

"KRAMER VS. KRAMER"

by

Robert Benton

**FADE IN:**

**INT. OFFICE - ADVERTISING AGENCY - MIDTOWN - EVENING**

**WIDE SHOT**

Patrick's  
bursting  
desks, all  
MURRAY  
thirties.  
what  
His tie

A large and very comfortable office over-looking St. Cathedral. At the moment the office is filled to with men and women, slumped in chairs, sitting on of them very tense. Among the crowd of people we note: FISHER, a young and very ambitious junior executive and PHYLLIS BERNARD, an attractive woman in her early She is a lawyer with the agency.

At the moment, TED KRAMER, nice-looking without being you would call a matinee idol, paces back and forth. is loosened, he checks his watch every fifteen seconds. Clearly he is very distraught.

**TED**

(predicting the worst)  
They're not gonna call... I tell you  
they're not gonna call. I blew it. I  
don't know what I did wrong, but I -

**REVERSE ON JIM O'CONNOR**

fifties,  
heavy  
propped on

Ted's boss and good friend. He is in his middle nattily dressed with the slightly bleary look of a drinker. He sits back in his chair with his feet the desk and a drink in one hand.

**O'CONNOR**

(not unfriendly)

Ted, will you take it easy? Revlon's not about to drop an account that represents more than two million in gross billing receipts in a small agency like this, without making us sweat. Now just relax, okay? Everything's gonna be fine.

**TED**

(at this stage, nothing will help)  
I don't think so, Jim. Maybe I shouldn't have -

O'Connor Sound-effect: The phone rings. Everyone freezes. As reaches for the phone,

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CHILD'S ROOM, KRAMER APT. - EVENING**

night The room is dark, the only light coming from a small light.

lies We SEE a beautiful five year old boy (BILLY KRAMER). He woman in bed, half asleep. HOLD FOR A BEAT as a beautiful him (JOANNA KRAMER) leans over, kisses the child and hugs tightly to her.

**JOANNA**

(intense)  
I love you, Billy...

**BILLY**

(drowsy)  
I love you too, mommy... Good-night...

**ON JOANNA**

the She gets up from the bed and starts toward the door of child's room.

**JOANNA**

Sleep tight...

**BILLY**

Don't let the bedbugs bite...

light.  
Joanna stops in the doorway, silhouetted against the  
outside.  
She turns, takes a last look at her son, then steps

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HALLWAY - EVENING**

**ON JOANNA**

clearly.  
Now that the light is brighter, we can SEE her more  
style  
In her mid-thirties, she is beautiful, dressed in a  
that can best be described as Bloomingdale's. HOLD FOR  
A  
BEAT as she leans against the door. It is clear from  
her  
expression that she is terribly upset. Then, making up  
her  
mind, she crosses to a closet and takes out a suitcase.  
THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HER as she carries it into the  
bedroom,  
lays it out on the bed and opens it.  
PAN WITH HER as she crosses to a closet, grabs an  
armload of  
clothes and dumps them helter-skelter into the  
suitcase.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. O'CONNOR'S OFFICE - EVENING**

good  
It is a few minutes later, the news has obviously been  
because there is a general celebration in progress.  
Jim O'Connor, now standing, raises one hand for  
silence,  
then making a toast.

**O'CONNOR**

Here's to Ted Kramer.

Cheers and good-natured jokes.

**O'CONNOR**

(putting an arm around  
Ted squeezing him  
tight)

I wanna tell you something about  
this little runt. He went out there  
and sold the shit out of Revlon and  
that's why we got the account. It  
was his idea, it was his concept,  
right down the line...

More hoots and cheers. People start to yell "Speech."

**TED**

(embarrassed, but  
cannot stop grinning)

All I can say... All I can say is  
this is maybe one of the five best  
days of my whole life...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BATHROOM - KRAMER APT. - EVENING**

Joanna stands at the medicine cabinet, going through  
it,  
packing things in a travel kit: rollers, deodorant,  
makeup,  
birth control pills. She starts to take a small bottle  
of  
perfume that has only an eighth of an inch of fluid  
left  
inside, hesitates, then puts it back.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. O'CONNOR'S OFFICE - EVENING**

Now some time has passed, most of the crowd has gone  
and  
only the regulars are left.

**TED**

(in the middle of a  
story)

So anyway Jim and I are making the  
pitch, right? And all of a sudden  
this old guy starts to cough and I

keep on going and he keeps on coughing  
and I keep on going and he keeps on  
coughing and -

Murray Fisher leans over, shakes Ted's hand.

**MURRAY**

(interrupting)  
Congratulations, Ted. That was a  
hell of a job.

**TED**

(surprised)  
Where you goin' Murray, it's early?

**MURRAY**

Got to get home.

**TED**

(glancing at his watch)  
Oh, Christ, I'm late... I gotta get  
out of here.

(however, instead of  
going, he settles  
back and resumes his  
story)

So anyway, I look over and this old  
geezer is starting to turn blue and  
I swear to God the only thing I can  
think about is that this poor  
sonofabitch is gonna die on me and  
screw up the pitch.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - KRAMER APT. - EVENING**

making out  
hospitals,  
that  
Billy is and isn't permitted to eat.

INSERT: A long and meticulous list that Joanna is  
of the phone numbers and addresses of doctors and  
of what the various medicines are for, and of the foods

**WIDER ANGLE**

carefully  
of  
As Joanna puts the finishing touches on the list and  
arranges it on top of the kitchen counter next to a box

unsweetened, whole grain cereal and a jar of honey.

Note: It is this same set of notes that Ted will later unthinkingly throw away.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MIDTOWN - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

O'Connor

As the doors to the outer lobby open and Ted and appear.

Ted starts to hail a cab, O'Connor stops him.

**O'CONNOR**

Hey, what's the rush? C'mon, walk me a couple of blocks.

**TED**

Jim, I've got to go. I'm already late -

**O'CONNOR**

Listen, Ted... I just want to tell you, when old man Schmidt retires next year, I've got a pretty good feeling they'll kick me upstairs...

of

He turns and starts to walk off down the street, Ted, course, follows.

**O'CONNOR**

...and when they do, I just want you to know I'm takin' you along with me.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BEDROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**CLOSE ON JOANNA**

things,

As she goes through her jewelry case, taking some leaving others. In the B.G. we SEE a framed photograph

of

Billy, smiling, looking into the camera.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

**ON TED AND O'CONNOR**

Tracking with them as they walk.

**O'CONNOR**

(feeling no pain)

Y'know, Ted, I mean what I said back there. You did a hell of a job on this and I want you to know I'm turning the whole show over to you.

**TED**

(thrilled)

Wow!

**O'CONNOR**

I mean it Ted, you're running this one.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BEDROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

The suitcase is now full. Joanna zips it shut and looks around to make sure that she hasn't forgotten anything. Then, she hefts her suitcase and starts out of the room.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FOYER - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

Joanna carries in the suitcase, sets it by the front door, then she crosses to the living room and sits down at the dining table.

**CLOSER IN ON HER**

envelope. As

She takes out a list made on the back of an old  
she begins to review it, checking off some items:

OFF SCREEN Sound: A key turning in the lock.

As Joanna looks up...

**CUT TO:**

**HER POV**

enormous  
is  
anything

As the door swings open to reveal Ted Kramer, an  
grin on his face, a bottle of champagne in his hand. He  
so full of himself that he doesn't notice there is  
wrong.

of  
Note: Throughout the entire scene he carries the bottle  
champagne, never putting it down.

**TED**

I thought you might just like to  
know that at five-fifteen this  
afternoon we were officially handed  
the Fire and Ice account by Revlon.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**JOANNA**

(she takes a deep  
breath, then:)  
Ted, I'm leaving you.

**TED**

That represents a gross billing in  
excess of two million -  
(hearing her)  
What?!

Joanna opens her purse, takes out her keys and wallet.

**JOANNA**

Here are my keys. I won't be needing  
them any more.

will  
he  
one

Note: Ted does not for a moment believe that his wife really leave him. All he can think of right now is that will have to spend the rest of the evening coping with of her moods.

**TED**

(sardonic)

I'm sorry I'm late, all right? I'm sorry I didn't call - I was busy making a living.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

her  
cards.

Joanna doesn't even bother to look up at him. She opens purse, takes out her wallet and begins removing credit

**JOANNA**

My American Express... My Bloomingdale's Credit Card... My check book -

**TED**

(the martyr)

Okay, okay... What is it this time? What did I do now?...

**JOANNA**

(ignoring this)

I took two thousand out of the savings account. That was what I had in the bank when we got married.

**TED**

Joanna, whatever it is, believe me, I'm sorry.

**JOANNA**

Here are the slips for the laundry and the cleaning. They'll be ready on Saturday.

**TED**

(hard lining it)

Now listen, before you do something you'll really regret you'd better stop and think -

**JOANNA**

(not bothering to  
look up)  
I've paid the rent, the Con-Ed and  
the phone bill, so you don't have to  
worry about them.

She checks off the last item on her list as her husband  
watches, dumbfounded.

**JOANNA**

There, that's everything.

Joanna gets to her feet and starts toward the front  
door. In an instant Ted is after her.

**TED**

(panic starting)  
For God's sake, Joanna, would you at  
least tell me what I did that's so  
terrible! Would you do me that little  
favor?

**ON JOANNA**

At the door.

**JOANNA**

Look, it's not your fault, okay?  
It's me. It's my fault - you just  
married the wrong person.

**TED**

(placating her)  
So we've got problems. Everybody's  
got problems - that's normal -

Joanna opens the door and they step out into the  
hallway.

**INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE KRAMER APT. - EVENING**

**JOANNA**

Ted, you're not listening to me.  
It's over, finished.

**TED**

I'm listening, Joanna - believe me,  
I'm listening. My wife is walking  
out on me after eight years of -

**JOANNA**

(bitter)

You just don't get it, do you?

(as though to a child)

I - am - really - and - truly -  
leaving - you.

**TED**

I heard you, Joanna. I promise I  
heard you.

**JOANNA**

No you didn't.

(quietly)

You didn't even ask about Billy.

**TED**

(stiffening)

What about Billy?

**JOANNA**

I'm not taking him with me.

**TED**

What?

**JOANNA**

(tears start)

Ted, I can't... I tried... I really  
tried but... I just can't hack it  
anymore...

**TED**

C'mon, Joanna, you don't mean that.  
You're a terrific mother -

**JOANNA**

(from her gut)

I am not! I'm a terrible mother! I'm  
an awful mother. I yell at him all  
the time. I have no patience. No...  
No. He's better off without me.

(unable to look at

Ted)

Ted, I've got to go... I've got to  
go.

**TED**

(desperate)

Okay, I understand and I promise I  
won't try and stop you, but you can't

just go... Look, come inside and talk... Just for a few minutes.

**JOANNA**

(pleading)

NO!... Please... Please don't make me stay... I swear... If you do, sooner or later... maybe tomorrow, maybe next week... maybe a year from now...

(looking directly at him)

I'll go right out the window.

Sound-effect: The elevator approaching.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

last

There is nothing more that can be done, this is the moment of intimacy.

**TED**

(quiet)

Where are you going?

**JOANNA**

I don't know...

The elevator door opens, Joanna steps inside.

**TED**

Do you want me to help you get a cab?

her

Joanna shakes her head. The elevator door closes behind and it starts to descend.

**ON TED KRAMER**

he

He stands for a moment, stunned, unable to move. Then turns and races back into the apartment.

of the

THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM as he rushes across to one living room windows, throws it open and leans out.

**HIS POV**

SEE

Looking down to the street from the eighth floor. We  
Joanna step off the curb and hail a passing taxi.

**TED**

(calling out)

Joanna!?!... Joanna?!

attention.

Either she doesn't hear him or else she pays no

it

She gets into the cab, closes the door behind her and  
drives away.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. APT. - NIGHT**

**ON TED**

disappears.

As he stands for a moment watching the taxi as it

CAMERA

Then, slowly, he closes the window, turns, and AS THE  
TRACKS WITH HIM, walks into the bedroom.

inside

The bedroom is a mess: the closet door stands open,  
Joanna's section is empty except for some shoe-boxes  
and a  
few dresses that are scattered across the floor.

Several

dresser drawers have been pulled out and their contents  
emptied.

dresses

HOLD IN A WIDE SHOT as Ted wearily picks up one of the  
and hangs it back on its hanger in its proper place,  
ready  
for Joanna's return. As he continues straightening up  
the  
room,

ready

the

**THE CAMERA SLOWLY FADES TO BLACK.**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - VERY LATE AT NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

Then,  
receiver  
Ted Kramer paces back and forth, eyeing the phone.  
coming to a decision, he crosses to it, picks up the  
and starts to dial.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. APT. BLDG. - LATE AT NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

which  
The building is dark except for the Kramer apartment  
is ablaze with lights. HOLD as we HEAR:

Sound: The phone ringing. Then:

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

(obviously asleep)  
Huh... Hello?

**TED**

(righteous)  
All right, Thelma... That's it. I've  
had it. You can call your good friend  
Joanna Kramer and tell her enough is  
enough, okay? I mean, I don't know  
what I did, but you can tell her  
she's made her point.

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

Ted, what are you talking about?!

**TED**

Don't play innocent with me, Thelma.  
You know perfectly well what's going  
on.

**WOMAN'S VOICE**

(exasperated)  
Ted, I don't understand a word you're  
saying. Where's Joanna?

**TED**

Ha! You tell me.

Sound-effect, as Ted slams down the receiver.

Instantly a light is turned on two floors below.

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT

ON THE FRONT DOOR

As we HEAR:

Sound-effect: the doorbell rings.

A moment later Ted opens the door and THELMA PHILLIPS enters. She is a neighbor (Apt. 6-B) and Joanna Kramer's best friend. About four months ago Thelma and her husband Charley were divorced.

Until then the two families had been very close, the Kramer's son

(Billy) being about the same age as the Phillips' daughter (Kim).

With the divorce, however, the Kramers tried to remain friends with both Thelma and Charley and that has caused a certain amount of friction.

Thelma is an attractive woman in her mid-thirties. She dresses well, works out religiously at Jack LaLanne's and goes to a therapist twice a week. She is also given to acting the lay analyst with her friends. Thelma is generous with her advice, sharing the wealth so to speak. With all of this she is kind, loyal and a loving friend. At the moment, however, she is all business.

**THELMA**

(looking around,  
suspiciously)

All right. What's going on?

**ON TED**

lost

From his attitude it is clear that there is no love  
between them.

**TED**

All right, Thelma, you want to know  
what's going on? I'll tell you what's  
going on. I'll tell you exactly what's  
going on.

**THELMA**

Look, Ted, all I -

**TED**

(starting to really  
roll)

I came home tonight. We just got the  
Fire and Ice account at the agency.  
Do you know what that means?! Do you  
understand what that means? It means  
that it was maybe one of the five  
best days in my whole life.

**THELMA**

Ted, all I wanted to know was where  
-

**TED**

(not letting her get  
a word in edgewise)

I walk in the house and before I can  
say "How are you?", "Did you have a  
nice day?" before I can say anything.  
Pow she's out the door.

**THELMA**

OhmyGod. Didn't she say anything?  
She must've said something.

**TED**

(sarcastic)

Yeah, she said it wasn't any use  
talking anymore.

**THELMA**

Ted, don't be so hostile.

Ambassador

Ted draws himself upright with the dignity of the

following, he to the Court of St. James. However, during the  
with begins pounding the pillows on the couch into shape  
real vehemence.

**TED**

Hostile?  
(pow)  
Me?  
(whack)  
Thelma, I'm not hostile.  
(thud)  
I am anything but hostile.  
(sock)  
But if you want to know what I am.  
I'll tell you what I am. What I am  
is, I am hurt. I am very hurt. And I  
just want to know one thing, okay?  
Just one thing... Why? That's all I  
want to know... Why?

**THELMA**

(how to say this)  
Ted, Joanna and I used to talk a lot  
and... well, she told me a lot of...  
ah, things about the two of you.

**TED**

(instantly nervous)  
Things? What kind of things?

**THELMA**

(clearly she knows  
more than she's  
willing to say)  
I mean... things. Ted, Joanna's very  
unhappy and -

**TED**

(flash of anger)  
Listen, Joanna Kramer's got a goddamn  
good life. She's got a husband that  
loves her. She's got a terrific kid.  
She's got a wonderful home -

**THELMA**

(getting mad herself)  
What d'you know about how Joanna  
felt? You went off to an office every  
morning and you'd come dragging home  
at seven or eight every night and as

long as dinner was on the table you thought everything was swell.

**TED**

Did it ever occur to you guys that Joanna Kramer's not the easiest person in the world to live with?! Did it?! For one thing she's always thirty minutes late. You can set your watch by it -

**THELMA**

(exasperated)

So she's late. What's the big deal. That's just a way of saying, "Pay attention to me."

**TED**

(not listening)

Two. She is getting to be a real hermit or recluse or whatever it is you call it. Thelma, do you know where I could be in this business if I had a wife that entertained or went out socially -

**THELMA**

Oh for shit's sake, Ted, you are the most selfish human being I have ever met. No wonder she said you came first, then Billy, then, if there was anything left over, she got the scraps.

**TED**

Joanna said that?

Thelma nods.

**TED**

Then how come she never said anything like that to me?

**THELMA**

Maybe she didn't feel like she should have to. Maybe she felt like if you'd been paying any real attention to her to start with, maybe you would've noticed.

**TED**

(stung)

Boy, you guys are really something, y'know? I'd like to know one thing, okay - just one little thing. Did you tell Joanna she should leave me?

**THELMA**

(stiffly)

No.

heel. She turns and starts toward the front door, Ted at her

**TED**

Y'know something Thelma - you are the typhoid Mary of divorce. I mean it. Joanna and I never had any trouble until you and Charley split up.

**THELMA**

Ted, divorce is a terrible thing. I know, I went through it. You've got to believe I did everything I could to get Joanna to stay.

(pause)

But I'll tell you something. You may not want to hear it, but it took a lot of courage for Joanna to do what she just did.

**TED**

I'd like to know what the hell kind of courage it takes to walk out on your husband and your child?

**CLOSE ON THELMA**

assumed That stops her dead in her tracks. She had always that Joanna took Billy with her when she left.

**THELMA**

Joanna left Billy? She didn't take him with her?

Ted shakes his head. There is a long beat of silence.

**THELMA**

(stunned, quiet)

Oh Shit.

**CUT TO:**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. KRAMER APT. BLDG. - EARLY MORNING**

**WIDE SHOT**

front  
garbage  
sacks  
grind  
UP TO

It is a beautiful sunny morning and the super stands in  
of the building hosing down the sidewalk. HOLD as a  
truck enters FRAME and the garbage men begin loading  
of trash into the back of the truck. As it begins to  
up the garbage with an ungodly sound, THE CAMERA PANS  
**THE EIGHTH FLOOR WINDOWS.**

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BILLY KRAMER'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

**MEDIUM SHOT**

truck  
feet  
his

Billy Kramer lies in his bed, fast asleep.

