

The Pursuit of Happiness

By
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EXT. VENICE, CALIFORNIA - DAY (1976)

CHRIS GARDNER, sits on a park bench with his girlfriend LINDA near a busy amusement park pier in Venice. Linda is a few months pregnant. Chris wears a navy Seaman's uniform. Other sailors wait near a small bus across the street; one is waving Chris over. The script *Venice, California 1976* appears.

SAILOR
(calling Chris to the bus)
We have to get back to the ship!

Chris ignores the guy. Something heavy's going on between Linda and Chris. They both seem blue.

CHRIS
(to Linda, calmly)
I'm almost out. One more year. Then I'll get a good job. And I'll take care of him. Hey.

Chris has said "hey" to get Linda to face him because she hasn't been. She does.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I never had a dad. That's not going to happen to him. I'll always take care of him.

LINDA
You didn't want to be in this kind of thing.

CHRIS
What kind of thing?

LINDA
Kid. Not married. No jobs. No *real* jobs. Neither did I.

She's sad over the event of her pregnancy. Chris tries to cheer her in his calm way.

CHRIS
I'll get some good work after the navy. It's going to be fine. It's going to be.

Chris makes a brave face for Linda, but something about his demeanor shows he knows, because of the pregnancy, that he's in a hard spot now he never wished to be in.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY (1981)

In the more urban setting of San Francisco, trash in *City of San Francisco* cans is laid out for pick up in the beaten down tenderloin district.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME

A row of low income housing and two-story motels make up a city block in this same neighborhood.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO CA. - SAME (1981)

Chris waits to cross a street in San Francisco. He's with his son CHRISTOPHER, 5. Chris wears a coat and tie and carries a pretty large, square machine of some kind. The script *San Francisco, 1981* appears.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe I should make a list.

CHRIS

For your birthday gifts?

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah.

CHRIS

Well, you know, you're just going to get a couple things.

CHRISTOPHER

Just to look at. And study. So I can choose better.

CHRIS

Can you spell everything you're thinking of?

Christopher thinks about it.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah...

CHRIS

Okay. Make a list. That's smart.

The light changes. They start to cross.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Are you doing okay in here?

Chris has nodded up ahead to a city-neighborhood, cut-rate daycare.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah... Can we go to the park today? After?

CHRIS

I'm taking the bus back from Oakland. I don't know when I'll get home.

EXT. MRS. CHU'S DAYCARE, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris leaves the daycare building after leaving Christopher there. But he turns and looks back at the building.

He's looking at their poorly-maintained mural of kids playing. The paint's peeling. There's graffiti over kid's faces. And someone's written *Fuck* in spray paint on it.

Then Chris looks at the daycare motto painted above. *Mrs. Chu's Daycare. Fun, Joy, Happyness.* Chris looks at the word *Happyness*. Time passes. Then he speaks to a Chinese daycare maintenance worker who's sweeping out there.

CHRIS

That's misspelled.

MAINTENANCE WORKER

Hui hyu tsa.

CHRIS

Happiness? There's no y. After p.

The guy keeps sweeping. Chris keeps looking at the wall, then he looks inside the window at his son. Inside there, Christopher's playing with blocks by himself - he looks more lonesome than pleased.

INT. DAYCARE PLAYROOM - SAME

While Christopher plays quietly, Chris stands outside the window looking in. Christopher doesn't see him.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I'm Chris Gardner.

EXT. MRS. CHU'S - SAME

Chris remains at the window on the San Francisco sidewalk, looking in at his son.

He's watching Christopher play with the blocks alone inside. There, a dog no one's paying attention to walks right across the kid's play area over to a food bowl; there's spilled food laying around his bowl. It's a cramped, unhappy setting for kids.

Then Chris looks away from the window.

CHRIS (V.O.)
This is part of my life story.

He looks at his watch. Late for something, Chris starts running off with his machine.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris sits on a bus bench in the city; the guy beside him's a drunk Filipino with a screw loose, 60, in a T-shirt that reads *World's Greatest Dad*. Chris keeps the machine on his lap. The two sit there waiting for the bus.

CHRIS (V.O.)
This part, in the eighties... this part's called Riding the Bus.

All of a sudden, the Filipino guy faces Chris and looks astonished.

FILIPINO GUY
Holy shit, did you just crystallize from nowhere?

The guy points at Chris's machine.

FILIPINO GUY (CONT'D)
That's a time machine. Holy shit.

The bus arrives.

FILIPINO GUY (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Holy shit, man.

Chris's expression shows the guy's disturbing his peace. He stands up to catch the bus.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides through east San Francisco; he's staring out the window like he's got something heavy on his mind. He keeps the machine on his lap.

CHRIS (V.O.)
That's a bone density scanner.

FILIPINO GUY
This guy has a time machine! This
one fucker!

The Filipino's seated in the row behind Chris, looking through the crack between the seats; he's addressing everyone on the bus.

FILLIPINO GUY (CONT'D)
He crystallized beside me!

EXT. BUS BENCH, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris waits for a transfer bus on a bench alone; he's staring at the machine on his lap.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Where would I go if it was one? If
it was a time machine I wondered.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris carries his scanner as he walks through the city.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Two years back, probably, before I
took this job.

EXT. ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

A DOCTOR and Chris part company before the entranceway to St. Francis Hospital. Chris still has his scanner.

CHRIS (V.O.)
This thing was unnecessary and
expensive. It gave a slightly
denser picture than an x-ray, for a
ton more money.

DOCTOR
We just don't need it, Chris. It's
unnecessary. And expensive.

EXT. STREET CORNER, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

A still image of Chris standing among a crowd of San Franciscans waiting for a walk light; he's staring at the scanner like he has personal hard feelings toward it.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 This was the business I bought
 into, when we moved to San
 Francisco.

*What follows is a montage of still images of Chris with his scanner in assorted places around San Francisco, waiting at corners, waiting for the bus.

EXT. STREET/SIDEWALK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris walks up a sidewalk. A guy leaves a parked Mercedes a short distance ahead of him. Chris has been watching him.

CHRIS
 (making eye contact)
 Hey...

MERCEDES OWNER
 Hi...

Chris looks at the car. Then he looks at the guy again.

CHRIS
 How are you doing?

MERCEDES OWNER
 Good.

CHRIS
 (smiling)
 Did you have to go to college to do
 your job?

MERCEDES OWNER
 (smiling back)
 Yeah. I'm a structural engineer.
 Yeah.

Chris nods. The light changes. Chris starts to cross the street. Then he checks his watch and starts to run.

EXT. OAKLAND CA. - LATER

Chris runs along the sidewalk beyond a busy Oakland street; he's carrying his scanner.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 That's my car.

In the foreground, among the cars parked on the streetside, is a hazel Riviera with a yellow Denver boot locked down on the front wheel. A policeman writes a ticket beside the car.

EXT. OAKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - LATER

Chris jogs with the scanner up the walkway to the main entrance of Oakland Memorial Hospital.

CHRIS (V.O.)
There's limited parking near hospitals.

INT. ELEVATOR, HOSPITAL - LATER

Chris rides up the elevator, holding his scanner box.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I made four hundred and eighteen dollars on each sale.

INT. CORRIDOR, HOSPITAL OFFICES - LATER

Chris carries his scanner down a long hallway.

CHRIS (V.O.)
A thirty dollar ticket every three days was a business expense. I thought I'd take it out of the commission on my scanners. As I sold them.

EXT. OAKLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - LATER

Chris walks out the same doors he entered on his way in; HE STILL HAS THE SCANNER, THOUGH.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I just wasn't selling any.

INT. CHRIS'S HAZEL RIVIERA - LATER

This is a shot through the windshield of Chris's parked car. Bright orange tickets cover the lower half of the windshield. Chris is visible through the clear space of the glass, walking across the street up ahead, carrying his scanner.

CHRIS (V.O.)
And I needed at least one commission a week to cover rent and daycare.

EXT. BUS STOP, OAKLAND - LATER

Later, Chris sits on a bus bench beside an unaccompanied Chinese kid trying to play a trumpet; it's nearly evening.

CHRIS
(facing the kid)
Would you stop that?

The kid stops and faces Chris.

KID
(to Chris)
Hu xia tu hi ma.

The kid sits quietly for a moment, then he resumes playing the trumpet.

CHRIS (V.O.)
So... the bus...

The bus pulls up.

INT. BUS, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides beside the window, with his bone scanner, looking out at the landscape.

CHRIS (V.O.)
All I'm saying... riding the bus
somedays is a drag.

The kid's playing the trumpet somewhere behind him. Chris sits there for a while. He's sharing the row with a real heavy guy and he's sort of over against the wall with his machine.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I remember... I think it was this
day... I remember I actually tried
it.

Chris looks down at his scanner.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Just in case that crazy fucker was
somehow right.

Chris keeps staring at the machine.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I had this stupid thought, or wish,
that maybe he was right and
everyone else was crazy, and maybe
I was a time traveler and didn't
know it and could really go
somewhere else if I pushed the
button.

CLOSE ON CHRIS as he considers this. He puts his finger on the black button.

CHRIS (V.O.)
And I actually pushed the button...
like an idiot...

Chris pushes the button on his medical machine.

CHRIS (V.O.)
...and went nowhere.

Chris sits there for a moment. He's gone nowhere of course. Soon, he turns and looks out the window. The city's going by beyond him.

EXT. SIDEWALK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris walks down the sidewalk with the scanner. He comes upon a young man paying a meter for a parked Ferrari; Chris has looked at the guy and the car.

CHRIS
(to the guy, saying hi)
Hey.

FERRARI OWNER
Hey.

CHRIS
Can I ask you something?

FERRARI OWNER
What?

CHRIS
(to the guy)
What do you do?

FERRARI OWNER
(looking over)
What? For a job?

CHRIS
Yeah.

FERRARI OWNER
I'm a stockbroker.

Time passes.

CHRIS
Do you have to go to college?

FERRARI OWNER

Have to?

CHRIS

Yeah.

More time goes by.

FERRARI OWNER

You don't *have* to.

Chris nods. The guy's said it to mean you don't have to but you sure should. Then Chris starts to cross the street.

INT. CHRIS'S APARTMENT - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris and Linda eat dinner at the kitchen table without speaking. Linda wears a grocery worker's uniform. The apartment's small and unadorned with anything. Some time passes during which there's the heavy silence between a couple not getting along.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER (NIGHT)

Linda cleans up after dinner. Chris walks past and sees a RUBIK'S CUBE resting on a kitchen counter.

CHRIS

What's this?

LINDA

A gift for Christopher.

CHRIS

From who?

LINDA

Cynthia. From work. It's for adults. It's an adult thing. Chris can't use it. She didn't know.

CHRIS

What is it?

LINDA

You're supposed to make every side a solid color.

Chris picks the thing up.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Did you pay the taxes?

CHRIS
I filed an extension...

LINDA
You already filed an extension.

CHRIS
I had to file another one. The bill
was six hundred and fifty. I'll
have it in September.

LINDA
That means interest. Right?

CHRIS
Yeah. Some.

Money seems to be a source of conflict for them. Rather than deal with it further, Linda leaves the room. Chris remains there.

EXT. PATIO, APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT)

Chris has come out on the patio idly with the cube; it's not a patio in the sense that one would derive enjoyment from sitting there. It's cement space outside the kitchen. Each small apartment in the complex has one, so Chris is sitting five feet from his neighbor's patios on either side. He's started messing with the cube. Time passes like this while Chris, over a minute or so in real time, SOLVES THREE SIDES OF THE RUBIK'S CUBE COMPLETELY. His thoughts are somewhere else, though, so he doesn't care to finish. He just puts the thing down and goes back inside.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY (MORNING)

Chris and Linda share the real small space of their bathroom; Chris brushes his teeth. Linda's finishing dressing for work; they're in the middle of an argument.

CHRIS
(upset about it)
Does he have to be in daycare from
6:30 in the morning?

LINDA
(pissed too)
Can you watch him?

CHRIS
I need to be in the financial
district. Before work.

LINDA
I have to open. It's the
nineteenth. We have to pay rent
next week. I need both shifts.

Linda tries to leave and bumps Chris's shoulder.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Fuck...

Linda walks out. Chris is left alone. He stands there for a while. Then he resumes brushing his teeth. A few moments go by. Chris rises up and looks in the mirror for a while; he's sizing himself up. Time passes while Chris looks at himself.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris has followed Linda into their bedroom.

CHRIS
I just want to go by Dean Witter.
Before work.

LINDA
For what?

CHRIS
I want to see about a job.

LINDA
What job?

CHRIS
I want some information about a job
there.

LINDA
What job?

CHRIS
Stockbroker.

Linda looks at Chris like he's aiming off the mark for what's likely or best for them.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I could go through a math book in a
week when I was a kid. I want to
see about it.

LINDA
I have to open. So you have
Christopher.

CHRIS
I'll go by during the day.

LINDA
You should probably do your sales
calls. Sell what's in your contract
and get us out of that business,
Chris. Fuck, Chris. Okay?

Linda has finished dressing and leaves the room. Chris
watches her go.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Christopher's sleeping. The clock beside his bed reads 5:30.
Chris sits on the bed, waking him up.

CHRIS
Christopher...

INT. BREAKFAST TABLE - LATER

Chris and his son have breakfast. The table's in the kitchen.
The kitchen's real small. It's pretty early. Christopher's
holding a cereal spoon. But his eyes are closed and he's
motionless. Chris looks over at him.

CHRIS
(trying to wake him up)
Pssst.

Christopher's eyes open. Chris looks at him. There's a small,
black and white TV on the counter that plays local news;
there, a field reporter's holding a Rubik's Cube up for the
camera.

REPORTER
...is shaping up to be the gift
sensation of 1981. Don't expect to
solve it easily, although we
encountered a math professor at USF
who took just thirty minutes on
his.

Chris notices the TV. He's getting the idea the cube's a
challenge he could pass easily. He looks back at Christopher.
Christopher's eyes are closed again. Chris looks at him with
bad feelings he's got his son up so early.

EXT. BUS STOP, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris is freshly dressed for work and is holding a scanner as
he sits waiting for the San Francisco city bus.

The kid with the trumpet sits beside him, playing it. Chris stares straight ahead like he's determined about something.

EXT. DEAN WITTER OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Businessmen and women walk around the financial district. Soon, Chris becomes visible, turning a corner onto the same sidewalk, joining the group of traders and brokers. He stops and looks across the street at a Dean Witter branch office; he's holding the scanner. Then he turns back the way he came.

EXT. SIDEWALK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Down the street, Chris speaks with a GIRL JUNKIE who sits a couple steps up apartment stairs off the sidewalk. The scanner rests at Chris's feet; Chris holds some dollar bills.

CHRIS

Can I give you a couple dollars?
You can watch this for me? I'm
going in for a meeting. I don't
want to bring this in and look
small time.

GIRL JUNKIE

Yeah.

Chris hands the girl the money. Something occurs to him.

CHRIS

(doesn't want her to steal
it)

It can't be sold anywhere. It's
medical equipment. It can't be sold
anywhere. I can't even sell them,
and it's my job. I'll give you some
more money when I get back.

GIRL JUNKIE

Yeah.

INT. RECEPTION AREA, DEAN WITTER BRANCH - LATER

Chris sits alone in the reception area. Then TIM BROPHY enters the room.

TIM BROPHY

Chris?

CHRIS

(standing quickly)

Hi.

TIM BROPHY
(offering his hand)
Tim Brophy. Resources. I was going
out to grab a coffee. Do you want
to come?

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris and Tim Brophy have come outside to a nearby public
park square. They're mid-conversation, sitting together on
the low, perimeter wall of the park fountain.

TIM BROPHY
Here's an ap. For our internship.
That's all we can do for you here.

Brophy hands the application to Chris.

CHRIS
Thanks...

TIM BROPHY (CONT'D)
We have a resume sheet, too. We've
had a lot of applications, though.
We're out.

CHRIS HAS NOTICED SOMETHING ACROSS THE PARK, THOUGH; THE GIRL
JUNKIE'S CARRYING HIS SCANNER OFF. She's walked away with it
into the city.

