

PAUL AUFIERO

by

Robert Siegel

EXT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

A three-level concrete parking garage. It's bitter cold.

INT. PARKING GARAGE PAY BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

PAUL AUFIERO, the dumpy 37-year-old parking-garage attendant, sits in his cramped booth with only a cheap space heater to keep him warm. He's writing something on a yellow legal pad.

PAUL

(to self, heavy Noo Yawk
accent)

I can't tell you how sick I am...

A WOMAN in a Lexus pulls up to the booth to pay. In the passenger seat is a FRAIL OLD MAN with a patient-ID band on his wrist. Paul takes the woman's ticket and scans it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Ten dollars.

WOMAN

(incredulous)

How much?

PAUL

\$10 up to six hours.

The woman looks at the sign outside the booth: "\$5 UP TO TWO HRS., \$10 UP TO 6 HRS., \$18 UP TO 24 HRS." She shakes her head and hands Paul a \$20. He gives her change.

WOMAN

You guys have some nerve charging that here.

The gate lifts and she exits. Paul shrugs and resumes his writing. A small transistor radio is tuned to "The Sports Dogg Show," a late-night call-in show on WFAN, the local sports-radio station. He is disrupted by an old Mazda driven by an attractive but slightly worn-out-looking WOMAN in her late 20s. She seems distraught.

PAUL

Eighteen.

She hands him the exact amount. The gate lifts and she exits. He continues writing until a tough-looking MAN in an SUV pulls up. Paul scans the ticket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Five dollars.

MAN

I was in there, like, 10 minutes.

PAUL

It's \$5 for anything up to two hours.

MAN

It goes straight to two hours? There's no first 15 minutes free?

PAUL

Yeah, no, I'm sorry...

MAN

Or a dollar for the first half hour?

PAUL

That's just the way they do it here.

MAN

Even La Guardia gives you 10 minutes free.

PAUL

I really don't know about La Guardia, but--

MAN

Forget La Guardia, parking should be free at a hospital. After the thousands you're charging for my wife's...

PAUL

I'm sorry about that, sir, but I honestly don't have anything to do with the prices. I'm just--

MAN

Yeah, you're just doing your job. I bet you really get off on this, your little power trip with your little gate.

The man crumples five ones into a ball and throws it at Paul.

MAN (CONT'D)

Have fun in your fuckin' box.

The man drives off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL
(to self)
Asshole.
(beat)
Dick.

Then, after a longer pause:

PAUL (cont'd)
Fucking SUV-driving suburban fuck.

Paul returns to his writing. On the radio, a WFAN caller, PHILADELPHIA PHIL, is engaged in a heated debate with THE SPORTS DOGG. The call catches Paul's interest.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (O.S.)
You gotta be friggin' kidding me! Come noon tomorrow, Philly is gonna lay one serious smackdown on your precious boys in blue, Antwan King or no Antwan King. There's no way we're gonna lose to that pathetic team you got up there. That's right, tomorrow is judgment day for the G-men, baby! I'm out.

SPORTS DOGG (O.S.)
Philadelphia Phil, always a pleasure.

INT. METRO BUS - NIGHT

Paul is riding home from work. Out the window, we see the commercial sprawl of suburban Long Island.

INT. METRO BUS - SHORT TIME LATER

The landscape has turned grittier as we move from Long Island to Queens. The gleaming Circuit Citys and Barnes & Nobles of suburbia have given way to mom-and-pop pet stores and graffiti-stained locksmith shops.

We pass a billboard for DR. GENE'S INCREDIBLE "TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE!" SYSTEM. Dr. Gene, a creepily charismatic self-help guru, is surrounded by a spread of his many best-selling motivational books, audio cassettes, and videos.

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - PAUL'S BEDROOM - 1 A.M.

The modest blue-collar house in Queens where Paul grew up, and where he still lives with his mother, THERESA. Paul's bedroom, which is upstairs, still looks like a kid's room. On the wall above his bed is a big poster of CAM ALBERTS, the New York Giants' star linebacker. Tons of other Giants stuff is scattered throughout the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Yellow legal pad in one hand and cordless phone in the other, Paul nervously paces back and forth.

PAUL
(reading off pad)
...I can't tell you how SICK I am... I
can't TELL YOU how sick I am...

Paul is on hold. Through the phone, we hear the on-air WFAN broadcast.

PAUL (CONT'D)
...I can't TELL YOU how SICK I am...

The on-air feed is cut off and we hear the voice of a WFAN PRODUCER.

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)
Paul?

PAUL
I'm here.

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)
On in 20 seconds.

PAUL
Thanks, Larry.

Paul paces faster, all nervous energy. He takes a deep breath.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(blustery, full of bravado)
How ya doin' Sports Dogg? It's Paul From Kew Gardens, back again, and I just wanna say I cannot wait until tomorrow, when Cam and the boys finally shut these Philly fans up once and for all. I can't tell you how SICK I am of Philadelphia Phil and all these other Eagles fans, going on about how we can't stop Marcus Williams. What has Williams done lately? Nothing! The guy hasn't been the same since the Week Three ankle injury against Dallas. Their fans are going crazy like they're headed to the Super Bowl, and they can't even beat Kansas City at home! Last week, they gave up 514 total yards to an K.C. offense that was averaging a pathetic 227 yards a game, including a league-worst 98 on the ground. MY MOTHER could gain 98 yards a game! The only way those losers are--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

From another room, we hear the screeching voice of his mother.

THERESA (O.S.)

Paul, it's the middle of the night!

Paul covers the phone with his hand until she stops.

PAUL

--the only way those losers are going to the Super Bowl this season is if they buy a ticket at the door.

INT. SAL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Scrawny, 36-year-old SAL DEGAETANO is under the covers of his bed, smiling as he listens to Paul on his bedside clock radio, which reads 12:49 AM.

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

PAUL

So Philadelphia Phil, Eddie From Cherry Hill, and all the rest of you loudmouth Philly fans who've been talking smack all week on this show, get out your forks, because you're gonna be eating your words big-time when we knock the living daylights out of your precious cheesesteaks. It's judgment day for Philly, baby! Thanks a lot, Sports Dogg. You da man. I'm out.

Paul hangs up, breathless and excited. He starts punching the air like a boxer. With an errant punch, he knocks over a lamp, making a loud crash.

THERESA (O.S.)

What was that?

PAUL

Nothing, I knocked something over. Go to sleep.

THERESA (O.S.)

Can't you ever just be quiet up there?

PAUL

I'm quiet, go back to sleep, okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

7.

THERESA (O.S.)

YOU try sleeping with that racket over your head. All night with the phone calls.

PAUL

I'm off, ma. Go to bed.

THERESA (O.S.)

Every night, I have to listen to that claptrap.

(beat)

It's enough already with the stupid calls.

PAUL

You're the only noise now.

No response. Paul lets out a sigh.

THERESA (O.S.)

You're lucky I haven't kicked you out. My oldest child, still living at home. Where did I go wrong?

PAUL

Go to sleep, ma!

THERESA (O.S.)

Your father never would have put up with this, that's for sure.

PAUL

I'M QUIET! SHUT UP. SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP!

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE ~ SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is in bed, under the covers, lights out. He's on the phone.

PAUL

(whispering)

Did you hear?

SAL (O.S.)

Unbelievable, Paul. You were on fire!

PAUL

I felt that definitely needed to be said.

INT. SAL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

SAL

Oh, man, you seriously stuck it to those Philly fucks. About how they can't even beat K.C.? What's Philadelphia Phil gonna say about that? Nothing!

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

PAUL

What could he say?

INT. SAL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

SAL

And that part about how they should get out their forks, 'cause they're gonna eat their words after we get through with them? That was beautiful. The whole time, I was like, "Yes! That's my boy Paul!"

PAUL (O.S.)

I guess I just have a gift.

SAL

God, I wish I could do that.

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

PAUL

So do it.

SAL (O.S.)

Nah, I'd get too nervous.

PAUL

It's easy.

INT. SAL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

SAL

For you.

PAUL (O.S.)

Ah, maybe you're right...

SAL

Hey, did you find out about the car?

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

PAUL

Shit, I forgot to ask. Don't worry, I'm sure she'll let me borrow it. She never goes anywhere Sundays. Pick you up at 11.

Paul hangs up. He grabs some tissues from the Kleenex box on his nightstand and a small bottle of Astroglide from the nightstand drawer, and disappears under the covers.

INT. ROOSEVELT FIELD MALL - CHAMPS SPORTING GOODS - NEXT MORNING

Paul and Sal are at Champs, a sporting-goods store. They are standing before a massive wall of NFL jerseys, mostly Giants. Both of them are wearing blue Giants jerseys, Paul a Demetrius Green and Sal a Dante Carver.

PAUL

Eventually, I definitely wanna get a road Green.

SAL

I have a road McCants, but it's last year's, without the 75th anniversary patch.

A Champs SALESGUY comes over.

SALESGUY

Can I help you guys?

PAUL

Do you have the new Alberts?

SALESGUY

We should, hang on, let me check.

The salesguy grabs a long metal pole and pulls down a Alberts jersey hanging from a rack way above their heads. Paul holds it fetishistically.

PAUL

Now, that's what I'm talking about.

INT. CHAMPS SPORTING GOODS - REGISTER - CONTINUOUS

Paul hands the CASHIER his credit card.

INT. ROOSEVELT FIELD MALL - JUST OUTSIDE CHAMPS - CONTINUOUS

Paul excitedly strips off his Demetrius Green jersey and puts on his brand-new Alberts jersey. The jerseys are identical, the only difference being the player name and number.

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul and Sal are speeding down the LIE in Paul's mother's white 1990 Ford Fiesta. A cross hangs from the rear-view mirror and a St. Christopher statue is mounted on the dash. Spirits are high.

EXT. CROSS BRONX EXPRESSWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sal tunes the radio to WFAN.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Laughing and trash-talking. Paul shouts back at something he hears on the radio.

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - CONTINUOUS

Sal is looking into the mirror on the passenger-side sun visor. He's painting his face half blue and half red.

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - CONTINUOUS

Paul is painting his face as he drives, checking his work in the rearview mirror every so often. He swerves a little.

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - CONTINUOUS

A sign reads "GIANTS STADIUM - MEADOWLANDS - NEXT EXIT."

EXT. GIANTS STADIUM PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Paul hands the parking-lot attendant \$10.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Paul is driving all over looking for a spot relatively near the stadium.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is still looking. He's further away from the stadium. Sal excitedly points to a MAN getting in his car. The man grabs something from the front seat and promptly locks the car again. Paul smacks Sal in the forehead.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

They finally pull into a spot, way the hell away from the stadium.

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul and Sal are walking through the lot, enthusiastically high-fiving the tailgating fans they pass.

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

A SCALPER, a black guy in his 20s, is looking for action.

SCALPER

I need tickets, who got tickets?

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

TWO GUYS are throwing a football around. One throws a long bomb to the other. Paul leaps in front of the guy about to catch the ball.

PAUL

(playfully)

Intercepted by Alberts!

The ball clangs off Paul's shoulder and goes bounding away. It lands under a car. The man Paul leaped in front of shoots him a dirty look.

PAUL (cont'd)

Sorry.

Paul fishes around under the car and, after a bit of an ordeal, retrieves the ball. He hands it back to the guy.

PAUL (cont'd)

Sorry.

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul and Sal are in the midst of a HUGE GANG OF FANS chanting.

EVERYONE

Phil-ly sucks! Phil-ly sucks! Phil-ly
sucks! Phil-ly sucks! Phil-ly sucks!

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

The scalper is talking to TWO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCALPER
Seven hundred for the pair.

CUSTOMER #1
Forget it, that's crazy.

SCALPER
Sold-out game, ain't gonna find better
than that.

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

FOUR GUYS are grilling beef shish kebabs on a portable grill. They're all in their 20s and, judging from their clothes and the fancy SUV they came in, have money. Nearby, Paul and Sal are eyeing the beautiful shish kebabs.

PAUL
Come on, Sal, don't be a wuss. We're all
on the same team here.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul and Sal are standing with the guys, eating shish kebabs. GUY #1, who's doing the grilling, looks irritated.

GUY #1
Good?

PAUL
Mmm... fantastic. Thanks.

GUY #1
(slightly hostile)
Like you said, we're all on the same team
here.

GUY #2
So where you guys from?

PAUL
Kew Gardens.

GUY #1
That's Queens, right?

PAUL
Yeah.

GUY #3
Lucky bastard. Bet you can get a lot more
space out there than I do on the Upper
West Side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I got a pretty okay place.

GUY #3

Probably twice the size of mine for a tenth the price. I'm so jealous.

GUY #2

Kew Gardens, what's that near, like, Shea Stadium?

PAUL

Not really. You know where the Van Wyck meets the Jackie Robinson? Richmond Hill, Ozone Park... that area.

GUY #3

I guess I don't get out to that part of the city much.

Awkward pause.

PAUL

So you guys go to a lot of games?

GUY #1

Whenever the partners don't want their seats. Usually, the last few games of the season, it's too cold for the old farts. The seats are fuckin' sweet: Ten rows up on the 45.

GUY #3

I can sometimes get them through my company, too. Kick-ass skybox.

GUY #1

Marc's at Deutsche Bank, and me, Adam, and Eric are all Skadden Arps.

(beat)

How about you?

PAUL

Me? I'm with Long Island Presbyterian.

GUY #1

Very nice. Let me guess. Cardiologist.

Guys #2,3, and 4 suppress a chuckle.

PAUL

Huh? Oh, no. .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GUY #1
Neurologist?

Paul sheepishly shakes his head no.

GUY #1 (CONT'D)
Shit. Okay, hang on, let me think.
(beat)
Wait, I got it. Proctologist. You've got
proctologist written all over you

The guys laugh a little more audibly. Paul drops his shish-kebab. He bends over to pick it up and dusts it off.

EXT. GIANTS STADIUM - GATE B - SHORT TIME LATER

It's almost gametime. FANS are streaming into the stadium by the thousands. A MAN outside is hawking programs. ANOTHER GUY is hustling bootleg T-shirts. SOMEBODY ELSE is banging on a cowbell, leading a group cheer. It's a carnival-like atmosphere. Paul and Sal are psyched.

PAUL
Here we go, baby'

SAL
Whoooooooooooo!

Paul and Sal bend down in a football stance, as if they're at the line of scrimmage. They charge at each other, colliding with a soft thud. Sal wraps up Paul in a bear hug, thrashing him around. Paul turns the tables and wraps up Sal. All the while, fans are pouring into the stadium around them.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The two guys who were looking for tickets are still circling the stadium. One is holding a crude hand-drawn sign reading "WE NEED TWO."

CUSTOMER #1
Fucking scalpers.

CUSTOMER #2
32-year wait list for season tickets, but
somehow they've got.

EXT. GIANTS STADIUM - GATE B - 30 MINUTES LATER

Fans are still heading in, but it's slowing down. Most are now inside. Paul claps and high fives some more fans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Big Blue about to take care of business!

SAL

We should get to our seats.

INT. GIANTS STADIUM - SHORT TIME LATER

The Giants kick off. The crowd roars.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal are sitting on folding chairs by their car. The parking lot is COMPLETELY EMPTY except for them. They're watching the game on a little portable TV propped up on the trunk of the car. Paul looks around the lot, taking in the majesty of the scene, the stadium looming large before him.

PAUL

Can't get any closer without a ticket.

Paul raises his beer. Sal raises his to meet it.

MONTAGE OF PAUL AND SAL WATCHING THE GAME:

--Paul and Sal cheer a big play

--The Giants fumble the ball near their own goal line

--The Eagles score

--Paul throws his ski cap down in disgust.

--The Giants sack the opposing QB.

