

Halt and Catch Fire

Pilot

"BREAKING BIG BLUE"

by

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TEASER

INT. GLASS-WALLED OFFICE -- DAY

ANGLE ON A MAN IN A BLACK SUIT SITTING BEHIND A DESK

Smarmy gym-and-suntan disciple with a conservative haircut.
This is DALE BARNES (38).

SOMEONE FACES HIM

Standing. JOE MACMILLAN (34). A man these black suits were
made for. But despite the jawline, the executive contour
hair, he's a million miles away right now.

BARNES

C'mon, Joe. It's just business.

Without a word, MacMillan turns and leaves through the glass
door.

INT. PRISTINE HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

HIS BLACK WINGTIPS

Walking at a swift clip, toes glancing against the bottom of
the frame as they move forward in rhythm.

A BLACK BRIEFCASE

Suspended by the grip of MacMillan's hand. White shirt cuff
exposed a flawless quarter inch from a black suit sleeve.

EXT. HEADQUARTERS ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

MacMillan steps outside to a cement walkway leading out to a
vast employee parking lot.

He reaches the walkway's end. Stops.

Just stands there.

FADE UP SUPER: "Armonk, New York. 1981."

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATER

SLAMMING closed the trunk of a black 1980 Audi Quattro.

HIS HAND REACHES INSIDE THE SUIT BREAST POCKET

Pulls out a pair of Serengeti sunglasses.

Places them over his eyes.

EXT. NEW ORCHARD ROAD -- LATER

The Audi ROARS past the company entrance sign: IBM.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL NEW YORK HIGHWAY -- LATER

The GROWING ROAR of the Audi. It appears, rockets down a two-line asphalt in a matter of seconds, kicking up dead leaves.

INT. AUDI QUATTRO -- CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON MacMillan's hand, pulling the floor shifter down into fourth gear, the road's reflection in his glasses.

CUT TO:

EXT. COASTAL HIGHWAY -- LATER

The Audi traverses a wooded lane that opens onto the rocky coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Going faster.

INT. AUDI QUATTRO -- CONTINUOUS

MacMillan is blank as he throws the car into fifth. The blur of water stretches to the horizon outside his window.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD, an approaching hard bank turn. Nothing but guard rail. Not a problem at normal speed.

ANGLE ON the speedometer climbing...

EXT. COASTAL HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The Audi SMASHES through the guard rail somewhere around 110.

A direct hit. No swerve. Intentional.

The rail gives like paper and the Audi is now a missile being shot out over the white water of the coastline.

It sails high, engine REVVED and floored before...

THE FRONT END HITS THE WATERLINE LIKE A BRICK WALL

DESTROYING half of the car with a THUNDER CLAP.

A few seconds pass before lapping waves begin to fold around the vehicle and its driver. No movement within. Completely arrested.

END TEASER

ACT I

INT. HONKY TONK BAR -- NIGHT

SUPER: TEN MONTHS LATER

An honest to God COWBOY drops in a quarter, makes his punch button selections on a jukebox. Two seconds pass until the machine lets loose with STEEL GUITAR and MERLE HAGGARD.

The cowboy takes his mug of beer from atop the juke and actually *moseys* through a late night crowd of legitimate and gregarious country western folk spanning generations.

ANGLE ON the bar itself, tracking across its patrons--all tough men in hats, jeans--ladies with perms, chewing gum, heavy eyeshadow.

THE LAST MAN AT THE BAR sticks out like a sore thumb. He isn't country; hell, he ain't much of anything. Ragged hair, big glasses, thick unkempt mustache. Lots of empty mugs.

This is GORDON CLARK (31).

CLARK

(to bartender)

Can I get another Shiner?

A fresh mug of beer slides his way but it doesn't seem to cheer him up any. A YOUNG BUCK (early 20's) sallies up next to him, square head in a wide-brimmed hat.

YOUNG BUCK

(calling back)

HEY, WHATCHOO WANT?

A chubby YOUNG GIRL (same age) appears next to him, jostling Clark as she squeezes in.

YOUNG GIRL

(thick accent)

I dunno, gimme a beer or somethin'.

The young buck holds up two fingers for the bartender. Then glances over at Clark. He has to talk over the music:

YOUNG BUCK

You down an' out, friend?

CLARK

Guess you could say that.

YOUNG GIRL
 (gross)
 What's wrong, sugar?

CLARK
 I hate my job.

YOUNG BUCK
WHAT'S THAT?

CLARK
 I HATE MY JOB.

YOUNG BUCK
 Yeah? Whatchoo do?

Clark shakes his head, trying to return to his solitary beer.

YOUNG BUCK (CONT'D)
 (to girl)
 What'd he say?

YOUNG GIRL
 He didn't say nothin'.

YOUNG BUCK
 (to Clark, louder)
 Hey, whatchoo do?

CLARK
 I'm a systems programmer.

YOUNG BUCK
 What?

CLARK
 Computers.

YOUNG BUCK
 Oh man, that's some future shit.

Lull in the conversation as the two youngins get their beers.

YOUNG BUCK (CONT'D)
 So whatchoo sad about? Computers,
 man, I tell you what. You gon' make
 some big ol' money with that.

CLARK
 (turning to them more)
 I'll tell you what I'm sad about.
 (MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

I'm sad because right now I'd rather be in Northern California living the sweet life, as opposed to sitting in some Hee Haw rerun.

(pause)

No offense. I'm having a bad night.

YOUNG GIRL

California! Ain't Reagan from California? That's one good thing come out of the Left Coast.

CLARK

Reagan? You know he opposed equal rights for women, right? That's real enlightened.

(swigs beer, to girl)

You are a woman, aren't you?

The young buck's face drops, as does the girl's. Clark takes another gulp of beer as the buck steps toward him, ready.

YOUNG BUCK

You wanna apologize to the lady?

CLARK

Would it make a difference?

The buck seizes Clark by the shirt, pulls him to his feet.

YOUNG BUCK

Not for you.

CLARK

Then no.

And the buck BELTS HIM ACROSS THE FACE HARD, sending Clark to the sawdust floor.

The crowd MURMURS as Clark rises, his nose badly bloodied. But he grins a little bit as he steadies himself on a chair. Then...

HE SMASHES THE CHAIR ACROSS THE YOUNG BUCK'S BACK

Knocking him to the floor. Male patrons tackle Clark back down and proceed to kick the shit out of him.

CUT TO:

INT. DALLAS COUNTY LOCK-UP -- LATER

A heavy metal door swings open with a BUZZ.

DALLAS DEPUTY
Gordon Clark.

THE DALLAS DEPUTY waits, then leads Clark out of the holding area, tight grip on the programmer's arm.

CLARK
Hi, honey.

REVEAL DONNA CLARK (30), facing him, arms crossed. She's got the pretty face of a high school sweetheart, but the grim frown of someone who's put up with a lot of shit.

CUT TO:

INT. DONNA'S STATION WAGON -- LATER

Donna drives in silence, Clark next to her, his nose taped.

CLARK
You didn't have to bring the kids with you.

ANGLE ON their two daughters belted in the backseat, HALEY (4) and JOANIE (6), spitting images of their mother, blonde hair and all. They're in pajamas, out cold.

DONNA
(without looking at him)
I figured they'd never been to Dallas County Jail before, so why not bring them along.

CLARK
C'mon, Donna.

DONNA
You're right, I should've asked the neighbors to watch them at 2 a.m. 'Hey, can you take Haley and Joanie for a bit, Gordon got in a bar fight again.'

CLARK
Look, I'm sorry--

DONNA
I get that you're unhappy, Gordon.

CLARK
It's the job, it's this whole place, it's this whole situation--

DONNA

Things didn't turn out how we planned. So what?

CLARK

Don't you miss it?

DONNA

What do you want me to say? I'll say it again, like I always do, Gordon. We can move back to Palo Alto tomorrow. What I can't do is build a time machine and get us back to Palo Alto six years ago.

CLARK

Donna, the choice was stay or have Joanie. I took the job at Cardiff Giant so we wouldn't have to--

DONNA

(*'keep your voice down'*)
Joanie was coming no matter what.

(pause)

You know what I think? I think you were scared, because in California it was just a bunch of us smoking dope and fiddling with circuit boards in Steve's garage. So we left.

CLARK

(too loud)

Right, and then Steve shaved his beard and made a hundred million dollars. Is that your point?

Haley wakes up in the back seat.

