

SOUL SEARCHING

Written by

Jeffrey Hause & David Hines

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The Turman-Morrissey Company  
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# The Turman-Morrissey Company

LAWRENCE TURMAN

December 12, 1997

Mr. Steve White  
Warden, White & Associates  
8444 Wilshire Blvd., 4th Floor  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

VIA FACSIMILE: 213-852-0843  
2 PAGES

Dear Steve White,

As discussed with Larry Turman the page following lists, in no particular order, possible actors for SOUL SEARCHING by Jeffrey Hause and David Hines.

Regards,



Matthew Waldman

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SOUL SEARCHING  
by Jeffrey Hause & David Hines

Larry Turman's actor suggestions

Ashley Judd  
Nicole Kidman  
Julia Roberts  
Cameron Diaz  
Meg Ryan  
Winona Ryder  
Reese Witherspoon  
Neve Campbell  
Demi Moore  
Elizabeth Hurley  
Julia Louis-Dreyfus  
Courtney Cox  
Gwyneth Paltrow  
Kirstie Alley  
Jennifer Aniston  
Ellen Barkin  
Annette Benning  
Fran Drescher  
Bridget Fonda  
Lauren Holly  
Diane Lane  
Jennifer Jason Leigh  
Julianne Moore  
Kelly Preston  
Elizabeth Shue  
Uma Thurman  
Renee Zellweger

SOUL SEARCHING

FADE IN:

INT. COUNTY HEALTH OFFICES - DAY

The offices of the Health and Human Services Department, bustling with activity. Workers sit in cubicles, looking nearly as harried as their clients. Lugging a leather tote bag over her shoulder, ANNIE GIDDONS weaves her way through the office. In her late twenties, Annie's very attractive in a bright, approachable way. She's also much better dressed than everyone else, in a stylish black dress and high heels.

ANNIE

Well, if it isn't the hardest working, best-run social services office in Los Angeles... and it isn't...

The other workers laugh as she makes her way down the crowded line of workspaces, stepping over feet, bags, and the sleeping children of clients.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Hey, no sleeping on the floor - sleep behind a desk, like the people working here... How is everyone this morning?

She passes STEPHEN, an overweight man crammed uncomfortably into his cubicle.

STEPHEN

Everyone is crowded. How was the cruise?

ANNIE

Two whole weeks where people waited on me for a change. I felt like I died and went to Heaven. How's the baby?

STEPHEN

He's learned to sit up on his own.

ANNIE

Wow! Already 35 years ahead of his old man...

(he laughs as she moves past)

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Hello Molly, hello Scott, hello,  
hello, I don't know you, but hello  
anyway...

Stepping to her cubicle, she drops her tote bag with a thud  
as her friend JANET steps up.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Hi Janet. How's the business of  
being out of business?

JANET

If that's our goal then we're doing  
great. I'm still trying to fill  
that position in the promotions  
department. So far all the  
applicants have something against  
long hours and low pay...

ANNIE

Don't worry, there's got to be some  
selfless, caring, saintly person we  
can completely con into taking the  
job.

JANET

(looks Annie over)  
You look tan, happy and rested... I  
hate you. How was your vacation?

ANNIE

(trying to seem  
nonchalant)  
Great. I relaxed, did some  
sightseeing, met a guy, went  
shopping...

JANET

Whoa there, back up - 'met a guy'?  
Is he cute?

Annie reaches into her bag with a grin, pulling out a stack  
of Polaroids. Janet studies the pictures, which show Annie on  
a cruise ship, posing with a handsome man (DONALD) with dark,  
piercing eyes. In each picture they're touching, laughing,  
looking at each other happily.

ANNIE

I used to look for three things in  
a guy - a nice car, fresh breath,  
and Paul Newman's eyes. It got to  
the point I'd settle for a valid  
drivers license, he breathes, and  
has eyes...

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(pauses thoughtfully)  
 But this guy's different - the ship's leaving for another two week cruise tomorrow, so he wants me to meet him back there tonight for some romantic, private dinner. I think he's going to propose.

JANET

He's cute...  
 (squints)  
 ...a little fuzzy around the edges. But isn't this awfully fast? You've known him, what? A couple weeks?

ANNIE

There's just something about this guy, some cosmic bond. He actually makes me think I may be ready for marriage and kids...

There is a COMMOTION across the office, Annie looking up to see SARAH, a pretty young woman, approach with her two hyperactive children, RICKY (4) and BOBBY (3). The kids race up to Annie and immediately begin tugging at her dress.

RICKY & BOBBY

Candy lady! Candy lady! Candy lady!

ANNIE

Well, marriage maybe...

Handing Annie back her pictures, Janet scurries away. Annie quickly opens a desk drawer and removes a handful of candies, tossing them at the kids like they're animals in a zoo. As they scatter for the candies she tries to smooth down the little hand marks on her skirt.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Giving these kids sugar is like rubbing meat on yourself and stepping into a lion's cage.

SARAH

(stepping up, laughing)  
 Tell me about it. I live in the lion's cage. Hi, Annie!

Annie takes a slip of paper out of her bag, handing it to Sarah.

ANNIE

I got you an interview. It's only a waitressing gig, but it's a pretty fancy place so the tips should be good. And they're willing to schedule around your night classes.

SARAH

(reading slip of paper)  
'The Grove', huh? I hope so. Things have been so bad lately I've been thinking of going back to Edward.

ANNIE

No! Going back to that household is not an option. You'll come live with me before you go back to Edward.

Sarah smiles at Annie gratefully - until she turns to see Bobby eating out of an ashtray, grabbing him by the arm.

SARAH

Bobby! Take that out of your mouth!  
You don't know who's been smoking that!

The phone on Annie's desk RINGS, Annie answering.

ANNIE

Family Counseling...

CUT TO:

INT. GRIER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

MRS. GRIER, a middle-aged woman, speaks anxiously into the phone. We CROSS-CUT between she and Annie - who watches as Ricky digs things out of a trash can and feeds them to Bobby.

MRS. GRIER

Annie? Annie, I got a call from Darryl's school again. He didn't show up for class today.

ANNIE

You think they'd call when he did show up - save them a lot of work.

MRS. GRIER

I'm worried. He's got to be in court August 15th, and one of the things they're going to look at is his school record...

ANNIE

I'll track him down. I think we both know where he is.

Bobby begins making weird 'oompah... oompah' noises in his throat, Annie bending over him, concerned.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Bobby? Are you okay? What's the matter?

Bobby suddenly 'oompahs' all over Annie's dress, Sarah smiling apologetically.

SARAH

Maybe it was something he ate...

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

A blacktop sporting a couple of crowded basketball courts. Inner city kids shoot hoops and hang out as Annie steps up, still trying to clean the stain on her dress with a wet-nap. She watches DARRYL GRIER play in a heated game of 5-on-5. Though smaller than most of the other players, Darryl's a graceful kid who easily outclasses them on the court. There's a break in the action, Annie calling out to him.

ANNIE

When they gave you a court date they didn't mean a basketball court...

DARRYL

Oh no - the government is here to help me again.

ANNIE

I'm not the government, I'm a social worker - and you should be traveling to school instead of to the basket.

Darryl tosses the ball to a teammate, nodding for them to play without him as he walks over to Annie.



DARRYL

Come on, Ms. Giddons, you know I can't handle school. This is what I know how to do. Play a few games, make a few bets, make a few bucks.

ANNIE

Okay then, I'll make you a bet. You and me, one-on-one. If I make a basket you go to school today.

DARRYL

And if you don't?

ANNIE

I'll leave you alone for a whole month.

A grin spreads over Darryl's face as he calls to the guys playing behind them.

DARRYL

Hey, Sammy - time out, okay? Gimme the ball.

The game stops as the ball is tossed to Darryl. He hands it to Annie.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

You got a bet.

Kicking off her high heels, Annie tosses him the ball and waits at the top of the key. Darryl grins at her, shaking his head in amazement. He bounces the ball to her, getting into his defensive stance. The other players gather nearby, cheering for Annie and razzing Darryl.

ANNIE

Give it up, pretty-boy. You've got no game... You're an under-educated, irresponsible, myopic little delinquent with no ambition...

DARRYL

(straightens up)

Huh?

ANNIE

(stops dribbling)

That was trash-talk. We're supposed to trash-talk, right?

DARRYL

Yeah, but it helps if the other guy understands what the hell you're saying.

ANNIE

Oh. Well it stung. Trust me.

Annie drives - Darryl quickly stepping in front of her and cutting off her path. She bumps him hard, trying to back him up, but he doesn't budge.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Hah! Ow! Oh crap, I think I got a run in my nylons...

She throws up a hook - which Darryl blocks easily. Grabbing the rebound, she heaves the ball up again... Darryl calmly blocking it without having to leave his feet.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Wait, is that legal? Great - I'm getting sweat all over my good dress...

Annie backs him down again - suddenly turning and pulling down his shorts. Darryl grabs at them, embarrassed, as Annie whips around him, scoring an easy lay-up.

DARRYL

Foul!

Annie tosses the ball back to a stunned Darryl, smug grin on her face. Darryl's friends all laugh hysterically, scattering as he heaves the ball at them.

ANNIE

C'mon, superstar - I'll drive you to school.

Still shocked, Darryl walks alongside Annie as they head for her car.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You mom says they scheduled your hearing for the 15th.

DARRYL

I'm screwed. They got me some lawyer who couldn't care less. I got no one on my side.

ANNIE

I'm on your side. You need a character witness? I'll be there. But you've got to do a couple things for me.

DARRYL

(sighs)

I know - go to school. And...?

ANNIE

Work on your defense. If some weak-ass girl in a party dress can score on you you've got some serious practicing to do.

Darryl laughs in spite of himself, giving Annie a playful push as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

An older, funky apartment building. It's vaguely Victorian in style, setting it apart from the more modern complexes on the street.

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Annie is in a t-shirt and sweat pants, scrubbing the stains out of her black dress in the sink with Woolite.

ANNIE

Did this kid eat day-glo paint or something? I'm not supposed to have to wash bodily fluids off my dress until after the date!

She hangs the dress over the bathtub, using a hairdryer to blow it dry.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

What am I getting myself into? Every marriage I've been around has crumbled. Look at poor Sarah - alone with two kids...

(stops, speaking to reflection in mirror)

Then again my parents were together 45 years and never said an unkind word. Of course they never said a kind word, either.

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's amazing I ever learned to talk. What am I getting myself into?

Shaking her head to clear it, Annie returns to blow drying her dress.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But Donald's not like other men. He's cute, warm, smart... out of the country a lot. All the ingredients of a successful relationship. Maybe I should say yes. Maybe it feels right because it is right...

(stops again, speaking to reflection in mirror)

What am I getting myself into...?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT

Annie leaves her apartment, once again wearing her black dress. The stain still barely visible, she positions her purse to cover it. She hurries down the stairs where JOE, a janitor of no recognizable nationality, is asleep on the steps. His tools are spread everywhere, lit cigarette dangling from his mouth - the fire alarm disassembled.

ANNIE

Hi, Joe!

(Joe wakes, spitting his cigarette across the hall)

I need you to fix my air conditioner. It's so hot I've been putting my underwear in the refrigerator - I'm getting tired of smelling like corned beef.

JOE

(smiles at Annie, nodding)

Awright! Awright!

As Annie passes Joe lights another cigarette, falling back asleep. She reaches the ground floor to see the LANDLADY hanging an elaborate set of chimes near the entrance. A gray-haired woman in her late 60's, the Landlady has a slightly wild look in her eyes.

LANDLADY

Annie! Aren't these lovely? They're Chinese Spirit Chimes. You hang them indoors where the air is still - when they ring a ghost is present.

ANNIE

Or you have a draft...

LANDLADY

You missed a wonderful séance last week. We called on the spirit of Joe DiMaggio and witnessed a phantom baseball fly across the room above our heads.

ANNIE

Uh, Mrs. Belasko? Joe DiMaggio is still alive.

LANDLADY

(oblivious)

This week we're going to call Bob Hope.

Annie starts to say something, then stops herself, giving the Spirit Chimes a gentle nudge as she leaves, making them TINKLE.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Annie drives impatiently, muttering at other drivers.

ANNIE

Come on, come on - I'm late. What's with all this traffic? I could be married with 2.5 kids by now...

Her cell phone rings, Annie snatching it off the passenger seat.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Mrs. Grier speaks worriedly into the phone. We CROSS-CUT between she and Annie.

MRS. GRIER

Darryl's gone off again, Annie. He left with those gang-bangers about five minutes ago.

ANNIE

No! He promised... Okay, don't worry - I'm on my way over. We'll drive around and find him again. We just need to sit him down and have a calm, rational...

(honks, screaming out window)

Move it, asshole!!!

EXT. CITY STREET

Annie pulls a u-turn, tires SQUEALING as the cars around her brake and HONK angrily.

INT. ANNIE'S CAR

Annie speaks gently, trying to calm Mrs. Grier.

ANNIE

Give me five minutes, I'll be there. Everything'll be alright...

(the phone BEEPS)

Oh, no. I've got another call...

I'm the only person I know that needs a second phone line in her car. Hold on...

(clicks over)

Hello...? Sarah? What's the matter?

CUT TO:

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Sarah is on the phone in her kitchen. She seems nervous, peering out through a window as we CROSS-CUT between she and Annie.

SARAH

I just talked to Edward and told him I never wanted to see him again. So he's coming over...

ANNIE

No! Don't let him in! Take the kids and get out of the house... wait, I'll pick you up.

EXT. CITY STREET

Annie pulls another u-turn in heavy traffic, the cars around her swerving and HONKING, their drivers screaming obscenities.

INT. ANNIE'S CAR

Annie speaks firmly, trying to galvanize Sarah.

ANNIE

I'll be there in five minutes. Do not let him in, Sarah. The last thing you need right now is some hot-tempered psychotic bursting in...

(honks her horn, yelling out window)

... Pick a lane, butt-nugget!!!

Engrossed in her conversation, Annie doesn't notice as she draws up alongside a big diesel truck.

SARAH

I'm sorry to bother you, Annie. I hope I'm not interrupting anything...

ANNIE

No, no - I was just...

(remembers, slaps forehead)

...going out to get proposed to...

Its exhaust pipe pointed directly into her open window, the diesel truck shifts gears, FILLING ANNIE'S CAR WITH THICK BLACK EXHAUST. Coughing, Annie tries to wave away the smoke... not noticing the light in the intersection ahead of her turn yellow, then red. She looks up at the last moment, crying out in shock as...

EXT. INTERSECTION

...her car barrels through the intersection, black smoke spewing from the open windows. Swerving to avoid hitting the other cars it SPINS out of control, SLAMMING into a lamppost in an explosion of glass.

INT. ANNIE'S CAR

Annie sits stunned, broken glass everywhere. A trickle of blood runs down her forehead as a BYSTANDER hurries forward, leaning through the broken drivers side window.

BYSTANDER

Are you okay? Are you alright?

ANNIE

It's the dress... The dress is cursed...

The Bystander gently puts his hand on Annie's shoulder as her vision starts to blur, the world spinning. She still clutches the cell phone, Sarah's voice calling out, concerned.

SARAH

(over phone)

Annie? Is something the matter? Are you almost here? Annie...?

But Annie's out cold. The sound of approaching sirens grows louder as we...

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN ON:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The building where Annie lives. A large moving van is parked out front, a couple of burly MOVERS unloading furniture.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: TWO WEEKS LATER...

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY

PETER BRYANT, a well-educated young executive in his early thirties, walks behind a Mover (MOVER #1), who carries a large, heavy box.



PETER

Careful with that box. Unless it's my girlfriend's Elvis plate collection - if you break that there's a big tip in it for you...

(watching Mover #1 struggle)

Do you need help? Because if you do... you should probably go get your partner.

Mover #1 rolls his eyes, continuing down the hallway as Peter spots Joe the janitor sitting on the steps eating fast food, holding a hamburger between two chopsticks.

PETER (CONT'D)

Excuse me - is it safe to leave my car parked out front? This is a pretty good neighborhood, right? There aren't any people like... say, you, that live around here?

JOE

Awright!

PETER

It's just that someone broke into my car at a Laker game and stole this really expensive stereo, so I'm a little paranoid.

JOE

(smiling and nodding)

Awright! Awright!

Peter frowns. He steps up to Joe, speaking confidentially.

PETER

Listen, I'm a serial killer. Where do you want me to dump the bodies, the back alley or the dumpster?

JOE

(thumbs-up)

Awright!!

Sighing, Peter continues down the hall.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Peter enters his apartment, where his girlfriend KELLY MYERS is busy unpacking.

Kelly is a beautiful, if somewhat artificial-looking girl in her late-twenties, who is currently wearing a small white guard on her face to protect a recent nose job. She speaks into a cordless phone while sorting through boxes.

KELLY  
 (into phone)  
 Murray, I can't go in for an  
 audition tomorrow. I've got two  
 more days 'til my nose is ready...

MOVER #2 brings in a box, looking at Peter questioningly.

PETER  
 (reading box)  
 Let's see - 'kitchen utensils'.  
 Obviously this goes in the  
 bedroom...

The Mover nods, lumbering off with the box as another cell phone rings. Shaking his head after the Mover, Peter answers it.

PETER (CONT'D)  
 Hello? Hi Marcus, what's up?  
 Massengil is freaking about the new  
 ad campaign?

KELLY  
 (looks down at her  
 breasts thoughtfully)  
 Well, they're 36-C's - but they can  
 be bigger...

PETER  
 They want Dennis Rodman as a  
 spokesman? Don't they realize he  
 doesn't use vaginal spray? ...Oh,  
 he does?

