1a. INT. NPR STUDIO – DAY

(MUSIC: NPR like chime. SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**CARY ONANON:**

WFIU, Bloomington Indiana. Where you don’t need to be an expert, if you learn something new everyday.

(MUSIC: Newsbreak transition.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

On the road, Ernie washed his own socks and underwear, pressed his own slacks and shirtsleeves. He never expected Jerry would do any of it. But, when they went home to Dana he fell back into the care of his loving mother, who would do all of it, and then some. It was enough to drive a wife to drink, I tell you.

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

(MUSIC: WASHINGTON POST MARCH – THE ERNIE PYLE EXPERIMENT MAIN TITLE THEME.)

**ERNIE:**Hello, I’m Ernie Pyle, the Hoosier Vagabond, and this is that girl who rides with me.

**JERRY:**Here we go again.

(MUSIC: Main theme begins to fades out.)

**1b. INT. NPR STUDIO - PRESENT**

(SFX: The ambience of a recording studio fades in.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

Welcome to The Ernie Pyle Experiment; Episode 4, “My

Mother”.

Now, Let’s catch up with Jerry as she sits in Ernie’s childhood bedroom, talking to the machine; her ol’ Boyfriend Jim:

(MUSIC: Main theme finishes fading out.)

**CROSS TO:**

2a. INT. ERNIE’S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

(SFX: Room ambience of Ernie’s childhood bedroom. The window is open and the wind rolls in subtle gusts from time to time. Jerry pulls the recorder, over the covers, toward herself on the bed. NOTE: The scene should start with the mono vintage wire recording SFX then slowly cross fade into a full stereo mix.)

**JERRY:**  
I’m thirsty! Aren’t you thirsty, Jimbo?

(SFX: Jerry fiddles with the recorder, picking it up as she searches for her bottle, moving the blankets etc.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

You hiding anything?...I got something around here.

(SFX: Jerry sees the bottle on the floor next to the bed.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Well, looky here!

(SFX: Jerry flops on her stomach so she can reach for the bottle, pulls it from the floor then she sits herself cross-legged on the bed. Getting comfortable as she uncorks the bottle.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**  
Ain’t that the best sound, Jim? Name me another, and you get the next swig.

(SFX: Full stereo mix should be in effect by this time. She flails the bottle at the recorder, shaking it sloshing.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Can’t hear you!

(SFX: Jerry takes a drink.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Ahhhhh. Why am I so tired? I hate when this happens, Jim. It’s some kind of…sleeping sickness, or something. (YAWN.)

(SFX: Jerry gets out of the bed, her bare feet padding across the wood floor. Over this…)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**  
I don’t know where Ernie went to. His typewriter is empty. There’s a stack of something here beside it...  
  
(SFX: Jerry peruses a stack of papers.)

**JERRY(CONT’D):** Let’s see... Well. Looks like *he’s* making the most of our time here. One looks complete, and parts of a few others. I’ll look over these later.

(SFX: Jerry drops the papers on the desk and crosses to the recorder on the bed and pulls it toward herself. Over this…)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Maria was up here a few minutes ago. She just can’t give up on us buying a place out here. I let her talk. It’s the last place I’d ever live.

(SFX: The door opens as Ernie enters.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Sure wish we went on to Chicago, instead.

(SFX: Ernie steps a few feet into the room, his shoes creaking across the hardwood, then closes the door. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Thinking about driving up there, are you?

(SFX: Jerry gets up and starts to make for the stack of papers. Over this...)

**JERRY:**Want me to finish that stack of half-baked ideas for you?

(SFX: Ernie crosses quickly, cutting Jerry off, and picks up the stack of papers. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Who says they’re half-baked? Most of them have only been quarter-baked.

**JERRY:**I see that.

(SFX: Ernie hands the pages to Jerry. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Don’t go all-in. You can put some ideas down for me.

(SFX: Jerry crosses and plops on the bed next to the recorder.)

**JERRY:**Gee, thanks.

**ERNIE:**Get your own column then.

**JERRY:**You don’t want to start anything with me, right now. Your Mother was just here.

**ERNIE:**Was she, now?

**JERRY:**Nagging me about being on perpetual vacation. She was telling me about the trip she took to Niagara Falls. She didn’t want to go. Did you know that? I don’t understand that.

