**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:**  
As a writer of the first-person, Ernie intentionally put forth a persona un-heroic. He didn’t wish to be patting himself on the back as the most-upright, or the one with the quickest come-back. Instead, he wrote of himself as that sad-sap everyone knows, and little goes right for.

Perhaps it was because, when faced with his reality, there wasn’t much to laugh about. And instead of taking care of things on the home front, it was easier to point out why everyone else should be laughing at him.

**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:**   
I’m staying home.

(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 10, “The Zipper”.

Let’s catch up with Jerry at the kitchen table of their apartment, back home in Washington DC, as she shows us a new way to capture the magic of an asthma inhaler

(MUSIC: Main theme finishes fading out.)

**CROSS TO:**

**2. INT. PYLE SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT - MORNING**

(SFX: The fireplace faintly crackles and through the two open windows the ambience of a bustling city morning is mixed with the sounds of ships and a gentle breeze. Jerry seems in a very, very dark place. Jerry walks to the fireplace, she sets down the recorder then she takes a coffee pot out the fireplace and pours herself a cup into a coffee cup on the mantle. Over this... NOTE: The scene should start with the mono vintage wire recording SFX then slowly cross fade into a full stereo mix.)

**JERRY(GROGGILY):**

OK Jim. This is how you do it. This is how you make the best cup of coffee in the world.

(SFX: Jerry places the coffee pot back in the fireplace. Jerry takes out a Benzedrine inhaler from her purse. Over this...)

**JERRY(CONT’D):**

OK. You see this?

(SFX: Full stereo mix should be in effect by this time. Jerry shows the Benzedrine inhaler to Jim. She takes the aluminium cap off one end. Over this...)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

You’re supposed to pop the end off and then you breathe in like this…and your asthma goes away.

(W/T: Jerry inhales.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**But that doesn’t get you anywhere near the worlds best cup of coffee.

(SFX: Jerry handles the inhaler, taking off the other end of the inhaler. A little strip of soaked paper falls out into her hand. Over this...)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

For that, what you do is take the other end off, and a little soaked paper falls out...

(SFX: Jerry rolls the paper in her hand into a ball then pops it in her mouth. She then picks up her coffee cup and takes a drink. Over this...)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

...you roll it into a little ball, like so, and pop it in your mouth like this...and swig your coffee...and down she goes...

(W/T: Jerry swallows. SFX: Unnoticed by Jerry, Ernie walks up the staircase in the hallway, behind her, then walks toward her across the hardwood from the hall into their apartment. Over this...)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

I’d make you one, Jim, but I only have one left. I need to get down to the drugstore…

(SFX: Ernie creaks the already open front door to their apartment then closes the door behind him. He is holding a newspaper in his other hand.)

**ERNIE:**What’s that?

(SFX: Jerry turns on her feet slightly, pivoting to see Ernie.)

**JERRY:**Huh?

(SFX: Ernie crosses to the couch. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**What are you doing?

**JERRY:**What? (beat)

(SFX: Ernie sits on the couch. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**What are you hiding?

**JERRY:**I’m not hiding…why are you spying? (beat)

**ERNIE:**How’d you sleep?

(SFX: Ernie unfolds his newspaper, opening it.)

**JERRY:**Fine now. Coffee?

**ERNIE:**Sure.

(SFX: Jerry picks up the coffee pot from the fireplace and takes another coffee cup from the mantle then pours it for Ernie. Jerry crosses and hands Ernie his coffee. Over this...)

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

Anyone still here?

(SFX: Ernie sets the coffee cup down on the end table next to him. Jerry then sits next to him and sets down her purse. Over this...)

**JERRY:**I didn’t see anyone. Give me the crosswords.

(SFX: Jerry starts to pull at the paper. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Oh, for crying out...

(SFX: Ernie adjusts the paper and moves so she can’t reach it.)

**JERRY:**Just give me the dang...

**ERNIE:**You can’t wait to mess everything up, can you?

**JERRY:**Get off my back!

(SFX: Ernie handling the paper in admiration. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**One of the finest things in all life...

**JERRY:**...is an unread newspaper. You can’t allow me this peccadillo?

(SFX: Ernie picks up his coffee from the end table. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Not even if it were all you had.

(SFX: Ernie takes a sip of his coffee.)

