

What Women Want

A Screenplay by

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A BLACK SCREEN:

Over, we HEAR a drum roll and the giant sound of a Big Band. Loud and Brassy. Sinatra sings, "Something's Gotta Give"...

SINATRA

*When an irresistible force such as
you... Meets an old immovable object
like me... You can bet just as sure as
you live... Something's gotta give,
something's gotta give, something's
gotta give...*

Over this, a title appears:

"WHAT WOMEN WANT"

FADE IN:

ON A THICK BEEFY GUY

in a Cubs jacket unloading newspapers off the back of a truck, a Camel crammed between his lips.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You know the expression, 'A man's man'?

ANOTHER GUY

tall and slender, walks out of a smoky jazz club at three in the morning. He's joined by his buddies, all of them laughing and finishing off cigars.

WOMAN'S VOICE

A man's man is the kind of man other men look up to, admire and emulate.

A BLACK GUY

mean and lean, swaggers down Michigan Avenue like he owns it. He looks Two Women up and down. He likes what he sees.

WOMAN'S VOICE

A man's man is the kind of man who... just doesn't get what women are about.

ANGLE - THE WOMEN

turning back for a look at the Guy. They roll their eyes and shake their heads.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CHICAGO - DAY

EMILY, mid-thirties, dressed in a cream colored Second-Time-Around Wedding Dress sits in front of a make-up mirror applying mascara as her CLOSEST FRIENDS adjust her veil and sit around her. It's Emily who's been narrating.

EMILY
(to Friends)

Nick, my ex-husband, is the ultimate man's man. I probably should've never married him. I don't think he understood a thing about me. Not like Ted. Ted just gets it.

(finishes her mascara)

Although Nick was a charmer. Completely irresistible at first. Which feeds into the whole man's man thing.

(turns to her friends)

You know about Nick's mother, right? I mean, once you understand about Nick's mother, you understand Nick.

FRIEND

Wait... Nick had a mother?

INT. BIG TIME CHICAGO ADVERTISING AGENCY - MORNING

An Office Intern, ANNIE, pushes a mail cart through this busy upscale ad agency, showing the ropes to a new Intern who carries a tray of Cappuccinos. Annie stops at a Secretary's desk, dropping off mail for a large corner office.

ANNIE

(re: corner office)

Nick Marshall's office. You'll meet him later. He never gets in before ten. He'll send you on more errands than anyone in the company. He can't do anything for himself. He's like a total bachelor and the least politically correct guy in the universe. He's the King of all the T & A ads we do. You want girls in bikinis - he's your man. He does however play Frank Sinatra all day long. I'll give him that. The man has good taste in music.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Nick's 15 Year Old Daughter, ALEX, walks through a throng of teenagers.

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3.

She's a hip looking kid, small tight T-shirt, tight jeans, platforms. She's surrounded by girlfriends with the identical look - girls thrilled to have sex appeal.

ALEX

My Dad..? How can I best describe him?
He's always been...like an uncle to me.
Yeah. Uncle Dad.

Alex brushes right past CAMERA, almost knocking into it.

CLOSE - A PACK OF VIRGINIA SLIMS - ON A HOTEL DRESSING TABLE

Emily, now fully dressed for her wedding, takes out a cigarette and lights it. Her friends are poised around her in various chairs and ottomans as a ROOM SERVICE WAITER serves them all champagne.

EMILY

His mother, my ex-mother-in-law, was a real, honest-to-God stripper. Her name was Sindee. Spelled S-i-n D-e-e.

(the Women laugh)

Nick was actually born in Las Vegas. He used to say he was the only kid breast fed by the entire cast of the Folies Bergere. Imagine growing up backstage at a Vegas strip club...

(The Waiter shuts his eyes and dreams at the the thought)

Sindee really killed it for every other woman Nick would ever meet. She had a lot of sugar daddies in her life, but only one true love... The boy who wore the family jewels.

INT. STRIP CLUB DRESSING ROOM - 1970 - NIGHT

The FRAME is filled with Strippers in G-Strings and pasties. As the Strippers clear FRAME, they REVEAL FIVE YEAR OLD NICK MARSHALL, freckles, shorts, striped T-shirt, band-aid on his knee, sitting on a dressing table -- picture an X-Rated Norman Rockwell painting.

Little Nick happily eats a dish of red Jello as he watches the Girls adjust their costumes, paint their nails, powder their bodies.

EMILY (V.O.)

When other boys were outside riding their bikes and playing ball, Nick was backstage hangin' with the girls.

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4.

One Stripper leans across Nick, her derriere to CAMERA. She wipes Nick's face with a paper napkin.

EMILY (cont'd)

He was their mascot. Their little pet.
They couldn't get enough of him.

Another Stripper leans over Nick, her breasts falling on either side of his little face and kisses him on top of his head. Another pins a Sheriff's badge on his T-Shirt and smiles at him adoringly. He smiles back, eating his jello.

EMILY (V.O.)

And Sindee, well, she apparently tried her best to be a good mother...under the circumstances.

BACK STAGE - VEGAS - ANOTHER NIGHT

Little Nick wears pajamas and sits on Sindee's lap, holding a blankey. Sindee wears nothing but silver sparkle pasties and a silver G-String. She reads a bed-time story to Nick as he rests his head on her bare bosom.

INT. STRIP CLUB BACK OFFICE - ANOTHER NIGHT

Nick, wearing A LIPSTICK KISS on his cheek, sits on a stool next to a Hairy Guy who's adding stacks of crumpled dollar bills on an adding machine. Sindee walks by in a robe, smoking. She hands Nick another pile of crumpled bills and a wine glass filled with milk.

EMILY (V.O.)

Since Nick didn't have a father, Sindee made sure he was always surrounded by strong male role models...men her son could really look up to.

As Sindee passes, the Hairy Guy slaps her on the butt then notices Nick is drinking milk and tosses him a couple of packets of Saltines.

ON STAGE - BEFORE A SHOW

It's Nick's Birthday and the Girls, in full makeup and robes, have seated little Nick on stage and present him with a cake as the Strip Band plays Happy Birthday. Little Nick wears a jacket, bow-tie, a paper crown and an ear to ear grin. A Vegas Photographer, wearing a skimpy outfit and holding a box-style FLASH CAMERA gathers the Chorus Line of Strippers around the Birthday Boy for a Photo.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY (V.O.)

But let's face it. You don't have to be Freud to figure out this was one cock-eyed way to enter the world.

As the BULB on the Camera FLASHES, all the Girls WHIP OPEN THEIR ROBES to REVEAL their nearly NAKED bodies. The PHOTO FREEZES. The COLOR of the Photo FADES and the PHOTO AGES as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

THE PHOTO - TODAY - 30 YEARS LATER

framed and hanging over a king-sized bed in Nick Marshall's Lake Shore Drive Apartment. CAMERA DRIFTS DOWN the wall to find NICK, asleep under a large down comforter. Nick turns and we SEE he wears A LIPSTICK KISS on his cheek. Nick's bedroom is furnished with a 60's feel, clearly bachelor-ish in its lack of feminine touches. A Rat Pack Dream Pad. A wide screen TV faces the bed. Two empty glasses of last night's cognac sit on the night stand, one stained with lipstick. Nick, still looking like a charmer, winces as the room is suddenly filled with light.

NICK

Don't you ever knock?

STELLA, Nick's Hispanic Housekeeper opens the curtains and drops this morning's Sun Times on Nick's bed.

STELLA

It's almost ten, you need to get to work and I need to vacuum in here. Your cleaning's in your closet and ...

(makes a face as she nears the bed and opens a window, airing out the room)

Ugh, another one who wears vanilla perfume. Don't you know any women who don't want to smell like candy?

NICK

(trying to open his eyes, digs a half smoked cigarette out of an ashtray)

Toss me my lighter babe.

STELLA

Babe? What am I, a little pig?

(tosses him his lighter then begins picking up his clothes)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STELLA (cont'd)

And I have no time to make you no onion bagel this morning either, so don't beg me. And just for the record, I dun't like finding these things in your sofa, okay?

She stretches a PINK SATIN G-STRING between her hands.

STELLA

What kind of woman wears underwear like this?

NICK

Hey! My mother wore underwear like that. Just put it somewhere, babe.
(takes out Sports Section)

STELLA

Babe is putting it in the trash compactor where it belongs, your mother should excuse me...

(hanging up clothes)

You ever think of dating a woman who wears real underwear? The kind that covers her entire bottom like it's supposed to?

NICK

No, but if I do, should I call you?
(slapping her tush)

STELLA

Ay, dios mio!! I'm going to clean the kitchen.

NICK

While you're in there, could you toast me a little bagel, light cream cheese, sliced tomato...capers if we have any...
(off her look)

C'mon, Stella...you do it so well.
(off her next look)

You know I can't think on an empty stomach.

STELLA

(exiting)

Alright, I'll do it but just because you didn't call me that little pig name.

NICK

(disappears behind the paper)
Okay, babe, you got it.

EXT. NICK'S APT. BUILDING - LAKE SHORE DRIVE - MORNING

A typical windy day. Nick exits in an Armani suit and overcoat, collar turned up, sunglasses. A stocky forty year old military-like DOORWOMAN, GRETCHEN, whistles loudly for a cab.

NICK
 (holding onto his ear drum as
 he walks to an approaching
 taxi)
 You got some pipes on you there,
 Gretchen.

GRETCHEN
 (nods)
 Thank you, Sir. Have an excellent day.

Gretchen OPENS the back door of the Cab for Nick. He takes a seat then Gretchen SLAMS the door SHUT. Nick jumps from how hard she slammed it. He turns back and Gretchen salutes him.

NICK
 (salutes back)
 Toughest Doorwoman in the city.

CABBIE
 (looks in his rear view)
 That was a woman?

INT. OFFICE LOBBY STARBUCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Nick makes his way across a crowded Starbucks in the LOBBY of his Office Building. A pretty WOMAN in a Pink Mohair Sweater passes by, raising her arms so as not to spill her carton full of coffee on anyone. Nick bumps right into her, her coffee spilling a little on her sweater. Nick grabs a napkin and pats her chest dry.

NICK
 Gee. Sorry. Absolutely did not mean
 that.
 (she smiles embarrassed)
 Please. Let me get the door for you.

The Woman, now carrying the coffee tray in front of her chest, smiles and whispers "thanks".

NICK (cont'd)
 No, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

The Woman laughs in an embarrassed way. Nick watches her as she crosses through the Building's Lobby. If he were a dog, he'd be licking his lips.

BEHIND THE COUNTER

is an offbeat but VERY CUTE GIRL in her late twenties, butterfly tattoo on her hand, little bit weird hairstyle, small scarf around her neck. This is LOLA.

LOLA

(calling out)

Half caf grande, non fat, thick foam, wet cap, no lid.

COUNTER GIRL

(repeating)

Half caf grande, non fat, thick foam, wet cap, no lid. So when do you find out?

LOLA

Today, I think. Unless I didn't get it and then I'll never find out. And I'm sure I didn't get it. They were looking for an earth mother type and I overheard the director say I was more space cadet, which is like, hello? I'm an actress. I can be whatever you want.

COUNTER GIRL

Is that true? Can you?

LOLA

-- Of course it's true. It's gotta be true. Otherwise I'll be stuck playing a ditzy Starbucks girl for the rest of my life...

(turns, notices Nick; fixes her barrettes)

Oh. Nick. Hi.

NICK

Lola my love, when are you going to let me buy you dinner? How 'bout I pick you up after work tonight? Say seven-thirtyish.

LOLA

Nick, come on, why don't you believe me? I'm not your type. Trust me on this one.

(knowing Nick's order, yells)

Cappuccino, extra foam.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOLA (cont'd)
(to Nick)
Tall or grande.

NICK
Grande. Or at least I like to think so.

LOLA
Ha! Next!

NICK
(on the QT)
Rumor has it I'm getting very good news
at work today. Why don't you at least
let me take you out for a cup of coffee
to celebrate.

LOLA
(also on the QT)
Memo to you. I work in a coffee shop.
(to next customer)
Hi.

NICK
Do you want me to stop asking you out?
(to anxious Dork next in line)
Sorry. This'll just take a sec.
(to Lola)
Is that what you're saying, Lola? 'Cause
all you have to do is just give me the
word and I'll stop.

LOLA
(flustered)
Okay. Yes. I'm giving you the word
because...you know I'm an actress or at
least I'm trying to be one and I'm trying
to concentrate on that and...
(gathers her thoughts)
Anyway... Yes! If you don't mind...
that would be good... if you would stop
asking me out ... Okay? Thank you.
(hands him his coffee)
And...congratulations on your good news.
I personally have never received any but
I'm extremely happy for you. That'll be
two, eighty-five.
(digs into a cookie jar)
Here, have a Madeline.

NICK
(holds her hand)
Honey, you seem really stressed.

LOLA

I am. I'm so stressed.

NICK

Why don't I just see you here, tomorrow morning, say ten, ten thirty.

LOLA

Okay. Yeah. That would be good.

NICK

So it's a date?

LOLA

It's a date.

(then)

Thank you!

DORK

(in awe as Nick passes)

Sir...That was inspiring.

NICK

(exiting, winks)

Thank you my man.

INT. SLOANE-CURTIS ADVERTISING AGENCY - MOMENTS LATER

Nick cruises through the office with tremendous confidence. He's as comfortable here as we'll ever see him. He's joined by his protege, MORGAN FARWELL, a kid whose entire appearance screams "rich kid". Morgan falls in step with Nick, as they wend their way through the bustling office.

MORGAN

I was at a breakfast this morning and heard Miller's shopping around, looking for a new agency...

NICK

(nods)

--For Miller Lite. I know. I'm all over it.

MORGAN

Also heard Darcy McGuire left PP&O.

(to passing Attractive Female Worker)

'Morning Angela.

(turns to watch her from behind)

(CONTINUED)

NICK
You're kidding? Left or was fired?

MORGAN
I don't know, I just know everyone over there's thrilled to get rid of her.

NICK
(smiles)
So much for edgy female vision.

MORGAN
So that girl we met last night at Gibson's. Nothing happened after you put her in the cab, right?
(off Nick's look)
It did? Something happened. But she said she had to get in bed early...

NICK
I had her in bed by eleven. Maybe a quarter to...

MORGAN
You're like a genius, you know that?

NICK
What can I tell you, buddy. I'm blessed.

MORGAN
(stops at his office, then, confidentially)
Call me when Wanamaker makes it official.

NICK
Sucking up to a Creative Director won't be quite as easy for you, you know.

MORGAN
Not to worry, I'll manage. I'll make us a lunch res at The Drake to celebrate.

NICK
(feigning embarrassment)
Let's not count our chickens, huh?
(then, all smiles)
One o'clock?

MORGAN
Pick you up.

Nick takes an Advertising Age OFF THE DESK of an OVERWEIGHT SECRETARY who was just about to read it.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(not looking at her)
Can I borrow this?

Not waiting for an answer, Nick reads as he walks. A small Mouse of an Employee, ERIN in a drab cardigan and skirt and holding a HUGE STACK of files, darts out of Nick's way. He never even sees her. But he does notice a hot looking Female Exec, in a short skirted suit.

NICK
(sotto)
Hey, Dina...What's the difference between a wife and a job?

DINA
(already laughing)
I give up.

NICK
In ten years the job still sucks.

Dina BURS
He passe
DANISH P
...ING as Nick cracks up, continuing on.
...s about to bite into a LARGE

you.

The Se
on, r
Annie
...ish as Nick continues
past Annie, the Intern.
ick.

I got
top right hand
...put the
our desk, picked
's, got your
no charge, this
was cancelled and
ney're in your

NICK
(looks up)
The staff meeting was cancelled?

ANNIE
That's what I was told.

Nick arrives at his corner office where his Pair of Secretaries, MARGO and EVE, both of whom look remarkably like aging Strippers await his arrival.

Framed Ads for Beer, Cars and Sports Teams line his Outer Office. Margo hands Nick his mail and phone list as Eve takes his coat and hangs it up.

NICK
'Morning ladies.

MARGO
Good afternoon, Sire.

NICK
Anybody know why the staff meeting was cancelled?

MARGO
Nobody called us but Mr. Wanamaker wants to see you as soon as you get in which I told his office was fifteen minutes ago.

EVE
(this one probably was a
stripper)
You couldn't come on time the day you know you're being promoted? You look very good by the way. Like a Creative Director. Very distinguished.
(fixes the knot in his tie as she CRACKS her gum)

NICK
You two going to be able to handle yourselves on the 44th floor?

MARGO
You kidding? We were made for the 44th floor. Get up there already so we can break out the bubbly.

INT. DAN WANAMAKER'S CORNER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick sits on a leather sofa, confident, foot bouncing with excitement. DAN WANAMAKER, the CEO of Sloane, Curtis, mid-fifties, takes a seat facing him.

DAN
Nick, you've paid your dues here. You've worked your ass off and you've done great for us.

NICK
Hey, it's been a gas. I love it here, you know that.

(CONTINUED)

DAN
(distracted)
I know you do. I know.
(into phone)
Jess, can I get a cup of decaf and a
couple of Tylenol? And see if we have
any Echinacea around...
(to Nick)
You want anything?

NICK
I'm fine.

DAN
(hanging up)
So. Here we are in the "Y2K". Who came
up with that one by the way? "Y2K"...I
wish we had.
(Nick laughs, agreeing)
And the business is changing so friggin'
fast I hardly recognize it.

Nick nods, agreeing, not sure where he's going with this.

