THE PAPER

by

David Koepp & Stephen Koepp

May 26, 1993

revised:
6/22/93 (blue)
7/12/93 (pink)
7/16/93 (yellow)
7/29/93 (green)
8/11/93 (goldenrod)

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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, SLAMMING the door behind her. Henry jolts awake, looks around, and closes his eyes again. (X)

From the kitchen, a cupboard SLAMS. Henry opens his eyes and sits up.

HENRY
(calling out)
You mad at me?

Another cupboard SLAMS.

HENRY (cont'd)
Scale of one to ten?

Dishes CLANK and RATTLE.

HENRY (cont'd)
(to himself)
Seven.

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 CLARK, 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. (X)

ALICIA
Will you just sell the God damn bonds, Danny? I'm aware of that. (X)
I'm aware of that. 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 my husband that. He's a sculptor, he's the one person who knows what he's doing. Will you just sell 'em?

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 Clark of the New York Sun." (X)

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)
Aw, God, they got it. How'd they get it? It happened at midnight out in Williamsburg. Shit, Newsday got it too! I don't even want to see the Post. (X)

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

MARTHA
And, oh, let's see what you guys have. "No Parking -- Except For Me!" Really, Henry, can't McDougal just leave the poor parking commissioner alone? (X)

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. (X)

MARTHA
So you went to Brooklyn. (X)

HENRY
Yeah, I went to Brooklyn, but by the time I got back it was too late. (X)

MARTHA
Four a.m. (X)

HENRY
I'm the metro editor, what am I supposed to do? (X)

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

He picks up still another paper.

HENRY (cont'd)
Wow, look at the Sentinel. "Nepal Premier Won't Resign." See, that kind of stuff is shameless. They're just trying to sell newspapers. Sensationalism, Marty. I for one would not be a party to it. (X)

MARTHA
Will you say hi to everybody for me? I miss everybody. Everybody except Alicia. Who else do I hate?

HENRY
You gonna go nuts 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
Well, yeah. Call me later? (X)

MARTHA
Wear a tie, for the interview. And promise me you won't torpedo it on purpose, okay?

HENRY
Why would I do 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!

Another GUY rants about how nice it must be to have a government job. HENRY passes the scene and grins, amused. He heads into the building underneath the copper sun. (X)

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 fifedom.

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.

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.

PHIL, fortyish, terrible posture, sees Henry and charges after him. (X)

PHIL
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.

JERRY, in business, is already making dinner plans. (X)

JERRY
(British accent)
Anywhere but Mortimer's, it's limey hell. (X)

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

BLAISCH
What's the plural of ultimatum?!

Henry nods to LOU, thirtyish, in rewrite.

HENRY
How are ya, Lou?

LOU
How am I? You want to see the bruise on my leg? (X)

HENRY
Ah, you're fine.

BLAISCH
(to Henry)
Ultimatums? Ultimata? (X)

HENRY
(as he passes)
Both. Smart guys say ultimata. We say ultimatums. (X)

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 Phil want? He looks like he sat on something sharp. (X)

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, Phil's still pissed that you wouldn't approve his six hundred dollar orthopedic chair -- (X)

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? (X)
(missing every other word)
I -- you -- call -- office --

He hangs up abruptly and smiles at Janet.

HENRY (cont'd)
I <u>love</u> car phones. (X)

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 Phil? (X)

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 a little bit -- (X)

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.

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

12 CONTINUED: 12

CARMEN
Hey Henry, you know what's happening out in Fort Green? There's two dozen cops 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. (X)

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.

PHIL crowds into the office too.

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

HENRY
Phil, I'm talking to somebody. (X)

PHIL
I can barely stand up straight!

HENRY
(to Carmen)
Just go. I'll handle Wilder.

PHIL
(suddenly gossipy)
Hey, what're you guys gonna do to Wilder?

HENRY
Phil, will you wait outside? (X)

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

12 CONTINUED: 12

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 the Sentinel job?! (X)

McDougal opens one eye. (X)

McDOUGAL
Bernie told me. (X)

HENRY
Bernie knows?!

JANET
It's a newsroom, Henry. Look, it's none of my business, but do you really want to count pencils uptown? (X) 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.

Through his windows onto the newsroom, we see PHIL and a (X) COLUMNIST having a disagreement. 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 uptown? You want me to wait outside and think positive thoughts? That's not my job. My job is to keep your ass downstairs. (X)

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 have no idea what's comin' with that. When people have kids it's like "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," they get this glazed look on their face -- "It changes your priorities," "you look at the world through new eyes." They're like Moonies all of a sudden. Gone. Snatched. (X)

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 <u>your</u> problem.

Henry just nods, contemplating this. Finally:

14 CONTINUED: 14

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. What's up? Janet said you called. (X)
(to Janet)
Tell Ray this is gassy, it's got no color, it, it -- it sucks, is what it does. Do over.

JANET
Oh, he'll love that.

She heads into the newsroom with the printout.

HENRY
(into phone)
You okay? You need anything? Not right away, I mean, but in general?

(INTERCUT AS NEEDED)

16 CONTINUED: 16

MARTHA
I'm great! I can follow five shows at once! Watch!
(points remote at TV)
Hooker housewives --
(CLICK)
-- Grandpa got a race car --
(CLICK)
-- I'm fat, they're not --
(CLICK)
-- Williamsburg, heating up --
(CLICK)
-- and Robert Shaw's pissed at the shark! 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 <u>reason</u> you called?

MARTHA
Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! (X)
I had a reason, I -- I think I had two reasons, 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. What's up, I've got a budget meeting with Alicia.

MARTHA
Don't take any crap from her, okay?

HENRY
Anything to say? Last chance. Anything at all?

MARTHA
(shouting at a game show)
WATERBED!

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

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

16 CONTINUED: 16

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

HENRY
-- there it goes --

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

HENRY
Call me when you get it. See you, (X)
love you --
(he hangs up)
You're nuts.

