

BEEETHOVEN

2/23/90

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ALL (K) (G) (I) (J)
ARE FROM EARLY
DRAFT-
MOVIE

BLACK. A QUOTE FADES ON...

"The one, absolute, unselfish
friend that man can have in
this world, the one that
never deserts him, the one
that never proves ungrateful
or treacherous, is his...

CU. DOG

Big, hairy, panting and slobbering St. Bernard shot against
seamless, portrait style. It slobbers and pants for a several
beats and then BARKS!

The last TITLE CARD gives way in a FADE to...

CU. ST. BERNARD PUPPY

Hanging his head out a pick-up truck window, ears blowing,
tongue dangling, as cute as anything on earth could ever be.

EXT. TRUCK. HOOD MOUNT

A chunky middle-aged man, HARRY NEWLBITTEN, is driving. He's
wearing jeans, a western shirt and a baseball cap featuring
the logo of construction supply company. Next to him, holding
the puppy is his wife, VEL. She's round, jolly, warm,
friendly, middle-aged. She's wearing an imitation denim pants
suit. She has extremely large, extremely pointed, uplifted
bosoms.

EXT. TRUCK

It's travelling down a woodsy suburban road on a gloriously
sunny spring day.

INT. TRUCK. CU. VEL

He pats the little pup affectionately.

VEL

I don't think it's such a
good idea taking this little
guy over to Mr. Charles
Newton's house.

CU. HARRY

He glances at Vel.

Why's that? HARRY

INT. TRUCK. VEL AND HARRY

Vel shrugs.

VEL
He don't strike me as a dog
man. He's sort of the cold
type. I think he's prissy.

HARRY
Prissy like fruity?

VEL
Prissy like pissy.

HARRY
Pissy like particular?

VEL
Exactly.

HARRY
Particular people can have a
dog, can't they?

VEL
I suppose. But what makes you
think he'll even want the
pup?

HARRY
(sly grin)
He's got kids, don't he?

EXT. TRUCK. CU. PUPPY

He barks. The trucks MOVES ON. CAMERA FOLLOWS IT AROUND. The
back of the truck is heaped with canine supplies and a new,
homemade dog house.

EXT. HOUSE

A cozy and perfect Cape Cod with a white picket fence covered
in wild roses and bordered with annuals.

ECU. BASEBOARD

A freshly painted baseboard. Semi-gloss white. With a paint
brush hair imbedded in the dry paint.

ECU. CHARLES NEWTON

His nose is almost touching the bleached oak floors as he looks at the baseboard. He's in his late thirties, early forties, a handsome, Ralph Lauren type.

CHARLES

Here's another one.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Redone, reconfigured and thoroughly modern. Bleached oak floors, Shaker furniture, prized antique quilts, antique wedding portraits, coffee table made from an old campaign chest, chintz upholstery. JULIA NEWTON is standing over Charles with her hands on her hips. She's wearing shorts and an oversized cotton shirt. She's very pretty and a few years younger than Charles. She's weary from his nit-picking.

JULIA

Honey? Hairs do fall out of paint brushes.

CHARLES

Geez! Here's another one and it's not only stuck in the paint, it's stuck to the floor.

JULIA

No one but you will ever notice.

Charles stands up. He brushes his pants off, licks his thumb and index finger and squeezes the trouser crease at his knee to restore it. Julia puts her arms around his waist.

JULIA

Don't be so prissy.

She playfully jerks up on his shirt, pulling it out of his trousers a little bit. He sighs at the action and without hesitation tucks it back in.

CHARLES

I'm not prissy, I'm particular. If I can have the house perfect, I want it perfect.

JULIA
It's fine. It's a
masterpiece. Let's live in
it. Like a real house. Not a
symbol of how many
decorating magazines we read.

EMILY, their five year-old daughter, comes in the front door.

EMILY
Dad? The plumber's here.

Charles groans.

CHARLES
(to Julia)
What does he want?

EMILY
It look like he wants to suck
the fat with you.

JULIA
That's chew the fat, honey.
Tell him Dad'll be right
there.

Emily smiles and turns. Something catches her eye. She looks
down at the floor. She drops to her knees and with the tip of
her finger picks up a speak of dirt.

EMILY
(turning to Charles)
Sorry, Dad. It's dirt. I'll
put it outside where it
belongs.

CHARLES
Thank you, honey.

She tiptoes back across the foyer to the front door watching
the speck of dirt on her fingertip lest it fall off.

EXT. HOUSE

The truck's parked on the street. Vel's in the truck. She has
the pup in her lap. Harry's standing with TED and RYCE. Ted's
eight and Ryce is ten.

HARRY
You kids got any pets?

RYCE
We have a fish.

Emily comes outside and flicks the dirt in the flower bed.

HARRY
Did you tell your Pop I'm
here?

EMILY
Uh, huh.

HARRY
Is he in a good mood today?

RYCE
He's never in a good mood.

Charles and Julia come out.

HARRY
Hey there, Chuck! Mizzus!

JULIA
Hi, Harry.

Harry is clearly not someone Charles looks forward to seeing.

CHARLES
What can I do for you, Harry?

HARRY
A couple reasons for the
visit, Chuck. First, I wanted
to thank you for letting me
do your plumbing work. And B,
I think I have something you
might be interested in. You
got a minute to mosey down to
my vehicle?

CHARLES
I have some phone calls I
have to...

HARRY
Two minutes.

Charles resigns with a sigh.

HARRY
(to the family)
All of ya's can come along.

Charles and Julia exchange curious glances. Harry ushers the
Newtons down the walk to the driveway.

HARRY

(to Charles)

I spent a good deal of time here at your place and I think I got to know you and yours pretty good. And I seen more or less what you got and you got plenty. But there's one thing you're lacking.

CHARLES

I told you I'm not putting in a fountain.

HARRY

This isn't plumbing related. Put on your thinking caps and figure out what's the one darn thing you folks don't have that would your life complete.

They approach the truck.

TED

A Range Rover?

HARRY

Nope.

RYCE

A pool?

HARRY

Not even close.

EMILY

A CD player for the car?

HARRY

Chuck? Mizzus? You want to venture a guess?

CHARLES

(annoyed)

A used truck?

HARRY

Mizzus? What's your guess?

JULIA

I'll go with used truck, also.

HARRY
You're not even in the
ballpark. Vel? You want to
help 'em out?

EXT. TRUCK. VEL

She grins out the window at the Newtons. She bends down into
the footwell and comes up with the puppy.

EXT. TRUCK. NETWONS

The kids' jaws drop with surprise. Julia gasps. Charles
freezes in horror.

INT. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. LATER

Charles and Julia are in the living room.

CHARLES
I'm not going to be pressured
into getting a dog. No.

JULIA
Nobody's pressuring you. If
you don't want it, say so.

CHARLES
I don't want it.

JULIA
Okay. Tell the kids.

CHARLES
Why do I have to tell them?

JULIA
Because you don't want it.

INT. LIVING ROOM. FOYER

Ted pokes his head in the room.

TED
Mom? Excuse me. Did he say
yes?

INT. LIVING ROOM. CHARLES

He answers for Julia.

CHARLES
No, I didn't.

CU. PUP

He jumps aside as the bike speeds THROUGH FRAME.

EXT. STREET. PUP

He's peeking in a garden gate at a house, considering it's potential as a permanent residence.

HIS POV

A perfectly nice house until two cats appear at the gate. They hiss.

EXT. STREET

The pup takes off.

INT. ANOTHER HOUSE. DOGGIE DOOR

The pup pokes his head in the door.

HIS POV

A family at breakfast. MOTHER, FATHER, TWO LITTLE GIRLS. And a Rottweiler. He snarls at the pup.

EXT. HOUSE

The pup races down the driveway.

EXT. NEWTON HOUSE

CHARLES NEWTON is on his hands and knees in the flower bed. He's forty, a good-looking, aging, Yuppie.

CU. WEED

Charles' hand reaches through the rose bushes and yanks out the weed.

EXT. STREET

The pup is across the street, sitting, watching.

HIS POV

Charles on his hands and knees. MATCH DISSOLVE TO A SAINT BERNARD IN THE IDENTICAL POSITION.

CU. PUP

His ears perk-up.

INT. HOUSE. FOYER

Charles comes back in the house and calls up the stairs.

CHARLES

Up and at 'em!

EXT. HOUSE. PUP

He crosses the street to Charles' house.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles pours himself a cup of coffee and sits down with the paper.

EXT. CHARLES' HOUSE. FRONT PORCH

The pup sits on the porch.

INT. HOUSE. FOYER. SCREEN DOOR

The pup noses open the front door.

INT. HOUSE. UPSTAIRS

JULIA NEWTON comes out of the master bedroom, closing her robe. She's very pretty and a few years younger than Charles. RYCE NEWTON, 10, wanders out of her room yawning.

RYCE

Why do we always have to get
up so early on Sunday?

JULIA

Ask your father.

She pokes her head in a bedroom.

JULIA

Ted? Up.

A bedroom door across the hall opens and five year-old EMILY, stumbles out.

EMILY

Where's the fire?

RYCE

Ask your father.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles cups his hand to his mouth and yells.

CHARLES
First one down gets a big
surprise!

INT. HOUSE. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. JULIA, RYCE AND EMILY

Their jaws are slack with surprise. Eight year-old TED pushes through to see what they're looking at.

TED
Holy smokes!

THEIR POV

Down the stairs. The pup's sitting at the bottom of the stairs, looking up at them. He barks.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles, reading the paper.

CHARLES
(in response to the dog
bark)
Bless you.

INT. FOYER

The kids charge down the stairs and seize the pup.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles casually sips his coffee, pleased with his family's quick response to his call. The kitchen door opens and Julia pokes her head in.

JULIA
Charles? I take back
everything I ever said about
you being cold and
insensitive.

She returns to the foyer. Charles is puzzled. OC, the pup yaps.

CHARLES
Cover your mouth when you
cough, please.

Ryce pokes her head in.

RYCE
Dad? I love you. I have
everything I ever wanted.

Charles smiles.

CHARLES
That's nice to hear. I'm glad
you're satisfied with what
you have.

She exits. Ted pokes his head in.

TED
I owe you big time. Thanks.

CHARLES
My pleasure.

He exits. Emily pokes her head in the door.

EMILY
Daddy?

CHARLES
You're welcome, too.

EMILY
What?

CHARLES
You were going to tell me how
happy you are in the new
house.

EMILY
No. I was going to ask you if
we can call the puppy Fred.

CHARLES
Oh.

She exits. Charles sips his coffee. A long beat and he
clenches. He slowly lowers the coffee mug.

INT. FOYER

Charles comes in from the kitchen. He slows as he sees...

HIS POV

MOVING in on the kids. Ryce stands up with her back to
Charles. HORROR MUSIC. CAMERA STOPS, Ryce turns and thrusts
the pup at CAMERA. HUGE STING.

CU. CHARLES

He's horrified. She might as well have held up a decomposing limb.

EXT. HOUSE. PATIO

The kids run outside with the puppy.

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN

Charles paces up and down the kitchen as Julia sits calm and passive at the kitchen table.

CHARLES

I don't know where that dog came from. I know nothing about it but it has to go.

JULIA

It's awfully hard to show a child a puppy and then take it away two minutes later.

CHARLES

I didn't show them anything. It obviously got lost and wandered into our house. If you can occupy the kids, I'll run it down to the pound.

JULIA

The pound?

CHARLES

Isn't that where you take lost dogs?

JULIA

And if the owner doesn't claim him, he's destroyed.

CHARLES

If we keep him and the owner doesn't claim him, the house is destroyed.

JULIA

It's just a dog. Millions of people have dogs.

CHARLES

Honey, they lick, they sniff,
they chew, they bite, they
wet, they bark, they shed,
they drool, they dig, they
whine, they run, they...

(pause)

We both work, it'd be home by
itself, the kids'll lose
interest, I'll have to look
after it, it'll grow to be
enormous, the bushes'll die,
the lawn'll look terrible and
when it finally settles down,
it'll die and everybody'll be
so upset we'll go get another
puppy and it'll start all
over again.

JULIA

Okay.

CHARLES

Do you see my point?

JULIA

In a way.

CHARLES

I'm glad.

JULIA

Go tell the kids.

Charles stares at her. He's angry. She's intractable. He
glances out the kitchen window.

HIS POV

The kids are romping with puppy. Hyper happy.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles wilts for a moment. He steels himself, in manly
father fashion.

CHARLES

(after a pause)

Alright. I will. If a foot
has to go down in the name of
common sense, let it be mine.

He exits the kitchen. Julia grins.

EXT. HOUSE. PATIO

Charles crosses the patio to the lawn.

CHARLES
Kids! Listen up!

EXT. YARD. KIDS

They stop their play.

CU. CHARLES

He stares at the kids.

CHARLES
As you know, we are not dog
people. We are people people
and goldfish people.

He gestures to a fish bowl on the kitchen window sill.

CHARLES
We give our love to each
other, to our friends and to
our fish. How much more love
can we give?

CU. EMILY

She starts to cry.

CU. CHARLES

He continues, looking off to avoid the kids.

CHARLES
We have a new house, that Mom
and I have invested alot of
time, money and effort in.

CU. RYCE

She wipes away a tear.

CU. CHARLES

He clears his throat, nervously and continues.

CHARLES
Due to the prevailing
economic conditions and the
state and nature of the
contemporary nuclear family
both your mother and I work.

CU. TED

He drops his head in sorrow.

CU. CHARLES

He continues with slightly less verve.

CHARLES
Therefore it is my sole
decision...

CU. PUPPY

He throws his head back and howls.

CU. CHARLES

He looks with dwindling resolve to the kids and the puppy.

CHARLES
I have decided...My mind is
made up...I...
(withering pause)
Until we find the owners, you
kids better give him a name
so I have something to call
him when he tears up the
house.

EXT. YARD. KIDS

They shriek with delight.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles comes in from outside. She knows what happened.

JULIA
How did they take it?

CHARLES
Very well.

JULIA
Truth hurts at that age.

CHARLES
I realized that and I revised
my opinion of the situation.

JULIA
Couldn't do it, huh?

