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LIAR LIAR

Written by

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Rough draft, April 1996

INT. FULGHAM KINDERGARTEN -- WEDNESDAY MORNING

Two dozen KINDGERGARTNERS listen to their teacher, MS. BERRY. The word "Work" is on the blackboard.

MS. BERRY

"Work." Today we're going to  
share what our parents do for  
work.

QUICK CUTS of a series of five-year olds standing beside  
their desks, addressing the class:

JEFF

My dad is a truck driver.

MELINDA

My mommy is a doctor.

CAROLYN

My dad is a librarian and my  
mom is a vegetarian.

THEODORE

(with difficulty)  
My father is a struck-she-al-  
engine-ear.

CRAIG -

My mother is an actress. She  
works at Denny's.

KELLY

My daddy works at a place  
where they make stuff, and my  
mommy is a mommy.

ELLIOT

(looking a little

CRAZED)

My father is a postal worker.  
The QUICK CUTS end with MAX:

**MAX**  
My mom's a teacher.  
As Max starts to sit:

**MS. BERRY**  
And your dad?

**MAX**  
**(HESITANT)**  
My dad? He's . . . a liar.

**MS. BERRY**  
(taken aback)  
  
A liar? I don't think you  
mean "a liar."

**MAX**  
Well... he wears a suit and  
goes to court and talks to the  
judge and--

**MS. BERRY**  
**(RELIEVED)**  
Oh! I see-- you mean he's a  
lawyer.

Max shrugs.

**INT. COURTROOM .-- DAY**

FLETCHER REID, early 30's, stands before the JUDGE. His  
manner is utterly genuine and convincing.

**FLETCHER**  
A dark street. . . a stormy  
night... two desperate men  
struggle... one man is taken  
to the hospital, the other to  
ja il. The prosecutor wants  
you to believe this is an  
open-and-shut case of a poor  
man, brutally victimized.  
He nods at the victim - - a fragile OLD MAN in his 70's.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**  
Well, for once I agree with  
t he prosecutor. This is an  
open-and shut case -- but the  
true victim is my client.  
Fletcher's CLIENT is a 250 pound brute in a suit.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**  
Put yourself in his shoes for  
a moment--walking home from  
church, alone, in a  
frightening part of the  
suburbs.  
As he describes his client's movements, Fletcher ACTS THEM  
**OUT:**

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**  
You're nervous, timid, looking  
over your shoulder -- when  
suddenly, you encounter him--  
(pointing at the  
old man)

pouncing from the shadows.  
You quiver in fear. The  
streetlight flashes on  
something shiny in his hand--  
a knife?

Suddenly Fletcher becomes the attacker, brandishing a  
weapon. The jurors RECOIL.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

And in that terrifying instant  
you do what any respectable  
citizen would -- you defend  
yourself. Only after you  
shatter his arm and collarbone  
do you realize it's all a  
mistake... the man was merely  
walking away from an ATM  
machine, the apparent flash of  
metal caused by his bank card.  
He reveals the weapon in his hand is only a credit card.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

**(CONCERNED)**

As you stand over his  
crumpled, though potentially  
still-dangerous form, your  
heart goes out to him. You  
want to help. First, you  
gather up the many bills he  
dropped, to stop them from  
blowing away. Second, in an  
effort to get the name and  
number of someone to notify,  
you take his wallet. Finally,  
you leap into the man's Lexus  
to head for assistance, when  
suddenly a police car speeds  
up. You breathe a sigh of  
relief: "Someone to look after  
the injured man! Oh joy!"  
But do the police applaud your  
initiative? Do they hail your  
heroism? No-- they arrest you  
and throw you in the slammer!  
He walks along the jury box:

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

◆ And why? Why does the State  
turn its massive power against  
this individual?  
(takes an

**IMPRESSIVE**  
moment, then  
answers his own

**QUESTION:)**  
Discrimination,  
(to a black

**JUROR)**  
But this time it's not based  
on race.  
(to a female

**JUROR)**  
Not based on gender.  
(to a man wearing  
a crucifix)  
Not based on religion,  
(to a heavy set

**JUROR)**

No--this time it's  
discrimination based on size!  
. I know what the prosecution  
wants you to think - - i t ' s  
always the big guy's fault.  
Is that what we've come to as  
a society -- persecuting  
people because they're large?  
Fletcher points accusingly at the opposition.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Shame on you, Mister  
Prosecutor! Shame on you!  
(turning back to

**JURY)**

The state is trying to  
barbeque my client on the spit  
of Justice. Only you can douse  
the flames. The decision is  
your s. And please...don't let  
your emotions run away with  
y ou . The fact that my client  
is a family man, raising his  
sons alone after the tragic  
death of their mother, has  
absolutely no bearing on this  
case.

In the front row we see two sad-faced YOUNG CHILDREN.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Instead, let cold reason be  
your guide as you decide the  
fate of this church-going,  
orphan-rasing widower!  
Fletcher returns to his seat. Jurors, dab their eyes.

**EXT. COURTHOUSE -- AFTERNOON**

Fletcher bounds down the stairs, passing a fellow LAWYER,

**LAWYER**

How's it going, Fletcher?

**FLETCHER**

(he' s won)  
Another gratifying day serving  
Justice.  
Fletcher's huge client catches up to him.


**CLIENT**

Hey great job, Mr. Reid. I  
wish there was some way I  
could show my appreciation.

**FLETCHER**

Stay out of my neighborhood  
after dark.  
A PUBLICIST carrying, a clipboard approaches Fletcher.

**PUBLICIST**

Mr. Reid, do you have a   
moment-?

**FLETCHER**

No, I'm late picking up my  
son.

**PUBLICIST**

-Because a couple of reporters  
want to interview you about  
your big win today.  
Fletcher instantly shifts directions.

**FLETCHER ..**

How's my hair?  
And he's off to woo a GANG OF REPORTERS.

**EXT. SUBURBAN PORCH - AFTERNOON**

A sad Max and his mother, AUDREY, wait silently on the steps.

**MAX**  
What time is it?

**AUDREY**  
(checks her

**WATCH)**  
I ' m sure he just got tied up  
in court again.  
Finally, Fletcher's BMW pulls up. Max races to him,  
delighted.

**MAX**  
Dad!

**FLETCHER**  
Maximillian!  
(calls out a

**COMMAND)**

**TRANSFORMERS!! .**  
Fletcher instantly becomes a human version of the  
TRANSFORMER TOY making ROBOTIC MOVEMENTS and SOUNDS. Max  
knows the routine well, moves in perfect sine with dad. . ...  
Until -- .

**FLETCHER**  
Malfunction in vector 3 ! !  
Malfunction in vector 3!!  
(pretends to lose  
control of a  
'robotic' arm)  
Look out! It's on tickle  
mode!!  
Fletcher's "mechanical arm" becomes CLAW-LIKE, TICKLING MAX  
like crazy! Max loves it.  
Audrey watches these two kids, smiles.

**FLETCHER**  
(re: Audrey)  
And who is this lovely lady?  
Max, could you introduce me?

**MAX**  
That's no lady, that's mom!

**AUDREY.** ♦  
Thanks, Max.

♦ **FLETCHER**  
Mom? !  
(under his

**BREATH)**  
Himm. . . I don't remember her  
looking that good,  
(becomes the  
robot again)  
Malfunction in Vector 4!  
Malfunction in Vector 4!  
Fletcher's other robotic arm becomes a "pincher", comes  
after Audrey.

AUDREY

(PLAYFULLY)

Keep Vector 4 away from me.  
Unless you want Vector 4  
chopped off.

FLETCHER

You know, you were much easier  
when we were married...

(re: her luggage)

So where are you off too?

AUDREY

Stanford. I'm delivering a  
paper.

FLETCHER

O h really? Where I live, we  
use a boy on a bike.

MAX

Hey mom, dad's taking me to  
see wrestling!

AUD REY

(MILDLY

PROTESTING)

Oh, Fletcher!

FLETCHER

(PLAYFULLY

mimicking her)

Oh, Audrey!

AUDREY

Do you have to take him to  
those things? They're so  
violent.

Fletcher IMITATES the familiar wise, old INDIAN CHIEF DAN  
GEORGE.

FLETCHER/DAN GEORGE

The boy must learn the way of  
the warrior. And who better  
to teach him than Rowdy Rod-  
Piper and Big John Stud?

Audrey can't help but LAUGH.

FLETCHER/DAN GEORGE

He must be schooled in the way  
of the face-claw, the sleeper-  
hold, and the purple nuxple.  
For only then--

AUDREY

(PLAYFULLY)

Shut up!!

FLETCHER/DAN GEORGE

(to Max)

The squaw will never  
understand us.

A HORN HONKS. It's the good-natured, affable JERRY. Max  
runs up to him.

JERRY

Max, my man!  
Jerry gives Max "five", then kisses Audrey on the lips.

**JERRY**  
Fletcher, good to see you?

**FLETCHER**  
What? No kiss for me?

**JERRY**  
(re: luggage)  
What do you say, Max? Give me  
a hand?  
Fletcher grits his teeth as Jerry gives Max a piggyback  
ride to get the luggage.

**FLETCHER**  
(to Audrey)  
I didn't know the boyfriend  
was going.

**AUDREY**  
Jerry. His name is Jerry and  
yes, he's going.  
Audrey heads inside.

**INT. HOUSE - DAY**



Audrey enters, shuts the blinds.

**FLETCHER**  
To Stanford? Overnight? Does  
this mean you two are...  
(cringes, can't  
say the words)

**AUDREY**  
I've been seeing him seven  
months, what do you think?

**FLETCHER**  
I was hoping that after being  
married to me, you'd have no  
more strength left.

**AUDREY**  
. Well you have to remember when  
we were married, I wasn't  
having sex nearly as often as  
you were.

**FLETCHER**  
MEDIC!! I've been hit.

/-

**EXT. HOUSE - DAY**



Audrey locks up.

**FLETCHER**  
Well, great... I'm so happy  
for you two. I am just Mister  
Happy man. Happy, happy,  
happy.

**AUDREY**  
Relax, Fletcher. It looks  
like Jerry's taking that job  
offer in Boston.  
Fletcher turns sincere.

**FLETCHER**  
Aud, I am so sorry...

Behind her back, he FLAILS in celebration. She glances back... He stops, whistles innocently.

**JERRY**  
(calling to

**AUDREY)**  
Ready?  
Audrey and Jerry say goodbye to Max. They get in his Explorer.

**FLETCHER**  
(to Audrey)  
Yo u gonna be okay? Because if not, we could leave Max with your sister and I could go out with you two, does that appeal to you at all?  
They drive off.

**FLETCHER**  
Wave to the soon-to-be ex-boyfriend, Max.  
(flipping Max the

**KEYS)**  
You drive.

**INT. BMW - AFTERNOON'- MOVING**

Fletcher is driving, Max beside him.

**MAX**  
Dad, are we really going to go to wrestling?

**FLETCHER**  
Absolutely, Maxattacker. We just have to stop by the office for one minute.  
Max SIGHS. He's heard this before.

**EXT. SKYSCRAPER - AFTERNOON**

Establishing the headquarters of ALLAN, STEWART &

**KONIGSBERG.**  
As they head inside, Fletcher and Max pass a BEGGAR.

**BEGGAR**  
'Scuse me, sir. Do you have any change?

**FLETCHER**  
(patting his

**POCKETS)**  
'Fraid not. Sorry.

**INT. SKYSCRAPER LOBBY - AFTERNOON**

Fletcher grabs The Daily Journal, paying for it with a HANDFUL OF CHANGE. His son takes this in. On their way to the elevators Fletcher and Max pass PHILIP, a dweebish bore.

**PHILIP**  
Fletcher!

**FLETCHER**  
Philip!



**PHILIP**

And this must be Max!

**FLETCHER**

(trying to brush  
him off)

. Yes. Yes it is. Well, it was  
good seeing you--

Fletcher starts off with Max, when Philip calls after him.

**PHILIP**

You know, Ethel and I had a  
blast at our last little get-  
together.

**FLETCHER**

Oh, me too. I can never get  
enough of charades. We'll  
have to do it again sometime.

Fletcher heads into an open elevator... only to find the  
door's closing impeded by Philip's foot.

**PHILIP**

When?

**FLETCHER**

Soon.

The door again begins to close... when Philip stops it.

**PHILIP**

How 'bout tonight?

**FLETCHER**

Not that soon. I'm taking Max  
to see wrestling--

**PHILIP**

We love wrestling.      We could--

**FLETCHER**

I don't think so. See, Max is  
really shy around strangers.

Max looks up at Fletcher.      He isn't.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Tell you what -- give me your  
card as a reminder. I'll call  
y o u . Soon. Promise.

**PHILIP**

Great!

Philip hands him his card just as the door closes.

**INT. ELEVATOR - AFTERNOON**

Max watches as his father TEARS PHILIP'S CARD IN TWO.

**INT. RECEPTION AREA OF LAW OFFICES - AFTERNOON**

The receptionist, JANE, greets them. Jane has an ODD,  
UNATTRACTIVE HAIRDO. A large GIFT BASKET is on her desk.

**JANE**

Hi, Mr. Reid.  
(indicates, her

**HAIR)**

What do you think?

**FLETCHER**

Fabulous! I love it.  
(indicates the

**BASKET)**

What's this?



**JANE**

I don't know who sent it. But  
it's for Mr. Allan. It's his  
anniversary.

**FLETCHER**

Ah... The Partnership  
Committee meeting still  
scheduled for Friday?

**JANE**

(as she goes)

Yep...

Fletcher quickly removes a gift card from his pocket,  
scribbles on it, puts it in place of the one already there

**MAX**

What are you doing?

**FLETCHER**

Oh, I'm... fixing the card,  
(shows him the  
old card)  
Look, they spelled Mr. Allan's  
name wrong. Have an apple.

**INT. MIRANDA'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON**

...Where a troubled FRED RAND is talking to MIRANDA, a  
beautiful, steely partner.

**FRED**

I can't do it.

**MIRANDA**

Fred, it's your duty to  
present the strongest case  
possible.

**FRED**

The strongest case possible,  
consistent with the truth.

**MIRANDA**

Let the Judge decide what's  
true. That's what he gets  
paid for. You get paid to  
win.

**FRED**

If you insist on my taking it  
to trial, I'll represent Mrs.  
Cole aggressively and  
ethically. But, Miranda -- I  
won't lie.

Miranda looks out her window, calculating.

**MIRANDA**

Then we'll just have to find  
someone who will.

**INT. HALLWAY OF LAW OFFICES -- AFTERNOON**

Fletcher strides through the hallway with Max, calling out  
GREETINGS to his colleagues.

**FLETCHER**

Hey, Pete! Great tie!



Max looks at PETE, -whose fashion-disaster tie startles him.

**FLETCHER**

Thomas--looks like you're  
losin' weight.

THOMAS glances up from a file. Max notes that he's  
corpulent.

**THOMAS**


Gained three pounds.

**FLETCHER**

(wedging past

**HIM)**

On you, it works.

Fletcher arrives at his office. WE MEET his secretary, the  
fiftyish, .worldly-wise and world-weary GRETA. 

**GRETA '**

M ax ! What's new?

**.MAX**

Well. . . it's my birthday  
tomorrow. We're having a  
party and everything.

