

PRINZE

By
Jose Sonera

PRINZE

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PRINZE

for Freddie Prinze Sr.

PRINZE

PRODUCTION HISTORY

PRINZE was produced at the Kraine Theatre (NYC Fringe) in New York City on October 20th, 2017 and then again on December 12th 2017 and April 7th, 2018. It was directed by Melissa Linton; set design by Kurler Warner, lighting design by Weston G. Wetzel; costume by Lisa Montalvo, wig design by J. Jared Janas; the managing artistic director was Erez Ziv; the stage manager was Ashley Brown. The cast was as follow:

Freddie Prinze.....Jose Sonera

PRINZE was also produced at the Sheen Center in New York City on October 25th thru November 18th 2018. It was directed by Melissa Linton; set design by Kurler Warner, lighting design by Lauren Parrish; costume by Lisa Montalvo, wig design by J. Jared Janas; the stage manager was Ashley Brown. The cast was as follow:

Freddie Prinze.....Jose Sonera

PRINZE also participated in the United Solo Theatre Festival on September 21st 2018, where it won the award for Best Comedy and the All About Solo 2018 Critics' Award. It was directed by Melissa Linton; set design by Kurler Warner, costume by Lisa Montalvo, wig design by J. Jared Janas; the stage manager was Ashley Brown. The cast was as follow:

Freddie Prinze.....Jose Sonera

PRINZE was originally workshopped at the All For One theatre company and is now available for streaming on PBS and its new network ALL ARTS.

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Awards

United Solo Theatre Festival 2018 Winner for Best Comedy

All About SOLO Winner for 2018 Critics' Award

Performance

To view the performance, go to:

pbs.org or **allarts.org** and search for the “House Seats” series.

You may also find the performance on – **prinze.weebly.com** – along with additional footage, reviews, pictures and all information regarding PRINZE.

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CHARACTERS

FREDDIE PRINZE.....the young comedic legend in the last year of his life.

Although other characters are called upon and introduced, the play only requires one male actor.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Freddie Prinze Sr. is the only character on stage. He is the young American comedic icon who rose to fame in the 1970's on the hit TV show *Chico & the Man* opposite Jack Albertson. His parents were immigrants making him half Hungarian and half Puerto Rican (a "Hungarican" as he referred to himself) who overcame poverty and racism to achieve Hollywood stardom. Like with many young celebrities who fall victim to the Hollywood lifestyle, Freddie begins to battle his inner demons including depression and a drug addiction that he ultimately loses by taking his own life. Even though Freddie is the main character in the play he often breaks into other characters portraying important figures in his life.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

Although PRINZE deals with one of the last appearances of Freddie Prinze, the performances should be "up-beat" in every way. Joy and humor should be the prevalent emotions felt onstage. This is because comedy was Freddie's salvation. Even when he does a comedy set that's "sad" or "dark" his joy in the act of comedy stand-up should transform the story into a celebration for the audience. The stories he tells should be delivered as if they were the funniest things imaginable. The horror of his life will affect the audience much more if he seems almost oblivious to it himself. An example is the story of his asthma attack where he nearly loses his life. To Freddie, years later this is a testimony of power and encouragement that has made him stronger to deal with life's other challenges including the near loss of his child's birth and his legal troubles with his ex- manager. Stories about his depression, loneliness, health issues and drug addiction should shy in comparison to his biggest pain – the divorce papers with his restraining order. This is by far his greatest tragedy in which he's unable to cope with.

Please note that when a forward slash (/) appears in the dialogue often times Freddie is representing different voices or characters in the story. Also note when indicating an accent Freddie is doing throughout the play (i.e. "Spanish accent"), it is best to refer to his comedy recording performances to really capture the essence in which he performed it and to honor the dialogue as authentically as possible. Furthermore, the structure of his sets were transcribed accordingly in the fashion in which he performed it for authenticity purposes.

SETTING:

The set for PRINZE can be as simple as a bare platform with a chair, table and small sofa (representing "backstage / green room" area) with a microphone on a stand and a high sitting stool for Freddie when he performs stand-up (representing the "IMPROV" center stage). The play should re-create the comedy night club atmosphere along with a "backstage/green room" setting for Freddie to retrieve to in-between sets.

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PLACE:

The action of the play transpires in two separate settings; THE IMPROV (a comedy club founded by Budd Friedman - located in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of New York City on West 44th Street & 9th avenue.) and BACKSTAGE where Freddie retrieves to his dressing room to rest in between comedy acts. Freddie is hosting a comedy special with other comedians.

TIME:

The time of the play is about 10pm on a Saturday night – October 1976. There is no passage of time except that of the performance. It is obviously late in the evening, and it is equally late in Freddie Prinze's life. Three months from now he will die of a self-inflicted gunshot in the UCLA Medical Center on Saturday, January 29th, 1977.

PLAYING TIME:

Depending on the timing of his comedy sets (and audience laughter), the playing time should be approximately 1 hr., 35 min. It should not exceed 1 hr., 45 minutes.

SET LIST

Small couch
Floor rug
Small coffee table (or 2 black boxes)
Garbage bin
Milk Crates (2x)
Small table Chair
Coat rack
Microphone w/ stand

PROP LIST

Envelopes & letters for hate mail (20x)
Ash tray (2x)
Glass picture frame (for cocaine)
Silver case (for cocaine)
Small cocaine glass containers (3x)
Small plastic envelopes (cocaine)
Baby powder (for cocaine)
Cigarette case with cigarettes
Cigarette lighter (2x)
Phone (70's)
Large envelope (divorce paper)
Divorce paper document
Glass & Bottle (for wine & water)
Magazines & Newspapers (from the 70's)
Pill bottles (4x)
Mints (for Quaaludes)
Blank paper & pen (or pencil)
Bible (with verse index card)
Gun (70's)
Silver cross (in pocket)

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SETTING

TIME: October 1976, late in the evening.