TIM BROPHY (CONT'D)
You can pick one up at your school.
We send them out.

CHRIS
Mr. Brophy, I have to go.

TIM BROPHY
Okay.

CHRIS
I have to. Thanks.

Then Chris rises and runs off.

EXT. SIDEWALK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris sprints through a large group of young market traders
on break.

EXT. STREET/TRAIN STATION, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

The girl junkie with the scanner takes the stairs up to the train. It's a long shot that shows city sidewalk a good distance behind her; Chris is visible down there running toward her. But the train comes and blocks the view. The train sits there, obscuring anything that's happening behind it. After a while, it moves along, and when it's totally out of frame it reveals Chris standing on the station platform all alone without his scanner, having reached it too late.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I rode up and down looking for her.
That day.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Chris stands near the window of the moving train, watching the city landscape pass outside.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

This train's moving the other way. Chris is seated now. He looks at the papers Brophy gave him.

CHRIS (V.O.)

There were three blank lines after "High School" to list more education. The program took just twenty people every six months. One got a job. The internship paid nothing.

EXT. CITY TRAIN PLATFORM, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris leaves a train later with some others. He walks across the platform toward the stairs, then he puts the application in the trash can by the steps and keeps walking.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - MORNING

It's just sunrise so there's little traffic. Chris and Christopher leave Linda at a bus stop bench for her ride to work and start walking off on their own somewhere; Chris carries a scanner, Christopher a backpack.

LINDA

(to Chris, about the
scanner, kidding sort of)
Come back without that, please.

CHRIS
 (trying to be light-
 hearted about it)
 I'm going to. Say goodbye to it.
 Because I'm coming back without it.

LINDA
 (to the scanner, just
 slightly amused)
 Goodbye. And good riddance.

CHRIS
 (trying to kid)
 You didn't have to add "good
 riddance."

LINDA
 (to Chris and Christopher)
 Goodbye.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - LATER

Chris and Christopher have walked farther into east San Francisco, past a park where one guy's shooting baskets. Christopher's watching him.

CHRIS
 That's not how you spell it.

CHRISTOPHER
 How?

CHRIS
 P-p-y. It's an "i." Happiness.

CHRISTOPHER
 That's an adjective?

CHRIS
 Yeah. It's just not spelled right.

CHRISTOPHER
 Is "fuck" right?

Chris doesn't say anything for a while.

CHRIS
 Yeah. But that's not part of the motto. So... you're not supposed to learn that. It's a grown up word. To show anger, and other things. Drop it, okay?

CHRISTOPHER

All right.

CHRIS

What's it say on your bag? That tape?

CHRISTOPHER

My nickname. We picked nicknames.

CHRIS

What's it say?

CHRISTOPHER

Hot Rod. Did you have a nickname?

Chris thinks for a while.

CHRIS

Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

CHRIS

Ten Gallon Head...

CHRISTOPHER

What's that?

CHRIS

I lived in Louisiana, near Texas. Before I joined the navy. People wore cowboy hats. A ten gallon's a big hat. I was good at school. I was smart when I was a kid, so they called me Ten Gallon Head.

CHRISTOPHER

Hoss wears that hat.

CHRIS

Hoss?

CHRISTOPHER

Hoss Cartwright. On Bonanza.

CHRIS

How do you know Bonanza?

CHRISTOPHER

I watch Bonanza at Mrs. Chu's.

CHRIS
You watch Bonanza at daycare?

Christopher's gotten distracted by a Chinese pushcart passing.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hey. You watch Bonanza at daycare?

Christopher nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
When?

CHRISTOPHER
What?

CHRIS
When do you watch it? After snack?
After your nap?...

CHRISTOPHER
After Love Boat.

Chris looks down at his son, getting pissed.

CHRIS
(quietly)
Fuck...

CHRISTOPHER
I made my list. For my birthday.

CHRIS
(distracted, thinking
about the TV issue)
What did you pick?

CHRISTOPHER
A basketball. Or an ant farm.

CHRIS
Okay...

EXT. MS. CHU'S DAYCARE - LATER

Out front of the daycare doorway, in the San Francisco neighborhood, Chris holds a conversation with elderly, Chinese MRS. CHU.

CHRIS
He says he's watching TV.

She shows Chris an inch distance between her thumb and forefinger.

MRS. CHU
Little TV. For history.

CHRIS
Love Boat?

MRS. CHU
For history. Navy.

CHRIS
That's not the navy.

MRS. CHU
Little TV.

CHRIS
He could watch TV at home. We pay three hundred dollars a month. I'm going to take him out if you're watching TV.

MRS. CHU
Navy history. Little history. Little TV. Go pay more at other daycare if you don't like history TV.

Chris's expression means he doesn't have that money.

MRS. CHU (CONT'D)
You late pay anyway. You complain, I complain. You late pay.

In the middle of this, Chris looks at his watch; he's late.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - LATER

Chris stands on a platform, with his scanner, waiting for a train.

Chris looks across the tracks.

CHRIS'S POV

THE TRASH CAN CHRIS PUT HIS APPLICATION IN rests on the opposite platform from his.

Chris stands across the tracks looking at it.

STATION SPEAKER
Blue line...

Chris looks down the line for the train. IT'S COMING. Chris looks across the tracks at the trash can.

CHRIS (V.O.)
This part of my life's called...
running.

Like a bolt, Chris takes off running. He sprints with his scanner toward the platform steps down.

INT. STATION PASS THROUGH - CONTINUOUS

To reach the other side, Chris must run with his scanner through the station underground pass-through.

EXT. OPPOSITE PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Chris has grabbed his application out of the can and taken off for the stairs as the train pulls in across the tracks.

INT. STATION PASS THROUGH - CONTINUOUS

Chris runs back through the underground pass.

EXT. PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Chris reaches the other platform and sprints toward the closing doors of the metro train. He jumps in as the doors close and the train rolls off.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - LATER

Chris stands outside the skyscraper lobby with his scanner and application.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I was waiting for Witter resource
head Jay Twistle, whose name
sounded so delightful, like he'd
give you a job and a hug.

A tall, thin businessman MR. TWISTLE walks up toward the entranceway from a cab.

CHRIS
Hi, are you Mr. Twistle?

MR. TWISTLE
Yes.

CHRIS
I'm Chris Gardner.

Chris shows him the application.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I wanted to drop this off
personally and make your
acquaintance. They described you in
the office. I thought I might catch
you on your way in.

MR. TWISTLE
Okay.

CHRIS
I'd appreciate the opportunity to
discuss what may seem like
weaknesses in my application.

TWISTLE
(gesturing to Chris with
the application)
We'll start with this, Chris. We'll
call you if we want to sit down.

Chris nods; he's been rebuffed. He starts to walk away.

EXT. STREET CORNER, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris speaks on a pay phone. The scanner rests at his feet.

CHRIS
Chris Gardner for Dr. Delsey.
(listening)
I'm running late for a sales call.
Acro. It's with Dr. Delsey and Dr.
Cross.
(listening)
Can we still do it? In a half-hour?

Then CHRIS CATCHES SIGHT OF SOMETHING.

CHRIS'S POV

Across the street, in a slice of space between skyscrapers,
Chris has seen the girl junkie and A BOYFRIEND walking by.
THE GUY'S GOT CHRIS'S MEDICAL EQUIPMENT.

Chris stares at them from across the street. He wants to get
off the phone and chase the pair, but the receptionist is
still speaking.

CHRIS

Okay.

(listening)

I'll see you then. Okay. Thank you.

Chris hangs the phone up and takes off running.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - SAME

The girl and her boyfriend have taken Chris's stuff to a bus stop. They're in a line of folks boarding the city bus. Chris comes running up the street behind them. The bus pulls away. Chris is right behind it, though, and never lets up running; he's pretty strong and fast and can keep up with the bus from the sidewalk.

CHRIS (V.O.)

That was my stolen machine...
unless she was with a guy who sold
them, too..

THE FRAME FREEZES on Chris in mid sprint.

CUT TO:

A QUICK FLASHBACK OF CHRIS SIGNING A CONTRACT IN A MEDICAL
SUPPLY COMPANY OFFICE

CHRIS (V.O.)

...which was unlikely because I had
the whole Bay area in my
contract...

EXT. MEDICAL SUPPLY COMPANY WAREHOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

With the help of a warehouse worker, Chris loads scanners into the back of a rented van. Linda waits beside it, looking on.

CHRIS (V.O.)

...which meant I more or less *owned*
these things. Which seemed like a
good idea at the time...

EXT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Chris, Linda and the warehouse guy carry scanners up the stairwell steps to Chris and Linda's apartment.

CHRIS (V.O.)

..because I didn't know yet that
doctors and hospitals would regard
them as unnecessary luxuries.

CHRIS(cont'd)

I even asked the warehouse man to
take a picture.

INT. CHRIS'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Because of a lack of space, Chris has had to stack the
scanners along the living room wall. There are thirty of them
stacked up there. Chris stands in front of the stack with
Linda. They're posing for the picture. Chris smiles from the
enthusiasm of a new endeavor. IN FACT, HE OFFERS A THUMBS UP
TO THE CAMERA. HE NUDGES LINDA, WHO SEEMS A LITTLE LESS
ENTHUSIASTIC, TO GIVE A THUMBS UP, TOO; SHE SMILES AND,
BECAUSE SHE'S THROWING IN WITH CHRIS'S DREAM, GIVE THE THUMBS
UP, though it's not quite as heartfelt as Chris's. The camera
flashes.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - SAME

In the present again, the girl and her boyfriend sit toward
the back of the bus. It moves through the San Francisco
neighborhood. Chris is visible out the window, running
alongside the bus.

CHRIS (V.O.)

....so if I lost one, it was like
losing groceries. For a month.

EXT. SIDEWALK - SAME

Chris runs hard to keep up with the bus; he's still got his
scanner. The bus is pulling up to a corner stop; he's going
to catch it.

Chris has reached the bus and goes right in in front of
commuters who were waiting.

INT. CITY BUS - CONTINUOUS

Chris walks past the driver without paying fare.

DRIVER

Hey, man...

Chris head down the aisle with his scanner until he reaches
the junkies' seat.

CHRIS

Hey...

The guy looks up.

EXT. BUS STOP - LATER

The bus doors have opened to let commuters off at a corner. Soon, Chris leaves the bus with two bone density scanners. He places them on the sidewalk to rest. He checks his watch. He's late for his sales call. He picks the scanners up and starts running with them again.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris runs through San Francisco with both scanners.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I carried them because I got paid
at installation.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO HOSPITAL - LATER

Chris sits at a board table across from a pair of doctors. Both scanners rest on the table top.

CHRIS
I could even install today.

FIRST DOCTOR
We don't need two.

The second doctor looks at the equipment.

SECOND DOCTOR
We don't need *one*.

Chris looks back at the doctors.

EXT. INTERSECTION, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris carries both scanners across a city intersection.

EXT. CITY TRAIN PLATFORM, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris has retrieved Christopher and holds both scanners as they wait for the train. Christopher's looking at him.

CHRISTOPHER
Did you forget?

CHRIS
Forget what?

CHRISTOPHER
(nodding at the scanners)
You're not supposed to have any of
those.

CHRIS

I know.

CHRISTOPHER

You have two now.

CHRIS

Yeah, I know.

INT. KITCHEN, CHRIS'S APARTMENT - LATER

Linda sets dinner out. Chris enters the kitchen with his son. LINDA LOOKS AT THE SCANNERS HE CARRIES, taking notice Chris didn't sell them.

CHRIS

Hey...

LINDA

Hey...

She stares at Chris with his double scanners. They don't say anything, but she's thinking of this morning and Chris's promise he was going to make something happen with his sales job.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Later, after dinner at the kitchen table, Christopher has opened a birthday gift. Chris hands him a second one - a gift-wrapped basketball.

CHRISTOPHER

(taking it, smiling)

Thanks for the basketball.

CHRIS

(smiling)

How do you know it's a basketball?

The child's pretty smart and gets the humor in the fact the gift was obvious.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Maybe it's an ant farm.

CHRISTOPHER

(amused)

No way.

Christopher unwraps the ball.

CHRIS
We'll go play soon. Okay?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah...

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris passes through the living room. A wide shot shows TWENTY SCANNERS STACKED along the wall there.

EXT. PATIO, CHRIS'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Linda's out on the small setting of the third floor patio balcony. THERE'S AN OLD NEIGHBOR BEATING A SMALL RUG on the balcony right beside her, and another one smoking on a lawn chair just to her left. Chris comes out and finds her there; they don't say anything for a while.

CHRIS
(having to whisper because
the neighbors are close)
It was a fucked up day. I went by
Dean Witter. I ended up having to
run somebody down. Someone tried to
run off--

LINDA
Whatever...

CHRIS
Whatever? What are you talking
about?

THE GUY KEEPS BEATING THE RUG beside them. Chris looks over at him; it's getting to Chris.

LINDA
(having to whisper)
Whatever.

CHRIS
What do you mean whatever?

LINDA
I don't care. Whatever. Every day's
got some story so...

CHRIS
(having to whisper,
meaning believe in him)
Hang on.

LINDA
(didn't hear him)
What?

CHRIS
Can you hang on?

The guy keeps beating the rug.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Can you just hang on.

The guy beats the rug. It sets Chris off.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Roy. Hey. Beat your little rug when
no one else is out here. Can you?

ROY
I'm trying to keep a clean house,
Chris.

CHRIS
We're talking.

The man lays the rug on the balcony rail. Chris seems to regret he laid into such an old guy. But he faces Linda again.

CHRIS
(still whispering)
I'm saying... just hang on. We'll
come out of it. It's going to be
fine.

LINDA
You said that before. You said that
before Christopher, it'll be fine.

CHRIS
What? You don't trust me?

LINDA
Whatever...

After a moment, Linda goes back into the house. Chris remains on the balcony. He stands there for a while. Then the old neighbor begins beating his rug again.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD - EARLY MORNING

It's not yet light. Chris and his son walk to work and daycare again

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER(SUNRISE)

They wait at a corner to cross. Beyond them, the sun's just coming up. A car's passing; Christopher starts to cross without looking.

CHRIS
(stopping him)
Christopher, look. I know it's
early. But wake up.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris is dressed for work and stands outside Dean Witter, holding a scanner and waiting for Twistle as he approaches from the street.

CHRIS
Mr. Twistle.

The two shake hands.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Chris Gardner. We met a couple
weeks ago. I gave you an
application--

MR. TWISTLE
Chris, I'm busy right now.

CHRIS
I'm sorry.

Twistle continues on his way. Chris watches him go.

INT. MOVIE THEATER, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

The Disney picture *The Fox and The Hound* plays on the theater screen.

Chris sits in the audience with his son. Chris watches the picture for a time. Soon, he turns to check on Christopher and finds him asleep. He looks at his son for a while, getting the idea clearly that the way he lives is wearing his son out.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

On another day, Chris, with a scanner, runs along a sidewalk in the financial district, past the Transamerica building.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris waits in his now familiar spot before the Dean Witter skyscraper. Jay Twistle leaves the building. As he approaches a cab, Chris approaches him.

CHRIS
Mr. Twistle?

TWISTLE
Hi.

CHRIS
Chris Gar--

TWISTLE
Yeah. Listen. What can I do for you?

CHRIS
I submitted an application for the intern program. I hoped I could sit down with you for a moment.

TWISTLE
I'm on my way to Russian Hill, Chris.

Twistle has pointed to the cab. Chris looks at the cab; he decides to lie.

CHRIS
Me, too. Can we share a ride maybe?

Twistle looks back at Chris.

INT. CAB, MOVING - LATER

Chris sits in the back of a cab that drives through San Francisco.

CHRIS
... a lot of my family members were in the navy. I just decided to join after high-school...

Chris is looking across the cab back seat; he's disappointed by what he sees.

What Chris sees is Twistle sitting across from him, playing with a Rubik's Cube and half-listening to Chris.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

... I planned on going to college,
but I started a family before I was
discharged and began working...

