



A Rock Musical

The Man

MAN vs. CITY

In a career as commissioner spanning forty years, Robert Moses conceived, built and even ran much of New York City. He was by far the most powerful unelected public official New York has ever seen. And because his ideas and techniques were imitated across the country for decades to come, his influence would extend well beyond New York. In fact Moses truly parted the waters for the car culture of today, and by extension a modern urbanism that shaped how almost every American city looks today.

Brash, brilliant, socially awkward, the 20th Century's Ultimate Master Builder -- he didn't even drive!

The Story, in Brief

From his folk-hero early years when the newspapers portrayed him as a Johnny Appleseed of the common man, building parks, roads and public facilities across New York State, to his creation and leadership of the new Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, Robert Moses was a modern-day shadow Caesar. In the early 1950s, at the height of Moses' power, Mayor Robert Wagner tried to get rid of his commissioner, but couldn't. Moses, who put tens of thousands to work, was just too influential. Through the powers of eminent domain, he managed to raze entire neighborhoods, displacing over half a million low-income and middle-class New Yorkers to make way for public housing and highways. Ultimately these colossal projects would divert resources from public transportation and other civic amenities (like parks, ironically enough), helping to create a new class of entrenched, political interests.

Time

From 1924 to 1968, Robert Moses years as "a public servant." He never was elected to public office, and yet he wielded more power than anybody, even most of the politicians who appointed him.

The Characters

Robert Moses -- master builder, portrayed by the same actor as a college student, through middle age, and finally as an older man.

The Troubadour – a witness to history over the course of Moses' career.

Alfred E. Smith -- governor of New York, the first Catholic presidential candidate.

Rita Ray – Showgirl, close friend of Moses, performed at Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe, and later at Jones Beach Theater

William Randolph Hearst – Newspaper publisher

Robert Wagner -- mayor of New York.

James Felt - City Planning Commissioner under Wagner, a Moses proxy

Elmore Seabrook -- grandson of slaves, resident of the Bronx, displaced.

Concheta Pozallo -- Italian immigrant, resident of South Brooklyn, displaced.

Jane Jacobs -- vocal critic of Robert Moses' modern urban planning principles, author, community activist.

Father Gerard La Mountain – Rector of the Church of the Most Holy Crucifix on Broome Street

Nelson Rockefeller – governor of New York, Moses' nemesis

Walter O'Malley -- owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers

Lewis Mumford -- Historian, literary critic, philosopher of urban architecture, architecture critic of *The New Yorker*

THE HUMAN TOLL

Act I

- Scene 1: A New York City street (“Voice of the People” intro/chorus)
 Scene 2: New York State capital building (“Master of the Masterplan”)
 Scene 3: The beach along Babylon, Long Island
 (“The View from My Imagination”)
 Scene 4: Jones Beach nightclub, Moses’ office
 (“When the World Isn’t Watching”)
 Scene 5: A room in the Yale Club (“We Like What We Like”)
 Scene 6: Triborough Bridge (“We’re Impressed”)
 Scene 7: Moses’ Randall’s Island office
 (“No One Can Do This Without Me”)
 Scene 8: South Brooklyn, Concheta Pozallo
 Scene 9: Jones Beach, Moses’ office (“Master of the Masterplan” reprise)
 Scene 10: Jones Beach, Moses’ office, Walter O’Malley
 Scene 11: A street corner in the Bronx (“Can’t You See”)

Act II

- Scene 1: The Maps of New York (“Master of the Masterplan” reprise)
 Scene 2: City Hall (“We’re Afraid”)
 Scene 3: Broome Street, summer of ’59 (“Master of the Masterplan”
 reprise)
 Scene 4: City Planning Commission hearing room
 Scene 5: Randall’s Island (“The Great Unknown”)
 Scene 6: News broadcasts, progress (“Lost All Sense of Direction”)
 Scene 7: Jones Beach office, night
 Scene 8: Outside Tavern on the Green, Central Park
 Scene 9: Tavern on the Green, driveway in front of bldg
 (“Voice of the People”)
 Scene 10: Moses’ yacht w/ Rockefeller, 1964
 Scene 11: Moses in his car, being driven to a meeting
 Scene 12: Rockefeller’s Eastside apartment, 1968
 (“There’s No One Else”)
 Scene 13: On the beach, Robert Moses State Park
 (“Straight Towards the Sun”)
 Scene 14: Randall’s Island, Lewis Mumford interview
 Scene 15: Moses’ Eastside apt, 1976 (“Master of the Masterplan” reprise)

Act I

Scene 1: A New York City street

From black a burst of glaring light completely fills the theatre. As eyes adjust we see Robert Moses in suit jacket and tie towering over a group of reporters. Flashbulbs pop. A phalanx of news cameras bristling with microphones is pointed at him. Several of his aides, most in shirtsleeves, are standing behind him, looking nervously at the crowd. It's a hot summer day on The Upper West Side of Manhattan. The year is 1966. Robert Moses points as he speaks, barely concealing his anger and contempt.

MOSES

(Hears a question, almost screaming at the cameras)

For over forty years I've been building roads, creating parks, and making this city into the greatest city on earth. The naysayers, they have no imagination. They can't see the infrastructure, the added capacity, the tax revenue our projects generate for the city.

(Protestors and activists in the crowd begin to boo.)

For these so-called liberal-minded, community watchdogs to stand up and arrogantly say no to progress, no to improved traffic flow, no to increased capacity, no to parking is ridiculous, it's an insult. My public authorities generate cash, cash to build, cash to borrow, cash to do as we please, all in the interest of the public good.

MAN

You're not god, Moses!

(Voices rise in anger. Moses laughs contemptuously. During the following, music underscores a montage of projected multiple views of New York City -- aerial shots of highways, bridges, buildings, and parks, mixed with scenes of people on street corners, playing in parks, walking their dogs, buying hotdogs, hailing cabs, etc. As the music builds, the group of reporters and concerned citizens morphs into a group of protesters carrying signs ("Save our City," "Say No to Destruction," "Moses isn't God"). The crowd coalesces into a spirited

dance mob. From their midst emerges urban activist Jane Jacobs, who sings “Voice of the People.” Others join in. The crowd goes from angry to joyfully defiant. They taunt Moses who continues to address the crowd during the song, but who becomes increasingly distant as his rants are drowned out. Live video close-ups of the singers are projected on the stage’s honeycomb of screens.)

MOSES

The public doesn’t know what it wants or needs until I build it for them!

(Song: “Voice of the People”, instrumental with chorus sung by Jacobs and street crowd)

Listen to the voice of the people.
Talking ‘bout the voice of the people.

MOSES

The public doesn’t know, I KNOW!

Listen to the voice of the people.
Talking ‘bout the voice of the people.
... voice of the people.
... voice of the people.

During the final chorus the crowd disappears a little at a time. When the song is finished, Moses is gone. Sounds of bumper to bumper traffic as the stage goes dark.

Scene 2: New York State Capital Building

(Off to the side of the stage a strolling troubadour appears in soft lighting under the Washington Square Arch singing)

**(Song: “Master of the Masterplan”, sung by troubadour)
(verse 1)**

He had a vision for New York City,
A shining future no one else could see.
Great bridges, tunnels, and parks connected by highways.

This is the story of the city that came to be.

He started out in search of truth and beauty,
And dreamed of grand ideas never seen before.
For more than forty years he shaped this city,
From the Hudson River to the Long Island shore.

He was the masterbuilder, he was the powerbroker.
Creating and building an empire at his command.
The Triborough king, the ultimate authority,
Robert Moses was the master of the masterplan.

The year is 1920. A meeting room in the NY State Capital. Gov. Alfred E. Smith presides over an informal gathering of aides, and a handful of Tammany Hall cronies. A very young Robert Moses is sitting at end of a long table, stacks of papers in front of him.

YOUNG MOSES

(shirt sleeves rolled up, pencil behind his ear)

... well, I ask simply why equal jobs shouldn't be given commensurate pay? Our government is rife with a job in one department getting almost twice as much as the same exact job in another department. That shouldn't be. I've uncovered hundreds of examples of this ...

TAMMANY HALL CRONY

...I wouldn't be too quick to jump to any conclusions here. The supervisor in one department might have seniority, he might...