--Paul jingles his keys while Sal waves, hoping to distract the Eagles kicker

--The Eagles kick a field goal

--Paul and Sal lean forward nervously, hands clasped in prayer

--The Giants receiver drops a sure TD pass in the end zone

--The Giants receiver catches a TD pass

--Paul pisses by the side of the car

--The Eagles running back scores and celebrates with a flamboyant end-zone dance

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--A Giant is on the ground clutching his knee; Sal and Paul watch with deep concern as he's carted off on a stretcher

--The Eagles kick another field goal

--Sal gives the TV the finger while wearing heavy winter gloves; He pushes down all the fingers but the middle one

--The Giants drive down the field

--Paul and Sal are on their feet

--The Giants get a big run and are near the end zone

--Sal adjusts the reception on the TV while Paul screams at him to hurry up

--The Giants QB scrambles frantically; at the last possible moment, he throws the ball. The receiver leaps in the back of the end zone and drops the ball, which is throw high. The clock ticks down to 0:00. The Giants lose.

--Paul and Sal look devastated.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE PAY BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

A glum-looking Paul is staring off into space. WFAN is playing.

WFAN REPORTER (O.S.)

With the loss, the Giants drop to 7-4,
and their lead over Philadelphia in the
NFC East narrows to just one game.

(beat)

For all the latest sports news, stay
tuned to WFAN with updates every 15
minutes.

A WHOOSHING SOUND EFFECT.

CANNED STATION I.D. (O.S.)

(singing)

The sports lea-der, W-FA-NNNNNNN...

Paul just sits there.

CANNED STATION I.D. (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

(different super-deep voice)

Get your rabies shots, you're listening
to the Sports Dogg on 660 WFAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A LOUD BARKING SOUND.

SPORTS DOGG

10:36 in the big town. Still disgusted.

(sighs)

Vinny from Massapequa, you're on with the Sports Dogg.

A car pulls up to the gate. A HOSPITAL NURSE, still in her uniform, is behind the wheel. Paul waves hello to her and lifts the gate.

INT. PARKING GARAGE PAY BOOTH - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is sitting there, staring blankly.

FRANK FROM BAYSIDE

...waste 42 seconds with three time outs left? Inexcusable.

Paul snaps to attention when he hears:

SPORTS DOGG

Good job, Frank. Couldn't agree more.

(beat)

Philadelphia Phil, you're on with the Sports Dogg.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (O.S.)

(over-the-top macho)

Sports Dogg! Philadelphia Phil is in the house, and I got a message for a certain someone named Paul from Kew Gardens. In case you missed it, pal, Philly marched into your house today and slapped you around like A LITTLE BITCH. You were talking plenty of smack on the show yesterday, but when it came down to crunch time, you CHOKED.

A car pulls up to the booth. It is the distraught woman from the day before. Paul doesn't notice her.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

We controlled the line of scrimmage all day long, and the only reason you were even in it at the end was because of those two turnovers, which you couldn't capitalize on for jack. Alberts was a non-factor all day, and--

Paul is interrupted by TWO QUICK BEEPS. He looks up.

(CONTINUED)

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PAUL
(trying to sound nonchalant)
I'll just wing it as usual.

SAL (O.S.)
Tonight?

PAUL
In, like, an hour. You gonna be up?

SAL
(trying to sound nonchalant)
Ah, probably.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - 1 A.M.

Paul is sitting up in bed, studying the yellow legal pad in his lap. He's holding his hand up to his ear, forming a pretend phone with his thumb and pinky.

PAUL
(into pretend phone)
...cannot wait until the rematch on
December 22nd down in Philadelphia,
because it's gonna be a whole different
story, my friend. This time, we're gonna
come into YOUR house and...

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is pacing nervously, phone to ear. It's ringing. The person picks up.

WEAN PRODUCER (O.S.)
"Sports Dogg Show." Name, location, and
comment, please.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is in his underwear, standing before the season schedule. His eyes drift down to the remaining six games and stop at the last one, "DEC. 22 - AT PHILADELPHIA." In the space next to it, he writes "W", a look of grim determination on his face.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is masturbating vigorously under the covers. We hear a LOW MOAN.

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CONTINUED:

PAUL
Ohhhhhh, Goddd. .

The masturbating slows a bit. The rhythm of Paul's stroke seems slightly off.

PAUL (cont'd)
Fucking asshole.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STATEN ISLAND - GINA AND LEN'S HOUSE - DAY

A tacky but impressively large and new Staten Island home-- clearly a step up from Theresa's place. Paul and Theresa get out of their car and head up the driveway, gift in hand. Paul is wearing a Giants sweatshirt. Theresa checks out the house.

THERESA
Look how nice.

INT. STATEN ISLAND - GINA AND LEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Paul's sister GINA lets Paul and Theresa in. She's wearing a paper party hat.

GINA
Hey, hey! Welcome to party central!

Gina gives Theresa a hug and kiss as Len takes her coat.

THERESA
Oh, Gina, it's beautiful.

GINA
Just wait 'til you see it. I'll give you the grand tour.

Gina's husband LEN comes over holding their 1-year-old son BRANDON. Also running around in the general vicinity are their two other children, D.J., 5, and BRITTANY, 3. Both are fat and hyperactive.

THERESA
There's my little birthday boy!

LEN
Say hi to Grandma, Brandon!

The DOORBELL RINGS, and in walks Paul's brother DENNIS and his longtime girlfriend CHRISTINE. Dennis is wearing a red tucked-in polo shirt with an embroidered "PRICECO" logo.

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CONTINUED:

A cellphone is clipped to his pants. He's holding a 15-gallon drum of Smuckers grape jelly.

DENNIS

Avon calling!

(handing the jelly to Gina)

Hey, sis. Little gift from the store.

Hugs and kisses all around.

INT. GINA AND LEN'S BEDROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Gina is leading Theresa, Paul, Dennis, and Christine on a house tour. Everyone but Paul oohs and ahs at every turn. Gina opens the door to their very ordinary bedroom.

GINA

Ta-da!

Theresa swoons.

INT. GINA AND LEN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

They crowd into the plain bathroom.

GINA

This, of course, is the second bathroom.
Still needs some work.

Christine notices a small swatch of floral-print wallpaper taped to the wall.

CHRISTINE

Are you getting this? Adorable.

Paul rolls his eyes. Theresa catches him and shoots him a dirty look.

INT. GINA AND LEN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A boring old kitchen.

LEN

We never could have gotten a deal like
this in Queens.

GINA

(to Dennis and Christine)

If you two ever.. you know... you should
really consider Staten Island.

INT. DINING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

The tour is over. Everyone's standing around in small clusters, chatting. Paul is with Gina.

GINA

Listen, Paul, I don't know how you feel about blind dates, but Len just hired a very nice woman who I think might be your type. Her name's Melissa, and she--

PAUL

That's what you wanted to ask me?

GINA

Something wrong?

Paul makes a sour face.

INT. DINING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Everyone but Gina and Len are sitting around the table. Above their heads is a computer-printed banner reading "HAPPY FIRST BIRTHDAY, BRANDON!" The lights go out. In walk Gina and Len carrying a Carvel ice-cream cake with one candle.

GINA AND LEN

(soon joined by the rest)

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you...

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul, Dennis, and Len are having a conversation.

DENNIS

Priceco is America's fastest-growing bulk-merchandise superstore. By 2006, we're going to have 500 units in 48 states.

LEN

Impressive.

DENNIS

Cost Club and Savings Depot are shitting their pants.

PAUL

What's a "unit"?

DENNIS

A store.

INT. DINING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul and Theresa are at the dining-room table. Theresa is trying to get birthday cake into Brandon's closed mouth. Brandon sticks a fingerful of frosting up his nose. Nearby, D.J. and Brittany tear up the place while Gina tries to stop them. D.J. knocks over a chair

GINA

D.J., what did I tell you?

Gina picks up the chair. Dennis approaches Paul and Theresa.

DENNIS

(to Theresa)

Mind if I steal my big brother for a sec?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dennis talks to Paul.

DENNIS

I've got something I think you should really consider, Paul. We've got an opening for a distribution manager in our--

PAUL

I have a job.

DENNIS

I know, I just thought maybe--

PAUL

Do you think there's something wrong with my current job?

DENNIS

I just figured--

PAUL

How would you feel if I offered you a job? What if I felt bad for you, working at that depressing warehouse?

DENNIS

It's not a warehouse, it's a superstore.

PAUL

Whatever it is, I don't need your pity.

INT. DINING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

D.J. knocks over another chair. Brittany grabs a fistful of cake. Gina snatches it out of her meaty little hand.

GINA

That's enough sugar. Go watch your new video.

Len walks into the room waving a VCR tape.

LEN

(grinning)
Speaking of videos...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is gathered excitedly around the TV. Len pops the tape in the VCR and hits play.

ON TV:

We see a test pattern, then a countdown from five to one. Then:

EXT. STREET INTERSECTION - ON TV - DAY

A MAN is sitting in his car at a red light. We suddenly hear the LOUD SCREECH OF SQUEALING TIRES. The man looks to the right and gasps. His eyes bug out and he covers his face. The TV screen goes black, and we hear the sound of a VIOLENT CAR COLLISION. On the black screen appears, in bold yellow letters, "INJURED?"

INT. LAW OFFICE - ON TV - DAY

Len is leaning on an oak desk. Behind him is a big bookshelf filled with impressive-looking law books.

LEN

(stilted)
Hi, I'm Leonard Paltz, attorney at law.
Have you been injured in an auto accident
or other situation? If so, you may be
entitled to a large cash compensation.

CUT BACK TO REAL LIFE:

Gina's arms are wrapped around Len from behind. She kisses his cheek, bursting with pride. Everyone seems wowed but Paul.

CUT BACK TO COMMERCIAL:

EXT. LAW OFFICE - ON TV - DAY

Arms outstretched stiffly, Len is standing on the sidewalk outside the law office, which is on a drab commercial strip somewhere in Queens. It has an ugly teal awning that reads, "McGRUDER, DORFF, & PALTZ -- LAWYERS/ABOGADOS."

LEN

At McGruder, Dorff & Paltz, we've been personal-injury specialists for over nine and a half years. Whether you've been the victim of a slip-and-fall, dog bite, or even wrongful death, we have the experience you need to get the cash you deserve.

As he speaks, we see scrolling up the TV screen: "MEDICAL MALPRACTICE, AUTO ACCIDENTS, DOG BITES, SLIP-AND-FALL, TRUCKING ACCIDENTS, MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENTS, PRODUCT LIABILITY/RECALLS, BRAIN/HEAD INJURIES, BURN INJURIES, SPINAL CORD INJURIES, BACK INJURIES, WRONGFUL DEATH, PREMISES LIABILITY, NURSING HOME ABUSE."

EXT. A RANDOM STREET - ON TV - DAY

A very happy-looking MAN IN A NECK BRACE holds a wad of bills in his fist.

INJURED MAN

Thanks, McGruder, Dorff & Paltz!

EXT. LAW OFFICE - ON TV - DAY

Len is now sitting behind the desk.

LEN

You're welcome!

CUT BACK TO REAL LIFE:

Everyone bursts into applause. Theresa gives Len and Gina a big hug.

THERESA

My son-in-law, the TV star!

GINA

And public defender.

Dennis clears his throat to get everyone's attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENNIS

As long as everyone's here and feeling good, I have a little announcement of my own to make.

(takes Christine's hand)

Christine and I are getting married.

Everyone goes nuts again. Theresa moves from hugging Gina and Len to hugging Dennis and Christine. She weeps.

From out of nowhere, Brittany runs at Paul and tosses a big cup of soda into his lap.

INT. BEDROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Gina is closing one of Len's dresser drawers.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is standing in front of a full-length bathroom mirror in a pair of his brother-in-law's Dockers and a nice button-down shirt. His soda-soaked Giants sweatshirt and jeans are drying on the edge of the sink.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

GINA

How do those fit?

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul stares unhappily at this more impressive, professional version of himself.

EXT. VAN WYCK EXPRESSWAY - NIGHT

Paul and Theresa are driving home. Theresa is behind the wheel.

THERESA

Why don't you at least visit Priceco? You never know.

PAUL

I don't want to discuss my career.

THERESA

You could be heading somewhere there.

PAUL

Like Dennis? Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THERESA

He's doing very well for himself. They
just promoted him.

(beat)

Who knows, maybe you'd actually meet
someone for once.

PAUL

What do you mean?

THERESA

Dennis and Gina both met people at work

PAUL

So?

THERESA

So who are you gonna meet in a toll
booth?

PAUL

Ma, Gina was Len's mistress! She was his
secretary--he was cheating on his wife
with her!

THERESA

That first wife wasn't no good for him.

PAUL

Gina FUCKED him while he was married! You
daughter's a homewrecker!

THERESA

Don't you say that word in my car!

PAUL

"Homewrecker" or "fucked"?

THERESA

The second one.

PAUL

Why? It's what she did. She fucked him.

THERESA

Stop it--I won't have that.

PAUL

So it's worse for me to say it than for
Gina to do it?

THERESA

Stop it, Paul.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL

No, I wanna know. Which is worse, me saying the sentence, "Gina fucked her married boss," or Gina fucking her married boss? 'Cause if you ask me, the second is a lot worse.

THERESA

I'm stopping this car.

PAUL

You're such a good Catholic, but somehow, in your brain, saying dirty words is worse than adultery. Is that how the Pope feels? Maybe you should ask the Pope which is worse.

THERESA

You should only wind up with somebody as good as Len.

PAUL

Gee, that'd be a tough one to top.

THERESA

You're such a judge. Let's see you bring home any girl before you judge.

PAUL

Just because you don't see girls doesn't mean I don't date.

THERESA

Sure, you do. You're dating lots of girls.

PAUL

Maybe they're just not good enough to bring home to you.

THERESA

You're so kind to your mother, sparing me from all these thousands of girls you're dating, waiting for just the right one who's worthy to meet me.

PAUL

I'm dating, alright? Drop it.

THERESA

Yeah, I know exactly who you're dating. Your hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PAUL

What did you say?

THERESA

Don't think I don't see all the tissues in your garbage.

PAUL

You're crazy! I am not--

THERESA

Either that or you're just sneezing an awful lot. Maybe you've just had a bad cold the last 15 years.

PAUL

Oh, I am not hearing this.

THERESA

The strange kind of cold where you sneeze out of your you-know-where.

Paul covers his ears.

PAUL

I am not hearing this!

THERESA

You probably think I don't see none of those brown streaks in your underpants, either.

Paul presses his hands to his ears harder and closes his eyes.

PAUL

Stop it!

THERESA

You don't want me to see these things? Do your own laundry and keep your hands off yourself.

PAUL

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

EXT. QUEENS - J&H FURNITURE LIQUIDATORS - DAY

We're in the pick-up area behind J&H Furniture Liquidators, a furniture showroom on Hillside Avenue specializing in tacky mafioso-type bed frames, dressers, dining-room cabinets, etc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sal, wearing a back-support belt and wheeling a dolly, is finishing up helping a large-ish CUSTOMER in a shiny Adidas track suit load something into his SUV.

SAL

Yeah, good to see you, too.

The man gives Sal a \$2 tip and gets in his car. Paul pulls into the parking lot. He walks over just as the man is pulling away.

SAL (cont'd)

Did you see who that was?

PAUL

No, who?

SAL

Richie Danziger.

PAUL

Are you serious? Richie Danziger? I fuckin' hated that dick

SAL

He used to give you atomic wedgies in the locker room.

PAUL

No, that was Dan Pasquale. Richie was purple nurple. And Chris Kolkos was Indian sunburns.

SAL

You weren't too popular with the jocks.

PAUL

Yeah, you, neither.

(beat)

So what's Richie doing these days?

SAL

Some kind of contracting or developing. I forget what he said.

PAUL

Richie Fuckin' Danziger...

EXT. JAMAICA LANES - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Queens bowling alley.

INT. JAMAICA LANES - CONTINUOUS

PAN ACROSS a long row of lanes. The place is crowded. We hear the sound of PINS SMASHING.

SAL (O.S.)

And DeGaetano picks up the spare!

INT. JAMAICA LANES - BAR AREA - CONTINUOUS

Sal and Paul are playing VIDEO BOWLING on an arcade machine in the bar area.

PAUL

Not bad. Not bad at all. But now watch and learn from the master.

