

One Day in September  
by  
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EXT. MANHATTAN LATE AFTERNOON.

As credits roll, we follow BARRY WRIGHT rushing along a busy Manhattan sidewalk. As he approaches his building, he runs by a group of young black Gospel street musicians singing "Amazing Grace." In front of them is a small bucket where they are collecting donations for a new church. Many people go by hardly even noticing them, which seems to frustrate one of the young singers. Barry, similarly, doesn't even look up as he walks by...this is New York, after all. For the BOY GOSPEL SINGER Barry's passing by is the last straw.

BOY GOSPEL SINGER  
Hey man, leave somethin' for the  
Lord!

BOY GOSPEL SINGER'S MOTHER  
Hush!

But Barry stops, shakes his head, and reluctantly searches his pockets. All he can come up with is a twenty-dollar bill, but by this time he's committed. He looks at the Boy Gospel Singer who looks back at him expectantly. Barry sighs and drops the twenty into the bucket.

BOY GOSPEL SINGER'S MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Bless you sir!

BARRY  
Yeah.

He's late for a meeting. Rounding a corner he enters the lobby of a funky building in Soho, otherwise known as Silicon Alley. It's an old building -- perhaps an old mill or factory -- that's clearly been refurbished: exposed brick walls, post and beam construction. In front of the RECEPTIONIST, a gorgeous young blonde who peers at him over a silver LCD computer monitor, he pauses and smooths his hair.

RECEPTIONIST  
They're waiting.

BARRY  
Yeah. Yeah, I know.

He is a Steve Jobs-like character: 40-ish, black turtleneck, jeans, sport jacket, and sneakers. Nodding to the receptionist, who smiles back in return, he takes a quick deep breath and then steps into a spacious but -- again -- funky conference room. Old brick walls contrast with modern silver-chrome furniture. Scattered all around the room are tokens of Barry's status as a minor Internet celebrity: article reprints ("the Web done Wright");

(CONTINUED)

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photos with the Mayor; various other plaques; etc. Today, he, his close friend and business partner AHMED, and chief designer JOY MIYAZAKI are pitching a redesign of a customer's web site. Ahmed is somewhat scruffier than Barry: jeans, open Hawaiian shirt, sandals. Joy, about 30, is trim, attractive, sexy, and wears a short black miniskirt and black shirt: tres, tres DKNY. The customer in this case is a big Wall Street bank. The clients seated around the table could not be more different from Barry: all dressed in suits, ties, cufflinks, except for the female manager, JOAN GULATI, who nonetheless is also dressed very conservatively - and so on.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late, everyone. Oh, I'm not late?

The clients are stone-faced.

AHMED

You're late.

BARRY

Oh. I'm so sorry. Traffic. Listen: we're so excited to have you here. You've met Ahmed, and Joy? Did you get lattes? We brew Starbucks right here. Great.

(looks around)

Bill couldn't make it?

The clients shift uneasily.

JOAN

(evenly)

No. Bill couldn't come today.

BARRY

OK.

Something's wrong. Nevertheless Barry switches on the projector and starts his PowerPoint presentation.

BARRY (CONT'D)

OK. Now, I'm going to skip all of our testimonials and go right to the details, what we can do for you. Bottom line: we believe we can lower your overall customer acquisition costs by 30%, and increase customer retention by at least 10% year over year. We guarantee -- guarantee, mind you -- fifteen million dollars in uplift.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRY(CONT'D)

Fifteen million. Amazing, isn't it? You are NOT going to hear that kind of claim from anybody, not IBM, not our direct competitors down the street. Fifteen million dollars in uplift. Joy?

Flips slides showing charts and graphs of return-on investment, etc.

JOY

So, how are we going to do this? You ask. I'll show you.

An animated slide with lots of interconnected computers through the Internet is displayed.

JOY (CONT'D)

We'll be using customer lists from several key partners for which we'll be getting a great rate, bringing them in overnight into our data center over a super high speed fiber link.

AHMED

We're right on the Internet backbone.

CLIENT 1

What does that mean?

BARRY

What that means is, your customers get MUCH faster response time, much better service than ANY of your competitors. It's a huge competitive advantage. You'll be light years ahead.

JOY

That's right, and --

CLIENT 1

So tell me how we monetize it? None of you e-business guys ever say how we turn this into cash.

JOAN, who is clearly the leader of the client team, interrupts, and waves off her colleague.

JOAN

Excuse me -- Mr. Wright --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARRY

"Barry," please --

JOAN

Mr. Wright, let me cut right to the chase. We believe you can do this, and we believe you have the technical expertise to accomplish this task.

BARRY

But?

The clients shift nervously in their chairs.

JOAN

How much?

BARRY

(puzzled)

How much what?

JOAN

How much will it cost, Mr. Wright?

BARRY

How much will it cost...

JOAN

How much will it cost?

BARRY

Umm..

(flips to a slide late in the deck)

Uh, OK. Here's the breakdown.

JOAN

(studies a very complex spreadsheet)

Yes. 2.3 million dollars, Mr. Wright.

BARRY

That is, ah, the bottom line, yes. Now that includes certain fixed costs, plus...

JOAN

Too much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BARRY

Too much?

JOAN

Too much.

BARRY

How much too much?

JOAN

Five hundred thousand dollars.

BARRY

Five hundred grand too much? I'm  
sure we could make some  
adjustments...

JOAN

No. That's our budget.

BARRY

What?

JOAN

That's our budget. That's what  
we're willing to pay you. The  
bottom line.

Silence.

BARRY

You never had problems getting  
budget before. Want me to call Bill  
-- where is he, anyway, he called  
me himself to confirm yesterday,  
we're playing golf next weekend --

JOAN

You want to call my vice president?

BARRY

Well --

JOAN

He was laid off yesterday. Barry.  
(waits for that to sink  
in)  
Budgets aren't what they used to  
be. We're headed for a recession. A  
big one. Can't you see?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JOAN (CONT'D)

Markets are down, deposits way down, people are getting nervous, pulling money out.

Another long silence.

BARRY

OK. I'll tell you what. You guys have been a great customer for us. We'll do the job for half a million bucks. We may have to cut our deliverables a bit. And it may not entirely be up to your standards -

JOAN

Great. We'll expect a revised proposal from you by the end of the week.

They stand and get ready to leave. As they are walking out...

JOAN (CONT'D)

Better get used to this sort of conversation, Barry.

BARRY

Nah. Listen, Joan, I worry for you guys, I talk to your competitors all the time, they're not cutting back.

JOAN

(almost condescending)

Sure, Barry. Listen: the laws of capitalism have been suspended for the last three or four years. They're back. Keeping costs down is important. Making a profit is even more important. Get used to it. You need to make profits.

BARRY

Aah! Profits are for wimps.

The clients leave, and Ahmed, Joy and Barry have a postmortem. Joy lights up a cigarette.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(to Joy)

Do you have to do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

JOY

What, you want me to go outside and smoke?

AHMED

Joan's right, Barry. Things are slowing down everywhere.

Joy is nodding too.

AHMED (CONT'D)

Barry, we really ought to start putting together a list, you know, of who's really essential.

BARRY

Ahmed, we've been together since college you and I. We started this company together...trust me, we're not going to lay off. We can't lay anybody off, hell, SwordShark just down the street, they'd think we're going under! Steal all our clients!

Joy sits down in front of Barry, crosses her fishnet stockinged legs slowly. He can't help but notice...a provocation?

JOY

So, SwordShark just laid off half their employees.

BARRY

What?

AHMED

This is what we're telling you.

BARRY

Look, there are a thousand reasons why that won't happen to us. We've got great customers, we've got a positive cash flow --

JOY

-- almost positive--

BARRY

Our investors love us --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

AHMED

We're in hock to them up to our ears, our options are diluted out the wazoo...

BARRY

Listen to you guys!

AHMED

Barry. You're my best friend. And you must hear this: the bubble is bursting, and all your charisma and personality is not going to stop it.

BARRY

I am charming, aren't I?

JOY

And then some.

Barry shoots her a glance, thinks better of responding. Instead he picks up a book on the credenza.

BARRY

Check it out. Dow 30,000. We're in a New Economy, baby, the gold rush is still on, and the three of us are building an empire. In five years we three are going to be so rich. you'll all be naming islands after me..Hey... hey...I got an idea. Let's rename the company. Check this out: the Empire of Design. What do you think?

JOY

Uh-oh.

BARRY

It'll be great! Yeah. Reinvent the company. If it ain't broke, break it! Yeah!

AHMED

Major uh-oh.

BARRY

Let's ask the team.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

AHMED

Let's not...they have work to do.  
Barry!

But it is too late. They walk out of the conference room into a bullpen full of Gen-X'ers and Gen-Y'ers all sitting in front of Macs. There's a pool table and a foosball table at one end of the big open room; a good-sized, well-stocked kitchenette at the other; and everyone is sitting on Aeron chairs at funky, too-cool work areas.

BARRY

Hey! Instant meeting!

Everybody stops working, look up.

BARRY (CONT'D)

We're thinking about changing the name of the company! Empire of Design. What do you think?

Barry's suggestion is met with a resounding chorus of boos. But almost instantly, true to the ultra-creative nature of the company, there are lots of counter-suggestions:

VOICE 1

Hey, maybe Design Destiny?

VOICE 2

That's stupid. Dirty Design, yeah, with an edge to it.

VOICE 3

Well, maybe if you took a shower once in a while you wouldn't be so damn dirty.

VOICE 4

BarrEx. Or the Wright Stuff? How about that?

VOICE 1

Suck-up!

BARRY

OK, OK, OK. Noodle on it, all right? Send me email! Oh, and by the way, it may be Monday, but what the hey...

ALL

BEER BASH TONIGHT!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

Barry, Ahmed and Joy walk into Barry's office.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER.

BARRY

(to Ahmed and Joy)

How can we be in trouble with so many smart kids helping us out? Listen --

(he makes a snap decision)

We are going to do the bank deal. For \$250,000.

AHMED

That won't even cover expenses!

BARRY

It's customer retention, baby. Retain the customer! Sure, they think they're down now. But they'll get out of this funk they're in, and when they do, they'll be so grateful they'll be writing out unbelievable checks. Huge. Huge. We can get a percentage, maybe. Huge.

JOY

You're crazy. I don't have a clue what you're doing, but you're crazy. In a good way.

BARRY

All right then. Get back to work! Yeah!

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE. A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Ken, the CFO walks in. Ken is the only one who wears a tie, but it's on a checked shirt, so it's still pretty informal. He's in his fifties -- experienced, smart, pragmatic. Barry has his feet up on the credenza and is looking out his window into space.

KEN

Hey.

BARRY

How's money, Ken?

KEN

What money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY  
Isn't my Chief Financial Officer  
supposed to know how our money is?

KEN  
Did we get the contract?

BARRY  
Yup...but...

KEN  
But what?

BARRY  
We had to knock down the price a  
little.

KEN  
How much?

BARRY  
Two fifty.

