

The Park Street Angels

A Screenplay Written By

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Title: *The Park Street Angels*

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Scene 1

EXT. PARK AND TREMONT STREETS, PARK STREET CHURCH - EVENING

INSERT TITLE CARD: December 2007

CHRISTINA [CHRIS] NORDSTROM is walking cautiously down the snow-covered sidewalk on Tremont Street, past the Granary Burial Ground and Park Street Church on her way to the Park Street subway station for her commute back to the suburbs. The carillon is playing "Oh Come, All Ye Faithful." It is snowing lightly.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

In keeping with the season, at precisely five o'clock in the evening on December 5th, 2007 the carillon in the newly refurbished steeple of the Park Street Church rang out with "Oh Come, All Ye Faithful." On a colder-than-usual day in early December, snow had been falling since mid-afternoon. It created a sense of magic and anticipation in the evening air as it sparkled to the ground – like *Peter Pan's Tinker Bell* sprinkling fairy dust on the parade of weary holiday shoppers and evening commuters. My footsteps were slow and deliberate as I navigated the slippery brick sidewalk outside the Park Street church on my way home from work.

Scene 2

EXT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - EARLIER THAT MORNING

CHRISTINA is leaving for work at 6:30 in the morning. She closes the door to her house and walks to the car to start her commute to the "T."

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Home is in a suburb south of Boston. I usually commute to work on the "T" which is short now for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

Scene 3

INT. OLD "T" CARS, UNDERGROUND PLATFORMS - MORNING

(Suggest shots of old subway cars, tracks, platforms, station signs and MTA fare increase protest placards inserted here.)

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

The oldest subway system in the country, the "T" is perhaps best known through the song, "Charlie on the MTA." It's about one hapless passenger named "Charlie" who, in 1949, went for a ride and apparently "never returned" from an ill-fated trip from Kendall Square to Jamaica Plain. Then the "T" was called the "MTA," or the Metropolitan Transit Authority."

I could never figure out why Charlie's wife didn't just hand him the 5-cent fare that he needed to continue "at the Scully Square Station" instead of handing "him a sandwich as the train [came] rumbling through." Actually, the song was written to protest a fare increase by the MTA. The actual name of the song is, "The Metropolitan Transit Authority Fare Increase Protest Song."

Scene 4

EXT. PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - MORNING

CHRISTINA crosses Park Street. She stops for a while on the corner outside the church. The scene pivots to view the State House and then back to CHRISTINA as she walks up Tremont Street toward Government Center. The wind is at her back and the sound of dry leaves scraping the sidewalk is heard as they scurry down the "Freedom Trail" in front of her.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

This morning I looked for my friend at Park Street, but, he wasn't there. Robert Wright - "Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire" as he used to refer to himself - had been living on, and sometimes off the streets of Boston for the last 12 years. I had come to know him over the course of several months, visiting him there on

the corner most weekday mornings on my way to work in Downtown Boston. The Park Street Church corner was the site of his daily "prospecting." I think he was prospecting perhaps as much for "donations" as he was for hope that his life would change somehow for the better, and that he would be able to live off the streets someday.

Little did I imagine when I first came to know him that, as his prospects and his life would be changing for the better, so would mine.

Scene 5

INT. CHRISTINA'S SUBURBAN HOME - DECEMBER, LATE AFTERNOON

INSERT TITLE CARD: December 2005

CHRISTINA is writing out checks for household bills at her dining room table. She closes her checkbook and puts it on top of the unpaid bills. She puts stamps on two payment envelopes, and then looks up a phone number. She picks up the phone.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

I had been managing a community health education program in a small community hospital, but became collateral damage when the hospital had to discontinue the program. I did manage to stay on there working several hours a week on a human service grant project, but that, together with my partial unemployment benefits, didn't go far enough to take care of all the household bills.

Scene 6

INT. HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY OFFICE - MORNING, DECEMBER 23

CHRISTINA is meeting with a case manager to apply for assistance with heating and electricity for her rented home.

CASE MANAGER

Christina, I've looked over your application and you are eligible for fuel assistance. I just need you to have your landlord verify that

you are his tenant and then we can process the application. He'll need to sign this form.

CHRISTINA takes a deep breath and picks up the application form.

CHRISTINA

He has to get involved in this? I have to tell him about this? [The case manager gestures a "yes".] OK. It'll take a couple of days.

She leaves the office to go home, but after learning that her landlord would have to verify her as his tenant, she is embarrassed beyond words, struggles and stuffs her emotions, and decides not to pursue the application.

Scene 7

EXT. HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY ENTRANCE - MORNING

CHRISTINA tosses the form in the trash barrel outside as she closes the agency door and walks to her car.

CHRISTINA

Yeah...that's not happening.

Scene 8

EXT. BOY SCOUTS' CHRISTMAS TREE MARKET - EVENING

She is at the local Boy Scouts' Christmas tree marketplace. The lowest priced tree that she finds is \$25. She gives up and holds back tears as she declines making the purchase. She gets into the car to drive home, sits a minute.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

OK...so no tree again this year.
[*"Rock, Paper, Scissors,"* verse 1 plays as she drives away]

Scene 9

INT. LOCAL COFFEE SHOP - NEXT MORNING

CHRISTINA is finishing up a weekly visit with friend, SUSANNE "SUE" STRALEY in a local coffee shop. As they get up to leave, SUE hands her a coffee shop gift card. CHRISTINA gives her friend a hug as she receives what, to her, is a special gift.

CHRISTINA

Sue ... you're just not gonna know how special this is. I'm not kidding. It's been such a long time since I had any discretionary money even to buy a cup of coffee.

SUZANNE

Well, yes, I think I will ...

They walk out of the coffee shop, arm in arm.

Scene 10

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - EVENING

CHRISTINA is finishing up a conversation on the phone with her sister, PHYLLIS NORDSTROM.

PHYLLIS

But, I'm in a place where I can do this now ... so don't worry about it. You can pay it back when you get on your feet again.

CHRISTINA

I just hate to have to **ask** you. And I can't believe that I'm not getting a refund this year and have to actually make a payment. I didn't realize that piecing together those jobs last year would actually be detrimental to me tax-wise. I always got a refund!

PHYLLIS

Don't worry about it now...things will get better, really they will.

CHRISTINA

[*Pausing, sighing*] OK, thanks, Phyl. I'll get it back to you as soon as I can.

Scene 11

INT. MA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE - AFTERNOON

CHRISTINA is completing an interview with GAIL RENQUIST.

GAIL RENQUIST

Christina, you don't have all the credentials to do this particular job; you're not a content expert in this area and people here just wouldn't take you seriously. I'm sure you can understand that. But [*pausing a moment*], there's another job that's available and you might be just right for that one..."

Scene 12

INT. SANCTUARY OF LOCAL CHURCH - MORNING

CHRISTINA is sitting with SUE in their church listening to the end of a sermon.

MINISTER

...And, as James Forbes notes so pointedly: "You can't get into heaven without a note from the poor."

The service comes to an end. Trying to hold back her excitement, CHRISTINA speaks to SUE as they stand up to leave.

CHRISTINA

So I have to tell you about the job! [*They continue talking as scene fades.*]

Scene 13

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS, BOSTON - 6:30 A.M.

INSERT TITLE CARD: November 2005

"BOB" WRIGHT "sets up shop" on the corner outside Park Street Church. He sits on a black milk crate and places two signs on either side of him - one "Homeless by Fire" and the other "SMILE: It's the Law!" He places a large, white half clam shell on the sidewalk in front of him and fills it with

birdseed. He opens an empty cigar box and places it on the sidewalk, sits back and lights a cigarette. He smiles and waves at the young children escorted by their parents on their way to day care. The occasional passer-by puts a few coins in his cigar box. He smiles with a nod of his head and waves a thank you.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

"Homeless Bob" was in his late 50's. He looked closer to 70 and reminded me of a Dickensian St. Nick with his white beard and hair. According to Hearth, a local human service agency that serves frail elders who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless, depending on the length of time someone is "un-housed," the stress of having inconsistent shelter can make a person actually age by 15 to 20 years. Because of this premature aging he had a number of health problems including diabetes that affected his kidneys, his feet and circulation.

ANNA BISSONETTE [ON CAMERA]

[Speaks re plight of frail elders who are homeless or at risk of being homeless]

Scene 14

EXT. BACK ALLEY BEHIND AN UPSCALE RESTAURANT - MORNING

INSERT TITLE CARD: Thanksgiving Day 2005

BOB is seen "dumpster diving" outside a pricy Boston restaurant. He appropriates two discarded frozen turkeys and a half a sack of potatoes. He tosses them into his push cart.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

All his life Bob had to be resourceful. He advised that one way to eat healthy if you're homeless is to go "dumpster diving behind the good restaurants, of course."

