

THE PAPER

by

David Koepp & Stephen Koepp

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Revised Edition

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FADE IN:

1 EXT BROOKLYN STREET NIGHT 1

A big clock on top of a restaurant sign says it's 1:04 in the morning. The light in the sign CLICKS off, as do the lights in the fast food joint the sign stands above.

The back door of the restaurant opens and TWO KIDS, seventeen and nineteen, black, come out, laughing and joking with each other, happy to be off work. The older Kid locks the back door and they set off across the parking lot.

Although we follow them, we aren't close enough to hear what they're saying, but they seem like friends. The neighborhood around them is a little rough -- not dangerous, exactly, but not Park Avenue either.

They round a corner, turning down an alley to take a shortcut --

-- and stop in their tracks.

There's a car in front of them, a late model American one, rental sticker on its bumper, but that's not what strikes them.

The words "WHITE DEVILS" and "GHOSTS" are spray painted across the side of the car, which has been shot to pieces. And so have the two dead men inside.

FIRST KID
(the older one)
Ho -- lee -- shit.

He walks forward, amazed. The blood from the dead men's wounds still flows. Smoke still curls from the bulletholes in the car.

The Second Kid just stares, terrified, frozen in his tracks.

The First Kid looks down, at his feet. An automatic weapon, a long silencer screwed over its barrel, lies on the pavement. The Kid bends down to look at it. He reaches for it.

SECOND KID
Don't touch it!

They hear a SCRAPING sound behind them, shoes on pavement, and they turn, fast. A WOMAN, about sixty, walking a dog, stands in the mouth of the alley, staring at the car, at the corpses --

-- and at the First Kid, bent over the gun. Her eyes go wide.

FIRST KID
No, wait a second --

1 CONTINUED:

1

But the Woman SCREAMS, the Kids jump back, the Woman keeps SCREAMING --

FIRST KID (cont'd)

Run!

-- and they do, tearing ass out of there as fast as they can, looking for all the world like guilty men.

The HISS of AM radio sneaks in and the unmistakable CLICKETY-CLACK of a teletype machine drowns out everything else.

CUT TO:

2 INT ALARM CLOCK DAY

2

The teletype continues. We're inside a clock, an old-fashioned, spring-wound model from the looks of the hardware around us. A large, shiny cog CLICKS forward relentlessly, one tick at a time, a spring lever checking its progress.

We glide slowly through the middle of the clockworks as the teletype continues, now background behind a familiar ANNOUNCER's voice.

ANNOUNCER

Ten ten WINS. You give us twenty-two minutes, we'll give you the world. It's already eighty-three degrees in Central Park, working its way up to a downtown high of ninety-five. At the top of the news this morning, racial tensions flare again, this time in Williamsburg, where two white, out-of-town businessmen were gunned down outside a restaurant, a racial slur spray-painted on their car --

While he goes on, we move up, through the clock, and follow the track of a long, heavy hammer that rises up out of the top, to where it finally rests between two heavy brass cups, the clock's alarm.

ANNOUNCER (cont'd)

-- in apparent retaliation for the murder of a black youth last week in Greenpoint. Police are said to be searching for two suspects. Keep your radio tuned to ten ten WINS for updates. Ten ten WINS -- all news, news whenever you need it. Because your whole world can change in twenty-four hours. W-I-N-S news time --

3 IN THE HACKETT BEDROOM,

3

we leap suddenly outside the clock and stare at its face. The strong black hands point to 6:59. The radio broadcast BEEPS.

ANNOUNCER

(finishing)

-- seven o'clock.

With a TICK as loud as a starting gun, the alarm clock jumps forward to seven a.m. The hammer springs to life, leaping back and forth between the brass cups, filling the bedroom with a splitting RING. HENRY HACKETT, late thirties, is asleep in bed -- or on bed, rather, fully clothed, right on top of the covers, arms crossed against his chest.

He doesn't even crack his eyes at the sound of the alarm.

MARTHA WARD-HACKETT, a few years younger and eight and a half months pregnant, is asleep on her back next to Henry. She leans over with great difficulty and shuts off the alarm. She puts on her glasses and regards Henry. She sees his clothes and shoes still intact from last night, shakes her head, and gets up.

She shrugs into a robe and leaves the room. Offscreen, we hear the front door open and BANG shut. Henry jolts awake, looks around, and closes his eyes again.

Martha comes back in the room with several newspapers and SMACKS Henry on the head with them. Hard.

HENRY

(waking)

Hey --

But she walks out. Henry struggles up to a sitting position.

HENRY (cont'd)

(calling out)

You mad at me?

From the kitchen, a cupboard SLAMS.

HENRY (cont'd)

Scale of one to ten?

Dishes CLANK and RATTLE.

HENRY (cont'd)

(to himself)

Seven.

He picks up the newspapers, straightens them --

-- and starts to read.

CUT TO:

4 INT ANOTHER APARTMENT DAY

4

A cigarette burns in an ashtray in the window of a Central Park West apartment. This place has a view of the park, but almost nothing else. There's one comfortable chair, a reading light, several enormous stacks of newspapers and magazines, and a big television that sits on the floor, CNN "Morning Report" blaring.

BERNIE WHITE, sixtyish, with coffee, plops into the chair in a robe. Bernie's a commanding man, you'd follow him anywhere, but he's also the picture of coronary distress, overweight and overworked. He's got a stack of reading in his lap, two or three newspapers, plus The New Republic, New York, Time.

He lights a second cigarette, although the first is still burning in the ashtray, and starts to wade through the stack. After a moment, he looks up and around the empty apartment.

BERNIE

'Morning, everybody.

CUT TO:

5 INT SAG HARBOR HOUSE DAY

5

This spacious house in Sag Harbor is equal parts tasteful decoration and war zone, as it's torn apart and overrun with CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.

ALICIA STARK, late thirties, in an expensive suit, is in the kitchen, another stack of newspapers in front of her. She's talking on a cordless phone.

ALICIA

Will you just sell the God damn bonds, Danny? I'm aware of that, I need the money, okay? I need it yesterday.

Alicia shoves all the papers aside without reading them and finds a copy of People. She flips to the "Star Tracks" section. Behind her, BRUNO, an attractive man in his mid-thirties, argues with the construction workers, pointing to a half-built wall.

BRUNO

It's totally at odds with everything we're trying to do in the living room!

ALICIA

(still into phone)

Oh, for Christ's sake, when am I going to enjoy the money more?

(MORE)

5 CONTINUED:

5

ALICIA (cont'd)
When I'm seventy-five years old, so I
can get a condo closer to the
ping-pong room, or now, when I'm
showering in a God damn bucket?

BRUNO
I don't care what it costs, it's
wrong, take it down!
(calling to her)
Alicia!

Alicia drops her head into her hands.

ALICIA
(into phone)
No, I will not tell Bruno that. My
husband is a sculptor, he knows what
he's doing. Just sell 'em,
already.

She hangs up the phone and finds what she's looking for in
People -- a picture of herself, in an elegant dress, BRUNO
on one side, entirely neglected, and Tom Brokaw, whom Alicia
is smiling all over, on the other. A partial caption
reads " -- Brokaw, with Alicia Stark of the New York Sun."

Alicia seems deeply fulfilled.

CUT TO:

6 INT BATHROOM DAY

6

HENRY shaves in his bathroom. A shower radio blares, WINS
again, sports now. He stops in mid-stroke, seized by a pain
in his abdomen.

He puts one hand on it, the other hand on the sink, to steady
himself, and waits while it passes. The pain eases and he
jerks the medicine cabinet door open, revealing a wide array
of vitamins, prescription pill bottles, Maalox, Stresstabs,
practically dripping off the shelves. He sighs.

He SLAMS the door shut without taking anything and --

7 INT KITCHEN DAY

7

-- takes a Coca-Cola from the refrigerator instead. He sits
down at the table with it and the New York Sentinel (picture
the New York Times). MARTHA, still angry, is plowing
through the New York Daily News on her way to the Sun. A
small TV on the counter is tuned to "New York One."

Henry COUGHS to cover the sound of the Coke can popping open,
but Martha frowns.

7 CONTINUED:

7

MARTHA

Why not just pour battery acid down
your throat, Henry?

HENRY

No caffeine.

She just stares at him. He lifts the can slowly, taunting
her.

MARTHA

It's not funny.

He takes a long drink from it and sets it down.

HENRY

It's a little funny.

She shakes her head and raises the Daily News in front of
her face, so that Henry can see its headline.

MARTHA

Daily News kinda kicked your butt
today, didn't it?

The News front page has a huge picture of the shot-up car
from last night and its dead occupants, surrounded by a
headline in type so large one would think it reserved for the
Second Coming:

"Welcome to New York -- You're Dead!"

HENRY

(grabbing the paper)

What?! How'd they get that?! It
happened at one in the morning way
out in Williamsburg!

She picks up the New York Sun, also a tabloid, and looks at
its headline.

MARTHA

What do you guys have? "No
Parking -- Except For Me!" Oh God,
McDougal's going after the poor
parking commissioner again?

HENRY

That's a great shot, lookit,
Sandusky's double parked in front of
his own office.

Martha seems unmoved.

7 CONTINUED:

7

HENRY (cont'd)
The parking commissioner? Double
parked? No ticket? As a New Yorker,
this doesn't enrage you?

MARTHA
Sweetie, it's horseshit.

HENRY
I know it's horseshit, I tried to
get the Williamsburg thing. That
idiot Wilder wouldn't answer his
beeper. The guy's supposed to cover
Brooklyn --

MARTHA
You went to Brooklyn yourself, didn't
you?

HENRY
Yeah, I went myself, but by the time
I got back it was too late. I'm the
metro editor, what am I supposed to
do?

MARTHA
Four a.m.

HENRY
I had to try, didn't I? You
would've.

MARTHA
Four a.m. in the morning.

He picks up the remote and starts flipping channels.

HENRY
That's redundant.

MARTHA
Tell me about it.

Martha SNEEZES, hard. Henry looks at her for a moment, as if
the sneeze had special meaning. Martha looks down, at her
lap. She sighs.

MARTHA (cont'd)
You never appreciate bladder control
until it's gone.

HENRY
Sorry, honey.

7 CONTINUED:

7

MARTHA

At least I'm not in public. If my desk had gotten any closer to the bathroom they would've had me handing out towels.

HENRY

God, look at the Sentinel. "Nepal Premier Won't Resign." That's shameless. They're just trying to sell papers.

MARTHA

I miss my desk. I miss everybody. Say hi to everybody for me? Everybody except Alicia?

HENRY

You gonna go nuts on me again today?

MARTHA

No, no, no, no, no. That was a one-time thing. I have a million projects. I never even have time to finish a book when I'm reporting -- or the baby's room -- I want to work on the dresser --

HENRY

I gotta go.

MARTHA

Now, if you weren't making a sacrifice too, that would be different. That would be a lot different.

HENRY

Call me later?

MARTHA

You oughta wear a tie. And promise me you won't torpedo the interview on purpose, okay?

HENRY

Why would I want to do a thing like that?

He leans over to kiss her goodbye, but she grabs him by the arm and pulls him down, so his face is close to hers.

MARTHA

Henry. You know those days that can change your whole life?

(MORE)

7 CONTINUED:

7

MARTHA (cont'd)
This is one of 'em for us. For good
or for bad, it can happen either way
today.

He just looks at her, taking in the seriousness of her mood
for a moment or two.

MARTHA (cont'd)
(friendly)
So, you know, don't blow it.

CUT TO:

8 EXT NEW YORK SUN DAY

8

A faded, greening copper sun is stuck like a lantern on the
side of an old stone building down near Foley Square. There's
a clock in the center of the sun that says it's now 8:26. A
motto curves above and below it:

"The New York Sun -- It Shines for All!"

Below the clock, there is a small but growing crowd watching
with some interest as a WOMAN, sobbing, sits on the hood of
her car, trying to prevent it from being towed away.

A PARKING COP directs the towing process, listening unmoved to
the SHOUTS and JEERS of a growing crowd. One CRAZY GUY shouts
at the Cop.

GUY
Parking Fascist! You tell Sandusky
we're not gonna take it anymore!

HENRY passes the scene and grins, amused. He heads into the
building underneath the copper sun.

9 INT AN ELEVATOR DAY

9

HENRY is alone on an elevator. He rocks on his heels,
waiting, while overpleasant MUZAK plays.

He looks almost like a prizefighter before a fight, shaking
out his hands, stretching out his neck.

The elevator slows and stops. In that brief moment before the
doors open, Henry takes a deep breath, holds it --

-- and then the elevator WHOOSHES open and he is engulfed.

10 INT NEW YORK SUN DAY

10

By the newsroom. There are seventy or eighty WORKERS
scattered throughout the place, separated into various
departments.

10 CONTINUED:

10

Metro is in the heart of the room, a bunch of desks separated by low dividers, underneath three TV sets mounted in recesses in the wall.

There used to be six TVs; three are inexplicably missing from their recesses, making the row look like Grandpa's smile.

Business is shoved off in an alcove, editorial is Upstairs someplace, and sports is a group of desks pushed together at one end of the room, surrounded forbiddingly by file cabinets, making their own private fiefdom.

Look, the Sun is no Washington Post. The place is shabby, even, but endearing in its own way. Because everywhere, there is movement, noise, chaos, shit stacked high, mess.

We get the impression this place is desperately understaffed; somewhere a phone always RINGS, unanswered, and everyone seems hot.

BLAISCH, in rewrite, shouts to the newsroom at large.

BLAISCH

What's the plural of ultimatum?!

HENRY steps off the elevator and plows into the thick of the place. He immediately unbuttons his shirt and strips off his tie. Last we'll see of that today.

SEMEL, fortyish, terrible posture, sees Henry and charges after him.

SEMEL

Henry? Henry!

Henry speeds up, dodging him. He passes GRACE, the gossip columnist, who's touching up her makeup.

GRACE

What have you got for me, Henry?

HENRY

Donald Trump threw himself off a building. Landed on Madonna.

GRACE

And then they all went to Elaine's.

BLAISCH

What's the plural of --

HENRY

(as he passes)
Ultimata.

10 CONTINUED:

10

JANET, fiftyish, Henry's assistant, sees him coming and follows him into a little kitchenette.

11 IN THE KITCHENETTE,

11

JANET
Don't complain, they already called the air conditioning guy. Alicia wants to see you before the staff meeting, the phone thing again.

Henry goes to a Coke machine, fishes out enough change, and gets a Coke.

HENRY
What's Semel want?

JANET
You told him he could have Richard's old desk, right? And now you promised it to Carmen? Are you completely psychotic?

12 INT HENRY'S OFFICE DAY

12

Henry's office is a glass-walled place that looks out on the mess, sparsely furnished, running down like everything else in the building. HENRY hurries in, JANET hot on his trail. His phone is RINGING, and a POLICE SCANNER in the corner blares more or less constantly.

JANET
See, Semel's still pissed that you wouldn't approve his six hundred dollar orthopedic chair --

Henry sits at his desk, answers his phone, and starts flipping through a pile of stuff on the desk.

HENRY
Henry Hackett.

JANET
-- so now with this desk thing he thinks it's a conspiracy to prevent him from sitting down.

HENRY
(into phone)
Hello! What? Hello? Alicia?
(annoyed)
Aw, God, are you in the car? I can't hear you! Can't make out a word!

12 CONTINUED:

12

He hangs up the phone and looks at the glass of Coke he set on top of a ventilator shaft next to his desk. The glass is vibrating, trembling, the cubes inside TINKLING up against one another. Henry looks up at Janet.

HENRY (cont'd)
Presses are running?

JANET
Macy's ad supplement. So what are you going to do about Semel?

Henry notices a GUY on the other side of the office, sleeping on his sofa, his back to them.

HENRY
Who's that?

JANET
(what are you, blind?)
McDougal.

HENRY
What's he doing?

JANET
(and stupid too?)
Sleeping. He says he can't go home, somebody wants to kill him.

HENRY
Hey. Hey. McDougal.

He throws a notebook at McDougal, who wakes up and rolls over. McDougal's fortyish, going on seventy. He squints at the light.

HENRY (cont'd)
Who wants to kill you now?

McDOUGAL
Sandusky.

HENRY
The parking guy? Because of a couple of lousy columns?

McDOUGAL
My columns aren't lousy.

HENRY
Don't you have this out of your system yet? So they towed your car and scratched it --

12 CONTINUED:

12

McDOUGAL
Six thousand dollars. Six thousand dollars damage to a vintage automobile.

HENRY
You're ranting.

McDOUGAL
Hey, I bust my ass to find something fresh, and when I get it, I bang it like a cheap drum. People love this shit, you should read my mail. Turn that scanner down, will ya? How the hell are you supposed to sleep in here?

He rolls over and goes back to sleep.

HENRY
Jee-zus!

He's staring at a photograph that was in the pile. The phone starts to RING again.

HENRY (cont'd)
What the hell are these?!

JANET
From the subway wreck at West 4th Street this morning. Did you find the one with the --

HENRY
Oh, God! Is that an arm?!

JANET
You found it.

The phone continues to ring, ignored by Janet.

HENRY
(false cheeriness)
I'll get it! Henry Hackett. Alicia!
I -- you'd -- back -- call --
office --

He hangs up abruptly and smiles.

HENRY (cont'd)
I love car phones.

CARMEN ASENCIO, late twenties, Puerto Rican-American, steams into the office.

12 CONTINUED:

12

CARMEN

There's two dozen cops out in Fort Green hassling anybody with a black face and a record on this Williamsburg shooting thing. If there's gonna be a riot we'd better have somebody there, unless you want to get stomped two days in a row on the same story.

HENRY

Doesn't anybody say good morning any more?

CARMEN

Boy, are you old.

HENRY

Williamsburg is Wilder's story; you trying to bigfoot him?

CARMEN

Wilder? Yeah, he really aced it last night. Come on, I know that neighborhood, I grew up near there.

SEMEL crowds into the office too.

SEMEL

Forget the desk. She can have the desk. Just give me the chair, for Christ's sake!

HENRY

Semel, I'm talking to somebody.

SEMEL

I can barely stand up straight!

HENRY

(to Carmen)

Just go. I'll handle Wilder.

SEMEL

(suddenly gossipy)

Hey, what're you guys gonna do to Wilder?

HENRY

Semel, will you wait outside?

SEMEL

You don't know what it's like to live with pain, Henry! It does things to you! It changes you!

12 CONTINUED:

12

JANET
You're a dead man if you feel like
that at eight-thirty.

She closes the door on him. Henry looks up at her, exhausted
already.

HENRY
Keep the crap away from me today?
I've got this decision and I just --
need to think.

JANET
What, about the Sentinel job?

