

Bored to Death aka Untitled Jonathan Ames Project

By

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TV Calling - For educational purposes only

EXT. JONATHAN AMES'S BUILDING -- DAY, MORNING

Jonathan, early-to-mid 30's, leans against his three-storey Brooklyn building, looking forlorn.

A moving van, with a Star-of-David-logo and the words MOISHE'S MOVERS, is on the street.

Two Israeli men throw a bed into the back of the van, carelessly. Jonathan stands away from his building, upset.

JONATHAN
Hey, be careful with that!

The movers look at him.

JONATHAN
(his voice trailing off)
That was our bed . . .

Jonathan's lovely ex-girlfriend, Suzanne, early-30's, comes out of the building, carrying a lamp. She brings it to the back of the van and hands it up to one of the movers.

Jonathan watches her, sadly.

EXT. BUILDING -- DAY, MORNING, LATER

Jonathan helps the two movers with a very heavy dresser.

JONATHAN
(wanting to bond)
I'm Jewish, too.

The Israelis look at him disdainfully.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
I had heard that the Israeli's had cornered the moving business, like the Greeks with diners, but I mean, it seems unusual to have Jewish movers, you know, doing such muscle-oriented work.

MOVER
(Israeli accent,
dismissive)
What are you another self-hating New York Jew?

JONATHAN
 (beat, then, in a whisper,
 almost to himself)
 Yes, I am...

They hoist the dresser into the van.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, LATER

The three-room apartment is empty, except for a desk with a chair and a laptop.

There are numerous books piled against the walls and there's one picture on the wall -- a water-color of a beach-umbrella by the ocean.

Jonathan is standing around, looking at the emptiness. Suzanne comes into the room. They look at one another. She takes down the one picture.

SUZANNE
 (referring to the picture)
 Sorry.

JONATHAN
 That's all right...We had a nice time in Martha's Vineyard...Didn't we?

SUZANNE
 It was a good trip, except --

Then she puts the picture back on the wall, smiles sadly at him, and leaves the apartment.

Jonathan, encouraged by this, follows after her, down two flights of stairs through the brownstone, and outside.

EXT. JONATHAN AMES'S BUILDING -- DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The two Israeli movers stand by the van.

MOVER
 Anything else?

SUZANNE
 No, that's all.

The mover yanks down the back door of the van with FINALITY. The men climb into the cab of the van. Jonathan and Suzanne stand there, uncertain -- how does one say good bye?

JONATHAN
Are you really sure about this?

SUZANNE
You're asking this now, after
everything is loaded?

JONATHAN
I guess....I don't know....I don't
want to lose you.

SUZANNE
Come on. I told you months ago that
if we're going to work on this you
had to quit drinking and smoking
pot, and you didn't do it. That was
our deal.

JONATHAN
It's dangerous to go cold-
turkey....I'm down to white wine --

She doesn't want to hear this -- she turns and starts to
climb up to the passenger side of the van.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
And I can't help it, I still like
the way pot makes me think. Maybe
it's healthy?

Suzanne settles into the seat next to the movers, closes
door, the window is open.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
In California, you know, it's
called medical marijuana --

SUZANNE
Bye, Jonathan.

Suzanne looks sad, but resigned. The van starts to pull away.
Jonathan jogs after it.

JONATHAN
I'm sorry. I'm crazy! I'll quit the
pot and the white wine!

The van turns and disappears. Jonathan stops jogging, lowers
his chin, turns around, enters his building.

INT. JONATHAN'S BUILDING -- DAY, CONTINUOUS

The ground-floor door opens up just as Jonathan comes in, and Ava, a very sexy and beautiful black woman, mid-30's, stands in the doorway.

AVA
She left you?

JONATHAN
Yeah. I'm an idiot. Too much pot
and wine.

AVA
She was sweet, I liked her...But
you have to rebound fast. That's
the best cure. Just go on Craig's
List. I'm telling you people are
hooking up like crazy on that
thing. Everybody is a sex-addict
and having a good time.

JONATHAN
Maybe it's too soon --

Then there's a crash and Ava turns and we see a little boy,
five-years old, jump up gleefully and then go dashing away.

AVA
Django! What did you do?

She disappears inside her apartment and Jonathan heads up the
stairs.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Montage of movements (chance for credits):

* Jonathan is staring at an empty closet. He waves his hand
in it, as if testing reality, and flashes to the same closet
full of Suzanne's BEAUTIFUL DRESSES, and then the closet is
empty again.

* Jonathan removes a rolled-up futon from a closet in the
bedroom. He puts a CD in the CD player and we hear Loudon
Wainwright's "Mother likes Her White Wine". Jonathan has a
bottle of white ready and pours it into a coffee mug.

* Jonathan is curled up on the futon, one sheet covers him. Another Wainwright song plays, "Living Alone." Jonathan's eye catches on a Raymond Chandler book in the HUGE PILE by the wall -- FAREWELL, MY LOVELY.

