

"WATERMARK"

by

William Finlay

William Finlay
307 - 1400 Bathurst St.
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 3S5
416-658-8831
scriptwriter@ca.inter.net

FADE IN:

EXT. THE NORTH ATLANTIC - DAY

An endless expanse of rolling, black ocean. Powerful and dangerous, yet strangely entrancing. Our POV suggests we are directly ON the water, as if drifting in a life raft.

We rock and drift from crest to trough to crest again -- primal, brooding brine extends in every direction as far as the eye can see, pitching and heaving with the soothing rhythm of a maritime lullaby.

It's hypnotic, frightening, peaceful and awesome all at the same time.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A small bachelor arrangement where the kitchen, living room and bedroom all blend into each other.

An old black & white gangster flick plays on the TV. Bad guys against the cops. THE SOUNDS OF POLICE SIRENS AND THE RAT-A-TAT-TAT OF TOMMY GUNS FILL THE ROOM.

PAN ACROSS THE ROOM to find--

A COUPLE in bed. They're in the final stages of love-making... though only one of the two appears to be caught up in the fever of the moment. This is NICK DELANGE.

Nick, 37, shows few signs of approaching middle age except for the lines around his eyes -- which, at the moment, are clamped shut as he cajoles, grunts and moans and with playful abandon.

Nick's partner in coitus is SANDI, 28. Sandi is pretty in that waitress-cashier-bank teller-working girl kind of way. She'd be prettier if she cut back on her make up by half. She's warm and uncomplicated. And she can chew gum and have sex at the same time.

Sandi struggles to look past Nick's shoulder to see the television. She gives his arm a slap.

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SANDI

-- Cripes, Nick. Do you have to make such a bloody racquet? I can hardly hear the gunfire.

Nick climaxes with a noisy flourish. Spent, he collapses heavily on Sandi.

SANDI (CONT'D)

Dammit, Nick. I got ribs ya know!

Nick rolls off her.

NICK

Try coming along for the ride sometime. You might enjoy yourself.

She cuddles, kisses his shoulder--

SANDI

I enjoy myself, Nick. I always do when I'm with you. You know that.

A look of panic flashes cross Nick's face--

NICK

O, shit.

SANDI

What? What's wrong?

NICK

I can't believe it. I forgot. I'm on shift tonight.

Sandi glares at him, then explodes--

SANDI

You prick!
(flailing at him)
Get away from me, get away from me!

NICK

It just slipped my mind that's all. Honest.

SANDI

Bullshit!

She gives Nick a sharp push. He rolls off the bed and hits the floor with a thud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SANDI (CONT'D)

Why the hell do I bother? I swear
to God this is the last time, Nick
Delange!

NICK

(grins)
That's what you said last time.

She whops him with a pillow.

SANDI

Screw you!
(she immediately shifts
into pout-mode)
-- You said you'd take me out to
dinner. You promised.

Nick hops to his feet, gives her a quick kiss on the head,
and heads for the bathroom.

NICK

Next time. I swear to God. I think
there's some peanut butter in the
cupboard. Knock yourself out.

SANDI

Peanut butter?? You creep! You
goddamn lowlife creep. Stay the
hell away from me.

Nick pops his head out from behind the bathroom door.

NICK

Do me a favor, will ya? When you
leave, don't lock the door--

Nick ducks behind the door as Sandi's SHOE CRASHES AGAINST
IT. Nick's head reappears--

NICK (CONT'D)

I can't find my key.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - NIGHT

A giant container vessel sits alongside the brightly lit
dock. Thousands of trailer-sized metal containers are stacked
on the huge dock like so many toy blocks.

Nick and his best friend ROLLIE, uncomplicated, loyal, and
built like a Mack truck, walk between two long rows of
containers. They drink coffee from paper cups.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

-- Maybe you took it up too fast.

ROLLIE

Did Marsh tell you that? Cause that's not how it happened. He gave me the all clear. Bugger just laughed about it.

NICK

Marsh is a prick.

ROLLIE

Yeah, well it goes on MY chart though, don't it?

NICK

Don't worry about it. Do us all a big favor, Rollie. Next time you drop a box, just make sure that little shit's under it.

ROLLIE

Be a friggin' pleasure.

Rollie continues on his way. He stops, turns back to Nick.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

Hey, don't forget about Friday. You 'n Shelly.

Nick shows blank. Rollie grins from ear to ear, waggles his fingers in front of his chest.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

Shelly. The manicurist. Lil says she's a cutie. Perky. Nice teeth. And personality to boot.

The penny drops. Nick groans.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

Hey, you could do worse. And God knows she could do a whole lot better.

Rollie cackles, turns -- and steps right into a container, spilling his coffee. He curses, crumples up the paper cup and continues on his way.

NICK

You be careful up there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROLLIE

Yes, mother.

Nick lifts his gaze upwards to--

A GANTRY CRANE

-- one of three giant cranes used to lift the large metal boxes on and off the container vessels.

The crane lowers a container into the hold of the ship.

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - NIGHT

A large brightly-lit office that looks small only because so much is crammed into it. A wall of computer screens flicker with a dizzying amount of information and satellite imagery. Charts and thick manifests are stacked in every available space. Large windows look out over the dockyards below.

LYLE MARSH, 40, stands at a counter completing a form. Nick steps into the office, continues past him--

NICK

Shouldn't you be on deck?

MARSH

Your buddy Rollie dropped a can yesterday, Nick. Or didn't he tell you?

NICK

He told me.

MARSH

Did he tell ya he almost killed me?

Nick doesn't respond.

MARSH (CONT'D)

'Course, now I gotta file a grievance.

Nick says nothing.

MARSH (CONT'D)

(pushing his point)

He's a fuckin' klutz, Nick. Plain and simple. He's a danger to everyone on the dock.

Nick stops at his desk, looks back at Marsh.

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CONTINUED:

NICK

Don't suppose this has anything to do with you being pissed that Rollie's on the gantry and you're not does it, Marsh?

The remark hits a nerve. Marsh holds up the completed grievance form.

MARSH

He's an accident waiting to happen and you know it. Just see something gets done about it.

Marsh slaps the form on the counter and stomps out of the office. Nick plops into the chair at his desk.

FERGUS (O.S.)

I've had boils I liked better.

Nick looks up to see--

FERGUS FORSYTHE,

the Dock Manager, standing in the doorway of his small corner office.

Fergus, in his early 60's, has been around the docks all his life. His imposing size and weathered face seem in sharp contrast to his gentle disposition -- though, one immediately knows that this is one man you don't want to cross.

NICK

The prick's after Rollie's job.

FERGUS

Then it's pretty much up to Rollie whether or not he gets it.

NICK

(sighs)

...Yeah, well you know Rollie.

Nick points to the form on the counter.

NICK (CONT'D)

What should I do about that?

FERGUS

Sit on it. Talk to Rollie. Tell him to relax... And tell him if he screws up again I'll have his balls for bait. And I mean it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Fergus is about to turn back into his office when he remembers something.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
-- Hey, you know a Nancy Carlyle?

Nick tenses.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
She's called here I don't know how many times. Said she left you a bunch of messages, but you haven't called back. What's up?

Nick shrugs.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
Said she needs to hear from you ASAP.
(grins)
Is the rabbit chasing the fox?

NICK
No, nothing like that.

FERGUS
Then call her, ya dummy. She's got a nice voice. Take her out for dinner why don't ya?

EXT. THE WATERFRONT - DAY

Early morning. A glorious sun peeks over the horizon. The city is just beginning to wake.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - PARKING LOT - DAY

A stream of MEN and WOMEN in hardhats head for their vehicles. Nick and Rollie walk together. Rollie is upset.

ROLLIE
-- Marsh and his goddamn grievance. I get a probation period, don't I? It's not right, Nick. I been on the dock fifteen years and this is my first accident.
(off Nick's look)
My first MAJOR accident, ya prick.

NICK
You been on the crane for two months, Rollie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE

That's my point. It takes time to get use to it. It's not like driving a friggin' Honda Civic, is it?

NICK

All I'm saying is be careful. We'll find a way to bury the grievance. Just make sure you don't screw up again.

Rollie stops, gives Nick a look. This is a tender area for Rollie.

ROLLIE

I'm not a fuck up, Nick.

NICK

For chrissake, Rollie. I didn't say you were.

Rollie holds his stare, then walks away on his own. Nick watches after him.

EXT. A STREET - DAY

A quiet, tree-lined residential street. A weathered five story apartment building sits on the corner.

NICK'S PICKUP TRUCK

rolls along the street. It passes a compact Toyota parked not far from the apartment building.

INT. TOYOTA - DAY

As the truck passes, an attractive brunette in sunglasses looks up from a thick folder of paperwork on her lap. This is NANCY CARLYLE, 32. Nancy sips coffee as she watches the truck pull to the curb in front of the apartment building.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Nick hops out of his truck and stops for a moment to greet an elderly couple as they exit the building.

INT. THE TOYOTA - DAY

Nancy jumps into action. She throws open the door and bolts out of the car - a second before she unclips her seat belt. The belt restraint instantly halts her forward motion - but not that of the pile of papers on her lap.

EXT. THE TOYOTA - DAY

THE PAPERS

slide cleanly onto the street -- followed a second later by the contents of her coffee cup.

Nancy struggles to disentangle herself from the seat belt. She steps out of the car just as--

A FEDEX VAN

rumbles by. The ensuing wind scatters the pile of loose paper in all directions.

She lets go a frustrated yelp, chases after the paperwork.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

ON HIS FRONT DOOR

as someone lays into it from the other side. THUD! THUD!
THUD!

Suddenly the door explodes open, cracking the doorpost in the process.

Nick charges in -- and is stopped in his tracks by what he sees. The place has been tidied and vacuumed. The bed is made and the drapes have been pulled wide to let in the sun.

Nick reacts. He heads to the fridge for a beer, takes a long swig, then notices a light blinking on his speaker phone. He moves to the counter, punches a button--

SILICONE SALLY'S VOICE

*You have two new messages. To
listen to your--*

Nick hits "1" on the phone console -- SANDI'S VOICE kick's in. At the same moment something catches Nick's eye. He smiles to himself as he picks up a house key attached to a brightly coloured ribbon--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANDI'S VOICE

Nick, it's Sandi. Surprise! I thought I'd give your apartment a bit of a clean, an' guess what? I found your key. I left it on the table, then locked the door cause ...well, cause your key wasn't lost anymore. Kinda stupid, huh? Sorry. Hope you got in okay... Thanks for the movie. You're still a prick, but maybe we can do it again sometime. Not for awhile though. Larry's home on shore leave tomorrow--

Nick punches another button on the console -- BEEP.

SILICONE SALLY'S VOICE

Message deleted--

Nick begins removing his shirt as the next message begins--

NANCY'S VOICE

Mr. Delange, it's Nancy Carlyle... I'm not sure why you aren't returning my calls, but it's imperative that we--

Nick reaches over and hits the same button -- BEEP.

SILICONE SALLY'S VOICE

Message deleted--

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Nancy walks up the steps into the vestibule.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - THE VESTIBULE - DAY

A tenant directory hangs on one wall. Next to the directory is an intercom unit -- a speaker and a key pad.

Nancy finds "N. DELANGE" on the directory. Her eyes travel across the board to locate the accompanying apartment code; she dials.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Already the apartment is reverting to its former self. Nick's clothes are everywhere -- and we quickly see why. Nick stands naked in the bathroom testing the temperature of the shower.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Satisfied, he steps into the shower and slides the stall door shut.

At the same moment, the INTERCOM BUZZES--

INT. THE VESTIBULE - DAY

Nancy listens as the intercom goes unanswered. She rechecks the wall directory.

MR. AND MRS. HENRY

step into the vestibule from outside. As they proceed toward the inner door--

NANCY

Excuse me. I'm sorry to bother you, but didn't I see you speak to a man on the steps just a moment ago? Nick Delange?

MRS. HENRY

That's right. Are you a friend of his?

NANCY

Not exactly. But I AM trying to get hold of him. He doesn't seem to be answering his buzzer.

MRS. HENRY

He just got home from work. Could be that he's in bed already.

MR. HENRY

(to Mrs. Henry)

Nah, he never gets to bed before noon. Told me that himself.

NANCY

Do you think it'd be okay if I just, you know, went up and knocked..?

The old guy smiles.

MR. HENRY

It's fine with us, and I know it'd be okay with Nick. Never known him to complain about a pretty woman knocking on his door... And there's been a few.

INT. THE APARTMENT BUILDING - 5TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Muffled sounds -- music, TV chatter, a crying baby -- leak into the hallway as Nancy follows the apartment numbers to--

THE DOOR TO NICK'S APARTMENT.

The door is open -- the doorpost splintered as a result of Nick's most recent entry. Nancy knocks.

NANCY

-- Hello??

No answer. She knocks again.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

The NOISY SPRAY of the SHOWER catches Nancy's attention. She steps cautiously inside the apartment--

NANCY

-- Hell-o-o? Mr. Delange?

NANCY'S POV - NICK'S CLOTHES

making a trail from one side of the apartment to the bathroom. Her eyes follow the trail: shirt, undershirt, pants, socks, underwear--

Nancy peers through the open bathroom door and sees Nick's naked physique behind the frosted glass of the shower stall. Taut. Muscular. Defined.

She gasps involuntarily, then quickly turns away... only to find her eyes being drawn back. She locks on the scene for a moment longer--

ON THE SHOWER STALL

as Nick turns off the water.

