

Bored to Death aka Untitled Jonathan Ames Project

By

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EXT. JONATHAN AMES'S BUILDING -- DAY, MORNING

Jonathan, early-to-mid 30's, leans against his three-storey Brooklyn building, looking forlorn.

A moving van, with a Star-of-David-logo and the words MOISHE'S MOVERS, is on the street.

Two Israeli men throw a bed into the back of the van, carelessly. Jonathan stands away from his building, upset.

JONATHAN  
Hey, be careful with that!

The movers look at him.

JONATHAN  
(his voice trailing off)  
That was our bed . . .

Jonathan's lovely ex-girlfriend, Suzanne, early-30's, comes out of the building, carrying a lamp. She brings it to the back of the van and hands it up to one of the movers.

Jonathan watches her, sadly.

EXT. BUILDING -- DAY, MORNING, LATER

Jonathan helps the two movers with a very heavy dresser.

JONATHAN  
(wanting to bond)  
I'm Jewish, too.

The Israelis look at him disdainfully.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)  
I had heard that the Israeli's had cornered the moving business, like the Greeks with diners, but I mean, it seems unusual to have Jewish movers, you know, doing such muscle-oriented work.

MOVER  
(Israeli accent,  
dismissive)  
What are you another self-hating New York Jew?

JONATHAN  
 (beat, then, in a whisper,  
 almost to himself)  
 Yes, I am...

They hoist the dresser into the van.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, LATER

The three-room apartment is empty, except for a desk with a chair and a laptop.

There are numerous books piled against the walls and there's one picture on the wall -- a water-color of a beach-umbrella by the ocean.

Jonathan is standing around, looking at the emptiness. Suzanne comes into the room. They look at one another. She takes down the one picture.

SUZANNE  
 (referring to the picture)  
 Sorry.

JONATHAN  
 That's all right...We had a nice time in Martha's Vineyard...Didn't we?

SUZANNE  
 It was a good trip, except --

Then she puts the picture back on the wall, smiles sadly at him, and leaves the apartment.

Jonathan, encouraged by this, follows after her, down two flights of stairs through the brownstone, and outside.

EXT. JONATHAN AMES'S BUILDING -- DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The two Israeli movers stand by the van.

MOVER  
 Anything else?

SUZANNE  
 No, that's all.

The mover yanks down the back door of the van with FINALITY. The men climb into the cab of the van. Jonathan and Suzanne stand there, uncertain -- how does one say good bye?

JONATHAN

Are you really sure about this?

SUZANNE

You're asking this now, after everything is loaded?

JONATHAN

I guess...I don't know...I don't want to lose you.

SUZANNE

Come on. I told you months ago that if we're going to work on this you had to quit drinking and smoking pot, and you didn't do it. That was our deal.

JONATHAN

It's dangerous to go cold-turkey...I'm down to white wine --

She doesn't want to hear this -- she turns and starts to climb up to the passenger side of the van.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

And I can't help it, I still like the way pot makes me think. Maybe it's healthy?

Suzanne settles into the seat next to the movers, closes door, the window is open.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

In California, you know, it's called medical marijuana --

SUZANNE

Bye, Jonathan.

Suzanne looks sad, but resigned. The van starts to pull away. Jonathan jogs after it.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry. I'm crazy! I'll quit the pot and the white wine!

The van turns and disappears. Jonathan stops jogging, lowers his chin, turns around, enters his building.

INT. JONATHAN'S BUILDING -- DAY, CONTINUOUS

The ground-floor door opens up just as Jonathan comes in, and Ava, a very sexy and beautiful black woman, mid-30's, stands in the doorway.

AVA  
She left you?

JONATHAN  
Yeah. I'm an idiot. Too much pot  
and wine.

AVA  
She was sweet, I liked her...But  
you have to rebound fast. That's  
the best cure. Just go on Craig's  
List. I'm telling you people are  
hooking up like crazy on that  
thing. Everybody is a sex-addict  
and having a good time.

JONATHAN  
Maybe it's too soon --

Then there's a crash and Ava turns and we see a little boy,  
five-years old, jump up gleefully and then go dashing away.

AVA  
Django! What did you do?

She disappears inside her apartment and Jonathan heads up the  
stairs.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Montage of movements (chance for credits):

\* Jonathan is staring at an empty closet. He waves his hand  
in it, as if testing reality, and flashes to the same closet  
full of Suzanne's BEAUTIFUL DRESSES, and then the closet is  
empty again.

\* Jonathan removes a rolled-up futon from a closet in the  
bedroom. He puts a CD in the CD player and we hear Loudon  
Wainwright's "Mother likes Her White Wine". Jonathan has a  
bottle of white ready and pours it into a coffee mug.

\* Jonathan is curled up on the futon, one sheet covers him. Another Wainwright song plays, "Living Alone." Jonathan's eye catches on a Raymond Chandler book in the HUGE PILE by the wall -- FAREWELL, MY LOVELY.

\* Jonathan lying on the futon, reading FAREWELL, MY LOVELY.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, LATER

Jonathan sits at his laptop. CRAIGSLIST is visible.

