

TIME & TEMPERATURE

Written by

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Inspired by True Events

EXT. VERY MIDDLE CLASS SUBURBAN CUL DE SAC - NIGHT

CAMERA just a foot above street level, PUSHES IN SLOWLY down this quiet, sleepy, humble bedroom community.

8-year-old family sedans. Toppled Big Wheels on front lawns. A basketball rests under a garage-mounted hoop. A few street lights dot the sidewalk, the only illumination besides the moon. As the camera moves in on a SMALL CAPE resting at the center-end of the street, CHYRONS stagger:

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 3, 1989

4:29 A.M.

INT. SMALL CAPE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

A sleeping DALE JULIN (44) and wife PATTI (40). The night-stand CLOCK reads **4:29**, like the Chyron below it, until... the Chyron and the clock FLIP simultaneously to **4:30 A.M.**

ENH! ENH! ENH! The alarm clock blares. Dale doesn't move. At the 8th "**ENH**", Patti, half asleep, reaches over Dale, hits the alarm silent, collapses into her pillow.

PATTI
Dale... you have to get up.

DALE
(asleep)
Mmmmpf... I'm Aquaman.

PATTI
(eyes still closed)
You're sleeping -- get up.

She slowly extends her legs, gradually pushing sleeping Dale until he falls from the bed onto the floor - **THUD**.

LOW ANGLE - across the width of the bed - a groggy DALE raises his head INTO FRAME, half asleep, serious bed head...

DALE
I'm awake.

Dale is our hero... he just doesn't know it yet.

INT. SHOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Dale, palms against the wall, head down, lets water beat on him. Hanging from the shower head, his "SHOWER BUDDY" CLOCK/RADIO reads **4:38**.

Roxette's YOU'VE GOT THE LOOK plays. Remember, this is 1989 - this is the crap they played. Dale's motionless until the brutally annoying chorus: "*Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah...* *Nah, nah, nah, nah...*" Nails on a blackboard.

Without lifting his head, Dale slams his palm into the radio repeatedly until its casing hangs by a wire... but at least the song stopped.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

TIGHT ON WALL CLOCK - **4:47**. PAN DOWN to COFFEE MAKER. A hand reaches into frame, lifts the mug to Dale's face. He looks straight ahead, almost to camera, takes a sip, bites a bagel. This is his routine - every day.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dale brushes his teeth, spits, looks at himself in the mirror. He smiles. It's a nice smile. Warm. Genuine.

DALE
Good Morning Fresno.
(tries it again)
Good Morning Fresno.
(once more with feeling)
Good Morning Fresno.

Then, just like that, the smile is gone. OFF Dale, looking at his reflection, contemplating himself, his station in life...

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dale leans in, takes the hand of sleeping 20 month old ROSIE (her hand sticks thru the crib slates) and kisses it.

DALE
Bye bye sweetheart.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

ON a WRISTWATCH on Dale's night stand - **5:01**. Dale, now in a suit, puts the watch on. He leans in, kisses Patti's forehead.

DALE
(*really* means it)
I love you.

Patti snorts a snore-grunt. Dale doesn't mind. He pulls down her covers to REVEAL Patti's PREGNANT BELLY. He kisses it.

DALE (CONT'D)
 (whispers to belly)
 I love you too.

His eyes and tone give it all away - Dale is a good man.

EXT/INT. DALE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Dale gets in his '81 Nissan (with **SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS** bumper sticker). The car sputters to life. Clock reads: **5:03**.

He spins the radio dial. **DON'T WORRY BE HAPPY** by Bobby McFarin. Then, **NAUGHTY GIRLS NEED LOVE TOO** by Samantha Fox. He lands on **SWEET CHILD OF MINE** by Guns 'N Roses.

The car backs out of the driveway but then STOPS. Dale fiddles with the radio again until **NAUGHTY GIRLS NEED LOVE TOO** comes back on. Fuck it, he's alone. So, as he drives...

DALE
Then along came you. Now I know it's true... Naughty girls need love too.

SOURCE MUSIC becomes SOUND TRACK as Dale drives through...

EXT. STREETS OF FRESNO - EARLY MORNING, STILL DARK

CREDITS ROLL as Dale's commute establishes FRESNO. He passes CALIFORNIA DMV - FRESNO BRANCH OFFICE; FRESNO SAVINGS & LOAN (their "TIME TO SAVE" clock reads **5:17 A.M.**); etc.

He rolls to a FOUR-WAY STOP SIGN INTERSECTION. Red light. No other cars anywhere. Catty-corner to Dale is a patrol car. COP drinks coffee, reads his paper. Dale watches him, waiting, as he rolls through the sign...

DALE
C'mon big fella, I'm rollin' right through...

Cop happens to look up, makes eye contact with Dale.

DALE (CONT'D)
Gotcha.

Dale hits the gas, speeds off, looks in his rear-view...

DALE (CONT'D)
Come 'n get me, copper.

But nothing happens. Amazingly, Dale's disappointed.

DALE (CONT'D)
Knew it... jerk.

LOW LONG ANGLE on the ROAD as Dale's car APPROACHES CAMERA. The car passes OVER CAMERA, it's momentum PULLS US TO BLACK.

SUPRA: **TIME & TEMPERATURE.** (OVER SUPRA we **PRE-LAP...**)

DALE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
It's 6:00 A.M., 52 degrees in the beautiful Central Valley and once again I have the pleasure of being the first to tell you...

INT. NEWS SHOW SET - MORNING

TIGHT ON Dale. BRIGHT. SHINY. SMILEY. All TV-Host-ish.

DALE
...Good Morning, Fresno. And thanks for tuning in to The Sunshine Show on KSEE. Now let's K-See who we'll be getting to know this morning.

Dale stands, walks to a SIDE STAGE where CYNDI WEINSTOCK (11, Girl Scout) stands in uniform. Behind her is a massive 6' high MAZE, made completely of GIRL SCOUT COOKIE BOXES.

DALE (CONT'D)
Whoa. Look at this thing. What's your name and *how did you build this?*

CYNDI
(giggling)
Cyndi Weinstock. And I didn't build it.

