

SING SING

Story by:

CLINT BENTLEY, GREG KWEDAR, CLARENCE "DIVINE EYE" MACLIN, & JOHN
"DIVINE G" WHITFIELD

Screenplay by:

CLINT BENTLEY & GREG KWEDAR

Based on, The Sing Sing Follies by John H. Richardson

&

Breakin' The Mummy's Code by Brent Buell

INT. THEATER - DAY

A MAN on a stage. Bathed in a lone spotlight, standing in a grove of trees. Butterflies flutter around him. A soft breeze crackles through the speakers.

He looks around at the swaying branches. And speaks.

MAN ON STAGE

For aught that I could ever read,
could ever hear by tale or history,
the course of true love never did
run smooth.

He stares out into the darkness of the theater and resumes his monologue.

MAN ON STAGE (CONT'D)

But either it was different in blood or else misgrafted in respect of years. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice. War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it. Making it momentany as a sound. Swift as a shadow. Short as any dream. Brief as the lightning in the collied night. That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and Earth. And, ere a man hath power to say "Behold!" The jaws of darkness do devour it up. So quick bright things come to confusion.

The man bows his head. The spotlight goes dark.

A roar of APPLAUSE erupts in the theater.

In the darkness onstage, the man is joined by the rest of the cast. They join hands, smile and nod to each other.

The lights flood the stage and they take their bows to the roar of a standing ovation.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - A LITTLE LATER

The man is holding a slice of cheese pizza in his teeth while he changes out of his costume. INTO A GREEN JUMPSUIT.

The rest of the cast don identical jumpsuits while TWO CORRECTIONS OFFICERS watch over them.

Yet still, the excitement among the company is electric -- everyone congratulating each other, hugging.

Soon the whole company lines up on the wall. A CORRECTIONS OFFICER starts counting them. One after another, the cast and crew call out their numbers.

We draw closer to the man who gave the monologue, waiting his turn. We see the contours and shadows of his face in sharp relief, his eyes bright despite the years on his face. This is JOHN "DIVINE G" WHITFIELD.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD.

EXT. SING SING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - MORNING

Sing Sing Correctional Facility is rooted on the shore of the Hudson River. Red brick, ancient stone, razor wire. The lull of water on the bank, the breeze through forest trees.

The only prison in the U.S. where a commuter train whips through the yard heading to Cold Spring, to Poughkeepsie, to towns beyond.

The walls of Sing Sing barely tremble.

INT. B BLOCK - EARLY MORNING

First light. Sing Sing's infamous B BLOCK - 4 stories tall and housing over 800 men - is raucous and echoes with noise.

As we move down the corridor we hear the sound of typing.

We arrive at Divine G's cell. He's seated in front of a TYPEWRITER, headphones on as he types. He slides a fresh sheet of paper, sets the margins, and continues his work.

INT. CELLBLOCK CORRIDOR - MORNING

A long line of men snaking through corridors and gates. Each gate thundering open before them, pounding shut behind. A sound felt in the bones.

INT. MESS HALL - LATER

Divine G moves his fork through runny powdered eggs. His instant coffee steaming.

A man stands next to him. Divine G doesn't look up.

BOOK FAN

Excuse me. I've been trying to
catch you in the yard, but...

Divine G looks up at him. The man holds out a BOOK: a bedraggled copy of MONEY GRIP by Divine G.

BOOK FAN (CONT'D)

Mind signing it?

Divine G warms up.

DIVINE G

Of course.
(sees the title)
You from Rikers?

BOOK FAN

Spent two years there. How'd you
know?

DIVINE G

This one was very popular there for
a while. Got a pen?

Divine G signs the book, then returns to his breakfast. The man is still there. Standing awkwardly.

BOOK FAN

Man I can't believe Puck did you
dirty like that.

DIVINE G

Hell of a twist.

BOOK FAN

But hey man, for real...

He doesn't know how to say it, but he fumbles through an AWKWARD THANK YOU to Divine G for the emotional scene on stage.

BOOK FAN (CONT'D)

I hadn't seen anything like that
before.

Divine G removes his glasses and looks up at the man.

DIVINE G

Releasing those tears is healthy
for you. Don't tamp that shit down.

EXT. YARD - AFTERNOON

Divine G stands against a wall in a corner of the yard. He pulls out a baggie of carrots and green beans and shakes it out on the ground.

A GROUP OF GEESE gather around him. They know Divine G, they eat greedily. Divine G scolds one of them.

DIVINE G

Come on. Don't hog it all from your brothers.

He watches the patterns of men in the yard.

Then a SIREN WAILS and Divine G drops onto his belly, puts his hands on the back of his head along with everyone else in the yard.

INT. CLASSROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Divine G -- reading glasses low on his nose and a notepad in his lap -- sits with a group of four other men in a cramped classroom. This is the STEERING COMMITTEE.

Inspirational posters hang askew on the walls around them:

You'll always miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

Attitudes are contagious, is yours worth catching?

DIVINE G

Alright gentlemen. Beautiful work last night. Let's hear those kudos.

The men discuss their favorite parts of the production. The beautiful moments, the standout performances, the gaffes, the reactions from the crowd.

JJ

But G. That monologue... I never heard population that quiet.

DAP

When you looked around at those butterflies...

The group murmurs in appreciation of the moment.

DIVINE G

It's because I forgot the rest of the monologue. I was thinking.

They all laugh.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
Dropped two lines though. I'll
never forgive myself.

Divine G flips the page on his clipboard.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
Now, uh, we also need to talk about
what we can do better. Those
transitions were... rough.

MIKE MIKE
Man. I'm still riding high. Already
miss stepping on the wood.
(looking around)
Maybe talk about improvements at
the next meeting.

The others nod. So Divine G flips another page.

DIVINE G
Alright. Well, want to go over the
waitlist? See if there's anyone to
pull up?

They review the waitlist. Debate different men vying for
acceptance into the program. Who they think has the most to
gain from the work.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
What about Curtis Cross?

MIKE MIKE
I talked to some people about him.
He's not serious. He's just wants
to be a star. Steal the show.

DIVINE G
Alright. Maybe he stays on the
waitlist one more round. Then we
revisit him?

They agree.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
One more. This is his second
request. Divine Eye.

The others are wary of the idea. Divine Eye has a reputation
for running the yard.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

I know it. But he's teaching a history class with the NAACP. He's smart. He just needs something better than yard work to channel his talents into.

The others still aren't convinced.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Isn't that why we're here? To go after the ones who need this program?

They get quiet.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Let's just interview him. See what's what.

They agree.

EXT. YARD BERM - ANOTHER DAY

Divine G and Mike Mike are talking on the edge of the yard. Both scanning the yard, looking for someone.

MIKE MIKE

(looks at the sky)

It's too hot for this. Let's look for him another day.

Divine G just watches the yard.

DIVINE G

There he is.

Divine G starts walking, Mike Mike follows.

EXT. YARD COURTYARD, 2ND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

They approach a man walking across the yard. He's broad-shouldered and muscular, yet graceful: like he could dance as well as he could fight. This is CLARENCE "DIVINE EYE" MACLIN.

DIVINE G

Excuse me, could I have a word? I--

DIVINE EYE

Be with you in a second. I gotta take care of something right quick.

Divine Eye keeps walking. He descends some steps into the lower courtyard. Divine G and Mike Mike stand there, annoyed, and watch what unfolds below.

EXT. YARD COURTYARD, 1ST LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Divine G and Mike Mike watch from a distance as Divine Eye approaches a YOUNG PRISONER -- clearly new here -- who has been waiting for him. This is CLAY. Divine Eye steps close to him.

CLAY

Oh hey man.

DIVINE EYE

Yo. Nice layup out there.

CLAY

You saw that?

DIVINE EYE

What you mean? Of course I saw that.

Divine Eye leans closer.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

You got what I left with you?

CLAY

Yeah, of course. I held it all day just like you told me.

DIVINE EYE

And you didn't tell no one you had it, right?

CLAY

No, no, of course not.

They stand there awkwardly a moment.

DIVINE EYE

Well let's see it then.

CLAY

Oh yeah.

Clay scrambles in his pockets. Brings out SQUARE OF TIN FOIL, folded tightly around something. Hands it to Divine Eye.

DIVINE EYE
Appreciate you helping me out like
that. I won't forget it.

Divine G and Mike Mike just watch as this unfolds.

Divine Eye opens the packet just enough to check the
contents. A ROUGH-CRUSHED WHITE POWDER.

Divine Eye looks confused at it. Then at the Young Man.

CLAY
What...?

DIVINE EYE
What the fuck is this?

CLAY
What?

DIVINE EYE
What do you mean, what? This ain't
what I gave you.

Divine Eye tastes some on his finger. Shakes his head.

CLAY
Huh? Yes it is, I just--

DIVINE EYE
What is this, fucking aspirin? What
the fuck are you trying to pull?

CLAY
Hey man, I didn't... I put it in my
pocket just like you told me and--

DIVINE EYE
(quietly livid)
You think I'm a fucking fool?

CLAY
No man, I swear to God.

DIVINE EYE
You saying I'm lying then? That I
don't know what I'm looking at?
Taste it.

CLAY
No, I believe you, I just--

DIVINE EYE

This is aspirin. You know what I fucking left with you?

CLAY

No.

DIVINE EYE

Not fucking aspirin.

Divine Eye shoves it back to him. He steps close. The other man is trying hard to stand there.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

I don't know what you did or didn't do, and I don't care. That was five hundred dollars. You fucked me. Now you owe me five hundred dollars.

CLAY

Oh please man, come on--

DIVINE EYE

Next time I see you, you better have a plan for how to get me my money.

Divine Eye leaves Clay there, stunned.

EXT. YARD COURTYARD, 2ND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Divine Eye is laughing as he climbs the stairs back to where Divine G and Mike Mike wait for him.

MIKE MIKE

That's fucked up.

DIVINE EYE

He's gotta learn what it's like around here. Can't be going around trusting people. What can I help yall with?

DIVINE G

You signed up for RTA. We've got a couple openings for our next production. Maybe you could put your acting talents to better use than hustling people.

