

FINDING NORMAL (1984)

Written by  
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Neither a lofty degree of  
intelligence nor imagination  
nor both go to the  
making of genius.

Love, love, love,  
that is the soul of genius.

-Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

FADE IN:

The opening CREDIT SEQUENCE rolls through exterior scenes of Chicago throughout the focus group.

It is early spring, 1984.

1 EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE, TALL OFFICE BUILDING - DAY 1

It is gray and raining.

2 INT. FOCUS GROUP ROOM 2

Around a metal table sit seven subjects, name placards in front of them. The assortment skews lower to middle income, male and female, blue collar. LINDA, the moderator, has purchased too much from her Mary Kay representative, and is far too friendly. Linda's pacing is quick; respondents are painfully slow. STEINER is rumped, too big for his chair. WADE is an aging outlaw. MRS. GIEBEL is elderly, an expert on all things. MISS SHELLY, with the bad haircut, hopes to own a Trans Am one day. MS. SORENSON is a normal person, mom-looking. GEORGE is the ideal grandfather.

LINDA

Allll riight! Now how does everyone else feel about this Milk Bone issue? Mr. Steiner?

STEINER

They're ok, I guess. I never buy them anymore.

LINDA

And why not?

STEINER

Very flat tasting. No flavor.

LINDA

Good. Somebody else...

WADE

Shee-it! I don't need to give m'dog treats. My rottie takes his treats from other dogs. Whatever he wants, just goes out there an takes it. Snatches it right up.

MRS. GIEBEL

Milk Bones!

LINDA

Excuse me?

MRS. GIEBEL

Milk Bones! A buck sixty-nine!  
Butchered turkey backs. 29¢ a  
pound. Ralphie loves em.

STEINER

(To Mrs. Giebel)

My dog's Ralphie, too!

MRS. GIEBEL

My husband's Ralphie. Still dead.  
Twenty years.

3

INT. FOCUS GROUP MONITORING ROOM

3

In the back of the room PETER, 20's, flamboyant to excess, a creative dresser, slouches in a tall stool. Peter is intelligent but not driven. He is a sugar addict, and is rarely without a candy bar or Ho Ho. Today he wears a psychedelic silk shirt and leather pants. KRISTEN, the other research assistant, stands close to the two-way observation mirror. She is capable but not insightful and suffers from what some would call a lack of breeding. LEIGH sits at a table at the mirror, intent and taking notes. Leigh is in her early 30's, attractive, intelligent, but tries too hard at being serious, almost to comic proportions. We hear the MURMUR of the focus group.

PETER

Research is the business of  
scholars and gentlepersons.

Leigh smiles without directly acknowledging Peter. The camera finds DAVE O'RIELY. Dave is in his mid to late 20's, with a boyish innocence. His sweatshirt is well worn, and he needs a haircut badly. He's very comfortable with who he is. He has a beautiful smile and eyes that undress you. LEIGH is drawn to stare.

LEIGH

Who are these people, Peter?

PETER

They are people who had two hours  
in the middle of the workday and  
who needed fifty bucks, Leigh.

LEIGH

No I mean who are they? What do  
they do?

PETER

Well, mostly they don't DO much, if that's what you mean.

(Peter looks at a list of respondents on a clip board)

Retired. Retired. Homemaker. Carpenter. Grocery checkout. Grandma. Oh isn't that adorable? One doesn't list anything so I am going to assume Thief.

LEIGH

That's enough.

4

INT. FOCUS GROUP ROOM

4

Seven empty faces.

LINDA

Now, I want to switch gears a bit and talk about nutrition. Nutrition is a big thing, isn't it? You know, saturated fat? Vitamins? How important is it to you that your dog gets good nutrition? Are we thinking... Jump right in... What about you, Miss Shelly?

(beat)

MISS SHELLY

Yes, I think it's important.

She looks up at Linda to signify that that, in fact, was a complete response.

LINDA

OK. . .How about you, Mr. O'Rieley. You've been quiet. In fact, you've said nothing. What do you think about dog nutrition?

DAVE

Uh, sure. I think I never thought about dog nutrition. I just have a puppy. But I love her and would do anything for her.

LINDA

Great. Ms. Sorenson? Help me out here...

MS SORENSON

Certainly I care about our dog. I spent a lot of money on treats when he was a puppy, but now he prefers his own feces to Milk Bones.

WADE

They sure are cute when they're puppies, ain't they?

GEORGE

My Beatrice had a litter, the cutest little wieners you'd ever want to see.

George tenderly takes out his wallet to show pictures.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Here they are at three weeks, no larger than a big thumb...

The group is oohing, all reaching for a look. Someone else gets out their own pictures.

MRS GIEBEL

When Ralphie was a pup, he would bite my toe and suck on it like it was a nipple...

5 INT. FOCUS GROUP MONITORING ROOM 5

Through the glass, Linda attempts to regain order. Leigh shows dry contempt, holding her eyes on Dave two seconds too long as he gets up and saunters to the cookie table.

LEIGH

Dog people.

She leaves the room. Her RAs dash after her.

6 INT. HALLWAY OF A LARGE ADVERTISING AGENCY 6

Leigh is flanked by her cohorts. They turn into Leigh's office.

7 INT. LEIGH'S OFFICE 7

The desk is thick in paper; so are parts of her floor. She tumbles into her chair. PETER and KRISTEN take their seats in front of her desk.

LEIGH

(To no one in particular)  
We throw manure on the mediocre and  
encourage it to grow. The middle of  
the bell curve is our own creation.

PETER

(Eating M&Ms by tossing  
them in his mouth)  
We have to make a living.

Leigh is deep in thought.

KRISTEN

Vita Dog...

LEIGH

It shouldn't exist.

KRISTEN

(Finally finding familiar  
ground)  
So, our recommendation is that the  
market will not respond to this  
healthy dog food thing?

LEIGH

Kristen, what do we do?

KRISTEN

Research.

LEIGH

And what is our mission?

KRISTEN

To find relevance in that which is  
meaningless to create profit for  
people who pay us.

PETER

Due, of course, by Monday so it's  
another happy weekend of work. I  
just love my job.

Peter and Kristen are visibly depressed.

LEIGH

It's OK, I'll have secretarial  
complete transcripts by end of day  
and I'll write the recommendations  
this weekend.

Visible relief for PETER and Kristen.

LEIGH (CONT'D)  
You're welcomed.

PETER  
Par-tay! Come on Kristen. Show the  
sugar daddy some skills!

Peter throws M&Ms in the air as they walk out. Kristen is adept at catching them.

8 INT. HALL OUTSIDE AGENCY FOYER - END OF DAY 8

Leigh is leaving, saying goodbye to the CLEANING CREW. Her briefcase is bulging with transcripts from a dot matrix single sheet printer.

9 INT. INSIDE OF ELEVATOR GOING DOWN 9

Two men are already in the elevator. JIM is in his late 20's, and comes directly from the pages of GQ. His STOCK BROKER FRIEND has less flair for business attire, making Jim look even better. Jim wears an open overcoat over his suit, but it is soon evident to Leigh that his fly is resoundingly, dramatically OPEN. Leigh fights the urge to look.

BROKER FRIEND  
I made a fucking killing today. A  
fucking killing! I love the NASDAQ.

JIM  
Yea, the market was hot, really  
hot. That one sweet little stock I  
told you about was up ten points  
again today.

BROKER FRIEND  
Plans tonight?

JIM  
There's this woman - new client  
with a juicy 401K - I'll be up late  
getting a jump on her.

The friends laugh knowing the hidden meaning of what they said. Leigh, not being able to maintain her composure any longer, looks up at the elevator lights. She impulsively pushes a button at the next lower floor. The elevator JERKS to a stop.

LEIGH  
My floor.



She rushes out.

10 INT. A DARK FLOOR, WOEFULLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION 10

Leigh stands with her back to the elevator, two steps out. Elevator doors CLOSE behind her. She drops her head.

11 INT. LEIGH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 11

Her apartment is darkly claustrophobic. It's cluttered with disheveled bookshelves and books on books in every corner. Her dining room has been converted into a working desk; her Commodore computer is there, as well as heaps of papers and the printout. She has a portable TV, and a huge, clumsy VCR.

In the kitchen we see Leigh, dressed in an old sweatshirt that's too big, tights and big socks. She is scanning the food cabinet for something to eat for dinner; there's not much in there besides canned soup. She heats it on the stove, pours a glass of milk and quietly eats out of the kettle.

Leigh's night after dinner: She opens her mail. She prepares her Publisher's Clearinghouse entry. She listens to Beethoven on the radio while she works at her computer. She eats Fiddle Faddle out of the box while she watches a documentary on the mating rituals of birds. She switches to a tape of the focus group. She rewinds the segment when Dave speaks, and plays it again. And again. And again. She sleeps curled up in a ball.

12 INT. LEIGH'S APARTMENT - DAY 12

She wakes up. Dressed in the old sweatshirt and big socks, she enters the bathroom, then staggers out to her computer to work. The day passes. She hasn't changed clothes.

13 INT. LEIGH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 13

The clock reads 6:00 pm. The news is on TV in the background. It is local fare, and includes an anchor puppet. An alley cat. She looks up with a distant look at nothing. She puts her head back down to work. Time passes. Saturday Night Live is on, and Dana Carvey is saying "Isn't that special." She falls asleep at her desk.

14 INT. THE VELJOVIC FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY 14

Jelly bean garnish being added to a lamb-shaped cake. The preparer is CHARLES, and he is humming a familiar passage from Mozart.

Charles is in his mid 40's, single, balding, overweight and disheveled. He is Leigh's brother. He scurries around the kitchen tending to boiling pots. Leigh's father, DAD, sits at a formica table, twiddling his thumbs, dressed in a white tank that is too small. His rotund belly shows. A big man with ever so slow movements, he is the center of attention without having to say a word. The decor of the Veljovic family home is middle class Midwest, but showing its age.

DAD

She's not going to forget my  
lottery ticket, is she?

CHARLES

She won't forget your lottery  
ticket.

DAD

I feel lucky.

Charles continues to hum.

DAD (CONT'D)

You never sing good songs.

CHARLES

What do you suggest?

DAD

(Sings)

Ol' Zeke oh say, put away your  
pitchfork, put away your hay. We  
all are going swinging in the corn.  
Ol' Daniel Boone, take your old  
guitar and pluck a little tune, we  
all are going swinging in the corn  
. . .

Leigh enters from the back door, in a rush.

LEIGH

Sorry I'm late.

CHARLES

Out last night cavorting with the  
hedonistic advertising community?  
Why aren't you a physician, or an  
attorney. Or a proper researcher.  
Can I assume you showered? The  
cigarette smoke in public places  
offends me.

LEIGH

Charles, I was working. I...I do not go out. I told you that. How do you feel, Dad?

DAD

Lucky.

Leigh fumbles about in her oversized bag, and puts the lottery ticket and a quarter on the table in front of Dad. He slowly begins rubbing.

LEIGH

I also got a butter lamb.

She takes the butter lamb from her bag and lays it before Charles, who is still decorating the cake, like an offering. He barely looks up.

CHARLES

I already got a butter lamb, thank you.

DAD

I got a cow.

Leigh takes off her coat and checks the refrigerator for things to munch.

LEIGH

Three cows you win, Dad.

CHARLES

So what worthless product are we heaving down the throats of the unsuspecting public this week?

LEIGH

Why you maintain such interest in my job is a mystery to me, Charles. Expensive health snacks for dogs. Should fail but I think I may have found positioning to keep it alive.

DAD

Pig!

CHARLES

I agree entirely! Asylums are filled with righteous souls who simply cannot tolerate fruit wraps, air freshening mushrooms, dog exlixirs and other products of commercial slavery that we are coerced into purchasing by the likes of advertisers.

LEIGH

(Sincerely)

You'd be a good copywriter, Charles. I could talk to someone at the agency about you working, maybe part-time.

Charles mashed potatoes madly.

CHARLES

What, and enter the laboring class in an honorless profession? I am a writer. Not a copywriter, a writer. Albeit unpublished. Perhaps I will start my book of essays:

(He uses his hand like he is reading a marquee)

"The Downfall of the American Mind. How Advertising Makes Us Stupid." My greatest fear is that you marry one of those advertising thieves. Thank heaven you are in research and not the loosely coined "creative" as you say, side of the industry, Leigh or I couldn't leave the house for ridicule of the neighbors.

LEIGH

You hate the neighbors.

CHARLES

Yes, dullards. They are not only dull themselves, they are the cause of dullness in others. Did you win, Dad?

DAD

Huh?

Leigh checks the ticket Dad rubbed off.

LEIGH

Two cows and a pig. Where's Nikki?

CHARLES

She and Marc are with his family at a country club for brunch. She'll be here any minute.

COMMOTION on the back porch.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Oh, I do enjoy being right.

They scoop the remaining food from kettles into bowls.

NIKKI and MARC arrive. Nikki is 21, mature, and one of those striking women gifted with natural beauty. Her grace and cordial smile make everyone in the room feel interesting and important. Marc is quiet and well mannered. They are perfect people, a perfect couple. There is now much commotion in the kitchen, as food is taken to the adjoining dining room. Dad remains seated at the kitchen table.

NIKKI

Happy Easter! Hi Dad! Hey a lottery ticket! How did you do?

DAD

I got a butter lamb.

Everyone is used to being confused.

MARC

(He offers his hand to Dad, who ignores him)  
Hello, Mr. Veljovic. Happy Easter!

DAD

I just sat down. And suddenly, it was Easter.

NIKKI

Oh, Charles. A lamb cake. You're so thoughtful.

Nikki tracks down Charles to give him a hug. He's not comfortable getting hugged, and sort of escapes her grasp to tend to peas.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

Leigh! How's work? Can we help here?

LEIGH

Everything needs to go in the dining room. Work is the same.

NIKKI

You should really get out more.

LEIGH

I have fun. I have much fun.

NIKKI

(To Marc)

What about that professor of yours,  
that physicist you did research  
for? He's single, right?

Charles darts into the room, busily finishing preparations.  
The others are slow in their help.

CHARLES

Certainly a physicist could have  
reasonable input into our  
conversations, but I have always  
envisioned Leigh with more of a  
romantic. Pity Oscar Wilde is dead.

LEIGH

Charles, he was gay.

CHARLES

Ah, but there were women for whom  
he had great intellectual passion.

NIKKI

I was speaking of companionship,  
love and affection.

CHARLES

As was I.

LEIGH

Excuse me, but I can make my own  
happiness, thank you.

CHARLES

Like that degenerate that followed  
you home in the ninth grade? You  
know, he went on to get several  
women pregnant.

LEIGH

Charles please stay out of my. . .

CHARLES

(Interrupting)

Just protecting our gene pool. Now  
Marc here will be a welcomed  
addition to the pool.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Oxford masters candidate,  
triathlete, humanitarian.

MARC

Ah, excuse me. I'll just take my  
place at the table.

Marc exits the kitchen to find refuge in the dining room.

LEIGH

Didn't we just get here? Isn't this  
Easter dinner? Isn't this supposed  
to be warm and fuzzy?

DAD

If Charles would just stop singing  
that same old corn song it would  
be. How about this..."Imagine me  
and you, I do, I think about you  
day and night..."

(Leigh and Nikki begin to  
sing along)

it's only right, to think about the  
ones you love, and hold them tight,  
so happy together..."

They all laugh.

15

INT. VELJOVIC FAMILY DINING ROOM

15

Charles is rambling, and the TV is on in the background with  
some bad Sunday afternoon western. The TV is always on in the  
Veljovic home. They are just sitting down.

CHARLES

Marc, did I ever tell you the story  
about Dad single-handedly capturing  
the Japanese general and his  
entourage at Luzon.