DAN (cont'd)
You know, the eighties I understood.
They were about alcohol, tobacco, cars.
I got it. Know what I mean? I was in my
milieu. But in the nineties, something
changed. Men no longer dominated how the
dollars were spent. I read the other day,
women now control or what was the word
they used..."influenced" 80% of all
purchase decisions and women between the
ages of sixteen and twenty-four make up
the fastest growing consumer group in the
country. Nick, I'm talking about girls
who were born in the mid-eighties
controlling our advertising dollars.

Dan's Secretary ENTERS with a mug of coffee, two Tylenol and
a glass of water.

DAN'S SECRETARY
Sorry. No Echinacea.

Dan nods to her, takes the Tylenol.

DAN (cont'd)
While we've been gettin' our rocks off
shooting beer commercials with the
Swedish Bikini Team, the industry's been
transformed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAN (cont'd)
(waits for his Secretary to
leave)

We were the hot agency in town ten years ago. Five years ago we were neck and neck with PPB&O, now we're struggling to be third. If we don't evolve and think beyond our natural ability, I think we're gonna go down.

NICK
Our natural ability? What do you mean?

DAN
What do you know about Darcy McGuire?

NICK
I know she just left PPB&O. I never met her but I hear she's a real man eater. She's won a couple of Clios. She won the one we should've gotten two years ago for...

DAN
-- Oh, right, right, that was her? I forgot about that.

NICK
I wish I had... We've been up against each other a bunch of times for different accounts... She was partnered for awhile with her husband... They broke up or something... Truthfully, I hear she's a bitch on wheels.

DAN
She is? That's very funny.

NICK
Why?

DAN
'Cause I just hired her

NICK
(not getting it, laughs)
Right. To do what?

DAN
You know I love you, Nick and I mean that, but it's a woman's world out there and getting into a woman's psyche is not exactly your strong suit.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAN (cont'd)

You can get into their pants better than anyone on earth, but their psyche is a whole other ball of wax...

NICK

Are you saying you hired Darcy McGuire as...What? What's her job gonna be?

DAN

I know she hasn't done it on her own yet but somebody was gonna grab her...

NICK

(stunned)

You made her Creative Director?

DAN (cont'd)

I'm sorry, buddy. I hope you can accept this, work with her and be part of her team 'cause she's got what I need to keep this place afloat.

NICK

She's got what you need, meaning she's a woman?

DAN

You know how we can compete with that?

INT. SLOANE, CURTIS CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Nick walks through the busy office, trying to pull his thoughts together. Morgan spots him and starts singing, "Hail To The Chief", saluting him as he passes by. Nick puts his arm around Morgan and walks him down the corridor.

NICK

Not so fast, buddy-boy. It didn't happen.

MORGAN

Whaddya mean?

NICK

He hired someone else for the job.

MORGAN

Who? Who could he hire other than you?

NICK

Darcy McGuire.

MORGAN (cont'd)

(stops)

You're shitting me.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

He gave me a bunch of crap about women controlling the advertising dollars so he thinks he needs a woman running the department.

(Morgan's jaw drops)

Don't worry. She won't make it here. In six weeks she'll be history and I'll get the job at twice the salary. Guarantee you.

Nick leaves Morgan in his wake. As he arrives at his office, his Secretaries are about to POP A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE.

NICK

Not so fast, girls. Put it on ice, we'll break it out soon.

EVE

We're not moving to the 44th floor?

Nick ENTERS HIS OFFICE and pushes in a Sinatra CD, *Come Fly With Me*, fills the room.

MARGO

(ENTERS with a FAX)

Staff Meeting's back on. Your presence is requested. Four o'clock sharp. Mr. Wanamaker's going to introduce (reads off the Fax)

'Darcy McGuire' to the entire Creative Team.

Nick HITS THE REMOTE, BLASTING the VOLUME on the CD. Margo turns, rolling her eyes, shrugging at Eve. Eve takes a peek to see what's going on, Nick swivels in his chair, turning his back to them. Eve, in backless shoes, flip flops her way over to Nick, lowering the Music with the remote.

NICK

What?

EVE

You do remember you have to pick up Alex at the Ritz Carlton in thirty minutes..?

CUT TO:

EMILY

now married and looking very happy as she talks to friends at a SMALL WEDDING RECEPTION at the Ritz Carlton.

(CONTINUED)

She glances across the room and spots Nick headed her way. We see a change in her as she appears suddenly self-conscious.

NICK
(arriving at Emily's side)
May I kiss the bride?

EMILY
(turns to him)
Sure.

Nick heads for Emily's lips as Emily offers Nick her cheek. Emily's new husband, TED, arrives and Nick shakes his hand. Ted is a very solid looking guy. He looks the way you wish your doctor looked.

NICK
Congratulations, Ted. You're a lucky man.

Nick rubs Emily's back, a little too familiar.

TED
(taking Emily's hand)
Thanks. I happen to agree.

NICK
So, St. Barts for two weeks, huh?

EMILY
St. Barts is just one week. Alexandra has our itinerary plus I faxed one to your office yesterday. And your apartment last week. And Ted's office has one. And so does the school.

NICK
Just in case I fall off the planet..?

EMILY
You never know...

Just then Alex, Nick's daughter, arrives in a soft pink dress.

NICK
Hey there she is. Pretty in pink.
(Alex rolls her eyes)
So two whole weeks together...

ALEX
Yeah, how you gonna handle it?

NICK
I'm gonna love it. You'll take care of
your old man for once. Cook for me, get
me my slippers...

ALEX
Yeah, that'll be happening.

EMILY
Just so you know, Alexandra has a ..
boyfriend now...

ALEX
Mom!

EMILY
I'm just telling him so he's not
surprised when he comes by.

NICK
Who has a boyfriend?

ALEX
See? Whatever. It doesn't matter.

NICK
You have a boyfriend? You're thirteen
years old.

ALEX
Am I? I thought I was fifteen.
(to Emily)
Look, I'm gonna meet Cameron, can I meet
Dad back at his place?

EMILY
(to Nick)
Can she? Is that all right with you?
(to Alex)
What time?

ALEX
Eight...nine...

EMILY
Seven-thirty.

ALEX
Okay. Thanks.
(hugs Emily)
Have a great time Mom...
(hugs Ted)
You too Ted. Really. Have fun.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (cont'd)
(to her Dad, as she exits)
Nick. Later.

NICK
(after she's gone)
Yeah. Seven-thirty's fine. Thanks for asking. And the name's "Dad"...

EMILY
(turns to Ted)
Do cell phones work in the Caribbean?

INT. SLOANE CURTIS CONFERENCE ROOM - 4 P.M.

The entire Creative Team, fifteen or so Men and Women (mostly Men), sit and stand around the conference table, waiting for the staff meeting to begin. The Office Mouse, Erin, places bottles of water around the table. No one pays attention to her. The Men schmooze with the Men, the small Group of Women stick together. The name Darcy McGuire is on everyone's lips. Nick sits with Morgan toward the end of the room, tapping a pencil on the table.

The DOOR OPENS and everyone turns, quieting down. Nick accidentally drops his pencil and LEANS DOWN to pick it up as it keeps on rolling away.

HIS VIEW - A GREAT PAIR OF LEGS

in high heels ENTER the room.

DAN (O.S.)
Everyone...meet Darcy McGuire.

NICK LOOKS UP

to check out the Man-Eater. To his surprise she's a startling beauty. She turns her mega-watt smile on the room and shakes hands with the nearest person then notices Nick bent over, checking her out. She walks right up to him, picking up his pencil.

DARCY
(handing him the pencil)
Hello. I'm Darcy.

She aims her smile right at him.

NICK
(rises)
Nick Marshall.

We see his name clearly registers with her as they shake hands.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

I've heard a lot about you, Nick.

NICK

I've heard a lot about you, Darcy.

DARCY

Well, remember, it can't all be true.
(moves on to the next person)

NICK

(to himself)
Let's hope not.

Dan, Nick's boss, crosses to Nick, patting him on the back, appreciating the effort. Everyone takes a seat as Dan and Darcy approach the head of the table.

DAN

I'm very pleased for you all to meet Darcy McGuire. I know her reputation as a leader in the field precedes her. At PPB&O she championed a creative team that snagged 500 million dollars in new business wins and that was just last year alone. Here at Sloane, Curtis we've always proved ourselves on strategic thinking and management skills, and now we need to once again prove ourselves creatively in the market place. I'm absolutely thrilled that Darcy has consented to join our team and lead us into the 21st Century.

ANGLE - MORGAN

Jerking off his hand under the table. Nick smiles to himself as he applauds with the rest of the group.

DARCY

Thank you Dan and thank you all for the warm welcome. Let me just start off by saying the feeling is mutual. I'm absolutely thrilled to be here. When I started in this business it was my dream to work at Sloane, Curtis. I believe I even applied for a job here. Twice.

DAN

(leans in)
Somebody call personnel...

Everyone laughs except Nick. He watches Darcy carefully.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

But it was PPB&O that offered me a home. And what I learned there was that our successes were the result of the team of people I worked with. I'm a firm believer that two heads are better than one and five heads are better than two. If we put our heads and our hearts into this company, I promise you we will deliver new campaigns and new clients. I love challenges, I love hard work, I look forward to sitting around this very table, tossing around ideas into the wee hours...But most importantly, I want the work to count.

Morgan now jerks off with two hands. Nick coughs, distracting Darcy.

DARCY

Well, as our friends in Hollywood say, 'cut to the chase'... How are we going to turn this company around?

(she pauses, the room is deadly silent)

When Sears decided to go after women in their advertising and said, "Come see the softer side of Sears", their revenues went up 30%. Thirty percent! That's huge. When Levis made the choice to empathize with women and advertise that women come in all sizes and shapes with their Levi's Custom Fit Jeans for Women, their business jumped five-fold, new sales hovering around the 600 million mark for the year. Female driven advertising totaled forty billion dollars in billings last year. Sloane Curtis' share...?

Dina makes a zero with her thumb and index finger.

DARCY (cont'd)

Right. Zero. If you want to sell an anti-wrinkle cream or a Ford Mustang - to women - this is the last place you'd bring your business. And we can not afford not to have a piece of a forty billion dollar pie.

(Nick starts to lightly tap his pencil again)

So...What I've put together is a little kit for each of you...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DARCY (cont'd)

Now don't panic, this is supposed to be fun...

(reaches into a carton and passes out individual PINK BOXES)

Every product in this box is looking for new representation and they're all made for women. If we got 20% of these accounts, I'd be thrilled. If we got 25%, I'd be more thrilled. If we got more than 25%, we'll have our next Christmas party in Hawaii.

(nervous laughter)

Just a thought, Dan. I know all the women here are probably familiar with most of these products. So for the men, let me just quickly run through them for you.

Darcy sees Nick isn't paying attention and doesn't have a box.

DARCY

Here you go Nick...

She SLIDES A BOX down the table like a bartender sending down a shot of whiskey. Nick catches it with one hand.

DARCY

Briefly, each kit contains, as promised, anti-wrinkle cream, a volumizer shampoo, mascara, mud bath, pore cleansing strips, lipstick, a home waxing kit, quick drying nail polish, Ginseng, a Volvo - not life size, a pack of Winston Lights, Advil, a more wonderful Wonder Bra, a home pregnancy test, control top panty hose and a Visa card. I'd love for each of you to come up with something for one product, two, the entire box, whatever moves you. We'll meet tomorrow, have a little show and tell and see where we are. How's 9:30 for everybody?

(a few eyes go to Nick, no one says anything)

Great. See you 9:30 tomorrow morning.

Everyone applauds.

NICK

(stretches, leaning back, and mumbles)

Nightmare..

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
 (turns to Morgan, facing him)
 Read my lips, baby. Night-mare.

FULL SCREEN TV - A BULLS GAME

It's the end of the quarter. It goes to commercial. The channel is SWITCHED to a James Bond Movie, we watch for a sec then CLICK, SPEEDING PAST a Cooking Show, Jane Pauley, Tipper Gore - no thought of stopping for them, SLOWING DOWN for Howard Stern, A Tight Shot of A Girl's Abs on a Work Out Show, A Male Ice Skater - An Announcer says, "And now for the Women's Finals..." and the TV CLICKS OFF.

ANGLE - NICK

lying in bed, still dressed from work, tie loosened. He sets down the remote, finishes off a glass of wine. He pours himself another glass, rises, a little tipsy and puts on a Sinatra CD - "I Won't Dance". He sings along, "I won't dance, don't ask me, I won't dance, don't ask me, I won't dance, Madame With you." He ENTERS:

THE LIVING ROOM

Another Ring-A-Ding-Ding Room. Leather sofas, a bar, some groovy chairs. Darcy's PINK BOX sits on a table illuminated by a light from above. Nick walks by it, carrying his glass of wine and the wine bottle, turns back, looks at the box.

NICK
 (imitating Darcy)
 Don't panic, this is supposed to be fun.
 (takes the contents out of box)
 ...I won't dance, For heaven rest us, I
 am not asbestos and that's why I Won't
 Dance, Why should I...
 (looks at all the contents on
 his table)
 Hello girls.

Nick picks up the LIPSTICK, twists it up, grabbing a legal pad.

NICK
 Okay...I can do this...
 (scribbles notes)
 Lipstick on a guy's collar. No.
 Women will hate that. Lipstick on a
 guy's collar that won't rub off. Worse!
 Think like a woman.
 (closes his eyes)
 Okay, I'm a woman. What do I see?
 (smells the lipstick)
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

25.

NICK (cont'd)
I see lipstick on a dark haired Hawaiian
beauty in a thong under a waterfall...
(opens his eyes)
I'm a lesbian! I gotta change the music.

Nick crosses to a CD rack, he has nothing but guy music...
Tony Bennett; Dean Martin, Bobby Darin... He notices his
daughter's BACKPACK and suitcase sitting by the door. He
crosses to her open backpack and sees a stack of CD's inside.
He scans through them -- Alanis Morissette, Fiona Apple...He
barks at a few of the women's faces...

NICK (cont'd)
(finds Meredith Brooks)
Okay. She's hot.

Nick pops out Sinatra and inserts Meredith Brooks, turns up
the volume and "Bitch" blasts on. "I'm a bitch, I'm a lover,
I'm a child, I'm a mother, I'm a sinner, I'm a saint, I do
not feel ashamed...."

Nick dances by himself, gathering up all of the female
products and the wine bottle.

NICK
(sees himself in the mirror)
That's right. You go girl!

STEAM IS WIPED OFF THE BATHROOM MIRROR

and we SEE Nick just out of a bubble bath, towel around his
waist, in a green mud mask, a white pore strip over his nose,
a Winston Light dangling from his lips and applying hair
volumizer. He's obviously drunk.

NICK
(singing along)
I'm a bitch, I'm a tease, I'm a goddess
on my knees...

Nick applies a little MASCARA, gets it in his eyes and
SCREAMS and BLINKS from the burn. He finishes off the bottle
of wine, drops his towel on what we now see are his PAINTED
TOE NAILS.

NICK (cont'd)
Now for the *piece de resistance*.

Nick LIFTS HIS BARE LEG onto the closed toilet seat and
smears HOT WAX from his ankle to his knee. His knee gives
way as he almost falls down from the heat.

NICK (cont'd)
Ayamama!

(CONTINUED)

He quickly fans his leg then very quickly reads the directions on the Hair Waxing Kit.

NICK (cont'd)
Heat wax...Use enclosed pink plastic applicator to spread... Then immediately apply disposable cloth over waxed area...

Nick quickly REACHES INTO THE BOX and WHIPS OUT a strip of fabric and PRESSES IT over the hot wax.

NICK (cont'd)
Okay. All right, this is kinda nice. Why do women complain about waxing?
(reads)
Now, in one smooth motion, yank the strip quickly in the opposite direction of hair growth...
(then)
Yank strip. Okay...Nothin' to it.

Nick quickly YANKS THE COTTON STRIP and instantly RIPS every hair out of his leg. Speechless, his face contorts with pain as he reels back and falls into the wall. He grabs the towel bar for support then looks at the strip of cotton in his hand. It's filled with his squiggly leg hair. He SCREAMS at the sight of it. He tries to throw it away but it's now stuck to his hand. Nick rips it off, tearing the skin right off his finger.

NICK (cont'd)
(catching his breath)
Women are insane. Who would do this more than once? Who would do the other leg?

Nick reaches into the box and pulls out the last item -- A PAIR OF CONTROL TOP PANTYHOSE.

NICK (cont'd)
That's right girls. Wax it off, then cover it up.

Nick tears opens the package and pulls on the pantyhose hopping around the bathroom trying to get his balance. He squeals as he yanks them up getting sucked in by the Control Top.

NICK (cont'd)
(admiring himself in mirror)
Miss Thang, you just lost yourself five pounds. Where's my Wonder Bra?

Nick reaches down for the Wonder Bra when the MUSIC IS TURNED OFF. He rises to find Alex standing in the doorway.

ALEX
What are you doing?

NICK
(covering his privates with the
bra)
Exfoliating?

Alex' boyfriend, CAMERON, joins Alex in the doorway. He's eighteen, wears two earrings, leather jacket, growing a goatee.

CAMERON
(checking out Nick)
Yo.

NICK
(trying to be manly)
Hey. You must be...

ALEX
-- Cameron. My boyfriend. This is Nick.

NICK
-- Her father.

Cameron shakes Nick's hand and notices his nail polish.

CAMERON
Nice nail polish, man.

NICK
Hey, I don't usually look like this. I'm just doing research for a new work thing... Trying to get into the female psyche...

CAMERON
Hey, you know... Whatever.
(to Alex)
I should probably take off.

