

SCRIPT for GUT RENOVATION by Su Friedrich

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STYLE NOTES:

The font styles in this script relate to the various modes of address in the film, as follows:

Scene 1: This font is used to describe each scene or when something visual needs to be described within a scene.

This font is for text that appears on screen,
either over an image
or on a black background

This font is for natural speech—i.e. when a person is speaking on camera (or as a voiceover, but it's sound that was recorded live during filming, not written later.)

This font is a voiceover being “performed”, i.e. one that was written after filming.

*This font is when someone speaks on the film but can't be understood;
it appears as a yellow subtitle.*

The passing years are marked on screen by 2007, etc.

This font is for lyrics to a song being heard during a scene.

**THESE INDICATE THE APPEARANCE OF A MAP WITH CONSTRUCTION SITES BEING
COLORED IN WITH RED BOXES AND COUNTED OUT WHILE BEING NOTED.**

This font is when GRAFFITTI is seen on screen within a filmed image.

Scene 1: INTRO

We hear footsteps climbing a staircase while seeing b&w etchings and photographs of an old building. Camera then pans the exterior of the building and a POV shot as Su enters one of the spaces in it which has been gutted.

Spring 2010

Su: "Oh...Oh my god...they took everything down!...Oh, there's birds!...When we first came here, pigeons lived in here."

It had been empty
for twenty years.

Several pigeons fly across the space.

Su: "So they've come back..."

GUT RENOVATION

by Su Friedrich

Scene 2: HECLA HISTORY AND REZONING

A hand points out a spot on a map. Then one sees photographs of places decorated by works made by The Hecla Ironworks and photographs of the loft that we entered in Scene 1 as it was being renovated.

"In 1989, my girlfriend and her ex-girlfriend fell in love....with a beautiful, dilapidated loft in Williamsburg. They started renovating it and, with mixed feelings, I joined them. It was originally the Hecla Ironworks Building, built at the turn of the century. I mean, the other century.

They made decorative wrought iron pieces for many buildings in New York, like Carnegie Hall, the New York Stock Exchange, Saks Fifth Avenue, and The Waldorf Astoria."

When we moved into Williamsburg
in 1989, it was a working class
neighborhood, a home to
Italians, Poles and Hispanics.

It was also
a thriving manufacturing area.

"Lots of artists were moving into industrial spaces in Williamsburg. Most were renters, and they renovated the spaces at their own expense, just as we did.

Our landlord gave us two space heaters and installed a water pipe to the bathroom. We on the other hand emptied our bank accounts and put in eight months hard labor scraping the ceiling, stripping the old linoleum, building a kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms, studios and, eventually, a garden."

“The landlord told us at the outset that we could live there, but he gave us a commercial lease....and the city turned a blind eye. This was common practice at the time.”

Screen goes to black...

Drums and bagpipes begin playing the first few bars of “Auld Lang Syne”

On May 11, 2005,
the City Council approved
the rezoning of Williamsburg.
This made the industrial areas
open to
residential development.

They could have passed a loft law
to protect the artists
who lived in the rezoned area,
and enforced the laws
that protect residential tenants
from eviction,
but they didn’t.

Within days, the developers
swarmed in.

Motivated by all the great
tax breaks, they began to acquire,
evict, and demolish buildings
throughout the neighborhood.

A hand enters the frame and starts twirling an ornament like a mini disco ball hanging on a Christmas tree.

2006

Scene 3: HOUSE BEING DEMOLISHED

A young man and woman walk past a house being demolished; the woman sees the camera.

Why are you videotaping me?

Shots of details of the demolition are intercut with people exiting from an adjacent deli.
Cut to a closeup of Su’s hand as she colors in red areas and puts colored dots on a map, and then we see her cataloguing properties on a laptop.

“We had three years left on our lease, but I was beginning to wonder: Was I a dinosaur looking at the first snowflake?

In order to ignore that thought, I began to record every demolition and development in Williamsburg west of the expressway—an area only 6 blocks wide by 15 blocks long.”

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 1-15

Scene 4: NEW CONDOS AT MCCARREN PARK

Pan of a series of new buildings under construction around McCarren Park. A large poster with a photograph of the former building is seen on a plywood wall in front of the new building under construction.

This was posted
by someone
who missed the old building

Pan up a high-rise that's part of the McCarren Park group, then go inside their showroom and walk to a large screen TV playing a promotional video about it.

Video narration: “Just over the river is 20 Bayard, with its panoramic city views, only one stop from Manhattan. You won't believe how close you are. See the possibilities, then make your move. From your doorstep to the expanse of McCarren Park to the shops in your neighborhood. Your daily routine...beyond the ordinary. What does it all add up to? The sophistication of a boutique hotel with the hospitality of home. A place that spares no luxury. Sleek, beautiful design. Unexpected charms that create your world. Your own authentic style, fresh and personal. A place you'll love to live—above it all. “

Meanwhile, below “it all” and across from us was...

Scene 4: FRANK AND EDDIE ON OUR BLOCK

From the vantage point of our building window, a man, Frank, is seen eating lunch and then loading a truck at the Forklift Repair garage across the street.

Frank and Eddie
repaired forklifts
for the local industries.

In voiceover, one hears Su talking with Frank, while we see him loading up a moving truck and then we see shots of the green building.

Su: Anyway, it's gonna be strange...

Frank: Yeah.

Su: Did they sell the building already or what's....?

Frank: I think they did, that's why everybody gotta leave; not only us—it's everybody.

Fall 2006

Su: Uh huh....But not in the...I mean, in the, in the taller one too??

Frank: Yes!

Su: Oh, I thought it was only this building!

Frank: No, no....see, the whole green one...everything green, it's the same.

Su: Oh...Oh no....So what are they gonna do, tear it down?

Frank: I don't have no idea.

Su: Oh my god....

Frank drives a forklift into an adjacent garage. Fade to black as next title comes up..

Scene 5: N11/55 BERRY

And at the corner is a
beautiful old building
with small businesses
and artists' studios.
It has a bus repair garage
at one end.

And it's one of the first to go.

For the entire summer of 2006,
men tore down the bus garage
with jackhammers.

My crazy anger started then.

One sees workers dumping debris and inspecting a renovated industrial building.

Goodbye,
bus repair garage.

In front of the finished building, a model in a Jaguar is posing for a fashion photographer.

Hello, Madison Avenue.

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 16-27

Scene 6: THE INDUSTRIES OF WILLIAMSBURG

Pan to the foundation of a demolished industrial building.

In order to justify
the creation of Condoburg,
the city and the “developers”
claimed that industrial Williamsburg
was moribund.

Which was a lie.

And here,
to the tune of
“Kommt Zusammen”
[Come Together]

by a German band called
“Zwei Raum Wohnung”
[Two Room Apartment]

in alphabetical order
from
Auf Wiedersehen
to
Zeitgeist

are some of the former,
or still standing,
industries of Williamsburg.

*The song referred to begins now. No lyrics are printed here because it's
in German and the meaning is explained later.*

**A long montage of images of industrial buildings with some
explanatory texts over some of the images, as noted below (e.g
about Domino).**

This was becoming
a bowling alley.

When the moneyed class appeared,
the Sanitation Depot
had to be disappeared.

Which is what happened
the year after I shot this.

The Domino Sugar plant.

They made your sugar.

And no, they weren't saved.

The music stops during the voiceover but montage of building images continues.

“Around the time we moved in, the City Planning Office was in the middle of a detailed survey of Brooklyn waterfront neighborhoods with a view toward possible rezoning.

Contrary to the expectations of the survey team, they found that Williamsburg combined industrial and residential uses very successfully: Small businesses and industries provided reliable employment and generated tax revenue. Many people who worked in Williamsburg also lived in the neighborhood and could walk to work.

At the same time, by renting spaces in industrial buildings, artists were helping to sustain the viability of those buildings—and were shopping locally, were making the streets safer by populating them at night, *and* were paying commercial real estate taxes.

There were some issues, and one of the recommendations of the survey team was that the zoning should be changed from an M3, which allows heavy industry, to an M1, for light industry, to prevent the creation of more transfer stations for industrial and radioactive waste.

