

HELLO TOMORROW!

Written by

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EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREETS OF TOMORROW - MORNING

The birds are singing and the sun shines down on a picture-perfect space-age suburb. We're moving at a safe, sensible speed past a series of picket-fence domestic visions:

A father and son wrestle with their *REKS* RoboElectric-K9-System; a *GreenerGrass* GardenBot weeds, waters and greets marauding squirrels with its "humane but effective" tazer-arm; the paperboy pedals by with a smile, while his *Pitch-a-Paper* Pneumatic News Distributor does the grunt work. A happy family steps out to their front porch: Dad kisses Mom, who heads off to walk Baby in the *CloudCarriage* hands-free stroller; Dad fires up his *Hummingbird* Jetpack and blasts off into a sky filled with commuter blimps, high-altitude school buses and rockets. It's plain to see, modern marvels have turned everyday life into a high-tech, high-gloss dream --

We've been cruising along with a cargo-class *HoverVan*, guided from delivery to delivery by its driver-replacement radar array, and emblazoned with the logo of corporate behemoth *Amazing Personal Products* (APP). The dozen radar dishes swing forward, and the van slows to let a *KINDLY GRANDMA* cross the road in her *Perm'n'Roll* salon-chair/mobility-scooter. *SAMMY THE STORK*, APP's amiable spokescartoon, calls out from the (black & white) TV screens that make up the van's windshield and windows --

SAMMY THE STORK

Morning Friend. I'm out delivering smiles. Hope next time I'll be bringing one to you!

KINDLY GRANDMA

Such a nice bird.

Once she's safely across, Sammy resumes his route, eventually pulling into the driveway of a modest ranch house --

Inside the house, *MARIE*, 50, a tired but dauntless single mother, presses buttons, and gives a whack to her glitchy *Sud'n'Scrub* sink system full of crusted pots. She hears Sammy's jingle and spots the *HoverVan* in her driveway. She takes off her apron and heads outside --

Marie signs for her package and takes a cardboard box from the van's robotic arm. As the van's backing out, a neighborhood cat darts behind it. The radar dishes whip around. The van avoids the cat but plows forward, crushing Marie into her garage door. As the van pulls away, Sammy does what he always does: winks and delivers the cheery mantra of the APP empire --

SAMMY THE STORK

You're up to date,
You're right in style,
So all you have to do is smile!

MAIN TITLE: HELLO TOMORROW!

EXT. ROADSIDE HOTEL - NIGHT

In the dark sky above an all-American, just-off-the-interstate hotel, a full moon is on the rise. A rocket ship after-burner arcs up toward that dreamy hunk of glowing rock, which seems bigger, brighter, more alluring than ever --

INT. NAT'S BAR AND GRILL - ROADSIDE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON - the weary face of a 65 year-old man, call him SAL, forgotten by the world, ignoring his soup, drowning in despair and light beer. He thunks his empty glass down on the formica counter --

SAL

Hit me again, Nat.

NAT hovers over in her gleaming aluminum glory, extends a pincer-arm (standard on the *Hostess-Pro 3*), and loads Sal's glass into her chest cavity where it's washed, dried, and refilled. She plays a prerecorded snippet of sassy banter --

NAT

Hey there Fella, my eyes are up here!

(slides over the beer)

Bottoms up!

Sal cringes, he's heard that line six times tonight. As he gulps down half his pint, JACK BILLINGS slides onto the next stool over. Jack's spry at 60, sharp-dressed but never showy, handsome enough to charm but plain enough to trust --

JACK

How's the soup, Boss?

SAL

Prob'ly cold.

JACK

'Least those oyster crackers are still ship-shape.

Sal grunts grudging acknowledgement. After a beat --

JACK (CONT'D)

So's the wife dying?

SAL

What?

JACK

Or passed away already? -- that's what you're drinking at?

SAL

Just after some peace and quiet.

JACK

Good news about the wife. Family's
a man's top treasure.

(a beat)

House didn't burn down, did it?

SAL

Look Mister, I got problems enough
without you sitting there making
more up for me.

JACK

Wait, wait, it just hit me...
you're a good man, who's worked
hard to give his family the life
they deserve, which adds up to
you're drowning in debt and all the
latest-greatest useless junk, and
your ulcer...

(studies Sal)

... hemorrhoids...

(studies Sal again)

... 'course not, heart burn, like
you guzzled jet fuel and a lit
cigar, makes every night a torture.
But who needs sleep, when they gave
your job of thirty years to some
floating tin can and your dignity
along with it, right? So it's no
surprise and no shame 'you're day-
dreaming the getaway of a lifetime,
straight down, off the nearest
bridge.

(a beat)

But the fact you haven't slugged me
yet, means you've got enough hope
left to hear the one word that's
gonna save your life.

SAL

You get hit a lot?

JACK

Every time I'm wrong. But it's
been a while.

Sal's features betray some tentative hope that Jack might be
the person to finally understand his pain --

SAL

You left out I got a daughter
'won't pick up when I call. What's
the one word that fixes that?

JACK

First, let me show you something...

Jack lays a curious bluish-grey pebble on the counter --

JACK (CONT'D)

From the Sea of Serenity, two-hundred-forty-three thousand miles above us, on the bright side of the moon. My son picked it out for me, my prized possession.

Sal picks up the rock, it's heavier than he'd imagined --

SAL

Wow.

JACK

There you go. 'Said it yourself.

SAL

What?

