

Ike Rich Players, Goose High School
Happy Valley-Goose Bay
presents

“Shame of a Nation”

Cast

James..... Jocques Butler
Sebastien..... Justin Igloliorte
Marie-Francoise..... Paula Thomas
Pierre..... Shavonne Brown
Dealer..... Sheldon Campbell

The Troupe (Who play all the other roles.....including Basques terrorists)

Samantha LeBlanc
Nova McCoy
Marsha Gear
Amanda Pardy
Krista Blake
Jessica Wall
Sarah O'Donnell
Tara Kelly
Ossie Michelin

With special guest appearances by..... Tim & Kathleen Borlase

Crew

Stage manager..... Stephanie Williams
Lighting..... Harry Borlase (the real one)

Teacher Director

Dorrie Brown

An almost true story.....OK we lied about the drug dealer.....and.....the Basque terrorists meeting.....

“Shame of a Nation”

(Two narrators enter, speaking. At center stage (back) stand two black boxes, with James behind them. He has with him a suitcase and an array of clothes.)

#1: Ah, the Student Exchange Program.....

#2: Every year, hundreds of outstanding students from all countries of the world take part in exchanges which promote understanding.....

#1: of one another’s culture...They spend a week.....

#2: or a month!.....

#1: living in each other’s countries and homes, discovering how different....:

#2: and alike.....

(James pops up from behind boxes, slaps down his suitcase, opens it, and begins to throw clothes in haphazardly; then heads off, leaving clothes hanging out of case and strewn behind.)

#1: they really are. They learn that, though lifestyles may differ in some ways, in actual fact, teenagers the world over, are very much the same.....

(Mother enters and shakes her head at the strewn clothes, picks them up and follows James off, calling after him.....)

#2: And, they discover these similarities, curiously enough, by experiencing all of the exotic differences another culture has to offer.....

#1: *(Locks quizzically at #2....How can differences point out similarities???)*

#2: *(Explaining)* ...the food!

#1:the customs!

#2:the sights!

#1:thesmells?!?

#2: That too!

#1: ..festivals!

#2: ...religion!
#1:appreciating the art, the architecture, the dances, the music....
#2: ..experiencing the countryside, the currency, the transportation....

(Airport patrons, dragging luggage, talking on cell phones, checking monitors etc. begin to walk across the stage, moving the two black boxes forward, as counter for a newsstand, and taking positions, at the last words of: coke vending machine, revolving magazine rack, clerk.)

#1: The shopping!

#2: ..the language!

#1: La langue!

#2: Clearly only the best of students....

#1: ..the brightest.....

#2: are chosen for this type of ambassadorship.....

#1: this honour!

#2: Our exemplary citizens: responsible, mature, intelligent, curious, open-minded, adventurous, polite, independent, sensitive, aware.....

#1: Youth leaders! Our promise of the future! The Pride of a Nation!

#2: Exactly!

#1: From Canada.....

#2: to France.....

#1: Bonjour!

#2: Hello!

Both: Let's take a look.....(*#1 and #2 take their places in airport scene; flight announcements are heard. James and Sebastien enter, talking*)

Sebastien: Finally, I am leaving this backwater, Canada, and heading back to a civilized

country.

James: What do you mean “civilized”? Canada is a civilized country!

Sebastien: You call this “civilized”? I call it a frontier! For three weeks (it only seemed like a year) the only “civilized” thing I did was play computer games. Wait till you see France.

James: That’s right. All YOU did was play Solitaire - which you could do chez toi, while I tried to get you to go horse-back riding, hiking, rock climbing. I set up a tour of three different historic sites, a day at the sand dunes, an evening of summer repertory theatre..and what did You do? If you DID go, you grumbled that it was nothing like France could offer. If you DIDN’T go, you sat on your derrière and watched Seinfeld.

Sebastien: Yeah, your TV’s not bad here..that’s civilized! Seinfeld is anyway.....Wait till you see France!

James: I took you to the Bay of Fundy, to see the highest tides in the world; to see one of the world’s largest collections of Inuit art at the university.....

Sebastien: Wait till you see France.

James: We went to hear a rock concert; there were the ghost stories and bonfire at the beach; the crab supper at that little country church.....

Sebastien: Crab! That was awful. But McDonald’s wasn’t bad. That’s pretty civilized. But then, we have McDonald’s in France too. Wait till you see France.

James: I can’t wait to see France..unlike you, I’m going to experience everything I possibly can when I get there. I’m looking forward to seeing the Taj Mahal....

Sebastien: That’s in India.

James: I knew that. I mean the.....

Sebastien: Eiffel Tower..??

James: Yeah, and the.....

Sebastien: Arc de Triomphe??

James: Yeah, all that stuff. And you won’t find me turning up my nose at all your

culinary delights.....no. Sir-ooney! I'll be trying it all.

Sebastien: *(Mischievously)* Escargots?.....The wine?

James: *(Confidently)* Escargots! And especially. the wine! Hey, want a coke? I'm going to go get one.....

Sebastien: Sure, why not?

(James heads over to the cooler to get a coke, while Sebastien heads for the magazine rack, where he finds a girlie magazine, takes it, and obviously begins to enjoy it. James makes the coke transaction with the clerk, who starts to speak in French, but realizing James is an Anglophone, changes to English. Meanwhile, James finds that he is short of money, and heads back to ask Sebastien for some. Sebastien hands him the magazine to hold, while he fishes out the change; James is oblivious to its content. James takes the money and goes back to pay, then brings the coke to Sebastien. He does a double-take when he realizes what Sebastien is looking at. They tussle.)

James: Give me that! *((takes it and places it on the rack))*

Sebastien: Hey. Give that back. *(He takes it again)*

James: No. You can't look at that stuff here. This is Canada. They'll think you're some kind of pervert. *(Puts it back on the rack)*

Sebastien: *(taking it again)* What is this? In France, no one would think twice about it.

James: *(Putting it back)* You're not in France, you're in Canada.

Sebastien: *(Taking it)* Well, I'll take it to France, then. Only thing good about Canada is their porn!

James: *(Putting it back)* Canadians don't even believe the stuff exists in this country! We have a "Wholesome image" and I'm supposed to be The Shining Example. Now leave it there!

Sebastien: *(Taking it again)* No! *(They fight over the magazine, eventually drawing attention of the newsstand clerk, not to mention several passers-by. As the clerk approaches, James loses his balance and falls against her knocking over the magazine rack. The clerk, discovering the magazine in his possession, scolds loudly in French, both on account of the fact that the mad had not been paid for "Thief" "Dishonest" and that James should not be looking at such material anyway. "Young pervert" "Porn". James tries to escape and set the rack aright,*

all the while being chased by the clerk)

James: *(protesting)* No, no. You misunderstand. I don't even like women...well, no, that's not exactly what I mean, either. I mean, I like them, I just don't, oh never mind. It wasn't me...it was him. *(Pointing to Sebastien, who has now moved away, following a good-looking girl across the front of the stage. She stops to check an overhead monitor, and Sebastien nearly crashes into her. James, escaping, rushes up to him.....)* You got me into a lot of trouble back there.....*(He continues to mime this angry conversation while the flight announcement is heard.)*

Announcement: May I have your attention please. This is the first call of Air France flight 8345, from Montreal to Paris, now ready for boarding at Gate 29.....Attention! C'est le premier (etc).....