But, for the most part, the survey data was disregarded so that the final report could justify a rezoning for residential use.

I spoke with Isabel Hill, the woman in charge of the survey. She quit her job as a result of the city's response. She then made a film called “Made in Brooklyn” which showed persuasively that the industries of Brooklyn were alive and well.

The film caused a certain amount of debate, but the wheels turned, the developers saw how much money there was to be made, and the Bloomberg administration came in---with its focus on high-end residential development---and the area was rezoned.”

A building housing a company that makes plastic containers is seen. The camera pans to a large FOR SALE sign on the front of it. The following text fades in over that sign.

The gist of the song
is that each of us is
sometimes entirely alone,
but that condition
never lasts forever,
and we should
come together
and feel what
holds us together.

Camera pans across a building that makes plastic bags to an open bay, where one sees a machine that's spooling bags. Freeze frame on that as the following text scrolls up.

Why do we wonder
why all of our
zippers

boxes
tools
nails
fabrics
rugs
bags
and
everythings
are now labeled
Not Made in the U.S.A?

Scene 7: THE DEVELOPERS

Final shot of industries is a carpet warehouse; camera pans up to a newly built high-rise, then cuts to a view out Su's window as a group of developers walking by across the street. One of them stops to take a photo of her.

I stop to focus...

And so does he.

As he stands there, she yells out the window at them; they begin to walk away.

Su: You may think it's funny, but you're the people who are coming and ruining our neighborhood--and I'm recording it....**So:** Welcome to the neighborhood, you're ruining it!

"Have a nice day!"

Su: Well I won't, but I'm sure you will because you're making all the money!

How typical.

I make a fool
of myself

and they don't
give a shit.

Scene 8: THE CHURCH AND A NEW YEAR

An elderly woman is bent over inspecting some flower beds. As the camera pans up, we see that she's in the yard of an imposing Russian Orthodox church with onion domes. Church bells chime.

5,000 square foot lot...
ready for conversion?

Pan from the church to see a new condo at dusk with a young man on the balcony smoking a cigarette. Music counts down to a new year. An ornament of a devilish-looking cat swings on the branches of a Christmas tree.

*Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one...
Happy New Year!*

2007

MAP OF BUILDINGS: #28-40

Scene 9: THE IKON SALES PARTY

An ad on a telephone booth with a blonde woman and the slogan "Avoid the Papparazzi" is seen, then shots of the valet parkers in front of The Ikon condo.

Su: Hi Wendy, my name is Su Friedrich. I got an email from you to call you about coming to this, um, thing....Well, on the site I filled out the studio, although it could be a one bedroom. Yeah....I mean basically I want to come and see what the spaces are like....I live on North 11th...Okay, it's "F" as in Frank, R, I, E.....

Enter the party; montage of images of bright red tents, crowds with fancy cocktails, and the model apartment. Camera pans out window to see a modest 3 story apartment building behind The Ikon.

My friends live
in that green building.
They pay \$750/month rent.

A studio apartment here—
\$570,000.

Scene 10: AMY JENKINS' PARTY

Pan a street at night to an old industrial building.

Soon, there were other parties.

Su enters the building...

...like the one
at Amy Jenkins' loft
around the corner from us.

...and encounters another partygoer.

Cathy Diamond: Hi!

Su: Hi! How are you?

Cathy: Good! You coming up?

Su: Yes I am.

Cathy: Good, good...

They begin to climb the stairs to the party.

Cathy Diamond, a painter.

Su: I'm, uh, I'm actually making a film about the destruction of the neighborhood.

Cathy: It's...It's the evolutionary process...

Su: Yeah.

Cathy: And we're watching it. And it's just...it's so interesting for me...not having been inside the whole Soho thing, to really be on the inside of it as a pioneer, you know, and to see this....you know...yes, it's all economics and it's all marketing, but it was artists...I mean, the soul was artists, and what we do as people, how we're able to live, how we're able to create a place for other people and then to be canceled out of the equation...

Su: Completely...And this is going to be a more extreme version.

Cathy: It is more extreme, because we have a business man in power and everything happened so quickly.

They enter the loft where the party is in full swing. Camera pans to window; one sees a dramatic view of the Manhattan skyline with a clear view of the Empire State Building.

Yeah...Amy had one of those
"Priceless views!"

Pan the room to see the crowd. Amy Jenkins is heard in voiceover and also seen on camera. One also sees a series of fast-motion shots as her loft is being packed up and emptied out.

Amy: The developer bought the building, like, two days before Christmas, I mean, basically they called us up Christmas Eve and said "Oh, we bought the building. You know, you're welcome to stay through your lease but we're going to be tearing everything down all around you." And "Oh, you know, you live on the sixth floor but we're going to be tearing the roof off."

And they basically made it very clear that they were going to be *gutting* the place. And there were three commercial floors, so they had absolute power to get those floors out, and they had three residential floors to deal with. So we were told that, you know, they were gonna proceed with an eviction, and I saw the writing on the wall and I've spoken to enough people who've gone through litigation that I decided, I don't wanna deal with litigation. So I made basically a bargain—not a very good one—a tiny bit of cash which I split with my tenants and, you know, a couple months' rent free. You know, there's been too many changes in this neighborhood and I just felt like.... everything that I knew in this neighborhood as supportive for me as an artist...it seems to just be disappearing....

Images of the loft space shown in Scene 1 appear, and a few photographs of people at editing stations in that space.

The Outpost
(upstairs from us)
was an editing facility
with the cheapest rates in town.

Amy did a lot of work here.

Amy: I mean, so many changes happened, like the Outpost being above you, and that was a great place for me to start out as a video artist. So many of the artists are getting evicted, and leaving, and so much of the big money coming in, and the galleries all moved to Chelsea—except for a few...

Su: Yeah...

Amy: This is definitely the end of an era, which is why we're just gonna have to dance! (laughs) What else does one do?

Amy laughs at turns away. Two photographs of the now-gutted loft are seen, then the camera goes back down the stairs and outside while the song plays.

*...oh, no, no, no!
Oh, no, no, no!*

*'Cause I'm leavin' in the morning
And I must see you again
We'll have one more night together
'Til the morning brings my train
And I must go, oh, no, no, no!
Oh, no, no, no!*

Two people exit the front door with Su. There are a few shots intercut showing the old hallway and how it looks now.

Su: Bye!

Friends: Bye!

And I don't know if I'm ever coming home...

We see the old exterior at night with graffiti stenciled on the door:

**NEVER FALL IN LOVE WITH
BUILDINGS
THEY ONLY BREAK YOUR
HEART**

Amy was able to relocate
to New Hampshire.

Other artists needed
to relocate more locally.

Scene 11: LINDA AND NORTHSIDE PIERS' AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Pan across the exterior of a small loft building; then see a series of photographs of the woman and child being described.

“For example, my friend Linda is a painter, a speech therapist for children and, as a single woman, she adopted a daughter. Linda and Ava lived a nice life in a small loft in this building that she renovated herself.

The building was sold and she was given a short time to find a new place. After a desperate search, she ended up in the affordable housing unit at the base of Northside Piers, one of the new high-rise condos on the riverfront.”

Pan across a construction site to the new high-rise being built, then cut to a shot looking up at it when finished.

The condo owners
towering above Linda
will pay no real estate tax
for 25 years.

Not one single dime.

Pan across the ugly affordable housing unit at its base, then see a montage of images in a storefront window advertising the condo (three women drinking champagne, a swimming pool, etc.) The last image is of the partying women with the slogan: “Welcome to your neighborhood”.

“So, she and her daughter have a roof over their heads, but why should she be a second-class citizen in a place that doesn’t let her use the main entrance, the pool, the gym, the hot tub, the children’s playrooms, the lounge, the restaurant, or any of the other amenities? It was her neighborhood until they welcomed her to it.”

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 41-53

Scene 12: UNSAFE CONSTRUCTION

Su is filming a site under construction on North 5th. A man in a hat (MiH) stops to talk to her about the condition of the streets. We see that there’s scaffolding and another building under construction directly across the street.

Su: What are you saying to me?

MiH: You should videotape how you can’t use the sidewalks.

Su: Oh, I know, the whole neighborhood...you can’t walk anywhere anymore.