**JERRY:**Witty.

**ERNIE:**And you burned the coffee.

**JERRY:**You put it on.

(SFX: Ernie sets the cup back on the end table.)

**ERNIE:**Yeah, but you’re supposed to watch it.

**JERRY:**Well, I forgot.

**ERNIE:**Yeah.

**JERRY:**Road routine is different than home routine. I miss the road, already.

**ERNIE:**  
Yeah.

**JERRY:**Just give me the damn crossword, you squirrel.

(SFX: Ernie goes about dismembering the newspaper to find the crosswords for her...he gives Jerry her page then adjusts the pages back into a semblance of normal.)

**ERNIE:**One of the finest things in all life is the untouched, unwrinkled, unmolested American newspaper with a cup of coffee. It is a work of art;

Coffee-paper-cigarette; a tableau of the perfect moment in life.

One newspaper *per* person, should be a rule.

**JERRY:**It’s in an entirely different section than the front pages!

**ERNIE:**It doesn’t matter!

**JERRY:**Stupid.

(SFX: Ernie settles into the couch and reopens his paper.)

**ERNIE:**Look. Look!

**JERRY:**What?!

**ERNIE:**All of these pages are even. They match up. What is my biggest peeve in life?

**JERRY:**When you don’t change your socks for a week?

**ERNIE:**No!

**JERRY:**Oh that’s mine. Ummm, oh the straight newspaper thing.

**ERNIE:**The straight newspaper thing, that’s right. When one of the pages is pulled off the fold because ‘someone’ has to have the crossword...

**JERRY:**Pages stick together, it’s not my fault.

**ERNIE:**It IS your fault!

**JERRY:**Not when I ask for it from *you,* because you’re *holding* it, and you throw it at me and I have to put it back together...

**ERNIE:**Can we just have quiet? (LONG BEAT)

(SFX: Ernie holds his paper trying to relax. Jerry picks up a pencil from the end table.)

**JERRY:**Oh, the cacophony of the crossword puzzle.

**ERNIE:**Just be quiet now, please.

**JERRY:**How do you get a pencil on newsprint to make noise?

**ERNIE:**Shhh.

(SFX: Jerry scribbles something on the newspaper.)

**JERRY:**...could have given me the crossword right off the bat without all the gabbing...

**ERNIE:**Quiet.

(SFX: Ernie turns the newspaper page then takes another sip of his coffee.)(BEAT)

**JERRY:**What’s a five letter word for ‘hypocrite.’

(SFX: Ernie adjusts in the couch, putting down the paper.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**

(BEAT) You know that was funny.(BEAT)

(SFX: Ernie stands to walk to the fireplace.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**Ok. Ok. I’ll shut up. Sit down.

(SFX: Ernie stops.)

**ERNIE:**I’m getting more coffee.

**JERRY:**Oh.

**ERNIE:**Need some?

**JERRY:**Sure.

(SFX: Ernie takes her cup and crosses to the fireplace then he pours the coffee for them. During this, Jerry picks up her purse and pulls out a cigarette for Ernie.)

**JERRY (CONT’D):**Here, I rolled you a cig.

**ERNIE:**Thank you.

(SFX: Ernie returns, handing Jerry her coffee. Jerry hands him the cigarette then he sits.)

**ERNIE:**

Look at that...

(SFX: Ernie shows the cigarette to Jerry.)

**JERRY:**

What?

(SFX: Ernie brandishes the cigarette at Jerry. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Why can’t you put more tobacco in?

**JERRY:**Huh?

**ERNIE:**Why would you roll me one of those pinners you make for yourself? I’ll be lucky to get one drag out of this without burning my lips.

**JERRY:**Then don’t say you want one when I offer.

**ERNIE:**But, you said you rolled one for me.

**JERRY:**I did.

**ERNIE:**You know I like more tobacco than this.

**JERRY:**So what?

(SFX: Ernie picks up his paper. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Well, sounds like you rolled two for you and when I offered you another cup of coffee you wanted to return the favor.

(SFX: Jerry intermittently scribbles answers in the crossword as they speak.)

**JERRY:**So? Isn’t that what marriage is?

**ERNIE:**Making the other person into you? I guess it looks that way.

**JERRY:**Don’t smoke it then.

(SFX: Ernie puts the cigarette on the end table next to him. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**That isn’t the point, dear.