HENRY
How do you know about that?

JANET
Bernie told me.

HENRY
Bernie knows?!

JANET
It's a newsroom, Henry. Look, it's
none of my business, but do you
really want to count pencils at the
Sentinel? Is that you?

HENRY
You know, you can just smell a
horrendously shitty day on the way,
can't you?

JANET
Like rain.

CUT TO:

13 INT BERNIE WHITE'S OFFICE DAY

13

Bernie White's office is another glass-walled room, bigger
than Henry's. Bernie has a two liter jug of orange soda
nearby at all times, and a television behind him plays
cartoons, the sound turned down.

HENRY pokes his head in the door just as BERNIE is ripping
through today's Sun.

HENRY
Hey, Ber-

13 CONTINUED:

13

BERNIE
I hate columnists. Why do I have all these columnists? I got political columnists, guest columnists, celebrity columnists -- the only thing I don't have is a dead columnist, and that's the kind I could really use.

HENRY
Uh huh. Listen --

Bernie holds the paper up as if it smells.

BERNIE
We reek of opinions. You know what every columnist at this paper needs to do? Shut the fuck up.

HENRY
You got a minute?

BERNIE
(getting up)
If you don't mind walking. I gotta walk before I die.

HENRY
What's the matter?

BERNIE
You don't want to know.

HENRY
Sure I do.

BERNIE
No, you don't.

HENRY
Bernie --

BERNIE
I got a prostate the size of a bagel.

Henry is taken aback.

BERNIE (cont'd)
(brightly)
Still coming?

CUT TO:

14 EXT ROOF DAY

14

BERNIE and HENRY come out on the roof of the building, twenty-five stories above lower Manhattan. The view is mostly of the East River.

They stagger to the railing, breathing hard.

HENRY

I know you know about the Sentinel interview --

Bernie just stares at him, lighting a cigarette.

HENRY (cont'd)

It's an assistant managing editor thing.

Bernie still stares, waving out the match.

HENRY (cont'd)

It's really more sideways than up. A little metro coverage, a lot of administrative. You know me, Bernie, the last thing I wanna be is a bean counter, but --

(still nothing from
Bernie)

You can jump in any time here.

BERNIE

What are you looking for here, Henry? You want me to make it easy for you to go to another paper? You want a ride? You want me to give you a little pep talk and wait outside? That's not my job. My job is to keep your ass downstairs.

HENRY

What am I supposed to do? You tell me. It's a nine to five. More money, less hours -- what am I supposed to do? Martha's having the baby, she gave up her job --

BERNIE

So it's for her.

14 CONTINUED:

14

HENRY

No, me too. Every day, I'm behind from the minute I wake up, I think and I walk and I talk as fast as I can just to keep my head above water, I miss every single deadline and somehow we get it out anyway, I go home and fall into bed, get up, fight with my wife --

(and this is the weird part)

-- and I can't wait to get back in in the morning and do it again.

BERNIE

That's kinda sick, Henry.

HENRY

Tell me about it. And this kid thing -- I don't know what I was thinking with that. When people have kids it's like "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." One day you got a normal friend, the next day a zombie shows up at your house. "It gives you such perspective," "it changes your priorities," "you look at the world through different eyes." I mean, it's disgusting. You can slap 'em all you want, but they're gone. Snatched.

BERNIE

Interesting theory you got there, Henry.

HENRY

You've got kids, how'd you keep doing the job?

BERNIE

Don't ask marital advice from a guy with two ex-wives and a daughter that won't speak to him.

Henry sighs and looks out at the city. Bernie looks at him, trying to come up with advice.

BERNIE (cont'd)

The problem with being my age is everybody thinks you're a father figure, but you're really just the same asshole you always were.

(pause)

You do have a problem, Henry. But it's your problem.

14 CONTINUED:

14

Henry just nods, contemplating this. Finally:

HENRY
Well, you've been a big help.

CUT TO:

15 INT HACKETT LIVING ROOM DAY

15

An old dresser sits in the middle of the living room, on top of some newspaper that's been spread out on the floor. Tools and an unopened can of wood reviver wait on top of the dresser.

Also on the floor, a copy of "Moby Dick," opened to the first or second page, lies face down, abandoned next to an empty bowl of cereal, which is next to a chair.

In the chair is MARTHA, watching television, still in her bathrobe, staring dully at the set.

She holds the remote in one hand and leans on the button, never more than three seconds on a program.

The phone RINGS and she snaps out of it, practically leaping for the thing.

MARTHA
Hello?! Henry! Why aren't you at
your interview?

16 INT HENRY'S OFFICE DAY

16

HENRY is on the phone in his office, liberally marking up a printout, the phone jammed onto his shoulder. JANET stands next to him, waiting.

HENRY
Because it's not for another two
hours.
(to Janet)
Tell Ray this is gassy, it's got no
color, it's just a big fat muffin.
Start over.

JANET
Oh, he'll love that.

She heads into the newsroom with the printout.

HENRY
(into phone)
You called, what's up?

(INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

MARTHA

I can follow five shows at once!
Watch!

She points the remote at the TV and demonstrates.

MARTHA (cont'd)

The babe in the hat's got leukemia --

(CLICK)

-- housewives who just happen to also
be prostitutes on Sally Jesse --

(CLICK)

-- Williamsburg stuff, panic in the
streets --

(CLICK)

-- Robert Shaw's about to buy it --

(CLICK)

-- and Herman Munster got a race car.
Come home for lunch, I'll show you
how to play.

Through the windows on the newsroom, Henry watches as Janet
shoves the marked-up copy at BLAISCH.

HENRY

Marty, get a grip. Is there a
reason you called?

MARTHA

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!
There is a reason, I swear, I have
to talk to you, it's very important,
I just -- just -- give me a second to
remember. What's going on there?
Tell me everything. Leave nothing
out.

Blaisch goes crazy, waving his arms in the air and snatching
the copy.

HENRY

You know, the usual delights -- I've
got a budget meeting with Alicia --

MARTHA

Don't take any crap from her, okay?
(shouting at "Wheel of
Fortune")

LICORICE STICK!

Blaisch starts to march angrily toward Henry's office. Henry
rolls his eyes.

HENRY

Uh-oh, phone's slipping out of my
hand --

16 CONTINUED:

16

MARTHA
No, wait, stop, stop, stop --

HENRY
-- there it goes --

MARTHA
I'll remember, I will, I will -- !

He's hung up. She sighs, hangs up the phone, and goes back to the TV. She grunts, thinking about something Henry said.

MARTHA (cont'd)
Alicia Stark. Give me a break.

CUT TO:

17 INT NEWSROOM DAY

17

The elevator DINGS, the doors open, and ALICIA STARK steps off, carrying a suit bag in one hand. She's helping the PARKING COP that was outside earlier with the other. His shirt is torn now and he has a bloody nose.

Alicia deposits him at a GUY's desk.

ALICIA
(to the Guy)
Let him use your phone, they stole his radio. McDougal has got to be stopped.

She heads off across the newsroom. LISA, her assistant, catches up to her as she heads for the conference room.

LISA
They started the staff meeting already. You wanted a copy of the phone bill so you could talk to Henry first thing.

As they walk, Alicia unloads her belongings on Lisa and takes a sheaf of notes in return.

ALICIA
Did the decorator call?

LISA
Yes -- she said the kind of wood Bruno picked for the chair rail wasn't included in the guaranteed price and you have to approve another six hundred dollars.

Alicia stops at a coffee pot and gets a cup.

17 CONTINUED:

17

ALICIA
Unbelievable. Every time the phone
rings from these guys it's six
hundred dollars.

LISA
Also, Robert DeNiro's office
called --

They're passing rewrite.

ALICIA
(loud, so they will hear)
Oh, Bobby called?

LISA
Well, his office, and said there are
two seats left at his table for the
benefit tonight --

ALICIA
No kidding. That's a much better
table.

LISA
-- so if you want them it's five
hundred dollars a plate.

Alicia's face falls. She lowers her voice.

ALICIA
Call 'em back. Tell them we'd love
to be Mr. DeNiro's guests. Hit
"guests." If they mention the five
hundred thing again, remember a
previous -- you son of a bitch!

Lisa looks up, startled, but Alicia's not talking to her
anymore, she's talking to HENRY, who's headed across the
newsroom in the same general direction.

ALICIA (cont'd)
You promised me, Henry.

HENRY
For God's sake, Alicia, I cannot ask
a news reporter to wait until after
five to make out of state phone
calls. It's ridiculous. I won't do
it.

ALICIA
This job isn't easy, you know. I
didn't ask for this job.

17 CONTINUED:

17

HENRY

Some of us have greatness forced upon
us. Look at Semel here.

SEMEL, headed for the conference room also, falls into step
with them.

SEMEL

(paranoid)

Look at me why?

ALICIA

(to Henry)

You think it's easy to fire people?
You think I enjoy it?

SEMEL

Fire people? Is that why you're
looking at me? Is it? Is it?

18 OMITTED

18

19 INT CONFERENCE ROOM DAY

19

Seven or eight EDITORS are gathered in the conference room,
all of them talking as HENRY, ALICIA, and SEMEL come in.
There is a thick, smoky haze in the air. Semel winces and
waves his arms in annoyance as soon as he walks in the door.

SEMEL

Jesus, Bernie! You know, the doctor
found nicotine in my urine again.

BERNIE looks up from the head of the table.

BERNIE

Then keep your dick outta my ashtray.

The entire room breaks up.

SEMEL

Very funny. Very funny.

Henry picks up a copy of the budget, a sheet that details what
stories will appear on what page. Alicia has one, so does
Bernie. As stories are proposed, they will mutter page
numbers.

Bernie speaks in a voice that quiets everyone.

19 CONTINUED:

19

BERNIE

So. Two days after a black kid is killed in a neighboring community, two white businessmen named Hanson and MacGregor -- Joe Heartland and his brother -- get shot up in a black neighborhood with racial slurs written on their car. In response, the New York Sun decides to run --

He throws today's Sun on the table and it lands with a SLAP.

BERNIE (cont'd)

-- a parking story.

He looks around the room. It's silent, except for a SNEEZE from MAX, the photo editor, who has a terrible cold. Bernie lets the moment hang. Finally:

BERNIE (cont'd)

Go now, and sin no more.

(to work)

Okay. Metro. I assume we're all over the subway?

HENRY

(nods)

Tick tock. Dead and dying, search for heroes, standard transportation wreck stuff.

BERNIE

We got any art?

MAX, the photo editor with the terrible cold, speaks.

MAX

Yeah, Eddie picked up some nice spaghetti shots on this one.

LOU, thirtyish, an assistant managing editor, offers:

LOU

"Limbs Akimbo," we can call it.

HENRY

I had Limbs Akimbo for dinner last night.

ANNA

Near West 4th Street?

BERNIE

What about the motorman? They find him yet?

19 CONTINUED:

19

HENRY
(checking his notes)
Uh -- yes. In his neighborhood bar,
drunk as a skunk.

ALICIA
Can you believe the guy? Derails his
train and then steps over bodies to
go have a few beers.

HENRY
What do you do after you step over
bodies?

ALICIA
(a sharp look)
I'm not in the mood, Henry.

HENRY
(continuing)
What else -- we got an above average
bank robbery, an exploding hand
grenade in Niagra Falls --

BERNIE
What about somethin' fun? Don't we
have anything fun today?

HENRY
The exploding hand grenade! Plus
Nazis marching in New Jersey --

BERNIE
Nazis are always fun. Features?

CARL, the features editor, is fortyish, good looking. Alicia
watches him while he speaks. Alicia's got an eye.

CARL
Okay, we got Allison's profile of a
teenage hitman, Grace is still
working on that who's-bangin'-who
chart for Hollywood, and we got part
three in the series on penile
implants.

All the men wince. Henry holds up today's paper, open to a
certain page.

HENRY
Can you get another dick drawing?
'Cause this one looks more like a map
of Florida.

19 CONTINUED:

19

BERNIE
(imitating Alicia)
I'm not in the mood, Henry.

Laughter.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Business?

JERRY, the business editor, is one of the few who wears a shirt and tie.

JERRY
Dow's up, trade figures came out at eight, nothing shocking, but I'm telling you, I'm sitting on Watergate out in Staten Island with this zoning commission thing. If you guys would just let me have a couple reporters from city I could --

Even though he's been raising his voice over his last line, Jerry is already drowned out by jeers and thrown paper as everyone reacts as though they've heard this from him a dozen times.

BERNIE
Jerry, how is it possible that you always have Watergate somewhere?

JERRY
I mean it this time! I got a tip from the commission chairman's ex-wife and --

HENRY
His ex-wife?!

BERNIE
There's a reliable source.

HENRY
You could run a sidebar on how rotten he is in bed.

Bernie turns and goes into a long, disgusting smoker's hack. The room is silent by the time he finishes. He looks at Alicia, in whose direction he was coughing.

BERNIE
I get any on you?

Alicia shakes her head, disgusted.

ALICIA
Thanks for asking.

19 CONTINUED:

19

BERNIE

Foreign?

Another editor, ANNA, mid-fifties and been at this a hell of a long time, speaks up.

ANNA

The vice president's at the funeral in China, the U.N. forces got hit by another terrorist bomb last night, two dead, and -- oh, Henry, you might be interested in this -- the whales that were born in the Ukraine were both females.

HENRY

You calling my wife a whale?

Bernie's SECRETARY sticks her head in the door.

SECRETARY

Mr. Keighley for you on three.

Bernie rolls his eyes. People GRUMBLE their feelings about whoever this guy is.

ALICIA

I can take it for you.

BERNIE

No thank you, Alicia.
(to his Secretary)
Call him back.

Everyone OOOHS.

HENRY

Sure, only owns the fuckin' thing, doesn't mean he gets to talk to you.

BERNIE

Sports?
(with relish)
Emmett!

Inexplicably, they all burst into APPLAUSE. EMMETT, mid-thirties, is the only one who stands when he speaks. He looks self-conscious, as if expecting to be cut off at any moment. While he talks, everyone seems to think of something they have to say to whoever's next to them.

19 CONTINUED:

19

EMMETT
(as fast as he possibly
can)
Mets are gonna get their clocks
cleaned in L.A. again, Yankees are at
home but who cares they're still
twelve and a half behind the Brewers
and nobody's really chasing 'em any
more --

HENRY
Is Emmett talking?

JERRY
No, I don't think so. Why?

EMMETT
(ignoring them)
-- Stovavich failed his drug test
again --

HENRY
I'm almost sure he's talking.

ANNA
Yeah, I think Henry's right.

EMMETT
(sweating now)
-- Sabatini and Graf are in the final
at the Open at two and I'm takin' all
the action I can get says Sabatini
gets stomped.

HENRY
(over GROANS)
Would you let that die, already? She
had a boyfriend, okay?

ANNA
And you're not that good looking.

EMMETT
Fuck you.

HENRY
"He explained."

JERRY
I'll take a hundred on Sabatini.

Emmett drops back into his seat, writing down more bets as
they come in.

BERNIE
So. Page one. Subway's our wood?

19 CONTINUED:

19

LOU

If I've got good art, no problem.

Max SNEEZES and holds up gruesome pictures.

ALICIA

Definitely the subway.

HENRY

Really? The subway kinda puts me to sleep. Carmen's working on day two stuff from the Williamsburg shooting thing. If they make a bust, we oughta follow up.

ALICIA

The subway is a major story.

HENRY

Nobody died!

LOU

(hopeful)

A bunch got maimed, didn't they?

ALICIA

Yeah, that helps.

Bernie drops his head in his hands as people mutter about head injuries.

HENRY

Hey, we fucked up yesterday, right? Why tuck our tail between our legs and do what everybody else does? Let's try to stand alone, let's make up for it.

ALICIA

We're a commuter paper, people want the subway.

HENRY

What are you, in market research now? Not everything's about money.

ALICIA

It is when you almost fold every six months.

BERNIE

Come on, you two can slug it out at the three o'clock. Let's wrap it up early.

(MORE)

19 CONTINUED:

19

BERNIE (cont'd)
(singsong)
Henry's got an interview at the
Sentinel.

Henry rolls his eyes, there are more OOOOHS.

BERNIE (cont'd)
At least steal us a little something,
will ya?

CUT TO:

20 INT NEW YORK SENTINEL NEWSROOM DAY 20

This is the newsroom of The New York Sentinel, and the contrast with the newsroom of the Sun could not be greater. Everything has a burnished, time-worn, expensive feel, including the STAFFERS, every one of whom wears a suit and tie.

It's quieter than the Sun too, the hush of important work going on. Henry walks across the room, to what looks like it might be a receptionist's desk. A GUY is on a headset, taking notes.

Henry makes a gesture, but the Guy holds him off with a finger and keeps making notes.

Henry waits. He looks around. Except for him, everyone in the room is wearing a suit and tie. He pulls his tieless shirt collar together uncomfortably.

Finally, the Guy takes off the headset and stands.

HENRY
Excuse me, I'm meeting Paul --

The Guy walks right around him, ignoring him.

HENRY (cont'd)
-- Bladden.

GUY
Map.

THUNK. He hits the wall --

GUY (cont'd)
Right here.

-- and disappears around a corner. Henry sighs and consults the plastic covered map.

21 INT BLADDEN'S OFFICE DAY

21

PAUL BLADDEN, mid-forties, very buttoned-down, sits behind a desk in an office with a window. HENRY sits across from him. Bladden leans back, hands behind his head. He seems to enjoy interviews.

BLADDEN

I've been watching the Sun the last few weeks, and I tell you, it's exciting. We're looking forward to letting our hair down a little bit, squeezing in some coverage of the outer boroughs. Nothing like you're used to, of course. This is, after all, the Sentinel. We cover the world.

HENRY

So I've heard.

Bladden looks down disapprovingly at Henry's open collar. Henry darts a hand to it, uncomfortable.

BLADDEN

Hey, I won't dick you around any more. I talked to Vince, and he's ready to go with my recommendation. Congratulations. The job's yours if you want it.

Henry just stares at him for a moment, taken aback.

BLADDEN (cont'd)

You don't seem very pleased.

HENRY

Oh, yeah, sure I am, I -- I'd just like to think about it a bit. You know, talk to my wife.

BLADDEN

Sure you would, I understand. But I'll need to know first thing in the morning. Don't disappoint me. I gotta say, Henry, I think you're a serious newspaperman.

But he's said it with the implication that others don't. Henry looks at him sideways as Bladden turns to a stack of stuff on his desk.

HENRY

Well, thanks.

21 CONTINUED:

21

BLADDEN

I mean it. It's a cute little paper
you guys got down there, and
sometimes you really pull one out.

HENRY

(clenched teeth)

Thanks.