KEN  
You knocked off 250? That's fine.  
That's all margin.

BARRY  
No, we're going to do the job for  
two fifty.

Open-mouthed, Ken stares at Barry.

KEN  
Barry, look...we're running out of  
cash. I hate to say this but by  
December or so we won't be able to  
make payroll.

BARRY  
You sound like them. Don't sweat  
it.

KEN  
Time to go back to the well, I  
guess, see if we can milk the  
investors out of a little more. Two  
or three mil, keep us afloat  
another few months.

A long pause, then Ken gets it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KEN (CONT'D)

You've already talked to them,  
haven't you. They turned you down.

BARRY

Don't...sweat...it.

KEN

Jee-zus....

The phone rings. Barry picks it up; it's his four-year-old daughter Suzanna.

BARRY

Hi, Suzie-Q. How was school today.

SUZANNA

Hi Daddy! Mommy says don't forget  
to come home early tonight.

BARRY

I'm sorry, honey, I have to work  
late...

SUZANNA

Again?

(pause)

Mommy wants to talk to you.

MONICA

You remember the party at your  
parents' house tonight?

BARRY

Oh, shit.

MONICA

Your brother will be there. Jenny,  
too.

BARRY

She pregnant yet?

MONICA

Barry...

BARRY

Well, you know, to hear Jeff talk,  
that's all they do...

MONICA

Barry!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARRY

Honey, look... I can't...beer bash tonight.

Ken's eyes go up; he hadn't heard about this additional expense.

MONICA

On a Monday night? Barry!

BARRY

All right, all right. Listen, I'll meet you there. You and Suzy go early, you know how Dad loves to play with her. Yeah, OK, bye.

KEN

Beer bash?

BARRY

Yeah, for morale.

KEN

Whose?

Barry frowns.

KEN (CONT'D)

Listen, it's September, and at this burn rate we're closing in November. Shutting our doors.

BARRY

(frustrated)

Ken!

(He points to a book on the desk)

Look. Dow 30000! This is just a lull!

KEN

Yeah, right.

He leaves. Barry sits back down and stares back out the window over the Manhattan landscape. He begins a dialog with The Voice, a disembodied speaker with whom he converses from time to time. The Voice has a feminine, patient, but authoritative tone. Though Barry actually vocalizes his responses, no one ever hears them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You really should spend more time with her, you know.

BARRY

Who?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Suzie. Your daughter?

BARRY

Yeah, yeah, I know.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

She loves you so much, and all she wants is your approval and your love. Kids are so simple and perfect that way.

BARRY

I know. But I've got work to do. Have to get the company through this. Hell, if the company goes down, so does my family, so this takes priority.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Barry. The company isn't going to make it. It is going to go down. You know it.

BARRY

Bullshit!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You know it, Barry. You know it. Deep down inside, you know you're screwed. You should be spending time with your daughter.

BARRY

That's the most defeatist damn thing I ever heard. We're all just going to have to work harder. Do more with less. Success is built from challenges overcome.

THE VOICE

That's true, but you know times are changing. Shall I tell you a funny story, Barry? Someday, you'll die.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

THE VOICE(CONT'D)

And then, when you and I talk,  
you're not going to say 'I wish I'd  
spent more time at work.' Trust me,  
I've never seen it.

BARRY

Who the hell are you to tell me I'm  
screwed, anyway.

(no answer)

Obviously, talking to myself is my  
way of relieving stress.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You know better.

BARRY

I know what?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You know you're not talking to  
yourself.

BARRY

Yeah, and how do I know that?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Ah, how many times have we had this  
conversation. But I always enjoy  
it. You desperately trying to prove  
I don't exist, so you can  
guiltlessly turn your back on what  
you know to be true, and what you  
know you must do.

BARRY

I don't think you exist. In fact,  
I'm pretty sure. I'm talking to  
myself.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Ah, you old doubter!

BARRY

And so what makes you female,  
anyway? When everyone thinks you're  
a father figure.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

(in deep male voice)

This...is CNN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

BARRY

Yeah...yeah, right. So we've had this conversation before. You know my argument. You give me a big brain, I instinctively think with it, I reason with it logically, just like all those people out there writing their programs one logical step at a time. We have a brain and the capacity for reason...BUT THEN you say, 'Have faith!' My brain which you claim to have given me, all that logical thinking, demanding proof, making things predictable -- none of that applies to you. So says you. Personally I don't think so.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You don't think so.

BARRY

I don't think so.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

The fact that we're actually having this conversation, this a priori fact, this has no bearing on your conclusions.

BARRY

I have an overactive imagination, or superego, or something.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

If you would spend more time with your daughter, you might just think differently. Your perspective might change.

BARRY

Is that so. Well, personally, I'd rather control my own perspectives, thank you very much.

(pause)

Tell you what I have faith in, it's that this market is coming back.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Dow 30,000.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

BARRY  
50,000, baby.

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
I wouldn't bet on it.

BARRY  
(scornfully)  
You wouldn't, eh? What do you know?

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
Pretty much everything, actually.  
What you know is one grain of sand  
in a million million oceans on a  
million million planets. You know  
nothing.

BARRY  
Really.

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
Yes...but you do make me laugh,  
though. Why I like you.

BARRY  
Jesus Christ.

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
Sorry, not available.

BARRY  
Funny. Very funny.

EXT. ESTABLISHING. ST. MARKS HOSPITAL, NEW YORK CITY.

We hear a pager going off.

INT. ST.MARKS HOSPITAL. NEW YORK CITY. NEONATAL UNIT.

Jenny Wright, Barry's sister-in-law, is hanging out around the nurse's station in the neonatal intensive care unit. She is wearing scrubs befitting her status as attending physician and while the conversation between her and the nurses is friendly, there is no mistaking who is in charge. The camera pans to tiny baby after baby, all attached to wires and tubes in incubation units. The head nurse is Olivia Rodriguez, a portly Hispanic woman who wears a flowered nurse's outfit.

JENNY  
(looking at her watch) )  
Hope David gets here soon. I have a  
party to go to tonight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLIVIA  
Trying to have a life?

JENNY  
Trying.

OLIVIA  
Still moonlighting over at  
Bellevue?

JENNY  
No, I stopped that, thank God. I'm  
a married woman now, you know?

OLIVIA  
(points to babies)  
So, when are you going to have one  
of these?

JENNY  
One of these days.

OLIVIA  
One of these days?

JENNY  
Well. If it were up to Jeff we'd  
have five by now. Man, he's got a  
lot of energy. I hardly walk in the  
door...  
(stops, embarrassed)

OLIVIA  
(giggles)  
Newlywed!  
(a small amount of  
jealousy enters her  
voice)  
I bet you guys are like rabbits.

JENNY  
(looks at Olivia, then at  
her watch again)  
What are baby Kim's vitals again?

OLIVIA  
(looks at instruments on  
the wall)  
Pulse 95, b/p 130 over 95.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JENNY

OK.  
(sighs)  
Where is he?

Just then an alarm goes off. One of the babies is suddenly flatlining. OLIVIA dials a number on the phone and suddenly her voice is on the public-address system. Jenny runs to the baby's bed.

OLIVIA

Code Blue, neonatal, I repeat, code blue, neonatal.

JENNY

(examining the baby)  
No pulse. Eyes dilated. Turning blue. Starting chest compressions.

Several technicians enter the room.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I'll need to ventilate.

OLIVIA

You can't do that, she's too small!

TECHNICIAN 1

I'm sorry, Doctor, I can't. That baby only weighs a pound!

JENNY

I'll do it.

OLIVIA

Doctor --

JENNY

(smiling)  
I know what I'm doing.  
(works some more)  
Her left lung has collapsed. Nurse!

OLIVIA

Yes, Doctor.

JENNY

Continue the chest compressions while I get this tube in.

OLIVIA

Are you -- are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JENNY

Just watch.

Jenny manipulates a tube into the baby's mouth, and slowly it disappears down her throat. A machine starts to pump air into her lungs.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Nurse?

OLIVIA

(looking at EKG)

Nothing.

JENNY

I'm not letting you go, kid. Come on.

(to OLIVIA)

Let me take over.

Jenny takes over the chest compressions from Olivia. All eyes are on the EKG. Absolute silence. Suddenly the EKG spikes.

OLIVIA

Normal sinus rhythm. My God.

Jenny steps back.

JENNY

Let's continue ventilation for a few more minutes.

OLIVIA

(wonderingly)

I've been a neonatal nurse for ten years and I've never seen anything like that. That was a miracle. You performed a miracle.

Jenny smiles.

JENNY

No, not me.

OLIVIA

What?

JENNY

(points upwards)

It was a miracle. But it wasn't me that performed it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

OLIVIA  
(smiles, and crosses  
herself)  
I love this job.

JENNY  
You know the amazing thing is, in  
five years a beautiful, perfectly  
normal, precocious toddler is going  
to walk in here with her parents.

OLIVIA  
(points to baby Kim)  
Her?

JENNY  
Yeah.

OLIVIA  
I love when that happens.

JENNY  
Yeah, me too.

David Rose, the next-shift doctor, enters the ICU.

DAVID ROSE  
Hey guys. Anything going on?

JENNY  
The usual.

INT. ST.MARKS HOSPITAL. NEW YORK CITY. JENNY'S OFFICE

Jenny is at her tiny desk in her tiny room writing notes.  
Looking up to her bookshelf above her desk she spots a Bible.

JENNY  
Thanks.

THE VOICE  
Not a problem.

JENNY  
Will she grow up and have a normal  
life?

THE VOICE  
Against the rules. You know.

JENNY  
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE VOICE

One thing I like about you, Jenny --

JENNY

What's that?

THE VOICE

I like how you never take the credit. You're a good person, Jenny.

JENNY

Thanks!

THE VOICE

And you never shrink from challenges. You never know what's coming, but you don't fear them.

JENNY

What's that supposed to mean?

THE VOICE

Oh, I don't know. Aren't you late for your party.

JENNY

(looks at her watch)

Oh, boy. Gotta go.

EXT. ESTABLISHING. BARRY'S PARENTS' HOUSE.

Their house is a modest older home in New Jersey, in a predominantly working class neighborhood. Dad is an ex firefighter.

INT BARRY'S PARENTS' HOUSE.

Inside the small living room all sorts of NYFD memorabilia decorate the walls. A plaque tells us that Dad was a Captain. As we enter, Dad, a white-haired old gent, is playing checkers on the floor with Suzie, his granddaughter. Monica is chatting with Mom, Jeff -- Barry's younger brother, and Jenny, his wife. Mom can't take her eyes off of Dad playing with the little girl.

SUZANNA

(to Dad)

King me, Grandpa!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAD

Wow, look at you! OK, here I come.  
(he makes an obviously  
stupid move and winks at  
MONICA)

SUZANNA

(multiple jumps over  
several of Dad's pieces;  
triumphant)

Aha!

DAD

Oh, my goodness! Grandma, she's a  
genius!