Scene 15

EXT. NEAR LONGFELLOW BRIDGE - LATER THAT MORNING

With the potatoes and two turkeys stuffed into his push cart, BOB joins his homeless compatriots sheltering near the Longfellow Bridge on the Boston side of the Charles River. One turkey he ties to a rope and puts in the river to stay "refrigerated" while the other he starts to roast over an open fire. One of his friends brings back a beat up old appropriated kettle filled with water from the Charles and they put that on the fire and added the potatoes. They all hover around the fire to stay warm and anticipate dinner.

Scene 16

EXT. NEAR THE LONGFELLOW BRIDGE - THE NEXT DAY

BOB decides to cook the second bird. He walks over to the riverbank and grabs hold of the rope to which it was tethered, and pulls it out. To his surprise, attached to the rope is nothing but a carcass that has been stripped clean. He bursts out laughing; then falls down on the ground and starts to cry.

JIM O'CONNELL [ON CAMERA]

[Relate experiences of Boston Healthcare for the Homeless staff working with people who are homeless living under the bridges in Boston.]

Scene 17

EXT. OUTSIDE PARK STREET CHURCH - MID-MORNING, SUNDAY

Wearing a Santa Claus hat, BOB sits outside Park Street Church on a Sunday. He's open for business. A family from the church brings leftovers from last evening's dinner for him on their way to church and there's also a box of decorated Christmas cookies in a plastic container. He smiles at the children. They giggle and give him hugs.

Scene 18

EXT. ROAD TRIP IN COLORADO - SUMMER AFTERNOON

INSERT TITLE CARD: Colorado, summer 1972

BOB is in his early 20s. He is on one of many of his motorcycle road trips criss-crossing the country with JENNY ("JEN-JEN," "JENNY-O") TURNER, his girlfriend of 6 years. JENNY calls him "Robert." There is a trailer hitched to his bike so his dog, "Beano," can ride with them. ROBERT/BOB and JENNY are sitting around an open fire at a campsite. They are drinking coffee as they discuss their future together.

JENNY

Robert, over these past several months, I've been giving "us" a lot of thought. I think it's time to plant some roots. I'm missing my family back in Massachusetts, and I'm not - **we're** not getting any younger. Have you thought anymore about coming back with me ... and maybe settling down? I know we've talked about this before, but I just need to resolve this...I need a decision.

ROBERT/BOB

[Sighing] Jen-Jen-Jenny-O. *[Pauses and lights a cigarette; throws the match into the campfire]* This is my life. This is who I am and this is what I want to do.

JENNY

So there's no point discussing it any more ... is that what you're saying? *[BOB is silent for a while and then begins to speak but she interrupts him and stands up and starts walking to the tent.]* OK, OK ... I get it. Just get me to the bus station tomorrow...

Scene 19

EXT. SUBURBAN CHURCH ROOF REHAB PROJECT - DAYTIME

INSERT TITLE CARD: Boston suburb, summer 1985

BOB now in his 30s works on the steeple of a church roofing project with his father in a suburb of Boston.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Bob had a number of jobs over the years and somehow he reconnected and started working with his formerly estranged father in construction back home in Massachusetts. His father passed away, though I'm not sure of the timing. But he continued in construction for a while. Then, in January 1994 Bob became homeless after a fire in the boarding house where he was living in Framingham, Massachusetts. Things were further complicated for him after he suffered from oxygen deprivation from all the smoke from the fire.

JIM O'CONNELL [ON CAMERA]

[Statement about the impact of mental/emotional illness and physical disabilities on the risk of becoming homeless; lifelines that can help prevent it]

Scene 20

INT. BOSTON AREA SHELTER - WINTER, EARLY EVENING

INSERT TITLE CARD: Boston, January 1994

BOB is standing in line waiting to check in to a Boston homeless shelter. He gets a bed assignment and looks for it in the sea of cots that have been set up in a large room there. Later that night, after he has been dozing a while he gets up to use the bathroom. When he comes back to his bed, he confronts another "guest" who is visibly drunk and is rummaging through his backpack. He fights him off and wakes up many of the residents. A security guard breaks up the fight, dismisses the fellow who is drunk, and reprimands BOB. BOB is allowed to stay the night.

Scene 21 (Optional)

EXT. SHELTERED AREA NEAR LONGFELLOW BRIDGE - WINTER AFTERNOON

BOB is seen arriving in a sheltered spot near Longfellow Bridge on the Boston side of the river. There is a foot and a half of fresh, wet snow on the ground. He builds an "igloo" and that's where he lives for the time being.

Scene 22

INT. A BOSTON HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

INSERT TITLE CARD: 1995 one year later...

BOB keeps a journal, writing on 8½" x 11" writing tablets. The cold and wind that day have made him seek refuge in a shelter for the night after struggling outside on the streets. He sits on his cot in the shelter and makes an entry.

BOB

[Bob is narrating as he writes.]

February 9, 1995 27°F. As I walked by a store front on Bromfield, I saw myself in a mirror, and I thought "Who is that man?" What I saw scared me. "This is not the Robert Wright I am." The man I saw was old, gray beard, graying dirty hair, baggy dress, walking with a worn wooden cane. What have I become? What did I do wrong? How can a working, almost middle-class person go from what we think as "normal," to what you see in front of you? This is what I call fear. From what I was. Most nights it just doesn't seem worth the fight. Each night I lose a little more. Sleep seems to be the elusive Butter Fly. The MTA police throw me out of the subway, so I run to another tunnel, maybe I get an hour sleep with the rats till the MTA police find me again and out I go again to run to another tunnel. Each time I exit, the sweat freezes. The shivers never seem to go away. The other night I walked from Park Street to Arlington *on the tunnel tracks* all the time thinking "so what if a train hits me, the darkness must be better than this." I know I should sell crack coke or "junk" - make a

couple hundred a day and get off the streets,
but even the darkness is more appealing.

Then 5:00 a.m. comes and I go to Tremont and
Park Street and sit with my cigar box. From my
seat, I suck energy from the good people who
smile at me, or say, "Good morning," or put
pieces of silver in my cigar box. They give me
the power to keep trying to get off the
streets...for me the answer is in my people.
These are good people.

Signed Robert Wright
"Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire"

REP. FROM FATHER BILL'S [ON CAMERA]
[Statement about purpose of sheltering
programs: not intended to serve as long-term
housing solutions, intention is for them to be
a temporary refuge.]

Scene 23

EXT. MBTA RED LINE EXIT AT PARK STREET STATION - MORNING

INSERT TITLE CARD: Boston, April 2006

CHRISTINA takes the subway to work. She exits at Park Street
and BOB is sitting on the corner at Park Street Church writing
in his journal. She doesn't notice him and crosses Tremont
Street in the other direction. She walks down the pedestrian
walkway on Winter Street, dodging overflowing trash barrels
that were left out the night before.

BOB

[Bob narrates as he writes.]
...If you are homeless and or disabled, you are
invisible. It can happen instantly, one day
you are middle class (whatever that means), the
next (as in my case by fire) you are homeless.
Last night I ate well. After setting out my
collection, I found I had 2 partially eaten hot
dogs (both with mustard), 1 half eaten taco,
2 sandwiches (one egg salad, one tuna) and 1
Styrofoam container of gook rice. To think I
once bought my own food. Why must I be reduced

to shopping in trash barrels or begging at food lines?

Signed *Robert Wright*

"Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire"

Scene 24

INT. PARK STREET "T" PLATFORM - MORNING

CHRISTINA walks up from the lower level of the Park Street Station to the main level to go through the turnstile to go up the stairs out to the plaza. As she does she walks by a young man, obviously inexperienced with the subway, who is stuck with his bicycle inside one of the "meat grinder" turnstiles trying to exit. She continues walking, tries not to stare in disbelief, hesitates wondering if she should try to go to his aid, but sees some "T" officials coming over to help him - they are unsuccessful holding back their astonishment, which borders on hilarity. She passes through one of the exit doors. Holding back a smile, she goes on up the stairs to the plaza.

Scene 25

EXT. PARK STREET STATION EXIT (PARK AND TREMONT) - MORNING

CHRISTINA exits Park Street Station and crosses at the corner of Tremont and Park, passes BOB who is sitting there and then she walks up Tremont Street.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

So this morning I decided to take a different route to work which took me along the Boston Freedom Trail, past the Granary Burial Ground and rounding the corner onto School Street, passing the Parker House and King's Chapel. That's when I first noticed Bob at Park Street Church out of the corner of my eye. He was looking at me with a smile on his face. I picked up my pace.

Scene 26

EXT. PARK STREET STATION EXIT AND BOSTON COMMON - MORNING

INSERT TITLE CARD: Later that week...

