

# *I'm In Hell*

"Pilot"

Written by

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2<sup>nd</sup> REVISED NETWORK DRAFT  
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COLD OPENING

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. HUMMER - DAY

A gargantuan yellow Hummer speeds down a freeway. At the wheel is NICK PIPER -- 28, handsome, cocky, and carefree. Nick closes in on a tiny Prius, tailgates it, and BLASTS his horn. The terrified Prius driver wildly swerves over three lanes to get out of Nick's way. Nick smiles and accelerates.

NICK (V.O.)

I admit it. I've done bad things.

INT. LOBBY/ELEVATOR - DAY

Nick gets on an elevator and punches his floor.

NICK (V.O.)

Sometimes I was inconsiderate.

An ELDERLY MAN is shuffling for the same elevator.

ELDERLY MAN

(out of breath)

Hold the elevator... Hold the...

NICK

Take your time. I'm pressing the button.

REVEAL: Nick is pressing the CLOSE DOORS button repeatedly.

ELDERLY MAN

Thank you... That parking garage is so--

The doors shut in his face as Nick does the international "I can't explain this crazy elevator" shrug.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Nick is working at his desk.

NICK (V.O.)

I wasn't always a team player.

A CO-WORKER approaches.

CO-WORKER

Hey, Nick. Jeff made vice president! We're taking him out to celebrate.

NICK

(seething envy)

Jeff made VP?

Nick sees JEFF being congratulated by the gang.

NICK (CONT'D)  
I'll catch up with you. I still  
have a little work to finish.

INT. JEFF'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Nick slips into Jeff's empty office and starts typing on his computer.

INT. BAR - LATER

The office gang is assembled. Nick is toasting Jeff.

NICK  
...and how about Jeff's sense of  
humor? Wicked, huh? Even when he  
pushes it a little too far, like  
that joke he e-mailed everybody about  
the black guy and the Chinese woman...

Nick looks from face to face to make sure he's covered every race and persuasion.

NICK (CONT'D)  
...and the fat -- gay -- Hindu in  
the lifeboat.

JEFF  
(confused)  
What joke did I e-mail?

NICK  
(suddenly serious)  
Personally, Jeff, I was really  
offended.

As is everyone else. Jeff gulps, his throat slit.

INT. JEFF'S/NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Whistling merrily, Nick moves his stuff into Jeff's old office.

CO-WORKER (O.S.)  
Hey, everybody, Nick made vice  
president!

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

There's a knock on the door. Nick goes to open it.

NICK (V.O.)  
And I wasn't the greatest boyfriend.

A pretty woman, DEBBIE, bursts in, giddy, wheeling a suitcase.

DEBBIE

Nick, I did it! Just what you told me to do. I told Frank I wanted out. I said he could keep the house, the car, I didn't care. Because I met the guy I wanted to be with the rest of my life.

She happily waits for his reaction.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Well?

NICK

What's that on your collarbone? Is that a mole?

DEBBIE

It's a birthmark. Why?

NICK

I just never noticed it before.

Nick looks at Debbie's suitcase.

NICK (CONT'D)

It kind of changes everything.

INT./EXT. HUMMER - RESUME

NICK (V.O.)

All in all, I wasn't good news.

Nick drives fast, talking on a SHINY, FANCY CELL PHONE.

NICK (CONT'D)

Kevin, what's happening? Yeah, I'm on my new phone, the Triax 9000. It's top of the line, does everything. (punching buttons) I'm text messaging you right now. Did you get it? Yeah, it says you're fired. You're replaced by my phone.

Nick weaves in and out of heavy traffic, cutting it close.

NICK (CONT'D)

It's just a lot faster and more stylish than you are, Kev. Hey, I do feel terrible doing this! You should see my face. In fact, you can.

Nick holds the phone at arm's length, makes a mock pouty face, and photographs himself.

NICK (CONT'D)  
(fiddling with phone)  
Let's see -- how do I send photos?

Badly distracted by his phone, Nick doesn't notice that TRAFFIC HAS STOPPED. He finally looks up.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Uh...

He SWERVES to avoid a collision and the Hummer SAILS OFF the road, FLIPS, and rolls down a steep embankment.

INT. OFFICE - SAME TIME

The beleaguered assistant, KEVIN, holds the phone to his ear, listening to the sound of a GRUESOME WRECK.

KEVIN  
(on phone)  
Nick? Nick?

A smile slowly creeps over Kevin's face.

EXT. HUMMER - SAME TIME

The partially destroyed Hummer finally comes to rest at the bottom of a ravine.

NICK (O.S.)  
As it turned out, dying horribly was just the beginning of my day. Things were about to get a lot worse.

FADE OUT:

END OF COLD OPENING

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

We're CLOSE on a blurry ANGELIC FACE, smiling sweetly.

FOCUS and WIDEN to reveal that it's a peeling PAINTING of a fat cherub sitting astride a hog, adorning the sign on a shabby shop called "Angel's Meats."

Nick becomes aware that he's sitting on a bus stop bench on a city STREET.

SCOTT (O.S.)  
How you feeling, Nick?

Nick turns to a young, sharply-dressed guy next to him, SCOTT.

NICK  
Kind of weird.

SCOTT  
It's probably because you're dead.

