

AN ACT OF GOD

Written by

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A murder mystery comedy ignited by an unrepentant, philandering womanizer. A puckish, heavenly emissary offers one last chance to avoid the "chute to hell." A metaphysical puzzle holds the key to preventing a series of pending new murders. Solving this criminal conundrum will require *An Act of God*.

AN ACT OF GOD

FADE IN:

EXT. HEAVENLY FOG - DAY

Celestial and ethereal beauty with a luminous glow.

JERRY (V.O.)

The world sucks! Countries are at each other's throats. Families are dysfunctional and people hate one another. Why? Relationships! Everything's relationships. If two people can't get along, how do we expect the world to get along?! I know about relationships. Mine killed me.

We HEAR the SOUND of a single, dangling PIANO WIRE as it is dragged behind --

JERRY

As he EMERGES from a bank of celestial fog. He's clearly lost. Dazed. The piano wire, several black & white keys and part of a piano leg dangle from his rumpled clothes.

Jerry's made it past forty, lived beyond his means in every way -- loved women, too many at a time -- loved music and used it to get them; loved himself too much yet had a sense of humor about it, which was never more in need... than now.

A WHITE CONCERT GRAND PIANO

appears out of the heavenly fog before him. Jerry sags onto the piano bench and reluctantly fingers the ivories and SINGS *They're Writing Songs of Love, But Not For Me...* then suddenly stops and looks around as --

DIPUC

saunters jauntily out of the fog. He is the Sergeant-Major Angel Trainer and a master at having a rollicking good time and also is a prodigious butt-kicker.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Am I dreaming?

DIPUC

What's the last thing you remember?

JERRY

I'd lost my house keys and was going to climb up the trellis to an open window.

DIPUC

Then what?

JERRY

Then this tune went through my head and I was here.

DIPUC

(laughs)
That's funny.

JERRY

Why?

DIPUC

You'll see.

A BEAM OF LIGHT

from beyond the clouds splashes onto a rising wall of fog in front of Jerry. Bright colors form an IMAGE of --

A PIANO BAR CAFE

in Beverly Hills. Jerry's at the piano SINGING *But Not For Me* to a sexy BLONDE who's falling under his seductive spell.

JERRY

Hey, that's me. That was tonight.
You filmed that?

DIPUC

We film everything.

The blonde writes her phone number on a napkin and slips it to Jerry before her boyfriend returns to her table.

DIPUC (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

She's hot. You got to her.

JERRY

I'm good.

DIPUC

That's what got you here.

The projected image on the fog bank changes to --

JERRY'S KITCHEN

as his wife, RONNIE, a sexy, spunky Eurasian psychologist prepares a tray of tea service for three.

JERRY

Ronnie...

DIPUC

Yes. Your wife. Probably needs repeating -- your wife. While you were singing, she was doing tea.

Ronnie carries the tray INTO the dining room where CLAUDIA sits at the table. Claudia's body will take a man's breath away and her brain will take everything else.

JERRY

Claudia...

DIPUC

Your ex-wife, who you were still sleeping with by the way.

JERRY

Look at that body, wouldn't you?

DIPUC

You think Ronnie knows...?

JERRY

Hey, I'm really good.

DIPUC

You're smart.

JERRY

Gotta be.

The doorbell in Jerry's townhouse RINGS. At the front door is SIMONE, a tall, sensuous blonde with a playmate's body, who knows just what she wants and how to get it.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ!

DIPUC

No, that's Simone -- your girlfriend.

JERRY

Nobody knows about her.

DIPUC

When you're as smart as you are,
you gotta be lucky. But sooner or
later luck runs out.

JERRY

What's goin' on here?

Simone is ushered into the dining room and is handed a cup of
tea -- and a shotgun. Claudia has a 9 millimeter Glock and
Ronnie has a 44 magnum revolver.

The women sip their tea and load their weapons.

JERRY (CONT'D)

My God, they shot me!

DIPUC

That was their plan, but you came
back too early.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

Jerry has lost his keys and no one answers the doorbell... so
he moves to the trellis to climb up to the open window of the
living room which is on the SECOND FLOOR.

JERRY

So I stopped them. They're in jail,
right? Those bitches.

INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM

Simone peers OUT the window DOWN to Jerry as he approaches
the trellis. Claudia and Ronnie push the baby grand piano
toward the open window.

Jerry looks at Dipuc questioningly...

DIPUC

Maybe it's a comment on your
singing.

OUTSIDE

Jerry steps up to the trellis as the piano tilts out the
window and drops like a black boulder straight for his head.

Dipuc SNAPS HIS FINGERS and the piano stops one inch from
Jerry's head -- the IMAGE FROZEN in time.

DIPUC (CONT'D)
(grins, loving it)
See, a tune went through your head.
Funny, right?

Jerry stares at the image and rubs his head...

JERRY
I don't feel a thing.

DIPUC
You should feel miserable. You
cheated, you lied, and you never
fulfilled your dharma.

JERRY
My what?

DIPUC
Dharma. Your purpose. Your destiny.

JERRY
Okay... what is it?

DIPUC
You'll find it when you get to the
heart of the matter.

Dipuc SNAPS his fingers and the FROZEN IMAGE LEAPS into
ACTION -- REWINDING through moments of Jerry's life.

JERRY
Is my whole life on film?

DIPUC
And the soundtrack.

JERRY
Who put it together?

DIPUC
You did, you dummy. You're the
writer, director, producer and star
of your life. You even chose the
cast.

JERRY
I chose those assholes?

DIPUC
You chose all of them.

JERRY
Why would I do that?

DIPUC

Maybe to make things more exciting,
but it's usually to learn a lesson.
Assholes are good for that.
Probably why you chose so many. But
the good thing is, you can rewrite
your story any time.

JERRY

Change anything?

DIPUC

Yup, it's your story. Drama,
comedy, action-adventure, whatever.

Jerry looks off at --

THE PEARLIE GATES

which beckon him -- shimmering in the heavenly glow. Beyond
the gates are faint images and forms of multi-colored lights.

JERRY

So I go through those gates and
what?

DIPUC

When you get it right, you'll see.
Otherwise...

