

State of Mind
Pilot

by
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STATE OF MIND

ACT ONE

INT. NEPTUNE'S DINER - DAY

Dusty starfish, conch shells and tangled netting on the walls, and an assortment of mermaid mobiles hanging from the filthy acoustic tiles. Great cheeseburgers, good tuna on rye and coffee that'll dissolve your spoon.

At the back of the diner, a storage area with boxes and cartons, a few chairs and a regulation-size pool table. Three coffee cups, three sandwiches and a pile of rumpled cash rest on top of a huge box of plastic cutlery. Three old friends study the pool table: ANN BELLOWES, M.D. chalking her cue; a smart, competent, funny, no-bullshit psychiatrist in her early 30's, a giver, not a taker, and someone who tries to handle a short fuse, and a lifelong inability to keep her mouth shut; CONCHATA GLUCK, Neptune's owner, headcashier and occasional busboy. A big, handsome, mountain-moving woman. Take away her conscience, and she'd kick Tony Soprano's ass; and JUDGE CANINO, an older man with the look of a misspent youth followed by a distinguished career (Robert Mitchum, after thirty years on the bench). He sips his coffee and eyes Ann as she coolly lines up a shot.

JUDGE CANINO

Doc? Fifty bucks says you can't make that shot.

CONCHATA

Oh, I hate to bet against you, Augusto...but I will.

Ann breathes deeply, stays calm, and puts away two balls, simultaneously. She holds her gunslinger cool for a beat and then exhales, grinning like a kid. She twirls her cue once and racks it. She glances at the wall clock: 12:58.

ANN

Sonofabitch! I'm late.

She grabs the rumpled cash, Conchata hands her a sandwich half and Ann heads for the door, blowing a kiss.

ANN (CONT'D)

Same time next week, people.

She runs out.

JUDGE CANINO

Good, good pool player.

CONCHATA

Good person.

JUDGE CANINO

How long's that marriage gonna last?

CONCHATA

You wanna win back that fifty?

INT. HALLWAY - MODERN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Ann rushes down the hall, checking her watch: 5 after.

INT. FANCY WAITING ROOM

Ann pushes open the waiting room door (ELM CITY MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATES). The inner door facing Ann has a brass plaque: DONNA RODINSKY, Ph.D., MARITAL COUNSELING. Ann puts her ear up to the door and listens; there is a faint human sound. Ann knocks and listens.

ANN (TO HERSELF)

Did she say "Come in"?

Ann opens the door to a fancy office, with the usual two armchairs-and-sofa setup. Only Donna's flushed, damp face appears over the back of the nearest armchair, her largely undressed body is concealed.

ANN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I'm late.

DONNA

Oh, God.

ANN

Or early? I'm sorry...

DONNA

Oh, God.

ANN

Or it's the wrong day? Shit, it's the wrong day.

Ann begins to back out and catches sight of polished wingtips on the floor next to the armchair. She stops. She knows those shoes.

ANN (CONT'D)

Phil?

PHIL NEWMAN, M.D., attractive, 40ish, a Yale Man who can't stop talking about it, pops up like a frightened groundhog, in his undershirt and trousers, behind Donna.

This is Ann's husband. Ann opens and closes her mouth, twice, like someone thrown from a horse.

ANN (CONT'D)

Oh Phil. And oh, Donna, oy.

They are all frozen, in a tableau of world-class embarrassment. Ann clears her throat, puts her hands on her hips and tries to gather herself.

ANN (CONT'D)

Where do I start?

(pointing to Donna)

Ethics? Professional standards? Common sense? No, no, no and no goddam decency. And, honest to God, no judgement. Did you think I was kidding about our sex life?

She walks towards them and Donna scrambles for her blouse, her over-filled white satin bustier revealed. Ann hands her the blouse and looks at Phil, still crouched behind the chair. Ann tears up but doesn't cry.

ANN (CONT'D)

I wish you would have said...I wish you would have said, "It's over, I need someone else, I need something else." Even if you had to sit me down and say: "Honey, what I really need is a manipulative, bleached-blond couples therapist who fills her own emotional vacuum by preying on unhappy, insecure and clueless men, a woman who cannot spell, let alone grasp, psychotherapy-- that's what I need"-- I would have liked that better. You. Son. Of. A. Bitch.

As she says this last line, she gathers his shoes and walks out on the word "Bitch."

EXT. MAPLE STREET OFFICE - PARKING LOT - DAY

Handsome, large, slightly shambling Victorian house-turned-office on a tree-lined but gritty New Haven street. As Ann turns into the driveway, she passes a sign: NEW HAVEN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATES. She pulls into a spot and sits in her car, trying to compose herself, patting the wingtips, absentmindedly.

Her 2pm appointment, a hostile, needy patient, SYLVIA FORTUNA, walks up to the car and raps on Ann's window. Ann lowers her window.

SYLVIA

Dr. Bellows? That's a handicapped space you're in.

ANN

Thank you. Okay.

Sylvia doesn't move.

ANN (CONT'D)

Okay. See you inside.

SYLVIA

Are you handicapped? Suddenly?

ANN

(gritting her teeth)

No more than anyone else in this business.

Sylvia stares at her stonily and backs away a few feet, arms folded, to make sure Ann moves her car. Ann puts up her window and, swearing steadily but quietly, she moves the car to a legit space, under Sylvia's judgmental gaze.

INT. MAPLE STREET OFFICE HALLWAY- DAY

Ann walks towards her office. She is unsteady on her feet, emotionally clubbed. She passes her colleague JAMES LECROIX, a brilliant child therapist, appealing, devoted to his patients and comfortably eccentric. He takes one look at Ann's face, grabs Ann and pulls her into the nearest bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

JAMES

You look terrible. What happened?

ANN

Bad day, that's all.

JAMES

Are you kidding? We all have bad days. You look like Nagasaki. Talk.

ANN

Jesus. Okay.

She perches on the sink. He sits on a toilet seat.

ANN (CONT'D)

Let's see...

(abruptly)

Phil's banging Donna Rodinsky.

JAMES

Donna Rodinsky?

James makes the universal gesture for big tits. Ann nods.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What an idiot. Cancel your patients. For their sake. Then we can go hunt Phil down like the dog he is.

(Pause)

And kill him.

ANN

Okay.

(sighs)

I guess I could cancel.

James pats her awkwardly on the shoulder. She exits.

INT. MAPLE STREET OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ann walks into the hallway and bumps into sweaty, anxious, shoe-less Phil, who has hustled over to try and defuse the crisis--and get his shoes back.

PHIL

Annie, I --

Ann, still holding the shoes, runs into her office and slams the door in his face. Phil stands there, embarrassed and angry as James walks by. James looks at Phil and at his socks and shakes his head, with contempt.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

FRED SMEDRESMAN, the office manager--and, in his own mind, one of the shrinks--runs this room. The black sheep of his own, and any other family; very intelligent, without much common sense, sarcastic and socially awkward, a lifetime loner. He's entering data in the back corner, behind a desk and a partial partition. He has no photos or decorations, except one New Yorker George Booth cartoon about suicide.

An older lady and a nervous guy (DON YOUNG) and Sylvia are seated in the waiting room. DR. RAJ BHATTACHARY comes into the waiting room. He is handsome in a Bollywood/Hugo Boss way, very bright, with a barely concealed sense that he is the Crown Prince and you--whoever you are--are not.

The arrogance hides his insecurity. He greets his patient, the old lady, and she follows him out. They just miss Phil, furious and in his socks, running through the waiting room. He slams out, toward the parking lot. Fred doesn't even look up.

Hapless, twitchy Don Young remains in the waiting room with Sylvia. He glances at the clock, waiting as the minute hand agonizingly shifts from 2:14 to 2:15. Don approaches Fred.

DON

Uh.

At last, Fred looks up, blandly.

DON (CONT'D)

I have an appointment with Dr. Newman.

Fred continues to regard him, malice and pleasure lurking beneath.

DON (CONT'D)

It's for 2:00. I think he's late. Phil Newman? He is late. I don't know. I've never...This is my first time.

Fred looks out the window to the parking lot as Phil screeches away in his car. He begins humming "It's the wrong time, and the wrong place..."

FRED

I don't think that'll work out. Dr. Newman's...gone.

DON

Gone? As in--retired? As in out sick?

FRED

Certainly. Certainly those are possibilities. And not possibilities to *shrink* from--as it were. Don't despair--there's Dr. Bellows, I like her. She's a woman, with those disabilities and limitations, but I like her. Smart, not insane, but she seems to be going through a bad patch. Give her a few weeks to get back on her feet. Normally, she's the best but right now, I think she's a little off-center. You got Dr. Lecroix, he's a man, if you like that. And he has those disabilities, but he's not a fool. Not your usual psychoanalyst, has a Peter Pan I-can't-tuck-in-my-shirt thing going on but...