Twistle's still messing with the cube while Chris is talking.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Mr. Twistle, I'm trying to...

TWISTLE

I'm sorry. This fucking thing's
impossible.

Chris looks over at Twistle. Time passes.

CHRIS

I can do it.

TWISTLE

No one can.

CHRIS

I can.

TWISTLE

No one can. It's bullshit.

CHRIS

Give it to me.

Twistle looks at Chris. After a moment, he hands him the Rubik's Cube. Chris looks at it as he begins to make some corrections on it.

CHRIS

(good-natured)
You really fucked it up.

TWISTLE

(lighthearted)
Sorry.

CHRIS

It's all...
(looking out at the
street)
How far away are we?

TWISTLE

I don't care. We can drive around
all day. Because you can't do it.
It's bullshit.

CHRIS

Yes, I can.

TWISTLE

No, you can't.

CHRIS

Yeah, I can.

Twistle's smiling now. Chris sits in the back of the cab,
twisting the thing backwards and forwards. Twistle watches.

The cab driver looks on in the rear view mirror. He's got a
Rubik's Cube on the seat beside him.

Chris continues moving the thing around.

Twistle continues watching.

The cab driver keeps watching as well.

Chris has two sides solid already.

Twistle looks on.

The cabbie pulls up to where Twistle was headed. No one
leaves the cab. Chris keeps working on the cube. He stops for
a while, though. Some part of it's got him hung up. He stares
at it. Everyone's gone quiet in anticipation of Chris
succeeding or not. Chris figures something out, turns the
thing three times. Then he shows the finished cube to
Twistle.

Twistle looks back at Chris.

CAB DRIVER

(about the fare)

Seventeen ten.

TWISTLE

(to Chris)

You were going on, right? Somewhere
else in Russian Hill?

CHRIS

Yes.

Twistle has stepped out of the cab.

TWISTLE
 (about the cube, to Chris)
 Good job.

He waves goodbye to Chris; he hasn't offered any money or anything further about Chris's interest in his program.

CAB DRIVER
 (to Chris)
 Where are you going?

Chris is still watching Twistle.

CAB DRIVER (CONT'D)
 Where are you going?

CHRIS
 Go over to Pacific...

The cab pulls out. Chris rides in the back. He sees something that troubles him.

CHRIS'S POV

Chris is looking at the cab fare meter. It reads \$17.30.

Chris's expression imparts he doesn't have the fare. As the cab drives along, Chris grows more concerned.

EXT. TRAFFIC, RUSSIAN HILL, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

An exterior shot of the cab in traffic. Chris's door opens violently and he bolts out.

CAB DRIVER
 Hey!

Chris sprints up Pacific Avenue away from the cab. The driver's jumped out to chase him.

EXT. HYDE STREET - SAME

Chris has run onto Hyde Street. He's faster than the driver and pulls away.

EXT. POLK STREET - LATER

Chris has turned into an alley off Polk. He stays there for a while. The cab driver walks by out on Polk. He's looking for Chris. He's lost him. The driver heads back for his cab. Chris should feel like he's in the free and clear. He does for a while, then he takes notice that he's standing there empty-handed and realizes he left his scanner in the cab.

CHRIS

Fuck...

EXT. PACIFIC AVE, - CONTINUOUS

As the cab driver returns to where his cab waits in traffic, CHRIS RUNS RIGHT BACK PAST HIM, and the driver starts chasing him again.

THE CAB

Chris grabs the scanner out from the back of the cab. The driver's closing in on him. Chris gets the gear out and gets going again with little distance between him and the driver now.

EXT. PACIFIC AVE - LATER

Chris tries to sprint while carrying the scanner.

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE - LATER

Chris runs through a public square park. He's starting to drag. He comes to a rest bench. He must rest and puts his scanner on the bench. As Chris catches his breath, he sees the driver come into view running toward him from not too far off.

Chris looks at the scanner; he has to leave it to get away; it represents money he needs though, and leaving it's difficult. Chris looks back at the driver then he leaves running.

Soon, the driver reaches the bench where the scanner rests. He knows he can't catch Chris now that Chris isn't hauling something. So he just gives up. He stops. He watches Chris run off at the far side of the square.

EXT. STREET, WEST SIDE OF THE PUBLIC SQUARE - LATER

Later, the driver sits across the street from the square. He's doing surveillance on the abandoned scanner that still remains in the middle of the square; he's waiting to chase Chris when he reclaims it.

Chris is on a pay phone across the street from the opposite side of the square. He sees the driver; the driver doesn't see Chris; Chris watches the driver and scanner.

CHRIS

(to the phone)

I'm going to be home late.

LINDA (O.S.)
Chris, I'm leaving.

CHRIS
Leaving where?

LINDA (O.S.)
I have my things together.

CHRIS
Leaving our place?

LINDA (O.S.)
Chris, I'm going. I'll talk to you
later.

CHRIS
Wait...

Linda hangs up. Chris has been surprised. He's thrown and real unsettled. He looks over at the scanner. Then he takes change from his pocket. He's taken a quarter and nickel out. He looks at them.

CLOSE ON the heads side of the nickel: the profile of THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Chris looks at it. Then he looks up across the street.

CHRIS (V.O.)
The train was coming every four
minutes.

There's a city train platform in the distance behind the street the driver waits at.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I could get my scanner, get past
him somehow, and if I timed it
right, jump right on and roll off.

Chris looks forty yards across the square at his scanner. Then Chris just jumps out and goes for it.

Across the street, the driver's distracted and doesn't see Chris across the square on a straight line for his equipment.

Chris has reached the scanner and grabbed it. He's got to run by the driver to get the train. He sees that it's coming around the bend to the west.

Meanwhile, the driver's seen Chris and stands up to stop him from running by.

Chris reaches him, jukes him, then takes off after the train.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I was thinking... I don't know...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Chris runs for the train; the driver chases him. The train's at the platform stop Chris runs toward.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I was thinking about Thomas
Jefferson.

INT. STATION - LATER

Chris has reached the station and puts his change in the turnstile machine.

CHRIS (V.O.)
...And the Declaration of
Independence.

INT. STATION STAIRS - LATER

Chris runs up the station steps to the platform.

CHRIS (V.O.)
And the passage about our right to
life, liberty and the pursuit of
happiness. For real.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - LATER

Chris has come up to the platform and found the train there; he runs toward the open doors of the closest car.

CHRIS (V.O.)
And I remember thinking... how did
he know to put the pursuit part in
there. That happiness...

The doors are closing.

CHRIS (V.O.)
...maybe it's just something you'll
never have. No matter. How did he
know that? He was a smart person I
always admired.

Chris tries to jam in past the doors coming together. They've clipped the scanner and caused Chris to drop it. It lands on the platform broken up.

Now Chris is on the other side of the train door with no way to open it. Chris looks through the glass at the scanner. The train starts to roll away; Chris keeps looking at the scanner as the train takes him away from the platform.

EXT. CHRIS'S NEIGHBORHOOD, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (EVENING)

Later, when it's become dark, Chris walks home through his city neighborhood.

INT. CHRIS'S APARTMENT - LATER

Chris looks across his living room at the stacks of Acro Bone Density Scanners he can't sell; THE ODD FEATURE OF THIS MOMENT IS THAT THE PLACE IS PRETTY EMPTY NOW EXCEPT FOR CHRIS'S PRODUCT. Linda has left with some of their belongings.

Chris turns back for the open front door. His landlord's standing in the doorway.

LANDLORD

Chris.

Chris heads past him.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

I got to get the rent from you.

Chris goes by him out the apartment.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Hey, man...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Chris has come out front. He's looking over the lot across the street to see if there's some trace of Linda and Christopher going. He doesn't see them. He remains there for a while; he's facing the idea Christopher's gone. A phone rings from his open apartment. Chris looks that way. Then he jogs toward his place.

INT. CHRIS'S APARTMENT - LATER

As the phone rings, Chris runs in past the landlord hanging around the doorway.

LANDLORD

I got to get the rent from you,
man.

Chris closes the door on him. The phone rings. Chris gets over to it.

CHRIS
Hello.

MAN'S VOICE
Chris?

CHRIS
Yeah.

MAN'S VOICE
Jay Twistle.

Chris is surprised. It takes him a moment to respond.

CHRIS
Hi...

MAN'S VOICE
Dean Witter.

CHRIS
Hi...

MAN'S VOICE
Do you still want to come by and
visit?

After a moment, Chris tries to make his voice come over casually, but it's an opportunity he's been long chasing and he's shaken by it.

CHRIS
Yes.

MAN'S VOICE
Come on by. Let's sit down with a
couple colleagues of mine. Do you
have a pen and paper?

Chris looks around in the drawers, the tabletops; he grabs a stray piece of paper from the counter. He doesn't have a pen. He just stands there.

CHRIS
Yes.

MAN'S VOICE
Good. Because this is going to get
a little complicated.

CHRIS
 (afraid of that, very
 quietly)
 Fuck...

MAN'S VOICE
 17901 West Devaney.

Chris concentrates hard to remember.

CHRIS
 Okay.

MAN'S VOICE
 Tower two. Suite eleven--

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris runs full speed through the sidewalk foot traffic.

CHRIS
 (repeating to remember)
 17901 West Devaney--

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris waits at an intersection corner for the crosswalk. An ACQUAINTANCE OF CHRIS'S, hanging out nearby, comes over.

CHRIS
 (to himself)
 Suite eleven sixty three--

ACQUAINTANCE
 Chris.

CHRIS
 (rushed)
 Hey.

ACQUAINTANCE
 What's up, man? Did you see that
 Nuggets game?

CHRIS
 No.

ACQUAINTANCE
 Last night. You didn't see that?

CHRIS

No.

ACQUAINTANCE

A hundred and eighteen...

(correcting himself)

A hundred and *nineteen* to a hundred
twenty. Two overtimes. Moons made a
three pointer with seventeen
seconds left.

The numbers are fucking Chris up.

CHRIS

I'm running somewhere. And I can't
talk to you about numbers and shit
right now.

The light changes. Chris takes off.

ACQUAINTANCE

(to himself)

What's your problem with numbers?

CHRIS

(stopping in the street)

Wayne.

ACQUAINTANCE

What?

CHRIS

You owe me fourteen bucks.

ACQUAINTANCE

Yeah...

CHRIS

Do you have that?

ACQUAINTANCE

I'll get that to you.

Chris takes off again.

ACQUAINTANCE (CONT'D)

(to himself again)

Fourteen's a number.

INT. REGISTERS, GROCERY STORE - LATER

Chris HOLDS A SINGLE PEN and waits for his turn to pay.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - LATER

Chris sits on a bench outside the grocery with his new pen; he's writing the address down on the paper he has. He finishes. He looks at it. FOR THE FIRST TIME, CHRIS DEMONSTRATES A SENSE OF SLIGHT RELIEF AND SATISFACTION. He remains on the bench, resting for a while. Then he notices the paper is the list Christopher's made earlier. Chris looks at it.

The paper bears handwriting that reads *basketball... microscope... two records...*

Chris looks at the paper for a while; he's thinking about his son.

EXT. MS. CHU'S DAYCARE, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Chris is amped up and has caught up with Linda in front of daycare. Christopher's gone in; left alone, they take the occasion to scream at one another.

CHRIS
You didn't leave me a *pen*.

LINDA
Chris--

CHRIS
Did you know he watches nonsense in here? He watches TV in here?

LINDA
What are you saying?

CHRIS
You set this up. I wouldn't have set this up. I would have looked *in* this fucking place. Take off. But I want Christopher. Give me Christopher if you want to take off.

A DAYCARE WORKER has come out to quiet them.

DAYCARE WORKER
There's children in here.

She goes back in. The couple look at one another. Then they finish with each other by whispering fiercely.

CHRIS
You set this up.

LINDA
We didn't have a choice. It's all
we could pay for.

CHRIS
Where are you staying?

LINDA
At Cynthia's.

CHRIS
There's no room for Christopher
there. I'm taking him if you're
staying there. Why are you staying
there?

LINDA
Until I can figure out where I'm
going. All right? Until I figure
out what I want to do. I want to do
something different. Just-- That's
where I'm staying.

Linda walks off. Chris watches her go.

EXT. BUS BENCH, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris sits on a bus bench across the street from the daycare
building.

He's looking across the street, into the center where the
class is being collected to leave for the day.

Chris stands up to go retrieve Christopher.

EXT. MS. CHU'S DAYCARE - CONTINUOUS

Christopher's come out front with some others. Chris is
there, waiting.

CHRIS
Hey.

CHRISTOPHER
Hi..

CHRIS
Ready?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. Where's mom?

Chris doesn't answer right away. They start walking off.

CHRIS
She went to stay with a friend for
a little while.

CHRISTOPHER
Cynthia?

CHRIS
Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER
Why?

CHRIS
She wants to be alone for a while
to do some thinking.

CHRISTOPHER
Thinking about what?

CHRIS
Just... About how to be happy. All
right? I'm with you. You're going
to be fine.

Christopher looks a little mixed up. They've come to a corner
and stopped. Chris looks down at his son.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
She just wants to do some thinking.
You're going to be fine.

He smiles as a means to reassure Christopher. Christopher
nods.

EXT. APARTMENT MANAGEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Chris has met his apartment landlord in front of the office.
Chris holds his lease; they're discussing it.

CHRIS
The apartment's in good shape. You
have to keep this fifty dollar
cleanup?

LANDLORD
That's a touchup fee. Repainting.

CHRIS
I'll paint it.

LANDLORD
That's all right. Why are you
moving?

Chris looks at the guy for a while.

CHRIS
Linda's moved out. We need a
smaller space.

INT. CHRIS'S APARTMENT - LATER

Chris paints the walls white; he's dressed in old clothes he doesn't care about. It's an unhappy scene with the scanner stack visible in the frame. He's got to edge past a scanner to paint.

CHRIS
(to the scanner for some
reason)
Watch out.

He knocks the scanner aside with his foot. It didn't go as far as he needed.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(starting to lose it)
Watch out, asshole.

He knocks it harder, then he looks at the scanner with the loose bearings of a guy who just called some equipment "asshole."

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Fuckin'... Shit. Asshole.

Then he kicks the equipment. Then he pushes his ladder down on the scanner.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Fucker.

Then Chris really kicks its midsection hard. He's a little winded and stops. He looks at the damage he's caused.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(realizing he busted it)
Shit...

After a while, he sits down beside the scanner. Chris takes a piece that flew off and tries to put it back on.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(more calmly)
Fit. Come on.

It's not going back on.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Come on. I'm sorry.

Chris keeps trying to fix the equipment.

EXT. PATIO - LATER

Chris sits on the small cement patio. He's got his face pressed against the green mesh chain link of the rail.

CLOSE ON Chris's face meshed in; it's an uncomfortable-looking position but one he's apparently taking some comfort from temporarily.

APARTMENT - LATER

Chris paints with a roller when THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. He goes to answer it and walks past part of the wall where he's painted in broad white paint

Chris,

You suck,

Chris

DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Chris opens the door. TWO SAN FRANCISCO POLICEMAN stand outside.

POLICEMAN
Chris Gardner?

Chris looks back at the police.

INT. JAIL CELL - LATER

Three inmates sit around a station jail cell - Chris and two others. Chris remains in his painting clothes.

INMATE
(to Chris)
What'd you do?

Chris doesn't answer.

INMATE (CONT'D)
(to Chris)
What'd you do?

The other guy starts laughing.

SECOND INMATE
(laughing)
Parking tickets.

After a moment, the first guy begins to laugh.

INMATE
(laughing, to Chris)
You got to pay that shit.

INT. CASHIER'S OFFICE, POLICE STATION - LATER

Chris writes a check for the clerk.

CHRIS
Four hundred?

CLERK
Four eighty.

It's a heavy amount for Chris.

CLERK (CONT'D)
That's a county tax.
(taking the check)
You have to stay until this clears.
We verify at nine-thirty A.M.

CHRIS
(worried for Christopher)
My son's at school. I have to get
him.

CLERK
It's nine-thirty A.M.

