

FADE IN:

CREDITS

We HEAR Aerosmith's "SAME OLD SONG AND DANCE" during a MONTAGE of events of the 20th twentieth century (shown in sepia photos, black and white footage, newspaper headlines, and color videotape), interspersed with those of Red Sox history since 1918. World War One. The Sox win the 1918 World Series. Babe Ruth becomes a New York Yankee. Prohibition. The Yankees win one World Series after another. The Red Sox are in the cellar. Depression. World War Two. Pesky holds the ball in 1946. Galehouse pitches loss to Cleveland in 1948. Korea. Red Scare. Kennedy. Vietnam. Sox lose 7th game in 1967. Watergate. Aparicio falls down at third base in 1972. Sox blow lead in 1974. Nixon resigns. Carlton Fisk. Disco. Jimmy Carter. Bucky Dent home run in 1978. Ronald Reagan. Challenger. Ball through Bill Buckner's legs. Gulf War. Clinton sex scandal. Sox lose playoff to Yankees. Y2K. Bush wins. 9/11. Sox get sold.

CUT TO:

INT - BEDROOM OF JONATHAN AND MALLORY BAILEY - DAY

CLOSE-UP of a clock radio on a nightstand, lit only by sunlight peeking through a window shade. The song comes from the radio.

DISC JOCKEY

99.9 Classic smooth oldies and 'Same Old Song and Dance' at 6:45. Good morning, Boston on this the first day of spring -

A female hand hits the top of the radio and it shuts off. We HEAR Mallory Bailey's voice.

MALLORY

Jon?

JONATHAN

Yea?

MALLORY

How about it? You getting up?

CUT TO:

INT - BEDROOM OF JONATHAN AND MALLORY BAILEY - DAY

In their modestly appointed bedroom, thirty-somethings Mallory (a very attractive woman with dark hair and green eyes) is standing next to the Queen-sized bed in which Jonathan Bailey (a balding, paunchy, but nice-looking man) looks very comfortable.

JONATHAN

I'm getting up.

MALLORY

Sometime today?

JONATHAN

What's the rush?

MALLORY

I'm meeting the girls today and I want to make the bed before I go.

JONATHAN

Honey, you don't have to make the bed every day.

MALLORY

I may not have help like other women do...

JONATHAN

Here we go...

MALLORY

...but no one is going to say that Mallory Bailey doesn't keep a good house.

JONATHAN

Who says that? Who even suggests that?

MALLORY

(TUGGING ON THE SHEET)

Come on, let's go.

Jonathan gets out of bed and ambles to the bathroom.

MALLORY

(CONT)

And I need you to pick up the dry cleaning.

JONATHAN

Sure. Oh, wait, I'm going into town today.

MALLORY

Oh, that's right. Your pilgrimage.

JONATHAN

I'll pickt it up tomorrow.

MALLORY

Never mind. I'll do it myself.

Jonathan slinks back into the bathroom to brush his teeth.

MALLORY

(CONT)

But I'll tell you what I can't do myself and that's these windows. I'm tired of breaking my back every time I want to open a window around here. Are you listening to me? If you got that promotion we wouldn't have to worry about these windows, you know. We could move into a house that had windows built after the Civil War.

CUT TO:

INT - BATHROOM IN THE BAILEY HOME - DAY

As Jonathan brushes, we HEAR Mallory from the other room.

MALLORY

(CONT)

You know Chrissy Michaels got all new windows in her house. Never mind the hours she'll save when she has to clean them but they'll save a fortune on heating bills. Are you listening to me?

As Jonathan blissfully daydreams, we HEAR the sound of a cheering crowd. An announcer speaks over a P.A.

P.A. ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, now batting for the Red Sox, your All-Star, Gold glove, Triple Crown-winning centerfielder -

MALLORY

Jonathan Bailey!

The daydream ends. Mallory is standing directly in front of him, furious. She knows he hasn't been listening to a word she said, and she storms out of the bathroom. Jonathan, his mouth full of toothpaste, stares at the door for a moment before slipping back into his reverie. The cheering crowd returns.

P.A. ANNOUNCER

Where was I... Oh, yes, now batting for the Red Sox, he has hit safely in 63 straight games for a new all-time major league record, a remarkable streak in which he has hit over 20 home runs and -

CUT TO:

INT - FRONT SEAT OF A CAR - DAY

The crowd noise fades as Jonathan Bailey's worn-out 1998 JETTA pulls into the parking lot of a suburban office building. Jonathan picks up his computer case and exits the car.

CUT TO:

EXT - FRONT ENTRANCE OF JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonathan swipes his I.D. badge through a slot next to the door as he pulls on the door, which does not open, almost causing him to fall. He examines the card and wipes it on his shirt before swiping it again, this time gingerly trying the door, which now opens. He sheepishly enters the building.

CUT TO:

INT - THE OFFICE OF TENNIS.NET - DAY

A typical "cubicle farm" of the modern day office. As Jonathan walks down an aisle between real offices and a row of cubicles, we HEAR keyboards clicking and phones ringing. A casually-dressed thirty-something man calls out from his cubicle.

KENNY

Hey, Johnny! You got 'em?

JONATHAN

Hey Ken. No, I'm going today at lunch.

KENNY

Well just remember who your friends are...

JONATHAN

Everyone's my friend at the beginning of the season. Come September I can't give them away.

Phil and Marie are drawn by the conversation.

KENNY

That's because by then they're ten games out.

JONATHAN

That was last year.

KENNY

And the year before that.

PHIL

And the year before that.

MARIE

And the -

JONATHAN

Do your necks ever hurt jumping on and off
the Red Sox bandwagon?

Everybody laughs.

PHIL

Hey Jon, join us while we grab a cup?

JONATHAN

Oh, gee, thanks, but if I'm gonna go out
later I better get a few things done.

MARIE

Bring you back anything?

JONATHAN

No, thanks.

PHIL

Coming, Kenny?

KENNY

Yea, sure.

(MOUTHS TO JON AS HE EXITS)

You and me... pals. Tickets. Red Sox.

Jonathan laughs as he enters his cubicle, decorated liberally with Red Sox memorabilia, photographs and pennants. He unpacks his laptop and turns it on, then takes out his bag lunch and the Sports section of his Boston Globe. He looks across the hall at an empty office, which he eyes indifferently. His view is suddenly blocked by a man who looks inside the office.

NEIL

So, you gonna ask for new carpeting?

Jonathan seems surprised that Neil is speaking to him, and is about to respond when he hears BRIAN's voice.

BRIAN

You know Ross hasn't made a decision yet.

NEIL

Oh, please. Everyone knows that job is in
the bag.

BRIAN

You won't mind if I wait for Ross to tell me that before I start picking out the carpet?

NEIL

Come on, who else is it gonna be?
(TURNS AND SEES JONATHAN)
Bailey!

BRIAN

Stranger things have happened. There's no rule that says it can't be -
(HAS WALKED TO THE OFFICE DOOR,
SEES JONATHAN)
Bailey!

JONATHAN

Hi guys.

NEIL

Hi.

BRIAN

Hey.

NEIL

Listen, Jon, we didn't mean anything.

BRIAN

Yea, it was just speculation, you know?

JONATHAN

(JOVIAL)

It's all right, don't worry about it.

BRIAN

You do a great job...

NEIL

Absolutely.

JONATHAN

So you think I'd actually be considered for the manager's position, huh?

NEIL

Oh. Sure, buddy.

BRIAN

Absolutely.

JONATHAN

Well, like you said, stranger things have happened, right. Excuse me, I gotta grab some files from accounting before our meeting.

Jonathan squeezes past Neil and Brian, who watch him walk down the corridor.

BRIAN

So, what do you think?

NEIL

After eight years in the same job in the same cubicle what do you think? Poor bastard doesn't have a shot.

BRIAN

(LOOKING AT THE OFFICE FLOOR)

No, I meant the maroon.

NEIL

Oh. The nice thick pile, right?

BRIAN

Of course...

Neil nods his head.

CUT TO:

INT - BUSINESS CONFERENCE ROOM -DAY

The head chair is empty, but eleven others are filled with chattering workers - Jonathan, Neil, Brian, Kenny, Marie, and Phil among them. All talking ceases when Gene, an older, white-haired man in shirtsleeves and loosened tie, walks into the room and sits down. As he does, Brian stands up.

BRIAN

Admiral on the bridge!

He smiles smugly and sits down as the older man chuckles.

MARIE

(ANNOYED, IN A STAGE WHISPER, TO PHIL)

He does that every time 'cause the old man was in the Navy.

GENE

Good morning, let's get started. I got an email from the San Jose office about the new ad the agency cooked up, and I need someone to follow up for me.

Brian's hand makes is up first. The V.P. nods.

GENE
(CONT)

Thank you Brian. I'll have the email forwarded to you. It has the all the contact information. Next is the sales conference in Houston. Any volunteers?

This time several hands - including Neil's - rise at once. Eyes dart back and forth to one another until -

NEIL
I've already been working on the display for the booth, sir, I'd be happy to -

GENE
Great. Don't forget to make sure the messaging connects with the PR plan.

Neil nods and smiles smugly to himself. Around the room, the others prepare to pounce on the next request - all except Jonathan, whose serene countenance seems oddly out of place.

GENE
(CONT)
Now as many of you know - and some of you have been working very hard on this - we're looking at switching our on-line purchasing agent. Can I get a few people together in a separate meeting - Jim, Kenny, Anne, and...
(LOOKS RIGHT AT JONATHAN)
Marie, let's meet after lunch, okay?

The four "chosen" are happy. Phil notices the satisfied faces, as well as Jonathan's relived face, and understands a great deal.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Jonathan suddenly looks at his clock and bounds out of his chair.

CUT TO:

INT - AISLE BETWEEN ROW OF OFFICES AND CUBICLES

As Jonathan passes Kenny's cubicle, he hears

KENNY
Remember, you and me is pals, ain't we, Jon?

Jonathan laughs as he heads for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT - YAWKEY WAY, OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK - DAY

Jonathan has just parked his car. He exits, his hand already reaching for change in his pocket as sees that there is time left on the meter. He smiles broadly.

JONATHAN

(HAPPILY, TO HIMSELF)

That's a good sign, huh?

He playfully pats the parking meter, then, as he puts his change back in his pocket, looks up at the roof of Fenway Park and sees (and HEARS) several American flags fluttering in the wind. He smiles and walks up Yawkey Way, past several people holding signs that read SAVE FENWAY PARK! He attempts to pass them but is stopped by a bearded man with a clipboard.

MAN WITH CLIPBOARD

Hey, man. You're a Sox fan, right? How about signing our petition to Save Fenway Park?

Jonathan indicates with his hands that he is not interested, and continues walking. The man with the clipboard immediately accosts another passer-by. Jonathan has enters the Red Sox ticket office.

CUT TO:

INT - RED SOX TICKET OFFICE - DAY

Several people stand in line at each one of the three windows labeled PURCHASE TICKETS. Jonathan walks to a window labeled WILL CALL and speaks to a bored young man.

JONATHAN

Hi. I'm here to pick up tickets I paid for over the phone. Last name Bailey.

TICKET SELLER

First name?

JONATHAN

Jonathan. Jonathan Bailey.

TICKET SELLER

Uh huh. Hold on.

The young man disappears, then re-appears with a small envelope.

TICKET SELLER

Got any I.D.?

JONATHAN

Sure.

Jonathan fishes out his license and shows it to the man, who barely glances at it before handing the envelope to Jonathan. Jonathan immediately opens the it and gazes at his bounty.

TICKET SELLER

You know we could have mailed those to you.

JONATHAN

And I could watch the games on TV, too.

The remarks draws smiles from a few of the other fans waiting their turn in the other line, but the ticket taker just rolls his eyes. Jonathan stuffs the envelope in his pocket and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT - YAWKEY WAY OUTSIDE THE RED SOX TICKET OFFICE - DAY

The man with the clipboard is engaged in an argument with another passer-by, allowing Jonathan to get directly to his car. He starts to get in when he sees a ticket on his windshield. Seeing that there is still time left on the meter, searches and find the meter maid - a large middle-aged woman in decidedly too-small stretch pants - writing out a ticket for another car.

JONATHAN

Miss! Excuse me!

METER MAID

You talkin' to me?

JONATHAN

Yes. Look, this meter, there's still time on it.

There is a sudden buzz from the meter.

CUT TO:

EXT - CLOSE-UP OF THE FACE OF THE METER - DAY

The meter's display suddenly changes from TIME LEFT to VIOLATION.

CUT TO:

EXT - YAWKEY WAY IN BOSTON - DAY

The meter maid has not stopped writing the ticket.

METER MAID

(WITHOUT EMOTION)

Not anymore.

Jonathan resignedly takes the ticket off his windshield.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

Jonathan meekly puts the ticket into his pocket and takes out his keys. It takes a couple of tries, but he finally gets the engine to kick over. He puts the car in gear and pulls away.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

Jonathan shakes his head as he passes the SAVE FENWAY protesters. He turns on the car radio. We HEAR a radio jingle for the JERRY JOSEPHS Sports talk show on WBFN. Josephs seems to be going out of his way to sound "working class." It is grating.

JERRY

Welcome back to the Jerry Josephs show here on WBFN, the Boston Fan. It's an open line day but none of you wants to talk about the Broons or the Celtics - even though both are headin' for the playoffs.

CUT TO:

INT - JERRY JOSEPHS' RADIO STUDIO - DAY

Josephs is a huge, unkempt man who sits behind a small console clutching an unlit cigar. The studio is littered with half-empty coffee cups, empty fast food containers, and crumpled up pages of used wire and commercial copy. On the walls are posters of various local sports stars (Larry Bird, Nomar Garciaparra, etc) and swimsuit models. Behind a glass wall in an adjacent room sits a producer in a rude T-shirt simultaneously running the control board, answering the phone, and typing on a computer screen. He signals to Josephs to take a call.

JERRY

No, all you guys and gals seem to wanna talk about today are the Sox, who haven't lost a spring training game so you pinheads got them waltzing away with the World Series. Just like Bill, on his car phone. Welcome to the show, Bill. What's up?

BILL

You're the pinhead, man. I thought you was a Red Sox fan.

JERRY

I am a baseball fan, Bill.

BILL

Opening day is next month and you've already given up on them, man.

JERRY

I haven't given up. I'm just not ready to foolishly predict that something is going to happen that hasn't happened in almost 90 years.

BILL

We all know how long it's been since they last won the Series. What I wanna know is what that has to with this year's team?

JERRY

You think that this team has what it takes to break the Curse? You really think they're gonna be any different than last year's team -

BILL

You know, this is all you guys can do, criticize and -

Though he sounds very animated, Josephs is matter-of-factly cramming a jelly donut into his mouth in between responses.

JERRY

Wait a minute, what guys?

BILL

You guys in the media who -

JERRY

Oh, here we go again. The Sox blow a three run lead going into the ninth inning and it's the media's fault.

BILL

I never said it was you guys fault. But how about looking at the bright spots once in a while.

JERRY

Bill, are you a parent?

BILL

Yea.

JERRY

So lemme ask you. Your kid burns down the house. You gonna compliment him on how resourceful he was finding the matches?

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

Jonathan looks with scorn at the radio.

BILL

(OVER THE RADIO)

Lemme ask you. Your high-school kid wins second place in a contest - sports or something else, it doesn't matter - you gonna get angry because he didn't finish first?

JONATHAN

That's telling him.

CUT TO:

INT - JERRY JOSEPHS' RADIO STUDIO - DAY

Jerry has just stuffed the last of the donut into his mouth. When Bill suddenly stops talking, Jerry is forced to expel the unused portion of the donut into his hand so he can speak.

JERRY

Bill, we're not talking about amateur athletes here, we're talking about professionals who get paid a lot of money to play a game.

CUT TO:

INT - PRODUCER'S BOOTH - DAY

Two men in suits stand behind the producer, watching and listening to Jerry. One is ALAN SWAIN, the station manager.

BILL

(OVER THE PHONE)

Doesn't mean they're not people, man. I'm just saying no matter how much you get paid it's gotta get to you when all you hear about is history from... you know, you guys.

CUT TO:

INT - JERRY JOSEPHS' RADIO STUDIO - DAY

Jerry notices the suits and winks.

JERRY

Bill, how long you been livin' in New England? How long you been a Red Sox fan? History is all we got! We sure don't have any World Championships!

CUT TO:

INT - PRODUCER'S BOOTH - DAY

The two suits listen to Jerry over the speakers.

JERRY

Thanks for your call. 1-800-BOSTON-FAN if you want to reach us. I'm Jerry Josephs, and you're listening to 720 the Boston Fan.

Jerry shuts off his microphone and the ON AIR light goes off as he re-stuffs the half-eaten donut into his mouth. The man standing next to Alan looks like he's going to retch. Jerry pushes a button on his console and his voice is heard through a smaller speaker.