NICK  
Huh? No! I have a distinct memory of being in an O.R. and the surgeons were really happy, and were giving each other the thumb's up.

SCOTT  
That's when they harvested your liver. Thanks to you, a grandma in Seattle can drink again.

The truth sinks in.

NICK  
I'm dead? My God... that's tragic.

SCOTT  
Yeah, big loss for mankind. I'm Scott, by the way. We have some stuff to go over.

Nick looks around at the gritty urban environment: old cars, empty newspaper boxes, garbage cans.

NICK  
I thought heaven would be a lot nicer than this.

SCOTT  
Heaven is a lot nicer.

NICK (O.S.)

(shit)  
Oh.

SCOTT

Yeah.

NICK

Hell? This doesn't look like hell,  
either. Where's the... red?

SCOTT

Here's the thing. We have a  
situation. You are without question  
fully deserving of hell--

NICK

I have a big problem with that. I  
do not deserve hell. Do you know  
how much I gave to charity?

SCOTT

I know how much you claimed on your  
taxes. I also know how much you  
really gave.

NICK

(beat)  
I always bought Paul Newman salad  
dressing. Did you count that?

SCOTT

You should be in hell, but hell is --  
full.

NICK

How can hell be full?

SCOTT

People are getting meaner, and fatter.  
So we've had to adjust, and you're  
in our new pilot program -- "Hell on  
Earth."

Scott gestures to the surroundings.

NICK

So I'm in...?

SCOTT

Akron, Ohio.

NICK

Oh, God. The Flyover.

SCOTT

The what?

NICK

The Flyover. The boring part of the country between New York and L.A. that people like me fly over. I've seen pictures, but...

(looks around in disgust)

So everyone in Akron is in hell?

SCOTT

No, most folks are here to work in the tire factories. Did you know Akron is the rubber capital of the world? There are some really nice places around here. But not where you'll be living.

Scott indicates a particularly grubby-looking brownstone across the street.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Let's go take a look.

They stand up. A pigeon drops some shit on Nick's shoulder.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Get used to that.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

They are in a very small, dismal apartment.

SCOTT

We tried to make it as lousy as we could. You've got a view of a brick wall, three-legged couch, kind of a general mothball smell....

We hear muffled -- but not muffled enough -- voices.

DRUNKEN WOMAN (O.S.)

Don't you walk away from me! You come back here. Don't you walk away from me!

DRUNKEN MAN (O.S.)

I am walking away from you. I am walking away from you!

SFX: A CRASH of a pot being thrown.

SCOTT

...Neighbors.

NICK

How thin are these walls?

DRUNKEN MAN (O.S.)  
 (pounds on walls)  
Shut up over there!

Scott walks over to the kitchenette.

SCOTT  
 Four burner stove, one of which works.  
 Drippy faucet. Don't waste time  
 trying to fix it -- it's set for  
 eternity.

Scott looks at the floor, displeased.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 Where are those roaches? There were  
 supposed to be roaches.

Nick opens the fridge.

NICK  
 Found 'em.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick opens a closet door, revealing some mismatched cheap  
 clothes.

SCOTT  
 Your wardrobe.

NICK  
 Where'd you get this stuff?

SCOTT  
 A thrift store was going out of  
 business and selling everything for  
 a dime.

He pulls out a green and brown checked shirt.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 This is the stuff that was left.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Scott flips on the light switch of a dank old bathroom.

SCOTT  
 The shower's a little yucky, so you  
 might want to wear flip-flops. And  
 pants.

Scott feels the material of a towel.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 Huh. Soft.

He gathers up all the towels.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
I'll send over something else.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick and Scott enter from the hall.

NICK  
I can't handle this. I can't be  
cooped up in this dump all day.

SCOTT  
Relax. You get to leave. To go to  
work.

NICK  
I'm in hell and I have to get a job?

SCOTT  
We provide placement assistance. In  
fact, I think I've found something  
perfect...

Scott holds out the paper for Nick to read.

NICK  
(reading)  
"Children's party entertainer. No  
experience required. Must be able  
to dance for hours in 40 pound costume  
with unventilated head." No way.

SCOTT  
Nick, this isn't heaven, where Marilyn  
Monroe's walking around with a plate  
of sandwiches. If you don't work,  
you don't eat. If you don't eat...

NICK  
What, I starve? I can't die again.

SCOTT  
No, but you'll get really, really  
hungry.

Nick sighs and takes the newspaper. As he does--

NICK  
Ow! Paper cut.

SCOTT  
Ouch. That's gonna happen. A lot.  
(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Every day will be a grab bag of torments -- splinters, stepping in puddles, hot coffee spilled in your lap, guys next to you in elevators with horrible breath...

NICK

Really. Well, I guess I've got no choice but to make the best of--

Nick lunges for the door. He grabs the knob, and ZAP! He gets a nasty shock and lets go.

SCOTT

And static electricity is gonna be a real bitch for you, too.

Nick picks up the phone.

NICK

Fun and games are over. I'm calling my old buddies in L.A. and they're going to bail me out.

SCOTT

(mocking)

"Hi, it's Nick, the dead guy. You were at my funeral. I'm in the Flyover. Send money!"

(then)

Your "friends" have already forgotten you. Don't take that away from them.

Nick puts the phone down.

NICK

Fine. I'll start a new life. I'll take the first flight out of here...

