

FEARLESS
(JOYRIDE)

by

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Based on the novel
by Rafael Yglesias

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JOYRIDE 3/4/92

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FADE IN

A FIELD - DAY

A MAN and a BOY seem to awaken. They lie where they fell, in a field of green corn stalks. The man leans over and picks up an infant seat in which there's an almost NEWBORN baby. He takes the Boy by the hand and they move on...

NO SOUND but for a slight RINGING, of the kind you'd hear in your ears right after a tremendous explosion.

The Man, MAX (40), seems to know where he's going. The Boy, BYRON (9), clutches Max's hand. They move gracefully -- as if in a dream -- through the clear summer air. The sunlight DIMS OUT abruptly once or twice, like a light turning off and on. They move through the darkness or the light without reaction.

AIRLINE SEAT --

Sitting intact in the field.

Max, carrying the Newborn, and Byron walk pass the intact seat in the green field. It's an incongruous image, straight out of a surrealist painter's head.

SOUNDS -- They are surreal too: An animal cry...? A siren...?

SHADOWS FLIT past Max, Byron, and Newborn running in the opposite direction.

MAX --

his feet land on asphalt -- the tarmac of a runway. There are BLACK SKID MARKS and TORN CHUNKS OF CONCRETE...

SOUND -- The ringing clears replaced by the chaos of rescue...

MAX'S POV -- behind are perhaps twenty survivors who are following him out of the cornfield.

WIDE ANGLE -- Max, Byron, and other survivors are surrounded by Rescuers, helping, asking questions, etc.

Red Cross Volunteer One, a young slim man, takes Byron's hand. Byron pulls away toward Max.

RED CROSS VOLUNTEER ONE
We'll stay with your Daddy.

MAX
I'm not his Daddy.
(to Byron)
Go with him. You'll be okay.

BYRON
No! I wanna be with you!

MAX
(to Volunteer)
Take him.
(shows Newborn in infant seat)
I've got to find the mother.

TRACK WITH MAX -- he walks toward the airport hanger where cots, stretchers, and soon, body bags will be placed. Everywhere there are Rescuers and Survivors.

Max approaches a WOMAN IN TORN CLOTHES, obviously a survivor.

MAX
Is this your baby?

The Woman In Torn Clothes turns. Max sees that she is in her sixties. She's in shock.

WOMAN IN TORN CLOTHES
I need my luggage. I can't stay
in these clothes.

Max moves on. A PARAMEDIC comes up to him.

PARAMEDIC ONE
You okay?

MAX
I've got to find the mother.

PARAMEDIC ONE
Are you injured?

Max looks at himself. His body and clothes are pristine.

PARAMEDIC ONE (Cont'd)
Were you in the crash?

MAX --

he makes a decision.

MAX

No.

(hurries on)

I found this baby. I've got to find the mother.

PARAMEDIC ONE

(as he rushes off)

There's a woman over there looking for a baby.

Max follows the indication. He approaches a BLONDE MOTHER. As she turns to him, we see tears streaming down her face. Otherwise she seems calm. There are no tears in her dulled voice.

MAX

Is this your baby?

BLONDE MOTHER

(dulled, in shock)

My babies are okay. My sister and her sons...

She turns back and stares at one of the burning sections. No one could still be alive in there.

BLONDE MOTHER (Cont'd)

I'm waiting for them.

Max moves on.

EXT. DAY - RUNWAY

CARLA, (28), very dark and New York Italian working class, is being carried on a stretcher. Her leg is broken. She's half-trying to get up, saying:

CARLA

My baby...

EMERGENCY DOCTOR (25) a dark haired man, checks her leg, her shoulder -- it's burned -- and then her eyes. Doctor talks to PARAMEDIC TWO (30) a plump woman. The Doctor is nervous, harried.

EMERGENCY DOCTOR

Leg's fractured. Get me an air cast. Second-degree burn. She's in shock. Could be internal--

CARLA
(rising)
I gotta go--

EMERGENCY DOCTOR
(stops her)
Whoa!

Paramedic Two is offering an air cast to the Doctor.

MAX --

Appears beside Carla and offers her the infant he's carrying.

CARLA --

For a moment, she's blank. But then, she's even more frantic.

CARLA
That's not my baby! My baby's still
there!

Max moves on. We stay with the stretcher

CARLA --

CARLA
(struggling, hysterical)
I gotta get my boy!

EMERGENCY DOCTOR
(shouting at Paramedic)
Give me morphine! Stat!
(yelling at Carla, holding her)
Settle down! I don't have time
for this shit!

Paramedic Two hands him a syringe. Carla fights.

CARLA
Just lemme go...

Paramedic restrains her. Emergency Doctor approaches with a syringe.

ON CARLA'S howl of protest...

EXT. DAY - RUNWAY

Max, still carrying the infant, approaches a WOMAN WEARING WIRE-RIM GLASSES. She is seated on the open back door of a station wagon. She has her head buried in her hands. Max stands over

her and holds the infant seat out.

MAX (Cont'd)
Is this your baby?

WIRE-RIMMED GLASSES MOTHER --

She looks up. For a beat, she doesn't move and then -- she's frantically happy, grabbing the infant seat away from Max and kissing the Newborn all over. She pays no attention to Max. That's okay with him.

Max moves on, toward the door to the Airline Terminal.

As Max reaches for the handle, he pauses at the sight of...

MAX'S POV -- The glass reflection of what's on the tarmac:

AN ABSTRACT IN ORANGE, really rather a beautiful color, a bonfire for a party or a lovely sunset.

MAX --

turns and we turn with him to see the sight for the first time:

MAX'S POV --

THE HOLOCAUST. A metal giant has been broken on the earth, cut into three torsos. Two are in flames; the third piece is eerily smoking. Rescuers -- firefighters and medical teams -- crawl like insects into and out of the huge smashed body. Machines pee foam and water onto the metal corpse.

We note an intact champagne bottle rolling toward an ambulance.

We see an engine lying by itself, charred like an overdone steak.

And for one long appalling second --

Bodies or body parts, unrecognizable and yet too recognizable as human corpses.

MAX --

No reaction.... He is expressionless.

INT. DAY - AIRPORT TERMINAL

Max enters a door as a television crew rushes past him going out. People watch from the windows. Max moves away from them toward the ticket counters.

COUNTERS -- deserted. That includes the Rental Car counters.

MAX --

At a water fountain. He splashes water all over his face.
Beside it is a self-pay newspaper dispenser. Max peers at paper.

MAX
(to himself)
Canton, Ohio.
(thinks for a beat)
Home of the Pro-Football Hall of
Fame.

Max moves off toward the exit.

EXT. DAY - AIRPORT ENTRANCE, TAXI STAND

Max walks over toward three waiting taxis. THREE CABBIES are out of the cars, leaning against a chain link fence and watching the rescue efforts. One of the cabbies is using a Camcorder.

MAX
I need a cab.

Two of the Cabbies look at him with surprise. The third one, using the Camcorder, keeps shooting, but he mumbles:

CAMCORDER CABBY
You gotta be kidding.

MAX
I want to go to the nearest hotel.

One of the other two cabbies, a bald man (45), turns to Max.

BALD CABBY
Right away?

Max nods. Bald Cabby looks at crash site with some regret.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - SHERATON

The cab with Bald Cabby pulls up. Max steps out. He looks calm.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - SHERATON ROOM

Ordinary room. It's empty. The door to the bathroom is open.

We hear a shower turn off.

Max steps into our view and plants himself in front of a large mirror on the wall. Max is in very good shape, a man who obviously exercises regularly and watches his diet.

MAX --

Studies his body intently and thoroughly, but dispassionately. He raised his hands and carefully touches himself, beginning with his pecs and then lowering his hands down the length of his torso. The touching is both practical -- he's checking -- and sensual -- he's enjoying the life in himself.

Finally he locks eyes with his image.

MAX
(quiet but excited)
You're not dead.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - MALL

Max, dressed again in his crash clothes (which still look just fine), walks up to a small Hertz Car Rental kiosk. (Customers stand outside as they are waited on.) Max pauses for a moment en route. He HEARS SOMEONE SINGING -- either live or recorded isn't clear -- just a single human voice, pure and thrilled. And then it's gone.

EXT. DAY - HERTZ COUNTER

A college age woman is on the phone. She is halfway through filling out a form for Max. Max is in front of her.

CAR RENTAL CLERK
(to phone)
Jesus... I'm never flying again.
(to Max)
This is my boyfriend. A plane's
crashed at the airport.

MAX
I'm in a hurry.

CAR RENTAL CLERK
(to phone)
A customer.

Max taps on the counter.

MAX

Fill out the form and call him
back!

CAR RENTAL CLERK

(to phone)

Yeah, story of my life.

Clerk hangs up and looks at the form.

CAR RENTAL CLERK (Cont'd)

You want insurance? It's three
dollars for full coverage.

Max stares at her. He doesn't answer.

CAR RENTAL CLERK (Cont')

(oblivious)

I thought you were in a big rush.

MAX

(a beat)

No insurance.

CAR RENTAL CLERK

That means you're responsible for
any damage.

MAX

Yeah...I'm responsible.

CUT TO

INT./EXT. - LINCOLN TOWN CAR/HIGHWAY

Max is merging onto an empty highway. He glances over to the
passenger seat. There's a map spread out on it.

MAX --

looks calm as he leans forward and turns on the radio. Rock
music comes on. Max smiles and merges into light traffic.

Max's car picks up speed. The speedometer climbs past sixty.

Max moves into the fast lane. He raises the radio's volume.

Speedometer:...Seventy...Eighty...and still going...

MAX -- leans his head out the side window, far enough so that the
rushing air washes over his face. He relishes its feel.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - HIGHWAY

The TOWN CAR is stopped on the shoulder. The driver's door is open. Track up to it (as if we're a traffic cop). There's no driver. Track around the front of the car and onto the grass on the other side. We find three empty Hershey chocolate wrappers. We keep moving until we find...

MAX --

Stretched out, as if sunning himself. He looks at the ground beside him. Part of the grass has worn away and there's a dried, almost reddish patch of clay. Max lets a trail of saliva stream down casually and mix with the clay. It moistens into dark, fertile earth.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM CORRIDOR

CARLA --

in a drugged sleep on a gurney. There's an air cast on the lower half of her leg. Her shoulder is bandaged. Around her there is chaos of activity, people being worked on, or wandering in shock.

BEA (60), short and plump, wearing enormous tinted glasses, shakes Carla. Carla's eyes, very drugged up, open woozily. Bea shows no fear or uneasiness about talking to Carla.

BEA

Hi, honey. My name is Bea. I'm a social worker and a family therapist...plus some other things. Has a doctor seen you?

CARLA

(touches her air cast)
It's broken.

BEA

That looks temporary. I was told you were traveling with a little boy. Your son?

CARLA

(rousing, getting upset)
I couldn't get him in the belt!
It wouldn't work!

BEA

Okay...okay, I think you should know that your boy is missing. What was his seat number?

CARLA

Ask the stewardess about the belt -- it wouldn't get tight!

BEA

Okay, nobody's saying anything to contradict you, honey. Do you remember your seat number?

CARLA

(shakes her head no)

Is he dead?

BEA

I don't know. He isn't here and they tell me all the children are in this hospital. But that's not definite. There's a lot of confusion. Can I call someone for you? Your husband?

CARLA

(nods -- she's passing out)

He's at work... He's Manny.

BEA

Manny. What's his number?

CARLA

555-4137...that's in New York.

BEA

Okay...go to sleep.

Carla passes out. Bea moves away, sadly. Another SOCIAL WORKER appears and indicates Carla.

SOCIAL WORKER

We've matched up all the kids who made it.

BEA

(nods, as if she knew)

Let's not say anything definite until her husband gets here.

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EXT. DAY - OFF RAMP, HIGHWAY

A SIGN: WELCOME TO PITTSBURGH

MAX --

He chuckles about the sign as he passes it.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - LINCOLN STREET, PITTSBURGH

A modest middle-class family house. ALISON (40), a woman with a beautiful face whose figure has seen much better days comes to the door as the echo of a doorbell fades out. She opens it.

ALISON'S POV -- Porch. No one's there. She steps out warily.

EXT. DAY - ALISON'S LAWN

Alison sees the back of a man leaning against a maple. He looks contemplatively up the street.

ALISON

Hello...?

The man turns -- it's MAX.

ALISON -- Recognizing Max with pleasure.

ALISON

Max! Max Klein! What are--

Max walks right into her surprised arms and hugs her tight. She embraces him just as completely while her amazement lessens.

ALISON (Cont'd)

What the hell are you doing here!

(studies him as they disengage)

You bastard, you don't look any different!

MAX

Nice try. I had a lot more hair.
And there wasn't any gray.

ALISON

It makes you look even handsomer.
I can't believe it! Max! It's
been twenty years!

(her eyes fill)

Makes me want to cry.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES, PITTSBURGH

Max and Alison at a booth waiting for their order to arrive.

ALISON

We didn't even eat here as freshmen. It's ridiculous. Stay for dinner. You can meet my four kids--

MAX

Four!

ALISON

Yeah, we're crazy. I'm crazy. I've been made crazy.

MAX

I can't believe you never left Pittsburgh.

ALISON

Hey -- watch it fella. We were just rated the most liveable city in America by some survey.

MAX

Yeah, some survey is right. The only reason it's liveable is because the steel industry died.

A waitress arrives with a plate of pancakes for Max. The pancakes are embedded with pale slivers of strawberries.

MAX (Cont'd)

These are strawberry pancakes?

WAITRESS

Yep.

MAX

I wanted -- do you have whole strawberries?

WAITRESS

I guess.

MAX

Bring me a bowl, please.

Waitress shrugs and goes.

ALISON

I don't remember you having a thing for strawberries.

MAX

How's Bill? Is he head of the Theater Department yet?

ALISON

No. He was passed over. Look, I'll make this quick. I can't stand going through the list item by item. My life is a disaster.

MAX

No, it isn't. Trust me. Your life isn't a disaster.

The bowl of strawberries arrives. Max takes one and eats it.

ALISON

(a sarcastic listing)

Yes it is. I'm fat. I haven't written a play in ten years. Timmy, my oldest, has a learning disability. Thanks to family therapy I've learned to love him for what he is, not my fantasy of what he should be. The middle two, James and Sarah, resent the extra attention Timmy got. So they fuck up in school to punish us. They're working that out in their support group for Siblings Of The Learning Disabled. And my youngest, my beautiful baby Ellen, who was going to be the great ballerina? She destroyed her ankle playing basketball with her brothers. As for Bill -- he's screwing a student.

(gives up, laughing)

It's pathetic. Not even tragic.

Max offers a strawberry.

MAX

Have a strawberry.

ALISON
(laughing helplessly)
What good's that gonna do?

MAX
Forbidden fruit always does good.

ALISON --

takes the strawberry and eats it suggestively. She's asking...

MAX --

Eats another strawberry and holds her look.

MAX (Cont'd)
I didn't come for that.

ALISON
Figures. You were always faithful.

MAX
And you?

ALISON
Who would have me...?
(abrupt)
Wait a second. Aren't you allergic
to strawberries? Didn't you almost
die when you were little from eating
a strawberry?

Max leans back, indicates his intact body, and smiles
expansively.

MAX
Oh, I'm past all that. See...?
No reaction. No reaction at all.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - HOSPITAL

A small private room. Carla lies in a drugged sleep in a bed.
There's a permanent cast on her leg and a new bandage on her
shoulder. Outside the one window we see it's night.

MANNY (30), Carla's husband, sits by the bed in a chair, watching
Carla. He's half-Filipino, half-Italian and all working class.
He's dark, handsome, and macho. Right now, he's worried.

CARLA --

Her eyes open. They are blurred, unfocused. When they recognize Manny a kind of fear comes into them.

