GHOST TOWN

by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT
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1 EXT MANHATTAN DAY 1

Here's a weird image -- Sixth Avenue's completely empty in the middle of the day, not a soul in sight. *

VOICE (O.S.)
Hello? Is anybody there?

SCADS OF PEOPLE dissolve into the image, as if they were there all along and we just couldn't see them. New York, 5 p.m. on the first hot day of summer. We hear a VOICE:

VOICE (O.S.) (cont'd)
How about now?

The speaker steps into frame -- FRANK HERLIHY, mid-forties, one too many martinis last night. And the night before. Dressed in a tuxedo, overcoat over one arm, talking on a cell phone and scrolling through a Blackberry at the same time.

FRANK
Oh hi, Honey, what's up? What? What do you mean? Slow down, who are you talking about? I don't know. I don't know. Sweetheart, I don't have a clue what you're-

He stops and puts a hand to his face in utter horror as he figures out what domestic crisis he's dealing with.

FRANK (cont'd)
An apartment? Of course I'm not looking at an apartment, why in God's name would I be looking at...
(lying, but well)
Oh, *I* know what this is, it's the oldest trick in the book, sales guy calls the wife, tells her he already talked to the husband...

He sweats. This isn't going to be an easy one to get out of.

FRANK (cont'd)
Well, I don't *know* how he got my card. Maybe he, uh, maybe, uh... maybe...
(an idea)
Okay, you got me. Surprise ruined, but what the heck. It was going to be our anniversary present, but now... Well, *I* know it's six months away, but that's how long it takes, what with escrow and having it painted your favorite color and all.

(MORE)

1 CONTINUED: 1

FRANK (cont'd)
You're the one who says you're sick of the commute and you wish we were back in the city. It's a beautiful little one bedroom in the West Village, you're going to love it. Listen, my car never showed up and I'm late for that thing at the Waldorf, I'll be home around eleven, let's talk then. Love you too. Big kiss. *

He pushes a button to hang up, scrolls through his phone list, and punches another button. This time, his tone is ugly.

FRANK (cont'd)
(into phone)
Lemme ask you a question -- are you a real estate broker or a professional fucking idiot? *

2 INT MODEST APARTMENT DAY 2

A seemingly discontinuous cut, except it's not. In a modest apartment, a YO N H SBAND lugs a window air conditioner across the living room toward an open window. It's heavy, he can barely manage it. His YO N WIFE follows him.

YO N WIFE
I really think we ought to have the super do that.

YO N H SBAND
I got it.

3 EXT STREET DAY 3

Frank rounds a corner onto another avenue, headed uptown.

FRANK
Listen to me, I did *not* say my wife needs to see the apartment, I said *Amber* needs to see the apartment. Does "Amber" sound like the wife of a man my age to you?! I hope you're happy, you, you, you *homewrecker!*

4 INT MODEST APARTMENT DAY 4

The Young Husband hoists the air conditioner up toward the ledge of the open window, twenty-six floors above the street below. He R NTS, sweats, almost drops the thing.

YO N WIFE
He'll do it for free, it's his job.

4 CONTINUED: 4

YOUNG HUSBAND
I got it! I got it!

5 EXT STREET DAY 5 *

Frank, livid, is still walking, still ranting.

FRANK
No! No, it's too late for that, it's not exactly a love nest if my wife is there picking out the God damn *curtains,* is it?!

6 INT MODEST APARTMENT DAY 6

The Young Husband finally gets the air conditioner up on the ledge and balances it there.

YOUNG HUSBAND
The window! Pull the window!

The Young Wife SLAMS the window down on the top ledge of the air conditioner, securing it in place.

7 EXT STREET DAY 7 *

Frank stops at the base of an apartment building, rubbing his forehead, thinking, still on the phone.

FRANK
Let me think, let me think. No, you know what?, just kill it.

8 INT MODEST APARTMENT DAY 8

The Young Husband steps back proudly, mission accomplished --

YOUNG HUSBAND
There!

-- and the air conditioner promptly falls out the window.

9 EXT STREET DAY 9 *

Frank's still talking.

FRANK
Call me over the weekend and leave a message on my home machine that the sellers changed their mind and --

10 IN MID-AIR, 10

the air conditioner falls, sorta beautifully. No sound except the air WHOOSHING around it as it plummets, its power cord SNAPPING above it like a tail.

11 EXT STREET DAY 11 *

As faint SCREAMS come from above, Frank finishes his sentence:

FRANK
-- the whole thing's dead.

Perhaps hearing the screams, he looks up.

FROM THE AIR CONDITIONER'S POINT OF VIEW,

we scream toward the sidewalk, toward Frank's upturned face, as everybody around him dives out of the way.

ON THE SIDEWALK,

at the last second, Frank pulls off a miraculous leap, five feet *straight back,* bounding like an acrobat and landing neatly on his toes in the street, safely out of harm's way as the air conditioner SMASHES into a million pieces in the exact spot where he was standing. It surely would have killed him.

Standing in the street, Frank is wide-eyed, breathless, thrilled to be alive.

FRANK (cont'd)
(into phone)
You are not going to BELIEVE what almost-

WHAMMO!

An uptown bus SMACKS into Frank at about forty miles an hour, sweeping him out of sight, deader than a doornail in the split-second it takes him to clear frame.

The camera stays where it is for a long moment as PEOPLE race through frame, toward the scene of the crash, but we don't look that way, we stay right where we are. Frank's overcoat wafts slowly down into frame from above and falls in the street.

TWO GUYS stop in frame --

GUY 1
Oh, my God.

11 CONTINUED: 11

GUY 2
Is he dead?

GUY 1
He ain't happy.

-- and race off, toward the crash site. More people race through frame, all headed in the same direction.

But then somebody *backs* into frame, from the opposite direction. It's Frank, and he looks completely unhurt, unwrinkled even. He watches everybody run in that direction, confused as hell.

A COP runs toward Frank --

-- and passes right *through* him. Frank's eyes pop wide, and the Cop stops and SNEEZES. Then takes off toward the crash again.

Frank realizes something is seriously wrong.

FRANK
What? No, I...

Now a WOMAN WITH SHOPPING BAGS walks right through Frank. She SNEEZES too, then keeps walking.

FRANK (cont'd)
Aw, c'mon!

As a crowd gathers at the nearby accident scene, Frank sighs.

FRANK (cont'd)
So *that's* how Frankie goes.

With a WHOOSH, an X-ray of a human skull zips up in front of Frank's face and we --

CUT TO:

12 INT DENTAL OFFICE - MONTAGE DAY 12

-- cut to an actual X-ray, up on the light board in a dental office. Credits run over gorgeous -- simply *gorgeous!* -- shots of nasty shiny tools and grinning X-rays of problem teeth.

PINCUS (O.S.)
Go ahead and spit.

13 INT DENTAL OFFICE DAY 13

A gaping human mouth is reflected in a dentist's shiny plastic facemask. BERTRAM PINCUS, D.D.S., fortyish, British accent, * sits back as his PATIENT hacks a mouthful into the spit basin.

13 CONTINUED: 13

Pincus -- and he's one of those people that everyone just naturally seems to call by his last name -- holds his tools aloft, waiting for the UPPER EAST SIDE LADY in his chair to sit back so he can resume cleaning her teeth. Pincus winces as she prattles on, to him her voice is nails on a chalkboard.

U.E.S. LADY
The very first scene just takes your breath away, it's as if you're in the middle of the Serengeti, you have to remind yourself you're in a theatre watching a play! My four year old Alex just ADORED it, he wanted his father to see it with us but of course his father-

Pincus, desperate to shut her up, shoves a wad of cotton in her mouth. She talks through it, garbled now.

U.E.S. LADY (cont'd)
-- ashhhd aa-aay ate ass eeeer.

Pincus grabs another wad, shoves that in there too. It doesn't slow her up a bit.

U.E.S. LADY (cont'd)
Akbadk keila rueilsl wileknsl skee iv barmer issid!

14 LATER, IN THE SAME OFFICE, 14

Pincus cleans his tools at the end of the day. Sounds of MERRIMENT come from the outer office. DR. JAHANGIR PRASHAR, a Pakistani dentist, pokes his head in the door.

DR. PRASHAR
Say, Dr. Pincus --

Pincus winces, an unfortunate habit whenever people speak.

DR. PRASHAR (cont'd)
I'm going to need the panoramic X-ray machine most of the morning tomorrow, if that fits with your appointments.

PINCUS
I've cleared my schedule for tomorrow.

DR. PRASHAR
Really? Well, it's supposed to be a lovely day.

14 CONTINUED: 14

PINCUS
(furrows his brow)
What are you implying?

DR. PRASHAR
Nothing. Just thought you might be taking the day off to enjoy the beautiful fall weather.

Pincus glares at him, offended and befuddled.

DR. PRASHAR (cont'd)
I beg your pardon.

LAUGHTER from the outer office, now someone has a radio on.

DR. PRASHAR (cont'd)
Will you stop and have cake with us? Mrs. Prashar and I just had our baby girl, I've brought pictures.

PINCUS
(that sounds horrible)
That sounds delightful.

15 INT DENTAL OFFICE - OPEN AREA DAY 15

A few minutes later. Pincus pokes his head out of the back office. He notices the little staff party, paper plates and plastic cups of champagne, over near the RECEPTIONIST's desk.

Pincus makes sure everyone's turned away, then tiptoes behind them, scoots into the waiting area and out the door. Dr. Prashar sees him go -- a bit sadly.

16 EXT FIFTH AVENUE DAY 16

CLOSE ON a brass name plate next to the office's front door.

BERTRAM PINCUS, D.D.S. *

The door opens and Pincus steps out. He turns north, headed up * Fifth Avenue in the nineties. There's a Greenpeace Guy handing * out leaflets -- *

GREENPEACE GUY *
Stop global warming? *

PINCUS *
Wouldn't dream of it. *

16 CONTINUED: 16

-- but Pincus cuts around him, stops abruptly, SNEEZES twice, and ducks into his apartment building, the very same building in which he has his office. His commute is exactly fourteen paces. *

A moment later, a FOOD DELIVERY GUY walking down the street stops in the same spot Pincus did, SNEEZES, then keeps walking.

17 INT PINCUS'S BUILDING - LOBBY DAY 17

Pincus strides across the lobby of his apartment building, behind the back of the DAY DOORMAN, who's chatting with another RESIDENT, and heads for an open elevator.

18 IN THE ELEVATOR, 18

Pincus pushes the button for his floor. A Young Woman comes into the lobby, struggling with a big cardboard box. GWEN is in her thirties, lovely, winsome, sad around the eyes. *

GWEN
Hold the door!

Pincus looks down, at the "door open" button, but he freezes. Can't bring himself to push it. He keeps looking down, trying to avoid eye contact with the Young Woman.

GWEN (cont'd)
Can you hold it a second?

Pincus just stares at the button. The doors start to close.

GWEN (cont'd)
Hey!

She hurries, racing up toward the elevator as fast as she can with the cumbersome box. Pincus still averts his eyes.

GWEN (cont'd)
Wait!

The doors close on her. Pincus, happy this way, rides alone.

CUT TO:

19 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT - ENTRY DAY 19

Pincus comes into his neat-as-a-pin one bedroom apartment and hangs his coat on a hook by the door.

20 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN NIGHT 20

Night has fallen. Pincus sits at a sparkling clean kitchen table, staring down unhappily. We see what he's looking at.

20 CONTINUED: 20

A huge jug of some sort of grisly-looking liquid squats on his kitchen table, an empty glass beside it. Pincus stares at it unhappily, then pours a glass of the milky-looking yuck and gulps it down. *

He nearly gags, pours another glass, and chugs that too. He has about three-quarters of a gallon to go. *

21 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 21

Pincus's fingers DRUM on the arm of an armchair. He waits.

DRUM. DRUM. DRUM.

He freezes suddenly -- is this the moment?

Nope. False alarm.

DRUM. DRUM. DRUM.

He freezes again -- how about this? Nope.

DRUM. DRUM. DR-

Pincus bolts out of the chair and races for the bathroom. We hear the door SLAM.

CUT TO:

22 INT HOSPITAL - ADMITTING AREA DAY 22

The next day. Pincus, clutching an overnight bag to his chest, stands before a tired ADMITTING NURSE in a local hospital. She is filling out a stack of forms.

ADMITTING NURSE
Spell it?

PINCUS
P-I-N-C-U-S.

ADMITTING NURSE
Birthdate?

PINCUS
Why?

ADMITTING NURSE
What day were you born?

PINCUS
I understood the question, why do you need to know?

ADMITTING NURSE
We'll leave it blank. Weight?

PINCUS
Last night or this morning?

ADMITTING NURSE
You pick.

PINCUS
One hundred sixty-two pounds.

ADMITTING NURSE
Number of alcoholic beverages consumed per week?

PINCUS
Is that really necessary?

ADMITTING NURSE
Well, they want to know.

PINCUS
I'm sure "they" would love to know lots of things. "I," however, am not interested in having my personal information auctioned off to the highest bidder.

ADMITTING NURSE
I'll put zero. Marital status?

PINCUS
Pass.

ADMITTING NURSE
Profession?

PINCUS
Irrelevant.

ADMITTING NURSE
Food allergies?

PINCUS
I don't plan to eat here.

ADMITTING NURSE
Are you allergic to sticking plaster?

PINCUS
An absurd question, I won't respond.

22 CONTINUED: 22

ADMITTIN N RSE
Do you smoke?

PINC S
Hush.

ADMITTIN N RSE
Do you wear dentures?

PINC S
Stop it.

ADMITTIN N RSE
When was the last time you ate?

PINC S
Ah! Pertinence returns! Lunchtime yesterday. I had a tuna sandwich. The toast was soggy.

ADMITTIN N RSE
Did you drink the laxative solution? *

Pincus looks around, to see if others are listening.

PINC S
Yes.

ADMITTIN N RSE
Did it work? *

PINC S
(lowers his voice)
It was... as advertised. *

ADMITTIN N RSE
(confused)
Did you evacuate your bowels? *

PINC S
I drank your hideous drain cleaner. *
What followed was a fait accompli. *

ADMITTIN N RSE
Sir, what I'm asking is-

PINC S
I HAD A SHIT! And then I had another! *
And another, and another! Okay?! *

ADMITTIN N RSE
Fine with me.

22 CONTINUED: 22

PINC S
This is all a grotesque invasion of my privacy.

ADMITTIN N RSE
Wait till they get you in back.

C T TO:

23 INT HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR DAY 23

Pincus, on a gurney and in hospital garb now, is wheeled down a hospital corridor by TWO N RSES. A BR SQ E S R EON falls into step beside him; she's consulting a chart.

S R EON
oooood morning, Dr. Pincus. Well, I don't anticipate any difficulties today, we'll have you up and on your feet in no time. I do have one quick question, I see you've requested a general anesthetic, now, that isn't necessary for this type of procedure and we normally don't-

PINC S
I have no intention of being present when they go where they're going. Tell me, when will the surgeon arrive?

S R EON
I'm the surgeon.

PINC S
Really? Why are you so tan?

S R EON
Spray tan. Just got it this morning. *
I was hoping to go darker, actually. Really make my eyes pop.

N RSE
Try whitening your teeth, I did.

She shows a mouthful of shiny white Chiclets.

S R EON
Oooh, that's nice.

PINC S
Excuse me, you nasty tarts, would anyone mind talking about my colon?

23 CONTINUED: 23

The Surgeon laughs as the ANESTHESIOLOGIST, who is all of twenty-six, falls into step beside them, holding a syringe.

SURGEON
(to the Anesthesiologist)
I see the sodium thiopental is kicking in. Always makes people say the craziest things.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
(holding a full syringe)
I haven't given it to him yet.

Pincus regards the Anesthesiologist with alarm.

PINCUS
How old are you? Are you here with your school on a field trip?

Offended, the Anesthesiologist jams the syringe into a stent in Pincus's arm and shoots him full of drugs.

SURGEON
Not really a people person, are you, Dr. Pincus?

Almost immediately, Pincus grows sleepy.

PINCUS
Given a choice between being with a few people or a lot of people...

They wheel him away from us, toward a pair of swinging doors at the end of the hallway.

PINCUS (cont'd)
... I choose my cat.

The gurney bangs through the door and into the brightly-lit operating room beyond.

CUT TO:

24 EXT MANHATTAN DAY TO NIGHT TO DAY 24

In speeded-up motion, the sun sets over Manhattan, building lights come on, the moon rises, dusk turns to night, the moon sets, night turns to dawn, building lights go off, and a beautiful autumn day is born.

CUT TO:

25 INT HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR DAY 25

Pincus is awake and dressed and clutching his overnight bag to his chest again. He's in a wheelchair he doesn't need, being wheeled toward the exit by one of the Nurses who took him into surgery yesterday. She seems nervous.

N RSE
Well, you must be excited to get home and see your cat.

Pincus cranes around, looks at her strangely.

PINC S
What cat?

N RSE
Oh! I thought you said yesterday you had one.

PINC S
I despise cats. What kind of man gives his love to a cat?

N RSE
I had a cat when I was a little girl. My father, just before he died, he took me down to the shelter and he said to me, Debra, when-

PINC S
Wonderful man. Listen, were there people in my room last night? I had the oddest dream, but sort of not a dream.

N RSE
(I know all about that)
I don't know anything about that.

They reach the elevators and she shoves a copy of a report in his hand. *

N RSE (cont'd)
There you are. Clean bill of health.

