

SEPTEMBER 9, 2016
PRODUCTION DRAFT
BLUE REVISIONS 10/10/16
PINK REVISIONS 10/11/16
YELLOW REVISIONS 10/20/16
GREEN REVISIONS 10/27/16
GOLDENROD REVISIONS 1/4/17
2ND WHITE REVISIONS 1/30/17

FEUD
BETTE AND JOAN

"PILOT"

1WB01

TELEPLAY BY

RYAN MURPHY

BASED ON THE SCREENPLAY

"Best Actress"

BY JAFFE COHEN AND MICHAEL ZAM

DIRECTED BY

RYAN MURPHY

REVISED PAGES: TITLE PAGE

RYAN MURPHY TELEVISION

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CAST LIST

Joan Crawford
Bette Davis
Olivia de Havilland
Robert Aldrich
Hedda Hopper
Jack Warner
B.D. Davis
Mamacita
Pauline
Marty
Peter Carlisle
Gary Merrill
Joan Blondell
Adam the Interviewer
Barbara Stanwyck (omitted)
Bill Aldrich
Studio Executive
Young Studio Executive
Burned Out Executive
Young Bette Davis (1931) (omitted)
George Cukor
Wisecracking Wig Lady (omitted)
Nonah
Anouk Aimee (omitted)
Pier Angeli (omitted)
DP Contini
Younger Reporter
Older Reporter
Second Reporter
Photographer
Another Photographer
Dave
Clapper
Makeup Artist
Stage Manager
Minister
Bookstore Clerk
Young Man
Marilyn Monroe
Patrick O’Neal
Margaret Leighton
Al Steele
Hairstylist
Cliff Roberston
Muscular Leading Man*
Hairstylist*

LOCATION LIST

- Soundstage (1962)
 - EXT. Soundstage
 - Joan’s Dressing Room
 - Bette’s Dressing Room
 - Hudson House Set
- Crawford Residence (1962)
 - EXT. Crawford Residence
 - EXT. Patio -- Pool
 - Master Bedroom
 - Master Bathroom
 - Parlor/Living room
 - Dining Room
 - Kitchen
- Bette’s Country Home (1961-1962)
 - EXT. Country Home
 - Living Room
- Kitchen
- Bette’s Rental House (1961-1962)
 - Foyer
 - Hallway
 - Living Room
 - Master Bedroom
 - Master Bathroom
- Hedda’s Beverly Hills Mansion
 - EXT. Hedda’s Mansion
 - Foyer
 - Dining Room
- Bette’s Maine House (1956)
 - EXT. Maine House (omitted)
 - Kitchen
- EXT. Los Angeles Railroad Station (1931) (omitted)
- EXT. Hollywood Boulevard (1932) (omitted)
- EXT. Movie Theater Auditorium (1932) (omitted)
- EXT. St. Louis Theatre (1958)
- EXT. Soundstage -- Golf Cart (1961)
- EXT. Paramount Studios (1961)
- EXT. Beverly Hilton Hotel (1961)
- EXT. Broadway Theater (1961) (omitted)
- EXT. Pacific Coast Highway (1961) (omitted)
- EXT. Hollywood Street (1962)
- INT. Warner Brother’s Soundstage (1962)
- INT. Screening Room (1962)
- INT. William Morris Agency (1961-1962)
- INT. Broadway Theater (1961)
- INT. Broadway Theater -- Bette’s Dressing Room (1961)
- INT. Pickwick’s Bookstore (1961)
- INT. Beverly Hilton Hotel (1961)
- INT. Soundstage (1961)
- INT. Editing Bay (1961)
- INT. Taxi -- Bette’s Country Home (1961)
- INT. Interview Room (1978)
- INT. Cutting Room (1961)
- INT. Sardi’s New York (1961) (omitted)
- INT. Studio Office (1961)
- INT. Studio Commissary (1961)
- INT. Jack Warner’s Office (1961)
- INT. Warner Brothers Conference Room (1962)
- INT. St. Louis Theatre (1958)
- INT. Chapel (1956)
- INT. “Autumn Leaves” Movie Set (1955)***
- INT. “Sudden Fear” Movie Set (1952)
- INT. “All About Eve” Movie Set (1950)

FADE IN:

1 INT. WARNER BROTHERS SOUNDSTAGE -- DAY 1

A bustling FILM CREW rushes around doing whatever urgent task is at hand. TITLE appears: HOLLYWOOD, 1962.

In the quiet corner of this hangar, two women are sharing an intimate conversation that we can't quite hear through the din. As WE MOVE CLOSER we see that they're sitting in director's chairs bearing their names: they are two of the most enduring legends of the silver screen --

JOAN CRAWFORD and BETTE DAVIS.

The stars are casually dressed and obviously enjoying themselves. Joan, knitting, says something we don't hear, but it makes Bette throw back her head and bray her famous laugh. Joan beams with delight.

FREEZE ON IMAGE. The picture RIPS IN TWO, splitting apart the two women as we hear a WOMAN'S VOICE speaking with a gravity more commonly reserved for state funerals.

WOMAN (V.O.)

There's never been a rivalry like theirs.

2 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY (1978) 2

REVEAL TALKING HEAD #1...Oscar winner OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND, circa 1978, in her early 60s. She has a big smile, is elegant and still somewhat girlish. Title reads: Olivia de Havilland, Best Actress Winner 1946 and 1949. She is the first of several major stars, peers of Bette and Joan, who tell us what they've witnessed (Crawford died in 1977, and these women have gathered for a documentary remembrance).

OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND

For nearly half a century they hated each other...and we loved them for it. You know Joan's real name was Lucille LeSueur? The poor thing was raised in utter squalor and literally scrubbed toilets until she came to Hollywood.

(MORE)

*
*

(CONTINUED)

OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND (CONT'D)
At the peak of The Depression when
I was first starting out, she was
the woman every man wanted -- and
every woman wanted to be.

A3 INT. "SUDDEN FEAR" MOVIE SET -- DAY -- 1952 A3 *
JOAN CRAWFORD, in a fur with shoulder pads, blasts out of the *
shadows and FIRES A GUN at someone. Round after round *
explodes as her eyes and nostrils flare with drama. *

OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND (V.O.) *
Many think of her as the greatest *
STAR of all time.

B3 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY (1978) B3 *
OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND *
Now, my dear friend Bette...she *
was, quite frankly, the greatest *
ACTRESS Hollywood has ever known.

C3 INT. "ALL ABOUT EVE" MOVIE SET -- DAY -- 1950 C3 *
BETTE DAVIS ascends the staircase as Margo Channing. *
OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND (V.O.) *
What a career! During the war she *
played all the best roles, and she *
played them with a -- I don't know *
how else to say this -- but with a *
ballsy intensity that none of us, *
actor or actress, would have dared.

D3 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY (1978) D3 *
Olivia pauses, moved. Then --

OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND
You know, they only made one film
together. "Whatever Happened to
Baby Jane?" But how that happened,
and what happened afterwards...oh
my...that's a story and a feud of
Biblical proportions.

The INTERVIEWER, ADAM speaks up.

ADAM THE DOCUMENTARIAN
What was behind their feud? Why did
they hate each other so much?

OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND

Feuds are never about hate. Feuds
are about pain.

(a beat, sadly)

They're about pain.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Please welcome to the stage, our
star of today and tomorrow...Miss
Marilyn Monroe!

CUT TO:

3 INT. BEVERLY HILTON HOTEL -- NIGHT (1961) 3

A SPOTLIGHT captures the sex goddess wiggling down an aisle, blowing kisses to the audience as she makes her way up to the stage. She passes Joan Crawford at a table, doesn't even look at her. Joan is the only person in this room not clapping. Joan is also very drunk.

STAY ON Joan as we hear Marilyn begin to accept her award in her breathy, baby-doll voice. Joan clumsily lights a cigarette, drains her glass, motions for her boyfriend PETER CARLISLE, 40s -- a handsome John Gavin type -- to give her his drink, downs that. *

As Marilyn receives a standing ovation and the applause that used to be for her reverberates, Joan begins to silently cry. Her time is over and she never saw it coming. SMASH CUT TO:

4 EXT. CRAWFORD RESIDENCE -- THE NEXT DAY 4

A white gloved FINGER rings the doorbell of the Crawford estate. It's gossip legend HEDDA HOPPER in one of her ridiculous hats. The door opens revealing Crawford's long-suffering maid MAMACITA, who has seen it all.

HEDDA HOPPER
Hedda Hopper here for Joan.

MAMACITA
Miss Crawford is occupied. *

HEDDA HOPPER
She's had enough time to sleep it off. Announce me.

5 INT. CRAWFORD RESIDENCE -- MASTER BEDROOM -- DAY 5

Joan in a cosmetologist's chair, her face covered in facial scrub. She examines her neck with a magnifying mirror as her RUSSIAN FACIALIST, NONAH, works on her.