DIVINE EYE

What, that? That was nothing. You haven't seen acting yet.

Divine G seems to be studying him.

DIVINE G
Why did you sign up for the
program?

DIVINE EYE
Heard yall got chick volunteers.

Divine G just stares at him. Sees through the act.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)
Do I need a reason?

DIVINE G
No. You just have to be honest.

Divine Eye looks around.

DIVINE EYE
I'm bored. Tired of this yard shit.
I came across this book that fell
off the library cart. Read a couple
lines. *When we are born, we cry*
that we are born to this great
stage of fools. I thought, this cat
must've done some time. He knows
what's going on.

DIVINE G
So King Lear just happened to fall
off the library cart? And you just
read a few lines.

DIVINE EYE
Yeah well, life's funny, isn't it?

Divine G tries to hide his smile.

DIVINE G
We'll be in touch.

Divine G and Mike Mike leave.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER - MORNING

The water is gentle over the Hudson. Sing Sing's walls paint
the shoreline. CO's move between guard towers like toy
soldiers. A sailboat lists by lazily.

INT. CLASSROOM - ANOTHER DAY

The classroom is now bustling with 15 MEN who have been selected for the program.

A few actors filtering coffee through a sock. Others are warming up with vocal exercises.

Divine G catches a glimpse of Divine Eye stepping into the classroom. Circling the room, not sure where to stand or who to talk to.

Soon, a civilian VOLUNTEER strides in, wearing work boots and aviator pants. A gold post earring and a long white ponytail. This is BRENT.

BRENT

Hello everyone. I see some familiar faces, but for those of you who don't know me, my name is Brent, I'll be at your service as your director for, whatever you decide to do for your upcoming production. But there's plenty of time for all that later. For now, let's start with a warmup.

He gathers everyone into a circle and moves to the center. He tells them to start moving.

Then he gives them cues to perform different walks: Walk like an old man. Like a model. Like a zombie. Like someone who's won the lottery.

The awkwardness fades from them and everyone loosens up.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

The company are all seated in chairs in a big circle.

BRENT

Gentlemen. Congratulations on Midsummer. You did beautiful work. You should be proud. Have you decided what's next?

The men start to discuss a range of shows. From *On The Waterfront* to *A Few Good Men* to *Candide* to...

Then one of the men speaks up. Says it's time they finally put on one of Divine G's plays. Novelist. Memoirist. Winner of four national writing competitions.

BRENT (CONT'D)

I love it. Do you have something in mind, G?

DIVINE G

Well, I don't know...

The company pushes him, tells him to spit it out.

Divine G starts to pitch it.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

OK. I just finished one actually. It's called, *Fine Print*. It's the saga of Zabar Turner, a record producer, who gets tricked into signing over his record company by the conniving Fast Freddy. It's a story of his journey to get his studio back. It's about friendship, the dangers of overzealous ambition, betrayal, and the power of perseverance. And how all relationships under heaven contain... *Fine Print*.

The company eats it up.

BRENT

Wow. Sounds amazing. Well, do we have any other ideas? Or should we take a vote?

Divine Eye raises his hand.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Yes, a new face. Hi.

DIVINE EYE

Yeah, I don't want to step on anybody's toes in here, and I don't mean no disrespect, but does every play have to be so serious?

MIKE MIKE

What do you mean?

DIVINE EYE

I'm just saying, every day in here is a drama. Every day is a tragedy. Might be nice to do, I don't know, a comedy. Population might appreciate it.

Divine G just listens.

BRENT
How does everyone else feel?

The rest of the men are warming to it.

DIVINE EYE
With a comedy, you could really turn it up. Have music numbers, dance numbers. Make it big.

DIVINE G
What kind of comedy would you propose doing?

DIVINE EYE
What do you mean, what kind of comedy?

DIVINE G
Do you want to do something broad? Want to be more low-key and do satire? Is it musical or not?

DIVINE EYE
Man I don't know. I'm just saying--

DAP
A cowboy comedy.

Everyone goes quiet and looks at him.

DAP (CONT'D)
I've always wanted to do a cowboy play.

This opens the floodgates. The men start throwing out random ideas for the comedy: Pirates, Ancient Egypt, Robin Hood. Freddy Krueger.

MIKE MIKE
OK hold on. Does anyone know a comedy out there has all that?

Someone suggests Divine G write it.

DIVINE G
That's not really in my wheelhouse.

BIG E
It could time travel.

DIVINE G
I know, but--

BRENT
That's true. It could time travel through all these places. Have a ton of roles to get more people up on stage. Have a message.

All eyes go to Brent.

BRENT (CONT'D)
I uh... I could write it if you aren't feeling it, G.

DIVINE G
Doesn't bother me. If everyone else is on board.

BRENT
I'll run it by Katherine and if the script is bad, we can always pivot to something else.

MIKE MIKE
Well. I guess let's take a vote.
All in favor of this original comedy...

Everyone raises their hand.

INT. DIVINE G'S CELL - LATER

Divine G is at his desk after lights out. Trying to repair the bent arm of his glasses without breaking them.

A voice comes from the cell across from his.

MIKE MIKE (O.C.)
I've read five drafts of Fine Print. It's good man. And I mean... it could be funny. With the right take. Or maybe you could write a musical number in it.

DIVINE G
(laughs)
It's a straight drama. No point trying to change that.

MIKE MIKE (O.C.)
Do you have another play that's
funnier? Maybe we can take another
vote.

DIVINE G
Appreciate it brother. But--

MIKE MIKE (O.C.)
I think it's important that we do a
play written by one of our own. It
would say a lot. And I hate to see
you get passed over when--

DIVINE G
Mike Mike. Please. I'm really OK
with it. When the time is right --
if the time is right -- we'll do
one of mine. If not, it's fine man.
Besides, it's not like we're short
on time in here.

He hears Mike Mike sigh.

MIKE MIKE (O.C.)
OK OK. Not trying to be pushy.

Divine G sets the glasses down. Thinks.

DIVINE G
I can't remember the last time
everyone was that excited about a
play. Maybe he's right. Maybe a
comedy will take the edge off
around here.

MIKE MIKE
I'll say one thing, it'll be easier
than all that dying stuff from the
last production.

Divine G resumes his work resurrecting the glasses.

DIVINE G
Dying is easy. Comedy is hard.

INT. CLASSROOM - ONLY DAYS LATER

The theater group is together again. Brent is passing out
scripts for the play. He looks exhausted from jamming this
play out in just a few days.

Divine G looks at the title page. BREAKIN' THE MUMMY'S CODE.

BRENT

I took everything you all wanted
and put it in here. Ancient Egypt,
pirates, Old West Gunfights. And I
sprinkled in the Black Plague and
Roman Gladiators because it seemed
like a good idea at the time.

DIVINE G

(thumbing through)

A hundred and forty-seven pages...

MIKE MIKE

...over the weekend?

BRENT

It was a lot to fit in. It's got
some dance numbers, some songs, a
Hamlet soliloquy. But at its heart,
it's the story of an Egyptian
prince who follows clues through
time to find his Mummy.

The men are trying to follow along. They start asking
questions about the plot, about how Hamlet fits in to Ancient
Egypt, is Freddy Krueger in there.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Yes. Freddy is in there. It will
make sense when you read it. For
now, just find a character you
identify with. Cast list is on the
board. Pick an audition slot.
There's enough for everyone to have
at least one role in here.

INT. CLASSROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Brent sits at a long table with Divine G and the Steering
Committee. Each with a notepad and a script.

The door opens and one of the men steps in. They thank him
for coming and ask him what role he's going out for. He names
three characters.

BRENT

OK. Whenever you're ready.

The man stands quietly a moment, readying himself. Then he
bursts into an incredibly intense rendition of "HAPPY
BIRTHDAY".

In Divine G's notes, he just puts a question mark.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

AUDITION MONTAGE.

Actors step in one after another. Their auditions range from the silly to the profound.

They act out gonzo scenes from the play. Tell stories from their childhood. Sing. Dance. Freestyle rap.

They are all range of ages and talents.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

And finally we land on Divine G as he FINISHES HIS AUDITION.

He went to the bottom of the well to pull out what he just brought.

The Committee is speechless. Divine G is still recovering.

He goes to take his seat but they tell him he can't observe the next audition since they're going out for the same part.

DIVINE G
Someone else is going out for
Hamlet?

BRENT
Divine Eye is.

Divine G nods, pretends it doesn't bother him.

DIVINE G
I'll send him in.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Divine G steps out of the classroom. Divine Eye waits on a bench with his head leaned back against the wall, as if he might be asleep.

DIVINE G
You're up.

Divine Eye stands.

DIVINE EYE
Sounded good in there. Intense.

DIVINE G
Thanks. Hey... Could I ask you something?

DIVINE EYE
Anything.

DIVINE G
You asked to do a comedy.

DIVINE EYE
Yes.

DIVINE G
And now we're doing a comedy.

DIVINE EYE
I'm excited.

DIVINE G
And yet you're auditioning for the only dramatic role in the whole play.

Divine Eye thinks a moment.

DIVINE EYE
Comedy's tough, man. I don't want to bomb up there.

Divine G nods.

DIVINE G
Good luck then.

Divine Eye steps into the room.

Divine G takes a seat in the corridor, listening to the muffled audition through the walls.

INT. REC ROOM - DAY

Close on Divine G. Sitting up alert in a chair.

DIVINE G
I would also like to note, Commissioners, that I was a candidate to become a New York City Police Officer.

VOICE (O.C.)

I see that in your packet. I'm just going to go out on a limb here and guess that that was before you became a rampaging drug dealer.

DIVINE G

Well sir, I only hustled that one year after my accident and then... Mike Mike, can you get your feet off the desk?

INT. REC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We see Mike Mike now. They're on opposite sides of a desk.

Mike Mike puts his feet down.

MIKE MIKE

My bad.

DIVINE G

It's just hard to get the vibe with you lounging like that.

MIKE MIKE

Alright, I got you.

Mike Mike gets back into character, serious again. He talks like a cop from an old movie.