**ERNIE:**Do you think being used to the road is the same kind of sickness as being used to home?

**JERRY:**Don’t dash *all* my hopes, little sad man…And you better sit your wandering rump in that chair, we have a business to run.

**ERNIE:**Yeah, I know. Can’t think of anything.

(SFX: Ernie crosses to the other side of the bed. Over this...)

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

Maybe I’ll take this machine out and talk to some folk... Say, is this thing on?

**JERRY:**Maybe.

(SFX: Ernie pulls the recorder towards himself across the bed.)

**ERNIE:**You can’t do that to people. Turn it off. It’s a sneaky business doing that to folks.

(SFX: Ernie turns off the recorder.)

**CROSS TO:**

**2b. INT. NPR STUDIO - PRESENT**

(SFX: The ambience of a recording studio fades in.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

It’s when a fellow gets in a bind that his own ethics and morals get rewritten. In this case, for Ernie, he was feeling bound up tighter than buttermilk in a straw. He needed some ideas. And so it was that on this morning in Dana Indiana, he turned his pencil around and used the eraser on his list of personal rules…

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

(SFX: A small midwestern town square, minimal if any cars and people. It is a sleepy town where you are more likely to hear the birds and a creak then any modern sounds of the present day. Ernie walks on the sidewalk taking in his home town, he scuffs his feet as...)

**3a. INT. DANA, INDIANA BARBERSHOP - MORNING**

(SFX: Ernie opens the barbershop-door and a bell rings. Ernie quickly stashes the recorder near the storefront window seat, knocking over some magazines from a table. Over this...)

**ERNIE(WHISPERING):**

Alright then. Trying to hide this thing…so nobody sees it.

(SFX: Ernie scrambles to pick up the magazines and put them back on the waiting table.)

**CLARENCE:**Mornin’ Ernie Pyle!

(SFX: Clarence is cutting Dick’s hair.)

**ERNIE:**Well, hello Clarence Porter!

**ERNIE(WHISPERING):**

I’m at Clarence Porter’s barber-shop in downtown Dana, Indiana.

(SFX: Ernie crosses to join the other men. Over this...)

**DICK:**Ernie! Your mother said you were coming.

**ERNIE:**Howdy, Dick. How is the life-insurance game?

(SFX: Ernie stops walking on the hardwood.)

**DICK:**What game? Nobody has any money for that.

**ERNIE:**Sorry to hear it.

**DICK:**So am I. So’s everybody.

**ERNIE:**What are you doing with yourself these days?

(SFX: Clarence snipping Dick’s hair. Over this...)

**DICK:**Nothing. Getting my haircut.

(SFX: Ernie sits in the barber chair next to Dick.)

**ERNIE:**Me too.

**DICK:**Good day for it.

(SFX: Door opens, bell rings as a man enters the shop and shuts the door then crosses to join the rest.)

**CLARENCE:**If you got any.

(SFX: Ernie rubs the back of his head. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Ha! I have some back here behind my ears, somewhere.

(SFX: Phil finishes his cross and comes to a stop. Over this...)

**PHIL:**Ernie. Your mother said you’d be in town.

**ERNIE:**She’s the one I tell most of my secrets to, Phil. I believe you.

(SFX: Phil grabs a stack of newspapers in a basket next to the group. Over this...)

**PHIL:**Hey, lookie here.  
  
(SFX: Paper rustling.)

**PHIL (CONT’D):**Can you guess what this here stack of papers is?

**ERNIE:**Looks like a back-stock of the Indianapolis Times.

(SFX: Phil holds the paper close so Ernie can see it.)

**PHIL:**And who do you think that funny looking fellow is there?

**ERNIE:**Looks familiar.

(SFX: Phil flails the paper dramatically. Over this...)

**PHIL:**I guess. Says, The Hoosier Vagabond! The Hoosier Vagabond! Clarence, The *Hoosier*...

**CLARENCE:**…Vagabond, everyone heard you Phil!

(SFX: Phil takes a step toward Ernie. Over this...)

**PHIL:**You aren’t from Bloomington! A *Hoosier*, it says!

**ERNIE:**Boilermaker Vagabond doesn’t have any ring of truth.

**PHIL:**Because we’re always working or because you couldn’t get in? You have to be smart to get into Perdue.

**ERNIE:**Oh, sure!

(SFX: Phil moves, walking as he speaks. Paper still in hand. Over this...)

