

"I'LL DO ANYTHING"

Screenplay by
James L. Brooks

1994

SHOOTING DRAFT

FADE IN:

INT. PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The CAMERA briskly retreats as FORTY, HIGHLY CHARGED, ATTRACTIVE, YOUNG PEOPLE march towards it. Each side of the frame is black as this troupe of young actors moves up the middle, everyone talking, grinning, squealing,... everyone having the "high" of their lives.

INT. NEW YORK CLUB - NIGHT

As the troupe, with geometric precision, spills into a large room (containing a raised dance floor); the CAMERA begins to move past dancing couples as a legend appears: 'This is 1975 and Matt Hobbs is singled out for the first time.'

And now the CAMERA reveals MATT HOBBS. His open, friendly, American face slips between some of the many cracks in his profession. The face at 26, and forever more, not arresting enough for a leading man; not quirky enough for a "character."

Matt must briefly walk on the dance floor to make his way past a knot of people. He dances furiously for two seconds, then steps down as THE DANCERS BEGIN TO SING "WOW", but just

PEOPLE
goers
TV

as the song breaks out musically, we hear the SOUND OF SHHHING; the singers falter and then stop as the party-gather, in choreographed movement, at a ceiling mounted set.

MAN ON TV

We can barely discern the words. . ."with his review is Leonard Graff."

A FRANTIC ACTRESS yelps a command:

FRANTIC ACTRESS

I can't hear over this shhing.

Silence, then:

TV CRITIC

...a play about guess what? That's right, young people.

ON MATT

nauseous

He stands next to a ruggedly handsome and extremely

CONTEMPORARY.

HANDSOME CONTEMPORARY

I can't look.

MATT

Good idea, let's not.

into
TV.

He begins to walk, the Handsome Contemporary falling step. Everyone they pass is straining, upwards, at the

HANDSOME CONTEMPORARY

How can we not listen to this?

MATT

We'll know all we need to from the reaction.

the TV
attention

At that moment, the rest of the party-goers turn from as one, looking mugged. (One girl briefly gets our

down
course,
name is

because she is particularly distraught; tears streaming
her angry face. The mixture of tears and rage are, of
the chemical components of incredible sexiness. Her
BETH.) A TORTURED MALE DANCER offers an incantation.

TORTURED MALE DANCER

He should be shot, he should be dead,
he should rot in hell, then come
back as the soap cake in a urinal.

HANDSOME CONTEMPORARY

(to dancer)
He didn't like it?

The DIRECTOR moves through the group, bucking up
spirits.

DIRECTOR

Don't worry. He doesn't count. We'll
just wait for the papers.

ON MATT AND FELLOW CAST MEMBERS - LATER

As they morosely watch the Director approach.

MATT

Hey, no matter what this review says,
the play was a great experience for
me.

Beth looks at him, puzzled.

MATT

(again)
I mean, it is about process, right?

HANDSOME CONTEMPORARY

Matt's right. Good Lord, it is what
we're alive for.

Beth turns from the conversation, finding it
preposterous,
then rivets her attention on the Director, walking
towards
them, holding a ridiculously thick sheaf of papers.
Beth
begins to sob in anticipation.

MATT

You've just got to be tougher than this.

BETH

(incredulous)
Tougher than this?!?

The Director reaches them.

DIRECTOR

I took it all down over the phone. It's quite bad. And, unfortunately, it's very, very long. I've got a broken heart and writers' cramp. He...

MATT

He's nuts.

DIRECTOR

He savages everyone.

MATT

I don't want to hear anymore. Let's dance.

DIRECTOR

Except you, Matt.

They all look at him.

HANDSOME CONTEMPORARY

(fiercely to Matt)
You filthy bastard.

BETH

(drawing closer to Matt)
What did he say?

The Director hunts for the paragraph.

MATT

Don't read it.

OTHER ACTOR

Oh, please. You can't wait to run out of here, buy a flashlight, and then go into some dark alley and drool over every word.

MATT

(truthfully)
You're wrong. I'm maybe relieved and
curious. That's it.

BETH

(wildly exasperated)
What did they say about him?

DIRECTOR

(reading)
...'in the midst of this delirium of
pretension...'

MATT

Don't. This divisive crap won't...

DIRECTOR

(again)
'...one actor, rather miraculously,
manages to provide passion and, yes,
truth. Matt Hobbs, in the supporting
role of Jesus, manages to touch the
heart long after you thought it numbed
by boredom.'

and
involuntary
The table of actors look at a sober Matt. A long beat
then, against his will, he grins... then a short,
barking laugh of joy... then:

MATT

(to his colleagues
with sincerity)
Sorry.

MORPH TO:

ESTABLISHING SHOT - L.A. MODERATE INCOME STREET

as the
a
As we HEAR the next lines of "WOW", BEGIN MAIN TITLES
CAMERA BOOMS UP to the outside of a small apartment as
legend appears on screen:

'EMMY NIGHT - 1980'

the
Beth, now 27, is standing in front of a TV set showing

out.
Emmy dancers performing a phrase of "WOW". She screams

BETH

Will you get in here--for God's sake?

INT. ANOTHER ROOM

Matt, 30, is on the phone.

MATT

(into phone)

Come on, Ma, how could I show up tonight when my union is boycotting the Emmys? Look, I have to hang up.

BETH (O. S.)

(screaming voice)

It's on right now... right now... right this second! You will miss it!!

MATT

(into phone)

I gotta go. Watch!

Matt hangs up and tear-asses into the living room. Beth screams as his name is read.

TV VOICE

(on TV)

...and Matt Hobbs for 'Caine Mutiny Court Martial'... And the winner is Powers Boothe for 'Jonestown--Story of a Massacre.'

BETH

Shit! Fuck! Shit!

MATT

He was good.

BETH

(again)

Shit! Shit! Shit! Fuck! Shit! Look, he even showed up.

TV INSERT - POWERS BOOTHE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

MATT

That took courage. I wonder if they send you something for just being

nominated?

BETH

Of all the pathetic questions.

MATT

(sharply)

Why are you being so damn foul?

he is
agenda
the

Beth glares at him, on the verge of taking him on--but looking at her very directly... the lack of any other giving him a temporary edge... Beth decides to state unadorned truth.

BETH

We've been going back and forth on our status for so long. I was hoping that if you won, it might mean something for us.

MATT

Look, Beth... the only...

She is waving her hand in a circle... he is puzzled.

BETH

Please go fast. I can't take you dragging it out.

MATT

(a bit faster)

The only reason I haven't...

BETH

I promised myself I wouldn't be so bossy. Take your time!! Was that bossy too?

MATT

(persisting)

The only thing I have against getting married is that it might not be fair because I'm going to stay with acting forever and you know how erratic the money's been and there's no resolve...

BETH

Do I get to vote? I'm going to tell you something I never told you before.

Your feeling towards your work is one of the things I love most about you.

MATT

Really?

BETH

Maybe the most.

MATT

Hey, then we have no problem here. Marry me.

They kiss, then break, murmuring to each other.

BETH

Stinker, I almost gave up on you.

MATT

I was just worried whether I could make you happy.

MORPH TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - FOUR A.M.

A
to
Matt

A SET FRAME showing several clusters of waiting people. A man rushes to one of these clusters, cueing this group singing the next phrase of "WOW". As an extremely hyper Matt enters, the SONG STOPS and a legend appears:

'1986'

MATT

(extremely hyper)

Everything's okay... Great... She's six or eight pounds even. Oh, God... Nothing like it. I'll tell you something amazing. They really reach right into her stomach and pull out this baby. It's not just a rumor. God. I understand the expression 'mind blowing' for the first time. It means something so wonderful happens that the top of your head comes off and your brain pops out. Part of it was terrifying, the baby

was turned and they couldn't budge her. I kept looking at this one woman doctor's eyes. And when Jeannie finally came out, this doctor and I each wiped away a tear at the exact same time, caught ourselves doing it, and then laughed together at the same time. Nothing can prepare you for it. You know why you're alive.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

As Matt walks with pep, accompanied by a burst of "WOW".

INT. BETH'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Beth holds BABY JEANNIE and wears a scowl.

MATT

How you doing? What's wrong?

BETH

My mother said you were flirting with the doctor during the delivery.

On Matt's expression...

MORPH TO:

INT. MODEST ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Matt and Beth lie on an open sofa-bed. "WOW" is completed, though with a dirge-like cadence. We hear a baby crying over a cheap walky-talky near their bed.

MATT

Could you get her, honey? I have that big reading tomorrow.

BETH

No, I have a lot to do tomorrow, too. I have to borrow on our Christmas Club, I have to...

MATT

Don't worry about money anymore.
(on her look)
I didn't want to tell you, because

it may sound a little strange when I say it out loud. You know me, I'm never that cocky. But I'm going to get 'Spider Woman'. It's me or Raul and I've never been so sure. It's weird, but I just know it. I do.

BETH

(broadly)

Boy, am I reassured. What good news. Isn't that a load off?

INT. BABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

front Where we see the crying baby holding the walky-talky in of its mouth as it screams into the mouthpiece.

BACK TO SCENE

MATT

I am gonna get this part, Beth.

BETH

I can't stand this anymore.

END MAIN TITLES

FADE IN:

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

too Rather: It's an awful place... the start-up apartment he's way old for... but we don't yet see his humble quarters.

A BLURRED IMAGE

of a until Then, the screen is CLEARED ON ONE HALF so we see half contact lens holder in focus--the other half blurred-- Matt gets his second contact in.

MATT'S POV

A tube of tooth bleach. CLOSE ON THE DIRECTIONS, then:

ON MATT

mirror...
awful
clears

Bleaching his teeth... finishing... smiling in the
This is the bleached smile of fear--true fear--the
state of having lost your way. The phone rings. Matt
his voice before answering.

MATT

(into phone)

Hello... Hi, Beth. I'm glad you
finally returned my call. What are
you so mad about?

(again, into phone)

**YOU KNOW, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE
WHO CAN SCREAM, I CAN SCREAM, TOO.**

anger
lightning

Matt was so suddenly, emotionally extended that the
leaves him that quickly... just a strange atypical
bolt of rage toward life and women.

MATT

(again, into phone)

You know what? I'm being a sort of
gutless wonder here. I'm yelling
back at you because I'm embarrassed.
I won't be able to take the kid when
I said... Why don't you listen for a
second?

holding
the

He rubs his head with both hands, including the one
the phone. This allows us to hear his ex-wife repeat
same sentence over and over again.

BETH (V. O.)

(from phone)

...You're taking her... You're taking
her... You're taking her...

MATT

Beth, I know exactly how long it's
been and I feel strange as hell not
seeing her but this isn't a choice.
I'm broke. It's the driest spell of
my life. I'm not saying it's your
problem, but it's no place for a six-
year-old. What can I do? The only
full-time job I seem to have is not

showing how scared I am. What? No,
that's not something I said before.
(accepting compliment)
Well, thanks.

he's

Beth turns angry again. Matt finds, unfortunately, that
got one more act of bravado left.

MATT

(again, into phone)
Beth, Hey... hey. Never mind, I'll
do it.

He hangs up.

MATT

(again, to himself)
I must get work. I will take anything.
I must get work. I must not be
embarrassed by these pep talks to
myself...

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

inexpensive
bench,
relaxation
go

As Matt walks from the outdoor parking lot, past
homes. In the lot, on private lawns and every public
at each street corner, are various actors doing the
exercises which will form the basis of A DANCE, as they
over their "sides".

MIDDLE-AGED ACTOR

...feathers I'm blowing. What am I,
a duck?

for
a

We pass various actors going over alternate sentences
the same speech so that we get a sense of the speech as
whole from the sum of its parts.

VARIOUS YOUNG ACTORS

1) I'm not thinking about whether
I'm going to shoot you. I'm...
2)...trying to decide where.
3)...the little spot behind the ear
where you die before you hear the
shot...

4)...on the left side of the belly
which is a very mean place.

EXT. POPCORN PICTURES - DAY

in An office building of clear architectural merit located
has all an industrial area. Even the sign "Popcorn Pictures"
ENTERS... the artistic dignity the name itself lacks... MUSIC
young Gradually, movement BECOMES CHOREOGRAPHED...i.e., the
actor and actress running across the street do so with
and we uncommon grace. The area Matt passes is very crowded
we still haven't reached the most congested area of all as
preparation. STUDY FACES and HEAR snatches of the actors'

MIDDLE-AGED ACTOR

What am I, a duck?

OLDER ACTRESS

Sure I'll tell you... Favor first...
Do a nice middle-aged lady a favor...
A fair trade... tell you what you
want to know in return for a...
(grimaces over dialogue
she must say)
...a pity fu...

building-- MUSIC BECOMING MORE INSISTENT as we approach the
Wailing the mumbling of the actors taking on the SOUND of a
Wall...

VARIOUS YOUNG HYSTERICAL

ACTRESSES

...the height of ego. You think your
he-manness can make me get on that
elevator even though I'm phobic?...
I CAN'T GET ON THAT ELEVATOR. I don't
care if... they catch us. DO YOU
GET... IT. DO YOU GET IT! I CAN'T! I
CAN'T... three, please.

THREE HYSTERICAL ACTRESSES

SINGING the dialogue...

SINGING ACTRESSES

...can't get on the elevator... can't
get on the elevator... even if you
make me... even if you make me. Do
you get it?... do you get it?...

TWO ACTRESSES

each
SERVING
enters
phrase,
cutting

Standing near each other--exchange glares as they break
other's concentration and move apart... THEIR MOVEMENT
as our gateway to DANCING... The SONG "MAKE BELIEVE"
fully now and builds in intensity, reaching a repeated
as we move to Matt and he enters the building, thereby
off the song.

ON MATT

building
we

As the SONG continues in intensity, Matt enters the
at the end of a repeated phrase cutting off the song as
move to:

ANGLE ON RECEPTION AREA

of an
are
hard
clearly
book

Where CATHY BRESLOW, age 30, waits. Hollywood is a bit
uphill struggle for Cathy. She is bright where others
brilliant, pretty where others are gorgeous, enormously
working where others are obsessive-compulsive. She is
waiting for someone while reading an enormously thick
galley. Matt almost scoots by her, then stops.

MATT

Hi... See, I did recognize you. You
didn't have to wait for me.

CATHY

Well, I wanted to introduce you. As
if knowing me would help.

INT. POPCORN PICTURES - DAY

slalom

MOVING SHOT. Staircase packed with actors, an uphill almost impossible to navigate.

CATHY

It's a ridiculously awful movie.

MATT

Well, challenge. I wasn't sure you'd remember me... let alone help...

CATHY

Stop. You're good. I'm doing them a favor by getting you in.

MATT

Well, that's a fresh slant.

They reach the casting assistant, CLAIRE.

CATHY

Claire, this is Matt Hobbs.

he
say
He
ready

As Matt is handed a set of sides, we SHOOT PAST Matt as watches Cathy move back down the stairs before he can another word. She moves with wit. He is struck by her. He looks back at Claire, who has an intricate hairdo and a smile.

CLAIRE

Hi. Sorry. We're running behind... Please forgive us.

LONG

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SHOT - TWO HOURS LATER

the

Her hairdo wilted, her blouse soiled, her smile gone, tendons of her neck prominent.

CLAIRE

(fiercely)
Matt Hobbs? Matt Hobbs!

ON MATT

Claire
Going over his lines. Hearing his name, he rises.
gestures him in.

INT. BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY

sit
The walls are pockmarked with movie posters. THREE MEN
director,
in an area some distance from the desk. The casting
MARTIN, makes the introduction:

MARTIN

This is Matt Hobbs... This is John
Earl McAlpine, the director.

MCALPINE

Good to see you.

extends
He speaks with an Australian accent, gets half-up and
his hand.

MARTIN

...and Burke Adler, the producer.

BURKE

So, what have you been doing with
yourself...

(checking resume)
...the last few years?

MATT

(to Burke)
I'm real bad at interviews, so, if
you don't mind, I'd really prefer to
just read first.

BURKE

That's the way you want to do it?

MATT

Yes.

BURKE

Maybe we shouldn't even read. I'll
just take your word that you're good.

Matt smiles.

BURKE

No. I'm serious. There's all different ways. Did you know Woody Allen never reads actors? He just looks at them, feels around a little and then decides who he wants. That's his way. Doesn't hear them do a line. I also have a way. What I do is interview first-- then read--maybe do it all over again the next day. I call up people the actor has worked with--check him out. If he's famous, I do an opinion survey to test how much people like him. If he's not famous, I put him on tape and show it to everyone I can grab. I believe in screen tests; I believe in replacing if the dailies are bad, in cutting people out if the previews aren't there. Because I'm not doing movies for theaters where they serve cappuccino in the lobby. I'm doing popcorn movies. You want to know what I like? Come to my house, look at my lamps... you won't find it in my movies. In my movies, you'll find out what I know. I know how to do detail. What I don't know, I discover. Yesterday we finished mixing a movie--the last scene is in a field of windmills which blows up and all the blades of these windmills slice through the air, one of which hits a four-story tank of propane gas. A humongous explosion scene. I kept on saying 'louder', and they finally said to me they couldn't go louder without distortion. We went louder. We had to discover a thing, a filter, but we went louder. I don't question doing these things. I do them. So if you want to know if it's okay to do it differently--not to talk--to just read first... I say...