FAREWELL, MY LOVELY is on the desk next to the laptop, along with his mug of white wine, a one-hitter, and his cell-phone.

He clicks on **Personals** and then on **Women Seeking Men**. He sees all the listings. Stares. Seems overwhelmed by the sheer volume of ads.

He takes a hit of pot and looks at the cool cover of FAREWELL, MY LOVELY. Mesmerized, he picks it up.

He then goes back to the main-page of CL and clicks on **LEGAL** and then types in the search section: **Private Detective**.

He clicks on an ad, reads it, then clicks on **Post** and takes another hit of pot.

He types **Private Detective For Hire** in the subject line, and then quickly types his ad: **Specializing: Missing Persons, Domestic Issues. I'm not licensed, but maybe I'm someone who can help you. My fee is reasonable. Call 347 555 1212.**

He smiles at his handiwork, looks again at Marlowe on the cover.

JONATHAN  
(to the book)  
I wish I could be like you.

He stands up, a bit stoned, and throws a few punches, acting tough, but then wrenches his elbow and cringes.

His cell-phone rings. Rubbing his elbow, he looks at his ad on the computer -- could it be a call already? He looks at the phone -- it says "Restricted". He answers.

JONATHAN  
Hello?...Oh, hey, Ray...Yeah, I can meet you...I'll be right over --

EXT. DONUT HOUSE -- DAY, LATER

Donut House, on Court Street, is an old classic Brooklyn diner-like place, next to an OTB.

INT. DONUT HOUSE -- DAY

Ray(mid-30's, scruffy beard)and Jonathan sit in the Donut House, which is filled, primarily, with older men.

They have coffee and donuts, and on the table in front of them is an open copy of *Spiderman*. Ray points at a drawing.

RAY

See -- I made Peter Parker's therapist look like you twenty years from now.

JONATHAN

That's cool...

(beat)

I sort of wish you had made me more heroic, though, not a therapist.

RAY

You have a good nose for a therapist. It's a thoughtful nose.

JONATHAN

Thanks...

(beat)

I should probably *go see* a therapist.

RAY

That's true.

JONATHAN

I mean, I really should...Suzanne moved out today.

RAY

What? Why didn't you tell me? You've got to keep me abreast of this shit. Moved out today?

JONATHAN

Yeah...I kept hoping it wouldn't happen but then it did. So I didn't tell you. I guess it was denial.

RAY

I'm sorry, man...Wait a second, have you been drinking? I smell booze. It's only one o'clock.

JONATHAN

It must be one of these old-timers. I never drink before seven p.m.

Jonathan takes a big sip of coffee to cover his breath.

RAY

What about last week? You called me from Bar Tabac in the middle of the day and you were wasted.

JONATHAN

That was an exception...Anyway, I'm single again. I went on Craig's List --

RAY

Suzanne's body isn't even cold and you're on Craig's List?

JONATHAN

Ava told me to go on there.

RAY

Now, she's hot. You should go for her.

JONATHAN

Yeah, but she's my landlady. Anyway, I didn't do anything on Craig's List, just looked for a second. I can't believe how many girls advertise on that thing.

RAY

I know, I know. If I was single, I'd be all over that...I used to have fun with Friendster. Something about the internet makes girls get real loose. You meet a girl in a bar and nothing happens. But e-mail some girl you've never met for an hour and next thing you know she's over your apartment taking her clothes off and giving you herpes.

JONATHAN

Is that how you got herpes?

RAY

I don't have herpes! I had one wart ten years ago! Totally different.

JONATHAN

Does Friendster still exist?

RAY

I don't know --

A beautiful brunette, Chiara, comes and refills their coffees.

JONATHAN AND RAY

(both obsequious)

Thank you --

Chiara smiles. Jonathan and Ray stare as she walks off.

JONATHAN

Who's that? I didn't see her when I came in.

RAY

She's the new waitress. She's from Italy.

JONATHAN

I thought you had to be a senior citizen to work here...I should just come here every day and work on my novel and maybe she'd fall in love with me.

RAY

How's the novel going?

JONATHAN

Not going. You know, third novels are the hardest to write --

Jonathan, distracted, watches Chiara, as she pours a coffee for another customer.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

My god, what an ass on her...It's kind of like Suzanne's ass...

(sad, suddenly)

Oh, man, I really screwed up.

RAY

Listen, you have to give yourself time to heal.

JONATHAN

At least one of us is in a good relationship.

RAY

I don't know about that. It's like I'm in a sexless marriage and I'm not even married.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Jonathan is playing INTERNET BACKGAMMON on his computer and his cell-phone rings.

He sees that it's a 215 area code, which puzzles him, but he answers while still playing his game.

JONATHAN

Hello?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

I saw your ad.

JONATHAN

(still playing backgammon)  
What? What ad?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

Craig's List? Missing persons?

JONATHAN

(snapping to attention)  
Yes, of course, I'm sorry. Most of my clients are word-of-mouth, so I forgot about my ad...How can I help you?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

It's about my sister, I think she's missing.

JONATHAN

What do you mean, you think?