Nick opens his wallet. He's dismayed.

NICK (CONT'D)

What kind of seat can I get for two dollars?

(re drivers license)

And my name is now "Nick Crapster?"  
Aw, c'mon!

SCOTT

I wanted to give you something different, but they wouldn't put it in the phone book.

(then)

Okay. Did I leave anything out?

NICK

Of course you didn't leave anything out. Name something else that could make my life worse.

A disreputable-looking slob, FISHER, now drifts in the open door, scratching his head.

FISHER

Uh, hey, I'm answering the ad for the roommate?

Fisher stops scratching and inspects his fingers.

FISHER (CONT'D)

Weird.

NICK

(to Scott)  
That's just showing off.

SCOTT

(to Fisher)  
Take a look around.

FISHER

This is so much better than my last place. Look at all these walls!

Fisher begins to explore the apartment. Nick turns to Scott.

NICK

Please, I'm begging you. I know I've made mistakes, but don't do this to me. I'm sorry.

Scott gives Nick an appraising look.

SCOTT

Well... It sounds like someone's learned his lesson.

NICK

(hopeful)  
My lesson?

SCOTT

None of this is really happening, Nick. It's a giant hallucination you're having on the operating table. In a little while you're going to wake up. And maybe, just maybe, you'll start treating people better.

Overcome with relief, Nick starts blubbering like Jimmy Stewart at the end of "It's a Wonderful Life."

NICK

I knew it was something like that!  
Thank you, thank you! From this  
point on, I'll change, I'll--

SCOTT

(laughing)  
I'm screwing with you! You're dead  
and you're in hell. Have a bad day,  
Nick.

Scott exits as Fisher returns.

FISHER

Should we do a morning bathroom  
schedule? I can take 6 to 11.

NICK

Look, whoever you are, I don't know  
what you've been told, but just get  
out of here. Run away as fast as  
you can. I'm damned.

Fisher considers this.

FISHER

That's okay. I smoke.

Fisher lights up a cigarette and starts coughing.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Fisher is arranging a tripod and camera near the coffee table  
while Nick knots his tie in front of the mirror. It comes  
out with the fat end way too long. He begins to retie it.

NICK

...And the real injustice is, right  
before the car crash, I was strongly  
considering volunteering at a salad  
kitchen.

FISHER

Soup kitchen?

NICK

One of those.

Now Nick's tie has come out with the thin end way too long.

NICK (CONT'D)

(exasperated)  
Wrong again...

He pulls it off and tries once more. Nick notices that Fisher  
has posed two crudely-made CLAY FIGURES on the coffee table.

NICK (CONT'D)

What are you doing anyway?

FISHER

I'm making a movie.

(low)

An erotic movie. In claymation.

NICK

Why in claymation?

FISHER

It will appeal to people who like  
porn and also people who like clay.

Fisher clicks the shutter and moves one of the dolls a millimeter closer to the other one. He clicks the shutter.

FISHER (CONT'D)

I've been working on it for nine  
years. I'm almost up to the part  
where they meet.

(as doll)

"Oh, you're not my regular tennis  
instructor."

He shows Nick a tiny clay racket. Nick's re-tied tie has come out with a huge knot and very little tie.

NICK

Crap!

Nick tries to rip the tie off but he only makes it tighter around his throat.

NICK (CONT'D)

Ggggggg!

FISHER

So that's like "the necktie from  
hell," right?

NICK

Yeah.

Nick accepts his tie as is and plops down in a chair.

FISHER

And when you go on a date, she's  
gonna be like "the date from hell."  
And if you go to the dentist, he'll  
be "the dentist from hell." Take a  
bath and it'll be "the bath from  
hell."

NICK

You're excellent at this.

FISHER

So, as your roommate, I guess that makes me the... only really good thing you got going on.

(then)

Why are you dressing up, anyway? If I was damned for all eternity, I'd go informal.

NICK

I'm going job hunting. Anyone who thinks Nick... Crapster is going to be a clown at kid parties is sadly mistaken. I will get my life back!

Nick holds up the Help Wanted page with lots of ads circled.

NICK (CONT'D)

Whatever else they can do to me, they can't stop me from giving a great interview.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. OFFICE - DAY

In a very nice office, Nick sits across a table from two executives. His suit looks a little thrift store, but he wears it well.

NICK

My focus, determination, and poise are exactly what you're looking for. How can I say that with such confidence? Because I'm a winner.

Nick cockily leans back in his chair and puts his hands behind his head, revealing massive damp PIT STAINS under each arm.

NICK (CONT'D)

Are you guys warm?

CUT TO:

EXT. SECOND SKYSCRAPER - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Not as tall as the first.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The office is reasonably nice. Nick chats with a few executives.

NICK

I excel because I plan ahead. I'm prepared for any situation.

Nick SNEEZES explosively. He covers his face with one hand and uses the other to check his pockets for a handkerchief. No luck. With his free hand, he points at a window.

NICK (CONT'D)

That magnificent Akron skyline didn't happen overnight, did it?

While the others turn, Nick quickly grabs the curtain behind him and wipes his nose with it. The curtain rod comes CRASHING down.

NICK (CONT'D)

As I was saying...

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A two-story brick building.

INT. OFFICE BATHROOM - STALL - DAY

Nick is on the toilet, giving himself a pep-talk.