Bladden is lookin for something on his desk.

BLADDEN

Sure missed the boat last night,
though.

Henry fights back the urge to punch him in the teeth.

BLADDEN (cont'd)

One thing I wanted to mention. When
I took this job, I had no
administrative experience myself, and
there was --

But Henry's not listening, he's still burning over being
called a cute little paper.

HENRY

So what's your metro lead tomorrow?

BLADDEN

(disapproving)

You don't work here yet, Henry. What
I was saying was there's a book that
was particularly helpful to me --

HENRY

Personally, I'd go with the subway.

BLADDEN

-- if I can find it here --

HENRY

'Course, that Williamsburg thing is
pretty tempting. You guys got
anything on that?

BLADDEN

Henry, stop it.

HENRY

You do, look at your eyes! Was
there a bust? No, I'd know if there
was -- you got tipped it's coming
down?

Bladden sits forward.

21 CONTINUED:

21

BLADDEN

Let's just say our coverage will be comprehensive.

Bladden puts his arms on his desk rather awkwardly, and as he does so, he gives everything away.

Because ever so casually, he slides a file folder a foot to the right and covers a legal pad with handwritten notes on the front. Henry can see just the corner of a dark, heavy box that has been drawn around something, but the file covers it.

Henry smiles.

HENRY

I'd love to borrow it.

BLADDEN

What?

HENRY

The book.

BLADDEN

(relieved to be off that subject)

Oh! Right, sure.

He turns his chair and pulls himself over to a bookcase behind him. He bends down to a lower shelf, to look there.

All in one motion, Henry straightens up, lifts the file, and cranes his head to get a good look at that pencilled box. He drops the papers and slides back into his chair, just as Bladden turns around with a book in his hand.

BLADDEN (cont'd)

Here it is!

HENRY

Thanks. You've been very helpful.

22 INT SENTINEL NEWSROOM DAY

22

HENRY walks quickly across the Sentinel newsroom, pulling a reporter's notebook and pen from his jacket pocket. He scribbles:

"Hanson/MacGregor -- Sedona Savings board."

He grins and SNAPS his notebook shut.

CUT TO:

23 INT DOCTOR'S OFFICE DAY

23

BERNIE WHITE is in a doctor's office, in his tee shirt and boxer shorts, getting dressed after an examination. His DOCTOR is washing his hands.

Bernie looks a bit shell-shocked.

DOCTOR

Don't overreact. We're very aggressive now with prostate cancer. If we go after it early, before it metastacizes to a bone, it's one hundred percent beatable.

BERNIE

Go after it -- how?

DOCTOR

Surgery.

BERNIE

That's fantastic. That is, that's wonderful, because as it turns out that's exactly the portion of my anatomy I'd like to see cut up into little pieces.

The Doctor just looks at him, absolutely no reaction.

BERNIE (cont'd)

I'm kidding.

DOCTOR

You'll need a full week off work. How's next Monday?

BERNIE

To cut a hole in my ass? Sounds good. Then I still have the weekend.

Again, the Doctor just stares at him.

BERNIE (cont'd)

Could you possibly be any more humorless about this?

DOCTOR

I don't believe so, no.

CUT TO:

24 INT NEWSROOM DAY

24

On a TV in the newsroom, a handsome REPORTER interviews TWO GUYS at the airport.

24 CONTINUED:

24

REPORTER

-- racial incidents like this make
you think twice about visiting New
York?

GUY

Our brother cancelled his trip.

LOU, who sits in rewrite next to BLAISCH, shouts from his
desk.

LOU

Big scoop from the TV guys!
Jerkoffs' Brother Cancels Trip!

A defensive BUREAUCRAT takes the screen as BERNIE steams past
the TV.

25 INT BERNIE'S OFFICE DAY

25

In his office, BERNIE punches a phone number he gets not from
his Rolodex, but from a business card he holds in his hand.
His wallet is open on the desk in front of him.

He waits, apprehensively, while the phone rings on the other
end. When someone answers:

BERNIE

Deanne White, please. Yeah, Bernard
White.

(quickly)

Just, uh -- just tell her it's her
father.

He's put on hold. While he waits, he turns slowly in his
chair and looks out the window on the newsroom. LOU and TWO
STAFFERS are gathered outside. Lou has cut something out of a
paper and they laugh as he tacks it up on a bulletin board.

Bernie's still waiting. It's a long wait, and getting longer.
The more he has to wait the more uncomfortable he becomes.

Outside the window, Lou draws something on the cutout and
Staffers laugh hysterically. Bernie turns away from the
window, embarrassed. Then angry. Then --

-- someone picks up on the other end.

BERNIE (cont'd)

Uh huh. No, I understand, I
understand. Could you just --
(even further out on the
limb)

-- do you happen to know if she's
free for lunch?

(MORE)

25 CONTINUED:

25

BERNIE (cont'd) (cont'd)
I know it's kind of short notice,
I --
(pause)
Yeah, it was just a shot. Just a
shot. You'll leave word? Thanks.

He hangs up, quickly.

More than anything, he just feels like an idiot.

CUT TO:

26 EXT PATIO RESTAURANT DAY

26

MARTHA is eating lunch at a patio restaurant in the Village with SUSAN, a woman in her late thirties. It's hot, they're in tee shirts. There is a half-full bottle of wine on the table. Martha has had none, Susan's had lots and is pouring herself more.

SUSAN
Actually, the first six weeks aren't
a problem. The first six weeks,
you're so exhausted and consumed by
these incredibly tedious domestic
tasks that you have no time to get
depressed.

MARTHA
Oh.

SUSAN
But don't worry, you've got plenty
of time for it later.

MARTHA
Well, there's a ton of things I plan
on doing --

SUSAN
Yeah, like what?

MARTHA
Well, reading, for one --

SUSAN
With a kid?
(laughs)
Sorry, go ahead.

MARTHA
Um -- I, um -- I've never tried
writing fiction --

26 CONTINUED:

26

SUSAN

Yeah. Like, you mean, in those long, quiet hours when you can concentrate?

MARTHA

Well, maybe that's not a good one --

SUSAN

Sorry, I'm being a bitch.

MARTHA

No, you're probably just having a bad day.

SUSAN

See, I had a bunch of hobbies. I actually made a list. I dove into them with a passion --

MARTHA

That's what I plan to do.

SUSAN

-- for about three days. Each.

Susan tops off her glass, which is already full.

MARTHA

(noticing)

You didn't drive into town, did you?

SUSAN

So you know what my hobby turned out to be? Living Bob's life. I hung on his every word, I obsessed about what he was doing at work, who he was talking to, who he had to take crap from --

This is starting to sound uncomfortably familiar to Martha.

MARTHA

Well, I'll only be off the paper for six months. I'm going back.

SUSAN

Yeah, I thought that too. Seven years ago. Then you find out about child care costs, about guilt over being away all the time, about competing with the assholes who don't have kids --

She takes a long drink of her wine.

26 CONTINUED:

26

MARTHA

Susan, can I ask you a personal question?

SUSAN

Shoot. My life is an open pop-up book.

MARTHA

Is it -- I mean, it is worth it, right?

SUSAN

I'm sorry. I shouldn't do this to you. Look, it's all, uh -- manageable. The physical pain. The loss of adult contact. Less money coming in. Feeling worthless around people who do work. All the crap -- you can't even remember it the first time you see your new baby.

MARTHA

But?

SUSAN

But he gets the baby too, and he didn't have to --

She stops herself, just looking at Martha for a long moment.

SUSAN (cont'd)

The fact of the matter is that once you have kids, a man's best work can still be ahead of him, but a woman's is very definitely in the past.

Martha swallows. That off her chest, Susan seems to brighten.

SUSAN (cont'd)

I'm so glad you called me today.

Martha forces a smile.

MARTHA

Me too.

CUT TO:

27 INT AN OFFICE DAY

27

ALICIA STARK sits on the edge of a sofa, buttoning her blouse, just staring off into space as she gets dressed.

She stands to pull her pants on. A MAN walks past, buttoning his shirt, and kisses her softly on the cheek.

27 CONTINUED:

27

She accepts it, but her mind's a million miles away.

She tucks her shirt in. She sits on the sofa, smoothing the wrinkles out of her pants. She looks at her watch.

ALICIA

We've still got ten minutes left.

The MAN settles into a chair opposite her. There are half a dozen framed diplomas on the wall behind him. He adopts a professional pose.

MAN

You were talking about work.

Alicia sighs, and as we realize the true nature of this situation, it's kind of a yucky feeling.

ALICIA

I just get no satisfaction anymore.
I get no pleasure from my job, even
if Bernie does retire there's no
reason to think I'd get any pleasure
from his job, I'm cheating on my
husband, and I don't even get any
pleasure from that, I've got money
problems that make Russia look well
managed --

MAN

(hurt)

You don't -- get any pleasure from --
the, uh, our, our --

Alicia just looks at him. She sighs and drops her head in her hands.

ALICIA

I am so fucked up.

CUT TO:

28 INT APARTMENT DAY

28

As cartoons BLARE in the background, today's issue of the Daily News sits on a coffee table next to an open pizza box, the picture of the shot-up car screaming out from page one.

The two KIDS from last night, the ones who first stumbled across the car, sit in a very modest Brooklyn apartment, watching TV and eating pizza.

BAM!!

The front door explodes open and COPS pour in, guns drawn.

28 CONTINUED:

28

FIRST KID
Hey! What -- what's goin' --

But the Cops are on them, SHOUTING, running, knocking the Kids to the floor and cuffing them.

SECOND KID
We didn't do it!

FIRST KID
Shut up!

SECOND KID
We were workin', we just walked
by it -- !

FIRST KID
Shut up!

SECOND KID
WE DIDN'T DO IT!!

CUT TO:

29 INT NEWSROOM DAY

29

A fax machine spits out a fax. A YOUNG GUY grabs it and carries it across the newsroom, past a TV, where Gabriela Sabatini whistles an ace right past Steffi Graf.

EMMETT, the sports editor, watches, chewing a nail.

EMMETT
Shit. Lucky serve. Lucky serve.

JERRY, the business editor, with whom he has a bet, stands over his shoulder, chuckling.

The Young Guy delivers the fax to ANNA, who sits at a desk under the big clock on the wall.

It's three o'clock, and BERNIE's not in a good mood. He opens his office door and SHOUTS to no one in particular.

BERNIE
THREE O'CLOCK!

A few STAFFERS passing by quicken their pace to get out of his eyesight.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Anybody around here respect a
deadline any more?

No one seems to acknowledge him except ALICIA, who's just returning from lunch.

29 CONTINUED:

29

ALICIA

What's the matter with you? We never have the three o'clock at three o'clock.

BERNIE

Then we have a hell of a nerve calling it the three o'clock.

ALICIA

Bernie, how often do I ask you for things?

BERNIE

Whenever you need 'em.

He turns and walks into his office.

30 INT BERNIE'S OFFICE DAY

30

Alicia follows him in. Bernie rolls his eyes.

BERNIE

What do you want, Alicia? Some coffee? Maybe a nice cappuccino with a little cinnamon?

ALICIA

You in a bad mood?

BERNIE

Ah, sit down. How are you, anyway?

ALICIA

Well, you know. Up to here with the Sag Harbor place. Bruno's driving me nuts with redecorating. Did you know he's a sculptor?

BERNIE

(sighs)

Yeah, you've mentioned. Alicia --

ALICIA

Anyway, these things always go over budget, you know, and it adds up.

BERNIE

Alicia. We're not having that conversation again, are we?

ALICIA

What conversation?

30 CONTINUED:

30

BERNIE

For God's sake, Alicia, you're the managing editor of the sixth largest paper in the country, you can't --

ALICIA

That's what I say! All I want is to be fairly compensated!

BERNIE

-- you can't come in here every six months --

ALICIA

I have other offers. Don't make me bring up the other offers.

BERNIE

-- and lay these disgusting credit problems on me.

Pause.

ALICIA

You think I'm disgusting, Bernie?

BERNIE

Does this have to be today? Do we have to do this today?

ALICIA

I have pressures, Bernie. Real. Pressures.

BERNIE

Alicia. Look. You came out of features to take an overwhelming administrative job you didn't want and you worked miracles with it. Somehow, you have seven hundred people doing work that they need two thousand for at Newsday.

ALICIA

You're God damn right.

BERNIE

But there's no more money for you. There just isn't. And it's not a gender issue, you know it as well as I do, so don't give me that. There's just a ceiling in this business, and you're hitting your head on it.

30 CONTINUED:

30

ALICIA

Okay. Fine. My contract's up in eighteen months, I'd like permission to start interviewing now.

BERNIE

Alicia --

ALICIA

Because you leave me no choice. That contract leaves me no choice.

BERNIE

Alicia, I hope you'll pardon me saying this, and I know I'm no one to talk, but the problem isn't with your contract, okay?

She gets up and goes to the window, not to look at him. Bernie thinks for a moment, trying to be diplomatic.

BERNIE (cont'd)

In this job, the real kicks gotta come from the work, not the money. If you try to make it about the dough, you'll only be miserable, 'cause we just don't get the dough. Never have, never will. I know it's hard, when you see it all around you, but you can't live like the people we cover. You'll never keep up. We move in their world, but it is their world.

She doesn't answer.

BERNIE (cont'd)

You gotta cut down. Talk to Bruno about the decorating, he's a --
(tactfully)
-- reasonable guy. Or give up the nights in town Bruno doesn't know about.

ALICIA

What?

BERNIE

It won't lead anywhere good. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about.

ALICIA

Okay. I'll be seeing Keighley tonight at the benefit. Obviously, I'm going to have to take this up with him directly.

30 CONTINUED:

30

BERNIE

Alicia, you go over my head on this
and you'll only make it worse for
yourself.

31 INT NEWSROOM DAY

31

On a computer in the newsroom, a GRAPHICS GUY works on a new
sketch of a penis. It goes from a map of Florida to a balloon
at the end of a hose. He keeps trying.

Meanwhile, BLAISCH shouts.

BLAISCH

What's another word for carnage?!
Anybody! ANYBODY!

ALICIA steams out of Bernie's office, closes the door hard
behind her, turns to head for her office --

-- and bumps right into HENRY. She MUMBLES an apology and
keeps on, barely pausing.

We stay with Henry, who's headed the other way.

HENRY

(irritated)
You're excused.

He heads for his office. Janet's desk is empty, so he breezes
inside.

32 INT HENRY'S OFFICE DAY

32

MCDUGAL is still asleep on the couch. HENRY goes to him,
pulls up a chair, and pokes him in the ass with a pencil.

HENRY

McDougal. What are you, still
sleeping?

McDougal stirs. He turns and looks over his shoulder at
Henry, squinting hard.

McDOUGAL

(defensive)
I went out for lunch. What time is
it?

HENRY

Five after three. Come on, wake up.
I need a favor.

McDougal struggles up to a sitting position. As he does so,
Henry sees inside his jacket. McDougal's packing.

32 CONTINUED:

32

HENRY (cont'd)
What is that? You got a gun?

MCDUGAL
I told you, Sandusky's after me.

HENRY
When did you get so paranoid?

MCDUGAL
Right after the conspiracies started.

MARTHA hurries into Henry's office, distraught.

MARTHA
Henry, I've gotta talk to you right now. Hi, McDougal, how are you?

MCDUGAL
(suspicious)
Why?

Outside the door, Bernie is pacing the halls, his mood not getting any better, SHOUTING to the newsroom at large.

BERNIE
THREE-OH-SEVEN!

MARTHA
I have to know about the interview right this second.

HENRY
Can this wait? I've got the three o'clock.

MARTHA
No, it cannot wait! This is our marriage here, Henry, okay?!

HENRY
What are you talking about? You walked in three seconds ago, when did whatever it is escalate to our marriage?!

MARTHA
Over lunch. You shoulda been there. Very enlightening. I've seen my future, Henry, and I'm a bitter, nasty broad who can suck down a whole bottle of wine in a single gulp.

32 CONTINUED:

32

HENRY

Just -- give me one second.

(to McDougal)

You remember Sedona Savings? Went under about six months ago, we did a big piece on it?

McDOUGAL

I don't read this newspaper.

HENRY

Take my word for it, we did a piece. Do you still have that friend in the Justice Department?

McDOUGAL

Sure, but he hates me now.

MARTHA

But if you get the other job, maybe I have a prayer --

HENRY

(still to McDougal)

Can you get a list out of him? Who were the major investors, who lost the most money. Especially from New York. Brooklyn, maybe.

MARTHA

-- because at least you'll be around to refill my Prozac prescriptions.

HENRY

Marty, please.

CARMEN, the reporter Henry sent up to Williamsburg earlier in the day, hurries into the office, flushed.

CARMEN

They made a bust on Williamsburg, two black kids, seventeen and nineteen, one of 'em did six months for felonious assault but they look like babies, very poignant hiya Marty, I thought you were on leave?

MARTHA

(to Henry)

Can we please talk alone?

McDOUGAL

(to Henry)

Bust is no good.

HENRY

What?

32 CONTINUED:

32

MARTHA
Can we please
talk alone?

McDOUGAL
The bust is no
good.

HENRY
How do you know?

McDOUGAL
Heard it on your scanner. The beat
cops were talkin' a blue streak.
They think it's totally cosmetic.

CARMEN
Whether it is or not they're gonna
walk the kids at seven and we need
art don't send Robin, she's too green
and if it gets rough she'll miss it
again like last --

WILDER, a reporter, late forties, comes into the office,
furious. He sees Carmen.

WILDER
Ah hah! The poacher herself. Who
said you could cover Williamsburg,
little girl?

CARMEN
Henry, you told me you'd handle
him!

McDOUGAL
Hey, let Henry talk to his wife.

WILDER
Oh, so now I have to be handled?!
I see. I see how things are around
here once you hit forty!

SEMEL, the guy with the bad back and no desk or chair, plows
in, waving a receipt over his head.

SEMEL
I bought it.

HENRY
Williamsburg's a big story, I need
you both on it.

CARMEN
Okay. Give him the cops, I'll handle
the poignant shit.

WILDER
Why does she get the poignant shit?

32 CONTINUED:

32

SEMEL

I bought the God damn chair.

WILDER

(to Henry)

That's it. That's the last straw.

HENRY

What do you mean, "last straw?!"
What exactly were the previous
straws?

Semel SLAMS the receipt down on Henry's desk.

SEMEL

Now it's your problem.

McDOUGAL

Let Henry talk to his wife. The
hell's the matter with you people?

HENRY

(to Wilder)

Michael, go call the cops and find
out if this bust is any good, okay?
I gotta know for the three o'clock.

BERNIE

(shouting outside)

THREE-OH-NINE!