JACK

"Wow," the one word. The word none of us can live without. And I'll promise you this -- hand on heart and hundreds of happy folks to vouch -- the first time you and your family watch the Earth rise up into the night sky on your lunar balcony, you're gonna say: "For such a shitty place to live, wow, it sure is swell to look at."

Jack slides over a glossy brochure for "The BrightSide Lunar Residence Club." Sal takes in the images of happy families in a space-age housing development on the moon --

SAL

Yeah, one more thing I can't afford.

JACK

Where'd you see a price-tag?

SAL

I'm not that stupid.

JACK

No, you're just so beat down, if you like something you think it's outta reach.

Sal's downed the dregs of his beer --

JACK (CONT'D)

But just imagine you skipped the next round, maybe pull up one short tomorrow too. 'Month of that you'd have the first payment on your family's C-plex right there. Plus a thank you note from your liver.

Jack's pointed out a luxe domed unit with a yard and pool --

SAL

Figured they'd never let regular folks like us up there.

JACK

Why should the rich and famous get our moon all to themselves? The BrightSide's a place for real people to start fresh, unwind, retire -- not to mention own an asset the kids'll thank you for. Here I'll get you started off easy.

(to Nat, re Sal's empty)

One more on me Sweetheart.

SAL

You don't gotta do that.

Jack puts his hand on Sal's shoulder --

JACK

You gotta stop saying "no" and start saying "thank you."

SAL

Okay, thanks.

(studying the C-Plex)

Really, this one here with the pool?

JACK

Same model I'm in. Big enough you can invite the mother-in-law and not see her for days.

SAL

(a rueful laugh)

'Kinda place Marlene and me thought we'd be working up to. Y'know, a while ago...

(re brochure)

Maybe I could take this home? -- give it a think?

JACK

The pros and cons.

SAL

Exactly.

JACK

You know, pros and cons do fine for picking out a toothbrush, but they never worked anybody any miracles. You think George Washington and his pals were doing pros and cons? -- or Babe Ruth at the plate?

SAL

(laughs)
Guess not.

JACK

You know who does pros and cons all day?

(points at Nat)

Hunks of metal like her. Which is why she'll never fall in love or drive too fast or have kids or any of the crazy things that make life worth the price. And it's why she's stuck here in the same day everyday, while fools like you and me get to dream on a better tomorrow.

(a beat)

You're smiling you know that?

SAL

Christ. This is nuts.

JACK

'How it feels to be back among the living. This time, don't let it slip away.

Jack pulls out a sales agreement and starts filling it in --

SAL

What's that?

JACK

Just what we said. Zero down, one-fifty a month, and it's yours for a scribble. You wake up tomorrow and don't like it, we rip it right up.

(hands Sal his pen)

But there is a catch -- you gotta promise me you'll call your daughter. Tell her life's too short, you're sorry, and you love her. And her room's ready when she wants to fly up and spend some time.

Sal puts pen to page, gives his hand a moment to stop shaking. He signs. Then breathes deep and looks around, as if seeing the world anew --

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm happy for you, Sal. You made yourself a great deal.

SAL
Thank you. Thanks Mister.

JACK
Jack. Jack Billings.

They shake. Nat's back with Sal's beer. He eyes it a moment, then thinks better and turns to Jack --

SAL
Thank you Jack. Now I guess I got somewhere I gotta be.

Leaving the full beer behind, Sal crosses the lobby and steps into a *Viddicom* booth. Jack lays some cash on the counter --

JACK
I'll take his whole tab Hon'.

NAT
Big tippers make good lovers.

Jack leaves an extra couple bucks, takes the beer and walks off. Passing the lobby's *Viddicom* booth, he sees Sal, teary-eyed, facing his daughter for the first time in years. Sal offers a covert but proud thumbs up, which Jack returns --

INT. BANQUET HALL - ROADSIDE HOTEL - NIGHT

The room shows the residue of today's BrightSide sales conference: banners hang from the ceiling; *CleanzAll* Bots sweep up brochures and neaten chairs for tomorrow; a cardboard cut-out shows Buck Manzell (TV's *Space Sheriff* from years back) waving to customers from his lunar balcony --

Gathered around a table are the members of Jack's sales-team: HERB Porter (30s, fresh-faced and by the book), EDDIE Sharples (40s, dressed to the nines, cynical and slick) and SHIRLEY Stedman (40s, suffers no fools). A *BookWiz* adding machine spits out ticker-tape as Shirley inputs the day's sales. Eddie paces, Herb is anxiously upbeat --

HERB
'Lot of bright futures got started today.

EDDIE
Don't talk, she's counting. How we doing Shirl?

SHIRLEY

Good. Don't talk, I'm counting.

EDDIE

"Good" like here's your noose, have a good hanging? Cause we all know good's not even good anymore thanks to our new nut-crunching quotas.

HERB

We still got tomorrow Eddie, that's twenty-four reasons to keep believing in ourselves.

EDDIE

Touching last words to remember when we're mercilessly shit-canned.

Jack's joined them. He places the beer in front of Shirley and puts Sal's purchase order on top of the pile --

JACK

There's a cold one Shirl. And another C-Plex.

HERB

Nice work, Jack.

EDDIE

Nice compliment to the Boss, Herb.

HERB

I'd be happy for you if you did something good too.

EDDIE

Did you ever have trouble making friends as a child and an adult?

Jack puts an end to the head-butting --

JACK

Easy fellas.

