

Rain Man
Script Conference
Stephen Spielberg & Ron Bass

7 August 1987

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RAINMAN STORY MEETING SS/RON BASS
AUGUST 7, 1987

Tape 1/1

RB: When I started reflecting on what we had said the last time, I think that job one for us to consider and for me to learn where you are at right now is who is Raymond. I think Charlie is the same guy, it sounds like...the same human being. Raymond is the same in some ways and very different in others. Before we can start talking about the beats and the dynamics and what the ark looks like, I have to know what the weapons are. Not only what the guy is not, but what the guy is. What the guy is capable of doing. You described him as a guy who desperately wants love; is able to show that he wants love; but unable in various ways to accept it, such as being touched and I'm sure other ways as well. That's great. I think that if all that is true, and if you and Dustin don't wind up with more reservations about, "well, I don't know how much he can really show he wants love", that's really the key...because if he can really show he wants it and, if it doesn't have to be internal, if the audience can see that he wants it, and Charlie can see that he wants it, then the fact that he can't accept it once it comes, is great because it gives you twice as many things to play. It's better than what we've got so far. But, that's a real key thing that's not...because Charlie's not going to be looking for it.

SS: Well, this all came from Dustin and after reading the script when I first talked to Dustin and the first thing he said was, "I think Raymond is wrong the way he is written because in my research I've discovered that the classic autistic person wants affection but can't handle it once it's upon him." He also said after some research he found that "some autistic people often don't initiate things". Raymond wouldn't just stand there and say (which is a wonderful line, but Dustin has a big problem with this when Raymond says his first line to Charlie), "Think about yourself, Charlie Babbitt." An autistic person would never volunteer anything, especially out of the clear blue sky, to anyone, even someone he presumes is his brother. I didn't really know, because I said, "Gee, doesn't that spoil what makes the heart of Raymond special?" Dustin said, "I'm sure that we can come up with a few things that make him even better, but you need to meet a few people to see that I'm not just crazy". So I did, and he wasn't crazy. We talked to a doctor, and we met several savant autists. We also met some autistic retards; we met some hyphenits. I only went to one meeting and I met three people in that one meeting. In this one instance of talking to them briefly, I saw Dustin was right. It was very hard for them to accept affection of any kind, but they had a kind of social behavior that I found very interesting that Dustin imitates and will eventually perform very well. They do a wonderful social facsimile of a smile, of a laugh, to part of a conversation, but they don't mean it...there is no meaning under the laugh. One of the things that I thought was really wonderful in terms of curve, is one of the biggest advances Raymond makes in terms of his change. He gets to really laugh, genuinely, as opposed to what is all through the picture, which is very false. As I said, I was a little concerned at first, but after meeting these people I realized there was really a truth being told here. Then, when I read Temple Grandens book, it really confirmed it to me. That was, I guess, only the third time I had experienced the autistic push and pull, and then I read her book,

SS (cont): which Dustin had given me to read. I said, "She, too, couldn't be touched." She had an aunt, apparently, who in her real life, smothered her into her bosoms, and pinched her cheek, and wouldn't let go. She just hated that. She had a problem with anyone touching her except her mother.

RB: So there are exceptions.

SS: There are exceptions. I didn't read the book that carefully, I must admit, I kind of glanced through it, but the mother, I believe, was so afraid of upsetting her daughter that she didn't volunteer the affection, when perhaps the daughter craved the affection. The mother was afraid of being rejected. It's interesting that a normal person is just as afraid of being rejected by a subnormal person.

RB: And maybe Charlie will be. What made her the exception? Why was it okay for this one to touch me...my mom can touch me but nobody else can because...?

SS: I don't know.

RB: That would be interesting for us to explore, because Charlie will obviously be an exception.

SS: Dustin was so excited about a couple of things. He hadn't finished the book when he gave it to me. He had read about 20 pages and he threw it at me. I read right through the book, but I read fast because I was interested and sort of looking for things that would apply as opposed to parts of her life that didn't apply...which was most of the book doesn't apply to this project. It was just those things that, I guess, you would call classically autistic. I had never read anything by any autistic person before, and I assume now, that her classical case is not unlike other classics who aren't gravely autistic. She is, I guess you would say was, moderately autistic, and now she is a cured autistic.

RB: Do you care how high function the autism is? Among the things that bothers you about Raymond in this draft...is one of the things that he is too highly functioning an autistic, emotionally?

SS: Yes, I think that bothers Dustin, and I think now it bothers me a bit too. It's that he makes too much progress, too fast. It's too easy to have a conversation with him. Whereas, it would be nice if the Raymond in act one, is almost as far as he gets in act two and a half. I'm saying, in terms of an exchange. It would be wonderful if we could arrive at a kind of normalcy between the two brothers, because what you said last week really interested me. You said, "Let's just talk about what brothers do together. Let's forget he's special, and let's just talk about two brothers". That was very interesting.

RB: I think that's what I want to get to...that it's a story about brotherhood. What I can see from what you're saying here is that the

RB (cont): first problem for me to isolate is to try and help you, and try to see if there is a place for me to be further involved. I'm not sure that there is from what you're saying here. I'm not sure yet, in my own mind, whether there's really a way to play what you're talking. The essential element is the one that keeps coming through the cracks as we talk, and that is the guys ability to express his desire for affection. The fact that he can't accept it once it comes, doesn't bother me at all. That's great. I think that's really a plus. But, the fact that he desperately feels it internally, I don't buy that that's enough. I mean, maybe Dustin feels that he can play it so all-internal and that he can never really express that he wants it, but we're going to see it...I don't think we really have scenes that are going to be enough to go through what you are going to want to go through. I think this guy has to be able to show Charlie that he wants it. That he wants Charlie's love; that he wants his respect; that he wants Charlie's attention; that he wants Charlie to think of him as a person. Whatever it is that he wants, we've got to be able to see that he wants it. We've got to be able to show that, and yet know how to handle it.

SS: That's a good challenge to set for yourself...whether it is possible to show that without Raymond becoming Cliff Robertson in CHARLIE, or without Raymond becoming Lenny in OF MICE AND MEN, which we have seen before. Whereas, these people are more retarded than autistic. They come out and not only show affection, but they pour themselves on you until you become very uncomfortable that they are breathing in your ear.

RB: Right. No, it will definitely be a challenge to do, and the question is whether it is doable.

SS: That's why we're talking. I'm questioning the doability of the whole thing.

RB: Exactly. So, the first thing to know before we can try to see if we can play this game, is to set up our own rules. What always bothered me when Dustin said it, and it bothers me when I hear you say it too, is what's a classical autistic. I'm real interested in the autistic that you and Dustin want, but I don't accept it as a Bible. You know what I'm saying?

SS: I think that, certainly, every autistic is different, because a lot of autism isn't just a chemical imbalance. They now think that some autism is caused by a rewiring at birth of the wrong neurons in the brain. Where there is a preponderance of neurons in one orbit of the brain and not the other, which also accounts for some genius savant, which is hard to explain because of how far they have developed.

I think what Dustin feels, and I kind of agree with him, is that it is too easy to like Raymond too quickly.

RB: You mean in this draft?

SS: Yes. And, he is too easy to handle. He doesn't take any handling at all - he just comes along for the ride. Raymond just sort of sits there and he plays into scenes that are undeniably sweet, and undeniably convenient and satisfying in an entertainment fashion, but Dustin just doesn't feel there is a progress in his character. He feels that Tom has a nice climb, but he feels he doesn't go anywhere.

RB: I think all that is dealable, but it's a little apart from what I'm saying. Everytime you say those things, I feel, yes, ultimately that can get done. Let me take a different angle.

This is the story of a relationship of two brothers actually becoming to be brothers.

SS: Right.

RB: I'm really convinced that the motivating force in that has to be Raymond and not Charlie. When we started to talk last time, the part that I felt most uncomfortable about, and what I went home thinking about was, "Why does Charlie....?", "Well, it will just sort of happen because they'll be there together and you know....". There's something about that that is wrong. First of all that's the cliché movie. The movie we've always seen is the normal trying to get through to the subnormal and he can't get through, and he can't get through, and he'll just do anything, and finally in the end there is one little victory... the guys laughs right or he pees standing up, or the girl in wheelchair moves her finger, and we're all overwhelmed because it's this tiny little victory as a huge big documentary history. First of all I don't want to see that movie, and I don't think I'd want to participate working on that movie. It's a T.V. movie about something that is truth, but it's such a specific truth. Specific to those people that I don't think it lets the general audience...it's like a photograph instead of a Monet. When I see something like THE GODFATHER, or something like THE COLOR PURPLE, that isn't done literal, but is done to give me the jolt of the emotional truth. It doesn't mean the guy has to be teeny, doesn't mean he has to be cuddly, it doesn't mean we have to have every scene sweet and entertaining and funny...great. I think there is lots of opportunity for dark and conflict and failures and haltings...whole different script but it could be fabulous. But, the thing that is interesting in this story is it's the subnormal that does the reaching out. You may not know how as easily as this guy did, but that's what is interesting...that the normal guy didn't care, didn't want to. But, to Raymond, not only does he want love generally, because he's been so denied, but this is a very specific guy. This is the baby he held in his lap when he was two-years-old. This is the last person that touched him that he touched. This is the baby that he wrapped in a blanket and sang to. This is the guy he has been obsessed about for the last 24 years. This is the man. This is the guy he wants, and he's the biggest thing in his life. To whatever the limits are of his ability, however we try to refashion how touching it is that he can't just come up and put his head on his shoulder and grab his hand right away - that will be great because it will be more touching if he can't -

RB (cont): but we've got to see that he wants it. It's not going to play in my mind (maybe it's just my own limitations, but I think it's also true for better writers than me) it's real hard to play two hours of that internal. We've got to see that he wants it, however jerkily it looks, so that Charlie can see that he wants it. And then, we are going to have some great moments that we don't have here, where Charlie has to give him a little, and suddenly the guy rejects it and now Charlie gets rejected.

SS: Let me tell you about one example that Dustin and I talked about which sort of plays into what you just said as an alternative to Raymond's first line to Charlie. And that is instead of that first line, which is dramatic and surprising, is in Charlie's touring of the facility on his own with Susan, or even with Lens, in the background there appears Raymond. He just keeps staring at Charlie. And, when they're in a room, Raymond goes by a window - doesn't put his face to it, but goes by the window - it's like he is shadowing them. What triggers it is when Raymond sees the 1962 convertible...the car. He stands there and just keeps looking at the car, and then starts shadowing them. He doesn't shadow them like a commando would behind bushes, but as innocently as walking, and everytime we see him in a scene, he gets closer and closer and closer. In all the scenes that almost exist he gets closer and closer and closer, it's a restaging of what is there. Until finally, Raymond is there almost just staring right into Charlie's face. So, we see that Raymond is putting all of this together and won't leave Charlie alone. He doesn't just come over to him and say something, which is profound, but Charlie gets curious about his curiosity towards Charlie.

RB: Well, that's something that obviously can work. But, it's an easy one again. I sort of start always by looking for the hard stuff. What's going to be the problem. An easier intro is going to be easy, because he doesn't have to very forthcoming in the intro. He just has to, in some way, reveal the truth, and it can be less assertive than that. But, something's got to get under Charlie's skin; something's got to get under our skin. The guy has to be lovable. He has to be adorable to us. There has to be the charm to the guy, even though a lot of the stuff we see him do will be very weird and off center...he doesn't have to do everything cute...but if we're always playing away from that, we're not going to have the hook that we need.

SS: It's like first impressions are very important. The first impression will trigger the approach to his character, as opposed to being confrontive, which I found in a couple of autistics I met, autistics aren't confrontive. They are if they are pressed into it. They often retreat in panic, which I find also interesting. But, what I'm not suggesting is that we take the scene, which I really like a lot, with Sally Dibbs, where Raymond says, "Eat my shorts," and all that, and where he is a bit voluntary in that scene...what's good about that scene is that we've been with him for awhile and he's a little more comfortable with Charlie.

RB: Though I think he is too voluntary in that scene. He could even be less so and play that same scene. Eventually he was just looking at her...

SS: What's nice is that eventually he is just watching the verbal tennis match between he two of them.

RB: That's pretty passive. Then he's just looking at her, and if somebody said, "What are you staring at?", 'cause what he's staring at is her tits...

SS: What you have to realize is that when a character says very little in a movie, the audience hangs on every silence. Everything is important, and everything is a clue and a great mystery. The audience tries to unravel the mystery, so if there are too many clues and no mystery to unravel, then the audience gets frustrated because they are presented with red herrings. So, it's what often Raymond doesn't say, which we have to be even as careful about as what he does say.

RB: I think that what you said last time, and I really agree with it; that's really true. But, it's the unpredictability of him that's interesting. Sometimes, he, I think, he would talk a blue streak, but it might sound crazy; it may be very short-circuited; it may be changing subjects or whatever. I want to just come back in my compartmentalized where I like to just go from one place to the other...if the dynamic is agreeable to you (I guess everytime I say you, I mean you and Dustin as a team...I'm looking to the two of you to see what you think this guy is that is going to be here)...

SS: This is definitely in essence a complete collaboration between Dustin, me, and Tom, in that sense, so it's different in the way I usually work.

RB: I only say just Dustin, because it's his character that we're talking about. If it's true that, however he does it, he's the guy that goes after Charlies, he's he guy that wants the relationship. Not just that he wants the relationship - he wants the relationship with every fiber of his being, more than he wants anything else in his life, and Charlie wants it exactly zero. It's the last thing that he wants, is to spend one more minute with this guy than he has to, just to get the money had get out. And that's where it starts from. When I'm starting from that, I know that it can't be accidental. This guy has to be the engine; he has to make it happen. He may be a quirky, weird engine. We may find ways, and particularly in the beginning before you can let him be real outgoing and it maybe real meticulous and and real time consuming and real difficult, but I've got to know when I start that one of the rules is he's the guy that makes the relationship happen. Now we can get to a point later on where Charlie is motivated to do some things, and he gets rejected, and then Charlie becomes more of an engine, and then it becomes kind of mutual. By the third act it should be extremely mutual. By the second act, Charlie is sort of starting to

RB (cont): be a little mutual - sort of. In the first act, every overture comes from Raymond however passively or actively it's phrased, he's the guy that wants it to happen, and Charlie doesn't. What makes us feel for both of them, is that. Because, I don't feel for Charlie to have his ark...Charlie's ark is about his rejection of Raymond. I don't care if the guy runs a boiler room; I don't care if he's only 25; I don't care what this guy has done; I'm not interested in the kind of stuff. What makes the guy a prick, what gives the guy the start of his ark, is that he doesn't love this little guy that I love. To me, that is where I really get pissed at Charlie. And, that's where I really appreciate Charlie's change. That's my stake in the movie is this little guy.

SS: I think everybody feels the same way. Tom feels that way...that Charlie's progress is a cliché progress, but sometimes the best things are clichés, in that he learns to love another human being, truly, for the first time, even more than he has ever loved his own wife. And, perhaps, through his opening up emotionally toward Raymond, he can open up emotionally toward the memory of his own father, and perhaps, some forgiveness of his father, and some sort of a new hope with Susan, or somebody else someday...who knows. That sort of goes without saying, but the whole idea is to the audience, the more of an asshole that Charlie in the beginning of the film, the moment that Charlie bumps into Raymond...the wife in Ft. Worth will turn to the husband and say, "You wait and see, he's going to soften up that Charlie character. That Charlie character, you're going to start liking that guy pretty soon." Everybody in the world is going to be able to predict that. Now, our job is, how do we then make the next hour and a half of this movie satisfying with the audience having guessed and hang off what they want to have happen, but having so many twists and turns emotionally, that the audience isn't bored by the inherent predictability.

RB: I don't think that's the toughest thing we have to do. We certainly have to do that. But everytime...if I see Mel Gibson and Michelle Pfeiffer walk on the screen together and they argue over who bumped into who, I know by the end of the movie they are going to be fucking their brains out.