HALEY

Daddy?

Donna glares at her husband. Are you happy now?

DONNA

Sorry, girls. Daddy's pretty tired.

CUT TO:

INT. SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE -- DAY

The room where your dad's boss held court. Enviously big. Credenzas with framed family pictures (wife, two young boys) shadowed behind prominently displayed sales awards.

But this isn't IBM. The windows look out onto a flat and seemingly endless horizon of low-rise buildings and prairie.

We're a long way from New York.

ANGLE ON JOHN BOSWORTH (48), an eagle resting in permanent judgment, comfortably in power behind his desk. When he speaks, it's equal parts brass tacks and Texas drawl.

But right now, he's listening.

MACMILLAN (O.S.)

Eight weeks inpatient, six months physical therapy.

BOSWORTH

So why'd you do it?

ANGLE ON Joe MacMillan seated across from him, somehow back from the dead. In his black suit, but with a vivid red tie. A small scar runs along the outside of his eye.

MACMILLAN

I don't recall putting my car accident on the resume.

Bosworth picks up a single sheet of paper from his desk.

BOSWORTH

Let's talk about what I do see on it. Three bold letters. I. B. M.

(tosses paper down)

I know what IBM is. I also know what IBM ain't. And anything that ain't IBM is cheaper, better, faster. That's what this company lives by.

MACMILLAN

Well, John, that's what General Electric thought. And RCA. And UNIVAC--

BOSWORTH

And Burroughs, and NCR, and Honeywell and Control Data, and blah, blah, blah. I know all the companies that IBM has chased out of this business or out of business entirely. Cardiff Giant is not one of them, and it won't be.

(pause)

Look at you; same suit, different tie.

(MORE)

BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

Dallas is pretty far from Armonk, New York, son, and that's no accident. You think I'm gonna see something other than a dyed-in-the-wool company stooge?

MACMILLAN

There is one thing IBM knows how to do.

BOSWORTH

An' what's that?

MACMILLAN

Make money. That's what I did for them. And I did it very well.

Bosworth sits back in his chair, evaluating him.

BOSWORTH

...I know.

(pause)

Look, you wouldn't even be sittin' in front of me if Al didn't like you. And he liked you. I'm just tryin' to figure out why.

MACMILLAN

I'm a heavy hitter. You bring me on, you legitimize your sales force, this company, this town. Maybe Silicon Prairie takes the stage with Silicon Valley. Maybe the suits back east will sit up and pay attention.

BOSWORTH

I'll be honest with you, Joe. Personally, I think you might be a basket case.

(pause)

But at the end of the day, I need someone who can come in here and blow the balls off the numbers.

(pause)

An' I will tell you this is systems software, straight up. Scheduling, database, doc management, who does it go to, when, how many copies, everything that makes a mainframe purr. It ain't sexy, but it sure as hell makes us some serious money.

MACMILLAN

What about PC's? That's the real way to get at IBM. Somebody could pull the rug right out from under them--

BOSWORTH

Did you not hear me? Cardiff Giant doesn't tussle around with any PC crap. As a cardinal damn rule we are strictly disinterested in throwing rocks at the IBM hornet's nest. That's how we get our name added to that list of companies KIA against Big Blue.

MACMILLAN

PC's are anybody's game to grab if you do it right.

BOSWORTH

Why do you even want this job, you were pullin' 300 back east.

MacMillan is without an immediate answer for the first time.

MACMILLAN

Don't worry, I'll break numbers. I always do.

BOSWORTH

Yeah, yeah, and I've got an in-ground swimming pool. Why are you really here?

A beat. Some honesty seeps through MacMillan's veneer.

MACMILLAN

I need... something different.

Bosworth takes that in. Then stands up, as does MacMillan.

BOSWORTH

You answer to Al and Al answers to me. And I'm the SVP of Sales so you're dogshit until you close a deal. Understand?

MACMILLAN

I do.

BOSWORTH

Good. We're married. You may now go make your numbers.

They shake hands, purely professional. A battle of direct and challenging eye contact. MacMillan begins to leave.

BOSWORTH (CONT'D)
MacMillan.

MacMillan stops at the door, turns.

BOSWORTH (CONT'D)
Are you better?

Long beat.

MACMILLAN
I am.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Familiar dark wood cabinets and earth-tone countertops of a 1980s American middle-class home.

ANGLE ON Clark as he closes the fridge, six-pack in hand. Wrinkled dress shirt untucked, tie loose, barefoot in brown polyester pants. Bridge of his nose badly black & blue.

DONNA ENTERS--the DIN of the living room suggests that she and the kids are watching prime time.

DONNA
How was work?

CLARK
(heading for garage)
Hmph...

DONNA
Hey.

He stops. Turns.

DONNA (CONT'D)
You gonna be all right?

CLARK
I'm sorry, I'm just... look, I'm gonna duck into the garage for awhile.

His face is a tired 'please let me go.' She nods, and he disappears through the darkness of the back door.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S GARAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

ANGLE ON a record player, sitting atop a 1970s receiver with a blue lit-up dash. Nothing digital here as the needle hits the groove on Supertramp's "Crime of the Century."

"BLOODY WELL RIGHT" LOUDLY PLAYS THROUGH THE SPEAKERS

ANGLE ON Clark as he cracks a beer and lets loud stoner rock wash over him. He closes his eyes...

ANGLE ON the garage space. The family cars never come in here. This is a Silicon Valley DIY workshop right out of 1975. A sanctuary and homage to the life Clark once led.

Mixed in with the landscaping tools and power drills are pristine circuit boards, monitors, monstrosities of electronics. Apple II's, Atari 2600's, Altairs, TI-99's in various states of functionality, assembly.

The MUSIC continues as we...

CUT TO:

INT. MACMILLAN'S CONDO -- LATE NIGHT

Sleek, all-business housing of the new Reagan-era. This unit is sprawling, but has hardly any furniture. A handful of cardboard moving boxes lie on the floor unopened. A tube TV on the floor has silver-haired Johnny Carson on mute.

ANGLE ON one moving box as MacMillan--in suit pants and a white undershirt--rips open the top. He pulls out a back issue of *Byte* magazine.

CLOSE ON the vicious scars down his left arm. Far worse than the superficial glance near his eye.

INTERCUT -- MACMILLAN'S CONDO / CLARK'S GARAGE

-- Clark sits at a fold-out card table, working on an original Apple I hooked to an old tube TV...

-- ANGLE ON the screen, almost all the light in the room coming from the glow of BASIC as it scrawls across the screen, Clark rapidly typing out the programming language...

-- ANGLE ON MacMillan sitting at small table eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, drinking a glass of milk as he reads under a single overhead light, *Byte* next to him...

-- LATER, Clark pulls apart a Commodore computer box in his lap, his face betraying the joy of a kid opening a Christmas present...

-- CLOSER ON the article MacMillan reads. Entitled:
IBM'S TROJAN HORSE: HOW OPEN ARCHITECTURE WILL UNDO BIG BLUE
The phone RINGS. A cordless plugged in on the floor.
MacMillan looks up. Goes to it, answers.

MACMILLAN

Hello?
(long pause)
Yes, I cancelled the prescriptions.
(long pause)
Because I don't need them anymore.

-- ANGLE ON a big brimming tool box as Clark looks for just the right screwdriver. He checks a few drawers, finds one, then finds a rolled-up bag of choice pot...

-- ANGLE ON MacMillan as he hangs up. Returns to the table. Stares off for a moment. Then comes back to the magazine.

-- ANGLE ON Clark now grooving more easily to the music as he furiously types more lines of BASIC into the Apple I...

-- ANGLE ON Donna, reading in bed. She puts her book on the night stand, turns the lamp off. The digital clock reads 1:35 a.m. She rolls over. No one there. Only MUFFLED SUPERTRAMP still coming from the garage.

-- ANGLE ON MacMillan as he continues to read. CLOSER ON the magazine byline. MacMillan takes a red pen and underlines the name until the paper grows wet and soft with ink. It reads...

"By Gordon Clark."

END ACT I

ACT II

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES -- DAY

Fluorescent lights, cubicles, retro colors. Just like the *Post* in All the President's Men, The Daily Planet in Donner's Superman.

ANGLE ON Clark at the break counter. He's wearing the same shirt, tie, pants as last night. Looking like he just rolled out of bed. He pours WAY too much sugar into his coffee.

