Acting Edition

Pictures from Home

by Sharr White

Based on the Photo Memoir
Pictures from Home
by Larry Sultan

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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ISBN 978-0-573-71080-3

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PICTURES FROM HOME was produced on Broadway by Jeffrey Richards, and premiered at Studio 54 on February 9, 2023. The performance was directed by Bartlett Sher, with set design by Michael Yeargan, costume design by Jennifer Moeller, lighting design by Jennifer Tipton, sound design by Scott Lehrer and Peter John Still, and projection design by Ben Pearcy at 59 Productions. The production stage manager was Jill Cordle. The cast was as follows:

LARRY SULTAN . . . . . Danny Burstein
IRVING SULTAN . . . . . Nathan Lane
JEAN SULTAN . . . . . Zoë Wanamaker

CHARACTERS

LARRY SULTAN – During the creation of the photo memoir *Pictures from Home*, Larry Sultan was in his thirties. By the end of this play, however, we realize that the story of the project's creation is told from the perspective of Larry at the end of his life, in his early sixties. The actor playing Larry, therefore, can either be in his thirties or early sixties, depending on a production's casting concept. As for the character, in this play (as he was in life), Larry is a driven, deeply-talented artist whose disarming, enthusiastic sense of inquisitiveness – which can border on the obsessive – leads him to seek out a purity of process rather than a stated result. In other words, his art is process, a concept that drives his father crazy.

IRVING SULTAN – Larry's Father, early seventies. Irv could be described as a book who is both closed and open at the same time. He is self-proud, preening and narcissistic while at the same moment vulnerable and deeply needful. Lurking just beneath it all is a dangerous, boiling anger whose presence Larry and Jean must constantly skirt.

JEAN SULTAN – Larry's Mother, early seventies. Jean is the guardrail of the Sultan family, and its unacknowledged backbone; at turns charming, sexy, feisty, watchful, quick to face Irv down. She is both Irv's keeper, sparring partner, and confidant. Crucially, she does the hard work of propping up Irv's personal myth: that even in retirement, he is a hard-working executive who must be in charge at all times.

SETTING

This play generally takes place in and around Jean and Irv's home, a stylishly-designed tract home in California's San Fernando Valley, circa the early '80s, though sometimes the play leaps outward or inward; to an airport parking garage, or to the solitude of inner thought. Thus, the set should be as flexible as possible, and yet should retain elements or even outright replications of the boldly-designed rooms pictured in Sultan's book.

As a matter of physical layout, it will be important that there be an upstage portion of the set where a backyard will be either literally present or suggested, bordered with high weeds. This is often Irv's retreat, and as such there should be an easy fluidity of sightline and sound from the backyard to the kitchen.

IMAGES AND HOME MOVIE CLIPS

The mentioned images and Home Movie clips are available to use. Licensees will receive a link to download the files once approved for a license. I've provided the files that were most impactful to us in creating cues during the world premiere of the play. What I have not provided is a final edit of those cues; your media artist will need to edit the Home Movies from the raw materials, which will allow you some flexibility in your choice of Home Movie images, and the timing of your staging.

Projections of Sultan's work play a crucial part in this drama. They are at turns points of argument, progressions of thought, drivers of story, and evidence. They are also works of art covered by protections in the contract. This means Sultan's photographs and videos shall be the only photographs used within and to promote the play. Sultan's photographs must be presented with fidelity to the original work in color, crop and focus and without alteration unless pre-approved by the Estate of Larry Sultan. Please contact the estate at studio@larrysultan.com for approvals or to inquire about additional images from *Pictures from Home*.

These materials have been generously provided by the estate of Larry Sultan: Kelly, Max, and Will Sultan. As these images depict their family, thank you in advance for handling them as personally as they deserve to be.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Beginning in the early 1980s, Larry Sultan spent ten years photographing, interviewing, and writing about his parents, and his relationship with them. The result was his acclaimed photo memoir, *Pictures from Home*.