Nancy panics. The realization of what she is doing suddenly hits her -- she's standing in a stranger's apartment watching him shower! She turns to flee, only to run right into--

MR. HENRY

standing in the doorway.

Nancy shrieks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. HENRY

Whoa, take it easy there, Missy.
It's only me. Just checking to see
if you found Nick okay.

INT. THE BATHROOM - SAME

Nick pokes his head out of the shower stall, reaching for a towel. He looks into the living room.

NICK

-- Somebody there?

INT. THE APARTMENT - SAME

MR. HENRY

Just me, Nick. And a very attractive
young lady who wants to see you.
(to Nancy; he grins)
...Tho' from what I can tell, you've
seen about all there is to see.

NICK (O.S.)

Who is she?

Nancy is desperate to escape the embarrassment of the moment.

NANCY

(to Mr. Henry)
I think I'd better go!

MR. HENRY

Go? But you haven't said a word to
Nick.

Frantic, she weaves around Mr. Henry and makes a beeline toward the door.

NANCY

Please, just ask him to call me.

MR. HENRY

-- What's your name, honey?

But it's too late, Nancy's gone. Nick, wrapped in a bath towel, steps out of the bathroom.

NICK

Who was that?

MR. HENRY

Damned if I know.

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - HALL - DAY

Tobin Towers is a geriatric care facility. Some effort has been made to make the hall bright and cheerful, but there is no escaping the pervasive sense of hopelessness and futility found in an institution where the residents are simply waiting out their days.

ELDERLY RESIDENTS are scattered throughout the hall, sitting alone, staring into space. One or two navigate the hall in wheelchairs or walkers.

A FOOD SERVICE CART

is wheeled down the hall by two uniformed orderlies, PHIL, a personable black man, 24, and MARGE, a plump, cheerful woman in her late 40's. The two are delivering lunch to the rooms.

MRS. CROMBIE, 80s, sits in a wheelchair parked against the wall. Marge speaks to her with that loud voice one often uses with seniors--

MARGE

Time for lunch, Mrs. Crombie.

The woman smiles a dazed smile. Phil pulls a tray of the cart and shows it to the old lady.

ON THE TRAY

consisting of a plate of macaroni & cheese, applesauce, a roll, and a small bottle of orange juice.

PHIL

Got somethin' special today, Mrs. C.
Your fave. Lobster. Mmm, mmm.

MRS. CROMBIE

(echoing)
Mmm, mmm.

Phil presents the juice like a waiter presenting a fine bottle of wine--

PHIL

An' a nice white wine. Lookie here.
Some o' that really expensive
French shit.

The old lady smiles sweetly.

MRS. CROMBIE

Mmm, mmm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Marge hoots.

MARGE

Lobster! You're bad, Phil.

(to Mrs. Crombie)

Isn't he bad? Lobster my ass.

Marge gives a hearty laugh as she pushes Mrs. Crombie down the hall as Phil carries the tray into a nearby room.

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - ALBERT'S ROOM - DAY

AN OLD MAN

is in a chair near the window. His face is blank, expressionless. His mind, what's left of it, is elsewhere. This is ALBERT DELANGE, 74.

In the b.g. Phil walks in with the lunch tray and places it on a table near the television. The television is on, but the volume is turned down. Phil CRANKS UP THE SOUND and starts flicking through the channels.

PHIL

What'll it be today, Mr. D? Sesame Street? You get a kick outta that puppet shit, don't ya?... Or how 'bout somethin' with a little heat, like one of them soap operas. Got some hot lookin' ladies on the soaps...

(he stops at a "how-to" program)

How 'bout this? Got a do-it-yourself thing happenin' here, Mr. D. You want this?... Never too late to learn yourself a new trade. Could teach yourself how to build a house or a motorcycle or some damn thing...

He cackles and heads for the door--

PHIL (CONT'D)

Someone be back to feed you in a bit, Mr. D.

STAY ON ALBERT

who's face hasn't changed.

INT. THE RUSTY ANCHOR PUB - NIGHT

A local hangout, a favorite for the crews who work the dock. The pub is pleasant, bright, and tonight it's crowded with DOCK WORKERS and their DATES.

NICK AND ROLLIE

move through the crowded room carrying pints of draft from the bar.

TRAVEL WITH THE TWO

to a table where two women are sitting. One of the women is LIL, Rollie's wife, a sweet cherub with a chubby, luminous face. It doesn't take an Einstein to see that she and Rollie are perfect soul mates.

The other lady at the table is Nick's blind date SHELLY, a perky, attractive blonde in a tight-fitting sweater. Shelly is reading Lil's palm. The two are giggling playfully as the men approach.

LIL
(to Shelly; excitedly)
Do Rollie!

Rollie cackles.

ROLLIE
Ooo, I like the sound o' that!

He and Nick seat themselves at the table.

LIL
Shelly can read palms.

SHELLY
Just learning, really.
Correspondence. My evaluator said
I'm a natural, given that I work
with hands like I do.
(to Nick)
I'm a manicurist.

NICK
So I heard.

Lil holds up her palm for Rollie to see.

LIL
My heart line splits in two. Right
here--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE

Uh-oh. That can't be good.

LIL

--But, look. The lower line is longer.

(to Shelly)

And that's good, right?

SHELLY

That's excellent!

(to Rollie)

Means she'll be a key part in your success.

ROLLIE

MY success?... How d'ya figure?

SHELLY

Dunno. Haven't got to that part of the course yet.

Rollie lets go a whoop.

ROLLIE

(to Nick)

Hear that? Me, a success! Piss on Marsh and his fucking grievance!

Lil brings her hand close to Rollie. She indicates another line on her palm.

LIL

(to Rollie; sweetly)

And this one means I'm incredibly passionate.

Rollie almost melts. He takes her hand and kisses it.

ROLLIE

O, baby, you don't need no palm lines to convince me o' that.

They come together for a long, sloppy kiss. Shelly looks over at Nick.

SHELLY

How about you?

NICK

Me?

SHELLY

You the passionate type?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICK

'Suppose it depends on who you ask.
(holds out his palm)
You're the expert. You tell me.

ON THE ENTRANCEWAY OF THE PUB

as Nancy Carlyle steps through the front door. She hesitates, uncertain about entering the pub alone -- and even more uneasy with the looks she's getting from the longshoremen who've been drinking since end of shift. She braces herself, then makes her way toward the bar.

CLOSE ON NICK'S PALM

as Shelly traces a line with her finger.

SHELLY

This is interesting cause your Sun
line begins at your Destiny line.

NICK

Meaning?

SHELLY

It's hard to be specific, but it
probably means you're in for a
sudden change of fortune or
circumstances.

ROLLIE

The friggin' lottery! Maybe you're
in for the big one.

Shelly continues to study his hand.

SHELLY

Ever been in a serious relationship?

ROLLIE

You're reading the wrong body part
for the answer to that one!

Lil gives Rollie an elbow.

LIL

Rollie!

Shelly indicates a spot on Nick's palm.

SHELLY

(to Nick)
See here? Parallel marriage lines.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LIL
(intrigued)
What does that mean?

SHELLY
Usually indicates multiple
marriages.

Shelly looks directly into Nick's eyes--

SHELLY (CONT'D)
But that's not the case with you,
is it?

NICK
What makes you so sure?

SHELLY
(without missing a beat)
Cause you're terrified of love.

ROLLIE
(teasingly)
Ooooo.

SHELLY
Once bitten, twice shy. Am I right?

Nick doesn't answer. He wants to hear more.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
If I had to guess, I say you're
relationships are strictly
temporal. All sex, no intimacy.

Rollie roars.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
No attachments. No commitments.

ROLLIE
Bingo!
(to Shelly)
Whoa, you're good!
(to Nick)
She's good!

Nick is taken aback.

NICK
You can see that in my hand?

SHELLY
Uh-uh. I can see it in your eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Shelly smirks and leans back in her chair. Rollie hoots.

ROLLIE

Man, does she have you pegged or what?! She can read you like a friggin' STOP sign!

Nick looks for some relief. He grabs his beer and quaffs.

ON NANCY

at the bar. Her eyes follow the BARTENDER'S pointed finger to the table where Nick, Rollie and the others are seated.

BACK ON NICK AND SHELLY AT THE TABLE.

NICK

(to Shelly)

So, let's assume you're right--

SHELLY

Then we can both relax, enjoy the evening, and forget about this going anywhere.

Nick's been bested. Shelly lifts her pint in a salute.

NANCY (O.S.)

Mr. Delange.

Nick looks up to see Nancy Carlyle standing near the table.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I'm Nancy Carlyle. We need to talk.

CUT TO:

INT. THE RUSTY ANCHOR - NIGHT

Nick and Nancy are parked on stools at the corner of the bar. A thick binder sits on the bar in front of them.

NANCY

Can I ask why you haven't returned my calls?

Nick shrugs, preferring not to answer.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I've called you at home, at work. I even went to--

She stops herself, deciding not to go there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY (CONT'D)

-- The point is Mr. Delange, I've got better things to do on a Friday night than to chase down people who won't return their phone calls. You have to realize we're quickly running out of time here.

She pulls a paper from the binder, slaps it on the bar.

NANCY (CONT'D)

This is a copy of the letter we sent out months ago -- as soon as we got wind of the impending cutbacks. Have you even read it?

Nick leaves it on the bar without looking at it.

NICK

Can't say I have.

NANCY

Now there's a surprise.

She catches herself. She's uncomfortably close to overstepping her professional demeanor. She takes a deep breath, then continues.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Look, Mr. Delange, we are simply suggesting to the families of those people who are not sufficiently covered by insurance, or whose benefits from when they were employed have run out -- people like your father--

NICK

Can we just cut to the chase?

Nancy gives him a look, then fingers through the pages of the binder. She finds the page she's looking for and slides a finger across a line of numbers.

NANCY

Up till now the cost of caring for your father has been generously subsidized. That all changes as of the first of next month.

She looks at Nick for a response. Nick waits for her to continue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NANCY (CONT'D)

...So the difference between what the government will now contribute and the actual cost of caring for your father will have to be made up by... well, by you, Mr. Delange. Unless you can make other arrangements.

Nick is silent. Nancy looks at the figures in her book and continues.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Uh, well let's see... The base cost minus the amount for which he is still eligible... That's a difference of roughly nineteen hundred dollars.

NICK

A year?

She's not sure if he's kidding -- then realizes he's not.

NANCY

A month, Mr. Delange. And that doesn't include the cost of any prescription drugs he might require.

NICK

Are you nuts?! I could keep him in a five star hotel for that kind of money!

NANCY

That would be fine if all he needed was his bed turned down and a chocolate left on his pillow. ...Look, I know this comes as a bit of a shock. But the money will have to come from somewhere.

NICK

And what happens if I don't meet your demands? You throw him off the balcony?

NANCY

This is not a ransom, Mr. Delange. This amount represents the legitimate cost of providing quality health care to each person in our facility.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NICK

And if I can't pay?

NANCY

Well...then I'm afraid your father will have to leave.

NICK

And go where?

NANCY

Well, that's up to you... You might want to consider some sort of Home-care arrangement. Your father would need someone to look after him while you're at work. A Homecare provider might be a suitable alternative, depending on the hours you need them. And, obviously, it'd be a lot more reasonable than a full time care facility such as ours.

NICK

And what do I do with him the rest of the time?

NANCY

(stating the obvious)
He'd be in your care.

Nick is silent.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Look, I know your father. He doesn't require a lot of attention. His medical needs are minimal. He's not bedridden or immobile--

NICK

He's a fucking vegetable, Ms. Carlyle, or haven't you bright bulbs at Tobin Towers noticed that yet?!

Nick gets on his feet and starts to walk away.

NANCY

Mr. Delange--

Nick stops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

NANCY (CONT'D)

I've been at Tobin Towers for almost four years. I've never seen you. Have you ever come to visit your father?

The question hangs in the air for a long moment -- until Nick turns and continues on his way.

EXT. SHEILA'S HOUSE - THE DRIVEWAY - DAY

A modest wood-shingled home with a glassed-in verandah. Duct tape and sheets of plastic -- much of which is now torn and shredded -- substitute for missing panes of glass.

A CHILD'S FACE FILLS THE SCREEN,

a dirty-faced four year old boy. This is RONNIE. He STARES vacantly INTO CAMERA. AN AUTOMOBILE HORN SOUNDS.

NICK

is in his pickup truck. The truck is stopped at the foot of the driveway next to the bungalow, its back-end jutting into the street.

NICK

Come on, kid. Shuffle yer arse.

WIDEN TO REVEAL - RONNIE,

sitting on his tricycle directly in front of Nick's truck. Nick TAPS THE HORN again, then pokes his head out the truck window.

The boy remains motionless. Nick taps the HORN again.

NICK (CONT'D)

If it comes down to a game of chicken, you really think you'd stand a friggin' chance?

The little guy is unmoved. He continues to stare blankly at the stranger in the truck.

SHEILA' VOICE

Ronnie, get the hell out of the way!

SHEILA, a harried woman of 33 stands in the doorway of the verandah. A chubby TODDLER clings to her side.

Ronnie immediately pedals to the side of the driveway. Nick eases the truck up the drive. He looks up at Sheila, smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
That one yours?

SHEILA
Yeah, he's mine. What the hell are
you doin' here?

NICK
Hey, it's nice to see you, too.