JANET, Henry's assistant, returns from lunch and sees the
chaos in his office. She puts her hands on her hips, like a
mother coming home to an unauthorized party.

JANET

Hey! No one comes in here without
seeing me first!

Martha SNEEZES and sits quickly, looking down at her lap.

WILDER

Henry, I've been here a lot longer
than she has, longer than you have,
for that matter --

CARMEN

For God's sake, if you want to cover
Brooklyn, cover Brooklyn --

HENRY

Wilder, will you please just go
call the cops?

32 CONTINUED:

32

CARMEN

-- but you can't do it from a
barstool in Manhattan!

SEMEL

And I'll tell you something, I'd
better see that six hundred in my
next check --

MARTHA

(to Henry)

See? Look at this -- you get
constant stimulation.

WILDER

The cops, great, any weather reports
you'd like typed up?

MARTHA

Problem solving. Human contact.

JANET

Henry!

BANG!!

Everyone shuts up immediately as an ear-splitting gun blast
RIPS through the office. Some scream, some fall back, all
turn to McDougal in disbelief.

He stands at the edge of the room, his smoking gun pointed
down at a huge stack of newspapers with a bullethole through
the top.

McDOUGAL

(calmly, as if explaining
it to idiots)

Let. Henry. Talk to his wife.

They all just stare at him in stunned silence.

McDOUGAL (cont'd)

Please.

Without another word, they all clear out. McDougal pauses as
he closes the door behind him.

McDOUGAL (cont'd)

You two take your time. I'm on the
Sedona thing.

And he's gone, off to deal with the BUZZING, curious crowd
that is swarming toward Henry's office to ask about the
gunshot.

32 CONTINUED:

32

MARTHA
God, I miss this place.

CUT TO:

33 INT KITCHENETTE DAY

33

MARTHA follows HENRY into the paper's tiny kitchenette.

HENRY
I've got about sixty seconds. What's wrong?

He goes to the Coke machine and digs in his pocket for change.

MARTHA
I overreacted, I'll tell you later. Why don't you let me go to Justice for you? I've got a much better contact than McDougal does.

HENRY
You're on leave.

MARTHA
Okay, I'll go anyway. Come on, how was the interview? Did he offer you the job?

Henry's still digging for more change.

HENRY
Not -- yes. You got any change?

MARTHA
"Not -- yes?" What does "not -- yes" mean?

HENRY
Yes, he offered it, but I said I have to think about it. Dime'll do it.

MARTHA
You have thought about it.

HENRY
I'd like to think some more.

He takes her purse from her and hunts for change.

MARTHA
Why?

HENRY
I have until tomorrow morning, and I want to think. End of conversation.

33 CONTINUED:

33

MARTHA

You wish.

A SECURITY GUARD sticks his head in. Henry finds a coin in Martha's purse and goes to the Coke machine.

GUARD

Anybody hear a gunshot?

HENRY

Came from Alicia's office.

The Guard nods and leaves. Henry is staring at the Coke machine in disbelief.

HENRY (cont'd)

Empty?! I can't work under these conditions!

33A INT NEWSROOM DAY

33A

HENRY and MARTHA hurry across the newsroom to the other Coke machine.

MARTHA

I don't get this. This was done, we had a deal, have you forgotten every conversation we've had since I got pregnant?

HENRY

Oh God, body snatchers. "Martha?! Is that you?! Martha?!"

MARTHA

If you don't want to go to the Sentinel, you could do something else here. You could go back to being a reporter --

HENRY

Okay. We can put the less money I get with the money you gave up, then we'll not have all that money.

MARTHA

You could get another assistant.

HENRY

Yeah, I think they'll approve a butler too.

MARTHA

Or you could ask for a column! It's your own hours, and your voice will still be what are you laughing at?

33A CONTINUED:

33A

HENRY

Why don't you ask Bernie how he'd feel about another columnist?

MARTHA

Okay, tell me this -- have you ruled the Sentinel out?

HENRY

Don't be a reporter, okay?

MARTHA

Don't worry, I'm not anymore. Okay, let me give you a hypothetical:

HENRY

Can it be a short hypothetical?

MARTHA

You're a professional tennis player. You love tennis. But one day you wreck your knee and you can never play tennis again. Your doubles partner, however, goes on and wins Wimbledon. How do you feel?

HENRY

Happy for him.

MARTHA

Bullshit. You hate him. I don't want to hate you.

HENRY

What, you want me to wreck my knee?

MARTHA

Okay, let me give you another one --

BANG! Henry gets a Coke from the other machine.

HENRY

I gotta go.

MARTHA

Fine. Me too. I'm going to the Justice Department.

HENRY

You are not going to the Justice Department.

33A CONTINUED:

33A

MARTHA

Remember we're having dinner with
your parents at eight o'clock at
Cent'anni.

(he groans)

Don't be late.

HENRY

Am I ever late?

MARTHA

It's not funny.

HENRY

It's a little funny.

He kisses her.

CUT TO:

34 INT CONFERENCE ROOM DAY

34

The EDITORS are all assembled in the conference room and the
staff meeting is underway when HENRY hurries in, embarrassed.
Bernie refers to a dictionary that is open in front of him.

BERNIE

(reading)

"Deadline -- a date or time before
which something must be done."

HENRY

Sorry, I'm sorry. God damn Marx
brothers movie every time I set foot
in my office.

ALICIA storms in, outraged.

ALICIA

I was just frisked by a security
guard!

Laughter. As Alicia passes, Henry turns and looks out the
glass windows on the newsroom. He watches Martha as she comes
out of the ladies' room and walks across the room, leaving.
He looks a little sad.

ALICIA (cont'd)

It's not funny! What the hell was
that gunshot?

JERRY

McDougal.

34 CONTINUED:

34

BERNIE

(hopeful)
Is he dead?

They laugh.

BERNIE (cont'd)

Okay, are we still in love with the
subway for page one?

HENRY

(snapping back)
No. The subway's ancient history.
They made a bust on the Williamsburg
shooting.

Everyone sits up and takes notice. Henry refers to his notes.

HENRY (cont'd)

Two black kids, seventeen and
nineteen, in Greenpoint. One of 'em
has a record.

ALICIA

We got any art yet?

HENRY

No.

ALICIA

So we get 'em at the perpwalk.
What's the wood?

They look at LOU.

LOU

Uh, something simple. "Caught,"
something like that, maybe with a
slammer.

ANNA

Yeah, God forbid this paper runs
anything without an exclamation
point.

HENRY

Hold it, it's not that clear cut.
McDougal picked up on the scanner
that the beat cops think this is a
flimsy bust. I agree. It doesn't
feel right.

BERNIE

Can you get that officially from the
cops?

34 CONTINUED:

34

Henry darts a look out the windows on the newsroom. WILDER is on the phone next to the window. Henry throws a pencil at the window, but Wilder doesn't hear it.

HENRY

Not yet. But these dead guys weren't just your ordinary businessmen. They were on the board of Sedona Savings. It went under about six months ago, losing TK millions of somebody's dollars. The Feds are looking into it now.

He throws another pencil at the window. Wilder still doesn't hear it.

BERNIE

Where'd you get that?

HENRY

Stole it off Bladden's desk at the Sentinel.

ALICIA

You stole it?!

The room breaks up. Somebody CLAPS Henry on the back.

BERNIE

Jesus, Henry, I was kidding!

HENRY

They called us cute.

Henry looks back to Wilder. He picks up a coffee mug, but decides against throwing it. He gets up and goes to the door.

ALICIA

Wait a minute, what are you saying here? These bankers got shot up by some pissed off Wall Street guy?

HENRY

I don't know. McDougal's at Justice trying to get a list of the investors.

BERNIE

So what about a cop quote?

Henry leans out the door and looks desperately to Wilder.

HENRY

Well?!

34 CONTINUED:

34

WILDER

Can't get anybody on the phone!

HENRY

Go there, talk to 'em, get
somethin'!

(back in the room)

Still workin' on it.

ALICIA

Fine, good lead, let's follow it up
for tomorrow, but without a quote we
still run "Caught."

HENRY

What if those kids aren't the guys?

ALICIA

So we taint 'em today, we make 'em
look good on Saturday, everybody's
happy, right?

Laughter.

HENRY

Hey -- this is a story that could
permanently alter public perceptions
of two kids who might be innocent
and, as a weekend bonus, ignite
another race war. Whaddya say we try
to be right?

While others debate the issue, Bernie leans back in his chair
and stares at the ceiling.

BERNIE

Race wars, subway wrecks, dying
people, maimed people, people coming
back from the dead --

ANNA

We got people coming back from the
dead?

BERNIE

Whatever.

HENRY

These aren't some politicians or
celebrities who crawled into the cage
and deserve whatever happens to
'em. These are two teenagers who
might not exactly enjoy the whole
prison experience.

34 CONTINUED:

34

ALICIA

Oh, please. Sensitive Henry. You don't care if they get beat up. That's not what this is about. You just want to beat everybody else because you got your ass kicked yesterday.

HENRY

Yeah. I do. You don't? Okay. Let's not beat anybody today. Let's not beat anybody all week. Bernie? How about we don't beat anybody until, say, August? October? Hell, let's give 'em the whole year.

Everyone turns to Bernie, who is getting a headache.

BERNIE

What do you want to run, Henry?

HENRY

(shrugs)
I don't know yet. "They Didn't Do It," something like that.

ALICIA

"They Didn't Do It?!" You don't have that! You don't have close to that! You got unattributed cops on a scanner, something you read upside down, and a hunch.

HENRY

You don't have "Caught," either. Not for page one. Not without a shot of the guys.

BERNIE

What time are they gonna walk 'em?

HENRY

Seven.

LOU

Seven?! Do the cops do that to annoy us?

BERNIE

So we stretch a little.

ALICIA

Are you gonna pay for that?

34 CONTINUED:

34

BERNIE

We stretch the deadline to seven thirty. If we get art on the two kids at the Walk of Shame, it's "Caught." If we miss 'em, the subway's page one.

HENRY

Bernie, for Christ's sake --

Bernie holds one finger out to Henry, a warning, and this is the sternest we've ever seen him.

BERNIE

Hey.

Henry shuts up, surprised.

BERNIE (cont'd)

You don't have it, and you know it. You wanna run the story? You've got four hours until seven o'clock, go get the story. Do your job, don't just take a position because it's the opposite --

(gestures to Alicia)
-- of what she says. It's like watching a bunch of sixth graders, for Christ's sake.

The room is absolutely silent. Bernie looks around, still pissed, but now mostly with himself for losing his temper. He looks around.

BERNIE (cont'd)

Photo? Where the hell's Max?

ALICIA

Went home sick.

BERNIE

Will somebody please make sure photo's at the perpwalk?

He leaves the room, leaving everyone else in stunned silence. Finally, JERRY, the business editor, speaks.

JERRY

What's up his ass?

HENRY

A bagel.

35 INT NEWSROOM DAY

35

HENRY stalks across the newsroom, ticked. He passes SEMEL, who's smiling, taking the plastic off a six hundred dollar orthopedic office chair and taping a "DO NOT TOUCH" sign to the back.

Henry walks under a sign that says "Photo," goes between some file cabinets, and comes into a smallish area jammed with photography equipment and pasted-up pictures.

HENRY
(to the first GUY he sees)
Robin here?

Sensing Henry's mood, the Guy just points to the far corner. Henry keeps on.

In the corner, ROBIN, a young woman barely out of college, is bent over a desk, looking at proof sheets with a loup.

HENRY (cont'd)
Robin?

Robin, startled, straightens up quickly, bumping her head on a shelf above her. She turns around, rubbing it.

ROBIN
Fuck!
(catching her language)
I mean -- shit. Sorry.
(used to making mistakes)
What's wrong?

HENRY
Nothing. I've got a very important assignment for you.

Robin nods and tries to force a smile so she doesn't look quite so scared shitless.

ROBIN
For -- me?

HENRY
Yes. It's big, Robin. If you miss this shot, Alicia can't run the page one she wants. Do you understand?

ROBIN
Uh huh.

HENRY
(a half smile)
Good.

CUT TO:

36 INT HENRY'S OFFICE DAY

36

HENRY is at his desk, at the computer again. BERNIE taps on the door and leans against the frame. Henry looks up.

BERNIE

Sorry. I've had better days.

HENRY

Me too.

BERNIE

This stuff with you and Alicia -- it's natural. She's your managing editor. You've got it with her and she's got it with me, and I've got it with Keighley. Ben Bradlee stood on Kay Graham's desk and called her a bitch for thirty years. Think of it as bonding. It creates intimacy.

Henry just nods. Bernie looks intently at the door frame, lost in his own thoughts.

BERNIE (cont'd)

It's coal into a furnace, Henry. I've been doing this for thirty-six years, every day you still start from zero.

HENRY

You okay?

BERNIE

Nah, I'm in a foul mood. I gotta get outta here early tonight, so page one's up to you and Alicia. Play nice?

HENRY

Give it a shot.

BERNIE

That Sedona thing -- why's it have to be today?

HENRY

"Caught" is wrong. I can feel it. I don't want to be wrong today. Didn't a day ever just start to matter on you?

Bernie thinks for a second. He smiles.

36 CONTINUED:

36

BERNIE
Hang with it if you want. But have
Lou do a subway page one just in
case.

(checks his watch)
You might get it. It's only
three-thirty.

CUT TO:

37 INT NEWSROOM DAY

37

Not any more. The clock on the wall says it's ten after five,
and the newsroom is noticeably more crowded. There's chaos,
arguments, people coming back from the dead. HENRY walks
quickly, digging through a pocket. He passes JANET.

HENRY
Is Wilder back and do you have any
change?

JANET
Not yet --

HENRY
Damn it.

JANET
-- and you borrowed it all.

HENRY
Now, let's not be small about such
things --

He heads for the Coke machine anyway, counting the little
change he's got.

On a TV in the background in the newsroom, Gabriela Sabatini
holds a huge trophy over her head triumphantly at the U.S.
Open. EMMETT sits next to the TV, hanging his head, as
STAFFERS drift by and collect their bets from his emptying
wallet.

Henry passes rewrite. LOU calls out to him from behind an
oversized computer screen next to BLAISCH.

LOU
You really wanna run "Drunk," Henry?

On his screen, a picture of the subway wreck is prominently
displayed, with a shot of the motorman and a splashy,
single-word headline -- "DRUNK!"

HENRY
Sure. It fits. Blaisch, you got any
change?

37 CONTINUED:

37

BLAISCH
If you got another word for
"mangled."

HENRY
I don't have time for this, Ray --

BLAISCH
(holding out a coin)
Then you don't get a Coke.

LOU
(to Henry)
The thing is it implies he was drunk
while he was driving the train. He
could have got drunk afterwards.

ANNA, passing, hears Lou's comment.

ANNA
You're accurate and ethical. I want
you out of this building.

HENRY
Torn! Mutilated! Shredded!

BLAISCH
(gives Henry the coin)
Attaboy.

ANNA
You got anything on Sedona yet,
Henry?

HENRY
It's only five thirty. Don't worry
about it.

Blaisch zooms back in his chair. It's a very nice chair, by
the way.

BLAISCH
Henry, can you think of another word
for --

HENRY
Ray, I can think of another word
for all of 'em.

CUT TO:

38 INT NEWSROOM DAY

38

HENRY types the subway story, sitting at Blaisch's desk.
BLAISCH himself just stares morosely over his shoulder. WILDER
hurries up to Henry.

38 CONTINUED:

38

WILDER

I struck out with the cops, Henry.
Somethin's up over there, but
nobody's talkin'.

HENRY

Where'd you go?

WILDER

One Police Plaza.

HENRY

Michael -- you gotta go to the
precinct on this stuff! Of course
nobody's talkin' at DCPI, if they
were givin' it out at DCPI, even
Newsweek could get it, for God's
sakes.

Behind them, a GUY trying to talk on the phone shouts in
annoyance.

GUY

I can't hear! I can't hear!

LOU leans in.

LOU

Okay, I put "Drunk" with a question
mark. What do you think?

HENRY

It's not gonna matter.

Another GUY leaps up, mocking the Guy who can't hear.

GUY

I'M BLIND! I'M BLIND!

EMMETT walks past quickly, looking over his shoulder. He
bumps into JANET, who's headed for Henry with a handful of
change. She dumps it in front of him.

JANET

I took up a collection. You can
never ask anybody again.

HENRY

Hey, did McDougal call in?

JANET

No.

HENRY

No message at all from McDougal?

38 CONTINUED:

38

JANET

I have no motive for lying, Henry.

JERRY, the business editor, passes, headed in the same direction that Emmett went.

JERRY

Emmett! Hey, Emmett!

LOU

(to Henry)

You wanna go down to paste-up and see the whole subway layout?

HENRY

Meet you there.

He scoops up the change and gets up.

HENRY (cont'd)

(to Blaisch)

Nice chair, Ray. My back feels great.

Henry takes off toward the Coke machine, passing a desk that SEMEL returns to, with a bag of coffee.

There is no chair at the desk.

SEMEL

Hey!

Henry passes another television, where a TV REPORTER is outside One Police Plaza, in front of a growing crowd.

REPORTER

-- where the youths arrested in connection with the shooting of two out-of-town businessmen are expected to be arraigned in --

HENRY

(to the TV)

Woah, nice hair!

Henry passes CARMEN, who is on the phone at another desk.

HENRY

Wilder wiffed with the cops. Can you get out to the nine-oh in Brooklyn and find out about this bust?

CARMEN

For tonight?

38 CONTINUED:

38

HENRY
(now feeding the Coke
machine)
Give me a break, it's only --

He looks up at the clock. The minutes actually tick off as he watches. And they're going backwards.

Henry takes off his glasses and rubs his eyes. He looks at the clock again.

HENRY (cont'd)
(tired as hell)
It's only six.

KA-CHUNK! He gets his Coke.

CUT TO:

39 INT PASTE-UP ROOM DAY

39

POW! The clock's hands jump forward to 7:15. HENRY is in the paste-up room now, a long, narrow room full of composing tables where the pages of the paper are actually cut and pasted together. Every thirty seconds or so, a big camera mounted on a rotating easel FLASHES and takes a picture of a pasted up page. One by one, the pages become official.

HENRY and LOU are looking at a composing board that has the "Drunk?" page one with the art of the subway.

HENRY
Well, I hate it.

LOU
Me too. What's with you?

ALICIA walks past and stops at the board.

ALICIA
What's this? What happened to
"Caught?"

HENRY
The art's not back yet. Bernie wants
a back-up. This is it.

A CAMERA OPERATOR takes the board and mounts it on the rotating easel.

ALICIA
(checks her watch)
Why the hell isn't the art back yet?

HENRY
I know, can you believe it?