The images from the book are often treated as if *they* are the artwork. When in fact, the real artwork is the entire project. It's Larry's interviews with his parents; his profound exploration of their relationship; his memories of childhood; his perspective on adulthood as he attempted to make sense of himself through the lens of his parents' experiences; and of course, the extraordinary photographs.

But it's more than that. The artwork is also a documentation of Larry's parents, and their agreement – sometimes weary, sometimes hostile, but always an agreement – to engage with him.

I first encountered the project during Sultan's 2015 retrospective at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Printed on the gallery wall next to a picture of his father, Irv, was the following exchange:

– Don't you think that a fiction can suggest a truth?
– Maybe, but whose truth is it? It's your picture, but my image.

The image in question was of a man, sitting on a bed, in a blue suit. Irv. A man, who, at first glance, does not present as a person interested in discussing concepts like ownership of image. The exchange resonated with tension, intimacy, rejection, acceptance. Then and there I wanted to know everything about Larry Sultan, his father, and his mother, Jean.

This play is my exploration of Larry's exploration. But take one further step with me: it also represents actors, along with their director, interpreting that exploration: Larry's pictures, his parents' images, this play, all further interpreted by an audience.

So whose truth is it? I like to think Larry would appreciate the idea of even more layers being added to that question.

Sharr White

Scene One

*(**LARRY** appears.)*

(PROJECTION: Above, around him, or even on him, plays a home movie from the early 1950s. Scenes of boys playing at a Southern California beach.)

[VIDEO 01: BOYS AT BEACH]

LARRY. *(To an invisible projectionist.)* Stop.

(The film stops. **LARRY** *addresses the audience.)*

In my parents' garage is a large brown box covered in dust and mouse turds. Inside that box are hundreds of reels of Super 8 film. This is one of them.

(To projectionist.) Go.

(The film resumes.)

I've watched every reel a dozen times; most I've gone through, painstakingly, frame-by-frame. Stop.

(The film stops.)

Let me give you some background. Generally it's the late 1980s, though I'm going to hopscotch around a little. I'm a distinguished Professor of Photography at California College of the Arts, in San Francisco. This project will become one of my hallmark achievements – I know that's not a modest thing to say. Regardless, this isn't about me, it's about them.

(Larry's father, **IRV***, appears.)*

IRV. Are you still here?

(To us.) Larry may say it's about us, but trust me. It's about him.

LARRY. Dad.

*(**IRV** gives a challenging chuckle. He carefully practices his swing.)*

(To us.) Every few months I've been flying down to my parents' house in California's San Fernando Valley, from the home I share with my growing family in the Bay Area.

IRV. *(To **LARRY**.)* Every few *months*?

(To us.) It's almost every weekend.

LARRY. Dad, every weekend? Some months it's twice a month but it's not every weekend.

IRV. See, this illustrates something to me, Larry – you may find it funny, you may not, but here you are professing to look for something – some, whatever, version of some sort of truth…

LARRY. – I love that no matter how often I explain what I'm doing you always seem to misrepresent it –

IRV. – and yet you can't even look at your*self*. *Truth* is, you come down *definitely* two times a month, *often* four days at a time, meaning it *feels like* every weekend.

LARRY. *(To us.)* What I've been doing? Is coming down to photograph them – my mother and father.

IRV. *(To us.)* And it's more than just photographs. It's like he's been investigating us. He calls it his "project." But I don't know.

LARRY. *(To us.)* My intention is that – eventually – this will be a book.

IRV. And it definitely feels like every weekend.

(Larry's mother, **JEAN**, *enters with a handful of paperwork, searching for something on a counter.)*

JEAN. *(Lifting a scrap of paper.)* Oh! Here it is!

*(***LARRY** *and* **IRV** *stare at* **JEAN** *as if she's interrupted.)*

(As if they should know what she's talking about.) For the listing? In Taluca Lake?

(They don't.)

With all the cactuses in the front yard? I said *take those cactuses out, nobody wants cactuses, who are you going to sell this to, some kind of a sadist? Certainly not a family with children, children want a lawn. Cactuses.*

*(***JEAN** *realizes* **IRV** *and* **LARRY** *are in the middle of something.)*

Are we talking about the project?