PLACE: The IMPROV comedy club in New York City.

SOUND CUE's

Sound Cue #1 (Scene 1) - pre-recorded voice over
Sound Cue #2 (Scene 4) - Pun Pun Catalu by Celia Cruz
Sound Cue #3 (Scene 9) - The Tonight Show entrance music
Sound Cue #4 (Scene 11) - Chico and the Man theme song by Jose Feliciano
Sound Cue #5 (Scene 12) - I feel love by Donna Summer
Sound Cue # 6 (Scene 14) - Gun Shot
Sound Cue # 7 (Scene 15) - Gun Shot
Sound Cue # 8 (Scene 15) - Payaso by Jose Jose

LIGHTING CUE's

Lighting Cue #1 (Scene 1) - Spotlight for "Comedy Club"
Lighting Cue #2 (Scene 2) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #3 (Scene 3) - Spotlight for "Comedy Club"
Lighting Cue #4 (Scene 4) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #5 (Scene 5) - Spotlight for "Comedy Club"
Lighting Cue #6 (Scene 6) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #7 (Scene 7) - Spotlight for "Comedy Club Flashback"
Lighting Cue #8 (Scene 8) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #9 (Scene 9) - Spotlight for "Tonight Show"
Lighting Cue #10 (Scene 10) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #11 (Scene 11) - Light change for "Chico & the Man TV Studio"
Lighting Cue #12 (Scene 12) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #13 (Scene 12) - Light change for "Disco club flashback"
Lighting Cue #14 (Scene 12) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #15 (Scene 13) - Spotlight for "Comedy Club"
Lighting Cue #16 (Scene 14) - Light change for "Backstage"
Lighting Cue #17 (Scene 15) - Fade to black - end of play

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SCENE 1

The IMPROV comedy club in New York City. The Stage is dark. A spotlight hits down center stage and we see a microphone stand along with a sitting stool (typical of a comedians set up).

SOUND CUE #1 - (pre-recorded voice over of Budd Friedman type voice)

V/O: Welcome to the IMPROV comedy club right in the heart of New York. For those of you who are not familiar with the New York's IMPROV, many people have started their careers here including Rodney Dangerfield, Dick Cavett, Richard Pryor, Robert Klein, Jimmy Walker, David Frye, Lily Tomlin and of course the host and the star of the show for this evening. It gives us a great deal of pleasure to welcome the very marvelous talents of Mr. Freddie Prinze.

*FREDDIE PRINZE enters the stage with comedy stand-up set #1
"Washington Heights."*

FREDDIE. Thank you people...thank you...thank you very much. Looking Good! Nice to be back. Last time I was here was last April, and one night I said were there any Puerto Ricans here...right, "all riiight," you see this time we got over. Last time I asked if they're any Puerto Ricans here, one guy ...alone...corsage, no girlfriend...and to add insult upon injury he's sitting near the kitchen. If a bus boy dies they're going to grab him. So I said "Why are you sitting back there" / *(Spanish accent)* "They put me here what you want me to do?" / Typical attitude of Puerto Rican..it's like ah "are those cockroaches..." / *(Spanish accent)* "Yea leave them with me I watch them for you...no problem" / That's why we didn't make it on the 60's. Black people made it in the sixties because they wouldn't take that. Maître d' say, "oh yes of course we have a table, over

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here sir..." / (*black accent*) "No sucka over there!"/ A lot of people think Puerto Ricans are responsible for cockroaches. I wanna clear that up right now. We didn't bring'em here. When we got here they were living in the apartments we live in now. But they're strong. I'm afraid of them, they adapt to any environment. They learn how to talk in my building. They would threaten me before I went out / (*imitation*) "Freddie, where you going? To the grocery store ah? Don't come back with no roach poison or we lock you out..."

(*beat*) I like working here, this is like home you know. Like, I play the road, I played the Fountain Blue in Miami two weeks ago, right...old people. Now I don't want to offend any old people, not like fifty or sixty. I mean Guinness book of world record old. I didn't see a pair of tits higher than here (*pointing to his knee caps*), I swear...even the sharks were going "nah, nah...(covering face), we'll find something in Lauderdale." Cause sharks aren't...you know, I mean...I was out in one of those little one man boat, and the guy says don't go out pass five hundred yards, cause that's where the sharks are. Something about the sea though, makes you forget...and you go out, and I'm out...and all of a sudden I hear the guy go...(faint scream) "Heeeey, Heeeey..." and I see him, he's with a towel going, (*imitating warning with towel*) "six hundred," so I panic and right away I start hearing, (*JAWS theme music*) so I get nuts, right...cause sharks like...you saw the movie, first scene, the girl gets bit she goes "Oh my God, help me..." Nothing! Right then I said, if a shark doesn't want to get involved with God, we're in big trouble, right. That's why Jesus walked the water, you know (*imitation*), cause like you saw the movie, the movie was bigoted. One shark attacking one kind of people in one place. The great white shark attacking wasps in Massachusetts. Imagine them attacking all ethnic groups. Shark attack a black dude / (*black accent*) "Whatcha' want fish face? Swim on sucka! Raggedy ass teeth! Give me a cigarette..." / Puerto Ricans go right for God / (*Spanish accent*) Jesus Kries / Jewish guy would've tried to buy the shark off immediately. No sharks going to attack an Italian / (*Italian accent*) "Hey Vinny, break his fin, (*whistles*)" / Imagine a shark attacking a gay guy, / (*gay impression*) "Go ahead eat me, I don't care...sorry Charlie..."