Sebastien: *(diverting James' blame)* Hey listen. That's us. That's our flight.

James: Good. Come on, then, before you get me into more trouble.

(Physicalization: all airport actors again assume passenger/personnel roles moving about on stage and taking the two black boxes toward SR where they will become part of the conveyor belt in Security Area and two black cubes to Security Sating Area. The two boys gather their things and head Sr, where personnel click into Security Area: conveyor belt, change-box, security guard, walk-through booth, security person with beeper, one passenger ahead of boys in line.

Sebastien goes through next with no problem. Security beeper person comments "Ooh-la-la--A Frenchman" as she scans him. He goes on through and sits in security area, ignoring the commotion that follows. James sets his satchel on the conveyor belt and fumbles for his boarding pass, when another passenger, The Dealer, pushes quickly behind him, sets his satchel, identical to James' except for the sticker, on the belt and proceeds through. He grabs the wrong case....and proceeds to the seating area.

James finally finds his boarding pass, but sets off the beeper when he goes through. At the "beep" all other actors instantly hop up to form a wall, against which beeper person throws James, gruffly telling him to "spread eagle". She roughly searches him. all the while he protests innocence, and eventually he unloads a Swiss Army knife, which she confiscates.)

James: No, no! You misunderstand. It was a gift, from him! *(Motioning towards Sebastien)* that's all. It's not a weapon!

(Scolding James profusely and letting him know that he really doesn't know much about travelling, yet, and he will have to learn to be more responsible if he hopes to avoid such scenes

in Security. It is his responsibility to clear all suspicious items.....blah, blah, blah. He feels like a fool. She sends him to Security Area. He slinks away from her, his self image now the size of a withered pea. All actors become passengers or agents within Security Area. James spies Sebastien, who is, by now, talking to yet another good-looking girl, trying to impress her. James goes to join them.)

James: *(Rushing up to Sebastien) Even your gift gets me in trouble.....(He stops, as Sebastien is in conversation with the girl and neither one is listening to James.)*

Sebastien: *(To the girl)for three weeks. I'm just heading back home, now, on this flight.*

Girl: Cool! What did you do while you were here? *(Flirting slightly)* Did you find Canada so different.....from....France?

Sebastien: Oh, Ihow do you say.....I "did it all". Everything I could! I went horse-back riding, rock-climbing, I love the "untamed" things you can do in this country...

Girl: Ooooh!

Sebastien: And I saw some of your sites historiques - they were very interesting - I.....went to a rock concert...ate crab at a little country church supper.....

Girl: You liked the crab?

Sebastien: Oui! Fantastique! I loved the crab! I just tried to do everything I could while I was here. *(Softening, coming onto her slightly)* I just loved everything about your wonderful country.....

James: *(About to throw up at all this) You didn't! (No one is listening) Even your gift gets me in trouble.....(He looks up to see the girl's father approaching, he grabs Sebastien by the sleeve.) Come onnn! (Pulls him towards Boarding Gate. Everyone off. As they leave, dealer spots the sticker on James' case and pursues him.....Talk about trouble! It's only beginning, sweetheart.....)*

Scene 2

(All actors form a plane, USR and cross in a diagonal to go offstage DSL. As the plane moves, we hear the announcement)

Announcement: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Paris. International flight regulations require that all passengers remain seated until the aircraft comes to a complete stop in front of the terminal building. Please ensure that you

take all of your cabin baggage and personal belongings with you when you leave the aircraft. At this time, Capt. Mechant and all of our flight crew would like to thank you for flying with Air France and we look forward to serving you again in the future.....Mesdames et Messieurs.....

(As actors move offstage, they don berets and move back across stage as arriving passengers and greeters in Paris airport. (Greetings, hugs, "Salut" all around)

- #1: And so you've met our two sterling students, Sebastien and James. We chose these names arbitrarily - we could have chosen many others, for these two are simply representative of so many like them.....
- #2: Raoul...and Newton.
- #1: Jean Paul and Sidney.
- #2: Michel and Owen.
- #1: Beavis and Butthead.
- #2: They're not French or Canadian.
- #1: Or "sterling" that's why they'd never b chosen for a student exchange.
- #2: Never! Only the best.....
- #1: The Best!
- #2: Yes, well, having formed a fast friendship over a short span of Sebastien's three-week stay in Canada, our two student companions excitedly forge ahead with the second part of their exchange.
- #1: James, of course, is by now as anxious toummm.....embrace French customs, as was Sebastien, to learn the nuances of Canadian living.
- #2: Funny you should use the word "embrace".....
- #1: *(Innocently)* Why?

(Narrators exit. Sebastien's parents re now among the passers-by in airport, and all the actors except James, Sebastien and Sebastien's parents move offstage. Sebastien and James are offstage at left with everyone else; parents are opposite, facing them from SR and peering into the "arrivals gate" anxiously. In one's and two's the other passengers come out; then The

Dealer, who is scanning for James-with-case and finally, the two boys also appear. Sebastien walks cool-ly as a teenage boy would towards his parents.

Mother and father greet him excitedly. James stands off a little, feeling awkward - especially with the double kiss greeting. His case is in plain view. The Dealer spies the case - and James - and is about to move in on him, when Sebastien's parents welcome James with the greeting, cutting him off from his would-be assailant. The Dealer keeps hanging about, to end of scene, hoping for an opportunity to retrieve his case.

Two girls and one boy - friends of Sebastien come running excitedly, excusing their lateness. They immediately embrace Sebastien in the French greeting. After they chat for a bit together, they realize that James is just standing there.)

Sebastien: *(Stepping forward to introduce James)* Oh! Oh, je m'excuse. Ceci est mon Ami, James, de Canada. James, ceci est Nicole.....

(Nicole steps forward and greets James, who is shy but grits his teeth.....)

Sebastien: et Chantal.....

(Chantal is greeted a little more enthusiastically by James, who is beginning to enjoy this kissing thing somewhat.....)

Sebastien: et Richard....

(Richard steps forward confidently, and a look of apprehension overtakes James' face. As Richard comes closer, James reaches out one hand, at arm's length, stiffly, placing palm flat against Richard's forehead to stop him. James looks down at his Canada-flag lapel pin; then back up at Richard's face; then leaning back, offers the same hand - at the end of a stiff arm - for a handshake. Suddenly, Richard, enthusiastically and forcefully takes James' head between his two hands and gives him two big smackers, one on each side! Then the other three young people surround James and they all go off, Sr, together followed by parents.....and watched by Dealer.)

Scene 3

#1: For centuries, French cuisine has been at the pinnacle of culinary culture worldwide.

#2: Wha- a?

#1: Food.

#2: It took you all that to say “food”?

#1: *(Carrying on, to educate her audience, if not her companion)* The French take great pride in choosing, preparing and presenting their food — French chefs are reputed to be the world’s best: training at the Cordon Bleu school for chefs is....the ultimate! Le Meilleur!