MOM

(to her daughters-in-law)  
He always wanted a daughter, you  
know.

(to Jeff)

Why, when I was carrying you I was  
so sure you --

JEFF

Mom, not that story!

JENNY

Is that when she dressed you up?

DAD

Oh, yeah. He was about a year old,  
and your Aunt Christine had sent  
this dress, you know, because Mom  
thought you were going to be a  
girl...

MOM

Oh, it was beautiful...taffeta and  
lace...

JEFF

(anguished)

MOM!

MOM

So, of course, we just had to...

DAD

You just had to! Wasn't my fault,  
son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUZANNA

Uncle Jeff wore a dress when he was  
a baby?

JEFF

MOM!

MOM

OK, OK.  
(whispers to Jenny)  
I have pictures.

JENNY

(whispering  
conspiratorially back)  
Can't wait to see them!  
(to Monica)  
How have Suzie's ears been? Want me  
to check them?

MONICA

Oh, I'd really appreciate it, she  
tugs them now and then. Did you  
bring the otoscope?

JENNY

Sure thing. Always do.  
(reaches in her purse;  
then to Suzie)  
Auntie wants to check your ears,  
honey.

Suzie scampers up on Jenny's lap; she's well accustomed to  
this ritual.

MONICA

Harvard MBA and all I care about is  
if there's fluid in my kid's ears.

DAD

It's what you should be worried  
about, you know.

MONICA

(jokingly)  
Chauvinist.

DAD

Guilty as charged.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MOM

Phi Beta Kappa in history, and here I am, fireman's wife raising two boys.

DAD

Honey, they're all grown now. Besides -- any regrets?

MOM

Tons!

Laughter.

DAD

By the way, where's what's his name? That son of mine who never comes around, I can never remember his name.

MONICA

(sighs)

Barry said he'd be late.

JENNY

(finishing her exam of Suzie)

They're fine. No problems. Right, Suzie-Q?

SUZANNA

Yay!

DAD

Always late. Kid'd be late to his own funeral. I hope he shows up to mine. What'ya say his name was?

MOM

Should we wait for him?

MONICA

No...who knows when he'll get here.

Mom starts bringing the various meal courses to the table, just as Barry walks in the door. He gives Monica a hug and quick kiss.

MONICA (CONT'D)

You smell like beer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SUZANNA

(running up to him)  
Daddy!

JEFF

Is it possible you're even uglier  
than you used to be?

MOM

Boys, don't start.

BARRY

Amazing how fast we regress back to  
our childhood when we come back to  
this house...isn't it, football  
face?

MOM

Boys!

JEFF

Capitalist oppressor of the people.

BARRY

Dentist. Need I say more.

MOM

Very successful dentist, Barry,  
will you stop.

BARRY

(quietly, but with big  
grin)  
Dentist.

DAD

Sons. Knock it off. Your mother's  
made us a nice roast lamb. Your  
favorite, Barry, so...

(jokingly)

Shut up and enjoy it.

(they sit at the table and  
start eating)

Barry, any chance you're available  
for lunch tomorrow?

BARRY

How come, Dad?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

DAD

Well, I'm going into town tomorrow. Ricky Moscovitz is retiring, you know.

JEFF

Uncle Ricky is retiring? I thought he was going to be trading bonds forever!

DAD

Yeah. They're having a breakfast party for him, you know, before the market opens. Up at the Windows on the World, you know, the overpriced restaurant. They invited me, you know, seeing we grew up together.

MOM

Thoughtful, don't you think?

BARRY

Yeah. Very, actually.

DAD

Helluva guy, you know. Grew up together. We were firefighters together, but he was smart. Went to school nights. So then he worked on Wall Street for a while, but all those suits drove him crazy. Wasn't real, you know, that's what he kept saying, "this isn't real, I need to see the real world."

BARRY

He went to Israel, didn't he?

DAD

Yeah. I guess if you're Jewish you feel these things, but after the '67 war he went there, served in their army for a good long time...then came back to the Street. I guess he'd seen enough. Now that he's retiring I'm looking forward to lots of golf with him. Take some of that money of his away from him.

BARRY

Sure. Sure, I can take you in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

MONICA

Really?

They are all surprised he can take the time.

DAD

Aren't you busy? I can take the train. I used to ride the subway every day for forty years.

BARRY

My first meeting isn't until 10. Besides, I have to make up for being late tonight.

Suzie gets down from her chair and grabs hold of Dad's arm. She doesn't let go, and looks up at him.

SUZANNA

(oddly)

I think you should stay home, tomorrow, Grandpa. Stay home and play with me. It'll be fun.

DAD

I'll come over in the afternoon, we'll play checkers just like today.

SUZANNA

No. Please, play stay home with me tomorrow!

DAD

I'll be back -

SUZANNA

(tugging on his arm even harder)

No, Grandpa!

MONICA

Suzie -

DAD

And we'll play Pick-up Sticks too!

That seems to mollify Suzie, who visibly relaxes.

SUZANNA

We keep putting on sticks, until it all falls down!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

DAD

Yeah!

SUZANNA

I'll whip your ass!

General shock and laughter at the little girl, who is delighted by the attention but has no idea why.

MONICA

Suzie!

BARRY

What?

MONICA

(to Barry)

You-- you taught her that!

BARRY

No way!

JEFF

Fine parents you are!

General commotion settles down.

BARRY

What time tomorrow morning?

DAD

Oh, around 7. Be there by 8 or 8:30. You know me, I get up at 6, have my morning coffee, my bagel, have my morning constitutional, gotta see Katie, of course.

BARRY

(blankly)

Katie?

SUZANNA

Who's Katie?

DAD

(twinkle in his)

Yeah, Katie.

MONICA

Katie...Couric?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

MOM

He's got a crush on her lately.

MONICA

You've got a crush on Katie Couric?

DAD

Yeah; so perky!

MOM

Listen to him. He'd pass out if he ever actually met her.

BARRY

Or she would.

JEFF

Nah, she's not so hot.

DAD

Well, who's your favorite anchor?

JENNY

(seeing Jeff hesitate)

It's okay, you won't get into trouble.

JEFF

Well...I kind of think that Leslie Chang chick is pretty hot.

JENNY

Leslie Chang!!!

JEFF

You said I wouldn't....

JENNY

Leslie Chang!

BARRY

Well, she is pretty cute, but I guess I'd have vote for Marina Smith, over on Channel 4.

MONICA

Marina Smith?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

BARRY

Yeah, she wears those high leather boots, and that red leather jacket, when she's on location, it's pretty damn...

(to Monica)

You should get some of those.

Monica glares silently.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Uh-oh.

SUZANNA

Daddy, who's Marina Smith?

JEFF

You're right. But Leslie has those nice --

JENNY

Jeff!

MONICA

Barry!

SUZANNA

Who's Leslie? Daddy!

DAD

(laughing)

Man, I raised a couple of idiots. It's Katie. Nothing beats that smile of hers. Except for the one right here.

(looks at MOM, then turns to his sons)

Live and learn from the master, boys.

SUZANNA

Katie in my school?

MONICA

No, honey, someone different.

JENNY

(to Jeff)

Leslie Chang?

JEFF

Nothing beats her except --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

JENNY

Oh, shut up...I wonder where you're sleeping tonight.

MONICA

(looking at Barry)  
Same place as doofus here.

FADE OUT.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM.

Barry's house is a contemporary, well-appointed "MacMansion" common to the late nineties. Lots of room, well-wired, home entertainment system, hardly-used Viking kitchen, the works. Barry, shirt open, is sprawled out over a La-Z Boy watching TV on his mega home theatre, a cup of Remy Martin in his hand. He barely notices as Suzie climbs up on his lap and kisses him on the cheek.

SUZANNA

Good night, Daddy.

BARRY

Good night, sweetie. Sweet dreams.

SUZANNA

Can you read to me tonight?

BARRY

I...I can't. Too tired. Tomorrow night. I promise.

Suzie climbs down from Barry's lap. Pause.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

There you go again, all she wants is a hug.

BARRY

I'm just so tired, you know.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

I know.

BARRY

I'll make it up to her. When we go public I'm going to dump all my shares first chance I get. Then..

THE VOICE (V.O.)

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY

(perks up)

Then we're retiring to an island.  
And all I'll do is raise my family.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

That's your plan?

BARRY

That's my plan.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Ah, you people. I know someone who  
laughs at you, people that is,  
because you can't even plan a  
measly thousand years in advance. A  
thousand years. How hard is that? I  
think he may have a point, even if  
he is wrong about just about  
everything else.

BARRY

What friend is this?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Not really a friend, not anymore at  
least. We had a bit of a falling  
out, I'm afraid.

BARRY

Sorry to hear that.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Do you remember the other day we  
were talking.

BARRY

About?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You complained that I gave you the  
gift of logic, if I recall  
correctly.

BARRY

Well, I wouldn't exactly say I  
"complained."

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Fair enough. But you know, I gave  
you many gifts, some obvious, some  
quite subtle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRY

Um-hum.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Think about bliss, for a moment.

BARRY

What?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Bliss. You know, contentment,  
supreme happiness. It is within  
everyone to find it. Everyone  
including you.

BARRY

But...

THE VOICE (V.O.)

(amused)

You're not feeling blissful, are  
you?

BARRY

Hardly.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Ah, but that's the trick. You have  
to find it, find your bliss, within  
yourself. You must know yourself,  
and find that which gives you joy  
in life.

BARRY

Why don't you just give it to me?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Then how would you learn anything,  
Barry? No, I want you to grow.

BARRY

I'm not your child.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

No? Well...we'll talk about that  
some other time. But for now, think  
about your bliss. You know, it's  
right out in front of you.

BARRY

Really.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Barry. It's there, but it's slipping through your fingers. Even now you can never go back to when she was on your lap and give her a hug. The moment is gone forever. Slipped through your fingers.

BARRY

What -- what --

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You know.

BARRY

Same old crap.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You have to ask yourself, are you truly finding your bliss?

BARRY

That sounds so selfish. Bliss. So ...I don't know, it's all about me kind of thing.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Umm. But I've noticed you rarely do things, at least for a long time, unless you find bliss in it.

BARRY

Uh-huh.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

But think about it, for a second. Think about your bliss -- think deeply. Is your bliss really about money and success and fame? Is it really?

Long pause. Barry notices a family picture on the mantle with Dad, Mom, Monica, Suzie and himself.

THE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Or is it about love?

BARRY

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
 (bemused)  
 You heard me.

BARRY  
 Love.

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
 For your family, your wife, your  
 child.

BARRY  
 (looking intensely at the  
 picture)  
 Love...

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
 And then when you find your true  
 bliss, maybe you find yourself on a  
 path, a path which leads to me.  
 Look in front of your own face, and  
 nothing will be hidden from you.

Barry does not speak for a moment but continues to look at the picture. He -- and the camera -- zoom in on the smiling image of his father. The Voice seems to know what he's thinking.

THE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 He's a good man, your father.