YOUNG MOSES

...but that's just it. Compensation shouldn't be left up to such variables. Pay levels need to be standardized and based on merit, not seniority or favoritism...

GOV. ALFRED E. SMITH

Mr. Moses, I do hear what you are saying. But do we know every factor? Probably not. Pay is the prerogative of department heads, based on many factors. Look, I'd tread lightly here. I was only elected by a very slim margin, don't forget, and we are going to need all of those votes and more. We have to make friends faster than we make enemies.

SMITH AIDE

That's right, we can't rock the boat.

GOV. SMITH

Why don't you and Sam here look at your findings together and see if you can save us a little money, without hurting our friends.

TAMMANY HALL CRONY

Yeah, come on Bob, I'm sure we can find a solution that works for all involved...

YOUNG MOSES

...we shouldn't have to compromise. Good government...

GOV. SMITH

Good government need not be painful. What else do we need to review today?

YOUNG MOSES

(Puts a thick roll of drawings on the table. He stands and unties them, then lays them out on the table.)

Well, I'd like to show you the plans for the Hudson railyards renovation. We've incorporated a wonderful waterfront park design with playgrounds and ballfields and several river piers for public use, and a two level bridge over the Harlem River with a highway...

GOV. SMITH

And the cost? *(He knows the answer to this)*

YOUNG MOSES

Pays for itself.

(Handing out copies of a thick legal document to everyone in the room)
... the bridge leading to the roadway will be established as a public authority and we'll charge each car 10 cents to cross. Projected revenue should be \$75,000 per month.

TAMMANY HALL CRONY

And the cost will be...?

GOV. SMITH

Joe... Didn't you hear him? It pays for itself.

YOUNG MOSES

Parks and ballfields up and down, a scenic view. People will drive their motorcars there just to see it.

GOV. SMITH

Moses, and his parks for the common man! Parks that pay for themselves! By jove, I think we're on to something.

(The men around the table nod their approval as Smith goes from man to man clapping them on the back.)

And make sure that the opening is well-attended, by dignitaries and the like, members of the press. Invite plenty of photographers, groups of school children, marching bands, we'll have men and ladies riding their bikes, a procession of motorcars across the bridge, and make sure those photographs are on front pages of the morning editions of every paper in town.

Scene 3: The beach along Babylon, L.I.

1924. Moses wearing a crisp, dark suit is looking out to sea, his back to us, his clenched hands resting on his hips. The sun directly above him shines fiercely on the beach, which extends for miles in either direction. The smooth sand, seemingly untouched for as far as the eye can see, has the tint of gold. Moses turns away from the sea with an expression of utter confidence.

He is in the ballroom of an ornate seaside mansion -- the August Belmont, Jr. Estate on Long Island -- framed by an enormous window looking out on the ocean. It is a bright summer afternoon.

A radio announcer issues a news bulletin. NY State has purchased the former August Belmont, Jr. estate and will turn it into a State Park. Handling the negotiations on behalf of Governor Al Smith is State Parks Commissioner Robert Moses.

With a shift of lighting Moses now stands in the middle of his ornate and imposing office in the Jones Beach complex, built on the former Belmont estate. He is looking out to sea again, through a large window, as secretaries scurry about, draftsmen come in with drawings, while Moses speaks with his assistant)

MOSES

See to it that the governor is here in the morning. Our car must be waiting for him. As soon as he finishes breakfast. The bill is written. It will pass as soon as it's presented. The Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority is the icing on the cake, it will complete the network of roads we've been piecing together township by township, making it possible for the average New Yorker to travel from just about anywhere in New York to the south shore of Long Island, in about an hour.

ASSISTANT

The average New Yorker with a car.

MOSES

A chicken in every pot, a car in every garage!

ASSISTANT

Yes sir. And if I do say so myself, the tolls will be very popular...

MOSES

Yes, of course they will! Young, knowledgeable, courteous toll-keepers in crisp uniforms, dispensing useful information. After all the land wrangling we've done to map out these parkways. Now it all comes together, and we'll have the revenue generating mechanism to build the tunnels and bridges we so desperately need to keep this city growing and moving forward. Stagnant communities brought to life, linked to New York, part of a network of green spaces, roads and outward growth that will alleviate the poverty and overcrowding, the deplorable living conditions of the poor. We really are doing something immensely valuable for the people of New York.

ASSISTANT

...not to mention the jobs that you are creating. Jobs that no other government agency can create...

MOSES

...yes, the economic impact of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority will be immense. Revenue and jobs. *(He smiles broadly.)*

Moses sings "The View." While he sings, walking slowly toward us, scenes of roads cutting through country fields circa 1930 give way to more roads, exit ramps, toll plazas, then bridges spanning rivers. The projections become increasingly dynamic, with pictures of traffic moving along these roads, circa 1950, more construction, newer bridges, mingling with images of New York's midtown where International style office towers are being built. Smartly dressed office workers enter Park Avenue's vast modern lobbies, flags flap in front of the United Nations, helicopters land on the Pan Am Building. Mixing aerial views with views from street-level, the montage conveys a sense of muscular urbanism. The colors become increasingly saturated... reds, yellows and powder blues burst forth from a mostly black and white grittiness.

(Song: "The View from My Imagination)

I see a future, where others see nothing,
Ribbons of green along the shore,
Majestic bridges connecting these islands,
Nothing like this has been done before.

I know this city, I know the problems
Of rapid growth and urban decay.
I've read the studies, and found solutions,
My plans will pave the way.

I'll make impassioned pleas, filled with facts and figures,
and the city's leaders will soon see...
The View, from my imagination.

Turning wasteland into promise,
Requires a giant leap of faith.
I'll fight resistance, and old-fashioned thinking
To make this city a better place.

I'll make impassioned pleas, filled with facts and figures,
and the city's leaders will soon see...
The View, from my imagination.

At the end of the song we catch a glimpse of the World's Fair of 1964; the fair's iconic metal globe sits in the middle of a busy construction site, striking an off-key visual note. The images come to a sudden stop. The song ends abruptly.

Scene 4: JONES BEACH Backstage at the amphitheater, and Moses Office

(Late at night. The big band sounds of Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians can be heard in the distance. A lively song reaches its crescendo, finishes. Applause. A line of plumed and beaded chorus girls having just finished a large production number comes off stage. A female assistant stage manager approaches one of the dancers, Rita Benson (stage name Rita Ray), whispers in her ear. Ray turns to the girl next to her, tells her something. The girlfriend helps Ray take off her headdress.)

RITA RAY

I have to go upstairs. Mr. Moses wants to see me. A big contract, something with the governor.

(The two women go to the side of the stage, to a door, Ray rings a buzzer. She leaves her friend when the door opens.)

(Scene changes to Moses' Jones Beach office. Moses is working at his large desk, illuminated by reading lamp that emits the only significant light in the otherwise dark room. The moon, unseen, shines in through the floor-to-ceiling curtains framing the window looking out on the ocean. Moses is smoking a cigarette. A female secretary hovers over him while he finishes writing something.)

MOSES

Check this amount. It's got to be exact, to the inch. Let me know what Warren says. I won't draft the contract unless he's checked it ten times. (*Notices Rita in the room.*)

Rita darling. What's the crowd like tonight?

RITA RAY

3/4's. It's a good house.

MOSES

Did you stop by Sterling's table?

RITA RAY

Yes I did. I gave him your message.

MOSES

Good. Rita darling, I know we had planned to spend the evening together, but it will have to wait.

RITA RAY

The night, Robert.

MOSES

Yes, the night. The governor is coming in the morning, there are a few things I must get done before he arrives. The legislation...

RITA RAY

You said the legislation was written. You shipped it off to Albany the other day.

MOSES

Yes, yes, it's all done.

RITA RAY

We were going to have a little supper and go for a midnight sail.

MOSES

Yes, I know. But it will have to wait. I hope you understand. I have things to do, to prepare.

RITA RAY

Yes, of course. We can go out some other night. It's just that the moonlight is perfect tonight.

MOSES

Yes, I know. I need to be alone.

RITA RAY

You don't need me to leave, do you? You can be alone with me here. You know that's alright.

