step forward for Sondheim. His lyrics were searingly accurate. After Franklin's divorce becomes legal he sings the lovely ballad, "Not a Day Goes By." The song is deeply emotional and it is evident Sondheim's own dealing with marriage and the expression of love has matured:
"Not a day goes by,
Not a single day,
But you're somewhere a part of my life.
And you won't go away.
And I'd have to say,
If you did I'd die." 47

This is a very different tone from the man who a few years earlier had mocked characters who were too emotionally involved.

The Pulitzer Prize winning musical **Sunday in the Park with George** opened May 2, 1984. The show dealt with Georges Seurat, the pointillist painter, and his lover Dot. Act II jumps ahead to the illegitamate great-grandson of Seurat and Dot and discusses familial relations, tradition, and recognition of love. Sondheim approached each of these subjects in a startlingly fresh way.

Because Sondheim was working with a whole new group of collaborators many feel it was a breakthrough in the emotional investment of his work. James Lapine (librettist/director) reveals, "I think it was a wonderful experience for Steve... I think he was a much more emancipated, creative person on this show... the idea of working in a different atmosphere, I think, helped Steve grow enormously." 48

Most of his songs from this score reveal a new level of self-discovery. "We Do Not Belong Together" contains none of the usualmasking of emotions of other Sondheim characters. "Move On" and "Lesson #8" are both songs that openly spur their characters into direct action, rather than Sondheim's usual indirect. The two lovers in the show realize that despite their passion, they can not successfully make their union work. The recognition of this is a new step for Sondheim.
The most telling, "un-Sondheim", song is "Children and Art," which was added to the show two days before it opened. It drastically changed the show. Lapine recalls that Sondheim wrote,"'Children and Art' and the whole thing came together... it was unbelievable. A dramatic change? That's an understatement. I mean the whole piece... it was like a magic trick."48

The number proclaims that only two things are important in life; children and art:

"This is our family, this is the lot. After I go, this is all that you've got. I know honey you don't agree. But this is our family tree. Just wait till we're there and you'll see--Listen to me. Mamma was smart. Listen to Mamma. Children and art. Children and art."49

Again Sondheim uses the repetition of the "Mamma"motif used in Gypsy and other shows, but with 'Sunday', he had broken new ground. He had finally voiced the importance of family, something he violently eschewed in other pieces.

Although this is a new step forward in his maturation there is something missing in 'Sunday'. The characters sing of family but never bring theses ideas to fruition. The characters never bond with their time-travelling partners. George is left alone at the end of the show with his art, and for now that is his family.

In his most recent work, Into the Woods, Sondheim has written the most emotionally connected work of his career. The musical which opened on November 6, 1987 recalls much of Sondheim's earlier work, but contains a more realistic,
yet optimistic view of families. By using the well-known characters of the fairy tales, Sondheim has made his most fervent plea for the understanding between children and parents.

Stephen Sondheim was drawn to the fairy tale motif because, "... all fairy tales are parables about steps to maturity. The final step is when you become responsible for the people around you, when you feel connected to the rest of the world." 50 This is an entirely new tone from a composer who has written about purely selfish characters. Sondheim himself seems to recognize the maturing of his process.

The characters have their parallels in other Sondheim musicals, but as Frank Rich writes, "This time Mr. Sondheim... wades into material he previously approached glancingly." 51 He has delved into the positive aspects of community and sharing.

Fairy tale imagery is not new to Sondheim. He has written two deleted songs, "Happily Ever After" from Company and "Two Fairy Tales" from A Little Night Music using the Grimms' message. He also pessimistically rhymes "Don't look bleak, happy endings can spring a leak, Ever after can mean one week." 52 in Do I Hear A Waltz?. But this time the imagery takes on a new optimistic tone.

Other similarities with past Sondheim works occur in both character and setting. Frank Rich in his initial review states: "Like the middle-aged showbiz cynics who returned to their haunted youths in Follies and Merrily We Roll Along, or the contemporary descendant who visits Georges Seurat's
hallowed park in *Sunday in the Park with George*, or the lovers who court in a nocturnal Scandinavian birch forest in *A Little Night Music*, Cinderella and company travel into a dark wilderness to discover who they are and overcome the eternal terrifying plight of being alone."53 With this show Sondheim is exploring an old theme with a benevolent approach.

In the final moments of the show, Sondheim’s characters form a family unit comprised of terrified survivors from an evil giant's revenge. The group is a nuclear family of sorts; Mimi Kramer: "There is no one left onstage but the baker, his baby, Cinderella, Jack, and Red Riding Hood, and from that nucleus a new family is created... we find the baker and Cinderella counselling the two children."54

Sondheim says that this section of the show,"... is very much about the legacy of what our parents teach us and how, even if we rebelled against them, we hand that down to our children...'No One is Alone' is about how we are all interconnected."55 By facing issues that he had skirted or rejected before, Sondheim has reached a new plateau. "To hear 'No One is Alone'," writes Frank Rich,"the cathartic and beautiful final song... is to be overwhelmed by one of the American theatre's most extraordinary song writing careers."56:

"Mother can not guide you,
Now you're on your own.
Only me beside you.
Still you're not alone.
No one is alone, truly.
No one is alone.
Sometimes people leave you,
Halfway through the wood."
Others may deceive you.
You decide what's good.
You decide alone.
But no one is alone."57