JOAN
Is there anything we can do about these lines? I'm afraid I'm going to be served for Thanksgiving dinner.

NONAH
(Russian accent)
The best you can do for this? High collars. Turtle neck for turkey neck.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

JOAN

Christ, give me some hope, Nonah!

NONAH

(shrugs)

You know how it is. Men age, they get character. Women age, they get lost. You have many good years left.

Mamacita appears at the door.

MAMACITA

I'm sorry, Miss Joan. Hedda Hopper's downstairs.

Off Joan's worry --

6 INT. CRAWFORD RESIDENCE -- PARLOR -- DAY

6

Hedda snoops around the joint, is fascinated that ALL of the furniture is hermetically covered in plastic -- Crawford is the world's biggest clean freak. Joan breezes in. They air kiss each other stiffly.

JOAN

Hedda! How wonderful of you to stop by.

HEDDA HOPPER

You ran out of the Globes last night before I could get a quote.

JOAN

Did I? It was a marvelous event. I do so appreciate the foreign press. They've been very kind to me.

HEDDA HOPPER

I didn't come here for the boiler-plate, Joan. From what I hear you stumbled out of there in a drunken fit.

7 EXT. BEVERLY HILTON HOTEL -- NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

7

JUMP CUTS: Joan drunk and emotional; Peter trying to calm her as her Cadillac is brought around. She slaps him across the face; staggers into the VALET who is right behind her, opening the passenger door. Joan notices some ELEGANT GLOBE-ERS watching. She's instantly embarrassed. Peter pours her into the car. Offers the valet a tip and an apologetic look.

8

INT. CRAWFORD RESIDENCE -- PARLOR -- RESUME SCENE

8

JOAN

You know how bad those award show dinners can be. I ate something that didn't agree with me.

HEDDA HOPPER

Crow? Had to have been pretty galling, watching the foreign press fawn all over Monroe like that.

JOAN

I don't know what you mean. Miss Monroe may not be to my taste, but she's certainly achieved a great deal. In any event, you know when I'm out at public events I only drink Pepsi Cola. I'm the brand ambassador.

HEDDA HOPPER

I don't know why you're still plugging that hideous sugar water. Word is since Al died, the board isn't paying your bills anymore and you're selling off your custom-made Billy Haines furniture piece by piece just to keep the lights on.

*
*

Joan reacts to that. Covers her panic --

JOAN

You wouldn't print those lies?

HEDDA HOPPER

Gotta print something.

JOAN

Then print this: Joan Crawford, after mourning the passing of her beloved husband, Alfred Steele, is ready to get back to work.

*

HEDDA HOPPER

And you really think there's room on the screen for the three of you?
(off Joan's look)
You and Monroe's tits. Come on, Joan. Give me a quote. You know my readers would be fascinated to hear the thoughts of yesterday's "It" girl about today's.

(CONTINUED)

Joan bristles at being the past-tense.

JOAN

And there can only be one "It" girl. Is that right?

HEDDA HOPPER

Men built the pedestal, not me, honey and there's only room for one goddess at a time.

*
*
*

JOAN

Men may have built the pedestal, but it's the women who chip away at it, until the whole thing comes tumbling down.

HEDDA HOPPER

So what's it gonna be, honey -- a quote on Monroe...or am I gonna have to write about how a valet saw you stumble into your Cadillac?

Joan pauses. Always the survivor, she takes a beat, then sits ramrod straight on the sofa across from Hedda. Hedda takes this as a cue, sits, opens her notebook, pen poised. Then, with queenly dignity and hauteur --

JOAN

I think...that Marilyn Monroe and the vulgarity of her clothing and pictures...is hurting this great industry that I love. People don't want to see stars like Monroe in pictures, families certainly won't stand for what she's come to represent. They want their stars to be wholesome, with good morals, true gentlemen and ladies...like me.

HEDDA HOPPER

(grinning as she scribbles)

That's not the only difference between you and her...she's getting roles.

Off Joan, her back up --

PLUNK. An OSCAR is pulled out of Joan's oversized purse and forcefully put before her agent, Marty. He just stares at it.

(CONTINUED)

MARTY

What's this about?

JOAN

This, my friend, is the Academy Award for Best Actress I won in 1945 for "Mildred Pierce." It's our industry's highest honor given for screen excellence, and I would like another. And to do that Marty, you know what I need? A great script!

(then, pacing)

I want to get back to work now that Al's dead. I want to work, I need to work.

MARTY

I sent you a great script four months ago, Joan. You did it and you were wonderful in it!

JOAN

It was a pilot. For television. I had two lousy scenes, I had to do my own makeup and it wasn't even picked up to series.

Joan lights a cigarette. Marty motions for Joan to sit.

MARTY

Joan, how about this. Let me read everything that's out there, and send over the highlights. You go through the pile and find something that excites you.

Joan brightens a bit.

10

INT. JOAN'S BRENTWOOD HOME -- NIGHT

10

Dimly lit. Find Joan, in her living room corner, reading glasses on, pouring over a stack of scripts. She flips forward, flips back, clearly looking for a hoped-for character that isn't there. Peter brings her a drink as we hear:

MARTY'S (O.C.)

Joanie, how's my girl today?

We INTERCUT:

11

INT. JOAN'S BRENTWOOD BEDROOM -- THE NEXT DAY

11

Joan paces and smokes while on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

JOAN

Not good, Marty. Not good.

12 INT. WILLIAM MORRIS OFFICE -- DAY

12

MARTY

What's the problem, talk to me.

JOAN

I can't be Elvis' grandmother, I just won't do that.

MARTY

Uh-huh.

JOAN

What about the script for that Capote story, "Breakfast At Tiffany's"? There's a marvelous role in that project for a woman of style and means who sleeps with the young man...

MARTY

George Peppard is playing the guy and Patricia Neal is playing the broad who keeps him.

JOAN

But Pat's 34. In the book the character's in her late 40s.

(off his silence)

Maybe you could send over some other scripts...

MARTY

That's all I have, Joan. That's all they're making.

JOAN

I am an actress and I want to act. I still feel as vital as I ever did, I want to contribute.

MARTY

Then you need to find a project yourself, because the roles just aren't out there.

A13 INT. JOAN'S BRENTWOOD MANSION -- KITCHEN -- DAY

A13

*

Water SLOSHES from a bucket onto already sparkling linoleum. Reveal Joan, standing there. She pauses, grabs a brush and gets down on her hands and knees to scrub this floor.

*

*

*

This is her therapy, how she works her pain out. She cries a little. Reveal Mamacita at the door, dressed to go out. She looks at Joan, moved by her panic and sadness, EXITS. *

13 INT. PICKWICK'S BOOKSTORE -- DAY 13

A CLERK steps up to a customer at the front desk.

BOOKSTORE CLERK
May I help you?

Mamacita, dressed in gloves and a hat, stands there.

MAMACITA
I need books.

BOOKSTORE CLERK
Was there a particular title you were interested in?

MAMACITA
Anything with ladies on the cover.

The clerk reacts to this strange request.

14 INT. CRAWFORD RESIDENCE -- DINING ROOM -- DAY 14

Joan is at the dining room table arranging both hardback and paperback books into piles. Mamacita enters with a Pickwick bag stuffed with more.

JOAN
Oh, Mamacita. Good.

Joan takes the bag, dumps it onto the table.

MAMACITA
That's all they had. I can try Encino next. Unless you found something you like.

JOAN
Everything written for women seems to fall into just three categories:
(indicates piles)
Ingenues, defeated house fraus/mothers, or gorgons.

MAMACITA
Which one are you?

JOAN
I'm certainly no ingenue, not any more.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

14

CONTINUED:

14

JOAN (CONT'D)

And I doubt I'll find another Mildred Pierce in the mother pile. But I'm not ready to play the gorgon, either.

MAMACITA

So what does that leave you?

This question cuts like a knife. Joan pauses, then --

JOAN

We'll find something.
(picks up "Chocolates For Breakfast")
Oh, Mamacita! Nothing sapphic!

MAMACITA

Miss Joan. I ran into the gardeners outside. They want to know when they'll get paid. We owe them two months.

Joan pauses, vulnerable and pained.

JOAN

What did you tell them?

MAMACITA

That it was an honor to prune Miss Crawford's bush and to shut up.

JOAN

(tearing up)
These are lean times, Mamacita. But we'll get through them. I'll cut the goddamn grass myself if I have to.

*
*
*

Joan goes back to making piles of books. Mamacita picks up one of the new books. Looks at it.

MAMACITA

This one is about a baby. Which pile? Mothers?

Joan takes it from her. WE SEE the cover: "Whatever Happened To Baby Jane?" As Joan reads the description on the back...