**PHIL:**You only *think* you’re smart. That school down in Bloomington puts their nose up and thinks it makes our laws and our culture and everyone down there just sits around and thinks and philosophizes. But when you need something done, well that’s another story, ain’t it Mr. Vagabond? When you need someone to make you a building to do all the thinking in, where do you go? Perdue, Perdue, Perdue. Can you imagine a Hoosier thinking a limestone quarry into blocks? Haha! Then trying to guess how to use a pencil? Geometry? Then stacking those blocks into theaters and courthouses and wherever else they need to congregate and do more thinking?

**DICK:**Aren’t we all Hoosiers?

**CLARENCE:**I thought so.

**PHIL:**How long you in Dana for, then, *Hoosier Vagabond*?

**ERNIE:**Another day, or so, Phil.

(SFX: Phil drops the paper in his hands back on the stack after he says, “throw the rest away.” Over this...)

**PHIL:**Well, you can see from that stack of papers there, we keep your column and throw the rest away. Even someone from Bloomington ought to realize what an honor that is.

**ERNIE:**OK, then.

**PHIL:**That’s because we’re proud of you.

**CLARENCE:**Here, here.

**DICK:**That’s the truth, Pyle.

**ERNIE:**Thank you, boys.

**PHIL:**But if you weren’t such a damn good writer, we’d throw them all out.

**ERNIE:**Well, I appreciate that.

**PHIL:**Well, you write good.

**ERNIE:**Well.

**PHIL:**What’s that now?

**ERNIE:**I write *well*.

**PHIL (LAUGHS):**

Well, ain’t you just as humble as the rest of Bloomington? Trying to confound everybody with your *rules*…I don’t get it.

**ERNIE:**And you might, if you had gone to Indiana University, instead of Perdue.

(W/T: Laughter.)

**PHIL:**Oh, alright. Laugh it up.

(SFX: Clarence removes the hair cutting cape from around Dick’s neck the Dick gets out of the chair. Before this...)

**CLARENCE:**You’re up, Ernie.

(SFX: Clarence moves toward Ernie. Getting a clean hair cutting cape and placing it around Ernie’s neck. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Ok, Clare. How about a shave? Clean up my neck, maybe, a little over the ears?

(SFX: Dick takes a few steps, moving so he may talk to Ernie. Over this...)

**DICK:**What are you going to write next?

(SFX: Clarence takes out a towel then turns on the hot water, and runs the towel back and forth under the hot water. Wrings the towel. He then runs the towel back and forth under the water again. Over this...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLvUfRj6JeA> )

**ERNIE:**You know, fellas, that is a good question. I’ve been with the folks now for the last twenty-four hours and all I can think about is them. So, maybe something about my mother. But I don’t want to make her too famous...

(SFX: Clarence wrings out the towel again. Before this...)

**CLARENCE:**Hot towel!

**PHIL:**Hot towel!

**DICK:**Hot towel!  
  
(SFX: Clarence flaps the wet hot towel, before...)

**ERNIE:**Hot towel!

(SFX: ...it hits Ernie in the face and he screams.)

**PHIL:**I was wondering how long it’d take him to shut up.

(SFX: Clarence starts trimming Ernie’s hair. Over this...)

**DICK:**You ought to tell your mother she needs to bake more cakes. She is the best cake baker around. Jule and Genevieve Walkers wedding cake, she made, was the favorite cake I’ve ever had.

**PHIL:**That’s over twenty years ago, Dick.

**DICK:**I remember it like it was yesterday. The end of my Sunday tie dipped into the frosting. I smelled like vanilla and lavender for a whole year, whenever I put it back on. Oh, boy, she can bake a cake. I tell her every time I see her, but she refuses to make me another.

**CLARENCE:**Maybe at your funeral.

**DICK:**That’d be my luck.

**PHIL:**She voted for Al Smith! I can’t get over that. She and Will too!

**CLARENCE:**Ahead of their time.

**DICK:**Yeah, would you shut up about Hoover, Phil?

**PHIL:**Roosevelt lovers! You all think his plan is going to work? You are dumb! If Hoover had a chance to implement his...

**DICK:**He had more than two years to do something! Then when it comes time to campaign for the next term, because Roosevelt pressed him, he wrote all of his plans on a cocktail napkin and said, “what a good boy am I”...

(SFX: Clarence stops cutting Ernie’s hair and waves his scissors. Over this...)