CHRIS
I have a job interview at 10:15. At
Dean Witter. And my son's at--

CLERK
We verify at nine-thirty.

Though he's concerned, Chris has to accept this.

INT. CORRIDOR, JAIL - LATER

Chris is on the pay phone down the end of the long jail corridor; though he's talking calmly, his expression shows he's feeling great unrest.

LINDA (O.S.)
(meaning what do you want)
What?

CHRIS
I have to... I can't get
Christopher today.

LINDA (O.S.)
What?

CHRIS
I need you to get Christopher. Take
him with you. For the night. One
night.

LINDA (O.S.)
What are you doing?

CHRIS
(quietly)
I got stuck. In this... situation.
I'll get him at school tomorrow.
I'll go right there.

LINDA (O.S.)
Maybe I should take him.

CHRIS
You should take him for the night.
Like I'm asking. To help us.

LINDA (O.S.)
I want to see him...

Chris doesn't say anything.

LINDA (O.S.)
I want to see him.

CHRIS
See him tomorrow. Then bring him
back.

There's no response.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
See him then bring him home.

LINDA
I want to take him to Golden Gate.
To the park. I'll bring him back at
six.

Chris doesn't say yes or no.

LINDA (O.S.)
Six. Okay?

CHRIS
Linda...

Chris weighs what Linda has in mind.

CHRIS
(meaning it better be six
and no later)
Six.

Chris is leaned way in with his head pressed into the corner of the phone box; there's pain on his face like someone's hitting his head with a hammer.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

In the middle of the night, while the few other inmates sleep, Chris lays in his space awake.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I was wondering how I was going to
get over to Dean Witter in time.
Without a dime.

EXT. POLICE STATION, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY (MORNING)

No one's out on the front steps of the station the next morning. The setting looks like a still picture. Then the doors fly open, and Chris comes running out.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris tears down the sidewalk, running past business people.

EXT. SIDEWALK/STREET, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - LATER

Chris sprints down the sidewalk toward the Dean Witter building. He's wearing a gray Member's Only jacket, no shirt under and white jeans covered in old paint.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris stands in front of the skyscraper lobby entrance fighting with the busted front zipper of his jacket.

CHRIS
(struggling with the
zipper)
Fuck...

Then Chris gives up on it. He stands there for a moment, having to accept the fact that he has to conduct an interview this way.

INT. BUILDING ELEVATOR, MOVING - LATER

Surrounded by business people, Chris rides the elevator up in his painter pants and his open Members Only.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM, DEAN WITTER HEADQUARTERS - LATER

Young Dean Witter applicants in suits wait together in a row of reception room seats. Chris sits directly in the middle of them. A RECEPTIONIST enters from the inter-office to call Chris for his interview.

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Gardner?

Chris rises.

CHRIS
Thank you.

Chris walks past her.

INT. BOARD ROOM, DEAN WITTER - LATER

A group of DEAN WITTER PARTNERS waits for Chris in the board room. Chris and the receptionist enter.

RECEPTIONIST
(introducing him)
Chris Gardner.

The men look at Chris. Jay Twistle is part of the group. Chris looks back at them.

CHRIS
Hi.

More or less embarrassed, the group has gone quiet.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

... I've been sitting out there for a half hour thinking of a story about some series of events that would have led me to be here like this. Dressed like this. And also would have demonstrated qualities you probably value here like diligence and earnestness and maybe team-playing or something...

The partners look at Chris.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I couldn't think of anything. I was arrested for failure to pay parking tickets. I ran here from the Polk station. From the police station.

The partners keep looking at Chris.

FIRST PARTNER

I have a question.

Chris looks back. The guy checks out his clothes.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)

What were you doing before you were arrested?

The others laugh. Chris has smiled. There's some good cheer in the room now.

CHRIS

I was painting my apartment.

FIRST PARTNER

Sit down.

Chris begins to sit.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)

(gesturing for Chris to stop)

Is it dry?

CHRIS

Yes...

Chris sits down.

FIRST PARTNER
(to Chris)
Jay says you're pretty determined.

TWISTLE
He's been waiting out front with
some forty pound gizmo for a month.

FIRST PARTNER
He said you're smart.

Chris looks over at Twistle. The look is meant to thank Jay.
Jay returns Chris's look to say he's in Chris's corner.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
Do you think you can learn
regulations and operations of the
market so as to capitalize?

CHRIS
Yes.

FIRST PARTNER
Have you already starting learning?
On your own?

CHRIS
Yes.

FIRST PARTNER
Because that's all we do.

The partner looks Chris over.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
We generally hire M.B.A.s from good
schools. We like to be prepared in
case a client asks where an
employee went to school.

Chris listens like that's bad news.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
But it's been my experience that
they don't. They ask whether
they're profiting through our
service.
(turning to Jay)
Jay, how many times have you seen
Chris?

TWISTLE
Ten.

FIRST PARTNER
Has he ever been dressed like this?

Chris awaits the answer.

TWISTLE
No. Jacket and tie.

FIRST PARTNER
(looking at his resume)
You were first in your class? In
high school?

CHRIS
Yes.

FIRST PARTNER
Out of how many?

CHRIS
Twelve.

No one reacts like it's much of an accomplishment.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Small town.

FIRST PARTNER
I'll say.

TWISTLE
First is first, though.

FIRST PARTNER
Yes, first is first, Jay.

CHRIS
I was first in radar class in the
navy also. Twenty guys.

TWISTLE
If Chris finishes first here, he's
made us a lot of money.

The first partner looks at Chris for a while.

FIRST PARTNER
What would you say if I told you a
guy showed up for a interview
without a shirt. And I hired him.
What would you say to that?

Chris thinks about it.

CHRIS
He must have had a pretty nice pair
of pants.

The whole room laughs. Chris has accomplished sharing some
character strengths with this group.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING, SKYSCRAPER LOBBY - LATER

Twistle has walked Chris out; they finish a conversation out
front of the skyscraper.

CHRIS
Thank you, Mr. Twistle.

TWISTLE
You can call me Jay.

CHRIS
(nodding)
I'll let you know, Jay.

TWISTLE
(totally surprised by
that)
What?

CHRIS
(not following)
What?

TWISTLE
You'll let me know, Jay?

CHRIS
Yes.

TWISTLE
You hounded-- You stood here--

CHRIS
There's no salary. My circumstances
changed some. I need to figure out
if I can make it.

TWISTLE
A couple hours. No shit. I'll fill
your spot. I promise. You know what
I'll look like... if you back out,
you know what I'll look like to the
partners?

CHRIS

Yes.

TWISTLE

What?

CHRIS

An ass--
 (thinking better of it)
 --a-hole.

TWISTLE

Yes. An ass a-hole. All the way.

Amused, Twistle has smiled. Chris has smiled too from the simple enjoyment of his company; all in all it's a moment of relief for Chris amid all his long stretches of unhappiness.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris runs back home from the building.

CHRIS (V.O.)

There was no salary. And not even a reasonable promise of a job. One intern was hired at the end of the program. From a pool of twenty.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris keeps running.

CHRIS (V.O.)

If you weren't that guy, you couldn't apply the six months training to another broker. I'd have to quit formally working for Acro as well. I'd have to give up benefits.

EXT. GUN & PAWN, STORE, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris removes his watch, slowing from his run and approaching the pawn shop.

CHRIS (V.O.)

The only resource I would have for six months would be my scanners, which I owned on lease and could still sell. I had fifteen left. If I sold them all, I might get by.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM, CITY - LATER

Chris waits among other at the central San Francisco train platform.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I had two hours to decide.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides by the window. He's looking out at the landscape of the city. It's fall. The afternoon light's fading out. Chris has gone quiet like he was at the film's beginning, riding the train and considering the matters of his life.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I remember wondering... Am I a good bet? Or not. Because all this was was a bet I could shine.

INT. CHRIS'S APARTMENT - LATER

Chris is alone in the apartment, standing under his broad *You Suck* message. With a brush, he begins to cover it with paint. Once it's painted over, Chris shows a degree of relief. Then he checks his kitchen clock.

The clock reads five minutes to six.

EXT. STAIRWELL, MOTEL - LATER

Chris sits alone outside on the stairwell steps waiting for Christopher.

INT. CHRIS'S APARTMENT - LATER

It's almost dark. Chris looks out the window of his room to the stairwell where Linda should come up. She's not there. Chris checks his watch. He's worried. Soon, Linda comes up the stairs. She's carrying Christopher because he's asleep. Chris lets some apprehension go.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Linda has put Christopher down on the couch under the message Chris painted over; he's still asleep. They face one another from five feet away.

LINDA
(meaning where's he been)
What were you doing?

CHRIS

I had to, I had to manage all this stuff. I had an interview at Dean Witter. I had to get there. For an intern program. A competitive program. I got it.

Linda has been listening.

LINDA

I'm going back to Los Angeles.

CHRIS

All right...

They keep facing one another.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I want Christopher. Here.

Linda looks at Chris for a while; sizing him up.

LINDA

Salesman to intern's backwards.
You're fucking around.

CHRIS

(with some anger, trying
to stay quiet.)

I'm not.

LINDA

What are you going to do for money?

CHRIS

I'm going to sell those things I leased. And I'm going to stand out. In my program.

LINDA

You're doing that?

Chris doesn't answer her. Linda stands there for a while. The vibe of Linda is she's lost, disappointed with her lot and uncertain over the important concerns of her life; she's considering all of what Chris said to her. Chris waits for the answer.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I know you'll take care of him.

Then Chris watches Linda walk past him until she reaches the partly opened door and goes out.

Chris remains alone. After a while, he turns and looks at Christopher.

The boy's sleeping on the sofa under the message Chris covered up.

Chris looks at his son. IT'S A MOMENT DURING WHICH CHRIS TAKES THE MEASURE OF THE RISKS THE PROGRAM RUNS FOR THEM AGAINST HOW HIS AND CHRISTOPHER'S LIVES CAN BE IMPROVED BY IT. Chris watches his son sleep. Then Chris steps over to the kitchen phone. In time there, he's placed a call and keeps his voice pretty low so he doesn't wake his son.

TWISTLE (O.S.)

Hello?

CHRIS

Hello. It's Chris Gardner.

TWISTLE (O.S.)

Hi, Chris.

CHRIS

I called to thank you again for inviting me in.

TWISTLE

I responded to your determination, Chris.

CHRIS

I appreciate it. Jay?

TWISTLE

Yeah.

Time passes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'd be real pleased to be in the program.

TWISTLE

That's good, Chris.

CLOSE ON CHRIS on the phone; he's expression shows some uncertainty over what their future holds.

EXT. APARTMENT PARKING LOT - DAY

On another day, Chris and his acquaintance Wayne load Chris's scanners from Chris's old apartment into Wayne's car.

CHRIS
 (urging Wayne to slow
 down)
 Careful.

WAYNE
 What?

CHRIS
 Be careful.

Chris loads one in. Then he and Wayne enter the car.
 Christopher's in the back seat. The car pulls out, then heads
 directly across the street to a motel lot.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Christopher eats cereal at the small kitchen dining table.
 They're in a residence motel room now with fewer furnishings.
 Chris enters the room.

CHRIS
 (with a great deal of
 fatherly enthusiasm)
 Hey, it's Saturday!

CHRISTOPHER
 Yeah!

CHRIS
 (same enthusiasm)
 Let's go play some basketball!

CHRISTOPHER
 Yeah.

CHRIS
 Then go sell a bone density
 scanner!

Chris leaves. Christopher remains at the table, puzzling over
 the last part.

EXT. PLAYGROUND, SAN FRANCISCO - EVENING

Chris has taken Christopher to a park basketball court in the
 middle of the city. Christopher takes a shot, misses and hits
 a scanner that rests near the court.

CHRIS
 (quietly)
 Shit...

Chris gets the ball.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Try not to hit that. Okay?

CHRISTOPHER
Okay.

Chris dribbles the ball, smiling.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
I'm going pro.

CHRIS
(watching Christopher for
a stretch)
Yeah, I don't know.

Chris isn't smiling now.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(kindly)
Come here. Listen.

Christopher walks over. Chris looks at him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(kindly))
You'll probably be about as good as
I was. That's the way it works. And
I was below average, so you'll
probably ultimately rank somewhere
around there. Around average.

Christopher listens; his eyes are a little wider now with the
new set of facts.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You'll excel at a number of things.
Not this, though. So I don't want
you out here day and night,
bouncing this ball. Okay?

CHRISTOPHER
Okay.

A couple moments pass.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Why did we move to a motel?

CHRIS
Because I'm getting a better job.

Christopher makes a curious expression; he's a smart child and doesn't add that up. Chris looks down at him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You have to trust me.

CHRISTOPHER
I trust you.

CHRIS
(looking at his watch)
It's time to go.

They head off the court. Christopher's trailing.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Come on. Keep up.

CHRISTOPHER
When's Mom coming back?

CHRIS
I don't know...

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Early Saturday, Chris and his son are the only ones in the train car. They ride through the city with the scanner between them.

EXT. OAKLAND - LATER

Chris and his son walk through an Oakland business district. The streets are pretty quiet still; Chris carries his scanner.

EXT. CHECK CASH STORE, OAKLAND - LATER

Chris has sold the scanner. He cashes a check at the counter while Christopher waits beside him. Christopher's checking out some Clark candy bars for sale on the counter. He doesn't say anything though. Chris sees him.

CHRIS
(to Christopher)
Do you want one?

Christopher nods. Chris faces the clerk again and points to the candy bars.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
One of these, please.

EXT. MRS. CHUS DAYCARE - DAY

Morning, Chris wears a new suit and parts company with Christopher outside daycare right under the word *Happy*ness.

CHRIS
I'll see you after school.

CHRISTOPHER
You're going to get me?

CHRIS
Yeah. I'm going to get you.

Christopher heads inside. Chris stands under the word *Happy*ness, looking at him go.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - LATER (MORNING)

Chris is dressed in the new suit; he rides the bus along the bay as the sun rises.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING/STREET FINANCIAL DISTRICT - LATER

Office Manager ALAN FRAKESH, 38, leads the entire group of twenty Dean Witter interns, including Chris, from the Dean Witter building toward some destination across the street; each is clean-cut and fresh-looking. The group reaches a busy corner where three streets intersect. Frakesh gestures to a number of skyscrapers visible around them.

FRAKESH
Mehvney Industrial and Sanco Oil
have the twelve hundred building.
Lee-Ray shipping is across the
street.

Chris listens; he's glancing at the size of the skyscrapers.

FRAKESH (CONT'D)
In a couple weeks you'll get cold
call sheets with the phone numbers
of employees from the Fortunes 500s
in the financial district. If you
canvas the district you can pool
from sixty Fortune companies.
Coffees and working lunches can be
fun occasions to familiarize
possible clients with our packages.
We need you to bring them in. Match
their needs and goals to a package.
And sign them up.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, DEAN WITTER - LATER

Chris and the other interns sit around a conference table. Frakesh distributes pretty thick textbooks.

FRAKESH

The board examination isn't just a simple pass fail. It's an evaluatory tool we use to separate applicants.

Frakesh checks his watch.

FRAKESH (CONT'D)

Okay. Five minute break. Back at two.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris is on break, waiting to cross the broad intersection out front of the skyscraper. The FIRST PARTNER from Chris's early interview has come out as well and stands beside Chris, hailing a cab.

FIRST PARTNER

Hi...

CHRIS

Hi.

The guy can't recall Chris's name.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Chris.

FIRST PARTNER

How are you doing?

CHRIS

I'm good. Thanks.

FIRST PARTNER

How's first day?

CHRIS

Good. Exciting.

FIRST PARTNER

(kidding, looking around and meaning why's Chris outside)

You're not quitting are you?

CHRIS
 No. Five minute break.
 (nodding across the
 street)
 I'm grabbing a candy bar. We're
 doing board prep.

FIRST PARTNER
 (like board prep's hard)
 Man. I remember mine...

While the first partner reminisces, Chris sees something.

CHRIS'S POV

The Filipino sits across the street on a bus bench; he's got
 Chris's scanner on his lap.