Sal moves aside for Paul's turn. He taps the joystick to just the right spot on the line and hits the "BOWL" button. He rolls a perfect strike.

PAUL (cont'd)

Steeee-rike!

EXT. JAMAICA LANES - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal are standing at adjacent urinals.

SAL

You hungry?

INT. STELLA'S PIZZERIA - NIGHT

Paul and Sal are eating a slice. Paul's is pepperoni and Sal's has ham and pineapple on it.

PAUL

How can you eat that shit?

SAL

It's good. Hawaiian.

Sal raises it for Paul to try a bite.

PAUL

When it comes to pizza toppings, I think I'll trust the Italians over the Hawaiians.

SAL

Just try.

Sal moves the slice closer to Paul, who swats it away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I don't need to drink piss to know it
tastes like piss.

Sal takes the slice back...

SAL

So you gonna give Philadelphia Phil more
shit tonight?

PAUL

Nah, I'll let him make the next move.

SAL

What if he never calls again? Maybe you
shut him up permanently.

Looking out the pizzeria's window, Sal notices a GARGANTUAN
MAN-MOUNTAIN get out of a limo at a gas station across the
street.

SAL (CONT'D)

Paul...

PAUL

Yeah?

SAL

Is that who I think it is?

Paul turns around. He peers intently.

PAUL

Holy fucking shit.

EXT. JACKIE ROBINSON PARKWAY - NIGHT

Paul and Sal are tailing the limo in Paul's mother's car.
They are out of their minds with excitement.

SAL

What the fuck's he doing here?

PAUL

I don't know!

SAL

Where the fuck's he going?

PAUL

I don't know!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL

Are we really gonna follow him?

PAUL

You got anything better to do tonight?

SAL

Cam Fucking Alberts!

EXT. BROWNSVILLE, BROOKLYN - 10 P.M.

The limo exits the Jackie Robinson Parkway in Brownsville, a very rough part of Brooklyn. They drive down Atlantic Avenue, starting to look a bit nervous.

SAL

What's he doing?

PAUL

Maybe he's visiting a teammate's family or something. Lathon and Carver are both from Brooklyn.

The limo turns off Atlantic onto a side street. It parks in front of a VERY SHADY-LOOKING HOUSE. Paul parks a safe distance away, rolling up his windows and locking his doors. They see ANOTHER MAN, a smallish white guy, get out of the limo and enter the house.

EXT. THE SCARY HOUSE - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul and Sal are waiting.

SAL

Maybe we should go.

Just then, the guy emerges from the house and gets back in the limo. It takes off again.

EXT. PROSPECT EXPRESSWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

Sal and Paul are still tailing the limo, keeping a safe distance.

SAL

Think he's partying?

Paul checks his watch. It's 10:35 PM.

PAUL

It's a little late to first be heading out.

EXT. GOWANUS EXPRESSWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

SAL

I can't believe we're doing this! This is so cool.

A sign reads "BROOKLYN BATTERY TUNNEL-- CASH ONLY RIGHT LANE." Paul puts out his hand to Sal.

PAUL

\$3.50.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The limo crawls through Times Square. Not frequent visitors to Manhattan, Paul and Sal are dazzled by the bustling scene. The limo turns a corner and soon pulls up in front of VISIONS, the city's finest strip club. Alberts and two other guys, neither of whom looks like a football player, hop out and enter the club.

Paul and Sal seem nervous about the prospect of entering the strip club. Paul pulls up to the spot where the limo just dropped off the guys. Paul rolls down his window to ask the VISIONS DOORMAN a question.

PAUL

Excuse me, is there a--?

VISIONS DOORMAN

(waving brusquely)

Can't stop here, keep moving.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal are looking for a parking spot. Nothing.

EXT. ANOTHER MIDTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

A RAPPER, mid-20s, is performing on a street corner. Throngs of pedestrians walk past, oblivious to him. He's dressed in hip-hop gear that's meant to look trendy and expensive but is clearly cheap bootleg knockoffs.

RAPPER

(rapping)

Maintain on the game, bringin' lyrical
pain/ My style is wild, addictive like
cocaine.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal are still looking for a spot. It's hopeless.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

RAPPER

When I'm on the mic, shit just ain't the same... Kill or be killed, that's the name of the game.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul takes a ticket and enters a parking garage. It's \$15 an hour--way more expensive than Long Island Presbyterian.

SAL

(teasing)

You don't get, like, a union discount?

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal are walking toward Visions. The city is electric.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

RAPPER

(to self)

Man, it's all about to happen for me.

EXT. VISIONS STRIP CLUB - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The previously brusque doorman politely opens the door for Paul and Sal.

VISIONS DOORMAN

Good evening, gentlemen. Welcome to Visions.

INT. VISIONS STRIP CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Sal and Paul walk down the stairs to the club. They seem to be loosening up, excited by the prospect of seeing Cam Alberts and naked women. They are about to enter when a HUGE BOUNCER stops them and directs them toward a window.

BOUNCER

Over there.

They go to a plexiglass window, behind which is a SEXY FEMALE CASHIER.

SEXY CASHIER

\$20.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pooling their money, they hand her two tens and start to head in.

SEXY CASHIER (CONT'D)

Each.

They dig into their pockets and give her another ten each. They enter, but before they get very far, the big bouncer directs them to the bar.

BOUNCER

Please step to the bar for your drink, gentlemen.

They approach the BARTENDER, a sexy, scantily-clad woman.

PAUL

Bud Light.

SAL

Uh, same.

BARTENDER

Twelve each.

They dig into their pockets.

INT. VISIONS MAIN STAGE

TOP 40 RAP AND R&B blares from the Visions speakers. Paul and Sal are sitting at a table next to the main stage. They look fidgety and not particularly strip-club savvy.

VISIONS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, at this time, please welcome to the Visions main stage, Khandi, Vanessa, and Mercedes.

The previous dancers exit and on walk KHANDI, VANESSA, and MERCEDES. Paul and Sal look across the club at Cam Alberts, who's got a sizeable entourage around him: friends, agents, managers, guys who look like old college teammates, etc. They're all doing shots, getting drunk.

SAL

This is seriously insane.

PAUL

And you were worried.

Sal looks over at Cam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL

What should we do? We gotta go over or something.

They are interrupted by MERCEDES, a stunning, exotic-looking woman of mixed ethnicity. She starts writhing right in front of them.

MERCEDES

(sexy)

Hi, what's your name?

PAUL

Paul.

MERCEDES

Hi, Paul. I'm Mercedes.

PAUL

(dorky)

Wow, like the car. Cool. Nice to meet you, Mercedes.

Paul awkwardly extends his hand to shake hers, as if he's at an interview. She's on all fours, shaking her ass in their faces.

SAL

What are you?

MERCEDES

I'm half-Italian, half-Colombian, and, like, one-eighth Cherokee.

SAL

That's a really cool race.

Mercedes looks at Sal and smiles seductively. Bent over on her knees, she licks a finger and rubs her G-stringed pussy.

SAL (cont'd)

You have a very beautiful figure, Mercedes. Could I give you a dollar?

INT. VISIONS - CAM'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

A member of the entourage pops open a bottle of Cristal. Several of the men are getting lap dances. They're in the midst of an animated discussion

CAM BUDDY #1

CL 600, that's all I need to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAM BUDDY #2

The new CL 600's a piece of shit. BMW 7-series!

CAM

Escalade! Escalade! Escalade! That's the shit. I just got the 2003. Custom grille, 22-inch rims, wood-grain kit... Fuckin' sick.

INT. SAL AND PAUL'S TABLE - SHORT TIME LATER

Sal and Paul have one eye on the stage, one on Cam's table. CHINA, an Asian stripper in a white spandex dress that glows under the club's blacklight, walks over and puts her arm around Sal.

CHINA

Would you like a lapdance?

SAL

Is that, like, extra?

CHINA

It's \$20.

Sal pauses to ponder.

SAL

How much time do you get?

CHINA

One song.

SAL

Oh...

(beat)

Um, no thanks. Maybe later.

China walks away annoyed at the cheapskates.

PAUL

What a fuckin' rip.

SAL

They get really close up with the lapdance, like they stick their nips right in your face, but it's not worth 20 bucks more than this.

He gestures toward a STRIPPER gyrating just a few feet away on stage.

INT. VISIONS - CAM'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

One of Cam's buddies leans over and discretely taps his nose.

CAM BUDDY #3

Need a bump?

INT. SAL AND PAUL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

SAL

Maybe it'd be worth \$20 if the song was,
like, really long.

PAUL

I'd tell them to play, like, "Stairway."

INT. SAL AND PAUL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Sal and Paul notice Cam and another guy get up.

SAL

He's leaving!

PAUL

He's probably just going to the bathroom

SAL

Maybe that's a good place to say hi. It'd
be casual, like, you know, just some guys
chatting, taking a leak.

INT. VISIONS - MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cam and his buddy are in adjacent stalls. Each takes out a
small vial of cocaine and unscrews the cap. Attached to the
inside of the cap is a little spoon.

INT. SAL AND PAUL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal take a deep breath and get up. They head toward
the bathroom, nervous and excited.

PAUL

I wish I brought a Sharpie.

INT. VISIONS - MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cam exits a stall, wiping his nose. He washes his hands. In
walks Sal and Paul. They look like they're about to say
something to him, but then chicken out. They awkwardly make
their way to the urinals. Cam gets a weird vibe from them and
exits the bathroom quickly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Fuckin' A! We blew it.

Cam's friend is still in the stall. He hears this.

INT. VISIONS - SAL AND PAUL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Sal and Paul are back at their seats. They look over to Cam's table.

INT. VISIONS - CAM'S TABLE

Cam notices the two guys from the bathroom glancing his way. He takes a big swig from a Cristal bottle. The guy he was in the stall with eyes them suspiciously, too.

EXT. VISIONS ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The rapper is standing right next to the doorman, who ignores him.

RAPPER

'Sup, yo. My name is Mysterious. With a "Y".

He extends his hand to the doorman. The doorman stonily disregards him like a Buckingham Palace guard.

RAPPER (CONT'D)

M-y-s-t-e-r-i-o-u-s.

Thinking he's done a cool hip-hop modification, Mysterious doesn't seem to realize that this is actually the correct way to spell the word.

INT. VISIONS - SAL AND PAUL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Another stripper dances in front of Sal and Paul. She zeroes in on Sal.

STRIPPER

Hi, I'm Sindi... with an "S".

She smiles at Sal. After a few writhings, she pulls open her leg garter for Sal to slide in a bill. Sal looks into his wallet. All he's got left is a \$5. He looks at Sindi's garter, which is stuffed with ones.

SAL

I don't know if this is allowed, but is it possible to, like, get back change?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sindi makes a face. She counts off four singles and takes Sal's five. She tosses the singles into his lap.

SAL (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Sindi promptly moves to the other side of the dance floor, as far away from them as possible.

EXT. VISIONS ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The rapper is still bothering the doorman.

RAPPER

Yo, how much to see them titties?

The doorman stares straight ahead, ignoring him.

INT. VISIONS - CAM'S TABLE - SHORT TIME LATER

Everyone's coked up. Cam is particularly loud and drunk and wired and edgy. Everyone's listening to him tell a story.

CAM

So I'm like, "FUCK YOU, YOU FUCKING PUSSY-
ASS MOTHERFUCK!"

Everyone laughs uproariously, including Cam himself.

INT. VISIONS - SAL AND PAUL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Paul is deep in thought.

PAUL

Let's get him a drink.

SAL

Huh?

PAUL

We'll buy him a drink and tell the waitress to tell him it's compliments of the gentlemen by the stage. Then he'll invite us over to say thanks. It's perfect.

Paul checks his wallet.

SAL

I only have four bucks left.

PAUL

Gimme.

INT. VISIONS - CAM'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Drink in one hand, expensive Cuban cigar in the other, Cam is entertaining his posse with a terrible "Scarface" impression.

CAM

Ny name ees Tony Montana. You fock wit mee, you fockin' wit dee best.

Everyone laughs maniacally. They're all high out of their minds.

CAM (CONT'D)

Say hello to my leetle fren!

He then does a Travis Bickle "Taxi Driver" line with a Tony Montana accent, apparently confusing the two movies.

CAM (CONT'D)

Ju talking to mee? Are *ju talking to mee?*

A WAITRESS comes over and hands Cam a drink.

CAM (CONT'D)

What's this?

WAITRESS

Screwdriver. From the high rollers.

She nods in the direction of Paul and Sal.

INT. VISIONS - PAUL AND SAL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal nod to Cam suavely.

INT. VISIONS - CAM'S TABLE

Cam waves the waitress off.

CAM

I don't want it.

INT. VISIONS - PAUL AND SAL'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Their view obscured by Cam's entourage, Paul and Sal don't see that the drink's been rejected.

SAL

Is he coming over?

PAUL

I think we're supposed to go there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL
You don't get waved over?

PAUL
Let's just go.

EXT. VISIONS ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The doorman roughly shoves the rapper away.

DOORMAN
Get the fuck outta here! It's enough!

RAPPER
Yo, why you gotta do me like that? I
ain't bothered nobody!

INT. VISIONS - CAM'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal nervously approach the table. Cam doesn't even see them at first. ONE OF HIS BUDDIES, very drunk and very high, intercepts them.

PAUL
Hi, we're here to see Cam.

CAM BUDDY #1
Cam, there's somebody at the door to see
you!

Paul and Sal squeeze their way through the entourage to Cam. He tenses up as soon as he sees it's the guys from the bathroom.

PAUL
Hello, Mr. Alberts. I'm Paul, and this is
Sal. We're really big fans of yours.

Cam gives them a "Who gives a fuck?" look and takes a swig of Cristal.

SAL
The biggest. We came all the way from
Queens to see you.
(winking slightly)
With a little stop in Brooklyn.

Cam takes this remark as a veiled threat.

CAM
What the fuck you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Nothing, never mind, if you're busy, we can, you know, that's cool...

SAL

We can go.

CAM

You guys narcs?

PAUL

No, we just...

COKE BUDDY FROM BATHROOM

What'd you mean, "We blew our chance"?

PAUL

Huh? I didn't--

BUDDY FROM BATHROOM

In the can. You said you "blew your chance."

CAM

(slips back into Tony Montana accent)

Are ju guys narcs?

PAUL

Not at all, no, we just...

Sal steps way back. Buddies #1 and #2 stand between Cam and Paul as a precaution, anticipating trouble

CAM BUDDY #1

Cam, they're just some stupid fans.

CAM BUDDY #2

It's cool, relax.

Cam inches forward, toward Paul. His buddies put their hands to his chest, which Cam doesn't like. Cam resists, and they put their arms around him lightly, which only gets him more agitated.

CAM

Ju guys are focking narcs!

Cam's pals wrap him up tighter. He breaks free and SHOVES PAUL HARD, knocking him to the ground. Cam KICKS PAUL IN THE RIBS. Paul hops up to scramble away, and Cam PUNCHES HIM IN THE FACE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Paul falls backward and hits his head hard on the edge of a table. Cam's friends try to hold him back. He breaks loose of their restraint.

CAM (CONT'D)
LEMME GO! I FOCKING KEEL YOU!

Cam picks up a glass and THROWS IT HARD AT PAUL'S HEAD. It shatters against his temple. Paul is bleeding bad. He has shards of glass in his forehead. Sal, panicked, reaches for his cellphone.

SAL
Police? I'm at Visions, a strip club,
somewhere in Manhattan!

Cam is finally restrained by about seven of his buddies. Paul lies on the floor, barely conscious. Cam starts to calm down a bit, still breathing heavy.

CAM
You got what you deserve. You don't
respect me. I hope you're hurt.

SIRENS ARE HEARD.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - NEUROSURGICAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -
DAY

PAUL'S POV. Paul opens his eyes. He slowly scans his surroundings, unsure where he is. Sitting in a chair in a corner is Sal. Sal notices that Paul is awake.

SAL
Hey, buddy, how you feel?

Paul groans, still woozy.

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - NEUROSURGICAL ICU - DAY

A DOCTOR is examining Paul. His head is heavily bandaged. Sal is there.