INT. SHEILA'S HOUSE - THE KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is cluttered with the usual signs of a household with small children -- dirty dishes, open cereal boxes, clothing and toys are scattered everywhere. A playpen on the floor houses the toddler Sheila was holding a moment ago. Another INFANT is in a highchair near the table.

Sheila spoon-feeds the baby a concoction of strained veggies. Nick leans against the kitchen counter.

SHEILA
If it's money you want, forget it,
Nick. I buy the kids' clothes at
Goodwill as it is.

NICK
I'm not looking for money cause I
don't plan on keeping him there.

SHEILA
You're single. You're making a good
living aren't ya?

NICK
Not a spare two grand a month I'm
not.

Sheila goes back to feeding the infant. After a moment--

SHEILA
You keep in touch with Cory?

Nick nods.

NICK
Had him for a week last August.

SHEILA
He needs to see you more than that,
Nick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

I know. But what can you do?

SHEILA

(goo-gooing to the baby)
'Sides, I want him to meet his
widdle cousins.

(with a look to Nick)
Mind you, they never met their
uncle before today.

NICK

Been meaning to get out.
(indicating the toddler)
Who's this then?

SHEILA

Ricky Junior.

He leans over the crib and rubs the toddler's bald head.

NICK

Hey, little Ricky.
(to Sheila)
Got a head o' hair like his old man.

SHEILA

Yeah, and he's just as ornery.

Sheila plucks the baby from the highchair and brings him up
to her shoulder.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

And this little muffin is Albert.

Nick reacts.

NICK

Why the hell would ya saddle him
with that?

Sheila shoots Nick a hard look.

SHEILA

Why do you think, Nick?... So if
it's not money, just what did you
come here for?

NICK

I want some help figuring out what
to do with the old man, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHEILA

Kinda late in life to start asking advice from your kid sister, isn't it?... 'Sides, I think you already know what you want to do. You wanna pass him off and make him someone else's problem. Well, no thanks, Nick. He can't stay here. The last thing I need is another mouth to feed or another ass to wipe. I barely make it through the day as it is. 'Sides, Ricky would have no part of it. He wants nothing to do with my side of the family... An' I can't say I blame him.

NICK

What're you saying? That he's MY responsibility?

SHEILA

I'm saying maybe it's time you TOOK some responsibility, Nick. He's your father, for chrissakes. Doesn't that mean anything?

NICK

Didn't seem to mean much to him.

SHEILA

So he fucked up. Who hasn't? Know something? The only people I know who haven't fucked up are my kids. But they will. Someday. Over something... It's called life.

Nick digests this for a moment, then picks his jacket off the back of a chair, plants a cold kiss on Sheila's forehead and heads for the door.

NICK

Good seeing ya.

SHEILA

What are you gonna do? Hate him for the rest of your life?

Nick stops at the door, looks back.

NICK

Probably won't have to. Just the rest o' his.

And he's gone.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - NIGHT

The dock buzzes with activity. A container ship, its hatch covers removed, sits flush with the dock while containers are being lowered into its holds by the three gantry cranes that run the length of the dock.

Mobile "yard gantries", looking much like giant spiders on wheels, race around the dock positioning and stacking the metal boxes for the huge gantry cranes to load on board the ship.

INT. GANTRY CRANE - SAME

Rollie is at the controls of the gantry responsible for loading the ship's forward hold. He is trying his best to be composed, but it's obvious he's tentative and jittery. A two-way radio hangs in the operator's nest keeping him in touch with the crew-leader below.

ROLLIE'S POV - A CONTAINER

being lifted slowly off the dock.

Rollie eases a lever forward and the crane responds. The box moves toward the ship.

EXT. THE SHIP - SAME

Lyle Marsh, holding a clipboard, stands on the deck overlooking the forward hold. He watches impatiently for the container to touch down. Several CREW are in the hold waiting to release the box from the crane's cables as soon as it lands.

Marsh gazes the length of the ship and sees--

CONTAINERS

that the other crane operators are transferring from shore to ship. They glide swiftly through the air with seeming grace and precision.

Marsh looks back at the box slowly making its way toward him. He presses a button on the walkie-talkie microphone hooked to his jacket.

MARSH

(into the walkie-talkie)

It'd be nice to get this ship loaded before we all have to retire, don't ya think?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSH (CONT'D)
 Goddamn it, Rollie, get a move on!
 My crew's falling asleep on me down
 here. If you can't keep up--

INT. THE GANTRY - SAME

Marsh's VOICE can be HEARD on the radio.

MARSH'S VOICE
 -- then let someone in there who
 can!

Rollie tenses.

ROLLIE
 Asshole.

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - NIGHT

Nick is at his desk, stressed. He flips through the yellow pages, jots down phone numbers.

Fergus Forsythe approaches. He carries a coffee thermos, a coffee mug, and two large bottles of rum. He places the bottles on Nick's desk, then pours coffee into his and Nick's mugs.

FERGUS
 You look like you could use a pick-
 me-up.

Fergus cracks open one of the bottles and adds a generous shot of rum to each of the cups. Nick manages a grin.

NICK
 A pick-me-up or a knock-me-out?

Fergus pulls up a chair and motions towards the rum bottles.

FERGUS
 Little present for ya.

NICK
 (nods appreciatively)
 Thank you. What's the occasion?

FERGUS
 No occasion. The Feds dropped by
 this afternoon, broke open a box.
 Got a tip there was hash oil or
 some damn thing on its way up from
 Jamaica.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A knowing smile sneaks across Nick's face. He can guess the rest of the story.

NICK
They find anything?

FERGUS
Only what was supposed to be there.
Eight hundred and sixty cases of
fine Jamaican rum.

Nick nods thoughtfully.

NICK
You don't say... So, I assume, when
the cops were finished you had the
box resealed and sent on its way?

FERGUS
(playing it straight)
I did. Including all eight hundred
and fifty-nine cases of fine
Jamaican rum.

They raise their cups in a toast.

NICK & FERGUS
Jamaica.

They drink.

FERGUS
So tell me what's happening with
the hunt for Homecare.

NICK
Nothing to tell. Every place I've
called is swamped because of the
cutbacks. No one's taking on new
clients. 'Course, being on shift
doesn't make it easy to find
someone willing to match my hours.
(he snorts)
Worse comes to worst, I suppose I
can always stuff him into a basket
and leave him on a church doorstep.

FERGUS
(stating the obvious)
You and your dad aren't very close.

Nick gives a disinterested shrug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICK

Haven't so much as talked to the prick since I was fifteen... And after his accident there wasn't much point. Be like talking to a potato.

FERGUS

Not that you've tried.

Nick is surprised at Fergus's candor.

NICK

-- No, not that I've tried.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - NIGHT

A CONTAINER

hangs in limbo, midway between ship and shore. We HEAR THE GRINDING OF GEARS coming from Rollie's gantry crane.

INT. THE GANTRY - SAME

Rollie is panicking. He's done something to cause the machine to grind to a halt. He pounds at a control levers with the palm of his hand.

ROLLIE

Aw cripes, Rollie. Now ya done it. You've gone an' broke the fuckin' thing!

As he continues to pound away on the controls, Marsh's VOICE BLARES OVER THE RADIO.

MARSH'S VOICE

Rollie, how the hell did you ever get certified? For chrissakes, pull yourself together and get these boxes on board! In case you hadn't noticed, we've got a schedule to--

Rollie reaches for the radio and TURNS IT OFF.

EXT. THE SHIP - SAME

It dawns on Marsh that Rollie has shut down his radio. He tries again to raise a response. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Marsh cusses -- then whistles to a STEVEDORE on the dock and points in the direction of the office.

MARSH

Get Nick Delange down here! Now!

The stevedore hurries toward the office.

INT. THE GANTRY - SAME

Rollie is in a panic. He presses his palms into his eyes, then decides to try once more to get the crane working. He mutters to himself as he goes through the process in his head step by step.

He clamps his hands firmly on the controls and pulls--

EXT. THE GANTRY CRANE - SAME

Cables tighten, wheels whirr. The container starts to move toward the ship.

INT. THE GANTRY - SAME

Rollie lets go a huge sigh of relief. He flicks the radio back on.

EXT. THE SHIP - SAME

Marsh looks up as the container starts to move.

MARSH

(grumbling to himself)
Son of a bitch.

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - SAME

The stevedore hurries through the door.

STEVEDORE

Nick, Marsh wants you on deck.
Rollie's jammed number three.

As Nick grabs his hardhat, Fergus moves to the window.

FERGUS

Looks okay to me.

EXT. THE SHIP - NIGHT

Marsh watches as the container is lowered gently toward the ship. He motions for it to keep coming, keep coming, keep coming...

As the container reaches deck level - directly in line with Marsh - it suddenly stops.

MARSH

Now what?!

He presses the button on the walkie-talkie microphone.

INT. THE GANTRY - SAME

MARSH'S VOICE

I swear to God, Rollie, I'm gonna write you up for this. Move the damn box and move it now!

Rollie thrusts a control stick forward--

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - NIGHT

As Nick and Fergus watch from the window, they see--

The container moving again - but not INTO the hold, as expected, but SIDEWAYS, toward Marsh.

FERGUS

What's he doing?

EXT. THE SHIP - NIGHT

The container moves directly toward Marsh. It's about to pin him to the ship's rail.

MARSH

(screams)

Rollie! What the hell?! TAKE IT DOWN, TAKE IT DOWN!!

But the container keeps pressing toward him! There's only one way out -- and Marsh takes it. HE LEAPS OVER THE SIDE OF THE SHIP INTO THE HARBOUR!

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - NIGHT

Nick and Fergus watch, dumbstruck, as Marsh bobs to the surface of the water.

On the dock an emergency SIREN KICKS IN. The work crews jump in to action, rushing to the side of the ship with rope, safety hooks and flotation rings.

Fergus can't quite suppress a smile

FERGUS

Did I just see what I just saw?

NICK

(wearily)

...O, shit.

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - HALL - DAY

An ELDERLY WOMAN in a walker negotiates her way slowly along the hallway. She wears a sweatshirt that says "WORLD'S GREATEST GRANDMA!"

The usual REGULARS line the hall, sitting alone, watching the hallway traffic or just staring into space.

A NURSE moves along the hall carrying a tray of paper thimbles, each filled with coloured pills.

She passes an OLD MAN slumped lifelessly in a wheelchair -- it's impossible to tell if he's snoozing or if he has expired.

Nick steps out of the elevator into the unfamiliar surroundings. He speaks to the passing nurse.

NICK

Excuse me. Albert Delange. Know where I'd find him?

She nods in the direction from which she just came.

NURSE

Second door from the end.

She continues on her way. Nick moves along the hall toward his father's room. As he passes an open door, he sees--

A LONELY OLD TIMER

lies in bed, tubes running in and out of his body. He stares blankly at the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick continues past the array of elderly residents dotting the hallway, coming to a stop at the doorway to his father's room.

INT. ALBERT'S ROOM/ INT. DOORWAY - SAME

Albert, like the last time we saw him, sits quietly in the chair near the window. The television plays noiselessly in the foreground.

Nick stays by the doorway, eyes looking in on his father.

NANCY (O.S.)
Has he seen you yet?

Nick turns to see Nancy Carlyle standing next to him. She looks particularly attractive in a fashionable business suit; a photo-ID is clipped to her jacket. Nick is surprised to see her.

NICK
No. I, uh... I just got here.

Nancy senses Nick's discomfort. She offers a genuine smile.

NANCY
Would you like me to take you in?

NICK
No, no. I just wanted to, you know--
I'm not gonna disturb him now.

NANCY
I'm sure he'd love to see you. He
doesn't get many visitors.

The point is not lost on Nick.

NICK
Does, uh, does ANYONE come see him?

NANCY
I try to pop in and spend a few
minutes whenever I can.

NICK
No, I mean... you know, from
outside?

NANCY
I believe your sister was here at
Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick nods.

NICK

Good, good. Glad she got in.

NANCY

There was a gentleman from down the hall who used to come by and read to him from the newspaper. Sports scores, obituaries, that sort of thing. But he passed away a couple of months ago--

NICK

(surprised)

Read to him?

(gestures toward his head)

I thought, you know--

NANCY

No, he can't. Even so, I'm sure he enjoyed the company. You sure you don't want me to take you in?

NICK

No, it's okay. Thanks.

Nancy looks in the direction of the old man.

NANCY

I understand he's leaving us next week.

Nick nods.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I'm going to miss him.

(genuinely)

Well, good luck.

She's about to turn and head off--

NICK

You said you visit him. Is that like, you know...a job requirement?

The question hits her like a splash of ice water.

NANCY

I happen to think a lot of your father, Mr. Delange.

She holds her eyes on Nick for a short moment, then turns and heads down the hall. Nick watches her.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Rollie sits on the front steps, waiting for Nick. He looks up as Nick's pickup pulls to the curb.

INT./EXT. NICK'S PICKUP - DAY

Nick is still peeved at Rollie's latest prank, and he's not sure how he feels about even talking to him. He hops out of the pickup and walks toward the apartment.

NICK

(taking the offensive)
There's nothing I could do, Rollie. Marsh went crying to the union. We had to show 'em we were willing to take some kind of disciplinary action. My hands were tied.

ROLLIE

(calmly)
'S okay. No big deal.

Nick stares at him for a long moment, then settles on the steps next to him.

NICK

You got off easy, ya know. Marsh wanted you canned.

ROLLIE

Three weeks ain't bad. Kinda like an unscheduled vacation.

NICK

You're a crazy sonovabitch. You know that, don't ya?

Rollie nods. Then his face explodes into a huge, satisfied grin.