JERRY

Then I'll rewrite those three
bitches straight to hell -- that'll
get it right!
(excited)
Let's go.

Jerry walks toward the gates... but discovers that he's on a
CLOUD TREADMILL -- going nowhere -- not getting any closer.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I didn't write this part, I thought
this was my story.

DIPUC

Every bit of it. That's the
problem.

JERRY

What problem?

DIPUC

You chose everything that happened to you to create the lesson you most needed to learn. Only you didn't learn it.

JERRY

I didn't?

DIPUC

You gotta really "*get it*" before you can go through those gates.

JERRY

Are you telling me I gotta go back to learn some bullshit lesson because I didn't... "*get it*"?

DIPUC

Exactly.

JERRY

Then let's get goin'.
(Dipuc doesn't move)
What?! C'mon!

DIPUC

They dropped a piano on your head.
(a beat)
You've been cremated.
(a beat)
You have no body.

Jerry looks at himself -- his body looks perfect.

JERRY

Yeah I do, what do you call this?

DIPUC

A frame of reference.

Dipuc passes his arm right through Jerry's body.

DIPUC (CONT'D)

You're what you always were -- spirit. You get to see a body right now so you don't completely freak out.

But Jerry is freaking -- passing his own hand frantically back and forth through his own body.

JERRY
 (finally realizing)
 I'm dead! I can't deal with this!

DIPUC
 True, true, that could get
 embarrassing down there. Lot of
 explaining to do, and you don't
 know the *Ghost* technique yet.

JERRY
Ghost technique?

DIPUC
 You know, from *Ghost*. The movie.
 Patrick Swayze, Demi and the
 Whoopster. They got it right, sort
 of, you know focusing all your
 anger to kick the can --

Dipuc kicks a soda can across the cloud banks and we HEAR the
 SOUNDS of a subway station from the scene in *Ghost*.

DIPUC (CONT'D)
 -- but that's another discussion,
 because right now you do know how
 to move someone.

JERRY
 I do?

DIPUC
 Wanna get to a woman? Tell her
 beautiful words or sing her a
 beautiful song.

Dipuc sings the first line from *Misty* -- sounding exactly
 like Johnny Mathis.

DIPUC (CONT'D)
 Wanna get to a man? Show him a
 beautiful woman.

Dipuc suddenly MORPHS INTO MARILYN MONROE over the subway
 grate from *The Seven Year Itch* -- then SNAPS BACK to himself.

DIPUC (CONT'D)
 Pictures and sounds. Been that way
 since the world began. Control the
 pictures and sounds and you control
 the world. That's where you come
 in, Jerry. You're an expert on
 that. You and the two schmucks you
 gotta save.

JERRY

Schmucks? What schmucks?

DIPUC

Two guys, who are headed for a fate worse than you.

JERRY

Why me? Why them?

DIPUC

They have an opportunity to do what you were supposed to do and didn't.

JERRY

Are we talkin' life and death here?

DIPUC

What these two guys do is gonna influence the world. If the flapping of a butterfly's wings can effect the entire universe, these two schmucks could destroy every relationship forever if they don't get it right.

JERRY

Why can't they get it right?

DIPUC

Same reason you couldn't. They're out of touch with reality and caught up in illusion, a victim of their sensory systems. They see what isn't, instead of what is.

JERRY

So what do we do?

DIPUC

We go back to the very beginning, so you can see where this illusion began. Then you'll know where these two guys are coming from.

Dipuc MORPHS INTO CHARLETON HESTON from *The Ten Commandments* and spreads his arms open wide -- a wooden staff appears in his hand -- and he bellows:

DIPUC (CONT'D)

(as Charleton Heston)

"Behold his mighty hand!"

THE HEAVENLY CLOUD BANKS

part like C.B. Demille's waters of the Red Sea REVEALING --

EXT. NIGHT SKY - DEEP BLACK

The Void.

In the beginning was the SOUND...

We HEAR the distant ECHOES of famous lines from movies uttered by Bogart, Gable, Lombard, Hepburn and more... and phrases from well known romantic songs sung by Sinatra, Mathis, Bennett, Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, Streisand -- all drift in and out, as if blown by the winds of memory.

And the sound becomes VISUAL...

We SEE IMAGES brush across a section of the screen -- logos of motion picture studios, faces of movie stars, singers -- images that are romantic, whimsical, ethereal -- pieces of a collective romantic memory fluttering by.

The random IMAGES and SOUNDS SPIRAL into the center of the screen. Brighter. Faster. Louder -- a ROAR. Swirling images BREAK APART -- HURLING particles from its SPINNING borders, ever EXPANDING, until all unites into --

THE BIG BANG

and in the crash of that moment, everything is BLOWN back into BLACKNESS... and SILENCE. Then...

We HEAR the sparkling refrain of the MAIN MUSIC THEME rising into the darkness.

We SEE a tiny FLICKER of LIGHT -- a pinpoint. Then another. And another. Shimmering lights... the twinkling stars of a big, expansive night sky. The CAMERA TILTS down REVEALING --

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE - ON TREE BRANCHES - NIGHT (THE PAST)

...WITH PIANO MUSIC OVER, The CAMERA DOLLIES past the tree branches, REVEALING that two little boys are holding the fake branches next to a four foot high cardboard cut-out of a hand-drawn castle wall.

Beside it is an ELECTRONIC PIANO played by --

CHARLIE GUNTHER

seven years old in cowboy boots, jeans and a cowboy shirt.

An adorable five-year-old girl, JENNIE, sits next to him.

Suddenly, a pretty seven year old brunette, VALERIE, appears along the castle wall wearing her mother's "borrowed" evening dress and "make-up."

OUR CAMERA continues to DOLLY, REVEALING --

A LITTLE RED WAGON

with a Bell & Howell 8mm home movie camera on a tripod, that is "dollying" with the young girl. Eight-year-old IAN pulls the wagon and pinches Valerie's rear end as she passes.

The seven-year-old camera operator & director --

TOM VAN ARSDALE

wears a Pittsburgh Pirate's baseball cap.

