

CONDO MILLENNIUM

By Marya Sea Kaminski

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Created with Josh Aaseng, Robert Aguilar, Marah Blake, Andy Crooks, Zac Eckstein, Bob Freeman, Pearl Klein, Carrie McIntyre, Phillip E. Mitchell, Carolyn Marie Monroe, Reed Nakayama, Charles Norris, Gina Marie Russell & Korby Sears, and from interviews with dozens of gracious Seattle residents. Also featuring a special guest appearance from comedian Brett Hamil.

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AN OBJECTIVE: To create a live performance experience that resonates with our audience's sense of home and neighborhood; that connects us more deeply to our neighbors and our collective place in a long urban history.

AN IMAGE: The havoc that tree roots wreak on sidewalks, pushing up from below, slow and living.

PRE-SHOW: THE HOOD

Screens: a slide of the title of show projected across stage in a font/ design similar to the trendy billboards advertising new condominium developments, eventually "Please Turn Off Your Cellphones" comes across the screen

Sound: atmospheric elevator music

A comedian stands at a microphone. He welcomes audience members as they arrive. He has a short set that places us firmly in Seattle. He beckles the show and talks to the crowd. His jokes reference Seattle neighborhoods, The Stranger, the mayor, the Light Rail, the viaduct, the bridge-and-tunnel club from Kirkland/ Bellevue who infiltrate Capitol Hill bars every weekend, biking, coffee, passive-aggressive customer service, rain, etc. Though he is making fun, there is an implicit affection for Seattle. He is one of us; he is not only mocking us.

He finishes with asking the audience to turn off their cell phones and to 'make themselves at home.'

PART ONE A: RICHARD, RANDY & WOODS

There is a sudden blackout when the comedian exits the stage and then a small, focused light up on Richard/Carolyn, then Randy/Gina, and finally Woods/Charles. Screens are dark.

Sound: each time a light goes up on an actor, there is the sound of a heavy lightswitch (or maybe more like a circuit breaker) being flipped (four cues in all)

↓
RICHARD/CAROLYN

(sings) “Drink four days in a yellow house. Beer cans in the yard. (air guitar) Do do do do do do do.” That was a cool house... in Wallingford. Called Yellow House. (laughs). I remember that place. It was beat up. It got so beat up they wrote a song about it. I’d be pissed if somebody did that to one of my houses, but, you know, punk rock...that’s how they...do.

There’s been lots of punk rock houses in Seattle... I just went to a party a couple of weeks ago in this house that just looks like somebody had given up construction on it and it’s all torn apart on the inside. Yeah, it’s awesome.

Sure. I’m Richard.

I collect rent. Since 1983. Yeah, I’m 51 now. I bought my first house from a builder when I was 25. I never, really, it just...when it happened, I was just as surprised as everybody. Back then, there was a lot of ways to buy houses, you know, without having banks involved, because I could never get a loan. They just like assume enough FHA mortgage for \$50 and just sign a piece of paper – and it would be like YOUR mortgage and you didn’t have to qualify or anything. So basically, uh and then there was like, uh, you could also assume VA mortgages and you could also have-make payments directly to old people. So, I did that over the years lots...like, like, like within - by 1989 I had six houses.

Yeah, that’s, that’s uh...I am different that way. Because homes kind of turn into containers, you know? So, I always kind of felt like I was staying in a hotel. Cause I never got mail at my house cause I was always going to sell it or rent it or move or something, you know. Yeah, I’m a pretty transitory type person. I never really settle in.

I...not much to tell about real estate, really, you know? It’s easier than most people think it is, but it’s kinda scary. I just figure, fuck it. Just take it, I guess. It just always seemed easy to do. It just made sense. Beats working. I have nothing else I can do. It’s kind of like, you know...I would be fucked.

They used to have these books before the internet, and they were like a big book, like a phone book, about this thick, you know? And, uh, they would have little pictures of all the houses for sale in the whole city. You know, everywhere, outlying areas. And I would go into real estate offices and I’d like talk to them a little about this or that, and then I’d steal one! And go look at all the houses. That was fun.

Marya Kaminski 5/3/10 11:10 AM

Deleted: RANDY/GINA -

... [1]

Now I know a couple of real estate agents and I just tell them, just look, give me your code on the internet so I can just look at them all myself. That way...cause I can pretty much tell just from the pictures. That way, I don't have to drive all over the place. Craigslist. Yeah. Everything.

I mean, yeah! I'm affected. Sure, yeah, oh totally. We're the second wave of foreclosures. Like, the first people were the ones that shouldn't have borrowed money in the first...you know, they'd loan money to anyone. And, um, now that, they had all these programs with 5-year fixed interest rates, which was five years ago and now that they're adjusting out, and so, everybody's payments are gonna start going up – and that's the second wave of foreclosures that they're talking about. That's kind of where I'm at, you, know, half my stuff's vacant. Um, and, uh, my payments are about to go up. One of my payments on this house I own in North Beach went up...500 bucks a month. And, uh, you know –

I could lose everything. For real.

But it's also a little fucking... Right now, is kind of a great time. It's fucking thrilling. This is where everybody is going to get rich. There's all this stuff that is so cheap right now. It's like you can see – everything else is going up. You know, like, inflation. Groceries are getting expensive and cars and stuff, but houses are like, lowering in value. And that's been since like 2008. Based on watching the cycles, the longer things stay flat, the more dramatic the increase will be at the end. If you've got a feeling something is going to happen, you can get in and buy something and you can make money really quickly.

I have a house in Ballard. So...

(scoffs) In Ballard? You think?! Yeah, they're everywhere.

(long pause) Um...I don't know. We'll know more when they sell them, those condos. I mean, I think they're pretty empty right now... They're ugly. I don't know who's going to buy them... Well, I'm just assuming because they have all these different incentives to get people in there and the builder is willing to work with people who have poor credit. I mean, that's a pretty good indicator... But right now, the neighborhood isn't changed. We still go to the same bars with the same people. Ballard is weird. It's like the bars - I go to Hazelwood and the Sunset and the Tractor and Hattie's, you know. And then there's this like... Other places, where obviously other people go, and they're like more styly and younger, you know. We're like the old Ballard rockers, I guess.

I could tell you lots of stories about real estate, but they're like...something about it, like about deals and money gets... it gets kind of boring.

RANDY/GINA

It was a complex of three buildings with twelve units each and we met the one other woman in the building who had bought a condo and she seemed really nice. So we bought it. And we were really excited about the prospects. Little did I know it would get so...

As other people moved in, we felt the attitude of the complex start to shift. Most of the owners were first time home buyers and had this "My home is my castle, my fortress" mentality. And in a

condo you can do whatever you want to the inside, but the exterior is shared. There are rules. And these people didn't like to follow them.

One owner very gleefully told me "I've turned my garage into a gym, but don't worry I'll park on the street." Yeah, that lasted until the first time he was broken into, then he was parking in the guest spots.

That was a real problem. No one wanted to park in their assigned spots or they would have more than one car and take up guest parking.

These people didn't like to follow rules.

It was around that time I started talking to my wife about moving. We even called our realtor, but it wasn't a good time. We really put a lot into that condo.

(Takes a breath)

The last straw was when we got a new condo board president, who was also a new tenant, and he really wanted to crack down on the rules. My wife Judy, who was on the condo board, tried to explain to him that you CANNOT make these people stick to a rule structure, but he wanted to have a meeting, so we offered our condo, it's one of the bigger units, so it's easier.

Apparently, before the big meeting, everyone who had issues with the new rules had held their own meeting and handed out grievances to spread them around so it didn't appear to be coming from any one person. They all showed up to the main meeting as a group, which made me go, "hmm..." and they had delegated the most soft-spoken person to be their representative. After a while I asked someone, "You guys had a meeting before this, right?" *(slow nod, pause)* "Yeah." "Where you decided what you were going to say as a group..." *(slow nod, pause)* "Yeah." "Well, why didn't you talk to someone on the board?" "Who?" "You could have talked to Judy." "Pffft."

After that meeting, I looked at my wife and said, "We are moving. We are moving now. We are getting out of here. Get me off this ship of fools!"

I almost felt bad selling the place though. Putting someone else through what we'd gone through with those people. But we sold to a couple that seem really happy. They love it. They are really happy with it. So... good. I guess not everyone's condo experience is bad.