CHRISTINA emerges from Park Street Station again where she passes a handicapped woman in a wheelchair parked at the top of the stairs, just at the exit.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

There was nothing routine about my commute. Once I passed a woman who was sitting at the top of the stairs at Park Street. She wasn't asking for anything, she has no cup that she rattles for donations; she just sits there staring. Someone just left her there.

CHRISTINA continues on her way to work, passing BOB on the corner again, and walking down Tremont Street. As she passes by, she notices the sign that says: "SMILE: It's the Law." She obeys the law but keeps walking. [*Verse 1 of "Meditation on Micah 6:8" plays in the background behind shots of the woman in the wheelchair and people sleeping/hanging out on Boston Common.*]

Scene 27

INT. LOCAL SOUTH SHORE AREA COFFEE SHOP - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

CHRISTINA and SUE are sharing some conversation over a cup of coffee. CHRISTINA tells SUE about the unhoused people she sees as she goes to work each day.

CHRISTINA

[FADE IN]...So I'm calling them all "Park Street Angels." It feels like no one else sees them - they all just walk by and go about their business. But **I** can see them; it's really hard to ignore their being there. So, this is weird, and it seems cruel if this is the case ... but it feels kind of like they're there for some reason - like there's something for me to learn, some sort of lesson. Geeze, SUE, I feel like I'm in an episode of "Touched by an Angel."

SUE

Well, you know that saying about how there are no coincidences. I'd like to hear more. Did you ever think about keeping all of this in a journal? [*The scene fades as they continue talking.*]

Scene 28

INT. IN A RED LINE SUBWAY CAR BOUND FOR PARK STREET - MORNING

As CHRISTINA rides the "T" she fishes around in her back pack for some quarters. She finds three and puts them in her jacket pocket. When the train stops at Park Street station, she dons the backpack, gets off the subway car, climbs up the stairs and walks toward the exit.

Scene 29

EXT. CORNER OF PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - PARK STREET "T" EXIT

After exiting the station and crossing Park Street, this time CHRISTINA walks over and hands BOB the quarters. He holds onto her fingers very gently and briefly as she does so and then he lets them go.

CHRISTINA

[*She tries not to appear startled as she withdraws her hand and turns to go on her way.*]
Take care.

BOB

[Smiles, thinks "I won!"] Thank you, ma'am.

CHRISTINA

[*She mumbles a criticism to herself as she walks away*] Oh, sure! "Take care"...what's he gonna do with 75 cents?

Scene 30

EXT. CORNER OF PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - MORNING

INSERT TITLE CARD: 2 weeks later

With a couple of dollars to "spare," CHRISTINA walks over to BOB who is sitting on the milk crate at the corner of the Park Street Church. She hands him the bills while, at the same time, notices the second sign that says, "Homeless by Fire." She stays for a while and talks with him this time.

CHRISTINA

I'm sorry for your trouble. How'd the fire happen? I hope you don't mind my asking you.

BOB

Nope, don't mind at all. I was living in this boarding house in Framingham. They say they don't know how it got started, but there were these two guys, two addicts that lived downstairs - I'm sure it was them. I tried to get people out of the house, but then I passed out. These firemen threw me out on the lawn and left me for dead. I lost everything. But I was alive. Somehow, and I don't remember how, but I got to a hospital and they said I suffered from a lack of oxygen to my brain.

[BOB lights a cigarette and continues.]

Been on the streets now for 12 years.

CHRISTINA

What did you do before that? I mean, what kind of work did you do?

BOB

Used to work with my father in the roofing trade - slate and copper like this one here *[pointing up to Park Street Church's roof with his cane]*. Used to make copper lanterns and stuff like that with him, too...made this cane. *[He holds up his cane again made from a copper pipe with a sculpted brass mermaid as a handle.]* My father's gone now. Didn't know my mother, and my brother Richard and I grew up mostly in foster homes.

[BOB takes a long drag from the cigarette, and flicks some of the ash onto the sidewalk and continues.] I made some bad decisions over the years and ended up doing 18 months in a federal prison - not my proudest moment. A shrink there said to me once that my in-car-ce-RA-tion [emphasizing each syllable] was the result of "too many foster homes, and not enough love."

Richard's not around anymore either. The war killed him. So I got nobody left.

SPOKESPERSON [ON CAMERA]

[Statement about the effects of adverse childhood experiences; impact of family instability on children]

CHRISTINA

So, where do you stay at night? Sorry, I don't mean to be nosy.

BOB

That's OK, I don't mind. Sometimes I stay in the subway. I mind my business and don't give the cops any lip and they let me stay. It's all about my attitude. If you give them trouble, they'll kick you out. [Scene continues as voice over starts]

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Sometimes he collects enough to get a room for a couple of nights. He said that his feet hurt because of his diabetes. But it's not with a little pride that he says that he's still got all of his toes. He related that the doctor wanted to chop some of them off once, but he wouldn't let them. He said that most homeless people don't have their toes because of frostbite.

BOB

[Another drag] I've had two heart attacks - right here on my corner, and I got to stay at Barbara McGuinness House for a while. Then this car clipped me a couple of years back and knocked me down, and I ended up there again. My

right leg's never been the same since. This is all I can do now.

CHRISTINA

[CHRISTINA is feeling anxious about where to go with their conversation. She needs to get to work.] Um ... I'm sorry ... well, listen, I'll stop by tomorrow. I've really got to get to work now. Please take care of yourself. *[BOB nods and she smiles nervously as she turns and walks down Tremont Street.]*

Scene 31

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

After emerging from Park Street Station, CHRISTINA ventures over to BOB's corner and, as she does, he doesn't say good morning, but, with a twinkle in his eye, starts telling a joke:

BOB

So, there are these two rattlesnakes, see. One says to the other, "Hey, are we poisonous?" to which the other replies, "Yup." The first snake says, "Uh-oh!" and the second one asks, "Why, what happened?" The first snake answers, "I just bit my tongue!"

CHRISTINA smiles wryly at the joke. *[Scene fades over their continued conversation]*

Scene 32

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

CHRISTINA approaches BOB at his corner where he is finishing up a conversation with a well-dressed gentleman who includes a \$20 bill in his handshake with Bob. The gentleman leaves.

CHRISTINA

Good morning. How are things?

BOB

Good morning, Sunshine! See that guy that just left? He's one of the members of the Thursday morning breakfast club. They're all a bunch of Boston blue-bloods. They meet every Thursday morning for breakfast and discuss [*makes air quotes*] "important matters" at the "No. 9" restaurant up there. They all stop by, so I make sure I'm out here on Thursdays. They invited me to come once - me and this Black guy. I was the token homeless guy and he was the token Black...paid for our breakfast and everything. They said they wanted to hear what I had to say, so I told 'em. [*Scene continues as voice over begins*]

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

He said he asked them if they knew why he sat out there on his corner, which is right down the street from the State House. They didn't. So he told 'em that he thought if the Governor could see him sitting here every morning, maybe he would figure something out to help the homeless, but he hasn't done that yet. He also said the mayor just wanted to round them all up and hide them out of sight.

Another Brahmin stops by and waits to see BOB. CHRISTINA says goodbye, turns and walks down Tremont Street to work.

CHRISTINA

See you next time. I'll let you talk with this guy. I've got to get to work.

SPOKESPERSON [ON CAMERA]

[Statement about local/state/national response to acute homelessness vs. chronic homelessness]

Scene 33

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

INSERT TITLE CARD: October 2006

BOB is on his corner as CHRISTINA walks over to him.

BOB

Good morning, Sunshine!

CHRISTINA

Hey. How goes it?

BOB

Ya know, I was thinking. You've been stopping by now for quite a while. People don't usually do that. They mostly just ignore "the homeless." It's like we're invisible. They start out meaning well, but then they get tired of it and just ignore us. They let us down. I just wanted to thank you for not ignoring me - for stopping by and at least **ack-knowl**-edg-ing my existence. You don't have to give me any money - just acknowledge that I am a person and I'm sitting right here!

CHRISTINA

Well, truth be told, this is something I have to do for me as well. I've also been talking to my friend, Sue, back home and we were wondering how we might help you out.

BOB

If you wanna help and you don't wanna give a homeless person money, bring 'em leftovers from last night's supper or give 'em a gift card to buy food.

As he finishes his sentence, JOHN, who works at Park Street Church and who has also befriended BOB, brings him three fried eggs, sunny-side up on a paper plate and a mug of tea that is steaming like a boiling cauldron in the late autumn air.

CHRISTINA

Hey, thanks for the advice. I'll let you have your breakfast. Take care and I'll see you next time.

Scene 34

INT. LOCAL SUBURBAN COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

CHRISTINA is having coffee with her friend, SUE, catching her up on her visits with BOB.