MIKE MIKE (CONT'D)

We're not interested in what you could have been, Whitfield. We're here to talk about what you are. I see here you were in a group called *Mix Machine*. Is that some sort of criminal gang organization?

DIVINE G

No. That was a DJ group. We were--

MIKE MIKE

I'll bet it was funky as hell, wasn't it?

Divine G stares at him. Tries to keep a straight face.

MIKE MIKE (CONT'D)

Admit it!

Divine G bursts out laughing.

INT. THEATER - LATER

The theater inside is cavernous, with dramatic arched ceilings, light pouring in through big windows.

The whole company is gathered on stage. Brent has handed out the roles to everyone. They're looking over their sides. Divine G flips through his script, reserved. Divine Eye is trying to find his part in his.

Most are excited.

CARMINE

Man. How was I cast as a tree?

DINO

I started out as background on my first production. Can't have a believable Sherwood Forest without believable trees.

Brent begins an exercise.

BRENT

OK. I want you all to step into the circle, say your name, step out, then step back in and introduce yourself as your character, in that voice.

They begin. Through this we get a glimpse into the personalities of each man.

It comes to Divine Eye. He steps forward with his own name. When he steps forward again, it's in the exact same tone.

DIVINE EYE

Prince Hamlet of Denmark.

The others won't accept it. They make him go again. He goes way over the top sarcastically.

Divine G watches Divine Eye as he steps back into the circle, barely paying attention.

The exercise circles around finally comes to Divine G. He steps forward with his name. And then comes forward again completely transformed. Like he grew two feet.

DIVINE G

Gladiator Goliathon.

INT. THEATER / ONSTAGE - LATER

They have transitioned into the work for the day. Brent gives an overview of the rehearsal schedule. The big dance and musical numbers.

An actor RAISES HIS HAND.

BRENT

Yes.

MOSI

I have a question about my character. Wouldn't he be freaked out by some cat from Ancient Egypt time traveling into the Middle Ages? I mean, if I put myself into the mind of someone from that time, I don't even know what a mummy is. And do we even have a common language?

BRENT

Well, good questions, but remember, it's a comedy, so we can take some liberties and have fun with it. Why don't we workshop it when we get to it and see how it plays?

Another actor raises his hand.

DAP

I also had a question. Of what nature is the time travel in this play?

BRENT

The nature of...?

DAP

Is it via a wormhole? A rip in the space-time fabric? I'm just wondering how we play it. How hard would it be on the human body?

BRENT

Well, again, those are great questions, but um... why don't we take those scene by scene?

Divine G steps up.

DIVINE G

Brent. May I?

Brent nods.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

(to everyone)

Listen. You guys wanted a cowboy play, you wanted Ancient Egypt. Somebody asked for Freddy Krueger for some reason. And Brent gave us all that. How did you think that was going to happen?

No one has an answer.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Let's just focus on getting our scenes up on their feet, focus on the emotion of your scene and if that's true, then the play will start to come together.

BRENT

Well, uh, thanks. That's great. Why don't we start with your scene?

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER / ONSTAGE - LATER

Divine G is with Mike Mike. They're working out a scene, reading from sides as they act.

Divine G's years of skill shines through in this moment. He reads from the script as he moves around the stage and somehow emotion flows out of every moment.

Divine Eye stands in the wings, barely paying attention.

They wrap Divine G's scene.

BRENT

Amazing! Who's next?

DIVINE EYE

I'll do my scene.

INT. THEATER / ONSTAGE - LATER

Divine Eye is center stage with his scene partners. He's trying to keep up with them as they do the scene, but he keeps losing his place in the scene, fumbling lines. Squints at his page. Complains that he doesn't have his glasses. Someone gives him a pair. Still brutal.

Brent helps him, tells him to move his thumb along the side of the page by the line he's on.

All of Divine Eye's confidence is gone as he limps through the scene.

They mercifully reach the end.

BRENT

OK, that was a good start. It will get smoother. Who wants to go next?

The group moves on to the next scene.

Divine G watches Divine Eye disappear down to the theater seats and just wait to leave.

INT. SING SING HALLWAY - LATER

Class is over. Divine G and the other members of the Steering Committee are standing in line, waiting for a gate to open.

They're talking about how crazy the play is. Asking if they're in over their heads.

DAP

So is the mummy time traveling too?
Or just her son?

MIKE MIKE

I thought the mummy was a metaphor.

JJ

Forget that. How are we going to get this thing done? It's too many props, too much wardrobe.

DINO

And it's going to run four hours. B Block will kill us. Right there on stage, they'll walk up and murder every one of us.

MIKE MIKE

At least we won't have to finish the play.

Divine G is just listening.

JJ

Maybe we postpone until the fall.
Skip this production and give ourselves more time to prep.

They look to Divine G.

DIVINE G

I say we go for it. I think this is one of those instances where the art we are seeking is also seeking us. I have no idea why...
(laughs)
Trust the process.

INT. THEATER - ANOTHER DAY

The group is in the middle of another exercise: physical acting. They're "becoming objects": a statue, a tree, a tomato.

When it's Divine Eye's turn, he declines.

DIVINE EYE

I'm good man. I'll catch it on the next round.

It throws off the energy of the group. But they move on.

INT. THEATER - LATER

Later, they're done for the day. Everyone looks exhausted as they're straightening the room. Divine G stops Divine Eye on his way out.

DIVINE G

Yo. Before you leave, let me show you something.

Divine Eye looks to others leaving, as if he has somewhere to be.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

It'll only take a second.

DIVINE EYE

Alright.

INT. THEATER / WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Divine G leads Divine Eye deeper backstage. To a corner with a LITTLE CAGED WINDOW. Through it they can see rolling green mountains.

Divine G stands by the window. Divine Eye is looking around the room.

DIVINE EYE

You know they call this room The Steeple. Lotta business gets done in here.

DIVINE G

Window's got a nice view too. You ever look out there?

Divine Eye stares at him.

DIVINE EYE

I don't look where I can't go. And I don't think you brought me up here to look at some mountains.

The conversation stops cold a moment.

DIVINE G

Listen. You uh, you seem... frustrated with the work. I can see you struggling and I've been there. It's--

DIVINE EYE

I'm not struggling, those exercises are just goofy.

DIVINE G

They're leading to something bigger. You'll find the depth if you lean into it. There's no bottom to what the work will give you if you--

DIVINE EYE

Is this the speech you give all the new guys?

DIVINE G

It's not a--

DIVINE EYE

Listen man, I know your type. Always gotta be up front. On top. Herding everybody around with your lessons. But I don't need that. I didn't come here for that.

Divine G is quiet a moment, thinking of how polite to be.

DIVINE G

I've been wanting to put a play of mine up for years. Years.

(MORE)

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

But then you walk in and ask for a comedy and now... Here we are. But I didn't say one word. You know why?

DIVINE EYE

Cause I was right. Cause everybody likes a comedy.

DIVINE G

Because it's what the group wanted. It doesn't matter what I want. Doesn't matter if we never do one of my plays. No one is bigger than the program. No one.

DIVINE EYE

(sarcastic)

Well you're a real big person.
That's--

DIVINE G

I know you've got a knife in your waistband.

Divine Eye is quiet at that.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

You think it makes you stronger but it's a false strength. That yard shit is not necessary in here.

DIVINE EYE

I don't need you telling me what's necessary.

DIVINE G

You've got your armor up. Afraid of what might be underneath it. Afraid that if--

DIVINE EYE

You practice that line?

They stare at each other.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

How about this? I do my thing, you do yours. And don't take me into any dark corners no more. That makes a xxxxxxx nervous, you feel me?

DIVINE G
(quickly)
Hey we don't say that in here. We
use *beloved*. And if I--

Divine G takes a deep breath. Re-centers.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
All I want to say is: you signed up
for this program. You could have
the respect for your brothers to
try a little when you show up. At
least don't fuck it up for them.

Divine Eye stares at him like he might try taking his head
off shortly.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
This place is sacred. It's fragile.
This program is on a tightrope and
if they take it away... They'll
take any excuse to shut us down. A
blade would be a pretty good
excuse. That's all I want to say to
you. Please remember how much these
guys need this.

DIVINE EYE
That's it?

DIVINE G
That's it.

Divine G leaves him there at the window.

INT. MESS HALL - ANOTHER DAY

Divine G sits at a table by himself. Jots notes on a legal
pad while he sips his coffee.

Divine G looks up to see Divine Eye moving along a table,
stopping every few men, small exchanges of product and
currency, subtle as sleight of hand.

Divine G returns to his legal pad, tries to ignore it,
frustration starting to burn in him.

INT. THEATER - LATER THAT DAY

The group sits in a circle onstage. They start roll call.
They're missing two.

MOSI

Carlos is on A Block. They've been
on keeplock all day.

BRENT

What about Divine Eye? Is he on A
Block?

BIG E

Nope. He's B Block. No idea where
he is.

They decide to move on with class.

Divine G stares at the empty chair where Divine Eye should
be.

INT. DIVINE G'S CELL - NIGHT

Divine G is back in his cell, working at his desk.

The gates open and a CO appears.

CO

Random contraband check. Step out
of the cell.

Divine G knows the drill. He sighs. Steps out and holds onto
the bars.

The CO goes in the cell and turns it over, goes through every
drawer, turns over his bed, fans out books and drops them.
Turns meticulous order to chaos.

Divine G just stares off into space.

Finally the CO finishes.

CO (CONT'D)

OK. Go back in.

Divine G returns to his cell and starts to piece it together
as the gate slams behind him.

INT. THEATER - LATER

All the men sit onstage, cross-legged. Brent walks between
them.

BRENT

Close your eyes and go to your most
perfect spot. Most perfect moment.

(MORE)

BRENT (CONT'D)

What are the sounds? Do you hear anything? Who is there?

Divine G closes his eyes. Slows his breathing. He hears someone come in and join the circle late. He sneaks a look. It's Divine Eye.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Do you feel the temperature? Is there a breeze? Are you inside? Out? What are the smells? Hold yourself there. And... open your eyes.

Divine G opens his eyes. The men are squinting at the light. He sees Divine Eye, his face is serene.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Does anyone want to describe where you just were?