ALEX
You don't have to...

CAMERON
(watches Nick wince as he rips
off the pore strip)
I think I better.

(CONTINUED)

Cameron gives Alex a KISS on the lips.

CAMERON
(exiting)
Nice meeting you, Nick

NICK
Excuse me...Did you just kiss that guy?

ALEX
(holding up her CD)
Where'd you get this?

NICK
It was in your zipper thing...You kiss
guys now?

ALEX
I can't believe you went through my
stuff.

NICK
It was an emergency, I needed the right
music. It was just sitting there.

ALEX
What are you like, allergic to listening?
You never listen when I talk. I don't
want you going through my stuff. If I'm
stuck staying here, my stuff's gonna be
around okay, but it's my stuff and I
don't want you like...

NICK
--I listen to you.. What do you mean I
don't listen to you?

ALEX
You think you listen to me?

NICK
Yeah. I listen to you.

ALEX
Do you? What's my boyfriend's name?

Nick starts to say something then realizes he has no idea.

ALEX
Good night.
(exits)

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Wait! I know it. Come back. Dustin!
(yells)
His name's Dustin!

He HEARS a DOOR SLAM

NICK
(to himself)
No, wait, it starts with a Ka...Carmen?
Carson?
(goes into hallway, yells)
Carmichael! His name's Carmichael!

We HEAR the DOOR LOCK. Nick angrily returns to:

THE BATHROOM

and wipes off the mask and starts blowing his hair dry.

NICK
(looks upward)
What do women want?
(then)
I know it has three syllables...
(then, realizes)
Cameron!

Nick turns to go back toward Alex' room when he TRIPS on his shoes, loses his balance and accidentally knocks a jar of Bath Beads all over the floor. Nick tries to side step the rolling beads but they're everywhere. He SLIDES across the tile, FLINGING THE HAIRDRYER INTO THE AIR. He reaches out for the sink for support but SKIDS right past it. The Home Pregnancy Test, Ginseng and other products fly into the bathtub as Nick crashes into the wall and LANDS on the edge of the tub, his arm falling in the water. The Hairdryer, still on, nose dives into the tub, sending a JOLT OF ELECTRICITY through the room and RIGHT THROUGH NICK.

NICK
AAAAhhhhh!

The BATHROOM LIGHTS FLICKER as a cold BURST OF AIR SLAMS the door SHUT. Nick hits the floor with a thud as the LIGHTS GO OUT and the SCREEN GOES BLACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CHICAGO SKYLINE - MORNING

INT. NICK'S BATHROOM - THE SAME TIME

ANGLE - NICK

lying sprawled across the bathroom floor, out cold. STELLA'S FEET, in running shoes and thick stockings, ENTER THE FRAME. OVER Nick's FACE, we HEAR:

STELLA (O.S.)

What the hell has he done now? I hope he's not dead.

NICK

(opening his eyes)
I'm fine. I'm fine. I think.

Nick rises, holding onto the sink for support.

STELLA

You sure?

NICK

(looking in the mirror)
Clean pores, thicker hair...very weird headache. Like really weird.

As Nick massages his temples, we HEAR:

STELLA (O.S.)

Now I gotta clean up bras and home pregnancy tests! The man does not pay me enough for the things I have to do...Oh Jesus, he's wearing panty-hose. Now he's a cross dresser?

Nick turns to Stella. She smiles, not saying a word.

NICK

I was experimenting with some products for work.

STELLA

Did I say anything?

NICK

(checks his watch)
It can't be nine o'clock.

Nick starts to wash his face as Stella cleans up the bathroom. CAMERA STAYS ON NICK.

STELLA (O.S.)

One day I'd like to sleep till nine o'clock. He'd fire my ass if I wasn't here to wake him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
 (turning to look at her)
 You're in a mood today.

STELLA
 (surprised)
 Same as every other day.

Nick EXITS as he HEARS:

STELLA (O.S.)
 (mimicking him)
 Honey, make me a little bagel, I can't
 think on an empty stomach.

NICK
 (turns back)
 For your information, I'm not even
 hungry.

STELLA
 (turns from picking products
 out of the tub)
 Who said you were?

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Gretchen opens the door for Nick and WHISTLES for a TAXI.
 Nick stands alongside Gretchen as they both look down Lake
 Shore Drive, searching for a cab. Gretchen WHISTLES again.

NICK
 (his eyes on the street)
 Thanks Gretchen.

GRETCHEN
 (her eyes on the street)
 You're welcome my little sweet ass.

NICK
 Gretchen!

GRETCHEN
 (innocently turns in his
 direction)
 Yes, Mr. Marshall?

NICK
 What did you just say?

GRETCHEN
 Me? Nothing Sir.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(rubbing his head)
Nothing?

GRETCHEN
No Sir.

NICK
You know what? I think I'm gonna walk
today. I could use a little fresh air.

GRETCHEN
You have a great day, Sir.

Nick walks away and HEARS:

GRETCHEN (O.S.)
Love the ass on that man. Ma-ma!

Nick quickly turns back. Gretchen salutes him with a curt smile. He salutes her back. Nick crosses the street and ENTERS a SWARM OF PEDESTRIANS. As he passes through them, he HEARS a BARRAGE of OVERLAPPING FEMALE VOICES although NONE OF THE WOMEN HE HEARS SEEM TO BE ACTUALLY TALKING.

WOMAN JOGGER (V.O.)
*Did I turn the coffee maker off? I
walked over to it, did I turn it off?*

FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENT (V.O.)
(singing)
*Aruba, Bahama, come on pretty Mama, Key
Largo, Montego.*

HOUSEWIFE (V.O.)
(pushing a baby stroller)
*Hate his ugly shirts, his hairy back,
those pee stains in his underwear...*

THIN WOMAN (V.O.)
(walking briskly)
*Two slices of toast, 150 calories, plus
a tab and a half of butter, another 150,
three-quarters of a spoonful of sugar...*

CLOSE ON NICK

He stops walking. He WATCHES the WOMEN pass him, NOT ONE OF THEM IS TALKING OUT LOUD, YET HE HEARS EVERYTHING THEY'RE THINKING.

(CONTINUED)

BUSINESSWOMAN (V.O.)
So estrogen is good for the heart but
bad for the breasts... What kind of
choice is that? If men went through
menopause they'd figure it out.

SHOPPER
Matt Lauer is so cute...

ARAB WOMAN (V.O.)
(in Arab head garb)
Yelling at the top of her lungs in
Arabic!!!

NICK
(stops in the middle of the
sidewalk)
Okay, just stay calm. I obviously have
brain damage. I was electrocuted and now
I'm receiving signals from another
planet...An all girl planet...

A YOUNG WOMAN passes by, looks at Nick talking to himself.

YOUNG WOMAN (V.O.)
Creepazoid. Talkin' to himself.
(casually covers her mouth)
Don't breathe his air...

NICK
I have no double vision....
(puts finger to nose)
Motor skills are working...

GIRL TODDLER IN STROLLER
(V.O.)
(stares up at Nick while
sucking on a bottle)
Man scary.

NICK
Just keep walking. Left, right, left,
right...

As he picks up his pace he HEARS AN OVERLOAD OF WOMEN'S
THOUGHTS from the Women on the street.... "Three days late
does not mean anything... "My kid doesn't need Ritalin!"
"What's the deal with Rebecca Romaine Stamos?" Nick speeds
around a corner and comes face-to-face with:

AN ENTIRE GIRL'S HIGH SCHOOL TRACK TEAM

out for a run. Nick runs through them, the SOUNDS are so fast and intense that he spins around inside them then takes off running as fast as he can.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY STARBUCKS - MORNING

Nick RUNS IN like he's been chased by wolves. His eyes land on a Woman reading the morning paper. He hears nothing. So far so good. He looks up and sees the Mohair Sweater Girl from yesterday. She spots him and looks away. Her mouth doesn't move yet Nick HEARS:

SWEATER GIRL (V.O.)

Oh great, the slimeboat's gonna feel me up again.

She raises her Carton of Coffees to protect her breasts then smiles a sweet 'Hi' to Nick as she passes. Then, Nick HEARS:

LOLA (O.S.)

Oh, good. He's here.

Nick LOOKS toward THE COUNTER and sees Lola isn't even looking in his direction. She's talking to a Female Customer. Nick gets in line behind the Customer who pays for her coffee, dropping a tip in the tip cup. As she passes, Nick HEARS:

CUSTOMER (V.O.)

-- Tip her everyday, never once says thank you.

Nick watches the Woman, and like all the others, her mouth does not move.

LOLA

(to Nick)

'Morning. The regular?

NICK

Fill a grande with as many espressos as it can hold

LOLA

You serious? That's like 16 shots of espresso.

NICK

I need a jolt of something.

(CONTINUED)

LOLA
Well that should do it.
(yells)
Grande Espresso - 16 shots.

Nick stares directly at Lola's face. Her mouth is definitely not moving, yet miraculously he manages to HEAR:

LOLA (V.O.)
He's not asking me out. Why isn't he asking me out? I knew I went too far yesterday.

Nick starts to sweat. He loosens his tie.

NICK
Lola, did you just say something about me not asking you out?

LOLA
(straight faced)
Nick, I thought we settled this.

LOLA (V.O.)
That was WEIRD!

NICK
I know. It was.

LOLA
(not following)
You know what was?

Nick FLINCHES, hearing a high pitched SHRIEK. He grabs his ears and looks down and sees a FEMALE POODLE in a pink diamond collar longingly staring out the window at a GORGEOUS GREAT DANE. Nick tosses down the grande espresso.

INT. SLOANE-CURTIS - DAY

Business as usual. Ping! The Elevator OPENS and Nick FLIES OUT, just about crashing into Erin, the office Mouse. Erin leaps out of his way.

ERIN (V.O.)
God, he almost killed me. Too bad he missed.

Nick turns back and looks at her strangely. Too bad I missed? Nick heads toward his office when he sees Dina heading his way.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
'Morning.

DINA
'Morning...
(opens a file, starts reading)

DINA (V.O.)
*Don't look up, he'll make me hear
another disgusting joke. He's such a
schmuck...*

NICK
(shocked)
She thinks I'm a schmuck?

He passes the Overweight Woman whose Advertising Age he took yesterday. She looks right at him while sipping her coffee.

OVERWEIGHT WOMAN (V.O.)
*Ass-hole jerk. Fuck you and your Armani
coat.*

Stunned, Nick quickly looks away when a Young Female Exec rushes past.

FEMALE EXEC (V.O.)
*Whoa! Lighten up on that aftershave,
buddy.*

Nick starts to wipe his face when he passes the Secretary who he warned yesterday not to eat the Danish. Today she eats a Rice Cake.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
(as she watches Nick pass)
Like you've got the perfect body...

NICK
Jesus!

Annie catches up with him.

ANNIE
'Morning Mr. Marshall.

NICK
What!?! Don't say it!

ANNIE

What? I was just gonna tell you the Gillette budget's on your desk and I went out last night and got you that wine you wanted...Here's your credit card back.
(smiles)

ANNIE (V.O.)

(as she hands him his credit card)

-- Do you realize I have an Ivy League education and running your stupid errands has put me in therapy which I can not afford. And why won't you take me seriously and give me real work to do? Oh yeah, I remember why.

(screams)

Because I have a vagina!

ANNIE

(smiles her perky smile)

Anything else I can get for you?

Nick makes a bee line right for:

HIS OFFICE

Margo and Eve make their normal fuss when they see him.

EVE

Good. You're on time. What's the matter? You look different?

MARGO

It's his hair, it looks thicker...You okay?

EVE

Why do you smell like lavender?

NICK

That's it? No other thoughts?

MARGO

What do you mean?

EVE

(concerned)

You feeling all right, doll?

He pauses, looks at them. They look right back at him. Complete silence.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

I love you both. I just want you to know that. You're pure honest women and I love you from the bottom of my heart.
(hugs them both then quickly
exits into his office)

Morgan ARRIVES with a stack of storyboards under his arm.

MORGAN

Girls, the Boss in?

MARGO

Just arrived.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE

Morgan ENTERS to FIND Nick standing behind his desk flying through the Yellow Pages, the speed from the grande espresso fueling him.

MORGAN

(watching this madman)
What are you doing? We gotta go, it's 9:30.

NICK

(whipping through Yellow Pages)
Can't go. Can't go. Gotta find a doctor. Need a cure. Can't go.

MORGAN

You sound like the guy in "Shine".
What's wrong with you?

NICK

(flipping through yellow pages)
Maybe not a doctor, maybe an Exorcist or a brain surgeon or a Witch Doctor. Yeah, a Witch Doctor could fix it.

MORGAN

(crosses to him and shuts the phone book)
There are no Witch Doctors in the greater Chicago area, bub. Now let's pull it together here and go sell some sensitive feminine shit, okay?

Annie, the Intern knocks on the open door and delivers inter-office mail to Nick. Nick pulls back when he sees her.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

Here you go. Sorry to interrupt. By the way, your hair looks really good today, Mr. Marshall...

ANNIE (V.O.)

And it's okay you pay me minimum wage because I just called my boyfriend in Israel... for an hour.

NICK

(after she leaves)
Tell me you heard that?

MORGAN

Your hair looks really good...So what?

NICK

No, I mean, the other part, what she was thinking.

MORGAN

I don't think she thinks too much. She's not exactly a genius, that one.

NICK

She went to an Ivy League school.

MORGAN

I doubt that.

NICK

You didn't hear her say anything about her boyfriend in Israel?

MORGAN

(gently)
Uh, dude...I didn't hear it 'cause she didn't say it. Now we're gonna be late for our sorority meeting so let's try to pull it together, okay?

NICK

Just so you know, in case I maybe die today or something...

MORGAN

(getting Nick up)
Can we walk and talk... 'cause, in case you live, I don't want to be late.

CAMERA TRACKS as they walk together THROUGH THE OFFICE. Nick tries his best to explain the state he's in.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Okay, here's what happened, just in case the coroner asks. I got drunk last night and put all the products on from the pink box.

MORGAN

You what?

NICK

I put all the products on, the mask, the pantyhose, everything....I was blowing my hair dry, fell in the tub and got electrocuted. I passed out and ever since I woke up, I can hear every woman's thoughts. Their innermost, not intended for my consumption, unbelievably personal thoughts. I'm like a one man psychic network. You get what I'm saying? I know what every woman is thinking. That secretary there...

(listens)

Thinking how cute her best friend's boyfriend is ... The lawyer comin' toward us...

(listens as she approaches)

Thinks you're overpaid and gay. I know what they're all thinking man. Even French Poodles.

MORGAN

(as they arrive at the Conference Room doors)

Okay. So just so we're on the same page here, I want you to know, you sound insane. You're freaked out over losing the job which I understand but if you tell anyone else you can hear the innermost thoughts of a French Poodle, you're gonna be out on your ass. Do you read me? Let me say this without talking. Read my mind.

NICK

I can't. You're not a woman.

The Office Mouse passes between them carrying a tray of fruit into the Conference Room..

ERIN (V.O.)

(looking past Nick)

What if I just jumped out the window?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ERIN (cont'd)

Just put the fruit down and jumped right through the plate glass? Would they notice? Not if I didn't get glass on anybody.

NICK

Okay, did you hear that? That girl with the fruit's kinda funny, right? Suicidal but ...

MORGAN

Nick! What girl with the fruit?

Nick gives up.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Darcy sits in the middle of the long side of the table. The rest of the Creative Team sits around her with their products and ideas. Nick and Morgan slip in.

DARCY (V.O.)

(noticing)

Last one to arrive. Wants me to know I'm not his boss...Okay, he's a star. I get the message.

NICK

(to Morgan as they sit)

She's thinks I'm late because I want her to know she's not my boss. What is she, nuts?

MORGAN

Maybe, so let's not scream it, okay?

Nick looks at the other Women in the room and HEARS their thoughts. Dina is counting up the cost of Darcy's outfit and Another Woman mumbles something about not wanting to be called on first. Nick rubs his temples as Darcy takes a sip of water.

DARCY (V.O.)

I can't believe I have butterflies in my stomach. Feels like the first day of school...

Nick perks up. Looks over at Darcy. She's nervous?

DARCY

Okay, let's see how we did....

(CONTINUED)

DARCY (V.O.)
*Nobody wants to go first. Everyone's
avoiding me...except Nick Marshall.
Lookin' right at me... Unbelievable.
The only one with good eye contact.*

Darcy leans over the table to reach for few storyboards.
Nick PEERS RIGHT DOWN HER BLOUSE, checking her out.

DARCY (V.O.)
(looking down)
*At least he's looking at my eyes and not
down my blouse.*

Darcy glances up at Nick. His eyes rush IMMEDIATELY BACK TO
her FACE

DARCY
Nick. What'd you come up with?

NICK
Me? Yeah. Okay...What did I come up
with?
(strums his fingers nervously
on the table)

DARCY
He's so wired...

NICK
(stops strumming)
I was thinking mostly about the
moisturizing lipstick...Not ever wearing
lipstick myself, I tried to imagine what
I'd want from a lipstick...if I were a
woman.

DINA (V.O.)
Oh, spare me.

DARCY (V.O.)
Okay he's trying to be honest...

NICK
At first I thought of a beautiful girl
under a waterfall...

DARCY (V.O.)
-- Oy. Beyond awful...

NICK

Then I realized that was beyond...you know, it was terrible. No woman is going to --

DARCY (V.O.)

Relate to a male fantasy of a soaking wet woman....

NICK

-- Uh, probably you know, respond to the male fantasy if you will of a ...pardon the expression, of a soaking wet woman.

Darcy looks surprised.