CARLA

Manny...?

Manny moves out of the chair and sits on the bed. He takes her hand. She watches him as if he's capable of anything, even hurting her. Manny puts his head beside hers.

MANNY

I'm here, babe. I been here for an hour. A doctor told me you're okay.

CARLA (Cont'd)

Did they say anything...?
(she can't finish)

Manny maneuvers so that he is almost hugging her. He kisses her cheek, her eyes, and whispers into her ear. We don't hear, but we know the terrible news that he's giving her.

CARLA --

CARLA (Cont'd)

No...

Shuts her eyes in pain. After a beat, she opens them. They're wild from the hurt. There's no escape from her loss.

Carla pushes Manny off. He moves away hopelessly.

CARLA (Cont'd)

Let's get outta here.

Tears are running from her eyes, but she isn't sobbing. She sits up.

CARLA (Cont'd)

I wanna go home!

Manny slumps into the chair, puts his head in his hands.

CARLA (Cont'd)

What are you doing! Get up! Get me out of here! I want to go home!

Manny doesn't move. Carla tries to move, but she can't shift the heavy cast, she's too weak.

CARLA (Cont'd)

God damn it! Manny! Get me out
of here! I'm gonna go crazy here!

She breaks down into hopeless sobs.

A Nurse looks in. She's carrying a pill and a cup of water.

NURSE

(to Manny)

She want a sedative?

Manny signals to the Nurse to come in with the pills.

CARLA

(shouts through her sobs)

I want my baby!

She reaches for what's nearby, a plastic cup, and throws it at
the Nurse. It falls far short.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - SHERATON HALLWAY, PITTSBURGH

AGENT PARSONS (45), a clean-cut man and AGENT SMITH (35), a very
tall and thin African-American. They look at a photocopy of
someone. It's a blurred picture of Max. They knock on a room
door firmly. After a pause, they knock again, even louder.

Max opens the door. He's in underpants and looks disheveled from
sleep.

AGENT SMITH

It's him.

Both men show Max their FBI I.D.

AGENT PARSONS

Good morning, sir. I'm Agent
Parsons and this is Agent Smith of
the FBI. You're registered as Mr.
Max Klein of 505 West End Avenue
in Manhattan. Is that correct?

MAX

You've got me.

Max steps back into his room and sags onto the bed. Through the
window we can see it's morning. There are the remains of an
elaborate room service meal for two, including two bottles of
champagne.

AGENT PARSONS
Were you on a flight to--?

MAX
Yes. I was.

AGENT SMITH
You took a hike from the scene?
Just upped and left?

MAX
What time is it?

AGENT SMITH
Ten o'clock Thursday morning.
You've been missing for almost a
day.

MAX
(puzzled)
Missing...?

AGENT SMITH
Mr. Klein, what are you doing
here? You walked from the crash,
rented a car, drove to
Pittsburgh... Why?

MAX
They didn't need me anymore.

AGENT PARSONS
Need you for what?

MAX
(curious)
Am I under arrest?

AGENT PARSONS
You haven't done anything.

MAX
(smiles)
That's what you think.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - CARLA'S HOSPITAL ROOM

CARLA --

It's morning. She stares into space, hopeless and desolate.

BEA (O.S.)

(to Manny)

Hi, I'm Bea. I talked to your wife yesterday. I heard about your son. I'm very sorry.

MANNY (O.S.)

Thank you.

Bea appears next to Carla, sitting on the bed.

BEA

I heard you refused to take any more tranquilizers. I told them to leave you alone. You're right. Throwing blankets on a fire may put it out, but if you cover feelings...they burn hotter inside.

CARLA

(dead voice)

Who are you?

BEA

You mean, why am I bothering you? I'm a thanatologist. That's a very long word which means I try to help people who have lost someone. Lost someone. Isn't that a funny way to talk? I mean -- when someone they love has died.

CARLA

That's very nice of you.

BEA

I do it for myself. My daughter Julie died in a car accident. She was sixteen. She went to the movies with friends and I never saw her again. Every time I cried, they gave me a sedative. Every time I talked, they told me to forget. It took me three years to stop using the pills. When I quit them, my pain was still there...as if she'd died the day before. So you scream bloody murder. Get it out.

CARLA --

No reaction. She isn't crying or raging. She's dead. She takes a pillow and holds it in front of her.

BEA (Cont'd)
What happened in the crash? Was
he in your lap?

Carla is agitated. She tightens her grip on the pillow.

MANNY
This ain't helping.

BEA
She has to talk about it...

C.U. CARLA -- she clutches the pillow as she begins to re-live...

FLASHBACK - INT. DAY - TRANSCON PLANE

CARLA AND BUBBLE --

Snuggling in the seat as the plane nears the ground. Carla has a tight hold on BUBBLE, (2), her beautiful son. Other passengers are bent forward in crash positions.

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL

CARLA --

Reacting to the memory, she's sobbing into the pillow. Manny pulls at Bea.

MANNY
You have to go--

BEA
Talk about it honey...

MANNY
She don't want to talk about a
fucking thing!

CARLA
(wild, desperate)
I don't remember! I don't
remember anything!

CUT TO

INT. DAY - PITTSBURGH SHERATON LOBBY

Max, Agent Parsons, and Agent Smith come out of an elevator. Max has showered and shaved, so some time has gone by. Agent Parsons nods yes to a young woman who approaches. She is--

CINDY DICKENS (25), Transcon Public Relations. She's pretty, but dressed in business armor, both her clothes and manner.

CINDY

Mr. Klein? I'm Cindy Dickens of Transcontinental Air. I'm here to help get you home.

MAX

That's nice. No one's taken me home since first grade.

CINDY

I've got tickets on Amtrak to get you back to New York. Your train leaves in an hour.

MAX

I want to fly.

CINDY

Excuse me...?

MAX

You'll fly me back to New York for free, right?

CINDY

Of course...

(confused)

When I told your wife the good news about you she said that even before the...uh, unpleasant...

MAX

The crash.

CINDY

Right. Even before that you were scared to fly.

MAX

I would love to fly home on your airline. But I've got a request.

CINDY
(wary)
Sir...?

MAX
I want to go first class.

CINDY
(relieved)
With our compliments, sir.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - TRANSCON COUNTER, PITTSBURGH AIRPORT

MAX approaches a counter with a ticket. Cindy Dickens is in b.g., hustling over to a bank of phones away from Max. We see that it's night outside.

C.U. MAX'S HAND as he slaps the ticket down.

FLASHBACK -- INT. DAY - TRANSCON COUNTER, NEWARK AIRPORT

C.U. MAX'S HAND as he slaps a different ticket down.

PULL OUT -- Beside Max is JEFF GORDON (35-40), his business partner.

Max is in the same clothes he wears in the present. Jeff is also dressed casually and carries a portfolio for architectural drawings. In contrast to how we've seen him so far, Max is very nervous. TRANSCON CLERK ONE looks up at him. Max points to the flight boards.

MAX
(to Clerk)
What's the equipment on our flight?
That says 727. But this supposed to
be widebody service.

JEFF
If you don't relax, they'll give
you wide berth service.

TRANSCON CLERK ONE
No, sir, that's the flight number.
I'll check.

The clerk clacks keys on her terminal.

MAX
(alarmed)
It's supposed to be a 747.

JEFF
We'll go to Gate 8 and see for
ourselves.

TRANSCON CLERK ONE
There has been a change. It's not
a wide-body --

JEFF
Here we go...

MAX
I called three times. They told
me, they promised it was going to
be a 747.

TRANSCON CLERK ONE
There was an equipment change.
Sometimes we have trouble --
(stumbles)
you know, not trouble.--

MAX
When's your next flight on a 747?
Or even an L-1011?

JEFF
You're kidding. We can't keep
Nutty Nick waiting!
(intense whisper to Max)
You'll fuck up the biggest
opportunity of our lives!

TRANSCON CLERK ONE
One-thirty. There's another at
five oh five.

MAX
We'll take one-thirty--

Max moves to hand the tickets to the Clerk to be changed. Jeff
intercepts the tickets and marches away from the counter toward
the gates..

Max follows Jeff and stops him.

JEFF

You're not an idiot and you're not neurotic -- I take that back, you are neurotic...

MAX

I've learned to control it. By being logical I can control the fear. I've learned all I could about airplanes so I can fly under certain conditions--

JEFF

I understand. You're an obsessive compulsive control freak.

MAX

I can't after a sudden equipment change! Don't make me!

JEFF

(really angry)

You have to! Listen to me! We're drowning! Either get on that plane or kiss our business goodbye!

Max is thoughtful, hesitant. Jeff grins meanly:

JEFF (Cont'd)

Besides, what are you worrying for? Your life isn't so great.

INT. NIGHT - TRANSCON TERMINAL COUNTER, PITTSBURGH

MAX -- coming out of the memory. He focuses on the TRANSCON CLERK in the present.

MAX

I want a widow seat, please.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - TRANSCON 727, COCKPIT

C.U. INSTRUMENT PANEL -- Lights flashing

PULL OUT -- Pilot and Co-Pilot going through pre-flight check. The Co-Pilot becomes uneasy -- he feels there's someone looking at him. He turns:

MAX -- he stares back innocent, curious.

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT steps between Max and his view of the cockpit.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir? May I see your boarding pass?

INT. NIGHT - TRANSCON 727, MAX'S SEAT

The first two seats in First Class. Max looks out the window at the runway. A Psychologist, BILL PERLMAN (40), a big friendly man, rushes in and sits down next to Max. He is out of breath. We're on the runway. Perlman chats easily, but he keeps an observant eye on Max. Max is happy, at ease.

PERLMAN
Just made it. I'm Bill Perlman.
Flying home, right?

Max nods.

PERLMAN (Cont'd)
Glad to be going home, I bet.

Max peers at him with the trace of a smile.

MAX
You're a shrink.

PERLMAN
(unfazed)
That's right. I specialize in the treatment of Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome. I wrote a book about it and several airlines hired me--

The jet taxis.

PERLMAN (Cont'd)
--we're taxi-ing now -- as a consultant to work with crash survivors. Naturally, one of my perks is free tickets--

The engines rev loudly. Perlman continues to interrupt himself and narrate the 727's actions.

PERLMAN (Cont'd)
-- that's the captain getting the engines up to speed -- but I travel so much for work that my idea of a vacation -- we're turning to be in position for takeoff -- is to stay put.

MAX
I'm not scared. But I would like
another drink when we're airborne.
(smiles, elbows Perlman)
I should say, if we're airborne.

An ELDERLY WOMAN on the other aisle looks concerned at this joke.

PERLMAN
(tense)
We're beginning takeoff.

MAX
(leans across Perlman)
Look at us go!

PERLMAN
(tight, as they lift up)
I was told you're terrified of
flying.

MAX
I was.
(cheering plane on)
Go, baby, go!

PERLMAN
(rigid in seat)
What you did was remarkable. They
say you saved more than twenty
people--

The jet banks sharply, turning while it climbs. Perlman grips
the seat handles.

MAX
(happy)
This is the most dangerous time.
Every bolt is stressed. The air
is crowded with deadly
obstacles... each one as reckless
and blind as we are.

PERLMAN
(very nervous)
We're safe.

The Elderly Woman looks more upset.

MAX
The hydraulics were blown out. We
should have fallen out of the sky.

Max spreads his arms out, preparing to mime the flying actions.

MAX (Cont'd)

But that pilot improvised
brilliantly. Half of us died.
That's the count, right?

(a sweating Perlman nods)

The Captain didn't make it, did
he?

(Perlman, swallowing hard, nods)

No, he was crushed when we flipped
over. But he saved ninety lives
by doing this...

Max rocks his arms up and down, flying a wounded plane. The
Elderly Woman seems ready to freak. Perlman notices her.

PERLMAN

Okay, okay. That's enough.

Max drops his arms. He leans toward Perlman.

MAX

No one is safe, Doctor Perlman.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - BATHROOM, MAX'S APARTMENT

C.U. DEBBY LOOKING INTO A MIRROR

DEBBY (35-40), Max's wife, is lithe, very beautiful, an ex-
ballerina. She has the fragile uncertainty of someone preparing
for a first date, looking at own image as if considering
whether it needs a change.

Debby puts on lipstick and immediately wipes it off.

DEBBY

(to her image)

What am I doing?

Off-stage WE HEAR a hubbub. Debby turns quickly and opens the
bathroom door. We follow her out into...

INT. NIGHT - MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM

Big, sweeping view of the Hudson river. Very very white and
spare; furniture all modern, but tasteful, not parody and not
entirely Hi-Tech. The room is full of people. They are:

JONAH (10), Max's son, a tall thin child with a shy, intelligent

manner. At once gentle and clever.

BRILLSTEIN (40) a small-time wrongful death lawyer. Doesn't matter whether he's tall or thin, fat or skinny. What matters is, he's dressed just this side of tacky and his manner is falsely solemn. He's hyper: nervous even when at rest.

GAIL (68), Max's mother, an elegant sophisticated middle-class woman, and her unmarried daughter Sarah (38), somewhat overweight, inelegant, and unhappy. Debby's parents are there and several friends, but only to fill out the scene.

The crowd parts as Debby appears and we find MAX.

Debby approaches Max with her arms unfolding toward him. (Remember, she is a dancer and moves with studied grace.) Jonah hangs near his father, but shyly.

DEBBY AND MAX -- as they embrace

DEBBY
(passionate whisper)
Why didn't you call?

MAX
Didn't occur to me.

Debby is puzzled, to say the least. Max opens his arms to Jonah.

MAX (Cont'd)
Come here...

Max hugs Jonah. He whispers to his son.

MAX (Cont'd)
Were you scared?

JONAH
I was worried.

Brillstein appears in Max's vision, despite the embrace going on.

BRILLSTEIN
Excuse me, I'm Steven Brillstein.

DEBBY
Nan asked if he could wait here
for you... He's a lawyer.

BRILLSTEIN

I'm sorry to intrude. Mrs. Gordon is frustrated. The airline hasn't made a definite statement--

MAX

Jeff's dead.

Max is matter of fact. His news is a bombshell. Debby is scared. Jonah is shocked. Gail, Max's mother, cries out. His sister, Sarah, helps their mother to the couch while complaining:

SARAH

Jesus, Max!

PERLMAN

Max isn't himself right now.

MAX

How do you know? We just met.
(in answer to Debby's look:)
A therapist who works for the airlines.

PERLMAN

I'm here for you, Max.

BRILLSTEIN

(to Perlman)

If the airline pays your bills then it's a conflict of interest. I know, I'm terrible. But I have to warn Mr. Klein that anything he says--

PERLMAN

Is in confidence. That's my agreement with the airlines. Relax.

BRILLSTEIN

You help make them look more sympathetic to a jury, am I right? I know, I'm terrible.

MAX

You're Debby's lawyer?

BRILLSTEIN

Just a friendly advisor until they hire an aviation specialist. I'm sorry to bother you, but are you certain about Mr. Gordon?

MAX

He's dead. Completely dead.

Gail covers her face and groans. Sarah looks daggers.

MAX (Cont'd)

Sorry. I didn't know you felt that close to Jeff, Mom.

GAIL

I've known him for twenty years!

MAX

You knew him because he was my partner.

JONAH

How do you know he's dead?

Max separates from Debby who's upset now, rather than excited as she was at the start of the scene. Max walks to Jonah.

MAX AND JONAH --

In a huddle. Max talks to his son in an intimate whisper.

MAX

I forgot, Jonah, that you and Sam are best buddies. Sammy'll be okay. We'll look after him.

Brillstein sticks his head into Max's and Jonah's huddle.

BRILLSTEIN

Can we speak privately?

Perlman sticks his head into the huddle.

PERLMAN

This is inappropriate.

Max stands up.

MAX

Out! All of you!

PERLMAN

We should talk.

Max punches Perlman.