She spins the chair around and heads back down the hall, calling over her shoulder as the elevator doors close on him. * *

N RSE (cont'd)
Come back soon!

25 CONTINUED: 25

PINC S
What an awful thing to say at a hospital. *

26 EXT PPER EAST SIDE - Q IET STREET DAY 26

Pincus comes out the front gates of the hospital and pauses to button up his coat. He notices THREE N RSES in O.R. scrubs on a cigarette break. He waves away their smoke in annoyance. *

PINC S
Fine example for people in health care. *

Another N RSE is on the other side of him, but this one's dressed in an old-fashioned outfit, almost World War II era.

PINC S (cont'd)
Still, I suppose smoking serves a purpose. Thins the herd. Weeds out the stupid. * *

The Nurse turns and stares at him. She looks behind her, then back at him, you talking to me?

PINC S (cont'd)
Oh, do I offend Madame?

Still no answer, she just stares at him, now raising a finger slowly to point at him, mouth agape.

Pincus, realizing she's a wacko, rolls his eyes and crosses the street, muttering.

PINC S (cont'd)
Madame should be in a straitjacket.

27 AT THE CORNER, 27

He walks on, passing a LOVELY OLD CO PLE moving slowly across the street, hogging the crosswalk.

PINC S
On your left.

The Lovely Old Couple stops and stares at him, was he talking to *us?* But Pincus motors past them, fast. * *

AT THE NEXT CORNER, *

Pincus waits for the light. Hearing a MUFFLED SHOUT behind him, he turns and looks over his shoulder. * *

CONTINUED:

The Nurse and the Lovely Old Couple from the crosswalk are talking excitedly, hurrying down the sidewalk toward him. *

Pincus is concerned. He hurries across the street.

As the Nurse and the Lovely Old Couple speed up to follow him, a middle-aged JOGGER falls into step alongside them, and they explain, pointing ahead to Pincus. The Jogger joins in.

AHEAD, with Pincus,

he steps on it, moving up to a very brisk walk. He darts a look over his shoulder, where now a half dozen people seem to be following him.

He speeds up to a slow trot.

29 AT ANOTHER CORNER, 29

Pincus ignores the light, stepping out in front of a cab, which SCREECHES its brakes and HONKS at him. *

A GUY IN A CARDIGAN stops in his tracks, watching Pincus as the dentist steps around the cab, while the CABBIE waves a fist at him and curses. *

Cardigan Guy watches Pincus with interest as he heads down the street. He follows. *

30 IN THE SIDE STREET, 30

the Cardigan Guy SHOUTS to Pincus, who's crossing the street ten yards or so ahead of him.

CARDIGAN GUY
Hey!

Pincus looks up, still walking fast. He sees the Cardigan Guy step into the street.

CARDIGAN GUY (cont'd) *
Yeah, you! *

Pincus sees the Cardigan Guy is angling towards him, directly into the path of an oncoming street sweeper. The street sweeper's a big heavy bull of a machine, and fairly slow. Still, the Cardigan Guy is veering right into its path. *

PINCUS *
(to himself) *
Idiot. *
(MORE)

30 CONTINUED: 30

PINCUS (cont'd)
(to the Idiot)
LOOK OUT!

But Cardigan Guy doesn't hear him and keeps walking, now about to step directly in front of the street sweeper, whose DRIVER doesn't seem to care.

CARDIGAN GUY
I need just two minutes --

All at once, a car comes ROARING out of nowhere, BLASTS RIGHT THROUGH the Cardigan Guy, and then the street sweeper does too, seeming to chew him up, he vanishes --

-- and when it passes, it reveals the Cardigan Guy, unharmed, standing right in front of Pincus.

CARDIGAN GUY (cont'd)
(finishing his sentence)
-- of your time.

Pincus is stunned.

31 IN THE CAB OF THE STREET SWEEPER, 31

the Driver SNEEZES.

32 BACK ON THE STREET, 32

Pincus is wide-eyed and ashen. Behind him, a FLIGHT ATTENDANT in uniform, standing in front of a hotel entrance, takes notice of him too. Cardigan Guy is excited.

CARDIGAN GUY
(to Pincus)
You know I'm here, don't you? And you're not, you're not --

PINCUS
Leave me alone!

CARDIGAN GUY
I *know* you're not, because back there, that cab, it honked at you!

32 CONTINUED: 32

PINCUS
I'm not feeling well.

He turns and takes off. Looking back over his shoulder, he sees a DOZEN PEOPLE pursuing him, half a block back. He heads toward Central Park. *

33 EXT FIFTH AVENUE DAY 33 *

Pincus hurries across Fifth Avenue, avoiding the traffic. A moment later, the crowd pursues him. It's growing, this crowd, it now includes THREE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS and a HARLEY GUY IN LEATHER; they bolt back across Fifth Avenue, right into the thick of midday traffic -- *

-- which ALL passes right through them. *

UP AHEAD OF THEM, *

Pincus takes cover behind a tree near an entrance to the park. As the crowd races past on Fifth, he circles around the tree, avoiding them, but as he comes around the other side -- *

-- he's face to face with Cardigan Guy. *

CARDIGAN GUY
I need you to do something for me.
It's about my little boy.

PINCUS
Go away!!

He takes off again, but Cardigan Guy SHOUTS to the Crowd.

CARDIGAN GUY
HEY! HE'S OVER HERE!!

The Crowd stops mid-block and turns around. Pincus does the only logical thing he can do. Run like hell. *

34 EXT CENTRAL PARK DAY 34 *

Pincus runs into the park and sees a COP up ahead. He races up to him, breathless. *

PINCUS
People! Chasing! Could be Mormons, or
Moonies, or-

The Cop's eyes widen and, too late, Pincus notices he's dressed in a 70s cop uniform and has a Serpico look going on. The Cop points at Pincus.

34 CONTINUED: 34

COP
Hey man, you can *see* me!

PINCUS
Oh, *Jesus!*

He takes off running again, and now the Cop joins the crowd.

35 EXT CENTRAL PARK - TUNNEL DAY 35

Looking through the mouth of a tunnel, we see Pincus race down a hill toward us. He darts through the tunnel, where a MUSIC STUDENT plays for dollars. *

Coming out the other side of the tunnel, he ducks off camera just as the parade of ghosts chasing him comes down the hill and into the tunnel. As they all blow past us, we move left and find Pincus flattened against the wall at the mouth of the tunnel, where he's just given them the slip.

He runs out of the tunnel, now behind the ghosts, and watches as they reach a fork in the park pathway. The ghosts take the left fork, and Pincus takes the right, headed away from them, for good this time.

But as he disappears, a Man in a Tuxedo steps into frame, watching him go, intrigued. We know this guy -- it's Frank Herlihy, the guy who got hit by a bus.

CUT TO:

36 OMITTED 36

37 INT HOSPITAL DAY 37

Back at the hospital, Pincus is talking to his Surgeon, who has a look of excessive innocence on her face.

SURGEON
What kind of side effects?

PINCUS
Hallucinations.

SURGEON
Um hm. Visual or aural?

PINCUS
Both. Extremely vivid and realistic. Is that normal?

SURGEON
Well, what's "normal," really?

37 CONTINUED: 37

PINCUS
Did anything unusual happen during my procedure?

SURGEON
Um... well... uh... can you hang on one second?

Pincus nods, puzzled, and the Surgeon picks up a phone.

SURGEON (cont'd)
(low mutter)
Yeah, it's me. Why don't you come on down here right away.
(VERY low mutter)
That thing we talked about.
(turns slightly away)
Because you said to call you and so I'm calling you.

She hangs up and smiles uneasily at Pincus. *

PINCUS *
In any case- *

The Surgeon holds up her hand -- not yet. She gestures to him * to follow her, as she opens a door behind the nurse's station. *

IN A TEENSY OFFICE, *

she waves him in and closes the door behind him. It's a tiny * space, maybe four by six, that they use for e mail, a water * cooler, and so forth. She closes the door behind him. *

PINCUS *
In any case- *

She holds up a hand again -- let's wait. *

Okay, Pincus doesn't get it, but he waits. They smile at each other for a long moment, look around the tiny room, clear their * throats, and finally, from outside, they hear the BAM BAM BAM of footsteps approaching, the door flies open, and a MAN IN A SUIT enters, carrying a file folder.

PINCUS (cont'd) *
As I was- *

SURGEON *
(to the Man in the Suit) *
Close the door please. *

He does. *

CONTINUED:

PINCUS
Right, so I-

SURGEON
(to the Man in the Suit)
And the blind.

The Man in the Suit twists the knob on a window blind. Now the three of them are wedged into a dark, tiny space, bumping into each other. Pincus waits. The Surgeon checks her watch.

SURGEON (cont'd)
(to Pincus)
We're a bit pressed for time.

Pincus looks at them like they're both crazy, then repeats himself carefully:

PINCUS
Did anything unusual happen during my surgery?

The Man in the Suit leans in and whispers in the Surgeon's ear. The Surgeon nods.

SURGEON
(to Pincus)
Define "unusual."

PINCUS
Out of the ordinary, bizarre, unanticipated.

The Surgeon flips open a folding printout that gets longer and longer, studying heart rates, respiration, and so forth.

SURGEON
No, no, let me see... not really... well... the cessation, perhaps... other than that...

PINCUS
"Cessation?"

SURGEON
Dr. Pincus, I'm sure I don't have to explain to you, medical procedures don't all follow the same path. Every one is different, there are subtle variations in even the simplest surgeries.

CONTINUED:

PINCUS
What would be an example of a subtle variation in my case?

SURGEON
Well, one doesn't wish to speak in jargon, but... technically... that is, medically speaking... how shall I...

The Man in the Suit leans in and whispers something in the Surgeon's ear.

SURGEON (cont'd)
(to Pincus)
You died.

PINCUS
I died?

SURGEON
Little bit.

PINCUS
For how long?

SURGEON
(shrugs, it was nothing)
Seven minutes.

PINCUS
I died for seven minutes?!

SURGEON
But that's about the only thing I can think of that would qualify as un*usual*...

PINCUS
How in God's name did I *die?!*

SURGEON
For the record, we did advise you against using a general anesthesia for this procedure. Any time you work with anesthesia there's a chance, however remote, of a biochemical anomaly.

PINCUS
I demand to speak with the anesthesiologist.

SURGEON
He no longer works here.

CONTINUED:

PINCUS
Why not?

SURGEON
We have a strict three strikes policy.

PINCUS
My anesthesiologist had two strikes?!

SURGEON
Let's not overdramatize the situation.

PINCUS
Why in God's name didn't you tell me I died before I checked out?!

SURGEON
We did. We gave you a full report that very night.

PINCUS
I don't remember that, what did I say?

SURGEON
(checks his notes)
Uh, you gurgled, and your eyes rolled back in your head.

PINCUS
Do you have any idea how much I am going to sue you for?

The Man in the Suit sits forward, excited to join in.

MAN IN SUIT
Nothing, I'm afraid. You signed a general release and a quit/claim form relieving your surgeon, your anesthesiologist, St. Victor's Hospital, and Cooperative Institutional Health Partners from any liability related to your anesthetic-induced cessation of heart function.

PINCUS
I certainly did *not.*

But the Man in the Suit has the form out of the folder in a flash and holds it up in front of Pincus. *

MAN IN SUIT
Is that your signature at the bottom?

CONTINUED:

PINCUS
When did I sign this?!

MAN IN SUIT
Right after you passed the Post-Operative Responsiveness Tests legally mandated by the State of New York.

PINCUS
I had no idea what I was doing!

MAN IN SUIT
You knew enough to sign your name.

PINCUS
I dotted my i with a heart!

SURGEON
You were happy to be alive! Now, about these hallucinations -- what, exactly, are you seeing?

Pincus spits it out like an expletive:

PINCUS
People!

CUT TO:

37A EXT MANHATTAN - SKYLINE DAY 37A

Storm clouds roll in. THUNDER rumbles, lightning flashes. No rain yet, but it's coming.

38 EXT UPPER EAST SIDE DAY 38

Pincus slithers along the wall of a building on the Upper East Side, eyes darting from side to side. When he reaches the edge of the building, he lowers his head and bulls his way across the street, trying desperately not to catch eyes with anyone.

He passes the door to his dental practice and keeps walking, eyes down, headed for the entrance to his building.

He looks back to see if he's being followed, and when he turns around, he nearly collides with Frank (in his tuxedo), who's standing right in front of the building. It's too late for Pincus to stop, but instead of smashing into Frank --

-- he walks right through him. He SNEEZES, in the exact spot where he and the Delivery Guy both sneezed earlier.

38 CONTINUED: 38

FRANK
So *you're* the guy.

PINCUS
No I'm not! I'm not the guy!

FRANK
Real quick -- I gotta hit you up for a favor.

PINCUS
There's nothing I can do. Go away!

Frank is standing in front of the entrance to the building, so Pincus lunges to the curb, where a yellow cab is just pulling over. Now the rain starts to fall. *

Pincus darts in front of a woman waiting at the curb and leaps into the back of the cab. The woman is Gwen, for whom he failed to hold the elevator earlier. She's struggling with the big cardboard box, which has been taped back together for a return. *

GWEN
Hey, that's my cab!

39 INT CAB DAY 39

Pincus is slumped back against the seat, holding his head. Gwen is still on the sidewalk, pleading with him as rain pours down.

GWEN
Aw, c'mon, that's really low!

Pincus BANGS down the door lock.

PINCUS
Sorry, lady. Medical emergency.
(to the Driver)
Pull away!

CAB DRIVER
Where to?

Frank leans in close to Pincus, he's suddenly sitting in the back seat beside him.

FRANK
I can see you're a busy man, so I'll get right to the point.

PINCUS
GAAAAH!

39 CONTINUED: 39

CAB DRIVER
I didn't catch that.

PINCUS
I'm losing my mind.

CAB DRIVER
Where you wanna go, pal?

Pincus lunges to get out, but Gwen is still on the curb, the wet box disintegrating in her hands. Pincus is trapped.

FRANK
That angry woman whose cab you just snaked? She's my wife. My widow, I mean. She's got a serious problem and I need your help to fix it.

PINCUS
(to the Driver)
Will you just drive the car?!

CAB DRIVER
(to Pincus)
Either give me a destination or get out!

Outside, Gwen's box has disintegrated in the rain and she's battling a dozen pieces of coffee table, falling everywhere.

FRANK
Just tell him Fifty-fourth and Madison. *

PINCUS
I don't *want* to go to Fifty-fourth and Madison. *

CAB DRIVER
Okay, that narrows it down.

PINCUS
(to Frank)
What's at Fifty-fourth and Madison? *

CUT TO:

40 INT BAR DAY 40

Frank and Pincus are sitting in a nearly-deserted upscale bar. *

40 CONTINUED: 40

PINCUS
(to Frank)
I don't *want* a Sapphire martini up with olives.

The BARTENDER looks at him.

BARTENDER
Okay, that narrows it down.

FRANK
You're making a fool of yourself. You can't talk to me when somebody's *standing* there.

PINCUS
(to the Bartender)
I'll have a Campari and soda. No! A Pimm's Cup.

BARTENDER
Pimm's Cup.

FRANK
Oh, Pimm's Cup?, *smashing* good choice! Order a real drink, for God's sake.

PINCUS
Okay, *fine.*
(to the Bartender)
Make the drink, the thing, the first what I said.

BARTENDER
Sapphire martini up with olives.

He turns to make the drink. Pincus slumps. Frank looks at him.

FRANK
You're adjusting, right? I gotta let you adjust, is that it? No problem.

He pulls his Blackberry out of his jacket pocket and starts scrolling through it.

FRANK (cont'd)
I haven't done jack the last fourteen months, I can wait another ten minutes.

PINCUS
(as if realizing it for the first time)
(MORE)

40 CONTINUED: 40

PINCUS (cont'd)
I died today. This is the day of my death.

FRANK
Beg your pardon?

PINCUS
I was dead. For seven minutes. And then I came back. And now I can... I can...

FRANK
Look, here's the deal -- New York is *lousy* with ghosts. They're everywhere, and they're a noisy, pushy, demanding bunch, just like when they were alive. Frustrated, too, we died with unfinished business, which is why we're still here, right? But there's nothing we can do about it, we can't even talk to the living, but then you come along, and, well, imagine the excitement.

Pincus notices Frank's tuxedo.

PINCUS
Were you a maitre d'?

FRANK
I'm gonna ignore that. You wear what you died in. At least I look nice.

The Bartender comes over and sets the best looking martini you ever saw in front of Pincus.

FRANK (cont'd)
Ah! Drink your drink. You're gonna be all right.

Pincus rotates it on its cocktail napkin, looking it over.

PINCUS
It is pleasing aesthetically.

FRANK
Point is, everybody needs something done, and at the moment you're the only one in the tri-state area who can hear or see us.

PINCUS
(takes a sip of the drink)
It tastes of solvent.

40 CONTINUED: 40

He takes another sip, then finishes it all.

FRANK
Don't get out much, huh?

PINCUS
Am I still dead? Is this heaven? Maybe I'm still lying on the operating table, imagining all this.

FRANK
Don't overthink it. You were dead, now you're back, so enjoy your drink. Have another. God knows I would if I could.

He goes back to his Blackberry. Pincus notices.

PINCUS
You can take your Blackberry with you?

Frank's distracted, jamming on the buttons now.

FRANK
I guess. *

PINCUS
Do you -- actually get a signal?

FRANK
You never know. Maybe I just need to find the right spot. Thank Christ I downloaded Tetris before I went.
(the game goes badly)
Shit.