JERRY

Hey Alan, how's it going?

CUT TO:

INT - PRODUCER'S BOOTH - DAY

Alan nods to the producer, who pushes a button. He leans into the intercom microphone.

ALAN

It's always going great when you're on, big guy.

THE PRODUCER

(INTO THE INTERCOM)

Excuse me, Jerry, but you got a live spot for Syrian's coming up in ten seconds.

Jerry swallows the rest of his donut, the crumbs of which still ring his jelly-stained mouth. The ON AIR light goes back on.

JERRY

You know, nobody knows furniture like Syrian's, the area's number one source for the finest selection of...

Alan starts to lead the other man out of the producer's area.

MAN

Thanks for the tour, Al. I'll pay you back one day by taking you to see the pigs at the zoo.

ALAN

That pig in there has paid for my new Lexus. And my wife's. If I thought his heart would hold up I'd put him on morning and afternoon drive.

The man laughs as the they exit the studio.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

Jonathan pulls into the company parking.

JERRY

(OVER THE RADIO)

So it's just a coincidence that ever since 1920 when the Red Sox sold Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees that the Yankees have won 25 World Series and the Red Sox none. I don't think so!

Jonathan shuts off the radio.

JONATHAN

What a jerk. Too bad he's right.

CUT TO:

EXT - FRONT ENTRANCE OF JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonathan swipes his card through the security device, but once again, the door doesn't open and he almost falls to the ground. He blows on the card and tries again, gingerly pulling on the door, which now opens.

CUT TO:

INT - COMPANY LUNCHROOM - DAY

Kenny, Phil, and Marie are sitting together at a table in the TENNIS.NET lunchroom.

KENNY

No, man, give me a guy who can blast the ball out of the park.

PHIL

You're a typical Red Sox fan. You got that left field wall and forget every baseball fundamental. You need speed and pitching. That's how we did it in Milwaukee.

MARIE

Milwaukee. You guys haven't won it since Reagan was in office!

PHIL

And you guys haven't won it since Woodrow Wilson was in office!

There gentle laughter, mumbled through bites of sandwiches. A brief pause follows. Kenny starts muttering.

MARIE

What's your problem?

KENNY

My wife made me chicken salad again. I hate chicken salad.

(PHIL SMILES)

What's so funny?

PHIL

I was just thinking about this joke. There's these two guys eating lunch at work, see, and one guy is complaining about what he's got for lunch, see? "I got chicken salad, he says."

KENNY

It's about me, isn't it?

PHIL

Is what about you?

KENNY

The joke.

PHIL

No, it's not about you.

KENNY

Then why is the guy eating chicken salad?

PHIL

He doesn't have to be eating chicken salad. Just because he's eating chicken salad doesn't mean it's you.

KENNY

Then give him something else to eat. Besides chicken salad.

PHIL

All right.

KENNY

I hate chicken salad.

PHIL

Fine. It's egg salad.

KENNY

Egg salad?

PHIL

Yea. Egg salad. He hates egg salad.

KENNY

(LOOKS MOURNFULLY AT HIS SANDWICH)

I love egg salad. How could anyone hate egg salad?

PHIL

I don't know. He just does. All right? So he starts complaining. "Egg salad," he says. "I hate egg salad. There's nothing I hate more than egg salad." So the other guys says to him, "Why don't you have your wife make you something else." So the first guy says "I can't. I make my own lunch."

Marie chuckles. Kenny looks at his food.

KENNY

I wish I had egg salad. I love egg salad.

MARIE

(AFTER A PAUSE)

Boy, I just feel so badly for Jon.

KENNY

Yea.

PHIL

Whattya mean?

MARIE

You didn't hear? Brian got the district manager's job.

KENNY

Got the office and everything.

MARIE

I hear he's going for the maroon carpet.

KENNY

The real thick pile, too, I'll bet.

MARIE

Uh huh.

KENNY

(KNOWINGLY)

That Brian. Have they told Jon yet?

MARIE

No, he's been out getting his tickets.

PHIL

Poor guy, he'll be crushed.

MARIE

Jon, crushed? You must be new around here.

PHIL

I am new around here, remember? I started last month?

KENNY

Jon's just not the get upset kind of guy.

MARIE

Or if he is he doesn't show it.

PHIL

I can't believe that it won't bother him.

MARIE

I didn't say it wouldn't bother him, but upset, that's a different story.

PHIL

A guy works how many years and someone with less experience comes in and -

Jonathan enters, waving his tickets. Marie notices first and is quick to interrupt. Kenny catches on first.

MARIE

Hey, Jon!

KENNY

There's my buddy with the tickets!

Marie and Kenny look urgently at Phil, who desperately searches for something to say.

PHIL

Yea. Hi Jon.

MARIE

Brilliant repartee, Phil.

Kenny, Phil, Marie, and Jonathan stare blankly at each other.

JONATHAN

So... what's going on?

Gene Walker leans into the lunch room.

GENE

Bailey, can you come see me in my office?

JONATHAN

Must be that corporate jet I ordered.

Jon laughs at his own joke, as Kenny, Phil, and Marie look self-consciously at each other.

CUT TO:

INT - OFFICE OF GENE WALKER - DAY

Gene's plush corner office is filled with the "trophies" of his hard work - including mahogany desk and bookcase, pictures of a large home and private boat. Gene looks sincerely at Jon.

GENE

I won't bullshit you, Jon. It's not that we don't think you aren't working hard enough or that the work you do isn't good enough. That's not the issue. But the fact is that we needed someone who could be proactive and give us the big ideas we need to remain competitive. You're still a valuable member

GENE (CONT)

of the team, and I hope the fact that Brian hasn't been here as long as you will cause any problems.

CUT TO:

INT - THE LIVING ROOM OF JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S HOME - EXT

Jonathan's sentence from the office concludes here in the pleasant, but modestly furnished living room of his home.

JONATHAN

And that's pretty much everything he said.

MALLORY

Uh huh. Well?

JONATHAN

Well what? It's not the first promotion I didn't get and it's probably not going to be the last.

MALLORY

And you're proud of that.

JONATHAN

No, but I'm not ashamed, either.

MALLORY

Well, what are you?

JONATHAN

I'm just a guy who works hard at his job. I don't think there's anything wrong with that.

MALLORY

Nothing wrong with a promotion, either, once in a while.

JONATHAN

I'm not saying there would be, but when it doesn't happen, getting upset doesn't solve anything.

MALLORY

You know I never realized how annoying even-tempered-ness could be.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry. Would you like me to throw something? Maybe break a lamp?

MALLORY

(LOOKING DISDAINFULLY AROUND THE ROOM)

Maybe you should. Might improve things.

JONATHAN

You know, perhaps we shouldn't go tonight.

MALLORY

The hell we won't. I'm not giving up a night at the club. We're going and we're going to have fun, damn it, you hear me?

JONATHAN

(TO HIMSELF, AS HE WALKS UPSTAIRS)

Oh yea, this is going to be fun...

MALLORY

(FOLLOWS HIM)

Maybe if you were a member and we could go anytime we wanted. But we're not. Only managers and directors and vice-presidents can afford the memberships. So we have to wait for someone to take pity on us and invite us. Jonathan, are you listening to me? I need this, damn it!

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan has finished dressing and sits watching Mallory, a beautiful woman to begin with, dressing herself up to perfection. He seems hesitant to speak with her.

JONATHAN

You look very beautiful.

MALLORY

(UNENTHUSIASTICALLY)

Mmmm.

He stands up and watches her from behind in the mirror, then gently moves an arm around her waist, which she firmly removes. He falls backwards, unsure of what to say or do.

CUT TO:

EXT - DOORWAY TO THE PATIO OF THE CLUB - NIGHT

Casually, well-dressed couples exit from the reception hall onto the patio of the Mattapoissett Golf Club. Strings of Japanese lanterns sway gently in the spring breeze. A mix of casually well-dressed couples sit around well-appointed tables sipping drinks. Mallory and Jonathan enter, her confident gait in

contrast to Jon's ambiguity. Two couples, sitting close to the door, watch them enter.

WOMAN
(TO HER TABLE)

How did he ever get her?

Mallory hears the remark and smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT - THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PATIO - NIGHT

Jonathan stands with Mark, a 45 year-old TENNIS.NET employee.

JONATHAN
As a matter of fact I got two for
tomorrow's game with Toronto. My first game
of the year.

MARK
(SUDDENLY SERIOUS)
Hey, listen, Jon, I heard what happened
today, you know, with Brian and the office
and everything, and I want you to know I
think you got a raw deal. I mean Brian's
an okay guy and all that -

Steven, a young, swarthy, confident, well-dressed thirty-something steps up behind Mark and slaps him on the back.

STEVEN
Hey!

MARK
Steven, how are you, you son-of-a-bitch!

STEVEN
Doin' great, Mark, doing great.

MARK
Steve, old man, have you met Jonathan?

STEVEN
Don't believe we've had the pleasure.

MARK
Steven is with The Cambridge Group.
Director of Marketing, right?

STEVEN
You haven't heard? Vice President.

MARK

No! When did this happen?

STEVEN

Last month.

MARK

Well, congratulations.

STEVEN

Yes, I was beginning to wonder if it was ever going to happen. You know I was stuck in that Director's job for almost three years.

MARK

Three whole years.

STEVEN

You know how it is. If you're in one job for longer than that you can forget about promotion. It's like whatever job you're in, that's it. The big boys just can't see you doing anything else. Before you know it, they're naming your cubicle in your honor. So, Jonathan, what do you do?

Jonathan looks as if he feels worse for Steve than for himself.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK - DAY

Yawkey Way is packed with ticket holders, scalpers, hot dog, sausage, and pretzel vendors. The crowd jostles Jonathan around but he is clearly enjoying the experience. Two male fans having and argument pass him.

FAN #1

You don't know what the fuck you're talking about! The man was a major leaguer for chris-sakes. It was a simple fucking ground ball!

FAN #2

You can't even bend down to pick up a dime that's laying there on the sidewalk, so how can you say what a major league ballplayer should or should not have done!

The sound of the argument fades as Jonathan takes a deep breath as he passes a sausage stand and stops, eyeing his slight paunch guiltily. But he makes his way to the stand. On his way, he passes several members of the SAVE FENWAY PARK committee,

protesting in front of the park. The man who had accosted Jonathan before is now engaged in a heated argument a fan.

FAN #3

... maybe if you went to as many games as I
did you wouldn't be so quick to try to save
a hundred year-old building.

Jonathan steps up to the vendor and points to a sausage. He nods and prepares it. Suddenly a chill goes down Jon's spine. He abruptly looks around, but can't identify the course. No one else seems to be bothered.

VENDOR

Hey buddy! Yo!

Jonathan breaks out of his trance and sees the annoyed vendor holding out his sausage and change.

JONATHAN

Huh? Oh. Thank you.

The vendor hawks more sausage as Jonathan pockets his change, still perturbed by a strange feeling. Unseen by anyone is a figure, dressed in black, his face covered by the shadows from his brimmed hat. We HEAR Heart's "Magic Man" from a transistor radio on the sausage stand, as the figure watches the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT - FENWAY PARK'S RIGHT FIELD BLEACHERS - DAY

Jonathan joins his fellow fans in a lusty cheer as a Red Sox player hits a long fly ball that bounces off the left field wall.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

We still HEAR the cheering crowd as Mallory tries to open a window.

CUT TO:

EXT - NEAR THE GREEN MONSTER IN FENWAY PARK - DAY

The left-fielder can't grab the just-hit ball. The crowd roars.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

We still HEAR the crowd roar as Mallory grips the bottom of the window trying to get it open.

CUT TO:

EXT - BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND BASE - DAY

The roar increases as the Red Sox player races past first base towards second, just beating the throw from left field.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

As we HEAR the crescendo of the crowd, the window suddenly gives and Mallory flies backwards to the floor. She picks herself up and stares malevolently at the window.

CUT TO:

EXT - RIGHT FIELD BLEACHERS - DAY

Jonathan high fives several other fans as we...

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE JONATHAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Jonathan's car pulls up to his house. We HEAR a sportscaster over the radio.

SPORTSCASTER

If you weren't at Fenway Park today you missed a beauty as the Sox won their first game of the homestand by beating the Toronto Blue Jays on the awesome power of Cuban defector Manny -

Jonathan shuts off the car, gets out, and enters the house.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

JONATHAN

Mallory! Sweetie! I'm back.

Mallory appears at the far end of the room. He does not notice the deep, boiling resentment in her eyes as he

JONATHAN

Oh, Mal, you should've been there. Martinez hit one that -

CUT TO:

INT - ENTRANCE TO THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

A CLOSE-UP of a furious Mallory.

JONATHAN

(CONT, V.O.)

Honey? Is anything wrong?

CUT TO:

EXT - JONATHAN'S HOME - NIGHT

A huge bolt of lightning illuminates the house as if it were high noon. A deafening clap of thunder quickly follows.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The lightning and thunder continue outside as Mallory paces in front of Jonathan, who sits passively on the bed. We do not hear her, but from her physical motions she is clearly complaining about the window. Jonathan appears catatonic again, and we HEAR the cheers of fans at a baseball game.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

The cheers subside as Jonathan, dressed in business attire, works on his computer. Out of the corner of his eye he sees Brian's new carpet being installed in the office. He listens grimly to the pounding of the installer's nail gun.

PHIL

Hey, why so glum? They won last night,
didn't they?

Phil realizes he has invaded a private moment. Jonathan is embarrassed, and forces himself to brighten his mood.

JONATHAN

You're right Phil, they did win last night.
Guess I'm just getting myself psyched up
for that first slump of the year.

PHIL

Typical Red Sox fan. Come on, they're
waiting for us at the agency.

JONATHAN

Great, let's get there before all the good
donuts are taken.

As they walk down the aisle, we HEAR the thumping sound of the carpet installation receding.

PHIL

What's a good donut?

JONATHAN

Anything with jelly in it.

PHIL

And what's a bad donut?

JONATHAN

Anything that's low fat.

Phil laughs as they exit the office.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

Jonathan reaches for the radio.

JONATHAN

You mind?

PHIL

No, go ahead.

Jonathan turns on the radio. We HEAR Jerry Josephs speaking.

JERRY

Yes, it was a good, win. But if you people think that this combination of a rubber-armed pitching staff, Swiss cheese infield, and puny-hitting outfield had even a shot of competing against the Yankees or Texas come the fall you are kidding yourselves. But why don't we see of any of you Sox fans have a different opinion?

Expecting protest, Phil sees only amusement in Jonathan's face.

CUT TO:

INT - PRODUCER'S BOOTH AT WBFN - DAY

All 16 extensions of the phone flash as the producer answers a call. Jerry gulps down a cruller as he listens to the caller.

CALLER

Josephs, you jerk, why don't you go to New York with the rest of them Yankee bums?

Jerry points to the producer, who pushes a button, at which point we HEAR a funny SFX that sounds like an electronic bouncing ball.

JERRY

Wait a minute, what's that sound? Could it be? It is! It's the ball going through Buckner's legs!

Jerry laughs as the caller hangs up and we HEAR dial tone. The station manager, leaning against the back wall of the booth, smiles at the brightly lit phone.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

We still HEAR the blooping SFX over the radio. Jonathan laughs and Phil, now totally confused, shuts off the radio.

JONATHAN

Hey, why'd you shut it off?

PHIL

How can you listen to that jerk? I can't stand him and I'm not even a Red Sox fan.

JONATHAN

I don't know... because he's funny?

PHIL

Funny? The Buckner thing was 15 years ago.

CUT TO:

EXT - SHEA STADIUM, 1986 - NIGHT

As Phil speaks, we SEE FOOTAGE of the ball going through Bill Buckner's legs.

PHIL

(CONT)

I mean how many times do you have to be reminded that Bill Buckner cost the Red Sox the 1986 World Series when he let a ground ball go through his legs?

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

We are back in Jonathan's car.

JONATHAN

I can't change the fact that it happened.

PHIL

But move on, already. Jesus. You guys aren't happy unless you have something to complain about, are you?

JONATHAN

Not at all. I wanna see them win. I just don't get so upset when they don't.

PHIL

Because you expect that they won't.

JONATHAN

I don't expect anything.

PHIL

You do. You all expect they're gonna choke and almost seem satisfied when they do. You even have a name for it, don't you? The Curse of the Bambino!

JONATHAN

You mean that the Red Sox haven't won a World Series since we sold Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees?

PHIL

Not since, because. Come on admit it, you believe in this silly Curse, don't you?

JONATHAN

I do not!