HOLD FOR A BEAT as we HEAR:

OFF SCREEN Sound: From the street below, the garbage  
grinding up garbage.

A moment later, Billy opens his eyes, struggles to his  
and,

AS THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM, trudges sleepily out of  
room, across the hall and into the bathroom.

**INT. BATHROOM - EARLY MORNING**

closed, we

As the child stands in front of the toilet, eyes

**HEAR:**

OFF SCREEN Sound-effect: as the child pees noisily.

bothering

Then, when he is finished, he turns and, without

his

to flush the toilet, shuffles down the hall and into  
parents' bedroom.

**HIS POV**

slept in

The bed is empty, there is no sign that anyone has  
it.

**ON BILLY**

back

A look of suspicion on his face, he turns and starts  
down the hall toward the living room.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING**

As Billy enters, looks around.

**HIS POV**

of

Ted Kramer, still fully dressed, looking like the wrath  
God is asleep in the chair.

**ON BILLY**

As he marches across to his father.

**BILLY**

Where's mommy?

**ON TED**

His eyes open, he looks around startled.

**TED**

Huh?... Oh God... What time is it?

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**BILLY**

(suspicious)

The little hand is on the six and  
the big hand is on the nine. Where  
is mommy?

**TED**

(trying to pull himself  
together)

Oh, Christ... Ah, yeah... you want

to know why mom's not here, right?

Billy nods.

**TED**

(bullshit)

Okay, I'm going to tell you... It's like this. Mommy and daddy had a little argument and mommy decided she wanted to go off by herself for a little while. You know how sometimes you get mad and want to go off and be by yourself? Well, it's like that, okay? Okay.

(subject closed)

Now how about some breakfast?

THEM as Ted struggles to his feet and THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH them as they start toward the kitchen.

**BILLY**

When is mommy coming back?

**TED**

(lying)

Soon. Very soon.

By now they are inside the kitchen, Ted looks around.

**HIS POV**

grain"  
with There, on the kitchen cabinet is a box of "natural cereal, a jar of honey, some wheat germ, and a banana, carefully written instructions from Joanna underneath.

**ON TED**

tosses it He takes one look at the note, crumples it up and in the wastebasket.

**TED**

(the camp counselor)

I'll tell you what, kiddo - why don't I fix us some French toast?

**BILLY**

(impressed)

Wow! French toast, really?

**TED**

(the camp counselor)  
Sure. Didn't I ever tell you French  
toast was my specialty? I'll bet I  
never told you that. Now then, the  
first thing we need is...  
(trying desperately  
to remember)  
...eggs! Right?

Billy nods. Ted opens the refrigerator and takes some  
eggs.

**TED**

This is terrific... isn't this  
terrific?

As Ted begins the process of making French toast, it  
soon becomes obvious that he has no idea of what he is  
doing. What follows is a symphony in incompetence on Ted's  
part. He breaks the eggs into a bowl and ends up with most of  
the shell mixed up with the egg.  
Then he takes a piece of bread and drops it into bowl.

**TED**

(saying it will make  
it so)  
I'm having a good time... Are you  
having a good time?

**ON BILLY**

Watching all of this with increasing apprehension.

**BILLY**

You forgot the milk.

**TED**

(still the camp  
counselor)  
That's right. You're absolutely  
right... It's been a long time since  
I made French toast.

Ted takes a container of milk, pours it into the bowl  
so

bread

that it is filled to the brim. Then he sloshes the  
around until it is half-dissolved.

**TED**

Look at this, isn't this something?!

omelet

He lops off a huge hunk of butter, drops it into an  
pan and turns up the flame.

**ON BILLY**

Watching. He looks as though he is about to throw up.

**BILLY**

What about my orange juice?

**TED**

(the counterman)

Right. One O.J. coming up.

juice.

the

He opens the refrigerator and starts to get the orange  
As he does, black smoke begins to billow ominously from  
frying pan.

**BILLY**

(scared)

Daddy!!!

Ted turns, spots the smoke.

**TED**

Don't worry... Everything's fine...

now is

whole

floor.

He lunges for the handle of the frying pan, which by  
very hot. He grabs it, lets out a howl of pain and the  
mess, frying pan, butter, bread, goes crashing to the  
floor.

**CLOSE ON TED**

Suddenly all the rage comes pouring out.

**TED**

Goddam! Son of a bitch!

**REACTION - BILLY**

Terrified.

**WIDE SHOT**

As Ted kneels down and begins to clean up the mess.

**TED**

(to himself as much  
as to Billy)

It's okay. It's gonna be okay...

Everything's going to be all right.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON A BUS**

mothers  
with  
down and  
far  
on

As it pulls to a stop. The doors open and a stream of  
and children get off. Among them we spot Ted Kramer  
Billy. As they start across the street, Ted reaches  
takes hold of Billy's hand. The moment they get to the  
side, Billy takes his hand away from Ted's and wipes it  
his pants. Clearly Ted's hands are very sweaty.

**CLOSER IN ON THEM**

As they start down the block toward Billy's school.

**CLOSER IN ON THEM**

**BILLY**

When is mommy coming back?

**TED**

Soon. I told you before, very soon.

**BILLY**

(nervous)

Will she pick me up after school?

**TED**

No. If I'm not here, you go home  
with Thelma and Kim.

**BILLY**

What if she forgets?

**TED**

(weary)

I'll call Thelma and remind her,  
okay? Don't worry.

They walk in silence for a few steps, then:

**BILLY**

But what happens if she's on her way  
to school and she gets runned over  
by a truck and killed? What happens  
them?

Ted looks at Billy in amazement.

**WIDE SHOT**

As the two of them enter the school and disappear from  
view.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OFFICE, TED'S AGENCY - DAY**

**ON THE ELEVATOR DOORS**

As they open and Ted steps out looking like the wrath  
of  
God. THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM as he crosses the  
waiting  
room toward the inner offices.

**ON THE RECEPTIONIST**

Glancing up as he passes.

**RECEPTIONIST**

(cheerful)

Congratulations, Mr. Kramer.

**ON TED**

Looking at her like she has lost her mind. Nevertheless  
he  
continues on, passing through swinging doors into a  
long

leading corridor lined with secretaries' desks and offices  
off of it.

starts Suddenly a younger man rushes up, grabs Ted's hand and  
to pump it vigorously.

**YOUNG MAN**

Terrific news, Ted.

continues Another nut. Ted smiles at the man, humoring him and  
around toward his office. O'Connor appears, throwing his arm  
Ted, squeezing him in a bear hug.

**O'CONNOR**

Hey... Look who was out celebrating  
last night.

congratulating Suddenly Ted realizes that all these people are  
him for getting the Fire and Ice account.

**TED**

(trying to appear  
nonchalant)  
Uh, Jim... Can I talk to you?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. O'CONNOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

O'Connor Ted and O'Connor sitting across from one another.  
has just heard the news.

**O'CONNOR**

Jesus Christ. That's a real  
blockbuster.  
(shakes his head)  
I always figured you guys had it  
made.

**TED**

(morose)  
You want to know the real kicker?  
The real kicker is, for the first  
time in my life - the first time - I  
feel like a loser.

that O'Connor nods sympathetically. Actually he is praying  
Ted won't start to cry.

**O'CONNOR**

(stiff upper lip)  
Listen, don't let it get you down.  
(doesn't believe it  
for a second)  
You're going to be fine.

**TED**

(toujour gai)  
Me? I've never been better. I mean  
having my wife walk out on me after  
seven years of marriage agrees with  
me just fine.

**O'CONNOR**

Look, Ted, I'm the oldest whore on  
the beat, okay? Three marriages, two  
divorces... You're gonna be okay.

**TED**

(wishful thinking)  
I'm going to be okay. The way I see  
it, Joanna'll come home, it's just a  
matter of time.

**O'CONNOR**

(emphatically)  
She'll be back...

both Ted nods in agreement. There is a beat of silence as  
men consider Joanna's imminent return. Then:

**O'CONNOR**

(trying to be tactful)  
But... just in case... I mean, just  
on the off chance she doesn't. What  
are you going to do about the kid?

**TED**

(the wind goes out of  
him)  
I don't know, Jim. This whole thing  
has happened so... Pow - like that.

**O'CONNOR**

(a friend having to

say something very  
difficult)  
Look, it's none of my business, so  
you can tell me to butt out, okay?  
But if you want my advice, you'll  
send Billy away to stay with relatives  
for a while. Just until you get  
yourself straightened out.

**TED**

(doubtfully)  
I don't know, Jim...

**O'CONNOR**

(the Dutch uncle)  
Ted, this may sound a little rough,  
but we've just landed the biggest  
account in the history of this agency,  
right? And now it's up to us - that's  
you and me - to deliver the goods.  
Ted, you're my main man, and if I  
can't depend on you a hundred and  
ten percent, twenty-four hours a  
day, because you're worried about a  
kid with a runny nose -

**TED**

Jim, I appreciate what you're saying.  
I mean it, but I really think Joanna's  
coming back.

**ON O'CONNOR**

Clearly he doesn't believe this.

**O'CONNOR**

I hope you're right, Ted... I really  
hope you're right.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FOYER - KRAMER APT. - DAY**

**INSERT: TIGHT ON AN ENVELOPE**

addressed  
It is postmarked Denver, Colorado. The letter is  
to Billy Kramer and it is from Joanna.

**ON TED**

As he rips open the letter.

**TED**

Billy!

**ON BILLY**

chocolate  
watching  
He sits in the living room watching television, a  
doughnut in one hand and a remote control device for  
television in the other.

from the  
Off-screen Sound: a Saturday morning kiddie program  
television set.

**BILLY**

(focused on T.V.)

Uh, huh...

**TED**

You got a letter from mom.

television.  
Instantly, Billy turns down the volume of the

**BILLY**

(excited)

When is she coming home?!

**ON TED**

can  
As he starts to read, slowly, carefully, so that Billy  
absorb it.

**TED**

"My dear, sweet Billy: Mommy has  
gone away. Sometimes in the world  
daddies go away and mommies bring up  
their little boys. But sometimes a  
mommy can go away too, and you have  
your daddy to bring you up."

sound  
As Ted continues to read, Billy starts turning up the  
on the television, using the remote control device.

**TED**

(raising his voice so  
he can be heard)

"I have gone away because I must find some interesting things to do for myself in the world. Everybody has to, and so do I. Being your mommy was one thing, but there are other things and this is what I have to do. I did not get a chance to tell you this, and that is why I am writing you now."

Ted By now the volume from the television is so loud that has to shout to make himself heard over it.

**TED**

"I will always be your mommy and I will always love you. I just won't be your mommy in the house. But I will be your mommy of the heart. And I... "

(he looks up, about to tell the child to lower the volume)

Billy.

**HIS POV**

ferocious Billy sits, watching television with an almost intensity on his face, doing his best to block out Ted's voice.

**ON TED**

the He watches his son for a second, then carefully refolds the letter, puts it away.

**TED**

(as he reaches across, turns down the sound on the T.V.)

It's okay... It's okay. We'll talk about it some other time.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - KRAMER APT. - LATER THAT DAY**

**CLOSE ON THELMA**

Reading Joanna's letter.

**THELMA**

Oh, God... OhmyGod...

She finishes the letter, looks up at Ted.

**THELMA**

What are you going to do?

**TED**

I don't know, Thel... This whole thing has happened so... Pow, like that.

**THELMA**

I mean, what are you going to do about Billy?

**TED**

(stiff)

I'm gonna keep him, why?

**THELMA**

Look, this is nothing personal, but I don't think you can do it.

**TED**

Thelma, I've lost my wife, I'm not losing my child.

**THELMA**

(backing off)

All right... Okay... But let's get something straight, right now. I mean, I'm sorry about what happened between you and Joanna, but it's not my problem, understand?

**REVERSE ON TED**

He nods.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**THELMA**

I'm not going to have you calling every fifteen minutes just because you can't find a hot water bottle, understand?

Ted nods.

**THELMA**

I've got enough trouble raising my own kid. I don't need another one. Got it?

**TED**

Got it.

**THELMA**

You're on your own, understand?

**TED**

I understand.

**THELMA**

You're sure?

**TED**

I'm sure.

**ON THELMA**

A long pause, she looks at him with all the warmth of a sergeant facing a raw recruit. Then:

**THELMA**

All right. Who's Billy's pediatrician?

**ON TED**

He hasn't the foggiest idea.

**THELMA**

(machine-gun delivery)

Ed Davies. 230 East 76th Street. 472-8227. Fifty bucks a house call, thirty for an office visit. Write this down: I'm not telling you twice. What's the nearest hospital?

**ON TED**

As he grabs a piece of paper and starts writing frantically.

**TED**

Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

**THELMA**

(not waiting)  
Lenox Hill. 77th Street between Park  
and Lex. The emergency number is 327-  
**0800.**

**TED**

Slow down... Slow down...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TED'S BEDROOM - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

huge  
bed,  
Ted stands in the middle of the room, sorting out a  
pile of dirty clothes. Thelma sits on the edge of the  
watching.

**THELMA**

Colors in one pile, white things in  
another and shirts in a third.

and  
clean  
In the BACKGROUND we SEE the bathroom door as it opens  
Billy Kramer steps out, freshly bathed and wearing  
clothes.

**THELMA**

(without looking around)  
Brush the teeth. Hang up the towel  
and flush the toilet.

into the  
bathroom.  
Billy immediately turns on his heels and heads back

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - DAY**

**CLOSE ON A SILVER CIGARETTE BOX**

April 4,  
That is inscribed, "Ted and Joanna Kramer, Married  
**1970."**

picks  
HOLD FOR A BEAT then Ted's hand reaches into FRAME and  
it up.

**MEDIUM SHOT TED**

stack of  
he is  
framed  
apartment  
trace  
As he takes the cigarette box and balances it on a  
scrap books, photographs, ash trays, etc., etc., that  
carrying. He crosses to another table, picks up a  
photograph of Joanna and Billy and piles that on top of  
everything. We realize that Ted is going through the  
from top to bottom and methodically cleaning out every  
of Joanna that he can find.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

**ESTABLISHING SHOT**

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

clothes  
Billy's  
As Ted goes through the room, picking up Billy's  
which have been strewn every which way.  
THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM as he carries them into  
room.

**INT. BILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

night  
the  
Billy is fast asleep, the only light coming from the  
lamp on the dresser. Ted dumps the soiled clothing in a  
hamper, hangs up Billy's jacket, then he neatly folds  
boy's sweater and crosses to the dresser.

**CLOSER IN ON THE DRESSER**

away. As Ted opens a drawer and starts to put the sweater  
Suddenly he spots something.

**CUT TO:**

**HIS POV**

clothing  
this  
There, in the drawer, sitting on top of a pile of  
is one of the photographs of Joanna that Ted put away  
afternoon.

Ted  
Billy has retrieved it and hidden it here, hoping that  
wouldn't find it.

**CLOSE ON TED**

to his  
As he takes a long look at the photograph, then turns  
son.

**HIS POV**

Billy asleep, tangled up in the covers.

**ON TED**

the  
Billy  
up  
of  
rumpled  
He removes the photograph from the drawer, crosses to  
bed and places it on the nightstand nearby so that  
will be able to see the picture of Joanna when he wakes  
in the morning. He sits for a moment longer on the side  
the bed and reaches across and smooths down his son's  
hair.

**FADE TO**

**BLACK:**

**INT. TED'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON**

**ON TED**

do  
Clearly in a rush, loading his briefcase with work to

TRACKS  
heading  
office:

that evening. He starts for the door and THE CAMERA  
WITH HIM as he walks along the outer office corridor,  
for the elevator. As he passes the door to O'Connor's

**TED**

(calling out)  
'Night, Jim.

**O'CONNOR (O.S.)**

(calling out)  
Hey, Ted. C'mon in. I wanna' talk to  
you.

the  
Reluctantly Ted stops, turns around and walks back to  
door to O'Connor's office.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. O'CONNOR'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON**

the  
O'Connor sits back in his chair, his feet propped on  
desk a drink in one hand.

**O'CONNOR**

(jovial)  
What's the big rush. C'mon in, put  
your feet up, have a drink.

**REVERSE ON TED**

Hanging in the doorway, clearly anxious to leave.

**TED**

Can't do it tonight. Gotta pick up  
Billy. I'm late.

**O'CONNOR**

(paying no attention  
to that)  
Listen, I heard a terrific joke today.  
There's this Polish skydiver -

**TED**

(urgent)  
Sorry, Jim I've got to go. I'll talk  
to you tomorrow.

And before O'Connor can say anything he is gone.

**REVERSE ON O'CONNOR**

his  
starts  
Obviously displeased. He sits for a moment, drumming  
fingers on the desk top, then reaches for the phone and  
to dial. A moment later:

**O'CONNOR**

Murray? Jim O'Connor, why don't you  
drop by and have a drink...

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON**

**WIDE SHOT**

As Ted emerges from the building, starts to hail a cab.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE, EAST EIGHTIES - LATE AFTERNOON**

**WIDE SHOT**

inside.  
As the cab pulls to a stop. Ted leaps out and rushes

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HALLWAY - APARTMENT BLDG. - LATE AFTERNOON**

The elevator doors open and Ted steps out.

of an  
THE CAMERA PANS WITH HIM as he crosses to the doorway  
apartment, rings the bell.

**CLOSER IN**

her  
As the door is opened by a pleasant-looking woman in  
thirties.

of  
eight  
  
and

This is MRS. KLINE. She has the slightly haggard look  
someone who has just survived a birthday party with  
five-year-olds.

In fact, behind her we SEE an abundance of crepe paper  
balloons.

**TED**

(apologetic)

Mrs. Kline, I'm sorry I'm late, but

-

**MRS. KLINE**

That's all right, but I'm afraid  
Billy was a little nervous...

(she glances off screen)

**THEIR POV**

on a

Billy, his coat on, his goody bag in his lap sits alone  
bench in the foyer.

for the

The moment he sees his father, he gets up and starts  
door.

**BILLY**

(to Ted, accusingly)

You're late.

**TED**

I'm sorry, pal, but I had a meeting  
and -

**BILLY**

(to Mrs. Kline anxious  
to get away)

Goodbye.

**MRS. KLINE**

Goodbye, Bill. Thank you for coming.  
(calling out to her  
son in the next room)  
Mark. Say goodbye to Bill.

**MARK (O.S.)**

(preoccupied)

Bye.

**BILLY**

Bye.

door is And he hustles his father out into the hallway. Once  
shut behind them:

**BILLY**

(sullen)

I was waiting a long time.

bell. By now they have crossed to the elevator. Ted rings the

**TED**

(this ain't exactly  
the greeting he's  
expected)

It wasn't so long, I'm only...