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(Ends set and begins to introduce the next comedian.)

FREDDIE. Alright, we're gonna have a good time tonight, we're going to introduce the next comic coming up. He's achieved a kind of immortality here at the Improv, Budd named a hamburger after him. He's a former Rolls Royce salesman and he's a good friend of mine (*as an aside*) and a roommate who's wall I damaged with bullet holes, (*explaining*) it was target practice, will you welcome Jay Leno.

Lights up as Freddie goes from "the stage" to "backstage" in what will be considered the "Green Room." He is looking for his pills. He finds documents inside an envelope. He hesitates, he opens them (beat) and then puts them back in.

SCENE 2

Freddie is in the "Green Room." He settles in and starts pouring himself a glass of wine. On a nearby table we see lots of magazines (i.e. Tiger Beat) and newspapers along with fan mail and other papers.

FREDDIE. Guys thank you for coming out tonight, this means a lot to me. We have a great show for you folks tonight with a few comedians and me coming out doing my comedy, it's going to be great. But tonight, we're going to talk, yeah? I'm going to tell you my side of the story. (*Referring to the articles on the table*) None of this bullshit! You've read it, you know it, none of that shit. Tonight, we're going to have a conversation, I'm going to set the record straight. (*Stopping abruptly as he can't find the pills on him, starts looking around the room almost frantically. Murmuring to himself...*) Hold on, where the hell did she put them? They were right here...where is it? I don't see it? Do you see it? CAROL? (*looking, frantically*) It drives me crazy when she moves my shit around. (*Picking up an article from the table*) This drives me crazy, look...(*reading*) Star of Chico and the Man Freddie Prinze gets angry on the set when they question his portrayal of playing a Chicano and almost punches somebody in the face...

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(Stops reading abruptly and after a brief beat he puts the article down.)

No, not tonight. None of that shit tonight. Tonight we're going to set the record straight, I'm telling you my side of the story, the truth! Can we do that? Can we talk? Alriiiiiight! But before we do, where did she put my shit? Where's my shit? *(Continues searching for pills)* I told her to leave my shit right here. Makes me so angry ...but Puerto Rican anger is different right? Like white folks get angry and they sound different. They over annunciate, elongate their vowels / *(impersonating)* "What the HELL, C'mon, I mean really! CRAP! SHIT! / Puerto Ricans, we get angry we get animated. We use our hands a lot, it's like we're conducting something, / *(reenact as if conducting with your hands)* Donde esta Karol? Coño, carajo, pero donde esta?" / Blacks are more confrontational / *(reenact)* "Bitch, where you at?" / Aw c'mon, you gotta laugh. If you don't know how to laugh you don't know how to live. My mom has always said that and she's right, you gotta laugh. Otherwise shit like this will drive you crazy, look...*(Walks over to the table, grabs an article and reads.)* Star of Chico and the Man Freddie Prinze storms off the set. He gets angry when the audience begins to question his portrayal of playing a Chicano. He gets so angry he storms off the set almost punching someone, he punches the wall *(stops reading and reenacts the punch)*. Wow, I punched wall. They wrote it so it must be true. But you see, that's their job. They have to write this shit. They write it, print it, sell it, you buy it, you read it, and they print more and that's the Hollywood machine man that's how it works. But if they were to write something like...*(reading another article)* Freddie does benefit at children's hospital to raise money for sick kids. *(stops reading)* Ehhhh, who gives a shit? But a picture of me with that same kid saying... *(reading again)* The child Freddie Prinze won't admit he has. *(Stops reading)* Ohhh I gotta read about that shit! Take my money, that's good! That's alright, that's the price we gotta pay. They love taking that camera and taking that picture "snap, snap" and printing whatever the hell they want. *(beat)* But, if you come at me with that camera and take that picture "snap, snap" and I go "boom" *(reenact karate punching someone)*, and knock your teeth in, well that's the price you gotta pay, right? Hey you wrote it, you said I punched walls, I punched you motherfucker! We all

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gotta price to pay. You don't think so? Hmm, they don't let you get this rich and famous without a price to pay. They want a piece of my soul, but guess what? Not for sale!

(Looking for Carol) CAROL? Where is Carol? *(looking)*, Carol's is my assistant. She'll be here in a minute, oh she's great. She helps me with my food, my drink, my sleep, my *(miming sex)*, no, no, no, my wife Kathy introduced me to her...*(Takes a moment, thinking...)* My wife, I love my wife, despite whatever you read here *(indicating articles)* I love my wife. Are we having marital issues? Sure, who doesn't, we all got our marital shit right? Anyone here married? *(asking the audience & improvising)* You see no one wants to talk about it! But we all got shit, it's just that I'm a celebrity so my stuff gets highlighted. But we're going to be fine. That's the mother of my child, my soul mate, everything is going to be just fine...*(beat)* Is Jay done? Okay, here's how it's going to work out. We have a great show for you guys tonight. We've got some great comics, I'm going to go out and do my comedy, it's going to be great. But in between comedy acts I'm coming back here and we're going to talk. None of this shit *(indicating the media articles on the table)* but tonight we're going to set the record straight, alright! So, hang tight, enjoy the show and I'll be right back. *(about to exit, but then suddenly comes back)*. Oh, and do me a favor, if you see Carol tell her to leave my shit right here *(points to the coffee table and exits)*

Freddie runs off and goes center stage to perform Comedy Stand-up. Lights down as Freddie goes from "backstage" to "the stage."