MiH: Yeah.

Su: Yeah.

MiH: I gotta walk up and down this street and I almost get hit by big trucks coming through here. I work right over there and I gotta do this shit every day....There should be some sort of...

Su: Ordinance?

MiH: Yeah!

Su: Yeah.

MiH: Like they can’t build two things on the same street right next to each other so you can’t...

Su: Right.

MiH: It’s awful.

Su: Yeah! It’s like they’re breaking all the rules....

MiH: Oh, they must be. And they're getting away with it.

Su: Yeah.

MiH: Time to go...

Scene 13: THE BUTCHER IS LEAVING

See the exterior of a butcher shop called "B and B Meat Products" as we hear Su talk to the butcher in voiceover.

Butcher: This is supposed to be chicken rotisserie...

Su: Chicken specialty restaurant?

Butcher: Yeah...so we see what happens. What are you gonna do?

A local woman stops in, she stands at the doorway talking to him.

Woman: Are you closing?

Butcher: Yes. We did already.

Woman: Oh, oh, we'll miss you! God....Are you retiring?

Butcher: No, I'm still too young to retire.

Woman: You are, yeah. Are you gonna work for the other butcher?

Butcher: No, no, the other butcher gonna go down too. He's gonna be gone.

Woman: Oh? Why, the rent's too high?

Butcher: No, no, the lease expired and the people doesn't want them.

Woman: Oh, that's terrible!

Butcher: Yeah, there's gonna be no butcher here no more.

Woman: Oh I'm so sorry, it was one of the special things.

Butcher: I'm here since 1969, I'm here with that store! But the new generation doesn't know what's good, they don't cook, they don't know nothing.

Woman: Oh it's terrible! I'm so sorry, we will *really* miss you.

Butcher: Well, thank you.

The butcher goes inside. We see him as he talks to Su; we also see his employees moving out the cutting block, the slicing machine, etc. Camera pans to the white and black tiled walls.

Su: Well I hope the new place keeps these...

Butcher: Yes, yes, they're gonna keep...

Su: They're so beautiful...

Butcher: Yes, yes, yes,you can't find that anymore like this, this is maybe like 75 years old, this is made custom...See, the walk-in icebox back to the walls! See?

Su: Yeah, it's a great place.

Camera shows a sign on the door that reads: "We're closed for good. Thank you for supporting us in the past. The personnel."

Cut to the façade of the butcher shop in its new state, as a restaurant called "Peter's Since 1969".

Scene 14: THE BAKERY IS GONE

Su enters the shell of the former bakery, now a demolition site, and talks to one of the men in the demolition crew (DC).

DC: Hey, excuse me!

Su: Well I thought I was not supposed to come in here!

DC: Yeah, come in, come in, you have my permission. You take one good set of pictures and come on out.

Su: Okay! Thank you so much!

DC: Watch where you're going.

Su: I will. Thank you. I've actually, like, I've lived in the neighborhood for twenty years, so...

DC: There's nothin' wrong with that, it's your neighborhood, go take your pictures! (laughs) We can hold up a second...

Su: Thank you.

Camera pans the rubble of the site as the text scrolls.

The Tribeca Bakery was here.
They left the extra bread
neatly on top of the dumpster
so people in need
could come by at night.

It smelled so good
when you passed by.

Camera pans the new condo that was built on the site of the bakery.

But who needs bakeries?

Camera pans a large brick building with a AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT sign on it, and then shows a small sign by the door that reads:

STAR SOAP AND CANDLE CO.

PRAYER CANDLE CO.

Farewell to
the butcher,
the baker,
the candlestick maker,
and...

Scene 15: HARRY'S AUTO REPAIR IS LEAVING

Su visits her car mechanic, Harry, at his shop.

Su: Hi Harry!

Harry: Hello.

Su: How are you?

Harry: Okay

Su: You know what I'm doing? I'm making a documentary about the whole neighborhood...

Harry: Oh, okay...

Su: Because everything's being torn down.

Harry: This here they're gonna tear down too.

Su: When?

Harry: I don't know. Maybe two months or three months I gotta move...

Su: In two or three months?! Where are you going?

Oh no!...What about our car?

Harry: But I'm trying to get something in the neighborhood...but I'll still have the same phone number.

Su: How long you been here?

Harry: Twenty six years.

Su: Twenty six years?!

Harry: Right in this place. And it just come sudden like that. They gave me one month to move out, this was September, Labor Day weekend...Then the new landlord tell me, before going in...well, assuming he's the new landlord, I don't know what's going on. But in the meantime, every day I'm checking around to find out.

Su: Uh huh...

Harry: That's what's going on: In twenty years...This is why they're rushing everything; they gotta finish pulling down and leave the empty spot.

In case you didn't catch that:

A developer
who cleared a property
before June 2008
got a 25 year tax break.

Harry: Everything changes...

Su: Yeah.

Harry: The rent is so high, everything....Mostly you see coffee shops around...

Su: Coffee shops and bars...

Harry: Yeah, that's all you see around here.

Su: Right. Well, we're screwed. What can I say? It's the end of the neighborhood.

Harry: Yeah, and it's so sad, so long you've been around one place, you know so many people.

Su: Right!

Harry: You know? Everybody...I've been telling all my customers, "I'm very sorry"...Where they gonna go, what're they gonna do?

Su: Right...

A different building is shown midway through construction with a graffiti reading HELLBENT on it. From another angle, the camera pans from that building (which is now in a more finished state) to the fire station next door to it; a plaque on its lintel indicates that it was built in 1869.

An estimated
40,000 new residents

live in the area,
many of them lured by
the tax breaks.

Do they know that
the local firehouse
was closed
in 2003
due to “lack of funds”?

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 54-62

Scene 16: THE INVASION OF MONEY

One sees a small apartment building with a TOWNHOUSE FOR SALE sign on it.

You're in big trouble
when they start calling your
apartment building
a “townhouse.”

Camera zooms in to a new condo with a Mansard-style roof.

*Oh look, honey...
it looks just like Paris!*

A couple carrying shopping bags approaches the building. The woman confronts Su.

Woman: What are you filming?

Su: The rich new people who are moving into the neighborhood...So...

Woman: Well it's a little rude ...

Su: ...and you're on public prop...space so I'm actually allowed to film...

Woman: Well it's just rude....

Su: ...and usually people like you object to it...

Woman: You don't know anything about me and it's just rude to put your camera on someone and follow them, that's all!

Su: Well okay, all right....Oh shit...

The camera pans away from them to the street...

So I freak out
and stop filming her.

...and then pans back to see them go inside.

But there they go...

And she had a point.
I also hate to be filmed.

From the rear of that building, the camera pans across a few other smaller new ones built on the same block.

At one point,
Cathy said I should call this film
“I Hate Rich People.”

Su and Cathy are standing in front of a pile of mail on their kitchen table. Su opens and reads a letter from a realtor; this is intercut with views from their window of the building across the street; men are dragging out a refrigerator and other furnishings from the now-vacated building.

Su: Everybody in the building got something from Prudential Douglas Elliman, which is one of the big condo people in the neighborhood, and I'm just wondering if it's something about our building. It may not be; it may just be, “Hello, welcome to the neighborhood.”

(reading letter) “I have lived and worked in WB for almost ten years and I have noticed and admired your building since the beginning. I work for Prudential Douglas Elliman on Bedford. The reason for this letter is a wonderful new business owner and friend in the neighborhood wanted me to find out if there were any vacancies in this building.”...That's really weird.

Cathy: It really is.

Su: *(reading letter)* “I told her that I would do my best to find out. Thanks for your time reading my letter and if you have a room or more available in your space please contact me.”

Cathy: No.

Camera zooms in slowly to the doorway of the building across the street, and freezes on a large, messy pile of mail delivered after the tenants vacated.

I scrawled a big
FUCK YOU!
on the letter
and mailed it back to him.

MAP OF BUILDINGS: 63-77

Scene 17: FANCY NAMES, FANCY DOGS.

An extreme close-up of the map showing an especially dense areas of new construction.

It was madness.

An elderly neighborhood woman is pushing a shopping cart.

In the bodegas, workshops
and on street corners,
the constant question was,
“What’s going to happen to us?”