BARRY  
 Yes. Yes, he is. By any definition.  
 I've always looked up to him.

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
 Did you ever doubt that he loved  
 you?

BARRY  
 (surprised at the  
 question)  
 No. Not ever. He was always a great  
 father to Jeff and me. When I was a  
 kid, I wanted to be a fireman like  
 him, but he said I should do better  
 than that. Practically forced me to  
 go to college.

THE VOICE (V.O.)  
 Look at you two now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BARRY

Yeah. I have my own business...Jeff  
a dentist...

THE VOICE (V.O.)

He's proud of you.

BARRY

I know that.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

And how does that make you feel?

BARRY

Good. It makes me feel good.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

He's quite a hero, too. He saved  
many lives in his day.

BARRY

Yes, he's a good man.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MORNING. BARRY'S PARENTS' HOUSE.

Barry's Porsche is parked out front. It is a beautiful, warm,  
sunny morning.

INT. MORNING. BARRY'S PARENTS' HOUSE. KITCHEN.

On the counter of the small kitchen sits a small television  
set. On the Today show Katie Couric is bantering with Matt  
Lauer; they are sitting in an exterior set in Rockefeller  
Plaza. Barry and Mom are sitting at the breakfast table.

BARRY

(checking his watch)

Come on, come on..

MOM

Not too loud, you'll disturb him.  
You know how cranky he gets.

BARRY

Couldn't he have taken something? A  
laxative or something?

MOM

He hates Metamucil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY  
It comes in a pill, now.

MOM  
Really?

Pause.

BARRY  
Is he doing one of those damn  
crossword puzzles?

MOM  
Don't think so, not today. You know  
once I was in a hurry to get to  
church -- and I gave him a  
chocolate fudgsicle.

BARRY  
But he's lactose intolerant!

MOM  
Sure is! Five minutes and whoosh!

BARRY  
You're diabolical.

Sound of a toilet flushing; Mom smiles.

MOM  
You're all set.

Dad emerges, buttoning his pants and straightening his tie.

DAD  
Ready? Let's go!

MOM  
My boys...wish Jeff were here!

DAD  
Ah, a drive with my son in his  
Porsche! Let me drive, son!

BARRY  
I don't think so, Dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAD

Are you kidding? I used to drive those big hook and ladder rigs at 70, 80, 90 miles an hour down the FDR! You think driving a Porsche is a big deal to me?

BARRY

I don't think so, Dad.

EXT. MOM AND DAD'S HOUSE.

Barry's Porsche leaving the house. All is quiet. We hear indistinct murmurings, a silly interview of some sort, from the Today show. A very long pause. Birds chirp. Then, as clear as can be:

KATIE COURIC (V.O.)

It's a beautiful day here in New York City. This is Today, Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

A very long pause.

MOM (V.O.)

OH MY GOD!

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS OF 9/11.

In absolute silence we watch the images of the World Trade Center. We see the first plane hit; we see the fire; we see fire engines approaching. A rapid-fire montage of scenelets follows.

INT. WTC OFFICE. SOUTH TOWER.

A woman executive in a well-appointed office. She is chatting on the phone with a branch office.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE

Beautiful day...yeah, I heard something about an explosion in the other tower, doesn't seem to be anything. We're all fine.

(pause while she listens)

An airplane? Huh.

(strains to see out her window)

Yeah, I can't see it from here.

(pause)

Jody's fine, a very precocious eight years old.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN EXECUTIVE (CONT'D)

Told me the other day she hates boys.

(pause)

Yeah. OK, I'll tell you what, I'll call them myself. I'll discount it another ten percent, that really ought to do it.

(pause, she chuckles)

No, not out of your commission, we'll eat it!

Slowly she swivels her chair around to face the window. In the distance there is a speck...quickly it grows larger...it is below her...IT IS A PLANE! It is United Airlines Flight 175, we just have time to make it out before...

WOMAN EXECUTIVE (CONT'D)

(screaming, drops the phone)

NO!!!

A huge, thunderous explosion.

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. WTC DAY CARE CENTER

Next, we see a day care center. Toys and little chairs and tables are strewn everywhere. Smoke fills the room making it difficult see. We hear, then see a little girl; she is evidently talking to her mother on a cell phone.

WTC LITTLE GIRL

(coughing)

Mommy, there's smoke...I can't breathe, Mommy, I'm scared...

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. WTC OFFICE.

Next we a man trapped in an office. It's a high end executive corner office with expensive furniture, leather chair, plaques and family pictures on the wall, an Oriental carpet on the floor. Fire licks at the closed door and, as in the day care center, smoke is obscuring our vision. We hear a WOMAN'S VOICE coming from an answering machine.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm sorry, we're not home right now. Leave a message and one of us will get back to you as soon as we can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then we see the man, choking on the smoke.

WTC OFFICE MAN  
 Honey...it's me. Can you pick up?  
 (coughs)  
 You'r'e not there...I don't know  
 what's going on.

The ceiling starts to collapse and fire threatens to descend from the hole in the ceiling.

WTC OFFICE MAN (CONT'D)  
 I don't know what's going on, but,  
 uh, I don't think I'm going to make  
 it... I love you, always.

CUT TO:

INT. WTC SNACK BAR 80TH FLOOR

We hear screams above a scene of absolute hell -- a superhot fire rages on one side of the snack bar, smoke is everywhere, the tables, chairs, and other restaurant paraphernalia are everywhere. The noise of the fire and the screams from all over are deafening.

WTC WOMAN  
 Help, help!

We see an older black woman trapped underneath a soft drink machine in a snack bar. Then: two elderly men with handkerchiefs over their mouths come and lift the heavy machine off the woman. They help her to her feet and guide her to a stairwell. There are more screams. The WTC WOMAN nods that she's OK.

More screams. One of the men points back in the direction of the fire and smoke indicating where someone else is hurt, and they head back in. At that moment the fire billows out, obscuring our view of the men... and then we see them, but from a different angle.

EXT. WORLD TRADE CENTER. 80TH FLOOR, LOOKING IN FROM OUTSIDE.

They are DAD and UNCLE RICKY, whom we recognize by the yarmulke on his head -- cut, bruised, clothes in shreds; burns cover their bodies. They are standing at the edge of a blown out window. There is only fire behind them. There is only yawning space in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Terror fills their eyes. They try to get around the fire, try to get through it, but the fire beats them back at every step. A backdraft billows out and knocks them down for a moment.

They stand. They can see the fire advancing. It is brutally, viciously hot. Their skin is black in places, blistering in others. They are in great pain.

Uncle Ricky looks at Dad and shakes his head slowly. Dad's shoulders slump.

They accept their fate. They shake hands, and with the fire raging behind them, they embrace...and then leap, first Rickie, then Dad...and in one still shot after another we see them fall...and fall...their out-of-control, tumbling bodies miniscule against the huge scale of the WTC building.

Then: more quick shots. We see the great buildings collapse; the billowing clouds of smoke barreling through the streets; we see ghost-like survivors, running away. There is Rudy Giuliani barking orders in a megaphone, and shots of body parts on the ground; an overhead of smoke-covered Manhattan. Then there is nothing but a lone firefighter weeping.

EXT. THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE.

A river of people makes its way across the bridge, a stream of humanity. In the background we see the smoke rising from the WTC site. In the background a lone soprano sings the few first few words of "Amazing Grace."

SOPRANO (V.O.)

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me...

The camera takes its time wending its way through the crowd, looking at the faces of the people. As she sings "saved a wretch," we see Barry, slowly walking across the bridge. He is covered in dust and soot and dirt. An orchestra picks up the tune and carries it on. The camera moves from one person to another, slowly, and we see the multitude of reactions: some like Barry are in shock; some are desperately trying to make contact with loved ones on their cell phones; some are weeping; some talking incessantly. Then the camera slowly pulls back again, revealing again the enormity of the scene, a tableau of humanity violated.

FADE OUT.

EXT. NIGHT. THE DOOR OF BARRY'S HOUSE.

It is very late in the evening. Barry approaches the door, still shuffling as he was across the bridge.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE.

Barry walks in the door, into the foyer. Monica, hearing the door open, rushes in and seeing Barry, screams. Suzie runs in too. Out of immense relief Monica embraces him, and then, crying uncontrollably, beats on his chest.

MONICA  
(yelling)  
Why didn't you call me?

BARRY  
(mumbles)  
Cell phones...all out...no service.

SUZANNA  
Oh, Daddy! Mommy told me you were  
in heaven.

This gets Barry's attention. Stunned, he kneels down and embraces Suzie.

BARRY  
What?

SUZANNA  
(almost playfully)  
We thought you were in heaven.

Barry looks up questioningly at Monica.

MONICA  
(defensively)  
We...we didn't know. What was I to  
tell her?

BARRY  
(to Monica)  
It's ok. I'm not in heaven.  
(to Suzie)  
It's ok. Daddy's home.

MONICA  
Thank God, thank God!  
(for the first time takes  
in Barry's appearance)  
Look at you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY

I was right there. I saw it all. It was...awful...I saw some really bad things....

(he weeps)

The family embraces. Then Monica remembers about the breakfast.

MONICA

It's all right, it's all right, we're together now...

(pause)

Wait...Barry...Barry, what about your father? He went in with you, he was going to have breakfast at...at...oh, my God!

SUZANNA

Yeah, where's Grandpa, Daddy? Can we go see him?

Barry just looks at Monica and shakes his head.

MONICA

Oh, my God, no. Oh, my God.

BARRY

(to Monica)

He was in the restaurant. At the top.

(to Suzanna)

Honey. Look at me, honey. I'm OK. But Grandpa...Grandpa has gone to heaven. Uncle Ricky too.

It is as if someone hit her. Without a word she turns and runs to her room.

MONICA

(turns to follow)

Wait, honey!

BARRY

Monica, stop. Listen.

MONICA

What?

BARRY

We have to go see Mom. We have to tell her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONICA

Oh, God. What's happening?

BARRY

Come on. She doesn't know. We have to tell her.

MONICA

Yes. Yes, we have to tell her...

(suddenly hysterical)

You have to promise me, you'll never leave my sight again! Never leave my sight again!

BARRY

(calm)

I promise, Monica.

(embraces her)

We have to go see Mom.

MONICA

OK. Suzie? Suzie!

EXT. MOM AND DAD'S HOUSE. LATE NIGHT.

Monica's Lexus is out in front of Mom and Dad's house. The scene is surreal. Suzie is crying; Monica is stifling tears; Barry is covered in ash. Mom answers the door; instinctively she embraces her son, who returns the hug. We hear strains of "Amazing Grace" in the background again; we do not hear the family's words. They talk, and we see the expression of relief on Mom's face turn into heart-wrenching grief. She begins to wail, and crumples to her knees. The camera pulls back and we watch this tableau for a few more moments.

EXT. THE NEXT DAY.

More shots of the World Trade Center site, smoldering, smoking. Firefighters and police are everywhere, combing the site, looking for remains. One holds something up -- a gold NYFD shield (it is Dad's).