DARCY

I'm with you on that one.

DARCY (V.O.)

I'm gonna die here with these kinds of ideas...

NICK

But anyway, I'm still working on it and it's evolving...I guess you wouldn't want any ideas involving the Swedish Bikini Team...

ALL THE WOMEN (V.O.)

Agggghhhhhhh!!!!!! Go away! Grow up already!

DARCY (V.O.)

If this is what their head guy comes up with, I get why they hired me.

NICK

That was a joke.

DARCY

And it was funny.
(takes a sip of water)

DARCY (V.O.)

I should've asked for more money.

Nick hates that she thinks he's no good.

DARCY (cont'd)

(notices Dina wants the floor)
Dina.

(CONTINUED)

DINA

Okay, I spent the night trying to figure out a way to sell Advil just to women. A way to reach women on a more personal level using some real female issue other than migraines or muscle aches which are pretty generic...

SUE, a Female Exec in her early forties, chews on the end of her pen, thinking. Nick listens in.

SUE (V.O.)

We should sell it to women like me...
(Nick leans in for a better listen)

I take it every time I need to fake a headache. Works like a charm.

DINA

It's mild and won't upset your stomach so...

NICK

(blurts out)
-- I got a great one. Seriously. Sorry to interrupt but it just came to me. Dina, do you mind?

DINA (V.O.)

Yes! You had your turn!

DINA

Sure. Go ahead...

NICK

We're in a bedroom. The lights are out. A woman's in bed, lying on her side, taking an Advil. Her husband's leaning over her, rubbing her back and we say, "So mild and so gentle on your stomach, you can take it even when you're faking a headache." Then the woman turns to her husband and says, "Not tonight dear, I need an Advil".

All the MEN at the table laugh and applaud. All the WOMEN just stare at Nick, pissed off.

NICK

In my opinion, that would reach women on a personal level.. Be honest. Women do that, don't they?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

All of the Women deny it. Nick turns to Sue.

NICK
Sue Cranston, have you ever done that?
Faked a headache to --

SUE
(embarrassed)
-- No, Nick, I haven't. But thanks for
asking.

NICK
Wait. Be honest. You've been married
for what...ten years? You never pretend
you have a headache...It doesn't "work
like a charm"?

SUE
No, Nick, I don't! It doesn't, okay?

NICK
Sorry. I thought...
(off Sue's look)
Okay. I guess I'm off.

Embarrassed, Sue looks away from Darcy then DIGS her HIGH
HEEL INTO NICK'S FOOT under the table.

SUE (V.O.)
What an ass-hole!!!!!

Nick holds in a painful scream.

DARCY
What's good about Nick's idea is that he
made Advil a woman's product. What
wasn't so good, was that it just wasn't
honest enough. But you're on the right
track, so hang in there. Dina, go on...

MORGAN
Great antenna there, babe. The poodle
give you that one?

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick rounds the corridor, carrying his briefcase. He stops
before his door and pulls two small wads of kleenex out of
his ears.

INT. DARK APARTMENT

Nick ENTERS, throws down his keys and FLICKS ON THE LIGHTS to find:

ALEX AND CAMERON

on the sofa. Alex' sweater is off, she's in a tank top and jeans. Cameron is on top of her, his hand under her top, his tongue in her mouth. Alex SCREAMS, NICK SCREAMS, and Cameron FALLS OFF THE SOFA. Nick turns his back on them as Alex reaches for her sweater.

ALEX

What are you doing home at five o'clock?

NICK

I have a migraine.

ALEX (V.O.)

This is hideous. My boyfriend feeling me up in front of my father...

NICK

Alex! Be quiet! Don't think anything...
(covering his ears)
La, La, La, La, La....

ALEX

We were just watching a video.
(clicks TV on)

ALEX (V.O.)

Oh, shit, where's my bra?

NICK

Oh, God...

Nick looks down and spots the bra on the floor near and nonchalantly pushes it back toward Alex with his foot.

ALEX

(as she sees this)
Oh, God!!!

CAMERON

(rising, fixing his hair)
I think we all need to just chill here...

NICK

No chilling.
(throws him his backpack)
Just get your stuff and take off.

(CONTINUED)

Cameron catches the backpack, losing his balance.

CAMERON

Just relax man, nothin' major was goin' on.

NICK

How old are you?

CAMERON

I'll be eighteen in September.

NICK

She's fifteen. She was ten five years ago. Know what I mean? Get out.

ALEX

Dad!

ALEX (V.O.)

We're going to prom. Don't ruin it!

NICK

You're not going to any prom with this punk.

ALEX

How did you know about prom?

NICK

I don't know. Mom told me. But it's not gonna happen. He's too old for you. I know what boys this age want and he ain't gettin' it from my daughter.

(opens the door for Cameron)

ALEX

Your daughter? Suddenly I'm your daughter.

ALEX (V.O.)

How am I related to this ass-hole?

NICK

Another one!

ALEX (V.O.)

I want Mom....

CAMERON

(to Alex)

I'm gonna take off.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAMERON (cont'd)
 (to Nick, laughs)
 Sorry about this Nick...

NICK
 (hands him his leather jacket)
 Save it.

ALEX
 (taking the jacket)
 That's mine.

She grabs her jacket, exits and SLAMS the door.

A LIGHTNING BOLT

electrifies the night sky. A thunderstorm has hit the windy city.

OUTSIDE NICK'S APARTMENT

the RAIN beats against the windows.

CLOSE - NICK'S FACE

as he smears a facial mask across his cheeks. He pours volumizer back into his hair, flattens a cleansing strip across his nose. lights up a Winston Light and slaps nail polish on his nails. The ritual is almost complete as Nick's eyes land on:

A CUP OF HOT BUBBLING WAX

Nick backs up at the very site of it. Bolstering himself, he polishes off a bottle of wine and bravely applies the hot wax to his leg with the pink plastic applicator. Biting his lip, he places the cloth strip over the wax and RIPS IT OFF, immediately FLYING BACKWARDS and RIGHT OUT THE BATHROOM DOOR.

EXT. NICK'S FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Nick climbs out the window, now in a T-Shirt, pantyhose and loafers and stands on his fire escape, the wind thrashing around him. Getting drenched by the downpour, he whips his HAIR DRYER out of the waist of his pantyhose. The Hairdryer is connected to the apartment by a long extension cord.

NICK
 (looks upward)
 C'mon baby, do your thing. Turn me into me again.

Thunder EXPLODES overhead as Nick TURNS ON THE HAIRDRYER in the storm. Within seconds, LIGHTNING STRIKES and Nick is JOLTED from head to toe.

WIDE SHOT - CHICAGO - NIGHT

The city rumbles with thunder and lightning.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

THE SAME SKYLINE - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

As a quiet sky settles over the city.

NICK WAKES UP

on his SOFA to the SOUND of BIRDS CHIRPING on his window sill.

NICK
 (cracks open an eye)
 Good. I'm not dead. Please tell me I
 got rid of it. Stella?
 (a la Brando)
 Stellaaaaa....
 (remembers)
 Awww, shit... It's her day off.

CLOSE - THE PHONE

Nick dials 411.

NICK
 (to himself)
 Please be a woman.

FEMALE OPERATOR
 For what city please?

NICK
 Hi. Would it be possible for you to
 think of your favorite color..or TV show
 or...

FEMALE OPERATOR
 (repeats, obviously a computer
 voice)
 For what city please?

INT. APARTMENT ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

A FUSSY LOOKING BOW-TIED MAN with a FRENCH POODLE rides down the elevator in Nick's building. The elevator STOPS and Nick rushes on. He looks down at the pretty poodle and the pup looks right back at him. Nick leans forward, like he's trying to catch what the dog has to say but Nick HEARS NOTHING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
Excellent!

The Elevator ARRIVES IN THE LOBBY and the Man gently tugs on the Poodle's leash.

FUSSY MAN
C'mon boy...

Nick drops his head.

EXT. BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Nick flies out the door looking for Gretchen. She's nowhere to be found and the street, oddly enough is populated only by a few Men.

NICK
I don't believe this.
(spots a Taxi driven by a
woman)
Taxi! Woman Taxi Driver!!!!

A Taxi driven by a Man in a Turban pulls up.

NICK
(frustrated)
I need a woman.

TAXI DRIVER
Ah, yes. Join the club.

CLOSE ON THE WORD - BLOOMINGDALE'S

The Taxi pulls up INFRONT OF THE STORE as plenty of Women ENTER and EXIT. Nick quickly gets out of the Taxi and walks past Construction Workers jackhammering in the street in front of the store.

INT. COSMETIC DEPARTMENT

At least A HUNDRED WOMEN are buying and selling cosmetics.

NICK ENTERS

hearing lots of chatter. He looks around, his eyes landing on Women who are ACTUALLY TALKING. He's thrilled, starts a little victory dance but then stops short when he catches a glimpse of:

TWO DEAF WOMEN SIGNING TO ONE ANOTHER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Not a word is coming out of their mouths yet Nick can HEAR their ENTIRE CONVERSATION. Every single word.

NICK

No, baby, no ...

Nick TURNS IN A CIRCLE realizing he can HEAR absolutely EVERY THOUGHT from every Woman, TALKING or NOT. As the CAMERA PULLS UP AND AWAY, the SOUND becomes almost DEAFENING.

HIGH SHOT - NICK

standing in a Sea of Women, his hands over his ears.

CLOSE - NICK'S FIST BANGING ON AN OFFICE DOOR

We can see the partial name of a DOCTOR on the door, and under the name, "Marriage and Family Counseling". Nick KNOCKS again. A WOMAN in her late forties in a sweater and skirt, wearing glasses around her neck, answers.

WOMAN

Yes?

NICK

Dr. Perkins? Hi. You may not remember me, I'm Nick Marshall, I came to see you about ten years ago...with my ex-wife, Emily...

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)

Oh, Christ, not him!

NICK

(relieved)

Good! You remember me.

INT. DR. PERKINS OFFICE

Dr. Perkins sits in a chair, holding a legal pad. Behind her, we see her computer is on. Nick paces in front of her, panicked.

NICK

I don't know what to do, who to go to...how to get rid of it...I'm afraid to go to work, afraid of my Doorwoman, I'm afraid to get a cup of coffee...

DR. PERKINS

All right, let me just make sure I completely understand what you're saying.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
(faces her)
I hear what women think!

DR. PERKINS (cont'd)
And the women whose thoughts you can hear
have absolutely no idea you can do this.

NICK
Correct.

DR. PERKINS
Mr. Marshall, I'm a marriage and family
therapist, this kind of imaginary
displacement scenario isn't really my
thing...

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)
(checking her watch)
*Why did I answer my door? I was so into
buying that lamp on eBay.*

NICK
How much was it going for?

DR. PERKINS
How much was *what* going for?

NICK
The lamp on eBay?

Dr. Perkins GASPS.

NICK (cont'd)
This ain't about my imagination doc. I'm
wired into every woman I come in contact
with. You think it. I hear it.

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)
Oh, shit.

NICK
No kidding. Can I lie down?

DR. PERKINS
Go right ahead.

Nick lies down on her couch.

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)
Shoes...

NICK
(points to his shoes)
You want them off?

DR. PERKINS
(nervous that he keeps
answering her thoughts)
Yes please.
(then)
My God! Frankly, I'm in shock that you
can actually do this...

NICK
Imagine how I feel. If only women came
with a mute button. Who knew they never
stopped talking when they weren't
talking.

DR. PERKINS
Why don't you tell me why you want to get
rid of this..."gift"...

NICK
For starters, I found out mostly every
woman I know kind of hates me.

DR. PERKINS
They do? Okay...What's their complaint?

NICK
It seems to be unanimous that I'm pretty
much of an ass-hole.

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)
*That's what I thought when I first met
you.*

Nick turns to her.

NICK
That doesn't help.

DR. PERKINS (cont'd)
I'm so sorry.

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)
Oh, God, what can I do for this guy?

NICK
I don't know, try anything. You went to
medical school.

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)
Not a very good one.

She covers her mouth, afraid to think.

NICK
It doesn't matter. I'm desperate. Isn't there some kind of pill I could take to make it go away? Some kind of woman-blocker...I'm like going nuts here...

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)
A Woman-blocker? What are you stupid?

Nick turns to her again. She's horrified.

DR. PERKINS
Mr. Marshall, I'm so very very sorry. I don't know how to turn off my thoughts, I'm so used to responding to my patients like this....

NICK
And let me just say, if they could hear you, you'd be out of business...

DR. PERKINS
Understood. Okay. So you found out women think you're a... jerk.

NICK
A jerk would be a compliment. I'm a hated man. A slimeboat. A schmuck. An ass-hole in an Armani coat. A man who doesn't give women a break. A lightweight at work.

DR. PERKINS
As I recall, these are very similar to your wife's complaints.

NICK
Can you give me a break? Just a little one?

DR. PERKINS
Mr. Marshall, can't you see this as a golden opportunity to change?

NICK
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

DR. PERKINS (cont'd)

Freud said, "What do women want?" You may be the one man on earth able to answer that. Did you ever think of taking advantage of this?

NICK

Oh, I tried that. At work. I heard what one of the women was thinking, said it out loud and she totally denied it.

DR. PERKINS

Was it private? Personal? Sexual?

NICK

All three.

DR. PERKINS (V.O.)

Then you're an idiot!

NICK

(covers his face)

Ugh!!!! You are the worst doctor!

DR. PERKINS

I meant to say, then of course she would deny it. Okay! Let me just say what I think. Mr. Marshall, something mysterious and unexplainable and perhaps wonderful has happened to you. I suggest you learn from it. There isn't a woman I treat who doesn't wish her man really understood her. If Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus, and you speak Venetian then the world is yours.

CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES IN ON NICK changing his fear and anxiety to joy and power.

DR. PERKINS (cont'd)

I don't know how this happened to you or why but I suggest you embrace it with wide open arms. Mr. Marshall, the truth is, you may be the luckiest man alive. If you know what women want...You can rule.

We are finally CLOSE ON NICK, hearing her loud and clear..

INT. STARBUCKS - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Nick ENTERS, wearing shades, a changed guy. Cocky. A Master of the Universe. He spots Lola behind the counter and heads her way.

LOLA - NICK'S POV

as the CAMERA MOVES IN ON HER, GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER....

LOLA (V.O.)

Gosh, there he is. Lookin' awfully cute today and I haven't had sex in five months. Why did I tell him to stop asking me out? Idiot! Idiot! Idiot!

LOLA

(extremely blase)
Hey, Nick. How's it goin'?

LOLA (V.O.)

I wish I washed my hair this morning....

NICK

Lola my love. I can't take no for an answer.

LOLA

About what?

NICK

(takes off his shades)
About us...

LOLA (V.O.)

Just don't hurt me, Nick, I've been hurt too many times.

NICK

I know how hard it is to go out with someone new...there's always that fear of getting hurt...At least that's the way I feel.

LOLA

(so sucked in)
You do? Really?

NICK

All the time.

LOLA

Me too all the time.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
So why don't we just take it real slow
and see how goes.

LOLA
Okay. Slow is good.
(then)
You free tonight?

INT. SLOANE-CURTIS - A LITTLE LATER

Morgan walks with Sloane Curtis' Female Attorney.

MORGAN
So you don't think I'm gay? You're
saying you never said that?

ATTORNEY
Right. I never said it.

MORGAN
But that doesn't mean you didn't
think it. What is it, my hair? The
highlights happen to be natural...

ATTORNEY
(trying to get away from him)
Morgan, I've got a meeting...

MORGAN
And you don't think I'm overpaid either?
Right? You never said that?

ATTORNEY
(flustered)
I don't think I ever said that.

She takes off, leaving Morgan behind...We STAY with her.

ATTORNEY (V.O.)
Who has he been talking to?

Nick PASSES, hearing this.

NICK
(cheerfully to Attorney)
Good morning!

Nick then passes Annie ON THE PHONE in the Secretarial pool.

NICK
Hey Annie. Say hi to your boyfriend in
Israel.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
(her mouth drops open, then he
turns on the sincerity)
And Annie, thanks for picking up that
wine for me...that was really nice of you
to do that for me after work. Really.
Appreciate it so much.

Annie hangs up the phone in shock, misses the receiver, drops
the cord, finally gets it on the hook.

ANNIE
C-C-Can I get you a cup of coffee or
water or anything?

NICK
Oh, no thanks. If I'm thirsty, I know
where the coffee room is.

Nick SEES several of the GUYS in the office sharing a laugh,
walking right past Erin, the Mouse, who is kneeling, picking
up an entire stack of dropped files. The Guys don't help her,
they don't even see her. Nick passes too when he HEARS:

ERIN (V.O.)
*That's right, guys. Don't help. Just
walk right past me...Hey, why don't you
just step on my hand you big ...*

ERIN
(then, shocked)
Oh!

She's stunned to see Nick kneeling beside her, handing her
the remainder of her files.

NICK
How you doin'?

ERIN
Oh. Fine. Thank you, Mr. Marshall.

NICK
You're welcome....?

ERIN
Erin.

NICK
You be careful, Erin. Okay?

ERIN
Yeah. Sure.

As Nick rises he HEARS:

ERIN (V.O.)
Whaddya know. There is life on this planet.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE

Nick ENTERS, sits behind his desk, turns on his computer.
Morgan ENTERS.

MORGAN
I think you were right. That attorney, Meg Whatshername definitely thinks I'm gay. I gotta stop looking so neat. I'm not gonna shave for a few days.

NICK
Oh, so now you believe I can hear women's thoughts..? Oh, excuse me, I believe Eve's thinking I might want my door shut.