DOCTOR
The CAT scan showed a subdural hematoma,
but we were able to successfully drain
it.

PAUL
A subdural what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

You were bleeding from a vein between the brain and skull.

PAUL

Am I gonna be okay?

DOCTOR

You should be fine. The only lasting effects we sometimes see in these types of situations are psychological. Post-traumatic stress disorder, that sort of thing.

PAUL

I'm not too worried about that. As long as there's nothing physical.

DOCTOR

Good. Then the plan is to keep you one more day for observation, and after that you're free to go.

PAUL

"One more day"? How long have I been here?

DOCTOR

Four days.

Paul's wheels are turning.

PAUL

It's Monday?

DOCTOR

All day.

He looks at Sal. Sal knows exactly what he's thinking.

SAL

(grim)

We lost, 31-14.

Paul's face goes ashen.

PAUL

Did Cam play?

Sal says nothing. His face says it all.

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

A GAGGLE OF REPORTERS hover outside a closed hospital room. Paul's doctor escorts a POLICE INVESTIGATOR into the room.

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is lying in bed. In walks the doctor and the investigator.

DOCTOR

Paul, this is Detective Frank Stavros of the 17th Precinct. He just needs to ask you a few questions.

Paul eyes the investigator suspiciously.

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - FOURTH FLOOR - SOME TIME LATER

The investigator exits the room. He looks frustrated.

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Paul is lying in bed, watching TV. He flips to ESPN.

ON TV:

INT. ESPN SPORTSCENTER

Anchor Dan Kramer is at the Sportscenter desk, wrapping up a story. A picture of SHAQUILLE O'NEAL occupies the top right corner of the screen.

KRAMER

Kobe, for his part, says there are no hard feelings.

A pic of Cam Alberts replaces the Shaq pic.

KRAMER (cont'd)

New York Giants GM Wayne Gaston had no comment today regarding linebacker Cam Alberts' status for Sunday's game against Chicago. Alberts, who did not play in yesterday's loss to Minnesota, was charged with aggravated battery stemming from a fight at a Manhattan strip club. He was jailed for five hours last Wednesday before being released on a \$20,000 bond. No word yet from the Manhattan D.A.'s office whether the case will be pursued.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRAMER (cont'd)

The victim, 37-year-old Paul Aufiero of Queens, remains in stable condition at a Manhattan hospital.

Paul turns off the TV. He spots a day-old "New York Post" on a chair near his bed. He flips through the sports section and finds: "ALBERTS VICTIM STILL IN ICU" and "COPS MUM ON STRIP-CLUB BEATING." He flips another page and sees an editorial from one of the Post's columnists: "LET'S SEND A MESSAGE TO THESE THUG ATHLETES."

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - HOSPITAL ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Paul lies awake in bed, alone with his thoughts.

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Paul is eating breakfast. Gina and Len are sitting with him as he eats. Paul seems to be in a good mood.

GINA

I can't believe they let people out of the hospital a day after draining their brain.

PAUL

I don't know, maybe I got no brain to drain.

Paul laughs at his little joke.

LEN

Speaking of brains, Paul, I've been thinking.

PAUL

Uh-oh, that's pretty scary.

LEN

What that guy did to you...

Paul bristles.

LEN (cont'd)

...that should not go unpunished.

PAUL

I already talked to the cops. I told them I don't want to press charges.

LEN

You did? Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I just don't.

LEN

If you don't press charges, it'll be left to the D.A. And the way they coddle these celebrities, there's no way--

PAUL

I don't want to press charges.

GINA

Come on, Paul, just hear Len out.

LEN

Look, if you're not interested in justice, how about money? You stand to make millions in a civil suit.

PAUL

I don't want to be one of those assholes who sues McDonald's for a billion dollars 'cause their vanilla shake was too cold.

LEN

We're not talking about vanilla shakes here, Paul.

PAUL

What are we talking about, then, Len?

LEN

We are talking about a privileged millionaire athlete who brutally beat a man to within an inch of his life in an utterly unprovoked attack. That sort of behavior is not only repugnant, it is illegal. Our society has an obligation to hold its most high-profile members to the same standards as everyone else.

PAUL

What do you call that in grammar where you say, like, "can't" instead of "can not"? Or "won't" instead of "will not"?

LEN

You mean contractions?

PAUL

That's it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEN

Why?

PAUL

You never use those when you're trying to sound all smart and lawyer-y.

LEN

I don't see your--

GINA

What the hell's the matter with you, Paul? Felony assault and battery, you could sue this guy for three, four million, easy!

PAUL

Yeah? Is that what Len says?

GINA

No, Paul, that's what I say. I know these things. I'm in the legal profession.

PAUL

Sorry, I thought you were a legal secretary.

GINA

Fuck you.

PAUL

You guys don't care about justice. You just want money.

LEN

Money is justice, Paul. You're actually willing to let him get away with this?

PAUL

I don't wanna sue. End of discussion.

LEN

This guy doesn't give a shit about you, Paul. He does not give a shit about you.

PAUL

I DON'T WANNA SUE, OKAY? DROP IT.

Gina stands up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GINA
Forget it, Len. Let's go.
(to Paul)
Stupid idiot. No fucking brains.

Just as Len's grabbing his coat, in walk Dennis and Christine. Christine is holding a "Get Well Soon!" balloon and a pink teddy bear. Dennis is carrying a ludicrously large container of Priceco-brand aspirin with a bow around it.

CHRISTINE
(super cheery)
Good morning! How's our patient?

INT. NYU MEDICAL CENTER - HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Paul is lying in bed watching TV. A NURSE comes in with a medium-sized box for Paul.

NURSE
Mail call.

Paul examines the return-address mailing label. It's from the New York Giants. He opens the box and finds a card on top of an object wrapped in newspaper. He takes the card out of the envelope and reads it:

"ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE GIANTS ORGANIZATION, HERE'S WISHING YOU A SPEEDY RECOVERY." The card is signed "PETER ALLAND, VICE-PRESIDENT OF FOOTBALL OPERATIONS." It doesn't even have Paul's name, and looks suspiciously like a standardized, mass-produced card the team sends anyone who's sick with anything. Paul doesn't seem to notice.

Paul eagerly pulls the object from the box and unwraps it. It is an official team football autographed by all the players. Paul cradles it lovingly, carefully examining each signature. Eventually, he comes across Cam Alberts' name. Wide-eyed, he silently mouths the word "Wow."

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NOON

Paul and Theresa are eating egg-salad sandwiches at opposite ends of the table in stony silence. Paul has a large bandage covering his left temple and a deep bruise on his right cheek. The PHONE RINGS in the background. Neither of them pick it up. It eventually stops. Then, after what seems like an eternity:

THERESA
Wonder if that one was The Post or The News.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THERESA (cont'd)

(beat)

Or maybe The Times.

Another stretch of uncomfortable silence.

THERESA (CONT'D)

The papers all wanna interview my son. So proud you make me.

PAUL

Would you please lay off? As maybe you can see, I'm not doing too good right now.

THERESA

At least you didn't have to run into Claudia Pasquale at the A&P and have to try to explain what your son was doing getting beat up in some filthy topless bar.

PAUL

I told you, ma, we were following Cam Alberts. He's a major football star.

THERESA

That makes it better? If anything, that's worse.

PAUL

We wouldn't have been in a strip club otherwise.

THERESA

You wouldn't be in a strip club if you had a life of your own.

PAUL

I got a life.

THERESA

What life? You won't even take out that girl Gina wants to fix you up with.

PAUL

I got bigger things to worry about right now, okay? I got a lot on my plate.

THERESA

Bigger than dying alone? Do you want to die alone, Paul?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL

Who gives a crap? We all do.

(beat)

You will, too, ma.

THERESA

No, I won't. I'm gonna die with your father right here in my heart.

She beats her chest.

PAUL

I don't know, that sounds pretty alone to me.

(beat)

Know who didn't die alone?

THERESA

(exasperated)

Who?

PAUL

Dad. Know why? 'CAUSE HE DIED FIRST.

That's the only way to avoid dying alone:

Get married and die first.

The PHONE RINGS again. They don't pick up, sitting in silence as it rings and rings.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul sits on the edge of his bed. The PHONE RINGS again. He lets it ring for a long time. Finally, he decides to pick up.

REPORTER

(startled to actually get someone)

Hi, Paul Aufiero please.

PAUL

Whom could I say is calling?

REPORTER

This is Murray Pape from The Daily News. I'd just like to ask him a few quick--

PAUL

I'm sorry, he's not home right now, but thanks.

Paul quickly hangs up.

INT. PARKING GARAGE PAY BOOTH - NIGHT

Paul is listening to the radio as usual. His face is still bandaged and bruised.

WFAN SPORTS REPORTER (O.S.)

...With the win Sunday and New York's loss to Oakland, Philadelphia moves into a first-place tie with Big Blue.

(beat)

For all the latest sports news, stay tuned to WFAN with updates every 15 minutes.

A WHOOSHING SOUND EFFECT.

CANNED STATION I.D. (O.S.)

(singing)

The sports lea-der, W-FA-NNNNNNN...

CANNED STATION I.D. (O.S.)

(CONT'D)

His muzzle is off... and so are the gloves. You're listening to the Sports Dogg on 660 WFAN.

SPORTS DOGG (O.S.)

Marty From Montclair, you're up.

MARTY FROM MONTCLAIR (O.S.)

How ya doin', Sports Dogg, first-time caller, long-time listener.

SPORTS DOGG (O.S.)

Good to have you aboard, Marty. What's on your mind?

MARTY FROM MONTCLAIR (O.S.)

I know everybody's been talking a lot about this tonight, but I just wanna say I'm absolutely disgusted that the league's not taking any action against Cam Alberts. I mean, here's a star athlete who puts some poor schmo nobody in the hospital...

A car pulls up to the gate. The DRIVER is a guy in his early 20s. He starts searching the car for his ticket in a suspiciously exaggerated way. He opens the glove compartment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
(to self, intentionally loud
enough for Paul to hear)
Damn, not in there.

Paul watches as the man lifts up the floor mats.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Where did I put that ticket? I know it's
here somewhere.
(to Paul)
Sorry, I can't seem to find my ticket. I
was only in there for, like, 10 minutes,
though.

Paul has seen this trick a million times.

PAUL
It's \$18.

DRIVER
Eighteen?

Paul points to sign near the entrance gate reading, "DO NOT
LOSE TICKET!! THOSE EXITING WITHOUT TICKET WILL BE CHARGED
FULL-DAY RATE OF \$18"

DRIVER (CONT'D)
I wasn't in there anywhere near that.
Didn't you notice when I came in? Don't
you keep track of that stuff?

PAUL
That's not my job.

DRIVER
Well, it should be. What else do you have
to do in there all day?

PAUL
That's what the ticket's for.

DRIVER
Yeah, the ticket's so people will lose
it, so they'll have to pay the maximum
rate.

PAUL
That's not it at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER

If you're too busy to keep track of when people come in, they should at least hire somebody else to do that so people like me don't have to suffer.

PAUL

Are you gonna pay or not?

DRIVER

Or there should be video cameras. To protect people from you scammers falsely accusing them of stuff

PAUL

Are you gonna pay?

DRIVER

I'll give you what I owe Nothing more.

He takes a \$5 out of his wallet and hands it to Paul.

DRIVER (cont'd)

Lift it, or I'll call your supervisor and get you fired.

Paul is fed up. He lifts the gate in disgust.

PAUL

Just get out of here.

The driver starts to head off then stops.

DRIVER

You're lucky. I coulda gotten you canned.

PAUL

For what?

DRIVER

For having your head up your ass.
(beat)

That's probably how your face got all fucked up like that. From getting it stuck up somebody's ass.

The guy peels out. As he disappears, he leans out the window and gives Paul the finger.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Sucka!

INT. PARKING GARAGE PAY BOOTH - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is staring off into space. On WFAN, we hear:

WFAN CALLER (O.S.)

...if that guy had any balls at all,
he'd...

INT. PARKING GARAGE PAY BOOTH - LATER THAT NIGHT

The woman who comes every night pulls up. She hands him \$18 without even being prompted. Paul takes the money and raises the gate. She bursts into tears.

PAUL

You okay?

WOMAN

Yeah, I'm fine.

PAUL

You sure there isn't anything...?

WOMAN

No, I'm fine. Fine. Thanks, though.

The woman begins to compose herself. She notices Paul's face.

WOMAN (cont'd)

What happened?

PAUL

Huh?

WOMAN

Your...

Paul touches his bruise.

PAUL

Oh, this? It's nothing. Stupid accident.
Fell down my basement stairs. I'm fine.

They look at each other, connecting for a moment.

WOMAN

Would you like to get some coffee?

PAUL

(caught off guard, scared)

Me?

She nods yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (cont'd)

Uh, sure.

INT. APOLLO DINER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul and the woman are at a Greek diner near the hospital. They are eating pie and coffee.

WOMAN

So how long have you been there?

PAUL

This January, it'll be seven years.

She tries to hide her shock that someone would spend seven years working in a booth in a parking garage.

WOMAN

Seven years... wow. That's a long time to be working in one place.

(beat)

Do you like it?

PAUL

It's okay for now. I've been working on some things, making plans to move up to some bigger and better stuff, but it's cool.

WOMAN

What sort of stuff are you working on?

PAUL

Mostly, like, media stuff. You know, like, writing. And I've done some stuff on the radio.

WOMAN

Really? Wow. What kind?

PAUL

Mainly sports-related. Do you know WFAN?

WOMAN

That's the sports-talk station?

PAUL

Yeah, I do some stuff for them. Not, like, my own show, but I'm sort of a featured guy, a regular guest.

WOMAN

That's very impressive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Thanks. So hopefully, something will come of that...

They each sip their coffee, taking shelter from the awkward pause.

PAUL (cont'd)

I just realized I don't know your name.

WOMAN

Melissa. Melissa Bevell.

PAUL

Melissa? That's funny. I was sorta involved with a Melissa recently. Everybody in my family was really pulling for it, but she just wasn't right for me.

MELISSA

Yeah, I know how that goes.

They sip again.

PAUL

So, like, I don't know if this is too personal, but how come you're at the hospital every day?

MELISSA

My mother's been sick. She's on dialysis.

PAUL

Oh, I'm sorry. I hope it's not too bad. You always seem pretty upset when you're leaving the garage

MELISSA

It's been tough. But I think everything will be okay.

PAUL

Dialysis, that's, like, heart stuff?

MELISSA

Kidneys.

PAUL

How do they treat that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MELISSA

It's pretty complicated. The kidneys, they have to do a whole bunch of stuff to them. Like sometimes, they need to be hooked up to stuff and have things put into them. Then there's surgery. But it should be okay. We'll see...

Paul doesn't quite follow.

PAUL

Oh.

Another awkward pause, another sip of coffee.

MELISSA

Would you like to have sex?

Paul's jaw drops.

EXT. HILLSIDE AVENUE - MELISSA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Melissa is driving, Paul is in the passenger seat.

EXT. SUNRISE MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

They pull up to the Sunrise Motel. Paul gets out.

INT. SUNRISE MOTEL - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS

Paul nervously approaches the DESK CLERK.

DESK CLERK

Help you?

PAUL

Hi, I need a room. For, like... not a full day.

DESK CLERK

We don't do hourly.

PAUL

Oh.

(beat)

How much for a single?

DESK CLERK

Two people, \$65.

Paul checks his wallet. He only has \$40. He's about to ask if they take Visa when he sees a large sign reading "CASH ONLY."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Do you know if there are any of those,
um, places nearby?

DESK CLERK

A fuck motel? Kew Motor Inn's not too
far. Exit 42 on the LIE, you'll see it
right off the service road.

PAUL

Thank you.

EXT. SUNRISE MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Paul gets back in the car.

PAUL

No vacancy. I think I know another place,
though.

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

They're driving.

MELISSA

Do you have... protection?

INT. WALGREENS PHARMACY - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is browsing the store's selection of condoms. He seems
unsure what to look for. He finally settles on a 3-pack of
Trojans.