DEBBY

(aghast)

Max, are you crazy!

MAX

I didn't hit him very hard.

Max is right. Besides, Perlman is big. He remains standing. The room is stunned. Perlman has no visible reaction. He looks thoughtful.

PERLMAN

I can't help you.

Perlman leaves. The others hurry up and go. Max stares after them. Debby snuggles up to him. Brillstein moves away from Max -- very far away -- and says:

BRILLSTEIN

In fairness to Mrs. Gordon, I should hear the details.

MAX

I'll tell her.

(to Jonah)

Why don't you come with me?

Sammy'll be glad to see you.

DEBBY

You're going? You just got here.

MAX

I'm going to be home for a long time. Jeff isn't.

DEBBY

You could call her.

MAX

Yeah, or I could fax it to her.

DEBBY

You almost died. Right after something like that you should be with your family.

MAX

Don't scold me. Don't make me apologize for being good just because it isn't being good to you.

DEBBY

Good to me. You didn't tell me you were alive for twenty-four hours.

BRILLSTEIN

I'll tell Mrs. Gordon provided I know what I'm talking about.

MAX

(to Debby)

I owe it to Nan to tell her.

DEBBY

Go to her.

Debby exits. Jonah steps in her direction; then looks to Max.

MAX

Come with me.

Jonah's too worried. He shakes his head no and follows Debby.

MAX AND BRILLSTEIN --

Everyone else has left. Brillstein cowers by the door.

BRILLSTEIN

Want a lift?

CUT TO

EXT./INT. NIGHT - WEST SIDE HIGHWAY EXTENSION, BRILLSTEIN'S CAR

Brillstein's car, a dusty and dented blue Volvo station wagon, is going a million miles an hour on the lower Manhattan stretch of a roadway beside the Hudson river. Brillstein weaves in and out of traffic at a mad, reckless pace. Max, in the death seat, is magnificently calm. As they screech around some obstacle...

MAX

You drove a cab to put yourself through college.

BRILLSTEIN

(he whistles, then:)

Good guess. For two years.
Destroyed my kidneys.

(Doesn't pause:)

Mrs. Gordon's gonna take it hard.

MAX

She must suspect.

BRILLSTEIN

Don't think so.

MAX

That why she called you?

BRILLSTEIN

Her father called my father. I
said I'd help out until they
picked an aviation lawyer.

MAX

There are aviation lawyers?

Brillstein makes another hair-raising move to pass a slower car.

BRILLSTEIN

Oh sure. With a plane crash you
can get name brand lawyers. My
practice is mostly automobile
accidents...

Brillstein drives over a pothole so fast that the car bounces
violently. Max bumps his head on the ceiling.

BRILLSTEIN (Cont'd)

...and some medical malpractice.
An airplane crash is the golden
goose of wrongful death.

MAX

Wrongful death...

BRILLSTEIN

From what you said, you saw Mr.
Gordon's body.

MAX

(nods)

He drove a cab, too. Right after
college... Before we started our
business.

Brillstein comes to a lurching stop at one of the rare lights.

BRILLSTEIN

Let me give you a piece of advice. When you talk to your lawyer, you should emphasize that you saw your partner's dead body. And think hard about what else you saw. Doesn't matter what you've said to anyone so far. In accidents, there's a delayed reaction. Memories of what happened come back gradually. It's terrible to have to talk about, but it is important to remember if you saw Mr. Gordon actually being killed. Another thing to remember -- if Mr. Gordon didn't die instantly, if he was in pain--

MAX

(laughs)

You're telling me how to lie so I can get more money.

The light changes. Brillstein speeds off.

BRILLSTEIN

To be honest, I wasn't thinking about you. I was thinking about Mrs. Gordon. She doesn't come from a rich family and now she's a widow with two children--

Max screams!

Brillstein, shocked, jerks the wheel. They go into a skid, heading right at the water...

MAX --

is calm as his side of the car heads for the Hudson.

Brillstein's Volvo comes out of the skid and brakes to stop against a chain link fence at the river's edge. No harm is done. Traffic continues to move beside them.

BRILLSTEIN (Cont'd)

What's wrong!

MAX

I don't want to tell any lies.

BRILLSTEIN

Okay. Next time just say, "No."

They stare at each other for a beat; then they BREAK UP.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - LOBBY, JEFF'S BUILDING

Max and Brillstein enter and march to the elevator. Once there, Brillstein turns to Max and speaks with import:

BRILLSTEIN (Cont'd)

Don't scream, okay? But bear in mind -- you're sitting pretty, you get the partnership insurance. I think you owe Mrs. Gordon anything that would improve her settlement.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - ELEVATOR

Max and Brillstein going up in an elevator. Max is deciding...

MAX

I want you to represent me and Nan.

BRILLSTEIN

I can't recommend me. I'd love to do it. Frankly, airplane crashes are like taking candy from niños. But you can get the whole magilla. Harvard law, Armani suit... Sharks in wool clothing.

MAX

That's exactly what I don't want. I want someone I can see through.

BRILLSTEIN

Thanks. Appreciate the compliment.

The elevator doors open. Brillstein blocks the way with an arm.

BRILLSTEIN (Cont'd)

One thing. I had all night to look through Mr. Gordon's papers. He cashed in the tickets you ordered on Amex, got a better price, rebought them for cash and pocketed the difference.

MAX

So Jeff cheated me out of couple hundred bucks.

BRILLSTEIN

So he cheated his wife out of the automatic American Express insurance. That's another reason why your memory is so important.

MAX

He's not really dead, is he?

Max pushes past Brillstein.

INT. NIGHT - HALLWAY, JEFF'S BUILDING

NAN (38), a tall blonde, who looks frantic, comes toward Max. In b.g. at the apartment door are her children, SAM (10) a nerdy kid, and JAKE (5). Max opens his arms as Nan runs into them.

MAX AND NAN --

MAX

I'm sorry...

Nan just hugs him tight: no words or tears.

MAX (Cont'd)

Breathe.

NAN

I knew it. I just knew it right away. Isn't that crazy?

MAX

He loved you.

NAN

God, we were stupid.

MAX

What?

NAN

We lived like jerks. Always nagging.
We wasted it.

Now Nan cracks. She sobs and sinks toward the floor. Max tries to support her, but they both slide down in an embrace.

MAX

No. He loved you. You made him
happy.

MAX'S POV --

Sam and little Jake resisting as their grandparents try to pull them inside the apartment.

MAX

He loved you, Nan. You made him
happy.

Nan interrupts her sobbing enough to say:

NAN

Oh shut up, Max.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - JONAH'S BEDROOM

Same night. Max still in his crash clothes. The room is a typical New York middle-class kid's room: Apple computer, Nintendo, baseball cards, lots of books and tons of Legos. The lights are out. Max comes in and, as he leans over to kiss the presumably sleeping Jonah...

JONAH

I'm awake.

Max jumps back, excessively startled. Max makes no noise of surprise -- just the movement. Then Max leans over and kisses his son's brow.

JONAH (Cont'd)

You saw Jeff's...body?

MAX

He didn't feel anything.

JONAH

How do you know that!

MAX

(beat)

I don't want to tell you.

Max kisses him again and moves off toward the door.

JONAH

I can't sleep.

MAX

Yes you can.

INT. NIGHT - MAX'S LIVING ROOM

Dark. Max enters from leaving Jonah's bedroom, exhausted.

Debby, dressed in a long nightshirt, looking like a beautiful 19th century ghost, hurries from their bedroom across into Max's arms. They whisper throughout because of Jonah lying awake.

DEBBY

I'm scared.

MAX

I don't have patience for that anymore.

Debby moves out of his arms, peering at him in the dark.

DEBBY

Patience...?

MAX

I can't make it all okay.

DEBBY

What the hell are you talking about. Do you know what I went through? And Jonah? You didn't call. I thought you were dead.

MAX

I thought I was dead, too.

(he takes a deep breath)

I'm hungry. Want something?

Max exits. He turns on the kitchen light and we hear pots and pans banging, while Debby looks on, puzzled and worried.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - OUTSIDE MAX'S BUILDING

A daycamp bus, filled with kids, is at the corner. The kids are at the windows, pointing to...

A mob of press waiting outside the lobby of Max's building. With them is Byron and his father, PETER (44), who has the look of old money, although he is a sensitive modern version of fatherhood.

Max and Jonah appear. They are surrounded by the press and Byron. Max looks pleased by Byron, wary of the press.

BYRON

Mister Klein! It's me! We live in the same city. Isn't that cool?

MAX

Hey...You look great. This is my son, Jonah.

BYRON

Hi, I'm Byron.

JONAH --

is worried by the crowd. He whispers to Max.

JONAH

I want to get on the bus.

MAX

(loud, clearing a way)
Come on, people. My son's going to daycamp. Make way.

REPORTER ONE

Is it true you saved this boy's life?

That's only one of many questions they shout. Max ignores the Reporters while he maneuvers Jonah to the bus. Max tries to kiss Jonah, but Jonah ducks it, and the bus takes off, leaving Max to the mercy of the crowd.

PETER

I'm Peter Hummel, Byron's father.
I want to thank you.

MAX

You have a brave son.

BYRON

I made Dad bring me. I can't sleep. I want to be with you.

REPORTER ONE

Why do you want to be with him, son?

BYRON

I feel safe with him.

REPORTER ONE

A lot of people are safe because of you, Mister Klein. They're calling you the Good Samaritan.

MAX

I didn't save anyone. The pilot saved us.

BYRON

You saved me! I was upside down and stuck. You got me out. And a baby, too!

(to Reporters)

He found a way out for a lotta people. We would've been fried.

The press eats Byron up. Max backs away out of frame: he feels claustrophobic. The press is between him and the lobby.

REPORTER ONE

He saved a baby?

BYRON

Yeah! Pulled it outta the fire and gave it to the mother.

REPORTER ONE

What about the baby, Mister...?
(stopped by something)

REPORTER'S POV --

Max is running away, already more than a block off.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - RIVERSIDE DRIVE

Max comes running at us, almost frantic. He stops. And stares.

MAX'S POV --

The West Side of New York City. The Hudson looks magnificent.

EXT. DAY - RIVERSIDE PARK

Max is at its empty western edge. He continues to be fascinated by the Hudson river. The elevated West Side Highway blocks the way. There are three lanes going North, a narrow concrete divider, and then another cramped three lanes going South.

Near Max is a Drug Addict, Hispanic, dressed poorly, very skinny, in a T-shirt cutaway at the belly. Max is in jeans, sneakers and a bright yellow Polo shirt. No one else is around.

DRUG ADDICT

Hey, man, you got two dollars and ninety-nine cents? I wanna get me MacDLT, fries, and a Diet-Coke.

Max pats his pants. He left the apartment without his wallet.

MAX

I don't have anything on me.

DRUG ADDICT

Fuck that, man! That's bullshit.

Max ignores the cursing. He is focused on the river. He stands on the barrier that separates him from the Northern traffic.

DRUG ADDICT (Cont'd)

(laughing hysterically)

What you doing! Looking for a cab!

MAX'S POV --

of the treacherous traffic. The cars whiz right in front of us.

MAX --

takes off across the Northbound lanes. Cars don't brake. Max barely makes it to the concrete divider. He stands on top of it, wobbling precariously, sandwiched between the whizzing cars. There's another three lanes of Southbound traffic to cross to reach a small strip of grass at the Hudson's edge.

A cigarette is tossed at Max from a passing Van, hitting him.

VAN DRIVER

Get off there, asshole!

There's a brief gap in the Southbound traffic. Max takes off...

A Mercedes bears down on him in the far lane. Max can't make it.

Max leaps...

And lands on the grass, rolling and rolling until he is almost at the water's edge.

C.U. MAX --

sits up, happy, and looks at the river. After a beat...

DRUG ADDICT (O.S.)

There's a tunnel, you dumb fuck!

Max gets up. The Drug Addict confronts him. They are alone on this narrow strip of land while cars whiz past. In b.g. we see a tunnel exit.

DRUG ADDICT (Cont'd)

Gimme your money, man.

Drug Addict takes out a switchblade and releases its blade.

MAX

(sad)

I told you. I got nothing. Don't even have my keys.

Drug Addict is frantic, nervous. He flicks the blade at Max.

DRUG ADDICT

Don't fuck with me! I'll cut you!

Max calmly looks right into the addict's eyes. Max seems to draw the mugger toward him.

MAX

(no challenge, a fact:)

Go ahead. I don't have anything.

Drug Addict lunges at Max!

C.U. KNIFE --

it sinks into the left side of Max's chest.

MAX AND ADDICT --

They both look at the disappeared blade. Max, disgusted, pushes the Addict in the chest. The Addict falls on his ass. The knife

is still in Max. But there's no blood. Puzzled, Max raises his arm and we see that the knife didn't go into him, it went into the space between his chest and his arm. It has torn his Polo shirt in the armpit and hangs there, harmless.

Drug Addict, panicked, gets up and runs away.

The knife falls to the grass. Max laughs. He raises his arms to the West Side skyline and calls to the world:

MAX

You can't do it! You want to kill
me -- but you can't!

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - WIDE ANGLE OF UPPER BROADWAY

A teeming summer day. The streets are full of people of all colors and of all gradations of beauty. It's a mess, it's sexy, it's scary and it's beautiful.

MAX --

he walks in great fast strides among the crowds. He isn't looking at the people, though. He's looking at the buildings. His Polo shirt, torn from the switchblade, is soaked through.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. DAY - HELL'S KITCHEN

A bad, dangerous street. Ominous looking kids hang on the stoops and they look surprised at something.

MAX --

He's the something. Striding down the block, he pauses at a dilapidated brownstone. He stares at the way one of the windows is fit.

ANGLE ON STREET --

All the ominous types watch him, sort of paralysed by his boldness. After a beat, Max walks on, invulnerable, right past them.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - MAX'S OFFICE

C.U. DOOR --

A simple plaque reads: Klein & Gordon Architects

MAX'S HAND COMES INTO FRAME, touches the plaque once with the tip of his finger as if he were pressing a button. A beat, then:

Max pushes the door open with A VIOLENT BANG and enters. Max is in the drenched, torn Polo shirt. The office is modest, half of a loft floor. The desks are messy, models askew on a shelf, blueprints left on top of files.

GLADYS (55), the bookkeeper, a plump kindly matron, wheels at the noise and cries out:

GLADYS

Max!

(calls out as she approaches him)

He's here!

From adjoining offices the whole staff appears. They are: BETTY (23), a secretary; WARREN (45), a rather sad looking draftsman; and SCOTT (28), a young draftsman with a long pony tail.

Someone claps and then the others come in while Gladys behaves like she's his maiden aunt. She hugs Max.

GLADYS (Cont'd)

My God, Max, what a nightmare.

MAX

Yes.

Max politely moves her off him. His shirt is sticking to him and, because of the air-conditioning, is chilling. He peels it off. His bare-chestedness is somehow inappropriate.

GLADYS

I'll get you a towel.

Max nods and walks into his and Jeff's office.

INT. DAY -- MAX'S AND JEFF'S PRIVATE OFFICE

MAX'S POV --

The partner's drawing tables, side by side, looking out onto a busy Chelsea street and the ugly FIT buildings.

MAX --

goes to his desk and swivels, glancing at Jeff's empty chair.

MAX

Come in, everybody.

The staff was nearby anyway. They enter. Gladys bustles in and hands Max paper towels.

GLADYS

That's all we've got.

Max wipes the sweat off with the paper towels. From the way they watch we know his relaxed physical behavior isn't typical.

GLADYS (Cont'd)

Everyone's called.

WARREN

Practically every client.

BETTY

We're so proud of what you did.

MAX

Of what I did?

GLADYS

The children.

BETTY

You were so brave.