**CLARENCE:**You want to talk politics, you can do it outside!!! (PAUSE)

(SFX: Dick takes a step back. Over this...)

**DICK:**Ok, Clare, Ok. We aren’t.

(SFX: Clarence goes back to cutting Ernie’s hair. Over this...)

**CLARENCE:**Now, let me say something about Maria Pyle that nobody can argue with. Last winter there was influenza going around and it almost reminded me of 1918, when the Butler twins died, the Johansson baby, that’s what got old man Kruppert. Well, last winter some kids were real sick, in town. Your mother, not wanting it to get any worse, she went around helping everybody. Making soup and tinctures and generally just helping whenever someone asked.

**PHIL:**She helped with the body when my Aunt Alpha died. Most people just make themselves scarce.  
  
(BEAT)

**DICK:**Wish she’d make me a cake.

**PHIL:**She is a socialist, though.

(SFX: Clarence moves to his counter and begins lathering the shaving cream. Over this...)

**CLARENCE:**That woman is a saint.

**ERNIE:**That’s a myth!

(SFX: Clarence moves back to Ernie and begins dabbing shaving cream on his face. Over this...)

**CLARENCE:**Now why would you say such a thing?

**ERNIE:**I just have the whipping-switch scars to prove it.

(SFX: Clarence continues applying the shaving cream.)

**CLARENCE:**Oh, quiet now, I can’t get the shaving cream in the right places with you turning your head.

**ERNIE:**Ok, Clare, sorry.

**CLARENCE:**Only myth is that she’s a legend, doggammit, and it’s a myth worth propagating, isn’t it?

(SFX: Clarence takes out his straight razor and starts shaving Ernie’s neck.)

**DICK:**For her it is, I say.

**CLARENCE:**Here, here.

**PHIL:**Here, here, sure. Say Ernie, have you…?

(SFX: Clarence stops shaving Ernie’s neck momentarily to scold Phil. Over this...)

**CLARENCE:**Hey! Don’t ask a fella questions with a razor on his neck! You want me to pepper you with all sort of inquiry when I shave your ugly face, Phil?

**PHIL:**I don’t think I’m getting a shave today, Clare.

(SFX: Clarence goes back to shaving Ernie’s neck. Over this...)

**CLARENCE:**Well, you ought to. Your face looks great with a nice hot towel stuffed in your mouth!

(SFX: The recorder squeals.)

**DICK:**Your typewriter is making noise, Ern...

(SFX: Transition using shaving sounds and the razor being cleaned off from a towel, with a nice \*shing\* sound after the razor is cleaned off.)

**CROSS TO:**

**3b. INT. NPR STUDIO - PRESENT**

(SFX: The ambience of a recording studio fades in.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

Later that afternoon, when Ernie returned to the house, he found Jerry sleeping. A sleeping wife has its benefits, he always thought. On the one-side of things, it is good for getting some writing done, uninterrupted. The other side of that Jerry-shaped coin he approached with trepidation. For whenever she began sleeping her days away, all Ernie could see were dark clouds on the horizon.

His ‘flight’ response, at that point in time, hadn’t yet developed its ‘fight’ counterpart. That would come seven years later in North Africa, for our intrepid correspondent. Until then, ignoring a fight was a useful tactic. For Ernie, it was best to let sleeping wives lie.

So, with nothing else to do, he commandeered Boyfriend Jim to see if it could be useful in rounding out his next story idea…

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

**4a. INT. PYLE FARM KITCHEN - AFTERNOON**

(SFX: A small Midwestern kitchen with a General Electric "Monitor-Top" refrigerator, the window is open so the birds and cows may be heard outside. Ernie walks into the kitchen carrying the recorder from the hall.)

**ERNIE:**I’m in the kitchen at home. Aunt Mary is out in the garden, looks like she’s coming in with dinner chores.

(SFX: Ernie quickly sits, trying to play like he had been sitting at the table for some time. Screen door opens as Mary enters the kitchen from the garden.)

**ERNIE:**What’s for dinner?

(SFX: Mary crosses to the counter, unloading a bunch of beans held in her dress onto the counter top. Over this...)

**MARY:**Meat, potatoes, carrots…beans.

**ERNIE:**All the colors of the rainbow?

**MARY:**Boiled to taste!

(SFX: Ernie laughs.)

