

Manny

Monologue 1:

You scared the shit out of me! From the first words you read out loud – you were like not yet four, I knew I was in big trouble. Thank God I had the store; I was the smartest guy in the world in that store. I had those shoeboxes arranged perfectly, in size order. I needed to be the master of something, for crissake, why not shoes? At least they don't talk back. You know, simple men may not have the talent for words and ideas that some men have, but don't assume there's nothing going on behind the silence and the sarcasm. There's plenty.

Monologue 2:

Look at all the books your mother had! Anything Jewish. *Marjorie Morningstar*. She loved *Marjorie Morningstar*. Leon Uris. *Exodus*, *Mila 18*. Always with the books. You got it from her. I read maybe a couple start to finish the last fifty years. Books like, *My Gun Is Quick*. Mickey Spilane. Excellent book. *I, the Jury*. The follow-up. I liked that too. Henry Miller. *Nexus*, *Plexus*, *Sexus*? Remember those? The books that were banned in Boston? I didn't read the whole books, though, just the dirty parts. And, boy, were they dirty! Filthy! Some of the stuff he had going on in there! Unbelievable! I kept them hidden in my night table. Your mother's been dead how long?, thirty-odd years? You'd think a man all alone, pacing these four and a half rooms, books and books all around, might one day pick one up to see what was inside – out of curiosity, if nothing else. But, no. Not me. Not once.

Eric

Monologue 1:

My father sold shoes. In a Buster Brown store on Sheepshead Bay Road. He wasn't a partner, he was an employee. For thirty-nine years. He gave his life to that store. It wasn't even his to profit from, yet still he gave everything to that goddamn store. I could never understand what was so attractive about that place, why he chose to spend so much of his days there and not at home. I remember watching him closely in the morning, trying to uncover the mystery of manhood, the rituals of work. The shpritz of Aramis, the buff of the Oxfords, the tying of the perfect Windsor knot. I'd watch him from my window get swallowed up in the sea of Brooklyn fathers all beginning their day. (He's moved) I should get you home.

Monologue 2:

Why my mother and father named a Jewish boy "Eric" ... As far as I could tell, there is no Eric in the Old Testament. I looked. When I was about eight or nine I discovered I had the same name as Houdini, and suddenly it was cool to be an Eric. His given name was Erich Weiss. Erich with an "H" at the end. It was a coincidence; my parents didn't know that was his real name. I remember my grandfather telling me stories about the Great Houdini. He saw him once, back in the twenties, on the Lower East Side. Houdini had these heavy chains wrapped around him and they locked him inside a steamer trunk. Then the trunk was thrown off a pier into the East River. It was wintertime; it was freezing. The crowd waited for him to come up – minutes went by; they were certain he'd frozen to death – when, finally, miraculously, he burst to the surface and everybody cheered! I've come to see that Houdini and I actually have more in common than our names. We're both escape artists.

Tyler

Bernie – my agent? – he wants me to do a part that really lets me show my range and get out of the teen-idol trap? This is perfect. I get to age from like twelve to twenty-two. And play against type? They love it when you play against type. Uh-oh. He’s looking at my hair. You’re thinking: This WASPy guy wants to play Kenny Fleeshman?! No way! I just want to assure you, sir: these highlights? They’re gone; they’re history. I’m going dark for this; you know, like dark brown. I already talked to my hair guy? Miguel, the guy who does my hair for everything? He was thinking maybe like a curly perm? To make me look more ... you know. I always find my characters through my hair. Always. It’s like once I get the right hair, I become them. This movie I just did? My character was supposed to be this bipolar, futuristic, hip-hop, deejay, bounty-hunter guy? Miguel gave me this really radical buzz cut? The minute I saw myself in the mirror, it was like, “Yeah! All right! Now I get it.” And don’t worry. He looks so worried! I won’t be so buff, I promise. I had to be really ripped for this movie – abs, chest, arms – I bulked up big time. Killed myself, I was like on zero fat for six months. I was starving. Now I’m working with a trainer and a nutritionist to lose all the muscle mass I killed myself to put on? ‘Cause Kenny’s got to be soft. You know? He’s gotta be. Not flabby, but soft. Like a typical Jewish boy