DALE
But you sold this many boxes of cookies, didn't you? In fact, it's my understanding that you sold more cookies than any other girl scout in the Central Valley.
(takes in the maze)
There must be, what, almost twenty boxes here?

Cyndi laughs again - Dale is great with her.

CYNDI
Three thousand four hundred nineteen boxes.

DALE
What?! Nine thousand, three hundred fourteen boxes! That's crazy!

ROY (mid 30's, stoner cameraman) snorts a laugh from behind the camera. Cyndi laughs some more.

DALE (CONT'D)

Well, I don't care how many you sold,
 Ms. Braggy-Pants. I'm the Central
 Valley Maze Master four years running.
 So I bet I can get through this maze
 in less than thirty seconds or KSEE
 will donate one hundred dollars to
 your troop. We got a deal?

They shake on it. Dale looks up to the control booth.

DALE (CONT'D)

Producer Scott ... *Maze Music* please.

In the CONTROL BOOTH PRODUCER SCOTT (50, bald) flips on
FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE and Dale races into the maze.

OVERHEAD SHOT: Dale fumbles his way through the maze. He is
 intentionally "overly-lost"...

DALE (CONT'D)

No, it's not this way... wait a
 minute, this looks familiar... *Cyndi*?!
 Should I turn left at the Thin
 Mints?... *Cyndi*, I'm scared!

PRODUCER SCOTT (OVER SPEAKER)
 Ten seconds, Dale.

DALE

Don't pressure me!

Dale looks around - "worried"...

PRODUCER SCOTT (OVER SPEAKER)
 Five seconds.

Dale races out of the maze, THROUGH THE FRONT WALL...

DALE

Aaaaagh!

... and lands on the floor with a thud, surrounded/covered by
 cookie boxes. He looks up to Cyndi, out of breath ...

DALE (CONT'D)

Cyndi... the check's in the mail.

(to Camera)

We're going to take a quick break.
 For The Sunshine Show, I'm Dale Julin,

He points the mic up toward Cyndi who's excited to say...

CYNDI

...and I'm Cyndi Weinstock...

DALE

...and she's one smart cookie.

PRODUCER SCOTT (OVER SPEAKER)
And we're out. Great job Dale.

Everyone's happy with a segment well-done, but as Dale dusts himself off, you see less enthusiasm from him.

INT. NEWS SHOW SET - MORNING - LATER

Roy grabs two donuts from a SNACK TABLE while WAYNE MASON (40's, Affiliate Manager, former New Yorker, no tact, not really an asshole but it's hard to tell) addresses the troops which include Dale and...

- STEPHANIE BIEL (30's, hot weather girl)
- JAY TUCKER (30's, black, sports)
- DR. NAYLIN KATHARTI (30's, Indian, Medical Correspondent)
- BURT WARNER (30's, traffic)

WAYNE

Testing results are in and I've seen worse.

Dale waves off Roy's silent offer of a donut, anxious, to hear the results. Wayne reads from a report...

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Stephanie - Weather came in with an 82% approval rating with viewers...

Stephanie smiles. Ad lib claps/congrats from the others as Roy slyly sneaks a peek of her cleavage.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

...but certain days your scores were stronger. We looked into it...

STEPHANIE

Storm chaser segments. People love 'em--

WAYNE

--Skirts. Numbers peaked when you wore skirts. So don't be bashful; let those stair-steppers fly.

(scanning his report)

Jay, solid across the board, but no more hockey. No one cares.

BURT

It's one of the 4 major sports leagues.

WAYNE

Not in California, it isn't. Wanna cover hockey, Minneapolis is that way.

(MORE)

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Naylin, viewers love "Health Party with Dr. Kathartti". But they wanna see "healthy hair", "healthy skin", that kinda crap.

NAYLIN
 (Indian accent)
 I don't really think that's medicine.

WAYNE
 (Indian accent)
 I don't really give a shit.
 (back to New York accent)
 54% of our audience is women, Doc, and they think hair and skin is medicine.
 So tell 'em to eat almonds or some shit - you know, the good fat.
 (shifts gears to...)
 Burt, our Traffic Guy with the Eye in the Sky... most accurate traffic report in the Central Valley...
 (Burt straightens, proud)
 ...but viewers don't like the sound of the chopper blades. You know that Whoosh, Whoosh, Whoosh. Makes them nervous. So let's lose that.

BURT
 It's what keeps me in the air.

WAYNE
 (not paying attention,
 flipping through report)
 You'll figure it out ... ok, let's see what else...

ON Dale, waiting, hopeful for some positive feedback...

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Guess that's it. Good work team. Best morning show on TV.

And Wayne is gone. OFF Dale, dejected.

INT. WAYNE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Wayne stands at his desk, eating while working. Dale enters.

DALE
 Wayne, got a sec?

Wayne waves him in, doesn't look up from his work.

DALE (CONT'D)
 So, I, uh, I was wondering what the test audiences had to say about me.

Wayne looks up, mouth full of greasy breakfast sandwich.

WAYNE
(muffled)
About you? Well... ya know... slow and
steady, nice and consistent.

Wayne dives back into work. Awkward beat, then...

DALE
So, I've been working on this story...

Wayne freezes mid-bite, knows another "Dale pitch" is coming.

DALE (CONT'D)
African Americans drivers are pulled
over by Fresno police at a rate *three*
times higher than whites. I've pulled
stats from the DOT that back this up
and I've been doing my own experiment -
- going through stop signs when I know
a cop is watching --

WAYNE
--Stop. Just stop.

Wayne puts his sandwich down. Sits, rubs his eyes.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
We've had this talk. Just this past
Spring. You're a show host - someone
to transition viewers from segment to
segment and tease the evening news
stories. And sometimes you get to
interview little leaguers or hundred
year old firemen or some other happy
horse shit. 'Cause you're a *host*. Not
a *reporter*.

DALE
I *am* a reporter.

WAYNE
Reporters don't run through cookie
forts. Ya wanna know why I didn't
bring up your viewer responses in
front of everyone? Because of all the
hosts of all the morning shows of all
the nations' affiliates, you were the
least memorable. 70% of the test
audience didn't remember you when we
showed them your photograph an hour
after watching the reel.