MAX

Thank you. I know this is a much of a shock for you as it is for Jeff's family. He spent as much time here--

(catches himself)

Actually, he didn't. Anyway, I know you're all feeling upset, but I want to give you as much notice as possible. We have -- what do you think, Warren -- about three months work?

WARREN

I guess...

MAX

I don't want to keep the firm going after that work. You'll all be on salary through October but you should start looking for jobs right away. I'll help out, think up people to call, make recommendations--

GLADYS

(cuts him off -- but gently)

Max. Not now. Don't make decisions.

MAX

I know what you're thinking. And it makes sense. But it isn't like that. Eventually I'll work or do something. But I--

(picks up a design)

--designed stuff like Nutty Nick stores for money. I liked doing it, because I liked supporting my family and being part of the world. Who was I to think I could do better than anyone else? I eat at McDonald's. I even kind of look forward to their french fries. So why should I disdain their architecture? I've never met a King, how can I expect to build cathedrals?

The staff just look and listen, mesmerized, amazed.

MAX (Cont'd)

Don't you see the mistake I made? I thought I couldn't try anything else because I'm not an artist. I'm merely competent. But it has nothing to do with whether I'm good enough to design what I want to design. All I need is my own desire.

SCOTT

Money. You need money.

MAX

Yes, that's true. If I want to see my drawings built I need money. If I want to eat I need money. That's true. But Jeff has given me that.

Max gestures at the vacant swivel chair. Only:

JEFF IS THERE: on the phone, talking away, bullshitting with a client, but there's NO SOUND coming from his lips. He's a ghost.

MAX --

relating to the living again.

MAX

He's given me the one thing he
couldn't while alive. He's set me
free.

GLADYS

Max, you're upset. Let me make you
some tea.

MAX

No thanks. I love buildings. And
that's what I'm gonna to do.

SCOTT

What?

MAX

Look at them.

They're just dumbfounded.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - MAX'S APARTMENT

Jonah is in the foyer, bent over a stack of newspapers, ready to
be thrown out. He pulls out several, including one garish New
York Post Headline:

NEW YORKER SAVES TOT AND TWENTY

Track with Jonah as he carries them into his room and tears out
the relevant pages...

DISSOLVE TO

Jonah, dressed in different clothes, tearing out an inside
story -- without a big headline -- from the New York Times.
There a big diagram of the inside of a plane with arrows showing
exits. The subdued headline reads:

SENATE STUDIES CANTON OHIO CRASH FOR NEW REGULATIONS

With the subhead:

Why One Man's Bravery Was Necessary

DISSOLVE TO

Jonah, again dressed in different clothes, tearing out a Feature
story from New York Newsday showing a picture of Perlman standing
with a few rather sad looking people. The headline:

SPECIALIST MEETS WITH CRASH VICTIMS

Jonah pastes the article (beside many others we haven't seen) in a spiral notebook and carefully HIDES IT in his nighttable.

DISSOLVE TO

FAA DETERMINATION ON OHIO CRASH DUE

Jonah tears out a truly buried and underplayed item in the Wall Street Journal. The crash has faded from public interest.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - CARLA'S AND MANNY'S APARTMENT, LITTLE ITALY

A tenement kitchen, but it's been meticulously replastered and painted. The appliances are modern. The decoration is working-class -- chintz curtains, smile face magnets on the fridge, and a tacky portrait of Jesus over the formica kitchen table. Manny talks surreptitiously on the phone. He wears the handyman's uniform of a luxury Manhattan building.

MANNY

(to phone)

No, honey, I just got here from work. Can't. Not today. I'm going crazy...

The doorbell rings.

MANNY (Cont'd)

Gotta go. That's them.

(soft)

Yeah, me too.

INT. DAY - CARLA'S BEDROOM, LITTLE ITALY

A small tenement bedroom in Little Italy. Heavy furniture, a big console color TV. Dark heavy drapes are drawn over the windows. There's a window air-conditioner, but it's off. We know because Carla lies in a heavy sleep on a messy bed in a T-shirt that's soaked through with perspiration. She's no longer wearing a cast on her leg. She is pale, drawn -- a beauty in utter despair, a soul dying.

Manny opens door and comes in.

MANNY

The doc's here--

(alarmed)

Carla! You crazy? It's a fucking oven.

Manny goes to the airconditioner and turns it on Hi. Carla doesn't stir. Manny goes to the bedside, shakes her, lifts her from the bed. Her head hangs back: she is limp.

MANNY (Cont'd)
Get up! The doc's brought
somebody. The Good Samaritan.
You read about him in the Post.

CARLA
Leave me alone.

Manny rubs her stomach and chest -- the T-shirt is translucent from sweat, revealing her body. Manny's look and touch are sexual. She's in an agony of grief, but she's beautiful.

MANNY
You're a mess. You gotta wash up.

CARLA
I wanna die.

Manny slaps her.

MANNY
That's a sin.

CARLA
(waking, angry)
Lemme die!

MANNY
That's a sin! You drag yourself to
Church everyday. Don't Father Conti
tell you that's a sin?

CARLA
I'm no use to anybody.

MANNY
You been lying here for months! I
can't take it no more. Come out and
talk with the doc. Understand? You
got to get it together. I don't want
to have to put you away!

Carla remains in a sitting position, shoulders slumped, numb.
Manny kisses her passionately. She doesn't respond.

MANNY (Cont'd)
(tender)
You look good to me, babe.

INT. DAY - CARLA'S AND MANNY'S APARTMENT

Perlman and Max waiting. Perlman is nervous; stands awkwardly. Max is fascinated by the workmanship of a wall of cabinets, the electric wiring, and the painting and plastering. Otherwise, the room is small and the furniture is tacky.

PERLMAN

I appreciate your help. She's in bad shape. As I told you on the phone, the baby's belt wasn't working. He was in her lap on impact.

MAX

(focused on workmanship)
Couldn't hold on, of course.

PERLMAN

She's in a clinical depression. Drugs haven't worked... I'm considering hospitalization. She's obsessed with the crash, but won't talk. She's very primitive. Very Catholic and Old World, you know?

MAX

(still focused on workmanship)
No, I don't.

PERLMAN

Full of guilt and shame.

MAX

(pays attention)
I'm full of guilt and shame. How is that Old World?

PERLMAN

You think I'm a fraud.

MAX

Doctor, in the three months since we flew together from Pittsburgh, I haven't thought about you.

Manny comes in. He is shy with Perlman and Max.

MANNY

Sorry. She'll be right out.

MAX

(gesturing to cabinetry)
You did this?

MANNY

Yeah...

MAX

Everything? The rewiring?

MANNY

Yeah. I was training myself for
the job I got now -- Handyman. I
was assistant Porter.

MAX

Beautiful work.

MANNY

You're an architect, right?

MAX

I retired.

There's an awkward silence.

MANNY

I better go get her.

MAX

I think it's better if I see her
alone. You know? One crash freak
to another.

Max moves toward the hall. As he goes, Manny looks at Perlman.
Perlman nods. There's a silence, then Perlman talks in a
whisper.

PERLMAN

He and your wife are the only
survivors I can't reach. She
won't talk and he won't admit the
crash was bad.

MANNY

That right? He says it was good?

PERLMAN

Says it was the best thing that
ever happened to him.

MANNY

You know the day we got home all these lawyers called, wanting our case. But one guy came to see me, told me he was the Good Samaritan's lawyer. I signed right then and there. Figured he must be the best.

INT. DAY - CARLA'S BEDROOM

Carla sits on the messy bed. She has dressed herself in jeans and a T-shirt, no make-up, and yet she's extraordinarily beautiful: an El Greco. Max stares at her. She looks past him, virtually catatonic. They have been sitting there for a while without talking. Then Max speaks without preamble, almost speaking to himself, rather than pointedly to Carla.

MAX

When I was thirteen, my father died in front of my eyes. We were walking out of our apartment building... I was tossing a softball up and down. Mom screamed. I missed the ball and turned to look: Dad was dead on the sidewalk. There was a little blood coming out of his nose...his legs were twisted under him. He looked like somebody, somebody with a big hand, had just reached down and squeezed the life out of him.

CARLA

That was God.

MAX

That's what I thought -- God killed my Daddy.

CARLA

Why did God want to kill him?

MAX

Couldn't figure that out. He was a religious man. Hard working... kind to my mother and sister...

(stops)

CARLA

You loved him.

MAX

Yes. There was no reason to kill
him. So I decided there was no God.

Carla is sitting up, attentive. She has gradually awakened
during this conversation. She is out of herself for the first
time since the crash.

CARLA

I go to Church everyday. Only place
I go to. I pray for my baby's soul.

MAX

(shakes head no)
You go there to talk to God.

INT. DAY - MANNY AND CARLA'S LIVING ROOM/HALLWAY

Max and Carla appear in the hallway, heading for the front door.
As they pass, Max says matter-of-factly to Perlman and
Brillstein:

MAX

We're going to church.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - MULBERRY STREET

Max and Carla walking in a hot late September day to St.
Patrick's Old Cathedral, a small 18th century church on the
narrow block in Little Italy.

CARLA

You been to college, right?

(Max nods)

And you're Jewish, right?

MAX

Half.

CARLA

How can you be half?

MAX

My mother's Irish.

CARLA

Oh... So you're also Catholic. Let me ask you -- do Jewish people actually believe in God? I know Jews don't believe in Jesus, but tell you the truth -- I'm sorry, I know I'm being rude -- but I ask because it don't really seem like most Jews believe in God the Father either. Except for the ones with all the hair, the...

MAX

Hasidim. You're right. They're like devout Catholics. Jews like me...we're more like Mario Cuomo.

CARLA

You got it. People who go to college don't really believe in Him. I didn't go to college, but I'm not so stupid I'm going believe Father Conti when he tells me Bubble is with Jesus playing a harp.

They have reached St. Patrick's Old Cathedral. Max stands aside to allow Carla to enter the church first.

MAX

Maybe he's playing a trombone.

For a moment, we don't know how Carla's going to react. She doesn't either, then she smiles.

CARLA

Yeah...if he was playing anything it would be a trombone.

INT. DAY - ST. PATRICK'S OLD CATHEDRAL

Carla lights a candle for Bubble and returns to a kneeling position. Max is beside her. He copies her actions, lighting a candle as well. They are alone in the church. Carla stays down and prays intensely in a whisper. Max watches. She finishes and looks at Max. He speaks in a respectful whisper.

MAX

Life and death happen for no reason. We think people are born because their mother wanted them a lot or because God needed another home run hitter to play for the Yankees. We think people die because they eat red meat or rob banks. That way, even though we can never be good enough or careful enough to live forever, at least we can try. But if it makes no sense and just happens, then there's no reason to do anything.

CARLA

There's no reason to love.

MAX

People don't so much believe in God as that they chose not to believe in nothing.

Carla looks at the crucifix. Then at Max. She rises.

CARLA

He hurt me... He hurt me forever.
But I believe in Him.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - MULBERRY STREET, CARLA'S BUILDING

Max and Carla outside the tenement vestibule. Carla is going in. Max hangs back on the sidewalk.

MAX

I've got my car parked around the corner. Let's go for a drive.

CARLA

(agitated)

No, I can't... Didn't the doctor tell you? I can't go anywhere else--

MAX

You'll be safe. You read about me in the papers. Everyone with me lived.

CARLA

You must think I'm very stupid.

MAX

No. I'm not lying. I can't explain it. But you're safe with me.

CARLA

What are you telling me? There's no God, but there's you.

Max moves close to her. He takes her hand in both of his.

MAX

Come with me, Carla. I promise you'll be safe.

Carla calms. Slowly, she smiles.

CUT TO

INT./EXT. - MAX'S SAAB/CANAL STREET

Carla in passenger seat is very nervous. Max drives his Saab on Canal Street. He is content, relaxed.

CARLA

(wary)

Is this a German car?

MAX

Swedish.

CARLA

(nervous)

It's very sturdy.

MAX

It's a very safe car. Very safe and I'm an excellent driver. Never been in an accident. Not while I was behind the wheel anyway. And you know what?

CARLA

(very nervous)

What?

MAX

It doesn't mean we're going to survive this ride. Because even if I do everything right, even strapped in to the marvelous technology of the Saab's reinforced doors and roof, we could still be crushed.

For a moment, Carla is non-plussed. Then she laughs.

CARLA

That's reverse psychology, right?

MAX

No, it's the simple truth. In fact, you're not safe lying in your bed. On Mulberry Street you're less than a mile from one of the biggest faults in the US. Someday, maybe in a few minutes, there'll be a 7 plus earthquake. New York's not built for it. My guess is more than a million people would die immediately--

CARLA

You told me I was safe with you.

MAX

You are. We're safe because we died already.

CARLA

Stop the car!

Max pulls over. They are at a chaotic corner: honking trucks, homeless people, vendors, workers. Carla frantically tries to open her door, but she can't manage the lock.

CARLA (Cont'd)

Let me out!

Max calmly reaches over and opens the door. Carla peeks out at the mobbed street, full of busy angry people. She shrinks back.

CARLA (Cont'd)

I'm not dead!

MAX

That's not what I mean. Look at them...

(gestures at pedestrians)

They don't know what it's like to die in their heads. You do. You passed through death.

CARLA

That's bullshit! I didn't die in my head. My son died. I didn't think about dying, I thought about--
(stops abruptly)

MAX
About what? About how your son died?

CARLA
(cold, shuts down)
I wanna go home.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - MAX'S APARTMENT

Max comes in the front door.

MAX
Debby..?

Max listens. We hear the sounds of a Nintendo video game. Track with Max down a hallway into Jonah's room.

Jonah and Friend are huddled in front of a TV, playing Nintendo.

MAX (Cont'd)
Hello...

FRIEND
(staring at screen)
Excellent move...

JONAH
I'm gonna die...

FRIEND
No! Die now and we get game over!

JONAH
(cool)
I died.

FRIEND
Let me try.

MAX
Hello!

JONAH
Hi. I got to Dr. Wily.

FRIEND
Yeah. And then he died.

MAX

Where's your mother?

JONAH

In the shower. Oh! And Byron's Dad called. He's bringing him around three-thirty. Do I have to play with him?

MAX

No.

As Max leaves:

FRIEND (O.S.)

Is he the weird kid your father saved?

JONAH (O.S.)

Yeah... He comes here practically everyday and hangs around my Dad.

Track with Max through the hallway, down to the master bedroom. Debby is on the floor in a full lotus, meditating. She's wearing sweat pants and a T-shirt. They are dark with perspiration and tight to her dancer's figure.

Debby opens her eyes.

DEBBY

You okay?

MAX

Un huh.

DEBBY

Where did you go today?

MAX

I met the woman whose child died in the crash. I'm in love with her.

Debby rises, very gracefully, says nothing and exits into the bathroom. She shuts the door behind her.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - PERLMAN'S OFFICE

A shrink's office. Not fancy, but typical. Perlman is behind his desk. Debby is seated in a chair beside it.

PERLMAN

Fascinating...

DEBBY

Not for me. I feel angry and I can't say anything.

PERLMAN

Why can't you?

DEBBY

Because he's not himself.

PERLMAN

Who is he? I mean, how has he changed?

DEBBY

He was...sensitive, a good father, a little neurotic, but responsible. I could always rely on Max. He was my foundation.

(rambles on:)

He certainly wouldn't shut down the business on a whim...

PERLMAN

(brings her back)

How do you feel about him?

DEBBY

The new Max? Or the man I married?

PERLMAN

Both.

DEBBY

I don't know...

(tries to think, then:)

I need him. I want my husband.

(sags)

This is humiliating.

(starts up)

And I hate this crazy truth telling. Like he's a robot.

(a plea)

Is it the truth? Does he love her?

PERLMAN

For twenty minutes your husband expected to die. He's suffering from battle trauma. Only it's worse for him. Soldiers go into battle knowing they will face death. Max got on a domestic flight to LA.