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

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

CUT TO:

17 INT NEWSROOM DAY 17

The elevator DINGS, the doors open, and ALICIA CLARK 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. Lisa?! (X)

She heads off across the newsroom, past two AIR CONDITIONING GUYS who have set up a ladder and are poking into the ceiling. A sweaty GUY beseeches them.

GUY
So how long you guys think? (X)

A.C. GUY
'Bout two hours. (X)

LISA, Alicia's assistant, meets her coming across the room.

LISA
Hi, how was the meeting? (X)

ALICIA
Great, great. Will you get me a (X)
copy of last month's phone bill? I
want to talk to Henry first thing.

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

LISA
Okay. Your decorator called.
(Alicia groans in agony)
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.

17 CONTINUED: 17

ALICIA
Unbelievable. Every time the phone rings 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.

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

Alicia's face falls. She lowers her voice.

ALICIA
Tell them we'd love to be Mr. DeNiro's guests. Hit "guests." If they mention the five hundred again -- 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
Okay. Why don't we let 'em make free phone sex calls too? (X)

17 CONTINUED: 17

HENRY
What, you mean as a bonus? Great. We'll start with Phil here. (X)

PHIL, headed for Bernie's office also, falls into step with them.

PHIL
(paranoid)
Start what with me?

ALICIA
(to Henry)
You think my job is easy? You think it's fun to fire people?

PHIL
Fire people? Is that what you're starting with me? Is it? Is it?

18 OMITTED 18

19 INT BERNIE'S OFFICE DAY 19

Seven or eight EDITORS are gathered in Bernie's office, all of them talking as HENRY, ALICIA, and PHIL come in. There is a thick, smoky haze in the air. Phil winces and waves his arms in annoyance as soon as he walks in the door.

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

BERNIE looks up from behind his desk.

BERNIE
Then keep your dick outta my ashtray.

The entire room breaks up.

PHIL
Very funny. Very funny.

Bernie speaks in a voice that quiets everyone.

BERNIE
So. Two days after a black kid is killed in a neighboring community, two white businessmen named Hanson and MacGregor --

19 CONTINUED: 19

BERNIE (cont'd)
-- Joe Heartland and his brother -- get shot up with racial epithets written on their car. In response, the New York Sun decides to run -- (X)

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.

ALICIA
Keighley called me at seven this morning. (X)

Bernie sighs and lets the moment hang. Finally:

BERNIE
(to all)
Go now, and sin no more.
(back to work)
Okay. Metro. I assume we're all over the subway?

HENRY
(counting them off)
Three pieces. A tick tock, list of the injured, search for heroes. Standard transportation wreck stuff. (X)

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
I like that arm shot. "Limbs Akimbo," we could call it. (X)

HENRY
I had Limbs Akimbo for dinner last night.

ANNA
Near West 4th Street?

HENRY
Yeah, little Caribbean joint.

19 CONTINUED: 19

ALICIA
(correcting his pronunciation)
Caribbean. (X)

HENRY
(one way)
Tomato. (X)

ALICIA
(the other way)
Tomato. (X)

Laughter.

BERNIE
What about the motorman? They find him yet?

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

ALICIA
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
Smoke a cigarette and go to sleep. (X)

HENRY
(continuing)
What else -- we got an above average bank robbery in the Bronx, an exploding hand grenade in Hoboken -- (X)

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

HENRY
The exploding hand grenade happens to be a hoot. Plus Nazis marching in New Jersey --

BERNIE
Oh yeah, Nazis are a barrel of laughs. Features? (X)

CARL, features editor, is in his early thirties, good looking. Alicia watches him while he speaks. Alicia's got an eye.

19 CONTINUED: 19

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 like a map of Florida. There's Sarasota. I don't even want to say what the Keys look like. (X)

BERNIE
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 <u>always</u> have Watergate <u>somewhere</u>?

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

HENRY
His <u>ex</u>-wife?!

BERNIE
There's a reliable source. Foreign? (X)

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

19 CONTINUED: 19

ANNA
Terrorists blew up a restaurant in Paris, killing five, none from New York. A ferry boat capsized in the Phillipines, drowning three hundred people, none from New York. There was a violent coup in Bahrain -- (X)

Several people chip in "None from New York."

ANNA (cont'd)
(over them)
-- witnessed by two people from Long Island! Oh, and Henry, you might be interested in this -- the mother whale in the Ukraine had triplets. (X)

HENRY
I swear I never laid a hand on her. (X)

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
Want me to get that for you?

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

Everyone OOOHS.

HENRY
Sure, only owns the fuckin' thing, doesn't mean he gets to actually talk to you. (X)

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
Hey, did Emmett get in yet? (X)

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

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

HENRY
I thought I saw him in the elevator. (X)

ANNA
Who, Emmett? No, he's not in yet. (X)

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 just let that die?

ALICIA
She didn't. Want. To go out with you. (X)

HENRY
She had a boyfriend, it's okay. (X)

LOU
And you're not that good looking.

EMMETT
Hey, saw it off. (X)

HENRY
"He explained."

JERRY
I'll take twenty-five on Sabatini. (X)

HENRY
Veal Sabatini for me. Does that come with anything? (X)

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

BERNIE
So. Page one. Subway sounds like our wood, right? (X)

LOU
We've got good art.

Max SNEEZES and holds up the gruesome pictures.

ALICIA
Definitely the subway.

19 CONTINUED: 19

HENRY
Really? It's gonna be all over TV. (X)
I mean, we can pump it up, but it's still a minor derailment. Carmen's got good day two stuff from the Williamsburg murder. If they make a bust, we oughta follow up.

ALICIA
The subway is a major story.

ANNA
Nobody died! (X)

LOU
(hopeful)
A bunch got maimed, didn't they?

ALICIA
Yeah, that helps.

HENRY
(calling out)
Minor derailment! (X)

ALICIA
All I'm saying is people got maimed, (X)
and we have pictures of it.