Jonathan clicks on the backgammon game, still playing.

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

She hasn't answered her phone for two days and her voice-mail is full and I came up from Philadelphia to go to a concert with her and she's not in her dorm --

JONATHAN

Dorm?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

She's at NYU.

JONATHAN

How old is she?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

Twenty-one.

JONATHAN

And how old are you?

RACHEL WEISS (O.S.)

Nineteen.

JONATHAN

Where are you? Let's discuss this  
in person --

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jonathan, looking in the mirror, puts on a tie.

He puts his jacket on, grabs FAREWELL, MY LOVELY, compares himself to Marlowe, puts the book in his pocket and exits.

INT. NYC SUBWAY, F TRAIN -- DAY

Jonathan stands at the very front of the subway, looking out the scratched window to the dark, rushing tunnel. The camera goes from the literal underworld of New York to our hero's face, which is half in shadow -- what is he being drawn into?

EXT. SECOND AVENUE -- DAY, LATE AFTERNOON

Jonathan approaches an internet cafe on the corner of 3rd Street and First Avenue and enters.

INT. INTERNET CAFE -- DAY, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan scans the young people at the tables and computers. He spots Rachel Weiss, 19, very cute, in a yellow dress, which shows some nice cleavage. He walks over to her.

JONATHAN

Rachel?

RACHEL WEISS

Mr. Ames?

JONATHAN

(nodding)

Can I sit down?

RACHEL WEISS

Yeah --

Jonathan sits.

JONATHAN

It's very nice to meet you. I'm really glad you found me on Craig's List.

RACHEL WEISS

I use it for everything. I didn't know what to do, so I typed in 'missing persons' and found you, and you said your rates were reasonable.

JONATHAN

They're very reasonable...So have you tried calling your sister since we spoke on the phone?

RACHEL WEISS

Yeah, it went right to voice-mail again and the voice-mail is still full. I texted, too, but nothing.

She crosses her legs, Jonathan looks at her legs. She catches him looking. To cover, he takes out a Moleskine notebook and pen, to take notes and seem professional.

JONATHAN

What's your sister's number?

RACHEL WEISS

9-1-7-5-5-5-3-8-5-4.

He jots this down.

JONATHAN

Do you have a picture of your sister?

RACHEL WEISS

No...Wait, I do, on my phone. She sent it to me from her boyfriend's phone.

JONATHAN

Can I see it?

She bends down to her purse to get her phone and Jonathan eyeballs her breasts.

She comes up, finds the picture on her cell-phone and hands it to him -- we see Lisa Weiss (pretty, dark hair) and Vincent Ettin, a rocker with a tatoo on his neck.

JONATHAN

Who's that?

RACHEL WEISS

Her gross boyfriend, Vincent.

JONATHAN

Let's call him. His number is with the picture.

He hands Rachel her phone. She calls the number, looking out the window, concerned. Jonathan sneaks another look at her legs and breasts.

RACHEL WEISS

(putting the phone down)  
It also went right to voice-mail and is full.

JONATHAN

What's gross about him besides that tattoo?

RACHEL WEISS

I don't know. He's a bartender and he's old, like thirty.

JONATHAN

Thirty's not so old, you know.

RACHEL WEISS

Yeah...but...anyway...I think he's a meth-head and she wanted to break up with him and maybe he went homicidal on her.

JONATHAN

Well, break-ups can be hard on a guy.

RACHEL WEISS

What?

JONATHAN

My girlfriend, actually, just moved out today, it was very upsetting --

RACHEL WEISS

Are you really a private detective?

JONATHAN

(catching himself)

Yes...Listen, I'm sorry I shouldn't have gotten personal. I think the thing to do is find this Vincent. If we find him, we'll find your sister.

EXT. FIRST AVENUE -- LATE AFTERNOON, LATER

Jonathan and Rachel are walking up the street.

JONATHAN

Are you really sure you don't want to go to the cops or let your parents know?

RACHEL WEISS

I'm sure. Lisa'll go ballistic. Maybe she and Vincent made up and she's just hanging out with him and turned her phone off. She says that even though he's a jerk, they have amazing sex. Guys who are assholes are always the best at sex. It sucks.

JONATHAN

Yes, I've heard this.

RACHEL WEISS

So if it's nothing, I don't want her pissed at me by calling my parents or the cops. But I just feel weird. Like intuition.

JONATHAN

Where'd she meet Vincent?

RACHEL WEISS

At the bar where he works. Lakes.  
Everyone at NYU goes there because  
they don't card.

INT. CHASE ATM, ASTOR PLACE -- LATER

Rachel removes one hundred dollars and gives it to Jonathan.

RACHEL WEISS

One hundred, right?

JONATHAN

Yes, that's the standard day-rate.

INT. KINKO'S, ASTOR PLACE -- LATER

Rachel and Jonathan stand by a printer as the picture of Lisa Weiss and Vincent Etti comes out.

EXT. KINKO'S ASTOR PLACE -- LATER, STARTING TO GET DARK

Jonathan hails a cab, one pulls up. Rachel looks at Jonathan, trying to size him up one last time.