From across the street, Chris looks at him.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
 ... it was an hour exam. Not three
 like yours...

CHRIS (V.O.)
 If I sold every scanner I had, I
 might still come up short by the
 end of the program.

FIRST PARTNER
 ...and we had no world markets on
 it...

CHRIS (V.O.)
 So I was watching a guy with my
 rent on his lap waiting for a bus
 to somewhere else.

Chris is focused on the Filipino. He sees the bus coming for
 him a block south.

FIRST PARTNER
 We didn't cover taxes either. It
 was still a pain in the ass...

CHRIS (V.O.)
 I couldn't run right off while he
 was talking, because I'd look like
 a freak.

Chris sees the bus pulling up.

CHRIS (V.O.)
But the bus was coming.

CHRIS
(to the first partner)
Well, I'm down to two minutes. On my break.

FIRST PARTNER
Yeah, Frakesh is a prick about it, too, I bet.

CHRIS
It's my first day, so...

FIRST PARTNER
Okay, get going.

Chris begins to cross the street. He's got to walk, although the bus has arrived. After a moment, it clears; the bus bench is empty. The guy has gotten on.

Chris has to walk until he turns a corner where the bus has gone. He finally does; he's out of sight of the first partner and starts to run.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - SAME

The Filipino sits near the window. He has the scanner. At that moment, Chris catches up to the bus and comes into view, running up alongside the guy's window. IT'S AT THIS POINT THAT CHRIS GETS HIT BY A CAR.

FILIPINO GUY
Whoa....

EXT. STREET - SAME

Chris lays on the pavement in the middle of the city street. His eyes are open, but he seems stunned. Cars come right at him.

SPANISH GUY
Hey, asshole.

A SPANISH GUY hauls Chris up to a knee then quickly over the few feet to the sidewalk as a car swerves by.

SPANISH GUY (CONT'D)
Are you all right, man? Fuck.

CHRIS
(standing now, coming
around further)
Yeah...

SPANISH GUY
What are you doing? I could have
killed you.

The guy's car is pulled over behind them; he's the driver who
struck Chris.

SPANISH GUY (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

CHRIS
Yeah.

SPANISH GUY
What are you doing?

CHRIS
I was trying to catch the bus.

SPANISH GUY
You're all right?

CHRIS
Yeah.

They stand around there for a while.

SPANISH GUY
Gross, man. Your thumb. Man, gross.

CHRIS
(not following the guy)
What?

SPANISH GUY
You got a fucked up thumb.

Chris's thumb stiffly points opposite the way it ought to.

SPANISH GUY (CONT'D)
Man, your thumb's fucked up.

CHRIS
(noticing it)
Yeah...

After a moment, Chris starts to walk away.

SPANISH GUY

Hey.

CHRIS

What?

SPANISH GUY

Where are you going?

CHRIS

Work.

SPANISH GUY

We should wait for the cops.

CHRIS

I'm on a five minute break. I have like a minute left.

SPANISH GUY

You got hit by a car. Go to the hospital.

CHRIS

I can't. I'm in a competitive internship at Dean Witter.

Chris waves then begins to run back the way he came.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, DEAN WITTER - LATER

Chris hustles back into the conference room. The other interns are all seated and working from their textbooks. Chris takes his seat; he picks up his pencil to write, even though that thumb's pointing in a different direction than everyone else's.

CHRIS (V.O.)

This part of my life is called...

CHRIS

(privately, flexing his hand)

Ow... fuck...

CHRIS (V.O.)

...intern. Show up early.

INT. MAIN OFFICE, DEAN WITTER - MORNING

Early, The wide office space of open desks is empty except for Chris and his twenty intern competitors, reading early market charts on computers.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Run with coffee...

EXT. WESTERN AVE, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

On another day, Chris is dressed for work and runs awkwardly up a financial district sidewalk with a carry carton full of coffees; he spills on his wrist.

CHRIS
Fuck...

CHRIS (V.O.)
Favors for Frakesh. Our office
manager. All day.

INT. CUBICLE ROW, DEAN WITTER - DAY

Chris sits at the end of a cubicle row of interns making cold calls from a employee sheet marked Pacific Transportation. He's got *Marshall Slauson: Billing* circled in red.

CHRIS
(with a pretty fast
rhythm)
Our office is a block from Pacific.
I'd be glad to come over and share
our information with you. Even the
eight hundred dollars from your
profit sharing, if that's all you
moved into the market yearly--
(listening)
Sure...
(listening)
You have my number.
(listening)
Call me with any questions, Mr.
Slauson. Anytime.

Alan Frakesh walks up to Chris's desk.

ALAN
Who wants to get me a doughnut?

He's looking at Chris. So Chris has to get up.

EXT. WESTERN AVENUE, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - LATER

Chris runs up the same coffee-spilling sidewalk, holding a doughnut.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Stay late.

INT. CUBICLE ROW, DEAN WITTER - LATER

Chris is on the cold call phone again. There's all kind of cold call chatter from the interns around him.

CHRIS

Even the four hundred dollars from
your pension can accrue to three
times--

(listening)

Accrue means adds up. Quickly. Into
more money.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

At day's end, the intersection before the skyscraper is mostly quiet; CHRIS, THOUGH, HAS LEFT THE SKYSCRAPER AND SPRINTS ACROSS IT.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Then catch an A train by six.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides the train.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Then the crosstown.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides east through San Francisco.

CHRIS (V.O.)

To the blue line.

INT. CITY TRAIN - MOVING

Chris is on another el.

CHRIS (V.O.)

The twenty-two

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING

Chris rides another bus.

CHRIS (V.O.)

To the place they can't spell
Happiness.

EXT. MRS. CHU'S DAYCARE - LATER

Christopher waits outside the facility with Mrs. Chu under their mural. He's the last kid. Chris runs up for him.

INT. MOTEL ROOM. KITCHENETTE - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris studies his textbook in their small kitchenette. Christopher's down for the night on a cot in the living room beside him. Chris is writing. His thumb's still hurting.

CHRIS
(from pain in his hand)
Ah...

CHRISTOPHER
(meaning what's wrong)
What?

CHRIS
My thumb.

CHRISTOPHER
What happened?

CHRIS
I got hit by a car.

CHRISTOPHER
Where?

CHRIS
On Pacific?

CHRISTOPHER
Where on your body?

CHRIS
The back of my legs. I don't
remember really.

CHRISTOPHER
How'd you hurt your thumb then?

CHRIS
I landed on it.
(kindly)
Go to sleep.

CHRISTOPHER
Were you on the street?

CHRIS
I was running on the street. Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER
Don't do that. You can get hurt.

CHRIS
(smiling)
Okay... Go to sleep.

Chris finishes a page of his textbook. Then he closes it. Then he opens his checkbook to pay bills he's got there. He looks at the amount he's got: \$138.00. Chris stares at the number for a while. He's concerned of course.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Then eight hours later... reverse.

*The film speeds up and takes Chris and Christopher on a quick-motion glimpse through their many transfers through the city back to daycare and work.

EXT. DEAN WITTER SKYSCRAPER - LATER

Chris runs up to the skyscraper for work again.

INT. DEAN WITTER OFFICES - DAY

The camera tracks along the cubicle row where each intern sits making calls.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Whoever brought in the most money
after five months was usually
hired.

They work frantically.

CHRIS (V.O.)
They were all working their way up
call sheets to sign clients.

An intern scratches a name he called from the bottom of a sheet titled State Farm.

Chris sits in the last cubicle.

CHRIS (V.O.)
They'd stay till eight, but I had
Chris. I didn't have the same time
to work my way up a sheet.

Chris looks at his sheet.

CHRIS'S POV

The sheet is titled *Bell Western*. THE CAMERA PANS UP THE SHEET FROM LOW LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR TITLES AND NAMES UP TO THE TOP:

Walter Ribbon: Pension Fund Manager.

Chris looks at the name Ribbon and decides to dial it. He awaits an answer.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Walter Ribbon's office.

CHRIS
Chris Gardner for Walter Ribbon.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Concerning?

CHRIS
I'm calling from Dean Witter.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Just a moment.

Chris, surprised he's getting through, waits by the phone.

WALTER RIBBON (O.S.)
Hello.

CHRIS
Hello, Mr. Ribbon. This is Chris Gardner. I'm calling from Dean Witter.

WALTER RIBBON (O.S.)
Yeah, Chris.

CHRIS
Mr. Ribbon. I wondered if you'd give me a few moments to discuss our products and how I might--

WALTER RIBBON (O.S.)
Can you be here in a half-hour?

CHRIS
Yes.

WALTER RIBBON

I just had someone cancel. Come now. I can give you a few minutes before the Giants game.

Chris is already taking off.

INT. LOBBY, DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

CHRIS SPRINTS THROUGH THE BUSY LOBBY.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Office manager Alan Frakesh is on his way in with a cup of coffee. He encounters Chris as Chris hustles out.

ALAN

What's up?

CHRIS

Hey, Alan.

ALAN

Hey, man. Do you have five minutes?

CHRIS

Man, I guess. I'm meeting Walter Ribbon at Bell Western at three.

ALAN

Because I have no minutes. I'm supposed to present commodities to Bromer. Could you move my car? That would really help me out.

CHRIS

Where is it?

ALAN

Lowery.
(pointing)
Half block. Lemon Tercel.

CHRIS

Where am I moving it?

ALAN

(like it's real easy)
Other side of Lowery. They're streetsweeping. There's spaces.

CHRIS
 (reluctantly)
 All right...

Alan has handed Chris keys.

ALAN
 Hold on to these. I have backups in
 my desk.

Chris begins to go.

ALAN (CONT'D)
 And you have to jimmy that.

CHRIS
 Jimmy what?

ALAN
 You have to jimmy the key. And the
 other doors don't unlock.

Alan makes a "jimmying" gesture to indicate what Chris needs to do.

ALAN (CONT'D)
 You have to jimmy it. Lemon Tercel.

Privately, Chris is a little more pissed.

EXT. LOWERY AVENUE, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - LATER

Chris has approached a parked lemon Tercel. He puts the key in the driver's door. He begins to "jimmy" it. It doesn't open.

Chris messes around with it a little more. It still won't open. He looks at his watch.

INT. WALTER RIBBON'S OFFICE, BELL WESTERN BUILDING - SAME

Fund manager WALTER RIBBON sits behind his desk, meeting with a couple younger associates; THERE'S A PROMINENT OFFICE CLOCK behind him reading 2:42.

EXT. LOWERY AVENUE - SAME

Back on Lowery, Chris continues to jimmy the key in the lock.

CHRIS
 (frustrated, to himself)
 I'm *jimmying* it. Come on. This is
jimmying it.

INT. WALTER RIBBON'S OFFICE - SAME

The associates have cleared out of Ribbon's office. Walter does paper work at his desk. THE CLOCK BEHIND HIM READS 2:48.

INT. ALAN'S TERCEL, MOVING - LATER

Chris has finally gained entry and drives around north San Francisco, trying to find parking.

INT. WALTER RIBBON'S OFFICE - LATER

Walter Ribbon sits at his desk. The large wall clock that looms behind him reads 2:55. RIBBON WEARS A SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS BASEBALL CAP now.

EXT. SIERRA BOULEVARD - LATER

Chris has pulled the Tercel into a metered parking space. He's left the driver's side. But after he's shut the door, he realizes he's left his work materials inside. He puts the key in. The door won't unlock, so Chris begins to "jimmy" it again.

CHRIS

Shit...

INT. WALTER RIBBON'S OFFICE - SAME

The prominent clocks reads 3:01. Ribbon wears the ball cap but also takes a mitt from his drawer.

EXT. STREET, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - SAME

Chris stands at the meter beside the parked Tercel. He's got his work case with him and has been looking through his pockets for change. He doesn't have any quarters. Chris looks at his watch. Then he looks back at the meter. Then he just takes off.

EXT. SIERRA BOULEVARD, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - LATER

Chris runs with his workbag up the Sierra Boulevard sidewalk.

EXT. SIERRA BOULEVARD - LATER

Chris stands on the sidewalk, looking around for an address he can't find. A BUSINESSMAN WALKS BY.

CHRIS

Where's 223 east, man? It should be right here.

BUSINESSMAN

This is 200 west. You have to cross Cortez.

CHRIS

(quietly)

Fuck...

BUSINESSMAN

You have to go east four blocks.

EXT. CORTEZ STREET, FINANCIAL DISTRICT - LATER

Once again, Chris is running through San Francisco.

INT. LOBBY, WALTER RIBBON'S OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Chris has jogged into the skyscraper lobby. He caught an elevator just as the doors close; the elevator is ABSOLUTELY PACKED THOUGH, so much so that it's absurd for Chris to try to enter, which out of desperation he does anyway. A maintenance worker up front pushes him out.

MAINTENANCE WORKER

Get the fuck out of here, man.

Chris steps back and lets the elevator go up without him. He hits the button. Soon, another elevator opens. Chris jumps in.

INT. ELEVATOR - LATER

Chris is alone in the elevator going up; there's *easy listening* coming through the elevator speaker that cuts across Chris's frantic mood, so it's a peculiar few moments.

INT. WALTER RIBBONS OFFICE - SAME

Walter Ribbon is no longer there. There is just an empty, high-backed chair behind his desk with the large clock reading 3:17 hanging on the wall behind it.

INT. RECEPTION DESK, LOBBY, WALTER RIBBON'S OFFICE - LATER

As the receptionist finishes a call, Chris approaches her. He arrives at the desk. They look at each other. Chris smiles and tries to come across bright-eyed.

CHRIS

Hi, I'm Chris Gardner.

INT. ELEVATOR, WALTER RIBBON'S OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Chris stands among a crowd of office-workers in an elevator that's going down. His expression is the opposite of the one he was just making; it's clear he didn't see Walter Ribbon.

EXT. SIERRA BOULEVARD - LATER

Dispirited, Chris returns to the parked Tercel and FINDS A PARKING TICKET ON THE WINDSHIELD.

INT. CITY TRAIN - LATER

Later, Chris rides the metro train. Pretty soon, he sees OFFICE MANAGER ALAN FRAKESH, having just boarded, walking down the aisle. They make eye contact.

CHRIS

Hey...

ALAN

Hey.

CHRIS

Why are you on the train?

ALAN

I'm just cruising up to Morgan Stanley. For a presentation. Parking in the financial district's a pain in the ass.

CHRIS

Yeah.

Alan takes an empty space beside Chris.

ALAN

Thanks for moving my car.

CHRIS

That's all right. It's on Sierra.

ALAN

(like Sierra's pretty far)
Sierra?

CHRIS

Yeah.

Chris reaches into his work bag.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 There weren't any spaces around
 Lowery. Where you said.

Chris TAKES THE PARKING TICKET OUT.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 I missed an appointment at Bell
 Western. With Walter Ribbon. Walter
 Ribbon left.

ALAN
 Man...

CHRIS
 I was twenty-three minutes late.

Now Chris is A LITTLE MORE THAN VAGUELY HOLDING THE TICKET
 OUT TOWARD ALAN TO ALLOW ALAN TO ASSUME IT AND THE
 RESPONSIBILITY OF PAYING FOR IT. Alan has seen the ticket but
 isn't taking it.

ALAN
 Tell him some Dean Witter business
 came up.

CHRIS
 (pissed)
 Okay...

ALAN
 Something for a current client.
 That'll seem industrious.

CHRIS
 Yeah...

Chris HAS CONTINUED TO HOLD THE PARKING TICKET OUT. FRAKESH
 CONTINUES TO IGNORE IT. So Chris just reaches over and puts
 the ticket on Alan's body. Alan, though, will not take
 possession of the parking ticket. He merely allows it to
 slide slowly down his sportcoat sleeve and come to rest on
 the train seat between him and Chris. HE DOESN'T EVEN
 ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THAT JUST HAPPENED either; he's just kept
 looking straight ahead.

Chris looks at Alan. Alan won't make eye contact.

MONTAGE

What follows is a series of dissolves featuring the train
 interior with Alan and Chris sitting with the ticket equally
 between them.