CHARLES
Not even close.

CU. BASEBALL CAP

Filled with folded bits of paper.

INT. FAMILY ROOM. NIGHT

The hat is in the center of the coffee table. The family's gathered around. Julia closes her eyes and pulls a name out of the hat. She opens it and looks at it.

RYCE
What is it?

TED
What's his name gonna be?

Julia looks at Charles.

RYCE
You can't change it, Mom.
That's the rules.

She hands the piece of paper to Charles. He looks at it.

EMILY
What is it?!

CHARLES
Did you do your names in
crayon?

Emily nods.

JULIA
Words for parts of the body
don't really make very good
names, sweetheart.

EMILY
But he's got one of those.

CHARLES
I'm sure he does but you see,
Daddy doesn't want to stand
on the porch at night calling
the dog by that name.

EMILY
That's what you call Uncle
Richard.

Charles and Julia look at each other.

CHARLES
Sorry, Emily, the rules state
that the dog cannot be named
after a relative if that
relative is either named
after or behaves like a body
part. Pull another.

Julia takes out another name. She reads it aloud.

JULIA
The dog's name will
be...Omar?

CU. HAT. LATER

One piece of paper remains.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

The kids are tired and leaning on elbows. The table top is
littered with pieces of paper.

CHARLES
The final rule is that the
last name is the dog's name
no matter what.

Julia finishes a yawn and takes out the last piece of paper.
She opens it. We hear BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH.

INT. KITCHEN. LATER

Charles is spreading newspaper on the floor. Beethoven is
sitting at his feet.

CHARLES

This is temporary. Don't get yourself too attached. I'm sure you have a home even if you don't have a collar or tags. We'll find your owner and I will rejoice.

He surveys his work.

CHARLES

That looks good. I'll rake all this up in the morning. Now...

He spreads a sheet of newspaper on the kitchen table.

CHARLES

We need to advertise your plight.

He sets Beethoven on the counter. He picks up a Polaroid camera from the kitchen table.

CHARLES

I'm gonna get your picture so I can have a handbill made-up and distributed around town. And hopefully in the next few days you'll be out of my life.

Charles sets to take the picture.

CHARLES

Smile!

The flash goes off. Beethoven panics. He leaps at Charles.

CU. CHARLES

Lowers the camera and gets a dog in the face. He's knocked back off his feet.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles slips on the newspaper on the floor. His legs strike the kitchen table leg, snapping it off. The table collapses, spilling a bowl of fruit and a twenty pound bag of puppy kibbles.

INT. KITCHEN. COUNTER

Beethoven lands on the kitchen counter and takes off, knocking the flour, sugar and pasta cannisters, glasses, the coffee maker, the toaster oven and the blender to the floor. He splashes through a pan soaking in the sink, up-ends a rack of dishes and slams into a bread box.

INT. HOUSE. STAIRS

Julia and the kids scramble down the stairs, sling around the kneelpost and charge into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Julia and the kids slam to a halt.

THEIR POV

Charles lifts himself to his elbows. He's in pain. The kitchen is a shambles. Beethoven's sitting on the counter. He barks. MUSIC BEGINS AND CARRIES THROUGH...

CU. HANDBILL

Tacked to a phone pole. A Xerox of a photo of the puppy with the hand-written words -- FOUND! ST. BERNARD PUPPY.

-- AN EXPENSIVE AND THOROUGHLY DOG-CHEWED WINGTIP SHOE.

-- CHARLES SHOOS THE PUPPY OUT OF HIS CHAIR.

-- NEWSPAPER AD -- FOUND! ST. BERNARD PUPPY.

-- THE NEWTON HOUSE IN AUTUMN. THE PICKET FENCE FALLS OVER REVEALING A MID-SIZE BEETHOVEN.

-- A NEIGHBOR IS RAKING HIS LEAVES. THE MID-SIZE BEETHOVEN IS ROOTING THROUGH HIS LEAF PILE, SCATTERING THE LEAVES AND TWIGS. THE MAN TAKES A SWING AT BEETHOVEN WITH HIS RAKE.

-- A SLOBBERED CAR WINDOW.

-- A LARGE, WET SPOT ON NEW CARPET.

-- A SCRATCHED AND CLAWED INTERIOR HOUSE DOOR.

-- A SMALL DOG DISH IS REPLACED WITH A LARGER DISH.

-- A HUGE HOLE IN A PERFECTLY MANICURED LAWN.

-- FADED HANDBILL ON THE PHONE POLE.

- A SCHOOL BUS PULLS OUT OF FRAME. BACKS INTO FRAME. THE DOORS OPEN. BEETHOVEN IS RUN OFF THE BUS BY AN ANGRY BUS DRIVER.
- A MASSIVE HOLE DUG UNDER A FENCE
- TED IS ASLEEP IN HIS BUNK BED. CAMERA RISES TO THE TOP BUNK. A LARGER BEETHOVEN IS SLEEPING IN THE TOP BUNK.
- THE FAMILY, INCLUDING GRANDPARENTS, ARE AT THE DINING TABLE HAVING THANKSGIVING DINNER. HEADS ARE BOWED AS EMILY RECITES A BLESSING. BEETHOVEN IS IN THE KITCHEN, UP ON HIS BACK LEGS EATING THE PUMPKIN PIE, HAVING FINISHED THE MINCE.
- FADED HANDBILL ON THE PHONE POLE. SNOW FALLS.
- NEWSPAPER STREWN ACROSS THE DRIVEWAY. WINTER.
- A POOPER SCOOPER WITH THE HANDLES CHEWED OFF.
- BEETHOVEN IS LAYING ON THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR, CHEWING ON THE CHRISTMAS TREE. HE'S PULLED IT OVER AND INTO THE CENTER OF THE ROOM AND IS TEETHING HEAVILY ON THE TRUNK AND LOWER BRANCHES.
- A LARGER DOG DISH REPLACES THE PREVIOUS ONE.
- AN EVENING DOG OBEDIENCE CLASS. CHARLES AND BEETHOVEN AND A DOZEN OTHER ADULTS AND THEIR DOGS. CHARLES IS PUSHING ON BEETHOVEN'S RUMP TO GET HIM TO SIT DOWN LIKE THE OTHER DOGS HAVE DONE.
- SPRING. EARLY SEASON GOLFERS ARE ON THE LINKS. A BALL BOUNCES DOWN ON THE FAIRWAY. BEETHOVEN SHOOTS OUT OF THE ROUGH, GRABS THE BALL AND TAKES OFF.
- A SECTION OF ACID-BURNED SHRUBBERY.
- TEETH CRUNCHING DOWN ON AN UPHOLSTERED CHAIR ARM.
- A MASSIVE RUBBER DOG DISH REPLACES THE PREVIOUS ONE.
- A UTILITY ROOM STREWN WITH DRY DOG FOOD FROM A FIFTY POUND CHOW BAG.
- THE HANDBILL IS GONE FROM THE TELEPHONE POLE.
- SUMMER. A CARPET COMPANY TRUCK IS PARKED IN THE DRIVE. A HEAP OF OLD CARPET SITS AT THE CURB ALONG WITH A TORN-UP ARM CHAIR, A CHEWED-UP AND DISCARDED KITCHEN DOOR, A PILE OF CHEWED SHOES AND A DENTED AND TOOTH-MARKED WASHING MACHINE. A SECOND TRUCK PULLS IN -- FERGUSON'S MANURE SERVICE.

BLACK...

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal the dog's nose, then his massive head and upper body poking out of a dog house in a fenced run at the rear of the property. He's fully grown. CAMERA MOVES around the dog house to the back to see that Beethoven has grown to such a size that the back of the house had to be removed to accommodate his hind quarters. His tail's wagging, spraying gravel here and there. He's fully grown.

EXT. SUBURBAN WAREHOUSE

A small warehouse in a suburban industrial park. A sign reads, NEWTON BIRD SUPPLY

INT. WAREHOUSE. CU. TELEVISION

A small black and white portable. Morning news. A story on the theft of the mayor's dog. A NEWS READER runs down the story, showing the mayor and then the dog.

NEWS READER

The three year old Jack Russell Terrier was abducted this morning two blocks from City Hall. The mayor joins dozens of citizens who have reported their pets stolen in recent weeks.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Half a dozen ELDERLY MEN are having coffee, huddled around the TV. They've taken a break from their chores constructing custom wooden birdhouses.

ELDERLY MAN 1

Terrorists.

ELDERLY 2

Vindictive Republicans.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. LOADING DOCK

A pair of YOUNG MEN are unloading bags of birdseed from a half-ton truck. Charles' car pulls in beside the truck. He and Julia get out. He walks with great purpose.

YOUNG MAN 1

Morning, Mr. Newton. Mrs. Newton.

CHARLES
(climbing up on the
dock)
Morning.

YOUNG MAN 2
Your dog came by a few
minutes ago.

JULIA
Not our dog.

The two young men exchange looks.

YOUNG MAN 1
I'm pretty sure it was him.

YOUNG MAN 2
He comes by all the time. He
stops here, has a doughnut,
then he goes to the meat
market and gets a bone,
then....?

He looks to Young Man 1.

YOUNG MAN 1
He goes to Jim's TV and
watches Oprah with Maxine.

CHARLES
I lock him in the run when I
leave and he's there when I
get home. You're mistaking my
dog for another.

He goes into the factory.

INT. TV SHOP. BACKROOM

Beethoven's gnawing on a bone as he lays next to a hefty
middle-aged WOMAN sitting in an old recliner watching Oprah
on a repair TV.

INT. WAREHOUSE. DOOR

Charles struts into the warehouse. He stops cold.

HIS POV

Down the work benches to the group of old-timers watching TV.

CU. CHARLES

He simmers.

CHARLES

Excuse me! Are we working or
are we watching TV?

CU. OLD-TIMER

He looks over his shoulder at Charles.

OLD-TIMER

We're watching TV, Chuck. The
mayor got his dog napped. You
know the little one,
Humphrey?

CU. CHARLES

He scowls.

CHARLES

Do you really think that's
worth leaving your work for?

INT. WAREHOUSE. OLD-TIMERS

They exchange puzzled looks. They're not sure if it is or
isn't.

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE

Charles stomps into his small, cluttered office and whumps
his briefcase down on the desk. Julia comes in behind him.

JULIA

It's my fault. If the old
guys don't get a morning
break they poop out in the
afternoon.

CHARLES

I'm trying to expand this
business...

JULIA

Honey, those guys are beyond
expanding. They do good work
but they're old.

CHARLES

I've made a good, strong contact with a couple buyers from Hobart and Healy. I'm close to securing a commitment to put our houses in their stores.

JULIA

We can't be in the retail business, Charles. We're dying just trying to keep up with the catalogue business.

CHARLES

I've been to the bank and I've got the financing.

JULIA

(nervous)

They approved the loan?

CHARLES

Yep. Now I have to get the orders and fill them. Then we're on our way.

JULIA

We have a good business. It's under control, we're getting by. To grow, we're going to have to make some big changes. In business and in life.

CHARLES

We have an opportunity, we have to seize it.

JULIA

You're going to have to find a bigger building, triple your work force, pay them more, you'll need more office personnel...

CHARLES

I know.

JULIA

We're going to have to put in alot more hours.

CHARLES
That won't hurt us.

JULIA
I'm not worried about us.

CHARLES
The old guys?

JULIA
The kids.

CHARLES
They're in school.

JULIA
What about after school?

Charles hasn't thought that far.

CHARLES
We can find somebody to watch
them in the afternoon. A lot
of people do it.

JULIA
They're used to one of us
being home.

CHARLES
Kids are resilient. They
adjust.

EXT. TOWN. SQUARE

Beethoven is in the square playing checkers with an OLD MAN.
He pushes the pieces with his snout.

OLD MAN
I know you're letting me win.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He stares at the Old Man.

CU. OLD MAN

He jumps three of Beethoven's pieces. The town clock STRIKES
FOUR.

CU. BEETHOVEN

His ears prick-up.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

Beethoven takes off.

OLD MAN
(yells after him)
SORE LOSER!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD

Beethoven charges across the street and cuts between two houses.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

Charles' Saab is rolling down the street.

INT. CAR

Charles glances in his mirror.

HIS POV. MIRROR

Beethoven races across the street.

CU. CHARLES

Does a take. Whips around in the seat. Looks around and slams his foot to the floor.

EXT. STREET

The Saab takes off.

EXT. BACKYARD

Beethoven leaps a sunbathing TEENAGE GIRL.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

The Saab screeches around the corner.

EXT. BACKYARD. HOUSE BEHIND THE NEWTON HOUSE

Beethoven runs up a driveway and scoots around behind the garage.

EXT. NEWTON HOUSE

The Saab whips into the driveway and skids to a stop.

EXT. BACKYARD. GARAGE

Beethoven scoots under a bush and disappears down a hole in the earth behind the garage.

EXT. NEWTON HOUSE

Charles gets out of the car and runs toward the backyard.

INT. TUNNEL

Beethoven belly-crawls through a narrow tunnel.

EXT. DOG RUN. DOG HOUSE

Beethoven comes up from the hole which is inside the dog house.

EXT. BACKYARD

Charles runs around the garage into the backyard. He slows and stops.

HIS POV

Beethoven is lying in his dog house, passive, calm and content.

CU. CHARLES

He stares at Beethoven, bewildered.

CU. LOCK

A padlock on the dog run door. Charles tugs on it. It's locked tight.

CU. CHARLES

Glowers at Beethoven.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He shifts his eyes up to Charles. A sad, forlorn look.

EXT. NEWTON HOUSE. NIGHT

The lights are on.

INT. NEWTON HOUSE. KITCHEN

The family is having dinner. A year has passed, the kids are different. The TV's on WALL STREET WEEK.

CHARLES
(referring to the TV)
See that. The prime is up a
quarter. I got my loan
yesterday. Good timing, huh?

EXT. HOUSE. FRONT PORCH

Beethoven wanders around the house to the front porch.

INT. KITCHEN

The DOORBELL RINGS. Julia looks at Ryce. Ryce looks at Ted.
Ted looks at Emily. They all look at Charles.

JULIA
Honey? Could you see who that
is?

He exits.