(shakes his head)

He doesn't love her. Not in a realistic way.

DEBBY

That's exactly what scares me. Love isn't realistic.

Perlman nods and waits. Debby doesn't say anything.

DEBBY (Cont'd)

I met him when I hurt myself... I told you -- I had to leave the ballet because of my injury. I was twenty and my life was over. Everything I had worked for...

Debby seems to fade out into the past. Perlman looks at her intently, seeing in her the lean, elegant and fragile beauty of the artist she was once.

PERLMAN

And Max helped you?

DEBBY

I was in mourning for my career. With him, those first years -- You don't understand, we were different. He loved me even though I wasn't special anymore...

(seems about to breakdown,
then holds it to say)

I used to dance for him. He loved to watch me.

There's another painful silence. Perlman waits and then:

PERLMAN

What are you going to do?

DEBBY

What can I do?

(pensive)

This woman...

PERLMAN

Carla.

DEBBY

Did meeting Max help?

PERLMAN

Well, she's terrified of him.

DEBBY

Really..?

PERLMAN

Did her some good, though. She's agreed to come to the group meeting. Wish Max would.

DEBBY

It's been almost four months. You told me he would come back.

PERLMAN

I was wrong.

Perlman looks at her with the passive attitude of a shrink, as if there's something for her to do or say. When she doesn't:

PERLMAN (Cont'd)

Maybe this Max is your husband.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - DEBBY'S BALLET CLASS

C.U. DEBBY -- Her face is intent and still and then...

She moves rapidly, doing a series of pirouettes. Only instead of stopping after one or two or three, she keeps going, faster and faster, her face moving from intense concentration to ecstasy. With each turn we PULL OUT farther and reveal in b.g., in an anteroom, a GROUP OF CHILDREN in tights (her students) with their MOTHERS, waiting to enter for the next class. They watch her private dance in confusion.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - JONAH'S ROOM

C.U. JONAH --

In his bed, sweating from a high fever.

Max is seated beside him, taking out Tylenol children's tablets.

MAX
You get two?

JONAH
I'm big for my age.

MAX
You get three.

Debby enters with her coat still on. While Max hands Jonah the tablets, Debby feels his forehead.

DEBBY
You're burning up.

MAX
A hundred and--

JONAH
--Four point two.

MAX
Should I get a cold wash--

JONAH
No--

DEBBY
--Yeah.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - MAX'S BEDROOM

He is dressed in slacks and a clean shirt. He tosses a dirty shirt into a laundry bag in the closet and stops at the sight of something shoved into a dark corner.

It's a bag of books. Max picks it up and takes out a few. The titles are all psychological texts: STRESS REACTION SYNDROME; COUNTERPHOBIA, etc.

INT. NIGHT - MAX'S AND DEBBY'S KITCHEN

A small round eating table that sometimes doubles as extra counterspace. Max and Debby are eating out of Chinese Food take out containers.

DEBBY

So come on. Tell me. What did you do all day?

MAX

I decided to look at just one detail. Concentrated on windows. Looked at thousands.

DEBBY

Un huh. What are you looking for?

MAX

I don't know.

DEBBY

Talk to me, honey. Please.

MAX

I'm talking. What you want to know?

DEBBY

(takes a beat, then:)
What happened in the plane?

MAX

I told you that.

DEBBY

Make me a part of it, Max.

MAX

You're not a part of it.

DEBBY

I'm here, Max. You're closer to Jeff than you are to me. And he's dead.

MAX

Jeff was decapitated.

She catches her breath.

MAX (Cont'd)

His head was lying in the seat I moved from. I passed it on the way out.

DEBBY

Jesus...

MAX

You can't be a part of it.

There's a silence. Abruptly, Debby is galvanized. She gets up and pulls her dress open as she moves at Max.

DEBBY

I'm here. Come on. I'm here. Come on.

She climbs on him, sexy and passionate, but Max stops her. He gently lifts her off.

MAX

This won't work.

DEBBY

You're not well. I know you don't think so, but you're a mess.

MAX

I've never felt better.

DEBBY

You're guilty you survived the crash and Jeff didn't.

MAX

You're wrong. I understand how you could think that, but it's wrong.

DEBBY

Then correct me. What is it? That you don't want to be with me anymore?

MAX

I like being with you.

DEBBY

But you want to be with her more?

MAX

I love her.

Debby snaps. She stands up, upset and furious.

DEBBY

God damn you. How can you be this cold to me? I've lived with you for sixteen years. I love you.

MAX

Have I been a bad husband?

DEBBY

No. Don't you see? That's how I know this isn't what you really feel.

MAX

What I really feel is that I don't want to be scared ever again. I don't want to be afraid of knowing people, of feeling what I feel and saying what I think. I walked away from the crash with my life. That's what survived. Just the taste and touch and beauty of life. I've never felt more real.

Debby stares at him for a beat, very upset, and exits, saying:

DEBBY

You're insane, just insane...

CUT TO

INT. DAY - BRILLSTEIN'S OFFICE

In a midtown building on Third Avenue. Brillstein has a small suite of characterless offices. One for him, a partner, and an outer space for two secretaries. Unlike his car his desk is immaculate. Nan, Debby, and Max are in chairs facing Brillstein.

BRILLSTEIN

Pain and suffering are compensable. Apart from other compensable losses such as the two million dollar Nutty Nick contract--

MAX

We didn't have a contract.

NAN

Oh God, Max! Who's side are you on?

DEBBY

Take it easy--

NAN

Don't tell me to take it easy! You've got a husband and the partnership insurance!

BRILLSTEIN

(cuts off argument)

I have a deposition from Mr. Nutty Nick that he had every intention of hiring Mr. Gordon and Mr. Klein. That's good enough.

MAX

He's lying. It's nice of him, but he's lying.

BRILLSTEIN

Do me a favor. Don't say that. They don't have to know your opinion, okay? Are you gonna work with me on this, Mr. Klein? You promised Mrs. Gordon to do your best for her and her children.

Max stands up. He walks to the window. The others watch him warily. He looks down at the sweeping view of Second Avenue.

MAX

You get a third of what we get, right?

BRILLSTEIN

I know, I'm terrible. One third is standard, Mr. Klein. Naturally I have an interest in getting as large a settlement as possible. In fact, that's my job. I don't apologize for it.

MAX

America in the nineties. Nobody apologizes anymore. They write a memoir.

BRILLSTEIN

Mr. Klein, this is the law, not some trick I invented. Each minute you and Mr. Gordon knew you were going to die is compensable as pain and suffering. Testify to the mental anguish you and Mr. Gordon experienced and each one of those minutes is worth dollars. Big dollars. Dollars you and Mrs. Gordon are entitled to.

Max strolls away from the window and speaks casually.

MAX

You want me to say Jeff wept at the prospect of his wife widowed, his children orphaned. It's a shame he was killed instantly. If only Jeff had been mashed up and died slowly in my arms -- Nan could really clean up.

BRILLSTEIN

(drops head on desk)

Goodnight.

DEBBY

(horrified)

Jesus, Max...

(turns to Nan)

He doesn't mean it. He's not--

NAN

Not himself? You're wrong. He's more Max than ever.

(gets up, faces him)

You're ashamed of me, is that it? I'm trying to make money off my dead husband -- so I don't meet your standards of widowhood. Let me ask you something. If Jeff was here what would he do?

Max is hit by this point. He can't answer. He trembles.

NAN (Cont'd)

Come on, Max, tell me. If you had died and he had lived, what would he be willing to say to help Debby and Jonah? I know he ripped you off for the tickets--

BRILLSTEIN

We don't know that! Maybe he was going to pay him back!

NAN

(ignores Brillstein)

Are you punishing Jeff?

Max trembles violently.

MAX

Okay, okay! I'll say what you want.

Max turns and rushes out of the office.

Track with Max through outer office past surprised secretaries.

DEBBY (O.S.)
Max! Wait!

But he's out the door too fast.

INT. DAY - STAIRCASE

Max runs up a flight of institutional firestairs frantically.

EXT. DAY - ROOFTOP

Max appears out of a door from the stairs. He's breathless. We are forty-seven stories up. There's a sweeping, scary view of the East River.

C.U. MAX -- The strain goes away and his face relaxes...

FLASHBACK - INT. DAY - TRANSCON PLANE

MAX AND JEFF --

The plane is falling, out of control. The noise is deafening. They are rigid, heads pressed back into the seats. The plane is tilted to Max's left.

MAX
(angry)
We're going down!

JEFF
(pure terror)
Oh God...

Max fights the gravity to look at his partner. When he manages to catch Jeff's horrified eye:

MAX
I told you so!

Another wrenching sound from the wounded plane.

MAX'S POV -- looks across aisle. A BUSINESSMAN has the Wall Street Journal folded in front of him to read it. But his mouth is open. Evidently he's screaming.

MAX'S POV -- looks past aisle to far window. What he sees is sickeningly wrong: not the sky, but land. The plane is sideways, plummeting.

MAX --

As the noise of the desperate machine just seems to get worse and worse and now is overwhelming.

SOUNDTRACK OFF -- In the silence, Max's voice, spoken in his head, is an intimate whisper to us:

MAX (VO)
This is it. This is the moment of
your death.

Max shuts his eyes, resigned to his death and...

SOUNDTRACK ON -- It's loud. Maybe the machine is coming apart.

WIDE ANGLE --

The cabin tilts back with jolt, suddenly righting itself. The noise of the engines changes as well, from a tearing noise of desperation to a calmer, but still not normal, whirring.

It's a surprise to us and him but -- Max isn't scared at all. All terror has been flooded out of him.

EXT. DAY - ROOFTOP

Max beaming at the memory, he steps away from the door out onto the 47 story high rooftop.

A stiff, unpredictable wind blows. He looks at the waist-high brick wall around the roof's perimeter. Max takes a few steps toward the wall. It's obvious that he's freaked by the height.

Max pauses. Shuts his eyes. Then opens them and walks purposefully right up to the wall. He studies the wall for a beat...

MAX--

Looks over the edge. Anyone would be scared by the sheer drop, the dizzying sense of flying above New York. Max looks up.

MAX
(addressing city)
I won't be scared of you anymore.

Max moves himself onto the low brick wall. He's lying on his belly. The wind blows furiously. Max shuts his eyes.

Slowly, almost painfully, Max rises onto his knees and hands. His eyes are still shut.

MAX--

Opens his eyes. Fear comes into them. He shuts them.

MAX (Cont'd)
You can't live as a coward.

Max, eyes still shut, gets to his feet and stands straight. He is blind, atop the city.

MAX --

Opens his eyes.

He screams! A rebel yell of facing terror.

MAX'S POV --

He is flying above the city. Nothing to stop him from dropping down to oblivion.

MAX --

The rebel yell stops. He stands on the narrow ledge of the wall. His eyes are open.

Slowly, painfully, Max takes a step forward. He teeters briefly...

Unafraid, Max takes another step. A smile dawns.

Another step!

And another! Max is exhilarated. Another step and he reaches the corner. He is flying above New York, proud, defiant, the wind whipping his clothes, yet unable to budge him.

MAX --

laughs with pleasure...not crazy, not hyper...at ease.

MAX'S POV --

A groundless view of the glorious skyline, shimmering in the late afternoon light.

MAX --

shuts his eyes and turns himself around and around on the narrow ledge, making himself dizzy and confused as to whether he is facing the fatal drop to the ground or the safety of the roof...

And then Max purposefully gambles with his life and blindly steps off the wall...

Max lands on the roof!

For a moment, at the discovery he is safe, Max has no reaction. Then he laughs....

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - NEW JERSEY SHERATON

Right outside the Holland Tunnel. In front of the main entrance there's a gathering of perhaps THIRTY PEOPLE. They are survivors of the crash. Many embrace, pleased to be reunited. Some stand apart.

Perlman stands under the awning with an Assistant.

Manny leads Carla up to the group. She leans against him, barely making the effort to support herself. She averts her eyes. Perlman steps forward to take her arm.

PERLMAN

You'll come with me, okay Carla? We don't need Manny. He'll wait for you.

Carla doesn't answer. She moves along passively with Perlman.

INT. DAY - SHERATON CONFERENCE ROOM

Bland and empty except for fifty-odd folding chairs that have been arranged in a circle of two rows. There are empty seats here and there between the survivors. Perlman sits in the front row. Carla is behind him, almost hidden. The others are seated.

PERLMAN

There are no rules here. You don't have to be interesting. You don't have to be nice. You don't have to make sense. I know some of you have become friends in these past five months and you've shared your feelings. That's how we handle most bad things that happen to us in life. We talk to family, friends, ministers, shrinks... But that's not what this is.

Perlman moves to the center of the circle and sits on his haunches maneuvering slowly to look at each of them.

PERLMAN (Cont'd)

We used to live in tribes. White,
black, yellow. We lived in tribes.
And when a tribe suffered a
calamity -- a great flood, an
exploding mountain, a shaking of the
earth -- we sat around fires and
retold the event, the stories of
death and destruction, escape and
rescue. I don't know why that
helps -- but it does.

(beat)

Would someone tell us their story?

Blonde Mother (seen on pg.3) stands up.

BLONDE

I lost my sister and my two nephews.
Their seats were ripped away...
Right in front of my eyes. I could
almost reach out--

The Blonde gestures at her disappearing sibling... She sags,
appears ready to break down. Two people stand up to comfort her.

PERLMAN

(sharply)

What's your name?

BLONDE

What...?

PERLMAN

Could you say your name, just your
first name, and then finish your
story? Everyone else can sit. She
can stand on her own.

BLONDE

(collecting herself)

Oh...I'm Jackie. Everybody calls me
Jackie.

PERLMAN

Tell us about the crash. We don't
only want to know who lived and died.
Tell us what happened to you.

BUSINESSMAN (Seen pg. 68)

Jesus.

(stands up)

This is going to take forever. I
can't stay. I've got to get back to
the office.

PERLMAN

What's your name?

BUSINESSMAN/WILKENSON

I'm John Wilkenson.

PERLMAN

Why were you on the plane that day?

WILKENSON

I was going to LA on business.

PERLMAN

You must be very committed to your
work.

Wilkenson, who has been buttoning his suit jacket, preparing to
go, is brought up short. He stares at Perlman for a beat.

WILKENSON

I'm sorry about the interruption.

And Wilkenson sits back down in his chair to listen. Perlman
gestures for Jackie, the Blonde, to continue.

JACKIE

We were taking a vacation, my sister
and me and our kids -- you know, no
husbands. We were going to see all
the dumb tourist sights together --
like when we were girls, only this
time we were also Mommies. Now we'll
never be together again...

(starts to lose it)

PERLMAN

Let's just talk about the day of the
crash. What happened to you when the
plane hit?

JACKIE

I don't know... I guess I closed my
eyes. There was incredible noise. I
couldn't see. I was choking on the
smoke and that man -- Is he here?

JACKIE (Cont'd)
(asks crowd)
Are you here? Max Klein?

PERLMAN
Couldn't come.

JACKIE
Oh. He saved my life.

PERLMAN
How did he do that?

JACKIE
He was shouting -- "Follow me! This way!" I had hold of my kids and I followed his voice. He sounded so normal. "Follow me to the light!" I was scared to. The light looked like a fire, but I saw him jump into it. So I followed and then we were in the cornfield...safe. I would've gone the wrong way. I came today hoping to thank him.

A MALE SURVIVOR stands up.

MALE SURVIVOR
Same thing happened to me.

A WOMAN SURVIVOR stands up.

WOMAN SURVIVOR
I followed him too.

CARLA --

listens to Max's heroism with a mix of wonder and upset. She's come out of her listless catatonia -- but she's agitated.

PERLMAN (O.S.)
Excuse me? You're leaving us?

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN --

An elderly woman is by the door, trying to leave unobtrusively.