(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)

if you want a post-Freudian interpretation of unspeakable maternal crimes perpetrated upon small boys--and I think you might--Dr. Lecroix can handle that--with *puppets*. You got Dr. Banks--that's something.

(in a Southern accent)

Cordelia, Cordelia, Cordelia.

(back to his real voice)

A lot of...pink, moist, spangled... energy.

(looks at Don closely)

You could use some Dr. Banks. And there's...

He pauses as an attractive couple enters, obviously coming from work, THE TREMAINES, JOHN and LOUISE. They do the usual waiting-room nod to Sylvia and pretend-we're-not-here-thing, settling themselves away from Fred's corner.

DON

I guess I'll go home. Just ask Dr. Newman to call me, please.

FRED

Ah. Leaving. Good choice. Good luck.

DON

You think I shouldn't leave?

Ann enters the waiting room. She looks at the morose Don and then at Fred, who shakes his head, reassuringly - Don's not her problem. Fred mouths: "Phil's." Unfortunately, Ann turns to see that she has not one but three people waiting for the next session. She cannot bring herself to cancel everyone.

ANN

(to herself)

Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

All three people rise to greet her, and then the couple and Sylvia look at each other, thinking: *Someone's in the wrong place and it's not me.*

ANN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry--

Sylvia moves, with entitlement, past Ann, up the stairs to Ann's office. Ann is left with the unhappy Tremaines.

ANN (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. I'm more than that--I'm mortified. I really am.

(MORE)

ANN (CONT'D)

I don't think I've ever done this before--
scheduled two... I wonder--the woman who
just went upstairs--she did actually come
from pretty far away. Could we re-
schedule? I wouldn't charge you for the
session, of course.

The Tremaines look more relieved than annoyed.

JOHN

It's okay. We can--

LOUISE

We can just come back next week. It's
okay.

ANN

I don't want you to miss your session...

The Tremaines are already putting their jackets back on.

ANN (CONT'D)

I have an opening tomorrow at this time,
if you want. I'm so sorry---

LOUISE

Okay, tomorrow is fine. It's fine. Don't
worry...these things happen.

They leave the building, cheerily.

EXT. OFFICE FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Immediately, the Tremaines dissolve into their usual acrid
tones.

LOUISE

Well, you seemed relieved.

JOHN

I wasn't relieved. I was being nice, for
Christ's sake. Actually, you seemed
relieved.

INT. WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ann, Fred and Don Young listen:

JOHN (O.S.)

You were like--No problem. Next week is
plenty soon enough. If we don't have sex
until next *month*--

Their voices fade out of earshot.

FRED
 (mimicking Ann)
*I'm so sorry. I don't think I've ever
 done this before. You have so.*
 (then, with concern)
 You look terrible.

Ann takes a deep breath, so as not to cross the room and smack him. She shakes her head and heads for the stairs.

DON YOUNG
 I see what you mean--off-center.

Ann winces and keeps walking to her office, hearing, from another office:

VOICE (HIGH-PITCHED, O.S.)
 Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me!

Ann doesn't even pause.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. JAMES' OFFICE - DAY

THE VOICE belongs to JAMES. His office is the Intergalactic Hall of Puppets: human, animal, sequinned and felt. Anatomically correct, old-fashioned marionettes hang from the walls. Posters of Kathleen Battle and Walt Whitman are on the walls, as is a velcro dartboard with a recognizable portrait of James at the bull's-eye.

James is having a session with VIKTOR (GOUREVITCH) PETROVSKY, a 10 year-old boy, recently adopted by the Petrovskys, an upper-middle class family. Life in a Russian orphanage was terrible for Viktor; life in suburban America is terrifying.

James' harlequin puppet has a leg in Viktor's lion puppet's mouth. Viktor holds the puppet with very little interest.

JAMES
 (puppet voice)
 Save me, save me!

Viktor sits limply.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 How much English do you speak?

VIKTOR
 Much.

JAMES
 Much. That's what your parents say--

VIKTOR
 They are not parents. You think they are
 parents?

James gets up and goes in search of another puppet.

JAMES
 No, they're not your parents.

He digs up a large male puppet, with the same coloring as Viktor, and sits down beside Viktor, silently handing him the boy puppet.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 (in Russian)
Is my Russian better than your English?

VIKTOR
 (Happily and loudly, in
 Russian)
Your Russian sucks!

INT. ANN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sylvia, her baggy polyester pants riding up mid-calf, is pulling at some loose threads on the couch, absent-mindedly, as she rants.

SYLVIA
 --and when I saw you in the parking
 space, I thought, this is a metaphor. You
 know?

Ann sees the threads in Sylvia's tight grip. She winces and looks away. Sylvia catches the look and pulls harder, with intent. There is a longish moment of silence, very High Noon.

ANN
 A metaphor.

SYLVIA
 Yes. Clearly. I mean you're not actually
 handicapped, am I right? And yet--

Sylvia's voice becomes a quiet buzzsaw and an apparition of Ann materializes behind Sylvia, wearing an orange prison jumpsuit. Sylvia pulls a huge thread from the couch, leaving a bare spot.

ANN 2

And that is why I killed her.

Ann 2 reaches behind the couch and pulls up a wire garotte and steps closer to Sylvia, putting the wire around her neck.

SYLVIA

You seem distracted.

Ann 2 disappears but Ann's eyes are still riveted to Sylvia's neck. Ann is embarrassed and a little startled.

ANN

No.

SYLVIA

And now you're lying to me.

ANN

No, not at all. Look, this is not about me.

Ann 2 reappears, still in her jumpsuit, in Freud's glasses and cigar.

ANN 2

Shame on you.

Ann 2 fades away, leaving a smoke ring over Sylvia's head.

SYLVIA

No kidding. One hour a week is about me, and even my therapist can't pay attention.

ANN

You're right and...I'm sorry. You deserve better. Actually, you deserve a rebate for today. I'm going through a personal crisis, and it seems to be leaking all over this session. I'm really--

Ann chokes up. Sylvia looks at her and really sees her. She gathers up her things and rises. She puts a compassionate hand on Ann's shoulder.

SYLVIA

It's okay. Shit happens--even to you, apparently. Which is good to know. You take care of yourself...you look terrible. See you next week.

Ann stands to see Sylvia out, then sinks back to her desk, embarrassed but relieved.

INT. JAMES' OFFICE - DUSK

James ushers in THE PETROVSKYS, an attractive American couple, determinedly upbeat and guarded, and furious with this embarrassing boy, who has been happily smashing his puppet against James' desktop. He stops when he sees the Petrovskys, and stops smiling as well.

MRS.P.
He's so angry.

JAMES
You bet. Come on in.

They take in the complete weird funkiness of the office.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Viktor and I are starting to get to know each other. How about if we go ahead and make an appointment for next week?

He takes a scrap of paper and pencil stub out of his pocket.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Same time?

The Petrovskys look at each other: this guy is clearly nuts and will probably make things worse.

MR.P.
Well, you know, I think we'll talk it over. You know, we'll talk it over with Vic here...

VIKTOR
(to himself)
Viktor.

Mrs. P. takes out her Filofax and thumbs through rapidly.

MRS.P.
You know, next week looks pretty busy. Why don't we call you at the beginning of next week and see if we can find a good time?

JAMES
I think it'd be best to make an appointment--

MRS.P.

Uh huh. Thank you. Come on, Vic.

James looks at Viktor sadly. The Petrovskys hustle out, dragging Viktor. At the doorway, Viktor looks at James as a drowning man looks at land.

INT. CORDELIA'S OFFICE - DUSK

Ann knocks on an open office door. The plaque reads: Cordelia Banks, Ph.D. CORDELIA BANKS has Elizabeth Taylor's looks, Dolly Parton's sense of humor and Southern similes, a longshoreman's vocabulary, and a Southern childhood that would make Anna Freud weep. Her office is done up in Shabby Chic from rag rug to tasteful knickknacks to coordinated chintz armchairs.

ANN

It's me. You got a 6 o'clock?

Cordelia types at her laptop, not looking up.

CORDELIA

No. Cancelled, thank God.

ANN

Working?

CORDELIA

Don't be ridiculous. I'm ordering this cute little dress.

Ann peers over her shoulder at something ruffly in satin, which, when blown up, is shown to be mid-thigh in length and mid-stomach in décolletage.

ANN

Nice for work. Big date?

CORDELIA

A few. You know how I do.

ANN

I do. And where you get the energy--and the nerve--I do not know.

(pause)

You seen Phil?

CORDELIA

Your Phil? No. Check the kitchen, he's probably eating someone else's dinner.

She looks up and focuses on Ann.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
You look terrible.

ANN
So I hear. Umm. I think Phil's gone.

CORDELIA
Gone? Gone how?

Ann turns away from Cordelia, looking out the window.

ANN
He's banging Donna Rodinsky.

CORDELIA
How do you know?