EXT. HOUSE

Beethoven runs back around behind the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Charles crosses to the front door.

INT. KITCHEN

Ted opens the backdoor. Beethoven sticks his head in. Julia
hands Ryce a dinner roll. She hands it to Beethoven.

EXT. HOUSE. PORCH

Charles looks around to see who might have rung the bell.

INT. KITCHEN

Ryce gives Beethoven a scrap of meat and pushes him out. She
closes the door and runs back to her seat as Charles comes
back in.

CHARLES
Nobody's there.

JULIA
It was probably kids ringing
doorbells.

Charles returns to his seat.

CHARLES

I have some exciting news.

OC BEETHOVEN BARKS. The kids stare. Not exciting news to them.

TED

Uh, oh.

CHARLES

What do you mean, uh, oh?

RYCE

When an adult has exciting news to tell a kid, it usually means it's good news for the adult and bad news for the kid.

CHARLES

Not necessarily. You don't even know what I'm going to say.

EMILY

Shoot.

CHARLES

Mom and I are expanding the business.

RYCE

Bad news.

CHARLES

Why is that bad news?

RYCE

Are you guys going to work more hours?

Julia looks to Charles.

TED

Of course. And that means...

EMILY

After school baby-sitters.

TED

Either an old babe in a nurse suit...

RYCE
Or incredibly vicious teenage
girls who scream at you if
you walk in the room when
they're on the phone.

CHARLES
Do you honestly think we'll
put you under the care of
anyone but a completely
pleasant and trustworthy
person?

OC BEETHOVEN BARKS again.

CHARLES
What is his problem?

EXT. HOUSE

Charles opens the back door. Beethoven's sitting on the
porch.

CHARLES
QUIET!

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN

Charles returns to his seat.

CHARLES
Am I the only one who notices
that whenever I have a
serious point to make, the
dog barks?

There's no response.

CHARLES
Anyway, in conclusion...

He points his finger. OC BEETHOVEN BARKS. Charles waits for
him to stop.

CHARLES
Everything's going to be
fine...

OC BEETHOVEN BARKS. Charles waits until he stops.

CHARLES
We'll arrange to find
someone...

OC BEETHOVEN BARKS.

CHARLES
...close-by-who-you'll-like-
and-we'll-live-happily-
ever...

OC BEETHOVEN BARKS ONCE.

CHARLES
After!
(pause)
Cross my heart.

OC BEETHOVEN HOWLS.

EMILY
He howls when you lie.

RYCE
It's true.

TED
He doesn't stop until you say
you're sorry.

CHARLES
He can howl all night because
I have nothing to be sorry
about.

EXT. HOUSE. NIGHT

The lights are out downstairs.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Charles and Julia are in bed.

JULIA
(after a pause)
Charles?

CHARLES
Hmm?

JULIA
Are you worried?

CHARLES
About?

JULIA
You secured the loan with our house.

CHARLES
Uh, huh. That's fairly common.

JULIA
If something goes wrong, we'll lose it.

CHARLES
Nothing's going to go wrong. I'm meeting the buyers in a couple weeks. It's a lock.

JULIA
It's not so bad how we live now, is it?

CHARLES
No. But if it can be better...

JULIA
You mean bigger?

CHARLES
Bigger means better.

JULIA
Does it?

CHARLES
In a few years, we'll drive by this house and laugh.

JULIA
Maybe you will. I love this house.

CHARLES
I love it, too, but when the business takes off, we'll be in a whole different league.

JULIA

I want you to realize your dream, Charles. But if you don't, this isn't such a bad league to be in. It's alot better than either one of us ever grew up in or ever hoped to live in.

CHARLES

If you reach for the stars you may not get one, but you won't come up with a handful of mud either.

JULIA

True.

CHARLES

Good night.

JULIA

(after a pause)

Just promise me you'll keep a level head and not change who we are.

CHARLES

I promise.

INT. BASEMENT. WINDOW

Beethoven noses open the basement window and squeezes in.

INT. KITCHEN

Beethoven comes up from the basement stairs.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Beethoven jumps up on Charles' chair. He sits on the TV remote control. The television goes on.

CU. TV

The news. A story on the discovery of dog remains. A local reporter doing a location piece on the outskirts of town.

REPORTER

...the remains of over two hundred dogs. Children playing in the area made the discovery.

CU. BEETHOVEN

His ears perk up.

INT. BEDROOM. CHARLES

He lifts his head off the pillow as he hears the TV. He gets out of bed.

CU. TV

The city mayor, A short, stocky, man in his fifties, MAYOR BROOKMAN, is being interviewed.

MAYOR BROOKMAN

I have a dog myself, as you know, and as a dog lover and the mayor of this city, I want to get to the bottom of this horrid discovery.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Charles crosses the living room.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He hears Charles. He jumps out of the chair.

INT. BEDROOM

Julia sits up.

JULIA

Charles?

She gets out of bed and exits the room.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Charles walks in. Beethoven slinks out. Charles turns off the TV.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Beethoven hurries across the living room and up the stairs. A beat and Charles enters.

INT. HOUSE. RYCE'S ROOM

Julia tiptoes into Ryce's room. She looks around.

INT. HALLWAY

Beethoven goes down the hall and into the master bedroom. Julia crosses the hall to Ted's room. Charles enters the master bedroom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Charles enters the room and gets back in bed.

INT. HALLWAY

Julia crosses from Ted's room to Emily's room.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Charles settles in.

CHARLES

I left the TV on.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He's in the bed. He lets out a sigh.

CU. CHARLES

He thinks it's Julia.

CHARLES

What?

Beethoven whimpers.

CHARLES

Half an hour ago you didn't want to do it.

Beethoven whimpers again.

CHARLES

(after a pause)

You just like to tease me.

INT. HALLWAY

Julia comes out of Ted's room. She hears Charles O.C.

CHARLES OC

Your hair is so soft.

CU. JULIA

She's bewildered.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. DOOR

Julia steps into the doorway. OC we hear a KISS.

HER POV

In the dim light we see two large shapes in the bed.

CHARLES

Your nose is cold. Do you
want me to turn up the heat?

CU. JULIA

She's startled.

JULIA

Charles?

CU. CHARLES

He looks up from under the covers. A beat and Beethoven looks up.

INT. HOUSE. STAIRS

Beethoven flies down the stairs. Charles races after him.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Beethoven skids across the living and crashes through the door to the kitchen. Charles chases.

CHARLES

Come back here you son of....!

EXT. BACKYARD. DOG RUN

Charles shoves Beethoven into the run and slams the gate shut. He locks it.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He watches sadly as Charles locks him in.

CU. CHARLES

Through the fence.

CHARLES
I don't know how you get in
the house but it'll never
happen again. I don't care
how much my kids love you, I
think you're worthless and
disgusting.

He turns and heads back to the house.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He glances up.

HIS POV

The moon. Framed in the crotch of a tree.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He looks to Charles.

EXT. BACKYARD

Charles crosses the lawn to the house.

EXT. DOG RUN

Beethoven BARKS.

CU. CHARLES

He stops and grits his teeth.

EXT. BACKYARD

Charles turns and walks back to the run.

CHARLES
Shut up!

CU. BEETHOVEN

He stops BARKING.

EXT. BACKYARD

Charles starts back to the house. Beethoven BARKS again.
Charles turns and walks back to the run. He kicks the
fencing.

CHARLES
I told you to shut up and I
mean it!

CHARLES
I don't know how you get in
the house but it'll never
happen again. I don't care
how much my kids love you, I
think you're worthless and
disgusting.

He turns and heads back to the house.

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CU. BEETHOVEN

He stops BARKING.

EXT. BACKYARD

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Charles turns and walks back to the run. He kicks the
fencing.

CHARLES
I told you to shut up and I
mean it!

CU. BEETHOVEN

He dips his head in mock shame.

EXT. BACKYARD

Charles heads back to the house.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He looks up to the sky again. In the distance, the TOWN BELL CHIMES -- 11 TIMES. Beethoven BARKS.

EXT. BACKYARD

Charles walks back to the run.

CHARLES

Beethoven!

CU. SPRINKLER SYSTEM

The timer is set for eleven. It clicks a notch closer to the blast-off.

CU. CHARLES

He's yelling at Beethoven.

CHARLES

SHUT UP!

CU. BEETHOVEN

He stops BARKING on the EIGHTH RING.

CU. CHARLES

He glares at Beethoven. NINTH RING

CHARLES

You through?

EXT. BACKYARD

Charles heads back across the yard. TENTH RING.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He lets out a little bark.

CU. CHARLES

He turns.

EXT. BACKYARD

The lawn sprinkler goes on. Charles is caught standing over a sprinkler head. His robe billows with spray as his upper body is washed from the surrounding heads.

EXT. DOG RUN

Beethoven casually walks back to his dog house and goes inside.

CU. CHARLES

He stares ahead, soaked to the bone, resigned to defeat.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Laying in his house, he yawns and lays his head on his paws.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Julia's car is parked in the driveway. Julia's talking to DEVONIA PEET. She's in her fifties, an extreme woman. She's wearing Palazzo pants, white platforms and an orange blouse. Emily, Ted and Ryce standby. Beethoven is in the car, watching out the back window.

JULIA

My husband and I'll be back
at six to pick them up. In
the meantime, Ryce and Ted
have homework that they can
do.

DEVONIA

(to the kids)

I hope you finish early so we
can sing a tune together.

(to Julia)

Are the children musically
inclined?

JULIA

I don't think so but they
like music.

(to the kids)

Right?

The kids shrug. Not anything Devonias would have heard of.

DEVONIA

(to the kids)

Do you like the older material? The Crosby, Stills? The Hendrix sound? Or are your tastes a little more modern? I'm a nut for the disco beat. It puts the bump in my rump as we used to say.

(to Julia)

You know, I don't understand why it went out of fashion like it did.

JULIA

I don't know.

(to the kids)

You behave yourselves, okay?

CU. BEETHOVEN

He's watching things with a distrustful eye.

HIS POV

Devonia leads the kids into the house.

EXT. SMOKESTACK

A red brick chimney is belching grey smoke into the clear night air.

CU. INCINERATOR DOOR

A yellow-white fire burns behind the door grate. CAMERA PULLS BACK through the hot, dark concrete room, past BIG JUDY, the brute we saw in the opening, sitting with his back to the incinerator to the cover of the SASSY magazine he's reading. He lowers the Sassy, revealing that he's shirtless -- his glistening chest is adorned with a huge, tattooed portrait of NADIA COMENCI on a balance beam with her arms triumphantly spread. He mops his perspiring bald head with a rag, tilts his head back and squeezes the rag over his mouth, drinking his own fluids.

OFFICE

DOC VERN MULCHINS, a wizened, little man with tiny, round wire-rim glasses, slicked, thinning white hair, a protruding lower lip and small yellowish teeth sits behind a rosewood desk in a clean, modern, well-appointed office. Across the desk from him is a BUSINESSMAN. He's in his mid-thirties, nice-looking, conservatively dressed, a Democrat who votes Republican. He opens his briefcase and takes out a revolver and a box of ammo. He lays them on the desk.

BUSINESSMAN

We'd like you to use this revolver to test the ammunition.

Doc Vern takes the box of ammo, opens it and takes out a large bullet.

BUSINESSMAN

For crowd control. We need to know if it's fatal at close range.

DOC VERN

Alright.

BUSINESSMAN

I presume you can get large dogs? Newfoundlands, Elkhounds, St. Bernards?

DOC VERN

The big dogs are harder to come by. Harder to handle.

CU. BRIEFCASE

A second case is at the Businessman's feet. He lifts it up.

CU. DESK TOP

The briefcase is set down on the desk and opened. It's packed solid with new hundred dollar bills.

CU. DOC VERN

Looking up from the money.

DOC VERN

(grinning)

I think we'll be able to take care of you.

CU. BEETHOVEN

CAMERA PULLS BACK SLOWLY to reveal Beethoven in a vet's office sitting between Charles and the kids. The door opens and an elderly WOMAN strolls in holding a sick Persian cat. She takes a seat.

CU. CAT

It glances at Beethoven.

CAT'S POV

Beethoven looks across at the cat. His huge, floppy ears perk up. Beethoven barks.

CU. CAT

It shrieks. It's eyes bulge. It's hair stands on end.

INT. VET'S OFFICE

Charles yanks on Beethoven's leash to silence him. The cat falls to the floor, dead. The woman, Charles, the kids and Beethoven lean forward to look at the dead cat.

INT. VET'S OFFICE

He's a soft, corpulent man in his fifties. A few narrow strands of heavily greased hair are combed across his bald head. DR. HUBBARD. He's speaking across his desk with JUAN O'CONNOR, the truck driver we saw in the opening. Juan's wearing a wrinkled and soiled, poorly manufactured knock-off Italian suit, scuffed beige slip-ons and a two day old white shirt. The vet's nervous and sports a glow of oily sweat.

VET

You have to understand
there's a limit to what I can
do. I'm not in the business
of supplying dogs for medical
research. I'm a veterinarian.

JUAN

You've given us a dozen or so
dogs this year.

VET

If someone brings in a dog
that has to be destroyed,
I'll sell it to you but I'm
not going to solicit animals.
I could lose my practise.

JUAN
You can lose your practise
now.

Dr. Hubbard leans back in his chair. He's deeply concerned.
Juan stands up. He buttons his coat and leans across the
desk.

CU. JUAN

He leans in big.

JUAN
We have an immediate need for
large dogs.

INT. WAITING ROOM

The lady and the cat are gone. The Newtons are alone. Emily's
sucking her thumb.

CHARLES
How can you put your thumb in
your mouth after touching
these chairs?

RYCE
It's a sign of immaturity.

TED
And the dentist says it
wrecks your teeth.

EMILY
(over her thumb)
You should talk. You scratch
your butt when you sleep.

TED
So what? It keeps me from
sucking my thumb.

CHARLES
Do you know how dirty these
chairs are, Emily? Animals
sit on them and lean on them
and when animals get nervous
they shed, they perspire,
they go to the bathroom.

