

# "LIAR, LIAR"

Rough Working Draft  
by  
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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  
jail. 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  
the 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 -- it'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 yours. And please...don't let your emotions run away with you. 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-raising 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  
Oh really? Where I live, we  
use a boy on a bike.

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

AUDREY  
(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)  
You 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  
you. 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 '  
Max! 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.

GRETA  
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  
partner 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.

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,  
money... 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?  
Thirty? 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!



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

Something'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  
seventeenth 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  
Hm? 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-- 1

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  
She!ton... 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

So . . . 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. COURTRROOM -, 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 presence. 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 ..  
Wait! 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)

There'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

DAZED, 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.

HORRIFIED, Fletcher hurries on. The heavysset 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

Hiya, 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...

FLETCHER  
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.

INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE - MORNING

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

FLETCHER,  
(panicking)  
Don't panic. You can beat  
this - it's all a matter of  
willpower.

He dives for his desk and rifles through it.

FLETCHER  
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 is . . ." He tries to write an "R" but can't. He STRAINS. STRAINS 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."

FLETCHER  
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  
blue!! 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 Dunn 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!

AUDREY

My God!!

She SLAMS DOWN the phone.

INT. FLETCHER'S OFFICE

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

FLETCHER

AHHHHHH!! I WHAT IS WRONG WITH  
ME!!

EXT. 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

Fletcher. 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)

No? No?! What are you  
saying? 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.

MIRANDA

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 open -- 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.

FLETCHER  
Shit!!

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  
geezer, 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.

AUDREY  
(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 about 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 stage. The children stare, rapt with attention.

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  
last 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  
tonight. 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 if... Look,  
here's an example. When Mommy  
was pregnant with you, she  
gained a little weight.  
Seventy pounds. I thought she  
was gonna give birth to a car.  
But she'd say to me "How do I  
look?" So I'd say, "Oh,  
honey, you're beautiful,  
you're glowing."<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, I  
would've hurt Mommy's  
feelings. 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  
Fine! 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 you together. You're his hero.

FLETCHER

Oh 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  
All 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 harassed.

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  
this silver frame. From  
Tiffany's.

(questioning)

. . . Tiffany's?

FLETCHER

Jumbo's House of Junk.

She throws 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  
leg. 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  
into 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 varied  
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.

DEAN 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)  
No sir! We are not ready to  
begin. 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  
Water! Get him water!

Falk hurries into the building as Fletcher hacks on.

FLETCHER  
Fu-- fu--

VIRGINIA  
Sit 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)  
What?! What?!

FALK  
I couldn't find any water, so  
I got him coffee!

Fletcher runs up and down the steps, frantically fanning  
his 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 -- of 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."

He 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  
DOWNS 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.)

Wait 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  
severly 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.ropes.

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 patonic, not?  
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  
wintness!

JUDGE STEVENS  
It's hig 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 FUR 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.

VIRGINIA  
Listen, you bastard. I want  
my 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.

BALIFP

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,

FLETCHER

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  
she got married. Which makes  
her 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)  
Prenuptial agreements.

FLETCHER  
(knows he has  
them)

PRENUPTIAL 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)

You. . . . are . . . . TOASTTTTT! !!

(dramatically)

Nothing further, your Honor!

A MURMUR OVERTAKES THE ROOM!

/

JUDGE STEVENS

(banging his  
gavel)

Quiet! 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  
of 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. FLETCHER'S WON! Dana, Mr. Cole are  
devastated.

MR. ALLAN

That son of bitch pulled it  
off!

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

JUDGE STEVENS

Order! 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 victim here. And now I'm going to hit him where it hurts.

FLETCHER

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

JUDGE STEVENS

Mr. 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 morning at nine. Court is adjourned!

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

V. 5-1

VIRGINIA  
Stop that! We're leaving now!

CHILD  
I want to go with Daddy.

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)  
Your 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)  
This 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 truth! We want to win! We want to win at all costs...and you know what the worst thing about wanting to win so badly is? 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* 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)  
CAPPED! FIVE-NINETY A  
CHICKLET!!

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

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

FLETCHER  
You 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,  
passing a phone)  
Phone call!! Phone call!! I  
get 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

Fletcher's holding a phone. He's frantic, now.

FLETCHER  
(re: ringing  
phone)  
Answer! Answer!! Answer!!!  
%

The phone RINGS, Audrey answers it.

AUDREY  
Hello.

INTERCUT FLETCHER/AUDREY

FLETCHER  
Audrey! It's Fletcher--

AUDREY  
(pissed)  
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  
Audrey, 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)  
One 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  
supply? You don't think "the  
man's" dumped enough toxins to  
render every dick in this cell  
as lifeless as a beached  
minnow? You're damn right!  
"The man" does anything he  
wants. We're nothing but  
puppets... 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  
to 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  
know 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  
Taxi! 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  
Twenty.

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.

FLETCHER  
My 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  
charades. 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

"Flight 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.

FLETCHER

Nooo!!!

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...

FLETCHER  
MAX?!! 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.

MAX  
Mom! Mom!!

AUDREY  
Just a second, Max.

MAX  
Mom, it's dad!

AUDREY  
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 is... 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  
taking that job? I can get  
you a better job here in L.A.  
I've got all kinds of  
connections...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 hot 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  
Sure. . .  
(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