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SCENE 3

*Spotlight on Freddie Prinze as he starts his comedy stand-up set #2
"Hangin' with Nat."*

FREDDIE. But there's a code among the muggers and criminals in New York, like no mugger in New York will hit you if you have money at the time of the holdup. Like if they say "stick'em up" and you go "well I'm broke" (*sound "Pop"*), so my mother would give me a dollar a day, criminal money / (*Mom accent*) Freddie if the criminal bother you don't fight give him the money, you can always make more money but never get your life back. / So, this one guy Henry would rob me every day. Yea, I knew him, if he was sick I'd take the money to his house. So, one day it was snowing really hard and I said, well Henry is not going to come out in this weather, and I'm not going to his house so I spent the dollar. Sure enough after school Henry was right out there waiting for me, / (*black accent*) Where's the dollar Fred? / I spent it Henry / (*black accent*) "I'ma tell your mother" / Right as I get home my mother says / (*Mom accent*) Henry call me, you spend his money, POW! /

No fun where I grew up, like...in my neighborhood my best friend was this dude Nat. Black dude who played trumpet and I was in in the band, I played drums and so we were hangin' out and ah...Nat was about 6' 8", but 5 inches of it was his hair and 3 inches was platform. Actually, he was about 6 foot, 6 foot 1 around there. But he look good, he was clean you know...and he initiated me into an all-black gang called the Royal Lords, right...cause I wanted to join, it was the only gang in the neighborhood. They never fought anybody, they just had a gang to have a gang. And the first day they initiated me he said, / (*black accent*) Fred come here...this ain't usual procedure for the Royal Lords, but we're going to take a Puerto Rican in. We've been getting a lot of static, about how we ain't an equal opportunity gang, so we're going to let you in my man. But you gotta get your initiation, and the initiation is ask Ralphy...you see that fella eating the building? Ask Ralphy how his father do the boogaloo." / So me I didn't know better, so Ralphy how does your father do the boogaloo? / (*black*

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accent) "My father ain't got no legs man, I kills you, what's wrong with you sucka'... / It wasn't true as it turned out, but they got me good, right, they 'd put me on...

...and we all went to the same school...and we'd mess with the teachers, like ah...teacher would go, / *(as Teacher)* Ah, Nat could you spell murder for me.../ *(as Nat)* No, but I can demonstrated / and Nat hit me to think, he said black folks when they get mad, their voices goes high and loud, and if he's talking to a girl it goes real low, soft, romantic, right. So God forbid a brotha' is arguing with his old lady telling her please wait for me and arguing with a dude telling he's going to kill'em, it sound like / *(demonstrating in high pitch black accent)* Say sucka' don't get in my face no more, I'll whip your ass, what's wrong with you...*(low voice)* listen baby I'll be with you in just a minute alright? / If a black dude can't fight he can threaten you great... / *(black accent)* "I'll break your nose, if you bleed I'll kill your mama..."

(Ends set and begins to introduce the next comedian.)

FREDDIE. They say Comediennes are hard to find but this one is brilliant and a friend of mine. Would you please put your hands together for Elayne Boosler.

(Lights up as Freddie goes from "the stage" to "backstage.")

SCENE 4

Freddie is now back in the "Green Room"

FREDDIE. Comedy, I love it! I love hearing it, I love doing it, I love being a part of it, I swear it's the only thing keeping me alive. That and my baby boy. As much as I love making you all laugh, nothing beats the sound of my baby boy, especially when I can make him laugh. I grab my little pie and I go...*(reenacting how he makes his baby laugh)*. As parents you gotta

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make your kids laugh, sometimes that's all you got. My mom did that for me, growing up. She would always find a way to make me laugh. If she was angry, stressed, upset, frustrated, you'd never know it cause she was always laughing. Like this one time, I'll never forget it...*(walking over to the couch)* We were in the elevator of our building in Washington Heights, we had just moved in, and these two older white ladies get in the elevator with us and they look at me and my mom and say, *(accent)* "Oh Margaret look, the spics are here". *(beat)* You see it was the sixties, it wasn't what it is now. So, when my father walked in, this white tall blue eye blond hair Hungarian looking man they gave him the apartment, never expecting for him to bring along his little Puerto Rican mama. And once you get one Puerto Rican in, all Puerto Ricans get in. We quickly claim our territory! Before you know it, the Puerto Rican flag is out the window, rice and bean smell all over the hallway, music blasting until two in the morning...

SOUND CUE #2 - (Latin Music - "Pun Pun Catalu" by Celia Cruz and Willie Colon)

FREDDIE. *(He begins dancing and improvising)* That's how we do it. *(continues dancing)* And the neighbors' downstairs all they hear is *(stomping on the floor while imitating white folks getting upset)* "Oh what the hell? C'mon!" *(dancing)* You can't help that, that's in our DNA. If you're brown in this room right now you're shaking your ass.

(Cut off Sound Cue #2)

FREDDIE. So there we are in the elevator and the two older white ladies are saying "oh the spics are here." And I could see my mom's wheels turning and she turns to me and says...