In *Into the Woods*, there is, "... a father who is uncomfortable with babies, who Sondheim admits is his father, a mother who regrets having had children, who Sondheim says is his mother."58 Sondheim has expanded his vision by delving deeper into parent and child relationships. He has reconciled himself with his parent's mistreatment of him and has moved forward. Sondheim has discovered, "...a deeper reassurance, born of tolerance and community and shared sacrifice... deeper and richer in meaning."59

The tolerance Sondheim has discovered in *Into the Woods*, is uncharted territory for him. Through examination of his past work and understanding the problems of his childhood, this breakthrough is personally liberating. The growth and maturity from his earlier work is startling. Although Sondheim may be, "...the one person I know who truly hates his mother,"60 he has learned to deal with this anger and has made a ringing endorsement for parenting in *Into the Woods*. 
ENDNOTES


3. Zadan, p. 3.


6. Henry, p. 82.


9. Henry, p. 82.

10. Henry, p. 82.


17. Zadan, p. 54.


27 Henry, p.83.

28 Henry, p.83.


30 Prince. p.147.

31 Prince. p.147.

32 Prince. p.147.


34 Laufe, p.407.

35 Prince, p.149.

36 Gottfried, p.320.

37 Zadan, p.143.


39 Gottfried, p.322.

40 Zadan, p.195.


42 Gottfried, p.323.

43 Gottfried, p.324.


45 Zadan, p.279.

46 Zadan, p.281.


51 Gottfried, p.317.

52 Rich, Frank. "Theatre: 'Into the Woods'"  
The New York Times. 6 November 1987, Sec. 1 p.17.


54 Kramer, Mimi. "the Theatre."  


56 Rich, p.17.


58 Henry, p.81.

59 Rich, p.17.

60 Henry, p.80.
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POST PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

In reviewing my project concept statement for my one-person show I found The Brady Bunch were Fucking Liars, exceeded and expanded the intent I had originally designated for myself. Through strong structural work with Don Nigro I believe I honed and streamlined the pieces into a cohesive journey. I took a very painful and personal message and dealt with it in a very positive manner. I'm pleased with the fact that I focused on a single journey and chose pieces that enhanced the numerous facets of this one idea.

Visiting playwright, Don Nigro, made the analogy that this was Greg Brady's journey after being evicted from "Sitcomland." The only thing I would have done, is to have enhanced this aspect -- either through references throughout the piece or a clearer statement at the beginning.

I was surprised that I used my time so efficiently throughout my process. I felt ready to present it, but in performing a show with so many pieces I found it difficult to concentrate on only one piece at a time. Perhaps I was too concerned with product? I trusted myself enough to make changes from my original script. Perhaps the nicest surprise, was the late change for the "We're Gonna Be All Right" section. I'm proud of the fact that my directorial eye was able to remedy that problem section. I think my weakest point is movement and I never addressed this enough in my process. I would like to have set goals for each rehearsal. I felt my music was sloppy but I was unable to meet with my accompanist before the new year. Overall I know myself well enough that I budgeted my time very well.
I found it quite interesting that the pieces I wrote myself were the hardest to perform. I was unable to interpret what I had written. I think my technique was challenged in a show with so many characters. While I feel successful with most of them, I found some consistent problems that troubled me. My vocal pattern (dropping off at ends of lines) was monotonous and worked best when I strongly pursued a clear, strong objective. I think my energy was too consistent throughout; I had no exercises to escape its similarity. I also feel my tempo rhythm was frenetic and should be altered to fit the character. Overall I think this project contained my most focused, concentrated, committed work here at the Ohio State University.
Suddenly, Dr. Morrissey's own creation, a hideous creature 9 feet tall and bearing the heads of the Brady Bunch, turns against him.

"Love, Lucy!"
THE BRADY BUNCH WERE FUCKING LIARS

An MFA Showcase by Rob Roznowski to fulfill my degree and get out of here.

The Brady Bunch Were Fucking Liars by Me
"Now You Know" by Stephen Sondheim
Sitcom by Eric Bogosian
Cable TV by Me
"Pleasant Little Kingdom" by Stephen Sondheim
"Every Day a Little Death" by Stephen Sondheim
Sticks and Bones by David Rabe
Superman by Eric Bogosian
"Stay With Me" by Stephen Sondheim
Hamlet (with Dick Van Dyke as Polonius)
"We're Gonna Be All Right" by Sondheim and Rodgers
The Seagull (with Donna Reed as Masha)
"We're Gonna Be All Right" (part two)
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (with Jackie Gleason)
"We're Gonna Be All Right" (part three)
The Day Room by Don De Lillo
No Problems by Eric Bogosian
"Happily Ever After" by Stephen Sondheim
The Brady Bunch Dream Continues Next Week by Me

Musical Direction.............Steven Weiss
Stage Manager..................Joe Albright
Set Run..........................Charles Murray
Light Board......................Steve Koehler

Special Thanks: Marc, Cindy, Barry, David, Kathleen, Paul, Time, and Don.

This show is dedicated to Debi, Ede, Debbie, Lisa, Jon, John, Michael, and anyone else whose integrity was misconstrued as a bad attitude.

My Committee consists of Marc Powers (chair), Dr. Brown, and Rex McGraw.