ROLLIE

Goddamnit, Nick, it was worth it. I almost drowned the prick.

A smile sneaks across Nick's face. The two of them share a laugh before Nick's face turns solemn.

NICK

I can't get you back on the gantry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE
 Figured as much.
 (shrugs)
 Face it. I wasn't much good at it
 anyway.

Nick gives him a look. He's didn't expect this reaction.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
 Well, I wasn't.
 (a beat)
 It's not your fault. Marsh is right.
 I'm a bona fide klutz..

Rollie flips his hands and looks into his palms.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
 So much for being a big fucking
 success, huh?

The two stay sitting on the steps for a long moment, saying
 nothing, as we--

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE NORTH ATLANTIC - DAY

The same expanse of rolling black water we saw previously.
 Mysterious, majestic and dangerous. One gets the sense of
 being peacefully - and terrifyingly - alone. We drink in the
 scene for long, tranquil moment. Suddenly--

THE PROW OF A SHIP

shatters the solitude of the moment as it CRASHES INTO FRAME.

It's a huge container vessel carrying a full cargo, its decks
 stacked high with neat rows of metal boxes. The ship slices
 through the dark waves on its way to some distant port.

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - ALBERT'S ROOM - DAY

Albert sits in his usual chair seemingly unaware of the
 activity around him. Phil the orderly packs the last of
 Albert's things into two suitcases.

Phil pulls a pair of baggy faded-white boxers out of the
 dresser. He holds them up and whistles admiringly.

PHIL
 (playfully)
 Will ya lookie here! I didn't know
 you was such a fox, Mr. D.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHIL (CONT'D)

This is some badass shit you got here. Explains why the ladies are always poppin' by to say hello. They're just hoping to grab an eyeful o' you in this frosty fabric, that's what they're doin'. These are fresh, Mr. D. No two ways about it.

He chuckles heartily, then begins zipping up the suitcases.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Gonna miss you, Mr. D. Nobody got the gift of gab like you.

Phil takes Albert's hand in his two hands, tucking the old man's fingers into a fist. He then taps Albert's fist with his own, top and bottom.

PHIL (CONT'D)

You take care o' yourself, Mr. D. And go easy on the ladies, hear?

He places the suitcases by the door and exits.

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - HALL - DAY

The elevator doors open. Nick and Rollie step into the hallway.

They move down the hall past the usual collection of old timers stationed along the walls. Nick does a double take as they pass--

THE OLD MAN

snoozing in his wheelchair. He's in the exact same position as he was when Nick was here last week.

Rollie reacts to the depressing scene.

ROLLIE

(whispering)

How the hell can they tell who's alive and who's not?

NICK

Don't know if they can.

ROLLIE

If I'm still around on my seventy-fifth birthday, do me a favour and smother me in my sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

Be a friggin' pleasure.

They pass the room where Nick saw the old man with tubes running in and out of his body. Nick sneaks a glance into the room and sees--

AN EMPTY BED.

It looks freshly made up. There's no sign of the old guy or his tubes.

Nick And Rollie come to a stop outside Albert's door.

ROLLIE

You wanna have... you know, some time together?

NICK

Yeah... Yeah, that might be good.

INT. ALBERT'S ROOM - SAME

As Nick steps tentatively into the room, Albert shows no response.

Nick walks over to the chair and crouches in front of Albert.

He looks into the old man's eyes. Blank, vacant. Nick doesn't say anything for a moment, then--

NICK

All right. Let's go then.

EXT. A DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Nick's pick-up truck snakes its way through downtown traffic.

INT. NICK'S PICKUP - TRAVELING - DAY

Albert is sandwiched between Nick and Rollie. Rollie studies the old man.

ROLLIE

(to Nick)

Doesn't say a lot, does he.

NICK

His fucking brain's been rattled, ya twit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE

I don't know what I'd do if that happened to me... Man, I'll tell you one thing. I'd sooner be dead than have the IQ of a cabbage.

Nick throws him a look.

NICK

For chrissakes, Rollie. He's daft, he's not deaf.

ROLLIE

He can hear me? O, shit.

(to Albert)

Hey, don't mind me, Mr. Delange. I'm just shooting my mouth off. Don't mean nothing by it.

Albert stares straight ahead.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

(to Nick)

...You sure?

NICK

He can hear. He just doesn't know what the hell you're jabbering about.

A beat.

ROLLIE

I get that a lot.

As Rollie looks out the window, A REPETITIVE, UNIDENTIFIABLE SOUND BEGINS. It's an organic, wordless, VOICE-ON-BREATH - "H-uuh, h-uuh, h-uuh." The sound GROWS LOUDER as we--

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

-- where we discover the sound's source. Albert sits on the foot of Nick's bed rocking gently back and forth, unleashing, what seems to be, an expression of agitation and anxiety.

Rollie and Nick, each with a beer, lean against the kitchen counter watching the old man.

ROLLIE

You just gonna let him go on like that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
Got any suggestions on how I can
get him to stop?

ROLLIE
Is that normal?
(off Nick's look)
I mean for HIM.

NICK
Rollie, how the hell would I know?
It's probably cause he's someplace
strange.

Rollie nods in agreement.

ROLLIE
Well this place would be enough to
send anyone over the fuckin' edge.

NICK
You know you're not helping.

ROLLIE
Sorry.
(a beat)
What if he keeps going?

NICK
He won't. He'll settle down. I'm
sure of it.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Albert sits on a chair by the window, still rocking, and
still making that sound.

Nick is in the kitchen area spooning a rice and chicken
concoction onto two plates. It's obvious that the old man's
vocalizations are having an effect on him.

Nick carries the food to a small table in the corner of the
apartment. He looks at Albert.

NICK
Let's eat.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nick and Albert are seated next to each other at the table.
Albert continues to rock and make that noise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick holds a spoonful of food in front of the old man.

NICK

Look, you gotta eat. And you can't eat if you keep making that goddamn racquet.

A beat. Nick mashes the food a little more, then offers another spoonful. Albert doesn't respond.

NICK (CONT'D)

If you don't eat, you'll die. Is that what you want?

A long moment goes by. Nick drops the spoon on the table.

NICK (CONT'D)

Fuck it. Let's face it, if you die we'll both be a lot happier, so go ahead and starve yourself to death ya sonovabitch. See if I care.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Albert remains seated at the table, still rocking, and still vocalizing.

The food has been cleared away. Nick stands by the window. He's approaching his wit's end. He swings around to face Albert--

NICK

Okay, what's going on? You weren't doing this at the other place. So it's obvious you can turn it on and turn it off. Now turn it off before I do something I really regret.

Albert continues droning. Nick paces.

NICK (CONT'D)

Look, if you don't want to live with me, fine. The feeling's mutual. But since no one else wants to take care of your sorry ass, we've got no choice! SO JUST SHUT THE HELL UP!

Albert shows no sign of comprehending. Nick stares at him for a moment, growls, and heads for the television for some distraction. He flicks on the set, throws himself onto the bed. He flips channels with the remote.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A moment goes by before Nick realizes that something has changed. Albert is no longer rocking or making that sound.

Nick looks at the old man, and then to the TV. He starts to put two and two together. Nick gets up and turns off the TV. Albert begins to rock. The noise follows.

Nick turns on the TV. Albert stops rocking; the noise stops. Nick turns the volume of the TV down and watches his dad's reaction. Nothing.

NICK (CONT'D)
-- Well what d'ya know?

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nick and Albert are back at the table. Nick is again attempting to spoon feed dinner to the old man. He's not having a lot of success, but at least Albert is eating. Grains of rice have dribble down the old man's chin and all down his shirt.

Nick scoops up another spoonful of rice from Albert's plate and moves it towards Albert's mouth.

NICK
Come on, open up.

Albert keeps chewing.

NICK (CONT'D)
Stop chewing.

Albert continues to chew.

NICK (CONT'D)
I can't feed you if you don't stop
chewing!

Albert continues to chew.

Nick moves closer to Albert. As Albert continues to chew, Nick lines up the spoon next to the old man's mouth. As Albert's jaw drops, Nick fires.

A few grains of rice reach the target, but most don't. Nick looks to floor. There's rice everywhere.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nick helps Albert into pajamas. He slides the pajama-top over Albert's shoulders and does up the buttons.

CUT TO:

NICK

puts toothpaste on a toothbrush. He offers it to the old man. Albert looks past it.

NICK

(whining)

Aw, come on. You're not going to
make me do this are ya?

He lifts Albert's right hand and places the toothbrush in his fingers. He raises Albert's arm, hoping to activate some motor response or muscle memory.

CLOSE ON ALBERT

as a toothbrush moves mechanically over his front teeth. Toothpaste and foam drip from his lips.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - NICK

standing next to Albert, pushing the toothbrush back and forth over Albert's front teeth.

NICK (CONT'D)

Spit.

(wearily)

Never mind.

NICK'S POV - ALBERT'S PAJAMA TOP

smearred with dripping spittle, toothpaste and foam.

CUT TO:

ALBERT

standing in pajama bottoms as Nick helps him into a fresh pajama-top.

CUT TO:

ALBERT AND NICK

in the bathroom as SEEN FROM THE LIVING AREA. Albert stands in front of the toilet naked from the waist down, his pajama bottoms bunched around his ankles. Nick stands next to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK (CONT'D)
 (pleading)
 Hold it. Please. Come on, just hold
 it and aim!... Cripes.

Nick begrudgingly reaches a hand in front of the old guy. A moment later we HEAR THE SOUND OF PEE TARGETING THE TOILET.

INT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nick pulls the covers down on the bed. Albert sits on the chair by the window.

NICK
 Okay... The bed's for you. I'll
 crash on the couch until, you know,
 we get some place bigger. Anything
 I can get you?

Of course, Albert doesn't respond.

NICK (CONT'D)
 All right then.

CUT TO:

NICK

in the chair near the window. The room is dark except for the glare from the TV. Nick's eyes look across to--

Albert, lying in bed, eyes staring at the ceiling.

BACK ON NICK,

as WE HEAR the beginnings of that sound again. VOICE-ON-BREATH, "H-uuh. H-uuh. H-uuh." But there's something a little different about it this time. It's quicker. And it's more strained, forced, pained. The sound continues to GROW as we--

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Rollie HUFFS AND PUFFS noisily as he jogs painfully towards Nick's apartment building. His face is flushed, his T-shirt soaked with perspiration.

He slows to a stop near the front steps of Nick's apartment building. He presses his hands on his knees, gasping for air.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Albert, dressed and shaved, sits by the window staring out over the street below. Nick pours himself a coffee.

Rollie steps into the apartment, a little less breathless.

ROLLIE

'Morning.

He heads straight to the fridge and grabs a beer.

NICK

You RAN here?

ROLLIE

Yeah. I figured I'd use the down time to get in shape.

(a beat)

Then I realized if I do this everyday I'll be dead by Friday, so fuck it.

(to Albert)

How ya doing, Mr. Delange? You sleep okay?

No response.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

(to Nick)

I suppose you two stayed up all night gabbing like a couple of schoolgirls.

Nick grabs his lunch pail from the counter and heads for the door.

NICK

I appreciate you sitting in like this, Rollie.

ROLLIE

'S okay. Don't have much else to keep me busy.

NICK

It won't be for more than a couple of days. Promise.

Rollie nods toward the old man.

ROLLIE

Anything particular I should know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
His lunch is in the fridge. And
keep the TV on.

Nick starts for the door.

NICK (CONT'D)
I'll call ya later.

ROLLIE
What about, you know... if he needs
to go to the bathroom?

NICK
Give him a hand.
(beat)
Literally.

And he's gone. It takes a moment, but Nick's last words to
Rollie finally land--

ROLLIE
Aw, cripes!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

A CHECKER BOARD

sits on the table between Rollie and Albert.

Rollie picks up one of his black pieces and methodically
jumps two red pieces to land on the back row of the opposing
side. He beams.

ROLLIE
King me!

Rollie gets up and moves behind Albert. Taking a black piece
from Albert's booty, he "kings" his piece.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
I got it. There we go.

He studies the board from Albert's perspective.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
Now, let's take a moment and figure
out what to do here, Mr. Delange.
...You gotta really watch that
Rollie. He's a slippery
sonovabitch. Best not to let your
guard down for a minute. Lemme see--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rollie spies a possible move.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
 Ooo, ooo. Look at this! You could
 jump here, to here, to here...
 (realizing)
 My God, that'd give you three of
 his men, plus you'd get kinged--

Suddenly Rollie is not so happy with his suggestion. His face lights up as he finds another option.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
 O-or...how 'bout this? You can move
 this piece one space, here to here.
 See? Won't jump anything, but it's
 a sound defensive move. Yeah, how
 'bout we just do that. We'll just
 play it cool and see what Rollie's
 up to.

Rollie makes the move, then moves back to the chair on his side of the board. Without a thought, he picks up his black checker and jumps two of Albert's pieces, landing again on Albert's back row. He hoots.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
 Whoa! Would you look at that! You
 gotta crown me again! ...Gee, Mr.
 Delange, you shoulda seen that one
 coming. Gotta keep you eyes peeled,
 know what I'm saying? If you had
 done that jump I showed you, you
 would've blindsided me and gotten
 yourself kinged at the same time.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Nancy Carlyle walks up the steps into the vestibule.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - THE VESTIBULE - DAY

Nancy is about to press Nick's apartment code onto the keypad when the inner door to the apartment building opens. A smiling Mr. Henry holds the door open for her.