#2: There you go again.

#1: *(Explaining)* It’s as good as it gets.

#2: Why didn’t you say that?

#1: I’m trying to set the tone, a mood, a milieu!

#2: Oh, for Pete’s sake!

(Other actors enter, setting up an open-air market, placing black boxes as stalls: vegetable, breads, wines, cheeses. Shoppers with baskets, Marie-Francoise among them, carefully scrutinize and bargain for purchases.)

#1: *(Ignoring her companion)* The French, over the centuries, have fashioned dishes with exactitude, everything has to be “just right”. Even the ordinary femme will shop daily for only the finest ingredients. The vegetables have to be the freshest. The cheeses must have just the right bouquet. Milk must be served at room temperature - in fact, no beverage is served cold. When cooking, temperatures, textures and flavours must be delicately turned and balanced.....*(#1 mimics “putting on airs)*

#2: And, after they’ve done all this to it, and admired it so much, when do they get to eat it?

#1: Oh, don’t be mistaken. Eating is an art. An art! We, in North America, always in a hurry - fast food this, microwave that - we have no idea how to truly enjoy a meal - every morsel ...every subtlety, like the French!

#2: Do they like bread?

#1: Ah oui! Croissants.....

#2: And... . . . bread?

#1: Baguettes.....

#2: And...bread?
#1: Patisseries.....pain de maison roti.....
#2: Um...bread?
#1: Yes! Bread!
#2: French bread?
#1: *(Looks disgusted..bad joke)*
#2: How about wine?
#1: *(Brightening)* Chardonnay! Bourgogne!
#2: Chateau de Chassille!
#1: Shall we dine?
#2: Bn appetit!

(All exit. Enter Marie-Francoise and Pierre, carrying black boxes to CS, forming table. They busy themselves preparing and serving food. Sebastien and James join them, placing small black cubes as chairs.)

Pierre: Ah! Our young guest. Bienvenue, James chez nous! Please sit here.

Marie: Bienvenue, James. Sebastien, make our guest feel at home.

Sebastien: *(Points to a chair)* Sit there.

(James sits, as does Sebastien. Parents bring food to the table)

Marie: *(Taking her place at the table)* Are you hungry James? We have many special dishes to share with you.

Pierre: *(sitting)* My Marie-Francoise!.....MMWAHHH! She is the best of cooks! She has spent the entire day shopping for just the best, just the freshest of vegetables.....

Marie: Do you like vegetables, James?

James: Um, well,I've never been that much of a vegetable eater...but....

Pierre: Oh! You will like vegetables when we get through with you! Wait till you see how we prepare them!

Marie: *(Dishing them up and handing them to James.)* Here James. This is a really delicious méele of many different vegetables.....

James: Ye-eah. *(Trying to look brave)* This looks really good. I think I read about this dish before I came.....is this vegetable “mush-ee”?

Marie: Méele. Méele. It means.....it means.....um.....

Sebastien: A mixture. Mush.

James: Ye-eah - that’s what I thought. Oh! It looks good though.

Pierre: What’s wrong? You don’t like it?

James: Oh, no. L.....L.....uh, I like it.....

Pierre: *(Jumping up)* You need something to drink? What? Some milk? How do you like your milk? Warm or hot?

James: Warm --??

Pierre: Chaud it is! *(He scrambles to get it.)*

James: Uh no. I meant, you drink your milk warm? L...I like it cold.

All: COLD?

James: No, *(Shrinking)* No, uh, I guess warm is fine....

(Pierre serves warm milk to James, who chokes it down.)

James: *(Recovering)* Um, how do you make it - not the milk - this delicious méele, I mean. I’ve never had anything quite like this at home!

Pierre: Well, that’s what an exchange like this is for, n’est-ce pas? Thee him how you make it, Marie-Francoise!

Marie: Oh well, first I shop all day.....

Pierre: All day!!

Marie: Like I already told you, I go from one marché to another, searching for just the ripest tomatoes, asparagus, beets - I go all over the place....

Pierre: All over the place, just for you, James, because she wants to make you so bienvenue now that you come to visit in France.

Marie: And then I bring them all home, and I lavée (*she motions*) and I cut them small, and then I put them in a mortar bowl, and I mush them up like this! (*She motions*) And then, a few spices and thing, et voila!

Pierre: Tiens! How about some escargots! (*Pierre heaps them on James' plate*) You like the escargots?

James: Sure, load them on! (*He piles in with gusto and quite enjoys them*) Taberna.....c! (*Sebastien claps his hand over James' mouth quickly to prevent the swear word. James, meekly catching on*) They're good. I'll have some more. (*To Sebastien*) What are these, in English?

Sebastien: (*drily*) Snails.

Pierre: Would you like some more? We have plenty more! We don't waste food like you do in Canada!

Marie: Oh, mais non! We have plenty for left-overs.

Pierre: You can have some more: demain..et demain.....et demain.

(All leave. Narrators enter, crossing stage as they speak)

#1: Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

#2: And the next day and the day after that....

#1: Demain.....

#2: et demain.....

#1: et demain!

(They exit. Enter Sebastien, James, Marie-Francoise and Pierre. They replay the scene, loosely and a little faster...beginning with:)

Pierre: Eh bien, James! Aujourd, les left-overs! They're good, oui!

James: *(Wearily)* They're very good!

Marie: Here James, some vegetables mélees? You want some more?

(And ending with :)

James: *(Quietly)* Got bread?

Pierre: Eh, James, you're not looking so good. Here, I know what you need - you need some wine. I got two bottles here - red or white?

*(Sebastien, Marie-Francoise and Pierre all stand and shout happily) Both! Mix them together!
(Freeze, then exit.)*

(Narrators cross stage, saying nothing but motioning "And tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.....James, Sebastien, Marie-Francoise and Pierre replay the scene again, even faster, and this time plying James with mush wine)

Marie: *(enters, carrying real vegetables)* Je m'excuse - I have been so in a hurry today that I really haven't had time to prepare our dinner. *(She places each vegetable on the table in front of James, who is by now desperate for familiar food, that he thinks he's died and gone to heaven, just to touch an intact vegetable. He holds them one at a time, with reverence.....)*

Pierre: *(Offering)* Not at all, Marie-Francoise. I can help you with that. I'll just get the mortar and pestle.

James: *(Crestfallen)* No! *(Marie-Francoise thinking James is merely handing her each one, cuts it and hands it to Pierre who mashes it into the familiar paste)* In Canada..we eat our vegetables crunchy! I just want onelittle....crunch! *(He's almost in tears)*

Pierre: *(Confidently)* Viola! That didn't take long. Here we are James....

James: Got bread? Got wine? *(Etc. until James brings a halt to the action by saying:)*
Do .you.....have.....any ...meat?

Others: Ah! Viande! Le viande! *(All excitedly get up from the table to fetch a very large covered tray..it takes all three to carry it proudly and place it before James. Pierre takes off the cover, and James searches, puzzled for the minuscule piece of meat.)*

James: Where is it?