MOSES

Rita, you're the best. You ask nothing of me. Everyone wants this and that, but you, you ask for nothing.

RITA RAY

Because you give me all that I need!

MOSES

We are exactly the same. Self-sufficient to a fault. To the world we need nothing. To the world we have it all... Power... good looks, well that's your department.

RITA RAY

The word for that is beauty, Robert.

MOSES

Yes, beauty... Rita, I ask you for nothing.

(Song: "When the World isn't Watching" Duet: Moses and Ray)

Moses No one understands me better, she can read my every thought.

Always knows just what I'm thinking, remembers what I've forgot.

Ray I've never met anyone like him, so sure of who he is.

He makes me feel I can do anything, but he takes all that I can give.

Moses & Ray When the world isn't watching, no one gets me the way you do.

Moses In a crowd I can be so lonely, when across the room I'll hear her voice, And remember we're together, our fate is our own choice.

*Ray I know he truly loves me, but in his thoughts he's miles away,
On moonlit ocean breezes when he's sailing on the bay.
Moses & Ray When the world isn't watching, no one gets me the way
you do.*

RITA RAY

I give you what you need, and I, too, ask for nothing in return.

MOSES

No one gets me the way you do.

RITA RAY

Yes, I know.

MOSES

And for that you know I will give you the world.

RITA RAY

(Smiles, more to herself than to him.)

I want you to promise that you will reward yourself with a moonlit sail tomorrow.

MOSES

If all that we set out to do is accomplished.

RITA RAY

It will be. *Halavashem.*

MOSES

Hush! We don't need to go into that.

RITA RAY

Robert, listen to me...

MOSES

Nothing is ever given to us. It is up to us to take for ourselves. We must fight for everything, Rita. For every last penny, for every ounce of respect, for every smile and courtesy, we have to fight. Nothing comes to us otherwise.

RITA RAY

(Frowns, playfully.)

Certain things are given.

MOSES

No. We pay for it all.

(An assistant comes in with a stack of contracts.)

MOSES

Good, let me see those.

(Moses turns his attention to the stack of papers. Rita Ray watches him for a few moments, forcing a smile as she realizes that he has forgotten about her.)

Scene 5: A Room in the Yale Club

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST

So how do these tolls work?

MOSES

Brooklyn is linked to Queens, Queens to Manhattan and all of it links to Long Island... the toll gates are going to be right at the center of this system, the point at which all of what happens to the south and east feeds straight into New York, Manhattan.

HEARST

Are you sure people will go for it? Will the toll gates as you call them, create congestion, blockage?

MOSES

No, in fact it will regulate the flow, like a good heart, it will pump the blood. The toll gates will be the point at which the automobile driver will see what lies before him... It will be dramatic, the public will love the toll, for that view, that moment of anticipation.

HEARST

It is dramatic.

MOSES

You must remind them, tell your writers to not forget this... Encouraging car use, breaking our reliance on electric trolleys, helping the flow of traffic – these are the things that will turn New York City into the modern metropolis we know it can be.

HEARST

Breaking through this deadly inefficient, Byzantine morass of minor bi-ways that ensnarl this city. A greater capacity for commerce, for leisure, and for the betterment of our society.

MOSES

That's right!

HEARST

Fascinating. Everyone wants to drive. It's the new obsession. How about you?

MOSES

I don't drive.

HEARST

(Laughs.)

Good for you! It's beneath you, I suppose. When I supported your failed bid for governor, I told you I understood you. The power you were amassing... I knew what you were up to. So what if you didn't know how to kiss a baby.

MOSES

One should always pay one's way. Never be a burden to the public.

HEARST

Amen to that! Beholden to no one. Especially when you are not to the manor born.

MOSES

I suppose.

HEARST

You went to Yale, you were top of your class, but there were limits.

MOSES

Yes.

HEARST

(Winks knowingly.)

You are Jewish.

MOSES

Irrelevant.

HEARST

Ah, Moses, you are smart.

MOSES

William, let's talk about your land.

HEARST

Yes, lets.

MOSES

We will buy up the entire area, all your property around 125th Street.

HEARST

That's good.

(He takes out a cigar from his breast pocket. Inserts it in his mouth to moisten it.)

It's just a sorry collection of warehouses. But what about this diverting of traffic all the way up to 125th Street? Won't that be a nuisance?

MOSES

Not at all. So it adds two and a half miles to the trip in and out of Manhattan. No one will know the difference. This is good for the city, those blighted warehouses and slaughterhouses of yours can go. We've approved \$800,000 for the land, Bill. I hope that will prove satisfactory.

(Hearst smiles broadly. The figure is most satisfactory. He lights the cigar, as Moses watches.)

(Song: “We Like What We Like Until We Don’t Like It Anymore”, sung by newspapermen chorus)

*There’s not much in the news to get us excited,
but finally there’s a politician that we can trust.
Let’s hope he doesn’t get mired in a scandal and find out
That he’s just like the rest of the elite uppercrust.*

*We like what we like until we don’t like it anymore.
We like what we like until we don’t like it anymore.
We like what we like until we don’t like it anymore.*

*What else can we do but follow our leaders.
Even though that’s a game for kids to play.
Moses seems to have our best interests in his heart,
He’s asked for our support, so let’s hear what he has to say.*

Scene 6: Triborough Bridge

(A video and audio montage of radio bulletins, newsreels, and headlines heralding the opening of the Triborough Bridge in 1936. Moses, extolled as a hero of the common man, a savior of New York, the great visionary of urban planning, is seen in photographs with William Randolph Hearst. The lucrative deal to move the Manhattan anchorage northward by two dozen blocks, which accounts for the span’s contorted angles, is barely mentioned. What matters is that the Triborough, connecting Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan, is a mammoth success. Moses can do no wrong.)

(Song: “We’re Impressed”, sung by Hearst, and a chorus of cronies, newsmen and politicians)

*We’re Impressed, we’re impressed, he really gets things done.
We’re impressed, we’re impressed. The kids are having fun.
We’re impressed, we’re impressed. He’s such a modern leader.*

*We’re impressed, we’re impressed. He’s got the magic touch.
We’re impressed, we’re impressed. He’s already done so much.
We’re impressed, we’re impressed. With his vision for the city’s future.*

Extra, extra, read about his plan,

*The city's parks are in his hand,
Soon our pools and playgrounds will be rebuilt.*

*He's building bridges for all to see,
Bringing jobs to our economy,
He's doing more than the president.*

Scene 7: Moses' Randall's Island Office

*(Robert Moses is meeting with his protégé, the developer James Felt.
Moses stares intently at his visitor from across his desk.)*

JAMES FELT

So we move forward with the clearance?

MOSES

All of it. At once.

JAMES FELT

What do we do about Hicks Street and President?

MOSES

Gallo?

JAMES FELT

Profaci country.

MOSES

You make Joe Gallo a very good offer. We've contacted him. I've spoken with him myself. He'll be fine. 50 square blocks are his, he's the cornerstone for us in South Brooklyn, from the docks to the Gowanus Canal.

JAMES FELT

Divide and conquer.

MOSES

Hardly. Divide and partner. He is especially useful. His people will fall into line. Invite him to the theatre. Does he know Guy Lombardo? He should. They're both Italian.

JAMES FELT

I doubt it. 52nd Street is more his speed.

(He stands. The two men stare at one another as they think.)

You don't think he'll change his mind, do you? They say he's a nut job.

MOSES

No.

JAMES FELT

He keeps a lion. In the basement of one of his houses.

MOSES

I wouldn't worry.

JAMES FELT

Let's hope he doesn't eat kosher meat, Bob! *(He laughs at his joke.)*

MOSES

(Not amused, glares)

The key is to show up after dinner. Not before.

(Song: "No One Can Do This Without Me", sung by Moses and Felt)

They write headlines about men like me,

Cement and steel are my legacy.

The politicians just come and go,

I'm the only one you need to know.

Lesser men might compromise, they'll all give in once they realize...

No One Can Do This Without Me.

Now I've got power, and I've got the plans,

Follow me to the promised land.

I get things done, nothing stands in my way,

Those who have tried are all gone today.

Lesser men might compromise, they'll all give in once they realize...

No One Can Do This Without Me.