Dale registers this information - it hurts.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Wanna know why you still have a job here? Because I think that's a good stat. It's your job to present whatever fluff we're doing that day in a way that the audience enjoys. They remember the show, Dale, they just don't remember you.

(Wayne's softness disappears)

And who cares? Fat housewives with one eye on the TV and the other on the toaster, waitin' for their kids' Pop Tarts. Fuck 'em if they can't remember you. Probably can't remember the last time they saw their feet.

And Wayne's back to work. Beat, then Dale walks out. But he stops at the door and turns back.

DALE

They'd remember me if I were Anchor.

WAYNE

(mouth full)

Excuse me?

DALE

The new anchor position - nights, weekends. Audience would see me all the time, not just a voice in the background when they're getting ready for work. Think I should be considered.

Wayne considers this then, acquiesces...

WAYNE

Wanna throw your hat in the ring? Fine by me.

Dale smiles, nods, and exits enthused and energized.

EXT. STUDIO PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Dale hurries out to his car, pep in his step. Roy's in his VAN, rolls down his window, some pot smoke filters out.

ROY

Hey bro - what he say about the Blacks Are Bad Drivers story?

DALE

Doesn't want it ... and you really missed the point of that piece.

ROY

Yeah... probably... well, it's 4:20 somewhere, know what I mean...

DALE
No it isn't.

ROY
Well, yeah... with time zones...

DALE
Nope.

ROY
And daylight's savings...

DALE
Still not 4:20.

ROY
Alright man. See ya later.

Roy hits his joint and rolls up the window as Dale hurries to his car and peels off. OVER THE CAR DRIVING OFF...

DALE (PRE-LAP)
Military convoys entered Tiananmen Square on the evening of June 3rd under strict orders to clear the Square by dawn.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - DINING/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dale sits at the table, in suit and tie. On the china hutch behind him (**full of San Fran Giants memorabilia**) is taped a makeshift construction paper CHINESE FLAG. A wooden spoon taped to soup can for a mic. Patti watches from the living room couch a few feet away.

DALE
The People's Liberation Army used live fire to disperse the protesters. The exact number of civilian deaths is not known, though estimates range from several hundred to possibly thousands.
(breaks into BIG smile)
I'm Dale Julin and we'll be back with Weather after this break.
(beat)
So, what do you think?

PATTI
Fantastic... but maybe not so much smiling after the massacre talk.

DALE
Right. Sunshine Show habit. Lemme try another.

He slaps over the Chinese flag a **PUT A TIGER IN YOUR TANK** magazine ad for EXXON.

DALE (CONT'D)

Ready? Ok... A new culprit is being targets in the Exxon Valdez disaster. The defense team for Valdez captain Joseph Hazelwood has presented evidence that the ship's radar was not only broken but Exxon knew this for over a year and failed to make repairs because it was quote: "too expensive." Ironic, considering the costs of the spill might reach four billion dollars.

(beat)

Ok, that's all I have for that one.

PATTI

(clapping)

That was excellent. Of all the ones you've done this week, that was my favorite.

Dale springs up from behind the table to reveal he's in cargo shorts to go with his jacket/tie.

DALE

I added that *ironic cost* bit on the fly.

PATTI

I liked it. Made you think.

Dale sits next to his wife, looks her in the eyes.

DALE

I really want this.

PATTI

I know... I want it for you. I want it for all of us.

She puts Dale's hand on her tummy. Then Dale remembers...

DALE

Oh, *hey*, how'd the doctor go today?

PATTI

Ten fingers, ten toes. Dr. Fine says she might be a big one.

Dale smiles, kisses Patti's hand.

DALE

That's great.

PATTI

She also said my hypertension is up a bit -- still in the safe range -- but she doesn't think I should work anymore. I told her I could try sitting behind the checkout desk--

DALE

--No. If the doctor says you need to get off you feet, then you stop. The library will go on without you.

PATTI

I know, but my salary.

DALE

It's just a few months before we knew it would stop anyway.

PATTI

We need it. We're floating bills as it is - insurance co-pays are eating us up; still a little late with the mortgage payments and our rates just jumped...

DALE

PATTI

We have a five year lock-in. It's been five years.

DALE

Shit... Ok, we'll be fine. I have a feeling this anchor job's gonna change everything for us.

PATTI

Damn right. I mean, what do those other guys have that you don't have?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO BACK HALLWAY - MORNING

A hall full of **LATINO MEN**. Young, handsome, all have audition sides, practicing "sign-offs" as Dale walks past, dumbstruck.

LATINO ANCHOR #1

This is *Rrrrrr-eynoldo Rrrrr-eyes* for K-SEE, Fresno, California...

LATINO ANCHOR #2

For K-SEE, I'm *Alfrrrrr-edo Barrrios*.

INT. WAYNE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dale storms in, pissed. And Wayne clearly knows why.

DALE

Are you kidding me?

WAYNE

Dale...

DALE

Why'd you even waste my time? Do you know how hard I've been practicing?

WAYNE

Just relax--

DALE

--Relax?! It's a god-damn *Menudo* audition out there! I don't have a shot unless I suddenly become 10 years younger or 20 shades *browner*.

WAYNE

Dale! ... Why don't you say hello to Gary Gabrielle - he's a frontrunner for the anchor position.

Dale slowly turns to find GARY GABRIELLE (32, handsome, Latin) on the corner couch. Dale pales - a beat, then...

DALE

I'm not a racist.

And Dale turns and walks out.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

TIGHT ON: Junk Drawer is opened. In the clutter a hand finds a paddle game/toy with a red ball on a rubber band string.

EXT. DALE'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Dale furiously paddles. Whump-whump-whump-whump. He's amazing at it. He's pissed/stressed and this is his meditation and anger management. Patti exits onto the back stoop. No response. Just an angry man and his paddle ball. OFF Dale smacking the shit out of the ball.

INT. NEWS SHOW SET - MORNING

Dale does his fluff-news morning show gig.