NICK

Just pull yourself together. How hard is it to nail one interview?

He reaches for the toilet paper roll but it's empty.

NICK (CONT'D)

Hello? Can I get a little help, please? Anyone?

Nick looks around helplessly. Finally, he looks down at his TIE.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

A downscale-looking office with fake wooden panelling. Nick, tieless, is with an EXECUTIVE in a cheap suit.

NICK

(flat)  
I'm really take-charge.

EXECUTIVE

Well, I don't know where you're from, but in Akron, people who want jobs wear ties!

Another EXECUTIVE pops his head in.

## EXECUTIVE #2

The can's flooded! Somebody stuffed it up.

Both executives look at Nick suspiciously.

INT. PARTY HEARTY CO. - DAY

In a cramped office filled with karaoke machines, bubble makers, and costumes, Nick is being zipped into a low-quality "Dora the Explorer" costume by SAMAR PATEL (50s, entrepreneurial). It's a very tight fit and Patel struggles.

NICK

I'm fielding offers from several other firms, so I can't commit to a long-term assignment...

PATEL

Yeah, yeah. Hunch your shoulders a little so I can zip it. More.

Nick hunches, very uncomfortable. He looks at the giant Dora head he hasn't put on yet

NICK

So who am I, Dora the Explorer?

PATEL

(legalistic)

Who said you're Dora? Did I? You're Flora the Adventuress, a completely original character. I thought her up when I was in my kitchen. Shut up about Dora!

NICK

Okay, okay.

PATEL

Maybe some of the children will mistake you for Dora. Is it your job to correct them? No! You're there to entertain, not to be disagreeable.

NICK

Fine. Who cares? I'll say I'm Buzz fricking Lightyear if you want.

PATEL

(re Buzz costume)

You mean Fizz Galaxyhead?

Patel finally gets Nick zipped in.

PATEL (CONT'D)

Okay. You're all set. The costume's due back in four hours.

NICK

Wait. How do I pee in this thing?

PATEL

How you pee in this thing is to pee before you put this thing on.

Nick looks concerned.

PATEL (CONT'D)

It's only four hours. I don't have time for this.

(claps hands)

Come on, vamonos!

EXT. PARTY - DAY

A very nice lawn behind a very expensive house. Adults mingle, drinking wine. There's lots for the 20 kids to do -- play in a bounce house, watch a machine spin cotton candy -- but right now, they're riveted on Flora the Adventuress, hunched over in his tight costume, talking to a stuffed raccoon.

NICK

Hoo, Mr. Raccoon, you know what today is? Jake's birthday! That means Jake gets a birthday wish!

He looks at an unpleasant kid, JAKE, sitting like a pasha in the middle of his friends.

JAKE

I wish... that you weren't so queer.

NICK

(ignoring him, singing)

We're going to Jake's party. Gonna have a thrill. Going to Jake's party. Climbing up a hill.

The kids start chanting.

KIDS

Queer! Queer! Queer! Queer!

Nick looks around -- no parents are nearby -- then pretends the raccoon is telling him a secret.

NICK

What? Don't say that, Mr. Raccoon.

KID

What did he say?

NICK

He said he's going to rip out all of your tongues and eat all of your eyes if you don't shut up.

He lunges the raccoon at one kid, who jumps back terrified.

JAKE

I'm bored. It's time for the booth.

NICK

What's the booth?

EXT. DUNKING BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Nick, still in costume, is sitting on the platform, waiting to be dunked. Jake throws a softball at the target. Down he goes.

INT. DUNKING BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The wet Flora costume weighs about a thousand pounds. Nick, drowning, bangs against the tank. From the reverse angle, we see the kids pointing and laughing. Nick tries and fails to climb out. When he finally sticks his wet, giant head above the water, the kids BOO.

EXT. PARTY - LATER

Nick, soaking wet, sits on the grass, gasping for breath through his giant head.

JAKE

I need somebody else for the dunking booth. I know -- Jennifer!

JENNIFER, Jake's nanny (25, very cute), crosses past. She's carrying a heavy armload of presents and party supplies and is harried.

JENNIFER

What? Uh-uh. I'm your nanny, not your floaty toy.

Nick gazes at Jennifer. Even in her frazzled state, she's the one genuine beauty at this party.

JAKE

(whiny)

Dad, I want to see her wet!

Jake turns to his dad, HUGH FITZSIMMONS, who is pouring wine into a plastic cup.

FITZSIMMONS

Jennifer, I think it would mean a lot to a lot of people.

JENNIFER

If I go in, the presents are going with me!

Jennifer walks off and starts setting up party stuff on a table. Nick (still in costume) soggily follows her.

NICK

They act like they own us, don't they?

JENNIFER

(coolly)

Did you say something?

NICK

It isn't like I need to be doing this. I'm only here because I like being around kids. Not in a weird way.

Nick hold out his big costume hand.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'm Nick.

JENNIFER

I'm busy.

She crosses away. Nick stands there for a beat, then squirms a little.

NICK

(sotto)

I should've peed when I was in the dunk tank.

EXT. PARTY - LATER

Jake is sitting on his kiddie-party "throne," ripping open presents as everyone watches.

JAKE

(unimpressed)

XBox games. For the old XBox.