Scene 8: South Brooklyn

CONCHETTA POZALLO

(Furious, prowling her narrow tenement apartment like a caged animal.)
 I'm a goina eat his heart! I swear, on my mother's grave, if that man comes on my block, I will go outside myself, and rip his heart right out of his chest. That bastard, he thinks he is so smart. Ahhz! Who does he think he is?

(An explosion in the distance makes the dishes in her cupboard rattle.)

This is our neighborhood, and we do things the way we want, and no man in a suit from New York is goina tell us we gots to leave. No man. Moses, Jesus, the Holy Spirit... there ain't nobody going to tell Conchetta Pozallo her family's got to leave for no highway. Nobody. No, nobody! Not over my dead body!... my husband walks to work, the piers, hey, he comes home on Fridays early, with the others, because we is all family, everyone... the Italians, the Micks, even the Jews... not that there's many of those, but the ones that are here... they's treated the same. Every Friday, we women, we make the Friday dinner, for the family, everyone... there's traditions. And we know each other. We knows our kids, I knows my neighbors kids, they comes to my house... we take care of the babies. Profaci... *(she makes an odd gesture with her hand)* Those big shots! If a woman needs a day to herself, to shop, to visit, whatever, she goes to her neighbor not some Mafiosi. I'm a no count on those guys to take care of it. The piers they take care of, but not the house. And this is my house. If that Moses shows his face, I'll a strangle him myself. That's the way it is here in South Brooklyn. We looks out for each other. If the Jewish lady downstairs needs something, we give it to her. Like I says. This is our neighborhood. There ain't nobody goina tell Conchetta Pozallo her family's got to leave for no highway. Nobody. No, nobody! Not over my dead body!

(A warning whistle blows. In the distance a large explosion is detonated; workers are blasting the ground to make a trench for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, a cut-and-cover highway. Suddenly our perspective changes and we see a wide swath of earth, no more than a half-mile from the home of Conchetta Pozallo. From this trench, teeming with workers and equipment, we can see a far-off building, with Pozallo leaning out her window, gesturing furiously as she yells.)

Scene 9: Jones Beach, Moses' office

RITA RAY

(Looking around.)

There's something different. What is it? *(Moses sits down on arm of the couch, looking at her.)*

MOSES

I had them remove that lampshade. The one you despise.

RITA RAY

I don't despise it. I said it didn't fit, it seemed out of place.

MOSES

It didn't. The room didn't need it.

RITA RAY

It might have been fine someplace else.

MOSES

You said it yourself. The room didn't need it.

RITA RAY

I rather liked the design, the shape on the shade. I like Art Deco.

MOSES

You said it looked like an evil eye, like the Pyramid on the dollar bill. Those were your very words. Listen, we are very different. The gap in our ages is just a small part of it.

RITA RAY

Well, yes but... It's fine that you threw it out.

MOSES

End of story.

RITA RAY

Is there anything else you want to get rid of? You were the one who told me that story about the eye on the dollar bill...

MOSES

My wife and my two daughters need me.

RITA RAY

(She's alarmed by his expression.)

You know I never take you away from your family responsibilities.

MOSES

That's right, you don't.

RITA RAY

(Wanting to soothe him.)

I know how much you love your girls. You take them sailing every Sunday, and I'm nowhere to be seen.

MOSES

I'm sorry I threw away that lamp. I take it you liked it.

RITA RAY

I liked the shape, the eye, but it was just out of place.

MOSES

I guarantee you won't miss it.

(Moses gestures for Rita to approach him, which she does, somewhat sheepishly. He looks her over, like he's appraising a farm animal before an auction.)

(Song: "Master of the Master Plan", sung by troubadour and chorus)

(verse 2)

*His legacy stretches from Montauk to the Cross Bronx Expressway,
from Stuyvesant Town down on the lower Eastside.*

*To Jones Beach, Lincoln Center, and the Verrazano Narrows,
For better or worse, they have all survived.*

*He was the Masterbuilder, he was the Powerbroker,
Creating and building an empire at his command.
The Triboro King, the ultimate authority,*

Robert Moses was the master of the Masterplan.

Scene 10: Jones Beach, Moses' office

MOSES

Like I said, I have some prime land for you.

WALTER O'MALLEY

In Queens?! I own the Brooklyn Dodgers.

MOSES

The location is far superior than anything you could think of in Brooklyn. Transportation access, parking, it's a gift.

WALTER O'MALLEY

Damn you, Moses! Damn you to hell. I didn't ask for a hand-out, just a fair shake. Title 1, a public purpose project, at Atlantic Yards. A fair deal.

MOSES

If you want the land so bad, why don't you purchase it with your own money?

WALTER O'MALLEY

You can condemn that land under Title 1, like you're doing everywhere else in New York.

MOSES

For the public good. Parks, housing, not a ball field. That land is too valuable for a ball field or stadium.

WALTER O'MALLEY

And I don't want to go to Flushing, and operate in a city-owned facility.

MOSES

Well then I guess we don't have a deal.

WALTER O'MALLEY

The Brooklyn Dodgers have given this borough and this city something to cheer about for ten seasons now, and in the glare of national adulation, at

the height of our fame, New York is turning its back on us. New York is turning its back on a team that broke the color barrier, a team that made heroes out of one little guy after the other. A team that could pull it out in the final innings, a team that could beat the odds. We just won the series. The Yankees have their larger than life heroes, but the Dodgers have the common man.

MOSES

I root for the Yankees.

WALTER O'MALLEY

Fuck you! They used to say you were for the common man.

MOSES

(Stands.)

This conversation is done.

WALTER O'MALLEY

And so are the Brooklyn Dodgers!

Scene 11: A street in the Bronx, in front of a condemned building

(A black man, Elmore Seabrook, is loading a borrowed Packer with his possessions. He looks up at the building he's lived in for close to 20 years, where he's raised his family, and where his wife is spending a few more minutes before coming down for the last time. Both of his children were born in this building of coldwater flats, once filled with close-knit working-class families. Condemned the building has been empty for some weeks, with the Seabrooks the last hold-outs. With the exception of one window emitting light, the building otherwise has the dead look of a mausoleum)

ELMORE

(Tying down a mattress and some bundles on the roof.)

It's the Title 1. Slum clearance. Hard on the families. We have to move out so's they can clear out all these buildings, make way for decent housing, and the expressway. Next year we'll move in to the apartment they be givin us.

Twice the space, an elevator, trees, shrubs, a sink that doesn't leak. Windows that shut and keep out the cold. But for now we need to find ourselves a place on our own. Ain't gonna be easy. Sent the kids down south with their grandma. Liz and I will move around for a time. But shoot, won't it be nice to live in a brand new apartment, a building with a manager on the premises, a phone call away. I told Liz she mustn't cry. Think of what we'll be leaving, I told her. The noise, the dirt, the bugs, the pipes that be rattlin all the time, or broke, the lights in the halls that don't work, the paint chippin, the rodents... honey we'll be leaving that behind. And what'll take its place? What will we be getting in return? Two bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen with appliances that are new, a shower that works, not a shower that leaks, I forgot that. And windows that close. Honey bun, Liz I said, I won't have to be tapin no windows! Can you imagine that? Never again! And an elevator, and a buzzer downstairs, with a, whatever they calls it, to speak down through the wall, an intercom... to let people in. Modern conveniences. A modern place, Liz, not a run-down cold water flat. A modern home.

(A woman appears in the doorway of the building behind him.)

Look, I know it's hard to move from what you know, but think of what we can get. Think of the better life. Think of the opportunities for our kids. Think about livin in decency for a change.

(Song: "Can't You See" sung by Elmore Seabrook)

*Standing on a windswept corner, the rain mixed with my tears,
With a taxi as my witness, I try to add up all the years,
But it doesn't really seem to matter, counting lost hopes and fears.*

*I was proud to be a husband, proud to have a wife,
In these rooms we raised a family, but there's nothing left of that life.
And it doesn't really seem to matter, though I know this can't be right.
Can't you see, what they're doing to me.*

*How many others are there just like us, who've lost their homes.
Who've been removed and uprooted, and left out all alone.
All in the name of progress, and we've got nothing to call our own.*

*What makes a life worth living if everything is taken away.
When your dreams lie in ruins, and there's nothing left to say.*

And it doesn't really seem to matter when it can't get any worse than it is today. Can't you see, what they're doing to me.