SHIRLEY

Today was solid. 'Whole week here's been solid.

Shirley rips off her ticker-tape for Jack to have a look --

JACK

Amen. This is prime turf. I know Stan Jenkins sent you down some tough new sales goals, but hey, sometimes a little pressure gets you a diamond.

SHIRLEY

Just iron the knots out of your
panties and do it again tomorrow,
you'll hit those numbers.

JACK

And my pocket's full of
appreciation and motivation.
(handing Eddie cash)
To today's top-seller and biggest
whiner, Mister Eddie Sharples.

EDDIE

Thanks Boss. Sorry I got a little
heated.

JACK

(...and some for Herb)
And the Can-Do Kid here, moved the
day's only A-Plex.

HERB

Thanks Mister Billings. Sorry I
couldn't keep Eddie more positive.

During which a *BellBot* has hovered over, holding a message --

BELLBOT

Mister Jack Billings please.
Mister Jack Billings please.

Jack takes the note and reads to himself, while the team
watches his face for telltale reactions --

HERB

'The moon, I bet. Gosh, saying
that never gets old.

SHIRLEY

Calm down, Kid. It's just orders
from the boss.

HERB

(still thrilled)
On the moon!

JACK

Looks like Stan wants us pushing
through to Vistaville for morning.
Have to ask you get your beauty
rest on the road.

SHIRLEY

There's still a week's worth of
doorbells to ring here.

JACK

(levelheaded)

Life at a pioneering young company:
soon as you get rolling, they start
reinventing the wheel.

HERB

Maybe it'll be even better in
Vistaville.

EDDIE

'Sure -- if despair counted as
money. Well, it's been nice
working with some of you.

JACK

You're a good salesman, Eddie, but
that attitude's exactly what's
holding you back from being great.
There's a grown man in the lobby
right now, weeping like a baby,
remembering what hope feels like,
thanks to us. That makes me pretty
proud of what we do, and pretty
inspired to do it for the good
folks of Vistaville too.

HERB

I'm with you Jack, all the way.

SHIRLEY

Won't be our first time selling
lingerie to a nun in a blizzard.

They all look to Eddie, waiting for his assent --

EDDIE

Sure, here goes greatness.

JACK

You guys are aces. Let's load up
and change some lives.

The trio heads out, but Jack lingers behind. His ever-ready
smile fades to show a looming concern as he surreptitiously
rips his telegram and feeds the scraps to a *CleanzAll* Bot --

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The full moon lights up two big-finned *HoverSedans*, gliding
in convoy down a desert road. We hear the sound of a *JetBall*
game on one of the car's radios --

PLAY-BY-PLAY GUY

Whizzes out to second. That'll end
the inning, leaving fliers stranded
in all six zones.

INT. SHIRLEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Shirley drives with her hair in blinking *TenderPerm* curlers.
Eddie's shotgun, twists the radio off --

EDDIE
Cross-eyed half-wit limp-noodle
bums!

SHIRLEY
What'd that fun time cost you?

EDDIE
A medium amount. Big picture, I'm
about even.

SHIRLEY
Does your "big picture" count your
bets and the money you make at
work?

EDDIE
Isn't that the first basic
principle of accounting? -- what
you take in versus the outflows?

SHIRLEY
Everyday I add up your commissions,
the better you do the more I worry
about you.

He caresses her cheek, it's clear their bond is more than
just professional --

EDDIE
I always figured people were either
honest or nice, but then came you.

SHIRLEY
I'd rather you just say you can
cover what you lost.

EDDIE
I can cover what I lost.
(a beat)
What? You think I'm lying?

SHIRLEY
I know you're lying.
(beat)
You ever think about moving up
there Ed, like Jack and his family?
Might be nice.

EDDIE
Not for your husband.

SHIRLEY

So everybody gets what they deserve.

EDDIE

One day Shirl, absolutely. Only you deserve nothing less than a palace. Which is actually exactly why I gamble in the first place.

SHIRLEY

Lying again. Get some sleep.

He drops his head into her lap --

EDDIE

Honest and nice. Amazing.

Off Shirley, smiling --

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAWN

Herb drives, a self-illuminating map spread across his lap. Jack's shotgun, watching out the window as they pull off the highway into Vistaville --

HERB

... I mean you love 'em, but it's like every time they see a car, or a washing machine, or a bigger house, we end up losing money, right? And it gets worse when they're expecting, like I think I mentioned Betty is. Twins. Which they say is actually two-and-a-half times the cost...

Jack's deep in his own thoughts, but Herb plunges ahead --

HERB (CONT'D)

But I keep telling her, I've been with BrightSide four months now, seventeen weeks really, and all I can do is keep delivering on all my goals and outpacing all your expectations and pretty soon I'll earn my way to Senior Sales Partner...

JACK

Stop, Herb. Stop the car.

HERB

Oh. We're here. Perfect.

Herb's stopped short, now pulls into the hotel driveway --

JACK

Leave it running, would you. I got a stop to make.

HERB

Whatever it is, I'd love to help.

JACK

You just start ringing doorbells and fill those seats for me.

Herb exits the car, as Jack comes around to take the wheel, he puts a fatherly hand on Herb's shoulder --

JACK (CONT'D)

Look Kid, don't let a couple babies spook you. Truth is: a man with a family is a man customers trust. Shows you're caring and committed and got working equipment down in the shed. Not to mention it's life's greatest joy. Next thing you know you'll be my age and wondering how things got so good.