SS: Then the interesting thing is that you have to do a whole movie about how did they get there, and it can't be straight. And, what we have here is a series of wonderful scenes on a road, and the whole object of a road, of course, is the linear narrative is when you are on a highway. We just have to figure out ways along this course, so the course isn't just smooth, but it's a troubled course. And, at times, it's a chaotic and cathartic, and also a disturbing course. I want to bother people with some parts of this. I think we all do. We don't want this just to be "delightful brother, Raymond, with a coming around Charlie" where the only real danger is that they might meet some rednecks who could beat them up if Raymond doesn't save the day by being smart about his...or at least using one of his abilities, his super-human abilities. That scenes great too. My problem is that I like so many scenes in the script that we all have to figure out what is

SS (cont): character essential and what is just sort of filling time with a good scene. The Shakespeare scene could fall into that category unless that scene is made essential. I always feel that many real tightly drawn and written movie...the Shakespeare scene, for instance, if the scene didn't happen in the film, the audience would fall into the hole in the clock. You know what I'm saying? Everything has to be like clockwork rather than seeming seaworthy. Everything has to have a reason for being in the story...even in a character story. I was thinking about the MIRACLE WORKER the other day, and there's a very interesting progress in that story because, not only is the Helen Keller character a problem and disturbed, but the miracle worker herself has more problems than the Patty Duke character. She is actually living a rather simple, sublime life until the miracle worker comes into her life and disturbs her own natural progress which is not to see, hear or respond, and she is very happy in that world. Then somebody comes in and tries to say, "we're not happy with you in this world...we think you would be happier in our world...I'm going to force you into our world", which is a traumatic thing for her. Sometimes it's actually better to leave well-enough along. That is an interesting message in that film.

RB: What also occurred to me while we were talking about Charlie, my vest pocket psychological profile of Charlie that I used...Charlie is a guy that never has been able to convince himself that his father wasn't right, that he was a loser. And, he's built his entire life around defending against that unconscious fear that his father wasn't right and that he was a loser, in doing so, he has made himself into really a loser, who says he isn't, but deep down fears that really he is. That is true in the world of business, but much more importantly, it is true in the world of relationships. It's why he couldn't really love Susan in the beginning, but could at the end. He doesn't feel that he is worthy of somebody's love. That whole area is an area that he just isn't adequate to handle. So, one of the things that each of these guys gives the other, is they are each giving each other, not only the love that they give each other, and the mutual support and the connection that they give each other, but they make each other feel good about himself. Charlie lets Raymond strike him out. And, although you had a different interpretation of that scene, whatever we do with that scene - whether it's in, out, or whatever - what there's go to be (if it's not there, it's got to be somewhere else), is the moment when Charlie thinks about Raymond and, not just being nice to Raymond or liking him, but thinks about actually humiliating himself to make the other guy feel good. The hardest thing in the world for Charlie ever to conceive of to do...to strike out like he failed, and he is announcing that he's the hammer and he's going to do it, and he strikes out and falls on the ground and pretends (in that scene) that he is miserable so that his brother can feel the ecstasy of having beaten him. And, of course, when that happens, his brother comes over and his reaction is to be sympathetic and loving because he feels that his brother is sad...that's not only a great moment for Charlie to have done it, but a great lesson for Charlie that sowing love means the return of love, like...maybe if I'd ever done to Susan or other people in my life, I'd made that sacrifice, look what happens when you make that sacrifice. The other

Rain Man Script Conference (1987) Pages 9 missing from script

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RB (cont): it's about. It's about...we're all people...and whether it's a character in THE COLOR PURPLE or rather it's a mafia overlord in THE GODFATHER, it's the essential humanity, and getting down and inner-relating in that level after they have gotten that close, that I think elevates the movie.

SS: I think that certainly you have some of that already here. Where Raymond turns the table on Charlie and says, "What do you want?", and Charlie says, "I want you..."

RB: Maybe that's too much for you though. Is that okay though?

SS: No, that was never too much for me, that was a killer moment. The victory that I felt they had achieved at the end was that Raymond did not have to go back to another 24 years of institutionalized living, but instead can be an outpatient; can live with Charlie or live on his own if he wants.

RB: And, equally, Charlie doesn't have to go back to 26 years of being a thwarted, frustrated loser who can't be the best person he can be. That through each other, both of those guys...it's each other that really counts to me. It's really a true story, that it really gets a little blurred and a lot closer, if it's only Raymond's technical victory over his illness, that he can now live outside, then it's not enough for me.

SS: No, it's not that. For one thing, he was put in this home, and he was voluntary, but he didn't know what that was. So, he only knows those walls and those halls.

RB: I think he knew he was voluntary and never entered his mind...he would be afraid to leave.

SS: He gets a chance to cross the highway, and he doesn't cross the highway.

RB: It's like CUCKOO'S NEST. Those guys would never have left.

SS: No, never. They had to be forced on the bus almost to go out.

RB: He would be on the same boat.

SS: Exactly. So then you take on of those 15 people in CUCKOO'S NEST, which is Raymond, and you send him outside of the first time and it's a frightening place. Even though he has a wonderful memory of everything that happened to him...I think he was about 18 years old when he was first institutionalized, and certainly he has a memory from very early on.

RB: He remembers everything, this guy.

SS: He knows everything...but it's a different world out there. And,

SS (cont): even though he's learned things from television, and television has been a big part of his life, and there were suggestions that we use TV more, and my only problem with that is that I did it in ET and then SPLASH did it...I don't like using TV anymore as a way of getting people to use TV commercials and the only thing he knows is how to recite a Ford jingle or a McDonalds slogan, that doesn't really interest me.

RB: I think the baseball stuff is nice. In fact they could use a Vin Sculley...

SS: I always loved that. Now, if they can get me some background. I think if I'm not the director on this project, I think it will go right back to bowling again. I think I'm right now the only one kind of pushing for baseball. Dustin didn't like baseball as much as he liked bowling because I think he met an autist who bowled. He never really threw a ball, but spent all day long with an imaginary ball in his hand, bowling strikes and spares and keeping score. Dustin does a great performance of this bowling.

RB: He'll do great baseball too.

SS: Sure he will. I don't particularly care for baseball as a sport, and I never did (that's a heresy to say in America), I've always like football and other sports. Baseball has always been to me, sort of a round and round. But, for some reason, in this particular story baseball really works because it is something that any cracker on any front porch can relate to Raymond on it. It's a way that Raymond can find a fissure in outside society to start a conversation or get involved in a conversation.

RB: There's a gentleness to it too.

SS: And there's a nice thing about knowing these names. There are no other players that haven't been around for 30 years.

RB: If it's bowling how is he going to sit in the card game and tell you who bowled the last 300 game in the BGA Championship.

SS: But, I like bowling for the reason that I explained to you yesterday or the day before. You can't bowl against somebody, but you can pitch against somebody. I found that wherever that scene winds up, as being a very important scene, as being a sequence where Charlie strikes out for Raymond's victory, or whether Charlie does take a cut and misses and losses, and has to, for the first time, be faced with the fact that he is a loser in less he does something about it. However that scene turns out at the end, baseball, for me, is justified in this script it that scene remains in the movie.

RB: I think we definitely need two scenes, because in my mind, although I hope you leave the baseball scene to make that particular point, I

RB (cont): think that you're absolutely right...we needed this scene, and it's not in there, where something happens and Charlie loses. The way I've got it...he comes to the realization and he lies down on the bed in Vegas, and he says, "Do you like this place?" and Raymond does, "It makes me feel like a loser, you know and I'm a fuckin' loser now. I'm down there watching you win the money. All I'm doing is watching you, you're doing all the work and I'm just pushing the money in the box..." and that's where he starts to get it. That's all true and it's relevant, but I think it would be great for there to be one, real visual moment when something happens that could make that point.

SS: Right, right.

RB: I don't know what it is, but that could be a great point.

SS: You know what's interesting on a subject like this, is the same thing that we found with the sequel to BACK TO THE FUTURE which Bob Zemeckis and Bob Gale are working on now, there are so many opportunities for scenes and moments that it's almost overabundantly rich. There is just so much you could do with something like this. There are so many different directions the characters could take.

RB: One of the problems you.... To me it is a much smaller issue, because I don't care about it as much as I care about Raymond, but when we talk about more plot, more conventionalized plot...

SS: No, no. Not conventionalized plot in the sense that I said to you the last time we met. Not conventionalized in the sense that there are people chasing them...

RB: But when you tell me what Richard did about, so now there are two guys and he told 125 grand, I think of that of conventionalized plot. Maybe it will be great, and maybe it will be not great conventional, but I think of it as conventional. To me, this story is, these two guys getting together, where I feel real in sync with what you and Dustin are saying, but every scene is so sweet. Can't there be more scenes of more conflict. I mean, you'll read that one bathtub scene, which you may hate, but it certainly is the tone of "the guy absolutely freaked out in front of your eyes and your heart stopped.

SS: Can you find it for me?

RB: (Ron looks for scene) You know what it starts with. You have to kind of read the old McDonald scene first, because the McDonald scene kind of leads into it. The saw a guy, in my old version, that reminded Charlie a little bit of his dad, just a little bit. If you start reading from the bottom of page 54 a take it through the next scene or two...

SS: I like the bathtub because it represents something that will be paid off later.

RB: When you get to the end of this and you get to the final scene, although a lot of the final scene was better in the newer version...

SS: Why was this cut out? What was the reason?

RB: Marty thought it was too melodramatic. I don't know if Dustin's reaction was good or bad to it, but Marty was very, very concerned about melodrama, very concerned about it getting too sentimental or too emotional, very concerned about playing with anything that was too over the top. He always wanted to step away from that. So, you'll see that in the ending, although I think it's still kind of a killer emotional ending about "What do you want?", it's playing a much higher level in the earlier version, because it's about Charlie suddenly realizing that's what the bathtub was. And he knocks the other guy aside, and he gets down on his knees, and he says, "I'm turning on the bathtub, Ray." It's like he takes him through it and watches the guy go crazy. I sure don't want it to come off like he's solved this guys whole problem like now he's done something and unlocked the door so now the guys normal. It doesn't play that way in the ending, and the scene doesn't show him any different, but it was something specific that he figured out about the guy. It wasn't simply the reaching out. It was some key that he unlocked for Raymond that he was responsible for because he was the baby in the bathtub. When I was arguing with Marty for this, I was saying, it isn't just a random thing that he happened to figure out, he was there. He was the guy! And, this guy thinks he's been locked away all his life because he thinks he almost killed this little baby that he loves, and of course none of it was true. And he tells him, "Dad was just screaming, it wasn't true. I was okay. I was always okay." So it was like, reasserting their roots together, and putting it back together.

SS: The way it reads now, the whole hearing scene, is simply about the doctors trying to ask Raymond what time it is to purposely trigger a negative reaction in front of the judge.

RB: The one guy, yes. The one guy is trying to do his...

SS: I never felt that was very valid at all because I don't just don't understand how someone like Raymond who understands calendars and everything else, can't tell what time it is. That always got in the way of whatever that scene was suppose to be about.

RB: I thought, and I don't know where this research came from, maybe you should talk to Gail or something, but I believe that that's valid. I believe that the savants...I believe it is very valid that the guy could tell all of this calender stuff, which has nothing to do with telling time, it's whatever mysterious trick they have to do it with, and then can't do something simple like tell time; can't read a wristwatch, and has no concept of time - doesn't know what it is. You may not like, it may go out, but I think it's part of the paradox of the things that the guy cannot to.

SS: Let me go back to the beginning and talk about a few things that Dustin, Tom and I have discussed. One thing that we discussed was when Charlie was in this home, he had a routine. I told you last time about moving the bed. The routine goes beyond that though. He eats at a certain time - he always has; he watches "Wheel of Fortune" at a certain time; he watches a certain TV show at a certain time; there are certain activities that he does at a certain time. And, once he is outside, he can't break those habits just because they are in a car are driving cross country. That is, Raymond knows exactly what time "Wheel of Fortune" comes on. When there is no TV set around, it is hard on him. He knows what time he usually eats, but when Charlie isn't hungry, even though Raymond isn't hungry either, it's time to eat. Raymond wants to eat and Charlie doesn't. What I didn't really know is, does Charlie break Raymond of his routine, or does Raymond break Charlie of his routine?

RB: It's definitely got to be some of each. If it's about routine breaking, that's a great running bit for them. That's a great running thing. In the beginning, of course, Charlie is breaking Raymond because he just won't give in. Raymond really just can't do much around Charlie. We find some ways where he snuck a banana or crackers in the glove compartment and figured out a way like a little packrat to beat him, but then it can be like a game.

SS: I had one crazy idea where he watches, say, "Wheel of Fortune" just for the sake of anything, that he has to watch Vanna, or he has to watch the wheel go around.

RB: I like that he watches Vanna...

SS: ...or he's good with the numbers or something.

RB: I like that he's attracted to a beautiful woman.

SS: That's actually what happens with Sally, or maybe even with Roxanne. We can talk about that...the penpal that he's never seen before.

RB: Let me interject one thing - when I thought of the penpal, in my mind I said, I'm going to love it if she's attractive to us, I'm going to hate it if she's not. I'm going to feel exploited. She doesn't have to be a beauty like the hooker, but I'd be horrified to bring us to some of the people...do you understand what I'm saying? I was feel like I was being jerked.

SS: And yet, I think that a lot of the people I saw were very attractive, they just happened to be, because of their mental disability, they happen to be...a retarded person usually, it is manifested physically...

RB: Acting abnormally, it's like in the original ROCKY, I could see Talia was pretty even when they made her...and it was okay. She can be doing something that is wrong, but a basically attractive person is going to be...so it's not like you're throwing me ice water to just horrify me.

SS: I agree with that. Exactly.

I was saying about this "Wheel of Fortune" routine, like if Raymond goes into a bit of an anxiety attack because his routine is broken, and the TV isn't on the first time, and Charlie doesn't quite know what to do and he just pulls into a gas station or something, or a TV store and appeases Raymond. Where it would go, which would be sort of interesting, would that at one point, Raymond would be screaming and yelling that he wants to see "Wheel of Fortune", and there's no TV set around, and they're driving through a neighborhood, and Charlie is a great salesman and just can't stand it anymore, stops the car, goes up to a complete stranger's house and knocks on the door...through his glibness, the old Charlie comes back, the Charlie that can convince any woman to go to Hawaii because the Lord wants her to, goes up to some woman and winds up talking her into letting Raymond watch "Wheel of Fortune" on the television set with her kids. That's how you could have the scene where the little girl sits on his lap, instead of in the grocery store.

RB: That could be terrific.

SS: And then, of course, at some other point if he wants to watch "Wheel of Fortune" and there are in Vegas or something and they turn it on and Charlie could go, "Oh, shit, time zone changes. "Wheel of Fortune" isn't carried here in the same time zone." Raymond would have no idea about time zone. Back East "Wheel of Fortune" will be on between 7:30 and 8:00.

RB: So how does Raymond tell time? We have to figure out how Raymond tells time. If he is going to tell time in this version....

SS: Through a certain routine of certain things that happen at a certain time. He knows that at 6:00 he eats dinner.

RB: Is it possible that he doesn't know how to read a watch or read time, but he just knows.

SS: Sure, it's possible.

RB: It's like I always just wake up in the morning.

SS: I don't need an alarm clock when I'm shooting a movie. I just wake up when I'm suppose to wake up.

RB: I do that everyday.

SS: And you know what's interesting, when my call is changed, I'm going to have an earlier call, I wake up for the earlier call. It's the weirdest thing in the world.

RB: For him to have this great instinct for what the time is, but not to be able to do it in a different time zone is great. The instinct didn't cover time zones. Something else that crossed through my mind is he's got to see "Wheel of Fortune" pulling up to a bar, like a roadhouse, could even be the same place where the cardgame occurs, walking in and here's the five toughest guys in the world watching a football game.

SS: The audience goes "Gulp" before they even see it. That's interesting.

RB: "Would you guys like to watch "Wheel of?", and Raymond is going to freak out if he doesn't, and he's got to do something about it. I think that's a great situation.

SS: That's a good situation...very, very good.

RB: I think possible to play both of those situations.