Emily pulls her thumb out of her mouth so fast it pops. Juan comes out a door from the hallway servicing the examination rooms and the kennel into the reception area. He crosses to the door. He slows to a stop, turns and looks back at Beethoven.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Beethoven glances up at Juan. He curls his lip and growls.

CU. JUAN

He grins wickedly.

INT. WAITING ROOM

Beethoven lunges for Juan. He yanks Charles and his chair across the room. Juan dashes out the door.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Beethoven's sitting up on the examination table. Charles is standing next to him. Emily, Ted and Ryce are standing along the wall.

EMILY

Is he going to hurt him?

CHARLES

Honey, nothing can hurt Beethoven.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He looks at Charles, as if to take issue.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Charles allays Emily's fears.

CHARLES

He needs his s-h-o-t-s'es.

Beethoven throws his head back and HOWLS.

INT. KENNEL

Beethoven's HOWLS set-off all the kennel dogs. They HOWL.

INT. HALLWAY

Charles sticks his head out of the examination room. He's embarrassed. Beethoven's HOWLING, the kennel is bedlam, all the dogs in the various examination rooms are HOWLING. Charles pops back into the room.

CU. BEETHOVEN

His head's back. He's HOWLING.

INT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL. HALLWAY

Dr. Hubbard comes down the hall to the examination room. He looks at the exam sheet clipped to the door.

CU. SHEET

BEETHOVEN -- ST. BERNARD....

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He looks up from the sheet. This is what he's looking for.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Dr. Hubbard comes in. He introduces himself. His voice can't be heard above the din. He says an unheard hello to the kids. He crosses to the cabinet and takes out a hypo. He loads it. All the while talking, unheard, to Charles. He turns to Beethoven with the needle.

CU. BEETHOVEN

His eyelids flutter and close. He keels over.

INT. HALLWAY

We hear a TREMENDOUS CRASH!

INT. WAITING ROOM. LATER

Emily. Ryce, Ted, Charles and Dr. Hubbard come out. Beethoven is straining mightily on the leash. He wants out. Fast. Charles struggles to control him.

DR. HUBBARD

He might be a little groggy
this evening.

CHARLES

That'd be nice.

DR. HUBBARD
I wonder if I could have a
word with you in private?

CHARLES
Sure.
(to Ryce)
Take Beethoven to the car.
I'll be right there.

The kids exit with the dog.

EXT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Beethoven goes immediately to the bushes and lifts his leg.

INT. DR. HUBBARD'S OFFICE

Dr. Hubbard is behind his desk. Charles sits across from him.

DR. HUBBARD
St. Bernards have been
heavily bred. There's been
quite a bit written about
certain behavioral problems
with the breed.

CHARLES
I don't understand.

DR. HUBBARD
They've been known to turn on
people. Attack without
provocation. I only mention
it because you have children.

Dr. Hubbard leans back in his chair. He knows he has Charles.

EXT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Charles comes out. Beethoven is still lifting his leg.
Charles takes the leash from Ryce.

CHARLES
You guys get in the car. And
watch the puddle!

The kids head toward the car. Charles waits on Beethoven.

INT. DR. HUBBARD'S OFFICE

He peeks out the window at Charles and Beethoven.

EXT. HOUSE. PATIO. NIGHT

Charles and Julia are sitting on the lawn chairs.

JULIA

That's crazy. There isn't anything even remotely dangerous about Beethoven.

CHARLES

Not so far but who knows?

JULIA

He might take a piece out of you but I know he wouldn't hurt the kids.

CHARLES

First sign of anything out of the ordinary. A snarl, a snap, a funny look and he's gone and that has nothing to do with my history with him.

EXT. BIRD HOUSE FACTORY

A bigger sign and fresh paint -- NEWTON INTERNATIONAL.

INT. FACTORY

Julia is frantically helping the old-timers with their new white and blue jumpsuits. Twenty day laborers have been hired and uniformed.

OLD-TIMER

Mrs. Newton, this uniform don't fit me right.

JULIA

You look wonderful, Henry.

DAY LABORER

Lady? What am I supposed to do?

JULIA

Just sit at a bench and look like you're making a bird house.

DAY LABORER

Is this full-time work?

JULIA
No. We hired you for the day
and then you go back to
whatever you were doing.

DAY LABORER
There's nothing to go back
to. I'm unemployed.

JULIA
I'm sorry about that.
(to everyone)
Mr. Newton will be here in
five minutes with some very
important people. I want you
all to look and act like
you're busy and productive.
Any questions?

DAY LABORER
Can we keep the uniforms?

INT. FACTORY. OFFICE AREA. RECEPTION

A tiny reception room. A TEMPORARY SECRETARY sits behind a
new reception desk. Charles is instructing her on how to
behave. She's a little on the cheap and sexy side.

CHARLES
When these people come in ask
them who they wish to see.
They'll say me. Ask them to
have a seat and then buzz me.

The temp nods.

CHARLES
I'll come out and greet them.
That's all you have to do.

TEMP
Beauty.

CHARLES
And spit out the gum.

TEMP
What gum?

CHARLES
What's in your mouth?

TEMP
Tobacco.

INT. DEVONIA'S HOUSE

She's at her disco keyboard in the seventies style living room. Ryce and Ted are doing their home work at the dining room table. She plays LADY MARMALADE.

DEVONIA

Hey, let's have a little help!

Ted and Ryce, without looking up from their work sing.

TED AND RYCE

Hey sister, go sister, soul
sister, go sister.
Hey sister, go sister, soul
sister, go sister.

DEVONIA

He met Marmalade down in old
New Orleans,
Struttin' her stuff on the
street.
She said, "Hello, Hey Joe,
you wanna give it a go?"

ALL

Gitchee, gitchee, ya-ya,
da- da.
Gitchee, gitchee, ya-ya,
hee-ya.
Mocha, chocolata, ya-ya...

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE

LEO and GLORIETTA STURBENS are sitting on the sofa examining the bird mansion. They're in their early thirties. Dull, listless, low-rent yuppies. Julia and Charles stand across from them.

CHARLES

My plan was to offer you,
free of charge, one of these
bird mansions for each retail
outlet the houses are sold
in, as the promotional center
piece. You got the press,
obvious interest for
everyone...

LEO

I like this.

Charles looks at Julia with relief. She signals to him to step out in the hall.

CHARLES

All the little doors and windows open. Can you excuse me?

INT. HALLWAY

Charles and Julia step out in the hall.

JULIA

If you're having them over for dinner I better go get something.

CHARLES

I'm sorry. I thought they'd want to go out. I'll tell them you had to take an overseas call at the house.

JULIA

Why don't you tell them the truth?

CHARLES

They don't have kids. They wouldn't understand.

JULIA

Don't start apologizing for having a family.

CHARLES

Don't be silly.

JULIA

I hope you get rich quick because I've had it.

CHARLES

Don't say that, honey. It's going great. We're impressing them like crazy. We're there. We won.

JULIA

You won. I'm going to the store. I'll pick up the kids on the way home.

INT. DEVONIA'S LIVING ROOM

She's onto another tune. The kids are watching TV with the sound off.

DEVONIA

If you think you're too cool
to boogie,
Boy, have I got news for you.
Everybody here tonight must
boogie.
Let me tell you, you are no
exception to the rule.
Get on up, on the floor
'cause we're gonna boogie
oogie oogie till you just
can't boogie no more...

EXT. DEVONIA'S HOUSE. BACKYARD

Emily's sitting on a deck chair, facing away from the pool. A six year-old boy in a blue blazer and a turtleneck, cranberry pants, white belt and white platform shoes is standing in front of her. He looks like a tiny Norm Crosby. He has all the moves of an old-line stand-up comedian. His name is MEL.

MEL

Is this your first time at my
aunt's house?

Emily shakes her head, no.

EMILY

I've been here a couple
weeks.

MEL

(annoyed)

You're not supposed to answer
me. It's just patter. Pretend
you're in a joint.

EMILY

A what?

MEL

A club, a venue. I'm the
headliner, you're the
audience. Okay? This isn't
brain surgery here. I'm
breaking in some material.
(clears his throat)
I don't know how many of you
are married but I'll tell
you, my wife drives me crazy.

EMILY

You're not married.

Mel glares at her.

MEL

What is your problem?! It's a
joke. It's a bit. I'm six. Of
course, I'm not married. What
banana boat did you just fall
off of?

(snaps his fingers)

Get hip, zip the lip.

EXT. HOUSE. BACK FENCE

Beethoven is laying at the backyard fence. He lifts his head
and looks in a knot hole in the fence.

HIS POV

Emily and Mel.

EXT. FENCE

We can see Beethoven's eye peeking through the hole.

EXT. BACKYARD

Mel returns to his routine.

MEL

What is it with women and
clothes? I take my wife
shopping and she tries on
something. First thing out of
her mouth is, "Does it make
me look fat?" I say "I don't
know about the dress but I'll
bet the three cheese burgers
at lunch might have something
to do with it."

He chuckles. Emily stares.

MEL

You don't think that's funny?

Emily shakes her head, no.

MEL

You don't like observational humor? What's the matter, you still on knock-knock jokes? My pediatrician wet his pants when I did that one for him.

EMILY

It's stupid.

MEL

Stupid? You know what? You're all wet.

He grabs the legs of the deck chair and flips it and her into the pool.

INT. HOUSE. DEVONIA

She's playing and talking.

DEVONIA

You kids might be interested to know that I'm the featured performer Saturday nights at the Padded Zebra. You and your folks might like to stop in. They have the world's most fattening salad bar.

UNDERWATER

Emily struggles.

EXT. BACK FENCE

Beethoven jumps up. He barks in panic. He backs away from the fence.

EXT. DEVONIA'S YARD. MEL

Beethoven flies over him like a hairy 747.

EXT. POOL

Beethoven splashes down.

INT. HOUSE. DEVONIA

She continues to blab and play.

DEVONIA

I'd like to play Vegas
someday but I just can't stay
up all night any more.

She glances out the sliding glass door of her living room to the pool. She stops playing.

EXT. POOL

Beethoven drags Emily to the side of the pool. She grabs the edge.

EXT. BACKYARD

Devonia runs screaming from the house to the pool. She reaches down and pulls Emily out of the water. Ted and Ryce charge out of the house.

DEVONIA

What the hell's the matter
with you?! I said no pool!

EMILY

Mel pushed me in.

MEL

That's not true, Aunt
Devonia.

DEVONIA

(to Beethoven)

Get out of there!

Beethoven paddles to the steps and pulls himself out. He shakes off, sending an enormous spray of water across the yard.

DEVONIA

(to Emily)

What's your dog doing here?

EMILY

I don't know.

DEVONIA

Did he push you in the pool?

EMILY

No.

MEL

He did, too.

DEVONIA

Your dog came here and pushed
you in the pool.

EMILY

It was Mel.

DEVONIA

I saw the whole thing.

EMILY

You were in the house.

She leans in close on Emily.

DEVONIA

I don't like fibbers. I saw
the whole thing.

RYCE

You were in the house.

She looks to Ted and Ryce.

DEVONIA

You stay out of this.

CU. TED AND RYCE

They look to Emily.

CU. EMILY

She sees them and shakes her head, no.

EXT. NEWTON HOUSE

The station wagon pulls in the drive.

EXT. HOUSE. CAR

The windows are splattered with water and misty with
condensation. Julia gets out. She's wet and disheveled from
the ride. She helps a soaked Emily out. Ryce and Ted get out.
They're wet as well. Beethoven hops out.

EMILY

She's the biggest liar, Mom.

JULIA
You shouldn't call an adult a
liar but you're right.

EXT. HOUSE. DRIVEWAY

Charles' car pulls into the driveway behind the wagon. Leo
and Glorietta's BMW pulls in behind Charles.

CU. CHARLES

He stares out at the family.

EXT. HOUSE. DRIVEWAY

Charles, Leo and Glorietta get out of their cars.

CU. JULIA

Her face is drooping worse than her hair.

JULIA
I'm dead.

The grocery bags give and the dinner makings hit the
concrete.

JULIA
And buried.

INT. BEDROOM. LATER

Julia's in her bra and panties hurriedly blow drying her
hair. Charles is pacing, angrily.

CHARLES
The dog has a vendetta
against me. I tell Leo and
Glorietta the whole way over
what a terrific family we
have. You and the kids get
out of the car looking
like....

JULIA
Don't say it.

CHARLES
Please let me kill the dog.

JULIA
That dog saved your daughter.

CHARLES

So says Emily. She's six.

JULIA

You believe that Beethoven would knock her in a pool? That babe was in the house boring Ted and Ryce with bad disco tunes. She wasn't paying attention. All three told me she lied. I feel like calling a lawyer.

CHARLES

A grain of salt, Julia.

JULIA

You can hate Beethoven all you want but don't doubt your children.

CHARLES

We'll talk about it later. Right now let's just do our best to save the situation.

JULIA

You better get that order. You're about to lose your partner. I'll quit before I'll send Emily back to that place.

Julia's still angry. She points the blow dryer in Charles' face, blowing hair out of place.

JULIA

Fix your hair.

She goes into the bathroom.

EXT. HOUSE. PATIO

Leo and Glorietta are sitting on the patio with iced teas, talking to Ryce, Ted and Emily.

LEO

What kind of name is Ryce?

RYCE

I don't know. A name name.

LEO
What're you going to name
your kids?

GLORIETTA
Oats, Wheat and Barley?

Leo lets out a horse laugh. The kids don't laugh.

TED
Do you have kids?

GLORIETTA
No. Do you?

Leo cracks up. The kids don't find it funny.

EXT. BACKYARD. BEETHOVEN

He's tethered in the yard. He's watching and listening to the conversation.

HIS POV

The cackling couple on the patio.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He just watches.

EXT. PATIO

Charles and Julia come out. Julia's dressed in fresh clothes.

JULIA
Sorry about that. We had a
little accident.

She and Charles sit down.

JULIA
(to the kids)
We're going to talk now. You
can go play or watch TV. And
take Beethoven with you.

GLORIETTA
Leave the pooch. I like big,
dumb-looking dogs.

The kids are only too happy to leave. Glorietta gets up and walks out to Beethoven. She unhooks his tether from it's mooring on the lawn. She walks him back to the patio.