DALE

It's 53 degrees, 6:13 in the morning, and if you think Detroit puts out the most innovative American cars, think again. We'll meet the head of the California Dairy Council's *Go-Kart Cotillion* whose winning entry this year had wheels made of cheese. Wow, when you take a risk like that, you cheddar win because second place isn't gouda 'nuff.

Dale forces out a pained, agonized laugh. He's dying inside.

DALE (CONT'D)
But first, I'm pleased to introduce
the newest member of our team, our new
nights and weekend anchor, Gary
Gabrielle, with a preview of what to
expect at 10 o'clock.

ANGLE ON Gary, super-handsome with a million dollar smile.

GARY
(latino accent)
Thank you, Dale - so happy to be on-
board. Tonight I'll be talking with
former president Rrrrr-onald Rrrrr-
eagan from his home in Bel Air,
California and what he has to say
about the current president just might
surprise you.

INT. STUDIO - BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Dale walks back to his office, crosses with Gary.

DALE
Hey, great job out there.

Dale, a good sport, shakes Gary's hand.

GARY
(in perfect English)
Thanks. And I love what you do - all
that funny stuff - it's great.

DALE
What... happened to your accent?

GARY
Oh, that's just for the camera my man. Real
name's Gary Rivers. I'm from New Hampshire.

Gary gives Dale a friendly smack on the shoulder, moves off.
Dale can't believe it. He walks down a hall to find Patti at
the Kraft table grabbing a bagel for Rosie (in her arms).

DALE
Patti?

PATTI
Hey.
(she kisses Dale)
Got cream cheese on you. Sorry, can't
stop eating...

DALE
(kisses Rosie)
Hey Rosie; are you visiting Daddy?
(to Patti)
What're you doing here? Everything ok?

PATTI
Everything's fine. I just know you've been down about work and the whole anchor thing... so I wanted to give you these. For tonight.

She pulls out a pair of tickets. Dale can't believe it.

DALE
Those are World Series tickets!

PATTI
Go Giants.

DALE
Oh my God! Giants! World Series! I'm going?!... We don't have money for these.

PATTI
Cathy at work - her Uncle had tickets but he died of a heart attack last week.

DALE
That's fantastic.

PATTI
I know. So go, turn your mind off for a night, have fun. And there are two so you can bring a friend.

VOICE (O.S.)
Sweet.

They turn to find Roy with a mouthful of donut.

ROY
I'll drive.

INT. ROY'S VAN - LATER

Roy drives. Dale finds a HUGE 1989 cell phone in the console.

ROY
Pretty sweet, right? Called a *cellular* phone. For calls from the studio when we're On Location.

DALE
Cool. Can't wait to try this out.

ROY
 (uncomfortable)
 Yeah... Wayne said it's only for the
 new guy. Mr. Rrrr-ivera.

Dale puts the phone down - another blow. Then...

DALE
 You think he's better than me?

ROY
 Better reporter? No way... He's just
 better looking. Like really better
 looking.

Dale's face falls. As Roy stares ahead, keeps driving...

ROY (CONT'D)
 I mean, I dig the ladies, but if I
 didn't, I'd be all over that spicy
 enchilada. Chocolatey eyes, caramel
 skin... I'm gonna get a candy bar at
 the game.

Dale just stares out the window - *fuck me.*

EXT. CANDLESTICK PARK - NIGHT (30 MINUTES BEFORE GAME TIME)

Packed stands. Roy and Dale squeeze through to their seats,
 loaded with hot dogs, beer. Roy eats a candy bar as he talks
 on the cell phone...

CHYRON: OCTOBER 17, 1989 ... 5:03 PM

ROY (INTO PHONE)
 Seriously Mom - *World Series...* With
 Dale from work... no, that's the
 Sports guy... I'm with Dale. Dale
Julin...

Dale can't believe it - once again he "isn't remembered."

ROY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
 No, that's our new anchor... I know,
so good looking...
 (as they both sit...)
 Dale's the host...
 (Roy studies Dale's face)
 ...I guess, kind of like a ferret...

Dale absorbs the indignity.

ROY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
 Anyway, he gave me the ticket...
 'cause we're best friends...

DALE
I don't know your last name.

ROY (INTO PHONE)
Alright. Bye Mom.
(hangs up, looks around)
I still can't believe we're here.
Patti is the coolest wife I know.

DALE
Damn right.

As Roy works a mustard packet over his hot dog...

ROY
(kind of to himself)
And she's *really* hot.

Dale turns to Roy, let's it go. As he melts into his seat...

DALE
Aaaah. This is just what I needed. No work. No Wayne. No bills. Nothing but my Giants and an ice cold beer--

ROY
--and your best friend, Roy.

DALE
Just gonna take a night to enjoy myself and *relax*.

But as he moves to sip his beer **THE 1989 LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE HITS.** Dale's beer goes FLYING as Candlestick Park rocks and rolls. Fans scream as...

DALE (CONT'D)
It's an earthquake! It's an earthquake!

The lurching stadium topples Roy into the seats in front on him.

ROY
Oh shit!

A woman behind Dale topples toward him but Dale catches her.

DALE
I got you - I got you...

Her helps her up, then grabs onto a seat. The earth bucks, he can barely stand, noise is deafening, all he can think of is...

DALE (CONT'D)
(softly, to himself)
Patti.

And then, 15 seconds after it started, it stops. People try to compose themselves but Dale springs into action...

DALE (CONT'D)
You alright?

Roy, on his ass in the aisle nods that he's okay.

DALE (CONT'D)
Still have the phone?

Roy looks around, finds the phone under a seat.

DALE (CONT'D)
Let's go!

INT. BOWELS OF CANDLESTICK PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Dale and Roy race through the halls under the stadium. Security, employees and fans scurry about. It's frantic.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
You okay?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY WITH PATTI AT HOME.

PATTI (INTO PHONE)
We barely felt it here. The news says the whole stadium was moving!

DALE
We're fine. I promise. But I have to go, love you...

PATTI
Roads are out all over the city! Where are you going to go?

DALE
On the air.