15

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE -- DAY

15

Sand dunes against blue sky. EXTRAS dressed as Hebrews march up the bluff, pose. The STIFF MUSCULAR LEADING MAN poses last, looks nobly out at the horizon.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

15

CONTINUED:

15

A PIECE OF SET suddenly, sadly, dips over, then falls into the sand.

*
*

REVERSE ANGLE: we're on a film set. The ITALIAN DP screams Sicilian invectives at the crew as the CLAPPER changes the take number to 31, revealing the name of the film-in-progress: "Sodom and Gomorrah," Director ROBERT ALDRICH. It's his voice we heard above. Aldrich tries to explain to the crew the need to prop up the camera track.

*

ALDRICH
Plywood! You need to prop this up with -- aw, shit!

DP CONTINI
(heavy Italian accent)
Paleye-wood?

Aldrich throws up his hands in defeat as a younger, more eager version of himself comes running over. It's his SON, BILL.

BILL
Dad, you're needed in the control center, pronto.

ALDRICH
If I make another movie with two women, put a bullet through my skull.

Aldrich stomps toward --

16

INT. EDITING BAY -- CONTINUOUS

16

-- where his smart-as-a-whip, cool-as-a-cucumber assistant PAULINE, surrounded by scripts, mans the control center.

PAULINE
Eva Braun on the horn...

Pauline bats her eyes. Aldrich grabs the phone from her.

ALDRICH
Gretchen my love...how's my little strudel? Gretchen, you can't come here, no. Why? Because my kids are working on the set, that's why! What if word got back to my wife?

Pauline throws a script into the garbage, grabs another.

ALDRICH (CONT'D)

I love you too, baby.

(hangs up phone)

Christ, she wants to be in the movie now.

PAULINE

That's because she knows the only time you really pay attention to a woman is when she's in front of a camera.

Aldrich grabs a drink, sits. Pensive. Then --

ALDRICH

This movie we're making? Fucking crap. How's the espionage script?

PAULINE

Stinko. I know who did it on page three. But this one's got potential.

She holds up a paperback novel, "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" by Henry Farrell.

PAULINE (CONT'D)

Horror thriller. Two broads.

(off his wince --)

Two OLD broads. Former movie stars. A cripple and her crazy sister battling it out in the Hollywood home.

ALDRICH

A horror picture?

PAULINE

Hitch just did it with "Psycho." Still raking it in. Even better, "Baby Jane's" got one set, small cast: you can have final cut and produce it yourself. Not to mention sleep in your own bed with your wife -- and have a little strudel on the side.

(pointing to the set)

Face it, Bob -- Ben-Hur's been done.

She tosses the book to him. He looks at it, intrigued.

ALDRICH

Where'd you find it?

(CONTINUED)

PAULINE

Came by messenger, special
delivery. Along with that --

She nods to a cooler full of Pepsi Cola. Attached is a note
which reads: "Keep cool, Bob. XO, J" on fancy stationary
embossed with "From the desk of MISS JOAN CRAWFORD."

17 EXT. CRAWFORD RESIDENCE -- DAY 17

Joan helps Mamacita do the gardening, they have had to let
all the staff go. Suddenly a YOUNG MAN approaches.

YOUNG MAN

Miss Crawford?

JOAN

Yes?

YOUNG MAN

Special delivery.

Joan is handed a record with a bow on it: "Autumn Leaves as
sung by Nat King Cole from the hit film."

She hugs the record to her bosom, smiles -- a secret she
enjoys. CUT TO: *

18 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY (LATER) 18

"Autumn Leaves" dropping on a record player. The needle moves
to a disc. As the music begins to play, we PAN OVER to reveal
Aldrich, staring at a huge oil painting over the fireplace of
Joan circa 1950.

MAMACITA

She's expecting you.

Aldrich tightens his tie, and without a thought, starts up
the circular staircase. Mamacita stops him, points outside.

MAMACITA (CONT'D)

She's expecting you...on the patio.

19 EXT. PATIO -- A FEW MOMENTS EARLIER 19

"Autumn Leaves" CONTINUES on a nearby hi-fi as Mamacita leads
Aldrich out, then leaves him to make his way over to Joan, in
sunglasses, lounging on a chaise, greased up and fit in an
elegant white one-piece swimsuit. Joan doesn't move until
Aldrich's shadow reaches her face.

ALDRICH

Joanie.

(CONTINUED)

Joan sits up, takes off her shades, being sure to extend her lithe leg. Aldrich notices it. Joan sees this.

JOAN

Bob, lovely to see you. Tea?

ALDRICH

If we're going to talk business,
I'm going to need a real drink.

Joan calls to a YOUNG WOMAN painting the trim on the cabana.

JOAN

Sally dear, go see if Mamacita
needs your help.

Sally puts her brush down and silently leaves the yard.

ALDRICH

One of your fans?

JOAN

If they're going to hang around all
day, I'm going to put them to work.

Joan reaches into her purse, pulls out a flask and pours some vodka into teacups.

ALDRICH

So, are we gonna make this picture?

JOAN

If you can...satisfy my demands.

ALDRICH

Can anyone, Joan?

JOAN

We did pretty well last time.
"Autumn Leaves" made millions.

ALDRICH

It would have made a million more
if you'd gotten off your goddamned
high horse and let me muss you up a
little more.

JOAN

It would have made two million more
if you'd have gotten me Brando. You
listen to me on this picture, and
I'll get you the perfect co-star.

(CONTINUED)

"Pilot" Goldenrod Revisions 1/4/17 15.
19 CONTINUED: (2) 19

ALDRICH
(raising his eyebrow)
Who'd you have in mind?

20 INT. BROADWAY THEATRE -- STAGE WINGS 20

Smoke wafts in the stage lights. BETTE DAVIS, cigarette in hand, steps into the light, preparing to make her entrance.

With frightening efficiency, she checks her props on a bar cart as her COSTUMER busily adjusts her costume, a white male dress shirt unbuttoned to Bette's waist.

When the costumer is satisfied, she holds up a mirror for Bette to see how she looks. Her eyes reveal she dearly wishes she looked better...but sensing her cue, she turns immediately professional, impatiently pushes the mirror aside, stubs out her butt, grabs the bar cart handle and rolls --

ONSTAGE: where PATRICK O'NEAL as a horny defrocked priest and British leading lady MARGARET LEIGHTON as a mousy spinster are acting their hearts out on the Mexican locale set.

BETTE
(in her loudest bray)
"Cocktails, anyone?"

Bette's entrance receives a huge ovation from her fans. Unable to resist the attention, Bette breaks character, turns to the audience and holds up her arms like a champ.

Her costars O'Neal and Leighton exchange annoyed glances. Davis is playing a supporting part, she's not happy about it and she has routinely made their lives a living hell.

21 EXT. BROADWAY THEATRE -- NIGHT 21 *

A LIMO pulls up beneath the marquee advertising Bette Davis in Tennessee William's new play "The Night of the Iguana." *

Joan, in white chinchilla and diamonds, is helped from the car by a driver. Before entering the theatre, she pauses at the rave from the Tribune for Bette's costar Margaret Leighton -- "Leighton is heartbreaking. She steals the show!" *

Joan smiles approvingly, walks into a theatre through a door that's been opened for her. *

22 INT. BROADWAY THEATRE -- SAME 22

Joan, in white Chinchilla and diamonds is led to her seat by an usher with a glowing FLASHLIGHT.

(CONTINUED)

Audience members thrilled at seeing Bette on-stage become distracted at the sight of Crawford in the flesh and literally glittering. The great star politely acknowledges her fans, then sits down and pulls out a pair of serious specs to study her rival.

*

ONSTAGE: barking her dialogue, Bette senses that she's just lost some of the audiences attention. Trying to see out, she misses her cue. O'Neal clears his throat and Bette throws herself back into the role.

22

CONTINUED:

22

LATER: the actors are taking their bows. O'Neal receives an enthusiastic response, followed by a THUNDEROUS OVATION for Leighton, who is visibly moved. Then comes Bette, who receives polite, respectful applause. Bette is even less pleased as a fan leans across the footlights and gives Leighton a bouquet of roses. A stagehand lights a cigarette just in time to give it to Miss Davis as she storms off the stage.

23

INT. BETTE'S DRESSING ROOM -- SECONDS LATER

23

Bette charges in, pulls off her wig, throws it across the room. Frustrated with her performance -- and the response to it -- she drops her head in her hands. There's a KNOCK on her door and she quickly covers.

BETTE

Come in.

STAGE MANAGER

There's a lady here to see you.

BETTE

Who?

*
*

STAGE MANAGER

(nervous)

Joan Crawford.

*
*
*

BETTE

You're fucking kidding me.

*

Suddenly in the mirror's reflection, she sees her "guest," Joan, walk in, with her arms outstretched to embrace Bette.

*

JOAN

Bette!

BETTE

(disappointment)

Lucille. What brings you to the theatre?