CHRISTINA

Each day I try to ask him more questions. I'm not the inquisitive type, so it's a challenge. He told me his brother took his own life, and that the Vietnam War was responsible for that. He said his step-mother used to physically abuse them and that she didn't want them. The emotional abuse from essentially being "discarded" - I can't imagine the toll that takes on a kid. He said he never was able to get close to a family because it never lasted anyway. I'm still not clear about his father's role in his life - only that they ended up working together.

SUE

But, if I could encourage you to be honest with yourself, I think you can imagine the toll that takes on a child. Maybe your situation wasn't as severe, but didn't you tell me that your relationship with your parents was, well, let's say challenging...

CHRISTINA

Yeah...they had five of us...[she pauses as she is thinking back]. Yeah...it was pretty difficult. Mom and I were just oil and water. I left home when I was 18. They asked me to drop out of college, and said they couldn't afford to keep both my older brother and me in school, and that he should have preference since he'd have to support a family some day. That was how people thought about things then. But, I managed to get a secretarial job in Boston. And, over the years, I finished school

going part-time while I was working. Looking back on it, it's pretty scary being out there on your own when you're not ready ...knowing what I know now, 18 is still really young.

SPOKESPERSON [VOICE OVER]
[Information on studies of "Adverse Childhood Experiences"]

Scene 35

EXT. CORNER OF PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - MORNING

BOB is sitting on his milk crate and writing in his journal.

BOB

[*Bob narrates as he writes.*]

Bob's Birth Day Wish List

Number 1: Sit down dress up meal at Legal Sea Foods

Number 2: Flowers (I love flowers and plants)

Number 3: "T" tokens; I don't walk as fast as I once did

Number 4: Respect: we are real people

Number 5: Hope not Dispare

Number 6: Smiles and Hello's, most days this is all that keeps me going

Number 7: Ruby slippers; click, click, there's no place like home

Number 8: Food as you walk by; don't worry, if I get too much, more homeless will be happy

Number 9: A home

Number 10:OK it was a shot in the dark

Number 11: Strong water proof back pack

Scene 36

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - EVENING

CHRISTINA sends SUE daily email messages on what they talked about each morning, if he was there or not there, what he might need, etc.

CHRISTINA

[CHRISTINA is narrating as she is writing an email message to SUE]

So our almost-daily meetings have continued. Even if it's raining and I could get off at a stop closer to work, I go to Park Street. I know it's more important to be consistent, to show up every day.

JAMES O'CONNELL [ON CAMERA]

[Statement on the impact of family inconsistency, emotional illness on children]

Scene 37

INT. "T" RED LINE CAR - MORNING

CHRISTINA is typing an email to SUE as this scene plays out.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Dear Sue, at the JFK/UMASS stop, a 20-something, very large and very muscular African American man, with a serious, kind of angry look on his face and wearing a T-shirt and jeans, got on the train. He sat next to me in the only seat left. He was holding a napkin over a cut on his hand, and, as he kept peeking, blood kept oozing. I remember thinking, "Should I offer help? I must have a Band-aid somewhere in my bag. But, what will people think? Nobody else is doing anything." At South Station, the train was almost emptied of its "cargo." Still nursing his wound, the young man slid over so that there was a seat open between us, but it was soon filled with a new passenger. I was determined to find a Band-aid and scrounged around in my wallet as the train moved on. I knew I had one! I started to look, and then stopped because it felt really ridiculous. But then I started looking again. I found one of those square Band-aid patches. I hesitated. What the heck is he going to think? But then, without saying a word, I rather meekly leaned forward around the passenger sitting between us and offered him the bandage. The biggest smile beamed across

his face and he took it...he was also very surprised.

MAN

Thank you. Thank you very much [*He applies the band-aid to the wound. He gets off at the next stop and as he leaves, he steps over in front of CHRISTINA and smiles.*] Thank you very much.

Scene 38

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

One day she meets STEPHEN MCDONOUGH, one of BOB's Park Street corner friends - he is a lawyer. They all become friends and visit most weekday mornings on BOB's corner.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Dear Sue, Mr. McDonough often sports a different hat every time I see him. He had known my Park Street Church friend for some time now. My new friend was always very formal with names - Mr. This or Mrs. That. Anyway, while it was hard for him to do, he would also usually stand up, and lean against the church wall for balance, out of respect when Mr. McDonough approached. Sometimes he would do that for me, too, but he said his feet often hurt too much.

Mr. McDonough said, "Hi, Bob," as he greeted him. What a dunce! I never thought to ask Bob's name, and I never introduced myself to him either for that matter. But I was glad now to know it and to also let him know mine. Bob introduced him to me; I introduced myself as Chris. So now we all knew each other's names.

Mr. McDonough had known Bob and had been helping him for a couple of years, often with significant essentials. Sometimes he coached Bob on how to approach "the system" to advocate for himself, but Bob always made up an excuse about why he didn't follow-up on Mr. McDonough's advice. Bob told me that he was a lawyer and worked just down the street in Government Center.

Scene 39

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

CHRISTINA's donation today is SUE's \$10 gift card to a bagel shop just around the corner. CHRISTINA did the errand for her.

CHRISTINA

Morning, BOB. How goes it?

BOB

Mornin' Sunshine!

CHRISTINA

OK, so my friend, SUE, and I were talking and I told her about what you said ... about the gift card and all. So she wanted me to give you this card to this restaurant [*pointing*] it's that bagel place just over around the corner. They serve lunch there, too.

BOB

I thank you kindly. Tell me who is SUE again?

CHRISTINA

She's a friend of mine...she's one of the people who helped me when I was going through a hard time in my life - she's kind of a mentor, too. Everyone she knows will tell you that she's their best friend. I talk with her a lot, and I got to talking to her about you and your situation and she really wants to help. So she asked me to give you the card. She wondered if there was anything else you might need.

BOB

[*He thinks for a few moments*]

Ya know ... in the Army Navy store they have these lined jeans...don't cost too much. I could sure use a pair of them. Waist is 36 and length is 34. Tell her I said thank you.

Scene 40

INT. BAGEL SHOP IN BOSTON - LATE MORNING

BOB spends close to the whole gift card on just a sandwich and a drink. He is duly frustrated.

Scene 41

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

BOB is talking with CHRISTINA a couple of days later.

BOB

[FADE IN, *dialog begins after BOB and CHRISTINA have been talking a while*] Oh, just so you know, I spent close to the whole \$10 gift card on lunch the other day. It's out-RAGE-ous to charge that much for a sandwich. I usually get by on \$3 a day. And it's not that I'm ungrateful, but that's crazy to spend that kind of money on lunch. So, maybe if you want to give a gift card to a homeless person, give 'em a card from a supermarket so they can get what they need.

CHRISTINA

OK...well, that makes better sense. Yeah ... I'll talk to Sue about that. That's great...thanks. Hey, I'm late today, and I've got to get to work now. Take care!

Scene 42

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

As CHRISTINA approaches BOB on the corner, instead of his usual friendly greeting, today he is rather challenging. He begins speaking abruptly, without saying "Hello" first.

BOB

I'm afraid of people like you. You're here one day and then gone the next."

CHRISTINA

[*She is puzzled by this sudden change in attitude and is defensive. She is frank with*

him.] Look, I had a couple of difficult times in my life, and people helped me out - some even without my asking because they knew how hard it was to ask. Some had been "there" before themselves. I just want to help out if I can. I probably have less than half of a quarter of an *inkling* about living through what you've had to live through. [*She pauses*] I also know that sometimes just having someone there and letting me talk things out was all I needed to keep going until things somehow worked out.

The scene continues with BOB and CHRISTINA talking. Folks pass by and flip coins into BOB's cigar box, or kids wave to him. Bob's demeanor changes and he withdraws from his offensive.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

I remember a time when I was newly separated, working full-time in Boston and commuting and taking care of my son who was just a toddler. While we had a roof over our heads, I remember a wintry Saturday and I had to go food shopping. Because "ends" didn't quite meet then either - and I still feel guilty about it - I counted out twelve dollars in pennies, dimes and nickels from my son's piggy bank to buy some food until next payday. I didn't know how to ask for what I needed then - and I actually still have trouble doing that now.

Scene 43

EXT. CORNER OF PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - MORNING

BOB is writing in his journal.

BOB [VOICE OVER]

Bob's NEWEST Top Ten Wish List

Number 10. Clothes for me: 34-36 waist, 16.5-33 shirt, 7.45 hat, 40 coat.

Number 9. People willing to try to help the homeless, most are willing, they just don't know how.

Number 8. Dentist: I am tired of my food coming through a straw.

Still Number 7: Ruby Slippers: click, click, "There's no place like home."

Number 6. A tiny recorder with tapes: This experience must be documented. (A cheap unit will not last out here.)

Number 5. To be treated with RESPECT: most homeless are real people, just blindsided.