EXT. CANDLESTICK PARK - LOADING BAY AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Dale bursts through the back entrance, Roy on his heels. He searches the loading dock area, then his eyes land on... the KSEE "Live Sports Truck". He bangs on its doors which open to reveal PETE CUMMINGS (40's, 300 lbs) - truck operator - and his technician BEANY (20's). A not-looking-so-good looking Jay (the sports guy) sits in the back.

PETE
What the hell are you guys doin' here?

DALE
Looking to help. You gonna go live?

PETE
 Hell no. We were only supposed to do
 post-game with Jay.

Dale and Roy look at Jay - he's 3 shades of gray.

ROY
 What's wrong with him?

BEANSY
 Downed half a flask in the past 10
 minutes - Chicago boy, first quake.

Dale leaps into the truck, starts taking off Jay's tie.

DALE
 I'm gonna borrow this.

BURT
 The ground... it's like jello.

DALE
 That might be the San Tequila fault
 line you're feelin'.

Roy follows Dale's lead, grabs a camera from the truck.

PETE
 Hey, we don't have clearance to go on.
 NBC's been knocked off the air in this
 city. Communication with the home
 office is in and out... we can't just
do this...

DALE
 Pete, people are scared. Can't get in
 touch with loved ones, don't know
 where to go to for help... this is why
 we all got into this business, right?

Pete locks eyes with Dale, who is more than resolute. Then:

PETE
 Beansy, crank up the satellite! We're
 goin' live!

JUMP CUTS as Beansy and Pete flip switches, press buttons and
 do all the shit you gotta do to send TV out into space and
 back into people's homes from the back of a truck.

BEANSY
 We're live in 5, 4, 3...

He fingers off 2 and 1 to Dale who stands with a mic, a
 sports coat and Burt's tie in the parking lot with people
 still streaming outside of the stadium behind him.

The camera's light goes on; Dale is **LIVE** to most of California.

DALE

This is Dale Julin reporting live from Candlestick Park moments after a massive earthquake shook the Bay area to its core. The scene here's a bit chaotic but I'll do my best to get you accurate and up to date information through the rest of the day and into the evening...

BEGIN MONTAGE OF...

ON Patti at home, watches Dale with pride - he's GREAT.

PATTI

There ya go babe, you're doing it.

BACK TO DALE - with cops who direct insane traffic.

COP

Let's go! Jamestown's clear down to Bayshore - go South from there!

DALE

With communications down around the city, how are you getting such detailed information on road availability?

Cop points up - Roy angles the Camera up to a BLIMP.

DALE (CONT'D)

Incredible. The Goodyear Blimp, which was here to cover a game, has become an integral part of Emergency Services...

ON Producer Scott, watches in The Sunshine Show Control Room.

PRODUCER SCOTT

Nice question Dale...

BACK TO DALE - with firefighters as they load their truck.

FIREFIGHTER

Fires are breaking out all over. People need to shut off their home's main lines if they smell gas.

DALE

Where are you heading now?

FIREFIGHTER

Marina. To support the Phoenix.

The truck peels out. Dale turns to camera.

DALE

To clarify, the Phoenix is a fire boat
that pulls water from the Bay.
Amazingly, the same exact boat was
used during the Great Quake of 1906.

ON Gary Gabrielle (in "talent lounge"), Stephanie, Burt, Dr. Katharti and ND crew - all gathered around a TV, watching Dale. They're all impressed...

GARY

How the hell did he know that?

BACK ON DALE - still rocking the mic and kicking ass...

DALE

Fatalities cannot be confirmed, and though just one death is a tragedy, the numbers are remarkably less than might be expected. This reporter has a theory. A Bay Area World Series between the Giants and A's had effectively shut this city down by 3 pm. People had left work early to watch the game. As a result, there were a *fraction* of the cars that normally would've been on the freeways, *freeways that collapsed* when the earthquake struck in the middle of rush hour. So in a strange twist, baseball may have saved thousands of lives today.

IN THE TRUCK - Pete and Beansy share a "did you just hear that baseball/zen shit Dale spun" look. They whoop and high five - they're all doing something great and the know it.

BACK ON DALE - with GIANTS FAN DAD (injured arm, blood can be seen through his shirt) and 6 year old daughter (scared).

DALE (CONT'D)

Triage station's about a quarter mile away, volunteers are giving rides from the Northside Ticket Booth.

DAD

Okay, thanks a lot man...

Dad moves to leave but...

DALE

Hold on. That's bleedin' pretty bad.
You should keep pressure on it.

Dale removes Jay's tie, wraps it around Dad's forearm. Dad grimaces. Dale notices the daughter's fear at seeing this.

DALE (CONT'D)

Hey, I know this is a little scary, but
you and your Daddy are gonna be fine.
(pulls M&Ms from pocket)
Here, something sweet, ok?

The girl takes the candy... Dale rubs her head gently.

ON Patti, wiping a tear from her face.

ON Stephanie, moved. In the hall behind her, Wayne passes, barking orders at a junior producer at his heels...

WAYNE

Book the geologist for two segments
but the FEMA rep goes on last...
(as he spots the gang...)
Gary, I've got some USGS guy that
you're gonna interview so work on
pronouncing all the big rock words -
tectonic, seismograph, shit like that--

GARY

Have you been watching this?

Wayne sees Dale on the TV. His jaw tenses. He's not happy.

INT. KSEE LIVE TRUCK - DAY

The phone in the truck rings.

PETE

Looks like we've got comm again.
(answers phone)
This is Pete.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY WITH Wayne IN HIS OFFICE.

WAYNE

*What the hell is Dale Julin doing on
my air?!*

PETE

Kicking ass?

WAYNE

Where's NBC 'Frisco?

PETE

They're completely down.

WAYNE

Listen up, D-Cups - in times of crisis
people want what's familiar. Jay does
sports in the morning, afternoon and
evening!

(MORE)

WAYNE (CONT'D)
People see him three times a day; they
listen to Dale while they gargle.

PETE
Jay's been drinking--

WAYNE
Make the switch now!

BACK ON DALE...

DALE
I have received the names of make-
shift shelters being set up by the Red
Cross around the city--

The LIGHT goes off on Roy's camera.

DALE (CONT'D)
Shit. We lost power.