DAD

What happened?

CHARLES

And how Dad became a special guest  
of Emperor Hirohito after the war  
in thanks for his mannered  
treatment of the general.

DAD

Hirohito was a good man.

CHARLES

Gave Dad a silk top hat as a gift.  
That top hat is now in the  
Smithsonian.

DAD

Never fit. Really tiny head on that  
guy.

CHARLES

Then, of course, there was dinner  
with Truman at the White House.

NIKKI

Please...

MARC

No, it's all right, Nikki. This is  
great.

CHARLES

Marc needs to recite the legacy if  
he's to join the family.

LEIGH

Can we eat?

CHARLES

Dad, can you say grace?

There is a long pause as everyone bows their head.

DAD

I gave it my best shot.

CHARLES

It was your finest.

They reach across each other in true family style to fill  
their plates. Charles takes Dad's plate first before  
addressing his own.

16

INT. THE VELJOVIC LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

16

Nikki looks through a Brides magazine. Charles has Marc  
corralled on the couch. Leigh walks through the room to the  
front porch.

CHARLES

After he invented Crazy Glue, Dad  
should have been a millionaire if  
not for corporate greed and  
wrongful work for hire laws.

(MORE)



CHARLES (CONT'D)

Now, Super Elastic Bubble Plastic.  
Dad's original formula...

17 EXT. THE VELJOVIC FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

17

Dad is sitting on the front porch swing on a chilly night. He's wrapped in a blanket. Leigh is looking through the front door. She slowly comes out.

LEIGH

What are you doing out here?

DAD

Oh, just getting air.

LEIGH

Can I sit down?

DAD

Why sure.

The conversation is slow and thoughtful.

DAD (CONT'D)

She likes flying saucers.

LEIGH

What, you've seen flying saucers?

DAD

No, not today. Communion candy. She likes to eat them. With the shaky noise.

LEIGH

Oh, flying saucers.

DAD

She likes to eat them. Nikki.

LEIGH

I don't think she's had one in a while.

DAD

I put some in her Easter basket.  
(Long pause)  
Nikki's going to marry that guy, hey?

LEIGH

Marc seems very nice. You know Marc, he's been here before.

DAD  
She'll go away.

LEIGH  
I don't know, Dad. They're both  
going to go to graduate school.  
They're really smart. They may have  
to go away to go to the best  
school.

DAD  
The end.

LEIGH  
The end of what?

DAD  
Everything. End of our family. She  
won't shine around.

LEIGH  
Families stay families forever.  
People who love each other love  
each other forever.

Dad wraps his daughter with part of his blanket. After a  
time, he begins a song.

DAD  
Pardon me boy, is this the  
Chattanooga choo choo...

18 INT. LEIGH'S BEDROOM - MORNING 18

Her alarm rings. She slams it off.

19 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE LEIGH'S APARTMENT - DAY 19

She's in her car, on her way to work. Dave and his puppy,  
SAMMIE, a beautiful white Samoyed, walk down the sidewalk.  
Leigh nearly has an accident as she sees him.

20 INT. BASEMENT ELEVATOR HALLWAY, PARKING GARAGE - DAY 20

Leigh enters the elevator with her messy briefcase and turns.  
We hear RUNNING STEPS on concrete and a voice in the parking  
garage.

JIM  
Can you hold it please?

Jim enters the elevator. Leigh is surprised, and off guard.  
Jim looks good.

JIM (CONT'D)

Thank you.

21 INT. ELEVATOR GOING UP 21

Awkward silence. Leigh is uncomfortable. She summons courage and is about to speak when the elevator opens and other people get on. More quiet. DING, 26, her floor. She speaks to Jim without warning.

LEIGH

Bye.

She fumbles out as the doors close behind her.

22 INT. AGENCY HALLWAY 22

She mutters.

LEIGH

Bye. I said "Bye."

23 INT. LEIGH'S OFFICE 23

She stands above her chair and practices.

LEIGH

Hello. My name is Leigh. Hi, I'm  
Leigh. Would you like to go out for  
a drink?

Linda enters with a transcript. Leigh is still talking to herself.

LINDA

I'm Linda. I work for you.

LEIGH

(Embarrassed)

Linda, is there something you want?  
I'm obviously busy.

LINDA

I proofed the rough transcript and  
made some notes for the client.

Leigh puts the transcript on a very large pile.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
 Are you getting any...  
 carbohydrates?

LEIGH  
 Yes, yes. I have many  
 carbohydrates. Thank you.

LINDA  
 Ah, the Vita Dog meeting has been  
 moved up to nine o'clock. In five  
 minutes.

Linda EXITS as Peter and Kristen join her. Peter is in  
 Prince's Purple Rain outfit. Kristen is babbling.

KRISTEN  
 So then Ron, that slime ball AE,  
 says "So for five bucks will you  
 sit on my face?" And I say "Is this  
 a third world country or  
 something?" I'm not sitting on  
 anybody's face for less than...  
 ten.

Leigh's dry stare abruptly ends Kristen's discourse on faces.

LEIGH  
 We need to go to Brandon's office  
 immediately for Vita Dog. I've  
 finished the report. Just jump in  
 when you can. We're talking  
 puppies.

PETER  
 Puppies?

24 INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE

24

BRANDON is a classic example of someone who confuses egoist  
 with egotist. Hugh Hefner is his muse. It is Brandon's  
 agency. Leigh stands before a large table; eight people,  
 including Brandon, Peter, Kristen and Linda.

Cadence suggests the session is under way.

LEIGH  
 Puppies.

BRANDON  
 Dog. The product name is Vita DOG.  
 Not Vita PUPPY.

LEIGH

Change the name. Vita Pup, Vita  
Puppy...

BRANDON

We were hired to do dog. Leigh,  
have you met our new creative  
director, Orlaf? Orlaf is from New  
York City. He's going to present us  
here with a spot he already  
storyboarded with DOGS.

ORLAF is a gooey European skinny guy in black. Seated next to  
Brandon, storyboards are on the table in front of him. He  
uses the boards as props, clumsy as he tries to hold the big  
board and point simultaneously. We see close-ups as he  
speaks.

ORLAF

Yes you see here we have the anemic  
dogs who are very tired. They are  
stretched out here because they are  
tired, they do not like their food,  
they do not eat it.

He points to a frame with a close-up of a greyhound stretched  
out on a hardwood floor. The next frame shows the same dog  
stretched out, but now you see the environment: high  
ceilings, contemporary New York loft apartment. The frame's  
POV is from above and the dog is very small. The next frames  
show dogs in different, expansive settings, all drawn from  
above. There are three, four stretched dogs on the floor in  
each shot...in the cosmopolitan city, in the mountains, on  
beaches.

ORLAF (CONT'D)

We show the anemic dogs of San  
Francisco, the anemic dogs of  
Aspen, in Florida they have very  
anemic dogs.

We see an all-type frame: V I T A D O G. Then an owner's hand  
comes into frame and gives the dog a Vita Dog treat.

ORLAF (CONT'D)

And now the dogs they eat the Vita  
Dog, and they become very athletic  
dogs.

The athletic dog frames show the same dogs standing  
majestically in the same environments, except now the dogs  
are wearing running shorts with race numbers attached to  
their chests. The POV is from the floor; the dogs are drawn  
larger than life.

ORLAF (CONT'D)

And the announcer says "VITA DOG,  
FOR A HEALTHY DOG." Of course,  
there will be some very nice music  
in it too.

Leigh's stare is enough to cut Orlaf's brain in half.

LEIGH

Orlaf, may I call you Orlaf? Do you  
know what the bell curve is?

ORLAF

I do not think it is art.

LEIGH moves to an easel for demonstration. She draws the  
curve.

LEIGH

No, Orlaf, it's a math thing. You  
see, Orlaf, it has to do with how  
many people act or think a certain  
way, or have something the same.  
It's how we target - have you ever  
heard that word in advertising,  
Orlaf? - target products and  
messages to human data points.  
Here's the bell curve about  
intelligence.

She writes INTELLIGENCE above the curve and draws vertical  
lines at 10%, 20% and 80%, 90%. As she speaks of a group, she  
marks it through with a marker.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

See these, fortunately there are  
not a lot of them.

(She says it in Orlaf's  
accent)

"These are the people they are dumb  
as zee very small rodent animals."  
Now see these, these are the people  
who are intelligent, so for our  
purposes, they don't exist. But  
these people right here (she draws  
a circle around the center), these  
people, they vote for politicians  
who kiss babies. They believe a  
\$10,000 American car is built  
better than a \$40,000 Japanese car.  
And do you know why they do this?  
Because we make them.

(MORE)

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Because we find one nuance of belief in them and manipulate it so they think they've had an original opinion.

BRANDON

Yeah, so? What's your point, Leigh.

Leigh attacks the chart, crossing out INTELLIGENCE, replacing it with DOG.

LEIGH

These are dog people. These people have the most dogs. They can be convinced to buy dog products based on some slim thread of supposition.

Leigh attacks the chart again, crossing out DOG and scribbling TV SPOT. She extends the baseline of the curve to create a semi-circle the bell. She draws another small circle at the center bottom of the circle she just drew. She puts an X in it. It looks like a 3-D bell now.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

This is ding dong land. Orlaf's anemic dog commercial is somewhere in the void, in the anti-matter. It doesn't connect. It's not on the curve, and it won't sell dog food.

PETER

What Leigh is leading up to is that the focus groups used subjects from the middle of the bell curve. These people discounted the use of special food for their adult dogs, but showed a propensity of affection for their puppies.

LEIGH

Puppies. Show puppies. Lots of them. That'll sell product.

KRISTEN

I think Vita PUP is cuter than Vita DOG.

BRANDON

Orlaf, bring me puppies. And get rid of those dead dogs.

25 INT. AGENCY HALLWAY

25

Leigh, Peter and Kristen walk down the hall in triumph.

KRISTEN

Leigh, you were great. You were so professional.

LEIGH

Thank you, Kristen. Nice work wrapping up my ranting, Peter.

PETER

I've never seen a human fry like an egg before. A good show.

The trio reach Leigh's office. Peter reaches into his pocket and pulls out a ten dollar bill.

PETER (CONT'D)

It would be my pleasure to buy you ladies jelly donuts.

Peter leaves. Kristen is chatting happily and Leigh is quietly glowing.

KRISTEN

That Orlaf has a really weird twitch in his eyelid. Thank you, Leigh, for being my mentor.

KAREN, Brandon's secretary, who looks like she could be Brandon's mother, knocks and enters.

KAREN

Excuse me, Leigh. Brandon would like to see you in his office immediately.

26 INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE

26

Brandon sits at his desk. Leigh stands.

BRANDON

What the fuck are you doing? You're humiliating my creative people again.

LEIGH

The spot was inappropriate.



BRANDON

I know that, what do you think - I'm in the void? The spot was bad so you make the new guy piss his pants. Dripped to his shoes. Only I can make an employee piss on their shoes. Geez, there are pissprints all over my floors. Leigh, I like you. You're the only one around here who doesn't kiss my ass. But couldn't you kiss somebody else's ass once in a while? You don't like the spot, you say "Hey, nice try, but the spot sucks." People understand that. They don't suck, the spot sucks. But you, you smear them with shit and tell them to roll in it. I don't care what you do with your direct reports, but stop smearing shit inter-departmentally.

LEIGH

I was just trying to embellish a point so he would understand.

BRANDON

I know. You meant well. But Christ, loosen up. Go be nice to someone. Go get laid, or something.

27

INT. THE VELJOVIC DINING ROOM - NIGHT

27

The sisters are sitting at the table. There are torn-out pages of magazines everywhere; Nikki is shuffling through. Leigh seems kind of down. She is reading an encyclopedia, ignoring the magazines. Dad is watching Fantasy Island. "De plane! De plane!"

NIKKI

So, what do you think of this one?

LEIGH

I don't know, Nikki. I, well, I just don't think I'd feel comfortable as a Southern belle.

NIKKI

You're right, I don't want Southern belles at my wedding either. This?

LEIGH

It's...so...feminine. Very...  
feminine.

NIKKI

You could do feminine.

LEIGH

I wouldn't miss this for the world,  
Nikki, but I'm afraid I'm not the  
wedding type.

Charles emerges from the kitchen with a huge platter of  
bacon, eggs and fried potatoes. He has napkins and forks - no  
plates. Dad gets up with Charles' announcement, and sits at  
the table amongst the torn out pages. No one hesitates to eat  
right off the platter.

CHARLES

Platter Night is served.

NIKKI

You're kind of quiet, Dad.

CHARLES

Against boredom even the gods  
themselves struggle in vain.

LEIGH

You feeling all right?

DAD

I feel fine.

CHARLES

May we talk about something with  
more substance than taffeta during  
dinner?

LEIGH

How's school, how's your internship  
going?

NIKKI

They're both going well. We've got  
this new pupil in my gifted class  
who is a delight. Frankie is six,  
fluent in three languages and is  
reading at the fifth grade level.  
He used the word "relevant" in a  
sentence today.

CHARLES

How glorious it is, but how painful it is also, to be exceptional in this world.

NIKKI

It would be fun to have a kid like that, but I wouldn't push him.

DAD

(Startled)

Oh my God, you're preggers. Did that friend of Leigh's do this to you?

CHARLES

So, Leigh, how goes dog food? In one end and out the other? Look at that. I am funny.

LEIGH

Our creative department came up with a new tv spot based on my recommendations.

CHARLES

Once again, Leigh has pointed the advertising soldiers in the proper direction for battle against unwitting consumers.

LEIGH

I may have alienated a few of those soldiers.

CHARLES

Soldiers were made on purpose to be killed.

NIKKI

You don't mean that.

CHARLES

Of course I mean it. Leaders know these things.

DAD

Isn't the war over? Why does Charles always talk about the war?

NIKKI

I want to know about the TV commercial!

CHARLES

Before you start, who wants apple pie for dessert? With cheddar, of course. Because a dessert without cheese is like a beautiful woman with only one eye.

After a pause, Leigh and Nikki laugh.

28

INT. FILM STUDIO, SET OF DOG COMMERCIAL - DAY

28

It is before the last take of the Vita Pup commercial. There are puppies absolutely everywhere, dozens of puppies. The set has puppies sitting on tiers in all directions around a nervous cliché of a male SPOKESPERSON in the center. Orlaf is arguing with a Spielberg-looking guy in a baseball hat who is obviously the DIRECTOR.

ORLAF

As the artist I demand that the dogs be in my preferred color scheme.

DIRECTOR

I am in dog hell here. You are Satan.

ORLAF

Visually, the grey dogs must be there, the black dogs must be there, the blond dogs must leave. The blond dogs do not fit my concept.

DIRECTOR

There is hair in my teeth, shit on my shoes, and you are a wacko. Someone get Francis Ford the fuck outta here!

29

INT.BACK OF THE STUDIO

29

Leigh and Peter are observing, talking quietly as the shooting goes on and off with several cuts as puppies indiscriminately leave their posts. Lots of "Action!" "Cut!" by the DIRECTOR and miscued first lines by the SPOKESPERSON. His first lines are: "Pump up your pup with Vita Pup. Puppy-sized treats for your pick of the litter." Throughout dialog the backdrop of production is comically out of control. It's golf day; Peter wears a green golf shirt, green pants, white belt, white shoes and a white visor.

PETER

Our crack creative department is in rare form today.

LEIGH

Brandon accused me this week of envying Orlaf's creative penis.

PETER

What did you say?

LEIGH

I told him I didn't think Orlaf had a penis.

PETER

This production is a fiasco. You've got to enlighten Brandon on the scope of this debacle.

LEIGH

Brandon says I don't enlighten. He suggests I am a human steamroller and further, that I need to be laid.

PETER

Brandon wants you in his bed.