VALERIE

"Romeo, Romeo, where for art thou,
Romeo?"

(stops and looks at Tom)

Tommy, Ian just pinched me and I
have to go potty.

TOM

Cut! Cut!

(to Ian)

Ian, stop the wagon.

(to Charlie)

Charlie, Jennie stop the music!

Ian stops the wagon and Charlie stops playing the piano. Tom jumps off the little red wagon.

JERRY (V.O.)

Wait a minute, I gotta deal with
these kids?

DIPUC (V.O.)

Show me the boy at seven and I'll
show you the man.

TOM

(walking to Valerie)

In "*The Way We Were*," Barbara
Streisand didn't go potty, in
"*Casablanca*," Ingrid Bergman didn't
go potty! You're supposed to be
Juliet -- you can't go potty! This
has to be perfect!!

VALERIE
 (whining, not enthused)
 We've done this three times.

CHARLIE
 This is a love story, Valerie. You
 don't always get it right the first
 time!

Tom BLOWS OUT a CANDLE atop the castle wall and we SEE:

EXT. STUDIO LOT - ON SUNRISE BACKDROP - DAY (PRESENT)

What we see is a gorgeous -- absolutely realistic -- vista of sunrise cresting the dunes of the Sahara Desert. It's also the EXACT VISTA used in "*Lawrence of Arabia*" when Peter O'Toole first journeys into the vast Sahara.

For a moment, we HOLD on this magnificent visual splendor -- which appears absolutely real -- until -- it MOVES away from us, thus revealing what it really is -- a backdrop on wheels being hauled across the studio lot.

As the backdrop CLEARS FRAME, CHARLIE GUNTHER and TOM VAN ARSDALE, now grown men, walk past a sound stage.

CHARLIE'S small in stature, but with an impish charm that excuses assorted flaws. He wears cowboy boots, jeans, and a gray brushed-wool sport coat with leather patches.

TOM'S a physical force, but his playful eyes reveal the little boy inside. He wears a Pittsburgh Pirate's cap with clothes from Banana Republic and Eddie Bauer.

HOWEVER... both men are frazzled and exhausted.

Suddenly, illusion pours out around Tom and Charlie as --

THE MASSIVE SOUND STAGE DOOR

slides OPEN revealing a BLACK INNER VOID from which MUSIC rushes forth, followed quickly by costumed munchkins, aliens, horses, wranglers and angels with tattered wings.

JERRY (V.O.)
 How come we don't have wings?

DIPUC (V.O.)
 They don't hang well on thoughts.

JERRY (V.O.)
 Huh?

DIPUC (V.O.)
You'll catch on.

Charlie and Tom pay no heed to this flood of strange humanity pouring from the sound stage, including the --

SEVEN SCANTILY-CLAD WOMEN

all made-up to look like Princess Leia from Star Wars.

MOVING BEHIND the seven princesses, we HEAR:

JERRY'S VOICE
These babes are hot. I'll have three phone numbers and a dinner date in an hour. God, I love being back down here.

DIPUC'S VOICE
Before you get too turned on, you might wanna take a good look at yourself.

JERRY'S VOICE
AHHH!

Suddenly, the LAST TWO PRINCESS LEIAS, turn around. We SEE that they are Dipuc and Jerry, surprisingly sexy in drag.

JERRY
Holy shit, I'm a girl!
(panicked)
I can't be a girl!
(suddenly intrigued with his breasts)
Are these tits real?
(feels his breasts)
These are real.

Jerry's enthralled with copping a feel on himself.

DIPUC
Only in your thought. You can look however you want, but you gotta see it perfectly. The pictures you create in your thoughts are exactly what you're gonna get.

Dipuc MORPHS THEM BACK to their heavenly selves.

DIPUC (CONT'D)

To Picture Is To Create. That's
step number one in our guidebook,
"Getting It Right." Next time it's
up to you. But no more breasts.

Jerry stares sadly at his male chest -- his hands still
cupped around his now phantom breasts.

JERRY

Okay, why Hollywood? Why now?

DIPUC

Hollywood's the ultimate illusion.
No one sees it as it is.
(points to Tom and
Charlie)
And they're not kids anymore.

EXT. SOUND STAGE 16 - DAY

Charlie and Tom walk past the cavernous open doors.

INSIDE, a grand sweeping staircase leads to a glow of
heavenly light bathing Dipuc and Jerry standing at the top.

Tom and Charlie DO NOT see them.

TOM

This is where God would be if He
was in the movie business.

Dipuc looks at Jerry with a knowing smile.

Tom suddenly veers INSIDE the magical darkness. Charlie
follows in depressed silence.

INT. SOUND STAGE 16 - ANGLE ON SET WALL - DAY

as Tom and Charlie appear around the corner of a set wall.

The CAMERA DOLLIES with them as they walk through an open
cross-section of "hot sets" -- down the aisle of a Boeing 747
only to disappear through the tail section and emerge into
the periscope command center of a nuclear attack submarine.

CHARLIE

Maybe we've lost touch with
reality.

Jerry and Dipuc tag along behind...

JERRY

Hey, he gets it.

DIPUC
Not until he acts upon it.

TOM
How can we write a relationship
story when none of our
relationships have ever worked?

DIPUC
(to Jerry)
*Awareness is the second step in
"Getting It Right."* It's the key to
transformation that begins to
separate illusion from reality.
Once you're aware, the key is to
act upon it.

They continue through the far water tight door and step out
onto a lunar landscape kicking up "moon dust" as they walk.

TOM
God's dirty trick is He put two
sexes on the planet who have no
idea where the other's coming from.

CHARLIE
And schmucks like us are supposed
to figure it out. We're screwed.

Depressed, they step OFF the lunar landscape and track "moon
dust" onto the floor of a NEW set -- an EXACT DUPLICATE of
the INTERIOR OF "Rick's" FROM "Casablanca."

Charlie wanders over to the piano and plays a melody that is
the INTRODUCTION to a SONG that seems FAMILIAR...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Why do we always end up with the
wrong woman?

The intro flows into the main verse of "*As Time Goes By.*"

TOM
Because we wouldn't know the right
one if she was carrying a sign.