They exchange frustrated looks, covering the mouthpieces with their hands.

KELLY  
 Twelve years of dance, six years of  
 acting school, Dramalogue Award for  
 best dramatic actress - all leading  
 up to an audition for a homeless  
 bikini girl on something called  
 "Beach-Bike Patrol."

PETER

The makers of the worlds most popular feminine hygiene spray are worried their ad campaign doesn't appeal to men.

Reaching into a box, Kelly pulls out a framed poster from a Broadway show, holding it up to the wall.

KELLY

(into phone)

Yes Murray, I'm sure many fine actresses began their TV careers playing homeless bikini girls...

(to Peter)

What do you think? Should this go here...

(lowers picture)

...or here?

PETER

(into phone)

Well who else could we get... No, Jack Palance is not perfect...

(to Kelly)

Don't you think we should figure out where the furniture goes before we start worrying about the pictures?

KELLY

But the pictures are as important as the furniture. Everything's got to work in harmony with everything else or we won't achieve Feng Shui.

PETER

Can't we just do it in a bed, like usual?

(into phone)

No, Marcus, I'm not talking to you...

One of the Movers enters, carting a couple of dining room chairs into the apartment.

KELLY

(into phone)

Yes Murray, I'll hold...

(to Peter)

Feng Shui is the ancient oriental art of item placement to create harmony and bring good fortune.

(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)

Everything's got to be positioned in relation to everything else so the flow of positive energy isn't disrupted.

PETER

As long as the flow of energy to the TV isn't disrupted I'll be fine.

KELLY

(irritated by his attitude)

You couldn't care less about this, could you? I mention it and you just dismiss it, make a joke about it.

The second Mover brings in two more dining room chairs, speaking to the first Mover under his breath.

MOVER #2

What's the problem?

MOVER #1

Feng Shui.

MOVER #2

(nods)

Overtime...

The Movers hurry out.

PETER

'Feng Shui'. This is from the same culture that gave us the 'togo roll' - which you loved until you found out it was raw octopus and seaweed, and then you threw up all night.

(into phone)

No, no - it's nothing important...

KELLY

Nothing important? That's it!

(hangs up phone)

We need to have a talk. Right now.

Peter stares at the phone in her hand apprehensively.

PETER

You just hung up on your agent.

(into phone, worried)

I've gotta go, Marcus.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

If I'm not at work in the morning  
send the coroner over to my  
place...

Peter hangs up, Kelly looking at him angrily.

KELLY

All you do is make jokes whenever I  
bring up something that's important  
to me.

PETER

I'm sorry. It's just that the last  
time I lived with a woman we had to  
break it off after 18 years, and  
she still keeps calling and  
harassing me. Do you know how  
painful it is to take out a  
restraining order on your mother?  
This is gonna take some getting  
used to, that's all.

The first Mover enters, lugging a coffee table.

KELLY

Take some getting used to? We're  
supposed to be married in two  
months! I'll tell you what the  
problem is - you're too self-  
involved. You never want to talk  
about the future, or our  
relationship, or whether I should  
get the tummy tuck or the  
liposuction...

The second Mover wheels in a dolly full of boxes. They speak  
under their breath.

MOVER #2

New problem?

MOVER #1

He's self-involved.

MOVER #2

(nods)

Double overtime...

PETER

(to Movers)

Hey, guys - shouldn't you be  
outside in the truck breaking  
glassware or something?

The Movers try to look busy as Kelly paces, working herself into a dramatic, overwrought, six-years-of-acting-school lather.

KELLY

This is a mistake, Peter. Our problems are so obvious anyone can see it's never going to work. Maybe we needed to live together to see that we're not right for each other.

PETER

Live together? We've been living together an hour-and-a-half! Shouldn't we be having this conversation a little later in the relationship - say, next week?

(to Movers)

What about you guys - do you see any problems here?

The Movers stop unloading the dolly, shifting uneasily. Kelly frowns, embarrassed.

KELLY

Stop it, Peter.

PETER

No, really. I'm interested. You say anyone can see we have problems. These guys have been with us all day, I want to know what they think.

(to Movers)

Guys?

The Movers think a moment, Mover #1 finally speaking up.

MOVER #1

Well sir - seems to me your constant joking is an attempt to avoid any real emotions and to keep your girl here at a psychologically safe distance. That, combined with the fact that these are the first civil words you've spoken to us all day would indicate an inability to connect with other people, which in turn would cause one to assume that achieving genuine intimacy is a problem in your relationship.

Everyone looks at the Mover, stunned. He shrugs.

MOVER #1 (CONT'D)  
I had an affair with a marriage  
counselor one time.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The moving truck pulls away from the front of the building,  
Kelly sitting in the cab with the two Movers.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY

Peter stands at the front door with an unopened bottle of  
champagne in his hand. He calls after the truck bitterly.

PETER  
Hey - you forgot our housewarming  
champagne! Maybe you and Guido and  
Cheech can share!  
(makes a filthy gesture)  
Feng Shui!!!

The Landlady pokes her head out of her apartment, irritated.

LANDLADY  
What's all the ruckus out here?

PETER  
Oh nothing - moving day, lots of  
stress, fiancé runs off with the  
moving guys. The usual.

Peter wanders toward his apartment, the Landlady frowning.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Peter walks down the dark hallway, muttering to himself.

PETER  
Guess I should look on the bright  
side - at least I don't have to  
wear that teal green tuxedo she  
picked out for the wedding...

There is the sound of a GIGGLE behind him, Peter turning. He  
squints into the shadows, but there's nobody there.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Kelly? Is that you?

Sensing a movement out of the corner of his eye, he sees something flash toward the stairs. Intrigued, he follows, looking cautiously up the steps.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hello... Anybody there? Anybody big... and hairy... with a history of violence against new tenants...?

He looks up the steps, but there's nobody there. Shrugging, he turns - finding himself face-to-face with Annie. They both let out startled screams.

ANNIE

Ahhh! You scared the hell out of me!

PETER

Good! 'Cuz you scared the hell out of me!

Wearing her black dress, Annie looks much like she did the night of her accident.

ANNIE

(extends hand)

I'm Annie. I live in the apartment above yours. Welcome to the building.

Peter shakes her hand, giving her an uncertain look.

PETER

Peter Bryant. I just moved in...

Annie moves past him, breezing down the hallway.

PETER (CONT'D)

Would you like to come in for a...

But she's already inside his apartment. Puzzled, Peter follows her.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

The apartment is completely empty except for boxes containing Peter's stuff, and a bean bag chair. Annie wanders all around, exploring eagerly. Peter watches her, not knowing what to think.



ANNIE

This place is much nicer than mine.  
And I love what you've done with it  
- you've really achieved a  
minimalist sense of Feng Shui.

She gives him a playful grin. Peter smiles, shaking his head.

PETER

You heard all that? Why do I have a  
feeling 'Feng Shui' translates to  
'domestic violence'?  
(looks at her clothing)  
You've got a stain on your dress...

ANNIE

Believe me, I know...  
(looking around the empty  
room)  
... Let me guess, all the furniture  
was hers except the bean bag chair.

Annie circles the apartment, opening and closing doors and  
cupboards.

PETER

How long have you lived here?

ANNIE

A couple years. I don't know if you  
can exactly call all of it  
living...  
(changing subject)  
You have a cigarette?

Peter reaches into his pocket, pulling out a pack of Swisher  
Sweets.

PETER

All I have are these little cigars.

ANNIE

Can I set fire to it and suck out  
the smoke? Hand it over.

Peter smiles - he likes this person. He gives her a cigar,  
lighting it for her. She takes a long, satisfying hit.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Oh man, I haven't had anything like  
this for weeks...

Peter looks at her thoughtfully, holding up the bottle of  
champagne.

PETER  
How about some of this?

Annie just smiles as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LATER

It's late. Peter sits in the bean bag chair while Annie lays on her side, head resting in her hand. Both laugh drunkenly as they take swigs from the champagne bottle, passing it back and forth.

PETER  
I should've seen it coming. She got rid of three eyesores in the past year - her nose, her thighs, and me.

ANNIE  
Monogamy is tough. We're one of only three mammal groups that practice it.

PETER  
What are the other two?

ANNIE  
Apes and... I can't think of the other one.

PETER  
Probably lemmings. That's why they jump off cliffs.

(sighs)  
She's right, I am a self-involved jerk. But so is she, that's why I thought we were perfect for each other!

(drinks)  
What the hell - I work better alone, I live better alone. There isn't one thing I did with Kelly that I can't do better alone. Well, maybe one thing... So what about you? You involved with anyone we can badmouth?

Annie sits up, a small, sad smile crossing her face.

ANNIE

No. I was in love, but... it's over now.

PETER

So what happened? You know all about my embarrassing break-up. Let's have it.

Annie reaches for the champagne bottle, snapping her fingers.

ANNIE

It just ended. Stuff happens you can't always control.

Getting the message, Peter lets it drop. He hands the bottle to Annie, who raises it, forcing a smile.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

A toast. To new beginnings. May you find that perfect someone you want to spend eternity with.

PETER

Eternity? I'd just like to get through a dinner date without thinking of my bail-out excuse for the next morning.

Annie tries to sit up, weaving from the effect of the champagne. Falling back, she grins, embarrassed.

ANNIE

Whoa! The champagne's really going to my head. I should go.

PETER

Yeah, I've still got all this furniture to arrange...

Reaching out to support one another, they stand, legs wobbly. Managing to make it to their feet (barely), they find themselves in each others' arms.

PETER (CONT'D)

I had a really good time. Maybe we can get together again the next time I experience an ugly break-up.

ANNIE

Hey, what are neighbors for? I'd borrow something, but I don't need a bean bag chair.

Annie gives him a peck on the cheek. Peter turns his face, kissing Annie full on the lips. Surprised, she pulls back, flustered.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
 (shakes head)  
 No. Wait a second, this is wrong.  
 I've got to go...

Annie hurries for the door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Annie opens the door, stepping into the hallway. Peter follows, a little flustered, calling after her.

PETER  
 I'll see you around?

ANNIE  
 Here and there.

Annie walks up the stairs to her apartment, Peter watching her. As she reaches her door she looks over the railing, waving goodnight.

PETER  
 'Kay... Night... So long...  
 (she steps back from the  
 railing and is gone)  
 Shit!

Peter sighs, heading back inside as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The next morning. A small, portable alarm clock RINGS, Peter reaching out and shutting it off. We PULL BACK to see that he's slept in the bean bag chair. Sitting up with a groan we see that he's covered with small foam balls from a rip in the vinyl. Hung-over, he crawls slowly into the bathroom, muttering to himself.

PETER  
 Okay... memo to myself... buy a  
 frickin' bed!

He disappears around the corner, his voice booming out from the bathroom.

PETER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And some toilet paper!!!

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Dressed for work, Peter locks up his apartment and starts down the hallway. Wearing dark glasses he moves gingerly, trying not to jostle his aching head. He doesn't see Annie step out of the shadows, trailing him silently. As Peter opens the front door and steps outside Annie STARTS TO FOLLOW him - but she suddenly STOPS SHORT, almost as if she'd run into some sort of invisible barrier. Frowning, she looks up at the Spirit Chimes hanging in the hallway, giving them a nudge and making them TINKLE as she heads back up the stairs. After a moment the Landlady sticks her head out of her door at the sound of the chimes, looking around curiously as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTURY CITY HIGH RISE - DAY

A tall, mirrored building, granite slab out front identifying it as the home of 'DERWIN & TATE ADVERTISING'.

INT. DERWIN & TATE LOBBY

An elegant, marble-floored lobby, bustling with early morning activity. Peter enters, still wearing dark glasses and trying not to appear too hung-over. Stepping into the elevator he turns to see an OBESE MAN rushing toward him, calling out:

OBESE MAN  
Wait! Hold the doors!

Peter calmly pushes the 'close door' button, the elevator doors sliding shut as the Obese Man chugs harder to catch them. Just before they close Peter smiles at him in mock sympathy.

PETER  
Oh! So close. Knock off twenty  
pounds and I bet you make it.

The doors close, leaving the Obese Man standing before them, huffing and puffing.

INT. DERWIN & TATE - 12TH FLOOR

The elevator doors open, Peter stepping out. A few people try to say 'hello' as he swoops through the room, but he's passed before they can blurt it out. The RECEPTIONIST greets him, intimidated, holding a stack of messages.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Bryant? I have your messages here...

But Peter is already gone, blowing down the hallway, people scurrying to get out of his way. He's obviously a player, and enjoys his place near the top of the corporate food chain. The Receptionist scurries after him. They pass offices and cubicles, intimidated workers pretending to bury themselves in their work as Peter moves by.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

... Mr. Derwin called - he wants to see you and Mr. Kirby as soon as you get in. He sounded like he had some issues.

PETER

Thanks for the psychological profile, Dr. Freud. Do you have my morning paper?

RECEPTIONIST

Right here. I separated the classifieds, just like you wanted. Are you looking for another job?

The workers who overhear this look up, interested. Peter speaks loudly, covering.

PETER

No, of course not. I'm looking for garage sales this weekend. Big garage sale guy. Can never get enough wicker furniture...

Reaching his office, Peter snatches the newspaper from the Receptionist's hand, giving her an irritated glare as he storms inside.

CUT TO:

INSERT - TV COMMERCIAL

A 'Mintos' commercial runs. A group of teenagers play Frisbee in a cemetery. One of the kids throws wild, the disc flying over SKIPPY's head and through an open window into a...

...mortuary. Skippy enters to see an open-casket service taking place. The Frisbee has landed in the coffin, on the chest of the deceased. Thinking quickly, Skippy jumps into the receiving line, head down and sad. As he passes the casket he grabs the Frisbee, trotting jauntily toward the door. He stops and turns to see the mourners gaping at him in surprise. Grinning smugly Skippy holds up a roll of 'Mintos', the mourners all smiling and laughing in understanding. We PULL BACK to see...

INT. SCREENING ROOM

... we're watching the ad on a large screen. The lights come up, revealing MARCUS DERWIN, a well-dressed man in his late fifties, who is obviously very comfortable with his success as head of the agency. Beside him is ALLAN KIRBY, a junior executive in his mid-twenties, who looks to Derwin expectantly.

DERWIN

I don't get it.

ALLAN

It's symbolic! The kids with the Frisbee represent life! Their playing in a cemetery represents life triumphing over death. That triumph is fully realized by the scene in the mortuary in which Skippy teaches everyone to get on with life rather than give in to sadness and grief.

DERWIN

I thought this was supposed to be about breath mints.

ALLAN

Fresh minty breath is the final coup de gras! Have you ever smelled a dead person's breath? Jesus, doesn't anyone understand symbolism around here?

The door opens and Peter steps in. He's obviously nervous about this meeting, but tries to hide behind a confident façade.

PETER

Sorry I'm late. I tried to get here as quickly as I could without having to actually watch the commercial.

DERWIN

(stands)

Ah, Peter! Come on in! You know Allan.

Allan and Peter exchange curt nods - they know each other, they just don't much like each other.

DERWIN (CONT'D)

Allan's out newest rising star - he reminds me of you five years ago. Young and full of energy.

PETER

Well, he's full of something, alright.

Derwin laughs, clapping them both on the back.

DERWIN

That's what I like to hear - envy, jealousy, hate. The spirit of competition keeps this company on top. Which brings me to why I called you in. National Life Insurance is shopping around for a new advertising firm, and they've agreed to let us pitch them. The catch is we only have until the end of the week.

PETER

The end of the week? To come up with an entire campaign? They want us to cure cancer and end world hunger while we're at it?

DERWIN

Rather than assign one of you to come up with a bunch of half-baked ideas, I want you each to come up with one winner. You'll both pitch to the client Friday morning.

Allan shrugs coolly, the picture of confidence.



ALLAN

Friday shouldn't be a problem. I work best under pressure.

PETER

And plagiarism is such hard work.

ALLAN

Will you get off it already? I never plagiarized anything. We had similar ideas, it was a coincidence.

PETER

Quite a coincidence - same concept, storyboards... typos.

DERWIN

(cuts in)

Okay, okay - enough envy, jealousy and hate already. I don't have to remind you that it's been awhile since you brought us any new clients, Peter. It couldn't hurt your status within the firm to land this account.

Allan grins at Peter's dressing-down as a FEMALE VOICE comes over the intercom.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Derwin, you've got a call on line twelve... and Mr. Bryant - there's a half-dozen secretarial applicants waiting outside your office...

DERWIN

My God, Peter, it's been months. You still don't have a secretary?

They all head for the door, Peter shrugging.

PETER

I know, I know... I haven't found the right person. Fiancés come and go, but hiring a secretary is a major responsibility.

INT. DERWIN & TATE - CORRIDOR

Peter, Allan and Derwin step out of the screening room just as a distinguished CLIENT steps off the elevator.

Recognizing him, Peter hurries forward, making sure that Derwin and Allan hear every word.

PETER

Mr. Matheson! My biggest client!  
What a surprise to see you! And how  
is my biggest client, responsible  
for over a million dollars in  
billable hours last year? I didn't  
know you were coming, but I can  
always make time to have lunch with  
my biggest client.

The Client looks at Peter a little uneasily.

CLIENT

Uh, actually Peter, I'm not here to  
see you. I'm here to talk with Mr.  
Kirby.

And with that Allan swoops in, leading the Client down the  
corridor.

ALLAN

Right this way, Mr. Matheson. I  
have some ideas for your spring  
campaign that I think you'll like -  
your idea about Dennis Rodman?  
Brilliant!

Allan looks back, flashing Peter a smarmy grin. Peter's  
shoulders slump, Derwin stepping up behind him.

