

***PRETTY/UGLEE: A True Hollywood Story***

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Directed by Dawn Terry

Under the influence of Joan Schenkar

NARRATOR: The scene is set: a bright little pond surrounded by cattails and long grass, perfect for hiding a nest, or shooting a TV movie. The Ugly Duckling appears, speaking to a gaggle of reporters. He wears a fedora and polished wingtips.

REPORTER: Ulysses, has your life changed since you've become a famous swan?

UGLY DUCK: Changed? You bet your beak, mister. But it's not THAT different. I've always been the center of attention.

REPORTER: What would be your ideal role?

UGLY DUCK: Call me Bill, James Bill.

REPORTER: Do you regret anything? And changes you'd make?

UGLY DUCK: I have no regrets. I'm beautiful. You can't get prettier than *this* face.

REPORTER: Do you think your *mother* would have any difference of opinion?

UGLY DUCK: No comment (honk)

NARRATOR: The light go down (pause) and he disappears into the reeds. They come up again (pause). A Mother Duck emerges exuberantly from the pond, wings outstretched, looking good for a duck of her age. She has a ruthless look in her eyes, and carries a designer handbag.

MOTHER DUCK: Hello, ladies and gentlefowl! (Sings)

I am Mother Duck! QUACKQUACK!

I am Mother Duck! QUACKQUACK!

I wanted to be like Streisand.

I pined for a role in Yentl.

And now my little ducklings

Must live up to their potential, for,

The love of the many is better (better),

It sure beats the love of the few!

I am Mother Duck! QUACKQUACK!

MOTHER DUCK: Hellooo! I am the Mother Duck. I brought four beautiful ducklings into this world—Daffy, daisy, Donald, and Aflac—and I preened the feather of five (QUACK). Are my feathers flat? (Shakes wing out). The other, Ulysses Grant Lee, was a special child from the beginning. But out little duck yard world was a happy one (QUACK)

NARRATOR: An image of Oscar Wilde appears, carrying a single orchid. He swooshes his cape and declared, "The point is to be as artificial as possible," then disappears.

MOTHER DUCK: My ducklings made excellent marks, and passed Flyer's Ed. with flying colors. I just know they will be shining stars, helped along by my humble skills.

NARRATOR: She pauses to feel the honest weight of the sentiment.

MOTHER DUCK: They looked incredibly adorable in their matching outfits, made by your truly (QUACKQUACK) modeled on the designs of Tommy Hilfeather. They picked out their own colors during our scheduled family time.

NARRATOR: An image of Martha Stewart appears, simultaneously stenciling her driveway and basting a turkey. She cocks her head, smiles and says, “You know, in China they say the thinner the chopsticks, the higher the social status. Of course I got the thinnest I could find. That’s why people hate Me.” she smiles and disappears.

MOTHER DUCK: You know the story of Ulysses—the Ugly duckling who became a beautiful swan. He didn’t even think of his poor mother when he became famous. I was so good to him. I treated him like one of my own, stuck up for him when they called him ugly, and included him in the scheduled family time. Still he insists that I mistreated him. Quite frankly, that’s a load of pond slime, so I am going public with what really happened. This is the TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORY.

NARRATOR: She disappears into the reeds. The image of Kate Moss appears, wearing an Angels bra and carrying a Philly Cheesesteak. She says, “A lot of horrible things have been said about me. I can only say that the best revenge is success, and that the more visible they make me, the more visible I become.” She takes a large bite, and disappears. The Ugly Duckling reappears, and gazes into his reflection in the pond. He is approached by a Gossip Hound with a sensitive nose, large ears, and very sharp teeth.

UGLY DUCK: Oh! Do not eat me! I am far too pretty to be eaten...and it would all over the tabloids!

DOG: Sniff! Sniff!

UGLY DUCK: Look away foul beast! Not me!

DOG: You, yourself, are quite a foul creature. Not like any good I’ve ever seen.