EVE
(sticks her head in)
Is this private? Did you want your door closed?

NICK
Yeah. Thanks doll.
(listens)
No, no, no, you don't have to hold the calls.

EVE
Oh, very good, I was just gonna ask you that. Don't hold the calls. Right.

NICK
And now is a good time for you to go to the Ladies Room.

EVE
(thrown)
It is? Good. I was just thinking that.

Nick smiles as Morgan falls into a chair.

NICK
It's a gift. I don't know who from but I know why I got it.

MORGAN

Hold on, so like if you're in bed with a woman and you know what she's thinking...you can just do what she wants, not waste a lot of time doing things she doesn't like, cut foreplay in half and....

NICK

-- As I was saying, the reason I was given this gift was to get the job I was destined to have. Dan wants to go after the female market, the next day I can hear the thoughts of every woman I come in contact with. You do the math. I'm obviously supposed to use this gift to understand women so I can manipulate them and sell them millions of dollars worth of useless crap.

(thrilled)

It's a dream come true, babe.

He clicks on a Sinatra CD, walks around his desk.

NICK

I am gonna use this thing 'till I wear it out. I'm gonna learn so much about being a woman that they're gonna make me an honorary chick. I'm gonna be the one guy on earth who knows what they want and how they think and why they do those cuckoo things they do. At the end of this, I'm gonna be more of a woman than Darcy McGuire has ever been.

MORGAN

Why would I not want to be her right now?

NICK

What are you kidding? I'm like having Michael Jordan on your team. Just pass me the ball and get out of my way.

MORGAN

What I mean is, if I were her, I wouldn't unpack so fast.

NICK

Oh yeah.

CUT TO:

MOVING MEN

carrying EMPTY CARTONS out of DARCY'S OFFICE. Darcy talks on the phone, her legs up on her desk.

A Workman hangs FRAMED PHOTOS in the b.g., another hangs new curtains. Nick arrives, knocking on Darcy's open door. She immediately takes her legs off her desk and motions Nick in.

DARCY

(into phone)

Dan, I've only been here 48 hours. It's gonna happen. I promise. All right? Okay... Take it easy.

(hangs up, jots down a note)

DARCY (V.O.)

(as she writes)

Set meeting -- Nike. Women's Division.

(tucks the note in her drawer, then, to Nick)

Hi.

DARCY (V.O.)

What's he got up his sleeve? God, I hope he didn't see up my skirt...

(nonchalantly tugs on her skirt)

NICK

(looking away)

Your office looks good. Nice photographs.

(looks closely at them)

DARCY (V.O.)

No clue they're Cartier Bresson.

NICK

(knowingly)

Are they all Cartier Bresson?

DARCY

(impressed)

Yeah. They are.

NICK

They're amazing. Great collection.

DARCY

Thanks...yeah...So... how's it going?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

I was going to ask you the same thing.

DARCY

Well, it's starting slow, I'm evaluating some of the staff which is always a hard thing to do...

NICK

Oh, yeah. Right...

He LISTENS but DOESN'T HEAR anything. He looks at her. She doesn't give.

NICK

Well. Good. So look, I don't want to beat around the bush so here's what I'd like to propose.

DARCY (V.O.)

He's proposing so soon?

NICK

(a little thrown by that one)
I uh...I don't know much about the products you're going after personally but I do believe I can sell *anything* once I understand the buyer's needs so what I'd like is for you to let me go after the big fish...the one you really want. I'll learn what I need to know and I'll reel 'em in for us.

DARCY (V.O.)

No, actually, I think I'll reel them in for us.

NICK

Unless you're going after someone in particular yourself...

DARCY

No, no, it's just that there's several big fish out there...at the moment...

NICK

Uh-huh. So what's the biggest? Nike? The Women's Division.

DARCY

(stunned)

You heard they're shopping?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
I just got wind of it.

DARCY
That's amazing. I heard no one knew.

NICK
You knew.

DARCY
I heard no one else knew.

NICK
Hey, we're on the same team now. It's okay if I know what you know. Anyway, as I recall someone once said, two heads are better than one...

DARCY
Hey, you were listening.

NICK
More than you know

DARCY
Okay. Here's what I heard. They're shopping but they want to keep it very quiet. This is a really tough one for us to get. I mean, it's a tough one for anybody to get. But if we got it, it would single handedly put this place back on top. I mean, way on top.

NICK
What do you think they're looking for?

DARCY
They want to empower women. That's what they're all about. They want to get inside women's heads and reach them on a very real level. Now, don't take this the wrong way but yesterday you were thrown talking about a lipstick. Nike's like ultra-mega-girl-power. You sure you want to go for this one?

NICK
You get them here in two weeks, I'll be ready.
(then)
And that wasn't said like an order.

DARCY
I didn't take it as one.

DARCY (V.O.)
(biting her lip)
This guy's kinda exciting...

Nick's backs up, again surprised at her thoughts when Dan, the Boss, ENTERS, holding a storyboard.

DAN
Hey, glad I caught you both. Got a minute?

DARCY/NICK
(at the same time)
Sure.

DAN
Just wanted you to see these storyboards for U.S. Air before they come over this afternoon...What do you think..? It feels like it needs something to me...

DARCY
Let's see...
(looks at the storyboards)

DARCY (V.O.)
(thinks to herself)
Don't like the graphics, feels a bit parochial...Maybe it should be in black and white...

DAN
Nick, take a look...

Nick looks at the storyboards with Darcy.

DAN
What do you think?

NICK
I don't know who's been working on this but it feels a bit... What's the word..? Parochial. Darcy, what do you think?

DARCY
(surprised)
I totally agree. Especially about the graphics... Parochial. That's so weird that you said that.

NICK

Also, why don't you tell them to try it
in black and white. It might punch it up
a bit.

(to Darcy)

Did you say something?

DARCY

No, but I swear I was thinking the exact
same thing!

NICK

Were you?

Nick and Dan exchange a look.

DAN

Black and White's a great idea, Nick...

DARCY (V.O.)

Great idea, Nick? Speak up!

As Dan is about to EXIT.

DARCY (V.O.)

Say something before he leaves...

NICK

(quickly)

Dan.

(Dan turns)

If you want me to take another look,
after they take another stab at it, give
me a buzz.

DAN

I will. Thanks.

Nick is about to turn to Darcy with a victorious smile when:

DARCY

-- And Dan...

DAN

(turns back)

Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

Just in case they find Nick's approach too retro, which they might, elegance is often perceived as old-fashioned, I'd also be prepared with a dot-com type approach maybe using web-site graphics and buzzwords... You know, 'click here' for the airline of tomorrow kind of thing. It's always good to have a back-up.

DAN

You're right. Yeah. That's very good by the way....Thank you.

DARCY

Anytime. That's my job.

Dan exits. Now Darcy turns to Nick with a smile. The Drapery Man interrupts, holding his ladder.

DRAPERY MAN

All done Miss McGuire.

DARCY

(looks at new curtains)
Oh, thanks... Hey, they look great.

DRAPERY MAN

Good luck here.

The Drapery Man gives Nick a knowing look when Darcy's Assistant ENTERS.

ASSISTANT

Mr. Marshall, you're daughter's on line one.

DARCY (V.O.)

He has a daughter? I'm stunned. How old?

NICK

She's fifteen, staying with me while her Mom's away.

(picks up phone)

Alex? Hi....Uh-huh. Sure, honey, that's fine.

INTERCUT WITH ALEX ON A PAYPHONE AT SCHOOL

ALEX

Honey? Who are you trying to impress?
Look, I'm gonna go out with my friends
tonight then can I bring them back to
your place or will you freak out again?

NICK

No, no that's great. No problem. What
time will you be home?

ALEX

(yells to friends)
Wait for me!
(to Nick)
I don't know. Bye.
(hangs up)

NICK

Eight's fine. Love you too. Bye,
sweetie.

Nick smiles at Darcy. Like Father Knows Best.

DARCY (V.O.)

Total shocker. He's like a nice guy.

NICK

Sorry about that. Duty calls.

DARCY

Don't worry about it. No problem.

Again, Nick listens. Doesn't hear anything. She must be
telling the truth.

DARCY

She's fifteen?

NICK

Yeah, and she's got a boyfriend who's
eighteen.

DARCY

You hate that, right?

NICK

Yeah. But she's crazy about him. He
asked her to the prom so...That's a big
deal I guess.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

That's very big. But going to the prom is mostly about the dress, you know.

NICK

It is?

DARCY

Once you buy the dress, it's all down hill from there.

DARCY (V.O.)

This feels like a date. Why'd I go into all that? He needs to go...

NICK

All right. So, I'm out of here. I'm gonna do a little research around town...Try to get inside women's heads...

DARCY

If you need any help...

NICK

Believe me, I'll be picking your brain.

DARCY

You got it.

NICK

(exiting)
I'll take it.

The CAMERA SWEEPS IN ON Nick as he EXITS Darcy's Office and slips his shades back on, smiling a devilish smile. Nelson Riddle couldn't have orchestrated it any better.

CLOSE - THE PAGES OF SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE

Pretty girls in pretty prom dresses. We're in:

ALEX'S ROOM AT NICK'S PLACE

Alex sits on her bed with Two Girlfriends, looking at the dresses.

ALEX

I love that one but it says you can't wear it if you have hips. That one's cute but too low cut in the back, I hate my back.

They HEAR a KNOCK on the door.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

It's me.

ALEX

(rolls her eyes)

It's open! ...Cause it has no lock.

Nick ENTERS, stands in the doorway. Alex just stares at him.

ALEX (V.O.)

What? Say something!

NICK

Hi. I'm Nick, Alex' Dad.

THE FRIENDS

Hi...Hi...

THE FRIENDS (V.O.)

*Deadbeat. Never sees his daughter.
Forgot her birthday. Nice stack of
Playboys in the closet. Mr. No Food in
the House.*

ALEX (V.O.)

Why is he just standing there?

NICK

*(snapping out of it)**Oh. I just wanted to let you know I'm
home. I have a date tonight so I'm going
out but I won't be home late and I wanted
to know if 'you and I' could have a date
soon. I'd like to take you shopping for
your prom dress.*

THE FRIENDS (V.O.)

*That is soooo sweet. He's soooo nice.
I wish my Dad would ever say that.
Awww. I love him.*

Nick smiles his new 'Aren't I adorable' smile.

ALEX

I don't get it.

THE FRIENDS

*Alex! Go with him. It'll be fun. Just
do it.*

ALEX

(suspicious)

Why do you suddenly want to go shopping with me?

NICK

Because it's your first prom and I'd like to help you pick out your dress. That's a big thing you know. They say it's all down hill after the dress.

ALEX (V.O.)

He must be stoned. Fine. I'll get the most expensive dress, shoes, new make up. He can afford it.

NICK

And while we're there, we'll get you some great shoes, new make up. The works.

ALEX

Okay, Dad, fine. Whatever.

NICK

Great. Nice meeting you girls. Hope to see you again.

THE FRIENDS

(totally won over)

Definitely! Bye Mr. Marshall! Great apartment by the way!

OUTSIDE ALEX' ROOM

Nick's in heaven.

NICK

Women are so easy.

CUT TO:

NICK AND LOLA

all over each other OUTSIDE OF LOLA'S DOWNTOWN APARTMENT. Actually it's Lola that's all over Nick. She's practically devouring the guy.

LOLA

I gotta tell you, I'm not usually like this on a first date... it's just that you've been so amazing all night. So sensitive and understanding... You want to come up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

71.

Nick wants to come up.

LOLA (V.O.)
(as she's kissing him)
I can't believe I asked him up. Am I ready for him to come up? If I sleep with him, he'll think I'm a slut and never call me again or call me all the time 'cause he'll think he can get it whenever he wants...Oh, what's the difference. He's so incredible...
(looks at him)
...He reminds me of my sister...

They separate.

LOLA
So what do you think?

NICK
I'll only come up if you really want me to...I don't want you to do anything you're not ready for...I can wait...

Lola GRABS Nick, KISSING him, PUSHING him RIGHT OUT OF FRAME.

CUT TO:

NICK AND LOLA - IN BED - IN THE DARK

We HEAR:

LOLA (V.O.)
Hey, nice abs...not exactly washboard but Whoa! Cold hand ...Ouch! That's right, they're attached. My God, what's with the tongue? I'm gonna need the Heimlich Maneuver...Thank you! What's that?!? It's huge! Oh, it's his leg. Where's his...O-kay Lied about the grande!

If there was ever a time Nick didn't want to hear a woman's private thoughts, it would be now.

NICK
(stops, breathless)
Would you mind if we turned on the light?

LOLA
You want the light on?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
It might help.

LOLA
If it'll help...Sure.

Lola CLAPS and the Light POPS ON. Nick looks down at her.

LOLA (V.O.)
God, I hope he's better with the light on.

Not giving up, Nick leans forward, kisses her lips, her neck, her lips, her ear.

LOLA (V.O.)
He's so all over the place...Just do it already so I can start faking it...Is Britney Spears on Leno tonight?

That does it. Nick stops, pulling away.

LOLA (cont'd)
You okay?

INT. LOLA'S BATHROOM

Nick stands in front of the mirror. He's a mess. Sweating. Hyperventilating. A master of the universe in search of his universe. Shaky, he sits on the leopard-covered toilet seat, looks down at his penis.

NICK
(to his penis)
Buddy! Pull it together. This is what we do, man...

Lola sticks her head in the door.

LOLA
You okay? . . .

NICK
(crossing his legs)
Yeah. Just regrouping.

LOLA
Regrouping. Okay. What's that supposed to mean?

NICK
(lost)
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

Lola just looks at him.

NICK
I can do this better, Lola.

LOLA (V.O.)
Wanna bet?

INT. BEDROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Nick and Lola are out of breath as they lie side-by-side. Nick is a changed man. Like a virgin, so to speak.

LOLA
That was...a-mazing. It was like you were more inside me than anyone ever...

NICK
Thank you doll. I tried.

LOLA
No, I mean, more inside my head. Like you were tuned into me, knew everything I wanted and how I wanted it...We connected in a way that was like beyond... beyond. My heart is pounding so hard...

Nick beams.

LOLA (V.O.)
Who would've thought? Slow starter then turns out to be a genius in bed. Ladies and Gentlemen, Nick Marshall is a Sex God!

ON NICK'S extremely HAPPY FACE we HEAR Sinatra sing "I've Got The World On A String" and a MONTAGE begins...

CAMERA PANS down A ROW OF WOMEN in a TAE-BO CLASS

and finds Nick smack in the middle of them, listening to their every thought. CAMERA CONTINUES PANNING PAST Nick to see the rest of the FEMALE LINE UP then PANS BACK to Nick, taking it all in.

NICK'S IN A NAIL SALON, having his nails done, surrounded by Women. He's all ears.

At an INNER CITY GIRLS'S HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GAME, Nick sits in the Crowd of Fans, watching the game, looking at the Players' Faces, listening, listening, listening.

(CONTINUED)

AT WORK, Nick rides the ELEVATOR, surrounded by Men. The doors are about to shut when DARCY steps on, reading Advertising Age. She doesn't see Nick buried in the back of the elevator. She tucks the paper away and clearly has something on her mind. Nick leans in to eaves drop. She steps off the elevator on the 44th floor, Nick remains, making a note. We see him mouth, "Thank you!"

A COUPLE KISSES ON A MOVIE SCREEN

Nick sits in a DARK MOVIE HOUSE, the only man in a theater FULL OF WOMEN. He listens to every female thought around him.

CLOSE - A STORYBOARD

of a WOMAN FLYING OVER NEW YORK CITY. ANGLE WIDENS to see an Artist is finishing the drawing as Darcy gives him final instructions. Satisfied, Darcy takes the storyboard off its easel and walks it into:

DAN'S OFFICE

where Dan sits on the sofa, on the phone, holding a storyboard. He SEES Darcy, waves her in. Darcy proudly holds her storyboard as Dan sets his storyboard on the coffee table. Darcy takes a peek -- It's the exact same idea! A Woman FLYING over New York Skyscrapers. Darcy looks confused, then slips her storyboard behind her back as the MUSIC FADES.

INT. SLOANE, CURTIS COFFEE ROOM - DAY

Filled with Secretaries making coffee. Everyone is laughing and we FIND Nick is in the center of it all, eating a salad from a tupperware container..

NICK

Okay, last one...Why do men like to do it in front of a mirror?

SECRETARY #1

(laughing)

Why?

NICK

Because objects may appear larger than they actually are...

All the Women crack up.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

(to Secretary #2)

I heard that in the Beauty Shop this morning. It's pretty good..But seriously, Fay, you know, in terms of that other thing we were talking about, he can not ignore you all night, stay glued to the TV, then expect you to turn it on like a light bulb. I wouldn't take that if I were you. You're either interesting or you're not. Tell him to decide.

SECRETARY #2

Can I write this down..?

(grabs a piece of paper)

I'm either interesting or I'm not. He'll shit a brick...

SECRETARY #2 (V.O.)

What if he says I'm not..?

NICK

He won't say, "you're not". Trust me.

SECRETARY #3

(exiting with a coffee for her boss)

Okay, then, I'm tryin' that one tonight, myself. He got me the remote control last night, so I guess anything's possible.

NICK

(finishing salad)

Thanks for the salad, doll, it's unreal.

Annie arrives carrying a tray of dirty coffee cups, she loads the dishwasher.

ANNIE

Okay, I did it. I told Haim I wasn't moving to Israel.

NICK

And..?

ANNIE

I said what you said, that he can be a writer anywhere and if I'm going to be in advertising, I need to be here and not there.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
And he said?