* Jonathan lying on the futon, reading FAREWELL, MY LOVELY.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, LATER

Jonathan sits at his laptop. CRAIGSLIST is visible.

FAREWELL, MY LOVELY is on the desk next to the laptop, along with his mug of white wine, a one-hitter, and his cell-phone.

He clicks on **Personals** and then on **Women Seeking Men**. He sees all the listings. Stares. Seems overwhelmed by the sheer volume of ads.

He takes a hit of pot and looks at the cool cover of FAREWELL, MY LOVELY. Mesmerized, he picks it up.

He then goes back to the main-page of CL and clicks on **LEGAL** and then types in the search section: **Private Detective**.

He clicks on an ad, reads it, then clicks on **Post** and takes another hit of pot.

He types **Private Detective For Hire** in the subject line, and then quickly types his ad: **Specializing: Missing Persons, Domestic Issues. I'm not licensed, but maybe I'm someone who can help you. My fee is reasonable. Call 347 555 1212.**

He smiles at his handiwork, looks again at Marlowe on the cover.

JONATHAN
(to the book)
I wish I could be like you.

He stands up, a bit stoned, and throws a few punches, acting tough, but then wrenches his elbow and cringes.

His cell-phone rings. Rubbing his elbow, he looks at his ad on the computer -- could it be a call already? He looks at the phone -- it says "Restricted". He answers.

JONATHAN
Hello?...Oh, hey, Ray...Yeah, I can
meet you...I'll be right over --

EXT. DONUT HOUSE -- DAY, LATER

Donut House, on Court Street, is an old classic Brooklyn diner-like place, next to an OTB.

INT. DONUT HOUSE -- DAY

Ray(mid-30's, scruffy beard)and Jonathan sit in the Donut House, which is filled, primarily, with older men.

They have coffee and donuts, and on the table in front of them is an open copy of *Spiderman*. Ray points at a drawing.

RAY

See -- I made Peter Parker's therapist look like you twenty years from now.

JONATHAN

That's cool...

(beat)

I sort of wish you had made me more heroic, though, not a therapist.

RAY

You have a good nose for a therapist. It's a thoughtful nose.

JONATHAN

Thanks...

(beat)

I should probably go see a therapist.

RAY

That's true.

JONATHAN

I mean, I really should...Suzanne moved out today.

RAY

What? Why didn't you tell me? You've got to keep me abreast of this shit. Moved out today?

JONATHAN

Yeah...I kept hoping it wouldn't happen but then it did. So I didn't tell you. I guess it was denial.

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RAY

I'm sorry, man...Wait a second, have you been drinking? I smell booze. It's only one o'clock.

JONATHAN

It must be one of these old-timers. I never drink before seven p.m.

Jonathan takes a big sip of coffee to cover his breath.

RAY

What about last week? You called me from Bar Tabac in the middle of the day and you were wasted.

JONATHAN

That was an exception...Anyway, I'm single again. I went on Craig's List --

RAY

Suzanne's body isn't even cold and you're on Craig's List?

JONATHAN

Ava told me to go on there.

RAY

Now, she's hot. You should go for her.

JONATHAN

Yeah, but she's my landlady. Anyway, I didn't do anything on Craig's List, just looked for a second. I can't believe how many girls advertise on that thing.

RAY

I know, I know. If I was single, I'd be all over that...I used to have fun with Friendster. Something about the internet makes girls get real loose. You meet a girl in a bar and nothing happens. But e-mail some girl you've never met for an hour and next thing you know she's over your apartment taking her clothes off and giving you herpes.

JONATHAN

Is that how you got herpes?

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RAY

I don't have herpes! I had one wart ten years ago! Totally different.

JONATHAN

Does Friendster still exist?

RAY

I don't know --

A beautiful brunette, Chiara, comes and refills their coffees.

JONATHAN AND RAY

(both obsequious)

Thank you --

Chiara smiles. Jonathan and Ray stare as she walks off.

JONATHAN

Who's that? I didn't see her when I came in.

RAY

She's the new waitress. She's from Italy.

JONATHAN

I thought you had to be a senior citizen to work here...I should just come here every day and work on my novel and maybe she'd fall in love with me.

RAY

How's the novel going?

JONATHAN

Not going. You know, third novels are the hardest to write --

Jonathan, distracted, watches Chiara, as she pours a coffee for another customer.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

My god, what an ass on her...It's kind of like Suzanne's ass...

(sad, suddenly)

Oh, man, I really screwed up.

RAY

Listen, you have to give yourself time to heal.

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JONATHAN

At least one of us is in a good relationship.

RAY

I don't know about that. It's like I'm in a sexless marriage and I'm not even married.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Jonathan is playing INTERNET BACKGAMMON on his computer and his cell-phone rings.

He sees that it's a 215 area code, which puzzles him, but he answers while still playing his game.

JONATHAN

Hello?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

I saw your ad.

JONATHAN

(still playing backgammon)
What? What ad?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

Craig's List? Missing persons?