DERWIN

You need to get this account,  
Peter.

Derwin moves off, Peter speaking quietly to himself as if  
rehearsing.

PETER

Do you want fries with that?...  
Would you like to see something in  
a pump?... Clean-up on aisle  
four...

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Late afternoon. Peter's car pulls up to the front of the  
apartment building, where a moving van is parked. He climbs  
out of the car, a cocky grin on his face.

PETER  
Kelly. Just can't stay away...

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY

Peter enters, surprised to see movers carting furniture - not into his apartment - into Annie's. Glancing around, he finds the Landlady needling the movers as they clumsily heft a sofa up the stairs.

LANDLADY  
Careful! That banister is older than you two put together. And it's a heck of a lot better looking!

PETER  
What's going on?

LANDLADY  
What does it look like? Demolition experts disguised as moving men are destroying my staircase.

PETER  
No, I mean why are people moving into that apartment? Isn't that Annie's apartment?

The Landlady turns to face Peter, the movers forgotten.

LANDLADY  
You know Annie?

PETER  
Sure, we met last night...

LANDLADY  
Last night? What're you talking about? I don't think this is funny, Mr. Bryant...

PETER  
I'm not trying to be funny. I met her in the hallway, we talked, hit it off, had a few drinks, she wouldn't put out... and now someone's moving into her apartment?

Grabbing Peter's arm, the Landlady pulls him into a dark corner beneath the stairway.

LANDLADY  
You met Annie last night?

PETER  
If you'll just tell me how many times I have to say 'yes' before you believe me, we'll save a lot of time.

LANDLADY  
Annie Giddons. About five-six, dark brown hair, green eyes?

PETER  
Four it is. 'Yes'. So where'd she go? She never said anything about moving out.

LANDLADY  
Annie didn't move out. Annie's dead.

Peter stares at her a moment. A big grin breaks out on his face.

PETER  
You almost got me! Dead. Jeez. You know it's been a bad day when you almost buy into that. So where is she, really?

The Landlady doesn't crack a smile, looking at Peter seriously.

LANDLADY  
Annie is dead, Mr. Bryant. She was killed two weeks ago in a car accident.

Something about the tone in her voice wipes the grin off Peter's face.

PETER  
You're not kidding.

LANDLADY  
If you saw Annie Giddons last night, you saw a ghost.

Peter stares at her in shock as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Late that night. The apartment is filled with the NEWLYWEDS' moving day clutter. Annie wanders through the living room, looking at things unhappily. Through the slightly ajar bedroom door we can hear the Newlyweds making love.

ANNIE

(rummaging through box)

Look at this stuff... Oh no... They can't be serious about these curtains...

(there is an escalation of moans from the bedroom)

Don't they ever stop? With that much friction I'm surprised they haven't spontaneously combusted.

Annie picks up a tacky ceramic Three Stooges lamp, inspecting it closely.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Oh look - the switch is right where Moe's dinky should be...

She playfully flips the switch, a BLINDING WHITE LIGHT suddenly filling the room.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(wincing)

Whoa! Calm down, Moe...

The light grows stronger until the room is bathed in the supernatural glow. Annie clutches the lamp fearfully as a loud HEAVENLY CHOIR reaches an awe-inspiring crescendo. Squinting, she can see a SHADOWY FIGURE emerge from the center of the light, which quickly FADES to reveal...

... a bookish, balding man carrying a briefcase. This is WALLACE EARLE, who rubs his eyes, blinking rapidly.

WALLACE

Man! I always forget to close my eyes...

Annie raises the lamp, wielding it threateningly.

ANNIE

Who are you? Are you an angel? Are you the devil? A ghost...?

(thinks)

Wait a minute - what am I scared of? I'm a ghost.

WALLACE

Sorry about all the light and noise, some traditions die hard.

(grins, extending his hand)

Wallace Earle. I'm here to handle your transition.

ANNIE

(shakes his hand uncertainly)

Annie Giddons. Dead person. You don't look like an angel.

WALLACE

Everybody sees me differently, whatever makes their transition more comfortable. To some I'm an angel, to some I'm the Grim Reaper. Once I was a topless blonde woman in a G-string and pumps. That was an interesting afternoon...

ANNIE

Shouldn't you have been here sooner? I died like two weeks ago.

Wallace pulls a clipboard with a form attached from his briefcase, handing it to Annie.

WALLACE

Sign that, please. To make your transition easier I thought I'd appear as a social worker with a huge backlog, and I pride myself on my realism...

(she's not buying it - he sighs)

... Okay, there was a little oversight. You were on the invoice, I just kind of, you know, forgot you.

ANNIE

Forgot me? So much for all-seeing and all-knowing. What, are you new or something?

WALLACE

New? No, no - I've been doing this about a month. In 200 years I won't have to wear the 'Trainee' pin anymore...

(glances at watch)

(MORE)

WALLACE (CONT'D)

I'm running late - I've got a few more pick-ups but we can talk on the way...

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Wallace and Annie MATERIALIZE on a crowded street corner, where everyone is staring upward. Annie looks around, a huge smile on her face. As they continue their conversation it becomes obvious that NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE THEM.

ANNIE

Hey! I'm out of the building! Every time I tried to leave it was like walking into a brick wall. I never thought I'd be so glad to be out in the fresh, smoggy air.

WALLACE

When people die they can become attached to a person or a place. You became attached to your apartment building. It was obviously a source of comfort in your life, so you retreated there in death. Now you come with me.

Wallace takes Annie's arm, moving her gently to one side just as the body of a SUICIDE VICTIM plummets past them, splatting OUT OF CAMERA RANGE on the sidewalk. The bystanders all turn away in disgust as the spirit of the Suicide Victim stands. He looks at Wallace, blinking in confusion.

SUICIDE VICTIM

Grandma?

Wallace pinches the man's cheek, giving him a clipboard with a form attached.

WALLACE

Yes, dear. Could you sign here...?  
Hurry, please - busy, busy, busy...  
(back to Annie)  
You can leave the building now because I'm with you. If you were to leave me you'd find yourself right back in your apartment.

ANNIE

Are you sure?

WALLACE  
 (nods)  
 It was on the final.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Wallace and Annie APPEAR at a bus stop, the Suicide Victim standing behind them, still dazed, reading the form. A young man stands at the curb listening to his Walkman. He dances with his eyes closed, absorbed in an REM song.

YOUNG MAN  
 (singing)  
 It's the end of the world as we  
 know it, and I feel fine....

WALLACE  
 You should be glad you're leaving.  
 Here nobody sees you, nobody hears  
 you, nobody speaks to you. What  
 kind of an existence is that?

ANNIE  
 I live in LA, I'm used to it.

The young man with the Walkman starts to dance as the song kicks in, eyes closed.

YOUNG MAN  
 (singing)  
 ... Six o'clock, TV hour...  
 Something-something... bag of  
 flour...

He doesn't realize he's stepped off the curb and into the path of an oncoming bus. We hear a SPLAT as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wallace and Annie MATERIALIZE beside a man standing at his kitchen counter, putting a piece of bread into a toaster. The Suicide Victim and CRASH VICTIM stand to one side, exchanging dazed looks.

ANNIE  
 It's just that I died at a really  
 bad time for me.  
 (MORE)



ANNIE (CONT'D)

I have clients that need me... I was about to get married!

WALLACE

Really? Congratulations!

The toaster begins to smoke, the man flipping it over and shaking it. The Crash Victim steps up, staring in disbelief at Wallace, who hands him a clipboard and form.

CRASH VICTIM

Uncle Louie...?

WALLACE

(ruffles his hair)

How's it goin', ya little shitbag? Sign this form, wouldya?

(turns back to Annie)

Look, I sympathize with your situation, but I've got too many other cases to deal with...

ANNIE

Me, too. I'm sorry Wallace, but I can't leave yet. I have Darryl and Sarah... and Donald... I'm not ready.

Annie steps away, DISAPPEARING. Wallace watches her vanish with a frown... just as the man sticks a knife into the toaster. There is a loud ZAP, the TOASTER VICTIM flying back. His spirit steps out of his body, squinting at Wallace.

TOASTER VICTIM

Johnny Carson?

WALLACE

That's a new one... Have a seat next to my other guests on the panel. I'll be back right after these messages from our good friends at Alpo and Budweiser...

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Annie MATERIALIZES in her living room again - only to hear the Newlyweds still going at it in the bedroom.

ANNIE

This is worse than my dorm room in college...

Wallace APPEARS - the Suicide Victim, Crash Victim and still smoldering Toaster Victim (holding a clipboard with form attached) milling about behind him. The Crash Victim and Suicide Victim dig into a bag of Cheese Puffs on the coffee table.

WALLACE

Don't eat too much of that stuff.  
You'll leave orange ectoplasm  
everywhere.

(to Annie)

Look, it's not like you have a lot  
of choices here. You're dead. That  
tends to cut down on your  
options...

The moaning of the Newlyweds is suddenly replaced by the woman BARKING like a dog. The three Victims exchange interested glances, dropping the Cheese Puffs and wandering over to the bedroom door, staring in at the Newlyweds.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

That's it...

Pulling a handheld remote control from his pocket, Wallace points it at the wall, where a GLOWING PORTAL emerges, a BRIGHT LIGHT filling the room.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

It's time to go, Annie. You can  
take it up with management.

(to other ghosts)

Come on guys - show's over.

The other ghosts grumble as they reluctantly step away from the bedroom door. Annie sighs, moving towards the light, but STOPS as if HITTING A WALL. She rubs her nose gingerly.

ANNIE

Ow! Very funny. Do you always pick  
on dead people for laughs?

WALLACE

Oh no. I had a feeling this would  
happen...

ANNIE

What, I don't qualify?

(worried)

I'm going somewhere else...?

Wallace points the remote control at the GLOWING PORTAL, which BLINKS OUT. The other ghosts turn to him excitedly.

## CRASH VICTIM

Does this mean we're staying?

(Wallace nods)

Cool!

The three Victims scurry to the bedroom, where the woman has now segued into cat noises. Wallace frowns at Annie.

## WALLACE

You have issues to resolve here before you can move on. You have to complete your unfinished business or lay it off on someone else.

Annie knocks on his forehead with a closed fist.

## ANNIE

That's what I've been trying to tell you! I have to figure out a way to get out of this building and tie up some loose ends...

(gets an idea)

You said when you die you can become attached to a person or a place. How do I attach myself to a person?

## WALLACE

You've got to find a person you know who needs guidance and help them. Then they, in turn, can help you.

## ANNIE

Someone I know? That's easy, I've got plenty of screwed up friends. The problem is picking just one...

Wallace pulls another case file from his seemingly bottomless briefcase.

## WALLACE

(reads)

'Peter Bryant. Age 32. Veered from his life path at age 13 when his father abandoned his family'.

## ANNIE

Peter? Peter from last night Peter? What's it mean, 'veered from his life path'?

WALLACE

Peter is a lost soul whose life is falling apart. And it's going to get a lot worse unless you can get him to change his ways.

(reads file)

Since he cares so little about his fellow human beings, you've got to get him to shed a tear of sympathy for another person.

ANNIE

Shedding a tear is going to put him on the right path? One tear?

(Wallace nods)

Whatever you say. At least it's not something hard, like getting him to leave the toilet seat down. So how do I do this attaching thing, anyway?

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The next morning. Peter is pacing, looking like he's been up all night.

PETER

This is crazy. A ghost. I tongue kissed a ghost. I hope she didn't die from anything contagious...

(stops, laughing)

Get ahold of yourself. Ghosts don't exist. They're myths, like UFO's, the Bermuda Triangle and Oliver Stone movies... This is either a joke, or a misunderstanding, or... something else. But it's not a ghost.

There is a KNOCK at the door, Peter moving to answer it.

PETER (CONT'D)

(firmly)

There's no such thing as ghosts.

He opens the door, freezing when he sees Annie standing in the hallway.

ANNIE

(cheerfully)

Hi! Can I talk to you?

Peter SCREAMS, slamming the door. He watches, stunned, as Annie walks THROUGH the closed door.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Glad to see you, too.

Peter holds up his index fingers in the sign of a cross, keeping his distance.

PETER

What are you - a zombie? A vampire?  
A ghost? You're not gonna drink my  
blood or eat my face or something,  
are you?

ANNIE

I prefer 'spirit'. It's less chain-  
rattly, anguished-moany.

Peter grabs the bean bag chair, holding it up to protect him from Annie.

PETER

How can you be dead? I touched you.  
I kissed you...

(an ugly thought)

Is it necrophilia if you don't know  
the person is dead?

ANNIE

Listen, I came down here because I  
need a favor.

(touching her chest)

Let's see if I can figure this  
out...

As Annie touches her chest her hand disappears INSIDE her body. Peter lets out another SCREAM, dropping the bean bag chair. She plucks out a SMALL SPARKLING BALL, which she examines in amazement.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Whoa...

Reaching out, Annie puts the SPARKLING BALL inside Peter's chest. He stares at her in surprise.

PETER

Hey! What was that? What did you  
just do? Are your hands washed?

ANNIE

I removed a little piece of my soul  
and gave it to you.

Peter rubs his chest where Annie touched him.

PETER

Eeeyew! Take it out. That's gross!  
This is the cold and flu season!

ANNIE

No. We're attached. Where you go, I go.

PETER

I don't think so! I don't even like live women hanging around me all day!

ANNIE

I need your help, Peter. You're the only one I can turn to.

Peter tries to beg off, in full bail-out mode.

PETER

This is just not a good time for me. I'm up to my eyeballs in work... there's this whole thing with Kelly... I don't think it's smart to get attached to someone so soon after a break-up...

ANNIE

(rolls eyes)

Even in death I'm surrounded by men who can't make a commitment.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Peter leaves his apartment, followed by Annie. He is angry, still rubbing the spot on his chest.

PETER

This can't be happening! I don't even believe in ghosts.

ANNIE

I read somewhere that 63% of Americans believe in ghosts. That's more than believe in the president.

PETER

Why are you doing this to me? Isn't there someone else around here who can help you?

ANNIE

It doesn't work that way. Besides, they all know I'm dead. If I suddenly appeared before Mr. Sweeny I think his pacemaker would shoot out the top of his head.

INT. ANOTHER ANGLE

as the Landlady steps through the front door, carrying a bag of groceries. She sees Peter approaching - seemingly talking to himself. (NOTE: Only Peter can see and hear Annie, unless otherwise specified.)

PETER

Fine! Then he'd be dead and you could bother him!

LANDLADY

(uncertainly)  
Good morning, Mr. Bryant.

PETER

(distracted)  
Morning...

As Peter passes the Spirit Chimes TINKLE by themselves - almost as though someone gave them a gentle nudge. Peter leaves, pausing to hold the door open for someone the Landlady can't see. Her eyes go wide.

LANDLADY

Annie! It is Annie!

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S CAR - DAY

Peter drives, Annie sitting tensely in the passenger seat.

ANNIE

Watch out... this guy's weaving ... that light's going to change... do you have to drive so fast?... look out...!

She lets out a SCREAM, covering her eyes and bracing herself against the dashboard. Peter grips the wheel tightly, clenching his teeth.

PETER

Would you give me a break, please -  
I'm not even going the speed limit!

ANNIE

Sorry. I'm a little nervous. I  
kinda had a bad experience last  
time I was in a car, y'know?

PETER

You're nervous? You're dead! The  
car could explode and you'd still  
be dead!

Annie points to a cross street up ahead of them.

ANNIE

Turn here! Turn here!  
(Peter ignores her, going  
straight)  
I need to go to 'The Grove'.

PETER

The restaurant? Since when do dead  
people eat? Your old boyfriend work  
there or something? And what about  
that - why aren't you attached to  
him?

ANNIE

He's not around. He works on a  
cruise ship and he won't be back  
until tomorrow night. You don't  
seem to understand, I'm here to  
check on some people and I need you  
to help me. And you can't pawn me  
off and you can't break up with me.  
Deal with it.

PETER

No, you don't understand - I only  
have a couple days to come up with  
a brilliant life insurance campaign  
or my career is dead. No offense.

Annie grabs the steering wheel, trying to turn down the next  
cross street.

ANNIE

Turn here!



PETER  
 (yanks wheel back)  
 Don't touch the wheel! I'm the  
 driver, only I touch the wheel!

ANNIE  
 (tugs on steering wheel)  
 There it is, that macho car thing.  
 Only men know how to drive.

Peter and Annie wrestle for control of the steering wheel.

PETER  
 At least I never killed myself in a  
 car wreck!

ANNIE  
 I knew you were going to bring that  
 up! Typical! Typical!

EXT. CITY STREET

Peter's car WEAVES wildly down the road, other cars SWERVING  
 to avoid it. Peter and Annie continue to bicker.

PETER (O.S.)  
 Gimme the wheel!

ANNIE (O.S.)  
 Turn!

PETER (O.S.)  
 Spook!

ANNIE (O.S.)  
 Mortal!

PETER (O.S.)  
 Succubus!

ANNIE (O.S.)  
 Weenie!

Annie lets out another SCREAM as the car rounds a corner. We  
 hear a CRASH, a hubcap slowly rolling back around the corner  
 as we...

CUT TO:

INT. DERWIN & TATE - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

Peter steps into the main lobby. He is followed by Annie.

ANNIE

Those people at the bus stop were surprisingly agile for their age. And that police officer was very nice to let you off with just a ticket.

Peter and Annie step into the elevator, turning to see the Obese Man running toward them.

OBESE MAN

Wait! Hold the doors!

Like clockwork, Peter hits the 'close door' button, the elevator doors closing just before the Obese Man can reach them.