Fletcher's EYES WIDEN. He has clearly forgotten.

**GRE TA**

I'm sure your dad'll give you  
something wonderful.

Fletcher tries to wave her off, awkwardly stopping when Max  
turns to him. .

**MAX**

Yeah?

**FLETCHER**

Oh, yeah. You're going to  
love it. Uh, why don't you  
play in my office for a  
minute? Fax something, sue  
someone, have a good time.  
We'll be leaving in a second.

Max heads into the office. Fletcher closes the door behind  
him turning it into a silly, two-handed wave.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Damn! I completely forgot.

**GRETA**

Oh, there's a surprise.  
Greta produces a wrapped GIFT.

**FLETCHER**


You're a saint. I should get  
you something.

**GRETA**


You did.  
She holds up another, smaller package.

**FLETCHER**

Ah. Well, I always do the  
classy thing. Any calls?

She hands him a stack of mail. 

**GRETA**

. Let's see.. . 

**(CHECKING**

**MESSAGES)**

Judge Patterson's clerk. He  
needs your filing.

**FLETCHER**

Tell him it's in the mail.

**GRETA**

(jotting down a

**NOTE)**

Right. You'll do it next  
week. Mr. McKinley phoned,  
questioning that fourteen  
hours you billed on Christinas  
Eve.

**FLETCHER**

Write him a long, explanatory  
letter. Then bill him for the  
letter.

**GRETA**

(jotting down a  
. note). ..  
Done. Your mother called.

**FLETCHER**

I ' m on vacation.

**GRETA**

This is your fifth week. . ♦ .

**FLETCHER**

It's a long vacation.

**GRETA**

(jotting down a

**NOTE)**

"Break mother's heart." Done.  
And that's it, except  
Miranda's looking for you.

**FLETCHER**

(checking watch)  
As if I don't have anything  
better to do than bow and  
scrape at her royal perfumed  
p artner feet. Tell her I'm in  
court.

**GRETA**

Court's closed.

**FLETCHER**

Tell her I broke my leg and  
had to be shot.

**GRETA**

**(WHISPERS)**

Why don't you tell her  
yourself?  
As Miranda approaches, Fletcher switches gears in an

**INSTANT:**

**FLETCHER**

--And then send out a notice  
of judgement on my win today!

**GRETA**

(DRY)

I'll get right on it.  
Fletcher turns -- and pretends to be surprised.

**FLETCHER**

Miranda! I didn't see you.  
Hey, you look lovely, today.  
Here, I bought you a gift.

He grabs Greta's gift and hands it to Miranda.

**MIRANDA**

Thanks. I heard about your  
victory today. You're making  
quite an impression on the  
partnership committee.

**FLETCHER**

(FEIGNING

PUZZLEMENT;

THEN)

Oh, that's right. You folks  
are meeting again soon.  
"Allan, Stewart, Konigsberg,  
and Ried." There's something  
about the rhythm of fours.  
It's like a full measure.  
Well, anyway, I've got a  
client waiting in my office--

**MIRANDA .**

Actually, something important  
has come up. You're not busy  
tonight, are you?

Before Fletcher answers, we:

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE - EVENING**

A sad Max sits on Fletcher's big sofa. His heart sinks  
further when Fletcher enters. . . carrying two boxes of  
documents.

**MAX**

We're not going, are we?

**FLETCHER**

Of course we are. A promise  
is a promise. We are gonna  
see wrestling or my name isn't  
Fletcher T. Reid.

**FLETCHER**

(to wrestler)

Could you hand me that?  
(the wrestler

DOES)

Thank you.  
(without looking

UP)

We are having some fun, eh  
Maxer?

PUSH IN on Max; he isn't.

**♦INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Jerry paces. Audrey is on the phone, waiting. She notices  
Jerry pacing.

**AUDREY**

Are you alright?

**JERRY**

Uh, yeah, just, uh... how long  
are you gonna be on the phone?

**AUDREY**

I just wanted to say good-  
night to Max, but he must  
still be out with Fletcher,  
(hangs up)

**JERRY**

**(SUDDENLY)**

Will you marry me?  
She's SHOCKED.

**I**

**AUDREY**

Uh...would I . . . ? What did you  
say?

**JERRY**

**(NERVOUS)**

I proposed, I . . . Look, I know  
this Boston thing is a great  
opportunity, good job,  
mo ney . . . everything. But I  
started to think about being  
three thousand miles away from  
you and Max. And I didn't  
like it. I-- Look, I know  
it's a lot to ask, to move and  
everything, but I . . . I love

you. I love your son. Will  
you marry me?

She stares at him, excited, but nervous.

**EXT. HIGH RISE APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING**

Early morning outside Fletcher's building.

**INT. FLETCHER'S STUDY - MORNING**

Fletcher types on his computer. He's been up all night.  
He leans back, rubs his eyes. When he opens them he sees  
Max standing there in pajamas. Fletcher SMILES.

**FLETCHER**

Max Factor... Happy birthday.  
How old are you today?  
T h i r t y ? Forty?

**MAX**

Five.

**FLETCHER**

Well, you've held up well. I  
only wish there was some way  
to commemorate such an  
occasion, some small symbol to  
mark this day, like....

Fletcher produces --

**FLETCHER**

. . . A present! .

Max eyes it with wonder.

**MAX**

What is it?

**FLETCHER**

(no idea)

It's... it's.

(it hits him)

a surprise.

Max knows his father doesn't have a clue but he rips the box open, revealing, a BASEBALL, GLOVE, DODGER'S CAP, and

**FULL MAJOR LEAGUE STYLE UNIFORM.**

**MAX**

Baseball stuff!

\_J

**FLETCHER**

Baseball stuff.

**MAX**

(hugging his dad)

Will you play catch with me?

**FLETCHER**



:

Absorootentootenlutely.

Max beams.

**FLETCHER**

Tonight. After your party,  
you have my word on it.

Max nods sadly as Fletcher turns back to his work.

**EXT. JERRY'S CAR - MORNING**

Jerry and Audrey are driving. Audrey's holding a couple of airline tickets.

**AUDREY**

(re: tickets)

Jerry, these are for tomorrow.

**JERRY**

The company wants me to get  
started right away.

**AUDREY**

I can't just pick up and move  
to Boston with two days  
notice.

**JERRY**

Just come check it out. You  
and Max, see the town. Let's  
pick out a place together.  
Then, if you want to turn me  
down and scar me for life,  
fine.

**AUDREY**

It's just not that simple...  
What about my job? I've been

at UCLA three years.

**JERRY**

It's New England. They're lousy with colleges. You can't swing a bat back there without hitting a college.

You'd get a job there in a second.

**AUDREY**

There are other factors involved.

**(POINTS)**

There they are now. ♦.  
They pull up in front of Fletcher's building where Fletcher and Max are waiting. Fletcher's still reviewing a file.  
As Audrey gets out of Jerry's car, Max runs over.

**AUDREY**

Did you have fun? How were the wrestling matches?

**FLETCHER**

Big fun. Manly fun. Am I right, Maxie?

**MAX**

**(HALF-HEARTEDLY)**

It was fun..

♦

**FLETCHER**

(re: Audrey)

So how were the wrestling matches ? Did you have fun?

**JERRY**

Max , my man! My happy birthday man!

Max and Jerry exchange "fives" and a hug. Jerry gives Max a light punch on the arm.

**JERRY**

One-two-three-four-five... and one for good luck.

**FLETCHER**

Did you see that? He struck the child!

**MAX**

Look what dad got me!  
(shows the glove)

**JERRY**

Whoa! Great! I have my glove in the car. We'll stop in the park on the way home and play catch. Then tonight we'll oil

it, wrap a rubber band around it. . . It'll be great.

(to Fletcher)

Great birthday present, dad!

Fletcher hates him. Jerry and Max go to Jerry's car.

**FLETCHER**

(makes a fist)

When is it his birthday?

♦.



**AUDREY**

Some thing's come up. We need to talk.

**MAX**

Mom, let's go. I want to play.

**AUDREY**

(to Fletcher)  
We'll talk tonight.

◆

**FLETCHER**

Tonight?

**AUDREY**

Max's birthday?

**FLETCHER'**

Oh , yeah, right. Seven. I knew that. I did. I blocked it out weeks ago. The se ven tee nt h of May. Max's birthday.

**AUDREY**

It's the eighteenth.

**FLETCHER**

The seventeenth of May is the day I .remind myself that the eighteenth is Max's birthday. See you tonight.

They drive away.

**INT. MIRANDA'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Miranda, and Fletcher's new client, VIRGINIA COLE, an alluring woman in her early thirties/ review the document he spent the previous◆night putting together.

**VIRGINIA**

This is good. This is really smart.

**FLETCHER**

Thank you.

**VIRGINIA**

Only i t ' s . . . Like not true. Every word of it is a lie.  
Fletcher and Miranda exchange glances.

**VIRGINIA (CONT'D)**

I mean... isn't that a problem?

**FLETCHER**

Mrs. Cole, the only problem here is that after you've provided years of faithful service and loving support, of raising his children -- They are his?

**VIRGINIA**

H m ? Oh yeah. One for sure.

**FLETCHER**

After all that, your husband wants to deny you a fair share of the marital assets based on one single act of

INDISCRETION--

VIRGINIA

Seven.

FLETCHER

Hm?

VIRGINIA

Seven single acts of indiscretion.

FLETCHER

--Seven acts of indiscretion, only one of which he has any evidence of, and all of which he himself is responsible, for.

VIRGINIA

He is?

FLETCHER

Mrs. Cole, I stayed up all night last night studying your case. Not just your case... but you. And, by now, I feel I know you. You are the victim here. The wife of a cold, distant businessman. Starved for affection, driven into the arms of another man--

VIRGINIA

Seven.

FLETCHER

(not missing a

BEAT)

--Seven other men. You're not trying to deny him what is rightfully his. All you're insisting on is what is rightfully yours. And maybe an idgy-smidgy bit more. I think you're bending over backwards.

VIRGINIA

Well, I did agree to give him joint custody of the kids...  
(to Miranda)  
He's always been a good father.

FLETCHER

And you've always been a good wife.

VIRGINIA

(getting worked

UP)

Yeah. . .

FLETCHER

There's such a thing as being too nice. That's why you need aggressive representation. To show the court that there is

more than one side to this  
story. All I'm asking is the  
opportunity to see that  
justice is done on your  
behalf.

(takes her hand)

Will you give me that  
opportunity?

He stares into her eyes. A moment, then...

**VIRGINIA**

Yes! I ' m tired of getting  
kicked around.

**FLETCHER**

Good for you!

**VIRGINIA**

Thank you, Mr. Reid. I ' m so  
grateful I have an attorney I  
can trust.

She gives him a HUG and momentarily grabs his ass. With a  
farewell nod to Miranda, she leaves.

Miranda turns, smiles at Fletcher, then shuts the door.  
She moves in on him.

**MIRANDA**

You're good. You're really  
good.

**FLETCHER**

Oh, pshaw.

(pronounces it  
with the "p")

She picks a piece of lint off his jacket.

**MIRANDA**

No, I mean it. The Cole case  
is worth a truckload of money  
to this firm, not to mention  
the press it's going to  
generate. You win this case  
and I guarantee you'll make  
partner.

**(STRAIGHTENING**

his tie)

Actually, how would you like  
to make a partner right now?

**FLETCHER**

Excuse me?

She grabs his lapels and pulls him in for a deep KISS.

**INT, AUDREY AND MAX'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

A PARTY in progress, KINDERGARTNERS being entertained by a  
MAN in a clown suit and clown make-up.

**CLOWN**

**(SINGING)**

Captain Fuzzy is my name,  
Making children happy is my  
game,  
With a shake and a juggle,  
And a big belt buckle,  
You'll all be glad I came. '

He flops down on his back causing something in his pants to  
HONK. Audrey and Jerry watch.

**AUDREY**

(indicating the

**CLOWN)**

What do you think?

**JERRY**

Well, if you don't hire your  
brother, who will?

She heads into...

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

**JERRY**

They called me again from  
Boston. They really want me  
there tomorrow.

**AUDREY**

. . . I can't go to Boston.

**JERRY**

How come?

**AUDREY**

Max.

**JERRY**

He'll love it there.

**AUDREY**

It's Fletcher.

**JERRY**

Fletcher?

**AUDREY**

I can't move Max three  
thousand miles away from his  
father.

**JERRY**

Audrey, I have never said a  
bad word about your ex --

**AUDREY**

I know.

**JERRY**

But how much responsibility  
does Fletcher take for Max,  
now? He'd never come over if  
you didn't remind him.

**AUDREY**

I know. But if they're three  
thousand miles apart they'll  
never see each other.  
Fletcher will never come to  
Boston and how can I send Max  
cross-country to him?

**JERRY**

So because your ex-husband is  
unreliable, we can't --

**AUDREY**

I know, it's not logical, it's emotional. I'm sorry.  
Pause.

**JERRY**  
I still want to marry you.

**AUDREY**  
Are you sure?  
Jerry picks up the PHONE, pulls out a piece of paper, dials.

**JERRY**  
(into phone)  
Mr. Crisitelli, Jerry Shelton... I hope I'm not calling too late... Mr. Crisitelli, I'm afraid I have to turn down your offer..'. So am I . . . Well, I've fallen in love with this beautiful woman in L.A. and she doesn't want to leave and I won't leave without her... Well, thank you very much... Yes, good-bye.

(hangs up)  
He wasn't there, but that's  
1 the speech I would've made.  
She smiles and KISSES him. The PHONE RINGS. Audrey answers.

**AUDREY**  
Hello...

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**INT. MIRANDA'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

**AUDREY**  
Fletcher, where are you?  
We're getting ready to cut the cake.

**FLETCHER**  
Urn, actually, something has come up. A problem on a new caaa--  
Miranda bites one of Fletcher's nipples.

**FLETCHER**  
A-h-h-h-!

**AUDREY**  
What happened?

**FLETCHER**  
Nothing. I just nailed my  
◆knee into the desk... Listen, I'm really sorry I can't 'make it.

**AUDREY**  
Max is going to be so disappointed.

**FLETCHER**  
I'll make it up to him, I promise. I'll pick him up from school tomorrow, okay?

**AUDREY**

Do you want me to put him on  
the phone?

Miranda starts "reeling in" the phone cord.

**FLETCHER**

Ah, no. I have to go.

**AUDREY**

Right.

ANGRILY, she hangs up. Fletcher stares UNHAPPILY at the  
phone, before Miranda THROWS HIM BACK ONTO THE COUCH.

**INT. AUDREY AND MAX'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

WE PAN DOWN from banners reading HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MAX! . . . to  
a room full of guests... to a desultory five-year-old.  
Audrey finishes lighting the candles on the homemade cake.

**AUDREY**

All right, birthday boy, make  
a wish.

Max doesn't respond.

**AUDREY (CONT'D)**

C'mon, honey. It can be  
anything-- whatever you want  
most in the world.

When he .doesn't respond, she leans down to him..

**AUDREY (CONT'D)**

Max, your dad is sorry. He  
had to work.

**MAX**

He said he was coming. He  
promised.

**AUDREY**

Yes, well, he... promises  
he'll see you tomorrow.

Max doesn't believe it. <

He turns his full attention to the candles on the cake. In  
VOICE OVER we hear what she does not.