JONATHAN

(snapping to attention)
Yes, of course, I'm sorry. Most of my clients are word-of-mouth, so I forgot about my ad...How can I help you?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

It's about my sister, I think she's missing.

JONATHAN

What do you mean, you think?

Jonathan clicks on the backgammon game, still playing.

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

She hasn't answered her phone for two days and her voice-mail is full and I came up from Philadelphia to go to a concert with her and she's not in her dorm --

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JONATHAN
Dorm?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)
She's at NYU.

JONATHAN
How old is she?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)
Twenty-one.

JONATHAN
And how old are you?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)
Nineteen.

JONATHAN
Where are you? Let's discuss this
in person --

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jonathan, looking in the mirror, puts on a tie.

He puts his jacket on, grabs FAREWELL, MY LOVELY, compares himself to Marlowe, puts the book in his pocket and exits.

INT. NYC SUBWAY, F TRAIN -- DAY

Jonathan stands at the very front of the subway, looking out the scratched window to the dark, rushing tunnel. The camera goes from the literal underworld of New York to our hero's face, which is half in shadow -- what is he being drawn into?

EXT. SECOND AVENUE -- DAY, LATE AFTERNOON

Jonathan approaches an internet cafe on the corner of 3rd Street and First Avenue and enters.

INT. INTERNET CAFE -- DAY, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan scans the young people at the tables and computers. He spots Rachel Weiss, 19, very cute, in a yellow dress, which shows some nice cleavage. He walks over to her.

JONATHAN
Rachel? TV Calling - For educational purposes only

RACHEL WEISS
Mr. Ames?

JONATHAN
(nodding)
Can I sit down?

RACHEL WEISS
Yeah --

Jonathan sits.

JONATHAN
It's very nice to meet you. I'm
really glad you found me on Craig's
List.

RACHEL WEISS
I use it for everything. I didn't
know what to do, so I typed in
'missing persons' and found you,
and you said your rates were
reasonable.

JONATHAN
They're very reasonable...So have
you tried calling your sister since
we spoke on the phone?

RACHEL WEISS
Yeah, it went right to voice-mail
again and the voice-mail is still
full. I texted, too, but nothing.

She crosses her legs, Jonathan looks at her legs. She catches
him looking. To cover, he takes out a Moleskine notebook and
pen, to take notes and seem professional.

JONATHAN
What's your sister's number?

RACHEL WEISS
9-1-7-5-5-5-3-8-5-4.

He jots this down.

JONATHAN
Do you have a picture of your
sister?

RACHEL WEISS

No...Wait, I do, on my phone. She sent it to me from her boyfriend's phone.

JONATHAN

Can I see it?

She bends down to her purse to get her phone and Jonathan eyeballs her breasts.

She comes up, finds the picture on her cell-phone and hands it to him -- we see Lisa Weiss (pretty, dark hair) and Vincent Ettin, a rocker with a tatoo on his neck.

JONATHAN

Who's that?

RACHEL WEISS

Her gross boyfriend, Vincent.

JONATHAN

Let's call him. His number is with the picture.

He hands Rachel her phone. She calls the number, looking out the window, concerned. Jonathan sneaks another look at her legs and breasts.

RACHEL WEISS

(putting the phone down)

It also went right to voice-mail and is full.

JONATHAN

What's gross about him besides that tattoo?

RACHEL WEISS

I don't know. He's a bartender and he's old, like thirty.

JONATHAN

Thirty's not so old, you know.

RACHEL WEISS

Yeah...but...anyway...I think he's a meth-head and she wanted to break up with him and maybe he went homicidal on her.

JONATHAN
Well, break-ups can be hard on a
guy.

RACHEL WEISS
What?

JONATHAN
My girlfriend, actually, just moved
out today, it was very upsetting --

RACHEL WEISS
Are you really a private detective?

JONATHAN
(catching himself)
Yes...Listen, I'm sorry I shouldn't
have gotten personal. I think the
thing to do is find this Vincent.
If we find him, we'll find your
sister.

EXT. FIRST AVENUE -- LATE AFTERNOON, LATER

Jonathan and Rachel are walking up the street.

JONATHAN
Are you really sure you don't want
to go to the cops or let your
parents know?

RACHEL WEISS
I'm sure. Lisa'll go ballistic.
Maybe she and Vincent made up and
she's just hanging out with him and
turned her phone off. She says that
even though he's a jerk, they have
amazing sex. Guys who are assholes
are always the best at sex. It
sucks.

JONATHAN
Yes, I've heard this.

RACHEL WEISS
So if it's nothing, I don't want
her pissed at me by calling my
parents or the cops. But I just
feel weird. Like intuition.

JONATHAN
Where'd she meet Vincent?

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RACHEL WEISS
At the bar where he works. Lakes.
Everyone at NYU goes there because
they don't card.

INT. CHASE ATM, ASTOR PLACE -- LATER

Rachel removes one hundred dollars and gives it to Jonathan.

RACHEL WEISS
One hundred, right?

JONATHAN
Yes, that's the standard day-rate.