(As the song reaches its climax, the clouds darken and it begins to rain. Seabrook tries to protect the things he's tied up on the roof of the car, but they are exposed to the elements. When the song is over, Liz, his wife, runs up to him in tears. She wails, in agony, beating her husband's chest as he tries to keep her from falling on the ground at his feet.)

ACT II

Scene 1: The Maps of New York

(1959, Cameras flash as Robert Moses is being crowned General Motors Man of the Year. Images of cars on highways, cars on city streets, cars at Jones Beach, cars on the Triborough and Whitestone Bridges, cars on country roads.)

LEWIS MUMFORD

The attack on Washington Square by Robert Moses and the Park Department is a piece of unqualified vandalism. The real reason for putting through this callow traffic plan has been admitted by Mr. Moses himself: it is to give the commercial benefit of the name Fifth Avenue to the group of property owners who are rehabilitating the area south of Washington Square, largely at public expense. The cause itself is unworthy and the method used by Mr. Moses is extravagant. To satisfy a group of realtors and investors he is as ready to change the character of Fifth Avenue as he is to further deface and degrade Washington Square. Washington Square has a claim to our historic respect: a respect that Mr. Moses seems chronically unable to accord any human handiwork except his own.

(Song: "Master of the Masterplan", sung by troubadour)
(verse 3)

*He drained the swamps, and straightened out rivers,
He created parks and beaches for the common man.*

*But to build his highways Moses through out those very same people,
And he said if you stood in his way you didn't understand.*

*He was the Masterbuilder, he was the Powerbroker,
Creating and building an empire at his command.
The Triboro King, the ultimate authority,
Robert Moses was the master of the Masterplan.*

Scene 2: City Hall

MAYOR WAGNER

Bob, I want you to sign this. *(Passes a sheet of paper across the table to Moses.)*

MOSES

What is it?

MAYOR WAGNER

Your letter of resignation as commissioner.

MOSES

(Glances at the paper before him; slides it back)

Bob, nothing doing. This commissioner doesn't resign. I would put my focus on getting re-elected if I were you, not on getting me removed. You're the one with the head on a chopping block. If you want me to place my head next to yours, we both go. In this case two heads are not better than one.

MAYOR WAGNER

I'm losing all of Greenwich Village because of you.

MOSES

Hardly. Let's not give these rabble-rousers too much credit. This is happening because of other factors. And since when did we worry that the Village could carry the city? Not on your life. Getting rid of me will not save you, Mr. Mayor. No, this will only hasten your demise.

MAYOR WAGNER

Spoken like a true politician. Though we all know you were a lousy one.

MOSES

When I ran for governor in '34 and lost by a landslide, I was interested in serving this state to the best of my abilities. Good thing I lost. I've since learned how to be a far more valuable public servant, and a more durable one. Believe me, when I ran for governor, I never realized how lucky I was to lose.

MAYOR WAGNER

I guess you are what they would call a good loser.

MOSES

I am the very model of a good winner. A good winner never wishes to lose, especially if losing will make you more popular. What I have seen is that many politicians are willing to lose battles in order to win the war. In my book if you accept losing of any description, you will definitely lose the war.

(An assistant to the mayor bursts into the room.)

(Wagner takes the paper back from Moses, looks at it and then crumples it before handing it to the assistant.)

(Song: "We're Afraid", sung by chorus of cronies, politicians)

*We're afraid, we're afraid, afraid to challenge him,
We're afraid, we're afraid, 'cause he always wins.
We're afraid, we're afraid, afraid we're in his back pocket.*

*We're afraid, we're afraid, he's grown too powerful,
We're afraid, we're afraid, he's out of control,
We're afraid, we're afraid, afraid we're weak and tired.*

(A young person sings)
*His theories of planning are out of date,
New York City is in a gridlocked state,
We need to stop him in his tracks.
But he commands the entire town,
Governors and mayors have all backed down,
We need someone who'll take a stand.*

Scene 3: Broome Street, Summer of '59

(Jane Jacobs is walking with Father Gerard La Mountain along Broome Street. They are approaching the Church of the Most Holy Crucifix on Broome Street, between Mott and Mulberry.)

JANE JACOBS

We need to conduct our own surveys, Gerard. If they're going to give us all their statistics about job gains, we have to make sure we document all the jobs lost. The waiters, the small business owners, their employees. It will be harder to tally, but we have to roll up our sleeves. The numbers will be impressive. They have to be. Our numbers have to crush theirs. We can't afford for it to be close.

LA MOUNTAIN

Yes, Jane, it is agreed. And our neighbors down on Wall Street have to understand that we are just as committed to progress as they are.

JANE JACOBS

I've been called an obstructionist more times than I care to think.

LA MOUNTAIN

Somehow they've been able to equate the highway across Lower Manhattan with progress, with economic development, and we've been portrayed as anti-progress.

JANE JACOBS

So we have to assert what we know, that this highway will cut a deep wound in the fabric of Lower Manhattan. Just like the others did in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

LA MOUNTAIN

Why not say the flesh? The neighborhood is a living, breathing thing after all.

JANE JACOBS

Yes, you are right.

LA MOUNTAIN

The developers are eviscerating this neighborhood in the name of saving it.

JANE JACOBS

We cannot let them.

LA MOUNTAIN

We won't! May God be my witness!

(Song: "Master of the Masterplan", sung by troubadour)
(verse 4)

*But one day a group of young mothers found a blueprint,
Showing plans to bulldoze the park where their children played,
So they stood their ground against the great Moses,
And he tried but he couldn't roll over the stroller brigade.*

*He was the Masterbuilder, he was the Powerbroker,
Creating and building an empire at his command.
The Triboro King, the ultimate authority,
Robert Moses was the master of the Masterplan.*

Scene 4: City Planning Commission Hearing Room

CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Jacobs. Would you please address the committee.

(She has her back to the committee members and is facing the crowd.)

JANE JACOBS

I am addressing the committee.

(Laughter.)

CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Jacobs. We are not amused. Would you please turn around and face the committee?

JANE JACOBS

(Without turning.)

Well I can tell you this, Mr. Chairman. The residents of Greenwich Village are not amused. We feel that the city is turning its back on the residents of this community, who have made their wishes known. But for some reason these wishes, spoken quite clearly, seem to be falling on deaf ears.

CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Jacobs, there are procedures that have to be followed. If you do not follow the procedures, you cannot expect to be heard. Follow the procedures and you will be heard.

JANE JACOBS

I thought the procedures were designed to drown out the voice of the people. The laws have been written by Mr. Moses and his cronies on the City Planning Commission so that voices like ours will not be heard. These laws create a deafening noise that drowns out the voices of these people.

CHAIRMAN

If you are talking about the voices of the minority, due process cannot be gerrymandered by a small band of radicals.

JANE JACOBS

You underestimate how many voices you are dealing with. We have a petition. We have community organizers. We have stories in the press.

CHAIRMAN

There are other voices and other interests and they are much more numerous than you care to admit.

JANE JACOBS

I'm not exactly sure you know how to count.

CHAIRMAN

There are voices in favor of the redevelopment of Greenwich Village. We have conducted surveys that prove these residents are looking for affordable housing, many are being forced to leave.

JANE JACOBS

(Turns to face the Chairman.)

The questionnaires are being written and designed by your friends at Rose Construction.

CHAIRMAN

Nonsense. These are product of the Commission.

JANE JACOBS

We have proof that they are not and that the questions are being asked to achieve the answers you desire.

CHAIRMAN

How so?

JANE JACOBS

Because you are promising things in the questions you ask... would you like a new kitchen? a new bathroom? These questions are leading. This is beyond manipulative.

CHAIRMAN

The questionnaires provide valuable answers.

(Noisy reaction from the floor of the committee room. Jacobs sweeps her arms to fan the noise level.)

Order. Mrs. Jacobs, you are trying our patience.

JANE JACOBS

(Raising her voice.)

Mr. Chairman, our patience is already tried. And now our community is ready to act.

CHAIRMAN

The community wants progress, not the status quo.

JANE JACOBS

Since when do you speak for the community?