There is general approval of this. Bernie drops his head in his hands as people MUTTER, encouraged by 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, talking on the phone in French. (X)

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

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. (X)

HENRY
You <u>do</u>, look at you. Was there a bust? No, I'd know if there was -- what are you sitting on? (X)

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. If we go after it early, before it metastacizes to a bone, the majority of prostate cancer cases are beatable. (X)

BERNIE
Go after it -- how?

DOCTOR
Irridation therapy. (X)

BERNIE
Well, that's fantastic. That is, that's wonderful, because as it turns out that's exactly the portion of my anatomy I'd <u>like</u> to see exposed to radiation. (X)

The Doctor just looks at him, absolutely no reaction.

BERNIE (cont'd)
I'm kidding.

DOCTOR
You'll need an hour or two off work for each treatment, and we should start right away. How's next Monday? (X)

BERNIE
To burn a hole in my ass? Sounds good. Then I still have the weekend. (X)

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 next to BLAISCH, shouts from his desk.

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

JERRY, the business editor, is on the phone at a desk, angry. (X)

JERRY
It's hardly Watergate, your source is the man's ex-wife, for God's sake! (X)

BERNIE steams past.

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 pasted McDougal's head on a picture of a woman in a bikini and they laugh as he tacks it up on a bulletin board. (X)

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 --
(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 tops off her glass, which is already full. (X)

MARTHA (cont'd)
(noticing)
You didn't drive into town, did you?

SUSAN
I had projects. I made lists. (X)
Things I always wanted to do but never had the time? But 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. (X)

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.

She looks at her watch. (X)

CUT TO:

27 INT HOTEL DAY 27

ALICIA CLARK is looking at he watch too, or, more specifically, at the skin around her wrist. She sits on the edge of a bed, her blouse unbuttoned, raising her wrist up and down, staring at her skin. (X)

27 CONTINUED: 27

CARL, the features editor, is also getting dressed in what we now see is a hotel room.

CARL
Age has nothing to do with it. If anybody pushes their skin together, it bunches up. (X)

ALICIA
(sighs)
Yeah, but it's the way it bunches up. (X)

CARL
Your skin is the central preoccupation of my life.

He kisses her as he walks past. She smiles. He is sweet. (X)
But then she looks around.

ALICIA
What did this room cost? I can't afford this, I've got money problems that make Russia look well-managed. This was the last time. Absolutely the last time. (X)

CARL
So I'll pay. (X)

ALICIA
Yeah, but what about next time?

She finishes buttoning her blouse and picks up her bag.

ALICIA (cont'd)
I don't know. Did you ever wonder if one day you'll just reach the point where -- (X)

She stops, looking at him. He is eager to sympathize. Too eager.

CARL
What? (X)

ALICIA
(sighs)
No, you probably never did. (X)

She heads for the door.

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!!

28 CONTINUED: 28

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

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.

The Young Guy drops a stack of copies on the desk outside Bernie's office as Bernie opens his door and SHOUTS to no one in particular. (X)

BERNIE
THREE O'CLOCK!

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

29 CONTINUED: 29

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

He turns and walks into his office.

30 INT BERNIE'S OFFICE DAY 30

ALICIA is waiting in BERNIE's office as he comes in.

BERNIE
If somebody says "three o'clock," what time does that imply to you?

ALICIA
You in a bad mood?

BERNIE
'Cause me, I'd figure around threeish.
(shakes his head)
All right, what do you need?

Alicia just looks at him. She makes a face, and both of them seem to immediately know what she's talking about. Bernie falls back in his chair.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Oh, for God's sake, Alicia, you're the managing editor of the sixth largest paper in the country, you can't --

ALICIA
All I want is to be fairly compensated! (X)

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

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

30 CONTINUED: 30

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

ALICIA
I have pressures, Bernie. Real. Pressures.

BERNIE
Alicia. Look. I know you loved running features. I know Keighley shoved you into this overwhelming administrative job you didn't want, and you worked miracles with it.

ALICIA
I have three hundred people doing work they need seven fifty for at Newsday. (X)

BERNIE
I know. Thank you. But there's no more money for you. There just isn't. There's a ceiling in this business, and you're hitting your head on it. (X)

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?
(how to put this?)
Lemme tell you a story.

Alicia looks at her watch.

30 CONTINUED: 30

BERNIE (cont'd)
In sixty-eight, a bunch of us that were covering the Olympics in Grenoble decided to go to the best restaurant in town. The menu didn't have any prices, but we were on expense accounts, so we just figured fuck it and got drunk. Well, somehow there ended up being, I don't know, fifteen or twenty of us at the table, and when the check came it was nine thousand dollars. (X)

ALICIA
Oh, God.

BERNIE
Exactly. So, suddenly we're all pointing fingers, we're trying to remember who invited who, we're talking about going to Western Union to get money cabled, and just when it was getting <u>really</u> embarrassing, this funny looking old guy at the next table called the maitre d' over, drew a couple of squiggly lines on a napkin, signed his name, and winked at us. That napkin paid our bill.
(pause)
Because the old guy was Pablo Picasso.

ALICIA
I'm not sure I caught the segue here, Bernie. (X)

BERNIE
The people we cover. We move in their world. But it is <u>their</u> world. You can't live like them. You'll never keep up. If you try to make this job about the money, you'll be nothin' but miserable, because <u>we don't get the money</u>. Never have, never will.

Alicia gets up and goes to the window.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Talk to Bruno about the decorating, ask him to be reasonable. 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.

A COPY EDITOR calls to the YOUNG GUY for last Tuesday's edition. Meanwhile, BLAISCH shouts. (X)

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)
My fault. My fault. (X)

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

32 INT HENRY'S OFFICE DAY 32

McDOUGAL 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. He has a toothpick in his mouth. (X)

McDOUGAL
(defensive)
I went out for lunch.

HENRY
Get up. (X)

McDOUGAL
What time is it? (X)

HENRY
Five after three. Come on, I need a favor. Do you remember Sedona Sa- (X)

32 CONTINUED: 32

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

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

McDOUGAL
I told you, Sandusky's after me.

HENRY
When did you get so paranoid?

McDOUGAL
When they started plotting against me. (X)

MARTHA hurries into Henry's office, distraught.