LARRY. *(To the invisible projectionist.)* A few slides please?

(PROJECTION: Irv and Jean at the kitchen table.)

[IMAGE 02: READING AT KITCHEN TABLE*]

*(***IRV** *looks at the photo, then at us.)*

IRV. Is he fucking kidding me?

JEAN. *(Weary.)* We're talking about the project.

IRV. *(To* **JEAN**.*)* That's a picture he *likes*?

LARRY. Next.

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(PROJECTION: Irv and Jean in bed.)

[IMAGE 03: READING IN BED*]

JEAN. *(To* **IRV**.*)* Oh! There you are with all your newspapers!

IRV. It's not that many papers.

JEAN. Well I'm glad Larry's got a picture of it, maybe you'll start to see there's a problem – *that's* something good that can come out of this.

(PROJECTION: Jean peers out a sliding glass door as Irv bends over a mass of weeds in the backyard.)

[IMAGE 04: FIXING THE RAIN BIRD]**

IRV. I hate this picture too.

(To **LARRY**, *edgy humor back on.)* – Larry, are you planning on this being a book you're actually going to *sell*?

LARRY. *(Ignoring him, to us.)* On one hand my father says he hates being involved in this project. On the other he's secretly flattered that he might actually be in a book.

IRV. *(To us.)* We ask him: Is it a novel? *No*. Is it a biography? *No*. What kind of a book is it?

JEAN. Late at night I'll hear Larry rustling through all our closets.

(PROJECTION: A nightstand with nasal spray, a framed photo, and a blood pressure cuff.)

[IMAGE 05: NIGHTSTAND*]**

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Or like this one! One day I came back from a listing and he'd taken all of our things out of our drawers.

IRV. Next he's going to show you a picture of a big turd, floating in a bowl.

JEAN. Irv, disgusting.

IRV. You know how long he's been subjecting us to this? *Eight years*.

LARRY. Not that long, dad.

IRV. Larry. When you started this thing you were single. Since then you met Kelly, got married, had a baby.

JEAN. And there's another on the way! – How's Kelly feeling, Lare?

LARRY. Yeah, good. She says hi.

JEAN. *(To us.)* Kelly tells us Larry's a very important photographer – whatever that means. I'd just like to have a couple nice pictures for the fridge.

LARRY. *(To us, wry humor.)* My wife Kelly and I joke that no matter how much respect I get in the outside world, stepping inside these walls is my Kryptonite. I turn to mush when I try to get the shots I'm looking for.

IRV. And what shots are those, Larry? Please, just tell us, so we can bring this whole thing to a close.

LARRY. *(To us.)* My father just wants me to march through this thing like a production line, but it doesn't work that way.

IRV. One day he had us posing all day long, doing all this phony stuff, and at the end of the day he discovered he had the lens cap on.

LARRY. Dad.

IRV. Did that not happen?

LARRY. That happened *once*, *one* time, you bring it up like it's a regular occurrence.

IRV. *(To us.)* I just wonder: maybe *those* were the mythical shots he was looking for, but now they're permanently missing.

JEAN. I can be a little more forgiving of Larry's project than his father. It's nice he wants to come down.

IRV. Jean has taken that official position. Me, I don't know.

LARRY. I absolutely do worry about the part of this that's invasive.

IRV. But not so much that he stops doing it.

JEAN. He did invite himself along – alone – on our Hawaii vacation. Me, Dad… Larry. I don't know what to say; this is the son we have.

IRV. *(To* **JEAN**.*)* I don't know why he's like this, where he gets this from. Not from me.

LARRY. But if I can get back to the point?

IRV.

So there's actually a point?
– Jean, I think it's important for us to know: *is* there a point?

JEAN.

Irv!
– Well why don't you let him explain for a second and he'll tell you!