LEIGH

Preposterous.

PETER

Uncle Peetie can sense these things. We should discuss this further. My office?

Peter points to a client lounge, grabs Leigh's arm and pushes her in the direction. In the background there is another flub, the DIRECTOR yells "Cut, dammit!" and flails his arms about, knocking over a light. Dogs bark and scatter everywhere.

30

INT. CLIENT LOUNGE

30

Peter and Leigh have been drinking from the well-stocked bar. Peter, a martini with a stem cherry, Leigh, white wine. The wine bottle is on the table, less than half full. They sit in overstuffed chairs. Leigh, not used to drinking, has lost her hard edge and shows her innocence.

PETER

You've never made love?

LEIGH  
I never had a boyfriend.

PETER  
Did you ever kiss anyone? Like,  
with your tongue?

LEIGH  
No. God, it must be so obvious.

PETER  
So you think Brandon knows?

LEIGH  
(Feeling a bit  
pathological, close to  
tears)  
He must have guessed, he must have  
figured it out. I must wear it on  
my sleeve.

PETER  
Oh, no, Leigh...people can't tell.

LEIGH  
Are you sure they can't tell?

PETER  
(In quiet realization)  
Why, yes! No!...You're a virgin,  
Leigh.

LEIGH  
I'm so embarrassed.

PETER  
Uh, you're not disabled down  
there...

LEIGH  
I don't know! What is disabled?  
There's just never been anybody,  
well, I just never found anyone to  
love.

PETER  
How about liked?

LEIGH  
You mean to make love to someone I  
merely like?

PETER

Like an internship. Practice.  
Practice. Practice.

LEIGH

I look at certain men, and this  
biological thing happens...but I  
can't talk...to them.

PETER

Really, a lot of people don't say a  
word. Ohhhh, you mean you can't  
talk to them.

LEIGH

I have nothing to say that they  
could understand.

PETER

Why wouldn't they understand?

LEIGH

What do I say? "Gee that's a nice  
tie? Where'd you get it?"

PETER

You mean people aren't smart.

LEIGH

It's just been hard. All my life  
it's been hard. People talking  
about the weather and what they had  
for lunch.

PETER

You're talking to me. We're  
talking. We're having a delightful  
conversation.

LEIGH

That's because you're almost my  
best friend...and I don't even know  
you.

There is a pause. Peter is taken back with all that has been  
revealed.

PETER

Are you OK?

There is a long, uncomfortable pause. Peter is thinking of  
the word "virgin."

LEIGH

I have to go. You certainly must have better things to do. Oh my, it's now the weekend, isn't it? Another Friday night...

PETER

Leigh, you have to talk to people. You have to give them a chance. And you should take the initiative.

LEIGH

I know. I'm sorry. Thank you. I have to go.

They both get up and attempt to hug. They fumble arm in arm as they walk to the door.

31

INT. BACK OF THE STUDIO

31

The lights are off and no one is about. It is very late. The set is still up and the cameras are in place, making it hard to walk in the darkness.

LEIGH

It's late. I hope we don't set off some sort alarm.

The shriek of a stepped-on puppy breaks the silence. Leigh shrieks too.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Oh my God, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

The puppy is whimpering in the darkness.

PETER

It's a puppy!

LEIGH

Oh, they've left without it. What'll we do?

PETER

(Thinking maybe it'll be a good idea)  
You have to take care of it, Leigh. You'll have to take it home or it will die.

LEIGH

Me? Can't we call someone? Or you take care of it!



PETER

I can't. Allergies. My lungs are shutting down as we speak.

LEIGH

But what do I do? What does it need? Oh, it's crying...

32 INT. LEIGH'S KITCHEN FLOOR - NIGHT 32

The camera locks down at a singular spot on the floor. Leigh's hand puts down a bowl of noodle soup. A puppy head comes into frame to inhale it. A half peanut butter sandwich on a plate. The puppy chomps it. A bowl of Animal Crackers and saltines. Gone. A container of old Chinese food...

33 INT. LEIGH'S KITCHEN TABLE 33

The PUPPY is sitting at attention on Leigh's kitchen table. He is a Weimaraner, the ghost grey dog with the expressive eyes. He is about 12 weeks old. All Weimaraner's think they are human. Leigh stands to talk to it.

LEIGH

Now, should you need to urinate or defecate, you must do so outside.

34 INT. LEIGH'S DINING ROOM 34

The puppy is circling the dining room table. It has a floppy sock in its mouth. Leigh is in pursuit.

35 INT. LEIGH'S BATHROOM 35

The puppy pees on the floor while running. Leigh fumbles with a huge wad of toilet paper, in chase, to clean it up.

LEIGH

AAARGH!

36 INT. LEIGH'S BEDROOM 36

Leigh is sitting on the bed, reading aloud, slurring her words a bit, still drunk-ish. Our puppy lies on his stomach looking up at Leigh, with a quizzical yet content look.

- 37 INT. LEIGH'S BEDROOM - DARK 37  
 They're both sleeping in bed together. The puppy sleeps on his side, and takes up most of the bed. Leigh is curled up in a ball, with her arm around him.
- 38 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY 38  
 She's filling her cart with a full variety of dog food products and toys. She walks to the check out. She begins putting items on the conveyer belt. In the next lane, she sees Dave's head checking out too. She stops for a long second before she resumes.
- 39 EXT. SIDEWALK, LEIGH'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY 39  
 The puppy is walking her, except when he's jumping up on her.
- 40 INT. LEIGH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 40  
 She's running on all fours with a squeak toy in her mouth. The puppy is in pursuit.
- 41 INT. LEIGH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 41  
 She's lying on her stomach reading a book. The puppy lies to her side, his head resting on the small of her back.
- 42 INT. LEIGH'S BEDROOM - DARK 42  
 They are curled up again, asleep.
- 43 INT. VELJOVIC LIVING ROOM - DAY 43  
 Camera is tight on the puppy's tilting face.

CHARLES

Malodorous, flea-bitten, dirt-pawed, carnivorous beast! There is an animal in my house...a hideous, smelly mongrel preparing to write his name upon my carpet.

Leigh and Charles stand looking at the puppy.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You're not possibly keeping him.

LEIGH

Well, I...

CHARLES

Oh, Leigh, really. A DOG? A  
Siamese, maybe...

A toilet FLUSHES. Dad enters from the bathroom. He spots the puppy.

DAD

Who's this? Your mother's cousin  
Larry come back from the dead?

LEIGH

His name is Larry and he's my dog.

44

INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE - DAY

44

CATHERINE, the client, looks consummately professional. Her vernacular would never be tolerated unless she had unflappable power. BOBBY is handsome, professional and younger than Catherine. He is her secretary/assistant, accompanying her everywhere. They are in a meeting with Brandon and Leigh. On a flip chart is a drawing of Leigh's bell curve.

BRANDON

This is a great assignment. A great  
assignment. Isn't it great, Leigh?

LEIGH

Well, television news has its  
nuances.

CATHERINE

We've got one more ratings book to  
hang in the dumper. Then one of two  
things will happen. Major  
restructuring at six and ten  
o'clock, or we will all get shit  
canned, including you.

LEIGH

Your dealing with subjectivity  
here. Research results may have  
statistical validity, but candidly,  
I wouldn't trust them. The bell  
curve is inarticulate.

BRANDON

(Rolls eyes)  
Oh, here we go again...

LEIGH

People have great difficulty being specific about what they like and don't like. It'll take time.

CATHERINE

I don't have time. I have money.

BRANDON

That'll work.

CATHERINE

Find out what's fucking up my six and ten o'clock news. You have \$500,000 for research and creative. I hate getting my ass kicked by a fucking puppet.

BRANDON

A half million.

LEIGH

Time?

CATHERINE

Two weeks for recommendations.

LEIGH

Two weeks! That's all?

BRANDON

No problem.

CATHERINE

Here are tapes of anchors we'd consider as replacements.

Bobby sits quietly until commanded.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Give her the tapes, Bobby. See if any of these heads on a stick play well.

LEIGH

Are you looking to niche in a certain demographic or psychographic range?

CATHERINE

Are you not listening? If you don't bring me the fat part of that bell my last act of employment will be to shove it up your ass, dinger and all.

45 INT. AGENCY HALLWAY OUTSIDE LEIGH'S OFFICE

45

Peter waits for Leigh, following her inside her office. He is wearing a CLUB BOY London t-shirt and acid washed jeans. He gingerly closes the door. Leigh is packing up to leave for the day.

PETER

Evidently the breeder is more embarrassed than upset about misplacing his "investment," or so he calls it. And everyone seems to think we left early. Larry is yours.

Leigh smiles, looks up giving silent thanks.

PETER (CONT'D)

Now remember what I said. You should also attempt to talk with your own species.

LEIGH

Thank you, Peter.

Peter exits. Leigh leaves.

46 INT. HALL OUTSIDE AGENCY FOYER - END OF DAY

46

She's at the elevators. She pushes the button; the elevator door opens. Jim, the stockbroker, is alone. Leigh fetches nerve, and enters. She gathers courage before she blurts.

LEIGH

Do you want to have a drink with me?

JIM

You're the woman who said "Bye" to me the other day.

LEIGH

Yes. Yes I am.

JIM

Sure.

47 INT. A PIANO BAR - NIGHT

47

They sit on tall stools at a little table.

JIM

I mean I like my meat well done. If I'm gonna pay for a piece of meat -- OK, so it was on my expense account, so I really wasn't paying, Merrill Lynch was paying, but I was sort of paying -- I don't want any blood, see. So I tell her "Take it back, Babe, you musta had this cow grazing in back and just lopped off a slice."

(He laughs.)

So, how do you like your meat?

(He leans over.)

Thick, long and pink I bet...

Horror of horrors. She grabs her stuff. She bolts.

48 INT. OUTSIDE LEIGH'S FLAT - DARK

48

She fumbles for keys. She opens the door.

49 INT. LEIGH'S LIVING ROOM

49

She turns the light switch on. Her place is a shambles: the dog carnival came through. Half eaten books everywhere, chairs tipped over, cushions ripped, picture frames tilted, toilet paper from one end of the room to the other. She slowly walks in. The toddler gate she had erected sealing off the kitchen from the rest of the house is in pieces. The whole place is covered with dog drool. Larry is curled up, sleeping on the kitchen table. He looks up as she enters and wags his tail, so happy she's home.

50 INT. PUPPY CLASS (GYMNASIUM)

50

The camera pans the row of puppies and their owners, as they all attempt to sit at attention (owners behind puppies). Big pups, little yappy pups, wiener twins; each pup has an owner that seems to match or complement the dog. Leigh sits with Larry, waiting patiently for class to begin. AUNTIE CHRIS, the dog trainer, makes preparations to address the group. She is a bit of a female drill sergeant.

Dave and his puppy enter late, and take their place next to Leigh and Larry. The color drains from Leigh's face. Auntie Chris addresses the group as Leigh and Dave end up speaking to each other quietly.

AUNTIE CHRIS

Now since most of you have never owned a puppy before, right now you're the ones needing the training. My job is to see that your puppies don't grow up to be neurotic unsocialized dogs, because if they do, it's likely to be your own fault.

LEIGH

(Blurts.)

Hi.

DAVE

Do I know you?

AUNTIE CHRIS

Is anyone currently having behavior problems?

Everyone in the group raises their hand except Dave.

AUNTIE CHRIS (CONT'D)

OK, who's not potty trained

Everyone raises their hand except Dave.

AUNTIE CHRIS (CONT'D)

Oh, Auntie Chris has a lot of work to do. The two most important things you have to understand are patience and consistency.

LEIGH

So you're pottie trained?

DAVE

I can't remember the last time anyone asked me that. Oh, you mean Sammie. Yes, she seemed to catch on pretty quick. I put a bell by the door, and every time we went outside I put her nose in it. Now she rings it when she has to go.

Leigh is mesmerized and a bit taken back with her own bravery.

LEIGH

Wow.

AUNTIE CHRIS

Dogs are not hateful, conniving, pretentious or malicious. They're just not as smart as you, and they come from a different culture. All they want is to love you, please you, and have some fun. Dogs are all about love. If you love them back, you'll have a wonderful life together. OK, everybody up. Let's see who's walking who here.

51 EXT. THE STREET IN FRONT OF PUPPY CLASS (AN OLD NEIGHBORHOOD GRADE SCHOOL) - NIGHT

Puppies and owners file out and go in different directions. Dave and Leigh end up walking the same direction.

LEIGH

God, I feel so much better. Larry is Lassie compared to some of those other dogs.

DAVE

(To his dog)  
You were good too, Sammie!

LEIGH

She's beautiful. What kind of dog is she?

DAVE

A Samoyed. In the "working class" of dogs. Those people with the Chihuahuas! How do you touch a dog that small without breaking it?

Leigh laughs and mimes pushing a tiny dog down with one finger.

LEIGH

(Squeaky voice)  
Sit! Sit!

DAVE

And that schnoodle!

LEIGH

Oh, I couldn't stop laughing!



They walk for a while. Dave stops in front of a duplex.

DAVE

Uh, well, see you next week. I live here.

LEIGH

I live five more blocks. Uh, see you.

Dave watches her walk.

52

INT. THE VELJOVIC FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

52

The family sits around the dining room table, less Charles. He enters with the platter catching Leigh mid-sentence. He sits down and they all eat.

LEIGH

And then there was this dog, a schnoodle, who pees in his water dish. He's amazingly accurate. Doesn't spill a drop.

CHARLES

Leigh, you have delighted us long enough with your charming repartee. This now proves my theory of intellectual transference. In a relationship, the intellect of the smarter partner is sucked from the marrow by the dumber partner.

NIKKI

CHARLES!

CHARLES

We should all be thankful you did not adopt a goldfish.

NIKKI

Really...

CHARLES

(Like a ditzy woman)  
And then he swam under the treasure chest. And the other fish made a bubble.

NIKKI

Dad and I were enjoying Leigh's story!

LEIGH

That's all right, Nikki. It was stupid of me.

CHARLES

(He takes a deep breath)  
No, I apologize. I was harsh.  
I've just got a lot on my mind.

DAD

Were there any other animals besides dogs at the circus?

LEIGH

There were just puppies in class, Dad.

DAD

Charles is upset about the letter. Don't let him pick on you.

LEIGH

What letter?

CHARLES

It came today. Dad's last residual payment.

LEIGH

They're over? This soon? How can that be?

CHARLES

I seemed to have miscalculated. The unspeakable truth is, I will have to find employment.

They all look at Dad, struggling to feed himself.

53

INT. AGENCY SCREENING ROOM

53

A fairly private room with padded theatre chairs. Leigh is alone writing by the light of the video screen. The sound is off. She has a remote control. She views sample anchor people: a milky, oatmeal, saccharine, JC Pennied, fossilized, over-warm and caricatured lot they are. After a time, Brandon enters and sits down. Leigh continues working.

BRANDON

I love this business.

LEIGH

How consistent with my opinion of you, Brandon.

BRANDON

I just got a call from our friend Catherine.

LEIGH

Your friend Catherine.

BRANDON

She's giving us the media buy for the new six and ten anchors after you pick them. 1.2 million in media, paid up-front, to be spent in six deliciously short weeks. We take the up-front, put it in the money market or something, and pay vendors in 90. Making money is a kind of poetry to me.

LEIGH

My assignment is to fix the news. Perhaps it is not the anchors at all. Perhaps viewers prefer a pink background to green. Or stripes to solids in a man's tie.

BRANDON

Seriously, a million two. "Tune in to see our new ties and pink background. We're in the pink at W G N." Change the anchors.

LEIGH

Or I'm fired.

Brandon gets up to leave and pats Leigh on the shoulder.

BRANDON

Intelligent women. I just love them.