LEO
Why don't you go throw your
little sister in the dryer?

They chuckle. The kids don't find it funny. Neither does
Julia. Charles smiles and shoots a look to Julia. She ignores
it.

JULIA
(to Ryce)
It's a joke, honey.

RYCE
(cold and direct)
Har, har, hardee, har, har...

JULIA
I'll be right back.

She herds Ryce, Emily and Ted into the house. Glorietta slips
the tether around a patio table leg.

GLORIETTA
(to Beethoven)
Boy, you sure are one dopey-
looking hound.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He looks up at Glorietta. He'd like to take a piece out of
her.

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN

Julia and the kids come inside.

JULIA
(to Ryce)
That wasn't very good
manners.

RYCE
What about them? They told us
to put Emily in the dryer. Do
you know how dangerous that
is?

JULIA
I know. It wasn't right for
them to say that. But these
people are very important to
Dad's business.

EXT. HOUSE. PATIO. EVENING.

Julia, Charles, Leo and Glorietta are eating at a glass-top, wrought-iron table on the patio. It's elegantly set with Julia's best crystal, silver and china. Beethoven's on his tether. Throughout the meal, Glorietta and Leo give him tidbits from their plates causing him to go between them, under the table, around behind them. All the while, he's tangling their chairs, the table legs, their ankles.

LEO

Normally we wouldn't even
consider doing business with
a supplier as small as you.

CU. TABLE LEG

Beethoven's tether winds around the table leg.

CU. CHARLES

He nods.

CHARLES

You'd have to define small
for me.

Beethoven continues circling. He goes around behind Glorietta and Leo. Leo hands him back a piece of bread.

GLORIETTA

We're not in the business of
building businesses for
people.

CHARLES

I can handle whatever order
you place with me. I built my
catalogue business in two
years. From scratch.

Glorietta hands Beethoven a scrap of meat.

CU. CHAIR LEG

Beethoven CLEARS FRAME. We see that the tether connects the
table leg with Leo's chair leg.

EXT. PATIO

The conversation continues.

CHARLES
If my catalogue sales are any
indication of consumer
interest, I'm confident that
I can get the orders I need
from someone. You or your
competitors.

CU. LEO'S FEET

He shifts his foot into a loop of tether.

CU. GLORIETTA

She leans back.

GLORIETTA
Have you contacted anyone
else?

CU. GLORIETTA'S FEET

As she leans back and shifts her feet, she gets tangled in
the tether.

EXT. PATIO

Glorietta leans forward. Leo leans back. Beethoven slips
under the table again.

CHARLES
I intend to. I'm very serious
about moving into this area.
As serious as I was about the
catalogue business.

Glorietta gives Leo a look.

LEO
There's no question you make
an interesting product...

CHARLES
It's a product someone's
going to pick up.

GLORIETTA
(after a moment)
Leo?

Leo's thinking. Charles sneaks a confident look to Julia. Beethoven's head pops up between Leo and Glorietta. Charles motions for him to leave. Leo looks at Glorietta. He's close to a decision. Charles holds up a piece of meat and waves it for Beethoven to see.

CU. BEETHOVEN

His ears prick up. He's ready to go for the meat.

EXT. PATIO

Charles teases Beethoven with the meat.

LEO

Well...

Charles draws back and hurls the meat into the yard.

LEO

What the heck.

Beethoven dashes under the table heading for the meat. Leo reaches his hand across the table to Charles.

LEO

Let's do it.

The force and power of Beethoven's charge flips Leo and Glorietta over backwards in their chairs. They're yanked under the table, tipping it over, breaking everything on it including the glass top. Charles and Julia dive out of their chairs and Leo and Glorietta, tangled in their chairs rocket across the patio, with the table in tow, through the hedge and down the yard, SCREAMING ALL THE WAY.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD

The meat lands in the adjoining backyard. Beethoven leaps the low chain link fence.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S YARD. FENCE

Leo and Glorietta hurtling to the fence.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S FENCE. SIDE ANGLE

They're traveling on their backs, feet out in front of them, dragging the table behind them. They hit the fence feet first. The impact sends them over the fence, headfirst. They land upright in the chairs with the table landing in front of them.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He gobbles the little piece of meat.

CU. LEO AND GLORIETTA

They're sitting as they were before -- in front of the table. Except they're covered with dirt and grass and are wearing catatonic expressions.

EXT. HOUSE. PATIO

Charles and Julia pick themselves up. Charles looks down the yard in horror.

HIS POV

Leo and Glorietta sitting with their backs to Charles in the neighbor's yard.

CU. CHARLES

He's stunned, shocked and enraged.

CHARLES
BEETHOVEN!

CU. JULIA

She shakes her head in a panic.

JULIA
NO!

CU. BEETHOVEN

He turns and looks to Charles.

CU. LEO AND GLORIETTA

Their eyes open wide in terror as Beethoven charges between them heading back to the house. They bolt forward, OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. YARD. LAWN

A flashlight beam follows a pair of two inch wide trenches cut into the lawn. The little ditches are a yard apart.

CU. CHARLES

He's following the trenches with his flashlight. He's suicidal. He stops, bends down and comes up with a dental plate. He slips it in his pocket and continues.

EXT. PATIO

Julia comes out of the house. She bundles a big knobby sweater around her shoulders. She watches Charles.

HER POV

Charles is slowly following the trenches to the patio.

EXT. PATIO

Julia rights a chair and sits down. She gingerly addresses Charles.

JULIA

The kids are in bed if you want to say goodnight.

CHARLES

In a minute.

He reaches the patio. He stops, holding his beam on the concrete.

HIS POV

The trenches have been replaced by a band of red lipstick on one side and scratched concrete on the other. They end together a few feet onto the patio.

CU. CHARLES

He looks with a semi-maniacal smile.

CHARLES

The people who might have bought one hundred thousand of my birdhouses and solved our financial problems for life were dragged down the yard on their butts and back on their faces. They plowed the yard with their front teeth. What do you think my chances with them are?

CU. JULIA

She feels as bad as Charles. It's not her fault.

EXT. PATIO

Charles flips a chair up for himself and sits down.

CHARLES

That dog...

HIS POV

Beethoven is hanging out of his dog house in the back of the yard.

EXT. PATIO

Charles continues.

CHARLES

...I believe he was visited upon me. To test my resolve and challenge my base instincts.

JULIA

He's just too big, too friendly...

CHARLES

He's ruined my house, he's ruined my business...

JULIA

What happened tonight wasn't all his fault.

CHARLES

Tell that to the bank when they call in my loan. \$250,000 at 11%. I don't have any reason to expand my business anymore. That fuzzy goddamn ox made sure of that.

CU. BEETHOVEN

In his run, head buried in his paws.

BACK TO SCENE

JULIA

(after a pause)

Maybe he knows something you don't.

CHARLES

Like what? How to hump a client's leg?

JULIA

Maybe he knows that the bigger your business gets, the colder your heart grows.

CHARLES

What the hell does that mean?

JULIA

You're a very bright and ambitious man. You'll find another buyer. You'll make your fortune. You'll be able to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the rest of the greedy, uncaring, dollar driven heros of the American business miracle. And tucked away behind you, deep in the shadows will be me and your kids and the goddamn fuzzy ox, if you don't get rid of him. And between phone calls and faxes you might find a few minutes to take a meeting with us.

Charles stares at her deeply offended.

CHARLES

That's how you see me? That's nice. Everything was fine until we brought the hound of hell into our lives. Now, all of a sudden, because I happen to view dogs as insufferable nuisances that do nothing but shed and excrete, I'm a lousy father and husband.

JULIA

Actually, I'm proud of Beethoven. Those two morons you had over for dinner insulted your kids, acted like European royalty and dangled their business in your face until you grovelled. Beethoven was the only one of us who had the nerve to give those geeks the ride they deserved. I'm going to bed.

She goes into the house.

CHARLES

(angry)

My dream's going down the drain and you're worried about a dog!

Julia returns, sticking her head out the door.

JULIA

Your family's going down the drain and you're worried about a dream.

CU. CHARLES

He considers the remark. He doesn't believe it but it troubles him. He looks to the run.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He's looking at Charles. He gets up, turns around, and lays back down, leaving his rear end to Charles.

We hear a DOORBELL RING OVER...

INT. HOUSE. FRONT DOOR

The front door opens on Dr. Hubbard. He's smiling nervously.

DR. HUBBARD

Sorry to trouble you...

EXT. PATIO

Julia leads Dr. Hubbard out of the house.

DR. HUBBARD
With an animal as large as
yours I like to do follow up
on rabies shots. See how he's
doing.

JULIA
I appreciate it.
(to the kids)
Guys?

HER POV

The kids are pooper scooping Beethoven's run. They're wearing
swim masks and snorkels, rubber gloves and rain boots.
Beethoven's watching. He turns to the house as the kids do.

EXT. HOUSE. BACK YARD

Julia escorts Dr. Hubbard down the yard to the dog run.

JULIA
Dr. Hubbard has to take a
look at Beethoven.

EXT. DOG RUN

The kids are concerned. Beethoven backs away in fear. Emily
speaks with the snorkel in her mouth. Ted whacks her snorkel.
She turns angrily on him. Ryce takes her snorkel out of her
mouth.

RYCE
What's wrong with him?

Dr. Hubbard and Julia come into the run.

JULIA
Nothing, honey. Why don't you
three go around to the front
so you don't bother Dr.
Hubbard.

Dr. Hubbard smiles at the kids. They're suspicious. Julia
herds them out.

DR. HUBBARD
I'll just be a moment.

EXT. HOUSE. YARD

Julia walks the kids to the house.

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He watches them go and turns to Beethoven with a sneer.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He looks up at Dr. Hubbard. He's frightened.

INT. HOUSE. OFFICE

Charles is on the telephone.

CHARLES

Leo? Hi. This is Charles
Newton. I'm just calling to
see how you and Glorietta are
feeling since the...
...mishap.

INT. OFFICE. CU. LEO

On his back.

LEO

(lisp)
How would you feel if you
plowed a lawn with your front
teeth?

He turns around to reveal a bandage on his forehead and a set
of severely bucked teeth. He covers the phone.

LEO

It's Charles Newton.

CU. GLORIETTA

She's sitting across the desk. Same bandage and bucked teeth.

GLORIETTA

Hang up on the twerp!

EXT. DOG RUN. DR. HUBBARD

He grabs his shirt cuff and tears it off and then tears the
sleeve halfway up his arm. He reaches into his coat and
withdraws an old prescription bottle. He opens it and
pours blood on his arm.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He watches suspiciously.

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He looks over his shoulder at the house. He turns back and looks down at Beethoven. He draws his hand back.

EXT. HOUSE. DRIVEWAY

The kids peek around the house. They don't trust the Doc.

THEIR POV

Dr. Hubbard has Beethoven backed into the far corner of the run. He's smacking him in the muzzle. Provoking him.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles shuffles in from the living room. Julia's making lunch for the kids.

CHARLES

Thanks to our dog, I lost
Hobart and Healy. Leo hung up
on me. It's over. I'll call
the bank, settle the loan.
Take the loss and shoot
myself.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Pressed against the dog run fence. Dr. Hubbard's poking and jabbing at him.

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He's frustrated and angry that he can't get the dog to react.

DR. HUBBARD

Come on, you big, stupid
mutt!

CU. BEETHOVEN

He snaps.

CU. DR. HUBBARD

An evil grin.

DR. HUBBARD

That's better!

He glances down, picks up a big rawhide bone. He raises it over his head and brings it down hard.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He barks ferociously.

INT. DOG RUN

Dr. Hubbard drops to his knees, grabs Beethoven's collar and YELLS at the top of his voice.

DR. HUBBARD

HELP!

INT. KITCHEN

Julia runs to the window.

JULIA

OH, MY GOD!

She runs to the door.

CHARLES

WHAT?!

EXT. DOG RUN

Dr. Hubbard is wrestling with Beethoven.

EXT. HOUSE

Charles and Julia charge out of the house.

JULIA

BEETHOVEN!

EXT. HOUSE. DRIVEWAY. CU. RYCE

She's frightened.

EXT. DOG RUN

Charles and Julia rush into the run. Charles grabs Beethoven by the collar and pulls him away. Julia kneels next to Dr. Hubbard..

CU. JULIA

She looks down at Dr. Hubbard in horror.

HER POV

Dr. Hubbard's splattered with his "blood". He's clutching his forearm, feigning agony.

CU. CHARLES

He looks at Dr. Hubbard, then to Beethoven.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Confused and frightened. He ducks his head.

EXT. DOG RUN. FENCE

The kids slam into the fence, breathless from running.

RYCE

IT'S NOT BEETHOVEN'S FAULT!

EXT. HOUSE. FRONT PORCH

Dr. Hubbard comes out with Charles and Julia. He has his arm wrapped in a dish towel.

CHARLES

Please let me take you to the hospital.

DR. HUBBARD

(short, terse)

I'll take care of it.

(to Charles)

I warned you about that dog.

Ryce pushes through Julia and Charles. Emily and Ted are behind her.

RYCE

You hit him in the face!

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He snaps a look down at Ryce. He didn't know she saw him.

DR. HUBBARD

(indignant)

I patted him on the head!

EXT. HOUSE. FRONT PORCH

Charles grabs Ryce by the arm and pulls her back.

CHARLES

Get in the house!

DR. HUBBARD
You have a very dangerous
animal out there and this
time, you better do something
about it!

He steps off the porch and heads to his car.

CU. RYCE

She YELLS after Dr. Hubbard.

RYCE
YOU'RE A LIAR!

INT. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM

Charles yanks Ryce into the room.

CHARLES
Get up to your room!

TED
It's true Dad. That guy hit
Beethoven.

EMILY
A whole bunch of times.

CHARLES
All of you, go upstairs! NOW!

JULIA
Charles!

CHARLES
(to Julia)
Don't start with me.
(to the kids)
GO!

RYCE
You're listening to that guy
only because you hate
Beethoven. You've always
hated him! I hope he hates
you, too.

She stomps up the stairs.

TED
Yeah!

EMILY

Right!

They head up the stairs.