Number 4. FOOD: This is more important than money. If I get too much, I can feed others.

Number 3. Smiles and hello's as you walk by. Some days this is all that keeps me going.

Number 2. Clean, warm, home.

And now, Number 1 - HOPE, not Dispare

Scene 44

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

It's another day and CHRISTINA approaches BOB on his corner. He's forgotten he's already told her the rattle snake joke.

BOB

One rattle snake was talking to another one and asked, "Are we poisonous?" The other rattler said, "Yes, we are." The first snake said, "Uh, oh!" and the second said, "What's the matter?" to which the first one replied, "I just bit my tongue!"

CHRISTINA

[With another wry smile - just like the time when she first heard it] Yeah, Bob, I think I've heard that one before. How are things?

BOB

[Lighting a cigarette] Oh...fair to mid-land, I'd say. Feet hurt. *[Stops speaking abruptly to point out a hawk circling above a building]*

across the street] Oh, hey, will you look at him. That's a red-tailed hawk ... he's been around a lot lately.

CHRISTINA

[Looking up at the hawk flying around, she finally remembers SUE's gift for BOB.] Oh, hey, I almost forgot...Sue asked me to bring these to you. [She produces a bag from her back pack with two pairs of lined L. L. Bean jeans.]

BOB

[Very surprised and very thankful] Well, I'll be! Please give her my thanks...that was very kind of her.

CHRISTINA

I sure will... Hey, I gotta run, I'm late for work. [She begins walking away.]

BOB

So what is it that you actually do for work?

CHRISTINA

[*Adjusting her backpack*] Oh...I work at the state health department on the obesity prevention program. We do stuff like recommending changes that schools can make in what they offer kids to eat while they're at school. Stuff like that.

BOB

Ya know, when I was in the hospital once for my diabetes, they had to give me insulin like four times a day to get my sugar controlled. But after they gave me - ya know - food, good food to eat while I was there, I didn't need so much insulin. Funny...if they'd just feed people maybe they'd stay out of the hospital.

CHRISTINA

[*Sighs*] You know, Bob...that's absolutely right... [*Hesitating*] Hey ...sorry, I really gotta go. See you next time.

BOB

[He calls out as she is walking away] Hey, you know what you can do with all the fat people? Send 'em to me. I'll take care of 'em! [Chorus of "Lipid Blues" plays as she walks away]

JIM O'CONNELL [ON CAMERA]

[Information about health care and "housing first"]

Scene 45

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

As CHRISTINA approaches BOB at his corner one morning, without saying anything, he fishes around in his bag and produces a "coupon" which he has designed by hand. He reads it to her.

BOB

I would like to make a presentation. Here... it says, "Notice to Bearer: Should I, Homeless Bob, arrive at Heaven's gate before you, you may cut in front of me." And then, "Notice to St. Pete (AKA Gatekeeper): The bearer of this pass has ex-CELLED in treating the homeless with respect. Signed by Homeless Bob, Homeless by Fire."

CHRISTINA receives the award from him and is stunned, stares at it, looks back at Bob and then back at the "note".

Scene 46

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

INSERT TITLE CARD: August 2006

It's the Friday before the last weekend in August, just before Labor Day. As CHRISTINA crosses the street she sees one of his signs and smiles, as the sign next to him has changed from "SMILE: It's the Law" to "SMILE: It's Friday."

BOB

Good moorr-nin' Sunshine.

CHRISTINA

Hey, BOB. How are things today?

BOB

I got no complaints. It's going to be a beautiful weekend and I'm looking forward to doing some significant girl watching. [*He lights a cigarette and continues.*] Oh, hey, you don't want to miss the sand castles this weekend. They have 'em every year out on Revere Beach, right at the end of the Blue Line. Ya can't miss it. These things are incredible - you gotta go see 'em. Ya know they spray them with hair spray to keep them from falling apart. [*He takes a drag from his cigarette, then stands up and greets MR. MCDONOUGH as he approaches.*] Mister Mc-DON-ah! Good morning.
 [*They talk for a while on the corner. Dissolve into Scene 48*]

Scene 47

EXT. SAND CASTLE EXHIBIT ON REVERE BEACH - DAYTIME

Camera pans scenes of the sand castle exhibit as Verse 1 of "Sand Castles" is played.]

Scene 48 (Optional)

EXT. CORNER OF ARLINGTON AND BEACON STREETS - DAYTIME

INSERT TITLE CARD: Mid-October 2006

CHRISTINA walks out from the Public Garden to the corner of Beacon and Arlington Streets and stops dead in her tracks as right before her on that corner is a metal sculpture of an angel watching over the gardens.

Scene 49

EXT. CORNER OF PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - MORNING

INSERT TITLE CARD: Late November 2006

It's raining and snowing. CHRISTINA approaches BOB.

CHRISTINA

BOB! You're here today! You're never here on Mondays - and it's such a lousy day to be out. I was going to take the Green Line because I didn't think you'd be here - but then I thought that you might be, and well...

BOB

Yeah...well I got hungry.

CHRISTINA

Oh, before I forget, here are a couple of gift cards from SUE and me for the week.

BOB

I thank you kindly. Tell Sue, too, will you? [*CHRISTINA nods yes and smiles.*] And will ya listen to that trumpet over there [*pointing to the Salvation Army volunteer on the corner across the street*]. I much pree-fer the small bells they usually ring. What happened to them?

CHRISTINA

Yeah, me too.

BOB

[*Winking at CHRISTINA*] And I hear bells every time I see you. [*Quickly changing the subject*] Hey, would you do me a favor? [*Before CHRISTINA has a chance to say "yes" he continues.*] Could you go over to the coffee shop over there and get me a cup of ice? Sometimes it helps. They usually charge me for it.

CHRISTINA

Ice? That's all you want? Don't you want some coffee or something to eat? I'm happy to get it for you.

BOB

No, just the ice is fine. Chewing on it helps. You're doing enough.

CHRISTINA crosses the street to get the ice. When she gets back to the church, the Salvation Army soldier is now ringing a bell.

CHRISTINA

[Handing BOB the cup of ice and nodding toward the much sweeter music of the tiny bell playing in the falling snow] That's better. Hey it's late...I've got to get to work. Take care!

Scene 50

INT. RED LINE "T" CAR - MORNING

Christina writes an email to SUE over the following scene:

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Today I saw this rather sporty looking, middle-aged man sitting directly across from me. He wore dark glasses and a navy blue baseball cap with an air force emblem. On the floor in front of him, he had a gym bag, an insulated lunch bag and a yellow plastic shopping bag of wrapped holiday gifts. He sat very straight and tall across from me on the end seat and took up half the seat next to him as well. His long legs sprawled outward, cradling his stuff on the floor, made it hard for anyone to sit next to him. I couldn't tell if "Sports Guy" was sleeping, staring at me or gazing out the window. He was absolutely motionless.

Then a pigeon that was on the platform, contemplating whether or not it should hop on for a ride, walks through one door, passes right between me and the snoozer, then walks down to the other end of the car and exits through another door. Sports Guy stares ahead

and doesn't move a muscle. He is definitely sleeping. He is totally oblivious.

Then in walk a man and a woman - and you just KNOW they're together. Both were about four feet eleven inches tall by two feet wide (they looked like square people), wearing different versions of army camouflage uniforms, complete with hats and boots: one wore the traditional green, brown and black fatigues, the other had on the kind a soldier would wear if he or she were serving in a desert, in shades of brown and beige. They sit down together simultaneously and their feet do not touch the floor. They do not speak to each other and stare ahead as the doors to the car close and the train begins its journey.]

Scene 51

INT. SUBURBAN COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

CHRISTINA and SUE are meeting again for coffee.

SUE

Chris, you've got to start a journal and write these things down. I can see all these scenes you write to me in your emails. Oh, before I forget it, here is the gift card to give to Bob and here's some more money to give out to anyone else you see who needs it.

[CHRIS takes the card and envelope of cash.]

Scene 52

EXT. OUTSIDE GRANARY BURIAL GROUND, TREMONT STREET - MORNING

CHRISTINA is walking to work and passes a solo jazz saxophonist playing outside the burial ground.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

It was ironic. A jazzed-up version of "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen" was being played by a lone saxophonist standing on the sidewalk just in front of the iron bars of the Old Granary Burial Ground. The tones of the sax were a haunting indictment with something of an "in-

your-face" quality. Some days in the city it's hard to prevent the sinking desperation and helplessness that I feel when I see so many poor souls that have been left to wander these streets. BOB wasn't there this morning or the last two mornings for that matter. I think he's having more trouble with his feet. Prayers for "comfort and joy" for all these souls!

Scene 53

EXT. CORNER OF PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - MORNING

As the scene opens, BOB has been talking with CHRISTINA.

