**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:**
For almost ten years Ernie worked various jobs for The

Washington Daily News. He started as a cub reporter and worked his way through every task in the newsroom. In that time he developed himself as a writer, creating his first fan base; the people of Washington DC.

Until now, however, he was able to maneuver through life as an unknown face in the crowd. Until now, he could be himself without thinking about the ramifications of losing his job, if say, a certain someone didn’t pay attention to such ramifications...

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

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

**ERNIE:**This is Ernie Pyle, the Hoosier Vagabond, and this is that girl who rides with me.

**JERRY:**Maybe, maybe not.

(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 8: Have You Been Away?

(MUSIC: Main theme finishes fading out.)

**CROSS TO:**

**2. EXT. MCPHERSON SQUARE PARK. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY**

(SFX: The park trees are filled with Blue Jays and Song Sparrows. Cars drive around the park the outskirts of the park nestled within Washington D.C. People enjoy the warm afternoon: children are at play, couples picnicking, and others walk through the park past the statue of Major General James B McPherson. Ernie and Jerry sit on a bench under the statue with boyfriend Jim, Jerry has the wicker picnic basket from the car and is delving out eggs and salt for them both. She also pulls out a bottle of bourbon and the tin cup.)

**JERRY:**...look, if we don’t finish these eggs right now....

(SFX: Jerry positions the eggs on a towel on the bench between them.)

**ERNIE:**There’s a dozen eggs!

**JERRY:**That is exactly why we need to...

**ERNIE:**Why did you boil a dozen eggs last night when you knew we were going to be home today?

**JERRY:**We brought the eggs from your folks place.

**ERNIE:**So?

**JERRY:**So...If I have to explain how long eggs keep to a gaddang chicken farmer...

**ERNIE:**Alright, so you boiled them. They’ll keep now. Why can’t we eat them at home?

**JERRY:**We won’t.

**ERNIE:**Why not?

**JERRY:**Good question. When do we ever eat at home?

**ERNIE:**Good question. Another good question is *I can’t eat six eggs right now*!

**JERRY:**You’re going for nine.

**ERNIE:**What?

(SFX: Jerry cracks and peals a hardboiled egg. Over this.)

**JERRY:**I can only manage two, but I’ll sacrifice for the common good and go for three.

**ERNIE:**Nine?

**JERRY:**Don’t argue with me.

**ERNIE:**I ain’t even hungry.

**JERRY:**There’s starving children in West Virginia... and you *ain’t* even hungry.

(SFX: Ernie cracks an egg and begins peeling it.)

**ERNIE:**Oh, boy. I’m going to throw up.

**JERRY:**You better not.

(SFX: Jerry eats her egg.)

**ERNIE:**That Midwest wind will have *nothing* on me.

(SFX: Jerry takes the bourbon out of the picnic basket and uncorks it.)

**JERRY:**Here.

(SFX: Jerry pours some bourbon into the tin cup and hands it to Ernie. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**It’s about time.

**JERRY:**Don’t drink it all.

**ERNIE:**It’s the only way, dear, it’s the only way.

(SFX: Ernie takes a swig of bourbon then sets down tin cup on bench.)

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

Bourbon and eggs!

(SFX: Ernie crams the fourth egg in his mouth.)

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

I can’t eat anymore, really.

(SFX: Jerry begins peeling another egg for Ernie. Over this.)

**JERRY:**You’ve only had four.

**ERNIE:**You’ve only had one!

**JERRY:**I was taught a lady eats like a bird.

**ERNIE:**Well, dangit! You’re the only one that gets to eat like a lady around here? Gimme that...

(SFX: Ernie grabs the egg and bottle from Jerry and drinks directly from the bottle. Ernie takes a bite of the eggs as Bryant walks toward them along the sidewalk. Ernie takes a drink.)

**BRYANT:**Hey! You’re Ernie Pyle..

(SFX: Ernie struggles to swallow his egg. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**Oh-no.

**BRYANT:**Ernie Pyle, remember me?

**ERNIE:**No.

(SFX: Ernie sets the bottle of bourbon on the bench.)