Flanked by flat screen TVs with a flying logo and building projections, a blonde woman is talking on the phone in the storefront salesroom for the North8 condo, and two young people with an N8 brochure are on the street. Another realty showroom is seen with a directory that lists 14 realty offices. The elderly woman with the shopping cart from above is now seen walking away down the block. See a banner reading LUXURY CONDOS—LIFE GETS GREENER. Su enters the showroom and speaks with the saleswoman from Urban Green(UG) .

Su: Um, are these in here or can I just take one or two...?

UG: Sure, uh, I have some floor plans of the penthouses there...You can take some of these as well. This is what we have left for sale.

Penthouses?
It’s only 3 stories tall.

Su: And so it’s...I noticed...

UG: It’s across the street, we’re working on the foundation right now, and there’s two buildings connected by a garden. It’s gonna be very pretty; that’s why we call it Urban Green.

One sees a mural covering the entire wall with a photographic likeness of the planned interior garden area of the condo.

Uh...but the name
implies that it’s
sustainably built...

Su: Uh huh...

UG: And it’s about 80% sold at this point.

Su: So, that many people are buying without there even being a stone in the ground?

UG: Oh yeah, well, uh...

Su: It seems like people would want to see a place before they buy it, so it’s just interesting to me that people are...

Pan of their listings sign with things like 1,041 square feet for \$860,000.

UG: Yeah, buying on the floor plan, basically. There’s many buildings that were sold much, much before they were finished around here and in Manhattan as well.

Su: Uh huh...Can I just look around?

UG: Sure, sure, if you wanna take the....(fades out)

The next texts are superimposed on images of the kitchen and bath areas of the showroom.

80% pre-sold by then,
in summer 2007.

She said it would
be ready by fall 2008.

The developer
went bankrupt.

Camera pans across the exterior of the condo, now almost finished.

A new developer finished it in 2011
and renamed it Jardin Condominiums.

Cut to a banner on the side of the building that reads:

JARDIN
IT'S FRENCH *for* 'GARDEN'
ENGLISH *for* 'Exceptional Lifestyle'

Su: Okay! Well, thank you very much!

UG: Thank you for coming.

A man is crossing the street in front on another building under construction. He's walking three French bulldogs that are wearing dog jackets that match the color of his jacket. The following text is superimposed on an image of one of the construction workers as he puts in a roof beam.

The neighborhood was littered
with new 'n fancy building names.

Aqua
The Belvedere
N Forth
The Modern
Lucent
Aurora
The Rialto
9inety N. 5th
Ikon
Lotus Lofts
Decora

The man walks away with his dogs; two other people walking dogs are seen.

Hey!

What's with all the fancy dogs??

The camera follows one of them; he stares back at the camera.

Yeah,
I'm looking
at you.

Two Tibetan women approach with white toddlers in their strollers;
they enter a condo.

Fancy names,
fancy dogs,
and nannies
with fancy strollers.

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 78-92

Scene 18: "NORTH 8" FOR SALE

See a view of Manhattan and the Empire State Building, then pan across the scaffolding of a massive condo. An elderly woman is talking with a younger woman; the camera pans over to the now-finished building. A banner reading "Toll Brothers Advantage Day" is hanging on the front of it. A few people are outside talking with a salesman.

Toll Brothers—
the largest builder of homes in America—
has finally made it to NY!

They turn farmland and forests
into those
godawful sprawling tracts
of beige houses
on winding lanes
out in the suburbs
and, more often now,
just off the interstate.

The president of the company
owns three houses,
none of them
built by Toll Brothers.

Inside the showroom, various shoppers are speaking with salespeople.

General hubbub in salesroom: I would urge you to fill out a raffle ticket, we've got lots of nice prizes...Thanks for coming...Did you have any questions...Oh, a cupcake...Yeah, help yourselves...

Su: Can I just go upstairs or do you wanna take me upstairs?

N8 Salesman: Yeah, I'm happy to take you up. This is my availability sheet...So I only have three apartments left...

Su goes upstairs with the salesman.

Su: Oh, okay...So this is one of the ones that's available?

N8 Salesman: Still available, believe it or not.....So this is the one piece Kohler toilet, limestone countertops, Waingate cabinets, subway tiles...

They loved to brag about
their subway tiles.

N8 Salesman: This is, um, this is the second bedroom, which overlooks the private backyard.

Su: How does this work?

N8 Salesman: You see the little black holes in the grass?

Su: Yeah.

N8 Salesman: That's where the fence will be. So what it does is it gives you eleven hundred and ninety square feet of private outdoor space. The units above us only face south, so no one upstairs can look down onto these private back yards.

Su: Oh!

N8 Salesman: And this apartment also has a custom sound system throughout...

Su: You mean, piped...piped-in sound throughout the rooms, is that what you mean?

N8 Salesman: Yeah!

Su: Oh, okay.

N8 Salesman: This is the master.

Su: Uh huh...it's very nice.

N8 Salesman: This is. ...Once again, custom built Waingates...

I don't know about you,
but I gotta get out of here!

Scene 19: SEVENBERRY CONDO FOR SALE

Construction workers stand in front of a pit; camera pans the foundation of another huge site.

Oh shit...

A homeless man is sitting on the steps of an older house next door to a new condo called SevenBerry. Camera pans from old to new.

Closeup on Su's hand as she signs an application form. One then sees the two salesmen in the showroom talking to her.

SevenBerry Salesman: Uh, let me get you a price sheet...

Su: Okay.

SevenBerry Salesman: ...and run down the building for you. It's a four story, twenty seven unit building...

Su: Uh huh.

SevenBerry Salesman: We have a mix of one, two and three bedroom units...

Su: Uh huh.

SevenBerry Salesman: We'll have a fitness center, a common courtyard, a recreation lounge for the tenants...This is actually the smallest two-bedroom we offer. Are you looking more for a studio?

Su: Yeah. But, one-bedroom, whatever...

SevenBerry Salesman: The one-bedrooms we have remaining, they each have 400 square foot terraces.

Su: Uh huh.

SevenBerry Salesman: So they're roughly 700 square feet of interior space and they're starting at \$644 (thousand).

Su: They're 700 square feet at \$644?

SevenBerry Salesman: With a 400 square foot terrace, yes.

Su: Uh huh. Good, well I'll just, can I just look around or do you wanna show me something?

SevenBerry Salesman: Oh absolutely!

Su: It is *weirdly* similar to...I think it's 80 Bayard...the Dawn of Luxury one, yeah. Is it the same?

SevenBerry Salesman: The architect is the same; the finishings are a lot different.

Su: How are they different?

SevenBerry Salesman: I mean, it's almost self-explanatory. You'll see it's a lot of tiles that...and colors that haven't been used before...

A montage of images of other condos that look like this one are shown, with their names superimposed.

Urban Green
125 North 10th
The Williamsburg
The Ikon
North 8

Su: Uh huh.

SevenBerry Salesman: As well as the kitchen, just the way they integrated the natural oak and everything's completely integrated..

Su: Uh huh...It just has a similar feel, but, you know, whatever...Um, cute beds!

I was usually better
at feigning interest...

Su walks towards the bedroom; more similar condo bedrooms are shown with their names.

125 North 10th
The Williamsburg
The Ikon

Su: And have you had a lot of interest so far?

SevenBerry Salesman: Yeah, we have about twelve units off the market in about three weeks, so it's moving along pretty well.

Su: Uh huh. And do you live in the neighborhood?

SevenBerry Salesman: I'm going to be moving to the neighborhood! I'm actually going to be buying at The Edge.

Su: Huh. Okay. I've lived in the neighborhood twenty years, so...

SevenBerry Salesman: So you've seen all the changes.

Su: Yeah. Well, not all of it, I'm sure there's gonna be...

SevenBerry Salesman: Well...

Su: ..a scary amount more, but anyway...Okay!

...like this guy moving to The Edge.

SevenBerry Salesman: Have a good night.

Su: Thank you. You too.

Walking through the basement, with unfinished sheetrock walls; one sees the boiler room door open.

Su: So this is the *basement*. Right? Okay, so you have a duplex, but the bottom floor is the basement, so you have no windows.