CHAIRMAN

The condemnation of the West Greenwich Village is already underway. It cannot be stopped.

JANE JACOBS

I think Mr. Moses put it a little more eloquently. 'The scythe of progress must move northward. We cannot rebuild our city without moving people.' Well this is where we stop you. This is where we turn the scythe of protest on you.

(A roar of approval drowns out the Chairman as he furiously bangs his gavel.)

Scene 5: Randall's Island

(Moses and Rita Ray are in Moses' Randall's Island office.)

(Moses is putting down the phone at the desk. Ray is sitting on a couch.)

MOSES

Why are you angry? Is something bothering you?

RITA RAY

I'm not... Well, yes, I am. I know I shouldn't have any expectations about us. Afterall, I'm just a showgirl and you are... well, you are somebody.

MOSES

And you are somebody too.

RITA RAY

But I need to spend time with you. More than our evening trysts after a show. It's more than just physical for me and I don't think it is for you. You'd rather be sailing or swimming, just off by yourself.

MOSES

... I take you sailing.

RITA RAY

You take your daughters sailing too. It's all planned, it's all scheduled.

MOSES

What can I do? I'm a busy man.

You knew from the start what you were getting into with me. And it's not just that you're a showgirl and I'm... What about our age difference, and...? Rita, I'm in the public eye. The Governor doesn't like scandal, and you know I can't leave my wife with her health in the state it is.

RITA RAY
(sobbing)

I know. I know...

MOSES

I've enjoyed every minute with you, and I've always looked forward to our time together, but... I can't, I just can't promise you anything else.

RITA RAY

I was afraid we would end like this. No explosions, no recriminations, just... over.

(Song: "The Great Unknown", sung by Rita Ray)

*When did it start? Well, that's so hard to say,
it's much easier to see where it ended. All of those times I looked deep
in your eyes, weren't you afraid of what I'd discover?*

*When you broke my heart, I didn't know where to go, I couldn't see
the sky from the ground, as I fell thru the great unknown.
When you broke my heart, you took the me that I know, there wasn't
that much left behind, as I fell thru the great unknown.*

*In all of your plans, there wasn't any plan for you and me,
You were so convincing, and I was so convenient.
I did all I could, but my best wasn't good enough, and now you're
leaving, and I'm holding on to nothing.*

*When you broke my heart, I didn't know where to go, I couldn't see
the sky from the ground, as I fell thru the great unknown.
When you broke my heart, you took the me that I know, there wasn't
that much left behind, as I fell thru the great unknown.*

MOSES

Let's not kid ourselves, we are who we are. My inclinations toward family life are limited... because of my work!

RITA RAY

That's not the only reason. Your upbringing had something to do with it. Yale.

MOSES

Where I got my stiff upper lip.

RITA RAY

Where you were admired and snubbed at the same time. And it was not just your classmates. Your mother snubbed you too, missed your swim meets, you said.

MOSES

It didn't mean so much to me. I didn't want them to come. With their accents, I always felt a bit awkward with them around.

RITA RAY

I thought they were well-to-do.

MOSES

They were highly cultivated. But they had German accents. There was nothing to be done.

RITA RAY

But you loved your parents.

MOSES

Well... I wouldn't go that far. They were hard-working, very ambitious.

RITA RAY

I'm sure it wasn't easy. They came to America for a better life, which they quickly found. Your father owned a successful department store.

MOSES

By the time they came here they had had all the struggling of a lifetime. When they were in Germany, they lived in a ghetto. They even had to pay a tax to leave.

RITA RAY

A tax?!

MOSES

Actually it was a toll. A human toll. A toll to leave the ghetto. It was so expensive, nobody ever left.

RITA RAY

But they did!

MOSES

Yes. They found a way. They left and they never went back. They paid this insidious toll. A toll to leave, a toll to escape one's suffering. There is nothing more heinous.

RITA RAY

All your roads have tolls, Robert... why is that?!

(Moses looks at her. Doesn't answer.)

Scene 6: News broadcasts, progress.

(The description of a toll road taken from Moses-drafted legislation establishing New York's tollway system, is read aloud, while different views of New York's sprawling network of highways – satellite, map views, road-level views from inside speeding cars – build to a projected climax. A voice-over speaks the following: "Because of the toll revenues (which gave him the ability to raise bond issues to build more highways and bridges and collect even more tolls), in the 1960s the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority had over \$130 million in cash and was collecting over \$30 million a year in tolls. At the same time the New York subway system and the City itself were fast approaching a financial cliff.")

(Song: "Lost All Sense of Direction", sung by Concheta)
Where did we go wrong, how did we end up here,

*we're on unfamiliar ground.
 We followed all the rules, like good little boys and girls,
 Now the rules have let us down.
 I don't know where to go, I can't see where I've been,
 'cause I've lost all sense of direction.*

*The future looked so bright, there was promise in the air,
 And tomorrow would be better still,
 We had everything and more, but we didn't have control,
 And it looks like we never will.
 I don't know where to go, I can't see where I've been,
 'cause I've lost all sense of direction.*

*I once was just like you, thought that I knew the way,
 I believed in the golden lie.
 Now I struggle to get up, but gravity pushes me back down,
 And the world rushes by.
 I don't know where to go, I can't see where I've been,
 'cause I've lost all sense of direction.*

Scene 7: Jones Beach office, night.

JAMES FELT

You're getting trounced in the press, Bob. Mumford comparing you to a vampire wasn't very cricket.

MOSES

Below the belt.

JAMES FELT

I don't know what to say.

MOSES

'Once you sink that first stake, they'll never make you pull it up.' Did I really say that?

JAMES FELT

Apparently.

MOSES

A poor choice of words. Granted, there have been times when I could have benefited from a speechwriter.

JAMES FELT

I'm worried about this bad press.

MOSES

We have plenty of friends who will write more favorable stories.

JAMES FELT

The list is getting smaller.

MOSES

Look, ultimately we know we have right on our side. There's no retreating. We stand firm, and we take our lumps.

JAMES FELT

I don't like this idea of putting down a stake so people won't be able to stop your progress. It sounds too devious. We need to show that you are willing to compromise.

MOSES

The City needs us. We have the advantage, nobody's going to take that away. I can call these guys' bluff. Just you watch. I go to Rockefeller, and I offer him my resignation. You'll see how fast he changes his tune. They're offering me the World's Fair, and that's all I need. And the Bridge and Tunnel Authority. Fuck these Manhattan liberals. We push the Queens agenda, build the parks there, and the Cross Sound Bridge, and I'm a happy man.

JAMES FELT

They'll name that park after you, Robert, just you wait.

MOSES

I have very little interest in compromise. You should know that by now.

Scene 8: Outside Tavern on the Green, Central Park.

(Moses and his staff members, moving away from flashing cameras and the shouted questions of journalists, retreat to a spot off to the side.)

JAMES FELT

There's very little you can do against a battery of women with baby strollers.

MOSES

(A bit winded, trying to regain his composure.)

These women are incredible. Reckless! Baby strollers at a protest! You offer them an amenity, that will make their lives better, and they grouse about it. More parking. Take the cars off the streets, off *their* streets, but no, this is just unacceptable. The park is regrettably underused, 300 acres of underused pasture land, at the doorstep of the wealthy, and when we ask to take up a small portion of it for the benefit of all, for the benefit of the entire community, they go nuts. James, I'm telling you, sometimes I can't understand the minds of these people... I mean I know human nature very well, but sometimes, these liberal, I don't know, well-educated, women... Whose idea was it to bring out these strollers?

JAMES FELT

It had to be Jacobs.

MOSES

(Screaming, knocks a pad from the hands of one of his staff members.)

That bitch! They're nothing but a bunch of mothers! Fuck them all!

Scene 9: Tavern on the Green, in the driveway in front of the building

(Around the corner, Jane Jacobs, in front of the restaurant is speaking angrily to a decent-sized crowd, as several camera crews film the event. About 50 mothers with their baby carriages have assembled for this action)

JANE JACOBS

If Robert Moses thinks he can come in here and destroy our park so that his cronies can have a few more parking spots, he's got another thing coming to him. Central Park! The audacity! What is he thinking? That he's god?

(The mothers scream lustily, raising their fists, as they denounce Moses.)