54

INT. LEIGH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

54

She's working at the computer, talking on the phone. Larry is curled up at her feet.

LEIGH

Charles, no, you're not a specialist.

(MORE)

LEIGH (CONT'D)

But as you get higher in an organization you get into more generalists. Your overall base of knowledge is positively unmatched. Really. I'll take care of the mortgage. If Dad can get some sort of disability or something, then maybe you just have to find something part-time.

Larry gets up and a BELL RINGS. Joy of joys! He figured it out.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

OH! Got to go. Larry rang his bell.  
Bye.

She slams the phone, obviously without a response from Charles, and dashes off. Off camera, some disappointment. She wasn't fast enough.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Ohhhh.

55

INT. AGENCY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

55

Leigh, Peter, Kristen and Linda surround a table. Papers, coffee cups everywhere. It's been a long day. Peter is in outlaw motorcycle wear.

PETER

I'll coordinate the telephone surveys on all stations. Rate all newscasts and on-air on looks, delivery, credibility, chatter...all those things we talked about.

LEIGH

Ninety-five percent confidence level, plus or minus 4 percent error.

PETER

You got it. Kristen and Linda will handle the six focus groups on current anchors at all stations. We'll also ask about Winky or Blinky or whatever the rat's name is.

KRISTEN

It's a cat. It's an anchor cat. And his name is Albert.

PETER

Whatever.

KRISTEN

I'm screening lower to middle income blue collar, lower to middle income white collar, female 18 to 34, female 35 54, professional mixed, elderly mixed 55 plus. What about Blacks and Hispanics?

LEIGH

Just put them in and see if we can pull them out later.

KRISTEN

Oriental?

PETER

Hellooooo, can we please say Asians?

LEIGH

They don't watch TV. They're too busy with calculus.

PETER

Oh for fucks sake you two.

LEIGH

Generalizations are only imperfect when applied to individuals. Oh! Look at the time. I have to go. I've got...an engagement.

Leigh quickly leaves the disheveled, overworked group. They are stunned, and can't take their eyes off the closed door.

LINDA

An engagement! I bet she's never even been laid.

56

INT. PUPPY CLASS

56

Everyone is walking their dog in circles, talking to them as they go. The air is filled with baby talk. There are two sibling CHIHUAHUAS with very large husband/wife owners. The Chihuahuas are both psychotic and are acting out.

AUNTIE CHRIS  
 Parents of Bubba and Mau Mau!  
 Control your dogs! You're disrupting  
 the rest of class!

Bubba and Mau Mau GROWL.

EXT. THE STREET IN FRONT OF PUPPY CLASS - NIGHT

Puppies and owners file out. Dave and Leigh again walk the same way.

DAVE  
 Larry was very good tonight.

LEIGH  
 Oh, yes, we've been doing the homework. Practice. Practice. Practice. Oh, and I put up a bell and I'm trying to teach Larry to ring it.

DAVE  
 That's awesome! How's he doing?

LEIGH  
 Well, when he pees on the floor he goes to ring the bell. It's an announcement that he peed rather than a prelude to going outside.

He smiles. They walk quietly.

DAVE  
 There's an ice cream place up the street. Do you want to go get some?

LEIGH  
 Oh, uh, do I want to go...uh, sure. I could go.

DAVE  
 Does that mean yes?

LEIGH  
 No. Yes.

DAVE  
 I'm Dave.  
 (Pause.) And you are...

LEIGH  
 Leigh. My name is Leigh.

57 EXT. A PARK BENCH OUTSIDE THE ICE CREAM SHOP - EVENING 57

Leigh and Dave are eating ice cream. The puppies sit, looking directly at them. They drool.

LEIGH

So then I screamed. And Larry was crying and so frightened. I just couldn't leave him there. So I took him home.

DAVE

And nobody missed him?

LEIGH

Apparently not.

DAVE

You know, I did something a few weeks ago that had something to do with advertising. People asked me questions about dog food. I didn't really care or know what it was for. I did it for the fifty bucks.

Dave gives Sammie a glob of ice cream off his spoon.

LEIGH

So, then, what are you?

DAVE

Do you mean, what do I do for a living? I make cabinets. I work as a carpenter.

Leigh looks at David with a blank look that turns into something sad. She was eating a cone, and there's vanilla on her nose.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You have vanilla on your nose.

He takes it off with his finger, and puts it in his mouth. Meekly, she smiles.

58 INT. FOCUS GROUP ROOM 58

The group, seven people, is female, 18 to 34. MISS DAVIS is about 24, and believes she is fashionable. MS O'CONNOR has very short hair. MS HACKETT is the 18 year old, dressed in workout clothes.

MISS DAVIS

I don't watch the news because it's really boring, you know? It's only good when somebody famous dies.

MS O'CONNER

Can I just say something about how offensive the media in this country are, controlling and manipulating what information we're made to believe is important and setting absurd ideals for beauty and grooming like we're supposed to like their plastic little heads and fake hair.

MS HACKETT

I'd like to go back to that dead thing. Like when someone famous dies, and they have those long shows about them that show their lives, do they do those shows before they're dead so they have all these shows sitting there waiting for old people to die? I always wondered that.

59 INT. FOCUS GROUP MONITORING ROOM 59

Leigh's head is weighty on her hand. Her eyes close.

60 INT. FOCUS GROUP MONITORING ROOM 60

The group of six is lower to middle income blue collar, male. RENSKI is newly retired.

RENSKI

Now your weather, your weather should have arrows that move. Moving arrows... high pressures, riding the prairie states. Now your sports...

61 INT. FOCUS GROUP MONITORING ROOM 61

Peter sneaks up behind Leigh who watches with hopeful intent. He is dressed in all black, with a black turtleneck. He has dyed his hair blond.



PETER

Ordinarily he is insane, but he has  
lucid moments when he is only  
stupid. Heinrich Heine.

62 INT. FOCUS GROUP ROOM

62

Quick edits of assorted commentary, multiple groups. MRS. PETERS is a middle aged mom. ANDERSON is likely an accountant. VOGEL is a car mechanic. MS. CARSON is 40 and boring. JOHNSON is obviously a sports fan. MISS GREY is about 22, a student.

MRS. PETERS

There should be more good news.  
Nice things about the community.

ANDERSON

Business news is rarely covered.

VOGEL

That Burns guy can't talk, man. We  
got a pool at work how many times  
he screws up a word. I won ten  
bucks the other day with Chicago  
White Snots.

MRS. CARSON

Too much sports.

JOHNSON

Not enough sports.

MISS GREY

Is this really how you people make  
decisions? Don't you have experts  
or something who know these things?

63 INT. THE VELJOVIC DINING ROOM - NIGHT

63

It's Platter Night. Leigh, Charles, Dad and Nikki sit at the dining room table. Larry is trying to be a lap dog on Leigh. He is growing fast.

They have finished eating. Dad is playing with a cup on a stick, trying to get a ball on a string in the cup. Nikki is scanning the classified ads in the newspaper.

CHARLES

An invitation came yesterday for  
the first annual Veljovic family  
reunion picnic. A picnic. Outdoors.

NIKKI

That's where most picnics are,  
Charles.

CHARLES

Picnics are prevalent in European  
secular art from the eighteenth  
century on; I'm aware of where  
they're held.

DAD

I haven't seen my sisters for  
years, and I miss them.

NIKKI

Here, you could be a part-time  
summer admissions counselor at  
Northwestern.

(Reads)

Evenings, twenty hours a week,  
eight to nine dollars an hour...oh,  
BA required.

CHARLES

To eat food on paper in the company  
of bugs.

LEIGH

When is the picnic?

CHARLES

May 21st.

LEIGH

And you want to go, Dad?

DAD

To see the old family. I only see  
the old family when somebody dies.  
What happens to people when they  
get older, why they don't want to  
see each other anymore?

CHARLES

Children throwing plastic disks and  
adults running shackled in burlap.

NIKKI

I can't go. Marc and I will be  
touring colleges out east that  
week.

Dad puts down his toy at her remark.

CHARLES

You've got to go with us, Leigh.  
I know it will be a living hell,  
but at least we can talk to one  
another.

LEIGH

We'll see...

NIKKI

Here, earn extra money reading  
manuscripts.

CHARLES

Perfect! I shall write my own and  
recommend it enthusiastically.

64

EXT. STREETS IN LEIGH'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- NIGHT

64

Leigh is walking with Larry. They come upon a fruit stand/  
neighborhood grocery. They meet Dave and Sammie.

LEIGH

Oh hi!

It's Sammie and you! You...

DAVE

Dave. We had ice cream, Leigh.

LEIGH

Leigh.

DAVE

May I join you, Leigh?

LEIGH

You want to join me...

DAVE

For a walk. Walking. With our dogs.

65

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - NIGHT

65

DAVE

So, tell me your dreams.

LEIGH

Pardon me?

DAVE

You know, what you live for.

LEIGH

That's a little forward, wanting to know what I live for. I live because I live. I am an organism.

DAVE

Is that what you think you are? An organism? Let me ask a different way. What are your dreams?

LEIGH

Well, last night I dreamed that Larry ate everything out of the refrigerator and then coughed it all up and it came out like perfect little hot dogs, you know, on buns with mustard.

DAVE

So do you live for Larry, or do you live for hot dogs?

Leigh stops and just looks at him.

66

INT. AGENCY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

66

Another work session with Peter and Leigh. Peter looks a bit like PeeWee Herman today. Blond hair is gone. Leigh was in her state again.

PETER

Leigh? LEIGH? The words, Leigh. The words anchors used not found in most respondent's vocabularies. Should they be part of our report?

LEIGH

Words. What words were they?

PETER

Entourage, faction, germane, rhetorical, fortuitous, perennial, multilateral and ubiquitous.

LEIGH

An anchor used ubiquitous?

PETER

He used it in his Christmas message about God and to describe the Channel 5 helicopter.

LEIGH

Peter, what are your dreams?

PETER

My dreams? You mean, my goals? My desires?

LEIGH

Yes, that would be it. What you live for.

PETER

I live for love. Enlightenment. Satisfaction of intellectual curiosity. And to one day own a pick-up truck. You know, for hauling.

67 EXT. FRUIT STAND/GROCERY - NIGHT 67

Leigh is there with Larry. They're hanging out.

68 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - NIGHT 68

They're sitting on a park bench. Looking around.

69 INT. THE VELJOVIC LIVING ROOM 69

Dad is scratching off lottery tickets. Marc and Nikki are playing with Larry on the floor. Leigh sits in a chair, work papers spread about. She is writing. Charles arrives from the kitchen with a plate of hors-d'oeuvres.

DAD

Cow!

CHARLES

No, cheese balls.

LEIGH

What do you suppose are the three most influencing variables in a viewer's decision to watch a given six o'clock news?

NIKKI

I'll say one of them is anchor credibility. Whether they have a background as a journalist.

CHARLES

Anchor intelligence, or lack of.

DAD

Good weather.

LEIGH

Dad wins. Number one is if they watched the lead-in program, number two is if they like the weatherman, number three is the length of the sports segment. Friendliness and personality of anchors comes in fourth.

NIKKI

When is your presentation?

LEIGH

Wednesday. And there's so much to be done before then. I'm totally swamped, and really need to work hard at this one.

CHARLES

Let's not forget the lesson of spretzatourra.

MARC

Spretzatourra?

CHARLES

As the High Renaissance in Italy was coming to a close, paintings of elegant beauty and effortless flow were thought better than works that, well, looked like they were hard work. Spretzatourra means more worthy, because it flows from genius without being soiled by the toil of effort. Spretzatourra... spretzatourra... isn't it beautiful?

Dad finishes the last lottery ticket.

DAD

Sloth!

70

INT. AGENCY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

70

Leigh, Peter, Kristen and Linda are frantically at work. The place is a mess. Everyone looks like they smell bad.

Peter is doing a derelict thing. The lights are off and they're running through a slide presentation. The first slide is a typeset graphic of quotations: "...slurs words. Must be an alchie." "...Chicago White Snots." "Five o'clock shadow makes him look homeless." "Head looks like it's on someone else's body." The next slides are name/title cards and photos of possible anchors.

PETER

OK, OK, so after Kristen presents the findings on current anchors I'll do the presentation of the recommended anchors. Let me, let me, let me.

LEIGH

I think, politically, I should do that. She's never met you. It's a credibility issue.

Peter nods. Disappointed.

PETER

What about Tim Murphy?

Peter clicks to a head shot of a little person.

LEIGH

Absolutely not.

PETER

Everyone loves a dwarf!

LEIGH

No.

PETER

Seriously, he is an aggressive journalist.

Peter makes a growling noise then viciously barks.

LEIGH

(Stares.) Can you wear something the least bit navy blue tomorrow?

PETER

Oh you know how I react to authority.

Leigh checks her watch.

LEIGH

Oh my God, I'm really late.

She throws together her things.

LINDA  
You're not leaving!? We haven't  
completely outlined the  
presentation!

LEIGH  
Just follow my lead. I gotta go.

She leaves.

KRISTEN  
What's wrong with this picture?

71 INT. PUPPY CLASS

71

People stand scattered about the room with their dogs and take turns doing figure eights around the human/animal islands. The puppies are growing.

AUNTIE CHRIS  
Circle drill!

The dogs and owners immediately break into a trotting circle.

AUNTIE CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Halt!

Everyone stops on a dime. The dogs sit in unison.

AUNTIE CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Praise your pups. Everybody leans  
over to rub ears and lavish praise.

72 EXT. THE STREET IN FRONT OF PUPPY CLASS - NIGHT

72

Puppies and owners huddle in the protected outside landing. It is pouring; sheets of rain fall, thunder CLAPS. One by one the owners run for it. Leigh and Dave bolt together. The camera follows them as they run through the streets. It's not fun. They get closer to Dave's place.

DAVE  
Come inside! Wait 'till it breaks!

They run through the gate and to the door.



73 INT. DAVE'S FOYER

73

They all come in out of breath, relieved to be in shelter. They throw their jackets on the floor and take off their shoes. Sopping, sopping wet. The dogs do their shake thing and get anything that was previously dry in the area wet. Dave undresses quickly and goes into the bedroom. Leigh is just realizing where she is and takes a step into the living room.

His apartment is immaculate; not a sock lies about, not a piece of furniture is out of place. It looks like the photographers from Apartment Life are about to arrive for a session. He made this place himself. It has that look. Leigh is impressed.

The kitchen is warm and well stocked. It's a cook's kitchen. He's a cook. It's like Leigh is seeing a kitchen for the first time. He sneaks up behind her. He's in dry clothes, and he has sweats for her.

DAVE

Here. Put these on.

LEIGH

No, I...

DAVE

I'll put your clothes in the dryer so when it stops raining you can go home and not catch pneumonia. The bathroom's over there.

74 INT. DAVE'S BATHROOM

74

Leigh's movements are slow as she puts the clothes down to undress. She's soaked. She's also shaking.

LEIGH

I, I must be cold.

75 INT. DAVE'S KITCHEN

75

He's getting stuff out of the refrigerator. He's singing along to "Wake Me Up Before You Go Go," somewhat animated. Leigh comes out of the bathroom carrying her ball of wet clothes. She watches for a while until he notices her.

DAVE

I made some enchiladas the other night. I hope you don't mind leftovers.

LEIGH  
Oh, no, really...I don't...

DAVE  
Did you eat earlier?

LEIGH  
No.

Dave smiles.

76

INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM

76

They're eating dinner in front of the fireplace on a low table. Along with the enchiladas, Dave has managed to scrape together rice, beans, hot tortillas in a covered stone holder and Coronas, with lime of course. The dogs are eating rawhide chewies in the corner. Leigh is finishing the second beer she's ever had, having just finished the first.