ANN
Interesting response. You don't say,
"You're crazy." You don't say, "Don't be
ridiculous, Phil would never cheat on
you."

CORDELIA
There is no man on earth, straight, gay
or quadriplegic, about whom I would say
that.

ANN
In her office. In her armchair. I was
early. Or late. I was--not expected.

Cordelia grins and puts a hand over her face. Ann grins back,
a little.

CORDELIA
Useless, lazy, insecure sack of shit.

ANN
You're speaking of Phil now?

CORDELIA
Yeah. Donna was just using what God gave
her, seein' if the fish were biting. I
don't blame her. Much. But Phil had you.

A phone rings in Raj's office across the hall. The women
overhear him as he goes to close his door.

RAJ (O.S.)
Where the hell are you?

The door closes, muffling his voice. A beat.

CORDELIA
Let's go bother Raj.

Cordelia puts on her shoes and yanks Ann up.

INT. RAJ'S OFFICE - DUSK

A nice office for a CEO. Big cherry desk, with a big leather swivel chair, and six diplomas framed in walnut on the wall behind. Three large portraits in oil, suitable for the Medicis, decorate the other walls: Raj in suit and tie; his wife in sari and gold jewelry; and their two daughters in Burberry. The very room forbids intimacy, confession or revelation, and Raj likes it that way.

Very quietly, Raj's door pushes open to reveal Ann and Cordelia listening in as Raj talks on the phone, his back to them.

RAJ
I understand. I understand. No, no one.
Who? I said, with whom?

Unable to take it, Ann and Cordelia burst into the room. Raj looks at them, uncomfortably, as Ann stands in front of his desk, and Cordelia perches on it, her skirt riding up to her panties. Ann mouths: "Phil?" Raj violently shakes his head "No."

RAJ (CONT'D)
No. You're not? You're kidding. Oh. Fine.
(in Bengali)
You irresponsible syphilitic ass.
(in English)
Bye.

He hangs up. Ann and Cordelia look at him.

RAJ (CONT'D)
My wife.

Ann and Cordelia stare at him in disbelief.

RAJ (CONT'D)
What? I don't know anything.

ANN
You do so. It was Phil, wasn't it?

RAJ
I can't say.

ANN

God Almighty. Be more lame. What'd he say?

RAJ

Nothing useful.

(in a supremely lame way)

And it wasn't Phil. Out, out. I have a patient waiting.

They stare at him for an uncomfortable beat, then exit.

INT. CORDELIA'S OFFICE - DUSK

Cordelia and Ann re-enter.

CORDELIA

All righty then. Group meeting tomorrow morning. I think having Phil skip out counts as an emergency.

ANN

Come on. Let's not blow this out of proportion.

CORDELIA

Out of proportion? Your husband is screwing your couples therapist, your marriage is sinking like the Titanic, and unless our Phil is a very different kind of mammal than I think he is, he'll be slinking out of this office and his share of the rent by the end of the weekend, when you have kicked his sorry ass to the curb. By all means, let us maintain a sense of proportion.

Ann's cell phone rings, she answers.

ANN

Ann Bellows.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SHOE STORE - DUSK

Phil is putting on new wingtips at the cash register as he speaks.

PHIL

Look, don't hang up. I found a crisis counselor--someone for us to talk to. Please come.

Long pause. Cordelia can tell from the look on Ann's face who it is. She shakes her head "No", violently.

ANN

Where?

Cordelia looks disgusted. Ann makes a please-understand face.

PHIL

8 tonight. 19 Elm. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

ANN

Okay.

PHIL

That's great. That's great. I love you, babe.

Ann starts to respond, then closes her mouth. She hangs up. She cannot help but look a little hopeful.

ANN

I know you think I'm an idiot--but hold off on the meeting. It might be unnecessary.

Cordelia hugs her.

CORDELIA

You never know.

Ann leaves.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RAJ'S OFFICE - DUSK

Cordelia sits on Raj's desk, swinging her leg distractingly.

CORDELIA

--so I'd say it's an emergency.

RAJ

(sighing)

If you think so.

CORDELIA

Of course, I do. And so do you. It's your turn to bring doughnuts.

RAJ

Fine, of course, I will be glad to.
Meena'll make some first thing in the
morning. She says the idea of my eating
store-bought makes her ill.

CORDELIA

That is simply appalling.

RAJ

Not to me.

Cordelia walks out.

EXT. THE SOLUTION CENTER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Many, many signs: who may park where, where not to park no
matter who you are, etc. Ann watches the guard, who's reading
porn in the guard booth. She parks quickly and illegally,
dousing her lights, then slinks out of the car--Mission
Impossible music, please--and darts through the lot, into the
building, past the brass plaque which reads, in foot high
letters: THE SOLUTION CENTER. Ann sees it and rolls her eyes.

INT. MEDIATOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ann is bedraggled by the time she schleps into the mediator's
waiting room. The door to his office is open and we see--from
Ann's POV--the counselor and Phil, both in blue blazers and
khakis.

Ann flinches as Phil steps forward to kiss her.

PHIL

Come on, I'm still your husband.

ANN

Yes, I know.

MEDIATOR

Well, please come on in--Dr.
Bellows...Phil.

Instantly, the two men dart guilty glances at each other.

ANN

You know each other?

PHIL

Not really.

MEDIATOR

Just casually..golf...

ANN (CONT'D)

You know each other.

Ann straightens up.

ANN (CONT'D)

Okay, then. We're all pals here. You are friends with everyone, aren't you, Phil? Crisis counselor. Crisis counselor, my white ass. This is not a crisis, fellas. There was a crisis. This is the aftermath. The levees broke months ago. We missed it. It came and went and we missed it. This is the wake, boys. Let's rest in peace.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ann runs out and goes to her car. The guard hurries up to confront her about her illegal parking.

ANN

Oh, for God's sake. I was here for five minutes, the car's still warm.

She puts his hand on the hood to feel. He pulls his hand away and looks at her, sympathetically.

GUARD

Divorce?

ANN

I look like I'm getting divorced?

GUARD

Yeah. I been there. You'll feel better - in a year.

Ann smiles and opens the car door. Phil comes out to look for her. He spots her car and begins to run.

ANN

Oh, no, I can't.

GUARD

Go!

Ann slams the door, throws the car into reverse, floors it-- and hits Phil. She slams on the brakes, gasps, gets out of the car and runs over to his supine form.

ANN

Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Are you all right?

Phil, fully conscious and not yet in pain, lifts his head.

PHIL

I think so.

ANN

Thank God.

Ann gets back in the car and drives off. Phil lies on the asphalt, stunned and disbelieving. The Guard helps Phil up.

PHIL

She's crazy.

GUARD

Nah. She's upset. My wife was crazy.

He pulls up his shirt to reveal an elaborately lettered tattoo that says: *I have a small penis.*

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. KITCHEN/CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

The pathetic coffee pot is dripping. Ann's attention is split between the slow dripping and the Yellow Pages, opened to Attorneys. Raj enters with a huge paper bag of doughnuts, so fresh, they leave grease marks on the brown paper. The smell is fantastic. Raj indicates that he would like some coffee. Ann pointedly makes her own and sits at the farthest end of the table. Cordelia comes in and sits beside her. Raj hands the paper bag of doughnuts to Cordelia. Cordelia rolls her eyes, takes the bag, and heaps the gorgeous, homemade doughnuts on a big plastic platter.

ANN

(to Cordelia, quietly)

You were right to call the meeting.

(to Raj)

These look amazing. Thank you.

Ann reaches for a doughnut.

RAJ

Yes. Meena made them. This morning.

Ann drops her hand, as if burnt.

RAJ (CONT'D)

She despises Dunkin' Donuts. It upsets her to think of me eating them.

Raj takes a doughnut and chews ecstatically. Cordelia and Ann exchange glances. Cordelia takes one. After a beat, so does Ann.

ANN

Meena has a doctorate in biophysics-- she's getting up at five a.m. to make you doughnuts? Appalling.

RAJ

Awfully good, aren't they?

CORDELIA

Better than you deserve. Let's talk about Phil.

Raj concentrates on his coffee and clears his throat. Ann can barely contain herself but Cordelia looks at her warningly. Raj has prepared a statement, on an index card, as if for a press conference.

RAJ

I value discretion. I think you all know that. I value people's privacy. And surely, Ann, your marriage is your business. I have no interest in--I have no respect for--the American passion for interfering.

Cordelia yanks the card away and tears it up.

CORDELIA

In the name of God, Raj.

Ann jumps up.

ANN

James--we forgot James.

She picks up her cell, shrugs and runs out. She knows where he is.

INT. JAMES LECROIX'S ATTIC APARTMENT - MORNING

The large room is Spartan: a cot, a full bookcase at its foot, and a small stereo on top of the bookcase. James' clothes hang on one of those rolling, stainless-steel coat holders you see at big parties. His underwear is in a plastic cube, of the kind college kids use. A case of beer is next to it. The room is dominated by a regulation size pool table. It is the temporary home of a man paying a lot of alimony.