MR. HENRY
 Well, well, look who's here. Come
 back for another eyeful?

Nancy blushes. She isn't quite sure how to respond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

You know, I wasn't peeping--

MR. HENRY

Not to worry, missy... I'll tell you one thing. If the tables were turned, I can guarantee that Nick woulda been looking at you.

A beat. A smile sneaks across her lips.

NANCY

You think so?

MR. HENRY

O, I KNOW so.

He holds the door open as she steps inside.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rollie is resetting the checker board. He's still giddy from his victory.

ROLLIE

Don't feel bad, Mr. Delange. Checkers just ain't your game. Hey, how 'bout we tackle poker tomorrow? I'll teach you how to gamble. What d'ya think?

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Rollie steps to the door and opens it to reveal Nancy. She offers a friendly smile.

NANCY

Hello.

ROLLIE

'Morning.

NANCY

...Is...Mr. Delange here?

ROLLIE

Nick? No, he's at work. I suspect he'll be back around four, four-thirty--

Nancy looks past him to see Albert across the room.

NANCY

Actually, I was just wondering how he's getting on with his father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE

Don't know. But I'M getting on with him just fine.. Mind you, he's a bit of a washout at checkers.

(extends his hand)

I'm Rollie, friend of Nick's.

NANCY

Nancy Carlyle.

ROLLIE

(remembering)

O, yeah. From the pub.

NANCY

-- Would it be okay if I just hello to Albert?

ROLLIE

Oh, yeah, yeah. Sure. Come in, come in. Make yourself at home.

Nancy enters. She smiles brightly as she moves to where Albert is sitting. She sits down next to him and takes hold of his hand.

NANCY

(cheerily)

Good morning, Mr. Delange. It's so good to see you. We've missed you, we really have. Everyone's been asking for you.

(she rubs his hand affectionately)

Maybe I can talk Nick into bringing you back for a visit sometime.

ROLLIE

...Uh, I should tell ya, he can hear you okay -- it's just that he's a bit of a retard when it comes to actually connecting the dots as it were.

(off Nancy's look)

...According to Nick anyway.

(beat; sheepish)

...Then again, it mighta been me he was talking about.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

The three gantry cranes are busily off-loading a container vessel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON GANTRY NUMBER 3

where Lyle Marsh is at the controls in the operator's nest. He lowers a container to the crew waiting on the dock.

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - DAY

The office is busier than the last time we saw it. Fergus Forsythe is at the window, watching the activity on the dock below. He turns and crosses to Nick's desk. Nick is on the telephone--

NICK

(into phone)

-- No, he's not medicated. He just needs someone to keep him company, Make sure he's looked after, that sort of thing... Yeah, well give me a call if you get any openings. The sooner the better...

He hangs up.

FERGUS

No luck?

NICK

Uh-uh. And I'm running short on options.

Nick grabs his hardhat, picks up an electronic scanner and a clipboard thick with paperwork. He heads for the door.

FERGUS

Care for some company?

Nick gives him a look. He anticipates what's coming.

NICK

Not that it's gonna stop you, but just to let you know I've had enough father-son touchy-feely crap in the last couple of days to last a lifetime.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

Nick and Fergus walk past rows and rows of stacked containers.

Nick is matching the boxes with information on his clipboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FERGUS

-- It must be difficult. You know, reconnecting with your old man like this.

NICK

Not really. Nothing's changed. He's still a fucking stranger. Always has been.

FERGUS

Maybe. But he's still your father.

NICK

In name, but not much else.

Fergus waits for Nick to continue.

NICK (CONT'D)

When I was a kid, I had this friend -- Icky Steiner. Icky's old man died when we were in the third grade. Everyone felt bad for Icky. 'Cept me. I thought Icky was the luckiest kid in the world. Why couldn't that happen to my old man? So you know what I did? I started praying that he'd die, too.

FERGUS

You were just a boy, Nick. In your mind he deserved it.

NICK

Well I'm not a kid anymore... and I still think he deserves it. He was a nasty, cantankerous son of a bitch. 'Specially when he drank, which was most of the time. Let's just say he didn't do a lot to endear himself to his family. I was friggin' giddy when I heard about the accident. Prick had it coming. I only wish Mom had been alive to enjoy it. If anyone deserved to see the bastard get his comeuppance, she did.

FERGUS

You really think she'd feel that way?

Nick knows the answer, he just doesn't like to admit it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICK

You know you're taking all the fun out of this.

FERGUS

Could be, in a strange way, the accident provided an opportunity for change.

NICK

O, he changed all right. But not he because he wanted to, not because he made the effort. He changed cause he got slammed in the head by a slab of pig iron. And that's what pisses me off.

FERGUS

-- I was talking about you.

EXT. THE NORTH ATLANTIC - DAY

The massive cargo vessel we saw earlier continues its solitary trek across the North Atlantic. We see for the first time the name of the ship painted on its bow - "BELLA ROSA".

For all we know, the ship could be fully automated. There is no sign of any movement on the ship, only row upon row of stacked metal containers. As the Bella Rosa MOVES THROUGH FRAME, we SLOWLY MOVE IN on--

THE CONTAINERS,

hundreds upon hundreds of them, each originating someplace different and destined for who-knows-where.

As the ship moves on, WE HEAR what sounds like KNOCKING from somewhere amidst all those containers... but it's too brief, too out-of-place to be certain. Maybe it's only the pounding of pistons or the cranking of gears from the engine room...

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Nick gets out of his truck and heads for his building. Mr. and Mrs. Henry are just stepping out the front door--

MRS. HENRY

Nick, he's a sweetheart! Everyone just loves him.

Nick shows blank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. HENRY

Your father! Rollie set him up in a lawn chair by the front steps. I think the old fella got introduced to everyone in the building.

(he winks)

...Those two flight attendants in 409 sure made a fuss over the old guy. Wouldn't be a bit surprised if they popped by for a visit.

MRS. HENRY

For heaven's sake, Bill. Let the boy run his own life!

(to Nick)

Don't you worry. When the right girl comes along, you'll know.

MR. HENRY

Which reminds me. The mystery lady came back today.

NICK

Mystery lady? What mystery lady?

MR. HENRY

You remember. When you were in the shower. Rollie says she works at Tobin Towers.

NICK

Nancy Carlyle was here?

MR. HENRY

(beams)

And I understand she was disappointed you weren't.

MRS. HENRY

Bill, you don't know that.

(to Nick)

Just take whatever he says with a pinch o' salt. You'd think he was running a dating service the way he goes on.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

CLOSE ON ALBERT,

his head and face sunburned a crimson red!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICK (O.S.)
For chrissakes, Rollie! Couldn't
you have put a hat on him?

Rollie looks painfully sheepish and guilty.

ROLLIE
How was I to know he has sensitive
skin? We were only outside for a
couple of hours.

NICK
A couple of hours! Why didn't you
just stick him under the fucking
broiler?!

ROLLIE
I'm sorry. I didn't know.
(in his own defense)
He didn't turn red till we got back
inside.

Nick shoots Rollie a look.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
What??

NICK
Well we can't leave him like this.

As Nick heads to the bathroom, Rollie flashes a preemptive
grimace. And we quickly see why--

INT. THE BATHROOM - SAME

As Nick steps into the bathroom, he freezes on the spot--

NICK'S POV - THE BATHROOM

It looks as if someone has hosed the place down. The toilet,
the wall behind the toilet, and floor are sopping wet. Small
puddles are everywhere.

Before Nick can say anything, Rollie appears just outside the
bathroom. He blurts out an explanation.

ROLLIE
I couldn't do it! It was just too
weird. It woulda scarred me for
life, Nick, I swear. If it was my
own father, maybe... Put yourself
in my position!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick is simply aghast at the amount of urine that has been sprayed everywhere.

NICK
(quietly)
How much did you give him to drink?

ROLLIE
It was hot. I was afraid he might,
you know...dehydrate.

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - HALLWAY - DAY

Nancy Carlyle steps into the hallway from her office and makes her way to the elevator.

Nancy and a SMALL CLUSTER OF OTHERS wait for the elevator to arrive. As the elevator doors open, the group, as one, moves into the elevator. At the same moment--

Nick steps from the elevator into the hallway.

It takes a split second for either Nick or Nancy to realize they've just past each other. Nick turns.

NICK'S POV - NANCY

just lifting her eyes to his. Her face registers surprise. At that moment, the elevator doors close. Then, from behind the elevator doors, Nick hears Nancy's voice.

NANCY'S VOICE
Wait there! I'll come back!

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - HALLWAY - SAME

Nick leans against the wall opposite the elevator. The elevator opens and Nancy hurries into the hallway. She runs a hand through her hair as she gives Nick a warm smile.

NANCY
Sorry. I swear it stopped on every
floor on the way down and every
floor on the way up.

The two lock eyes briefly, each taking in the other.

NANCY (CONT'D)
-- Uh, so...What can I do for you,
Mr. Delange?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

Nick. Please.

NANCY

Nick.

(a beat)

How are things with your father?

NICK

We're adjusting. Slowly. Actually, that's sort of what I want to see you about. I'm not having a lot of success getting plugged into a Homecare provider.

NANCY

Well, considering you left it until the last possible moment--

(catching herself)

Sorry. That was uncalled for.

(she smiles)

Once an administrator, always an administrator... So, what is it I can do for you?

NICK

I guess I was hoping you might be able to offer some advice, some contacts. I dunno, just give me something I can run with.

NANCY

I'd be happy to.

(checking her watch)

Look, I'm just on my way to a meeting. Could we, you know, maybe do this tomorrow or later in the week?

Nick is about to agree, then it just comes out--

NICK

How about tonight?

NANCY

Tonight?

NICK

Over dinner.

Nancy's caught completely off-guard.

NANCY

-- Are you asking me to dinner?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICK
(straightforward)
Sure. Why not?

Nancy looks at Nick, then at the floor, then at Nick again.

NANCY
I'm, I'm... a little, uh, surprised
to say the least. I'm not sure what
to say, Mr. Delange--

NICK
Nick.

NANCY
-- We hardly know each other.

A tiny smile appears on Nick's face.

NICK
You've seen me naked. Doesn't that
count for anything?

Nancy's jaw drops.

NANCY
I can't believe he told you that!
It's not true!
(off Nick's look)
Okay, but I didn't see much.
(she puts a hand to her
mouth)
Omgod, that's not what I meant!

Nancy realizes the more she protests the more she is
implicating herself.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I'm not sure what to say.

NICK
It's simple. Yes or no?... You like
Italian?

NANCY
Yes.

NICK
Good. How's eight o'clock?

NANCY
Yes, I like Italian. That's not to
say yes I'll go to dinner with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NICK
Fair enough. Why don't you decide
and let me know. Tonight.

NANCY
Tonight?

NICK
Over dinner.

A smile spreads across Nancy's face.

NANCY
Cute.

NICK
Where can I pick you up?

NANCY
You have someone to take care of
your father?

He hadn't thought of that -- and his face shows it.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I hope you weren't planning on
leaving him unattended..?

NICK
No, no. Of course not. I forgot.
I'm new at this.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nancy sits next to Albert, feeding him with a spoon. She's dressed in jeans and a sweater. The look seems to bring out her natural attractiveness and sex appeal attributes not lost on Nick.

Nick returns to the table after clearing away dishes. He refills the wine glasses. Nancy gives him a smile.

NANCY
That was delicious. You do take-out
well.

NICK
To take-out.

They clink glasses and sip their wine. Nancy looks around the apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

These are close quarters for the two of you.

Nick nods.

NICK

Yeah, but I like the building. Good neighbours. The super's going to let me know if anything larger opens up.

A photograph on the table beside the bed catches her eyes. She reaches for it.

NANCY

Who's this?

NICK

My son. Cory.

NANCY

I see the resemblance. He's cute... How long have you been divorced?

NICK

'Bout eight years. He was just a toddler.

NANCY

Do you see much of each other?

NICK

-- You mean me and Cory?

Nancy nods.

NICK (CONT'D)

His mother remarried. I guess I don't want to interfere.

NANCY

You're risking having your son grow up without knowing you. Nor you him.

NICK

Kinda runs in the family.

NANCY

It doesn't have to.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - LATER

CLOSE ON THE TV

where an old black and white movie is playing. A glamorous couple from the 1940's share a passionate kiss. Even though the volume on the television is down, the SOUND OF SMOOCHING is audible.

ON NICK AND NANCY

standing in the middle of the room locked in a kiss.

Nancy pulls away, breathless. She smiles.

NANCY

-- My God, what's in that tomato sauce?

NICK

Actually, it's the meatballs.
(he grins)
You gotta try the linguine.

He moves to kiss her again, but she recoils. Something has caught her eye. She looks toward the bed. Nick follows her gaze to see--

ALBERT,

in bed, his head propped against a pillow. It's hard to tell if he's looking at them or looking through them. Either way, his eyes are definitely looking in their direction.

Nancy steps away and straightens her hair.

NANCY

I probably should get going.

She heads for the kitchen to retrieve her purse.

NICK

You don't need to go. He'll be asleep shortly.

NANCY

I really should. I have an early morning tomorrow.

She stops at the door where Nick joins her. She's clearly a little flushed, but pleasantly so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY (CONT'D)

I wasn't expecting... you know,
things to happen like this.

NICK

I can always move him to the sofa.

Nancy gets his meaning. She raises her eyebrows.

NANCY

The meatballs were good, but not
THAT good.

(she smiles)

Call those numbers I gave you. Use
my name. It may not help, but it
can't hurt.