**BRYANT:**I sent in a poem for the paper to publish and you never did?

**ERNIE:**You don’t say?

**BRYANT:**Names Bryant Keenan?

**ERNIE:**Doesn’t make sense.

**BRYANT:**Sending in a poem?

**ERNIE:**Sometimes, but no...how would I know who you were just by the fact you sent in a poem?

**BRYANT:**Well, I’m Bryant Keenan.

**ERNIE:**I never heard of you.

**BRYANT:**I’m the one that sent in the poem.

**ERNIE:**Oh, you’re the one?!

**BRYANT:**Bryant Keenan.

**ERNIE:**Bryant Keenan, you don’t say. Well… long time no see...

**BRYANT:**Well, we’ve never met.

(SFX: Jerry picks up the bottle and pours herself some into the tin cup. Over this.)

**JERRY:**Don’t worry about it Ernie, it’s just McPherson Square, it does this to people.

**BRYANT:**What’d she say?

**ERNIE:**Just that Mcpherson Square is lovely in the afternoon. We’ve been away for a few months, just drove into the District about an hour ago. We thought we’d stop here and have lunch in the square, right here beneath the Generals statue, before we went on home.

**BRYANT:***Major* General...

(SFX: Jerry continues to drink as Ernie and Bryant speak.)

**ERNIE:**Right.

**BRYANT:**...Mcpherson. You know this statue is made out of confederate canons.

**ERNIE:**Yep. (BEAT) Keenan. You’re Irish.

**BRYANT:**I’m American.

(SFX: Ernie picks up one of the remaining hard boiled eggs. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**Of course you are. Wouldn’t want a hard boiled egg, would you?

**BRYANT:**No, thank you.

(SFX: Ernie throws the egg into a nearby bush. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**No, I wouldn’t either.

**BRYANT:**What did you think of the poem?

**ERNIE:**What poem?

(SFX: Jerry finishes her drink and pours herself another glass.)

**BRYANT:**My poem I sent in to the Daily News? Aren’t you the editor?

**ERNIE:**At one time I did a little of that, sure.

**BRYANT:**Right. You remember now, don’t you?

**ERNIE:**Well, Bryant Keenan, here were a lot of poems...

**BRYANT:**A walk in the pink canopy of yesteryears gift/

(SFX: Jerry pulls the recorder close to herself, muttering into the microphone. Over this.)

**JERRY:**Oh, boy...

**BRYANT:**on Potomacs old shore my memories sift/

**ERNIE:**Not bad...

**BRYANT:**From actions taken and held frozen in winter’s guilt/ Into the grace of distraction a promise may shift

**ERNIE:**Wow. Very good.

**BRYANT:**It’s the cherry blossom! The cherry blossom that lifts!/ The guilt of mis-deeded politicians it lifts

**ERNIE:**Oh...

**BRYANT:**It’s Washington himself that never told a lie/ Baloney, I say, my axe will make short shrift.

(SFX: Jerry quietly raspberries into the microphone… quietly… as Ernie talks.)

**ERNIE:**Mis-deeded?

(SFX: Jerry takes a drink.)

**BRYANT:**It’s poetry.

**ERNIE:**Oh.

**BRYANT:**(Bryant begins again) The Cherry Blo...

**ERNIE:**Say, I remember this now! Didn’t you send this in around July?

**BRYANT:**I thought you would remember!

**ERNIE:**You sent it in July, sure, but the cherry blossoms come end of March.

**BRYANT:**So?

**ERNIE:**You’d have a better chance if you sent it in February. Anyway, nice meeting you.

**BRYANT:**I have another, if you...

 **MUSIC SEGUE:**

3a. INT. NPR STUDIO - DAY

(SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

And so it goes, that when one of the crowd takes notice of a familiar face, it doesn’t take long for everyone else around to notice as well. Ernie wanted to make himself scarce. And so, with a made up excuse he left Jerry under the statue with boyfriend Jim, and the eggs, and the bourbon…

 **CROSS TO:**

**3b. EXT. MCPHERSON SQUARE PARK. WASHINGTON D.C. - LATE AFTERNOON.**

(SFX: The park is much busier now as people head home after work. There is both more foot traffic and cars driving around the park. The trees are still filled with Blue Jays and Song Sparrows. Possibly people walking their dogs etc. Jerry sits alone on a bench under the statue of Major General McPherson with boyfriend Jim. Jerry has continues to drink the bourbon from the tin cup.)

**JERRY:**I left a sink full of dishes when we left last December. I’m in no hurry, Mcpherson Square. When did I first come here?... eighteen years its been. I don’t feel myself here anymore.