**JERRY:**You go through tobacco at three times the rate that I do. I just like it when there is more at the end of the pouch.

(SFX: Ernie turns sets the paper down. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**That doesn’t make sense.

**JERRY:**Does to me.

**ERNIE:**Listen. Let’s have a nice evening home alone tonight. What do you say?

**JERRY:**Really?

**ERNIE:**Who did you invite over?

(SFX: Jerry resumes her crossword. Over this...)

**JERRY:**The usual.

**ERNIE:**Do you think it’s early enough to cancel?

**JERRY:**I guess.(BEAT)

**JERRY:**Folks know we are in town.

**ERNIE:**I know. Maybe you can get another word out...to the usuals. I’d like to get some writing done.

**JERRY:**OK. I can get you some space.

**ERNIE:**I like the sound of that. (BEAT) And...what do you say let’s lay off the sauce? (BEAT)

**JERRY:**You probably should, then. (BEAT)

**ERNIE:**I feel like I can’t…even bring up…Why do you make it that I can’t request…or…

**JERRY:**Oh, you can *request* anything you like.

(SFX: Ernie puts down his paper in frustration.)

**ERNIE:**There is too much, Jerry, too much riding on *every* word. All of this talking about nothing, walking on eggshells, trying to get here…to this point…where I tell you to stop. You. Have. To. Stop. Stop drinking. Stop the pills. Stop buying those damn inhalers. Stop getting in my way. Stop!…Stop this darkness…(BEAT)

(SFX: Jerry stands abruptly and throws newspaper down. Over this...)

**JERRY:**Hypocrite!!!!!

(SFX: Jerry storms out of the room slamming the front door to the apartment.)

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

3a. INT. NPR STUDIO - DAY

(SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

Later that evening, in the kitchen of the Old Pyle speakeasy, Ernie and a friend discover that the inventor of the zipper hadn’t yet worked out its kinks…

**CROSS TO:**

**3b. INT. FIRST FLOOR PYLE APT BUILDING, KITCHEN - EVENING**

(SFX: The first floor of the Pyle Apartment building is a shared kitchen and common space. The windows are closed but there is still muted city sounds and intermittently one may hear different muffled bits of the other families that live in the apartments: a baby crying, a dog barking, ETC. Ernie and Bill grunt and huff in the kitchen, scuffing on a ceramic tile floor, as they struggle in an awkward contorted fashion to unfasten the zipper on Ernie’s pants with a pair of pliers.)

**BILL:**

Don’t move! Don’t move!

**ERNIE:**Got...it?...huh? Can’t see, your hand is in the way.

(SFX: Zipper relents a little. Over this...)

**BILL:**Shhh! You hear that?

**ERNIE:**No.

**BILL:**Feel it?...

(SFX: Bill shifts and loses the zipper then stands up venting his frustration. Over this...)

OH! Lost it! Dammit!

(W/T: They both sigh.)

**ERNIE:**Try again.

(SFX: Bill readies himself then he bends over and tries to grapple with the zipper. Over this...)

**BILL:**Alright, hold still.

**ERNIE:**...I don’t think I ever had to urinate more than I had to today, I tell you. Maybe it was all in my head, but the more I though about it, the more I had to pee.

(SFX: Pants shifting. Over this...)

Ope...I felt something...(BEAT)

**BILL:**No.

**ERNIE:**Well, shoot.

(SFX: They lose the zipper again.)

**BILL:**How the hell would they sell you a pair of pants like this?

(SFX: Jerry is heard stumbling down the wooden staircase, gin in hand, in the hallway.)

**ERNIE:**You’re telling me. What was so wrong with buttons?

**BILL:**Alright pull!

(SFX: Jerry having reached the bottom of the stairs, shambles down the wood hallway, gin in hand, toward the kitchen. Ernie and Bill strain against the zipper. Fail and quit. A knock on the door.)

**ERNIE:**Well, shoot.

(SFX: Bill moves to stand and catch his breath. Jerry stumbles into the kitchen door. Over this...)

**JERRY(STUMBLING DRUNK):**

Someone’s at the door. Get the gin out, Ernie.