(checking his watch)

...twenty minutes late.

The elevator doors open.

**BILLY**

All the other mothers got here a  
long time ago...

And the doors close, blocking them from view.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

between Ted and Billy sit at the dining table, a large pizza  
them.

rapport Ted is working hard, trying to establish some kind of  
pizza with his son. Billy is silent, he picks at the slice of  
in front of him.

**TED**

(more of the camp  
counselor)

How was school today?

**BILLY**

Okay... Same as usual...

**TED**

Billy, don't eat with your fingers.

**BILLY**

(morose)

Sorry.

There is a long beat of silence.

**TED**

(like pulling teeth)

Well, I see the Yankees finally won a game.

**BILLY**

Mom, I mean dad?

**TED**

Yeah?

**BILLY**

Can I be excused? I'm not hungry. I think I'll go to bed.

**TED**

Sure. Too much birthday cake, right?

**BILLY**

(as he gets up from the table)

I guess...

**WIDE SHOT**

beat As Billy shuffles off toward his room. Ted sits for a picking at the food on his plate.

table THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH BILLY as he gets up from the and walks into his room. HOLD IN THE DOORWAY as he takes off his shirt and pants and leaves them lying on the floor. The boy crosses to the closet, gets his pajamas and puts them on.

**REVERSE ON TED**

Standing in the doorway, watching.

**TED**

Goodnight.

**ON BILLY**

He starts to crawl into bed.

**BILLY**

(aloof)

'Night.

**ON TED**

dropped  
THE CAMERA PANS WITH HIM as he crosses to where Billy  
his clothes on the floor, picks them up.

**TED**

Listen, pal, I'm sorry, okay?

Silence.

**TED**

I know how you feel.

Silence.

Ted crosses, sits on the edge of the bed.

**TED**

Look, I remember one time when. I was a couple of years younger than you are now and... I was staying with this cousin of mine and my parents were supposed to come and pick me up by three, but it got later and later and they didn't and they didn't show up and I remember I got really scared that something had happened to them and I remember when they finally came instead of being happy to see them I was very angry and... Billy, I promise I'll never do that to you again, okay?...

Silence.

**TED**

Billy? Okay?

**CLOSEUP BILLY**

SEE His face is turned to the wall. HOLD FOR A BEAT as we  
him nod.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - TED KRAMER'S APT. - NIGHT**

Note: The following scene, which is written as one, is  
the actually to be played so that each time we cut back to

sometimes woman who is being interviewed as housekeeper, it is a  
different woman: sometimes nervous and excited,

large and lugubrious, with six shopping bags, sometimes  
looking like a headmistress at Dachau.

They are uniformly (until the last) unappetizing.

desperate. Throughout this, we SEE Ted becoming increasingly

**WOMAN**

(looking around nervous)

It's very big... They didn't tell me  
it was this big.

**TED**

(apologetically)

No... No, actually it's only two  
bedrooms.

**SECOND WOMAN**

(sniffing)

Phew... This place is a real pig  
sty.

**TED**

(defensively)

Look, my wife just walked out on me.  
Okay? It's been a tough week.

**THIRD WOMAN**

Don't tell me your troubles, mister.  
I got enough of my own.

PULL Note: With the FOURTH WOMAN we begin on a CLOSEUP and  
the BACK to REVEAL that we are in Ted's office and it is

middle of the afternoon.

**INT. TED KRAMER'S OFFICE - DAY**

**FOURTH WOMAN**

The first thing is, I don't do floors.

At that point the door behind her opens and O'Connor  
pokes  
his head in.

**O'CONNOR**

Ted.

**FOURTH WOMAN**

(ignoring him)

Or windows. I come in at ten and I  
get Wednesdays off.

**O'CONNOR**

Ted.

**TED**

(brisk)

I'll be with you in a minute, Jim.

(back to the woman)

You couldn't make that Saturday,  
could you?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**ON THE FIFTH WOMAN (MRS. WILLEWSKA)**

She is a slightly built attractive woman in her early  
sixties.

There is a long pause as she looks around.

**MRS. WILLEWSKA**

What kind of boy is your son?

**REACTION - TED**

This is the first person that ever asked about Billy.

**TED**

(taken aback)

Well, he's... ah, he's a good kid.  
He's shy and... I think he's probably

very creative and...

**MRS. WILLEWSKA**

Could I see him?

**TED**

Sure. He's right in here.

As they start toward the child's room.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

In the darkness we can SEE Billy, all scrunched up in the covers.

HOLD FOR A BEAT as the door opens and the light from the hall falls across the sleeping boy.

**ON THE DOOR**

Ted and Mrs. Willewska stand silhouetted against the light.

**MRS. WILLEWSKA**

Oh... He's very beautiful.

**ON BILLY**

As he stirs, in his sleep.

**MRS. WILLEWSKA (O.S.)**

Mr. Kramer, you are a very lucky man.

**REACTION, TED**

This is the first time since Joanna left that this has occurred to him.

**TED**

Mrs. Willewska, could you start on Monday?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY**

**ON BILLY AND TED**

cart  
starts

TRACKING JUST IN FRONT OF THEM as they wheel a shopping  
along the aisle. Ted has a shopping list in his hand.  
Ted stops, takes a box of detergent off of the shelf,  
to put it in the shopping cart, when:

**BILLY**

(worried)  
Mom, I mean dad...

**TED**

(his mind elsewhere)  
Uh huh...

**BILLY**

That's not the right soap. We use  
the kind in the green and yellow  
box.

**TED**

C'mon, there's not much difference -

**BILLY**

(firmly)  
We use the green and yellow.

replaces  
for  
steps  
dishwashing  
at

Ted looks at his son for a moment, then carefully  
the detergent that he had originally picked and reaches  
the green and yellow kind. They continue on for several  
and Ted stops again, this time looking for a  
liquid. He starts to reach for one, stops, looks around  
Billy.

Billy shakes his head.

Ted points to another.

**BILLY**

(shaking his head  
again)  
The pink stuff.

shopping

Ted takes a bottle of the pink stuff, puts it in the cart and consults his shopping list.

**TED**

Okay, what color cereal do we get?

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. PLAYGROUND, CENTRAL PARK - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

much  
of

It is that same afternoon and Billy (his clothes are dirtier by now) is running back and forth with a group of other children.

**MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)**

Walk him over to Bethesda Fountain and buy him an ice.

**ON TED**

took  
Sitting  
age.  
and  
FATHER.

He sits on one of the playground benches, the work he from the office stacked beside him on the bench. next to him is a personable-looking man of about Ted's age. He is nattily dressed in a suit complete with vest, tie and polished Gucci loafers. We will call him THE SATURDAY

young  
throughout  
not  
insists  
secret  
of

Note: The Saturday Father and his daughter (a pretty girl of about ten) will appear from time to time the film. He is a divorced father, putting in his time, giving a shit about the child. The Saturday Father on treating Ted as though they were members of the same fraternity. And he comes to represent Ted's nightmare what might happen to him.

**TED**

(looking in the  
direction of the  
voice)

What?

**SATURDAY FATHER**

Walk him over to Bethesda Fountain,  
buy him an ice. It'll kill twenty  
minutes.

**TED**

I've got a lot more than twenty  
minutes to kill.

**SATURDAY FATHER**

Tough...

(checking his watch)

...I get off duty at five-thirty.

(bored, anxious to  
make conversation)

How long you been divorced?

**TED**

(surprised)

Three months. How can you tell?

**SATURDAY FATHER**

You've got that look. My lady and I  
split two years ago in August and  
I'm an old pro at this shit. First  
thing, stay away from the Children's  
Zoo. It's pure hell - if I never see  
another chicken, I'll be happy.

(calling out to his  
daughter OFF SCREEN)

I'm here, darling. Don't worry...

**CLOSER ON TED**

looking Finding this distinctly unpleasant. He glances around,  
for Billy.

**HIS POV**

but The sprinkler area. Other children are running around,  
there is no sign of Billy.

**TED**

(calling out)

Billy?

**HIS POV**

Another area of the playground. Billy is nowhere in sight.

**WIDER ON TED**

As he grabs his stuff and starts toward the exit of the playground.

**TED**

(louder)

Billy?

**HIS POV**

Looking in another direction. Nothing.

**WIDE ON TED**

Standing among a crowd of people just outside the entrance to the playground. He is looking around wildly.

**TED**

Billy?!

**HIS POV**

There in the distance is Billy Kramer, running as hard as he can away from Ted.

**ON TED**

TRACKING IN FRONT OF HIM as he starts to chase after Billy.

**HIS POV - TRACKING FORWARD**

It is clear that Billy is running with a purpose.

**TED (V.O.)**

Billy!

Billy pays no attention to him.

**ON TED**

TRACKING IN FRONT OF HIM as he continues to chase his son.

**HIS POV - TRACKING FORWARD**

that, Closer now, we can SEE that ahead of Billy is a woman from behind, looks remarkably like Joanna.

**CLOSER ON TED**

As he realizes what is about to happen.

**CLOSER ON BILLY**

Catching up to the woman.

**BILLY**

Mommy! Mommy!

skirt. A moment later he gets close enough to grab onto her

As the woman turns around:

**CLOSEUP WOMAN**

Quite clearly it is not Joanna.

**CLOSEUP BILLY**

vanishes. His face becomes impassive again. All the excitement

**BILLY**

Oh. I thought you were my mommy.

**CLOSEUP TED**

His face reveals all of the pain that Billy's can't.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CLASSROOM, NURSERY SCHOOL - DAY**

**CLOSE ON A HOMEMADE CURTAIN**

moustache, construction As it opens and Billy Kramer, wearing an outsized a makeshift cape and a stovepipe hat made from paper.

spots

He stands for a moment, looking around, finally he  
someone, grins and begins waving.

**HIS POV**

is  
chairs  
show.

Across the room eighteen to twenty mothers (Ted Kramer  
the only man present) are gathered, sitting on tiny  
and at work tables watching as their children put on a

**ON BILLY**

A  
whispers

Suddenly he forgets his lines, looks around nervously.  
moment later a very pretty young teacher leans over,  
in his ear.

**TEACHER**

Ladies and gentlemen...

**BILLY**

Ladies and gentlemen...

**TEACHER**

Welcome to the greatest show on earth.

**BILLY**

Welcome to the...  
(he forgets again)

**REVERSE ON TED**

prompts

He leans forward mouthing the words as the teacher  
Billy.

**TEACHER**

Greatest.

**BILLY**

Greatest...

**TEACHER**

Show.

**BILLY**

Show...

**TEACHER**

On earth.

**BILLY**

On earth.

through

Ted breathes a sigh of relief, his son having gotten it.

**AND**

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THE CHILDREN PUTTING ON THE SHOW  
TED KRAMER SITTING IN THE AUDIENCE WATCHING:**

when

A look of total pleasure on his face. From time to time Billy does something particularly difficult, Ted nudges the woman next to him.

the

there

Note: In all of the shots of Billy we SEE the teacher guiding, helping, over and over and over we cannot help but notice how attractive she is. Toward the end of the Ted's POV occasionally follows the teacher rather than the child.

but

show

the

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**WIDE SHOT**

around

The show is over and the parents and children mill eating popcorn, drinking lemonade from paper cups. Ted stands off to one side, talking to the teacher as Billy runs around.

stands

around.

**CLOSER IN ON THEM**

**TEACHER**

Mr. Kramer, I just wanted to tell you what a wonderful boy your son is.

**TED**

(clearly attracted to her)

I don't know... I've been worried...  
(glancing around,  
making sure Billy is  
out of earshot)  
I mean, with what he's been through  
and everything. I -

**TEACHER**

(solicitously)  
No... No... Billy is doing just fine.

**TED**

(giving himself a few  
points)  
Well, you know it's not easy raising  
a kid on your own and I thought if  
we could get together and, uh, discuss  
-

reaches  
At that moment one of the class mothers interrupts,  
across Ted and takes hold of the teacher's hand.

**WOMAN**

(effusive)  
Barbara! Congratulations! When is  
the baby due?

**TEACHER (BARBARA)**

Oh, God. Not 'til August.

**CLOSE ON TED**

nothing  
Inadvertently glancing at the teacher's stomach,  
shows.

**ON THE TEACHER**

As she turns back to Ted.

**TEACHER**

Excuse me. You said you wanted to  
talk, Mr. Kramer.

**TED**

(embarrassed)  
Yes, but... ah, not now...  
(checking his watch)  
I've got an appointment... I forgot  
all about it...

As Ted begins beating a hasty retreat,

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON TED**

TRACKING IN FRONT OF HIM as he walks down the street  
carrying  
a large and elaborate papier-mâché art thing that Billy  
made  
in school.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN TED AND HIS POV:**

As he manages to notice every single pretty girl that  
passes,  
thread his way through the crowd and still balance  
Billy's  
enormous work of art.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. AGENCY - DAY**

**ON THE ELEVATOR DOORS**

As they open, Ted squeezes off and AS THE CAMERA TRACKS  
WITH  
HIM, he crosses the waiting room and enters the offices  
proper. He pauses at his secretary's desk and deposits  
Billy's  
papier-mâché thing. She jumps up from her desk, takes  
the  
papier-mâché thing and her notebook in hand, and  
follows Ted  
as he walks down the corridor towards O'Connor's  
office.

**SECRETARY**

Mr. O'Connor called. There's a meeting  
with the Revlon people in the board  
room and you're fifteen minutes late.

**TED**

(in a rush)  
I know... I know.

**SECRETARY**

Mr. Schmidt can't have the figures  
on the television buy until Monday.

**TED**

No. Uh, uh. Tell him I asked for it  
Friday. I want it Friday. Period.

**SECRETARY**

Mr. Lombardo from packaging wants to  
meet on Friday.

**TED**

Fine.

without  
By now they have reached the board room. He enters  
knocking, his secretary still in tow.

**SECRETARY**

And Mrs. Kelsey called to ask if  
Billy can come to Stephanie's birthday  
party on Tuesday.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY**

and  
The room is filled with executives in three piece suits  
O'Connor who is doing a lot of backing and filling.

**TED**

(as he enters)

Yes. Remind me to pick up a "Crying  
Chrissie" doll at lunch on Tuesday.

**ON O'CONNOR**

Clearly he is very irritated at this.

**O'CONNOR**

(sardonic)

If it's all right with you, Mother  
Kramer, can we get down to work now?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. PHYLLIS BERNARD'S OFFICE - DAY**

It is a real mess, legal files and law books scattered

everywhere.

we  
of  
In the midst of all this chaos sits PHYLLIS BERNARD, as  
said before, she is about thirty, very pretty in spite  
her glasses.

**ON PHYLLIS**

attitude  
are  
She looks up as Ted enters. It is clear from their  
that they have known one another for a long time and  
very relaxed together.

**PHYLLIS**

Hello, Kramer.

**ON TED**

across  
He drops into a chair and shoves a stack of papers  
the desk to her.

**TED**

Hiya, Phyllis. These are the Revlon  
contracts. I thought you ought to  
check them out.

**PHYLLIS**

Sure.

margin. As  
of her  
bra.  
She takes the papers and starts to rifle through them,  
stopping every so often and making a note in the  
she does, we notice that the second and third buttons  
blouse have come undone and that she is not wearing a

**CLOSER ON TED**

As he realizes this.

**ON PHYLLIS**

or  
She glances up to ask Ted a question about some point  
other, notices the direction of his gaze and, unself-  
consciously buttons up her blouse.

her. She goes back to her papers as Ted continues to watch

**ON PHYLLIS**

Not looking up from her papers.

**PHYLLIS**

Yes.

**TED**

(baffled)

Yes, what?

**PHYLLIS**

(looks up, serious)

Yes, I'll have dinner with you.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TED KRAMER'S BEDROOM - LATE AT NIGHT**

**ON THE BED**

Although the room is dimly lit, we can SEE quite clearly finished reaches checks her watch. that Ted and Phyllis are in bed together. They have making love and Ted lies back, half asleep. Phyllis across to the nightstand, puts on her glasses and watch.

**PHYLLIS**

Kramer, I've got to go. I've got an eight o'clock closing tomorrow down on Centre Street.

**TED**

(half asleep)

Mmmnph... I'll get you a cab...

But he makes no move to get up.

SEE Phyllis gets to her feet and in the dim light we can that, except for her glasses, she is naked.

**PHYLLIS**

(as she crosses the

hall on the way to  
the bathroom)  
That's okay. It's just that I've got  
these clients that are -

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

buttoning his There is Billy Kramer, standing by the toilet,  
pajamas. He looks up at Phyllis.

**HIS POV**

look There stands Phyllis, naked as the day she was born, a  
of stunned amazement on her face.

**PHYLLIS**

(softly to herself)  
Oh, God.

Too startled to cover herself.

**ON BILLY**

He looks her up and down, then:

**BILLY**

(very serious)  
Do you like fried chicken?

**ON PHYLLIS**

Suddenly remembering to cover herself.

**PHYLLIS**

(hoping desperately  
it is the right answer)  
Ah... Yes.

**SHOT - PHYLLIS AND BILLY**

**BILLY**

So do I...

he And he shuffles off to bed. Phyllis waits, frozen until  
back disappears into his room. Then, she turns and flees

into the bedroom.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**ON PHYLLIS**

her,  
As she bursts into the room, closes the door behind  
leans against it.

**PHYLLIS**

(eyes wide)

I just met your son.

**ON TED**

pants.  
Who has leapt out of bed and is scrambling into his

**TED**

Like that?!

Phyllis nods.

**TED**

And?

**PHYLLIS**

He wanted to know if I liked fried  
chicken.

**TED**

Do you?

Phyllis nods rather frantically.

**TED**

(grinning)

So what's your problem?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - KRAMER APT. - EVENING**

**ON TED AND THELMA**

some  
Stand side by side. He is cutting, chopping, making

glass

kind of stew. Thelma stands nearby watching, sipping a  
of white wine.

around,

FROM OFF SCREEN we can hear Billy and Kim running  
playing.

**TED**

You ever think about getting married  
again?

**THELMA**

No, not really...

(she thinks for a  
moment, then:)

I guess it's different if you don't  
have children, but... I dunno, even  
if Charley and I don't live together,  
even if we're sleeping with other  
people, even if Charley was to marry  
again... He'd still be my husband.  
That stuff about "Till death do you  
part?" That's really true.

**TED**

(nodding toward a  
cookbook that is  
propped open nearby)

How many onions does it say to use?

**THELMA**

(without bothering to  
look in the book)

Three. And add some basil.

**TED**

(as he does)

D'you think you and Charley'll ever  
get back together again?

**THELMA**

No. I don't think so.

**TED**

C'mon, Thel. So Charley had a little  
fling. So what? All in all he was a  
pretty good husband.