SS: The other thing is that (this comes under the heading of shifting the routing) because Charlie doesn't realize it, but he is stepping into the shoes of the custodian, Vernon. One thing that I thought might be a kind of interesting scene is that Vernon tries to prepare Charlie, when Charlie is taking or kidnapping or whatever, when Vernon sort of knows that Charlie is going to take Raymond away, or something like that, when these brothers get together, and Vernon tries to prepare Charlie for things that Charlie doesn't even know are going to happen yet, because Charlie doesn't know his brother. Vernon tries to sit down and give him a briefing on what to expect and what to be careful of, Vernon would say (I think you have it in your script), "Here's a number...if anything goes wrong, call me."

RB: Susan does that.

SS: That's right, Susan does that. What I thought would be sort of interesting was that, once Susan, who is good with Raymond the way a girl is good with a little baby, once she leaves and Charlie is alone with Raymond, Charlie's best advice, his best conjobling doesn't work on Raymond, I thought what would be kind of interesting at some point is... Some of these savants make up words...they have their own language. Dustin was adlibbing a scene with Tom and I, and Dustin said, (end of tape). Raymond goes over to Charlie in the motel room with a little bit of panic on his face, but not much, goes over to Charlie and says, "Freebo." Charlie says, "Freebo?" And Raymond says, "Freebo." Charlie ignores him, and Raymond goes back into the other room and comes back in and says, "Freebo! Freebo! Freebo!" Charlie says, "What are you talking about? Freebo? Freebie? Free? Something for free?" It's kind of like twenty questions.

RB: He's trying to make some sense of it...trying to take it literally.

SS: Raymond really starts to get panicky and starts running around the room yelling, "Freebo! Freebo! Freebo!", and running around the room, hitting walls and reciting it back and forth, and Charlie doesn't know what to do. He gets on the telephone and gets Vernon on the phone and says, "What the hell's going on? He's yelling freebo, freebo freebo!" Then, you cut to the bathroom to the toilet paper roll which is just cardboard, there is no toilet paper there, and Charlie is coming back from the store with "freebo" and changing the toilet paper because Raymond won't take a dump without his "freebo". I

RB: That's fabulous! That's in the movie!!

SS: It was fun to see these guys sort of improvizing.

RB: Also, the fact of what "freebo" turned out to be gives you lots of places to call it back later too.

SS: Right. For instance, Raymond has a shorthand vocabulary of about seven words. He teaches Charlie, not by saying "here are my seven words", but in the course of the movie these seven words are revealed, so in the summation scene in the hearing at the end, Charlie, totally forgetting that the judge and lawyer and the ties and the hearing room and the micorphones and all that, in the course of Charlie trying to summate why he deserved to have Raymond in his life, he just throws this stuff away the way he did the "freebo", and Charlie seems a bit autistic. In that last scene, there is something about Charlie that seems autistic himself.

RB: That would be great. The more we make them alike toward the end, the greater it will be.

SS: Exactly. The guys are just staring at him as though he has really changed, and Susan too. Let's see what else I could catch you up on in just these past couple of weeks. Did I tell you about the weirdest idea? This is the weirdest idea of all. Trying to make Susan more functioning in the story - not with them, because they have to be alone and I think it's great where you have Susan have to leave, but Susan's function as a girlfriend and, perhaps, a wife.

RB: Are you thinking of making her a wife?

SS: Yeah, but I have a better idea now too. What if Susan were an attorney. What if, in fact, Susan handled Charlie? They were married, and Susan had a job and she's active and she's smart, real good at what she does.

RB: Why would she be married to this guy?

SS: I don't know. Charlie is trying to be Susan...he's trying to be

SS (cont): organized, he can't be. He is a used car salesman, and he's good at it. In the broiler room, he does what he does. He has ten things up his sleeves, and he has schemes and this and that. If Susan knows this, she knows one thing very, very well. The idea being that if Susan and Charlie, as you almost have them here, separated, and Susan goes off, that link about the hearing and everything else, and the representation of Charlie and Raymond at the end, could possibly be Susan. (I'm not in love with this idea, I'm just throwing all of this out to you.) What it would do, in terms of the economics of this, it would take a character out of the piece; it would consolodate the focus of the story, so Susan becomes a functioning character. She doesn't become the fighter's moll who sits in the front row and the fighter performs better when she's sitting in that seat, when the seat is empty he gets knocked out.

RB: You mean functioning in the last scene.

SS: Yeah, the last scene, and also in conversations throughout the story. Where it's not just a guy with another history, some sort of a school chum who grew up together with Charlie, this attorney we know named Stu, but there's more history and more importance and that relationship has to work too.

RB: Let me say a couple of things just off the top about that. First of all, it would disturb me enourmously if she was his wife, for a bunch of reasons. Like the Groucho Marx line about, "I wouldn't join any club that would make me a member". If this gal is worthy of him winning, she can't be married to the first Charlie. She loves him, she sees, like she says, "there were moments". She saw the real goodness in him in those moments, but they were too small, and finally when she sees what this guy was going to do to his brother, she knows that that's the real guy. He has to earn her back. I think that's, not only more credible, but also better dramatic.

SS: I also had a problem with the fact that she was the wife, because I felt that Charlie would only work harder if she weren't the wife. Charlie would miss her more if she were the girlfriend.... "Don't leave me." But, if Charlie had already taken that relationship for granted and it was an old marriage, even if it was a year old, and there's less sexual tension.

RB: Much less juice to me...everywhere. He always deserved her in his real heart, but he never really acted like he did, and it's his reward. I think that bringing her back more, is right. The obvious pragamaics of "couldn't she be Stu?" so we have someone that we care about instead of this third banana guy who doesn't really count, sure is tempting because of it's economy; sure is terrifying because of its clear convenience if he just happens to have a girlfriend. I'm wondering if she could provide the stuff without being a lawyer. First of all, her being a lawyer makes her a different kind of gal. For example, a legal secretary, or someone who just finds this stuff out and plugs into it.

RB (cont): The problems though, for putting her up that high, in what she sees in Charlie and why she's hanging out with him, it's so convenient if that's her profession is the very exactly thing we need. But, the economy is very attractive. I wonder if there is a way for her to be the person that finds the stuff. Like, he didn't have a lawyer to start with, and she helped him...she walked in to go out to dinner with him in the opening scene, and wound up getting on the phone and having to play secretary to him. I wonder if there is a way that she becomes the person....

SS: Finds out who Raymond is for him.

RB: No, once she has left him, let's just say that there was a lawyer at first that once advised him that if you steal the guy, you get the money. Just like, we're never going to see that guy. You have a one way conversation or have one conversation. But, that guy blows Charlie off because Charlie hasn't paid his bills so "Fuck you, Charlie. Good-bye." and that guy just disappears. (This doesn't sound so great to me as I say it, but maybe there is something that will start getting us on the right road.) When he goes back, if he calls on her and tries to get her to help him, "Well, the guy that you work for. Couldn't he help? Couldn't you talk to him?", like he's got no way to pay a real lawyer. Either she works for a lawyer, but even that's a little fishy. But that she is a lawyer sounds way to convenient to me. That she works for a lawyer...sounds too convenient. But, how about this...maybe she works for a large corporation that has a legal department, that's a little more credible. She's not working for a lawyer, but she goes up four flights and sits down and bats here beautiful...(who is going to be doing this? Are you casting Meg Ryan or who?)

SS: I don't know yet. I didn't want to cast Meg only because I didn't want to step into a prepackaged deal with Dustin and Tom, which I love and that is one of the things that inspired me to do this picture, but I just felt I wanted to be a little independant, and I didn't think the girl was fully flushed out in the screenplay. I feel that we were going to do so much work on the character of Susan that Meg might wind up being too young. So rather than cast her now, the script will be finished and then we'll figure out who will play the part.

RB: So, anyway, batting her eyes, having to do another version of what she had to on the phone for him. And, even though they have broken up, I don't know how this would play, but if he can get her to do that, what you get out of that is not only economy, but having your legal information...

SS: Instead of Stu, it comes from Susan.

RB: Yeah, but not only that, but you get to play the continuing tension of their off romance in some very halting way. Where at the beginning he is very manipulating with her, and maybe part of the progression that the greeting of Charlie that Raymond induces, spills over and shows up as

RB (cont): him being a little more tender with her, a little more respectful of her.

SS: You know how you do that on the phone? In the middle of all this legal stuff on the telephone he says, "Listen, Susan, do me one more favor. Get me some obscure fact, find out who pitched for the so and so in 1957, and what his batting average was. Just find out this bit of information for me..." because I think it would be interesting that some progress in Charlie is that Charlie wants to give something to Raymond. He wants to give Raymond a fact that Raymond can't possibly know about that Charlie can give to Raymond...a gift of an idea that plays into his baseball expertise. It's like giving somebody an obscure baseball card, but instead it will be a piece of knowledge for Raymond's ...

RB: It shouldn't be done the way you are saying, I think, because it's too easy if he just asks Susan to do it for him. If we could find a way that he has to pay a price to do that...it's like the brother who hocks his favorite rollex to get the \$1000, rare baseball card. If he can see the sacrifice that he had to do, then he can give it to Raymond as a throw away. Like, he didn't have to do anything for him. Like, "...hey, here, I found this...". When you love the guy is when the guy had to really have to sacrifice to do something nice, and doesn't take the credit for it. He just does it. That really makes you see progress. That's a great idea.

SS: He does something for him....

RB: I don't know if he could give the guy knowledge that he doesn't have, but maybe there's a thing. Also, it's a little hard to visualize...

SS: If Raymond doesn't really know everything there is to know about baseball, which I picture that he knows absolutely everything.

RB: No, he just know what he's read. He doesn't know anything about of this, he just knows what he has read.

SS: It's interesting. I was so convinced that they know everything, because when I talked to this one savant at the workplace in Culver City, I did ask him some songs that he didn't know from the,40s, his favorite era. I was glad he didn't know everything. I thought that they knew everything about a certain catagory of....

RB: That's a great idea. What that makes me flash on is a scene where Charlie is grilling Raymond, "Well have you read this...have you...have you...have you?..." What it looks like the scene is about is him abusing Raymond by trying to better him by trying to find out something that he doesn't know. Like he's competing with him and besting him. And then, turn that around and find out that what he was doing that for was to go find the thing to give him that the didn't have.

SS: Right. Right.

RB: That would be a nice turn around.

SS: That would be very nice.

RB: I don't know just how to do it yet, but that would be nice.

SS: Which leads me to go back towards the beginning a bit to talk about some of Raymond's first impressions of Charlie. That is, if you are judged by the company you keep, then Charlie who is good with the women and good with business people and can pretty much bullshit his way through life, when he's around Raymond, he's a nerd. He's a nerd. Raymond's a nerd - he's a nerd. Raymond's a geek - Charlie's a geek. I'm just saying that when a pretty girl comes over to two guys, and she looks at that wonderful Tom Cruise smile, and she starts talking to Tom, and then Raymond looks up and he tries to smile and starts talking too loud..."Blah, blah, blah..." the girl is not exactly going to look back at the Tom Cruise smile and say I want to out with this guy. She is going to see this sort of geeky looking person next to him, and she's going to have a tough time separating one from the other.

RB: I don't think I buy that.

SS: Well, I buy it in first impressions. I really do buy it because I think it's basic human nature. I buy it because I've experienced it.

RB: Maybe I'm not buying it because of the casting. There is a level of guy that I would buy it for. When they're sitting down, for example, at the diner and Sally Dibbs walks over and Tom lays the heat on her, this guy may have a weird brother. I can picture her being put off because the brother's around. But to really think that Tom...

SS: What it does is make you look more carefully at the normal person to see what is abnormal about that person. This is just first impressions that we're talking about. It's a reaction that I would direct the actors to have, that she would be very warm and flirtatious with Tom, but the minute Raymond if he performs this at, and it is really upsetting, she would certainly pull back those feelings. Being afraid of being in the same car with him, or having to walk down the street with him, both. That's all that I'm saying...I was making a point. That was kind of a prologue...

RB: You were talking about going by the company that you keep.

SS: Let me go back to the broad strokes here and that is, how many scenes, because I think in the current draft, Charlie too quickly notices Raymond. He too quickly is able to see. In the very, very first script...page 21. It is a small thing but it has always bothered me. On the bottom of page 21, Charlie so quickly understands how to handle Raymond, that when the professional says, "You go to your room

SS (cont): now and in a little while your brother will come and visit, I promise." and Charlie says, "It's okay, I'll come in a minute and I'll see your room." Now even though all Charlie is doing is mimicking Lenz, Charlie is saying all the right things.

RB: Yeah, but let me make the case for it. Charlie's first reaction to the situation with Raymond, would be to be very glib and very good about it. He's not under stress here. Of course, hearing that this guy is his brother, he knows instantly that this guy is 1,000,000 bucks on the hoof.

SS: Exactly, and he's going to bullshit him.

RB: He's 1,000,000 bucks on the hoof; I don't know who I have to talk that 1,000,000 out of - whether it's his doctor over here, whether it's this nerd standing in front of me that's my brother, but I smell money. So, Charlie's first reaction, I think, should be very smooth. He should be able to be the real Charlie. He, of course, senses it. Just as he knows with Gladys Wens, he's talking about the Lord, he should do it better than Lenz, I think. "It's okay, I'll see you in a minute." He's cool with the guy until the crunch comes and he's under stress. That's when he starts to break down. And I think his breaking down later will be more attractive to us, will have more impact for us if he was cool before in the control situation. This is a very controlled situation, and when he goes into the room with Vernon, he's cool. Once he gets alone and he's embarrassing everybody and he goes to the...like for example a place where (although I love the scene) you objected to the scene for a different reason during the last conversation, was where he cons him about the baseball stuff. I think Charlie has the brains and the presence of mind to hit on that baseball...you thought it was too early and wanted to do it later.

SS: Too early because I want to see Charlie start to break down. I want to see all of this awkwardness.

RB: He wouldn't be awkward here, but the awkwardness would be, here are 45 guys watching this guy in the thing. He says, "Come on, come on with me." Raymond doesn't cooperate, and suddenly, are the cops going to come? I kidnapped this guy, what the fuck is going to happen here? What I would like to take that to, is Charlie trying the same approach. Because he would try it, and it's tempting to watch him try the same approach, but it doesn't work quite so well. Maybe, it like starts to work or something, and then Raymond comes up with some terrific (I don't know what it is yet) answer to it so he gets into the game. He's the pitcher and he's the manager, but then he finds some tremendous reason in the context of that game, why he has to do the opposite of what Charlie said. And, Charlie is kind of like screwed by his own game. He really kind of outsmarted himself. Where he looks at the manager and says, "Yeah, but you pitched Neidenfuher last night and so there's nobody left but me. I've gotta go until the sixth inning at least if for only..." That's probably not it, but it's that kind of a thing,

RB (cont): turns it against him and then just goes right back to doing it and now Charlie has nowhere to go...except lost his temper. Except clear the desk like he did the first time.

SS: That's what I think we need more of is Charlie losing his temper.

RB: I think you're right.

SS: Charlie being even more incapable of accepting this new reality than Raymond is...accepting the reality of being outside of the institution for the first time in 24 years. The more we can give that kind of tension to Charlie, because Charlie is used to fast lane action. He is using juggling three or four things at the same time. Suddenly he's on the road, he's in the country, he's in the mid-West. He doesn't have the telephone.

RB: He's used to knowing the rules and the guy that can always outsmart everybody, outsmarts everybody because he knows the rules. He knows how the other guy thinks. But it doesn't work with this guy. He does exactly what he would with somebody else, and it has the opposite effect. It wouldn't make him totally berserk.

SS: I think what we need then is to be able to say what we're needing to say now we need a scene where Raymond puts so much on Charlie, in otherwords, Raymond asks so much of Charlie, not in the voluntary way, but in keeping with that would be in keeping with his own syndrome... with his own disability...that so much is coming to Charlie for the first time it's like being suddenly, the dishes stacking up in Charlie's hands and he just drops them, he can't hold them any longer. He just at some place cannot cope, and it becomes a breaking point. For instance, he does have a breaking point in the current script, but I just didn't feel enough...

RB: Where's that?

SS: It's the toothbrush scene, where they yell at him because of the toothbrush..