**ERNIE:**I thought you put the word out.

**JERRY:**I did. I bet this porch-load is from your office.

**ERNIE:**Well, shoot.

(SFX: Jerry shakes her gin bottle at Ernie. Over this...)

**JERRY:**I bought some gin anyway.

(SFX: A pounding on the front door.)

**JERRY:**And they’re here, so...

(SFX: Jerry moves to open the front door. Over this...)

**Jerry (CONT’D):**

Coming! Coming!

**BILL:**She’s smashed already.

**ERNIE:**Hhahaha. Happy to be home I guess, hahaha.

(Bill crouches down to try and get a better grip with the pliers on Ernie’s zipper. Over this...)

**BILL:**One, two, three and mount!

(SFX: Bill and Ernie re-double their efforts. Jerry opens the front door. W/T: A group of people burst through. They each have a Kazoo, which they begin playing “The Washington Post March”. They play it out, cheering at the end.)

**ERNIE:**Very good. Very good. Now if you’ll be so kind as to *never* do that again.

(W/T: They all boo him. SFX: Bill struggles to try and pull the zipper to free Ernie. Over this...)

**BILL:**Hold still, Ernie!

**ERNIE:**Oh, boo yourself! You think I’m kidding?

**POLLY:**Hey, Pyle. I didn’t realize Bill liked you in that way.

**ERNIE:**What way?

**POLLY:**Hahaha. Hey, Pyle? Why is Bill clamping your bird with a pair of pliers?

**ERNIE:**Don’t worry about it, Polly.

**POLLY:**Hey, Pyle...!

**ERNIE:**Shut it Polly! Put a drink in your mouth!

**POLLY:**Will do! Where’s the booze!!?

(SFX: Jerry shakes her gin bottle at Polly. Over this...)

**JERRY:**

Come with me.

(SFX: Polly takes a few steps to Jerry. She uncorks the bottle and hands it to Polly.)

**ERNIE:**Sounds like he’s already had a few. Alright, Bill. Let me stable myself here. I’ll get a good grip on my belt and then you pull downward...

(SFX: Bill pulls the zipper with the pliers, Ernie wriggling, putting in an effort, grunting and straining.)

**BILL:**Nope. Won’t work. We need something like a...claw of a hammer. I can jam the tab down in there so it won’t slip.

**ERNIE:**Good idea! I don’t know if I have a...Honey!

**JERRY:**Yes, dear?

**ERNIE:**Do we have a hammer?

(SFX: Jerry hurriedly stumbles from the hardwood hall past them entering the ceramic tiled kitchen. Over this...)

**JERRY:**In the kitchen. I use it on the dishes.

She proceeds to walk a few steps to Ernie, offering Bill the hammer. MUSIC: Polly plays the Souza March on a kazoo again. SFX: Jerry opens a drawer, pulling out the hammer then she shuts the drawer. She then walks toward Ernie. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Polly...Polly!...POLLY!

**POLLY:**What?

**ERNIE:**Stick that thing up your kazoo would you?

**POLLY:**Sorry, Pyle.

(SFX: Jerry hands Bill the hammer, he places the pliers on the counter then tries his luck with the hammer. Ongoing over this...)

**PYLE (CONT’D):**

Once I start I can’t get the damn song out of my head.

(MUSIC: Polly plays “Stars and Stripes Forever.”)

**ERNIE:**Tell me about it. I’ve had it in mine since last February. I have nightmares about it where it’s playing and I can’t find the road out of Ohio. Hey, Polly...Not even Souza. Don’t play Souza at all!

(MUSIC: Polly plays “Jingle Bells.”)

**BILL:**Christmas already?

**ERNIE:**Oh boy…Polly! Get over here and grab hold of something!

(SFX: Polly moves to try and help, placing the gin on the kitchen table. Grabbing Ernie’s pants as ordered. Over this...)

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

Grab hold of my pants at the cuffs. Now Bill, You do the other thing…

(SFX: Bill resumes trying to catch the zipper with the hook end of the hammer. Over this...)

**BILL:**What’s so wrong with Ohio, anyway, Ernie?

**ERNIE:**What’s wrong with Ohio? Seltzer, Saunders, Burkholder, Matson and Groat. Heave!

(SFX: They strain against the zipper. Bill stops. Over this...)