PHIL

Oh, please , you all do. And you know why? Because without the Curse you'd go insane. You know, when I was at my old job here on business trips and the Sox were in first place, everywhere I went I heard the same thing: "So how are they gonna blow it this year?" And then when they did blow it everyone seemed... happy, for Chris' sakes.

JONATHAN

Oh, that's crazy. Red Sox fans want to win as much as anybody else.

PHIL

Oh, really?

Phil turns the radio back on. We HEAR Jerry Josepfs through the car speaker.

JERRY

...so don't come crying to me when they break your hearts again, you losers.

We HEAR the Bloop SFX.

PHIL

So how is it this guy has the number one talk show in the city?

CUT TO:

INT - SUBURBAN BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Mallory is getting a manicure from Candy, while her friends Francine, Debbie, and Mary Ellen get various treatments (haircut, wash, manicure) from other female staff members.

MALLORY

I'll tell you why. Because we're gluttons for punishment.

FRANCINE

I always thought it was because our mothers taught us that this is the way life was supposed to be.

MALLORY

This is the way life is supposed to be?

(SUDDENLY PULLS HER HAND BACK)

Owww!

MANICURIST

Sorry.

MALLORY

That hurt.

MANICURIST

Like, I said I was sorry. Your hands are like, really messed up.

MALLORY

It's those God-damned windows.

MARY ELLEN

Why don't you have your husband buy new ones if they're broken?

MALLORY

Because he says we can't afford them and that he can fix them anyway. Owww!

MANICURIST

Sorry.

FRANCINE

I don't know how you put up with him. You could have had anyone at Taft.

MALLORY

Sure, anyone the cheerleaders left over.

(THOUGHTFULLY)

But you know, by the time I got to college I had matured, you know? So instead of looking for a body and some fun I looked for a brain and some security, right? Someone with like a business degree who was gonna be a Vice-President or something. Owww!

(STARES AT HER HANDS)

Instead I end up fighting windows with a guy in cubicle.

This self-pity stuns the other women.

FRANCINE

You have every right to complain.

DEBBIE

No one should have to settle.

MARY ELLEN

I still say you tell him how you feel. How you really feel.

MALLORY

He knows, believe me.

FRANCINE

Well, I give you a lot of credit.

DEBBIE

Yea, Tammy Wynette's got nothing on you.

MARY ELLEN

(SINGING)

Stand by your man...

FRANCINE, DEBBIE, AND MARY ELLEN

(SINGING)

...Give him two arms to cling to...

Everybody in the shop, joins in the song, giggling and laughing as they try to remember the words.

ALL

...and something warm to come to, when nights are cold and lonely...

Mallory seems quite happy in the role of martyr.

CUT TO:

INT - OUTSIDE BRIAN'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

The door is shut but behind we partly HEAR Brian yelling. PHIL, KENNY, and MARIE poke their heads of their cubicles, but we HEAR the sound of the door opening, they duck back in. Jon walks out of the office into his cube as the office door shuts behind him. The three heads poke out of their cubes again.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mallory sits at her vanity, preparing for bed, while Jonathan lies in bed, trying to watch the Red Sox game. We can HEAR the play-by-play announcer and glimpse piece of the game.

ANNOUNCER

And there's a high fly ball that looks like it might be... no, the wind seems to have held it back and it drops into the centerfielder's glove. The Red Sox, down by a run, now have one out with a man on second, who is unable to advance.

MALLORY

So you just sat there?

Jonathan unwillingly lowers the volume of the television.

JONATHAN

What was I supposed to do? Walk out?

MALLORY

You could have told him he was wrong.

JONATHAN

But he thinks he's right.

MALLORY

But you said that he wasn't.

JONATHAN

That's doesn't matter. He's the boss and if he thinks he's right, that means he is.

MALLORY

So you just let him get away with it.

JONATHAN

Get away with what? It doesn't mean anything. He's just blowing off a little steam.

He raises the volume of the TV as Mallory works some cream into her face. Jonathan gets very excited as the play begins.

ANNOUNCER

And there's a long fly ball, way back, it
could score the man on second...

MALLORY

You know everyone's talking about it.

JONATHAN

(SIGHS, LOWERS THE VOLUME)

About what?

MALLORY

About you getting chewed out by someone who
has less time at the company than you do.

JONATHAN

Everybody? Who's everybody?

MALLORY

Mary Ellen. She said that Kenny told her
all about it.

JONATHAN

That's everybody, all right.

MALLORY

He is your friend.

JONATHAN

And he knows it's no big deal. He's been
called on the carpet his share of times
too, believe me.

MALLORY

Really? When? What happened?

JONATHAN

Mallory, it's just a corporate ass-kicking.
Stop making it into such a big deal.

Mallory turns back to the mirror. Jonathan starts to raise the volume of the TV, but lowers it when she speaks.

MALLORY

Maybe if you made a bigger deal of it and
fought back you'd be giving the ass-kicking
instead of getting it all the time.

Jonathan, knowing he cannot win, sighs as looks longingly at the television. We SEE the action as a runner tries to score from

third base but stumbles on his way to home plate and is tagged out by the opposing catcher.

CUT TO:

INT - AMRINE'S BAR IN SOUTH BOSTON - NIGHT

It's crowded as a number of older men are watching the same play Jon just saw. Some just shake their heads and return to their tables, others order another drink. One patron, 67 year-old laborer Jimmy O'Hara, bangs his hand on the counter.

JIMMY

God-damn it. Can you believe that shit?
God-damn bums is all they are. Nottin' but
God-damned overpaid bums, for Chrissakes.

PATRON #1

Jimmy, relax, it's just one game.

PATRON #2

And it's still early in the season.

PATRON #1

Yea, there's still plenty of time for them
to tank.

Everybody laughs except Jimmy as we

CUT TO:

INT - JONTHAN'S CAR - DAY

Jonathan is driving his car to his office listening to the radio. We HEAR the deep tones of a serious reporter and Jerry.

REPORTER

...and last night's loss puts the Red Sox a
full eight games out of first place with
hopes fading fast that they can make a run
at the Yankees this year.

JERRY

So it's ball between the legs time!

REPORTER

I didn't say that, Jerry, but...

We HEAR the SFX of the bouncing electronic ball.

JERRY

I said it's ball through the legs time!
Boing! Boing! Boing!

Jonathan laughs as we

CUT TO:

INT - A CAR OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK - DAY

We only see the outline of a dark figure sitting behind the wheel of a car. We still HEAR the sound of the bouncing ball and Jerry's laughter coming from the radio.

JERRY

God bless you Bill Buckner, wherever you are! Boing! Boing! Boing! Now let's open up the phone lines and see how many members of the Red Sox nation want to defect.

The figure turns off the radio and starts the car.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK - DAY

The car drives away from Fenway Park as "Magic Man" begins.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Brian steps out of his office into Jon's cube.

CUT TO:

EXT - ROAD LEADING TO SALEM, MA - DAY

The dark figure's car drives past a sign that reads: WELCOME TO SALEM, THE WITCH CITY.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

With Kenny and Marie looking on, Brian hands Jonathan tickets to a Red Sox game.

CUT TO:

EXT - A STREET IN SALEM, MA - DAY

The dark figure's car pulls in front of a store called ODDS BOTKINS. He gets out and walks into the store.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Jonathan shakes Brian's hand. Kenny puts his arm around Jon's shoulder and Jon hands him a ticket.

CUT TO:

INT - ODDS BOTKINS, A CURIO SHOP IN SALEM - DAY

The shop is filled with the campy ephemera and knick-knacks of the "witch" trade. The MUSIC ends as the dark figure enters and is recognized by the shopkeeper, a sixty-something woman clearly dressed for the effect in a flowery outfit, headband, and crystals hanging around her neck. She sits behind a counter filled with small colored bottles. She smiles knowingly at him.

WOMAN

You have the look of a man who has made an important decision.

The figure nods his head.

WOMAN

(CONT)

Very well.

She reaches under the counter and produces a perfume-sized bottle filled with a greenish liquid that glows softly in the dim shop. He takes the bottle from her with trepidation.

WOMAN

(CONT)

You are aware there are no refunds.

The figure nods his head. He places a twenty dollar bill on the counter, which the shopkeeper takes. He nods and starts to exit the shop. When she speaks he stops but does not turn around.

WOMAN

(CONT)

Be careful what you wish for, you might get it.

The figure turns to give her an "are you kidding me?" look.

WOMAN

(CONT)

Sorry, I was obligated to say that.

The figure nods his head understandingly, turns, and exits.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Jonathan and Kenny are listening to the radio as they look for a parking space near Fenway Park.

ANNOUNCER

The skies over Boston are threatening and the forecast calls for rain, heavy at times, but tonight's ball game is still on at Fenway.

Jonathan turns off the radio and turns in a parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

The weather hasn't stopped thousands of fans from pouring into the old ballpark. Jonathan motions to the sausage vendor. Kenny demurs, but Jonathan makes a purchase. We HEAR "The Magic Man" coming from the vendor's radio and a chill goes down Jonathan's spine. He looks around for the source.

KENNY

Hey Jon!

JONATHAN

Huh?

Jonathan sees the annoyed look on the vendor's face. He meekly takes his change and he and Kenny head to the park entrance.

KENNY

Are you all right?

JONATHAN

Yea, I'm fine.

Jonathan gives the crowd one last sweep before handing his ticket to the attendant and entering the park. The dark figure, close behind them, also enters the park.

CUT TO:

EXT - THIRD BASE SEATS IN FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

Jonathan and Kenny applaud as the third out of the inning is made by the opposing team. There is a break as the teams switch places.

KENNY

So it really doesn't bother you?

JONATHAN

You sound like my wife. Why should it?

KENNY

He's been there five years less than you, for one thing.

JONATHAN

Do you know how many guys have sat in that office over the past eight years? Gotta be four, at least. That's not an office, it's a waiting room.

KENNY

More dough.

JONATHAN

More work.

KENNY

Chance to move up.

JONATHAN

Chance to get moved out. It's like standing up in a gunfight. You're just giving the enemy a chance to pick you off.

KENNY

You outghta write a book. "The Secret to My Success."

JONATHAN

I could write a book. It's called "How Not to get an ulcer."

Kenny laughs as the crowd cheers a hit by a Red Sox player, as the chill returns down Jon's spine. He searches for the source. A few rows back, his face hidden by upper deck shadows, the dark figure impassively watches the ballgame, as rain begins to fall. A few fans look up and shake their heads in disappointment.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

Don't worry. It's just a few drops.

With that, a torrential rain begins, sending everyone, including Jonathan and Kenny, scurrying under the upper deck. The players race off the field as the rain intensifies. A bright bolt of lightning and a loud clap of thunder shakes the old ballpark, sending the crowd further under the upper deck.

JONATHAN

(CONT, TO KENNY, WITH ASSURANCE)

These summer storms never last.

Kenny (and others huddled around them) look hopeful as we

CUT TO:

EXT - FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

It is still raining and only about half the original crowd still remains. A retrospective of past Red Sox high and lowlights is running on the scoreboard in centerfield. We HEAR the sound of the public address system turning on.

P.A. ANOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, the Boston Red Sox regret that tonight's game is being canceled due to the -

There is a bright flash of lightning and a loud clap of thunder.

P.A. ANNOUNCER
(CONT)

- weather.

We HEAR a mix of groans and cheers. Jonathan is more disappointed than Kenny, who is quick to head for the exit.

P.A. ANNOUNCER
(CONT)

Please follow the instructions of the ushers and exit the ballpark in an orderly manner. The Red Sox thank you for coming out tonight and we look forward to seeing you again.

The crowd, along with Jonathan and Kenny, makes it's collective way up the aisles and down the exits. From the P.A. system music begins to play - "Singing in the Rain," and several members of the crowd laugh and sing along as the ushers motion them to the exits. Just as he reaches the exit ramp, Jonathan frantically looks around - the chill is back - but he crowd forces him down the ramp. We see the DARK FIGURE ducking behind a pole.

CUT TO:

EXT - FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

The rain has stopped. A thick carpet of clouds still hangs over a drenched Fenway Park as the ushers finish their last sweep of the ballpark and the lights on the towers are turned off, throwing the park into an eerie darkness. There is a small flash of lightning and a low rumble of thunder as the last of the ushers leaves the ballpark. A few seconds later the DARK FIGURE pops his head up from behind a concession stand. He hobbles down an aisle to the edge of the field and hops the fence, making his way to the left field wall. Another flash of lightning illuminates him against the wall as he takes out the vial of green liquid.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Hey, you!

The DARK FIGURE almost drops the vial. We HEAR a whistle blow.

SECURITY GUARD #2

What's going on?

SECURITY GUARD #1

Over by the wall!

The DARK FIGURE fumbles with the cap of the bottle as we HEAR the sound of footsteps getting closer.

SECURITY GUARD #3

There he is!

SECURITY GUARD #1

Grab him!

With the security guards almost upon him, the DARK FIGURE flings the bottle against the wall, where it explodes in a shower of sparks that begin to spread across the wall's surface. The DARK FIGURE now races away from the wall with the guards in pursuit. Security Guard #2 is about to grab the DARK FIGURE'S arm when a lightning bolt strikes the light tower on top of the wall, which is now bathed in sparkes. The concussion from the strike knocks everyone on the field to the ground. As the sparks dissipate the DARK FIGURE groggily gets up. He looks at the Wall and then with concern at the three guards sprawled on the ground. He HEARS shouting in the distance and looks around for an escape route, hesitating as he looks again at the three men on the ground.

SECURITY GUARD #4

Hey! Are you guys all right?

The DARK FIGURE hears moaning from one of the men on the ground, and sees the other two stirring. He races from the field to the stands where he vaults the fence and heads down an exit ramp, Security Guard #4 in pursuit.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jonathan is having breakfast while watching ESPN's SPORTSCENTER. A Boston Globe lies on the table, with the headline STRIKE ONE! just over a photograph of the Wall and light tower. Mallory enters and eyes the television, newspaper, and Jonathan with disdain, as we HEAR and SEE the anchor's report.

ANCHOR

Well this just might be the jolt the fourth place Boston Red Sox are looking for. Last night the light tower over the fabled left field wall - the Green Monster, was struck by lightning just a short while after the game was called due to rain. Three security guards who were on the field at the time were taken to an area hospital complaining of headaches. All were later released and are said to be doing fine. A report that they were on the field chasing an intruder has not been confirmed. We'll be back with more electric SPORTSCENTER after this...

Jonathan lowers the volume on the TV and begins speaking to Mallory, who exits the room as soon as he begins.

JONATHAN

How about that, huh? You know Kenny and I couldn't have been seated more than fifty feet from the Wall. Man, I can't believe the old ballpark didn't fall down or burn or something. Can you imagine that?

It takes Jonathan a few moments to realize that Mallory has exited. His self-consciousness gives way to resignation. He sighs and resumes eating his cereal.

CUT TO:

INT - LUNCHROOM AT TENNIS.COM - DAY

Jonathan is eating lunch with Marie and Phil.

JONATHAN

Without even trying, every day I learn something. Not the crap they were shoving down our throats in school like who was James K. Polk or what's the atomic weight of Carbon, but important stuff. Like how to hammer a nail without splitting the wood. Exactly how fast can I go through the toll booth so I can drop my money in the basket and make it past the gate without the alarm going off. How to talk to a beautiful woman without her realizing you're only talking to her because she's beautiful. Of course I'm 42 and married so knowing how to talk to a woman is valuable only if she's my boss or an IRS auditor. I think to myself 'schmuck, if you had only known this stuff twenty years ago, when it might have made a difference, then you

JONATHAN

(CONT)

wouldn't have made all the mistakes that you did.' But of course the only way I could have learned all those things is by screwing them up in the first place.

MARIE

You know what you got? A Catch-22.

PHIL

I remember that movie... Anthony Perkins catches Martin Balsam on the toilet.

JONATHAN

This is gonna go on until I die. I'll be on my deathbed -

PHIL

Where do you get one of those?

JONATHAN

What?

PHIL

Deathbeds.

JONATHAN

What do you mean? I don't understand..

PHIL

I was just wondering if there's, like, a special section at the furniture store for deathbeds.

MARIE

(MOCK SERIOUSNESS)

I'd like to see something in a deathbed, please.

PHIL

Certainly madam. We have oak, pine, and a new model that's a convertible.

MARIE

A convertible?

PHIL

Yes, it turns into a coffin.

Phil and Marie laugh and give each other the "high-five"

JONATHAN

Are you through? Minutes from death, I'll get the last piece of the puzzle. That's what that white light is, you know. It's what happens when you get that last piece of knowledge that you've needed all your life and everything clicks into place. You understand it all. Only it's too late. You're dead.

MARIE

(AFTER A MOMENT OF SILENCE)

Do you ever wonder why we don't ask you to lunch more often?

Kenny enters, holding a newspaper, with which he playfully hits Jonathan on the head.