ANNIE

What'd you do that for? That wasn't very nice.

PETER

Are you kidding? I am probably the only exercise that guy gets.

Annie just looks at him dubiously.

INT. DERWIN & TATE - 12TH FLOOR

The elevator doors open, Peter and Annie stepping out. She looks around, impressed.

ANNIE

Wow. Swanky. This is where you work? I'm used to cement floors with a drain in the center so you can hose it down at night.

Peter ignores Annie, hurrying through the hallways as she tags along. Seeing Peter, the workers all hunker down in their cubicles as he passes.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And it's so quiet. Did everyone take a vow of silence to work here?  
(catches up to Peter)  
You need to lighten up. Say hello to people. Every morning when you come in. You'd be surprised what a difference it makes.

PETER

(under his breath)

The last person I said hello to was you, and look where that got me.

ANNIE

Boy, one little run-in with the law and you fall all to pieces. There's no sense crying about it... Wait - maybe a good cry is just what you need. You know, shed a tear or two, very therapeutic...

INT. PETER'S OFFICE

Peter and Annie step into the office, Annie pressing him for information.

ANNIE

So tell me Peter, what makes you sad? I mean as an emotion, not a condition.

PETER

In the last 24 hours I've lost my girlfriend, my front fender, probably my job, and I've gained you. You don't think I'm sad?

The Receptionist steps into the office, obviously terrified to talk to Peter.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Bryant?

ANNIE

(jumps)

Aaah!!! She scared me!

PETER

(to Annie)

Keep it down!

Confused, the Receptionist whispers meekly.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Derwin called for you, sir.

PETER

Why are you whispering?

RECEPTIONIST

You told me to.

PETER  
When?

RECEPTIONIST  
Just now.

PETER  
No I didn't.

RECEPTIONIST  
Yes you did.

Annie leans against the doorframe, watching in amusement.

ANNIE  
Call it a hunch, but I'd say  
communication is a big problem in  
your relationships.

PETER  
(to Annie)  
Quiet!

RECEPTIONIST  
See?

ANNIE  
See?

Peter takes a deep breath. He looks to Receptionist, speaking calmly.

PETER  
What did Derwin want? In normal,  
non-whispering tones, please.

RECEPTIONIST  
He wants you and Mr. Kirby to join  
him for lunch so you can each give  
him a progress report. He said for  
you to pick the restaurant.

PETER  
I pick the restaurant? I'm dead.  
They never let you pick the  
restaurant unless you're on your  
way out. It's like a last cigarette  
before the firing squad takes aim.  
(frustrated)  
I need a cup of coffee.

Annie pipes in cheerfully.

ANNIE  
I'll get it!

Annie leaves the room, Peter leaning against his desk, rubbing his temples.

RECEPTIONIST  
Are you okay, Mr. Bryant? You seem kind of... insane.

Peter looks up, the Receptionist gulping nervously.

PETER  
You've only been here, what, a couple months?  
(she nods)  
Good - you won't have as much to clean out of your desk.

The Receptionist frowns. Peter sees Annie step in behind her, carrying a cup of coffee.

INT. ANOTHER ANGLE

Catching something out of the corner of her eye, the Receptionist turns toward the coffee cup - which seems to be floating in mid-air. Realizing what's happening, Peter lunges for the cup. He grabs it before the Receptionist can see, spilling it all over himself.

PETER  
Ow! Hot! Hot! Hot!!!

RECEPTIONIST  
What happened?

INT. ANOTHER ANGLE

Annie stands, arms crossed, watching Peter dance around the tiny office.

ANNIE  
Now I suppose you're going to blame this on me...

PETER  
Why wouldn't I blame it on you?

RECEPTIONIST  
Me? What did I do?

PETER

Not you!  
 (points to Annie)  
 Her!

The Receptionist looks to where Peter points, unable to see Annie. Freaked, she just wants to get out of here.

RECEPTIONIST

Uh... okay. Which restaurant should I tell Mr. Derwin?

ANNIE

'The Grove'!

PETER

(wiping at his pants)  
 'The Grove'! Fine! Whatever! 'The Grove'!

Peter rushes out of the office, the Receptionist shaking her head.

RECEPTIONIST

People handle stress in strange ways...

ANNIE

Tell me about it.  
 (follows Peter out)  
 Are you okay, Peter? That scalding coffee bring a tear to your eye...?

CUT TO:

INT. 'THE GROVE' RESTAURANT - DAY

Peter enters the fancy restaurant - clothes ruffled, coffee stain on his pants, scowl on his face. Annie is right behind him. Peter lets the door swing shut in her face, Annie passing right THROUGH it.

ANNIE

I said I was sorry! I don't know what the big deal is - lots of people get two traffic tickets in one day.

PETER

I thought spirits were supposed to be frightening or benign - you're just a pain in the ass!

ANNIE

I don't mean to make things  
difficult, it's just that my time  
is limited - and yours is, too...

PETER

(not hearing - sees Allan  
waving from a table)  
Oh great, they're already here.

Peter hurries through the restaurant, where his sloppy appearance brings stares from the elite clientele. Annie tags along behind, jabbering happily and scanning the restaurant as though looking for someone.

ANNIE

This is impressive. I was never  
able to afford this kind of place.  
If the waiters weren't wearing  
paper hats it was out of my price  
range.

Peter reaches the table where Derwin and Allan are seated. Derwin frowns at Peter's appearance, while Allan seems amused.

ALLAN

(nodding to stain on  
Peter's crotch)  
I didn't know you got so nervous  
before meetings, Bryant.

DERWIN

Yes, what gives, Peter? Is this  
some medical problem I'm not aware  
of?

Not thinking, Peter holds a chair out for Annie, who sits. Derwin and Allan exchange confused looks as Peter tucks the seemingly empty chair closer to the table, then sits in the next one.

PETER

It's coffee. I spilled a cup of  
coffee on myself.

Annie leans forward, checking out Derwin and Allan.

ANNIE

So these are the guys you work  
with? Which one's the big boss? The  
one with the rug or the one with  
the plugs? I'm guessing plugs.

DERWIN

Allan here was just filling me in on some of the ideas he's come up with for the ad campaign.

ANNIE

(exclaims happily,  
pointing to Derwin)  
Plugs it is!

The waitress steps up, handing each of the men a menu. It's Sarah.

SARAH

Hello gentlemen. How are you today?

As the men mutter their responses Annie looks up, happy to see Sarah.

ANNIE

Sarah! She got the job! I used to be her case worker. I wonder how she's doing...  
(nudges Peter)  
... Ask her.

Peter shoots Annie a frown.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Come on, I just want to know she's doing okay.

Peter ignores Annie as Sarah pulls out her order pad.

SARAH

Can I get you gentlemen something to drink?

DERWIN

(picks up wine list,  
reading)  
I always like a glass of wine with my lunch. Let's see what you have...

Irritated, Annie begins flicking Peter's ear with her finger. He jerks away.

PETER

Ow!

DERWIN

Peter? Is something wrong?



The others at the table stare at Peter - whose ear seems to be TWITCHING back and forth on its own. He flinches with every new flick, trying to retain his composure.

PETER

It's nothing. Just a spasm. It'll go away.

ANNIE

I'm going to keep doing this until you ask her. I want you to keep in mind not only how annoying this is, but the fact that I never have to sleep.

PETER

(to Sarah, still flinching)

So... how're you doing?

SARAH

(staring at his ear)

Uh, I'm fine, thanks.

ANNIE

(stops flicking)

That's not enough - everybody says 'fine'. They could have their legs cut off and they'd say 'fine'. Ask her if they're scheduling around her night classes.

Peter sits stubborn and stone-faced - until Annie begins flicking his ear again.

PETER

Ow!!!

(to Sarah)

So... are they scheduling around your night classes?

Sarah frowns, confused by Peter's sudden interest in her.

SARAH

Yes, they are. Do I know you?

Allan reaches down, pulling some crude storyboards from his briefcase - and by crude we're talking stick figures scrawled inside crooked, hand-drawn frames.

ALLAN

I took the time to sketch out a few rough storyboards, to give you a better grasp of my vision...

ANNIE

Ask her how Ricky and Bobby are doing. Does Bobby still like to eat everything he can get his hands on?

(Peter gives her an annoyed look)

Just ask!

PETER

(resigned)

So... How're Ricky and Bobby? Bobby still eating everything?

Sarah just stares at him. She's beginning to get a little nervous. How does he know so much about her? Derwin continues to peruse the wine list.

DERWIN

I don't know whether I'm in a red mood or a white mood.

SARAH

(distracted by Peter's questions)

Uh... we have some very fine blush wines...

ALLAN

(holds up storyboard)

I see... two families. At a park. Widowed mothers watching over their kids. But one family is happier because their dead dad had National Insurance and they're doing fine. Maybe we even see the other family is actually panhandling...

Peter rolls his eyes. Annie nudges him, nodding to Sarah, who continues to wait patiently for their order.

ANNIE

Ask her if she's gone back to that jerk Edward.

Peter hesitates, Annie raising her flicking finger threateningly.

PETER

(interrupting Allan)

Have you gone back to that jerk Edward?

ANNIE

I hope she's not exposing her children to him.

PETER

(confused, trying to listen to three things at once)

Does your husband still expose himself to children?

Now totally freaked, Sarah SLUGS Peter, sending him toppling over backward - directly into a waiter carrying a desert tray. The cakes, pies and pastries arc upward gracefully... and SPLAT down on Peter, who lays on his back on the floor. He looks up at Annie through a layer of frosting and whipped cream.

PETER (CONT'D)

I've never tried the meringue here - it's not bad...

The RESTAURANT MANAGER rushes up, helping Peter to his feet.

RESTAURANT MANAGER

Mr. Bryant! Are you alright?

(turns to Sarah)

You're fired! Take your stuff and get out - now!

Fighting back tears, Sarah races off, Annie watching after her, concerned.

ANNIE

So much for helping her...

PETER

Don't worry, we'll probably run into her again on the unemployment line.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Peter's car pulls up, he and Annie climbing out - Peter opening his door, Annie stepping THROUGH hers. Still sticky from the restaurant... and the coffee... Peter looks like he's had the worst day of his life. Which he probably has.

ANNIE

I am not taking the blame for this one.

(MORE)

## ANNIE (CONT'D)

The 'exposing' thing wasn't a question, I was just making an observation. Which you misinterpreted, I might add.

(Peter is silent, fuming)

Why are we coming back here? We did what you wanted to do all day, now the least you can do is take me to Mrs. Grier...

## PETER

'The least I can do'? After today the only person I'm gonna take you to see is an exorcist.

## ANNIE

Oh please, it wasn't that bad. Look at the bright side - you weren't fired, the cops let you go... it could've been worse.

A HOMELESS MAN walking past stops to stare at Peter, who seems to be having an argument with himself.

## PETER

I'm supposed to be happy because I didn't actually end up in jail? I'm happier on days where that possibility never presents itself! My career's going down the toilet, thanks to you...

(notices the Homeless Man watching him)

What're you looking at? What, you guys have a patent on arguing with yourself?

Peter turns to Annie, for the first time today letting loose and ranting unself-consciously.

## PETER (CONT'D)

And why can't anyone else see you? Why am I the lucky one who gets to look like a lunatic all day long? Huh? Why can't this guy see you?

## ANNIE

Because I don't want him to.

## PETER

That's it? If you wanted him to see you he could see you?

Sighing, Annie closes her eyes, concentrating. She then taps the Homeless Man on the shoulder, smiling sweetly.

ANNIE

Hi.

HOMELESS MAN

(turns, sees her)

Hi. Aaaahhh!

ANNIE

(to Peter)

I learned a few things sitting on my butt for two weeks.

Peter shakes his head miserably.

PETER

Can I win the lottery? No. Can I meet Cindy Crawford for a night of hot sex? Nu-uh. But can I have a crazy ghost woman choose to hang around so that only I can see and hear her? Oh sure, that I can do...

Peter opens the door to the building, holding it for Annie before stepping inside.

HOMELESS MAN

(shaking head sadly)

People handle stress in strange ways...

(turns to invisible friend)

Why can't you do that, Mortimer?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Peter and Annie walk down the hallway, speaking quietly.

ANNIE

I don't think you appreciate the little things in life. That's probably why all your relationships fail.

PETER

I resent that. I appreciate plenty. I'd appreciate it if you'd leave me alone for a while, that I'd appreciate.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Besides, I'm not dead, so I have a hell of a lot better chance of enhancing my relationships than you do.

He unlocks the door to his apartment, stepping inside to reveal...

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

The apartment is fully furnished, complete with chairs, sofa, appliances... and Kelly. Her nose guard is off, and she looks great.

ANNIE

Speaking of enhancement...

KELLY

Peter! I've been waiting for you. Can we talk?

Stunned, Peter steps forward, as if to shield Kelly's view of Annie. As Peter talks, Kelly subtly looks behind him, only to see nothing.

PETER

Honey! What a surprise! Where have you been?

KELLY

I had a lot of thinking to do. I spent some time with Carlo...

PETER

Carlo?

KELLY

One of the movers. He helped me come to grips with some things... apparently this kind of stuff happens a lot in their business.

ANNIE

How convenient. 'Carlo's Moving and Marriage Counseling'.

Peter shoots Annie a glance over his shoulder as Kelly steps closer.

KELLY

He convinced me that I overreacted. I just panicked.

(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)

I suddenly saw us as one of those boring old couples watching TV in bed at eight o'clock every night. We're never going to be like that, are we?

Kelly hugs Peter as Annie inspects her, face-to-face.

ANNIE

That's not her real nose, is it?

Peter hugs Kelly back, making a grunting noise - meant to sound like a hug grunt, it's actually meant to tell Annie to be quiet.

PETER

Of course we're not! We're never going to be an old couple...

(Kelly gives him a look)

... in bed at eight o'clock...

ANNIE

What was her nose like before? A real hook job? They say a woman's breasts are shaped like her nose - what are her boobs like?

Kelly slips a leg around Peter's thighs and they kiss.

KELLY

(whispers in his ear)

I'm wearing the purple garter belt and stockings...

ANNIE

Whoops! Apparently I'm about to find out...

Peter breaks away from Kelly, smiling apologetically.

PETER

That's great...

(glances at Annie,  
speaking purposefully)

... Can I just have a tiny minute by myself in the next room?

INT. BATHROOM

Peter steps inside with Annie, locking the door behind him. He flushes the toilet to cover their conversation before confronting her.

PETER

Not to be rude, but would you please get the hell out of here? You've screwed up my job, my car, my best suit, and my ability to purchase affordable insurance in this state... after all I've put up with today you could at least let me do this in private...

ANNIE

You mean you're actually going to take her back? Good for you! That shows you're able to put your differences behind you and make a commitment! I'm proud of you!

PETER

Who said anything about taking her back?

ANNIE

You're just going to sleep with her? That shows you're a complete pig! I'm disgusted with you!

Realizing the toilet's stopped, Peter flushes again.

PETER

Look, I know it's wrong to just jump back in bed with someone after they've left you. It doesn't solve anything, and it just glosses over the real problems...

(wincing)

... but she's wearing the purple garter belt and stockings.

ANNIE

You're pathetic. I don't even want to be around you tonight.

PETER

Good! Whatever works. Now leave us alone...

Peter exits the bathroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Peter steps back into the living room, where Kelly waits, checking her teeth in a hanging mirror.



PETER

Sorry. So - how've you been...?

Before she can answer he embraces her, kissing her hard. Kelly pulls back, grinning.

KELLY

You've never been to big on holding and cuddling, have you? It's always straight to business.

PETER

I was a 'straight to business' major in college...

KELLY

Would you like to go into the bedroom?

Peter stops, looking around for Annie.

PETER

I don't know - it's quieter in here...

KELLY

(laughing)

We're alone in our apartment, it's quiet everywhere. Unless you sub-let the bedroom.

Peter laughs weakly, then sighs. He takes Kelly by the hand, leading her cautiously toward the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Peter peeks in through the door. Seeing no sign of Annie, he leads Kelly inside.

PETER

We're going to have to do this quickly...

KELLY

Why? Haven't you been doing those exercises?

PETER

I don't mean that - I might be expecting company...

KELLY

(stops)

A girl? Are you seeing someone else  
already?

PETER

Not if I can help it. Come on...

They kiss again, removing each others' clothes as they back  
onto the bed. Suddenly Annie speaks from the corner of the  
room.

ANNIE

I used to have boyfriends like you.  
They never lasted long... and  
neither did the relationships.

Peter lets out an irritated moan, which Kelly misinterprets  
as passion.

KELLY

Oh yeah, baby... I feel so wild  
tonight. Like I could do  
anything...

(sits up)

... Just tell me what you want,  
baby - I'll do it... your wildest  
fantasies...

Kelly lifts off her top, Annie observing from across the  
room.

ANNIE

Yup. Definite hook-nose...

PETER

(snaps at Annie)

Will you shut up?!?

KELLY

I thought you liked me to talk in  
bed...

PETER

(groaning)

Let's just do it...

He climbs on top of Kelly and pulls up the covers, shielding  
her from Annie. Kelly purrs with pleasure.

KELLY

Oh, yeah...

PETER

Oh, yeah!

ANNIE

Oh, please...

Kelly groans with pleasure, calling out.

KELLY

Ooh baby! Harder... harder...

ANNIE

Oh my! Are you sure she's a professional actress? The only thing stiff in this bedroom is her performance.

Peter heaves a pillow at Annie - which flies THROUGH her and knocks over a lamp. Annie just laughs as Kelly continues.

KELLY

... Mmmmm - oh yeah...

ANNIE

Hey - I've done this one before:  
"Oh yeah! Yes! Yes-yes!!!"