Guests respectfully clap. Jake drops the games on a big pile of presents as Jennifer hands him another one and steps back. Nick/Flora sidles up to her.

NICK

Maybe we could hook up later.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Because I gotta tell you -- you are the hottest girl in Akron. Maybe that's not saying much, but--

JENNIFER

Thanks for the compliment, but I'm going to pass.

NICK

Hey, I understand. I just look like a six-foot Mexican girl to you. But I'm actually really handsome. I'd show you but I can't get my head off.

JENNIFER

That's okay. I'll use my imagination.

NICK

Screw it. This is important.

With great effort, Nick yanks off his Flora head. He looks like a drowned rat.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'm usually not this sweaty.

Jake has opened another gift.

JAKE

(whoop-de-do)

A phone.

A GUEST calls out:

GUEST

Jake, I already set it up with the phone company. All you have to do--

JAKE

(tosses it)

I want a big present next!

Nick notices the discarded phone on the pile.

NICK

(to no one in particular)

Hey, that's the Triax 9000! It's all bluetooth. It's got speech recognition, titanium case. I used to have one of those...

Nick stares at the phone in slack-jawed envy. Fitzsimmons glares at him.

FITZSIMMONS

Hey, Muppet. How about putting the head back on?

Nick sadly complies as people TITTER. Fitzsimmons turns to the crowd.

FITZSIMMONS (CONT'D)

Next time I'll pay the extra five bucks for one that doesn't talk!

People LAUGH. Jennifer looks at Nick and the barest flicker of sympathy crosses her face.

NICK

Yeah. Mock me. I used to be the mocker. I used to be important!

JAKE

I'm Mr. Important! I'm Mr. Important!

Jake struts around importantly, punctuating his steps with FART NOISES. Everyone LAUGHS uproariously. Nick stews, humiliated, surrounded by jeering faces.

NICK (V.O.)

Was this my future? Day after day after day, just like this. I couldn't take it. Somehow I had to end the suffering.

EXT. PARTY - LATER

Kids are eating birthday cake, chasing each other merrily. Suddenly, a little girl SCREAMS. She POINTS.

ANGLE ON : THE DUNK TANK.

Flora the Adventuress, bobbing lifelessly upside-down in the water -- a ghastly sight.

EXT. STREETS OF AKRON - DAY

Nick, naked to his shorts, runs down a suburban street, the Triax 9000 cellphone clutched tightly in his hand.

NICK (V.O.)

So I stole a kid's birthday present.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Fisher "directs" his claymation figures as Nick plays with his new cell phone.

FISHER

(to dolls)

Lovely. Lovely. You guys see each other and passion rules. You move as fast as your feet will carry you!

Fisher moves the figures imperceptibly closer and clicks the shutter.

NICK

Fisher, my new phone has a movie camera that's a million times better than the one you're using.

FISHER

Well, I would never taint my claymation porn film by using a present stolen from a kid on his birthday. That's not my style.

NICK

It's fine -- no one saw me.

(defensive)

I deserve this! You should have seen how everyone was acting better than me -- especially this stuck-up nanny. A nanny!

FISHER

Weird.

NICK

I know!

FISHER

Not you. My actors. I can't tell which is the guy and which is the girl anymore. Have you seen his little...?

(grabs a bit of clay)

I'll make a new one.

NICK

The important thing is, I'm getting my life back -- one gadget at a time.

A KNOCK on the door. Nick reaches for the knob -- ZAP!

NICK (CONT'D)

Damn!

Scott enters.

SCOTT

I thought I warned you about that.  
Here's your paper. It got a little  
rained on.

Scott hands Fisher a soggy mass of paper. Fisher thumbs  
through it.

FISHER

Man, the Dodgers lost 37 to 1 last  
night!

NICK

I love the Dodgers... Oh.

SCOTT

That's gonna be rough on the Boys in  
Blue.

FISHER

(to Nick)

Dude, I'm from Boston. Root for the  
Yankees!

SCOTT

I'm just checking in, making sure  
you're uncomfortable.

NICK

Extremely. But I'm glad you're here.

He pulls Scott aside.

NICK (CONT'D)

You need a guy like me, a guy on the  
inside who could give you information  
that might be very useful.

SCOTT

About what?

NICK

About other bad people, old friends  
of mine, who should be in hell.

SCOTT

You want to name names?

NICK

These were close friends, so it would  
have to be a really good deal.

SCOTT  
Nick, we have all the names.

NICK  
Really? Did you know that...  
(feigning outrage)  
Fisher over here is a pornographer!

FISHER  
Hey...!

SCOTT  
(re dolls)  
You can't even tell which one's the  
guy.

FISHER  
I'm working on that. I just gotta  
make another little--

Scott starts walking to the door.

SCOTT  
This place depresses me. Let's hook  
up later for a beer.

NICK  
I can drink beer?

SCOTT  
Schlitz Ice.

Nick grimaces as Scott exits. Fisher stares at Nick.

FISHER  
You sold me out.

NICK  
No, I tried to sell you out, but he  
didn't want to buy you.

Nick takes a sip of coffee and makes a face. He takes  
something out of his mouth.

NICK (CONT'D)  
I think this is what you're looking  
for.  
(hands him bit of  
clay)  
Now we're even.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Nick, holding a dollar, is talking to a HOT DOG CART VENDOR.