FREDDIE AS MOM. *(in Mom Spanish accent)* Papito, today rice and beans for you con pastelillo, asopao, sancocho, pasteles lo que tu quiera pa ti. Y al que no le guste que se valla par carajo. *(to the white ladies)* I'm a human being too coño, *(to Freddie)* bente papito *(walking away and singing in Spanish)*. Tingi, que tingi, tingi que tingi...

FREDDIE. That was my first lesson in life, watching my Mom taking that

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racist shit and flipping it, making it funny. And that's what I'm going to do with my boy. Teach him how to laugh at the racist bullshit life is going to throw at you because that's how you survive. How else was this half Hungarian, half Puerto Rican kid from the streets on New York going to survive? I was a misfit! I wasn't Puerto Rican enough or Hungarian enough. And I had asthma, some really bad asthma. I'm this six foot tall Puerto Rican looking kid with the last name Pruetzel or as the kids would say Pretzel, / *(imitating)* "hey fat pretzel..., where's my dollar? Get that fat Pretzel. *(Reenacting running from the bullies across the stage)*. That was me most of my childhood, running for my life. But this one time I didn't want to get hit and call it survival instincts, but I started running like this, *(reenact a hideous run)*. They didn't know whether to laugh, cry, call the cops. They were like, "Dam, this nigga crazy right here..." So I make it all the way home and I lock myself in the bathroom cause I am having a full asthma attack and I don't want my Mom and Dad to see me this way *(beat)*. Well, my mom really because dad worked the night shift as a tool and die maker at this factory so it was just me and mom *(Reenacting the pain and his difficulty breathing)*. So I'm in the bathroom catching my breath and my mom is knocking on the door,

FREDDIE AS MOM. Papi, is everything ok?

FREDDIE. *(out of breath)* ...yea Ma, I'm okay.

FREDDIE AS MOM. Papi, why are you breathing so hard?

FREDDIE. I'm just...I'm just taking a shit!

FREDDIE AS MOM. Ay, sounds like a big mohon, push it, push it really good.

FREDDIE. *(reenact coughing)* But I kept coughing blood all over. All I could do was open the door and yell MAMI, MAMI. My mom comes in, / *(as Mom)* "Ay Jesus Kries, don't let my son die..." I don't know what happened next but I remember waking up in the emergency room to the "beep, beep" sound of the machine. *(laying on the sofa)* My Dad is over here, my Mom is over here praying *(imitating Mom praying)* "Jesus Kries don't let me son die" and the doctors turns to my Mom and says, / *(as Doctor)* "Mary your son almost died. It's nothing short of a miracle that he's alive right now, you almost lost your son." / *(beat)* My mom was convinced that her prayers had kept me alive. And can I tell you, after all

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that praying not only did it keep me alive but my asthma, it went away. It was the first time I had experienced God's healing power. But it was this (*indicating his eyes*) the fear in my mom's eyes that I couldn't shake. This little mama who was able to find the humor in just about anything she couldn't do it this time because there's nothing funny about being told that your son almost died. And I did that to her, I caused her that fear. Never again, I told myself never again will I do that to her. And when I make a promise that's my word, my bond. That's why I hate this shit! (*referencing articles*) Because I know she's reading it and I know she's getting worried, look... (*reading an article*) "Freddie Prinze knifed in his own neighborhood! On his way home from work somebody sticks him up getting into a knife fight almost losing his life." (*stops reading*).

FREDDIE AS MOM. Ay papi, is everything ok?

FREDDIE. Yea Ma, I'm okay, I'm fine. I'm talking to you aren't I? This is Hollywood, they have to write this sh..., stuff, but I'm okay Ma, everything is fine, (*to himself, defiant, referring to the article*) Everything will be fine! (*throws article and walks to the stage...*)

Lights down as Freddie goes from "backstage" to "the stage"

SCENE 5

Spotlight on Freddie as he's back at the comedy club. He goes center stage to perform comedy stand-up set #3 "Three Cities"

FREDDIE. Different people are recognizing me now, I like it. Like old ladies recognize me, they grin a lot...they go, / (*imitating*) "Mmmm hmmm, you're you, that's you" / Black people they recognize me they take an hour to make sure they're right, / (*imitating in black accent*) "Is that my man, television? Ahhhh, ha, ha, yea, wheeeeew, ah man, me and my old lady watch you every week, we love you. Mama, come here and meet Merv Griffin" /...my people recognize me too, / (*Spanish accent*) "Hey Freddie Prinze, you made it, you making money now, stick em' up." /

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(*beat*) From traveling I've discovered the difference in the three cities, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Like New York...like I'm saying cause of the crime people are uptight and paranoid, you can't blame em'. Chicago I found people very sweet, right...sweeter than most cities, and Los Angeles they're high a lot...and you can tell when you drive a car. You know sometimes you're driving in the express way and somebody's door is open...or at least slightly ajar...and you want to warn them, right. In New York / (*imitating*) "You better be careful there, your door is open / (*as rude New Yorker*) "Mind your own damn business, drive your own car, hope you fall out, ha, ha, ha! / Chicago (*imitating*) "Hey careful your door is open." / (*cool mellow accent*) "Well I have four of them would you like one?" / Los Angeles (*imitating*) "Hey your door is open." / (*stoned accent*) "Oh wow, I didn't know I had a door baby. Well thanks for telling me man cause doors are like life, they open and close right...you wanna come to McDonalds and eat eighty hamburgers with me?"