(pointing to John
Earl)

Ask him--he's the director.

JOHN EARL

Whatever.

BURKE

Okay, let's do it. Do you have any questions?

MATT

They only gave me these two pages.
I'd like to give this my best shot.
So if I could read the script and
come back...

BURKE

This part works tomorrow.

MATT

Oh. Who will I be reading with?

Burke indicates Martin.

MATT

(from his chair)
Can I read from here?

BURKE

I want you to do it wherever you're
comfortable, but I'd prefer it if
you were comfortable standing up.

a
Matt rises uncomfortably. A SECRETARY enters and hands
note to the director.

JOHN EARL

Time for my buns to have visitors.

Matt looks astonished as the director leaves the room.

BURKE

(to Matt)
Go ahead.

MATT

Go ahead? The director left.

BURKE

That's okay, he trusts me, uh... And
we're just doing the first page.

MARTIN

(cueing him badly)
'Okay, darling Harry, here it is...
If someone were breaking up with me,
I'd like it short and sweet. What
about you?'

MATT

(reading--showing
pain)
'Incredibly drawn out...'

MARTIN

'I can't take care of you right now.
What am I, your mother?'

MATT

(intense)
'Well, what am I? Your duck?'

release
As he gets into the scene he begins to experience some
of the desperate feelings he's been harboring.

MATT

(again)
'We've been together two years and
you act like all you're doing is
blowing away some feathers. So what
I'm asking...'

BURKE

You didn't do the quack.

MATT

Huh?

BURKE

The stage direction says for him to
quack.

MATT

I know, but why would he quack when
someone's breaking up with him?

BURKE

Hopefully because it's funny.

MATT

This isn't a comedy.

BURKE

Then we're in trouble, because they're
already fall down laughing at the
teaser-trailer in fifty-two hundred
and thirty theaters.

MATT

A comedy?
(rubbing his face)

I think I have to make an adjustment here.

INT. CATHY'S OFFICE - DAY

coming
clearly
galley
room

We HEAR the strains of the theme of a past hit movie from Cathy's cassette player. A rack of soundtracks visible. Cathy is frowning as she reads the last of the pages. She overhears some conversation in the adjoining room which begins to disturb her concentration.

FEMALE D PERSON (O.S.)

I'm not supposed to read TV pilots.
Don't call us D-Girls. We're
Development Persons!

to
the
As she

Cathy closes the door, shutting her off. She now begins to fill out a form with a felt-tipped pen. As she does so, the pad is supered on the screen--action seen through it. As she writes, we see the notations on the super.

BRESLOW. TO:
DICK"

Then
for
for
form

It is marked COVERAGE--CONFIDENTIAL FROM: CATHY BURKE ADLER. SUBJECT: (the pen writes out) "LITTLE GENRE/CATEGORY (the pen writes out ACTION-ADVENTURE). There are columns to check EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR, POOR for the story. CHARACTERS, DIALOGUE... The pen checks FAIR for story, POOR for all else, CHARACTER, DIALOGUE, etc. The form then states--CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:

I DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS PROJECT
I RECOMMEND THIS PROJECT
I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THIS PROJECT
I'D STAKE MY ALL ON THIS PROJECT
I'D GLADLY STAKE MY ALL ON THIS PROJECT

down
listening

The phone rings. As she picks it up and reaches to turn the volume of the motion picture soundtrack she's

to.

CATHY

(into phone)

Hi. I just finished. I'll have my coverage right over. It's past derivative... it's photocopying. What a hoot! You're kidding, right? There is truly active bidding for this book? Really? 2.3 million? Okay, see you.

She hangs up and begins to alter the form changing the STORY/POOR to STORY/EXCELLENT, and all the other POORS

to

GOOD... and now the Recommend section.

INSERT

The pen is poised.

ON CATHY

RECOMMEND"

Her soul is poised. A beat and she allows "I DO NOT

heroism.

to stand, the source music theme--"CHARIOTS OF FIRE"--coincidentally celebrates this considerable act of

Cathy takes the sheet and walks to the door.

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

two

As she approaches her secretary's desk, she overhears other members of Burke's Development Staff (a 27-year-old well-dressed man and a woman younger than Cathy) as they enthuse.

old

they

MALE D PERSON

Even the title "Little Dick"--it means so many things.

FEMALE D PERSON

Story, story, story, story, story.
(seeing Cathy)
You loved it, right?

CATHY

I had some problems.

FEMALE D PERSON

Like what?

CATHY

Well, you know, it's a little
garbagey.

FEMALE D PERSON

So it has to be cast right.

MALE D PERSON

If Cathy doesn't like it, we know
it's a smash.

CATHY

(stung)

Hey. It's not like I didn't recommend
it.

enters. She surreptitiously changes her "recommend" as Matt

She looks up.

CATHY

How'd it go?

MATT

I didn't get it. He did say something
about wanting me back.

CATHY

Good. His saver is he means what he
says.

MATT

Yeah, I just wanted to say thanks.

She nods and starts to turn back towards her office.

MATT

...and I wanted to ask you out.

The other people in the office stare at Matt.

CATHY

(turns)

For when?

MATT

Any time.

CATHY

I never know when I'm free.
(Matt nods)
It sounds like I'm just... but it's true.

MATT

Okay. Thanks again. I felt funny asking.

CATHY

Well, don't please.

MATT

I meant asking you to get me the audition.

CATHY

Oh... well, don't please.

He nods and starts to go. She looks at him.

CATHY

Don't be sad.

Matt smiles in astonishment and exits.

MALE D PERSON

Who is he?

CATHY

Oh, I was auditing this acting course and he filled in teaching one night. He did a scene himself and he was awesome. For some reason, he can't get arrested.

MALE D PERSON

Yeah. He does seem to have a layer of loser dust on him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Matt drives his faded, seven-year-old car into view.

INT./EXT. MATT'S CAR - EARLY EVENING

He looks off... sees something that arrests his interest and pulls to the curb. It's a curious sight.

MATT'S POV

pain.
gulps
of
shocked
he
heavens.

Burke Adler, standing at a street corner, palpably in
He's trying to rein in his emotions, sucking in huge
of air... and, then, a wave of emotion gets the better
him as he looks at his watch. A sob escapes him--
that he's so close to tears on a public street corner,
battles for control... another sob as he looks to the

ON MATT

A split second to consider, then he's out of his car.

FULL SHOT - THE STREET CORNER

figure of
before
public,

A flow of PEOPLE--in the foreground, the tortured
Burke Adler--in the background, Matt Hobbs, pauses
intruding. But Burke's spectacle is growing more
sounds of anguish escape him.

CLOSER SHOT - BURKE

BURKE

Oh, God... why? Why?...

(louder)

What am I going to do?

the
grabbing

And now he begins to disassemble, openly crying--on
verge of a complete breakdown. Matt moves into frame,
Burke, trying to provide him with an anchor.

CLOSE ON MATT

His face--his eyes providing a beacon of strength.

MATT

Hey. Hey! HEY!!

ON BURKE

state.

Totally fucked-up, wild-eyed. As he witnesses his own

BURKE

Look at me. You'd think I was a writer.

(his story of travail
pours from him)

I hired this kid as a production assistant. His father's a business manager... a few good clients.

MATT

What happened?

BURKE

He's been driving for me two weeks... all he has to do is pick me up on time... he's twenty minutes late and I have a test screening in the valley. Everybody's gone from the office.

Burke flails at himself as Matt looks at him.

MATT

Is that it? You need a lift?

BURKE

Yeah.

MATT

I'm right over here.

Burke
Matt starts to lead him back, then realizes he's alone, having seen his car finally arrive.

MATT'S POV

the
Burke, berating the YOUNG DRIVER. Matt pauses, awed by the wild gesticulating--the few screamed words...

BURKE (O.S.)

...Not just today... believe me, there's no way you'll ever make it... You are going to fail. Listen, listen-- I know about this; you are going to be a failure.

CAMERA FOLLOWING MATT

Matt.
As he joins Burke and the young man, Burke turns to

BURKE

(to Matt)

Let's get moving; you said you'd give me a lift.

MATT

What the hell are you talking about? Not in your car... I've got my own.

BURKE

I'll give you a hundred and twenty dollars to take me... and it will still be a favor.

(to Young Man)

Get out. Come on.

(to Matt)

Please. This is very important.

The driver gets out.

YOUNG MAN

(final plea)

A guy got shot on the freeway... Traffic's tied up.

BURKE

You should leave time for that kind of thing.

CUT TO:

INT. BURKE'S CAR

MATT

What do you need me for? Don't you drive?

BURKE

(a mumble)

Yeah, I drive. I don't like to look for parking.

EXT. GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - EARLY EVENING

The sun setting on a nondescript slab of California.

INT. BURKE'S CAR - EARLY EVENING

The two men... Matt feeling very peculiar in this line

of

even.
takes

work. Burke's tension renders him arresting, handsome
The look of generals who go forth against long odds. He
an enormous cleansing breath. It startles Matt.

BURKE

(explaining)

Yoga shit. I feel like barbed wire.
I don't know if you keep track, but
I'm the sixth independent producer
ever to have two big pictures
scheduled for Christmas, and tonight
we're testing the first one for the
first time... You get it?

MATT

Yeah. It's important to you.

BURKE

(laughing at the
understatement)

Yes. I don't think I would have put
it that way... but, yes...

EXT. MALL - EARLY EVENING

Burke's car moves toward the movie complex.

BURKE'S POV

pragmatic,
in
rough
Our first view of NAN MULHANNEY; middle-aged and
yet extraordinarily naive. She's a scientist of sorts--
monitoring the tastes and feelings of Americans, first
Washington and now here. Though she just had a very
hour or so, she bends down to smile at Burke.

INT. BURKE'S CAR

BURKE

Keep driving. She runs the test
screenings. Very smart. Very. She
has a real case on me, but so far
I've been keeping it in the bank.

He stops talking, stops breathing, as he sees.

BURKE'S POV - THE TEST AUDIENCE

who are
hands.

The line consists of disparate, disinterested people
focused on their own small, personal dramas--not at all
cognizant of the fact that they hold a life in their
They are clearly growing impatient.

INT. CAR

BURKE

Go very slow.

MUSIC IN... Burke steels himself and exits the car.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - LATE DAY

NAN

We're 34 minutes late. The studio is
appropriately wild... people are
beginning to leave... but I knew how
upset you'd be if we started without
you.

BURKE

(distantly)

Yeah. Thanks.

But he pays her no mind as MUSIC CONTINUES and he moves
towards the line. Nan approaches the car.

NAN

How is he tonight?

MATT

I don't know him, so I have nothing
to compare it to.

NAN

Well, how would you say he is, anyway?

MATT

Not quite himself.

ANGLE ON BURKE

to
misdirected

As he approaches the line, he BEGINS TO SING his love
them, "I'll Do Anything." As he pours out his
heart to individuals on the line who DO NOT HEAR HIM.

ANGLE ON LINE

each
exaggerating
SING...
more
BACKGROUND
form
of
become
plea

Their impatience gives rise to a VERY SLOW TAP DANCE,
couple or cluster doing it differently--barely
the normal shifting of a line... As BURKE CONTINUES TO
the song builds as does the dance... Burke sings even
passionately, his D-PEOPLE perhaps joining in as
SINGERS. At a key point, the disparate groups turn and
a SOLID UNIFIED LINE. They begin the rhythmic clapping
impatience--having become a line, they now threaten to
a mob. Burke sings one more Joe Cocker-like passionate
before turning to camera to shout over the mayhem:

BURKE

Let them in.

As they enter.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - EVENING

Nan is addressing the audience from down front.

NAN

The name of the picture you'll be
seeing is 'Ground Zero'... There may
be some scratches... some of the
colors may be off, there are no final
titles, and it has not been finally
mixed for sound, and the music is
temp, that means temporary...

As she says this:

ANGLE ON REAR OF HOUSE

side.
Where Burke spies the STUDIO HEAD and leaves Matt's

ON STUDIO HEAD

behind his
boss' ear. He leans in and offers an intimacy.

BURKE

I'm glad you came yourself instead
of sending your staff.

must be
powerful
The boss is startled--jumps. BURKE eyes him... there
some way to profit from these stolen moments with a
man.

BURKE

I wouldn't be surprised if tonight's
screening is a monster.
(emphatically)
Could happen, right?

STUDIO HEAD

Sure.

BURKE

Okay.

audience.
He moves back to Matt and Nan at the rear of the

BURKE

(to Matt)

Eisner just said he thinks the
screening will be a monster.

three
with a
Strangely, Burke seems truly buoyed by the words of
encouragement he himself manufactured. He moves down
rows and sits in an aisle seat just as the film opens
series of violent explosions.

CLOSE ON NAN

NAN

Please, God, let tonight give him
peace.

sound
his
whispers
Incredibly, Burke turns and gestures to her that the
of her small voice is interfering with the cacophony of
movie. Nan is clearly stricken by her lapse as she
to Matt.

NAN

We're short two card-counters, can
you two help out?

INT. MOVIE THEATER - 1:47:20 LATER

We are seeing one of the final moments of the film.

INT. WHOLESALE BUTCHER'S (THE FILM) - DAY

giant
hanging
villain
hero
hero
meat on
other
whooping

As the muscular hero moves with stealth through the
refrigerated meat door. He passes cows and dead men
from alternate hooks. Suddenly, he is attacked by the
brandishing an electric meat dismembering tool. The
ducks, the machine ripping apart hanging cow flesh. The
grabs the only weapon he can find: a large piece of
a large bone, which he uses as a mace. He clubs the
man--then again--and again. Part of the audience is
and applauding.

QUICK SHOT OF NAN

applause,

Standing with Matt and Cathy. At the sound of the
Nan grins and mumbles with a connoisseur's knowledge.

NAN

Males, fifteen and under.

BACK TO SCREEN

meat.

Where the hero stands over the man whose face he has
shattered, holding a club from which hang strings of
He is breathing heavily, and between breaths, states:

HERO

Sorry to bust your chops.

General audience laughter.

SERIES OF SHOTS ON NAN - FRONT OF AUDIENCE

NAN

If you'll just stay in your seats a

few moments and fill out these cards
for us...

ON AISLES

attached...
out;
THROUGH

Matt and others handing out cards with pencils
Folks filling them out. As an ADOLESCENT MALE fills it
PREVIEW CARD FILLS THE SCREEN as we view LIVE ACTION
IT.

INT. THEATER MANAGER'S OFFICE

The
a
with

An office meant for two, containing twenty counters.
counting is done with erasers rifling stacks, creating
sound, a MUSICAL RHYTHM, as the GROUP CAPTAIN calls out
gospel cadence.

GROUP CAPTAIN

Who has young males? Young women?
Older males?... Older males?...

The

Matt, his tally finished, squats on the floor, waiting.
Group Captain approaches.

GROUP CAPTAIN

Older males... older males?

Matt looks blank.

GROUP CAPTAIN

(again)
Older males... over 25?

over the

Matt now realizes that it is his category and hands
older male cards and exits.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

and
looks
lobby.

Burke, prowling the lobby as audience stragglers leave
Studio Execs and Popcorn Development Staff wait. He
off to see Matt and Nan chatting in another part of the
lobby.

ON MATT AND NAN

Captain

As they arrive... Nan looks off to see the Group approach.

NAN

How long since you've seen your daughter?

MATT

A little over two years.
(on her look)
My wife insisted on moving back to the Midwest--then I was in the Philippines on the mini-series and...

NAN

(suddenly and loudly)
Oh, please. It's one thing being a son-of-a-bitch, but you don't have to be a stupid son-of-a-bitch. People move heaven and earth to see their kids. I don't care if she moved to Pluto, it's abandonment.

MATT

(a pause, then)
Hey, we just met.

NAN

(realizing)
Oh. Sorry.

BURKE

Make a guess how we did.

NAN

It wouldn't mean anything.

BURKE

Nothing good that happens can make it worth feeling the way I do now. Nothing.

An OLDER WOMAN approaches them.

OLDER WOMAN

Excuse me.

BURKE

Who the hell are you? This is private.

OLD LADY

I'm Mr. Eisner's mother.

BURKE

Oh. Can I get you some water?

OLD LADY

No, thank you.

The Group Captain approaches and hands Nan a sheet.

FULL SHOT

Nan. Everyone, all the studio and Popcorn staff, is drawn to

ON NAN

As she glances at the figures.

ON NAN'S LEFT HAND

it in As she secretly reaches for and holds Burke's hand. Is sympathy or congratulations?

TIGHT ON STUDIO EXECUTIVE FACES

smiles As we see in ever-so-SLOWED ACTIONS, tense lips turning gloriously upward to reveal gums--then a smile. More teeth. as we pan across teeth... bonded executives and bonded he The shot widens. The studio head mumbles to himself as carefully goes over the tally in every category. Then:

STUDIO HEAD

I don't need the numbers. I loved it.