NICK

Two dollars? That's a lot, don't you think? How much for a hot dog without the bun?

The vendor looks at him.

NICK (CONT'D)

How much for a bun without a hot dog?

The vendor starts rolling the cart away.

NICK (CONT'D)

How much for a cup of hot dog water?

INT. PARTY HEARTY CO. - DAY

Patel is trying to reconstruct a shattered pinata.

PATEL

Pay you? Why should I pay you?

NICK

I'm starving.

PATEL

You ran away in your underwear, you left the costume in the dunk tank, you scared the bejeezus out of a small child!

Patel drops some candy in the pinata. The pieces fall through the cracks.

NICK

So there's room for improvement. Let me do a bachelor party. I know a million dirty jokes.

PATEL

The family you "entertained" is not just any family. Mr. Fitzsimmons runs the largest tire factory in Akron! I can't afford him as an enemy. If you want me to pay you, go make nice with him.

NICK

(resigned)  
All right...

As he turns to go, Nick tries to sneak a piece of candy. Patel slaps his hand.

INT./EXT. FITZSIMMONS HOUSE - DAY

Jennifer answers a knock at the front door and sees Nick standing there.

JENNIFER  
You're kidding.

NICK  
It's great to see you, too. I need  
to talk to Mr. Fitzsimmons.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS approaches and quickly decides Nick isn't worth talking to.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
Jennifer, keep looking. That phone  
didn't walk out of here by itself.

JENNIFER  
(staring at Nick)  
I know it didn't.

Nick shoves the phone deeper in his pocket.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
He's out by the pool. Oh, and here's  
your costume.

She hands him a heavy, drippy garbage bag.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
You might want to dry out the head.

EXT. POOL - DAY

Mr. Fitzsimmons sits at a table by the pool, a pile of papers in his lap and beads of sweat covering his forehead.

MR. FITZSIMMONS  
Jake, it's the middle of summer. We  
drained the swimming pool because  
you said you wanted to skateboard in  
it.

REVEAL: Jake, outfitted head to toe in skateboarding gear, is lying in the EMPTY SWIMMING POOL, his head resting on a skateboard, reading a comic book.

JAKE  
I want a real half-pipe.

MR. FITZSIMMONS  
Fine. If you've changed your mind  
we'll fill the pool again.

JAKE

No!

MR. FITZSIMMONS

It's 100 goddamn degrees!

Nick enters, full of fake cheer. He peers into the pool.

NICK

Hello, down there, Jake! Mr. Fitzsimmons, hi. Remember me from yesterday? In all the excitement, I ran off without making sure you were completely satisfied--

FITZSIMMONS

You destroyed the only ninth birthday party my son will ever have.

NICK

Okay, maybe I didn't knock it out of the park, but I'm coping with a lot of difficult personal problems.

Fitzsimmons holds up the sheath of papers.

FITZSIMMONS

I've got a warehouse full of tires I can't sell because government crybabies say they're defective. Why should I care about the problems of a party clown?

NICK

(weak)

Will you at least reimburse me for the balloon animals?

FITZSIMMONS

Get off my patio.

Fitzsimmons looks down dismissively. Nick starts to walk away, then turns back. One last shot.

NICK

Can I ask you a question? What's wrong with the tires?

FITZSIMMONS

Nothing. As long as you don't go over 55. If you do, some "expert" says they'll blow out.

NICK

Just spitballing here, but what if you put stickers on the tires that

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)  
 said "For Display Only"? That way,  
 if anything happens, God forbid, you  
 can legally say, "This tire was never  
 meant to be driven. It was meant to  
 be displayed as artwork."

FITZSIMMONS  
 I don't know if that's morally right,  
 but... how big a sticker are we  
 talking about?

Nick holds his fingers a tiny bit apart.

NICK  
 Just big enough for a lawyer to read.

Fitzsimmons scratches his chin and takes stock of Nick.

FITZSIMMONS  
 I'm not in the habit of taking advice  
 from men who dress like little girls  
 for money.

NICK  
 We've all got to start somewhere.  
 Who do you want working for you?  
 Someone who won't put on a dress  
 when the situation calls for it, or  
 someone who's hungry enough to do  
 anything?  
 (then)  
 I'm smart, I'm ambitious, and I'm  
 cheap. Mr. Fitzsimmons, do you  
 recognize talent when you see it?

Fitzsimmons is impressed.

FITZSIMMONS  
 There might be room in my organization  
 for a man who's not afraid to... go  
 into some gray areas.

NICK  
 You've found him.

Nick beams. He's on his way back! Mrs. Fitzsimmons and  
 Jennifer enter.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
 We have literally searched every  
 inch of this house. I am prepared  
 to announce this gift stolen.

FITZSIMMONS  
 It's got to be around somewhere.  
 (MORE)

FITZSIMMONS (CONT'D)

(to Nick)

Let's say it was your phone, genius.  
How would you find it?

NICK

Easy. I'd dial the number and listen  
for it to ring, then...

(uh-oh)

But that wouldn't work in this case.

FITZSIMMONS

No, that would work fine.

(to Jennifer)

Dial the number and listen for the  
goddamn ring.

NICK

Stupid idea. I was testing you.

Don't be a schmuck!

(off his reaction)

Isn't this what you're paying me  
for? Straight talk?

JENNIFER

I'll call from inside.