*(***IRV** *and* **JEAN** *disappear back into their work as* **LARRY** *continues.)*

LARRY. Anyway! This all began because I was visiting them in about 1982 – just a normal visit at the time – and one night, instead of renting a videotape we pulled out the mouse turd box with the home movies in it, and…and we watched thirty years of folktales. Epic celebrations of the family. Go.

(PROJECTION: The movie begins playing again. Scenes from a train window, of Irv mowing the lawn, and gardening.)

[SELECTIONS FROM:]

[VIDEO 06: TRAIN WINDOW]

[VIDEO 07: IRV MOWING THE LAWN]

[VIDEO 08: GARDENING COWBOYS BIKES]

*(***LARRY** *turns to watch it.)*

They were remarkable. And.

IRV. Stop.

(The film stops.)

OK, here we go. Larry never says "but." He says "and." And what, Larry, to you they weren't just home movies. Right?

LARRY. Right, dad, they…

IRV. …they were something significant. Something that meant more than they actually mean.

LARRY. *(To us.)* What's fascinating to me is how he can both mock and participate at the same time.

IRV. They're just home movies, Larry!

JEAN. *(Carefully.)* Irv.

LARRY. *(Patient, to us.)* To me, they were more like a… a record of hopes and fantasies than of actual events.

(The film image fades out.)

IRV. *(To* **JEAN**.*)* OK, see? This is a part of what galls me. What else are home movies but records of actual events?

LARRY. Yeah but dad, you've told me a very specific story about your life, our lives.

IRV. *(Skeptical.)* OK…

LARRY. You get on a train headed West.

IRV. The Super Chief, in 1948.

LARRY. And you're scared to death; you've got a wife and two kids in New York, and you're a men's clothing salesman.

JEAN. Uch, he was *miserable*! And everyone he knew seemed to know someone in California who could give him a job.

IRV. *(To us.)* But on the train I meet this guy who tells me I'm nuts. There's a recession. A water shortage. Nobody's hiring. And I get out here and I call all those numbers and I'm like a bad relative nobody wants to hear from.

LARRY. You stay with Mom's sister and her husband.

JEAN. They had that cheap little bungalow in Culver City, you know what that would go for now?

LARRY. You told me one night you cried in the shower.

IRV. Which I don't think merits launching an investigation of us, Larry, I couldn't even find a job in a clothing store. You would cry too.

(To us.) Cried until the water went cold.

LARRY. Right. And so that evening in 1982 when we all watched the home movies, I find this one reel you made, and it's about that time period. It's titled…*Trip West.*

IRV. I'm one for a simple title.

JEAN. Oh, I love that movie; that's the one that shows us getting here from Brooklyn.

LARRY. *(To the projectionist.)* Start it again please?

(PROJECTION: The film starts rolling again. Young Larry and his brothers in cowboy outfits.)

[VIDEO 08]

(To us.) It's like this…extraordinary myth, unfolding in front of you. Of America. Of a Western migration. Of a great, primordial postwar fantasy lived by an entire generation just like my parents. I would even say that it's the most convincing representation of the myth of the West and the Garden that I've ever seen.

IRV. *The myth of the West and the Garden?*

LARRY. Okay, well, don't you think *Trip West* – two syllables – kind of downplays the moment, dad?

IRV. *(To* **JEAN***.)* Can you imagine what it would be like going to a party with Larry and his friends? They all stand around talking this way while you look for an open window to jump out of.

LARRY. *(Ignoring him, to us.)* The point being you can't watch this movie without getting the impression of, of…a family living in a small apartment in Brooklyn projecting its dreams onto film emulsion.

IRV. – Oh, Jesus Christ.

LARRY. *(To* **IRV***.)* But so; knowing the disparity between the actual circumstances of the movie versus the hopes you nurtured when you made the movie…can't you then imagine the possibility that a home movie could be more than, as you call it…"a record of actual events"?

IRV. What I'm saying is, why am I not allowed to just have my home movies?

LARRY. I'm not saying you're not! But did you ever think that my examining them is perhaps my way of getting to know…a different version of you?

IRV. Larry, I think you know me perfectly well. And if you'd like, I'll introduce you to a version of your mother.