He puts it back in his pocket.

FRANK (cont'd)
How'd *you* die?

PINCUS
Something went wrong with the anesthetic when I went in for a colonoscopy.

FRANK
Yeah? I never had one of those.

PINCUS
I don't think you need to worry about it now.

40 CONTINUED: 40

FRANK
What kind of anesthetic do they use?

PINCUS
They didn't want to use any.

FRANK
What?! What about your ass-feelings?

PINCUS
I'm not comfortable discussing this with you.

FRANK
Well, if we're gonna be hanging out...

PINCUS
We're not gonna be hanging out.

An OLDER WOMAN leans in from the other side of Pincus.

OLDER WOMAN
May I ask you a question, young man?

PINCUS
What?

OLDER WOMAN
It's about my daughter, my youngest, she lives in Far Rockaway. She won't speak to her sister, and it's all because she never got my letter, you see, so she thinks-

Frank leans in abruptly.

FRANK
Marjorie, I swear to God -- back off, he's mine.
(to Pincus)
Don't *talk* to them, for God's sake.

Pincus drops his head on the bar while Frank and MRS. MARJORIE PICKTHALL, seventyish, bicker.

MRS. PICKTHALL
I certainly see no harm in making a simple request of the young man.

FRANK
Yeah, except I found him first.

Frank turns back, but Pincus's chair is empty.

40 CONTINUED: 40

FRANK (cont'd)
Now look what you did, you upset him.

CUT TO:

41 EXT FIFTH AVENUE DUSK 41

Evening. Pincus is walking briskly up Fifth Avenue, hands shoved in his pockets, eyes glued to the sidewalk so as not to make eye contact with a single soul.

FRANK (O.S.)
You had a rough day.

PINCUS
GAAH!

Frank is suddenly walking alongside him.

FRANK
You're tense, you're keyed up. Do you do yoga? My girlfriend owns a studio, I'll show you where it is. She's really hot.

PINCUS
Girlfriend? I thought you were married.

FRANK
Did I *say* I was a perfect person? C'mon, hail a cab.

PINCUS
You don't exist. You're the bizarre after-effects of poorly administered anesthetic. I'm going home to bed, and when I wake up in the morning, with any luck at all, you'll be gone.

FRANK
Well, that would be rotten luck for my wife, who is really and truly in need of help, if only you would-

PINCUS
I'm not listening to you anymore.

FRANK
Look, I don't want to play hardball here, but I will if I have to. It's Pincus, right? Pincus, this is a matter of life and death.
(MORE)

41 CONTINUED: 41

FRANK (cont'd)
It's my widow. She lives right here in your building. She's getting married in a couple months, to a real scumbag lawyer. Somebody's gotta stop it.

PINCUS
What do you care? You were having an affair. *

FRANK
You've never been married, have you? *
(starts to walk away) *
You need some time. I can take a hint. *

PINCUS
It isn't a hint!

Pincus approaches the entrance to his apartment building --

DAY DOORMAN
Good evening, Dr. Pincus.

PINCUS
Go to hell. *

-- and alienates the NIGHT DOORMAN this time. *

Frank turns, truly shocked at Pincus's curse. *

FRANK *
That's a terrible thing to say to a * dead person.

CUT TO:

42 INT PINCUS'S BEDROOM NIGHT 42

Pincus is fast asleep in bed in the middle of the night. His bedroom door is open. After a long moment, a face peers around the corner.

It's the face of a man in his 30s, nothing unusual about him, but we've never seen him before. He looks around, sees Pincus snug in bed, and tiptoes into the room.

One other thing about the guy -- he's BUCK NAKED.

Naked Guy walks over to Pincus's bedside, a lamp tastefully intervening between parts of him and us.

42 CONTINUED: 42

Another face appears in the doorway -- Mrs. Pickthall, the woman Pincus met at Frank's bar. She turns and gestures behind her, waving to someone else.

Cardigan Guy, whose name is CHARLIE SPENCER, tiptoes into the room. He too gestures for others to follow.

Spirits steam through the open door and into Pincus's bedroom -- the Cop, the Lovely Old Couple, the Nurse, the Jogger, the Harley Guy, the Three Construction Workers, and at least thirty others we've never seen before.

Fifty people are now jammed into Pincus's bedroom, trying to be quiet, but *somebody's* gonna have to wake him.

Mrs. Pickthall clears her throat.

Nothing. Naked Guy clears his throat.

Pincus stirs.

Half a dozen spirits clear their throats, then everybody starts clearing their throat.

Pincus opens his eyes. The first thing he sees is Naked Guy, his hands cupped demurely down south. Seeing Pincus awake, Naked Guy is overcome with enthusiasm and raises his hands to his mouth to cup a whisper.

NAKED GUY
Is this a bad time?

Pincus sits bolt upright in bed, eyes wide, scared silent. The spirits whisper their cases urgently.

MRS. PICKTHALL
You see, the letter went under the carpet in the entryway. *

CHARLIE SPENCER
He lost something important, and I know where it is.

HARLEY GUY
She won't wear a helmet 'cause of me, but that's nuts!

Now everybody presses forward toward the bed, all whispering their needs to Pincus, who can only stare in horror.

CUT TO:

43 INT APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY NIGHT 43

SLAM! Pincus, who has hastily dressed and packed a suitcase, bursts out the door of his apartment, a wild look in his eyes.

Frank is waiting outside. Pincus stalks toward the elevator.

FRANK
Gee, I'm sorry, did I accidentally give everybody your home address?

Pincus cuts around him and runs to the elevator.

FRANK (cont'd)
Let me tell you, nobody was more excited than Naked Guy.

Pincus jams the down button and the elevator doors open, revealing THIRTY GHOSTS jammed inside.

GHOST 1
My sister!

GHOST 2
My brother!

GHOST 3
My cousin!

GHOST 4
My mother!

Pincus backs off in horror and races toward the stairs. (The ghosts are NOT reflected in a mirror in the hallway.)

44 INT BUILDING LOBBY NIGHT 44

Pincus bursts out the stairwell door and into the lobby, which is, of course, crowded with DEMANDING GHOSTS. Frank is waiting at the base of the stairs.

FRANK
C'mon. Where are you gonna go?

PINCUS
LEAVE ME ALONE!

The Night Doorman looks up from across the lobby. *

DOORMAN
Everything all right, Doctor?

44 CONTINUED: 44

PINCUS
(to the Doorman)
BACK OFF! Sorry! Fine. Fine. *

The lobby is intensely crowded and there's only one way to the street, so Pincus plows ahead, marching right through the ghosts. Every time he passes through one, he SNEEZES.

DOORMAN
Bless you!

PINCUS
Thank you.

DOORMAN
Bless you!

PINCUS
Thank you.

DOORMAN
Bless you!

PINCUS
Stop it.

He lunges out the door and onto the sidewalk.

45 EXT PINCUS'S BUILDING NIGHT 45

Pincus hurries out of his building. FIFTY GHOSTS follow him, clamoring for attention. Pincus marches ahead of them, but Frank is right in stride with him. *

FRANK *
Don't you see? There's a *reason* why *
I'm here, and this is it. This *
slimeball Gwen's with, he's using her, *
catching her on the rebound and trying *
to get his hands on her money. I left *
her a nice chunk of change, you know. *

PINCUS *
My head. *

FRANK *
I'm like her guardian angel. *

PINCUS *
It's throbbing. *

He marches around the corner -- *

45A EXT STREET NIGHT 45A *

-- where Frank's waiting for him, right in stride. The ghosts are still pursuing, maybe ten feet back. *

FRANK *
And you're the guardian angel's assistant. *

PINCUS *
Pass. *

FRANK *
You don't want me to earn my wings? *

PINCUS *
Don't care. *

FRANK *
Don't you at least want to help Gwen? *

PINCUS *
She's beyond help. She picked you, now she picked this "slimeball," if she doesn't marry him I'm sure another Mr. Wrong will come along, it seems to be her thing. Now leave me alone, I have a crown at eight a.m. *

He crosses the street. Frank follows. So do the ghosts. *

FRANK *
Ohhhhhh, I see. I get it. *

PINCUS *
What? What do you "get?" *

FRANK *
You. The whole self-loathing gig. *

PINCUS *
It's you I loathe. *

FRANK *
Please, Frankie's spent some time on the couch. It all makes sense. Dentists have the highest suicide rate of any profession. But don't you see, this is a chance for you to actually connect with another- *

Pincus finally snaps. *

45A CONTINUED: 45A

PINCUS *
Shut up! SHUT UP! *SHUT! UP!* Don't * you understand?, *I don't give a shit!* * I *like* my job, it suits me, you know * why? Because ninety percent of the * people I work with have cotton shoved * in their mouths! I'm not interested in * their political opinions! I don't want * to hear what they thought of Spamalot! * I don't *care* about their lives! I JUST LIKE THE QUIET!

FRANK *
You are a sad little man.

PINCUS
And you're a lying, bigamous corpse.

FRANK
I'm not a bigamist, I'm an *adulterer*. Whole different thing.

PINCUS
I apologize. You were a real catch.

FRANK
Hey, I took *care* of her. From the moment we got together I never denied my wife a thing.

PINCUS
Except the truth.

FRANK
So sue me in the World Court. I didn't hurt anybody. She never knew.

PINCUS
A man has needs! She didn't understand you! She brought it on herself!

FRANK
You're a real dickwad, you know that? I tell you this as a friend.

PINCUS
Go rot.

He walks away. This time, Frank doesn't follow. *

FRANK *
You think we can't find you in a hotel? *

45A CONTINUED: 45A

P.O.V. across street, all the ghosts following.

Pincus looks back over his shoulder, at the crowd of ghosts behind Frank. He is a man trapped.

FRANK (cont'd)
You want your quiet life back? I'll make you a deal. I'll talk to them, get them to leave you alone. I'm good at talking people into things, it's what I do. Then you do this one tiny thing for me, and you'll never see me again. Problem solved.

Pincus, desperate and exhausted, nods, okay, fine. Frank walks back to the crowd of ghosts, confers urgently for a moment, then heads back to Pincus.

This time, the ghosts don't follow. In fact, they start to disperse.

PINCUS
What did you tell them?

FRANK
I took care of it. Don't worry about it.

PINCUS
So they won't bother me again?

FRANK
Not as long as you help me get rid of this lowlife predator.

PINCUS
How do we do that?

FRANK
Well, that's the fun part.

CUT TO:

46 OMITTED 46

47 INT METROPOLITAN MUSEUM - LECTURE HALL DAY 47

A couple dozen EGYPTOLOGY BUFFS are scattered throughout the museum's Great Hall, attending a lecture.

Gwen is at a podium in front of a big screen on which appropriate photographs and sketches are projected.

47 CONTINUED: 47

GWEN
-- and the grand manner in which mummy 1999.1.4 was preserved also suggests that he was embalmed by royal mummifiers, as opposed to curb side marketplace preservists.

From the back, we hear sharp, bickering WHISPERS.

Gwen glances up, but there's a spotlight on her and she can't see into the audience. She goes back to her lecture.

47 CONTINUED: 47

GWEN (cont'd)
But because the remains were found at a considerable remove from the presumed burial site, biographical details, normally available through hieroglyphics, weren't available, so Pepi III's cause of death at the relatively young age of 23 remains a mystery. *

The WHISPERS pipe up again.

VOICE (O.S.)
Shut up! SHUT IT!

Gwen glances up. She peers out into the lights.

IN THE AUDIENCE,

it's Pincus, sitting near the back. He's wearing his white dentist's lab coat. Two dozen heads are turned toward him, glaring.

PINCUS
Sorry.

They turn back around. Pincus turns to the chair next to him, where Frank is seated.

PINCUS (cont'd)
(mutters)
You see what you did?

FRANK
Hey, they can't hear *me*.

Pincus leans forward, trying to listen to the lecture.

FRANK (cont'd)
It can't be that hard to break up a relationship, I used to screw 'em up all the time. Why not hire a broad to seduce the guy and videotape it?

Pincus ignores him.

FRANK (cont'd)
Or send her an anonymous letter from his "other" family?

47 CONTINUED: 47

PINCUS
(watching Gwen)
That woman lives in my building? I've never seen her before.

FRANK
You stole her cab, remember?

PINCUS
I just never -- noticed.

FRANK
You never noticed *her?* Open your eyes, man, what are you, a brain in a jar?

PINCUS
Will you please be quiet? I want to hear what she has to say.

FRANK
You do? See, I never followed all that- *

AT THE FRONT,

Gwen clicks to another slide.

GWEN
The mummy's been examined by virologists, oncologists, forensic pathologists searching for signs of foul play --

IN THE AUDIENCE,

Pincus speaks softly to Frank, never taking his eyes off Gwen.

PINCUS
I suppose the simplest way to break it up would be to plant a seed of doubt in her mind. To let her see -- another option.

FRANK
I don't get it.

PINCUS
You know. An alternative.

FRANK
Oh, you mean hire a real good-looking guy, like a fireman or a male model or something?

47 CONTINUED: 47

PINCUS
(offended)
No I don't mean hire a fireman or a male model or something.

FRANK
Okay, but handsome, right?

PINCUS
Doesn't have to be *so* handsome...

FRANK
Rugged, though. Tough.

PINCUS
Or not so tough...

FRANK
He should have a lot of cash, this guy.

PINCUS
Oh, I don't know, sensible with money is the important thing.

FRANK
Tall. Tall is important.

PINCUS
Average would be fine, almost bordering on the short.

FRANK
Really?
(it dawns on him)
Oh my God, you mean *you.*

He bursts into laughter, then stops himself.

FRANK (cont'd)
I'm sorry.

Pincus, offended, gets up and walks out of the aisle.

FRANK (cont'd)
Aw, don't walk away mad!

ELSEWHERE IN THE AUDITORIUM,

Pincus finds a seat in the middle of another row and goes back to listening. But Frank, who is suddenly sitting behind him, leans forward.

47 CONTINUED: 47

FRANK (cont'd)
I'm sorry.

PINCUS
Don't worry about it.

FRANK
You know, a lot of great ideas sound completely ridiculous at first.

PINCUS
Never mind, I'm sorry I brought it up.

FRANK
Hold on, let me think, it could work. All you'd have to do is be charming enough to give her a few second thoughts.
(thinking, sizing up Pincus)
It's a challenge. Almost impossible, really, but I'd be there, pulling the strings, the guy in the bushes, calling the plays. Yeah, yeah, I can do this. I can do it!

PINCUS
Forget it.

FRANK
Why? You're not married, are you?

PINCUS
Good Lord, no.

FRANK
You got a girlfriend?

PINCUS
No.

FRANK
So... you use hookers?

PINCUS
Stop talking.

FRANK
Oh! Never mind. Duh. I'm sorry. It's cool.

PINCUS
What?

47 CONTINUED: 47

FRANK *
Nothing! I'm fine with it. I think it's great they let you be a dentist.

Pincus rolls his eyes.

PINCUS
What did you, die in the 1950s?

AT THE FRONT,

Gwen continues.

GWEN
We've also conducted extensive CT scans to search for orthopedic trauma which may have led to infection, as was the case with Tutankhamun, shown here on slide forty-three --

IN THE AUDIENCE,

Pincus is listening to Gwen, enraptured. Frank is trying to encourage him. *

FRANK *
No, you know what? It's possible she could go for you. She likes -- athletic guys. You work out, right?

PINCUS *
(no) *
Weights. Couple times a week.

FRANK *
You got a nice full head of hair.

PINCUS *
Protein shampoo.

FRANK *
She'll like that. We just need to come up with a way for you two to meet. You could show up at her apartment and say you're the cable guy. Or the innocent Pizza Boy!

PINCUS
You watch a lot of porn, don't you?

47 CONTINUED: 47

FRANK
(yes)
No.

PINCUS
I'll just walk down there when she's finished and talk to her.

FRANK
Yeah, sure, okay, it's just, um, well --

PINCUS
What?

FRANK
In the smock?

PINCUS
I came from work, what am I supposed to wear?

FRANK
(trying to stay optimistic) *
Great! *

AT THE FRONT,

Gwen changes the slide to a close-up shot of the mummy's head.

GWEN
We also looked carefully at the issue of cranial swelling, which would have produced stress lines in the plates of the skull, indicative of meningitis or bacterial inflammation, common along the Nile delta at that time...

IN THE AUDIENCE,

Pincus sees something in the slide that's interesting to him, he peers closer, muttering to himself.

47 CONTINUED: 47

PINCUS
She should consider a dental exam.

FRANK
Yeah, that's a good opener, very flattering. Why not tell her she needs a nose job while you're at it?

PINCUS
Will you please leave?

FRANK
Just don't be all creepy, okay? Ask her about her dog, you know, "I'm a dog person too!"

PINCUS
I mean it, I will get up and walk out if you don't.

FRANK
Or the shoes thing, "I love your shoes." It's crazy but it works, these things are cliches for a reason.

PINCUS
Good bye.

FRANK
Fine! Do it yourself!

Frank makes a big show of getting up as noisily as possible and making his way out the row of seats. *

FRANK (cont'd) *
Who am I to give advice?! What do I know about her?! *

THREE PEOPLE in the row SNEEZE as he walks through them. *

FRANK (cont'd) *
(mumbling as he leaves) *
I was only her husband for seven years. *

CUT TO: *

INT LECTURE HALL DAY *

Later. As Gwen packs up her stuff near the front, the lecture-goers file out the rear doors. All except for Pincus, who makes his way nervously down the aisle to the front. *

48 CONTINUED: 48

Busy with her stuff, Gwen doesn't notice him. He opens his mouth to speak, then closes it. Clears his throat.