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

McDOUGAL
(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.

MARTHA
Henry, if you got the other job, maybe I have a prayer. (X)

HENRY
(to McDougal)
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
Because at least you'll be around to refill my Prozac prescriptions.

HENRY
(still to McDougal)
Can you get an investor list out of him?

MARTHA
Because I <u>will</u> need to be medicated. (X)

HENRY
Marty, <u>please</u>.

MARTHA
Probably heavily. (X)

HENRY
(back to McDougal)
A list of major investors, guys who lost the most money, especially from New York. Brooklyn, maybe.

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
Hiya.
(to Henry)
Can we please talk alone?

McDOUGAL
(to Henry)
Bust is no good.

HENRY
What?

MARTHA
Can we please talk alone?

McDOUGAL
The bust is no good.

HENRY
How do you know?

McDOUGAL
Heard it on your scanner. The arresting cops think it's totally cosmetic. (X)

32 CONTINUED: 32

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 Puerto Rican poacher! (X)
Who said you could cover Williamsburg, little girl?

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

McDOUGAL
Hey, let Martha talk to her husband.

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

CARMEN
Yeah, well, maybe if you answered (X)
your beeper once or twice a week --

WILDER
Yo babe, handle this. (X)

HENRY
(thinking aloud)
Okay, Williamsburg is turning into our lead. This is good. We could wood on this. All right. All right, I want you both on it.

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

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

PHIL
I bought it.

WILDER
Why does she get the poignant shit?

32 CONTINUED: 32

PHIL
I bought the God damn chair.

WILDER
(to Henry, of Carmen)
That's it. This is the last straw. (X)

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

Phil SLAMS the receipt down on Henry's desk.

PHIL
Now it's your problem.

McDOUGAL
Let Martha talk to her husband. The
hell's the matter with you people?

HENRY
Michael, you go call the cops and
find out if this bust is for real.
I gotta know for the three o'clock.

BERNIE
(shouting outside)
THREE-OH-NINE!

JANET, Henry's assistant, appears in the doorway.

JANET
Who the hell took my stapler?!

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
(to Wilder)
Hey, just call the cops.

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

JANET
I'll find out! It has my name on the
bottom!

32 CONTINUED: 32

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

HENRY
Phil, for God's sakes -- (X)

MARTHA
(to Henry)
See? Look at this -- you get constant stimulation.

JANET
I'm waiting! (X)

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 tall stack of newspapers with a bullethole through the top.

McDOUGAL
(calmly, as if explaining it to idiots)
Let. Martha. Talk to her husband. (X)

They all just stare at him in stunned silence.

McDOUGAL (cont'd)
Please.

They start to clear out.

HENRY
(to Wilder)
Call the cops? (X)

WILDER
The cops, great, how about if I type up some weather reports while I'm at it? (X)

McDougal pauses as he closes the door behind him. He pulls a necktie out of his jacket pocket.

McDOUGAL
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 like sixty-four seconds. What's wrong?

He goes to the Coke machine and digs in his pocket for change. Behind him, BLAISCH, with a Nerf football, motions a guy to go deep. (X)

MARTHA
Why don't you let me go to Justice for you? I've got a much better contact than McDougal does. (X)

HENRY
You're on leave.

MARTHA
Okay, I'll go anyway. So come on, how was the interview? Did he offer you the job? (X)

Henry's still digging for more change. Blaisch's phone rings and he sits down, forgetting the guy who went deep. (X)

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, then maybe you're going to have to go back to being a reporter -- (X)

HENRY
Oh, yeah. We can put my pay cut with the money you gave up, and then move in with your mom. It's perfect, honey.

MARTHA
Then why won't you ask Bernie for a column? You like to write, it'd be your own hours what are you laughing at? (X)

They pass the two AIR CONDITIONING GUYS, who have pulled a bunch of stuff out of the ceiling and are pointing in opposite directions, arguing about where the problem is. (X)

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. Let me give you a hypothetical.

HENRY
Can it be a short hypothetical?

MARTHA
Say for example 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.

BANG! Henry gets a Coke from the other machine.

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

HENRY
I'm a little confused here. You want me to wreck my knee? (X)

MARTHA
Okay, let me give you another one --

A GUY walks past, headed for the meeting.

GUY
Henry -- they're doin' it now --

HENRY
I gotta go.

MARTHA
Fine. Me too. I'll see you tonight at eight thirty. Gus's Cafe. Your parents.
(he groans)
Please, don't be late, please.

33A CONTINUED: 33A

HENRY
Am I ever late?

MARTHA
It's not funny.

HENRY
It's a little funny.

He kisses her. She elbows him.

HENRY (cont'd)
Nice kiss, honey. (X)

CUT TO:

34 INT BERNIE'S OFFICE DAY 34

The EDITORS are all assembled in Bernie's office 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 comes in.

ALICIA
One of our security guards actually tried to frisk me. We're having drinks later.

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)
What the hell was that gunshot?

JERRY
McDougal.

34 CONTINUED: 34

BERNIE
(hopeful)
Is he dead?

They laugh.

BERNIE (cont'd)
Okay, before we go through the skeds, 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, in Fort Greene. One of 'em has a record. (X)

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?

ALICIA
"Caught" is boring, how about "Gotcha"?

LOU
Yeah, "Gotcha!" Maybe with a slammer.

ANNA
Oh yeah. God forbid this paper runs anything without an exclamation point.

HENRY
Hold it, it's not that clear cut. McDougal heard on the scanner that even the arresting cops think this bust is bullshit. Let's think about this, doesn't it set your alarm bells off?

ANNA
It could be like when everybody thought the Westies rubbed out that union guy.

BERNIE
Can you get anything officially from the cops?

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
Workin' on it. The other thing is these dead guys weren't just your ordinary businessmen. They were on the board of Sedona Savings. It went under about six months ago, lost millions of dollars for somebody. The Feds are looking into it now. (X)

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

34 CONTINUED: 34

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, I was there -- (X)

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
(stalling)
A what? (X)

BERNIE
A quote. You know. They talk. You write. We print it. (X)

Henry leans out the door and looks desperately to Wilder.