Pete climbs off the truck, followed by Jay.

PETE
No we didn't... Wayne wants Jay. Says
people are more comfortable with him.

ROY
Are you shittin' me? Dale was killin' it!

DALE
Wait... what was I doing wrong?

PETE
Nothin' man. You were incredible.

JAY
Sorry, Dale. Ain't my call.

Dale nods, almost in a daze, hands Jay the mic.

ROY
This is crazy, right? We're gonna cover
an earthquake with a drunk guy!

But Pete is busy getting Jay ready, fixing his collar, etc.

PETE
We've been dark for 15 seconds. We
gotta get back up.

ROY
(as he readies camera)
God dammit.

BEANSY
Live in 5, 4, 3...

PETE
This ain't right, Dale.

Dale just stands there, heartbroken - can't believe this is happening. Beansy "fingers off" the last two seconds, then...

JAY
Good afternoon. Jay Tucker here covering the World Series and the Earthquake that disrupted it. Now when the playoffs start up again, this has got to affect the pitching rotation...

Dale just watches - stunned, crushed. Roy approaches...

ROY
You were a ninja tonight. You'll get to be a real reporter -- you just need a big break...

Dale turns to Roy with an "are you fuckin' kidding me?" look.

ROY (CONT'D)
One bigger than a 6.9 earthquake, apparently.

OFF dejected Dale as the OPENING CHORDS of Sesame Street's SUNNY DAY begin...

EXT. DALE'S BACKYARD - DAY

And continues over *Whump-whump-whump* as frustrated Dale does his paddle-ball routine.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - SAME TIME

Sesame Street's on TV. Rosie watches from her Exersaucer, bouncing, digging the music. Patti cleans as Dale enters. He throws the paddle into the drawer.

PATTI
Quit.

DALE
Can't get by on 30K a year, how can we get by on nothing?

PATTI
They don't know what they have in you, that's *their* problem. You'll get another job.

DALE
Move? Again?

PATTI
If we have to.

DALE
Albany. Chatanooga. Columbus.
Flagstaff. Not doing that to you any
more... not doing it to our kids.

PATTI
We can handle it.

Dale sits, looks up at her. He's reached bottom...

DALE
Thought that by this age we wouldn't
have to "*handle*" our lives any more.
Always thought by now I'd... be
something else. Someone else.

Patti sits next to him, looks at him, hurts for him.

PATTI
It's just another city.

DALE
When I was twelve, my dad got word he
was being assigned to Oklahoma. We'd
been settled in California 8 years. He
did the only thing he could do to keep
us home - took a tour in Saigon;
bombing missions at fifty. Said when
he came home, he wanted to come *home*.
This is our *home* now. If my dad can go
to war to give his family some
stability, least I can do is figure
out how to make a living.

PATTI
You have to stop trying to be your
father. You're not him - you'll never
be him.

DALE
Wow. Thank you.

PATTI
You know what I mean - you're great at
just being you.
(kisses him gently)
And you'll see, in a few years, things
will be totally different.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. MINIVAN - LATE MORNING

SUNNY DAY **still** plays on the tape deck. Nothing is different except for the fact that Rosie is now 5 and MARA MAE (3) and DASIY (6 months) have been born. Dale drives. Patti sings...

CHYRON: THREE YEARS LATER (1992)

PATTI

*Can you tell me how to get, how to get
to Grandma & Grampa's street? A week
with Maime and Pop Pop! Hooray!*

DALE

(less than enthusiastic)

Hooray. You know, some people go on an
actual vacation during their vacation.

PATTI

Yes, and those people have double our
money and half our kids.

DALE

That's not true. No one with double
our money can afford a vacation.

EXT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - FRONT GATE - DAY

Dale pulls up, hands AIRMAN BATTLES (20, black) his ID.

DALE

Afternoon.

AIRMAN BATTLES

(as he checks the ID)

It's 11:52.

DALE

Morning.

AIRMAN BATTLES

Any relation to Lt. Colonel Julin?

DALE

He's my father.

GUARD

Tipped a few back with him at the E-
Club. Guy's got a million stories.

DALE

Yep... that's my Dad.

As the Guard hands back the ID and raises the gate...

GUARD

Thought your name was Craig.

DALE

(here we go again)

That's my brother.

GUARD

Didn't know he had two sons.

Dale takes this in a bit -- typical. They drive onto...

EXT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

As they drive, Dale points things out to the kids...

DALE

That's where Daddy played handball,
that's where I went to school.

(as they stop at a light)

...and up at this corner is the Church
where I...

Dale stops talking - A FUNERAL is ending, a casket is carried out. TEDDY KOKINIUS (Dale's age, pronounced CO-KIN-E-US) follows the pallbearers. Dale realizes...

DALE (CONT'D)

I went to school with that guy. Teddy Kokinius.

When the casket is fully outside, we see it's small.

PATTI

Oh my God, it's a child's casket.

ROSIE

What's a casket?

DALE

Nothing. It's nothing, baby.

The light changes and Dale drives off.

EXT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

On a porch glider, VELMA JULIN (70's, sweet as pie) and DON JULIN (70's, career Air Force, Eastwood-esque gruff as hell, teddy bear to his grandkids). Velma spots the minivan.

VELMA

They're here, Don! They're here!

DON

They're late.

Velma hurries to the driveway. The car doors are barely open and she is all over her grandkids.

VELMA

My girls, my girls... we are going to have so much fun together.

Dale gets out of the car, kisses his mother.

DALE

Hi, Mom. Happy Anniversary.

She gives him a big hug/kiss. Then one to Patti.

VELMA

My chickies are back in the coop!
C'mon! I've got everything laid out to make cookies. It's the kind of dough you can eat raw...

Patti and the girls follow Velma inside.

DON

Must've been a helluva lotta traffic.

DALE

Happy Anniversary, Dad.

They shake hands. No hugs. No kisses.

DON

Yeah. Your mother's excited by it...

He grabs the biggest suitcase from the van...

DALE

That's the heavy one...

DON

That's why I'm carryin' it.

Dale watches him walk off - all par for the course.