**THELMA**

Look, I know this isn't gonna make  
any sense, okay? I mean forget the

logic part... But I keep thinking if Charley really loved me, he wouldn't have let me divorce him.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

nothing  
vendor.  
blouse,  
Central  
The Saturday Father and his daughter, clearly with  
to say to one another, stand eating ices from a nearby  
THE CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM THEM across to Billy, Ted and  
Phyllis. She is dressed in a very nice suit, silk  
high heeled shoes and looks distinctly out of place in  
Park on a Saturday afternoon.  
At the moment, Ted is trying to teach Billy how to bat.

**TED**

Now look, you hold it like this...  
(he places Billy's  
hands on the bat  
just so)  
...and you swing like this...  
(taking him through  
the motions)

**ON PHYLLIS**

she  
Watching. She can't believe what she's seeing. Finally,  
can't stand it any longer.

**PHYLLIS**

(impatient)  
No, no, no, Kramer. That's not how  
you do it. Look...

She crosses to Billy, gently takes the bat from him and demonstrates.

**PHYLLIS**

...you hold it like this...  
(showing him her grip)  
Farther down the bat. And you swing  
like this...

(to Ted)  
Throw me one.

**ON TED**

her. He As he gives Billy a look that says, we have to humor  
throws a ball.

**ON PHYLLIS**

looping As she swings, connects and slams a ball in a long,  
fly that goes at least two hundred feet.

**ON TED**

back Watching the ball disappear in the distance, he turns  
to Phyllis, open-mouthed.

**CLOSE ON PHYLLIS**

to Embarrassed, she grins, shrugs and hands the bat back  
Billy.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. O'CONNOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

office O'Connor, Murray and the Art Director are in O'Connor's  
papers, as the door opens and Ted enters, carrying a pile of  
charts, graphs, etc., etc.

**TED**

Okay, Jim. Here's the report on...

He stops in mid-sentence, looks around.

**HIS POV**

Fire On the walls are a series of mock-ups of the various  
had and Ice ads, none of which are what Ted and O'Connor  
agreed upon.

**TED**

(surprised)

What the hell is this?

**O'CONNOR**

(innocent)

Murray had some ideas about the Fire and Ice campaign and he had the art department make up a few roughs...

(weakly)

I think they're kind of interesting.

**TED**

(bugged)

I don't. Jim, this isn't anything like what we talked about. It's not even close.

**MURRAY**

(oily)

Ted, basically it's still your concept.

**O'CONNOR**

(chiming in)

Murray just added a few things, that's all.

**TED**

Now hold it right there, I'm the one that went in and sold Revlon on this idea to start with, remember? You said I was going to be -

Sound-effect: The phone rings.

O'Connor picks it up.

**ON TED**

**O'CONNOR**

Yeah?

He listens for a moment, then hands the phone to Ted.

**O'CONNOR**

It's for you.

**ON TED**

As he takes the receiver.

**TED**

(puzzled)

Yes?

Then, embarrassed, he turns his back and lowers his voice.

**TED**

Look, Billy, I told you before, one hour of T.V. a day, that's the rule...  
No...

(clearly, Billy is  
giving him an argument)

I don't care what the other mothers do... Listen, I can't talk now, I'm in a meeting...

(firm)

Billy, I'll talk to you later, good-bye.

Murray  
superiority

Note: During the phone call, the CAMERA PANS AWAY to  
& O'Connor, looks of bored Condescension and smug  
on their faces.

Ted hangs up the phone and turns back around.

**MURRAY**

(smooth)

Ted, I appreciate what you're saying, but I really think you're just too close to it right now.

**O'CONNOR**

(quickly)

Murray's right.

(reassuring)

Look it's just some ideas, okay? I mean nothing's locked in cement. I promise you this is your show...

**ON TED**

Not very reassured.

**O'CONNOR**

Trust me on this one, Ted...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

Spread out  
etc.  
tipped

Ted is sitting at the dining room table, working.  
all across the table are layouts, rate sheets, etc.,  
Billy sits across from him drawing on a pad with felt-  
pens. HOLD FOR A BEAT, then:

**BILLY**

(worried about  
something)  
Mom, I mean dad...

**TED**

(busy)  
In a minute...

beat of silence then:

**BILLY**

What do you do when an elephant sits  
on your fence?

Silence.

**BILLY**

You get a new fence.

**TED**

(he hasn't heard a  
word)  
C'mon, Billy. I'm trying to work for  
God's sake...

glass of  
purple

Another beat of silence, then Billy reaches for his  
Hawaiian Punch and accidentally tips it over, spilling  
liquid across all of Ted's papers.

Instantly, Ted is on his feet, yelling.

**TED**

Goddamnit, can't you watch what you're  
doing!

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**BILLY**

(quiet)  
I'm sorry.

**TED**

Je-sus Christ! I catch all kind of  
shit at the office because I'm not  
pulling my weight because I'm busting  
my butt trying to be a decent goddamn  
father and -

**BILLY**

I'm sorry.

**TED**

(sardonic)  
That's terrific. That's really  
terrific, but I notice I'm the one  
that's cleaning up this -  
(noticing an important  
paper covered with  
grape juice)  
Oh, crap, I'll have to do this one  
over.

**BILLY**

(starting to help)  
I'm sorry.

By now there is nothing the boy can do right.

**TED**

Look, it's after your bedtime, okay?  
Just do me a favor and go to bed,  
okay?

into  
gets  
crosses  
looks

Billy gets to his feet, collects his stuff and walks  
his bedroom. HOLD ON TED who sits for a moment, then  
wearily to his feet and as THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM  
to the door of Billy's room. He stops in the doorway,

**OFF SCREEN.**

**HIS POV**

time.

Billy struggling to get his pajamas on, having a hard

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**TED**

Look, I'm sorry I yelled, okay?

**BILLY**

(quiet)

That's okay.

**TED**

It's just... I've been catching a lot of flack at the office...

**BILLY**

That's okay...

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

**ON THE DOOR TO O'CONNOR'S OFFICE**

As it opens and Phyllis comes out. In the background in O'Connor's office we SEE O'Connor and Murray, talking, laughing.

THE CAMERA TRACKS ALONGSIDE Phyllis as she walks to Ted Kramer's office and opens the door without knocking.

**PHYLLIS**

How about lunch, Kramer. I'm buying.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. RESTAURANT, MIDTOWN - DAY**

**ON TED AND PHYLLIS**

As they sit across from one another. A waiter stands over them, setting drinks in front of them.

**WAITER**

Perrier and lime...

(placing a drink in front of Phyllis)

...and scotch with soda.

(putting Ted's drink in front of him)

The waiter bustles away.

**TED**

Okay, Phyllis, what's up?

**PHYLLIS**

Kramer...

Then,  
scotch

She breaks off, uncertain whether or not to go on.  
making up her mind, she reaches across, takes Ted's  
and soda and drinks half of it down in one gulp.

**PHYLLIS**

(in a rush)

O'Connor's out to get you. He's going  
to take the Fire and Ice account  
away from you.

**TED**

(stunned)

What?!?

Phyllis nods.

**TED**

(angry)

I don't believe it! That's crazy!  
Why would Jim do something like that?

Phyllis polishes off the rest of Ted's drink.

**PHYLLIS**

(angry herself)

You want to know why? I'll tell you  
why...

(signaling to the  
waiter)

Another scotch and soda for the  
gentleman.

(back to Ted)

I'll tell you exactly why. Because  
you're not his buddy anymore. Because  
he can't count on you to sit around  
the office every night until eight  
or nine and shoot the shit with him.

**TED**

I can't. I've got Billy to take care  
of.

**PHYLLIS**

(exasperated)

You dope. O'Connor doesn't give a  
damn about Billy. All he wants is  
somebody that'll hang around with

him every night so he won't have to go home.

**TED**

(stiff)

I don't believe you.

him. He

The waiter sets Ted's drink on the table in front of starts to reach for it, but Phyllis is quicker.

**PHYLLIS**

(taking a stiff drink)

All right. Okay. But tell me something, Kramer. Who do you think is palling around with O'Connor these days?

Ted shrugs.

**TED**

How should I know?

**PHYLLIS**

Murray.

**REACTION, TED**

Stunned, but trying to be nonchalant.

**TED**

So... what's so terrible about that?

**PHYLLIS**

(would like to take him by the shoulders and shake him until his teeth rattle)

Oh, for God's sake, Kramer. You have got to be the world's most naive human being.

(leaning forward)

Murray has gone in and changed every single ad you've done on the entire Fire and Ice campaign. Every layout... Every idea... Every single thing, right down the line.

**TED**

No. No, I don't believe it. Jim O'Connor would never let anything like that happen. He gave me my shot

in this business. If it wasn't for  
Jim O'Connor I'd be - I don't know  
where I'd be. He's a wonderful man...

**PHYLLIS**

(apologetic for having  
upset Ted)

Kramer, I'm sorry. All I was trying  
to do was -

**TED**

(cutting her off)

I don't want to hear another word  
against him. Not another word. He's  
a wonderful man... a wonderful man...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TED KRAMER'S OFFICE - DAY**

done,  
INSERT: The finished proof of the ad that Murray had  
that Ted had seen in O'Connor's office.

**ON TED**

marches  
TRACKING WITH HIM as he steams out of his door and  
along the corridor to O'Connor's office.

**SECRETARY**

(as Ted brushes past  
her)

I'm sorry, Mr. O'Connor is in  
conference.

without  
But it is too late. Ted barrels into O'Connor's office  
bothering to knock.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. O'CONNOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

as Ted  
O'Connor is alone in the office. He looks up startled  
comes barging in.

**TED**

(furious)

All right, Jim. You said I was running this show, right? You said no decisions without my approval, right?  
(brandishing the ad)  
Well what the hell is this? What's going on, Jim?

**O'CONNOR**

(embarrassed)  
Well, ah... I thought it over and I decided we're doing it Murray's way.

**TED**

Jim, this is garbage. This isn't anything like what we talked to Revlon about. None of it. You can't -

**O'CONNOR**

(tough)  
That's my decision, Ted and that's final.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. DINING AREA - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**ON BILLY**

him Who sits looking down at the plate of food in front of as though it was a coiled rattlesnake about to strike.

**BILLY**

What is it?

**ON TED**

a Preoccupied, jumpy. He is eating, but he doesn't taste thing.

**TED**

Salisbury steak.

**BILLY**

I hate it.

**TED**

You don't hate it. We had Salisbury steak last week and you liked it fine.

**BILLY**

(stubborn)

No I didn't. I hate the brown stuff.  
It's gross.

**TED**

(strained patience)

All it is is onions and gravy.

**BILLY**

I'm allergic to onions.

**TED**

You are not allergic of onions. You've  
had them lots of times.

**BILLY**

(sullen)

I want a pizza.

**TED**

(trying not to lose  
patience)

No. This is fine. Just take a bite,  
you'll like it fine.

in  
being  
Reluctantly, Billy takes a tiny bite. He barely puts it  
his mouth before he spits it out with a great show of  
physically ill.

**BILLY**

I think I'm going to throw up.

**TED**

(getting pissed off)

Oh, for God's sake... Here.

the  
meat.  
He reaches across and scrapes most of the sauce off of

**TED**

There, okay? Now that's just plain  
old hamburger.

**BILLY**

Some of the brown stuff is still  
there.

**TED**

(through clenched  
teeth)  
Then eat around it.

**BILLY**

No.

**TED**

(anger building)  
Now listen to me, young man. Do you  
know what I had to go through to put  
this goddamn food on the goddamn  
table?

**BILLY**

(obstinate)  
I don't care. I hate it. I want pizza.

**TED**

(blowing up)  
Not on your life. That's it. I've  
had it with crap around this house.  
From now on, no more pizza! Get it?  
Starting right now you can eat real  
food like a normal human being!

**BILLY**

No!

By now both of them are out of control.

**TED**

You want to know something?! You are  
a spoiled selfish little brat! Now  
eat -

Billy takes his plate and looking his father straight  
in the  
eye deliberately overturns it, spilling food  
everywhere.

**ON TED**

He is out of his chair like a shot, crosses to Billy  
and  
jerks him to his feet.

**TED**

(yelling)  
Goddamnit! Go to your room!

screaming He half-carries, half-drags the child kicking and  
into his room. THE CAMERA TRACKS ALONGSIDE THEM.

**BILLY**

(at the top of his  
voice)

Owww... You're hurting me... You're  
hurting me... I hate you... I hate  
you...

**TED**

(seething)

You're no bargain either, pal.

**BILLY**

I want my mommy... I want my mommy..

the By now they have reached Billy's room. Ted dumps him on  
bed unceremoniously and starts out of the room.

**BILLY**

(sobbing)

I want my... mm... ommy... I want  
mmy... mommy...

**TED**

(at the door)

Tough shit. You're stuck with me.

And he slams the door behind him.

**CUT TO:**

**WIDE SHOT**

meal The dining area. Ted sits down and tries to resume his  
alone.

**BILLY (O.S.)**

(sobbing, fighting to  
catch his breath)

I want my... mmo... mmy. I want  
mmy mmo... mmy...

**CLOSER IN ON TED**

that he As he lifts his glass to take a drink and we can SEE

is shaking like a leaf.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

**ON TED**

As he finishes doing the last of the dishes, dries his hands and looks around to make sure that everything has been put away. He flips off the light and, as THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM, he walks from room to room, turning off the lights, until he reaches the door to Billy's room which is still closed. Ted hesitates for a moment, then eases open the door and steps inside.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

**TED'S POV**

Billy lies sprawled across the bed, all tangled up in the covers.

**ON TED**

As he crosses to the sleeping child and starts to straighten the covers.

**BILLY**

(tentatively)

Daddy?

**TED**

(all anger gone)

Yeah?

**BILLY**

I'm sorry...

**TED**

(kisses him)  
That's okay, pal. Go back to sleep.  
It's very late.

He starts to get up, when:

**BILLY**  
Daddy?

**TED**  
Uh huh?

**BILLY**  
(very quiet)  
Are you... gonna go... away?

**ON TED**

Stunned at the question.

**TED**  
Of course I'm not going away. I love  
you very much. I'll be right here.

There is a beat of silence, then:

**BILLY**  
(it comes pouring out)  
That's why mommy left... isn't it?  
'Cause I was bad...

The boy begins to weep.

**TED**  
(he puts his arm around  
Billy and holds him  
close)  
Oh, Christ... Oh, Christ...  
(he thinks for a  
moment, then:)  
No, pal. Your mom loves you very  
much. The reason she left didn't  
have anything to do with you.  
(pause, this is very  
painful)  
Look, I don't know if this will make  
any sense to you, okay? But I'll try  
and explain. You see the reason your  
mom left was because... Well, I guess  
it was because I kept trying to make  
her into a certain kind of person...  
Make her be the way I thought a wife

was supposed to be. Only she wasn't like that. She was...

(smiles to himself)

Well, she wasn't like that. And now, when I think about it, I can see she tried very hard to be like I wanted - very hard. And when she couldn't, then she tried to tell me about it. Only I wouldn't listen. I guess I thought that if I was happy, that meant she was happy too. Only she wasn't. The truth is, the only reason she didn't leave a lot sooner was because she loves you so much. Joanna stayed until she couldn't stand me any longer and then she left... But it wasn't you, pal. It wasn't you.

There is a long beat of silence as Billy thinks about this.

Clearly an enormous burden has been lifted from his shoulders.

Finally:

**BILLY**

Is mom ever coming back?

**TED**

You mean for good?

Billy nods.

**TED**

I don't think so.

**BILLY**

(thoughtfully)

Oh...

Ted gets to his feet, starts for the door.

**TED**

Now go to sleep. It's very late.

**BILLY**

Good night.

**TED**

Sleep tight.

**BILLY**

Don't let the bedbugs bite.

**TED**

See you in the morning light.

**BILLY**

Dad?

Ted pauses in the doorway, smiles.

**TED**

Yes?

**BILLY**

I love you...

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY**

**SERIES OF TRACKING SHOTS**

a  
As Ted runs along beside Billy, who is learning to ride  
bike.

runs  
speeds  
Billy  
Then, in the last shot, Ted lets go of the bike and  
along just behind. Slowly as Billy gains confidence he  
up, leaving Ted farther and farther behind. Finally, as  
glances over his shoulders.

**CUT TO:**

**TED'S POV**

and  
As the boy, by now a considerable distance away, turns  
waves.

**ON TED**

glances  
wipes  
Waving back, a grin of enormous pride on his face. He  
around, embarrassed to make sure no one is watching and  
tears from his eyes.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON A BUS**

get  
As it pulls to a stop and a mob of mothers and children  
off.

PANS  
Among them we spot Billy and Ted Kramer. THE CAMERA  
WITH THEM as they cross the street and enter the school  
building. THE CAMERA CONTINUES IT'S PAN across the  
street,  
to a Coffee Shop with large plate glass windows facing  
the  
school. There, standing in the window, watching, is  
Joanna  
Kramer. HOLD AS THE CAMERA SLOWLY ZOOMS IN ON HER and  
we SEE  
a look of overwhelming pain on her face.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. PLAYGROUND, CENTRAL PARK - AFTERNOON**

**ON TED AND THELMA**

high  
Sitting on a bench, the area around them is stacked  
with toys that the kids have brought with them to the  
park.

playing.  
OFF SCREEN we can HEAR Billy and Kim racing around,

**TED**

(a little too casual)  
Thel, you ever hear from Joanna?

**THELMA**

(also with deliberate  
nonchalance)  
Not for a couple of months. The last  
time I heard from her she was living  
in San Francisco.

**TED**

(surprised)  
California?

**THELMA**

(watching him)  
Uh, huh... She said she had a good  
job, was playing a lot of tennis.  
She wanted to know all about Billy.

There is a beat of silence, then:

**TED**

(the real question)  
She ever ask about me?

**THELMA**

(lying)  
Uh, huh... Yeah...

**TED**

What d'you tell her?

**THELMA**

I told her you're doing a pretty  
good job.

**BILLY (O.S.)**

Daddy! Daddy!

Ted glances around:

**HIS POV**

has a Billy and Kim are standing near the jungle Jim. Billy  
toy airplane in his hand.

**BILLY**

Daddy, look! Presenting Billy Kramer's  
Fantastic Superjet!

noises and And he begins to race around the area, making jet  
holding the airplane in his hand.

**REVERSE ON TED**

Watching him, smiling.

**ON BILLY**

back

Weaving in and around the benches. He turns and starts towards Ted. As he does:

**QUICK CUT: INSERT:**

Billy's foot, as he trips.

**ON BILLY**

As he starts to fall, still holding onto the airplane.

**QUICK CUT: TED**

Watching, horrified.

**ON BILLY**

As he hits the concrete.

**ON TED**

He leaps to his feet, starts toward the boy.

**ON BILLY**

As he looks up.