Ann bursts in, sees James in his undershirt, asleep, with his sleeping bag on top of him and Wallace Stegner's Angle of Repose on the floor. Ann puts her hand on his shoulder.

ANN

Wake up.

James wakes instantly, like a cop or doctor.

JAMES

Fire?

ANN

No. Meeting. Now. Just get dressed.

She heads for the door, he gets up in his underwear and grabs his jeans from the floor. She sneaks a look, which he doesn't see.

INT. KITCHEN/CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

James comes in, shirt unbuttoned over T-shirt, barefoot, buckling his belt. Ann hands him a cup of coffee and a doughnut. Raj notes this and sulks.

JAMES
Fantastic doughnuts.

RAJ
Meena made them. Then she drove me to work.

CORDELIA
Raj.

RAJ
I think we may assume that Phil will not be returning.

ANN
I think we may.

JAMES
Bastard.

No one says anything.

Unbeknownst to everybody, Fred lurks in the doorway, picking at his nails, eavesdropping, biding his time.

CORDELIA
All right, awkward, awkward, awkward.
We'll just tell everyone that Dr. Newman, our very fine colleague, has left for personal reasons, which of course we may not share. Anyone see this coming? 'Cause Ann didn't and I didn't.

General head-shaking.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
FRED!

Fred is instantly in the room, glowing with knowledge.

FRED
What can I do for you?

Fred takes a doughnut.

FRED (CONT'D)
These are great. Meena's?

Raj nods, pleased. Ann bites her tongue.

CORDELIA

Fred, dear heart, were there any signs that something was amiss with Dr. Newman?

FRED

Amisss? Odd, untoward, not really comme il faut? Well, there's that poor shmuck he left hanging. And he didn't leave a check on the first of the month. And of course, there was his running through the waiting room without his shoes--but really is that so different than when Dr. Bhattachary--

RAJ

Thank you, Fred.

Fred tips an imaginary hat and spears another doughnut.

RAJ (CONT'D)

Well, we need another tenant. Phil's office wasn't cheap.

ANN

Excuse me, that's the conversation we're going to have? We need a new tenant? How about, ohmifuckingod, how can this be?

The three men exchange glances and look down.

ANN (CONT'D)

Oh. Oh. This is old news, huh, guys? Old news.

RAJ

I apologize. Ann, I didn't...What could I say?

JAMES

I wasn't sure. I saw the bastard in Hartford a couple of times. I am so--

Fred walks over to Ann and kneels on the floor.

FRED

Forgive me. I have behaved despicably, out of cowardice and a profound dislike of... you know.

ANN

Life.

FRED

Yes.

ANN

It's okay.

She puts her hand on his shoulder and glares at the other two men. Cordelia adds her glare as well.

RAJ

Well, I am sorry. And we need to get someone in that office.

He hesitates and braces himself to be tactless.

RAJ (CONT'D)

You are in charge of Housing, Ann.

CORDELIA

If I were married to you, I'd stab you in your sleep.

RAJ

Would you care to find the new partner?

Cordelia looks down at her manicure.

JAMES

I could do it.

They all look at him. Ann smiles sweetly at him and exchanges a quick glance with Raj. On this, they agree: not in a million years would they trust this assignment to Peter Pan.

ANN

Thank you, that's so sweet. I'll keep an eye out and I'll put an ad in the paper. That's all. Goddamit.

RAJ

Very good decision. It will take your mind off your personal difficulties.

CORDELIA

(to Raj)

You need to stop speaking.

Everyone except Ann stands up, meeting's over. Ann sits, stewing. Raj looks at Cordelia meaningfully and the camera follows them to her office. They both enter, and she locks the door with one hand.

INT. JAMES' ATTIC - MORNING

James finishes dressing, his cellphone rings.

JAMES
James LeCroix.

INTERCUT: The Petrovksy Home.

MRS.P.
It's Leslie Petrovsky, I'm sorry to
bother you. Is this a bad time?

JAMES
What's wrong?

As Mrs. P. speaks, we see the event unfold simultaneously, without sound, as it *actually* took place, at marked variance to her distorted report.

MRS.P.
We just had Ashleigh's 11th birthday
party, just a few friends at our club,
nothing fancy.

FLASHBACK: Upper middle class indoor pool party, with an Aloha Hawaii theme: 10 kids and the Petrovskys. Purple and lavender balloons in every corner, Hawaiian shirts on several boys and orchid leis on some of the girls. A large, lovely, purple-trimmed cake, half-eaten, reads "Happy Birthday Ashleigh".

MRS.P. (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Viktor was having fun.

Reedy, pale and somehow cold, even in this faux-tropical setting, Viktor wears a sweatshirt, hip-hop pants and baseball cap, ignoring the kids frolicking in the pool.

MRS.P. (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We'd just had cake and suddenly, I don't
know, Viktor threw Ashleigh into the pool-

As Ashleigh runs by, gaily, Viktor trips her and she falls into the pool.

MRS.P. (V.O.) (CONT'D)
-it was terrible, he could have killed
her, if she'd hit the wall--

Ashleigh flails furiously, but is clearly in no danger.

MRS.P. (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And then her friend Adam, a really nice
 boy, told Vic to cut it out...

Adam, a bigger boy, shoves Viktor off the chaise, hard, in
 retaliation.

MRS.P. (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...and Vic goes crazy.

Viktor hits the ground with a tidy drop-and-roll and pops up,
 murderously blank, and punches Adam hard. Viktor kneels over
 Adam, beating him up, rhythmically, and with satisfaction.

MRS.P. (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Anyway, Ashleigh forgave him, but
 still...

Ashleigh screams and tears at her leis while Viktor runs out.

BACK TO PETROVSKY HOME

MRS.P. (CONT'D)
 Anyway, I know it's not the end of the
 world-
 (forces a laugh)
 -but Viktor just sits in his room, he
 won't eat, he won't talk. His father
 thinks maybe we should make him come out
 but he just sits in the corner and I
 don't want to drag him-

James dresses as he talks.

JAMES
 I could come over.

MRS.P.
 Come over? Here?

JAMES
 Yes. Your adopted son's in crisis, your
 whole family's distressed, your husband's
 upset, I could come over to your house
 and try to help.

MRS.P.
 Well, that's very kind--

JAMES
 Okay. I have the address. It'll take me
 twenty minutes.

James hangs up, looks in the mirror, tucks in his shirt and goes.

INT. NEPTUNE'S DINER - DAY

Conchata nods to a grim-faced Ann as she enters.

CONCHATA

Heigh ho.

ANN

Heigh ho yourself. Coffee and, please.

CONCHATA

You look terrible, girlfriend.

ANN

Kiss my ass.

CONCHATA

Honey, if I could bend over that far, I certainly would. You're a very attractive woman, just not right now. Right now, you have the look of a woman who has been unpleasantly surprised by the man she married.

ANN

You could say that. In Donna Rodinsky's office--

Conchata makes the universal sign for big tits, questioningly, and Ann nods and keeps speaking.

ANN (CONT'D)

--in Donna Rodinsky's armchair, either before or after we were supposed to have had our last counseling session.

CONCHATA

So the counseling went well?

Ann cracks a smile.

ANN

You know what? I am sad and I am insulted, and I should file some huge lawsuit against her, which I won't because-- goddammit, you know what? She can have him, I didn't want him, I just didn't have the balls, or whatever, to do anything about it.

CONCHATA

I know.

ANN

You do?

CONCHATA

There wasn't anything wrong with him, right? Didn't drink, didn't hit you, picked up his socks, made decent money, didn't run around--until now--what the hell. It seems picky, doesn't it, all those losers out there, and you want to get rid of a decent guy just because...

Ann nods.

CONCHATA (CONT'D)

Because he was so boring, he made you long for pain.

Ann nods with sudden recognition and grins, helplessly.

CONCHATA (CONT'D)

O-kay. You need a lawyer? Babyface is back there. Just moved to town. He seems smart, looking to start his own practice--

ANN

One of your orphans? No thank--All right, yeah, call him over. Please.

Conchata waves a hand to BARRY WHITE, newly minted lawyer without an office, transplanted Minnesotan, very intelligent choir boy and occasionally lethal innocent, sitting in the farthest rear booth, surrounded by office paraphernalia (laptop, mini-printer, Palm Pilot, a stack of business cards, envelopes, stamps and two newspapers). Barry looks up and waves, tentatively. Ann holds his eye and beckons him over. He takes a deep breath and comes to the front.

BARRY

Hi, I'm--

ANN

Babyface. Oh God. I'm sorry. Ann Bellows.

Barry rises above the remark.

BARRY

I'm also known as Barry White. I heard Conchata say you might need--I really am a lawyer. I'm from out of town, but I've passed the Connecticut bar. If you're looking for some legal--

ANN

No, thanks. You want an office? We have one. Available immediately. \$800 a month. Plus your share of answering service, phone and Fred, who is sort of our office manager.