The men look around at each other.

Then begin to share their perfect spots...

It comes around to Divine Eye, he makes a joke about how wherever he was there was hammock there. But even though he won't admit it, it's clear by his face he really went somewhere.

Finally it comes around to Mike Mike.

MIKE MIKE

You know uh... I really tried to go somewhere else. Squeezed my eyes. Sniffed around. And I came up empty. Just blank nothing. I guess I've been here too long to imagine anything out there. But uh...

(looks around at the circle)

If I gotta be stuck somewhere. This is where I'd be here. Right here with yall. This spot. This is perfect.

INT. THEATER - ANOTHER DAY

Divine Eye is in the middle of blocking his scene. Divine G is with the rest of the company that circles the stage, watching on.

Divine Eye is agitated, having trouble focusing. One of the men walks behind him in the blocking.

DIVINE EYE

Hey hey. He can't walk back there.
I get nervous with people walking
behind me.

The guy stops, looks to Brent.

BRENT

Well you're gonna have to get used
to that. Or act like it doesn't
bother you.

DIVINE EYE

He could walk in front of me.

BRENT

At some point, someone will walk
behind you. Do you remember your
first mark?

DIVINE EYE

I'm supposed to be next to
Gravedigger. Then Leslie and Marion
magically appear stage left. Got
it.

BRENT

Great. Let's run it.

Divine Eye tries to calm himself. Begins his soliloquy.
Stumbles.

DIVINE EYE

Shit. Line!

BRENT

Whether 'tis nobler... Let's take
it from the top.

They do, but now it's not just Divine Eye stumbling. The
others in the scene are too. They can't find a rhythm.

It starts to get TENSE. Guys are getting agitated. One curses
himself.

Suddenly Dino's voice cut's through the group.

DINO

Stop!

Dino is quiet a moment, then speaks up from the wings.

[What follows is a real story.]

DINO (CONT'D)

I was a keeplock monster. My anger consumed me. I worked everything out with violence. But one morning at breakfast there was this guy sitting across from me -- had a big mole on his nose, I'll never forget that. I don't know who he was but somebody stepped up behind him and just cut him. Ear to ear, didn't say nothing. The blood, it was... everywhere. On the table, on my clothes, on my... face. But I didn't move. None of us did. We just sat there... still. Didn't even look at him as he died. Back in my cell I realized... that's not normal. I started to feel like I wasn't even human. After that day everything changed. I heard about this and my first thought was, dressing up in funny outfits and dancing around in a max security prison is not a great idea. But I gave it a shot. First time I felt like a human in... since I could remember. It showed me the way back.

The tension from the room is gone. They get back to work.

INT. SING SING HALLWAY - ANOTHER DAY

Divine G stands in a long line of people in a hallway. The gate ahead is shut -- they're stuck between places.

They've been waiting here a long time. Divine G is clearly agitated.

One man in line yells out to ask what's going on. A CO yells back for him to shut the fuck up.

So they continue to wait.

INT. THEATER - LATER THAT DAY

Divine G is sitting in a row of empty seats. He watches the actors onstage blocking a dance number for a pirate ship scene. Brent directs the action.

The men aren't off book. They don't know their marks yet. The choreography is all over the place.

Divine G jots some notes in a notebook on his lap.

Soon, Divine Eye comes and sits in the row behind him, soaking wet from the rain.

DIVINE EYE
Why ain't you up there?

DIVINE G
(without looking back)
We're not rehearsing any scenes I'm
in today.

DIVINE EYE
So you just come through to keep a
check on everybody?

DIVINE G
I just enjoy watching them is all.

They stumble onstage. Someone curses himself. Brent encourages him.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
It's a good reminder to see it when
it's so... rough. But I know,
somehow someway, it'll all come
together by opening night. Trust
the process. That's what we say in
here.

DIVINE EYE
What are those notes then? Writing
love letters?

Divine G moves his hand over the notebook, covering the page.

DIVINE G
Nah. Legal work. Some brothers want
healthier food in the mess hall.
I'm researching some litigation to
see if we can fix that.

Divine Eye nods, watches the stage a moment.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
So you just drifted on in, huh?

DIVINE EYE
Yeah...

Divine Eye is quiet a moment.

The ship backdrop onstage almost falls over, the actors have to hold it up while they devise a way to keep it standing.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)
You're telling me that's normal?

DIVINE G
Trust the process.

They watch them scramble onstage.

DIVINE EYE
You got any kids?

Divine G is surprised by the question.

DIVINE G
Two girls and a boy.

DIVINE EYE
What are their names?

DIVINE G
You're all up in my business
today...

Divine G pauses a moment. As if the memories are painful to touch.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
Divequa, Dinasia, and Karron.
Karron was just born when I came in here. But he's the only one who still writes me. He's getting into acting, of all things. Been making these little movies, putting them on that youtube.

DIVINE EYE
You don't write your girls?

DIVINE G
... They don't... I don't want to bother them. They're trying to live their lives. We think we're the only ones in a prison, but they're locked up in here with us. In their own way.

Divine Eye watches the action onstage.

DIVINE EYE

When I started my bid, my boy was young, but he was taken care of. The brothers I used to roll with, they looked after him. I mean rolled out the red carpet for him wherever he went. Treated him like a prince. Before long, he was doing the same work I was. Now he's wearing greens. Just like his old dad.

Divine G is quiet now.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

I feel different in here. If I'd had this on the outside, I'd've done something else, I know it. I wouldn't be in here. And he wouldn't be in here either.

Divine Eye stands up to leave.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

Keep writing your girls, man. Don't matter if they write back or not.

Divine G sits with that. Someone on stage yells for a line reading. Divine Eye chuckles.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

At least I'm not the only one.

DIVINE G

There's a trick to that, you know.

Divine Eye is quiet a moment, as if maybe he didn't hear him.

DIVINE EYE

(finally)

What's the trick?

INT. REC ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Divine G lays his script across a table. It's got notes all over it, more notes than lines.

DIVINE EYE

Holy shit.

DIVINE G

You can't memorize your lines until you know what they mean.

(MORE)

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Gotta get down under them.
Paraphrase, whatever you've got to
do to understand what they're
actually saying. Then...

Divine G pulls out a ROLL OF PAPER. He's taped a bunch of paper together to make one long scroll. It's filled with writing.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Then you write. Write all your scenes without punctuation. In one long sentence. Write your lines and write your scene partners' lines.
It's a mess but trust me.

(moving down the scroll)

Then, a week later, start taking it down in blocks. Then scenes. Pretty soon you're running the whole thing in your head. Then out loud. And then... Only then can you really start to play with it. Then you can be present in the moment.

Divine Eye looks lost.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

The point is to make it digestible.
You do it the same way you eat an elephant. One bite at a time.
Here...

Divine Eye pulls another roll of paper from his stack of things. He gives it to Divine Eye.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Made one for you.

DIVINE EYE

Thanks. What are those big ones?

DIVINE G

Ah these...

Divine G rolls five posters out. Bigger than the rolls of paper, each intricately covered in writing. Divine Eye leans over the table trying to make sense of the maze.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

My lists. Got one for the day. One for the week. The month. The year. Five years...

DIVINE EYE
Bro. I've met serial killers that
weren't this organized.

Divine G laughs.

DIVINE G
Helps me fight the slow time.

Divine Eye looks closer at the lists. We drift closer to the writing. To a series of legal goals, surrounded by a calendar date.

DIVINE EYE
What's that one?

DIVINE G
The most important one. Other than
the play. Got a parole hearing
coming up. A clemency hearing.

Divine Eye thinks.

DIVINE EYE
They say you found a tape. Proving
you're innocent.

DIVINE G
Took me ten years. But yes.

DIVINE EYE
Well then you got the golden goose.
I don't even have to say good luck.

DIVINE G
We'll see... Do you feel prepared
for your date?

Divine Eye is quiet.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
I saw the docket. I don't want to
get in your business, but to be
successful you have to--

DIVINE EYE
(quick)
I'm good man. I've gotta take care
of some business. Thanks for the
help.

Divine Eye starts to leave.

DIVINE G
Hey.

Divine Eye stops.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
(holds out the paper)
Forgot this.

Divine Eye thanks him, takes the paper and leaves.

INT. THEATER - ANOTHER DAY

ONSTAGE, the actor playing ALOTINCOMMON is walking through the MEDIEVAL ENGLAND set. A PEASANT appears, says a joke, and DIES.

More peasants appear and as soon as they see the dead peasant they die too.

Brent hops onstage.

BRENT
OK OK OK. Umm... We're too restrained. Too stiff. This is supposed to fly off the rails.

He thinks.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Everyone on stage.
(sees hesitation)
Let's go. Everyone.

The cast steps up on stage, Divine G bringing up the rear.

BRENT (CONT'D)
Pair up. We're going to do a little exercise.

As Divine G finally gets to stage, only one other person doesn't have a partner: Divine Eye.

Divine G ambles over to him. Without saying a word they agree to PAIR UP.

BRENT (CONT'D)
OK. I want you to die for each other. There's no right way, no wrong way, anyway you want, the only rule is... you have to make your partner laugh. Let's go.

Some of them start dying immediately. Others are less sure.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Don't overthink it, just follow
your instincts!

Divine Eye and Divine G stand there a moment awkwardly.

DIVINE G

You want to go first?

DIVINE EYE

Nah, let's see the pro in action.

Divine G nods. Seems to be thinking. Then suddenly he FREEZES IN FAUX PAIN, he dies magnificently over-the-top like a Victorian stage actor.

He falls to his knees and slumps.

When he looks up, Divine Eye is smiling.

DIVINE G

Not bad, huh?

DIVINE EYE

You know when somebody tells a joke so bad, that you have to laugh at just how bad it is?

DIVINE G

Oh come on. I threw a little Laurence Olivier in there.

DIVINE EYE

I never met him. Where's he doing his bid?

DIVINE G

OK smartass, show me how it's done then.

DIVINE EYE

Alright then, I just have to--

Divine Eye starts choking, gasping for air but none comes. It's hyper-realistic, veins popping out on his neck. Not funny at all.