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN
(nervous)
I don't belong here. I wasn't on the plane.

PERLMAN

Who are you?

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

My son died in the crash. I'm
sorry...

PERLMAN

It's okay. Why did you come?

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

I don't know... I wanted... If anyone
had seen my son... or knew how he...
I'm sorry...

(moves again toward door)

VOICES

Who was he?--

Where was he sitting?--

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

They said he was in twenty-one C.

ELDERLY MAN

That was right behind me. Did he
have red hair?

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

No... Brown.

ELDERLY MAN

Kind of reddish brown?

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

Maybe it looked--

ELDERLY

Tall man?

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

Six feet.

A YOUNG MAN fitting that description stands.

YOUNG MAN

(to Elderly Man)

You mean me. Remember? We talked at
the hospital. Actually, we were on
the other side of the plane.

ELDERLY MAN

Sorry... Since it happened I get confused.

PERLMAN

Anyone else remember that row?

CARLA'S POV --

Just to her right is a RED-HAIRED YOUNG WOMAN and a MIDDLE-AGED MAN. The Redhead speaks to Middle-Aged Man in a whisper.

REDHEAD

Twenty-One C was three rows ahead of me. They were smashed flat.

PERLMAN (O.S.)

Anyone else have information?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Go ahead. Speak up.

CARLA --

Very agitated. She gets up before the Redhead can.

CARLA

(shouts at Perlman)

Stop it! Let her go!

The Gray-Haired Woman is startled. Perlman moves at Carla, eager to engage with her.

PERLMAN

Why?

CARLA

This isn't doing any good!

PERLMAN

What harm can it do? She only wants to know what happened to her son.

CARLA

My son died.

PERLMAN

But you know how he died. You were with him.

(to Gray-Haired Woman)

When was the last time you saw your son?

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

His birthday. About a month before.
I don't remember kissing him goodbye.

(mumbles)

I know I did, I just can't remember.

(to Carla)

You're very young.

CARLA

I'm not young.

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

How old was your boy?

CARLA

He was almost two.

GRAY-HAIRED WOMAN

I'm sorry. He wasn't with you for
very long.

CARLA--

Doesn't cry. But she brings her hands to her mouth and looks
inward. Upset, but withdrawn. In b.g., an argument:

JOHN WILKENSON

Jesus Christ! This is sadistic!
We're not accomplishing anything!

PERLMAN

Why do we have to accomplish
something?

LISA, a flight attendant, rises from one of the chairs and comes
toward Carla. She looks depressed and enervated, not madeup, or
anything like what a flight attendant normally resembles.

LISA

(to Carla)

Hello. Remember me? I'm Lisa. The
Flight Attendant?

CARLA

(focuses on her; takes a beat)

Sure...

LISA

I really wanted to see you. I came mostly to see you.

(almost a plea)

I think about you and your baby a lot. Remember I tried to help you with the seat-belt?

CARLA

(rising anger)

Help me? You told me everything was going to be okay. You think you helped me?

LISA

I tried--

Perlman tries to come between the women. Carla keeps on at Lisa.

CARLA

You told me to hold him! I couldn't! You said it was going to be okay.

LISA

No -- don't say that--

CARLA

You said it! Everything's going to be okay! It wasn't okay! He died!

Lisa sobs into Perlman's chest. He's furious with Carla.

PERLMAN

That's enough! You've said it! That's enough!

CARLA

It's never enough! You want everybody to talk -- but only to say nice things! My baby died!

PERLMAN

If all you can do is blame people then I want you to go!

CARLA

I'll go. I'll be happy to go!

There's a kind of healthiness to the energy of her anger. Carla moves with a brisk step toward the door.

INT. DAY - SHERATON LOBBY

Carla moves energetically toward the doors scanning for Manny. She's eager to see him. She looks flushed: pretty and alive. She stops at the sound of something.

MANNY (O.S.)
Oh, baby, you know I love you.

CARLA --

Whips around to see Manny -- or rather, the back of Manny -- standing at a public phone, talking. He is virtually in tears.

MANNY (Cont'd)
(to phone)
Don't leave me, baby. I can't handle
this by myself. I need you, baby.

Carla approaches him, slowly, comprehending with each step that he is talking to a lover.

MANNY (Cont'd)
(to phone)
I can't do that to her now. She's
crazy with grief. When she's better
I can be with you all the time.

Carla is right behind him. She grabs a handful of his hair and yanks his head back.

Manny yelps, lets go of the phone and swings around, furious.

MANNY --

seeing that it's Carla, he's terrified.

MANNY AND CARLA--

CARLA
You fucking bastard! You'll cry for
her! You won't show me a tear for
our dead son! But you'll cry for a
whore!

Manny sinks to his knees.

MANNY
Honey, you don't understand.

CARLA --

Dark now, anger gone, hopelessness returning:

CARLA

I understand, Manny. I understand
you're going to burn in Hell.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - BUBBLE'S ROOM

Windows open to the cold air. An exhausted Carla has slumped on a twin bed that is covered in plastic. A crib, toys, other baby things are in the center of the room, covered by a sheet. The room is halfway through being painted. It was blue; it's turning white. Carla sits on the bed looking out the window. It's so cold in the room her breathing is visible.

Manny appears in the doorway.

MANNY

You sleeping here?

Carla nods, barely.

MANNY (Cont'd)

I told her.

(waits a beat)

I told her I can't see her no more.
So that's that. It's over.

Carla doesn't answer. Or even move.

MANNY (Cont'd)

I talked to Mr. Brillstein, the
lawyer, today. He said they're going
to take those depositions in a month.

CARLA

When you get your blood money, Manny,
I want you to move out.

Carla lies down on the bed and shuts her eyes.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - MULBERRY STREET

Max is on the sidewalk, across the street from Carla's building. There are Christmas lights being put up by storeowners as well as decorations in the windows.

Max's face is red from the cold. He's obviously been standing there for a long time.

MAX'S POV --

Manny is at the window watching him. The next window over opens. Carla sticks her head out.

CARLA
You'll freeze. Come up!

INT. DAY - HALLWAY OUTSIDE CARLA'S APARTMENT

Typical dingy tenement staircase and hallway. No hint of the cleanliness and modernity of Manny's work inside. As Max climbs the last flight up, Manny, in his Handyman's workclothes, appears.

MAX
Hi.

Manny seems undecided about whether to punch Max or let him in. He stands in the way.

MAX (Cont'd)
You going to work?

MANNY
(steps aside)
Yeah. I gotta work.

Carla appears at the door. She ignores Manny's departure and he doesn't say anything.

CARLA
(to Max)
What are you doing out there?

Carla is dressed in old jeans and a T-shirt. They are splattered with white paint. She is severely depressed, but angry, not catatonic.

MAX
Hoping to see you.

CARLA
Why didn't you ring the bell?

MAX
Perlman said you weren't talking to anybody.

CARLA
I ain't talking to him.

MAX
You're painting?

CARLA
I'll show you.

INT. DAY - BUBBLE'S ROOM

A small bedroom. Painting paraphernalia is on the floor. The window is open, the one Carla called to Max from. The room is now all white. Max and Carla are at the doorway.

CARLA
This is my room now.

MAX
Want to go for a drive? In my very safe car?

CARLA
Where to?

MAX
Beautiful Staten Island.

CARLA --

She would laugh at the idea if she had the energy to.

CARLA
You take me to all the best places.

MAX
There's a dock I want to see. It's where they haul ghost boats.

CARLA
Ghost boats?

MAX
Old boats to be scrapped for junk.

EXT. DAY - STATEN ISLAND FERRY

Max and Carla in the Saab as it's waved into the belly of the boat to park their car. Max is first in line and pulls up to chain at the front. They get out, walk to the edge and study the view of New York Bay while the Ferry loads up on cars and people.

CARLA
(playfully, but serious)
Is this safe?

MAX

No. It's had accidents. I think there are more boating accidents than any other kind.

CARLA

I can't swim.

MAX

I'd like to make this ferry sound especially dangerous, but it isn't. Best thing is we'll get a great view of the city.

The Ferry starts with a lurch. Carla is startled and clutches Max. He looks at her. She smiles sheepishly.

EXT. DAY - STATEN ISLAND FERRY UPPER LEVEL

Max and Carla alone on the open deck. Cold, sunny and beautiful: a sweeping view of the harbor, Manhattan behind, Statue of Liberty ahead. The wind blasts them.

CARLA

We're gonna freeze.

MAX

We are freezing.

But they don't go in. They stand arm in arm. Max turns Carla toward Manhattan.

MAX

Look...

The glorious Manhattan skyline, shimmering in the sun.

CARLA

It is beautiful.

MAX

That's what made me believe I was gonna be somebody special. I used to think it was my Dad dying... But it's that city.

CARLA

Makes everybody think they've gotta to be special...

For a beat, they both look at the imperious city silently.

MAX

My wife is angry at me.

CARLA

I'm fighting with Manny. Anyway, we're not talking.

MAX

You're too cold. Let's go in.

INT. DAY - STATEN ISLAND FERRY

Enclosed upper deck. Max and Carla sit on a wooden bench. They have bought takeout coffee from the concession stand.

CARLA

What's your wife angry about?

MAX

I told her I'm in love with you.

CARLA

(shocked)

You're crazy!

MAX

That's what she thinks.

CARLA

Well, she's right. Jesus...

MAX

It's what I feel. I'm not gonna lie about what I feel.

CARLA

You're supposed to lie about what you feel. Only way to keep everybody from each other's throats.

MAX

You want me to lie to you? Tell you you're safe? Tell you Bubble's up there, wearing little wings, looking down at us?

CARLA

(slaps him on the arm)

Shut up. I'm talking about them, the living. They can't take it. You can't go by me. I'm as crazy as you.

MAX

You're not crazy, Carla. You're very sad. And you've got a right to be.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - MULBERRY STREET

Max and Carla climb the steps to her building. Carla pauses at the door and turns to Max. He moves close to her.

MAX

Thanks for coming...

Max kisses her on the lips, briefly. Max is shy about the kiss. He backs away.

MAX (Cont'd)

You know, if Manny has any interest in doing carpentry full-time, there are people I can talk to who'd be happy to have a worker like him.

CARLA

Don't talk about my husband.

MAX

Sorry.

CARLA

I'm angry at him. That's why.

MAX

Oh...

CARLA

Don't look so scared.

MAX

I'm not scared. I'm not scared of anything.

CARLA

You're scared to kiss me.

MAX

I did kiss you.

CARLA

(smiles)

I mean for real.

MAX

I don't want to offend you.

CARLA

You're right. I don't want to be
kissed. I don't want anything--

Carla turns to the door. Then turns back:

CARLA (Cont'd)

--but I want to go with you the next
time you take a drive.

She goes inside. Max smiles...

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - MAX'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM

Jonah stands next to a menorah, set up on the dining room table,
holding the central candle and lighting one lower candle as he
recites a prayer in Hebrew. It's very casual, very Reform.

Behind and beside him are: Max, Debby, Nan, Sam, Jake, Gail,
Sarah, Byron and Peter Hummel. There are presents on the table.

JONAH

(rapidly: bored and embarrassed)
...asher, kidshanu, b'mitvotav
v'tzivanu, le hadleekner, shel
Hanukkah.

During the above, Nan nags Sam, her eldest:

NAN

How about you? What's the point of
all these Hebrew lessons?

SAM

So I can clean up when I'm thirteen.

Jonah has finished.

GAIL

(claps)
Beautiful...

Jonah, Sam and four year old Jake jump at their presents. Byron
stands quietly beside his father.

Max steps in front of the boys, blocking their way to the gifts.

MAX

Do it again. Recite the prayer loud
and clear. You join in, Sammy.

DEBBY

Max...

GAIL

It was lovely -- calm down.

MAX

I will not preside over this
hypocrisy. They can have all the
gifts they want--

JAKE

I'll take 'em!

MAX

And I'll give 'em to you with or
without the blessing. But if we're
going to do it, then God damn it,
let's do it with pride!

The others fall back into a scolded silence. Not Jonah:

JONAH

SuperDad II -- He's back, and this
time it's personal.

Sam, Jake and Debby laugh. Byron solemnly says to Max:

BYRON

I'll do it. Jonah has to teach me
the words. But I'll do it.

PETER

Stay out of this, Byron.

Jonah gives Byron a sour look. He faces Max.

JONAH

I'm not doing it again.

MAX

Fine. Then that's the last time
we'll bother with lighting the
menorah.

(steps aside)

Take your presents.

Jonah goes to the table. He shoves his gift onto the floor.

JONAH

I don't want the stupid present.

Flushed with emotion, Jonah runs from the room.

JAKE

I do!

GAIL

Max, you've made a disaster out of what was a perfectly lovely celebration.

DEBBY

Give him a break, Max. He's a little boy.

Debby turns to go after Jonah.

MAX

And if it was up to you, he'd stay that way.

This spins Debby around. She can't hold in her anger any longer.

DEBBY

No, Max. I want him to grow up to be a pompous self-centered man like you.

This is so naked the others are embarrassed. Max isn't surprised or hurt. But he is certain and merciless:

MAX

Being me. That's what really scares you, isn't it? An imitation of a man, that's what you love. I'm sorry, but he's dead. You refuse to bury him, but he's dead.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - MULBERRY STREET

Carla, vibrant and pretty, stands on the street. Max drives up in his Saab. She hops in eagerly.

CARLA

Where to?

MAX

Beautiful Jersey city.

Carla laughs.

CUT TO

EXT. JERSEY CITY - DAY

Sunny and cold winter day. Max and Carla drive through a hodgepodge of new buildings next to burnt out hulks, abandoned warehouses beside new stores. Carla seems relaxed in the passenger seat. They stop at a light.

CARLA

It's a mess.

MAX

Yeah... it was going to be gentrified and rebuilt. Then the recession hit.

CARLA

This country's falling apart.

MAX

Yep. The United States is finished. But you and me -- we're in peak condition.

EXT. DAY - JERSEY CITY, NEWPORT MALL PARKING LOT

Max parks. The enclosed mall is in b.g. There are lots of cars and people going in and out, loaded with Christmas presents.

MAX

Hungry?

CARLA

(nods at mall)

In there?

MAX

I didn't pack a lunch.

(she's still doubtful)

Remember. We're ghosts. They can't do anything to us.

CARLA

You're crazy. You're really nuts. You know that?

MAX

You should talk.

Max gets out and goes around to her side of the car. He opens

the door for her and extends a hand. Carla takes it, but slowly, almost suspiciously.

INT. DAY - NEWPORT MALL

An almost pretty white structure, three stories high, with skylights and an open center to look from one level to another. Its metal beams are revealed. Everywhere there are Christmas decorations. And everywhere there are shoppers, in particular families, especially mothers and children.

MAX AND CARLA --

They have entered on the third level. Carla surveys the strung lights, fake Reindeer, store displays, and all the people.

CARLA
It's pretty...

Max smiles and guides her gently into the flow.

CARLA'S POV -- (A SERIES OF SHOTS)

A mother runs after a breakaway toddler, chortling as he races into a toy store.

A gang of giggling teenage girls with big hair go flouncing past two exaggeratedly sullen teenage boys who pretend not to notice.

A harassed father is handed yet one more Christmas package to add to the load he's already carrying. He can't handle it and they all tumble onto the floor.

A pretty five year old girl in a new dress beams as she's handed an ice cream cone. She takes one lick and the top scoop falls off, smearing her immaculate dress. Her mother shrieks and dabs at the dress while the girl bawls.

CARLA AND MAX --

Walking arm in arm past the above shot.

CARLA
(means it sincerely)
They're so happy...

Carla pauses at something.

CARLA'S POV --

An overweight mother carrying an infant in a Snuggli. The mother peers into a shoe store window and absent-mindedly kisses the

baby's soft head over and over -- little tender kisses.