Sound and lights.

WOODS/CHARLES

Woods. We've started right? Then yeah, for all events and purposes lets go with Woods. I'm 33. So whose going to be seeing this. No cops or anything like that right? You sound like more of a reporter than theater guy.

Alright, okay, lets just say I'm a... street pharmacist.

I'm from Seattle. I live in the CD right now. But was raised in the West Seattle area. The one thing I love about Seattle is that it's constantly changing. People are constantly moving to this city for changes or whatever and then people leave just as frequently for the same reason. Funny how people assume where you live is going to automatically change who are. Seems to me your still just you but just in new surroundings. A bunch of Waldo's. You know like the books when we were younger. Where's Waldo. And in the book even though he was in different surroundings he's still standing in the same position, still the same Waldo. That's people who move to find themselves to me. Like strangers are going to make you feel more like yourself than people you know. Haha then again maybe I just made a great point on why people move. To escape the people that make them feel like themselves.

Thing about the condo's in my opinion is the people who occupy them seem to be more...there not what I was expecting. So far they haven't been a bunch of Bellevue assholes, but instead they've been, for example, customers of mine. And I don't want to divulge the prescriptions I give out, but some of it is a little harder than you would expect. Not to say rich people don't have drug problems as well, but I guess I'm just shocked that people who sort have always been part of the neighborhood are ones who are buying condos. On the hill that is. Because a few years back when places were getting knocked down in the CD and businesses and buildings were being bought by the white folks there was this big outcry about gentrification. And I'm half white, but even I was like what's new? But it's interesting that your doing this project and that people are up in arms about the condos and businesses that are getting pushed out because in my life it's the first time that I've seen white people perform gentrification on themselves. Haha you know what I mean. And damn they don't like the feel of it all. True story.

PART ONE B: MOSTLY JUST THE FACTS

Screens: Suddenly, the CONDO MILLENNIUM logo comes on the screen and starts flashing and spinning around. We are in a game show. Perhaps we add a tagline like "Mostly Just the Facts: A Game of Skill and Talking"

Sound: There is a flashy, attention-getting start to a game show theme. It continues, quietly, even under the first bit of dialogue.

Actors enter with suitcase. They address the audience.

VO: Welcome to another episode of CONDO MILLENNIUM!!! - The game where we wrestle with the hard questions and sometimes with our neighbors! Players are you ready?

Actors: Oh, yeah!

VO: Then please get your buzzers ready for our first question: How many condominium developments have broken ground in Seattle in the last five years?

Buzz. Maybe a lightbulb on the screen above their head?

VO: Yes, Player Two!

Carrie: Like, almost, like a thousand.

VO: I'm sorry...

Buzz.

VO: Yes, Player One!

Pearl: 238.

VO: I'm sorry Player One, that number can't be confirmed... (*Buzz*) Yes Player Three!

Charles: Alot. Alot of condos.

VO: That is CORRECT!

Canned applause.

VO: Alrightee then, Question Number Two: How many permits were granted to build condominium developments from the time the market crashed in 2007 to now, 2010?

Silence.

VO: How... many... permits to build condominiums... were granted by the City of Seattle between 2007 and 2010?

Player Two buzzes her buzzer by accident. She is startled.

VO: Yes! Player Two!

Carrie: Oh! Oh... my god. Um, I don't know?

VO: That is... CORRECT! Nobody knows! When the city hands out permits to build, they do not distinguish between apartment buildings and condominium developments so, that's right, noooooo-body knows!

Canned applause.

VO: Question Number Three: what is the average occupancy rate for a new condominium development in Seattle? Or, to turn it around, how many of these new condos are just sitting there? Empty? With absolutely nobody living in them?

Silence. Then a buzz.

VO: Yes! Player Three!

Charles: Alot? A lot of condos?

VO: That is CORRECT!

Canned applause, interrupted by Marah Blake standing up in the audience and walking up to the microphone.

Marah:

I'm sorry. Hello. Hello, I'm so sorry. Sorry guys, just hold on a sec. Excuse me. But I'm the dramaturg for this show and... And a dramaturg is someone who does all the research and helps to structure the show and everything like that. I do lots of research. Like, lots of research. Like both my parents are librarians and I am the one in here who finds reliable, trusted facts. I am the one who battles speculation. With evidence. And, well, I have just been having a really, really hard time.

I've been trying to find firm numbers on how many condos have been going up, who lives there, what's the occupancy rate and, I am not lying, nobody can tell me. I've contacted the Department of Planning and Development, the Records Office, Washington Center for Real Estate Research, and finally a general, desperate email to King County at large and the best I can come up with is some general numbers about permits and no confirmation on what was even built.

"40% of new condos are empty" -- Says WHO?

I mean, that sounds right. I hear that and I say, yeah, that makes sense but how can I know for sure? It's like we have this mythology about all the condos that they've built more than they can fill and developers are suffering and there's these ghost-town complexes scattered all over the city. Anyways, I'm embarrassed and I'm sorry and if anyone can help me out, please contact me at

tellmecondo@gmail.com. God this makes me feel sick to my stomach. *Pause.* Thank you. *Pause.*
Um. Moving on...

PART TWO: WE'RE JUST A BLIP ON SEATTLE'S SCREEN

All the actors enter and place suitcases at the bottom of the stage and start to prepare for the puppet show. Phillip is situated at the upstage microphone.

screens: One screen shows the subtitles - firstly, "A Short History of our Fine, Fine City". The biggest screen shows live feed from an onstage handheld camera that is following the puppet-action. A final screen shows corresponding images?

Phillip: Right! Moving on! Condos are popping up everywhere and this is a bustling, exciting and uncertain time in Seattle's development. But wait! Since Seattle's inception, hasn't our lovely city boasted a heaping spoonful of regional change, sweeping growth and urban development? Before we look toward the Seattle we know today, let us look back... to "A Short History of our Fine, Fine City..."

Carrie: 12,000 BCE - when the Retreating Vashon Glacier carves out the Puget Sound Basin and in 2,000 years, human beings begin to arrive from Asia.

characters: The Vashon Glacier and a group of people, setting: Puget Sound

Gina: 1780 – Chief Seattle is born and goes on to lead the Suquamish and Duwamish Native American tribes.

character: Chief Seattle, setting: Puget Sound landscape

Carrie: *Earth does not belong to us, we belong to earth... Are you guys even listening to me?*

Phillip: 1805 – After navigating across the continent, Lewis, Clark and Sacagawea arrive at the mouth of the Columbia River.

characters: Lewis, Clark and Sacagawea, setting: the mouth of the Columbia River

Charles: *Are we there yet? Are we there yet?*

Carolyn: *Oh my GOD!*

Carolyn: 1861 – The University of Washington opens on November 4th.

characters: Graduate Owls, setting: UW

Carrie: *I'm flying high on education.*

Phillip: *WHOOO are you?*

Carrie: *I'm a student!*

Phillip: *I'm ready for tenure!*

Carrie: 1878 – Seattle's first telephone is demonstrated. And Georgetown starts brewing beer.

characters: a telephone and a glass of beer, setting: Georgetown

Carolyn: *Ring ring! Hello?*

Charles: *She said bello! Drink!*

Charles: 1889 – The Great Fire scorches 64 acres of downtown Seattle. After the fire, the city passes an ordinance to raise street levels. Some business owners ignore this and rebuild in their original spots. Eventually, this lower level will be abandoned. And then it will be used for speakeasies during Prohibition.

characters: fire and buildings, setting: Downtown Seattle in 1889

Phillip: 1897 – The Klondike Gold Rush begins. Though the gold is in the Yukon... the rush has an impact on Seattle because it is the nearest major city, so an industry develops to accommodate the people traveling from all over the country who want to venture north.

characters: miners, gold, setting: a map of Seattle to the Yukon

Carolyn: 1899 – The city begins an enormous project to level Denny Hill and open up Belltown's Business District. The second phase of the Denny Regrade makes the city more accessible to automobiles by 1911, and the final phase, creating the city we know today, will be complete in 1930.

settings: pictures at each of the three phases

Gina: [Vanna White-ing]

Carrie: 1901 – Capitol Hill is given its name by developer James Moore.

characters: James Moore unicorn, settings: Volunteer Park without the watertower or trees

Phillip: Hey Capitol Hill!