His smiling face takes us:

NAN

Burke, ninety in the top two boxes.

TO BURKE

to A tear in his eye--a smile shyer than others. He turns

settle his

the old lady, instinctively using this victory to most recent score as he says mockingly:

BURKE

Now can I get you some water?

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

is

herself.

confidence

for

Cathy and Matt are leaning against Burke's car. Cathy distraught--temporarily, but horribly, unsure of Matt is looking at her. If he had a little more going for him right now, he would make his move. But, now, they are two self-doubters on different trips.

CATHY

I never thought it would do this well. There were so many holes; I told everybody it wasn't going to do business. Why am I so public with my opinions?

MATT

You might be right.

CATHY

Not with that score. You know, maybe tonight's the night I'm losing my entire mind, but weren't you in 'Platoon?'

MATT

Incredible. I was only there for a minute in the rape scene, moving past Charlie Sheen when I left the hut... I had a great scene cut out... I was...

CATHY

But there was that one long close up-- where you seemed ashamed of yourself but still arrogant.

MATT

That's exactly what I was going for.

CATHY

It reminded me of my last boyfriend.

(indicating book bag)
Got to go.

on She hefts the bag--puts it back down--crosses her eyes, burlesquing the weight of the bag. He helps her put it her shoulder.

MATT

You have to read all that?

CATHY

Beast of burden.

MATT

(sincerely)

So what are you, totally wonderful or what?

weight of She smiles and is gone, staggering a bit under the her scripts. Matt looks after her. Burke and Nan approach.

BURKE

How come you haven't said anything?
This is great, right?

NAN

No.

BURKE

What no?

NAN

The definite recommends are way off for a score this high and, even for action-adventure, it's just too low for women.

(Burke looks anguished)

I'm sorry.

He leans against the car for support.

BURKE

It was such a good score.

NAN

(extraordinarily
sympathetic)

I know... And, unfortunately, yesterday's tracking wasn't...

(he reacts)
I'm sorry... They just don't seem in
the mood for action-adventure right...

(he reacts)
Sorry... May I tell you one more
thing?

(he looks up in
anticipatory fear)
I think it's so wonderful that you
don't worry about even trying to act
strong.

BURKE

Thanks. You want to eat something
sometime?

NAN

I'm, uh... I'm blushing from head to
foot.

BURKE

Good. I'll call you.

As Burke moves to his car. He SEES the Group Captain
paying
Matt.

GROUP CAPTAIN

Thirty-two, thirty-three.

Burke is looking at Matt with some surprise.

BURKE

You want to do this regularly for
me? I was gonna offer, but I thought
it would humiliate you.

MATT

(straight at him)
I don't mind an occasional odd job.
But I can't work tomorrow. I have to
get my kid.

As they get in the car, Burke has the front door open,
about
to get in--reconsiders, and gets in the rear door.

BURKE

Okay, I got the cards to look at--I
think I'll ride back here.

(to Nan)
Maybe I'll drop by your place

tomorrow.

full- Matt gets behind the wheel, thereby ending the day as a
fledged chauffeur. They drive off.

EXT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Burke and Nan returning from lunch.

NAN

So, thanks for lunch. I hope this leads to an evening date. Though I have to stay home with my daughter, Leslie, on Saturdays.

BURKE

(sincerely)

Yeah, okay. You were very interesting to talk to. I swear to God. Honest. No kidding. You really were.

NAN

I believe you.

(sincerely)

And I was very surprised what you were like when you weren't working. There was absolutely no difference. You want to see where we do the tracking?

BURKE

(excited)

Is it okay?

INT. TRACKING ROOM - DAY

cubbies The enter the room containing a maze of telephone
with workers manning the phones.

NAN

Nobody ever wants to see how we do the polling, but they're like little starved puppies when the data comes in--running at you, scrambling to...

Burke hardly hears. He is awed as if by a cathedral.

VARIOUS WORKERS

- 1) How often do you go to the movies?
- 2) I'm going to describe a movie in

one sentence and then ask you to rate it on a scale of...

BURKE

(as the workers
continue)

I love this. This is what counts and this is where you count it.

NAN

(soft and true)

That's the same way I feel.

BURKE

You phone all over--you know what movies they're waiting to see, whether your TV spots are working. You know what the country thinks.

WORKER

...what feelings do you have about Cher as a singer, an actress, or potential date...

BURKE

(again)

...and it's accurate.

NAN

Within six-point-eight percent.

BURKE

And you can't fix it... right?

NAN

No... no... Sometimes just for myself, I can't resist asking America a personal question.

BURKE

Like?

NAN

(simply)

When do you feel more worthless--mornings or afternoons?

BURKE

I gotta get back.

They pause by a workers to say goodbye.

WORKER

Assume Michelle Pfeiffer is the woman--
which of these 67 actors would you
most like to see her with... Patrick
Swayze, Keanu Reeves, Dustin Hoffman,
Johnny Dep, the guy from 'Major
Dad'...

NAN

There's something I meant to tell
you. You may have noticed something
unusual about me.

BURKE

I gotta get back.

NAN

I could never find the right time
to...

BURKE

Is this urgent?

NAN

Well, maybe not urgent, but
immediately significant and necessary
to tell.

(a deep breath)

You see, there's these pills...

BURKE

'Cause I gotta go. I'm listening
with an eighth of an ear now.

NAN

So long.

list He exits as the telephone pollster continues with the
of prospective Michelle Pfeiffer male co-stars.

INT. PLANE

five, Matt, wearing earphones, is in the middle of a row of
intent on what he is watching.

MATT'S POV

A recent example of a great actor in a regular movie...
something like Brando in "The Freshman." No sound.

ON MATT

studying--
moment--
share

Watching intently. Not watching--studying... not fully appreciating. Now he sees a particularly good looks around joyously for half a beat--a reflex to what he saw. His neighbors, not quite knowing what he's smiling at; he returns his attention to the screen.

EXT. MID-WESTERN HOUSE - DAY

walks up
He

As Matt's cab pulls up. He opens the front gate and to the porch, noting a tricycle, stirred by old guilts. knocks on the door. A MAN answers.

MAN

Are you Matt?

MATT

Uh-huh.

MAN

I didn't know if we could wait much longer. Come on in.

flicks

He lights a cigarette, takes three quick drags, then it away before walking inside behind Matt.

MAN

(again)

She's a real nut on smoking anywhere near the kid.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

they
Frederic
just a
mutant of
packing
up.

They enter. A bedroom down a narrow hallway from where stand. Remember "The Best Years of Our Lives"... March coming home from the wars and seeing his wife beat before she sees him. Here we have a wretched that moment. Beth, still fierce and attractive, is her daughter's suitcase when she senses him and looks

die,

Shaking her head with a disapproval which will never
she walks to him.

BETH

Hello--did you two meet?

MATT

Not really. Is she ready? I have the
taxi waiting.

BETH

I just have to say goodbye. You have
no idea how difficult that is.

MATT

It's three weeks.

BETH

It's not three weeks.

MATT

Yes, it is.

BETH

No, it's not.

Several beats--Beth and the man staring at Matt.

MATT

It is.

MAN

He doesn't know?

BETH

You are not taking her for a visit.
You are taking her for a while.

MATT

Just because you want to go off with
him doesn't mean I...

MAN

You're getting the wrong idea.

MATT

I don't think so. No matter how you
put this...

MAN

Hey, look, I'm a United States

Marshal. I'm here because she didn't show up yesterday to start serving her time.

BETH

I don't have a choice. You don't have a choice.

She turns and starts for the other room.

MATT

What did she do?

BETH

(turning)

I loved, helped and supported in every possible way a business man who committed the terrible crime of being financially imaginative with a pension fund.

his
She exits. He sits down, stunned in the headlights of fate.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

them.
of
side.
Matt and the Marshal in the foreground as Beth talks to Jeannie in the background. We see only glimpses of Beth's face as she leans towards Jeannie from one side the doorway--just Jeannie's legs dangling on the other side.

BETH'S VOICE

Okay, listen carefully, Jeannie. Be still. Now, what's the most important thing in life to know?

JEANNIE

No one will ever love me as much as you do.

Matt and the Marshal exchange a look of mutual horror.

BETH

Good. Now, concentrate with all your muscles and remember everything I'm about to say to you...

The Marshal and Matt shift uncomfortably.

BETH

Don't talk to strangers. They may be killers. Take your vitamins so the poison in the food can't hurt you. What else now?

JEANNIE'S VOICE

Teeth.

BETH'S VOICE

Right. Thank you. Brush right after you eat or your gums will start to bleed in your sleep and choke you.

to
out
The Marshal and Matt can stand no more--they each call her... "Beth... Beth... Mrs. Hobbs... Beth." She looks and then walks to them.

BETH

What? I'm giving Jeannie her reminders.

MATT

Reminders?!? You can't say things like that to a little...

BETH

No. Don't. No. Don't dare. Don't criticize the way I mother or I think I'll start to scream and never st...

MARSHAL

Mrs. Hobbs.

BETH

(suddenly cheery)
Yes.

MARSHAL

You know, I've been involved with this sort of thing for a long time.

BETH

You're not going to criticize me, are you? Not in front of him--because all he's done is send Jeannie these long, stupid letters. He doesn't even realize she can't read. He sends letters to someone who can't read.

(laughs)
It's almost funny.

MATT

I thought you'd read them to her.

BETH

(realizing)
Oh.

MARSHAL

I'm not faulting you. You love your daughter and this is a very tough thing to go through. You feel guilty and caring and it all gets mixed up so that there's so much important stuff going down that there's no sure way of dealing with it, but the best thing you can do is just make sure you love her.

BETH

Typical cop talk.
(on his look)
But I understand what you're trying to say. Thank you. Can I have another minute with her?

with
CAMERA
puzzle

She returns to the doorway which still only provides us glimpses as she SINGS, "DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS." The MOVES down the hallway to INTRODUCE JEANNIE, trying to things out as she sits amongst a ridiculous number of suitcases.

INT. SITTING ROOM - DAY

doesn't
off
of

As the two females who bear his name approach. Matt want a pregnant first moment with Jeannie, so he wards silence with chatter. Unfortunately, he can only think one word.

MATT

Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.

JEANNIE

(laughing mirthlessly)

Hello, monster-poop.

MATT

(to U.S. Marshal)

She has her mother's sense of humor.

Beth stops him with a look, then bends down.

BETH

Okay, love, Mommy's going to help others who need her for a few years, and you're going with Daddy as I explained.

(to Marshal and Matt)

We'll all have to help with the luggage.

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - DAY - LONG SHOT

luggage

All three adults and Jeannie sharing the burden of the

Matt

as they move towards the cab. Mother and child hug.

struck by his child's plight, him.

BETH

(turning to Matt)

Beginning now, you must give less value to your own happiness and well-being, then hopefully, you will reach the point where you give that no value whatsoever. Give her everything. There's no such thing as spoiling a child.

MAN

Even if you have to steal to do it?

BETH

You don't really want to mess with me, do you?

MAN

(simple honesty)

No.

MATT

(to Jeannie)

Okay, sweetie. We have to go.

JEANNIE

(to Beth)

I want to go with you.

BETH

Can't, pretty-heart. I'm sorry.

Tears fall from Jeannie's eyes.

JEANNIE

Not even a compromise?

BETH

(thinking)

The compromise will be that you don't have to ride in back; you can ride up front with the driver... okay?

MATT

What?

JEANNIE

Okay.

in As Beth buckles Jeannie into the front seat, Matt gets the back, alone, feeling preposterous. Beth nods to the Marshal, who surreptitiously handcuffs her.

MATT

(to driver)

Can we please go?

SHOT - JEANNIE

back The cab pulls away. Matt leans towards her as she looks at the receding figure of her mother and grows still.

ON MOTHER AND MARSHALL

STRANGERS."

EXT. SIDEWALK AREA - DAY

lets Matt checks Jeannie's luggage, then takes her hand. She him. He is grateful.

MATT

It's going to be okay. I'm you're dad, you know? So it will be okay. You and I will make it okay. You

ever ridden in a plane before?

JEANNIE

(a sudden gust of
anger)

Yesssss!

INT. PLANE - DAY

Jeannie and Matt in the center two seats of a five seat
row.
Jeannie is coloring in a book which Matt bought her; he
is holding some extra crayons.

JEANNIE

Don't stare at me.

MATT

Sorry.

JEANNIE

I want to put on my yellow dress
now.

MATT

It's underneath the plane. We can't
get it.

And just that quick, Jeannie screams.

JEANNIE

I want to put on my dress. I want to
put on my dress.

Other passengers turn around. This is pretty raw stuff
we're into. Temper in all its wildness, MUSIC UNDER...
electric guitar beginning to match the energy and naked emotion
of the child.

MATT

There's no way we can get the dress--
it's impossible.

Jeannie's feet start kicking in front of her--the
person in that seat turning sharply around.

MATT

Don't kick the seat!

JEANNIE

I want the yellow dress.
(a shriek)
Give me a compromise.

She is crying now.

MATT

As soon as we land. That's the
compromise.

MORE MUSIC

Without warning, Jeannie slaps herself in the face. All
five people in the row ahead turn and say in unison:

WOMEN IN ROW

Don't hit her.

MATT

God, I didn't hit her--she hit her.

ANGLE ON LIGHTS

As everyone starts pushing the cabin attendant call
button.
These dings magnify until they're part of the music--as
it drives and drives... Matt takes Jeannie's hand and
tries to restrain her.

JEANNIE

Noooooo. Let go of me. Noooo. The
yellow dress... let go... let go.

She breaks away from him. He moves after her.

CAMERA MOVING

At breakneck speed, Jeannie dashes through the plane
with her father in pursuit... flashes of disapproving faces.
The seat belt sign goes on. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT blocks his
path.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

You'll have to sit down.

moves
Jeannie takes advantage of Matt's being stopped and
into the toilet, locking the door behind her.

MATT

(yelling)
Jeannie, we have to sit down. Please.

CAPTAIN'S VOICE

We'll be having some turbulence for
the next twenty minutes or so. Will
the cabin attendants please take
their seats?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sir.

MATT

(simply and utterly)
I have no idea what to do.

door.
A sudden bump and Matt falls. He yells to the locked

MATT

Jeannie, you okay?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Go back to your seat. I'll get her.

hidden
the
shell-
As Matt makes his way back, the Flight Attendant uses a
latch to open the door. Music building--then calming,
worst is over. Matt makes his way back to his seat,
shocked. The Attendant leans over him.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

She wants to be alone. So we're
upgrading her.

He just nods.

FULL SHOT

she
Down the aisle--Jeannie lets an Attendant lead her as
peers back at her dad.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Matt carrying the sleeping child like a sack over his shoulder, also managing to hold onto all her luggage.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He
window's
attempts

He has propped her on the sofa, a cotton nightgown out. She is unbuttoning her dress. She opens her eyes, the protective bars PLACING A SHADOW ACROSS HER FACE. She attempts to cover her fear.

JEANNIE

These are the wrong jammies.

MATT

Okay... so what do we do?

to
she

Jeannie mimics him perfectly under her breath. She goes to an open suitcase and throws things on the floor until she finds the right jammies.

JEANNIE

Where do I sleep?

MATT

I have a sleeping bag and bed. Which one do you want?

sleeping

She surveys her pitiful choice; then points to the sleeping bag.

JEANNIE

That.

something

She gets into it. He zips her up--then she says something remarkably unexpected.

JEANNIE

Hug.

Amazed, Matt hugs her. A half-beat, then:

JEANNIE

(sharply)
Let go.

back, He does--then stands and looks down at her. She looks
mocking his stare with one of her own.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

bathroom. Nan uncertainly enters this decidedly masculine
the She is wearing an evening gown. The sun streams through
opens lush foliage outside a wall-sized window. MUSIC as she
singing her purse and removes a pillbox; at one point lightly
single a snatch of lyric concerning the conflicts of being a
on the woman and a single mother--this while totally focused
pills.

INSERT - PILL BOX

TEST A major movie shot of this compartmentalized box. Each
burrowed nest clearly labeled for the pill it contains:
VITAMIN B, VITAMIN A, OSCILLOCOCCINUM, PROZAC, CALCIUM,

DRUG, ASPIRIN, XANAX, ETC.

ON NAN

her MUSIC CONTINUES. She dials a phone number while arching
swigs neck and swallowing one pill after another with little
into of water. This process continuing, even as she speaks
the phone.

NAN

Monica--is Leslie up yet? Good. I didn't want you to get worried when you realized I wasn't there. I'm still with that man. I'll tell you about it later. But it's sure nice to have wobbly legs again. Look, today's recycling day for Leslie at school, so give her some empty cans... well, then dump some out for her! Tell her I had to leave real early for work and I'll pick her up at school myself to make up for it and

we'll rent any cassette she wants
for tonight. Thank you... Take good
care.

brush
the
She hangs up. Another snatch of lyric as she bends to
her teeth with her finger; prepares herself and opens
door to greet her new lover.