Asking price \$880,000

Scene 20: FRANK AND EDDIE MOVE OUT OF THE FORKLIFT GARAGE

In the evening, Frank is standing out on the sidewalk in front of the now-emptied garage. A few shirts whip around in the wind, a dog barks.

Goodbye,
Frank and Eddie.

November 2007

Su: So this is it, huh?

Eddie: Yeah...you can tell that it's pretty well empty now.

Su: Yeah! [the sound of barking is heard] The dog is still here.

Eddie: Yeah. Well, she'll be the last one to leave.

Su: It looks strange seeing it all empty.

Eddie: I know. It does look different.

Su: It looks *cleaner* than it's ever looked before...

(laughter)

Eddie: Woah...I'm losin' my soda!...Well, you're gonna be takin' pictures of this one day when they make the new building here.

One sees several large moving vans parked in front of the building.

Su: I know. Ugh..

Eddie: It'll probably take them a few years to do it.

Su: Yeah. But the people haven't moved out of the tall building yet, or what?

Eddie: Sasha's moving, he was supposed to be out now...

Su: Uh huh...

Eddie: The people on top of me have to be out by the 15th of December...(fades out)

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 93-100

Scene 21: THE CONDO AT 125 NORTH 10TH

Pan the scaffolding that covers the outside of a very large building under construction. One sees a bright red advertisement on it detailing the various features, including what's in the following text.

FULLY
EQUIPPED
ROOFTOP
CABANAS
FOR
SALE

for SALE?

I feel blue

Zoom in to the front window, through which we see a large screen TV playing a looped image of a roaring fire in a fireplace. Then one sees the salesman talking with a prospective buyer.

125 salesman: So this is a full-blown model apartment, um...This kind of beautiful green porcelain ceramic tile is gonna be the walls so it's cut in a kind of exploded subway tiling.

Woman: And they all have two...?

125 salesman: They all have double faucets....This actually makes this look smaller than it is, it's actually, it's kind of, they're kind of large, and there's a huge amount of storage, and in the master bath these big medicine cabinets, they articulate, so there's storage up there as well. So this is actually a very sexy bathroom and I'm really happy that they're actually gonna make it happen. Um, so this is an actual unit...Um, you're interested in a two bedroom?

Woman: Yeah.

125 salesman: And you would be interested in...?

Su: One

125 salesman: Okay, I'll grab....

On screen is a photograph of the outside of 125 N 10th with graffiti on it that reads:

WELCOME TO CONDOBURG

Scene 22: THE EDGE CONDO

Across the street from the construction site, a man is seen in the front office of the company building a massive condo called The Edge. He walks out to the steps and has a conversation with Su.

"I went to see The Edge, the new condo where the salesman from Sevenberry said he was moving.

I had a very long talk with this man, but the truck traffic made it inaudible.

He started out by defending the development and claiming that the area was previously unlivable.

I insisted that a lot of people had been happily living and working around here, and now were being forced out, and that, even with my salary as a professor, I could never afford one of these new condos.

So, we went back and forth, back and forth, and then he finally admitted that he also couldn't afford to live here."

Black banners cover the fence surrounding the Edge's construction site. One sees the following slogans which are printed on the banners:

BRAINS: INTELLIGENT SPACES + SMART VALUE

PARK: A SPACE TO PLAY + A SPACE TO PARK

TASTY: SERIOUS KITCHENS + FUN RESTAURANTS

POOL: SWIMMING POOL + SHOOTING POOL

ROCK: INDIE BANDS + STONE COUNTERTOPS

SPACE: BIG FOOTAGE + BIG VIEWS

PERKS: UNREAL AMENITIES AND REAL NEIGHBORHOOD

SHOP: THE HIPPEST DRESS CODE + THE COOLEST ZIP CODE

HEART: HOMES YOU CAN LOVE + A BURG WITH PULSE

PULSE

PULSE

PULSE

And four years later...

A shot of The Edge finished, a massive pile of blue and gray.

They've got the edge, don't They?

Pan across the ugly affordable housing unit at the base and then pan up to the luxury high-rise behind it.

I'm guessing that the guy
from Seven Berry
isn't in the low-rise section.

A metallic yellow ornament of a curled-up snake is hanging on a Christmas tree.

*Fast, pounding, hard core strains of the beginning
of "Auld Lang Syne"*

2008

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 101-112

Scene 23: ONE COMMUNITY MEETING AMONG MANY

Bricks fall from the ceiling; brick dust floats up in the sunlight. Camera goes up stairs and pans around to see the rubble of the demolished building. Camera moves quickly back down the dark stairs.

Su: It's like we live in a fucking war zone!

Sound of chainsaws and through a fence, on a distant roof, one sees a line of men passing black bags filled with rubble.

Meanwhile,
I was hearing scary noises
across the street from us.

Through our window, one sees workmen disassembling scaffolding at the building across from ours.

January 25

Su: Sure, but look...I think they're taking it down.

Cathy: If they're taking that down it's just gonna be too much....And it's too much anyway.

Su: Yeah...

Cathy: And I can't even believe they have these people out there working in 18 degrees.

Cut to a montage of construction sites in the neighborhood while one hears the following man speaking.

Man at Community Meeting: Hi. I'm an artist, and I came in 1990 and was given a lease to the floor of a building and my landlord told me that I could move in, live there, do what I wanted to do, and I moved in and started living and working....and I developed a relationship with him and things went sour when, I think, the prices went up around here—around 2000—and we are now facing an eviction. Uh...there are ten artists there and we're in Supreme Court right now. We have a lawyer but we can no longer afford him and we're just here to let you know about this, reaching out to anyone who might have an idea about how we might be able to find the funds to continue to fight to stay there.

And I believe this issue is important because there are—as far as I understand—ten *thousand* people living in commercial spaces here in Brooklyn. And judges are deciding sometimes in favor of the tenants and sometimes favor of the landlords because there's no real, strict law. And so we're fighting to stay there and I believe that if we win our case, the other artists...(fades out)

A large group is gathered in a storefront; several speakers are sitting in the front talking to the group. One also sees a few audience members addressing the group.

“I felt sorry for that guy.

It was all so familiar.

We didn’t participate in this meeting because, by then, we’d lost our taste for the battle.

Ten years earlier, we were one of many tenant’s groups who fought for tenant’s rights and a loft law—and lost.

Our building won a temporary reprieve—a lease renewal at better rates than the landlord’s offer of doubling the rent.

And, in the years before this meeting, various neighborhood groups fought successfully against the radioactive storage facility, and plans to build a massive power plant and a new garbage dump. But, instead of improving conditions for the old time residents, those successes paved the way for the developers, and guaranteed our exile.”

Man at Community Meeting: ...so I’m just letting you know I’m here and we’re looking for ideas, and looking for support and, um, anyone who might be able to help us. And thank you for your time.

The group applauds and gets up to leave; cut to a few more images of new condos.

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 113-123

Scene 24: THE GREEN BUILDING GOES DOWN

From our window, one sees construction workers putting up scaffolding on the green building where the Forklift Garage had been.

Su: It’s, um...What day is it?...It’s April....It’s Friday, April 11th, 2008 and the building across the street looks like it’s comin’ down!

Camera pans across the array of cassette tapes in my studio as the song begins. Then we see various close-up shots of the building in the process of demolition.

*Lover, there will be another one
Who'll hover over you beneath the sun
Tomorrow see the things that never come
Today*

I didn’t pick this song to
“set the mood,”
I was just listening to Neil Young
that morning on my iTape.

*When you see me
Fly away without you*

April 29

*Shadow on the things you know
Feathers fall around you*

April 30

And show you the way to go

A man stands on the roof of the building, slowly knocking individual bricks off, which fall with a thud onto the pile below.

It takes a long time
to
such a great old building.
wreck
May 3

It's over, it's over.

Then they took a break
and I watched
the designer dog parade.

Su: Hey Cathy! Here it goes....

The front wall goes down, the side walls, and then a shot at dawn reveals the hole where the building was, and the rising sun.

The next morning,
for the first time in nineteen years,
we saw the sunrise.

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 124-134

Scene 25: CLEARING THE WRECKAGE and then THE ROCK
A cat sits at a window watching an earth-moving machine at work across the street.