INT. KINKO'S, ASTOR PLACE -- LATER

Rachel and Jonathan stand by a printer as the picture of Lisa Weiss and Vincent Ettin comes out.

EXT. KINKO'S ASTOR PLACE -- LATER, STARTING TO GET DARK

Jonathan hails a cab, one pulls up. Rachel looks at Jonathan, trying to size him up one last time.

RACHEL WEISS
Are you really a professional?

JONATHAN
As I put in my ad, I'm not
licensed. But I'll find your
sister. I promise. I want to help
you.

Jonathan opens the door of the cab; Rachel gets in.

RACHEL WEISS
(vulnerable now, young)
I hope everything will be all
right.

JONATHAN
Don't worry. Just get back to
Philadelphia and I'll call you
later tonight --
(to the cabby)
Penn Station.

He closes Rachel's door. The cab drives off. Rachel waves good bye and so does Jonathan. Jonathan's cell-phone rings. He answers.

JONATHAN
Hi, George...Oh, shit I forgot, I'm
sorry...I'll be right over --

EXT. WEST 25TH STREET -- EARLY EVENING, LATER

Jonathan exits a taxi, which has stopped in front of a large glass-fronted Chelsea Gallery. Through the glass, you see lots of people at a party, drinking white wine.

INT. CHELSEA GALLERY -- EARLY EVENING, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan enters the gallery. There's a table with two girls sitting behind it and in front of them are the sheets of the guest list and copies of the glossy magazine -- **EDITION**.

Behind the table is a banner: **George Christopher and Edition Magazine Celebrate the Work of Patrick Ellis**, and around the gallery are enormous black-and-white fashion photos.

Jonathan checks in with the girls and they mark off his name.

He looks around, scanning the crowd and spots SUKI OH, elegant, early 30's, Korean-American, and he walks over to her.

JONATHAN
Hi, Suki.

SUKI
(a bit severe, but not in
an unappealing way)
George was wondering where you
were.

JONATHAN
I know...I forgot.

SUKI
He wants you to get quotes for the
party-page.

JONATHAN
I know...

SUKI

I haven't seen you for a while. How have you been?

JONATHAN

Well...Actually not so good. Suzanne and I broke up.

SUKI

I'm sorry to hear that.

JONATHAN

It's all right...How are you and Nick doing?

SUKI

Actually, we broke up, too.

JONATHAN

(genuinely shocked)

God, I'm sorry. That's strange that we should both be going through break-ups. How long were you two together? Five years?

SUKI

Four...You and Suzanne?

JONATHAN

Two years...

SUKI

I don't know about you, but I'm already happier alone. The only reason to be with someone is to have sex and I don't need sex. Sex is over-rated.

JONATHAN

(beat, digesting this)

You're probably right...That said, you look very pretty tonight.

Jonathan smiles, a bit flirtatiously, and Suki smiles back, and then GEORGE CHRISTOPHER, late 50's, swept-back silver hair, a belly, florid face, grey-suit, comes over to them, carrying a glass of wine.

GEORGE

(to Jonathan, mid-Atlantic accent)

Do you have any pot?

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JONATHAN

Yes --

GEORGE

Of course you do.

INT. BATHROOM AT GALLERY -- A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Jonathan and George are in a stall of the bathroom. Jonathan digs out his one-hitter and lighter, which he hands to George. Jonathan then takes out a small medicine bottle, where he keeps his pot, and hands that to George.

GEORGE

(referring to the medicine
bottle)

Very clever.

JONATHAN

That's what you used to do, before
you quit smoking pot.

GEORGE

That's why I thought it was clever,
and I'm still off of pot, except
when you tempt me, which is very
bad of you.

George pries off the top, digs the one-hitter into the
bottle, then he looks more closely at the bottle.

GEORGE

(outraged)

This is my Viagra bottle! What the
hell are you doing with pot in my
Viagra bottle?

JONATHAN

You gave me the bottle months ago,
there were two pills left, you
thought I should try them, and now
I'm putting my pot in there.

GEORGE

Are you insane? If you get arrested
for marijuana possession, Page 6
will have a field day. I can't have
the world knowing that I use
Viagra.

JONATHAN

Do you really need to take so much? TV Calling - For educational purposes only

GEORGE

Yes...Heavy drinking and my heart medicine have taken their toll. I'm not what I once was, but I accept this. It's called humility.

JONATHAN

Do you think we drink too much?

George lights the one-hitter takes a hit and hands it to Jonathan.

GEORGE

(exhaling)

No. We don't drink too much. Men face reality. Women don't. That's why men need to drink.

George takes his glass of wine, which is on the back of the toilet, and takes a swig.

JONATHAN

That's a line from my second novel.

GEORGE

You stole it from me.

Jonathan looks sceptically at George, then takes a hit and hands the one-hitter back to George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

How's the new novel going?

JONATHAN

I'm not working on it. I'm taking a break; I'm writing a mystery story about a detective who's having a breakdown.

George, nods, takes a hit of pot, exhales, leaving them in a cloud of smoke.