Gina: 1903 – John Olmstead arrives in Seattle to design our city parks.

characters: John Olmstead, Volunteer Park watertower and trees, setting: Volunteer Park

Carrie, Carolyn, Phillip: [triad]

Carolyn: 1910 – Women win the right to vote in Washington State. A full ten years before women are allowed to vote nationwide.

characters: women, setting: ballot box

Woman #1: Thank you! Yay! Finally!

Woman #2: It is about time!

Woman #3: Lysistrata for President!

Woman #1: Sacagawea for President!

Charles: 1915 – Prohibition of alcohol takes affect. (*sign goes up*) And the first violator is arrested within three hours (*sound*), but it ends in 1933 (*sign goes down*)

character: drinking buddies, setting: anti-liquor stamp

Phillip: 1928 – Water skis are invented on Lake Union by Don Ibsen

character: water skis, setting: Lake Union

Charles: *Wheeeeeeeeeeeee!*

Carrie: 1936 – Eddie Bauer invents the Down Parka in Seattle

character: eddie bauer, setting: seattle wilderness/ rainstorm

Phillip: [rainstorm]

Carolyn: I'm Eddie Bauer.

Gina: 1942 – Japanese Americans evacuate Seattle after FDR signs an order mandating internment

photo: Japanese Americans going to internment

Everyone: [breath]

Carolyn: 1947 – Kenneth Arnold spots the world's first 'flying saucers' near Mount Rainier

character: Kenneth Arnold, flying saucers, setting: Mount Rainier

Gina: Look at that sky. Oh my lord! What is that?!? I reckon them's aliens!

Phillip: [sound]

Phillip: 1950 – The Korean War begins. And Northgate Mall opens

setting: Korean map, a shiny new Northgate Mall

Carolyn: Oh my god! That is so cute!

Carrie: [gives a look]

Charles: 1954 – Dick's Drive-In starts serving hamburgers

characters: Dick's cup and bag, setting: Dick's logo

Gina: I'm a shake! I'm a shake! Shake shake shake!

Phillip: Tasty!

Carrie: 1962 – Century 21 World's Fair Opens, giving us the Space Needle, the monorail, and 9 million visitors to Seattle.

setting: space needle, photo: World's Fair maps/ ads

Everyone: Oooh! Aaab!

Carolyn: 1968 – Voters approve Kingdome and reject light rail transit

character: thumbs up/ thumbs down, setting: photo of Kingdome and of 1968 light rail transit plan

Pearl: 1971 – First Starbucks opens in Pike's Place Market

Everyone: [drinks from their Starbucks cup]

Gina: 1978 – Microsoft opens its first Eastside office

character: Bill Gates, setting: the green fields and old school butterfly from msn screensaver

Charles: I eat apples for breakfast.

Phillip: 1985 – Columbia Tower, Seattle’s tallest building, opens

character: Columbia Tower, setting: Seattle skyline

Carolyn: [Columbia Tower song]

Charles: 1989 – Voters “CAP” downtown building heights

character: “CAP” line, setting: Seattle skyline

Gina: [sound]

Gina: 1991 – Nirvana releases “Nevermind” and grunge begins.

character: Nirvana cover

Everyone: [dances to ‘Come As You Are’]

Carrie: 1994 - Kurt Cobain commits suicide

photo: Kurt Cobain

Everyone: [breath]

Carolyn: 1997 – Voters fund new Seahawks stadium and Paul Allen acquires the team

character: Paul Allen, The Seahawks, setting: The new amazing stadium

Carrie: Hut! Hut! Hut!

Gina: I love football! You’re mine! Mine mine mine...

Charles: 1999 – Seattle hosts the WTO Convention and over 40,000 people gather to protest economic globalization in one of the biggest demonstrations of the century.

characters: group of protesters, group of cops, setting: a forced perspective sidewalk

Carrie: [siren sound]

Phillip: Stay with the group! People before profits!

Phillip: 2001 – In February an 6.8 earthquake shakes Seattle, in March Boeing announces it will relocate its headquarters to Chicago, in September, the World Trade Center and Pentagon are attacked

setting: Seattle Skyline shaking, map of America, character: Boeing logo

photo: The Twin Towers

Carolyn: Oh no.

Gina: Oh no.

Everyone: [breath]

Carrie: 2007 – Subprime Mortgage Crisis becomes apparent as the housing market bottoms out and banks and financial institutions begin to fail all over the world

character: Munch's scream, setting: Stock Market

Carolyn: Paul Allen's company Vulcan continues to develop and helps to open the Seattle Lake Union Streetcar, otherwise known as the SLUT.

character: Paul Allen, setting: a SLUT car

Gina: I love to ride my slut. You're mine too.

Gina: The 500 block of East Pine is razed for condominium development, closing or moving several local businesses and establishing a widely criticized parking lot

characters: the Cha-Cha, Kincora, Manray, setting: the block

PART TWO B: PINE & BELMONT

Carrie: It's not even really a parking lot.

Carolyn: It's not anything.

Charles: Just vacant.

Phillip: Some gravel.

Charles: And a really sad, broke-down fence around it. That you can just step over.

Gina: It's the block in Capitol Hill that was once home to businesses such as Rebellious Jukebox, Righteous Rags, Squid Row, the Puss Puss Cafe, Tugs Belmont, Bimbo's, the Cha Cha Lounge, Double Trouble, Lipstick Traces, Manray, Kincora, Bus Stop, and Pony.

Phillip: And now it is not, really, anything.

Josh: *(has put down the camera)* We went there. All of us. On one of the first sunny days a couple of weeks back. We took a walk over there and just hung out for awhile. Looked at the big space that's opened up there now.

Pearl: When we got there we saw a small kid, maybe five or six, playing in one of the big piles of dirt and rocks pushed up against the back fence. Sort of... strange.

Carolyn: And there was a woman cleaning her kitchen naked on the third floor of the building that used to be behind the Kincora. Completely naked. Couldn't stop watching her.

Charles: It was sort of like watching a train wreck.

Gina: We found some pieces of polished glass,

Carrie: Rusted bottlecaps,

Phillip: A plastic butterknife,

Carolyn: A purple flower pushing up through the gravel,

Pearl: Snapdragons, hens and chicks growing around the fence,

Carrie: An old tire in the back with several rocks placed carefully around it, a meeting place or a firepit. The lot may be vacant but somebody's made it into a home.

Gina: A handmade sign that reads "Stop the Developer."

Carolyn: All these shiny new planters and bike racks along the sidewalk. Which looked ridiculous. Who's going to put their bike there? There's nothing around.

Josh: We tried to piece together the old layout. It was Cha-Cha's, Bimbo's, Bus Stop, Manray, Kincora...

Gina: Wasn't Manray on the corner?

Carrie: Is it true that Johnny Depp owned part of Manray?

Gina: I don't know.

Charles: It made me feel nostalgic. I mean, I've walked by there plenty of times but I haven't really stopped and looked at it. It was strange. Made me think about when I was nineteen and twenty, sneaking into those bars. And the homeless man that would take your picture and sell you the Polaroid for a dollar. He'd always be like, "Stop stop stop! Smile" and he'd yell at strangers to get into the picture, "Hey you! Come over here!"

Pearl: That's funny. That it made you feel nostalgic. I went looking for nostalgia. I used to live over there in a building they called The Galaxy, which is now called something very lame like Apartments at Melrose. But, you know, it was cool because we lived "in the galaxy." There was this parking lot behind my old building and all that open space let all this light come into our garden. And then they built on top of it. When I was living there, things were changing rapidly. And now there's this big vacant lot where all these businesses once were. Open spaces come and go. Buildings come down and then go up. It's inevitable. *Progress* is not inevitable, but... change is.

Josh: It sort of made me feel... like I missed out on something. Like there were these places there that meant so much to so many people and I missed it. And now I'm staring at this vacant lot and hearing all these stories. I'm always coming in at the tail end of things.

Phillip: It made me think of a dream that isn't possible anymore. A dream that didn't come to fruition. I mean, it's easy to paint developers as opportunists who care about money and don't care about people, but... that vacant lot is somebody's dream that didn't happen, for whatever reason. I looked at it and I kept thinking that maybe that open space is like a field left fallow. Sometimes a farmer will leave a piece of land alone, so nature can reconfigure it, re-invigorate it. Maybe that particular piece of land just needed a rest.