AL KOWALSKI (45) nears--a man who's parked it in management, a bit bloated from booze and food and glory days.

AL

Jesus, Gordon, you look like garbage.

CLARK

Thanks, Al, duly noted.

AL

(withering)

I'm not asking you. 'Pajamas at work' might've flown back in Frisco, but this is a professional workplace. When I see you again, you better be wearing *at least* a clean shirt. Understand?

Clark lowers his eyes to his coffee as Al walks away.

ANGLE ON MacMillan, in his black suit, a perfect contrast as he approaches Clark.

MACMILLAN

Gordon Clark.

CLARK

That's me.

MACMILLAN

You're my SE for this sales call.

CLARK

Oh... I am? With, uh...

MACMILLAN

Applied Data.

CLARK

That's not my account.

MACMILLAN

I made some changes and now it is.

Clark looks up at him with confusion, which quickly turns to anger. He walks to his cubicle, grabs his bag as MacMillan follows.

CLARK

Oh, right, right. Great. Of course you did. Should be pretty quick.

MACMILLAN

Why's that?

CLARK

'Cause they never buy anything.

MACMILLAN

Well... we'll just go in there and both do our best, how's that sound?

CLARK

(walking past him)
Jesus, what planet are you from?

CUT TO:

EXT. CARDIFF GIANT PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

MacMillan and Clark walk to Joe's second Audi Quattro, a slightly newer model of the one he drove into the ocean.

CLARK

You kiddin' me? Where's the Porsche?

MACMILLAN

What?

CLARK

You sales guys. Don't you drive the latest and greatest, whatever gets 'em wet?

MACMILLAN

(shrugging)
Car saved my life.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- LATER

MacMillan sits at one end of the table, locked in. Clark sits next to him, half-engaged.

ANGLE ON the other end of the table. A VP at the head flanked by four of his top DIRECTORS and MANAGERS.

DIRECTOR 1

It's just that efficiency is kicking us in the ass right now. If we can't speed up, then we're dead in the water.

CLARK

A recent analytics pass we did showed our product out-performing most of the top-sellers by an average of 16%.

DIRECTOR 1

What about IBM?

CLARK

IBM is IBM. But we're neck and neck. And we're cheaper.

DIRECTOR 2

Technically. The difference in cost is negligible. It seems you guys at Cardiff think you've built a pretty fancy race car that deserves an outrageous price tag.

MANAGER 1

And we get no Big Blue guarantee.

MACMILLAN

There's no such thing as a Big Blue guarantee.

DIRECTOR 2

Well, they had me fooled.

The execs chuckle. MacMillan conspicuously does not.

MACMILLAN

Me, too. That's why when the floor dropped out, I was caught unaware.

The execs quiet, listening.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

When you're sailing along with the best of the best, it's as if you're invincible. When I worked for IBM, I excelled at IBM. And let me be clear, they make a good product. And they are a good company.

His tone is confident and matter-of-fact, devoid of artifice, just a man relaying facts.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

But one day, I turned a corner, and I got blind-sided. It was because the confidence I had, my convictions, what I believed to be true, the very foundation I was standing on--it was a lie. When that happens, you're left with nothing. And when that moment comes for Applied Data, who are you going to blame?

MacMillan lowers his voice now, causing the execs to lean forward almost imperceptibly. Here, he drifts off just a bit.

ANGLE ON Clark, paying attention perhaps for the first time.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

Will you blame IBM? They don't care. You're an account number to them. Your entire mainframe could halt and catch fire, but their name isn't sullied. They go on. That's when you cease to exist. At least to them. And to the world, if it costs you your entire business. And it's your fault.

And now MacMillan returns to the room from wherever he was. He locks eyes with the rapt VP, going in for the close.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

Cardiff Giant will white label all its products and sell them to you outright. No licensing renewal. And we will place an IT position at your location on our payroll. We will not leave you. We will be there. It's simple, honest, and real. It's why I work for them.

(pause)

So. Are we ready to do business?

A long silence. The managers and directors turn to look at the VP, who has said nothing up until this point. The silence goes on for some time. A stand-off.

Clark's adrenaline is going--are we really closing?

CLARK
 There's also free install of any
 updates to the product--

MACMILLAN
 Gordon, please.

As he says it, MacMillan never takes his eyes off the VP.

Waiting. Then:

VP
 Yeah, I definitely think we can put
 something together.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARDIFF GIANT PARKING LOT -- LATER

Clark gets out of the car, as does MacMillan. They walk
 toward the office.

CLARK
 Wow, I've gotta say I'm impressed.
 That was like... JFK staring down
 the Cuban Missile Crisis. Applied
 Data hasn't bought jack-all from
 anyone in years.

MACMILLAN
 We did good. You did a solid job
 explaining the software.

CLARK
 Good... I mean, I should've, I
 wrote the--

MacMillan spins on him. Clark stops, caught off-guard.

MACMILLAN
 But I need you to do me one favor.

CLARK
 Okay.

MACMILLAN
 Next time I move to close. This is
 what you do.

CLARK
 (eager for a pro tip)
 Okay, what?

MACMILLAN
 You **SHUT. THE FUCK. UP.**

It echoes out over the entire parking lot. Clark stands there, stunned, speechless. MacMillan steps closer, extremely intimidating.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 Do you understand me?

Clark can only nod somewhat. MacMillan walks off, leaving Clark alone in the lot.

A wave of several different emotions cross over Clark's face as he stares after him.

CUT TO:

INT. SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE -- LATER

Bosworth sits behind his desk, leaning in his chair as he evaluates MacMillan, who's back in his seat across from him.

Behind MacMillan's chair stands Al.

BOSWORTH
 He closed 'em?

AL
 Apparently.

BOSWORTH
 I'm impressed.

MACMILLAN
 (to Al)
 I thought you'd be enthused.

AL
 That you actually did what you said you could?
 (pause)
 Applied Data is nothing compared to the rest of your quota for this quarter.

MACMILLAN
 Which I've noticed is higher than everybody else's.

AL
 We had a saying in the Navy.

BOSWORTH

Oh, God.

MACMILLAN

About extremely high quotas?

AL

I'm sorry, did you command a flight squadron in Vietnam? Was that you?

(pause)

This is about management. Which is my job. Incentive to perform under pressure and exceed expectations. And you know what? I never lost one man. Not one.

MACMILLAN

Look, I've been here two days and I already brought a deal onto the table.

BOSWORTH

What Al is *also* saying, is 'Good job, Joe.'

(pause)

You brought in an account that Al hasn't been able to do anything with in three years.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES -- MOMENTS LATER

Al and MacMillan step out of Bosworth's office.

AL

One tiny deal? Who cares?

(pause)

You still work for me, remember that, so the next time you close somebody, I better be in the room. One word to John Bosworth from me and you're gone.

Al stomps off.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES - CLARK'S CUBE -- LATER

Clark sits at his desk suffering from wounded pride. MacMillan appears over the divider. Tosses a magazine down onto Clark's desk. It's open to a certain article...

IBM'S TROJAN HORSE: HOW OPEN ARCHITECTURE WILL UNDO BIG BLUE

The same article MacMillan was reading at home. The issue of Byte he brought with him from New York in a moving box.

MACMILLAN

Ever read that?

Clark stares blankly at the pages.

CLARK

Yeah... I wrote it. A while ago...

CLOSER ON the article. We see the by-line: "By Gordon Clark."

MACMILLAN

What do you think?

CLARK

What do you mean? It's, uh... yeah. IBM's PC is just off-the-shelf parts. They rushed it to market, used generic hardware, put it in a box labeled IBM. Everybody knows that.

MACMILLAN

Not everybody.

CLARK

(flipping through mag)
Where did you find this?

MACMILLAN

What does open architecture mean to you?

CLARK

It means...well, it means anyone could build an IBM PC. Tweak it, make it better. Call it their own.

MACMILLAN

Like Cardiff Giant.

CLARK

(chuckles)
Buzzards like John Bosworth and Nathan Cardiff will never go for the PC business--

MACMILLAN

Unless you force them to.

(pause)

(MORE)

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

Personal computing. That's where the future is. Not this mainframe systems shit. And the future is always inextricably tied to what?

CLARK

...I don't know.

MACMILLAN

The money.

(pointing to magazine)

If you see him around, I want to meet the guy who wrote that. I have a project I want to discuss with him.

MacMillan walks away. Clark stands up from his cube.

CLARK

Hey, what are you trying to do?