Through dissolves, the passage of time is indicated by the changing crowd of passengers around Chris and Alan Frakesh. New riders appear and disappear. Throughout the sequence, though, the ticket remains exactly between the two men. Soon, the train comes to a stop. Alan rises.

ALAN

Thanks again for moving my car.

Alan walks down the aisle to leave the train. He leaves the ticket behind. Chris remains beside it. Alan has disembarked. The train begins moving again, taking Chris and his parking ticket somewhere else. Then Chris puts it in his workbag.

INT. DINER, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris and Christopher sit across from one another at a booth. Chris pays the parking ticket with his checkbook.

CHRIS

We should get home pretty soon.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

CHRIS

(kindly)

Finish up.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

(looking at the checkbook)

What are you doing?

CHRIS

Paying bills. A parking ticket.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't have a car anymore.

CHRIS

I know.

Chris looks down at his checkbook.

CHRIS'S POV

The amount he's just written as his balance is \$64.08

Chris looks at that for a while. He's worried.

CHRIS

I need to take you with me to a couple doctors' offices tomorrow. Okay? For a sales call.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

CHRIS

Then... possibly... we'll go to a baseball game. Possibly. Okay?

CHRISTOPHER

(pleased)

Yeah...

CUT TO:

INT. BUS, SUBURBS - LATER

It's a jarring cut because for the first time, the setting is not the city. Chris and Christopher ride in the bus together. THEY'RE WEARING BRAND NEW SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS BASEBALL CAPS SO FRESH THEIR BRIMS AREN'T BENT. Chris has a scanner with him. Out the window pass spread out suburban homes and trees.

EXT. SUBURBAN TOWN - LATER

Later, Chris and Christopher, in their fresh caps, walk past suburban houses.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't understand.

CHRIS

You don't understand what?

CHRISTOPHER

Are we going to the game?

CHRIS

We're *possibly* going to the game. Do you know what *possibly* means?

CHRISTOPHER

Like probably.

CHRIS

No... *Possibly* means we might, we might not. *Probably* means there's a good chance we're going.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

CHRIS

(testing him)

What does probably mean?

CHRISTOPHER

It means there's a good chance.

CHRIS

What does possibly mean?

CHRISTOPHER

I know what it means.

CHRIS

What?

CHRISTOPHER

It means we're not going to the game.

Chris laughs. He looks at his son for a while.

CHRIS

How'd you get so smart?

CHRISTOPHER

Because you're smart.

Chris smiles. They fall silent and keep walking. After a while, Chris's expression shifts to doubt and concern whether his son's really right about that.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - LATER

Chris has knocked on the door of a large private home. Christopher waits beside him. Soon, Walter Ribbon answers the door.

CHRIS

Mr. Ribbon?

WALTER RIBBON

Yes.

CHRIS

I'm Chris Gardner.

Ribbon's wearing a Giants cap as well.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Dean Witter.

WALTER RIBBON
Hi... what are you doing up--

CHRIS
I came to apologize for missing our
appointment.

WALTER RIBBON
You didn't need to come up.

CHRIS
I wanted to thank you for your
time. You probably waited for me.

WALTER RIBBON
A little bit.

CHRIS
I didn't want you to think I took
that for granted.

WALTER RIBBON
(nodding at the scanner)
What's that?

CHRIS
An Acro density scanner. I sold
them before I began at Dean Witter.
I have a few remaining on a sales
lease. I have an appointment. After
the game.

WALTER RIBBON
You guys are going to the game?

CHRIS
Yeah. This is my son Chris.

WALTER RIBBON
We're going too. I'm taking my son
Tim. My sixteen-year-old. We were
just leaving.
(calling back into the
house)
Tim.

Chris waits in the doorway. He begins to go.

CHRIS

Well, we'll leave you alone. I'm sorry about yesterday. It just wasn't enough time to finish my work and get across the district. I was eager, and probably too optimistic about getting over there.

WALTER RIBBON

I appreciate that.

Chris waves goodbye. He begins to leave with Chris. Some time passes as they walk farther away from Ribbon.

Walter Ribbon watches Chris and his son walk off and approach a car on the streetside that isn't Chris's.

WALTER RIBBON

Hey.

Chris seems relieved. He turns.

WALTER RIBBON (CONT'D)

You guys want to come with us?

Chris looks at Ribbon; A BALLGAME TRIP WITH RIBBON IS WHAT HE WAS TRYING TO PULL OFF BY COMING OUT.

CHRIS

To Candlestick?

WALTER RIBBON

Yeah. We're going now. Come with us. Where are your seats?

CHRIS

Upper deck.

WALTER RIBBON

We have a box. Come on.

(to Christopher)

Do you want to sit in a box?

Christopher thinks about it for a while.

CHRISTOPHER

(plainly)

No.

CHRIS

(to his son)

It's not an actual box.

CHRIS(cont'd)

It's a closed off area. It's more comfortable.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

Chris looks at Ribbon and smiles.

CHRIS

Yeah, that would be great.

WALTER RIBBON

(calling back to the house)

Tim!

Chris has come over to Walter's car. He's starting to enter with his scanner.

WALTER RIBBON (CONT'D)

Why don't you just put that in your car?

Chris looks over at the strange car he was just pretending to enter; He looks at Ribbon for a while, trying to come up with something. Then HE DOES SOMETHING PRETTY WEIRD.

CHRIS

Ah!

WALTER RIBBON

(meaning what happened)

What?

CHRIS

I just got stung by a bee.

Ribbon looks at Chris. He didn't see any bee anywhere. It functioned as enough of a subject change though that Ribbon opens his driver's door without bringing up the scanner again. So Chris is able to get in the car without dealing with the issue.

INT. WALTER RIBBON'S CAR, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides in the passenger seat. Ribbon's driving them toward San Francisco.

WALTER RIBBON

Are you okay?

CHRIS

Yeah.

WALTER RIBBON
You're not allergic or anything?

CHRIS
No...

WALTER RIBBON
Where did it get you?

CHRIS
Like... back of my head.

No one speaks for a little while.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Thomas Jefferson mentions happiness
a *couple* times in the Declaration
of Independence.

CUT TO:

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

CLOSE ON the phrase *effect their safety and happiness*.

CLOSE ON the phrase *road to happiness*.

CHRIS (V.O.)
It may seem like a strange word to
be in that document. But he was
sort of... he was an artist.

EXT. STADIUM PARKING LOT - LATER

Chris and his son are in the midst of a Bell Western tailgate party. Christopher plays with some of the younger kids in the party. Chris sits on a lowered tailgate of an SUV, drinking soda.

CHRIS (V.O.)
He called the English, "the
disturbers of our harmony." And I
remember sitting there that day
thinking about the disturbers of
mine.

CLOSE ON CHRIS as he considers.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Mrs. Chu. Running. Christopher
maybe going with Linda to Los
Angeles. That idea.

Christopher runs around in the grass lot. Chris watches him.

CHRIS (V.O.)
My bent thumb.

When Chris lifts his soda, WE SEE HIS WAYWARD THUMB.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I sat on the tailgate of someone's truck for forty minutes because of the lack of an actual bee sting on the back of my head. I couldn't get up and get a hot dog. And I was pretty hungry. And I thought about all this.

Chris looks at something significant.

CHRIS (V.O.)
But Walter Ribbon and his Bell Western pension money, which was millions, was a way to leave it behind.

CHRIS'S POV

Walter Ribbon speaks with a group of colleagues nearby. They're laughing it up with pregame good cheer.

Chris looks over at Walter.

INT. CORPORATE BOX, CANDLESTICK PARK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Walter Ribbon holds a conversation with other work friends in the crowded Bell Western corporate box. When he has a quiet moment, Chris comes up to him. Ribbon turns to see Chris as he arrives.

CHRIS
Thank you again for having us.

WALTER RIBBON
That's my pleasure, Chris.

CHRIS
Mr. Ribbon, I'd love the chance to introduce you to what Dean Witter could do for your company. I'd be pleased to come meet you whenever you have the chance. We can beat your arrangement with Morgan Stanley.

WALTER RIBBON

Chris, I didn't have a notion you were a first year over there. I like you. But there's not a chance I'd let you direct our fund. That's not going to happen, buddy. Come on. Relax. Enjoy the game.

Walter has patted Chris on the shoulder kindly and walked off. Chris remains behind.

EXT. PARKING LOT, CANDELSTICK PARK - LATER

The Ribbons and Gardners part company with other Bell Western corporate employees in a parking lot of Candlestick. A couple of the younger ones exchange cards with Chris.

YOUNG EXECUTIVE

(to Chris)

Give me a call.

CHRIS

Okay.

SECOND YOUNG EXECUTIVE

(handing Chris his card)

Nice to meet you, Chris.

Chris heads off with the Ribbons. THE VIBE HERE IS PRETTY BLUE BECAUSE CHRIS DIDN'T SCORE WITH RIBBON THE WAY HE HOPED.

EXT. WALTER RIBBON'S HOUSE, SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Ribbon has pulled his car up to his home. The group is splitting up - the Ribbon's going inside and Chris and his son walking off toward the street.

CHRIS

Thank you again.

WALTER RIBBON

My pleasure.

The Ribbons head in. Chris and Christopher walk out to the street. Chris waits there for a moment, making sure the Ribbons have gone into their house for sure. They have. So Chris and Christopher start walking off down the street, back to whatever bus stop brought them there.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER (NIGHT)

A wide shot of the Gardner's motel room gets across for the first time what threadbare conditions they're living in.

Christopher sleeps on the side of the room on a cot. Chris reads a financial textbook in the kitchenette. The scanner stack of four is visible in the frame. THE IMAGE BECOMES STILL, LIKE THE STILL IMAGES USED IN THE BEGINNING OF THE PICTURE.

What follows is a series of these still photographs of the same setting. In each of them, Christopher sleeps and Chris sits in different positions around the kitchen table, studying. BUT IN EACH PASSING PICTURE THERE IS ONE FEWER SCANNER UNTIL NONE REMAINS.

EXT. MOTEL OFFICE, MOTEL - DAY

On another day, after work, Chris has taken his mail from his slot. He's checking out something that's got him worried. He's opened the letter. Christopher hangs around in the distance.

CHRIS'S POV

The header reads *IRS*. The section beneath it reads...*immediate payment of full balance of \$645.14. The IRS will effect garnishment of wages from your employer....*

Chris stares at the letter like it bears an unexpected, critical difficulty.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris is back in the setting of the still photos. He's writing this check at the kitchen table. Christopher sleeps. THE SCANNERS ARE ALL GONE. Chris looks up after finishing the check. He's grown deeply concerned.

EXT. STREET CORNER, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

On a day off, Chris has caught up with his acquaintance Wayne outside a city grocery.

CHRIS

Do you have the fourteen dollars,
man?

WAYNE

I thought I didn't owe you that
now.

CHRIS

Why?

WAYNE

Why what?

CHRIS
Why did you think that?

WAYNE
I helped you move.

CHRIS
You drove me across Kelsey Street.
That's five yards. Wayne. Fuck.
It's been four months. Come on,
man.

Christopher has come out of the market and joined them. He starts walking off with his dad.

CHRISTOPHER
Are we going to school?

CHRIS
It's Saturday.

CHRISTOPHER
Are we selling machines?

CHRIS
There's none left. We have to meet
someone.

INT. DINER, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris and Christopher have met one of the YOUNG EXECUTIVES FROM BELL WESTERN and his young daughter for lunch. Chris is showing the young man an investment graph.

CHRIS
How much are you putting in your
pension?

YOUNG EXECUTIVE
All of it.

CHRIS
Well, here's what it could look
like if you put a quarter in an
index.

Chris hands the guy the graph.

YOUNG EXECUTIVE
(checking his watch)
Chris, I have to run. Do you want
to finish up later this week?

CHRIS

Yeah. Ben wanted to meet, too. Your colleague?

YOUNG EXECUTIVE

Yeah. Ben March. You want to all just get together?

CHRIS

That would be great. If there's anybody else at Bell Western that would like to sit down, let me know.

INT. REGISTER, DINER - LATER

Chris, with his son, pays at the register.

CHRIS (V.O.)

There was a month left in the program. I was broke.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris has come outside with Christopher. They're about to cross the street to their residence motel. But Chris sees something that makes him keep from going.

CHRIS'S POV

Chris can see in the open door of his motel room. The motel manager's in there, putting Chris's clothes into Chris's suitcase.

Chris stares at him.

CHRIS

(to Christopher)

Let's go for a walk.

After a moment, they head off another direction.

EXT. CITY PARK - LATER

Chris sits off to the side of a sand box area where Christopher plays with some other kids. Chris seems pretty distressed. A while goes by. Then CHRIS CATCHES SIGHT OF SOMETHING.

He's seen, vaguely, a couple blocks up ahead, the Filipino walk across an intersection with his scanner.

Chris looks in that direction, though the guy's slipped from sight.

Then Chris looks over at Christopher who he doesn't want to leave.

Then looks back the two blocks away where the guy's gone off to.

Then Chris picks Christopher up.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris runs with Christopher.

EXT. WHARF, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

The guy's sitting on a bench at the end of the wharf. Soon, Chris comes up to it; he sees that he can walk now because there's nowhere else for the guy to go.

CLOSE ON the guy, he's got his eyes closed.

CHRIS

Hi...

Chris has walked up beside him. The guy looks at Chris for a while.

FILIPINO GUY

(calmly)

Hey, Time Man.

CHRIS

Hey...

Chris stands there for a while with his son.

CHRIS

Where did you find it?

FILLIPINO GUY

Train platform.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(nodding at the scanner)

That's broken, right?

FILIPINO GUY

Yeah.

CHRIS

Do you have all the pieces?

FILIPINO GUY

Yeah.

As Chris looks on, the guy takes a couple stray pieces from his coat pocket. He hands them to Chris.

CHRIS

I have to go away to fix it. Okay?

FILIPINO GUY

Okay.

He looks at Chris.

FILIPINO GUY (CONT'D)

You'll come back?

CHRIS

Yeah...

Chris starts to go.

FILIPINO GUY

Because I want to go back to the fifties, man. When I was thirty three, man. That's what I want to do.

CHRIS

Okay.

FILIPINO GUY

When I had all my days ahead, man.

CHRIS

Okay.

FILIPINO GUY

I want to see Jimi Hendrix do that guitar on fire.

They look at one another.

FILIPINO GUY (CONT'D)

Bring my time machine back.

Chris waves, then turns and starts to leave with his machine.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Chris and his son ride on the train with the scanner.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Chris sits in a doctor's office waiting area, waiting for the chance to sell the machine. Christopher sits beside him, reading. Then the receptionist comes in from the inner-office.

RECEPTIONIST

Chris, Dr. Telm's not going to be able to get back from the hospital.

Chris tries not to come off disheartened.

CHRIS

Okay...

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Chris and Christopher take the train elsewhere.

CHRISTOPHER

Where are we going?

CHRIS

To Dr. Strauk's.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm tired.

CHRIS

I know...

Chris looks worried he can't sell his machine. The train comes to a stop. Chris picks the scanner up.

INT. DR. STRAUK'S OFFICE - LATER

Chris speaks with a doctor in his meeting room. Chris has just tried to fire up the machine, but it's not working.

CHRIS

It's not...

(to himself)

Fuck...

(aloud again)

...functioning right now. There was an issue with the light that I tried to--

DR. STRAUK

Just see me next quarter, Chris. I'm going to put some money into the office.

Chris nods.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

The train comes back the other way. Chris and his son ride in it. He still has the equipment with him. Christopher's fallen asleep.

EXT. RESIDENCE MOTEL - LATER (EVENING)

It's night now. Chris and Christopher walk up to their motel door. There's a large piece of luggage left outside. Chris looks at it. Then Chris tries his key in the lock. It doesn't work. Chris stands there for a while. More time passes. Then he lifts the luggage.

CHRIS

Come on.

CHRISTOPHER

(growing upset)

Where are we going now?

CHRIS

Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't want to go.

Christopher's worn out. He slumps down to stay right there.