39 CONTINUED:

39

ALICIA
We can only hold page one until seven
thirty, not a minute more! It's six
grand every half hour we wait! Those
are union drivers waiting, mister!

HENRY
No problem!

Alicia moves on.

HENRY (cont'd)
(imitating John Wayne)
Those are union drivers waiting,
mister.

LOU
You're up to somethin'.

HENRY
(to the Camera Operator)
Shoot it.

FOOM! The Operator photographs the "Drunk?" paste-up.

CUT TO:

40 INT FEDERAL BUILDING DAY

40

BERNIE stands in the lobby of the Federal Building, downtown.
The ceiling is huge, vaulted, and the place is filled with the
noise and bustle of ATTORNEYS and OTHERS headed home at the
end of the day.

Bernie is leaning against a wall, watching the elevators. A
door DINGS, opens, and spills its contents. Bernie checks out
the PASSENGERS as they file out.

He freezes when he sees one person in particular --

-- DEANNE WHITE, late twenties, in a business suit, headed
swiftly for the revolving doors at the front of the building.

Bernie moves fast and intercepts her.

BERNIE
Deanne --

She stops, staring at him.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Just give me a second. It won't kill
you.

She looks both ways and steps out of the flow of traffic. He
looks at her, nervous, and he's breathing hard.

40 CONTINUED:

40

DEANNE

What are you doing here?

She scratches her face with her left hand and he sees a gold wedding band.

BERNIE

God, you're married?!

DEANNE

I've made it very clear I don't wish to see you. Please respect that. I'm walking away now.

Bernie's breathing harder now, can't seem to catch his breath.

BERNIE

Hey, this is just like the first time I asked your mother out.

He sits down on a bench and wipes his forehead with a handkerchief. She pauses, concerned.

DEANNE

Are you all right?

BERNIE

Freshman in college. I was on my bike when I saw her at the top of a hill. I started riding up, but it was further than I thought, and I got tired. I was gonna turn back, but she saw me coming, so I had to keep going. By the time I got to the top I thought I was gonna die -- I was completely out of breath, pouring sweat, gasping for air -- couldn't speak a word. I think I scared the shit out of her.

DEANNE

What did she do?

BERNIE

She waited for me.

DEANNE

Good practice for her marriage.

BERNIE

Thanks, I'm much more comfortable now.

DEANNE

I've made it very clear I don't wish to --

40 CONTINUED:

40

BERNIE

Drop the rehearsed stuff, will you?
It sounds like you just walked out of
your shrink's office.

Deanne flushes. She turns and walks away. Bernie gets up and
hurries after her.

BERNIE (cont'd)

Hold it, hold it, hold it, that was a
rotten thing to say and I know it,
let me start over.

DEANNE

Why are you here?

BERNIE

I -- I saw your name in that piece we
ran on the Murray Hill trial. I was
proud. I just wanted to tell you
that.

She nods, just looking at him.

DEANNE

Thanks.

(she turns to go, but
turns back)

Let me ask you this. Would you have
cared to come if my name hadn't
been in your paper?

BERNIE

What, you hate me, Deanne?

DEANNE

I don't know you well enough to hate
you.

She turns and walks away, out the revolving doors.

CUT TO:

41 INT MIDTOWN BAR DAY

41

This midtown fern bar is crowded with BUSINESS TYPES having a
drink before their commute. MARTHA is at a table with TOM,
fortyish, gray suit, gray face.

He's been telling a story. He likes Martha.

MARTHA

(laughing politely)
That's funny. That's so funny.

41 CONTINUED:

41

TOM

That's just an example, I could tell you dozens of stories like that, exactly the same. You guys should do a whole series on Justice. People would like that.

MARTHA

They would, I bet they would.

TOM

So where's Henry tonight?

MARTHA

Working.

TOM

(pause)

Well, give him my regards. Sure you don't want some juice or something?

MARTHA

No thanks. You have another though.

TOM

(signals to the WAITER)

Don't mind if I do.

MARTHA

(casually)

So did you bring the list, Tom?

His face falls. He just looks at her for a long moment.

TOM

Yeah.

He looks both ways, reaches down into his briefcase, and comes up with a thin manila file. He puts it on the table.

TOM (cont'd)

You can't take it. Just a look.

MARTHA

Come on. I'm supposed to memorize every single investor in a major bank?

TOM

You'll know what you're looking for when you see it.

Martha studies the list. Tom studies Martha. A long moment passes.

41 CONTINUED:

41

TOM (cont'd)
Hey, Martha. Tell me something. Did
you honestly find even one of my
stories funny?

Martha looks him in the eye.

MARTHA
No. I didn't.

TOM
(nods)
Just wanted to know where I stood.

MARTHA
You knew when I called, Tom.

TOM
Yeah.

She goes back to the list and stops, suddenly, seeing
something there.

MARTHA
Oh, my God --

TOM
Yeah. Kinda jumps out at you,
doesn't it?

CUT TO:

42 EXT BROOKLYN COURTHOUSE DAY

42

There is a mass of PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS jammed outside the side
door of the Brooklyn criminal court building. They jockey for
position, shouting and bitching, as a couple of UNIFORM COPS
struggle to make a corridor through them, a clear way from the
doorway to a squad car that waits in the driveway.

ROBIN, the young photographer we saw earlier, is at the back
of the throng, camera in hand, trying to push her way to the
front. But she's too polite --

ROBIN
'Scuse me -- sorry -- could I just --
New York Sun -- sorry, my fault, my
fault --

-- and she ends up shoved to the back again. She plows
forward, resolute, and actually bulls her way into the middle
of the pack, but the side door opens, the crowd shifts,
stampedes forward, and Robin is squeezed out like a watermelon
seed.

42 CONTINUED:

42

ROBIN (cont'd)

Hey!

Nobody's listening. Stuck at the back of the crowd, Robin jumps, to get a view over the others. The TWO KIDS, their heads hung to escape the strobing cameras, are brought out the side door of the building and escorted by the Cops to the waiting car.

Robin, seeing she has no shot from here, turns and runs toward the car, trying to beat the rest of the crowd there.

She stakes out her ground near the car door, turns for the shot, and --

-- the crowd is upon her.

She barely has time to open her eyes in shock when they swarm over her, sending her reeling. She SHOUTS as she goes down and instinctively presses the shutter button on her camera. The autowinder WHIRRS, snapping off eight or nine shots at a bizarre angle as Robin hits the pavement and the Kids are whisked past her, into the back of the car, and driven away at top speed.

The crowd of Photographers dissipates, those who got their shots headed back to their papers, those who didn't chasing after the car.

Robin, alone, sits up in the middle of the street. She sighs.

CUT TO:

43 INT HENRY'S OFFICE DAY

43

HENRY is in his office, at the computer. JANET yells from her desk.

JANET

Carmen on four!

Henry whirls, grabs the phone and punches a button.

HENRY

Tell me tell me tell me tell me.

44 EXT BROOKLYN PRECINCT HOUSE DAY

44

CARMEN is at a phone booth outside a Brooklyn precinct house.

CARMEN

Nothing, I'm sorry. I walked into the building and all the detectives hid under their desks, they won't talk to any reporters, the guy from the Sentinel was crying, no shit!

44 CONTINUED:

44

(INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

HENRY

Ahhhhhh, God, you're killin' me,
Carmen, it's ten to eight, it's --

The phone on his desk rings. Janet SHOUTS.

JANET

Wifeline!

HENRY

Hang on, Carmen.
(punching a button)
I'm not late yet!

45 EXT PHONE BOOTH NIGHT

45

MARTHA is on the phone in a booth, very excited.

MARTHA

No, the Sedona thing, I got something
for you!

HENRY

You did go to Justice! God bless
you, I knew you knew when I said no
I meant yes!

MARTHA

Shut up and listen! I saw the
investor list. I'm reading it, it's
all just your average Wall Street
schmoes, trusts and stuff, buncha
names I don't recognize, I'm thinking
this goes nowhere, and then POW!

HENRY

Hold on.
(punches a button)
Carmen, hang in there.
(punch)
Yeah, so, pow?

MARTHA

Sedona Savings' single largest
investor, who alone lost over
twenty-five million dollars --
(a dramatic pause)
-- C&C Interstate Trucking. Nicholas
D'Attilio, proprietor.

Pause.

45 CONTINUED:

45

HENRY

Are you telling me these banker schmucks lost twenty-five million of the mob's money?!

MARTHA

Dumbfellas, huh? Unwise guys.

HENRY

You are the best, you are still the best, I love you, I love you, I love you so much.

MARTHA

(touched)

Hen-ree. You're not even tipsy.

46 INT ALICIA'S OFFICE DUSK

46

ALICIA has changed into the rather formal dress she hung on the back of her door this morning. Packing up to leave, she looks up at the clock on her wall. It's 7:55. She rests one hand on the ventilator shaft, feeling for something.

She frowns and shakes her head, ticked off.

47 INT HENRY'S OFFICE DUSK

47

HENRY is still on the phone, thinking fast.

HENRY

God, we gotta get that cop quote, they gotta say it.

MARTHA

Aw, come on! I dump a big, fat, juicy steak in your lap and you ask for sauce.

HENRY

Hang on.

(punch)

Carmen? You gotta get a quote.

CARMEN

I can't, I'm telling you --

HENRY

All cops want to talk, they just don't know they wanna talk. You gotta tell 'em.

CARMEN

I'm telling you, they took one look at my press pass and --

47 CONTINUED:

47

HENRY
You wore your press pass?!

Janet shouts again.

JANET
Paul Bladden from the Sentinel on
six!

HENRY
Shit, hold on.
(punch, now very calm)
Paul. I'll be with you in just one
second. Thanks.
(punch)
Marty. God, you're good, I'm
running this tonight.

MARTHA
Calm down, Henry! It's almost eight
o'clock, you're way past deadline,
you're supposed to be at dinner in
five minutes --

HENRY
It's your own fault! It's too good!

MARTHA
Henry, listen. Tomorrow is fine,
tomorrow --

HENRY
No! Today! Today! Today! Today!

ALICIA storms in.

ALICIA
I was on my way out at seven
fifty-five and I couldn't help but
notice our presses weren't running.
That struck me as odd, since we are,
after all, a newspaper.

HENRY
(to Martha)
Gotta go, see you, bye.
(punch)
Carmen? No offense, I'll get the
quote myself.
(punch)
Paul? What can I say, I'm gonna owe
you one. Ninety seconds more.

Henry turns his attention to Alicia.

47 CONTINUED:

47

HENRY (cont'd)
Gee, you look lovely.

ALICIA
Knock it off. What's going on?

HENRY
We didn't get the art back from the
perpwalk.

ALICIA
Who'd you send?

HENRY
Robin.

ALICIA
You sent Robin to cover the
Williamsburg perpwalk?!

HENRY
Hey, Robin happens to be a
professional news photographer!

ALICIA
Robin happens to be fourteen years
old!

HENRY
Now you're just being silly.

ALICIA
That was a cheap-ass trick, Henry.
You had no right.

HENRY
I'm onto something with this Sedona
thing, I just need a quote from the
cops --

ALICIA
You don't -- have it! Give it up
for Christ's sakes, what made today
so important all of a sudden?!

HENRY
I admit it, I may have made an error,
but --

ALICIA
I'll say you made an error, a God
damn twelve thousand dollar error,
if you get the art in the next
twenty minutes, which I sincerely
doubt.

(MORE)

47 CONTINUED:

47

ALICIA (cont'd)
All right, Bernie's not here, so this is my call. You wait till 8:30 for Robin. If she makes it back by then, run "Caught," if not, go with the subway. The hell's the matter with you?

She storms out. Janet sticks her head in the doorway immediately.

JANET
Pull it together, Henry. Bladden's still holding.

Henry takes a deep breath and picks up the phone.

HENRY
Sorry about that, Paul. Listen, I thought I had until tomorrow morn-

48 INT BLADDEN'S OFFICE DUSK

48

PAUL BLADDEN is on the phone in his office.

(INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

BLADDEN
(furious)
You are the most unethical, unprincipled -- I can't believe you had the balls to do it.

HENRY
Wait a minute, slow down, what are you talking about?

BLADDEN
You know God damn -- you took it! The Sedona thing, you stole it, right off my desk!

Henry sits back in his chair. This is a tricky one.

HENRY
Uh --

BLADDEN
Yeah, "uh" my ass. Our guy saw McDougal banging on doors all over the Justice Department.

48 CONTINUED:

48

HENRY

Well, hold on here, Paul. If we are working on a Sedona story, I'd like the truth about how you found out about it. Do you people have a mole on my paper?

BLADDEN

Did you or did you not take it?

HENRY

Because if your newspaper is involved in industrial espionage, the Sun may be forced to contemplate filing criminal charges --

BLADDEN

Cut the bullshit, Henry --

HENRY

(calling out)
Janet?! Get Gavin Polone in the D.A.'s office on the line, will you please?

BLADDEN

Did you or did you not take the item?

Pause. Henry thinks. Bladden waits. Henry clears his throat. Finally:

HENRY

(feebly)
You knew you were interviewing a journalist, Paul.

Janet sticks her head in.

JANET

Who in the D.A.'s office?

Henry just waves her off.

BLADDEN

Unbelievable. That thing didn't even lead anywhere. You hustled me for a dead-end.

HENRY

A dead-end.
(to Janet, covering the phone)
And these guys win all the awards. I can't believe it.

(MORE)

48 CONTINUED:

48

HENRY (cont'd)
(into phone again)
Look, this isn't exactly getting us
off on the right foot.

BLADDEN
The right foot?! Are you out of your
mind? The offer is rescinded. Hope
you're satisfied, asshole, you just
blew your chance to cover the world.

HENRY
(practically shouting)
I DON'T LIVE IN THE WORLD! I LIVE IN
NEW YORK CITY!!

And he SLAMS the phone down.

Pause.

JANET
Well, you handled that well.

CUT TO:

49 EXT CENT'ANNI NIGHT

49

MARTHA waits outside Cent'anni, a small Italian restaurant
downtown. She's alone, and she's annoyed.

Henry's MOTHER and FATHER come down the street. They're in
their late sixties, small town. They beam when they see
Martha. She forces a smile.

HENRY'S MOTHER
Oh my God, you're going to explode!

MARTHA
That's how I feel.

HENRY'S FATHER
Where's Henry?

MARTHA
(through clenched teeth)
Oh, running a few minutes late, I
guess.

She looks at her watch. It's 8:05.

CUT TO:

50 INT NEWSROOM NIGHT

50

POW! The clock in the newsroom leaps ahead again, and now
it's 8:20.

50 CONTINUED:

50

In contrast to earlier, the place has thinned out a bit, PEOPLE are either leaving or envying those who are. HENRY is standing over Blaisch's shoulder, reading from the notes he took from Martha.

HENRY

No, for a company, it's not an alias, it's, uh, you know, how would you say, how would you say --

BLAISCH

"Reputed mob front?"

HENRY

Hey! Ray, you got one!

He looks up at the clock.

HENRY (cont'd)

Shit!

He grabs his jacket and charges across the newsroom. McDOUGAL is coming the other way.

McDOUGAL

There you are! I couldn't get squat out of Justice, I told you my friend hates me. Why don't you send Marty, she knows that --

HENRY

Hey, does your friend in the nine-oh hate you too?

McDOUGAL

(thinks)

Not for good reason. Why?

HENRY

Gotta talk to him. Pick me up in front of Cent'anni in exactly ten minutes, okay?

McDOUGAL

What's with all the grunt work, Henry? I'm a columnist.

Henry jumps into an open elevator and hits a button.

HENRY

You're not a columnist, you're a reporter who writes long. Can you bring a clipboard?

McDOUGAL

A clipboard?

50 CONTINUED:

50

JANET catches up to him just as the doors are closing.

JANET

Henry! You can't leave till you okay
page one!

HENRY

(smiles)
Workin' on it.

The doors close and he's gone. The doors of the other
elevator open a second later, revealing --

-- ROBIN, the photographer.

CUT TO:

51 INT LION'S HEAD PUB NIGHT

51

The Lion's Head is a bastion of New York journalism, a smoky,
dark, place with a lot of framed book jackets on the wall from
books written by the guys at the bar. A TV over the bar is
tuned to New York One news. A REPORTER narrates tape from the
perpwalk earlier.

BERNIE comes in, GRUNTS to a few people, and slides onto what
must be a familiar stool at the bar. He is not in a jovial
mood.

TONY, the bartender, ageless, sees him. Their exchange has
the ring of the very familiar.

TONY

Hey, Bernie-Boy!

BERNIE

Tony. How are ya?

TONY

Can't complain. Yourself?

BERNIE

Could. Won't.

TONY

(laughs)
What can I get ya?

BERNIE

Fill a glass with scotch.

TONY

With a little ice to wake it up?

BERNIE

But not wide awake.

51 CONTINUED:

51

Tony smiles and starts fixing the drink. Bernie just watches him, somber. He looks around the bar.

It's mostly men, most of them alone, either reading or watching TV blankly or just staring off into space.

There is a SAD GUY at the end of the bar, small, baldish, who seems particularly despondent. Bernie gestures to Tony and points to the Sad Guy.

BERNIE (cont'd)

He looks familiar.

TONY

(shrugs)

Never seen him before. Says he's waitin' for a fight.

BERNIE

(to the Sad Guy)

A fight? With who?

SAD GUY

None of your business!

Bernie looks back to Tony, who shrugs. On the television, the Reporter wraps up and they cut back to the ANCHOR.

ANCHOR

-- bring you constant updates as tensions mount in the wake of --

BERNIE

Turn that off, will 'ya?

Tony does.

CUT TO:

52 INT CENT'ANNI NIGHT

52

HENRY skids around a corner and into the dining room of Cent'anni.

A few DINERS look up, but he slows to a walk and strides quickly over to the table where MARTHA and his PARENTS are sitting. A few tables away, a COUPLE has two KIDS with them. The noisy kind.

HENRY

Sorry I'm late, I hope you ordered.

MARTHA

(a tense smile)

No, we waited.

52 CONTINUED:

52

Henry kisses his mother.

HENRY

Hiya, Mom.

(to his father)

Dr. Hackett. How was the drive down?

HENRY'S FATHER

Made it in an hour forty-five.

HENRY'S MOTHER

It was two hours, it's a two hour drive. Nobody can make it in an hour forty-five.

HENRY'S FATHER

Well, nobody but me, because I had my watch and I timed it.

(quickly, to have the last word)

So how's work?

Henry kisses Martha and sits.

HENRY

Work is okay.

HENRY'S MOTHER

Oh, you liar! Martha told us about the Sentinel job. Congratulations. Let's get some champagne!