**JUMP CUT IN TO EXTREME CLOSEUP**

into

There is a terrible-looking gash running from his cheek his hairline.

Kim screams at the sight of the blood.

**BILLY**

(terrified)

Daddy!

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. ENTRANCE TO CENTRAL PARK - AFTERNOON**

**ON THE ENTRANCE**

barreling  
with

As Ted, carrying Billy, wrapped in his coat, comes out of the park, nearly knocking over several people

CAMERA

Thelma

SHOT

FACT,

APARTMENT AND

LIGHT,

FINALLY ON

GENUINELY

shopping bags, and begins running like hell WITH THE TRACKING JUST IN FRONT OF HIM. In the BACKGROUND we SEE and Kim chasing after him. THE LENGTH OF THE TRACKING SHOULD BE MUCH LONGER THAN WE EXPECT. IT SHOULD, IN COVER THE THREE CITY BLOCKS BETWEEN THE KRAMER THE HOSPITAL, ACROSS STREETS WITHOUT STOPPING FOR THE ALONG CROWDED SIDEWALKS WITHOUT STOPPING, ENDING THE EMERGENCY ENTRANCE TO THE HOSPITAL. IT MUST BE SUPERHUMAN, GENUINELY HEROIC.

CUT TO:

DAY

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM, EMERGENCY SECTION, HOSPITAL -

ON TED KRAMER

his

He is covered with Billy's blood, it is on his face,

wound.

shirt, his trousers. At the moment 'he stands helpless, watching as, Off-Screen, a surgeon examines Billy's

**SURGEON (O.S.)**

(calm, reassuring)

That's good, Billy... That's a brave boy... Now then, how's that? Now we've cleaned it out...

**WIDER SHOT**

bending

Billy lies on the examining table with the doctor over him.

**SURGEON**

There. That wasn't so bad, was it?

Billy doesn't say anything.

**SURGEON**

Now then, you just wait here, Billy. I want to talk to your dad for a

minute.

The doctor motions for Thelma to wait with Billy and he crosses to Ted who stands in the doorway.

**CLOSER IN ON THEN**

**SURGEON**

(low voice, again  
calm and reassuring)  
Your boy is very lucky, Mr. Kramer.  
One inch over and it would have caught  
the eye.

**REACTION TED**

**SURGEON**

But I'm going to have to take some  
stitches.

**TED**

(flat)  
How many?

**SURGEON**

Ten.

Ted closes his eyes, there is a sharp intake of breath.

**SURGEON**

Because of the position of the wound  
and your son's age, I don't think  
there will be much of a scar.  
Otherwise I'd call in a plastic  
surgeon.

Ted nods.

**SURGEON**

Now, I'd advise you to wait outside.  
It'll be eas -

**TED**

(like a shot)  
No.

**SURGEON**

(reasonable)  
Mr. Kramer, there's -

**TED**

(softly, but with

real vehemence)  
Fuck you. He's my son. I'm staying  
with him.

**CUT TO:**

**CLOSE ON TED**

He holds his son tightly while the doctor stitches up  
the  
face,  
see  
with  
of  
Ted's  
boy's wound. From THIS CAMERA ANGLE we can SEE Ted's  
but only the back of Billy's head. Although we do not  
the stitches being made, we do SEE the doctor's hand,  
the needle and surgical thread as it moves into and out  
view with a slow, steady rhythm. Billy's hand clutches  
so tightly that the knuckles are white.

**BILLY**

(softly, as each stitch  
is taken)  
Ohhh... Ohhhh... Ohhhhh...

**TED**

(whispering to his  
child)  
It's okay, son... I'm here... Just a  
little more to go... Don't worry,  
son... I'm here...

**FADE TO**

**BLACK:**

**EXT. KRAMER APT. BLDG. - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

It is late, only a few lights are still on.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

**ON BILLY**

bandages.  
in a  
BEAT,  
and

He lies in bed, fast asleep, his head swathed in  
THE CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM HIM across to Ted, who sits  
nearby rocking chair, watching his son. HOLD FOR A  
then Ted gets to his feet, walks quietly to the door  
steps out into the hall, closing the door behind him.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

off  
anything

Thelma having washed and dried the dishes is now wiping  
the top of the counter top, more to keep busy than  
else. She looks around as Ted enters.

**THELMA**

How is he?

**REVERSE ON TED**

and  
Standing in the doorway. He hasn't changed his clothes  
he is still covered with blood.

**TED**

(nods)

He's okay... Thel, can I ask you a  
favor?

**THELMA**

Sure.

**TED**

I don't mean a little favor. I mean  
a big F favor.

at  
Thelma nods. She watches Ted closely. He doesn't look  
her.

**TED**

Thelma, if I die -

**THELMA**

(aghast)  
What?

**TED**

(quickly)  
I didn't say I'm going to die, but  
if I should -

**THELMA**

(deeply upset)  
Don't say that! I don't want to hear  
you say that!

**TED**

(firmly)  
Thel, listen to me. If, on the million  
to one shot that I should -  
(correcting himself)  
That anything should happen to me.  
Would you take care of Billy?

**THELMA**

(amazed)  
Me?! You want me to take care of  
Billy?!

**TED**

I thought about it a lot and you're  
the only person I know that I trust  
with him. I mean, if anything happened  
to me, he'd be okay with you. You're  
a good mother.

Silence. Thelma looks away from him.

**TED**

(hastily)  
I know it's not an easy thing to  
answer.

Silence. She still cannot look at him.

**TED**

Look, if it's too much responsibility  
-

Thelma nods, unable to speak.

**TED**

You're sure?

She nods again.

**TED**

Thank you, Thel. Thank you very much.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BILLY'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING**

**MEDIUM SHOT ON BILLY**

Billy's  
SCREEN  
five

As he lies in bed asleep. Some time has passed and bandage is much smaller. HOLD ON HIM as we HEAR OFF  
Sound: From the street below, the regular six-forty-five garbage truck that serves as Billy's alarm clock.

**HOLD ON BILLY**

into  
the  
the  
HOLDS  
in  
bathroom.  
to  
and  
meets  
doughnut

As he wakes up, struggles to his feet.  
THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM as, eyes closed, he stumbles into the bathroom, pees, and still not remembering to flush toilet walks into the bedroom and wakes his father. As child turns and walks toward the kitchen, THE CAMERA ON TED. He heaves himself to his feet and, eyes closed, much the same manner as his son, stumbles into the bathroom. He automatically flushes the toilet without bothering to look, walks into the living room, opens the front door picks up the paper. As he starts into the kitchen, he meets Billy coming the other way carrying two plates, a doughnut on each.

living  
crosses  
the

THE CAMERA NOW TRACKS WITH BILLY as he walks into the room, carefully sets the plates on the dining table, to the television set, and turns it on. He returns to

glasses of table, and sits down as Ted appears carrying two  
orange juice and vitamins. He takes a seat in the chair  
opposite Billy and opens his paper and starts to read.  
HOLD ON THEM as they sit without talking, eating their  
breakfast - the only sound, a children's cartoon  
program coming from the T.V.  
From time to time Ted glances up from his paper to look  
across at the cartoon.  
HOLD ON THEM as we SEE that they have become roommates  
in the best sense of the word.

**EXT. TED'S OFFICE BLDG. - MIDTOWN - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

falling. It is a gray, cloudy day in mid-November. Snow is

Sound-effect: a telephone ringing. Then:

**TED'S VOICE**

Hello?

**JOANNA'S VOICE**

Ted?

**TED'S VOICE**

Joanna?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. RESTAURANT, ISLE OF CAPRI - NIGHT**

**ON THE DOOR**

approaches. As Ted enters, looks around. The Maitre d'hotel

From his attitude, it is clear that Ted and Joanna were regular customers.

**MAITRE D'HOTEL**

Good evening, Mr. Kramer. We haven't seen you for a long time. Mrs. Kramer, she waits for you in the back.

**TED**

Thank you, John.

room  
hello,  
door

THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH TED as he walks toward the back of the restaurant. Several waiters approach and say the piano player looks up and smiles. As he reaches the to the back room.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BACK ROOM**

**TED'S POV - JOANNA**

front of

She sits against the wall, a glass of white wine in her.

Nevertheless,  
BEAT

She is dressed simply and no longer has a tan. Joanna is still stunningly beautiful. HOLD ON HER FOR A as she looks up, smiles.

**ON TED**

impossible not

He stands watching her, his knees weak. It is to fall in love with her all over again.

**TWO SHOT**

As he crosses to her table, sits down.

**JOANNA**

Hello, Ted. You look well.

**TED**

So do you.

it

The waiter appears, carrying a scotch and soda. He sets down on the table in front of Ted.

**WAITER**

The usual, Mr. Kramer.

**TED**

(not taking his eyes  
off Joanna)  
Thanks, Gino.

The waiter nods and promptly disappears.

**JOANNA**

How's the new job?

**TED**

Fine.

piano  
deal  
There is a self-conscious pause. From the bar, the  
player begins playing a new song. From Ted and Joanna's  
reaction, it is clearly a song that has meant a great  
to them in the past.

They listen for a moment, then:

**TED**

Look at us, Joanna. Just like any  
old married couple having dinner.  
Who would believe it.

**JOANNA**

Yes... How's Billy?

**ON TED**

The question he has been dreading.

**TED**

He's great... except...  
(not looking at her)  
...Except he had... he fell and he  
cut his face. He... He has a scar,  
Joanna, from about here to here.  
(indicating where and  
how big)

There is a beat of silence. A moment of shared feeling.

**TED**

(he has to say it to  
someone)  
I can't help but feel somehow...  
it's my fault. I keep thinking I  
could've done something - stopped  
it...

**JOANNA**

You can't tell it from a distance,  
Ted.

For the first time he looks up at her.

**TED**

What?

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**JOANNA**

I've seen him.

**TED**

You have?

**JOANNA**

A few times. Sometimes I sit in that  
coffee shop across the street and  
watch when you take him to school.

**ON TED**

Speechless.

**JOANNA**

He looks like a terrific kid.

**TED**

He is...

(he still can't get  
over it)

You sat in that coffee shop across  
from school -

**JOANNA**

(completing the  
sentence)

Watching my son... Ted, I've been  
living in New York for the past two  
months.

**TED**

(amazed)

You've been living here, in the city?

**JOANNA**

(a deep breath)

Ted... The reason I wanted to see  
you... I want Billy back.

**TED**

You want what?!

**JOANNA**

(firm)

I want my son. I'm through sitting in coffee shops looking at him from across the street. I want my son.

**TED**

Are you out of your mind?! You're the one that walked out on him, remember?

**JOANNA**

(trying to explain)

Ted, listen to me... You and I, we had a really crappy marriage -

(hastily)

Look, don't get so defensive, okay? It was probably as much my fault as it was yours... Anyway when I left I was really screwed up -

**TED**

Joanna, I don't give a -

**JOANNA**

(she will be heard)

Ted, all my life I'd either been somebody's daughter or somebody's wife, or somebody else's mother. Then all of a sudden, I was a thirty-two-year-old, highly neurotic woman who had just walked out on her husband and child. I went to California because that was about as far away as I could get. Only... I guess it wasn't far enough. So I started going to a shrink.

(leaning forward,  
very sincere)

Ted, I've had time to think. I've been through some changes. I've learned a lot about myself.

**TED**

(like a shot)

Such as?

Silence.

**TED**

(boring in)  
Come on, Joanna, what did you learn?  
I'd really like to know.

Silence.

**TED**

(relentless)  
One thing, okay? Just tell me one  
goddam thing you've learned.

There is a beat of silence, then:

**JOANNA**

(quiet, determined)  
I've learned that I want my son.

**ON TED**

He reacts as though he has been slapped.

**TED**

Joanna, go be a mother. Get married,  
have kids. Don't get married, have  
kids. Do whatever you want. I don't  
give a damn. Just leave me out of it  
- and leave my baby out of it.

**JOANNA**

Ted, if you can't discuss this  
rationally -

**TED**

(getting to his feet)  
Joanna, go fuck yourself!

And with that he turns on his heels and stalks out of  
the  
restaurant.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

A large, very plush office: lots of antiques, beautiful  
nineteenth century paintings on the wall along with

of  
desk  
early  
buttonhole,  
in

autographed photographs of at least three ex-Presidents  
the United States. Sitting behind a large and imposing  
is JOHN SHAUNESSY, a handsome, formidable man in his  
sixties. He is well-dressed, a cornflower in his  
that sort of thing. At the moment, Shaunessy leans back  
his chair as Ted finishes his story.

**TED**

(leaning forward,  
intense)

Look, she walked out on her own child,  
right? That's desertion, right? Mr.  
Shaunessy, I'm telling you it's an  
open and shut case.

**SHAUNESSY**

First, there's no such thing as an  
open and shut case. Especially where  
custody is involved. Got it?

Ted nods.

**SHAUNESSY**

Second, the burden is on us to prove  
your ex-wife is an unfit mother.  
That means I'm going to have to play  
rough and, if I play rough, you can  
bet they will too. Can you take that,  
Mr. Kramer?

Ted nods.

**SHAUNESSY**

Third, it'll cost you five thousand  
dollars.

**REACTION TED**

That's an astronomical amount of money to him.

**SHAUNESSY**

That's if we win. If we lose, you  
could end up having to pay your wife's  
court costs as well.

**TED**

(determined)

Fine.

**SHAUNESSY**

Good. You've hired yourself a hell  
of a lawyer, Mr. Kramer.

(down to business)

How old is the child?

**TED**

Six.

**ON SHAUNESSY**

He shakes his head.

**SHAUNESSY**

That's tough. In most cases involving  
a child that young, the court tends  
to side with the mother.

**ON TED**

Agitated. This is not what he wanted to hear.

**TED**

But she signed over custody. Here...

He digs in his pockets, pulls out a piece of paper and  
it at the lawyer.

thrusts

**SHAUNESSY**

(glancing at it)

I'm not saying we don't have a shot,  
but it won't be easy...

(thinks for a moment)

Mr. Kramer, do me a favor. There is  
something I find very helpful in  
matters like this. I sit down and  
make a list of all the pros and cons  
on an issue. I actually write them  
down and look at them. I want you to  
do that, okay? Then, after that, if  
you're really sure you want to retain  
custody of your child - then we'll  
go in there and whip their asses.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - LATE AT NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

been Ted sits at the dining table, the supper dishes have pushed aside. He has a legal pad in front of him and is writing. THE CAMERA DOLLIES IN CLOSER.

**INSERT - TED'S POV**

the The legal pad. On one side Ted has written "Pro" and on list other, "Con." Underneath "Con" Ted has written a long Money, of the drawbacks involved in keeping Billy: Sex Life, The Possibility of Remarriage, Sleep, Emotional Dependence. "Pro" side of the list is empty.

**ON TED**

crumples He sits for a moment, staring at the list, then he the paper, gets to his feet.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BILLY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

**ON THE DOOR**

child is As Ted enters. He crosses to Billy's bed where the the fast asleep, sits down on the edge, and starts to rub child's back.

**TED**

I love you Billy Kramer.

**BILLY**

(half-asleep)

I love you too daddy.

toward the Ted kisses the child, gets to his feet and starts door.

**TED**

Sleep tight. Don't let the bedbugs bite...

**BILLY**

(almost asleep again)  
See you in the morning light...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. O'CONNOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

O'Connor stands with his back to Ted, looking out the window.  
From the beginning this is clearly an awkward and unpleasant moment.

**O'CONNOR**

(scared to do what he is about to do)  
Look, ah... Ted. I just got word from the guys at Revlon and... ah they did some marketing tests on our campaign and the results were...

**CLOSE ON TED**

is  
Hold on him listening as it slowly dawns on him that he is being fired.

**O'CONNOR**

(stiff)  
Disappointing. It only pulled a fourteen share and they were hoping for a twenty five minimum, and... ah... they're not very happy and... Well, the guys have decided they want to... ah, re-think the entire concept and... Look, I don't like having to do this, okay?... But... I mean, what I mean is... ah, I'm going to have to... ah, let you go -

**TED**

(not really sure he heard right)  
Are you firing me, Jim?

**ON O'CONNOR**

He still has his back to Ted.

**O'CONNOR**

C'mon, Ted, don't get emotional.  
Okay?

(whining)

Look, this isn't exactly an easy thing for me to do, y'know? I swear Murray and I did everything we could, but those sons of bitches were out for blood. I mean it was all I could do to keep the account inside the shop... Look, I promise, if I hear of anything I'll let you know first thing.

Ted, I want - O'Connor looks around.

**O'CONNOR**

Ted?...

**HIS POV**

The room is empty, the door stands open and Ted is gone.

**O'CONNOR'S VOICE**

Ted?...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TED'S OFFICE - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

As Ted grabs a picture of Billy from his desk, takes his jacket and coat and stalks out the door.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**TRACKING ALONGSIDE TED**

As he walks along the street in a state of total shock. Behind him, in the windows of expensive stores we note Christmas decorations.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. INTERVIEW ROOM, EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

man  
like  
Ted sits across from the interviewer, a polished young  
in his middle twenties, very efficient, he sounds a bit  
a tape recording.

**INTERVIEWER**

(glancing at a form  
Ted has filled out)  
Ummm, hmmm... umm, hmmm...  
(the good news)  
Well, this looks very good.. Of course  
(the bad news)  
...you understand this is the worst  
time of the year to look for a job.

**TED**

(panic)  
What?! What do you mean, I don't  
understand.

**INTERVIEWER**

(patronizing)  
Mr. Kramer, nobody even thinks about  
leaving their job until after they  
get their Christmas bonus.

**TED**

Look, you don't understand. I need a  
job. I've got a kid and -

**INTERVIEWER**

(smooth)  
I understand and I'm absolutely sure  
something wonderful will turn up...  
(ending any further  
discussion)  
...after the first of the year.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON A TELEPHONE BOOTH**

DOLLIES  
employment  
listings  
next,  
him and

Ted stands inside, talking on the phone. AS THE CAMERA  
IN CLOSER, he hangs up the receiver and takes the  
section of the New York Times which is filled with  
he has circled and crosses off one. He goes on to the  
takes a dime from the stack on the shelf in front of  
starts to dial.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. TED KRAMER'S APT. HOUSE - EVENING**

**ESTABLISHING SHOT**

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

**ON TED**

HOLD

Who stands at the sink doing the last of the dishes. A  
dishtowel is tucked into his belt, serving as an apron.

ON HIM as we HEAR:

Sound-effect: The phone ringing.

Ted wipes his hands, picks up the phone.

**TED**

Uh, huh?

**SECRETARY'S VOICE**

(from the phone)

Mr. Kramer? Please hold for Mr.  
Shaunessy...

Then, a moment later:

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

Ted? They've set the court date. I  
just heard today... It's...

(checking his notes)

January sixth.

**TED**

(despair)

Oh, Christ.. .John, there's something I ought to tell you. My... ah, situation has... changed. I lost my job.