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Velma plates cookies as Patti chops veggies for the party. Dale fills bowls with chips. A banner reads: **50 YEARS!**

PATTI

So you guys look great, Velma.

VELMA

Well I've been doing aquacize at the Sports Complex and your father-in-law keeps himself busy with Alumni Relations.

PATTI
He's still doing that?

VELMA
He loves it. Helps with reunions, outreach programs - let's him flap his gums about the glory days. He'll be doing it when he's dead and buried.

DALE
Speaking of which... I just saw Teddy Kokinius, from high school, at a child's funeral...

Velma puts down her tray, waves off her son...

VELMA
Please, I can barely talk about it... His little girl... cancer. Base started a fund for the family - raised over ten thousand dollars. You know what your Dad always says: *Family takes care of it's own...*

DALE/VELMA
And Air Force is family.

VELMA
We felt weird having the party today but we didn't really know Teddy and the RSVP's had come in, some from out of town...

DALE
(as he pecks her cheek...) After 50 years with Dad, you've more than earned a party.

VELMA
Stop it. I want a nice week.

Dale puts his hands up, palms out, "I surrender". While in...

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Don holds Mara Mae, shows her the treasures on his mantle.

DON
This is my W.W. Two Victory Medal. This one here's for Meritorious service, this is a Bronze Start - not too shabby.

He picks up a photo of him as young man with a B-29 bomber.

DON (CONT'D)

See this one, girlie? That's me, when I had two good knees and one good prostate. I flew the shit outta that plane in the Tokyo Fire Raids. Can you say *Tokyo Fire Raids*?

MARA MAE

Kokiup Fiuh Wades.

DON

Good girl. We gave 'em a little "What For" but that's what you get when you team up with Hitler--

Dale swoops in, snatches up Mara Mae.

DALE

Ok, that's enough history for today.

DON

(incredulous)

She's old enough to hear about Hitler.

DALE

She's three.

DON

General LeMay said: *Children are--*

DALE

(by rote, to Mara Mae)

--Ah, the great General Curtis LeMay. Rose from an ROTC cadet in 1924 to retire a full General in 1965. In 1947 became Commander of USAF Europe, in '48 oversaw the Berlin Airlift and in '51 was the youngest four star general in modern history.

MARA MAE

You handsome, Dadda.

DON

Surprised you remember.

DALE

How can I forget your hero?

DON

Grown men don't have heroes. I just respect the hell out of the man.

(very subtle "unlike you")

He did great things with his life.

Awkward beat, then the front door opens, guests enter.

DALE
 (thank God)
 Oh, hey, the guests are here...

Dale moves to great them. OFF Don, watching Dale walk off.

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - LATER

Anniversary party - dozen or so friends/family. Velma holds court as Don pours some drinks.

VELMA
 ...And then my father looks him right in the eyes; "You're askin' for Velma's hand; problem is, the rest of her's attached to it and I don't think you're able to provide for a whole person."

(off everyone's laugh)
 My father put poor Bonnie through the ringer.

As Don finishes up the drinks, without looking up...

DON
 (thrown away)
 Never grudged your Dad. He just didn't want to let you go - who would?

The room is affected by the sweetness of the moment. A few of the women let out an "Awww". Velma hugs Don, kisses him.

DON (CONT'D)
 Alright, it's not a swingers party...
 Let's talk about something other than us. Craig, how's the season going?

CRAIG (35, handsome), Dale's brother perks up.

CRAIG
 Gangbusters. Solid season so far.

DON
 He's being modest. They're in first place, QB's All-County and they're on their way to State. Game'll be televised so y'all better watch.

Patti sees how Don brags about Craig, comes to Dale's aid...

PATTI
 Speaking of television, Dale's morning show is going gangbusters too.
 (talking out of her ass)
 Number one... in the demo...

DON
 Demo?

Dale looks at Patti wide-eyed, shakes his head, but it's too late.

PATTI
The... morning category demo...
viewers 18... to 75...

She turns, pretends to eat a finger sandwich.

CRAIG
I saw you, bro! Few months back - when
they made you enroll in clown college!

Dale pales - dear God, of all the stories to bring up...

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Big red nose, giant wig-- DALE
--don't really remember that
one--

CRAIG (CONT'D)
--Floppy shoes-- DALE
--May've been a different
reporter--

Don looks mortified. But not as mortified as Dale...

CRAIG (CONT'D)
(oblivious, laughing)
No, no. It was you. And the instructor
hit you with a pie, remember?

Everyone laughs, unaware (except Patti and Don) of Dale's
discomfort.

AIR FORCE BUDDY
(hysterical)
And after you got cleaned up... he hit
you again - oh... my side hurts...

DON
(ok, let's end this...)
--Ok, let's let Velma open those
presents. See what I get in return for
feedin' all of you tonight.

Don hands her a box and the topic has shifted. Dale and Don
share a quick look - Dale knows his dad was embarrassed.

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - KITCHEN - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Alone, Dale stands, stares at the TV, can't believe what he's
seeing. On *The Sunshine Show* a *Host Puppet* is in his place.
As Don enters and walks past frame behind Dale...

DON
Aren't you a little old for Sesame
Street?

Dale doesn't respond - just stares at the TV.

HOST PUPPET

*Don't go away - we'll be right back
with more Sunshine Show after these
messages.*

Don leans back into RIGHT FRAME - a beat, then...

DON

They replaced you with a puppet?

DALE

It's a gimmick. He's just there while
I'm on vacation... doing my job...

DON

Yeah, well, we're outta milk and I
promised Rosie pancakes. Goin' to the
BX..

(takes in his son, unsure)
Wanna come?

Dale just turns and follows his Dad out the door.

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE THE BX - DAY

Dale/Don exit Don's truck. Dale notices construction taking place between two existing buildings.

DALE

What's going up?

DON

New communications center.

DALE

Why squeeze it between those
buildings? They have all that
untouched acreage on the South 40.

DON

(are you dizzy?)
That's where the plane went down.

DALE

Plane went down by the service road.
They've had all those acres fenced off for
decades; can't they spare some of it?

DON

You're a city planner now? Thought you
were a TV host.

DALE

Reporter.