JEAN. Very funny, Irv. Lare, your father and I, we really don't have any secrets. I mean…we have plenty of things we wouldn't talk about in a million years. But those aren't *secrets*.

LARRY. *(To us.)* So what I did following that night was I took several years…

IRV. *(To us.)* You hear that? *Years*. He took years.

LARRY. …to comb through every film in the box to create an entire collection of home movie stills.

IRV. I think really what we should be talking about here, Larry, is that you have a problem with obsession.

LARRY. *(To booth.)* Can we show a few?

(PROJECTION: Selections from Larry Sultan's Home Movie Stills.*)*

[IMAGE 09: HEADING WEST*]

[IMAGE 10: WATERFALL]**

[IMAGE 11: HOUSE*]**

[IMAGE 12: CLASSIFIEDS**]**

View from a train window. A waterfall on a summer's day. The front yard of a small suburban house. My father with the classifieds. If you know the story, the images support the teller's narrative. But when you take a familiar image, isolate it, strip it of context…can it tell a different story?

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IRV. *(To the invisible projectionist.)* Okay, you know what? Play the actual movie, not his whatever.

(PROJECTION: The film starts rolling again. Scenes of Yosemite, Disneyland, boys playing with a puppy.)

[VIDEO 13: YOSEMITE]

[VIDEO 14: DISNEYLAND]

[VIDEO 15: PUPPY]

(To **LARRY***, as the movie plays.)* It's right here, Larry. The movies are the movies. We *went* to Yosemite. We *went* to Disneyland. We *bought* a new house. *This* is the lawn that was in front of that house.

LARRY. I'm not arguing, dad, I'm pointing out.

(The movie image fades out.)

IRV. For you, though, Larry, that's just a euphemism for arguing. I'm serious! Again, it goes back to this search for the truth when you yourself want to avoid truth!

LARRY. I'm making a statement of discovery. And no it's not a euphemism, I'm just exploring an idea, why are you so threatened by that?

JEAN. All right you two. OK. Irv, leave him alone. Larry, OK, he's acting like he's cornered, OK, just everyone enough.

IRV. *(To us.)* All right, if you haven't figured it out yet, this is what Larry does. He picks and picks and picks.

LARRY. I'm *exploring*!

IRV. You're picking!

LARRY. *(Vulnerable.)* What I'm doing, dad? Is looking for the, the…life *beyond* the frame.

IRV. Beyond the frame.

LARRY. It's…it's a metaphor.

IRV. I don't think that's a metaphor, Larry.

LARRY. Dad, what a metaphor is, is…

IRV. I know what a fucking metaphor is! But *beyond the frame*; that's not a metaphor for what you're doing.

LARRY. OK, what is it?

IRV. I think it's literal.

JEAN. *(To us.)* Irv finally found a job selling razor blades for the Schick Razor Blade Company. He worked his way up to Vice President of Sales.

IRV. *(To us.)* I was good at what I did, I'll tell you that.

JEAN. Now he specializes in shaving down big ideas.

IRV. Very clever, Jean.

JEAN. Thank you Irving.

IRV. But I'm not tearing down his idea at all.

(To **LARRY**.*)* I think you actually, *literally*, want to discover a life you can't see, Larry. You want to dig up the, the…whatever, the things that defy this image of, whatever you call it, *the Garden*. But the fact is, I've been very open about the real life behind these scenes, about how difficult it was: me, a grown man with a family moving us all the way out to Los Angeles just to work in yet another clothing store; selling freezers at night to make ends meet; hating my life.

LARRY. Yeah, but dad I'm not trying to *defy* those images. What I'm saying is that many different interpretations of an image can live together side-by-side, *all of them true*.

IRV. No, Larry. They can't.

LARRY. Oh Jesus Christ.

IRV. How old are you, Larry? At your age, I'd bought us our *second* house. With a pool. *By selling razor blades*. Have you been able to provide your family with a pool, Larry? You personally?

LARRY. I think you know we don't have a pool, dad.