INT. BURKE'S MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

her.
Burke sits on the edge of the bed, fearful. He sees

BURKE

Oh, I thought you took off in the
middle of the night.

She moves quickly to him.

NAN

No. I just had to call home. Is that
why you're sad?

BURKE

No. It's Everett. This kid who used
to work for me. He was always crazy
to do his own movie.

NAN

(fearing worst)
What happened?

BURKE

(very down)
His movie not only opened to a three
million dollar Friday--it's gotten
great reviews.

actually
lovers: he,
intimate,
Nan is dumbfounded; still she puts a hand on him,
consoling him for his hideous thought--Hollywood
wrapped up with ill thoughts of others; she, feeling
yet severely compromised. Cupid's work is done.

BURKE

(again)
Listen. I'm tremendously worried
about 'Ground Zero' because of the

bad 'want to sees' you sent over.
But that's just me being nervous
over nothing, isn't it?

NAN

No. That's just you correctly
assessing the situation. So stop
being so hard on yourself.

He eyes her, then:

INT. MATT'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

coming
Matt,
next
varied
a
her
is
woman in

We hear a muffled argument between Matt and Jeannie
from inside their apartment. Then the door opens and
holding Jeannie by the hand, moves down the hall to the
door and knocks. (NOTE: Jeannie is dressed in layers of
clothing--some of the layers play clothes, some fit for
coronation. She is a pocket contemporary Annie Hall...
style so much her own it transcends judgement. Her hair
unkempt. The door opens revealing Lucy, an Hispanic
her mid-30s.

MATT

How're you doing? I'm from next door.
I see you with your kids in the
laundry room...

LUCY

Hello.
(seeing Jeannie, turns
warmer)
...Who are you?

Jeannie is a bit shy.

MATT

Say, 'Hello, I'm your new neighbor
now too.'

Jeannie says nothing.

LUCY

I'm Lucy Crisala... What's your name?

Jeannie says nothing.

MATT

Say, 'Jeannie.'

answering
her
The form of the conversation is forged. Jeannie not
anything. Matt bending over to Jeannie while he forms
answers to Lucy.

LUCY

I have a little girl too.

MATT

Say, 'Isn't that nice... How old is she?'

LUCY

She's four and a half and I have a little boy who is not yet one year.

MATT

Say, 'That's nice... I'd like to play with them... My Daddy didn't know your phone number, so we just decided to...'

LUCY

(interrupting)

What can I do for you?

MATT

Say 'Daddy has to go to work tonight and...'

(catching himself and
looks directly at
Lucy)

I need someone to help me and her on short notice. I've seen your around with your kids and hoped you knew someone in the building or close by. I've got this new job that starts now. Do you know anyone?

LUCY

Well, I'm always here. I could maybe do it myself.

MATT

(there is a God and a

good one at that)
Oh, this is so great. Let's work out
a full-time schedule and...

LUCY

Wait. Jeannie, why don't you come in
for a minute and meet Ricky and Essa.
Come on, we're making fruit bars.

Jeannie walks into the apartment past her father.

LUCY

(again, to Matt)
Why don't you leave her for a while
and then we talk.

MATT

Sort of a test?

LUCY

We'll just see how it works.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

there
Matt
stays
Play-pen in the middle of the floor... Jeannie stands
staring at Essa who is playing with her little brother.
moves to embrace Jeannie who cranes away from him. He
with it, whispering in her ear.

MATT

Please behave, understand? I don't
know what we'll do if this doesn't
work, so behave, sweetheart. Behave,
behave.

As he exits towards his own apartment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MATT'S APT. - 20 MINUTES LATER

crying
despair.
Matt is extraordinarily anxious. Then he HEARS loud
and screaming from next door. There is a stab of
Matt deflates, then resigned, exits.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

door,
stands
The sound of screaming now louder. He walks to Lucy's
takes a breath and knocks. The door opens and Lucy
there looking rattled.

MATT

I'm sorry I bothered you.
(calling inside)
Jeannie...

LUCY

Could I have her a little bit longer?
My little boy just fell and Jeannie
is the only one he let hold him.

ON MATT

happy
A devil's weight lifted from his shoulders. The slap-
smile of the just saved plastered on his face.

MATT

Your little boy fell, so he's
screaming. And you want her to stay.

Lucy, confused by his buoyant reaction, nods.

LUCY

Okay. Seven dollars an hour?

MATT

Great. Thank you. See you later,
Jeannie.

having an
He tries to kiss her, but she shuns him. Lucy, now
official status, turns to admonish her.

MATT

No, that's okay. I'm fine with it. I
feel fine.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

rest of
in a
Burke
Burke walks tight little circles near Cathy and the
his staff while a few feet away Studio Executives stand
cluster. There is a DISTANT, RHYTHMIC SHUFFLING SOUND.

walks past Cathy.

BURKE

Nothing good that happens tonight
can make it worth feeling the way I
do right now. Nothing.

(turning to Cathy)

What do you think?

CATHY

(nervously taking the
plunge)

To be honest, I had problems with
'Ground Zero.' But this 'People Get
Hurt' one, while it might not be my
exact, exact thing, I think will
really work for an audience. It's so
over the top, you have a great time.

BURKE

So you think it'll score big?

CATHY

Yes.

INT. COUNTING ROOM - NIGHT

card-
with

Where we discover the SOURCE OF THE SOUND. Some twenty
counters on the floor riffling through stacks of cards
erasers. Matt and Nan stand in the doorway.

NAN

Don't worry. My daughter used to
throw fits in supermarkets when we
first moved here. It's all so
perfectly normal. Plus I know a great
psychiatric children's group.

MATT

That's what breaks your heart.
Jeannie's problem is that she's so
down on herself.

NAN

Well, she's lucky to have a daddy
who cares, believe me.

MATT

I don't know if lucky's the word.
I'm hoping she's asleep when I get

home so I won't have to deal with her... I'm actually afraid of my own kid.

NAN

Oh, my. I've had exactly that feeling and never said it out loud. See, there are men who talk my language and I'm just cursed that I'm not attracted to them because they are so nice they remind me of myself.

Matt laughs. In the b.g., the counting is completed.

GROUP CAPTAIN

Excellents?

GIRL COUNTER

Seven.

GROUP CAPTAIN

Very goods?

BOY COUNTER

14.

GROUP CAPTAIN

Fairs?

SECOND BOY CARD COUNTER

30.

GROUP CAPTAIN

Poors?

SECOND GIRL CARD COUNTER

Just a second...

(finishes counting)

666.

the
theater

The Group Captain notes the figure on a sheet, walks to doorway and hands it to Nan, who is still deep into conversation with Matt. She begins walking back to the without looking at the sheet in her hand.

NAN

I felt terrible about the way I blew up at you when I first met you.

(before he can object)

Please.

FULL SHOT - THEATER AREA - NIGHT

some
Burke and others waiting as Matt and Nan come to a stop
distance away.

BURKE

What are they doing?

NAN

I began taking anti-depressants when we moved here from Washington. I had some small reactions--sleeping 14 hours, no libido, I gained 17 pounds in nine days--that sort of thing. So they gave me pills to deal with the side effects. And then pills to deal with the side effects I was getting from those pills. All this besides the stuff the nutritionist was giving me. The combination formed some sort of potion so that I keep telling the truth. I don't have a choice. That's why I was so rude to you.

MATT

Your doctor says this?

NAN

Oh, yes. He's excited, but only because he sees glory for himself in it... See, ordinarily I wouldn't say that about my doctor, but I can't help it, it's the truth. He's monitoring me for a while longer before writing it up for this medical journal...

Cathy has joined them.

CATHY

Burke's going crazy waiting for the score.

NAN

Coming.

CATHY

(to Matt)

How are you, anyway?

Matt shifts, figuring out his answer.

CATHY

(a small laugh)
It's a tough one, huh? Me too.

Nan looks down at the score.

NAN

Oh, my. Matt, I'd better drive him
myself.

She starts for Burke.

ON BURKE AND OTHERS

As Nan arrives and hands the Studio Executives the
score,
Burke looking over their shoulders.

BURKE

I can fix this... Get some narration
written. . .

(turning to Director)
You'll cut 30 minutes. It will come
out like butter.

DIRECTOR

We're only 77 minutes now...

BURKE

(mumbling to himself)
...a 47-minute movie... no, that
won't work...

FEMALE STUDIO EXEC

I have to go. I have a nanny problem.
Priorities, right?

BURKE

Thanks for the support.

Burke
She kisses his cheek and leaves. A beat of silence...
turns to Nan.

BURKE

(again)
Can you help?

Exactly the moment Nan has been waiting for... she does
have

a valuable observation to offer at this dark moment.

NAN

Yes, I can.

BURKE

(hopeful)

Go ahead.

NAN

It's only a movie.

As Burke looks at her from the depths of his pain and
sees her confidently believing that she has imparted
something of value, the movie's marquee lights go off giving us a:

BLACK

OUT:

INT. MATT'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

As he carries an enormously resistant Jeannie, wearing
a borrowed T-shirt nightie, back towards his apartment...
Matt has Jeannie under one arm--her clothes and shoes in
another... Jeannie's arms are extended towards Lucy, who stands in
the open doorway of her apartment. She begins thrashing.
Giant tears come--the moment is operatic.

JEANNIE

Let go. Please, Lucy, don't make me
go.

MATT

Everyone's tired. You can come back
tomorr...

LUCY

Listen to me, Jeannie...

JEANNIE

I want to live here with these people.
God, let me live here.

MATT

Maybe if she stayed tonight she...

JEANNIE

I love it here so much that...

her
Now her father's last words have registered on her--she immediately stops crying, though tears still roll down cheeks.

JEANNIE

Daddy says I can stay.

takes
Jeannie wriggles away towards Lucy's doorway. Lucy
looming
several steps toward Matt, who obviously fears the exchange.

LUCY

I no think you can give her what
pleases when she act like this...
Because then she think...

corner
in
Matt is very much like a fighter taking a great deal of punishment, knowing he is beaten, but being told by his he must make a fight of it. He nods his head repeatedly agreement...

MATT

I know... I know...

in
Now he sniffs the air in quick rhythm, hoping to draw some courage and resolve. He moves to Jeannie.

MATT

You'll see Lucy in the morning. We're going home.

JEANNIE

No. I'm not! STOP!

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

and
As they enter and Matt pushes her into the other room closes the door, placing her in there alone.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

bedroom. Jeannie, behind the double glass-paneled doors of the

HER POV

a Matt, upset in a way he has never imagined, as he pops
begins beer--puts on some headphones for calming music and
to read a book on child behavior modification.

ON JEANNIE

now Feeling the restrictions of her punishment, pacing and
have she begins to wail "THIS LONELY LIFE". Few adult women
loss, sung with such appropriate passion out of need and
sits aloneness and confusion. The song finishes. Jeannie
huddled.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Popcorn This rooftop serves as an outdoor commissary for
Cathy, Pictures. There are a few tables, snack machines and
In umbrellas. The whole "D" staff is there, including
awful having lunch, along with Claire, the casting assistant.
Jeannie in the b.g., we see Matt, huddled, sitting on the roof's
green outdoor carpeting, feeling much the same as
the previous scene.

ON MATT

their Off in the distance, the Popcorn execs contentedly ply
begin trade. As he overhears their conversation and the words
to register in all their horror.

MILLIE

Will somebody take a minute to look
over my casting list before Burke

gets here?

MALE D PERSON

(scanning list)

This isn't so great, Millie.

MILLIE

Well, I wanted to put in people we had a shot at getting.

MALE D PERSON

(reading from list)

F. Murray Abraham, Jeff Daniels, Ed Harris, John Lithgow, Rip Torn, Willem Dafoe, John Malkovich... For an action lead?

MILLIE

Could you at least take it one person at a time instead of...

MALE D PERSON

Okay. Let's play 'State the Obvious'... F. Murray Abraham has a nose as long as an Aspen ski line, Ed Harris is losing his hair, Joe Mantegna has never played the lead in a big movie... Willem Dafoe's teeth... Bob Hoskins looks fur bearing when he takes off his shirt... Malkovich...

from Matt can take it no more. He hears a loud voice coming his own throat. He wigs out.

MATT

I can't stand it anymore. I can't.

CATHY

What's wrong? What happened?

MATT

What, in God's name, are you doing in this job you have?

SHOT

As they all start to answer at once.

MATT

I mean him. What, in God's name, do

you know about casting?

MALE D PERSON

Me?

Matt rises and walks towards the Male D Person.

MATT

Yes. What do you know? About anything? You don't even know you have a habit of touching your tongue with a finger like you want to lick yourself.

(note: this is his
little habit)

Yet, you talk like you actually know something... So I want you to tell me...

(louder)

...what you know.

MALE D PERSON

I'm not going to be drawn into this.

MATT

I've been an actor most of my life and this is the first time I've ever heard what the people calling the shots sound like when they're casting. So I really want to find out what, if anything, you know because what if nothing you know.

FEMALE D PERSON

I don't think the yelling is necessary.

MATT

Oh, you couldn't be more wrong. And I'm not talking to you. And I don't like you.

MALE D PERSON

How about you just mind your own business?

Matt is very close to him--he shakes his chair.

MATT

You're minding my business. That's the problem... so, just tell me, what do you know?

ON MALE D PERSON

around
Matt's manner is threatening. The Male D Person looks
for some support and finds little... then Matt's tone
changes... it's reasonable, almost seductive.

MATT

Just tell me and I'll shut up.

MALE D PERSON

(taking the bait)

First of all, I've been going to
movies since I was six, for God's
sake...

MATT

What you know is the size of a
schnozz. What you don't know is that
these guys...

(indicates list)

...are for real...

ON CATHY

reach
complicated,
She is a ricochet victim of every word Matt says, as he
continues to indict the Male D Person and unknowingly
her instead. His fury grows and becomes more
containing an element of mourning.

MATT

(again)

...that they can make something
happen, and even they don't know
what that is till they get in there
and play a little... they can make
something happen that you can't even
imagine... and it's not your fault,
this stupidity... 'cause you're just
this scared little prick who gets to
say he's making movies, and the only
thing they ever taught you is that
what you like doesn't matter.

MALE D PERSON

(frightened)

Thanks for understanding.

The anger leaves Matt. He is depleted.

MATT

But isn't it almost good manners for you to feel a little shame?

Cathy rises and begins to exit.

MATT

(again)
I didn't mean you.

CATHY

If you didn't, you sure should have.

She exits. The D Person's Colleagues have taken advantage of the beat to egg him on.

MALE D PERSON

You talk about manners--are you actually so bitter you don't realize how you acted just now? You're gone, pal. But at least know that we can't help that we're making it.

MATT

Oh, shit. You win. You got lucky with 'bitter.' That word just scares me to death.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

A distraught Cathy is walking down as Burke bounds up.

BURKE

You look down.

CATHY

I am.

BURKE

Thank you. I appreciate the support.

CATHY

I'm not down for you. I'm down about myself.

BURKE

(not hearing)
Oh. What if 'Ground Zero' doesn't do well this weekend?

CATHY

Please listen to me.

He nods, but she pauses, disconcerted.

BURKE

What?

CATHY

I just got this feeling of seeing myself talking to you and how this is the most important moment of... ever.

BURKE

(brusquely)

Okay. Good. What is it?

CATHY

I've been watching this company make movies that cost tens of millions of dollars and all the while I've known about this wonderful script which we can somehow own and we could make for about \$14,000,000... \$3,000,000 if you can live without stars or a name director.

BURKE

Is that it? Okay, send me...

CATHY

I've sent you coverage on it nine times. I swear to you, Burke, it will work. You've never heard me say that.

BURKE

How about last night?

CATHY

(an unexpectedly fierce outburst)

I don't know anything about action-adventure!!

(on his look, she gains control)

I have no idea where that came from. Hey, I know everyone thinks I don't have any commercial sense because of what I said at the 'Gremlins' preview and all... And you think I can't put myself on the line. Well, if this

picture doesn't work, fire me. Have me killed if it doesn't get good reviews. If this doesn't get a 70 percent definite recommend from women 49 and under, I promise to be your sex slave until they drop ticket prices back to five bucks and start enforcing the R rating.

BURKE

You're selling very excellent. Very excellent presentation.

CATHY

You've got to do this. I think this movie can save me.

BURKE

(disgusted)

Oh, please... What's the script?

CATHY

'Mr. Deeds Goes to Town.'

EXT. MATT'S APARTMENT - EVENING

As Matt exits his car with beaten down body language.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

As he leads Jeannie briskly down the hall from Lucy's apartment and into his own.

JEANNIE

Why couldn't you even look at the way I dressed Ricky?

MATT

Look, I don't want to talk about it. I just had a real rough day... so just let it sit there, okay?

JEANNIE

But what was it? Telllll me... Compromise... You sad?

MATT

Yes.

(through gritted neck
cords)

Now, I really need to be quiet.