Clearing the
wreckage
took two months.

A huge rock is being dropped onto other rocks in order to break it.

Cathy: It should be higher.

Su: Yeah, he didn't get the right angle.

The plywood wall in front of the demolition site across the street from us has this graffiti on it:

ARTISTS USED TO LIVE HERE

I wrote this...

and tourists sometimes
photographed themselves
in front of it.

A group is in front of our building photographing a model.

Bloomingdale's came slumming...

Woman at fashion shoot: Yeah, she just has to do something with her hands.

Photographer: Sorry?

Model (moving hands): More?

Across the street in the site, a man in a digger is slamming the machine's huge claw against a massive rock. Throughout the scene, one watches various groups of men drill into the rock, marked by the times of day.

And on
June 18th...

8:45 am

10:20 am

Su: That is a *big fucking rock*.

11:15 am

(lunchtime)

1:40 pm

2:30 pm

Two weeks later...

July 2

Su: I know. Can you imagine how long this is going to take?

Cathy: Well, they're gonna split it, I suppose.

Su: Yeah.

Cathy: Do you think it's too big for them to move?

Su: Yeah, cuz I was shooting the other day and.....(fade out)

I was *loving* this rock!

They try the rock splitter.

They try again with some goo.

Trouble at the source.

The machine dies again...

Su approaches the man who had been drilling; he's at his truck, ready to drive away to get some equipment.

Su: So I was just curious about this: How is this gonna work and when is it gonna happen?

Man by truck: In a few minutes, hopefully.

Su: In a few minutes?

Man by truck: Yeah, once I get back.

Su: Once you get back? So can you....oh!....

An hour later...

Nothing doing.

They quit for the day.

Will the rock prevail?

Onward, accompanied by
Vivaldi's Concerto in C Major
F. VII No. 6

The Vivaldi concerto plays for the rest of the scene.

They've brought in
a new guy.

28 minutes later...

They need more holes.

The foreman is seen sitting on the rock for a while; the drilling has stopped. Screen goes black during the next exchange,

Su: Excuse me! Excuse me!! Sir! Is that thing gonna get broken today or no?

Man at site: What?

Su: The rock.

Man at site: Tomorrow.

Su: Tomorrow? Okay, thanks.

We resume seeing the men drilling and putting the splitter into the rock, which is finally broken in a few places.

July 4

Time for the splitter.

No, over here...

July 7

The pieces of the rock are seen on the ground at the site. A man is standing on the hood of his dumpster truck directing the digger, which is lifting and bringing over one of the rock fragments. It falls with a crash into the truck. Once finally loaded, the truck drives away.

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 135-146

Scene 26: THE CRASHING AND THE CRASH

Through our window, one sees the pile driving machine at work across the street. On the kitchen table, a rose in a vase shakes from the impact of the machine.

In mid-July
they started pile-driving
the main beams
for the new building.

From then on,
there was constant,
relentless,
infuriating
NOISE

until mid-September.

A montage of front pages of The New York Times appears, beginning with September 15 (on camera the dates are not very visible but are

included here; headlines are written in upper case or italics as they appear in print).

9/15 BIDS TO HALT FINANCIAL CRISIS RESHAPE LANDSCAPE OF WALL STREET

9/16 WALL ST. IN WORST LOSS SINCE '01 DESPITE REASSURANCES BY BUSH

9/19 VAST BAILOUT BY U.S. PROPOSED IN BID TO STEM ECONOMIC CRISIS

9/23 TALKS ON BAILOUT PLAN ADVANCE; CONGRESS IS ANGRY AND SKEPTICAL

9/25 Bush to Hold Meeting on Bailout; First Debate Up in Air

9/26 Day of Chaos Grips Washington; Fate of Bailout Plan Unresolved

Su is sitting at her desk in her studio addressing the camera.

Su: So it's September 29th, uh, it's about a week and a half after the beginning of the bailout crisis, and none of us today knows what the hell's gonna happen. Um....it seems terrible!

And on August 20th, the Department of Buildings raided our building...uh...essentially showed up--there were eight or ten inspectors--showed up and said that they had....that there had been a gas leak reported and they needed to look in the spaces. So they came through, and this is a building which extends all the way around the block so there are many, many units...There are businesses here, there are people living here, artists live/work in the building. So they did all of that and then the Fire Department came and, you know, we were freaking out and said, "What's gonna happen?!" and they said, "Well, you should be prepared, you know. You might get thrown out today." Because that's what happened down to another building on Kent Street in our neighborhood about a year and a half ago, and they were thrown out for a period of months.

We had 9 months left on our lease,
and we hoped that we could
at least stay until then!

Su: Uh, well then they decided not to throw us out but to take the gas meters out...

We had no heat or hot water
from October to December.

Su, cont: ...and then they posted a lot of violations...And all of the violations had to do with residential use of the space because it's zoned for commercial.

We see the violations posted on the entrance door of the building, then the stack of them on Su's desk as she reads from them:

(Reading as we see a violations ticket) "Erected partitions", which to translate means bedrooms..."Installed water and waste lines for three-piece bathrooms, creating residential use in a commercial building. Comply with code forthwith."

Well, the problem is they've known for nineteen years that we've made partitions in order to have bedrooms.

What else? Well, "failure to maintain building" is due to the fact that the landlord has been collecting rent, real estate tax, water/sewer taxes, and we have paid all of the utilities for nineteen years. The *only* thing he has spent money on was to pay a super to clean the building.

So...we're fucked!

(See man's name on violation form) Stuart Goldstein, who we've never met because he's hiding in his trust that owns this building.

Uh...there was no mention of a gas leak in any of the violations, so it was really clear that they wanted us out of here for some other reason. We didn't know who it was—we didn't know if it was the landlord somehow manipulating this so that he would get us out of here so he could, you know, give it over to other people or what. Um, and, uh...(fade out)

Walk into the loft of Su's upstairs neighbor. He's kneeling on the floor packing a crate while Cathy (off screen) talks to him.

The next day,
I started looking at
real estate websites.

And we watched Billy,
our friend upstairs,
move out.

Billy: Don't pay rent.

Cathy: What?

Billy: Don't pay any rent....They should be in jail.

Cathy: Well, we had an awfully happy time here.

Billy: Yes, we did.

A montage of photographs from his former life in the space accompany the next dialog. We then see Billy standing by his door, and Su leaves.

Billy: I just made a crate for one of these.

Su: Oh, wow, you built that crate?

Billy: No, it's backing to that big silver painting that was on the wall over there.

Su: Okay, well I gotta go downstairs and email some realtors.

Billy: Okay, well thanks for....

Su: It's an interesting search...

Billy: Yeah.

Su: Aiee! Bye!

9/30 *DEFIANT HOUSE REJECTS HUGE BAILOUT; STOCKS PLUNGE; NEXT STEP IS UNCERTAIN*

10/2 *SENATE APPROVES BAILOUT PROPOSAL BY A WIDE MARGIN...36 Hours of Alarm and Action as Crisis Spiraled*

10/4 *BAILOUT PLAN WINS APPROVAL; DEMOCRATS VOW TIGHTER RULES*

10/7 *FEDS WEIGH BID TO SPUR ECONOMY AS MARKETS PLUMMET WORLDWIDE*

10/8 *STOCKS FALL MORE DESPITE FED'S HINT IT WILL CUT RATES*

Su is seen in her studio again as she addresses the camera.

Su: So, that was amazing! It's, um, October 9th, I went downstairs to the Brooklyn Brewery to get...(fade out)

CW: What's goin' on?

Su is down at the construction site talking with the foreman. They walk around, and this is intercut with more images of the New York Times headlines.

10/9 U.S MAY TAKE OWNERSHIP STAKE IN BANKS TO EASE CREDIT CRISIS... Taking Hard New Look at a Greenspan Legacy

Su: Well, I live across the street and I was talking to the guy from Brooklyn Brewery and he said they laid off fifty guys this week from this site. Is that true?

CW: Yes, that's true. I'm the company and I laid off the men because Lehman Brothers ran out of money.

Su: And this was being funded by Lehman Brothers?

CW: Yes.

Su: Wow. So what's gonna happen to it?