HERB

So be patient about the promotion then. Which I can do, of course. Got it. Thanks.

Jack's driving away puts a merciful end to Herb's rambling --

INT. ETERNAL SPRINGS REST HOME - DAY

We move down a linoleum hallway: a bath-robed resident in a hovering wheelchair plays checkers against a *PlayMate* Robotic Arm, another weeps to a *TeleSoothe* CompassionBot, which replies automatically, "There, there..." --

Now we see Jack, carrying a vase of *NeverWilt* flowers. He turns into a room to find his mother BARBARA, 80, in bed. As usual, she's selling her pain to whoever will pay attention --

BARBARA

Oh Jacky! What took you so long? -- my note said I was dying.

JACK

Came quick as I could.

BARBARA

One of these days it'll be true.

JACK

And I'll be here then too. You look good.

BARBARA

(takes his hand)

I almost drank myself dead twice since yesterday. All alone in this gulag, facing the horror --

(breaking into tears)

It's just too sad, Jacky. In too many ways.

JACK

It's okay, Ma. Whatever it is we'll get through it.

BARBARA

How can we? It's Marie, Jack! Your Marie. Run down outside her own house by one of those vans with the goddamn bird.

JACK

Oh...

BARBARA

That's it? Oh?

Jack's devastated, but determined to hide it from his mother, and himself. He chokes down his feelings as best he can --

JACK

She hasn't been my Marie for eighteen years, you know.

BARBARA

And your poor baby boy -- now his mother in a coma too. How could anyone with a heart stand it?

JACK

He's twenty now. I'm sure he can take care of himself.

BARBARA

How? Who taught him? Don't you think about these things Jack?

JACK

Not really, Ma. That's the difference with you and me. I try to keep on living. And you...

(a beat)

It didn't work out with Marie. I'd say everyone's moved on but you.

BARBARA

Stop lying. I know you better than you do.

(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

(a beat)

Go see them.

JACK

I'm not going to screw things up
for them more than they already
are.

BARBARA

What a wiz you are for talking
yourself out of every hard part of
life.

JACK

I'm here, aren't I?

(a beat)

How's the new room working out?
Garden view's nice, huh?

BARBARA

You were the same with your father.

Jack hardens, she's crossed some unspoken line --

JACK

I gotta go now Ma. You know I'm
with a new outfit now. Regional
Manager. Big upside kinda place.

She glances at the brochure he's handed her --

BARBARA

I know what your father would say:
too bad you're just selling while
the idea-men make all the money.

She tries to hand back the brochure --

JACK

Keep it, I got plenty.

BARBARA

Don't leave yet Jacky. Five more
minutes.

JACK

I love you Ma.

He kisses his fingers, holds them to her forehead --

BARBARA

Go see them.

He walks out --

A SERIES OF IMAGES FROM THE BRIGHTSIDE SALES VIDEO:

The screen's awash in flames. As lush orchestration swells, a sleek passenger rocket takes-off on a column of fire into the vast promise of space --

VOICE OVER

Three, two, one, blast off! -- to a new beginning beyond the stars...

Now we're panning across the breathtaking lunar landscape. We come upon a shining complex of glass domes and tunnels, evoking the promise of a vibrant other-worldly lifestyle --

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

Welcome to the BrightSide Lunar Residence Club, the moon-based community all of us deserve.

A series of dissolves takes us through a BrightSide home: past the front door, into a plush living room where a dog sleeps by a glowing *FauxFire*, then the kitchen where chrome *GourMates* handle the cooking and washing; then the master bedroom, where the cool blue light of Earth-rise falls on silk sheets, inviting us to lay down for some quality time --

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

Our collection of fully-furnished, value-priced units, and buyer-friendly payment plans, means the luxury of lunar living can finally fit your family's budget...

A MONTAGE FOLLOWS - tying the inspirational voice-over and sound-track of the sales video to the activities of Jack and his coworkers as they prepare for the day's conference:

Shirley oversees a team of *BellBots*, hanging banners and laying rows of folding chairs. She fires up the *CassMaster* Tuna Casserole Dispenser, and adjusts the Buck Manzell cardboard cut-out --

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

...plus you'll enjoy the solar-system's most alluring leisure package: from the Deep-Crater Spa to the exotic rhythms and winning action at the DarkSide Lounge and Casino.

Herb and Eddie ring a series of doorbells and a series of doors open. The salesmen hit the good people of Vistaville with smiles and flyers promising "Free Tuna Casserole!" A caved-in garage tells us their final stop is the scene of Marie's hit and run. They hand a flyer to her son, JOEY, 20s (earnest, wholesome, with a far-off look in his eye), who looks it over and lets himself dream a little --

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

Home is where the happiness is --
not the headaches. Where you're
free and easy to be your best...

Jack's at the bathroom mirror, pushes a button on a fresh *InaCinch* necktie, which tightens itself into a crisp Windsor. He works his features into a perfectly natural-seeming salesman's smile --

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

...to live, love and laugh and
leave the stains and stresses of
yesterday's world behind.

Now we're back on the SALES VIDEO. In an idyllic lunar backyard, Dad mans the grill, Kiddos toss the Zero-G pigskin, and Mom comes by holding Baby with a kiss for the cook --

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

Join our exclusive club of daring
pioneers, savvy investors and happy
families... And start living your
brighter tomorrow, today!