MACMILLAN

Break Big Blue's back.

END ACT II

ACT III

INT. CLARK'S GARAGE -- NIGHT

ANGLE ON Clark, in a t-shirt and jeans, sitting with his older daughter Joanie on his lap. On the card table lies a Speak & Spell toy that has been almost totally dismantled.

JOANIE

(unhappy)

You broke my Speak & Spell!

CLARK

No, no, no, no, baby, don't worry,
I'm gonna put it back together.
Just like new. But I want to show
you how it works--

JOANIE

Fix it!

CLARK

Look at this first... See, here are
the batteries, okay, the power
source... see these wires here?
That makes the circuit board work.
On the board you've got the 128
kilobit ROM chip...

DONNA ENTERS from the house door but Clark doesn't notice her. She continues to watch the interaction...

CLARK (CONT'D)

...and this is your logic here...
and this is your speech synthesizer
chip, which Mommy helped make at
her job. This chip makes it talk,
just like you and me--

JOANIE

Make it talk.

CLARK

You make it talk, here.

He hands her the keyboard portion of the Speak & Spell. She presses the 'On' button and the device's FAMILIAR CHIRPS echo loudly through Gordon's stereo speakers. Joanie is amazed.

SPEAK N' SPELL

Now. Spell. Courage.

Joanie carefully taps the keys, looking to Clark for assurance on some of the harder letters.

SPEAK N' SPELL (CONT'D)
C. O. U. R. A. G. E.
 (she presses 'Enter')
Correct.

Clark notices Donna behind him.

CLARK
 (to Joanie)
 Go get ready for E.T.

Clark kisses her on the head, she darts off into the house.

DONNA
 Six years of voice synthesis
 technology at Texas Instruments,
 all for a plastic red toy.

CLARK
 It's a brilliant product.

He tiredly turns to an Apple II also on the fold-out card table. Not dismantling this computer, simply using it. His checkbook is open next to it.

DONNA
 (looking at screen)
 What's this?

CLARK
 I'm figuring out how we can make it
 through August given our two
 mortgages and two car payments.

DONNA
 On the computer?

CLARK
 Yeah, I wrote this little program
 last night, since the calculator's
 broken. And look...
 (tapping a few keys)
 I can project expenses here and see
 how we do. It runs the whole
 scenario of our finances. At this
 rate...
 (reading screen)
 We can retire in 2045.

DONNA
 You're a genius.

CLARK

I still have some good ideas once
in a while.

DONNA

Oh, uh... a Joe MacMillan called.
From work.

Clark falls back in his chair, sighing with frustration.

DONNA (CONT'D)

I said we were going to see E.T.
tonight and you were done work for
the day. What does he want?

Clark turns off the computer.

CLARK

He wants to pick a fight he can't
win. Not in Texas, at least. And he
thinks I'm some innovator and
revolutionary.

DONNA

Well, aren't you?
(pause)

Maybe he has something you can sink
your teeth into for once.

CLARK

Donna, if I need a hobby, I'll take
up golf. I'm not about to cross
wires with a guy like John Bosworth
just because I'm bored. Not when we
have--

CLARK (CONT'D)

Two mortgages and two car
payments.

DONNA

Two mortgages and two car
payments.

Clark sighs.

CLARK (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's just go to the movie.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE THEATER -- LATER

The lights are up at the movie's end, the signature JOHN
WILLIAMS FANFARE playing over the end credits.

CLARK AND HIS FAMILY slowly walk out with the rest of the
audience. His daughters are overjoyed.

CLARK
 (to daughters)
 You guys like that?

HALEY
 Yeah!

CLARK
 (to Donna)
 I'll also point out that Elliot had
 a Speak & Spell and not a Cardiff
 Giant systems mainframe.

Clark stops unexpectedly.

ANGLE ON Joe MacMillan in his shirt and tie, sleeves rolled
 up, sitting in the back row with a bag of popcorn.

MACMILLAN
 Gordon, is that you?

He stands, offers his hand to Donna.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 Hi, Joe MacMillan. We spoke on the
 phone earlier.

DONNA
 Oh, right...

MACMILLAN
 You guys couldn't wait to see this,
 either? Very affecting movie.

DONNA
 The girls have been crazy to--

CLARK
 Did you follow me here?

MacMillan steps out of the aisle, leads Clark away.

MACMILLAN
 (to kids)
 You mind if I borrow your dad for a
 second?

CLARK
 (to Donna)
 Work stuff.

Donna ushers the children out of the theater, eyeing
 MacMillan, unsure.

MACMILLAN

Reverse engineer an IBM PC with me.

A beat. Clark lightly kicks one of the seat legs.

CLARK

Why do you want to reverse engineer
an IBM PC?

MACMILLAN

I told you. It's where everything
is headed.

CLARK

I know.

(pause)

But why are you doing this?

MACMILLAN

Why do you think I picked Cardiff
Giant? With my resume, I could've
gone to work for any other company
in the country. Maybe the world.
But I came to Texas. You think I
did it for the BBQ? I came to where
you were. And as luck would have
it, you're extremely unhappy.

CLARK

I think you make a lot of
assumptions.

(pause)

Look, thanks for seeing something I
used to be, but...

MACMILLAN

I don't take no for an answer.

CLARK

I'm gonna have to respectfully
decline, Joe. I just... can't put
my job in jeopardy when I've got
two kids and...

(hating himself)

Two mortgages and two car payments.

Clark leaves the theater, his face conflicted. He looks back
toward MacMillan a couple of times on his way out.

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL -- DAY

An older PROFESSOR (58) stands in front of a large class of about 75 students. Their vibrant 80's youth clashes with boredom as the professor clears his throat.

PROFESSOR

We will be postponing today's discussion on vacuum tubes, as we have a special guest who's in town on business for today only. He contacted the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering this morning and requested to stop by and speak to some of our best and brightest about the current state of the computer industry...

Students have started to take notice. One is CAMERON HOWE (22), a young woman with ice blonde hair cut very short. Big black-rimmed glasses and exposed collar bone, fashionable, post-punk.

She has a pattern of rubber bands currently wrapped around her fingers.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

So without further ado, please welcome Joseph MacMillan from Cardiff Giant Computer Systems.

MacMillan, looking his shaved and showered best, trots into the room amidst half-hearted applause.

ANGLE ON Cameron as she immediately tosses the rubber bands off her fingers, very interested in what this man might say.

MACMILLAN

Good afternoon, UT. Let me start off with a question: How many of you desire to be professional computer engineers?

About 50 hands go up in the class.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

Now I'm going to list off several categories. When you hear a category that you don't have hands-on experience in, put your hand down.

(pause)

Electrical engineering. Software design.

(MORE)

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 Hardware-software integration.
 Circuit design. Microprocessing.

Already, half the class has their hands down.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 Firmware design. Very Large Scale
 Integration. Operating systems.

Down to about eight people now.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 FPGA configuration. Hardware
 description languages. Personal
 computer design.

Three people have their hands raised. One is Cameron.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 Reverse engineering.

Cameron's hand goes down, as does another, leaving only one
 smiling, cocky male student.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 Okay, let's go back one.

Both hands go up again and the cocky kid loses his grin.
 MacMillan points to a FAT BALDING GUY first.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)
 Tell me one thing that will be true
 about computers 10 years from now.

FAT BALDING GUY
 (mouth-breathing)
 Computers will exist as ocular
 headsets that plug into the back of
 our cerebral cortexes--

MACMILLAN
 Okay, thanks.
 (pointing to Cameron)
 You?

CAMERON
 Um... Computers will likely be
 connected together over a vast
 network and able to communicate
 with each other by alternately
 modulating and demodulating digital
 data over an electric system of
 some kind--

MACMILLAN
Like phone lines.

CAMERON
Probably phone lines.

MACMILLAN
Can you see me after class, Miss.
uh...?

CAMERON
Yes. Cameron Howe, yes.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADE -- LATER

A hallmark of the early 80's coin-op craze. Hazy from smoke and the crowd's a bit older, college drinkers.

Cameron and MacMillan have stationed themselves before a Frogger cabinet. MacMillan, tie loose and suit sleeves pushed up short, deftly carries four tequila shots over to the controls.

CAMERON
I'm great at this game, I'll whoop
your ass.

MACMILLAN
But there are rules. Every time you
lose a frog...
(holding out a glass)
You take a shot.

CAMERON
I can handle that.