JONATHAN

Ow!

KENNY

Hey!

JONATHAN

Hey what?

KENNY

Why can't you get tickets to games like this one?

MARIE

Oh yea, I saw that on the news last night.

PHIL

So didn't I. They said it was the first time a game ended with a triple play.

JONATHAN

An unassisted triple play.

KENNY

(SLAPPING JONATHAN WITH THE NEWSPAPER)

Did you hear that? Unassisted triple play for Chris' sakes! UNASSISTED!

Phil and Marie laugh and Kenny swings away at Jonathan.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan's arm is around Mallory as they sit on the couch watching television. A commercial comes on and Mallory gets up.

MALLORY

I'm going to get a drink. Want anything?

JONATHAN

No thanks.

Mallory is barely out of her seat when Jonathan uses the remote to switch to the Red Sox game. Mallory rolls her eyes.

MALLORY

You know, if you want to watch the game instead of our show...

JONATHAN

No, I just wanna see the score.

Mallory exits to the kitchen. A few moments later Mallory returns and stands by the couch. Jonathan doesn't notice her.

MALLORY

Jon, if you want to watch the game...

JONATHAN

Just getting the score.

MALLORY

It's right there in the upper left hand corner of the screen. 6 to 1, Red Sox. Do you want to watch the game?

JONATHAN

I just want to see how many outs.

MALLORY

It says it right there. One. Look, if you want to watch the game instead of TV with me -

JONATHAN

No, that's all right. I just want to see the -

MALLORY

(GRABBING THE REMOTE)

I know, you just want to see the score.

JONATHAN

(GRABBING THE REMOTE BACK)

Come on. Cut it out, Mal.

MALLORY

You cut it out.

A tug-of-war over the remote ensues.

JONATHAN

I'm just watching the game for a second.

MALLORY

You know the damn score -

JONATHAN

They're probably not even back from commercial, what's it gonna hurt if we -

MALLORY

Gimme that!

JONATHAN

Hey!

Jonathan's grip is so tight that Mallory slips and falls forward on top of him, leaving them horizontal and face-to-face on the couch. In their eyes, they are embracing and making love, but physically their bodies uncomfortably move apart, until Mallory is standing and Jonathan is seated. We HEAR the sounds of the ballgame from the TV as Mallory and Jonathan just look at each other. Mallory exits and Jonathan reluctantly remains on the couch, watching the game, as we HEAR the announcer.

ANNOUNCER

...if the Sox can hold onto this lead it will not only be their eighth win in a row but it will also mean first place tie with the Yankees who lost earlier today...

CUT TO:

INT - JERRY JOSEPHS' RADIO STUDIO - DAY

As the male caller speaks, Jerry swallows the last of a donut, then searches in vain in the box for another.

CALLER

How can you argue with first place?

JERRY

(WHILE SHOWING THE EMPTY BOX
TO HIS PRODUCER)

I'm not arguin' with you, pal. I'm just sayin' don't buy those playoff tickets, yet.

CALLER

They've won eight in a row!

JERRY

Do you remember 1978?

CALLER

Here we go again with that Curse crap..

JERRY

The Red Sox had a thirteen game lead in August and ended up in a one-game playoff with the Yankees in September. A playoff game they lost because Bucky Dent hit a home run over the Green Monster.

CALLER

Josephs, you are such an idiot. That was twenty-five years ago.

JERRY

I dare you to call me back in October after they've blown it all again.

We HEAR the sound of the phone hanging up, then a dial tone.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

We HEAR a jingle from a small radio on Jonathan's desk. He does not see PHIL standing behind him.

PHIL

Think they have a shot?

Jonathan stops typing, then very deliberately turns to look at Phil with his best "are you kidding" face. Phil shakes his head and walks away.

PHIL

(CONT)

Let's hear it for them sure-we-want-win-it-all Sox fans.

Jonathan chuckles to himself, then allows himself just a moment to look wistfully at his Red Sox memorabilia, before shaking off his dream and returning to his computer.

CUT TO:

INT - PARK STREET STATION PLATFORM - DAY

Commuters crowd the platform waiting for a Green Line trolley. Two men peer over the shoulder of a third who is looking at the back (Sports) page of the Boston Herald, which has a headline SOX FINALLY LOSE ONE!

MAN #1

About time.

MAN #2

Yea, I was getting worried.

MAN #3

It's only the beginning, man.

They all share a laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTDOOR CAFÉ IN BOSTON - DAY

Mallory and her friends FRANCINE, DEBBIE, and MARY ELLEN sip cocktails at a table along Newbury street. The girls watch as Mallory twists her neck to ogle a passing young man, then sighs.

FRANCINE

So how long has it been?

DEBBIE

Francine!

FRANCINE

Oh, please. It couldn't be more obvious.

DEBBIE

Francine, was that really necessary?

MARY ELLEN

Every man goes through one of these spells.

MALLORY

Oh yea? Has Kenny?

MARY ELLEN

Well... No, Kenny actually hasn't had one, but I've heard it happens all the time.

FRANCINE

Bullshit. We're talking about men here. The only excuses for a dry spell are death or castration. Believe me, they're either getting it at home or they're getting it someplace else. But they're getting it.

DEBBIE

Francine!

FRANCINE

What?

MALLORY

That's all right. I've wondered the same thing, too, you know?

FRANCINE

And...?

MALLORY

It's just not possible.

FRANCINE

Why not?

MALLORY

Please, we're talking about Jonathan here.

Debbie gives Mary Ellen a look that says "NOW we understand."

MALLORY

(CONT, SHE SAW THE LOOK)

What?

DEBBIE

I didn't say anything.

MALLORY

What was that look?

DEBBIE

It was nothing.

MALLORY

I thought you guys were on my side.

DEBBIE

We are, but, you know, how's the guy supposed to be, you know, romantic when you're all, you know, down on him.

MALLORY

I am not all down on him. In fact I'm always encouraging him.

MARY ELLEN

Encouraging or nagging?

MALLORY

Hey what's going on here?

FRANCINE

I still say you can't trust him. I say you hire a detective.

DEBBIE

Why don't you try to like, be romantic. You know, put the moves on him. Guys like that kind of thing.

FRANCINE

Yea, if they're in high school.

There are a few moments of silence. Mallory sighs.

MALLORY

It's just not been the same, you know, since the operation.

The other girls look at each other.

MARY ELLEN

Because of him? Or you?

Mallory wants to get angry, but all she does is sigh.

DEBBIE

I still say my suggestion is worth a try if you want save this relationship.

MARY ELLEN

If that's what you want...

MALLORY

Now what the hell is that supposed to mean?

MARY ELLEN

Nothing. Never mind.

There is a tense silence. Another good-looking young man walks by and all the women watch Mallory, who doesn't fall for the bait.

MALLORY

Go to hell, all of you.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE of the Red Sox on a winning streak and their fans cheering in the stands, in front of TVs in bars, airport lounges, and at home. At one bar, the DARK FIGURE watches the cheering crowd. We also see a smug JERRY JOSEPHS at the microphone dismissing his callers with disdain. A Boston Globe newspaper headline declares RED SOX IN PLAYOFFS. More cheering fans. A Red Sox pitcher throws a ball and the batter strikes out, sending the entire Red Sox team spilling onto the field. A front page Boston Herald headline screams AMERICAN LEAGUE CHAMPS!

CUT TO:

INT - TENNIS.COM CAFETERIA - DAY

Jon, Marie, Phil, and Kenny sit around a table having lunch. Jon reads a Globe with the headline: BRING ON THE METS!

JONATHAN

Hey, you know what? We should get together and watch one the games.

MARIE

That's a good idea. It could be fun.

KENNY

Which game?

MARIE

Better make it one of the first four, in case they get swept.

Phil shakes his head in disgust.

JONATHAN

The Red Sox won't get swept. They'll take it to at least six games before the ball goes through someone's legs.

Kenny and Marie laugh their agreement. Phil fumes.

KENNY

(TO PHIL)

What's your problem?

PHIL

I could live here a hundred years and never understand you people.

KENNY

What?

PHIL

Have you ever thought that maybe they might win?

Kenny, Marie, and Jonathan look at each other, then together say

JONATHAN, MARIE, KENNY

Nahhh!

The three of them laugh and Phil shakes his head as we HEAR R.E.M.'s "End of the World."

CUT TO:

INT - AIRPORT WAITING ROOM - DAY

About a hundred people jockey for a view of a television set. Nearby, a female television reporter speaks into a camera.

REPORTER

And so, as they have in their last four World Series appearances stretching back to 1946, the Boston Red Sox prepare for a seventh game against their National League opponents. And just as they have since 1918, the Red Sox faithful, including hundreds of passengers waiting for their flights here at Logan airport, gather around television sets to see if their team will do what no Red Sox team has done since Woodrow Wilson was president - win a World Series. And, in a twist that is delighting fans from Fall River to Presque Isle, if the Red Sox do pull off a victory, it would come at the expense of the New York Mets, their nemesis in their last series appearance, a fateful series 17 years ago, the one that featured the now famous "ball through Buckner's legs." Cheryl Miller for ESPN sports.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE. At Fenway Park, a home run is deposited in the screen over the left field wall and the crowd goes wild. All over Boston the joy explodes onto the streets. In the South Boston bar, Jimmy O'Hara clutches his chest. At the Bailey house, Kenny, Marie, and Phil had literally been at the edge of the couch but now they shoot up like three bottle rockets and began jumping up and down, screaming and hugging each other. On the TV we SEE fireworks going off over the ball park as fans rush onto the field. Mallory stands at the entrance to the living room watching her husband with curiosity as he doesn't move from the couch. His friends stop jumping and collapse on the couch, where they clasped the still silent Jonathan's hands.

CUT TO:

EXT - BOSTON SKYLINE - NIGHT

We HEAR R.E.M.'s "End of the World," along with shouts, cheers, car horns and fireworks exploding over the city. We HEAR the television announcer.

ANNOUNCER

(V.O.)

Some New Englanders would have told you that this night was impossible. That the sale by Boston of a young, power-hitting pitcher from the streets of Baltimore - a kid named Babe Ruth - to the New York Yankees was such an affront to the baseball Gods that a Curse was laid upon this team. As fanciful a notion as a Curse might seem to the rest of the nation and the world, the Curse slowly revealed itself to be a very formidable idea, even to the taciturn, stoic New Englander. There seemed to be some things that you couldn't fight.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

The dark figure watches the jubilant crowd that has gathered on the streets outside Fenway Park. We still HEAR the announcer.

ANNOUNCER

(V.O., CONT)

There were late season folds, bloop home runs, clumsy base running, and just plain bad luck that might have had logical answers. But most New Englanders seemed happy to point out that their anguish was due to a real, honest to goodness Curse. But no more. Now, with a home run in the bottom of the tenth inning of their fifth seven-game series you can take heart New England, your Curse is broken.

After soaking up the sight, the dark figure turns and, with a slight hobble, walks away from the crowd as the music fades.

CUT TO:

INT - AMRINE'S BAR - NIGHT

Two paramedics are sweating and exhausted from their attempt to revive the old man laying on the barroom floor. They look at each other, shook their heads sadly, and ceremoniously began disconnecting the hoses and tubes from the now lifeless body.

BARTENDER

That's it, then?

One of the paramedics nods and around the bar the old men cross themselves and whisper novenas. A voice in the dark is heard.

VOICE IN THE DARK
Poor Jimmy O'Hara.

BARTENDER
Look at it this way, the last thing he saw,
God rest his soul, was the Red Sox win the
World Series.

The men all nod and cross themselves again.

CUT TO:

INT - JERRY JOSEPHS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jerry sits on a ratty couch in a messy apartment, stunned,
watching his television, a bag of chips on his lap. All we HEAR
is the tinny sound of the roar of the Fenway crowd and fireworks
from the small TV.

JERRY
Oh, shit.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The alarm goes off and is playing "End of the World." Jonathan
opened his eyes tentatively.

MALLORY
Well, I guess congratulations are in order.

JONATHAN
(TO HIMSELF)
Then it wasn't a dream.

He rolls over in bed to look at her, and is struck by her beauty.

JONATHAN
(CONT)
Thanks.

MALLORY
Can I ask you something?

JONATHAN
Yea, sure.

MALLORY
Last night, when they finally won, you
seemed so... down.

JONATHAN
Down? You mean like sad?

MALLORY

I don't know. The game ended and the Red Sox had won and Marie and Kenny and that new guy Phil were screaming and jumping up and down like a bunch of idiots but you were just sitting there. Sorry, I apologize for using the word idiots.

JONATHAN

That's okay. I guess we did look a little silly.

MALLORY

Well the others did. But you, Jon, you looked so sad that I swore you were going to cry. Were you?

Jonathan looks like he wants to say a million things, but after a few moments of introspection he simply mumbles.

JONATHAN

I dunno. Guess I was in shock.

He gets up and ambles to the bathroom. Mallory is unable to stop watching him until he shuts the bathroom door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR - DAY

Jonathan is driving to work, listening to Jerry Josepfs. We HEAR a conversation over the radio.

MALE CALLER

Where's your bleepin' Yankees now, Josepfs? How come I don't hear about any balls going through Buckner's legs now you fat bastard?

JERRY

I don't know what to say, caller, except I'm happy for the Red Sox and I'm happy for Red Sox fans. Watching the Yankees win 25 championships while you sucked wind was not only depressing, but boring, as well. So I say, congratulations.

MALE CALLER

And I say -

There is suddenly a few seconds of silence as we

CUT TO:

INT - PRODUCER'S BOOTH AT RADIO STATION - DAY

The STATION MANAGER leans against the back wall of the studio as the producer points his finger at a smug Jerry.

JERRY

Well, I don't know what my mother has to do with it, but I guess when you're so used to losing that when you finally win one you don't know how to react like good sports.

Jerry points towards the producer who punches a button. The ON AIR light goes off and we HEAR a commercial over the speaker. Jerry, in all his corpulent glory, leans back in his chair.

STATION MANAGER

You know, I used to worry about what I'd do if that Sox ever won it all. Zinging the Red Sox fans is his whole act, right?

(THE PRODUCER NODS)

Mark my words, he's going to be bigger than ever.

The producer watches Jerry swallowing a donut, whole.

PRODUCER

Jesus. Any bigger and he'll explode.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE THE TENNIS.COM BUILDING - DAY

Jonathan again fails to open the door on his first try.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

He begins to unpack when he looks across the aisle at the office. A look of longing passes over his face, which confuses him. Suddenly, a jubilant Phil, Marie, and Kenny rush in and, like schoolchildren gleefully exchange high-fives and handshakes.

KENNY

Isn't it amazing!

MARIE

I heard they had to shut down the whole area around Fenway Park. Kenmore Square, all the way to Mass Ave -

PHIL

I heard they're going to hold a parade in Boston tomorrow.

KENNY

And the Governor is closing all the state offices.

JONATHAN

Well, who's gonna get any work done in Boston, anyway?

PHIL

Who's gonna get any work done anywhere?

MARIE

This is so fantastic.

KENNY

D'ever think you'd live to see this day?

Jonathan stops and reflects.

PHIL

What? What is it?

JONATHAN

I was just thinking. I wish my old man had.

There is a moment of silence.

MARIE

Come on, coffee's on me, this morning.

The group exits Jon's cubicle. Jon stops and, unsure why, stares longingly at the office across the aisle.

CUT TO:

INT - TENNIS.NET LUNCHROOM - DAY

A HAPPY NEW YEAR sign hangs limply on the wall of the lunchroom near the table where Kenny, Marie, Phil, and Jonathan are engrossed in another lunchtime discussion.

JONATHAN

The worst month? No contest. We're in the middle of it right now. January. Look, Christmas is over, you're let down and all you've got to look forward to are the bills from December and three more months of cold and snow. And the worst thing of all is this 'clean slate' business, how the New Year is supposed to be a fresh start. But you turn on the news New Year's Day night and wars are still going on and there are murders and you realize this year won't be any different than the last.

Marie and Phil get up simultaneously.

MARIE
(SARCASTICALLY)

Thank you, Jon for great lunch
conversation.

Marie and Phil exit the lunchroom shaking their heads.

KENNY

Hey Jon?

JONATHAN

Uh huh?

KENNY

Is there anything you want to tell me?

JONATHAN

Tell you? About what?

KENNY

Look, buddy, I don't mean to pry, and if
you don't want to tell me what's going on
that's fine, but the past few months you've
been... I don't know... kind of... morose.

JONATHAN

Morose?

KENNY

Yea. And I'm concerned.

JONATHAN
(SIGHS)

So am I.

Kenny watches as Jonathan drifts into deep thought.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK. The Christmas tree is up in the Bailey living room as
Jonathan and Mallory sit close together on the couch watching TV.
Jonathan has his arm around Mallory. Jonathan smiles at her
dreamily and begins to nuzzle her neck.