Transition movement. Everyone but Carrie, Josh and Carolyn exit the stage to put on sportscoats.

DENNIS/CARRIE

One word – negative.

I'm speaking of the 500 block, one of the most vital blocks of Capitol Hill. It was taken down and kept down to shreds of nothing.

I'm Dennis. That's with two n's. I am 60 years old. Ummmm currently I am unemployed.

How could you tell? Oh right my sweat shirt. Yes. I went to Penn State. Well then I went to Law School at the UC, then came here. I live next to Cal Anderson Park, which is just two blocks that way and then one block up... Are you familiar with this area? Alright.

What have you heard? *(laughs)* No, no! I'm joking, though some people don't think the best of me. Yes I am a historic preservationist. Specifically of Capitol Hill. I focus on architecture and social preservation. Definition wise I keep or try to keep the sense of community and buildings of the community alive and intact for years to come. I am very present. I attend many city council meetings and have spoken many times as well at them. Many times.

Condos have speculative value, they seem okay, they seem like a great idea at the time, but they turn out to be not so wise in the end. Speaking socially, as preservationist, I've noticed a huge change in the community.

But I'm curious to see what this, your project, will do.

LINDA/JOSH:

Yes, what's this for?

Oh, cool. Oh that's okay I won't be divulging any deep secrets. Okay – are we filming this or...? No? Oh, okay then this will just take a few minutes. I wrote down all my answers.

TIM/CAROLYN:

I'm Tim.

I am the publisher of the Stranger.

LINDA/JOSH:

(reading) Um. Linda. Restaurateur. I own restaurants. I'm older than you. *(laughs)*

Well in 1994 some friends of mine who owned a record label and I – we decided to open a bar. We thought it would be a lot of fun and so we did. And that went really well and I decided to just keep going. *(smiles)*

TIM/CAROLYN:

Sorry what was the other question? Oh yeah.

You know, I don't know if mine is the popular opinion. People always say, oh the condos are going to come in and ruin the neighborhood or bring in a bunch of stuffy rich people, but I really don't think that's true. There are definitely more people, but I think that's a good thing. Density is a good thing. It's a universal human thing that people like to be around other people. It makes us happier.

Sorry, is this what you...?

LINDA/JOSH:

I think it's good.
Making things dense. Density's good.
I don't like sprawl. I like denseness.
You know my favorite city is New York. I just got back from there, in fact. I love it. I own an apartment there. I've owned it for nine years, the longest I've ever owned any place.

TIM/CAROLYN:

I was worried that what happened to New York and San Francisco would happen here. That housing would become so expensive that younger, artistic folks wouldn't be able to afford the cost of living. Believe it or not, Capitol Hill used to be a neighborhood where you could get a really nice apartment for cheap and it's already pretty expensive, but not to the extent of those other cities.

This building, the Oddfellow's Building – actually has an interesting history. You know it was recently sold and you probably know that this room that we're sitting in right now used to be home to a theater. It's a bummer that the theater couldn't afford the lease when it was sold, but I am actually glad that the old landlords are out. It was owned by a bunch of... I mean, really awful people...

LINDA/JOSH:

And, well, sometimes finding a location just happens. By instinct. I don't do any market research or anything. I live in this neighborhood and so we're looking for what we would like to see in the neighborhood, places that we'd like to go.

TIM/CAROLYN:

I come here every day.

LINDA/JOSH:

With Oddfellows, we thought it would be great to have a nice café in the neighborhood, so we started one. I can't really explain how I do it, it's just a feeling. You know sometimes I'm not even looking and something will just hit me, like I need to do something with this place.

TIM/CAROLYN:

What is the name of that new building over there? Where Boom Noodle is? I can't remember. Anyway, I went over there to check it out when it was still unfinished. That's one of my favorite streets, and even I was a bit resistant to the change. But it's funny how fast you just adapt. You get used to it. Like it's always been there. And I honestly don't mind it at all now.

PART THREE: THE SELL

Gina, Phillip and Charles wear sportcoats. They are real estate agents.

screens: during the sales pitches, the screen boasts fancy, staged images of these condos inside and out, quickly almost accidentally interspersed with dirtier images of condo life like construction sites, , parking garages, etc.

sound: innocuous background music that eventual breaks into a dance number.

PHILLIP:

And you won't mind it either!

CHARLES:

The popularity of Seattle condos has gone through the roof in recent years,

GINA:

and it is a modern and stylish roof!

CHARLES:

We're here tonight to let you know that the condos filling the city embody the essence of style and convenience.

PHILLIP:

The first and most obvious benefit of Seattle condos is the convenience of their location...

GINA:

Location, location, location!

PHILLIP:

The convenient location of these Seattle condos cuts down on commuting, which is good for pocketbooks and the environment.

LEAH/CAROLYN

I live in a condo. The building is called The Elektra.

I'm 31.

I'm from Detroit.

I do. I bought it about two years ago, which was not the absolute worst time to buy, but not great. I haven't lost thousands and thousands of dollars like some people have, but I certainly haven't made any money...

CHARLES:

Is that glass half empty or half full? You decide!

EMILY/PEARL:

When I first looked at my condo, I really liked the layout. It's open, yet private at the same time. And the kitchen—see, I used to be a chef, so the kitchen was important to me. The kitchen was a galley kitchen, with counters here and here, and at the end, the stove and a sink, and this walk-in pantry, sizable. And the thing is, they had this flyer that said “step-saver kitchen,” like it was supposed to be a feature! And I went home, and I didn't know it was the one, but the next day, I called my agent, and made an offer.

I'm Emily. I've lived there 9 years. I am a condo person.

I love where I live, and it's mine. Let me give you a visual of home, for me: I'm lying in my bed, and there's a dogwood tree outside my window, and I can look out the door, I sleep with the door open, and look out the balcony window, and there's a walnut tree, and it's just beautiful.

I have this balcony, it's like a fire escape really! I've got two potted plants, but you couldn't really put a chair out there, but I love it. I go out there and (holds up both hands and mimes opera singing)—at night, when nobody's around, and I don't actually sing.

CHARLES:

We all have a song to sing, don't we? Maybe owning a condo will help you find your voice too! A little karaoke on the half balcony?

SARAH/GINA

You've gotta love where you live.

I never understood the whole buying a home just to resell it idea. Flipping houses. You should like your home. It should be a commitment. I think of a home as a savings account. It's an investment in your future.

You know, I have sold a lot of condos.

But I gotta be honest... Condos aren't for me, I need a yard.

But I have sold a lot of them.

Even though I have my own opinion of condos, they are perfect for many of my clients.

In your twenties it's fine to go out, grab a beer and fall into your small apartment. But when you get older, you want more of a connection to your community, your neighborhood.

I really like selling condos, but I like the condos built in the 70s. They may be hideous on the inside, but they are MUCH bigger than the ones developers build today. It's like developers today are trying to turn Seattle into New York City dwellings overnight. But the condos from the late 70s are big enough to be real homes.

CHARLES:

New condos are cropping up across the city, with many occupying old warehouses and factories. This design trend and all the other benefits in Seattle create a distinct loft style of living.

SARAH/GINA:

Yeah. Like there's this one complex that I've personally looked at where in the 2 bedroom units, neither one of the bedrooms can fit a twin bed. They're not long enough. I mean, who fucked that up? Who built a place where the bedrooms can't even fit a fucking twin bed? Oh, it's built for the burgeoning child market? The junior high demographic?

Phillip/Charles:

That's funny! That's a funny story.

SARAH/GINA:

But there's a lot of good, too. In real estate, as in life, there are great people and shitheads.

Phillip:

Yes! Speaking of great people! It is also fun and beneficial to become an active member in the homeowners' association after moving into one of these new condos. They make the decisions that affect all the residents, so it is important to understand what's going on in those meetings.

LEAH/CAROLYN

Ok. That's true, but... Well...

First of all: my experience on the condo board was not typical...AT ALL.

Ok so, my condo is not typical. Most condo buildings will say that you can't have renters at all. You cannot rent your unit. Which is why a lot of those new buildings are just empty. Right? Well, in the Elektra building, where I live, not only did they allow renters, but certain owners were turning their units into basically a money making venture and renting them out to ritzy business people for like short term home stays. Kind of like a hotel. So, you can imagine, that there were very divided interests and priorities amongst the live-in tenants and the folks who were trying to turn a profit.