GEORGE

These one-hitters really should be called three-hitters.

INT. CHELSEA GALLERY -- NIGHT, LATER

Quick montage of Jonathan interviewing party-goers (three such types -- a trio of models, a posh-looking man, a rich old lady), his MOLESKINE notebook in hand.

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Then Jonathan approaches Suki, who steps away from the people she's talking to.

JONATHAN
I think I have enough. I'll email
you the article tomorrow.

SUKI
Sounds good. If you could get it in
by eleven that would be great.
We're on deadline.

JONATHAN
Okay...Well, I better get going.
I've got to be somewhere.

He kisses her goodbye on the cheek, they part, look at one another, the kiss has meant something, and then he leaves.

EXT. WEST 25TH STREET, OUTSIDE GALLERY -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan takes out his cell-phone, dials 411.

JONATHAN
Lakes Bar, in Manhattan...

On his pad, he jots down a number -- 212 555 1898. He then dials this number.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Is Vincent Ettin working
tonight?...Okay, thanks...

INT. LAKES BAR, EAST VILLAGE -- NIGHT, LATER

Jonathan enters the bar. The place is dark and shadowy. The way it is filmed, we get a sense of danger and intrigue; the people's faces are wary, hidden, secretive.

Jonathan sits down, looks at the bartender, who has a completely shaved head. Jonathan looks at his watch: 9:15. The bartender comes over.

BARTENDER
What would you like?

JONATHAN
Just some white wine -- wait, a
whisky, no ice. Jameson's.

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The bartender fixes the drink. Jonathan is trying to look tough. The whiskey is put in front of him. Jonathan throws it back, like Marlowe, but can't help himself -- he coughs. The bartender looks away.

JONATHAN
(to the bartender)
Excuse me --

BARTENDER
Yeah.

JONATHAN
I called earlier. Someone told me
Vincent would start working at
nine...Is he coming in tonight?

BARTENDER
You spoke to me. He called a little
while ago. Said he wasn't coming
in. I'm covering for him.

JONATHAN
Do you know where he might be?

The bartender looks at Jonathan incredulously. Jonathan takes out his wallet and puts a twenty on the bar and rests his hand over it, just like Marlowe would.

The bartender still looks at him. Jonathan, not happy, takes out another twenty and puts it with the other.

BARTENDER
What do you want to know?

JONATHAN
Do you know where he lives? He's
not listed in the phone-book.

The bartender glances down at the money and then along the bar to the other customers.

BARTENDER
I tell you one thing. He's not
home.

JONATHAN
Can you tell me another thing then,
like where he's at?

BARTENDER
(hesitates, then--)
He's at the Senton Hotel.
(MORE)

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BARTENDER (cont'd)
He didn't tell me, but it came up
on the caller i.d.

JONATHAN
(tough)
Thanks for the information. You've
been very helpful.

The bartender deftly scoops up the \$40. Jonathan then stands up, finishes his whiskey, COUGHS quite loudly, and is embarrassed.

JONATHAN
(trying to explain,
through his cough)
I've been laying off the whiskey.
Been on a white-wine regimen. Was
trying to save a relationship.

BARTENDER
Sure...okay...

EXT. SENTON HOTEL -- LATER

Jonathan exits a cab outside the Senton Hotel, a seedy short-stay. It has begun to rain. Jonathan stands in a doorway, takes out his medicine bottle, fills and lights his one-hitter, cupping his hand over it, like a latter-day Robert Mitchum.

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan enters the Senton, which has a dirty narrow lobby with one chair, leading to a glass-enclosed booth where an Indian man sits. Jonathan approaches the booth, walking with a Private Detective swagger.

JONATHAN
Is there a Vincent Ettin staying
here?

The man doesn't respond.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Vincent Ettin?

CLERK
Fuck you.

Jonathan pauses. Looks around.

JONATHAN
Do people use their real name at
this place?

The man doesn't respond. Jonathan takes out the picture of
Lisa and Vincent, holds it up to the glass.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Have you seen these two?

CLERK
Fuck you.

JONATHAN
Come on. You don't have to curse so
much.

The man is silent.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Can I sit in the lobby and see if
they come out for cigarettes?

CLERK
No. You can rent a room. Sixty for
three hours. Ninety for the night.
If you do that, you can sit in that
chair.

Jonathan looks out the front door to the rain. He then takes
out sixty bucks, slides it through the little hole at the
bottom of the glass. The man slides back a registration form
and a key.

Jonathan puts down PHILIP MARLOWE for his name and Brooklyn
for his address, slides it back. Then holds the picture up to
the glass.

JONATHAN
So have you seen these two?

CLERK
Fuck you.

Jonathan hangs his head. Then the clerk smiles.

CLERK (CONT'D)
I started working one hour ago. I
don't see them.

JONATHAN
Thanks.

Jonathan turns, sits on the chair. Montage:

* Jonathan reading FAREWELL, MY LOVELY. A prostitute and a john go up to the glass booth.