She moves to Albert and gives him a gentle kiss on the
forehead.

NANCY (CONT'D)

'Night, Mr. Delange.

(to Nick)

Thank you for dinner.

She gives him a quick kiss, then heads for the door.

NANCY (CONT'D)

(coyly)

-- Maybe we'll try the linguine
some time. Call me.

And she's gone. Nick throws a look at Albert.

NICK

You and me are gonna have to work
something out here.

EXT. A STREET DOWNTOWN - DAY

A bright, sunny morning. UPBEAT MUSIC PLAYS FROM THE RADIO of
a small sports car that sails along in traffic with its top
down.

Two figures can be seen in the car, one of whom is wearing a
large brimmed sun hat, similar to a Mexican sombrero, only
larger, brighter and tackier. The other wears a backward
baseball cap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON THE SPORTS CAR

-- as we now recognize the sombrero-wearing individual. It's Albert. The hat is secured on his head with a ribbon tied beneath his chin.

Rollie is behind the wheel. He vigorously taps his hand in time to the music.

THE SPORTS CAR

zips along city streets. The giant hat attracts stares from pedestrians and other drivers.

A TRAFFIC LIGHT

turns from yellow to red.

Rollie slows to a stop at the busy intersection.

A cement truck stops in the curb lane to the right of the sports car. The beefy TRUCK DRIVER looks down on the two from his perch in the cab. He leans out the window--

TRUCK DRIVER

Hey, Juan Valdez! Nice hat!

The truck driver hoots. Rollie fires him a look--

ROLLIE

He's got sensitive skin, okay?

CUT TO:

THE SPORTS CAR

motoring along more city streets. As Rollie brings the car to a stop at an intersection--

A GORGEOUS WOMAN,

tall and leggy, steps into the crosswalk walking a dog. She throws a look at Rollie and Albert. Her face brightens in a sexy smile.

GORGEOUS WOMAN

Wow! Love the sombrero.

Rollie beams. He watches her as she makes her way to the other side of the street. As she reaches the curb, she turns back and throws another smile in their direction.

FAST CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROLLIE'S HAND

on the stick shift. He jams it into first gear and--

THE CAR PULLS AWAY FROM CAMERA TO REVEAL - THE SOMBRERO

is now on Rollie's head. Albert is wearing the backward ball cap.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

A cargo vessel, recently loaded, is being gently eased away from the dock by several tugs.

Rollie and Albert -- now in hardhats -- walk past rows of stacked containers. Rollie speaks to the old man like he was conducting a guided tour. He points to the gantry crane.

ROLLIE

I used to work up there. Gantry Number Three. Looks easy, but don't be fooled. That's about 800 tons of machinery right there. Takes a lot of skill and know-how to move that baby around.

At that moment, Rollie spies Lyle Marsh climbing down from the crane's cab.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

-- That said, they pretty much let any Neanderthal dipshit run the thing.

As Lyle Marsh touches down, he spots Rollie. His faces tightens.

ROLLIE

turns Albert in the direction of the ship pulling away from the dock.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

See that ship and all those boxes on it? Well, that's what I do. I help load and unload those big boxes on and off the ship.

(a beat)

...Pretty friggin' pathetic, huh?

Marsh approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSH

What the hell you doing here?
You're off the dock till next week!

ROLLIE

Wrong. I'm off the JOB till next
week, Marsh.

MARSH

If it was up to me you'd be off the
job permanently.

ROLLIE

Gee, too bad. Cause it ain't up to
you, is it?... Now push off. The
smell of dog shit makes the old man
nauseous.

MARSH

You'll screw up again, Rollie. You
always do.

ROLLIE

I said push off, Marsh.

MARSH

You know what I can't figure out?
Why Nick keeps covering that sorry
ass o' yours. He's the only guy on
the dock blind to the fact that
you're a total fuck up.

Rollie looks at him hard for a long moment, fighting to
contain himself. Finally, he turns and takes hold of Albert's
arm.

ROLLIE

Let's go, Mr. Delange.

Marsh whoops.

MARSH

O-o! So this is Nick's old man!
(he steps in front of
Albert)
Heard a lot about you, Mr. Delange.

Albert stares vacantly ahead.

MARSH (CONT'D)

It's easy to see where Nick gets
his smarts.

Rollie seethes. He points an angry finger at Marsh

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROLLIE

I'm not telling you again.

MARSH

What are you gonna do, Rollie. Hit me? Go ahead. Take a shot. In fact, I dare ya. Come on, doughboy. Take a fuckin' swing at me.

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - DAY

Fergus Forsythe steps to the window looking over the dock. He stares at something down below for a long moment--

FERGUS

-- What the hell is going on down there?

Nick gets up from his desk and moves to the window.

NICK AND FERGUS'S POV - MARSH & ROLLIE

in a shoving match. An old man stands to one side.

NICK

Looks like Rollie and Marsh...
(realizing)
Cripes! And that's my father!

He races for the door.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

Albert is starting to show signs of anxiety. He's emits a steady "H-uuh, h-uuh, h-uuh".

Marsh and Rollie roll clumsily on the ground. Neither seems to be getting any good shots in.

STEVEDORES rush to enjoy the spectacle. Nick pushes his way through the circle.

NICK

Break it up! Break it up!
(to some of the men)
Pull 'em apart!

Several of the dock workers dive in to pull Rollie and Marsh away from each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK (CONT'D)

Back off, Rollie. Let it go! Let
it go!

Marsh wipes blood off his lip as he gets to his feet. He's
livid.

MARSH

That sonovabitch clocked me, Nick.
Goddamnit, he shouldn't even be
here!

(to Rollie)

You're finished, Rollie. You can
kiss the dock good-bye cause I'm
writing you up!

FERGUS (O.S.)

No one has any work to do around
here?

Fergus stands just outside the circle. On seeing him, the
longshoremen quickly hurry back to their duties.

MARSH

You can't sit on this one, Fergus.
He attacked me. I want him outta
here.

FERGUS

(matter-of-fact)

You've got no case for a grievance,
Marsh.

MARSH

What?! Why not?

FERGUS

Rollie's on suspension. He's a
visitor to the dock, along with Mr.
Delange here. You can't file a work
grievance against a visitor... But
you CAN press charges with the
police.

Rollie reacts. He looks in disbelief from Nick, to Fergus, to
Nick again.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

(to Rollie)

Of course, you also have the option
of pressing charges against Mr.
Marsh.

(to Marsh)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FERGUS (CONT'D)

...Not that I'm an expert on these things, but it looks like your word against his... So, you want me to call the cops?

Marsh gets the message. He throws a stony look at Rollie, picks his hardhat off the ground and stomps away.

Fergus watches him leave. He turns to Nick with a sly smile.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

-- I can't believe he fell for that. The man's as dumb as dirt.

Albert's noisy gasps catch Fergus's attention.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

Is he okay?

NICK

He will be... We just need to find a TV.

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - DAY

Albert sits in the corner of the office at a desk on which sits a small, portable TV. It plays silently. Although he's not watching the screen, Albert seems to be back to his old self.

Nick is at his desk. Rollie sits across from him.

ROLLIE

I didn't know where else to take him. I had to get out of the apartment, Nick. I was going stir-crazy.

(lowering his voice)

I think your old man's beginning to rub off on me. No kidding. This morning I found myself staring.

NICK

At what?

ROLLIE

At nothing! Just staring. How weird is that? I'm half afraid I'm gonna get the urge to piss all over the floor... Don't get me wrong, I like the old guy. But I don't mind telling ya, I can't wait to get back to work.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

What'll you do if you can't find
someone to look after him?

Nick doesn't have an answer for that. He shrugs.

NICK

-- Why don't you take off, Rollie?
Give yourself a breather. I'll take
it from here.

ROLLIE

Really? You sure?

NICK

Yeah, yeah. Go ahead. I'll skip out
early, take him to the park or
something.

Rollie nods.

ROLLIE

Okay, then.

He pulls a bulky rubber electrician's glove out of his
pocket. He hands it to Nick.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

You'd better take this.

(off Nick's baffled look)

Use it for when he has to take a
piss. Keeps you from...you know,
making contact.

EXT. POINT PLEASANT PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

Nick's pickup pulls into the parking lot. Albert is in the
truck with him.

EXT. POINT PLEASANT PARK - PICNIC TABLE - DAY

The table sits in the shade of a cluster of trees. Nick sits
next to Albert on one side of the picnic table. Half-eaten
sandwiches and fruit litter the top of the table.

The two sit in silence. Albert, as usual, seems lost to the
present. After a moment--

NICK

How 'bout you and me take a walk.

EXT. THE JETTY - DAY

Nick holds Albert by the arm as they walk slowly along the jetty. They pass a GRANDFATHER and TWO YOUNG GIRLS fishing for mackerel.

As they come to a stop at the end of the jetty, Nick looks out over the water.

NICK

I used to come here as a kid.
Sometimes to fish, sometimes just
to be alone. Get away from the
house, get away from you...

The old man shows no sign of comprehending anything Nick is saying. But Nick just needs to say it--

NICK (CONT'D)

I could never figure out what it
was about us, about Mom and Sheila
and me, that you despised so much.
We were never good enough, smart
enough, neat enough. Then one day I
came down here and it hit me. It
wasn't us you hated. It was YOU.
You were the one who wasn't good
enough... So I started hating you,
too.

(he looks back at Albert)

...And now you're trying to take
that from me.

HOLD ON ALBERT

-- it's nearly incomprehensible to imagine Albert as the man Nick remembers. He looks so weak, vulnerable and pathetic - perhaps now more than ever.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Albert is in his pajamas sitting at his usual spot by the window. Nick empties a can of soup into a saucepan and mixes in some water.

EXT. ALBERTO'S RESTAURANT - EVENING

Nancy steps out of the restaurant carrying a bag of take-out. She's in a business suit, just having finished work, but she looks particularly radiant, happy. She punches a number into her cell phone as she makes her way to her car.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Nick places the pot on the stove as the PHONE RINGS. He turns to the counter and is about to pick it up - but something triggers in him. He pulls his hand back. The PHONE RINGS AGAIN--

Nick waits. The PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

Nick looks at the phone for a long moment, waiting for the message light to blink. Finally, it does.

Nick pushes a button on the phone console--

SILICONE SALLY'S VOICE
You have one new message. To listen
to your--

Nick hits the "1" on the keypad--

NANCY'S VOICE
 Nick, it's Nancy... I tried to get you at work all afternoon, so it's not like I didn't try to warn you. I hope you're on the way home cause I picked up dinner. It's a little after seven. I'm on my way over. Don't eat!

Nick hits another number on the keypad -- BEEP.

SILICONE SALLY'S VOICE
Message deleted--

Nick stares at the answering machine for a long moment, then he looks across the room to Albert--

NICK
 Let's get you fed.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - THE STREET - NIGHT

Nancy pulls her car into a space half-a-block from the apartment building.

EXT. NANCY'S TOYOTA - NIGHT

Nancy hops out of the car with the bag of take-out and a bottle of wine. She's in a buoyant mood. As she walks towards the apartment building, she passes Nick's truck. She smiles to herself, looks up to the fifth floor of the building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY'S POV - NICK'S APARTMENT WINDOW.

Light comes from inside the apartment.

Nancy skips up the steps and into the vestibule.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

There are two soup bowls on the table. Nick places the saucepan of soup on a pot holder at the centre of the table. As he helps Albert to the table, the INTERCOM BUZZES.

Nick stops and looks at the intercom unit for a long moment. It BUZZES again. Nick walks to the door and gently secures the lock. He flicks the light switch off. The apartment goes dark -- except for the glow from the TV.

INT. THE APARTMENT BUILDING - THE VESTIBULE - NIGHT

Nancy seems to have lost the radiant blush she had a moment ago. She lets the intercom BUZZ one final time before slowly hanging up the phone.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Nancy makes her way back towards her Toyota. As she comes alongside Nick's truck, she turns and looks once again toward Nick's apartment window.

NANCY'S POV - THE WINDOW

It's dark, except for a very faint bluish light coming from the television.

Nancy turns and continues towards her car.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nick stands near the window. He can see Nancy walk through the pool of light beneath a street lamp. He watches as she gets into her car and drives off.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

A cargo vessel sits alongside the dock being off-loaded.

INT. THE SHIP - THE HOLD - DAY

Rollie is back at work. He's with the crew working in the forward hold, securing the gantry crane's cables to the top of containers to be hauled from the ship.

Rollie secures the latches on the top of a container and signals to the HATCH TENDER on deck. The Hatch Tender speaks into his walkie-talkie. The container rises out of the ship's hold.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - PARKING LOT - DAY

Rollie and Nick walk toward their vehicles in the parking lot.

ROLLIE

-- All those times I joked about dropping a box on Marsh don't seem so funny now that he's sittin' up there. Prick could squash me like a bug.

NICK

Don't worry about it. He's not half the bent sonovabitch that you are.

ROLLIE

So what happened with Nancy Carlyle? I thought you said you had a nice time with her.

NICK

Yeah, I did. Just didn't work out, that's all.

ROLLIE

Didn't work out? Have you called her?

Nick shakes his head.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

Has she called you?

NICK

What is this, Twenty Questions?

Rollie gives him a look.

ROLLIE

Shelly had you pegged good, didn't she. Soon as you start feeling
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE (CONT'D)
something for a woman, you freak
out an' run for the friggin' hills.

NICK
Don't be daft.

ROLLIE
Then why don't you call her?