Then he lets out a long fart and starts laughing hysterically.

Divine G can't help but crack up.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

Got you!

DIVINE G

You can't use props though, that's cheating.

DIVINE EYE

I didn't hear Brent say that in the rules. Hey Brent! Did you say anything about props?

BRENT

(across the room)

What?!

DIVINE G

Nevermind that. You can cheat. Check this.

Divine G starts miming. It's flawless. He's pulling a rope, hoisting a piano high into the air. Then something catches his eye. He watches a passersby, waves, and the piano falls and crushes him dead.

Divine Eye laughs.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Ah hah!

DIVINE EYE

I'll give you that one. Reminded me of my corny uncle.

DIVINE G

Nuh uh. You're just playing it cool. You loved it.

DIVINE EYE

Whatever. But do you know how to die like this--

Divine Eye stabs an imaginary blade into Divine G's belly. Divine G dies spectacularly.

Then Divine G, from the ground, pulls the pin from an imaginary grenade and it explodes at Divine Eye's feet. Divine Eye flies off his feet.

We move back now and watch the whole company try to one-up each other in a "die off". Noble deaths. Vengeful deaths. Cowardly deaths. Playing like kids.

INT. THEATER - LATER

Divine Eye finishes his monologue but it lands flat, lacking conviction. Brent watches him.

BRENT

Want to try it again?

DIVINE EYE

Why? Did I do something wrong?

BRENT

Let's just try something.

DIVINE EYE

Long as you don't say anything
about eating any fucking elephants.

BRENT

I don't know what that means, but I
won't... OK. Let's start at the
beginning.

DIVINE EYE

With my first line?

BRENT

No no no. To before you even walk
onstage. Go to the wing, then step
into the scene.

Divine Eye looks around.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Let's see it.

Divine Eye sighs. Then trudges off. Comes back in and stands
on his mark.

Brent looks confused.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Sorry, did you do it already? I
fell asleep.

The company laughs.

BRENT (CONT'D)

You're stepping onstage like you
need permission to be here. If you
have that mindset, you can't flow.
You have to *take the stage*. Show
the audience it's time to pay
attention to you.

Divine Eye tries again. It's a little better.

Divine G steps onstage.

DIVINE G
(to Brent)
May I?
(to Divine Eye)
Think about it this way. The world
out there expects men like you and
me to walk through a door cowering.
To bow our head. To feel like we
don't belong. But not in here. In
here you're Divine fucking Eye.

Divine G demonstrates.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
Walk in big. Like when you step out
into the yard. Say I'm fuckin here.
This is my fucking theater!

Divine G nods to him to try it.

Divine Eye steps off. This time he comes back in big.

DIVINE EYE
I'M FUCKIN HERE.

DIVINE G
THIS IS MY FUCKIN THEATER.

DIVINE EYE
THIS MY FUCKIN THEATER!!

DIVINE G
That's how you do it. Alright.
Now. Where are you going. How do
you leave the scene. Emotionally...

DIVINE EYE
I'm mad.

DIVINE G
Mad. Why?

DIVINE EYE
Cause Maid Marion left me for him.
I gave her this rock to remember
me. And she threw it out like
garbage.

DIVINE G
But anger. That's easy. It's the easiest thing to play. You go big, you scream, and wow, he's angry.

Divine G steps close.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
You wanna go deeper. Try playing hurt. Hurt makes you look in. Makes you name it.

Divine G steps offstage. Divine Eye is lost in thought. His mind running. Inspired.

BRENT (O.C.)
Let's run it from the top!

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF THE PLAY COMING TOGETHER:

Divine G and Divine Eye and other men from the company rehearse throughout the prison.

INT. REC ROOM - LATER

The group is rehearsing lines from their play as a group as camera moves around them.

INT. CELLBLOCK - NIGHT

- Rehearsing between cells after lights out.

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

- Rehearsing across trays at chow.

EXT. WEIGHT POUND - DAY

- Rehearsing between reps at the weight pound.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER - ANOTHER DAY

Brent is fielding a barrage of questions about creative choices.

DAP

This isn't an Egyptian headband,
it's clearly Phoenician.

BRENT

Hmm. We'll take a look at that.
Check with props.

The actor playing Coal steps up holding his script.

BIG E

Brent. Brocolli? I need a six
shooter. Make it cardboard. Paint
it in crayons. What am I supposed
to do with broccoli? No one's gonna
buy it.

BRENT

It's funny. They're expecting a six-
shooter. Make em expect a six-
shooter. Then give em broccoli.

The actor doesn't totally buy it. Then the man playing Freddy Krueger approaches, tense.

JJ

We've got a serious issue here. The
RTA principles are not clear in my
character. And if I don't have a
motivation and a moral, we'll undo
everything we've been fighting for.

MIKE MIKE

You're Freddy Krueger dude. Your
motivation is slicing people up.

BRENT

The moral is in the mummy.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER / ONSTAGE

One of the stage crew is on ladder rigging a light. Divine Eye below him standing on his mark.

The stage crew turns it on, but the spot is off by a foot.

STAGE CREW (O.S.)

Can you skooch a tad to the right,
Eye?

DIVINE EYE
I'm on my mark. Why don't you
skooch your fuckin light?

The stage crew looks to Brent.

BRENT
We can move the mark a little.

Divine Eye is silent a moment, like he might fight it.

DIVINE EYE
Alright, let's move the mark.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THEATER - ANOTHER DAY

Brent is with Divine G, Mike Mike and a few other men. He speaks to them quietly.

BRENT
The Superintendent has some big money out in the seats. Money that can buy us curtains. We need to melt their faces off with this fight scene.

MIKE MIKE
We got this.

BRENT
Make it savage.

INT. THEATER / ONSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

They jog onstage to find the Superintendent with WOMEN FROM A LOCAL CHURCH.

Brent looks to the men. Too late to back out.

Divine G and Mike Mike engage in mortal gladiatorial combat, moving in slow motion. Stabbing each other with fake swords. Brent glancing nervously between the women and the scene unfolding.

They finish and bow to polite clapping from their guests. The Superintendent walks the women out.

BRENT
Don't worry guys. We can figure it out without curtains.

Moments later, The Superintendent returns, shaking his head.

SUPERINTENDENT
I can't believe you chose that
scene. But... they loved it.

INT. THEATER - ANOTHER DAY

Lunch is brought to the theater so the men can keep rehearsing.

Divine Eye and Divine G are off to the side in their own row.

Divine Eye is pushing the sad looking meal around with his fork.

DIVINE G
Need a line reading?

DIVINE EYE
Huh?

DIVINE G
Nothing. Bad joke. You OK?

Divine Eye looks for how to say it.

DIVINE EYE
It's just, Hamlet bro. That
soliloquy.
(looks for the words)
My slings and arrows are on the
inside. And all this make believe
ain't gonna change that. If they
stamp my ticket and crack those
gates... I'm still a fucking
gangster. Jail house college
doesn't change that. Theater ain't
gonna change it. It's my destiny.
It was always waiting for me. It's
like Hamlet, all he wants is Maid
Marion and he's going to try and
take on the whole Roman Empire, but
to what end?

Divine G looks confused a moment.

DIVINE G
I forget how different this version
of Hamlet is. But listen. That's
not what I see. You're an artist.
You always have been.
(MORE)

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

This isn't turning you into something else, it's revealing the parts of you that have been hidden. Let it. Let it strip all that other shit away.

INT. ONSTAGE - ANOTHER DAY

Everyone is now lined up onstage.

BRENT

Some of you have expressed that a traditional curtain call is not in the spirit of Mummy's Code.

Brent looks around the company.

BRENT (CONT'D)

So instead of a bow... we're gonna dance. Keys... hit it.

Keys presses play on a boombox in the wings. A CD whirls to life. Music pulses through the dusty speakers.

No one wants to make the first move.

DIVINE EYE

Fuck it. Let's roll.

Divine Eye starts to move. And like a wave the room bursts into motion.

The whole cast starts dancing, freestyling down the line.

Motion slows, and score overtakes the track. Swelling with emotion as the men dance with unbridled joy.

INT. THEATER - LATER

Score continues as the sets are unveiled.

The men push each other around in a ROMAN CHARIOT. Wielding cardboard swords.

Two long-cut boards are brought in, painted like WAVES ON THE SEA.

They layer the boards and stand on either end, pulling them back and forth to make it look like ROLLING WAVES, endless open ocean.

Everyone is in awe as they watch. Transported.

INT. THEATER - LATER

Divine Eye takes the stage with confidence. The whole company surrounds the stage watching.

He finds his mark.

Divine G and Mike Mike are on pins and needles with the rest. Divine Eye starts the soliloquy.

It's flawless. Everyone leaning forward as he nears the end.

But he stumbles on the very last line.

DIVINE EYE
Perchance... Perchaaaance--

Divine Eye reaches out his fist, like he's grabbing for the last line. But he only catches air.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)
(smiling)
--aaand there it went.

They all come around him, razzing him and celebrating his progress. Brent gives him a hug.

BRENT
Very close. And very good. One more time from the top?

EXT. YARD - ANOTHER DAY

Divine G is walking the yard, slowly around the perimeter, deep in thought. He has a folder under his arm.

He sees Divine Eye standing off by himself. He approaches him.

DIVINE G
Hey. Been waiting for you. Spin the yard with me?

Divine Eye follows him and they start walking the path together.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
I know you haven't had a lot of time to prep for your parole board hearing.
(MORE)

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

I don't want to step on your toes,
but I know you've been busy with
the play -- I remember how much it
was my first year -- so I did a
little prep work for you.

He hands Divine Eye the folder. Divine Eye opens it.

DIVINE EYE

What did I say the last time we
talked about this?

DIVINE G

I did what I could on the forms,
you'll just need to fill in the
addresses and all that. And write
your essay. The other stuff is just
a template. You'll need to put it
in your own words to--

Divine Eye closes the folder. Stops them.

DIVINE EYE

How can you stand here and have all
this faith in the system? *The*
system that put you here. *The*
system that won't let you out, even
with what you have. I got none of
that and--

DIVINE G

Are you telling me they got you?

