

ACT I

The O'Shea house.

A large kitchen with a large eating area. This is where the family does most of its living. Back door, with curtained window. Door to basement. Narrow back stairs to 2nd story. Typewriter. Stack of newspapers. Cluttered but clean. Jo is baking. Mike is reading in his chair. Terri's on the phone. Becky is fiddling with her tape recorder.

Linda O'Shea enters and speaks to the audience.

Start

LINDA

Hi! Hello. (to somewhere in the last row) Everything ok back there? Great! Welcome to the O'Shea household. My name is Linda O'Shea and I'll be your tour guide. Do you remember the 1970's? (looking at specific audience members) Yes...No...Not sure, that's interesting. Okay, well, if you don't, it's a little difficult to describe them. Like when my mom tried to tell me about when she was little girl in the 1930's. The Depression. Ice-boxes and outdoor restrooms. No TV! Sounded pretty scary. Like Jules Verne or H.G. Wells, only in reverse. The 1970's had good music...

Linda's family suddenly looks out to the audience and sings a good song like, The Guess Who's: "American woman! Stay away from me!" They return to their work.

LINDA

And not so good music...

Linda's family suddenly looks out to the audience and sings a bad song like, Paul Anka's: "Having my baby..."

LINDA

Fashion?...the worst decade of the 20th century. No, please... I mean, come on, this blouse? I was sober when I bought this. All in all, I guess you could say that the 70's were ugly/beautiful. Sort of like vomiting, when you know vomiting will save your life.

This is what's called a "memory play." Which means that a lot of it is false. Right? I mean, come on, think of your own family. When you all get together and you're telling stories: *Remember all those crazy trips with Uncle Dave in his yellow Ford Falcon? What yellow Ford Falcon? Uncle Dave drove a Chevy and it was blue. What about that time I sold Christmas wreaths with Dad at the Winter Carnival and then we lost the envelope with the money and Father Reardon didn't believe us. You and Dad? That was me and Dad! That's my story! Of*

course, now we know all kinds of stuff about eyewitness testimony and how unreliable it is, even when you're the eyewitness and the testimony is about your own life. Not reliable. Let's say most of this is true. Well, parts of it. Maybe. I don't know anymore. They say every time you remember something, it changes a little and that change becomes part of the new memory until finally, you're remembering something that is unrecognizable from what actually happened. As Sister Aloysius used to say to us: *I'll leave you to ponder that fact, ladies and gentlemen.*

Over the course of 4 days in 1973, a series of events occurred in my life that was more memorable than anything else from that time. It's funny, you know, years later I would think, what was all the fuss? But at the time—these events were explosive. It was my Watergate. And like dominos, they just kept on falling. There was even a Saturday night massacre...sort of.

Okay, let's get started...Oh, one thing...For you to appreciate this story—keep in mind, we're talking old-school, analog living, okay? The 1970's social network was a no-frills, pared-down menu of options. You didn't tweet or text or skype or post on Facebook. For the most part, you lived your life in person. Crazy, right? You gossiped in person, you pontificated in person, you were held up to public ridicule in person. And public ridicule in a close-knit, hermetically sealed, Catholic parish was the ultimate nightmare.

Stop

On that note, let's get right to our cast. Up first, my mother:

Jo steps forward, waits to be judged. Apron. Oven mitts.

LINDA

Josephine Catherine O'Shea. She makes three meals a day, does all the shopping, vacuuming, dusting, mopping, waxing, washing, caulking, painting, gardening, nursing and ironing. Volunteers at the church, prepares the taxes, pays the bills and provides 24-hour care for her invalid mother-in-law. As my dad likes to proudly tell everyone:

DAD

(lowering his newspaper) Jo's never worked a day in her life!

MOM

I always smile when he says it.

LINDA

In her spare time, Mom takes in typing for Professor Tidwell who lives across the street and is writing an epic romance novel called:

MOM

"The Professor and the Farm Girl." It's not horrible.

LINDA

In her youth, Mom played piano. Wrote concertos. She won a scholarship, but....