JOAN

To see you, of course. You were wonderful tonight. You lit up the stage. I just can't believe you didn't get better reviews. New York critics...they don't like us Hollywood people taking over their town. I say, screw 'em.

*

BETTE

Make this quick, Lucille. I have a car waiting to take me to the country.

*

JOAN

Guess what, Bette? I finally found the perfect project...for the two of us. It's always been my dream to work with you. Don't you remember how I begged Jack Warner to put us together in "Ethan Frome"?

BETTE

With Mr. Gary Cooper.

*

JOAN

I knew you'd remember.

BETTE

Yeah, I remember. You wanted to play the pretty young servant girl and have me play the old hag of a wife! Forget it.

*

JOAN

This is different, these are the parts of a lifetime.

BETTE

No thanks, Lucille. I've got lots of better offers.

*

JOAN

Bullshit. I know what kinds of offers you've been getting -- exactly none. Because the same's true for me. Nobody's making women's pictures anymore. Not the kind we used to.

BETTE

It's all cyclical. They'll come back into fashion.

JOAN

But we won't. If something's going to happen, we need to make it happen. Nobody's looking to cast women of our age. But together? They wouldn't dare say no. We need each other, Bette.

23

CONTINUED: (2)

23

Joan gently hands her the paperback of "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?"

*
*

BETTE

So what the hell happened to her, anyway? Baby Jane?

JOAN

Read it and find out.

Joan hoists her back, turns to go. Then pauses. The sentence she is about to utter is the hardest one of her entire life.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Bette...I'm offering you the title role.

BETTE

(incredulous)

The lead?

*

JOAN

We can call it that.

Joan leaves that ace on the table and exits. Off Bette --

*

24

OMITTED

24

*

25

OMITTED

25

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26

OMITTED

26

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27

OMITTED

27

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28

OMITTED

28

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29

INT. TAXI -- OUTSIDE BETTE'S COUNTRY HOME -- NIGHT (1961)

29

*

Bette sits in the back, looking disgruntled as she watches the rain pour down. The cab stops. Bette gets out, stepping over mud puddles to get to the door.

*
*

30

INT. COUNTRY HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

30

BETTE

(walking in)

B.D! Where the hell are you?

Bette walks across the empty living room to --

KITCHEN -- where she spots a note, picks it up. It reads: "Mom, went to Sally's for the weekend. B.D." Annoyed, Bette balls up the letter. She looks out at the big empty house.

31 INT. COUNTRY HOME -- LIVING ROOM -- LATER 31

Sitting alone on the sofa, drinking, Bette stubs her cigarette into the already overflowing ashtray, throws down her copy of LIFE magazine with Fidel Castro on the cover.

She reaches for another cigarette. Pack empty, she rummages in her handbag and discovers the copy of "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" As Bette looks at the book --

32 INT. CUTTING ROOM -- 1961 32

Aldrich edits "Sodom and Gomorrah." The phone rings. An assistant hands the cradle to Aldrich.

BETTE (O.S.)
Did you fuck Joan Crawford?

SPLIT SCREEN with Bette in --

33 INT. BETTE'S NEW YORK DRESSING ROOM -- NIGHT 33

Bette prepares to go on, attended to by her personal costumer.

ALDRICH
(covering)
No, Bette, I did not fuck her. Not
that I didn't have ample
opportunity.

*
*

BETTE
We both know the special
relationship Joan has with her
directors.

ALDRICH
Come on now, Bette. What about you
and Vince Sherman?

BETTE
We waited until "Old Acquaintance"
was wrapped, and not just wrapped
for the day.

ALDRICH
William Wyler?

BETTE
I see someone's been a good little
boy and done all his homework.

ALDRICH

Listen Bette, this is the deal: Crawford's name on the marquee gets us a distribution deal. I need her to get this picture made. But I need you to make this picture great.

BETTE

Keep talking.

Aldrich pauses, takes a breath. He really needs this to work.

ALDRICH

Bette, listen to me. I've made my share of steaming piles of shit, but every now and then I get to work with an artist like you...someone who's not afraid to leap off a cliff, while most other people are too scared to get close to the edge. Suddenly, I'm a kid again -- everything's possible. I promise you, this is going to be the greatest horror picture of all time and Baby Jane is going to be the greatest part you've played since Margo Channing. We'll get you another Oscar, Bette. You'll be the first to get three.

BETTE

Can I ask you a very simple question? And don't lie. Why this picture?

ALDRICH

Honestly? I'm not being offered anything else.

That makes her laugh. She likes him. Then --

ALDRICH (CONT'D)

You're too big for Broadway, Bette. Come back to Hollywood where you belong.

Off her dilemma, we --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

34 EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS -- DAY 34

Aldrich walks through the busy lot, script under his arm.

35 INT. STUDIO OFFICE -- DAY 35

Aldrich sits with a slick STUDIO EXECUTIVE.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE

It's a socko script, Bob. Just socko. We ran the numbers and it looks doable. Very doable.

*

ALDRICH

Fantastic.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE

But there's the question of cast.

ALDRICH

What about them?

STUDIO EXECUTIVE

We feel like Crawford and Davis are maybe a little long in the tooth.

(a beat, delicately)

What if we go just a *little* bit younger. How about Hepburn for the Blanche role?

ALDRICH

Katharine Hepburn's the same age as Davis. I think she's a year older.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE

Audrey Hepburn. And Doris Day as Baby Jane.

36 EXT. STUDIO -- GOLF CART -- DAY 36

Aldrich sweats as he follows a YOUNG STUDIO EXECUTIVE.

YOUNG STUDIO EXECUTIVE

Are you kidding? We love Davis and Crawford for this!

ALDRICH

Terrific.

YOUNG STUDIO EXECUTIVE

This character of the sexy neighbor girl. You thought about that?

(CONTINUED)

ALDRICH

Uh. Not yet. It's a small part.

YOUNG STUDIO EXECUTIVE

Yeah, let's beef that up. In fact, we want to tell the story from her point of view. You know, like Hitchcock did with "Rear Window."

ALDRICH

The story's not about the sexy neighbor girl.

YOUNG STUDIO EXECUTIVE

We want to make it about her. We've been looking for something for Natalie Wood.

Aldrich sits with a BURNED OUT EXECUTIVE.

BURNED OUT EXECUTIVE

It's not gonna work here, Bob.

ALDRICH

I'm not taking "no" for an answer, Marty. These two women are legends. They have millions of fans all across the globe who'll pay good money for the chance to see them paired on the screen.

BURNED OUT EXECUTIVE

I agree. It's not Davis and Crawford we don't want. It's you, Bob.

Bob just stares, shocked.

BURNED OUT EXECUTIVE (CONT'D)

We're just not prepared to get into bed with you. Not after "Sodom." No offense.

(waves to waiter)

Bromo.

(to Aldrich)

Now, if you were willing to take a reduced fee, maybe a co-producer credit, I think we could interest Huston in directing.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

HOLLYWOOD TITAN JACK WARNER LOOKS DIRECTLY AT US.

JACK WARNER
Would you fuck 'em?

Reveal we're in --

38 INT. JACK WARNERS OFFICE -- DAY -- 1961

38

A now desperate Aldrich sits awkwardly watching as powerful studio head JACK WARNER, lies supine on a massage table getting a rubdown from a PRETTY BUXOM MASSEUSE, 28.

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*
*

ALDRICH
I...I don't know.

JACK WARNER
It's a very simple question, Bobby
-- would you give either one of those broads a toss in the hay?
Would you fuck 'em?

Aldrich thinks, growing nervous, not wanting to give the wrong answer. Then, he laughs --

ALDRICH
Yes?

JACK WARNER
What?! Bullshit. So it's a no, Bobby.
(then)
So every studio in town has passed on this project and you come to me as a last stop. I find that disrespectful.

*

ALDRICH
Not last, Jack. Inevitable.
(beat, the big sell)
It's kismet that we make this picture here. Warners is the only studio that worked with both Crawford and Davis when they were under contract. It would be like a homecoming. Get big headlines. They're still big stars.

*

JACK WARNER
Big has-beens you mean. And big pains in my ass. Both these women made my life a living hell when they worked for me because they thought I worked for THEM!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JACK WARNER (CONT'D)

More perks, always questioning the material I wanted them to do, big fucking headaches.

*
*

Warner gets up from the table, still in his robe and heads over to his desk, puts on his glasses.

*

ALDRICH

Oh, come on, Jack...

JACK WARNER

It's true! And the worst part? The ingratitude. They acted like I was doing something to 'em, while I was giving them everything. I created goddesses. I was Zeus and they were a coupla Aphrodites. But you know what happens when Aphrodite's tits start to sag and her pictures start losing money? When Venus, who should keep her mouth shut and just look pretty, starts having opinions about things? Zeus hurls a lightning bolt at her head and splits it open, that's what.