Barry expected a possible blind date, a lead on a job, but not this. On the other hand, he has taken notice of Ann.

BARRY

An office? In your building? Well, I could use...an office. Absolutely.

He pats his pocket for a checkbook.

ANN

Plus two months in advance in case you run off with some bimbo or kill yourself.

BARRY

(crestfallen)

I don't have twenty-four hundred dollars. If I did, I wouldn't--

ANN

Got it.

(Beat)

Will you buy toilet paper every month? We have two bathrooms.

Barry nods circumspectly, although underneath we glimpse wild enthusiasm.

BARRY

Yes. Happy to.

ANN

And light bulbs?

BARRY

Of course--of course light bulbs!

Ann puts out her hand to seal the deal.

ANN

Good man. When can you move in?

BARRY

Now?

INT. PETROVSKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

James is led into the sunny kitchen by Mr.P. Mrs.P. holds Ashleigh on her lap.

MRS.P.

This is our daughter, Ashleigh.

JAMES

Hi, Ashleigh, I'm James LeCroix. Your parents asked me to come and see if I could help Viktor, maybe I could help everyone.

Ashleigh smiles sweetly.

MR.P.

Go on, honey, we have to talk to Dr. LeCroix.

Ashleigh gets up but lingers.

JAMES

Maybe there's something you wanted to tell me--something about your brother?

ASHLEIGH

(flatly)

He's not my brother. He's a Russian orphan who happens to live in our house.

She exits quickly, past her mother's embarrassment and her father's anger.

JAMES

Good to know where she stands.

INT. PETROVSKY HOUSE - VIKTOR'S BEDROOM - DAY

James knocks lightly, says Viktor's name and enters. The parents hover behind him.

From James' POV: Viktor is huddled in the corner, wearing an old, adult, cracked leather jacket, a large screwdriver sticking out from one pocket. He tosses an old baseball. He looks towards James, and then away, concealing his sudden tears of joy.

JAMES
 (to the parents)
 Why don't you go downstairs for a while?

Viktor and James are frozen until we hear the parents clumping downstairs.

VIKTOR
 (in Russian)
They sent for you?

JAMES
 (in Russian)
Yes. You're miserable, they're worried and Ashleigh--boy, is she pissed!

Viktor grins and throws the ball to James, who catches it, one-handed, and closes the bedroom door.

INT. CORDELIA'S OFFICE - DAY

Cordelia and Raj make out, their shirts undone, her heels kicked off. He puts one hand under her skirt.

CORDELIA
 Why didn't you tell me about Phil?

Raj pauses, shrugs and continues stroking.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
 You know I like to know what's going on.
 You could have told me.

Raj stops stroking, gives her a kiss on the tip of the nose.

RAJ
 He asked me not to. I didn't tell anybody.

Cordelia straightens slightly, pulling her body away from his.

CORDELIA
 I'm not *anybody*. I would like to think that we're...that at least I'm a friend.

RAJ
 (Coolly)
 Really? You think of us as friends? I never get that feeling. Ann is your friend--which is why I didn't tell you.

A knock on the door.

ANN (O.S.)

Come on back to the kitchen, I've got an announcement.

Cordelia, still unbuttoned, unlocks and swings open the door, revealing a mortified and unbuttoned, untucked Raj, frantically scrambling. Lucky for him, Ann has already moved on. Slowly, Cordelia goes back for her heels, steps into them and then walks out, leaving her office door wide open, buttoning her shirt as she walks down the hall. Raj follows her.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Ann returns to the waiting room to meet Barry, who carries two boxes and quite a bit of his office stuffed into a satchel.

ANN

Okay, Fred Smedresman, Barry White, lawyer.

Fred grins. Barry puts out his hand.

BARRY

Nice to meet you, Mr. Smedresman.

FRED

Call me Fred.

BARRY

And call me Barry, please.

FRED

Oh, no, not when I can call you Barry White, every day.

He goes back to work humming, "You're My First, My Last, My Everything."

ANN

I've gotta go check my messages. I'll be right back to show you around.

She leaves. Barry and Fred look at each other.

FRED

Are you any good, as a lawyer?

BARRY

I think so. I made Law Review, first in my class, things like that.

FRED
Ann's gonna need a lawyer, I think.

BARRY
Oh, she didn't mention that.

FRED
She's shy. And broke. What she could use
is a competent, sympathetic lawyer who
wouldn't ask for a \$7000 retainer. You.

Barry picks up a few of his boxes, and Fred nabs him, pulling
him into the hallway.

FRED (CONT'D)
I'm asking you nicely.

BARRY
Why me?

FRED
Why? Because you're here and you seem
decent and because if you don't, I will
make your life... it will make Hell look
like Paris in April. I will hide your
lunches and those that I don't hide, I
will tamper with. Your bills will not get
sent, and those that do get sent will be
wrong. Cockroaches, which are notoriously
difficult to get rid of, will appear in
your office and--

Ann reappears.

ANN
You're frightening him, Fred. He just got
here.

Fred balks.

ANN (CONT'D)
Come on, back to the starship.

Fred retreats, a little sulky.

BARRY
That's impressive, with the cockroaches.

ANN
You have no idea. Why was he threatening
you?

BARRY
Slow day, I guess.

The phone rings. Fred answers.

FRED
It's for you, Ann, it's Phil.

ANN
God. Tell him I'm not here.

Fred doesn't move, as if she hasn't spoken.

ANN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I know I shouldn't make you
lie. Tell him to drop dead.

FRED
Certainly. I'm on it.

Graciously he waves them on: class dismissed. He looks hard
at Barry, who nods, thoughtfully.

ANN
(to Barry)
Come on, to the snake pit.

INT. PETROVSKY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

James and the Petrovskys sit, tensely.

MR.P.
I'm the one who found him, he was playing
soccer--right across from the hotel. The
orphanage looked like a prison. He seemed
like a nice kid.
(nostalgic pause)
Tough kid. He won't even play here. They
lied to me.

He throws down posed photos of Viktor: Viktor in a turtleneck
and blazer, holding a copy of "The Sun Also Rises"; Viktor
swinging a baseball bat under a coach's kindly eye; Viktor
pushing a little boy on a swing.

JAMES
The bat's a nice touch.

MRS.P.
I know we can't just send him back, like
a suit that doesn't fit.

MR.P.

He doesn't--or we don't fit him.

JAMES

Oh, well.

(Meaning: who fits?)

What did you think? You did see him, you did see that place. Ten years in a St. Petersburg orphanage, whadja think--it was prep school? You can send him back. They'll find a bed for him. Well, maybe not an actual bed but...something. And when he's fourteen, they'll put him on the street and then,

(brightly)

hey, it'll be like he never was.

MR.P.

I know what you're doing. I don't want that for him. I also don't plan to put my family in danger. Who knows what this kid might do.

JAMES

Sure--or you, or me, or Ashleigh.

MR.P.

No, not me or Ashleigh. There's nothing wrong with us. We're not...look, he might have some kind of damage, brain damage. If he does, they should treat him. And if the orphanage concealed information from us about a medical condition, we have every right to return him and we have every right to sue them.

MRS.P.

It's just that... if you would give him a full evaluation, tell us what to expect, then we could... If there's hope that he'll become normal and become part of our family, we want to keep him. It's just that if we should make other arrangements...

JAMES

(coldly)

I do see. Just bring him in on Monday, at 4. I'll do a complete evaluation and give you the name of a pediatric neurologist and you can get a full work up.

MR.P.

I just think maybe we--maybe I--made a mistake. I liked his looks.

JAMES

I'm sure you did.

James and Mrs.P. exchange glances. There is a striking physical resemblance between Viktor and Mr.P. that has never consciously occurred to him.

MR.P.

Ya know, I just thought, when I saw him-- I thought he'd be a good fit.

JAMES

Really? A good fit? Where? At the country club? At the elementary school? At Christmas? In what way did you think that a boy who was regularly beaten and terrorized, who barely speaks English, who probably let himself be sodomized for a warm pair of socks, and thought he was lucky--in what way did you think he'd be a good fit?

James writes down his cellphone number, puts his card on the table.

JAMES (CONT'D)

If there's an emergency, here's my number. Otherwise, see you Monday.

James leaves, closing the front door firmly.

INT. PETROVSKY HOUSE- VIKTOR'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Viktor's room is empty. Viktor's baseball, jacket and screwdriver are gone.

INT. ANN'S OFFICE - DAY

Ann is mid-session with the Tremaines, John and Louise.

JOHN

I'm not sleeping with anyone. You see, I didn't say with anyone else, because I am also not sleeping with you. I do sleep, but I don't have sex with anyone.

Louise looks away, disbelieving and pained.

LOUISE

You think everything would be fine if we had sex?