KELLY

... Oh yeah! Yes! Yes-yes!!!

Kelly pounds the headboard.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Oooohh - I like your hand there...  
and your other one there...  
(wrinkles nose)  
... and one tickling my foot...?

Annie giggles as Peter stops. We see the covers ROLL BACK off of his foot, which is suddenly WRENCHED into an unnatural angle. He yelps in pain, then climbs off Kelly, apologizing.

PETER

Can you give me just one more  
second alone?

INT. BATHROOM

Peter limps back in, Annie waiting for him. He turns on the shower, growling at her angrily.

PETER

Do you know how embarrassing this is?

ANNIE

You're embarrassed? I have to watch it. Haven't you ever heard of foreplay?

PETER

Why couldn't I be haunted by someone less spiteful - like Freddy Kreuger?

Peter sticks his head under the shower, wetting his hair. Annie flushes the toilet - the shower water turning scalding hot. Yowling, Peter pulls back in pain.

INT. BEDROOM

Kelly sits in bed, listening to the odd assortment of sounds coming from the bathroom. The shower RUNS... the toilet FLUSHES... there are BUMPS and THUDS... and suddenly the sound of a HAIR DRYER kicks in.

INT. BATHROOM

Peter holds the hair dryer, absently using it on his head.

PETER

Why are you doing this?

ANNIE

Because you have to start thinking about someone other than yourself.

PETER

Who? Kelly? I'm thinking of her. Now if you don't mind I'd like to stop thinking and start doing.

ANNIE

But you're just using her! You don't love her.

PETER

Of course I love her! Well, parts of her...

ANNIE

If you love her then why did you try and get me drunk and into the sack the other night? You don't give a shit about anyone, do you? Was your dad like that, too? Is that why he left when you were 13?

And with that Annie VANISHES, leaving Peter alone. Turning off the hair dryer, he frowns, looking at himself thoughtfully in the mirror. She hit a nerve.

INT. BEDROOM

The sound of the hair dryer stops as Peter steps out of the bathroom, hair sticking straight up from static electricity. He looks at Kelly, who waits for him seductively under the covers. Grinning, he jumps underneath with her. They giggle, snuggling. He kisses her and climbs on top again. They moan contentedly. Then moan again, only less forcefully. Now almost without feeling. Distracted, Peter glances around the room, then back at a puzzled Kelly.

PETER

You want to watch some TV?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT

Annie sits on the stairs, staring morosely at the oppressive walls. She begins to cry.

ANNIE

I wish you were here, Donald...

But as she sobs, Annie seems to FADE a bit, FLICKERING like a bad TV signal. She stops crying, trying to compose herself.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

This haunting stuff is exhausting.  
It's hard to catch your breath when  
you've been dead for two weeks...

Suddenly there is a PIERCING SCREAM, a pizza delivery boy bolting past her down the stairs, terrified. She watches him go, puzzled, then climbs the stairs to...

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Annie steps THROUGH the door into her apartment - which is now packed with ghosts, in all stages of death. An AXE MURDER VICTIM - the axe still in his head - carries a box of pizza to the coffee table. Some spirits make popcorn in the kitchen, some play cards at the dining room table, a group watches a baseball game on TV, and others simply loiter. Spotting Wallace sitting alone in a corner, Annie calls to him.

ANNIE

Wallace! What's going on in here?

Wallace perks up when he sees Annie, waving her over hopefully.

WALLACE

Are you ready to go? Is Peter back on track? Did he shed a tear?

ANNIE

Not yet, we hit a few snags. I don't suppose the tears in his eyes from laughing at a fat person would count?

(looks around)

What's with all the...

WALLACE

Dead people? I picked up all the spirits on my invoice, but none of them will leave because of you! They say if you don't have to go, they don't have to go. They never covered this in any of the classes...

They turn as the Crash Victim, Suicide Victim and Toaster Victim - along with three other ghosts - scurry out of the bedroom.

CRASH VICTIM

Heads up - they're taking a break.

The ghosts hurriedly return anything that might be out of place to its correct location - putting back liquor bottles, ditching the cards and poker chips under the table, sliding the pizza box under the sofa as the Newlyweds step out of the bedroom.

NEWLYWED GUY

So where do you want to eat?

The Newlywed Gal walks across the living room, the male ghosts all grunting and hooting approvingly - it's as if she's walking through a construction yard and doesn't even know it. Sensing something, she glances around the room suspiciously.

NEWLYWED GAL

(sniffing the air)

For some reason I have this craving for pizza. Hey - you left the TV on again.

The Newlywed Guy steps to the TV, just as a slugger hits a ball deep to center field, the outfielder going back... back... CLICK! He turns it off. The ghosts gathered around the set groan and curse as the Newlyweds leave the apartment.

NEWLYWED GUY

I don't even remember turning it on.

NEWLYWED GAL

You've been doing that a lot lately.

As soon as the Newlyweds close the door behind them the ghosts turn the TV back on, groaning when they see a beer ad. Wallace frowns, concerned, as the stereo is flipped on, several ghosts dancing behind him.

WALLACE

This isn't good. I always thought dead people would be happy to go. "Hey, I'm dead and it's not the end - take me with you, Wallace!" Not hardly.

ANNIE

I did have one weird thing - just now, coming up the steps, I got dizzy and felt... I don't know, like I wasn't completely here. It was almost like when I was a kid and inhaled too much helium at my girlfriend's birthday party.

WALLACE

Really? You must be losing energy or something. If you keep interacting and becoming solid you might use up all of your life force and you'll just fade away.

ANNIE

Fade away - you mean I can die again? That hardly seems fair...

WALLACE

When you watch over someone you're supposed to gently steer them in the right direction: a whisper, a subtle sign - not bully them into running errands for you. If you're not careful you won't have enough energy to cross over to the other side.

ANNIE

I'll work fast. I've been wanting to lose a little around the hips, anyway...

(changing subject)

Look, as long as we're talking about what I can and can't do - is there any way I can change my clothes? I can't go through eternity with a stain on my dress.

The Axe Murder Victim passes, pointing to the axe in his head sarcastically.

AXE MURDER VICTIM

Awww, poor baby...

(hears the doorknob jiggling)

Quiet! Somebody's coming!!!

The music is switched off and all goes quiet again at the sound of a key turning in the front door. It swings open slowly, the Landlady poking her head inside.

LANDLADY

Hello? Anyone home?

Hearing nothing, the Landlady steps inside, looking around nervously. She is followed by Joe the janitor, who wields some sort of incense holder, which billows a white smoke.

LANDLADY (CONT'D)

Annie? Annie, are you here?

The Landlady tiptoes around the apartment uncertainly.



LANDLADY (CONT'D)

Annie? If you're here can you give me a sign? A noise? A knock? Anything?

Joe follows closely behind the Landlady, swatting at an invisible fly as a ghost playfully floats around him, tickling the back of his neck. The Crash Victim steps up behind the Landlady, tapping her on the shoulder - all the other ghosts grinning in anticipation. When she turns the Crash Victim MORPHS into a hideous looking GHOUL with green rotting flesh, wild hair and glowing red eyes. He speaks in a DEEP, RASPY voice.

CRASH VICTIM

Annie wants her cleaning deposit back!

The Landlady SCREAMS as she bolts from the apartment.

LANDLADY

It's okay, honey! I'll help you find your way to the light! I'll free you from these Earthly constraints if it's the last thing I do!

(glances back)

At the very least I'll bring you some moisturizer!

Joe stands frozen in the center of the room, staring goggle-eyed at the Crash Victim.

JOE

(drops lantern, pleading)

Awright! I fix air conditioning! I fix air conditioning!!!

He races out of the apartment as the ghosts explode with laughter, congratulating and high-fiving the Crash Victim, who returns to normal. Wallace sighs tiredly.

WALLACE

They've learned a few tricks.

(to group)

Everybody keep it down - try to remember that you're dead.

TOASTER VICTIM

(ala Tonight Show crowd)

Hey-oh!!!!

Everybody else joins in as Wallace groans. Suddenly a ghost thumbing through a stack of CD's holds one up, calling out:

CD GHOST  
Hey, cool - 'Disco Sounds of the  
70's'!

The ghost slides it into the CD player as Wallace looks to Annie pleadingly.

WALLACE  
Please hurry.

He flinches as 'Jungle Boogie' BLASTS full volume from the speakers.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BASEMENT

The Landlady and Joe huddle in the basement, still frightened by their experience in Annie's apartment. MUFFLED DISCO MUSIC pounds from overhead as Joe clutches a hammer tightly in both hands, eyes darting back and forth.

LANDLADY  
It's that Bryant fellow. None of this happened until he moved in - he's obviously the conduit causing all this unrest in the spirit world. If we want to help Annie move on we've got to free her from him...

Seeing that Joe isn't listening, she taps him on the shoulder - Joe swinging around and imbedding the head of his hammer into the plaster wall next to her head. Realizing what he's done, he just smiles, giving a thumbs-up as the Landlady glares at him.

JOE  
Joe fix. Awright...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Later that night. Peter sits on the steps, watching as the Movers cart the last of Kelly's furniture out of his apartment. Mover #2 emerges carrying the bean bag chair, Peter calling to him.

PETER

Hold it - the bean bag stays.  
 (Mover #2 shrugs,  
 dropping it)  
 And when you see Kelly tell her I  
 want my key back.

Mover #1 pauses as he passes, turning to Peter.

MOVER #1

I know this is a painful time, but  
 perhaps you should focus on the  
 positives and learn from the  
 experience. It's in this way that  
 we become better individuals and  
 ultimately live happier, more  
 rewarding lives.

Peter nods as though considering the Mover's words, then  
 responds softly.

PETER

Eat me.

Mover #1 exits as Annie comes down the stairs, sitting next  
 to Peter.

ANNIE

Wow. So much for worrying about  
 your bail-out excuse the next  
 morning.

PETER

Kelly decided - again - that I'm a  
 selfish jerk she couldn't possibly  
 live with. Enter 'Two Guys Who Will  
 Psychoanalyze You'. It's always  
 nice when your day has a consistent  
 theme.

(he looks at her closely)

How did you know about my dad?

ANNIE

I know all about you. Part of the  
 job. Even in death I get stuck with  
 a social worker gig.

Peter stands, speaking defensively.

PETER

So what're you supposed to do,  
 solve all my problems? Show me my  
 past, present and future like I'm  
 Ebenezer Scrooge or something?

ANNIE

No. But I've been a social worker for seven years. I know what makes people tick. I know that you've erected this wall around yourself and won't let anyone else in. And I know you're not very happy with your life.

Peter looks at her, his defenses dropping a bit when he sees the sincere expression on her face. He glances up as the Movers tromp back through, heading into his apartment.

PETER

What makes you think I'm not happy? Just because I'm about to lose my job to a snot-nosed little jerkwad who steals my ideas and my clients? Or because I can't maintain a relationship with any woman who might want some sort of commitment? Or maybe the fact that I have absolutely no friends because I used to be the snot-nosed little jerkwad stealing everyones' clients? Is that what you think?  
 (Annie looks at him blankly - he sighs)  
 So what do you think I should do....?

CUT TO:

INT. DERWIN & TATE - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

Peter and Annie step into the lobby, Annie trying to pump him up with a pep talk.

ANNIE

Okay. This is the first day of the new Peter. The kind Peter. The tolerable Peter. Remember - thoughtful!

They step into the elevator, turning to see the Obese Man running toward them as usual.

OBESE MAN

Wait! Hold the doors!

Peter reaches out to push the 'close door' button when Annie plucks a lock of hair from his head.

PETER

Ow! Mother-fu...

(Annie prepares to yank  
more hair)

... I mean, come on in, buddy!

The Obese Man stops at the door, eyeing Peter suspiciously. He quickly steps into the elevator, the doors closing behind him.

INT. DERWIN & TATE - 12TH FLOOR

The elevator doors open and Peter and Annie step out. The Obese Man sticks his head out of the elevator, watching Peter curiously... until the doors close on his head, bouncing back open. Walking down the hallway, Annie frowns at the quiet, sterile atmosphere.

ANNIE

I don't see how anyone can work here. It's like a morgue. Except dead people are a lot livelier, I can vouch for that.

Annie points to a particularly harried-looking woman standing near the coffee machine ahead of them, juggling papers as she tries to pour herself some coffee.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Say hi to her when you go past.

PETER

I don't even know her. Besides, I have a reputation around here.

ANNIE

So did Vlad the Impaler. Fear and respect aren't the same thing.

As they pass the coffee machine Peter mutters to the HARRIED WOMAN.

PETER

Hi howyadoin'?

The Harried Woman jumps at the sound of Peter's voice, papers flying everywhere.

HARRIED WOMAN

(looks up, surprised)  
Uh... fine. Thanks.

ANNIE

That was a nice start.  
 (points to MAILROOM GUY  
 pushing cart)  
 Now say hi to this kid, only try  
 not to be so generic. Everyone says  
 'howyadoin'. Compliment him  
 somehow.

They pass the Mailroom Guy, Peter nodding to him.

PETER

Hi. Nice... tie.

MAILROOM GUY

(panicked)  
 Huh?

The Mailroom Guy freezes in terror, not sure if it's a compliment or an insult. He backs off like an overmatched lion-tamer, humble and wary as he scuttles away. Oblivious, Peter smiles - he's actually getting into it. Annie points to the Receptionist just stepping out of the ladies room.

ANNIE

Now her. Try a joke, something  
 light.

PETER

(flashes Receptionist a  
 big grin)  
 Everything come out alright?

The Receptionist gapes at Peter in shock.

RECEPTIONIST

No... I mean, yes... I mean...

She clutches her stomach, feeling a spasm, and hurries back into the bathroom. Annie winces, patting Peter on the back encouragingly.

ANNIE

Okay, that's a solid beginning. We  
 just need to work on the joke stuff  
 a little more...

Peter stops short as he looks down the hallway to his office, where Sarah sits at the secretary's desk - Ricky and Bobby chasing each other around it.

PETER

Wait a second - what the hell is  
 this?

Annie grins sheepishly.

ANNIE

Oh yeah - I forgot to tell you. I put in a call to social services and got you a new secretary.

PETER

Her? She slugged me!

ANNIE

Yeah, and she got fired for it, remember? Show a little compassion. If she doesn't have a job she'll have to move back in with her ex. Picture a complete, drooling lunatic, only without the drool.

PETER

(uncertain)

What's with the kids? Those blurs are kids, right?

ANNIE

I kind of said you had day care facilities here.

PETER

But we don't.

ANNIE

Well you should...

She pushes him toward his office, Ricky and Bobby spotting him.

RICKY & BOBBY

Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!

The two boys rush toward Peter, grabbing his sleeves and tugging on them. He looks to Annie for help.

ANNIE

Do you have any candy?

PETER

Just some Tic Tacs.

ANNIE

Give 'em up quick or they'll tear you limb from limb.

Peter struggles to reach into his pocket, pulling out a container of Tic Tacs and chucking them down the hallway. Ricky and Bobby chase after it, calling out happily.

RICKY & BOBBY  
Candy! Candy! Candy! Candy!

Sarah steps up, smiling apologetically.

SARAH  
I'm sorry - the people at social services told me you had a day care center here...  
(stops short, recognizing Peter)  
Hold it - you're that guy from the restaurant! Are you some kind of weird stalker or something?

PETER  
No, no, no...  
(glances at Annie)  
... Just the opposite...

Peter winces in pain as Annie elbows him in the ribs. Sarah starts to grab her purse and coat, in a hurry to leave. Her voice rises, echoing through the quiet offices.

SARAH  
I don't know who you are or how you know so much about me, but if you don't leave me alone I'm gonna call the cops, you hear me?

Peter looks around self-consciously as his co-workers begin stepping into the hallway and peering out of their offices at the commotion.

ANNIE  
Stop her - tell her you know me.

PETER  
Calm down, you've got it all wrong. I'm not a stalker. I'm a friend of Annie Giddons.

At the mention of Annie's name Sarah instantly calms down. Her voice lowers sadly.

SARAH  
Annie? You knew Annie? Why didn't you say so yesterday?



PETER

I would've, but I got slugged in  
the jaw before I could explain.  
Nice right hook, by the way.

Sarah blushes, embarrassed.

SARAH

I'm sorry, I guess I freaked out.  
It's just, you knew so much about  
me...

ANNIE

Tell her I used to talk about her.  
Tell her she was very special to  
me.

PETER

Annie says...  
(catches himself)  
... Annie used to say how special  
you were.

SARAH

Annie was special. I miss her so  
much, don't you?

PETER

Not really.  
(Annie elbows him in the  
ribs again)  
I mean, sometimes it feels like  
she's still here.

SARAH

Sometimes that can be just as  
painful.

PETER

Definitely.

He rubs his ribs gingerly, scowling at Annie.

SARAH

Annie was the first person who ever  
believed in me. She got me into  
night school, she helped me out  
with Ricky and Bobby, and she  
convinced me that I'd be better off  
without Edward. I owe Annie  
everything. She was my angel.

Sarah tears up, as does Annie. For the first time Annie feels  
her own loss.

Peter grabs a box of tissue from the desk, Annie taking one. Peter quickly snatches it from her hand, giving it to Sarah before she can see. Irritated, Annie wipes her nose on Peter's sleeve as he grimaces, helpless.

ANNIE

Well? You gonna hire her or what? Come on, think of it as a positive step toward a lifetime of commitment-making.

PETER

Why don't we put you on as a temp - you know, until we're sure things are going to work out...

ANNIE

Wow. Don't hurt yourself there, big boy.

PETER

(glances at desk  
calendar)

It's the 15th, so you'd be coming in right at the start of the pay period...