Zimmer

Monologue 1:

You don't think it's "great"; I certainly don't think it's "great." What's so great about it? My dad drops dead, my uncle sees it as a sign from God, he picks up, moves to Boca, my mom is a basket case, my sister doesn't want anything to do with the place, so who do you think the deli lands on, like a house fallin' outta the sky? Ya know? I used to wish him dead. I did; I prayed he would just go away and leave me the hell alone. Then whataya know? One day I show up to work after class? Ambulance, cops, people on the street. I think, Sonofabitch. You're not supposed to get what you wish for, you know. Screws you up big time if you do. It's not your fault. It was only supposed to be for the time being. Who thinks forever when your twenty-one, twenty-two? A year goes by, then five years, then before you know it, you're the alter cocker behind the counter flingin' the Hebrew Nationals. Some old customers come in, see me, and think I am my father! That he didn't die! That he and I are the same person! Need a story for your next book? Oh, I've got a story. Only I'm gonna charge you for it this time.

Monologue 2:

I saw you on TV! I'm sitting there eating breakfast ... (Announcer voice) "In the next half hour ... Eric Weiss, author of Brooklyn Boy ..." I almost choked on my cheerios. I swear: Milk almost came shooting out of my nose! You were great! So cool, so relaxed! Like you've been doing this your whole life! Mindy was impressed; she thought you were cute. *Shayna Punim!* If you didn't sell a million books that day! ... You're all over the place! I'm at my dentist's the other day, getting a new crown? There you are in Time magazine! Time magazine! Has a write-up on my friend Ricky Weiss! I couldn't believe it, I showed everybody there! The girl at the desk?, everybody, "See this guy? We grew up together in Sheepshead Bay! Like brothers, practically! Twins!" Oh, yeah, and in the thing?, in the write-up?, when they mention the friend in the book he gets bar mitzvahed with? Wait a minute: That's me! I had to have that book! I run home, get online, order the book – and I want you to know you should be honored: I never buy hard-covered books – ever. Ask Mindy; if it takes a year, I wait for paper. But this one; open, start reading. Cannot. Put. It. Down. I mean, hours go by. Kids can't find me; Mindy can't find me: "I-raaa!" I'm in the john, reading! Couldn't count on the author sending me an autographed copy or anything.

Zimmer Monologue 3:

You really stuck to it. You didn't give up. And I really gotta hand it to you. 'Cause after those other books of yours ... The first two ... (Shakes his head) Whatever the "message" or whatever, went (whistles) wayyy over my head. I'm not talking critics now, I'm talking regular people. – Is it okay for me to be saying this? Cause I don't know what you're supposed to say to a writer. I almost wrote you a letter. Years ago. After your first book: *The Gentleman Farmer*. I told you: I'm up on you. I tried reading it, I really did. I read maybe fifty pages. If that. I didn't know where it was coming from. You know? It didn't seem like you at all. It was like you were trying to be profound or something. I kept thinking, Where's Ricky in this? What's he writing this intellectual modern bullshit for? I was gonna write you and ask you point-blank. I wish I had. 'Cause, then – man! That second book! If someone put a gun to my head and said, "Tell me what this book's about or I'll shoot," I'd be shot – dead – right on the spot. Who am I to tell you, right? You're the published writer. Who am I. Just some schmuck who runs a deli.

Nina

Shlepping along on your book tour is not my idea of fun. You know how it is; I become totally irrelevant. It happened with *The Aerie*! And that was nothing compared to this. You have no idea what it's like having to stand there, smiling like an idiot, hoping someone makes eye contact with you. It's demoralizing. And you always make a point of introducing me to everybody and telling them what a wonderful writer I am and I hate it. It makes me feel like a fucking charity case when you do that! Everyone knows I haven't had a story published in six years. Who do you think you're fooling? Come on, six years? And it hasn't occurred to you I might not be any good? I wish I could've been a different sort of partner for you, Rick, I really do. You'd've been much better off with an adoring little wifey-type. But that's not who I am. I'm way too selfish and competitive. I don't know how you put up with me as long as you did. The contagion of failure should've been overwhelming. Between the miscarriages and the rejection letters. And you still don't get it. I don't want a baby. I wanted a baby. Our baby. I'm over it. My maternal instinct is dead. I've done all the mourning I can possibly do. Now I want my life back. We let that farce go on way too long. Infertility was my full-time job. What the hell, I needed a real job, anyway, right, Rick? Why didn't you say it was okay to stop?! You never said it. I needed to hear you say it. That's all I needed to hear.