INT. WALGREENS PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

Roaming the aisles, Paul picks out a few cheap, random
items--a candy bar, batteries, dental floss, etc.--to
"dilute" the condom purchase.

INT. WALGREENS PHARMACY - FRONT REGISTERS - CONTINUOUS

Paul apprehensively approaches the register. He's clearly not
comfortable buying condoms. There are two checkout cashiers,
a STONER DUDE in his 20s and an ELDERLY WOMAN who vaguely
resembles his mother. They're both helping customers. He
waits, hoping and praying to get the young guy.

OLD-LADY CASHIER

(to Paul)

I can help you here.

Paul winces and walks over.

EXT. KEW MOTOR INN - SHORT TIME LATER

The pull into the lot of the Kew Motor Inn, a cheap hourly motel that also offers themed "fantasuites."

PAUL

Wait here a sec.

INT. KEW MOTOR INN - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS

Paul is talking to the DESK CLERK, who's behind five inches of bulletproof plexiglass. The rates are posted. It's \$55 an hour for the most basic room.

PAUL

I guess I figured if a regular hotel room's, like, \$60 for the full 24 hours, an hour would be, like, five, ten bucks.

DESK CLERK

Don't work that way.

PAUL

You don't take credit cards, do you?

DESK CLERK

Sure.

Paul breathes a huge sigh of relief.

INT. KEW MOTOR INN - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Melissa open the door to their room. It's done up in trashy reds and pinks, and there's a mirror on the ceiling. Paul, nervous beyond belief, has no idea what to do or say.

PAUL

Wow, look how romantic.
(beat)

What a great place for having sex.

Melissa shuts the door and starts kissing Paul. He kisses her stiffly, as if he's never made out with a woman before. Melissa pins Paul against the wall and presses tightly against him. After about 30 seconds of grinding, Paul's face tenses up. He gulps and lets out a little gasp. He comes in his pants.

Paul continues with the kissing, trying to hide what has happened. Melissa slowly moves her hand down toward Paul's crotch, and he intercepts it. As she's embracing him, he sticks his butt out slightly to keep his groin from coming into contact with her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She leads him to the bed, where the kissing continues. They roll around awkwardly, Paul's every move dictated by his fear of revealing his premature ejaculation. Melissa tenderly kisses Paul on his facial bruises and cuts. She then straddles him, prompting him to casually drape a hand over his crotch. She unbuttons the top two buttons on her blouse when she stops herself.

MELISSA

Let's turn out the lights.

Paul is relieved. The room is pitch black. We hear the rustling of sheets for a little bit. Then the movement stops.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I should go.

She gets up and puts on her clothes. She turns on the light. For a split-second, her shirt is hiked up a bit in the back and we see an OLD, FADING BRUISE on her hip. Paul does not notice.

Paul is relieved to have averted humiliation but is upset that something went wrong.

PAUL

Is it me? Did I do something?

MELISSA

No, no, no, you were fine. It's just...
I'm sorry, I should go.

She bolts out the door. Paul watches her disappear down the hallway. He goes back in the room and shuts the door, glumly plopping back down on the bed. He touches his crotch, then holds his hand close up to his face. He touches his thumb to his middle finger, watching the cum form a sticky connection between the two. He does this several times.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Paul is in bed, unable to sleep. He has a splitting headache. He lies awake restless, listening to WFAN on his bedside clock radio, which reads 4:26 AM. A MAN with a thick Noo Yawk accent is on some sort of angry rant about the New York Rangers.

RANGERS FAN (O.S.)

...is a disgrace to the sport of hockey.
If LeClair had any class at all, he'd...

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul opens the giant drum of Priceco aspirin. He reads the label for recommended dosage. It says one or two. He takes three.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Head still pounding, Paul is watching TV with the volume low so as not to wake his mother. He's watching an infomercial for self-help guru DR. GENE's line of books and motivational cassettes. Dr. Gene extolling the wonders of his system to a rapt studio audience.

DR. GENE

..If you follow the six core principles of my "Take Control Of Your Life!" system, I guarantee you will see noticeable results within a matter of...

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - INFORMATION DESK -
NEXT DAY - EVENING

Paul is carrying a box of chocolates and a mylar "GET WELL SOON" balloon. He approaches the INFORMATION-DESK NURSE. The nurse recognizes him.

NURSE

(surprised)

Hey, Paul, I don't think I've ever seen you inside the hospital.

PAUL

I'm visiting a patient. A friend's mother.

NURSE

What's the name?

PAUL

Bevell.

NURSE

First name?

PAUL

I'm not sure.

The nurse types in "Bevell."

NURSE

I'm showing a Fran Bevell in 651.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Thanks.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - 6TH FLOOR ELEVATOR
BANK - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open. Paul steps out and sees a sign with an arrow pointing left reading "640-660."

INT. JUST OUTSIDE HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul looks at the name on the door. "BEVELL, F." He knocks lightly on the half-open door.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(Gruff)

Come in.

Paul opens the door and sees a BURLY, MENACING MAN in his early 30s in the bed. The man is in traction, his head immobilized in a halo. Paul, intimidated by his rough tone, takes only a few steps into the room. The man can't turn his head to see who he's talking to.

PAUL

(confused)

Sorry, I think I have the wrong room.

PATIENT

Who you looking for?

PAUL

A woman named Fran Bevell.

PATIENT

I'm Fran Bevell, asshole. You see any tits on me?

Paul slips out.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PATIENT INFORMATION
DESK - CONTINUOUS

Paul is back at the desk.

PAUL

Could you tell me where the kidney people are?

INT. NEPHROLOGY WARD - CONTINUOUS

Paul enters a large room with DOZENS OF OLD PEOPLE hooked up to dialysis machines. He nervously clears his throat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL
(to the whole room)
Excuse me, does anyone here have a
daughter named Melissa Bevell?

Everyone shakes their heads "Not me."

ONE OLD LADY
Pardon?

INT. 6TH FLOOR ELEVATOR BANK - CONTINUOUS

The elevator door opens. Paul gets out.

INT. JUST OUTSIDE ROOM 651 - CONTINUOUS

Paul is about to knock on the door when he hears inside:

FRAN (O.S.)
(angry)
You're doing it too fast. Half the
fucking soup's in my lap.

MELISSA (O.S.)
Sorry.

The voice is familiar to Paul.

FRAN (O.S.)
Yeah, you're sorry. For a lot of things.

The door slightly ajar, Paul peers into the room. He sees a familiar coat on a chair. He then sees Melissa for a split second from behind.

INT. 6TH FLOOR CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Paul is heading toward the elevator. He passes a friendly FEMALE EMPLOYEE whom he recognizes from the parking garage. The woman recognizes him, too. She has a LAMINATED HOSPITAL ID clipped to her shirt. It says "DEBORAH SUTIN, SOCIAL WORKER."

SOCIAL WORKER
Parking-garage guy! What brings you to these parts?

PAUL
Oh, I was just visiting somebody. I'm working tonight.

SOCIAL WORKER
I hope everything's okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

Yeah, they're fine, thanks...

(beat)

Just curious, do you know what happened to that guy in 651?

SOCIAL WORKER

On his patient file, he claims he broke his neck "falling down a flight of stairs." Classic.

Paul gives her a confused look.

PAUL

I don't...

SOCIAL WORKER

Let's just say from the way he talks to his wife, she's probably had to use a frying pan for more than just eggs.

EXT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - FRONT ENTRANCE -
SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is standing in front of the hospital, still holding the mylar balloon and chocolates. He pulls a pen out of his pocket and takes a violent stab at the balloon, aiming straight for the words "GET WELL SOON!" The balloon is unharmed. Paul makes several more attempts to stab it. Each failed try further stokes his anger. Then, instead of holding it by the string, he traps the balloon under his arm. He raises the pen above his head and brings it down with full fury. The balloon bursts with a loud and violent pop..

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - ROOM 651 - SHORT
TIME LATER

Melissa is standing next to the bed, holding up the New York Post for Fran to read. He's reading the sports pages.

FRAN

Turn.

Melissa turns the page. Fran browses the page for a few moments.

FRAN (CONT'D)

Turn.

Melissa turns the page. Something catches her eye on the side facing away from Fran.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE UP ON NEWSPAPER: We see a headshot of Paul with photo caption "THE VICTIM." The picture is under the headline "D.A. STILL QUIET ON ALBERTS."

Melissa is reading the article. She looks upset.

FRAN (CONT'D)

Turn.

Caught up in the article, Melissa is slow turning the page.

FRAN (CONT'D)

(a bit more forceful)

Turn.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE -
THAT NIGHT

Melissa pulls up in her car. She hands him \$18.

MELISSA

Hey, Paul.

PAUL

(a bit cold)

Hi.

MELISSA

Paul, about last night...

PAUL

Forget it, it happens.

MELISSA

I honestly didn't mean to--

PAUL

It's fine, don't worry about it. Really.

MELISSA

It wasn't because of you.

PAUL

I understand. You got a lot on your mind,
with your mother and all.

A car pulls up behind Melissa to pay. The driver, a MIDDLE-
AGED LADY, sees they're just chatting and groans.

MELISSA

I said I'm sorry. What more do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

I don't know, nothing.

(beat)

I guess I just don't take it well, being
led on.

MELISSA

That's not why I did it.

PAUL

Then I guess it was to get back at him.

Paul gestures toward the hospital. The woman in the car
behind her HONKS.

DRIVER

C'mon, folks, let's break up the coffee
klatsch'

Melissa is unsure what to say to Paul.

PAUL

I came by today. Nice guy.

She closes her eyes.

MELISSA

I just needed to talk to somebody.

PAUL

Well, I guess I count as somebody.

MELISSA

Somebody, not anybody.

PAUL

You didn't have to lie to me.

MELISSA

Look, Paul, I wasn't the only dishonest
person there last night. Of all people,
you should understand.

PAUL

What's that supposed to mean?

MELISSA

It means we've both been hurt. You know?

The woman honks again, louder and longer.

DRIVER

While we're young, people!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL
(dodging the issue)
I thought you liked me

MELISSA
I did.
(beat)
I do.

PAUL
Then can we maybe go out for coffee or,
like, see each other sometime again?

Irate, the middle-aged woman leans on her horn, producing a continuous, blaring beep.

MELISSA
That's not a good idea.

Melissa looks behind her

MELISSA (cont'd)
I gotta go.

Melissa shifts her car into drive. Paul lifts the gate. She exits.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - 3 A.M.

Another headache, another sleepless night. The clock radio reads 3:07 AM. On WFAN, we hear:

SPORTS DOGG (O.S.)
Next up on line three, our old pal
Philadelphia Phil.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (O.S.)
Sports Dogg, how ya doin? I'm calling
with a SHOCKING revelation for all your
listeners. You know this guy who got the
living crap beat out him by Cam Alberts?
I have it on good authority that he is
none other than "Sports Dogg" regular
Paul From Kew Gardens.

SPORTS DOGG
You don't know that. We never give out
full names on this show.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
True, but you do post the pictures of the
"Sports Dogg" Caller Of The Month on the
FAN website.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (cont'd)

I happened to be browsing it the other day and came across Paul From Kew Gardens' picture, Mr. July 2001. Then today, I'm reading the sports section and see a picture of the Paul who got beat up. Same friggin' guy! PAUL FROM KEW GARDENS GOT PUT IN THE HOSPITAL BY A GUY FROM HIS OWN TEAM! Is that the most humiliating thing or what? COULD YOU IMAGINE?

The PHONE RINGS. Paul picks up.

PAUL

Hello?

SAL

(urgent)

Are you listening?

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Paul lies in bed, masturbating. The clock now reads 4:21 AM.

PAUL

(seething, to self)

Fucking asshole.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Paul massages his temples. He appears to be in headache agony.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SOME TIME LATER

Paul is lying in bed, cradling his "Sorry we beat you up" team-autographed football. He tosses it up in the air several times. He reaches over to his nightstand, where he's got the accompanying card on display. He rereads it. He stares at the signature of Peter Alland, New York Giants Vice-President of Football Operations. He wets a finger with his tongue and rubs the signature. It doesn't smear. It's a pre-printed card.

INT. PARKING GARAGE PAY BOOTH - NIGHT

Paul looks like shit. The information-desk nurse pulls up to the gate.

NURSE

You okay, Paul?

PAUL

Yeah, just a little tired.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE

Well, take care of yourself.

PAUL

Thanks.

She exits.

INT. METRO BUS - NIGHT

Paul is sitting toward the back of the mostly empty bus. A pair of BLACK KIDS, probably 12 or 13, are sitting in the back row. They're sharing a bag of sunflower seeds, giddily plotting something mischievous. Paul can hear them.

KID #1

Do it.

KID #2

You do it.

Kid #2 gives his friend a playful shove, egging him on.

KID #1

Do it, yo. Don't be a faggot.

Kid #2 gives in. He motions for Kid #1 to be quiet and still. He places a sunflower seed in his mouth and, taking careful aim, spits it at the back of Paul's head. It bounces off and lands in the hood of his nylon Giants winter jacket. Paul pretends he didn't feel the seed. The kids double over in hysterics.

About 30 seconds later, Paul, hoping the coast is clear, quickly runs his fingers through the back of his hair to straighten the spot where the seed hit. The kids notice and start howling anew.

INT. STELLA'S PIZZERIA - NEXT DAY

Paul is eating a slice by himself. The man at the next table gets up and leaves his New York Post on the seat. Paul grabs it and opens to the sports section. He sees a headline: "ALBERTS BEATING VICTIM PLANS \$25 MIL. SUIT." He reads the lead paragraph:

"KEW GARDENS, NY--AN ATTORNEY REPRESENTING PAUL AUFIERO, 37, ANNOUNCED PLANS FRIDAY TO FILE A \$25 MILLION CIVIL SUIT AGAINST FOOTBALL STAR CAM ALBERTS MONDAY, CITING PAIN AND SUFFERING, LINGERING INJURIES, AND SEVERE EMOTIONAL DISTRESS. LEONARD PALTZ, THE LAWYER FOR..."

INT. THERESA'S CAR - SHORT TIME LATER

An enraged Paul is speeding down the highway. A sign says "VERRAZANO-NARROWS BRIDGE - 3 LEFT LANES". He's got The New York Post on the seat next to him.

EXT. GINA AND LEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gina opens the door.

PAUL

Where's Len?

INT. GINA AND LEN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Paul dramatically kicks open the bathroom door, which was already slightly ajar and needed no kicking. Len is sitting on the toilet, right in the midst of wiping. Paul is clutching the copy of the NY Post, breathing hard.

LEN

WHAT THE FUCK, PAUL?

PAUL

Yeah, what the fuck?

LEN

I'm taking a dump! Get the fuck out of here!

Gina is standing behind him in the doorway.

GINA

Get out of here, Paul. You're acting like a fucking lunatic.

PAUL

(suddenly calming down)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, you're right.

Gina leads Paul out of the bathroom. When they're halfway down the hall, he WHEELS AROUND and SPRINTS BACK INSIDE the bathroom, locking the door behind him.

GINA

(through door)

Jesus Christ, Paul!

LEN

You're insane!

Paul gets right in Len's face with the New York Post.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

What the fuck is this?

LEN

What's what?

PAUL

"What's what"? "WHAT'S WHAT"?

Paul flips wildly through the sports section pages, looking for the article. After a longer search than he would've liked, he finds it and nearly puts his finger through it.

PAUL (cont'd)

The fucking lawsuit I'm apparently planning to file is what's what!

LEN

Paul, you have to believe me, I'm acting in your best interests here. You're not seeing things clearly.

PAUL

I told you I don't want to sue. You have no right.

LEN

I do if I'm your brother-in-law and you're not mentally competent to make such decisions for yourself.

PAUL

What are you talking about? I'm mentally competent.

LEN

You're a 37-year-old man who still lives with his mother and depends on her for food, laundry, and countless other basic life necessities. On paper, you're practically a retard.

Len pulls back a bit, realizing he was a tad harsh.