Hearing this, Annie perks up.

ANNIE

It's the what? It's the 15th? Of August? August 15th?

(grabs Peter's arm,  
tugging at him)

Come on, we've gotta go. It's an emergency.

Peter's doing everything he can to look like he's walking himself backwards down the hallway, calling to Sarah as he's pulled toward the elevators. Once again his co-workers peer out of their offices to watch him jerking spastically past.

PETER

So, uh, welcome aboard... and, uh, take any messages... I've got an important meeting with... urp!...

Peter is cut off as he's YANKED into the elevator, doors closing. The office workers all turn to stare at Sarah, who shakes her head uncertainly.

SARAH  
People handle stress in strange  
ways...

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

The crowded basketball courts where we last saw Darryl. Climbing out of his car, Peter looks around the run-down street uncomfortably. Annie APPEARS, dragging him towards the courts.

PETER  
We can't stay here - if I leave my  
car here the only thing I'll find  
when I get back is Kelly's Yanni  
tape.

Peter reluctantly leaves the car, following Annie to the first court, where Darryl is playing basketball with much larger, older men.

ANNIE  
We have to convince one of these  
kids to go to court, or he's in big  
trouble.

PETER  
How do we do that?

ANNIE  
Have you ever played basketball  
before?

Peter watches the action on court, players jumping, spinning, jamming.

PETER  
I don't think it was the same game  
these guys are playing. Who do you  
want me to play?

ANNIE  
(pointing)  
Him...

Peter looks to Darryl, the smallest guy on the court. He breathes a sigh of relief.

PETER  
The little guy? No problem...

Darryl gets the ball at the top of the key. He dribbles around his man with ease, using a wicked cross-over, splits two huge defenders and slams the ball home with a tremendous leap. Peter frowns thoughtfully.

PETER (CONT'D)

Do you think he plays chess?

Annie pushes him out onto the court.

ANNIE

His name is Darryl Grier. This is the last thing I'll ask you to do - I promise...

(he gives her a look)

Okay, maybe not the last thing, but it's close.

Sighing, Peter steps onto the court.

PETER

Darryl Grier? I need to talk to you.

DARRYL

Yeah? Who the hell are you?

PETER

My name is Peter Bryant. I'm here for Annie Giddons.

DARRYL

Bullshit. I know why you're here, man. You want to drag me to court so I can get reamed by my shithead court-appointed lawyer and some judge who hates my ass. Let them come and get me - at least I'll have a few more days outside.

ANNIE

Challenge him. If you make a basket he goes with you.

PETER

Tell you what, I'll play you one point. If I make it...

DARRYL

One point? You ain't Annie. You play me, we go to eleven.

PETER  
(sighs unhappily)  
Can I warm up?

Darryl nods, laughing to himself.

DARRYL  
Ain't gonna make any difference.  
Ball!

Somebody throws Darryl the ball as Peter takes off his jacket, stretching a little and shaking his legs. Grabbing the ball, Peter takes a couple of dribbles, then drives toward the nearest basket. He LEAPS and DUNKS the ball with authority, yelling triumphantly and even hanging on the rim a little. He drops back down, looking to Darryl, who seems unimpressed.

DARRYL (CONT'D)  
That was good - but that's the  
little kids' basket. We play over  
here...

Peter looks to the basket Darryl is pointing at - ten feet high, chain netting, very intimidating.

PETER  
I knew that...

Peter throws Darryl the ball, taking his place at the top of the key. The other players clear out as Darryl tosses the ball back to Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
Here we go... concentrate...  
focus...

He takes a dribble - the ball immediately stolen by Darryl, who dunks it effortlessly.

PETER (CONT'D)  
... beg for mercy...

Darryl trots back to the top of the key, Peter taking a defensive stance. Head-faking him, Darryl dribbles through Peter's legs, easily laying the ball in.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Oh, Annie...

Annie APPEARS behind him.

ANNIE

What?

PETER

(not moving his lips)

Can I get some help here?

ANNIE

I'm a ghost, not a miracle worker!  
Besides, I am helping. I'm rooting  
for you.

PETER

Gee, thanks. That's like rooting  
for the Titanic against the  
iceberg...

Darryl tosses the ball to Peter.

DARRYL

Hey man, you gonna play or you  
gonna stand there and talk to  
yourself? I ain't got all day.

PETER

I have a feeling it won't take that  
long...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN COURT - VARIOUS SHOTS

QUICK CUTS as Darryl does a variety of acrobatic dunks. The crowd cheers, Peter watching helplessly. Darryl bounces it off the backboard and dunks it as Peter scratches his head. Annie stands beside him, arms crossed.

ANNIE

Ask him if he'll spot you ten  
points and try again.

Darryl performs a 360 degree dunk, dropping from the rim to the applause of everyone on the court. He steps over to Peter, dribbling between his legs tauntingly.

DARRYL

That's eleven... now let's go to  
court.

Surprised, Annie and Peter both perk up.

PETER  
You're going? So I at least won  
your respect, huh?

DARRYL  
Respect you? You suck, bro. I'm  
doing it for Annie.

Darryl moves off, Annie giving Peter a cocky grin as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. DARRYL'S CAR - DAY

A beautiful black top-of-the-line Porsche. BOOMING music rattles the tinted windows.

DARRYL (V.O.)  
(over music)  
Sorry about your car, man. Those  
wheels bring a lot of cash in this  
neighborhood.

INT. DARRYL'S PORSCHE

Peter sits glumly, clutching a Yanni cassette, Annie crammed on his lap in the passenger seat.

DARRYL  
At least you got your Yanni tape  
back.

Watching the rear view mirror vibrate wildly from the bass, Peter looks at the expensive stereo, recognizing the brand.

PETER  
Hey, I used to have a stereo just  
like this.

Darryl grins, turning it up even louder.

ANNIE  
I feel like that scene in  
'Fantastic Voyage' where they got  
trapped in that guy's eardrum.

PETER  
We'll be lucky to come out of this  
with eardrums! Why am I helping  
this kid again?

ANNIE

He needs guidance. He's disadvantaged.

PETER

He's disadvantaged? I make 200 grand a year, and he drives a better car than I do!

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Peter, Annie and Darryl enter the courtroom tentatively. Sitting in the gallery, Mrs. Grier rushes up when she sees Darryl and Peter.

MRS. GRIER

Darryl! I didn't think you were going to make it on time.

(gives Peter a look)

This isn't another shyster lawyer, is it?

PETER

No ma'am, actually I'm a shyster advertising executive.

MRS. GRIER

Same thing.

Annie laughs as she, Peter and Darryl step to the defense table, where a disheveled, overworked public defender (BOB SPITAL) sits. He seems surprised to see Darryl.

SPITAL

Well, well - the defendant cometh. That's a rarity these days. Guess I win the office pool.

(nods to Peter)

Who're you? What're you doing here?

PETER

Yeah, what am I doing here?

ANNIE

You're a character witness. Doy.

PETER

(to Spital)

I'm a character witness. Doy.



Spital gives Peter an odd look as he and Darryl take their seats. Nowhere else to sit, Annie sits cross-legged on the table as the BAILIFF calls out:

BAILIFF

All rise!

Everyone stands as the JUDGE enters, pounding his gavel and calling the court to order.

JUDGE

This is the sentencing hearing for one Darryl Grier. Counselor?

The PROSECUTOR stands, offering Darryl's file to the Judge.

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, the County of Los Angeles tried and convicted the defendant for possession of 7 stolen car stereos, 13 cellular phones, and in one case, an entire dashboard. Although still technically a youth at age 17, we feel he should be sentenced as an adult for his repeated offenses.

JUDGE

Noted. Does the defense wish to say anything?

Spital stands, speaking dramatically.

SPITAL

Your honor, I am outraged that the state would recommend sentencing this young man as an adult. Surely there is a better way to discipline...

(looks up name in file)

... Darryl here, for the simple crime of stealing a few car stereos from a Laker game last March 27th...

Peter looks at Darryl, turning red.

PETER

A Laker game? That is my car stereo...

(lunging at Darryl)

You little bastard...

Spital steps between them, holding Peter off as the Judge pounds his gavel.

JUDGE

Order! This is the Court of Los Angeles - I have enough trouble dealing with police brutality, I don't need it on the defense team, too!

Peter calms himself, taking his seat. Annie smacks him on the arm angrily.

ANNIE

I'm counting on you, Peter. Nobody here cares about this kid. Without your help he'll end up in jail - and I'll make you visit him every day...

PETER

(whispering discreetly)  
I'm not responsible for this kid!  
I've got other responsibilities,  
like my job, which I'm two hours  
late for...  
(checks wrist)  
... Hey, where's my watch?

Peter glares at Darryl, who stares back innocently. Order regained, the Prosecutor stands once again.

PROSECUTOR

... After a court appearance for that offense he was then arrested for stealing several more car stereos from this very parking lot, including three cassette players, half a dozen speakers, and an Alpine CD player...

Spital turns to Darryl, face red.

SPITAL

So, it was you that took my  
Alpine...  
(lunges at Darryl  
angrily)  
You better have a good lawyer, you  
little bastard...

Peter steps between them, shielding Darryl from Spital. The Judge pounds his gavel again, everyone calming down.

JUDGE

I should stick this kid in jail,  
where he'll be safe. Let me see  
that list...

The Prosecutor hands him the file, the Judge scanning the list of stolen items.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Yup, he got my Blaupunct...

(to Darryl)

Well, son - have you got anything  
to say for yourself before I pass  
judgement?

No one speaks, Annie looking to Peter, who is still glaring at Darryl.

ANNIE

You've got to say something about  
Darryl!

PETER

I hope they bolted down the stereo  
on the prison bus...

Irritated, Annie grabs a pen, POKING Peter in the ass. He jumps up with a loud whoop, everyone looking at him. Frowning at Annie, Peter rubs his butt as he speaks uncertainly.

PETER (CONT'D)

Uh, my name's Peter Bryant, and I'd  
like to say a few words on the  
defendant's behalf, your Honor. As  
I've had the pleasure of getting to  
know Darren here...

ANNIE

Darryl!

PETER

... Darryl here, I've come to know  
him as more than just a misguided  
delinquent, a scourge on our  
society, a social pariah feeding  
off of the hard working people of  
Los Angeles...

ANNIE

This is how you compliment someone?  
He'll be the first kid to get the  
death penalty for ripping off car  
stereos. You're in advertising,  
sell him!

Looking for any inspiration, Peter takes Darryl's file off the table, holding it up dramatically.

PETER

I've come to know a youngster who's grown up on the mean streets of Los Angeles, surviving drive-by shootings, riots, and fires - some of which he didn't even start.

Peter's free hand resting on the edge of the briefcase, Annie shuts the lid hard, smashing it. He bites his lip, dropping the file as he does a little pain-dance across the courtroom. Bending to pick up the scattered papers, Peter notices that under the word 'FATHER' on Darryl's arrest sheet is typed the word 'NONE'. He blinks, stopping cold. Turning, he focuses on Annie and Darryl's expectant, hopeful faces.

PETER (CONT'D)

Darryl comes from a home without a father to guide and encourage him. To help him become the person he should be...

Turning, Peter steps to the bench, speaking calmly.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'm going to level with you, your Honor - I barely know this kid.

Annie buries her head in her hands.

ANNIE

I should've attached myself to someone with more compassion, like Saddam Hussein.

PETER

I'm only here as a favor to a young woman who passed away a few weeks ago in a car wreck. But knowing her, and knowing that her dedication to him means that there must be a shred of decency in him somewhere, I'm offering to take personal responsibility for Darryl, if you'll give him another chance...

Darryl looks up at Peter, confused. Annie leans forward, surprised and touched. Peter speaks to her, sincere for the first time.

PETER (CONT'D)

Annie Giddons lost her chance for a full, rewarding life, but because of her amazing spirit she continues to try and help Darryl... through me. In this cynical, harsh world we live in I've never seen such selfless devotion, such caring and compassion. And I've never seen anybody who was more treasured by others. Annie believed in Darryl, and that means I do, too.

Peter takes his seat. Darryl looks at him appreciatively, like he's just recognized a friend... he even slides Peter's watch back to him. Annie stares at Peter, not knowing what to think. Amazed by Peter's offer, the Judge chuckles to himself.

JUDGE

That was quite a speech, Mr. Bryant. I've got to confess, this court's not used to such displays of passion on behalf of defendants. Court-appointed lawyers aren't known for their articulate defenses.

(gives Spital a look,  
making him squirm)

You realize that you'd be taking responsibility for a person who has shown no respect for you, or anybody else, and will probably cause you nothing but trouble.

PETER

(glances to Annie, giving  
her a smile)

Don't worry, your Honor - I'm used to it.

The Judge nods, pounding his gavel.

JUDGE

I guess if you can forgive him, so can I. Three year's probation, Mr. Grier. And keep your nose clean or you will end up in jail.

(to Peter)

I'm releasing him into your hands, Mr. Bryant. Watch over this young man...

(pointedly to Darryl)

... Especially in the parking lot.

Mrs. Grier leaps out of her seat with a triumphant yell, rushing up and hugging Peter.

MRS. GRIER

If I'm ever in trouble and they try to give me some shyster lawyer I'm gonna say no way - I want me one of them shyster advertising men!

Darryl and Spital step forward to shake his hand - Peter doing his best even though Mrs. Grier has his arms pinned to his sides. Annie watches it all, grinning proudly. She and Peter lock eyes for a moment, sharing a knowing smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTURY CITY HIGHRISE - DAY

Darryl's Porsche pulls up in front of Derwin & Tate, Peter and Annie climbing out.

PETER

Thanks for the ride.

DARRYL

No prob.

Peter starts to leave, then hesitates, glancing at Annie as he steps back to the car.

PETER

Hey, hold on. I forgot to give you my number.

(gives Darryl a business card)

Anytime you need something - a friend, just to talk, to kick someone's ass at hoops - give me a call.

DARRYL

Thanks, man. What you did back there was awesome. I owe you.

PETER

(smiles, touched)

Well, someone's got to watch out for you, you reprobate.

Darryl frowns, confused.

DARRYL

Is that trash talk?

PETER

Kinda.

DARRYL

(shakes head)

Man, you are Annie's friend.

Darryl drives away, Annie and Peter walking toward the building entrance.

INT. DERWIN & TATE - MAIN LOBBY

Peter and Annie wait at the elevator, Annie looking at him with a new respect.

ANNIE

Darryl was right, you know. You were awesome.

Peter tries to shrug it off, a little embarrassed.

PETER

I just did what you said. I sold him.

ANNIE

No, it's more than that. If I didn't know better I'd think you actually started to give a shit about someone else.

The elevator doors open, revealing Allan trying to wipe a large stain off his jacket with a handkerchief.

ALLAN

There you are - I was just looking for you in your office. The pitch has been moved up to eleven o'clock tomorrow...

(dabbing at stain)

Kind of busy up there. I always wondered what the Menendez brothers were like as children.

Allan brushes past them angrily. Peter turns to Annie as they step into the elevator, a nasty grin on his face.

PETER

Remind me to give Sarah a raise.

The doors close as we...

CUT TO:

INT. DERWIN & TATE - CORRIDOR

Peter and Annie approach his office, which looks like a combat zone. Ricky and Bobby are currently raiding the coffee machine - Ricky drinking straight from the pot while Bobby empties sugar packets into his mouth. They spot Peter, rushing him.

RICKY & BOBBY

Candy man! Candy man! Candy man!

As Ricky and Bobby bear down on him, Peter desperately rifles his pockets. Coming up with a pack of Swisher Sweets, he tosses it to the boys, who grab it and run off. Peter breathes a sigh of relief.

ANNIE

Nice job - giving cigars to kids...

PETER

Hey, I'm out of Tic-Tacs - besides, they're called 'Sweets'...

Peter enters his office, stepping over Ricky and Bobby, who eat the tiny cigars as though they were candy. Annie follows, a smirk on her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PETER'S OFFICE - DAY

Later. Peter's struggling to come up with an idea for the ad campaign. He flips pencils up into the ceiling tiles, where dozens more are already imbedded. Speaking on the phone, Annie isn't looking well. Pale, pasty - her energy level is dropping, leaving her exhausted. She hangs up, looking at Peter impatiently.

ANNIE

Hurry up and be creative, willya?  
My boyfriend's ship docks tonight  
and I don't want to be late... no  
pun intended.

PETER

Yeah, well I've got to come up with  
a presentation before tomorrow  
morning or my career's gonna be  
late. I checked today's classifieds  
and the only advertising job  
available was mine...

(thinking)

Life insurance, life insurance...

(MORE)



PETER (CONT'D)

'Trust us with your life and you'll feel no more strife'... No...  
'They'll still be fed after you're dead'... Yeesh, sounds like cannibalism...

ANNIE

You know what bugs me about life insurance ads? They always tell you about the cost of funerals. Speaking as a dead person, I could give a shit about how much my funeral cost.

PETER

I need something different.  
Something they haven't seen before.  
(stops, curious)  
Did you have life insurance?

ANNIE

Figured I'd get around to it when I got older. Never went to Paris, never spent an evening with a life insurance salesman - my two great regrets.

They look up as Sarah steps into the office, holding up what's left of a pack of Swisher Sweets.

SARAH

Excuse me, Mr. Bryant? Can I ask you - did you give my children these cigars?

PETER

(grimaces, caught)  
I'm sorry. I panicked, it was all I had, the survival instinct kicked in. Are they okay?

Sarah gestures for him to come into the doorway, where he can see Ricky and Bobby sound asleep under her desk, bits of tobacco stuck in the sugar around their mouths.