Pierre: Ah...here..allow me. Don't worry, french fingers are always clean. *(He hands him a tiny morsel, pinched between his thumb and finger)*

Marie: The cleanest!

(James puts the meat in his mouth and chews; the piece seems to be very rubbery and gets bigger rather than smaller. All others watch him intently, gradually standing up, encouraging him as he chews, anticipating his joy. He's struggling. Pierre offers him wine to help wash it down. Finally he swallows.)

James: What was that?

Sebastien: *(sitting down)* Bacon.

Pierre: You don't know bacon in your country?

James: Oh yeah, we have bacon in Canada, but.....

Marie: *(sitting down)* Yes?

James: But.....in Canada.....we cook our bacon.....

Pierre: *(sitting down, puzzled)* Oh! That's different..

James: Got wine?

Pierre: Two bottles. Red? Or white?

All: *(Standing, shouting)* Both! Mix them all together!

(Freeze briefly; then they exit - taking any foodstuffs with them. Black boxes and cubes stay, as they will become "vantage points" for watching the parade, to follow...)

Scene 4

#1: Our young friend is beginning to truly experience the culture of his chosen country. Certainly, food is a very good place to begin.

#2: Indeed, it is true that the common use of wine at a meal - for a sixteen year-old boy! - is a bit, shall we say..exotic...for our Shining Example, James, but then is this not the whole idea behind such an exchange?

- #1: *(With meaning)* To experience everything first hand.
- #2: Exactly. No pictures. No lengthy travelogue explanations.
- #1: No sir! Experience.
- #2: When in Rome.....
- #1: I thought he was in France.
- #2: He is!....When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
- #1: But he's not in Rome. You just said so. You said he's in France. I know he's in France.
- #2: It's a saying.....
- #1: Oh.

(James enters, and stands on one side of the black boxes, center)

- #2: James has met Sebastien's parents. They are like parents everywhere, they seem to like vegetables! *(James rolls his eyes)*and wine, at meals. *(James smiles)*
- #1: He has met Sebastien's amis. They are like friends anywhere; they seem to like kissing! *(James recoils, remembering)*
- #2: *(Enter The Dealer who furtively makes his way across stage, recognizes James, who remains oblivious)..And he's about to meet even more trouble.....*
- #1: *(Before dealer can approach James, parents and Sebastien join James on boxes "watching" parade; Dealer exits)* Sebastien and his parents take James to a parade celebrating the presence of the Basque people in France..... a kind of "Basque Pride" parade.....
- #2: A Basquerade?

(Enter "parade" singing, dancing, waving flags and placards; Dealer also moves with parade; narrators continue shouting over the din....and walking with the parade as they speak. The parade passes across the stage 4 times, each time sweeping another member of the family along with it. At the last wave, James spins, bewildered, to center.)

- #1: Little is known about the origin of the basques. They live in the Pyrenes

Mountains on both sides of the border between France and Spain. About half a million Basques live in France.

#2: They have never lived under a united government of their own, but since the late 1960's, many have renewed demands for a separate Basque government and culture. The conflict between the Basques and the government has resulted in widespread violence.

#1: In 1980, the Spanish government granted the Basques limited self-rule; the country's three Basque provinces became a self-governing region within Spain. The Basques living in France, however, have never enjoyed even this much independence....

(James, at center, looks around. The parade seems to have disappeared completely, taking everyone with it. He searches. Just when he thinks it's all over, the entire parade makes one last wave, trampling him. The Dealer, in passing, slips him a handbill.)

James: *(Stands up, brushes himself off and reads, brokenly)* Hm... Un reunion... Un reunion pour La Nouvelle France. Uh..... La Nouvelle France - oh, that's easy - the New France. Probably a bunch of people wanting to go to Quebec! Hey! I... I could be their, sort of, "cultural connection". Oh yeah, Let's see here "72 Rue Revolution" OK..... *(he turns to "search" for the street. Buildings/doors have instantly lined up across stage. All have cards reading 72A, 72B etc. He tries each door - and there are a variety - including French doors - looks inside, sees nothing, shakes head and closes it again. When he gets to the last one, someone (The dealer) reaches out and pulls him quickly in... doors now move forward to form three threatening walls.... which then turn into walls and up of terrorists. They put on arm bands or kerchiefs and glare at him)* Hi there. Is this a meeting? *(He hauls out the wrinkled handbill)* The New France reunion? Hey, does that mean you guys have all been to Quebec before? What's this, a little get-together to look at slides of your trip? Kind of an old boys network like army buddies after the war, huh? Let's see, I guess in French that would be "le network d'anciens"? Would it?... Sort of? Maybe not.....

(Terrorists are silent and stare at him, or pass knowing glances to one another, with each overture. They don't seem to be amused.)

James: *(Remembering his lapel pin)* hey! Look at this! I'm Canadian. See? The Maple Leaf Canadian!.... So, like anything you want to know about Quebec, you can just ask. *(No response)* Go on! Ask me. Plains of Abraham..... Montcalm..... Habitants..... separatists.....

Terrorists: Separatist! *(En Francais & English at the same time)* He is one of us! Vive les

Basques libres et independents! He talks the same language. Eh and all this talk about Quebec...if he is from Quebec, he probably knows a thing or two about separation...he could show us some stuff.....

Dealer: It's not the separatist "Stuff" that I am interested in. He's got some other "Stuff" that belongs to us, and is worth a lot more right now than a bunch of separatist ideas. (*Stepping forward*) Hey you!

James: (*feeling uneasy and threatened*) I..I'm Canadian!

Dealer: yeah, yeah, I know. I know you're Canadian!

James: (*Weakly*) See the Maple Leaf? We're wholesome!

Dealer: You got something I want.

James: (*Nervous and fast*) A high standard of living? We have one of the highest standards of living in the world. Everybody seems to want to come to Canada..oh, but I wouldn't come on that rusty, old boat, though - the authorities kind of frown on that.

Dealer: That's not it.

James: Oh? Oh, well let me see. How about maple syrup? We have lots of that, that's something else we're kind of famous for.....ummmmm, wheat? A beaver, perhaps?

Dealer: No: that. My stuff - you've got my stuff.

James: Oh no. I think you have me mixed up with someone else. I don't have anything that belongs to you. I'm just on a student exchange. I'm a Canadian. See? (*Points to lapel pin*) I was just minding my own business, when I was flattened by a passing parade and.....

Dealer: (*Moving in on James*) In your satchel..you have..stuff.

James: (*Backs away and begins to weave through the legs of the surrounding terrorists, answering Dealer, but at same time, looking for an escape*) Well, yeah. I mean, who doesn't? What's a satchel for, if it's not for stuff?

Dealer: You have my satchel. You have the wrong case. See? (*He shows him his own satchel, opens it and waves a pair of maple leaf boxers in front of him*) You recognize?

James: Hey! What are you, some kind of pervert? How'd you get those?

Dealer: Our satchels were switched at the airport in Montreal. I have yours and you have mine. I have your boxers and you have my stuff. Now *(threatening)* we need to make a trade. You are going to go back to your nice French family where you are staying and you will get my satchel, and you will bring it, and all its contents here, in 10 minutes. *(Terrorists hum "Jeopardy" jingle)* And, when you do.....you will get your boxers and the satchel back. Do you understand?