HENRY
Well?!

WILDER
I'm on hold!

HENRY
Go there, talk to the cops, and get it! (X)
(back in the room)
Still workin' on it.

34 CONTINUED: 34

ALICIA
Fine, good lead, let's follow it up for tomorrow, but without a confirmation we still run "Gotcha." (X)

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. (X)

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, Emmett gets beeped and Bernie leans back in his chair, staring at the ceiling, and Alicia moves on, reading from the printed skeds. The meeting dissolves into chaos for a moment. (X)

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

ALICIA
Well, obviously. Okay, we got Nazis, dognap, coup -- on bank, what is this on bank? (X)

ANNA
We got people coming back from the dead?

LOU
We got it from the armored car driver it was 1.3 million. (X)

BERNIE
Whatever.

ALICIA
Okay, so this is fairly major, this moves up front a little -- (X)

HENRY
Hey. These aren't some publicity hounds who crawled into the cage and <u>deserve</u> whatever happens to 'em. These are two teenagers who might not exactly enjoy the whole prison experience. (X)

34 CONTINUED: 34

ALICIA
Oh, please. You don't care if they get beat up. That's not what this is about. We got our ass kicked yesterday so you want to beat everybody else today, that's all. (X)

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? Let's give 'em the whole year. Let's not beat anybody ever.

ALICIA
Glad you're not overreacting. (X)

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 "Gotcha," either. Not for page one. Not without a shot of the guys.

BERNIE
What time are they gonna walk 'em?

HENRY
Seven thirty. (X)

LOU
Seven thirty?! Do the cops do that to annoy us? (X)

BERNIE
So we stretch a little.

ALICIA
Are you gonna pay for that?

34 CONTINUED: 34

BERNIE
We stretch the deadline to eight. (X)
If we get art on the two kids at the Walk of Shame, it's "Gotcha." 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. (X)
You wanna run the story? You've got five hours until eight 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
Henry, you make damn sure photo's at (X)
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.

ALICIA
Anyway. Bank moves up to five. (X)
What else?

35 INT NEWSROOM DAY 35

GRACE, the gossip columnist, is on the phone. (X)

GRACE
Darling, I'm not saying you slept with him. (X)
(pause)
But everyone else is.

HENRY stalks across the newsroom, ticked. He passes the two AIR CONDITIONING GUYS, who are moving their ladder.

A.C. GUY
Told 'ya it was down there. (X)

The same GUY that talked to them earlier now begs them.

GUY
So how much longer? (X)

A.C. GUY
'Bout two hours. (X)

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 NEWSROOM DAY 36

PHIL smiles, taking the plastic off a six hundred dollar orthopedic office chair and taping a "DO NOT TOUCH" sign to the back. HENRY walks past him, passing BERNIE.

BERNIE
Sorry. I've had better days.

HENRY
Me too.

He goes into his office. Bernie follows and leans against the door frame.

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. I bet Ben Bradlee stood on Kay Graham's desk and called her a bitch for thirty years. Think of it as bonding. It creates intimacy. (X)

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
"Gotcha" 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 not even four. (X)

CUT TO:

37 INT NEWSROOM DAY 37

Not any more. The clock on the wall says it's ten after six, (X) and the newsroom is noticeably more crowded. PHIL argues with the same COLUMNIST he argued with this morning.

PHIL
I gotta say, Mike, I kinda like it. (X)

COLUMNIST
Of course you like it, you rewrote the whole thing. Now it sounds like you. Why don't you just put your name at the top? Put your picture on it too. Hey, somebody get a camera and take a picture of Phil! (X)

HENRY walks quickly, digging through a pocket. He passes JANET, who is on the phone, fielding a complaint.

HENRY
Wilder back?

JANET
No.

HENRY
Damn. Got any change?

JANET
NO.

He flinches and 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 "Smashed" for the subway, Henry? (X)

37 CONTINUED: 37

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

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

BLAISCH
If you got another word for "mangled."

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 flips him a coin and Henry counts his change anew.

ANNA
You got anything on Sedona yet, Henry?

HENRY
It's only quarter after six. (X)
(shouting to Janet)
Hey, beep Wilder!

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 <u>all</u> 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
Police headquarters. (X)

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!

Another GUY leaps up, mocking him.

GUY
I'M BLIND! I'M BLIND!

LOU leans in.

LOU
Okay, I put "Smashed" with a question mark. What do you think? (X)

HENRY
It's not gonna matter.

EMMETT walks past quickly, looking over his shoulder. He bumps into JANET, who walks over to Henry.

JANET
I took up a collection. (X)

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

JERRY
Emmett! Hey, Emmett!

Janet dumps a handful of change in front of Henry.

JANET
You can never ask anybody again. (X)

38 CONTINUED: 38

HENRY
Hey, did McDougal call in?

JANET
No.

HENRY
No message at all from McDougal?

JANET
I have no motive for lying, Henry.

LOU
Henry, hang on, I'll make a proof of "Smashed." (X)

HENRY
I'm going down to composing to see some early pages, I'll see it there. (X)

He scoops up his 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 PHIL returns to, with a bag of coffee.

There is no new chair at the desk, just a wooden stool. (X)

PHIL
Aw, come on! (X)

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 Arizona businessmen are expected to be arraigned in -- (X)

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-one in Brooklyn and find out about this bust? (X)

CARMEN
For tonight?

38 CONTINUED: 38

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

He looks at the clock. The minutes actually tick off as he watches.

HENRY (cont'd)
(tired as hell)
-- seven o'clock. (X)

KA-CHUNK! He gets his Coke.

CUT TO:

39 INT COMPOSING ROOM DAY 39 (X)

POW! The clock's hands jump forward to 7:21. HENRY is in the composing 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 "Smashed?" 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 "Gotcha?"