**MAX (V.O.)**

I wish, for just one day, Dad  
couldn't tell a lie.

He takes a breath --and blows out all the candles. A  
strange WIND blows the drapes and the wisp of smoke up, up,  
up... to the clock on the wall. It's 9:15.

**CUT TO:**

A clock on a wall. It's 9:15'. We are--

**INT. MIRANDA'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

PAN around Miranda's office, where the displaced sofa is  
adorned with Fletcher's shoes...

To the credenza, where Fletcher's pants hang...

To the lamp, where Fletcher's shorts swing...

To the desk, where a ravished Miranda lies next to  
Fletcher. Superbly confident of the answer, she asks--

**MIRANDA**

S o . . . was it good for you?

Without thinking, Fletcher responds in the most astonishing  
way possible-- he TELLS THE TRUTH.

**FLETCHER**

I've had better.

Miranda turns to him in disbelief -- but it's nothing compared to the LOOK OF SHOCK on Fletcher's face.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MIRANDA'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

The door opens -- and the naked Fletcher is forcefully kicked out. He goes TUMBLING over a desk as a RAIN OF CLOTHES follow.

The door SLAMS SHUT again, leaving him without his pants. A CLEANING LADY stares at him in shock, then takes her broom, aims for his crotch, SWINGS.and. . .

**INT. BEDROOM - FRIDAY MORNING**

An alarm CLOCK RINGS. Fletcher BOLTS UP in bed. With regret and wonder he remembers:

**FLETCHER**  
"I've had better?"

**INT. FLETCHER'S BATHROOM - MORNING**

Fletcher brushes his teeth, looks up at his reflection in the mirror, mouth foaming.

**FLETCHER**  
"I've had better?!"

**INT. HALLWAY OF FLETCHER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING**

Dressed for work, Fletcher waits for the elevator.

**FLETCHER**  
(laughing it off)  
"I've had better?"  
It arrives. He steps in.

**INT. APARTMENT ELEVATOR - MORNING**

The elevator is empty, except for Fletcher... and a beautiful young WOMAN.

**FLETCHER**  
New in the building?

**MODEL**  
I just moved in Monday.

**FLETCHER**  
Ah. Well, you must allow me to give you the grand tour.

**MODEL**

(SHE'S  
INTERESTED)  
Oh? Do you do that for all the new tenants?

**FLETCHER**  
No. Just the ones I want to bang like a drum.  
Fletcher's face REGISTERS extreme SHOCK and...

**INT. LOBBY OF APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING**

We HEAR a SMACK off camera and a PING as the elevator door opens. The model storms off and A STUNNED Fletcher steps

out, rubbing his freshly slapped face.

**EXT. COURTROOM -, MORNING**

A SHAKY Fletcher strides toward the courthouse... when he is accosted by a BEGGAR.

**BEGGAR**

Any change, Mister?

**.FLETCHER**

Absolutely.

But he continues walking.

**BEGGAR**

Could you spare some?

**FLETCHER**

Unquestionably.

Fletcher walks faster, PUZZLED that he has answered truthfully. The beggar is even more puzzled.

**BEGGAR**

Will you?

**FLETCHER**

No.

**BEGGAR**

How come?

**FLETCHER**

Because I resent your  
p re sen ce. You fill me with an  
unpleasant mixture of disgust  
and guilt. Further, I don't  
believe you'll use the money  
for food, but I believe you'll  
use it for, at worst, drugs,  
or, at best, whiskey, or  
. cigarettes. Also, I'm cheap.  
As Fletcher heads up the stairs...

**BEGGAR**

Jerkoff.

**INT. COURTROOM - MORNING**

A winded Fletcher joins Virginia at the respondent's table,

**VIRGINIA**

You look like you're having a  
rough morning.

**FLETCHER**

I've had better.

He WINCES as he recognizes the words. Then, an extremely  
wealthy, respectable industrialist, RICHARD COLE enters  
with his attorney, DANA APPLETON, young, brisk, confident.

**DANA**

Good morning, Fletcher.

**FLETCHER**

Dana.

"

**RICHARD**

All right, Virginia, how much  
will it take to put an end to  
this?



**FLETCHER**

Fifty per cent of your estate.  
Richard is SHOCKED.

**DANA**

Fifty per cent? With a pre-nup and proof of adultery?  
What's your case?

**FLETCHER**

Our case is simply this. . .  
Fletcher opens his mouth to enlighten her -- but he CAN'T GET THE WORDS OUT. He tries to FORCE OUT SOUNDS, but succeeds only in looking like a fish gasping on dry land.

**DANA**

Interesting, though based on your track record, I expected a little more.  
Nearing panic, Fletcher whirls to his BRIEFCASE and grabs the brief.

**FLETCHER** ..

Wa it! Wait! I've got it in writing!  
But when Dana tries to take the document, the astonished Fletcher finds himself PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO RELEASE IT.

**DANA**

Let go!

**FLETCHER**

I'm trying!

He INVOLUNTARILY snatches the document away and IT PULLS HIM to a nearby TRASH CAN where he throws it out.  
At this moment the BAILIFF calls.

**BAILIFF**

All rise for the Honorable  
Judge William Stevens.

**DANA**

Very funny, Fletcher. You want to play hardball, I'm game.  
JUDGE STEVENS takes the bench.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Calling case BA 09395, Richard Cole versus Virginia Cole.  
How're we doing this morning, counsel?

**DANA**

Fine, thank you.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

And you, Mr. Reid?

**FLETCHER**

Well, I'm a little upset about a bad sexual episode I had last night--  
Fletcher screeches to a standstill, suddenly aware of what he just said. After an awkward silence--

**JUDGE STEVENS**

**(DRYLY)**

Well, you're still young.  
It'll happen more and more.

In the meantime, what do you say we get. down to business?  
First, Mr. Reid, I see that your client was previously represented by Mr. Rand of your office.

**FLETCHER**

Yes, Your Honor.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

I take it you're seeking to substitute in as counsel?

**FLETCHER**

Yes, Your Honor.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Fine , fine. And for the record, the reason is?

**FLETCHER**

Mr. Rand had severe ethical objections to my client's case.

Fletcher is incredulous. Somehow his greatest asset in the world, his mouth, has become his worst enemy.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

I take it you don't share the same ethical objections, Mr. Reid?

**FLETCHER**

I have lower standards, Your Honor.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

I see. Well, if Mrs. Cole wants the substitution of counsel, I'll allow it. Is that what you want, Mrs. Cole?

Virginia looks to the judge, then to Fletcher, whose unorthodox style seemed so brilliant earlier.

**VIRGINIA**

**(UNSURE)**

Yes?

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Fine.

**VIRGINIA**

(aside, to

**FLETCHER)**

What are you doing?

**FLETCHER**

**(WORRIED)**

I don't know.

(to judge, with

**SOME**

**DESPERATION)**

Your Honor, I ' d like a continuance!

**JUDGE STEVENS "**

This case has already been

delayed several times, Mr.  
Reid.

**FLETCHER**

I realize that, Your Honor,  
but I ' d really, really, really  
like a continuance.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

I'll have to hear good cause,  
counselor. What's the  
problem?

**FLETCHER'S P.O.V.**

The ROOM begins to SPIN slowly -- then faster -- then  
faster -- until we wind up squarely on --

**FLETCHER'S FACE**

**FLETCHER**

I can't lie!

**JUDGE STEVENS**

**(IMPATIENT)**

Commendable, Mr. Reid, but I'm  
still waiting for the good  
cause. Now, do you have it or  
not?

**FLETCHER**

**(TRUTHFUL)**

Not.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Motion for a continuance  
denied. Is there any chance  
of a settlement in this case?

**DANA**

I don't think so, Your Honor.  
Mr. Reid made it abundantly  
clear that the last thing in  
the world he wanted was to --

**FLETCHER**

**(DESPERATE)**

**SETTLE! SETTLE! SETTLE!**

Dana and Mr. Cole look at Fletcher with surprise.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

There appears to have been a  
change in strategy. Let's go  
to my chambers and negotiate.  
He BANGS the gavel.

**INT. JUDGE STEVENS'S CHAMBERS - MORNING**

Dana and an apprehensive Fletcher sit before the judge

**DANA**

Your Honor, under the terms of  
the prenuptial agreement, if  
Mrs. Cole commits adultery,  
she is entitled to nothing.  
We have in our possession an  
audiotape made by a licensed  
private investigator of an

explicit act of sexual congress with a man who is not her husband.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Sounds pretty damning, Mr. Reid.

**FLETCHER**

It certainly does.

**DANA**

However, my client has no desire to see his ex-wife destitute. Against my advice, he's willing to offer her a cash settlement of two point four million dollars.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Two four seems like a pretty fair offer, Mr. Reid.

**FLETCHER**

Fantastically fair. Phenominally fair. In fact, I'd say beyond fair, bordering on stupid.

Dana fumes. The judge finds Fletcher's boldness refreshing.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

What are you suggesting, Mr. Reid? That Ms. Appleton's willingness to proffer such an offer betrays a lack of faith in her position?

**FLETCHER**

(utterly sincere)

No, not at all. She's got my client dead to rights. When

attorneys go to sleep at night, they dream of having a case as strong as hers.

**DANA**

Can the sarcasm, Reid. All right, I admit it -- I've seen you make even the lamest case fly. But this time I have you. Even Clarence Darrow couldn't explain this away. She brandishes the audiotape.

**JUDGE SAMIOAN**

Well, Mr. Reid? without a dynamite explanation, I'd say you're dead in the water. How's your client's story?

**FLETCHER**

The best that money can buy, Your Honor. ♦

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Strong corroborating evidence?

**FLETCHER**

We have evidence that you are not going to believe. Despite herself, Dana is beginning to look worried.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

You're pretty confident how

this trial is going to come  
out, eh, Mr. Reid?

**FLETCHER**

(hopeless) .

"Confident" is too weak a  
word, Your Honor. I am  
certain what will happen if I  
take this puppy to trial. The  
verdict will be a stunning,  
humiliating defeat that will  
cut a spectacularly promising  
legal career off at the knees.

Fletcher is referring to himself, of course, but Dana  
thinks he's speaking about her. She buckles.

**DANA**

All right! Double the offer!  
Four point eight! And not a  
penny more.  
(venomous, to

**FLETCHER)**

Bastard!

She storms out, leaving an astounded Fletcher behind.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

You are some negotiator, Mr.  
Reid. If your client has half  
a brain, she'll jump at the  
offer.

**CUT TO:**

**VIRGINIA**

No!

We are --

**INT. COURTROOM - MORNING**

Fletcher has joined Virginia at the respondent's table

**FLETCHER**

No? ! Mrs. Cole, this offer  
was a miracle. I'm talking  
about a walking-on-water,  
Lazarus-rising-from-the-dead,

**FIND-NO-LINE-AT-THE-FRIGGIN'-**  
DMV miracle! You've gone from  
two point four to four point  
eight million in...  
(checks his

**WATCH)**

four minutes. Think of it  
this way -- now you're getting  
paid seven hundred thou per  
schtupp!

◆

◆

◆

**VIRGINIA**

Mr. Reid, you convinced me  
yesterday -- I'm the victim  
here, starved for affection,  
driven into the arms of  
another man--

**FLETCHER**

Seven!

◆

**VIRGINIA**

-- Seven other men. With the story you came up with, I don't think I can lose. I want to proceed.

**FLETCHER**

Mrs. Cole, you don't understand, I--  
But before Fletcher can finish, the judge enters.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Well , Mr. Reid. Do we have a settlement?  
Fletcher looks pleadingly at his client, but she is firm. He shakes his head unhappily. The judge is irritated.

**JUDGE STEVENS (CONT'D)**

Th ere' s no settlement. Trial to start at one-thirty sharp. He BANGS the gavel. Fletcher emits an involuntary whimper.

**INT. HALLWAY OF LAW OFFICES - MORNING**

DA ZED, Fletcher makes his way down the hall. Jane comes toward him wearing a hairstyle that resembles a nest. He tries to avoid her, but...

**JANE**

What do you think?

**FLETCHER .**

I think you need help.  
HORRIFI ED, Fletcher hurries on. The heavyset Thomas ambulates in his way.

**THOMAS**

What's shakin', Fletcher?

**FLETCHER**

Your cellulite, Tubster.  
The now panicked Fletcher breaks into a run, passing Fred.

**FRED**

Hiy a, Fletcher. How's the Cole case going?

**FLETCHER**

(not stopping)  
'Straight into the crapper, you wuss, with my career right behind it.

**P**

Fletcher is RUNNING NOW, COVERING HIS EARS and SINGING LOUDLY so as not to hear OTHER EMPLOYEE 'GREETINGS...

**FLETC HER**

LA-LA-LA-LA-LA-LA!!

Fletcher speeds past--

**GRETA**

Hi, boss. What's happening

WITH--

**FLETCHER**

DON'T ASK! FOR GOD'S SAKE,

PLEASE DON'T ASK!  
-- And races into his office.

I NT . FLETCHER'S OFFICE - MORNING

He leans against the door, trying to catch his breath.



FLETCHER,

(PACING)

Do n't panic. You can beat  
this -- it's all a matter of  
willpower.  
He dives for his desk and rifles through it.

FL ET CH ER

A test. . . Something small...  
Aha!  
He holds up a BLUE PEN.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Red. Red. All right. Focus,  
(with great

DELIBERATION)

The color of this pen is r--.  
R--. R--! The color of this  
pen is--blue! AAAAHH!  
(burying his

HEAD)

Ahhhh! One' tiny lie and I  
can't say it!!

(suddenly sitting

UP)

' I'll write.it!  
He takes a sheet of PAPER, his pen and writes "This pen  
i s . . . " He tries to write an "R" but can't. He STRAINS.  
S TR AIN S HARDER. He's out of his chair, on the desk. His  
feet KICK OVER OBJECTS on the shelves'behind him. He  
finally forces pen to paper. He looks down where he wrote

INADVERTENTLY:

"This pen is blue."

F LE TC HE R

NO, NO, NO, NO, NO! ! ! !

Greta enters to find--  
FLETCHER running around the office, shaking the blue pen in  
the air.

GRETA

Boss, what's wrong?

FLETCHER

. The pen is blue!! The pen is  
b l u e ! ! The GODDAMN PEN IS

BLUE !!!

Almost weeping, he collapses into a chair. A moment --  
then Greta tentatively offers him a red pen.

GRETA

Red?

**FLETCHER**

**(BITTER)**

Oh, that's easy for you to say?!

**GRETA**

Are you all right?

**FLETCHER**

(getting up)

I have to go home.

**GRETA**

Home? Was the case settled?

**FLETCHER**

No. I have to be in court at one-thirty.

**GRETA**

Well, then how can you go home?

**FLETCHER**

I don't know, I don't know!!!

**GRETA**

Okay.

(walking on

**EGGSHELLS)**

Before I forget -- Rubin and Dun n called. They want to know where the Darvis settlement offer stands.

**FLETCHER**

I only proposed a settlement to dick with them. I never had any intention of going through with it. .

Not certain why her boss would shoot himself in the foot, Greta nonetheless jots down his remarks.

**GRETA**

'♦...dick with them." Okay. Your accountant, Philip, called to remind you about getting together. .

**FLETCHER**

I'd rather shave my ass and sit in vinegar..