(Scene shifts to Moses office on Randall's Island. Moses and an associate are watching the television news report of the afternoon's events. First they see this sound-bite from Jane Jacobs leading the protest outside of Tavern on the Green

JANE JACOBS

(Seen on television screen.)

If he thinks he can come in here and destroy our park so that his cronies can have a few more parking spots, he's got another thing coming to him.

(Her words elicit a roar from the crowd of activists and protestors. The pulsing beat of "Voice of the People" builds in the background as we view the actions from Act I/scene 1 from a new perspective. Stroller Brigade production number builds to the end of scene.)

MOSES

(Seen on the television screen.)

Where do they want to park their cars, on top of each other? For over forty years I've been building roads, creating parks, and making this city into the greatest city on earth. The naysayers, they have no imagination. They can't see the infrastructure, the added capacity, the tax revenue our projects generate for the city.

For these so-called liberal-minded, community watchdogs to stand up and arrogantly say no to progress, no to improved traffic flow, no to increased capacity, no to parking is ridiculous, it's an insult. My public authorities generate cash, cash to build, cash to borrow, cash to do as we please, all in the interest of the public good.

JANE JACOBS

(Addressing the crowd on stage.)

What Moses fails to see is that more parking means more cars. More cars means more traffic. And more traffic means more pollution. Do we just bow down when we hear the word progress? Do we fall on our knees and thank Moses like he's what... Moses? Hell no.

(Song: "Voice of the People", sung by Jacobs, Father Gerard, activists)

*You've treated our city like your private kingdom,
But your lies and deceit can't fool us anymore.
Don't try to tell us what to do,
You better listen up, because we're talking to you.*

*(Listen to the) Voice of the People.
Voice of the People. Voice of the People.*

*We've seen all the damage that comes from your ego.
Your highways and bridges all lead to dead ends.
Don't try to tell us what to do,
You better listen up, because we're talking to you.*

*(Listen to the) Voice of the People.
Voice of the People. Voice of the People.*

MOSES

(while the instrumental bridge of the song continues, Moses is trapped in his office, no longer at the protest, but his words and actions from Act I/scene 1 are re-enacted here on the television screen.)

What you're saying is no to progress. No to improved traffic flow, no to increased capacity, no to parking. That's right, no to parking. No to parking. No to parking!

JANE JACOBS

Every time he builds a new highway, it fills up and adds more traffic. These highways don't alleviate traffic, they breed more cars. Don't believe his lies.

MOSES

If they don't want progress then screw them.

JANE JACOBS

No, we don't want what you call "progress". Screw you, you fucking corporate stooge.

(the chorus continues to chant in the background.)

... Voice of the People ... Voice of the People.

Scene 10: Moses' Yacht, The Triborough

(1964, Moses is sailing on his yacht with Nelson Rockefeller, the governor of NY State. It's a very sunny afternoon. The two men are drinking cold drinks in tall glasses.)

ROCKEFELLER

We need to fund mass transit.

MOSES

A bad idea, a waste of money.

ROCKEFELLER

We need to stop neglecting the inner city.

MOSES

A waste.

ROCKEFELLER

I need you to get behind this.

MOSES

A bad idea, a waste.

ROCKEFELLER

We're working on some plans.

MOSES

I haven't seen any plans. We've got to start talking about the World's Fair, Flushing Meadows, and the Cross Sound Bridge.

ROCKEFELLER

What we, and I mean you, need to do is put some money into the subways.

MOSES

You'd siphon off funds from the Triborough to pay for the most out of date, antiquated means of transportation of them all? A rat-infested, crime filled River Styx?

ROCKEFELLER

We need to combine the Authority and the MTA. It's imperative.

MOSES

A folly. If we'd built the expressway across Lower Manhattan, we'd have excellent traffic flow. Lessen the burden on the subways, that's how you solve this.

ROCKEFELLER

Well... that plan of yours has been denied.

MOSES

City Hall got spooked by this public outcry caused by the Jacobs cabal. Now the city will have to contend with a tremendous traffic crisis that will only get worse.

ROCKEFELLER

Most New Yorkers don't have cars, Bob, in case you didn't notice.

MOSES

You'd have the hard-working suburbanites, the professionals who come into our city everyday to toil at their desk jobs, who pay their tolls, in their cars, and have them underwrite the subways and buses?

ROCKEFELLER

Exactly.

MOSES

That isn't fair at all. I'm sorry, I won't be a party to this.

ROCKEFELLER

We'll just have to proceed without your blessings. Actually there's something else we will like you to do.

MOSES

What's that?

ROCKEFELLER

My brother Laurence is looking for a foothold. I thought the State Parks commission would be ideal for him.

MOSES

You want your brother to run the Parks Commission?

ROCKEFELLER

For the state. If you wouldn't mind. You've had that commission for nigh on 40 years now. Not to mention the fact you run every other state and city commission under the sun. One less shouldn't affect you that much.

MOSES

No. I've kept these commissions strong and working in the public interest, I'm not about to put other interests, especially family nepotism, ahead of that.

ROCKEFELLER

My brother is prepared to serve the public interest. I wouldn't question this. None of us is on the take, you should know this. Our wealth makes that possible. We put the public's interests first. I want the State Parks Commission for my brother Laurence.

MOSES

If anyone has the temerity to pursue personal interests in these posts, woe onto them.

ROCKEFELLER

Laurence is unassailable.

MOSES

(Thinks he's calling his bluff.)

Then I should say goodbye to all of my parks posts.

ROCKEFELLER

I'm only looking for the resignation from just one. State.

MOSES

If I give away one parks post then I will give up all of them.

ROCKEFELLER

All of them?

MOSES

That's right... all of them.

ROCKEFELLER

Hmmm. Alright then. I accept.

MOSES

You what?

ROCKEFELLER

I accept. All except the World's Fair. We'll need you for that.

MOSES

You accept?!

ROCKEFELLER

And the Triborough... There's no denying you run that well. But we'll have to combine it with the MTA.

(Moses glares at Rockefeller. The sun bears down on them both, like the light beaming through a magnifying glass.)

Scene 11: Moses inside his car, being driven to a meeting

(A montage of headlines, mixed with television and radio news reports chronicle the World's Fair of 1964. Because Moses pushed to exceed

the prescribed duration of such events and raised the exhibition fees, the fair was not sanctioned by the Bureau of International Expositions. Most European countries, and the entire Communist bloc, did not participate. The fair instead became a showcase for American corporations, while aggressively promoting a futurist, man-made Utopia. Of the 140 pavilions only 36 were sponsored by foreign countries. Its most notable participants were General Electric, Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, IBM and Bell Telephone. Its theme was "Man in a Shrinking Globe, in an Expanding Universe." The fair did not come close to meeting its attendance goals, and ended with a deficit. Plans to expand Flushing Meadows Park after its conclusion were abandoned.)

(Moses riding in the back seat of a large sedan with a guest, a man in a dark suit.)

MOSES

We'll take you back to your office, if you like, your hotel. We have another car following this one. We'll pull over and my other car will take you where you want to go. No, it's no bother. It's been very nice meeting with you. And unfortunately I won't be able to join you for dinner. My wife's quite sick, you see. In fact she's dying. Yes, I know, it's quite sad. Well, she's been sick for some time. I've had her at a facility now for over a year. Yes, they give her the best treatment there. Far better than what we can provide. My daughters and I visit her regularly, on the weekends, Sundays after church. I fear that she suffers a great deal. Not always from a physical standpoint, but from a human standpoint. You know, not being able to be care for one's self. But what can you do? We have to muddle through. Well, you know, as we were saying, the World's Fair was a great success in many ways. So many disparage what we did, but look at some of the results. Flushing Meadows has a new state-of-the-art stadium, New York has a new ball club, and the area will continue to be a magnet for commerce. I'm still pushing through the Cross Sound Bridge. I'll get it; it's essential. Anyway, you are very kind to meet with me, and we should do it again. I'll have him stop the car, so the other car can take you to your hotel. I'm glad that our planning ideas are proving to be of value for you in the South. *(He taps on the window. Soon the car stops.)* Very good, Mr. Grayson. Call me any time. It's been very nice to see you. *(The car slows, comes to a stop. He yells to the front.)* Make sure Mr. Grayson is taken to the Plaza right away.