RACHEL WEISS

Are you really a professional?

JONATHAN

As I put in my ad, I'm not  
licensed. But I'll find your  
sister. I promise. I want to help  
you.

Jonathan opens the door of the cab; Rachel gets in.

RACHEL WEISS

(vulnerable now, young)  
I hope everything will be all  
right.

JONATHAN

Don't worry. Just get back to  
Philadelphia and I'll call you  
later tonight --  
(to the cabby)  
Penn Station.

He closes Rachel's door. The cab drives off. Rachel waves good bye and so does Jonathan. Jonathan's cell-phone rings. He answers.

JONATHAN

Hi, George...Oh, shit I forgot, I'm sorry...I'll be right over --

EXT. WEST 25TH STREET -- EARLY EVENING, LATER

Jonathan exits a taxi, which has stopped in front of a large glass-fronted Chelsea Gallery. Through the glass, you see lots of people at a party, drinking white wine.

INT. CHELSEA GALLERY -- EARLY EVENING, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan enters the gallery. There's a table with two girls sitting behind it and in front of them are the sheets of the guest list and copies of the glossy magazine -- **EDITION**.

Behind the table is a banner: **George Christopher and Edition Magazine Celebrate the Work of Patrick Ellis**, and around the gallery are enormous black-and-white fashion photos.

Jonathan checks in with the girls and they mark off his name.

He looks around, scanning the crowd and spots SUKI OH, elegant, early 30's, Korean-American, and he walks over to her.

JONATHAN

Hi, Suki.

SUKI

(a bit severe, but not in an unappealing way)  
George was wondering where you were.

JONATHAN

I know...I forgot.

SUKI

He wants you to get quotes for the party-page.

JONATHAN

I know...

SUKI

I haven't seen you for a while. How have you been?

JONATHAN

Well...Actually not so good. Suzanne and I broke up.

SUKI

I'm sorry to hear that.

JONATHAN

It's all right...How are you and Nick doing?

SUKI

Actually, we broke up, too.

JONATHAN

(genuinely shocked)

God, I'm sorry. That's strange that we should both be going through break-ups. How long were you two together? Five years?

SUKI

Four...You and Suzanne?

JONATHAN

Two years...

SUKI

I don't know about you, but I'm already happier alone. The only reason to be with someone is to have sex and I don't need sex. Sex is over-rated.

JONATHAN

(beat, digesting this)

You're probably right...That said, you look very pretty tonight.

Jonathan smiles, a bit flirtatiously, and Suki smiles back, and then GEORGE CHRISTOPHER, late 50's, swept-back silver hair, a belly, florid face, grey-suit, comes over to them, carrying a glass of wine.

GEORGE

(to Jonathan, mid-Atlantic accent)

Do you have any pot?

JONATHAN

Yes --

GEORGE

Of course you do.

INT. BATHROOM AT GALLERY -- A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Jonathan and George are in a stall of the bathroom. Jonathan digs out his one-hitter and lighter, which he hands to George. Jonathan then takes out a small medicine bottle, where he keeps his pot, and hands that to George.

GEORGE

(referring to the medicine  
bottle)

Very clever.

JONATHAN

That's what you used to do, before  
you quit smoking pot.

GEORGE

That's why I thought it was clever,  
and I'm still off of pot, except  
when you tempt me, which is very  
bad of you.

George pries off the top, digs the one-hitter into the  
bottle, then he looks more closely at the bottle.

GEORGE

(outraged)

This is my Viagra bottle! What the  
hell are you doing with pot in my  
Viagra bottle?

JONATHAN

You gave me the bottle months ago,  
there were two pills left, you  
thought I should try them, and now  
I'm putting my pot in there.

GEORGE

Are you insane? If you get arrested  
for marijuana possession, Page 6  
will have a field day. I can't have  
the world knowing that I use  
Viagra.

JONATHAN

Do you really need to take so much?

GEORGE

Yes...Heavy drinking and my heart medicine have taken their toll. I'm not what I once was, but I accept this. It's called humility.

JONATHAN

Do you think we drink too much?

George lights the one-hitter takes a hit and hands it to Jonathan.

GEORGE

(exhaling)

No. We don't drink too much. Men face reality. Women don't. That's why men need to drink.

George takes his glass of wine, which is on the back of the toilet, and takes a swig.

JONATHAN

That's a line from my second novel.

GEORGE

You stole it from me.

Jonathan looks sceptically at George, then takes a hit and hands the one-hitter back to George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

How's the new novel going?

JONATHAN

I'm not working on it. I'm taking a break; I'm writing a mystery story about a detective who's having a breakdown.

George, nods, takes a hit of pot, exhales, leaving them in a cloud of smoke.

GEORGE

These one-hitters really should be called three-hitters.

INT. CHELSEA GALLERY -- NIGHT, LATER

Quick montage of Jonathan interviewing party-goers (three such types -- a trio of models, a posh-looking man, a rich old lady), his MOLESKINE notebook in hand.

Then Jonathan approaches Suki, who steps away from the people she's talking to.