**GRETA**

(jotting down a

**NOTE)**

Got it. And your mother called again. Are you still on vacation?

**FLETCHER**

**(EMPHATICALLY**

nodding "yes")

No.

**GRETA**

So then you're here?

**FLETCHER**

**(EMPHATICALLY**



shaking his head

"NO")

Yes.

**GRETA**

I ' m having a little trouble following you. what do I say to your mom?

**FLETCHER**

**(RESIGNED)**

Tell her I'm a thoughtless son who'd rather spend ten hours clogging the wheels of justice than five minutes talking to her-- but only if she asks. You.might also add that she deserves better, though I hope to God you don't.

**GRETA**

Thanks for clearing that up. And that's it, except your ex called and asked when you were cowing over to see your son.

**FLETCHER**

**(REMEMBERS)**

**OHH! I'M SUCH A SHIT!!**

He reacts, particularly stunned by this truth.

**INT. VOLVO - MOVING / FLETCHER'S OFFICE - MORNING**

Audrey is driving Max, who wears his new baseball uniform when her cellular PHONE RINGS. She picks it up. We INTERCUT between car and office.

**FLETCHER**

**AUDREY--**

**AUDREY'**

Hey, Fletcher. I was wondering if you were going to still pick up Max after school today.

**FLETCHER**

I don't think I can. I had a case I was certain would settle and it didn't. I have to go to trial this afternoon, God help me.

**AUDREY**

(not believing

**HIM)**

Right.

**FLETCHER**

It's true... I really do want to see Max, today.

Fletcher considers what he just said, realizes it is true.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

How about that. I really do.

**AUDREY**

(CYNICALLY)

But things keep coming up at  
the last minute.

FLETCHER

Yes, but-this time it's  
different.

AUDREY

I see. And how is that?

.



FLETCHER

( he walked into

IT)

This time I'm telling the  
truth.

AUDREY

But last night you weren't?

FLETCHER

No.

AUDREY

What were you doing?

FLETCHER

Having sex.

AUDREY

(barely holding  
her temper),

It must have been with someone  
very "special."

FLETCHER

No. It was with someone I  
don't even like. But I  
thought it would help my  
career and at the moment that

seemed more important than  
attending my son's birthday!

A U D R E Y

M y God!!

She SLAMS DOWN the phone.

INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE

Fletcher BANGS THE PHONE against his head in frustration! '.

FLETCHER

A H H H H H ! ! I WHAT IS WRONG WITH

ME I ! I

E X T . FULGHAM KINDERGARTEN - MORNING

The Volvo parks.

Audrey gets out. She leans over to say good-bye to her  
son.

MAX

Is dad picking me up?

AUDREY

No, I'm sorry, Max. He can't  
make it. I will. I'll work  
it out.

Max is disappointed.

**MAX**

I guess my wish didn't come true. ❖

**AUDREY**

What wish?

**MAX**

I wished that, for just one day, Dad couldn't tell a lie.

Max heads toward his teacher. Audrey is deeply moved.

**INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE**

He's dialing the phone.

**FLETCHER**

Answer, answer, answer...

**INTERCUT WITH AUDREY'S CAR**

**AUDREY**

Hello.

**FLETCHER**

Audrey, let me explain.  
Something has happened to me--

**AUDREY**

Fletcher, something else is about to happen to you.

**FLETCHER.**

What do you mean?

**AUDREY**

Max and I are moving to Boston.

**FLETCHER**

What?!

**AUDREY**

Jerry asked me to marry him.  
He wants Max and I to fly with him this weekend to pick out a house. And I'm going to go.  
God knows I don't have any reason to stay here.

**FLETCHER**

(panicking) .  
Wait, you can't move! If you take Max away... I'll practically never see him.

**AUDREY**

Well then you'll have pretty much the same relationship you have with him now.

**FLETCHER**

Audrey, please.... Is this because of what I just said on the phone?

**AUDREY**

That was the straw and this is the camel's back saying goodbye.

**FLETCHER**

Where are you?

**AUDREY**

Heading home.

**FLETCHER**

When you gee there, stay there. I'll be right over. We have to talk.

**AUDREY**

**FLETCHER--**

**FLETCHER**

I'll be right- there!

He hangs up and heads for the door. It opens and Miranda enters.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Aaaah!

**MIRANDA**

Flet cher. Fletcher, Fletcher, Fletcher. I must confess-- after last night's incident, I was. . . hurt. So hurt. I was tempted to do whatever little things lie in my power to scuttle your chances of making partner.

Fletcher is FRIGHTENED.

**MIRANDA (CONT'D)**

But then I thought, "No, that 's not fair. Fletcher didn't mean to insult me."

**(STRAIGHTENING**

his tie)

"It was just some massive, boneheaded misunderstanding, and Fletcher is very, very sorry."

Fletcher smiles. It looks like he's off the hook, until--

**MIRANDA (CONT'D)**

Isn't that right, Fletcher?

**FLETCHER**

(in agony)

Uh -- not really, no.

**MIRANDA**

(stunned, angry)

N o ? No?! What are you sayi ng? Have you no respect for me?!

**FLETCHER**

None, whatsoever. I mean, I ' d like to respect you, and if it weren't for your mistreatment of the associates, your rudeness to the staff, and the fact that your work sucks, I would.

**M IRANDA**

But -- what about last night?

**FLETCHER**

I was afraid you wouldn't support my partnership if I turned you down. Plus, I have an immature need for sexual conquests.

**INT. HALLWAY OF LAW OFFICES - MORNING**

We HEAR A SMACK! The door flies opens -- and a furious Miranda stalks off.



**INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE - MORNING**

Fletcher rubs his freshly SLAPPED FACi..

**INT. BMW - MOVING / EXT, STREET - MORNING**

Fletcher speeds away. He pulls the blue pen from his pocket.

**FLETCHER**

Gotta focus. . . gotta focus.  
He's so preoccupied that he speeds through a crosswalk and almost hits an OLD MAN.

**FLETCHER**

The color of the pen is --  
red ! .  
But he hasn't regained the ability to lie -- he's referring to the RED LIGHT he just ran, nearly colliding with a truck. The DRIVER screams:

**DRIVER**

What's your problem, schmuck?!

**FLETCHER**

(the truth)  
I ' m an inconsiderate prick!

Fletcher once again focuses on the blue pen.

**FLETCHER (CON "ID)**

C'mon, you can do this! The  
color of the pen is -- RED!  
This time he's referring to the flashing red light of a  
POLICE CAR in his rearview mirror.

**FLETC HER**

S h i t !!

Fletcher pulls over. A POLICE OFFICER strolls up.

**POLICE OFFICER**

Do you know why I stopped you?

**FLETCHER**

Depends on how long you were following me.

**POLICE OFFICER**

Why don't we take it from the top.

**FLETCHER**

◆ (in agony)  
Here goes -- I didn't fasten my seatbelt, I didn't glance in my rearview mirror, I didn't signal when I pulled away from the curb, I sped, I followed too closely, I ran a

stop sign, I almost hit :a  
Chevy Camaro, I almost hit a  
ge ezer, I sped some more, I  
failed to yield at a  
crosswalk, I changed lanes in  
the intersection, I changed  
lanes without signalling, and  
I changed lanes in the

**INTERSECTION-WITHOUT**  
signalling while running a red  
light and speeding.

A long moment.

**POLICE OFFICER**

May I see your driver's  
license?

**FLETCHER**

No.

**POLICE OFFICER**

And why is that?

**FLETCHER**

It's in my other pants.

**POLICE OFFICER**

I see. And where are your ♦  
other pants?

**FLETCHER**

Hanging from my boss's  
credenza.

**POLICE OFFICER**

Do you expect me to believe  
that?

**FLETCHER**

No.

**POLICE OFFICER**

Do you think I'm an idiot?

**FLETCHER**

Yes -- but that's beside the  
point! My license actually is  
in my other pants, and they  
actually were hanging from a  
credenza! I wouldn't lie to  
you! I mean, I would if I  
could, but I can't!

**POLICE OFFICER**

I see. So you ..have no reason  
to try and hide your license  
from me?

**FLETCHER**

I didn't say that. I have  
other reasons. Seventeen  
reasons, to be precise.  
(begrudgingly,  
off the  
officer's look)  
Unpaid parking tickets.

**(BESEECHINGLY)**

Be gentle.

**EXT. AUDREY'S HOUSE - MORNING**

A cab speeds up to the house. Fletcher runs out. Audrey is headed to her car.

**FLETCHER**

Audrey, wait!

**AUDREY**

Wait? You know, I just had an insight into myself. I ' m crazy. You call me up and . tell me to wait here because you'll be right over and -- here's the crazy part -- I actually wait.

**FLETCHER**

I can explain--

**AUDREY**

I missed a department meeting. I. . . Did you come in a cab?

**FLETCHER**

Yes.

**AUDREY**

Where's your car?

**EXT, POLICE IMPOUND YARD - MORNING**

Audrey finishes paying the impound-yard CASHIER and joins Fletcher, who is waiting alongside hundreds of towed cars.

**FLETCHER**

Thank you. . I can't tell you how much this means to me.

**AUDREY**

I can. One thousand, six hundred, and fifty-four dollars and eleven cents.

**FLETCHER**

Ow.

At this moment WE HEAR a hideous scraping noise -- and a TOW-YARD EMPLOYEE whips Fletcher's BMW into view and parks... revealing a prominent new scrape on the door.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

You scratched my car!

**TOW-YARD EMPLOYEE**

Where? .

**FLETCHER**

Right there!

**TOW-YARD EMPLOYEE**

Oh that? That was already there.

**FLETCHER**

**(OUTRAGED)**

Why, you -- you liar! Do you know what I ' m going to do about this?

TOW-YARD EMPLOYEE

What?

FLETCHER

(angrier and

ANGRIER)

...Nothing! Because if I take you to small-claims court, it will just drain eight hours out of my life, and you probably won't show up, and if I finally got the judgment you'd just stiff me anyway, so what I'm gonna do is piss and moan like an impotent jerk and then bend over and take it up the tail pipe!

TOW-YARD EMPLOYEE

You've been here before, haven't you?

He flips Fletcher the keys and goes.

AUDREY

Well I can't remember when I've had more fun, now if you'll excuse me, I have a class.

She starts out.

FLETCHER

Audrey, wait. I want to talk to you about this Boston situation.

. AUDREY

What do you want to say?

FLETCHER

You can't go. It's not fair. Taking Max three thousand miles away is not fair.

AUDREY

Let's define "fair." Last night a five-year old boy was crushed because his father lied to him about coming to his birthday party. Fair?

FLETCHER

Last night--

AUDREY

-- Was none of my business. When it happened two years ago it was my business, but now I don't have to care anymore. See, that's the magic of divorce. But it does matter to Max. Everything you do matters to him... and everything you don't do.

FLETCHER

All right-- now let me tell you something...you're absolutely right. I'm guilty of all charges. I'm throwing myself on the mercy of your court.

Audrey doesn't know what to say. Fletcher seems very sincere, but she can't trust him.



**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

I have an idea. I'll come over tonight, right after court lets out and play with Max. Have him invite some friends over. We'll have a game and everything. Then, you and I can sit down and talk.

**AUDREY**

We're suppose to be on a plane

**TONIGHT--**

**FLETCHER**

No, Audrey. Just talk to me about this first. Please. Audrey, I've lost you. Don't make me lose Max, too.

**AUDREY**

You're really coming?

**FLETCHER**

This is iron-clad. This is the mother of all promises. What time?

**AUDREY**

...Six?

**FLETCHER**

Ten-to-six.

**AU DR EY**

**(UNSURE)**

All right... only if I tell Max you're coming and you don't show up and I have to see that look on Max's face -- that heartbreaking look-- it's Boston, Fletcher.

**FLETCHER.**

I will be there.

As Audrey gets in her car -- .

**AUDREY**

I hope so. Do you know what your son was doing at nine-fifteen last night? He was making a wish on his birthday cake. He was wishing that, for just one day, his dad couldn't tell a lie.

She drives away. Fletcher starts for his car, pensive, when a new thought strikes him.

**FLETCHER**

Oh my God! That-'s it! An innocent kid -- a heartfelt plea-- a birthday wish! Sure, it's impossible --but it makes sense!..! If he can wish it, he can unwish it!

**INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALLWAY**

Fletcher marches quickly down the hall, cake box under his

arm.

**INT. MAX'S KINDERGARTEN CLASS**

Ms. Berry's reading a story when Fletcher enters. Max brightens.

**MAX**

Dad!

**MS. BERRY**

Are you Max's dad? I ' m Ms. Berry, Max's teacher!

**FLETCHER**

Hi. Listen, I need to talk to

**MAX--**

**MS. BERRY**

Mr. Reid, we were just talking ab ou t careers. You're a lawyer, aren't you?

**FLETCHER**

**(WARY)**

Yes.

**MAX**

Mr. Reid it'would be wonderful for the children to hear something positive about lawyers!

**FLETCHER**

Well, actually-- ♦

**MS. BERRY**

Children! .Mr. Reid is going to tell us what it's like to be a lawyer.

She leads the kids in APPLAUSE. Fletcher takes center s tage. The children stare, rapt with attenion.

**FLETCHER**

Uh, hi. Uh, I'm a lawyer and I work at a big law firm with a lot of other lawyers and I do stuff in a law court. Thank you.

He starts out.

**MS. BERRY**

One moment, Mr. Reid. Maybe some of the children have

**QUESTIONS**

(hands shoot up)  
Jeffrey?

**JEFF**

What kind of lawyer are you?

**FLETCHER**

Mostly, I ' m a divorce lawyer.

**BILLY**

What's that?

**FLETCHER**

It means if you're daddy left  
your mommy, he'd call me.

**CRAIG**

So what do you do?

**FLETCHER**

(growing more and  
more impatient)

I help people fight over their  
money and their children.

**THEODORE**

Can't they fight without you?

**FLETCHER ' "**

They could but then J wouldn't  
make a living.

**JILL**

Why would my daddy leave my  
mommy?

**FLETCHER**

To marry a younger woman. To  
escape a loveless marriage and  
have cheap meaningless sex.  
To cling to an illusion of  
youth as his body gives way to  
sore backs, flat feet, spare  
tires, gum disease, hair loss,  
liver spots, kidney stones,  
clogged arteries, diabetes,  
goiter and eventual death.

The kids EYES GO WIDE. A moment, then:

**MS. BERRY**

**(BRIGHTLY)**

Well, I think it's time for  
fingerpainting.

**EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY**

They're in the playground just outside the classroom.

**FLETCHER**

Monster-Max.

**MAX**

Dadzilla. You came to play  
catch?

**FLETCHER**

No. I ' d like to, but I can't  
right now.

Max is disappointed again.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

I ' m sorry I missed your party  
la st night. How was your  
Uncle Glen?

**MAX**

Stupid. His big nose and  
stupid orange hair...

**FLETCHER**

That's why he should have worn  
make-up.

Fletcher elbows Max, playfully, trying to induce a laugh.  
Max doesn't laugh.

**MAX**  
I want to play kickball with  
my friends.-

**FLETCHER**  
Yeah, okay, urn... Your mother  
told me about... the wish you  
made last night. It came  
true.  
Max is amazed.