James: How do I know they're really mine? My mom always embroiders my name inside the waist-band.....

Dealer: Here, look! *(When he holds satchel closer to James' face, for inspection, James grabs the boxers, throws them over the Dealer's head, grabs satchel and runs out through the legs of the members. Everyone exits.)*

Scene 5

(The Illegal Photographer)

#1: A close call for our innocent youth.

#2: What would a clean-cut young man like James know of terrorist meetings, or smuggled contraband?

#1: *(Aghast)* Nothing. Not our James. I don't think that is what student exchange trips are supposed to teach our young people!

#2: I suppose it's part of the culture, in a way.

#1: In a perverse sort of way!

#2: No extra charge! The ways of the world. It's all part of education.

#1: But there are better kinds of cultural education to engage in.....

#2: *(Enter Sebastien, who flops down and flips channels)* And Sebastien, being a curious and active teenager, and a carefully selected young ambassador for his country, is only too anxious to show James these cultural attractions.....

(Narrators exit; James comes running, satchel in hand, breathlessly slams door behind him.)

Sebastien: *(Absent-mindedly, not taking his eyes off TV)* Hey! Where you been?

James: *(Panting, sarcastic)* I've been jogging!..With my suitcase. See, in Canada, we always jog with a suitcase..it's a tradition that originated with the couriers do bois; the voyageurs - adventurers without roots - always on the move, never quite knowing quite what their *(meaningfully)* journeys might bring their way....

Sebastien: *(Looking up, inquiring; willing to believe him)*

James: WHERE HAVE I BEEN/ WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? You wanna know where I've been? I've been to a Basque terrorist meeting where this hulk of a guy, who looks like he could kick-start a Boeing 747, threatened me that I have 10 minutes to get back here and get his satchel which he thinks I have and take it back to trade it for my satchel, which he doesn't have, because I have it right here, because I pulled my shorts over his head, and j'ai escapé!

Sebastien: *(Incredulous)* Tu as tiré tes boxeurs sur sâ tete! *(He mimes the action, trying to figure out how it could be done - and why!)*

James: Yes!...I wasn't wearing them, man! He had them in his hand!

Sebastien: Bien sur!..... Pourquoi?

James: Because he had taken them out of this suitcase, to prove to me that I have his!

Sebastien: Boxeurs???

James: NO-ohhhhh! His satchel; his suitcase!

Sebastien: You have his suitcase?

James: I didn't know I did. He said they got switched in Montreal.

Sebastien: And you didn't even know it? You've been here three days, and you didn't even open your suitcase to know it wasn't yours? In three days, you haven't even changed your clothes? Do you feel the need to take a shower? What would your mama say, if she knew you weren't taking care of yourself this way? *(James tries to interrupt throughout Sebastien's questions)*

James: Leave my mama out of this! Of course, I've changed my clothes! But I didn't open that satchel because it only had stuff (Oh! Horrid word) I was going to give you and your family when I left - you know, "hostess gifts" little thank you's for letting me stay here.....

Sebastien: So, do you have his satchel - the Boeing 747 guy?

James: Apparently I do...

Sebastien: So, give it back to him.

James: I'm not going back there! And besides, I can't.

Sebastien: Why not?

James: because.....because.....it's loaded man! I've got his stuff, man. Like this is so illegal! Stuff man! The goods! I'd be like, an international criminal!

Sebastien: Sheit -!!

James: Yeah - that's it, man.

Sebastien: *(They stare at each other. Sebastien turns suddenly and goes back to his TV)* You know, for a Canadian, you have a pretty good imagination!!!

James: Aargh!.....(I wonder how you say that in French?)

#1: As we said, Sebastien and his family, being good hosts, were anxious to show James the sights - the many cultural icons of France.

#2: Their first outing was to probably the oldest attraction in the country.....

#1: The term Cro-Magnon Man comes from the Cro-Magnon cave located near Les Eyzies in southwestern France, where human skeletons dating from 35,000 to 8000BC were found in the year 1868.

#2: Cro-Magnons had a primitive hunting culture, wandering on the cold grassy plains of Europe in pursuit of game. Some took shelter in caves, where they left behind beautiful paintings of animals and la chasse.....

(Enter The Cave, tourists, Dealer and Tour Guide. Sebastien and family "deposit" James at cave entrance, and wave to him (A bientôt! - Meet us at the Arc de Triomphe at 2:00") they leave)

#1: Bienvenue *(Narrators leave, as Tour Guide picks up the line)*

Guide:A la Caverne Cro-Magnon.....*(en francais)* In this cave, in 1868, skeletons were found that may date from as far back as the year 35, 000 BC. *(James*

wanders off, playing “echo” against the walls. Dealer has spied him and follows him at first; then furtively moves ahead to hide against the wall. The “echo” moves around the walls until it reaches Dealer, who responds: “STUFF!” James does a double-take and retreats, “echoing” his way back the way he came.) The skeletons indicate that these early people were strong and had a height of about 173 centimeters. They used tools of bone and stone, to scrape skins and sew hides for clothing...and for hunting. They sometimes took shelter in caves such as this one, where they also recorded their hunting stories in beautiful paintings which you will see on these walls. (*En français et répétez en anglais*) We insist on two things while you view the paintings: (1) do not touch the paintings, and (2) do not use camera flashes to take pictures. (*En anglais*) One further caution, which I will demonstrate: we are far enough into the earth to be in a area of absolute darkness. In a moment, I am going to turn off my flashlight, so you can experience this phenomenon. You will undoubtedly find this brief moment of darkness disorienting - so much so, that you will find it difficult to locate your hand in front of your face. I show you this, so that you will understand why it is imperative that you stay only on the marked paths within the cave, and do not wander off them at all. (*She turns off her flashlight; James flashes a picture in dealer's face just as he is about to grab him. Guide shrieks, from the darkness*) J'ai dit pas de cameras! Pas de lumières!

James: (*In the darkness*) Oops!

(*Actors position themselves immediately, in the dark, to make The Louvre; tour Guide is surrounded by tourists. Dealer, wearing Maple leaf shorts under an open trench coat, as one of four “statues” outside the building, stands as if clutching a suitcase in one hand and the other hand is outstretched; James stands in front of one of them*)

#2: (*As lights come up*) next stop: The Louvre!

#1: La Louvre! One of the largest and most famous art museums in the world.

#2: Inside its 13 kilometers of galleries are contained more than a million works of art, with outstanding collections of Greek, Egyptian, Oriental and Roman pieces.

#1: The most famous works in The Louvre include the Greek sculpture Venus de Milo and the Mona Lisa by Italian painter Leonardo da Vinci.

#2: Outside the main entrance, performers - live actors - pose as statues.

#1: Something like buskers - and as is our custom in Canada concerning buskers, it is the custom in France to give them a coin or two, for their statuesque performance.

#2: They stand perfectly still, with absolutely no facial expression, and it can be very disconcerting when one finally discovers that these sculptures are, in fact, flesh and blood.

#1: fleche et sang.....