*
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*

(pauses)

You've got a really short goddamn memory.

*
*

ALDRICH

What's that supposed to mean?

*
*

JACK WARNER

That bitch Davis sued me in '36 to be let out of her contract. Literally sued me. I got so upset I got an ulcer and hemorrhoids from that. And let me tell you something else...I won that case and she was ordered back to work with me --

*
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*

ALDRICH

All she wanted was better roles Jack, some say in her own destiny --

*
*
*

JACK WARNER

-- but it was because of her selfishness and bullheadedness that the studio contract system came crashing down. She put the crack in the levee and now you want me to work with her? Never. Never again! Her unemployment is my long simmering revenge.

*
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*
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*

Aldrich pauses. Now is either the moment to leave, or fight. *
Then, quietly --

ALDRICH

You're gonna make my picture, Jack.

JACK WARNER

I'm sorry?

ALDRICH

You need it. Television's been killing you. And the movies you are making? One bomb after another. "Crowded Sky"? Bomb. "Girl of the Night," "A Fever in the Blood"? You couldn't give away tickets. You know why? No stars. I've got stars, I've got a great script that I wrote myself, that I believe in, and I have a genre they aren't doing on TV -- horror. Classy horror.

JACK WARNER

No.

ALDRICH

I have most of the financing, from Seven Arts. All I need is for you to release it in your theaters. You'll be the largest profit participant, and we'll pay you first.

Jack just stares at him. But he doesn't say no.

Light bulbs FLASH. Bette and Joan stand side by side getting their pictures taken, working the press like maestros.

SECOND REPORTER

Miss Davis, how do you feel about Baby Jane Hudson? We hear she's pretty mean.

BETTE

She's full of venom and doesn't mince words. We have nothing in common.

The reporters laugh.

JOAN

Which is so wonderful for me,
Jimmy. I usually play the bitch.
Now I can sit back and watch Bette
do it.

More laughter. More photos. Mamacita hands Joan a bottle of Pepsi as Joan slips her arm through Bette's elbow, an act of sisterly affection. A moment of resentment flashes through Bette's eyes at being forced to pose with a soft drink -- but it passes quickly. To the side, Aldrich whispers to Warner.

ALDRICH

I told you -- together they are an
EVENT.

JACK WARNER

I can't believe you talked me into this.

Bette and Joan are approaching the table for the photo op and contract signing. An OLDER REPORTER nudges a novice.

OLDER REPORTER

Who do you think's gonna grab the
chair on the left?

YOUNGER REPORTER

Whaddya mean?

OLDER REPORTER

Whoever gets there first gets top
billing under the caption in
tomorrow's paper.

The Novice nods, sees Joan quicken her pace to get to the chair in question before Bette. Just as soon as Joan pulls the chair out for herself, Bette scoots right in, plops down.

BETTE

Why thank you, Lucille.

Joan hides her displeasure at Bette's quick move.

PHOTOGRAPHER

How about one with the two of you
signing your contracts?

As the cameraman prepares to shoot, Joan decides to remain standing and, laying her hands on Bette's shoulders, leans forward, strategically placing her head to Bette's right.

40

CONTINUED:

40

They each pick up a pen and smile. Picture taken, Joan looks over Bette's shoulder, sees something in her co-star's contract that momentarily makes her lose her composure.

ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPHER

One more.

Joan quickly recovers. Big smiles. FLASH.

41

INT. HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

41

Joan, angrily preparing a hasty exit, is handed her gloves by Mamacita, who follows behind, having trouble keeping up.

JOAN

Get the car, Mamacita.

Aldrich rushes up to her, waving her contract.

ALDRICH

Joan, wait. You didn't sign your contract.

JOAN

I expected better from you, Bob. I truly did. Though I don't know why. Starting with my no-good father who ran off with a stripper from Galveston when I was a baby, to Louis Mayer, who promised me I'd be performing at the MET but instead cut all my songs from *Ice Capades of 1939* because Jeanette MacDonald told him there wasn't room enough at MGM for two musical stars. I've been lied to and cheated on by men my entire life. Why should you be any different?

*

ALDRICH

What are you talking about, Joan?

JOAN

She's getting six hundred a week more in expenses than I am. I can't go into this project feeling resentment toward my co-star, Bob. Not when it was my idea to throw this party in the first place! I'll bet you never pulled anything like this with Kirk Douglas on *The Last Sunset*.

*

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

ALDRICH

It was an oversight, Joan. I'll take care of it. I promise.

JOAN

(emotional)

You do understand it's not about the money? It's about trust.

ALDRICH

Of course.

JOAN

(pulling on her glove)

I want fifteen hundred.

Joan marches out the door, leaving Aldrich stunned. Nearby, Jack Warner waves to Aldrich as if to say "I told you so!"

42 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM -- DAWN (1962)

42

*

Joan is sleeping. The phone rings. She answers it, groggily.

JOAN

Hello?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Joan, it's George. I've got bad news...

JOAN

Did they cancel the picture?

Off Joan, waiting for a response --

43 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY (LATER)

43

On the coffee table: that morning's LA TIMES front page with a picture of Marilyn Monroe and the headline: "MONROE DEAD at 36!" Joan paces, very upset, weepy. Veteran director and old friend GEORGE CUKOR nurses a cup of coffee.

JOAN

Do they know for sure it was suicide?

GEORGE CUKOR

No autopsy yet, but they found pill bottles, empty pill bottles.

JOAN

Damnit George, this shouldn't have happened!

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE CUKOR

Joanie, you need to calm down. You mustn't feel guilty.

JOAN

Guilty? Guilty for what?

GEORGE CUKOR

For those horrible things you said about Marilyn in the press.

JOAN

And I was right. She was cheap, an exhibitionist. She was never a professional and that irritated the hell out of people, including me. But for goddsakes, she needed help.

(beat)

Why wasn't anybody with her? She had all these people on her payroll. Where the hell were they when she needed them? Why the hell did she have to die alone?

George realizes she's talking about herself, says nothing.

JOAN BLONDELL (O.S.)

The 1950s were a tough decade for all of us mature gals.

*

CUT TO:

Movie icon JOAN BLONDELL, now blowsy and a lot of fun, is being miked as our DOCUMENTARY INTERVIEWER, ADAM nods and listens to her. This scene is captured by B-ROLL, it's very real because she doesn't know the camera is recording her. She's white-haired with a no-nonsense demeanor. Title card reads: JOAN BLONDELL, Contract Player at Warner Brothers, 1930-1938..

*

*

*

JOAN BLONDELL

The studio system was dying out big-time, and the only women getting work had big chests and small brains. Say, is this documentary about all of us or just Joanie? Is it like "That's Entertainment?"

*

ADAM THE DOCUMENTARIAN

Um...not sure.

JOAN BLONDELL *
 (touching his sleeve with
 affection)
 Well honey, I'm sure that both *
 people who see it will LOOOOOVE it.

JUMP CUT: Joan is now in the chair ala Olivia. *

JOAN BLONDELL (CONT'D) *
 What were we talking about? You're *
 so goddamned cute I got distracted. *
 Hey, anybody got a drink for this *
 girl here? Thanks, honey. *

ADAM THE DOCUMENTARIAN
 How tough it was for women in the 50s.

JOAN BLONDELL *
 Right, but not for Joan. Wow, she
 was really something! She barrelled
 through the decade like a freight
 train. She kept her figure. She
 kept her fans. She even kept her
 salary, even after she left MGM for
 Warners. So what if her co-stars
 kept getting younger and younger.

A45 INT. "AUTUMN LEAVES" MOVIE SET -- DAY (1955)

A45

Joan is on a bed in a clinch with younger co-star Cliff
 Robertson. We see the crew around her getting the shot.

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
 She was still Joan. Still ambitious as
 hell and making hits until she got the
 best offer of her career in 1955 --

45 INT. CHAPEL -- DAY -- 1955

45

Joan, in virginal white, gazes adoringly at chubby
 millionaire AL STEELE.

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
 -- a proposal from widower Al
 Steele, CEO of Pepsi Cola and one
 of the wealthiest men in the
 country. With all that money, after
 40 years of working her ass off,
 sweating over every goddamned dime,
 she could finally exhale and live
 the high-life.

MINISTER
 Al, you may kiss the bride.

JOAN
(sly, so relieved)
Come to Momma.

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
Bette, well, she was a different
story. After "All About Eve," she
was on top of the world.

46 OMITTED 46

A47 INT. MAINE HOUSE -- DAY -- 1956 A47

Bette, being domestic, mixes two martinis. She places them on
a serving tray. We follow her to --

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
She thought she'd be swamped by
offers, but her big comeback turned
into an even bigger letdown. So
Bette decided she'd throw herself
into the one role she'd never
gotten right: wife and mother. She
married her "All About Eve" co-
star, Gary Merrill.