MALLORY

Jon, what are you doing?

JONATHAN

I, uh... well, I just thought that, you know, you wanted me to.

MALLORY

Well, I don't.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry.

Jonathan at first looks like he wants to crawl away. Concern quickly takes over.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

It wasn't deliberate on her part, you know.

MALLORY

I know that. I'm not stupid. She's my sister. I know it wasn't deliberately cruel on her part. And I know it would be unfair to expect that the rest of the world would either stop having babies or stop talking about them just because...

She grimaces. Jonathan reaches out for her hand.

JONATHAN

I know. And that's a very healthy attitude to have. Life... has to go on.

He strokes her cheek but she pulls her face away. She stews.

MALLORY

I've never been someone who was tied to dogma, you know, but somehow I can't get it out of my mind that somehow, in some small way that there's something wrong with... that by itself.

JONATHAN

By that, you mean our lovemaking?

MALLORY

Yes.

JONATHAN

What do you mean, by itself?

MALLORY

We're'n't we taught that it's supposed to have a meaning... a purpose?

JONATHAN

What about making each other happy?

MALLORY

Maybe it's the Irish Catholic in me, but
when you say it like that it sounds dirty.

JONATHAN

Only if we do it right.

He winces at the realization of how stupid the remark is.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

I'm sorry.

MALLORY

A baby would make me happy Jonathan. And
please don't remind why that isn't
possible, okay?

JONATHAN

It may not be possible the natural way,
Mal, but as I've said before we could
always adopt.

MALLORY

Oh, God, the last desperate act of a
desperate couple.

JONATHAN

Why is it desperate to give a child a
chance at life?

MALLORY

Who are you, Sally Struthers?

JONATHAN

Mal, all I know is what you know, that it's
not going to happen for us, you know, the
natural way but I also know it doesn't mean
we can't be parents and give a kid a good
home.

MALLORY

You're not a woman. You don't understand.

JONATHAN

I understand that you want one of your own,
but isn't it time you accepted -

MALLORY

God-damn, it! Must you be so God-damned
accepting all the time? Can't you get
angry?

JONATHAN

At who, Mallory? At who? You? Why should I get angry at you? It's not your fault. At the doctors? It's not theirs, either. There's no one to get mad at. It just is, that's all. It just... is.

Mallory's whole body trembles, as her hands slowly rise up and cover her face. Then there is a terrible, primeval wail and she collapses into a sobbing heap on the floor.

JONATHAN

(RACING TO HER SIDE)

Mallory!

MALLORY

Go away. Just go away.

Jonathan looks at her helplessly, afraid to help but afraid not to. He slowly covers her body with his as we SEE the snow falling through the living room window. END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - NEAR JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Jonathan is walking back to his cubicle as Brian comes out of his office. Brian speaks with his patented transparent insincerity.

BRIAN

Say, Jon, I hate to make you into a delivery service, but if I wait until pick-up time then the agency won't get these proofs. Would you mind driving into Boston and delivering them for me?

Jonathan feigns a "sure-boss-whatever-you-need-even-though-it-will-take-me-away-from-my-very-busy-job" look.

CUT TO:

EXT - KENMORE SQUARE, BOSTON - DAY

We HEAR R.E.M.'s "END OF THE WORLD" as Jonathan's Jetta wends it's way through Kenmore Square. The car turns up Brookline Avenue, over the Massachusetts Turnpike, and is pulled over.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CAR -DAY

The music stops as Jonathan turns off the car engine. He proudly looks across the street at Fenway Park. We can HEAR the fireworks and cheering of the fans after the Red Sox World Series victory. In FLASHBACK, we HEAR the announcer from the TV after the game.

ANNOUNCER

(V.O.)

...That the sale by Boston of a young, power-hitting pitcher from the streets of Baltimore - a kid named Babe Ruth - to the New York Yankees was such an affront to the baseball Gods that a Curse was laid upon this team. As fanciful a notion as a Curse might seem to the rest of the nation and the world, the Curse slowly revealed itself to be a very formidable idea, even to the taciturn, stoic New Englander. There seemed to be some things that you couldn't fight. Couldn't fight. Couldn't fight...

Jonathan wakes up, shakes it off, starts his car, and drives off.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A light snow falls as Jonathan and Mallory eat in grisly silence. Jonathan stops to watch the snow. Mallory's interest is peaked.

MALLORY

What is it?

JONATHAN

The damnedest thing... I was driving by Fenway Park today and -

MALLORY

You were in town? Boston?

JONATHAN

Yea. Brian asked me to help him out with a presentation. Anyway, I was driving past Fenway and -

MALLORY

Brian asked you to help him out?

JONATHAN

Yes. He's my boss. He asked for help. I gave it to him. Geez.

MALLORY

I'm sorry. Go ahead.

JONATHAN

Well, I was driving past Fenway Park on my way back to the office and the next thing I knew I had pulled over. I guess just had to stop and look at it, you know, the

JONATHAN (CONT)

ballpark. It's still like a dream to me that the Sox actually won the World Series. And I'm looking at Fenway and thinking about my old man and all those teams we used to root for and all of a sudden I was struck by the damndest thought.

MALLORY

What?

JONATHAN

It's something Phil said to me once. All my life I've been a Red Sox fan and rooted for them to win a World Series. But at the same time, deep down, I knew they never would because there was this Curse.

MALLORY

For selling Babe Ruth to the Yankees.

Jonathan is quite surprised.

MALLORY

(CONT)

Well don't act so surprised. I did grow up here, you know. You know, growing up I used to hear about this Curse all the time. Always seemed so silly to me. I mean what does what happened a hundred years ago have to do with what happens today?

JONATHAN

But don't you see? That's just it! When it came to the Red Sox it was easy to believe in things like a Curse. No, it became necessary to believe in it to keep yourself from going crazy every time they got close to winning it all.

MALLORY

So now they've won. You should be happy. It turns out there is no Curse.

JONATHAN

No, that's just the point, don't you see? If there wasn't a Curse that means that all along the answer was that they just weren't good enough to win it all.

MALLORY

So... you think it's better to be unlucky than bad?

JONATHAN

All I know is that all these years I've accepted a ball dribbling through some guy's legs or a base runner falling down rounding third as something mystical rather than physical. I've been disappointed, sure, but I've just shrugged my shoulders and said 'well, that's the Curse for you!'

MALLORY

But what else could you have done about it? You weren't playing for the Red Sox.

JONATHAN

(SURPRISED AT HIMSELF)

I'm not talking about the Red Sox. I'm talking about me.

Jonathan looks lost, leading Mallory to reach out for his hand, which Jonathan takes with surprise and gratitude.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE THE TENNIS.NET BUILDING - DAY

Jon swipes his card through the reader and, to his surprise, the door immediately pops open.

CUT TO:

INT - CONFERENCE ROOM AT TENNIS.COM - DAY

Gene suddenly bursts through the door.

BRIAN

Admiral on the bridge!

Gene chuckles and several sets of eyes roll.

GENE

Good morning, everyone. Let's get started. Brian, that was a fine bit of work on the trade show booth. Everyone in the Valley loved it.

BRIAN

Thank you, Gene.

Jonathan's usual indifference is supplanted by great interest. He eyes the room stealthily.

GENE

Now we have an opportunity to pitch some new business in the Valley, and I'm looking for someone to do a business-oriented presentation that really shows off our -

JONATHAN

I'll do it!

No one in the room looks more surprised than Jonathan.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

I, mean, uh, I have some thoughts on how to do that.

GENE

Very good, Jon. Why don't you drop by my office tomorrow morning and you can tell me what they are. Now, next on the agenda is the Corpus Christi dot Com evaluation. I'll need a couple of people to review the..

As Gene continues to speak, Jonathan tries to catch his breath from his exhilarating experience. Phil, Kenny, Neil, Marie, and Brian look at him with surprise.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Jonathan is on the phone.

JONATHAN

I don't know how late. I told you, I volunteered for a special project. No, I'm not kidding you.

Kenny shows up at the entrance to the cube.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

Look, I'll call you later.

Jonathan hangs up the phone.

KENNY

So, it's the big man with the big idea.

JONATHAN

Yea, that's me, all right.

KENNY

Well, you really tucked it to Neil. He told Marie that he was all set to present his plan, too.

JONATHAN

Too? What too? I don't have any plan.

KENNY

Then why the hell did you volunteer?

JONATHAN

Beats the shit outta me. It was like some out of body experience. I saw my hand go up and heard someone with my voice saying he had some big ideas for the new presentation.

KENNY

Well you'll come up with something.

JONATHAN

(WITH RESOLVE, AS HE
LOOKS INTO BRIAN'S OFFICE)

You're right. I will.

We HEAR R.E.M.'s "END OF THE WORLD."

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Except for the cleaning crew the building is empty. Jonathan works furiously at his desk, then picks up the ringing phone.

JONATHAN

Hello. Hello? Hello?

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock on the bed stand reads 11:24 P.M. Mallory, satisfied Jon was at his desk, hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The clock on the bed stand, which now reads 6:00 A.M., suddenly comes alive and we HEAR the music fade as the DJ speaks.

DJ

Good morning, Boston on this cold January morning. We've got more of your favorite tunes coming up -

Jonathan slams his fist on top of the radio.

MALLORY
What time did you get in?

JONATHAN
(GROGGY)
Uhhh, about one thirty.

MALLORY
You must be exhausted. Let me make you
breakfast.

Jonathan tries to mask his surprise.

JONATHAN
Breakfast? Oh, gee, thanks.

Jonathan looks confused, and pinches his arm to make sure he is
awake. Satisfied, he gets out of bed and goes to the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT - THE BATHROOM - DAY

Jonathan is shaving, and he HEARS the sounds of Mallory in the
kitchen. He shakes his head in disbelief.

CUT TO:

INT - THE KITCHEN - DAY

Eyeing Mallory suspiciously, Jon eats breakfast as she looks on.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE TENNIS.NET - DAY

Jonathan successfully swipes his card and enters the building.

CUT TO:

INT - AISLE NEAR JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Jonathan is about to enter his cubicle.

KENNY
Hey!

Jonathan backs up and peers inside Kenny's cubicle.

JONATHAN
Hey yourself.

KENNY
I'm not going to ask.

Jonathan smiles and pats his computer carrying bag.

JONATHAN

Took me until after midnight, but I think I got it.

KENNY

Good luck.

Jonathan smiles as he walks into his own cubicle.

JONATHAN

Luck? I don't know the meaning of the word.

CUT TO:

INT - BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Across the hall, staring darkly back at Jonathan from his office, Brian whispers to himself

BRIAN

Well, you better learn it because you're going to need it.

CUT TO:

INT - OUTSIDE THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Waiting outside Gene's office Jon looks a bit haggard, but he perks up when Gene opens his door and motions him to step inside.

CUT TO:

INT - THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Like a preacher at a revival meeting, we SEE Jonathan making his presentation to Gene, who sits, nods his head, and smiles.

JONATHAN

...And thank you for your time.

GENE

It was my pleasure, believe me.

Gene leans forward and becomes very serious. Jon is anxious.

GENE

(CONT)

Jon, you've been with Tennis dot Net for how long now?

JONATHAN

Uh, let's see... about eight years, now, sir.

GENE

Eight years and seven months, to be exact.
I pulled your personnel records yesterday.
I must say you are a very consistent
employee.

JONATHAN

Thank you.

GENE

That wasn't a compliment, son.

JONATHAN

Oh.

GENE

The employee in this folder is a model of
benign efficiency and banal reliability. In
other words, duller than dishwater. You get
the job done, son, but that's about it. I
suppose I could run a company stocked with
nothing but Jonathan Bailey's and make a
profit. But you know what? That company
wouldn't last more than a few years before
it suffocated. Now I'm not saying a company
doesn't need a whole mess of Jonathan
Bailey's working for it. We do. That's why
you've lasted here this long with this kind
of record. But Jon, what you've presented
to me this morning showed insight and
thought and creativity and what I want to
know is... where have you been for the past
eight years?

Jonathan can only shrug his shoulders.

GENE

(CONT)

Ever take any marketing courses, Jon?

JONATHAN

A few. Back in college.

GENE

Me too. Took lots of them. Read lots of
case studies that were supposed to show
why some companies failed and others
succeeded. And you know what I found? That
the companies that succeeded were run by
people willing to take chances where
conventional wisdom said they should not.
You follow me?

JONATHAN

I think, sir, what you're saying is that after eight years and seven months you want me to give you a reason to take a chance.

GENE

So we understand each other?

Jonathan nods.

CUT TO:

INT - HALLWAY AT TENNIS.NET - DAY

Jonathan, Kenny, Marie, and Phil stand around a water cooler.

KENNY

Come on, tell us. It's the least you can do if you're going to blow us off.

JONATHAN

I'm not blowing you off, I just decided to hit the treadmill during lunch, that's all.

MARIE

Out of the blue you decided to hit the treadmill?

JONATHAN

Hey, I'm getting older and I've got to take better care of myself, you know. The days when I could have a Big Mac and fries and simply sweat it off sitting through Calculus class are long gone. Besides, the warm weather will be here soon and a nice jog at lunch might help me clear my head.

Jonathan sees only blank stares.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

Look, I gotta go and get some stuff done.

KENNY

Sure.

MARIE

Uh huh.

PHIL

See you later.

Jonathan walks away.

MARIE

Jogging? Since when does Jonathan Bailey jog?

MARIE

Hey listen, his health isn't the reason for Jon to exercise. Everyone knows that Gene always invites the newest "Golden Boy" to jog with him at lunch. Jon's just doing the smart thing and getting in shape so he doesn't have a heart attack, that's all.

KENNY

Did you know I heard he's going to the Valley to make the presentation?

PHIL

No shit. Imagine. Jonathan on a business trip. That must have been some meeting.

KENNY

That must have been some presentation.

MARIE

That must be some drug they're putting in Gene's coffee.

CUT TO:

INT - THE BAILEY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan is sorting through his mail. Mal is on the couch.

MALLORY

A business trip? Since when do you take business trips?

JONATHAN

You know, I'd like to get upset at your reaction but I have to admit it's not much different than mine was.

MALLORY

I'm sorry, I'm really very proud of you, Jon. Congratulations. It is congratulations, right? I mean, this is what you want, right?

JONATHAN

Mal, I never thought I'd hear myself say this, but yes, I do want it. I want it bad.

MALLORY

I never thought I'd hear you say that either... I'm sorry, that didn't come out the way I meant it.

JONATHAN

(SADLY AND DEFENSIVELY)

No, I think it did.

He walks out of the room, leaving a very regretful Mallory.

CUT TO:

INT - EXERCISE ROOM AT TENNIS.NET - DAY

Jonathan, in a sweat suit, steps onto one of three treadmills and turns on a television sitting on a shelf, and begins flipping through the channels until he sees a reporter standing in front of Fenway Park. He raises the volume and listens.

REPORTER

In spring a young man - and woman's heart - turns to baseball, and in Boston that means the World Champion Red Sox. The Red Sox report that season ticket sales were the best ever, despite another increase in the average price of ten percent they say is necessary to fund the construction of the replacement for Fenway Park

Jonathan SEES the camera pull back to a wide view of the park and of people lining up at the ticket office. His face goes white.

JONATHAN

Holy shit!

He freezes in place and goes flying off the treadmill landing on the floor. He HEARS the studio anchor on the TV.

ANCHOR

Thanks, Stacey, for that live report from Fenway Park, the home of the World Champion Red Sox. Gosh I just love saying that.

Gene walks in and is shocked to see Jonathan on the floor.

GENE

Jon, are you all right?

JONATHAN

Yes, I'm fine.

GENE

Did you... fall off that thing?

JONATHAN

I... uh... yea, I guess I did.

GENE

Do you want me to call the nurse? Maybe you shouldn't be exerting yourself like that... What happened?

Totally embarrassed, Jon struggles whether to come clean.

JONATHAN

Are you a baseball fan, Gene?

GENE

I can't imagine what that has to do with you ending up on the floor but yes, I'm a very big fan. In fact I have season tickets to the Red Sox. Had 'em since my late twenties.

JONATHAN

Good seats?

GENE

Good? First base side with a view of the Wall second to none. So close to the field you can hear the sound of the runner's cleats hitting the bag.

JONATHAN

My dad and I used to go about six or seven times a year. He worked the line at Gillette and...

Jonathan's voice FADES and we HEAR "End of the World" as he speak to Gene, who nods understandingly. The music FADES.

JONATHAN

But this year I've just been so busy. Can you believe it? Of all the years to forget it has to be the year after they finally win the Series.

GENE

Do you regret taking on all this work, Jon?

JONATHAN

No! Not at all. I guess it just kind of caught me by surprise.