**MARY:**Well, stand up, let me look at you.

(SFX: Ernie gets up from his wooden chair at the kitchen table and crosses to her. Over this...)

**MARY (CONT’D):**

I sure miss you, Ernie.

**ERNIE:**I miss you too, Aunt Mary.

(SFX: They embrace.)

**MARY:**Okay, enough of that.

(SFX: Mary lets go of Ernie.)

**MARY (CONT’D):**

Here, snap the ends off these green beans.   
  
(SFX: Mary hands Ernie some beans and he joins her at the counter then they begin snapping beans. Over this...)

**MARY:**Not sure you know what it’s like with you now. Folks over in Indy I don’t even know…talking about your column.

**ERNIE:**That right?

**MARY:**Oh, you bet it is! It’s ‘*Have you read Ernie today’*? And ‘*did you see what he said?*’, and what-not...

**ERNIE:**That right?

**MARY:**You are getting good at it. I consider myself one of the lucky few that get a personal letter from you, to boot.

**ERNIE:**There’s more than just a few of you, I can assure you.

(SFX: Mary momentarily stops snapping beans. Over this...)

**MARY:**Who else do you write to?

**ERNIE:**Well, you, Mom, Dad., and a whole mess of other folks.  
I look at it like this; before I start in on the race I like to take a few laps around the brickyard first, get the engine warmed up.

(SFX: Mary starts snapping beans with Ernie again.)

**MARY:**That’s smart.

**ERNIE:**That’s why you get letters by the pound, my dear aunt.

**MARY:**Well, if you slowed it down I wouldn’t complain. Don’t do that, now! I’m just saying if you did I wouldn’t complain. I get to feeling obliged, as well. I set and scribble one out to you every day, it seems. At least as fast as they come in!

(SFX: Ernie stops snapping beans. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Really?

**MARY:**Well, sure.

**ERNIE:**Hmm. Maybe they’re getting lost in transit, then?

(SFX: Mary stops snapping beans. Over this...)

**MARY:**What?! Did you get the one about your mother arguing with Pastor Strater about the new hymnals?

**ERNIE:**I did not.

**MARY:**Well, what happened to it?

**ERNIE:**How should I know? What’s the new hymnals story?

**MARY:**Same songs, new numbers.

(SFX: Ernie starts snapping beans again. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Oh, boy.

(SFX: Mary joins him again in snapping beans. Over this...)

**MARY:**Apparently a salesman got to Pastor Strater, convinced him he needed new hymnals. Got every business in town to advertise on the pasted paper inside the front and back cover, and a dozen pages before the table of contents, you get me?

**ERNIE:**Oh, I do.

**MARY:**Everybody paid five dollars. The Seed and Feed, Grocery, Clarence’s Barber shop...

**ERNIE:**Clarence?

**MARY:**Well, yes!

**ERNIE:**He doesn’t even go to church.

**MARY:**He knows what side his bread is buttered.

**ERNIE:**Yeah.

**MARY:**And the church didn’t get one dollar from the selling of those advertisements, just free hymnals that we didn’t need. Pastor Strater’s undoing is that ‘How Great Thou Art’ is now number 287, when it used to be 39. When he called out the hymn to sing everyone went to 39, then all of heck broke loose.

**ERNIE:**Oh, no.

**MARY:**I don’t know why, everyone knows the words. But there was so much shuffling in the pews, folks trying to find the new page, and Carolyn restarted the intro on the organ at least five times. Then your mother saw the advertisements.

**ERNIE:**Oh no.

**MARY:**She stood up on the pew.

(SFX: They finish snapping the beans.)

**ERNIE:**You have got to be kidding.

**MARY:**She did! I tell you...

**ERNIE:**What was dad doing?

(SFX: Mary takes the beans and washes them in the sink. Over this.)

**MARY:**He went the other way, he sunk as far as he could to disappear. Everyone sat down, and got real quiet. Then she said, “My house shall be called a house of prayer, but Ye have made it a den of thieves”! She marched right out of there.

**ERNIE:**Oh, boy.

**MARY:**Now, I laid that all out in a letter to you last April.

(SFX: Mary turns off the faucet.)

**ERNIE:**This is the first I’ve heard it.

**MARY:**The very next day, I wrote you another and you didn’t write back about any of that one either. It was about the linement man. Remember the time she threw that wad of dollars at the linement man?