LEN (cont'd)

Look, I realize you look up to this guy, but you have to stop looking at him as a hero and start looking at him as a no-neck asshole gazillionaire who almost killed you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL

I'm sorry, but I just don't feel I have grounds to sue. The whole thing was an accident. A misunderstanding.

LEN

A misunderstanding?

PAUL

He was drunk.

LEN

That's no excuse.

PAUL

I was harassing him. He was just trying to have a good ti--

LEN

Bullshit, Paul! Do you hear yourself? Do you actually hear yourself?

PAUL

Lots of people get beat up every day. I don't see you out there all upset, fighting for their cause. Your cause is the cash.

LEN

My cause is you. You're my brother-in-law. And for what it's worth, the whole family supports this: Gina, Dennis, your mom...

PAUL

Well, for what it's worth, I'm gonna do everything in my power to stop it.

LEN

You do that, kiddo.

PAUL

I will.

LEN

Great. Can't wait.

They have reached an impasse.

LEN (CONT'D)

Can I please finish wiping now?

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul is suffering another agonizing headache.

EXT. QUEENS PUBLIC HEALTH CLINIC - NEXT DAY

Establishing shot of a free health clinic.

INT. QUEENS PUBLIC HEALTH CLINIC - CONTINUOUS

Paul is sitting in the clinic's large waiting area. It's a zoo: Crying babies, pregnant women, uninsured homeless people, the elderly, etc.

Paul is filling out a patient-information sheet. It asks for the name and number of "PERSON TO CONTACT IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY". He looks troubled by the question. After much soul-searching, he writes "THERESA AUFIERO." Next to this, it asks "RELATIONSHIP TO PATIENT." Paul writes "MOTHER." Paul moves on, filling in other lines, but then returns to the emergency-contact part and crosses out his mother's name. In its place, he writes "SAL DEGAETANO." Where it asks "RELATIONSHIP TO PATIENT," he crosses out "MOTHER" and writes "ONLY FRIEND."

INT. QUEENS PUBLIC HEALTH CLINIC - ONE HOUR LATER

Paul is still waiting. In the corner of the waiting room, a TV is mounted up high. Paul's eyes drift to it.

ON TV:

The TV is tuned to CHANNEL 7 NEWS AT NOON, a local New York newscast.

INT. CHANNEL 7 NEWS AT NOON

ANCHORMAN

Now, here with all the latest in the world of sports, our very own Randy Clark.

RANDY CLARK

Thanks, Mort.

A picture of Cam Alberts appears in the corner of the screen.

RANDY CLARK (CONT'D)

Well, today was a very good day indeed for one Mr. Cam Alberts.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDY CLARK (CONT'D)

At 9 a.m., the Manhattan D.A.'s office announced it is dropping criminal charges related to that infamous strip-club melee of two weeks ago, ordering Alberts to serve 100 hours of community service instead. Less than an hour later, Giants G.M. Wayne Gaston announced that the team will end the star linebacker's suspension, clearing him to play in tomorrow's key matchup against Washington. Alberts, who practiced with the team this morning, had this to say:

STILL ON TV. CUT TO:

INT. GIANTS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A shirtless Cam is sitting on a stool in front of his locker, talking to REPORTERS.

CAM ALBERTS

I'm just happy to finally put this whole thing behind me and get back to the business of winning football games. I thank the good Lord that I was able to--

INT. HEALTH CLINIC EXAMINING ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

A shirtless Paul is sitting on an examining table, talking to a CLINIC DOCTOR.

DR. KRISHNAN

With a subdural hematoma, you shouldn't be getting the headaches. It's most likely something else.

PAUL

Like what?

DR. KRISHNAN

Any number of things. You really should set up an appointment with a neurologist to run some tests.

PAUL

You can't just do that here today?

DR. KRISHNAN

We don't have any of that kind of equipment.

PAUL

(to self)

A neurologist...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (cont'd)

(beat)

I guess I'm not exactly sure who to call.

EXT. GIANTS STADIUM ENTRANCE - DAY

It's gameday. The area outside the stadium crackles with excitement. Fans pour in. Scalpers hustle for action. A three-piece brass band plays. Souvenir vendors hawk their wares. A BIG FAT GUY runs around whooping and hollering, trying to psyche up the crowd. He's wearing a T-shirt that says "WASHINGTON SUCKS..." He turns around, and we see that the back reads "PHILLY SWALLOWS."

INT. GIANTS STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Washington kicks off. The crowd roars.

EXT. GIANTS STADIUM PARKING LOT - ONE HOUR LATER

A face-painted Paul and Sal are watching the game on the portable TV in the parking lot.

ON TV: Giants defensive end DEMETRIUS GREEN sacks the Washington QB.

TV ANNOUNCER

Oh, what a hit by Green! Loss of seven on the play.

Green celebrates the sack like a man possessed. Among the players who aggressively mob him in celebration is Cam Alberts. Paul and Sal leap out of their chairs and high-five each other.

PAUL

(angry, macho)

Fuck, yeah! That's the way, D.G.!

SAL

DE-METRIUSSSS GREEEEEEEEEN!

EXT. GIANTS STADIUM PARKING LOT - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul and Sal sip their beers.

SAL

Know what's weird? Back in high school, we fuckin' hated the jocks.

PAUL

So?

SAL

Now we love 'em.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sal gestures to the TV. On TV, we see the headshot and vital stats of Cam Alberts, who just made a big play.

PAUL

No, we don't.

SAL

What do you mean we don't? We're fuckin' sitting in the freezing cold, screaming our heads off for them.

PAUL

These aren't jocks, they're athletes. Richie Danziger's a jock. Cam Alberts is an athlete. Big difference.

SAL

You don't think Cam Alberts was a jock in high school?

PAUL

He was on the football team, sure. But he was an athlete. That's above the jocks. Jocks are the assholes who never go on to do anything with their lives, as punishment for what dicks they were in high school. Athletes, when they're in high school, are too busy going someplace in life to bother being bullies.

Sal chews this over.

SAL

Know what, Paul?

PAUL

What.

SAL

I gotta tell you. What you just said, that makes no fucking sense whatsoever.

Sal laughs at him. Paul doesn't like this.

PAUL

Yeah, it does, Sal. You're just not getting what I'm saying.

SAL

(laughing)

I think maybe Cam messed up your brain!

Paul shoves Sal, knocking him and his chair over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL
Fuck you!

SAL
What the fuck, Paul?!

Sal gets up and dusts himself off.

PAUL
Sorry.

SAL
What was that for?

PAUL
I'm sorry. I just kinda lost it there for
a second.

SAL
I guess so. Geez.

PAUL
Sorry.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul is standing before his 2003 Giants team schedule. In the space next to "DEC. 3 - WASHINGTON", Paul writes in "W - 23-3." The clock radio is audible in the background:

WFAN SPORTS REPORTER (O.S.)
...got a much-needed boost from the
return of Cam Alberts today, shutting
down the vaunted Washington offense in a
decisive 23 to...

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul is on the phone, yellow legal pad in hand.

PAUL
So who's laughing now, Philadelphia Phil?
We're back in first place, all alone, and
that's how it's gonna stay!

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is asleep. He is dreaming.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOUISIANA SUPERDOME - SUPER BOWL XXXIX - NIGHT

The Giants are running out the clock. The scoreboard reads "NEW YORK 31 - PITTSBURGH 20". Cam Alberts and SEVERAL TEAMMATES dump Gatorade on the COACH's head.

ENTIRE CROWD

Three... two... one!

The clock hits 0:00. New York wins the Super Bowl. Paul and Sal are in the stands, deliriously cheering.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER

And the Giants are Super Bowl champions!

INT. LOUISIANA SUPERDOME - SUPER BOWL XXXIX - CONTINUOUS

Cam Alberts charges off the field. He stops in front of a MAN WITH A MICROPHONE.

CAM ALBERTS

I'm going to Disneyworld!

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is smiling, clearly loving the dream.

INT. LOUISIANA SUPERDOME - GIANTS LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A wild, champagne-drenched locker-room celebration is in full swing. The NFL COMMISSIONER, flanked by an ABC REPORTER and the Giants coach, is holding a large trophy.

NFL COMMISSIONER

It is now my distinct honor to present the Super Bowl XXXIX MVP trophy to the man who was all over the field today, who almost singlehandedly shut down a tremendous Pittsburgh offense, Mr. Cam Alberts.

Cam's teammates roar. Somebody pulls Cam over. He's drenched in champagne, wearing his football pants and a championship T-shirt and baseball cap.

CAM ALBERTS

Oh, man, this is just unbelievable. So many people I want to thank... the good Lord for seeing us to victory today, Coach Perkins, all my teammates and, most of all, the fans.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAM ALBERTS (cont'd)

Especially one very special fan, a guy who stuck by me when things got rough, who never gave up on me.

(looking around locker room)

Is Paul here? Paul Aufiero, get on up here!

Everyone cheers. A champagne-soaked Paul joins Cam on center stage. Cam puts his arm around him.

CAM ALBERTS (cont'd)

Paul, I know I hurt you, but you understood that I didn't mean it, that it was just a terrible accident. And you never, ever lost faith in me or the team. That's why, if you ask me, you're the real Super Bowl MVP.

Cam hands the MVP trophy over to Paul, who raises it high over his head. The locker room erupts in riotous cheers. Paul is beaming, vindicated.

PAUL

(to Cam, in a private moment)

No hard feelings, man. Honest mistake.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is asleep, smiling.

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Paul is at the kitchen table, gnawing on spare ribs and egg foo yung as he watches his mother in silence.

Theresa is methodically dismantling the remains of their Chinese take-out lunch. She takes the plastic bag the food came in and puts it in a bag under the sink that already contains hundreds of neatly folded plastic bags just like it. She then takes the paper bag that was inside the plastic bag and folds it neatly. She lays the paper bag flat on a stack of similar paper bags in a high cupboard. She then takes the five unused plastic forks and five plastic spoons that came with the Chinese food and puts the spoons in an old Sanka coffee tin and the forks in an old Chock Full Of Nuts tin. Both tins are already jammed with identical leftover plastic cutlery. She then takes the 20 or so packets of soy sauce, Chinese hot mustard, and duck sauce that were in the bag, and puts them in their appropriate drawers in the fridge. There's got to be 75 pounds of packets in there already.

Despite having seen his mother do this a million times, Paul is still astonished by her pointless thrift. He chuckles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THERESA

What's so funny?

PAUL

(laughing)

You must have the world's largest collection of Chinese-food packets. I think I saw an '83 soy sauce in there the other day.

THERESA

Such a comedian.

PAUL

Have you ever once actually used one of those? My whole life, I've never seen you use even one.

THERESA

What do you want me to do? I'm not gonna just throw them out.

PAUL

My mother the squirrel, stocking up for the great duck-sauce strike of 2007!

THERESA

Keep laughing. That's a real riot, not being wasteful.

PAUL

What's a riot is you spending the last 40 years putting those stupid packets in coffee cans. That's what's a riot, if you ask me.

INT. METRO BUS - EVENING

Paul is heading to work. As he stares glumly out the window, the bus passes endless Queens shopfronts.

PAUL

(to self)

What the fuck's the point?

INT. METRO BUS - SHORT TIME LATER

The urban shopfront grit of Queens has given way to the sanitized commerciality of suburban Long Island. Endless Targets, Home Depots, and other national chains whiz past. Among them is the mammoth Priceco superstore where Dennis works. Paul stares hard at it.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Melissa silently hands Paul her usual \$18. It's like they don't even know each other.

PAUL
Thank you.

The gate lifts and she exits.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul stands before the 2003 schedule. Next to "DEC. 8 - DALLAS", he writes in "W - 14-6."

WFAN SPORTS REPORTER (O.S.)
...victorious, but so is Philadelphia,
beating Houston 17-13 to stay just one
game back with two to go...

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Paul clutches his head. In the background, we hear the piercing wail of ambulance sirens.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul lies awake unable to sleep.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Paul sits in his booth.

EXT. GIANTS STADIUM PARKING LOT - DAY

Paul and Sal are watching the game in an EMPTY LOT. There aren't even any cars. It's an away game.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul stands before the 2003 schedule. Next to "DEC. 15 - AT GREEN BAY" he writes in "L - 24-10." In the background, we hear:

WFAN SPORTS REPORTER (O.S.)
With the loss, the team drops back into a
first-place tie with Philadelphia. The
two teams meet next week in a decisive
Monday night showdown in Philly.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is in bed, suffering another blinding headache.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul opens the aspirin drum. For such a huge container, it's getting surprisingly low. Paul's vision blurs a bit. He squints hard, bringing the five aspirins he's holding back into focus. He downs them.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul crawls back into bed. He hears that familiar voice again.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (O.S.)

We are your worst nightmare, buddy, refusing to die, tailing you stride for friggin' stride. Oh, man, I cannot wait for next Monday night, when you're thrown into the lion's den of Veterans Stadium, 77,000 screaming Philly fans making your life a living hell...

INT. STREETS OF KEW GARDENS - 2 A.M.

Paul is taking a walk. The streets are empty. He passes a bookstore. In the window is an oversized replica of the cover of Dr. Gene's "TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE!"

INT. STREETS OF KEW GARDENS - 3 A.M.

Paul is still walking. A street sweeper rumbles past, blowing dirt and newspapers in his face.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Paul lifelessly takes a driver's ticket.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - 4 A.M.

Paul is masturbating listlessly. It's not working. He's distracted.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Paul is staring off silently. He starts writing in his yellow legal pad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE UP on pad. He writes: "IT IS TIME I TOOK CONTROL OF MY LIFE." He reads it back to himself, silently mouthing the words while nodding intensely.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - DAY

Paul is on the phone.

PAUL

Hello, may I please have the number for
The Daily News.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is on the phone.

PAUL

Murray Pape, please.

(beat)

Thank you.

Paul paces as he waits on hold. Then:

OVER PHONE (O.S.)

Hi, this is Murray Pape.

PAUL

Hello, Mr. Pape, this is--

OVER PHONE (O.S.)

I'm not available at the current time,
but if you leave a message, I will get
back to you. Thanks.

We hear a long BEEP. Paul hangs up.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul tries again. It rings and picks up.

OVER PHONE (O.S.)

Hi, this is Murray Pape. I'm not--

Paul hangs up.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul tries again.

OVER PHONE (O.S.)

Hi, this is--

Paul hangs up, a bit angrier.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul tries again.

OVER PHONE (O.S.)

Hi, this is--

Paul is about to hang up again, but stops himself.

OVER PHONE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

--Murray Pape. I'm not available at the current time, but if you leave a message, I will get back to you. Thanks.

A long BEEP.

PAUL

Hello, Mr. Pape. My name is Paul Aufiero. As you may recall, you phoned my household recently out of interest in speaking to me regarding the recent incident at Visions strip club involving myself and Cam Alberts. Anyway, I was hoping to speak to you in person about this, but would like to let you know that I am planning to hold a press conference to set the record straight regarding certain aspects of this situation and other things, too. The press conference will occur tomorrow night at 11:30 p.m., or possibly a few minutes later, on "The Sports Dogg Show" on WFAN, 660 AM. Please pass along word of this press conference to any other people in the media who this might be of interest to. Thank you very much, Mr. Pape, and I look forward to your attendance listening to my press conference. Goodbye.

Paul hangs up.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul is hard at work writing.

ON PAGE:

..."WAS AN UNFORTUNEATE MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN MY SELF AND"...

Paul crosses something out.

..."HAVE NO PLANS TO SUE AT THIS"...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He crumples up a page and throws it out.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Paul is still writing furiously.

ON PAGE:

..."THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TEAM AND I ARE GOOD"...

He crosses something out.

..."I WOULD APPRECHIATE IT IF YOU RESPECTED MY"...

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Still writing.

..."AS FOR YOU, PHILADELPHIA PHIL, I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY THAT"...

He tries a new wording.

..."WILL BE SETTLED ON THE FEILD THIS MONDAY"...