There is a long pause, too long.

**TED**

John?

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

(thoughtfully)

Ted, I won't lie to you, we don't have a hope in hell of winning a custody hearing if you're out of work.

Ted doubles over the phone like he has been hit in the stomach.

**TED**

(softly, but with  
real feeling)

Good Christ, Joanna, just get the hell out of my life.

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

Ted? Are you there?

**TED**

Yeah.

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

Any prospects?

**TED**

(trying to make himself  
believe it)

Don't worry. I plan to have something within twenty-four hours, John.

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

(amazed)

How the hell are you going to do that?

**TED**

(grim)

I don't know.

**INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - EMPLOYMENT AGENCY - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

The same young man sits across the desk from Ted.

**INTERVIEWER**

(smirk)

Mis-ter Kramer, as I mentioned yesterday, this is a very bad time of year to look for work. Now I'm sure we'll have something for you by mid-February, March at the latest.

**CLOSE ON TED**

Leaning forward, impatient.

**TED**

I need a job, now.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

to  
The interviewer gives Ted a weary look. Then he starts flip through the card file.

**INTERVIEWER**

(going through the motions)

No... No... No...

Finally he pauses at one card, pulls it out.

**INTERVIEWER**

(doubtfully)

There might be something at J. Walter Thompson. But...

(shaking his head)

...I don't think they're really serious. The position's been open for two months and...

(shrugs)

They may just be on a fishing expedition.

(cheerful)

I'm sure you'll be much happier if you wait until after the first -

**TED**

(checking his watch)

Call up the people at J. Walter Thompson. Set up an appointment at four.

**INTERVIEWER**

(politeness strained  
almost to the breaking  
point)

Mis-ter Kramer, it's...

(checking his watch)

...almost four now. It's the Friday before Christmas. Nobody is going to want to -

**TED**

(leaning forward,  
tough as nails)

Either you call and set up the appointment, or I'll call. And if I call, you lose the commission.

**INTERVIEWER**

(arch)

My, we are a hot shot aren't we?

Ted is already on his feet and halfway out the door.

**TED**

You bet your ass.

**CUT TO:**

**LATE**

**INT. OFFICE ADVERTISING MANAGER, J. WALTER THOMPSON -  
AFTERNOON**

From  
office

It is dark outside and the lights are on in the office. beyond the door, we can hear the sounds of a Christmas party in full swing.

**ON JACK ACKERMAN**

forties,  
sits  
time

The advertising manager. A balding man in his mid- he wears a suit, complete with vest. At the moment he behind his desk listening to Ted's spiel, from time to he glances at the resume on the desk in front of him.

**TED (O.S.)**

So, Mr. Ackerman, as you can see from my resume, my experience in setting up the leisure package concept means that I've spent a lot of time working along the same lines as your multiple buys and your regional advertising ideas. I know the pitfalls, but - and this is more important - I know the potential revenue for the company inherent in these programs.

**ON TED**

As he finishes. He sits back, pleased with himself.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**ACKERMAN**

Well, Mr. Kramer, I must say this has been very impressive. I'd like to think about it and get back to you.

**TED**

(leaning forward)

Mr. Ackerman, is there anyone else that I should see before you come to a decision.

**ACKERMAN**

Mr. Spencer, our Advertising Director.

**TED**

(no time to waste)

Could I see him right away?

**ACKERMAN**

(taken aback)

I'm sorry, but he's leaving this evening for a two-week vacation. I'll set up something the moment he gets back.

to  
He gets to his feet, starts to shake Ted's hand, ready  
end the interview.

**TED**

I'd like to see him now - before he

leaves.

**ACKERMAN**

Mr. Kramer, I don't think -

**TED**

(means it)

I want this position very much.

Ackerman gives Ted a long, considered look, then:

**ACKERMAN**

Wait here.

He turns and goes out the door.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OUTER OFFICE, J. WALTER THOMPSON - LATE AFTERNOON**

executives,  
drinks  
general

The large room is crowded with secretaries, junior researchers, editors, ad-men, etc., etc. They all have in their hands and there is a good deal of kissing and conviviality going on.

office,  
room  
moment,  
in his  
approaches  
head  
and  
excuses  
Ackerman  
Ackerman  
that

THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH ACKERMAN as he steps out of his office, closes the door behind him and makes his way across the room to MR. SPENCER, the Advertising Director. At the moment, Spencer stands with his coat over one arm and a drink in his hand talking to a very pretty young woman. Ackerman approaches him, whispers something in his ear. Spencer shakes his head and points to his watch. Ackerman says something else and excuses himself from the pretty young woman and follows Ackerman back to his office. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM. As Ackerman opens the door to his office, THE CAMERA IS ANGLED so that we can SEE past them, into the office where Ted stands

waiting.

**ACKERMAN**

(as they enter)

Mr. Spencer, Mr. Kramer.

**SPENCER**

(not wasting any time)

So you're the go-getter. All right,  
you've got ten minutes.

CAMERA As the door closes behind them, blocking our view, THE  
PANS UP to a clock over the door. It reads five-  
fifteen.

**MATCH**

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. ACKERMAN'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON**

**ON A CLOCK**

TO Which now reads five twenty-two. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK  
REVEAL Spencer, now sitting in Ackerman's chair, his  
feet on Ackerman's desk. Ted has just finished his pitch.

**SPENCER**

(sipping his drink)

That's very interesting, Mr. Kramer.  
I must say, it's very interesting.  
Let me think about it. I'll let  
Jack...

(indicating Ackerman)

...know and he'll get in touch with  
you.

Spencer gets to his feet, starts to retrieve his coat.

**ON TED**

As he decides to take a gamble.

**TED**

Excuse me, I believe you said I had  
ten minutes.

**ON SPENCER**

Almost at the door, looking around.

**SPENCER**

Well?

**ON TED**

Checking his watch.

**TED**

That means I've got two minutes left.  
I understand you're paying twenty-five.

Spencer nods.

**TED**

(a deep breath, then  
a real huckster)  
All right, I'll tell you what I'm  
gonna do - I'll take the job at twenty-  
two-five. Now, that's twenty-five  
hundred less than you're offering.  
The only thing is, you have to say  
yes right now. Not tomorrow. Not  
next week. Not after the holidays.  
It's worth it to me for a yes right  
now and I'll take twenty-five hundred  
less.

look  
this.

There is a long beat of silence as Spencer and Ackerman  
at one another. They were clearly not prepared for

**TED**

(watching them)  
Today only. One day only. Twenty-two  
five.

**SPENCER**

Mr. Kramer, can we talk privately  
for a moment?

**TED**

Certainly.

**CUT TO:**

**OUTER OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON**

**ON TED**

all of  
down  
he  
his

As he steps out of Ackerman's office, sits down. Now,  
the fear, all of the anxiety that he has been fighting  
comes welling up. What if he pushed too hard? What will  
do if he doesn't get a job? If Ted Kramer could fall to  
knees and pray, he would.

**CROSS-CUT WITH THE CHRISTMAS PARTY**

very  
is  
she  
steps

That swirls around him. We notice in particular, one  
pretty young woman flirting with a number of men. She  
wearing a dress with straps, one of them has broken and  
has patched it with a piece of masking tape.  
Finally the door to Ackerman's office opens and he  
out.

**ACKERMAN**

Mr. Kramer?

Ted jumps to his feet, starts into the office.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. ACKERMAN'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON**

**ON SPENCER**

He looks at Ted carefully for a long time, then:

**SPENCER**

(grins)

Welcome aboard, Mr. Kramer.

**CLOSEUP TED**

cool:

There is an instant of relief, then, with astounding

**TED**

Well, gentlemen, I'm pleased to be  
with you.

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

TRACKS  
party  
passes the  
kisses

As they shake hands, say their good-byes. THE CAMERA WITH TED as he makes his way through the Christmas that is still going strong. Then, suddenly, as he very pretty woman we noticed earlier, he turns and kisses her.

**QUICK CUTS**

something

As a look passes between them, a sudden chemistry, we have not seen in Ted before.

**TED**

(steps back from the  
astounded girl, grins)  
Merry Christmas.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON A BUS**

the  
Billy.  
Billy is  
the  
his

As it pulls to a stop, the doors open and, along with usual flood of mothers and children we SEE Ted and THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH THEM as they walk to school. talking a mile a minute, describing in minute detail plot of an episode of "I Dream of Jeannie." Ted listens intently, then, almost involuntarily, he glances over shoulder in the direction of the Coffee Shop.

**HIS POV**

There, standing in the window, watching, is Joanna.

**ON TED AND BILLY**

As

As they continue to walk. Ted's eyes remain on Joanna.

son. they reach the door to the school, Ted looks at his

**TED**

(kissing Billy goodbye)  
You're a terrific kid, Billy Kramer.

building. He stands watching as Billy rushes off into the  
direction of Then he turns back and once again looks in the  
the Coffee Shop.

**HIS POV**

This time there is no one there.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. KRAMER APT. BLDG. - NIGHT**

**ESTABLISHING SHOT**

HOLD FOR A BEAT as we HEAR:

later: OFF SCREEN Sound: A telephone ringing. Then, a moment

**TED'S VOICE**

Hello?

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

Ted? John Shaunessy here. I just got  
a call from your wife's lawyer. She  
wants to see the kid.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

cleaning up Ted Kramer, the phone cradled against his ear is  
perfect the remains of one of Billy's attempts to make the  
peanut butter sandwich.

**CLOSE ON TED**

Horrorified.

**TED**

What?! She wants what?!

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

(he's been through  
this a million times)  
She's the mother. That means she's  
within her legal rights.

**TED**

(agitated)  
John, what if she kidnaps him. I've  
heard all these -

**SHAUNESSY**

(the patience of a  
saint)  
Look, Ted, I don't honestly think  
she would go to the trouble of suing  
you for custody of the child if she  
was planning on kidnapping him.

**TED**

(doubtful)  
I don't know, John... I mean, to be  
brutally honest, I'm not so sure  
what kind of mental shape Joanna's  
in right now. Y'know she admitted  
she was seeing a shrink.

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

(a flicker of interest)  
You ever see her talk to the walls?

**TED**

No, but -

**SHAUNESSY'S VOICE**

Then you don't have a choice. Have  
Billy at the Seventy-Fifth Street  
entrance to Central Park, Saturday  
at ten.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. FIFTH AVE. SIDE OF CENTRAL PARK - DAY**

**ON TED AND BILLY**

TRACKING IN FRONT OF THEM as they walk along the  
Central

that

Park side of Fifth Ave. From their attitude it is clear each of them, for their own reasons, is very nervous.

**TED'S POV - TRACKING FORWARD**

She  
as

About half a block away Joanna paces back and forth. hasn't seen them and it is clear that she is as nervous they are.

**ANOTHER ANGLE ON TED AND BILLY**

check.  
spits on  
Billy's

Ted stops, turns to Billy and gives him a last-minute Then, spotting a smudge he takes his handkerchief, it and wipes the child's chin. Now satisfied, he takes hand and they continue. Suddenly:

**CLOSEUP BILLY**

As he spots his mother.

**BILLY**

Mommy!

**QUICK CUT: JOANNA**

As she turns, spots Billy, starts to run.

**ON BILLY**

starts to  
arms  
knocking

TRACKING WITH HIM as he lets go of Ted's hand and run flat out toward his mother. She kneels, opens her wide for him and he goes barreling into her, almost her down from the impact.

**JOANNA**

(somewhere between  
laughter and tears)  
Oh, Billy... Oh my Billy... Oh my  
son...

**WIDER SHOT**

Joanna gets to her feet and takes Billy's hand.

**JOANNA**

(to Ted, but looking  
at Billy)

I'll have him back at six.

And they start off in the opposite direction.

**ON TED**

looked

Realizing that Billy has not said good-bye, has not  
at him once.

**JUMP**

**CUT TO:**

**WIDER SHOT**

Ted stands helpless, watching them leave.

**JUMP**

**CUT TO:**

**WIDER SHOT**

still

Ted, now almost lost from view on the crowded street,  
hasn't moved.

**FADE TO**

**BLACK:**

**WIDE SHOT**

like

is

to

hanging

But as

it is

Ted and Phyllis, getting ready to go to bed. They look  
a couple that has been married at least five years. Ted  
busy talking as he takes off his tie, jacket and starts  
unbutton his shirt. Phyllis is getting undressed also,  
things in the closet, putting things away in drawers.  
Ted continues to talk, she watches him apprehensively,  
clear that something is wrong.

**TED**

(he has become an  
armchair lawyer)

So, naturally, you assume that since Joanna left, that would be a compelling point against her, right?

**PHYLLIS**

(thoughtful)

Right.

**TED**

But it doesn't work that way. A major decision was handed down by the Appellate Court in 1969 - in the case of Haskins vs. Haskins.

**PHYLLIS**

Kramer -

**TED**

Now in Haskins vs. Haskins the court ruled in favor of the mother, thus establishing a precedent for awarding the child to the mother even though she previously abandoned the baby.

**PHYLLIS**

Kramer... There's something I ought to tell you.

**TED**

Yeah?

**PHYLLIS**

I've been offered a job in Washington with H.E.W.

**CLOSE ON TED**

He stops what he is doing, turns to her.

**TED**

And?

**PHYLLIS**

(a deep breath)

I'm going to take it.

**REACTION - TED**

He sits down on the bed.

**PHYLLIS**

It's a very good job - too good to

pass up. I'll be handling funding  
for the whole...

(she stops, sits beside  
him on the bed)

Look, I...

(she means love)

..."like" you a lot. And you...

(she means love)

..."like" me, okay? Maybe if it was  
a year from now, maybe things would  
be different...

**TED**

(quiet)

But it's not a year from now, is it?

She shakes her head, then, reaches out and touches him.

**PHYLLIS**

I'll miss you, Kramer...

**INT. KRAMER APT. - DAY**

**ON THE FRONT DOOR**

woman,  
the  
It is open and standing in the doorway is an attractive  
a bit overweight and very serious. This is DR. ALVAREZ,  
court appointed psychiatrist.

**ALVAREZ**

Mr. Kramer?

**TED**

Yes?

**ALVAREZ**

I'm Dr. Alvarez, Judge Atkins asked  
me to look in on your son and prepare  
an evaluation sheet.

**TED**

Oh, yes. Won't you come in.

with her  
coat.  
Dr. Alvarez enters the apartment. Ted helps her off

**ALVAREZ**

Where is the child?

**TED**

He's in his room, playing.

**ALVAREZ**

Good. I'll see him in there.

walks

As Ted carries her coat to the closet, Dr. Alvarez  
into the living room, looks around.

**ALVAREZ**

Mr. Kramer, do you ever have sex in  
here with anyone?

**TED**

Doctor, I attempt to conduct my social  
life discreetly. At the moment I am  
seeing no one.

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**ALVAREZ**

Does that distress you?

**TED**

Not particularly.

**ALVAREZ**

What does?

**TED**

The prospect of losing my child.

**ALVAREZ**

(makes some notes,  
then:)

Very well, I'd like to see him if I  
may.

They cross to the door of Billy's room. Ted opens it.

**INT. BILLY'S ROOM - DAY**

**THEIR POV**

Billy

The room is a mess, blocks are stacked everywhere.  
sits in the middle playing with his toys.

**ON TED AND DR. ALVAREZ**

They stand in the doorway.

**TED**

Billy. This is Dr. Alvarez. She would like to talk to you.

**BILLY**

(looking up from his toys)

Sure.

There is an awkward pause as Ted remains in the doorway.

**DR. ALVAREZ**

(pointedly)

I'd like to talk to Billy privately.

**TED**

(embarrassed at being caught)

Oh, yeah...

Reluctantly, Ted leaves, closing the door behind him.

THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM as he crosses the living room to the couch where he has a stack of legal books and a number of note pads spread out. He is obviously continuing his legal education.

**THROUGH OUT THE FOLLOWING, THE CAMERA REMAINS ON HIS FACE.**

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

What do you have here, Billy?

**BILLY (O.S.)**

Detroit.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

Have you ever been to Detroit?

**BILLY (O.S.)**

No. But I've been to Brooklyn.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

I see you have people there. What are their names?

**BILLY (O.S.)**

That's Kim... and this one's Thelma and that's Mrs. Willewska and this is daddy and that's Batman and over there is Robin.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

What about your mommy?

**BILLY (O.S.)**

Oh, sure. Here, this can be mommy.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

Do you like to be with your mommy?

wags his  
Ted by now has given up all pretense of working. He  
pencil in the direction of the door.

**TED**

(the defense attorney)

Objection. You're leading the witness.

**BILLY (O.S.)**

Sure.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

What do you like best about her?

**BILLY (O.S.)**

Lunch in a restaurant.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

What do you like best about your daddy?

**BILLY (O.S.)**

Playing.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

Tell me, does your daddy ever hit you?

**REACTION - TED**

Eyes wide. He starts to get up.

**TED**

Objection.

**BILLY (O.S.)**

Sure. Lots of times.

across  
This brings Ted all the way to his feet. He starts  
the living room headed for the door to Billy's room.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

(interested)  
When does he hit you?

Ted has his hand on the doorknob, about to enter.

**BILLY (O.S.)**

He hits me on the planet Kriptarium,  
when I steal the buried treasure  
from the famous peanut butter factory.

**ALVAREZ (O.S.)**

In real life when does he hit you?

**BILLY (O.S.)**

(laughing)  
My daddy doesn't hit me, silly. Why  
would my daddy hit me?

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. MODERN OFFICE BUILDING, MIDTOWN - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

Ted  
office  
It is a Saturday afternoon. HOLD FOR A BEAT as we SEE  
Kramer and Billy approaching. Billy is talking a mile a  
minute. Ted listens intently, absorbed in the boy's  
description. As they turn into the entrance of the  
building:

**INT. CORRIDOR, J. WALTER THOMPSON - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

next to  
approach  
reading,  
A long corridor with desks for secretaries lined up  
doors leading to smaller individual offices. As they  
a door in the foreground that bears a small sign  
"Ted Kramer":

**TED**

(interrupting Billy,

who is still in the  
middle of his story)  
See. That's my name.

**BILLY**

(looking at the sign)  
It's my name too.

**TED**

Right.

As he opens the door:

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TED KRAMER'S OFFICE - DAY**

It is a pleasant enough office, but nothing  
spectacular,  
windows that look out over Fifty-seventh Street, simple  
Formica furniture, that sort of thing.

**ON THE DOOR**

As they enter.

**BILLY**

(he stops dead in his  
tracks at the sight  
of the office)

Wow!

**TED**

(pleased)  
You like it?

Billy crosses to the window, presses his nose to the  
glass,  
looks out.

**BILLY**

Wow! Is this really where you work?