* Jonathan doodling in his Moleskine. A male hustler and a john come in.

* Jonathan reading FAREWELL, MY LOVELY and a tranny-prostitute and a john walk in.

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, LATER

Jonathan is on his cell-phone.

JONATHAN
Hi, dad, how you doing?

INT. FLORIDA CONDOMINIUM -- NIGHT

Irwin Ames, 80, is on the phone, and the TV is on.

IRWIN
Not good. My ring-finger on my
right-hand has curled in.

He holds out his curled-in finger, as if his son could see it.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
I'm sorry.

IRWIN
Let me put your mother on, I'm
watching something on
TV...Florence! It's Jonathan!

Florence Ames, 73, wearing a robe, comes into living room, takes phone.

FLORENCE
Hello? Jonathan? Everything all
right? You never call this late.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
I just wanted to say hi. How are
you doing?

FLORENCE
Okay...I had a beautiful t'ai chi
class today at the Y; ^{TV Calling - For educational purposes only}
(MORE)

FLORENCE (cont'd)
it was wonderful. You should do
t'ai chi. It could help you with
your writing. Doesn't Suzanne do
t'ai chi?

She does a t'ai chi motion, without thinking.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
She took an Aikido class.

FLORENCE
How is Suzanne?

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan on the phone.

JONATHAN
Uh...She's fine.

Three tranny-prostitutes come in with three guys, talking
loudly.

FLORENCE (O.S.)
Are you at a party?

JONATHAN
Yeah...I better go. Just wanted to
say hi. I love you.

FLORENCE (O.S.)
I love you. And so does your
father. Right, Irwin?

IRWIN (O.S.)
(in the distance)
What? I'm trying to watch a show!

JONATHAN
Good night, mom.

FLORENCE (O.S.)
Good night.

The party of six enters the elevator beyond the glass booth.
Jonathan dials a number on his cell-phone.

JONATHAN
It's me...Just wanted to leave a
message. I hope the move to your
new place went all right...I wish I
could have changed for you, but
it's hard to change. TV Calling - For educational purposes only
(MORE)

JONATHAN (cont'd)
But maybe I can. Buddhism says that
nothing is permanent...And I've
started changing today, a
little...Anyway, I miss you
already, bye --

Jonathan hangs up, stands up, and walks to the glass booth.

JONATHAN
(to the clerk)
Do you have a bathroom on this
floor I can use real quick?

CLERK
No. There's a bathroom in your
room.

Jonathan thinks. He holds the picture up to the glass again.

JONATHAN
Listen, if these two come out, can
you stall them? Please? Tell them
someone's looking for them and will
be right down?

CLERK
Fuck you.

JONATHAN
I thought we were getting along
better?

Jonathan takes out his wallet, slides a twenty through. The
man doesn't say anything, but takes the twenty.

Jonathan goes to the elevator, pushes button, waits.

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jonathan exits the elevator, having gone to the bathroom. He
goes over to the clerk.

JONATHAN
Did you see them? Did they head
out?

CLERK
I saw the man. He went out and
already came back in. With beer.

JONATHAN
What about the girl? TV Calling - For educational purposes only

CLERK

No girl.

JONATHAN

What room is he in...Wait, don't say it.

Jonathan takes out a twenty, slides it through the hole.

CLERK

713.

INT. HALLWAY, SENTON HOTEL, 7TH FLOOR -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jonathan exits elevator, approaches 713. Television noises can be heard from the other rooms.

Knife-like shadows jump out in the dimly-lit hall. Jonathan knocks on 713. Nothing.

JONATHAN

Vincent? Vincent Ettin?

Pressing his ear to the door, he hears some kind of noise inside the room. He BANGS on the door. The door NEXT DOOR opens and a large, sexy, black transsexual prostitute in bra and underwear, opens up her door.

TRANSSEXUAL

What the hell is going on out here?

JONATHAN

Nothing...Sorry...

She appraises Jonathan, looks him up and down.

TRANSSEXUAL

You wanna date, baby? I just had a client cancel on me.

JONATHAN

I can't right now, but thank you.

Without thinking, intimidated by the transsexual, he nervously jiggles the door-handle to Vincent's room, which suddenly opens up and Vincent's wild, sweating face is seen, and he is recognizable because of the TATOO on his neck.

VINCENT

What the fuck is going on?

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JONATHAN
Are you Vincent Ettin?

VINCENT
No!

He goes to slam the door, Jonathan heroically bangs his shoulder into it. The tranny sensing something bad going down, retreats into her room.

Jonathan pushes his way in, the door remains slightly ajar.

INT. VINCENT ETTIN'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Vincent in t-shirt and boxer shorts backs up, and grabs a pen-sized lighter, used for bbq's and crystal meth pipes, from the bureau and clicks it on. There is a six-pack on bureau.

LISA WEISS, in panties and bra, is on the bed. She's loosely tied down with a sheet (her arms pinned) and there's a washcloth in her mouth. She has a confused look on her face.