DIVINE EYE

Who got me?

DIVINE G

They've got you convinced that you
belong in here. That this is where
you're supposed to be--

DIVINE EYE

--That ain't it--

DIVINE G

--and now you can act tough and say
you're not going to prepare but
that's what's real, isn't it? They
got you fooled.

Divine Eye looks around. He's trying to hold in his emotions.

DIVINE EYE

What do I got out there? Got no real family to speak of. All my friends are in here. Even my son is in here. Shit. I've been in so long, I don't even know what I'd do if they let me out. Maybe this is...

DIVINE G

Don't say it. They want you to say it. But you're not a lap dog, you're a fucking wolf.

They start walking again.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

How we see the world is how it's delivered to us.

DIVINE EYE

(slowly)

If I try and they don't let me out...

DIVINE G

Then you try again on the next one. It doesn't change who you are or where you're supposed to be.

Divine Eye opens the folder. Looks at the papers.

DIVINE EYE

How long does the essay need to be?

DIVINE G

There's no limit. Three to five pages is a good length, from my research.

DIVINE EYE

I heard sometimes they don't even tell you their decision. You just wait.

DIVINE G

They always send a letter. If it's a thick letter, you didn't get it. But if it's thin, just one sheet of paper... then you're free. Thick as a brick, or light as a feather.

Divine Eye takes all this in.

INT. DIVINE G'S CELL - NIGHT

Divine G and Mike Mike are talking across their cells. Just sharing stories and chatting.

Mike Mike shares a story about growing up in the Bay, talking about his childhood. Divine G is listening, laughing.

It reminds Divine G of his youth. He starts talking about his time at the FAME school. How he danced ballet.

MIKE MIKE
Ballet? Are you joking?

DIVINE G
(laughs)
Shut the fuck up. I loved it.
There's no room for lies in ballet.
Everything is direct, every
movement is necessary.
(gets quiet)
I couldn't tell my friends about--

Silence from Mike Mike.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
Hey. You fall asleep on me again?

Still silence.

EXT. DIVINE G'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

DIVINE G (O.S.)
(smiles)
After I sat through your dumbass
story.

He rolls over.

DIVINE G (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Good night, Mike Mike. You dick.

INT. DIVINE G'S CELL - NEXT MORNING

Divine G is laying on his side, staring at the wall. A sound fills his space, coming from another cell: cleaning, scrubbing, shoving contents into trash bags. He just stares into space, a blank look on his face.

Through the portal in his door we see the source of the noise: A JANITOR is cleaning out Mike Mike's cell while a CO stands watch.

The janitor rips down photos, bags sheets and what little clothing was left.

It's unceremonious. Efficient. Without regard for the life that once occupied the room.

INT. THEATER - SOME TIME LATER

The whole cast sits in a big circle on the stage. Except for ONE EMPTY CHAIR. Mike Mike's. We let them sit in silence for a while. Taking in each face. Their grief.

Finally one of the men speaks up.

BIG E

Man, I can understand a brother stringing up. I can understand a stabbing. But his brain just shut down...

PREME

My dad died of an aneurism. One day he was fine, the next just... I found him leaned over the sink. Toothbrush still in his mouth.

They start to share stories about what Mike Mike did for each of them.

Divine G tries to nod along and smile but its clear something is breaking apart inside of him.

They promise to dedicate the show to Mike Mike. To find ways to support his family in their grief.

The walls begin to tremble from the commuter train.

INT. THEATER - A LITTLE LATER

Divine G is stacking chairs again. Divine Eye comes beside him to help.

Divine Eye stops stacking.

DIVINE EYE

Do you want to talk about it?

DIVINE G

Everything that needed to be said, got said. Right? Do you need to get anything off your chest?

DIVINE EYE
I'm only asking because you didn't say much earlier and--

DIVINE G
(sharp)
What's that supposed to mean?

DIVINE EYE
Look man. I didn't mean anything by it. I'm just saying, if you need--

DIVINE G
I'm good.

Divine G realizes his tone. Softens a bit.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
I gotta go write a dozen letters to his family tonight. So I need to finish up these chairs. Appreciate it.

Divine G steps away with three stacked chairs.

INT. REC ROOM - DAY

MONTAGE: THE NEXT FEW DAYS

We watch Divine G go through life, living in the slow time.
- Watching TV with other men in the common area.

EXT. YARD COURTYARD - DAY

- Divine G circles the courtyard. As he's been doing for hours. And will continue to do.

INT. THEATER - LIGHTING BOOTH - DAY

- Divine G watches down on the rehearsals. The men onstage are paired up and waltzing around part of the pirate ship set.

INT. PAY PHONE - ANOTHER DAY

A singular PAY PHONE hangs on the wall. A long line of people waiting to use it. Currently, Divine G is on a call, though his mind seems far away.

DIVINE G

...No, that's not what I'm saying
but--
(listens)
But you need to tell them that they
can't talk to you like--
(listens)
I hear you, Mama, but--
(listens, now frustrated)
Well why are we even talking about
then? If you don't want to do
anything about it, then you're just
wasting your time by--
(listens, softens)
I'm sorry, I just... No, I'm not
nervous, I just want to have it
done already. Maybe I'm a little
nervous.
(listens)
Yes ma'am. I know. I'm just--
(chokes up)
I'm just ready to see you, Mama.
I'm ready to come home.

INT. PAROLE BOARD HEARING - DAY

Divine G sits in a room more befitting a congressman's office than a prison.

THREE COMMISSIONERS sit in high-backed chairs. Thumbing through his file.

They make him a wait a long time before speaking to him.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

Mr. Whitfield, this is a Clemency hearing for your conviction of murder in the second, for which you were convicted of 25 to life, as well as weapons possession, second and third, two counts on each, two to seven and five to 15 respectively. The sentences are verdict by trial.

DIVINE G
That's correct.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

You have also served out your sentence for criminal possession of a controlled substance, third degree, one to three year sentence by plea.

DIVINE G

Yes.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

I'll note at the outset we were able to acquire the sentencing minutes, which will be considered as well as your parole packet.

DIVINE G

Did you also have time to review the letter from the Jeffrey Deskovic Foundation for Justice? I received a letter saying there was some issue with the timing of my filing, but I sent it within the submission window.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

No, we have it here. I believe I saw that. But before we get to that, we've got to finish defining what it is that we're talking about. Now we're talking about the March 25th, 88 homicide of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He had been shot many times in the head and body.

Correct?

DIVINE G

As far as I understand.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

And in terms of this offense you have exhausted your appeals, you had the Innocence Project look at this, Legal Aid, you hired an investigator. Apparently you've raised other issues of prosecutorial and police department misconduct. And there were some...

(reading)

...other exculpatory statements made by another person that were never given to you for your trial.

DIVINE G
██████████ exonerated me on the
audio tape I submitted.

LEAD COMMISSIONER █████
But in the end your appeals were
not successful.

DIVINE G
To date. That's correct.

LEAD COMMISSIONER █████
You do understand that we cannot
overturn or invalidate the
conviction of this court? We can
only take into consideration your
assertions of innocence and the
information presented to support
your claims.

DIVINE G
I understand.

LEAD COMMISSIONER █████
This tape that you submitted,
supposedly proving your
innocence...

DIVINE G
(excited)
Yes. █████ confessed to the
crime on that tape. But it was
buried, along with some other key
evidence.

LEAD COMMISSIONER █████
Yes, that's part of the issue. It's
been next to impossible for us to
verify the authenticity of it
because the person who made the
tape is deceased. And we can't get
the DA's office to return our
calls.

Divine G is unsure how to respond.

DIVINE G
I don't...

LEAD COMMISSIONER █████
You understand that creates a
complicated legal issue, don't you?

DIVINE G

Well, yes, but I can't control--

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

(barreling on)

--Since you've been in custody
you've been involved in numerous
programs -- it's too long of a list
to go over every one -- but I have
a question about the theater
program. You've been involved in
that many years, have you not?

DIVINE G

Yes. I'm one of the founding
members of that program. I'm very
proud of it.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

And what part do you play in that
program? Actor, director...?

DIVINE G

No I'm not a director. I'm on the
Steering Committee, kind of the
board that guides the direction of
the program inside. And yes, I act.
Usually a few roles per production.

(growing more proud)

It seems like just acting in a
play, but it really opens up
something inside these men --
myself included -- that was closed
off. We all learn to get closer in
touch with our feelings.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

So are you acting at all during
this interview?

The air goes dead. The other Commissioners stare at him.

DIVINE G

(fumbling)

Well I-- Well no, not here. Of
course not. I mean this is-- This
is coming from the heart. I hope
that's the way it's being
interpreted, it's coming from the
heart. I just--

(stops, takes a breath)

(MORE)

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

The program is designed to help individuals learn management skills and just, become better human beings. That's all I was trying to get across.

LEAD COMMISSIONER [REDACTED]

I read about the program. It's a good program. OK, any other questions from the board?

(none)

Well thank you for answering our questions, Mr. Whitfield. We'll take all this into account and deliver our decision in two weeks.

DIVINE G

Thank you for the time. And thank you for the consideration.

The back door opens. Divine G hangs there a moment as if there might be more to say. Then he fades out of the room.

INT. PACKAGE ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Divine G checks his mail one afternoon. There's a LETTER. From The Parole Board. It's THICK, HEAVY.

He immediately knows what it says without opening it. We read it all over his face.

INT. THEATER / WINDOW - A LITTLE LATER

Divine G steps to the small window looking out at the mountains. Someone else is already there, looking out: Divine Eye.

He holds his own LETTER in his hand. A single page. PAROLE GRANTED.

Divine G steps up next to him. Sees tears have been running down Divine Eye's face. Divine G just looks out the window and they both quietly stare out a while before speaking.

DIVINE G

You're going home.

DIVINE EYE

I can't believe it. It still doesn't feel real.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)
What about yours man? Have you
heard anything yet?

Divine G wants to do anything but stamp out Divine Eye's enthusiasm right now. Struggling over whether to come clean.

He begins to say something, but his words catch in his throat and he looks back out the window.