People say LA has a lot of smug...that's marijuana smoke. Walk through the streets you get a contact high. Cops pull you over, they're loaded, (*Cop siren sound*) / "What I do officer?" / (*as high cop*) "Hell if I know, scared you, ha, ha, ha..." / (*beat*) I hate drug parties cause there's always one dude who's an expert, / (*imitating with accent*) "...let me try what you got man, did you buy it without showing it to me first? I told you don't buy anything unless you let me try it. I hope you got beat on it, let me, (*smokes*) Columbian 71" / meanwhile it's a Marlboro you gave him, right...he don't know anymore. But the junkies, some of them know, right. They go to court and they know how to lie, like, / (*imitating a junkie*) "...your honor man I'm straight now baby. This cop is just trying to get a promotion from me man. I didn't steal no car, do I look like I can drive (*almost falling*)? I don't need your lousy car, I'm a track star...look at me, I'm in great shape. I run a hundred yards in nine seconds with a colored TV in each arm." / Gotta believe him, right. But that's the thing, with crime people are buying dogs, guns, taking Kung-fu lessons, right. Like most people buy a German Shepherd cause their great with the doorbell, (*imitating door bell ringing and dog barking*)...neighbors move, right. I bought a Puerto Rican Shepherd, very macho, / (*imitating with doorbell*) "WHO is it?" / I tried to

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paper train him, I put newspaper in the bathroom, he'd go in, sit on the bowl and read'em. Reason I knew he was a Puerto Rican Shepherd, if I'd take him out in the streets and he'd see a poodle he'd go... / *(imitating)* "bow wow, honey, oye...Lookin' Good."

(Ends set and begins to introduce the next comedian.)

FREDDIE. The next guy coming up is one of my favorite actor comedians. He is insane but he's also brilliant, there's always a fine line between the two. Would you please welcome Tim Thomerson.

(Lights Up as Freddie goes from "the stage" to "backstage.")

SCENE 6

Freddie is now back in his "Green Room."

FREDDIE. Comedy! That was always going to be my ticket out of the ghetto. I mean what else was I going to do? Sell drugs? *(smoking a cigarette)* No, not under my mother's watch! Instead I would get lost in my room man. That's where everything started for me. I had my own radio show, I did my impressions of Richard Nixon *(begins doing impressions)*, Bob Hope, Rich Little, Ed Sullivan *(impression)*. And I had the best audience in the world, my mom and dad. Well, my mom really because like I said my dad worked the night shift as a tool and die maker at this factory, so it was just me and mom. *(beat)* Wait, hold on, let me say something about my dad before we go any further. I love my dad, but he had to work. That's what dad's do. I get it. I'm a dad, I'm working right now. But before my dad met my mom he had a previous marriage, where he lost his little girl in a pool accident while he was working on the house. It was a trauma my mom says he never fully recovered from. How can you? I can't imagine. That's why it was important for him to laugh and I made that my goal. *(Doing Nixon impression)* "I am not a crook" *(Doing Sullivan impression)* "And the next one coming up it's the Beatles..." *(ending impression)*. I just wanted him to look at me and say, "good job..." *(beat)*. Anyway, but when he wasn't there my mom was there and she

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made up for that time. I would get home late and she would be waiting for me in the kitchen with a glass of lemonade. And we would talk about anything and everything. God, I miss those days, it was like therapy. And we would laugh, boy did we laugh. I could tell her anything, nothing was off limits, I could ask her whatever I want. (*Reminiscing and reenacting conversation with Mom.*) Ma, where do babies come from?

FREDDIE AS MOM. Well, papito, they say a seagull flies by and drops them off, but I think it starts when I get in all four and your father grabs my behind and smacks my ass...

FREDDIE. Ahhhhh! Ma, you're going to traumatize me...

FREDDIE AS MOM. Well papito you ask me and I tell you the true, I always tell you the true.

FREDDIE. I know you do Ma, that's why I love you.

FREDDIE AS MOM. I love you too ...and your father loves you too. In his own way and he worries about you.

FREDDIE. Why does he worry about me? I worry for you guys. You guys work so hard, I want you guys to retire so I can buy you a house.

FREDDIE AS MOM. A house? Ay papi please no we don't need a house, we're fine. Don't put that pressure on yourself. We just want you to be happy that's it. You go out there and get your education. Get a good job so you're not stuck working a nine to five like us and go out there and live your dreams papito. Live your dreams. (*Ending the conversation reenactment with Mom.*)

FREDDIE. And I did. I tried out for High School of the performing arts. That was my way to live my dream and I tried out for acting. I went in there with some Shakespeare shit. (*reenacting the audition*) "But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun." I mean why couldn't Shakespeare just say, "Mira mami, you looketh good in thy tighteth dresseth...it makes thy ass looketh huge coño..." But I got in, I was the only one from PS52 to get in. I was good! You see that's how it all started for me with acting. A lot of people don't know that. They look at me and say "Oh it's the comedian, the jokester, tell us another joke monkey boy." (*beat*) But acting, that's how it all started for me. Comedy was just a discovery, a surprise. It was because I was cast in my first theatrical debut, at the school play in Neil Simons Barefoot in the Park. If

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you don't know the play it's about this newlywed white couple who are moving to the upper east side of Manhattan into this apartment building where there's no elevator and that's the joke. Everyone has to go up five flight of stairs and everyone's out of breath, ha ha ha, white people. Every Puerto Rican building is like that. And I play the part of Harry Pepper, a Jewish middle aged out of shape telephone repairman. And I'm about to make my stage entrance when it hits me...what the hell do I know about a Jewish middle aged out of shape telephone repairman? So I had an epiphany and I decided to change him and make him into my own. And I go from Harry Pepper into Henrique Pepino...*(Reenacting a scene from the play)*.