GENE

You mean that success comes at a price?

JONATHAN

I... I mean I never really thought about it like that, but yea, sure.

GENE

You've been hiding in that cubicle a long time, son. Welcome to the real world.

Gene pats Jon on the shoulder paternally.

GENE

(CONT)

Now what do you say we get some exercise?

They both get on their treadmills and watch the TV.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

Jonathan is in his cubicle, looking a little stunned but happy. Kenny, Phil, and Marie cluster at the entrance.

KENNY

Congratulations, man, you must be flying.

JONATHAN

To tell you the truth, I'm a little stunned.

JONATHAN

Assistant Marketing Manager. Wow.

KENNY

It had to happen, man, especially after all that presentation you gave to the Corpus Christi people.

PHIL

I heard you blew them away.

JONATHAN

Yea, it went very well.

MARIE

Wait a minute. Assistant Marketing Manager? We don't have an Assistant Marketing Manager.

PHIL

We didn't until today. They created the position just for Jon.

KENNY

I heard Gene say he was afraid to let someone of your caliber think there wasn't a career path.

JONATHAN

Yea, that's kind of what he said to me when he gave me the news.

MARIE

So have you told your wife?

JONATHAN

Not yet. I can't wait to see the look on her face when I tell her she's sleeping with -

CUT TO:

INT -JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - INT

Jonathan has a huge smile on his face.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

- the new Assistant Marketing Manager for North America. How about that, huh?

MALLORY

Wow. I don't know what to say.

JONATHAN

How about congratulations?

MALLORY

Congratulations, darling.

They kiss, but hers is less than enthusiastic.

JONATHAN

What's this? I thought this is what you wanted. A husband on the fast track.

MALLORY

Yes, of course it is.

JONATHAN

And here's the best part. The job is management so the pay rate is totally different. I'm an E-fifteen now. That means bonuses, stock options. It means everything you've always wanted Mal. In fact...

He hands Mallory a sheet of paper that was on a table.

MALLORY

What's this?

JONATHAN

Remember that house on Cape Ann? The one with the gables and iron gate that you always said you'd want if we had the money? I called a broker this afternoon. She said with my new salary and the market the way it is we could sell this pile of junk and have more than enough for a down payment.

MALLORY

This is all happening so fast.

JONATHAN

No more arguing with windows, Mal. No more being ashamed of having your friends over...

MALLORY

I was never ashamed, Jon, I just -

JONATHAN

No, you were ashamed, and now I see why. We were being held back, baby, by me, I recognize that now. But not anymore.

Overwhelmed, Mallory sits down on the bed, still holding the offer sheet. Jonathan begins changing into a new outfit.

MALLORY

What are you doing?

JONATHAN

Getting dressed. We're going to the club tonight, remember?

MALLORY

(ENTICING HIM)

I know we were going to go, but I was just thinking that, you know, maybe we could stay home and, you know, celebrate.

JONATHAN

And we will, baby, we will, I promise. But it's important that I - we - be there, you know?

Mallory looks disappointed. He puts his arm around her.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

Mal, this invitation came from Gene personally.

MALLORY

I know, it's just...

JONATHAN

What?

MALLORY

You've been working late a lot recently, and, well, I kind of miss just sitting at home watching TV with you.

JONATHAN

You miss fighting over the remote?

MALLORY

(SADLY)

Yes.

He is a bit taken aback, but there is a resolve in his voice.

JONATHAN

Honey, I'm in management now. That means that sometimes it's not just about where we want to go but where we have to go.

Mallory looks as though she has fallen through the looking glass.

CUT TO:

EXT - MAIN DINING ROOM OF THE MATTAPOISETT GOLF CLUB - NIGHT

Well-dressed couples make their "entrances" into the well-appointed dining room. A subdued Mallory and ebullient Jonathan enter. Mark and Steve approach.

MARK

Jonathan, how long has it been? Jesus, you look great.

JONATHAN

(PATTING HIS STOMACH)

Hello, Mark. Thanks. Been working out.

MARK

It shows, man, it shows. Oh, hey, you remember Steve, don't you?

JONATHAN
(SARCASTICALLY)

Oh yes, you're the poor fellow from the Cambridge Group who was stuck in that Director's job for three years.

STEVEN
(EMBARASSED)

Well, from what Mark's been telling me you're the man on the way up.

Mallory's eyes spring open.

JONATHAN
Well, I don't know about that. I'm getting a few things done.

MARK
Oh, knock off the 'aw shucks' routine, Jon. We've captured two new accounts in the past month, alone, thanks to Jon here.

STEVE
Is that so?

MARK
It sure is. In fact, Jon has found a whole new way of approaching clients that lets them see the cost benefits of our programs from their perspective. It's remarkable.

STEVE
Is that so?

Steve studies Jonathan, then hands Mark his glass.

STEVE
(CONT, TRANSPARENTLY)
Say, Mark, would you mind getting me a refill?

MARK
Oh. Sure. Jon, can I get you something?

JONATHAN
No, I'll wait until we sit down.

Mark walks to the bar, ignoring Mallory. She is stunned at her invisibility.

STEVE
So Jonathan old man how are they treating you over at Tennis dot net?

Mallory glumly follows them into the reception hall.

CUT TO:

INT - MAIN RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Jonathan's confident gait stands in contrast to the still attractive but now subdued Mallory. They pass two couples seated at a table near the entrance to the reception hall, and one woman turns to her companions.

WOMAN

Now how did she ever get him?

Mallory falls further through the looking glass.

CUT TO:

INT - MAIN RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

From another table, Brian has been watching the same scene. He scans the room looking for someone, then stands up and walks over to another table, where we SEE a head of white hair from the back. Brian practically sneers as he extends his hand.

BRIAN

Hello, Gene. Nice to see you. Say, has Jonathan Bailey gotten here yet? Oh, never mind, there he is. Say, who is that with him?

Gene turns around and his pleasant demeanor disappears as he sees Steve plying Jon with drinks.

CUT TO:

INT - TENNIS.NET EXERCISE ROOM - DAY

Jonathan is on a treadmill watching TV. Gene enters.

GENE

Mind of I join you?

JONATHAN

Oh, hi Gene. No not at all. Jog away.

GENE

Why don't you turn that off? I'd rather talk while we walk, if that's all right.

JONATHAN

(TURNS OFF THE TV)

Sure. Do you want to go over the Corpus Christi presentation for next week?

GENE

No, let's just talk.

JONATHAN

Is there anything the matter Gene?

GENE

I like to think that this company is good to it's employees. Would you agree with that statement?

JONATHAN

Of course I do, Gene.

GENE

I know it's in vogue these days to jump ship the moment a better title or larger office or the chance for a few stock options comes along, but the problem with that tactic is that it ignores the long term benefits of sticking with one firm. Loyalty isn't dead, at least not as far as I'm concerned. I respect a man who recognizes there's probably no gold watch in anyone's future, but thinks before he leaps. You follow me?

Jon nods.

GENE
(CONT)

Good.

JONATHAN

Gene?

GENE

Yes?

JONATHAN

Did I do something wrong?

GENE

I could ask the same thing of you. Did I or someone at Tennis dot Net do something wrong?

JONATHAN

Of course not. You've been terrific.

GENE

Exactly my point. So why would you want to leave?

JONATHAN

I wouldn't.

GENE

Jon, I remember what a southern policeman once said to me when I tried to explain how I hadn't seen that stop sign big as day. He said 'son, don't try to bullshit an old bullshitter.'

JONATHAN

I'm not bullshitting you, Gene. I don't want to leave.

GENE

All right, Jon, have it your way. I guess as hard as I try I still don't quite understand the way you young bucks operate these days. Maybe it's time I did. Maybe it's time I did. I'll say this much for you, Jon. For a guy whose been ducking a career for all these years you've sure caught on fast. I'd like to get upset but all I can be is impressed.

Gene exits and Jon looks very confused.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mallory reaches for the alarm that has just rung. She lays there as Jonathan bounces out of bed, stretches and heads for the bathroom. Mallory cannot take her eyes off him, and before Jonathan can take another step, Mallory leaps from the bed and grabs and gives him a passionate kiss. All of a sudden he takes over, kissing her back with a fervor that takes her breath away. Before she realizes what has happened, Mallory is on the bed.

CUT TO:

INT - SUBURBAN BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

No work is getting done because Francine, Debbie, Mary Ellen, the Manicurist, and the two hairdressers are surrounding Mallory.

MALLORY

Now I know there's something wrong.

MARY ELLEN

Because it wasn't any good, huh?

MALLORY

That's just it. He was... fantastic. I mean, my God, I've never experienced anything like it. We were at it so long he was late for work.

The other girls giggle.

DEBBIE

Cool. Did he like, use a new position or something?

MALLORY

No, it was all pretty... you know, standard as far as that goes. But he did it with such... I don't know, confidence.

FRANCINE

Oooh. So who got things started?

MALLORY

I did, I guess. He had just gotten up and was heading for the bathroom and suddenly I saw this... body.

FRANCINE

He's been working out, huh?

MALLORY

No. I mean he's started exercising during lunch but that's not it. I don't know, maybe it was the way he swaggered when he walked -

FRANCINE

Swaggered? Jonathan?

MALLORY

I know. It's hard to believe.

MARY ELLEN

I don't know, Mallory, I saw Jon when I had lunch with Kenny the other day. He was looking pretty hot.

DEBBIE

Really?

Mary Ellen giggles as she nods, and Mallory doesn't look pleased at Francine and Debbie's interest.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBE - DAY

We SEE across the hall at the "real" office from Jonathan's cube. The view is suddenly blocked by Neil.

NEIL

So, you gonna ask for new carpeting?

We SEE that Jonathan's cube is half-empty, and Jonathan is putting papers and folders into a box.

JONATHAN

Nah. Brian picked out a pretty good color.
And it's that really thick pile, too.

Neil nods his head in assent. Kenny appears next to Neil.

KENNY

Hey Neil. So, Jon, how's the new Marketing Manager for North America doing, huh?

JONATHAN

Good morning, Kenny.

Gene, the Vice President, now appears at the cubicle entrance. Kenny and Neil seem to stiffen up slightly. Gene hands Jonathan an envelope.

GENE

Jonathan, I'm stuck in a meeting so I'm going to have to skip lunch.

JONATHAN

Oh, sorry to hear that.

GENE

Believe me, I'd rather go to lunch. But I'll see you at the game. Here are your tickets.

Gene hands Jon an envelope and exits, nodding efficiently to Neil and Kenny. Kenny is wide-eyed as a kid.

KENNY

Are those what I think they are?

Jonathan nods his head.

KENNY

(CONT)

Opening day? You're going to opening day?
You son-of-a-bitch.

JONATHAN

(TO NEIL, WITH A SMILE)

You know, there's just no respect for authority, these days.

KENNY

Opening day, do you know what that means? You're gonna be there for the first Red Sox game since they won the World Series. You're gonna see them put up the World Series banner!

CUT TO:

EXT - FENWAY PARK - DAY

Fenway Park has been festooned in American flags and bunting. We still HEAR Kenny speaking as we watch the ceremony to raise the World Series Championship flag over the old ball park. Men weep openly as Red Sox players (including some elderly, former players) help hoist the World Series flag.

KENNY

(CONT, in V.O.)

Yaz, Rice, Eckersley, they're all coming back. This is like the hardest ticket in the universe to get and - what's this?

JONATHAN

(V.O.)

Gene gave me two tickets.

KENNY

(V.O.)

Are you kidding me?

JONATHAN

(V.O.)

No, I'm not, I -

We HEAR the sound of a single kiss on a cheek.

JONATHAN

(V.O.)

Uhhh, Kenny? You're not going to do that at the game, are you?

We SEE the Fenway Park crowd on their feet and HEAR cheering.

CUT TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK - DAY

The game has ended and the ecstatic crowd (Gene, the other suit, Kenny, and Jonathan among them) empties onto Yawkey Way.

KENNY

I can't thank you enough for this, Gene.

JONATHAN

Me too. Opening Day is special enough, but to watch them raise that pennant, and then win by 6 runs...

KENNY

Awesome. Unbelievable.

GENE

Not a bad way to play hooky.

KENNY

Yea, and going with you meant we didn't have to pretend to be sick.

They all laugh.

JONATHAN

You missed lunch, Gene, so how about a drink now?

GENE

I'd love to, but I've got a meeting to go to and then I've got to get ready for the analyst tour. I'm on a plane for San Francisco tomorrow and, well, you know the story.

JONATHAN

I'm learning. Anyway, thanks again for the tickets.

KENNY

Yea, thanks, Gene.

Gene shakes Kenny's hand then Jon's. He stops, looks deep into Jonathan's eyes as he puts his other hand on his shoulder. Gene looks misty-eyed at the old ballpark and at Jon.

GENE

We never thought we'd see this day, did we Jon? Too bad our old men aren't around to share this - and everything else with us. I'm sure they'd be real proud.

JONATHAN

Thank you, sir. I had the same thought myself.

Gene smiles and he and the suit walk away. Kenny looks at Jon with awe as they walk through the still exuberant crowd. We SEE the profile of the dark figure in the background.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Jonathan proudly shows his new office Mallory.

JONATHAN

So, what do you think?

MALLORY

I think considering how hard you've been working for them that this office is the least they could do.

JONATHAN

Thanks. I'll take that as a compliment.

MALLORY

Of course it was a compliment. You've been working very hard.

JONATHAN

Thanks, again.

MALLORY

So tell me the truth, Jon. Do you really like the job?

JONATHAN

Well, like anything else it has its ups and downs.

Mallory looks at the well-appointed office.

MALLORY

It's obvious what the ups are, but what about the downs?

JONATHAN

Where do I start? Used to be I kept my head down and had to watch out only for my own mistakes. Now that I'm in charge of a department I have six people reporting to me and every one of their mistakes are now mine. That's probably the hardest thing to accept about this job.

MALLORY

Any others?

JONATHAN

You know I haven't seen a single Red Sox game from start to finish since that first game? I catch snippets of them playing as I'm racing through an airport or else I watch the taped highlights in my hotel room before I fall asleep. Of course this has the year I can't watch them when they're something like 40 and 13, in first place by like a dozen games... Mallory? What is it?

MALLORY

(SADLY)

Are there any more downs, Jon?

JONATHAN

What do you mean, like what?

MALLORY

Like maybe I was hoping that a downside of all those business trips and late nights preparing your precious presentations would be that we don't get to spend as much time together anymore.

JONATHAN

Mallory, I... I don't know what to say. To keep this office and salary that goes with it means a lot of work.

MALLORY

But if you didn't want to do it you wouldn't, would you?

JONATHAN

No, I suppose not.

MALLORY

You've even said that its fun playing the corporate game. You enjoy it.

JONATHAN

Yes, I enjoy it, but it doesn't mean I wouldn't rather be watching a Red Sox game. Or sitting with you watching television.

MALLORY

No, you don't Jon. You don't miss being with me because you never liked it.

JONATHAN

That's not true! I did. I did very much

MALLORY

Of course it is, Jon. You would have rather been watching or going to your stupid ball game.

JONATHAN

Just a minute, Mallory, God-damn it. You know I hate it when you tell me how I'm feeling. I love you. Why do you think I'm busting my ass in this job?

MALLORY

Because you like it. You said so.

JONATHAN

I like the challenge. I like the excitement sure. But what I really like is that I can give you all the things that you want, Mal.

MALLORY

But what if all I want is you?

JONATHAN

(STUNNED)

You know, for years when I was working in that cubicle right across that aisle all I wanted was to hear those words from you. Instead, what I got was how I'm not living up to my potential, or how I'm too easy-going, or how miserable you were because the windows in our crappy home stuck. And now that I've responded just as you wanted, all you can do is complain. What do you want, Mallory? Once and for all would you tell me what you want!

Mallory suddenly bursts into tears.

JONATHAN

(CONT, HIS ARM AROUND HER)

Mallory, please. Please stop crying. Look, I don't know if this is about you and, you know, your... physical condition or if it's about me and the hours I'm putting in or something else entirely. All I know is that I love you. Don't ask me why. You didn't marry a poet or a writer so I can't express it as well as I wish I could. I just know that I have ever since you spilled that daiquiri on me during Game six.

MALLORY

It wasn't a daiquiri, it was tequila.

JONATHAN

Huh. And all this time I thought it was a daiquiri... The important thing is that it was you, and that's made all the difference in my life.

Jonathan leans forward and kisses her gently on the lips. She returns his kiss with a force surprises him. She wraps her arms around his shoulders and pushes him backwards onto the floor of his office, her hips now grinding slowly against his. He rolls on top of her and begins to unbutton her blouse.

CUT TO:

INT - OUTSIDE JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Gloria, Gene's white-haired secretary, is about to knock on the door when Kenny interrupts.