Divine Eye looks at his friend.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)
I wouldn't be here without you,
beloved. Thank you.

Divine G smiles. Thanks him without saying a word.

DIVINE G
Come on. They're waiting for you.

They start walking back toward the theater.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
You know you don't have to carry
that thing everywhere with you,
right? They'll let you out even if
you lose it.

DIVINE EYE
I have to keep looking at it to
make sure I read it right.

INT. THEATER - A LITTLE LATER

A SINGLE CUPCAKE is carried onstage where Divine Eye waits, everyone gathered around him.

PRE-LAP: Audio of people telling stories of Divine Eye. The stories continue as everyone congratulates him on getting parole.

Divine G hangs back in the wings, watching it all.

After a few stories, Divine Eye speaks.

DIVINE EYE
This, um, reminds me of something
I read on the wall in the box. Got
me through my longest stretch in
there.
(thinks a moment)
(MORE)

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

*We the willing, led by the
unknowing, have been doing the
impossible for the ungrateful for
so long, with so little, that now
we are qualified to do anything
with nothing.*

(considers the cupcake)

I love yall man. Every one of you.
Now come up here and get some of
this. Everyone gets a taste, even
if its just a little one.

INT. THEATER - DAY

ONER tracking backstage and frontstage as COSTUMES are brought in by the program founder Katherine and the buzz is palpable as everyone tries them on for the first time. The outfits are eccentric. Outrageous.

Katherine jokes about the strange places she had to look to find them but says its worth it seeing the men in them now. Reminds them that every button and every zipper must be accounted for.

Sets roll past us. Three men in a tree costume struggle to walk together. Big E practices drawing his broccoli from his belt. His scene partner a carrot.

We turn a corner as two of the female volunteers greet their fellow cast like old friends.

We come to a rest on one of the new members wearing a gold polyester suit, staring at himself in a mirror.

PETE

I haven't worn a suit in fifteen years.

Divine Eye guides him away from the mirror.

DIVINE EYE

OK, that's good. Can you move over toward the stage, brother? Lotta guys need to use this mirror.

We follow Pete around a corner to land on Divine G, standing beside the curtain, alone in his gladiator outfit. Spinning a wig in his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. ONSTAGE - LATER

The cast is onstage. Cheering as every set is shown off and wheeled in.

We get a beautiful pep talk from Brent. This is the final dress rehearsal before opening night. He thanks the men for trusting the process, for trusting him to be part of it.

We now drift across the stage as MOMENTS FROM THE PLAY UNFOLD.

Throughout these moments WE TRACK DIVINE G as his mind seems elsewhere.

INT. THEATER - ANCIENT EGYPT SET

The Egyptian Set is wheeled in. The prince does his Egyptian slide across the stage. Two Egyptian guards stand beside Mummy in her sarcophagus.

INT. THEATER - WHISKERANDOS TOWER

Leslie, Maid Marion, and a companion walk in place as Whiskerandos Tower is wheeled closer. Tower is turned and reveals Whiskerandos, He says his big line.

A remote controlled car brings a clue to their next destination.

INT. THEATER - FREDDY KRUEGER

The growing shadow puppet of Freddy Krueger looms closer.

INT. THEATER - HAMLET

We enter this scene after Divine Eye finishes his soliloquy. Now we see the bizarre turns that Mummy's Code has in store for us.

INT. THEATER - PIRATE SHIP SCENE

Focus on the entrance of the bathtub sailing across the sea, the pirate ship entering the stage opposite.

We cut to Leslie and Maid Marion waltzing across the sea. Then the pirates in Hawaiian shirts pair off and join them.

INT. THEATER - LATER

DIVINE G'S SCENE IN THE GLADIATOR COLISEUM IS UP.

He enters the stage with three others. He gives his line reading, fast and flat.

DIVINE G

Zakariedies has got me locked into
a 25 year no-pay contract. If I
don't stay and be his number one
gladiator, he's gonna kill my wife
and daughters and feed me to the
lions.

The timing throws his scene partner, who stumbles. Then asks for his line.

Brent starts to read the line, but Divine G railroads them.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

(to first actor)

You say, *We sure could'a used you
for some serious backup.* Then I
say, *Hey, well never fear,
Gladiator Goliathon is here. I'll
smash 'em, I'll bash 'em, whether
short or tall.* Then,

(to second actor)

You say, *Why, you're just the kind
of person we need. You could be our
bodyguard,* and hopefully you've at
least been rehearsing,

(turning to the theater)

And then I cap it off by moving up
and saying the profound line, *Look,
if you can help me escape, consider
it done.* And that's the end of Act
IV.

Divine G looks out into the empty seats.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Oh yes, and remember, it's a
comedy. So say it BIG! Say it
merry! Be HAPPY!

It's dead silent in the theater.

BRENT (O.S.)

Um. Why don't we take five and--

DIVINE G

Why? It's not going to help. More time and more time, if we don't have it now, we're not going to get it, don't you all understand that? Don't you get that?

Divine Eye steps onstage. Leans in quietly.

DIVINE EYE

C'mon bro. Let's take a walk.

DIVINE G

(snaps)

Get the fuck away from me!

He and Divine Eye stare at each other. Everyone in the cast and crew is frozen.

The Divine G relaxes.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

See? Anger is easy to play.

He looks out to the whole company.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

What the fuck are we doing here?
These silly fucking outfits.
Dancing around, for what? So we can do it all over again in six months?
Working our asses off. We kill ourselves just to get permission to *paint cardboard* and then what?

The others are looking down, shaking their heads, disappointed in him, but no one stops him.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

We're just entertaining ourselves.
Dancing for them while they warm up the chair. That's the real fucking joke.

DIVINE EYE

You done?

Divine G sighs, holding back tears, looks around.

DIVINE G

No. I'm not.

(long pause)

Isn't that hilarious?

Divine G walks off the stage into the darkness until it envelopes him whole.

In the void a door slams shut.

INT. THEATER - DAY

SING SING - VARIOUS

A series of shots of EMPTY SPACES throughout the prison:

- The THEATER. The stage filled with props, but dark and empty.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

- A CLASSROOM. Filled with chairs, the lights out.

EXT. YARD - DAY

- The YARD. Wind blowing the dirt around. Little wrens searching for scraps.

INT. CLASSROOM - ANOTHER DAY

The entire cast sits in a circle of chairs. The conversation is chaotic, everyone talking over each other. The subject: Divine G leaving.

Divine Eye sits in a chair at the edge, barely in the circle.

Brent is here too, mostly listening.

The cast is talking about Divine G, mostly talking shit about him leaving them. Saying he betrayed them, betrayed the show.

Then someone's voice cuts through.

DINO

Hey!

They all stop, turn to him. Dino focuses on one of them.

DINO (CONT'D)

You love this program? You're protective of it? How did you get in here?

The man doesn't answer, just looks down.

DINO (CONT'D)

(to another)

And what about you? You were running meth through the yard, if I remember right. And he fought for you to be in this program. When some of us didn't think you should be in here, to be honest.

(to them all)

Everyone has a breaking point, no matter how strong they are.

JJ

So does that mean the rules don't apply to him? We have clear protocols in place for this.

Everyone gets quiet. Divine Eye says nothing. Just observes.

After awhile, Brent speaks. Softly from the side.

BRENT

I remember my first time directing a production in here. I decided all the roles, who would get what parts. It's how you do it on the outside, the director decides. Then I brought that list in and Divine G pulled me aside and said, that's not how we do it here. We decide together.

Brent smiles. A few smile with him.

Brent thinks.

BRENT (CONT'D)

When the towers fell, I was so worried about you guys. I called all my friends, a few family members, but I couldn't call you. I couldn't make sure you were ok. The second they let us in I came back and Divine G was the first person I saw. I cried at the sight of him. He just pulled me in and let me get it all out. Then he said, you good? I said, yeah I think so. He said, OK, well get your shit together. I don't need you worrying the others.

They all laugh. Then it gets quiet again.

Divine Eye stands and walks out of the room.

INT. MESS HALL - ANOTHER DAY

Divine Eye sits by himself, eating silently, full of questions.

Someone walks across behind him, DROPS A WAD OF CASH on the table by his tray. Divine Eye instinctively hides it under his tray.

He looks up to see who has passed. Clay.

The young man he extorted crosses the room and sits with a GROUP OF HARD-LOOKING MEN. He's accepted into their ranks.

He looks across the room at Divine Eye. The young man looks ten years older. It seems to have cost him a lot to get this money.

He nods to Divine Eye. A moment of recognition.

INT. DIVINE EYE'S CELL - NIGHT

VARIOUS SHOTS of Divine Eye's cell. Stacked cans of soup. Air Jordans. Ramen for days. A wealth amassed over the years.

But not the wealth Divine Eye longs for any longer.

Divine Eye sits at his desk. Lit by a single desk lamp.

After a while he pulls out his script. Opens it to his first scene. He starts mumbling, rehearsing his lines.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Divine Eye is back with the rest of the cast.

Brent starts a warmup. He asks everyone to close their eyes. He has them IMAGINE A FRIEND. Anyone they would like to see who they haven't in a long time.

BRENT

Now hold that face in your mind.
And open your eyes.

A man in street clothes stands there, smiling. This is CHARLIE.

CHARLIE

Did it look like me?

They group explodes with excitement, everyone jumps up, hugging Charlie.

CUT TO:

A LITTLE LATER.

Charlie sits in the circle with them. Telling a story.

He talks about what it felt like to go home. The first meal he ate. The first person he saw.

Slowly, he becomes more vulnerable. He talks about his struggles since going home. How hard it is to take the mask off that sustained him in here. How he forgot how to accept love.

CHARLIE

(looking for the words)

I've been talking to a counselor
and she says, you know, I might
have the, uh, the PT...

CARMINE

(softly)

PTSD.

Charlie nods. Tears in his eyes.

CHARLIE

I miss yall is all. I feel like my
family is in here and I'm just...

He starts to choke up. Has to stop.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(collecting himself)

Ah shit. Brent asked me to come in
here and pump you up before the big
show and look at me.

They all laugh with him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Maybe, uh, maybe we can do a
exercise. Just cut it up a little.
Would that be OK?