(SFX: Jerry takes a drink.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**Well, hello Jim! My fifth of Four Roses is out.

(SFX: Jerry takes a thermos from the picnic basket.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

But...I did put some rum in the Thermos...oh, boy!

(SFX: She pours a drink from the thermos.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Got some folks looking at me like I’m crazy, some crazy hobo or something. ‘*The crazy hobo talking to herself’*.

(W/T: Jerry giggles.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Ernie went off on foot to see the boys at the newsroom, I’ll take the car home in a bit, or maybe I’ll leave it here and walk myself. Yeah.

(SFX: Jerry drinks.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

I got here in 1918. They were recruiting women for the war effort. I was young! I had to get the hell out of Minnesota. My dad let me go. He figured I’d be back when it was all over...but I just keep telling him it’s still going on.

(W/T: Jerry laughs.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

They had me doing office work, typing and running around. Ernie came a few years later.

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

He can write. He sure can, better than you, Jim. I thought he was kind of funny. We met and that was it. We were always playing with words. Still do, when he feels like it...

(SFX: Jerry pour more alcohol from the thermos into the tin cup. Over this.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Oh, boy. I’m going to run off and not tell anyone. Go find something of my own to do. Not have to consider somebody else’s ideas. I wonder if he’d ever be able to do that? He is so damn lucky to be doing what he’s doing…But, we can make each other laugh, Jim. So, aren’t I lucky?

I’m just carrying on, Jim. I don’t know what else I’d do. I just don’t have the…see, it’s… it is a certain kind of brilliance, or genius, that a person of words has. I can think like them, but I just don’t do it. There is a lot to be said for doing nothing. I mean that. But…I gotta be around it. It is very attractive. Mostly, those born with it have no other positive attributes. (laughs). Lucky for him it is the only thing I am attracted to.

Don’t get jealous, Jim. I certainly wouldn’t call Ernie a genius to his face.

(W/T: Jerry laughs. SFX: Jerry drinks some more. A crowd of people walk by.)

**JERRY: (CON’T)**Bunch of Victorians waving little stick flags! Just come from Lafayette Square, that’s right there across from the White House, Jim, it’s where folks go to...worship.
They do, they stand there staring at it, like Roosevelt is going to come out and autograph their bibles. Waving little flags in their hands like it’s the fourth quarter of a football game and if they cheer loud enough it’ll matter somehow.

Don’t go there. I did once, when I first got here, I shouldn’t be too snobby about it. Most of them are probably first timers too and are just getting caught up. It just gets my goat when they start...genuflecting...So, I’m just fine here in McPherson Square where nothing means anything.

(SFX: Jerry slumps on the bench, lying down. People start to stare at her as they walk by.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**(under her breath) Yeah...what’re you looking at?

(SFX: Passerby stops.)

**PASSERBY:**What’s that?

**JERRY:**I said, ‘evening, my friend’.

(SFX: Jerry takes a drink.)

**PASSERBY:**Are you drinking in public?

**JERRY:**Wha?...are... you a judge?

**PASSERBY:**You can’t sleep here.

**JERRY:**I...what?!?

(SFX: Jerry sits up.)

**PASSERBY:**This isn’t Hooverville.

**JERRY:**You can’t talk to the Bonus Army like that!

**PASSERBY:**Bonus Army?

(SFX: Jerry lies back down on the bench. Over this.)

**JERRY:**Yeah, I’m waiting for my check! They said they’ll be here with it today...

**PASSERBY:**Bonus Army went home two years ago, and you’re a woman.

**JERRY:**Just because I’m wearing a dress?

**PASSERBY:**I’m calling the police.

(SFX: Passerby walks away down the sidewalk.)

**JERRY:**

Go ahead, you...civilized...Victorian...monkey...

(SFX: Jerry pours herself another drink. Over this.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**
He probably just came from Lafayette! Holy Jeeze, we gotta get back on the road, Jim. The Victorians are taking over the cities.

(SFX: Jerry drinks.)

(SFX: Jerry sloshes the thermos. Over this.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

I ain’t showin’ bottle, for crapsake.

(SFX: Jerry drinks.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

If I’m the only one sneaking a drink in *this* town, you aren’t looking close enough.

(SFX: Two policeman approach Jerry.)

This whole place is drunk! Everyone!!...Victorians!

(SFX: Jerry starts to collect everything into the picnic basket. Over this.)