Before I moved in... a bunch of people from the building rallied together to try and change this.

All this is ramping up to telling you how I became *President* of the board...

So, when I first moved in, I had a lot of free time. I met lots of people, chit chatted with other dog owners in the little dog area. I helped out with projects and meetings. I really liked being a part of the community and I had the time, so...when I was elected... despite the fact that a lot of my friends had told me, "Don't ever, ever join your condo board. Never EVER do it!" The optimist in me...the like young politician thought (arm swing) "I can do this!" That was possibly... No that was definitely the worst decision I have made in my entire life.

I was so stressed out. Trying to field the complaints and balance all the needs of these people who were all suing each other. It was just lawsuit after lawsuit. They were crazy. Ok, there were like two normal people on the board and four CRAZY people. It got to the point where it was affecting every aspect of my life. My work, my relationship, my friendships.

So, one night – after like a year of this – I wrote an email of resignation at like 3am and that was that. People don't really talk to me anymore...

Like I said: the worst decision I have made in my life.

EMILY/PEARL

Oh, yes. (laughs). The first day I moved in, I pulled into my garage and got out, and there was this guy there. He said, "Hi, I'm Doug!" and I said, "Hi!" and he said, "You're the new treasurer!" And I'm a people-pleaser, so even though I hadn't intended to... get involved, I said yes.

The vice president of the condo board, Susan—Oh, I probably shouldn't call her, what do they say? "Jenny," or something. Anyway, Susan was the vice president, and we got off on the wrong foot. One of the reasons I wanted to live in a condo was, I love animals, and I wanted to have a cat. So while I was still living in my apartment, I didn't tell them, I just got a cat. Cha-cha. So when I moved in, I brought Cha-cha in, and I had the door propped open, and she got out. I didn't see what happened, but the next day I got an email from Susan, asking if I had a CAT because she had been CORNERED by a cat! I wrote back, saying, "Hi, Susan!"

But, you know most people don't know their neighbors, and that's a real tragedy. For me, I was surprised by the sense of community that I didn't expect. We've each got these individual boxes inside this larger box. At one needed to paint the building, all the interior walls. We got a bunch of bids, and then we decided to do it ourselves, bought all the paint and stuff. I really wasn't looking forward to it. It turned out to be really fun. I'd never really have talked to these people, gotten to know them, if they weren't my neighbors.

SARAH/GINA

When I started doing this my mom told me as a realtor you would be their shrink, loan shark, banker, friend...and she was right.

But I get to be there for people when they make the most important purchase of their lives. I imagine being a realtor is also like being an OBGYN, which may sound odd, but I'm helping people make a HUGE decision. Buying a house is like giving birth. It's a long-term commitment. I help people find that one thing they love and need to create a home.

Phillip:

Keep in mind that condos offer a great quantity of amenities that are normally too expensive to have in a single family home.

Charles:

Many new condos on the market offer spas, fitness rooms, tennis courts, heated pools, Jacuzzis and many other amenities. In a traditional home these amenities would be very expensive and hard to keep up. Seattle condos offer these things to their residents to improve their

Everyone:

Quality of life!

Phillip:
And we're not talking about the quality of just anybody's life...

Gina:
We're talking about YOU!

PART FOUR: THE SONG AND DANCE

screens: Flourish! Fast-moving photos of “condo living” eventually resolving to pictures of the interior of a bar.

sound: The Big Sales Pitch Dance Number “Close to Home”

Flourish. Dance. Song. Eventually, song resolves to a karaoke bar – someone at the mic singing the last bits of the tune, lyrics projected across one of the screens.

You
Have spent your whole life
Working for one man
Only to come home and
sleep inside a building
owned by another man
And this is no plan
For a smart person like
You

You
Know every clothing boutique
Like the back of your hand
Every music store
That you adore
Right next to the Thai place
That sees your face
twice a week
this is the neighborhood
Where you feel most like
You

A house
With a fence
And some green grass
On which your dog can play

Would be so great
But let's face it
You' ain't got the dough

But why be
So far away
From the life where
You work and play
Your solution
Is clear
You need a condo-millennium
a condo-millennium

All of the places
Where you love to go
Can be right there
Waiting for you below
It's right outside of your
Balcony window
When you own a condo-millennium
a condo-millennium

[ALL] Location! Location! Location! Location!

[REALTOR 1] My true vocation is to find a good location for You

[ALL] Location! Location! Location! Location!

[REALTOR 2] Proposed land use signs and excellent finds

[ALL] Location! Location! Location! Location!

[REALTOR 3] Pre-installed bookshelves and ovens that clean themselves

[ALL]

Association dues

And commonlaw rules

Bamboo floors

And solid wood doors

We'll get you a 5-year, 10-year, 20-year arm

C'mon mama, sell the farm!

We're moving you in to a condo!

[REALTOR 4]

What could be better

Than receiving a letter

At your brand new condo complex

[REALTOR 4&5 - HARMONY]

What could be better

Than receiving a letter

At your brand new condo complex

[ALL]

Press!

Brix!

Trace!

Veer!

Alex!

Ava!

Enso!

Icon!

The list goes on!

This is more than a song

This is your life!

[REALTOR 4 – preferably female]

Who needs a yard

When every nightclub and bar

Is just 200 yards away

[ALL]

You are so close to home

Why not make it your own

And own your own condo-millenn-i-um

Condo-millennium

Condo-millennium

PART FIVE: THESE ARE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

screens: gently change to create the interior of a karaoke bar, with one screen serving as a karaoke screen and broadcasting lyrics across it.

sound: the last bit of the Big Sales Pitch Dance Number as a karaoke song. Then a karaoke version of a dance hit – maybe “We Built This City on Rock and Roll”? The actors stand in front of the karaoke stage, dancing in character.

Charles enters carrying a tray and a dish towel. Throughout the next few speeches, he is getting chairs from off stage and arranging them onstage.

Resolving to Josh at the karaoke mic:

JOSH:

Press!

Brix!

Trace!

Veer!

Alex!

Ava!

Enso!

Icon!

The list goes on!

This is more than a song

This is your life!

JEFF/CHARLES

I'm Jeff.

As you can tell, I'm a bartender.

I'm 28 years old. I live here on Capitol Hill.

Oh yeah condos are most definitely noticed. I mean mostly it's been driving business away. Especially with all the construction, people don't want to be a part of it. They see it as a sign of things to come. Regulars are beginning to find new places to drink. I mean lets be honest this is and always has been gay hill but not anymore.

(To another costumer) I said this is gay hill. Did you hear what she said? She said not once the condos go up, then its just going to be another straight up hill. Weird I'm pretty sure she had no clue what we were talking about.

Mari/Phillip comes down.

You want another drink?

Charles exits and will re-enter with two chairs, one for Mari/Phillip and one for Michael/Carolyn.

MARI/PHILLIP:

Oh, condos aren't so bad but the problem is when they take something down... like an anchor of the neighborhood's identity... And then it's really bad when nothing gets put back in its place... And now they aren't selling. They're really good at building them up but not so good at filling them up.

JEFF/CHARLES:

The thing is I actually considered buying a condo, but it was the rules and regulations that go with it that turned me off. Like I can't hang lights off my balcony, that's bullshit.

Michael/Carolyn & Jeff/Josh comes down. Charles listens for a minute then goes to get more chairs.

MARI/PHILLIP:

I know. Not for me. That's okay for some but for me I look at a house or condo and think, "That's just a whole lot of work". I don't need the responsibility. No, thanks.

MICHAEL/CAROLYN:

I used to. Own a condo. I owned a condo in Magnolia for five years. I didn't really like it. There wasn't a lot to do – and in condos you don't really get to know your neighborhood. Except the ones you don't want to know.

JEFF/JOSH:

Yeah, there are some condos a mile away or so away from us.

I live in a neighborhood kinda like this.
Well less busy than this, but,
you know how this is close to downtown Seattle?
Ours is close to downtown Renton.

MIKAILA / CARRIE

I grew up near here... in one of the last farm houses on Mercer island... It's kind of a sensitive subject for me. My parents sold the house because they had to move when the economy got bad. So I'm sure it's been bulldozed. I don't really visit Mercer Island at all anymore. I especially don't go where our house was. Too many memories... gone, or close to being gone.