Ted nods, walks over to the desk and begins collecting  
paperwork to do over the weekend. As he does, Billy  
goes  
every  
through the office, sitting in every chair, looking in  
drawer.

**BILLY**

Is this really your desk?

**TED**

Yep.

**BILLY**

Is that really your chair?

**TED**

Uh huh...

**BILLY**

Wow! That's neat. Can I sit in it?

**TED**

Sure.

Billy plops himself down in Ted's chair, swivels  
around.

**BILLY**

Did mommy ever see this?

**TED**

No, she never did.

**BILLY**

Are you going to get remarried?

**TED**

I don't know. I hadn't thought much  
about it.

**BILLY**

Are you going to remarried Phyllis?

**TED**

(shaking his head)

No.

**CLOSE ON BILLY**

There is a long pause, then:

**BILLY**

Will you and mommy get remarried?

Ted stops what he is doing, looks across at Billy:

**TED**

No, son. Daddy and mommy will never  
get remarried.

**BILLY**

(looking around Ted's  
office)

Boy, I bet you if mommy ever saw  
this she'd remarried you.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BEDROOM - VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING**

**CLOSE ON AN ALARM CLOCK THAT SITS ON A NIGHTSTAND**

sitting  
cigarette  
As it rings, THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS and we SEE Joanna  
in bed wide awake, smoking. As she puts out the  
she has been smoking and starts to get out of bed,

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KITCHEN - TED KRAMER'S APT. - EARLY MORNING**

**ON TED**

out  
then  
Who stands with a cup of coffee in his hands, looking  
the window, but not seeing anything. HOLD FOR A BEAT,  
he checks his watch and starts for the bedroom.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. JOANNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

**ON JOANNA**

closet.  
As she selects a very conservative suit from her

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BILLY KRAMER'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

**WIDE SHOT**

white  
As Ted, now fully dressed, wearing a dark blue suit,

shirt, conservative tie, leans over Billy and wakes him.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING**

Joanna sits across from her lawyer as he talks to her, intently, giving her last-minute instructions.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - MORNING**

**ON TED KRAMER**

kisses  
the boy  
Taking Billy to school. They stop at the entrance, Ted his son good-bye and stands for a moment watching as runs into the building.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

We  
out of  
steps of  
It is a bleak January morning, the streets around the courthouse are mobbed with people on their way to work.  
SEE Ted Kramer, a tiny figure among hundreds, coming the subway. He crosses the street and starts up the the large and forbidding courthouse.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

corridor,  
door of  
As Ted gets off the elevator and starts down the toward the courtroom. In the f.g., - standing by the

they  
they  
the courtroom itself is John Shaunessy, he greets Ted,  
shake hands and talk together for a moment. Then, as  
enter the courtroom:

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM**

**ON THE DOOR**

of  
by  
As Ted enters, looks around. Mrs. Willewska sits in one  
the back rows, wearing her best Easter hat. Ted pauses  
her, thanks her for coming.

her,  
Then  
John  
Several rows in front of her is Thelma. Ted crosses to  
they talk quietly between themselves for a few moments.  
Ted moves on to a table at the front of the room where  
Shaunessy waits.

**ON THE DOORS AT THE BACK OF THE COURTROOM**

MR.  
front  
Ted  
As they swing open and Joanna, along with her lawyer, a  
GRESSEN. THE CAMERA PANS WITH THEM as they walk to the  
of the room and take their seats at the table opposite  
and his lawyer.

**CLERK**

Oyez, oyez... The third Circuit Court  
of the State of New York, Judge Atkins  
presiding is now in session. All  
rise...

**WIDE SHOT**

As the judge enters, takes his seat.

Opening business of the court.

**WIDE SHOT**

As Gressen (Joanna's lawyer) gets to his feet.

**GRESSEN**

Your honor. As our first witness I would like to call Joanna Kramer.

**TWO SHOT - TED AND SHAUNESSY**

The lawyer leans across to Ted.

**SHAUNESSY**

(stage whisper)

Real direct. Motherhood... They're going right for the throat.

**WIDE SHOT**

stand and As Joanna gets to her feet, crosses to the witness is sworn in.

CUT to Note: Throughout the following, we continually CROSS- becomes Ted Kramer, leaning forward, listening intently. It feels evident that, in spite of himself, there are moments he great compassion for Joanna.

**GRESSEN**

Now then, Mrs. Kramer, would you tell the court how long you were married?

**JOANNA**

Six years.

**GRESSEN**

And would you describe those years as happy?

**JOANNA**

The first couple, yes, but after that it became increasingly difficult.

**GRESSEN**

Mrs. Kramer, did you ever work in a job while you were married to your ex-husband?

**JOANNA**

No, I did not.

**GRESSEN**

Did you wish to?

**JOANNA**

Yes. I tried to talk to Ted - my ex-husband - about it, but he wouldn't listen. He refuses to discuss it in any serious way. I remember one time he said I probably couldn't get a job that would pay enough to hire a baby-sitter for Billy.

**GRESSEN**

Tell me, Mrs. Kramer, are you employed at the present time?

**JOANNA**

Yes, I work for Jantzen as a sportswear designer.

**GRESSEN**

And what is your present salary?

**JOANNA**

I make thirty-one thousand dollars a year.

**REACTION - TED**

Stunned.

**GRESSEN**

(switching tactics)

Mrs. Kramer, do you love your child?

**JOANNA**

(emphatically)

Yes. Very much.

**GRESSEN**

And yet you chose to leave him?

There is a long pause, then:

**JOANNA**

(speaking carefully,

with great thought)

Yes... Look, during the last five years we were married, I had... I was getting more and more... unhappy, more and more frustrated. I needed to talk to somebody. I needed to

find out if it was me, if I was going crazy or what. But every time I turned to Ted - my ex-husband, he couldn't handle it. He became very... I don't know, very threatened. I mean, whenever I would bring up anything he would act like it was some kind of personal attack. Anyway, we became more and more separate... more and more isolated from one another. Finally, I had no other choice, I had to leave. And because of my ex-husband's attitude - his unwillingness to deal with my feelings, I had come to have almost no self-esteem...

(with feeling)

At the time I left, I sincerely believed that there was something wrong with me - that my son would be better off without me. It was only when I got to California and started into therapy I began to realize I wasn't a terrible person. And that just because I needed some creative and emotional outlet other than my child, that didn't make me unfit to be a mother.

**GRESSEN**

(to the judge)

Your honor, I would like to place in evidence a report on Mrs. Kramer's therapy by her therapist, Dr. Elinore Freedman of La Jolla, California.

thick  
Joanna: And with that he hands both the judge and Shaunessy a sheaf of papers. Then, turning his attention back to

**GRESSEN**

Mr. Kramer, why did you set up residence in New York?

**JOANNA**

Because my son is here. And his father is here. As a mother, I don't want my child to be separated from his father.

**GRESSEN**

Mrs. Kramer, can you tell the court

why you are asking for custody?

There is a pause, then:

**JOANNA**

Because he's my child... Because I love him. I know I left my son, I know that's a terrible thing to do. Believe me, I have to live with that every day of my life. But just because I'm a woman, don't I have a right to the same hopes and dreams as a man? Don't I have a right to a life of my own? Is that so awful? Is my pain any less just because I'm a woman? Are my feelings any cheaper? I left my child - I know there is no excuse for that. But since then, I have gotten help. I have worked hard to become a whole human being. I don't think I should be punished for that. I don't think my son should be punished for that. Billy's only six. He needs me. I'm not saying he doesn't need his father, but he needs me more. I'm his mother.

There is a beat of silence, then:

**GRESSEN**

Thank you, Mrs. Kramer. I have no further questions.

**ON SHAUNESSY**

taking  
As he stands, collects his papers from the table and,  
his own sweet time, crosses to Joanna.

**SHAUNESSY**

Now then, Mrs. Kramer, you said you were married seven years. Is that correct?

**JOANNA**

Yes.

**SHAUNESSY**

In all that time did your husband ever strike you or abuse you physically in any way.

**JOANNA**

No.

**SHAUNESSY**

Did your husband strike or physically abuse his child in any way?

**JOANNA**

No.

**SHAUNESSY**

Would you describe your husband as an alcoholic?

**JOANNA**

No.

**SHAUNESSY**

A heavy drinker?

**JOANNA**

No.

**SHAUNESSY**

Was he unfaithful?

**JOANNA**

No.

**SHAUNESSY**

Did he ever fail to provide for you?

**JOANNA**

No.

**SHAUNESSY**

(wry smile)

Well, I can certainly understand why you left him.

**GRESSEN**

Objection.

**SHAUNESSY**

(switching his line  
of questioning)

How long do you plan to live in New York, Mrs. Kramer?

**JOANNA**

Permanently.

examination,  
Now,  
Note: During the early part of Shaunessy's cross-  
Joanna has been very forthright, very sure of herself.  
as he starts getting tougher, she begins to falter.

**SHAUNESSY**

Permanently?  
(smiles, like a shark  
smiles)  
Mrs. Kramer, how many boy friends  
have you had - permanently?

**ON JOANNA**

Her head snaps back as though she's been hit.

**JOANNA**

I don't recall.

**SHAUNESSY**

(boring in)  
How many lovers have you had -  
permanently?

**JOANNA**

(looks toward Gressen  
for help)  
I don't recall.

**SHAUNESSY**

More than three, less than thirty-  
three - permanently?

**ON GRESSEN**

He is again on his feet, outraged.

**GRESSEN**

Objection!

**JUDGE**

Overruled. The witness will answer,  
please.

**JOANNA**

(almost a whisper)  
Somewhere in between.

**SHAUNESSY**

Do you have a lover now?

**GRESSEN**

(furious)

Objection!

**SHAUNESSY**

(to the judge)

Your honor, I would request a direct answer to a direct question. Does she have a lover?

**JUDGE**

I'll allow that. The witness will answer please.

**JOANNA**

(in a whisper)

Yes.

**SHAUNESSY**

Is that... permanent?

**JOANNA**

(by now she is becoming thoroughly rattled)

I... I don't know...

**SHAUNESSY**

Then, we don't really know, do we, when you say "permanently" if you're planning to remain in New York, or even to keep the child for that matter, since you've never really done anything in your life that was continuing, stable, that could be regarded as permanent.

**ON THE PETITIONER'S TABLE**

Gressen jumps to his feet.

**GRESSEN**

Objection! I must ask that the counsel be prevented from harassing the witness.

**JUDGE**

Sustained.

**SHAUNESSY**

(a new attack)

Mrs. Kramer, how can you consider yourself a fit mother when you have

been a failure at virtually every relationship you have undertaken as an adult?

**GRESSEN**

(red in the face)

Objection!

**JUDGE**

Sustained.

**SHAUNESSY**

I'll ask it another way. What was the longest personal relationship you have had in your life - other than parents and girlfriends?

**JOANNA**

(rattled)

Ah... I guess I'd have to say... with my child.

**SHAUNESSY**

(wonder, irony)

Whom you've seen twice in a year? Mrs. Kramer, your ex-husband, wasn't he the longest personal relationship in your life?

**JOANNA**

(reluctantly)

I suppose...

**SHAUNESSY**

Would you speak up, Mrs. Kramer? I couldn't hear you.

**JOANNA**

(louder)

Yes.

**SHAUNESSY**

How long was that?

**JOANNA**

We were married two years before the baby. And then four very difficult years.

**SHAUNESSY**

So, you were a failure at the longest, most important relationship in your

life.

**GRESSEN**

Objection!

**JUDGE**

Overruled.

**JOANNA**

I was not a failure.

**SHAUNESSY**

(sarcastic)

Oh? What do you call it then - a success? The marriage ended in divorce.

**JOANNA**

(so angry she forgets  
her cool)

I consider it less my failure than his.

**SHAUNESSY**

(seizes on this)

Congratulations, Mrs. Kramer. You have just rewritten matrimonial law. You were both divorced, Mrs. Kramer.

**GRESSEN**

(on his feet)

Objection!

**SHAUNESSY**

(to the judge)

Your honor, I'd like to ask what this model of stability and respectability has ever succeeded at?

(to Joanna)

Mrs. Kramer, were you a failure at the longest, most important personal relationship in your life?

**CLOSE ON JOANNA**

Who sits silently.

**JUDGE**

Please answer the question, Mrs. Kramer.

**JOANNA**

(whisper)  
It did not succeed.

**SHAUNESSY**

(suddenly fierce)  
Not it... Not it, Mrs. Kramer - you.  
Were you a failure at the most  
important personal relationship of  
your life?

**CLOSER IN ON JOANNA**

Silence.

**SHAUNESSY**

Were you?

**EXTREME CLOSEUP JOANNA**

**JOANNA**

(barely audible)  
Yes.

**WIDE SHOT**

back

Shaunessy smiles, turns his back on Joanna and walks  
toward the respondent's table.

**SHAUNESSY**

No further questions.

**CLOSER IN ON THE TABLE**

As Shaunessy sits down next to Ted.

**TED**

(leaning over, in a  
whisper)  
Jesus Christ. Did you have to be so  
rough on her?

**SHAUNESSY**

(tough)  
Do you want the kid or don't you?

**ON JOANNA**

to the

Shaken, she gets down from the witness stand, crosses

leans  
As  
petitioner's table without looking at Ted. She sits,  
across to her lawyer and whispers something in his ear.  
he nods...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM, LATER IN THE DAY**

**ON JIM O'CONNOR**

being  
Who sits in the witness stand. At the moment he is  
examined by Gressen.

**GRESSEN**

Now then, Mr. O'Connor, how long did  
Ted Kramer work for you?

**O'CONNOR**

Eight, almost nine years.

**GRESSEN**

And did you have a close personal  
relationship?

**O'CONNOR**

(in a whisper)

Yes...

**GRESSEN**

And how did you find his work?

**O'CONNOR**

It was good. He was a hard worker, a  
lot of drive, a real hustler.

**GRESSEN**

And yet you fired him.

There is a long pause.

**O'CONNOR**

(looking down)

Ted was a good worker. But, ah...  
after his wife left him and he was  
taking care of the kid on his own,  
things started to change. Look, I  
know he had problems, I understand  
that. I've got problems, everybody's

got problems. But I've got a shop to run, I can't let that kind of thing get in the way...

(quietly)

I guess I felt that Ted was letting his duties at home interfere with his responsibilities in the office.

**GRESSEN**

Thank you. I have no further questions.

Shaunessy stands up.

**SHAUNESSY**

Mr. O'Connor, does the agency still have the Fire and Ice account?

**O'CONNOR**

(up tight)

No.

**SHAUNESSY**

Mr. O'Connor, can you tell me where you are employed at the moment?

**O'CONNOR**

(stiff)

At the moment I am unemployed.

**ON THE JUDGE**

**JUDGE**

If the petitioner has no further witnesses, we will hear the respondent tomorrow morning at 9:30.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**WIDE SHOT**

writing  
him  
Billy

Ted sits at the dining table poring over law books, copious notes on a legal pad. Billy sits across from drawing in a pad with magic markers. HOLD FOR A BEAT as looks up at his father. It is clear that something is bothering him.

**BILLY**

Mom - I mean, dad?

**TED**

(not looking up)  
Uh, huh?

**BILLY**

What did you do when you were little?

**TED**

(still involved in  
his books)  
I guess about the same kind of things  
you do.

**BILLY**

Did you watch "I Dream of Jeannie?"

**TED**

(distracted)  
Uh, uh... We didn't have television  
then.

**ON BILLY**

Eyes wide. He finds this hard to believe.

**BILLY**

You didn't have T.V.?

**ON TED**

He looks up for the first time, smiles.

**TED**

Nope. It hadn't been invented yet.

He starts to go back to work.

**BILLY**

(this is serious  
business)  
Was there apple juice when you were  
little?

**TED**

Yeah, there was apple juice.

**BILLY**

Was there Burger King?

**TED**

Uh, uh. There was no such a thing as  
Burger King.

**BILLY**

What else wasn't there?

**ON TED**

He takes a long look at his son, then closes the law  
book,  
puts his notes away.

**TED**

Well, let's see... There wasn't  
McDonald's. And there wasn't  
astronauts... And there wasn't frozen  
yogurt. And there wasn't...

As he continues on about what wasn't, we

**FADE TO**

**BLACK:**

**EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY**

**ESTABLISHING SHOT**

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

**ON THELMA**

She sits in the witness stand being examined by  
Shaunessy.  
From her attitude it is clear that she is very wrought  
up,  
that all of this is taking a heavy emotional toll on  
her.

**SHAUNESSY**

Mrs. Phillips, how long have you  
known Ted Kramer?

**THELMA**

Six years. Ever since Ted and Joanna  
moved into the building.

**SHAUNESSY**

How often do you see Mr. Kramer and  
his son?

**THELMA**

(to the judge, by way  
of explanation)

Charley, my husband, and I are...  
divorced and Kim, that's our daughter  
is about Billy's age and the children  
play together a lot. So, I guess we  
see each three or four times a week.

**SHAUNESSY**

Can you describe the relationship  
between Mr. Kramer and his son?

**THELMA**

It's beautiful. It's just beautiful.  
They have a beautiful relationship.

**ON GRESSEN**

Getting wearily to his feet.

**GRESSEN**

(patronizing)

Objection, your honor. The answer  
is, to be generous, very vague.

**SHAUNESSY**

Can you recall any particular incident  
that relates to Mr. Kramer's care of  
his child?

**THELMA**

(fighting a losing  
battle with her  
emotions)

Ted - Mr. Kramer, spends a great  
deal of time with his child. I don't  
just mean hours, I mean good time,  
involved time. He reads to Billy.  
They play together. They talk all  
the time...

(tears start)

He is a very... kind man... a very...  
devoted father, and... and...

(she turns to Joanna)

And Joanna if you ever saw them  
together... there wouldn't be a trial  
at all...

(she breaks down,  
weeping)

Oh, shit... I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

staring

Note: during this we cross-cut to Joanna, who sits,  
at her friend, shaken.

**SHAUNESSY**

(gently)

No further questions. Thank you Mrs.  
Phillips.

**GRESSEN**

(without looking up  
from his notes)

No questions.

Thelma leaves the stand and walks back to her seat.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

**ON TED KRAMER**

Sitting in the witness stand.

**SHAUNESSY**

Mr. Kramer, would you tell the court  
exactly why you want to retain custody  
of your child.

**TED**

(speaking quietly)

When Joanna -

(to the judge,

correcting himself)

- my ex-wife - when she was talking  
before about how unhappy she was  
during our marriage... Well, I guess  
most of what she said was probably  
true. There were a lot of things I  
didn't understand - a lot of things  
I would do different if I could.  
Just like I guess there are a lot of  
things Joanna wishes she could  
change... But we can't. Some things,  
once they are done, can't be undone.  
Joanna says she loves Billy. I believe  
she does. So do I. But the way it  
was explained to me, that's not the  
issue. The only thing that's supposed  
to matter here is what's best for  
Billy... When Joanna said why

shouldn't a woman have the same ambitions as a man, I suppose she's right. But by the same token what law is it that says a woman is a better parent simply by virtue of her sex? I guess I've had to think a lot about whatever it is that makes somebody a good parent: constancy, patience, understanding... love. Where is it written that a man has any less of those qualities than a woman? Billy has a home with me, I've tried to make it the best I could. It's not perfect. I'm not a perfect parent.