**POLICEMAN 1:**Good Evening, ma’am.

**JERRY:**Better get out of my way! The Victorians can’t see me!

**POLICEMAN 2:**Ma’am?

(SFX: Jerry finishes gathering her belongings. Over this.)

**JERRY:**Gotta keep an eye on me, I can’t do it for myself…

**POLICEMAN 2:**Ma’am?

(SFX: Grabs purse and picnic basket then Jerry starts to get up, finally noticing it is the police. Over this.)

**JERRY:**The cops...

**POLICEMAN 2:**Ma’am!

**JERRY:**(annoyed) What!?

**POLICEMAN 1:**Are you alright?

**JERRY:**Yes...just talking to my boyfriend.

**POLICEMAN 1:**Have you been drinking, ma’am?

**JERRY:**Have you?

**POLICEMAN 2:**What’s your name? (long pause)

**POLICEMAN 2:**Ma’am?

**JERRY:**What’s yours?

**POLICEMAN 1:**Are you a resident of Washington?

**JERRY:**
Sometimes.

(SFX: Jerry pulls the recorder close to her and speaks into the mic.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

Sorry, Jim, let me take care of this...

**POLICEMAN 2:**
Do you have any identification?

(SFX: Jerry rummages through her purse.)

**POLICEMAN 1:**Have you been drinking, ma’am?

**JERRY:**Oh boy...Victorians...

(SFX: Jerry pulls her ID out and hands it to Policeman 2.)

**JERRY:**Here.

**POLICEMAN 1:**What’s her name? (beat)

**POLICEMAN 2:**Pyle.

**POLICEMAN 1:**Pyle?

(SFX: Policeman 2 shows Policeman 1 the ID.)

**POLICEMAN 2:**Pyle.

**POLICEMAN 1:**As in...Ma’am, do you know Ernie Pyle?

**JERRY:**Who doesn’t?

**POLICEMAN 1:**Are you the Mrs.?

**JERRY:**OK.

**POLICEMAN 1:**Well, how about that?

**JERRY:**How about what?

**POLICEMAN 2:**You’re that girl who rides with him!

**JERRY:**(big sigh) Oh, boy.

**POLICEMAN 1:**We know Ernie!

**JERRY:**Who doesn’t?...I already said that…

**POLICEMAN 1:**No, I mean it.

**JERRY:**Well, so do I, you knucklehead. He knows everyone in this town.

**POLICEMAN 2:**We were at your place a couple years back, brought our wives. It was an honor. Everyone knows the Pyle parties.

**POLICEMAN 1:**Yeah the ol’ Pyle speakeasy!

**POLICEMAN 2:**You were in the kitchen the whole time, we never got introduced...I don’t think. I can’t remember. I couldn’t remember the entire next day, either!

(W/T: the cops laugh.)

(LONG PAUSE)

**POLICEMAN 1:**Mrs. Pyle, have you been drinking?

**POLICEMAN 2:**We’ve had a complaint.

**JERRY:**If you’re going to haul anyone in for drinking in this town you need to start up on The Hill!

**POLICEMAN 2:**Well, if you were at home, or indoors, it wouldn’t matter so much...

**POLICEMAN 1:**Mrs. Pyle, they said you were ranting. Talking to yourself.

**JERRY:**I’m not talking to myself!

**POLICEMAN 1:**Well, who were you talking to when we walked up?

**JERRY:**My boyfriend!

**POLICEMAN 2:**Mrs. Pyle? Where is Mr. Pyle?

**JERRY:**I have no idea. (LONG PAUSE)

**POLICEMAN 1:**Where’s… your… boyfriend, then

**JERRY:**Right here. Where’s yours?

**POLICEMAN 1:**What the hell is that?

**JERRY:**It records your gaddarn voice. I don’t have time to sit here giving you knuckleheads a science lesson. I’m not taking questions at this time…

**POLICEMAN 1:**Well, I’ll be...What’ll they think up next?

**POLICEMAN 2:**So, you were just sitting here talking into this?

**JERRY:**I was. Want a drink?

(SFX: Jerry takes out her thermos.)

**POLICEMAN 2:**Say, Mike. I have an idea.

(SFX: Jerry pours herself a drink as part of the transition.)