(The suited man, who has not said a word, gets out. Moses is looking out the window. After a moment, a smartly dressed woman gets in the back seat. Moses adjusts his tie and he tugs at his collar as if it is too tight around his neck.)

WOMAN

Mrs. Moses expired this morning. I'm sorry Mr. Moses.

(Moses juts out his chin as he hears these word. He makes an exaggerated frown. It looks as if he is thinking. An impulse to say something is receding.)

Like I said Mr. Moses, I'm sorry.

Scene 12: Nelson Rockefeller's Eastside Apartment, 1968

(Song: "There's No One Else", sung by Rockefeller)

*Next time I see him I'll tell him it's over,
He won't be needed here anymore.
He's had a long run, but the time has come,
To put an end to his endless control.*

*And there's no one else, it's really up to me,
There's no one else...*

*He's battled mayors and governors before me,
They'd come and go, and yet he always stayed.
They needed him more than he needed them,
And he'd always end up with the final say.*

*History is full of tough guys like Moses,
From Julius Caesar to Napoleon Bonaparte.
They all got things done, nothing stood in their way,
But eventually each of their empires fell apart.*

ROCKEFELLER

Robert, I appreciate you coming to see me. Let's not beat around the bush. We have never seen eye to eye, but we have always remained civil with one another. So I want for this little episode to sail through without a scene. You're done. The party's over. I've spoken with my brother David, and while the legislation you so ably wrote cannot be undone, the bank that underwrites the bond issues of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority can revoke their backing, and will. The merger of the MTA and the Authority will happen. I'll have you on the board, but I can't have you running the thing.

Robert, we've had our share of run-ins together, and many fine and glorious moments. New York is a better city because of you. New York is without question the finest city in the world, but New York is not your private fiefdom.

MOSES

Are you saying it is yours? Is New York the plaything of the Rockefellers?

ROCKEFELLER

New York is not a plaything. The very thought is reprehensible. You have often acted as if it is your plaything. Or should I say playground.

MOSES

A very inapt metaphor, I should say. I am the one who built a thousand playgrounds. What did you build -- a university, a complex of buildings for your corporate buddies...?

ROCKEFELLER

I personally didn't build anything. None of us did. Rockefeller money built a few important things. A place to conduct valuable research, to discover the cures to world's most vexing diseases? Yes. A campus for commerce and art. Yes. But it's what we stand for that matters most. Not the playthings we collect.

MOSES

Playthings? You're treating me like a child.

ROCKEFELLER

I think it's more like standing up to a bully. We need to fund mass transit; that needs to be our priority.

MOSES

A bully, is it? Have I not lined your pockets with gold? What are you saying?

ROCKEFELLER

You will step down as chairman of the Triborough. We're going ahead with the combination. Chase Bank is prepared to rescind its support of New York's bond issues, lest we all fall into a terrible quagmire, one that would take years, even generations to undo. And as a show of good faith, I will appoint you to the new MTA board.

MOSES

What is this about all about, is it because of the World's Fair?

ROCKEFELLER

The World's Fair mess will never go away. You mismanaged it and left the city in a financial hole.

MOSES

I built this city, and helped the common man, lining your pockets in the process.

ROCKEFELLER

Is that so.

MOSES

I certainly didn't line my own.

ROCKEFELLER

You really think we all owe it to you, don't you? Robert, you've brought us to the brink. Mark my words, we all know it. It's unsustainable. We all know what you did. You and your cronies, the lesser real estate moguls, the arrivistes, the opportunists, they all came to the trough at your invitation. Moses opened the door, inviting one and all. And now the room is filled beyond capacity.

MOSES

You were there every step of the way.

ROCKEFELLER

Watching. *(He points to his eye.)*

Scene 13: On the Beach, Robert Moses State Park

(Robert Moses, dressed in a suit, is walking along the crest of a dune at the beach, in the late afternoon toward the end of summer. There are sounds of other people cavorting near the water, but these people are unseen to us. Moses is seemingly trying to get away, to be alone. He stops suddenly. Looks at his watch, then surveys the horizon, beyond the ocean.)

(Song: "Straight Towards the Sun", sung by Moses)

*I had so many good ideas, so far ahead of my time,
I was as modern as Corbusier.*

*But history is full of wrong turns, and ideals get left behind,
Please don't blame me, I'm not as bad as they say.*

No one can say that I didn't do my job.

Like it or not I got things done.

*Though Roosevelt and Rockefeller will never be my friends,
I can admit, I don't like what I've become.*

(chorus)

*I couldn't see a thing, 'cause the light was in my eyes,
I was heading straight towards the sun.*

(bridge)

*I wanted to transform the world, make it a better place,
I only wanted what was best for you.*

*I realize that the times have changed, and I've been left behind,
But look at me now, what else can I do.*

(During the song, the sun shimmers and then becomes blindingly bright. At the conclusion Moses is looking off in the distance, but he finds himself no longer on the beach. Instead he is surrounded by gravestones, row after row, after row. A prayer in Hebrew is being incanted by a rabbi.)

Scene 14: Randall's Island, outside, a bright sunny day

(Lewis Mumford is finishing up an interview with Moses. The two men are walking to a waiting car.)

LEWIS MUMFORD

Thank you for meeting with me Robert. Frankly, I was rather startled when Mr. Shaun phoned to tell me you had agreed to speak with me.

MOSES

Thank you for meeting with me Mr. Mumford. I'm glad we had a chance to speak.

LEWIS MUMFORD

I'm not sure if we will be doing a piece. William, Mr. Shaun, wasn't committal about it.

MOSES

I certainly hope you do.

LEWIS MUMFORD

Well, you know, old news, so much water under the bridge so to speak.

MOSES

A bridge I built.

LEWIS MUMFORD

Well, yes, but you see, all of your buildings and projects are done, I mean built, and, well, we talk about legacy, and, well that's been discussed quite a bit.

MOSES

I'm old news.

LEWIS MUMFORD

(Laughs.)

Not a bit! I wanted to speak with you in person. I wanted to ask you something. You see, I was the one who asked to speak with you.

MOSES

I thought it was on The New Yorker's dime.

LEWIS MUMFORD

Well it is. But you see, it's not really for a story. It's for me. There's something I wanted to know.

MOSES

What is it?

LEWIS MUMFORD

I was curious. In all these years, had you ever set foot in one of the apartments, in one of the projects you built, of someone who actually lived there? An apartment in a project with a family in it?

MOSES

I see.

LEWIS MUMFORD

And if you had, what was that like?

MOSES

Actually, I did.

LEWIS MUMFORD

And what was that like?

MOSES

I think that particular discussion will be for another day.

(Moses gets into the back of a black sedan. Without another word, he lets the door slam shut.)

Scene 15: Moses' Eastside Apartment, 1976

(Moses is alone. He is sitting in his living room, nursing a drink, looking out the window with his back to us.)

MOSES

(He calls off to someone.)

My dear, I wish you would hurry up. We need to be at the Governor's by 8 o'clock. There's no telling how long it will take us to get there. The traffic's likely to be horrendous.

When I resigned from the Triborough the Governor promised me a position on the new MTA board. He said that's the least he could do after all my years of public service, and besides, he knows that no one knows transportation as well as I do. I expect that's what he'll tell me tonight. Either that or plans to rename Flushing Meadows.

What's that? Go along without you? I can't do that! Why are you being so obstinate? What's gotten into you? You never make me wait. *(He stands, looks at his watch.)*

(He's thinking.) Listen. Maybe that's the right idea. Maybe you should stay. I'll go on without you. Anyway who wants to be caught in traffic on a night like tonight?

You could go to church. I know you like that. No, darling, I have to speak with the Governor about the new position. I want to be ready for him when he asks...

Say a prayer for me. You're a good woman. Thank God I found you. But now we can move on.

(Moses takes a last sip of his drink, walks to the light. A woman in a white robe is there to greet him. He disappears.)

*(Reprise: "The Master of the Masterplan", sung by all)
He was the Masterbuilder, he was the Powerbroker,
Creating and building an empire at his command.
The Triboro King, the Ultimate Authority,
Robert Moses was the master of the masterplan.*

THE END