FIREFIGHTER 1

Hey Captain, look at this.

FIREFIGHTER CAPTAIN

(examines it)

Gold shield. Huh. Another one. Awright, let's find out whose it was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FIREFIGHTER 1

Goddam, how many'd we lose here?

FIREFIGHTER CAPTAIN

A lot, son. A lot.

EXT. AFTERNOON, A FEW DAYS LATER. OAK LAWN CEMETERY.

It is a full-dress NYFD ceremony with fire trucks, firefighters in full uniform: Dad was after all a Captain. Endless numbers of old-time firemen come up to Barry, Jeff and Mom to offer their condolences. Mom is in grief, bereaved: but together, that is, composed; as is Jeff. Barry on the other hand barely, it seems, knows where he is, he's almost unbalanced from the events; and he has to give the eulogy.

BARRY

I uh, didn't know my father very well. That is to say, I knew him, but only as a child knows a parent. He was indestructible...this wasn't supposed to happen. He was incredible, the things he did, the little old ladies and the little kids he pulled out of those fires. He was my hero, I never thought...don't think...I could ever, ever live up to him, be his equal.

(pause)

I really wanted to know him, not as a child, but as a man, man to man. I never knew what he feared, what he wanted but couldn't attain. After all the years of being his child I'm old enough to be his friend. I think he was looking forward to that too.

(pause)

For all the times he took care of me, for all those people he helped...I couldn't help him.

He looks up at the sky for a moment, stares at the sun searching for an answer, but none comes. Suddenly a rage comes over him.

BARRY (CONT'D)

All because of that son of a bitch!  
That fucking raghead!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Some murmuring in audience: firefighters agreeing. Then Barry spots his friend Ahmed and his family.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Your uncle, right, Ahmed?

Ahmed's wife's mouth drops open; Ahmed himself turns to steel. There is absolute silence. Then without a word Ahmed and his family rise and leave the ceremony. Barry is oblivious, scoffs. He thinks he's just made a joke that for some reason fell flat.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Yeah. I don't understand why this happened, I'll tell you that.

At that moment a middle-aged black woman on crutches in the back stands as well. Next to her is her nine-year-old son. To everyone's surprise she speaks. Careful viewers might notice that she was the one trapped beneath her desk that someone saved.

ELLA MAE JOHNSON

Excuse me.

(louder)

Excuse me, please, Mister Wright. My name is Ella Mae Johnson, and this is my son, James. Mister Wright, your father saved my life. When the plane hit it knocked over a counter and I was pinned down. The smoke, it was terrible. I couldn't breathe. Your father lifted the counter and I couldn't walk...my leg was broken. He helped me to the door...Then he handed me off to someone else, he said he was going to stay to help the firemen when they came. I never saw him again, but because of him James has a mother to raise him.

(to Mom)

Missus Wright, if there's anything I can ever do for you, ever, you let me know. Thank you.

BARRY

Yeah. Well.

(pause)

Gonna miss you, Dad.

(shrugs, and leaves the podium)

EXT. BARRY'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON. A FEW DAYS LATER.

We pan from the smoldering WTC site slowly to Barry's house. Again a beautiful fall day, but now the occasional leaf litters Barry's otherwise immaculate yard.

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE. STUDY.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Hey. How are you doing?

BARRY

How the fuck do you think I'm doing?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

I'm truly sorry about your father, you know. He was a good man.

BARRY

You knew all along, didn't you? You knew!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Of course I did. I've known since the beginning of Time.

BARRY

Cut the shit, will you.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Tell me, Barry, what is it that you are so upset about? I mean, you all have to die sooner or later. You can't prevent it.

BARRY

What am I upset about? My father's dead! For God's sake!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Ask yourself: what hurts the most?

BARRY

Damn you. I never got to know him. I mean, really know him. Mom did...not Jeff...certainly not Suzie. I feel cheated. Robbed. You did this.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

So...it's about you, isn't it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY

Fuck you.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Listen, here's the thing, Barry, it's important, so listen up. Do you really think I'd allow your father -- or anybody -- to actually die, that is, to cease to exist? I conserve you, Barry, all of you, nonexistence is impossible. A billion years ago the atoms in your body were formed inside of a star, they will never die, nor will you. They and you are part of me.

BARRY

Yeah, right.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

There you go underestimating me again. I am the Alpha and the Omega! You stomp an ant, it comes back to me. You swat a bee, it comes back to me. Osama bin Laden kills 3000 innocent people, they all, every single one, come back to my loving arms.

(pause)

And when you find Osama bin Laden, and kill him, as you most surely will, then he too will return to my arms.

BARRY

I want him burning in hell. I want his head on a pike in Central Park, and every fucking al Qaeda bastard with him. In hell!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

It is comedic, you know.

BARRY

I beg your pardon?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Bin Laden wanted your misery for all the world to see, but all he did was exhibit his own cruelty. So what did he accomplish? Only the opposite of what was intended.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRY

I don't know what that means. I do know I want you to put that bastard in hell, for all time.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

No. There is no hell, Barry. That is a simplistic human concept. I am more subtle than that. More than you can possibly imagine.

BARRY

Then what? You're telling me Osama and Hitler and Pol Pot and, fucking Attila the Hun are in heaven? Is that what you're telling me? What kind of lunatic are you? Where's Mother Teresa, tending bar? Is there no good and evil?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Barry--

BARRY

And no more fucking condescension, please! I'm smarter than you think!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

OK. Well, try to imagine this. Imagine that the first thing that happens when you die is you see your whole life, and then you see the consequences of all of your actions, throughout your whole life. You see everybody you hurt - because you were thoughtless, because you were mean, because you had a bad day one day. Maybe you just cut somebody off on 6th Avenue and ten cars back somebody hit a pedestrian, a mom who was going to pick up her kid at day care. And now because of you that kid's all alone in the world, and turns into a thief, and then a drug dealer, and then one day he's lying in an alley with a bullet in his temple.

BARRY

I...did cut off somebody the other day on 6th...I didn't...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Nasty, huh? But here's the funny thing, Barry. I welcome you back anyway. Doesn't matter what you do. I forgive you. Crazy, isn't it. Drives some people absolutely nuts. I mean some people take a thousand years to come to terms. Some of them, they think it's hell, and what makes it so terribly worse is that it's a hell of their own making.

BARRY

This is bullshit.

And he stomps into the living room...

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

...where he finds Monica, Jenny and Suzie. They are watching TV and Monica is trying to persuade Suzie to eat.

MONICA

Grilled cheese, honey, please eat, your favorite.

Suzie just shakes her head.

MONICA (CONT'D)

But you like grilled cheese.

Suzie says nothing.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Did you have a good day at school?

Suzie slowly shakes her head "no."

MONICA (CONT'D)

What happened?

Suzie shrugs.

BARRY

Suzie, say something.

Suzie shrugs again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONICA

(to Barry)  
She hasn't said a word...  
since...not a single word!

BARRY

Suzie! Eat!

MONICA

Barry!

BARRY

(shouting)  
It's a damn discipline problem,  
can't you see?

Suzie, crying, runs away into her room.

MONICA

Barry. Listen. I know how hard this  
is on you...

BARRY

No, you don't.

MONICA

OK, maybe I don't. But listen, they  
have these grief counselors. You  
need help -- we need help. Jenny  
says it would help us accept what's  
happened, and move on.

BARRY

Accept?! ACCEPT!? What, are you --

MONICA

Barry, please!

BARRY

(calming)  
Listen. We're not crazy. We're not  
crazy! We just need time. Time.  
Time to sort all this out.

MONICA

Barry -- you --

BARRY

Yeah, I know, I know! I just need  
some time.

Barry's cell phone rings. He answers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRY (CONT'D)

(speaking in phone)

OK. OK. Excellent - I'll be right over.

(to Monica)

They're letting us back in! We can go back. I have to go.

MONICA

Can't you see? We need you here!

BARRY

I have to go! All those people that work for me, they're depending on me!

MONICA

We're depending on you!

EXT MOSQUE IN MANHATTAN

An Islamic Center in the Upper East Side. Children are leaving after a morning of church school. We follow one little boy, about 5 years old, heading home. After a block or two he is accosted by teenaged thugs.

THUG 1

Hey!

THUG 2

Yeah, you, terrorists!

THUG 1

Come here, let's see how brave you are without a jet plane!

IMRAN

I didn't do anything!

He starts to run.

THUG 1

Yeah, right.

They give chase, catch him, and drag him into an alley.

FADE OUT.

EXT. BARRY'S CAR, A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Barry is driving into Manhattan. In the distance smoke is still rising from the WTC site.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Hello, Barry.

BARRY

Shut up. I don't want to talk to you.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You're still upset.

BARRY

Now what gave that away, asshole? ... Come to think of it, I don't EVER want to talk to you. Ever again.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Tell me something, Barry. You still believe in it, don't you? In death?

BARRY

How can you possibly ask that question of me now?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You think that when the body dies, you die...

BARRY

I said, I don't want to talk to you.

(pause)

OK, yes, simple fucking biology. Blood stops flowing to the brain, brain stops, no more thinking, no more you. You're dead. Gone. Finito.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Doesn't work that way.

BARRY

I don't know why I'm wasting my time. God, I feel like my brain is splitting in half! I'm having a fucking argument with myself! Damn!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Barry. Listen. It doesn't work that way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRY

Everybody tells me to listen. I  
want to talk! I want you to listen!  
(voice starts to tremble)  
I want you to know how much I hurt!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Listen to me tell you about death.

BARRY

Tell me.

THE VOICE

Pay attention to your driving. You  
think your brain is like a  
computer. You think that everything  
you see and learn is in there, in  
your head. Pull the plug and it's  
all gone. That's the way you think  
about it, isn't it.

BARRY

I suppose so.

THE VOICE

It's far more complicated than  
that, Barry. Let me see if I can  
explain in terms you'll understand.

BARRY

Patronizing.

THE VOICE

The brain is not a computer. Think  
of it...like an antenna. And you,  
you, that which defines who you  
are, you are at the other end of  
that antenna. And when your body  
dies, yes, the antenna breaks, but  
you're still around...you come back  
to me...as Rickie Moscovitz  
did...as Mohammed Atta did...as  
your father did.

(kindly, gently,  
paternally)

You never really die, Barry. You're  
always part of me.

Barry parallel parks on the street.

BARRY

You are so full of shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He gets out the car, and notices papers on the sidewalk. He picks one of them up -- it is a Cantor Fitzgerald memo. He stares at it for a second, then crumples it up and moves on.

EXT ESTABLISHING. ST.MARKS HOSPITAL. NEW YORK CITY.

INT. ST.MARKS HOSPITAL. NEW YORK CITY.

Jenny is walking through the halls of the hospital on her way to the neonatal ICU. Suddenly there is a blood-curdling scream from one of the rooms. Jenny takes off at a run, and gets to a room where a patient, covered in bandages, is struggling against several nurses.