**BILL:**The tab bent. So, Got something against the Indians pitching staff, do you?

**ERNIE:**Ha! I wish. No, they’re the editors of the five Ohio Scripps-Howard papers. The Big Five.

**BILL:**Put your zipper up against the table, I’ll whack it back straight.

(SFX: Ernie moves few steps on the ceramic tile floor to the kitchen table. Over this...)

**JERRY:**I’ll whack it! Give that hammer!

**ERNIE:**The hell you will!

(SFX: Bill repositions himself. Over this)

**BILL:**I’m gentle. Don’t move.

(SFX: Gentle tapping of the hammer.)

**BILL:**So, you don’t like these editors? OK, same positions…

(SFX: Ernie and Bill move back to their previous position by Polly. Polly grabs Ernie’s pant leg and Bill tried to hook the zipper again with the hammer.)

**ERNIE:**Oh, they’re fine fellows. But, they write telegrams every week asking for me to come back. I’m sick of it. Heave!

(SFX: They strain against the zipper. Bill stops again.)

**BILL:**Damn! Bent again. It’s a compliment, if you ask me.

(SFX: Ernie and Bill move to the kitchen table again so Bill may hammer the zipper flat again.)

**POLLY:**Yeah, it’d be nice to be so wanted.

**ERNIE:**You fellas can’t let a guy complain?

**POLLY:**Ha! Woe is you!

(SFX: The hammer taps the zipper flat.)

**ERNIE:**Whenever I get to Ohio, I drive right to the center of the state. That way, whichever direction I go I’m leaving Ohio.

**POLLY:**Hey, did you try this?

(SFX: Polly spits.)

**ERNIE:**What the?! Hey, you can’t spit on a fellow’s pants like that!

(SFX: Polly tries the zipper and it finally works!)

**BILL:**Would you look at that?

**ERNIE:**Step back, I’m never putting these on again!

(SFX: Ernie removes his pants.)

**POLLY:**You just going to be walking around in your underwear, now?

(SFX: Ernie moves to the kitchen window and opens it. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Who says I have on any underwear.

**BILL:**Don’t lift your shirt-tails. I believe you.

(SFX: Ernie throws out the pants. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**I’m going to throw these pants out the window.

(SFX: Ernie takes a few steps back to re-join the group. Over this...)

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

Who wants a drink?

**BILL:**What the hell.

(SFX: Bill removes his shoes, unbuckles his belt, then removes his pants.)

**JERRY:**Hey, what’s the big idea?

**BILL:**If he isn’t wearing any pants, I don’t know why I have to.

(SFX: Polly starts taking off his pants. The rest of the party goers also start removing their pants. Over this...)

**POLLY:**I’m with you! These wool britches make me itch anyways.

**JERRY:**Oh, boy. Everybody keep your pants on!!

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

4a. INT. NPR STUDIO - DAY

(SFX: Small studio ambience.)

**DAN V. PRESCOTT:**

The very next hangover in the Pyle kitchen.

**CROSS TO:**

**4b. INT. FIRST FLOOR PYLE APT BUILDING, KITCHEN - MORNING**

(SFX: The first floor of the Pyle Apartment building is a shared, ceramic tile, kitchen and, wood floored, common space off the main hall. The windows are closed but there is still muted city sounds and intermittently one may hear different muffled bits of the other families that live in the apartments: a baby crying, a dog barking, ETC. Ernie walks across the wooden hall and enters the kitchen. Over this...)

**JERRY:**Coffee is hot…Best cup of coffee in the world…

**ERNIE:**Just the coffee, thanks.

(SFX: Ernie pulls out a wooden chair and sits at the kitchen table. Jerry throws a newspaper onto the table.)

**JERRY:**I already took the crosswords out, so shackle your hackles.

(SFX: Jerry opens a cabinet and pulls out a coffee mug then pours Ernie a cup of coffee. Ernie picks up the paper. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Jeeze Louise, can’t you get your own newspaper?

**JERRY:**If you can consider that one IS my newspaper, and that you are messing things up according to how *I* like to disturb the perfection of such a *work* of art...

(SFX: Ernie sits back and opens the paper. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**  
Oh, boy...

(SFX: Jerry cross to the table, sets the cup of coffee down for Ernie then sits across from him. Over this...)

**JERRY:**That’s right...oh, boy. (BEAT)

(SFX: Ernie lowers the paper.)