EXT. BACKYARD. DOG RUN. BEETHOVEN. NIGHT

He's sitting at the fence, looking at the house. He doesn't understand anything that's going on.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Charles and Julia are in bed. The lights are off.

JULIA

Charles?

CHARLES

Hmm?

JULIA

Are you going to do it?

CHARLES

What's that?

JULIA

Have the dog destroyed?

He'd hoped to avoid the subject. He steels himself and answers firmly.

CHARLES

Yes.

She figured as much but it's startling to her to hear him say it and say it so unequivocally.

JULIA

Are you going to tell the kids?

He hesitates. The toughest issue he has to deal with.

CHARLES

I wish you'd help me with this. It's a family issue and I don't like having to be alone in my decision.

JULIA
I don't agree with your
decision. I don't think the
kids would either. You're
alone not because of us.

CHARLES
I was warned something might
happen. Something did happen.
If it takes more than that to
convince you we have a
problem then I guess I don't
mind being alone.
(after-thought)
I'll tell the kids after it's
over.

JULIA
I hate to say this but I
think you're a coward.

INT. RYCE'S ROOM

She's at her window, looking into the backyard. She's been
crying.

HER POV

Beethoven alone in his dog run.

CU. RYCE

She whispers softly.

RYCE
Please don't let my Dad put
our dog to sleep.

EXT. HOUSE. DOG RUN. MORNING

Charles is standing at the dog run. Beethoven's sitting at
the gate. They're looking at each other. Charles is holding
Beethoven's leash.

CU. CHARLES

Dreading his grim task. Looking at the ground.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Looking up at Charles. Passive and calm, as if he knows.

CU. GATE HANDLE

Charles lifts the handle.

CU. BEETHOVEN'S COLLAR

The leash is attached.

EXT. CAR

Beethoven's sitting in the back of the station wagon. The wagon pulls away.

EXT. HOUSE. BEETHOVEN'S POV

The house recedes.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Watching his home disappear...

INT. HOUSE. RYCE'S ROOM

She gets out of bed and runs to her window.

CU. RYCE -- OVER HER SHOULDER

The dug run is empty. The gate is open. She turns into CAMERA and SCREAMS...

RYCE

MOM!

INT. CAR

Charles is taking the worst ride of his life. He's wracked with doubt. He glances in the rearview mirror.

HIS POV

Beethoven's in the back, looking at him.

CU. CHARLES

He takes his eyes off the mirror.

CHARLES

This isn't personal.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Staring ahead.

CU. CHARLES

He continues.

CHARLES

My father once had to do this. Drive our dog to the vet to be put down. I never knew how he did it and now I'm doing it myself. Our dog was old and he was in a lot of pain. I didn't believe it. But at that age, you think everything lives forever. But it was hard. And it's hard on my kids. So, you have to know I didn't come to this decision lightly.

(pause)

I'm talking to a dog so you know I have to be a little troubled by it all.

He glances in the mirror again.

CHARLES

The kids come first. I know you wouldn't want to hurt them.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Staring ahead.

CU. CHARLES

Looking in the rearview mirror.

EXT. STREET

The station wagon pulls to the side of the road and stops.

CU. CHARLES

He stares out of his side window, lost in conflicted thought.

FLASHBACK...

(ALL IN SLOW MOTION)

- Beethoven as a puppy, running.
- Ted playing catch with Beethoven.
- Kids playing in the sprinkler with Beethoven.
- Beethoven dressed for Halloween in a suit and tie.
- Beethoven with a mouthful of wadded-up Sunday newspaper.
- Beethoven with a butterfly on his nose.
- Ryce hugging Beethoven.
- Emily Riding on his back.
- Julia sunbathing on a chaise, Beethoven on his back in the chair next to her.
- Kids blow-drying a wet Beethoven with a leaf-blower.
- Beethoven's wearing a paper birthday hat behind a cupcake cup filled with ground beef with a candle stuck in it. He snorts the candle out.

CU. CHARLES

Turned in the seat, looking back at Beethoven. Remembering these few fond moments. Having serious second thoughts.

HIS POV

Beethoven's sitting in the back, looking at Charles.

CU. CHARLES

His melancholic expression turns to one of fear.

FLASHBACK

- Dr. Hubbard on the ground in the dog run with double the blood of the real situation.
- Paramedics running up the driveway, their mobile unit parked behind them, lights going.
- Ryce screaming in pain

CU. CHARLES

Snaps back to reality. Turns in the seat.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He lurches back as the car pulls out.

EXT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL

The station wagon's parked in the lot.

INT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL. LOBBY

Half a dozen people and their dogs are in the waiting room. Charles, with Beethoven on the leash, is standing at the reception window. The reception nurse, MISS GRUNDAL, looks up at him.

MISS GRUNDAL

Yes?

CHARLES

Charles Newton. I've brought my dog in to...

He looks over his shoulder.

HIS POV

The dog-owners in the reception room are looking and listening.

CU. CHARLES

He turns back and leans in a little closer.

CHARLES

He bit Dr. Hubbard yesterday.

CU. MISS GRUNDAL

She stares. She doesn't have any idea what he's talking about.

MISS GRUNDAL

Can you excuse me for a moment?

INT. LOBBY

Miss Grundal gets up from her desk and goes into the hospital. Charles turns away from the window.

DOG OWNER MAN

That's a nice looking dog.
How old is he?

CHARLES

(uncomfortable)
A little over a year.

DOG OWNER WOMAN

They say, the bigger the dog,
the bigger the love.

CHARLES
(nods nervously)
Yeah.

DOG OWNER MAN
In for his shots?

Charles is very uncomfortable with the small talk. He tries to look in the open door to the hospital.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Miss Grundal is hurriedly bandaging Dr. Hubbard's arm. Dr. Hubbard yanks his sleeve down and exits.

INT. LOBBY

A seven year-old GIRL, holding a small mutt and noticing the huge difference in size addresses Charles.

CHILD
How much bigger is he going to get?

Charles can't answer. He's rescued by Dr. Hubbard who comes out from the hospital. Charles offers his hand. Dr. Hubbard offers his left, favoring his "injured" right.

DR. HUBBARD
You've decided?

CHARLES
I'm afraid so. How's the arm?

DR. HUBBARD
37 stitches.

CHARLES
I'm so sorry.

DR. HUBBARD
It's a little tender but I'll be fine.

CHARLES
I want you to send me the bill.

DR. HUBBARD
Don't be silly. Do you want his collar and tags? Alot of people keep them.

Charles thinks for a moment and nods.

DR. HUBBARD
I have the bad wing. Can
you...?

Charles kneels in front of Beethoven and unfastens his collar. Dr. Hubbard hands him a choke collar and lead. Charles slowly slips it over Beethoven's head. Beethoven licks his face.

CU. CHARLES

Wipes his cheek and looks sorrowfully at Beethoven.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He returns the look.

INT. LOBBY

Charles stands up and hands the lead to Dr. Hubbard.

DR. HUBBARD
It's a sad but necessary
thing. I'm sorry.
(to Beethoven)
Come on, boy.

He leads Beethoven into the hospital.

CU. CHARLES

A lump rises in his throat.

HIS POV

Dr. Hubbard leads Beethoven down the hall. He turns a corner. Beethoven stops and looks back at Charles. Dr. Hubbard gently tugs the collar and Beethoven disappears around the corner.

INT. LOBBY

Charles looks down at the collar. Miss Grundal returns to her desk.

MISS GRUNDAL
We'll have to charge for a
day's boarding because Jimmy
who does our lethal
injections and disposals
doesn't work today. So we'll
have to hold the dog
overnight. Shall we bill you?

Charles nods. The dog owners look at him. He knows they're looking. As he crosses to the door, the dog owners avoid him. A WOMAN next to the door snatches up her dog as Charles exits.

EXT. HOUSE. BACKYARD. DOG RUN

Julia's in the dog run picking up Beethoven's toys and dish. She hears a CAR ENGINE and looks up.

HER POV

Charles has pulled in.

CU. JULIA

A hopeful look.

JULIA

Please...

The look fades.

HER POV

Charles gets out of the car and closes the door. He's holding the collar.

EXT. PATIO

Charles crosses and sits down. Julia walks over from the dog run. Charles is playing with the collar. Julia opens the plastic trash bag with the other of Beethoven's things. Charles looks at it and then at her. He drops it in the bag.

JULIA

The kids know. They heard us talking. They figured it out. Just so you know what to expect when they get home.

She goes in the house. Charles feels worse than he did before.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He's muzzled. He's being dragged out of the kennel.

EXT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL. KENNEL AREA

DONNY and RUDY yank Beethoven out of the kennel to the truck. Rudy's a grubby teenage boy, and Donny's a hulking, middle-aged half-fit. Juan and Dr. Hubbard walk out. Dr. Hubbard has his sleeves rolled up. The bandage is gone.

JUAN
You came through, Doc.

DR. HUBBARD
(bitter)
Yeah.

Donny gets into the truck and tries to pull Beethoven into it. He holds his ground. Rudy reaches around his back and pulls a short length of rubber hose from his belt. He whacks Beethoven on the haunches with the hose. He jumps into the truck.

JUAN
(to Dr. Hubbard)
Have a nice rest of the day.

He stuffs a hundred dollar bill in Dr. Hubbard's pocket and smacks it.

INT. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. CU. RYCE

She's sitting on the sofa, staring, lost, depressed, impenetrable. CAMERA SLIDES ACROSS TO Ted. Same face. And ACROSS to Emily. Same expression.

INT. LIVING ROOM. CU. CHARLES

He's staring at the kids as depressed as they are. For different reasons but...

INT. LIVING ROOM

The kids are on the sofa. Charles is sitting on the edge of an arm chair.

CHARLES
You don't want to hear what I
have to say?

No response.

CHARLES
You didn't talk to me when
you came home from school.
You didn't talk to me at
dinner. If you don't want to
talk, that's fine but you're
going to have to listen. I
did what I did because I love
you.

CU. RYCE

She shifts her eyes to Charles. She shifts them away. She doesn't believe him.

CU. CHARLES

He leans forward and softens his tone.

CHARLES

Sometimes parents have to do things that are unpopular with their families.

CU. TED

He snaps at Charles.

TED

Mom didn't have anything to do with this.

CU. CHARLES

He nods in agreement.

CHARLES

No, she didn't. Sometimes dogs do things that they don't mean. They can love you very much and still do these things because there's something wrong with them inside. Something they were born with. That they can't help. And it doesn't make them happy.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Ryce knows where Charles is going.

RYCE

There was nothing wrong with him inside. We all saw the vet hit Beethoven. He did it to make him mad.

CHARLES

We discussed this, Ryce.

RYCE

We didn't discuss it. You just yelled. You don't believe us because we're kids.

CHARLES

I didn't say I didn't believe you.

RYCE

Yes, you did.

CHARLES

Alright. Listen. This is a terrible thing that's happened to us. We'll all miss Beethoven.

EMILY

You won't.

CHARLES

That's not true. But we'll get over it. He's in a better place now and...

EMILY

He saved me from drowning because I can't swim in my clothes.

CHARLES

I never said he wasn't a good dog to you guys.

RYCE

So, why did you have him executed?

CHARLES

That's not the right word.

(realizes it is)

It was the only choice I had.

RYCE

This is just parent talk.

She gets up from the couch and goes upstairs. Ted follows.
Emily gets up.

EMILY

Dog killer.

INT. DOC VERN'S OFFICE

He's watching television. The news. Another story on the dog nappings. He's grinning.

CU. TV

A small color set. A taped report has the mayor opening the cat show. A FEMALE REPORTER stands in the foreground.

REPORTER

Mayor Brookman, an avowed dog lover and allergy sufferer, enthusiastically welcomed the opening of the 59th Annual AMERICAN FELINE BREEDER'S ASSOCIATION CAT SHOW at the Hotel Dumont this afternoon...

EXT. ALLEY. DPPS INC.

The truck backs up to the research company.

INT. DPPS. INC. DOORWAY. CU. BIG JUDY

A sadistic grin.

HIS POV

Donny and Rudy struggle with Beethoven. Pulling him out of the truck. Juan gets out of the passenger side.

JUAN

(to Big Judy)

You've met your match, fat boy!

INT. DPPS. INC. HALLWAY

Doc Vern is standing at the end of the hall. He's been at work. His apron is splattered with chemicals and blood. Doc Vern peels off his tiny, round glasses and cleans them with a hankie.

DOC VERN

Good work. Very good work.

INT. HALLWAY

Big Judy is dragging Beethoven up the hallway.

CU. DOC VERN

He squints at Beethoven.

HIS POV

An OUT OF FOCUS flash of rapid movement.

INT. HALLWAY

Beethoven lunges forward, between Big Judy legs, knocking him off his feet and flipping him onto his back. He drops the lead. Beethoven charges Doc Vern.

CU. DOC VERN

He rears back.

HIS POV

OUT OF FOCUS. Beethoven leaps on him.

INT. HALLWAY

Beethoven knocks Doc Vern off his feet. He continues down the hall.

INT. KENNEL

Beethoven races through the kennel.

INT. HALLWAY

Beethoven charges out of the kennel and down a carpeted hall. It's the unused front section of the building. The carpet's dirty and stained. Rubbish litters the floor.

HIS POV

MOVING DOWN THE HALL to a glass door.

EXT. STREET

Beethoven bursts through the glass. He picks himself up and starts to run but is jerked back.

CU. DOOR

The lead is snagged on a shard of metal from the damaged door frame.

INT. HALLWAY

Big Judy, Juan, Donny and Rudy thunder down the hall. They slow as they see what's happened.

EXT. STREET

Beethoven's tugging frantically on the lead.

EXT. BUILDING. DOOR

Big Judy, Rudy, Donny and Juan crowd the doorway. The men laugh.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He looks at them. He's bleeding, panting hard.

EXT. BUILDING. DOOR

Big Judy frees the lead.

JUAN

Take him to the lab and put him in the restraints. The Doc'll want to work on him first thing in the morning. By lunch, he'll be one dead puppy.

EXT. HOUSE. PATIO. NIGHT

Charles is sitting alone on the patio. He's sipping his coffee. Julia comes out from the kitchen and sits down next to him.