JONATHAN

I think I have enough. I'll email you the article tomorrow.

SUKI

Sounds good. If you could get it in by eleven that would be great. We're on deadline.

JONATHAN

Okay...Well, I better get going. I've got to be somewhere.

He kisses her goodbye on the cheek, they part, look at one another, the kiss has meant something, and then he leaves.

EXT. WEST 25TH STREET, OUTSIDE GALLERY -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan takes out his cell-phone, dials 411.

JONATHAN

Lakes Bar, in Manhattan...

On his pad, he jots down a number -- 212 555 1898. He then dials this number.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Is Vincent Ettin working tonight?...Okay, thanks...

INT. LAKES BAR, EAST VILLAGE -- NIGHT, LATER

Jonathan enters the bar. The place is dark and shadowy. The way it is filmed, we get a sense of danger and intrigue; the people's faces are wary, hidden, secretive.

Jonathan sits down, looks at the bartender, who has a completely shaved head. Jonathan looks at his watch: 9:15. The bartender comes over.

BARTENDER

What would you like?

JONATHAN

Just some white wine -- wait, a whisky, no ice. Jameson's.

The bartender fixes the drink. Jonathan is trying to look tough. The whiskey is put in front of him. Jonathan throws it back, like Marlowe, but can't help himself -- he coughs. The bartender looks away.

JONATHAN  
(to the bartender)  
Excuse me --

BARTENDER  
Yeah.

JONATHAN  
I called earlier. Someone told me Vincent would start working at nine...Is he coming in tonight?

BARTENDER  
You spoke to me. He called a little while ago. Said he wasn't coming in. I'm covering for him.

JONATHAN  
Do you know where he might be?

The bartender looks at Jonathan incredulously. Jonathan takes out his wallet and puts a twenty on the bar and rests his hand over it, just like Marlowe would.

The bartender still looks at him. Jonathan, not happy, takes out another twenty and puts it with the other.

BARTENDER  
What do you want to know?

JONATHAN  
Do you know where he lives? He's not listed in the phone-book.

The bartender glances down at the money and then along the bar to the other customers.

BARTENDER  
I tell you one thing. He's not home.

JONATHAN  
Can you tell me another thing then, like where he's at?

BARTENDER  
(hesitates, then--)  
He's at the Senton Hotel.  
(MORE)

BARTENDER (cont'd)  
He didn't tell me, but it came up  
on the caller i.d.

JONATHAN  
(tough)  
Thanks for the information. You've  
been very helpful.

The bartender deftly scoops up the \$40. Jonathan then stands up, finishes his whiskey, COUGHS quite loudly, and is embarrassed.

JONATHAN  
(trying to explain,  
through his cough)  
I've been laying off the whiskey.  
Been on a white-wine regimen. Was  
trying to save a relationship.

BARTENDER  
Sure...okay...

EXT. SENTON HOTEL -- LATER

Jonathan exits a cab outside the Senton Hotel, a seedy short-stay. It has begun to rain. Jonathan stands in a doorway, takes out his medicine bottle, fills and lights his one-hitter, cupping his hand over it, like a latter-day Robert Mitchum.

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan enters the Senton, which has a dirty narrow lobby with one chair, leading to a glass-enclosed booth where an Indian man sits. Jonathan approaches the booth, walking with a Private Detective swagger.

JONATHAN  
Is there a Vincent Ettin staying  
here?

The man doesn't respond.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)  
Vincent Ettin?

CLERK  
Fuck you.

Jonathan pauses. Looks around.

JONATHAN  
Do people use their real name at  
this place?

The man doesn't respond. Jonathan takes out the picture of  
Lisa and Vincent, holds it up to the glass.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)  
Have you seen these two?

CLERK  
Fuck you.

JONATHAN  
Come on. You don't have to curse so  
much.

The man is silent.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)  
Can I sit in the lobby and see if  
they come out for cigarettes?

CLERK  
No. You can rent a room. Sixty for  
three hours. Ninety for the night.  
If you do that, you can sit in that  
chair.

Jonathan looks out the front door to the rain. He then takes  
out sixty bucks, slides it through the little hole at the  
bottom of the glass. The man slides back a registration form  
and a key.

Jonathan puts down PHILIP MARLOWE for his name and Brooklyn  
for his address, slides it back. Then holds the picture up to  
the glass.

JONATHAN  
So have you seen these two?

CLERK  
Fuck you.

Jonathan hangs his head. Then the clerk smiles.

CLERK (CONT'D)  
I started working one hour ago. I  
don't see them.

JONATHAN  
Thanks.

Jonathan turns, sits on the chair. Montage:

\* Jonathan reading FAREWELL, MY LOVELY. A prostitute and a john go up to the glass booth.

\* Jonathan doodling in his Moleskine. A male hustler and a john come in.

\* Jonathan reading FAREWELL, MY LOVELY and a tranny-prostitute and a john walk in.

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, LATER

Jonathan is on his cell-phone.

JONATHAN  
Hi, dad, how you doing?

INT. FLORIDA CONDOMINIUM -- NIGHT

Irwin Ames, 80, is on the phone, and the TV is on.