She goes for the joystick, but he stops her.

MACMILLAN
And one to kick us off.

They both down a shot. He never takes his eyes off her.

LATER

She plays intently while he interviews her.

CAMERON
I don't know, but if I had to
choose now, I'd say personal
computing, software, video games.
Something like that.

MACMILLAN

There are a lot of companies that
already do those things.

CAMERON

Not like I would.

ANGLE ON the screen as she jumps too soon and her frog gets
killed against a car: POW.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

(turning to him)

Look, this is an entire industry
built on people ripping each other
off. SEC rips off CPM, Microsoft
rips off SEC, IBM rips off
everybody.

MACMILLAN

Some people would say this isn't
about money, but about making your
mark in the world.

(holds up a glass)

My turn.

(pause)

You ever worked with the IBM PC?

CAMERON

(coy)

I've worked with a lot of hardware
in my time.

She downs the shot. Starting to get to her. MacMillan cracks
a smile.

MACMILLAN

Forfeit?

CAMERON

You need to win don't you?

MacMillan takes his shot, looks at her. Something changes in
his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CLARK'S HOUSE - BATHROOM -- LATER

Gordon flips on the light, stares into the mirror. He's in a
white t-shirt, boxers. Looks at himself, a tired mess.

DONNA (O.S.)

What's wrong?

He looks to the hallway. Donna stands in the shadows, squinting in her robe.

CLARK
Can't sleep.

She lingers, then disappears. Clark leans in, examines his face closely. Runs his hand over his unkempt mustache.

He turns on the sink. Swings the mirror open, pulls a razor, shaving cream out of the medicine cabinet.

QUICK SHOTS: CLARK SHAVES OFF HIS MUSTACHE

Rinses off. His face immediately fresher. His youth, hidden until now, returns somewhat, as well as a bit of masculinity.

DONNA (O.S.)
What are you doing in here?

Clark turns to her. She's taken aback.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

She steps closer to him, sleepy-eyed, but smiling. Runs her hand across his face.

DONNA (CONT'D)
You're a new man.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMERON'S BEDROOM -- LATER

MacMillan gets dressed, having trouble not knocking over the clutter in her tiny college apartment as he puts on his wingtips. It draws her awake.

CAMERON
Where you going?

MACMILLAN
This wasn't part of the plan.

CAMERON
(incredulous)
What *plan*?

MACMILLAN
I'm sorry, Cameron. It's Cameron, right?

CAMERON

Okay, now you're being a jerk.

MacMillan throws his suit coat on.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Are you really just leaving?

MACMILLAN

...yes.

CAMERON

Well, what about the project?

MACMILLAN

...don't worry about it.

CAMERON

Don't worry about it? You dump this opportunity in my lap and then say 'don't worry about it'?

She stands, wraps the sheet around herself.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Maybe I don't need you. Maybe I'll just do it myself. I don't remember signing any non-disclosure agreements before we got into bed.

He turns, looks at her, his face pushing back the regret.

MACMILLAN

Maybe you will.

He walks out of the apartment, SLAMS the door.

CUT TO:

INT. MACMILLAN'S CONDO -- DAWN

With the lights off, the whole place is lit only by a dim and hazy blue of pre-morning.

ANGLE ON MacMillan, sitting in a chair blankly. Clearly been up all night. He rises, goes to a moving box...

...opens it up. Pulls out a wooden Louisville slugger worn at the grip. He's silhouetted against his condo's panoramic view of cosmopolitan flatlands.

CUT TO:

INT. GLASS-WALLED OFFICE -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Barnes' office. This is the first scene we saw. Joe is there, livid. Barnes hides all emotion, plays it cool.

MACMILLAN

You told me it wasn't worth anything.

BARNES

It *wasn't* worth anything, Joe, what do you want me to say? It's a wire path about the size of a period, for God's sake.

White hot silence.

MACMILLAN

(trembling)

Two days later... we patent it. Two days later.

BARNES

We have to protect our interests. That's our technology. It was developed on company time.

We rejoin the opening shot. A long pause.

BARNES (CONT'D)

C'mon, Joe. It's just business.

CUT TO:

INT. MACMILLAN'S CONDO -- PRESENT

MacMillan reaches back into the moving box. Pulls out a baseball. Examines it for a moment. Then he tosses it up...

SWINGS THE BAT AND CONNECTS

Sending a line drive into the wall opposite him with a CRACK. The ball dents the dry wall, then rolls back across the floor to MacMillan's feet. He picks it up again, tosses it...

SWINGS THE BAT AND SMASHES THE BALL THROUGH A LAMP

Destroying the shade and blowing the light bulb apart as the base falls off another moving box. He picks the ball up again...

SWINGS THE BAT, SENDS THE BALL OUT THROUGH HIS BALCONY WINDOW

With an EXPLOSION of glass.

The cool morning air flutters over his loose tie as he gazes out onto the horizon.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES - MACMILLAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

MacMillan sits at his terminal in an office that hasn't even been set up yet. He types methodically, focused.

ON THE SCREEN

We see what he's working on. In green letters against black, it begins:

"To: John Bosworth, Cardiff Giant Executive Team, et al

It is with sadness that I submit my formal resignation to the company..."

MacMillan's finger hovers over the 'Print' button.

GORDON CLARK ENTERS wearing beat up Ray-Ban Wayfarers, carrying a large box adorned with the IBM logo. He sets it down on MacMillan's desk.

CLARK

(taking glasses off)

Do you know how much one of these things costs?

(pause)

Monday's a holiday, so we can spend the three-day weekend in my garage.

(pause)

What do you say?

MacMillan stands. Opens the box, revealing a brand new IBM PC. A small smile appears on his face, perhaps for the first time.

MACMILLAN

This isn't just about Cardiff. We'll wake a sleeping giant at IBM. They'll come at us with everything they have.

Clark nods. Then looks back up at MacMillan.

CLARK

Let's turn this thing inside out.

END ACT III

ACT IV

INT. CLARK'S GARAGE -- NIGHT

MacMillan and Clark, still in their work clothes, stand over the IBM PC, removed from its packaging and vulnerable under the light. MacMillan works a screwdriver on its sides...

SLIDES OFF THE METAL BOX, REVEALING ITS INSIDES

MACMILLAN

From here, you're in the driver's seat.

CLARK

A personal computer--like any computer, really--is just a nothing box full of electronic switches; hardware. The IBM, Apple II, the Altair, it's all the same junk.

MACMILLAN

Get to the good part.

BEGIN MONTAGE -- REVERSE ENGINEERING

Clark and MacMillan slave over the machine, pulling it apart, examining it...

-- Clark carefully unscrews circuit boards and slides them out of the PC, laying them next to each other.

CLARK (V.O.)

You can buy all this stuff off the shelf right now. That's how IBM built this thing so fast.

MACMILLAN (V.O.)

I said the good part, not the part I already know.

-- Clark carefully pries a black rectangular chip the size of half a match book off one of the circuit boards.

CLARK (V.O.)

Well, if you're so smart, tell me what connects the hardware to the software?

MACMILLAN (V.O.)

The chip.

-- Clark holds up "the chip" under the light.

CLARK (V.O.)

Ding, ding, ding, and this chip, the ROM BIOS, is the only part of the whole machine IBM actually designed. It is the brain. It is the magic. Bad news is they copyrighted it and own how it works. Good news is, there's a way around that. Sort of.

MACMILLAN (V.O.)

Reverse engineering.

-- Days later. MacMillan and Clark in different clothes, tired. Clark has the chip and its board jerry-rigged to an output monitor, working.

CLARK (V.O.)

I sit down with the code and through trial and error we create a specification manual, a list of the things a chip has to be able to do.

-- Days later, different clothes. Clark documents with pencil on paper everything he does. Downing retro cans of Coke.

-- MacMillan transfers the notes into a typed version, prints them out on Cardiff Giant letterhead.

MACMILLAN (V.O.)

How long do you think it'll take?

-- MacMillan nods off as Clark works late into the night.

CLARK (V.O.)

I have no idea.

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT IN:

INT. CLARK'S GARAGE -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON MacMillan with his head resting on a work table amidst scattered circuit boards, screwdrivers. Asleep.

CLARK (O.S.)

That's it.

A heavy binder lands next to MacMillan's head with a SMACK, jarring him awake. He rubs his eyes, takes the binder, begins to flip through it. He looks over to...