NURSE 1  
Doctor, help us!

JENNY  
What's going on?

NURSE 1  
Burned at the Trade Center. Have to get her bandages off. Taking her to the bath to scrape off the scabs.

JENNY  
Oh, my God.

BURN PATIENT  
(screams)  
Oh, God!

JENNY  
What happened?

NURSE 1  
(struggling)  
Secretary. On the 85th floor. Covered in jet fuel and ignited.

BURN PATIENT  
(screams)  
Aaaah!

NURSE 1  
If we don't wash off the scar tissue...

JENNY  
Yeah, I know, she won't be able to move.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE 1  
Infection...

BURN PATIENT  
(screams)  
Aaaaah!

JENNY  
Can't you sedate her?

NURSE 1  
(moving the burn patient,  
still screaming, onto a  
gurney)  
She's been sedated for five days  
but we have to wake her for the  
irrigation. Have to do this, but  
for her it's absolute agony.  
Fucking bastards that did this to  
her!

JENNY  
My God.

NURSE 1  
As soon as we're done we'll sedate  
her back.

JENNY  
How long?

NURSE 1  
How long until we don't have to  
keep here out? A month or two.  
Maybe in two years or so, with ten  
or fifteen reconstructive  
surgeries, maybe she'll be able to  
have a life again.

BURN PATIENT  
(loudly, clearly)  
Oh God, why have you forsaken me?

NURSE 1  
Thanks. We're all set now.

Jenny shrinks back, repelled, stunned, aghast.

INT. ST.MARKS HOSPITAL. NEW YORK CITY. JENNY'S OFFICE

Jenny can't concentrate, can't move. The horror of the burn  
patient is too much even for her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENNY

Oh, my God.

She buries her face in her hands and begins to weep.

THE VOICE

How are you, Jenny?

JENNY

What...what did you do to her? Why?  
Why?

THE VOICE

You want to know if she did  
something evil, if she deserved  
those horrible burns. Right?

JENNY

No one...

THE VOICE

That's right. No one.

JENNY

Then...why?

THE VOICE

That's for me to know.

JENNY

(sarcastically)

You work in mysterious ways.

The Voice doesn't answer.

JENNY (CONT'D)

But...why? Why did you make this  
innocent person suffer? Why? WHY?

THE VOICE

It speaks well of you that you  
empathize, Jenny.

JENNY

I don't care about that! Why?

No answer.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE. A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Barry enters his office, where Ken and Joy are waiting for  
him. As he walks in they stand and embrace him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Even though it is a somber moment, Joy is dressed to kill and Barry can't help but notice.

KEN

I'm so sorry, Barry. Your father was a great guy.

JOY

I'm sorry as well, Barry.

BARRY

Thank you so much. Thanks for the beautiful flowers. Meant a lot to Mom.

(pauses)

How many funerals have you guys been to?

JOY

Two. Your father's, and a friend of a friend's.

KEN

I lost count. Lotta friends. You?

BARRY

A few.

Sitting down at his desk energizes Barry. He starts to take control.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Did we lose anybody?

KEN

Everybody's accounted for...but we have some pretty traumatized employees.

BARRY

Thank God. At least they're ok.

He touches various objects on his desk, as if to reconnect.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Hah. Good to be back. Shouldn't say this, but my house is like a morgue right now...so when can we get back to work?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOY

Well, cell phones are still out. All the fiber optic lines seem to be out, or cut, so no Internet for a while. But we never lost power, so all the servers are still up, believe it or not.

KEN

They're working 24-7 to get all services restored.

BARRY

I heard the NASDAQ was running out of the Millenium Hotel in Times Square for a while. Joy Yeah...and I heard the CEO of Merrill Lynch was running cables, right along with the Mayor's senior staff.

A pause. Barry's morale speech is working on him, but not on Joy or Ken.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I'll tell you, New Yorkers are the most incredible people in the world.

He is feeling better by the moment. He is back in a place he controls.

BARRY (CONT'D)

What about Joan Gulati over at AmeriSecurities?

KEN

They've relocated temporarily -- or maybe not temporarily -- to New Jersey, to Parsippany, I think.

BARRY

She OK?

KEN

I don't think they lost anyone.

BARRY

What about our other customers?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOY

Far as we know, everyone's ok, but they've all shut down. Most of them don't have offices anymore.

BARRY

Well, that's good news, anyway.

KEN

Yeah, well, there's more news. You know the Dow was down 600 points they day it reopened.

BARRY

Yeah.

KEN

Star Bonds and Eagle have called to cancel their contracts.

BARRY

What?

JOY

They're a lot more worried now about how to protect their data from airplanes crashing into them than they are about customer retention or acquisition. Things have changed.

Barry deflates.

BARRY

Yeah. Think they're just panicking? Heat of the moment?

JOY

What do you think?

BARRY

Yeah.

Ahmed walks in. Sensing an unpleasant moment coming up, Joy and Ken excuse themselves. The old friends stare at each other for a moment.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Ahmed, I'm sorry, I don't know what came over me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

AHMED

I'm resigning. Here's my letter.

BARRY

Oh, Ahmed, no, don't do this. We've been best friends since college. Listen, I know what I said at the funeral was hurtful --

AHMED

Hurtful? Barry, that was the most hurtful, most humiliating thing that's ever happened to me! Ever! Best friends? Is that what best friends do?

BARRY

Ahmed --

AHMED

Sure, we're pals, here in this melting pot. Big buddies. You're so fucking sensitive, so big on diversity...but boy, when the chips are down, hey...I'm just another brown person, aren't I? I'm not your friend anymore, I'm one of them!

BARRY

Wait --

AHMED

Doesn't matter that I'm godfather to Suzie, that I was best man at your wedding, and you at mine. I'm a brown person! I go to a mosque on Fridays! I pray to Allah! I'm the enemy!!

BARRY

Ahmed -- I -- I --

AHMED

(calms a little)

Look. Look, Barry, I'm sorry about your Dad. He was a great guy.

BARRY

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

AHMED

Just so you know, my Allah hopes these bastards burn in hell too.

BARRY

Ahmed, please accept my apology...

AHMED

Barry. I'm going back to Saudi Arabia.

BARRY

What? You...you can't!

AHMED

I can't stay here. It's only a matter of time before they round us all up, put us in camps like they did with the Japanese in World War II. One night my family and I disappear; and we're incommunicado, gone for five or ten years, living in camps out west in the desert someplace, or maybe in Cuba. I'll take my chances back home.

BARRY

No, they won't, this is America!

AHMED

They beat up my son, little Imran, yesterday! Five years old! They called him murderer, Osama...my little boy!

Ahmed's rage can barely be controlled. Tears are coming to his eyes.

BARRY

My God. Is he ok?

AHMED

Nothing broken, thank God. Lots of bruises. He cries all the time...

Barry walks over and embraces his friend.

AHMED (CONT'D)

I've had the three worst days of my life in the past two weeks: the day it happened; that day at the funeral;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

AHMED (CONT'D)

and yesterday when I saw my boy  
bleeding. But you know, I decided I  
don't want to hate. I don't want  
that. Then they win. So I'm not  
going to hate you, anyway. I  
forgive you, my friend.

BARRY

Thanks. Thank you. Not sure I  
deserve it.

AHMED

You don't.  
(smiles)  
But I am going. Back to Saudi  
Arabia. I just wanted to say  
goodbye. You understand.

BARRY

Yes.

They shake hands, and embrace again.

AHMED

God be with you, my friend.

BARRY

Yes. And you.

Barry is alone in his office after Ahmed leaves. He stares  
out the window for a long time; then he stands and looks down  
at the street. His eyes drift over to a dust-covered car  
parked along the road; clearly it's been here since before  
the 11th. There are people around the car with credit cards  
and cigarette packs. As Barry watches in puzzlement they are  
carefully sweeping the dust with the credit cards into the  
tiny packs. Barry is joined by Ken.

BARRY (CONT'D)

What...what the hell are they  
doing?

KEN

Sweeping up the remains. I've seen  
a lot of people doing that.

BARRY

Wby?

KEN

Might be people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

BARRY

Huh?

KEN

People. You know, vaporized when  
the planes hit. Just ashes left.

BARRY

(eyes blinking rapidly)  
Jesus, oh Jesus. Oh, God.

KEN

I'm sorry, Barry...I...

BARRY

(shouts)  
Joy!

JOY

(rushes in)  
What?

BARRY

You got cigarettes?

JOY

What? You don't smoke!

BARRY

You got cigarettes? NOW!

Joy fumbles in her purse and pulls out a pack. Barry snatches  
them from her hand and dumps the cigarettes out.

JOY

What --

Barry rushes out to the street. Joy starts to follow but Ken  
motions her to stay -- then the two of them watch as Barry  
joins the people around the car.

KEN

He's thinking of his father.

JOY

His father...

EXT. THE WORLD TRADE CENTER. AFTERNOON.

Jenny, dressed in hospital scrubs, is walking around the  
site. She is confused, upset. Smoke rises.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From time to time she faces the excavation, watches the construction workers and firemen.

Walking she passes a police officer standing motionless, quietly praying:

POLICE OFFICER AT WTC  
 ...yeah, though I walk through the  
 valley of death, I shall fear no  
 evil..

And a soul-shattering panorama it is. There are ambulances and hearses; backhoes and bulldozers. Everyone in the pit is wearing a mask to protect against the fumes.

Jenny's eyes go to three workers moving some rubble; suddenly a shout rises up!

WTC WORKER  
 We got one!

Several more workers rush over. Jenny presses herself against the chain link fence overlooking the pit. Could it possibly be a survivor? After all this time?

But her hopes are quickly dashed. For a moment she sees nothing...and then...he is holding a severed arm. A woman's arm, with several rings on the fingers. Jenny gasps.

Reverently the worker places the arm in white cloth provided by a medical technician.

Tears well up in Jenny's eyes. Unable to watch any more, she quickly walks away from the site, and then finds herself passing by the fence at St. Paul's Chapel, on Church Street. It is covered with pictures of the missing: beloved husbands, wives, children, with heartfelt messages.

She leans against the wall of the church, and slowly collapses to the sidewalk, weeping.

An elderly priest sees her; approaches her; kneels down to be at her level.

FATHER O'BRIAN  
 Are you all right, my child?

JENNY  
 No...

FATHER O'BRIAN  
 Did you lose someone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JENNY

No...but...

FATHER O'BRIAN

It's a terrible thing, isn't it?

JENNY

Yes.

(struggles to get control  
of herself)

Why did God do this, Father?

I've...lost all my faith, I've lost  
my faith...

(loses it again)

It's gone.

FATHER O'BRIAN

Don't let that happen. God still  
loves us.

JENNY

No. The men who destroyed these  
buildings, who killed all these  
poor people, who ruined all these  
innocent lives, they loved their  
God too.

FATHER O'BRIAN

God is good...but you know, there  
is evil in this world too. And here  
you see its face.