**MAX**  
Really? You mean you have to  
tell the truth?

**FLETCHER**  
Yes.

**MAX**  
No matter what?

**FLETCHER**  
No matter what.

Max grins -- then suddenly asks, in rapid succession.

**MAX**  
Is wrestling real?

**FLETCHER**  
In the Olympics, yes.        On        .  
Channel 23, no.

**MAX**  
Will sitting close to the TV  
set make me go blind?

**FLETCHER**  
Not in a million years.

**MAX**  
If I keep making this face--  
(makes a horrible

**FACE)**  
will it get stuck that way?

**FLETCHER**  
Uh-uh.

**MAX**  
.If I go in the water right  
after lunch, will I drown?

**FLETCHER**  
Only if you can't 'swim.

**MAX**  
Why do I have to eat squash?

**FLETCHER**  
Because your mom buys it.

**MAX**  
How come you're always too  
busy to play with me?  
The sudden shift in tone startles Fletcher. He feels  
awful.

**FLETCHER**  
I . . . I don't know. I ' m . . . Hey,  
you know I'm coming over  
to nig ht. We're gonna play  
together.

MAX

Baseball?

FLETCHER

. Yes! This is absolutely an  
A-number one promise. You and  
I -- tonight -- baseball.  
Fletcher and Max do their ritual "five" slap.

FLETCHER

Now, listen, Max, I need a  
favor from you. I ' m in a  
little trouble today. I need  
you to take that wish back.

MAX

So you can lie?

FLETCHER

Not to you.

MAX

To who?

FLETCHER

Max, sometimes grownups...  
need to lie. It's hard to  
explain, but i f . . . Look,  
here's an example. When Mommy  
was pregnant with you, she  
gained a little weight.  
Se venty pounds. I thought she  
was gonna give birth to a car.  
But she'd say to me "How do I  
lo ok?" So I'd say, "Oh,  
honey, you're beautiful,  
you're glowing.<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, I  
would've hurt Mommy's  
fee ling s. Understand?

Max nods.

MAX

You didn't think she was  
beautiful.

FLETCHER

Right. No... Max, I don't  
know how to get along in the  
grown-up world if I have to  
stick to the truth. I could  
lose my case, I could lose my  
promotion, I could even lose,  
my job... Do you understand?

Max shakes his head "no."

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Will you help me anyway?  
A moment -- then Max reluctantly nods.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

That's my boy!  
Fletcher opens the box, revealing a cake and candles.... He  
takes out two birthday hats. He puts one on Max and one on  
himself.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Now, do whatever you did last  
night... only this time, make  
an un-wish.  
Not really happy, Max turns to the candles on the cake. He  
takes a breath-- and blows them out.

**MAX**  
I did it. ^

**FLETCHER**  
Great! Great! Now to test --



Fletcher spots an attractive FEMALE teacher. Fletcher hurries to her and says something. A moment. Then she

**SLAPS HIM.**  
Fletcher returns to his son.

**MAX**  
Did it work?

**FLETCHER** . .  
(rubbing his sore

**CHEEK)**  
Not like I ' d hoped. Did you really unwish it?  
Max nods.

**MAX**  
Only...

**FLETCHER**  
Only what?

**MAX**  
Yesterday, when I wished it, I really meant it. This time when I unwished it I only did it 'cause you told me to.

**FLETCHER**  
(losing patience)  
Well, then do it again. Only  
this time, mean it.

**MAX**  
I can't.

**FLETCHER**  
Why not?!

**MAX**  
Because I don't want you to lie.

**FLETCHER**  
I explained this to you! I have to lie. Everybody lies! Mommy lies, even the wonderful Jerry lies--

,

**MAX**  
But you're the only one who makes me feel bad.



Fletcher is stunned by how much this hurts.

**MS. BERRY**

**(CALLING)**  
Max, recess 'is over, come on in.

**MAX**

I have to go.

**FLETCHER**

I am coming over, tonight,  
Max. You believe me, don't  
you?

Max hesitates, then nods.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

I'll see you tonight, buddy...

That's a promise.

Max heads back to class. Fletcher picks up the cake, looks  
at it, then dumps it in a trash barrel.

**EXT. SKYSCRAPER - DAY**

A worried and preoccupied Fletcher is heading toward his  
office building when a MACHO ATTORNEY passes by.

**MACHO ATTORNEY**

Yo, Fletcher! How's it  
hanging?

**FLETCHER**

Short and shrivelled.

Fletcher hurries up the steps when he spots Philip. He  
shields his face with his briefcase. Philip recognizes him  
anyway.

**PHILIP**

Fletcher! I'm still waiting  
for your call. I guess you  
must've lost my card --

**FLETCHER**

No --

**PHILIP**

Or my phone was busy --

**FLETCHER**

No --



**PHILIP**

Or you just forgot --

**FLETCHER**

No --

**PHILIP**

(cannot be

**DISCOURAGED)**

Or something. So anyway, ' why  
don't you swing by my place  
around seven-thirty!

Philip starts off, when Fletcher calls after him  
resolutely.

**FLETCHER**

Philip... I don't want to come  
over to your house!

A long moment, then --

**PHILIP**

Fi n e ! We'll go out! There's  
this new karaoke bar I've been  
dying to try. I'll pick you  
up at your office! Seven-

thirty! !  
And he runs off. Frustrated, Fletcher hurries on.

**INT. OFFICE'S - DAY**

Fletcher drags himself past Greta's desk. Miranda gives him the stink-eye. Fletcher doesn't see her.

**GRETA**

Do you want your messages?

**FLETCHER**

No.

He goes into his office. Greta is concerned. She follows him in, leaving his door open.

**INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Fletcher collapses onto his couch. Greta enters.

**GRETA**

Are you okay?

**FLETCHER**

My son hates me.

**GRETA**

No! He loves you. I've seen  
y ou together. You're his  
hero.

**FLETCHER**

O h yeah? Last night at his  
birthday party, he made a  
◆wish. That I wouldn't be able  
to tell a lie for one whole  
day.

**GRETA**

Kids...

**FLETCHER**

It came true.

**GRETA**

What?

**FLETCHER**

It's true. Didn't it seem odd  
to you that I kept telling the  
truth all morning?

**GRETA**

Well, yeah, but...

**(INCREDULOUS)**

You're telling me that you  
can't lie.

**FLETCHER**

That's right! I am incapable  
of lying.

**INT. OUTER OFFICE**

Miranda is 'eavesdropping. A wicked gleam in her eye,

**INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE**



**GRETA**

Just today?

**FLETCHER**

Apparently until 9:15 tonight.  
It's a twenty-four hour curse.

**GRETA**

Yes, those are going around.

**FLETCHER**

You don't believe me.

**GRETA**

Of course not.

**FLETCHER**

Go ahead. Ask me something  
I ' d normally lie about.  
She thinks.

**GRETA**

A ll right. Remember a few  
months ago, I wanted a raise--

**FLETCHER**

**(QUICKLY)**

Forget it. Let's not do this.

**GRETA**

-- and the firm wouldn't.give  
me one. And I asked you if  
you would give it to me out of  
your own pocket and you said  
the company wouldn't permit it  
because it creates jealousy  
among the other secretaries?  
Was that true or did you just  
not want to pony up the dough?

**INT. OUTER OFFICE**

Greta is emptying all her personal effects into boxes.  
She's leaving. Fletcher is on the phone and looks very  
harrass, sed.

**FLETCHER**

Greta, please...

(into phone)

Yes Judge Stevens, hi!..

Fletcher Reid. I ' m scheduled  
to be in your court in half-  
an-hour... Judge Stevens, I  
badly, badly need a  
continuance. . . so I can go  
home and stay there the rest  
of the day...111? Am I ill?

He wants to say "yes", but he can't.

**FLETCHER**

In a way.

(covers the

**MOUTHPIECE)**

Please, lie to him for me.

Greta holds up a framed photograph.

**GRETA**

I remember when you. bought me  
t hi s silver frame. From  
Tiffany's.

**(QUESTIONING)**

. . . Tiffany's?

**FLETCHER**

Jumbo's House of Junk.  
She thrpws it in the trash and keeps packing.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

I'll give you the raise!

**GRETA**

(gives him the

**FINGER)**

Here's your raise.

**FLETCHER**

(into phone)

Hi, Judge Stevens?... Yes, I  
know I haven't given you a  
reason.

The PHONE RINGS.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

(into phone)

But if you could just do this  
for me, I--

The phone won't stop ringing. .♦'

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Hold on, please,  
(pushes two

**BUTTONS)**

Hello... Mom!!

The phone flies into the air. He catches it.

**FLETCHER {CONT'D)**

Mom... Well, I wasn't actually  
on vacation... Because I  
didn't want to talk to you...  
Because you insist on talking  
to me about Dad's bowel  
movements -- size, color,  
frequency... I'll call you  
later... No, not really.

He pushes -two more buttons. Then SCREAMS.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Oh dammit! I cut him off! I  
cut off the Judge! Greta...

He falls to his knees.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

I'm on my knees in a nine  
hundred dollar suit. Don't  
leave.

Greta stops. She seems to consider.

**GRETA**

A few years ago a friend of  
mine had a burglar up on her  
roof.

**FLETCHER**

Yes?

**GRETA**

..

A burglar. -He fell through  
the kitchen skylight and  
landed on a cutting board on a  
butcher's knife, cutting his  
l e g. He sued my friend. The

burglar sued my friend.  
Thanks to guys like you-- he  
won. My friend had to pay him  
six thousand dollars. Is that  
justice?

**FLETCHER**

No. . . but what' s your poiit!

**GRETA**

My point is, it's hard to get  
justice. But this is justice,  
(pinches his

**CHEEK)**

Have a nice day in court,  
bubbie.

She leaves. Fletcher starts to give chase...

**FLETCHER**

**GRETA--**

He runs directly into Miranda.

**FLETCHER**

Aaaah!

Miranda smiles like a cat that's trapped a mouse.

**MIRANDA**

Ah, Fletcher, so nice to bump  
i nto you. Are you busy?

**FLETCHER**

Extremely.

**MIRANDA**

Good. Would you follow me,  
please?

Highly nervous, Fletcher follows Miranda down the hall.

**MIRANDA (CONT'D)**

Fletcher, did you know that  
the partnership committee is  
being headed up by Mr. Allan  
himself?

(off his wary

**NOD)**

Say, you used to work directly  
for Mr. Allan, didn't you?

(off his waried

**NOD)**

Tell me, what do you think of  
him?

**FLETCHER**

**(HELPLESS)**

He's a pedantic,  
pontificating, pretentious  
bastard, a belligerent old  
fart, a worthless, steaming  
pile of cow dung.

**MIRANDA**

**(GRINNING)**

How delightful!

She swings open a door, ushering Fletcher into --

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

The room is filled with ATTORNEYS, including MR. ALLAN,

the founder himself. Fletcher freezes.

**MIRANDA**

Pardon me for interrupting  
your, meeting. Mr. Allan, you  
remember Fletcher Reid.



**MR. ALLAN**

◆It's good to see you again,  
Fletcher. '.

An involuntary WHIMPER from Fletcher.

**MIRANDA**

Oh, that's right. You used to  
work together. Tell me, what  
do you think of Mr. Allah?  
Fletcher gulps. This is it. His career is history. He's  
trying to hold it back, but--

**MIRANDA**

I said... What do you think of  
Mr. Allan?

**FLETCHER**

He's a pedantic,  
pontificating, pretentious  
bastard, a belligerent old  
fart, a worthless, steaming  
pile of cow dung.  
DE AN SILENCE. Then --Mr. Allan bursts into raucous  
LAUGHTER. He is joined by everyone except Miranda, who  
looks on, STUNNED. Everyone pounds the table in hysterics.

**MR. ALLAN**

Marvelous! Marvelous! That's  
what I love most about this  
firm-- the collegial  
atmosphere, the hearty good-  
fellowship!  
Miranda is incensed.

**MR. ALLAN (CONT'D)**

And thanks for those flowers  
for my anniversary. My wife  
loved them.

**FLETCHER**

Well, I'm due in court... bye-  
bye.

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Fletcher exits the conference, closes the door, breathes a  
sigh of relief, then FAINTS. .

**INT. COURTROOM**

CLOSE UP of Fletcher, seated alone at a table. His hands  
are on his-face. He looks totally dazed. At the other  
table, sit Dana Appleton and Mr. Cole.

**BAILIFF**

All rise.  
They do. Judge Stevens enters. He sits. Everyone sits.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Counselors, are we ready to  
begin?

**FLETCHER**  
(eagerly and a  
little too

**LOUDLY)**  
N o sir! We are not ready to  
b eg in. My client has not  
arrived.  
The doors OPEN and Virginia Cole enters with her CHILDREN  
and a NANNY.

**FLETCHER** ♦ .  
-- until now.

He collapses into his chair.

(to Falk, with  
**DETERMINATION)**  
Did you and Mrs. Cole ever  
make lo-- forni-- roll in the  
h-- make the beast with two  
ba -- Did you two ever fu--  
fu-- Fu!  
He begins to hyperventilate. Virginia turns to Falk.

**VIRGINIA**  
Wate r! Get him water!  
Falk hurries into the building as Fletcher hacks on.

**FLETCHER**  
Fu-- fu--

/

**VIRGINIA**  
S it down! Get some air!  
(slaps him on the

**BACK)**  
Try to relax! Breathe deeply!  
Falk hurries out with a cup, hands it to Fletcher, who  
downs it in one gulp -- then spews it out again, SCREAMING  
in PAIN. -

**VIRGINIA (CONT'D)**  
W hat?! What?!

**FALK**  
I couldn't find any water, so  
I got him coffee!  
Fletcher runs up and down the steps, frantically fanning  
h is scalded mouth. The bailiff appears.

**BAILIFF**  
Judge is taking the bench.  
Fletcher's expression turns to terror.

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

The judge settles in. Mr. Allan and a smug Miranda look on  
from the gallery.

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
You may proceed, Mr. Reid. .  
Everyone turns to Fletcher in anticipation. In a voice  
quaking with fear...

**VIRGINIA**  
Sorry. One of the kids threw  
up in the car.

Virginia takes her seat, leaving her two young children sitting dejectedly in the gallery with their nanny.

**FLETCHER**

**(INCREDULOUS**

**WHISPER)**

You brought your kids. . . to  
your divorce?

**VIRGINIA**

(by way of

**EXPLANATION)**

Sympathy.

**FLETCHER**

Well, it's working. I feel  
sorry for them already.  
The judge BANGS the gavel.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Ms. Appleton, you may begin.

**CUT TO:**

Dana Appleton questions BRYSON, a private investigator.  
Fletcher watches with mounting anxiety, NERVOUSLY DRINKS  
from a GLASS OF WATER at his table.

**BRYSON**

(referring to his

**NOTES)**

-- From March six through June  
twelve, I surveilled Mrs. Cole  
at the behest of Mr. Cole.  
During that period, I noted  
that Mr. Cole left each day  
between seven-forty and seven-  
fifty. Thereafter, Mrs. Cole  
would frequently have a male  
visitor arrive and stay for  
one to four hours. I was able  
to take several photographs of  
the male visitor.  
He shows a photo - - o f a strapping hunk. Fletcher TAKES A  
HUGE DRINK. .

**DANA**

I see. And do you .know what  
Mrs. Cole and her male visitor

did during their frequent...  
visits?