CLARK, in a Texas Rangers t-shirt and looking very sleep-deprived. He sits forward in a metal fold-out chair, heavy-eyed but focused. Almost dreading their recent revelation.

CLARK (CONT'D)

The entire layout of the IBM PC ROM BIOS chip. The system map, everything.

A beat. They look to each other.

MACMILLAN

Now we just make our own chip.

CLARK

Correction: We make an even *better* chip.

CUT TO:

INT. WHATABURGER -- LATER

MacMillan and Clark sit in a booth, uneaten burgers unwrapped in front of them. The place done up in those three fast-food shades of brown. Both men seem distant, contemplative.

CLARK

I feel like we just figured out who killed Kennedy.

MACMILLAN

I feel like we're 16 and we just got the keys to Dad's car.

CLARK

So what now?

MacMillan flips through the book of precious research.

MACMILLAN

We go to the marketplace with a better product. Cheaper, better, faster.

CLARK

This is dangerous territory, man.

MACMILLAN

This entire industry is built on people ripping each other off.

(pause)

(MORE)

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

It trades on a remarkable idea that from the moment something is created, every second something new is made that does more, and costs less.

CLARK

(hanging head down)
I feel a little sick.

MACMILLAN

We did good. I'm gonna use the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE -- DAY

John Bosworth at his desk. As if he never leaves his perch. The phone RINGS and he answers.

BOSWORTH

(into phone)
This is Bosworth.

INTERCUT -- JOHN BOSWORTH / DALE BARNES PHONE CONVERSATION

INT. DALE BARNES' OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Dale Barnes. He's tanner. His office is bigger. Life has improved.

BARNES

(on speaker phone)
John. It's Dale Barnes.

BOSWORTH

Who?

BARNES

Senior Vice President of Sales,
North America.

BOSWORTH

(half-interested)
Well good for you, Dale.

BARNES

At IBM.

This is enough to give Bosworth pause.

BARNES (CONT'D)

Heard you got one of my boys down there.

BOSWORTH

Yes, we do. MacMillan. Interesting fellow.

BARNES

Yeah, he's damaged goods, John. Probably should've warned you, but now it might be too late.

BOSWORTH

What do you mean?

BARNES

I'm here with Rebecca Taylor, our senior legal council.

REBECCA TAYLOR (41) a shrewd bitch in a business suit, shoulder pads and all, steps closer to Barnes' desk.

TAYLOR

Hi, John. We've got a problem.

CUT TO:

INT. SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE -- LATER

Bosworth is now up out of his desk, pacing. Fuming. Al is also standing, angry, but more imitative, like a child pretending to be his father.

ANGLE ON NATHAN CARDIFF (60), relaxed in chair near the window, worn cowboy hat in his hand. He puts his snakeskin boots up on John's desk, whistling "Red River Valley."

BOSWORTH

I'm sorry we had to pull you away from the ranch, Nathan.

CARDIFF

Don't mind. I wanna meet the two boys who put my company in the ground.

The door opens. MacMillan walks in fairly grim, carrying the binder, followed by a trepidatious and slow-moving Gordon Clark. Al closes the door behind them.

AL

You guys screwed the pooch.

BOSWORTH
 Shut up, Al.
 (to MacMillan, Clark)
 You two sit down.

MacMillan and Clark obey. Al slinks back toward the corner, a wounded animal.

BOSWORTH (CONT'D)
 (gesturing)
 This is Nathan Cardiff. He started
 the company you destroyed.

Clark starts to rise, Cardiff holds him in place with a hand.

CARDIFF
 I'd rather not shake your hands
 right now, gentlemen.

Bosworth leans against the front edge of his desk, crosses his arms. Glowers down at both men.

BOSWORTH
 We just had a two and a half hour
 jaw with IBM's legal team,
 including your old boss Dale
 Barnes.

MACMILLAN
 (deadpan)
 Oh yeah? How's he doing?

BOSWORTH
 He's doing pretty splendid, given
 the fact that Big Blue is gonna
 liquidate this place to the tune of
several dozen million dollars in
 legal damages because two retards
 in our employ decided to *rip off*
 their flagship product.

CLARK
 We didn't do this as Cardiff Giant.
 That wasn't the idea, we did it
 rogue--

BOSWORTH
 Rogue, huh? On your own? Like
 whatever Silicon Valley rat hole
 you crawled from, right, Gordon?
 (pause)
 Turns out, doesn't matter. And
 trust me, we tried to throw you to
 the wolves.

(MORE)

BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

But since MacMillan here worked for IBM, and you two were ours at the time of your little project, the project is ours now, for better or worse.

CARDIFF

Worse, in this case.

BOSWORTH

Barnes and this woman Taylor are headed down here tomorrow.

BOSWORTH (CONT'D)

(in MacMillan's face)

So did you just not understand when I said we do *systems software* and don't TOUCH PC's?

CLARK

How the hell did IBM find out?

MACMILLAN

I told them.

Silence in the room. All eyes on MacMillan now.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARDIFF GIANT PARKING LOT -- LATER

MacMillan walks to his car, putting on his sunglasses. Clark follows, almost chasing after him.

CLARK

Hey. Hey! HEY!

MacMillan turns around.

CLARK (CONT'D)

You called them the other night, didn't you? The moment we finished. What happened, Big Blue kill your dog?

MACMILLAN

Just let everybody cool off.

CLARK

Let them cool off?

MACMILLAN

Gordon. It's gonna be fine.

Clark DECKS HIM across the face without a word, knocking MacMillan's sunglasses to the concrete. Despite the violence, MacMillan remains calm as he retrieves them, puts them on.

CLARK

I don't know who you think you are. But you're wrong. You can't just walk into this company, walk into my life and start rearranging shit. You might be some hot shot swinging dick without a care in the world but I got a family, man.

(pause)

I got a family.

Clark walks away. MacMillan wipes blood from the corner of his mouth. Then:

MACMILLAN

(calling after)

Just tell me one thing.

Clark stops, turns around. Waits.

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

When we were working in that garage. Where you work like you used to work, I mean *really* work. Tell me that didn't feel good. Tell me that didn't wake something up inside you that's been dormant for a long time.

CLARK

Look. I see the future. I've been seeing it since 1975. And as weird as you are, I can tell you see it, too. All right? I'm not a betting man, but I'd put *money* on where I think things are going. Do you know how hard that is? To wake up every morning and know in your gut? And watch everyone around you walk off a cliff? Watch yourself walk off it, too?

(pause)

We can't *make* them see it. You can't *make* someone see it.

MACMILLAN

I believe you can.

Clark just shakes his head. Walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. MACMILLAN'S QUATTRO -- MOMENTS LATER

MacMillan SLAMS his door closed. Sits in silence in the car.

ANGLE ON the rearview mirror. Joe catches his own eyes. Can't look away.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S GARAGE -- NIGHT

Clark sits at his makeshift workstation, looking off into the distance. His eyes come to rest on the mess of different computers in front of him. He picks up the Apple II...

HEAVES IT TO THE PAVEMENT AND IT SHATTERS

An ugly BLAST of plastic, circuitry, keys.

DONNA ENTERS from the side door moments later.

DONNA

What the hell was that?

CLARK

Nothing.

DONNA

What's going on, Gordon? You're up one minute, on five hours of sleep a week, then you're brooding around the house, won't even talk to the children. Won't even look me in the eye--

CLARK

I'm in TROUBLE, Donna.

DONNA

(quieter)

What kind of trouble?

CLARK

We pissed off IBM.

On her reaction. She knows it's serious.

He walks toward the door. He turns back, can barely look at her.

CLARK (CONT'D)
We should've never left California.

CUT TO:

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES - MACMILLAN'S OFFICE -- MORNING

MacMillan faces away from his computer, looking out onto the parking lot. A man awaiting execution.

A KNOCK draws his attention. He turns around to see...

Dale Barnes. Smug, mock-friendly, sharp where MacMillan has begun to blur. Barnes enters, drops himself into a chair comfortably.

BARNES
Long time, no see, huh? You get the flowers I sent?

No answer.

BARNES (CONT'D)
Unexpected business trip. Had to come down here with our legal group, put out the little firestorm you started.

MACMILLAN
Right.

BARNES
I was on the phone with Applied Data this morning. They love you, but I told them that Cardiff Giant might not be around much longer, so hey, IBM would love to step in and fulfill on their mainframe solution.