-- GARY MERRILL sits lounging. Bette, annoyed, serves him his
martini from the tray. He takes it, king of his castle. Bette
looks at him. She takes the other martini and downs it in one
gulp. Bette SMELLS something -- shit --

47 INT. MAINE HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- 1956 47

Two oven-mitted hands pull a burnt apple pie out of the oven.
Bette, miserable, wearing a gingham apron, cigarette dangling
from her lips, looks at her creation and frowns.

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
Bette was, to say the least,
miscast.

She slams the oven door shut with her knee.

48 OMITTED 48

49 INT. BETTE'S RENTAL HOUSE -- DAY 49

The front door is thrown open and Bette trudges into the dark
house, kicks off her shoes and makes her way across the dark
room to the HALLWAY. Unbuttoning her blouse, dropping it on
the floor, as she makes her way to the --

50 INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 50

Bette, about to unzip her skirt, in the mirror, she sees a man lying on her bed, a hat over his eyes.

BETTE
My my. Look what the cat dragged in.

MAN
Hello, wife.

The man lifts his hat, turns. It's Gary, Bette's estranged husband. Bette notices the bottle of Scotch beside him.

BETTE
Make yourself useful for once, Gary. Fix me a Scotch and soda.

Bette scoots into her bathroom.

51 INT. MASTER BATHROOM -- INTERCUT 51

GARY
I've been reading about you and Crawford. You start shooting next week?

BETTE
On day five I get to kick her right in the head. I can't wait.

She slips on an attractive robe, checks her face in the mirror. She has missed him and wants to look good.

BETTE (CONT'D)
So what brings you crawling back to Hollywood? Another guest shot on "Wagon Train"?

GARY
Actually, it's "Twilight Zone."

BETTE
That should be easy for you. Our whole marriage was a Twilight Zone.

BACK TO MASTER BEDROOM. Bette glides back in.

BETTE (CONT'D)
You went to bed with Margo Channing, but you woke up with me. Pure science fiction.

(CONTINUED)

Gary hands Bette her drink. They toast.

GARY

Why did we stop living together again?

BETTE

Because you wanted me to starch your shirts and greet you at the door with a martini in hand and ask "how was your day at work, darling? I was the one who needed a wife. I was the one who had a shot at being the best that ever was.

GARY

Here, I brought you something. You've wanted this for a long time.

Bette eyes the wrapped box he suddenly holds up, which, from the look of it, could be jewelry. Bette, touched despite herself, takes it, unwraps it with growing excitement and sentiment. Then getting the box open, her face falls as she sees what's inside: divorce papers.

GARY (CONT'D)

It's all there, Bette. I gave you everything: the kids, the houses, the bank accounts --

BETTE

You goddamned prick! How dare you break into my home -- to give me THIS!

Bette slaps him. He slaps her back. He throws her down on the bed. She tries to slug him, but he grabs her arms.

GARY

Admit it, Bette -- you don't want me, but you can't stand the idea of me being with anybody else.

BETTE

Who'd have you, you broken-down drunk?

GARY

You would, you miserable old hag.

He grabs her. She pushes him away. He kisses her, throws her down on the bed. They wrestle until passion takes over.

(CONTINUED)

"Pilot" Green Revisions 10/27/16 34.
51 CONTINUED: (2) 51

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
You know why they really broke up?
It wasn't his performance in bed.
It was his performance on stage. *
God, was Gary a stiff. *

52 EXT. THEATRE -- ST. LOUIS -- NIGHT -- 1958 52
A less than glamorous crowd shuffles into a theatre.

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
Just when Bette realized her
marriage was about to close, she
took it on the road.

The marquee reads: Bette Davis in "The World of Carl Sandburg." In smaller letters: also starring Gary Merrill.

53 INT. THEATRE -- ON STAGE 53

As Bette awaits her turn to read, Gary stands at a lectern dutifully reading a poem by Carl Sandburg. Bette notices the audience whispering, clearly bored.

A54 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM -- DAY (1978) A54

BACK TO BLONDELL. *

JOAN BLONDELL *
You know she had him fired from the
tour! Her own husband! Replaced him
the very next day with Barry
Sullivan. See, Barry was a
consummate professional, but there
were some things even he couldn't
do.

54 INT. BETTE'S RENTAL HOME -- BEDROOM -- NIGHT 54

As Gary sleeps naked under the covers, Bette looks at him, then slips out of bed, walks gingerly to the night stand where the divorce papers were left. She pours herself the last drops of the bottle of Scotch, then peruses the papers. Taking a glance back at Gary one more time --

JOAN BLONDELL (V.O.) *
When Bette had to choose, she
always picked the professional over
the private.

-- she then signs the divorce papers. DISSOLVE TO:

55 INT. BETTE'S RENTAL HOUSE -- DAWN

55

As Bette now sleeps, Gary slips out quietly from the bed, starts to dress. As he goes to the night table to retrieve his watch, he sees, under the finished glass of Scotch, the divorce papers, opened and signed by Bette.

With bittersweet satisfaction, Gary slides the papers into his inner jacket pocket, and tiptoes out. A moment later, Bette turns, awake. She looks over at the now-empty side of the bed, then HEARS the front door SLAM SHUT. Bette falls back, sighs, feeling very much alone.

She glances over at something. Holds it in her gaze. It's a reminder of her career, something she put above everything else: HER FIRST OSCAR. As Bette stares at it sadly:

JOAN (O.S.)

She actually claimed she coined the term "Oscar." Can you imagine?

56 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

56

Peter is getting out of elegant evening clothes, changing for bed. Joan is at her vanity, a bowl of half-cut lemons before her. She's feverishly grinding them into her elbows.

JOAN

When she nabbed the award for "Dangerous" in '35, she told the press that its posterior looked just like her first husband's ass. His middle name was Oscar. But nobody ever called him that. So it was just more bullshit. His name was Harmon. Everyone called him "Ham." She divorced him two seconds after she won, I can tell you that. I guess there wasn't room for two hams in one family.

PETER

Joanie, do you have to keep doing that?

JOAN

What? It's how I keep my elbows supple.

PETER

It's like sleeping with a can of Lemon Pledge. But I wasn't talking about that. Do you realize from the time we got in the car tonight, all through dinner and now, all you've done is complain about Bette Davis?

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

That's not true.

PETER

It is. And I'll be honest, I don't understand it. You two have so much in common. More than any two other people on the planet probably. Why can't you just get along?

JOAN

Don't you think I've tried? From her earliest days. Back when she won that damn Oscar. I was the FIRST person to send her a congratulatory note and bouquet. And do you know, I never heard back? NOT A WORD. Radio silence. Here I was, the biggest star at MGM, reaching out a gracious hand to a newcomer, and this after she tried to screw my boyfriend. Franchot was her co-star in that picture, you know.

PETER

(weary of it)

Yeah, you mentioned that at dinner.

JOAN

She knew he was mine. That's why she tried to take him away. He rejected her advances, of course. Told me everything. And then I married him out of spite. Do you realize Bette Davis is responsible for one of my failed marriages? Personally responsible!

PETER

And yet you still wanted her to do this picture with you. I think it's because you two survived all that, and you know you really should be friends.

JOAN

Friends? You think it's friendship I want from her? Is that what you think?! Wrong! Respect! It's the only thing I ever wanted from her -- or any of them! And it's the one thing I never got.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOAN (CONT'D)

While she was off doing "Of Human Bondage" with Leslie Howard -- and being denied the awards everyone thought she so richly deserved -- I was holding my own in "Grand Hotel" with Garbo and two fucking Barrymores! And they still saw me as just some clotheshorse. Some...tramp. She was playing one, but they all said I was one. It took me until "Mildred Pierce" to be taken seriously as an actress. And do you think when I won my Oscar I received any congratulatory notes or bouquets?

PETER

No.

JOAN

Oh, but I did. From men. Only from men. Men whose admiration I already possessed, and whose respect I never craved. But not the ladies. None of the bitches in this town. Least of all the Queen Bitch, who always thought she was better than me, more talented than me. Oh, I think Stanwyck may have sent me some sad zinnias from the corner grocery. But that was it. And why? Because I took the business of being a star seriously. I created this face, in the beginning I thought it was all I had. I looked in that mirror and ruthlessly assessed my flaws. I had to make myself beautiful. I couldn't coast on talent. And I certainly wasn't going to get any awards for being repulsive or grotesque.

PETER

(dawning)

You admire her...