**BRYSON**

Well, they were pretty good  
about keeping the shades drawn  
-- but I sure was able to  
hear. I made an audiotape of  
one such., "session."  
H e hands her the tape. Fletcher refills his glass.

**DANA**

With the Court's permission, I  
would like to play the tape.

**FLETCHER**

Your Honor, I object!

**JUDGE STEVENS**

And why is that, Mr. Reid?

**FLETCHER**

(can't help

**HIMSELF)**

Because it's devastating to my  
♦case.

The judge is startled by his candor.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Overruled..

As Dana pops the tape into a player, Fletcher anxiously

**DOWN THE GLASS.**

Periodically CUTTING to Virginia, Mr. Cole, Dan and the thirsty Fletcher, we hear Virginia and her visitor engaged in intense physical activity.

**MALE VISITOR (O.S.)**

So , what did you say? You  
ready?

**VIRGINIA (O.S.)**

Oh boy am I ready.

**MALE VISITOR (O.S.)**

Good. Let me help you off  
with that. Come on, lie down.

**VIRGINIA (O.S.)**

Wai t a minute. Do you have  
protection?

**MALE VISITOR ( O . S . )**

Right here. Okay, now I ' m  
gonna show you something new.

**VIRGINIA ( O . S . )**

Oh, I've never done it like  
this before. ♦♦.

**MALE VISITOR (O.S.)**

Don't worry, you can take it.  
Oh yeah. That's it. There  
you go. Yes! Yes!

WE HEAR labored rhythmic breathing.

**MALE VISITOR (O.S) (CONT'D)**

Yes, yes, yes --

As Dana fast-forwards again, then resumes... with still  
more labored breathing, building intensity and --

**MALE VISITOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)**

Oh yeah, bring it on .home --  
yes! Yes! Yes!

**VIRGINIA (O.S.)**

Yes! YES! YES!

The groans reach their incredible climax. There's a still  
moment. . .

As the shy COURT REPORTER, the macho BAILIFFS and the no-  
nonsense judge all mop their brows, Dana shuts off the  
tape. She turns to Fletcher with a satisfied smile.

**DANA**

Your witness.

**FLETCHER**

No questions.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

No questions? .

**VIRGINIA**

No questions?

**FLETCHER**

(afraid to ask

**ANY)**

No questions.

**DANA**

**(TRIUMPHANT)**

Petitioner rests.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

All right, Mr. Reid. You may proceed.

**FLETCHER**

(to himself)

How?!

Gathering his courage, he stands, downs the last of his water, and moves to the lecturn. He's about to speak... when a WONDERFUL FEELING sweeps through him. After a moment, he grins.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Would the Court be willing to grant me a short bathroom break?

**JUDGE STEVENS**

It can't wait?

**FLETCHER**

Not unless you want to mop up.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

**(FRUSTRATED)**

All right, but get back in here immediately so we can finish this.

Fletcher beams. Then necessity compels him to race out.

**INT. REST ROOM - DAY**

Fletcher stands before the urinal, taking the longest leak in legal history. Relief. Then, he looks at his watch. It's only 4:15. '

**FLETCHER**

What did I think? That I could piss for forty-five minutes?!

He HITS HIS FOREHEAD in frustration... and gets an idea. He HITS HIMSELF AGAIN and AGAIN, SMASHES HIS HEAD INTO THE WALL, POKES HIMSELF IN THE EYES, YANKS ON HIS EARS, finally KNOCKS HIMSELF IN THE STALL, where he continues his attack. A MAN enters, hears a commotion from behind the stall door.

**MAN**

What's going on in-there?

**FLETCHER (O . S . )**

I ' m abusing myself! Do you mind?!

The man looks disgusted. He carefully leaves the room.

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

The judge is PISSED. Suddenly the bailiff helps in the severely beaten Fletcher. The entire courtroom is SHOCKED.

**BAILIFF**

I found him like this in the bathroom. Somebody beat the



hell out of him.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Who did this?

**FLETCHER**

**(TRUTHFULLY)**

A madman, Your Honor.. A  
desperate fool at the end of  
his pitiful.rope.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

-What did he look like?

**FLETCHER**

**(DESCRIBING**

**HIMSELF)**

About five eleven, hundred  
eighty-five pounds, crazed  
look in his eye.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Bailiff, have the deputies  
search the building.

A HUBBUB rises. He bangs the gavel.

**JUDGE STEVENS (CONT'D)**

Under the circumstances, I  
have no choice but to recess  
this case until tomorrow  
morning at nine.

Fletcher smiles serenely -- until --

**JUDGE STEVENS (CONT'D)**

-- Unless, of course, you  
think you can still proceed?

Fletcher covers his mouth in a desperate attempt to avoid  
answering, but he can't repress the truth.

**JUDGE STEVENS (CONT'D)**

Can you?

**FLETCHER**

Yes, I can.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Splendid. I admire your  
courage, Mr. Reid. I'll give  
you a few minutes to compose  
yourself, and then we'll get  
started.

Fletcher looks as if he has just been sentenced to death.

**EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY**

Fletcher sits on the courthouse steps, miserable. PHONE

**RINGS.**

**FLETCHER**

Hello.

**INTERCUT WITH MAX AT HOME. AUDREY IS THERE.**

**MAX**

Dad...

**FLETCHER**

(summoning up

**ENTHUSIASM)**

Maxi-pad. How's it going?

**MAX**

Great. You know Paul and Emanuel from across the street?

**FLETCHER**

The twins.

**MAX .**

**(EXCITEDLY)**

Well, they never want to play baseball with me, but I told them I was gonna play tonight with my Dad, so now they want to play with us. Is it okay?

**FLETCHER**

Sure.

**MAX**

Oh boy. We're setting up a whole field in the yard. Where we buried Petey the hamster is second base.

**(Fletcher sighs)**

You're still coming right?'

**FLETCHER**

**(sees Virginia**

**APPROACHING)**

I'll be there. I gotta go now, Max. I'll see you in two hours.

Max hangs up.

**MAX**

**(to Audrey)**

He's really coming.

She smiles, but she's worried. .

**COURTHOUSE STEPS**



Virginia approaches with her handsome lover, LAURENCE FALK.

**VIRGINIA**

Mr. Reid, you remember Laurence Falk, the man from the tape.

**FALK**

How are you?

**FLETCHER**

I've slipped into the seventh circle of Hell, thank you, and you?

Virginia exchanges an anxious look with Falk.

**VIRGINIA**

Shouldn't we go over our testimony?

**FLETCHER**

Well, basically the plan is I walk you through the tape step by step, I ask you questions--

**VIRGINIA**

And we give the explanation

you came up with.

**FLETCHER**

Exactly.

**FALK**

So all we have to do is lie.  
Sounds simple enough.

**FLETCHER**

Doesn't it? And I'll finish  
up with a dramatic series of  
questions, something like...  
"Mr. Falk, isn't it true that  
you and Mrs. Cole have never  
made lo--"

But Fletcher GAGS. He CAN'T GET THE QUESTION OUT. The  
others look concerned, but he waves them off.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

Sorry. I'm fine. "Mr. Falk,  
isn't it true that you and  
Mrs. Cole have never made lo--

**IO-.H**

To his horror, he GAGS AGAIN, unable to form the word.

**FLETCHER**

(to himself)

Oh my God! I can't do it! I  
can't finish the question if I  
know the answer is a lie!

At this moment Miranda and Mr. Allan come up the steps.

**MR. ALLAN**

Don't let me interrupt,  
Fletcher. I just want you to  
know I'll be observing this  
afternoon. Miranda insisted I  
see you in action.

Fletcher shoots a hateful look at Miranda. She smiles.

**MR. ALLAN (CONT'D)**

I'm looking forward to it. Go  
get 'em!

Mr. Allan and Miranda head into the building, leaving  
Fletcher more desperate than before.

**FLETCHER**

C'mon! Gotta rephrase the  
question!

**FLETCHER**

Respondent calls... Lawrence  
Falk.

Fletcher's clears his throat. Here goes...

**FLETCHER**

Mr. Falk, do you know my  
client, Virginia Cole?

**FALK**

Yes.

**FLETCHER**

Isn't it true that your  
relationship with my client is

entirely platonic, not?  
The "not" was INVOLUNTARY. It takes everyone by surprise.

**FALK**

Excuse me?

**FLETCHER**

If I might rephrase your  
Honor.

(trying again)

Is your relationship with my  
client entirely platonic, not?

X\

Is your relationship with my  
client not entirely platonic?  
Is not your relationship with  
my client entirely platonic?

(thinks he's got  
it, beams with

**CONFIDENCE)**

Mr. Falk, is not your  
relationship with my client  
entirely platonic?

**FALK**

**(CONFUSED)**

No. I mean, yes. I think.

**FLETCHER**

Yes, is your relationship with  
my client not entirely  
platonic, or yes, is not your  
relationship with my client  
entirely platonic?

**FALK**

What?

**FLETCHER**

How 'bout just answering the  
question you think I'm asking?

**DANA**

Your Honor, he's badgering the  
witness!

**JUDGE STEVENS**

It's his witness!

**FLETCHER**

Did you ever not make lo--  
Did you not ever make lo--  
(losing it)

**YOU HAD SEX WITH HER EVERYTIME**

**YOU MET, DIDN'T YOU? DIDN'T**

**YOU?!!**

Falk looks shaken as Fletcher barrels on, unable to stop

**FLETCHER**

(screaming at

**HIM)**

**ADMIT IT! YOU .SLAMMED HER!!**

**YOU STOKED THE FIRE! YOU**

**-DID THE YAM DANCE! !**

**FALK**  
(breaking down)

**YES, YES,-- IT'S TRUE! I**

**HUMPED HER. BRAINS OUT! !**  
A GASP from the audience. All eyes are on Fletcher.

**FLETCHER**

**(WEAKLY)**  
No further questions.

**DANA**  
Uh...no questions.

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
(to Fletcher)  
Call your next witness.

**FLETCHER**  
I have no further witnesses,  
your Honor.  
A MURMUR erupts from the crowd.

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
You have no further  
witnesses?!

Fletcher meekly shakes his head, no.

**VIRGINIA**  
(whispers, to

**FLETCHER)**  
What are you doing? Call me.

**FLETCHER**  
(to Virginia)  
I can't.

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
Mr. Reid?

**VIRGINIA**  
Call me, damn it!

**FLETCHER**  
You don't understand. I can't  
lie . Until nine-sixteen  
tonight, I can't even ask a  
question that calls for a lie!  
Virginia GRABS HIM BY THE TIE, pulls him CLOSE to her face.

**VIRG INIA**  
L is ten , you bastard. I want  
m y money. I am not gonna wind  
up a 31 year old divorce on  
welfare because my scum bag  
attorney had a sudden attack  
of conscience!  
Fletcher suddenly stops -- focused on something Virginia  
said.

**FLETCHER**  
(to himself)  
Thirty-one?

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
Mr. Reid, we're not getting  
any younger...  
Fletcher quickly looks at the blowup of Virginia's prenup  
and her passport.

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
(he's had it)

Mr. Reid you have presented  
virtually nothing in the way  
of evidence and as such I have  
no choice but to rule in favor  
of --

**FLETCHER**

**WAIT!**

Silence.

**FLETCHER** ♦.

**(DRAMATICALLY)**

Your Honor, I call Virginia  
Cole to the stand.  
Stunned, Virginia nervously makes her way up,

**MR. ALLAN**

(in the gallery)  
What the hell is he doing?

**MIRANDA**

Kissing his career goodbye.  
The Baliff stands before the witness.

**BALIFF**

Do you swear to tell the  
truth, the whole truth and  
nothing but the truth, so help  
-you God?

**VIRGINIA**

I do.  
Fletcher approaches,. CONFIDENT NOW, COCKY.

**FLETCHER**

Mrs. Cole -- may I call you  
Virginia?

**VIRGINIA**

Yes.

**FLETCHER**

But that would be a lie,  
wouldn't it?

**VIRGINIA**

What do you mean?

**FLETCHER**

Isn't your true name...

**(BRANDISHING**

**PASSPORT)**

Carlotta?!

**VIRGINIA**

Well, yes. But it wasn't me  
so I started using Virginia.  
Is there anything wrong with  
that?

**FLETCHER**

♦.  
Not really. It's just the  
first and smallest in the  
tissue of lies that is the  
Kleenex of your life. Let's  
take one simple document as a  
sample of your veracity, shall

we, Carlotta?  
He grabs her purse from the desk, rifles through it,

**F LETCHER**

Your driver's license. What  
color are your eyes?

**VIRGINIA**

Blue.

**FLETCHER**

True blue? What if I asked  
you to remove your contact  
lenses? What color would they  
be then?

**VIRGINIA**

**(RELUCTANTLY)**

Brown.

**FLETCHER**

And here it says you're a  
blonde. Are you?  
(off her silence)  
C'mon, Carlotta, there's a  
very easy way for us to check.  
If you don't remember, perhaps  
Mr. Falk will.

**VIRGINIA**

Brunette.

**FLETCHER**

More like a dirty brown, isn't  
it?  
(she nods)  
Let's see - . - "Weight: one-o-  
five"? Please...

**VIRGINIA .**

One-eighteen.

(off his look)  
One-twenty-six. I swear!

**FLETCHER**

So on this single document,  
you basically lied at every  
opportunity. I'm sure a woman  
as vain as you would also lie  
about her age. It says you  
were born in 1964. What's the  
truth? 1962? '60? How young  
did you try to make yourself?

**VIRGINIA**

**(JOYFULLY)**

Wrong! I didn't lie to make  
myself younger. I made myself  
older. I was born in 1965!"

**FLETCHER**

**(FEIGNING**

**SURPRISE)**

What? You're trying to tell  
us you lied to make yourself  
older?

**VIRGINIA**

Yes! "I lied so I could get  
married! So there Mister 'I

GOT-ALL-THE-ANSWERS-BECAUSE-I-  
went-to-law-school'!

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Mr. Reid, does this have a  
point?

**FLETCHER**

Oh, you bet it does, your  
Honor!

(on a roll)

My client lied about her age  
because she was only 17 when  
s he got married. Which makes  
h er a minor. And in the great  
state of California, NO MINOR

**CAN ENTER INTO A LEGAL**

**CONTRACT WITHOUT PARENTAL**

**CONSENT INCLUDING--**

**DANA**

(defeated, to

**HERSELF)**

Prenuptual agreements.

**FLETCHER**

(knows he has

**THEM)**

**PRENUPTUAL AGREEMENTS! THANK**

**YOU VERY LITTLE!** This  
contract is void!!! The fact  
that my client gets nailed ♦  
more often than a two-by-four  
is irrelevant. Standard  
community property applies and  
this woman is entitled to half  
of the marital assets or  
thirty-seven point three-nine-  
five million dollars!!

(to Dana)

Yo . . . . a e . . . . T A T T T ! !  
u r OSTT!

**(DRAMATICALLY)**

Nothing further, your Honor!

**A MURMUR OVERTAKES THE ROOM!**

/

**JUDGE STEVENS**

(banging his

**GAVEL)**

Q uie t! Let me see-the license  
and birth certificate.