FREDDIE AS HARRY. *(thick Spanish accent)* Hello? Telephone Company! Anyone home?

FREDDIE AS CORIE. Oh, the phone is here, oh yes come on in.

FREDDIE AS HARRY. *(gasping)* That's quite a climb, a lot of steps. Just a little out of shape, a little out of breath. Where do you want the phone? Right here, ok no problem! *(sitting and miming a phone)* Hello? Eldorado, 5, 8, 1, 9, 1...

FREDDIE AS CORIE. Is that my number? Eldorado, 5, 8, 1, 9, 1. It has a nice ring to it?

FREDDIE AS HARRY. Yea, it's a beautiful number. *(on the phone)* Hello? Mr. Bell? Ok you did it again. *(Mimes hanging up)* There you have it, your new phone! And as my mother would say, may your first call be from the Sweepstakes. *(about to exit)* Oh and by the way, my name is Henrique Pepino. And if you have any trouble do me a favor, don't call Henrique Pepino. Okay Ms. Eldorado, 5, 8, 1, 9, 1...have a nice day...and may you soon have many different extensions. *(making his exit)* Ooohh, what did I say? I can't believe it! *(ends reenactment.)*

FREDDIE. It was hilarious! Not that Neil Simon needed any help but it was just so different. And right then and there I discovered the power of comedy. Me! I made this entire room explode with laughter. It was a high like I had never felt before and I wanted more. My life changed from that point on. I would go down the school hallway yelling "Showtime, Showtime" gathering the boys and the girls in the room telling whatever joke would come to me. *(reenacts telling jokes in school)* A black guy and

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a Puerto Rican in a car, who's driving? The Cops! What do you call a Puerto Rican with no arms? Trustworthy! How about a clean shaven Puerto Rican? A smooth criminal! (*end of reenactment*) I was just trying shit out man. (*beat*) A lot of people spend a lifetime trying to figure out what they want to do in life. But for me, right there in that moment I knew this was it. I wasn't good in sports or outdoor activities but this here I could do and I could do well. And I knew if this was going to be my calling in life I had to devote my time, my energy, my effort, my everything to it. So I quickly started hitting the comedy clubs, taking whatever spot I could. One, two, three in the morning, I didn't care. As long as I got to try my jokes in front of an audience that's all that mattered. But when you're a young kid getting home from the comedy clubs at two or three in the morning to go to school the next day, something's gotta give, and Mom was not a hundred percent on board. (*Reenacting his conversation with mom.*)

FREDDIE AS MOM. What do you mean you're dropping out of high school?

FREDDIE. Ma, I can't do comedy and school at the same time.

FREDDIE AS MOM. Well papi finish school, and then you can take a break.

FREDDIE. Ma this isn't a break, this is my calling, I gotta do this now.

FREDDIE AS MOM. But you're not even getting paid! Your father and I we're not rich, we can't leave money behind. All we can do is make sure you get your education.

FREDDIE. But Ma this is my education. They don't teach comedy in school, I gotta do this now.

FREDDIE AS MOM. But Papi...

FREDDIE. Ma listen, now's the time, I have to do this now. Tell you what, give me one year to make it happen. And if I can't do it in one year then I go back to school and I'll get my education. Heck, I'll even become a minister, and I meant it. (*Ending reenactment.*)

FREDDIE. She reluctantly agreed and I started hitting the comedy clubs. (*beat*) I gotta tell ya, there's nothing sweeter than performing at two or three in the morning for a half ass drunk racist audience. (*reenacting drunk heckler at comedy club*)

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FREDDIE AS HECKLER. Oh look the Spanish boy is on stage again. Tell us another joke you little brown spic, Ha ha. And when you're done up there go back to the kitchen where you belong and get us another beer you little brown shit. Una cerveza...Ha ha! (*end of reenactment*).

FREDDIE. When you're a young kid and you hear that shit it does something to you. It makes you question everything. You see, that's the part you won't read about. That's call paying your dues man. And I questioned everything. I thought maybe my mom was right. Maybe this was a mistake? Maybe I should go back to school. (*beat*) No, no way. Because that would mean I quit and I don't quit. I win! I just needed to figure this out. How can I make this work? How can I survive? (*beat*) Shit, I've been surviving all my life. Watching my mom take that same racist bullshit and flipping it and making it funny. And that's just what I had to do and I did! I started approaching my comedy very different. (*Reenacting comedy club performance.*) Ladies and gentlemen please hold on to your wallets, there's a Puerto Rican on the premise. I may have a knife and I know how to use it. (*pretending to stab someone*) "Shank, shank," no, no we Puerto Ricans keep our knives in the back (*Spanish accent*) "In the kitchen for cooking." Let me just say a few brown jokes and then I go back to the kitchen where I belong and get you your beer. In fact let me take your orders now, sir what are you going to have? A Budweiser? That's the Puerto Rican beer, you might be cousin after all. Let me give you a test, are your sofas covered in plastic? (*End of reenactment.*) And it worked and I started surviving. But I didn't come out here to survive, I came out here to win. Yes, I'm funny and so are the five other comics waiting to hit the stage, who cares? What I'm interested in is what makes me different, what makes me stand out from the rest? (*beat*) Shit, I don't have to look to far. Half Hungarian, half Puerto Rican from the streets of New York. I own that shit! So I started using that and people didn't know what to make of it. / (*imitating*) "Half Hungarian, Half Puerto Rican I've never seen such a thing before..." / It's funny how the very same thing that made me a misfit growing up would be the key that gets me in. I felt like I was doing something fresh, something new, different, original, ground breaking. It was like Lenny Bruce. You guys know Lenny Bruce? He was fresh, new and ground breaking! He's my comedic idol man. Lenny marches to the