Tom WALKS OUT and Charlie soon follows.

DIPUC
Time for you to take over.

JERRY
By myself -- with those idiots?

DIPUC

At least they know they're screwed up.

JERRY

Are you shitting me?! What do I do?!

DIPUC

Remember, they can't see you unless you want them to. So be careful how you see yourself.

JERRY

Who are you anyway?

DIPUC

They call me Dipuc.

JERRY

Dipuc???

DIPUC

Dipuc.

Dipuc FADES into thin air...

DIPUC (CONT'D)

See ya around.

JERRY

When?! Hey, Dipshit!

...and Jerry's suddenly alone at "Rick's."

JERRY

Shit...

INT. CHARLIE AND TOM'S OFFICE SUITE - DAY

Behind the secretary's desk is a tough ol' broad who has worked for everyone from Billy Wilder to Sydney Pollack to Steven Spielberg. She takes no shit, is frighteningly efficient, seen it all, shocked by nothing and possesses a commanding gravelly voice. This is PEARL. She is Tom and Charlie's last bastion of sanity and control -- their anchor.

Pearl reads through the stack of phone memo tear-offs.

PEARL

The head of the studio called.

TOM

Nate Tanner called us?!

PEARL

He wants to talk to you.

(next memo slip)

Nate Tanner called again, wants to know where you are.

(next slip)

Nate called and wants you to call the moment you get in.

(next slip)

He called back and started screaming. I hung up on him.

CHARLIE

(panicked)

You hung up?!

TOM

Oh shit!

PEARL

(calmly reads next memo)

He called right back and apologized for screaming and asked me to slip him a copy of what you've written.

TOM/CHARLIE

(really panicked)

What'd you tell him?!!

PEARL

I told him you wanted to surprise him.

Charlie drops onto the couch in despair...

PEARL (CONT'D)

Which you will when he finds out you haven't written a word in six months.

CHARLIE

So I guess we're --

Pearl motions with her hand to indicate "eye-level deep..."

PEARL

(indicating)

Up to about here.

INT. TOM AND CHARLIE'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Standard studio writer's furniture. Two desks back to back. A worn couch. A stained coffee table. An old stuffed chair. Papers and magazines strewn about. A mess.

The distinctive SOUND of CRUNCHING is heard as both guys walk over the spilled remnants of the mixed nut bowl. They take their respective positions -- Tom behind the computer and Charlie on the couch. Tom FLIPS OPEN his laptop.

TOM

Okay -- gotta get to work.

Silence... Then... the CRUNCHING of nuts being chewed.

OUT THE WINDOW

that leads to the flat roof, A HEAD SLOWLY APPEARS... it's Jerry and he PEERS INSIDE at Tom and Charlie.

Tom gets up and begins to pace -- right by the window, and --

OUT ON THE ROOF

Jerry DUCKS DOWN BELOW the window frame just in time.

JERRY

How can Dipshit leave me alone with these two schmucks?

INSIDE THE OFFICE

Charlie drifts back into memory. He HEARS SARA'S VOICE in his head, like a soft distant whisper on the wind...

SARA'S VOICE

Charlie... Hey, Charlie, you know what? -- If you married me, you could have that family you said you always wanted.

The remembrance of her voice drifts out of his head while --

OUT ON THE ROOF

Jerry looks around for the woman whose voice he just heard.

JERRY

Okay, where's the babe???

She's not on the roof. Jerry peeks in the window, but he can't see the whole office so he leans on the wall to get a better angle -- and he FALLS RIGHT THROUGH THE WALL --

INSIDE THE OFFICE

and crashes to the floor on the far side of the desk. Charlie stares right at him and Tom paces right toward him...

JERRY (CONT'D)
Sorry, I was just looking in and --

Tom walks RIGHT THROUGH HIM and Charlie doesn't respond.

JERRY (CONT'D)
(realizes)
Shit, they can't see me or hear me.
I'm not really here.
(looks around)
Where's the woman?

SARA'S VOICE
Charlie, did you hear anything I
said?

Jerry spins around but THERE'S NO ONE THERE... except Charlie who gazes off in reverie. Then Jerry HEARS single PIANO NOTES... but there is NO piano.

Jerry notices that Tom DOESN'T RESPOND to the piano notes, just like he didn't react to the woman's voice. But Charlie's right hand plays an "imaginary" keyboard as he tests the notes out in his head to see if they work.

JERRY
(stares at Charlie)
That woman, the music, it's in your
head. Amazing, I can hear what's in
your head!

Charlie HEARS more notes. He likes them -- a lot. Suddenly, he sits up and begins writing the notes down on a crumpled piece of paper he grabs off the floor.

JERRY (CONT'D)
(to Charlie)
Hey, that's not a bad tune.

Suddenly Charlie is stuck and replays the same run of notes, with the last note NOT working.

JERRY (CONT'D)
You need an A Flat there, Schmuck.
(hums the notes)
Da, da, da, da, dee, dee, da, dee,
DA.

Charlie tries an A Flat in his head the way Jerry hummed it and likes the sound. He marks an A Flat down on the paper.

JERRY (CONT'D)

If I can hear your thoughts, how
come I'm not gettin' anything from
that guy?

Jerry looks at Tom who is blank.

TOM

I don't see shit. You?

CHARLIE

I'm hearing something!

Jerry leans back against the wall as he contemplates what
he's learning about them and he FALLS BACK OUT --

ONTO THE ROOF

flat on his back. He gets up and walks back toward the wall
with the intent of passing right through it but SMASHES into
it and FALLS down dazed. He tries passing his hand through
the wall, but just meets a solid obstruction.

JERRY

How the hell does this work?!
(suddenly wonders)
Am I real now? Is that it? Is that
how I reach these guys? Am I one of
them now?

Jerry STEPS IN FRONT of the window just as Tom walks up and
stares outside -- RIGHT THROUGH Jerry.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You really can't see shit.

Jerry makes faces but Tom can't see him and doesn't respond.
Jerry flips him the bird -- still no response.

CHARLIE

(scribbling notes)
I think I got our title song.