All is quiet while the Judge reviews the documents. Then:

**JUDGE STEVENS**

In light of this new evidence,  
the court must rule in favor  
o f the defense. Mrs. Cole is  
hereby awarded half of the  
marital assets -or thirtyrseven  
million three hundred and  
ninety-five thousand dollars.

The courtroom ERUPTS.  
devastated.

**FLETCHER'S WON!**

Dana, Mr. Cole are



**MR. ALLAN**

That son of bitch pulled it  
off!

Mr. Allan gives Fletcher a thumbs-up; simultaneously,  
Miranda gives him the finger.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

O r d e r ! Order!! Now i  
understand both parties have  
agreed to joint custody. Is  
that correct?

**FLETCHER AND DANA**

**YES--**

**VIRGINIA**

No! I'm contesting custody.

Fletcher freezes.

**FLETCHER**

What?

**VIRGINIA**

(re: her husband)  
Payback. For him trying to  
prevent me from collecting my  
thirty-seven million.

**FLETCHER**

He was entitled to prevent  
you. You committed adultery.'  
You only won because you're a  
liar, remember? .

**VIRGINIA**

No. You pointed out that my  
husband took advantage of a  
poor underage girl. I was the  
vic tim here. And now I'm  
going to hit him where it  
hurts.

**FLETCHER**

But -- but -- you said he was  
a good father.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

M r. Reid? Do we have an  
agreement on custody or not?  
Fletcher takes a distressed look at the children.

**FLETCHER**

No.

**JUDGE STEVENS**

In that case, there will be a  
custody hearing tomorrow  
mor ning at nine. Court is  
adj ourned!

He BANGS THE GAVEL. Everyone gets up, but Fletcher's  
attention is drawn to a commotion between Virginia and her  
kids.

**VIRGINIA**

Stop that! We're leaving now!

**CHILD**

I want to go with Daddy.

V, '

, -

. -

Fletcher watches, horrified, as she drags the kids away from their tearful father.

**MR. COLE**

Don't worry. I'll see you no matter what. I promise.

Mr. Allan has made his way up to Fletcher.

**MR. ALLAN**

(re: the

**COMMOTION)**

I love kids. They give you so much leverage in a case like this.

(pats Fletcher on

**BACK)**

Congratulations, partner. how does it feel?

And with that question asked, as he watches poor Mr. Cole and his kids, the truth dawns on Fletcher like a sledgehammer!

**FLETCHER '**

Excuse me. Just a second.

(to the Judge)

Y our Honor? Your Honor?

Wait!

**JUDGE STEVENS**

We',re adjourned, Mr. Reid.

**FLETCHER**

Screw that!! She lies and she wins ?! What are we, nuts?

Everyone stops, watches Fletcher.

**FLETCHER (CONT'D)**

T his woman --my client -- goes down with the frequency of a nuclear submarine and we just gave her thirty seven million dollars because she's a liar! And now as an extra added little bonus, we're going to let her steal, the kids, too?

**JUDGE STEVENS**

Mr. Reid, you are out of order!

**FLETCHER**

**(SCREAMING)**

◆ **SO'S THE HAND DRYER IN THE**

**MEN'S ROOM!!** Do you ever stop to ask yourself, why do people hate us? Could it be because what we did here today sucks?! We don't care about the truth! We don't want to find the t r u t h ! We want to win! We want to win at all costs...and you know what the worst thing about wanting to win so badly i s ? **WINNING!** Winning and finding out you're left with nothing!

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
That's enough, Mr. Reid --

**FLETCHER**  
-Let' s see what I' ve done  
today. I've helped a gold  
digging slut get richer. I'm  
taking this guy's kids away.  
(to Mr. Allan)  
I don't like you in the least,  
now I'm one of your partners!

**YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT IT FEELS**

**LIKE MR. ALLAN? IT FEELS LIKE**

**SHIT! BUT TO TELL YOU IT**

**FEELS LIKE SHIT, FEELS FUCKING**

**GREAT 1 I**  
Fletcher does feel strangely fantastic. Free,

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
That's it, Mr..Reid. I find  
you in contempt!

**FLETCHER**  
**GOOD! I'M CONTEMPTIBLE! MY**  
**WHOLE GODDAMN LIFE IS JUST ONE**  
**BIG FAT FIB! YOU LIKE MY**  
**HAIR? --**  
(mussing hair)  
**MOUSSED! SHOULDERS --**  
(ripping out  
**PADS)**  
**PADDED! SHOES --**  
  
(kicking them  
**OFF)**  
**LIFTED! TEETH --**  
(pulling out  
**CAPS)**  
**CAP PED! FIV E-NIN ETY A**  
**CHICKLET!!**

COMMOTION in the court. The judge BANGS HIS GAVEL!!!

**JUDGE STEVENS**  
Bailiff! Remove Mr. Reid from  
the courtroom!

**FLETCHER**  
Yo u wanna know the truth? Oh  
yeah, let's let it rain... The  
truth is is that I've traded  
my life...a beautiful wife, an  
incredible son for THIS PISS  
**POT OF BIG DOUBLE O'S!**

The bailiff grabs Fletcher, forces him out...

FLETCHER

GO AHEAD, YOUR HONOR, BANG

YOUR GAVEL .-- KEEP TELLING

YOURSELF YOU'RE A BIG SHOT! DO

I SENSE A CASE OF GAVEL ENVY!!

WHAT'S THAT UNDER YOUR ROBE --

INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE?!!

(the judge is  
turning beet

RED)

. I TOUCHED A NERVE DIDN'T I?

WE'RE ALL A BUNCH OF BULLSHIT

ARTISTS!! IS THAT THE TRUTH

IN YOUR PANTS OR ARE YOU JUST

HAPPY TO SEE ME??

Fletcher is pushed passed Mr. Allan.

MR. ALLAN

You just killed your career.  
I hope you're happy.

FLETCHER

I'M BEYOND HAPPY MY BUTT FACED

FRIEND--- I'M EUPHORIC!

EXT. AUDREY'S PORCH - 'DAY

A sad Max is seated on the steps. TWO other BOYS are there  
with baseball equipment.

PAUL

We're going home.

EMMANUEL

Yeah, thanks for the great  
game, Max.

Emanuel knocks Max's hat off. Audrey's been watching from  
the door. She goes and sits by her son.

AUDREY

Max, honey. Your dad had a  
very big case today. It  
probably just--

MAX

I don't want to talk about it.

AUDREY

Okay.

MAX

(SUDDENLY)

I hate dad! I hate him!

AUDREY

Honey, don^t say that.

Max is really upset. It's "that look" and then some. The look Audrey never wanted to see again. She makes a decision.

**AUDREY**

Max, there's something I-want  
to talk to you about. . .

**INT. JAIL AREA**

Fletcher's handcuffed and is led to jail by TWO OFFICERS-.  
There's a happy/crazedness to him now. The truth is  
pouring forth, but he looks way, way off the deep end.

(desperately,  
p a s s i n g a phone)  
Pho ne call!! Phone call!! I  
g et to make a phone call!!

**INT. AUDREY'S KITCHEN -- DAY**

Max and Audrey at the table. The airline tickets Jerry  
gave her are in front of them.

**MAX**

When would we move?

**AUDREY**

Soon. My semester's almost  
over. You only have a week  
left of school... You like  
Jerry don't you?

(he nods)

So what do you say, should we  
check it out? Jerry wants us  
to come with him tonight. He  
has to pick out a place to  
live and he really wants our  
help?

**MAX**

Could I get a sled for when it  
snows?

**AUDREY**

Of course you can.

Max thinks, then:

**MAX**

Okay.

**INT. JAIL**

F l e t c h e r ' s holding a phone. He's frantic, now.

**F L E T C H E R**

( re: ringing

**PHONE)**

Answer! Answer!! Answer!! !

%

The phone RINGS, Audrey answers it.

**AUDREY**

Hello. .

**INTERCUT FLETCHER/AUDREY**

**FLETCHER**

Audrey! It's Fletcher--

AUDREY

(PISSSED)

I can't talk now, Fletcher.  
We have to pack.

FLETCHER

Wait, the most amazing thing's  
happened to me! I am feeling  
so good...

(REALIZING)

Pack?! Did you say pack?!

AUDREY

Max was sitting on the porch  
again, waiting for his dad. I  
won't let you do this to him  
anymore. I won't let you do  
this to me.

FLETCHER

A ud rey , wait. Please, I need  
to talk to you. I .swear, I'm  
a changed man. Just come to  
the courthouse with a thousand  
dollars and bail me out...  
Hello?

(to a cop)

O ne more call!! I need  
another call!!

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Fletcher is pacing back and forth. A GROUP OF TOUGH  
PRISONERS are on the far side of the cell, trying to stay  
as far away from Fletcher as they can.

FLETCHER

And what about our water  
su pply ? You don't think "the  
man's" dumped enough toxins to  
render every dick in this cell  
as lifeless as a beached  
minn ow? You're damn right!  
"The man" does anything he  
w an ts. We're nothing but  
pu ppets... Little game pieces  
they move back and forth.

A DEPUTY appears.

DEPUTY

Mr. Reid.

FLETCHER

That's me. Fletcher T. Reid.  
Pawn no. 332-154-9867.

DEPUTY

You made bail. Some woman.

INT. OUTER AREA

Fletcher rushes in.

FLETCHER

Audrey?

(he spots)

Greta?!

**GRETA**

Am I too late? Have you been  
sexually molested yet? I  
could circle the block.

**FLETCHER**

Greta! Greta!! . . . . Look at  
you, you well preserved,  
underpaid, overworked,  
underappreciated thing you.  
Give me a hug! You came and  
got me out!! Hug me!!

**GRETA**

(totally wierded

**OUT)**

Yes, well, I heard you went  
all noble in front of Mr.  
Allan so--

**FLETCHER**

You know what?! I love you.  
I loveyouloveyouloveyou. I  
want to hug you. Come here..,

**GRETA**

Mr. Reid, what has gotten into  
you?!

**FLETCHER**

Just the truth, Greta.  
Fifteen years of being stuck  
in a lie is nowhere near as  
powerful as one day of being  
stuck in the truth.

(checks his

**WATCH)**

Oh, my God!! I have to go!  
Thanks again, Greta!  
(as he runs off  
he calls back to

**HER)**

By the way, the truth is that  
I need you and I couldn't file  
a paperclip without you!  
Greta smiles, then catches herself, and quickly regains her  
"composure".

**CUT TO:**

**EXT.STREETS/INT. BMW**

Fletcher's driving like a madman...

**FLETCHER**

(on his phone)

Answeransweransweranswer...

We HEAR a RECORDED VOICE:



**VOICE**

The subscriber you called is  
either unavailable or outside  
the calling area.

**FLETCHER**

Shit!!

**INT. LAX UNITED TERMINAL - DAY**

Audrey and Max meet Jerry by the ticket counter. Max is wearing the Dodger cap his dad gave him. Jerry surprises him with a Boston Red Sox hat.

**JERRY**

A little going away present.  
I was gonna get you a bowl of  
clam chowder but they only had  
Manhattan.

**AUDREY**

Say thank you, Max.

**MAX**

Thanks.

Max takes off the hat his dad gave him and replaces it with the Boston hat.

**INT. BMW - DAY**

Fletcher's on the phone. He sails passed a parked POLICE CAR.

**FLETCHER**

(into phone)  
Shelton, Jerry Shelton.  
What time's that flight leave?  
7:50. Thank you.  
(checks his

**WATCH)**

Oh, shit! Shit!! Shit!  
Fletcher spots the FLASHING LIGHTS.

**FLETCHER**

Shiiiiit!!!  
He pulls over -- so quick he jumps the curb.

**POLICE OFFICER**

Would you step out of the car,  
please?  
Fletcher obeys.

**FLETCHER**

Listen; I know I'm driving a  
little crazy but i have an  
emergency to attend to...  
The cop's just getting off his walkie talkie.

**POLICE OFFICER**

I'm impounding this vehicle.

**FLETCHER**

Why? What for? For changing  
lanes?

**POLICE OFFICER**

I just ran your tags through  
the computer. You've got  
seventeen unpaid parking  
tickets.

**FLETCHER**

No ! I paid them! This  
morning! That's the truth! I  
swear!!

**POLICE OFFICER**



Not according to the computer.

**FLETCHER**

The computer is wrong! It  
' hasn't been updated. The  
computer's a liar!

**POLICE OFFICER**

You can straighten it out at  
the impound yard.

**FLETCHER**

(checks his  
watch, firmly)

**NO!**

**POLICE OFFICER**

No?

**FLETCHER**

That's right, no! I'm not  
gonna lose my son because some  
stupid clerk was too lazy to  
update the computer.

(getting cockier.  
as he goes)

Now if you want to follow me,  
you can follow me and take the  
car after I get where I'm  
going. I'm a lawyer and I  
k now my rights! Understand?!

**CUT TO:**

A TOW TRUCK drives away with Fletcher's car, leaving  
Fletcher stranded.

**EXT. STREETS - DAY**

Fletcher frantically tries to hail a...

**FLETCHER**

T axi! Taxi!!  
No luck. He spots

**A PAYPHONE**

digs through the Yellow Pages. Finds "Ten Minute Taxi".  
Yes ! He fishes for change. Shit! He doesn't have any!!

**FLETCHER**

(looking

**HEAVENWARD)**

Noooo!!!  
He spots a man walking by.

**FLETCHER**

'Scuse me, sir. Do you have  
any - -  
The man turns. It's the same BEGGAR Fletcher was rude to  
outside the courthouse.

**BEGGAR**

Change? Absolutely.  
He continues walking.

**FLETCHER**

Could you spare some?

**BEGGAR**

Unquestionably.

The beggar continues on.

**FLETCHER**

Alright, I get your point.  
But this is a crisis! Look,  
I'll give you ten bucks.

The beggar pulls out a quarter and holds it up.

**BEGGAR**

(ADMIRING

**QUARTER)**

It's so shiny and new.

**FLETCHER**

Tw ent y. .

**BEGGAR**

Minted in Denver. Imagine  
that.

**FLETCHER**

Thirty-four. That's all I  
have.

A moment as the beggar thinks, then:

**BEGGAR**

It's worth twice that to screw  
you.

He walks off, grinning.

**FLETCHER**

**JERKOFF!**

**BEGGAR**

**LAWYER!**

Fletcher turns, spots a familiar building in the distance.

**FLE TCH ER**

M y office!!

**INT. LOBBY FLETCHER'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY**

He starts in the front door, when a SECURITY GUARD stops  
him.

**SECURITY GUARD**

Whoa, where do you think  
you're going?

**FLETCHER**

I just need to use the phone  
to call a cab. I work here.

**MR. ALLAN (O.S.)**

Used to work here.

Mr. Allan has just exited the elevator.

...



**MR. ALLAN**

(to security

**GUARD)**

Son, that man is trespassing.  
The guard starts toward Fletcher threateningly.

**FLETCHER**

Hold it!  
(to Mr. Allan)

I've got ten years worth of  
dirt on you and this firm, and  
I'm in the kind of mood today  
to get a lot off my chest.  
You let me use the phone or I  
start talking!!

**CUT TO:**

Fletcher's is THROWN ON HIS ASS in the street. Mr. Allan  
has watched from atop the stairs of the building.

**MR. ALLAN**

Still euphoric, Reid?

He goes back inside. ♦ Fletcher starts to get up when a CAR  
SCREECHES to a HALT, inches away.