BOB

So Mr. McDonough gave me these boots last year...keep my feet nice 'n warm. I put those hand warmers in there with some thick socks he gave me, too. [*He lights a cigarette*] Mr. McDonough wants to give me a new winter coat, but I told him "no" cause he's done so much already. [*Takes a drag from his cigarette*] Hey would you do me a favor again - would you go across the street and get me some ice?

Scene 54

INT. CITY COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

CHRISTINA is across the street in the coffee shop. This time, she asks for the ice and is charged 83 cents for it. She is noticeably surprised. As she leaves the coffee shop, she hands out some extra money SUE gave her to a couple of other fellows outside the store holding cups for donations.

Scene 55

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - EVENING

CHRISTINA is making a journal entry. A full moon is shining through the window. She pauses to look out her window and then back at the PC and continues typing.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

The hickory tree in my front yard blocked the light of the nearly full moon perched in the

star-studded December sky, casting its stark silhouette on the snow. I wonder if Bob would be warm this night.

Scene 56

EXT. CORNER OF PARK AND TREMONT STREETS - MORNING

BOB and CHRISTINA have been talking on the corner for a while.

BOB

[FADE IN]...Hey, would you mind ...

CHRISTINA

[Interrupting him and pulling out a bag of ice from her back pack] Oh, wait a minute...would you like some ice? I brought you some.

BOB

What are you, psychic or something? [Takes the bag and pops a square morsel into his mouth] Is this gourmet ice? Bottled water is one of the biggest rip-offs... Thank you.

CHRISTINA

It's just from home. I put some in a plastic bag to keep my lunch cold. I gotta get to work, but I'll see you next time...

BOB [Interrupting]

...you know how to work the Internet, right?

CHRISTINA

Sure.

BOB

I was just wondering [*lights a cigarette and takes a drag*]...I had this friend once. Man, she was somethin' else. Yeah, so I was thinking ... I heard you can find all sorts of people with the Internet, and I wondered if you could see if you could try to find her for me. I used to call her Jen-Jen, but her name is Jenny, Jenny Turner. She used to live in Natick, but I haven't seen her since we were together years ago. Man, it's several decades now since I saw her. [*Takes a drag on his*

cigarette.] Is that something you think you could do?

CHRISTINA

[*Hesitantly*] Well...I'm not really good at that...I guess I could give it a try. Yeah, OK, I'll try, but I can't promise anything. And I gotta go now...

Scene 57

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - EVENING

CHRISTINA is doing an Internet search to see if she can find Jenny Turner. She finds a few names, but they don't match any of the clues that Bob gave her. She has no luck.

Scene 58

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

Scene opens as CHRISTINA and BOB have been talking.

CHRISTINA

...so I tried to do a search but I'm afraid I came up empty. Like I said, I'm something of a Luddite and not good with that high-tech stuff.

Scene 59

INT. RED LINE "T" - LATE AFTERNOON

INSERT TITLE CARD: Summer 2007

It is a hot summer day. CHRISTINA is riding home on the train.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

OK, so today I looked up I saw people standing fiddling with IPODs. Everyone looked like they were plugged in to something. Some were defying the laws of physics by not holding on to anything and expecting to stay upright when the train lurched to a sudden stop. Heads bobbed in their books and newspapers, or snoozes, and exposed everything from crooked-parted coiffures [why can't people part their hair in

a straight line anymore!?] to shiny, balding, bronzed brows. One "do" on one young woman's head also seemed to defy gravity and to be permanently subjected to a stiff breeze - like the ones that I've heard about in Aruba. It was combed over and "glued" so that it stuck out sideways, sweeping from left to right. I thought it was important that she sat on the train with her head going in the right direction or one might get somewhat disoriented when looking at her.

And then there are all these toes! I think one of the things I hate more than I hate these hazy, hot, humid summer days is the look of toes - mine and everyone else's! They're everywhere here!

[The song, "Toes," is played over shots of commuters wearing various styles of footwear described in the song.]

Scene 60

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

After a few days of not showing up, BOB is sitting on his black milk crate in his usual spot. STEPHEN MCDONOUGH is talking with him. CHRISTINA crosses the street and joins them.

BOB

Hi Chris. You remember Mr. McDonough.

CHRISTINA

Yes, of course. Hi.

[VOICE OVER the scene of them chatting]

He was the one with the hats.

[Dialog continues]

STEPHEN MCDONOUGH

[Sticking his nose in the air and in a mocking, upper-crusty accent, says] I wonder what sort of chapeau I should wear for the yachting event in Maah-blehead next weekend.

BOB

[Teasing, singing]

"You're so vain..." [All laugh together]

CHRISTINA

Bob, it's good to see you this morning...where ya been? I haven't seen you in the last few days.

BOB

I've been under the weather ... just wanted to lay low for a while. But I'm better now. I'm going out on the boat with Mr. McDonough on Saturday.

STEPHEN MCDONOUGH

Right...and I've got to get going to work now.

CHRISTINA

Oh, look at the time. So do I.

CHRISTINA and STEPHEN turn to walk up Tremont Street together.

Scene 61

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

INSERT TITLE CARD: November 2007

BOB and CHRISTINA have been visiting again on the corner...

BOB

Ya know, I've been out here some 12 years or so now, and I've seen how people adopt the homeless. I don't begrudge this for others, but no one had ever "adopted" me. Actually I don't like the word "adopted." But, anyway, I don't know how to put it into words, but since Stephen - Stephen McDonough - and people like you and Sue came along...well, I feel cared for.

CHRISTINA

Bob ... you're a good person, too, and you count in this world as much as anyone else. And, like I told you before, people helped me

out once and I just want to give back. I don't ever want to forget that "patchwork time" of my life when I was piecing everything together.

BOB

[*BOB lights a cigarette*] It's been real cold these last few nights. Someone from the church here gave me some long underwear, but I don't need it 'cause I've been sleeping in these lined jeans that Sue gave me for the last three days and nights...keeps me extra warm. Every three days I wash 'em out in the tub. I found this room I can stay in sometimes. It's small and you could fly a kite in it...you could say it's a bit ba-REE-zy.

CHRISTINA

Are you planning to go to a Thanksgiving dinner somewhere this week? I know there are a bunch of places, and...

BOB

Nope...you won't catch me at any of those. I'm planning on being "M-I-A." I don't like having to go to them and would rather just be alone for the day.

CHRISTINA

Yeah, I know what you mean...sometimes I feel like that too.

Scene 62

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

INSERT TITLE CARD: Summer 2008

CHRISTINA and STEPHEN arrive at BOB's corner simultaneously; he is absent and they wonder where he is and what might have happened.

Scene 63

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

CHRISTINA and STEPHEN meet on the corner. Bob is not there.

STEPHEN

OK, so this is three days in a row now. He told me he sometimes stays in an upstairs room at the *Shipwreck Lounge*, it's some dive in Revere.

CHRISTINA

Hmm. Aptly named. I'll try to get a number and see what I can find out.

STEPHEN

He says the owner's name is Blackie - also probably aptly named.

SPOKESPERSON [ON CAMERA]

[Defining who "the homeless" are, how some collect enough for a room for a couple of days, or sleep on the floor or the couch with friends or relatives for a time and then move on...]

Scene 64

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - LATE THAT AFTERNOON AFTER WORK

CHRISTINA finishes a call with someone at the *Shipwreck* bar.

CHRISTINA

OK, thanks anyway. If you ever do see him again, can you just let him know that Chris called asking after him...yeah...thanks.

Scene 65

INT. STEPHEN MCDONOUGH'S OFFICE - A FEW DAYS LATER, MORNING

STEPHEN

[*Phone rings and he answers. He is surprised to hear it's BOB*] Bob...where are you?

BOB

I'm at the Mass "Gen-i-tal" Hospital ... they said I'd be here a few more days. I got this thing with my kidneys...ya know, 'cause of the diabetes and everything. Tell Chris, will ya?

Scene 66

INT. CHRISTINA'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

CHRISTINA and STEPHEN are on the phone. STEPHEN is speaking.

STEPHEN

... Yeah ... so, then we have to step up this application process. I have the form for that assisted living facility that I told you about, and I'll make the time to meet with him this week. I can take him to breakfast and complete it with him.

CHRISTINA

That's awesome...he'll probably be more comfortable with you helping him. He really respects you. But, please let me know if there's anything I can do to help.

STEPHEN

OK. I'll get this done this week.

Scene 67

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

BOB is back on his corner sitting in a wheelchair. CHRISTINA approaches him.

CHRISTINA

Hey, Bob...it's good to see you. We missed seeing you last week. How are you?

BOB

Aw...just fair I guess. Doctors want to take some of my toes. I'm not lettin' 'em. [*STEPHEN MCDONOUGH approaches*] Mister McDonough! Nice to see you. Sorry, but I'm not gettin' up ... feet are bothering me today.