SARAH

This is the deepest they've slept since that mall cop shot them with an animal tranquilizer.

PETER

I'll pay for any doctor bills or Schick Center shock treatments...

Sarah laughs despite herself.

SARAH

It could be worse, I guess - you could've gotten them hooked on expensive Cuban cigars.

(motions to papers scattered on desk)

What're you working on?

PETER

Oh... uh, I need to come up with an ad for life insurance.

SARAH

(smirks)

In my family if you had life insurance someone would probably kill you so they could collect it.

Peter laughs, his eyes brightening as he gets an idea.

PETER

That's pretty funny.

SARAH

Not if you knew my family.

PETER

No, for an ad. I think I can do something with that...

(moves to desk)

I guess I've found myself a new permanent secretary.

Sarah smiles, a spring in her step as she leaves the office. Annie steps up behind Peter, nudging him playfully.

ANNIE

Well whaddaya know? That sounded like an actual, honest-to-God commitment. This is a big day for you. Want me to find a leper for you to cure, as long as you're on a roll...?

Peter tries to give her a stern look, but can't keep a little smile from crossing his face. He scours his desk, looking for something to write with.

PETER

Where's my pencil?

(glances up)

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Crud. You're a ghost, can't you float up there and get my pencil?

ANNIE

Being a ghost has its benefits, but it doesn't increase your vertical leap. Tell you what - I'll get your pencil, you get us a ride to the docks. And hurry!

She climbs up onto his desk to reach the pencils stuck in the ceiling as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WATERFRONT - DUSK

A beat-up old station wagon makes its way along the waterfront, the sunset casting a golden glow over the ocean.

INT. STATION WAGON

The inside of the car is even more beat up than the outside. Sarah drives while Ricky and Bobby peer unblinkingly over the front seat at Peter. He sits in the back, engaged in a staring contest with the two boys as Annie sits beside him, amused.

SARAH

It's a good thing I saw you at that bus stop - you'd have ended up in Compton. And no offense, but you're not exactly a Compton kind of guy. How do we get to the docks from here?

Peter doesn't answer, continuing to stare at Ricky and Bobby, who show no sign of breaking.

ANNIE

I saw this on 'Wild Kingdom' once. How animals will stare each other down to prove their dominance. Or maybe it was Jerry Springer...

SARAH

Mr. Bryant? Mr. Bryant?

Concentration broken, Peter blinks, Ricky and Bobby cheering happily.

RICKY & BOBBY  
We won! We won! We won!

PETER  
(to Sarah)  
We're gonna have to get one thing  
straight - don't ever interrupt me  
when I'm in a meeting.

EXT. DOCK - DUSK

The station wagon pulls up to the docks as vacationers depart the cruise ship. Peter and Annie climb out of the back seat, Sarah, Ricky and Bobby climbing out of the front.

SARAH  
You're not going to disappear to  
Mexico or something, are you? I  
need this job...

PETER  
Not unless NAFTA starts affecting  
the advertising business.

SARAH  
Then what are we doing here?

Peter glances to Annie, who stares up at a boat, transfixed. This is obviously a very emotional moment for her.

PETER  
Helping out a friend.

As the entire group heads up the gangplank and onto the ship, a white van pulls up nearby.

INT. VAN

Joe the janitor drives the van, the Landlady watching Peter from the passenger seat.

LANDLADY  
There he is! Clever - he's switched  
cars three times today to throw us  
off. I thought we lost him when you  
drove into the ocean near the port  
authority.

JOE  
Awright! Joe U.S. citizen! No port  
authority!

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - DECK

People mill about the deck, which has been decorated for a farewell party. Passengers eat and drink from buffet tables, enjoying their last evening on board. Peter, Sarah and the kids wander uncertainly as Annie looks around nervously.

ANNIE

This is it. This is where I was  
supposed to meet Donald the night  
I... when he was going to...

PETER

(whispers)  
Are you okay? Are you sure you want  
to do this?

ANNIE

I don't know if I want to... but I  
have to...  
(takes a calming breath)  
This is nerve-racking. I need a  
drink...

When no one's looking Annie takes a swig from a wine glass on a nearby table... a woman then reaching down for her drink and inspecting the empty glass quizzically.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

And a smoke.

Annie pulls a Swisher Sweet and a lighter out of Peter's pocket. Peter glances over to see Annie taking a drag, the cigar hanging in mid-air. He quickly plucks it away. Sarah looks up, puzzled, as a trail of smoke travels downward, seeming to fill an invisible pair of lungs, then is exhaled. She rubs her eyes tiredly.

SARAH

This has been a long day.

Peter leads Sarah away from Annie, heading for the railing as Ricky and Bobby attack the buffet like ravenous dogs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Are you okay? You don't look so  
good.

PETER

It's the motion. The up and down.  
The back and forth. The side to  
side...

SARAH

The boat's barely moving.

PETER

Not the boat - your kids at the buffet table.

SARAH

(laughs)

This hasn't been your day, has it?

PETER

Actually, it's been a good day - I've been doing some thinking, like maybe there's more to life than selling beer and cars.

SARAH

I wish my ex-husband had figured that out. He worked himself so hard he had a nervous breakdown. He'd have a few drinks, go into the garage, take off all his clothes and walk around the neighborhood naked. It got so the local cops had their own code for him - 'Nature Boy'. We lost everything.

PETER

That's awful! What business was he in?

SARAH

Advertising.

PETER

I knew I shouldn't have asked...  
(inhales deeply)  
The sea air feels good. The refreshing breeze, the cool spray on your face...

Sarah looks upwind, calling out angrily.

SARAH

Ricky! Stop that! No peeing off the side of the boat!

Peter immediately wipes his face in disgust as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - OBSERVATION DECK

... the Landlady and Joe watch Peter from above.

LANDLADY

Watch him, Joe. If he starts talking to Annie again we can catch her with these paper streamers...

(holds up thin rolls of paper)

They contain an ancient Oriental incantation that freezes the spirit. We throw them and they catch her like a net! Then we'll be able to free her from his control.

Joe isn't paying attention. He's looking down the shirt of a buxom young girl beneath them.

JOE

Awright!

CUT TO:

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - ANNIE

explores the deck, walking amongst the other passengers, who can't see her.

ANNIE

Look at these people - I'm dead and I'm the most active person here...

She leans against the on-deck bar, looking up to see...

... DONALD. We recognize him as the handsome man with the dark, piercing eyes from Annie's vacation photos. He stands alone at the bow of the ship, staring out to sea. Annie approaches him slowly, tentatively.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Donald... I can't believe I'm really seeing you here... I only wish you could see me...

Donald suddenly turns, LOOKING DIRECTLY AT ANNIE.

DONALD

It's good to see you too, Annie.

Confused, Annie looks behind her. Seeing no one else there and realizing he's talking to her, she SHRIEKS!

ANNIE  
Ohmygod! A ghost!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - RAILING

Peter stands alone at the railing, wiping his face with a hanky.

PETER  
(singing to himself)  
If they could see me now, all they  
could say is...  
(holds up wet hanky)  
... bleeech! If I ever meet Kathie  
Lee Gifford I'm going to kick her  
ass.

The Landlady and Joe suddenly appear, heaving streamers around Peter.

LANDLADY  
Now! He's talking to her!  
(screaming - everyone  
turning to look)  
Freeze spirit! We've got you!!!

Joe slips on the wet deck, knocking the Landlady over the railing. She flies overboard, foot kicking Peter in the head and knocking him on his back. Sarah rushes up with Ricky and Bobby, looking down at him.

SARAH  
This happens to you a lot, doesn't  
it?

PETER  
It's a recent phenomenon...

Hearing SPLASHING from below, everyone rushes to the railing... then turns and looks at Joe, who walks off as though nothing happened.

JOE  
Everything awright! Joe U.S.  
citizen! No problem...

CUT TO:



EXT. CRUISE SHIP - DECK

Annie and Donald stare at each other.

DONALD  
You're dead, too? When...?

Wallace MATERIALIZES behind them, speaking softly.

WALLACE  
That's why she never came to see  
you.

Annie and Donald turn to see Wallace - as well as about 20  
other impatient ghosts. Annie jumps, startled.

ANNIE  
Jesus! You'd think that being dead  
I'd get used to that. What are you  
doing here?

WALLACE  
I'm here for a pick-up.

ANNIE  
Donald? Donald's the pick-up?

WALLACE  
He's begun to fade. He's been dead  
for quite a while -though he does  
wear it better than most.

Wallace glances back at the other ghosts, who all give him  
dirty looks as they sneak food off the plates of vacationers.  
Annie turns to Donald, amazed.

ANNIE  
You were dead the whole time? We  
kissed! We had sex! I've heard of  
spirits entering the living, but  
this...

WALLACE  
It's actually not that uncommon.  
Lots of ghosts hook up with the  
living. All those one-night stands  
that meet in bars and never call  
back? You'd be amazed how many  
people are sleeping with spooks.

ANNIE  
You didn't love me? It was just  
some weird fling? I know I've slept  
with some lifeless people before...

Her voice trails off sadly. Donald steps forward, looking her in the eyes.

DONALD

I do love you. That's why I stayed.  
I had to see you again. I had to  
tell you the truth.

ANNIE

You stayed for me?  
(he nods - she stares in  
amazement)  
You stayed for me...

They reach out to touch one another, both FADING and FLICKERING, their hands PASSING THROUGH one another's. Annie turns to Wallace.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I'm ready. I want to go with you.  
(to Donald)  
With you.

WALLACE

I don't mind saying that it's about  
friggin' time.

Pulling the handheld remote control from his pocket, Wallace opens up the GLOWING PORTAL, motioning for the other ghosts, who grab as many sandwiches and snacks as they can hold before trudging over. Annie and Donald exchange loving glances, stepping into the light - where Annie once again SPLATS against the barrier.

ANNIE

Like death isn't traumatic enough -  
it's got to be humiliating, too...

WALLACE

What's left? Did you forget  
something? A client? A relative? A  
plant you forgot to water? What?!?

ANNIE

No, that's everything - Donald,  
Sarah, Darryl. Everybody's  
accounted for except...  
(suddenly realizing,  
groans)  
... Peter.

Wallace places his hand on Donald's shoulder, and they begin to FADE AWAY.

WALLACE

Don't you remember? You still have unfinished business - Peter is your last good deed.

ANNIE

That's not fair! I'm telling you, the guy can't shed a tear! I've tried Joni Mitchell albums, onions, Barbara Walters specials - maybe he's missing some glands or something...

WALLACE

And you have to hurry, you're losing energy. If you don't there won't be anything left to take back with me.

(cocks thumb at other spirits)

Plus you're backing up the whole pipeline!

Donald waves goodbye, nodding his head toward Wallace.

DONALD

Pretty bossy for a topless chick in a g-string...

And they're gone.

Peter rushes up, hailing a purser to tell him that the Landlady's fallen overboard. As the purser races off Peter turns to see Annie standing alone near the bow. She FLICKERS as she sheds a tear, which rolls down her face and lands on the deck of the ship. Peter stares at her thoughtfully - the single droplet glistening in the moonlight.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN

The Landlady is thrashing about in the water, trying valiantly to reach a buoy as Wallace and Donald APPEAR in a BRIGHT LIGHT, hovering over her - along with all the other spirits, most clutching drinks or munching on buffet sandwiches. Her eyes go wide.

LANDLADY

I knew it! It's Joe DiMaggio! And the entire Yankee team! I'm ready, Joe! Take me with you!

WALLACE

Joe DiMaggio is still... never mind. You have to go back, you're not ready to leave. Although there are a bunch of spirits haunting your building who are...

Wallace nudges the buoy towards her, the Landlady grabbing it tiredly. Wallace and the ghosts VANISH as she calls out:

LANDLADY

Can you at least come to my next séance...?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter and Annie straggle into the apartment, both looking the worse for wear.

PETER

That was fun - get peed on, get attacked by my landlady, get thrown off a boat by big security guys. Another exciting evening in spookville.

Annie leans against the wall tiredly. She begins to cry.

PETER (CONT'D)

Wait - it wasn't so bad. I'm getting used to being knocked on my can. Heck, I think I may be starting to like it. Why are you crying?

ANNIE

I'm not crying. I'm so h-h-h-happy...

PETER

I can tell. I used to make Kelly happy like this all the time. You know, crying's not good for you - moaning and booing are okay, but crying's just not very ghostly.

Annie laughs - still crying. Peter steps over and gives her a gentle hug.

PETER (CONT'D)

Are you okay? You aren't looking too good.

ANNIE

I've had a long day, I've been crying... I'm dead. Sorry if I'm not ready for the cover of Cosmo.

(looks at Peter  
thoughtfully)

You never cry, do you Peter?

PETER

Cry? The last time I cried was game one of the 1988 World Series. Kirk Gibson hits a homer in the bottom of the ninth and the Dodgers win. I lost a thousand bucks on that gimp.

Annie sighs, rolling her eyes.

ANNIE

I keep forgetting - you're a guy.

PETER

That's not a sentence any man wants to hear when he's hugging a woman. You know that, right?

Annie steps out of Peter's arms, pacing unhappily.

ANNIE

I feel so stupid! I spent so much time trying to avoid the mistakes of the people around me that I never let myself really live. Instead I buried myself in my work. Look at me! I'm dead and I'm still working! How type-A is that?

(looks at Peter  
seriously)

If you're not careful you're going to end up the same way, Peter.

Peter shakes his head sadly.

PETER

End up like you? I wish. When I hear the way Sarah and Darryl talk about you, how much they loved you... I think you're a pretty amazing person.

Annie stops pacing, surprised by Peter's honest show of emotion. Peter's even surprised himself.

ANNIE

You do?

PETER

Yeah. Believe it or not, I'm glad we're attached. Helping Sarah and Darryl today - those were the best feelings I've had in years. And you made me realize that I can have that feeling every day. You're the best thing that ever happened to me, Annie. You're probably the only real friend I've ever had.

ANNIE

(tears welling in her eyes)

Don't worry - this is good crying.

They hug lovingly, Annie crying on Peter's shoulder as they sit on the bean bag. We hear a key turn in the lock, the front door opening behind them. Kelly sticks her head into the apartment, unaware.

KELLY

Peter, I brought my key...

She stops cold when she sees Peter sitting on the bean bag, cuddling with thin air. Grimacing, she quickly backs out, whispering to herself as she quietly shuts the door.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Now he decides to cuddle.

(shakes head)

People handle stress in strange ways.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The next morning. Peter and Annie step out of the building to see Darryl at the curb - leaning against Peter's car.

PETER

Hey! My car... what... how...?

DARRYL

Now you're using words I understand.

(MORE)

DARRYL (CONT'D)

The trick is to put 'em all together to make an actual sentence.

Peter moves to the car, touching it lovingly. He looks to Annie, who frowns disapprovingly.

ANNIE

You know, if you're in charge of him you should make him take this back. I mean, he did steal it...

(Peter gives her a stunned look - she laughs)

Kidding! Kidding!

Glancing inside, Peter notices a brand new car stereo in the dashboard.

PETER

This is probably the first time anyone's had their car stolen and had it returned with a better stereo system.

DARRYL

(shrugs)

What can I say - car theft is a lost art. Besides, I couldn't expect a refined member of the bourgeoisie like yourself to motor about town deprived of symphonic stimulation.

Peter and Annie both raise their eyebrows at Darryl's suddenly expanded vocabulary. He grins, holding up an English textbook.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

We reprobates can learn, too.

CUT TO:

INT. DERWIN & TATE - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

Peter enters, confident, happy and full of good humor - teasing and joking with everyone he sees, like Annie had.

PETER

If it isn't the most talented advertising agency in the country - and it is... outside of those Mintos ads.

A YOUNG WOMAN greets him, intimidated.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Good morning, Mr. Bryant.

PETER  
Ah! The lovely Doris, brought to you by Giorgio Armani, Tommy Hilfiger, Gucci, and with underwear by Victoria's Secret, if I remember your dance at last years Christmas party...

She blushes, giggling, as Peter dances past, greeting everyone he passes. They just stare back in shock, unable to believe the transformation.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Is this the most talent-laden hallway you've ever seen? Tom - how was that nose job? Did they get all the brown off? Jerry! Nice new briefcase. I hope the booze inside is better, too...

Peter steps onto the elevator, whistling to the annoying elevator music as Annie APPEARS.

ANNIE  
I'm trying to conserve energy, but I feel I must tell you that 'Afternoon Delight' is annoying enough without you whistling along.

PETER  
Can't help it, for the first time in years I don't feel like a pissed off, over-anxious, type-A advertising hack... I feel like a happy, over-anxious, type-A advertising hack.

The Obese Man runs for the elevator, Peter reaching out... and stopping the door before it can close.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Take your time, buddy - you can make it!

The Obese Man reaches the elevator, Peter giving him a big hug and a playful kiss on the forehead.



PETER (CONT'D)

Ta-da! I knew you had it in you.  
Don't lose an ounce, man, you're  
beautiful just as you are!

The Obese Man backs out of the elevator uncomfortably.

OBESE MAN

Gosh, I forgot my briefcase...  
(notices he's holding  
one)  
... I mean my other briefcase...

ANNIE

I think I've created a monster...

The elevator doors close as Peter begins to whistle again,  
oblivious.

INT. AD AGENCY - 12TH FLOOR

Peter bursts out of the elevator as if in a musical. He  
passes the Receptionist, grabbing her hands and dancing along  
the hallway.

PETER

Our beautiful twelfth floor  
receptionist, the graceful... What  
is your name, anyway?

RECEPTIONIST

(in shock)  
Eileen.