RB: Yeah, that replaced the bathroom scene.

SS: Right. And I felt not enough had happened to justify Charlie's outburst in that scene. Not enough before that had happened to make Charlie uncomfortable enough. He was so easy going and handling Raymond, I felt, so where's the tension? Where's the drama? Where's the awkwardness? Where's this sort of green novice suddenly pretending he's Lenz and Vernon, and failing, knowing he's failing, and hating himself and Raymond because he, Charlie, is failing. He hates when he fails; he hates when he loses. And, when his weapons aren't working to effect, then he gets angry, or he gets out, or he gets somewhere, someplace.

RB: The one other way to approach what you're saying is (because I can remember Marty and I talking about the toothbrush scene), there's something interesting about it happening, and in a way even more interesting, less provoked. Maybe more provocation in earlier scenes, but I like it happening in a moment, totally inappropriate where it's a tiny last straw to a lot of other build ups because it's crazier for Charlie. It's more shocking when it happens, seemingly out of the blue, over nothing, then it shows that there's something that has been building that is deep and crazier in Charlie. You know, in the boiler room scene when he clears the desk, I know why he's clearing the desk, I would have cleared the desk if I had a temper, because he's back and forth and puts the bitch on hold, and my god, ya know, you've got a problem? But when you see someone break up over nothing, over something small, it really tells you something. It's harder to do.

SS: I think that's very valid, as long as the audience senses that he's had a tough time handling his brother up until this point. It's the small thing that makes him break, it's a pipe that we have to lay the head on.

RB: And then all the stuff pours out. "You don't fucking eat the french fries, and this and this..." and suddenly the whole litany of all the stuff he has been holding his tongue about suddenly comes pouring out in this incredible outburst. But, maybe Raymond has some delicious offbeat reaction. I would rather not make that the things that freaks Raymond out.

SS: I like the bathtub thing that freaks Raymond out.

RB: Yeah, I love that.

SS: I don't think that would freak him out. This is Charlie's scene to freak out, not Raymond's scene. He'll take his turn to freak out.

RB: And Raymond will do something that will make him maddening. That's like if Raymond did something nice or something sweet or to giggle or to go on the TV, or to hand him a gift to eat or something calms himself down, or calm Raymond down before Raymond is in the bicarb.

SS: Or, it would make Raymond do something that I saw...Chris, this young autistic...not a kid, he's like 33 years old...but I saw him do something kind of interesting. He was talking and then I asked him a question about this girl. I asked him, "Did you kiss her?" and he, instead of answering me, whispered...and Dustin and I both leaned forward and tried to listen, but he kept whispering. I said, "What are you saying, Chris?" He said, "Secret thoughts." I said, "Can you tell us?"

RB: Great line...the line should be in the movie.

SS: I said, "Can you tell us your secret thoughts?" He said, "They're

SS (cont): my secret thoughts." And, what I thought I heard him say was, "I want to go back in the rec room with the others." What I thought he was saying is that he wanted to leave. He wanted to not be asked those questions, so he wanted to go somewhere else. Those were his secret thoughts. He was retreating about answering the questions about the handholding or the kiss.

RB: You just took me to a place when you said that. A potential for something running when Raymond says, "Secret thoughts," is for Charlie to say to him the second time he hears it, when he says, "Will you tell me your secret thoughts?" and Raymond says, "They're my secret thoughts," for Charlie to say, "What if I tell you one of my secret thoughts?" like he's going to trade some secret, and would take Raymond a few scenes before he even agreed to make that trade. And then what the thoughts would be that would be traded could be terrific, and another neat path that occurs to me is if they find a shorthand way of doing that. Like if there is a code between them, that when one of them wants to share a secret thought, you just...it's like a "freebo", you say a word, or you wink, or do a gesture, or something that enables that to happen. Anything that they can do between them that is secret; that they can do with each other in that hearing scene that nobody else understands but to the two of them it's gold, it's uranium.

SS: Right. I like that.

RB: Nobody else in the room understands what is being said. But they are talking to each other like their own foreign language...

SS: I think that's great, but it's interesting how that discovery is made out of Raymond retreating out of Charlie's outburst...like going into a corner and starting to whisper to himself. (whisper, whisper)

RB: You know I have a line in the script, in the stage direction, about tracing his finger on his leg. I didn't know where that came from when I wrote it. I when read it over the other day, and it came from an autistic piece of behavior of mine. When I was a child, if I would be yelled at and I would be afraid to sass back the authority figure, the teacher or whoever it was that was bawling me out, it wasn't enough for me to think rebellious thoughts, I would sort of trace on my leg the first letter, so small they couldn't see me do it, the first letter of all the words of the sentence that I was in my mind vilifying the teacher back for. And, the physical act of defiance that I was actually doing something that she could have see, of course she could never really know what I was doing, I needed to do that much to be defiant.

SS: I did something similar...when I was a kid and I was put in the corner at school...I was put in the corner every once in awhile because I was sort of a rebellious kid in the second or third grade we're talking about, I used to take my hand and put things in my mouth. I was putting all of the bad words that I wanted to say to the teacher in my mouth. And, one day the teacher came over to me and asked me what I was

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RB: You know at the very end where they are really brothers, and he says, "You know, we're both him." That's what makes him the rosetta stone. That's where they both came from.

SS: Let me just try from memory to tell you what it was. I've never said this into a tape recorder and I would sort of like to be able to read it back and see how it reads.

"Everybody that has ever had any problems with their parents knows there are two sides to every tale, and often it just takes age and distance and the experience of having lost a parent, which I, thank God, haven't experienced yet, but it takes those things to cause you to reconcile your unfairness in the relationships. Not what he did wrong, but how you conveniently misperceive something to continue to make the mother and the father the enemy. I think some of us all do that. I thought wouldn't it be an interesting scene, at some point, because Charlie doesn't really know his father, but Raymond does. And, even though the father's a shit...we have to say the father's a shit...I can't think this father's anything but a shit, who would not only banish Charlie from his life - or make it very hard to try and have a relationship - but also institutionalize an 18-year-old son because he was too busy to handle it the problem himself...

RB: A millionaire who because his wife died, sent his 18-year-old son into an institution and saw him, he didn't say every weekend. Raymond said he came on my birthday and Christmas.

SS: Not a lot of forgiveness for a person like this. But, when we're all children, parents are different and parents are proud and bubbling over and missing the kids while they are at work. I know what I go through, and I hope I'll be as in love with Max twenty years from now as I am today. You know what I'm saying. I mean, I hope that continues.

RB: You may go for four or five years in the middle where you aren't...

SS: I hope that prevailing love is the engine that drives me through in my relationship with Max. What I'm saying is, I thought it would be kind of an interesting thing is Raymond remembered some good things about his dad, and at one point, my note just says, "Raymond needs to show Charlie how once good his father was, or could have been. He needs to perform; he needs to act out how the father was to Charlie when Charlie was two-years-old."

RB: There's even a line in there now where he says...

SS: "He held me, he kissed me.."

RB: He said, "He loved you, he kissed you."

SS: I love that. That scene to me is the emotional effigy of what happens between Charlie and Raymond and the father. That's why I want to move that scene later in the script.

RB: Isn't it later in here?

SS: Not for me. When I went through it with Michael Bortman, Michael liked where it was now, and I argued for it a bit later.

RB: Let me see if I can find where it is. It's on page 112. That's pretty late. That's just the last thing before they go to LA.

SS: Yeah, you're right, that is pretty late. And the other place that I wanted to do it was... this is something also I thought would be great on the pitching mound. You know, whatever happens on the pitching mound I always thought this scene would be part of that scene...this whole coming out of what Dad was like, with the blanket and everything else.

RB: That's interesting. You should look, by the way, at this older version, because the blanket is there in this older version. It coming back. You saw in the bathtub scene that he went and got the blanket. He didn't pull one off the bed, he got the real blanket.

SS: I would have a little problem and question, before Charlie ever meets Raymond why Charlie has the blanket. I haven't been able to figure that out.

RB: You know, I thought of that. When Marty first wanted it out, one of the things that I was fighting to keep it in, one of the things he said was just that. And I said, there's a few answers...my favorite answer is Susan took it.

SS: That's my favorite answer too. I would almost like to see Susan take it as opposed even assuming Charlie would take it. Because I think Charlie looks at the blanket....

RB: He finds it in the suitcase.

SS: Yeah, and the nicest thing he does, is he smells it. That's the most honest thing he does with that blanket, is he smells it. But, I just saw this moment where Raymond is pretending that he is the father. He is doing a one man act. He is reenacting breakfast, or reenacting a dinner, or reenacting a field trip...

RB: Word perfect, because he is remembering.

SS: And he's remembering word perfect what the father said, what Charlie said, and the few things that Raymond said.

RB: And he actually takes all the parts.

SS: He plays all the parts.

RB: He's like Pee Wee Herman when he jumps up...it's like Woody Allen in that courtroom scene where he jumps up, he runs over here...

SS: Well, I wouldn't physicalize it that way, but he would change his voice just a little bit, might play it just a little bit, but he would just perform the different parts to show the kindness that once the father had for the family.

RB: You know that would be such a great idea...I was thinking you were doing it for comedy, but the last part, it should be so small. It should be this heartbreaking...like he said, "I once put brown dirt (which was really shit, obviously) on the rose, and he thought he did it right." But some incredibly tiny moment where his father is being nice to Raymond, not to Charlie, it would have to be about moment he has treasured that...what it should do, or what you're making me think it should do, is it should run directly contrary to the disability. It should be a moment where his father said he was smart. Somewhere where he figured out he was smart. Now we are going to get to the pizza scene when you get to that moment when Raymond says, "What's wrong with me, can I get better?" Which is a great moment to get to and a great breakthrough to verbalize and be able to realize that think they are worse off than everybody else. But it would be really incredible if the thing he remembers is something where the line that he really treasured the most...where he made a connection that was clever...where his father commented on him being smart, or able, or coordinated, or something that he is really not, and he's known his whole life that he's not, and he's cherished this on thing from his father that gave him the hope that someday he could be smart, or he could be something. Don't you think?

SS: Yes.

RB: It's a fabulous moment. It's like the snapper of it, because it's basically about...what it should be for us, the audience, is showing the father as being a nice guy, which that line doesn't necessarily. So, the whole tea party is about showing the father as being something nice. But what it meant to Raymond wasn't that because Raymond can't be linear enough to say, "Now let me show you what a nice guy my dad was." That is never his purpose. His purpose is that he reveals this one things that he has carried around as his private treasure that his dad said he was really smart.

SS: Exactly. And it also could be a slight extension of the wonderful blanket scene, you know where he says, "and Daddy kissed you". It's just a furtherment of that part of the story.

RB: Is this at the bus stop you mean?

SS: It wasn't at the bus stop. I think it's....

RB: It's on 112 at the pizza parlor.

SS: It's the explanation of Rainman, how the name Rainman came into being.

RB: Okay, well that, of course, in this version is very much in the beginning, and like your idea of the arrangement.

SS: To me it should be later, not in the beginning.

RB: Maybe we're ready to start turning pages, I don't know. We seem to be doing good.

SS: Yeah, I think so. Some of the things we did, and I only read 35 pages, that's all he wrote. Richard Price. A very good, tough, edgy writer.

RB: Yeah, THE COLOR OF MONEY.

SS: COLOR OF MONEY, and another very good script about a cop in New York who has insomnia called THE SEA OF LOVE; a good script. He contributed something which I...it's not on any of these pages. I only mention it now because there are pros and cons about it, and I think we should talk about it. He wrote two scenes that I thought were kind of interesting. Both scenes presume that Stu is in, and not out of the movie. They both involve Stu. The first scene he wrote that I liked a lot was a scene where Charlie is called from the boilerroom to meet the brothers that own the boilerroom and it sets up, which I really feel is contrived, because I always felt the movie needed some top spin, because when you turn pages you still want to feel there is something that is challenging the story, something promising a conclusion. I always prefer movies that promise me the ending. I don't quite know when it's coming, but I kind of have an idea what it's about. Basic first, second and third act - Moss Hart stuff, you know. Very simple, structural brilliance, and very conventional. But, he wrote a scene that took place in the boilerroom where Charlie bullshits his way into getting himself an extension, and there's a threat in larceny, they're going to...

RB: They're going to lock him up.

SS: They're going to lock him up because \$120,000 has been blown, Charlie of course doesn't believe it's blown. (I told you about this before.) And Charlie then admits that he blew the money on a IUD deal that went down the tubes...bottoms up, whatever.

The other scene he wrote, I don't know what Tom or Dustin feels about this scene, I sort of like it, was a nice scene where after that, Charlie and Susan (the way Richard wrote it, Susan was Charlie's wife and they separate). Susan is in town, and Stu has a dinner and invites Susan over with Charlie, and Susan and Charlie haven't seen each other for a long while. So, it's Susan, Charlie, Stu and Stu's wife. Stu's wife is like, seven and a half months pregnant. It is the kind of scene where Stu's wife gets on Charlie's case. She loves him so much, she gets on his case, and she's crying...it's very well written...and the reason she's crying is she says, "Isn't it great that because I am pregnant I can cry and you can forgive me for all of these things that

SS (cont): I'm saying to you." She has said some pretty hard things to Charlie. It is the very top of the movie. What I don't like as the concept of this scene is it framed Charlie as a loser, not by demonstration, but by reporting, and it always bothers me when some other characters tell the audience about a character who is right before our very eyes, opposed to our learning...at the very beginning.

RB: Particularly at the beginning. If I thought I've learned a lot already, I don't mind learning a little more, but if I don't know this guy at all and someone is sitting down and telling me everything about him....

SS: I've just talked myself out of liking the scene...having just said that. But, one of the things about it that I kind of liked was that there was a freshness in Susan and Charlie. Kind of like they hadn't seen each other for awhile. And, there was freshness, and sort of a sexual thing going there, and Susan wasn't real sure about Charlie anymore. She had already broken up with him before, she didn't want to break up with him twice. She came to dinner because of that same curiosity that drives people who have seperated, old girlfriends or boyfriends, to try it on for size again...take it around the block and try it one more time. I have just totally talked myself out of liking that scene at all. Let's talk about your problem with the plotspin...

RB: I've written a lot a very intricately plotted things...

SS: I've never saw the stone...

RB: GARDEN OF STONES? If you see my script, it is completely different from the movie, but if you want to read anything I'll see that you get it. But, that isn't as intricately plotted thing. But the spec thing I just wrote is quite intricately plotted...this piece, because of the idea and of the casting, is a piece where, while you can say, (Dustin said it to me several times), there's no story here man, they're just vamping their way across the country. And, he's right, he's definitely right. But, with these particular actors, and this particular situation, it's all anybody wants to see, and I swear that any kind of plot that we're going to devise, and we will because you want it, so we'll devise one, that's when you go out for popcorn...that's when you check out for the car chase. You're checking out because all you want to see is what these two incredible characters and performers are going to do with each other, one on one, and everytime I cut back to whether or not Tom's going to fry because he stole the \$120,000, I couldn't care less. Just couldn't care less! The very thing that in other stories would be a driving engine, is only a distraction here, because the only thing we care about here is (yes, maybe it's predictable they're going to wind up lovers at the end) but how are they going to do it, what's it going to be? If I was going to have a plot in danger, I would have a plot that was danger of what I cared about which is to foreshadow earlier that these two will be seperated in the end. That kind of plot, a plot about volunteerism, and freedom, and whatever, is about the story and what the audience cares about. The audience doesn't give a shit if Charlie is going to jail. They don't, it's just not (end of tape).

RB (cont): It's meaningless, it's totally interruptive of what the story is. But, to put more driving engine in it, if that's wanted. You see, I don't feel, first of all, that the audience feels a lack of that. All the audience wants to do is see these two guys in every possible combination. The part of the criticisms that you and Dustin make that I very much agree with, is if there was less of a progressive sweetness to it, and there were more ups and downs, more back and forth, and more make-up/break-up about them, you would have greater watchability to it. But, if an engine is felt to be needed, even though I don't, I would want the engine to not be about Tom's financial circumstances. I would want it to be about Raymond, they won't be able to be together. Because that would make the predictability of the end, that they will want to be together, that's the twist to that. I couldn't believe that Steven Spielberg would lead me to a movie that, at the end, Charlie wouldn't fall in love with Raymond. I would never believe that...I'm enjoying watching it happen, but I couldn't believe that Steven Spielberg would ever split them up. And, if even before I know they're going to fall in love with each other, I'm planting the seed that, maybe if they do fall in love, it's going to be unrequited love...it's not going to work. The war will take them apart. You know, Johnny will get killed in the service, and even though they've finally fell in love, it's not going to happen.