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Paul paces back and forth with his yellow legal pad, anxiously practicing his speech.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul checks his watch. It's 10:57 PM.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul goes into his closet. He digs through all the sweatshirts and football jerseys, and at the very back, finds a not very stylish BLUE PINSTRIPED SUIT. You get the sense it's his only one.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is wearing the suit. He puts on the tie, struggling to remember how to knot one.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

In front of the mirror, Paul wets down his hair and combs it.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul stacks three milk crates on top of each other and covers it with a bedsheet, forming a makeshift podium.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul goes over his speech one more time. He checks his watch. It's 11:25. He takes a deep breath and dials the phone.

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)

"Sports Dogg Show." Name, location, and comment, please.

PAUL

Hey, Larry, it's Paul.

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)

Whatcha got for us tonight, Paul?

PAUL

Actually, some important things. Do you think you could get me on soon? I told people I'd be on around eleven thir--

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)

Phones are pretty crazy tonight, but I'll see what I can do.

PAUL

Okay, but--

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)

Just hang on the line.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul paces. He checks his watch. It's 11:34.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Still pacing, more agitated. It's 11:51.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul's going out of his mind. It's 12:08. As he holds, he listens to the on-air broadcast over the phone. Hearing the other callers' stressed-out rants only makes him crazier.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's 12:23, nearly an hour after the press conference was supposed to start.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)

Paul?

PAUL

I'm here.

WFAN PRODUCER (O.S.)

30 seconds.

Paul is put back on hold. The on-air broadcast returns. Paul positions himself behind the "podium" and prepares to address the world. After 30 seconds, he hears:

SPORTS DOGG (O.S.)

Next on line three, the famous Paul From Kew Gardens. What's shakin', Paul?

PAUL

Hello, Sports Dogg.

(clears throat)

Hello, and thank you to all of you WFAN listeners and members of the media for tuning in to my press conference. As many of you may know, there have been numerous things said and written about me in the newspapers in recent weeks.

Paul is speaking loudly, out of nervousness and a desire to "project" for his press conference.

PAUL (cont'd)

Tonight, I would like to clear up a number of these items, and also address--

THERESA (O.S.)

Not again, Paul!

Paul is thrown off by the scream from downstairs.

PAUL

--my primary critic on this radio station. First off, the matter of the reports of my plans to file a \$250 million lawsuit against Cam Alberts in connection with the events of Novem--

We hear a click on the phone line.

THERESA

(over phone)

Paul, I have had it up to here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Paul's mother has picked up right in the middle of the press conference.

PAUL
(calm but urgent)
Hang up the phone please.

THERESA (O.S.)
It's ridiculous already. You're 37 years old.

PAUL
Hang up, ma.

THERESA
What kind of nonsense is this?

PAUL
(blood-curdling)
HAAAAANG UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUP!

Click. She hangs up. Paul tries to regain his composure.

PAUL (cont'd)
Fuck, sorry, that was my roommate. I--
Paul is cut off.

SPORTS DOGG (O.S.)
Whoa, whoa, whoa.

INT. SAL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Sal is under his covers, cringing as he listens to the debacle unfold.

SPORTS DOGG (O.S.)
Sorry, Paul, but you cannot drop the F-
bomb on the radio. Definite no-no
(beat)
You can, however, scream at your elderly
mother to get off the line. FCC doesn't
mind that.
(beat)
Oh, man.

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is still clutching the phone. All he hears is a dial tone.

PAUL
Hello? Hello?

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - THERESA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Theresa is under the covers in bed. Paul bursts in.

PAUL

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHY ARE YOU DOING
THIS TO ME?

THERESA

Get out of here, Paul! Actually, you know
what'd be even better? Get out of this
house. I've had it.

PAUL

Good! So have I. I'm gone. I'm sick of
you treating me like a baby.

THERESA

You are a baby. Everybody's grown up,
except you, with your sports and your
pretend job and your little playmate Sal.

PAUL

Shut up!

THERESA

Gee, that's a wonderful answer, Paul.
Very impressive.

PAUL

Shut up.

THERESA

I try to help you, encourage you to get a
girl, get a job that'll lead somewhere,
but you won't listen. You got no plan for
the future. I'm trying to help you, but--

PAUL

I don't want your help! I DON'T WANT IT,
I DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T
WANT IT, I DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T WANT
IT, I DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T WANT IT, I
DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T
WANT IT, I DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T WANT
IT, I DON'T WANT IT, I DON'T WANT IT.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE -
NIGHT

Paul sits in his booth. He has another pounding headache. His
blurred vision seems to be worsening. He squints to make out
a car that's pulling up.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE -
SHORT TIME LATER

Melissa pulls up to the gate with Fran in the passenger seat. Fran, wearing a neck brace, is finally going home. Melissa hands Paul her ticket. He scans it. For the first time, it doesn't read \$18.

PAUL
Five dollars.

Paul and Melissa look at each other. She has an air of defeat and resignation. Paul knows she's going home to be beaten--or worse. Paul raises the gate. She exits.

INT. LONG ISLAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE -
SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is listening to WFAN.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (O.S.)
(mid-call)
...may be true, but you know what, Paul
From Kew Gardens? Because I'm such a nice
guy, I'd like to personally invite you
down to McSorley's Sports Pub in Philly
to watch the game with me and my buddies,
so we can watch the look on your face
when we stomp all over you and take the
NFC East. I'll even buy you a beer for
you to cry in. Any kind you like, they
got 'em all at McSorley's. So if...

A car pulls up to the booth. The MAN reaches out to hand Paul his ticket. Paul doesn't react.

MAN
Here.

Paul just stares at the man.

MAN (CONT'D)
Take it.

No response.

MAN (CONT'D)
What's your problem, dude? Take the
fucking ticket.

Paul walks out of the booth and heads off into the sunset.
He's had it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN (CONT'D)

Hey!

(beat)

HEY! What the fuck?

EXT. STREETS OF KEW GARDENS - NIGHT

Paul is wandering the streets again. He passes BLEACHERS, a sports bar with a big sign in front: "WATCH PHILLY GET DESTROYED TOMORROW NIGHT!.. 5 BIG-SCREEN TV'S! \$2 RAIL DRINKS. \$1 BUDS - MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL SPECIAL."

INT. BLEACHERS BAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul is having a beer at the bar.

BARTENDER

Last call!

EXT. STREETS OF KEW GARDENS - CONTINUOUS

Paul is wandering.

INT. PARTHENON GYROS - 3:30 A.M.

Paul is sitting in an all-night gyro joint. He's done eating and is writing something on his yellow legal pad. He's the only customer there until a trio of LOUD, OBNOXIOUS DRUNKEN COLLEGE GIRLS enter.

DRUNK GIRL #1

(to guy at register)

Do you guys have, like, burgers?

DRUNK GIRL #2

Omigod, you are such a spazz, Amanda!

DRUNK GIRL #3

She is so fuckin' wasted.

DRUNK GIRL #1

I am not! I had, like, one Sex On The Beach!

An EMPLOYEE is mopping the floor near where Paul sits. He mops under Paul's table. Paul lifts his feet for him.

EXT. STREETS OF KEW GARDENS - 4 A.M.

Paul is at a payphone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OPERATOR

I'm sorry, sir, I'm not seeing anybody with that name.

PAUL

Maybe try with one "L"... B-E-V-E-L.

Paul waits while she checks.

OPERATOR

Still nothing.

EXT. STREETS OF KEW GARDENS - 5 A.M.

Paul is huddled in a bus stop, writing. It's bitter cold. The morning garbage trucks are out.

INT. THERESA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Paul, looking like shit, marches past his mother, who's watching TV. He heads up the stairs to his room.

THERESA

Where have you been all night?

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul packs a duffel bag with some clothes.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Paul grabs his mother's keys off the table and heads out the door, walking right past her.

THERESA

Paul!

EXT. KINGMAN'S WORLD OF SPORTING GOODS - SHORT TIME LATER

A large sporting-goods superstore somewhere on Long Island. Paul parks his mother's car.

INT. KINGMAN'S WORLD OF SPORTING GOODS - CONTINUOUS

Paul cuts through the store with a clear sense of purpose. He strides through the football department, past a wall of footballs. He passes a SALESMAN.

SALESMAN

Can I help you find something today?

Paul breezes past without saying a word.

INT. KINGMAN'S - HUNTING AND FISHING DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Paul passes fishing rods, tents, camo gear, eventually coming to the gun counter. He scans the impressive wall of weaponry, which ranges from rifles to pistols to hunting bows. A friendly, folksy SALESMAN finishes up with another customer and comes over.

SALESMAN

Hi there, how can I help you?

EXT. KINGMAN'S WORLD OF SPORTING GOODS - CONTINUOUS

Paul exits the store carrying a bulky Kingman's bag.

INT. ROOSEVELT FIELD MALL - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul walks through the mall corridors, eventually reaching...

INT. CHAMPS SPORTING GOODS - CONTINUOUS

Paul is back at the store where he got his jersey before the first Philadelphia game. He browses the wall of jerseys. He drifts past the section where the Giants jerseys are hanging, heading to an area displaying jerseys of other NFL teams.

INT. ROOSEVELT FIELD MALL - CONTINUOUS

Paul, holding a Champs bag, enters a costume/magic shop. He browses an area displaying assorted Halloween make-up.

EXT. ROOSEVELT FIELD MALL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Paul exits the mall carrying the Champs bag and another small one. He tosses the bags in his trunk with the Kingman's bag and his duffel bag.

INT. THERESA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Paul reaches into the glove compartment and pulls out a USA ROAD ATLAS. The car's clock reads 2:12 PM.

EXT. RICHMOND PARKWAY - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is driving through Staten Island. A sign reads "OUTERBRIDGE CROSSING - NEW JERSEY - 2 LEFT LANES".

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - ONE HOUR LATER

Still driving. A sign reads "NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - SOUTH"

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - DUSK - 4:52 PM

It's getting dark. A sign reads "PHILADELPHIA - 79 MILES".

EXT. I-95 - EVENING - SHORT TIME LATER

It's now dark out. A sign reads "PHILADELPHIA - NEXT 6 EXITS". We see the Philadelphia skyline appear.

EXT. LIBERTY BELL MOTEL - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul pulls up to a cheap roadside motel. It's around 6:30 PM.

INT. LIBERTY BELL MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Paul opens the Kingman's bag and takes out a box. In the box is a BLACK PISTOL. He loads a clip.

INT. LIBERTY BELL MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Standing in front of the mirror, Paul takes out two small containers of Halloween make-up. He spreads it on his face with a scary intensity, like a half-mad Vietnam soldier ritualistically preparing for jungle warfare. He paints one side of his face GREEN and the other WHITE.

EXT. SAL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Sal is standing outside his apartment in blue and red facepaint, waiting to be picked up by Paul. He checks his watch.

INT. LIBERTY BELL MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Paul stands in front of the mirror, shirtless. He reaches into the Champs bag and pulls out a jersey. The jersey, folded up in the bag, unfurls dramatically. It is a GREEN PHILLY JERSEY. Paul puts it on. He pulls up the right leg of his sweatpants and puts the gun into a holster strapped to his calf. He sticks the extra clip into his jacket. He is ready for battle.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA - 8 PM

Paul drives down Broad Street in the heart of Philadelphia. He finds a spot and parks.

EXT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - CONTINUOUS

Paul stands outside McSorley's in his Eagles regalia.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - CONTINUOUS

Paul enters the cavernous sports bar. The place is packed. It's a total madhouse, a sea of Eagles green and white. Paul blends right in.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - CONTINUOUS

Beer in hand, Paul winds his way through the crowd. A MAN notices Paul's painted face and approves.

MAN

Fuckin' hardcore, dude!

He high-fives Paul, who continues on his way. He scans the crowd.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

It's kickoff time. All eyes are on the big-screen TVs positioned throughout the bar. Philly kicks off.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And we are underway!

The Giants return man catches the ball at the five. As the Eagles bear down on him, the McSorley's crowd grows louder, smelling blood.

VARIOUS BARGOERS

Kill him!

The Giants ball carrier is leveled with a vicious hit. The crowd roars with approval. Violence is in the air.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

It's early in the game. Paul is drinking another beer, still looking around.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

The kick is up... it's good!

ON TV: The Giants celebrate a field goal. The McSorley's crowd groans. Paul discretely pumps his fist.

TV ANNOUNCER PAUL (cont'd)

(O.S.)

And the Giants draw first blood, 3-0.
Back after this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The TV cuts to commercial. Paul moves to a spot where he feels safely obscured by bodies. He hides his mouth behind his beer and shouts:

PAUL

Phil'

Paul scans the crowd. No one seems to react to the name.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is in another area of the bar. He blocks his mouth with his beer and tries again.

PAUL

Phil!

No one responds.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

He tries a third time from another spot.

PAUL

Phil'

A PREPPYISH MAN looks around, hearing somebody shout his name. He tries to see who it was but can't find the person. Paul waits until the man stops looking around, then wanders over to within a few feet of him. The man, who seems a bit too white-collar to be Philadelphia Phil, is watching the game with THREE BUDDIES.

BUDDY #1

(to Phil)

So it was nice?

PHIL

Ridiculously gorgeous. Like, the bluest water you've ever seen.

BUDDY #1

Did you scuba?

PHIL

There was tons of stuff to do, scuba and water skiing and parasailing and all that, but we just spent the entire time just laying out on the beach. I swear, Amy didn't want to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUDDY #2

A guy I work with was at the St. Maarten Club Med, said it was crazy.

PHIL

Supposedly that's the one for singles.

Paul listens closely to the man's voice. It's not Philadelphia Phil. He moves on.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - CONTINUOUS

Paul does a tequila shot and chases it with a beer. He starts wandering the bar again and spots a promising group of five guys. Dressed head-to-toe in Eagles gear, they look particularly die-hard, the type of guys who'd call a sports-radio station. Paul covers his mouth.

PAUL

Phil!

No response. He moves a bit closer and tries again.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Phil!

Again no response. He moves on. Meanwhile, ON TV:

The Eagles quarterback throws a long bomb down the sideline. It's caught for a huge 63 yard gain. Philadelphia has a first-and-goal on the Giants' 8 yard line. The crowd goes nuts. Wanting to blend in, Paul raises his arms and cheers. His joy is unconvincing, but no one seems to notice or care.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - CONTINUOUS

The Eagles running back punches it in for a touchdown. Philadelphia takes a 7-3 lead. The crowd roars.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is wandering. ON TV:

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

New York unable to get much going since that early field goal.

The bar is getting increasingly raucous. From a distance, Paul hears:

SOMEBODY

We're completely dominating the line of scrimmage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The voice catches Paul's ear. He looks all around, trying to figure out where it came from. He zeroes in on a group of THREE SAD-SACK GUYS squeezed around a small circular table. One of them is exceedingly fat and is wearing a white Eagles jersey. His two friends flank him. The fat one is clearly the alpha male of the threesome and, in his own bizarre way, projects a certain Colonel Kurtz-like aura.

FAT GUY

Look at that fucking time of possession.

The fat guy is the one whose voice caught Paul's ear. Paul senses that he's found his man. He backs up a safe distance. He blocks his mouth with his drink.

PAUL

Phil!

The fat guy reacts. He looks around but can't find who's calling his name. Paul checks his calf. Everything is in place.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul is biding his time, waiting for his chance to make some sort of move. A MAN sitting on a barstool right near the threesome gets up. Paul snags his seat.

The Giants are driving with just seconds left in the first half. The mood in the bar is tense.

PAUL

(loud enough for Philadelphia
Phil to hear)

Let's get a stop here!

On a clutch third-down play, New York throws an interception. Everyone cheers. Paul high-fives Philadelphia Phil. There's 17 seconds left and Philadelphia is on their own 20 yard line.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Plenty of time for a quick three.

PAUL

Let's go, quick three.

Philadelphia Phil glances at Paul. The Eagles put together an efficient mini-drive and score a field goal as time expires in the first half. They lead 10-3 at halftime. Paul hides his unhappiness. He turns to Philadelphia Phil and his two buddies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED-

PAUL (cont'd)

Not bad.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Ah, we should be up by more than seven.
They haven't done dick since the opening
drive.