(Narrators exit. James walks past one statue; the statue turns 90 degrees after he passes. He continues walking around statues and they continue to turn 90 degrees, with palms outstretched as he passes. They want money. As he turns to walk back through them, he does a double-take, as he realizes they've changed positions. He sits down, in a sweat, and shakes his head. While his head is down, they all return to original positions. He looks up, then gets up. He's thinking "It's okay. I imagined it. They really didn't move.....")

James: *(To one statue) I'd speak to my sculptor if I were you. Ask him to take a little off your waist..... (To another) Hey! Lighten up - you got a face made of stone! (To another) What's your favourite kind of music: rock & roll? (To another) And this is my other brother Darryl, a real rock-solid character. (To Dealer; placing a quarter in his hand) Hey, put 'er there pal. Cut your hair and get a real job! Nice shorts! Eep! (Dealer makes a grab for him. James runs inside; the other statues take positions of art pieces in Louvre; Dealer hides among them, eyeing James.)*

Guide: *Bienvenue a La Louvre. Ceci est..... (etc., translation en francais of narrators' speech above. It trails off.....Meanwhile, James wanders off, admiring the art.) Two things we insist upon, as you view the art: (1) Do not touch any of the pieces and (2) Photographs are strictly forbidden. (Tourists move out of group and surreptitiously begin to snap pictures. James observes this and figures "What the hey! They're getting away with it!" He spies the Mona Lisa.)*

James: *Hey! The Mona Lisa! (Looks around, flashes a picture. Simultaneously, Dealer pops out from beside the painting and Tour Guide scolds loudly.)*

Guide: *Monsieur! Vous ne.....!*

(James, flustered and startled, turns straight into Dealer's face and flashes another picture - then runs like crazy. Dealer stumbles backwards; Tour Guide chases after James, who runs all through actors as they move around stage to form Arc de Triomphe. James ends up DSC, back to audience.)

#1: He really didn't mean to take those illegal pictures.

#2: He wouldn't deliberately do anything illegal!

#1: Unfortunately, his next picture was not so much illegal as life-threatening.

- #2: Escaping the clutches of a menacing terrorist-drug dealer, and an angry tour guide, James stepped out onto the busy Champs Elysees -
- #1: One of the busiest intersections in the world-
- #2: And recognized the famous landmark built by Napoleon to honour his fighting troops and celebrate his victories in Europe:
- #1: L'Arc de Triomphe.

(Actors begin street noises - cars zipping past and through the Arc. James stands precariously trying to take a picture. Dealer is advancing upon him, when a car knocks him down. The car exits (a hit and run) chased by a police vehicle; while Arc actors re-form to make ambulance, which envelopes Dealer and carries him offstage. Other actors re-form to make bus, which has been joined from SR by Sebastien and his family. The bus zooms to a stop in front of James; family leans out the window, calling:)

Family: Where have you been? Venez ici. Vite, vite!

(James boards the bus; the driver changes his sign from L'Arc de Triomphe to Les Alps; actors place black boxes in levels; dealer works with actors, placing his black box, with neck-brace inside USC, and hides under it; the bus makes a turn across the stage "up & down" over the Alps..)

Scene 7

- #2: Climbing aboard the bus, James notices that the city begins to fall away and little towns and villages begin to replace busy streets.
- #1: The countryside becomes more and more steep, with long inclines punctuated by narrow fertile valleys.....
- #2: ...where cattle graze in pastures above the thickly forested slopes.
- #1: Ah! The Alps! Land of small alpine meadows, where contented cows produce rich, thick milk which the French turn into "Only ze best" of cheese!
- #2: Les Alpes! And of course, ze highest Alp is in France; Mont Blanc - 15, 771 feet - she is really B-I-G *(motions with arms)* lots of snow! Only ze biggest and ze best in France!
- #1: *(Getting really into it)* Ah, Les Alpes! Home of the alpine horn and yodeling -

Yodel-ay-e-hoo!

#2: *(Disgusted)* That's in the Swiss Alps. We're talking about the French Alps. The best Alps are in France!

#1: *(Quietly, in a French accent)* Yo-dell-ay-e-hoo!

#2: C'est mieux. That's better.

(Narrators exit; sign showing hiking trails takes place; bus comes to a stop near sign and passengers get out.)

James: *(to Sebastien as they disembark)* Wow! The Alps! What're we going to do here? I've heard they have really cool cable cars that go up thousands of meters.

Sebastien: My mother is really into fitness - we are going to climb Mont Blanc.

James: *(they head for the sign, together with Sebastien's parents. He's gullible)* yeah?

Sebastien: Just kidding.

Parents: Come here, you two. Let's decide which hike we want to do.

Pierre: The Route St. Georges is good - not too difficile.....

Sebastien: Ah, that's too long. Look - two hours! I'll never make it.

Marie: You're too much a pomme de terre sur la sofa.

James: What did she call you?

Sebastien: A couch potato.

Marie: Maybe the Route Pastoral is better. I like that one. That way we can end up at the cheese factory.

Sebastien: Yeah, that's better. That trail has more benches on it.

Pierre: *(passes out small maps which he takes from the signboard)* here, a small map just in case you get lost. But I know you won't because you're so able to take care of yourself. How else could you have come all the way to France, eh? *(He leads the group up and down over the hills; about mid way, James pulls out map and walks as he studies it - head down. Atop a high rock, the wind takes it and carries it*

down over the slope. James reaches instinctively for it, loses balance and tumbles over the side, out of sight. "Ah-hhh!" he emerges, one hand at a time, clutching the "rock" and pulls himself up, along with his tattered map. Bruised, he swings up onto the "rock" and calls after Sebastien and his family. ECHOES They've continued on without him. He makes a few attempts at this and sits down. Looks at torn map. Cries. A lot!)

James: *(Through his tears) how much can even a sterling youth like me take? After all I've been through? It isn't enough that I've already been trampled by a parade, hauled into a terrorist meeting, implicated in a drug deal, chased by a dealer, screamed at by tour guides just for taking a picture, nearly run over by some maniac on the Champs Elysees...AND NOW THIS! Sebastien, Le couch potato and his vegetable-eating parents are nowhere in sight...and... Now I'm lost in the Swiss Alps. (He breaks down again)*

Dealer: *(From behind the "rock") French. French Alps.*

James: *(Correcting himself) Yeah, I don't even know where I'm lost! This was supposed to be the "chance of a lifetime" and it's turned into... (glances at lapel pin) Now, come on James. You can't be like this. You're Canadian! You're a survivor (hero music) that's why you were chosen because someone knew, that no matter what would come your way, you could meet the challenge. You are the promise of our future! So what are you doing snivelling on top of this little chunk of granite? Get your bearings, and...(sniffs) What's that? I smell something...kind of sour...the cheese factory! They said there's a cheese factory up here somewhere! I'll just follow this...smell....and I'll find my way out of here....*

(Singing to the tune of "Cabaret" James walks towards the Cabaret Cheese Factory which has now wheeled the piano out and positioned itself to welcome him...dealer emerges from behind rock and helps to wheel piano out; then hides behind it.)