JENNY

I...I just can't believe it's that  
simple. Good guys and bad guys.  
What kind of God would allow this  
to happen? How would He allow me to  
hurt so much?

(beat)

I've lost my faith. And...you know  
what the funny thing is? I'm so --  
lonely now!

FATHER O'BRIAN

I...I must go, I'm on my way to the  
hospital. Last rites --  
someone...is sinking. Burned.  
Horrible.

(pause)

But...please come again to my  
church.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JENNY

No, no...

FATHER O'BRIAN

Listen to me: your soul is worth saving. Come to church. You will be healed. It will take time. But you will find peace.

Jenny perfunctorily nods; O'Brian puts his hand on her shoulder, pauses, then walks off quickly.

She continues to look at the fence with all the pictures.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Evil.

JENNY

What?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Evil is the simplest and most difficult concept to understand. Every one of you is capable of it, every one of you secretly conceives it in your mind at one time or another, and when it happens...

JENNY

I don't believe in you any more.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Then who are you talking to?

JENNY

I don't know, myself, I suppose.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

No. You are saying you don't believe in me as you used to believe in me. You realize that the world, and I, are more complex than you ever thought. Until now evil had not appeared in your world.

JENNY

(contemptuously)

What is it, then? What is evil? Was this all caused by the Devil? Is that it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Jenny's eyes fall upon a dust-encrusted dandelion growing between the cracks in the sidewalk. She brushes off the dust exposing the flower.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

And is that flower yellow? Golden?  
Or blessed by the divine rays of  
the heavenly orb above, does it  
reflect my own glory?

JENNY

I don't understand.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

The Devil is one explanation. But  
there are so many ways of looking  
at it. There are those who say that  
evil tries to undo the work of God.  
God embodies the essence of beauty,  
order, love. Evil tries to break  
that up. What do you think of that?

JENNY

Yes.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Ironic, though. That sentiment  
comes from the Koran, which Atta  
and his hijackers memorized and  
loved, with all their hearts.

JENNY

(furious, raising her fist  
to the sky)  
Fuck you!

People turn to look.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

And others think it is a necessary  
consequence of free will. For if  
you are always doing my work, how  
can you be said to be free?

JENNY

Please.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

But I ask, how could you ever  
appreciate beauty and truth and  
perfection and love without ever  
having known their opposites?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JENNY

I don't know...I don't know if I  
can ever love you as I did before.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Listen to me, Jenny. At this very  
moment in Tel Aviv a bomber is  
preparing to blow herself up in a  
crowded pizzeria. Thirty-eight  
people, including the bomber, will  
die.

Suddenly Jenny's eyes no longer see the New York sidewalk,  
but a room in a run-down apartment in Israel. In the room is a  
woman dressed entirely in black, and with a friend she is  
wiring explosives to her body.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)

In Rwanda, right now, at this very  
moment, a Hutu chieftain is  
massacring a Tutsi village. His aim  
is to leave no one alive, and he  
will achieve this goal.

Again, Jenny sees a mini-vision: a small hut with small  
children squatting on the floor. We hear gunshots. The  
children shiver and whimper. Then a big man dressed in  
camouflage enters the hut and we see the children's skulls  
blown apart by bullets.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)

In North Korea, a man wrongly  
accused of anti-government  
activities is being executed --  
along with his entire family.

We see a glass room in the center of a larger one. A few  
dozen white-coated technicians sit in chairs as uniformed  
soldiers herd four naked people -- the mother, father, and  
two children, a boy and a girl -- into the chamber. The  
soldiers lock the door. The family is cold, and frightened,  
and they huddle together for warmth. They start to scream  
when they see the gas.

THE VOICE (CONT'D)

And of course the American  
government is planning its own  
retribution for what happened here  
a few weeks ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

JENNY

(weeping)

Why do you let this happen?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Jenny. Why do YOU let this happen?

JENNY

Wh-what?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You know, sometimes I ask myself,  
 what have I done? To create you so  
 that you can cause such unspeakable  
 suffering among yourselves? What  
 have I done?

(pause)

And yet...

JENNY

And yet?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

And then I ask you -- YOU, Jenny --  
 why do you let this happen?

JENNY

What can I do?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

When will someone take  
 responsibility for your actions.  
*Who speaks for humanity?* Who,  
 Jenny? Who ever did?

JENNY

I - I --

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Think.

JENNY

Jesus. Jesus Christ did.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Good, Jenny. Jesus did, and  
 Abraham, and Mohammed, and  
 Siddartha, the Buddha. They did!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

THE VOICE(CONT'D)

They said, each in their own way, *I speak for humanity*, I am responsible for not just myself, not just my tribe or my nation, but for all people, over all time. They made themselves *accountable* for every person who ever lived, ever. *Accountable*, Jenny.

JENNY

And every crime, every...sin...

THE VOICE (V.O.)

They...they...stood on a mountain and before you and me proclaimed that they would pay for them.

JENNY

Why? Why did they do it?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You know. They possessed hope, hope, Jenny! Hope that some day, one day, you would all become so self-aware, so enlightened! They were setting an example!

(beat)

Imagine, Jenny!

JENNY

We would be divine. We would truly be your children.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You are always, will always, be my children. But it's nearing the time you must grow up.

(beat)

Listen, Jenny. YOU must do that. You must do what they did.

JENNY

What?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

If you truly want to see the suffering end, you must stop it. YOU, Jenny.

JENNY

I- I- don't know...What must I do? You ask so much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

THE VOICE (V.O.)

In you, Jenny, I live. Jesus and  
Mohammed and Siddartha and Abraham,  
they live in you too, in all of  
you. You can do it. You can stop  
the pain, for everyone.

Tears are pouring, streaming from Jenny's eyes; visibly, her entire soul is in turmoil. People walking by her stare. Some think she lost someone at the WTC site behind her, and mutter, "poor woman," and the like.

Nearby the small group of Gospel singers we saw at the opening is gently singing "Amazing Grace."

Suddenly Jenny has another mini-vision: it is her, in a women's clinic and shelter in a slum in India. On the wall are newspaper clippings of her in court with abused women; at women's rights meetings; offering birth control advice. She is giving a shot when four angry men burst in and gun her down. She feels her soul leaving her body...

JENNY

(out loud, desperately)  
Oh God! Oh, God, NO!

At that moment before her a shimmering, indistinct figure appears walking toward her. We cannot quite make it out, and no one on the street but Jenny sees it. Shakily, Jenny approaches it, and extends her arm as if to touch.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Jenny.

JENNY

I...I can't do what you ask. I  
cannot bear it. It's too hard.  
Forgive me!

THE VOICE (V.O.)

I know, Jenny. And I forgive you.  
Of course I forgive you. My love is  
with you, always.

The shimmering figure slowly fades away, and then morphs into her husband JEFF. Her mouth drops open in shock. Seeing Jenny's disheveled appearance, he gasps and takes her into his arms.

JEFF

Are you all right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

JENNY

Jeff, oh, Jeff.

(she clings to him)

However did you know I was here?

JEFF

I don't know. Something told me, I guess -- gosh, it is weird, I have no idea.

Jenny knows. She looks at Jeff, then gazes up to the sky.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Why did you come here?

She cannot answer, and Jeff seems to understand.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Come on, I'll take you home.

JENNY

(getting control of herself)

Will you always be here for me?

JEFF

(looks deep into her eyes)

Yes, Jenny. My love is with you, always.

Recognizing the words The Voice just uttered, Jenny stares at her husband and gasps.

JEFF (CONT'D)

What?

JENNY

Nothing. Take me home, please?

INT. BARRY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. TWO WEEKS LATER.

Monica returns home from school with Suzie, who still hasn't spoken a word. She goes straight to her dollhouse in the living room. Barry is watching TV.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This eventful September, the September that changed America forever is coming to a close.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Negotiations with the Taliban for the handover of Osama bin Laden continue. For more on this let's go to our correspondent in Peshawar...

MONICA

Didn't go to work today?

BARRY

No point. No work to do.

He clicks the remote, surfing aimlessly.

MONICA

No work?

BARRY

No work.

Suzie picks up a toy airplane and rams it into her dollhouse. She gently drops a couple of her dolls to the floor. Barry and Monica watch, horrified.

MONICA

Oh, my God.

BARRY

Suzie...Monica...

MONICA

You need to help me. I need your help.

BARRY

What can I do?

MONICA

(sighs)

I wish I knew. I wish I knew.

(to Suzie)

Baby...don't get comfortable, we're leaving in just a few minutes.

(to Barry)

We have another appointment with Dr. Steinberg.

BARRY

The shrink?

MONICA

I'm so hoping she'll get Suzie to talk again. She needs to talk about this.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONICA (CONT'D)

(Monica starts to cry)  
I need to know what she's thinking.  
(pause)  
You should go too.

BARRY  
I'll be all right.

MONICA  
Barry, you must understand this:  
it's not about you. *We need you.*  
Your daughter needs you. Dr.  
Steinberg says only her father can  
fill in the gaps left by her  
Grandpa. You need to re-engage with  
life.

BARRY  
Yeah, what else does this Dr.  
Steinberg say.

MONICA  
Well, she says --

BARRY  
Never mind, I don't want to hear  
it!

MONICA  
She says says everyone in mourning  
goes through five stages: denial,  
anger, bargaining, depression and  
acceptance. Only you seem stuck in  
the anger stage.

BARRY  
Monica --

MONICA  
Look, it's been hard for me too -  
I'm all alone over here. Can't you  
see? *I want my husband back!*

BARRY  
(suddenly furious)  
I want my business back! *I want my  
father back!* Dammit!

Monica shrinks, and starts to cry again.

MONICA  
It's -- it's not my fault!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARRY

I know. I know. I'm sorry. I --  
just need a little more time, sort  
this all out.

MONICA

Dr. Steinberg says you need  
closure.

BARRY

Psychobabble.

MONICA

There's a memorial service at  
Yankee Stadium in a few days. I  
bought tickets for all of us, for  
you and me and Suzie, and Jeff and  
Jenny, and Mom, and we're going. I  
expect you to take us. I think it  
might help you.

BARRY

That's the last damn thing I want  
to do, I want to forget it all --

MONICA

Barry, I can't go on like this. Do  
this for me and for Suzie. Or I'm  
leaving you. Come on, Suzie.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE. A FEW DAYS LATER.

We see the offices and cubicles completely vacated. Barry is  
talking to an employee.

BARRY

You'll be fine. Good luck.

EMPLOYEE

Thanks...too bad it had to turn out  
this way.

BARRY

Yeah.

The employee exits, and Barry sits at his desk and looks out  
the window again. He spies the book "Dow 30,000" on the  
credenza, and throws it contemptuously into the trash can.  
Ken walks in; Joy follows.

KEN

That the last of them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY

Except for you two. Pull up a chair.

Barry opens a drawer and pulls out a bottle of Scotch and some glasses.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I was saving this for the day we went public. 21 years old.

While Barry pours, Joy and Ken take a seat and relax.

JOY

So, what were you going to do with all your money?