ANNIE
I'm not sure it was in Hebrew but I don't think it was, 'Okay, you got it, be there next Tuesday'.

NICK
Just wait it out. He'll call you.

ANNIE (V.O.)
I better call him back.

NICK
Be strong. He'll call you.
(checks watch)
Girls, gotta stop gabbin', need to get back to work.

ALL OF THEM
Can we get you anything? Coffee, muffin, anything?

NICK
No, no, I'm cool.
(exits, then quickly returns)
But thank you anyway.

SECRETARY #1
(after he's gone)
So, was he like, struck by lightning or what? I don't get how Nick Marshall is suddenly 'one of the girls'? I like it but I don't get it.

ANNIE
It's freaky. He suddenly runs all his own errands and yesterday he actually gave me a real job to do...

SECRETARY #4
(as she exits)
God works in mysterious ways, ladies. I'm just prayin' it happens one day to my boss. And my husband...And my Dad...
(exiting)
And my two brat sons...and my three idiot brothers...

INT. MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick and Morgan stand side-by-side. Morgan hasn't shaved in three days.

NICK

It's unbelievable. I'm actually beginning to understand what women want. I mean it's like, I get it. Do you know what that means?

MORGAN

Yeah. You get it. Whatever "it" is.

NICK

"It" is the difference between us and them. It's the thing that keeps us on different sides of the dance floor and I'm starting to get it.

MORGAN

O-kay...

NICK

I hear what they're saying and I see it from their point of view but then I also understand it from the male perspective so I can actually really help them. You know I could be bigger than Dear Abbey if I wanted.

(sighs)

So many of them just want to be listened to. Why is it so hard for men to pay attention to the women in their lives?

MORGAN

(washing his hands)

You know you're starting to sound like a nag?

NICK

(washing his hands)

That's man-talk for 'you don't want to listen'. Fine. Be that way. When's Nike coming in?

They EXIT the Men's Room and make their way though the OFFICE. CAMERA TRACKS.

MORGAN

A week from tomorrow. You buying a new dress for the meeting?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

So comparing me to a woman is a put down?
Do we wonder why you're single?

(to Erin as she passes)

Hey, Erin. Cute shoes.

ERIN (V.O.)

(checks out her shoes)

*What is this, pay attention to the nerd
month?*

Erin waves. Nick laughs.

MORGAN

What are you laughing at?

NICK

Erin. She's funny. Nuts, but funny.

MORGAN

Who's Erin?

NICK

You really should get to know the women
of the secretarial staff, Morgan.
They're not just a bunch of skirts with
steno pads.

MORGAN

(stops Nick)

Just for the record, let me say, I hate
what you're turning into.

NICK

You won't when I'm Creative Director...

Nick winks.

CLOSE - DARCY

shirtsleeves rolled, looking at storyboards IN NICK'S OFFICE.
Sinatra plays softly in the b.g. Nick circles behind Darcy,
listening to her every thought. Through the windows, the
lights of the city twinkle as the sun sets.

DARCY (V.O)

*This is good. Some smart stuff here.
This line isn't strong enough but...*

NICK

(coughs)

If you're thinking that line isn't good enough. I agree... It's just a dummy line 'til I get the right one...

DARCY

Maybe we should do a play on words...

NICK

Uh-huh.

DARCY (cont'd)

I mean this is good but maybe we could do something about sports and ... Let me just think for a minute...

NICK

Take your time.

DARCY (V.O.)

(shutting her eyes)

-- *Something about sports and games or sports and rules...Playing by the rules? Rules of relationships? No, that's unclear...Games people play and rules women think they have to live by juxtaposed against sports. Playing games versus playing sports..?*

Darcy opens her eyes. Nick's right in front of her, nodding. He loves this.

DARCY

-- Why are you nodding?

NICK

'Cause I think you're on to something.

DARCY

What? What am I on to?

NICK

We should do a play on words...

DARCY

Yeah, that could be good, right? I'm not thinking totally straight today...

NICK

Why don't we do something about sports versus...I don't know...games?

(CONTINUED)

DARCY
Exactly. Games as in the games men and women play...

NICK
We could even take it another step and talk about...rules...

DARCY (cont'd)
We could actually quote "The Rules"...

NICK
You mean like don't accept a date if it's after Wednesday and never pick up your phone before two rings.

DARCY
You have been doing your homework.

Nick laughs.

DARCY
(hesitates, then)
Can I be really honest with you?

NICK
Sure.

DARCY
You know before I came here, I heard you were going to be one tough chauvinistic prick.

NICK
Gee, you must've really looked forward to meeting me.

DARCY
(laughs)
No, I was dreading it. I had this other Nick Marshall all built up in my mind.

NICK
Yeah, I heard a few things about you too.

DARCY
Oh, I know. I'm a man eater. A bitch. Darth Vader of the Advertising World.

DARCY (V.O.)
But that's not who I am...at all.

NICK

Yeah, well, just for the record, I don't think that's who you are...

DARCY

Thanks. I appreciate that. Anyway...the feeling's mutual.

(then)

See. No games equals... embarrassing moment.

Nick smiles.

DARCY (V.O.)

Great smile. I like this guy. I can't believe it. Speaking of rules. Rule number one..Do not fall for men at work.

NICK

(looking straight at her)

Why?

DARCY

Why what?

NICK

(trying to cover)

Why don't I, you know... try that...'rule thing'... and I'll show it to you tomorrow. If you're free.

DARCY

You're asking me awfully late in the week for tomorrow. This is Thursday.

DARCY (V.O.)

I'm flirting!!! What's wrong with me? Acchh! Oh, God, I just looked right at his penis...I hope he didn't see me. Oh, shit, I looked again. Stop it!

DARCY

(wipes her eyes)

Sorry. Got something in my eye...Anyway, yeah, tomorrow will be great...

(looks back at him)

I'll see you then.

NICK

(opens his jacket, puts his hands in his pants pockets FLASHING his package)

Absolutely.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY
(walks backwards, almost
bumping into the door)
Good work...

NICK
You too.

INT. GIBSON'S BAR - THAT NIGHT

The place is JAMMED with Young Execs spilling right out into the street. Nick and Morgan wend their way through the noisy crowd.

NICK
(holding his ears)
I can't be in here, Farwell...

MORGAN
Just walk me through, tell me where I'm
wasting my time and where I can score.
Please. I'd do it for you.

NICK
Okay, one time through, here we
go...Blonde Ponytail's not
interested...V-Neck on the cell phone
thinks you're cute but short.

MORGAN
I'm not short.

NICK
She's six, one... Pink Cardigan's lookin'
for love...Her friend in the headband,
forget, just took a quaalude.

MORGAN
She did? Where is she?

NICK
Brunette in the black dress is checking
you out ...give her a smile.
(Morgan smiles)
Nice work. You passed. And she's in the
mood for Sushi if that helps...Black
Haired beauty's a Satan worshipper so
stay outta there. And little Meg Ryan
hair just had implants...

MORGAN
Little Meg Ryan where? You're going too
fast!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

Striped blouse - likes older guys...
 Laughing Girl...big Lesbo. Our favorite
 Waitress is glad to see you and isn't
 wearing any underpants and the Redhead in
 the corner's in the mood, likes your suit
 and has a trust fund.

(PAUSES as he reaches the door)

So I say, the Brunette in the Black
 Dress, the Waitress or the Trustfund who
 likes your suit.

MORGAN

(stopping him before he leaves)

And why is it you're not doing this for
 yourself?

NICK

(thinks about it, then)

I don't know.

INT. SLOANE-CURTIS - 9 P.M.

Nick steps off the elevator, the place is quiet and empty.
 He ENTERS his office. We see Women's Magazines are open and
 spread all over his desk. Nick goes to his computer, takes
 out a disc, sticks it in his briefcase. He turns off the
 light and walks through the empty corridor when he notices a
 light on down the hall and peeks in:

HE SEES

Darcy alone, IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM, going through piles of
 storyboards. Nick watches her work and HEARS HER SINGING
 Sinatra's "I've Got You Under My Skin" to herself. He smiles,
 starts to leave when he HEARS her really BELTING OUT the
 song. He returns to listen. Darcy looks up, sees his
 reflection in the window and jumps.

DARCY

Nick, you scared me. I thought I was the
 only one up here.

NICK

Sorry. I just came back to get a disc.
 I didn't want to interrupt. You're
 working late.

DARCY

Am I. What time is it?

NICK

After nine.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY (V.O.)

I'm so glad you're here...Help!!!

NICK

Uh...Look, I'd um, be glad to give you a hand if you need any.....

DARCY

Oh, thanks but I'm fine. I was just going over some ideas, trying to see what's valid here...I know this pile is not happening for sure. This one's borderline. This stack's pretty good.

NICK

Want an opinion on the borderline?

DARCY

You want to see if anything works for you?

DARCY (V.O.)

He's just being polite... He doesn't want to help ...Why am I even asking for help? I'm supposed to be able to do this on my own.

NICK

You want to work on some of these.. 'cause I'm not tired if you're not...

DARCY

(yawns)

That would be great.

(Nick laughs)

I'm only yawning 'cause I seemed to have basically stopped sleeping since I got this job...

NICK

(feeling a little guilty)

You have?

DARCY

Yeah. It's... you know it's... it's just...

DARCY (V.O.)

How do I say this?

NICK

New jobs are hard.

CONTINUED: (2)

DARCY

Yes they are. Well said.

NICK

(pulls out a storyboard)

So shall we talk about Control Top
Pantyhose?

DARCY

Sure.

NICK

All right, we know they're unbelievably
uncomfortable but they totally do the
trick....

DARCY

You've tried on Control Top Pantyhose?

NICK

Did you put a pair in the pink box?

Darcy laughs...As Nick and Darcy continue working together
and laughing, CAMERA PULLS AWAY and we realize we are OUTSIDE
THE BUILDING, looking in. CAMERA CONTINUES to FLOAT away
from Nick and Darcy and up and over the city's vast skyline.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Gretchen, the Doorwoman opens the door for Nick and Alex.

GRETCHEN (V.O.)

*Here comes my favorite little ass in the
building...Come on, baby, come on out to
mama....*

NICK

(whispers as he passes)

Gretchen, please, not in front of my
child.

GRETCHEN

Sir?

Alex CROSSES TO THE STREET to hail a cab.

NICK

I'm just ASS-king you to control it.
Just a little... I ASS-sume you can do
that..?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gretchen FREEZES as Nick whistles for a TAXI.

INT. BLOOMINGDALE'S JUNIOR DEPARTMENT - DAY

Blasting Music, Funky videos playing on a loop. Teen-Age Girls shopping in packs. Nick sits on a 50's style chair, waiting for Alex; holding a stack of dresses on his lap.

ALEX (O.S.)

The dress you picked out is totally hideous. I'm not coming out.

NICK

It can't be that bad.

ALEX

(sticks just her head out of the dressing room curtain)
I look like a nun. An ugly nun.

NICK

Why? Just because it's grey? Grey is the new black. Let me see it.

Alex opens the curtain and steps out. She wears a long full dress, long sleeves, high neck. She looks like she's ready for Sister Act III. Nick sort of likes it.

ALEX (V.O.)

If he says he likes it, I'll die.

NICK

(quickly changing what he's about to say)
Okay! Next!

CUT TO:

ALEX IN AN UNBELIEVABLY SEXY DRESS

ALEX

THIS I Love.

NICK

Thank you! Next!

ALEX IN DRESS AFTER DRESS AFTER DRESS

short ones, long ones, tight ones, tighter ones. Finally, she wears a long sleek dress with a simple neckline. She stands in front of a three-way mirror. We see Nick in the CHAIR BEHIND HER, tapping his foot.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (V.O.)

This is it! It's so Jennifer Love Hewitt except without the boobs. I need a padded bra...I'll buy one when he's not around. I can't believe this is what I'll be wearing the last night I'm a Virgin. Or should I say, what I'll be taking off!

Behind her, we SEE Nick FALL RIGHT OUT OF HIS CHAIR.

INT. BLOOMINGDALE'S RESTAURANT - LUNCH TIME

Nick and Alex sit at a THE COUNTER, eating lunch.

NICK

Alex, I want to talk to you about something important. We've never talked about it before but I think now's the time...

ALEX (V.O.)

Oh, God, he's actually gonna try to be a Dad...This should be hilarious.

Alex just stares at him, lets him squirm.

NICK

(trying to ignore that)
I realize I haven't been a perfect Dad in the past...

ALEX

Can you pass the ketchup, Nick?

NICK

(passing it)
But that doesn't mean I don't have the right to talk to you about... about...

ALEX

About..?

NICK

Well, now that you're a young woman, you might be flirting with the idea of...

ALEX

Having sex?
(to Waitress)
Can I have another lemonade please?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

That's correct. You know boys think differently about sex than girls.

ALEX

And how do you know what girls think?

NICK

I just spent four hours in the Junior Department of Bloomingdales.

ALEX

This does not make you an authority on what girls think about sex.

NICK

Well, I know more than I used to and my hunch is that girls want guys to be boyfriends. They want the guys to really like them and hang out with them and guys, not all guys, but most guys just want sex and you're only fifteen, I mean you just got your braces off...

(Alex makes a face)

You shouldn't feel any pressure just because your boyfriend's older...You know whose fault this is, don't you? I mean, look at the culture, think about what's on TV or just watch MTV, although I wish you wouldn't...I can't believe what I've been seeing on there lately, women are crawling on all fours...

ALEX

-- Hey, how about those wacky commercials? Especially the ones where the women are always in bikinis, no wonder half my friends are bolemic...

NICK

(as it sinks in.)

They are? That's awful.

ALEX

It ain't easy bein' a girl.

NICK

You can be the different one, you know.

ALEX (cont'd)

Please. Save it Nick. You're too late.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

I am?

ALEX

Mom had this talk with me when I was like eleven. I know you're supposed to have sex when you're in love, I know it's special. I know everything...And Mom like knows me for real and knows all my friends and knows Cameron so let's just leave the parental talks up to her, okay?

ALEX (V.O.)

Plus, I promised Cameron I'd do it Prom night....

ALEX (cont'd)

And also, let's not make me part of your Nick make-over or whatever this new thing you're into is...

NICK

What new thing?

ALEX

What new thing?!? This ridiculous new guy you're trying to be...taking me shopping and asking me if we can make a salad together and watch 'Friends' together...It's like nuts after fifteen years of no relating...I mean, c'mon who are you to talk about relationships anyway...

ALEX (V.O.)

(sipping her lemonade)

You've never had a real relationship with anyone in your entire life.

ALEX

(puts down her drink)

I'm gonna go meet my friends, okay?
Thanks for the dress.

Alex exits, carrying her dress. Nick SITS ALONE and HEARS all the OTHER GIRLS AND WOMEN who line the counter on either side of him.

WOMEN (V.O.)

She's such a bitch! I think she's totally right! Johnny Come Lately giving her advice!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WOMEN (cont'd)

She didn't even finish her lunch. I think the talk worked! Move on, dude, it's over!

Nick lowers his head.

FULL SCREEN - MARTHA STEWART

in her TV Kitchen, demonstrating how to make the perfect wedding cake.

NICK

watches Martha on his big screen TV from Bed, wearing sweats, nibbling on a rice cake.

NICK

(to TV, in all sincerity)
...So gorgeous.

Martha goes to commercial and Nick CLICKS AROUND, FLYING PAST Howard Stern, a Basketball Game and Bay Watch and STOPPING on Richard Simmons with a Weepy Woman who's lost 65 pounds. The Weepy Woman explains how 'Deal A Meal' literally saved her life.

ANGLE - NICK

his eyes filling with tears as he listens to her story. The phone RINGS. Nick clears his voice, wipes his eyes.

NICK

What is wrong with me?!?
(into phone)
Hello?

He DOESN'T HEAR anything at first...Then he HEARS:

WOMAN'S VOICE

What am I doing?

NICK

(guessing)
Darcy?

INT. DARCY'S APARTMENT

Darcy lies in bed watching the Basketball Game. She CLICKS it OFF.

DARCY

(into phone, bolts up)
How did you know it was me? I didn't say anything.

BACK TO NICK

NICK
 (sits up)
 I don't know. I just sensed it.

DARCY'S VOICE
*Shit! I'm such an idiot. I didn't
 think he'd be there!!!*

NICK
 Excuse me?

INTERCUT - DARCY & NICK

DARCY
 Sorry. I was just thinking. You know I
 didn't mean to really call you. I had
 your number here and I was thinking of
 you, of calling you and I mean, obviously
 I did call you but...

NICK
 I was thinking about you too.

Over Darcy's relieved smile we HEAR strains of a piano
 playing, "Where or When" ...

EXT. ADAGIO - NIGHT

The Sound of the Piano is coming from inside this smoky JAZZ
 CLUB.

INSIDE

CAMERA WENDS its way around Couples listening to the music,
 finding Nick and Darcy in a candle-lit booth. A Waitress
 serves them their drinks. Darcy looks more relaxed than
 we've seen her before. And more relaxed makes her even more
 appealing and none of this is lost on Nick.

DARCY
 (raises her glass)
 Here's to another great idea...

NICK
 You mean, 'Let's meet for a drink'?

DARCY
 Yeah. It's exactly what I wanted to
 say... Sometimes I think you're a bit of a
 mind reader.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

But I don't have to be a mind reader with you because you actually say what you think.

DARCY

I know it's a curse.

NICK

Are you kidding? It's a relief. Do you have any idea how unusual that is -- to actually say what you think?

DARCY

Do you know how unusual it is for someone to actually like that about me.