LEIGH  
I don't mean to be excessive, but these are good. These are good. The enchiladas are really good, and this beer, these are good. Too.

DAVE  
You'd like another Corona.

LEIGH  
Why are you always interpreting me?  
And looking at me?

DAVE  
I'm sorry. Would you like another beer?

LEIGH  
Yes.

DAVE  
And if you haven't noticed, I like looking at you.

Dave gets up for the beer. Leigh looks around. She's on her way to a place she's never been before. Dave returns with the Corona. Leigh attacks it.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
You asked me why I'm interpreting you.

LEIGH

What language do I speak? Ha!  
That's a question like you would  
ask.

DAVE

I'm not sure I've ever heard, or  
seen anybody like you. There's  
something about you that's not like  
other women.

LEIGH

But I'm ubiquitous!

DAVE

What's ubiquitous?

LEIGH

Oh my God, you don't know.

Leigh turns green.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Excuse me...

She runs to the bathroom to heave.

DAVE

Oh! You mean sick!

77 INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

77

Leigh is sleeping on the couch, all tucked in. The sun is  
streaming in the windows. Larry licks her face. She opens her  
eyes. Her eyes look around the room...not familiar. She  
stands up, sits down, stands up again and staggers to the  
bathroom.

78 INT. DAVE'S BATHROOM

78

Dave is standing in front of the mirror, shaving. His back is  
to the door. He's naked. Leigh stumbles in and screams.

79 INT. AGENCY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

79

Everyone is waiting. Brandon, Peter, Kristen, Linda,  
Catherine, her boy Bobby. They are quiet. Leigh enters. Her  
footsteps are loud. An uncomfortable moment.

LEIGH

Thank you all for coming.

BRANDON

We are not coming, rather, we came  
a long time ago. Came is past tense  
for come. You do know about came  
and come, don't you, Leigh?

LEIGH

Let's get started then.  
(She's blanking out.)  
Ah, Peter? Could you begin?

Peter is taken back; Leigh was to have given the opening. She looks to him desperately. He quickly gathers some notes and takes the position at the front of the room. He wears a navy blue tuxedo. Leigh sits down on the first chair she finds.

Peter rises to the occasion.

PETER

We used a combination of focus  
groups and telephone surveys to  
test current personnel and format  
among viewers and non-viewers, and  
focus groups to test formats and  
new on-air personalities...

Catherine is mostly stone-faced. Brandon looks expectantly at Catherine, grimly at Leigh.

PETER (CONT'D)

Current anchors tested poorly on  
credibility, intelligence,  
attractiveness and overall  
watchability. Weather, sports and  
features were also quantified...

The presentation, from Leigh's perspective, and the camera's perspective, is viewed through a fishbowl, underwater. It is unintelligible. Leigh is zoned.

PETER (CONT'D)

The future will see news and  
entertainment coming together...

Time is passing and her heart beats very loud.

PETER (CONT'D)

And the new anchors we recommend  
are...

He pushes the button and they appear on slide in all their plasticity.

PETER (CONT'D)  
 (With great bravado)  
 Bret Hardwood, Ashley Lovitt and  
 Tiny Tim Murphy!

CATHERINE  
 HE'S A MIDGET.

PETER  
 Little people test very well.

80 INT. AGENCY CONFERENCE ROOM

80

Brandon, Catherine and her boy Bobby stand in the front of the room and confer quietly. Kristen and Linda stand in the middle of the room to the side, confer quietly and look at Peter and Leigh. Peter and Leigh are in the back of the room by the donuts.

LEIGH  
 I lost my virginity. I lost it.  
 I know it.

PETER  
 I delight in your loss of  
 virginity, but women loose their  
 virginity every other day.  
 You have to clear your head.  
 Brandon is furious. You have to  
 defend yourself, or you will be  
 killed.

LEIGH  
 I don't feel good, Peter. I am ill.  
 Very ill.

Brandon, Catherine and Bobby walk to the back of the room.

CATHERINE  
 Excellent presentation, Peter.  
 We'll have Hardwood, Lovitt and the  
 dwarf on in six weeks. Oh, hello  
 Leigh.

The trio leave.

LEIGH  
 She said 'Hello, Leigh.' Just  
 'Hello, Leigh.' I am deceased.

81 INT. A GOVERNMENT OFFICE - DAY

81

It's the local Job Service, and it's filled with lots of people you'd find at an unemployment office. Charles sits in a fiberglass chair squished between two equally large people. There is a crackly speaker and a VOICE.

SPEAKER VOICE  
Number fifty-nine.

Charles pries himself free.

82 INT. THE EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR'S OFFICE

82

The employment counselor, MR. BASS, is a young man of about twenty-three who looks and sounds fourteen. He's dressed in his father's suit. Placards on his desk read "Mr. Bass" and "The Buck Stops Here." Charles is uncomfortable, aghast, and yet strangely dependent. He holds his hat in his hand.

MR. BASS

So, Mr. (he sounds it out) Vel'-jo- vic...

CHARLES  
Veljov'ic.

MR. BASS  
You list as your experience "None."  
What do you suppose this means?

CHARLES  
I have never been under anyone's  
employ.

MR. BASS  
You never even had a job?

CHARLES  
That is correct.

MR. BASS  
I find that very curious. Everybody  
works.

CHARLES  
I am a homemaker.

MR. BASS  
With no education, so I shall go to  
the blue file for you, Mr.  
Vel'jovic.

He wheels around to the file cabinet with the blue file. He places the file on his desk and takes out cards to read them aloud, in order as they appear in the file. His reading skills are none to speak of.

MR. BASS (CONT'D)  
Common Laborer. Unloading boxcars.  
Four-eighty per hour to start.  
Above minimum wage. Wow, cool!  
Benefits, none.

CHARLES  
I prefer no physical exertion.

MR. BASS  
That does limit career paths, Mr.  
Vel'jovic. Freelance Asbestos  
Removal. Oh, may be physical. Here,  
Flea Market Sales. Commission only.

Mr. Bass looks up with a leer. Charles is in a state of horror.

MR. BASS (CONT'D)  
You can start today.

83

INT. A BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

83

Nikki and Dad are on the alleys, bowling. Dad's delivery and his ball are painfully slow but unconsciously accurate. Another legend is in the make.

DAD  
How'd I do?

Cut to the overhead score sheet. Strike after strike. He even picked up his splits.

NIKKI  
247.

DAD  
I remember a bowling alley in  
Yuigahama during the war. I bowled  
a perfect game there.

Nikki smiles,

84 INT. A CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY 84

Nikki stands by smiling as Dad slowly counts crumpled dollars and change. He's buying scratch off lottery tickets and flying saucers.

85 INT. RUMMAGE-O-RAMA - DAY 85

Charles has a table of odd and soiled wares: thermal mugs, single forks and spoons, plastic flowers, naked Barbie dolls. OLD LADY is about 80, and feisty.

OLD LADY  
How much for the cup.

CHARLES  
Ten cents.

OLD LADY  
It got no handle!

CHARLES  
Broken by the Lady Di herself in hysterical rage against Charles, aloof and disinterested husband.

OLD LADY  
Seven cent.

CHARLES  
Gift wrap?

Charles stuffs it in a greasy brown paper bag.

86 INT. LEIGH'S OFFICE - DAY 86

Leigh's door is closed and her head is propped on heaped papers on her desk. The INTERCOM RINGS frantically. Leigh touches a button, keeping her head on the pile.

KAREN  
(On intercom)  
Hello Leigh, you missed a meeting in Brandon's office so he is on his way to see you.

Leigh's head pops up just in time. Brandon opens the door.

LEIGH  
Oh! Brandon! I was about to see you but I was awash in paperwork. I, I apologize...



BRANDON  
Rumor has it that you're not  
getting any protein.

LEIGH  
Carbohydrates.

BRANDON  
I'm in a remarkably good mood.

LEIGH  
I had a lapse there, Brandon. An  
extended lapse of judgement on many  
levels. It will not happen again.

BRANDON  
See to it. You can thank little  
Tattoo for saving your ass.

Brandon closes the door. Leigh looks up at the ceiling.

LEIGH  
I live.

Her head plops.

87 INT. THE VELJOVIC KITCHEN - DAY

87

Nikki is making homemade pizza. Dad is trying hard at paddle  
ball.

DAD  
Do you think they forgot?

NIKKI  
It's platter Night. They won't  
forget.

DAD  
I had a good time.

Leigh and Larry enter through the back door.

LEIGH  
Sorry we're late.

She gives dad a couple of ticket to scratch off.

NIKKI  
Charles isn't even here. He got a  
job.

LEIGH

Really? Doing what?

NIKKI

I don't know. But he called from the employment office and asked if I could spend the day.

DAD

Nikki, look! I got a chicken. I never got a chicken before. A lot of sheep. I usually get sheep.

NIKKI

Charles got a job. Dad got a chicken. Life is good.

Charles enters from the back door.

LEIGH

So? So? You got a job! This is exciting! What do you do?

Everyone is looking at him. There is a long pause.

CHARLES

I...I am...in research. At the library. I read articles and then write on little cards what they're all about.

Everyone smiles in pride. Dad gets up from his chair and walks slowly to Charles to give him a hug.

DAD

Son, I am so proud of who you are.

88

INT. THE VELJOVIC DINING ROOM - NIGHT

88

They're all just finishing dinner.

CHARLES

...Not knowing much about cold fusion, I did find it difficult outlining some of the technical pieces. They're doing so much with the atom these days, you know. Anyway, I can't believe you two went bowling. Next you'll be watching professional wrestling.

Leigh gets up.

LEIGH

I'm sorry but I've got an errand to run.

CHARLES

Oh, but how was your presentation? Wasn't that today?

LEIGH

Not worth discussing.

CHARLES

Remember, intellect is invisible to those who have none.

Leigh kisses everyone goodbye and leaves.

89 EXT. DAVE'S PORCH - NIGHT

89

Leigh is knocking. The door opens. Dave smiles. He's got a big Band-aid on his cheek.

LEIGH

I came for my clothes. I want my clothes and then I will leave.

DAVE

Are you OK?

Come in, come in...

Leigh and Larry enter.

90 INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM

90

He's listening to music. He has an incredible album collection. A jazzy version of "Smooth Operator" by Sade is on in the background.

DAVE

I'm sorry about what happened in the bathroom this morning. I didn't think you'd be up for a long time.

LEIGH

I'm sorry for all that blood on your rug. Oh, and your face...

DAVE

I've always wanted a scar. Can I get you something to drink? A water?

LEIGH

No, no. Just my clothes and I will leave.

DAVE

Really? Are you OK?

LEIGH

Um, did I? Did we? Did I lose something here last night?

DAVE

You mean like an earring?

The oven beeper in the kitchen goes off.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Oh! My cookies!

Dave dashes to the kitchen.

LEIGH

He bakes cookies.

She knows she's still a virgin.

91 INT. DAVE'S KITCHEN

91

Leigh and Dave are eating hot cookies off the sheet with big glasses of milk. The pups are waiting patiently for tossed cookie pieces.

DAVE

So I just believe you have work hard to get and be what you want.

LEIGH

But don't you think one simply is as they should be? Isn't working hard to attain personality characteristics unnatural somehow? I'm not saying people shouldn't work hard. I work hard at work. But shouldn't the rest of life be...restful?

DAVE

I like to cook.

LEIGH

Oh, you're a great cook. These are the best cookies I have ever tasted.

DAVE

Cooking is hard work. But it's also joy. You know, like the joy of cooking? I think a person should work harder at their personal life than what they do for a living. What they do in their personal life defines who they are inside, not what they do for money. You know, live to work or work to live.

92

INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM

92

They're sitting on the floor near the stereo. They're looking through his albums.

LEIGH

I don't know about any of that.

DAVE

Well, Aquarians are creative and sort of fluid. They kind of go with the flow, you know? What sign are you?

LEIGH

You're asking me what sign I am. I don't know. I was born April 3rd.

DAVE

Ooh, Aries the Ram. Headstrong, impatient, a born leader, but some people don't like you.

LEIGH

That's for sure.

DAVE

But some other people find you fascinating.

LEIGH

Maybe I should use astrology as a qualifier in my research if the generalizations are so accurate.

(Beat)

Say, what's this? David  
(She says it with the wrong inflection)  
Bowie.

DAVE

(Corrects her) Bowie.

LEIGH

Oh yes, of course. And John Lennon.  
He was a Beatle, wasn't he?  
(Dave smiles)

DAVE

You got a lot of living to do,  
Leigh.

93

INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM

93

They're on the couch. Leigh half lays against Dave's chest.  
They're drinking beer in front of the fire.

DAVE

And my mother left us when I was  
four. To this day, I don't know  
where she is. I know I must be  
missing something because she left,  
that there's some hole in my  
personality, but I don't know what  
it is. Sometimes I think if I just  
found her I would get that  
something back.

LEIGH

But then you'd be different.

DAVE

Maybe.

LEIGH

Maybe different's not better.

DAVE

Tell me about you.

LEIGH

Well, my research is predicated...

DAVE

No, no, no. About you.

LEIGH

My mother died. Breast cancer, when  
I was ten, and my sister was just a  
baby. My brother never finished  
high school because he wanted to  
raise us, to be sure we came out OK  
because my Dad worked a lot and was  
kind of sad and stressed out with  
it all.

(MORE)

## LEIGH (CONT'D)

And now he has to take care of my father. My father is so very special. He set the hand grenade throwing record in the army and won two silver stars during the war. When I was small, I remember he walked a mile on his hands. When he was born, he didn't speak a word until he was four and then he talked in full sentences. He never went to high school, but he taught himself chemistry with books and became an inventor. His IQ was measured at 165. But he came from a poor family. He didn't get much attention and now he's sick.

## DAVE

Wow, that's quite a Dad. You must love him very much. What's wrong with him?

## LEIGH

Diabetes. Early onset dementia. He's as good as he is because he used to be so strong. He's just old and his organs are kind of down from all the insulin spikes and he requires constant...

She begins to cry. He cradles and rocks her.

## DAVE

I would like to meet your father.

94

INT. DAVE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

94

They are in bed, facing each other, lying side by side. The scene is slow, and "Hello" by Lionel Richie plays almost in its entirety. Leigh is cautiously wide-eyed. Dave is tender and thoughtful. He takes her hand and touches his face with it. He kisses each of her fingers, taking them, one by one, into his mouth. He places her hand on his chest. Everything is dreamy. They kiss. Dave is about to make the turn to go on top. At that most intimate moment of life, Larry and Sammie jump on the bed and give Leigh and Dave dog kisses. After the oxygen is first sucked out of the air, they laugh. The dogs HOWL.

95 INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE -- DAY 95

Orlaf is making a storyboard presentation to Brandon, two Account Executives and Leigh. Under the table, Leigh's leg goes up and down wildly. Above the table, Leigh is far away.

ORLAF

...so then we see them with the old people and cheering on the wheelchair racer and then they're at the soup kitchen and then the sun is in the background and they run in slow motion with children and we say "Hardwood, Lovitt and Tiny Tim. More than two reasons to watch WGN."

Pause. Everyone looks to Leigh.

BRANDON

Well?

LEIGH

Oh, ah. Yes.

Orlaf smiles, the victor.

96 INT. ELEVATOR 96

Leigh's just gotten in. She's pressing the parking garage button, which was lit already, incessantly trying to make the door close.

97 INT. PARKING GARAGE 97

She fumbles with her keys like she's had intravenous caffeine.

98 INT. LEIGH'S LIVING ROOM 98

Larry jumps all over her when she enters. We notice that all her books are now at least four feet off the ground. She quickly feeds him. To do that she undoes the big moving strap wrapped around the refrigerator, and unscrews the screws sealing the drawers and cabinets closed.