Allison

Monologue 1:

There's this movie I wrote I want to produce independently. It's set in the future? On a space colony? Where the first generation of children born there – do you really want to hear this? Okay, so these kids were all conceived like right around the same time and now they're like sixteen, seventeen years old going through all the usual rebellious earthling shit teenagers go through – sex and drugs and stuff? Only they spent their whole lives on this like weird, hermetic colony in the middle of outer space, but it's the only home they've ever know, okay? And now this like utopian society is on the brink of like total ecological disaster. So, in order to save the colony, they band together to overthrow their leaders – who also happen to be their parents. They, you know, they kill them one by one, in really cool ways. So, like, in the third act, all the grown-ups are dead, okay And there they are, the kids, the new generation, finally in control, right? - in the middle of all this carnage – there are like body parts everywhere, it's really gross. And you know what they discover? They're still doomed! They're just as clueless as their parents! And that's my movie. People say it's awesome. It's an allegory.

Monologue 2:

No offense or anything, but fiction is like so over. I mean, don't get me wrong, I love books. And I really respect people like you who still bother to write them. Like watchmakers or violin-makers or something. People who devote themselves so completely to a dying craft? It's touching, it really is. I don't know how you do it. I really don't. It takes a lot of courage to do what you do. Who do you do it for? I mean, besides yourself. Who's your audience? Middle-aged or old people who have the time and the money to buy books and read them? That's nothing; that's like a tiny miniscule fraction of the population. Kids my age don't read. They don't. I mean, it's not that they're illiterate, it's just that it's not an important part of their lives. The only stories they like are the kind that can be shown to them. All they have to do is sit there and let it wash over them. I mean, why read when they could much more easily go to a movie or rent a DVD or something? Why spend like thirty bucks on a book that might not even be any good 'cause even books that are supposed to be good are rarely as good as they say they are, they're just hyped to get you to buy them. I'm not saying this is how I feel, I'm saying this is how kids my age feel.

Melanie

Monologue 1:

Oh my God! He's fantastic! I'll get Caitlin to send you a tape. You'll see; He's one of those actors you can't take your eyes off of. Like the young Brando. Or Monty Clift. The camera adores him. This kid can get our movie made. The studios dying to work with him. He has a meeting on the lot; he may stop by, he's dying to meet you. (The phone rings) This I have to take. What they say? Oh, that is such a – What?! Fuck them. That is such a crock of sh-- They did not, Jerry they never did. I don't give a shit they were in Ojai. What kind of people don't check their vociemail? You know, I don't have time for this. I don't give a shit what you do, I want you to fix this. Fix it, Jerry, you're our lawyer, what the fuck are we paying you for?! (Hangs up) Don't ask. We're building an addition and our neighbors are being unbelievable assholes. You ever renovate? It is such a nightmare; we should've just moved.

Monologue 2:

Listen... I have the most incredible news. I'm so glad you're out here so I can tell you in person! Tyler Shaw's dying to do this. *Outlaw Billy*? You don't know *Outlaw Billy*? It's the hour long hit of the season. On Fox. Billy the Kid, but very "now," very sexy? Tyler IS *Outlaw Billy*. He IS the show. He's been on the cover of everything lately; I'm sure you've seen him. Anyway, Bernie Glickman called me. Do you know Bernie? One of the old-time agents. I adore him. I'll introduce you; he's like a character from one of your books; you'll love him. Anyway, Tyler just finished this big action movie that's going to be huge and Bernie says he's got like a gazillion offers – and he's turning down every single one of them! You know what he told Bernie he wants his next movie to be? *Brooklyn Boy*! Isn't that fabulous?