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)
That art better get back here quick. (X)

HENRY
Oh, I'm sure it will. (X)

39 CONTINUED: 39

ALICIA
We can hold page one until eight o'clock, not a minute more. It's twelve grand every half hour we wait. Those are union drivers waiting, mister! (X)

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 "Smashed?" paste-up. (X)

CUT TO:

40 INT FEDERAL BUILDING DUSK 40 (X)

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? If you hate me, there's no point.

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 DUSK 41 (X)

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 DUSK 42 (X)

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 DUSK 43 (X)

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 DUSK 44 (X)

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 twenty after eight, it's -- (X)

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 DUSK 45 (X)

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

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

HENRY
You <u>did</u> go to Justice! Damn it, Marty, that really ticks me off. Whaddya got?

MARTHA
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 <u>POW</u>!

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

MARTHA
Sedona Savings' single largest investor, who alone lost over five million dollars --
(a dramatic pause)
-- E&R Interstate Trucking. (X)
Nicholas D'Onofrio, proprietor.

Pause.

45 CONTINUED: 45

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

MARTHA
Dumbfellas, huh? Unwiseguys.

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 8:25. She rests one (X) 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 thirty, you're way past deadline, you're supposed to be at dinner in five minutes -- (X)

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 eight twenty-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. (X)

HENRY
(to Martha)
Gotta go, see you, bye.
(punch)
Carmen? Just write up what you got, I'll get the quote myself. (X)
(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)
You know, you look lovely. (X)

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! And you screwed the story you do have. It's a fuckup, Henry, a God damn twelve thousand dollar error, if you get the art in the next twenty minutes, which I sincerely doubt. (X)
(MORE)

47 CONTINUED: 47

ALICIA (cont'd)
All right, Bernie's not here, so this is my call. You wait till nine o'clock for Robin. If she makes it back by then, run "Gotcha," 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, "uhuhuh" my ass. Admit it, you took it! (X)

HENRY
Well, hang on here, Paul. If we <u>are</u> working on a Sedona story, how did you find out about it? Do you guys have a mole over here at our paper? (X)

48 CONTINUED: 48

BLADDEN
Did you or did you not take it?

HENRY
'Cause, geez, Paul, you can get in trouble for stuff like that. I think they call it industrial espionage. (X)

BLADDEN
Henry --

HENRY
I think it's even a criminal offense. I mean, I'm not sure, but I can find out for you if you want -- (X)

BLADDEN
Cut the bullshit -- (X)

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

BLADDEN
Give it up, Henry, our guy saw McDougal banging on doors all over the Justice Department. I'm asking you one last time. Did you or did you not take the item? (X)

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

HENRY
(feebly)
Well, you knew you were talking to a journalist, Paul. (X)

Janet sticks her head in.

JANET
Dick who?

Henry waves her off.

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

HENRY
A dead-end.

He summons himself for one last try.

48 CONTINUED: 48

HENRY (cont'd)
Okay, Paul. Look. I realize this doesn't exactly get us off on the right foot -- (X)

BLADDEN
The right foot?! Are you out of your mind? (X)

HENRY
Paul --

BLADDEN
The offer is rescinded. (X)

HENRY
Paul, if you'll just let me say something -- (X)

BLADDEN
I hope you're satisfied, asshole.

HENRY
May I say one word? One word? (X)

BLADDEN
Because you just blew your chance to cover the world! (X)

HENRY
YEAH, WELL FUCK YOU!! (alt: "Guess what?!) I DON'T LIVE IN THE WORLD, I LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY!! (X)

And he SLAMS the phone down.

Pause.

JANET
Gee, you handled that well.

CUT TO:

49 EXT GUS'S CAFE NIGHT 49

MARTHA waits outside Gus's Cafe, a small 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 <u>God</u>, you're going to explode!

MARTHA
That's how I feel.

HENRY'S FATHER
Where's Henry?

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

She looks at her watch. It's 8:35.

CUT TO:

50 INT NEWSROOM NIGHT 50

POW! The clock in the newsroom leaps ahead again, and now it's 8:50.

In contrast to earlier, the place has thinned out a bit, PEOPLE are either leaving or envying those who are. EMMETT leaves dejectedly, comforted by JERRY.

JERRY
Come to Mortimer's with us. My treat. (X)

HENRY is standing over Blaisch's shoulder, reading from the notes he took from Martha. People who pass them pause to chat but move on quickly when they realize the hour and the lack of front page.

50 CONTINUED: 50

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! It's a sidebar, Ray, keep it tight. (X)

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

McDOUGAL
Hey! 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-one hate you too? (X)

McDOUGAL
(thinks)
Not for good reason. Why?

HENRY
Gotta talk to him. Pick me up in front of Gus's in 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
(grumbling, walking away)
What is this bullshit with picking up and going places and clipboards and -- why don't you pick up a God damn phone instead of sending people all over fucking town on wild --
(he trails off)

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
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 BEAR'S HEAD PUB NIGHT 51 (X)

The Bear'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. (X)

TONY, the bartender, ageless, slides a drink in front of BERNIE, who's seated at the bar.

BERNIE
Thanks, Tony.

51 CONTINUED: 51

There is a SAD GUY at the end of the bar, small, baldish, 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? 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 GUS'S CAFE NIGHT 52 (X)

HENRY skids around a corner and into the dining room of Gus's. (X)

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 fifty-eight. (X)

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 fifty-nine. (X)

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 GUS'S CAFE NIGHT 53 (X)

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 and 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. (X)

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! Nine o'clock! Let's go! (X)

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

HENRY
Well, I mean after tonight.

She just looks at him.

53 CONTINUED: 53

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

McDOUGAL
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 little -- (X)
(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
You're not. Two hours. (X)

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 squeegies 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 BEAR'S HEAD NIGHT 56 (X)

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.

CHARLES 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. (X)

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, Chuck -- (X)

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 upstairs. (X)

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 have a good relationship, (X)
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 McDOUGAL'S CAR NIGHT 58

HENRY and McDOUGAL pull up in front of the 91st Precinct in Brooklyn in McDougal's car.