PINCUS
I believe I owe you an apology.

GWEN
You mean for stealing my cab? Or for not holding the elevator?

PINCUS
I'm... not sure I remember the second one, but-

GWEN
Or for the time you complained to the doorman that somebody down on nine was cooking "stenchy ethnic food that stings the eyes?"

PINCUS
That was you?

GWEN
It was *tacos.*

PINCUS
I was told by the co-op board that complaints would be kept anonymous.

GWEN
You could also mention the seven or eight times I said hello or good morning or whatever and you never even looked at me.

Wow, somebody's giving it back to Pincus, and it throws him.

PINCUS
I'm -- I'm a very private person.

GWEN
What you are is a bit of a jerk.

PINCUS
(offers his hand)
Bertram Pincus, D.D.S. *

GWEN
So I've read.

He's confused. She gestures to the embroidered name on the breast of his lab coat.

48 CONTINUED: 48

PINCUS
I enjoyed your lecture very much.

GWEN
Thanks.

PINCUS
You shouldn't take all the walk-outs personally.

GWEN
I hadn't noticed, but I appreciate the encouragement.

There's an awkward pause. She turns away, wanting to end this odd conversation. Pincus soldiers on.

PINCUS
His dental hygiene was atrocious.

GWEN
I'm sorry?

PINCUS
Your guy. Mummy 1999 point one point four. Certainly wasn't a flosser.

Gwen looks at him, puzzling over him, the way you might over a strange bug you find in your back yard.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Right. Well, I'm off.

But he just stands there. In fact, he's staring at her.

GWEN
Is there something else?

PINCUS
(desperate)
Your shoes look comfortable.

Gwen shovels her stuff in her bag and hurries away.

CUT TO:

49 EXT EAST 82ND STREET - NEAR THE MET DUSK 49

Dusk. Frank and Pincus are walking down 82nd Street, away from the Metropolitan Museum, which is visible in the background.

FRANK
I knew you were gonna come off scary.

49 CONTINUED: 49

PINCUS
I wasn't scary! I just caught her at a busy moment.

FRANK
And scared her.

PINCUS
I'M NOT SCARY!

A COUPLE coming towards them gets scared and crosses the street.

FRANK
What do you -- wait, let me preface this. What the hell is your problem?

PINCUS
I don't have a problem.

FRANK
You have a problem with women. No, I take it back -- you have a problem with people.

PINCUS
Yes! They suck.

FRANK
Aw, will you quit bangin' that drum? What's the drama, some big bad lady broke your heart? Forget it, it's in the past. *

PINCUS
You don't know anything about my past. *

FRANK
I know you should let it go, cause it ain't helping you out there.

PINCUS
I do just fine with women, thank you very much.

FRANK
To save time, I'm going to agree with that insane point and say yes, you do great with women. But you stink with *this* woman, so we've got a lot of work to do.

CUT TO:

50 INT PINCUS'S BEDROOM NIGHT 50

Pincus is in bed, setting his alarm. Frank's lying on the covers next to him.

FRANK
She likes a man who's a man. She likes you to order for her in a restaurant --

PINCUS
Are you sure about that?

FRANK
-- but don't get bossy. *Never* tell her to "take it easy," it makes her nuts.

PINCUS
Stupid thing to say to a woman, I'd never say it anyway. "Take it easy." *

51 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN DAY 51

The next morning. Pincus is finishing breakfast. Frank hovers.

FRANK
She doesn't like to dance. Don't ask her.

PINCUS
She's graceful, why wouldn't she like to dance?

FRANK
Never show weakness. That sensitive man thing is a turn off. You can wear underwear on your head but you still can't piss through your ears, you know what I mean?

PINCUS
Not a clue.

52 INT HALLWAY DAY 52

In the hallway now, Pincus rings for the elevator. Frank is standing beside him.

FRANK
Once you're with her, show that you care -- be jealous, be suspicious.

PINCUS
Why on earth would I do that?

52 CONTINUED: 52

FRANK *
It shows you're interested. *

PINCUS *
This is the worst advice I've ever *
heard in my life. *

The elevator doors open, Pincus gets on --

53 INT ELEVATOR DAY 53

-- and Frank is already waiting inside. *

FRANK *
But *she's* jealous too, and she's no *
dummy. *

The doors close and the elevator starts down. *

FRANK (cont'd) *
When she thinks you're lying, she'll *
kinda close one eye and turn her head
sideways, give you this face.

He makes a face. The elevator stops two floors down and the doors open, but nobody's there.

FRANK (cont'd)
I call it her Pirate Look. It rattles
the hell out of you.

Down the hall, Pincus sees Gwen come out of her apartment, just as the elevator doors start to close.

PINCUS
Hey!

He hits the "door open" button. Gwen, approaching, forces a tight smile. She doesn't want to ride with him.

GWEN
That's okay. I can get the next one.

PINCUS
Don't be silly!

FRANK
This is a bad idea.

The elevator doors SLAM into him, but he maintains a semi-grotesque smile, leaving Gwen no choice but to get on.

53 CONTINUED: 53

FRANK (cont'd)
Just don't say anything. Not a word.

The doors close. Pincus clears his throat, preparing to speak.

FRANK (cont'd)
No! You're not ready. Don't do it.

Pincus draws in his breath and turns to face Gwen.

FRANK (cont'd)
Don't do it! DON'T DO IT!

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
I've been thinking about your decayed jawbone.

She turns. She stares at him. Frank sighs.

FRANK
How do the ladies resist that rap of yours?

GWEN
(to Pincus)
Hwa?

PINCUS
Pitting. Is what I'm saying.

GWEN
What are you talking about?

PINCUS
Your mummy. In one of the slides I saw pitting, which would indicate bone loss along the upper left mandibular gum line, and as we all know that's an engraved invitation to a little vitis named Ginga.

He laughs heartily. She doesn't get it. He stops laughing.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Gingivitis. Dental. Condition.

FRANK
Yeah, we're gonna have to hire somebody.

GWEN
I see.

53 CONTINUED: 53

PINCUS
Yes. Well. Anyway, you should check out the mandibular bone loss.

GWEN
Wouldn't that be just ordinary wear and tear?

PINCUS
Not if it's only on one side.

GWEN
Huh.

53A INT PINCUS'S BUILDING - LOBBY DAY 53A *

The elevator doors open on the lobby. Gwen walks out. *

FRANK
(to Pincus)
Okay. Okay, it wasn't a complete disaster. But next time, will you please do me a favor and listen to good-

GWEN (O.S.)
Excuse me?

Pincus turns. Gwen has stopped and is walking back.

GWEN (cont'd)
You wouldn't happen to have some time later to come take a look, would you?

Frank is stunned.

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
Ooh. Not sure. Let's see.

He takes out his schedule book and starts flipping through the pages. He frowns. Shakes his head.

PINCUS (cont'd)
No. No. Hmm. Maybe if... no, that won't work...

Frank looks at him, incredulous. Pincus turns more pages.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Can't move that... uhhh... no... no...

FRANK
OH FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!

53 CONTINUED: 53

PINCUS
Thursday (quickly)
~~Today around~~ four o'clock?

GWEN
Great, thanks.

She turns and walks out. Frank and Pincus watch her go. Frank holds up one hand, for a high five.

Pincus just looks at it.

FRANK
Don't leave me hangin'.

Pincus leaves him hangin.

CUT TO:

54 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT DAY 54

Frank is sitting on the couch in Pincus's apartment. The New York *Times* is unfolded on the coffee table in front of him and he's staring at it.

Then up at the ceiling.

Then down at the paper.

Then up at the ceiling. Bored out of his mind. Makes a few idle swipes at his Blackberry.

Pincus comes in the front door, carrying a Brooks Brothers bag.

FRANK
Thank *God* you're back.
(pointing at the paper)
You left it on a *cell phone* ad, you sadist.

PINCUS
Sorry.

Pincus hurries over and turns the page of the newspaper.

FRANK
Forget it, I'm not in the mood anymore.

He goes back to futzing with his Blackberry.

PINCUS
For God's sake, that's pathetic, will you just get rid of that thing?

54 CONTINUED: 54

FRANK
Hey, great idea! How about I just set it down right here on the table?

He sets the Blackberry on the table, but by the time he straightens up, it's back in his hand.

FRANK (cont'd)
Whoops. Maybe the couch.

He tosses it on the couch, but the moment he turns back, it's in his hand again.

FRANK (cont'd)
I know, I'll throw it out the window as far as I possibly can, *that'll* work!

He turns and throws it out the open window as far as he possibly can. This time, it doesn't end up back in his hand --

FRANK (cont'd)
Oh wait, here it is.

-- it's in his jacket pocket.

FRANK (cont'd)
You think I never TRIED?!

PINCUS
I'm late.

He hurries into the bedroom. Frank follows.

55 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM DAY 55

Pincus is changing clothes quickly.

FRANK
Where have you been? I sit here all day, you're out God knows where, you meet interesting people, you have a career -- hey, is that a new shirt? It *is* a new shirt! And it's got sleeves!

There's a mirror on the dresser -- Frank is NOT reflected in it. *

FRANK (cont'd)
Well, well, Pinky went and got himself a new shirt for his big-

SLAM! Pincus has swung the door shut on Frank.

A FEW MINUTES LATER,

55 CONTINUED: 55

Pincus, alone, stands in front of the mirror, buttoning up his new shirt. He regards himself with a sort of could-be-worse expression on his face.

He smoothes his hair. Pulls out a blow-dryer to puff it up nice. It's kind of sweet. *

GWEN'S VOICE comes over the scene:

GWEN (O.S.)
Quite the little heartbreaker, huh?

CUT TO:

56 INT EGYPTIAN WING - WORK ROOM DAY 56

CLOSE ON a face that's been dead for 5000 years. Gwen and Pincus are standing over the mummy in the work room at the museum. A few VOLUNTEERS work in the background.

GWEN
You should have seen the state he was in when we found him. Blackened skin, protruded jaw, fully retreated lips -- five thousand years of acid reflux'll do that to you. But deep down the preservation was exquisite New Kingdom work, and it's what's underneath that counts.

As she talks, really entranced by this dead hunk of flesh, Pincus notices her, *really* notices her for the first time.

GWEN (cont'd)
After they suctioned his brain through his nose, they'd slit open the side of his abdomen and remove his stomach, liver, and intestines -- *

A word slips out of Pincus's mouth, almost involuntarily:

PINCUS
Beautiful.

GWEN
-- so they could be separately preserved in Canopic jars. But what's really exciting about Pepe is how they handled his ~~male~~ organ. * * *

PINCUS
His organ? * *

56 CONTINUED: 56

GWEN
Yeah, his dick, I got it right here, you wanna take a look?

A MOMENT LATER,

Gwen is delicately unscrewing the lid from a Canopic jar.

GWEN (cont'd)
There's nothing unusual about the phallus *itself*, it's the way it was stored. Normally, of course, the penis and the heart are kept together and mummified along with the body, but in Pepe's case, they removed it and preserved it in this separate, gold-encrusted jar.

She takes the lid off the jar and shows it to him.

PINCUS
I can see why he was king.
(OR)
He must have had *huge* hands.
(OR)
I bet he'd like to get his hands on *that* again.

BACK AT THE MUMMY,

they're bending over its head, and Gwen is pointing to his jawbone with a pencil. They're studying it through large, swinging magnifying glasses mounted on poles.

GWEN
Is this the pitting you were referring to?

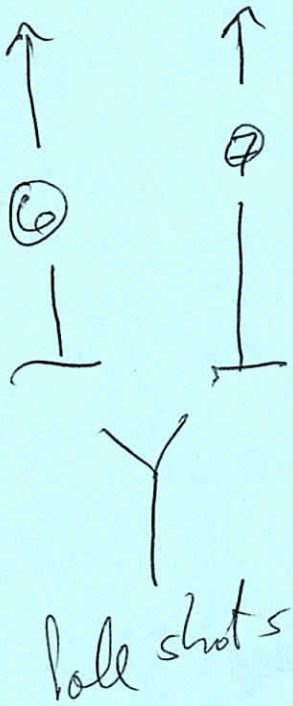
PINCUS
Yeah. Here, here -- and like crazy over here.

GWEN
We assumed that was post-mortal decay.

PINCUS
Don't be naive. That's an untreated abscess at work. It's a magic carpet for bacterial infection.

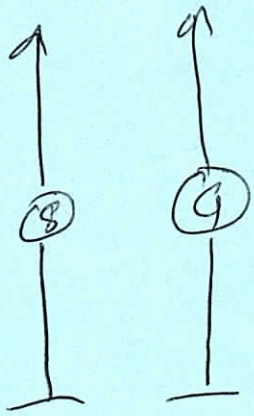
GWEN
And that could have killed him?

56 CONTINUED: 56



PINCUS
If it was severe, it would have led to something more systemic. Once the infection hit his spinal column he'd have pennies on his eyes in a couple days.

GWEN
The mouth. A coin in the mouth, it was a Greek tradition, to pay the boatman to ferry you across the river Styx.
(MORE)



56 CONTINUED: 56

GWEN (cont'd)
This is such a breakthrough, and just in time, our opening's next ~~Thursday~~ Wednesday. Will you come?

PINCUS
Big opening? Lots of people?

GWEN
Yeah!

PINCUS
No thanks.

GWEN
Oh. Okay. Well, if you change your mind...
(of Pepi)
It seems so obvious now. Why didn't I call a dentist sooner?

PINCUS
Everybody waits until it's too late.

GWEN
So you're a *funny* dentist.
(of the mummy)
You want to touch him?

PINCUS
Yes, I do.

He pokes the mummy with a finger.

GWEN
No, no. *Touch* him.

She runs her hands lightly over the mummy's skin. So does Pincus. While he's touching him, she leans down past Pincus and gives a good long sniff. He looks at her. She's odd.

GWEN (cont'd)
Don't you love the smell? It's not decay, it's the resin, they imported it from North Africa. But after a few hours, your brain thinks it's the smell of death and it triggers your vomit impulse.

PINCUS
Like McDonald's.

She laughs. He searches for something in the pocket of his lab coat.

56 CONTINUED: 56

(10)

PINCUS (cont'd)
Sugar-free treat?

She hesitates. He dangles it enticingly.

PINCUS (cont'd)
It's sweetened with Splenda.

Gwen notices something, in the back of his collar. It's the price tag from his new shirt. He forgot to remove it.

She smiles. It's endearing.

GWEN
Okay, thanks.

She takes the candy, unwraps it, and pops it in her mouth. He opens one for himself. For a moment, they just stand there, both sucking on their sugar-free treats. Finally:

GWEN (cont'd)
(pleasantly surprised)
Mmmm.

*

(12)

Super-wide

56 CONTINUED: 56

PINCUS
Yeah, right?

CUT TO:

57 EXT FIFTH AVENUE DAY 57

Gwen and Pincus walk up Fifth Avenue in the nineties, headed toward home. It's balmy for October, a perfect late afternoon.

GWEN
Have you lived in the building long?

PINCUS
Four or five years. I was born and raised in England.

GWEN
Why'd you move?

PINCUS
London's a bit crowded, isn't it? People on every corner, no privacy, that sort of annoyance.

GWEN
So you picked Manhattan?

PINCUS
The reasoning is rather convoluted and difficult to explain.

GWEN
What's her name? *

PINCUS
Sarah.

GWEN
Wife?

PINCUS
No.

GWEN
Girlfriend?

PINCUS
Yeah.

GWEN
Still together?

57 CONTINUED: 57

PINCUS
I think so. We haven't spoken for years.
(she laughs)
No, it's a sad story. She died of a very rare condition, auto-cannibalism. She actually *ate* herself.

Gwen has no idea what to say.

PINCUS (cont'd)
I'm kidding.

GWEN
(laughing)
But that's not funny.

PINCUS
Funnier than the truth.

GWEN
And the truth about Sarah is...?

PINCUS
Very boring and ordinary.

As they near their apartment building, she starts digging in her purse and pulling out keys, one at a time.

GWEN
Can you hold these? My keychain broke and I can never find my keys...

She gives him a handful of keys. While she continues to search:

GWEN (cont'd)
I moved back to the city about a year ago, just after my husband died.

PINCUS
You lost your husband? I'm sorry to hear that.

GWEN
Thanks. He --

She looks up suddenly, wincing.

57 CONTINUED: 57

GWEN (cont'd)
Hey, I want to ask you something. You tell me if it's inappropriate.

PINCUS
All right.

She stops under a streetlight and turns to him. She leans in close, close enough that he can feel the brush of her breath against his cheek. Her lips part.

She points to one of her back teeth.

GWEN
This tooth. It hurts when I drink anything cold. Should I make an appointment?

PINCUS
No, just warm the drinks up a little bit. *
(he's kidding) *
Let's have a look.

Pincus turns her head so the streetlight's shining in. He puts his hand in her hair, to hold the back of her head up.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Open.

She does and he studies her teeth. But his eyes wander off her mouth and up to *her* eyes, which are looking back at him. The moment lasts longer than it should, hey, is this gonna turn into a kiss?!, these two have some chemistry, and then --

VOICE (O.S.)
Hey, dentist.

IRISH EDDIE, a tattooed gangster, is standing between them.

IRISH EDDIE
I need you to clip a guy for me.

Pincus looks back and forth, realizes the situation -- he can see Irish Eddie but Gwen can't.