KRISTA/PEARL

We lived on Queen Anne Hill, in a big old house, three levels, with windows all around. I miss that house. We used to slide—there was this green shag carpet on the stairs—and me and my two sisters would slide up and down the stairs on our butts.

We moved to Bellevue, sold that house. I was really upset. I always thought of that Queen Anne house as home.

MOLLY/GINA

I live in a lovely home in Columbia City. I love it. I'm really picky about where I live, so we searched for this house for about 2 1/2 years before we bought it.

No condos in Columbia City. All the houses are really old and the families have been there a long time.

Oh! What am I talking about! Yes there are! Downtown Columbia City started to get the new developments right at the top of the housing bubble and right before the market crashed. I think they've only sold 2 or 3.

I used to always be looking for the next place. I guess you could say I had housing obsession. Lust!

No. This was not our first home. The first was a two bedroom. I loved it.

All the actors speak simultaneously during the following speech, about a house or home of one of their characters. At this point, the screens shift from the bar interior to a looped montage of the interviewee video portraits.

Too small, now, but it was great at the time. And it was a very strange process. My husband's father passed away leaving him \$20,000 that we never touched. No bank would give us a loan. So we bought this great junker for \$60,000 and we really fixed it up and 2 years later, we resold it for \$166,000. And we were able to buy this house for \$188,000 and only paying about \$2000 of our own money.

End simultaneity.

And all without a mortgage.

That's the only reason I've been able to stay home with my kids. No mortgage. Otherwise, we would have needed a second income to own or own home. We are really lucky.

JOSH

I worry about your generation.

PHILLIP

I worry about your generation.

CARRIE

I worry about your generation.

CHARLES

I worry about your generation.

CAROLYN

I worry about your generation.

PEARL

I worry about your generation.

MOLLY/GINA

I worry about your generation. My kids' generation.

Is owning your own home even an option any more?

Is it on the table?

Is it even worth it?

You can be perfectly happy in something that isn't yours. Where you pay rent.

Why tie yourself to the bank if you don't have to?

No. No one I know was affected.

Everyone turns to look at her.

Well, not directly affected. I think everyone suffered when the economy collapsed, but no one I know lost their house or had a bad subprime loan.

Oh! But my husband and I lost our retirements since they were wrapped up in the stock market. Our kids' college money too, I guess. Charles Schwab told us, "Oh, don't put your money in a savings account, put it here to earn more interest." And I guess that was all invested in subprime loans. So we lost all that money too.

ZOYA/JOSH

Ok. I am ready for you. Zoya. I am teaching. I'm 62. Russia. Grozny. It is Chechnya, north of Georgia.

I live in a home on Mercer Island. It is a very big, very old house. Very old. A very old, beautiful house. But it is too big for us. Our daughter is gone now and we do not need such a big house. We are thinking maybe we will sell it and maybe move into a condo or a two bedroom. Or maybe renting. We do not need such a big house. I don't need a yard anymore. I am old. (smiles).

Many rich people live on Mercer Island and they build two, three story houses. Huge houses. Just huge. And I don't like it. What does a family with two or three people need such huge houses for? This my personal philosophy.

I see them from the road, when I drive by but I don't know much about them. I don't like them. They are nice and brand new but they are not...they have no faces, as we say. I like old buildings. There is too much glass on these new condos and I don't like that. They have no faces.

LESLIE/CAROLYN

I used to be a grant writer for the Gates Foundation, but I recently left the job because I wanted to spend more time with him. Cat? Are you drawing a cat? Meow. Yeah... I've been renting this condo for almost two years, I was in a houseboat for 5 years before this.

Some people wonder how I do it with a little one, but it's not about the size. Home is really on the inside. I definitely don't think of it as the four walls (up and down hand gesture) or something. I know people in places like New York or in other countries...in Denmark... who live in two bedroom apartments with three, four kids and I think it makes them closer. Because, obviously, when you're living in very close quarters you have more contact and you just have to figure out how to make it work. That's home. In this place, I love that I can be...blow drying my hair and just lean out the bathroom door and look down the hallway and see him and know that everything is okay. He's safe. There is an element of safety that comes with sharing a wall with your neighbors. I really like that, especially as a single woman.

...and home is not just the physical space that you dwell in, it's reaching out to connect with your community and your neighbors. Just yesterday we went for a walk and we saw Mary and what did she have?

What did Mary have?

That's right, she had a worm! Yeah. Mary's a gardener. We don't have a yard, which is something I have considered – getting a place with a yard. But in a way this is almost better because it forces us to take walks and explore and connect with other kids in the neighborhood. If he were just running around out in a backyard with a fence around it, that wouldn't happen. It's good for Mary, too because she doesn't have any kids of her own.

So, I think the condo thing is definitely a balance and it works well in Eastlake. It's a good kind of symbiosis.

The thing I love the most about Seattle is it's individuality. On the other hand that does tend to make it harder to (*interlaces fingers*) – with people...when everyone is doing their own thing. You've heard of that “Seattle ice” thing...?

JOEL/CHARLES

My name is Joel. I'll be 40 in May. I'm from 2646 Wilson street! Brooklyn baby! That's right I was there when Grandmaster Flash did block parties, back before it was called hip hop. I was there when b boys didn't even know they were b boys. Of course we were the PR boys. Puerto Rican boys!! I live on Capital Hill now. I moved here after I got a divorce from my first wife. I'm a cook at a few bars around here.

Fuck the Condos, bunch of Microsoft fucks! They force out the people that make the neighborhood. They drive up all the cost making things more expensive, while making us have to move out of our apartments to make room for them. Then the money we would be saving on cheap rent else where gets spent on us commuting back to the very neighborhood that forced us out. Then they have the nerve to say get better jobs then. Motherfucker you get to sweeping and

mopping and doing dishes, cause I do all that and I don't mind. And seeing as you need my services you shouldn't mind either. I work hard, I've been disciplined to work hard.

Side note. We were actually just talking about discipline earlier and being trained. Right like my dad made sure of that. Yo my pops actually had a whistle. And it didn't matter where we were if we heard that whistle it was time to go. We would all be at the soccer games or wherever when heard that whistle and it would be like peace gotta go. But that's how I was taught. Especially with having two older brothers. And look at me, I'm not a big guy. But whenever something would happen they would always blame it on me. Until finally my mom told me "If your going to do bad you better do it by yourself, that way no one can snitch on you." And let me tell you something, I'm almost 40 years old and I've been to jail once...for a traffic violation.

My dad used to whoop our ass if we talked back. Not in a abusive way but in a way that kept us in line. I remember my dad once slapped me upside the head in the middle of a store and some lady tried to tell him he shouldn't hit his kids. And my dad looked her in the eyes and said look when this knucklehead breaks into your house, like all the other neighborhood kids don't call the police and you sure as hell better not call me. Like I said almost 40 and I've been to jail once. For a traffic violation.

I'm sorry what was your question again? Oh the condos, yeah fuck that I'm tired of talking about them, what's next? Homes is more than blood, it's where your people are. Let me put it this way, home is where you can go to your boy and say, yo, this is my last buck, but you need it and vice versa. Where the people in my life build me up to my fullest, that home.

JOHN/JOSH

John. 52 years old. I am a handyman. I am a carpenter, sometimes painter and theatre technician.

I live in a basement of a house. For now anyway. I'd like to make it more of an apartment, make it nice you know but I don't know when this foreclosure thing is gonna be over with. (Pause.) I don't pay much attention to politics or high finance and things like that, but I guess there's been problems with houses and people foreclosing. I guess there were variable mortgage rates that people could sign up and not pay anything I guess and at the time it seemed like a good idea but turned out to be...Satan. At least that's who was runnin' it. (laughs) He – the landlord - he owns this place and a few others and I guess there's some question as to whether or not we'll get foreclosed. There was talk of the people upstairs buying it outright from him but I don't know what's gonna happen. For a while I would ask the people upstairs each week, "we got a place to live next week?" "Yeah." "Okay." But lately they've been sayin' it's gonna be fine. We'll see. I gotta truck with a canopy and a sleeping bag, so if worse comes to worse. (Laughs)

I live in Maple Leaf. It's a real nice neighborhood. A lot of dogs. It is Dog Central. I mean you go out for a walk and it's like Holy Cow! 20-30 people out with there dogs. Kinda yuppie.