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beat of his own drum. He would do some shit like... (*Reenacting and imitating Lenny Bruce*)

FREDDIE AS LENNY. Would you want one of them to marry your sister. Now, I would like to do it this way, in Mobile Alabama. They know about good brawls, I'll do it there! Right, okay! I'm a do it in Mobile! Then I wanna do it with, and I'm being objective, Ku Klux Klan, again there's no good or bad, they're a part of their environment. Ok! Now, I'll get closer to home! Would you were a white, the imperial wizard, and you are a man, forty years old and now you have a choice. And if you don't think this is logic you can burn me on the fiery cross, and this is the logic. You now have a choice to spending fifteen years married to a woman. A black woman or a white woman! Fifteen years just seeing, hugging and sleeping real close on hot nights, watchin' her take off her garter belts, taken her make-up off, seeing every facet of her. Fifteen years with a black-black woman or fifteen years with a white-white woman. And these two were near about the same age bracket so it's not an unfair comparison. Fifteen years with a black woman or fifteen years with a white woman. The white woman is Kate Smith and the black woman is Lina Horne. Sooo, you're not that concerned with black or white anymore are you? You're concern with how cute, how pretty! And if you are concern with how cute or how pretty, then lets really get basic and persecute ugly people! Not black or white cause you see it's a facet then. And as far as your sister is concerned, cause you can assume for your sister, but if she searches her soul, she will jump over fifty Charles Lorton to get to one Harry Belafonte. (*End of Lenny reenactment.*)

FREDDIE. Lenny Bruce! He would have the cops lined up in the back of the room waiting to bust him if he said the wrong thing. Nobody was like him and I felt like I was following in his footsteps with my own style of comedy. And then one night at the comedy club, comedic legend in his own right David Brenner was right there at the comedy club and he happened to catch this Puerto Rican storm come at him...

Lights down as Freddie goes from "backstage" to "the stage" but this time in a "flashback" sequence as he recollects this memory.

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SCENE 7

Spotlight on Freddie as he's back at the comedy club. He goes center stage to perform comedy stand-up se #4 "They Never Tell It Like It Is."

FREDDIE. If you're an ethnic group in this country and you're getting subjugated, they let you move up as soon as they find a new ethnic group. Cause someone has to clean the toilet, and every group did. Black, White, Puerto Rican, Irish, Italian, Polish, everybody! And no group liked it, and some group voiced their opposition to it more than others. Like black people going, / *(black accent)* "what the hell am I doing here? I'm a genius and I'm cleaning the toilet, I be flushing stuff away..." / Then Puerto Ricans get in, / *(Spanish accent)* "God, is not my job, take me away from here..." / And that's why Chinese people are so quiet, they know they're next. And I hope they make it cause then justice will prevail, Indians will get in, blow up the toilets, nobody can go and they take their country back.

But they never tell it like it is, right. Like if you're reading the bible, Noah and the Arc, I'm offended by that personally because Noah took two of everything, where was a Puerto Rican? The cook Julio! Noah would go over to him, / *(as Noah)* "So Julio, how are you enjoying the coals?" / *(as Julio in Spanish accent)* "Terrible man, you said we were stopping in the Bahamas, what happened? All I can see is animals crapping in a boat. Where you going to find a newspaper big enough for the elephant? / *(as Noah)* "Julio you know if you don't like it, you can clean it up yourself..." / *(as Julio)* "Ees not my job man!" /

And going to the bathroom, that's taboo too. Like when you go to the bathroom in somebody's house, are you like me, you don't want them to hear you. Turn on the water, cough (*coughing*)...aim for the side of the bowl. But that's no good cause then you gotta get toilet paper, / *(imitating)* "...oh God, I made a mess here..." / Some people just stick their leg and let it run down. That's as quite as you can get. Then the other taboo is sex, but the movies make sex so beautiful. They make it much better than it is in real life. When is the last time you made love and you heard violins

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going (*making violin sound*)? Two people make love, the next morning they kiss right away ...you know your breath taste like a zoo keepers' heel. You kiss like this.../ (*imitating*) "I love you mama but, in an hour, I kiss you in an hour." / Nothing like sex, nothing like it, and guys love sex, right? We love it because we like it when girls make noise in bed, because that's like cheering, right guys? When a girl goes (*imitating*) "...ohhhhh," that's like "ALRIGHT!" (*Doing a celebrating theme song*). And different girls say different things in bed too...pending how they're brought up. Like Jewish girls, if they're repressed when they're young and read a lot of books, years later they sounded, / (*imitating Jewish girl*) "Oh that feels so good she said with an ecstatic grin as she frail her arms wildly..." / Spanish girls get annoyed in bed.../ (*imitating Spanish girl*) "Don't touch my behind Felix...just don't touch my behind..." / right...black chicks, you could be going ninety miles an hour sweating your life away, they go, / (*imitating black girl*) "...is that it?"

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