Jerry drops his drawers and presses his bare butt right
against the window -- MOONING Tom's face.

TOM

What an asshole!

Jerry hears that and dives away from the window in panic,
until he HEARS:

TOM (CONT'D)

We don't even have a script and
you're writing title songs!

CHARLIE

Other than heartburn, that's the
only thing that comes easy.

(pauses)

Do you think I should call Sara?

TOM

(frustrated)

She doesn't want to see you again,
remember?

Charlie slips back into painful memory. Tom stares into the
computer screen intently. Nothing. No ideas. Bone dry.

Jerry watches them again from out on the roof.

JERRY

C'mon guys, come up with something.
Please!

Beat. Beat. Beat.

CHARLIE

(suddenly excited)

I got it! I got it!!

TOM

(excited)

What?!

CHARLIE

(half singing)

Ahhh...

"A day of pain.

A night of agony.

A time when love starts

to fall apart and die."

TOM

This is a comedy, remember?

Both guys just stare out into space, hopelessly lost.

JERRY

They're pathetic, they're gonna
shit all over me. If I'm tied to
these two assholes I'm goin'
straight to hell!

As if by command, a --

HUGE HOLE

OPENS up in the roof -- right under Jerry -- and he DROPS DOWN onto a CORKSCREW CHUTE that rockets him straight to --

INT. HELL - ETERNAL NIGHT

Here the end of the chute ejects him out into a dark cavern and he lands FACE FIRST into a goopy, gloppy pile of -

JERRY

Shit!

(wipes face, smells)

Oh shit!

A big glop falls from above -- right on top of his head! He wipes it off and sees it as --

JERRY (CONT'D)

Shit!

Looking up, he's smacked in the kisser by another plop of --

JERRY (CONT'D)

Shit!

He wipes it off just as a BURST OF FLAME LIGHTS UP the cavern for a moment. Jerry looks up to SEE TWO BARE BUTTS bent over the rim of the cavern, their assholes aimed right at him.

The cavern GOES DARK AGAIN. We HEAR the ERUPTION of WET FLATULENCE and Jerry is pelted again by --

JERRY (CONT'D)

Shit! Shit!!

Jerry doesn't know which way to turn! He panics!

JERRY (CONT'D)

God help me!

Suddenly, he's enveloped in a gaseous, white cloud which --

ROCKETS HIM

in an UPDRAFT through the blackness and lands him gently on --

A CUSHION OF HEAVENLY FOG

where Dipuc leans down and helps him up. Jerry is stunned to find he's squeaky clean as if fresh from a cleansing shower.

DIPUC

I told you to watch what you think.

JERRY

You said watch what I picture.

DIPUC

You don't have pictures without first having thoughts.

JERRY

You mean because of what I thought and said about those two assholes --

DIPUC

They shit all over you in hell -- yes.

Jerry's beginning to get it...

DIPUC (CONT'D)

Thoughts and words have wings, and pictures give them flight.

JERRY

Okay, okay... I guess that's why they couldn't hear me or see me.

(thinks)

But how did I fall through their wall? All I wanted to do was lean against it to get a better view.

DIPUC

Yes, but your exact thought was: "*I could see better if I was inside.*"

JERRY

Yeah, well then when I was out on the roof again how come I couldn't walk back through it -- 'cause that's what I wanted to do?

DIPUC

But your exact thought was: "*I don't wanna go through this again.*" So, you didn't.

JERRY

So is this "thought-picture" bullshit some kind of exact science?

DIPUC

Yes. To think is to create, and to think clearly and specifically is to think powerfully.

(MORE)

DIPUC (CONT'D)
*Power Picturing, that's Step 3 in
 "Getting It Right."*

Jerry digests that until a horrible thought rushes out --

JERRY

Do you know how many stupid people
 are down there? How're you supposed
 to deal with all of their thoughts
 and pictures?

DIPUC

Just deal with your own, you might
 be surprised by how many you
 influence.

JERRY

Yeah, well I did get the little
 asshole to come up with a nice
 tune. I might be able to get to
 him. But I don't have a connection
 with the other guy yet.

(instinctively)

I wanna see what Tom's thinking.

Instantly, the heavenly fog is SUCKED UP and away from IN
 FRONT of Jerry, REVEALING --

TOM

standing by the office window looking out over the roof.
 Jerry is right where he was standing when the "chute to hell"
 opened up in the roof. Jerry CAN SEE INTO Tom's eyes.

INT. TOM & CHARLIE'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Tom CAN'T see Jerry. Tom thoughts are now somewhere else --
 somewhere painful -- his brow begins to furrow.

FLASHCUT

Very brief -- almost a flash -- of shower spray splashing a
 woman's (MAGGIE'S) naked chest. We DO NOT see her face.

ON TOM

as the memory is bittersweet.

FLASHCUT

Just a flash -- of Tom's bare chest pressing against Maggie's
 naked breasts as the shower water cascades between them.

ON TOM

As he falls deeper into the memory.

FLASHCUT

of Tom rubbing a soft soapy sponge across Maggie's breasts.

ON JERRY'S EYES

as we SEE the sexy image reflected in his eyes and PULL BACK to SEE Jerry getting turned on.

JERRY

C'mon, show me her ass, work it on down.

Again, as if by command, Tom blinks recalling the memory.

FLASHCUT

of Tom's hand tracing down the curve of her naked back... lower... and lower, then --

A sharp intercom BUZZER shatters the moment.

ON JERRY

dismayed at the interruption of erotica.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Hey!

ON TOM

Jerking out of his reverie, he SLAPS the intercom button.

PEARL

(through intercom)

Thought you'd like to know. Nate Tanner's on his way over. Do you want me to open the window?

TOM

No, we got it.

Both Tom and Charlie rise together in a synchronized routine and walk toward the window.

Tom OPENS the window while Charlie slides a chair underneath it and grabs a golf putter leaning against the wall.

In smooth choreographed fashion, Charlie steps up on the chair and OUT the window, handing the putter to Tom, who then steps up on the chair and OUT the window.

Tom uses the putter to push the chair out of the way -- tosses the putter back into the room -- CLOSES the window -- thus erasing all evidence of their avenue of "escape."