JOHN

NO! I think your willingness--I can't believe we now talk about your being *willing* to have sex--but willingness would at least indicate that you had some affection for me, that I'm not just a paycheck and a habit and someone to keep you from being humiliated at your aunt's house on Thanksgiving.

This is so on target, Louise's mouth falls open and so does Ann's, before she quickly catches herself and closes it.

ANN

Maybe, if John's not sleeping with anyone else--and since you've brought this up for the past five sessions and he has denied it every time--I think now you have to choose to believe him or divorce him. There's not much reason to keep beating him with this particular stick.

Phil appears behind the couch the Tremaines are sitting on. Ann inhales in surprise, shakes her head to make the vision disappear and continues.

ANN (CONT'D)

So, maybe what you feel isn't jealousy, Louise, maybe it's loss. And maybe that's what you want to make John feel too.

PHIL

You oughta know, Annie.
I mean, in our case, it was about jealousy AND loss. Personally, I think he *is* screwing around. Good-looking, he knows it. And he needs to know that other people know it. Nice clothes. I have that jacket.

Ann stares. We can hear the rise and fall of Louise's voice in the background. Phil stands behind Louise, as her lips move and she gesticulates. He examines and admires her body.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Nothing wrong with all that. Very nice. She ought to be working it.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

You know, someone should tell women: when you starve the bear, you don't wind up with a large housepet--you get a really angry bear. You oughta tell her. Not that she'd listen.

Phil lays his head on her shoulder and puts his hand on her breast; Louise continues to talk and gesticulate, narrowly missing poking Phil in the eye.

PHIL (CONT'D)

For the love of God. Blah blah de blah blah blah. Still talking. Makes you want to fuck a mute. He's not even pretending to listen. Johnny Cash on the interior stereo. God. Men and women, what a joke.

Phil fades away, blowing Ann a kiss.

LOUISE

--listening to me?

JOHN

(startled)

Yes.

(Beat)

No. No, I'm not. You know I'm not. How could I?

LOUISE

You can't even pretend to listen? I pretend to watch football, I pretend not to mind when your father grabs my ass, I pretend to listen to you talk about who you one-upped at work. More often than not, I am even willing to pretend to come. And you can't even pretend to listen in here, for fifty minutes? Fine.

She gets up and leaves, leaving the door ajar. John looks abashed but bulldoggy, watching Ann for cues.

ANN

Don't look at me, you chased her out of here.

JOHN

I just told her the truth.

ANN

Oh, yeah, that's certainly all anybody needs to hear. I can't do couples therapy without the couple. Do what you want.

(MORE)

ANN (CONT'D)

Go home and get your wife or go call a good lawyer. And, really, word to the wise-- get a good lawyer because that cocky, balls-out, smirky, I'm-the-man bullshit is not going to win you any friends in family court. I know Louise is no picnic, but if you want to stay married, get her back here. If you want to get divorced, just go out late tonight, have a few Martinis and badmouth her to your friends.

John continues sitting.

ANN (CONT'D)

I must not be making myself clear. Go home.

John exits. Phil reappears and sits on Ann's desk. In this moment, we see his sweetness.

PHIL

You come home too, Annie.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ann's house is modestly upscale, attractive and, at the moment, a complete mess. Ann is in her tattered "When Better Men Are Made, Smith Women Will Make Them" T-shirt and sweatpants. She pours a glass of wine, lies down in front of a nicely blazing fire and stares at it.

Phil walks in.

ANN

Hey.

PHIL

Hey.

ANN

Are you okay?

PHIL

You ran me over, for Chrissake, how do you think I am? I'm all right. How about you? Are you okay?

ANN

(ruefully)

You ran me over, for Chrissake, how do you think I am? I'm all right, too. I regret running you over.

Phil lies down on the floor next to her.

PHIL

Oh, regret. You regret it. Which is not the same as sorry or I wish I hadn't done it.

ANN

No.

PHIL

How honest do we feel like being?

ANN

Go for it.

PHIL

I regret that you walked in on me and Donna.

ANN

Oh.

PHIL
And for not being sorry--I am sorry.

ANN
Oh, P., at this point, who isn't?

PHIL
Can I stay tonight? I just--

ANN
I guess. Where were you last night?

Phil looks at her.

ANN (CONT'D)
Didn't go so well?

PHIL
Went great. But I... I don't know. I had
to come home.

ANN
Okay. I've got your shoes.

They both smile.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

In a series of dissolves, Ann and Phil slowly get ready for bed. They hide their bodies from each other as they bundle up in pjs and socks and silently climb into their bed. They lie there, in the dark, feeling the marriage end.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

James drives back, parks and goes up the steps to the office.

From the rear of James' car, we see the top of Viktor's head, then his watchful eyes. He sinks back down into the backseat.

INT. JAMES' ATTIC - NIGHT

James' cellphone rings.

JAMES
James LeCroix.

MR.P. (O.S.)
It's Al Petrovsky. Vic's gone.

INTERCUT: MR. PETROVSKY'S CAR

He's been cruising the streets, looking for Viktor.

MR.P. (CONT'D)

We searched the house and the yard. He's gone, he's not home.

JAMES

I understand. I'm sorry. Have you called the police?

MR.P.

He hasn't been gone that long, I don't think they'll do anything for 24 hours.

JAMES

You don't want to call the police?

MR.P.

You think I should? I thought... You have any other bright ideas?

James takes a pull on a beer.

JAMES

You mean making him feel wanted, respected, even inquiring about the whole decade of his life, about which you know nothing, seeing him as he is and loving him for that?

MR.P.

Jesus, what, were you an orphan? Aren't you supposed to be objective? Aren't you supposed to be helping?

James says nothing.

MR.P. (CONT'D)

Maybe you know something about this, right? Maybe you're not sorry Vic ran off and now we have this problem.

JAMES

Mr. Petrovsky, I did not make Viktor run away. I did not encourage him to run away--not by word or deed--and considering what the world holds for skinny ten year-old boys, I did not for one minute wish for him to run away. You're going to have to lay blame elsewhere.

MR.P.

Really? I don't think so.

Mr. Petrovsky hangs up, pulls the car over and puts his hand to his forehead. After a moment, he shrugs off the weakness. He dials 911.

MR.P. (CONT'D)

Hello, Officer, I'm not sure it's an emergency, it might be--my son is missing.

(pause)

You know Dr. LeCroix?

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ann is in bed. The phone rings. Ann opens her eyes. Phil sleeps on. Ann takes her cellphone into the bathroom.

INT. ANN'S BATHROOM

ANN

Ann Bellows.

FLORIAN (O.S.)

People for you, Dr. B.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FLORIAN'S OFFICE

FLORIAN is the office answering service. He is a vast, coffee-colored man, built along the lines of a medieval fortress or small whale. He dresses in caftans, for obvious reasons. He prides himself on taking good care of "his" people. His voice sounds like the late John Gielgud, with smoky bass undertones.

FLORIAN

It's the Tremaines. They want your first appointment of the morning. It's an emergency.

ANN

An "I-hit-my-wife" emergency, or an "I-got-caught-having-sex-with-our-couples-therapist" emergency?

FLORIAN

Neither. Genuine distress and confusion. "We're drowning in our neurotic ineptitude, please save us." More like that.

ANN

Tomorrow at 7:30 a.m., if you would.
Jeez.

FLORIAN

Okay.

(beat)

Can I ask? Donna Rodinsky?

ANN

Jesus Christ on a crutch. Does everyone
know?

FLORIAN

I'm not everyone and I do still answer
the phone for your soon-to-be-ex. And for
Mr. Lusky, the crisis counselor you
walked out on. Good call, by the way.

ANN

You are Homeland Security.

FLORIAN

Don't you wish. And, you may already know
this, but...your soon-to-be-ex has hired
Leon Snelling.

ANN

Who?

FLORIAN

Very good divorce lawyer. They call him
the Velvet Hammer.

ANN

Phil's hired a lawyer?

FLORIAN

Oh, yeah. Last week.

Ann sits there, shocked.

FLORIAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I thought you--

ANN

It's okay. Goodnight.

She hangs up the phone, softly.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Agitated and sad, Ann looks in on Phil, sleeping in their bed. After a beat, she gets dressed silently and leaves the house, to go to the office. It's the only place that feels safe.

INT. KITCHEN/CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

James comes downstairs, in the near-dark, barefoot, poking around for more food, and nearly collides with Barry, still schlepping stuff.

BARRY

Hi, I'm Barry White.

He cannot quite manage a handshake, so he puts down his boxes and extends his hand. James takes it, reluctantly.

JAMES

Ann left me a note. I'm James LeCroix.

BARRY

Great, good to meet you. I guess we're both working late.

JAMES

Yes.

BARRY

I'll be in Phil Newman's old office.

JAMES

Yes. You might want to get that couch dry-cleaned.

Barry looks appalled.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Just a thought. You might not.