The screen flashes: "LIVE TRANSMISSION" --

INT. VISTAVILLE HOTEL - BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

-- as we PULL OUT, we see Jack at a podium looking up to the screen where BUCK MANZELL, former star of TV's *Space Sheriff* lounges on his lunar balcony. He's drunk, shirtless, tanning his seventy year-old chest --

BUCK MANZELL

Jacky boy! You read me? Still
caught up in that goddamn tee-
restrial rat race...

JACK

You're loud and clear Buck.

ANGLE - two ladies in the audience --

ESTELLE

That's the fellow from *Space*
Sheriff, LeAnn. That's him!

LEANN

(fixing her hair)
I know, I know. Imagine he came by
for a cup of sugar.

RESUME - Buck in the video --

BUCK MANZELL

Then let me tell these good folks,
true as Texas Toast, it's all iced-
teas and real-deal livin' up here.
No neckties, taxmen, mo-skeeters or
traffic jams -- so who's the
goddamn genius now, Jack?

JACK

You said it Buck. Thanks for
calling in.

BUCK MANZELL

And don't none of you forget:
"There ain't no laws in the
stars... but me." Whooo-Hooo!

The call ends. The lights come up. Jack sips his water and studies the crowd of thirty-or-so potential customers. He's slow to start and uncharacteristically distant --

JACK

Well, you heard it straight from
Buck, so I won't waste your good
time saying it twice, but when I
think of BrightSide -- of my wife
out in our HydroGlow garden, or my
boy shagging flies on the Zero-G
diamond. My beautiful family...

Jack has to stop, he chokes up a little, the sad reality of his day pulling him out of the fantasy he's used to selling --

JACK (CONT'D)

You know what -- explain this to
me: these days we live with
miracles at our fingertips, we fly
to the stars, we split atoms, and
robots take out the trash -- so why
are so many of us still waiting to
live our dreams? There's a
technical term for that in my
business, it's called a shit deal.
Because while we're stuck waiting,
our kids are growing up and
drifting away, our best days are
piling in the rearview and the hope
that keeps us going wears right
down to nothing. Some of us are
losing the people we love. And
just like that, "any day now" turns
into "too late." Gone forever.

Jack steps back and tries to compose himself. Herb, Eddie and Shirley look on from the wings, perplexed --

HERB

What's going on with him?

EDDIE

Just crushing their spirits and
killing their dreams, that's all.

RESUME - Jack, with strange urgency and passion --

JACK

So why am I still talking? Every
minute we're not living for now --
right now -- we're waiting around
dying, one empty promise at a time.
I'm not waiting anymore goddamnit,
and neither should you. The time
is now, and regret's a killer worse
than death. Thanks for listening.

We FOLLOW Jack off the stage and behind the big screen --

INT. BACKSTAGE - BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

-- where Shirley joins him --

SHIRLEY

Different kind of speech today.

JACK

Different kind of day I guess.

SHIRLEY

You doing all right Jack? Things
okay up at home?

JACK

Actually Shirley, right now there's
somewhere I got to be.

SHIRLEY

Anything I should know?

JACK

Just how lucky I am I've got you to
keep the world spinning.

SHIRLEY

If you ever get the itch to talk, I
don't scare easy.

Jack's already gone. Off Shirley, doing her best to ignore
Jack's strangeness and focus on the task at hand --

EXT. MODEST RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Jack's hoversedan pulls up in front of Joey and Marie's
house. As he eyes the smashed garage, a deep-down ache works
its way across his features. He gathers his nerve, then
heads up the walkway, to face whatever might be left of the
life he ran from.

Putting on his go-to grin, he knocks on the door and waits. No answer. He looks in the window, knocks again. No one's home --

INT. VISTAVILLE HOTEL - BANQUET HALL - LATER

ANGLE - a pair of hands shaking. As we WIDEN OUT, we see it's Herb wrapping up a one-on-one sales-meeting with Joey --

HERB

Congratulations Mister Shorter on your new home in the stars.

JOEY

Thanks Herb, to be honest, this is coming at just the right time. That speech... I felt like he was talking right to me.

ANGLE - BIG FRED, a gruff looking man in a black trench, squinting at a sales brochure. We WIDEN OUT to see Fred's in a one-on-one with Eddie --

EDDIE

You look like a man who likes his space. Have a look at Kepler Crater -- big lots, very quiet...

BIG FRED

What about all them aliens?

EDDIE

Well Sir, not to put too fine a point on it, but there's actually no such thing.

BIG FRED

Yeah, says you.
(leans in, whispers)
Hey Ed, you don't know me, but I know you, and we both know the same other person.

Big Fred grabs Eddie's wrist --

EDDIE

(low, frantic)

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. What do you think I'm doing here besides making that person their money?

Eddie takes the bonus Jack gave him, slides it to Big Fred --

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Come back in the morning, I'll have more.

BIG FRED
(nods, takes the brochure)
No aliens, huh? I might think it
over.

Big Fred snaps Eddie's pinky back and walks off. Hold a beat
on Eddie, doing everything humanly possible not to scream --

ANGLE - Shirley, processing Joey's paperwork for Herb --

SHIRLEY
(unimpressed)
A D-Plex. No add-ons.

HERB
Gotta make your first sale to make
your second.
(a beat)
Where's Jack?

SHIRLEY
Had to take a call. Some crisis
with Jenkins. Maybe do your best
impression for now.

HERB
(chuckles, terrified)
Ha, yeah.