James: *(Sings) What good is sitting alone on this rock? Look! There's a Fro-ma-get!" (Factory singers - with Dealer- pick up the tune and complete it, in Broadway style)*

Singers: *Life is a Cabaret, old friend, Come to the Cabaret....*

(As song ends, factory actors have taken up positions as factory machines/equipment, complete with sounds. Dealer takes position at the end of the line. Sebastien and family enter, searching, slowly making their way towards the factory and calling "James". James follows a cheese through the assembly line. When he gets to the end, he is startled when he recognizes the Dealer. Dealer grabs at him, he turns away and walks right into the Family as they enter the factory. Dealer quickly turns away.....)

Family: Where have you been?

(Then as they scurry him away, they continue.....James keeps looking back over his shoulder, to be sure the Dealer is not following....)

Marie: We've been looking everywhere for you! *(En francais)*

Sebastien: I haven't. *(En francais)*

Marie: Are you all right?

Pierre: We were worried!

Sebastien: I wasn't.

Pierre: These are very dangerous mountains.

Sebastien: How could you get lost? Even I can stay on a trail. I'd just rather be watching TV....Is there some place to sit down here?

Pierre: Sebastien! Taise-toi.

Marie: Come on ! It's getting dark and we have to get back to the bus...

Pierre: Venez. Venez.....

Scene 8

(Going home: Oafs, Customs, the old lady, "Shame of a Nation" Narrators position two large black boxes center, as they begin this conversation. Other actors place James' two suitcases behind two center boxes and remove all the other boxes.)

#1: There were other memorable experiences, to be sure.

#2: The host family took James to see a bull fight in Spain-0 a few hours journey away. *(Narrators move to front of stage. Three spectators and Dealer enter, carrying cubes, which they place on the two black boxes, C. James enters and mimes the following)*

#1: ...James, returning to his seat in the crowded stadium, was carefully juggling four very full cups of Coke, and painstakingly inching his way past all the knees in his row, when unfortunately, he.....

(Dealer makes a lunge for him)

- #2: lost his balance and toppled forward into the ring, where numbers of excited Americans, who had travelled to Spain for this event alone, were playing soccer with the bull.
- #1: You're not serious.
- #2: Yes. Soccer.
- #1: They train bulls to play soccer?
- #2: No. And this is not a word of a lie: Americans will pay big money to go to Spain for the chance to, what they call, "Run the Bulls". They get into the ring.. and the bull is the "soccer ball."
- #1: They KICK THE BULL??? *(James is aghast; Spectators are cheering him on)*
- #2: *(Confirming) ..and then they run like.....!! They scramble up on the boards and then go try again. (Spectators urge him to go back for more: James clings desperately to the boards; points to lapel pin and mouths " I'm Canadian!!! No Americano.....Canadian!!")*
- #1: And James was out there?
- #2: he didn't mean to be. He just kind of fell into it.
- (Spectators off, taking cubes; James picks himself up off the floor and goes to black boxes, where he tosses up his suitcases; throwing open his own and scowling periodically at the other.)*
- #2: But, before he knew it, his three weeks were up and it was time to go home. *(James mimes an enthusiastic "YES-S!!")*
- #1: It was with heavy heart that James gathered up his things and began to pack. All those wonderful memories .. *(James glares at the other suitcase) - how could he pack them?*
- #2: They would stay with him forever. This had been an experience of a lifetime! This was something he would tell his grandchildren *(James is horrified - tell his grandchildren that he was a smuggler - and an accidental one at that?)*
- #1: He did pack some very special things, though. He had carefully chosen a bottle of French wine ("*only ze best*") for his father.

Dad: *(Enters at SL) Hey! Bring me back some nice Bordeaux, eh? (Exits. James carefully packs it and places it in suitcase)*

#2: *and some delicious paté for his mother.*

Mom: *(Enters at SR) I lo-o-ve paté: goose paté, liver paté.....ummmm (exits. James wraps and packs it. He closes up the suitcase, takes both satchels in hand. The Family come to collect him and they move across stage, toward "airport" at CSL, while "Airplane maintenance crew" ready the plane at CSR.)*

(At airport, the Family are saying their good-byes (with The Inevitable Greeting, which James tolerates, somehow) when James, who has been carrying both satchels, motions to Pierre, asking him if he would hold the second one briefly, while James goes to the bathroom. James leaves for the bathroom and then bolts - with his own suitcase in tow - through security - and onto the plane. Pierre, perplexed, is left with suitcase; keeps checking watch, worried that James will not come back for it in time to catch his plane. When dealer comes up from behind at Sl and recognizing it, snatches it from Pierre's hand and escapes, SL. Marie-Francoise and Pierre chase after him, protesting, while Sebastien follows sluggishly, merely shrugging his shoulders.

James seats himself in center seat. (18D). He's relieved. He's looking forward to putting all this behind him, and having the whole set of 3 seats to himself for the next 8 hours to Toronto. Enter 2 Oafs, speaking in French, and searching for their seats (18 C and 18 E)

James prays that they will keep going. They do. James settles in. Then the Oafs come back, searching. James quickly prays again that they won't stop. They do. But they climb into the seats ahead of him. He prays a quick thank you. Flight attendant comes along, followed by two passengers who crowd behind her. She checks tickets of the 2 Oafs. She explains that they are in the wrong seats - they should be in the two seats on either side of James. He moans and sinks down in his seat. The two passengers settle into seats ahead of James and Oafs.

Flight attendant returns. James brightens, hoping there's been some mistake. There has, but it is that the passengers in front of James are on the wrong flight altogether. They leave. These seats are empty. James tries to urge The Oafs to take those nice, empty seats, but no, they are all belted in and happy where they are. James sags.....

Attendant: *Bienvenue a Air Canada Vol numero 339 de Paris de Toronto.....Our flying time will be eight hours (Poor James) at an altitude of 16000 ft. In a few moments we will be showing you a video of the safety features of this aircraft.....*

(At least James can escape by putting on his earphones. He's about to drift off to sleep, when Oaf #1 nudges him.)

Samuel: *(En francais)* Do you have any other batteries?

(James plays dumb, pretending that he only speaks English and pointing to his lapel pin.)

David: *(Brightening, in broken English)* Oh, Anglais! Great! I am wanting to practice my English. I am going to Toronto to sell bread machines, and I need to have good English. Bread is very populaire in Canada, and we are going to do a good business there.

Samuel: *(leaning over, joins conversation)* Hello. My name is Samuel. You speak English? Good! We are bringing Canada the finest French technology in bread machines. You like bread?

James: *(hoping to dissuade them)* Yeah. I like bread. But nobody else in Canada does....*(he motions)*Oh! Hey! The movie. Cool! The Matrix....What??? technical difficulties? Only in French? *(Weary)* Not even a little English? Just a little? The whole point of taking the plane was the movie! If I'd known it would only be in French, I'd have rather swam! Aargh!

(James drifts off to sleep, while the two Oafs get into the movie - every once in a while awakening James with loud exclamations. When the movie ends, they awaken James to ask if he wants to play cards. He declines, but they want to use his table tray to do so anyway. James slips his earphones back on, to escape.....)