SS: Let's talk about what the war is. I'm assuming when you say "war" it's external power...like Mooney, or Lenz, and what you really do have in the current script, which is the information that there...my problem is, I always thought if I could know at the beginning at the story that there was going to be a hearing, and at the hearing there was going to be a determination as to custody of Raymond - not just like KRAMER VS. KRAMER where the custody goes to Charlie - but a bigger downside, you know, it's not just whether it goes to Dustin Hoffman or Merle Streep, the child either goes to Merle Streep, or the child goes to the orphanage. And, is Raymond going to have to go back to his routine with "Wheel of Fortune" at 7:30, and meals exactly at noon and 6:00 and at 7:30 AM, and the bedroom in the same place. Is he going to have to go back to the same routine that he has just successfully broken out from, with Charlie's help. And, there are a couple of plot spins that I thought were at least interesting enough to mention at this point...one of which makes Charlie even more of a shit, and the other which is simply taking the idea that you introduced at the beginning of act three, and just putting it more in act one, and just going ahead and biting the bullet and saying, look, we're going to tell you anyway there's going to be a hearing, let's just go ahead and say, there going to have ten days on the road, and there going to be in LA on the twelfth of August, and they better be in LA on the twelfth of August because there is going to be a hearing to determine whether Charlie is going to be able to keep Raymond and the money, because by that time the story of the money mute as far as Charlie's concerned; or is Raymond going to have to go back to Lenz who we should make a nice guy.

RB: Lenz should be a terrific guy. Lenz should have his view of what

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SS (Cont): That's why I first suggested Susan as Stu.

RB: It's still a phone call for Susan...

SS: Exactly. Susan certainly couldn't go on the road with them, and there is no way she could find them once they set out. Now, in your script, the latest draft, Charlie thinks he kidnaps Raymond, and then he discovers through talking to Stu...he calls Stu and says, "Get me a hearing quickly, I want a court to give me my brother."

RB: What happens is that there is a phone call before we ever saw him. There was one off screen phone call earlier in which he said, "I found out there is \$1,000,000 on the hoof here. What do I do?" and Stu said, "Bring him to California because this is a big powerful institution out there in Illinois, and they'll have all the clout. Bring him to California where these guy's suck don't mean anything. We'll have his body here. We'll have jurisdiction here..."

SS: Can you legally do that?

RB: It's hard. I have talked to lawyers...

SS: How do you get somebody out of their state and into another state, can't you require the hearing to be back in the original state?

RB: There would be a proceeding on that, and maybe more likely than not, you could be moved back to Illinois, but not necessarily. There are all different reasons for jurisdiction, and the odds are, yeah, but not for sure. It could, according to the guy I talked to who was my litigating partner when I was a lawyer, it definitely could be, that because you have physical custody of the guy and he's now in LA, his physical presence in the courtroom, and the fact that his brother, his only living, blood relative is there, and he is a resident of the state, and he's the guy that is bringing it and has physical custody of his brother there, that certainly gives you many of the grounds for jurisdiction that jurisdictions are decided on. Is it more likely that they had to fight about going back to Illinois? My guy thought it would be more likely that they would go back to Illinois, but not certain. It definitely could happen this way. But it definitely couldn't happen... you see, it's not a courtroom drama. It doesn't ever get to the hearing stage. In one interview, that's like a very pre anything, for all we know, Lenz had a battery of lawyers doing nothing but motions to get it back to Illinois, and maybe he wouldn't have even won. What happens is, in a hearing, everybody of good will, included Lenz, is convinced. What you have to see has to be so demonstrable, as I hope it is here because if it's not we'll have to make it better, so demonstrable that Charlie is sincere, and that this is real, and that this guy deserves the chance to prove that he can be responsible for his brother. That's where the guy has to be a highly functioning autistic, not only for other dramatic purposes for what I want to do in the story...Lenz has to be able to say in the end when Charlie says, "He could get a job, and he could live

RB (cont): alone without me in an apartment." Lenz has to say, "Sure, if he wanted to, but he's been voluntary in an institution for 25 years. That's not what he wants...that's what you want for him." That's the subtext. That's not what he wants. But you've got to believe that this particular guy is highly functioning enough to do it, so what stands between him and doing it isn't the degree of his disability, it's the will to be free. It's Charlie giving him the will to be free; it's the other person that can be the emotional anchor because someone has to be there for him, he cannot be alone in this world. It's the proof that he's not alone in this world, and the courage to want to go out and take that chance and take that risk to live like a free man. That's what's at issue; that's never what Lenz could believe. That Charlie could offer the one, or that Raymond would be ready to grab at the other, and that's what we see in the scene.

SS: Yeah. I don't think in two hours we can prove to an audience that Raymond has come along so far that he is able to take care of himself. He can't take care of himself, he's always with Charlie, and Charlie's always there for him. The few instances where we could let Raymond go out on his own, that should be filled with jeopardy and trauma, and there should be some kind of a moment where Raymond leaves...

RB: Don't misunderstand what I am saying. I didn't say in this version, and I don't think we should be saying, that what happens as you walk out of that hearing room and you go rent Raymond an apartment. All Charlie had ever said was, eventually, if we take it slow, this can happen. To me, Raymond moved in with Charlie at first, but eventually he could work his way into having his place in the same block or the same building...

SS: That's the way it is with lot of these people.

RB: Yeah, then they can walk on the beach and fish together.

SS: Exactly.

(Break)

SS: Why don't we throw out some ideas, even if we wind up throwing them o-u-t, about plot. Let's even put in the dumbest idea of all...here's the dumb plot. The dumb plot is that as the kidnapping occurs, they send the police out to get them, and the cops are chasing them out all over the United States of America, and before they get in the car they always look both ways, and they are always having to duck behind billboards as the cops go by; they're paranoid about everybody...who's an undercover detective; who's going to get them and who's going to let them go. Okay, that's the dumbest plot of all.

RB: See, that suggests something interesting to me. We've all had a big aversion to them being followed. But it might be worth it if they were followed, but they were followed by someone that wasn't trying to

RB (cont): catch them. Someone who just wanted to be sure that they were going to be okay. See, until they get this hearing set up, they can't make him involuntary. He is voluntary. They don't have the right to kidnap him. They would be the kidnappers. They don't have the right to force him...

SS: You mean the institution would be the kidnappers.

RB: Yes. That was the they. The they was Lenz.

SS: But, how important is the money to Lenz?

RB: I think, zero.

SS: Zero. Exactly. But it's more important to Mooney. I've always seen Mooney as the extension of the wishes of the father.

RB: We should talk about that too. I don't know that yet.

SS: It would just be nice if there was something about Mooney that was like the father that we never see. In the hearing room at the end there is a bit about Charlie and his father, not reconciling, but sort of adversarial clashing between the two.

RB: The problem is, I wish we could then do it with more economy. I wish that could be Lenz, because I love the concept of being able to reconcile with your father through the visual presence of somebody standing in for him. But, Mooney would be about money, which is why he shouldn't be, I think...for a couple of reasons. Number one, money is not an issue here. The hearing isn't about getting money. You can't get the money. The trustee owns the money, and there was never going to be any money; Charlie just didn't realize that. Then, at the end, it's sort of a cheap victory, because any victory over Mooney, any confrontation with Mooney will be about something that we don't value, and Charlie no longer values.

SS: Yes, but Mooney only represents the father. Mooney is almost like the last gasp of the father...

RB: Is there any way that Lenz could represent the father?

SS: I think that the people that run institutions, especially clean, well kept, caring institutions, shouldn't have any ulterior motives.

RB: No, no ulterior motives, but...

SS: Except, what is best for the patients.

RB: Except, he could not...he knew the father, what if he knew the father real well, better than Mooney knew him. You know there was that

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RB: He's doing what he is doing, solely for Raymond's benefit. But he is saying to himself now - this guy is on the way to ruin. His brother has taken him, his brother doesn't know that he's voluntary, but he's going to know, sooner or later it's going to come out. Thank God, he's hiding right now, but when he comes out in the open and asks the question, he's going to be told that the guy is voluntary. I have to now, make hay, to have this proceeding... See, Lenz wouldn't have started in California, but Charlie started it. I love the idea that Charlie hung himself; that his own plans are turned against him and the fact of the son of a bitch that he was before is what is causing the whole problem. If he wasn't such a son of a bitch in the beginning, everything would have been cool. So, Lenz hears about this...it's like if there was still a Stu in the thing...and again there are a lot of big problems here, I would like to cut away from our principals and cut into the extras - I agree with all of that shit - but if we could find a way to do it, if the lawyers called Lenz and said there is going to be such and such a hearing, but of course have six days to contest it and show why this hearing should not be held...and Lenz says, "No, it's fine." That kind of a moment, and we don't understand why and then we learn why. The ominousness of Lenz's well intentioned and very skillful inexorable efforts to bring Raymond back to prison, is a peril I would believe in the audience, because I know that, like you said, that they are going to wind up loving each other, but maybe you are going to have us loving each other, to have them torn apart, and have all the lessons learned be the bittersweet lessons of that we are changed and better people, but the price we pay is that we can't be together. That could make the payoff a lot sweeter.

SS: There are several things with Lenz. First of all, I have to understand the contract law, which I don't understand anyway. And that is, what happens when a father says, I am leaving this money in a trust. As an ex-lawyer, what is a trust? Explain all this to me.

RB: I'm going to tell you what I know about it but, I've got to say for the record, I was an entertainment lawyer. Very different. But we do have a nice lady in our firm that does this and she's done my will so I've learned a little bit about it. A trust is a way of giving a gift, but instead of giving the gift directly to the beneficiary (the person that is going to enjoy the gift [if I give you five dollars, I've given you a gift]). If for some reason I say, I don't want Steven to have this five dollars, I want to give this five dollars to Fletch and tell her what to do with this five dollars for Steven's benefit. She's going to go buy a jar of jellybeans and give one to Steven everytime he's a good boy. I have put the money in trust, you are the beneficiary, the five bucks is the corpus, Fletch is the trustee, and she has the instructions from the donar, me, as to what to do with the corpus for the benefit of the beneficiary. It is done for children. I have trusts for my children, and certainly for somebody who is incompetent, it would be the only way you would ever make money available. That can be done in a million different ways. What I presume, without going into any major detail, what Sanford Babbitt did was, he gave the money to Lenz (that's

RB (cont): why he had to know him personally too, not just some guy) and he said, you have absolute discretion. You use this money for my son's benefit as you see fit, period, over and out.

SS: So, in otherwords, initially, Charlie can't get his hands on the money, because even if he adopts Raymond and takes Raymond with him, even with Raymond in Charlie's life, even if they live together, Lenz could keep the money for the wing of the hospital if he felt it would benefit Raymond.

RB: Right now, at the end of this movie, Charlie never sees any of the money unless Lenz has been so won over that he wants to give it.

SS: Right, and when the Charlie discover this in the current script?

RB: In the current script, he discovers that in Arizona, before they go the Vegas. It's the second to last conversation with Stu. And what happens is, Stu was trying to tell him the last time, and Charlie hung up the phone on him. Now, he talks to him and he says, "What I was trying to tell you is you can't get your hands on this money, because it is up to the trustee, and as long as you're with the brother he's not going to give Raymond a dime". And Charlie says, "Yeah, well, if he takes that attitude, he's only hurting Ray by that.", and Stu says, "Hey, I tried that on him already. You're in a cage with a tiger here, and he knows that the only way to get rid of you is for you to know that not one red dime is ever going to pass through his lips." When that happens, Charlie realizes that all of his dreams of saving his shabby little financial situation are over, and he goes back, and he slams the door on his seedy motel, and he's freaked, and he starts to smoke, and he's totally at the end of his rope, and that's when Raymond comes and gives him the blanket and sings him the song.

SS: What page is that on? Can you find that?

RB: Now, in the old draft, he actually gave him the real one. But since we don't have the real blanket in Marty's draft...it's just before they go to Vegas. And, out of that, hitting the bottom, he is playing with the cards, and he sees the guy looking at the cards, he puts two and two together and they take off for Vegas.

SS: Now he is going to use his brother in another way to make money.

RB: Yes. The reason is that he now likes his brother, but he is desperate for money...he thought he was going to get the money out of his brother...so, he thought it was fine....page 77.

SS: So on page 77 is the first time the audience realizes that the money is academic.

RB: 76 actually. 76

(Reads the page)

SS: What is Stu trying to say?

RB: Stu is trying to say that he is voluntary, you don't have to do anything to get your brother. It's the otherside now that is pushing the hearing. He's trying to tell him the part that is really important, about Raymond's freedom. But, right now, Charlie...

SS: I think that's confusing.

RB: It's okay to be confused here, that's fine. You should be confused, because if you weren't confused, then Charlie wouldn't be confused and he would understand it. The point is right now, that though Charlie likes his brother, the most important thing in the world to Charlie is the money. So, symbolically, he's ready to hear.

SS: He has heard though, but all Charlie heard...

RB: Was about the money...Once he heard about the money, he didn't want to hear any more. He didn't want to hear about the fact that his brother is really free, and his freedom is now jeopardized by this hearing. So, now they go through the whole Vegas adventure together. And, by the way, the two versions are very different. The early version, if you read it, is longer, and there is a casino peril scene, where they go into a second casino, win a ton of money, and a guy catches them playing, brings them up to the casino and puts Raymond through a test to see if Raymond could count cards, and it's very threateneing and very ominous, or at least it was intended to be. And, they get away with no money. It's like, leave the money on the table and get out with your life. That's the choice they wind up getting, so they end up broke again.

SS: Right. Now back to this scene where Raymond says...then sings to Charlie...then Charlie realizes that all he's got in this world is Raymond. Now Charlie, according to this script, realizes he has nothing, and considers Raymond nothing at this point. So, he thinks he has nothing and is the loser he always thought he was.

RB: He's through...it's all over.

SS: And in the card count, he becomes this new sort of, aha, we can parlay that into a whole chance to save everything. And, of course to save everything means he has creditors breathing down his neck, or more specifically, the "Bass Brothers" at the beginning. Something less of a concept, less of an idea. We've all had creditors, we've all been through that and know what that's like, they're faceless threats and they give us sleepless nights, but it's always nicer, I found, that there is a personality or somebody behind that. One guy pays off the mafia before he offs you, so to speak.

RB: My objections was not have it, my objection to it was that the audience doesn't care about it. It's fine that Charlie cares about it. It's fine to throw in the Bass Brothers instead of what we had before to make Charlie's motivation clearer that he is facing trouble when he gets back, but we don't care about it, so I don't want to keep seeing it, is what I'm saying. To know that it's there, once, and to give me heightened credibility to Charlie's despair here, it's great, but I don't want to see 52 scenes of the brothers harrassing him.

SS: I guess what I'm thinking is, if Charlie had a dream at the beginning, I guess his boiler room is as close to any dream that he ever had. And that boiler room operation, or at least this current chance at the big money for Charlie, is blown when he loses the faith in the brothers that own the boiler rooms and Charlie is hired by them to set them up with their money. He uses their money and he has lost their money. They don't know that quite yet, but they suspect it...that's why they've threatened him. He's got to get the money back in two weeks. So, at this point he's got his brother, he realizes for the first time...does the audience at this point that Charlie is not getting the money, or does the audience been aware from the very beginning that he won't get it?

RB: So far, the way I wrote it...

SS: This is the first time, along with Charlie, that we realize that the money was always was Lenz's and...

RB: We thought this movie was going to be "Does Charlie get the money?"

SS: What's wrong with that?

RB: I don't think anything's wrong with that...that's why I wrote it that way.