IRWIN  
Not good. My ring-finger on my  
right-hand has curled in.

He holds out his curled-in finger, as if his son could see it.

JONATHAN (O.S.)  
I'm sorry.

IRWIN  
Let me put your mother on, I'm  
watching something on  
TV...Florence! It's Jonathan!

Florence Ames, 73, wearing a robe, comes into living room, takes phone.

FLORENCE  
Hello? Jonathan? Everything all  
right? You never call this late.

JONATHAN (O.S.)  
I just wanted to say hi. How are  
you doing?

FLORENCE  
Okay...I had a beautiful t'ai chi  
class today at the Y;  
(MORE)

FLORENCE (cont'd)  
 it was wonderful. You should do  
 t'ai chi. It could help you with  
 your writing. Doesn't Suzanne do  
 t'ai chi?

She does a t'ai chi motion, without thinking.

JONATHAN (O.S.)  
 She took an Aikido class.

FLORENCE  
 How is Suzanne?

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Jonathan on the phone.

JONATHAN  
 Uh...She's fine.

Three tranny-prostitutes come in with three guys, talking loudly.

FLORENCE (O.S.)  
 Are you at a party?

JONATHAN  
 Yeah...I better go. Just wanted to  
 say hi. I love you.

FLORENCE (O.S.)  
 I love you. And so does your  
 father. Right, Irwin?

IRWIN (O.S.)  
 (in the distance)  
 What? I'm trying to watch a show!

JONATHAN  
 Good night, mom.

FLORENCE (O.S.)  
 Good night.

The party of six enters the elevator beyond the glass booth.  
 Jonathan dials a number on his cell-phone.

JONATHAN  
 It's me...Just wanted to leave a  
 message. I hope the move to your  
 new place went all right...I wish I  
 could have changed for you, but  
 it's hard to change.

(MORE)

JONATHAN (cont'd)  
 But maybe I can. Buddhism says that  
 nothing is permanent...And I've  
 started changing today, a  
 little...Anyway, I miss you  
 already, bye --

Jonathan hangs up, stands up, and walks to the glass booth.

JONATHAN  
 (to the clerk)  
 Do you have a bathroom on this  
 floor I can use real quick?

CLERK  
 No. There's a bathroom in your  
 room.

Jonathan thinks. He holds the picture up to the glass again.

JONATHAN  
 Listen, if these two come out, can  
 you stall them? Please? Tell them  
 someone's looking for them and will  
 be right down?

CLERK  
 Fuck you.

JONATHAN  
 I thought we were getting along  
 better?

Jonathan takes out his wallet, slides a twenty through. The  
 man doesn't say anything, but takes the twenty.

Jonathan goes to the elevator, pushes button, waits.

INT. SENTON HOTEL -- NIGHT, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jonathan exits the elevator, having gone to the bathroom. He  
 goes over to the clerk.

JONATHAN  
 Did you see them? Did they head  
 out?

CLERK  
 I saw the man. He went out and  
 already came back in. With beer.

JONATHAN  
 What about the girl?

CLERK

No girl.

JONATHAN

What room is he in...Wait, don't say it.

Jonathan takes out a twenty, slides it through the hole.

CLERK

713.

INT. HALLWAY, SENTON HOTEL, 7TH FLOOR -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jonathan exits elevator, approaches 713. Television noises can be heard from the other rooms.

Knife-like shadows jump out in the dimly-lit hall. Jonathan knocks on 713. Nothing.

JONATHAN

Vincent? Vincent Ettin?

Pressing his ear to the door, he hears some kind of noise inside the room. He BANGS on the door. The door NEXT DOOR opens and a large, sexy, black transsexual prostitute in bra and underwear, opens up her door.

TRANSSEXUAL

What the hell is going on out here?

JONATHAN

Nothing...Sorry...

She appraises Jonathan, looks him up and down.

TRANSSEXUAL

You wanna date, baby? I just had a client cancel on me.

JONATHAN

I can't right now, but thank you.

Without thinking, intimidated by the transsexual, he nervously jiggles the door-handle to Vincent's room, which suddenly opens up and Vincent's wild, sweating face is seen, and he is recognizable because of the TATOO on his neck.

VINCENT

What the fuck is going on?

JONATHAN  
Are you Vincent Ettin?

VINCENT  
No!

He goes to slam the door, Jonathan heroically bangs his shoulder into it. The tranny sensing something bad going down, retreats into her room.

Jonathan pushes his way in, the door remains slightly ajar.

INT. VINCENT ETTIN'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Vincent in t-shirt and boxer shorts backs up, and grabs a pen-sized lighter, used for bbq's and crystal meth pipes, from the bureau and clicks it on. There is a six-pack on bureau.

LISA WEISS, in panties and bra, is on the bed. She's loosely tied down with a sheet (her arms pinned) and there's a washcloth in her mouth. She has a confused look on her face.

Vincent points the tiny flame at Jonathan and comes at him. Jonathan jumps on the bed to evade him.