**MAN'S VOICE ( O . S . )**

Fletcher! ♦  
It's PHILIP.

**PHILIP**

Seven-thirty... It's Karaoke  
time!

Fletcher runs up and HUGS the astonished man,

**FLETCHER**

**PHILIP!! LOOK AT YOU!!! MY**

**PHILIP!!**

Fletcher KISSES HIM ON THE LIPS.

**INT. PHILIP'S CAR - DAY**

Philip's driving Fletcher.

**FLETCHER**

You're saving my life, Philip.

**PHILIP**

You know, it's funny, but for  
some reason I was beginning to  
think you didn't like me.  
Isn't that silly?

**FLETCHER .**

No. It's not silly. I don't  
like you.

**PHILIP**

What?

**FLETCHER**

I don't like you. I'm sorry.  
I find you boring. I hate  
ch ara des . And you wouldn't  
know a good time if it sat on  
your face.

(feels bad)

I'm sorry. It was easier than  
telling you how I really felt.  
Are you upset?

A moment, then:

**PHILIP**

No. To be honest, I don't  
like you either. You treat  
people like obstacles and you  
cheat at charades. .

**FLETCHER**

Then why are you always trying  
to socialize with me?

**PHILIP**

You're a client. I figured if  
I didn't try to be your  
friend, you'd get a new  
accountant.

**FLETCHER**

Philip, I don't like you as a  
person, but I'm crazy about  
you as my accountant. I ' d  
never hire a new accountant.  
Never!

**PHILIP**

So we don't have to like each  
other anymore?

**FLETCHER** -

Not at all.

**PHILIP**

All right. Sooner I get you  
♦to the airport, sooner I can  
dump your sorry ass off.

**EXT. AIRPORT -- DAY**

Philip's car skids to a stop. Fletcher jumps out.

**INT. LAX TERMINAL - DAY .**

Fletcher races in.

**FLETCHER**

Bedelayed. Bedelayed. Fog,  
rain, something, anything...

He sees the DEPARTURE BOARD

" F l i g h t 69. Departs 7:50. On Time. Gate 17."

Fletcher looks at the clock -- It's 7:46!! Holy Shit!!

**INT. LAX ESCALATOR**

Fletcher pushes his way HE a crowded escalator. Past  
people standing on the left despite the SIGN that says

**STAND ON RIGHT.**

**FLETCHER**

Excuse me. . . excuse me. . . Come  
on folks, let's let the  
frantic man pass... Sorry...  
Thank... you... Standing on  
the right, passing on the  
left. They can't make this-  
deal any easier than it is...  
Come on... coming through...

At the top,- a WOMAN in a NURSES UNIFORM asks for money...

**WOMAN**

Help the poor?...

**FLETCHER**

(speeding past)

I don't trust you. I don't  
know what the hell that  
uniform is. Sorry.

(a Hare Krishna  
tries to stop

**HIM)**

**NOT NOW, TOGA BOY!**

**INT. LAX - SECURITY AREA**

Fortunately, there's no line at the metal detector.  
Fletcher races right by but SETS OFF THE ALARM.

**INSPECTOR**

Please step through again.

**FLETCHER**

Ahhh!! ! Damn..;  
Fletcher frantically tosses his keys, cufflinks, his Rolex  
into a tray.  
He tries again. It BUZZES again!

**FLETCHER**

What? I'tii practically naked!  
A guy in a TURBAN passes over him with a DETECTOR WAND.

**FLETCHER**

It's called a ZIPPER, Hodgy...

The wand BEEPS over Fletchers front pocket. He reaches in  
and pulls out the now familiar BLUE PEN...

**INT. LAX - DEPARTURE CONCOURSE**

Fletcher races by Gate 15, 16, gets to 17 . . . but sees the  
PLANE Slowly TAXIING AWAY.

**FL E TC H ER**

N ooo!!!  
Fletcher spots a door marked "NOT AN EXIT". Goes for it  
when a FLIGHT ATTENDANT interrupts.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

Can I help you?

**FLETCHER**

Look out!! ! --

(TRUTHFUL)

**-NOTHING'S COMING!!**

The woman raises her eyebrows and looks anyway. And  
Fletcher BOLTS THROUGH THE EXIT!

**EXT. TARMAC - DAY**

He scurries down a flight of stairs calling after the plane  
which is moving away.  
No way he'll catch it.  
Then, he sees a MECHANIC working on a MOBILE STAIRS UNIT  
(These are the steps they pull up to planes) Fletcher gets  
an insane idea. . .  
The worker hears an ENGINE START, looks up to SEE FLETCHER  
in the truck, driving off, TOWING THE STAIRS.

**WORKER**

Hey!! Hey!!!!  
But Fletcher's gone.

**EXT. AIRPLANE - DAY**

Fletcher's DRIVING THE STAIRS trying to catch up with the  
plane. GROUND WORKERS react.

Soon, the "stairs" are racing alongside the plane.  
Fletcher looks for signs of Audrey and Max but he's too low  
to see in the plane.  
He grabs the TOOL BOX'on the passenger's seat,-puts it on  
the accelerator, pinning it to the floor. Then, he CLIMBS

#### THE STEPS!

The "stairs" sway back and forth as he reaches the top.

#### INT. AIRPLANE - DAY - MOVING

PASSENGERS calmly read while outside FLETCHER speeds along,  
WAVING HIS ARMS like a maniac. The ENGINE NOISE drowns out  
his call for...

#### F L E T C H E R

MA X ? !!    AUDREYY?!!

A STEWARDESS stands in the aisle, giving the safety  
lecture.

#### STEWARDESS

In case of a water landing,  
please use your seat cushion

#### AS--

◆Her MOUTH DROPS as she notices Fletcher.

#### EXT. TARMAC - DAY

Fletcher is BANGING on the windows. People on the plane  
POINT, STARE in amazement.  
Fletcher looks ahead, SEES the stairs about to CRASH INTO  
THE WING! Fletcher desperately fiddles with some controls.  
At the last second, finds the one that LOWERS THE STAIRS.  
He surfs under the wing...  
... and RAISES UP THE STAIRS at the other side.  
Fletcher's at the front of the plane, where he finally  
spots. . .

#### MAX, AUDREY AND JERRY SEATED IN THE BULKHEAD

Max has the window seat, Audrey and Jerry are next to him.  
Audrey has on her headset and Jerry is looking for his  
seatbelt. NEITHER SEES FLETCHER.  
Fletcher SCREAMS to get their attention. But it's TOO

#### NOISY.

Then, Fletcher looks ahead and his EYES GO WIDE!

#### FLETCHER'S POV

The RUNWAY is ENDING!.

Just then, Max looks up...SEES HIS DAD. Audrey is now  
trying to help Jerry find his seat belt.

#### AUDREY

(checks under his

#### SEAT)

It's right here, honey.

#### M A X

Mom!    Mom!!

#### AUDREY

Just a second, Max.

**MAX**  
Mom, it's dad!

**AU DREY**  
What? What about dad?  
Audrey turns. Then she sees Fletcher **WAVING** weakly...

**AUDREY**  
Fletcher?!

**AT THAT INSTANT -- THE PLANE MAKES A SHARP TURN!**  
**BUT THE STAIRS DON'T!** They keeps going straight, heading **♦**  
right for the **END OF THE RUNWAY** and a parked **LOADED LUGGAGE**

**CART. . -**  
And **BAM!** **FLETCHER, THE STAIRS, THE LUGGAGE ALL GO FLYING!**

Audrey strains to watch as **FLETCHER** lands hard **ONTO A**

**MOUNTAIN OF BAGGAGE!**

**CLOSE ON FLETCHER**

With all the strength he has he lifts his head, sees he's  
in one piece, and then **COLLAPSES IN DEFEAT.**

**CUT TO:**

**INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT**

Fletcher's **BANGED UP** pretty good. His head is **BANDAGED**.  
He puts a **COLD COMPRESS** to his **BRUISED FOREHEAD** and **WINCES**.

**FLETCHER**  
(mumbles to

**HIMSELF)**  
Oh boy, the truth hurts. Yes  
indeed.

**DEPUTY**  
Mr. Reid. Someone made bail  
for you.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT**

Fletcher comes out **LIMPING**, totally dishevelled, missing a  
shoe, and still holding the compress.

**FLETCHER**

**(WEAKLY)**  
Greta? Is that you?  
He looks up and is surprised to see **AUDREY** and **JERRY**  
waiting for him just outside the door.  
Max is sitting at the bottom of the stairs, still **ANGRY**.  
He sees his dad, then quickly turns away.

**FLETCHER**  
(to Audrey and  
Jerry, trying to  
seem chipper)  
Sorry I made you miss your  
flight, not really.  
(no response)  
You're obviously a little  
. upset, not that I blame you...  
although I'll bet you'll still

get the bonus miles. . .

**AUDREY**

Fletcher, are you crazy?  
What were you doing?

**FLETCHER**

That's two questions. A; Yes,  
but I think the legal term is  
temporarily insane. And B; I  
was trying to finally have  
that talk with you about  
Boston.

Audrey's patience are growing thin...

**FLETCHER**

Okay, okay... The whole truth  
and nothing but the truth,  
(with difficulty,

**SINCERELY)**

I tried to stop the plane  
because it was taking off with  
my life... you and Max.

This comes as a surprise to Audrey. Not just what Fletcher  
said, but the way he said it.

**FLETCHER**

I know you've met somebody...  
somebody pretty great... and  
the truth is I wish you didn't  
but you did and... All I ' m  
asking i s . . . Please don't move  
to Boston. Please don't take  
Max away.

She's definitely moved by Fletcher, but not convinced.

**AUDREY**

You can come visit anytime.  
It's only a four hour flight.

**FLETCHER**

I don't want to visit him.  
That's what I've been doing--  
visiting him, dropping by,  
stopping in. I want to be in  
his life. I don't want to be  
some jerk that sees him at  
Easter. I want to be his  
father.

Fletcher turns to Jerry.

**FLETCHER**

I know I have no right to ask,  
but can I talk you out of  
taki ng that job? I can get  
you a better job here in L.A.  
I've got all kinds of  
connect ions... what do you do  
again?

**JERRY**

I design security systems.

**FLETCHER**

How symbolic. Okay great.  
You know Pac-Tec?

**JERRY**

The biggest.

**FLETCHER**

One of their systems shorted  
out and burned down a  
supermarket. I got them off.



Another proud day for justice.  
If I ask them they'll beat  
your Boston offer in two  
seconds . . .

**AUDREY**

Don't put Jerry in the middle.

**JERRY**

It's okay.  
(to Fletcher)  
Boston means this  
(snaps his

**FINGERS)**

to me. All I want is for this  
lady and Max to be happy.  
Preferably, with me. Whatever  
they want, I'll go along with.  
They both look to Audrey.

**AUDREY**

All I want is for Max to be  
happy.  
Audrey looks over to Max seated at the bottom of the  
stairs. He's still upset.

**AUDREY**

You better know your jury.  
You're not exactly Max's hero  
today.

**FLETCHER**

Just let me present my case.  
Fletcher walks over,, tries to be playful, starts WALKING,  
TALKING LIKE THE TERMINATOR.

**FLETCHER/TERMINATOR**

I have been sent from the  
future to destroy you. . .  
Argghhh!  
(no response, a

**BEAT)**

You mad at me?  
Max nods. Fletcher's at a loss for how to begin. Then:

**FLETCHER**

You wanted me to stop lying.  
But lying isn't the problem. . .  
Why we lie ~ that's the  
problem. Sometimes we lie to  
make someone else feel better.  
But sometimes we lie because  
the truth gets in our way...  
(touches him)  
But being an adult means you  
sacrifice some things for more

important things. Much more  
important things. I was so  
stupid, Max.

(pointing to his  
own head)

Malfunction in vector one.  
All this time you've been here  
and I could see you anytime I  
felt like it. And I...  
didn't. Please don't go to  
Boston. Max, I love you more  
than anything else in the  
world and you know it's true.  
I couldn't say it if it

weren't true. Not today.  
A moment as Max studies his father, then:

**MAX**

(to Audrey)

He's telling the truth, Mom.  
He's not allowed to lie. I  
made a wish and anything Dad  
says has to be the truth.

(to Fletcher) ..

Right?

But Fletcher's looking at his watch...

**FLETCHER**

Max. .. it's 9:22.

**AUDREY**

What?

**FLETCHER**

Max, you made the wish at  
9:15. I've been able to lie  
for the last seven minutes.

Max steps away from Fletcher.

**MAX**

So then, you were...

**FLETCHER**

No! It wasn't a lie. I just  
wanted to be honest with you  
and tell you -- there was no  
wish to guarantee it anymore.  
You just have to believe me.

Max looks at Audrey, who is letting Max decide for himself  
Max looks at Fletcher and tries to decide.

**MAX**

(to Audrey)

Mommy... do we have to go to  
Boston?

Audrey looks at Jerry, then back at Max.

**AUDREY**

No. We don't have to.

Fletcher hugs his son -- the kind of hug that says "I'll  
never let you go."

**MAX**

(to Fletcher)

Can we play catch tomorrow?

Fletcher smiles. . .

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

A beautiful park with a baseball diamond. Fletcher is  
seated on a bench, waiting. He's dressed in sweats, with a  
baseball glove. Soon, Jerry, Audrey, and Max pull up...

**MAX**

Dad! !

**FLETCHER**

Maximum!!

Fletcher picks Max up.

**MAX**

Transformer!!! .

Fletcher and Max do the TRANSFORMER ROUTINE again...

**FLETCHER**

Malfunction in vector seven.  
I have lost control of my  
affection reflex...

Fletcher starts KISSING MAX on the head over and over. He

sees Audrey.

**FLETCHER**

Procreate! Procreate!

**AUDREY**

**(PLAYFULLY)**

Fletcher... You're gonna lose  
a limb--

**MAX**

Come on, dad, let's play  
catch!!

**FLETCHER**

Sr. . .

**UE**

(starts to toss

**MAX)**

Here you go, mom.

(Max screams)

Oh, you mean with a ball...

He puts Max down. Max runs into position. Fletcher stops  
for a second and turns to Jerry, man to man.

**FLETCHER**

I take back every dirty,  
dishonest thing I ever said  
about you, wrote about you,  
faxed about you, E-mailed  
about you.

**JERRY**

Appreciated.

Fletcher tosses the baseball up and down.

**FLETCHER**

So, you up for a little  
friendly competition?

**JERRY**

No, you go play with your son.

**FLETCHER**

I wasn't talking about  
basesball.

A slow smile from Jerry. Fletcher winks and tosses the  
ball to Max.

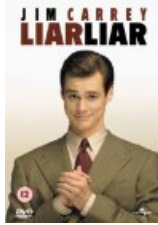
**FLETCHER**

(to Max)

Alright, it's time to show you  
the old Fletcher Reid change up.

Fletcher winds up in an EXAGGERATED SUPER FAST MOTION, then  
instantly shifts to SUPER SLOW MOTION. Max CRACKS UP.  
Audrey LAUGHS. Jerry can't help but smile, too.  
There may be better things in life... but at this moment,  
it's hard to think of a single one. Honestly.

**THE END**



## Liar Liar

Writers : [Tom Shadyac](#) [Mike Binder](#)

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