BARRY

I'm a *lawyer*.

JAMES

Yes, with all the probity and moral refinement that that suggests.

He turns to leave.

BARRY

Well, it's been--

JAMES

No.

(more kindly))

Look, it's all right. You can small talk with the others--Raj, for example, is a Zen master of small talk. But don't worry about me. I'm the Mrs. Rochester of the group.

Barry looks at him blankly, the penny drops.

BARRY

Jane Eyre, I read Jane Eyre. You mean you're--

JAMES

(Brightly, as to a kindergartner))

That's right. The freak in the attic.

James leaves, Barry stares after him, shrugs and picks up his box.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A Black-and-white pulls up. Two cops, one black, one white, get out. They knock. No answer. They enter, just as James emerges from the hall.

JAMES

Can I help you?

COP 1

We're looking for James LeCroix.

JAMES

I'm James LeCroix.

They look him up and down, without enthusiasm.

COP 2

You're Dr. LeCroix?

JAMES

Yes I am. Can I help you, officers?

The cops brush him back and enter threateningly.

COP 1

Yes you can.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. JAMES' ATTIC - NIGHT

The cops are not-quite-tossing James' room, pulling out books to examine their titles, holding up his clothes, shaking out his pockets, etc. while questioning him.

JAMES

No, I left their house--four hours ago. Viktor was in his room, on the second floor, near the rear staircase. I left after speaking with his parents, his adoptive parents, in their living room. There is a rear entrance, to the yard, from the kitchen, so it would have been possible for Viktor to leave the house during the time I was talking with his parents...without any of us knowing. I haven't seen or spoken with Viktor since seven o'clock this evening and I left the Petrovskys at about 7:20 and drove straight here.

CU: James' hands tremble slightly. He puts them in his pockets.

COP 1

You're very precise, Dr. LeCroix.

JAMES

Yes. I thought that would help you find Viktor.

(beat)

But, clearly, if I were vague, that would bother you too.

COP 2

You already bother us, Jim.

JAMES

Jim? Jim? Is that supposed to bring me to my knees?

COP 1

That a position that works for you, doc?

James smiles, appreciating the technique.

COP 2

You like kids, doc?

JAMES

Yes, I do. Don't you?

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Barry is carrying another armful, stops and eavesdrops.

JAMES (O.S.)

(provoking them)

They're beautiful and sweet, they smell good, what's not to like? Don't you guys like kids?

Barry closes his eyes in despair. God knows what will happen if he doesn't interfere.

INT. JAMES' ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The cops would like to beat James up, but they don't. They do begin to tear the room apart more violently, ripping a pair of pants, pulling the books out and leaving them on the floor.

COP 1

These people are worried you have their kid. They're good people.

JAMES

They are. I don't.

Barry enters, now wearing a tie.

BARRY

Hi, how's it going? Barry White, Dr. LeCroix' attorney. You gentlemen have a warrant for his arrest? Or a search warrant?

They shake their heads "no", they already know where this is going.

COP 1

No, no warrant. We just wanted the doc's help--one of his patients--a kid, Vic Petrovsky, is missing and we figured the doc would want to help us find the boy.

BARRY

And he does. And since you've asked him your questions--

COP 2

We have a few more.

BARRY

And if you call me in the morning--or any time--Dr. LeCroix and I will be happy to come down to the station and answer more questions.

COP 1

Look--

BARRY

(genially)

Gentlemen, it's late and we're done here. I'll show you out.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Black-and-white drives off, as Ann pulls up. She looks at the retreating cop car in bewilderment. Viktor lifts his head from inside James' car to watch.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

James and Barry also watch the cops drive off.

JAMES

Thank you. I'm not good at things like--

BARRY

If you did do anything like what they think--get another lawyer.

Barry turns and leaves. James looks out the window at the night.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Barry is putting things away. Ann walks past his door, sees him.

ANN

What happened?

BARRY

You saw the cops?

ANN

I did.

Barry puts a few books on the shelf. Ann comes in to help.

BARRY

I can't violate my client's confidentiality.

Ann hands him books and they shelve as they talk.

ANN
No. Of course not. But you can tell me
who your client is.

BARRY
James.

ANN
I would have thought Fred.

BARRY
Manslaughter?

Ann laughs.

ANN
Or Raj.

BARRY
Tax evasion?

ANN
James is a good man.

BARRY
That's my thought.

ANN
So are you. And nice. You are clearly
good and nice.

BARRY
I don't have a choice. My father killed
people for a living. My mother knew about
it and bought a new mink every year. I am
deeply, even pathologically, committed to
being nice--and good.

Ann sits down on the couch and puts her feet up. There's a
little flicker of interest in the air.

ANN
You heard about my husband?

Barry nods, avoiding her eye.

ANN (CONT'D)
Oh, you did hear. Obviously. And this was
his office.

Barry is surprised.

ANN (CONT'D)

I know. Very karmic. So, he's got a lawyer and I guess I need one.

BARRY

I guess you do.

Ann looks at him: Get a clue, buddy. He gets it--at last--and begins to pace, nervously, dropping books.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Oh. Me. You're thinking, me. Well, I think we should take a look at the pros and cons of my representing you. First of all, I'm new in town. I've been here for three days. I don't know anyone except you and Conchata and the guy at Popeye's Chicken on Whalley Avenue.

Ann shifts to get comfortable on the couch.

ANN

Yuck.

Barry keeps tidying and speaking slowly, trying to hide his nervousness.

BARRY

Not bad, really. Second, I've never actually handled a contested divorce. I did help my sister get her fair share from her boyfriend, but that was more--never mind. Third, I am, in effect, your neighbor and colleague and it might even come to pass that we--

As he is about to suggest that they might become more than colleagues, he hesitates and looks her way. Ann is sound asleep. Distracted, Barry does not see Viktor, moving past the door, going from office to office, seeking James.

INT. JAMES' ATTIC - MIDNIGHT

Viktor enters James' moonlit room. After a beat, he takes one of James' sportsjackets for a blanket, and another for a pillow, and curls up on the floor, beside James sleeping in his cot. For the moment, Viktor is safe.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE - MIDNIGHT

One more glimpse of Ann, sleeping safe, now under Barry's jacket. Barry looks on, tenderly. END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. JAMES' ATTIC - EARLY A.M.

James wakes up, stands up in the dim light, and trips over Viktor.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Barry is carrying another box of books. He hears the noise of the fall and rushes upstairs.

INT. JAMES' ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

From Barry's POV: James in t-shirt and drawstring sweatpants disentangling himself from a dazed, frightened Viktor.

BARRY
Get away from him.

James looks up, knowing how bad it looks.

Barry charges into the room and wrestles James up against the wall, trying not to hit him. Viktor watches them, eyes wide. James focusses on Viktor, indifferent to Barry.

JAMES
(in Russian)
You okay?

BARRY
Stop talking to him.

VIKTOR
(in English)
O-kay.

Barry grabs James angrily and pulls him into the hall.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

BARRY
(furious)
I told you, you'll have to get another lawyer.

JAMES
For tripping over him? If he came to me, and I care for him, I must be molesting him? No passion for children except the perverse, is that it? Every man who loves children is a pedophile?

BARRY

Lots of men who 'love' children are pedophiles.

JAMES

You're telling me? As far as I'm concerned, we could reserve the death penalty just for them. And now the only choice for decent men is indifference. I smile at little kids in the grocery store and their mothers push the carts away. Look, I don't disagree--if I had a kid, I wouldn't let him join the Boy Scouts unless the leader was a woman. It's not gay men you have to watch out for--it's just men. But that is not what this is.

Barry relaxes his grip. Viktor peers out watchfully.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(to Viktor, in Russian)

It's okay. My friend was worried about you.

VIKTOR

(In Russian)

He thought you wanted to bugger me?

JAMES

Da.

(to Barry)

Viktor understands completely.

Viktor smiles and steps out, pats himself all over to show Barry he's fine.

VIKTOR

Viktor o-kay. No kissy. No...

He pats his ass.

The men take Viktor back into the attic. He starts to play pool, badly, and watches them, trying to follow their conversation.

BARRY

Call his parents.

JAMES

It's too early.

BARRY

Are you nuts? You have to call them now and tell them he's here and to come get him. And you have to put on some adult clothes. You do own clothes, right?

JAMES

Yeah. All right. I know. You're right--I just thought: poor kid, let him sleep, before the shit hits the fan.

BARRY

Okay. You climb up on the cross, let the parents find him here, whenever that is--and you see how much good you do him when they're screaming rape and abduction.

JAMES

There'd never be any evidence of rape.

BARRY

You like saying things like that to me--so I can wonder if you mean there'd be no rape or no evidence. I know you're not like that.

JAMES

I'm not. You're a good judge of character. There are a lot of women with good reason to hate my guts, but absolutely no little boys...or little girls.