SHIRLEY
C'mon Herb, game time. And if you
see Eddie, tell him he's still six
short.

Off Herb, who clearly isn't ready for game time --

INT. VISTAVILLE HOTEL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eddie is stifling a scream, running toward a *PolarPoint*
hallway ice-dispenser. He plunges his throbbing finger into
the ice and lets out an obscene sound of relief --

INT. VISTAVILLE HOSPITAL - ICU - EVENING

A burst of white steam fills the frame then clears to reveal
Jack, looking haunted, stepping out of a *DeCon* chamber onto a
moving walkway. He glides by *NursAll* bots, who draw blood,
hang glowing IV bags and hand out tissues. Jack steps off
the conveyor belt at a door with the name "Marie Shorter" --

Marie's attended to by a team of robots: breathing for her,
massaging her legs, moistening her lips. Jack looks on,
forced to accept that any dreams of reclaiming his former
life are likely lost forever. He feels a tap on his elbow --

JOEY (O.C.)
Mister Billings?

Jack turns to see Joey, holding a BrightSide Welcome Packet --

JOEY (CONT'D)

'Bought a D-Plex today, thanks to you. At the sales conference. Joey Shorter.

They shake hands. Meeting his estranged son brings Jack as close as he's ever been to dumbstruck. He flinches --

JACK

Nice to meet you. 'Think I might be on the wrong floor.

JOEY

Yeah, this floor's got the really tough cases.

JACK

Is that your Mom in there?

JOEY

Yeah.

JACK

Very sorry kid.

JOEY

It's okay. We're pretty much near the end now.

JACK

I wish I knew what to say.

JOEY

What you said this morning really made a difference. First time I let myself look forward to anything since all this happened.

JACK

Means the world to hear that. Can I tell you something, Joey?

JOEY

Sure.

Jack studies his son, searches for words to confess, but can't bear to stomp the kid's innocence with the truth. And just like that, an opportunity passes by, perhaps forever --

JACK

I'm gonna upgrade you to a nicer unit, on me. This way, if your dad, or your girlfriend, or anybody wants to come for a visit...

JOEY

That's amazing. I don't really have a girlfriend, or a dad.

JACK

Well you're doing great without 'em. And your Mom's a real lucky lady to have you.

JOEY

Thanks Mister.
(re the welcome packet)
I'm going to go read this to her. They say she can hear a little maybe. So why not, right?

JACK

Best of luck Kid.

Jack watches Joey take a seat at Marie's bedside --

JOEY

(reading)
Congratulations. A fantastic new world awaits you ...

It's too much for him, Jack steps onto the moving walkway --

INT. VAL'S ROADHOUSE - VISTAVILLE HOTEL - EVENING

Val's is eerily like Nat's, with burgundy booths instead of teal. A *HoverJuke* floats from table to table. Shirley and Herb watch as Eddie drunkenly displays the sloppy DIY splint on his swollen pinky --

EDDIE

... anyone who tells you the flush mechanism on a men's urinal is an accident free device is a liar and a liability.

SHIRLEY

You mean the thing you just push down?

EDDIE

I may never shake a hand again, Shirl. Show me the salesman who can close without the time-honored ritual of the shake!

HERB

If I couldn't make my quota Eddie, you shouldn't feel bad you didn't. Jack'll understand that.

EDDIE

You embryonic, eating through your belly-button twit -- Jack's who screwed us. Led us to dust-sucking Vistaville, killed the room with that dead-dreams routine, then walked out in our moment of need.

SHIRLEY

Don't blame Jack 'you got beat-up by a urinal. If you're really sticking by that story...

EDDIE

Urinal, all the way.

Herb spots Jack at the front door and calls out --

HERB

Hey Mister Billings, over here.

EDDIE

Watch: he's all smiles, then takes our scalps for his masters on the moon.

Jack takes a seat, happy to be back in easier company --

JACK

The gang's here and all's right with the world. Steaks on me?

There's a long, awkward silence --

SHIRLEY

Didn't quite hit the numbers today, Jack. Aimed high and came close.

HERB

Kinda wasn't so smooth after you left.

EDDIE

Which you wouldn't know 'cause you weren't there.

Jack's unfazed by the atmosphere of despair --

JACK

Not gonna ask where I was?

EDDIE

Sure. Where were you Jack, in our moment of need when we're supposed to trust you and now I'm losing another job and Herb's wife's gonna leave him for a real earner with a grown-man's haircut?

JACK

Shut up Eddie. I was on with Stan Jenkins making the case to save your asses.

HERB

You didn't have to do that Jack.

JACK

Yeah it's not my job -- but like it or not, I care about you two. And I knew the second I stepped on that stage we never should've come here, and those quotas were nuts. So I told Stan you both are top talents, and if he's fool enough to fire you, he can fire me too.

EDDIE

Very noble, Jack. Supremely stupid but very noble.

JACK

Sure, I could've played it safe, but then you wouldn't be keeping your jobs. Plus, since you mean that much to me, he gave me the green light to bump you to Senior Sales Partners when I'm ready. So... congratulations.

Herb wraps his arms around Jack, blubbers a little --

HERB

This is finally happening.

SHIRLEY

You goddamn magician Jack.

EDDIE

'Last time I ever doubt you Boss.

Jack hands them each a pebble from the lunar surface --

JACK

Here. A little something from me. From the Sea of Serenity. My son collects 'em and they bring me pretty good luck.