CHRIS

Come on, hon.

CHRISTOPHER

I don't want to.

Chris lifts him up.

EXT. APARTMENT DOORWAY, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (NIGHT)

It's later now. Chris knocks on the door. No one answers.

CHRIS

(knocking again)

Wayne!

Chris keeps knocking. He waits for an answer. None comes.

INT. CITY TRAIN STATION, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris and his son stand with Chris's things in front of the station signs that give commuters a choice for trains north or south. Chris is looking at the signs.

CHRISTOPHER
Where are we going?

Chris stares up at the signs a while longer.

CHRIS
I don't know.

Then Chris walks over and sits on a rest bench in the station lobby. There's no one else there. It's dark outside. Soon, Christopher comes over and sits beside Chris. A pretty long time goes by.

CHRISTOPHER
That's not a time machine.

Chris isn't listening.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
That's not a time machine.

CHRIS
What?

CHRISTOPHER
Like that guy said.

CHRIS
What guy?

CHRISTOPHER
That guy said it's a time machine.

Chris looks at his son.

CHRIS
Yeah, it is.

CHRISTOPHER
(smiling)
No, it's not.

CHRIS
You push that black button. Then
you use your imagination.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

CHRIS

Are you going to do it?

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah.

CHRIS

Where are we going to go?

CHRISTOPHER

I don't know.

CHRIS

Let's just push the button and see.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

Christopher pushes the black button.

CHRIS

Close your eyes.

Christopher does.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Open them.

He does.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Whoa...

CHRISTOPHER

What?

CHRIS

Dinosaurs.

CHRISTOPHER

(looking around)

Yeah...

Christopher begins to stand up.

CHRIS

(stopping him)

Watch out.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

CHRIS

Don't step in the fire. When you're a caveman, you need that fire. There's no electricity. It's cold out here.

Chris puts his hands up like he's warming them in their fire. Christopher does it too. Then Chris rises.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Okay. It's late. Let's go in our cave.

The idea's excited Christopher. Chris has nodded over at the station bathroom. He begins to take their stuff over there.

Soon, he arrives at the bathroom door. Christopher's behind him.

CHRISTOPHER

Can we stay here all night? For real?

Chris looks at the room.

CHRIS

Yeah...

The two of them walk into the bathroom. The door locks.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Christopher's asleep, laying on Chris. Chris is wide awake. He's laying with his back against the wall. SOMEONE STARTS MAKING NOISE OUTSIDE, locking gates. Christopher starts stirring.

CHRIS

(whispering)

Hey.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

CHRIS

Go to sleep.

CHRISTOPHER
 (squirming, trying to get
 comfortable)
 What?

CHRIS
 You got to shush. Shush.

CHRISTOPHER
 I don't want to play anymore.

CHRIS
 Honey, you have to be quiet. Come
 on.

CHRISTOPHER
 (thrashing around)
 I don't want to play, Papa.

CHRIS
 Christopher, sleep.

Chris holds Christopher tighter as a means to quiet him. Christopher becomes quiet. His eyes stay closed. Chris remains awake; he's laying against the wall, looking at the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Come on. Sleep.

Christopher's stopped stirring. Chris keeps looking at the door.

INT. ELEVATOR, DEAN WITTER BUILDING - DAY

In the morning, Chris rides up the work elevator. He's holding his things. The doors open. JAY TWISTLE ENTERS. They see one another.

TWISTLE
 (glad to see him)
 Hey.

CHRIS
 (smiling back)
 Hi, Jay.

Chris holds his suitcase; he's been made uncomfortable by Jay's presence.

TWISTLE
 How are you getting along?

CHRIS

Great.

TWISTLE

You're doing good?

CHRIS

Yes. How are you doing?

TWISTLE

I'm doing great.

Some moments pass. Then Chris gestures with his bag.

CHRIS

I'm going to Sacramento. I'm trying to move some guys from Bell Western over to us. We're golfing.

TWISTLE

Awesome.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, DEAN WITTER - LATER

Chris is alone in the wide conference room; he's been working on the scanner.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I could sell this soon. If I could fix it. I could take the day off and sell this.

Chris presses the black activation button. Nothing happens. Chris looks down at the machine.

CHRIS

Fuck...

He just stands there for a while.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CITY SHELTER - LATER

Two female city shelter workers hold a conversation in the lobby of a city shelter. Then an assistant enters the lobby from outside.

ASSISTANT

(to the older shelter worker)

Someone's asking for you. He's outside.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CITY SHELTER - SAME

Chris, in his professional clothing, waits outside the shelter doors on the city sidewalk. The older CITY SHELTER WORKER comes out to meet him.

SHELTER WORKER

Hi.

CHRIS

Hi. Can I speak to you for a moment?

SHELTER WORKER

Sure.

They stand there for while, because Chris has difficulty getting to it.

SHELTER WORKER (CONT'D)

Do you want to make a donation?

CHRIS

I actually want to...

Chris doesn't finish right off. He waits there a long time.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I want a room.

He's holding the scanner.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Until I can fix and sell this.
There's some glass work that--

SHELTER WORKER

Yeah, listen. Yeah. We don't need reasons.

CHRIS

(feeling like he must
explain)
It got caught in the train.

SHELTER WORKER

Yeah.

CHRIS

I have a son. He's five. We need to stay.

She's become quiet.

SHELTER WORKER
 (with sympathy)
 Listen. No kids. We don't have
 liability. We can't take children.

Chris listens.

SHELTER WORKER (CONT'D)
 Go to Almont Church. Their building
 books up at five. It's first come.
 There's a line. Polk and Denning.

Chris nods his thanks then takes off running again.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Chris has retrieved Christopher from daycare. They ride the train.

EXT. SHELTER, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Outside the three-story church shelter building, a rougher-looking building, street people of different ages, mostly men, have formed a line onto the sidewalk. Chris waits with Christopher toward the front of the line. The guy in front of Chris talks with a A LARGE GUY who's come up to him. THE LARGE GUY'S NOT IN LINE; he's just standing around in the area in front of Chris. Soon, a PASTOR comes out from the doorway.

PASTOR
 (to the line of men)
 Four left. There's four more.

Chris sees he's fourth in line. He seems relieved until the LARGE GUY SIDESTEPS IN FRONT OF HIM LIKE HE WAS NATURALLY THERE. Chris stares at him for a while. He's waiting, maybe for the guy to leave, maybe for the guy to realize his mistake. But the guy doesn't leave.

CHRIS
 Hey, man.

The guy doesn't do anything.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Hey, come on.

LARGE GUY
 Come on what?

CHRIS

Come on, man. Just fucking... You cut.

LARGE GUY

Back up.

This guy elbows Chris back.

CHRIS

You cut.

Then he shoves Chris.

LARGE GUY

Back the fuck up.

Chris has been startled by the violence he's using. Christopher looks on; he's scared. Chris seems scared, too. But he shoves the guy. Then Chris holds him around the head, bends him and takes him to the ground. They start fighting down there while the line scatters then starts cheering them on.

PASTOR

Out of the line!

THE PASTOR HAS COME OUT FROM THE SHELTER. He yanks Chris off the larger man.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Both of you. Out of the line.

They're on their feet now, but neither of them moves.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Get out!

HOMELESS MAN

He sliced in front of him.

A guy farther back in line has spoken up.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

(to the pastor)

He sliced in front of him in line.

PASTOR

Who did?

The homeless guy doesn't want to say it out loud. He nods at the larger man.

CHRIS
 (to the Pastor)
 I got here first.

Chris is catching his breath.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 I was here first.

The Pastor looks at Chris. Then he looks at Christopher. Chris looks at the Pastor with the clearest communication of desperation he's shown yet.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 I came from my job. We got here. We got in line. This guy just came up. He shoved in front. I went and got my son and we got here. We were here on time. Someone told me we had to be here on time. We were on time.

The Pastor stares at him for a while.

PASTOR
 All right.
 (to the large man)
 Get out of line, Rodney.

The large man shuffles off. Chris takes his place in the line again. Chris tries to calm himself. Christopher's holding onto his arm now because he's freaked out. Then Chris notices his dress shirt's ripped.

CHRIS
 (quietly)
 Fuck...

INT. SHELTER ROOM - LATER

The room is small and real basic. There's a wood desk and a bed. It's dark. Chris lights a candle.

CHRISTOPHER
 Why don't we have lights?

CHRIS
 It's two dollars for electricity.
 We need breakfast tomorrow. Come on. Let's get washed.

They've come into the small bathroom. Christopher's taken off his shirt. Chris runs water from the sink over a cloth.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Can you stand up here?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah...

Chris picks his son up. He stands him on the low counter beside the sink. He begins to wash him with the cloth. Time passes.

CHRIS
What's your favorite color? I was wondering about that.

CHRISTOPHER
Green.

CHRIS
What do you like that's green?

CHRISTOPHER
Trees.

CHRIS
Anything else?

CHRISTOPHER
Holly.

CHRIS
The Christmas stuff?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah...

CHRIS
That's good.

Chris washes Christopher with the rag; he's feeling some pain in that hand.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(to himself, quietly)
Damn, man...

CHRISTOPHER
What?

CHRIS
(quietly)
I think I broke my other thumb.

Chris doesn't say anything else. He keeps washing Christopher up.

INT. SHELTER ROOM - LATER

Christopher lays in the bed. Chris sits on the edge, putting him to bed.

CHRIS
I have to go sit in the hall and
fix this, okay?

Chris has nodded at the busted scanner that rests nearby.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'll be right out there. I'll leave
the door open a little.

CHRISTOPHER
Okay.

Chris rises. He heads for the lighted common hallway. He turns back because he wants to reassure Christopher.

CHRIS
I'm just going to be right out
here.

CHRISTOPHER
Okay. I trust you.

Chris looks at his son; he smiles, waves, then takes the scanner out to the hallway.

EXT. HALLWAY, SHELTER - LATER

Chris sits on the hallway floor near the open door of his room. He's using the hallway light to help him repair his scanner. He's becoming frustrated by a part that won't function as a BOARDER IN AN OLD ARMY JACKET walks by.

CHRIS
(to the scanner)
You fucking piece of shit.

GUY
What did you call me?

CHRIS
Not you. This.

Chris has his hands on the scanner. The guy looks at Chris for a while. Then he walks off.

Chris tries to rig the thing another way. It fails as well. Then he gets up. He goes into his room. He's gone for a moment, then he comes out to the hallway again with one of his financial textbooks. He's taken a seat beside the scanner. He starts to do his work out there. Then the lights go dead.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Lights out.

INT. CHRIS'S SHELTER ROOM - LATER

It's pretty dark in their room. Chris sits near the window, trying to read his book by the streetlight coming in. He stops. He stares at the room. Before long, he starts to break up. He seems to be losing it like he lost it in the apartment-painting scene, but this time he can't make any noise. His feelings this time just take the form of silent, anguished crying. Then Christopher, who's apparently awake in bed across the room, asks him something.

CHRISTOPHER

How are you going to tie your tie?

CHRIS

(didn't catch all of it)

What?

CHRISTOPHER

How are you going to tie your tie?
With your hands hurt?

CHRIS

I'll get it done.

CHRISTOPHER

No way.

CHRIS

I'll get it done. Go to sleep.

CHRISTOPHER

No way. That's why animals can't
make tools. Because of no thumbs.

CHRIS

Go to sleep. The sooner you get to
sleep, the shorter the night'll be.

Christopher doesn't say anything else. Chris leans against the wall by the window. He's exhausted. After a while, he looks back at his book.

INT. SHELTER ROOM - MORNING

In the morning, Chris sits on the bed, nearly dressed for work. Christopher's with him, helping him get his tie tied properly.

CHRIS
Is it through the middle?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah...

INT. RADIO SHACK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

At the register, Chris is showing the clerk a mini light bulb and transmitter.

CHRIS
One of these.

CLERK
Six weeks.

CHRIS
(upset about that delay)
For a K transmitter? And a bulb?

Christopher's looking at a video game shelf.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Yeah. Those are English. Six weeks.

CHRIS
(upset at the delay)
Do you have a Thompson wire?

CLERK
That won't work.

CHRIS
Yeah, it will. We used them in the Navy to send the same electrical weight. Let me try it.

The guy enters the number.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Three weeks.

Chris takes the news in.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris walks with Christopher. He's dressed for work, but he's carrying his suitcase; Christopher has a bookbag.

CHRIS (V.O.)
You weren't able to leave your
belongings behind.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris approaches the lobby of Dean Witter for work; he's still got his luggage. He encounters another young Bell Western executive PAUL going in.

CHRIS
Hi, Paul.

PAUL
(greeting him)
What's happening, Chris?

Paul takes notice of the stuff Chris holds.

PAUL
(meaning what's he got
that stuff for)
What's up?

CHRIS
Work trip.

They enter the building.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, DEAN WITTER - LATER

Chris and Paul sit together at the conference table.

CHRIS
Your wife works at Bell Western,
too, right?

PAUL
Yeah.

CHRIS
Well, then you should use the
pension. Because you're paying
taxes twice.

PAUL
For real?

CHRIS
Yeah... because you're using your
taxable income...

CHRIS (V.O.)
I was able to finish this stuff
pretty quickly.

Chris has placed income amounts in different sections on his
paperwork.

CHRIS (V.O.)
The math. I had to finish quickly.
To get to the Altmont rooms by
five.

Chris looks up at a wall clock that reads 4:30.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris sprints away from the skyscraper.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides the train.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - LATER

Chris rides the bus.

INT. CITY TRAIN - MOVING

Chris is on another el, tapping the window glass from
adrenaline.

EXT. KING STREET - LATER

Chris and Christopher hustle with their things up San
Francisco's King Street, toward a bus stop.

EXT. BUS BENCH, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

They sit on a sidewalk bench waiting for the bus. There's a
wide public clock behind them. It reads 4:50. Chris taps his
foot like he's frantic. There're others waiting. The bus
comes. Chris rises quickly.

CHRIS
Let's go.

Christopher's preoccupied by a kid's book he's reading.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Let's go!

CHRISTOPHER

I want to read this.

CHRIS

On the bus.

CHRISTOPHER

Just this part.

CHRIS

Goddamnit. Get up! Come on!

It's hurting Chris to talk to his son this way. When Christopher catches up to him, they find the bus so full there's not room for all the commuters waiting on the sidewalk. Chris is shoulder to shoulder with an older lady. He jockeys his arm past her to get a front position. A young guy in a suit's watching.

GUY

Why don't you let the lady on?

Chris doesn't respond.

GUY (CONT'D)

Man, that's not cool.

Chris tries to ignore the guy.

GUY (CONT'D)

That's not cool. Let the--

CHRIS

Why don't you get the fuck away from me!

The guy's been startled.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Get the fuck away from me. Right now.

Chris gets Christopher up into the bus; he follows him on.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Outside of the Almont church shelter building, Chris and Christopher, in the front of the line, get accepted inside for an open room.

EXT. CHURCH SHELTER, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

It's evening now. Chris and his son sit under a streetlight on the stoop of the shelter building. Chris reads his textbook. Up the street, prostitutes stand on the corner. Chris looks at Christopher for a while. The boy seems real calm and more or less contented. Chris keeps looking at him.

CHRIS
You're a good boy.

Christopher looks over at him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You're a wonder. You know?

Christopher smiles.

CHRISTOPHER
Can I look at that fire truck?

CHRIS
Yeah.

Christopher heads off down the sidewalk where some firemen repair a hydrant. Their truck's parked there.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Just don't bother them.

Chris watches him go. Then Chris looks back at his book for a while.

PROSTITUTE
Get your kid some dinner.

Chris turns and sees a PROSTITUTE has come up to him. She's holding out a five dollar bill.

CHRIS
(declining)
That's okay. They have dinner here.

PROSTITUTE
Get him dessert.

CHRIS
That's fine.

PROSTITUTE
Do you think this is dirty money?

CHRIS

(smiling)

I don't think there's any such thing. I just don't want him to see me taking money. He thinks I know what I'm doing.