KENNY

I wouldn't do that, Glo. Not now, at least.

GLORIA

But Gene wanted me to get an important message to Jonathan.

KENNY

Yea, but he and Mallory are in there and they've been fighting.

GLORIA

I don't hear anything now.

KENNY

Probably taking a breather.

Gloria nods with understanding.

CUT TO:

INT - THE NEW BAILY HOUSE - DAY

Mallory is leading her three friends on a tour of her new house.

MALLORY

I'm telling you girls, when I think of the time I spent in that old kitchen just arranging everything. I mean there's just so much room here to play with.

MARY ELLEN

You know, Kenny tells me that Jonathan is practically Gene Walker's right-hand man.

MALLORY

Yea, I guess. Anyway -

DEBBIE

Who's Gene Walker?

MARY ELLEN

Only the vice president in charge of marketing. He's like everyone's boss over there. Kenny says that since the end of last year Jonathan has, like, taken over the whole department.

MALLORY

Now, the bathroom has this inlay that-

FRANCINE

What's his title now, Mallory?

MALLORY

Oh, uh... Marketing Manager for North America. Something like that. Mary Ellen... Debbie... did I show you the inlay in the upstairs bathroom tile?

DEBBIE

He's the manager now? How wonderful.

Mallory listens to the girls continue to talk about Jon, his job, and his body, and is desperate for a way to stop them.

MALLORY

Jonathan and I had sex in his office.

Everyone stops talking.

DEBBIE

You did it on the floor of his office?

Mallory nods her head. Debbie and Mary Ellen squeal as they fan themselves wildly. Francine smirks and Mallory smiles.

FRANCINE

How was it?

MALLORY

(HAPPY TO BE AT THE
CENTER OF ATTENTION)

Incredible.

MARY ELLEN

Hey Mal. When did this happen?

MALLORY

Wednesday of last week. Why?

MARY ELLEN

Because I just remembered that Kenny came home that night and told me you had visited the office that day. He told me that you two were having this monster fight in the office.

MALLORY

(UPSET AT THE REVELATION)

It wasn't really a fight. It was more like a discussion.

FRANCINE

(SMIRKING)

Discussion, huh? About what?

MALLORY

I don't remember, it was so insignificant.

FRANCINE

Uh huh.

MALLORY

(RELUCTANTLY)

Well, if you must know, it was about how Jon's been working a lot of hours and going on a lot of business trips and how we don't get to see each other as much.

FRANCINE

Well, I can see how you'd be upset. After all, what good does it do to be married to a stud if he isn't around?

DEBBIE

Yea, any guy who would do it in his office like that, wow.

Mallory seethes, as the girls continue to talk about how great Jonathan is.

CUT TO:

INT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mallory is looking at her well-appointed living room, when she HEARS the sound of a car in the driveway. She hears the radio.

ANNOUNCER

...and so the Sox lose a tough one in eleven
innings by the score of three to two and
drop out of first place for the first time
since September of last year when they
began their remarkable run towards their
first World's Championship in -

The car shuts off and a few moments later, Jonathan enters.

JONATHAN

Hey Mal! What a nice surprise. I thought
for sure you'd be in bed. It was a another
great trip. Gene said I knocked 'em cold.
So... whatcha doing?

MALLORY

Oh, nothing. You know, just sitting here
looking around at the house.

JONATHAN

I know how you feel. I do it to, sometimes.
Sometimes I'll just sit here and gaze at
everything we've got. Bet you'd never
thought you'd be living in a home like
this, huh? Come on, admit it.

MALLORY

(ROLLING HER EYES)

Jonathan, we've been through this before. I
told you that I always knew you had the
potential.

JONATHAN

But you never thought I'd reach it. Now
don't try to deny it, baby, because I know
it's true.

Mallory rolls her eyes again as Jonathan swaggers around the room
and pats his flat stomach through his shirt. Then he scowls as he
walks over the front window.

JONATHAN

How come this window is open?

MALLORY

I don't know. There was a nice breeze and
so I opened the window.

JONATHAN

(STRAINING TO CLOSE THE WINDOW)

Mallory, you've got to keep the windows closed when you have the air conditioning on, or else... Or else...

Jonathan's face is turning red with the strain.

MALLORY

Jon, are you all right?

JONATHAN

Everything would be fine if you'd just leave the - God-damn it - leave the windows alone.

Jonathan releases his grip and stands back from the window to catch his breath. He grabs it again and pushes it upward with all his might. Suddenly, the window gives way and Jonathan flies backwards and lands on the ground, gulping air like a grounded fish. Mallory rushes to his side.

JONATHAN

Stupid... windows... They're not... supposed... to stick... like that.

Mallory looks down at her husband and then up at the window. A smile slowly crosses her face.

CUT TO:

EXT - FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

The scoreboard shows that the Sox are down by two runs. The crowd watches a Red Sox runner get caught in a run-down between second and third base and get tagged out. The people in the stands shake their heads, looking resigned as they get up from their seats.

CUT TO:

INT - JERRY JOSEPHS' STUDIO - DAY

The phone has only one line blinking and the station manager, standing in back of the producer's booth, is eyeing Jerry with concern. Jerry's attention switches between the phone and the station manager. Beads of sweat start to appear on his brow.

JERRY

Well, how about it, folks? Where are the faithful to tell me it's only three losses in a row? Where's my buddy Ray from South Boston to remind me that it's only July? Carlos from Chelsea, Anne from Dover, where are you guys? See, this is the kind of lousy fan loyalty... you guys don't deserve a

JERRY (CONT)

World Series champion, how about that?

Okay, how about this? Your team sucks!

Jerry and the producer stare helplessly at the unlit phone. The station manager shakes his head and leaves the producer's booth.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Next to Jon, who is on the phone, is the Globe sports section with the headline: SOX LOSE FIFTH IN A ROW, FALL TO THIRD PLACE.

JONATHAN

But I did call the realtor. Don't tell me what I did or didn't do, Mal, you know how that annoys me. Yes, I was very clear about the windows and she said she would have a carpenter come by and -

Gene appears at the office door.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

Look, I gotta go. Yea, I call you later.

Jonathan hangs up the phone.

GENE

Sorry to interrupt -

JONATHAN

No, that's OK. What can I do for you?

Gene enters and shuts the door behind him.

GENE

I don't want to make a bigger deal out of this than it needs to be, Jon...

JONATHAN

But...?

GENE

But you were supposed to have your quarterly report on my desk by noon yesterday.

JONATHAN

Gene, I'm sorry. I was waiting for some data from Jeff in accounting and -

GENE

One of the things you've got to learn as a manager is not to let your lieutenants dictate your schedule.

JONATHAN

Yes, sir.

GENE

You're the boss, not them.

JONATHAN

Yes, sir.

GENE

If they can't meet your needs then maybe we need to find something else for them to do, right?

JONATHAN

Right.

GENE

Good man.

Gene nods officiously and exits the office. Jonathan looks tired, as we HEAR the cheers of a Fenway Park crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT - FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

It's the bottom of the tenth inning, there are two outs, and the Red Sox are down by three runs and the bases are loaded. There are two strikes on the batter, who just stands there as pitcher throws and the umpire calls him out on the third strike. It is as if the air has been sucked out of the park, as the crowd stands in resigned disbelief. They slowly exit the park.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kenny, Phil, Marie, and Neil work around a table in Jonathan's office compiling papers, writing down notes in a laptop computer, drawing on a white board. They are all tired and hungry. Jonathan, looking detached, sits at his desk.

NEIL

Hey John.

JONATHAN

Yea?

NEIL
(POINTING TO THE COMPUTER SCREEN)
You want to go over this now?

JONATHAN
Uh, sure, I guess.

Jon moves as if weights were strapped to his legs.

NEIL
Now I thought we'd use the click-through
rate as background, you know, because we
have the purchase data that's a lot more
verifiable.

JONATHAN
(REALLY TIRED)
Yea, sure whatever.

NEIL
Look, Jon, I know it's late and we're all
tired but we really need some direction
here.

Jon heads to the window, but stops and stares at his old cubicle.
Neil is boiling mad, but Marie stands up and intercepts him.

MARIE
Jon?

JONATHAN
Yes?

MARIE
Everything all right?

JONATHAN
Yea, I was just thinking, I guess.

MARIE
About what?

JONATHAN
About how much simpler the view was from
over there.

Neil throws the papers he is holding in the air.

NEIL
That's it! I'm out of here. Call me when he
decides to get some work done.

Neil storms out of the office and Phil, Marie, and Kenny look uncomfortably at each other and Jonathan.

CUT TO:

INT - JERRY JOSEPHS' STUDIO - DAY

The station manager paces behind the producer, as Jerry, looking like a trapped animal, stares at the completely dead phone. The smile he gives the station manager is met with a blank stare. Suddenly, Jerry's eyes widen and he smiles.

JERRY

You want to know why the Sox are in third place? I'll tell you why. It's not the team, per se, because except for a couple of utility infielders - who hardly saw any playing time except during blowouts anyway - you've essentially got the same line-up that won the World Series. But second baseman Manny Gutterez, who as we all know was sent to the New York Yankees just a week after the Series, has already batted in 32 runs and is hitting almost three hundred for the Bombers. So once again the Red Sox have sold off an all-star player to the New York Yankees. Once again the Yankees are in first place with a former Red Sox the reason. And once again the Sox are paying the price for their short-sightedness. Don't you see what this is? It's the Curse of Manny Gutterez!

Jerry looks hopefully at the unlit phone.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

All over the Boston we SEE hands either shutting off radios or switching them to other stations.

CUT TO:

INT - PRODUCER'S BOOTH - DAY

You can almost hear the crickets as the producer looks at a dead phone. The station manager walks out of the booth, shaking his head in disgust as we HEAR Jerry.

JERRY

What is with you people? Your team is dropping like a stone! You're supposed to be angry! You're supposed to be upset. Come on, doesn't anyone give a shit anymore?

Jerry clasps both hands against his mouth, then frantically motions to the producer, but gets no immediate reaction. Jerry makes a signal with his hand and the ON AIR light goes off and we HEAR a commercial in the background. Jerry punches the intercom button and speaks very frantically.

JERRY

(CONT)

What's the matter with you? Why didn't you hit the delay button?

The producer calmly leans forward and speaks into his intercom.

PRODUCER

Jerry, I told you an hour ago that since you weren't getting any phone calls the engineers took the delay unit out for maintenance. You've been live the whole time.

JERRY

Shit.

Furious, Joe Murphy bursts into the booth, gritting his teeth.

STATION MANAGER

Would you have Jerry see me when he gets off the air?

The producer doesn't have the chance to respond before the station manager exits, slamming the door. He turns to speak to Jerry and sees the sweat pouring off his face.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Behind a mountain of papers, Jonathan sits, on a phone.

JONATHAN

What was I supposed to say? 'Thanks for the personal invitation to your club, Gene, but where the hell are my passes?'

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S KITCHEN - DAY

On the phone in the kitchen, Mallory paces.

MALLORY

But you said I'd be able to go to the club today, and I've made plans with Francine and the rest of the girls. I told them we

MALLROY (CONT)

could go. Now what am I supposed to do? Do you know how embarrassing this is?

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonathan looks extremely fatigued.

JONATHAN

Look, this isn't a problem. I'll go now and ask Gene to call the club and tell them you're on his guest list and everything will be fine. I'll make sure of it. I promise. I'm -

We HEAR the click of Mallory's phone being hung up. Jonathan suddenly bolts from his chair and races out of his office.

CUT TO:

INT - IN BETWEEN TWO ROWS OF CUBICLES - DAY

Jonathan walks swiftly down the corridor.

CUT TO:

INT - GENE'S OFFICE - DAY

Even before Jonathan can enter his office, Gene speaks.

GENE

You want to explain to me about last night?

JONATHAN

You spoke with Brian, I take it.

GENE

I did. From what he tells me you didn't have the most productive of nights.

JONATHAN

Well, now, I wouldn't say that, sir.

GENE

Is the presentation ready?

JONATHAN

Uhhn, no,

GENE

Then what the hell were you doing last night?

JONATHAN

Sir, there's a lot of information that needs to be collated and processed in order to put together the most -

GENE

Come on, Jon, don't bullshit me. Brian showed me the draft and you didn't even use any of the data from the client's own year-end report. What's the use of visiting a prospective customer and doing the research on them if we don't use the information?

JONATHAN

You're right. You're right.

GENE

Brian was pretty annoyed this morning and quite frankly, I can't blame him.

JONATHAN

I don't know what to say.

GENE

So what did you want to see me about?

JONATHAN

See you? About?

GENE

You came to see me, remember? You wanted something?

JONATHAN

I only wanted tell you how sorry I am, Gene. It won't happen again, I promise.

Jon exits and Gene stares at the door.

GENE

Jesus, what have I done?

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonathan frantically listens to (and we HEAR) a phone ring.

JONATHAN

Come on, come on, be there.

We HEAR over the phone an answering machine message.

JONATHAN

Hi, you've reached the Bailey household.
We're not in right now but -

Jonathan slams down the phone.

JONATHAN

Shit.

CUT TO:

INT - ENTRANCE TO THE MATTAPOISETT HEALTH SPA - DAY

The girls make their way to the door of the health club and spa.

MARY ELLEN

Mallory, this is so great of you.

DEBBIE

I have been, like, dying to see what this
place was like inside.

FRANCINE

So Mallory, are you and Jon really gonna
join?

MALLORY

Well, Francine, now that Jon is management
we almost have to, you know?

They approach the window, behind which sits a very officious man.

MAN

Yes, madam, may I assist you?

MALLORY

You may. My name is Mallory Bailey and my
husband is Jonathan Bailey.

MAN

How very nice for you.

MALLORY

(A BIT TAKEN ABACK)

Gene Walker - a club member - was to have
called about four passes that are in my
name?

MAN

I'm sorry madam, but Mister Walker has not
called.

MALLORY

(DESPERATE HER FRIENDS DON'T HEAR)

But he had to! My husband said he would.
Could you check, please? Gene Walker?

MAN

I know Mister Walker, madam, and I assure
you that he has not called about any...
passes. If you'll excuse me.

The man disappears from the window before Mallory can argue.

MALLORY

Oh!

FRANCINE

What happened?

MALLORY

He won't let us in!

MARY ELLEN

But I thought you had passes?

MALLORY

Jonathan didn't get the actual passes in
time, but he was supposed to have someone
call. God-damn it!

DEBBIE

Well don't worry about it, I mean we can
always come back.

MALLORY

I'm just so embarrassed.

MARY ELLEN

There's nothing to be embarrassed about,
Mal, something must have happened at the
office that kept Jon from -

MALLORY

I'll tell you what happened. I trusted my
husband to do something right, for a
change.

DEBBIE

Look, Mal, Mary Ellen's right, there was
obviously a problem and -

Mallory's rant is no longer amusing, as evidenced by the
uncomfortable looks of her friends.

MALLORY

It's that husband of mine and his total lack of respect for me.

FRANCINE

Mal, take it easy.

During Mallory's next rant, Francine speaks to the others.

MALLORY

I've tried, believe me, I've tried to understand how one man could be so... so... I don't know, so infuriating.

FRANCINE

(TO THE OTHERS)

I'll tell you what I think. I think they deserve each other.

Mary Ellen and Debbie nod their heads as the three of them distance themselves from the still ranting Mallory.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN AND MALLORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

By the clock we see it is after midnight. A fatigued Jonathan sits at the edge of his bed, as Mallory stands in front of him.

JONATHAN

What more do you want from me, Mal? I mean how many more times can I apologize?

MALLORY

Keep apologizing. When you get there, I'll let you know.

JONATHAN

(GETS UP)

I can't do this anymore.

MALLORY

What does that mean?

JONATHAN

It means I'm tired, Mallory. I'm tired of being berated because I don't try. I'm tired of being berated when I do. I'm just tired.

MALLORY

And I'm tired of wondering who's going to walk through that door every day.

JONATHAN

And I'm tired of fighting over every little thing -

MALLORY

I don't fight over everything!

JONATHAN

Well, if there's something you won't fight over I haven't found it, because it would be the only thing I'd want to talk about.

Jon goes to exit the bedroom.

MALLORY

Where are you going?

JONATHAN

Downstairs.

MALLORY

Why do you have to go downstairs?

JONATHAN

Do we have to fight over whether I want to go downstairs? Jesus!

Mallory is taken aback. Jonathan is out the door when he stops and turns to speak to her. But all they do is look at each other sadness and anger in their eyes, before Jon turns and exits.

CUT TO:

INT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The light goes on in the kitchen and Jonathan enters. He takes out a beer from the refrigerator and opens it with a flick of his wrist. He sits down at the table and takes a sip, then turns on the table radio. We HEAR the Jerry Josephs jingle.