JOAN

I admire her talent and her craft. And I will have her respect. Even if I have to kill both of us to get it.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

- 57 INT. SOUNDSTAGE -- DAY (1962) 57 *
- Carpenters start building the film's interiors as Aldrich consults with the set designer.
- 58 INT. BETTE'S BEVERLY HILLS RENTED HOME -- DAY 58
- A HORNY-LOOKING HANDYMAN washes the windows as he eyes B.D, Bette's Juno-esque daughter, in a skimpy bikini top, helping her mother run lines.
- B.D.
(reading Blanche stiffly)
"...you wouldn't treat me this way
if I wasn't in this wheelchair."
- BETTE
"But y'are, Blanche --
(steps toward door)
Y'are in that wheelchair."
- Bette SLAMS IT, thus ending the ogling.
- 59 INT. JOAN'S BRENTWOOD HOME -- DAY 59
- Joan practices using a wheelchair, rolling past Mamacita, who applauds Joan's valiant efforts. While seated, Joan takes a little bow.
- 60 INT. BETTE'S BEDROOM -- DAWN 60
- Bette's alarm clock, next to a full ashtray, BUZZES. It's 5 A.M. on the first production day of "Baby Jane." Bette wakes. A mess, she stumbles out of bed.
- 61 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM -- DAWN 61
- Joan's alarm clock also goes off at 5 A.M. We PAN ACROSS THE BED. Joan is not in it. We track to --
- 62 INT. JOAN'S BATHROOM -- DAWN 62
- to find Joan in the bathroom, already dunking her face in cold water and splashing her bosom with witch hazel to firm and tighten the skin.
- 63 EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET -- 6 A.M. 63
- Bette drives her convertible as B.D. fiddles with the AM radio. Hit song of the day "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polkadot Bikini" BLARES to B.D.'s delight and Bette's consternation.

(CONTINUED)

B.D.

Why do I even have to come, Mother?

BETTE

Because the last time I left you alone I found you in the shed with the gardener. Do you know how hard it is to find a good gardener in this city?

B.D.

(sullenly)

He wasn't that good.

Bette gives her a fierce look. As she turns a corner, she flings her cigarette out of the car.

BETTE

Christ!

She TURNS off the RADIO, much to the annoyance of B.D.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE -- DAY

Joan's Cadillac pulls up to one of Warner's B-level ramshackle studios in a rundown section of Hollywood. Joan stuffs her disappointment, and head held high, marches through the door.

*

INT. SOUNDSTAGE -- MINUTES LATER

Busy CREW MEMBERS part a pathway for Joan as she strides by, greeting them all as close friends.

JOAN

(to various crew)

Hey, Billy, how's the new baby? Fred! Looks like you've lost a few pounds. I hope your mother's feeling better, Pablo.

Just a few steps behind Joan, Mamacita pulls a wagon full of wrapped gifts, hands one to each worker.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(to an OLDER WORKER)

Dave! How lovely to see you again after all these years.

DAVE

Miss Crawford!

65

CONTINUED:

65

Dave beams as he's handed his gift. The rest of the workers turn to each other, murmuring, confused as to how Joan knew so much about them.

66

INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM -- DAY

66

A shithole. Years removed from the star treatment she once had. Joan enters, surveys it. Will she bolt? Then --

JOAN

Mamacita, get the carpenter. We'll need more shelves right over there...and a table for Alice to answer my fan mail. Oh, good, my tea set will fit right there.
(rolling up sleeves)
Okay Mamacita, let's get to work.

Mamacita holds up a toilet brush and a pair of latex gloves.

67

INT. SOUNDSTAGE -- MINUTES LATER

67

A GRIZZLED TEAMSTER opens up a delicately wrapped gift box from Lord & Taylor he was given by Joan, pulls out a silk tie. Next to him an EQUALLY GRIZZLED FRIEND tries to figure out what he'll do with a pair of cufflinks. Bette, sunglasses on, strides by with B.D. Seeing the workmen with presents:

BETTE

Balls! She's at it again. Sucking up to the goddamned crew so she gets better lighting and props.

B.D.

Maybe she's just being nice mother.

Bette stops in her tracks when she sees a HUGE PEPSI MACHINE Joan has installed.

68

INT. BETTE'S DRESSING ROOM -- SECONDS LATER

68

Bette drops her bag, lights a cigarette and paces the room. B.D. flops in a chair. Bette notices a bouquet of flowers with a card. She picks it up, reads it, rips it in half.

BETTE

What a phoney.

B.D.

Mother, she's going to hear you.

(CONTINUED)

BETTE

She did the same thing at Warner's. Every day for months she sent me little gifts, fawning all over me like some lesbian schoolgirl while she slipped the steak knife in my back.

B.D.

Do I really have to suffer through these Joan Crawford stories again?

BETTE

Well here's one I kept from you, but now you're old enough to hear it -- she hit on me at a party! Grabbed my ass and made a drunken pass. And when I rejected her, she was so embarrassed she spread decades of lies about me!

(lights a cigarette)

Joan Crawford screwed eeeeeverybody. Anything that moved. She slept with every male star at MGM except Lassie!

B.D.

(bored)

Are you done?

Joan draws on a bit of eyeliner. Stares at herself in the mirror. A beat. She digs in her purse, pulls out a silver flask, takes a swig.

SLOW PULL BACK reveal Bette, watching unseen at the door.

BETTE

Before noon, Lucille?

Joan, caught, says nothing.

BETTE (CONT'D)

Got enough to share?

Joan pauses, then gets up and pours some of the vodka into a paper cup. Hands it to Bette. A beat. Joan makes a toast.

JOAN

To us. Together at last.

They click, both sit down. Bette lights a cigarette. An uncomfortable pause. Then --

BETTE

Nervous?

JOAN

Terrified. I haven't made a picture in what...

BETTE

Six years. You haven't worked in six years, Joan.

Joan laughs, so does Bette. A beat, then --

BETTE (CONT'D)

But you'll be great.

They drink. An awkward silence, then --

JOAN

When I drove onto the lot this morning, saw all the crew bustling, saw the scenery being built, smelled that sawdust...it's magic, isn't it? What we do?

She stubs out her cigarette and stands.

*

BETTE

Let's cut through the bullshit.

*

(then)

I don't like you, you don't like me, but we need this picture to work. Both of us. All I ask is that you cut the Queen of England crap and do your best work. Try. That's all I ask. Because when you're good, Joan -- goddamnit, you're good.

Joan pauses, extremely moved. This is the Bette approval she's waited for her entire life. Her eyes well.

JOAN

You really think so?

BETTE

Oh Jesus, are you gonna cry? Yes, I think so. I've always thought so.

Bette goes for the door. As she does, as an aside --

BETTE (CONT'D)

Oh and one last thing...lose the shoulder pads.

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

I'm sorry?

BETTE

And Christ, cut down on the mascara. You're playing a recluse who hasn't seen the sun for twenty years.

*

*

Off Joan, nostrils flaring in fury --

ALDRICH (O.S.)

Bette...please, let me handle this.

Joan, in her wheelchair, is being fitted with a body mic while Aldrich and Bette stand nearby.

BETTE

What is the problem? All I was doing was offering some ideas.

JOAN

Don't tell me about how to play my character before I even shoot a scene. I've done a lot of preparation and hard work and you're just trying to throw me.

BETTE

Throw you? I'm trying to help you! What are we making here, some soft-lens piece of shit that went out of fashion or a gritty character piece about two women alone on the edge?

*

JOAN

You want me to look bad and I won't do it. My fans show up to a Joan Crawford picture expecting to see Joan Crawford. And that's what they're going to get. If you want to see the girl next door, go next door!

*

*

*

(then --)

Mr. Aldrich, could you please escort Miss Davis to her dressing room so that she can work on her character? Or am I gonna get out of this wheelchair and walk off the set?

Bob gently takes Bette aside --

BETTE

She looks ridiculous, Bob. And Jesus Christ, look -- she's got falsies in there!

Bob looks, sees the SOUND TECHNICIAN is having trouble putting on the body mike because of the fake tits Joan has inserted that gives her the bustline of a twenty-year-old.

ALDRICH

Let me handle it.

BETTE

Okay, handle it. Now.

*

ALDRICH

It's the first day, Bette, okay? Need I remind you I put a second mortgage on my house to make this movie? So don't act like I don't care. She needs to be handled carefully, she's nervous.

BETTE

And drunk, she's also drunk.

ALDRICH

Look -- there's a lot to do. We haven't even set your look yet and your first scene's up right after lunch.

Bette takes a beat, then stomps off as Joan gets a touch up by a MAKE UP ARTIST.

MAKEUP ARTIST

You have a perfect face for the movies, Miss Crawford. There are no bad angles.

JOAN

(all but purring)

Bless you, Jimmy.

Joan's first scene. She sits in her wheelchair, ready.

CLAPPER

Scene eleven. Take one.

The sound of the clapboard throws Joan off, makes her flinch.

ALDRICH
(seeing Joan confused)
Joan?

Joan looks up from her knitting, motions she's ready.

ALDRICH (CONT'D)
No, Joan: Blanche is watching one
of her old pictures on TV.

JOAN
Oh, yes...of course.

Joan turns to the TV. Aldrich exchanges a nervous look with
his cameraman, both aware Joan hasn't made a movie in years.