**ERNIE:**Anyone still here?

**JERRY:**Ummm...Yes.

**ERNIE:**Who is it?

**JERRY:**It’s two people.

**ERNIE:**Who?

**JERRY:**No, it’s one.

**ERNIE:**OK, who?

**JERRY:**I don’t know, they’re under a pile of coats.

**ERNIE:**Who left their coats?

**JERRY:**Or, maybe it’s just a pile of coats...

**ERNIE:**Who would leave their coats? Go kick it.

**JERRY:**Kick what?

**ERNIE:**The pile of coats.

**JERRY:**You go kick it.

**ERNIE:**We can’t have anybody sleeping over here all day.

**JERRY:**Why not, they’ll just be back for cocktails anyway? It’s Saturday.

**ERNIE:**Can we not have everyone over tonight again?

**JERRY:**We’re not going to be in town much longer.

**ERNIE:**What difference does that make?

**JERRY:**Ok, grumpy.

(SFX: Ernie sets down the paper and begins to get up. His wooden chair scraping against the tile. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**I need to write.

**JERRY:**You could have written last night, but you brought Bill home with you.

(SFX: Ernie stops and stands. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**What about everyone else? You were supposed to tell everyone we were having the night off.

**JERRY:**I did! Everyone that came was from your office!

**ERNIE:**I know. I forgot.

**JERRY:**Well...

(SFX: Ernie shuffles and moves a few steps from behind the table. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Alright, let’s try again tonight.

**JERRY:**What do you want to do?

(SFX: Ernie stops again.)

**ERNIE:**Let’s just drink water...and stare at each other.

(SFX: She gives a Bronx cheer.)

**ERNIE:**You need a night off.

**JERRY:**I’ll tell you what I need and don’t need, thank you.

**ERNIE:**Give your liver a break.

**JERRY:**Give your armpits a bath!

**ERNIE:**Hey.

**JERRY:**Hey, yourself.(BEAT)

**ERNIE:**I can deal with you drinking too much on the road...

**JERRY:**What do you mean ‘too much’?

**ERNIE:**... here everyone knows who you are.

**JERRY:**So what?

**ERNIE:**Ok. Well...they’re concerned about you. Only they don’t tell you about it, they tell me. Then I sit on it with my conscience all day, and it takes some valuable space up there too.

(SFX: Ernie begins to leave again. Over this...)

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

I’d rather be thinking about story writing.

**JERRY:**Don’t!

(SFX: Ernie stops again.)

**ERNIE:**It’s true.

**JERRY:**You’re just trying to pick a fight!

**ERNIE:**I’m just trying to tell you how I feel.

**JERRY:**

Just go get your typewriter and start writing, you time-waster! Don’t put your being a lazy do-nothing on *me*!   
You drank just as much as ANYBODY last night you pasty fop-doodle!(BEAT)

(SFX: Ernie steps toward Jerry. Over this...)

**ERNIE:**Let’s just take a night off, shall we?

**JERRY:**  
I’ll be the judge of that…(BEAT)

**ERNIE:**So, here we are again.

**JERRY:**Here we are. What are you staring at? (BEAT)

**ERNIE:**Go tell that pile of coats to go home.

(SFX: Jerry gets up, her chair scrapping on the tile, and walks to the pile of coats. Kicks it.)

**JERRY:**It’s nobody.

**ERNIE:**Who left their damn coats?

**JERRY:**It’s not coats.

**ERNIE:**What!? What is it?

**JERRY:**A pile of pants!

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

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

(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. Jerry is sitting on the couch, she turns when she hears the typewriter stop.)

**JERRY:**Go ahead, I’m listening.

**ERNIE:**I’m running out of ideas.

**JERRY:**Go on then.

**ERNIE:**It’s about nothing. Not sure it’s worth the space.

**JERRY:**I’ll tell you what it’s worth or not, just read.

(SFX:Ernie rips the page from the roll without using the paper release then he begins reading from the page.)

**ERNIE:**I had a horrifying adventure with a pair of pants. It began out in St. Paul when I bought my new gray suit.

I bought it there because it was in St. Paul that the bottom fell out of my *old* pants, and because I like to show off as a much-traveled young man, and say casually,

“Oh, yes, this tie came from Germany, and I got this green

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

sweater in Portland, Maine, and these gloves in Knoxville, and my white socks in El Centro, California, and these shoes in Indianapolis, and this gray suit I picked up in St. Paul”.