99 INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM 99

He's just finishing the massive dog gate that segregates his bedroom area from the rest of the house.



100 INT. LEIGH'S BEDROOM 100

She's got clothes all over the place, trying to find the perfect outfit. She's trying to look sexy but appropriately disheveled. She ends up ripping an old sweatshirt to look like Dave.

101 EXT. THE SIDEWALK BY THE PARK - EVENING 101

Larry pees.

LEIGH  
Faster, faster.

102 INT. DAVE'S FOYER - EVENING 102

Dave opens the door. They stop for a moment. Leigh flings herself at him.

103 INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM 103

The two dogs, tails wagging, want to get past the gate. Dave, shirt off, pants unbuttoned, already out of breath, tosses the dogs his shoes.

DAVE  
Eat these. Eat anything you want.

104 INT. DAVE'S BED 104

It's quiet. Leigh is trembling and a bit out of control: anticipation, fear, self-consciousness, intense want, naked shock. Dave is flying his plane on automatic pilot. He prepares his approach.

LEIGH  
Oh my God. Oh my God.

105 INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM 105

The dogs are undoing the laces. They both look up when they hear Leigh.

LEIGH  
OUCH. Oh. My.

106 INT. DAVE'S BEDROOM 106

Leigh sits on a bed without sheets, staring blankly ahead. She's got on Dave's sweats. The washing machine is noisy in the background.

107 INT. BRANDON'S OFFICE -- DAY 107

The conference table has Orlaf, Peter, Kristen, a couple of AEs, a couple of creative types and Leigh. They all sit with perfume bottles in front of them. Brandon is pacing about the room, talking about a new business presentation. Everyone is fairly attentive. Leigh looks different. Distant, but calmer. Pretty.

BRANDON

I want this account. You have to get it for me. Shoots with beautiful babes. Babes on beaches. Babes on bear skin rugs. Babes in little babe outfits.

KRISTEN

This is a perfume account not a beer account.

BRANDON

Excuse me?

ORLAF

(With new authority)

I see very stark white bathroom scenes, very stark with white flowing outfits, and the putting on of the perfume from a black bottle in a white environment. Very black, very white.

Brandon dismisses Orlaf with a look.

PETER

I'll say it. How much do you want research to drive creative?

BRANDON

I want focus groups. Personal interviews. Whatever you can scrounge up to make whatever Orlaf does sound reasonable. Find out who's sexy. And then make them smell good.

LEIGH

(Kind of clinical, but  
kind of not clinical.  
More like a child who  
tries to demonstrate adult  
knowledge)

Who is sexy is a surprise revealed  
to each woman. It's not who, or  
what she thinks. The passion lies  
in the subconscious. Who is sexy is  
who touches her there.

Brandon makes an announcement.

BRANDON

Ladies and Gentlemen, our little  
Leigh has finally torqued the one-  
eyed snake.

Leigh covers her face with her hands, while the others smile  
knowingly.

108 INT. THE EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY 108

The blue folder is open on Mr. Bass' desk.

CHARLES

I simply must make more money.

MR. BASS

Mr. Vel'jovic, this is the  
employment office not the lottery  
commission.

He hands the card to Charles.

109 EXT. THE DOCKS - DAY 109

It's drizzling. Charles is sitting on an overturned washtub,  
his back to an open station wagon. The sign reads "FRESH  
CAUGHT SMELT." He is despondent. Seagulls ravage his wares  
behind him.

110 INT. DAVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 110

Leigh and Dave lay together on top of his comforter. Clothes  
are everywhere. They've just made love. Again. They're very  
close. Leigh is glowing, giggly. She sticks out her tongue.

DAVE

You know what they say about the tongue.

LEIGH

No, what do they say about the tongue?

DAVE

Don't stick it out unless you intend to use it.

Leigh laughs like she's never heard that before.

LEIGH

That's funny.

Dave shakes his head, but recognizes the opportunity.

DAVE

Can you do this?

He sticks out his tongue and curls up the sides.

LEIGH

I don't know.

She tries. Definitely a tongue without much dexterity. He tries to help.

DAVE

Just turn it. Turn it...

No use. A dead tongue sticking out. He kisses it. They laugh.

111 INT. DAVE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

111

They're having dinner by candlelight.

DAVE

So tell me again.

LEIGH

Researchers can infer your future product preferences vis-à-vis data on your previous product purchases.

DAVE

But I don't have a Visa. I have a MasterCard, and I don't buy much with it.

LEIGH  
 (Understanding,  
 unfortunately)  
 Vis-a-vis means "face to face" or  
 "by way of." By way of data on your  
 previous product preferences.

DAVE  
 Oh, so why didn't you say so? Why'd  
 you have to talk French or Greek or  
 whatever that was?

112 INT. DAVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 112

They lay on their sides. Leigh faces away from Dave. He has his arm around her and is asleep. She stares strait ahead, deep in disturbed thought. Eventually, she closes her eyes to sleep.

113 INT. THE VELJOVIC DINING ROOM - EVENING 113

Platter Night. Leigh, Charles, Dad, Nikki, Marc. Marc is the only one with his own plate. Professional wrestling is on TV in the background.

LEIGH  
 This is really fishy smelling fish.

CHARLES  
 Brain food. I suspect it is why the  
 Japanese have excelled at the  
 electronic sciences. Sushi.

DAD  
 Fish. Fish. Every day fish.

LEIGH  
 How's wedding planning going?

NIKKI  
 Marc's parents said they'd pay for  
 our honeymoon, so we spent the  
 afternoon at the travel agent.

MARC  
 I'd like to go to Hawaii but Nikki  
 wants to go to Florence. So we're  
 biking through Italy. We'll see  
 Milan, Venice...

NIKKI

Charles, we'll see spretzatourra.  
I'll finally experience it.

CHARLES

(He chokes on it all,  
especially "finally")  
As if you have not seen it in  
practice nearly every day of your  
life. That's nice of your parents  
to pay.

MARC

I hope you don't mind.

CHARLES

Of course not. Why would I mind?  
Excuse me.

Charles quickly picks up something to take it into the  
kitchen. He's upset, banging around getting coffee and  
dessert. Leigh follows.

114 INT. THE VELJOVIC KITCHEN

114

It starts slow.

LEIGH

You're not upset about the  
honeymoon.

CHARLES

I was the very pineapple of  
politeness, thank-you.

LEIGH

It's a wonderful gift, Charles.

CHARLES

A true German can't stand the  
French, yet willingly drinks the  
wine.

LEIGH

What does that mean? Why don't you  
just talk in plain English? Why do  
you always have to convolute  
everything with this prose of  
yours?

CHARLES

So in addition to being without capital reserves I have lost my ability to communicate. Whipped cream on a rotting mackerel, don't you think?

Dad enters carrying the empty platter.

LEIGH

I told you not to worry about money. I will take care of it. What the fuck is wrong with you lately?

Charles crashes something in the sink. He is intense.

CHARLES

That word has never been uttered in this house. Just who have you been seeing? WHO HAVE YOU BEEN SEEING?

DAD

Good word, fuck. Used it in the army all the time. "Hey, look at that fuck over there." "Hit that fuck in the head!"

Dad leaves. Leigh is still hanging on Charles' line. She's shaken.

LEIGH

No one. I've been seeing no one.

115 INT. THE VELJOVIC DINING ROOM

115

They all eat dessert quietly, heads down. The tension is palpable. Finally Dad breaks the silence.

DAD

Pass the fucking sugar.

116 INT. LEIGH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

116

The clock reads 11:30. She is reading aloud to Larry in bed. As she reads, she is overcome by the reverence of the words. She is near tears at the end, and solemnly holds the moment.

LEIGH

Two loves I have of comfort and  
despair, Which like two spirits do  
suggest me still: The better angel  
is a man right fair, The worser  
spirit a woman colour'd ill. To win  
me soon to hell, my female evil  
Tempteth my better angel from my  
side, And would corrupt my saint to  
be a devil, Wooing his purity with  
her foul pride. And whether that my  
angel be turn'd fiend Suspect I  
may, yet not directly tell; But  
being both from me, both to each  
friend, I guess one angel is  
another's hell: Yet this shall I  
ne'er know, but live in doubt, Till  
my bad angel fire my good one out.

The telephone rings. She feigns composure.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Hello. I, I'm sorry I didn't call.  
It was Platter Night. You have to  
see me? You have to? I can't. I'm  
trying on dresses with my sister.  
OK, Saturday. Uh, (lying), I got to  
go, Larry is ringing his bell. Yea.  
Bye.

She hangs up, turns off the light, and they sleep.

117 INT. DAVE'S FOYER - DAY

117

Dave opens the door to see Leigh with Larry. She's reluctant,  
and looks troubled. He immediately covers her face with a  
hat.

DAVE

Don't look, don't look.

He leads her into the room. He takes the blindfold off.

LEIGH

It's a bike.

He bought her a mountain bike.

DAVE

It's your bike.

LEIGH

I don't have a bike.



DAVE

You do now.

118 EXT. THE PARK - DAY

118

She's not very proficient on a bike, but she's learning and it's fun. She seems happy. Larry HOWLS with delight. They play frisbee with the dogs, and buy hot dogs from a vendor. They're eating the hot dogs when Dave pops the question.

LEIGH

So when can I meet your family?

Leigh chokes.

119 INT. THE VELJOVIC LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

119

Dad sleeps in front of the TV. Woody Woodpecker is on. Leigh, Charles and Nikki play Scrabble.

CHARLES

Everything great in the world comes from neurotics. They alone have founded our religions and composed our masterpieces. Never will the world know all it owes to them nor all that they have suffered to enrich us.

LEIGH

Charles, this is a kid who only eats brown M & M's. I don't think that qualifies for clinical neurosis.

CHARLES

Greatness begins young, and with proper cultivation, extends to adulthood.

(Puts letters down.)

C O D. Cod.

NIKKI

Friday was sad. They were writing the classified ad for my job. They're hiring an aide.

LEIGH

(Puts letters down)

Wretch.

CHARLES

Your position at the school is open? Is it possible I could apply?

NIKKI

Oh, you're not interested, are you...? I thought your library job was going so well.

CHARLES

(Outwardly excited)

Boring bookwork in lieu of an opportunity to mold the future leaders of the world?

LEIGH

The world is run by C students, Charles. That's what you've always said.

CHARLES

Of course! Teaching! What to us seems merest accident spring from the deepest source of destiny... teaching, yes, is my destiny!

NIKKI

I, uh, think they're looking for someone with a degree. Besides, Leigh and I were the only kids you've ever...met.

CHARLES

I am better than my reputation. I raised you two, didn't I? And just how many masterpieces must I paint before I am allowed my first commission?

120 INT. LEIGH'S OFFICE - DAY

120

She's working at her desk. There's a knock at the door and Karen enters. Something's up.

KAREN

Excuse me, Leigh, there's someone here to see you.

Dave walks in. He's carrying flowers.

DAVE

Hi.

She's aghast.

LEIGH

What are you doing here?  
(She rises from her chair)

DAVE

I took a day off. You know, this is  
the same building I did that dog  
food thing in.

Kristen comes in, carrying a piece of paper, holding back a  
grin.

KRISTEN

I wonder if you could sign this  
purchase order. We need these  
pencils right away.

LEIGH

Get out of here, Kristen.

Kristen leaves, not without getting a good look at Dave's  
jeans, front and back.

DAVE

I brought these for you.

Peter comes in. Preppie day, Izod collar up.

PETER

Oh, look! You have company! I just  
came to borrow a paperweight. There  
are papers flailing about my  
office.

He picks up something close without looking at it and leaves.

DAVE

Nice place.

LEIGH

This is embarrassing. I, I, you  
seeing me here.

DAVE

I've seen you naked, Leigh. It  
shouldn't make you embarrassed if I  
see you at work.

LEIGH

So if you see me naked you think  
you can just see me willy nilly at  
work, huh? What will people think?

DAVE  
 Willy nilly? Is that like vis-à-vis?

LEIGH  
 You can, you can just expose my privates, my private life to all these people here.

DAVE  
 (Coming close to melt her, walking her back against the wall)  
 I just wanted to see you. To see who you were when you weren't with me. To meet the lucky people who see you when I can't. I'll leave quietly if you want me to.

He's holding her now, and sort of nibbling at her ear.

LEIGH  
 You'll leave quietly?

DAVE  
 Just promise me something.

LEIGH  
 Yes.

DAVE  
 That I can meet your family.

She starts to push him away.

LEIGH  
 Oh no no no no....

He's holding her, and they're having fun in a playful struggle.

DAVE  
 Should I find Brandon and tell him I've seen you naked and that I'm the one-eyed snake?

LEIGH  
 YOU WOULDN'T DARE.

DAVE  
 I'm just teasing.

LEIGH  
TEASING? Nobody ever teased me  
before.

DAVE  
That's what I thought. Another  
first!

LEIGH  
(Smiling)  
Ah, let me walk you out.

121 INT. AGENCY, OUTSIDE LEIGH'S OFFICE 121

Every employee in the place has gathered in front of her office. Leigh comes through the door first, and is startled. She's embarrassed and immediately reverts back to the professionally shelled Leigh. Dave smiles and saunters out like Richard Gere as the sea of people part. The sea grins.

122 INT. HALL OUTSIDE AGENCY FOYER 122

Dave leans against closed elevator doors. Leigh has already pushed the button.

DAVE  
I've been thinking about things,  
Leigh.

The doors open. He falls in, on top of Jim the stockbroker.

Leigh looks at her romantic life before her as the doors close.

123 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LEIGH'S OFFICE 123

The entire crew waits. They give Leigh a standing ovation as she returns. She is disarmed, and cracks a smile as she closes the door to her office.

124 INT. A GOVERNMENT OFFICE - DAY 124

Charles is impatiently waiting his turn.

OFF CAMERA VOICE  
Number ninety-two.

125 INT. THE EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR'S OFFICE

125

Charles stands, upset. Mr. Bass is ground plant food.

MR. BASS

I told you, Mr. Vel'jovic.

CHARLES

VELJOV'IC.

MR. BASS

V,V,Veljov'ic, that you were  
already g,g,given two perfectly  
fine career opportunities.

Charles takes out a dead fish from his lapel pocket, slamming  
it on Mr. Bass' open blue file.

CHARLES

THIS is not an OPPORTUNITY.

Charles takes out another dead one from his side pocket.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

THIS IS EVERYTHING THAT IS WRONG  
WITH THE WORLD! You like torturing  
people without really getting into  
trouble by killing them, don't you?

MR. BASS

S, someone's got to sell f,fish.

CHARLES

YOU SELL FISH THEN. YOU COME HOME  
HEAPED IN GULL EXCREMENT. Do you  
read Kierkegaard? Can you solve  
Rubick's Cube? What are the  
qualifications for YOUR job?  
Ability to cultivate the genius  
that springs eternal from human  
potential? No. You're one of those  
perpetrators of mediocrity, aren't  
you? You wouldn't know an  
intellectual if they hit you in the  
face with a chub.

Charles hits him in the face with the chub.

126 INT. AGENCY PARKING GARAGE

126

Leigh comes out of the elevator and walks to her car. Dave is  
waiting.

DAVE  
You're out early.

LEIGH  
You waited all this time?

DAVE  
I wanted to talk with you.

There is a pause while Leigh waits for him to continue.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
In private.

They get in the car.

127 INT. INTERIOR OF LEIGH'S CAR

127

DAVE  
I've been doing a lot of thinking.  
About me, about you, and about me  
and you. I'm not normal.

LEIGH  
Noooo! You're extremely normal...