JEANNIE

(eyes him, then)

You!! I know what will cheer you up.

tape
tape,
motions,
starts to
own
beguiling.
the
tape

Moving very quickly and with great purpose, she slaps a
into a pink child's cassette player and MUSIC BEGINS...
Jeannie sings along with the child's chorus on the
"YOU COULD BE WONDERFUL", making, with little hand
the last thing Matt needs, but, in due course, he
actually make a bit of transitional progress out of his
troubles and into the fact that his daughter is
But, before the mood can fully sweeten, Jeannie forgets
lyrics and begins to verbally assault herself as the
continues to play...

JEANNIE

I can't even remember the words... I
am stupid.

MATT

No, you're not. You're not stupid
and I'm not bitter... and you know
why? Because there's no cure for
either one and we've got to believe
in some cure for each of us.

JEANNIE

I am stupid. I can't even remember
the words to some baby song.

MATT

Oh, Jeannie... I just can't do this
now.

The phone rings... As he goes to answer it...

MATT

(into phone)

Hello? Yes. Cathy... Hey. Just a
second.

called
His mood has changed. It's a fine sign that Cathy has

and

him at home. He needs only for his child to take pity
listen to him.

MATT

Jeannie, please... be quiet for one
second... this is very important for
me.

She decides, with some difficulty, to let him continue.

MATT

(into phone)
So? Wow. Good for you.
Congratulations.

finger

Jeannie mouths the words, "Who is it?" Matt holds up a
asking her to wait.

MATT

Me? This is great. I'll come right
over and pick up the script. Okay.
If you want to. Bring it over.
Goodbye.
(to Jeannie)
We might make it yet, kid.

EXT. MATT'S STREET - EVENING

life, and
security
parks
putting

As Cathy drives past some rough examples of street
finally finds Matt's building with its grim iron gate
system. Cathy, uncomfortable in these surroundings,
her car, brushes her hair, while, at the same time,
in place a phony cheap-car-radio-sticker over her own
expensive system, and gets out.

INT. MATT'S APT. ENTRANCE - EVENING

She buzzes his apartment and waits.

MATT'S VOICE

Cathy?

CATHY

Yes.

MATT'S VOICE

I'll buzz you in. You've got to be quick and push hard.

to
There is
door a
gathering

In the b.g. WE HEAR Jeannie loudly imploring her father make the person wait till she's finished dressing. the SOUND OF the buzzer. Cathy hurls herself at the good four times before finally timing it right and the necessary strength to spill through.

INT. MATT'S HALLWAY - EVENING

Cathy stands there overhearing the voices from inside.

JEANNIE'S VOICE

But why can't I stay just a little while?

MATT'S VOICE

Because this is a very special friend of Daddy's and I need privacy... Be fair... I let you wear that dress.

Cathy knocks. Matt opens the door.

MATT

Hi.

tidied up.
lace
tiara
heels

He steps aside so Cathy may enter... The place is He has changed his clothes and Jeannie is wearing a dress, fit for a young princess, complete with flowered and ballet slippers, with trailing blue ribbons at the and a velvet cape.

MATT

This is my daughter, Queen Elizabeth. Jeannie, this is Cathy.

CATHY

Hi... What a pretty dress.

JEANNIE

Thank you. That's nice.

ON MATT

Happy that Jeannie is behaving so well.

CATHY

Are you going to a party?

JEANNIE

(wildly hopeful)

Am I going to a party, Dad?

MATT

(quickly)

No. You're going next door.

Jeannie is crest-fallen; for a horrible second, it looks as if she may start to wail... Matt moves into action with a pep talk.

MATT

Remember our compromise? You're going next door to Lucy's to play and you'll show the kids your dress and I'll come get you later and we'll go out someplace and I'll buy you anything you want for under seventeen dollars?

JEANNIE

I remember.

She starts for the door, doubles back, and kisses a surprised Cathy full on the lips... The gesture is beautifully, even movingly carried off. It is totally false.

JEANNIE

(again to Cathy)

Goodbye. I love you...

CATHY

(totally thrown)

Well,... thank you.

Jeannie is on the run... as she passes her father.

MATT

(sotto)

Thanks.

Jeannie nods acknowledgment as she flies past.

OTHER ANGLE

Jeannie is

Favoring Cathy, Matt leans out the doorway until safely next door, then re-enters.

CATHY

What a little winner, huh?

MATT

(modestly)

Oh...?

CATHY

(waving script)

This is my favorite project. And it looks like we're going ahead with it.

MATT

(overlap)

'Mr. Deeds Goes to Town?' Oh, it's a remake...

CATHY

Well, come on, what's original? And this is a wonderful rewrite. It's funnier.

MATT

And there's a part in it for...

CATHY

Yes... Burke says I can test whoever I want. He wasn't even surprised when I mentioned you. So, if you could read this rewrite now and if you like it, we can make a test deal...

(catching herself)

they can make a test deal... we can tell them that they can make a test deal.

(in explanation)

I think it's important for me to steer clear of the business end.

MATT

Okay... which part?

CATHY

Longfellow Deeds.

MATT

Mr. Deeds?

CATHY

Who goes to town, yes.

Matt takes this in... takes this miracle in.

MATT

Who are we kidding? I'm even having trouble getting short parts--I'm going to say I love it no matter what you've done to it.

CATHY

Stop being so creepy honest. I really have an instinct about you for this. I'm going home--call me when you finish reading it.
(how quickly status changes things)
Or... come on over.

INT. BURKE'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Burke,
else.
recovering

A post-coital moment though only the man is visible; who lies on the bed wearing a shirt and tie and nothing Nan lies out of sight on the floor where she is from the deepest orgasm of her life.

BURKE

Why not? If you can test movies and premises and want-to-sees, why can't you test screen tests?

bed.

Nan hauls herself into view, climbing back onto the

NAN

I can't deal with your self-centered dribble right now. I have just had the biggest orgasm of my life and I'm trying to figure out if I'm in love with you.

BURKE

What?

NAN

Whoops. Tell me what made you rush over and pick me up and bring me here at six o'clock. I mean we seem to have...

gesture,
She closes her eyes in a characteristic and touching
as the scientist in her struggles to be precise.

NAN

(again)

...this unspoken agreement not to talk about why we're together when we're together and I don't think it's good to let that become a pattern for us.

verbal
She focuses again on Burke. Prepared for, at last, some
intimacy.

BURKE

Why did I rush to you? Because I felt like I had to... be with someone and you were closest.

(on Nan's reaction)

What's wrong?

NAN

You're not at all aware that you've just said something...

(her eyes close)

...unattractive?

BURKE

Look, I'm sorry if that came out...

NAN

I'm not looking for an apology.

BURKE

I'm just trying to say that one of the things I'm not great at is...

NAN

Let's not make this about your shortcomings. I'm sure you've had enough of those conversations to last you a lifetime. What I'm...

BURKE

No, I haven't.

NAN

No, you haven't what?

BURKE

Had a conversation about shortcomings...

NAN

(aghast)

No woman has ever told you that you have an almost barbaric insensitivity? That you seem to have lapsed into some final cynicism, where you actually believe that, not only does everyone think the way you do, but only you have the courage to express it? That you seem horribly certain everyone else is sort of pretending when they talk about love or seem to care for anything outside their own anus? No one's ever said that sort of thing to you?

BURKE

Oh, yeah... But I didn't get what you meant by 'shortcomings.' Hey, if you think things like that, what are you doing here?

NAN

(indignantly)

I'm here for the same reason 86 percent of older women loved 'Beauty and the Beast.' I would like to believe that underneath the creature, there is a sweet, caring guy.

BURKE

I sure hope you're wrong.

Nan breaks up, shaking her head ruefully.

NAN

I have to pick up Leslie.

Burke, not having intended humor, is also lighthearted, somehow avoided a tight spot.

having

EXT. CATHY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

the
MUSIC
door,
loved

Matt, holding the script, walks the small lane through tidy lawn to the perfect Silver Lake cottage. We HEAR from inside. (A soundtrack.) There is a note on the which is slightly ajar, reading: "Come right in if you it--ring if you have reservations." Matt enters.

INT. CATHY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

sparse,
squeal
bedroom

White walls, thick rugs, great, great, fantasy garret; but cozy. He walks a step, then there is a girlish and a naked Cathy streaks the rest of the way to her from the bathroom.

CATHY

(calling)
I mistimed it.
(sticking her head
out the door)
I wanted you to catch me fully
frontal.

quick and
rings.

She smiles broadly; hurriedly putting on something loose to match her buzz. As she walks to him, the phone She ignores it.

CATHY

So you loved it. A lot? A little?

MATT

Give me a second--all of a sudden,
there's a lot to deal with.

She sits on the sofa--looking at him.

MATT

(again)
It's terrific.

CATHY

(pointedly)
Do you see why I think you're right?

MATT

Because you're nice and you know I need work.

CATHY

(lower)

You know this is really happening, so I wish you wouldn't kid around about it.

MATT

Sorry, but I think the audition rule is that I have to be serious unless the person in charge is wearing a bathrobe and her nipples are sticking out...

(holds fingers apart)

...this much.

Cathy peeks down her bathrobe. Then broadly.

CATHY

There are some mixed signals coming out of here, aren't there?

(phone rings; she answers)

Hi. Working... I can't write down a number now. Call me back.

(to Matt)

The script?

MATT

It's really good. I get a little nervous thinking about the opportunity.

CATHY

I want to hear everything. You want to go page by page?

MATT

If it's okay. I kind of work on these things in a private... it's just... it's a little better for me if I don't...

CATHY

(hurt)

Okay.

MATT

Okay, let's do it. It won't kill me.

CATHY

Please. I understand.

him. A

An uncertain beat and then she leans over and kisses
sound escapes him. They get up and begin walking to the
bedroom.

MATT

I swear to God, I don't know which
thing I want more, the sex or the
conversation afterwards.

CATHY

(a smile)

What do you mean?

INT. CATHY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As they enter and move to the bed where Matt starts
undressing.

MATT

I mean I haven't been to bed with
anyone since Jeannie got here... I
haven't talked to anyone the way I
need to.

(cradling her breast)

I haven't seen anything this
beautiful. I haven't felt this good
about life. I mean, I've been lonely,
Cathy.

CATHY

(as he enters her)

I'll tell you the truth, Matt. I've
never felt more like turning my phone
off.

She twists her body gracefully, sexily towards the
phone.

MATT

You can't shut the phone off. I left
this number with Jeannie's sitter.

CATHY

I don't understand what you're worried
about.

MATT

I'm not worried. But if the phone was off, I would worry.

CATHY

But I get a lot of calls.

MATT

Oh.

CATHY

I could put the machine on 'monitor,' but it's going to be... I don't know.

MATT

It will be okay. I think the most important thing is to stop talking about the phone. Turn it off, monitor, whatever.

CATHY

Okay.

She twists toward the phone again--not quite so beautifully.

OTHER ANGLE

As she hits the "monitor" button, then turns back to him.

CATHY

You look so serious.

MATT

I am so serious.

CATHY'S POV

does
of
help
Matt totally there... this is major for him, then he something sensitive... reads her concern over the depth his need and interest and shrugs, indicating he can't it.

ON CATHY

She likes him.

THE COUPLE

the
thrust and

As they make love... their union thrown off kilter by
phone messages which roll in periodically as they
sweat towards intimacy.

YOUNGER MALE VOICE

(broadly)

Hi, Cathy... All my magazines came today... Read the new Vanity Fair, they take apart three people we hate... Spy is bad this month... Scorsese didn't get the Time cover, the plane crash did... ha, ha, ha... Why aren't you at the office? You know, I'm getting to the point where I prefer to reach people's machines... Bye.

The love making continues as the calls continue.

MALE D PERSON VOICE

Cathy? Are you there? Hello... Are you there?? I'm going to count to ten. One, two, three...

(then to someone
passing his office)

Did you go to the screening last night? What did you think? That makes two bombs in a row for her.

(into phone)

...four, five, six... Pick up if you're there. I've got major gossip... major screwup. It could be good for us.

divided

Cathy, in the throes of sexual union, feeling a bit
by the offer on the phone... she shakes it off.

MATT

Is this the kind of crap you listen to all day?

CATHY

Please, we're making love here.

BURKE'S VOICE

(incredibly depressed)

If the TV show bombs, there's going to be a dance party on my grave. I

don't give a crap. Nothing seems to have a point anymore. I'm really questioning everything... including action-adventure... Don't tell anyone I'm down. Even destroy the message tape. Don't tell anyone I said to destroy the message tape. Don't even give hints that there's something you can't tell them, but you wish you could... I'm losing it. I'm losing it. I'm losing it. Don't tell nobody. Don't tell nobody. Don't tell nobody.

difficulty The sound of a hang up... the couple having more making love...

ON CATHY AND MATT

then: As they look to the phone and react--still joined,

JEANNIE'S VOICE

(sobbing)
Daddy...
(berating someone who
is with her)
You dialed bad... Where is he?

LUCY'S VOICE

(with Jeannie coaching
b.g.)
Matt, Jeannie is very upset because you are not here when you said. And now the big hand is on the eight...

The sound of a hangup... As Matt springs from the bed.

MATT

I'm sorry...

CATHY

It's all right.

MATT

(as he leaves)
Is there a name for what we just had?

INT. BURKE'S CAR - DAY

Matt driving. Burke in back as his anxieties gnaw away.

MATT

This is awkward, my driving you around
and testing for you tomorrow.

BURKE

Not really.

MATT

Well, I hope you understand I can't
drive you to work tomorrow and then
go in and test. It's just...

Burke reluctantly considers, then:

BURKE

Okay. I was going to come in late
anyway. I'll get one of the kids to
drive me.

MATT

Thanks. And, look, if I get the lead
in this movie, you'll have to go
back to sitting up front with me.

Burke laughs--surprised at being genuinely amused.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jeannie

Matt, wildly dialing a phone--orange juice in hand,
standing nearby. He shrieks one phrase.

MATT

(into phone)

No sitter!!! Thanks. We're leaving
now.

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM - DAY

over

Matt is in the final process of being made up, going
his lines. Cathy enters.

CATHY

Jeannie's fine. There's a whole bunch
of kids in the building. She's
fascinated. And they're all ready
for you.

MATT

How many men are they testing today?

CATHY

You're the only one.

Matt is surprised... But he is a pro and so immediately
makes use of this sudden blip in status.

MATT

Then tell them I need a little more
time.

MAKE-UP PERSON

No, it's okay, we're done.

MATT

I mean for me. I want to focus a
little.

CATHY

Sure.

(she hugs Matt)

Good luck, Matt.

(whispered advice)

The thing they're looking for most
is sexy.

And then they're gone. With that bit of advice, Matt is
totally fucked up. A beat after Cathy leaves:

HAIR PERSON

You know who she was involved with
for a minute or so?

MAKE-UP PERSON

Who?

MATT

(quickly)

Hey!

On their look...

MATT

(again)

You guys have to leave. This is
important and I need to be alone
right now...

They exit... Matt thumbs through the script... does a
relaxation exercise... takes a breath and thinks... a

beat

circle

and he is reasonably confident... he walks one half-
of the room making sure he's fully pumped, then exits.

EXT. POPCORN MOVIES - DAY

but

the

Jeannie

shy,

clinging

"MAKE

point,

view.

As crowded as it was for the previous audition scene,
this time they are reading children of varied ages, and
kids and their parents are all over the stairs, etc.
is filled with wonder and is arrestingly and atypically
as she makes her way through this world of the young,
to Cathy's hand, as the kids sing their version of
"BELIEVE"--the stage parents taking one verse. At one
Cathy's begins talking to someone, blocking Jeannie's

JEANNIE

Get out of my way!

CATHY

Don't say it like that!!!

JEANNIE

Which way should I?
(polite little girl)
Get out of my way.
(almost weeping)
Get out of my way.
(furious)
Get out of my way.

All this noticed by a casting person with a clipboard.

CASTING PERSON

Wow.

INT. POPCORN PICTURES HALLWAY - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

stragglers.

Matt making his way past the last of the kid
Cathy and Jeannie come running up to him.

MATT

It felt great... Everybody...

JEANNIE

Let me tell him, let me tell him,
let me tell him...

CATHY

(highly annoyed)
Let him finish! God!

JEANNIE

I want to tell him.

CATHY

If you wait one minute, I'll let
you.

incanting
to
Jeannie turns down her volume, but keeps repeating--
actually... "I can't wait to tell him... I can't wait
tell him... I can't wait to tell him..."

MATT

Anyway, the girl I did it with, by
the way, she's really good; the
director, the crew... they all thought
we nailed it.

CATHY

(loving, sexy)
Hey.

JEANNIE

(to Cathy)
Now?

office
Cathy nods and Jeannie begins to push Matt into Cathy's
for privacy.

CATHY

Wait till you hear this one.

INT. CATHY'S OFFICE

we've
Jeannie sits her father down. This is the first time
seen her joyful. Pure glee.