 **MUSIC SEGUE:**

4a. INT. NPR STUDIO - DAY

(SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

I, myself, have no idea why Jerry went along with their plan. But, after a series of lowered inhibitions, along with her innate need to never take life seriously, she did. And now, we happen to find ourselves at the front stoop of the old Pyle place…

 **CROSS TO:**

**4b. EXT. PYLE APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRANCE - EVENING.**

(SFX: Suburban part of the southwest part of Washington DC off North Street. In addition to the sound of traffic and dogs barking in the city, the Warf Marina in the Washington Channel is just a few blocks to the east and the Anacostia River is to the southeast so ships can be heard in the distance. Ernie’s Model A pulls up and parks on North street then the policemen get out of the vehicle then walk up the cobblestone side walk and up the concrete steps to the apartment carrying the recorder. Policeman 2 hides the recorder behind a bush on the concrete porch of the apartment building. Over this.)

**POLICEMAN 2:**You ready?

**POLICEMAN 1:**Hide it a little more.

**POLICEMAN 2:**More? Where?

(SFX: Policeman 1 rings the buzzer for Ernie’s apartment.)

**POLICEMAN 1:**Kick it over farther.

(SFX: Policeman 2 pushes the recorder, scraping it across the concrete, rustling the bush as he tries to hide it. Over this.)

**POLICEMAN 1:**More. More! Hurry up!

(SFX: The recorder gets stuck on a branch. Scraping sounds and bush rustling. Over this.)

**POLICEMAN 2:**It’s stuck on a...

**POLICEMAN 1:**Not that far! Hurry.

(SFX: Policeman 2 manages to free the recorder from the branch and pulls it back a bit. Over this.)

**POLICEMAN 2:**It’s fine.

(SFX: Policeman 2 hurries up the steps and joins Policeman 1 as the apartment door opens. Ernie steps into the door frame. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**Hello... officer...

**POLICEMAN 2:**Ernie!

**ERNIE:**Hey! How are you Joe! Mike!

**POLICEMAN 1:**Hello, old timer!

(SFX: Ernie begins to move. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**Come on in, can I get you a drink?

**POLICEMAN 1:**Well, not so fast, yet...

(SFX: Ernie stops.)

**ERNIE:**Oh?

**POLICEMAN 1:**Well. Um...

**ERNIE:**What is it?

**POLICEMAN 2:**We found your wife.

(Long pause. Ernie sighs.)

**ERNIE:**Go on.

**POLICEMAN 1:**Apparently she...

**POLICEMAN 2:**Ernie, she robbed a bank.

**ERNIE:**She what?!

**POLICEMAN 1:**Yeah. She did...she sure did.

**POLICEMAN 2:**I guess she’d been drinking?

**ERNIE:**She robbed a what now?

**POLICEMAN 2:**The bank.

**ERNIE:**What bank?

**POLICEMAN 1:**Federal Home Loan ...Bank... Board Building.

**ERNIE:**Federal Home...Why, there’s no money there.

**POLICEMAN 1:**She didn’t know that.

**POLICEMAN 2:**She claims they tricked her.

**POLICEMAN 1:**And she’s pressing charges. (BEAT)

**ERNIE:**That my car parked right there?

**POLICEMAN 1:**It is.

**POLICEMAN 2:**I believe it is, yes.

**ERNIE:**Is that my wife waving at me from the back seat?

(W/T: HI ERNIE!)

**POLICEMAN 2:**Uh, yep.

**POLICEMAN 1:**It is indeed.

**ERNIE:**You wouldn’t be putting me on, would you?

(W/T: The policemen laugh heartily.)

**POLICEMAN 1:**Oh, no!

**POLICEMAN 2:**Never!

(SFX: Laughter carries on and on.)

**ERNIE:**You about gave me a heart attack. So you’re putting me on then?

(SFX: The police laugh more.)

**POLICEMAN 2:**Yes, Ernie Pyle. You have been had.

**POLICEMAN 1:**Except the drunk part. We aren’t lying about that.

**POLICEMAN 2:**No, not the drunk part. She is drunk, for sure.

**POLICEMAN 1:**She was drinking under the statue in McPherson Square, hassling and scaring people.

**POLICEMAN 2:**That part is also true.

**POLICEMAN 1:**We were walking a beat so we loaded her in your car and drove her here.

**POLICEMAN 2:**And her boyfriend.

**POLICEMAN 1:**Oh, yeah. Him too.

**ERNIE:**Her boyfriend, huh? Where is that thing?

**POLICEMAN 1:**She wanted to hear your reaction, so...

**POLICEMAN 2:**So did we! Haha! It’s right there by your feet.

**ERNIE:**Well, I guess that’s funny. Sort of. I guess. You wouldn’t mind bringing her up here would you?

(SFX: Police walk back to the Model A.)