(Nick laughs)

Trust me, it's not been a great thing in my life. Well Ben, my ex-husband didn't love it, let's put it that way.

NICK

Yeah...How long were you two married for?

DARCY

About a year. But we lived together for almost three years before that. We worked together, you know.

NICK

Yeah, I heard that. So was that good or not so good?

DARCY

Both actually. In the beginning it was great. A guy who fell for me at work, who I could collaborate with...It was very...

NICK

Complete.

DARCY

Yeah... Then something changed. And... it became competitive. And that was bad. That's really why I left PPB&O. I had to get out on my own, as scary as that was. Not scary exactly but...well, I was kinda scared.

(looks down and sips her drink)

NICK

Why?

DARCY

I don't know...Maybe because I didn't know if I could really do it on my own. I still don't know. Don't get me wrong, I think things are going pretty well at Sloane-Curtis but it's hard to be... you know...totally sure... If only I was as secure as I tell myself I am...

(then)

Is this completely insensitive of me to be talking about this? I know you were up for my job and... I'm sorry I was the one who got it.

Nick watches as she tucks a loose strand of hair behind her ears.

NICK

I'm not. I've learned a lot of from you.
(Darcy looks up surprised)

DARCY

Like what?

NICK (cont'd)

For one, you really love what you do.

DARCY

Oh c'mon, you really love what you do.

NICK

Not as much as you do. And I'm not as natural at it, either. It comes so easily to you.

DARCY

(truly surprised)

You think so? God, and I think you're so great at it, so great at it, I'm not so sure why Dan even thought he needed me ...and lately I think he might be wondering the same thing.

She finishes off her drink.

DARCY (V.O.)

Can I say it? Someone's stealing from me. It's too paranoid.

Hearing this, Nick panics, finishes his drink, then to his own surprise, says:

(CONTINUED)

NICK

What were you just going to say?

DARCY

I knew you knew I was thinking something.
(hesitates)

I think someone at work is stealing my ideas. I had this idea for Visa about this woman flying over the city and I gave it to the art department and I think somebody saw it there and ripped it off because someone presented it to Dan right before I did...I felt like such a jerk when I went into him with it. You should've seen me, I was so...oh, man, it was bad...

NICK

Who do you think it is?

DARCY

I don't know...Maybe Morgan. I know he's your guy so I hate saying it but he's got a lot of attitude and I think he'd love to see me out of there.

NICK

I don't think it's Morgan. He's not that desperate.

DARCY

Maybe I'm just overly paranoid.

Darcy looks at Nick's hand. It's so close to hers. She looks away, fiddles with her drink.

DARCY

Well, anyway, the best thing about all this is that I just closed escrow on my first apartment. Finally I own my own place which is a much more amazing feeling than I expected...

(notices Nick seems far away)

Now I wish I was the mind reader.

NICK

No, I was listening, but I was just thinking how men like me can get so screwed up.

DARCY

I don't think there are men like you.

(CONTINUED)

Darcy looks right into Nick's eyes.

DARCY (V.O.)
If we kissed would it ruin everything?

Nick touches her face.

NICK
Listen to me. I think you're one of the
great women, I really do and...

She kisses him.

DARCY
I'm sorry I just meant to say thank you.
I'm so sor--

Nick pulls her close and kisses her, long and sweet.

CLOSE - NICK AND DARCY

kissing again and again and again...

EXT. ADAGIO - NIGHT

Darcy and Nick stand under the club's awning. A Taxi waits
at the curb, it's engine on.

NICK
See you in...
(checks his watch)
Three and half hours.

DARCY
Nick...You are... an exceptionally great
kisser. I mean it.
(raises her thumb as in,
'thumbs up')

NICK
I haven't had this much fun making out
since...I've never had this much fun
making out.

DARCY
Me either. What do you say, we don't let
this get weird at work, okay? There's no
reason for either of us to be
embarrassed. We made out. It was...

NICK
-- Sexy as hell...

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

There you go...that's what I was gonna say.

NICK

But I think I actually said it first. I think.

DARCY

(takes his hand)
You did. All right then. Good night...

DARCY (V.O.)

(not letting go of his hand)
Just say it. Say 'Do you want to come back to my place'...Say it!!! Say it!

NICK

(ignoring what he heard, let's go of her hand)
'Night, Darcy...

Darcy ducks into the Cab and Nick shuts the door for her. As the cab pulls away, Nick instinctively reaches for his heart.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - LATER

Nick, his hands in his coat pockets, his collar turned up, crosses Lake Shore Drive and approaches the door to his building when he HEARS:

LOLA'S VOICE

There he is! Okay, be cool. Just breathe.

Nick turns around and SEES Lola standing in the shadows, pacing, looking wired and weird.

NICK

(stunned to see her)
Lola?

LOLA

I know why I haven't heard from you.

NICK

How long have you been here?

LOLA

Just a few hours. Nick, you said you wouldn't hurt me then you slept with me and then didn't call for six days. That in the world of 'me' is hurtful.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOLA (cont'd)

I mean we have this life altering
unbelievable sex and then you disappear.
I mean, you even stopped drinking coffee.

NICK

I'm so sorry.

LOLA

Well, it's okay... because I finally
figured out your little 'secret'.

NICK

You did?

LOLA

It's so obvious when you think about it.
How else would you know the things you
know.

NICK

It hasn't been so obvious to anybody
else.

LOLA

Come on... You're so tuned in, so
sensitive. So aware of my feelings. You
talk to me like a woman. You think like a
woman. Nick, come on, admit it, you're
totally and completely gay.

NICK

I am?

LOLA

Aren't you?

(Nick pauses)

I mean, if you're not, tell me 'cause
based on the other night... Oh, God, Just
put me out of my misery, are you or
aren't you?

LOLA (V.O)

Say you're gay, then I'm not nuts, not
undesirable, not rejected by another
guy... Say it! Say you're gay! Admit
it!!!!

NICK

Okay! I'm gay!

LOLA

(giving it another chance)
How gay?

NICK
I'm as gay as it gets.

He smiles with a little twinkle in his eye.

LOLA
(starts to cry)
Well, you're gonna make some guy very
happy.

NICK
From your lips....

LOLA
(hugs Nick, still crying)
I'm sorry. I hate that I'm crying...But
lookit, if things ever change in that
department...

NICK
You'll be the first to know.

LOLA
Promise?

NICK
(salutes)
Girlscout's honor.

Lola throws Nick a kiss as she walks off. Nick catches the
kiss and as he watches Lola turn the corner, his expression
quickly fades.

83 INT. SLOANE, CURTIS - NICK'S OUTER OFFICE - THE FOLLOWING DAY 83

A LINE OF WOMEN has formed outside of Nick's office. Some of
the Women hold flowers and home-made baked goods. Eve,
Nick's Secretary exits Nick's office, a bit harried.

EVE
(calling)
Number twelve.

A Woman in her late thirties holds up a Bakery Number showing
she's number twelve.

EVE (cont'd)
Okay, hon, we start with you tomorrow.
(the Women GROAN)
Ladies, the man has a job to do.

(CONTINUED)

NUMBER 12

Can I just see him for two seconds? I have this little problem with my ex and..

EVE

You'll be the first in to see the Swami in the morning. Be here at 8:00 for an 8:30 appointment.

Annie EXITS NICK'S OFFICE followed by her good looking ISRAELI BOYFRIEND, HAIM, who carries a duffel bag with El Al tags and holds a guide book to Chicago.

HAIM

Very nice to meeting you. Thanks for pip talk.

NICK

(standing at his door)
Okay, you two take care of each other. And Haim, thanks for the yamulkeh, man.
(brightens when he notices Darcy)
Darcy!

Darcy waves FROM ACROSS THE BULLPEN as she gives some instructions to a Young Exec.

NICK (cont'd)

I gotta talk to you.

DARCY (V.O)

(as she crosses to him)
Uh-oh. He is weird about it.

NICK

(joining her)
This isn't about last night. It's about the Nike meeting. I've been thinking and I really, honestly believe you should make the pitch to them.

DARCY

I guilted you into this last night.

NICK

No, I just think it would be better all the way around, if you did it. Okay?

DARCY

No, this is your baby. You've got to do it.

(heads off)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DARCY (cont'd)
I've got to make a quick phone call, I'll see you there.

NICK
(calls after her)
It's not my baby...

Erin passes, picking up files off a desk. She looks particularly drab today, even for her.

ERIN (V.O.)
I predict no one will even know I'm gone until the files start to build...Could be days...Then someone will finally ask, 'where's the Geek in the sweater who carries all the files?'

Nick watches as Erin trudges along picking up more files off more desks, her voice trailing off.

INT. NICK'S OFFICE

Eve and Margo are straightening up as Nick ENTERS. He goes right to his VCR, rewinds a tape.

NICK
Anybody know what the story is with that girl, Erin?

MARGO
Miss Lonely Hearts? Who knows?

EVE
I know. She's worked here two years, tried to be a copywriter but got turned down so she got stuck in the library.

NICK
Who turned her down?

EVE
You did, Sire.

NICK
(turns to them)
Did I meet with her?

EVE
I don't think so. As I recall, you told me to blow her off.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

(winces)

Well, remind me, I want to meet with her now. She's got something.

Morgan ENTERS..

MORGAN

This is your lucky day, pal. I just saw the Nike group get off the elevator. All women. Your speciality.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Nick and Morgan walk toward the Conference Room. Nick carries a videotape.

NICK

I hate what I'm doing to Darcy. I'm going to write her a letter, confess everything.

MORGAN

You're doing Darcy? Since when?

NICK

I said I hate what I'm doing to Darcy. Men are stupider, it's true.

MORGAN

Will you stop it.

NICK

They are.

MORGAN

What do you mean, "they"? Are you officially a woman now?

NICK

I wish. A woman wouldn't've screwed over the woman she loved. They don't think that way. By the way, you know that whole thing about penis envy. Not true. They don't envy it, most of them don't even like it. You know who has penis envy? We do. That's why we lie and cheat and screw up, we're obsessed with our penises.

The arrive at the CONFERENCE ROOM. Darcy sticks her head out of the Conference Room doors.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

Ready?

FULL SCREEN - VIDEO - MUSIC OVER

A YOUNG COUPLE going to the PROM. A nervous night for the Young Girl.

In the RAIN, at night, A COUPLE FIGHTS under an umbrella.

NICK (O.S.)

Playing by the rules has never been easy.

In the RAIN, during the day, A TEENAGE GIRL KICKS A SOCCER BALL. Hard. The Mud FLIES at the CAMERA AND FREEZES.

NICK (O.S.)

But remember, rules are meant to be broken.

A YOUNG WOMAN RIDES A MOUNTAIN BIKE over bumps and curves. Over this, an article from *Cosmo* appears.

NICK (O.S.)

Cosmopolitan tells you: "Ten Ways to Act Confident Until You Are!"

An ALL FEMALE Pick Up BASKETBALL GAME in a city playground, a Seventeen Year Old SLAM DUNKS and hangs on the hoop. Over, an article from *Vogue*.

NICK (cont'd)

Vogue advises: "Sex With a New Man -- What You Should and Shouldn't Do."

ANGLE - DARCY

mouthng the words along with Nick. Dan beams, sitting right next to her.

BACK TO THE SCREEN

A Woman BREAKS THE TAPE at a FINISH LINE of A MARATHON. She's drenched in sweat and high on adrenaline. Over, a copy of "The Rules".

NICK (cont'd)

The Rules insist: "Never talk to a man first and never ask a man to dance."

Nick stands IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN as the MUSIC CONTINUES.

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)

These are the rules women are asked to follow. These are the games women are asked to play. Our tag line: "No games. Just sports. Nike."

CLOSE - DARCY

she looks at Nick and mouths, "Great!!!"

CAMERA PANS THE THREE WOMEN FROM NIKE

as Nick reads their thoughts. "They Nailed it!" "Home run!" "Where do we sign?" Over this, the SOUND of a BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE POPPING OPEN.

INT. SLOANE, CURTIS - NIGHT

Darcy holds a bottle of Cristal and two champagne flutes. She's bubbling more than the wine. She carries the champagne into:

NICK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nick is typing a letter to Darcy when she enters. He quickly turns off his computer. Sinatra sings "I've Got You Under My Skin" in the b.g. Darcy crosses to Nick, singing along.

DARCY

(singing)

*I tried so hard not to give in...I said
to myself this affair never will go so
well... But why should I try to resist
when baby I know so well... I've got you
under my skin...*

Darcy tries pulling Nick out of his chair but he's not in a playful mood.

DARCY

Why are you not the happiest man in Chicago? You did so great.

NICK

No, no, I didn't do so great. We did so great. You did so great.

DARCY

Okay, you, me... we did great. Will you come with me somewhere? I want to show you something.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

I really need to finish this letter....

DARCY

Please?

(he doesn't budge)

Please.

EXT. TREE LINED STREET - NIGHT

A beautiful quiet street tucked away in the heart of the city. Darcy steps out of a CAB, looking up at a townhouse before her. Nick pays the Driver then joins her.

NICK

Wow. Incredible street.

DARCY

(looking up)

See the top floor of windows up there?

(shows him the key, smiling)

They're all mine.

INT. DARCY'S NEW APARTMENT - NIGHT - WIDE

The apartment is EMPTY, bare floors, high ceilings, lit by the light of the moon. The DOOR swings OPEN to REVEAL Darcy and Nick SILHOUETTED in the open doorway, kissing.

CLOSE - ON THE TWO OF THEM

DARCY

This is it...My Queendom...

Darcy leads Nick INSIDE where ladders and paint cans are scattered about.

NICK

When do you move in?

DARCY

They say about two more weeks. This is the Living Room. Dining Room's through there...real fireplace...

NICK

(walking through the spacious empty rooms)

I see elegant parties in here, waiters serving caviar....You in a beautiful gown...

(CONTINUED)

DARCY
You see all that?

NICK
Okay, maybe you're naked and I'm the only
guest but...

Darcy laughs, yanks him down the hall.

DARCY
That's the second bedroom, future office
or...whatever...Guest bathroom in
there...and this is my bedroom.

They stand in the doorway of a beautifully symmetrical room
with tall French Doors leading to a Juliet Balcony.

NICK
Your bedroom comes with great music.

DARCY
Where is that coming from?

Darcy opens the French Doors and SOFT MUSIC wafts into the
room from somewhere below.

NICK
Where's the bed going?

DARCY
(walks to the center)
Right about here.

NICK
(joins her)
So, if you had a bed...
(takes her in his arms and
dances with her)
We'd be dancing on it.

Darcy laughs as Nick gently twirls her around him. She falls
into his arms, leaning her head on his shoulder.

DARCY (V.O.)
(whispers, even to herself)
I love you...

CLOSE - NICK

as he hears this and shuts his eyes.

INT. DAN WANAMAKER'S OFFICE - THE NEXT MORNING

Dan sits behind his desk, just hanging up from a call and eating a yogurt. Nick rushes in.

NICK

I gotta talk to you.

DAN

Good. I've got to talk to you, too. That was Nike. They're going to tell the trades we won the account. They want to interview you. I gotta hand it to you, man. You saved my ass.

NICK

Actually I had very little to do with saving your ass. Darcy's the one you should thank. That's what I want to talk to you about.

DAN

Darcy? Please. I was there yesterday. The girl didn't open her mouth. Look, I'm a big enough man to admit when I screw up. I looked at the marketplace and I panicked. Nick, I want you to take over. Be Creative Director. Name your salary.

NICK

Dan, you already have the best Creative Director in the business.

DAN

You don't want the job?

NICK

No. I don't. All I did yesterday was make the pitch. Every idea they loved was Darcy's. Your instinct to hire her was brilliant. She's gonna make this place number one again. Anyway, I've been doing some thinking and I want to take a leave of absence. I need a little time away from here.

DAN

(rises)

What are you, nuts? We just the got the biggest account this company's ever had and you want me to have no one running the shop?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

What are you talking about? You have Darcy.

DAN

You're not listening. I let Darcy go.

NICK

You what?

DAN

I met with her this morning. Told her things just didn't work out the way I thought. She didn't entirely disagree.

NICK

Aw, man, this is... You fired her?!?

INT. CORRIDOR

Nick sprints down the corridor and right INTO DARCY'S OFFICE. She's not there.

BACK INTO DAN'S OFFICE.

Nick leans over Dan's desk.

NICK

Hire her back.
(handing him the phone)
Call her and tell you made a mistake.

DAN

(hanging up)
Okay...Calm down. I didn't think we needed her...Okay? Regardless of who came up with what, Nike wants you. Alright? You're the one they bought, you're the one I have to deliver. That's all I care about. Now you want Darcy back. Fine, Whatever it takes.
(Nick doesn't budge)
I'll hire her back, Nick.

NICK

(leaving)
And give her a raise, you underpaid her to begin with.

NICK

now headed BACK TOWARD HIS OFFICE, passes Annie.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Annie, get me Darcy's home address and phone number. Right away.

ANNIE

(taking off)

Sure.

A Kid from the Mail Room drops a stack of files on top of Erin's desk.

MAIL ROOM KID

Where's that girl in the sweater who carries the files?

Nick stops in his tracks, looks at Erin's desk. It's piled high with files, obscuring her little chair.

PASSING SECRETARY

I don't think she's in today.

NICK

Did she call in sick?

A NEARBY SECRETARY

I don't think so. She just didn't show up.

NICK

Oh, shit. Where does she live? Anybody know where Erin lives?

A MALE SECRETARY

Who's Erin?

EXT. STREET - CHICAGO - DAY

Nick EXITS the Building holding a scrap of paper with an address. It's WINDY and RAINING.