**ERNIE:**She’s a righteous woman.

**MARY:**You don’t say?

**ERNIE:**So, both letters lost?

**MARY:**How can that be? Well, I get your letters delivered here in Dana…when I pick it up from your mother I give her my letters back to you to send off for me… you think your Mother is... ?

**ERNIE:**I think you may have an editor.

(SFX: PAUSE. Mary considers this then storms out of the kitchen. Over this...)

**MARY:**Maria! Maria!

(SFX: Mary slams the screen door as she hurries to the garden.)

**ERNIE:**Someone’s in trouble...

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

**5. INT. ERNIE’S BEDROOM, PYLE FARM - NIGHT**

(SFX: Room ambience of Ernie’s childhood bedroom. The window is open and the wind rolls in subtle gusts from time to time. Jerry is asleep in bed as Ernie types, quietly and quickly at first, increasingly louder and then slower.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT (V.O.):**

Do you think he is pushing too hard on those typewriter keys?

(SFX: Slow typing.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT (V.O. CONT’D):**

Ernie is working in his bedroom, it’s late at night. What we can’t see is that Jerry is asleep in the room with him.

(SFX: Slower typing.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT (V.O. CONT’D):**

My guess is that he wants to wake her up, but if he tussled her hair or tickled her feet she’d awake like Vesuvius. I think he wants her help.

(SFX: Slower typing.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT (V.O. CONT’D):**

Or her blessing. But the sound of his typewriter keys hitting paper is just a lullaby to her ears…

**(**SFX: Ernie yanks of paper from roll waking Jerry.)

**JERRY:**Why don’t you ever just use the paper release?!

**ERNIE:**Sorry.

(SFX: Sitting up in the bed. Over this...)

**JERRY:**You woke me up.

(SFX: Ernie adjusts in his chair. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Sorry. Want to hear the latest?

**JERRY:**You’re only getting one out a day, why can’t you do one better?

**ERNIE:**If you think you can do it so fast, step on in here and *I’ll* take a nap.

**JERRY:**What else is a girl supposed to do around here?!! (PAUSE)

(SFX: Ernie turns back toward the typewriter. Placing the page on the table. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**OK. Jerry…

**JERRY:**What?

**ERNIE:**Listen now... Look, I’m not trying to start a fight.

**JERRY:**I guess we’re fighting, then.

(SFX: Ernie turns back towards her. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**No…

**JERRY:**What the hell you think I’m going to do, when you start a conversation with that? Oh, sure, that really calms a person, lays their hackles right to bed…just before you yank the covers right off!

**ERNIE:**I’m just trying to…

**JERRY:**Just say it, you bird-brain.

**ERNIE:**All right then…Are you headed down the path?

**JERRY:**What path?

**ERNIE:**Just the one that starts with you sleeping a lot and ends with…

**JERRY:**No, I’m not! I’m fine.

**ERNIE:**Define fine.

(SFX: Jerry gets out of bed and paces the room as she speaks. Over this...)

**JERRY:**Fine: Of superior or best quality; of high or highest grade. Choice, excellent, or admirable…

**ERNIE:**Alright…

**JERRY:***Informal:* in an excellent manner; very well

**ERNIE:**I got it.

**JERRY:**Fine: A sum of money imposed as a penalty. A fee paid by a feudal tenant. The end of a compositon that comprises several…

**ERNIE:**Fine! Fine. You’re fine! Sure. Very well. Very good. I’m glad I asked.

(SFX: Jerry stops pacing, reaches over to the nightstand and picks up the canning jar of moonshine. Over this...)

**JERRY (GIGGLES WITH A PLAYFUL HILLBILLY ACCENT):**

I’d be finer if you go get us some more of this here lightnin’-sauce first.

(SFX: Jerry takes a few steps toward Ernie as she unscrews the jar.)

**ERNIE:**Give me some of that.

(SFX: Ernie grabs the jar and takes a drink.)

**JERRY:**You’re just mad you need a boss, and that’s me.

(SFX: Jerry leans in behind Ernie. Over this...)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

You have a deadline, young man.

(SFX: Ernie picks up the story again. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Do you want to hear this, or not?

(SFX: Jerry lets go of Ernie and takes a step back to listen. Over this...)