**CROSS TO:**

**5. INT. PYLE SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT - LATER**

(SFX: There is a fireplace already lit across the room from the main door and two open windows, night city ambience mixed with the ships and a gentle breeze, on the wall left of the door. Ernie turns the recorder on as he closes the door to their one room apartment. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**Now, I’m turning this thing on so that tomorrow morning so you can hear what you sound like.

(SFX: Jerry stumbles across the wooden floor and flops on the bed.)

**JERRY:**Ah, go ahead.

(SFX: Ernie crosses to his desk by one of the windows on the left wall. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**You’re not going to stay drunk the entire time we are home.

(SFX: Jerry kicks off her shoes.)

**JERRY:**OK, Mom. Thanks... Mom. Momma!

(SFX: Ernie sets the recorder down on his desk.)

**ERNIE:**When you do this on the road we can just leave town and nobody knows who you are, and I’m not embarrassed and apologizing everywhere.

**JERRY:**Well...thanks for the favor, Ma.

(SFX: Ernie crosses to the bed and sits. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**Don’t be like this. I don’t want to have to worry about you while we are home.

**JERRY:**I can find my own way home. Not like you, you get three miles from Washington and you gotta ask directions.

**ERNIE:**(LAUGHS) They changed the roads on me, dammit.

**JERRY:**They didn’t change anything. It’s Merryfield Virginia, it’s right there for crapsake. Three miles that-a-way...

(SFX: Ernie brushes a stray strand of Jerry’s hair out of her eyes. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**Please. Don’t stay drunk while we are here.

**JERRY:***Okaaay*...

**ERNIE:**We have a lot of friends to see, a lot of folks on the business side of things.

**JERRY:***Okay*, I said...

**ERNIE:**We’ll be back out on the road in a week and you can drink then, it’ll be better. It’ll be fun and I’ll match you drink for drink.

**JERRY:**You can’t match your socks and underwear.

**ERNIE:**I’m serious, girl.

**JERRY:**I am too, Mom...Ma...Mother

**ERNIE:**Don’t start making me mad.

**JERRY:**Making? I’ll make you...

**ERNIE:**Now, goddammit...

**JERRY:**I’ll make you a drink?

**ERNIE:**Oh...Alright. Go ahead.

(SFX: Jerry gets up and crosses to their liquor cabinet. Over this. Jerry pulls the cork and pours two drinks.)

**ERNIE:**Now try and sleep, would you. I’m going to hit the keys.

(SFX: Jerry take Ernie’s drink to him. Over this.)

**JERRY:**Good idea, Mother. Quit this gabbing and fill your mouth with this...

 **MUSIC SEGUE:**

**6. INT. PYLE SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT - NIGHT**

(SFX: The fireplace faintly crackles and the night city ambience is mixed with ships and a gentle breeze from the two open windows. Ernie finishes writing a sentence on the typewriter then rips the page from the roll without using the paper release. Over this.)

**ERNIE:**You want to hear this?

(SFX: Jerry rolls over in the bed, still fully clothed, lying on top of the bedding half-asleep.)

**JERRY:**Mmmrrfff.

(SFX: Ernie holds up the page and begins to read aloud.)

**ERNIE:**Six Thousand miles behind us, and the white glow in the night of the Capitol dome ahead. Six thousand miles of Canada and the United States, without getting lost by as much as a block. And here, within eight miles of the White House, we went through a place called Merryfield, Virginia, which we had never heard of before.

**JERRY:**
I’ve heard of it. And it was daytime.

**ERNIE:**
Please don’t interrupt me.

**JERRY:**
Ope. Forgot.

**ERNIE:**
You can’t stomp all over a guys…

**JERRY:**
I know, I know. Go on. Start over.

**ERNIE:**
…eight miles of the white house… Merryfield, Virginia… which we had never heard of before, and had to stop and ask the way.