(pause)

I know you just closed that deal, but... you know, way of the world. Funnily enough, they also want a PC solution, too. All in a day's work, right?

MACMILLAN
Would've loved to have been on the phone. I haven't seen you close a deal in years.

(MORE)

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

Usually you just take credit for
whatever your guys bring in.

BARNES

Eh, it felt good to put on my spurs
again, what can I say? I figure as
long as I'm out in this backwater,
there might be a little bit of
business to be won while we clean
up the mess.

MACMILLAN

Sounds like you've got it all
figured out.

MacMillan shows no signs of cracking, letting this prick get
to him. Barnes stands up, moves to go. Stops, turns.

BARNES

What are you trying to prove with
all this?

(pause)

IBM doesn't lose, remember?

MacMillan grips the back of his chair, knuckles white. Dale
shrugs, leaves.

BARNES (CONT'D)

(on his way out)

Drive safe.

CUT TO:

END ACT IV

ACT V

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM -- DAY

Office bathroom at Cardiff.

ANGLE ON Clark puking his guts out into one of the toilets. MacMillan stands behind him, shaken. Uneasy.

MACMILLAN

They're ready for us.

CLARK

There is no 'us.'

Clark wipes his mouth, brusquely brushes past MacMillan to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Bosworth, Cardiff. Fresh clothes but weary. MacMillan, Clark sit in their respective chairs.

They're joined by lawyer BARRY SHIELDS (50) - good suit, if a bit small. The man himself is small, balding, worried. He carries Clark and MacMillan's report.

CARDIFF

An' why the hell can't we just fire these pecker heads?

SHIELDS

Because then we're gonna lose this lawsuit. If you fire them and shelve their work, we're essentially admitting guilt.

(pause)

We do that, we tell IBM 'You're right, we're wrong.' But the damage is already done. We've got the entire IBM ROM BIOS layout on 150 pages of Cardiff Giant letterhead.

BOSWORTH

So what's the *solution*, Barry?

Barry takes off his glasses, rubs the bridge of his nose.

SHIELDS

We legitimize the project. We go the other way.

(MORE)

SHIELDS (CONT'D)

We say that Cardiff Giant, as a company, was pursuing PC development all along.

CARDIFF

I sure as hell don't see how that clears away the hornet's nest.

SHIELDS

We take Clark's findings on the BIOS chip. The performance, the system map, all of it. We hand over the report to an engineer and tell them to build something that operates and performs in the exact same way. We don't tell them *how* to do it, and we certainly don't tell them we learned how by pulling apart an IBM machine and looking inside with a flashlight, but--

BOSWORTH

I don't think we have one engineer capable of building a BIOS from scratch other than
(pointing to Clark)
Sonny Bono over here.

SHIELDS

We can't use him. Or any other engineer we currently employ.

BOSWORTH

So we have to hire.

SHIELDS

Yes. Someone who knows nothing about us or IBM, and has never seen the contents of this binder. At this point, we're all dirty and have to walk away. Especially these two. They've got to be as far away from this as humanly possible, and this report has to go in a locked drawer until the end of time.

BOSWORTH

But we can't fire them.

SHIELDS

No. At least not right now.

BOSWORTH

We get out of this by actually building a PC clone.

SHIELDS

As Cardiff Giant.

CARDIFF

So we basically have to open a whole new line of business.

SHIELDS

To legally be in the clear, yes.

BOSWORTH

This is your brilliant idea to save our hides?

SHIELDS

No, actually... it was MacMillan's.

Again, all eyes on Joe MacMillan. Calmly sitting there.

BOSWORTH

You son of a bitch.

Cardiff stands, approaches MacMillan. Eyeballs him with a West Texas stare for a moment.

CARDIFF

You know how many futures you're toyin' with, son?

MACMILLAN

You said it yourself. This is a systems software company. But before that, what was it? Missile guidance systems. Before that, short-wave radios. It's not about what it is today, it's about what it's going to be tomorrow.

BOSWORTH

This is our BUSINESS--

CLARK

(interrupting)

It may be your business, but Joe is talking about the future. Selling systems software, he probably would've made you a couple hundred thousand dollars this year.

(pause)

We just made you several million.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)
 (Bosworth eyes him)
 ...Sir.

Everyone turns to Clark, his voice surprising in this room. MacMillan even looks over. Bosworth appears as if he's about to bite through his own teeth.

BOSWORTH
 Several million, huh?
 (to MacMillan)
 You are a basketcase.

Deathly silence in the room. Then:

CARDIFF
 I don't know 'bout you boys, but
 this is best sales pitch I ever
 heard.
 (to MacMillan)
 I admire your tenacity, son.
 (sober)
 Now don't screw it up. Because in
 Texas, you put a man's livelihood
 on the line and don't come
 through...
 (pause)
 You won't be gettin' any new job,
 'cause ain't nobody gonna able to
 find where you buried.

MacMillan stands.

MACMILLAN
 So put me in charge of the PC
 division.

BOSWORTH
 Excuse me?

MACMILLAN
 VP-level. If you want this to
 succeed, then I'm in charge. I
 frankly don't trust anyone else to
 see it through and it was my idea
 to--

CLARK
 Our idea.

Again, everyone looks to Clark. He stands.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 Our idea.

BOSWORTH

What are you saying, Gordon?

CLARK

I'm saying... sir...

(pause)

I'm saying you get both of us. We both run this. Because this is no longer a business of numbers, quota, or revenue. This is the business of *imagination*. I cracked that ROM BIOS chip like it was the morning crossword. You point out another engineer who can do that and I'll let them ride the horse, but so far? I'm all you've got.

(pause)

This is the future. We both made you see it. Now we run it for you.

Bosworth looks to MacMillan, who seems caught off guard.

BOSWORTH

(disgusted)

Vice presidents. Good God.

Cardiff heads for the door.

CARDIFF

Hell with it. Let's make it happen, boys.

(on his way out,
indicating Gordon)

An' get this one a separate office for his balls.

BOSWORTH

So where the hell are we gonna find this engineer?

CUT TO:

INT. TEXAS CHILI PARLOR -- AFTERNOON

MacMillan and Clark sit in a wooden booth amidst this landmark.

ACROSS FROM THEM sits Cameron Howe. Her face skeptical.

CAMERON

No. Absolutely not.

MACMILLAN

I understand there's a lot for you to be upset about.

CAMERON

You're a complete jackass, you know that? I thought you invited me here to apologize.

MACMILLAN

So we bring you on, you build the chip--

CLARK

Under my guidance.

MACMILLAN

And away we go.

CAMERON

You're not getting it. Even if, IF, I was to consider doing this, I'd have to leave the university.

MACMILLAN

I'm sure you can defer for a semester or... more.

She laughs, incredulous.

CLARK

Listen to me. This is real. You want to change the game as we know it? Or you wanna hang around here and learn about transistors?

She sobers, sees how serious Clark is.

CAMERON

All right. I'll do it.

MACMILLAN

We'll see you in Dallas.

MacMillan, Clark get out of the booth.

CAMERON

One more question.

They turn.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Why'd you drive your car off a cliff at a hundred miles an hour?

Clark looks to MacMillan, confused.

CUT TO:

INT. MACMILLAN'S QUATTRO -- LATER

MacMillan drives, sunglasses on. Clark sits next to him.
Silence for a moment, until:

CLARK

The hell's she talking about, man?

MACMILLAN

Nothing.

CLARK

Who are you? Really? Because I'm
staking a lot on this. I need to
know.

MacMillan doesn't answer him. Clark mulls it over.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Do you want me to drive?

MACMILLAN

No.

END ACT V

ACT VI

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

Barry Shields sits across from Cameron Howe at the corner of the conference room table, questioning her.

SHIELDS

I need your answers to be honest, as they're being recorded for legal record. If you answer falsely, you risk perjuring yourself. Do you understand?

CAMERON

Yep.

SHIELDS

Please say 'yes' or 'I do.'

CAMERON

Yes. I do.

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES -- CONTINUOUS

MacMillan and Clark stand outside the conference room, watching Shields question Cameron. None of what they're saying can be heard. Bosworth stands next to them.

BOSWORTH

You better pray we come outta this with more than our asses intact.

MACMILLAN

I've already got a line on a deal I can put together. Applied Data is looking to outfit with PC's.