JONATHAN  
(to Lisa)  
I'm here to help you! Your sister sent me. I'm a private detective!

VINCENT  
What? Who are you? Get out of our room!

Jonathan is standing on the bed, keeping Lisa, who is squirming, between him and Vincent, who's waving the tiny torch.

JONATHAN  
Hey, put that out!

Vincent jumps up on the bed, Jonathan jumps off the other side.

VINCENT  
Get out of our room!

Jonathan then scoots into the bathroom, locking the door.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan leans against the door. Vincent is rattling the knob, banging against door, but it's holding. Jonathan's cell-phone rings. He takes it out: Caller ID: GEORGE. Vincent, hearing the phone, stops banging and rattling.

VINCENT (O.S.)

Who the fuck is calling you? I'm going to call the cops if you don't get out!

JONATHAN

Can you wait one second? It's my boss. I'm going to answer it. He hates it if I don't answer.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

(into cell-phone)

Hello, George --

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

George is sitting up in bed, a SLEEPING MASK on his forehead, a glass of whiskey in his hand, a huge television on the wall, gleaming NYC outside his high-rise window.

GEORGE

Ames, are you still in Manhattan? I'm craving marijuana. I can't sleep. You've got me started again. Can you come over?

JONATHAN (O.S.)

Don't blame me. You're the one who asked for pot at the party...But I really can't come over right now --

GEORGE

Are you in Brooklyn? Don't be a milquetoast. Hop in a car-service. I'll pay --

He hears a loud noise coming through the phone.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Vincent is stepping back and hurling himself at the bathroom door to no avail.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan leans against the door, bracing it against Vincent's efforts.

JONATHAN  
 (on cell-phone, voice high-  
 strung)  
 I have to go. Bye George --

GEORGE (O.S.)  
 Ames!

Jonathan hangs up the phone, puts it back in his pocket. Vincent is now back to rattling the knob.

VINCENT (O.S.)  
 (angry voice)  
 Who are you?

JONATHAN  
 I'm a private detective. Rachel Weiss asked me to look for Lisa. Why is she tied to the bed?

VINCENT (O.S.)  
 I don't believe you're a detective.

JONATHAN  
 Well...I'm not a licensed private detective. I'm a writer.

VINCENT (O.S.)  
 (quieter voice)  
 What kind of writer?

JONATHAN  
 (beat)  
 A novelist. Some journalism.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Vincent's head leans against the door; he's had a mood-shift.

VINCENT  
 I write. I write songs. It's really what I want to do with my life.

JONATHAN (O.S.)  
 That's cool.

Vincent steps away from the bathroom door. Sees the open front door and closes it. Finds his meth pipe on the bureau, lights up, takes a hit, puts the pipe back down.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan is listening through the door.

JONATHAN

So, listen, what's going on? Lisa's sister is really worried. They were supposed to go to a concert.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lisa squirms. Vincent ignores her, comes back to the door.

VINCENT

(a bit high)

I'll tell you what's going on. She broke up with me, but we're trying to put things back together.

He looks over at Lisa and smiles. Her eyes are wide, agitated.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

Really? My girlfriend broke up with me. She moved out today. I'm pretty upset.

VINCENT

You just let her go? That's not cool. You have to be a man when that happens.

JONATHAN (O.S.)

Yeah, I let her go...But why is Lisa tied up? I don't like the looks of that.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan leans against the door.

VINCENT (O.S.)

Who are you to judge? We're role-playing. Stockholm syndrome. That's why we got this sleazy room to make it authentic.

JONATHAN  
I've always been intrigued by the  
Stockholm Syndrome.

VINCENT  
Yeah, well, she's supposed to fall  
in love with her captor, and in  
this case fall BACK in love.

JONATHAN  
I should have tried that...Can I  
come out?

VINCENT (O.S.)  
All right. But you better be cool.

INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan steps out. Lisa squirms. Vincent eye-balls him.

JONATHAN  
What's that smell?

VINCENT  
Meth.

JONATHAN  
You shouldn't smoke meth. I have  
some pot. It's better for you.

VINCENT  
Really. Can I have a hit?

Lisa squirms. Jonathan sits on the bed and takes out his  
medicine bottle and begins to fill his one-hitter.

JONATHAN  
(to Lisa)  
Do you want a hit?

She shakes her head.

JONATHAN  
(to Vincent)  
Can you take that wash-cloth out of  
her mouth?

VINCENT  
No. We need to stay in our roles.  
Also, she still wants to break up  
with me and I don't want to hear  
about it.

Jonathan passes the one-hitter to Vincent. He uses his little torch and takes a big hit, holds on to the smoke.

JONATHAN  
 (almost to himself)  
 My girlfriend broke up with me  
 because I smoke too much pot and  
 drink too much white-wine. But she  
 was right. How can you love someone  
 if you're in a fog the whole time?

Vincent blows out the pot smoke which goes in Jonathan's face.

VINCENT  
 Do you want a hit of meth?

JONATHAN  
 (considering it)  
 I've never but --

There's rapping on the door, followed by --

POLICEMAN OUTSIDE DOOR  
 Open up! Police!