CHARLES

I guess I'm the great executioner.

JULIA

It's understandable. If you're six, nine and eleven. Maybe you did the right thing. But you did it the wrong way. That dog, no matter how much trouble he was, meant something to the kids. He represented mistakes and goof-ups, and flaws and frailties. He made this perfect little palace an easier place to live in. When you're five and you're worried about scuffing the floor and getting finger prints on the brass drawer pulls, it's cathartic to see a chewed-up chair leg or a muddy set of foot prints on the carpet. Beethoven made this house real. He put the dents in it. He put the surprise and the uncertainty in it. He smelled bad and he barked, and he slobbered but he loved us. Even you. You can think he had it in for you and that he was the devil incarnate but nothing that brings so much pleasure to your children could ever harbor the kinds of feelings you imagine he had for you. I hope your motives were pure and that you did this only for the safety of your children because I'd hate to think you sold Beethoven down the river for a piece of carpet and a bunch of goddamned bird houses.

CHARLES

What about the vet?

JULIA

What about the vet? His word means more than your kids' word?

CHARLES

Honey...

JULIA

Did you even talk to them about it? Did you listen to them? No. You sent them to their rooms.

CHARLES

What reason would the vet have to lie?

JULIA

I don't care what reason the vet would or wouldn't have. That's not the point. You sentenced their dog to death without even talking to them about what they saw or think they saw. Have you ever known them to lie?

CHARLES

No.

JULIA

Have you ever known your daughter to attack an adult and accuse him of lying?

CHARLES

No.

JULIA

Before you listen to some vet you've seen twice in your life, maybe you oughta try listening to your kids. If they even matter anymore. I know they don't generate any profit.

She gets up and heads for the house.

CHARLES

Julia?

She stops but doesn't turn around.

CHARLES

Do you think Ryce was telling the truth?

JULIA
(slowly turning)
Yeah.

She goes into the house.

CU. CHARLES

He considers her remarks. He's having second thoughts.

INT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL. LOBBY

POUNDING ON THE DOOR. Dr. Hubbard shuffles in from the back and crosses to the door.

CU. DOOR

It opens on Charles.

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He's startled to see Charles.

DR. HUBBARD
Mr. Newton...

CU. CHARLES

CHARLES
I've changed my mind.

EXT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL. DOOR

Dr. Hubbard's shocked. Hesitates as he improvises a response.

DR. HUBBARD
I'm very, very sorry, Mr.
Newton. It's too late.

Charles is confused.

CHARLES
I was told it would happen
tomorrow. You charged me a
day's boarding.

Dr. Hubbard nods.

DR. HUBBARD
Right. We'll make a refund on
that.

CHARLES

Forget the refund. Why was I told that the person who does it wasn't in until tomorrow?

DR. HUBBARD

I'm very sorry about that. The dog's been destroyed. I have someone on the telephone. I'm here alone. If you wouldn't mind...

He starts to close the door.

CU. DR. HUBBARD'S ARM

Charles grabs his arm and holds it to keep the door open.

CHARLES

I'd like to see the dog.

DR. HUBBARD

The body's been disposed of. You made a decision, Mr. Newton. We acted on it. Whatever regrets you have are your personal concern. Now, good evening.

He pulls on the door. Charles holds it.

CHARLES

Let me ask you one more question.

Dr. Hubbard glares at Charles.

CHARLES

How's your arm?

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He looks at Charles suspiciously, then looks down at the arm Charles is holding. It's his right arm.

CU. CHARLES

He holds a firm, angry look on the vet.

CU. DR. HUBBARD'S ARM

Charles grabs the cuff and rips the sleeve up to the bicep. He rudely twists the arm over, revealing a clean forearm.

CU. DR. HUBBARD

He's frightened.

EXT. ANIMAL HOSPITAL. FRONT DOOR

Charles grabs Dr. Hubbard by the front, jerks him out of the door and slams him up against the building.

CHARLES

Where's my dog?!

He slams Dr. Hubbard against the building again.

CHARLES

I'm gonna break a bone for every tear that was spilled at my house today.

DR. HUBBARD

I sold him to a medical research company downtown.

CHARLES

What's the name?

DR. HUBBARD

They'll kill me.

CHARLES

If they don't, I will. What's the name?

DR. HUBBARD

Dandy Pup Pet Supply. On South Commerce St. You enter through the alley at Commerce and Hudson.

Charles releases Dr. Hubbard.

DR. HUBBARD

I'm very sorry.

CHARLES

So am I.

DR. HUBBARD

For what?

CHARLES

For this.

He draws back and decks Dr. Hubbard. He crashes into the building and slides down to his ass.

EXT. ALLEY. DPPS

The station wagon pulls down the alley to the end.

INT. CAR

Charles is driving, Julia's next to him, the kids are in the backseat. Charles looks up and out the windshield.

CHARLES

This is it. You wait here.

EXT. ALLEY

Charles gets out and walks to the door.

INT. DPPS. INC. HALLWAY

A single light burns at the end of the hall. Charles knocks on the door. BANG! BANG!

INT. KENNEL

The dogs start barking.

CU. BEETHOVEN

His head's locked in a brace. He's muzzled. He tries to bark.

EXT. ALLEY

Charles hears the dogs. He pounds again. He looks back at Julia.

CHARLES

This is the place. I can hear dogs inside.

INT. DPPS INC. MEDICAL LAB

Charles appears in a filthy window. He rubs his sleeve on the window pane and looks into the darkened room. CAMERA PUSHES IN on his horrified face.

HIS POV

MOVING. The filthy tables. A dead dog on one of them.

INT. CAR

Charles jumps into the car. He starts the engine.

JULIA
What's the matter?!

CHARLES
(gestures to the kids)
Nothing.

EXT. ALLEY

The station roars backwards down the alley.

INT. CAR. BACKSEAT

The kids grit their teeth as the car pulls out.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GAS STATION. PAY PHONE

Charles is on the phone. The kids are in the car. Julia's standing outside the phone booth.

CHARLES
They're doing animal
research. And they're doing
it on my dog.
(pause)
Proof? Just what I saw.
(pause)
Don't bust my butt, please.
(rolls his eyes)
File a report in the morning.
Thanks for nothing.

He slams the phone down.

EXT. ALLEY

The station wagon is parked in the alley. The lights are on. Charles is at the door. He holds his arms across the door to measure the width. He locks his arms and walks to the dumpster. He measures it against the door.

CHARLES
(to Julia)
It'll work!

He pushes the dumpster over in front of the door. Length-wise to the door. He gets in the car.

INT. CAR

Charles gets in and throws the car in reverse.

JULIA
What're you doing?

EXT. ALLEY

Charles backs down the alley to the street.

INT. CAR

He puts the car in drive.

CHARLES
Kids? Get out with Mom.

JULIA
Charles?!

CHARLES
Just get out.

EXT. STREET

Julia and the kids get out of the car.

CU. CHARLES

He takes a deep breath. Puts on his seatbelt. He slams his foot down on the accelerator.

EXT. STREET

The car lurches forward and dies. Charles restarts it, backs it up, throws it in drive and hurtles down the alley.

EXT. ALLEY

The station wagon howls between the buildings and crashes into the dumpster.

INT. DPPS. INC. HALLWAY

The door blows off the hinges, the dumpster rockets down the hall.

INT. DOC VERN'S OFFICE

The dumpster crashes through his wall and pins his desk to the wall.

EXT. ALLEY

The station wagon nose is crumpled. Charles gets out. He's ecstatic. Inside the DOGS ARE HOWLING.

CHARLES
(patting the wagon)
Quality is Job One.

EXT. ALLEY. REVERSE

Julia and the kids run down the alley.

JULIA
Charles?! Are you alright?

CHARLES
Get in the car. Back it out
on the street. Keep the
engine running and wait for
me.

Julia hustles the kids into the car. Charles runs inside
DPPS.

INT. KENNEL AREA

Charles walks in and crosses to Beethoven's cage. The DOGS
are BARKING. He quickly opens the cage. Charles kneels in
front of him. .

CHARLES
(referring to the
muzzle)
If I take this off you have
to promise not to lick me.

He removes the muzzle and Beethoven gives him a full tongue
job. Charles stands up.

CHARLES
Thank you very much. Your
breath is horrendous. Let's
get outta here.

INT. HALLWAY

Charles brings Beethoven down the hall. He stops as he passes
the lab. He looks in.

HIS POV

The dead Scottie on the table.

CU. CHARLES

He's saddened by the sight. He looks around the lab. He notes
the video camera.

INT. KENNEL. HALLWAY

Charles and Beethoven hurry down the hall to the alley. The dogs in the kennel are still BARKING. Beethoven stops.

CHARLES

Come on!

Beethoven won't move.

CU. CHARLES

He listens to the dogs. He knows why Beethoven hesitated.

CHARLES

You're right. We have to put these s.o.b.'s out of business.

CU. VCR

Charles turns it on, rewinds and hits "PLAY".

CU. MONITOR

Doc Vern in the lab.

DOC VERN

500cc's of Trinexaline caused severe internal bleeding within four hours. We will now increase the dosage to 1000cc's...

The video tape CUTS TO -- the dead dog we saw on the table being injected...

CU. VCR

The tape is ejected.

INT. DOC VERN'S OFFICE

Charles and Beethoven come into the office. Charles crosses to a file cabinet and opens the top drawer. He begins pulling files.

EXT. STREET

The car's still parked on the street.

INT. OFFICE. LATER

Charles has amassed an enormous amount of material. He's stacked it on the floor by the door. Files, photographs, records. He's at a PC. It's printing out computer records. Beethoven is sitting next to him.

CU. PRINTER

Financial records. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in billings.

CU. CHARLES

He grins as he invades the workings of the evil organization.

CHARLES

Alot of people are gonna burn
for this. It won't take a
genius to figure out who
these companies are.

EXT. ALLEY

The sun is coming up. A ray of sunlight sneaks through the buildings.

INT. CAR

The kids are sleeping in the back. Julia's fallen asleep in the front. She wakes up with a start and recoils.

HER POV

Charles is looking in her window.

INT. CAR. JULIA

She rolls down the window.

JULIA

(groggy)
Where's Beethoven?

CU. CHARLES

He's excited.

CHARLES

He's inside. I want you to go
to the nearest phone and call
a cab for me. Then you and
the kids go to City Hall and
wait for me.

INT. KENNEL

Charles opens the kennel door and walks in with Beethoven. Dozens of howling dogs.

CU. TERRIER

The mayor's dog. His collar and tag is affixed to the cage door.

CU. CHARLES

He looks at the dog's tags.

CHARLES
(to Beethoven)
This is the mayor's dog.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

A Mercedes cruises up an expressway off ramp. As the car passes CAMERA, we see that Doc Vern is driving.

EXT. SLUM STREET

The DPPS truck rumbles down a decaying residential street.

EXT. SUBWAY

Big Judy gets off the subway.

INT. DPPS. KENNEL

Charles is frantically releasing dogs from their cages.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL STREET

Big Judy lumbers up the street.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL STREET

Doc Vern's Mercedes rolls through an intersection.

EXT. BUILDING

A battered cab pulls up in front of the lab.

EXT. ALLEY ENTRANCE

The truck comes down the street and signals to turn.

EXT. ALLEY

The truck pulls into the alley.

INT. TRUCK

Rudy's driving. Juan's next to him. Their jaws drop.

THEIR POV

The damaged door is open.

INT. DPPS. HALLWAY

Charles, Beethoven and twenty five loose dogs charge down the hallway to the boarded-up front door. Charles is carrying a huge carton of records, files, and computer print-outs. Charles sets down the carton. He runs full out for the door, he ducks his shoulder.

INT. HALLWAY. BOARDED-UP DOOR

It opens. Big Judy steps in.

INT. HALLWAY

Charles can't stop. A look of horror on his face.

INT. HALLWAY. BIG JUDY

Charles slams into Big Judy.

INT. OTHER HALLWAY

Rudy and Juan race down the hall.

INT. HALLWAY. BIG JUDY

He reaches down and picks up Charles by his shirt front. He lifts him three feet off the ground.

CU. TOY POODLE

Looking up at Big Judy.

HIS POV. SEVERE UP-ANGLE

Big Judy's crotch.

BIG JUDY

(to Charles)

Going somewhere?

CU. POODLE

He leaps.

CU. BIG JUDY

His eyes bulge in shock! He looks down.

HIS POV

The poodle is clamped tight to his groin.

INT. HALLWAY

Big Judy drops Charles and reels back, out the door, tugging at the poodle.

CHARLES

GO!

The dogs spill out the door. Charles reaches into the carton.

CU. CHARLES

He grabs the tape and looks up.

HIS POV

Rudy and Juan come around the corner and stop.

INT. HALLWAY. CHARLES

He jumps and charges out the door.

CU. JUAN

He's stunned.

JUAN

He's got the video tape!

EXT. BUILDING

Big Judy stumbles out and pulls the poodle off. He doubles up in pain. Charles lets him have it -- a kick in the head. He topples over. Charles runs to the cab, whips open the back door. The dogs stream in.

INT. CAB

The young DRIVER is stunned.

EXT. CAB. DRIVER'S SIDE

Charles opens the door and yanks the cabbie out. He jumps in and takes off.

EXT. SIDE STREET

Doc Vern's Mercedes comes to a stop at an intersection.

EXT. INTERSECTION

The cab filled with barking, howling dogs streaks past.

EXT. STREET

The Mercedes squeals after the cab. A beat and the truck follows.

INT. CAR

Charles is driving. The cab is jammed full of dogs. He has to shove one away to see the road.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

The cab streaks past. The windows are open, the dogs are hanging their heads out the window, barking. The Mercedes rams the cab from behind. The cab swerves sharply into the next lane. The truck rams it.

EXT. DOWNTOWN. EXPRESSWAY RAMP

The cab roars up the ramp. The Mercedes and truck follow.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET

The cab wheels through heavy morning traffic. The Mercedes and the truck follow.

EXT. STREET CORNER

A BUSINESSMAN raises his arm for a cab.

HIS POV

Charles' cab pulls up to the curb.

CU. BUSINESSMAN

He steps back in alarm as...