Vincent points the tiny flame at Jonathan and comes at him. Jonathan jumps on the bed to evade him.

JONATHAN
(to Lisa)
I'm here to help you! Your sister sent me. I'm a private detective!

VINCENT
What? Who are you? Get out of our room!

Jonathan is standing on the bed, keeping Lisa, who is squirming, between him and Vincent, who's waving the tiny torch.

JONATHAN
Hey, put that out!

Vincent jumps up on the bed, Jonathan jumps off the other side.

VINCENT
Get out of our room!

Jonathan then scoots into the bathroom, locking the door.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan leans against the door. Vincent is rattling the knob, banging against door, but it's holding. Jonathan's cell-phone rings. He takes it out: Caller ID: GEORGE. Vincent, hearing the phone, stops banging and rattling.

VINCENT (O.S.)

Who the fuck is calling you? I'm going to call the cops if you don't get out!

JONATHAN

Can you wait one second? It's my boss. I'm going to answer it. He hates it if I don't answer.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

(into cell-phone)

Hello, George --

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

George is sitting up in bed, a SLEEPING MASK on his forehead, a glass of whiskey in his hand, a huge television on the wall, gleaming NYC outside his high-rise window.

GEORGE

Ames, are you still in Manhattan? I'm craving marijuana. I can't sleep. You've got me started again. Can you come over?

JONATHAN (O.S.)

Don't blame me. You're the one who asked for pot at the party...But I really can't come over right now --

GEORGE

Are you in Brooklyn? Don't be a milquetoast. Hop in a car-service. I'll pay --

He hears a loud noise coming through the phone.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Vincent is stepping back and hurling himself at the bathroom door to no avail.

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INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan leans against the door, bracing it against Vincent's efforts.

JONATHAN
(on cell-phone, voice high-strung)
I have to go. Bye George --

GEORGE (O.S.)
Ames!

Jonathan hangs up the phone, puts it back in his pocket. Vincent is now back to rattling the knob.

VINCENT (O.S.)
(angry voice)
Who are you?

JONATHAN
I'm a private detective. Rachel Weiss asked me to look for Lisa. Why is she tied to the bed?

VINCENT (O.S.)
I don't believe you're a detective.

JONATHAN
Well...I'm not a licensed private detective. I'm a writer.

VINCENT (O.S.)
(quieter voice)
What kind of writer?

JONATHAN
(beat)
A novelist. Some journalism.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Vincent's head leans against the door; he's had a mood-shift.

VINCENT
I write. I write songs. It's really what I want to do with my life.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
That's cool.

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Vincent steps away from the bathroom door. Sees the open front door and closes it. Finds his meth pipe on the bureau, lights up, takes a hit, puts the pipe back down.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan is listening through the door.

JONATHAN

So, listen, what's going on? Lisa's sister is really worried. They were supposed to go to a concert.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lisa squirms. Vincent ignores her, comes back to the door.

VINCENT

(a bit high)

I'll tell you what's going on. She broke up with me, but we're trying to put things back together.

He looks over at Lisa and smiles. Her eyes are wide, agitated.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

Really? My girlfriend broke up with me. She moved out today. I'm pretty upset.

VINCENT

You just let her go? That's not cool. You have to be a man when that happens.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

Yeah, I let her go...But why is Lisa tied up? I don't like the looks of that.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan leans against the door.

VINCENT (O.S.)

Who are you to judge? We're role-playing. Stockholm syndrome. That's why we got this sleazy room to make it authentic.

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JONATHAN
I've always been intrigued by the
Stockholm Syndrome.

VINCENT
Yeah, well, she's supposed to fall
in love with her captor, and in
this case fall BACK in love.

JONATHAN
I should have tried that...Can I
come out?

VINCENT (O.S.)
All right. But you better be cool.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan steps out. Lisa squirms. Vincent eye-balls him.

JONATHAN
What's that smell?

VINCENT
Meth.

JONATHAN
You shouldn't smoke meth. I have
some pot. It's better for you.

VINCENT
Really. Can I have a hit?

Lisa squirms. Jonathan sits on the bed and takes out his
medicine bottle and begins to fill his one-hitter.

JONATHAN
(to Lisa)
Do you want a hit?

She shakes her head.

JONATHAN
(to Vincent)
Can you take that wash-cloth out of
her mouth?

VINCENT
No. We need to stay in our roles.
Also, she still wants to break up
with me and I don't want to hear
about it.

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Jonathan passes the one-hitter to Vincent. He uses his little torch and takes a big hit, holds on to the smoke.

JONATHAN
(almost to himself)
My girlfriend broke up with me
because I smoke too much pot and
drink too much white-wine. But she
was right. How can you love someone
if you're in a fog the whole time?

Vincent blows out the pot smoke which goes in Jonathan's face.

VINCENT
Do you want a hit of meth?

JONATHAN
(considering it)
I've never but --

There's rapping on the door, followed by --

POLICEMAN OUTSIDE DOOR
Open up! Police!

VINCENT
Oh, shit!