Attendant: Mesdames et messieurswe will shortly be on our final approach to Toronto airport. I will be passing out to you Customs Declaration papers, on which you must record any items that you have purchased abroad. When you go through Customs in the Toronto airport, you must present this paper to the Customs official.

(She passes out papers to James and Two oafs, who fill them in....the plane lands. James wishes them good luck with their business and their English; they leave the plane. Flight Maintenance Crew comes aboard to "clean out" the plane - in actual fact, they remove cubes and set up a black box as "Customs Counter", and four chairs as waiting area to the side. Customs Official stands behind counter. Passengers line up in front of counter - Two Oafs and James are far back in the line. Everyone gets through Customs without a hitch - except James.)

Official: What is your nationality?

James: *(proudly points to lapel pin)* I'm Canadian!

Official: May I see your passport please? *(James shows passport)* Do you have your Customs Declaration papers? *(James shows him)* Hmmm....Hmmm.... How old

are you, son?

James: Sixteen.

Official: Put your suitcase up here. Open it up. *(James does ; Official fishes out the patè and wine. He gives James a big yellow sticker. Clown, Gothic-with-Imaginary Friend and Tough Guy enter and sit in waiting area)* Here. Put this on. Then go sit over there. *(Motions to waiting area)*

James: Why? What'd I do?

Official: Don't get smart with me. Underage drinking and importing banned substances. I think I'd be saying, "Yes Sir!"

James: *(Gathering up his suitcase, and walking away trying to cover the sticker, mutters)*
Yes Sir!

(He goes and sits with others in waiting room. He's nervous)

Tough guy: Hey. What you in for?

James: In? What am I in?

Tough guy: Trouble. Ever done time before?

James: Time? Uh, no.

Tough guy: It's not so bad. Here, it's not. Canada's prisons are pretty....."wholesome".

(Clown keeps annoying James by honking a small bicycle horn in his ear, and smiling incessantly; Gothic keeps trying to introduce James to his imaginary friend, Sally...)

James: Wholesome??

Tough guy: Yeah. No rats. Thailand.....Thailand's got rats. And roaches.

James: R-roaches?

Tough guy: Yeah, but that's a good thing; otherwise, you'd starve to death.

James: Starve?

Tough guy: They're not so kind to smugglers of "banned substances" there. You just plain

never get out...Me? Me, I escaped through a sewer.

James: A sewer? *(James passes out.)*

(Customs Official draws Jail across in front James and Co. Jail "wavers" as in a dream. Enter Mom and Dad, speaking to audience.)

Mom: *(Taking a picture down from the shelf)* And this, this was our James. *(Tearfully)* He just never came home.....

Dad: James was just sixteen - in the pride of his youth - when he went to France on a student exchange, and we never heard from him since. For all we know, he could be rotting away in some prison in Thailand, having got mixed up in some kind of drug-smuggling scheme.....

Mom: It just breaks our hearts. He was so...wholesome. Oh James, James.....

(Jail moves off, as Custom Official moves to shake James' shoulder, waking him from his dream. Two police officers accompany Custom Official, swinging the empty chairs around to form a circle around James. They are menacing)

Official: James, James. *(He wakens)* this is a police officer especially trained to deal with customs matters. Would you care to explain yourself to them?

Police: Open your suitcase, and then start talking. And remember anything you say could be used against you.

James: *(Opens suitcase; doesn't know whether to talk or not; decides to go for it.)* I'm sixteen years old, I'm on a student exchange - just returning from France. While I was there, I did the ...usual stuff.....*(Police goes through his things while he explains)*

Police: Did the "usual stuff"? What do you mean "usual stuff"?

James: Oh, you know - the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, that sort of thing.....

Police: Hmmm.

James: And I'm just going home now to Moncton., and I'm taking some wine for my dad and some patè for my mom. That's it.....I'm wholesome.

Police: That will be for us to decide, son. *(He circles him; looks him straight in the eye for 30 seconds; James doesn't flinch. Finally:)* I'll tell you what you are, son!

You are a disgrace to the exchange program. What you have done is illegal and you can be sentenced to two years in jail for this crime. But no, I'm not going to arrest you, although I probably should. I'm going to let you go, but I NEVER want to see this happen again! Now, I have to take this paté from you, but the other paté and the wine are yours. I normally don't do this. In fact, I'm not allowed to do this, so don't tell anyone. You can catch your flight to Moncton now, and I hope you'll just let this be as close as you ever get to a criminal record!

(James scrambles his things together, hides his sticker while he walks to the plane. Officers leave, taking black box with them. Airplane maintenance crew set cubes for plane seats. James take aisle seat.)

James: *(Talking to himself as he does up his seatbelt)* A criminal record? It was only a little bottle of wine, for crying out loud. And a container of paté. For my parents! Do I look like a smuggler? This Hell's Angel chases me all over France - he's the real thing - and I'm the one who gets blamed! Oh well, James old boy - put it behind you now. You're made of stronger stuff than that. And besides, you're going home!

Granny: Excuse me, son. My seat is in the middle there, beside you. *(She seats herself)* I have to tell you, that I'm a little nervous about flying.

James: Oh well. Everyone's a little nervous, I guess.

Granny: Yes, well. At my age - I'm 85, you know - it has some consequences.

James: Consequences? Like what?

Granny: Well, I'll probably have to use the bathroom from time to time.

James: Oh. Well, that's what it's here for I guess.

(Granny chats - can be mimed - with James and then excuses herself, climbs over him awkwardly and goes off. She returns. Repeat. Repeat.)

James: Uh - maybe - why don't we exchange seats? It might be easier....

Granny: Oh, all right then. That's probably better.

(They exchange seats. After a bit, James realizes he needs to use the bathroom. He gets up and climbs over Granny, and as he does, she notices his sticker - which he has forgotten about.)

Granny: Oh my, what a pretty yellow sticker you're wearing. What does it say? *(She leans in to read it. James is facing what would be "the rest of the plane" granny's voice is overtaken by all the other actors - including Dealer, with suitcase in hand - dancing onto SR, singing "Shame, shame, shame of a nation....." They continue singing and dancing, picking up cubes to remove "plane"; granny joins them; lower the volume. James turns away to SL, to face Mom and Dad, who have come to meet him at airport. Singers freeze.*

Mom: James! Oh, I'm so glad you're home. How was it?

Dad: Welcome back. How's your French? Did you have a good time?

(Singers sing and dance again: two lines at very low volume; then freeze.)

Mom: Oh James! Guess what just came in the mail! You're going to be so excited about this - now that you're such a seasoned traveller and allI just couldn't wait for you to get home so I could tell you.....

Dad: What your mother is trying to say is, you've been accepted for next year.....

Mom: .to go on another exchange.

(Singers begin once more, very quietly)

Dad: .to Thailand!

(Mom and Dad put arms around James and they go off, SL. At the same time, Narrators 1 and 2 from Scene 1 step forward from dancers, as dancers continue to dance and sing off)

#1: Ah! The student exchange program!

#2: Vive l'exchange des etudiants!

#1: Good night.

#2: Bonsoir!