Henry gives Martha a dirty look. She smiles sweetly.

HENRY'S FATHER

The New York Sentinel! Now that's what I call a newspaper!

Henry shoots a brief, annoyed look at his father, then nervously checks his watch. Martha looks at him sharply and he shoots his cuff over it, trying to look innocent.

The WAITER, a thick-set guy of sixty or so, comes to the table.

WAITER

Have you decided?

As Henry's mother starts to order, the sound seems to drain away for Henry, and for us, as a bead of sweat rolls down the side of his face.

Behind him, the two Kids are out of their chairs, making a racket, and their high-pitched voices seem to fill Henry's whole head.

52 CONTINUED:

52

The Waiter moves on, taking Martha's order. Henry sneaks a look at his watch. It's eight twenty-eight.

The Waiter turns his attention to Henry's father. Martha, noticing Henry's distress, puts her hand on his.

MARTHA

(whispers)

Are you okay?

Henry nods and looks down again. He shifts his wrist slightly, to pull his watch out from under her hand so he can see it.

It's eight twenty-nine.

The Waiter turns to Henry, and all the sound of the restaurant returns, including the Kids, who are even louder.

Henry looks over at them, annoyed.

WAITER

And for you, sir?

Henry looks around the table. He swallows. He manages to force a sickly smile.

HENRY

Actually, uh, what I was going to say
-- you're all going to find this hard
to believe --

He looks at Martha, who is just about ready to draw a gun.

HENRY (cont'd)

-- you in particular, I have a
feeling, might get a real kick out of
it. I, uh --

He looks around the table. All eyes are on him. He just plows through this next all at once.

HENRY (cont'd)

I can't stay we haven't put the paper
to bed yet how about if I catch up
with you for dessert?

They just look at him for a long moment.

MARTHA

Are you kidding?

HENRY'S FATHER

It was a two hour drive!

52 CONTINUED:

52

HENRY'S MOTHER

They don't even let you eat dinner
now?

HENRY

And, what the hell, while I'm at
it -- I lost the Sentinel job
because I stole a lead off the
editor's desk.

They look at him, dumbfounded. The Waiter SNAPS his book
shut.

WAITER

I can see you need a few minutes.

53 EXT CENT'ANNI NIGHT

53

HENRY and MARTHA are in front of the restaurant, arguing.

HENRY

I couldn't resist, they're so smug
over there, they've got maps and
neckties and seating charts and --

MARTHA

You did it on purpose! You did
exactly what I asked you not to do!

HENRY

You're shouting.

MARTHA

I know I'm shouting, I like to
shout! Don't you notice when I keep
talking louder it's because you
haven't heard?! I try to have a
sense of humor about things, but all
it gets me is a smile and a pat on
the head. Henry -- you don't
listen! You don't see!

HENRY

Of course I see.

(pause)

See what?

She laughs at his unintentional joke. She just looks at him
for a moment, and she seems to shrink into herself. Her eyes
moisten.

MARTHA

How scared I am.

She starts to cry. He goes to her and puts his arms around
her, comforting. She cries into his shoulder.

53 CONTINUED:

53

HENRY

I'll be there. I swear I will be there. We are more important to me than anything else, you know that.

MARTHA

(sniffles)

Let me give you a hypothetical.

HENRY

(checking his watch)

Really?

MARTHA

A guy with a gun breaks into the house and holds it to my head. He says, "Either I blow your wife's brains out or I blow up the Sun building. Choose. Now." What do you say?

HENRY

What do you think I say? That's ridiculous, it's not gonna happen.

MARTHA

That's my point, Henry. It's never one big, dramatic choice, it's little, vague situations every single day where you're either there or you're not. If you keep waiting for the guy with the gun, you'll look up one day and it'll be too late.

HENRY

I will be there. I promise.

A car SCREECHES to a stop at the curb. The driver leans over and shouts out the window. It's McDOUGAL.

McDOUGAL

Henry! Eight thirty! Let's go!

He throws open the passenger door. Henry looks from it to Martha.

HENRY

Well, I mean after tonight.

She just looks at him.

HENRY (cont'd)

Hey come on, this doesn't count, this is an unusual situation.

(MORE)

53 CONTINUED:

53.

HENRY (cont'd) (cont'd)
It's eight thirty and we don't have
page one yet, they can't run
anything without me --

She just looks at him.

HENRY (cont'd)
Come on, you know what it's like!
I'm not doing this because I want
to!

MARTHA
Yes. You are.

HENRY
Hey, you do the same thing. You went
waddling off eight and a half months
pregnant to chase a story --

MCDUGAL
Henry!

MARTHA
Come with me now, Henry. Come
inside, sit down, and have dinner,
like you said you would.

Henry just looks at her.

MARTHA (cont'd)
You're not going to be able to do it,
are you?

HENRY
Yes, I am.

MARTHA
Then do it now.

HENRY
(pause)
I'll see you at home. Two hours,
tops.

She just looks at him.

HENRY (cont'd)
Don't get calm on me. Come on, shout
again, you like to shout.

MARTHA
It's not funny, Henry.

53 CONTINUED:

53

HENRY

It's a --
(stops himself)
I know it's not. I'm sorry.

MARTHA

You should have told me that if we
had a kid I was going to be on my
own. You should have told me.

McDougal BLASTS the horn.

HENRY

Two hours.

He turns, jumps in the car, SLAMS the door, and they take off.

CUT TO:

54 INT DARKROOM NIGHT

54

A contact sheet floats in a fixer bath, bathed in reddish light.

ROBIN, in the paper's darkroom, takes a pair of tongs and pulls the contact sheet out. She rinses it quickly in a water tank, drops it on a hard board, and squeegees it dry.

She puts one hand on the light switch and closes her eyes in prayer.

ROBIN

Please -- something -- anything --
anything in focus --

She flicks the light and grabs a loup, a small eyepiece for viewing contact sheets. She bends over and checks out what she's got.

THROUGH THE LOUP,

she sees plenty of bad pictures. Shot after shot of people's backs, their knees, cracks in the sidewalk.

ROBIN (o.s.)

I'm fired -- that's it -- I'm --

She stops in the middle of her sentence. The loup stops too, freezing on one picture.

The edges of the shot are somebody's legs, as Robin went down, but by some miracle, through the legs, there is a clear, perfect shot --

54 CONTINUED:

54

-- of the guys. They're just being shoved into the back of the squad car, and they're both turned, looking down at Robin in sympathy as she falls, their faces staring right into the lens and full of real concern.

Robin looks up, eyes wide.

55 INT NEWSROOM NIGHT

55

A door marked "Darkroom" SLAPS open and ROBIN steps out, shouting to anybody within earshot.

ROBIN

I GOT IT!!

CUT TO:

56 INT LION'S HEAD NIGHT

56

BERNIE is still at the bar, making his way through another drink. He talks to TONY, the bartender.

BERNIE

I got it all figured out, Tony.

TONY

(supportively)

Good for you.

BERNIE

Ninety-nine percent of your time and effort goes into three basic things. Your house. Your work. And your family.

TONY

Well --

BERNIE

Women in general, if you don't have a family. Or men, or sheep, or whatever you --

TONY

I made the leap, Bern.

BERNIE

And all three pull on you at once. In different directions. If you put 'em all together, the three of 'em want more than you've got to give. So what do you do about that?

TONY

Tell 'em to fuck off?

56 CONTINUED:

56

BERNIE

No, you balance.

TONY

Balance, right, balance.

BERNIE

But your house is a thing, it's an object, it needs what it needs, and that's that. And your work, well, your work is an abstract, it's not like you can reason with it. But your family -- now, they're people. So you figure you can get a little, a little human leeway there. You figure they'll bend.

TONY

So you crap all over 'em.

BERNIE

Yeah.

Tony just looks at him for a long moment. There doesn't seem to be much to say.

TONY

Freshen that for you?

BERNIE

You read my mind.

CUT TO:

57 INT HOTEL BALLROOM NIGHT

57

This is a very upscale hotel ballroom, or rather the back of one. A benefit is going on, from the front we hear the drone of speeches and polite applause.

GRAHAM KEIGHLEY, an impressive man in his fifties, works the tables at the rear of the room, headed for the back. Keighley's in a beautiful tuxedo, huge cigar in his mouth, eyes at half mast from drink or disinterest.

ALICIA is at a bar in the back, her eyes following Keighley keenly. She screws up her courage, knocks back her drink in one gulp, and sets off after him.

57A INT ANTEROOM NIGHT

57A

ALICIA follows KEIGHLEY into a beautiful anteroom, where a bored ATTENDANT sits at a table counting tips.

ALICIA

Uh, Graham --

57A CONTINUED:

57A

He stops and turns.

ALICIA (cont'd)
There's something I want to discuss,
and I didn't want to bother you with
it out there.

Keighley offers no encouragement, but, then again, he's not
walking away either. Alicia goes on.

ALICIA (cont'd)
I feel I have an obligation to act on
this directly, with you, because I
think we've had a good relationship,
I'd like to take it further, and I
think the best way to do that is face
to face. You and I, face to face.

KEIGHLEY
Alicia?

ALICIA
Yes?

KEIGHLEY
I'm gay.

The Attendant looks up. Alicia turns bright red.

ALICIA
Wha -- oh -- no! I wasn't -- I
didn't -- I mean, that's fine, but
I wasn't -- I -- I --

KEIGHLEY
Alicia.

ALICIA
Yes.

KEIGHLEY
I'm kidding.

Alicia melts with relief.

ALICIA
Oh. Yeah, of course. That was --
very funny. That was good.

KEIGHLEY
What's up?

ALICIA
I won't waste your time. The fact of
the matter is, I've had other offers.
(MORE)

57A CONTINUED:

57A

ALICIA (cont'd)
I like working at the Sun, I think
I do a good job, and I'd like to
stay. But frankly, to do so, I'll
need a new contract on a level with
the salaries I'm being offered.

The Attendant is staring, just as interested in his reply as
Alicia is.

Keighley just stares at Alicia for a moment.

KEIGHLEY
Didn't we just renegotiate your
contract?

ALICIA
Recently, yes, but my deal is up in a
little under a year and --

KEIGHLEY
Eighteen months, isn't it?

ALICIA
Well, yes, technically, that would be
more accurate, but --

KEIGHLEY
Uh huh. Tell you what, if you've got
other offers, you have my permission
to pursue them. And don't come to me
again without talking to Bernie
first. I don't like it. It's cheap.
Okay? We done?

Alicia looks at him, stunned by the swiftness of his rebuke.
She barely manages a nod. Keighley continues, rounding a
corner in a cloud of cigar smoke.

Alicia rounds the corner too, and finds she's looking down --

-- an enormous row of urinals. She stops in her tracks.
Keighley has stepped up to one of the urinals, next to another
POWERFUL TYPE. Keighley turns.

KEIGHLEY (cont'd)
I'd love if you weren't here.

Alicia turns, humiliated, and nearly bumps into the Attendant,
who just looks at her. She fumbles in her pocket for a tip,
comes up with a bill, and offers it.

57A CONTINUED:

57A

ATTENDANT
(kindly)
You keep it.

CUT TO:

58 INT MCDUGAL'S CAR NIGHT 58

HENRY and McDUGAL pull up in front of the 90th Precinct in Brooklyn in McDougal's car. Henry picks up a clipboard.

MCDUGAL
What the hell you want the clipboard for?

HENRY
A clipboard and a confident wave will get you into any building in the world.

59 INT PRECINCT HOUSE NIGHT 59

A COP walks past the DESK SERGEANT, flipping through arrest reports on a clipboard. He heads back into the station. HENRY and McDUGAL come in and head immediately for the back.

McDougal has the clipboard. Henry has the confident wave.

HENRY
Hi. How are ya.

The Desk Sergeant GRUNTS and they pass into the back of the station.

60 INT HALLWAY NIGHT 60

Some of the fluorescents are out in this hallway, and the others waver uncertainly, so it's not exactly well-lit. RICHIE, a detective, fortyish, heads down the hallway with a newspaper. He stops, hearing something behind him.

He turns. Nothing.

He walks again. Now we see what's behind him --

-- HENRY and McDUGAL, sneaking down the hall, following Richie. They duck into a doorway --

-- just as Richie turns around. He misses them. Richie shrugs and steps into a men's room.

Henry and McDougal step out from the doorway, scurry down the hall, go into the men's room --

61 INT MEN'S ROOM NIGHT

61

-- and stop in their tracks, staring down the barrel of Richie's .38. Richie sighs when he sees who it is and puts his gun away.

RICHIE

What are you sneakin' up on me for?!
Everybody's on edge around here!

McDOUGAL

Richie, this is Henry Hackett, the
metro editor.

RICHIE

At home, I told you a million
times, you wanna talk to me, you talk
to me at home!

He goes to the door to the bathroom and locks it.

HENRY

It's urgent. We gotta talk about
Williamsburg.

RICHIE

Williamsburg. That whole thing makes
me sick. Nick D'Attilio wants to
settle a debt, fine, but his punks go
and make it look like a race war?
What the hell kinda thinking is that?
Now they got the neighborhoods all
stirred up. It just makes me sick.

HENRY

So you're confident it was D'Attilio?

Richie looks Henry up and down.

RICHIE

What are you, new in town? They lost
his twenty-five mil, what's he gonna
do, give 'em Giants tickets?

HENRY

If you guys know it was D'Attilio,
why are those kids in jail?

RICHIE

I ain't goin' on the record.

HENRY

We just want to know what you think.
To characterize this arrest, what
would you say?

Richie looks at him suspiciously.

61 CONTINUED:

61

RICHIE

To who?

HENRY

To anybody. To your wife. You go home, she says how was your day, what do you say?

RICHIE

Fuck you.

HENRY

You say fuck you to your wife?

RICHIE

No. I say fuck you to you. What's his name again?

McDOUGAL

Henry.

RICHIE

I say, "Fuck you, Henry." You're not gettin' me fired over this.

HENRY

You know what they wanna make me run? "Caught." Over a picture of the kids.

RICHIE

What?! You're runnin' that inflammatory shit?!

HENRY

I don't wanna do it. I gotta live in New York tomorrow too. I know what the streets'll be like.

RICHIE

See, this is the kind of thing that really pisses me off.

Henry and McDougal exchange an encouraged look.

RICHIE (cont'd)

They don't know shit downtown. See, they know if they make this bust then you guys, and the L.A. Times, and the Tokyo whatever are all gonna run nice fat front page stories about how we got the guys and it's still okay to come to New York.

(MORE)

61 CONTINUED:

61

RICHIE (cont'd) (cont'd)
So the tourists and the conventions
and all that shit don't get freaked
out and spend their money someplace
else. Then, a month from now, when
they let the kids go for lack of
evidence, you guys'll bury it on page
twenty-three and nobody'll notice.

HENRY
Meanwhile, they don't care that you
guys are holding the line on a race
riot here.

RICHIE
Exactly. Race riot don't mean shit.
The way the city hall guys see it,
New Yorkers can kill each other all
they want, just lay off anybody from
out of town.

Pissed off, he turns away and kicks a garbage can. Henry
elbows McDougal.

MCDUGAL
(another tack)
These are nice kids, Richie. They're
good kids you guys threw in jail.

HENRY
They got bright futures. One of
'em's an honor student.

MCDUGAL
Other one's a pretty good ball
player.

HENRY
Yep. Goin' to Penn State in the
fall.

MCDUGAL
Is that right?

HENRY
Oh yeah.

RICHIE
Jesus.

Agonizing, Richie turns to the sink. He runs some water, and
splashes it on his face. McDougal turns, muttering to Henry
under the running water.

MCDUGAL
Penn State, huh?

61 CONTINUED:

61

HENRY
(muttering back)
I was on a roll.

Richie turns back, chewing his lip.

RICHIE
You won't use my name?

HENRY
"Police department source."

RICHIE
You'll wait ten minutes, make sure
nobody sees you leave?

MCDUGAL
We're ghosts.

Richie nods. Henry reaches into his pocket and pulls out a reporter's notebook and a pen. He flips open the notebook, he CLICKS the pen.

RICHIE
These kids?

He leans forward, ever so slightly, shakes his head sadly, and almost whispers to them.

RICHIE (cont'd)
They didn't do it.

CUT TO:

62 INT MCDUGAL'S CAR NIGHT

62

HENRY and MCDUGAL are in McDougal's car, racing back uptown. McDougal is scribbling frantically in a notebook on his knee, Henry drives like a madman.

MCDUGAL
This is great, it's great, it writes
like butter, there is actual butter
coming out of my pen.

HENRY
(checking his watch)
Nine thirty. I'll have us there by
quarter to.

He SQUEALS around a corner.

MCDUGAL
HEY! I just had this repainted!

62 CONTINUED:

62

HENRY

The guy said my headline, the guy
said my headline, can you believe
it?!

McDOUGAL

Copyright it, Henry. You made it,
you earned it, you gotta make 'em all
quote us, we'll nail every lousy
paper in town to the wall!

HENRY

God I'm glad I held page one,
Alicia's gonna have to kiss my ass
after this --

McDOUGAL

Better than sex. I'm buyin' at the
Lion's head!

CUT TO:

63 INT LION'S HEAD NIGHT

63

BERNIE is way ahead of them on that score, now at the end of
the bar, drinking with the SAD GUY. They've become close
personal friends and are both three or more sheets to the
wind.

BERNIE

I just gotta know if she hates me.
If she hates me, there's no point.

SAD GUY

Hate you?! She's your daughter!
What could you have done she'd hate
you?

BERNIE

I kept fucking my reporters. Broke
her mother's heart.

SAD GUY

(pause)
Yep, that'll do it.

BERNIE

'Nother round?

He signals to the Bartender.

SAD GUY

You know what? Past is past! You
know where she lives, break in,
apologize, make her listen to you!

63 CONTINUED:

63

BERNIE

(laughs)
I like your attitude, Killer. Come
on, have another drink. You're in
training.

(extends his hand)
Name's Bernie White, by the way.

The Sad Guy shakes hands with him.

SAD GUY

Marion Sandusky.

BERNIE

Sandusky? Why does that ring a bell?

CUT TO:

64 EXT SUN BUILDING NIGHT

64

The big green clock on the Sun building says nine
forty-five. McDougal's car SCREECHES to a halt, double parked
in front. HENRY and McDOUGAL leap out and run into the
building.

65 INT NEWSROOM NIGHT

65

The elevator doors DING open. HENRY and McDOUGAL hurry out,
talking as they go.

HENRY

Type it in and proof it yourself,
I'll paste up page one, I wanna run
it by ten. Make sure you --

He stops in the middle of his sentence, and in his tracks as
well. He looks around, sensing something.

McDOUGAL

What's the matter?

HENRY

You feel that?

McDougal just stares at him for a moment, but then his face
goes white, as he is struck by a terrible, terrible thought.

McDOUGAL

Oh, no.

Henry looks over at a ventilator shaft a few feet away.
There's a glass on it, filled with ice and Coke --

-- and the cubes are TINKLING.

66 INT STAIRWELL NIGHT 66

HENRY dives into the stairwell, McDOUGAL right behind him. The TINKLING of the ice gives way to a RUMBLING sound below them, which grows into THUNDER as they fly down the stairs.

67 INT PRESS ROOM NIGHT 67

HENRY and McDOUGAL fly through another stairwell door and burst out into a huge, high-ceilinged room where the sound is almost deafening.

They stop and stare in amazement --

-- at the ROARING presses.

If you haven't seen presses running in person, ya oughta check it out. Huge rolls of paper spin and feed into a complex web of spindles and catchers and paper paths.

Henry and McDougal race over and stare at the paper as it SLAMS through the presses, unstoppable. They run along the length of the room, to the end, where page one after page one drops into place at the end of the run.

The headline is easy to read.

"CAUGHT!", it says.

The photo is a huge blowup of Robin's shot of the suspects. Their faces stare into the lens, concerned, seeming to scream out their innocence in spite of the condemning word overhead.

McDOUGAL

Oh, my God.

HENRY

Those idiots, those idiots ran it,
THOSE IDIOTS RAN THE WRONG FUCKING
HEADLINE!

They just stand there, totally defeated, watching as thousands and thousands of wrong headlines fly past them.

Henry looks up, determined.

HENRY (cont'd)

I'm stopping it.

McDOUGAL

What?!

He turns and walks quickly back the way they came.

HENRY

We stop and replate. Go upstairs.
Type up what we've got. Tell Lou to
paste up "They Didn't Do It" --

67 CONTINUED:

67

McDOUGAL
(loving this)
You won't do it.

HENRY
-- we'll use the same art they used
for "Caught" --

McDOUGAL
You don't have the balls to do it!

HENRY
-- have it ready in five minutes, not
a minute more --

McDOUGAL
Do you have the balls?

Henry hits a metal staircase at the end of the room and climbs it, fast, toward a platform at the end, a few steps higher than the rest of the press room.

HENRY
(shouting at McDougal)
MOVE IT!

68 UP ON THE PLATFORM,

68

A PRESS OPERATOR is at the top, feet on his desk, reading a magazine.

HENRY
How do we stop the presses?

PRESS OPERATOR
Who are you?

HENRY
The God damn metro editor. How do we
stop the presses?

PRESS OPERATOR
We don't stop the presses.

HENRY
If we had to. If a guy breaks in
here with a gun and holds it to your
head, how do you stop the presses?

PRESS OPERATOR
(gestures across the room)
Hit the kill button.

Henry looks across the room. Behind a square metal cage, there are two large buttons, one red, one green. Simple enough.

68 CONTINUED:

68

He marches over to it. The Press Operator practically falls out of his chair.

PRESS OPERATOR (cont'd)
Hey, hey, HEY, HEY, you don't touch that!

Henry tries to pull the metal cage open, but it's locked.

HENRY
Where's the key?

PRESS OPERATOR
Nobody touches that but Chuck!

HENRY
Give me the key.

PRESS OPERATOR
Chuck's got the key.

HENRY
Give me Chuck.

69 INT BATHROOM NIGHT

69

BANG! A men's room door SLAMS open and HENRY races in. He looks left and right, sees nobody, and walks quickly down a row of stalls, bending over to see if anybody's in them.

The door is closed on the second to last stall, and Henry sees a pair of work boots from under the door.

He goes into the neighboring stall, jumps up on the toilet, and looks down into the occupied stall. CHUCK looks up, surprised as hell, dropping his magazine into his lap to cover himself.

CHUCK
Hey!

HENRY
Hi. How are ya.

CUT TO:

70 INT NEWSROOM NIGHT

70

ALICIA is back in her office. There's a can of beer in a bag on her desk, and Alicia looks like it's not her first. She looks up, hearing something, and goes to her door.

She sees a lot of activity in the newsroom. McDOUGAL is at a monitor, typing furiously, PEOPLE swarming around him, helping.

70 CONTINUED:

70

Alicia goes out into the newsroom, a bit of stagger in her step. As she gets closer, she notices a paste-up of a new page one, Henry's page one, on the computer screen in front of LOU.

ALICIA
What the hell's going on?

CUT TO:

71 INT PRESS ROOM NIGHT

71

HENRY and CHUCK hurry across the press room, back toward the glass booth. Chuck has a big ring of keys that he's sorting through, which are connected to his belt by a tug chain.

CHUCK
You sure you got authorization for this?

HENRY
I've got authorization. How long will it take to get it started again once we have the new plate in?

CHUCK
Twenty, thirty minutes, we gotta rethread the whole machine. Look, I'd feel better if I talked to Ms. Stark first.

HENRY
I told you, I already talked to her.

The door to the stairwell SLAPS open right in front of them, spilling ALICIA and McDOUGAL into the press room.

ALICIA
(to Henry)
You son of a bitch, you are not stopping this run!

Chuck immediately lets go of his keys, and they ZING back into his belt.

HENRY
(just as pissed off)
Did you run that?! Did you run that headline?!

ALICIA
You're God damn right I did! I got a desperate call at five to nine saying we were two hours past our deadline and nobody knew where the hell you were!

71 CONTINUED:

71

HENRY

Your headline is wrong, Alicia.
One hundred eighty degrees wrong.
We have to change it.

ALICIA

(to Chuck)

How far through the run are we?

CHUCK

Quarter of the way, maybe more.
There's fifty, sixty thousand papers
sitting in the bin.

ALICIA

No way. No way. We run what we've
got.

She turns and heads for the door. Henry intercepts her.

HENRY

It's wrong!

ALICIA

Given the information we had at the
time, the story is right.

HENRY

Yeah, but it's not right! IT'S
WRONG!!

ALICIA

Not today it's not. Tomorrow it's
wrong. We only have to be right for
a day.

Henry steps back, trying to control himself, now practically
begging with Alicia.

HENRY

Listen to me. This shouldn't be
semantics. This shouldn't be a money
thing. People will read us and
believe us.

ALICIA

We're the Sun. They'll take us
with a grain of salt.
(the last word)
We'll run yours tomorrow.

HENRY

Not tomorrow. Today.

Alicia just looks at Henry with contempt. Her voice goes
strangely calm. The liquor is definitely talking.

71 CONTINUED:

71

ALICIA

I bet you thought it would never catch up with you, didn't you? I bet you thought I didn't even know the shit you guys said about me.

HENRY

Alicia --

ALICIA

What, you thought I didn't get the bean counter jokes, you thought I couldn't understand your snide shit? You don't even have a fucking college degree.

HENRY

Hey.

ALICIA

You think I don't notice you assholes always wait until I leave before you sneak off to the Lion's Head? Can't even invite me for a lousy fucking beer.

HENRY

This isn't about you and me, Alicia.

ALICIA

Thought it'd never catch up with you. Well, fuck you, Henry. It catches up today.

(to Chuck)

We run what we've got.

She moves past Henry and heads for the door.

Henry wastes no time. He turns, rips the keys off Chuck's belt, and heads for the glass booth.

CHUCK

HEY!

Alicia whirls, but Henry's already marching off across the press room. Alicia catches up, grabs Henry by the shoulder, and spins him around.

ALICIA

Give me those keys.

Henry just shrugs her off and keeps moving, picking a key from the ring. Alicia races ahead and cuts him off at the metal stairs.

71 CONTINUED:

71

ALICIA (cont'd)
Give me the keys, Hackett.

Henry tries to step around her, but she shoves him back.

HENRY
Don't do that.

He tries to go around her again, but she grabs him. Henry shrugs her off, a little too hard, and Alicia stumbles and falls.

A small crowd is starting to form.

HENRY (cont'd)
You okay?

He reaches out to pull Alicia up by an arm, but Alicia shakes Henry's hand off, violently, swinging her arm. Her elbow CRACKS into Henry's nose inadvertantly and Henry staggers back, in pain.

CHUCK
All right, hold it, both --

Henry has one hand to his face, the keys dangling from the other.

HENRY
I'm going upstairs.

He takes one step forward, but Alicia --

-- punches him in the face. Henry staggers back, just as surprised as he is hurt. Alicia immediately recoils and holds her hand in pain.

HENRY (cont'd)
What are you, nuts?! Get out of the way!

He heads for the stairs again, but Alicia lunges and tackles him, SLAMMING both of them into the metal steps. Henry shoves Alicia off and gets to his feet.

HENRY (cont'd)
I'll pop you, I swear to God, I --

CHUCK
Knock it off, you guys!

Alicia gets up and lunges at Henry. He shakes her off, but swings his arm wildly, CRACKING his hand into a cement wall.

Henry SHOUTS in pain and bends over, holding his hand between his knees.

71 CONTINUED:

71

Alicia takes advantage, stepping forward and taking a huge, swiping kick at Henry --

-- but Henry moves out of the way, Alicia's foot swings wildly up in the air and over her own head, and she goes down on her back, OOOOFING hard, knocking the wind out of herself.

McDOUGAL

These idiots couldn't hurt each other
if they wanted to.

Alicia lies flat on her back, GASPING for air. Henry, blood dripping from his upper lip, stands over her, breathing hard.

HENRY

And let that be a lesson to you.

He turns to go as Alicia fumbles in her purse.

ALICIA

Henry.

He turns around, just as Alicia presses the button on a can of Mace.

Henry's eyes go wide, but the thin stream just misses him --

-- and hits the GUY behind him.

The Guy SHOUTS in pain and falls to his knees. Alicia GASPS and drops the mace, horrified.

ALICIA (cont'd)

Sorry!

Henry shakes his head and turns --

-- but Alicia is all over him suddenly, punching and clawing and tugging everywhere.

Henry tries to shove her off, but she's relentless and this is going on and on and there's only so much a guy can take and finally --

-- he CRACKS her one in the eye.

Alicia goes down. For a moment, everyone is shocked, including Henry.

Then they get over it.

Henry climbs the stairs.

72 ON THE PLATFORM,

72

Henry BANGS open the protective metal grill with the key from Chuck's ring, takes one last look out at the ROARING presses --

-- and PUNCHES the big red kill button.

Immediately, the sound of the presses changes, their ROAR winding down, and down, and down, into a low HUM, and then, finally, silence as they are stilled.

Henry turns at a sound at the stairs to the platform. Alicia is there, so are McDougal and Chuck.

ALICIA

You are so fucking fired.

Henry just looks at her.

ALICIA (cont'd)

(to Chuck)

Can we start it up again without a web tear?

CHUCK

Probably.

ALICIA

Then do it.

Henry turns to leave as Chuck goes to the start button and hits it. As the low WHINE starts up again from downstairs, Henry turns back.

HENRY

Hey. Alicia.

She turns and looks at him.

HENRY (cont'd)

Congratulations. You've officially become everything you used to hate.

He leaves. McDougal stays, just standing there, staring at her like a judge. Alicia shifts, uncomfortable under McDougal's gaze.

ALICIA

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

73 BACK DOWN IN THE PRESS ROOM,

73

Henry walks out, past the presses as they GROAN slowly back to life. He pauses, watching as those headlines start to move past him, faster and faster until they are a blur.

73 CONTINUED:

73

He closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

74 INT RIKER'S ISLAND NIGHT

74

Row by row, the harsh fluorescents in Riker's Island CLUNK off, plunging the cell blocks into near-darkness. It's lights out.

In two adjoining cells, the TWO BLACK KIDS who were arrested stand at the bars, eyes wide with fear and disbelief.

It's quiet in here, except for the CLUNKING of the lights and the SLAMMING of cell doors somewhere far away as the next block is put to bed.

SECOND KID

(a whisper)
I'm so scared.

FIRST KID

Don't talk.

SECOND KID

What do I do?

FIRST KID

You stay awake.

CUT TO:

75 EXT SUN BUILDING NIGHT

75

McDOUGAL comes out of the Sun building, pissed off. He takes his keys out of his pocket, goes to where his car was double-parked --

-- and finds it gone.

He hears a ROAR down the block, turns, and sees his car being towed away by a city tow truck. The truck reaches the end of the block and turns right, too close to the street light.

McDougal hears the GROAN of metal and the flash of sparks as the whole right side of his car is caved in again, and then the truck is gone.

McDougal just stares, his mouth hanging open. He sits on the curb, totally defeated.

ALICIA comes out of the building behind him and sees him sitting on the curb.

ALICIA

What's the matter with you?

75 CONTINUED:

75

McDOUGAL
(too tired to fight)
Car got towed.

ALICIA
Again?

McDOUGAL
Yep.

ALICIA
You want a ride?

McDougal doesn't answer.

ALICIA (cont'd)
Come on, I'm not a leper. I'll buy
you a drink.

CUT TO:

76 INT HACKETT KITCHEN NIGHT

76

MARTHA is at the kitchen table, typing furiously at a typewriter, muttering to herself.

MARTHA
"Thank you so much for the ugly blue
thing I got from two other people.
What was it, on sale?"

She pauses and reaches for a bottle of water to her right, but sees it's empty. She gets up. She reels a tiny bit, a hand to the side of her head, as if she got up too fast. She goes to the refrigerator, opens it, and hunts around for something else.

She settles on a bottle of apple juice, opens it, turns back to the table --

-- and GASPS. The bottle of juice slips through her fingers and SMASHES into a million pieces on the tile floor.

The chair where she was sitting is covered in blood.

Martha, woozy now, staggers up against the telephone table and claws the receiver out of its cradle.

She punches 911 and waits while it rings.

She's getting pale, wobbly, something is going very, very wrong very, very quickly.

76 CONTINUED:

76

MARTHA
(into phone)
I think I -- need somebody.

CUT TO:

77 INT LION'S HEAD NIGHT

77

The Lion's Head is filling up as the night wears on. BERNIE and SANDUSKY are still at the bar, another round in front of them, even tipsier than before.

BERNIE
Sandusky. I know that name from some place.

SANDUSKY
(testy)
It's a common name.

BERNIE
No, no, that's not it --

SANDUSKY
I gotta go to the john.

He gets up.

ACROSS THE BAR,

the front door opens and McDUGAL comes in, extremely annoyed. ALICIA is just a few steps behind him.

McDOUGAL
What do you want me to say? You want me to say "Good job?" You want me to say you struck a blow for journalistic integrity today? Can't do it. You abused your position to settle a personal score. It is what it is. Live with it. Henry was right.

As they cross to the bar, it looks as though McDougal and Sandusky are going to bump right into each other --

-- but at the last moment Sandusky turns to go into the bathroom. He doesn't see McDougal.

AT THE BAR,

McDougal and Alicia take stools at the bar and nod to the BARTENDER.

77 CONTINUED:

77

ALICIA

What do you mean, Henry was right?
Henry was glib, and that's all.
Everything I used to hate -- what
does that even mean?

McDOUGAL

Let it go.

ALICIA

Henry wouldn't have a newspaper to
work on if I hadn't saved it.

McDOUGAL

Henry doesn't have a newspaper to
work on.

ALICIA

You know what I'm talking about.

McDOUGAL

Sure I do. Do you?

ALICIA

Don't give me that high-handed shit.
We're not exactly the Washington
Post, you know.

McDOUGAL

(offended)

No, we're not. We run stupid
headlines because we think they're
funny, we run maimings on the front
page because we got good art, and I
spend three weeks bitching about my
car because it sells papers -- but at
least it's the truth. As far as I
can remember, we never, ever, ever
knowingly got a story wrong. Until
tonight. Remember when you went to
journalism school in the first place?
Nineteen seventy-four, same as me. A
corrupt president lied, but the
papers told the truth and they busted
him. You loved it, it thrilled you,
you chose your profession because it
was decent. Now you could give a
shit. That's what Henry meant.

Alicia just stares at him.

ACROSS THE ROOM,

Sandusky comes out of the bathroom and is heading back to the
bar when he freezes in his tracks, staring at --

77 CONTINUED:

77

-- McDougal.

CUT TO:

78 EXT APARTMENT BUILDING NIGHT

78

HENRY walks down a sidewalk in the Village, head down, nose swelling, hand probably broken, not exactly on top of the world. He hesitates outside the Lion's Head, the friendly MURMURING coming from inside --

-- but then he looks down the block. He sees an ambulance parked in front of an apartment building, its lights flashing.

He looks at it curiously and walks past the bar.

He fishes out his keys and goes into the building.

79 INT BUILDING LOBBY NIGHT

79

HENRY comes into the lobby.

HENRY
How are you, Victor?

VICTOR, the doorman, looks up. The look on Victor's face is strange, he can't seem to say anything.

HENRY (cont'd)
(of his face)
Walked into a door.

Victor still doesn't say anything, but he takes a step or two toward Henry. Henry rings for the elevator.

VICTOR
Mr. Hackett --

Henry turns and looks at him, but that's all the further Victor can get.

Henry darts a look outside, at the ambulance, whirls back, sees what floor the elevator is on --

-- and it hits him.

HENRY
Oh God.

80 INT NINTH FLOOR NIGHT

80

HENRY bursts through the stairway door on the ninth floor. He heads for the end of the hall, where the last door on the left is wide open, light spilling from the apartment inside.

80 CONTINUED:

80

He swallows and tries to compose himself, walking quickly toward that door, no idea what he'll find when he gets there.

HENRY

Please, please not --

He just reaches the doorway, sees that the door has been splintered right off its hinges, but then has to jump out of the way as TWO PARAMEDICS hustle out of the apartment, fast, wheeling a stretcher between them.

MARTHA is on the stretcher.

HENRY (cont'd)

Marty?! Oh God!

But Martha is unconscious, an oxygen mask over her face. The Paramedics are all business, wheeling her for the elevator as fast as they can.

PARAMEDIC 1

Out of the way, sir!

HENRY

I'm her husband, what's going on?!

81 EXT APARTMENT BUILDING NIGHT

81

The PARAMEDICS wheel MARTHA out of the building and to the ambulance, fast. HENRY hurries alongside.

PARAMEDIC 1

(very fast)

-- severe blood loss and dizziness.
She lost consciousness on the phone
and we forced our way into the
apartment. The hemorrhage --

82 IN THE AMBULANCE,

82

the Paramedic starts to hook Martha up to an IV, talking very fast while he works and the Second Paramedic SLAMS the doors shut from the outside.

PARAMEDIC 1

-- is vaginal, which means we could
be looking at placenta previa or
abruptio placenta. I need you to
answer some questions for me. When
is she due?

Henry can't really speak, just holds Martha's hand and shakes his head, confused.

82 CONTINUED:

82

PARAMEDIC 1 (cont'd)
Does she have any existing health
problems or allergies?

Henry can barely manage a shrug.

PARAMEDIC 1 (cont'd)
If you want to help her, answer my
questions! Can you do that for me?!

HENRY
She's due in two weeks. No health
problems -- no allergies --

PARAMEDIC 1
Good! Let's go!

He finishes with the IV, POUNDS the roof of the ambulance, and
it pulls away with a jerk, the siren SCREAMING.

CUT TO:

83 INT LION'S HEAD NIGHT

83

The Lion's Head is almost full to capacity now.

IN A LITTLE HALLWAY,

ALICIA is on the phone, plugging one ear, trying to hear.

ALICIA
Yeah, who's this? It's Alicia Stark.
Get me the press room.

OVER AT THE BAR,

The BARTENDER puts a shot of tequila on the bar in front of
SANDUSKY, who picks it up with a shaking hand. BERNIE, next to
him, suddenly snaps his fingers.

BERNIE
I know where I know your name!

Sandusky tosses back the shot, shivers, and stands up. Bernie
follows his gaze across the corner of the bar. Sandusky is
staring at McDougal.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Uh oh.

Sandusky vaults himself across the corner of the bar, right at
McDougal.

And all hell breaks loose.

83 CONTINUED:

83

McDougal SHOUTS, but Sandusky hits him full in the chest and the two of them topple over backwards. PEOPLE leap to their feet, Sandusky and McDougal hit the floor with a huge THUD, and McDougal's gun tumbles out of his jacket and skitters across the floor.

IN THE LITTLE HALLWAY,

Alicia strains to hear over the uproar.

ALICIA
(into phone)
I can barely hear you! No, Chuck!
I need to talk to Chuck! NOW!
(for the third time)
ALICIA STARK!

BACK IN THE BAR,

there is a momentary lull in the fight as everyone sort of stares at the gun on the floor --

-- and then Sandusky rolls quickly off of McDougal, picks up the gun, and scrambles to his feet.

He stands there, pointing the gun at McDougal with shaking, drunken hands. Things get real quiet.

SANDUSKY
I don't need you to tell me the parking department's fucked up, okay?! I know it's fucked up, it was fucked up when I got there! Why'd you have to pick on me?!

McDOUGAL
You should have returned my calls.

SANDUSKY
(flipping out)
You called me a pointless little bureaucrat!

McDOUGAL
You should have paid for the damage.

SANDUSKY
You made my kids afraid to go to school! You made my wife cry when she reads the newspaper!

McDOUGAL
She bought it, didn't she?

The crowd can't help it, and TITTERS. Sandusky, livid, raises the pistol at McDougal again, wanting to shoot.

83 CONTINUED:

83

SANDUSKY
You tell me. You tell me right now,
or I pull the trigger. WHY --
ME?!

MCDUGAL
You work for the city. It was your
turn.

Sandusky just looks at him for a moment.

MCDUGAL (cont'd)
Now you listen to me. You don't want
to hurt me. You don't want to go to
jail. You want to scare me, fine,
scare me, but --

Sandusky points the gun just to the left of McDougal.

AROUND THE CORNER,

Alicia finally gets Chuck on the line.

ALICIA
Chuck! Thank God I caught you! I
want you to --

BACK IN THE BAR,

BANG!!

Sandusky fires the gun into the wall. The crowd SHOUTS,
Bernie grabs the little guy from behind, and McDougal strips
the gun from him.

There is a general easing of tension for a moment, until they
hear a loud THUD from the hallway behind them. They whirl and
look at the wall.

There's a perfectly round bullethole, around knee high,
through which light pours from the other side.

IN THE HALLWAY,

Bernie, McDougal, Sandusky, and a few others tear around the
corner and find Alicia lying on the floor under the pay phone,
clutching her leg, a pool of blood growing underneath it.

BERNIE
Oh, my God.

CHUCK'S VOICE comes from the phone, which swings from its
cord.

83 CONTINUED:

83

CHUCK (o.s.)
Ms. Stark? What were you going to
say? Ms. Stark!

SANDUSKY
Oops.

Alicia looks up at them, more surprised than anything else.

ALICIA
A bullet came out of the wall.

BERNIE
(to McDougal)
Call an ambulance!

McDougal grabs the phone and hangs it up, Chuck's voice still
SQUAWKING on the other end, while Bernie bends over and tries
to stop the flow of blood through Alicia's torn trousers.

ALICIA
Why did the bullet come out of the
wall?

MCDUGAL
(helpfully)
To get to the other side?

BERNIE
Shut up! You shut up too, Alicia,
you got shot.

SANDUSKY
I'm sorry! I'm so sorry! Tell her I
said I'm sorry!

ALICIA
I gotta talk to Chuck.

McDougal notices a hole in the wall under the phone.

MCDUGAL
Hey! I found the bullet!

BERNIE
Will you just make the call?!

MCDUGAL
I'm on hold.
(into phone)
Yeah! A woman's been shot! We need
an ambulance!

ALICIA
Get me one too, will you?

83 CONTINUED:

83

Her eyes roll back in her head and she passes out.

CUT TO:

84 INT HOSPITAL NIGHT

84

POW! The double doors to a hospital emergency room fly open as the PARAMEDICS wheel the gurney with MARTHA on it inside. HENRY is right alongside, holding her hand, trying to keep up.

An E.R. DOCTOR is immediately there, talking back and forth with the Paramedics and NURSES.

DOCTOR

Whaddya got?

PARAMEDIC 1

Placenta rupture, severe blood loss,
maybe three, four full units --

DOCTOR

(to a Nurse)

Type and cross her for six units, get
an OB surgeon down here ready for a
C-section in five minutes, we'll use
four, it's prepped for an appendectomy
and get some volume into her, saline,
anything, come on GO!

As more medical personnel descend on the gurney that's headed for a very brightly lit room at the end of the hall, Henry gets jostled and shoved to the back.

HENRY

Is she going to be all right?!

DOCTOR

Wait here.

And they're gone, into the operating room, the doors swinging shut behind them. Henry turns, desperate, and practically falls into a chair.

He drops his head into his hands.

CUT TO:

85 INT HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM NIGHT

85

POW!! Another stretcher SMACKS through emergency room doors and takes off down the corridor, this time with ALICIA on it. More DOCTORS and NURSES descend on it.

PARAMEDIC 1

Gunshot, possible nick of the femoral
artery --

85 CONTINUED:

85

ALICIA
(very groggy)
I have to call my office --

DOCTOR
Put her in six, we'll go in right
away, let's get her intubated and
keep those lungs pink --

Alicia paws at a pay phone as they whiz past it, but just
manages to knock it off the hook.

ALICIA
-- take me a second --

The pay phone just swings from its cord as they BANG through
more doors and into --

86 AN EXAMINATION ROOM.

86

NURSES move over to prep Alicia for surgery, SURGEONS step
forward and start to clean and anesthetize her wound.

Alicia fumbles in the pocket of her jacket and comes up with
something small, brown, and tattered.

It's a reporter's notebook.

CUT TO:

87 INT HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM NIGHT

87

HENRY sits alone in the waiting room. He's looking down, his
hands in his hair, he's been crying. Someone rests a can of
Coca-Cola on top of his head.

Henry looks up. It's BERNIE.

Henry smiles tightly at him, takes the Coke, and opens it.

HENRY
What are you doing here?

BERNIE
Long story. She gonna be okay?

HENRY
Maybe.
(pause)
I shoulda been with her.

Bernie doesn't answer. He sits down next to him, opens a can
of Coke of his own, and takes a long drink. They sit back and
wait together.

87 CONTINUED:

87

After a long moment, Henry leans over to Bernie and speaks softly.

HENRY (cont'd)
Hey, do I know that guy?

Bernie looks across the room. SANDUSKY sits in the corner, in the dark, chewing his nails, the picture of guilt.

BERNIE
I think he's a friend of Alicia's.

88 INT EMERGENCY ROOM NIGHT

88

RIP!! ALICIA tears a piece of paper with scribbling on it out of the reporter's notebook and lets a pen slip out of her fingers.

An ANESTHETIST starts to lower a mask over her face, but Alicia puts a hand up, holding it off, and grabs a nurse by the shirttail.

The Nurse turns and Alicia shoves the paper at her.

ALICIA
Make a call for me?

89 INT MARTHA'S OPERATING ROOM NIGHT

89

Now a mask is resting over a face, but it's MARTHA's face. She's in surgery, and it's a heavy duty one.

No one speaks in the room, there's just the sound of instruments CLICKING, a respirator WHOOSHING --

-- and a heart monitor that BEEPS a steady rhythm.

90 INT PRESS ROOM NIGHT

90

The presses still THUNDER in the press room, pumping out paper after paper with "Caught!" on the front page.

From the platform above the room, the PRESS OPERATOR SLAMS a telephone down and SHOUTS at the top of his lungs.

PRESS OPERATOR
RE-PLATE!

CHUCK keys open the metal box and SLAMS the red kill button.

91 DOWN ON THE PRESS FLOOR,

91

the giant presses start to slow their pace like before.

92 INT OPERATING ROOM NIGHT 92

The heart monitor skips a beat, becomes irregular. The tension goes up a notch in the operating room.

93 INT TYPESET ROOM NIGHT 93

FOOM! With an X-ray flash, we see Henry's page one -- "They Didn't Do It!" -- photographed. It's a negative image, the blacks white and vice-versa.

FOOM!

Another negative image, this time of the copy for the story.

A TYPESETTER RIPS a cartridge from the typeset machine that took the pictures. She carries it, fast, across the room, to another machine.

She SLAMS the cartridge into the side of the second machine and punches a few buttons. The machine HUMS and spits out strips of photographic paper with positive images of the cover and story.

94 INT OPERATING ROOM NIGHT 94

A respirator inflates and deflates, filling MARTHA's lungs.

95 INT HALLWAY NIGHT 95

The halls are empty as a TYPESETTER tears ass down the hall, the long, curling strips of photographic paper flowing behind him like tails. He BANGS through a door at the end of the hall marked "Paste-Up."

96 INT PASTE-UP ROOM NIGHT 96

SLICE! A giant paper cutter hacks off the rough edges of the photographic strips. ZIP! Exacto knives cut it even closer. With a HUM, the cleaned up strips are sucked between two thick rollers and feed out the other side, straightened, flat, and with hot paraffin on the back.

Two large cardboard faces with blue lines running down the middle have the old page one and lead story on them. Rough hands RIP those stories off like old Band-Aids, making room for --

-- our story. Skilled hands smooth the new strips onto the board between the blue lines. Robin's same picture is SLAPPED into place under the headline.

The easel the boards are on PURRS to life, rotating up ninety degrees to face a huge refrigerator-like camera that FLASHES twice.

97 INT OPERATING ROOM NIGHT 97

MARTHA's hand drops off the operating table. A NURSE's hand picks it up to move it back and Martha squeezes.

98 INT PRESS ROOM NIGHT 98

A MOCK-UP GUY bursts out of the stairwell and into the press room.

PRESS OPERATOR

Where you been, hurry up, go, GO,
GO!

The Mock-Up Guy crabwalks under the press bed, opens a drum underneath, shoves a cartridge in, SLAMS the drum shut, and rolls out.

99 UP ON THE PLATFORM, 99

CHUCK hits the green button and the presses start to roll.

100 DOWN ON THE PRESS ROOM FLOOR, 100

the WORKERS all stand back, breathing hard, as the presses pick up speed, running the new headline.

Finished papers, bundled automatically, CHUNK out of the press at the end. They hit an inclined stainless steel chute, slide right through a hole in the wall and end up --

101 INT SUN GARAGE NIGHT 101

-- in the loading dock. Dozens of Sun trucks are being loaded up, ready to go.

102 INT OPERATING ROOM NIGHT 102

The mask is removed from MARTHA's face.

CUT TO:

103 EXT NEW YORK CITY DAWN 103

The sun comes up over the city. The big clock in Columbus Circle says it's six thirty-five.

CUT TO:

104 INT HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM DAY 104

HENRY sits, eyes wide open, crammed uncomfortably into the waiting room chair. SANDUSKY is now in the chair next to him, also asleep. A DOCTOR steps into the room, red blood on his greens. Henry looks up.

CUT TO:

105 EXT STREET DAY

105

BERNIE, in the same clothes from last night, walks down a street on the Upper West Side, checking addresses against a piece of paper he holds.

He stops in front of a brownstone, summons his nerve, and goes up the steps.

He runs his fingers down the row of buzzers and hesitates before one in particular. As he's about to ring, something catches his eye from the window to his right.

It's the kitchen of the ground floor unit, and DEANNE, his daughter, is visible inside the apartment. Bernie steps back, not to be seen, and watches for a moment.

Inside, it's a domestic scene. Deanne is in her work clothes already, making and eating breakfast. A MAN is there too, reading the paper, still in his night clothes.

Deanne moves to the other side of the room, out of Bernie's eyesight, and when she comes back into the room --

-- she's holding a baby.

Bernie just stares for a long moment, stunned.

THUNK! Something SLAMS into the door next to him, startling the hell out of him. It's a newspaper.

A delivery car continues down the street, the DRIVER tossing papers to the other brownstones.

Deanne hears the sound and leaves the kitchen to get the paper. The front door opens suddenly --

-- but Bernie is gone.

Deanne never knew anyone was there. She bends down, picks up the paper, and opens it.

It's today's Sun. She looks at the front page, fascinated, then opens it and flips to the story, reading it right there on her front step.

HALF A BLOCK AWAY,

Bernie, unnoticed by Deanne, sees the front page when she opens the paper, sees that it's his paper she's reading.

He smiles. He turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

106 INT HOSPITAL DAY

106

HENRY stands outside the hospital nursery, staring through the glass. There's a baby beyond the glass, many of them, in fact, but he's staring at the one with the name card that says "Hackett."

Frankly, the kid is nothing special. Small, reddish, kinda messy-lookin'. But Henry stares at it like a work of art.

He snaps out of it for a second and smiles at himself. He shakes his head.

HENRY
Unbelievable. Snatched.

CUT TO:

107 INT MARTHA'S HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

107

HENRY appears in the doorway to MARTHA's hospital room. She's in bed, looking out the window. As he walks in, she turns and looks at him.

She smiles. He goes to her and embraces her, as hard as she can take it.

HENRY
I'm so sorry, Marty.

MARTHA
Hey, Henry. Did you notice?

HENRY
What?

MARTHA
All the crap. Today I can't even remember it.

108 EXT HOSPITAL ROOF DAY

108

HENRY and BERNIE are on the roof of the hospital. Bernie smokes a cigarette, looking out at the city below. Henry is looking at his headline, beaming.

HENRY
Never woulda picked Alicia to do it.
Not in a million years.

BERNIE
She cost us almost eighty grand, but they're quoting us all over the country. Keighley was on "Good Morning America," I think he even stayed awake.

Henry has flipped it open and is reading McDougal's article.

108 CONTINUED:

108

HENRY

Can McDougal write or what? New York
spreads him on its toast.

BERNIE

Look, Alicia's willing to forget your
little kickboxing fight last night if
you are. The job's still yours if
you want it, Henry.

Henry looks at him for a long time.

BERNIE (cont'd)

Come on, I know you lost the
Sentinel thing. You need it. And
we need you.

Henry seems to be wavering.

BERNIE (cont'd)

What are you telling me, after what
you accomplished yesterday you can
just walk away from it? I'll get you
more dough, you and Marty can work it
out. You should see your face,
you're dyin' for it. Come on back.
Whaddya say?

Henry turns and looks at Bernie, grinning from ear to ear.

HENRY

Nope.

Bernie looks at him, and he seems almost misty.

BERNIE

Good for you.

They look out at the city, and a long moment goes by. Bernie
looks back at Henry.

BERNIE (cont'd)

So what are you gonna do?

HENRY

I have no idea. Somethin' awful.

BERNIE

P.R.?

HENRY

(laughs)

Sales. Whaddya say, Bernie, would
you buy a cellular phone from me?

108 CONTINUED:

108

They both laugh until they stop. Henry looks a little ill. Bernie looks at him for a moment. He's torn, like a man who can't believe what he's about to say. Finally, he sighs.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Aw, what the hell, Henry, you earned it. You wanna take a shot at a column?

Henry looks at Bernie. Slowly, he smiles.

HENRY
You got a heart like a Cherry Slurpee, Bernie.

CUT TO:

109 EXT RIKER'S ISLAND DAY

109

The big metal doors of Riker's Island swing open and the TWO BLACK KIDS step out, blinking in the sunlight.

The doors open on two cars that are parked outside, waiting. Four or five FAMILY MEMBERS pour out of the cars and swarm over the Kids.

Radio HISS sneaks in and a TELETYPE MACHINE starts to CLATTER in the background as a familiar voice takes over.

VOICE (o.s.)
Ten ten WINS. You give us twenty-two minutes, we'll give you the world. It's seventy-one degrees in downtown Manhattan --

CUT TO:

110 INT HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

110

The radio voice continues over Martha's hospital room.

VOICE (o.s.)
-- headed up to a tolerable eighty-one. At the top of the news this morning, a copyrighted story in the New York Sun reports the out-of-town businessmen slain two nights ago in Williamsburg were in fact connected to a New York crime family, which may now be implicated in their slaying.

MARTHA is in bed, of course, asleep, exhausted. HENRY is spooned up behind her, this time right under the covers with her.

110 CONTINUED:

110

VOICE (o.s.)

Local police have turned the murder over to the state's anti-organized crime unit, and the black youths arrested yesterday have been released with no charges filed. Keep your radio tuned to ten ten WINS for updates. Ten ten WINS -- all news, news whenever you need it.

Martha stirs in her sleep and starts to roll over. Henry feels it and shifts too. Without either of them waking up, they turn gracefully over to their other sides, now facing away from the clock.

VOICE (o.s.)

Because your whole world can change in twenty-four hours.

There is an old-fashioned digital alarm clock on the bedside table, the kind with the numbers that flick by on little cards. The time is six fifty-nine.

VOICE (o.s.)

W-I-N-S news time --

One by one, the clock's numbers flip gently over to seven o'clock.

VOICE (o.s.)

-- seven o'clock.

BEEP.

FADE OUT.

APPENDIX A

The following may run under the end titles of the film:

111 INT HACKETT LIVING ROOM DAY 111

HENRY and MARTHA are in their living room, working. The desk is covered with stuff, stacks of magazines, stacks of newspapers, stacks of mail --

-- and a KID.

It sits in between two of the stacks, hanging out. It makes a kid sound. Henry looks up at it.

HENRY
Hi. How are ya.

FADE OUT.