She puts the bill away. Chris checks on Christopher. Christopher looks over at them from down the sidewalk. He makes eye contact with his dad. Then he waves hello with his good nature like he was waving from a carousel.

INT. MESS HALL, SHELTER - LATER

The room is full of cafeteria tables. Forty or so men eat in scattered positions around the room. Chris sits at a table with his son. They don't talk for a while.

CHRISTOPHER

Who called you Ten Gallon Head?

CHRIS

What?

CHRISTOPHER

You said they called you that. Who called you that?

CHRIS

My aunts. Some teachers.

CHRISTOPHER

Because you like to read?

CHRIS

Yeah. And do puzzles. Math.

CHRISTOPHER

What did you read?

CHRIS

I read about people's lives. Biographies. You know what those are?

CHRISTOPHER

Books about people's lives?

Chris nods.

CHRIS

I liked to read about interesting lives. Cool lives.

CHRISTOPHER
Like whose lives?

CHRIS
Miles Davis. I don't know. Thomas
Jefferson. Christopher Columbus.

CHRISTOPHER
Who's Thomas Jefferson?

CHRIS
President. Architect. Musician. He
wrote the Declaration of
Independence.

CHRISTOPHER
What's that about?

CHRIS
It's about... I don't know. It's
about people trying to be free, so
they can try to be happy.

CHRISTOPHER
What instrument did he play?

CHRIS
The violin. I think. Or the cello
or something. I don't really
remember.

Chris looks at Christopher as he returns to his meal.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, DEAN WITTER - DAY

The twenty interns sit around the table in the largest Witter conference room. They're taking a timed exam. A proctor sits up front. Soon, a MALE INTERN stands up and heads for the proctor to turn in his test. Some others look up - they're struggling and are pissed the assured male intern has finished already. But as this male intern walks to the door, Chris stands up; he's finished as well. The male intern looks at Chris.

INT. ELEVATOR, DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

The two ride the elevator down together. Some time passes.
THE FIRST PARTNER FROM CHRIS'S FIRST INTERVIEW RIDES BEHIND THEM.

INTERN
 (to Chris)
 Did you finish the whole thing, or
 did you have to go somewhere, or..?

CHRIS
 I have to go somewhere.

The guy nods. He seems relieved to resume believing he finished earlier than the others.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 But I finished the whole thing,
 too.

INTERN
 (a little bummed)
 Oh. Good.

CHRIS
 Yeah. You?

INTERN
 Yeah.

CHRIS
 What did you think of the graphs?

INTERN
 Easy.

Chris nods.

CHRIS
 What about the essay question?

There is a long pause.

INTERN
Essay question?

CHRIS
 On the back. Yeah.

Some more time passes.

INTERN
 Shit.

The guy hits the button for the next floor. When the doors open, he gets off quickly. Chris remains behind; he's laughing.

But he's also conveying the same vibe the guy was just giving off - satisfaction he found the test easier than his colleagues. He makes eye contact with the first partner; the partner's looking back like he found the episode telling and funny as well.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris and the First Partner are outside at the curb, Chris waiting to cross, the partner hailing a cab. A BUSINESSMAN passing sees Chris.

BUSINESSMAN

Chris.

Chris faces the guy.

CHRIS

(recognizing him)

Jeff, right? The Giants game?

BUSINESSMAN

Yeah. You were going to call.

CHRIS

I never got your number.

BUSINESSMAN

Okay, man. Here.

The guy takes a business card out.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Call me.

While the two have been talking the First Partner's been searching his pockets for something. Chris has his wallet out to put the guy's card away.

FIRST PARTNER

Fuck. Chris, hey, do you have five bucks?

Chris stands there for a moment.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)

My wallet's upstairs.

CHRIS

(trying to keep his money)

Do you want me to get it?

FIRST PARTNER
No, I have to get to Cal Bank. At
five.

CHRIS
Yeah... um...

FIRST PARTNER
(kidding)
I'm good for it.

CHRIS
(smiling along)
I know...

Chris takes a five dollar bill from his wallet, leaving a couple dollars left. He hands it to the First Partner. Then the First Partner takes off for his cab. Chris stands there, watching him go off with money Chris needed.

INT. ALMONT CHURCH SHELTER - LATER

Christopher and Chris have been admitted into the shelter foyer, into a shorter line to sign in and pay. They're one guy back from paying. A CHURCH-WORKER CLERK's explaining the billing to the guy; Chris stands behind him listening.

CHURCH WORKER
Two dollars to stay. Two to eat.
Two covers electricity.

Chris is holding the two dollars he's left with. He waits there for a while, then he looks at Christopher.

CHRIS
Are you hungry?

Christopher nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Did you eat at school?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah?

CHRIS
The second session?

CHRISTOPHER
(not following him)
What?

CHRIS
In the afternoon?

Christopher shakes his head. Chris looks at him. Time goes by.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Okay. Come on.

Chris leads Christopher out of the line. They head out the shelter doorway for the sidewalk.

INT. PIZZA SHOP, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Later, at night, Chris and Christopher sit at the window counter. Christopher's eating a piece of pizza. Chris studies.

EXT. TRAIN STATION, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

While Christopher waits, Chris pays the city station attendant with the dollar.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Later at night, Chris and his son are among a few other folks on the train. Christopher's coloring. Chris studies his books.

INT. CITY TRAIN, MOVING - LATER

Later, Chris and his son are the only ones in the car. It's moving back the other direction. Christopher's sleeping. Chris is awake. He's looking out the window again, much like he was in the picture's early scenes.

EXT. BLOOD CENTERS OF THE PACIFIC, SHOP OFFICE - DAY

The next day, Chris leaves a strip mall shop door over which a banner reads Blood Center of the Pacific.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

Chris meets with two professional women at a cafe table on the sidewalk. Christopher sits at the next table, coloring.

CHRIS
(to one of the women)
How long have you been at Bell
Western?

FIRST PROFESSIONAL WOMEN
Eight years.

CHRIS
 Good. Then you can start splitting
 into an IRA for stocks.

FIRST PROFESSIONAL WOMEN
 I can do that already?

CHRIS
 You could have done it last year.

FIRST PROFESSIONAL WOMEN
 Great...

The second woman folds her paperwork up.

SECOND PROFESSIONAL WOMAN
 Are we all set?

CHRIS
 Yes.

FIRST PROFESSIONAL WOMEN
 Thanks, Chris.

CHRIS
 Thank you, Ann.

They've all stood to leave one another.

SECOND PROFESSIONAL WOMAN
 Have fun on your trip.

Chris has picked up his suitcase he's had with him. He waves
 goodbye to the departing pair of women. Christopher's with
 him now.

CHRISTOPHER
 What trip?

Chris stands around there with his suitcase for a moment.

CHRIS
 Our trip uptown to Radio Shack.

INT. RADIO SHACK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

The clerk faces the camera, holding a small electrical part
 and bulb out to it.

CLERK
 Here's your Thompson wire.

Chris is facing the guy. He takes it.

INT. TRAIN CAR, MOVING - LATER

Chris and Christopher ride in the train together, among a lot of other working people going home. Chris holds the piece from Radio Shack.

CHRISTOPHER
What's that?

CHRIS
To repair the light.

CHRISTOPHER
Can I see it?

CHRIS
Yeah.

Chris hands the bulb to Christopher.

CHRIS
(calmly, smiling)
Don't drop it.

Christopher takes the piece.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Unless you want to keep living in
the same room with me.

CHRISTOPHER
I don't mind.

Chris smiles.

CHRIS
You will.

Christopher examines the electrical bulb. Chris looks over at him. Then Christopher looks at him again.

CHRISTOPHER
Why am I going to want my own room?

CHRIS
What's that?

CHRISTOPHER
You said I was going to want my own
room.

CHRIS
Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER

Why?

CHRIS

Space. For privacy. Peace.

Some time goes by.

CHRISTOPHER

Where are you going to be?

Chris looks over at Christopher and smiles.

CHRIS

Next door.

CHRISTOPHER

What am I going to do in there?

CHRIS

Whatever you want. Whatever makes
you happy. Nap. Read. Dream.

Christopher looks back at the bulb. Chris keeps looking at
him.

EXT. STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

They've walked to the shelter district.

INT. SHELTER ROOM - LATER (NIGHT)

Christopher's in the one bed. Chris sits on the edge, saying
goodnight; it's dark.

CHRIS

I'll see you in the morning.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay.

CHRIS

You're warm enough?

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah...

Chris tucks him in.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

You're a good papa.

After a while of looking at his son, Chris smiles. Then Chris finishes squaring Christopher away. Then Chris takes the object he bought at Radio Shack and walks toward the scanner left against the wall.

INT. CHRIS'S SHELTER ROOM - LATER (NIGHT)

In their dark room, as Christopher sleeps, Chris sits by the window, trying to fix the scanner by the light from the window. It's really dark. We can hear Chris clicking things into place. He's done. He looks at the machine. He gets ready to press the button to test it. A long time goes by.

CHRIS (V.O.)
This part of my life... This part
is called...

Chris pushes the button. The machine makes an activation sound, then his room get lighted all the way up by the bright blue light the scanner emits.

CHRIS (V.O.)
...happiness.

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Chris sits on the perimeter wall of a fountain in the public square. He's dressed for his Dean Witter work. The Bell Western building is beside the square. Chris holds an informal meeting with A YOUNG BELL EXECUTIVE AND A COUPLE OF HIS COLLEAGUES.

EXT. DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris leaves Dean Witter later. He's carrying his scanner.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE, MEETING ROOM - LATER

Chris sits across from a DOCTOR. The scanner rests on the table between them.

DOCTOR
Plug it in.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Four hundred and eighteen dollars.

EXT. CHECK CASH STORE - LATER

Chris and Christopher wait in line for the cash.

CHRIS (V.O.)
That was going to get me through
the program. All the way to the
end, and then some.

EXT. BUS BENCH, SIDEWALK, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (EVENING)

Later, Chris and Christopher sit on a bus bench in a San Francisco neighborhood; they have their belongings with them. Chris is feeling a measure of relief he hasn't shown before.

CHRISTOPHER
Are we going to the church place?

CHRIS
No...

CHRISTOPHER
Where are we going?

Chris thinks about it.

CHRIS
Let's go to a hotel.

CHRISTOPHER
Can we go back to the cave?

Chris sits there.

CHRIS
No...

CHRISTOPHER
Ever?

CHRIS
I don't think so.

CHRISTOPHER
Why?

CHRIS
Because some things are fun the
first time you do them. Then not so
much the next time.

CHRISTOPHER
Like the bus?

CHRIS
Yeah...

They sit there for a while. The bus comes.

INT. CITY BUS, MOVING - LATER (EVENING)

It's become dark. The bus is crowded, so Chris and his son are seated close together near a lot of others standing in the aisle; Chris is looking out the window at the city going by.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN HOTEL, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (NIGHT)

Chris and Christopher have gone up a step to the lobby entrance of the Holiday Inn San Francisco.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER (NIGHT)

The room's an average hotel room. A sofa's right in the middle. The bed's empty in the background. Chris and Christopher are asleep together on the sofa.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

The next day, Chris and Christopher sit all alone together in a really wide stretch of grass in Golden Gate Park.

CHRISTOPHER
(in the middle of a
conversation)
Can people climb Mount Everest?

CHRIS
Yeah. People have.

CHRISTOPHER
How high is it?

CHRIS
A few miles. Four miles maybe.

CHRIS (V.O.)
The next day, I took work off, and
we just went and sat in a field.

CHRISTOPHER
Where is Mt. Everest?

CHRIS
What country?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah.

CHRIS

Napal.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Far away from anything. Trumpet
kids. Guitars on fire. Ben
Cartwright. And my own constant,
ten-year-long disappointment in my
Ten Gallon Head... in my self.

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Chris sits in his now familiar spot on the fountain wall out
front of the Bell Western building. He's finishing signing
some paper work with another young executive.

CHRIS

Thanks, Dean.

OTHER YOUNG EXECUTIVE

Thank you, Chris.

CHRIS

You'll get these back in a week.
Then you'll start getting
statements a couple weeks after
that.

OTHER YOUNG EXECUTIVE

Okay. Thanks, Chris. Take care.

CHRIS

Take care.

The guy heads off back to Bell Western.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Because when I was young, and I'd
get an A on a history test or
whatever, I'd get this good feeling
about all these things I could be.
And then I was never any of them.

Chris finishes up his part of the contracts.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I was gambling, during all this,
that I could get back on my way to
being one, which I guessed would
feel like happiness.

Before long, Jay Twistle walks up.

TWISTLE

Hey.

CHRIS

Hi, Jay.

TWISTLE

Rumor has it you've signed thirty-one accounts from Bell Western.

CHRIS

Yeah...

Jay smiles.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I met some guys at a ball game. I got some cards. I worked them.

TWISTLE

(impressed)

I guess.

They sit quietly for a moment.

TWISTLE (CONT'D)

Well, there's a week left before we hire from the intern group. Are you getting nervous?

CHRIS

(smiling)

I'm okay.

TWISTLE

Okay...

They become quiet again. Then Twistle offers Chris his hand. Then Jay Twistle gets up and goes. Chris sits on the fountain wall by himself.

INT. BOARD ROOM, DEAN WITTER - DAY

The same group of partners that accepted Chris to the intern program sits around their conference table. After a while, Chris comes in.

FIRST PARTNER

Hi, Chris.

CHRIS

Hi, Mr. Keane.

Chris nods hello to the others.

FIRST PARTNER
Nice shirt.

CHRIS
(smiling)
Thanks...

FIRST PARTNER
Sit down, please.

Chris sits at the end of the table.

CHRIS
(smiling)
I thought I'd wear a shirt because
it's the last day.

FIRST PARTNER
That's good. Thanks. We appreciate
that.

Some time passes.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
Wear one tomorrow, though. Okay?

Chris looks across the table at the first partner.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
Because tomorrow's going to be your
first day. If you'd like to work
here as a broker.

Chris doesn't say anything.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
Would you like to work here?

Chris doesn't speak right off. He's getting himself together.

CHRIS
Yes.

FIRST PARTNER
Great. We couldn't have been more
pleased. Welcome, Chris.

The others have stood up to congratulate and shake hands with
Chris. He's risen as well.

FIRST PARTNER (CONT'D)
Was it as easy as it looked?

Chris takes a little while to answer.

CHRIS
(smiling)
No...

Chris keeps shaking hands around the table.

INT. ELEVATOR, DEAN WITTER BUILDING - LATER

Chris rides down in an elevator crowded full of professional men and women. Chris is in the way back, out of view of the others because he's crying.

EXT. MRS. CHU'S DAYCARE - LATER

Outside the building, Chris stands directly beneath the word *Happyness*, waiting for his son. Chris looks real tired like one might at the end of an ordeal, but he looks peaceful, too.

EXT. BUS BENCH, SAN FRANCISCO - LATER

They're waiting for the bus together. Christopher's coloring. Chris is just sitting there. The bus comes. It blocks them from view. After a while, it leaves. The two are still sitting there.

CHRISTOPHER
The bus came.

CHRIS
(looking over at it)
Oh...

CHRISTOPHER
Didn't you see it?

CHRIS
No... I was thinking of stuff.

CHRISTOPHER
(meaning what was he
thinking of)
What?

CHRIS
Just stuff. Grown up things. Don't
worry about it.

Christopher looks down the block at the bus.

CHRISTOPHER
Do you want to run up and get it?

CHRIS
No... I don't want to run anywhere
for a while.

He takes Christopher's hand. He smiles at his son.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(kidding)
Are you in a hurry to get
somewhere?

CHRISTOPHER
No, I don't want to run either.

CHRIS
Okay. Let's just sit here.

CHRISTOPHER
Okay.

They remain there for a while, holding hands. A period of time goes by while they sit together. Then a scroll begins to play over the image; it reads:

Chris Gardner remained in San Francisco with his son. He left Dean Witter after six years to found the investment firm Gardner Rich. Their assets in 2005 were 184 million dollars. After Christopher's graduation from college, Chris moved his business to Chicago where he and Christopher live today.

CREDITS BEGIN.