DAVE  
I mean for a guy. Like, I play  
softball on Wednesday nights and  
the other guys want to go out  
afterwards and drink and pick up  
girls and I just want to go home  
and make a nice dinner and be with  
Sammie. I'm really a quiet, um, no,  
a boring guy. I'm not a  
conversationalist, but somehow I  
like what we talk about. I've asked  
myself a hundred times what I like  
about you. What I like is that  
being with you gives me meaning. I  
learn from you, and I have  
something to share with you.  
Something you need. Because I  
think, in a different way than me,  
you're not normal either.

This is getting pretty tender. Dreamy music plays.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
When you look at me, you look at me  
with eyes that always see me for  
the first time. You look inside me  
and I'm beautiful.

LEIGH  
 (Whispering, in  
 revelation)  
 You look at me like that.

DAVE  
 Shhh.  
 (He touches her lips.)  
 And when I touch you, you tremble.  
 So precious.

Quietly, without effort, her seat goes down. As does his. He is so smooth. They're very close. He's very emotional. She is teary.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
 I don't know, I don't know what  
 love is. I have never loved anyone  
 to know. But I want to bake you  
 cookies. And I want to see where  
 you work, and know what you do.  
 And I want to know the people that  
 you love, who also love you.

They kiss and hold each other desperately tight for what seems a very long time, working themselves up.

DAVE (CONT'D)  
 I, ah, we, ah, we should go. We  
 have puppies. Can I make you dinner  
 tonight?

Leigh nods, because she cannot speak. Dave takes a breath and leaves. Leigh takes her breath, and pulls her seat back up. On her windshield, beneath the wiper, are many business cards from Brandon Stevenson Advertising, Research & Marketing.

128 INT. THE VELJOVIC LIVING ROOM

128

Dad is on the couch showing a photo album to a VISITING NURSE, who is sitting for Dad while Charles is away. They look at old pictures.

DAD  
 This is me, in the chemical  
 laboratory. This is Charles and  
 Leigh. Charles was a good boy.  
 Leigh had some trouble after my  
 wife died. This is my wife with my  
 sister. They were friends before we  
 met. They worked together in a  
 factory during the war.  
 (MORE)



## DAD (CONT'D)

My wife, the way she looked at me,  
she would touch me like a real  
touch. Sometimes I feel her, even  
today, looking at me. They say  
people you love stay with you  
forever.

129 INT. DAVE'S BEDROOM 129

Leigh and Dave make love under Dad's voiceover.

130 EXT. A PARK -- DAY 130

It's the Veljovic reunion picnic. There are many generations of Veljovics in attendance. The Veljovics are middle class Americans who have not forgotten their Serbo-Croatian roots: suckling pigs roast on spits, and temporizes play enticing young Veljovic men to dance as their fathers must have taught them. Charles and Dad sit at a picnic table. Dad speaks with many of his relatives who come to greet him; they address him as if he were a Don. Charles is quiet and out of his element.

131 INT. LEIGH'S CAR -- DAY 131

Leigh, Dave, Larry and Sammie have just driven up. Leigh is extremely on edge. They unload the car as they talk. Dave brought frisbees, baseball gloves and a ball, blankets and dog toys. He thinks he is prepared.

## DAVE

I don't know why you're so up tight  
about this. It's fun. With your  
family.

## LEIGH

Fun.

They walk over a long stretch of grass with their dogs to get to the festivities. Dave is smiling. Leigh is not. She walks fast, now significantly ahead of Dave who is fumbling a bit with the load. There are people everywhere. They find Dad and Charles, but they don't at first realize Leigh has a guest.

## CHARLES

Oh, Leigh, finally you've arrived.  
IQ points have been draining right  
out of me since I sat down.  
Fortunately this is not California.  
In California they say you loose a  
point off your IQ every year.

LEIGH  
Dad, Charles...I would like to  
introduce you to Dave.

CHARLES  
HE's with YOU?

Dave drops everything that he is carrying and offers his hand  
to Dad. They shake hands gingerly.

DAVE  
You must be Leigh's Dad.

CHARLES  
And I must be Charles.

DAVE  
I've heard a lot about you both.  
It's nice to finally meet you,  
Charles.

Dave offers his hand to Charles and he does not attempt to  
shake.

CHARLES  
Oh really? Leigh is the chatterbox.

LEIGH  
Dave, the dogs need walking.

Leigh hustles Dave away.

DAD  
Leigh's got a fella.

Charles says nothing.

132 EXT. WALKING WITH THE DOGS

132

DAVE  
You didn't tell them about me, did  
you... Is that true? You didn't  
tell them about me? We show up and  
they don't even know I am coming or  
who I am???

LEIGH  
I feel I may have made a mistake. I  
thought that it would be easier if  
you just came with me today. And I  
could ease them into you.

DAVE

Ease them into me? What the hell does that mean? I would have thought that they would already know about me. That I meant something, that we...

Dave nearly punches a tree with his fist.

LEIGH

OK, OK, we'll go back. Just don't say anything, OK?

133

EXT. PICNIC TABLE WITH DAD AND CHARLES

133

Leigh, Dave, Dad and Charles sit quietly for an eternity.

CHARLES

So what do you do?

LEIGH

CHARLES!

CHARLES

Excuse me, Leigh, I wasn't aware we'd all taken a vow of silence.

DAVE

Do you mean for money?

CHARLES

Ah, point well taken. No, I mean to demonstrate your deserve of copulation within my genealogy.

DAVE

Excuse me?

LEIGH

He means what do you live for.

DAVE

Well, since I met Leigh, I think I live for different things than I lived for before.

CHARLES

And I suppose you see her in the curves of certain lines and in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colors.

DAD  
You play baseball?

DAVE  
Yes.

LEIGH  
Dad pitched a no hitter in the army  
to a team of drafted New York  
Yankees.

DAVE  
Wow. That's great.

DAD  
Why don't you two go play some  
baseball.

LEIGH  
Yes. Let's go.

Leigh picks up the gloves and takes Dave and the dogs off to  
join a Veljovic game about to begin.

DAD  
Why do you do that to her?

134 EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND 134

The dogs are tied to a fence. Leigh is playing right field,  
Dave center field. A ball is hit to right, past clumsy Leigh,  
and Dave covers behind her to make a stunning play for the  
third out. He runs to hug her and lift her up on his  
shoulders. She is happy. Charles watches from afar.

135 INT. THE VELJOVIC DINING ROOM 135

Charles is at the table with a phone and the want ads. He's  
made several calls already. We see several more.

CHARLES  
Hello. Yes, I'm calling to apply  
for the staff writer position. No,  
not for any other publication but  
I've been writing on my own. No,  
I'm not published. But I'm sure if  
you see my work...



LEIGH  
 (Off camera)  
 Anybody home?

Leigh enters the living room.

CHARLES  
 Shhh!

He's sleeping.

LEIGH  
 I brought him some peanut butter  
 chocolate chip cookies.

CHARLES  
 Oh, yes. Gourmet Dave.

Leigh puts the cookies down.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
 Can I speak to you in the kitchen?

140 INT. THE VELJOVIC KITCHEN

140

CHARLES  
 Where are you going, Leigh?

LEIGH  
 Puppy class. Larry takes his final  
 exams tonight.

CHARLES  
 No, I mean where are you going with  
 your life, Leigh. I am your  
 brother, and I love you, and I care  
 about you.

LEIGH  
 It's not like you to tell me you  
 love me. I love you too, Charles.

CHARLES  
 I love you very much. I was  
 remembering the other day when we  
 were children and I made all those  
 Christmas cookies. We decorated  
 them together, and then we sat on  
 the back stairs in our coats and  
 mittens and ate them all, four  
 dozen, between us.

LEIGH

We were talking about writing.  
About growing up and becoming great  
writers.

CHARLES

Yes. You were only six or seven,  
but you knew what you liked. You  
liked the Scarecrow and the Tin  
Man, and you made up adventures for  
them.

LEIGH

And you wanted to write a novel  
about pirates of the Mediterranean.

CHARLES

I am astonished you remembered  
that.

LEIGH

I cherish that day, Charles.

CHARLES

I think of it often. We are so much  
alike, you and I... Which is why I  
am completely baffled by your  
interest in this Dave.

LEIGH

I know you may not have gotten a  
chance to know him...

CHARLES

No, Leigh, just give me my due. Our  
family is different. You and I and  
Nikki, we've all been blessed.  
We've been given the genetic gift  
of intellect, and we've nurtured it  
in each other against incredible  
odds. Against losing our mother,  
losing our father, against a  
society that rewards mediocrity  
with attention and intellect with  
subversion. What are you going to  
talk about the rest of your life  
with him, Leigh? Whether the recipe  
calls for chunky peanut butter or  
smooth? Leigh, intelligence, you  
use it or lose it. I've seen you  
change. And I am scared for you.  
For us all.

141 INT. PUPPY CLASS 141

Individual dogs are taking their tests in front of the class. Leigh and Larry are not there. Dave looks worried.

142 INT. PUPPY CLASS 142

There is much applause from the crowd. Graduation music plays from a boom box. Dogs wear dog-sized mortarboards and robes; they bite rolled diplomas as Auntie Chris presents.

143 INT. LEIGH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 143

There's a knock at the door. Leigh opens it. It's Dave and Sammie. Leigh looks bad. She's been crying, hard.

DAVE

Oh my God, are you all right?

LEIGH

Yes, I'm quite fine. We need to talk. David, whatever it is that we had, it is over. I don't want to see you anymore or be involved with you in any manner.

DAVE

I don't understand.

LEIGH

That's the point. You don't understand because you can't understand. We're just too different. It's been bothering me for some time. I'm really not interested this relationship anymore.

She turns away and begins to close the door. He physically stops it from closing and walks a step in.

DAVE

Look at me!

(He turns her)

What are you saying? You're not making any sense!

LEIGH

Dave, you're just not my type!



DAVE

You're type??? I can't take this.  
I can't take this. Leigh, my life,  
my future is with you. I know this  
in my heart. I believe it is in  
your heart, too!

LEIGH

Don't you see? You make cabinets.

DAVE

I make CABINETS? WHAT? You don't  
want to be with me because I make  
CABINETS?

LEIGH

Shakespeare, Kipling...these are  
things you could never know. You're  
simply not capable. I am bored with  
you now, and have been bored for  
some time.

DAVE

Who the fuck are you.

He and Sammie leave, slamming the door. Leigh breaks down.

144 EXT. OUTSIDE LEIGH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 144

Dave and Sammie literally run in to Nikki, who is on her way  
to see Leigh. She's carrying a bridesmaid dress.

145 INT. LEIGH'S APARTMENT HALLWAY, AT LEIGH'S DOOR 145

Nikki KNOCKS.

LEIGH

(From inside)

Go away!

NIKKI

Open the door, Leigh!

Leigh opens. She tries to control uncontrollable crying. It  
doesn't work. Nikki drops the dress on the floor and runs to  
hug her sister.

146 INT. AGENCY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 146

Brandon, Peter, Kristen, Orlaf and some AE's sit at the  
table. Peter has a power suit on with a yellow tie.

BRANDON

Why is she always late?

PETER

Punctuality is the thief of time.  
Oscar Wilde.

BRANDON

I should be late more.

Leigh enters with her notes, and stands at the head of the table to chair the meeting. She is Leigh the controller, Leigh the rapier professional.

LEIGH

I shall be brief. Demographic and psychographic indicators point to a statistically significant propensity to purchase men's and women's fragrances by low and middle income whites, blacks and Hispanics, single, ages 16 to 34. Optimum product price point is \$19.95. Bottle shape is insignificant, as is the fragrance itself. Motivational bias is sex although nearly one-third of female respondents added the caveat "romance." In simple percentages of combined genders, thirty-five percent purchased based on television advertising, and fifty-eight percent on product name. I suggest you name it "Sexy" and base television advertising on "what is sexy." Research can compile interview data on what is sexy next week.

Everyone's taken back. There is a chill in the room.

BRANDON

Good. Orlaf here has been working on this too and he's got a TV spot already storyboarded. Orlaf?

Leigh gives Orlaf a blank look. A drip of pee falls to the floor under Orlaf's chair.

147

INT. VIDEO TAPE/AGENCY SCREENING ROOM

147

Taped interviews. MALE RESPONDENT 1 is a skinny, trembling guy who is obviously nicotine deprived.

MALE RESPONDENT 2 is rotund and lives in his parents' basement. The FEMALE TWINS are dressed the same, and both have bows in their big hair. They speak in unison. MALE RESPONDENT 3 is a human representation of Andy Kaufman's alter ego Tony Clifton. Female recipient 3 is a bit of a ditz. FEMALE RESPONDENT 4 is wealthy and enjoys glamour. MALE RESPONDENT 4 is not particularly handsome, but is sincere and thoughtful.

MALE RESPONDENT 1

I like it when a girl smokes. Long drags on a cigarette. And if she can puff circles, man oh man...

148 CLICK.

148

MALE RESPONDENT 2

Interestingly enough, I find ankle bracelets very sexy. I'm a sales associate at Kenny Shoes and when I get an ankle chain it makes my heart race. I like the feet of heavier women...

CLICK.

FEMALE TWINS

MONEY! MONEY IS SEXY!

149 CLICK.

149

MALE RESPONDENT 3

Cut bushes. I wanna see that little man in the canoe.

150 CLICK.

150

FEMALE RESPONDENT 3

I don't know! Maybe...rock stars. Like Hall. Or is the cute one Oates?

151 CLICK.

151

FEMALE RESPONDENT 4

I like musk. It smells like ass.

152 CLICK.

152

## MALE RESPONDENT 4

I guess I'm attracted to women after I know them. Honesty. If they like who I am and if they're not afraid to be who they are. Their eyes. All the women who I thought maybe I could love look at me, through me, with their eyes...

Leigh is alone, watching.

## MALE RESPONDENT 4 (CONT'D)

Eyes don't lie. Eyes tell you that you are loved. And love, love...is very sexy.

153 CLICK.

153

Blank screen. Leigh cries.

154 INT. LEIGH'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

154

Larry waits patiently, watching Leigh's every move. He's bigger than the last time we saw him. She prepares an elaborate dinner: Yankee pot roast. For Larry. He likes it. She eats some cottage cheese out of the container, with potato chips scrunched up in it. The phone RINGS. Leigh holds her breath, says a small prayer in her head. She runs.

## LEIGH

Hello???? ...Oh, hello, Charles. I called because I spoke to someone at work whose husband is a social worker. She seems to think that Dad may be eligible for some sort of disability money from Social Security or the VA. I need to pick up his discharge papers -- no, it's not welfare. If he's entitled, a little money would help out. This isn't about pride, Charles. I'll pick up the discharge papers tomorrow at lunch. Bye.

155 INT. THE VELJOVIC LIVING ROOM - DAY

155

Dad is sitting in his chair in front of the TV, trying to sing along with the Gilligan's Island theme.

LEIGH  
 (Off-camera)  
 Dad? Charles?

Leigh enters from the kitchen.

LEIGH (CONT'D)  
 Hi Dad. Do you feel lucky?

DAD  
 I'm the luckiest man alive.

She puts the scratch off tickets and a quarter in front of him. He begins.

LEIGH  
 Where's Charles? He didn't leave  
 you alone to go to work, did he?

DAD  
 He's visiting the mailbox.

LEIGH  
 Did he leave some papers?

DAD  
 Papers? Charles has papers in his  
 room.

Leigh goes to Charles' bedroom.

156 INT. CHARLES' BEDROOM

156

Charles' room is filled with papers. Newspaper classifieds, index cards from the employment office, and shoe boxes filled with hand written scraps of loose leaf paper. Leigh is drawn to the scraps: "A true German can't stand the French, yet willingly he drinks the wine. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe" "He is the very pineapple of politeness. Richard Brinsley Sheridan" "Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. Albert Einstein" "Soldiers were made on purpose to be killed. Napoleon Bonaparte" "Intellect is invisible to the man who has none. Arthur Schopenhauer" "Dictators always look good until the last minutes. Thomas G. Masargle" They're everywhere. "I find him in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colors. Oscar Wilde" She turns. Charles stands in the doorway.