Shops and stuff have changed, but there all still local. There are lot grooming places in the area. A lot of them. One of them's even called Doggie Style, but you know "Doggy Style".

(pause.) I don't know. Home is where I sleep. Home is where my stuff is. But I guess as far as feeling AT home... I feel at home at my watering hole - the tavern. At the theatre. I don't feel at

home where I live. I just live there. The people upstairs sometimes just come in like "John, you here" like not even asking a question you know and just walk right in. They're real nice, you know, and bringing me food and stuff but they'll just walk in without knocking. I could be sleeping or, you know...whatever...but they just come in without knocking. And it's like thanks for the food now get the fuck outta here. (laughs) I just need my privacy you know. That's what I meant earlier about wanting to fix it up more like an apartment. I could stud in some walls or something, make it a bit more solid than the blankets hanging from the wall. If we were gonna be there for a year you know it would be worth it. But for a while we didn't know if we'd be there another three months. I guess it's looking up now. That's what they say. Doesn't seem like we'll be moving out.

No I never have. Never even occurred to me. My parents never owned a home and it was kind of like having kids - just didn't ever want to... it seems that people spend a lot of time on their homes. I never really saw the sense in owning a home. Hell, owning a truck's enough.

What do I love most about Seattle? I don't know. I haven't really known any other place. I can't imagine moving somewhere without thinking about what I'd be missing in Seattle.

There's this interesting thing in Seattle that no one wants to talk about. There's this...well...there's a subtle racism in Seattle. And, uh, I don't know what that is, if that comes from the Scandinavians or what. I'm not sure. You know because in the Scandinavian countries they like to stick to themselves but they're so nice they would never say anything out and out. You know it's nothing like in the South where they're a lot more blatant about it, but I do think there's a racism here below the surface and you don't see it cause people are just nice, or passive or liberal and don't think they are racist.

But I think that Seattle's a really great place for creative people. I, I think it's the weather. I have a friend from Chicago and there, you know, everyone's just fighting to live, you know. Winters are hard, summers are hot the city's rough. And here things are temperate and it's a...it's a quality of life thing. You know, a person just has the time to sit and think, I think. You can just sit and watch the rain run down the window and think.

RYAN/CAROLYN

What?!? Ryan. I am a small business owner. Actually, I am more like a medium-sized business owner. Oh, come on. I own a video store slash tanning salon. (*Folds arms*) How old do you think? A boy never tells. I'm flattered. No, actually I'm 33. Jesus died when he was 33. We have a lot in common. Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I rent a one bedroom apartment. In this neighborhood. Um, about 2 1/2 years. Ballpark. You mean my specific neighborhood, or the neighborhood at large? Yeah, actually there are condos going up everywhere and it's a huge pain in my ass. I used to live in this little row of bugalow style apartments next to an alley. Brick and then they built this huge building right smack in front of it. So, overnight the view of the lake and the slley were totally gone. (*to customer*) Helloooo. Yeah, pain in the ass, so I actually got a little (*click click noise with mouth*) monetary settlement out of it from the developers, enough to move. So in that respect it worked out in my favor. Oh! – and what's funny is that 2 1/2 years later, I hear that those condos are still 40% empty. Home. Well, it's not that sentimental kind of family definition I can tell you that. It's my fortress of solitude. Home should be somewhere you can go to just check out...gives me a break from (*indicates customers with thumb. Again, click click. Then, cordial and polite to customer*) Hello! How's it going? My childhood home? (*defensive*) Well, no we moved around a bit so, no I

never had that. No, never thought about that. Not at this point. Can't answer that question either. Again, not sentimental about Seattle. The topography, I guess. It's got that going for it, but other than that... (*sbrugs*) No.

CONNER /CARRIE

Heyyyy I'm Connor. That's a cute top...I love it. You're so welcome. This is Pookashell. Say hello Pookashell. She's being a love whore. You're like her pimp. Totes just joking. Ummm I'm 18 and I'm from Sherman Oaks, California...that's near L.A, if you didn't know. But I've been in Seattle for the past 6 months.

This is fun! What's this for?

Oh my god you're an actress ...you should move to L.A.
Seriously. Think about it.

Yeah I've been in Seattle for the past 6 months. No I graduated last year. I was skipped a grade when I was 14, because I was advanced, so I graduated at 17. Just turning 18! Ummm I got accepted to UCLA but I declined.

What am I doing in Seattle? Oh I'm here on business. I'm working with my dad. He's one of the top selling realtors in the greater L.A area. So his reputation is pretty amazing. And also being that he deals in L.A... with celebrities and important people, a company out here hired him to come up here and pick up some slack with new properties that need to get moving. I assist. Ummm I like check emails and stuff. I work about like 10-15 hours a week.

What do you mean? What do you mean by job? That is my job. 15 hours is almost part-time. OHHHHH!! Oh you mean like living expenses? How do I support myself? Oh ok! Well the people who hired my dad and me put us up in condos here in downtown. No I have my own condo and my dad has his right next door. The company put us in a condo building that is more then 75 percent vacant so there is plenty of room... for us to have our own space.

Well like I said I'm 18, and I think this is a great opportunity for something I might want to go do someday. Selling property and condos is about taste. I mean I am a gay man with style. I have a lot to bring to the table. I have great sense of what's modern and hip and ya know with logistics and stuff you hire someone to do that, I fucking hate math.

Seattle is awesome!! I love the scene. It's dark and edgy...but there's a tanning bed in my condominium so it fixes that. Seattle really has a lot of potential to be a thriving what do you call it... METROPOLIS!!! So they need to sell more homes and condos is a must. Because you need the people. Seattle still has some tendencies to be like small-town quaint. Which I don't get. Because if you want to call yourself a fucking city...then you need fucking people. That's why people go to a city. To be by people. To go to clubs and restaurants where people dance and eat. To have culture from different kinds of fucking people.

So providing more living area is how you make the deal. More homes, more people.

So tell your friends who have money to go out there and make an investment in this town. Live big or go home. Or whatever that saying is. I prefer Rock out with your cock out!

TOD/PEARL

I'm a Navy brat, so we moved around a lot. First Honolulu, then Florida, then Wisconsin, then Ohio, then Alaska, then California, then here. So I'm not really "from" anywhere, geographically.

You know, it's not a geographical location. Because of how I grew up I used to think home was about a place, but now it's more about the people. I think of Carrie, and the boys, sitting on the couch, the yellow walls. It's where I go to be with people I love.

For so long, I thought it was about a place, but I just now realized it isn't. Yeah.

I don't have anything else to say.

No, I think I revealed more than I intended to.

As they move their chairs off stage, each character repeats "No, I think I revealed more than I intended to" until we resolve to Phillip left onstage as the Crane Operator.

PART SEVEN: THE CRANE OPERATOR

The last construction worker steps forward.

screens: The 'live portraits' gently change to animation and settle on this man. The animated portrait should look very much like the actor, in black and white. When the Crane Operator begins talking about his job, the animation shows us his crane over a construction sight, perhaps his POV climbing all the steps and eventually, his magnificent view of Seattle. Lastly, the animation shows his fall, the ground rising to meet him in slow, horrific motion and then, beautifully, his flight.

No, I don't live near here. Too expensive. Though it'd be nice to live closer to work and cut down on the commute. You know, I'd like to spend more time with my kid and now my mother's moved in with us. She lost the house. It's happened to a lot of people, it's not such a big deal. When Wall Street went screwy she lost most of the money my dad left her, it was in investments and whatnot, she was sort of scraping by on the interest. And when those investments went ass-end up she just couldn't make the payments any more.

We used to visit her in the summer and, I guess I'll admit, it was nice out there. A lot of grass and green and, you know, I grew up there. Learned how to ride a bike on the gravel driveway, smoked my first joint behind the garage, spent my last Christmas with my pop there. So, yah, I loved that house. It was home to me. I was sad to see it go. Especially... well... we had to walk away from it. Houses out there aren't selling and it's not like I had some stash of disposable income to fix it up or anything. So we walked away. We took one last walk around the property and sort of laughed at all the times we had there, and then we left it behind. Our... house, home.

