

Farnham wanted to be a playwright. Some stubborn impulse led him to disdain the benefits of an education in that trade, and likewise led him to discard any notions of involvement in the local theater scene. He wanted to make it on his own terms, to do things his way. He wanted to arrive at a position of prominence with no helping hands along the way.

He went about it as pragmatically as he knew how. He spent several months crafting a fine little one-act, one-man drama that he would perform--since he didn't want to rely on the dubious talents of whatever thespian he might otherwise recruit. It was a good little play, close to his heart, and couched in the language of his life so that he would have every aid in delivering a credible performance. Farnham didn't consider himself an actor, after all, so he very consciously geared the writing towards something he felt he could pull off. Alone.

He spent no little while scouting venues. He had no desire to stage his production in any established theater, since once again he wanted to achieve success without any collateral assistance. An existing theater would, he felt, undermine his efforts by coloring the audience's perceptions of his work through their familiarity with what they had previously seen in that theater.

His primary impetus at every point was to craft and mount a work which would have no context other than that which he himself was responsible for.

The choosing of a title for the work was particularly thorny. He didn't want his title to have even the slightest ring of any other title the audience might be aware of. He crafted a list of possibilities, then spent hours at the library poring over back numbers of Books in Print and other records of creative works, comparing his titles to those of others. Finally he settled on one he was pleased with and that, to the best of his knowledge, had no likely relative.

In the final week before his production, he posted flyers--designed by himself and produced on a self-serve photocopier--all over town. He stewed at length over whether or not he should file an event listing with the local papers, since that could be construed as collateral context, but finally decided that this was a sufficiently neutral tactic and proceeded to carry it through.

The night came. He had rented a space. It was that place across that street from that club. Elvis drove by there once in a Cadillac that he gave away to a stranger hours later.

Farnham was ready and mounted the makeshift stage. He gave his all to the performance. In the audience were three people: his parents, and a man who

fruitlessly asked Farnham's parents for change before settling in to watch the show. It was cold outside and admission had been free.

After the performance, Farnham's parents applauded. The man asked if that was all there was before mopingly returning to the street.

Despondent over the failure of his endeavor, Farnham drank half a wine cooler and stood atop the roof of a ten-story building downtown. He ranted loudly for a while and finally a crowd gathered, composed primarily of emergency personnel. Grateful at last for an audience and having achieved, so to speak, a position of prominence (or at least of altitude), Farnham stepped boldly off the edge of the building.