JEANNIE

Some lady asked me to go in a room
and, you know, make believe and say
stuff like we were playing a game...

bolt
Just a

The words coming so fast that Jeannie lets loose with a
of SONG, as if taking a moment to catch her breath.
few sung lines proclaiming happiness.

JEANNIE

(again)

And everybody went 'yea' and they
said they wanted me to be on
television.

And the SUNG PHRASE.

JEANNIE

And give me money and have a teacher
there and a person to braid my hair
and color my face and give me
clothes...

The sung phrase again.

ON MATT

Stricken.

MATT

You wait here, Jeannie.

INT. CATHY'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

still
the

Several people milling about... Matt eyes Cathy. We
hear Jeannie's muffled singing from the other side of
door.

MATT

(furious)

I have to talk to you.

EXT. POPCORN PICTURES - DAY

placing
pushed

As Matt and Cathy come into frame... Matt forcefully
her with her back to the wall. She is not one to be
around.

CATHY

Don't!

MATT

What in hell is wrong with you? You actually think...

CATHY

I'm trying to hang in here but everything in me cuts off when somebody acts this way.

MATT

(continuing right along)

...that you can have my kid audition for a show without asking me.

CATHY

I didn't... She went for water and by the time she got back, they had offered her the part. Blame Burke, he was there...

fury is Matt takes this in. Just a millimeter underneath his professional curiosity.

MATT

What's the part, anyway?

CATHY

The white kid in a multi-racial foster home with all these kids of varying ages. It's not a bad show. I sure can't wait to see the test.

MATT

How were they able to test her so fast?

CATHY

No. They offered it to her off the reading. I meant your test.

MATT

Oh... A child actor. Just what any kid with problems needs to straighten out--a series of her own...

back. We Cathy has nothing to offer. Matt begins leading her confidence, HOLD ON THEIR BACKS and see the chink in Matt's

hear the tightness in his voice as he asks:

MATT

You'll let me know as soon as they see my test?

CATHY

Right away... You've got my vote.

They hold hands.

INT. MATT'S APT. - NIGHT

her Jeannie, a script in her lap, caressing it, avoiding father's gaze. He sits nearby sizing her up, pissed.

JEANNIE

I'm doing it.

MATT

Not if I don't let you. That's the law, the police law.

otherwise, She takes this shot hard, but tries to pretend continuing to stare hard at her script to avoid him.

JEANNIE

Do I have to learn to read to be on television?

MATT

(with a real edge)
You're going to have to learn to look at me and listen to me and the longer I have to wait THE ANGRIER I'M GOING TO BE.

JEANNIE

(looks up suddenly)
I'm so mad.

MATT

Me too. Just listen.

JEANNIE

I don't... why?!?

MATT

Because I know about this. I have worked with kid actors... They don't

have that much fun. They're inside all day... they don't get to go to regular schools or play with their regular friends like Ricky and Essa.

(progressively losing it)

And their parents? You think I'm going to be one of those parents, sitting in one of those rooms, where we all go crazy trying to jump start our egos with our kids' sweat, all the time smiling at each other like our lives are working while we root against everyone else's little girl?

(Jeannie is totally confused, until)

No!! No way! I can't!

JEANNIE

Okay. So, no, you're cuckoo anyway. I won't do it. And I don't care because I'm be stupid at it anyway.

She throws the script down. Tears in her eyes.

MATT

Pick it up, Jeannie.

it to She's so down, she complies--picking it up and walking the trash can. Matt stops her and takes the script.

MATT

Let's work on it.

INT. BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY

office The staff of Popcorn Pictures is gathered in the boss' next watching Matt's screentest on projection TV. Burke sits chairs to Nan on a sofa--Cathy sits in front of him--others in tune" or on the floor. One ASSISTANT is attempting to "fine between + the color--the TINT BAR GRAPH is on screen sliding and - as the color changes. Burke talks sotto to Nan.

BURKE

So how do you think 'Ground Zero' will do tonight?

leans She ignores him, continuing to watch the screen. He
into her.

BURKE

How do you think my movie will do
tonight?

NAN

(testy)
I'm not going to talk to you during
Matt's screentest.

Cathy turns in her chair and mouths "thank you" to Nan.

BURKE

(to himself)
How bad can it be? We've got to have
at least a two million dollar Friday.
There's nothing else out there.

CATHY

(turning to him)
Please.

BURKE

I'm watching...

ON SCREEN

to A VERY ATTRACTIVE ACTRESS is crying... Matt very close
her...

BURKE'S VOICE

Stop playing with that thing.

from The COLOR BAR GRAPH does a quick slide and disappears
the screen leaving the actors' faces green.

ACTRESS

(crying)
C'mon, Deeds, tell me about the
meeting.

MATT

What's wrong?

ACTRESS

Don't worry about my crying. As a

matter of fact, crying turns me on.

MATT

Well, in that case, your dog died.

through

There is laughter in the room. The actress smiles
her tears--pats Matt for being wonderful.

ACTRESS

What happened at the meeting?

MATT

I can't remember. You're too pretty.

(on her look)

Oh, I told them I'd keep on being
Chairman.

(then explaining)

I'm Chairman, you know.

ACTRESS

(smiling)

I know.

MATT

Told them I'd keep on being Chairman
if they hired everybody back.

ACTRESS

What did they say?

MATT

Oh, that I was crazy. You always
wear your hair back like that?

Terrific,

as

She kisses him. We HEAR the director say, "Cut.
guys." The girl and Matt hug, no longer in character,
others come in to congratulate them.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Ad-libbed enthusiasm... mostly about the girl...

ON CATHY

pointed...

As the conversation about the girl grows more
Cathy, impassive outwardly, recoiling inwardly.

BURKE

Okay, come on... let's have our creative meeting right here.

MALE D PERSON

Well, I'd sure go to bed with her.

BURKE

(professionally
concurring)
Very fuckable.

MALE CASTING PERSON

I'd sure fuck her.

BURKE

Okay... that's her... What about him?

FEMALE D PERSON

I think he's a very good to excellent actor--I do...
(puzzled)
But there's something...

BURKE

You wouldn't want to fuck him?

FEMALE D PERSON

Well, six years ago, maybe.

CLAIRE

I think he's talented and attractive.

BURKE

So you'd want to fuck him?

CLAIRE

He might be light in that area.

CATHY

The man is talented. If you get one of those directors who like actors, I think...

BURKE

A director can't make you hot if you're not hot. You'll end up with warm which is death.

CATHY

(defending Matt
slightly)

We laughed.

BURKE

Let me ask you something... Would you fuck him?

CATHY

(wearily)

Everything doesn't boil down to...

BURKE

Let me stop you before you embarrass yourself.

his
RENDEZVOUS,
Burke rises and addresses his staff... the camera has
back in the foreground as it MOVES TOWARDS A
Burke moving too as he continues...

BURKE

(again)

We all can do our little lectures on what things boil down to. Everybody else here was professional enough to come out and say... I'd fuck her... I wouldn't fuck him... and you're ducking it... I want you to forget the acting stuff and totally focus on the issue.

he
And now Burke and CAMERA meet up--the effect being that
is talking directly to us as he continues.

BURKE

(again)

We do have some kind of responsibility to the audience... You just saw his screentest... so, if this is the first time you saw the guy, do you come out thinking to yourself and your girl friends, 'I'd sure go to bed with him; oh God, would he be something.' Would you, Cathy?... I'm being real here.

CATHY

No...

BURKE

Okay, so let's keep looking.

the They file out. Cathy gets up several beats later than others... and follows them out, avoiding Nan's look.

INT. CATHY'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

postpone She's been sitting here for quite a while... she can no longer; she dials as one of her MOVIE SOUND TRACKS PLAYS in the background.

CATHY

(into phone)

Hello. Matt... Hi... Okay, sure...

She listens, waiting for him to quiet Jeannie.

CATHY

(again)

Matt...

(louder)

Matt... Matt... Maybe it would be easier if I just said 'hi' to her... Hi, Jeannie... Yes, it's exciting... No, no. He's right, honey, they get somebody to read it to you. Now, put your dad on--it's important. No, first put your dad on... DAMN IT!

(she waits a beat)

...Matt. Uh-huh, a few hours ago... They all... everyone liked your work, but I think they'll go for a name or something.

betrayed She listens to him. He is hurt. Cathy, though, is also wrestling with her own internal struggles. She has is, him and is ashamed; in a strange way--terrified. She therefore, just a little irritable.

CATHY

(again)

It's not a matter of doing it differently... they liked what you did, a lot... they laughed and... it's not you... it's them.

(suddenly her breath comes weird)

No, please. Don't thank me. If you

feel like getting together later or
anytime, call me, okay? You sound
like you have your hands full right
now... Goodbye.

INT. MATT'S APT. - NIGHT

As he hangs up...

JEANNIE

I wanted to talk to her again...
I...

most
starts
towards
of

She stops in mid-sentence, looking at her father. He is
overcome... his energy failing to get him past this
awful moment in his life. She moves to his side. He
to cry and, urgently seeking privacy, he moves quickly
the bathroom, rubbing Jeannie in an instinctive gesture
reassurance. He closes the door.

ON JEANNIE

starts

Devoid of anger. Sympathy so pure that it wrenches. She
to move towards the bathroom. Her voice sweet...

JEANNIE

Dad? Daddy?

Matt opens the door quickly.

MATT

Everything's okay... I'm sorry I
forgot to put you back on with Cathy.

He walks across the room, Jeannie tracking him.

JEANNIE

You didn't cried because of that...
I don't even want to talk to her.

unable
hearted
his

Matt sits down, still suffering a bit of dysfunction,
to keep up appearances other than a few minor half-
tweaks at his daughter who stands solemn and silent at

beats as
moment.

side. She pets him some... this goes on for several
the STRAINS OF "YOU COULD BE WONDERFUL" accompany the
Then:

JEANNIE

(a whisper)

Dad. Can I say just one thing?

permission.
With some effort, Matt lifts his head and nods

JEANNIE

You've got to make me supper.

Matt nods, rises and leads her into the small kitchen.

INT. BURKE'S BEDROOM - DAY

his
it on
dials.
Burke is wearing a T-shirt and shorts as he walks to
four-stops-past-state-of-the-art Stairmaster and turns
while looking over his shoulder at the telephone... now
sucking in some courage, he goes to the phone and speed
He begins to climb the stairs.

VOICE

You have reached the Warner's Hotline.
Estimated Box Office Grosses for
Friday, December 3rd, Weekend Number
49, are as follows in millions of
dollars.

He braces himself... there is a tone, then:

PHONE VOICE

Due to the high volume of calls, we
must ask you to wait till a line is
clear...

moving
the
MUSIC IN... At first from the speaker phone... Burke
in time to "THERE IS A LONELY..." And now singing... As
lyric concludes and the instrumental comes in.

PHONE VOICE

(again)

Thanks for waiting. Weekend 49 grosses

follow in millions of dollars.
'Belligerence,' 714 theaters. Two-
point-one-eight million, down 46
percent.

lighter,
Burke smiles with pleasure... his steps becoming
more fanciful.

PHONE VOICE

(again)
'Best Girl,' 1,820 theaters, six-
point-four million, up 24 percent.

BURKE

(contemptuously)
Cappuccino movies.

PHONE VOICE

Opening this weekend, 'Double Dare
Two,' 1,870 theaters, fourteen-point-
three million.

bat...
gleeful in
...and now his film, "Ground Zero," is coming up to
as succor to the gods, he tries to make his dance
anticipation.

PHONE VOICE

(again)
'Ground Zero,' 2,110 theaters, no
million, point four thousand dollars.

position,
Burke falls off his Stairmaster and, from his new
finishes his song.

INT. BURKE'S CAR - DAY

Matt is driving. Burke is seated alongside him, talking
without looking at him.

BURKE

I'm going to pieces...
(whispering)
The picture was budgeted at 21 million
and I spent 49 so they were a little
mad at me to begin with. Now it
doesn't open even with an Arby's
Roast Beef tie-in... I mean, we only
averaged 300 dollars a theater...

they're going to think I'm Woody Allen.

MATT

I don't think you have to worry about that.

BURKE

Thanks. But this is private. What about the exit survey? Did we do good with any group at all?

has
Now we HEAR Nan's voice on the speakerphone which Burke
been addressing all along.

NAN'S VOICE

I can't hear you, but--hi, Matt--that was funny.

MATT

Hi.

NAN'S VOICE

'I don't think you have to worry about that?'

to get
She laughs delightedly. Burke leans across Matt's lap
closer to the microphone.

BURKE

Did we do well with any group at all?

NAN'S VOICE

Eleven-year-old boys in the South.

He sits stupified.

NAN'S VOICE

(again)
Burke? Burke? Matt, is he...

BURKE

I'll see you later. Goodbye.

NAN'S VOICE

But, hon...

He hits the "end" button. He slumps for a second, then:

BURKE

I'm all alone...
(pause)
At least there's that.

EXT. POPCORN PICTURES - DAY

some
stage
As the car arrives outside Popcorn Pictures, we can SEE
child actors and their parents arriving at the sound
next door.

MATT

Are you going to need me? The kids
are rehearsing and I'd like to take
a look.

BURKE

Yeah, sure. I have to stay inside
during lunch hours now anyway--that's
when everybody returns my calls
because they're trying to miss me.

MATT

(amazed)
Is that true?

BURKE

(misinterpreting)
Yeah. Thanks for the support.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

adjusting
A row of parents standing near their child actors,
them--not unlike handlers of racing Greyhounds.

ON JEANNIE

background
even
Seen from a distance--her father behind her. In the
foreground, the mass of workers on the stage, It is, in
effect, her POV, even though she is in the extreme
of the shot. We MOVE CLOSER to Jeannie and her father--
a bit behind them. Jeannie is scared.

MATT

I bet I know what it looks like to
you.

JEANNIE

What?

MATT

A giant "find Waldo."

her
Despite herself, she smiles at the reference, though
tone is a bit sarcastic.

JEANNIE

Very funny.

PASSING VOICE

Five minutes, children, then we need
you for work on the set.

JEANNIE

Set?

MATT

That pretend living room, right over
there.

JEANNIE

Okay. Set. Bye...

MATT

(holding her arm)
Wait a second, Jeannie. Let Daddy
give you a few tips here.

JEANNIE

(twisting away)
Nooo. I've got to get to work.

moment
set,
up
trust
She breaks free, depriving Matt of the sweet and simple
he wanted with her. She's one of the first ones on the
other kids still hugging their parents. As Cathy comes
behind Matt, we can HEAR Jeannie who, having so small a
for her father, needs to confirm what he just told her.

JEANNIE

(faintly)
Is this the set?

Matt reacts.

PASSING VOICE

Parents to Room Two, please.
(as he goes by Matt)
Parents to Room Two, please.

Jeannie is watching.

PASSING VOICE

(again)
We have to clear the set.

Matt looks him off fiercely. The Passing Voice
addresses the
friendlier parents.

PASSING VOICE

(again)
This way, parents.

CATHY

I'm glad I found you.

MATT

Hi.

OTHER AREA - BEHIND GRANDSTAND SEATS

As they walk.

CATHY

You holding up? What did you do last
night after I called?

MATT

(as if teasing)
What do you think I did? I cried
like a baby.

CATHY

Okay. Okay. So you don't want to
tell me. Be a tough guy.

MATT

Now you got it.

CATHY

I feel relieved just seeing you after
all that stuff... whew... Okay.
(preparing to go)
Burke wants to...

MATT

You ever go out with him?

Cathy is as simple and direct as she is embarrassed.

CATHY

Yes.

MATT

You slept with him?

CATHY

Yes.

MATT

Did you hate it?

CATHY

Eventually.

MATT

(reeling a bit)

Good Lord.

CATHY

This is the thing that makes me nervous about you... You keep on assuming I'm nicer than I am.

He kisses her. She kisses back. Then there is an extraordinarily loud and piercing voice.

JEANNIE

DAD!!

He turns to see Jeannie beckoning to him from the stage--the director, standing at her side, joins in. He walks to them.

ANGLE - STAGE FULL OF ACTORS

The Director is talking to Jeannie who seems, even from a distance, distraught and lost. She sees Matt.

JEANNIE

There's such trouble.

DIRECTOR

She's very worried about being able to pretend cry when she has to and she doesn't get it about memorizing.

That's all.

JEANNIE

(aghast)
That's all!?!?

The Director beckons Matt to lead her away. He does.

JEANNIE

This isn't going to be good.

MATT

Not with that attitude.

changes
She seems stung by this, unusually vulnerable. He
tactics, softening.

MATT

(again)
It's just that they... Well, did
they tell you what an audience is?

JEANNIE

(insulted)
I know what an audience is.

MATT

Good. Now, because there's an
audience, they want you to know all
the words you have to say really
well. And since you can't read yet...
(off her fierce look)
...you're going to have to be patient
and try hard. I can help you.

She grasps at this unlikely straw.

JEANNIE

Can you help me to cry?

MATT

Yes.
(on her broad disbelief)
I can. I can help make it okay. Trust
me.