STEPHEN

No problem, Bob...Hi Chris. [To CHRISTINA]
Hey, Bob and I were able to get that
application over to Hearth and he's completed
the interview. We should hear back any day now.

Scene 68

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - EVENING

INSERT TITLE CARD: October 2008

CHRISTINA is writing in her journal.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Bob had a couple more long hospital
confinements for complications from diabetes.
We took turns visiting him at the hospital
after work. But then, fortunately, STEPHEN had
been successful in expediting the housing
approval. He moved Bob from his hospital room
to a furnished studio apartment in an assisted
living facility in Roxbury.

ANNA BISSONNETTE [ON CAMERA]

[Information on Ruggles Assisted Living Center;
describes Hearth's model]

Scene 69

INT. BOB'S ROOM AT RUGGLES HOUSE - EVENING

BOB is talking on the phone with CHRISTINA.

BOB

Ya know Chris, I wake up at night now and I'm
in a bed with clean sheets and it's warm, and I
still can't get used to it. But, my laundry is
done and they wash my dishes, too. But it's
hard to call it home just now ... I'm just
hoping they don't kick me out...Yeah...OK...
yeah, I'll see you then.

Scene 70

EXT. SILVERLINE BUS STOP ON TREMONT STREET, BOSTON - MORNING

BOB is getting off the bus.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Bob takes the new Silver Line bus and still "commutes" to Park Street Church - to see the regulars. But now he only puts out the sign that says: "Smile: It's the Law!"

Scene 71

INT. BOB'S STUDIO APARTMENT AT RUGGLES - MORNING

SARAH, the nurse, brings in his meds for the day. She knocks on the door and opens it.

SARAH

Good morning, Mr. Wright. I'm dropping off your meds for today. I'll leave them here on the counter.

BOB

'Mornin' Sarah. Thanks.

SARAH

Oh, and the van will be here to pick you up to go for your appointment in about 15 minutes. Is there anything you need before I go?

BOB

No...thank you kindly. Got everything I need.

Scene 72

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING AT 7 A.M.

CHRISTINA has some sad news to share with BOB.

CHRISTINA

Hey, BOB...how goes it today?

BOB

Ugh...my feet hurt. [*He lights a cigarette. One of his fellow "unhoused" friends walks up to him while they're talking. He is looking for a match. It takes a number of tries since the wind is strong today and keeps blowing out the match. He is finally successful and the fellow walks away.*]

CHRISTINA

Hey, Bob, I have some hard news that I have to tell you.

BOB

Yeah...what is it.

CHRISTINA

Sue's been pretty sick lately...she didn't let a lot of people know about it. I guess she wanted to live life on her own terms. She had had cancer some 30 years ago and said the treatment she had for it was really horrific. She hasn't gone back to a doctor since. But, she said she made a bargain with God to let her live long enough to see her children grow up. Her kids are all married now, and some have kids of their own. So I guess that's just what she did. She went to the hospital over the weekend and she died on Monday.

BOB

[*BOB is unexpectedly outraged at the news. He stands up leaning on his cane, walks around and whips his arm around in the air as if punching it.*] Shit...see...everyone keeps leaving me! They all leave me! They just leave me! Ya can't trust anyone...! Shit...they just leave me.

CHRISTINA

[*Interrupting him*] Bob!! Bob, listen! She didn't die to leave you! She was very, very sick. She didn't do it to leave you. She was just very sick.

BOB

[Calms down some, sits down and lights a cigarette.] Yeah...OK. [Takes a drag]
Yeah...OK.

Scene 73

INT. HOSPITAL TREATMENT ROOM - MORNING, DECEMBER 24, 2008

INSERT TITLE CARD: December 24, 2008

It is Wednesday, Christmas Eve day. CHRISTINA is sitting on an exam table, waiting in a treatment room at the hospital with a close friend who has come with her. A nurse stands by. The doctor enters, carrying her chart and puts it down on the counter. He then puts his hand on her shoulder and gives her the verdict. It is direct, but not without compassion.

DOCTOR

CHRISTINA, this is breast cancer. [*CHRISTINA reacts immediately, but he continues.*] We discussed the case at yesterday's tumor board. The cancer is contained, and while there's an outside chance we may be able to treat it successfully with a lumpectomy and radiation, we all feel the most effective treatment for this really needs to be a total mastectomy. It's because of how extensive it is and where's it's located. My colleague, Dr. Allison at Faulkner, has agreed that this would be the best treatment for your cancer.

CHRISTINA

[*As her friend comforts her, she tries to regain some composure*] OK, so what do I do...I need to know what this is, I need to know all I can about it ... and ... what can I do? [Scene fades as MD counsels her.]

Scene 74

INT. ROOM AT RUGGLES ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - MID-AFTERNOON

The next day, Christmas day, CHRISTINA visits BOB at his apartment. When she arrives STEPHEN is already there, and BOB has the NASA channel on the TV. They give BOB a DVD player and some DVDs that they have purchased together as a gift for

him. CHRISTINA also brought him a homemade turkey dinner; he puts it in the refrigerator.

They all sit down for a visit...after they've been visiting for a while, CHRISTINA tells BOB and STEPHEN the news.

CHRISTINA

OK...so...there's never a good time to tell you this, but I need to tell you both. I just learned that I have breast cancer and...

BOB

[Interrupting and visibly angry, yelling at the world] See what did I tell you - they always leave me! What did I...

CHRISTINA

[Interrupting him, leaning over in her chair to reach out to him] Bob! Listen, Bob! Bob, I'm not going anywhere. I'm still going to be here. I'm not going anywhere. *[BOB calms down and realizes what he has said.]* The doctor said it's early and it's treatable, but I have to be home for a while after the surgery - like six weeks or so. But we can talk on the phone, and I'll write, too.

BOB

Yeah...OK. I need a cigarette. Let's go out back.

They go out to the patio in the back of the center so BOB can have a cigarette. It's a warm December day, and they sit outside until he finishes his smoke. There is a cat that lives outside and some of the residents have put together a make-shift shelter for him in a cardboard box. They laugh at the cat's antics.

CHRISTINA

[After they sit a while] Well, I need to get going. I'll be around during January if you're still going to Park Street; I can see you then. But you can also call...you have my number.

BOB

Yeah. And I'm still going to the church. It's actually easy to get there on the Silver Line bus from here. It's not for the same reason anymore but I really miss the kids and "the regulars." I gotta see 'em.

Scene 75

INT. RUGGLES ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - LATE WINTER MORNING

INSERT TITLE CARD: March 2009

BOB closes the door to his apartment after picking up his mail. He has a card from CHRISTINA which he opens and reads before adding it to a collection of note cards that he has displayed on two rawhide shoe laces that hang from a couple of nails on the wall.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

Hi Bob. I'm going back to work in two weeks. I wanted to come in this Saturday afternoon for a visit. I'll call you and let you know what time.

Scene 76 (Optional)

EXT. RUGGLES ASSISTED LIVING CENTER - MORNING

INSERT TITLE CARD: June 2009

BOB is sitting on the bench outside Ruggles House waiting for his ride to another medical appointment. SARAH, an aid at Ruggles House, is waiting with him and helps him into the van that has come to pick him up. The van drives off.

Scene 77

INT. COMMON KITCHEN, RUGGLES HOUSE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

BOB is rolling out pie dough in the Ruggles House common kitchen and assembling the pie...later he takes it out of the oven and places it on the prep table to let it cool.

Scene 78

INT. COMMON DINING AREA, RUGGLES HOUSE - DINNER TIME

All of the Ruggles House residents are finishing up dinner when BOB proudly produces his homemade blueberry pie for all of them to enjoy. Surprise and smiles all around, as the staff affirm his generosity.

Scene 79

INT. MEDICAL EXAM ROOM - MORNING

INSERT TITLE SLIDE: July 2009

A doctor is talking with BOB.

PHYSICIAN

Mr. Wright I wish I could give you better news...the fact of the matter is that your kidneys are no longer functioning as they should. I know we've talked about this before as a possible complication with your diabetes; I'm afraid we're at that place now. [*Bob starts to become agitated.*] And we talked before about your diet. It's going to be more important than ever that you follow the meal plan we gave you, and by all means no alcohol. Your kidneys just can't handle that.

BOB

So ...I gotta keep coming here like two or three times a week to stay alive? Depend on some machine? What kind of life is that?

PHYSICIAN

Mr. Wright, I'm sorry, but this is our only option right now.

The scene closes with BOB and the PHYSICIAN continuing the conversation. BOB is noticeably frustrated.

Scene 80

EXT. LIQUOR STORE WINDOW - AFTERNOON

Bob is walking to get the Silver Line bus back to his apartment. He passes a liquor store on the way, looks in the window and hesitates for a moment. Then he walks on.