LEIGH  
 Who are you?

CHARLES

This is my private room.

LEIGH

I can barely look at you.

CHARLES

All intelligent thoughts have already been thought. What is necessary is only to try to think them again.

LEIGH

Is that in one of these fucking shoeboxes, too?

She flings a box at a wall.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

You, you treated us like we were all special, and you were special and we were from some sort of fucking other planet with your fucking gene pool shit...

CHARLES

You needed protection. Mediocrity is aggressive.

LEIGH

THAT IS SO FUCKED UP. YOU'RE THE FUCKING AGGRESSIVE ONE. You've been shoving these fucking papers my mouth my whole life! Talking to me about original thoughts and being smart and you have thousands of these fucking little papers. LIES. EVERYTHING'S A LIE! YOU TOOK MY LIFE AWAY. AND I LOVED HIM. AND I HURT HIM. AND I GAVE HIM UP FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME TO. God damn you.

She runs out crying.

CHARLES

It was I who gave up a life. I gave you mine.

157

INT. AGENCY HALLWAY OUTSIDE LEIGH'S OFFICE - DAY

157

Linda is standing at a desk, on the phone. Leigh comes in walking fast.

LINDA

Leigh! This is Bob. If you've got  
the papers he can...

Leigh doesn't acknowledge her. She slams the door of her  
office.

158 EXT. THE DOOR OF DAVE'S DUPLEX - NIGHT 158

Leigh knocks. A young, attractive woman she's never seen  
opens the door. Leigh goes through a full range of emotions  
before she speaks.

LEIGH

Excuse me. I have the wrong  
address.

The woman closes the door.

159 INT. DAVE'S APARTMENT 159

Dave comes out of the bathroom carrying a BOY TODDLER.

DAVE

Who was that?

WOMAN

Wrong address, I guess. Thank you  
for doing that.

DAVE

I'm happy to teach my little nephew  
how to pee. You just wait for the  
right man before you go off and  
marry him because he's convenient,  
okay?

BOY TODDLER

Show me more pee, Uncle Dave

DAVE

How about if I show you how to get  
tickled instead...

Dave throws the boy on the sofa and the tickling begins with  
great effect. His sister looks on appreciatively.

160 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - NIGHT 160

Leigh and Larry stand in the rain.

161 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD FRUIT STAND/GROCERY - NIGHT 161

No Dave.

162 INT. THE VELJOVIC DINING ROOM 162

Charles, Nikki and Dad. It's Platter Night. No Leigh. No one says a word.

163 INT. LEIGH'S OFFICE - DAY 163

Leigh is working at her desk. There's a knock at the door and Karen enters.

KAREN

Leigh, there's someone here to see you.

Dad and GRACIE, his nurse, enter.

LEIGH

Dad! What are you doing here!?

DAD

Nice place. Do you know Gracie, my babysitter?

LEIGH

How do you do, Gracie. It's nice to meet you.

GRACIE

It's nice to finally meet you, too. You're quite a woman. I've heard all about you, about all you Veljovics. What a family!

LEIGH

We are an odd lot, yes.

There is a long pause.

GRACIE

I'll wait outside.

Gracie closes the door behind her.

DAD

Your office is nice. This is nice. Real nice.

(Near tears)

Please come home.



LEIGH

Charles hurt me, Daddy. I can't come home. I call you. I call you all the time.

DAD

Nikki, she's gonna marry that guy.

LEIGH

(Tears)

Yes. She's gonna marry that guy.

DAD

You don't shine around. The end.

LEIGH

(Tears now pouring down her face)

Families stay families forever.  
People who love each other love each other forever.

164

INT. A BEACHFRONT FOOD STAND - DAY

164

The tiny stand serves grilled burgers, fries and ice cream to rollerbladers and bikini-clad sun bathers. It's a busy weekend afternoon; bicyclists are everywhere and there is a crowd for a sand volleyball tournament. It's about 110 degrees inside the food stand. The floors are so greasy, every step is a slide. Charles works the grill. His PARTNER works the window, where a long line awaits service.

PARTNER

(Doubled over)

This is the last time I eat the fucking food here. I'm going to either puke or shit. Chuck, take the window.

Charles' partner slides to the bathroom. Charles slides to the window to give a customer a hot dog. There is commotion as a dog jumps up takes the hot dog from Charles' outstretched hand. The dog's owner attempts to regain order.

CHARLES

MONGREL! Can I help...YOU!

165

EXT. BEACHFRONT

165

It's Dave. The dog was an older Sammie. Sammie takes off through the crowd. Dave bolts after him, and Charles rolls out the window of the food stand in pursuit of them both.

It's quite the chase, as Sammie, Dave and Charles upset rollerbladers, jump over children in strollers and deflate an air-filled, giant Miller Light can. Tiny Tim Murphy, who is on-camera doing a special report on the volleyball tournament, is flattened as he is resoundingly taken out by a madly dashing Charles. Charles finally falls, spiked by a volleyball and caught in the tumbling net in front of a legion of onlookers.

The camera's POV belongs to Charles, blue sky framing Sammie, who is licking him in his face as he awakens from a brief loss of consciousness.

166

INT. A FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

166

It is the rehearsal dinner. There are Nikki and Marc, bridesmaids, groomsmen, and requisite family, but no Leigh. Charles is there, and helps Dad butter his bread. MARC'S FATHER, as dashing as his son, stands and begins hitting a water glass with a knife.

MARC'S FATHER

Time to get used to it!

Nikki and Marc kiss sweetly as the crowd "ooohs" and applauds politely.

MARC'S FATHER (CONT'D)

I would like to take this moment, one of the last few before a new family is formed and my son becomes a husband, to say a few words. When I look at Marc, I can still see the little boy who got up on water skies when he was just six years old. And the kid who would stay up all night to make sure his hamster wouldn't die. I see my brilliant strait A student. My teenaged scientist. I've been so proud of him through the years, I never thought I'd be able to fill my chest with any more emotion. But tonight, seeing him together with Nikki, who couldn't be a more amazing woman, I realize I've only started to experience pride. You two are even more dazzling together than you are alone. You belong with each other. To Marc and Nikki.

The room raises glasses and toasts.

167 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY 167

The garden of Marc's parents' estate is eloquently decorated for the wedding of Marc and Nikki. Marc's parents are wealthy.

People from both families mill about while a string quartet plays. You can easily identify the Veljovic extended family.

168 EXT. THE GARDEN ENTRANCE - DAY 168

MARC'S MOTHER and Marc's Father stand in a receiving area alongside Dad and Charles. Friends and family of the groom, and Veljovics pour through the line, a trellice of flowers. Dad smiles nicely and greets them warmly, but doesn't really know who anyone is. Veljovics all look like they're seeing Oz for the first time. The ELDERLY VELJOVIC is male, escorting someone who looks like they would be Dad's aunt.

ELDERLY VELJOVIC  
Nice place you got.

DAD  
Thank you.

CHARLES  
It's the estate of the bride's  
future father-in-law.

ELDERLY VELJOVIC  
(To Marc's father)  
Nice place you got. A spread like  
this, you must be in organized  
crime.

Marc's father is polite, and smiles.

169 EXT. BY A FOUNTAIN - DAY 169

Larry, in formal bow tie, is held on a leash by a BUTLER. Larry pees next to the naked, peeing fountain boy.

170 INT. NIKKI'S DRESSING ROOM 170

Nikki is radiant. Leigh, maid of honor, stands behind her as they look in a floor-length mirror.

LEIGH  
You're beautiful. As you have  
always been, Sister.

171 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY 171

Ushers begin to organize the guests.

172 INT. NIKKI'S DRESSING ROOM 172

There is a KNOCK at the door. Leigh opens it. It's Dad.

DAD

Is my little girl in here?

NIKKI

I'm right here, Dad.

DAD

You don't look so little. You look like your mother. Did I ever tell you about your mother?

NIKKI

Yes, Dad, you did. You told me all about her. I wish I could have known her.

DAD

She, on her wedding day, was radiant. She lit up the church. There were candles everywhere, and she was brighter than all of them. I can still see the light around her. And you have light around you. She never went away from me. Never for a minute. In fact, she's here right now. We will be with you always.

(They hug.)

NIKKI

I love you, Daddy. With all my heart.

An USHER comes to the open door and KNOCKS.

USHER

It's time.

173 EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY 173

The scene is set: four GROOMSMEN including the Best Man. The MINISTER looks kind, as ministers do. There is a long aisle between rows of seated guests, mostly on the groom's side. TWO USHERS unroll a white carpet.

A FLOWER GIRL throws rose petals and a RING BEARER oh so carefully and deliberately carries the rings on a satin pillow. There are three other BRIDESMAIDS, then Leigh, Maid-of-honor. Charles sits in an aisle seat in the first row. He looks up expectantly at Leigh as she passes; she ignores him. As Dad and Nikki come to Charles, she stops. Charles rises to warmly hug his sister, and whispers some words to her. She smiles. Nikki and Dad then face the Minister.

MINISTER

And who gives this woman to matrimony?

DAD

I do.

Dad reaches in his pocket and hands Nikki a flying saucer candy. She takes it and holds it to her heart. They hug. Dad takes his seat next to Charles.

MINISTER

Today we shall all witness the union of two very special people, Nikki and Marc. Love is the most powerful gift we have to give, because as we give it to others, we receive it ourselves. Each time you are touched by love, you are changed forever. You are transformed by God to see and feel life without pretense, without judgment and with purity that transcends time. And the love you give to your mothers and fathers, your sons and daughters, your brothers and sisters, and to the man or woman you come to most cherish, grows inside and blesses their spirits forever. Repeat after me. I, Marcus Aurelius Compton, take this woman, Nicola Carmel Veljovic, to be my lawfully and spiritually wedded wife.

MARC

I, Marcus Aurelius Compton, take you, Nicola Carmel Veljovic, to be my lawfully and spiritually wedded wife. . .

MINISTER

To cherish and love from this day forward. . .

Larry starts to HOWL. It cuts the tension. Nikki and Marc laugh and quietly indicate to the Minister that it's OK. Larry continues throughout the scene. Nikki and Marc are smiling.

MARC

To cherish and love from this day  
forward. . .

MINISTER

(Appearing to shorten  
things)

Uh, forever and ever. Amen.

MARC

To cherish and love from this day  
forward, forever and ever. Amen.

MINISTER

And I, Nicola Carmel Veljovic, take  
you, Marcus Aruelius Compton, to be  
my lawfully and spiritually wedded  
husband.

NIKKI

I, Nicola Carmel Veljovic, take  
you, Marcus Aruelius Compton, to be  
my lawfully and spiritually wedded  
husband.

The HOWLS continue.

MINISTER

To cherish and love from this day  
forward, forever and ever.

NIKKI

To cherish and love from this day  
forward, forever and ever. Amen.

MINISTER

The rings, please.

The Ring Bearer presents the rings. They each place a ring on the other's trembling hand.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

I now pronounce you Husband and  
Wife. Ladies and Gentlemen, may I  
present to you, Mr. and Mrs. Marcus  
Aurelius Compton.

Music triumphantly plays and they kiss. They are very happy. They walk down the aisle as guests throw rice, visibly, mostly from the groom's side.

174 EXT. UNDER THE TENT - NIGHT 174

It's after dinner. Fairy lights are everywhere. A band plays in the background; LIONEL RICHIE is the on the piano, singing "Hello." People mill about. Bridesmaids, bridesgrooms, and couples of all ages look dreamily into their partner's eyes and touch hands. There is much love in the air. An elaborate multi-tiered cake is devoured by an unattended Larry.

175 EXT. UNDER THE TENT - NIGHT 175

At a round table, Dad sits with a group of ADORING CHILDREN, four to eight years old, who hang on his every word. KID is the eight year old. Adrenaline, or something, has made his world a little clearer tonight.

DAD

So I was crawling on my belly through the jungles of New Guinea. Only my eyes were sticking out, the mud was so deep. I hadn't had fresh water in two days. Rats as big as pigs were biting my ears. Then I saw it: a giant wart hog, maybe three, four hundred pounds, with big fangs. It had a canteen dangling from one of those fangs! He musta got it stuck on him while he was eating a dead guy. I grabbed him. I wrestled him in the mud--he gave me this scar on my cheek--and I took the canteen. I kicked him in the ass as he ran away, and I shared the water with my buddy and saved our lives.

KID

Is that a true story?

DAD

No. I made it up.

176 EXT. A LEDGE OVERLOOKING LAKE MICHIGAN - NIGHT 176

Leigh looks out, alone, her back to the camera. Charles approaches but keeps his distance.

She refuses to turn around. Her anger is evident when she hears his voice and turns to face him.

CHARLES

Leigh? Leigh, I need to apologize.

LEIGH

Charles, I'm really not ready to talk to you. Leave me alone.

CHARLES

We need to speak, Leigh. This is killing me.

LEIGH

Killing YOU? It has always been about you, and what you think is right for everyone around you. You know what I've learned, Charles? I've learned that people have to take responsibility for their own lives, and on their own they choose joy or sorrow. You chose martyrdom, but in a loving twist you chose me to share it with you.

CHARLES

Yes, I know that now. I've worked through that. You see, I've gotten some help.

LEIGH

Some help? Professional help. You, you talking to a psychologist. That's rich. What famous insane person did you pretend to be? Nietzsche? Rasputin was pretty psycho too, and as I recall he had your flair for control. It may be too late for me, but if I had it to do all over, I would choose joy.

She turns. Charles is standing with Dave.

CHARLES

It's not too late. He's my analyst.

She runs to hug Dave. She breaks, to hug Charles. She cries. She hugs Dave again. Larry runs up to them and jumps up to lick Dave's face. Larry is full of frosting, and gets it all over Dave's suit.



177 EXT. UNDER THE TENT - NIGHT 177

The band plays and people are dancing. In the background, we see Leigh bring Dave over to Dad. Dave gives him a lottery scratch-off and a quarter. Dad stands up to hug him, for a long time. Leigh introduces him to Nikki, Marc and Marc's parents.

178 EXT. UNDER THE TENT - NIGHT 178

Leigh and Dave dance close, looking in each other's eyes. They look so happy. People mill about the side of the dance floor, watching them glow. Charles is standing there; Larry sits at attention on his leash beside Charles. A woman, BEVERLY, early forties, makes an off-hand comment in Charles' direction.

BEVERLY

Cute couple.

CHARLES

Neither a lofty degree of intelligence nor imagination nor both together go to the making of genius. Love, love, love, that is the soul of genius.

WOMAN

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

CHARLES

(Shocked)

Why, yes.

WOMAN

Beverly Heiden. Northwestern University.

CHARLES

(He offers his hand)

Charles Veljovic. Burger Barn.

Dave and Leigh continue to dance, madly in love and in their own perfect world. In the background, Dad finishes scratching off a ticket and slowly turns to Nikki to show her. Three cows. A winner.

179 ROLL CREDITS 179

As credits roll, Dad sings "The bells are ringing, for me and my gal..." We see pictures from the new Veljovic photo album. Nikki and Marc in Florence.

Dave and Leigh's wedding: Larry and Sammie are best dogs, Peter is a bridesmaid. Dad accepting an oversized lottery check for ten million dollars. Charles and Beverly in Hawaii. Dave and Leigh's baby, with Dad, a very proud and happy grandfather.

180

THE END.

180

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Oscar Wilde

Heinrich Heine

William Shakespeare

Samuel Johnson

Truman Capote

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller

In memory of Larry, who was a real dog.