Jeannie pauses half a beat, then:

JEANNIE

I miss my mother bigger than you
know.

INT. MATT'S APT. - DAY

for the
Matt on phone, Jeannie standing next to him reaching
phone.

MATT

(to Jeannie)
Not yet. Don't grab.
(into phone)
Thank you. We really appreciate this.
Hi, Beth. I...

Jeannie grabs the phone in a flash.

JEANNIE

(softly into phone)
Mom? No... Nothing... Nothing...
Nothing. Nothing... Would you talk?
I'd just like to listen to you...
Wait. Let me sit down.

iron
this
look
some
who
adoring
some
looking at
she
Jeannie sits herself by the window, protected by an
grill, and sits listening to her mother. There is about
pose something prescient; unmistakably, Jeannie will
this way again as a young woman cloaked in the love of
guy... but for now it's her mother, her crazy mother,
blots out dread. Matt is struck by how quiet and
Jeannie looks even as he moves to give his daughter
privacy. Several beats, Jeannie noticing her Dad
her--switching positions, body language indicating that
wants to put him out of her mind... then a thought.

JEANNIE

Dad says he's going to make me to
really cry.

MATT

Jeannie, your mom's not going to
understand what you mean.

Jeannie shushes him, resisting with surprising will and

strength when he tries to get the phone.

JEANNIE

(to Matt)

She understands!!!

(into phone)

He's being terrible right now.

(faster; avoiding
Matt)

I love, loved, the coloring book you
sent me. Goodbye. Wait. I love you.
Let me hang up first. Love you. Send
me a letter. Bye. And a beaded T-
shirt. Bye.

She hangs up. Matt pissed.

MATT

Why don't you let me be on your side
for a second?

JEANNIE

I can't even understand what you're
saying now.

MATT

Do you know what trust means?

JEANNIE

Not very.

MATT

It means that even if something is
hard to believe, you believe someone
you trust because you know he wouldn't
say it unless it were true.

JEANNIE

I understand. So I don't trust
anybody, right?

MATT

Yeah, I think you get the concept.

JEANNIE

You don't make sense. I don't
understand you.

MATT

I think you do.

man

Jeannie reacts broadly... indicating what a difficult she's stuck with.

MATT

Just know that...

JEANNIE

Okayyyy!

MATT

(giving up)

You want to help me make a phone call?

She goes quickly to the phone and picks it up.

MATT

Seven... two...

JEANNIE

(hitting numbers)

Who are we calling?

MATT

Cathy. She's very nice. One... six...

JEANNIE

(hard to read)

"Very nice..." One...

INT. CATHY'S HOUSE - DAY

As she answers phone.

JEANNIE'S VOICE

Hi...

(to Matt)

What now?

MATT'S VOICE IN BACKGROUND

Tell her, 'How are you' and then let me...

JEANNIE'S VOICE

How are you?

CATHY

Jeannie... I can't talk now because...

JEANNIE

Wait, my dad wants to...

CATHY

Tell him I can't talk 'cause I'm on the phone with a director...

JEANNIE

He wants to talk to you very much and...

CATHY

(sharply)

I can't. I have to hang up.

She does.

INT. MATT'S APT. - NIGHT

Jeannie, truly stung by the hang-up. She takes this act of Cathy's as an insult to herself and her father. Matt doesn't feel too wonderful about it himself.

MATT

You have to understand that sometimes people are too busy.

JEANNIE

So she's too busy for you?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Burke and Nan eating together on an elevated balcony overlooking the main eating area.

BURKE

We look like jerks eating here this early. Everybody's going to think we couldn't get a reservation for the hot hours.

NAN

Why do you do this to yourself? Why do you insist on eating dinner in a restaurant where you're bound to see all the people you're afraid of?

BURKE

I'm not afraid of them.

NAN

What do you call it when you think

that what a group of people think of
you can confirm or destroy any decent
idea you have of yourself?

BURKE

Normal.

NAN

How did little Jeannie do today?

BURKE

Isn't it something that they have
you testing the TV show?

NAN

What I asked was, how did Jeannie
do?

BURKE

What are you talking about?

NAN

Somebody else. Jeannie. How did she
do?

BURKE

Don't talk to me like this.

NAN

(really pissed)

I want to be treated as if I'm really
saying words to you which you engage
and respond to. I like Matt; I'd
like to know how his daughter did.
So before you take your dance of
desperation across the restaurant
and I end up feeling so sorry for
you that I could die, I would like
you to answer my question.

BURKE

She did okay... and don't worry about
Matt... If the pilot sells, his kid
will be making five thousand a week.
So what do you know about 'People
Get Hurt?'

NAN

I'm told that they're not going to
release it...

BURKE

I knew. I knew. What the hell are you smiling for?

NAN

Forgive me. But telling you about this latest failure of yours--it pleases me. I have no idea why.

BURKE

I can't be with someone who's not rooting for me.

NAN

I think I am. It's just that rooting for you is a good deal more complicated than you realize.
(as he rises)
Don't go.

BURKE

Don't worry. I'm not that mad. I gotta do this.

the
MUSIC IN as Burke leaves the table. This "Dance of Desperation" is classical. Burke himself lifting one of women in greeting, then, as he puts her down.

BURKE

(again)
Sorry. I thought you were someone else.

As he continues to go from table to table.

TIGHT ON NAN

sing
Burke--but
Nan can
As she looks down on him, dying for him, we HEAR her the song "Poor Bastards". Finally, not only about the other damaged souls he seeks to dance with. Now, take no more. She exits.

FULL SHOT - BURKE

her,
just
As he sees her go past in the background, he goes after finally grabbing her near the Maitre D' station. This,

tries to as TWO IMPORTANT COUPLES arrive. Burke frantically cover.

BURKE

Nan, you know Victor and his wife...
(he mumbles, unable
to remember any wife's
name)
and Jay and his wife...
(he mumbles)

NAN

Yes. I'm sorry I can't talk now. I'm very upset about what's happening to Burke, so I just made up my mind I can't be witness to it anymore if I love him and I certainly shouldn't be here if I don't... so I was just in the process of leaving when he stopped me and you folks walked in... I'm sure you've had something like this happen to you some time... some horrible thing in your personal life happening in public.

Burke's They all nod and ad-lib agreements with her premise to amazement.

NAN

(again)
Thank you for understanding.
(to Burke)
Goodbye. I wish only good things for you even though I feel I've been really damaged by this relationship.

following She exits, enormously upset. Burke, torn between
are her and repairing the social damage. But the couples
As paying him no mind; rather they are impressed with Nan.
they comment, i.e.

COUPLES

Wasn't that spectacular? I've never seen anybody that secure...

Burke accepts the compliments as if meant for him.

BURKE

Thank you. Thank you. We're very close.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

as
just
The strains of "Poor Bastards" underscoring the moment
Burke rushes into the parking area and grabs Nan's hand
as a valet brings her car.

NAN

You don't understand that I'm exhausted from hurting. I'm through with you.

which
a
cars and
She begins to cry. Ordinarily this would be a scene
would be unendurable for Burke. However, the lesson of
moment ago is not lost on him. As people get out of
witness the sobbing Nan.

BURKE

(to restaurant patrons)

Excuse me, we're working our shit out... I'm sure it happened to you... you know, private stuff in public.

contempt.
Bastards"
The reaction to his openness is disdain and passing
She drives off, leaving Burke hurt and alone. "Poor
up and out.

INT. MATT'S APT. - NIGHT

tentative
as she talks to her father who sits watching intently.

JEANNIE

I don't know if I've been bad. I know somebody's been bad.
(hopefully)
...maybe it's you.

her
Matt laughs. Jeannie looks at him shyly... he looks at

hugging him with encouragement. Suddenly she is in his arms,
hard, an emotional dam seems to have broken.

JEANNIE

Oh, I love you so much, I love you
so much... I love you so much.

the Matt holds on--clearly, deeply moved. Then he exercises
surprisingly, as effort to control his emotions and speaks,
a Black woman.

MATT

(as Black woman)
I hope that makes you feel a whole
lot better, Chile... 'Cause it sure
goes a long way to cure what ails
me.

JEANNIE

I can't believe I...

MATT

(as himself, coaching)
...got in this much...

JEANNIE

...got in this much trouble. .

MATT

Right. Over a...

JEANNIE

(guessing)
Word?

MATT

Yes. 'I can't believe I got in this
much trouble over a word.' Now do
you know what she means when she
says that?

JEANNIE

I don't want to talk about it--just
say her stuff so I know mine.

MATT

No.

She starts to flail a bit.

MATT

It's your choice... But I'm not helping unless you try to understand as well as memorize. It will be fun. Come on. I know it's hard...

JEANNIE

Okay. Okay...

MATT

Anything to shut me up, huh? Okay, this little girl you're pretending to be... she can't be with her Mommy either, just like you, or her father... she has to stay in Rainbow House which is called that because...

(Jeannie starts fidgeting)

Jeannie...

(she stops)

...because everyone's a different color... so when this little girl calls the black lady who takes care of all the children this terrible word... it's like the worst thing anybody can do... Come here.

JEANNIE

(approaching him)

I don't want to do the 'I love you' again.

MATT

Yeah, I might have been working you too hard on that one.

She is unable to resist muttering one sarcastic shot.

JEANNIE

Yeah. Why don't you do that with poopie Cathy?

MATT

(ignoring her)

Now, did the director tell you how he wanted you to do it?

JEANNIE

He said to smile all the time almost and to talk... uh...

MATT

Faster?

JEANNIE

Yes.

MATT

Okay. We don't always get good directors, so it's important for us...

JEANNIE

Me. You're not in the show.

MATT

I'm referring to the family of actors, you little shithead.

calling.

as

Jeannie doesn't know quite how to take the name
MUSIC IN... we're heading for a rendezvous with a dance
it CONTINUES ACROSS THE CUT TO:

EXT. TV STAGE - EARLY MORNING

are

Matt and Jeannie walking from the catering truck. They
eating ravenously. MUSIC CONTINUES... VERY JOYOUS.

JEANNIE

This is so good...

MATT

It's a breakfast burrito. It's what actors eat when they're working.

JEANNIE

(excited)

Really.

EXT. ROOF GARDEN - DAY

MATT

Now, let's work a little more. The most important acting you do is when you listen. You're worried about being able to cry when you're supposed to, right?

JEANNIE

Yes. So much.

MATT

Well, there are really only two ways to do it. Think of something that makes you really sad... or forget you're you and really forget you're pretending...

JEANNIE

How do I do that one?

Matt reads from script.

MATT

(as a furious Black woman)

'Don't test me, child! I could eat you for lunch when I was your age and I'm a hell of a lot bigger now!'

Jeannie looks afraid.

MATT

That's it... You just looked at me and acted right without even thinking. And there are games you can play to help you with this. Get up...

(she does)

Now, be my mirror... do exactly what I do... that's it... now, at a certain point, I'm going to become your mirror, but I'm not going to tell you when... you tell me...

JEANNIE

(hesitantly)

Now?

Matt nods.

MATT

(enthusiastically)

Okay. We're going to make up words. The words aren't what matter now.

JEANNIE

I'm on a roof...

MATT

You're a great dad.

JEANNIE

You're a...
(then stops; then
smiles at him)

into
and
This acting exercise of Chicago's Story Theater leads
the song, "BE MY MIRROR." As the song finishes, Matt
Jeannie are in the best spirits we've seen as an A.D.
approaches.

A.D.

They need you.

JEANNIE

Okay.

She takes the A.D.'s hand as Matt calls.

MATT

You're welcome. Don't mention it.

INT. CATHY'S OFFICE - DAY

and
Cathy is in mid conversation with Millie. Matt enters
boldly says his piece.

MATT

I'm a free man. Let's go to your
house and break the answering machine.

CATHY

You know, I could get away now. But
I've got a big meeting later. We'd
better take two cars.

taken
she's
she
Millie, having been at the screen test viewing, is
aback, looking from one to the other. Cathy knows what
thinking and is unnerved, feeling silently accused, as
leads Matt out.

CATHY

See you later. Thanks again.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

holds
Cathy's car followed by Matt in Burke's car. The frame

both cars close as if this were one long car.

INT. CATHY'S CAR - DAY

on She seems troubled. Then a decision. She dials a number her mobile phone and picks up the receiver.

INT. MATT/BURKE'S CAR - DAY

The phone rings. He punches the speaker button.

MATT

I hope it's you.

CATHY'S VOICE ON SPEAKER

Hi.

Matt waves...

MATT

(delighted)

So this is how the big ones make out.

FULL SHOT - THE TWO CARS

Almost bumper to bumper... snuggling.

ANGLE - CATHY

She takes a breath and then plunges.

INT. MATT/BURKE'S CAR - DAY

motion As he hears one of the more ominous phrases of the picture community.

CATHY'S VOICE

Matt, will you take me off the speaker?

He picks up the phone. We intercut between the cars.

MATT

What's the matter?

CATHY

(hyper)

I don't know whether I'm being a coward for telling you this way or

brave for telling you period... Can you hear me?

MATT

Yes.

CATHY

But I better talk fast because this is where my phone always kicks out... When we did your screentest... Can you hear me?

MATT

Yes.

CATHY

Well, I sort of folded on you at the end.

She pauses, silence, then:

CATHY

Matt?

MATT

You didn't like what I did?

CATHY

I did. Truly. But the discussion got sort of dumb. It was a question of sexiness.

MATT

That's what it came down to?

CATHY

Well, sort of, yes.

MATT

You folded on whether or not I'm sexy. You don't think I'm sexy... and you expressed that to...

CATHY

Well, I'll tell you. I certainly must think so pretty much because I feel great about where we're going now...

EXT. NARROW CANYON ROAD - DAY

There is a longish line of cars behind Matt and Cathy.

INT. CATHY'S CAR - DAY

CATHY

Are you very mad at me?

MATT

No. You were just... Aw, damn it, I am. Very. Yes.

gobbling
watches

Matt manages to pull to the side... the other cars
the places behind Cathy, who sees this... and now she
Matt's car recede from her view.

MATT'S POV

Cathy going out of sight.

ON MATT

As he lets her go.

INT. BURKE'S HOME - EARLY MORNING

TV.

He is in bed, wearing a bathrobe, watching projection

FIRST VOICE

...number seven at the box office
this week-end is...

He switches channels.

VOICE NUMBER TWO

...the two words are Tom Cruise.

He switches channels.

THIRD VOICE

...becoming the first lawyer to be
awarded his own star on Hollywood
Boule...

us to

He turns off the TV and crosses to the phone, allowing
read the back of his bathrobe "ROCKY BALBOA."

ANGLE ON BURKE

dials.
He looks at the clock which reads "four a.m." and

BURKE

Hello, Nan. I hope it's not too late to call.

INT. NAN'S KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

She has been crying.

BURKE

I'd like another chance.

NAN

You only think you feel that way because you're on the verge of failure and you're without a core...

BURKE

See. Nobody else gets me.

(a beat then)

You wanna have a little sex, honey?

NAN

(a beat then)

You know I've never hung up on anybody in my life... because what if the next thing they said solved everything... but I must end this conversation.

notepad
Nan hangs up. Burke picks up a pocket electronic from the bedstand and hits the scroll button.

INSERT ELECTRONIC NOTEBOOK

Names and phone numbers.

ON BURKE

wanting,
He scrolls past numbers, considering, finding them so that, finally, he is scrolling the emptiness of his relationships. Now he considers one number and dials.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

The phone rings. He picks it up.

MATT

Hello.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO

BURKE

Hi, Matt, this is Burke. I'm sorry to bother you at home, but you know Nan... We were going out a little and I could use another guy's slant on what's just happened.

MATT

I don't think I can get into this...

BURKE

Why? Did I catch you at a bad time?

MATT

Worse. You caught me at a bad time you caused.

BURKE

Oh, you mean about the screentest. The whole room thought you did good work.

MATT

(reinventing irony)

Thanks.

BURKE

Yeah, look, I'm not going to bother you about my thing.

MATT

Yeah. Okay, good night.

INT. BURKE'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

number
Lonely." As he hangs up. Looks down and turns off his phone pocket computer. MUSIC RECALLS Prince's "There is

EXT. TV STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON

past
the line waiting to see RAINBOW HOUSE. MUSIC SEGUES to recall "I'LL DO ANYTHING," as he drives

(NOTE: FROM THIS POINT ON, THERE WILL BE AN UNDERCURRENT OF

CHOREOGRAPHY TO CONCLUSION...)

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

through
the
by an
the
voice

We see Jeannie's face in the mirror, but it is seen something resembling fleece, which we now recognize as strands of Jeannie's hair being combed out to the side expert hair-dresser. Jeannie is shifting nervously in large room where each chair is filled with a child of a different age and color. In the b.g., we can HEAR the voice of the WARM-UP MAN.