GWEN
Can you tell what it is?

IRISH EDDIE
You see, Dentist, in life I accepted payment for a job which I was never able to complete.

57 CONTINUED: 57

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
Bad molar contact.

IRISH EDDIE
Now I carry this burden with me, and it is a heavy burden, Dentist.

GWEN
Really? Is that serious?

PINCUS
I... I hope you'll come see me.

Truer words were never spoken.

GWEN
Maybe I will.

Pincus's face contorts in horror for a moment and Gwen looks at him quizzically.

Cutting back to Gwen, we see NAKED GUY is now standing beside her. She, of course, is unaware.

NAKED GUY
(to Pincus)
Is now a good time?

GWEN
(to Pincus)
Everything all right?

NAKED GUY
It's just, I saw you talking to Irish Eddie and I figured...

Now a THIRD GUY has appeared, a good-looking guy in a nice suit. *

GOOD-LOOKING GUY *
Hello there. *

Pincus just looks at him and HISSES. But Gwen reacts. *

GWEN
Oh, hi! I didn't see you!

Oops. He's alive. And she knows him. He leans in past Pincus and kisses Gwen. * *

PINCUS *
Alive. Right. *

57 CONTINUED:

GOOD-LOOKING GUY
So honey, why'd this guy have his hands in your mouth?

GWEN
Dr. Pincus, this is Richard, my fiancee.

PINCUS
Oh! I'm -- I -- I see. Sorry.

GWEN
Honey, Dr. Pincus is that dentist in the building I told you about -- he's got a terrific theory about what might have killed Pepi.

RICHARD
Really? Fantastic! You know, I've been needing to find a dentist myself. Why don't you join us for dinner at Gwen's, Doctor, ~~I've made enough curry for a dozen, it's sinful.~~ I'm making curry on Friday?

Pincus is distracted, looking at Naked Guy, who's staring openly at Gwen with great interest. Too much interest.

NAKED GUY
Wow. She's really cute.

He moves his hands to his hips. Pincus looks down, out of frame, then back up at Naked Guy, horrified and disgusted.

RICHARD
Doctor?

PINCUS
Huh? Love to.

RICHARD
Good! See you around eight.

He and Gwen turn to go. Gwen calls back, to Pincus.

GWEN
I'm in 9F, right below you.

Pincus stands there, flanked on one side by Naked Guy and Irish Eddie on the other. A moment passes, then:

57 CONTINUED: 57

IRISH EDDIE
Old Mikey's on his deathbed and he says to his friend, Paddy me boy, after I go, will you pour a bottle of fine Irish whiskey over me grave? Pat says Mikey I'd love to but is it all right if I run it through me body first?

Naked Guy thinks that's a good one. Pincus just stares at Irish Eddie.

IRISH EDDIE (cont'd)
What's the fekkin' problem, dentist, you don't like a joke?

CUT TO:

58 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT DUSK 58 *

Pincus has just arrived home to his apartment, and he's outraged, railing at Frank.

PINCUS
You're supposed to keep everybody away from me. I almost blew it out there. * What did you tell them? *

FRANK *
I told 'em you were going to help them * all one at a time, but you had to help * me first. *

PINCUS *
What?! Well, that's no deal at all, * that's not "problem solved," that's * just making everything worse! *

FRANK *
I bought some time. I'm tell 'em * something else later, I'm still working * on it. These things evolve. *

PINCUS *
You have no control over them, you have * no leverage! Why should I help you? * Why should I ever see Gwen again? * (pause) * I'm going to. I'm going to do this * thing, because when I agree to do * something, I see it through. I'm going * to sort this out, to show you what a * man of honor is. I *will* see Gwen * again, because I said I would. *

58 CONTINUED: 58

Frank is looking at him sideways, sensing something. *

FRANK *
Really. *

PINCUS *
But I warn you, if I see one more *
whinging zombie anywhere around me, *
I'll quit, understand? *

FRANK
We're not zombies. That's offensive,
zombies feed on human flesh. Get your
shit together. You're gonna have to be *
sharp with this Richard guy, he's *
vicious. Sneaky. *

58 CONTINUED: 58

PINCUS *
How could you ever have cheated on that woman?

FRANK
We lived in Westchester.

PINCUS
So?

FRANK
Sometimes I wanted to have sex in Manhattan. *

CUT TO:

59 INT GWEN'S APARTMENT NIGHT 59

Pincus is in Gwen's apartment, an eclectically furnished version of his own. He, Gwen, and Richard are seated around her coffee * table, as her dining room table is piled high with papers and * work stuff. Pincus looks uncomfortable, dressed a bit too * formally in a jacket and tie. He's clutching a glass of wine. *

RICHARD
I hope it's edible.

Pincus takes a forkful of lamb vindaloo and announces glumly:

PINCUS
It's the best Indian food I've ever tasted.

Frank is sitting on the table near Pincus, rolling his eyes. *

FRANK
What are you doing? * *

RICHARD
You're very kind.

A loud THUMP comes from the other room. Pincus looks up, but Gwen and Richard ignore it, still chewing.

PINCUS
Where did you learn to cook?

FRANK *
You're making him look good, you idiot! *

RICHARD
I had a friend who was generous with her time.

59 CONTINUED: 59

GWEN
Richard's too modest. He spent three years working with homeless prostitutes in Bengal.

PINCUS
My goodness. Are you still in the sex trade?

sits on arm of Richard

Frank bursts into laughter, likes that one. *

Gwen starts to laugh, but Richard's just glaring at Pincus, and is that a twitch in his jaw? Gwen stops laughing. *

RICHARD
I have to confess, Doctor, I had an ulterior motive in asking you here. You know, as a dentist, you could do a lot of good. The developing world is in desperate need of modern dental care. *

FRANK
Jesus, can you believe this guy?

Pincus tries to ignore him, but Frank is right in his ear.

RICHARD
The political will is there, the money is there --

FRANK
What an act. What a pompous ass.

P.O.V. of bathroom door, either clean or rack

That THUMP comes again, louder this time, it's something heavy smashing into the bedroom door. Pincus is getting rattled.

PINCUS
What the hell is that?

GWEN
My new puppy.

RICHARD
-- NGO's are being supported at record levels --

FRANK
Punch him!

RICHARD
But what we need are bodies --

59 CONTINUED: 59

FRANK
Kick his self-righteous teeth in!

RICHARD
-- volunteers --

PINCUS
(finally snaps at Frank)
How can *teeth* be self-righteous?!

He realizes he blurted that out and that Gwen and Richard are, understandably, staring at him. He covers.

PINCUS (cont'd)
I mean, think about it, it's absurd. Couldn't happen.
(to Richard)
You were saying?

RICHARD
We need people like you, Doctor, who can bring their expertise to bear in places like Peru, Cambodia, sub-Saharan Africa --

PINCUS
Hmm, all a bit sticky, aren't they? I don't function well in humidity. What about Palm Springs, how are the teeth out there?
(no reply)
St. Tropez?

Gwen laughs, but Richard just stares at him, wondering what planet he's from.

GWEN
He's joking, Sweetie.

RICHARD
Ah.

He forces a smile, but it comes out as a semi-polite grimace. Mercifully, Richard's cell phone rings.

RICHARD (cont'd)
Excuse me.

He stands and answers the phone, stepping into the kitchen. Frank watches him go.

FRANK
Well, he'd be handy on a camping trip --

59 CONTINUED: 59

GWEN
(to Pincus)
Would you like a bit more wine?

FRANK
-- with that tent pole up his ass.

Pincus swats at the air near Frank in irritation.

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
Love some.

Gwen gets up to get the bottle from the kitchen counter. Pincus turns and looks daggers at Frank.

FRANK
I'm throwing you off your game, is that it? Don't say anything, just cough if that's it.

PINCUS
<COUGH>

FRANK
I got it, I'm gone.

And when we return to the table with Gwen, Frank is indeed gone. Gwen refills their glasses.

GWEN
Richard's a human rights lawyer, he takes his work very seriously.

PINCUS
Well, I'm a big fan of human rights, obviously. I mean, we're all in this thing together, every single one of us. Except for those awful, awful Chinese. *

She laughs, finds him funny. Richard steams back into the room.

RICHARD
Ming Wa Men and Hu Park have been arrested in Shaolin.

Inadvertently, Pincus and Gwen burst into laughter. Richard can't believe it, but has no time to hand out reprimands.

59 CONTINUED: 59

RICHARD (cont'd)
They're being arraigned in thirty minutes and the government will only allow their attorneys to appear by closed circuit television. I'm afraid I have to get down to the office right away. Doctor, it's been a pleasure.

He gives Gwen a quick kiss.

RICHARD (cont'd)
Goodbye, darling. Don't wait up. You two stay and finish, please.

He leans down and whispers something in Gwen's ear, gives her another kiss, and he's gone.

SLAM! The puppy hits the door again.

GWEN
Poor Leonard. Do you mind if I let him out?

PINCUS
Not at all.

60 A MINUTE LATER, 60

Pincus is sitting at the table, unmoving. He seems nervous.

PINCUS
When did you get your horse?

Cutting wide, we see LEONARD, a giant dog, sitting on his haunches beside Pincus, watching him intently. Leonard is so large they are basically eye to eye.

GWEN
A couple months ago. I found him at a shelter on Long Island. They were about to put him down.

PINCUS
And then they lost their nerve?

Gwen laughs. Pincus starts to raise his fork, to take a bit of dinner, then stops and sniffs the air suspiciously.

GWEN
Yeah, I know. His mood levellers give him an ulcerating skin rash.

60 CONTINUED: 60

She picks up a can of air freshener and sprays the room from her chair. Pincus, about to take a bite of food, almost throws up in his mouth.

PINCUS
Sorry. Gag reflex.

WOOF!

It's just one bark, but it's like a gunshot and it's right in Pincus's ear. He drops his fork and jumps a foot.

GWEN
I think he has to go out. Do you want to finish first, or --

PINCUS
Now's good.

He bolts away from the table.

CUT TO:

61 EXT STREET NIGHT 61

Leonard is squatting on the corner of Fifth Avenue across from the building, looking a lot like an offensive lineman.

Gwen stands nearby, holding a shopping bag.

Pincus is a few feet away, horrified. We hold on his face and hear the sound of cellophane, a few "Good dog!" exclamations, and a very loud THUD as something lands in a trash can.

Gwen returns, smiling, holding the relieved Leonard's leash.

GWEN
Would you like to finish dinner?

PINCUS
I'm not ready for solid food. Maybe a drink?

GWEN
Sure. We could go to Bemelman's, that's only a couple blocks --

Beside her, Leonard hears something and takes off out of frame. She's thinking, doesn't notice that the 50 foot leash in her hand is WHIRRING out of the handle.

61 CONTINUED: 61

GWEN (cont'd)
-- but it's such a beautiful night, it might be fun to be somewhere outside.

WHIRR! Pincus tries to interrupt, pointing to the leash.

GWEN (cont'd)
We're probably too late for the roof of the museum, hey, I know, have you ever been to-

POW! She's gone, yanked out of frame, as if at the end of a high-tension stunt cable.

CUT TO:

62 EXT CAFE NIGHT 62

Leonard has gone and gotten his ass tied up to a parking meter outside a nearby bistro. The mere sight of him causes PEDESTRIANS to take the other side of the street.

63 INT CAFE NIGHT 63

Pincus and Gwen have found a table in the open French doors of the bistro. A WAITER stands over them with a tray with two drinks on it. *

WAITER
Pimm's Cup for the lady and a Sapphire martini up with olives. *

GWEN
You know, that was Frank's drink.

PINCUS
Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot, I didn't mean to-

GWEN
You forgot?

PINCUS
(panicking)
Huh?

GWEN
You forgot what?

63 CONTINUED: 63

PINCUS
That you lost your husband recently, and, and, the polite thing to do in these situations is to ask, uh, a person, what the, uh, decedent's drink or uh, drinks, may have been --

Gwen finds this odd. She turns her head sideways and studies him, narrowing one eye. It's the look Frank imitated earlier. It does indeed rattle Pincus.

PINCUS (cont'd)
-- to avoid an unpleasant coincidence that evokes horrible memories.

He takes a long belt from the martini glass.

GWEN
Why would you assume they're horrible?

PINCUS
I meant painful.

GWEN
Hmm.
(changes the subject)
Richard's a human rights lawyer, did I tell you that? *

She knocks back most of her drink.

GWEN (cont'd)
Hey, I like Pimm's Cup. It's the kind of girlie drink Frank would have teased me about. One time, in Anguilla, I ordered a Screaming Orgasm and Frank told the waiter --

PINCUS
Oh, for God's sake...

GWEN
I'm sorry, I'm running on about my dead husband.

PINCUS
No, it's not you, it's -- I just saw someone I hate.

Sitting at a table across from them, in the empty chair between a HANDSOME YOUNG COUPLE, is Frank. His eyes are welling up with tears.

63 CONTINUED: 63

FRANK
They never get over Frankie.

PINCUS
Someone I *really* hate. *

GWEN
(to Pincus)
Do you want to leave?

PINCUS
No! *He* should leave.

This gives Pincus an idea. He speaks up, loud enough for Frank to hear.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Let's try something. You were saying Frank had some flaws...

GWEN
Was I?

PINCUS
Yeah. That's good, it's healthy. You shouldn't romanticize the dead. You've got to remember his faults, too.

GWEN
Oh, I remember them.

PINCUS
Good!
(takes out a pen)
Let's make a list.

He flips over a cocktail napkin, to write on it.

FRANK
What the hell do you think you're doing?

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
C'mon, it'll be therapeutic.

Gwen thinks. She's game to give it a try.

63 CONTINUED: 63

GWEN
Okay. Well, he could be a little controlling.

FRANK
So? That's what made me successful.

GWEN
But that's probably why he was so good at his job.

FRANK
Hah!

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
Don't apologize for him, if he was obnoxious, just say so.

GWEN
Okay. He was occasionally obnoxious.

PINCUS
Good! Good!

He writes it down.

FRANK
That doesn't count. You led her into it.

He notices Mrs. Pickthall, the elderly lady they saw in the bar earlier, is suddenly sitting next to him.

FRANK (cont'd)
What are you doing, Marjorie, rubbernecking?

Mrs. Pickthall SHUSHES him, engrossed in the conversation.

GWEN
Oh, I got one! He had kind of a shoe fetish.

PINCUS
(writing)
"Pervert."

GWEN
And he could be very impatient with waiters.

63 CONTINUED: 63

PINCUS
(writing it down)
This is great, I feel like I already know him. Let's move on to physical characteristics. Was he one of those fitness fanatics?

GWEN
Well, he was really starting to get into yoga.

PINCUS
(remembering Frank's mistress)
I bet he was.

GWEN
And he went to the gym a lot...

PINCUS
(writing)
"Egomaniac."

GWEN
So you're a *naughty* dentist.

PINCUS
Okay, so far we have an obnoxious narcissistic pervert who's rude to waiters.

Mrs. Pickthall can't help it, she finds that very funny.

FRANK
I don't have to listen to this shit.

GWEN
(softly)
Disloyal.

Frank turns to her. Pincus looks up.

PINCUS
What?

She looks down. This is a very deep wound.

GWEN
What's in this stuff, anyway? *

Frank looks stricken. He looks at Mrs. Pickthall, who won't meet his eye, just silently stands up and walks away.

63 CONTINUED: 63

He turns back, and for the first time, he addresses Gwen.

FRANK
I didn't know you knew.

He looks at Pincus, he looks at her --

-- then gets up and walks out. Gwen and Pincus are left alone.

GWEN
I didn't find out until the day he died.

She looks up at him. There are tears in her eyes.

GWEN (cont'd)
Can you imagine? I didn't even get a chance to say go-to-hell-I-want-a-divorce like a normal person.

PINCUS
That must feel...

GWEN
Unfinished.

CUT TO:

64 INT ELEVATOR NIGHT 64

Gwen, Pincus, and Leonard ride up in the elevator in their apartment building. They're quiet. Pincus steals a look at Gwen. She's staring straight ahead, but feels his eyes.

Pincus knows he should look away, but it's hard to take his eyes off her. She's so beautiful. He takes a breath:

PINCUS
She used to travel a lot for work.

Gwen looks at him.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Sarah. The trips kept getting longer and longer, and then one trip -- she didn't come back at all. Married a guy in Portland.

GWEN
Yeah. Travel can do that to a relationship. *
(MORE) *

64 CONTINUED: 64

GWEN (cont'd)
I just got this amazing offer to go map tombs in the Valley of the Kings for six months, but I think I'm gonna say no this time.

PINCUS
Because of Richard?

GWEN
(pause)
Yeah.

The elevator stops and the doors open, but she has another thought first.

GWEN (cont'd)
Your story's not boring and ordinary, by the way.

Pincus shrugs. She holds the door.

GWEN (cont'd)
We get the one life, you know. Just one. You can't live somebody else's, or think it's more important just because it's more dramatic. What happens matters. Maybe only to you, but it matters.

Pincus just looks at her. That is the single kindest thing anyone has ever said to him.

GWEN (cont'd)
Good night.

PINCUS
Good night.

She steps off, and Pincus leans, to get every last glimpse of her. The doors come together and she doesn't look back.

FRANK (O.S.)
You surprised me out there tonight, Chief.

Frank is suddenly standing next to him.

FRANK (cont'd)
Little wit, little charm. Went a little heavy on old Frank, but if you've gotta tear a man down to build yourself up, I guess that's your bag.