SS: Let me just make this up hypothetically, because this probably isn't the law and we can't do anything that isn't realistic...this is not a fantasy or anything like that but...what if the money does belong to Raymond if Raymond is on his own, voluntary. But once Raymond is involuntary, the money is then Lenz to use the money to benefit Raymond while in the institution. So as long as Raymond is voluntary, the money is Raymond's, and therefore if Charlie gets custody of Raymond, it's Charlie's and Raymond's; as long as he's involuntary, then the money escapes everybody.

RB: I'm sure that could be legal. What you'd be staying is, that's a really complex thing to understand, it's a big concept for a general audience to handle but the concept your saying is...as long a my son is deemed competant to be voluntary of his own affairs, this money is somehow given to him. I don't know what that means, because he didn't have it. But if he is ever declared by a court of competant jurisdiction in the USA to be incompetant of handling his own affairs,

RB (cont): and therefore to be involuntarily committed to this or any other institution, then such amount of the trust that has not already been spent will be given...it will all have to be in trust for the trustee.

SS: In otherwords, the trustee being Lenz, can't frivolously spend the money on Raymond; we can't get at the money until Raymond is involuntary. I'm saying to make Lenz into a villain with greed in his wringing hands, but to essentially give Lenz the power to use the money to benefit Raymond, only if Raymond is involuntary, but that isn't the reason Lenz wants the involuntary commitment. The reason is he thinks he knows Raymond better than the brother says he will know Raymond, and Lenz says, if you take Raymond out of here, you are going to really fuck him up bad, because the outside world is not the institution. He is going to go into culture shock, and he is going to have a psychotic break, and he is totally going to unwind, so I'm doing this, not for myself, but I'm doing what I think is best. And what I think is best is for you to not see your brother anymore, and your brother remain with us as he has for 24 years.

RB: But does the change in the money part of the back story...I don't see that it makes any difference. We don't gain anything, is what I'm asking.

SS: The money, the way it is now, is just a launching pad. A new scheme for Charlie to get his hands on, and then many soon, in the second act, the money becomes a mute point because...

RB: No, by the top of the third act...77. Its got to go to the end of the second act. That's where I want to do it. In otherwords, I want to think for two acts that the trail is for money, and then put the third act for brothers. They're in Vegas getting money, but it's not about that anymore. Here's what it gives us this way. I do that scene in the end where Lenz can go and actually offer to buy Raymond. Otherwise, he would never be able to do that. It's like saying, you never had any money; there's no way you can get any money; you never could have had any money, that was your mistake. But, you know what, just against the one in a million chance that you might win tomorrow at that hearing, I'm going to give you the money just to give me....that shows Lenz's sincerity, and really puts Charlie up the the test that shows his progress.

SS: My problem always was that anytime you take somebody who is simply doing good work, but this isn't the forest where you can do the snakepit and have Alice turnkeys or Nurse Rachets...that's why I thought it was safer for the entire mental medical profession not to let Lenz even insinuate that he has any ulterior motive, or even let the audience assume that he is the villain in the piece. That's why I always wanted Mooney, or some extention of the estate lawyer being the heavy.

RB: But, it's the reverse. He has no ulterior motive now, but he would

RB (cont): have an ulterior motive if we do what you want to do. Now he has no ulterior motive because he has control of the money, and Charlie hasn't threatened control of the money. In fact, he has shown that his only motive is Raymond's welfare by going to and saying, "I'm going to write you a check for half of the money." That is the best money I will have ever spent on behalf of you brother...to get rid of you; buy you off. If you turn it around to where getting control of the guy means getting the money back, you can say to me, but that's not his biggest motive, his biggest motive is the welfare of the guy - you're clouding it.

SS: I know. Another way to handle it, now we're just talking about plots. Remember, this isn't trying to defend what is there, or what is going to be there, this is just sort of an exercise to just throw out some weird ideas and see where it takes us, or if it gets us completely unburdened on a purity we're losing by trying to...this is my discovery process. You're helping me through a discovery process by looking at every facet of this diamond in the rough. One idea that came up, which I think is at least worthy of a mention, is from the very beginning of the story, Mooney and Lenz, (I've always wanted to go for Mooney because this is a bad thing that I'm about to say which would come from a lawyer like Mooney, and not a good doctor like Lenz), where Mooney says, "Look, you're a very bright kid. You've found your way into the institution; you've found your way into discovering that you have a brother. There is no telling what you're going to find - you're a pretty smart guy. So, I'm going to make it easy on you, I'm going to tell you a few things that you probably didn't find out. The first thing is that I know that you need a lot of money, and you can bullshit me all want and say you want to get to know your brother better, but I know this is all for the money, because I've done some research and you have people with charges pending about misappropriation of funds, and you're in deep shit and you're here to get yourself out of this deep shit. I also know that you don't love your brother; you're probably never going to have a chance to do that, and I want to tell you one more thing that you probably don't know, and that is that your brother is not involuntarily committed; so he doesn't have to be kidnapped. He can leave anytime he wants, and he's always been able to leave anytime he wants. He doesn't want to. This is where he has chosen to stay - this is all he knows. So, here's what I'm telling you right now, Charlie Babbitt. I will right now promise you, that if we go into cahoots with each other, I will get a hearing, and it will be in Los Angeles which is your hometown because the judges are too tough in this state, and I think they are a little more open minded in California. It will probably take about two weeks to set this hearing, but we'll set a hearing where we will start proecedures for involuntary committment of your brother. Once he is involuntarily committed, I will control the money, and I will give you half. All you've got to do is cooperate with me; help me commit your brother; stand up for the truth which you'll see when you got to know him better, which he is no good on the outside world, and the outside world is only going to do him great mental and physical harm. You'll see that that's the truth, and you're going to stand up at this hearing,

SS (cont): and you'll stand next to me, shoulder to shoulder, in front of that judge, we can get him involuntarily committed to Lenz, and you walk away with \$1,500,000 and we walk away with \$1,500,000, and we will spend it only on for the best of your brother, and that will be it." So, this deceit package is agreed upon at the very outset. Charlie says, "Great, I'll leave him here and I'll meet you there." Mooney says, "No, you can't leave him here. Look, he's not involuntary. The judge will ask you how well you know your brother, and you just can't lie. This is a hearing; you are under oath; just go get to know him. Take off with him, he's fine. Here's what you have to do. Now I turn you over to Vernon who will brief you on the things you should look out for for your brother. Have a nice two weeks." And, of course, predictably, and the audience will see that too, is that there will be a complete change of heart by Charlie and by the end of the movie, Charlie will be standing up shoulder to shoulder with Raymond against Mooney in the court..fuck the money...to get custody of his brother in court. That's just another plot idea...there are 24 more.

RB: Shall we discuss that one?

SS: Sure.

RB: It is one way to go...it's a different way to go. It could be made to fit together logically. Too me, I don't see the advantage to it. It seems worse to me than the way we're going now. First of all, it reduces the tension because everything is so set up in the beginning, and so totally understood, that then everything does become a vamp, because all you're doing is waiting for that hearing. If we steal the guy, we have much more tension when we steal him than to be handed all this stuff. Then if you reveal all the different things piece by piece...one phone call reveals this...then you learn that he's not going to get the money...then you learn that he was voluntary all along, but now the hospital is going to take him back...you have a much better sense of things happening, and you have...

SS: You do, but I'll tell you what also happens which happened on my first read of the script, my first objective. I think I always find the first read to be the best read. I think if someone looks at your movie twice, whatever they say the second time isn't as valid as what they say the first time. When I first read the script, I felt as an audience I had been a bit mislead with red herrings, with new information...it was pretty heavy information, but I had just felt that I had been taken to a certain point, assuming a lot of things...even assuming that everyone in the bar was looking at Charlie because Charlie had accepted his brother. So, I was a little paranoid for Charlie. Who, out there, is going to come and arrest Charlie and throw him in jail for what he has done. And then that was distilled or dissipated with new information, not that he involuntary, but new information that he couldn't get the money. I guess I was reading this hoping to get more assurance in the story telling, because I was getting assurance from the characters, from the dialogue and from the emotional content of the whole script, but I

SS (cont): wasn't being assured from a strong sense of story telling... only because new things were cropping up...new things were rearing themselves. New information that kept sort of cutting down a plot that I was hoping to have. I was hoping to have more of a story. So then when I heard that he didn't have to kidnap him, and discovered that the money never was going to belong to Raymond, that it was always part of the trust, and Lenz always controlled the money, and finally toward the end I find out that he was always voluntary and all of a sudden there was almost an eleventh hour hearing, but to me it was an eleventh hour plot. For me as a reader I felt like the plot is finally happening on page 118, and just before the end we discover that there is a plot, and the plot only came into give tension to the final hearing, but it wasn't part of the super structure of this vessel. I guess I am very plot oriented, and I guess I always have been. Although I just made a movie that doesn't have any plot at all, EMPIRE OF THE SUN, which is a collection of experiences in a young boy's life with his orphanism in WWII. He is made a warchild, and there is no plot. What is interesting about no plot is that you can enjoy each scene. It's very interesting about connected tissue. Having just worked with guy, Tom Stoppard, who doesn't really concern himself with plot. His characters are the plot. He's a wonderful guy; he did a wonderful job on the script. But, admittedly his style is not to tell a story story, but to give you a collection or experiences and let you form the connective tissue. That's one kind of structure, and here we have two great actors in Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise. You can generate a lot of heat without a story. I'm perfectly secure in a series of scenes with these guys as long as there is some kind of a character plot...they are taking their characters somewhere. But, I felt strong enough about the lack of the story telling drive in this to immediately be able to associate it with the experience I have just had on EMPIRE OF THE SUN, where there is nothing compelling you to turn the page, except you have no fucking idea of what is going to happen next. There is no way you know what is going to happen next!! Interestingly enough, I sit there in my own movie empire, hoping for a plot to kick in, and a very tiny plot does kick in. It kicks in in the middle of the movie. I won't tell you what it is, it's just not relevant to this conversation. A small plot kicks in and kick out within 25 minutes of the movie. And, when that plot kicks in and becomes conventional, that part of the movie doesn't work as well because it become inconsistent with what we have done with the rest of the film. Then, after 25 minutes, we're back to "I don't know what's going to happen next".

RB: Maybe it also doesn't work as well because, for that story, not that it's just inconsistent, but the stuff in the rest of the film is better than a conventional plot. It's more interesting stuff than a conventional plot.

SS: There's interesting stuff, but once again, there isn't that sort of point to point association you get when you working with plotted stories when the audience pretty much thinks they know what is going to happen but they're fooled and they're happy they are fooled because they like your idea better than their own idea of what is going to happen next.

SS (cont): My theory, and I'm not rigid about this because I've made a film that destroys this theory, my theory has always been, let the audience always know how the movie is going to end at the very beginning, but don't let them guess anything else...nothing else. You know that ET is going to go home, and Elliott is not going to be able to keep him, you know that in the pit of your stomach and inside your heart, but we're not going to tell you how that's going to happen.

RB: And you know that Charlie and Raymond are going to wind up together.

SS: You know they are going to wind up together and you also know that there is going to be some kind of a situation where that (end of tape)

RB: This is why I said a moment ago, I like the notion of our learning, even at the cost of learning behind Tom's back, that this is going to happen. So, we predict this hearing at the end, and we half expect here, that Lenz is going to get the guy back, and everybody else is going on blissfully. What I don't see the advantage here, is revealing that information to Tom in advance. That would make everything that happened not even credible to me. Revealing it to the audience and not to Tom, would make it less suspenseful and less interesting. Whether through the device we have or a different device, the idea of revealing certain reveals of the game at different points in time, particularly when you have a story where you don't have plot about people chasing those kind of conventional pie elements, that deals a new hand, and gives it a new look, and where I tried to give it the new look is not arbitrary because it corresponds to what's happening in their relationship. In other words, if I had the information in front that I was never going to get the money, I would have never even talked to the guy. I would have left and there would have been no movie in the beginning of reel one. So, that information can't come until a time when the relationship has developed to a point that he now desperately cares about that information and it means something different to him. Similarly, the information that the guy is voluntary instead of involuntary...if I'd know that in the beginning, I never would have kidnapped the guy in the first place, even if I thought I was going to get the money. He would walk out. He could live someplace else. I wouldn't have to be defiant ones, chained to him going across the country. But, by the time that I finally learn that the guy is free to go wherever he wants, and I can keep him right now anyway...I learn at that same moment that now that I want him to be free, for the first time, for his own good, I want him to be free...not for my selfish gain. Because I love him, I want him to be free. That is the first moment that Tom learns that he is not going to be free. That I could give earlier.

SS: To me, that was too late.

RB: Yes. Why I'm agreeing with you is, that information, if I say in the beginning by cutting behind Tom's back, we reveal that Lenz is going to get him back in the end.

SS: One pick up of the phone...get me Judge Wopner.

RB: Then, I think all the stuff that we see along the way is going play with the peril. Although everybody knows that Steven Spielberg is going to make these brothers love each other in the end, we don't know whether Lenz is going to succeed or not. Setting that up as the stakes in the beginning is what I thought you meant when you said, "I want to tell them in the beginning how the movie is going to end, but that is all I want to tell them."

SS: I'm not going to use my name to direct this film. I'm going to use Terry Gilliam's name. I'm going to give them a Spielberg ending, but I'm going to promise them a Gilliam movie.

RB: You've picked the right studio to do that.

SS: Another crazy plot point - Charlie discovers that Raymond is voluntary at the very beginning, and he is not kidnapping him at all...he is just taking him. The doctors say that they're going to fight this. Charlie thinks that if he can win a hearing, he gets the money and Raymond.

RB: No, that is not possible because, if the doctors didn't want him to take Raymond, the last thing that they would tell him is that Raymond is voluntary. But the first thing they'd tell him is you won't get the money anyway, so why bother. If he didn't kidnap him and waited around to hear the truth, he'd have heard that the money wasn't there for the taking, and he wouldn't have cared whether the guy was voluntary or not. He'd been on the next plane.

SS: Let's just assume another point that you said was feasible ...not a point that any of us liked and committed to use in the movie. If Raymond is voluntary, he gets the money; if Raymond is involuntary, the hospital controls the money.

RB: I think that probably is possible.

SS: All that Charlie has to do, especially if it is Lenz and Mooney he is saying it to. "Okay, here he's voluntary, he can come and go as he pleases. But we are going to make him involuntary. We are right now picking up the telephone in front of you. We are calling this judge. It can be in your venue if you want..."

RB: Is that at the beginning?

SS: Yeah, I'm just proposing it now "...you can set the venue. We're are confident that we are going to get him back, so you can set it in San Martin if you want." The hearing will be set. It's in two weeks and it will be in California. Charlie goes off. He has his new friend Raymond, that goldmine in the car next to him.

RB: Why is he taking him?

SS: It's just an idea. What he is going to do is get the test questions before the test. He is going prep Raymond for this hearing. He is going to get Stu on the phone, and get some kind of meeting with the lawyer to find out what kind of questions they are going to ask Raymond. Throughout the story as they get closer and closer to California, there are different things happening in their lives that are going to supersede this convention. Charlie is planning to prep Ray so he can't possibly fail the test...so he can have the test and be able to live with him and the money, happily ever after. In the course of this road trip where Charlie is trying to say, "Now, Raymond, they're going to ask you this. Don't get rattled when they ask you because this is what Stu just told me. Here is a list of questions that I just got faxed to me. I'm going to ask you these questions. Here they are. Can you tell time? Can you do this? Can you do that? Are you happy? Do you like me? You say you love me, I'm your brother." He is coaching Raymond to pass the hearing, which in itself, is a sort of a continuing subplot. Then, throughout all of this, everything happens pretty much as we are discussing, except that Charlie becomes completely, head over heels, infatuated with the idea of having a brother for the first time; especially having this brother for the first time. Charlie changes. Raymond changes. Everything else becomes secondary. "I don't care about the money...you can have the money. I just want him to come live with me."

RB: Let's talk about this particular idea now. Why were they on the road?

SS: They could just stay in a motel room and take an airplane, certainly, between here and California and get there faster. I don't have a good answer for that off the top of my head. I haven't worked this out. I'm just adlibbing of the top off my head right now.