WARM-UP MAN

...pilot for a new show called 'Rainbow House'. Just listen to our band and I'll be back to tell you more and make you love me...

closes
sound...
room.
and a
running
life as
phrase

The audience laughs thinly. The BAND PLAYS as someone closes the door to the make-up room muffling the offstage sound... There is a good deal of tension in the brightly lit room. Jeannie sits between a FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD HISPANIC BOY and a FOUR-YEAR-OLD ASIAN GIRL. The room is abuzz... kids running lines and loudly talking... this builds to a musical life as in our first audition scene... there is a briefly sung phrase (Jeannie not taking part).

INT. GREEN ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

child
by
middle
is two
is

The parents, in the same variety of skin colors as the actors, are stuffed into a small room being patronized by the ASSISTANT DIRECTOR. Matt is grimly seated in the middle of a long sofa containing stage mothers. Another sofa is two feet away; the parents strain at each other. The A.D. is

the
we
the
the

talking grandly but we cannot hear his words because
Rainbow Parents are SINGING a phrase from the same song
heard in the make-up room. Matt does not take part in
singing. The music goes under allowing us to now hear
A.D.'s words.

A.D.

...and when you're in the audience,
make sure you laugh and applaud even
when it's somebody else's kid...

who

There is appreciative laughter from everyone save Matt,
rises in disgust and crosses out of the room.

A.D.

(again)
You're not allowed near the stage.
We only have a few minutes...

Matt ignores him and exits.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

ATMOSPHERE.

MUSIC NOW EMPHASIZING THE TENSION OF THE PRE-SHOW

a

Matt, moving about the area, looking for Jeannie, spots
cluster of other cast members excitedly awaiting their
introduction. Jeannie not among them. An A.D. talks
concern to a P.A.

with

A.D.

Let me know if you see the little
white girl.

Matt, growing concerned, walks on, then:

MATT'S POV

alone

Across the stage to the distant make-up room. Jeannie,
in the room, which is so brightly lit it creates a

bizarre

effect, as if she were under a surreal spotlight. MUSIC
reprises Jeannie's Sinead O'Connor song, "Lonely Life

of

Mine."

ON MATT

observe. Stopping his impulse to go to her--he continues to

MATT'S POV

handle Jeannie is nervous and uncertain... She plays with the
of the make-up chair... turns herself back and forth...
Then a very attractive TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY enters the scene--
obviously telling her to hustle... He offers his hand and she
takes it, instinctively masking all clues that this hand
holding is a "first" of great moment in her life. As they move
toward the main stage area, Jeannie looks around, needing
something... her dad.

MATT

Jeannie.

nod... She turns--sees her father and gives a small, cursory
giving her He moves quickly, drawing even with her but still
a bit of space and a low-key pep talk.

MATT

Just remember. You're not even here tonight. There's only this other little girl that you're pretending to be who lives at Rainbow House.

JEANNIE

...and who just vomited.

takes Matt breaks up. Even Jeannie smiles briefly, then she
him aside for privacy.

JEANNIE

I just found out that we bow before we even do anything.

MATT

Great.

JEANNIE

And everybody claps.

MATT

Great.

JEANNIE

I made up a great bow. You going to look?

MATT

Wouldn't miss it.

JEANNIE

I'm not going to be able to cry. It's too hard for me.

MATT

Hey, then they'll just give you more chances after everyone leaves.

pulled
the 10-
towards her

This does not satisfy her. She rolls her eyes as she is away towards the front of the stage. Matt watches as year-old veteran actor leads his little daughter debut.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATE AFTERNOON - MOVING SHOT - BURKE

Burke's
head
sees:
backstage.
direction
has

MUSIC, a tension-filled version of "Poor Bastard." stride was never stronger, his posture never worse; hunched down into his neck. Suddenly, he reacts as he the staff of Popcorn Pictures grouped together Cathy walking towards the group hurriedly from one as Burke approaches from the other. Seeing his staff clearly moved Burke.

BURKE

Look at you. You're all here because of what's on the line for me tonight. Having this many people in your corner helps more than I would have ever guessed. I'm just very grateful that

I made you come.

He starts off, but a jubilant Cathy stops him, whispers something. He reacts with excitement.

MOVING WITH CATHY

She sees Matt deep in the wings watching the stage. She calls to him with some urgency.

CATHY

Matt. Matt. Matt.

He turns and she beckons him towards her. With some hesitance, he joins her.

MATT

I don't want to miss her introduction.

CATHY

I'll talk fast. It's amazing news. Oliver Stone's been looking for a comedy and...

MATT

(distracted)
I've got to see my kid.

CATHY

(her voice breaking)
...he's doing my picture.

MATT

Hey. Good.

He starts off.

CATHY

Part of this involves you. He remembers you from 'Platoon' and wants to use you in this one.

(he stops)
Got your attention, huh?

Matt is terminally disappointed in her last cynical sentence.

MATT

Oh, Cathy. Look, I'm going to watch this. Let me talk to you later or

tomorrow. Thanks for your help. It's good news. Gotta go.

From the stage, we HEAR the VOICE of the WARM-UP MAN.

WARM-UP MAN'S VOICE

First, in her first appearance ever, Jeannie Hobbs...

There is applause. Matt's missed her intro.

MATT

Shit.

CATHY

I'm sorry.

MATT

Why couldn't you wait till later? Shit.

CATHY

(broadly)

I guess it's because I'm just incredibly insensitive to all human needs. I'd ask you to save me, but I'm so far gone, I wouldn't want you to waste your time.

MATT

(after a moment)

Huh?

She reacts, but he walks off, not wanting to get into it.

Cathy, however, has had a tricky nerve struck. She continues, biting off each word.

CATHY

You know, I don't have a kid or a mate or a talent.

(holding up book bag)

I got this.

(she's quite upset)

And shoot me if I think it's important.

MATT'S POV

Cathy, who looks alone and adorable as we HEAR MUSIC of "THIS

She
downcast.
LONELY LIFE OF MINE." He puts a comforting hand on her.
speaks nakedly from deep within herself; her eyes

CATHY

You think I'm a superficial jerk.
(and then a whispered
afterthought)
You can't be right.

MATT

I think you're the best of the bunch.

CATHY

(broadly)
Oh, great.

If
could
romance
Pridefully,
her
hold on
And now she raises her eyes--big, blue and vulnerable.
this look were returned, "I love yous" could flow--they
sink to the floor in a joint epiphany; but there is no
or kindling in Matt's eyes. He is in a hurry.
Cathy turns and walks off in the opposite direction,
flight so instinctive, she forgets her book bag. We
this--her exit, then:

INT. STUDIO FLOOR - BURKE AND MATT - 20 MINUTES LATER

immediately
in
Behind
laugh.
Standing just behind the four television cameras,
behind them, the "rail" where the Show's Staff and Crew
Members and Network Bosses stand crowded, choreographed
the way in which they "clear" for a moving camera.
these people is the studio audience. There is a loud
Burke turns around to study the audience.

BURKE'S POV

song
Happy faces accompanied by the strains of Burke's love
to the crowd...

BURKE

(to Matt)
What do you think?

is
front
the
the
child.

But Matt doesn't hear him... a few feet away, Jeannie making ready for her big moment. Three cameras swing in of them, TV monitors showing a MASTER and CLOSE-UPS of three characters in the scene: a short comic WHITE MAN, Black Female Lead, and Jeannie, dressed as a poor

MATT
(wide-eyed)
Wait. This is it.

ANGLE - STAGE

JEANNIE
It's like everyone is pi... ticked
off at me because I'm not colored.

The White Man jumps on the phrase.

SHORT WHITE MAN
(correcting her
pompously)
The word is black.

BLACK LEAD ACTRESS
(correcting him with
booming voice)
The word is African American.

audience.

A burst of laughter, whooping and applause from the

Burke brags in a whisper to Matt.

BURKE
I had them bring in two busloads of
people from black churches.

ANGLE - STAGE

As they play out the scene.

BLACK LEAD ACTRESS
(scolding Jeannie)
Now you use it in a sentence.

JEANNIE

Look at me, I...

ON JEANNIE

this
And Jeannie begins to falter... she must somehow cry at
moment... She looks outward for help.

JEANNIE'S POV

can.
She looks at the Lead Actress giving Jeannie all she

BACK TO JEANNIE

Jeannie still can't cry. She looks past the cameras.

JEANNIE'S POV

Her father nervously pulling for her.

BACK TO JEANNIE

blinks--
That didn't do it either. She looks into herself... she
there are tears running down her cheek.

WHOLE AUDIENCE

Awwwww.

GROUP SHOT

Matt, very much as he was when he watched Brando on the
plane... and then some. Burke, craning to make sure the
network bosses are suitably transported.

BACK TO JEANNIE'S SCENE

BLACK LEAD ACTRESS

Go ahead. Use it in a sentence.

JEANNIE

(crying fully)
Look at me. I love an African
American.

BLACK LEAD ACTRESS

Look at me. I love a little redneck.

who,
The Black Lead Actress holds out her arms to Jeannie,

tears streaming down her face, runs towards the arms...

ON BURKE

shock.
His lips pursed tightly in pleasure, then agape in

BURKE'S POV

going
legs
Jeannie has run past the Lead Actress and off the set,
into her father's arms instead. She jumps on him, her
and arms wrapped around him.

MATT AND JEANNIE

MATT

(pridefully)
You little stinker!

JEANNIE

You big stinker.

MATT

My little stinker.

JEANNIE

My big stinker.

The
In
as
The background to this intimacy is enormously alive.
Lead Actress and the Character Actor laughing out loud.
the b.g., we see the audience filling out preview cards
the FLOOR MANAGER leans in to say:

FLOOR MANAGER

It's okay, Jeannie. Take a minute.
We just need to get that hug at the
end.

MATT

(to Floor Manager)
Amazing, right?

FLOOR MANAGER

(to Jeannie)
You were great.

JEANNIE

Thank you. That's nice.

MATT

You look happy.

JEANNIE

I loved it, Daddy.

Matt starts to walk her back to the set.

MATT

You want me to put you down?

Her answer surprises him.

JEANNIE

No. This is okay.

MATT

Okay... Now, you're not finished until you hug the lady just like you did me.

but,
holding
an

He puts her down. She turns from him to go back to work on impulse, he restrains her. He is kneeling down, her lightly by the arms, her back to him as he states ultimate truth:

MATT

I'm very proud of you. I love you more than anybody.

sentiment,
will
him
say.

Jeannie, shocked by her father's unprecedented turns to face him and clamp a hand over his mouth so he add no more lush and primal affection. Having silenced though, she finds that she has something of her own to say. She'd never tell it to her father, but she can't resist telling it to her acting coach.

JEANNIE

When I had to cry, I thought of you buried in the ground.

MATT

(a beat, then)

Give me a kiss.

She does.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

changing
excitement--
with
scene
before.
this

The cast of Rainbow House taking off their make-up, clothes, etc. This is more than high energy and what's the opposite of trauma? All are off the wall pleasure--the MUSICAL LIFE of the earlier dressing room returning--peaks of glee resulting in sung phrases as Jeannie enters and is immediately surrounded with love, attention and ad-libbed compliments about her work. In glare of good will, Jeannie turns gloriously shy.

BLACK LEAD ACTRESS

Do you have any idea how special you were?

(on Jeannie's goony reaction)

That looks like a 'yes.' You've got to get dressed for the party.

JEANNIE

(overwhelmed)

There's more?

(then)

What will I wear?

BLACK LEAD ACTRESS

Go to wardrobe; they'll give you anything you want.

ON JEANNIE

mirror

She moves to her dressing table--sits, looks in the and giggles uncontrollably.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - NIGHT

Matt stands waiting for Jeannie. Nan approaches.

NAN

It didn't sell.

MATT

This show didn't sell?!? How do you know so fast?

NAN

It's the first time they had me do cards for a pilot and the demographics are all wrong for after nine o'clock. That's their only opening.

Jeannie exits the make-up room aglow. She is wearing an
expertly
incredibly stylish outfit and her hair is in an
done intricate braid.

NAN

Hi. I'm Nan. I'm a good friend of your Dad's.

JEANNIE

Hello, Nan. I'm Jeannie. Did you see it?

NAN

(to Jeannie)
Yes, and you were wonderful.
(aside to Matt)
89 percent likeability.
(to Jeannie)
And knowing that you were that good means so much more than the show not going.

JEANNIE

What?

NAN

Oh, no.
(to Matt)
I couldn't help it.

JEANNIE

What does she mean?
(to Nan)
What do you mean?
(to Matt)
What does she mean?
(to Nan)
What do you mean?

MATT

That they're not going to be doing

any more of these shows right now--
but...

JEANNIE

(struck)
Oh, my God.

MATT

Honey...

JEANNIE

And that means they're not going to
have a party?

MATT

No. They're still having the party.

JEANNIE

(totally relieved)
Oh... really?... good... can we stay
late?

To which Matt answers:

MATT

Honey, we're going to close the place.

EXT. ROOF GARDEN - NIGHT

her
lights,
opening

The door to the roof garden opens and Jeannie enters--
dad behind her as she sees the party... the sparkling
the decorations, the other kids and MUSIC... our
song... "WOW".

ON JEANNIE

Millie,

As her father urges her into the flow. She passes
who is dancing with the boy who held Jeannie's hand.

MILLIE

I cast him so he has to dance with
me, but I'm sure he'd prefer dancing
with you.

BOY

(to Jeannie)
Come on. You know how?

JEANNIE

(angrily, with disdain)

Yesssssss.

TEMPO as They begin to dance with the others. MUSIC SLOWS IN
we indicate TIME PASSAGE and:

ANGLE ON BURKE AND MATT

Perched on a ledge eyeing the party.

BURKE

I'm not comfortable with television
anyway... it's too small... I'm much
better at something with size... I
don't do itzy. Even this movie of
Cathy's--it's small... medium small.
But with Stone it takes on a certain
volume where I start to feel
comfortable.

(out of nowhere)

I hate my life...

(backtracking)

...in a way. I had a drink in my
office. I'm confused. You're not
saying anything. Is it because you're
not listening or because I haven't
stopped talking?

MATT

This Oliver Stone thing... does he
really want me?

BURKE

Yeah. Oh, yeah. I forgot to say
congratu...

MATT

Which part?

BURKE

Which one you want?

MATT

One of the two leads wouldn't be
bad.

BURKE

No. It's the crippled factory owner.

MATT

Best part in the movie.

moves
He gets off the ledge and starts to move away... Burke quickly to cut him off.

BURKE

Wait a second.

MATT

I want to see my kid.

BURKE

A second--look, they're taking the cast picture now anyway.

THEIR POV

cast
Jeannie, working her way to the absolute middle of the picture, where she plops on someone's lap.

BACK TO SCENE

BURKE

She doesn't look anything like the women I usually go with. And you know what they say, "beauty fades." What they don't say is that it fades very slowly.

MATT

You don't think I can tell you what to do?

BURKE

No. Only I can do that. I want you to tell me what to feel...

(he begins to use his fingers to run down Nan's qualities)

Look. I trust her. More important, everyone does. You have no idea how impressed people are with her. She's smart. She's interesting. You never know what she'll say next... Her work is amazing. I like talking to her. You have no idea what to expect next. I respect what she does more than any writer or director--sincerely--much more unusual--much more important. So?

MATT

Good luck.

around He walks away. Burke waves a grateful goodbye and looks
the room until he sees:

BURKE'S POV - NAN ACROSS THE ROOF

indicates Nan eating cake with her hands. She sees him. He
shake he would like to dance. She does not move a muscle in
coming response... Still, he walks towards her. She begins to
her head, "no." He shifts uncomfortably, but keeps
until he reaches her side.

ON NAN AND BURKE

BURKE

Dance with me.
(she shakes her head)
On a business basis.

NAN

No.
(he turns away,
dejected)
But I'll dance with you because I
think it will reassure me that I
should have nothing to do with you.

BURKE

I'll take it.

As they dance.

NAN

Why are you breathing so heavy?

BURKE

Nervous... Look, let's move our thing
in a more regular direction.

NAN

What do you mean?

BURKE

Let me think.
(then)

What if we go out this weekend...
(before she can say
"no")
...with your kid.

Several more beats of dancing--as he awaits her answer.

NAN

...whose name is?

BURKE

Whose name is...
(then, triumphantly)
Leslie.

NAN

Okay.

cadence for
closely.
"BE MY
MIRROR" as we...
SONG BACK--"WOW"... sung as a chorus... a slower
the romance as we... CHANGE MUSIC and they dance more
The song slows for time passage and MUSIC CHANGES to

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERTED POPCORN PICTURES ROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

his
with
it on.
Matt and Jeannie--the last ones there. He holds her in
arms, dancing. She is asleep. He dances her to a chair
her wrap on it... shifts her around, wrestling to get
She wakes up and puts it on herself.

JEANNIE

(looking around
satisfied)
Last ones here.

MATT

Well, I told you.

stair
shed--then:

MATT

I never got to see your bow.

smiling
She looks up, smiling pridefully, to see her father
back pridefully.

JEANNIE

(as if it's a great
sacrifice)

Oh, all right.

She bows. It is a bow all her own.

FADE

OUT:

THE END