The doors open on Pincus's floor and he walks off.

kitchen, cocoa preparation

65 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT NIGHT 65

Pincus comes into his apartment and drops into a chair, not even bothering to turn the lights on. Frank follows.

jacket off, over chair, tie loosened?

FRANK
What's with the gloom and doom? It's going good, you're weaseling your way right in there. This is gonna work. *

PINCUS
This Richard. It seems like she really loves him. Did you know he's a human rights lawyer?

FRANK
When the devil shows up, you think he's gonna have little red horns and carry a pitchfork? No. He's gonna work for Amnesty International and give all his money to the homeless.

PINCUS
Wouldn't that cancel out the whole devil thing?

FRANK
You know what I mean. Trust me, I wouldn't just be hanging around, I have better things to do with my time.

Pincus just looks at him.

FRANK (cont'd)
That's a cheap shot.

PINCUS
I want you to tell me what, *exactly,* is the problem with Richard.

FRANK
I told you, he's setting her up to rob her blind.

PINCUS
What proof do you have?

FRANK
I saw it with my own eyes.

PINCUS
Saw what?

65 CONTINUED: 65

FRANK
Enough to know.

PINCUS
What did he do?

FRANK
Well, they were, they were eating, right? And the check came.

PINCUS
Yeah?

FRANK
And this clown says his wallet is in his coat, you know, at the coat check. How convenient. And he gets up to "go get it," you know, big show about it --

PINCUS
Uh huh.

FRANK
And she says "No no, let me get this."

PINCUS
Right?

FRANK
And he *accepted!*

PINCUS
There's nothing wrong with this guy, is there?

FRANK
Don't you see, he tipped his hand! Showed his true colors!

PINCUS
Perfectly lovely human being.

FRANK
That's not the only thing! He took five grand from her too.

PINCUS
What?

FRANK
Five thousand dollars. I saw her write the check with my own two eyes; put it right in his sweaty little fist.

65 CONTINUED: 65

Pincus looks at him, thinking.

PINCUS
For charity. He was fundraising, wasn't he?

FRANK
Or testing the waters! Shaking the money tree to see what drops!

PINCUS
What was it? Refugees? Orphans?

FRANK
You're missing the point.

Pincus just stares at him. Frank's getting desperate.

FRANK (cont'd)
Well, he's... he's a lawyer.

PINCUS
Yes. A lawyer who works to protect the rights of the underprivileged.

FRANK
There must be *something* wrong with him. I mean, I'm still around, aren't I? I have to have a purpose, right? There must be some reason this is happening.
(getting emotional)
Otherwise... what am I doing here?

push in

Pincus looks at him, thinking about that.

PINCUS → takes cup + goes
I quit.

FRANK
What?

PINCUS
I refuse to interfere in Gwen's life. And I can't lie to her. You're right about that Pirate Look, she threw it at me and I almost confessed everything right then and there.

FRANK
You can't abandon her to this creep!

65 CONTINUED: 65

PINCUS
She *loves* Richard, don't you get it?

FRANK
She doesn't love him. I haven't seen her laugh once with that guy.

PINCUS
What do you mean she hasn't laughed? He's a good man.

FRANK
You actually *like* him? With his Mother Teresa schtick?

PINCUS
I hate him. I want to run him over with his own electric car. But he's what Gwen wants. After what she put up with from you, she's entitled to happiness.

Pincus seems to be getting emotional himself.

FRANK
I knew it.

PINCUS
Just leave her alone.

FRANK
I *knew* it! You're in love with her.

PINCUS
I want my life back.

FRANK
You are, you fell for her. That little Grinch heart of yours actually started beating and you want to take it back to your cave and crush it with a rock, that's what you want to do.

PINCUS
I quit.

FRANK
You can't quit! I will make your life a living hell.

PINCUS
It already is.

in hallway

into BR?

in BR + door closed

Wide from end of bed.

65 CONTINUED: 65

He goes into the bedroom and SLAMS the door behind him.

Frank sits. Stares. Lost.

65A INT PINCUS'S BEDROOM NIGHT 65A

Pincus sits on the bed and stares. Lost.

66 OMITTED 66

67 INT GWEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM NIGHT 67

In the bathroom of Gwen's apartment, she wrestles with Leonard, who's covered in soap and occupying most of the tub. Gwen's splashed with suds and trying to brush Leonard's teeth. But he's having none of it.

GWEN
Leonard. Leonard, don't be an asshole. Come on, man, you gotta brush. You don't want to wait till it's too late.

This makes her laugh. She stops what she's doing. Sits on the edge of the tub. *

Something just became clear to her.

She reaches for her cell phone, which is on the counter, but as she does so Leonard shifts his massive haunch, hip-checking her right out of the tub.

She goes ass over teakettle onto the floor. And there, lying in a pile of suds and wet towels, she has an epiphany -- what it is, we don't know. But she does. * * *

GWEN (cont'd) *
No way. *

CUT TO:

68 INT DENTAL OFFICE DAY 68

Back in Pincus's office, the end of a regular boring-ass day. The Upper East Side Lady from the opening is back in his chair.

U.E.S. LADY
And then Alex asks me, "Mommy, I know babies come from a lady's tummy, but what I *really* want to know is how do they get in there?" and of course I have *no* clue what to say, but I have to come up with something because his *father* isn't going to-

THWACK! A large gob of gooey soft plaster is shoved into her mouth on the end of a stick.

PINCUS
There we go. That's better.

68 CONTINUED: 68

He wedges the plaster up onto the roof of her mouth and holds it there, starting a timer that goes TICK TICK TICK.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Hold that. Don't move.

69 EXT DENTAL OFFICE - WAITING ROOM DAY 69

Pincus comes out to the reception area, drying his hands on a towel. He hands the Receptionist a sheaf of X-rays.

PINCUS
Please get these to the lab on a rush order, Mr. Harriman's bridge is on the verge of-

He stops, noticing HALF A DOZEN PATIENTS waiting in the outer office.

PINCUS (cont'd)
I thought I was through for the day after this.

The Receptionist looks at him, checks her book, and looks back at him.

RECEPTIONIST
You *are* through.

PINCUS
What about-

He points to the outer area but stops himself, figuring it out.

PINCUS (cont'd)
(a mutter)
Damn it, Frank.

The Receptionist looks at the waiting room, then back at Pincus.

RECEPTIONIST
What about what?

PINCUS
Never mind. Can I have the bathroom key?

She holds out a key on a large, smiling tooth and he snatches it. As he moves, the PEOPLE in the waiting area stand up. One is Mrs. Pickthall, another is Charlie Spencer, the Cardigan Guy. The Harley Guy is there too, and Irish Eddie.

69 CONTINUED: 69

HARLEY GUY
There he is!

Pincus turns and hurries toward the bathroom.

IRISH EDDIE
Dentist! Don't piss me off!

70 EXT PINCUS'S BUILDING - SIDE STREET DAY 70

Pincus darts out the back door and sneaks down the alley. He * comes around the corner of the building and scuttles into a * doorway, looking both ways. Irish Eddie is waiting in the doorway, standing right beside him.

IRISH EDDIE
There's a .38, clean as a whistle, taped under the passenger seat of my mother's Sedan DeVille.

PINCUS
Oh, piss off.

Pincus walks toward the corner of the building. In the next doorway, there's that World War II era Nurse, in uniform.

NURSE
I was supposed to meet Donald at the top of the Statue of Liberty, we were going to be married, but-

PINCUS
Sad news just in -- Donald found somebody else.

He keeps going to the corner, but we linger with her as she starts to tear up. Real emotion. Pincus is a man who doesn't notice his own wake.

71 AROUND THE CORNER, 71

Pincus peers around the building and sees the gaggle of ghosts from his waiting room, now in front of the office. They look up and down the street, searching for him, then one of them points toward the lobby of his apartment building and they all take off in that direction.

Pincus darts back into the office through the front door.

72 INT DENTAL OFFICE DAY 72

DING!

The timer goes off, and with a wet SCRUNCH, Pincus pulls the cement out of the Upper East Side Woman's mouth.

The Receptionist pokes her head in the room.

RECEPTIONIST
Can you take a walk-in before you leave, Dr. Pincus? He seems to be in a lot of pain.

PINCUS
Life is pain.

RECEPTIONIST
(confused)
Does that mean yes?

73 INT DENTAL OFFICE - EXAM ROOM DAY 73

Pincus trudges into the other exam room and washes his hands in the sink. The PATIENT is already in the chair, getting his paper bib clipped on by the Hygienist, who passes behind Pincus on her way out.

PINCUS
(with his back turned)
I'm Dr. Pincus.

PATIENT (O.S.)
We've met.

Pincus turns, holding up his dripping hands, and looks at his patient for the first time. He's surprised to see Richard, Gwen's fiancee.

PINCUS
Oh. You. Hello.

RICHARD
Thank you for seeing me.

PINCUS
Uh huh.
(pulling up his stool)
What seems to be the trouble?

RICHARD
I think I cracked a filling.

73 CONTINUED: 73

Richard isn't his sunny self. Pincus isn't really himself either, he's brusque and resentful as he sorts through his tools. He finds a sharp pointy one, looks at it in the light, and passes it over for something sharper and pointier.

PINCUS
Well. Let's have a look, shall we?

He hits a lever and the chair tilts back.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Open.

Richard does. Pincus starts poking around with his probe. He GRUNTS in disapproval at Richard's mouth.

PINCUS (cont'd)
You have the bite of an Inuit. Have you been chewing seal hide?

RICHARD
I grind my teeth pretty hard when I'm stressed. Last night was a bad one, when I got home Gwen...

He trails off.

PINCUS
Yes?

RICHARD
Never mind.

PINCUS
Gwen what?

RICHARD
She just -- ah, forget it.

PINCUS
What were you about to say?

RICHARD
Nothing. Let's just get this over with.

He sits back and opens his mouth.

PINCUS
I'm a very good listener.

73 CONTINUED: 73

RICHARD
It's personal. I'd rather not discuss it.

He opens his mouth again.

PINCUS
I understand. I respect that.
(thinks)
Hang on a second.

He bolts out of the room.

74 INT OTHER OFFICE DAY 74

Excited, Pincus pokes his head into Dr. Prashar's office.

PINCUS
Excuse me, Dr. Prashar? Jahangir? You're from a scary country, aren't you? *

Dr. Prashar looks up from his PATIENT and pushes back his clear plastic facemask.

DR. PRASHAR
India. *

PINCUS
Yeah, okay, but what I mean is you're not a -- a Christian, like us, are you? *

DR. PRASHAR
I'm Hindu. *

PINCUS
Good. So -- how would you extract information from a, let's say a hostile. *

DR. PRASHAR
As a Hindu? I'd ask them politely. *

PINCUS
Sure, sure. But -- what I'm looking for is, you know, techniques. *
(he mimes an injection) *

DR. PRASHAR
Doctor, I'm with a patient. *

He puts his mask back down. *

75 INT EXAM ROOM DAY 75 *

Richard waits in the chair, getting impatient. Pincus sits back down and rolls his stool up beside him. *

PINCUS *
Okay, let's have a look, shall we? *

He hits a lever and the chair drops back, fast this time. *

75 CONTINUED: 75

RICHARD
(startled)
Oh.

PINCUS
Open.

Richard does. Pincus starts poking around with his probe.

RICHARD
GAAAH!

PINCUS
That hurt?

RICHARD
Uh huh.

PINCUS
I'd imagine it does. You know the worst thing in the world for your teeth?

RICHARD
Sugar?

PINCUS
Secrets.

He sets down his probe and pulls over a tray full of the instruments that strike fear in human hearts.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Why don't you tell me what's on your mind?

RICHARD
(getting irritated)
Because, as I said, it's personal. Can we please just keep this on a professional level?

PINCUS
We can play it any way you want it.

He picks up a needle. You know how they usually slide that thing in there all sneaky-like so you never get a good look at it? Pincus doesn't do that. Instead, he holds it up in front of Richard's eyes while he fills it from a bottle of Novocaine.

Richard gulps.

75 CONTINUED: 75

But as he fills the needle, Pincus notices something on the other side of the room -- it's a little stand with a gas tank on it and a mask hanging over the valve.

Pincus's eyes light up and he rolls it over.

RICHARD
That's not Novocaine.

PINCUS
A little nitrous. Might be just the ticket.

RICHARD
I didn't know they still use that. Are there side effects?

Pincus cranks up the lever on the tank and gas starts to HISS through the line.

PINCUS
A few. Some people get sleepy. Some laugh.

He picks up the mask and lowers it over Richard's face.

PINCUS (cont'd)
But they all talk.

CUT TO:

76 EXT STREET DAY 76

Pincus is practically skipping down the street. He actually even *greets* people as he passes them. Well, one person, but still. He carries a small shopping bag, tissue paper sticking out the top.

He rounds a corner and suddenly Frank is walking beside him.

PINCUS
Frank! I'm surprised to see you.

FRANK
~~Are~~ you back on the job? 'Cause I got a couple ~~dozen~~ Civil War re-enacters who'll talk your ear off.
(a whisper)
Live ammo.

PINCUS
~~Didn't you get the news? The job's over.~~ Richard's history.

76 CONTINUED: 76

FRANK
What?

PINCUS
She dumped him last night.

FRANK
How do you know?

PINCUS
He told me. The marriage is off, the relationship's over.

FRANK
So he's out completely?

PINCUS
He wants to "stay friends," but she's done with him. She told him she's confused about her feelings, and it wasn't right to string him along.

FRANK
Why would Richard tell you all this?

PINCUS
Because I gave him seven hundred milliliters of nitrous oxide.

FRANK
Is that a lot?

PINCUS
Nah. It's not fatal till, like, seven fifty.

FRANK
~~This is great news!~~ You sure This isn't just some kind of a tiff.

PINCUS
NO. ~~Yeah, except she took the offer~~ She got the job in Egypt, she's ~~leaving for~~ going away six months. Goes right after the exhibit opens on Thursday.

FRANK
~~Then it's finished!~~ We did it!
This is great news.

PINCUS
~~That's right. So long, Frank.~~
Yep- Bye.

76 CONTINUED: 76

FRANK
We should go celebrate.

PINCUS
I'm kind of busy right now.

FRANK
What's in the bag?

PINCUS
Nothing.

FRANK
Is that from a jewelry store?
(GASPS)
Oh my God, you bought something for Gwen, didn't you?

PINCUS
Isn't it time for you to shove off?

FRANK
What happened to this whole "I will do nothing to interfere" thing?

PINCUS
There's nothing to interfere with. *She* broke up with *him.* She doesn't love him.

FRANK
And you think she's gonna love *you?* A smock-wearing tooth jockey?

PINCUS
Hey, our deal was, if I help you break up the marriage, you leave me alone.

FRANK
You should have at least let me help you pick something out. You got any idea how much please-forgive-me jewelry I had to buy over the years?

PINCUS
I can take it from here.

FRANK
She's crazy about Peruvian gold, but I gotta go on record that I think you're rushing things.

Pincus pulls Frank into a doorway, away from the passers-by.

76 CONTINUED: 76

PINCUS
Frank, our time together was quite unpleasant. And even though you're a vulgar man, and boorish, and profane, somewhat ignoble, dishonorable and uncouth, I, um...

He trails off. Frank waits for the positive part.

Pincus thinks. Frank still waits. Finally:

FRANK
Are you gonna finish that, or...?

PINCUS
I'm thinking.

FRANK
(waving it off)
It's okay.

PINCUS
The point is -- it's over. We finished what you needed to finish. So goodbye. And good luck. And maybe some day, not too soon I hope, I'll see you again.

FRANK
Yeah, but --

PINCUS
~~We did it, Frank. It's done.~~ Bye.

FRANK
But then why --

PINCUS
~~Goodbye.~~ Ciao.

FRANK
But --

Pincus turns and walks away, down the street. Frank remains in the doorway, watching him go, and suddenly he seems like a very small boy in a grown man's suit.

FRANK (cont'd)
But why am I still here?

CUT TO:

77-79 OMITTED 77-79

80 EXT FIFTH AVENUE DAY 80

Pincus rounds the corner at his apartment building and heads for the entrance. As he approaches, he sees the Three Construction Worker ghosts lingering out front. They beseech him.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 1
Construction crane dropped two tons of steel on us.

PINCUS
Ouch!

He cuts left, around the first guy.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 2
Hydraulic leak. It was an act of God.

PINCUS
Whaddya gonna do.

He cuts right, around the second guy.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 3
But the crane operator thinks it was all his fault.

PINCUS
Whoops! Therapy time! *

CUT TO:

81 EXT STREET DAY 81

Frank wanders the streets. Nowhere to go. No idea what to do.

82 INT FRANK'S BAR DAY 82

A HAPPY COUPLE and OTHER REVELERS sit in Frank's favorite bar, sipping fine wine and enjoying each other's company. Frank is visible outside, watching them forlornly.

83 EXT FIFTH AVENUE DAY 83

Frank wanders near Pincus's building. He stops abruptly as he sees Pincus and Gwen come out of the lobby, chatting animatedly. *

Frank just stands there, watching as they walk away from him, as Gwen LAUGHS at something Pincus says.

Frank stares. Thinking unhappy thoughts.

CUT TO:

84 EXT CENTRAL PARK DAY 84

Gwen and Pincus are walking along Literary Walk in Central Park. The trees are a blaze of fall color. Gwen's untying the ribbon on a small box from a jewelry store. *

PINCUS
Don't panic, it's nothing.

She takes the top off the box and pulls out a small silver keychain.