It was in the soft warm spring of 1923 that I first saw Washington. I was a cub reporter, and the editor had compassionately invited me to stay at his hotel until I found a place to live. We were walking to work that first morning, walking with the world ahead of me, walking through McPherson Square, so green and pretty, with people sitting leisurely on the benches even as early as seven o’clock, and the editor said to me, “You’ll probably like Washington. But let me warn you: don’t stay here too long. It’s a nice easy-going city and people get in a rut, and if you stay till you get to liking it too well, you’ll never leave. You’ll just settle down to a pleasant routine and never amount to anything”.

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

When I came back in 1935, I had been heeding that editor’s advice for a dozen years, always getting out of Washington. But somehow or other I kept coming back. Maybe it was the city that pulled me back, or maybe it was some stubborn part of me that didn’t want to amount to anything. Anyhow, here I was again.

I have often wondered how Washington achieved the appearance in the niceties of a small town, while retaining the best features of the big city. Anyone who sends in the correct answer, plus ten dollars in gold, can have my expired season pass to the American League ball games. My only guess is: Washington, on the edge of the real south, naturally has some of the south’s delightful slothfulness. A good big percentage of the population came there from somewhere else— many of them from small towns. Physically, Washington is broad and smooth, its parks are big and numerous, it’s streets are wide and it’s buildings low, and the result is spaciousness. Many of its people live in apartment houses, hence the city doesn’t spread all over the eastern seaboard. A good part of its population is in comfortable circumstances, so that the pinched look and the anxious stare in the goad of hurry, hurry, hurry seldom settles on the citizens of Washington. The whole thing, summed up, makes for easy living.

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

When a fellow has been shooting around the country and then goes back to Washington and walks down the street, all the people he knows stop and shake hands and say, “How was the trip”? So you say, “Oh, fine”, and you chat for a minute or two.

Up in the new Supreme Court building a handsome young man stopped and said, “You don’t know who I am do you”? I didn’t, so he told me he used to be a Western Union messenger and ran messages for me.

Down at the District jail, I saw friend of many years who was waiting to be tried for murder. He was glad to see me, and I to see him, and to see that he looked better than he had in years.

Crossing the street, I heard somebody yell at me. It was a man standing on the corner counting cars. I asked him what for. He said he was doing it on relief, because the traffic bureau wanted the figures. Used to be a taxi driver, and I knew him well. A lot of taxi drivers are my friends.
A fellow stopped me on the street and said, “I’m the man who’s poem you wouldn’t publish last winter”. I started to square off and make what little defense I could, but he said he just wanted to say hello, and he didn’t suppose he ever would get it published anywhere.

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

So, you see, when I sit at home in the evening reading in the original Greek and thinking about my friends and what a diversified lot they are, I feel very proud of them, and proud of myself too, for knowing them. Of course I just dismissed all those who stop and say, “Have you been away”? Or “Where are you working now”? Or who want to talk about what ‘they’ve’ been doing.

**JERRY:**
I like how you just end it like that.

**ERNIE:**
Do you, now?

**JERRY:**
You have to find that rhythm. If you don’t read it right, it feels like it just peters out.

**ERNIE:**
There’s a right way, and a wrong way to read everything.

**JERRY:**
That a political statement?

**ERNIE:**
Ha! No. But, rhythm. Yeah. Got to have that.

**JERRY:**
I hear it.

**ERNIE:**
Well…I’m glad one of my readers gets me. (LONG PAUSE)

**JERRY:**
What?

**ERNIE:**
Nothing. I mean…thanks.

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

**7a. INT. NPR STUDIO - DAY**

(MUSIC: Continues to play under this.)

(SFX: Small studio ambience.)

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

**7b. MONTAGE**

(A preview cuts and sound bites from episode 9.)

 **CROSS TO:**

**7c. INT. NPR STUDIO - DAY**

(MUSIC: Continues to play under this. SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT (CONT’D):**

Back next week with more stories from The Ernie Pyle Experiment. I’m Dan V. Prescott, Reminding you that the good road never ends, if you can only stay 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…I don’t even care anymore. It’s not my real name, anyway. Onanon is my nom-de-microphone. My first boss in public radio told me I needed an NPR name, something to fit into the pantheon of pretentious monikers known to our institution. Someone suggested, Cary Onanon. I said, “why not use my real name”? They asked, “what’s your real name”? I told them the truth, “Ted Bundy”. So, my hand was summarily and sanctimoniously forced, and that was the day I became Cary Onanon… though I still drive, to this day, a cream colored 1968 Volkswagen Beetle. The car of the people! It’s amazing what you can fit into the trunk of those things…

**FADE MUSIC**