Scene 81

EXT. CORNER OUTSIDE PARK STREET CHURCH - MORNING 7 A.M.

BOB is sitting on his milk crate outside Park Street Church talking with CHRISTINA. He gets up abruptly, grabs his cane, and hobbles over to help a blind person with a white cane navigate the Park Street crosswalk, and then returns to his post. A member of the Thursday morning group walks up to him and gives him \$20. Scene fades as CHRISTINA says good-bye.

Scene 82

EXT. LIQUOR STORE WINDOW - LATE MORNING

Another day Bob walks to the Silver Line bus stop, again passing the liquor store. He stops and thinks for a minute and turns to go inside as the scene fades.

Scene 82-A

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT - MIDNIGHT

With just the light from the outside streetlight shining in, BOB is reclining on his bed, leaning against two pillows and holding an empty glass. He stares at exactly nothing in particular. There is a half-empty bottle of vodka next to him on the night stand. He reaches over, picks up the bottle and pours some in the glass and puts the bottle back on the night stand. While still staring ahead, he lifts the glass slowly to his mouth and drinks half of it. We see him rest the glass on his thigh while still holding it. Moments later the remaining contents of the glass are spilled onto the bed and the glass falls to the floor as it is released from a now lifeless hand. BOB slumps over to one side. He is dead.

Scene 82-B

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOME - AFTERNOON

CHRISTINA has been crying. She sits down at her dining room table, looks up a phone number, dials and then begins to speak with RACHEL.

RACHEL

[Fade-in over their conversation; RACHEL is speaking] Well there are some restrictions at the cemetery. The state agency that oversees these burials has a regulation that prevents the public from going to the gravesite itself. But, like you, I don't want to let Bob's passing go unnoticed. I've been able to make arrangements for some of us to go and offer a short graveside remembrance at the cemetery. It will be near the place where he'll be buried. I'll talk with your pastor about the details. We can do this on the 20th. Why don't you plan to call the office next week for final details and to get directions. *[Fade-out as CHRISTINA continues to listen on the phone.]*

Scene 82-C

INT. CHRISTINA'S OFFICE - THE NEXT WEEK, MORNING

CHRISTINA is on the phone and has just called RACHEL'S office to get directions for the graveside burial.

CHRISTINA

Hi. My name's Christina Nordstrom, and I'm calling for directions to the cemetery for a service tomorrow at 10 o'clock for Robert Wright and I...

CEMETERY ATTENDANT

[Interrupting and speaking aggressively] You can't go there. They don't let the public go. You're not allowed to go.

CHRISTINA

But I spoke with RACHEL last week and the arrangements have been made and...

CEMETERY ATTENDANT

[Interrupting] No...you can't go. It's a rule and the public can't go. You're not allowed to.

CHRISTINA

[She is on the verge of tears] OK, listen, would you please let me speak directly to RACHEL.

CEMETERY ATTENDANT

Yeah, wait a minute...she's here in her office.

RACHEL

[CHRISTINA stays on the line and after a minute she is relieved to hear RACHEL'S voice]
Hello, Christina.

CHRISTINA

Hi. I'm a bit puzzled. I must have asked the wrong person in your office about the arrangements for tomorrow. They said I couldn't go, that the public isn't allowed to go.

RACHEL

[Reassuringly] Please don't worry, Christina, everything is still all set. I probably hadn't spoken to *enough* people about it and my staff didn't have all the information about this special case. As I told you we can't go to the actual gravesite where he will be buried, but we can have our service in the cemetery near there; that's what's been arranged. *[Fade-out as they continue their conversation]*

Scene 83

EXT. FAIR VIEW CEMETERY - LATE MORNING

INSERT TITLE SLIDE: August 2009

Christina and Stephen, with the pastor from Christina's church, participate in a graveside time of remembrance.

CHRISTINA *[VOICE OVER]*

There were no dignitaries there in the cemetery that morning, save for the ridge of distinguished evergreens keeping watch on the rise in the distance. A simple, stark, roughly constructed plywood box rested in front of us on the grass. The word "OPEN" was written with a black marker on one end with an arrow pointing toward that word. As we stood together on the grounds of Fair View Cemetery in Hyde Park under an azure August sky, the morning mist filtered through an opening in the trees where we could see the Blue Hills dressed in summer's finery. A red-tailed hawk - a fellow mourner - circled in the sky above.

As the temperature rose steadily toward 90 degrees, a handful of us shared memories of a friend who not two weeks ago passed away during the night at the age of 59. The only comfort was that for the last year and a half of his life he was housed and cared for in Hearth's assisted living center.

For the unenlightened who passed him by each work day on the corner of Park and Tremont Streets in Boston, he was invisible; he was just another guy looking for a handout, living among society's forgotten. But, to those lives he touched with his kindness and hard-earned wisdom, he left an unforgettable legacy, not the least of which included his admonition: "SMILE: It's the Law!"

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides a small stipend for burial services for the poor in what is known as the "Lot for the City Poor." There, in their final resting place, further insult is added to injury as they are assured of being forgotten - there is no accommodation to place a stone on their graves. There's just a number placed on the ground with a name on a corresponding list in the office.

Scene 84

INT. PARK STREET CHURCH VISITORS CENTER - NOON

It is the day after the burial service. A memorial service is being held for BOB in the Park Street Church Visitors Center.

CHRISTINA

After BOB's passing, we arranged for a memorial service to be held in the Park Street Church visitors' center. STEPHEN and I thought there would either be just two of us or the place would be packed. Well, packed it was. Friends, who came to know Bob as they walked to work each weekday morning, as well as church-goers who had befriended, and who *had been befriended* by Bob Wright packed the Visitor Center at Park Street Church for the noontime service. Bob's obituary took up one-third of a page in the August 16th Sunday *Boston Globe Metro* section along with two other distinguished Bostonians.

Scene 85

EXT. UCC CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH GARDEN, NORWELL - MORNING

CHRISTINA is intent on having a permanent marker for BOB. Arrangements were made for a donated marker to be placed in CHRISTINA's home church's memorial garden. Friends gather for a brief service.

CHRISTINA [VOICE OVER]

While we couldn't mark Bob's grave in the cemetery where he was buried, I learned that (not coincidentally) someone from my home church had donated a marker in our church's memorial garden for "anyone who needed it." In the fall during a brief outdoor service of remembrance, an engraved stone - Robert "Bob" Wright 1949-2009 - was placed in the garden near the fountain as church members gathered around. He was remembered.

Scene 86

EXT. CORNER OF TREMONT AND PARK STREETS - MORNING

Pan of Park Street Station, Boston Common and BOB's corner at Park Street Church. CHRISTINA is walking past BOB's corner on her way to work. [Verse 4 of "Peaceable City" is playing]

Scene 87

INT. OFFICE AT HEALTHCARE FOR THE HOMELESS - 2 YEARS LATER

INSERT TITLE SLIDE: Treatment room at City Healthcare for Homeless Adults, 2 years later...

JENNY, now at 61, has been a nurse working for City Healthcare for Homeless Adults for the last 8 years. She is working with an elder homeless woman and assisting the woman in finding housing. JOAN, a colleague, interrupts JENNY while she is with her patient.

JOAN

Jenny, when you get through with Mrs. Adams, I need a consultation if you've got a few minutes.

JENNY

Yeah, sure...I'll be done in about 15 minutes.
[Turns to her patient] OK, let's find you a place to live.

JENNY continues her on-line search and comes across "Hearth's" home page and sees a picture of BOB - much older now, but she recognizes him nonetheless. He is in one of the videos posted there. She is stunned and reads about his story and later learns of his passing after being housed through Hearth.

Scene 88

EXT. CHRISTINA'S MAILBOX - DAYTIME

CHRISTINA finds a card, opens and reads it.

JENNY [VOICE OVER]

Dear Christina. I wondered where he was. Through the strangest of channels that exist in the even stranger universe...I learned about a month ago that he was housed. Today I learned that he had returned. What a magnificent being. I would love to talk with you about him. If you so choose, me in my big, comfortable life. [Signed] Jenny Turner (aka Jen-Jen aka Jenny-O in case he ever referred to me).

Scene 89

EXT. PARK STREET CHURCH, TREMONT STREET, BOSTON

The scene is of Bob packing up his cart and walking away from the corner as the scene fades out. [Final verse of "Angel with an Attitude" is playing over the scene.]

Alternate Scene 89

EXT. PARK STREET CHURCH, TREMONT STREET, BOSTON

The scene is of Bob as an adult standing on the corner of Park and Tremont Streets looking up at the church, and then looking down at little Robert Wright as a child, and holding his hand they walk up Tremont Street as their characters fade away.