GWEN
Hey, I *need* a keychain! I love it!

~~She opens her purse, yanks out a handful of keys, and starts loading them onto the keychain.~~

GWEN (cont'd)
I can't believe you remembered. What a strange and practical man you are!

PINCUS
It was down to that or a set of socket wrenches.

GWEN
I hope you didn't spend too much.

PINCUS
About one forty. The receipt's in the bottom.

GWEN
You don't actually have to tell people in that situation.

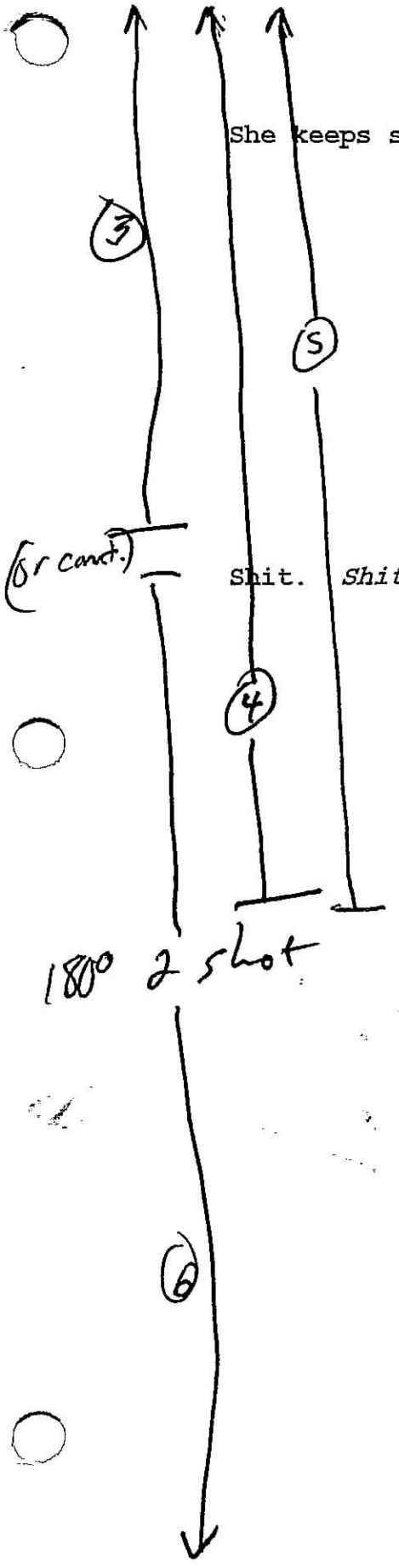
PINCUS
(nervous all over again)
I just meant, it's, you know, nothing extravagant. It's not like it's Peruvian gold, or something.

She looks up sharply. She half closes one eye and turns her head sideways to study him. It makes him nervous.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Oh! They had a pair of Peruvian gold earrings on display, I had a hunch you would have liked them, but I'm afraid they were a bit out of my price range.

She continues giving him the Pirate Look.

84 CONTINUED: 84



PINCUS (cont'd)
What? What's the matter?

She keeps staring at him.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Please stop giving me the Pirate Look, I just gave you a gift, it wasn't pushy or ostentatious, just a little gesture to show I've been thinking about you, and there's no strings attached or expectations or anything like that at all, so I think you should just take it in the spirit of friendship and good feelings with which it was offered.

STOPS

GWEN
"Pirate Look?"

Shit. *Shit shit shit shit shit shit shit.*

GWEN (cont'd)
How could you possibly know about that?

PINCUS
I don't.

GWEN
You do.

PINCUS
It's a common expression?

GWEN
How do you know *any* of this stuff? Peruvian gold, the Pirate Look --

PINCUS
(attempting blase)
Everyone knows about Peruvian gold.

GWEN
-- and the other night, Frank's favorite drink!

PINCUS
Now take it easy...

GWEN
DON'T TELL ME TO TAKE IT EASY!

PINCUS
I'm sorry, you hate that...

84 CONTINUED: 84

cont. 180° 2 shot

GWEN
HOW DO YOU KNOW I HATE THAT?! *

PINCUS
I guessed! Let me start over!

FRANK (O.S.)
Why don't you just tell her?

Rotates F into frame

Pincus turns. Frank is beside them.

FRANK (cont'd)
Spill it, man! She's leaving in two days, you're gonna have to go with the truth. No choice!

(6) Cont.; Now revolving 3-shot

GWEN
(to Pincus)
You've got about ten seconds to start talking, buddy, and then I'm out of here. How do you know all this stuff from my life with Frank?!

FRANK
(to Pincus)
I'll help you. I want to talk to her too, you know? I miss her.

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
It'll sound crazy.

FRANK *
Try her. *

GWEN
Try me.

push-in over Bongo hands

3 in BG

He takes a deep breath and launches in.

(7) 2 shot F+P

(8) single P

PINCUS
A couple weeks ago, I went in for some minor surgery. There was a complication, and I died. And when I was revived I saw... people like Frank. That's how I met you. That's *why* I met you. Because he asked me to.

She stares at him for a long, silent moment.

(9)

PINCUS (cont'd)
I can prove it! He's here, right now, with us.

Single Gwen

84 CONTINUED: 84

GWEN
Look, *stop* it. What you're doing is cruel.

She turns and starts to walk away. He follows.

PINCUS
How else could I have known the things I knew?

GWEN
You must have known Frank. Maybe you were his dentist, I don't know.

PINCUS
Ask me something else. Something it's impossible for me to know.

GWEN
How do you get like you?

PINCUS
Please! Just one question, and if I get it wrong you'll never see me again.

She stops, staring him down. She considers it.

GWEN
Frank used to have the same nightmare, over and over, he'd wake up in tears. He never told anyone about it but me. What was it?

Pincus turns to Frank -- well? Frank looks at Gwen, and now even he is deeply touched, overcome with emotion.

FRANK
Drowning. I'd dream that I dove in the water and went down deep, but when I turned around I couldn't make it back to the top, no matter how hard I swam.

Pincus turns to Gwen, triumphant.

PINCUS
Drowning! He'd swim down and couldn't get back to the surface. He couldn't breathe!
(she says nothing)
What? That's right, isn't it?

GWEN
Not even close.

84 CONTINUED: 84

She turns to walk away, then spins right back, pissed off.

GWEN (cont'd)
You know, the first time I met you, and the next ten or twelve times after that, I thought, "what a jerk." Then I got to know you a little and I convinced myself I saw something human in you. Maybe he's just eccentric. Needs a little work.
(with growing anger)
But to use intimate details about my dead husband to get close to me, or for God knows what reason... that's unforgiveable. You're sick.

PINCUS
I love you.

GWEN
Don't call me.

She tosses the keychain at him and walks away.

PINCUS
Gwen, wait! Gwen!
(whirls on Frank)
Why did you do that to me?

Frank looks at him coolly, his whole demeanor suddenly different, and it's clear that he planned this all along.

FRANK
Because you're a heartless son of a bitch who doesn't give a rat's ass about anybody but himself.

Pincus just looks at him, stunned.

FRANK (cont'd)
And she's already had one of those.

Frank turns and walks away, across the park.

FRANK (cont'd)
See ya around, dentist.

Pincus just stares after him, no cards left to play.

He sags onto a bench, and just sits there for a few long moments, alone. Slowly --

DISSOLVE TO:

84A EXT CENTRAL PARK NIGHT 84A

-- day dissolves to the middle of the night, and he's still sitting there, still alone. We move in closer to him, and when we get right up next to him, he turns to his right, supremely irritated, and spits out a word.

PINCUS
What?

Mrs. Marjorie Pickthall is suddenly sitting on the other end of the bench, looking at him timidly.

MRS. PICKTHALL
It's my daughter.

PINCUS
You know, you've mentioned that.

MRS. PICKTHALL
(sensing an opening)
She won't speak to her sister, her only sister. She's so angry about the necklace I left, but I slipped a letter under her door the day before I died, it explained everything, but there was a stair carpet, I didn't know, the letter went under the carpet and she never got it but it's still there, *she has to read the letter*, she-

PINCUS
Good luck with that.

Pincus turns the other way on the bench and immediately finds himself face to face with Charlie Spencer, who's giving him the same beseeching look.

CHARLIE SPENCER
My little boy has a stuffed animal, a squirrel, it was his favorite, he carried it everywhere, he couldn't go to sleep without it. But he lost it on the day I died. They don't know it's just under the front seat of the car. It's right there, they just can't see it. He cries himself to sleep without it every night, because to him, that toy is *me*. I just know he'll start to feel better once he gets it back.

PINCUS
Can't help you.

84A CONTINUED: 84A

MRS. PICKTHALL
You mean you *won't* help us. Isn't that the truth?

PINCUS
You want the truth? Lady, the truth is we're born alone, we die alone, and take a look around --

He gestures to the acres of empty bench in either direction.

PINCUS (cont'd)
-- we *stay* alone.

Pincus turns away, not noticing the tear that rolls down Mrs. Pickthall's cheek. We go in close as it rolls right off her cheek, falls through the air, and --

SMACK!

Something hard drops onto the bench beside Pincus. He picks it up (and in the time it takes him to raise it to his face, Charlie and Mrs. Pickthall are gone).

It's white. Looks kinda like a tooth. Huh?

SMACK-SMACK! Two more of the white things fall from the sky.

SMACK-SMACK-SMACK-SMACK-SMACK!

Pincus looks up, confused --

-- *AND A MASSIVE HAILSTORM BEGINS TO PUMMEL HIM.*

CUT TO:

85 EXT MANHATTAN DAY 85

Winter blows into town to kick the living shit out of fall. Gale-force winds drive gusts of icy rain horizontally across Manhattan.

86 EXT CENTRAL PARK DAY 86

The ice storm SHRIEKS across the Great Lawn, covering the once-beautiful trees in a clear lifeless freeze.

87 EXT STRAWBERRY FIELDS DAY 87

The tips of the fall-blooming flowers that yesterday were erupting everywhere are now just tiny dots of color underneath the sheets of ice.

88 INT PINCUS'S APARTMENT DAY 88

Pincus, a silhouette, sits in front of the picture window in his apartment, staring out at the cold and ice that have frozen his world. His window is a RAT-TAT-TAT of whirling hail and ice.

He's dressed for work, but immobile. What's the point?

89 EXT PINCUS'S BUILDING DAY 89

The Day Doorman works vainly with a bag of salt in front of Pincus's building, trying to melt a path through the ice, but it's thick and frozen and everywhere, the winds must be blowing that shit sixty or seventy miles an hour. He tosses salt down, but the wind is so strong it blows the salt back in his face.

PEDESTRIANS walk carefully, little six inch steps.

The Doorman digs out another handful of salt, flings it down as hard as he can, and ducks his head out of the way in case it blows back at him again.

Which it does, right into Pincus's face as he comes out of his building. He wipes away the salt and trudges toward his office, right into the teeth of the wind.

But he's walking too fast for conditions, and his legs fly out from under him. He lands hard.

He gets up. Falls again. Crawls the last ten feet to the door of his dental practice.

90 INT DENTAL OFFICE DAY 90

Pincus comes into his office, shaking off ice and humiliation.

The place is dark. He flicks on the lights and looks toward the Receptionist's desk, which is empty.

PINCUS
Hello?

He peeks into the back office.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Jahangir?

No answer. Pincus turns back, realizing he's the only one who made it in this morning. But as he turns, he notices --

THE WAITING ROOM,

90 CONTINUED: 90

-- which is crowded, at least a DOZEN PEOPLE out there, all waiting patiently, silently, sitting in the dark.

Pincus flicks the light switch and stares at them. A lot of familiar faces out there, and not one of them is alive.

They look at him, hopeful, trying not to upset him, but needy, so needy. Pincus reaches out a hand --

-- and shuts off the lights, leaving them in darkness.

CUT TO:

91 INT DENTAL OFFICE DAY 91

Pincus lies back in the dental chair in his office, staring morosely up at the examination light beaming down on him.

He hears a door SLAM. He sits up.

Through the open doorway, he sees Dr. Prashar, his partner in the dental practice, coming in from outside, dressed head to toe in winter gear.

Pincus thinks.

92 INT DENTAL OFFICE - LAB AREA DAY 92 *

Dr. Prashar is in the lab area, going over some dental stuff. *
Pincus appears in the doorway and looks at him thoughtfully. *

DR. PRASHAR
It appears winter is upon us.

PINCUS
Doesn't even have the decency to snow. Hail? Ice? Are there any stupider precipitations?

DR. PRASHAR
(thinks)
No, I suppose they are the stupidest.

PINCUS
Jahangir?

DR. PRASHAR
Yes?

dance floor, & traveling CUC starting in lab & going to file area.

PINCUS
We're friends, right?

Prashar looks mystified. He doesn't respond.

PINCUS (cont'd)
I mean, we're... associates, aren't we?

DR. PRASHAR
Yes.

PINCUS
What I mean is, we have certain things in common, things we share. The panoramic x-ray machine, for example.

DR. PRASHAR
Yes.

PINCUS
We're close.

DR. PRASHAR
No. I wouldn't say that.

PINCUS
(getting annoyed)
All right, we're not close, fine, that's not really the point.

Dr. Prashar stares at him, where the hell can this be going?

PINCUS (cont'd)
I met someone. A woman. The sort of woman who makes you wish you could go back to the moment right before you knew she existed, because whatever hell you were in *then* is better than *this*, the hell of knowing she's out there but you can't have her. So what I'm asking is --

Dr. Prashar leans forward thoughtfully.

DR. PRASHAR
Yes?

PINCUS
Could you possibly write me a prescription for Percocet?

DR. PRASHAR
What?

92 CONTINUED: 92

PINCUS
I can't prescribe for myself, you know, legally, and what I really need at this point is to go to sleep and pretend she never happened.

Dr. Prashar just stares at him.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Vicodin? Darvon?
(more staring)
I'm guessing morphine's a long shot?

Dr. Prashar puts a hand on Pincus's shoulder, his face full of wisdom and caring.

DR. PRASHAR
Come with me.

He gets up. Pincus follows.

93 INT DR. PRASHAR'S EXAMINING ROOM DAY 93

Dr. Prashar leads Pincus into his examining room. There are framed pictures of Prashar's family all over the walls.

PINCUS
What are we doing?

DR. PRASHAR
Please, sit down.

Pincus obliges. Dr. Prashar starts to put the chair back into the reclined position.

PINCUS
You know what, never mind.

DR. PRASHAR
Sit back. This is important.

The chair's all the way back; Pincus stares up at the ceiling.

DR. PRASHAR (cont'd)
Look.

He points to a poster which is mounted on the ceiling, facing down, so the patients have no choice but to look at it.

Pincus looks. It's the "Hang in There, Baby" kitten, clinging to a chin-up bar.

93 CONTINUED: 93

PINCUS
Thanks, that's helpful.

He starts to get up, but Prashar pushes him back down.

DR. PRASHAR
The other one.

Pincus looks at the poster next to it. It's a picture of Albert Einstein, his crazy mop head and those very deep eyes, with a quote printed underneath:

"Only a life lived for others
is worth living."

Pincus stares, taking it in, trying to be thoughtful.

PINCUS
Well, I tell you, Jahangir, as far as moronic sloganeering goes, that's a pretty good effort.

He starts to get up, but Prashar pushes him back down again.

DR. PRASHAR
Dr. Pincus, at a certain point in your life, you are going to have to ask yourself the ultimate question -- this business of being such a fucking prick.

Pincus looks at him, as stunned as we are to hear Prashar use that kind of language.

DR. PRASHAR (cont'd)
(kindly again)
What is it really getting me?

CUT TO:

94 INT DENTAL OFFICE - WAITING ROOM DAY 94 *

The ghosts are still in the waiting room. Pincus looks at all * the faces, wide-eyed with need. He sees Mrs. Pickthall across * the room. *

He drags himself over and slumps into the empty chair beside * her.

PINCUS *
You said something about a letter? *

CUT TO: *

94A EXT STREET DAY 94A *

The sun comes out. Ice melts. Things drip. *

95 EXT FAR ROCKAWAY - STREET DAY 95

A working class neighborhood in Far Rockaway. Mrs. Pickthall stands at the base of a streetlight, looking hopefully up a half flight of stairs that leads to a brownstone. *

At the head of the stairs, a loose flap of carpet has been torn up in the entryway. Pincus is standing a few steps down, * watching as a MOM with a TODDLER on her hip reads from a yellowed letter while the Toddler plays with the torn envelope.

The Mom has tears running down her cheeks, she puts one hand to her mouth, choked with emotion.

For some reason the streetlight switches on, in the middle of the day. Pincus turns around and looks down the stairs. The bulb in the streetlight's gone crazy, it's burning twice as brightly as usual --

-- and Mrs. Pickthall is gone.

CUT TO:

96 INT PARKING GARAGE DAY 96

In a parking garage, Pincus yanks open the door on a 2002 Volvo wagon and drops down to his knees next to the driver's door. He starts rummaging around under the seat.

A PARKING ATTENDANT in the background yells to him.

PARKING ATTENDANT
Hey! That's not your car!

Under the seat, Pincus spots what he was looking for -- a child's stuffed animal. A squirrel. He grabs it, leaps to his feet, and SLAMS the door. He takes off running, and the Parking Attendant gives chase.

PARKING ATTENDANT (cont'd)
Get back here with that!

97 EXT PLAYGROUND DAY 97

In a playground, a FOUR YEAR OLD snatches up his unzippered backpack off a park bench and turns to go.