UGLY DUCK: Foul?! You are mistake; I am beautiful, no matter what you say, word’s can’t bring me down. Oh no. You cannot chomp me, for I am a STAR.

DOG: I do not chomp you because you are not a goose. You are a silly though, and quite arrogant, at that.

UGLY DUCK: How dare you insult such a magnificent creature as I?

DOG: Beauty is skin deep, feathery friend. Remember that.

UGLY DUCK: Remember what? All I need to know is this face.

NARRATOR: An image of Brad Pitt appears, wearing nothing but a Girls Gone Wild hat and some body oil. He complains to his agent, “I am one of those people you hate because of genetics. It’s true!” He disappears. Mother Duck reappears, a look of studied compunction on her face.

MOTHER DUCK: Perhaps you think I am a tad overbearing...that at 22, my children should choosing their own paths. But think of Beyoncé, Tori Spelling, Melissa Rivers, tiger woods, the Culkins, the Williams sisters—where would they be without their parents? Listen to that little voice inside that is just a teeny bit jealous of Kelly Clarkson. No one is immune.

NARRATOR: The image of Longfellow appears, in bed with Gweneth Paltrow. He whispers in her ear, “Fame comes only when deserved and then it is at inevitable as destiny, for it IS destiny.” Then rolls over and disappears.

UGLY DUCK: As long as I can remember, I have longed for fame. Perhaps it is a product of some childhood incident. But I always knew I was destined for greatness.

NARRATOR: He pauses, to feel the weight of destiny.

UGLY DUCK: And even now, with a double-platinum CD, a semi-autobiographical film scheduled for release, and endorsement deal with Pepsi, I have must bigger plans. I will be even more beautiful, and will reign supreme over all that breathes.

NARRATOR: He leaves the stage in search of his morning Mimosa, narrowly missing mother duck's entrance into the spotlight. An image of Muhammad Ali appears, dressed in a three-piece suit. He throws some punches and says, "When you're as great as I am, it's hard to be humble."

MOTHER DUCK: Hello again good people. Soon the American public will understand, as you understand, that ugly, I mean U. G. LEE, don't deserve his fame. It's all the result of a sob story and studio magic. He didn't work for it, but he did have work done. Do you think his bill has always been that narrow?! Do you think his feathers have always been that white?! I was his first manager. I was the one who gave him a chance. And in this version of the story, all the gloss and glitter are gone, and you are left with one foul fowl.

NARRATOR: The Ugly Duckling goes on break from filming his semi-autobiographical major motion picture release. It is to be 8-Mile. He does not notice his mother, who has hidden behind the catering table.

UGLY DUCK: This story is so great! I love that I come out on top at the end, and nobody suspects it! (HONK)

MOTHER DUCK: Shut up! Shut up! (QUACKQUACK) That's not how the story goes at all!

UGLY DUCK: You know I am a beautiful sawn. You only WISH I was one of your own. (HONK)

MOTHER DUCK: My tail feathers! I'm a duck and I'm proud! Was so disgusted when I thought I had spawned such a hideous being! (QUACK)

UGLY DUCK: How did that story go again? (HONK)

MOTHER DUCK: You may think you are hot, but my kids are bad to the beak (QUACKQUACK). You really want to know how the story goes? Your biographer has it all wrong. All goes accordingly, then you start having delusions of grandeur and get heavy on the liquor. I had to something, so I kicked you out. you went so far for fame, no one in our pond's society would accept you, and you because a freak. You were just too stupid to realize it...

UGLY DUCK: Whatever you say, you washed-up had, you know how it goes. I am born ugly, get pretty and get rich off your stupidity. Hey, your loss, you wouldn't have me because I "wasn't good enough."

NARRATOR: The image of Madonna appears, with her legs wrapped behind her head. She says, "I am rich and famous. I have a talented and gorgeous husband, and two beautiful children. I could go on. I always thought I should be treated like a star."

NARRATOR: END PART I.

NARRATOR: Entre-acte.