EDDIE

Wow, thanks Boss. Feels pretty weird actually.

HERB

I'm gonna send mine home for Betty and the little guys.

Jack's thoughts are swirling. He can't help but think about his real wife and son --

JACK

Good on you Herb.

HERB

Thinking about 'em round the clock Sir, whenever I'm not working of course. But I don't have to tell you how it is.

JACK

No. No you don't.

Off Jack, feeling miles away, trying to plaster a smile over his confusion and guilt --

INT. JACK'S ROOM - VISTAVILLE HOTEL - NIGHT

Jack's on the bed in his undershirt, wrestling some weighty shame and disappointment, staring out the window at a giant, low-hanging moon. A syrupy string number plays on the radio. There's a knock at the door --

JACK

Come on in.

A BellBot rolls in and extends his grabber arm --

BELLBOT

Here to make your stay more pleasant.

Jack takes an envelope with the BrightSide logo from his nightstand, considers it a beat, then seals it and hands it to the BellBot. As the bot hovers away, Jack turns up the radio and tries to lose himself in the music --

INT. HALLWAY - VISTAVILLE HOTEL - NIGHT

Eddie and Shirley are flanking Herb, trying to keep him more or less upright, as he stumbles, mumbles and clutches a blue slushy cocktail full of fruit --

HERB

Sure, sure, sure, it's "just" our "job," sure.

(MORE)

HERB (CONT'D)

But it's not like you get close like this with anybody you work with anytime, you know, at the other places, at any place you work with, right? I mean so, so, like brothers and you're our sister Shirley, and Jack's so amazing too... Senior Sales Partner... which is, wow...how does just pineapples make this so blue?

Under which, the BellBot comes out of Jack's room holding the letter. Herb takes a big swig, which starts him vomiting instantly, spattering the BellBot and the envelope blue --

HERB (CONT'D)

(impressed by his own vomit)
Whoa. Did you see that?

EDDIE

Yeah. Real nice work there Budddy.

HERB

Thanks brother.

They stagger towards their rooms together, arm-in-arm --

INT. LOBBY - VISTAVILLE HOTEL - THE NEXT MORNING

Jack comes out of the elevator, suitcase in hand, looking fresh, determined, ready to tackle the day. He passes Eddie in the lobby, smoking with Big Fred --

EDDIE

Morning Boss, I was just telling my Uncle Fred here -- who happens to live in town -- about my commissions going up five points and how much more money that is.

JACK

Deserves every dollar, Uncle Fred. Parking lot in ten, Ed. We got lives to change.

Keeping stride, Jack passes Herb, who's very hungover, talking in the *ViddiCom* booth to his very pregnant wife --

HERB

Look, it's Mister Billings... Jack, it's Betty. I was saying all the great news.

JACK

You look radiant Mrs. Porter. Congrats. And what happened to you Herb? -- sleep in a dishwasher?

BETTY

It's good for him I think. He
doesn't have many friends.

HERB

Betty, stop.

JACK

Parking lot in ten Herb. 'Lives to
change.

Jack strides on. Shirley's waiting near the door with a cup
of coffee for Jack, which he takes and swigs --

SHIRLEY

Morning Mister B.

JACK

Beautiful morning, Shirl.

She puts a hand on his shoulder to stop him --

SHIRLEY

If you got a minute -- refund
request came this morning from
Jenkins. Kinda strange.

JACK

Oh yeah?

She shows him a piece of BrightSide stationary --

SHIRLEY

Refund's three times more than the
customer paid.

JACK

Well, Stan's overworked and
underslept lately. Maybe just wire
the money like it says. His fault,
not yours.

SHIRLEY

Jack -- I know this came from your
room last night. That's Herb's
Blue Hawaii he threw up.

She shows Jack the blue splattered envelope. He's caught --

JACK

You're right Shirl, I sent that.
Signed my boss' name and all.

SHIRLEY

'Never pegged you for a thief Jack.

JACK

It's not like that. I met this kid yesterday, real heartbreaker: Mom's dying, Dad's a goner, the works. And I just couldn't live with myself standing by, doing nothing.

SHIRLEY

I get it. I don't think accounting will.

Jack pauses, as if considering whether to let her in on a secret, then leans in and whispers conspiratorially --

JACK

Y'know things up on the moon aren't as buttoned up as you think. Life at a pioneering young company --

SHIRLEY

How messy can they be?

JACK

You'd be surprised. But until they get up to speed, a good deed or two can prob'ly slip through the cracks.

(a beat)

You think you'll wire the money?

SHIRLEY

Already did. Figured you had your reasons.

JACK

One day Shirl, when BrightSide's bigger than sliced bread -- and good people like you and me are running the show -- we'll be rich enough to follow the rules. Trust me.

They trade grins. Come what may, at least they have each other's friendship and loyalty --

JACK (CONT'D)

Parking lot in ten. We got lives to change.

EXT. VISTAVILLE HOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

As Jack's getting in his *HoverSedan*, he hears --

JOEY (O.C.)

Mister Billings!

Jack starts the engine, puts the car in gear --

JACK

Morning Kid. Sorry I can't chat.

JOEY

(at the car window)

I hate to trouble you, but there was some kind of mix-up with my application. My deposit got sent back this morning. 'Guess I got rejected or something.

JACK

What a shame. 'Damn finance guys aren't even half-human.

JOEY

Maybe I could talk to them? I think there was a pretty big mistake.