JERRY

(TOTAL LACK OF ENTHUSIASM)

All right you maniac insomniac sports fans, this is Jerry Josephs on the Boston Fan late night, all night, taking your calls...

(YAWNS)

at 1 - 800 -

(YAWNS)

BOSTON - FAN. Just remember the one rule that we have here on the Jerry Josephs overnight show. No Red Sox talk!

Mallory appears at the kitchen entrance, watching Jon.

CUT TO:

INT - COMPANY LUNCHROOM - DAY

Phil, Marie, and Kenny are sitting down for lunch, taking their sandwiches out of their bags. Kenny unwraps his sandwich and groans. Phil rolls his eyes at Marie, who swaps Kenny's sandwich for hers.

KENNY
(HOPEFULLY)

Egg salad?

Marie nods. Kenny wipes a mock tear from his eyes.

KENNY
(CONT)
Bless you. You are my God.

PHIL
Now there's an interesting religion.

MARIE
Yea, who needs holy water when you've got mayonnaise?

PHIL
Yea, you'd think they'd use Miracle Whip.

KENNY
Do you mind? I'm praying here.

They laugh, then Jonathan enters the cafeteria and all activity ceases. People avert their gaze as Jon walks through the room, puts money into the sandwich vending machine, and punches a button. Nothing happens, so he bangs and slams the machine a few times, without success. Weary, he rests his head on the machine as the lunchroom watches. When he turns around everyone quickly shifts their attention to their food. He exits, after which Kenny, Marie, and Phil look relieved.

CUT TO:

INT - PARK STREET STATION - DAY

Commuters jostle for position on the trolley platform at the beginning of another working day. A businessman is reading the back (Sports) page of the Boston Herald, which has a headline SEE YOU NEXT YEAR! and a subhead THESE SOX STINK. The same man from before reads over the businessman's shoulder.

MAN #1
Who cares? How'd the Celtics do last night?

CUT TO:

INT - GENE WALKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Gene sits behind his desk working on some papers, when we HEAR a soft knock at the door.

JONATHAN

You wanted to see me, Gene?

GENE

Sit down, Jon.

Jonathan sits down. Gene eyes him with some pity and not a little anger.

GENE

(CONT)

Jon, you must be aware that we've got some very upset people around here. We lost the Berkeley Group business, and only by the grace of God were we able to resubmit to Synergy, but only after we promised that you would not be on the account. I shouldn't have to make that kind of promise, wouldn't you agree?

Jon nods solemnly.

GENE

(CONT)

I won't bullshit you, Jon. There are a few on the board who wanted to let you go outright. But you put in nine years that I argued should count for something. Plus I don't like to fire people, especially when the mistake may not have been theirs, but mine. So here's what we're willing to do...

Jonathan listens intently as we

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S ORIGINAL CUBICLE - DAY

Jonathan is transferring files and personal memorabilia from the office back into his cubicle. Kenny, Marie, Phil, and Neil can be seen poking their heads out of the cubicles, and pulling them back in before he can see them. Jonathan sits and begins to sort through the piles, when he picks up a framed Boston Globe front page with the headline "WHAT CURSE?" with a color photo of Fenway Park just after the World Series was won. He looks forlornly at it, then across the aisle at the now empty office, and then at his cubicle before he dumps the frame into the wastebasket. We HEAR the phone ring in his old office. Jonathan jumps up.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S FORMER OFFICE - DAY

Jonathan enters the office, reaches across the desk, and picks up the phone.

JONATHAN

(CATCHING HIS BREATH)

Jonathan Bailey. Oh, hi. No, I was just on the other side of the room.

(SOLEMNLY LOOKS AT HIS CUBICLE)

Hey look, Mal, we need to talk. No, I don't want to do it over the phone. No, I don't want to do it at the house, either. Because we've had enough arguments there, already, okay? Could you meet me at the Marriott? At six? Thank you. Yes, I'll see you-

We HEAR a click of Mallory hanging up her phone. Jonathan hangs up his phone and walks out of the office.

CUT TO:

INT - JONATHAN'S CUBICLE - DAY

The clock reads 11:30. Jonathan stops unpacking and exits his cubicle.

CUT TO:

INT - TENNIS.NET LUNCHROOM - DAY

The lunchroom is empty. Jonathan enters and sits down with a sandwich, just as Marie, Kenny, and Phil enter.

JONATHAN

Hey guys, over here.

Like prisoners to the gallows, they walk to his table and sit.

JONATHAN

So, how have you guys been?

KENNY

Fine.

MARIE

All right.

PHIL

You know, same old, same old.

They sit in uncomfortable silence until Marie turns to Phil and silently, with her eyes, urges him to say something. Phil nods.

PHIL

So, what happened to your team?

JONATHAN

My team? You mean the Red Sox?

PHIL

Don't you still follow them anymore? Or is one World Championship enough for you?

Jonathan laughs gratefully

JONATHAN

I don't know, maybe I'm still getting over the one. It's funny, but after all these years it was hard getting used to a being a winner. I mean rooting for a winner.

MARIE

Wasn't that an interesting slip of the tongue.

JONATHAN

What do you mean?

MARIE

You said 'it's hard getting used to being a winner.'

JONATHAN

No, I didn't.

KENNY

Yes, you did. You said being a winner.

JONATHAN

That is such a strange thing for me to say, because the fact is I'm not feeling like a winner. In fact, as of about two hours ago I officially rejoined the ranks of the cubicle dwellers. The memo will say it was my decision.

They sit silently, digesting the news.

MARIE

Look, Jon, it's all right, you know? It's like that book that guy wrote. Bad things happen to good people.

JONATHAN

So you still think I'm a good person? Even though I worked in an office?

MARIE

None of us ever said you weren't.

Kenny and Phil nod their agreement.

JONATHAN

Thanks. Listen, guys, if I haven't been around, you know, for lunches, or been as... I don't know, friendly, I guess, as I used to be, I just want you to know it's only because I've been so busy, you know.

KENNY

Jon, it's all right. We knew it wasn't personal. You weren't blowing us off. You were busy, that's all. Besides, it wasn't all your fault. There might have been a little jealousy on our parts. You know, the new office and everything.

JONATHAN

Believe me, guys, there was nothing to be jealous of... except maybe for the carpet.

They eat silently for a few moments. Jon beams at his friends.

JONATHAN

(CONT)

You know, I read that book.

KENNY

Which book?

JONATHAN

That book about bad things happening to good people. Mallory and I were given a copy by after her surgery. Didn't to either of us any good. Mallory was in such shape there was no way a book was going to help her. And me, I've always understood why bad things happening to good people.

MARIE

Oh yea? Why?

JONATHAN

Entropy.

MARIE

Entropy?

JONATHAN

Entropy. It's the general running down of the universe. Between friction, gravity, and a whole bunch of other stuff everything eventually runs down and stops working the way it's supposed to. It's why hearts fail and elevator cables snap and why we have earthquakes. So why shouldn't bad stuff happen to everyone, even the good ones? That's just the universe falling apart. Now the book I'm waiting for someone to write is why good things happen to bad people.

PHIL

Got anyone particular in mind?

JONATHAN

I got a lot of people in mind. The sleazy landlord who wins the lottery. Or the wife-beater who escapes injury after the brakes on his car fail and he hits the guardrail at 60 miles an hour. Or the corporate raider who downsizes 2000 workers, goes on a skiing trip, hits a tree, but doesn't break a leg. Or Brian. Why should creeps like that beat the odds but nuns get cancer?

MARIE

(AFTER A PAUSE)

Thank you, Jon. I had forgotten how much fun you were to have at lunch.

They all laugh.

CUT TO:

INT - SUBURBAN MOTEL BAR - DAY

Mallory enters the crowded bar. Annoyed when she cannot find him, she resignedly finds a seat at the bar between two people, one of whom is a graying, handsome man with a mustache in his fifties (the DARK FIGURE). She orders a drink, and plays with the ice until several pieces fly out of the glass and splashes the man.

MALLORY

Oh, I am so sorry.

DARK FIGURE

(BRUSHING HIMSELF OFF)

Don't worry about it.

MALLORY

That was just so clumsy of me.

DARK FIGURE

Really, don't give it a second thought.
It's an old suit.

MALLORY

At least let me buy you a drink.

DARK FIGURE

Only if you promise not to tell my wife -
she's on a cholesterol kick and this will
be my second...

MALLORY

Your secret is safe with me.

(TO THE BARTENDER)

Excuse me, can I get a...

DARK FIGURE

Scotch rocks.

The bartender nods and pours the drink.

DARK FIGURE

(CONT)

Thank you.

MALLORY

So, how long have you been married?

DARK FIGURE

25 years.

MALLORY

Wow.

DARK FIGURE

Doesn't feel like it, though.

MALLORY

Really?

DARK FIGURE

Nope. Feels more like 50.

Mallory doesn't react.

DARK FIGURE

(CONT)

I was kidding. That was a joke? Really, it
was.

Mallory is so sad she can't even look at him.

DARK FIGURE

(CONT)

Sorry. Did I hit a sore spot? You know, if you or anyone were to tell me that your marriage was perfect I'd know you were either a liar or single. That was a joke, too.

MALLORY

I know, fighting is supposed to bring people together. It just seems like that's all we do.

DARK FIGURE

I know it may seem that way..

MALLORY

But in -

DARK FIGURE

(SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH MALLORY)

- our case it's true.

DARK FIGURE

(CONT, BY HIMSELF)

- uh huh. Everybody says that.

MALLORY

So... what do you and your wife fight about?

DARK FIGURE

The usual stuff. I don't pick up after myself. She's always late. Then there was my job. I was on the road a lot and she complained I cared more about it than our marriage. It wasn't true, but I could understand how she could feel that way.

MALLORY

What's a lot?

DARK FIGURE

About half the year.

MALLORY

Half a year! No wonder your wife got upset.

DARK FIGURE

We used to joke the reason our marriage lasted so long is that for a long time we only had to live together for half a year.

MALLORY

What did you do?

DARK FIGURE

(ELUSIVE)

Me? Oh, I worked in the sports industry.

MALLORY

Sales, Marketing? Something like that?

DARK FIGURE

Something like that. I'm retired now.

MALLORY

Retired? You don't look old enough.

DARK FIGURE

Thanks. You could say I took early retirement.

MALLORY

Did you like your job?

DARK FIGURE

Very much. I always considered myself to be very lucky to be doing what I did.

MALLORY

I don't think my husband has ever felt that way about anything he's ever done.

DARK FIGURE

Some guys are like that. The job is just a job, you know.

MALLORY

Or maybe they're so afraid of failure that they just accept mediocrity.

DARK FIGURE

I don't know your husband, but maybe you're being too hard on him. I mean everyone's afraid of failure.

MALLORY

But did fear ever stop you from trying?

DARK FIGURE

No, but trying didn't stop me from failing, either.

MALLORY

So you failed once in a while? How bad could it have been?

DARK FIGURE

It was the worst kind. When there were a lot of people counting on me to do something I'd done thousands of times before. But this one time... Well, anyway, that's all in the past, now. It was rough for a while but at least I'm still alive.

MALLORY

Goodness, you make it sound like it was a matter of life or death.

DARK FIGURE

Sometimes it is. Ever hear of a guy named Donnie Moore? He was a pitcher for the California Angels.

MALLORY

Do you know him from the sports business?

DARK FIGURE

You could say I did.

MALLORY

Did?

DARK FIGURE

Do you know the game? Donnie was what is called a relief pitcher. A guy who goes into a game in the late innings, usually when his team is ahead, and tries to preserve the win. And he was pretty good at it. During a three years stretch in the eighties he saved something like 68 games, which isn't bad.

MALLORY

What happened to him?

DARK FIGURE

He threw the wrong pitch at the wrong time.

MALLORY

I don't understand...

DARK FIGURE

In 1986 the Angels were one strike away from going to the World Series - something they had never done in their history - when Donnie threw a split-finger fastball right down the middle of the plate that Dave Henderson hit for a home run.

MALLORY

The Angels lost the game?

DARK FIGURE

Uh huh. Up to that point the Angels were leading the series three games to one but it seemed like the moment that ball sailed over the wall all the air went out of the Angels. They lost the next two games and the Red Sox were on to their way to the World Series. Which is where...

MALLORY

Where what?

DARK FIGURE

Nothing. Never mind. The point is that Donnie's pitch was the end of the Angels, and the fans never forgave him. He could never forgive himself, either.

MALLORY

What happened to him?

DARK FIGURE

Donnie shot himself in the head three years after that pitch.

MALLORY

What? But why? Not because...

DARK FIGURE

That's right. Because of that one pitch. That one lousy pitch. You see, from that moment on, wherever Donnie went, he was known as the man who threw that pitch, the guy who lost the chance to go to the World Series. Everyone forgot about the other 24 guys on the team. They forgot about the coaches and the manager and all of the hundreds of individual decisions that each one made as part of that one single inning, never mind the thousands that they collectively made in that particular game. All they cared about, all they wanted to

DARK FIGURE (CONT)

talk about was that one, single pitch.
Eventually, it got to him, and...

MALLORY

That's so... so unfair.

DARK FIGURE

Who was it that said life isn't fair? He
was right. In spades.

MALLORY

I guess you learn a lot about who your real
friends are.

DARK FIGURE

More important is that they learn something
about themselves. The friends who stuck
with me, who defended me, they had to put
up with a lot of abuse, too. But I believe
it made them better people in the end. Not
to mention better friends. And lovers.

MALLORY

You mean your wife?

He nods his head.

MALLORY

(CONT)

And those who didn't stick with you?

DARK FIGURE

Shallow people are just that, so what are
you going to do? I can honestly say I don't
miss a single damn one of them.

Mallory mulls this over, as we SEE Jonathan making his way
through the crowd. He stands next to Mallory, who breaks from her
reverie to exchange a perfunctory kiss. The DARK FIGURE gets up.

DARK FIGURE

Why don't you take my seat?

JONATHAN

No, that's all right.

DARK FIGURE

Please, I insist. I was leaving anyway.

(TO MALLORY)

It was nice meeting you. Thanks for the
drink.

MALLORY

Your welcome. Sorry about the bath. And thanks for... you know.

DARK FIGURE

It was my pleasure.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry, but you look so familiar. Have we ever met?

DARK FIGURE

I don't think so. But I get that a lot. Guess I have one of those faces.

He limps away through the crowd as several people give him a look of faded recognition. Jonathan, unable to place him, finally turns to his wife.

JONATHAN

So, he give you some investment tip or something?

MALLORY

You might say that.

JONATHAN

Been waiting long?

MALLORY

No.

JONATHAN

Mallory, I -

MALLORY

It's all right. I know.

He is both relieved and confused.

MALLORY

(CONT)

Kenny called Mary Beth.

JONATHAN

Faster than the Internet. Mallory, I... I think you should know that my return to the old cube also means a return to my old cube salary.

MALLORY

So the new house? The car? The club membership?

JONATHAN

I don't see how we can swing it. I don't know what to say.

MALLORY

How about 'let's go home?'

She reaches for his trembling hand, which he grasps gratefully. Mallory throws a few dollars on the bar and they walk through the crowd, hand in hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - OUTSIDE FENWAY PARK -DAY

Mallory and Jonathan are in a huge crowd gathered on a cold day to watch a wrecking ball tear down Fenway Park. The SAVE FENWAY protesters, kept a respectful distance by the police, march defiantly in front of the cranes.

MALLORY

Are you all right?

Jonathan nods. They watch the crane hit the park's brick façade, causing large chunks of masonry to fall to the ground. We HEAR the voice of a small child.

CHILD

Mommy? Daddy? I'm cold.

We SEE a five year-old Asian girl holding Mallory's hand. Jonathan leans down and smiles her.

JONATHAN

Cold, huh? Say... who wants hot chocolate?

CHILD

Yay! I do! I do!

MALLORY

Are you sure you want to leave?

Jonathan stand up and nods. Mallory smiles and they each take one of the child's hands. They start to walk through the crowd along Brookline Avenue. We HEAR another crash of masonry. Jonathan stops and looks back.

MALLORY

What is it?

JONATHAN

I was just thinking. When I was a little boy I actually thought I could affect the outcome of a game. That if I wished or prayed really hard then Yastremski would hit a homer or Tiant would throw a strikeout. I guess part of growing up is realizing that you can enjoy the game all you want, but there's really nothing you can do about what happens on the field.

(TO THEM BOTH)

Come on, let's get that hot chocolate.

They continue their walk up the street, not seeing that standing behind them was the DARK FIGURE, who smiles to himself as he fingers a small vial of green liquid.

CUT TO:

CREDITS

As the credits roll, we SEE Jon, Mallory, and their daughter at a Red Sox game in the new ball park, cheering their first-place team.

- END -