BRENT

Yeah. Definitely. Let's all get up
on our feet. Stop sitting around
like a sewing circle.

They all get on their feet and Brent starts describing the exercise.

EXT. YARD / STAIRCASE - AFTERNOON

Divine Eye sees Divine G across the yard, sitting on some stairs. Watching the Hudson River. The town beyond the river. People going home.

Soon he crosses the yard and sits quietly with him.

After a while the passenger train goes through the yard.

Divine Eye lets the silence settle back in before he knows what to say.

DIVINE EYE

You know, I lied when I came into the program. I said I didn't know what those plays were and I just wanted to talk to the chicks and all that. I mean, I did want to talk to chicks, but I knew about the plays. I was artistic, you know. When I was a kid.

Divine G is listening.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

I painted. Drew a lot. Anytime my mom's friends were sick, she'd have me draw a card for them. Or paint something. But I was always, you know, I didn't look like an artist. So other plans were set for me. When I got to be like twelve, I didn't draw any more. My mom's was always asking why don't you draw something for me and I just... I wasn't nice about it.

Divine Eye gets quiet, looks around the yard. His world here.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

I was out here in the yard one day, couple years back, and it starts pouring rain, so they shut it down. But I had some business to do. So I go to the theater, did what I had to do, then I just sat there, nowhere else to be. But all you cats were putting on a play.

DIVINE G
Which one was it?

DIVINE EYE
The one with the... guys in the
asylum--

DIVINE G
Cuckoo's Nest. Not a comedy.

DIVINE EYE
(smiles at that)
Nope. But here's what it was. See,
before that day, I thought I was
free. I did whatever I wanted. I
was a wolf. But I saw you up on
stage, crying over someone who
died, and I realized, I ain't free.
I wear a mask. Every day. All of us
do. Except for you. And I needed
that. I watched every play you were
in after that. I got on the waiting
list and I spent a whole year
getting no tickets, just so I could
know what that felt like.

Divine G doesn't know how to respond.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)
You don't know how to ask for help.
And you don't trust it when it's
offered. But you need it. Just like
the rest of us. You just have to
ask for it.

DIVINE G
I knew you were lying about that
too. I never forget a face out in
that crowd.

DIVINE EYE
(laughs)
Yeah right.

They watch the geese float over the river.

DIVINE G
I fucked up.

DIVINE EYE
You did.

Divine Eye lets that hang.

DIVINE EYE (CONT'D)

But the thing is, everyone in RTA took a vote. They know you. They know that wasn't you. You would be welcome back. On just one condition.

DIVINE G

What's that?

DIVINE EYE

You gotta admit that I absolutely crushed that soliloquy. Like, Shakespeare himself rolled around in his grave just a little so he could hear what I was bringing to it.

Divine G laughs.

DIVINE G

You did. You did, my beloved.

INT. THEATER - EVENING

BACKSTAGE.

The cast is in a tight huddle.

Divine G looks across the cast. They look him back at him, waiting for him to say something.

DIVINE G

I thought I was stronger. And uh... I'm just grateful for this family.

And everyone understands this. They nod. Welcome him back.

Then one actor starts a chant that the others soon join.

ALL

(starting quiet)

Energy. Energy. Flowing through my body.

(a little louder)

Energy. Energy! Flowing through my body.

The circle is now alive, swaying back and forth. Splitting off and dancing.

ALL (CONT'D)
ENERGY! ENERGY!! FLOWING THROUGH MY
BODY!!!

CUT TO:

ONSTAGE. LATER. JUST BEFORE SHOWTIME.

The stage crew is shepherding in the sets for the first scene.

Divine G and Divine Eye stand on stage, on their marks. The curtain closed before them. Props around them.

They are still. Ready.

The din of the audience falls to a hush. A quietness shot through with anticipation.

The Divines share one last look. A fleeting moment.

And then...

The curtains open to a WASH OF LIGHT.

A roar of applause.

WASH TO WHITE.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAYS LATER

Divine G is walking down the cellblock, escorted by a CO, passing one cell after another. Each a little microcosm, showing the life of the person inside.

CO
Yall were pretty good out there the other night.

INT. DIVINE EYE'S CELL - A LITTLE LATER

Divine Eye's cell is completely empty. He sits on his cot in there.

Divine G smiles when he sees him, leans on the bars.

DIVINE G
They let me come down and say goodbye. Still waiting?

DIVINE EYE

Been the longest two days of my
whole bid.

DIVINE G

I've heard that.
(of the cell)
You cleaned out.

DIVINE EYE

I didn't have that much to start
with. Sorry I didn't have nothing
to give you. I didn't feel like I
had nothing good enough.

DIVINE G

You've given me plenty.

They sit with that a moment.

DIVINE EYE

This ain't goodbye, you know. I'll
see you out there before long.

DIVINE G

Nah...

DIVINE EYE

Come on man. Don't get all, what'd
you call it, fatalistic. Don't bum
me out on my last day in here.

DIVINE G

Nah, It's not like that. I'm good.
Here. Whatever that means.

Divine G is thoughtful a moment.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

I had a little brother, Jeffrey. He
had a, condition, it was
congenital. His heart wasn't strong
enough to pump blood around his
body... looked all blue since I can
remember. It was ironic because he
was the biggest hearted person I
ever met. He knew things too. From
the time he was ten he started
saying he was gonna die soon, that
he wouldn't be with us long. He
always said, Davey, don't worry
mama when I'm gone. I used to get
so fuckin mad at him but...

(MORE)

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

it was just cause I was scared of
what he was saying. Scared of
losing him.

Divine G is quiet. Seems to be working out what he's trying to say.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

I used to carry him to the park in
the afternoons. The 260 park in
Canarsie. He was a baseball fanatic
so we'd go down to the five
diamonds and watch the other kids
play. I don't know anything about
baseball but I'd just sit there and
listen to him talk and talk. He saw
all these intricacies of the game I
just didn't see.

(sighs)

After I lost him... I didn't open
up. I took care of people but I
didn't really... I didn't want to
lose somebody I was close to like
that again.

(looks at Divine Eye)

I couldn't stand you when you came
into the program. Couldn't stand
the sight of you.

They both laugh at that.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Now I feel like I'm sitting on that
bench again with him. Knowing he's
going someplace better, but wishing
so bad he'd just stay a little
longer.

Divine Eye stands and they hug each other.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)

Alright get out of here.

INT. CLASSROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Another day. Divine G and three others of the Steering Committee sit in a circle in the classroom. A few seats remain empty.

Divine G sips his tea and makes a few notes. The others are still buzzing from the play, talking about what a joy it was to do a comedy.

JJ

Yeah, but I thought a comedy would
be a lot easier than that.

The others laugh and agree. A new Steering Committee member,
SUAREZ speaks up.

BIG E

So what do we want to do next?

The room quiets. Divine G still isn't saying much.

Others start to throw out ideas: *12 Angry Men*, *The Seagull*,
Jitney.

DAP

What about one of Divine G's plays?

Everyone looks to Divine G. He isn't sure how to respond.

DAP (CONT'D)

Do you have one that you want to
do?

DIVINE G

I don't know...

JJ

Come on man. Wasn't there one about
a music man or something?

DIVINE G

Ah yeah. Fine Print. But that one
still needs some work. Lost in the
second act.

(thinks)

You know. I've got one that I wrote
a couple years back that could fit.
It's called Pro Se. It's about...

Divine G goes on describing the play.

INT. THEATER - DAY

Music begins as we see grainy DV CAM footage begin of:

SEVEN YEARS OF CURTAIN CALLS.

We see the end of play after play, moments of Divine G with
rotating casts, dressed in an array of costumes from
different eras and countries, all stepping out as the
curtains part to take their bow. Intercut with ACTUAL FOOTAGE
of RTA performances.

Again and again.

INT. DIVINE G'S CELL - ANOTHER DAY

SEVEN YEARS LATER.

Divine G sits alone in his cell, a box on his lap. Everything else has been cleaned out.

On top of the box, A LETTER. LIGHT AS A FEATHER.

His GATE clangs open. He steps out, carrying his box, and stands outside his gate, waiting for his CO escort.

He looks around. His eyes land on Mike Mike's old cell. A new face looks out at him from it. A young man. They nod to each other, a subtle moment of recognition.

Then the CO steps up beside Divine G and walks him away.

EXT. THE GATE - SOON AFTER

Divine G stands with his paper sack. A twenty foot steel gate lumbers open.

He steps in a narrow passage between gates. His heart starts to thunder in his chest.

A CO steps out of an office a clipboard. We watch their interaction without words from the watchtower, high as a bird.

The CO makes a note and signals to the gate man in the tower.

The second gate groans, opening on a neighborhood street.

Divine G takes his first steps of freedom. He has trouble breathing.

INT. / EXT. PARKED SUV - DAY

Peering through a windshield, we see a little road that wraps around the prison fence, layers of razor wire in the background.

Soon, Divine G comes walking around the bend. We pan to see the person leaned on the hood of the car, waiting for Divine G. Divine Eye.

DIVINE EYE
Was starting to get worried.
Thought you had decided to stay.

DIVINE G
I was just trying not to walk too fast. Didn't want them to see me running, think I was escaping and shoot me.

They laugh.

EXT. SING SING FENCE LINE - CONTINUOUS

Divine Eye meets G along the fence. They grab each other a deep hug. Holding it for a while.

An expanse of prison and razor wire stretches out beyond them.

INT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

A blur of green out the window. Divine Eye drives along a road socked in with trees. Wind sings through the open windows.

Divine G looks out. The movement is overwhelming.

DIVINE EYE
You good?

Divine G looks for the words.

DIVINE G
It's a lot, isn't it?

He looks over to Divine Eye. Divine Eye nods.

DIVINE G (CONT'D)
Almost too much.

Divine G's emotions are welling up.

DIVINE EYE
Just sit with it man. Sit with it.
You've got plenty of time.

Divine G leans his head back by the open window. The trees give way to open farmland. The breeze and the sunlight crossing his face. He closes his eyes. Soaks it in.

And then his eyes open. To the new world.

THE END.