JACK

Don't waste your breath.

JOEY

You got to understand Mister, I don't want it. I've got nothing down here. Nothing to do. I'm just nobody.

It's too much for Jack to hear --

JACK

Okay Kid, but those problems'd be waiting for you up there too. Trust me.

JOEY

You don't know that.

JACK

I do. Better than anyone. And I like to see my customers happy, not playing themselves for a fool.

Jack starts to back out. Joey studies him a beat --

JOEY

So you cancelled my sale, huh?

Joey's insight stops Jack in his tracks --

JOEY (CONT'D)

Yeah, looking out for the poor orphan. What a hero.

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

'Talked a big game about me
grabbing hold of my life. Only you
know my life better than I do, huh?
You're full of shit Mister.

Jack studies Joey, smiles, impressed --

JACK

Nice, Kid. Nicely done.

JOEY

Screw you. The one thing I had to
look forward to...

This knocks the wind out of Jack. He can't stand having
crushed the kid's dream. He takes a beat then gets an idea --

JACK

There are other things you know...
You're a good kid, you know how to
stick up for yourself and you're
not too bad for thinking on your
feet either. That's the makings of
something.

JOEY

(wry)

Yeah, wow, thanks.

JACK

Well I know what I just saw. And
I'd start you at fifteen percent.

Joey takes a moment to realize Jack's just offered him a job.
It's been a while since anyone's believed in him like this --

JACK (CONT'D)

It's not curing diseases or
stopping wars, but sometimes,
giving folks a new dream to dream,
can make all the difference. You'd
be good at it. And I could teach
you a few things on the way.

JOEY

Are you lying to me again?

JACK

Sorry about that, Kid. But here's
a square deal: work for me, I'll
let you make all your own mistakes.
And laugh at you after.

Jack holds out his hand. For the first time in a while Joey
sees a future that's more than just running away --

JOEY

I don't have any nice clothes.

JACK

We better buy you a suit then.

Joey shakes his hand. Jack grins to beat the band and opens the passenger door for his son to hop in. They drive across the lot, and see Herb, Eddie and Shirley at the lobby door with their luggage. Jack stops and leans his head out --

JACK (CONT'D)

What's the bags for?

HERB

You said parking lot in ten.

JACK

I didn't say pack up and slink away with your tails between your legs 'cause you had one slow day.

(points to Joey)

'Wanted to introduce our new Junior Partner. Everybody, this is Joey.

JOEY

Hi there.

SHIRLEY

Congratulations Kid.

Jack stares at Herb and Eddie, who are a little stunned --

HERB

Oh, hey.

EDDIE

Great.

JACK

Tell them what you were just telling me Joey --

JOEY

Um... well APP just laid-off a whole shift at the northside warehouse...

JACK

A lot of severance checks and a lot of folks looking for new dreams. Prime turf. Right here.

HERB

(to Joey)

Well, it's not exactly that simple Joey, looking at local incomes --

JACK
(cutting him off)
Lesson one Joey, some of us are
here to dream and some of us are
here to wet the bed.

Jack puts the car in gear, and he and Joey speed off --

HERB
The attitude on that kid -- wow.

EDDIE
(A little scared himself)
Don't scare now Herb. Nobody can
sell scared.

SHIRLEY
Don't worry guys -- Jack's still
looking out for everybody. That's
what he does.

Herb and Eddie can't disagree --

INT. ETERNAL SPRINGS REST HOME - BARBARA'S ROOM - EVENING

Jack watches Barbara grimace at a bite of Salisbury Steak --

JACK
Overcooked?

BARBARA
Cremated.

JACK
I'll tell them to do lasagna
tomorrow. Hey Ma, let me show you
something.

Jack passes her a photo of him and Joey in matching suits --

BARBARA
Is that... ?

JACK
Yeah. Joey.

BARBARA
(tears, overcome)
Wow, Jacky. He's beautiful. The
both of you.

JACK
Thanks for kicking my ass about it.
He needs somebody.

BARBARA
This is better than a dream.

JACK
Love you, Ma.

Jack kisses her and heads out, happy he lifted her spirits --

INT. ETERNAL SPRINGS REST HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

-- a familiar voice calls out as Jack passes a nearby room --

FAMILIAR VOICE
That you out there ol' boy?

Jack pops his head in and sees Buck Manzell, who certainly isn't on the moon, and seems significantly short of sane --

BUCK MANZELL
I'm loving life, Jack. 'Living on
the BrightSide, thanks to you!

JACK
Thanks Buck. It means the world to
see our customers happy.

BUCK MANZELL
Don't leave now without paying your
respects to Mister Jenkins.

JACK
I'd never.

Jack walks into Buck's room, where a hovering terrarium holds a dwarf desert tortoise. Jack pets Mr. Jenkins' shell, then snags a few bluish-grey pebbles from the bottom of the terrarium... just like the ones from the "Sea of Serenity" --

JACK (CONT'D)
See you 'round Sheriff. 'Galaxy's
in your hands.

Jack pockets the rocks, tips an imaginary hat and walks off.
Buck belts out a mad rendition of Moon River --

BUCK MANZELL
*Moon River, wider than a mile,
I'm crossing you in style some day.
Dream maker, heartbreaker,
Wherever you're going,
I'm going your way...*

The song echoes through the halls as Jack walks away, his features shaped into a practiced salesman's smile, so good even he can't tell whether or not it's real --

FADE OUT.