RB: I understand. I wasn't asking like you had to have the answer. I was asking you in case you did have the answer.

SS: I hate not having the answer, you see, so I can fix you when you ask me questions like that. I don't have the answer to that. I don't know why he just doesn't vamp in that state. Get a motel room where they can't get hurt; where they can't go outside. Then, out of sheer boredom, or at least Charlie is bored...he needs to get a girl, to get some action...he gets Raymond out to see the world. Why he doesn't just get on an airplane and fly the 2000 miles to Los Angeles, I don't know.

RB: Even if we could solve that (and my instincts say that is going to be very hard to solve), but let's just say we solved it, there is something, a feeling to me. It is definitely possible, if that's what you want, you could do it that way. It's logical, in other words - except for the road part, it doesn't seem too logical. Then the whole

RB (cont): movie is very pat. The whole movie is like for the same reason that they really wouldn't be on the road. The whole movie just becomes a prep, and a waiting, for the end of the movie. It just becomes totally treading water.

SS: Why are they on the road the way it is currently?

RB: Right now they're on the road because Charlie thinks he kidnapped him. He is told by Stu that he doesn't have legal custody of your brother right now. "Of course when his hearing comes up in two weeks, and you win, you will be legal. Until then, lay low."

SS: Which could be in a hotel room for two weeks too, and then a quick plane flight to the West coast.

RB: Well, it's possible, and think he has a point there, if nobody is chasing them. If somebody's chasing them, then it makes that going on the road aspect more real.

SS: If he thought he was kidnapping his brother, he'd want to get out of the state first. Isn't that correct.

RB: Yes. He did. He went to St. Louis the first night. He thought he was going to fly right to LA, and they said, you have the car, drive across the country and by the time you get here, you should be here by the 10th (or whatever it is). Dustin's point is well taken, that he could have said, let's just find one motel to stick at. Maybe the car means something to him. Maybe he likes that idea of still having the car. Maybe he loved that old car. He seemed to love that old car.

SS: Also the idea to me, of just driving under the clear blue sky; getting out of the boiler room, there is just something attractive about this kind of new life.

RB: Particularly trapped in a room with Raymond would make him crazy. He would rather be doing anything than be stuck in the motel with him, playing solitaire for the next ten days.

SS: Exactly.

RB: It's a completely logical question for Dustin to ask, but it seems to me in reading, or as I would watch the movie, it wouldn't bother me. It wouldn't be something that I would say, "Well gee, why didn't they stay in a motel room?" There wouldn't be anymore reason for them to do that, than to do this. If they were being chased, it could go either way. You might be more likely to be on the run while you're being chased, or you might be more likely to find one little place to hide that's very secretive if you're being chased.

SS: The only people that would really be chasing them, I guess, would be a welfare worker, trying to keep tabs on them.

RB: The one that I like the best so far, is that we don't reveal the money part to the audience first. I like hearing it as surprise later. I don't see the benefit of doing it first. But, we do reveal to the audience first about the voluntary...not right away, but somewhere before the end of the first act. Maybe have a beat, if someone is following us is trying to catch us...then learn that the guy following them is a private investigator, hired by Lenz just to make sure that they get to the church on time. Maybe that guy helps us out of some jam, and totally shocks everyone, though I'd rather do it like THE STING. If it's fun to do that, it would be fun to know that Lenz's thing is a foreshadow, but not know the investigator was working for Lenz. So, this investigator comes out there in Vegas when the casino guys are about to break our bones. The investigator comes in and saves our ass, and we can't believe it. That's when we learn, instead of a phone call from Stu, that the investigator works for Lenz, and the whole thing is to get them to this hearing on the 10th, because there is something there that is not...

SS: There is something there that is very possible, and it also points out the fact that maybe he is "Johnny information". He's the conduit for this information.

RB: For some of the information. I don't think we have to have one "Johnny Information" for everything. It would be nice not to just have this guy walk on stage everytime we wanted to learn something. I hated that.

SS: Yeah, yeah...I know, I know.

RB: That's exactly what Stu was. It worked in LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS, but that's the only place.

SS: Well, this is interesting. Let's talk about this for a second. What information would this guy be able to give at that point after Vegas, because it's pre-Vegas that he discovers that he's not getting the money. When he discovers he's not getting the money, he goes to Vegas to try to make money to get these creditors off his ass. Especially, if there is another deadline working on this story, which is he's got to get the money on a certain day, or when he crosses over the California state line for the hearing. He's going for the hearing, right? Does he know he's going for the hearing? Is there any way we can key that thing in earlier so that he knows at least where he's going?

RB: Sure, we can key it in right away, because he tells his lawyer to get the hearing together because that's the only way that he'll get the money. So, he always thinks he's going to hearing.

SS: The other thing you could try to do, is try to borrow against his certainty that he's going to get the money. When none of his friends will buy this line of bullshit and he has no money on the road, he doesn't pay the guys off a portion of what he owes them the minute he crosses into California on his way to this hearing, he is

SS (cont): going to be arrested, and he'll never make the hearing. He'd better go to Vegas and make some money...

RB: But it's easier than what you're saying. It isn't a question of on the way he's going to be arrested (that's a little hard to believe but...) the hearing isn't going to go down in five minutes. And when I go back home, they'll know where I am. When I go back to Los Angeles for the hearing, they'll be there. They'll be waiting for me.

SS: So, I want to be given some cash right there. He wants to give them their money, or at least a portion of the money with good intentions.

RB: But we can control it, depending on how much you want him to owe them. You don't have to owe \$125,000 to go to jail for grand theft for 20 years, you can steal \$20,000 and go to jail for that period of time, and you can win that amount in Vegas in one night real easy. The way Raymond works, you could win \$125,000 in one night real easy.

SS: That's right. I like a small amount. I think you held back. Instead of going for the big California split poker game, you held back, and after all that work and all that counting, there was only about \$20,000. I thought that was real subtle. I liked that a lot.

RB: Right.

SS: But in your first script, they're stripped of the money.

RB: Yes, if I'm remembering correctly. I haven't read that in about five months. In the first script, they win more than that. They were at \$18,000 at one point. It was like this...when the first casino owner said get out of my club, they were going to quit. But, he goes and pitches the baseball game - which is the real fall in love moment - strikes out, take his brother back to the hotel so his brother can get kissed by the girl. They go and get drunk and go to the pizza place, and they start having such a great time. I think in the first draft, they sort of celebrated by going back to a different casino and winning a pile. He has always only won a small amount of money, because Charlie was smart enough to know that he would attract tremendous attention if he won too much money. But, here he was drunk and euphoric because he was high on his brother and the wonderful night they had had, and the experience they had had, and they went ape, and won a lot. That's when they got caught in the second casino, because the first casino owner had sent video tapes to every other casino. They were cooperating and getting rid of people who count. There's a whole scene in there.

SS: That might be too much Vegas though.

RB: Marty thought it was too much Vegas too.

SS: Did Marty like the Vegas idea initially? Did he like the idea of card counting and going to Vegas?

RB: Oh yeah. That was one of the few notions that we took from the earlier script.

SS: Was Barry Morrow there?

RB: Barry Morrow had that idea. Barry Morrow had the idea of the telephone boiler room. That scene is almost all written by Barry Morrow. The parts written by Barry are the rap that the guys give on the phone to the people, the back and forth got a little different, with Susan and the other guy, we changed that around some. And, he had the idea of going to Vegas and winning a lot of money counting cards. I think all of the dialogue has changed, and it plays differently, but the concept was his.

SS: It has been so long since I read Barry's draft... Now, this is nice. We are just discussing different angles of this whole thing just to see what does and what doesn't fit. What I was getting at was the last plot angle we talked about was...

RB: Mooney tells them everything in the beginning and says, "But in tens days from now, I'm beating you in court, making him involuntary, taking all the money...so now you have ten days to vamp and try to beat me."

SS: Of course the most dangerous thing that Lenz knows that could happen and the easiest way to win in court is that (he is assuming) Raymond will be a basket case when he arrives in California after never being outside the institution in 24 years. His own physical appearance is probably going to get the judge to say, "This guy belongs in the home for the rest of his life, or at least under the care of a good doctor like yourself." The other possibility, of course, is that is what they are expecting to happen, and it's not what it looks like is happening. The brothers are getting along great, they're the best they've ever been together by that time in the story. Then, of course, I had that idea that just before the hearing, something happens to bring Raymond back to where he began; to strip Raymond of all the progress he made; and I had used the idea that maybe it was his penpal who's retarded, and with this whole contact thing (that which we've been avoiding talking about, because we've been talking about plot right now, and if we even need a plot for this movie). This penpal, who won't let Raymond go, and just makes him freak out and become a basket case again. Charlie has a very hard time getting him prepped, ready - appearance wise and everything else - for the hearing. I always believe that the lowest point should precede the beginning of the highest point in any basic structure.

BH: It seems to fit really beautifully with the hooker scene.

SS: Which is a succesful scene.

BH: To take him to LA, and Charlie is saying, "He's got this girl, he's got this penpal...she's not a beast." Hey he loved it when the hooker

BH (cont): danced with him. This could be a really great thing. He takes her and he sees her, and she is really pretty. (It would be nice if she can look really pretty, particularly in the beginning when you see her.) And then this thing happens, which Charlie thinks is nice while it's happening.

SS: And the reason is because Raymond could control the hooker. The hooker didn't embrace Raymond. The hooker didn't put her arms around him. The hooker simply stood there and let Raymond touch her hand.

RB: Raymond made all the overtures.

SS: She simply gave him the best kiss he's ever gotten in his life.

RB: She dances with him and lets him hold her tight.

SS: Exactly, and when Raymond wants to release, she releases.

RB: And she's someone who knows...Johns. Her business is to be intuitive about that whole situation, while that other poor girl - it's the last thing in the world she knows.

SS: Exactly, and that would really be interesting. And then you get the real jeopardy were Raymond goes to this hearing. That's why I am saying, if nothing else is really agreed upon in terms of a heavy plot versus a very light plot, at least we should know this hearing is going to happen.

RB: It shouldn't be prepping for the hearing. It should be hearing about the hearing, but not that the whole movie is nothing but a prep for the hearing.

SS: That is just one of the four ideas that we've been talking about in terms of plot. I just know as an audience, I want to sit there and every time I feel good about these guys, I want to suddenly cause myself to say, "but there's that hearing". I always want to be able to say that while watching this film, to take some of the sweetness off the top. Leave some of the icing, and take off the whipcream..."but, there's this hearing." And, "Oh, my God, are they setting me up for a broken heart? They're setting me up...they are setting me up!"

RB: Exactly right.

SS: I love to feel, in that sense, manipulated.

RB: Absolutely right. That's the part that they won't be able to predict. They'll predict that Charlie will want him at the end of the movie, but they won't be able to predict where he's going to go. We have to find, if we do it that way, all of the various ways throughout the movie, not heavy-handedly, but subtly, to suggest that Charlie is not going to win.

SS: What was very nice about KRAMER was that they set you up for Dustin winning the case, and he loses the case...the minute he gets to trial, he loses the case. You have no idea nor do you expect it, and you're broken hearted. Then, when she voluntarily gives up the child because she is still at a very unstable place in her life (his wife), you suddenly cry and your completely relieved.

RB: I haven't seen it in a million years, and my recollection of it, she gave up the child, sort of, because she had a different perspective of Dustin.

SS: Yes, she does, but she has a different perspective, really, on herself. One of the last things she says at the end of the scene is, "I came to take him home, when I realize he is home."

Anyway, it will be fun to read this stuff back, because all of this goes by way of saying that Dustin's problem with the picture - aside from the fact that he wanted to play a different kind of Raymond, he wanted to be a less voluntary Raymond, and a more reactive Raymond, not a causal Raymond - he wanted the causal stuff to happen as he manifests some progress in his character, in his relationship with Charlie, as opposed to being causal at the very beginning. What you said interests me, he is causal in an inadvertent way. He is inadvertently causal to getting Charlie to do what he wants without Raymond ever going over and saying, "Charlie, will you do something for me?"

RB: I think that it's doable that he doesn't go over and say, "Charlie, will you do something for me"...

SS: But, the toilet paper scene is a perfect example of a causal scene, which won't be interpreted as Raymond going over and saying to him in a very normal tone of voice, "I need some toilet paper."

RB: Right. But, the scenes that I am worried about, that I think are very necessary from the very beginning, that I don't know if they will be okay with Dustin, are scenes where, however haltingly, however we all put our heads together to decide the right tone and manner, Raymond must be showing Charlie, from the very first, that he loves him and wants his love. He doesn't have to do it by holding his hand...he can do it...but he's got to do it. If he doesn't make the relationship happen, then the only way that Charlie builds affection for him is out of pathos.

SS: I sort of skipped over that when you first said that earlier. So, why don't you explain that one more time. What you're saying is that Raymond recognizes Charlie as the two-year-old he sang to, gave his blanket to, and held in his arms.

RB: And then, thought about, and loved in his heart everyday for the last 18 years.

SS: That's the new wrinkle. I don't know if any of us have ever

SS (cont): discussed this in any of our meetings at all. This is a new idea that I don't know has ever come up.

RB: The idea of what?

SS: What you just said. I don't think Dustin or Tom or Michael Bortman has ever said, "Raymond so knows Charlie that he has had Charlie on his mind all of his life, and now Charlie comes to his house." Raymond is glued; he's transfixed. I don't believe that we have discussed this. I don't know what anyone's feeling would be about that. My first reaction to that was, knowing now what I know about Raymond, he would remember. If he remembers baseball players, and remembers what his father said to Charlie at two years of age, he is going to remember Charlie's face, even if Charlie has changed that much. In your draft, he has a picture of Charlie in his wallet.

RB: Right. Of course it's a two-year-old picture of Charlie, but exactly.

SS: How would he know what Charlie looks like today?

RB: I don't know that he does know what Charlie looks like today. In my draft, he heard the name in two sections. Your suggestion is the car, which is another interesting suggestion. But, I also think if he's following him around all day, there is going to have been plenty of time for him to have heard the name, Charlie Babbitt. Susan says, "Charlie," and Lenz says, "Babbitt", and that could have happened any old way you wanted it to. That's easy. But standing and looking at the car is also terrific. But, to me it's a "gimme". It's not hard that Raymond adores Charlie. I don't think anyone would have an objection to the realization that Dustin's love for Tom in his heart. The question that we have to really be sure we agree on, is the attitude that we have in Raymond, right at the beginning, showing that Raymond wants Charlie's love, and how he feels about it. Certainly, it doesn't have to be in direct ways of saying, "You're my brother, Charlie Babbitt, and I love you." It is probably more touching to find him more hesitant and child-like and with fearful ways of doing that.

SS: "Fearful" is a good word.

RB: Yes, but all different..not always fearful. Sometimes it could be sweet; sometimes it would be fearful; sometimes it would be oblique. But, it's not simply that Charlie winds up digging him because he is so helpless and adorable, because then it's pathetic. He really has to be the guy, in my mind, who's moving this relationship forward. There is a relentless pressure from Raymond, to get Charlie to love him, even if the way he expresses that pressure is quirky and weird and different, and comes in different ways. It isn't just the fascination of the "freebos", though those are great bits and they should be in there, but we have to see in the audience, "...that little guy wanted Tom to do this for him and the fucker turned his back." That's what we've got to see

RB (cont): in the audience, so that when Charlie stops turning his back and starts accepting that stuff, we're sensing that progress. Then, with the new Raymond, we have a great option that we didn't have before. When Charlie turns around and starts to notice him and even gets a little affectionate - while it's at a nontouching level - he gets great response. Then, suddenly, the other guy draws away from him. Tom's reaction the first time with that may be "Fuck you..."

SS: That would be my reaction if I didn't understand it.

RB: Your first reaction. We put all the permutations together. It's like a couple who want to love each other, and one's in the mood and the other one's not. You can really play all those strings.