She exits. Nick looks trapped.

NICK

(pointing)

Did someone paint your lawn jockey  
white?

FITZSIMMONS

What? They better not have!

As the others are distracted, Nick takes the cell phone from  
his pocket, tosses it into a nearby TOTE BAG and edges away.  
Jennifer returns, dialing a cordless phone.

JENNIFER

...Okay, it's ringing.

The cellphone RINGS. Jennifer reaches into the bag.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Hey, here it is! In my tote bag?

Nick gestures: There you go -- case solved.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

And what would it be doing there, I  
wonder?

JENNIFER  
 How should I know?  
 (off Mrs. Fitzsimmons'  
 face)  
 Oh, no.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
 Maids steal, Jennifer. It's in your  
 DNA.

JENNIFER  
 I'm not a maid. I'm a nanny.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
 Whatever.

Jake, out of the pool, grabs the phone from Jennifer.

JAKE  
 Can I call the cops, Dad? Can I?

JENNIFER  
 Why would I steal his stupid phone?  
 (re Nick)  
 What about him?

FITZSIMMONS  
 You mean the guy who just saved my  
 company?

JAKE  
 (whiny)  
 I wanna call the cops!

JENNIFER  
 No!

Nick looks a little uncomfortable.

NICK  
 The important thing is we found the  
 phone, right?

JAKE  
 I'll get started on the mug shots.

With the phone, Jake starts clicking photos of Jennifer in  
 distress -- CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

JENNIFER  
 Stop it!

NICK  
 Let's all take a breath. Everybody  
 makes mistakes.

FITZSIMMONS

Nick, get this thief off my property.

JAKE

(to Jennifer)

Let me get one of you crying. Boo  
hoo!

Despite himself, Nick has seen enough.

NICK

Give me that thing!

Nick snatches the phone and throws it in the empty swimming pool. It SHATTERS into bits.

JAKE

Whoa.

NICK

She didn't steal the phone. I did!  
A girl like her wouldn't do that.

Jennifer looks at Nick. What is he doing?

NICK (CONT'D)

Anyway, this may cost me my job, but  
I have to tell you, Mr. and Mrs.  
Fitzsimmons, I find both of you  
repulsive and not very smart.

FITZSIMMONS

You know, a little straight talk  
goes a long way.

NICK

But the worst thing is you're turning  
your son into an even bigger monster  
than you are. I know the type,  
believe me.

He turns to Jake.

NICK (CONT'D)

Jake, you're just a kid so I'm going  
to put this in terms you'll  
understand.

He crouches down so that he's eye-to-eye with the kid.

NICK (CONT'D)

(gently)

You're going to hell. And hell is  
like summer camp, on the sun. And  
all the counselors are mean, and the  
other kids are even meaner.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

And you get ice cream headaches every day and wet your bed every night and the summer never ends, Jake. It goes on for a zillion, billion years! Does that sound like fun?

Jake, intimidated, shakes his head "no."

NICK (CONT'D)

So stop being a little creep. It's just not nice.

Nick tousles Jake's hair.

NICK (CONT'D)

Hey, why don't you check out Scouting?

Jake runs behind his mother and clings to her legs. Nick stands and turns to Fitzsimmons.

NICK (CONT'D)

(mustering his dignity)  
I'll show myself out, thanks.

Nick turns around just in time to FALL into the empty swimming pool.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

Nick is limping painfully down the sidewalk. Jennifer hustles after him.

JENNIFER

Hey, wait up.

NICK

"Wait up?" I don't think I can walk any slower.

JENNIFER

That was sweet, what you just did.

NICK

It was no big deal.

JENNIFER

For somebody nice, it wouldn't have been. But you're not that nice. So I think it was a big deal.

Nick gestures: Whatever.

NICK

I wasn't really trying to frame you, you know. That just happened.

JENNIFER

Forget it. They're repulsive and not very smart. But a job is a job.

NICK

Yeah. I've got to get me one of those. See ya.

Nick begins to shuffle off.

JENNIFER

What are you doing here anyway? In Akron?

How to put it?

NICK

Um, there was a death in my family. Someone I was very close to. And now I'm kind of going through some stuff.

JENNIFER

That must be hard.

NICK

You never think it will happen to you.

JENNIFER

Well, remember, Akron's the rubber capitol of the world.

NICK

So?

JENNIFER

So it's the right place to bounce back.

She smiles. Despite himself, Nick smiles back.

NICK

Boing.

JENNIFER

Right. Boing.

She turns back. Nick watches her go.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Carrying two beers from the bar, Scott makes his way to a table where Nick is sitting. A DART GAME is going on nearby.

SCOTT

Let's see. Which beer is yours?

Bzzzz-splash -- a FLY lands in one of the beers.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

This one.

He hands Nick the fly beer.

NICK

Thanks.

Nick plucks the fly out.

SCOTT

So how are you getting on so far?  
Any moaning, wailing, gnashing of  
teeth?

NICK

No, not yet.

SCOTT

All in due time. Have you felt so  
tormented that you wanted to pluck  
out your own eyeballs?

NICK

Not really.

SCOTT

Nick, you can drop the brave front.  
It's okay to cry in front of me.  
I'd love it, actually.

NICK

To tell you the truth, I met someone.

SCOTT

You met someone?  
(teenage girl)  
I am so totally psyched for you!