McDOUGAL
Here's your God damn clipboard, and the next time you need office supplies you might consider asking --

HENRY
Clipboard. Confident wave. Get you into any building in the world. (X)

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 McDOUGAL 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 turns back, and bumps directly into -- (X)

-- HENRY and McDOUGAL. Richie jumps, startled.

McDOUGAL
Hey, Richie. (X)

RICHIE
Jesus, you scared the shit out of me. Everybody's on edge around here! (X)

McDOUGAL
We gotta talk about Williamsburg. (X)

Richie is pissed off. He looks around anxiously and gestures to McDougal to follow him.

61 INT MEN'S ROOM NIGHT 61

RICHIE shoves HENRY and McDOUGAL into this men's room and locks the door behind them.

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

McDOUGAL
We think we know what happened. (X)
Nick D'Onofrio wanted to settle a debt, right, but his guys went and made it look like a race war. Now they got the neighborhoods all stirred up.

RICHIE
You know what'd happen to me if (X)
somebody saw us talking?

McDOUGAL
So what's goin' on? Are you guys (X)
lookin' at D'Onofrio?

HENRY
Hey, the dead guys lost his five (X)
million bucks. What's he gonna do, give 'em Giants tickets?

RICHIE
Congratulations. You have a firm grasp of the obvious.

HENRY
So if you do suspect him, why are those kids in jail?

RICHIE
I ain't goin' on the record.
(to McDougal)
Who the fuck is this guy? (X)

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

Richie looks at him suspciously.

RICHIE
To who?

61 CONTINUED: 61

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 <u>you</u>. What's his name?

McDOUGAL
Henry.

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

HENRY
Hey, if you feel alright about "Gotcha" on page one, that's fine. I didn't, but that's what they want to run, so -- (X)

RICHIE
"Gotcha?!" (X)

McDOUGAL
Over a picture of the kids. (X)

RICHIE
Yeah, sure, go ahead and inflame the shit out of it. That's what you guys are good at. (X)

HENRY
(pissed off)
Hey, what do you want from us?! I'm not locked in a God damn toilet with a cop because it's such a good time. You want to see some truth, <u>give me some truth</u>. Or if you don't give a damn, admit it. But don't blame us for running what you give us, because that's all we got. (X)

RICHIE
I didn't give you that bullshit, downtown did! All downtown cares is that you guys, and the L.A. Times, and the Tokyo whatever run nice fat front page stories about how we got the guys and everybody can still bring their money to New York. 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. (X)

McDOUGAL
(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.

McDOUGAL
Other one's a pretty good ball player.

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

McDOUGAL
Is that right?

HENRY
Oh yeah.

RICHIE
God, this just makes me sick.

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

McDOUGAL
Penn State, huh?

HENRY
(muttering back)
I was on a roll.

Richie dries his face and turns around. Finally:

RICHIE
You guys use my name on this and I will fucking find you, understand? (X)

61 CONTINUED: 61

HENRY
"Police department source."

RICHIE
These kids -- (X)
(pause)
-- they didn't do it.

CUT TO:

62 INT MCDOUGAL'S CAR NIGHT 62

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

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

HENRY
(checking his watch)
Ten o'clock. I'll have us there by quarter after. (X)

He SQUEALS around a corner.

McDOUGAL
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
You got an honest-to-God exclusive, Henry, now they all gotta quote us, we'll nail every lousy paper in town to the wall! (X)

HENRY
Alicia's gonna have to kiss my ass after this!

CUT TO:

63 INT BEAR'S HEAD NIGHT 63 (X)

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. 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 ten fifteen. 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.

HENRY
We got room for twenty inches on this, give me a killer lead, you got three minutes -- (X)

McDOUGAL
I need four. (X)

HENRY
Three, four, fast is what I mean! (X)

They reach rewrite and clear a GUY off the computer. (X)

HENRY (cont'd)
Lou, we're rippin' page one for a new wood, pop "They Didn't Do It" as big as you can! Tell composing we're subbing one and three, main bar on three, we'll need 120 point all caps across three with two forty point readouts -- (X)

He stops. 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
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 OMITTED 66

67 INT PRESS ROOM NIGHT 67

HENRY and McDOUGAL fly through a 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. "GOTCHA!", 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. Write up what you got. Tell Lou to send down "They Didn't Do It" -- (X)

67 CONTINUED: 67

McDOUGAL
(loving this)
Hey, Henry, aren't you gonna say it? (X)
You gotta say it!

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

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.

McDOUGAL
How often do you get the chance? (X)
Come on, you can't do it and not
say it!

HENRY
(rolls his eyes)
"STOP THE PRESSES!" Okay? (X)

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 run? (X)

PRESS OPERATOR
Who are you?

HENRY
The God damn metro editor. How do (X)
we stop the run?

PRESS OPERATOR
We don't stop the run. (X)

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 run? (X)

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. Newspapers cover the floor like carpet. (X)

Henry 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. 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. 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. (X)

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. Clark first. (X)

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 <u>not</u> 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 nine thirty saying we were two hours past our deadline and nobody knew where the hell you were! (X)

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 ninety thousand papers on the trucks already. (X)

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.

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 college degree.

HENRY
Hey.

ALICIA
You couldn't take the shit I put up with, Henry. You assholes think I don't know you wait until I leave before you sneak off to the Bear's Head? Can't even invite me for a lousy beer. (X)

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 she grabs hold of him and pulls him down instead. He BANGS his knee, crunching into her hand. Both SHOUT in pain. (X)

CHUCK
All right, hold it, both --

HENRY
What are you, nuts?! Knock it off! (X)

He gets up and heads for the stairs again, but Alicia lunges and tackles him, SLAMMING both of them into the metal steps.

HENRY (cont'd)
I'll pop you, Alicia, I swear to God, I --

CHUCK
Knock it off, you guys!

Henry manages to stand and throw Alicia off. She grabs for the keys, but he pulls them away, swinging his arm wildly, CRACKING his hand into a metal toolbox on the wall. The door to the box CLATTERS to the ground, Henry drops the keys. (X)

ALICIA
Henry.