NICK

(yells)

Taxi!

A Taxi splashes right past him, soaking him with water. Nick keeps walking, turning up his collar against the rain when his CELL PHONE RINGS. Nick takes his phone out of his pocket, walking backwards, trying to hail a cab.

NICK

(into phone)

Yeah. Did you find Darcy?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)

Well, keep trying her and when you get her, tell her to stay put, I'm coming over, I just have to make a stop on my way...Taxi!

A Cab pulls up to the curb.

CHINATOWN - MOMENTS LATER

Thunder rumbles across the sky. Nick walks down a busy street, the wind howling around him. Street vendors cover their wares from the rain as Pedestrians rush by under flapping umbrellas. Nick looks up at a street sign, written in Chinese and English. He scoots around an Old Chinese Woman, calmly standing under a colorful umbrella. Nick hears her thought in Chinese.

With his shoulders hunched against the thick rain, Nick heads down a narrow dark street filled with fire escapes. He turns back to look at the Old Woman and as their eyes meet, LIGHTNING STRIKES the sky above him. Nick stumbles, almost falling into a Man passing on a rickety bike. Nick turns back again and The Old Woman is gone. A white CAT springs off a nearby fire escape and scurries past Nick catching him off guard. Thunder rumbles over the buildings as Nick holds his head, a pain shooting across his temples.

CLOSE - A DOOR WITH THE LETTER "C" ON IT

Nick knocks. He's sopping wet from the rain.

NICK

C'mon, Erin...be there...

Nick KNOCKS again when he feels SOMETHING on his leg. He looks down and leaps when he sees the Cat from the alley is rubbing against his shin.

NICK (cont'd)

(grabs his heart)

Oh, shit...

The Cat pushes on the door and it CREAKS OPENS. Nick hesitates then ENTERS:

ERIN'S APARTMENT

surprisingly not drab at all. It's extremely creative in its decor. The Living Room looks fairly neat and undisturbed. A tiny colorful kitchen can be seen through a pass way. No signs of any foul play.

NICK

Erin?

(CONTINUED)

The Cat moves into ANOTHER ROOM where the DOOR IS AJAR. Nick, his wet shoes squeaking, follows the Cat through the open door and into:

ERIN'S BEDROOM

a mattress on the floor, Chinese streamers. Lots of books. The bed is unmade. A bottle of pills is open and on its side on the dresser. A half written letter lies on the bed.

Afraid he's too late, Nick quickly bends down to pick up the note when Erin EXITS the bathroom in a short kimono. She SCREAMS. Nick turns, sees her and SCREAMS, falling onto the bed.

ERIN

(grabbing her robe around her)
Mr. Marshall? My God! You're in my
bedroom!?!

NICK

(rises, realizes it's a water
bed, has trouble getting up)
Yes I am. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to
scare you.

ERIN

(shocked)
W-What are you doing here?

NICK

(finally rising)
I came to see how you are. You weren't
at work today. How are you?

ERIN

I have cramps but I think I'm gonna make
it.

NICK

Just cramps? Oh, that's good. So you're
fine. I mean, you're... alive and well?

ERIN

So far. Mr. Marshall, this is so weird.
You really came all the way down here
just to see how I am?

NICK

Well, no, that's not entirely why...
(she waits for the truth)
Erin, do you remember when you wanted to
be a copywriter?

(CONTINUED)

ERIN
You mean like last year?

NICK
Uh-huh.

ERIN
Yeah...I sent you a letter. I asked to meet with you but you were unavailable, and then out of town, I think...

NICK
(takes a seat)
Exactly. Well now I'm available and in town so I'm here to take the meeting.
(Erin can't believe it.)
Have a seat.

Erin pulls up a stool, sits on it, bewildered. Nick pauses.

NICK (cont'd)
(feeling a little lost)
You know you could help me out here if you would just think about what it was you were going to ask me in that meeting last year.

ERIN
You want me to "think" about what I was going to ask you last year? Okay...

Nick HEARS NOTHING but the TICKING of Erin's ALARM CLOCK and the RAIN PELTING against the window.

NICK
You thinking anything?

ERIN
I'm thinking a million things.

NICK
Can you sit a little closer?

Erin pulls her stool a little closer. Nick, suddenly, hard of hearing, leans forward.

NICK (cont'd)
Still thinking?

ERIN
If you knew what I was thinking you'd laugh.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
I usually do.

ERIN
Mr. Marshall, I think you're crazier than I am.

NICK
Well, that should make you feel better. Doesn't it?

ERIN
Only slightly.

NICK
(bangs on his head like he has swimmer's ear)
It's gone...It went away...
(looks at Erin, realizes)
I'm on my own here....

ERIN
Mr. Marshall, is there something I can maybe do for you...

NICK
No, Erin, I'm here to do something for you. The truth is...The truth is... The truth is, I'm glad I got here before you did anything to hurt yourself...

ERIN
What makes you think I'd ever... hurt myself?

NICK
I just sensed it.

ERIN
(her eyes welling up)
Really?

NICK
(nods)
And I wouldn't want you to do anything like that.

ERIN
(trying not to cry)
Why? Why would you care?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Because you're a funny, smart woman and talented...I mean look at this place, it's wonderful...and because of me you got stuck in the office library and now you're in a rut and it's gotten you down and...

ERIN

(wiping away a tear)

Believe me, being stuck in the office library is not the root of my problems.

NICK

Okay. But, how's this..? It is something we can fix.

Nick offers her a willing smile. Erin tries out a smile of her own.

EXT. STREET - CHINATOWN - HIGH SHOT - LATER

Nick exits the front stairs of the building, quickly getting lost among the umbrellas filling the street.

EXT. ROW HOUSE - LINCOLN PARK - LATER

It's still pouring. Wet to the bone, Nick knocks at the door of a semi-detached house. No one answers. He knocks again. Still no answer. He takes out his CELL PHONE and dials a number.

CLOSE - A PHONE RINGING - INSIDE THE HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

We are in DARCY'S BEDROOM, the phone on her night stand rings and rings. Her machine picks up. CAMERA DRIFTS into THE BATHROOM as we LISTEN to Darcy's phone message and SEE Darcy TAKING A BATH, looking wiped out and exhausted. As she hears Nick's VOICE on her machine, she SLIPS under the water.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - SAME TIME

NICK

(into phone)

-- So call me when you can. 664-1226, I really need to talk to you....

(waits before hanging up)

Just making sure you're not there. You're not, right? Okay...Call me.

He snaps his phone shut, waits for a beat then turns away.

DISSOLVE TO:

A NEON MARTINI GLASS

CAMERA PANS DOWN the NEON MARTINI GLASS to find Nick EXITING A DOWNTOWN BAR - HOURS LATER. It's evening now and the rain has finally let up. Nick smokes his last cigarette, tossing the empty pack as he exits. His cell phone RINGS.

NICK
(opens it)
Darcy? Oh, Emily. Emily?!? You're not
back are you?

INTERCUT NICK WITH EMILY IN A HOTEL ROOM IN THE CARIBBEAN

EMILY
No, not 'til tomorrow but what's going
on, Alex called me three times from a pay
phone, really upset, then we got
disconnected. What's the matter, isn't
she at the Prom?

Nick shuts his eyes, completely stung by this. The Prom???

EXT. THE DRAKE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Limos line the entire block.

INT. THE DRAKE BALLROOM - THE SAME TIME

The Prom is in full swing. Nick RUSHES IN, looking a little disheveled. Some of the Girls back off when they see him.

NICK
You know where Alex Marshall is? Little
tenth grader? Brown hair.

GIRL
I think I saw her in the Ladies Room ...

THE LADIES ROOM DOOR

With the word "Mademoiselles" painted on it. Nick is about to knock on the door when Three Girls EXIT in prom dresses.

INT. LADIES ROOM

An ancient-looking Black Ladies Room Attendant sits at a table with hair products and hand towels. Otherwise the place looks empty. Nick sticks his head in.

NICK
Alex? You in here?

(CONTINUED)

The Attendant points to a closed stall. Nick ENTERS, hears some crying.

NICK (cont'd)
Alex, it's me.

ALEX (O.S.)
What are you doing here?!

NICK
I can't believe I screwed up and wasn't home when you left for the prom.

ALEX (O.S.)
Yeah, well that's not why I'm in here. so you can just go, okay?

NICK
I know that's not why you're in there, but I just wanted you to know how awful I feel that I messed up like this. I wish I could see how you look.

ALEX (O.S.)
I look like crap. I already took my hair out and everything...

Nick hears her sobbing and goes into the stall next to hers and gathers up some toilet paper and passes it under the stall. Alex' hand takes it.

ATTENDANT
(whispers)
Would she like a towel or a breath mint?

ALEX (O.S.)
(sobbing)
No, thank you.

ATTENDANT
I understand.

ALEX (O.S.)
(through her sobbing)
Look, I've got like really serious issues to deal with here and if I told you what they were you'd like freak out so....
(more sobbing)

NICK
Try me. What do you have to lose?

All we hear is sobbing then:

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (O.S.)
(through her tears)
Is there anyone else in the bathroom?

ATTENDANT
(tip toeing out)
Tell you what? I'll guard the door
outside.

NICK
(nods to her)
Okay. It's just us now.

Nick takes a seat in the adjacent stall.

ANGLE - ALEX

sitting on the toilet, crumpled toilet paper all over her
lap. Her eye make-up has smeared, her lipstick is worn off.
Her face is flooded with tears.

ALEX
Okay, Cameron and his friends had this
big plan. They rented a hotel room, it
was like a suite and basically I promised
him I was gonna..
(crying harder now)
I can't believe I'm saying this to you, I
promised him I was gonna...
(she can hardly get it out)
sleep with him after the prom and like an
hour ago, we were on the dance floor and
I told him I wasn't sure if I was really
ready...

NICK
Good.

ALEX
Dad!

NICK
Sorry...

ALEX
And he was like...
(imitates a guy's voice while
still sobbing)
'the limo, the room and my tux cost me
four hundred bucks' and I said, 'I'm
sorry but I'm just not...' and he cuts me
off and he goes, 'I shouldda never asked
a stupid sophomore to the prom.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX (cont'd)

What a waste.' And then he walked away from me and left me standing there in the middle of the dance floor and like two seconds later he started making out with his old girlfriend, this slut with a tongue ring, she's so disgusting and they were laughing and everything and now I just can't go out there...ever...

NICK (O.S.)

I'm so proud of you.

Alex looks up and sees Nick ABOVE HER, looking down at her over the wall of the stall.

ALEX

(hides her face)

Da-ad!

NICK (cont'd)

(ducking back down, sits again)

Sorry. But I am. You handled yourself so brilliantly. Believe it or not, I know what it's like to be a woman and it's not easy as it looks. You spoke your mind. Be proud of yourself. Do you know how ahead of the game you are? Anyway, any guy who treats you like that and says those kind of things isn't...

ALEX

(still crying)

-- even worth my time, I know.

NICK

Well it's the truth. He isn't.

ALEX

He's a total game player and I hate that.

NICK

You're so much smarter than me.

Nick looks up and Alex stands before him.

NICK (cont'd)

And look at you, you look so beautiful. That guy made out with a girl with a tongue ring over you. You look like Audrey Hepburn.

ALEX

Who?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
I mean Jennifer Love Hewitt.

ALEX
Yeah, right. Take me home, Dad.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE PHOTO OF THE STRIPPERS

above Nick's bed. However, there are now BAND-AIDS across all the Women's breasts. PAN DOWN TO Alex asleep in Nick's bed. Nick tucks her in and turns out the light.

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN

Nick ENTERS, doesn't know what to do with himself. He opens his fridge, looks around, opens the veggie drawers, shuts them.

NICK
What am I doing? She's not in the refrigerator.

He looks at the CLOCK as it strikes MIDNIGHT.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Nick slips on his jacket.

NICK (cont'd)
It's not too late to go over there...It's never too late to do the right thing... I'm just gonna go over there and lay it all out. The whole awful truth...

INT. BEDROOM

Nick carefully places a large note on the floor next to where Alex is sleeping telling her where he is.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Nick rides down the elevator, psyching himself up for seeing Darcy.

NICK
Women like men who go after 'em...They want men to go after 'em. Okay...I'm goin' after her.

EXT. DARCY'S FRONT DOOR - A HALF HOUR LATER

Nick knocks and there's still no answer. He backs up from the house and yells her name.

NICK
(yells)
I'm not leaving 'til you open the door.
I'm here for the night so you might as
well let me in.

Darcy's NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR opens her front door, wearing sweats and a t-shirt and holding a book.

NEIGHBOR
I hate to tell you this but she left
about two hours ago.

NICK
Do you know where she went?

The Neighbor shakes her head.

NICK (cont'd)
Never mind, I know where she is.
(rushes down the stairs)
I know where the woman is!

EXT. TREE LINED STREET - 1 A.M.

A Cab pulls to a stop and Nick rushes out. He looks up to Darcy's new apartment, takes a deep breath.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - SAME TIME

The Living Room is completely empty. The BUZZER RINGS and echoes through the room. It buzzes again. After a beat, Darcy ENTERS, wearing her pajamas, socks, and a pair of glasses and crosses to the intercom.

DARCY
(into intercom)
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH NICK OUTSIDE

NICK
Hi. It's me.

He doesn't hear anything.

NICK (cont'd)
Can I come up?

CLOSE - DARCY

not saying anything, but definitely curious.

NICK

at the buzzer

NICK

I need to --

A QUICK BUZZ. He lunges for the door and gets to it in time.

INT. UPPER STAIRCASE

Nick runs up the stairs two at a time to find Darcy standing in her doorway in her pjs. Nick stops, suddenly nervous at the sight of her.

DARCY

How'd you know I'd be here?

NICK

Lucky guess.

Darcy nods and shows Nick into THE EMPTY APARTMENT.

NICK

So you...sleep here?

DARCY

I thought I'd see what it was like before I had to sell the place. Pathetic, huh?

NICK

You're selling it?

DARCY

Don't have a job, Nick. Can't afford to keep it.

NICK

You should try returning some of your phone calls.

(she looks up)

You got your job back. And with a raise.

DARCY

(laughs)

Did I? You're a real riot.

NICK

It's true. Dan told me so himself.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

Why would he tell you that? I didn't do what he hired me to do, I don't blame him for letting me go. Sorry I don't have any chairs...I'm gonna go lean on this wall...

She walks away, her back to Nick.

NICK

What if I told you you did everything you were hired to do but someone was sabotaging you, picking your brain and taking your ideas and you didn't even know it.

DARCY

(turns)

What if you told me or are you telling me?

NICK

I'm telling you.

DARCY

Who would do such an awful thing?

NICK

I did...

DARCY

(not believing him)

You?

NICK

The day I met you...or the night of the day I met you...I had an accident...and I think I was electrocuted and when I woke up the next morning, something very strange and mysterious happened. I could suddenly hear the thoughts of every woman I came in contact with. I could actually hear what all women were thinking, all the time... even you.

DARCY

Nick, I've had a really rough day. I don't know what you're doing but I think you gotta go.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

(not budging)

See, I was really looking forward to my promotion then you arrived with my job and there I was with this ability to read your mind. It was all too tempting...

(she looks at him doubtfully,
shakes her head)

I knew when you had butterflies in your stomach, thought your first day of work was like the first day of school...

(Darcy gets a sudden chill)

I knew when you thought I had something up my sleeve and when you thought I looked up your skirt...

(Darcy backs up)

I knew when you thought the U.S. Air storyboards were too parochial, that's why I said it... to get you off your game... It was me who stole your Visa idea... I was in the elevator when you came up with it... And the Nike pitch... the whole premise, was all you. All I did was repeat your own great ideas right back to you. I heard everything you thought Darcy and... you dazzled me. And then, when I wanted to stop, it was too late. The damage was done. So when I heard you say you loved me when we were dancing in your bedroom...

DARCY

(unable to catch her breath)

Please stop...

NICK

I was too ashamed to tell you that I loved you more...

DARCY

(catches her breath, then
motions him to come closer)

Oh jeez... Come here...

Nick leans in for a kiss and Darcy hits him with a right cross, knocking him DOWN and RIGHT OUT OF FRAME.

NICK - ON THE FLOOR

holding his jaw.

NICK

Ouch.

(CONTINUED)

DARCY

If you're such a mind reader, you should've seen it coming.

NICK

Today, in the rain, something happened and it just stopped. I'm back to being me. Except because of you, I'm not me anymore.

Darcy falls to her knees next to Nick. A beat, then:

DARCY

No woman has ever been told a story like this. You heard *everything* I was thinking?

NICK

(nods)
Everything.

DARCY

So you basically know everything about me.

NICK

(nods)
That's why I love you.

Darcy's eyes flood with tears.

DARCY

That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.

Darcy looks at him, looks away...

NICK

Go on....Do it... please.

DARCY

Do what?

NICK

Kiss me.

DARCY

I thought you said you couldn't hear my thoughts anymore.

NICK

I can't...

Frustrated, Darcy looks at Nick then shuts her eyes and kisses him, holding the kiss for a very long time.

DARCY

(opening her eyes)

What's not healthy is that I hate that I love you. That's not the way it's supposed to be...

NICK

It's a beginning... And what's good is... I love that I love you. So we're halfway there....

Darcy sighs very loudly then lies next to Nick on the floor. They stare up at the ceiling, trying to digest what has happened to them. Nick's eyes well up as the CAMERA RISES above them, lying motionless, spent and speechless. The CAMERA slips out the window and into the night's velvet sky.

FADE OUT:

THE END