BARRY

You ever notice you always start a conversation with the word "so"?

JOY

So?

BARRY

Yeah, well, my plan was to buy an island. That's what I wanted. My own island, somewhere in the Caribbean. Or maybe off of Tahiti. Wire it up for the Internet, broadband, mega house. Import a teacher for Suzie. Hadn't really thought it all the way through, I suppose. You?

JOY

Me? Paris. For a couple of months. Live high. Buy clothes. Men.

KEN

There's this place in Montana along a river. A vacation home, lots of sky, lots of trout, no Internet, no telephone even.

BARRY

Off the grid, eh?

KEN

Yeah.

(sighs)

Thing I hate, it's interviewing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KEN(CONT'D)

Hate it. Resume, glad-handing, all that damn smiling.

BARRY

Doesn't come easy to you?

KEN

Remember, I'm the CFO, I'm the guy that's supposed to say no all the time to you spendthrifts.

BARRY

You'll do fine. Probably be working within a week, at double the pittance I pay you.

KEN

Sure. Sure, Barry.

(stands)

I gotta go home. We're having some family over tonight. These days I like being around family as much as I can, for some reason. Barry -- we'll meet next Friday on the Chapter 6 stuff, right. Auctioning off all this stuff. Hell, may buy some of it myself.

BARRY

Some nice chairs out there.

KEN

Yeah. Spent way too much on them too, if you ask me. Probably get ten cents on the dollar for 'em.

BARRY

Not our problem now.

KEN

NO.

BARRY

Thanks for everything, Ken. Maybe we can do this again sometime.

KEN

(laughing)

I hope not.

They shake hands vigorously, and Ken departs...leaving Joy and Barry alone in his office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARRY

You'll be fine too.

JOY

Yeah. Yeah, I know. This is good,  
good Scotch, by the way.

BARRY

Thanks. Want some more?

JOY

Sure.

Barry refills her glass. She is getting a little drunk.

JOY (CONT'D)

Amazing how many companies have  
folded in the last month.

BARRY

Yeah. Yeah, all over a sudden the  
VC's are saying there are 10,000  
too many companies, gotta shrink  
that number down.

JOY

Well, we're doing our part. Here's  
to folding!

BARRY

Yeah. To failure!

Joy drinks the whole glass in one swallow, then stands, a  
little unsteadily.

JOY

I guess..I'll go too.

She looks at Barry; her eyes are telling him to ask her not  
to go. He doesn't.

BARRY

Thanks, Joy. Thanks for everything.  
You've been great.

JOY

You'll write me a good reference?

BARRY

You bet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JOY

You've been a great boss. I'd work  
for you again in a heartbeat.

They embrace...and the embrace goes on a little too long  
...and then their lips meet...and suddenly Joy is laying on  
Barry's desk; her shirt is unbuttoned; she is breathing hard,  
expectantly. Barry has lost control and is pulling off his  
shirt.

JOY (CONT'D)

Barry. Do you really want to do  
this?

Barry freezes.

JOY (CONT'D)

I do. I really, really do. But do  
you?

He slumps back in his chair.

BARRY

No. No, I don't.

He sits while Joy buttons up her shirt.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. That seems to be about  
all I can say lately.

Joy waves it off and hands him his drink, and pours herself  
another.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I wonder if this is what it means  
to hit rock bottom.

JOY

Well, thanks for that boost to my  
self-esteem. Barry, you have a wife  
and a child that love you, and from  
all I can tell you love them too.

BARRY

Yeah.

JOY

And they need you right now. So I  
have to ask you: what the hell are  
you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BARRY

Yeah.

JOY

You're so far down you don't even know which way is up, isn't that right?

BARRY

Yeah, that is right. Joy. You know what? Maybe I'll go for a little walk, clear out my brain a little. Joy, I'm really sorry -

JOY

Don't. It's ok. I can't believe ... I'm turning into a saint. Had this crush on you all this time, the opportunity comes up, and what do I do?

(pulls herself together)

OK.

BARRY

OK.

JOY

OK.

BARRY

So...what are you going to do now?

JOY

Me? I think I'll go to a bar, drink some more, see if I can get laid. Finish what I started.

Barry is taken aback at first, then chuckles.

BARRY

Make sure it's a nice bar, OK?

JOY

Only the best for me.

She stands, and they move closer to each other, this time tentatively -- and then Joy reaches out with her hand to Barry, and they shake.

JOY (CONT'D)

See ya!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

And then we see Barry all alone in his empty office.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK. A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Barry is walking through the park. It's October now, so it's kind of chilly, breezy; the sun is trying to poke through the clouds.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You know, I think the thing you're missing here is just how much I love you all.

Barry is just too emotionally exhausted to do anything but respond quietly.

BARRY

You sure have a funny goddam way of showing it. I mean, look at all the evil in the world. 9/11, World War II, the Holocaust, all the other wars.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Yes. Yes, you sure cause yourselves a lot of suffering, don't you?

BARRY

We cause ourselves...but you could stop it. Why don't you?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Yes. Yes I suppose I could.

BARRY

So?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

But how would you learn anything? You are my children, and I want you to grow. But it's not going to me that makes you grow. I want you to have my wisdom.

BARRY

Your wisdom.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Yes. You know you can't teach that, you have to learn it for yourself. Like with Joy back there.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE VOICE (CONT'D)

You knew what was right, and what was wrong. I was proud of you.

BARRY

I wasn't.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

You can only learn as you grow, it has to come from inside. I can give you commandments and commandments, but unless you feel them from inside, they're useless.

(pause)

What have you learned, Barry?

Barry sits down on a park bench, and nods his head. He has learned a few things.

BARRY

I guess - how fleeting everything is, how you can't take anything for granted. Dad was here one day...and gone the next. Could happen to anyone, at anytime. Could happen to me.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Very good, Barry. So: what does all that mean to you?

BARRY

Well...I need to be with my family. However many moments I have left I want to give them as many as I can. I know now, they will be better for my having spent my moments with them. It all starts with love, doesn't it?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

That's quite beautiful, Barry. You know, it's funny, that how I myself feel sometimes.

BARRY

Yeah, I can see that.

THE VOICE

Love, like me, is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and answer to everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRY

So obvious. I wonder why it's taking everybody so long. Say... something I've been meaning to ask you. How come you talk to me, anyway? What am I, some kind of prophet?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

(laughs)

No, not hardly. You, a prophet?

BARRY

(laughs along)

No, I didn't think so.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

I talk to everybody. Everybody there is. All the time.

BARRY

Really?

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Yes, but not everybody listens. You're pretty unique, you know, you didn't lock me out like most people do. Most people think they're imagining things, or think I couldn't possibly work on this level, they think I'm a book, or a ritual. Well, I'm not some dusty old book, I don't care about robes and rituals performed by candlelight. I'm alive, I am life, and I'm with you...always.

BARRY

I know. I know that.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Now, I have a question for you.

BARRY

Shoot.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

What do you think about miracles?

BARRY

You mean, do I believe in them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE VOICE

Yes.

BARRY

Well, I believe in the 1980 Olympic hockey team...but you mean like walking on water, or seas parting, or wine coming out of rocks? That kind of stuff.

THE VOICE

Yes. That kind of stuff.

BARRY

Umm...no. No, can't say as I really do. Never seen one before. Not scientific.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

I suppose you're right. Just wondering. Listen, I'm going to leave you alone for a while, let you think about everything that's happened, but before I do...and I really shouldn't do this...you really did the right thing with Joy back there.

BARRY

Yeah. Not too proud of myself though.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Like I say, I shouldn't tell you this, but she's on her way to a bar right now. She's going to meet a man there tonight, it'll be love at first sight, they'll have five kids, and live happily ever after, and you'll never see her again. Thought you might like to know.

BARRY

That's nice. Thanks for that.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

So. I -- I am proud of you, Barry. Very proud. Don't ever forget it.

BARRY

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

THE VOICE (V.O.)

Get in the habit of doing good,  
Barry. Develop a longing for it.  
Crave doing good things. You'll  
feel...maybe you'll begin to feel a  
little like me.

BARRY

Yeah.

The camera pulls back, away and upwards from Barry, still sitting on the park bench. We look down at the bench and the field across from it in Central Park. Two figures are walking toward Barry.

THE VOICE (V.O.)

He doesn't believe in miracles.  
Doesn't believe in 'em.

(pause)

Me, I think that every now and then  
a miracle is just the right thing.

The clouds separate, releasing a brilliant, spectacular sunburst; one dazzling ray lands squarely on Monica and Suzie walking across the meadow toward him. Barry, scarcely believing his eyes, stands. Suzie, seeing her father, runs toward him, and she yells:

SUZANNA

Daddy! Daddy!

Monica freezes; her hands go to her mouth as she chokes up in tears: Suzie talked! And then Monica herself rushes to Barry.

SUZANNA (CONT'D)

Hi, Daddy! I picked you a flower.

From overhead the camera pulls back slowly as the family, finally starting to heal, embraces.

SOPRANO (V.O.)

(picking up where she left  
off)

...I once was lost, but now am  
found...Was blind, but now can  
see...

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM. NIGHT. THE MEMORIAL SERVICE.

On the stage are any number of celebrities, including Mayor Giuliani, a row of firefighters, police and other heroes. Far back in the audience is Barry in a coat and tie;

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monica is on one side and Suzie on the other. Mom is on the other side of Suzie. Jenny's head is laying on Jeff's. They are relaxed; comfortable; and Monica smiles as Barry plants a tender kiss on Suzie's head. On Barry's lap is a 9x12 photo of his father.

BARRY  
(smiling at Jenny)  
So when's the date?

JENNY  
Late June, we think.

JEFF  
You're going to have a cousin,  
Suzie!

SUZANNA  
I hope it's a girl!

Bette Midler is introduced, and sings "Wind Beneath My Wings." The camera follows her: the singer's eyes are so misty she cannot look at the crowd, but the song is perfect:

BETTE MIDLER  
Did you ever know that you're my  
hero...

Monica looks up at her husband; he is strong again, whole again, and he holds her tight. Suzie, cold, snuggles up too. Jenny and Jeff embrace.

BARRY  
(looking at photo)  
He was my hero. I was so lucky to  
know him.

MONICA  
You're mine. You really are, you  
know?

SUZANNA  
Yeah, Daddy, you're my hero!

BETTE MIDLER  
You are the wind...beneath my  
wings.

Barry looks up at the starry sky. There a small shooting star flashes by, visible just for an instant; and he smiles.

THE VOICE  
Beautiful, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRY

Yes.

MONICA

(simultaneously)

Yes.

JEFF

(simultaneously)

Yes.

JENNY

(simultaneously)

Yes.

SUZANNA

(simultaneously)

Pretty!

They all look at each other briefly, wonderingly.

Bette Midler, herself weeping, finishes her song. Then, as CREDITS ROLL, a full choir sings.

CHOIR

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me I once  
was lost, But now I'm found, Was  
blind, but now I see.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END