BOSWORTH

It's gonna take a lot more than Applied Data to dig us outta this hole.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

SHIELDS

Prior to today, have you ever attempted to disassemble, deconstruct, or decompile in any way, shape, or form any equipment or products manufactured or licensed by International Business Machines, or as they are more commonly known, IBM?

CAMERON

No. I have not.

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES - MACMILLAN'S OFFICE -- LATER

MacMillan sits down at his desk, anxious. He still hasn't even really unpacked in here. He reaches into a small cardboard box, pulls out a Rolodex, puts it on his desk.

Pulls the phone closer, picks up, starts dialing.

BOSWORTH (V.O.)

I had some numbers run and the PC business will cost us upwards of a couple million just to get in the door. So if we reach that perfect world where we actually start *sellin'* these things instead of *runnin'* from the boogie man, your quota's gonna be from here to the goddamn Moon.

(pause)

MacMillan, I suggest you start cold-calling. Clark, I'm gonna need a product we can actually sell.

MACMILLAN

(into phone)

Greg, how are you, it's Joe MacMillan.

(pause)

No, I'm actually not at IBM anymore...

(pause)

I'm with Cardiff Giant, out of Dallas.

(clarifying)

Cardiff. Giant.

INT. CARDIFF GIANT OFFICES - CLARK'S OFFICE -- LATER

Empty. Brand new. Clark takes it in.

He moves to the whiteboard, uncaps a marker, starts writing...

MONTAGE -- CLARK WORKS / MACMILLAN CALLS / CAMERON INTERVIEWS

-- The interview continues.

SHIELDS

Have you ever attempted to reverse engineer any IBM equipment or products?

CAMERON

No. I have not.

MacMillan on the phone, later:

MACMILLAN

It's where everything is headed.
And Cardiff is doing it cheaper,
better, faster. Trust me.

-- Clark writes "BEST IN BREED" in marker on the board...

-- Another call with MacMillan:

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

I'm wide open next week. Let's get
drinks.

-- Another call:

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

Let's do dinner, bring the wife and
kids.

-- Another call:

-- Clark, writing -- "CHIEF COMPETITORS" and under that a
long list of familiar companies: **IBM, Apple, Xerox, Texas
Instruments, Tandy, Commodore, Atari, Hewlett Packard**

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

I hope you change your mind.
(pause)
If you let me in the room, we *will*
change your mind, how's that?

-- Clark writes "SIMPLIFY" on the board and underlines it...

-- Shields and Cameron.

SHIELDS

Have you ever attempted to reverse
engineer any microchips, micro-
code, or other computer hardware
while under the employ of a
business or corporation?

CAMERON

No. I have not.

-- MacMillan's calls begin to overlap, faster and faster:

MACMILLAN

Bottom line is, it's the difference
between Now and Then...

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

...You know me, I always bring a
reasonable price to the table...

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

...I don't sell things I don't
believe in, Marie...

MACMILLAN (CONT'D)

...I'm coming to you first because
I trust you to make good
decisions...

-- Clark writes "PERFECTION" on the board.

-- Back to MacMillan, Clark, and Bosworth outside the
conference room.

BOSWORTH

And I know I can't fire either of
you, but that also means you can't
leave. So if I need to stomp your
head into the ground just to feel
better about my morning shave,
you're gonna have to deal with it.

(pause)

One other thing. In our new *org*
chart, Al, God love him, has become
completely irrelevant. MacMillan. I
need you to let him go.

CLARK

I'll do it.

Clark turns, walks off.

DOWN THE HALLWAY stands Al, watching them uneasily. His eyes
focus on Clark, quickly coming towards him.

CUT TO:

INT. APPLIED DATA OFFICES -- DAY

MacMillan walks in toward the conference room, stops when he
sees Barnes and fellow IBM black suits there, smiling and
shaking the hands of executives we met previously.

BARNES

MacMillan.

MacMillan shakes a couple of hands as the execs leave.

BARNES (CONT'D)

Trying to win back your systems account? I think you just lost it.

MACMILLAN

I'm here to talk about a PC solution.

BARNES

You and I both know Cardiff's 'pre-existing' PC program is bullshit.

(pause)

I bet Cardiff loves you for that, too, right? Making him waste several million so he doesn't lose everything? It's so bold, Joe. Very bold. I guess it's because this is personal for you.

MacMillan says nothing.

BARNES (CONT'D)

It's okay. It's personal for me, too, now.

(closer to MacMillan)

You just became a pet project of mine. I'll be surprised if you move a thousand of whatever Frankenstein box you end up squeezing out.

MACMILLAN

I've got another 25 calls lined up in this region and beyond. Everybody wants a PC, especially one that's shaping up to be better than yours. They're starting to call *me* now.

BARNES

Good for you. I'm opening up a satellite office out here.

MACMILLAN

Then I guess I'll be seeing more of you.

BARNES

Everywhere you look. All those calls? They'll gladly pay a million dollars more just for that Big Blue logo.

They part, MacMillan headed into the conference room, Barnes returning to his cadre of black suits.

CUT TO:

INT. MACMILLAN'S CONDO -- LATE NIGHT

He's up late, like always. A KNOCK. He turns the TV off, goes to the door and opens it, revealing Cameron standing there. Pretty worn out, but still guarded in front of him.

CAMERON

I finished it.

She holds up a small rectangular black chip. Drops it in his hand. He regards it, stunned. Is it real?

MACMILLAN

I can't believe it.

CAMERON

Believe it. And it's clocking faster than the IBM BIOS by almost a full second.

MACMILLAN

Do you want to... how are you?

CAMERON

Dead as disco.

MACMILLAN

Why don't you come in?

A beat.

CAMERON

No. I'm not coming in. Because this is my shot. I'm here for me. So I'm never coming in.

(pause)

Understand?

MacMillan can only nod.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

(pointing)

What happened there?

MacMillan looks to where she points. The patio window that he blasted a baseball through is now horribly patched with a flat cardboard box and duct tape. He turns back to her.

MACMILLAN

What do you say we go wake up
Gordon?

CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S GARAGE -- LATER

Clark, in a bathrobe, sits at his work station. MacMillan and Cameron stand behind him. Even Donna is there in a bathrobe of her own, interest piqued. On the table sits...

A CARDIFF GIANT PC PROTOTYPE

Kind of a monstrosity at the moment. Circuitry boards exposed, a lot of wiring, all hooked up to a bulky old monitor.

MACMILLAN

We're getting a better box for it,
right?

CLARK

Without a doubt.

DONNA

Well... boot it up.

Clark, MacMillan exchange looks. Clark reaches over, locks a floppy disk in the drive. Hits the power switch...

The machine powers on, a series of HARSH ELECTRIC CATCHES, the exhaust fan WHIRS to life.

They wait.

HALEY (O.S.)

Mommy?

The adults turn around. Haley stands in her pajamas by the door, holding a stuffed lamb by the arm.

ANGLE ON MacMillan watching the little girl.

MACMILLAN

(softly)
Should she be up?

Donna is already moving toward the child.

DONNA

Go back to bed, everything's fine.
We're just looking at Daddy's
secret project, okay?

Haley lingers as Cameron and Gordon direct their attention back to the computer.

CLARK
(engrossed)
Night, baby.

MacMillan continues to look at Haley. She finally goes.

Donna turns and as she walks back, she makes eye contact with MacMillan. A quick moment. He swallows, turns away.

ANGLE ON the monitor screen. A green cursor begins to blink.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Needs a load progress screen.

CAMERON
Why? A progress screen just masks--

CLARK
(turning to her)
Here's the deal. When I tell you something's not right. You change it. Because it's not right.

The awkward moment is interrupted by a series of LOUD ELECTRIC SHUDDERS. Particularly long.

MACMILLAN
What was that?

CLARK
More kinks to iron out.

ANGLE ON the monitor. BEEP. It loads a preliminary message...

MASTER CONTROL PROGRAM IS ONLINE

MACMILLAN
(reading)
'Master Control Program is online.'

CLARK
What does that mean?

CAMERON
I just thought it was funny. Guess you guys didn't see Tron.

A command prompt finally appears on the screen. Cameron reaches over Clark. Types a few key strokes.

THE DOT MATRIX PRINTER NEXT TO THEM SCREAMS TO LIFE

Printing the screen.

ANGLE ON Clark, Cameron, MacMillan in the middle. The blue-green of the screen lighting their faces.

MACMILLAN

It's alive.

CUE "SEND ME AN ANGEL" BY REAL LIFE

CUT TO BLACK.

END SHOW