VINCENT  
 Oh, shit!

Lisa squirms. Vincent grabs his meth pipe and bag from the bureau and dashes for the toilet. Jonathan stunned, passes him his medicine bottle of pot. Vincent goes into the bathroom, closes the door.

POLICEMAN OUTSIDE DOOR  
 Open up!

JONATHAN  
 I'm coming!

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Vincent is throwing everything -- one hitter, medicine-bottle, meth, meth-pipe -- out the window of the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jonathan opens hotel room door. In hallway are two cops and the tranny prostitute.

JONATHAN  
Can I help you officers?

TRANSSEXUAL  
There was some kind of fight going  
on in there!

The cops sniff the air, brush past Jonathan and see Lisa tied up. One of the cops immediately takes the wash-cloth out of Lisa's mouth. Vincent comes out of the bathroom.

COP  
(to Lisa)  
Are you all right? Are these two  
men abusing you?

LISA  
I'm fine. They're not abusing me.  
That's my EX-boyfriend --

VINCENT  
Don't say that! --

LISA  
(ignoring Vincent)  
But I don't even know who this guy  
is. There's something wrong with  
him.

She points at Jonathan.

JONATHAN  
I came here to help --

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM -- NIGHT, LATER

Jonathan is alone with a styrofoam cup of coffee. A clock on a wall shows eight a.m. A detective enters the room, sits down across from Jonathan.

DETECTIVE  
So let me ask you. Why'd you pull  
this Craig's List stunt? For the  
money?

JONATHAN  
No, not at all...I wasn't in my  
right mind. My girlfriend broke up  
with me...

DETECTIVE  
Save the sob story for Bellevue.

JONATHAN

Well, anyway, I lost money on this whole thing. I forgot to tell the sister about expenses. In the books I've read, the private detective always ask for expenses. So I spent eighty on bribes and sixty on the hotel --

DETECTIVE

All right. Shut up.

(beat)

Listen, you didn't actually break any laws...And the girl and her boyfriend are NOT filing a complaint, after all...

(voice rising)

But don't you ever pull a stunt like this again! Ever! You do and I'm going send you to Rikers and you won't come out alive!

EXT. BERGEN STREET STATION BROOKLYN -- DAY

Jonathan emerges from the subway and takes out his cell-phone, makes a call.

JONATHAN

Hey, Ray...Can you meet for a coffee? I've got to talk to you about something...Let's meet at the Tea Lounge.

EXT. TEA LOUNGE, COURT STREET -- DAY, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Ray sits on a bench in front of the Tea Lounge with two coffees. He's surrounded by 18 hi-tech, empty strollers. Jonathan approaches rapidly, sits next to Ray, they shake.

RAY

We have to sit outside. Some early-morning post-natal yoga class just let out. It's like a nursery in there...I got your coffee.

He hands the coffee to Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Thanks --

RAY

I'm glad you called. I've got to talk to you, too. Who wants to go first?

JONATHAN

You can, if you want...but I had a really wild night --

RAY

(eager to vent)

Okay. First me, then you. So I was at Leah's last night, in bed, waiting for her. She promised that this was the night to break our cold streak. But she took forever putting her kids to sleep...I never should have started dating a woman with kids. I have to be the only child in a woman's life...So she finally gets into bed around ten-thirty and says, 'I want to close my eyes for ten minutes.' Well, that ten minutes was the rest of the night. She passed out cold.

JONATHAN

That's terrible. But you're not going believe --

RAY

I'm not done. So I left around one a.m. and now she's been calling me all morning leaving messages saying that I abandoned her and how can I be insensitive to her abandonment issues. Can you believe I had a night like that?

JONATHAN

That does sound bad, but listen, I got into a real --

RAY

Oh, shit there's Leah --

Leah comes racing up on a bicycle. Ray makes to walk off, like he doesn't know her. She rides alongside him.

LEAH

How dare you leave me in the middle of the night like a one-night stand.

RAY

One-night stand? I wish it was.

LEAH

You should have stayed and held me.

RAY

What am I a hot-water bottle? I'm a man. I have needs. You call this monogamy? I call it celibacy!

LEAH

Those are big words for you! You didn't read them in a comic book, did you, little boy?

RAY

(voice cracking)

I read them in my diary!

Ray suddenly starts crying and covers his face with his hands. He's motionless. Leah stops her bicycle and puts her arm around Ray. He hides his head in her shoulder.

Jonathan gets up from the bench, gets tangled with a stroller, and walks off.

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT -- LATER

He sits down by his computer with a cold bottle of white wine. He takes out his notebook to write his article. He puts on his computer, opens it to his email.

Clicks on the first one, which has in its subject: **YOUR CRAIG'S LIST AD**. Then he reads the email: **I NEED YOUR HELP. PLEASE CALL ME. ANY TIME DAY OR NIGHT. I NEED HELP. 646 555 3423 JANE LESSING.**

Jonathan stares at the email. He lights his one-hitter like a tough noir guy, inhales, and then takes out his cell-phone and makes a call --

JONATHAN

Is this Jane Lessing?

The end