CW: We've basically just put everything on hold until we get word that they got the money to pay us. That's happenin' all over Manhattan. All over Brooklyn and all over Manhattan. This happened to about twenty jobs over the last week. A lot of guys got laid off. Thank god we have other jobs goin' on.

10/10 NATIONS WEIGHING GLOBAL APPROACH AS CHAOS SPREADS

10/11 RICH NATIONS PUSHING JOINT RESCUE; G.M. AND CHRYSLER EXPLORE MERGER

10/12 White House Overhauling Rescue Plan for Economy

10/13 GLOBAL BID TO PROP UP BANKS

10/14 U.S. INVESTING \$250 BILLION TO BOLSTER BANK INDUSTRY; DOW SURGES 936 POINTS

Su: Right...Cuz you know how it is, you read all this stuff in the paper and it's sort of "out there" and suddenly, like when you hear that fifty people are laid off, you think, "Woah..."

CW: It's serious. Exactly. It's *bad*. A lot of people are gonna be laid off.

10/15 After Big Rally, Grim Outlook Still Looms on Profits and Jobs...A Fear That Hard Times Are Bearing Down

Scene 27: LIFE IN THE OLD LOFT

One sees a laptop screen; Su is searching through various real estate websites.

I started looking more urgently
for a new place for us,
accompanied by Randy Travis.

*You came a long way, goin' the wrong way
don't even set your suitcase down*

*You wanted to roam, now you're paying the bills
you're an old rollin' stone who rolled over the hill*

This went on for six months,
sometimes with Aretha
instead of Randy.

But sometimes,
instead of house hunting,
I would just dance around
to shake off the blues.

I hated to leave a place
where we'd had
so many great parties...

During the "Rock Steady" song one sees a montage of photographs of dance parties and holiday parties at the loft.

*Rock steady, baby
That's what I feel now
Just call the song exactly what it is
Just move your hips with a feeling from side to side
Sit yourself down in your car and take a ride
While you're moving, rock steady
Rock steady, baby
Let's call this song exactly what it is
(What it is, what it is, what it is)
It's a funky and lowdown feeling (what it is)
In the hips from left to right (what it is)
what it is is I might be doin'
this funky dance all night
(put your hands up in the air)
(got a feelin' you ain't got a care)
(you gotta take this burn)?
(that tear we all inside)?*

*Rock steady, rock steady baby
Rock steady...*

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 147-157

Scene 28: THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS INSPECTORS
The violations are seen posted on the front door of the building.

In November, two inspectors
from the Department of Buildings
paid us a visit.

The following conversation is accompanied by a montage of many images of new condos around the neighborhood.

Cathy: It seems like you...I mean, it would be kind of great if...

Inspector: No, no!

Cathy: ..if in New York, if something wasn't safe, the Department of Buildings could make the landlord do it, that would be nice.

Inspector: Let me...let me...let me assure you of something right off the bat: We have a lot of power and a lot of say about what happens here. Okay? We're not here for any other reason than to make sure you guys are safe.

Um, so we'll just begin with: How long have you lived here?

Su: Nineteen and a half years. And what makes the situation for everyone in all these spaces so confusing is that Stuart Goldstein is *completely* inaccessible. And about two months ago I emailed James Vest to say, "What can we expect?" and he wrote me back an email saying, "It will cost Stuart a lot of money to bring the building up to code for residential, and having spent all that money, he will rightfully expect to get market rates for rental after that.

Market rate was 3 or 4 times
what we were paying.

Su: Which of course means a totally unaffordable space for us, right? And it's not even clear whether this trust thing actually does own the building, because when we moved in, we were made to understand that they'd gotten a twenty year sublease and recently, instead of hearing about the sublease, we've been hearing about this family that holds it in trust. So it makes it very difficult for all of us to understand who actually is in charge.

Inspector: Who...who?

Su: SDG never does anything.

Inspector: Oh, oh.

Su: So, you know, twenty years ago when we all did our spaces, they did a little bit of work putting in a riser and that kind of stuff. But since then, all the tenants have individually done the work. So Wexler appeared and did, as you know, all the testing on the pipes, um...

One sees the Wexler plumbers in the loft talking with Cathy and then checking out a heating unit.

Cathy: You know, I think that since you came before they have done what we all felt was, you know, act in pretty good faith—they got architects to come in and work on it, and they got really *good* plumbers...

Inspector: Right...

Cathy: ...so we worked with them as opposed to working in opposition to them, you know, which was another possibility...

To clarify:
We worked with them
because we were desperately trying
to stay until the next summer.

Cathy: So that's pretty much how we dealt with it. And we also did quite a bit to try to make it happen for the gas to be turned back on, and even to help them, you know, possibly even get the C of O [Certificate of Occupancy] even though we don't even think we're going to be here.

Ones sees graffiti on a poster advertising 80 Metropolitan. Next to an image of people meditating, the graffiti says:

TO RELIEVE STRESS FROM MANAGING HEDGE FUNDS...

Next to an image of the subway train it says:

ALREADY FULL!!!

Another poster reads More Stuff and More Williamsburg, and the following additions are made in graffiti:

**MORE STUFF FOR RICH PEOPLE...
MORE WILLIAMSBURG CONDOBURG..**

Camera tracks for a long time along a blue plywood wall surrounding the 80 Metropolitan site as the following is heard:

Cathy, cont.: You know, which we also don't think is totally fair, and there is a possibility that we could say we're residential tenants, you know, and move towards getting that legalized. Which, when we went to the courts ten years ago...actually, the judge and everybody knew that they had rented it as living and were going to move forward. But they didn't want to because they *knew* that if they legalized one building in Williamsburg, then they were opening the door for, actually, all these buildings that have been torn down now!

So, I mean, if we have some....you know, if I have, at least, some distrust of officials, it is really because they...they didn't work with us.

Inspector: Understandable.

Understandable...

Inspector: Was this housing court on Livingston Street? (fade out...)

Scene 29: THE END IS NIGH

A phone answering machine is blinking. Looking out of the window, one sees the site across the street covered in snow with men working.

Phone machine: Friday, 4:45 pm

And now
another city agency...

Voice on phone machine: Hi, Su, I'm, uh from the DEP [Department of Environmental Protection]. A couple of months ago you made a complaint and I'm doing a follow-up, I wanted to make sure everything's all right with you...If any problems are still occurring at that address please call 311 and file a new complaint. Thank you very much.

Before Lehman went bust
and the site got quiet,
I had called in

a noise and dirt complaint.

What would be the use?

Su: It's December 21st, a couple of days before Christmas, we had a big snow on Friday... and a couple of weeks ago they actually started working again over there. I don't know what they're doing. I doubt they got Lehman Brothers money back, but they must have gotten somebody else's money, so....we'll see.

Out of the window, at night, one sees a "Porta-San" [a portable bathroom used at construction sites] with a man sitting inside drinking a cup of coffee.

But if I had complained again,
it would have been about
the conditions for this poor guy.

All night, for months,
in the deep winter.

Auld Lang Syne, in an instrumental version by Guy Lombardo, starts playing

An ornament designed like the "8 ball" used in pool games is hanging on a Christmas tree.

We had less than
8
months left on our lease.

Three photographs of a big New Year's Eve party at the old loft are seen.

2009

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 158-170

Scene 30: WHAT TO BUY, AND WHERE?

A man sits down on a balcony overlooking the Panorama of the City of New York [a diorama of the entire city built in miniature]. The camera pans over the whole cityscape.

Cathy and I were terrified of moving,
and fighting about buying or renting.

And where oh where to go?

*I don't love you any more,
It's just that simple
No, no, no, not like before
Such a shame, dirty shame ...*

What was cheap enough?

Bushwick?
Bed-Stuy?
Crown Heights?
Ridgewood?
Sunnyside?
The Moon?

Teddy Pendergrass was moving on.
Could I?

Pete and Su are seated at the kitchen table in the old loft with an array of breakfast foods; Cathy is off camera, although her hand is visible.

I convinced my brother Pete
to come over and convince Cathy
that we should buy.

Cathy: ...you know, and we're talking about thirty years where things are going pretty badly and it seems almost like fraud to sign something you *know* you can't do.