IRV. *(To our invisible projectionist.)* – Go. Play the fucking movie again.

(To us.) Pardon my French.

(PROJECTION: The film plays.)

[VIDEO 15]

(To us.) One razor blade sale at a time, look what it bought. Look at this life. Yes, did all sorts of other things happen? Were there... Whatever. Cracks in the foundation, underneath the rugs, that you can see when you pull everything up? Sure, but just look at this foundation. What a fantastic foundation for a life.

(To **LARRY**.*)* Why...why do you want to pick at it, and pick at it, Larry?

LARRY. Okay, why does my exploring it threaten you so much?

IRV. *Threatened?* Believe me if I was threatened you would know it!

JEAN. ...Irv. Careful.

...Irv!

(The film plays. **LARRY** *sees something that catches his eye. A boy jumping through a hula hoop.)*

[VIDEO 16: HULA HOOP]

LARRY. Wait, wait, stop. – This is what I'm talking about.

(The film stops.)

Roll it back, frame by frame.

(The film rolls back. We freeze on the image of a man's arm in a white shirt, sleeve rolled up to the elbow – Irv, presumably – holding a red hula hoop. A young boy pauses in front of the hoop, looking worried.)

[IMAGE 17: HULA HOOP STILL]

IRV. I didn't shoot this, your mother must have shot this, because that arm, that's me. And that boy, that's your brother Kenny.

JEAN. I thought it was cute. Kenny didn't know how to jump, your father was concerned, maybe there was something wrong with him, we went outside, he taught Kenny how to jump.

LARRY. Right. And this is what I mean about the life beyond the frame.

(To projectionist.) Can you loop it?

(We watch on a loop as the little boy, seemingly without end, leaps through, leaps through, leaps through.)

[VIDEO 18: HULA HOOP LOOP]

(To us.) It just somehow strikes me as significant that here is one of his sons…literally jumping through a hoop for him.

IRV. Now *that*. Is a metaphor.

Scene Two

(TEXT PROJECTION: THE GARDEN. A spot rises on **JEAN**. *She talks to us.)*

JEAN. My sister Teme had been living in Los Angeles for some time. And your father pushed his brother Burt to move, too, right after the war.

LARRY. *(Appearing with a tape recorder, guiding her to sit.)* Sorry mom, can you start that again?

JEAN. Start it again?

LARRY. I just want to get it on tape.

JEAN. *(Into recorder.)* My sister Teme had been living in Los Angeles for some time. And your father pushed his brother Burt to move, too, right after the war, and Burt actually did it! But your father didn't have the courage – *his* words. We had you and your brother; and who can afford to quit a job? It was just a clothing store – Edward Reeds, near Radio City – and he was miserable.

*(***LARRY** *takes a second tape recorder, brings it to* **IRV**.*)*

LARRY. This was back in New York?

IRV. – Yeah, Edward Reeds. I was miserable. It just wasn't me. And there's something literal in that because I had to change my name. To John Sutton. It was an English clothing store. You have no idea about prejudice until you pass yourself off as somebody else. As one of them. Irving Sultan was a Jew, but John Sutton wasn't. The stuff I'd hear people say about Jews was hard to believe and even harder to take. I wanted to punch people right in the nose, but where would that get me? I had a wife and two kids. So I had to accept their stupidity. The whole thing made me sick.

JEAN. Well finally one night we were at dinner, and he was bombed. Me too, a little. He's saying *what does New York hold for us? We live in a crummy fourth floor apartment in Brooklyn, and what do we have?* Finally someone got tough and said *cut the talk. If you think it's so great out West, do something about it.* And he said *you know what? I will.* A couple days later...he quit Edward Reeds. Bought a one-way ticket on the sit-up train to California.

IRV. The ticket cost ninety-nine dollars. Everyone said *you'll be back. You'll last a month or two but you'll be back.* I told them to kiss my ass. I wasn't ever coming back.