EXT. STREET. CAB

The dogs pour out of the cab.

EXT. STREET

Charles and the dogs take off down the sidewalk. The Mercedes and the truck pull up to the cab. Juan gets out of the truck.

JUAN

There he is!

INT. SHOPPING MALL/HOTEL COMPLEX

Charles holds the door as the dogs run into the big atrium lobby. The dogs dash up the escalator.

INT. ATRIUM. ESCALATOR

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN is riding the escalator.

CU. WOMAN'S LEGS

The dogs take the most direct route -- through her legs. The little one's first, then bigger and bigger...

CU. WOMAN

She SCREAMS as the dogs run through her legs.

INT. ATRIUM. ESCALATOR. WOMAN

She jumps up and straddles the railing as the dogs run through and finally, Charles.

CU. WOMAN

Her jaw drops in horror.

INT. ATRIUM. ESCALATOR. BOTTOM

Juan and Rudy charge up the escalator.

INT. RESTAURANT

A slick, modern restaurant favored by the morning meeting crowd. Packed with handsome hard chargers. Charles and the dogs race through the restaurant. The dogs are struck by the smell of food. They stop.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles bursts into the kitchen. He realizes he's minus the dogs. He looks back out into the restaurant.

HIS POV

The dogs have descended upon the tables and the diners and are getting all they can.

CU. CHARLES

He whistles to the dogs.

INT. MALL. SERVICE CORRIDOR

Charles holds the door for the dogs. Everyone continues down the hall.

INT. KITCHEN

Juan and Rudy race through the kitchen.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM

A huge, elegant ballroom. The 59th Annual AMERICAN FELINE BREEDER'S ASSOCIATION CAT SHOW. A hundred old lady's and their pussycats.

INT. STAIRWELL

Charles and the dogs scramble down the stairs. The dogs are BARKING AND HOWLING.

CHARLES

Shut-up!

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR

Charles and dogs scramble out of the stairwell and race down the corridor.

INT. BALLROOM. CAT

A big, puffy white Persian wearing a blue ribbon perks up suddenly, listening keenly.

CU. ANOTHER CAT

His ears perk up.

CU. DOWAGER

She hears the approaching ROAR OF THE DOGS. It sounds like a fox hunt.

INT. BALLROOM

A service door at the rear of the room opens and the dogs charge in. It's cat bedlam. Clawing, hissing, screeching cats, clawing their owners, leaping in the air, skittering across the floor as the HOWLING dogs and the Charles run through the show.

INT. HOTEL. LOBBY

Charles and the dogs race into the hotel lobby. Cats and SCREAMING dowagers follow.

INT. HOTEL COUNTER

A sour-faced CLERK looks up. He stares incredulously at the herd of animals thundering through his lobby.

INT. BALLROOM

The cat hell continues. Juan and Rudy run in.

CU. RUDY

A shrieking, berserk cat runs up his body and engulfs his face.

CU. DOWAGER

She peels her cat off her face and heaves it away.

CU. JUAN

Running through the mess he catches the cat in the face.

EXT. HOTEL

Juan bounds out of the hotel and jumps into the truck.

INT. BALLROOM. RUDY

He can't get the cat off his face.

EXT. FEDERAL PLAZA

Charles and the dogs race across the plaza. One of the dog's suddenly stops at a small patch of grass and trees. He starts sniffing. Other dogs join him.

CU. CHARLES

He slows to a stop. He turns.

HIS POV

All twenty five dogs are relieving themselves.

CU. CHARLES

He breathes an impatient sigh.

INT. TRUCK

Juan and Big Judy are cruising in the truck, looking for Charles and the dogs. Big Judy's driving.

JUAN

Stop!

Big Judy hits the brakes.

HIS POV

Down a sidestreet. Charles and the line of dogs are running across the street.

EXT. STREET

Big Judy whips the truck around.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET

Charles is running through the crowd with his pack of dogs. He's looking for a street sign. It's a seedier and more remote part of downtown.

INT. TRUCK

Juan is loading a tranquilizer rifle.

EXT. SIDESTREET

The Mercedes pulls up to the light.

INT. MERCEDES

Doc Vern looks out the window and sees Charles.

EXT. STREET

Charles runs down the street with the dogs. The truck pulls up alongside of him.

CU. JUAN

He takes aim.

CU. CHARLES

He slows as he sees

EXT. STREET. DOC VERN

Doc Vern is charging him.

CU. JUAN

He squeezes the trigger.

EXT. STREET. CHARLES

Ducks Doc Vern. The tranquilizer dart hits Doc Vern in the forehead.

INT. TRUCK. BIG JUDY AND JUAN

Big Judy's eyes are open wide in surprise. Juan lowers the gun slowly. He knows he's done wrong.

JUAN

He's gonna kill me...

CU. DOC VERN

He staggers and falls.

EXT. STREET. TRUCK

Juan jumps out of the truck.

JUAN

(to Big Judy)

Take care of the Doc!

He runs for Charles.

EXT. STREET

Charles is running balls out. Juan is behind him. The dogs are scattered ahead of, behind and in the street. The unit is breaking up. The crowd thins out as he leaves the commercial area and gets into the forgotten fringes of downtown.

CU. JUAN

As he runs he pulls a knife. He flicks it open.

EXT. INTERSECTION

Charles dashes through moving traffic. Juan doesn't catch the traffic as well as Charles did and loses a few yards.

EXT. STREET. TRUCK

Big Judy jumps in the truck and pulls ahead. He turns sharply and heads up the cross street.

EXT. STREET

Juan has lost Charles. He looks around frantically.

HIS POV

Empty street. An abandoned office building at the end of the block. Charles steps out from around the corner and to Juan.

CHARLES

Here I am, you moron!

He slips back around the corner.

EXT. STREET. JUAN

He takes off.

EXT. CROSS STREET.

Charles is right around the corner, pressed against a glass display window. He waits.

CU. HIS HANDS

He has one of the dog's choke chains and a chain lead wrapped around his fist.

CU. CHARLES

He's looking across the street.

HIS POV

The dogs are lined up across the street. Beethoven in the middle.

EXT. STREET

Empty.

CU. CHARLES

Waiting anxiously. Still looking across the street.

HIS POV

The dogs. Beethoven barks.

EXT. CROSS STREET

Charles jumps to the side.

EXT. BUILDING. WINDOW

Juan bursts through the glass.

EXT. CROSS STREET

Juan lands on the sidewalk in a shower of glass. Charles pounces on him. He grabs him by the shirt, slugs him in the face and slips the choke collar around his feet. He drags Juan to the curb and as a truck passes, hooks the lead handle on the bumper.

CU. JUAN

He SCREAMS and is yanked OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. CROSS STREET

Juan sails off the sidewalk and skids into the street. He's gone for a ride. Charles whistles. The dogs race across the street.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET

Charles and the dogs are walking under the scaffold of an abandoned building being dismantled.

CHARLES

We did it.

He takes the videotape out of his belt. The scaffolding ends at an alley. Charles and the dogs reach the end.

CHARLES

And this seals it.

EXT. STREET. SIDEWALK

Big Judy slams down from the scaffold above, landing right in front of Charles.

CU. CHARLES

He wheels back in shock.

EXT. STREET

The dogs scatter in terror.

CU. BIG JUDY

Draws back and...

CU. CHARLES

His head snaps back. But for the muscle and bone, his head should be on the next block.

CU. BIG JUDY

He looks at Charles with a sadistic grin. Killing people is more fun than killing dogs.

CU. CHARLES

He rolls over on his belly and pushes up to his knees. His nose and lips are mashed and bleeding. He's still clutching the video tape. He looks up.

HIS POV

The mayor's dog is down the sidewalk.

CU. CHARLES

In his daze he manages to wave the dog forward.

CU. MAYOR'S DOG

He cocks his head. He doesn't understand.

EXT. STREET

Beethoven has regained his composure and is snarling and stalking Big Judy.

CU. BIG JUDY

He turns on Beethoven. He reaches behind him and pulls out a bully club.

BIG JUDY

Atta boy! Come see Judy.

CU. CHARLES

He continues to wave the mayor's dog over.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Stalking, snarling.

CU. BIG JUDY

He can't wait to belt the source of all this trouble.

EXT. SIDEWALK

The mayor's dog takes a tentative step toward Charles.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He charges Big Judy.

EXT. STREET

Big Judy's ready. Beethoven lunges, Big Judy whacks him back. He yelps and stumbles. Big Judy kicks him back.

EXT. SIDEWALK. MAYOR'S DOG

He trots up to Charles. Charles puts the tape in the dog's mouth.

CU. CHARLES

He whispers to the dog.

CHARLES

Go home!

EXT. SIDEWALK

The terrier takes off. The other dogs follow him.

CU. BIG JUDY

He smacks Beethoven again.

CU. BEETHOVEN

He staggers down the sidewalk and drops at the mouth of the alley.

INT. TRUCK

Big Judy hefts Beethoven into a cage and slams it shut. He grabs his pole with the wire loop on the end.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Big Judy returns to Charles. He slips the loop around his neck and jerks him to his feet.

INT. TRUCK. CAGE

Beethoven lifts his head slowly and looks out the cage.

HIS POV

A near reprise of the opening, Beethoven sees Big Judy hauling Charles down the alley, the wire loop around his neck.

CU. BEETHOVEN

Claws at the cage.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE

A deep foundation pit filled with rain water.

EXT. ALLEY

The alley ends at the building site. Big Judy drags Charles to the edge. He's helpless, his hands committed to the wire loop to keep it from strangling him. Big Judy looks down into the pit with an evil grin.

HIS POV

Two stories down to the bottom and the water.

CU. CHARLES

He looks down fearfully.

INT. TRUCK

Beethoven slams against the cage door.

EXT. ALLEY. BUILDING SITE

Big Judy taunts Charles. He pushes him to the edge and pulls him back.

EXT. TRUCK. CAGE

Beethoven bursts out of the cage and leaps from the truck.

EXT. ALLEY. BUILDING SITE

Big Judy hangs Charles over the edge.

EXT. ALLEY. BEETHOVEN

Thundering down the alley.

CU. BIG JUDY

He turns to see...

HIS POV

Beethoven leaps.

EXT. BUILDING SITE. BELOW

Beethoven and Big Judy sail out over the pit.

EXT. ALLEY. BUILDING SITE

Charles has been knocked clear. He rips the wire loop from around his neck and scrambles to his feet.

EXT. BUILDING SITE. PIT

Beethoven and Big Judy splash down and disappear into the water.

CU. CHARLES

He looks over the edge.

HIS POV

Ripples in the water far below.

EXT. CITY HALL. STEPS

Julia and the kids are waiting anxiously on the steps. Julia perks up as she sees...

EXT. STREET

The dogs charge across the street and up the steps.

EXT. CITY HALL

The dogs thunder past Julia and the kids. They hop to their feet and start in.

INT. CITY HALL. STAIRS

The dogs race up the broad staircase.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

The clawed, disheveled and furious cat matrons are in the mayor's office raising holy hell. They clutch their pussies as they shriek for restitution.

CAT MATRON
YOU GET DOWN TO THAT HOTEL
RIGHT NOW AND SEE FOR
YOURSELF WHAT HAPPENED!

MAYOR
I've been on the phone with
the police...

CAT MATRON 2
THERE WAS NO SECURITY!

MAYOR
Ladies! I'm doing everything
I can!

CAT MATRON 3
YOU'RE NOT DOING ANYTHING!

INT. MAYOR'S OUTER OFFICE

The dogs charge through the outer office, past SECRETARIES.

CU. MAYOR'S OFFICE DOOR

It's ajar. The terrier bangs through it, throwing the double doors open.

INT. OFFICE

The hoard of dogs spill into the office, yapping and barking. The cats go berserk. The dogs go berserk. The ladies explode.

EXT. OFFICE. MAYOR

His jaw drops.

CU. DESK

The terrier runs under the mayor's desk and jumps into his drawer. He drops the tape.

CU. MAYOR

He's dumbfounded.

EXT. CITY HALL

Julia and the kids come out the doors.

RYCE

Do you think something bad
happened to Dad and
Beethoven?

JULIA

(worried)

No, honey. I'm sure
they're...

She stops. A smile spreads across her face.

HER POV

Down the steps and across the street. Charles and Beethoven,
wet and muddy. Charles waves. Beethoven steps around behind
him. Charles steps over the leash. He's now straddling it.

CHARLES

We did it!

EXT. CITY HALL. STEPS

Ryce yells for Beethoven.

RYCE

Beethoven!

CU. BEETHOVEN

His ear prick-up. He barks.

CU. CHARLES

A bad thought. He looks down.

HIS POV

His feet. The leash is wound around and through his legs.

CU. CHARLES

He looks up with dread. And he FLIES OUT OF FRAME.

CU. TV

The dognappers are leaving the court building. Doc Vern has his coat up to his face. Big Judy's head is bandaged and Rudy's nose is bandaged. Juan approaches with his mean scowl. As he passes CAMERA we see that the back of his head is bald from the neck line to the crown.

NEWSMAN VO

As the members of the group
were arraigned in felony
court today federal
investigators were going
through company records in
hopes of identifying the
corporations who contracted
for illegal animal research.

INT. LIVING ROOM. THE NEWTONS

Julia kisses Charles on his bandaged nose.

JULIA

And it's all because of you.

CHARLES

Because of us. We all did it.

RYCE

And Beethoven.

CHARLES

And most of all, Beethoven.

JULIA

It's time for bed.

She untangles herself from the kids.

JULIA

You guys missed enough
school.

The kids kiss Charles good night.

TED

Night, Dad.

CHARLES

Goodnight, buddy.

RYCE
Goodnight, Daddy.

CHARLES
Goodnight, sweetheart.

EMILY
Can I stay up?

CHARLES
Goodnight, baby.

The kids head upstairs.

JULIA
Are you coming up?

CHARLES
I have to let the dog in.

INT. KITCHEN

Charles walks into the kitchen. He opens the door and whistles. He steps back as Beethoven comes in. Then a basset hound, a Scottie, a collie, a shepherd, a lab, a beagle, a mutt, a huskie...

FADE DOWN

END