Lisa squirms. Vincent grabs his meth pipe and bag from the bureau and dashes for the toilet. Jonathan stunned, passes him his medicine bottle of pot. Vincent goes into the bathroom, closes the door.

POLICEMAN OUTSIDE DOOR
Open up!

JONATHAN
I'm coming!

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Vincent is throwing everything -- one hitter, medicine-bottle, meth, meth-pipe -- out the window of the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan opens hotel room door. In hallway are two cops and the tranny prostitute.

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JONATHAN
Can I help you officers?

TRANSSEXUAL
There was some kind of fight going
on in there!

The cops sniff the air, brush past Jonathan and see Lisa tied up. One of the cops immediately takes the wash-cloth out of Lisa's mouth. Vincent comes out of the bathroom.

COP
(to Lisa)
Are you all right? Are these two
men abusing you?

LISA
I'm fine. They're not abusing me.
That's my EX-boyfriend --

VINCENT
Don't say that! --

LISA
(ignoring Vincent)
But I don't even know who this guy
is. There's something wrong with
him.

She points at Jonathan.

JONATHAN
I came here to help --

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM -- NIGHT, LATER

Jonathan is alone with a styrofoam cup of coffee. A clock on a wall shows eight a.m. A detective enters the room, sits down across from Jonathan.

DETECTIVE
So let me ask you. Why'd you pull
this Craig's List stunt? For the
money?

JONATHAN
No, not at all...I wasn't in my
right mind. My girlfriend broke up
with me...

DETECTIVE
Save the sob story for Bellevue. TV Calling - For educational purposes only

JONATHAN

Well, anyway, I lost money on this whole thing. I forgot to tell the sister about expenses. In the books I've read, the private detective always ask for expenses. So I spent eighty on bribes and sixty on the hotel --

DETECTIVE

All right. Shut up.

(beat)

Listen, you didn't actually break any laws...And the girl and her boyfriend are NOT filing a complaint, after all...

(voice rising)

But don't you ever pull a stunt like this again! Ever! You do and I'm going send you to Rikers and you won't come out alive!

EXT. BERGEN STREET STATION BROOKLYN -- DAY

Jonathan emerges from the subway and takes out his cell-phone, makes a call.

JONATHAN

Hey, Ray...Can you meet for a coffee? I've got to talk to you about something...Let's meet at the Tea Lounge.

EXT. TEA LOUNGE, COURT STREET -- DAY, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Ray sits on a bench in front of the Tea Lounge with two coffees. He's surrounded by 18 hi-tech, empty strollers. Jonathan approaches rapidly, sits next to Ray, they shake.

RAY

We have to sit outside. Some early-morning post-natal yoga class just let out. It's like a nursery in there...I got your coffee.

He hands the coffee to Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Thanks --

RAY

I'm glad you called. I've got to talk to you, too. Who wants to go first?

JONATHAN

You can, if you want...but I had a really wild night --

RAY

(eager to vent)

Okay. First me, then you. So I was at Leah's last night, in bed, waiting for her. She promised that this was the night to break our cold streak. But she took forever putting her kids to sleep...I never should have started dating a woman with kids. I have to be the only child in a woman's life...So she finally gets into bed around ten-thirty and says, 'I want to close my eyes for ten minutes.' Well, that ten minutes was the rest of the night. She passed out cold.

JONATHAN

That's terrible. But you're not going believe --

RAY

I'm not done. So I left around one a.m. and now she's been calling me all morning leaving messages saying that I abandoned her and how can I be insensitive to her abandonment issues. Can you believe I had a night like that?

JONATHAN

That does sound bad, but listen, I got into a real --

RAY

Oh, shit there's Leah --

Leah comes racing up on a bicycle. Ray makes to walk off, like he doesn't know her. She rides alongside him.

LEAH

How dare you leave me in the middle of the night like a one-night stand.

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RAY

One-night stand? I wish it was.

LEAH

You should have stayed and held me.

RAY

What am I a hot-water bottle? I'm a man. I have needs. You call this monogamy? I call it celibacy!

LEAH

Those are big words for you! You didn't read them in a comic book, did you, little boy?

RAY

(voice cracking)

I read them in my diary!

Ray suddenly starts crying and covers his face with his hands. He's motionless. Leah stops her bicycle and puts her arm around Ray. He hides his head in her shoulder.

Jonathan gets up from the bench, gets tangled with a stroller, and walks off.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- LATER

He sits down by his computer with a cold bottle of white wine. He takes out his notebook to write his article. He puts on his computer, opens it to his email.

Clicks on the first one, which has in its subject: **YOUR CRAIG'S LIST AD**. Then he reads the email: **I NEED YOUR HELP. PLEASE CALL ME. ANY TIME DAY OR NIGHT. I NEED HELP. 646 555 3423 JANE LESSING.**

Jonathan stares at the email. He lights his one-hitter like a tough noir guy, inhales, and then takes out his cell-phone and makes a call --

JONATHAN

Is this Jane Lessing?

The end