Pete: Well, you don't know that you can't do it, because you don't know that you won't be employed for the next thirty years.

Cathy: No, I know I don't *know* that but I'm pretty sure that in thirty years it might be difficult.

Pete: Well, in thirty years ...The thing I always compare it to is life as a renter, so in thirty years, as a renter, you'll have almost no way to make an income,

Look at me.

I'm trying to act all casual
and involved with my bagel,
but I was in a panic.

I wanted to buy—
to buy security,
as if that's ever possible.

Pete, cont.: ...they'll still want rent, and it'll all be inflated...you know, it'll all be adjusted for inflation. Whereas in thirty years your mortgage will be paid off and you'll have a big chunk of something which would hopefully be worth more than you paid for it...Or even if it isn't, you've got a roof over your head, you know what I mean?

Cathy: Right.

Pete: That's why, for really long term looking, it's actually a great thing to do. That's why people say always, like, when you're buying something, don't buy it as, you know, something you're gonna buy

and sell unless you're a contractor and that's the business you wanna get into. Just buy it for some place so that you'll have a roof over your head.

Cathy: I do understand that but it's just, like, at a time when you *know* it's going down....

A contract for a house sale, and a wallet, are lying on the kitchen table. The camera pans up and around the room.

*You gotta respect each other
You gotta reply to your lover
It could never be,
It could never be like it was before...*

We decided to buy,
but she was right.

We were gambling
with a real estate market
and a banking system
that had created
this Condo-burg hell and
the nation's economic meltdown.

Scene 31: MOVING OUT

In a bedroom at the loft, a woman is seen packing up; the camera pans around the room. Then, from a window, we look down to see her loading up a moving van.

*To the sky...
To the sky....*

Mimi lived with us
for five years.

Mimi: Hi Su!

Su: Hi Mimi!

We return to her now-empty room.

Su: So this was the first room I had in this place and now this is the first room that's permanently abandoned...or whatever the word is...It's the first person to go forever. Hmm...

In another bedroom, a man is taking CDs off a shelf and detaching the shelf; we then see him outside loading up a van, and then see Su's studio piled with boxes.

Michael lived with us
for four and a half years.

And I started packing.

The screen goes to black as a "wooshing" sound starts to be heard.

Over the course of twenty years,
we'd had thirty seven roommates
and innumerable overnight guests.

In the living room of the loft, in front of an audience, a man is blowing loudly in a microphone—he's performing a (non verbal) poem.

We had our studios in the space.
Other artists who lived with us
also worked there.
And Cathy ran The 'temporary Museum
for a few years
which had painting shows and events.

The camera leaves the living room and pans out Su's window to see the new condo across from their building, then pans down the block to see others.

Su: It is Thursday, June 4th, and they're supposed to schedule the closing for tomorrow, and it will not be too soon to get away from this *noise*, every single fucking day for at least two years now. I'm so sick of it, so *sick of it*. This one, this one, the one beyond the dark one and all the ones over there, and *this whole fucking neighborhood!*

MAP OF BUILDINGS: # 171-173

Scene 32: AULD LANG SYNE

The last two red map squares are shown, but at #173 it cuts away to show the real construction site (currently just a hole in the ground).

Su: 171, 172...and 173!

One then sees a fast-motion scene in which Su is coloring in all 173 red squares on the map as she talks about the final count.

Su: This count is from 2010. And since then, when I've ridden around the neighborhood, I've seen even more. And more, and more. But I thought, "You gotta stop somewhere."
I gotta stop somewhere. *They won't, but I gotta stop somewhere.* So: 173: That's my official tally.

One sees the "before" and "after" images of each building mentioned.

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind ?*

The chocolate factory...

...is now The Union.

*Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and days of auld lang syne ?*

The bread distribution warehouse
is a parking lot.

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,*

The chicken processing plant...

...is now Warehouse Eleven.

*we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for the sake of auld lang syne.*

*And surely you'll buy your pint stout !
and surely I'll buy mine !
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.
For auld...*

The egg distribution warehouse...

...is now 100 N3.

*...lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness, dear,
for auld...*

Garages and machine shops...

...are now The Driggs.

*Lang....days of auld lang syne,
days of auld lang syne.*

*And here's a hand my trusted friend!
And give a hand o'*

Artists' studios, galleries,
and small businesses...

*...Mine
We'll take a cup of kindness yet,
Oh, for auld lang syne.*

For auld ...

...is now The Allan.

*...Con tu mismo amor,
Amigos de verdad,
Unimos nuestras voces hoy...*

And the cement storage facility...

...is now Wythe Avenue Lofts.

...for auld lang syne.

A happy holiday season to each and every one! Yeah, buddy....

Scene 33: THE END OF MY HOUSE

One ascends a stairway to a closed door as the date and comment are seen.

2010

One last look.

Then one is inside the loft, which is entirely whitewashed; walking to the window, one sees the new condo that was built across the street.

Su: This is, like, the new hideous thing on the corner of 12th. I think it's called The Berry or 41 Berry or something.

Cut to the same building, at dusk, seen from a car window at the corner. Pan up an adjacent building (where two signs read "Picture Yourself Here" and "We're Ready for You") to a rooftop party filled with people eating and drinking.

I was there to spy on a sales party
at another place on our old corner.

...wo-oo-oo-oo in my house

*Well anytime of the day or night
When you call me I will be there*

(Nice song choice, Mr. DJ.)

*Just call me up on the phone
When you need someone around to care
And when you feel sad and blue
You just come and see me anytime*

That water tower
was on our roof.

*I'll be waiting for you dear
And your fears you can leave behind
So when you need a little peace of mind
Come on over boy, anytime*

Go into the model apartment and see some women talking in the kitchen.

I listened for a while
to those young women exclaim
about how elegant and cool
it all was.

I'll keep you happy and so satisfied

Then I stole
a bottle of wine
and left.

Outside again and from down the block, one sees the loft building for the last time.

In my house, in my house

My house.
My house.

*So when you need some love and tenderness
And it's me baby that you miss...(fades out)*

TAIL CREDITS: As the credits roll, one hears the following voiceover.

Remember that graffiti I showed you earlier in the film? Well, there's a website about New York real estate called Curbed with lots of funny, snarky articles about Williamsburg. They once ran a story about local feelings about the developers...and they posted this picture.

One sees an image of a fence with graffiti reading:

ARTISTS USED TO LIVE HERE.

And then there were comments.

So what if artists lived there before? Artists are artists. They can live anywhere they can set up their canvas. Bushwick has plenty of room for artists.

The funny thing is- people that actually make a living by making art can *and do* live in expensive condos. Go look at the address of any artist being represented by a Chelsea gallery. They don't live in shitholes. Who would want to?

Fuck artists, I'm so sick of it already. Fucking smelly unshaven haven't bathed in days "artists".
Go to hell already.

Artists, fuck off and die.

Hey, true, #6--I can't stand how somebody with paint stained jeans from Michigan who's lived there for 3 -5 years is pumping his fist in the air and complaining.

And here's my favorite one:

The last "artist" we had was Picasso. The rest of them should just eat shit and move on.

The tail credits:

CAMERA, EDITING and GRAFFITTI
Su Friedrich

WRITING and EDITING CONSULTANT
Cathy Quinlan

ADDITIONAL EDITING CONSULTANT
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Michael Perconti
Cathy Quinlan
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Martina Siebert
Romin Sirjue
Caspar Stracke

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS OF LOFTS

William Basinski
Amy Jenkins
Ruth Kahn
Linda Pellagrini

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PANORAMA OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Queens Museum of Art

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MUSIC
“Auld Lang Syne”
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The Caledonians
Chino
Pathfinder
Guy Lombardo
Lou Rawls
Girlschool
Irish All Stars
Jo Hamilton
Carlene Davis
Straight No Chaser
Martin Sexton

“Kommt Zusammen”
Zwei Raum Wohnung

“Last Train to Clarksville”
The Plastics

“Too Gone”
Randy Travis

“Rock Steady”
Aretha Franklin

“Concerto in C Major, F. VII No. 6”
Antonio Vivaldi
New Brandenburg Collegium
Alex Klein, oboe

“I Don't Love You Any More”
Teddy Pendergrass

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