97 CONTINUED: 97

PINCUS (O.S.)
Excuse me, does this belong to you?

The Four Year Old turns. Pincus is standing behind him, holding the stuffed squirrel.

The Four Year Old sees it and his eyes go super wide.

FOUR YEAR OLD
Daddy's squirrel!

He grabs hold of it and pulls it close. His Mom sees it too and can't believe it.

PINCUS
It fell out of his backpack.

The Mom looks at him, and we recognize her, it's the Upper East Side Lady, the one he's always shutting up, the one who's always prattling on about her four year old.

U.E.S. LADY
Dr. Pincus?

PINCUS
(recognizing her)
Oh. Oh, I... I didn't know.

U.E.S. LADY
Thank you! Thank you so much.

She grabs her son, so *this* is little Alex, and she pulls him close, and we know well why she's so happy.

Charlie Spencer, the cardigan guy, knows why too, he's the kid's dad and once was the mom's husband. He's standing nearby, smiling, teary as he watches his son clutch the little squirrel.

A truck goes by, hauling glass, and the sun glints off the glass, blinding. When the glare passes, Charlie is gone.

98 EXT MOTORCYCLE SHOP DAY 98

Pincus is in front of a motorcycle shop in Brooklyn. He gives a large box to HARLEY LADY, lotta leather and tattoos. As she opens it, we see Harley Guy, the ghost we've seen before, sitting on the last in a row of motorcycles across the street.

Harley Lady opens the box and pulls out a motorcycle helmet. Pincus gestures to her to put it on and she does, tearing up.

98 CONTINUED:

As she does, across the street the row of motorcycl flick on, one after another, each brighter than the the last one, the light is blinding, Harley Guy is

Pincus and Harley Lady squint, and when the light fades, the Harley Guy is gone.

CUT TO:

99 EXT CONSTRUCTION SITE DUSK 99

Night has fallen, or maybe a day or two's gone by. The Three Construction Worker ghosts stand near a giant crane at a construction site.

Pincus is standing next to the cab of the crane, talking to the CRANE OPERATOR, who's hunched over, racked with guilt.

Pincus gestures, leads him down out of the cab, around to underneath the machinery.

UNDER THE CRANE,

they both look up, to where a steady drip of hydraulic fluid is puddling beneath one of the cables.

The Crane Operator looks at Pincus, relief flooding his face.

Behind them, an arc welder sparks to light, blindingly bright in the dusky light. Pincus turns around, and the Construction Workers are gone.

And in that moment, something occurs to Pincus.

He looks back at the Crane Operator, who has sagged down onto one of the wheels of the crane. He's sitting there, tears of relief flowing down his cheeks.

He turns, looking at the space where the Workers were standing. And back at the Crane Operator.

He turns abruptly to a WORKMAN standing next to him.

PINCUS
What day is this?

WORKER
~~Thursday.~~ Wednesday.

Pincus thinks for a second, then turns away. Then starts to walk, with purpose. Faster. Then faster still.

99 CONTINUED: 99

He hurries out of the construction site, passing the Dead Nurse and the Lovely Old Couple, the very first ghosts he encountered. They've been following him, waiting their turn, and now that they see he's on the move they go after him.

A half dozen other Ghosts fall in behind them, including the Jogger and the Flight Attendant. * *

100 OMITTED 100

101 EXT UPPER EAST SIDE NIGHT 101

Pincus turns a corner on the Upper East Side, walking even faster. A few seconds later, the Dead Nurse and the Lovely Old Couple come around the corner too, and the other half dozen Ghosts, and then ten more, and ten more. Word seems to be spreading, there's more pouring in from the sides.

Pincus is moving fast, something urgent on his mind, so urgent that he's gotta run. He takes off, and the now-Fifty Spirits take off too, running behind him.

102 EXT FIFTH AVENUE NIGHT 102

Pincus races down 82nd Street, headed for Fifth Avenue, now followed by ONE HUNDRED SPIRITS, all running right with him.

Up ahead there's bright lights across the street and he heads for them, snaking his way through traffic, headed for --

-- the Metropolitan Museum, all lit up for the opening of the mummy show. There's a huge banner over the front door:

VOICES OF THE DEAD
Saqqara, 1500 B.C.

MEN IN BLACK TIE and WOMEN IN SWELL GOWNS head up the stairs, and Pincus cuts right through them, racing toward the front doors in his white smock.

The Hundred Spirits, not far behind, race across Fifth Avenue.

103 OMITTED 103

104 INT EGYPTIAN WING NIGHT 104

Pincus races through the sarcophagi and so forth in the Egyptian Wing, headed for the party we can hear at the far end.

The Hundred Spirits are close behind, but Pincus slams on the brakes and turns to them.

104 CONTINUED: 104

PINCUS
I promise I will try to help each and every one of you, but can I just get a moment alone? Please?

Seems a reasonable request. The Spirits wait while Pincus takes off, through an archway and into --

105 INT TEMPLE OF DENDUR NIGHT 105

-- the Temple of Dendur, all lit up for the big party. A STRING QUARTET plays, tables are set out for dining. At the front, Pepi's display is resplendent, spotlit in front of the ancient temple itself.

In this elegantly black-tied crowd, Pincus tends to stand out. You know, in his white smock. He stands at the base of the reflecting pool, scanning the room.

He sees Gwen and wades into the crowd, pulling off his smock as he goes. He catches up to her in front of the entrance to the temple, next to the display of the fully restored mummy.

GWEN
What are you doing here?

PINCUS
I've got to talk to you. I figured something out.

GWEN
Please leave me alone.

PINCUS
It's all crap, Gwen. Everything they tell us in ghost stories, I think they've got it exactly wrong.

GWEN
How dare you do this to me here.

Desperate but on a roll, he turns to the mummy.

PINCUS
Look at Pepi. The man was buried with everything a dead guy doesn't need -- food, household pets, money. They even put his penis in a big jar. Now why would they go to all that trouble? *

GWEN *
You saw it, it wouldn't fit in a little jar. *

105 CONTINUED: 105

PINCUS *
With *him,* I mean. Why should they give * *
a damn? Why go to such incredible
lengths to care for someone they'll
never see again?

GWEN
Because they love him and they want to
make sure he'll be okay.

PINCUS
Because if they know he's okay... ?

GWEN
They can let him go.

PINCUS
Exactly! *They* can let *him* go! Frank *
is haunting you, Gwen, you've got to *
let him go. *

GWEN
If he's haunting me, shouldn't he let *
me go? *

PINCUS
No, he can't! Because it isn't him, *
it's you. This stuff about ghosts with
unfinished business, it's all wrong,
we're the ones who aren't finished, you
said it yourself. The poor bastards
are stuck here until we let 'em go.

This is making a lot of sense, and Gwen is getting emotional.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Let Frank go. Let the pervert decay in
peace.

Okay, that might not have been the most tactful way to say it, and Gwen's getting upset. She turns and hurries away from him, but he catches up to her as she crosses the crowded room. She tries to keep her voice down, but she's upset.

GWEN
Stop following me! I don't know how
you knew all that stuff about Frank,
maybe you two were buddies, you were a
couple regular guys when he was alive.
(MORE)

105 CONTINUED: 105

GWEN (cont'd)
Maybe you went out drinking and you went to strip clubs and you talked about your girlfriends and laughed at your wives behind their --

She stops, emotion overtaking her near the Twin Colossus. They have a bit of privacy over here, across the reflecting pool from the party.

GWEN (cont'd)
What was the matter with me? Why didn't he love me? *

Her tears start to flow. Suddenly, Frank is standing between them.

FRANK
I did love you. I still do.

PINCUS
He did love you.

GWEN
Then why wasn't I enough?

Pincus looks at Frank for the answer. Frank shrugs.

FRANK
Everybody wants a little strange.

PINCUS
(to Frank)
You're not really making a lot of forward progress, are you?

FRANK
Oh, please, what do you think I'm gonna do, *change?* In all your life, have you ever known anybody who's actually changed, at all, ever? I am what I am.

GWEN
(to Pincus)
I suppose you're talking to him now? Is that what you want me to believe?

PINCUS
What is it you want to tell him? What do you have to say?

GWEN
I want an answer. I want to know why I wasn't enough for him.

FRANK
(to Gwen)
It wasn't you who wasn't enough.

PINCUS
(to Gwen)
It wasn't you who wasn't enough.

FRANK
I don't know why I did the shit I did.

PINCUS
He doesn't know why he did the shit he did.

FRANK
And you don't get smarter just because you're dead.

PINCUS
And you don't get smarter just cause you're dead.

FRANK
But I did see one thing -- how much I hurt you.

PINCUS
The only thing he learned is how much he hurt you.

FRANK
And...

PINCUS
And...

FRANK
I'm...

PINCUS
He's...

FRANK
(choking up)
I'm so sorry, honey.

Pincus is moved.

GWEN
What? What did he say?

105 CONTINUED: 105

PINCUS
He said... he's sorry.

GWEN
That's it? He's *sorry?*

PINCUS
No, no, no, it was the *way* he said it -- *

GWEN *
He's sorry. Good guess. I gotta go *
pack. *

She turns and hurries out of the room. *

PINCUS *
You should have heard, really, I'm not *
doing it justice! *

He goes after her. *

CUT TO:

106 EXT METROPOLITAN MUSEUM NIGHT 106

Gwen comes out the front doors of the museum and races down the red-carpeted steps. Pincus isn't far behind her, and the Ghosts aren't far behind him, they're now up to ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY.

PINCUS
Gwen!

150 GHOSTS
GWEN!

PINCUS
Wait!

150 GHOSTS
WAIT!

She's at the crosswalk, crying hard now. Pincus reaches out, to put a comforting arm around her, and she swats it away.

GWEN *
Why am I talking to you? You couldn't *
even get his dream right. *

PINCUS *
Because he stitched me up! He wanted *
me to look bad, so he told me the wrong *
dream! *

106 CONTINUED: 106

GWEN
Then what's the right one?

PINCUS
(looking around)
Frank isn't here right this second, or I'd ask him.

GWEN
That's convenient.

PINCUS
Actually, it's inconvenient as hell.

GWEN
I'm not gonna let myself love another liar. *

She steps off the curb, but he jumps around in front and cuts her off, keeping her on the sidewalk.

PINCUS
I'm not. I've been a lot of things, I was cold and selfish and I was self-obsessed, but I'm no liar, and I'm not lying now. *
(summoning himself)
Gwen, I lived more in the few days I spent with you after I died than I ever lived back when I was alive. The first time. Before. I died.

She's listening, it even looks as if she's coming around.

PINCUS (cont'd)
You know what I mean?

GWEN
Nope.

PINCUS
Okay, so I'm born, right? And then-

WHAMMO!

A number 6 downtown bus SMACKS into Pincus at about twenty miles an hour, sweeping him out of frame in a split-second. Gwen GASPS in horror --

GWEN
PINCUS!

-- and takes off in the direction the bus went.

106 CONTINUED: 106

Again, we hold the camera right where it is for a long moment as PEOPLE go racing through frame, toward the scene of the crash, but we don't look that way, we stay right where we are. Pincus's smock drifts slowly down into frame, just as Frank's overcoat did earlier.

A moment later, Pincus backs into frame, looking unhurt and unrumpled, just the way Frank did when he got hit by a bus.

And of course, someone runs right through him and SNEEZES. Pincus is confused. Frank is standing beside him.

FRANK
Now that's just a shame. You were really gettin' somewhere with her, too.

PINCUS
What's happening to me?

FRANK
You ate it, Pal. The God damn MTA strikes again. These drivers, I mean, it's a menace.

PINCUS
Aw, come on, I can't be *dead!*

Slowly, behind them, the Hundred Fifty Spirits who've been following Pincus all start to disperse. Show's over.

FRANK
Yep, there goes your fan club. Sorry, Kiddo.

He pats Pincus on the back, and for the first time they make actual physical contact. Frank notices.

FRANK (cont'd)
Hey!

He puts both arms around Pincus and squeezes hard.

FRANK (cont'd)
Oh, this feels good.

Pincus shoves him off.

107 IN FRONT OF THE MUSEUM, 107

people race to the sidewalk to see what happened. Among them is Richard, Gwen's ex, wearing black tie and carrying please-take-me-back flowers.

9/28/

108 IN THE STREET,

Pincus is distraught.

PINCUS
No! I was just getting *started!* Everything else, every minute up till now, it was all a waste, a warm-up!

Ten yards away, they can see Gwen, standing at a slight distance from the small knot of people hovering over Pincus's body. She's sobbing.

FRANK
This is the worst part. When you have to watch her cry and know she needs someone to comfort her, and you know it can't be you. *

But there is excited murmuring over at the accident site. *

PINCUS *
Wait a minute. Waaaaiiittt a minute! *

They race over to the knot of people to see what's going on. *

A man is bent over Pincus, giving CPR and mouth-to-mouth, desperately resuscitating him. He looks up --

-- it's Richard! He rips off his jacket dramatically.

RICHARD
Space! Give me space!

FRANK *
He knows CPR. Well sure, of course he does. *

PINCUS *
He asked for space! Give him space! *

FRANK *
He'll probably cut open your chest and massage your heart back to life with his bare hands. *

Richard looks up from the body and pleads to the heavens. *

RICHARD *
OH LORD, SPARE THIS MAN! *

108 CONTINUED: 108

FRANK
I can't take this guy anymore, I really can't.

An ambulance, SIREN SCREAMING, blasts down Fifth Avenue. Help is on the way.

PINCUS
I've got a legitimate shot here!

Frank looks back at Gwen, so sad and scared. Then at Pincus.

FRANK
Hey, Pinko. There's something I gotta tell you that might come in handy when you get back.

PINCUS
You're gonna help me? Why?

FRANK
Those tears she's crying are for you now.

One by one, every streetlight down the block lights up, burning extra bright for a split second, turning everything white. Frank notices, he smiles.

FRANK (cont'd)
Listen up. My ride is here.

CUT TO:

109 EXT MANHATTAN NIGHT TO DAY 109

Another time lapse shot as Manhattan goes from nighttime and back into day. Things start to blaze by, into night again and then day and then night, as if we've come unstuck in time.

Finally it slows to a halt one fine morning a few weeks later and we're --

110 INT HOSPITAL ROOM DAY 110

-- in a hospital room. A very familiar hospital room. And two familiar faces looking down at us -- the Surgeon who operated on Pincus in the first place, and the Man in the Suit, carrying a thick file folder. The Surgeon's dream of a darker spray-tan seems to have come true; she's brown as a nut.

SURGEON
Dr. Pincus! Always good to see you!

110 CONTINUED: 110

Pincus, in bed and looking battered but not broken, blinks his eyes as he orients himself.

PINCUS
What happened?

SURGEON
You crossed against the light.

MAN IN SUIT
Not much of a lawsuit, I'm afraid.

Beside him, ORDERLIES wheel his ROOMMATE out of the room -- with a sheet over his head. *

PINCUS
Is Gwen... was there a woman here?

MAN IN SUIT
It's possible. But ~~if she was unable~~ unless she to provide proof of kinship, security would have escorted her off the premises.

PINCUS
Good work, guys.

CUT TO:

111 INT DENTAL OFFICE DAY 111

A few shiny balloons float near a "Welcome Back, Dr. P!" sign. Pincus is in his office again, mostly healed. He finishes with a PATIENT and removes the man's bib.

PINCUS
All right, Mr. Goldman, six months. And remember, you only need to floss the ones you want to keep.

This lame dentist joke gets a lame patient laugh, but Dr. Prashar, walking past, chuckles and gives Pincus a thumbs up.

Alone in the room, Pincus starts to clean his tools. He senses someone in the doorway and speaks without looking up.

PINCUS (cont'd)
Am I done for the day?

VOICE (O.S.)
I didn't know you were back.

He looks up. It's Gwen. Pincus smiles.

111 CONTINUED: 111

PINCUS
I thought you were in Egypt.

GWEN
Felt like sticking around. You okay?

PINCUS
Pretty good. Considering.

GWEN
I tried to see you at the hospital but-

PINCUS
They run a tight ship over there at Cooperative Institutional Health Bastards. How are you?

GWEN
(gestures to her mouth)
Bad molar contact.

PINCUS
Oh, right! Right. Have a seat.

Pleased, he prepares the chair, readies his tools.

GWEN
I made the appointment with Dr. Prashar. I didn't know if you --

PINCUS
Ah. Of course.

Disappointed, he sets his tools down.

GWEN
Anyway, I'm glad to see you looking well.

She turns to go. Just before she does --

PINCUS
He's eight years old.
(she stops, turns back)
Frank. In his dream. The real one. He's a little boy, and he's walking in the woods, holding his father's hand. But then his hand slips away and all of a sudden his dad is gone and he's lost. He tries to run back the way he came but no matter what path he takes he always ends up in the same spot.
(MORE)

111 CONTINUED: 111

PINCUS (cont'd)
That was his nightmare. To be all alone and not know the way home. Right? *

Gwen nods, moved. It's all true, then. She takes a moment to compose herself.

GWEN
Do you still see him?

PINCUS
Not since the accident. I don't see any of them.

GWEN
But he's still out there?

PINCUS
(shakes his head no)
He found his way home.

GWEN
Thank you.

He nods. And she leaves.

Pincus sits, just staring at the empty doorway, waiting for her to come back.

And waiting. And waiting.

And finally she does, backing just halfway into the door frame, her eyes filled with tears.

GWEN (cont'd)
It hurts when I smile.

PINCUS
I can fix that for you.

FADE OUT.