(unconsciously echoing something Joanna said earlier)

I don't have enough patience. Sometimes I forget he's just a little kid... But I love him... More than anything in this world I love him.

**SHAUNESSY**

Thank you, Mr. Kramer. No further questions.

**ON GRESSEN**

to the  
As he gets up from the petitioner's table and crosses witness stand.

**GRESSEN**

(hard-lining it)

Mr. Kramer, by any chance have you ever had a woman in your bed while your child was asleep in the next room?

**TED**

I suppose.

**GRESSEN**

(pointedly)

So do I.

**SHAUNESSY**

Objection!

**JUDGE**

Sustained.

**GRESSEN**

(switching to another  
line of attack)

Mr. Kramer, isn't it true that you  
were fired from your last job not  
more than six weeks ago?

**TED**

(not losing his cool)

Technically, the agency lost a big  
account and seventy four people were  
let go. I was one of them.

**GRESSEN**

(snotty)

You were fired, correct?

**TED**

Yes, but I'm with J. Walter Thompson  
now. I don't think that will happen  
again.

**GRESSEN**

(snide)

Give them time...

**SHAUNESSY**

Objection, your honor! Counsel is  
harassing the witness.

**GRESSEN**

(to the judge, pettish)

Your honor, I'm only examining the  
man's employment record. He pretends  
to fitness when he cannot hold a  
job.

**JUDGE**

Sustained.

**ON GRESSEN**

He is thoughtful for a moment, like a man trying to  
decide  
Ted: whether or not to drop the bomb. Then, turning back to

**GRESSEN**

(very tough)

Mr. Kramer, did your child nearly  
lose an eye when he was in your care?

**REACTION - TED**

Stunned. He looks across at Joanna.

**QUICK CUT - HIS POV**

Joanna looks away.

**GRESSEN**

(boring in)

Mr. Kramer, did you, or did you not tell the child's mother that you were responsible for the injury that permanently disfigured your child?

Shaunessy is on his feet racing toward the bench.

**SHAUNESSY**

(vehement)

Objection! Your honor, counsel is raising a question that is not germane to these proceedings.

**GRESSEN**

(to the judge)

While the child was in the care of the witness, he cut his face badly and is now scarred.

**JUDGE**

(to Gressen)

Are you introducing the question of negligence here, counselor?

**GRESSEN**

Yes, your honor.

**JUDGE**

I see. Well, you'll have to do better than that. Do you have any affidavits to support negligence?

**GRESSEN**

I do not, your honor, however -

**JUDGE**

This is an isolated incident, counselor, unless you can prove otherwise.

**GRESSEN**

(back to Ted)  
Does the witness deny the injury  
took place?

**JUDGE**

(before Ted can say  
anything)  
No, counselor, I'm going to over-  
rule you on this line of questioning.

**GRESSEN**

Then I have concluded my questions.

**ON THE PETITIONER'S TABLE**

face,  
Joanna sits, still not looking at Ted. She holds her  
one hand shielding her eyes.

**CUT TO:**

**ON THE JUDGE**

As he makes his closing statement.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MAIN LOBBY, COURTHOUSE - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

Then  
turns and  
as  
Shaunessy and Ted stand talking, reviewing the case.  
the two men shake hands, the lawyer waves goodbye,  
starts back into the building. THE CAMERA PANS WITH TED  
he walks toward the main exit.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE, COURTHOUSE - DAY**

**ON TED**

As he comes out of the building, starts down the steps.

**JOANNA (O.S.)**

Ted.

He stops, turns:

**HIS POV**

There, standing waiting for him is Joanna.

**CLOSE ON TED**

His face a mask of cold anger. She crosses to him.

**JOANNA**

I'm sorry... I just mentioned it in passing. I never thought he'd use it.

**TED**

(sarcastic)

Yeah, well he did, didn't he.

**JOANNA**

Please, Ted. I never would have brought it up if I thought -

**TED**

I'm not interested, Joanna. Goodbye.

**WIDE SHOT**

As he turns and walks away from her, leaving her standing,  
watching him as he disappears.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON TED AND THELMA**

It is a bleak winter's day. THE CAMERA TRACKS WITH THEM  
as they walk along, Ted carrying a bag of groceries,  
Thelma with cleaning.

The children run around them, playing.

**THELMA**

You heard anything yet?

**TED**

(shakes his head)  
Any day.

lost in  
They walk in silence for several beats, each clearly  
their own thoughts. Then:

**THELMA**

Ted.

**TED**

(preoccupied)  
Uh, huh...

**THELMA**

(this is hard to say)  
Ah, Charley and I are... Well, we're  
thinking about... I mean, actually  
we're sort of talking about maybe  
getting back together.

**TED**

(thunderstruck)  
You and Charley?

Thelma nods.

**TED**

Really?

Thelma nods.

**TED**

(conflicting emotions)  
Hey, that's terrific.

**THELMA**

(hastily)  
Maybe. I said maybe.  
(apologizing for her  
good fortune)  
What I mean is, ah... I don't think  
it'll really work out, but Charley  
seems to want it, so...

silence for  
She leaves the sentence unfinished. They walk in  
several more steps. Then she takes his hand.

**THELMA**

(can't help grinning)  
Oh, God... Ted, I am really scared.

SCREEN, They walk in silence for a beat, then Ted looks OFF  
spots something:

**HIS POV**

nothing The Saturday Father, restless, bored, walking with his  
waves and daughter who is also bored. It is clear that they have  
to say to one another. He looks around, spots Ted,  
starts in his direction.

**CLOSEUP TED**

death. He reacts as though he has seen a vision of his own

**TED**

(to Thelma, urgent)  
C'mon.  
(to Billy and Kim)  
Billy, Kim. Let's go.

**WIDE SHOT**

Saturday As Ted ushers them across the street, away from the  
Father.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MEN'S BAR, MIDTOWN - DAY**

alone A crowded, rather posh watering spot. Shaunessy sits  
at a table for two, a drink in front of him.

**REVERSE ON THE DOOR**

direction. As Ted enters, spots Shaunessy and starts in his

**CLOSER ON SHAUNESSY'S TABLE**

As Ted sits down.

**TED**

Well?

**ON SHAUNESSY**

As he looks up at Ted, says nothing.

**ON TED**

He realizes that they have lost.

**TED**

Oh, Christ!

**CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:**

**SHAUNESSY**

The judge went for motherhood straight down the line.

**TED**

I lost him? I lost him?

**SHAUNESSY**

I can't tell you how sorry I am.

**TED**

Oh, no..

**SHAUNESSY**

(reading from a piece  
of paper)

Ordered, adjudged and decreed that the petitioner be awarded custody of the minor child, effective Monday the 23rd of January. That the respondent pay for the maintenance and support of said child, four hundred dollars each month. That the father shall have the following rights of visitation: every other weekend, one night each week to be mutually agreed upon and one half of the child's vacation period.

(looks up at Ted)

That's it.

**TED**

(grim)

What if I fight it?

**SHAUNESSY**

(matter of factly)

We can appeal, but I can't guarantee anything.

**TED**

(determined)  
I'll take my chances.

**SHAUNESSY**

It's going to cost.

**TED**

(his mind is made up)  
Don't worry. I'll get the money.

There is a beat of silence, then:

**SHAUNESSY**

I've got to tell you something, Ted.  
This time it'll be Billy that pays.  
This time I'll have to put him on  
the stand.

**CLOSE ON TED**

As his last hope goes crashing to the ground.

**TED**

Oh, Christ no... I can't do that. I  
just... can't...  
(he looks up at the  
lawyer in despair)  
Excuse me... I'm sorry... I just...

and  
That is all Ted can manage to say. He gets to his feet  
rushes for the door.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. KRAMER APT. BLDG. - DAY**

**ON THE ENTRANCE**

crying.  
her  
POSITION  
then  
As Mrs. Willewska comes out. Her eyes are red from  
THE CAMERA PANS WITH HER as she turns up the street on  
way to pick up Billy from school. THE CAMERA HOLDS IN  
as she meets Thelma. They stand talking for a moment,  
Thelma turns and starts to run toward the building.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE TED'S APT. - DAY**

**ON THE ELEVATOR DOORS**

begins

They open and Thelma steps out. She runs to the door,  
to knock.

**THELMA**

(calling out)

Ted!... It's me... Ted?...

There is a beat of silence, then:

**TED (O.S.)**

(very quiet)

Please go away, Thel... I... I just  
have to be by myself for a little  
while...

**THELMA**

Ted, I just heard...

**TED (O.S.)**

Please, Thel...

Thelma leans against the door and begins to sob.

**THELMA**

I'm so... sorry... Oh, Ted, I'm so  
sorry...

**FADE TO**

**BLACK:**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. KRAMER APT. BLDG. - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

As Mrs. Willewska brings Billy back from school.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KRAMER APT. - DAY**

**ON THE FRONT DOOR**

Ted  
It opens and Billy and Mrs. Willewska enter. Billy sees  
and rushes across to him.

**BILLY**

(excited)  
Daddy! You're home early. Did you  
get fired again?

**TED**

(laughing in spite of  
himself)  
No, son, I didn't get fired.  
(fake cheerful)  
I'll tell you what we'll do, okay?  
How about if we go to a Burger King  
and then we watch a little T.V. and  
then we get packed to go to the  
country tomorrow. Just you and me...  
How 'bout that?

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. KRAMER APT. BLDG. - NIGHT**

**ESTABLISHING SHOT**

HOLD FOR A BEAT, then:

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - NIGHT**

**ON TED**

him.  
He sits at the dining table, a typewriter in front of  
As he begins to type, hunt and peck system, we:

**CUT TO:**

**INSERT - HIS POV**

time.  
The page in the typewriter. We SEE and HEAR at the same

**TED (V.O.)**

Joanna... This is by way of

introducing William Kramer. He is a sweet child, as you will see. He is allergic to grape juice, but will more than make up for the loss in apple juice. He is also allergic to peanut butter from the health food store, but not from the supermarket. Don't ask me why.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON A CORNER MAILBOX**

As Ted mails the letter.

**TED (V.O.)**

At times, in the night he will have nightmares, one particular monster is called The Face. The Face, as best as I can determine, looks like a circus clown without a body, and from what the pediatrician says, and what I have read, may be sexual fear of losing his penis, or a fear of his own anger, or just a circus clown he saw once.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON THE SAME MAILBOX**

As a sack of mail is loaded into a truck.

**TED (V.O.)**

His doctor, by the way, is still Ed Davies. The Sundafed is for colds, one tablespoon every four hours. I will pack it in the blue suitcase.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. JOANNA KRAMER'S APT. BLDG. - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

A POSTMAN enters the building carrying a bag of mail.

**TED (V.O.)**

His best stories have been Babar and Winnie the Pooh up to now, with Batman moving up. His housekeeper has been Etta Willewska and she is the main reason for the note. She is a loving woman, conscientious, very concerned about Billy and more important, Billy cares about her.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. HALLWAY, JOANNA'S APT. BLDG. - DAY**

**ON A STACK OF MAIL**

As it is dropped in front of a doorway. We SEE that the letter from Ted to Joanna is on top.

**TED (V.O.)**

I urge you to retain her. Her number is 722-8099, and I think she will take the job if it is offered. I'm sure other things will come up. Ask me what you need to and I guess eventually we'll talk...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. JOANNA'S APT. - DAY**

**ON HER**

As she finishes reading the letter.

**TED (V.O.)**

That's all I can think of, except to repeat what I said before, he's a terrific kid. I'm grateful for the time we've had together and I feel I am a better man because of my son... Ted.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

Billy

It is a clear, cold beautiful winter's day. Ted and  
walk

TRACKS

along the beach at the edge of the water. THE CAMERA  
WITH THEM. There are several beats of silence as Ted  
tries  
to think of how to begin. Finally:

**TED**

Billy, sometimes when a mother and a  
father are divorced, there's a  
discussion about who the child should  
live with, the mother or the father.  
Now there is a man who is very wise.  
He's called a judge. And a judge has  
a lot of experience with divorces  
and he decides who it would be best  
for the child to live with.

**BILLY**

Why does he decide?

**TED**

Because... Well, that's what he does.  
He's a very powerful man.

**BILLY**

Like a principal?

**TED**

Bigger than a principal. The judge  
sits in robes in a big chair... The  
judge has thought a lot about us,  
about you and me and your mom, and  
he has decided...

(a deep breath)

...he has decided that it would be  
best for you to live with your mom  
Joanna in her apartment.

(fake cheerful)

And I'm very lucky. Because even  
though you'll live with your mom  
Joanna I'll get to see you once a  
week for dinner and a couple of  
weekends a month.

**BILLY**

I don't understand, daddy.

**TED**

(trying very hard not  
to cry)  
What don't you understand, pal?

**BILLY**

Where will my bed be, where will I  
sleep?

**TED**

At your mom's. She'll have a bed for  
you in your own room.

**BILLY**

Where will my toys be?

**TED**

I'll send your toys there and I'm  
sure you'll get some new ones.

**BILLY**

Who will read me my stories?

**TED**

Your mom.

**BILLY**

(worried)  
Daddy, what if The Face comes when  
I'm at mommy's?

**TED**

Your mom knows all about The Face,  
okay? Don't worry, she'll tell The  
Face to beat it.

**BILLY**

Will you come and say good-night to  
me every night?

Suddenly Ted can't stand it any longer.

**TED**

Look, it's getting cold. Why don't  
you go inside where it's warm. I'll  
be along in a minute.

Billy hangs back, watching Ted.

**TED**

Go on, scoot.

house. The boy turns and runs back along the beach toward the

father. Then, he stops, turns back to look once more at his

**HIS POV - LONG SHOT**

weeping. Ted stands at the ocean's edge, his back to CAMERA,

**FADE TO**

**BLACK:**

**EXT. KRAMER APT. BLDG. - DAY**

**WIDE SHOT**

It is early Monday morning.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. KRAMER KITCHEN - MORNING**

**ON TED AND BILLY**

assistant. They stand side by side, like a surgeon and his  
makings Spread out on the counter in front of them are the  
efficiency, of French toast. The following is done with great  
the in contrast to the first time we saw them go through  
occasional same ritual. They work in silence except for an  
closeness, command. Each concentrating on this last moment of  
departure. each doing his best to avoid thinking about Billy's

Finally:

**ON BILLY**

man's Looking at his father, trying to memorize the older  
face.

Ted turns, sees his son watching him.

**TED**

(with false gaiety)  
Hey? What's doin' with that bread?  
Let's see a little hustle around  
here.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LIVING ROOM - KRAMER APT. - MORNING**

**WIDE SHOT**

living  
Billy's bags are packed and stacked neatly in the  
room.

Nearby, Billy and his father sit, silent, waiting.

Sound-effect: The intercom from the lobby buzzes.

**CLOSER IN ON TED AND BILLY**

Ted looks at his son, smiles. The boy smiles back.

**TED**

This is it, pal.

Billy, fighting back tears, nods.

Sound-effect: The intercom buzzes again.

Ted gets to his feet and starts toward the foyer.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. FOYER - DAY**

As Ted picks up the intercom:

**TED**

Yes?

**JOANNA'S VOICE**

Ted, it's Joanna. Can you meet me in  
the lobby?... Alone?

And she hangs up before he can answer.

**TED**

(to Mrs. Willewska,  
in the kitchen)

I'll be back in a minute.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LOBBY - DAY**

**ON THE ELEVATOR DOORS**

As they open, Ted steps out, looks around.

**HIS POV**

The lobby is dark, the only light coming from the window. Joanna sits off to one side, wearing sunglasses. She looks up as Ted approaches, a small smile on her face.

**TED**

(abrupt)

Okay, I'm here. Now why did you -

**JOANNA**

Ted, do you love him?

**TED**

Goddamnit, Joanna. What the -

**JOANNA**

(insistent)

Ted, do you love him?

He nods.

**JOANNA**

I love him too... I don't think I ever knew how much until now.

There is a long pause as she looks at Ted, unable to speak.

Finally:

**JOANNA**

(a deep breath, then:)

Ted, when we got married it was because I was twenty-seven years old and I thought I should get married and... when I had Billy it was because I thought I should have a baby... and I guess all I did was mess up my

life and your life and -

**TED**

Joanna, what the hell is -

**JOANNA**

(urgent)

Please... Please don't stop me. This is the hardest thing I've ever had to do..

**ON TED**

Struck by the urgency in her voice.

**JOANNA**

After I left... when I was in California, I began to think, what kind of mother was I that I could walk out on my own child. It got to where I couldn't tell anybody about Billy - I couldn't stand that look in their faces when I said he wasn't living with me. Finally it seemed like the most important thing in the world to come back here and prove to Billy and to me and to the world how much I loved him... And I did... And I won. Only... it was just another "should."

(she begins to break down)

...Sitting in that courtroom. Hearing everything you did, everything you went through... Something happened. I guess it doesn't matter how much I love him, or how much you love him. I guess it's like you said, the only thing that counts is what's best for Billy. I don't know, maybe that's all love is anyway... Ted, I think Billy should stay with you...

**TED**

(stunned)

What?

**JOANNA**

(she reaches out, takes his hand)

He's already got one mother, he doesn't need two... He's yours...

(her last ounce of  
reserve crumbles)  
I won't fight you for him any more.  
He's yours...

**TED**

Oh, God... Oh, my God...

**JOANNA**

Only can I still see him?

**TED**

No more waiting in Coffee Shops... I  
promise.

sob.  
kiss.  
Joanna's last ounce of reserve crumbles, she begins to  
Ted puts his arms around her and holds her. They do not  
Then, after a few moments she steps back.

**JOANNA**

(chin high)  
Okay... I think I'll go talk to my  
son now.  
(wiping her eyes)  
How do I look?

**TED**

Beautiful.

blocking  
They step into the elevator and, as the doors close,  
them from view, we...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**ON TED AND BILLY**

park.  
away  
reach  
to  
being  
TRACKING JUST IN FRONT OF THEM as they walk to the  
They are deep in conversation, although we are too far  
to bear what they are saying. HOLD ON THEM and, as they  
the entrance to the park, Billy first, then Ted begin  
run, overwhelmed with the sheer joy of being alive, of

BACK AND

afternoon.

from

together. As they continue to run, THE CAMERA PULLS

UP AND WE SEE that they are only two among thousands of  
parents and children in Central Park on a sunny

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO PULL BACK until they are lost

view and it is...

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**THE END**