NICK

She's really special--

SCOTT

You're special, too, Nick. That's  
why you're in hell.

NICK

I know, but when I was with her, I  
forgot about all that. And today, I  
actually went out of my way to help  
a kid not make the mistakes I made.  
I couldn't help myself -- it just  
happened.

SCOTT

Well, knock it off. If somebody's on track for hell, it's unethical to talk them out of it.

NICK

What are you gonna do to me?  
 (to GUYS at next table)  
 Don't get drunk! Don't cheat on your wife! Don't steal office supplies!

SCOTT

Stop it!  
 (to Guys)  
 Sorry about that, guys. Just go back to what you were doing.

NICK

(dawning on him)  
 Actually, all things being equal, I had kind of a good day today.

SCOTT

No, you didn't. The Hummer, the lying, the sleeping around, the backstabbing -- those were your good days!

NICK

Were they? Was I really happy?

SCOTT

Completely!

NICK

Maybe I only thought I was happy.

SCOTT

Tomato, tomahto. Either way, you've had all the good days you're ever going to get. We are now in the punishment phase.

NICK

All I know is, for a couple of hours today, I didn't feel like I was in hell.  
 (taps head)  
 It's all in the attitude. You can throw as much crap at me as you want. But if someone like Jennifer likes me, maybe I'll even be happier than when I was alive.

Scott glares, then smiles.

SCOTT

Nick, you've made it through two days. You still have...

(counts on fingers)

Eternity to go. We're just getting started here. And I can ratchet it up anytime I want.

NICK

Well, you know where to find me.

With a touch of swagger, Nick picks up his mug and takes a sip.

NICK (CONT'D)

Not bad.

A DART hits Nick flat in the chest and sticks.

DART PLAYER (O.S.)

Sorry, buddy.

NICK

(to Scott, in pain)

You're showing off again.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nick and Fisher are lounging around. Fisher has his arm down his shirt and is scratching his back vigorously.

FISHER

So this Jennifer chick. Do you tell her you're in hell? Is that a second date discussion? Third date?

NICK

I don't know.

FISHER

Cause I was dating this woman once, and I didn't find out she had an extra toe until I was sucking on the thing.

Nick looks uncomfortable.

FISHER (CONT'D)

Relationships require honesty, man.

NICK

Speaking of honesty, since we're going to be living together for a while, I'd appreciate if you didn't scratch your back for twenty minutes in front of me. It's kind of disgusting.

Fisher stops in mid-scratch.

FISHER  
(la-di-da)  
I didn't know you were so sensitive.

NICK  
(rising)  
It's all right. I'm going to bed.

FISHER  
You probably want your toothbrush.

Fisher takes his hand out of his shirt and offers Nick his toothbrush.

NICK  
Keep it.

FISHER  
Oh, thanks. Hey, I got something for you, too. If it goes well with Jennifer and you feel like intensifying the romance...

Fisher proudly holds up a cassette.

NICK  
You finished your movie?

FISHER  
Yup. Seeing how you wasted your life made me want to accomplish something while I walk the earth. So I stayed up all night and finished the puppy.

Fisher pops a tape in the VCR.

ON TV: The film starts out OK for a few seconds, with a claymation figure swinging a tennis racket, then the claymation gets cruder and more hurried and the characters more shmushed, and the "action" unrecognizable -- just a big clay ball rolling around. The End.

FISHER (CONT'D)  
Well?

NICK  
Wow... That was hot.

FISHER  
Are you just being nice because you know I spent nine years on it?

NICK

(pained)

No. Can I see it again?

FISHER

You got it! This time I'll do commentary.

Fisher starts the tape.

FISHER (CONT'D)

(commentary mode)

This project originated with a short I did in Play-doh when I was 13...

As he drones on, Nick takes stock of his surroundings.

NICK (V.O.)

I admit it. I've done bad things. And now I'm in hell. But maybe tomorrow will be better.

DRUNKEN MAN (O.S.)

(loud)

It's 1:30 in the afternoon. Are we making love or not?

DRUNKEN WOMAN (O.S.)

(louder)

Hold on. Mama's coming with the sugar.

The sound of GLASS BREAKING O.S. Fisher bangs on the wall.

FISHER

Shut up!

(back to commentary)

Those tennis rackets? They're made out of toothpicks...

NICK (V.O.)

Or maybe the day after tomorrow.

INT. COFFEE BAR - DAY

Jennifer is talking to someone we don't see at first.

JENNIFER

I hate Akron. I hate being a nanny.

And this Nick guy -- I don't know.

(rolls her eyes)

I think he likes me.

She sips her coffee and spits it out.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Yuck, I forgot -- this is hell coffee.

REVEAL that she is across the table from Scott.

SCOTT

Still haven't developed a taste for it?

JENNIFER

Not yet. Look, I know I've done bad things, and I should be glad that I'm in this pilot program, but sometimes I wish I was in regular hell.

SCOTT

Oh, relax. You're doing great. Nick's all over you.

Jennifer sighs.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Here, have some of my coffee. It's good.

Jennifer takes Scott's coffee, mixes in some CREAM and sips it. GAGS.

JENNIFER

Hell cream?

SCOTT

Hell cream, yeah. Sorry about that.

Jennifer pushes away the coffee as we...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW