THE DEAD ZONE

"THE COLD HARD TRUTH"

Production #1-3004

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THE DEAD ZONE

“COLD HARD TRUTH”

CAST

JOHNNY SMITH
BRUCE LEWIS
SARAH BANNERMAN
WALT BANNERMAN
J.J. BANNERMAN

JACK JERICHO
MARGARET JERICHO
MITCHELL NOZAWA
RADIO ENGINEER (JERRY)
DR. MONICA
MEDICAL INTERN

NON-SPEAKING

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS
LOCALS/CROWD OF PEOPLE
BIKERS
RADIO STATION RECEPTIONIST
CHINESE FOOD DELIVERY BOY
CHINESE RESTAURANT WAITER
CHINESE RESTAURANT CHEF
STUDENTS/TEACHERS @ J.J.’S SCHOOL
SHERIFF’S DEPUTIES
10-YEAR OLD PIANO STUDENT
TWO FRIENDS OF J.J.
JERICHOS’ MAID
JERICHOS’ SON (TODDLER BOY)

* CHARLES

VOICES ON RADIO
TIPSY YOUNG WOMAN (THELMA)
GRUFF GUY (BILL)
EARNEST YOUNG WOMAN (MARIE)
FRAT GUY (BRAD)
OLD WOMAN
MALE CALLER 1
MALE CALLER 2
FEMALE CALLER 1
YOUNG DUDE (CHAD)
# The Dead Zone

**“Cold Hard Truth”**

## Sets

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**Vehicles**
- Johnny’s Jeep
- Pick-up Truck
- Harley Motorcycles
- Sheriff’s Cruiser
- Jericho’s Car
- Cars Parked at Radio Station
FADE IN:

1 EXT. WIDE VISTA - PENOBSCOT COUNTY - DAY
A familiar Jeep rolls down the highway between Cleaves Mills and Bangor. Over this idyllic vista we HEAR a radio being tuned - bits of news, sports, oldies - regional AM Radio chatter - finally landing on...

MALE DJ (RADIO)
...and you're back with Jack Jericho, the man you love to hate, here on "THE COLD HARD TRUTH"...

2 E.C.U. A CIGARETTE BEING LIT
Exhaled smoke swirling around a microphone.

JERICHO (O.S.)
...Charles from Cleaves Mills, you're on the air...

A hand, still holding the cigarette, punches a blinking call button.

3 EXT. MAIN STREET CLEAVES MILLS - DAY
Several CONSTRUCTION WORKERS stand around a pickup truck drinking coffee, listening to their radio.

CHARLES (RADIO)
Yeah, I just want to say, I've been a mail carrier for fifteen years and I don't appreciate the way you run down my fellow postal workers.

4 E.C.U. A CUP OF COFFEE
Being sweetened with a slug of scotch by the unseen Jericho.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JERICHO (O.S.)
Charles... far be it from me to disparage the U.S. Mail Service, my daily dose of hate mail arrives through rain or sleet or Anthrax scares...

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY
Several LOCALS pump gas, the DJ's voice echoing around them.

JERICHO (RADIO)
...I was only wondering aloud why your fellow postal employees go crazy and kill each other with such regularity that we had to come up with a new verb, "going postal." I mean, just what is so stressful about making us all wait in line endlessly for bad service?

E.C.U. A HAND
Punches the call button, sending Charles to oblivion, then punches the next blinking call.

JERICHO (O.S.)
"Tiny" you're on the air.

EXT. BIKER CLUB HOUSE - DAY
A row of Harley's in front of a scary looking dive. Several BIKERS loiter menacingly, listening to the radio as their Leader "TINY" talks into a cell phone.

TINY
Yeah bro, this is Tiny from the Penobscot chapter of the Vipers, I just want to say we all dig your show and remind your listeners that our local "LOVE RALLY" is happening tomorrow, so if they want to donate any toys for disadvantaged kids they can still drop them off at the clubhouse.
E.C.U. A WORN PAIR OF SNAKESKIN BOOTS

Resting on the edge of the control board. The boots slide off to the ground as Jericho (still unseen) leans in to the mic.

JERICHO (O.S.)
Thanks for the public service announcement "Tiny". It's really touching how you guys take time off your busy schedule of drinking and dealing crank to spread the love.

TINY - AT THE CLUBHOUSE

Not taking this well.

TINY
Hey. It's for the kids you...

BANG! TIGHT ON A CALL BUTTON

As another caller is silenced.

JERICHO (O.S.)
Yeah right. More like it's for court-ordered community service.

A hand stubs out an unfiltered Camel and throws open a newspaper.

JERICHO (O.S.)
Let's give the phones a rest and check today's big stories. Hmmm... Any good plane crashes? ... Here's something...

E.C.U. NEWSPAPER PHOTO

A car being winched out of the water by a tow truck. Inset tabloid style is a photo of Johnny Smith.

JERICHO (O.S.)
My favorite local celebrity is in the news again. Maine's own Johnny Smith is up to his old headline grabbing tricks -- this time supposedly saving a drowned little girl from a sunken car... oh really?
ANOTHER HAND PUNCHES A BUTTON

Pull back to reveal:

INT. JEEP - JOHNNY AND BRUCE - MOVING

Bruce just shut off the radio.

BRUCE
You don't need to listen to that knucklehead.

JOHNNY
This guy's been riding me since I got arrested. I want to hear what he says.

Johnny punches the radio back on.

JERICHO
(reading)
"According to Penobscot County Sheriff Walt Bannerman, Smith's visions allowed him to locate the vehicle in time for paramedics to revive both her and her father."
(derisive)
Sheriff Bannerman can't seem to solve a case without calling in his human Ouija board Johnny Smith. Pretty soon when you dial 911 around here, you're going to get the "Psychic Friends Network."

BRUCE
That's cold...

JERICHO (RADIO)
In fact, why don't we just pin a badge on Johnny Smith and cut out the middle man since he's already doing the Sheriff's job -- maybe in more ways than one. Anybody seen that hottie wife of Sheriff Bannerman's?

Johnny slams on the brakes and grinds to a halt on the shoulder.

JERICHO (RADIO)
You couldn't miss her, standing by her man on those Bannerman for Sheriff signs.

(MORE)
CONTINUED:

JERICHO (RADIO) (CONT'D)

Apparently she used to be engaged to Johnny Smith but she dumped him for the Sheriff during Johnny's infamous coma. Now they're all "friends". What's up with that?

Bruce punches off the radio, he can see that Johnny is starting to lose it.

BRUCE

Don't listen to that stuff man, it'll make you crazy.

Without a word, Johny puts the car in gear and guns it back onto the road, hanging a U-turn.

BRUCE

John, no... what are you doing?

EXT. WPOV OFFICE BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - DAY - VFX

Raking up the side of the roughly ten story building, an old fashioned radio tower dominating the roof.

INT. WPOV OFFICES - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Johnny steps off the elevator in a tight lipped fury, Bruce trailing worriedly. They find Station Manager MITCHELL NOZAWA, a mild looking Japanese American, reviewing messages with a RECEPTIONIST.

Beyond them in the background, seen through the glass of the tiny broadcast booth, with his back to us as he continues to bark at the world, is Jericho.

JOHNNY

I want to speak to whoever is in charge here.

NOZAWA

(recognizing him)
Mitchell Nozawa, station manager.

Johnny sees Jericho, goes straight for him...

CLOSER ON THE BROADCAST BOOTH

As Jericho goes to a commercial, still seen from behind.
CONTINUED:

JERICHO

...We'll be back with more of the Cold Hard Truth after this word*
  from one of our brave sponsors...*

JOHNNY

bangs on the glass. Jericho turns, revealing the face behind the voice. He reacts to Johnny.

JERICHO

Johnny Smith?

JOHNNY

I don't give a damn what you say about me, but my friends are off limits.

JERICHO

Ladies and gentlemen, Johnny Smith has decided to come down to the station personally to lodge a complaint.

Jericho has stepped out of the booth, mic in hand, yanking the cable along behind him. Bruce intervenes.

BRUCE

C'mon Johnny you don't need this.

NOZAWA

Jack, please, go back inside.

Johnny and Jericho ignore the others. Jericho nods toward the "ON THE AIR" light.

JERICHO

C'mon John, you got a problem, let's get it out on the air, know what I mean?

JOHNNY

Look I'm not doing this. Just have some respect and lay off my friends, okay?

JERICHO

Respect? For a second rate carnival act who passes himself off as a real psychic? "Real Psychic?" There's an oxymoron for you. C'mon Johnny, let's see just how good you are. Make a prediction.

(MORE)
CONTINUED: (2)

JERICHO (CONT'D)
Right now, on the air, a freebie for our listeners.

JERICHO waves the mic in Johnny's face. Johnny bats the mic away, triggering:

A VISION - FALLING POV

A montage of images; disjointed, mysterious, all sharing the same horrific momentum:

- A RED ORB FALLING SILENTLY THROUGH A NIGHT SKYLINE,
- A FIST CONNECTING WITH JERICHO'S JAW,
- A POV RUSHING TOWARD AN OPEN WINDOW (NIGHT),
- POWERFUL, TATTOOED ARMS, SHOVING JERICHO, SNAPPING HIS HEAD BACK.
- A GLINT OF A WOMAN'S REFLECTION ON THE GLASS OF A WINDOW.
- A POV SOARING OUT THE WINDOW INTO THE NIGHT - REVEALING THE GROUND TEN STORIES BELOW, BEFORE SPINNING INTO A BLUR. (NOTE: AND WITH THIS BLUR, OR A SIMILAR DEVICE, WE ARE TRANSITIONING INTO A DIFFERENT VISION OF A DIFFERENT FALL, THOUGH THIS IS SOMETHING A VIEWER SHOULD REALIZE ONLY IN RETROSPECT.)
- THE BLUR STABILIZES AS WE CONTINUE TO FALL, AND NOW WE REVEAL WHO'S FALLING - IT'S JERICHO - AND WE FOLLOW HIM AS HE PLUMMETS TO EARTH, LANDING ON TOP OF A CAR, THE WINDOWS EXPLODING OUTWARD ON IMPACT.

RESUME SCENE

Ripping back out of his eye to reveal Johnny as he releases the mic, still reeling from the impact. Jericho continues to press Johnny.

JERICHO
C'mon Johnny, one prediction, that's all I'm asking...

Bruce is trying to pull Johnny away, but Johnny shakes him off.

JOHNNY
That big mouth of yours is going to get you killed.

(CONTINUED)
Jericho just laughs in disbelief.
JERICHO
Is that a prediction or a threat?
Cuz if you want to kill me Johnny, you're going to have to get in line.

Johnny covers the mic with his hand, locks eyes with Jericho.

JOHNNY
It's the truth.

JERICHO
(quietly to Johnny)
We'll see about that.
(think. Time for an instant poll --
(then into the mic)
Let's find out what the listeners
Is Johnny Smith a fake? Or am I
think. Time for an instant poll --
a dead man? Lets go to the phones.

Off Johnny and Bruce's reaction...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. RADIO STATION - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A CHINESE FOOD DELIVERY KID heads into the offices as Johnny and Bruce exit, followed by an anxious Nozawa. Johnny watches Jericho continue ranting in the b.g.

JOHNNY
(re: vision)
Listen to me. What happened in there... that wasn't an act. He's going to insult the wrong person and get killed. If there's any way you could get him to take this seriously...

Nozawa's dubious, not sure how seriously he takes Johnny.

NOZAWA
I don't know. Jack's got his own mind... and these days it's not too open to conflicting opinions.
(brightening)
Hey, ever considered doing a show of your own?

JOHNNY
You're offering me a job?

NOZAWA
(holds out a card)
We already have an on-air therapist. Why not a psychic? The hours are easy and I'm sure we could make the numbers work in your favor.

JOHNNY
Look I'm really not interested...

BRUCE
(snatching the card)
He may not be interested...

Nozawa moves off as Johnny gives Bruce a look. Then Jericho pops his head out of his booth.

JERICHO
Hey guys, guess what, I'm a psychic.

And he underhands a FORTUNE COOKIE at Johnny, which he catches, sending him into --
INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT - VISION

The Chinese delivery boy smashes into a chalkboard that reads "Wednesday Dinner Specials." Reveal Johnny watching as he turns to see what propelled the kid and sees a waiter and a chef wrestling with an angry man in a postal uniform (CHARLES), who has Jericho in a headlock.

RESUME SCENE

Johnny reacts to the vision, then cracks open the cookie.

JOHNNY
(reads)
"You will embark on an unwanted journey."

He turns over the fortune, sees the name of the restaurant -- LUCKY DRAGON CHINESE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT -- and sighs...

BRUCE
What is it?

JOHNNY
Don't make any dinner plans.

The elevator has arrived. Johnny and Bruce step in as Johnny's phone rings. He answers.

JOHNNY
Hello? Yes. Have you called his parents? I'll be right there.

Off his worried expression as he shuts the phone.

OMITTED

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

SARAH's already here, sitting next to J.J. on a BENCH as she uses a handkerchief to clean up some dried blood around his nose.

SARAH
You're not in any trouble, J.J. I just want to know why.

J.J. remains stoic, embarrassed to have his mom cleaning him up. The door opens, and J.J. looks up expectantly... then reacts with barely concealed disappointment and a hint of confusion when he sees Johnny.
JOHNNY
Hey, J.J., how you doin'?

J.J.
Fine.

SARAH
He got in a fight. But he's not saying why... to me anyway.

Relieved that's all it is, Johnny peers at J.J.'s slightly bruised face.

JOHNNY
Well, you look better than I did after my first fight. Professional tip: Never try to block a punch with your face.

This gets a slight smile from J.J.... but nothing like the one he greets Walt with as he enters now.

J.J.
Dad!

Johnny stands; Walt is surprised and put off to see him here. He crosses to his son.

WALT
Hey big guy. Heard you had an accident.

SARAH
Not an accident. A fight.

WALT
A fight? Well, you don't look too bad. How's that nose?

J.J.
You should see the other guy.

WALT
That's my boy.

J.J. smiles.

SARAH
Walt... this is serious.

WALT
Of course. I'm just glad he's okay.
There's definite tension here, though both adults are conscious that J.J. is watching them closely, anxiously searching for any signs of reconciliation. Walt turns to Johnny, wondering again why he's here.

**WALT**

Hey, Johnny. You get a vision or were you just passing by?

**JOHNNY**

They called me.

**SARAH**

Can I speak to you outside?

**WALT**

Sure. Back in a sec, champ.

J.J. watches them go, disappointed, barely noticing as Johnny sits beside him on the bench. A longish beat.

**JOHNNY**

So. You want to talk about what happened?

(J.J. shakes his head)

Okay, no problem.

Another long beat. Johnny starts nervously tapping his foot. Then he realizes J.J. is unconsciously doing the exact same thing. He stops, a little unnerved by the hint of "like-father-like-son" convergence. A question occurs to J.J.

**J.J.**

Why are you here?

Caught off guard, Johnny doesn't answer for a beat. Then:

**JOHNNY**

I guess because I'm on the emergency list. They called me when they couldn't get your Mom or Dad on the phone right away.

**J.J.**

Oh. Right.

This seems to satisfy him, to Johnny's relief. And from this awkward scene, we go to another:

**INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY**

Walt and Sarah try to have a private conversation in the
busy hallway; they are forced to play opposite the words, putting on a happy face for the occasional teacher who passes by.

WALT
So who'd he get in the fight with?

SARAH
Eddy Cirillo.

WALT
Cirillo? If he's anything like his dad, I'm sure he started it.

SARAH
They say J.J. went after this kid. And it's not just the fight. His grades are slipping. He won't listen to a word I say. Ever since you left, he's been doing everything he can to get into trouble.

WALT
I'll talk to him.

SARAH
What, like you just talked to him now? He needs more than that... We need more than that. I think we should get some family counseling.

WALT
No. I'm not going to have some stranger tell me what's wrong with my family. I know what's wrong with my family -- and so do you. The question is, what are we going to do about it?

CUT TO:

JOHNNY AND J.J.

Both tapping their feet in unison again. This time, it's J.J. who notices first, then stops himself, not liking where his thoughts are taking him. Just then, Sarah and Walt return.

SARAH
C'mon J.J., let's get you home.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

J.J.
I want to go with Dad.

SARAH
Dad's not coming home with us,
J.J.

J.J.
I want to go with you, Dad.

Walt hesitates. Johnny stares at his shoes, not sure if this is none of his business or all his fault.

WALT
I'll drive him home.
(then to J.J.)
But J.J.... that doesn't mean I can stay.

J.J.
I know.

Walt walks off with J.J., leaving Johnny and Sarah behind. They exchange a look, but neither one knows what to say.

SARAH
I have to go.

Johnny just nods, and Sarah goes, leaving him alone. He sighs, exhaling like he's been holding his breath for the last five minutes.

EXT. LUCKY DRAGON CHINESE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Johnny's Jeep angle-parked out front, along with several other cars.

BRUCE (V.O.)
(resonant DJ voice)
And welcome back, ladies and gentlemen, to WPOV, where you are riffin' with Da Kid...

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Finding Johnny and Bruce burrowed into a back booth. Bruce grabs a handful of crispy noodles as he "riffs."

BRUCE (Cont'd)
...comin' at'chya with the fresh sounds and sweet conversation.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
BRUCE (Cont'd)
   (beat)
   Well, whadaya think?

Johnny just eyes him evenly over his tea.

JOHNNY
Don't Bogart all the noodles.

BRUCE
Thank you. Thank you for your generous support. Now can we order, 'cause I'm starved?

JOHNNY
Not yet.

He turns to look at a booth across the restaurant. It's occupied by Jericho, wearing a WPOV JACKET and smoking while draining a tall Mai Tai, too lit-up to even notice their presence. The Wednesday Specials BLACKBOARD is propped near him. Bruce follows the look, reacts...

BRUCE
Oh man, when were you gonna tell me we were workin'?

JOHNNY
Soon as you finished "riffin'".

BRUCE
I still don't get it. We are very much on the ground level here. You said he gets pushed off a tall building.

JOHNNY
(nods)
And if that's where the vision ends, maybe this is where it begins...

And he nods to the door, Bruce following his look to see...

ANGLE - CHARLES THE ANGRY MAILMAN
as he enters and spots Jericho, then heads toward him.

CHARLES
Your name Jericho?
(quite drunk)
Sorry, never sign autographs while I'm drinking. "Quality Control."

CHARLES
I don't want your damn autograph. I called your show today.

Clearly agitated, he sits down opposite Jericho.

JERICHO
Oh yeah? Say, you're not one of those "disgruntled" postal workers, are you?

CHARLES
As a matter of fact, I am.

And he lunges across the table at Jericho.

WITH BRUCE AND JOHNNY

Bruce starts to rise, but Johnny holds him back.

JOHNNY
(re: Charles)
Let's give him a chance to make my point.

Bruce gives him a curious look, then looks back at --

THE FIGHT

A waiter, chef and the delivery boy seen earlier are converging on the fracas. Charles is throwing little rabbit punches at Jericho, who's hanging on to him, not trying overly hard to defend himself, as meanwhile --

BRUCE & JOHNNY LOOK ON

Bruce is increasingly alarmed, but we sense Johnny doesn't mind letting Charles get a few licks in. To Bruce:

JOHNNY
Not yet...

And now --

(CONTINUED)
THE DELIVERY KID

is knocked into the SPECIALS BOARD, as in Johnny's fortune cookie vision, and Bruce has seen enough. Rising:

BRUCE
I'll take the mailman.

And as he moves to intervene, Johnny trailing, Johnny sees --

CHARLES

rearing back to deliver the big punch that Johnny now realizes he saw connecting with Jericho's jaw in the falling vision in the Teaser. Only Bruce is moving in between them...

JOHNNY
Bruce, watch out--

But the warning comes too late as the punch hits Bruce instead, knocking him on his ass. The staff finally subdues the disgruntled postal worker as Johnny rushes to help Bruce up.

JOHNNY
Sorry about that. You okay?
BRUCE
(rubbing his jaw)
Tell me you didn't see that coming.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

FLASHING LIGHTS strobe the restaurant exterior as a sheriff's deputy stuffs Charles into the back of a cruiser. PULLING BACK to find Jericho being helped across the street by Johnny and Bruce. He sounds less than grateful (and still very drunk).

JERICHO
You guys stalking me?

JOHNNY
I told you I had a vision. That big mouth of yours is going to get you killed.

JERICHO
(slurred)
Not that again. Why don't you predict something useful, like what pony to bet on in the fourth race tomorrow?

Johnny sighs. They find JERICHO'S CAR -- a beat-up sedan with a WPOV BUMPER STICKER advertising his show -- parked in front of the station, its tires slashed.

BRUCE
Let me guess, another one of your loyal fans expressing their gratitude.

JERICHO
At least I know they're listening.

JOHNNY
C'mon, we'll give you a ride.

EXT. JERICHO'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

An old building in a run-down neighborhood. The Jeep lurches to a stop. Johnny and Bruce turn to look at Jericho. He's passed out.

JOHNNY
(re: sleeping beauty)
Great...

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

BRUCE
Can't we just leave him by the curb? Tomorrow's trash day.

JOHNNY
(getting out)
Just give me a hand.

INT. JERICHO'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lights go on to reveal an unmade pull-out bed, heaped dishes and take-out containers, and a jumble of packing boxes. Bruce looks around the room.

BRUCE
Apparently, being a radio D.J. doesn't pay what it used to.

They half steer, half carry Jericho inside and dump him on the bed. Bruce rubs his jaw again; he's had enough.

BRUCE
Let's call it a night.

JOHNNY
Give me a minute.

BRUCE
(whatever)
I'll be in the car.

Bruce exits as Johnny eyes Jericho who's still pretty out of it, mumbling to himself occasionally. Johnny's clearly not going to be able to make much headway reasoning with him tonight. Instead, he lifts Jericho's feet up on the bed, then looks around, curious about all the boxes. He touches one, hears...

A CACOPHONY OF ANGRY VOICES. An 'auditory vision.' He pulls his hand away and the voices stop.

The box is taped shut. So are the others. Johnny glances at Jericho -- still out cold on the bed -- then tries touching a few more... and hears more of the same: more voices, all angry, but too jumbled to make out many words, though we do hear Jericho's name.

The circuit of boxes brings him to a desk close to the bed. He sees an open drawer filled with letters. No, not letters, cards -- BIRTHDAY CARDS. They're sitting in a stack, looking like they've never been mailed. But as Johnny reaches for one... the drawer SLAMS SHUT and Jericho GRABS HIS ARM, spinning Johnny to face him --
FALLING VISION - REDUX

The same disjointed, mysterious montage we saw before: a red orb falling silently through a night skyline; POV rushing toward an open window; tattooed arms, shoving Jericho; the glint of the woman's reflection on the window glass; a POV soaring out the window into the night; the blurring fall ending with Jericho crashing into the parked car.

(However, we've lost one image: the punch, which was thrown by the mailman in the fight that just happened. As a result, those tattooed arms now seem to more clearly belong to someone who will push Jericho over the edge.)

RESUME SCENE

Jericho is sitting up in bed, drunkenly shouting at Johnny.

JERICHO
I don't want you touching my stuff!

JOHNNY
I'm trying to save your life.

JERICHO
Just get out!

JOHNNY
(at the door)
Mind telling me one thing? What's in all the boxes?

JERICHO
You really wanna know?

And he angrily rips one open, revealing another stack of letters and envelopes, many different postmarks.

JERICHO
My hate mail.

And he smiles an odd smile.

JERICHO
'Night, John.

Johnny closes the door behind him, and we linger on his disturbed, puzzled expression.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. JOHNNY'S KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON A STREAM OF COFFEE as it hits a mug.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
You still take yours black?

And as we pull back and he turns, we reveal his guest: Sarah.

SARAH
Yeah...
(rueful)
Guess some things don't change.

Johnny brings her the mug, eyeing her thoughtfully. She's come here for a reason, but she hasn't disclosed it yet.

SARAH
Thanks.

JOHNNY
(picking up his own half-full mug)
Everything okay?

SARAH
Yeah. No. I'm worried about J.J. and I just needed someone to talk to. I can't seem to talk to Walt about anything anymore without it turning into a fight.

They each sip their coffee.

JOHNNY
You know Walt's crazy in love with you.

SARAH
Is he? Lately it's been hard to tell.

JOHNNY
How's J.J. taking all this?

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
That's what I wanted to talk to you about... He finally told me why he got into that fight.
Apparently, some kids were teasing him about something they heard on the radio...

Johnny closes his eyes. He was afraid of this.
SARAH (Cont'd)
...some talk radio jerk was going
off about how Walt can't solve a
case without your help.

Johnny opens his eyes, and now there's anger in them.

JOHNNY
I can't believe people let their
kids listen to that idiot.

SARAH
You know about this?

JOHNNY
Unfortunately, yes. His name is
Jack Jericho. He's been using me
for comic fodder since my arrest.

SARAH
But you were cleared.

JOHNNY
Doesn't matter. I'm in the public
eye. That makes me fair game.
Unfortunately, he didn't stop
there.

SARAH
What do you mean?

JOHNNY
He also insinuated things about
you and me.

SARAH
About us? What kind of things?
Did he say anything about you and
J.J.?

JOHNNY
No, but it's only a matter of
time. The facts are out there --
dates, birthdays. If anyone made
a point of doing the math...

SARAH
J.J. can't find out this way.
We've got to be the ones to tell
him.

JOHNNY
I know but...
SARAH
We can't wait too much longer.

Johnny thinks.

JOHNNY
I'll talk to this guy again, see if I can get him to lay off.

PRELAP:  ROARING HARLEYS

OMITTED

EXT. RADIO STATION BUILDING - DAY

A half dozen GRIZZLED BIKERS led by Tiny, his "old lady" perched behind him holding a BOOMBOX, pull up on their hogs.

JERICHO (RADIO)
...Who's this I see coming? Looks like Tiny and the "Love Riders."

OMITTED

INT. RADIO STATION - BROADCAST BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Jericcho is scanning the street with his binoculars. He's cued an appropriate b.g. song like "Born to be Wild."

JERICHO
The very idea of a bunch of knuckle-dragging bikers banding together to pursue a higher calling is a joke. They're too low down on the evolutionary scale...

OF TINY DISMOUNTING AT THE CURB.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

His girlfriend's apparently playing the broadcast on the boombox and he looks mightily pissed.

JERICHO (O.S.)
In fact, calling Tiny here a Neanderthal is an insult to Neanderthals. Remember that monkey with the bone in "2001"? No, that's still too kind. Basically, this guy must've crawled up on land on Saturday, traded his flippers for arms on Sunday, and got 'em tattooed on Monday.

And as Tiny looks right up at us, eyes spelling murder...

EXT. RADIO STATION BUILDING - DAY

As Johnny also pulls up in his Jeep, amidst what's beginning to look like an angry biker convention. As he gets out, a meaty hand lands on his shoulder.

TINY (O.S.)
Hey bro...

VISION - LOW ANGLE - JERICHO

Is being lifted off the ground by two massive tattooed arms, the same tattooed arms from the first vision — Tiny's arms. We're looking up at both of their faces from below, nothing but blue sky framing them, as Tiny shoves Jericho out of frame.

RESUME

Johnny turns to find himself staring up at man-mountain Tiny, and those tattooed arms.

TINY
What floor is the radio station on?

JOHNNY
Sorry, I'm just here to see my dentist.

And with that he rushes off into the building.
Johnny exits the elevator and approaches the front desk, where the Engineer is flirting with the receptionist. Even though we hear Jericho on the air, the broadcast booth is empty, a pre-recorded commercial running. Johnny nods to the empty booth (See Addendum A).

* 

JOHNNY
He didn't just go down, did he?

ENGINEER
Think he went up to the roof.

JOHNNY
The roof?
CONTINUED:

ENGINEER
Yeah, you know -- smoke, take in
the view. It's nice up there.

The receptionist nods in agreement, but Johnny's already
running back to the elevator.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING ROOF - DAY

Johnny bangs through a fire door, only to find the roof
empty. Hearing a COMMOTION -- muffled shouts and curses
from below -- he rushes to the ledge, looks over and sees:

POV FROM ROOF

Jericho being choked by Tiny ten stories below.

EXT. STREET - LOW ANGLE MATCHING VISION

As Tiny lifts Jericho then heaves him. JERICHO flies
like a rag doll and bounces off a car, smacking his head.
A scrum of bikers converge on him, ready for a good old-
fashioned beat-down. They're stopped by a shout.

TINY
No! That's enough.

As they all turn to him, surprised.

TINY
Don't descend to his level. We've
got a Love Rally to get to.

Amid various snorts of assent, they begin mounting up.

JOHNNY rushes out in time to see the bikers roaring off,
then finds Jericho lying by the curb, groggy and groaning.

A SKULL X-RAY IS SLAPPED UP AGAINST AN ILLUMINATED VIEWER

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hmm. Looks like a minor
concussion.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINING ROOM - NIGHT

A muscular black MALE INTERN is studying the X-Ray while
Jericho sits on an examining table, a hospital ID BRACELET
on his wrist. Johnny watches, standing.

(CONTINUED)
INTERN
(to Johnny)
You need to keep him awake for another eight hours.

JOHNNY
Eight hours?

INTERN
If he falls asleep and there's swelling, there's a risk he could end up in a coma.

JERICHO
A coma? Does that mean I could wake up with psychic powers?
(grabs intern's arm, Johnny-style)
I see a malpractice suit in your future.

The Intern jerks his arm away, then eyes Johnny gravely.

INTERN
Tell your friend it's especially important to avoid injuries that could aggravate his condition.

JERICHO
Yeah? What kind of in--hey!

As Johnny jerks him to his feet. To the Intern:

JOHNNY
Thank you, and he's not my friend.

As he hustles him away from the Intern's icy stare...

JERICHO
Where are we going?

JOHNNY
Just about the last place I want to take you.

INT. SMITH HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT
Dimly lit. Locks turn, then Johnny leads Jericho inside.

JERICHO
I didn't ask you to play baby-sitter.

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY
Don't worry. Eight hours from
now, you're on your own.
(stops him)
Hold on.

He works an ALARM PANEL until it beeps off. Jericho notes
the security cameras.

JERICHO
(firing up a Camel)
What's a psychic need security
for anyway -- can't you just use
your third eye?

JOHNNY
I'd rather you didn't smoke.

JERICHO
'Course you'd rather. But since
it doesn't look like you're gonna
throw me out, how about finding
me an ashtray?
(entering living room)
Whoa, hold the phone, big-screen
TV alert. John, tell me you've
got satellite and high def and
I'll take back most of the bad
things I've said about you.

JOHNNY
Satellite, no H.D.

JERICHO
(plopping on the couch)
You're a stiff and a phony.

Johnny hands him an ashtray.

JOHNNY
I brought you here for a reason.
We've got to talk.

JERICHO
Talk, huh? As in really "talk,"
like on Oprah? C'mon John, my
frigging head's pounding like one
of those giant Japanese drums.
Save the male bonding stuff for
later.

Johnny sits across from Jericho.

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY
So why are you doing it?

JERICHO
Doing what, John?

He opens a vial of prescription painkillers, shakes out a few, then tosses them back with a jolt from his flask.

JOHNNY
That for instance.

JERICHO
What are you, my Mom?

JOHNNY

Acting bored, Jericho turns on the TV, starts flipping channels -- and sidesteps the issue.

JERICHO
I just tell it like it is, John. The cold hard truth. And if they had any sense, they'd thank me.

JOHNNY
Instead of sending hate mail?

JERICHO
I worked hard for every one of those letters. And that's something nobody can take from me.

JOHNNY
No. But somebody can take your life. So tell me, is that the plan? Death by talk show?

JERICHO
Oh right, your big scary vision.

JOHNNY
Listen to me, I saw you--

But Jericho cuts him off, flicking off the TV and standing.

JERICHO
No, you listen to me. You want to play psychic head games? Fine.

(MORE)
JERICHO (CONT'D)
Let's see what my third eye tells me about the famous Johnny Smith.
(pacing, rapid-fire)
I see a man with more security cameras in his living room than the Bellagio has in its high roller pit... a man so paranoid about people getting into his hermetic little world that he spies on himself.
(looking around)
I see a man living in a 10,000 square foot mansion, whose only personal decorating touch is a 42-inch plasma TV. I see a lonely screwed up guy who thinks he's some kind of savior, butting into everyone else's business because it keeps him too busy to take a good long look in the mirror.

And we see Johnny react as each point hits home. Much as he dislikes Jericho, the man's insight commands respect.

JERICHO
And now you want to save me. Save me from... what? Cigarettes and booze? Getting my ass kicked? Or maybe the thing you really want to save me from is life, that messy bit of business that everyone else has to deal with. But not you, locked up in Xanadu here, safe from feeling anything that might even approximate a human emotion while you--

JOHNNY
I saw you fall.

And somehow this simple statement stops Jericho cold.

JERICHO
What?

JOHNNY
I saw you falling from a tall building. Ten stories, maybe more.

Jericho remains silent, clearly disturbed. Johnny senses he's touched a nerve, but he's not sure why.
JOHNNY
What's wrong, Jack, fresh out of rants? Or are you thinking maybe, just maybe, someone else is telling the cold hard truth for a change?

In response, Jericho flips on the TV again.

JERICHO
Actually, I was thinking you could at least order some movie channels. Man cannot live on basic cable alone.

The doorbell rings as Johnny stares at him, stymied.

ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR AS IT OPENS, REVEALING WALT
His cruiser is in the driveway, light bar flashing.

JOHNNY
Walt?

WALT
It's J.J. He's missing.

As Johnny reacts...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. WALT'S CRUISER - NIGHT

Walt driving, Johnny beside him, Jericho in the back.

JERICHO
I can't believe this.
(when they turn)
I can't believe I'm doing a ride-along with Sheriff Bannerman...
I'm about to meet the lovely Sarah --
all my favorite characters from
"As the Psychic Turns."

WALT
(to Johnny; disgusted)
Tell me again why your friend's here?

JOHNNY
It's a long story, but basically
he's got a concussion and I've
got to keep an eye on him.
(a glance at Jericho)
And he's not my friend.

JERICHO
And I thought we were bonding.

JOHNNY & WALT
Shut up!

Jericho sits back, Johnny turns to Walt...

JOHNNY
So what happened?

WALT
Sarah thought he was upstairs
doing his homework, but when he
didn't come down for dinner...

JOHNNY
Did he take anything?

WALT
His jacket. But his bike's still
in the garage, so he couldn't
have gone too far. Unless...
unless someone picked him up.

JOHNNY
It's not your fault, Walt.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
It isn't? I should've been there.

Johnny doesn't know what to say. Jericho's been listening, and now he breaks the silence, his tone no longer flippant.

JERICHO
I ran away when I was nine.
(off their looks)
My parents had just told me they were getting divorced. They'd been separated but I guess I thought they'd get back together again, like always.

And now we shoot from the front, watching Walt's face and Johnny's as Jericho continues.

JERICHO (Cont'd)
So that night I packed my Cub Scout knapsack with extra underwear, my catcher's mitt and my pet turtle, and took off. I got as far as the Little League field, then I realized not only did I have no clue where I was going, I didn't really want to leave. They were still my parents, broken up or not. So I went home.
(beat)
I'm sure your boy will be okay, Sheriff.

Walt nods, moved and grateful, as Johnny eyes Jericho thoughtfully, wondering at this uncharacteristic display of empathy.

INT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A distraught Sarah is letting them in as she updates Walt.

SARAH
I've called all his friends' families. No one's seen or heard from him.

WALT
I've got my guys checking the video parlors, the train station, anywhere he might've gone.

And right now they're just two worried parents, their differences put aside. Sarah reacts to Jericho.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
Sarah, this is Jack Jericho.

Jericho's been hanging back. He nods somewhat sheepishly.

SARAH
(wispering to Johnny)
Isn't he the one on the radio... the one who...?

And now it's Johnny's turn to nod sheepishly.

SARAH
Why's he here?

JOHNNY
It's a long story. Maybe I should check upstairs, see if I can get any hits off of anything.

WALT
I'll make another run around the block.

Sarah's phone rings. She goes to answer. As Johnny heads for the stairs, Jericho trailing...

INT. J.J.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Johnny enters and begins touching various objects; nothing tells him what he needs to know. Our focus, though, is on Jericho, who remains silent, thoughtful and troubled as he takes in the room, its childish furnishings, toys, etc. We sense it's all affecting him. He sees an open window, frowns...

JERICHO
You shouldn't leave windows open.

JOHNNY
If it's bothering you, close it.

Jericho moves to do so, then notices something: a smudge on the sill.

JERICHO
Hey... Mister Psychic.

Johnny comes over, notes the smudge, touches it... WHOOSH. He reacts, surprised, then pokes his head out the window.
EXT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The dormer window protrudes over the steeply sloping roof. Holding onto the window frame, Johnny looks around to the side... and sees J.J. sitting on the roof, knees tucked under his chin.

JOHNNY

Hey, J.J.

J.J.

Hey, Mister Smith.

Jericho pokes his head out the window too.

JERICHO

You mean he's been up there all along?

JOHNNY

Guess so.

Johnny climbs out.

JOHNNY

This seat taken?

J.J.

(shrugs)

I should've figured you'd find me. Who's your friend?

JOHNNY

Long story. And he's not my friend.

(a beat)

This is your secret spot, huh?

(another shrug)

Guess we've all got our secret places. I've got one too.

J.J.

You do?

JOHNNY

Yup.

J.J.

Is it on your roof?

JOHNNY

Well, if I told you, it wouldn't be a secret anymore, would it?

A beat, then J.J. starts to open up a little.
CONTINUED:

J.J.
Are my mom and dad mad?

JOHNNY
No, but they were pretty worried.

J.J.
I heard them looking for me. But
I just wanted to be by myself for
a while... to think, you know?

JOHNNY
What are you thinking about?

J.J.
I dunno... just thinking.
(a beat)
Can you really tell the future?

JOHNNY
Sometimes. Why?

J.J.
Are my parents going to get a
divorce?

JOHNNY
(a long beat)
The truth is J.J.... that's not
something I can predict... only
your mom and dad can answer that.
But there is something I know for
sure. No matter what happens,
your mom and dad love you, and
that's never going to change.

J.J. nods, a little comforted. But just a little.

JOHNNY
Think you're ready to come back
down?

A beat, then J.J. nods again. Johnny helps him back to
the window.

INT. J.J.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As Johnny helps J.J. inside, Walt and Sarah are entering
with Jericho following.

SARAH
Honey! You had us worried sick.
CONTINUED:

She hugs him tight.

WALT

No kidding. What were you doing up there?

J.J.

Nothing...

And as J.J. pulls his father into the family hug...

FINDING JERICHO

hanging back by the door, reacting to this family reunion, uncharacteristically moved. He looks over at...

JOHNNY

who's also standing apart from the scene, feeling shut out again, and yet wondering now whose fault that really is. He turns to the door... and sees Jericho's gone. He's immediately worried.

INT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

As Johnny comes down the stairs, glances around. He notices the front door is open, Jericho having disappeared into the night. He steps onto the porch, looking for him, but finds only his discarded HOSPITAL I.D. TAG. He picks it up, triggering:

REPRISE FALLING VISION

Faster. Farther. More horrific. More real. The woman's face is more distinct. The red orb more mysterious. Jericho's fall ending with even more impact!

OFF JOHNNY

As he comes out of it, profoundly worried now...

EXT. WPOV OFFICE BUILDING - NEXT DAY - ESTABLISHING

Johnny's Jeep parked out front.
Johnny is following Nozawa around as he tends to business. A feel-good therapist D.J., DR. MONICA, is in the booth.

NOZAWA
I'm not sure I understand, Mister Smith. Are you saying he's dangerous?

JOHNNY
Only to himself. I think he might actually want someone to kill him. He's using his radio show to fulfill a death wish.

NOZAWA
After yesterday, that doesn't surprise me.

JOHNNY
Maybe if you could just take him off the air, for a little while, until he can get some help...

NOZAWA
Actually, I can do better than that. I left him a message this morning. He's fired.

JOHNNY
Fired?

This is more than Johnny wanted, and he immediately worries what the effect on Jericho will be.

NOZAWA
Low ratings. Yesterday's little fracas clinched it. I'm trying to run a radio station, not remake "The Wild One."
(indicates DJ booth)
I've got Doctor Monica covering, but my offer still stands if you're interested.

JOHNNY
Isn't there anyone he's close to who could help him? A family member, or a friend?
CONTINUED:

NOZAWA
I'd say you're the closest thing
to a friend he's got right now,
and if you see him, tell him he
can pick up his junk, along with
his last check.

He indicates a couple of TAPED PACKING BOXES near the
booth. Johnny moves closer, sees an AWARD PLAQUE that's
sitting on top of one of them. It says, "1994 COMMUNICATOR
OF THE YEAR." As he picks it up...

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT - VISION - CLOSE ON A WOMAN

Young and pretty, a WEDDING RING visible as she adjusts
Jericho's formal bow tie. He also looks younger and
happier; he's smoking a CIGAR. She teases him playfully:

WOMAN
You're not going to insult them
for giving you an award, are you?

JERICHO
(Groucho)
I refuse to belong to any club
that would have me as a member.

WOMAN
That's the spirit.

And the vision ends on her smile, but in an odd way: a
glint of another woman's REFLECTION -- or is it the same
woman? -- briefly shimmering over, only this face is
contorted in horror, hands half covering a mouth frozen
in a silent scream...

RESUME JOHNNY

As he turns back to Nozawa...

JOHNNY
He has a wife... or an ex-wife.

NOZAWA
Well, you know, he did mention an
ex once or twice.

The receptionist holds up a phone for him. As he walks
away:

(CONTINUED)
NOZAWA
(re: Engineer)
Talk to Jerry, he might know how to get ahold of her.

Off Johnny, studying the award, as we PRE-LAP the muted sound of a piano student playing a hesitant waltz.
CLOSE ANGLE - A POST-IT WITH A STREET ADDRESS

PULLING BACK to reveal Johnny checking it as he sits in his Jeep. He's parked by the curb alongside:

EXT. JERICHO'S EX-WIFE'S HOUSE - DAY

A modest two-story affair. The piano music stops. A long beat, then the door opens and MARGARET JERICHO, older now and careworn, ushers out a ten-year old girl carrying music books. As he gets out of the Jeep, Johnny watches Margaret bend to zip the girl's jacket a little tighter, then stroke her hair. We can see the affection in the gestures, and the loneliness.

MOVING WITH JOHNNY as he heads up the front walk, calling to Margaret as she's about to close the door.

JOHNNY
Ms. Jericho? Hi, my name is John Smith.

MARGARET
And my last name isn't Jericho any more. What do you want?

JOHNNY
I was hoping I could talk to you about your ex-husband, Jack.

She's taken aback by the mention of his name.

MARGARET
I'm sorry. That was a long time ago. It's not something I want to discuss.

JOHNNY
I understand. If you won't talk to me, maybe you could give him a call. He's in a kind of bad way and could really use a friend.

MARGARET
I haven't talked to Jack in years and I'm not about to start, no matter what kind of trouble he's in. I'm sorry you wasted your time. Goodbye.

She shuts the door and locks it. Defeated, Johnny takes a few steps down the walk... then goes back, reaches out and touches the door with his fingertips. A Dead Zone WHOOSH as --
To find Margaret leaning on the other side and sobbing quietly. Camera lingers on her a beat, then reverses its motion, going back through the door to find --

realizing there's clearly still some deep connection between Jericho and his ex-wife. But that doesn't make it any easier to reach her. He takes a CARD for the radio station from his wallet, slips it under the door.

as it slips under. Margaret, still crying, looks down.

Ms. Jericho, if you change your mind, you can reach him through the radio station. I'm sorry I bothered you.

As he walks away, camera lingers a beat on Margaret, still looking at the card but making no move to pick it up.

Johnny pulls up to find J.J. playing STREET HOCKEY with TWO FRIENDS out front. Johnny gets out and approaches.

Hey, J.J.

Hey, Johnny.

Your mom home?

J.J. shakes his head as he passes the ball to a friend.

She had a job interview, she'll be back in a little while.

(a little suspicious)

Why do you want to see her?

Just wanted to tell her something.

He picks up a hockey stick lying on the curb.

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY

Hey, pass it here.

J.J. smiles, shoots him the ball. But as it hits Johnny's stick, we RAMP from it up the stick to Johnny and into --

INT. BANNERMAN LIVING ROOM - DAY - VISION

Where Johnny, Walt and Sarah sit with J.J. -- and we don't need to hear the words to know that J.J. has just been told Johnny is his father. He looks from Sarah, to Walt, to Johnny, a look of betrayal growing across his face as he shakes his head "no". Sarah tries to wrap him in a motherly hug, but he pulls away and runs out, confused and devastated. Walt looks to Johnny and Sarah, then goes after him. Sarah squeezes Johnny's arm supportively, then follows, leaving him alone, his own expression as pained as his son's. It went about as badly as it could.

J.J. (O.S.)

C'mon, shoot it back!

Vision Johnny turns as we --

RESUME SCENE

Looking very unsettled, Johnny shoots the ball back.

JOHNNY

Tell your mom I stopped by, okay?

J.J.

'Kay.

He's already back into his game, shouting and laughing with his friends. Johnny gets back in his Jeep, watches J.J. for a beat, then his eyes track --

THE RED BALL

as it skitters from stick to stick.

OMITTED

RESUME JOHNNY

The ball recalling something else: the mysterious falling orb. Another fragment of the visionary puzzle he's trying to piece together.

(CONTINUED)
But now his phone rings, snapping him out of it. He answers.

JOHNNY

Bruce?
INT. JOHNNY'S JEEP - DAY

JERICHO (RADIO, Cont'd)
"The Cold Hard Truth" with Jack Jericho.

And as Johnny steps on the gas and roars away...

END OF ACT THREE
FADE IN:

EXT. RADIO STATION BUILDING - NIGHT

Darkness is falling as Johnny pushes his way through a small but growing crowd, all looking up. Many people are listening to headphones or portable radios; a few aim videocams. A DAD holds up his SON, who points to the roof. Walt and Bruce are waiting to usher Johnny inside.

WALT
Looks like your friend really went off the deep end. He's been asking for you.

JOHNNY
(once again, weary)
He's not my... never mind.

BRUCE
He's demanding that you get your ass on the air... his words.

Johnny reacts as Walt holds a door open, telling Bruce:

WALT
Stick with John. I'll be up on the roof.

INT. RADIO STATION - RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Uproar among the small staff. A COUPLE OF COPS are up here too. Nozawa leads Johnny and Bruce toward the broadcast booth, where Doctor Monica is at the mic.

NOZAWA
Doctor Monica's been trying to talk sense to him.

INT. BROADCAST BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Without much success it seems, as they enter to find her coming unglued.

DOCTOR MONICA
Now, Jack, let's be honest...
DEAD ZONE: COLD HARD TRUTH - ACT FOUR - 11/27/03 - BLUE 43.

73 CONTINUED:

JERICHO (V.O.)
Sure, Doc, and why don't you start by telling your listeners how your husband left you, your kids disowned you, and that the reason you keep talking about good sex is to remind yourself what it felt like -- back in junior high.

DOCTOR MONICA
(losing it)
You can't talk to me that way you sonofabitch!

NOZAWA
Doc, this is Johnny Smith, the man Jack's been--

DOCTOR MONICA
He's all yours. I don't have to take this crap!

She storms out in tears, the latest victim of Jericho's vitriol. The three men look after her, then Johnny eyes the D.J. desk and its myriad controls uncertainly. Bruce takes charge, sliding in behind the console.

BRUCE
Don't worry, I'll hook you up.
(for Nozawa's benefit)
I practically ran my college radio station.

A cop raps on the glass, needing to speak with Nozawa.

NOZAWA
Good luck.

He exits as Johnny sits in front of the microphone, then leans forward tentatively.

JOHNNY
Jack?

And that single resonant word causes a FEEDBACK HUM that Bruce quickly brings under control as we --

74 INTERCUT: EXT. RADIO STATION BUILDING - ROOF - NIGHT 74

JERICHO is still pacing on the ledge, Walt and his deputies keeping their distance, remaining in the rooftop doorway.

(CONTINUED)
JERICHO
John! Glad you could make the party. I was just about to blow out the candles.

JOHNNY
(takes a breath)
Jack--

JERICHO
(rapid fire)
"Jack, you don't have to do it!" "You've got so much to live for!" "Think about your loved ones!" Please, John, don't demean yourself. I didn't ask you here to "talk me down."

JOHNNY
No? Then why?

JERICHO
To bear witness to the fulfillment of your prophecy, of course! That's right, folks, we all owe this hugely entertaining spectacle to the one and only Man From Cleaves Mills.
(to Johnny)
When you told me how you saw me going out -- not with a bang or a whimper but after achieving my own personal terminal velocity -- I gotta admit, it struck a chord.

JOHNNY
Nobody wants you to do this, Jack.

JERICHO
Let's just see about that, shall we? All right, campers, it's time for another "Cold Hard Truth" poll! Do I stay or do I go? Suicide jump or suicide chump? Next ten callers decide. Go ahead and spin a record, Johnny, while the folks at home make up their minds.

And indeed Bruce cues up a record (in an ideal world, The Clash's "Should I Stay or Should I Go?"), to Johnny's disbelief.
JOHNNY
What are you doing?

BRUCE
Buying us some time. I've worked enough suicide hotlines to know he's not joking. Our call board's already filling up with unfriendly voices. We need a plan.

JERICHO (RADIO)
C'mon, John, I know those calls are coming in. Punch a button, let's hear one.

Johnny's feeling the pressure, knowing he can't talk Jericho down unless he understands clearly what got him up there. Then his eyes fall on...

THE PACKING BOXES MARKED "JERICHO"
They trigger a desperate hope.

JOHNNY
grabs one of the boxes, then punches the first of a row of blinking call buttons.

JOHNNY
Umm, okay, we have, um...

Bruce holds up a piece of paper for him to read.

JOHNNY
...Thelma in Bangor. You're on the air.

TIPSY YOUNG WOMAN
Yeah, I've been listening to this guy for a year and all he does is trash people day in, day out. I think he should jump.

As Johnny tears open the box...

JERICHO (RADIO)
Thank you Thelma from Bangor. That's it people, don't hold back. Keep 'em coming, John.
CLOSE ANGLE - ONE OF THE BOXES

Office supplies, old calendars and files, yellow pads, souvenirs, miscellaneous junk. Johnny paws through it as he punches another button...

JOHNNY
Bill from Plymouth: you're on the air.

GRUFF GUY
I called in from my body shop, and Jericho made me sound like a schmuck. The guys all laughed their heads off. I hope he lands on his head.

Meanwhile, John rips open the second box, finding more of the same bric-a-brac. Johnny's frustration is growing.

JOHNNY
I guess that's a vote for "jump." Who's next?

EARNEST YOUNG WOMAN
Hi, my name's Marie, and I abhor violence of any kind -- but in this case...

Johnny angrily dumps the contents of the box on the floor. He stands over the mess, at a loss, then something catches his eye: a flash of color in an unsealed envelope. It's a child's birthday card. As Johnny picks it up --

INT. JERICHO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - VISION

Jericho, alone with a half-empty bottle of scotch. He starts to write a note in the card, but can't get past the name "Aaron." He gives up, tosses the card in his TOTE BAG to finish another time -- then he reaches over, and slams shut the drawer full of similar birthday cards we saw earlier.

RESUME SCENE

Johnny opens the card, still blank except for the name -- a letter that was apparently never sent -- and suddenly something clicks in his head. To Bruce:

JOHNNY
Take over.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BRUCE
Take over? Where are you going?

But he's already out the door, card in his hand. Bruce looks at all the flashing lights, then hits a button.

BRUCE
"Cold Hard Truth," you're on the air.

EXT. RADIO STATION ROOF - NIGHT

Jericho standing quietly now on the ledge, listening to his radio, staring out at the twinkling cityscape.

FRAT GUY (RADIO)
Hey, man, my whole fraternity took a vote, and we say he takes the dive, so does that count for more than one?

BRUCE (RADIO)
Not a lot of love in that house, is there Brad?

FRAT GUY (RADIO)
Hey, if the guy wants to take a header off a building, that's his business. We just want to watch it on the tube, right dudes? (laughter)

JOHNNY (O.S.)
At least we know you're not doing it for them.

Jericho turns to see Johnny approaching, Walt hanging a little distance behind him, holding Johnny's cane.

JERICHO
John? You abandoned your post.

JOHNNY
I just wanted to talk to you, face to face.

JERICHO
That's close enough. I'm serious.

JOHNNY
I know you are. I think I also know why.
Johnny steps onto the ledge, a few yards from Jericho.

JERICHO
John, I'm warning you, back the hell off.

JOHNNY
Tell me about Aaron...

He holds out the card. Jericho recognizes the card and reacts, suddenly weary, as if the very word "Aaron" sapped him of his strength.

CLOSE ON - THE CARD HELD OUT IN THE AIR BETWEEN THEM

as Jericho's hand, almost unwilled, comes up to grasp the other edge of it. And as he does so, camera does a 180 around Johnny, who now finds himself in --

INT. HIGH-RISE HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT - VISION

He's watching a YOUNGER JERICHO, wearing a tux (it's still before the awards ceremony alluded to in the earlier hotel vision) and arguing with his agent on a hotel telephone. A MAID is cleaning up in the b.g.

YOUNGER JERICHO
Ari, if they want to go national, fine, but the hell with this "let's try-it-for-a-few-months" crap.

And now a YOUNGER MRS. JERICHO walks by, holding a TODDLER BOY who's clutching a TOY (Teddy Bear, action figure, etc). She deposits him on the floor, says to Jericho --

YOUNGER MRS. JERICHO
Watch him for a moment, will you?

Younger Jericho nods absently, goes back to his phonecall.

YOUNGER JERICHO
Look, either they commit to a long-term deal or they can screw themselves.

Meanwhile, the maid reacts to a smelly old cigar sitting in an ashtray on a table by the windows. She opens a window to let the odor out, then picks up the ashtray and exits... and now we see a RED BALL sitting on the same table, right by the window sill.

(CONTINUED)
VISION JOHNNY

reacts to the ball, then turns to look at the boy, a terrible realization dawning. Jericho, meanwhile, continues his phone diatribe...
YOUNGER JERICHO

Ari, I don't care whether you like the deal, what matters is whether I like it.

And meanwhile, the boy, bored with his toy, has spied the ball, and clambers up on a couch to reach for it. He accidentally knocks it onto the window sill, starts to climb out further after it, perilously close to the edge...

YOUNGER JERICHO

That's right, you work for me. I call the shots.

And now he turns, finally seeing the danger.

YOUNGER JERICHO

Aaron, no!

And he drops the phone as he rushes after his son, reaching out for him as we transition into excruciating SLOW MOTION, his fingertips almost brushing the boy's clothing.

And then the boy is gone. Jericho rushes to the window and looks down, a wave of vertigo gripping him and we realize that the fall in Johnny's vision was his son's, a fall that Jericho has experienced every day of his life like a waking nightmare. He turns away, sees his wife's horrified REFLECTION in the adjacent window glass as she begins to scream, and we --

RESUME RADIO STATION ROOF - NIGHT

JOHNNY

Oh my God, Jack. I had no idea.
It wasn't just you I saw fall -- it was your son, too.

Jericho holds the phone away so he's not broadcasting.

JERICHO

His name was Aaron. He would've been ten years old. Just about the same age as your son.

Johnny reacts, surprised Jericho knows this. Jericho sees his reaction and laughs.

JERICHO

Oh, come on Johnny. The second I saw you and J.J. together you think it wasn't obvious? Does he know?

(CONTINUED)
Johnny's lack of an answer speaks volumes.

JERICHO
Well. I guess we have more in common than I thought. Both of us know what it means to lose a son. The only difference is -- I can't get mine back.
(takes a beat to regain his composure)
But you still can. How's that for some cold hard truth?

JOHNNY
Jack...

JERICHO
Don't worry, Johnny. Your secret will die with me.
(beat)
Not a day goes by that I don't relive that moment, imagine what it must've felt like, how he must've felt, during those last few seconds of life.

JOHNNY
It was an accident. You couldn't have known the maid opened the window.

And now Jericho backs away from him, suddenly angry.

JERICHO
Do you think that changes anything? Do you think your knowing changes anything?

And indeed if Johnny thought this visionary epiphany would defuse Jericho's suicide plans, he's mistaken. For as Jericho inches closer to the edge...

OLD WOMAN (RADIO)
...He's a sinner and I say jump.

JERICHO
Numero Nine and Closer my God to Thee.

He backs still closer to the edge, the city spreading out on both sides of him, and laughs. Walt, meanwhile, seeing that Jericho is about to jump, talks quietly to a deputy.
WALT
Stay close. If he goes, I don't want him taking John with him.

JOHNNY
Listen, Jack. You don't need to do this.

JERICHO
C'mon, Bruce, we're dyin' out here! Where's that tenth caller?

INT. RADIO STATION - BROADCAST BOOTH - NIGHT
Where Bruce is desperately screening calls, punching through the call board trying to find at least one sympathetic voice.

BRUCE
Cold Hard Truth--

MALE CALLER 1 (V.O.)
--What's he waiting for?

BRUCE
--Cold Hard--

FEMALE CALLER 1 (V.O.)
--He told my sister to--

BRUCE
--Cold--

MALE CALLER 2 (V.O.)
--You wanna know my opinion? Good riddance to--

BRUCE
--Cold Hard Truth--

TENTATIVE WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Hello? Who is this?

And as Bruce pauses, hearing something different in this tentative voice...

EXT. RADIO STATION ROOF - NIGHT
CLOSE ON ONE OF JERICHO'S HEELS as it inches out over the edge, the abyss yawning on all sides.
JOHNNY
Jack, wait. If you jump, who's
going to tell us the cold hard
truth? Think of your fans. They
won't have anyone to hate.

JERICHO
You're kidding right?

JOHNNY
I had to try something.

JERICHO
I'm going to miss having you to
kick around, Johnny.
(to phone)
C'mon Bruce, last call.

Johnny's cell rings. As he answers, we hear a subtle
Dead Zone WHOOSH.

JOHNNY
Bruce?

82  INT. RADIO STATION - BROADCAST BOOTH

BRUCE
Guess who called in?

83  RESUME ROOFTOP

Johnny listens, then makes a decision.

JOHNNY
Put her through on my line.

A beat, then he holds out the phone to Jericho.

JOHNNY
It's your ex-wife. She wants to
talk to you.

A glimmer of something passes over Jericho's face, but
then he considers and his expression hardens again.

JERICHO
Guess what John? I'm through
talking. Tell her I said goodbye.

And he launches himself backwards over the edge! Walt
and the deputy rush forward, grabbing hold of Johnny,
even as Johnny watches, horrified as --
Looking up, a strange smile on his face.

People scatter, screaming, as Jericho SMASHES into the roof of a parked car, blowing out the windows and setting off the alarm.

Still staring aghast, the alarm echoing up from the street. Walt grips his shoulder.

WALT
It's over.

And indeed it is... the vision, that is... as the scene now resets itself and Johnny once again finds himself with his phone to his ear as he eyes Jericho. This time, he makes a different decision.

JOHNNY
Wait. Bruce, put her on the air.

A beat, then Margaret's voice comes over Jericho's radio.

TENTATIVE WOMAN'S VOICE (RADIO)
Jack? Can you hear me?
(beat)
Jack, it's me, Margaret.

And this time, Jericho is caught unawares by a voice he hasn't heard in years. For a moment, he doesn't think, just reacts. Seeing this, Johnny presses him gently.

JOHNNY
Go ahead. Take the call.

And after a beat, Jericho slowly raises his cell phone.

JERICHO
Margaret...
CONTINUED:

MARGARET
Jack... why are you doing this?

JERICHO
You know why.

MARGARET
No, I don't. I really don't. Can you at least try and tell me?

INT. CONTROL ROOM – CONTINUOUS – BRUCE LISTENING
To silence. And then a couple of halting words:

JERICHO (MONITOR)
It's just...

And as Jericho's voice catches and echoes, we see:

QUICK MONTAGE OF REACTIONS
Everyone listening in stunned silence.
- JOHNNY standing still on the ledge...
- BRUCE, his finger on the volume control...
- THE CROWD watching silently, suddenly worried about Jericho...
- WALT and his men, poised...
- SARAH watching a live TV NEWSCAST (a simple videocam
POV of the roof from street-level, with overlaid station
I.D.).
- MARGARET on the phone, holding a picture of her and
Jericho with Aaron.

MARGARET
Jack...?

RESUME ROOFTOP

JERICHO
Margaret... I...

Jericho's feet are still at the very edge; it seems like
he could go either way.
CONTINUED:

MARGARET (RADIO)
...I know, Jack. I know. We never talked about it. Not really. We couldn't. But maybe now we can...

JOHNNY watches as Jericho's feet shift... WALT tenses... and then finally Jericho steps back onto the roof.

Walt and the deputies immediately rush in, guide him away. Johnny steps down too, exhaling with relief. He watches as Jericho sits on an old crate, the deputies forming a protective cordon around him, then starts talking on his cell. Realizing that it's a conversation that deserves privacy, Johnny pulls out his own cell, speed dials.

JOHNNY
Bruce... no one needs to hear this.

INT. RADIO STATION - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bruce is already selecting a record.

BRUCE
I'm way ahead of you.
(hangs up)
And this is Da Kid, signing off for Jack Jericho. Got something different for your ears. More Truth, this time from the King of Soul.

And he plays something smooth, something appropriate, maybe not from Solomon Burke, but it's definitely got some soul in it.

EXT. RADIO STATION BUILDING - NIGHT

The crowd, emotionally drained, starts to break up, a few people glancing up at the roof as police usher them away.

EXT. RADIO STATION ROOF - NIGHT

Johnny pockets his phone, is about to leave...

JERICHO
John...

He's lowered his own phone for a moment... means to say something to Johnny but now words just fail him. Johnny understands.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A long look and a nod between the two men, then Johnny heads for the rooftop door as we...

FADE OUT:

And over an interlude of darkness, we hear:

YOUNG DUDE (RADIO)
So c'mon, man what do you think of the Sox's chances this year?

FADE IN:

INT. RADIO STATION - BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

A HAND sweetens a cup of coffee with a packet of sugar.

JERICHO
Ah Chad, they say hope springs eternal. They also say there's a sucker born every minute. So what do you think that makes you?

And it sounds like Jericho is being his old bad self, setting up poor Chad for the kill.

CHAD (V.O.)
(nervous chuckle)
I don't know, man.

A beat as Jericho takes a sip, savors it...

JERICHO
An optimist, Chad. An optimist.
(beat)
I guess there's always reason to hope that things can be turned around. Case in point: A sudden surge in ratings, and a radio show and its host are back on the air. Turning a life around is harder. For that we have to be willing to face some hard truths about ourselves... and take some risks. Step onto a ledge, or off of one, as the case may be.

And as he plays a song, source becomes soundtrack over --

INT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - DAY

Walt, Sarah, Johnny and J.J. gathered in the living room.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

It's the prelude to the scene we witnessed in Johnny's vision. Johnny and Walt stand together, looking uncomfortable, while Sarah sits across from J.J.

J.J.
Am I in trouble?

The grownups laugh, breaking the tension.

SARAH
No honey. It's nothing like that. We just have something to tell you... Don't worry, it's a good thing. Something we should have told you a long time ago -- but we wanted to wait until you were old enough to understand...

JOHNNY
...She means until we were old enough...

Walt gives Johnny a look. J.J. finds himself with three adults smiling at him. This only makes him more worried.

J.J.
(still worried)
...yeah... okay....

SARAH
You know J.J., you're so lucky to have such a wonderful Dad, who loves you more than anything in the world. We both do, and that's never going to change.

Walt watches, a bundle of mixed emotions. Johnny squeezes his shoulder.

SARAH
(on the verge of tears)
...But you're even luckier than you know. Some kids don't have any dad to love them, but you...
(a beat)
...You have two dads. And both of them love you very much.

We see this soak in on J.J.'s face. He looks to Walt, searching his face for an answer to the questions swirling in his head, then, as the penny drops, he looks to Johnny.

J.J.
What do you mean, two dads?

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
Johnny is your biological father.

J.J.
...What? No... wait...

Sarah tries to wrap him in a hug, but he pulls away, turning to Walt.

J.J.
...That's not true... Dad?

Walt's expression tells J.J. what he doesn't want to hear.

J.J.
No. I don't believe you...

JOHNNY

But J.J. is overwhelmed. He pulls away from Sarah and, like in Johnny's earlier vision, pushes past Walt and runs to his room, slamming the door. Walt looks to Johnny and Sarah, then goes after J.J., leaving Sarah and Johnny alone. Johnny looks devastated. Sarah squeezes his arm.

SARAH
I should...

Johnny nods, understanding the Bannerman family needs to be together now. Sarah follows Walt and J.J. into the bedroom, leaving Johnny alone, fulfilling his vision. Sad and drained, Johnny picks up his cane and turns to go, but before he reaches the door, Walt pokes his head out of the bedroom door.

WALT
Johnny wait. J.J. has something he wants to ask you.

Walt ushers a tentative J.J. out the bedroom door. J.J. sticks close to Walt, wiping his eyes as he gets up his nerve.

JOHNNY
What is it J.J.?

J.J.
What am I supposed to call you?

JOHNNY

Johnny reaches out to put a hand on J.J.'s

(CONTINUED)
shoulder, and his touch seems to comfort J.J., releasing a flood of pent up emotion in both of them, and as Walt and Sarah watch through tears, the touch develops into a hug that's been a long time coming.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END
FOR SCENE 39, page 23A:

JERICHO

Damn, I'm hungry. Anybody else out there hungry?

(exaggerated ad voice)
And you know when I'm hungry, I hustle on down to the Lucky Dragon Chinese Restaurant. Yes, there's nothing like the Lucky Dragon for food that really sticks to your ribs -- before metastasizing into a flesh-eating virus. Yup, an hour later, you're not only hungry again, you're a skeleton, so you can dig into your Kung Pao with the confidence that soon you'll be shedding pounds faster than a bulimic with the runs. No, seriously, folks, the Lucky Dragon is a fine establishment. I do all my drinking there and I hear the food is good too, so don't miss it on your next night out in beautiful downtown Bangor.