CARLA --

is pulled over to the mother and infant. She sticks her head next to them, becoming part of their intimacy. But the mother and baby don't notice or react to her. Max tugs at Carla. As she moves with him:

CARLA

Maybe I am a ghost.

Max and Carla walk to the edge of the walkway. Down below, in an open central area, is a Santa. A long line of children and parents wait to take a picture with him.

CARLA --

She is very sad. She's so weak from the emotion, Max takes her arm. Carla looks at him. Behind him are Christmas lights, there are carols playing over the speakers, and shoppers pass continuously.

CARLA

I was going to buy him lots of toys.

Carla leans against the rail, ready to weep. Max sticks his head in and interrupts her tears.

MAX

Let's buy them. What did he like?
How about a sword? My son used to
love swords. He still does but he's
too old to admit it.

CARLA

What...?

MAX

What would your son like for
Christmas? Does he play with Legos?
No, he's too young. How about
Bristle Blocks? Does he have them?
They're great. Babies can use 'em
and older kids like them for years.

She isn't in despair any longer, but she's confused, uncertain.

CARLA

You want me to buy presents for
Bubble?

MAX

Bubble is really his name?

CARLA

Leonardo. I called him Bubble. You want me to buy presents for him? That's sick.

MAX

Why?

CARLA

Because he's dead. It's gonna make me feel bad to pretend he's not.

MAX

Of course Bubble is dead. But your wish to give him presents isn't dead. I like giving presents too. So let's do it.

Max tugs at her. She shakes him off angrily.

CARLA

Are you serious? You're not. You wouldn't do this. You gonna buy a present for your father?

MAX

My father...

(thoughtful)

I never bought him anything...

Max sags against the railing, apparently hurt. Carla is worried.

CARLA

I'm sorry. I didn't... It's not a good idea, that's all I meant.

Max isn't upset, however. He turns to her, eager:

MAX

I made him something in school. I carved his name in wood. You know, a nameplate to put on his desk. But I was thirteen when he died. Never had a chance to buy him a real present.

(takes hold of her)

Let's do it. Let's buy presents for the dead.

CARLA
(pulls away)
I can't.

MAX
Why?

CARLA
(almost shouts)
Who do we give them to!

MAX
Who cares about that?
(takes her arm)
Come on. I know what my Daddy wants.

Max pulls her through the crowds of shoppers toward the down escalator. At first, Carla is tugged without enthusiasm. But she finally moves with him, curious.

INT. DAY - SEARS, NEWPORT MALL

Max almost runs through various sections. Now Carla moves under her own steam, behind him.

Max comes to a stop.

MAX
There it is.

TOOL CHEST --

A huge red tool chest, it's many drawers open, displaying dozens of tools that fit precisely into the space allotted by the chest.

MAX AND CARLA -- She is out of herself, fascinated by Max. Max is almost transported by his memories:

MAX (Cont'd)
He liked to build things. Shelves, chairs... Made our dining room table. He'd give me a hammer and sometimes let me do the easy stuff. When we had to get something at the hardware store, Dad would stop in front of one of these -- they weren't as magnificent as this one -- and be totally silent for a long time. Then he'd say, "I'd like to have that," and walk away... Only thing I ever heard him say he wanted.

Carla is moved by his emotion. A Salesman appears.

SEARS SALESMAN
Can I help you?

MAX
I want to buy that for my father.

SEARS SALESMAN
That's a professional chest. Is your
father more of a weekend handyman?

MAX
He's dead.

SEARS SALESMAN
Un huh.

MAX
I want to buy this one. Can you ship
it to him by Christmas?

SEARS SALESMAN
Uh...okay. What's his address?

CARLA -

Smiling at Max as he gives the salesman a credit card.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - TOYS 'R US

CARLA AND MAX run past shelves of toys as if rushing to make a
deadline.

CARLA
You get Bubble the Bristle Blocks. I
got plenty on my list.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - NEWPORT MALL: (A SERIES OF SHOTS)

Max and Carla come out of Toys 'R Us loaded with shopping bags of
toys.

Max and Carla leave their packages at a wrapping stand next to a
Food Court, a central area with table and chairs surrounded by
various food kiosks. The sign over the wrapping stand announces
that the fee for the wrapping goes to help Babies with Aids.

Max and Carla carrying two trays of food. They have ordered something from each of the various stands: A hot dog; an eggroll; a slice of pizza; a bucket of fried chicken.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - FOOD COURT

Carla, blowing her cheeks out to show she's stuffed, reacting as Max arrives with another tray, this time of desserts.

Prominent among them is a BOWL OF STRAWBERRIES. Max offers one to Carla and then eats one himself. As he lets his hand drop, Carla takes it. They hold hands while their eyes meet and linger.

CUT TO

EXT. NIGHT - NEWPORT MALL

Max and Carla carrying wrapped packages. They are surprised by the fact that it's dark and pause to look at the sky.

CARLA

It's night.

(smiles at him)

Where are we going?

MAX

We could disappear.

They walk toward Max's car in an enchanted state. They put all the gifts in the trunk. Carla moves to the door and gets in.

EXT./INT. NIGHT - JERSEY CITY/MAX'S SAAB

CARLA -- She pulls the seat-belt across her and it CLICKS:

C.U. CARLA -- distressed by the sound and a memory it provokes.

Max drives on a street parallel to the water. Carla comes out of the memory.

CARLA

(tremulous)

There's something I want to tell you that nobody knows.

(Max nods and waits)

Do you remember? Just as the wheels first touched, it was like we were landing okay...

(Max nods; choked, ashamed:)

I let go of Bubble...

Carla's voice is in so much pain, Max pulls over immediately. They are next to a seawall, taller than the view of the harbor.

CARLA (Cont'd)

Do you remember? I thought we were gonna be safe...

MAX

For a second it seemed okay.

CARLA

(she's back in the crash)
I had him in my lap. I looked at the runway... I thought we were safe and when the wheels bumped, I clapped... I let go...

(a whisper of horror)

I was safe in my belt and he wasn't.

MAX

I see. So it was your fault.

Max is speaking for her, but she accepts it as truth, listening in terror, eyes wide, mouth slack, pleading almost...

MAX (Cont'd)

It wasn't the accident--

CARLA

I wasn't holding him!

MAX

You killed your baby.

CARLA

And the lawyer...

MAX

Brillstein.

CARLA

I didn't tell him the truth... Manny wants the money and I have to...

MAX

I understand. You're also a liar.

CARLA

I'm very weak...

Carla bows her head, shuts her eyes, locks her fingers into a double fist and prays in a furious whisper.

CARLA (Cont'd)

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women. Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Max wants to bring her out of it. He touches her shoulder.

MAX

Carla, it's not your fault.

But she's keening now, rocking back and forth, completely withdrawn, oblivious to him and the world, praying desperately:

CARLA

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women. Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

MAX

Carla, stop! You're not to blame!

CARLA

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

MAX

Okay, that's enough!

CARLA

Holy Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee--

Max is too upset to listen. He gets out of the car.

EXT. NIGHT - JERSEY CITY

Max looks through the window and sees that she's still going on, in a state of madness, a madness he feels he's driven her into. He is bewildered for a moment. Then he walks to her side of the car, opens the door. She looks right through him and doesn't seem to hear what he says:

CARLA

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners --

MAX

I'm gonna take you home, okay?

CARLA

-- now and at the hour of our death.
Amen. Hail Mary, full of Grace--

MAX

You couldn't have held on, no matter
what. Don't you understand? We were
going hundreds of miles an hour--

CARLA

Blessed art thou amongst women.
Blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

Max shuts the door. He sags... He berates himself:

MAX

Of course she thinks it was her
fault! God gave her a child: it was
her job to keep him safe.

Max walks to the seawall and thinks. In b.g. we see Carla
continue her mad penance. Max comes to a decision.

TRUNK --

It opens, empty but for a red plastic emergency box and a
blanket.

Max tests the weight of the box and finds it wrong. He opens the
box and dumps its contents of jumper cables and other sundries.

Max goes back to the sea wall. At its base, among other garbage,
are two chipped red bricks.

EMERGENCY BOX --

Max places the bricks inside, shuts it, wraps the blanket around
it and uses electrical tape (dumped from the box) to keep it on.

INT. NIGHT - SAAB

CARLA --

as she prays, the door opens. Max unfastens her seat-belt.

CARLA

--pray for us sinners now and at the
hour of our death. Amen--

MAX

I want you to sit in the back.

Carla looks him in the eyes as he pulls her out, but she continues praying.

CARLA

Hail Mary, full of Grace--

MAX

I'm just moving you to the back--

Max gets her out. She stays stiff and prays throughout. Max moves her into the back seat in the middle, not behind either bucket seat. Meanwhile:

CARLA

Blessed art thou amongst women.
Blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

Max puts the middle-seat lap belt around her and hands her the emergency box, wrapped in the blanket and weighted by the bricks.

MAX

That's your baby. Hold him upright.

At last, Carla stops praying.

MAX (Cont'd)

This is Bubble. This is your chance
to hold on tight and save him.

Carla stares at the box and then takes it, hugging it in her lap.

Max shuts the door. He races around to the driver's side, getting in. Carla clutches the box and watches him, pale, mesmerized, crazy. Max puts on the seat-belt, starts the car and pulls into the empty avenue.

MAX (Cont'd)

Did you pray in the plane?

Carla clutches the box, but doesn't answer. Max hits the accelerator.

SPEEDOMETER --

Climbing past thirty miles an hour.

MAX (Cont'd)

Did you pray in the plane?

CARLA --

Clutching the box. She shakes her head no.

MAX'S POV --

About two block ahead, the avenue makes a sweeping turn toward the water, around a long brick factory wall. If Max goes straight they will hit the wall head on.

ACCELERATOR -- Max's foot presses down on the pedal.

MAX AND CARLA--

MAX

Hold on to him! Pray to God to give you the strength to save your baby!

CARLA

(intense whisper)

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with thee--

They are going fast, straight at the brick wall--

MAX

Hold onto your baby!

Carla clutches the box -- The brick wall looms--

CARLA

Blessed art thou amongst women,
Blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God--

MAX -- as he is about to hit the brick wall.

MAX

Pray for us now and at the hour of our death...

EXT. NIGHT - JERSEY CITY

WIDE ANGLE --

The Saab hits the curb, and flies up, several feet off the ground... SMASHING HEAD ON INTO THE BRICK WALL.

INT. NIGHT - SAAB

CARLA -- Her arms are wrapped around the box. The front windshield explodes! Her body is jerked forward with tremendous

force and her arms are flung open --

SLOW MOTION -- CARLA'S AMAZED LOOK AS SHE WATCHES THE BOX HURTLE AWAY FROM HER INTO THE INVADING BRICK WALL...

REAL-TIME MOTION -- Carla is stopped by the lap belt and flung back. The deafening noise of the crash ends.

CARLA'S POV -- THE BOX. Where the windshield used to be, it's imbedded in the brick wall, smashed into half of its size.

Max's bloody face appears. He looks bad, but he's conscious.

MAX

(a wild grin)

You see...? No one could hold on.
Not even God.

CARLA --

she looks at his bloody smiling face, comprehending Max's lesson at same moment that she faints away...

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - LAWN (CARLA'S DREAM)

Carla sits alone on a beautiful green lawn.

CARLA -- She looks down tenderly at something.

Now Carla is breast-feeding an infant. She closes her eyes.

BUBBLE -- A toddler, standing a few feet off, laughing at Carla and then running away from her.

Carla runs after him. She giggles as she catches him.

BUBBLE

I'm going bed...

Bubble runs away from her... Until a man's hand catches him.

MAX -- It's his hand. He smiles back to Carla.

MAX

I'll get him home safe.

MAX AND BUBBLE -- they walk off hand in hand into a blue horizon.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - JERSEY CITY

WIDE ANGLE --

of the accident. The Saab is buried in the wall. Max and Carla are unconscious. There are people arriving and sirens in the distance.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

Brillstein and Carla in a small waiting room near the Emergency Room.

CARLA

He's gonna be okay. He's got a concussion, but--

BRILLSTEIN

I know, I know. What did he do? Try to kill himself?

CARLA

No. He was showing me something.

BRILLSTEIN

Show you what? That bricks wall are hard?

CARLA

He was showing me I couldn't hold on to Bubble no matter what.

BRILLSTEIN

Didn't you know that? Why do you think they have seat-belts? That's why our case is strong, because your son's belt wasn't working--

Manny enters. Carla ignores Brillstein and turns to Manny.

CARLA

Hello Manny.

MANNY

You're talking to me?

CARLA

I'm talking to you. You listening?

BRILLSTEIN

I was just explaining to your wife--

CARLA

(cuts him off)

You don't understand. The flight attendant told me to hold him.

BRILLSTEIN

Yes, but--

CARLA

Shut up for a second.

(to Manny)

I wasn't holding tight to Bubble when we crashed. I thought I could've saved him. Max showed me I couldn't've. No matter what. No matter how hard I prayed. No matter how much I loved him.

MANNY

He crashed the car...

CARLA

To show me...yeah.

MANNY

That's it! That fucking nut won't get in ten feet of you!

BRILLSTEIN

Excuse me. Just one thing. Our case is good. Really good. Nothing to be concerned about, but--

CARLA

You're not gonna ask me to lie?

BRILLSTEIN

No, no, no, no. Not lie. I would never, ever advise you to lie. But, as I'm sure your husband understands, you don't have to tell things you aren't asked --

CARLA

Mr. Brillstein, I'm not gonna lie about the death of my son for any reason.

MANNY
Woman, are you crazy?

CARLA
No. I'm not. I want you to take me home now.

Carla heads for the door.

MANNY
They killed him! They have to pay!

BRILLSTEIN
Of course, don't worry.

MANNY
You listening to me!

CARLA
No.

She leaves. Manny kicks a chair hard. It skids across the room.

MANNY
They're responsible! Not her!

BRILLSTEIN
Let me work on it. Take it easy.

MANNY
Yeah, you work on it!

He storms out. Brillstein sighs.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - MAX'S ROOM, HOSPITAL ROOM

MAX--

in bed. His head is bandaged, the lacerations on his face have been stitched, and are also covered with white strips. They give him the appearance of a Native American wearing war-paint.

Debby sits in a chair staring at him. Jonah stands beside her. He looks unhappy. Max is staring ahead. He moves his head and seems to notice Debby and Jonah for the first time. Max motions for Jonah to come closer. Jonah responds immediately, almost eagerly, moving to the bed. But he doesn't speak and avoids a direct look into his father's eyes..

MAX

Have you heard any talk about how I don't want to live?

(Jonah nods shyly)

It's nonsense. More than anything I want to live, especially because I'm your father.

(Jonah doesn't react)

I don't just happen to be your Dad. I want to be.

(Jonah looks away)

Look at me.

(Jonah does.)

You can't lose me because I don't want to be lost.

JONAH

That's good.

MAX

When I'm better I'm going to show you and Sam and Jake the Zuckerman house. It's a pretty good design that Jeff and I did. I want to teach you boys about architecture.

JONAH

I don't want to learn about that.

MAX

I'm your father. That means I'm your teacher. It's the only thing I know how to teach. You don't have to be good at it. You don't have to like it. But I have to teach it to you.

JONAH

(smiles)

You're the boss.

MAX

That's right.

Max is satisfied. He winces as if he's feeling pain and shuts his eyes.

JONAH --

looks uncertainly at Debby. She motions him over. She whispers:

DEBBY

Go to the waiting room and stay with Grandma. I'll be right out.

Jonah leaves. Debby stands up and moves toward Max, staring at him.

MAX --

His eyes open. Max looks at her almost blindly, as if he cannot see. There's a terrible silence, full of tension. At last:

DEBBY
Do you want to talk?