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Jerry backs up as Tom and Charlie walk toward him -- but he TRIPS and FALLS DOWN -- and Tom and Charlie WALK RIGHT OVER him, their feet actually stepping through him. Jerry feels nothing and stands up brushing himself off.

Tom and Charlie stop and check the bottoms of their shoes.

TOM
Smells kind of like dog shit.

CHARLIE
Yeah, but nothing's there.

JERRY
I smell like dog shit?!

Tom and Charlie sniff the air, shrug and walk off...

CHARLIE
Yeah...dog shit.

Jerry flips them "the bird" as Dipuc appears beside him.

DIPUC
You haven't had enough shit for one day?

JERRY
(jumps)
Jesus -- yes -- where'd you come from -- yeah, no more shit, please.

DIPUC
If they're sensing you, then you're getting closer to a connection.

JERRY
Really? That's good then, huh? Even if it's dog shit, at least it's something.

DIPUC
Yes, but you'll find that dog shit will only take you so far.

JERRY

I haven't gotten them to see me yet, but I could see what Tom was thinking and I can hear Charlie's thoughts.

DIPUC

Pictures and sounds.

JERRY

Like a movie.

DIPUC

That you've got to project --

JERRY

-- so they can see it and hear it.

DIPUC

That's *step 4, The Law of Projected Picturing.*

JERRY

Yeah -- but how do I do that?

DIPUC

First...Make sure that what you see is what you want because it's what you're gonna get. Then you must project it outwardly with passion!

Tom and Charlie are near the end of the roof.

EXT. STUDIO OFFICE BUILDING ROOF - DAY

Tom and Charlie follow their well-worn path around the air conditioning unit, under the giant satellite dish and over to the elevated outer wall, all while...

TOM

Maybe we start the story when the guy meets the girl... or we could start at the break-up and flashback.

They approach JERRY, who's now AHEAD OF THEM and CLOTHED as a studio HANDYMAN. He stands BEHIND the air-conditioning unit making repairs. They SEE him FROM THE WAIST UP.

TOM (CONT'D)

(to Jerry)

How ya doin'?

Jerry looks around to see if there is someone else with them.

JERRY
Are you talking to me?

TOM
Yeah.

JERRY
So you can see me. That's great.

TOM
I guess...

JERRY
What do I look like to you? Do I
look like a studio handyman?

Tom looks to Charlie for help...

CHARLIE
Well... nice tools.

JERRY
This is great. I guess I'll be
talking to you guys later.

TOM
Sure...

Tom and Charlie walk past this weirdo... then Dipuc appears.

JERRY
Hey, I got them to see me. I
pictured a studio handyman and
that's what they saw.

DIPUC
Your projected picturing technique
needs work.

JERRY
No way, I got this down...

Jerry steps out from behind the air-conditioning unit and
from the waist down he is A WOMAN, dressed as Princess Leia.

DIPUC
*Step number 5. A Clear Picture
Brings Belief. And belief brings
the passion necessary to manifest
it. You weren't clear. Without
clarity, there's no passion.*
(grins)
You were more real as dog shit.

LONG HIGH SHOT - ACROSS ENTIRE STUDIO - DAY

The two SILHOUETTED FIGURES of Tom and Charlie climb onto the ledge of the elevated wall and trudge along the perimeter to the neighboring building.

They step across onto the roof of the new building and traverse it to the metal gangplank that connects to the big studio water tower all while:

CHARLIE

We gotta do a relationship story where they don't break-up. I can't handle another break-up -- even in a screenplay.

TOM

They can break-up, then get back together for a happy ending.

They walk across the gangplank onto the catwalk that circles the water tower and leads to an iron ladder to the ground.

CHARLIE

(rush of hope)
Get back together?

LOW ANGLE - LOOKING UP WATER TOWER LADDER

as the two men descend the iron rungs of the ladder -- Tom first, Charlie right above him. Peering down on them FROM THE CATWALK is Jerry -- now a "complete" handyman.

TOM

Don't even think about calling Sara!

Jerry tries to climb over the side onto the ladder, but his handyman tool belt gets caught on the railing and he SLIPS OFF the top rung -- DANGLING and SWAYING wildly.

CHARLIE

Why did we break up with them?

TOM

We didn't! They broke up with us.

Tom reaches the ground and heads toward the BACK ENTRANCE to the commissary. Neither one sees Jerry struggling above them to unhook his tool belt.

TOM (CONT'D)

Maybe we're incapable of feeling.

Tom OPENS the back door to the commissary.

CHARLIE

I'm not, I feel like shit.

They disappear INSIDE THE COMMISSARY.

A moment later, Jerry SPLATS onto the ground, raising a cloud of dust -- his tool belt dangling from the railing above:

JERRY

OW, damn it! How come that hurts if my body is only thought?

Dipuc EMERGES out of the cloud of dust:

DIPUC

Step number 6 is: You Manifest What You Picture And Believe It To Be."
When you fell, you expected pain.
It has no reality except as a suggestion.

JERRY

So if I don't believe it...

DIPUC

...you won't feel it.

From above, a hammer SLIPS OUT of the dangling tool belt and LANDS ON HIS HEAD -- followed by a wrench -- and Jerry DOESN'T react, feeling nothing.

JERRY

And you expect me to buy that?

A screwdriver DROPS from above and IMBEDS in Jerry's skull.

DIPUC

Eventually.

With the screwdriver sticking out of his head, Jerry heads for the back door to the commissary.

JERRY

I better catch up to those guys before they totally screw things up.

Jerry reaches for the door, but suddenly --

THE IMAGE OF A ANOTHER DOOR OPENING

is PROJECTED onto the commissary door -- REVEALING NATE TANNER STRIDING INTO Tom and Charlie's OFFICE.

The LIGHT SOURCE of the PROJECTION of this MOVING IMAGE comes from DIPUC'S EYES.

NATE TANNER is an imposing man. Dark hair, dark eyes. Attired in an expensive hand-tailored suit from the Via Veneto in Rome. This is how God would dress if he had the money.

NATE

Are they in?

PEARL

Out to lunch.

He walks INTO Tom and Charlie's INNER OFFICE.

PEARL (CONT'D)

Sometimes they go for little walks to work out their storyline.

NATE

Well they better walk their little asses into my office with that storyline, or they'll be out to lunch permanently.

He picks up some papers strewn on the floor and reads. Jerry looks over to Dipuc as his eyes beam the projected scene.

JERRY

Does the success of my mission depend on these two schmucks writing a good script?

DIPUC

Yup.

JERRY

I was afraid of that.

Nate's expression darkens as he reads the script pages...

NATE

This is unmitigated crap!

PEARL

They're revising it.

NATE

Not like the old days is it, Pearl?

Nate heads for the door.

PEARL

Drop by any time, always good to see you, Nate.

NATE

You should run the studio, Pearl.

PEARL

(shrugs)

Conflicts with my bowling night.

As Nate walks out, Jerry steps IN FRONT of the projected beams from Dipuc's eyes and HIS SILHOUETTE is CAST AGAINST the commissary door.

JERRY

I gotta get these guys writing.

Jerry turns around to go in the commissary and SEES his SILHOUETTE PROJECTED on the door -- with the SCREWDRIVER STUCK IN HIS HEAD. He reaches up and touches the screwdriver, making it very real for him -- and SCREAMS in pain!

JERRY (CONT'D)

AHHHH!

Jerry YANKS OUT the screwdriver. The projected light from Dipuc's eyes TURNS OFF and his eyes go back to normal.

DIPUC

Anything gettin' through to you yet?

Pissed off, Jerry tosses the screwdriver and heads INSIDE.

INT. COMMISSARY - DAY

Tom and Charlie select their food from the cafeteria line...

CHARLIE

What was the last thing you said to Maggie?

TOM

(thinking... then)

"I guess not."

CHARLIE

Huh?

TOM

She said, "I guess there's nothing more to say." And I said, "I guess not."

CHARLIE

Doesn't sound angry like Sara.

TOM

(pained)

Yeah, well, there wasn't anything left to break.

Tom and Charlie reach two empty seats.

Claudia -- Jerry's ex-wife, now wearing a "SFX Dept" jacket -- and JENNIE, an adorable woman, are seated across from them.

AT THE ENTRANCE

Jerry, now WEARING A BANDAGE ON HIS HEAD, spots Tom and Charlie -- and Claudia!!

JERRY

What the hell is she doing here?!
Why isn't she in jail -- she murdered me!

DIPUC

Your death was a freak furniture accident, nobody suspected the women.

JERRY

What?!

DIPUC

They drove all night to Vegas to go shopping. To celebrate.

JERRY

Celebrate?!

DIPUC

Your gardener discovered your body the next morning when the neighbor's dog was peeing on you.

JERRY

I never liked that dog.
(points at Claudia)
And I'm gonna nail that bitch too!

AT THE TABLE

both guys stare at their food.

TOM

Okay, suppose we start with our guy meeting the girl.

CHARLIE

What do you think attracts them to each other?

TOM

I like the way women move, how everything fits together... like an aura.

CHARLIE

Kind of spiritual.

TOM

No, physical. You can feel it -- a tingling -- like electricity.

CHARLIE

You're just feeling horny.

TOM

Yeah, but what is that really? Ever think about it?

CHARLIE

Not in electrical terms.

Jennie and Claudia cast furtive glances at the men while Jerry now stands across the table glaring at Claudia.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Maybe it's really simple.

TOM

(nodding)

You're either immediately attracted or you're not.

Jerry suddenly LUNGES ACROSS the table to strangle Claudia! But he goes RIGHT THROUGH HER and CRASHES BEHIND her!

CHARLIE

Yeah, but what do you know about someone immediately?

TOM

Maybe all you need to. Who said
"eyes are the windows to the soul?"

CHARLIE

da Vinci...or maybe Lady Gaga.

TOM

Suppose you do know everything when
you first look into someone's eyes?

Jerry RISES like a dark phoenix BEHIND Claudia -- gripping a
fork in each fist -- REACHES AROUND her face -- and JAMS the
forks BACK INTO HER EYES -- passing harmlessly through her
head -- EMBEDDING PAINFULLY INTO his own chest!

JERRY

(staggers away)
AHHHH!!!

CHARLIE

Did you look into Maggie's eyes
when you first met?

TOM

I guess... but I couldn't get past
her body. What about Sara's?

CHARLIE

I saw them as violet, like
Elizabeth Taylor's in "Ivanhoe."

TOM

Were they?

CHARLIE

(suddenly realizing)
I'm not sure.

Claudia suddenly interjects --

CLAUDIA

Men don't like commitment.

CHARLIE

(looking over)
How do you know?

Jerry wobbles between them -- snarling at Claudia like a
wounded wolf -- the forks stuck in his chest, dripping blood.

CLAUDIA

I was married to one.

CHARLIE
That's a commitment.

CLAUDIA
Not to this asshole.

JERRY
Bitch!

Dipuc steps between them -- grabs an embedded fork in each hand -- places his foot against Jerry's chest -- and YANKS OUT the forks in a burst of blood!

JERRY (CONT'D)
(careening off)
AHHHHH!!!!

JENNIE
We couldn't help listening.

TOM
(wants an answer)
Why don't men like commitment?

CLAUDIA
Because you're afraid of losing control. So you chicken out emotionally 'cause you're afraid of getting hurt.

CHARLIE
And women aren't hurt when a relationship breaks up?

JENNIE
Women go through their hurt during a relationship, men after.

CHARLIE
Sometimes I think women commit before they know what they're committing to.

JENNIE
Then what about your eye contact? Don't men commit when they like what they see?

Charlie and Jennie have a connection with their eyes. Jennie has a sparkle when she looks at Charlie -- something's happening -- she knows it -- but Charlie doesn't quite "get it" even though he "feels" something.

All the while this is going on --

JERRY

addresses the commissary crowd like a religious revivalist, but now with his CHEST BANDAGED. No one can hear him.

JERRY

I believe in commitment. So did God. That's why he put planets in orbits. But commitment to women is not about staying in your orbit. No, No, they wanna drag you into theirs. Now orbits can cross and intersect for sex, but then keep going. Gotta keep going. Cuddling-- that's just a trap to slow you down and deteriorate your orbit. Men hold back because emotionally women are like a galactic black hole. You get too close you get sucked in and feel your balls compressed by all those female hormones until your manhood light can't get out, can't escape that event horizon! Then they whittle and mold you into what they want you to be--their singularity--a slave to their every desire --

(jumps up on a table)

-- and then when they've got you just the way they want you, they spit you out because you don't interest them anymore! Then you're just...just...space trash!!

He walks down the table to Claudia, who stares at Tom.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Women are planet killers!

(points to Claudia)

Especially that bitch!

CLAUDIA

(to Tom)

You said eyes are the window to the soul. How real do ya think that is?

Jerry jumps off the table and sticks his face right next to Claudia -- eyeball to eyeball -- SCREAMING:

JERRY

Very real -- 'cause all I see in there is the black hole of hell!!

Suddenly -- Charlie sees Nate Tanner ENTER the far end of the cafeteria! Nate searches the crowd with his eyes.

CHARLIE
There's Nate!!

Both guys desperately look for an escape route.

JENNIE
What do you guys do?
Tom dives under the long table...

CHARLIE
We're writers.
Charlie slips below the table...

CLAUDIA
I hope you're not writing a love
story.

UNDER THE LONG TABLE

Charlie and Tom crawl between a forest of feet and legs.

HIGH ANGLE - LOOKING DOWN TO TABLES

The labyrinth of cafeteria tables stretch end to end and at right angles like a domino pattern all the way to the main entrance. Nate scans the room for Tom and Charlie.

Like a rhythmic wave, people all along the tables bend down to look under their table at who is "stepping on" their feet.

UNDER THE TABLE

Tom and Charlie can see the light at the end of the table tunnel and crawl faster. They're almost out, when Nate's pair of Italian shoes STOPS right at the end of the table.

Tom STOPS dead cold and Charlie BARRELS right INTO his ass head first. Both men hold their breath -- frozen still.

NATE

looks around... finds nothing.

NATE
Assholes.

Then LEAVES... AT THE END OF THE TABLE, Tom and Charlie squirt out from underneath, still crawling, and scoot OUT the FRONT ENTRANCE --

EXT. COMMISSARY - DAY

-- INTO the arms of Nate Tanner, who hustles them INTO a waiting limo!

INT. NATE'S LIMO - DAY

Panicked, Tom and Charlie sit on either side of Nate. In the rear-facing seat is SIMONE -- Nate's girlfriend -- and Jerry's former girlfriend oozing sensuality in a mini-skirt.

CHARLIE

We're glad we ran into you. The script's almost finished.

TOM

Yeah, and you're gonna love it!

Nate doesn't even look at them. The limo ROARS off!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dipuc drags a reluctant Jerry along the sidewalk...

DIPUC

Keep up with me, will ya?

...and OUT INTO A CROSSWALK.

JERRY

Where are we going?

DIPUC

Right here.

In the MIDDLE OF THE CROSSWALK, Dipuc turns Jerry around to face the oncoming traffic as --

NATE'S LIMO

barrrels down on them!

JERRY

AHH!!

INT. NATE'S LIMO - DAY

The limo SMASHES into them and Dipuc and Jerry get SUCKED INTO the front seat. Jerry's freaked. Dipuc's calm.

JERRY

Holy shit!

(to driver)

You asshole! I was walkin' there!

DIPUC
We're not here for him.

Jerry's eyes follow Dipuc's glance into the back seat where Tom and Charlie struggle not to look at Simone while she toys with Nate -- CROSSING AND UNCROSSING HER LEGS -- LEANING OVER to scratch an ankle while EXPOSING HER CLEAVAGE.

JERRY
Oh my God, Simone's in on this too?

DIPUC
She's Nate's girlfriend.

JERRY
I just died, how could she be Nate's girlfriend?
(off Dipuc's grin)
She was doin' him while doin' me?!

DIPUC
While you were also doing your wife and ex-wife.

Simone's sensual tease has all the men adjusting their pants.

JERRY
This is hell right here, isn't it?
No fire, no shit -- just women to drive you crazy.

DIPUC
That's why Nate feels these guys need psychological help.

JERRY
My wife's a psychologist, she could certainly screw them up.
(off Dipuc's grin)
Oh no... first Claudia, then Simone -- tell me we're not going to...

OUT THE WINDOW

We SEE a sign that reads: *PSYCHOLOGY UNLIMITED, INC.* as the limo slides into the parking lot of a chic office building.

JERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh shit...

EXT. PSYCHOLOGY UNLIMITED, INC - DAY

The parking spaces are filled with five luxury cars. Their license plates: PSYCHO1, PSYCHO2, PSYCHO3, PSYCHO4, PSYCHO5.

NATE'S LIMO stops -- Tom and Charlie are SHOVED OUT...

NATE
Get out, get in, and get well!

The limo door SLAMS SHUT and the limo ROARS OFF...

INT. PSYCHOLOGY UNLIMITED OFFICES - INNER CORRIDOR - DAY

Smoked glass corridor. DR. COSGROVE, a tightly wrapped, fortyish WASP stands with his colleagues, DR. ROSENTHAL, eternally beleaguered and pressing fifty, and Jerry's wife, Ronnie, as they peer through a two-way mirror into the session room at Tom and Charlie.

ROSENTHAL
Human wreckage.

COSGROVE
Crashed and burned trying to make their relationships work.

RONNIE
I can understand that.

ROSENTHAL
Well I gotta go. My rabbi found out about my girlfriend.

COSGROVE
Which one?

ROSENTHAL
His wife.
(leaving)
And my kid's being bar mitzvah' d this weekend.

Ronnie leaves as Cosgrove ENTERS the Session Room with Tom and Charlie. We SEE Jerry and Dipuc REFLECTED in the window.

JERRY
Claudia, Simone, and now Ronnie.
These poor schmucks are surrounded by murderers.

DIPUC
There are no accidents.

JERRY
(finally gets it)
This is why I'm here.