**JERRY:**I’m sorry. Go ahead.

(SFX: Ernie lifts the page to read from it. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**My mother would rather drive a team of horses in the field than cook a dinner. But in her lifetime she has done very little of the first and too much of the latter. She has had only three real interests- my father, myself, and her farm work. Nothing else makes much difference to her. And yet,

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

when I left home in my late teens, to be gone forever except for brief visits, she was content for me to go, because she knew I was not happy on the farm.

My mother is living proof that happiness is within yourself; for a whole lifetime she has done nothing but work too hard, and yet I’m sure she’s been happy. She loves the farm there outside Dana, Indiana. She wouldn’t think of moving to town, as the other “retired” farmers do. She would rather stay home now and milk the cows than go to the state fair. She is the best chicken raiser and cake baker in the neighborhood. She loves to raise chickens and hates to bake cakes. My mother probably knows as little about world affairs as any woman in our neighborhood. Yet she is the broadest-minded and most of liberal of the lot. I don’t remember her ever telling me I couldn’t do something. She always told me what she thought was right, and what was wrong, and then it was up to me.

She is a devout Methodist and a prohibitionist. Yet she and my father voted for Al Smith in 1928, because they thought he was a better man than Hoover. Some of their neighbors wouldn’t speak to them for months because they voted for a Catholic and a wet, but they didn’t care. They are always doing things they think are right.

My mother has quite a temper. I remember once when the liniment man came, and said we hadn’t paid him for a bottle of liniment. My mother said we had. The man said we hadn’t.

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

So my mother went and got the money, opened the screen door, and threw it in his face. He never came back.

She always tells people just what she thinks. A good many of our neighbors have deservedly felt the whip of her tongue, and they pout over it a while, but whenever they’re in trouble they always thaw out and come asking for help. And of course get it. My mother is the one the neighbors always call on when somebody gets sick, or dies, or needs help with of any kind. She has practically raised a couple of kids besides myself. She has always been the confidant of the young people around here.

My mother doesn’t realize it, but her life has been the life of a real prairie pioneer. You could use her in a book, or paint her picture, as one of the sturdy stock of the ages who have always done the carrying-on when the going was tough.

She isn’t so well anymore, but she seems to work harder than ever. We try to get her to rest, but she says, “Oh, the work has to be done”. We say, “Yes but, but you don’t have to do it. Supposing you were gone; the work would still be here, But you wouldn’t have to do it”. But she doesn’t understand what we mean.

**JERRY:**It’s good.

**ERNIE:**Thank, you…Is there a better way to say… just… ‘liniment man’?

**JERRY:**How so? Like, ‘travelling salesman’?

**ERNIE:**I wanted to be more…

**JERRY:**Specific. Yeah. (to herself) vendor…merchant.. trader…peddler?

**ERNIE:**Peddler.

**JERRY:**Peddler is… appropriate. ‘Linement peddler’…

**ERNIE:**No.

**JERRY:**No. I think ‘linement man’. Yeah. I understand why you are…

**ERNIE:**..thinking there might be a better…

(SFX: we should move from the stereo mix slowly cross-fading back into the mono sounds of the vintage wire recording.)

**JERRY:**Right. (PAUSE)

**ERNIE:**(PAUSE) Thinking too hard on this?

**JERRY:**Yeah. Keep it. Say, you going to do anything with the stuff from the barbershop?

**ERNIE:**I don’t know. I would. Probably would if this thing didn’t record everything. I feel like I’m competing to tell the story with the darn thing.

**JERRY:**Have a contest against it? Like John Henry?

**ERNIE:**And didn’t he die?

**JERRY:**Yeah. Let’s turn this thing off. **MUSIC SEGUE:**

6a. INT. NPR STUDIO - DAY

(MUSIC: Continues to play under this.)

(SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**  
Next time on The Ernie Pyle Experiment: **CROSS TO:**

**6b. MONTAGE**

A preview cuts and sound bites from episode 5.

**CROSS TO:**

**6c. INT. NPR STUDIO - PRESENT**

(MUSIC: Continues to play under this.)

(SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT (CONT’D):**  
See you next week, folks. Until then, I’m Dan V. Prescott reminding you that the good road will never end, if you stay only on it.

**FADE TO:**

(MUSIC: “THE WASHINGTON POST MARCH”.)

**CREDIT ROLL**

(MUSIC: Continues to play under this.)

**CARY ONANON:**

WFIU Bloomington, Indiana. I’m Cary O*nan*on. And, now, I am also carry-grizzly-bear -spray. Try me kids.

**FADE MUSIC**