MOTHER DUCK: Ladies and Gentlefowl. Under your seats, you will a press release that has been sent to all major media outlets to coincide with the release of Pretty/Uglee. Please take this opportunity to read it and dispel any false notions you might have about that ungrateful little duck.

*(House lights up 1 minute)*

NARRATOR: PART 2.

NARRATOR: The Ugly Duckling, on break from his publicity junket, relaxes with a Marlboro and a Grey Goose and tonic. He is approached by Courtney, a little blonde peasant girl carrying a basket of crackers, wearing a torn, dirty pink dress and smeared red lipstick.

COURTNEY: I know you! You're Ulysses! I know everything about you from TV, the Internet, magazines, the Internet, newsletters, the Internet and...the Internet!

UGLY DUCK: Would you like to feel my feathers?

COURTNEY: Oooh! They're really soft, softer than the ducks I feed at the pond!

UGLY DUCK: You've been feeding ducks for years, how would you like for a duck to feed you?

COURTNEY: I like ducks...Peking Ducks!

UGLY DUCK: There is a certain duck that wished that I were a certain celebrity's Oscar dress, and you look pretty hungry. Duck season opens soon, you know?

COURTNEY: Duck season?

UGLY DUCK: You know, the season when, when the hunters, when ducks can be taken out.

COURTNEY: On a walk?

UGLY DUCK: No! No! Killed, plucked, roasted, PEKINGED!

COURTNEY: Oh—Oooh, well, I like any kind of duck. Even funny-looking ducks like you.

NARRATOR: They whisper together conspiratorially as the Ugly Duckling downs another drink. Suddenly, Mother Duck appears, talking to a gaggle of reporters. The Ugly Duckling disappears to his dressing room. The image of Teena Booth appears in a duck costume. She says, "If there is one thing worse than being an ugly duck in a house of swans, it is having the swans pretend there is no difference." She lays an egg and disappears. Courtney, carrying an autograph book, approaches Mother Duck.

COURTNEY: You're Mother Duck, aren't you?! I have always wanted to be just like you!

MOTHER DUCK: Why thank you! (QUACK! QUACK!)

COURTNEY: To even be in your presence is an honor.

MOTHER DUCK: Why should I trust you human?

COURTNEY: I am just a little girl, and a vegan at that!

MOTHER DUCK: Oh...?

COURTNEY: I want to be a vegan vet.

MOTHER DUCK: What a relief! I need to be around to see to the careers of my children. (She casts a long glance at the attentive group of reporters.) Even poor Ulysses. I have always wanted the best for him.

NARRATOR: Ugly Duckling bursts out of his dressing room, staggering and smelling of hard drink, sobbing.

UGLY DUCK: You never loved me!

MOTHER DUCK: I paid for your voice lessons!

NARRATOR: He throttles his mother as the reporters snap pictures and scribble furiously.

MOTHER DUCK: GhackQUACKQUACK!

NARRATOR: The image of Petrarch appears, wrestling Brad Pitt Greco-Roman style. He is put in a headlock and says, "Rarely do great beauty and great virtue exist together." He knows Pitt's cap off, and slowly disappears. The Ugly Duckling realized what he has done, and recoils in horror.

COURTNEY: Oh, hello!

UGLY DUCK: Oh shit! I just killed my mother! What do I do?!?!?!?

NARRATOR: He buries his face in Courtney's breast..

COURTNEY: Oh dear!!! Rest, Rest, and I will sing you a soothing song. (Sings)

Doesn't matter how famous you get

Dear duckies, it's all about fate.

I'm gonna eat you with five-spice powder

I'm gonna eat you with five-spice powder

How pretty you'll look on my plate.

Yes, beautiful on my plate.

NARRATOR: The lights dim as she wrings his neck. The image of the image of a certain celebrity appears. He removes his surgical mast and says, "I have been the artist with the longest career, and I am so proud and honored to be chose from heaven to be...invincible."