But it's good to have my mom around. Good for my son and, you know, family is family and you can't ever forget that. Family's important. More important than... comfort or money or... Shelley and I have had sort of a hard time. The house is sort of crowded now and that's hard on her and I think she has a hard time with mom there all the time. She doesn't get a lot of time to herself and even though we said we'd never do this – I mean, we promised each other we would never EVER fight over money – money has been tough and you know I don't think it's possible for that to not affect you and the people you love. I've had a couple jobs fall through recently with the whole real estate fiasco and she's worried about our debt and we want to send our kid to school but I don't know, it's hard to know how that's going to happen. So, it's been hard on us but... but family's family.

I like my job. No, I do. I really do. I used to love it but I still like it. Them's a lot of stairs to climb but the view still takes my breath away. So high up and the city tiny and frozen underneath you. It can get lonely staying up there all day though. You can't come down. People don't know that but you can't come down for lunch or to use the bathroom or anything like that. You know you figure out how to deal with it but that's a lot of time to spend by yourself day after day and it does definitely get a little lonely. It's just you and the tiny jigsaw puzzle project you're putting together on the ground fifteen stories below you. You and the city and beyond the city; the city and the water and the mountains and the huge, huge fucking sky wrapping around you on all sides and sometimes I imagine... Well not really you know I would never do anything crazy, or anything, but... I think it's a natural feeling, that far up, above everything, all alone... sometimes I imagine what it would be like to step off the top. Just go to the top rung and climb over the safety bars and

take one last, long unbelievable fall and have the ground coming up on me and feel the skin on my face pull back and sting with the atmosphere up there and maybe just end it all in a bright flash...

Or maybe, I don't know. Maybe something else would happen.

screens: The fall is interrupted by a bright white flash and, from the construction worker's POV, we take flight and fly over Seattle.

*In this animated flight, we see sights we recognize and places we've talked about:
the Space Needle,
the skyline,
Capitol Hill and the 500 block of East Pine,
Safeco field,
the Starbucks factory
and then water and ahead of us, the mountains and, for the first time, color. Sunset.
Eventually, we land on a woman at Pike's Place Market.
A homeless woman with a guitar.*

PART EIGHT: HOME SWEET HOME

screens: The image of our homeless woman, Betty, eventually resolves to a full, 360 degree sunset. Or projections of the inside of the theater, thus making the theater effectively 'disappear.'

sound: The final ballad.

TRANSITION: *The actors remove the screens?*

This scene should give us the feeling of a long, slow walk around the neighborhood at dusk. Not going too fast, slow enough to notice pennies on the sidewalk and people on their porches. At the end, the audience should want to walk home more slowly and to notice the things they love about their neighborhood – with a gentle knowledge that nothing lasts forever, not even this.

BETTY/CARRIE (*looking at the sunset*)

What I love most about Seattle is the colors. I mean, damn. Just look that way.

Thank you. I told you Rainier... but you know what this is great I like Miller High Life. I do. I like it. I like it. Thank you, I said, thank you! For this. Not a lot of people buy me what I want. I get all sorts of things like pennies, I get lots and lots of pennies.

Okay.

Hold on baby girl. This fucker needs to back his shit off.

BACK YOUR SHIT OFF MAN! FUCK YOU LENNY!

He used to be my friend.

Okay baby girl what did you say? Suuuuuuuurrrree.

Betty.

But I have a lot of friends that call me B.

How old are you?

I could be your mother.

That's funny.

Oh no, I ended up moving here from Florida like five something years ago. I was doing a lot of meth with this guy in Denver and he said he had a friend in Snohomish who had a plant and like a community for users, so...

Oh my god, are you with the cops?

Okay good, my fucking heart just leapt into my mouth.

I meet people and I like them and then I say shit and let shit fly without thinking and then I get myself in trouble.

No no no, you can use it baby girl. I'll just be a mystery Betty.

I don't do that stuff a lot anymore.

Yes I'm homeless.

No I've been trying for awhile but I can't hold one down and I've been arrested and what not so I have a record and that makes getting a job hard.

Since I'm homeless I prefer to come down to the Market here because there's a lot of people and I like to be by my friends.

Condos? *(laughs)* No baby girl I have not been affected by the condos.

Hm. Home doesn't really have much of a meaning. I guess home is where my friends are.

(Betty starts to strum a simple tune on the guitar)

LESLIE/CAROLYN

Home is not just the physical space that you dwell in, it's reaching out to connect with your community and your neighbors.

JOSEPH/PHILLIP

Home is where I'm comfortable. Where I can close the door on the day and relax and be comfortable to unwind or plan the day for tomorrow or whatever. Yeah, I like the quiet.

MOLLY/GINA

Home, to me, is definitely a place. I am very picky about where I live and I have never lived some place I hate. I have always loved my apartments and houses. OK, that's not true. I'm really picky though. So, home is definitely a concrete thing to me.

JEFF/JOSH

Concept of home? I don't know. *(Long pause.)* What do you mean 'concept'? Uh, I don't know. Cozy. Warm. Uh...warm...cozy. Uh...a place that's warm and cozy and I can relax in, you know. Place that's mine.

WOODS/CHARLES

Funny how people assume where you live is going to automatically change who are. Seems to me you're still just you but just in new surroundings.

STEVE/PEARL

I think mine must be different. I mean, I don't buy into the Martha Stewart/ nostalgia/ psychotic nesting thing. It's a place to live. It's better than not. I mean, I like this place, but if I had to leave tomorrow, that would be okay. I need a place to put my books and my computer and my bed, and I'm good. I mean, to have a place to go. Being homeless, that would suck. So I'm good.

BETTY/CARRIE

Home is where I survive. That's all I do man.

People worry too much. People fucking worry too much and I say calm down and take it day by day. That's what I do.

God, what I love most about Seattle is the colors. *(Laughs)*

The water's blue and sky's always this pink color, this bright pink color.

Sometimes it hurts my eyes but I don't mind. People say it rains a lot here, and it do but it's so bright with the colors and all.

Betty starts to hum, as the rest of the cast performs the Seattle Dance and the following list scrolls across the screens:

ON SCREEN:

The feeling of walking under the Space Needle.
The water and the mountains and the fish market.
The music scene. The theater scene.
The DIY movement.
Seeing people I know in random places.
Cherry blossoms in the UW Quad.
Golden Gardens and Alki in the summer.
Walking through downtown.
The bikes and the dogs.
Seattle sports teams and the fans. Our teams always suck but we will always cheer.
Olympic Sculpture Park.
Ferry rides.
Watching the drawbridges.
Saint Mark's.
Sunsets.
Watching the fireworks from West Seattle and seeing three different displays at the same time.
Beer.
Food.
Festivals.
Naked bike riders.
Hearing birds chirp while riding my bike to open the coffee shop at 5am.
Taking the train to Portland.
Flirting with my baristas.
Shakespeare in the Parks.
Passing the Hostess Cupcake Factory and getting a whiff of the sweetness.
The Elephant Car Wash sign.
The Harvard Exit. Even though they don't give away Market Spice Tea anymore, every time I go there I feel at home. I have so many memories – stark, distinct, specific – of being there.
The Allegro where I had my first mochas. I still go there for mini-vacations.
Lowell's. The view more than the food.
The air in March, especially at night and after a rainfall. There's a plant that doesn't flower but smells so sweet.
The Wedgewood Rock.
Public clocks.
Bald eagles.
The way everyone can appreciate a sunny day. It's like the whole city leaves work early.
The skyline. The way my heart skips a beat when I'm coming back to the city and I first see it.
The populist attitude.
The progressive attitude.
Our representation in the federal government.
The technology all around us.
The drag queens.
The feeling that we're both a big city and a small town.
The anticipation of what the city will be like in ten years; that feeling that the best is yet to come.
Top-pot donuts.
Mighty-O.

The fact that HUMP exists.
The farmers markets.
Sailboats.
Seaplanes.
Thick, soft moss.

All the green.

BETTY/CARRIE

All those colors.
And the sky and the grass and that big lake thing over there.

Ya know. Shit.

I was tellin' my friend PJ the other day about why there are always people painting pictures in the park here. He says he don't get it, but I say it's 'cause someone's gotta show people on the other side of the country what they're missing out on here in Seattle.

Fin.