James walks over to the pool table.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(in Russian)

He's telling me I have to call your parents. If I don't, they'll put me in jail.

VIKTOR

(in English)

Call. Co-ward.

He goes into the corner and looks out the window, fighting back tears. James dials and takes a rather good sportsjacket, ironed shirt and tie off the coat rack.

INT. WAITING ROOM - EARLY A.M.

James, Barry and Viktor sit in the very still waiting room. The clock says 7:15.

JAMES

What the hell. How about some poker?
Anybody here play poker?

Barry and Viktor both nod and James, handsomely dressed up and unexpectedly impressive, pulls a deck of cards from Fred's desk.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SCENE - LATER

The three are playing poker. Ann stumbles in, hair every which way and seriously ruffled. The guys exchange glances.

VIKTOR

(in Russian)
She looks terrible.

JAMES

(in Russian)
Shut up.
(in English, to Ann)
Rough night?

ANN

Shut up. And, yes. You all go on about your serious psychotherapeutic endeavor there, I gotta shower.

She leaves, to use James' shower.

VIKTOR

Cigarettes?

James and Barry exchange glances.

BARRY

We don't smoke.

JAMES

It wouldn't look good.

Viktor shrugs and lays down a card. We see the Petrovskys arrive through the window. They stop and watch a Viktor they have never seen: Happily playing cards and grinning.

VIKTOR

(in English)
I am winner!

Viktor scoops up a stack of pennies. The Petrovskys enter the waiting room and Viktor goes blank and still as they approach. James acts as host.

JAMES

Hi. Hey. Good morning. You know, it's early. Let's have some breakfast.

MR.P.

We thought we'd just take him home. Are you okay?

Mr.P. starts to put his hand on Viktor's shoulder. Viktor stiffens. Mr.P., hurt, puts his hand back in his pocket.

VIKTOR

O-kay. Breakfast?

James pulls Barry slightly aside.

JAMES

Go get us breakfast.

BARRY

Me?

JAMES

I can't. They'll bolt. You're not the kind of pompous ass who stands on his dignity--

BARRY

Apparently not.

Barry exits.

INT. ANN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Ann is again mid-session with the Tremaines. Her hair is damp, her clothes are rumpled but she is ready for work. Loaded for bear, in fact.

JOHN

I don't want to get divorced.

LOUISE

Me neither.

JOHN

And I hate when we fight. And I really try not to engage in that, the name-calling, the endless round and round. I think I'm really a pretty easygoing guy.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

And if Louise could just stop--I don't want to use the word 'nagging', I know that sounds critical--

Ann sighs.

ANN

Here we go.

LOUISE

You think so? I don't think you can't stand my nagging, I think you can't stand my speaking. You get this stony, cold look on your face-

ANN

(conversationally)

You know, if I had to live with either one of you, I'd cut my throat.

They look surprised and stop talking.

ANN (CONT'D)

Really. Honest to God--when you two get divorced--which seems inevitable--do the right thing--don't re-marry.

She gets up and walks to her door to usher them out.

ANN (CONT'D)

I can't help you.

They don't move.

INT. JAMES'S OFFICE - MORNING

They are having a sort-of picnic, around a big coffee table. Barry distributes an enormous amount of breakfast food. Viktor helps out, which the Petrovskys observe.

MR.P.

Good coffee.

BARRY

Neptune's.

They fall silent and eat.

JAMES

You know, I didn't handle this right.

BARRY

(worried about a lawsuit)

There's no need--

JAMES

Yeah, there is. It's okay. Maybe you and Viktor can go play some darts.

MR.P

I'm not going to sue him for being a shmuck.

James smiles, which Viktor watches carefully. Barry pokes Viktor and they go to the corner, Viktor still watching over his shoulder.

JAMES

Look, Mr. Petrovsky, I was breaking your balls and I'm sorry. You did the right thing, you brought this boy to a better life. I didn't help. I saw how hard it was for him and--that's what I saw.

The Petrovsky's say nothing.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Here's the thing--he's not brain damaged, he's just angry and terrified and he had ten bad years and it will take about that long to make it better. And you can get the most elaborate work-up in the world and what no one will want to tell you--because no one would want to hear it--is that this boy is going to spoil your family vacations, he's going to give you headaches at school, he's going to break the toys you give him and probably--even though you are decent people--you're going to know the police better than you expected. But he's a tough kid, he's not going down easy.

MR.P.

(with some fondness)

No, he's not. We had the cops on the front porch every night for ten years, between me and my brothers.

MRS.P.

But we *don't*. We thought maybe you'd help us avoid all that...the anger and the breaking things...

JAMES

There is no avoiding it. It's like the weather.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

There's dealing with it, there's being prepared, there's working hard, so he only gets picked up for a little B&E at 14 and not for armed robbery at 16, but...it's so much work. The world--the orphanage, the schools, people like me--we have no right to expect you to work this hard. No one loves without expectation, no one gives without wanting something in return. To keep this boy, there's no reason for you to choose this.

MR.P.

People do. Some people do the hard thing.

JAMES

Yeah, they do. And a few, really just a few--they feel blessed, the kids and the parents, they have had what most of us never do--they have given all they have, without expectation, they have persevered in love when love made no sense and they have saved a life--and most people do not.

MR.P.

Yeah.

(calling out)

Viktor.

(to James)

You just thought I was an asshole, didn't you?

Viktor comes back. Mrs.P. reaches out to smooth Viktor's hair, but he flinches and reaches into his pocket to touch his screwdriver.

MRS.P.

Does he--

James indicates she should address Viktor.

MRS.P. (CONT'D)

(to Viktor)

Do you not like to be touched?

VIKTOR

When they touch, not good. Bad things.

The Petrovskys look at him, understanding. Mr.P. hates to hear it. Mrs. P. puts her hands in her lap. James watches, rooting for them all.

INT. ANN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Ann stands, her back to the Tremaines, looking out the window. John and Louise still sit on the couch, eyeing each other in puzzlement. Beat. Finally, Ann turns around.

ANN

What is it with you people? You have looks, you have luck, you have IQs over 75, no apparent physical disabilities and all you do is piss and moan about how you deserve better. You don't deserve better.

(to John)

Of course, she doesn't want to sleep with you--you're an ice cube all day and wild...turkeys do a better job with foreplay.

(to Louise)

Of course, he doesn't listen to you, not one kind or supportive word comes out of your mouth. What do you think--marriage is easy? It's not. It's not easy. It's glorious and it's terrible--and there are some vast *longeurs*--which is where sex comes in handy--but it is not easy. You're in a little lifeboat, you morons, in a big, cold ocean and here you both are, too lazy to row, too selfish to do one inch more than your share--and there's a hole in the boat and what do you do?

(mimics nastily)

'You fix it, No, you fix it, I fixed it last time--It's your fault, No it's your fault.' Believe me--it is not the other person's fault, it's yours. If there's a leak on her side, you're going down, John. If there's a leak on his side, even if it's due to his own carelessness--even if it's due to his own shocking stupidity--you're going to drown with him, Louise. And do you offer the other person a hand? Do you row when the other one gets tired? Do you forgive? Do you apologize--as everybody needs to--a lot--for our mistakes, for all our accidental cruelty, for the way in which we disappoint each other, all the time? No, you just sit there, co-captains of the What's-In-It-For-Me-Team, waiting for someone else--apparently the Marriage Fairy--to fix it.

John and Louise look at each other, guiltily.

ANN (CONT'D)

There is no Marriage Fairy, people. You help each other or the marriage dies. And then, you're two more people, treading water, alone and cold and wondering what went wrong. Shut up about your needs. Shut up about the past. Do more. Give more.

John looks at Louise.

ANN (CONT'D)

Give what you never got. Love each other more than you deserve, for God's sake.

She gets up and looks out the window. John and Louise get up. John opens the door for Louise, she puts her hand on his arm, they half-close the door and leave Ann, who lies down on the couch. Worn out from helping the Tremaines do what she could not, Ann cries.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - MORNING

The Petrovskys and Viktor leave, as James waves goodbye from the porch.

JAMES

(In Russian)

Viktor, you have to give back the screwdriver.

MR.P.

What'd he say?

VIKTOR

He say--Viktor, see you next week!

Viktor walks jauntily to the family mini-van.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - MORNING

James walks down the hallway, passing Ann's office. He hears quiet crying and peers in through the open door. He thinks a moment, leaves, then returns with a puppet.

INT. ANN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

James shuts the door behind him and sits beside Ann on the couch. She puts her head back, barely opening her eyes, sees the puppet and smiles slightly.

JAMES

Hey.

ANN

Hey.

James puts her head on his shoulder.

JAMES

(using the puppet to talk)

You know what Henry James said?

ANN

No.

JAMES

We work in the dark--we do what we can--
we give what we have.

ANN

Yeah.

Ann closes her eyes, relaxes on James' shoulder and smiles.

FADE TO BLACK

END ACT FIVE