PAUL

That's all right, it's gonna get ugly in
the second half--just watch.

(beat)

Can I get you guys anything?

BUDDY #1

Nah, I'm good.

Buddy #2 shakes his head no thanks.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Actually, I'll take a Bud.

Philadelphia Phil offers Paul a five. Paul declines.

PAUL

Don't worry, I got it.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

You sure?

PAUL

No prob.

(beat)

By the way, I'm Gene.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Phil.

They shake hands.

PAUL

Nice to meet you, Phil.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

Beer in hand, Paul is now sitting with Philadelphia Phil and
his two friends. The second half has begun. Philadelphia's
quarterback is being chased down by a New York linebacker.

BUDDY #1

Get rid of it!

The Eagles QB is run out of bounds for a loss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
You gotta throw that away.

Paul acts pissed about the play. He takes a swig of his beer.

PAUL
(to Philadelphi Phil)
This is kinda weird, but...

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
What?

PAUL
I swear your voice sounds familiar. Have
I heard you somewhere?

Philadelphia Phil is pleased by the question. His chest puffs
out a bit with pride.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
Probably on CSZ. "C.J. & Malone", "Rob
Brenner Show", "Nothing But Netsky"...
I'm a pretty big regular on all of them.

Paul's never heard of the station or shows.

PAUL
Yeah, that's gotta be it.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
And a few times a week, I'll even call
WFAN, the sports station up in New York,
just to piss off the locals.

PAUL
Really?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
There's this one guy I've been fuckin'
giving it to like crazy--the guy who got
beat up by Cam Alberts.

PAUL
Seriously?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
This guy is so fucking pathetic, it's
pathetic. He's, like, the most hardcore
Giants fan in the world. I've been making
his life fucking miserable--even before
the whole thing with Alberts.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (cont'd)
He'd call up with these weak-ass arguments on why the Giants were gonna win the division or whatever, and I'd just brutally lay the smackdown on him.

BUDDY #2
The guy was completely outgunned.

BUDDY #1
Total mismatch.

BUDDY #2
Then when Phil found out it was the Alberts guy, he took it to a whole 'nother level.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
Brought the hammer down... with a vengeance.

Philadelphia Phil simulates a 50-pound hammer being brought down on a tiny, helpless victim.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

Paul, Philadelphia Phil, and his two buddies are focused on the game. Paul's now pretty drunk and a bit punchy.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Giants putting together their best drive of the second half. Carver lined up in the backfield, Dyson in motion slot left...

The Giants throw deep. The receiver almost makes a spectacular grab but drops it. Everyone in the bar cheers.

PAUL
Bet that loser Aufiero is dying right about now.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
I cannot wait to call after the game and rub it in his face.

Philadelphia Phil thinks for a moment.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (cont'd)
How'd you know his name?

PAUL
Who? Aufiero? It's in the paper almost every day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Wow, good memory.

PAUL

Hard to forget a name like that. Fucking no-life, no-job guinea-wop asshole. Got what he deserved.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Watch it, I'm Italian.

PAUL

Hey, I am, too, so I can say it.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - CONTINUOUS

The Giants kick a field goal.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

New York pulls to within four.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - CONTINUOUS

The Eagles have the ball. They are stuffed on three straight run attempts.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

No time to get over-conservative.

INT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SHORT TIME LATER

It's getting late in the game. Eagles lead 10-6. It's a hard-fought, low-scoring affair.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Just under three minutes left in the ball game. New York will get the ball back for one last shot. A field goal won't do it. They need a touchdown.

Philadelphia punts the ball.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hofstadt gets off a beauty.

The Giants return the ball to their own 21. Their offense takes the field.

PAUL

Let's go, big stop, big stop.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

No way they're scoring here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONTAGE OF GIANTS DRIVE.

--Pass complete to the 33.

--Run for three yards.

--Incomplete pass. It's third and seven.

--Pass complete for a big gain of 25 yards. They're on the Eagles' 39.

--A reverse run for a gain of 21. They're now on the Eagles' 18.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL (cont'd)

Let's get some pressure on him! He's got all fuckin' day to throw!

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Giants reeling off one big play after another. Still plenty of time.

--Giants reel off a series of modest but effective runs. Three yards, four yards, three yards. It's first and goal on the eight.

--Incomplete pass into the end zone. The entire bar breathes a sigh of relief.

--A run for four yards. It's third and four.

--Another hand-off. The Giants running back comes heart-stopping inches from crossing the goal line, setting up a decisive fourth and goal.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

This is the whole game, right here.

PAUL

Let's go guys! Come on!

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Fourth and inches. Here we go.

--The Giants run it in, straight up the gut. All the air goes out of the bar. Paul uses every ounce of strength he has to contain his glee.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And the Giants take the lead with just five ticks remaining. Oh, what a finish!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Everyone in the bar has their heads buried in their hands.
The Giants celebrate wildly. They line up to kick off.

TV ANNOUNCER (cont'd)
Barring a miracle here, the Giants will
face Tampa Bay next Sunday in round one
of the playoffs.

The Giants kick off. Philadelphia takes it near their goal.

TV ANNOUNCER (cont'd) (O.S.)
(CONT'D)
Wychek at the five. Cuts left. He's got
blockers.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
Hang on...

The ball carrier outruns the first wave of Giants tacklers.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(rising excitement)
Wychek finds some daylight along the
sideline. Breaks a tackle. He's at the
40, the 50.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
GO!

BUDDY #1
Holy shit!

Paul can't believe what he's seeing.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Wychek's in the clear! He's gonna go all
the way! 30! 20!

Everyone in the bar is on their feet, screaming.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Touchdown! Eagles win! Eagles win! I
don't believe what I just saw!

It's absolute bedlam at McSorley's. Philadelphia Phil gets up
on a chair, arms raised over his head, and lets out a primal
scream.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
YEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!
(beat)
FUCK YOU, NEW YORK!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Paul is in shock. He looks at Philadelphia Phil with a murderous hate.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MCSORLEY'S SPORTS PUB - SOME TIME LATER

Philadelphia Phil is saying goodbye to his two buddies in front of McSorley's. They're still on a high from the incredible win.

The three guys part ways, and Phil heads to his beater of a car. He gets in and starts up the engine. Paul startles him, appearing at his window.

PAUL

Could do me a big favor?

INT. PHILADELPHIA PHIL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Philadelphia Phil is driving Paul somewhere.

PAUL

I can't believe I locked my fucking keys in my car. So stupid.

(looking at the road)

A left here.

Philadelphia Phil makes a left.

PAUL (cont'd)

So you gonna call WFAN tonight?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Shit, yeah. That will be the cherry on top of a very sweet victory sundae.

PAUL

Bet that asshole's writing out his suicide note as we speak.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

By the time I get through with him he will.

Paul laughs semi-maniacally.

PAUL

Know what, Phil?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

You're the asshole.

Paul is pointing his gun at Philadelphia Phil.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Jesus Christ!

EXT. STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA - SHORT TIME LATER

Philadelphia Phil is driving at gunpoint. They pass the campus of Temple University. In the distance, he sees the school's football stadium.

PAUL

To the stadium.

EXT. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Philadelphia Phil parks his car in the parking lot and slowly gets out.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

I have no idea what this is about, but whatever it is...

PAUL

Shut up.

INT. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Paul leads Philadelphia Phil toward the college football stadium. They enter through a small hole in the fence. They descend the steps and go onto the field.

PAUL

On the owl.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

What?

PAUL

Sit on the owl.

Philadelphia Phil looks around and realizes Paul's talking about the big Temple Owls mascot painted on the 50 yard line.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Oh.

He sits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL
Got a cellphone?

Philadelphia Phil nods and takes a cellphone out of his pocket.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Call WFAN.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
I don't know the number.

PAUL
I thought you call all the time.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
From my regular phone. I never use my cell.

PAUL
718-555-6610.

Philadelphia Phil dials.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Is it ringing?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
Yeah.

PAUL
You're gonna get Larry, the producer.
Tell him who you are and that you want to
apologize on air to Paul From Kew
Gardens, a good decent person who never
gave you or anybody else any trouble. A
person who deserves your respect.

Philadelphia Phil finally realizes what this is all about.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
Hi, this is Philadelphia Phil. I'm
calling to--

Philadelphia Phil stops talking.

PAUL
What's going on?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL
I'm on hold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL

Gimme.

Philadelphia Phil hands him the phone. Paul hears the on-air broadcast.

WEFAN CALLER (O.S.)

What happened tonight, I can't even begin to process...

Paul tosses the phone back to Philadelphia Phil.

PAUL

When you're up, you're gonna read this.

Paul reaches into his pocket and hands Philadelphia Phil five folded sheets of yellow-legal-pad paper. Philadelphia Phil unfolds it. We see:

"HOW YA DOIN SPORTS DOGG? THIS IS PHILEDELPHIA PHIL AND I JUST WANT TO SAY HOW SORRY I AM FOR THE WAY IVE TREATED PAUL FROM KEW GARDENS, MAKEING FUN OF HIM FOR DOING NOTHING MORE THAN STICKING BY HIS FAVORITE PLAYER AND UNDERSTANDING THAT CAM ALBERTS WAS JUST DRUNK AND DIDNT REALY MEAN TO DO HIM ANY WRONG." It goes on and on like that for pages.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Just keep calm, okay? I'll do whatever you want.

Paul aims the gun at Philadelphia Phil's head.

PAUL

When you're on the air, I want you to mean it. The apology has to be sincere.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Absolutely. You got it.

Pause. Paul is lost in his thoughts.

PAUL

You didn't have to be mean to me like that.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

It was nothing personal, I swear. I don't even know you.

PAUL

Everybody's always so mean. It wears me out.

EXT. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

A campus-security police car is on patrol. The OFFICER drives past the stadium parking lot and notices a lone parked car. He gets out to investigate.

INT. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Paul now has the gun aimed at Philadelphia Phil's head. Paul is starting to tear up.

PAUL

I give my team unconditional love and support, and what do I get in return? Shit on and made fun of.

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Please don't do this, I'm begging you. I never did anything to you.

PAUL

Why couldn't you just be nice to me? Is that too much to ask?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Just keep calm, okay?

PAUL

Is that too much to ask?

PHILADELPHIA PHIL

Let's just talk about this. I swear I--

PAUL

IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?

Paul aims the gun squarely between Philadelphia Phil's eyes and FIRES.

Philadelphia Phil falls backward, red trickling down the bridge of his nose from the spot of the gunshot. Paul stares at Philadelphia Phil, then fires another shot into his chest. Then another. Then another. The shots come in rapid succession until Phil's white Eagles jersey is almost entirely red.

EXT. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

The cop crawls through the small hole in the fence. He hears three more shots and calls for backup. He moves in to investigate. Peeking through one of the stadium tunnels, he sees Paul standing over the blood-soaked body of Philadelphia Phil in the middle of the field.

EXT. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Paul stands over Philadelphia Phil's body, crazed with bloodlust. He runs in a circle around him.

PAUL

Oh, what a hit by Aufiero! Loss of seven on the play!

Paul does a celebratory sack dance.

PAUL (cont'd)

And the crowd goes wild!

He pretends to be the crowd.

PAUL (cont'd)

Phil-ly sucks! Phil-ly sucks! Phil-ly sucks!

Paul then snaps back into focus. He aims and fires, plugging Philadelphia Phil with two more shots. Still not satisfied, he removes the gun's clip and replaces it with a fresh one.

He fires another shot into Paul's chest. Strangely, though, the blood from this shot is BLUE. He fires twice more, producing more bright blue blood. We realize that Paul has been not been using a real gun, but rather a PAINT-BALL GUN.

As Paul continues firing, we see he is writing "NY" across Philadelphia Phil's chest in blue paint. When he's done, Phil's white-and-green Eagles jersey has been transformed into a RED-AND-BLUE GIANTS JERSEY. Paul lingers over the body, breathing hard. Philadelphia Phil stirs a bit. Philadelphia Phil touches the spot between his eyes where he was first hit. He sees red on his fingertips.

We hear SIRENS. A pair of cops emerge from a tunnel. They draw their guns. Also present is the campus security guard.

COP #1

Drop your weapon!

Paul drops the gun. He ponders the situation.

PAUL

(to self)

Aufiero in trouble.

COP #1

Raise your hands slowly.

Paul does not comply.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL
(to self)
But he's got one more chance.

COP #1
I said raise your hands slowly.

PAUL
Fourth and long, what's he gonna do?
(beat)
He's going to go for it!

Paul takes a long look around him. The two cops inch closer.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hike!

Paul breaks into a sprint. He heads for the end zone, cutting and dodging invisible defenders.

PAUL (CONT'D)
He's at the 40, the 35...

COP #2
FREEZE!

PAUL
He breaks a tackle!

TWO SHOTS ring out. Paul is hit in the legs. He falls to the ground, writhing in pain.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Ohhhh, and that's the ballgame...

The two cops and security guard descend upon him. Paul is cuffed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ST. LUKE'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Establishing shot of psych hospital/prison on pretty, wooded grounds.

INT. ST. LUKE'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - REC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul is playing Trivial Pursuit with a FELLOW PAIENT/INMATE. He is holding a question card. Other patients watch TV and play ping-pong. An ARMED GUARD watches over the proceedings.

FELLOW PATIENT
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL
(reading back of card)
East Berlin.

Paul rolls a six. He lands on yellow, History. The other guy reads a question.

FELLOW PATIENT
What legendary Sixties counterculture figure advised young people to "Turn on, tune in, and drop out"?

PAUL
No idea.

FELLOW PATIENT
(reading back of card)
It says backgammon.

PAUL
For yellow?

FELLOW PATIENT
Sorry... Timothy Leary.

PAUL
Oh...
(beat)
Who's that?

FELLOW PATIENT
I don't know.

The door to the room opens. A FEMALE STAFFER pokes her head in.

STAFFER
Paul, you have a visitor.

Behind the woman, we see Sal. He waves to Paul and smiles sweetly.

EXT. ST. LUKE'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Sal are strolling a walled-in courtyard. A GUARD keeps an eye on them.

SAL
Has your mom been by?

PAUL
She comes Thursdays. She's not taking this too good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL

I figured.

PAUL

My brother was here last week. He said he was sorry but he can't get me a job at Priceco anymore. I didn't say anything, but I was like, *thank God*.

SAL

Now you know how to get him to lay off: Get thrown in a nuthouse jail for shooting somebody with a paintball gun.

Paul and Sal chuckle.

EXT. ST. LUKE'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - COURTYARD - SHORT TIME
LATER

Paul and Sal are still strolling.

SAL

So do you know what you're gonna do when you get out?

PAUL

Honestly, I haven't even thought about it.

SAL

You probably should. Eight months isn't so long.

(beat)

Hey, speaking of eight months...

Sal takes a small, torn-out scrap of newspaper from his pocket. He dangles it tantalizingly. Paul looks to see what it is.

PAUL

(excited)

It's out?

EXT. ST. LUKE'S PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - COURTYARD - SHORT TIME
LATER

Paul and Sal are sitting at a picnic table, huddled around the newspaper scrap. CLOSE-UP ON NEWSPAPER: We see it's the Giants 2004 season schedule.

PAUL

(reading off the scrap)

Week Three, at Carolina. Easy win.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAL
So we'll be 2-1.

PAUL
I still say we can beat Oakland.

SAL
I don't know...

PAUL
Definitely. Especially if Jackson signs
with Miami, which they say he will.

SAL
Okay, so 3-0.

PAUL
Then Week Four we get Jacksonville at
home. Piece of cake.

SAL
4-0.

PAUL
Week Five, we're at St. Louis.

SAL
I don't know, that's tough...

PAUL
You're forgetting something.

SAL
What?

PAUL
That's the week I get out. Our rooting
power will be doubled.

SAL
You're right--I completely forgot about
that. 5-0.

PAUL
Next is the always shitty Chicago,
bringing us to a perfect 6-0.

SAL
This is amazing.

PAUL
6-0 is totally realistic, and I'd say 4-2
at absolute worst.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAL
Oh, man, wow.

PAUL
It's gonna be a great year.