Max says nothing, staring out of his unseeing eyes at her. He shakes his head, shuts his eyes, and turns away.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - CARLA'S HALLWAY

A hand knocks on the door. Carla answers. She's dressed up, her hair is done, and she's wearing makeup. She looks pretty, but a working class woman's idea of being done up. She's almost perky.

DEBBY -- She did the knocking.

DEBBY
I'm Max's wife.

CARLA
Oh... Nice to meet you. I just talked to the hospital. They said he's better.

DEBBY
May I come in?

CARLA
Oh, sure.

Carla steps aside. Carla and Debby move into the living room. It looks emptier than we've seen it in earlier scenes. They sit. Debby is uncomfortable. Carla is encouraging.

CARLA
You want to talk...?

DEBBY
How are you?

CARLA
I'm pretty good.

Debby nods and continues to look uncomfortable.

CARLA (Cont'd)
Can I get you something? Coffee?

DEBBY
No thanks. Your husband's at work?

CARLA
I guess. He moved out yesterday.

DEBBY
Oh...

CARLA
We didn't make it.

DEBBY
I'm sorry.

CARLA
It's okay. I'm a different person now.

This is very distressing to Debby. Carla notices and looks uncomfortable.

CARLA (Cont'd)
Sure you don't want some--

DEBBY
(jumps in)
You're getting a divorce?

CARLA
(smiles ironically)
I don't think I'm allowed.
(solemn)
But he's not my husband anymore.

A silence follows that is fraught: does she confront this or not? She takes the plunge:

DEBBY
My husband's in love with you--

CARLA
No--

DEBBY
He was willing to die for you. He must love you.

CARLA

No, no. He's a kind man. You know that. You're married to him. You gotta know how kind he is. He likes to help people in trouble...

(she leans forward and
whispers)

You know what I think? I think he's an angel.

DEBBY

I don't know what to do... He's in trouble...

Debby looks an appeal to Carla...

CARLA

What can I do?

DEBBY

I've tried... I want him to be happy.

(embarrassed)

Even if I lose him.

CARLA -- She doesn't know how to react.

CARLA

He saved my soul.

Debby nods. The women sit together quietly, sadly.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - MAX'S ROOM, HOSPITAL

Max, very swollen and with his face still streaked by white bandages, lies in a private room with a view of New York's skyline.

Carla comes in. Max peers at her. She's carrying a box of chocolate candies. She's normal, back to her pre-crash self.

CARLA

Hi! How ya doing? Here --

(puts chocolates on his tray)

I didn't know what to get. I figured everybody likes chocolate. How's your head?

MAX

Hurts.

CARLA

I can't tell you how much I...

She's overwhelmed by her gratitude and can't talk for a beat.

CARLA (Cont'd)

...You're a wonderful man.

MAX

You look happy.

CARLA

I'm okay. Manny moved out. I told him to.

MAX

Are you all right?

CARLA

I'm okay now. I visited Bubble's grave and it was okay. You know?

MAX

I'm glad.

CARLA

But things can't go back exactly the way they were. Know what I mean?

MAX

Yes.

CARLA

You can go home, Max. It's okay to be alive again.

(smiles)

I'm not a ghost anymore.

MAX

I can't get back.

CARLA

Yes you can.

MAX

I don't want to.

Carla stands up. She looks radiant, but her eyes shimmer.

CARLA

I wish I could help, Max.

MAX
(smiles)
We could disappear, Carla.

CARLA
I can't anymore, Max. I'm stuck
here. I have to make a new life on
Earth.

(she takes his hand and
kisses it)
Say goodbye.

MAX
I don't want to.

CARLA
Say goodbye like it means nothing.

Carla moves off quickly, opens the hospital door, calling back as
she leaves:

CARLA (Cont'd)
Bye Max. See you.

MAX -- he can't...he can't.

CARLA (O.S.)
Please Max.

MAX
(a whisper)
Bye Carla...

CUT TO

INT. EARLY EVENING - MAX'S ROOM, HOSPITAL

Max's eyes open. He watches the light fade. He is alone.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. NIGHT - MAX'S ROOM, HOSPITAL

Same shot. Max lies in the same position. The city lights are
brilliant now and very far away.

DEBBY (O.S.)
What do you want, Max?

Max turns to look at Debby. She sits in a chair by the wall, far
off, but intent on him. Max struggles to answer, seems to fail,
and then says, surprising even himself:

MAX
I want you to save me.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - JERSEY CITY HOSPITAL

Debby leaves a livery cab near the entrance and heads in.

INT. DAY - MAX'S ROOM HOSPITAL

Debby enters. Max isn't there. A NURSE appears with a wheelchair.

NURSE
Where is he?

EXT DAY - HOSPITAL TERRACE

A terrace reached through french doors from one of the waiting rooms. Max stands at the edge looking out toward New York. His face is covered by thin lines of healed stitches, very light scabs.

The Nurse and Debby appear at the doors.

NURSE
Ready to go home, Mr. Klein?

INT. DAY - JERSEY CITY HOSPITAL

The ground floor elevator banks.

DEBBY -- as the Nurse turns over to her the job of pushing Max in a wheelchair to the exit.

Max's head bandage is off. Debby pushes him in silence down a long corridor to an exit that ends in sliding doors.

The doors open with a whoosh and Brillstein rushes up.

BRILLSTEIN
You're here! Great. It may be premature -- I don't want to jinx it, but I think I'm going to have it all wrapped up tomorrow.

Max doesn't respond. Debby is dulled as well.

DEBBY
Good.

Debby pushes Max forward slowly. Brillstein tags along.

BRILLSTEIN

It's an incredible story. Because of your suicide attempt -- Don't argue, that's how I presented it to them, that you were suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome and they were going to be on the hook for whatever happened to you. Anyway, this morning I hondeled with Transcon's lawyer for two hours and we got close, really close to big dollars for you, Mrs. Gordon, and Mrs. Fransisca.

They reach the outer doors and, instead of reacting with pleasure, Debby and Max look past him as she pushes him out the sliding doors.

EXT. JERSEY HOSPITAL

Max gets up from the wheelchair. Brillstein takes his arm as if he needs help. Max shrugs him off. Debby moves down a street toward a waiting livery cab. Max follows and so does Brillstein. Throughout it all Brillstein blabs:

BRILLSTEIN (Cont'd)

Anyway, I think we're gonna make out like bandits. An hour after I get the call from the Transcon lawyer, I get one from the insurance carrier. I know, I'm terrible to take advantage, but there's been some fuckup in their communication. They both think they're the one designated to negotiate with me. I played dumb, started doing numbers with the insurance guy and his offers are even higher!

Debby has reached the car. She opens the door for Max. Max nods at Brillstein. Brillstein, frantic to make them understand how great things are, shouts:

BRILLSTEIN (Cont'd)

I got both preliminaries notarized!
They're gonna be stuck!

Brillstein laughs wildly, spinning with happiness.

DEBBY
Congratulations.

She nods to the driver and they go. Brillstein is puzzled.

INT. DAY - LIVERY

Debby looks at Max. He stares ahead. She looks out her window.

DEBBY'S POV --

Through the car window she sees a deserted Crime Scene at a store front. There's a ribbon of sagging yellow police tape. TWO MEN are cleaning up: One sweeps glass with a broom; the Second picks up broken goods from the window display.

CUT TO

EXT. DAY - UPPER BROADWAY

FOOD EMPORIUM -- A smallish supermarket on Broadway. The livery car stops in front.

INT. DAY - LIVERY

MAX
What are we doing here?

DEBBY
I'm going to cook dinner for you.

Debby gets out. Max is puzzled.

INT. DAY - FOOD EMPORIUM

Debby selects delicacies, (caviar, etc.) while Max moves along behind, almost a zombie. Max PICKS UP A BOX OF STRAWBERRIES.

INT. DAY - FOOD EMPORIUM, CHECK OUT

C.U. CONVEYOR BELT --

as the BOX OF STRAWBERRIES goes by to be rung up.

Debby's hand intercepts.

DEBBY
That's not ours.

MAX
Yes it is.

DEBBY

It'll kill you.

Max picks up a strawberry from the box and bites it. Debby watches him for a beat, then waves her hand to allow the whole box to go through.

CUT TO

INT. DAY - MAX'S AND DEBBY'S APARTMENT

Max walks down the hallway to Jonah's room.

INT. DAY - JONAH'S ROOM

Max looks in. It's empty.

INT. DAY - KITCHEN

Max appears. Debby is already cooking. She works with an air of solemn concentration.

MAX

Where's Jonah?

DEBBY

At mother's for the night.

Max looks at her -- hard -- for a beat. She doesn't look up.

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT - DINING ROOM/LIVING ROOM

The large room with a long pine table is open to the living room so we see the River through the windows in b.g. A romantic dinner for two is over. The only illumination are candles on the table. The strawberries are in a bowl in the center of the table. A dish of them is in front of Max. He is eating one.

Debby gulps a swallow of wine and stands up. She is elegant in a long black dress. She walks away from the table to a cleared area between the two rooms. The black city view of the River and the lit up Jersey shore is almost a painted backdrop as Debby rises, goes to the living room, opens a cabinet and puts on music.

MAX -- the haunting music washes over him. He smiles at her.

DEBBY -- stands in the cleared area between the two rooms and stares at Max. She seems to be willing herself to reach him. She holds his eyes, and slowly, exquisitely....

JOYRIDE 3/5/92

She dances...

MAX --

Is touched as he watches her. He understands that she wants to bewitch him, charm him back to her. The flickering light transforms his faint scabs into a kind of handsome scarring, as if he were a pirate.

DEBBY --

Twirls once in a pirouette... She fixes Max with a stare at the end of the revolution, seems to float in the look, charming Max.

MAX --

fascinated, absorbed. He takes a strawberry.

DEBBY --

Twirls again faster... And fixes Max with a stare at the end willing herself into him.

MAX --

He is charmed. He's finished the strawberry. He stands up as if to go to Debby and...

MAX raises a hand to his throat. He chokes once.

Debby is immediately alarmed.

Max, surprised, looks at her and chokes again. His face is turning red -- the scabs are purple lines now...

MAX FALLS TO THE FLOOR, suffocating...

DEBBY

Oh my God--

Debby moves to the phone in the living room in a clumsy rush. She bangs into a coffee table and scatters magazines.

Debby fumbles with the phone and shouts into it.

MAX --

Debby is very far away. He can't hear what she says. He looks up at us and the scabs pulse and break open into thin vivid lines of blood, like the stigmata of a martyred saint.

SOUNDTRACK OFF EXCEPT FOR MAX. We hear his thought:

JOYRIDE 3/4/92

MAX (V.O)
This is it. This is the moment of my
death.

DEBBY --

She appears, bending over Max.

Debby covers his mouth with hers, giving him the Breath of Life.

The blood from Max's cuts are IMPRESSED ON DEBBY'S FACE as she leans back between each breath so they both wear the red paint of life.

CAMERA DESCENDS FAST on Max and Debby in a concentric spiral.

FLASHBACK - INT. DAY - TRANSCON PLANE

Over what follows THE MUSIC DEBBY IS PLAYING IS HEARD

Objects fly in the enclosed space....

Books, bags, shoes, papers....

MAX --

We hear Max's voice, spoken in his head, as an intimate whisper:

MAX (VO)
This is it. This is the moment of
your death.

Max shuts his eyes, resigned to his death and...

THE MUSIC CONTINUES

Track forward at ceiling height, looking down on passengers:

Young Byron, traveling alone. He stares up at us in terror.

Track more until we stop at--

Bubble and Carla. Bubble has slid down in the seat. The seat-belt has ridden up around his neck. It's choking him.

CARLA --

She fights against the roll of the plane to reach her son. Out her window we see the ground, not sky.

WIDE ANGLE -- With a shudder the cabin tilts back, suddenly righting itself. Carla pulls Bubble free.

SMASH CUT

STILL IN FLASHBACK - TRANSCON PLANE

Lisa the Flight Attendant passing Max and Jeff mouthing words frantically:

The Plane steadies -- they are close, too close to the ground, and very near to the runway.

Jeff turns to Max and says something in an excited, hopeful manner.

Max answers coolly, almost with hostility.

Jeff blinks. For a moment, we don't know whether he's going to scream or burst into tears.

We see Max glance toward Byron, sitting alone, a few rows up.

Max touches Jeff's arm and speaks gently...

Max unbuckles his belt and says something quick to Jeff and moves up the aisle toward Byron. It's a tough couple of feet.

MAX'S POV -- Jeff, pale and worried, looks a silent plea.

MAX --

winks at Jeff and gives an okay sign with his hand. The plane groans and wobbles.

Max moves up the aisle, looking from left to right at those who will live and die. The rare one has found inner strength, some pray, some weep.

Max flops into empty seat next to Byron. The boy is pale and drawn.

We hear Max's voice as if spoken in a dream: isolated and significant:

MAX
Everything's okay.

Max pushes Byron's head forward into his lap. Max leans forward into his own lap, turning his head so he looks into Byron's eyes.

MAX AND BYRON --

MAX (Cont'd)
Close your eyes.
(Byron does)
It'll be over soon.

There's a bump from the wheels --

MAX (Cont'd)
Everything's wonderful...

A jolt from the right side -- Byron's eyes open in terror--

The nightmare begins...

The right side of the plane goes over. Rows of seats pass Max.
There's a flash of bodies and seats collapsing. They crumple
like cans of soda --

MAX AND BYRON SEEM TO SOMERSAULT -- The ceiling panel rips open

MAX --

he shuts his eyes.

SMASH CUT

INT. DAY - MAX'S LIVING ROOM

DEBBY'S FACE PULLS BACK FROM THE KISS OF LIFE --

Her mouth is smeared with blood and saliva from her resuscitation
attempt. She looks panicked:

SHE'S LOSING MAX

SMASH CUT

FLASHBACK - INT. TRANSCON PLANE

MUSIC TRACK STILL ON

MAX (V.O.)
Goodbye...

The plane rolls over and breaks apart.

A sudden stillness as the remains of the cabin come to a rest.

MAX'S POV -- SOFT FOCUS: light streaming through something blond.

FOCUS -- IT'S BYRON'S HAIR. HE'S UPSIDE DOWN.

MAX --

He's upside down. He is surprised to be alive. Then he's galvanized -- but not frantic, not panicked. Max unbuckles and...

Max falls down to the ceiling, which is now the floor. The drop hurts his knees. Smoke billows from somewhere. The smoke is poisonous.

Max releases Byron's belt and catches him. Max takes Byron's hand. It's impossible to see more than a foot or two, hard to tell where to turn, light is so distorted. There's a kind of hazy light to the right.

Max moves that way. We see a squashed body between two seats pressed together.

Max pushes Byron ahead, but holds on to him.

Max halts.

MAX'S POV -- there's a Newborn Baby in an infant seat. The Newborn is unhurt, the infant seat suspended in the air by a mass of wires that have been torn out of the ceiling or floor or wall -- it's all a mess, jumbled together.

Max takes Newborn in the infant seat. Byron clings to Max. Smoke and fire are near.

MAX
(shouts)

Follow me to the light! Hold on
to me! Follow me to the light!

Max moves toward A YELLOW HAZE. Abruptly Max stops.

MAX --

He looks right at us.

DEBBY'S FACE LIFTS AWAY AS MAX SUCKS IN AIR...

We are back in the living room. MAX IS SAVED...

DEBBY

Max...?

Their faces are covered with blood, and wet from the mouth to mouth. In the b.g. there are others, PARAMEDICS, but between Max and Debby there's nothing but the mixture of each other, both physical and spiritual.

DEBBY (Cont'd)

Max...?

MAX --

as tears of joy stream down and mix with the lines of blood:

MAX

I'm alive.

They kiss. Max pulls away.

MAX (Cont'd)

I'm alive.

And they kiss again, frantically....crying and laughing between kisses as the music continues...

FADE OUT