NICK
I can't.

ROLLIE
Why not?

NICK
It just wasn't working, okay? We
had a nice time. She's really
sweet... But, I dunno. I guess it's
not what I'm looking for.

ROLLIE
In other words, she wants more out
of it than a quick tumble in the
sack. Good for her.

NICK
Thanks. 'Appreciate the support.

ROLLIE
What the hell's the matter with
you? You sure know how to hold a
grudge, don't ya? I hope to God I
never end up on your bad side.

NICK
What's that supposed to mean?

ROLLIE
It means you've got a problem with
letting things go.

NICK
You're crazy.

ROLLIE
Am I? Cripes, Nick, look at
yourself! Before this whole thing
happened with your dad, you hadn't
talked to him for more than 20
years! You've been divorced for
what, eight? And you haven't had a
relationship with a woman that went
further than the bedroom!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICK

So? What's that prove, Rollie? And what business is that to you? It's my life. I'm not hurting anyone.

ROLLIE

Like hell you're not, Nick. What about Cory?

NICK

What about him?

ROLLIE

You're his dad, for chrissakes. You pretend like it's some kind of noble thing you're doing by not seeing him. "O, I don't want to impose. I don't want to be a bother. The kid's probably better off without me around." D-uh... You've been hurt. It sucks. Shit happens. Get over it.

NICK

I AM over it!

ROLLIE

Then ACT like it!

NICK

Fuck you!

Nick turns and heads toward his truck. Rollie throws his hands into the air, calls after him.

ROLLIE

O, great! Now I've done it. I just put myself on your infamous shit list!... Well, be sure to gimme a call when you're ready to speak to me again!

Rollie watches as Nick hops in his truck and pulls away.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

(yelling after him)

I'll expect to hear from you in about thirty years!

Rollie watches Nick's truck pull out of the parking lot. He knows he went too far.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

-- Goddamnit, Rollie. Why don't you mind your own fucking business?!

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - THE STREET - DAY

Nick's pickup truck rounds the corner at the end of the street.

INT. NICK'S TRUCK - DAY

As Nick slows near the building looking for a parking spot, he sees-

TWO POLICE CRUISERS

parked outside his building.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nick enters to find a police officer, OFFICER DOWNEY, in the apartment, along with a very distraught Mrs. Henry.

MRS. HENRY
(seeing Nick)
O, Nick, I'm so sorry!

NICK
What? What's going on?

Nick immediately notices that Albert is not in the apartment.

NICK (CONT'D)
Where is he? What happened?

Mrs. Henry is close to tears.

MRS. HENRY
Nick, I feel terrible... I had just given him some lunch and he looked like he wanted to nap. So Bill helped me get him to the couch. I put a blanket over him--

NICK
(adamant)
Where is he?

OFFICER DOWNEY
Mr. Delange, I'm Officer Downey.

The officer extends a hand to Nick.

OFFICER DOWNEY (CONT'D)
Apparently your father wandered off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK

What??

OFFICER DOWNEY

We've checked the stairwells, and we're doing a door to door on every floor. If he's in the building, we'll find him.

MRS. HENRY

I just went down to get some tea, Nick... You don't have any tea.

NICK

When? How long has he been gone?

MRS. HENRY

Maybe two hours.

OFFICER DOWNEY

(to Nick)

Mrs. Henry said he's...

(being as delicate as possible)

impaired? Mentally?

Nick nods.

NICK

He's had a head injury. A traumatic brain injury is what they call it.

OFFICER DOWNEY

He's not capable of asking for help or using the telephone?

NICK

No. 'Bout the only thing he can do on his own is walk. Except he doesn't have a clue as to where he's going.

Mr. Henry enters the apartment. He sees Nick.

MR. HENRY

Nick, I'm really sorry.

NICK

It's not your fault.

MR. HENRY

We were only out of the apartment for a minute.

(to Officer Downey)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. HENRY (CONT'D)
 He's not in the building.
 (to Nick)
 I'm sure he can't have gone very
 far.

OFFICER DOWNEY
 Does your father carry any
 identification? A hospital card?

THE PHONE RINGS.

NICK
 No. No, nothing like that.

THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

OFFICER DOWNEY
 Perhaps you should get that.

Nick reaches for the phone.

NICK
 (into phone)
 Hello?

INT. TOBIN TOWERS - NANCY'S OFFICE - DAY

Nancy is on the other end of the phone. She's standoffish,
 but businesslike.

NANCY
 Hello, Nick. It's Nancy.

INTERCUT: NANCY AND NICK

NICK
 ...Hi. Uh, look, this is probably
 not a good time--

NANCY
 Nick, I'm calling for no other
 reason than to ask if you've found
 Homecare for your father. Cause if
 you haven't, I just heard about a
 new agency, but they're filling up
 fast--
 (suddenly shifting gears)
 You know, you could have at least
 been a gentleman about it. I'm not
 a porcelain doll so it's not like I
 was going to fall to pieces!
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY (CONT'D)
 And if that's what you thought, you
 only flatter yourself. Maybe you
 think you're the be-all and end-all-
 -

NICK
 (interrupting)
 Nancy, my father's missing. He
 wandered off this afternoon.

NANCY
 What??... O my God. I'm sorry. O my
 God!...

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A dozen or so RESIDENTS from the building crowd around
 Officer Downey and Nick who stand on the front steps.

OFFICER DOWNEY
 (to Nick)
 He's been living here for little
 more than a month and all these
 people know him?!

Nick shrugs. He's at a loss at how to explain.

OFFICER DOWNEY (CONT'D)
 I've been in my building fifteen
 years. I know the super and a lady
 I once arrested. Period.

Officer Downey moves to the top step and addresses the group.

OFFICER DOWNEY (CONT'D)
 Okay, let's get going. For those on
 foot, if you find him stay with him
 and call in your location.
 (he checks his watch)
 Let's all be back here by eight
 o'clock.

The small group begins to break up, many offering words of
 encouragement to Nick as he heads for his pickup.

As Nick jumps into the truck, Rollie's sports car screeches
 to a stop right next to him. Lil is behind the wheel, Rollie
 in the passenger seat. Rollie looks at Nick.

ROLLIE
 Okay if I ride with you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nick nods. Rollie catapults himself out of the car. He scoots around Nick's truck and hops in. Lil gives Nick an assuring smile.

LIL
 (to Nick)
 We'll find him, Nick. Don't worry.

She drives off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Nick's pickup truck crawls along the street.

INT. NICK'S PICKUP - TRAVELING - DAY

Nick and Rollie ride along quietly scanning the sidewalk for Albert. After a long moment--

ROLLIE
 -- Thanks for the call.
 (beat)
 Thought it might be awhile before I
 heard from you again.

NICK
 Believe me. It woulda been.

Rollie leaves it at that, until he notices a smile slowly spreading on Nick's face. Rollie realizes he's being had. He grins.

ROLLIE
 You're a friggin' shit, you know
 that?

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

Nancy's Toyota moves slowly along the quiet residential street.

INT. THE TOYOTA - TRAVELING - DAY

Nancy scans the sidewalk and the spaces between houses. She reaches for her cell phone.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

THE PHONE RINGS. Mrs. Henry picks it up right away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. HENRY

Hello?

INTERCUT: NANCY AND MRS. HENRY

NANCY

Hi, uh...it's Nancy Carlyle.
(a slight hesitation)
...I'm a friend of Nick's.

MRS. HENRY

O, the shower lady.

Nancy reacts.

NANCY

Is there anybody who DOESN'T know
that story?

MRS. HENRY

Nick's out looking for his father--

NANCY

That's why I called. Just wanted to
see if there was any news. Listen,
let me give you my number...

MONTAGE BEGINS:

EXT. A DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Lil motors slowly along the street, keeping her eyes peeled
for Albert.

ON A TRAFFIC LIGHT

turning red.

A SQUEEGEE KID steps off the curb and soaps Lil's window. She
digs change out of the ashtray, speaks to the squeegee kid --
he takes the money, shakes his head. Lil nods appreciatively
and continues on her way.

EXT. A LANEWAY - DAY

Nick's pickup creeps along the laneway. KIDS playing road
hockey move their nets so the truck can pass.

Nick brings the truck to a stop. Rollie sticks his head out
of the window, chats with the kids--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The kids shrug, shake their heads. The truck continues down the lane -- the hockey nets are quickly reset. Game on.

EXT. A BUS STOP - DAY

Nancy pulls her Toyota to the curb. An ELDERLY COUPLE sit on a bench waiting for the next bus.

Nancy jumps out of the car, hurries to the sidewalk, speaks to the couple. They shake their heads.

Nancy looks back to see--

A CITY BUS

waiting to pull into the bus stop.

She scurries back to her vehicle, hops in, speeds off.

EXT. A DRUGSTORE - DAY

Mr. Henry and another NEIGHBOUR are talking to PEDESTRIANS as they pass the drugstore. It's clear they are asking about Albert - but no one has anything positive to offer.

EXT. UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Nick's truck is parked at one end of the field, its doors open.

Nick and Rollie walk along the bleachers peering underneath.

EXT. AN INTERSECTION - FOUR-WAY STOP - EVENING

Lil's convertible slowly approaches the intersection, stops, then turns right. At the same time she is exiting the intersection--

Nick's truck advances through the intersection from the opposite direction. As Nick's truck clears the intersection--

Nancy's Toyota arrives from the same direction that Lil exited. Nancy stops, passes through the intersection. There is no indication any of them noticed each other...

END MONTAGE.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Officer Downey, Mr. and Mrs. Henry, Lil and most of the neighbours we saw earlier have regathered at the front steps.

Nick's truck stops at the front of the building. Nick and Rollie get out. Nick needn't ask -- the discouraged faces say it all.

MR. HENRY

Sorry, Nick.

Officer Downey offers a sympathetic shrug.

OFFICER DOWNEY

You'd almost think he didn't want to be found.

ON NICK

as Downey's words trigger something.

At that moment, Nancy's car pulls to the curb. Nick looks in her direction--

CUT TO:

INT. NANCY'S TOYOTA - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Nick is in the passenger seat.

NICK

-- Tell me about my father's injury.

NANCY

Nick, I'm not a doctor. I'm an administrator.

NICK

Doesn't matter. You've been around him. You're familiar with his condition... Can he change?

NANCY

You mean can he improve?... No. He's had major brain damage, Nick. That can't be rectified.

NICK

Is it possible he understands what I say to him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

No. Probably not. He doesn't have the ability to express or to understand language. It's a condition called aphasia.

NICK

'Probably'?

NANCY

What?

NICK

You said 'probably' not.

NANCY

Probably, definitely, who's to say? The brain's a universe until itself, isn't it.

NICK

But he can hear me.

NANCY

Yes. But he can't process sounds into words, into thoughts. It just doesn't work that way for him. Why are you asking me this?

EXT. POINT PLEASANT PARK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nancy's Toyota pulls into the empty parking lot.

EXT. THE PARK - NIGHT

Nick walks quickly across the sand towards the jetty. Nancy hurries to keep up with him.

NANCY

Nick, he could never make it all the way here on his own. At least not intentionally.

Nick keeps moving. Nancy stops.

NANCY (CONT'D)

What are you looking for? Who do you think you're going to find out here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
(stating the obvious)
My father.

Nick jogs toward the jetty.

EXT. THE JETTY - NIGHT

Several overhead lamps create pools of light along the jetty. Nick slows as he approaches the end of the quay. It's deserted.

Nick's heart sinks. Clearly his hopes were high -- and unrealistic. He stands looking out over the water as Nancy approaches from behind.

NANCY
You're not looking for your father,
Nick. You're looking for someone
who doesn't exist.

He turns to face her.

NICK
What are you talking about?

NANCY
This hope you have about your
father improving, about him
understanding you -- Nick, it's
just not going to happen. He's
never going to apologize for not
being the father you needed, the
father you wanted him to be... He
CAN'T. It's as simple as that.

Nick is silent.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Your father's a different man. He's
the same flesh and blood, but he's
unrelated to the father you
remember. You need to forgive THAT
father, Nick. Forgive him and then
let him go. Cause he's not here
anymore.

Nick listens. But this is not easy for him to hear.

Nancy's CELL PHONE RINGS. She reaches into her purse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Nancy Carlyle... Yes, he's with
 me...

A look of relief comes over her face. She looks at Nick and
 nods excitedly.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 That's wonderful. Yes, yes I'll
 tell him. Thank you.

She hangs up.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 They found him. He's okay... He
 was on a city bus.

NICK
 (incredulous)
 What? How??

NANCY
 Dunno. I guess the driver saw him,
 figured something wasn't right, and
 took him in.
 (softly)
 Come on, let's go.

Nancy turns and walks back toward the beach. After a moment,
 Nick follows.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Nancy's Toyota comes to a stop near the front steps.

INT. NANCY'S TOYOTA - NIGHT

NICK
 Thanks.

NANCY
 You're welcome.
 (suddenly awkward)
 ...I was hoping that it might be
 okay for me to drop by to see your
 dad from time to time.

NICK
 Hey, sure. Whenever. He'd like
 that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK (CONT'D)
 (a long beat)
 I owe you an apology--

She stops him with a gesture.

NANCY
 Not necessary. Let's just forget it.

He looks at her, nods, and reaches for the car door. He opens the door - but before getting out, he shuts it again.

NICK
 (quickly)
 I can't blame you for being pissed.
 I'm sorry. I got scared. I didn't
 handle it well.