JEAN. Your father would write me letters from California. He tried to keep it upbeat, but on the side I would be getting letters from my sister. People were abusive to him. *You so-and-so's come out on planes, buses. You're here today but in three days you'll be gone. We don't hire transients.*

LARRY. Did you have...aspirations?

IRV. What did I *aspire* to?

LARRY. Yeah, what did you see for yourself?

IRV. What I was trying to see for myself was having a job, Larry. It's that simple. Who could afford hopes and dreams?

JEAN. Finally he found a job. And what was it? Selling men's clothes again. I think he hated himself.

LARRY. So Mom moves us to California in 1949... but it's not until 1952 – three years later – that you get hired at Schick.

IRV. The district manager was severely criticized for hiring someone as old as I was. At thirty-six years old I was a bad bet.

LARRY. But he hired you.

IRV. The guy only showed me the ropes for a single day. He'd walk into these wholesalers with his hands in his pockets – real low key – and tell the buyer Schick was having a promotion on blades: one dozen free packages with every order of eleven dozen. "How much do you want?" He did this all day. One free with eleven, how much do you want. I thought Jesus, this is easy.

JEAN. So I get a call from him, long distance. You probably don't remember, but long distance was a big deal back then. "Come out," he says. He's rented a house in Culver City. A real house, not an apartment.

LARRY. Just… *Come out.*

*(***JEAN** *gives a shrug.)*

IRV. So after the first day he tells me, "OK Irv, you're on your own, go cover this territory." Gives me all these cow towns in a five-hundred-mile radius from Los Angeles. "Give me a call when you're finished." So I start off the next morning – work late and drive over the pass through the night to the next town, stay in a motel room with maps, planning out the next day, I cover all these accounts and return two days later and call the guy.

– Jay, this is Irv.

– Irv, where you calling from.

– I'm home.

– You're where?

– I'm home.

– What're you doing home, it takes a week to cover that territory.

That's how it began. I would do the work of two salesmen, and good work. People thought I was working on a commission, which I wasn't.

(A glance at **JEAN**.*)*

IRV. – I was working for something else. I was on fire.

JEAN. Your father met us at Union Station. He took us to the house he'd rented, and my sister Teme had food for us, all laid out…

(Emotional.) …and there were flowers. All over the place. Flowers, from the *garden*. And you guys couldn't believe it. There was a front lawn. And a driveway, right up to the house. You went wild. It was a sunny day and you ran up and down the street. After years in an apartment, here it was: real houses. With front and back yards.

And that was the beginning. – Well, it wasn't the beginning of the *beginning*. But it was the beginning of the middle.

Scene Three

(The sound of a jet flying overhead. The apron of the theatre is an airport terminal. **LARRY** *stands alone, loaded down with camera equipment and a roller suitcase. He speaks to us.)*

LARRY. Okay, look. I *have* been doing this for eight years. When I'm up late trying to edit my literally *thousands* of images Kelly will laugh and tell me this is what I do: an idea will grab me and, and…I'll just get right in the boat and sail off and figure it out on the high seas. She calls this project my Odyssey. And I'm like… Well, at least *my* Odyssey is only eight years… Uh. So far.

Though I think it's interesting that when you sit down to read *The Odyssey,* you realize that it isn't actually the tale of Ulysses finding his way home. It's the tale of Ulysses' son…*discovering* the tale…of Ulysses.

(To the projectionist.) …Hey can we have that picture up? The headshot? – While we're on myth.

(PROJECTION: A Schick corporate officer headshot of Irv, circa 1960s.)

[IMAGE 19: BUSINESS SNAP (PORTRAIT OF YOUNG DAD)*]

When I first started this project it was the Reagan years, and resurgent conservatives were fetishizing the image of the family. The *image*. To me, this isn't just a picture of my father. It's also a picture of a man projecting an image; fulfilling the mythological *role* of father. But what bothers me about the Reaganite narrative… is that… *(Referring to the photo.)* …they conveniently pretend that this is *happily ever after*. They never tell you what happens later. When this man…who's been driven by this image of success…gets discarded.

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* Page 120, *Pictures from Home*

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