PETER

Eileen! I think you deserve a  
reward for putting up with all my  
crap. I'm going to call payroll and  
tell them to give you a raise...  
(lets go, hurrying away  
as she grins, amazed)  
And get some dancing lessons!

Annie follows tiredly as Peter passes a group of workers  
smoking in the hallway. They all freeze, caught.

PETER (CONT'D)

Smoking in the building! That's not  
allowed...  
(grins)

...

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

but you guys look so much more sophisticated and mature with them that I'll let it slide! You guys are great!

As they approach, Allan steps out of Peter's office, jumping in surprise when he sees Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)

Allan! What an honor to have you take the elevator six floors just to see poor little me. Did my secretary beat you away with a broomstick as instructed?

ALLAN

No, she's in the bathroom screaming at some naked guy.

ANNIE

Edward!

Grateful for the distraction, Allan grins maliciously, hurrying off. Peter and Annie see Ricky and Bobby peeking out from under Sarah's desk. There are the sounds of raised voices coming from the women's bathroom. We hear Sarah, and the voice of an angry male. Annie notices a pile of mens clothes on the floor and groans.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Yup - Edward is here. Whenever he gets stressed he takes all his clothes off.

PETER

At least he'll be easy to recognize. What should I do?

ANNIE

You're in charge here, kick him out.

PETER

Right. I'll handle it...

Peter heads for the women's bathroom. Pausing, he looks to Annie, whispering worriedly.

PETER (CONT'D)

Did he beat her or anything?

ANNIE

No, he wasn't like that, thank God.

Peter nods, steeling himself.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM

Peter throws open the bathroom door to reveal Sarah cringing as a naked man (EDWARD) towers over her. Clearing his throat, Peter speaks in his deepest, toughest voice.

PETER

You must be Edward. I'm Peter Bryant. I'd say 'how's it hanging', but that's obvious...

(tense moment)

I understand you worked at Ogilvy, Sherman and Bates. I've always admired their work. I take it the dress codes over there are pretty loose.

EDWARD

Do you mind? My wife and I are having a private conversation.

PETER

The conversation's over. Sarah doesn't want to see you, the kids don't want to see you, and I certainly don't want to see... all of you. Why don't you leave on your own before security helps out.

Edward hauls back and PUNCHES Peter in the face. He falls back, skidding across the tile floor and hitting his head on a stall door as Edward storms off. Sarah rushes forward, staring down at him worriedly.

SARAH

Oh no! I'm sorry, Mr. Bryant! I didn't know he'd show up.

PETER

That's okay... I'm getting kind of used to this...

Annie kneels beside Peter proudly.

ANNIE

That was great! You were so brave.

PETER

(out of the corner of his mouth)

I thought you said he didn't hit.

ANNIE

I said he didn't hit Sarah - guys  
he hits.

Peter nods, rubbing his jaw gingerly as he turns to see Ricky and Bobby standing in the doorway, watching uncertainly. Oddly subdued, they step forward, Bobby offering Peter a piece of candy. Peter takes it, Bobby and Ricky both hugging him. Surprised, Peter looks up at Annie and Sarah, who smile at him encouragingly. He hugs the two boys back - tentatively at first, quickly growing more comfortable.

PETER

It's okay... everything's going to  
be fine... your mom's alright...

ANNIE

I think you just made three more  
friends.

Peter smiles at her, sitting on the floor of the bathroom, the two boys continuing to embrace him as we...

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ghosts lounge about the place, as if trying to sleep off a really wild party. They lie on furniture, tables, counters, all asleep or looking terribly hung over. The doorbell rings, and they all groan from the noise. The Newlywed Gal emerges from the bedroom, looking around at the clutter in amazement.

NEWLYWED GAL

Was there an earthquake last night?

She opens the door to see Joe the janitor wearing an elaborate, embroidered robe and tall, horned hat. He throws a bucket of chicken bones and molasses at her, making bizarre ritualistic gestures as the Landlady steps in cautiously.

NEWLYWED GAL (CONT'D)

Hey! What the hell is going on? We  
paid our rent on time!

LANDLADY

This apartment is haunted! Since my  
near-death experience I've realized  
that it is my mission to free all  
ghosts from their torment in this  
dimension...

The ghosts start to wake up from all the noise, looking at Joe curiously.

NEWLYWED GAL

What? That wasn't mentioned in the rental agreement!

LANDLADY

Don't worry, I'm including it with the pest removal. Thank God I found out Joe here is a holy man in his country.

NEWLYWED GAL

What country is that?

LANDLADY

(frowns)

I'm not quite sure...

Joe continues to chant... noticing a little extra chicken on one of the bones and nibbling on it.

CUT TO:

INT. DERWIN & TATE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Peter and Annie enter the conference room, where Derwin speaks with ERNEST CALVIN, the President of National Life Insurance. In his early 60's, Calvin is a big, burly man with a curly mid-life crisis hairpiece balanced on his head. Allan stands with them, laughing too hard, in full brown-nose mode.

DERWIN

Peter! Come in, come in. I'd like you to meet the President of National Life Insurance, Ernest Calvin.

ANNIE

What is it with these guys? The more money you have the worse your toupee is?

Nursing a bruised jaw, Peter shakes Calvin's hand.

PETER

A pleasure to meet you.

CALVIN

I hear you're the man behind the NRA ads claiming if James Brady'd had a gun he might never have been shot in the first place. I love those ads.

ANNIE

Oh, you didn't...

PETER

(nods sheepishly)  
A proud moment for us all.

Confused by Peter's sarcastic tone, Derwin quickly leads Calvin to a seat.

DERWIN

Let's get started, shall we? Have you boys decided who's going first?

PETER

Well, I...

ALLAN

(cuts him off anxiously)  
I'll go first!

Derwin looks to Peter, who nods his assent and takes a seat. Annie sits beside him, sinking into the chair in exhaustion. Allan stands at the head of the room, taking a quick sip from a glass of water and beginning his pitch.

ALLAN (CONT'D)

The problem with so many life insurance ads these days is they're all the same - dour warnings to provide for your loving family, all shot through hazy filters and golden sunlight...

Peter suddenly sits up, listening to Allan intently.

ANNIE

What's wrong?

PETER

I don't believe it...

ALLAN

But real peoples' lives don't normally look like that, or work like that.

(MORE)

ALLAN (CONT'D)

So I wanted to try something new,  
something different - I'm proposing  
we take a more humorous look at the  
way people picture life  
insurance...

Peter sits back, eyes closed, whispering in disbelief.

PETER

He did it. I don't believe he did  
it - he stole my pitch!

ANNIE

How do you know it's your pitch?  
Maybe he just had a similar idea...

ALLAN

Picture a scheming family who  
discover that grandpa has a hefty  
life insurance policy...

Annie stands indignantly.

ANNIE

That asshole stole your pitch! You  
should do something! Say something!

PETER

Like what? I don't have any proof  
it was mine. That's why he was in  
my office this morning - he must've  
taken my notes...

ANNIE

Maybe you can't do anything - but I  
can...

Peter reaches out to stop Annie - but she FADES, his hand  
passing THROUGH her. Concerned, he watches as she steps up  
behind Allan, discreetly taking his glass of water and  
pouring it down the back of his pants.

ALLAN

The family sit around the dinner  
table, trying to think of various  
ways to bump off grandpa to collect  
on his policy...

A stain begins to grow on Allan's pants, water welling up in  
his crotch and running down his legs. Derwin and Calvin  
frown, Allan blushing. Peter covers his mouth with his hand  
to keep from laughing, Annie giving him a goofy grin.

ALLAN (CONT'D)  
 (starting to feel it,  
 flustered)

They discuss various ways to rub out grandpa, and speculate on how they're going to spend his money. Then it comes to light that grandpa's policy is with some small-time life insurance company, and not National Life Insurance...

Everyone watches uncomfortably as the stain continues to grow in Allan's pants. Peter watches Annie helplessly - it seems that even this small contact with Allan is draining her further, as she now FLICKERS and FADES more drastically. Confused, Allan speaks quickly, desperately trying to rush through the pitch.

ALLAN (CONT'D)  
 ... Everyone is disappointed until Uncle Harry pipes up that he has a policy with National Life. The entire family then turns, advancing on Uncle Harry. The message being, of course, that while other insurance policies are worthless, National Life Insurance policies are very valuable. Told in a humorous fashion, of course.

Allan sighs, relieved to have survived the presentation. Covering his crotch with his hands, he speaks directly to Calvin, wrapping up.

ALLAN (CONT'D)  
 I want to thank you for your time and this opportunity, Mr. Calvin.

A beaten man, Allan takes a seat, slumping miserably. He casts a glance at Peter, who glares at him hatefully.

CALVIN  
 (to Derwin)  
 I'll say this for him - he sure gets excited about his work.

Annie returns to her seat, looking as though she's about to pass out. She continues to FLICKER and FADE, Peter whispering to her.

PETER  
 Are you okay? What's happening?



Too tired to talk, Annie waves him off as she tries to gather herself. Everyone turns as Calvin speaks.

CALVIN

I must say that's the most...  
unusual pitch I've ever seen. But I  
like the idea. It's funny, it's  
fresh, it's irreverent. It's  
different. And different's good.

(to Allan)

But we're gonna have to work on  
your presentation skills if you  
want to sell it to the Board of  
Directors.

Allan sits up, surprised, while Peter and Annie slump dejectedly. Derwin calls to Peter, gesturing to the front of the room.

DERWIN

Peter? Are you ready?

PETER

(low, to Annie)

I don't have any other ideas.

ANNIE

What're you going to do?

PETER

Bomb.

Peter stands slowly, Allan giving him a big, shit-eating grin as he steps to the front of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ghosts roll around on the floor, laughing in hysterics at Joe, who continues his incantations as ghosts flick off his hat and fling ashtrays and dishes across the room like frisbees. The Newlywed Gal turns to the Landlady, indignant.

NEWLYWED GAL

This had better not count against  
our cleaning deposit!

Wallace MATERIALIZES, looking around in disgust.

WALLACE

Okay, that's it! Everybody out -  
we're leaving!!!

Pulling the handheld remote control from his pocket, Wallace points it at the wall, where the GLOWING PORTAL again emerges, BRIGHT LIGHT flooding the apartment. Wallace angrily directs the grumbling ghosts into the light, all VISIBLE in the heavenly glow.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Let's go. No more Mr. Nice God.  
Head toward the fuckin' light...

SUICIDE VICTIM

(gasps, shocked)  
Grandma cussed!

The ghosts leave the apartment through the portal, the Landlady and Newlywed Gal watching in amazement as Joe continues to chant obliviously, his eyes closed. All the ghosts having passed through, Wallace steps into the portal, which BLINKS OUT with a FLASH.

LANDLADY

(in shock)  
The property value in this  
neighborhood is going to plummet...

The Newlywed Guy steps out of the bedroom, yawning.

NEWLYWED GUY

Morning. What's going on?

The Landlady looks at Joe with a new respect.

LANDLADY

Joe, I'm impressed. I had no idea  
you were so gifted, so blessed, so  
spiritual...

(yelling)  
Now fix the damn air conditioning!  
It's like an oven in here!

Joe nods and smiles, uncomprehending, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. DERWIN & TATE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Peter stands at the front of the room, trying and failing to think on his feet and come up with a pitch. Annie watches, feeling for him, while Allan sits with a smug grin on his face.

PETER

... My ideas are less about specifics and more about general concepts. I'm painting in broad strokes rather than focusing on every detail...

ANNIE

I haven't seen anybody die like this since my car wreck - and at least that was over quickly...

Everyone freezes as a WHITE LIGHT suddenly fills the room - Wallace and the other ghosts becoming visible in the glow. Wallace steps up to Annie, holding out his hand.

WALLACE

It's time, Annie. I've got to go. I can't wait any longer.

Annie looks up at him, dark circles under her eyes, FADING slowly but surely to nothingness. Struggling to her feet, Annie tries to move toward the light, but she is very weak. Peter turns to her, concerned.

PETER

Annie? What's happening?

ANNIE

It's time for me to go, but I haven't finished my work here...

PETER

What does that mean?

ANNIE

It means I'm dying again...

She collapses to the floor, now little more than a vapor. Every word she speaks drains more energy from her until she's translucent, barely there. Peter kneels next to her, trying to hold her hand - but his hands pass right THROUGH hers.

PETER

No! This isn't right. You've done so much for me, there's got to be something I can do...

A single TEAR forms in Peter's eye, rolling slowly down his cheek. Annie looks up at him proudly, a smile on her face.

ANNIE

(smiles)  
You just did...

Annie looks to Wallace, who nods to her, holding out his hand. She tries to move to him, but simply doesn't have the energy.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's too late. There's not enough  
of me left...

PETER

(remembering)  
Yes there is.

Peter points to the spot on his chest where Annie placed the piece of her soul. Gathering what little energy she has left, she's able to reach INTO Peter's chest and remove the SPARKLING BALL, returning it to her own chest. The energy instantly revitalizes her - she STOPS FADING, becoming SOLID again.

ANNIE

Now there's nothing of me left in  
you.

PETER

(pointing to his chest)  
You'll always be with me.

Now it's Annie's turn to shed a tear. She kisses Peter on the cheek, taking one last look at his face, as though memorizing it. Peter watches as Annie follows Wallace and the other spirits into the light. Turning back, she gives him one last smile as the light DISSOLVES, the room returning to normal. There is a moment of stunned silence, Calvin finally jumping to his feet and shaking Peter's hand enthusiastically.

CALVIN

That was incredible! That was the  
most amazing pitch I've ever seen!  
How'd you rig that up, with the  
lights and the actors and all?

PETER

(stunned, still reeling)  
Um... I didn't...

CALVIN

Son - you've got the account.

Derwin and Allan both leap out of their seats - Derwin in joy and Allan in disbelief.

ALLAN

What? That's not fair! What'd that  
have to do with life insurance?

CALVIN

Didn't you see? The woman represented his loved one who had moved on, and all her talk about leaving a part of her behind represented how she obviously left him with a valuable life insurance policy after she died.

(to Derwin)

Jesus, doesn't anyone understand symbolism around here?

Calvin still pumps Peter's hand, Derwin clapping him on the back. But Peter's not smiling, lost in thought.

DERWIN

I've got to admit, I thought you'd lost it. But that was the most amazing pitch I've ever seen. What do you have to say for yourself?

PETER

I quit.

Calvin stops pumping Peter's hand, Derwin ceases to clap him on the back.

DERWIN

You what?

PETER

Quit. No offense, Mr. Calvin, but I just don't give a shit about life insurance anymore. Or soda, or tampons, or jock itch or the heartbreak of psoriasis. I've had my eyes opened to what's really important in life, and it can't be summed up in thirty second spots about how to get rid of that not-so-fresh feeling. See, I've spent the last ten years trying to con people into thinking they need shit they don't really need. I think it's time I started helping them find the things they really do need. So - in the words of one of our greatest poet laureates - you can take this job and shove it.

Peter smiles, walking to the door and leaving. Derwin, Allan and Calvin stare after him in stunned silence.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

Peter steps in through the front door, looking lonely and tired. He glances up at the Spirit Chimes hanging in the hallway - now completely still. He gives them a nudge and makes them TINKLE as he heads up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter wanders his apartment, bored and lonely. Sighing, he flops down on the bean bag chair - which POPS, tiny Styrofoam balls spilling all over the floor.

PETER

A perfect end to a perfect day...

There is a knock at the door, Peter wiping the Styrofoam balls from his pants as he rises to answer it. Opening the door he is surprised to see Sarah standing in the hallway.

PETER (CONT'D)

(searching his pockets)

Uh-oh... I'm out of candy...

SARAH

Don't worry - I paid for a baby-sitter with my first and last paycheck from Derwin and Tate.

(holds up bottle of champagne)

I wanted to congratulate you on getting the account - even though you quit. And I really wanted to thank you for helping me with Edward today. I haven't had a man stand up for me in a long time.

PETER

Well, I hadn't stood up in a long time, so it was a new experience for both of us.

Grinning, Peter steps aside and motions her to enter.

PETER (CONT'D)

I was going to call you. I talked with Annie's friend Janet about running the promotions department over at Health and Human Services.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

I already hired Darryl Grier as my Assistant in Charge of Urban Research and Development. And even though the budget's a little tight, she said I could hire a secretary, too...

SARAH

Really? I might be available... if my interview at Burger King doesn't work out.

Stepping into the kitchen, Peter pulls a couple of plastic 7-11 Slurpee cups out of the otherwise barren cupboards, then pops the cork on the champagne bottle.

PETER

Good. I just have one question... have you ever thought of day care?

SARAH

(grins)  
Only about 9,000 times a day...  
(looking around)  
Nice place. You've really achieved a minimalist sense of Feng Shui.

Peter stares at her for a second, then laughs as he hands her a cup of champagne.

PETER

You know, I think Annie was right about you...

SARAH

(flirtatiously)  
Annie was a smart lady. To Annie...

PULL BACK to reveal Annie watching over them. She looks very weak as Wallace steps up behind her, speaking gently.

WALLACE

I think they're gonna be okay.

ANNIE

Funny how everything worked out so neatly... You wouldn't have planned all of this, would you?

WALLACE

(gives an enigmatic smile)  
Not me - I'm just a trainee. Are you ready?

Annie nods, a bittersweet smile on her face, and takes his hand. She turns to see Donald waiting, arms spread to embrace her. Together they pass through a PORTAL OF LIGHT as Peter glances their way, seeming to sense something. He turns back to Sarah, a feeling of calm passing over him.

PETER

To Annie.

They clink their Slurpee cups in a toast and drink as we...

FADE TO BLACK

**THE END**