It was a nice suit, and had two pairs of pants— one with buttons up the front, the other with a zipper. I had never had a zipper on a pair of pants, and I thought that was hot stuff. The super-supersalesman, clinching the deal, said, “This is one zipper that works, too, and don’t you forget it”. So I bought the suit, and was measured for alterations.

I picked up the altered suit that evening, and left St. Paul early next morning without trying it on. They had altered it, all right, but they altered it down to the point where I couldn’t get into it. It cost six dollars to have it altered back up.

But the real story is about that zipper. It never did work very well. It ran like a cog-wheel train off the track. It made a ripping noise, and you had to pull with all your strength to get it up or down, and it kept getting worse.   
One day when I put on the suit after it had come from the cleaners, it took me five minutes to close the zipper. That should’ve been sufficient warning, but my mind was on other things, so I went downtown wearing those pants.

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

During the morning I had occasion to work the zipper and it wouldn’t budge. I yanked and I pulled and I tugged, but no go. I pulled so hard that the little metal tab cut a gash in my thumb, and I had to go and wrap it up.

Finally I had to call for help. An ex-football player on the Washington News staff managed to get it open by wrapping a handkerchief around his thumb and bracing himself while I pulled up on the top of the pants.

By that time I was thoroughly alarmed, and I kept within calling distance of aid all day. It happened twice more before evening. I had to get a government clerk and then a fellow in a garage to help me. When I got home I decided to get out of those pants right away. But I couldn’t get them off; the zipper wouldn’t move.

We had a dinner guest, a great big fellow, and he thought he could zip the zipper all right. He was just a fool; he couldn’t even get it started, he cut his thumb on the metal tab and got mad, and I got mad, and I don’t know what might’ve happened if I hadn’t thought of the hammer.

I got the hammer and had him slip the claw over the tab, and then while I pulled up the pants with all my might, he pushed down on the hammer. It sort of worked. The zipper came open about half an inch at a time.

**ERNIE (CONT’D):**

We were going along pretty good, when suddenly the metal tab collapsed under the strain and bent up in a half circle, and the hammer claw wouldn’t stay on it.

From then on, after every heave with the hammer, I’d have to work the tab up over the edge of the kitchen table, and he’d hammer it down flat again. We got the zipper open in a little less than half an hour.

I didn’t put on the other pair of pants, the one with the buttons. I didn’t eat any dinner, either. Didn’t feel like dinner, somehow. I just went to bed and turned out the lights and lay there with my jaws clenched, staring at… the *darkness*. After a while I went to sleep. (BEAT)

**JERRY:**It’s perfect. Don’t touch it.

**ERNIE:**Think so?

**JERRY:**Sure. It’s about a guy wrestling with something that should be so easy to pin… but he just doesn’t have the wits.

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

**ERNIE:**That right?

(SFX: Jerry picks up a glass from the coffee table in front of the couch. Over this...)

**JERRY:**That’s right. Cheers.

(SFX: Jerry takes a swig from the glass and immediately begins coughing, choking. She carries on a few beats.)

**ERNIE:**You OK? I guess you didn’t like it then?

**JERRY:**No. I like it. I just took a sip of this water and my tongue didn’t know what it was…

(SFX: Jerry pouring the water into a metal trashcan.)

**MUSIC SEGUE:**

**6a. 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:**

**6b. MONTAGE**

(A preview cuts and sound bites from episode 11.)

**CROSS TO:**

**6c. 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:**

Hmm. Someone just sent this to me. What is this? TikTok.

(SFX: Cary clicks a link on his cell phone and a TikTok like video is heard playing from the phone.)

**TikTok:**

I’m Cary Ononon and on-and-on and on-and-on. I carry on-and-on to on-and-on ad naseum. I’m Cary Ononon and on-and-on and on-and-on. I carry on- and-on to on-and-on ad naseum….(and on and on to ad nasuem).

(SFX: Cary stops the video. Over this...)

**CARY ONANON:**

Apparently, I am trending, as they say…WFIU, Bloomington, Indiana. I’m Cary Onanon.

**FADE MUSIC**