ALDRICH
Okay then....roll camera. ACTION!

Joan immediately snaps into character. Her eyes soften with
bittersweet nostalgia as she stares at the TV. Suddenly,
"Blanche" sees something she doesn't like.

JOAN (AS BLANCHE)
"Oh, he really should have held
that shot longer. I told him at
rehearsal and when we were shooting
he wouldn't listen. But still, it's
a pretty good picture."

ALDRICH
Cut.

She's actually amazing. Emotional and real. Aldrich looks to
his cameraman who gives him a thumbs up.

ALDRICH (CONT'D)
Great work, Joan.

Joan smiles, relieved. Her old star confidence floods back
into her and her spine goes straighter. Then --

JOAN
Give me one more, Bob. I'm just
getting warmed up.

Bette violently ransacks a row of dresses as a COSTUMER
stands by, as does a MAKEUP ARTIST and a HAIRSTYLIST. A bored
B.D. chews gum and flips through a magazine in the corner.

BETTE

These are wrong. I want her to look demented. Like that sort of lady you see at the bank...who hasn't taken off her makeup for years. Every day she just puts on another layer.

She finds a dress she likes, all white, frayed, moth-eaten.

BETTE (CONT'D)

This one. Wigs.

She is lead to a collection on stands.

WISECRACKING WIG LADY

Funny fact for you, Bette. Joan wore this one in some early 1930s MGM melodrama. And from the looks of it, it hasn't been touched since.

Bette inspects it. It's blonde, with big sausage curls. Utterly ridiculous and girlish, like Joan. Eyes widening in feral excitement, Bette SNATCHES it off the wig stand.

Bette is at her lit vanity, getting to work, doing her own makeup (but we do not see her). She dips a brush in various pots of rouge and powder. The team assembled stares in horror. Even B.D. cannot believe what she's witnessing.

B.D.

My God, mother. Is that how you really want to look?

BETTE (O.S.)

Just wait...I haven't even started.

Joan is examining a script with Aldrich. The crew waits. Suddenly, heads begin to turn. A LIGHTING TECHNICIAN turns a spot on an APPROACHING FIGURE, who suddenly STOPS.

Joan and Aldrich look up. A shocked expression passes from person to person, like a wave, as they see --

BETTE...as sour-faced Baby Jane in ghastly Kabuki makeup, garish smeared lipstick and a wig with curly tendrils.

JOAN
(aghast)
She can't be serious.

Bette walks up to Aldrich, does a little spin in front of him in her lacy pinafore. Then placing her hands on her hips, she looks directly into Aldrich's eyes, daring him to comment.

BETTE
(complete Baby Jane)
Hello, Daddy.

The entire place has gone silent, waiting for Aldrich's reaction. He observes her from head to toe. She bats her eyes. Then, Aldrich does the unexpected:

He applauds.

After a moment, the crew applauds as well. Joan is furious.

CUT TO:

Empty and reserved to watch the day's rushes. Only around twenty seats. Bob sits silently in the back row with Pauline. Joan enters with her knitting, sits on the far left. A beat, then Bette enters, sits on the far right. They refuse to look at each other. It's war now.

Joan's scenes play first. ONSCREEN, Blanche's SIDE of a scene. Only her CLOSE UP in the frame. 3-2-1 then --

JOAN/BLANCHE
You wouldn't be able to do these awful things to me if I weren't still in this chair!

BETTE/JANE (O.C.)
But ya are Blanche! Ya are in that chair!

ALDRICH (O.C.)
Cut! Good Joan, more anger next time. Remember, you're a prisoner and she's the jail warden!

Another take starts right away, slightly modulated. We HOLD ON JOAN watching this, quietly devastated.

JOAN
Bob, don't you think the lighting is a little...harsh?

(CONTINUED)

ALDRICH

(covering)

I haven't color corrected the
footage, Joan, don't you worry.

*
*
*
*

JOAN

But it's a black and white picture.

*
*

We hold on Joan as she turns back, hear another take. Joan
watches herself silently. All her attempts at previous
glamour have failed. She's crushed and worried.

*
*

She takes a beat, fights emotion, then stands and leaves.

Bette says nothing.

Now it's Bette's turn. The scene in question: Baby Jane
approaches a MIRROR. She finally sees herself, a horror show
in white face, and let's out a SCREAM at what she's become.

Bette watches herself intently. A single tear rolls down her
cheek as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

A grand house with a grand lawn. Imposing.

76

CONTINUED:

76

CLOSE: a car door opens. A shapely leg in fuck-me pumps exits.

CLOSE: another car door opens. Another leg, this one in sensible shoes.

Joan and Bette, both dressed up, meet at the path leading up to the house. They pause. Bette gestures -- "you first."

They walk up to the house silently, not looking at one another. They share a sense of quiet dread.

Joan rings the doorbell. A beat. Hedda Hopper answers. Hedda smiles like a cobra.

HEDDA HOPPER

Welcome to the house that fear
built.

She gestures for Joan and Bette to enter. They do.

77

INT. HEDDA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

77

Joan and Bette follow Hedda inside. Joan notes the absence of any other guests. As Bette and Joan remove their wraps, hand them to a waiting HOUSE MAID:

JOAN

It's just the two of us for dinner?

HEDDA HOPPER

The three of us. Didn't I specify that in the invitation? I suppose you expected one of my legendary dinner parties. No, Gloria and Jimmy Stewart and the Fondas are on Wednesday. Tonight it's just us gals. I wanted everyone to feel free to let their hair down.

BETTE

For some reason mine's standing on end.

HEDDA HOPPER

(smiles)

Can I get you ladies some drinks?

BETTE

Scotch on the rocks.

Hedda looks to Joan, who produces her own silver flask.

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

Just a glass.

HEDDA HOPPER

I take it that's not Pepsi Cola.

JOAN

Vodka. Hundred proof. I say if you're going to drink, have something you like.

HEDDA HOPPER

Be right back. Dining room's through there. I hope you gals brought your appetites.

Hedda sweeps off. Joan and Bette are left alone for a beat.

BETTE

It's an ambush.

JOAN

She wants blood.

BETTE

Are we going to give it to her?

Joan looks at Bette.

JOAN

Not on your life.

For now at least, a meeting of the minds.

A BUTLER lifts a SILVER SERVING DOME revealing SALMON encased in gelatin aspic.

BETTE

Fish jello. Goody.

HEDDA HOPPER

It's aspic, darling. It's all the rage. I had the cook pull the recipe from this month's Ladies' Home Journal. I thought it would be the perfect dish to serve for our little tête-à-trois. Something substantial -- but transparent.

Hedda goes to the credenza and takes out a portable reel-to-reel tape recorder, puts it in the middle of the table. She clicks it over to "record."

HEDDA HOPPER(CONT'D)

All right, ladies. You know what I need, and you know what the fans want. We haven't had any excitement in this town since Lana Turner's dyke daughter knifed her mother's dago gangster boyfriend. So feel free to let 'er rip.

JOAN

Get ready to be disappointed, Hedda. Because Bette and I have been getting on like a house afire.

Hedda susses them out, senses an alliance. Testing it:

HEDDA HOPPER

So -- who gets top billing?

JOAN

Bette, of course. She plays the title role. There was no problem about that.

BETTE

Both roles are tremendously important. I'm just the first among equals.

JOAN

And I wouldn't have it any other way! I've been wanting to do a picture with Bette since 1944. So when I came across "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane," I sent it to Bob Aldrich and in no uncertain terms demanded this was only for Bette and me.

BETTE

And I was thrilled! Think of it, Joan Crawford was a BIG star when I arrived fresh off the boat. It's quite something to have one of your girlhood idols requesting you personally.

*

JOAN

(smile frozen on her face)
What a lovely thing to say. I may have become a star at a much younger age, but we're really very similar. We were each born under the sign of Aries.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOAN (CONT'D)

We're both single mothers. We've each had four husbands.

BETTE

And we both put at least one of 'em in the ground.

JOAN

Dear Bette.
(to Hedda)
What's for dessert?

HEDDA HOPPER

(deadly)
We're skipping dessert. I'm already getting diabetes.

Bette and Joan LAUGH. Their eyes meet. Alliance formed. They share a silent moment. Hedda watching them both. Controlled, but something roiling just under the surface...a surface Hedda is determined to get beneath.

As the CAMERA PULLS BACK, we hear Hedda's FUTURE RADIO BROADCAST.

HEDDA HOPPER(V.O.)

Dateline: Los Angeles. September 16, 1962. Stars of the night sky tend to keep to fixed orbits and never interfere with one another. Things sometimes operate that way in Hollywood, too. Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, stars of equal magnitude who ruled in motion pictures during the fabulous 30s, never got to know each other. Now, in the Indian Summer of their careers, they're about to...

SMASH TO BLACK.

END EPISODE ONE