NANCY
 (not about to be drawn in)
 Well live an' learn, I guess.

NICK
 That's it?

Nancy nods. A beat.

NICK (CONT'D)
 Can I see you again?

NANCY
 Nick, I'm not interested in
 being somebody's yo-yo. Sorry.

NICK
 So no second chance?

Nancy doesn't answer. She looks away, waits for Nick to leave. Nick concedes. He gets out of the car.

EXT. NANCY'S TOYOTA - NIGHT

He leans down and speaks through the open window.

NICK
 Thanks... You know, for helping out
 with the search and everything.

Nancy nods. Nick steps away from the car. She gives him a final look and drives off.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Albert, in pajamas and housecoat, sits at the table. Mrs. Henry is finishing up feeding him dinner. Mr. Henry sits across the table with a cup of tea.

Nick enters. Mrs. Henry gives him reassuring look.

MRS. HENRY

He's fine, Nick. A little tired,
but none the worse for wear.

Nick nods. He moves across the room toward Albert. He crouches down next to the old man, studies his face for a long moment, then--

NICK

Thought maybe I lost you. You had
me worried.

No response. Not that Nick was expecting one. Nick looks to Mr. and Mrs. Henry.

NICK (CONT'D)

It's been a long day. I can finish
up here.

MRS. HENRY

You sure? It's no trouble.

NICK

I'm sure.

MR. HENRY

We're sorry, Nick... You know, for
messing up. We feel awful.

NICK

Hey, hey, none of that. It was no
one's fault. Truth is, I don't know
what I'd do without you guys.

Nick gives Mrs. Henry a quick peck on the cheek.

NICK (CONT'D)

You two get some rest. I'll see you
in the morning.

Mr. & Mrs. Henry head for the door.

NICK (CONT'D)

...By the way, Nancy thinks I can
probably have a Homecare worker
here by the end of the week.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. HENRY

That's fine. But we'll be here as long as you need us.

MR. HENRY

Speaking of the young lady, where is she? I was beginning to think you two had eloped. Can't say I'd blame you, mind you.

Mrs. Henry rolls her eyes.

MRS. HENRY

(to Nick)

I swear to God he's got a one track mind.

(she smiles)

...But she IS a sweetie. I'd be careful not to let that one get away if I were you.

Nick winces.

NICK

Good advice. But maybe a bit too late.

MRS. HENRY

O-o, Nick, I'm so sorry.

Mr. Henry looks for something positive to say... but can only come up with--

MR. HENRY

Women. Who needs 'em, right?

Mrs. Henry growls, rolls her eyes--

MRS. HENRY

For heaven's sake, Bill! When are you going to learn to THINK before you speak. It's really not that difficult. People do it all the time!

As Mrs. Henry guides her husband toward the door, he throws a smile back at Nick.

MR. HENRY

Why bother starting this late in life, huh?

Mrs. Henry nudges him out the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. HENRY
 (to Nick)
 'Night, Nick.

And they're gone.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Albert stands at the sink, expressionless. Nick is at his side. He wipes toothpaste dribble from Albert's chin, sighs. It's been a long, trying day.

Nick gazes at his father's reflection in the bathroom mirror. The old guy looks worn, helpless, pathetic.

And suddenly Nick tears up -- then a sob, birthed in some deep, hidden place inside, finds its way to his throat.

And when the tears come, they gush. The planets have aligned. Regret, longing, disappointment and anger all finding voice -- and escape.

Albert remains motionless -- only now his breathing has become shallow and the soft beginnings of his fretful chant have again found root: "H-uuh, h-uuh, h-uuh."

The strange duet -- Albert's anxious huffs and Nick's cathartic weeping -- create a strange cacophony as they amplify and resonate off the bathroom's tiled walls.

WE HOLD FOR A LONG MOMENT

-- on father and son, side by side... separate and dissimilar, yet united in mutual torment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's quiet. The bluish beam emanating from the television provides the only light in the apartment. Albert is in bed, asleep. Nick sits in the chair by the window nursing a beer. He's weary, fatigued, introspective.

There is a SOFT KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Nick walks to the table, retrieves Mrs. Henry's box of tea, and goes to the door.

NICK
 I was just about to bring this over--

Nancy stands in the doorway. Nick reacts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK (CONT'D)

Hi.

NANCY

(matter-of-fact)

ONE second chance. And that's it.
So help me, Nick Delange, if you
screw up, it'll be the last time, I
swear. There'll be no second second
chances. You have my word on that.

Nick stares at Nancy for a brief moment, trying to understand what she just said. What the hell, he can figure it out later.

NICK

Sure.

NANCY

Have you eaten?

NICK

Huh?

NANCY

Have you had dinner? Are you hungry?

NICK

No... I mean, ya.

NANCY

Which is it?

NICK

...No. No...uh, I haven't had
dinner. But I guess I could eat.
Hadn't thought much about it.

NANCY

Good.

She pushes past Nick and steps into the apartment.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Cause I'm famished.

She turns and gives Nick a soft, penetrating look. She holds up a bag of take-out--

NANCY (CONT'D)

-- I hear the linguine is excellent.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

A huge vessel, stacked high with containers, sits flush against the dock. There's something about this ship that looks familiar.

A CONTAINER

is lowered to the dock. As it PASSES THROUGH FRAME, the name of the ship comes into focus. It's the "BELLA ROSA".

INT. THE GANTRY - DAY

Lyle Marsh is at the controls. He waits for the crew to secure the cables to the corners of a container.

MARSH'S POV - ROLLIE

climbing on top of a container, snapping the latches that secure the crane's cables.

EXT. THE BELLA ROSA - FORWARD DECK - DAY

Rollie moves off the container and signals the Hatch Tender. The Hatch Tender, in turn, signals Lyle Marsh.

The container rises off the ship.

ROLLIE

leans against a container, grabbing a moment. From somewhere on deck, Rollie hears a faint THUD, THUD... then nothing. He looks around, sees nothing. He looks up as the cable descends for another container.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BELLA ROSA - LATER

All the off-loading that has to be done is now complete. The three gantry cranes are on-loading new containers into the ship's deck to be carried to its next destination.

As Rollie unlatches the cables from a container that was just brought aboard, he again hears a dull THUD, THUD. This time he is certain he has heard something--

Rollie moves along the ship's rail listening carefully.

The Hatch Tender looks along the rail to see Rollie with his ear against a container.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HATCH TENDER
Rollie, what's up?

Rollie is listening intently. He hears another weak THUD, THUD... as if someone was tapping on the inside of a container. Again he hears a WEAK KNOCK.

ROLLIE
I heard something. I heard knocking.

HATCH TENDER
What??

We HEAR MARSH'S VOICE over the Hatch Tender's walkie-talkie.

MARSH' VOICE
What the hell is going on?!

HATCH TENDER
(into his walkie-talkie)
Just a sec, Marsh. Rollie thinks he heard something.

INT. THE GANTRY - DAY

Marsh looks down the length of the ship. The other two cranes are busily moving containers onto the Bella Rosa. He reaches for the radio microphone

MARCH
(into radio)
Hey, it's my ass if this stuff doesn't get loaded! Tell Rollie to get back to his position. Now!

INT. THE BELLA ROSA

Rollie has pinpointed a box that sits in the hold just below deck level. It's under at least half a dozen containers.

ROLLIE
(pointing)
There! Right there! That's the one.
Let's get it out!

HATCH TENDER
(to Rollie)
I dunno, Rollie. You sure?
(he listens)
...I can't hear anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLIE
I heard knocking.

INT. CONTAINER PIER OFFICE - DAY

Marsh explodes into the office, followed by Rollie. Marsh is fuming. He heads straight to Nick's desk.

MARSH
He's fucking done it this time,
Nick!

Nick sighs.

NICK
Now what is it?

MARSH
What time is the Bella Rosa
scheduled to leave?

Nick looks at Marsh, to Rollie, and then to the computer screen on his desk.

NICK
Fifteen thirty. Why?

MARSH
Cause she's not gonna be on time if
Rollie has his way.

Nick looks at his screen again.

NICK
She's gotta be. Got two others
already queued.
(to Rollie)
What's up?

ROLLIE
I heard something, Nick. I think I
heard some knocking in one of the
boxes below deck.

MARSH
No one else heard a thing!

NICK
Rollie, you sure?

Rollie nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSH

Nick, there's no one in any of those boxes! How could there be? Those boxes left Italy weeks ago.

(a beat)

Even if there was, let 'em take care of it when they're off-loaded in New York.

ROLLIE

If someone's in there, who says they'll make New York?

Nick looks over to Fergus Forsythe who leans against his office doorpost listening to what's going on.

NICK

(to Fergus)

What do ya think?

FERGUS

I don't think we have a choice.

MARSH

(to Nick)

If Rollie's wrong, I want him fired. I want him off the dock.

Rollie is silent.

FERGUS

...And if he's right?

Marsh wasn't anticipating that. He fidgets.

MARSH

He won't be.

FERGUS

(repeating)

If he's right?

NICK

You gotta put up a stake, Marsh. Make it interesting if not fair.

Marsh is feeling the pressure.

MARSH

Alright... If he's right, he can have his old job back.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

A cargo vessel waits in the harbour for access to the dock.

A CONTAINER

is lifted out of the hold of the Bella Rosa. It moves slowly toward the dock where Rollie waits, along with Nick, Fergus and a team of EMERGENCY PERSONNEL. Two ambulances and an police cruiser are parked nearby.

As it touches down, Nick, Rollie and others push their ears against the container. Rollie taps.

ROLLIE
Hello!... Anyone in there?

There's not response. Rollie and Nick exchange looks.

FERGUS
Stand clear.

Fergus approaches with a large pair of bolt cutters and snaps the seals on the end of the container.

The doors are pulled open to reveal--

A wall of crates, piled up to the full height of the container.

INT. THE GANTRY - SAME

Marsh has a birds-eye view of what's going on.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - SAME

There's no sign that anyone is in the box. Rollie can't believe it. Nick feels as bad as Rollie. Suddenly--

A crate crashes to the dock, pushed from the inside of the container.

FERGUS
Get 'em outta there!

The crew tears away at the wall of boxes.

EXT. CONTAINER PIER - DAY

A stretcher is loaded into the back of an ambulance. We can just make out the pale, gaunt face of a man behind an oxygen mask.

Rollie stands with Nick in the circle of stevedores around the emergency vehicles. Fergus approaches.

FERGUS

Four Romanians as far as we can tell. They're in pretty rough shape.

(to Rollie)

The paramedic figures another day in there and they'd all be dead.

He gives Rollie a pat on the shoulder, then heads to toward the office.

ROLLIE

Can you imagine life being so bleak that you'd try something like that?

NICK

-- I dunno. I've had a few days of late that would make holing up in a box seem pretty darn attractive.

He gives Rollie a playful punch in the arm.

NICK (CONT'D)

And you're back on the gantry!

Rollie shakes his head.

ROLLIE

Uh-uh. Marsh can have it. It ain't that important to me anymore. The only reason I wanted to be up there in the first place was to prove to myself that I could do it. Instead, I proved I couldn't. So what? I can't fly an airplane or do heart transplants either.

(grins)

And my wife still loves me. Go figure.

EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Nick is in front of the building loading a few things into the back of the pickup truck -- a small valise, a picnic cooler, and a colorfully wrapped boxed with a big bow.

MR. AND MRS. HENRY

escort Albert down the steps towards the truck.

Nick opens the truck door as Mr. Henry guides Albert onto the seat.

MRS. HENRY

(to Nick)

Do you have everything? Sandwiches?

NICK

Enough to feed an army.

MRS. HENRY

(indicating Albert)

Make sure he's buckled in.

Mrs. Henry leans into the truck and pats Albert on the hand.

MRS. HENRY (CONT'D)

I'm thrilled for you. You're going to have a wonderful time.

(to Nick)

Give us a call when you get there.

NICK

Anyone ever tell you you'd make a wonderful mother?

MRS. HENRY

(she beams)

Yes. My children.

Nick gives the two a quick hug. As Nick skips around and hops in the truck--

MR. HENRY

Tell Cory I found a new fishing spot. We'll check it out when he comes next month.

(indicating Albert)

His granddad can come along, too.

Nick starts up the truck.

MRS. HENRY

You drive carefully.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Before Nick can pull away from the curb, A CAR HORN is HEARD. Nancy's Toyota pulls to the curb just in front of the truck. Nick smiles.

Nancy jumps out and runs to the truck and gives Nick a big hug through the window.

NANCY

'Morning.

NICK

'Morning... D'ya change your mind?

NANCY

Uh-uh. Just wanted to say good-bye.

NICK

I'd really like you to meet Cory.

NANCY

I will. Next month. Right now I think he needs some time with the men in his life.

(she kisses him)

As do I. When you get back.

She hands Nick a glossy brochure.

NANCY (CONT'D)

You might want to take a look at this. They've found some corporate sponsorship for Tobin Towers. A fund is being set up to help subsidize patients affected by the cutbacks. I think you're dad will qualify.

NICK

I could send him back there?

NANCY

If you want.

A beat. Nick looks over at Albert, then back to Nancy. He hands the brochure back to her.

NICK

I think maybe he needs to spend some time with the men in his life.

Nancy beams, then wraps Nick in another hug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She moves to the sidewalk with Mr. and Mrs. Henry. They wave and good-byes as Nick's truck heads down the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE NORTH ATLANTIC - DAY

Formidable and majestic. Timeless and unchanging. Rolling on and on and on...

FADE OUT.

-THE END-