SS: The kinds of things that Dustin objects to, and I kind of see his point, is manifestations of his affections or even his fear. He doesn't think that his character, as he sees Raymond...he would run across the street, and when that little crosswalk man goes on (they might even do that funny little thing), he would, maybe in a funny way, imitating that, walk across the street. He wouldn't hang onto his brother. Then, when the light began to flash stop, in the middle of the street Raymond would just stop, and no human force on earth, except picking him physically, could move him out of harm's way. The idea would be that he would see the light go, and he would hesitate, mess around a little bit taking on the position, take a cut across the street, light turns green, says stop, cars start moving, and Raymond won't get out of the middle of the street until it says "walk". He takes certain things like that literally. Dustin just objected to the whole idea that Raymond would do things that we see retarded people doing...about taking the arm and putting the head on the shoulder out of nowhere.

RB: I think that, in the literal examples like those that you are giving me of the differences that you and Dustin want, I have no problem. My fears or my concerns or what I think that we need to iron out, is stuff that is yet unspoken. When we start to turn the pages together and through this transcript of our meeting together, we start to find how everybody feels.

SS: Let me ask you a question - I think that this is certainly worth a meeting with Dustin at some point because he is more articulate on this than I am. Dustin has worked on it a lot longer than I have. He has more specific ideas. I'm just trying to recall from our meetings where Dustin is coming from. I don't want to misrepresent him or undercut something that might turn you off this project. I don't want to make you false promises, and then suddenly Dustin says, "Wait a second, you got Ron real excited about something that I don't want to do, and that's Ron's turning point of whether he does this project with us or not."

RB: That's exactly what I am worried about.

SS: So I don't want to start committing to things until we have another

SS (cont): session, maybe only an hour long, just to talk with Dustin about some of his feelings.

RB: When we sit and turn the pages, and we go through the scenes that exist, I'm not talking only about which scenes you like and don't like, but also about what you see Dustin's character could or couldn't do in those scenes, then I start to get a working knowledge of whether I can make it work or not. Because the films I saw of autistics...it wasn't just to say that they weren't cute and cuddly and ET-like and they couldn't be touched, they were very off-putting people. You would have to get to know them for a long time to feel it. You could do something that was very pure and a fabulous performance and a fascinating character to watch, but I wouldn't have any way as a writer of bringing you the distance that I want to bring you with that kind of character. So, it gets down to the beats.

SS: But, what a great moment or series of scenes in the beginning of the story, not to like Raymond. What a wonderful thing not to have love at first sight. He is off-putting. I am attracted to that idea...to put an edge on it.

RB: I think that better than that is to put one more loop on it. It's going to be very hard not to like him when you first see him. I think what might be even more interesting, is to take the conventional normal's view, maybe a little off-putting with some of the weirdness but, how basically he's sweet. Because, again like Charlie, we see him in this controlled setting. Then, maybe, to get him out on the road and start to get a little shock with some of the shit that the guy can put you through. Sort of the way that Charlie got the shock, rather than a total straight line thing...maybe, think he's kind of cuddly at first, and then, kind of like Charlie is shocked when he can't touch the guy, we kind of see it too. I think Dustin's instinct is terrific that, we make him a whole person with faults, not just disabilities, so that he is not a perfect person with a disability. I don't know how to do it yet, but all that stuff sounds challenging and interesting, and tremendously long in time involving in the prep. Clearly, everybody has to be clear in the prep, or otherwise you're just wasting your time, doing a draft, and then at the end they say, well that wasn't really what I had in mind. But, the parts that have to come through, that I feel in Raymond are strong that haven't yet been discussed, is however cuddly he is or isn't, he has that child's pure sense of right and wrong, and a very pure kind of perception, the way people do who aren't encrusted over with all the lies and deceptions and shit that we all call adulthood. He has that kind of clear vision, and that kind of clear heart. He has the clear humanity, that even he doesn't know how to express. It's the kind of thing that you see in him that makes you love him. It has nothing to do with being cuddly. He can behave like a pain in the ass. He can run around and bounce off walls; he can make demands; he can spit; he can be rude; he can do a lot of stuff; but when you see that this guy's in the right place and the other guy's heart isn't yet - that's the dynamic that puts you on his side.

The second thing that he has to be able to do - and maybe Dustin will make me happy by saying, "Oh, sure, I love that he is able to do that, I just don't know yet," - I want him to be able to show us and to show Charlie that he wants Charlie's love. Not to be like someone who's happy to be like him...

SS: That's one of the things I want to discuss with you and Dustin.

RB: I don't know how he does it, but if the moves don't come from Raymond, however haltingly and awkward they are, then there are no moves and it's all osmosis and it doesn't work.

SS: What you're saying is that you envision Raymond consciously wanting Charlie's love as opposed to him wanting Lenz's love or Vernon's love even though those are people in his life now, because Charlie's special, and he recognizes him as his brother, and he has a concept not what he is, but what he was when he was two years old.

RB: He's the only person that Raymond ever took care of. He's the only person who ever loved Raymond best. He was Raymond's baby. He belonged to Raymond, and in that very scary world with a dead mother and a fearsome father...

SS: I think that one thing Dustin will hate, and I might hate it tomorrow morning because it may be a little bit too sweet, but remember when Raymond was 18 and Charlie was 2, Raymond might feel pretty good if Charlie ever sat in his lap in the story.

RB: I think that would be terrific, but I think Dustin would think that that should be later in the game.

SS: Through scenes, as scenes are, let's start to talk about the emotional curve of both characters.

RB: Right. The predicate, I think, to talking about emotional curve of both characters, is to know who Raymond is and what he's allowed to do and not do. It's hard to do that plotting until we know who Raymond is.

SS: When we first meet Raymond, he is probably hiding behind his knowledge of baseball so he doesn't have to confront Charlie or Susan or any of these new people. Like a kid who has a limited vocabulary will immediately show off the things he knows best - like his dinosaur toys. Max will always put a dinosaur between himself and the screen. First he'll hold the dinosaurs up and see if you respond to that, and if you do, you've got the key to his heart. So I interpret it when Raymond began talking about, "White Socks, Chicago, 1955, Nellie Fox at 2nd Base, etc.", he was making his house of cards. (Page 24) I like this card scene very much, because to me that represented how fragile Raymond is. I thought the house of cards was a really nice and subtle symbol.

RB: For example, Raymond says at the bottom of page 25, "Would you see my ducks?" This is a good example of what I am asking you and Dustin about. If you and Dustin come to feel that all volunteering of any kind is not the character that you want, that's where it's going to be beyond my ability to make much of a contribution, whether this particular idea is good or not. This is an example of the kind of volunteering that isn't saying to someone, "Give me a kiss or a hug and love me," but just, as Max would say to somebody, "Want to look at my dinosaur toys?", it's sort of that oblique way of trying to make contact, trying to show off his best thing. It's really the same thing. He's trying to show off his best thing to his brother - he wouldn't do that to everybody. Raymond doesn't make a habit, as maybe a kid does, of stepping forward to everybody.

SS: What you need in a moment like that is, if he turned to Charlie and said, "Would you see my ducks?", Vernon would do a double take. Vernon would suddenly realize that this is not necessarily a breakthrough, but this is an important moment. It is something that he has never done to Vernon, and he has never done to anybody else that Vernon can recall. He has volunteered; he is showing someone something...a total stranger. That would make Vernon's eyes open a bit.

RB: It might even be worth (we're getting pretty fine here for this early a conversation) Vernon verbalizing that to Charlie whether Raymond is or isn't there at that moment. Like, "Geez, it may sound like nothing to you, but that's the first time I've ever heard him do that."

SS: Raymond is making a corridor for Charlie.

RB: It's very fine, to me, to let the audience know that Raymond doesn't usually volunteer anything as long as our rules will permit him to volunteer to Charlie.

SS: Dustin, I think, has a whole approach on this that you should hear.

RB: Absolutely.

SS: But, it's not dissimilar to the one we're talking about. I can't see Dustin saying, "He wouldn't say ducks aren't geese, geese are bigger." He wouldn't not say that.

RB: Dustin would say that he would not say that?

SS: No, I'd have to talk to Dustin about this one more time.

RB: Turning the pages with Dustin and hearing what he thinks the guy does and doesn't do could be a real education.

SS: We haven't done that yet. We haven't turned the pages of the script yet. Even with Michael Bortman we haven't been doing that. Why does Charlie at this point ask Susan to leave?

RB: First of all he is going to kidnap the guy. He doesn't want to put Raymond in the car and start to drive him away because he feels that he will be stopped if it's right there in the open courtyard in front of the open door where all of the doctors can see. What he wants to do is seduce Raymond around to the car when the car's hidden somewhere, and go on that very long and windy path to get to the main road. So, what he pretends is going to happen is that he is going to send Susan away and spend the day hanging out with Raymond so that everyone in the hospital who could be concerned (nobody probably is concerned, but if there was somebody around there concerned) would feel relaxed; the car went away, the girl went away, and he's marooned here, hanging out with his brother, so, what can happen. Then, when they walk to the car, ostensibly to say good-bye to Susan, he leaves Raymond standing there, takes Susan where nobody else can hear and says, "I just want you to drive around the bend over there, stop the car, and wait for me." That's all he wants her to do. And that's how he effects the kidnapping.

SS: I didn't get that. (end of tape 2)

SS: On page 28, I really wanted the "Rainman" thing to be much later.

RB: I think you're right. I think it would be better later.

SS: Yeah, and more powerful. I love that moment...

RB: When you say that the "Rainman" could be more powerful, still he'll show him the picture and we'll talk about Daddy, but we just won't make that connection with Rainman.

SS: I was confused when Charlie took Raymond and put him in the car, because I thought Charlie was just going to take Raymond to the cemetery to see his father...which he does do.

RB: That's good that you thought that because I intended, rather than just explain everything in the line up and shoot them for six scenes so you know what they are, for us to learn, step by step, what Charlie is really doing. That was the intention.

SS: But then you have to have a dramatic moment when Charlie doesn't make the U-turn to go back to the home.

RB: No, it's in stages. The way it happens is - first of all he is taking him to the cemetery where where he wants to go. Bang - they go to the cemetery and do all that. At the end of the cemetery thing, Charlie says, "You don't have to go back. You can be with me. We'll go to a ballgame, and we'll watch Fernando pitch...", and he gives him all that stuff. Raymond is just giddy with the thought that his favorite person in the world is going to give him all that attention.

SS: And he's doing it because he thinks he can get the money if he can get Raymond? That's why he's doing it?

RB: Absolutely. But, we don't know that yet. We are setting us up for the drop on Charlie. We're sitting there saying, "Geez?" Maybe some people are sitting there saying, "Wait a second. I bet it's something to do with the money." Maybe they aren't. Maybe they're sitting there saying, "Geez, he really likes the little guy. I don't understand this."

SS: I know the script very well, but I need for you to tell me where now is the next beat where we find out, along with Susan or along with... that it's all for the money.

RB: We find out that it's all for the money before Susan does. We find out in the phone call with Stu. It's at the top of page 34. This is when we find out that he's not being a nice guy. We just don't hit it on the nose. We see that there's a court; you don't have legal custody; a kidnap could arise. So, all we know is that there is going to be a court proceeding about getting custody again. I think that everyone in the audience will make the connection that that's about the money, but

I didn't want to have a complete repeat, so I wanted to save the talk about the money until Susan said it in the motel that night. It could obviously be said here if you think it's more confusing than...whatever. That's just a question that could be mentioned if there's going to be this phone conversation at all.

SS: I think the fight needs to be different, but I like the fight between Susan and Charlie. I had a problem with the phone call. I had a problem with the bye-bye Rainman, but we agreed that that is going to be moved later in the story anyway. The whole thing we discover, through the phone conversation of Charlie's plans, suppose that Charlie letting Susan know what his plans are. Susan, being the voice of the audience, and asking Charlie, "What are you up to? There is something going on. What is happening here?" I would almost rather have Charlie talk to Susan about this, and if he has to dispatch Susan to get the court hearing set, or something like that...

RB: She wouldn't do that.

SS: She would if she were a lawyer, but if she weren't a lawyer, she wouldn't do that.

RB: Even if she is a lawyer, if really what the fight is about is that Charlie is a shit for wanting to take control of Raymond, that's why she leaves him.

SS: "You'd stoop to any means to get what you want, Charlie." Exactly.

RB: So, what you're saying is, why on page 34, it doesn't really get hit on the nose. You just get that taste that there is something nefarious afoot; it gives you that edge that this isn't just all visits to the cemetery and visits to Dodger Stadium, but he's got a plan cooking here with a lawyer, and he doesn't really like the little guy at all. "I can't travel with this guy, you ought to see him. I don't want to be with him for even five minutes," he's saying, when, to his face, he's been so sweet. So, it just gives us that and then we drop the other shoe that night in the motel room. (the fight is on the bottom of page 40)

SS: Maybe Charlie needs to be rougher earlier out on his being uncomfortable around the handicapped to motivate Susan away. My notes say - "What set Susan off so decisively here?" I guess my problem is the failing of Susan's character in an early draft. I had a problem in believing that Susan would snap and leave Charlie based on this because I hadn't felt any kind of a perponderance of problems in their former association. In otherwords, in the glimpse you have given me of Charlie and Susan together, this scene didn't work as the straw that broke the camel's back. I didn't feel that that relationship was in any great danger, so that when Susan decides she'll leave based on whatever happened between Charlie and Raymond, or Charlie's treatment of Raymond, literally just saying, "Get

SS (cont): out of here. Go away. Watch television. Read the Bible. Read the yellow pages. Just get out of here." I didn't believe Susan would leave Charlie based on that. I did believe she would leave him based on a history of problems, but I didn't feel that from page 1 to page 39, where we find ourselves, that that history of problems was strong enough to say this is why she would leave.

RB: Well, we can make the problems stronger, but let me make the case for what we have seen. When we first see her, she is walking in to take him out to dinner, and he embroils her, very much against her will, in a series of lies to help him dodge a creditor. Then, they go up to the attic, and he's sexual with her, which you can see is where the attraction is, or why is she even with the guy. But, he reveals himself as being very hardhearted, cynical, and unsentimental, again something that is not the side of him that she admires. Then he goes through this whole thing with the will, exploding to her after he leaves about that SOB and how much he deserves the money. He seems crass and unloving, and again, not a guy that is particularly attractive to be with. At this point I almost have more trouble wondering why she's with him than why she leaves him. When they go to find Raymond, and all of his motivations have been so crass and unappealing, you give her sort of a fresh view of him, because he seems so sweet and caring, and he kidnaps Raymond, in her view, for the guy's own good. He gives him a holiday at the risk of getting in trouble over it. So, this is the sweet side of Charlie that in this mix that we have seen, sexy to her about her cute little pointed ears up in the attic, but makes her lie on the phone for him. This mix, where she is trying to kid herself that the good side is going to come out, and then she gets this big drop when she learns that everything she'd just been admiring and thought she was seeing the good side of Charlie, was actually the worst, most deceitful side of Charlie at all. He is going to manipulate his own handicapped brother, use him as a pawn, crush him, and throw him away just to get \$1,000,000. Her speech that brings this moment back to the rest of their relationship is 42A - to pick out one speech that tells you why she's leaving. What this speech gives you, if it does what I hope it did, it gives you the picture of that relationship. There is that Tom Cruise, irresistible thing about Charlie, and this girl has gotten as close as anyone ever has, and she's seen those flashes of wonderfulness in this guy. That's what kept this very good girl hanging on with a guy that is extremely difficult and generally unappealing. Now, she finally has a moment that she thinks is the breakthrough, where this guy is being so loving to his poor handicapped brother, and taking him on a trip, and suddenly it's like, this is the Tom I always wanted. It's all yanked out from under her. Not just because he's rude to the guy when they're trying to make love, but he confessed that the whole thing has been a lie; he's really stolen to get the money; he's going to get a million bucks and throw him away like an old shoe. He's used her in this whole process, hasn't told her about it, and she is moved to say, "Everytime I see a little flash of goodness in you, I want to believe so bad - I want to believe that's the real you." This is the moment that she can't believe that anymore.

SS: I think that Susan's character comes into focus in this scene very well. But, I think prior to this, Susan is just there as a woman, as a pretty girl, and she doesn't really have any character. I think that's why Dustin and Tom came up with the concept that they be married - to give it more stake, you know.

End of tape