Henry bends to pick up the keys, just as Alicia presses the button on a can of Mace.

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!

71 CONTINUED: 71

Henry moves for the stairs again. Alicia steps forward and takes a huge, swiping kick at him --

-- but misses. Alicia's foot swings wildly up in the air and over her own head, and she goes down on her back, OOOFING 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. (X)

HENRY
And let that be a lesson to you.

He heads up the stairs. She follows.

72 ON THE PLATFORM, 72

Henry BANGS open the protective metal grill with the key from Chuck's ring.

But Alicia's back. She's all over him, trying to pull him away, and in trying to shrug her off, his arm gets away from him and he accidentally -- (X)

-- <u>elbows her in the face</u>. (X)

Alicia goes down. For a moment, everyone is shocked, including Henry. Alicia just looks up at him, one hand to her cheek, stunned. (X)

Henry takes one last look out at the ROARING presses, turns back to the metal cage --

-- 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 back to Alicia, who gets back on her feet. (X)

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 BROOKLYN DETENTION CENTER NIGHT 74 (X)

Row by row, the harsh fluorescents in this detention center CLUNK off, plunging the cell blocks into near-darkness. It's lights out. (X)

In a crowded cell, the TWO BLACK KIDS who were arrested stand at the bars, scared.

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.

<u>The chair where she was sitting is covered in blood.</u>

Martha, woozy now, staggers up against the telephone table and claws the receiver out of its cradle.

She punches 911. (X)

CUT TO:

77 INT BEAR'S HEAD NIGHT 77 (X)

The Bear'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 McDOUGAL 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?
(he doesn't answer)
Henry wouldn't even have a newspaper to work on if I hadn't saved it. (X)

McDOUGAL
Henry doesn't have a newspaper to work on. When'd you go to journalism school?

ALICIA
Please. I'm O.D.ing on righteous indignation tonight. (X)

McDOUGAL
What, seventy-five? Seventy-six? (X)

ALICIA
Seventy-four. (X)

McDOUGAL
Seventy-four?! Nineteen seventy-four?! (X)

ALICIA
I know where this is going, and we're not exactly the Washington Post, okay? (X)

McDOUGAL
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. Alicia, you're a post-Watergate American journalist, you became a reporter because two unknown guys from the Post metro desk busted the extra ball and brought down a corrupt president's entire administration. You used to remember how fuckin' great it felt to find the truth and tell everybody. Now you could give a shit. That's what Henry meant. (X)

77 CONTINUED: 77

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 --

-- 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. Up ahead, he sees an ambulance parked in front of an apartment building, its lights flashing.

He fishes out his keys and heads for the building. A police car pulls up in front and stops, next to another one. The DOORMAN gestures for the cops to go inside. Henry walks up to the Doorman.

HENRY
Victor, what's goin' on?

The doorman looks at him, concerned.

VICTOR
Uh, Mr. Hackett -- your --

All at once, Henry realizes. He races inside.

79 OMITTED 79

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 races to the open door, which has been splintered right off its hinges, but immediately 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
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?!

PARAMEDIC 1
(very fast)
She's hemorhagging vaginally and I need you to answer some questions for me. When is she due? (X)

Henry, in shock, pulls himself together as much as he can as they hurry onto the elevator and ride down.

80A INT ELEVATOR NIGHT 80A (X)

HENRY
Uh -- uh -- two weeks! (X)

PARAMEDIC 1
Does she have any existing health problems or allergies?

HENRY
No -- uh, yes! Pencillin. She's allergic to penicillin! What's wrong, what is it?! (X)

PARAMEDIC 1
Don't know yet, placenta previa or placenta abruptio. Stand back, please! (X)

Henry backs away a few steps as the Paramedics hover over Martha, tending to her, starting an IV, getting blood pressure, working fast, talking quickly between themselves. (X)

CUT TO:

81 THRU 82 OMITTED 81 THRU 82

83 INT BEAR'S HEAD NIGHT 83 (X)

The Bear'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 Clark. Get me the press room. (X)

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! (X)
I need to talk to Chuck! NOW!
(for the third time)
ALICIA CLARK!

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
Well, at least she bought it, (X)
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. Tell me right now, or I pull the trigger. WHY -- ME?!

McDOUGAL
You work for the city. It was your turn.

Sandusky rants. Bernie steps in. (X)

BERNIE
Hey, come on, come on, pal, you don't want to hurt him, you don't want to go to jail. You want to scare him, fine, scare him, but don't --

SANDUSKY
You got no idea what it's like! People wanting favors, nuts calling me, you guys sniping -- you want me to scare him?! I'll scare him! (X)

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. Clark? What were you going to say? Ms. Clark! (X)

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?

McDOUGAL
(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.

McDOUGAL
Hey! I found the bullet!

BERNIE
Will you just <u>make the call</u>?!

McDOUGAL
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 apendectomy 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 --

DOCTOR
No calls in my office. (X)

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.

87 CONTINUED: 87

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. (X)

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 --

-- <u>our</u> 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
Unbelieveable. 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.

CUT TO:

107A INT ALICIA'S HOSPITAL ROOM DAY 107A

Today's copy of the Sun SNAPS open, its front page bold and correct and right in our face.

The paper lowers. ALICIA sits up in her hospital bed, her leg bandaged, looking at the paper. BRUNO is asleep in a chair near her. (X)

A NURSE who is tending to her leg looks up and sees the front page of the Sun. Intrigued, she cocks her head to look at it.

NURSE
Can I read that when you're done?

Alicia looks at her. She smiles, deeply satisfied.

ALICIA
Buy your own.

CUT TO:

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. They already booked Keighley on "Good Morning America," I hope he stays awake. (X)

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
Thanks.
(pause)
Hey, can Marty have one too?

Bernie just looks at him.

HENRY (cont'd)
No. No, one. We'll just take the one. One is good.

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, an exclusive story in (X)
the New York Sun reports --
(MORE)

VOICE (o.s.) (cont'd)
-- 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.