DON
Right. Reporter. Like the puppet.

Don walks off. Dale moves to follow but spots Teddy crossing the lot to enter the E-Club. Dale watches, feels for the guy.

DON (CONT'D)
You coming or not?

DALE
You go ahead. I'll meet up at home.

And Dale moves off. Don watches him go; his son confuses him.

INT. E-CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Dale enters. Dark. Dank. Like any bar in the early morning.

BARTENDER
Sorry. Don't open until noon.

Dale sees Teddy alone in a back booth with a scotch.

DALE
What about him?

BARTENDER
He's got a reason to drink at 7.

DALE
C'mon. I went to school with him...
(Bartender doesn't blink)
I'm Lt. Col. Julin's son.

BARTENDER
The football coach?

Beat, then...

DALE
Yes.

Bartender motions "go ahead". Dale approaches delicately...

DALE (CONT'D)
Teddy?

Teddy looks up, eyes raw from painful days. He says nothing.

DALE (CONT'D)
I... um... I'm Dale Julin. We went to school together - high school...

TEDDY
Don't remember you.

DALE

Yeah. Well. I, um, I heard what happened -- just wanted to say I'm sorry. I have kids of my own and...

Teddy finishes his scotch, put the glass down, no eye contact, clearly marking the end of their talk. Awkward beat, then Dale just walks to the Bartender, hands him money.

DALE (CONT'D)

For his next round.

TEDDY

(from the back of the bar)

Buy two.

Dale peels off more bills for Bartender. He walks off, heading toward camera/the exit when...

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Drink 'em with me.

Dale stops walking. TIME CUT TO:

INT. E-CLUB - LATER

Table is covered with a few stacked glasses and a 1/4 full bottle. They've had a few, but aren't sloppy. Teddy talks to Dale, but it's almost as if he's softly talking to himself.

TEDDY

...Been a mechanic for 20 years. I can fix *anything*. I understand if something's broke, you fit a joint, you weld a gap - you *fix it*... But there was no fixing what Katie had. You don't *fix* cancer. One day it's not there... then it's there... and then *she's* not there. Her *room's* there, her toys, clothes, Lego castle we were building together... but your girl's gone. Half hoping if I keep her room just the way she left it... *she'll* come back.

He looks down, sips his drink. Dale watches...

DALE

What exactly did she have?

TEDDY

(hates the words)

Acinic cell carcinoma. Better chance of seeing Bigfoot riding the Loch Ness Monster than getting that...

DALE
It's rare?

TEDDY
Rarer than rocking horse shit. So 4 years ago, when my niece got it...

DALE
...Your niece had it too?

TEDDY
Oh yeah - welcome to Teddy Kokinius' World of Shit. My niece Janey... beautiful girl - played the cello - lived 3 houses down from us on the base. When she got it, I just thought we were unlucky. Now, just think we're cursed.

He shifts his weight, knocks a glass over, had a few too many.

DALE
Maybe you should rest. You look tired.

Teddy nods, slowly gets up, walks off, softly mumbling...

TEDDY
You go home too, Dale. Go home to your daughters.

OFF Dale - confused, concerned... intrigued.

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Don glues a model Bomber at the table. Velma and Patti play gin. Dale's on the phone with Dr. Katharti, takes notes.
INTERCUT AS NECESSARY WITH DR. KATHARTI

DR. KATHARTI (INTO PHONE)
There could be genetic predispositions, environmental factors; very hard to say with certainty. But 2 cases like that - it's an anomaly.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
Ok. Thanks doc, really appreciate it.

DR. KATHARTI (INTO PHONE)
No problem... By the way, when are you returning?

DALE (INTO PHONE)
I'll be back next week.

DR. KATHARTI (INTO PHONE)
 Already? We were really enjoying the
 puppet. He's quite funny and...
 (click)
 Hello? Dale?

But Dale hung up when he heard "puppet". BACK IN KITCHEN:

DALE
 (reading from his notes)
 So acinic cell carcinoma makes up 3/10
 of 1% of all cancer in the United
 States, according to Dr. Katharti.

DON
 (snort incredulity)
 The guy who tells you how to get rid
 of warts with Witch Hazel?

PATTI
 (to Dale, sotto)
 At least he's watching.

OFF Dale, looking at his notes. He underlines 3/10 of 1%.

EXT. DALE'S PARENTS' DRIVEWAY - NEXT DAY

Velma and Patti pack up the kids, blanket, picnic basket.

VELMA
 Did you pack Dale's Fig Newtons?

PATTI
 He's not coming.

VELMA
 But he loves the lake.

PATTI
 Said he had something to take care of.

EXT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - FUEL FARM - LATER SAME DAY

10,000 gallon bladders of JET FUEL dirt-bermed at the far end
 of a runway field. AIRMAN MITCH KUGLER (21, Good 'Ole
 Southern boy, goofy) fills a vile with fuel. Dale's with him.

MITCH
 Shit, jet fuel's loaded with heptane,
 cyclohexane, iso-octane, benzene,
 pinch of cinnamon and a *partridge in a
 pear tree* - you name it, we got it...
 Hell, why you wanna do a story on Bulk
 Fuel anyhow? Gotta be the most boring
 company in the Force.

DALE

All anyone ever talks about are the pilots. But without you guys, they'd never get off the ground, right?

Mitch takes Dale in - Dale is so completely unassuming and clueless that he is beyond suspicion. Mitch snorts a laugh...

MITCH

Now don't you let your Daddy here ya talkin' like that, Julin Junior.

As Mitch drops a Thermometer into the vile, notes the temperature, jots it down in a chart...

DALE

What would happen if any of that stuff you mentioned got into the soil?

MITCH

(dead serious)

Oh, we'd all die.

(breaks into laughter)

Shit man, that ain't ever happened, ain't ever gonna happen. Under these bladders, we got 1 ton anti-corrosive storage tanks with leak detection systems so hot they know when I don't shake good at the urinal.

DALE

Never so much as a drop in the dirt?

MITCH

Nope. Test it every day.

Dale takes this in - a dead-end. He shakes hands with Mitch.

DALE

Alright, appreciate your time, Mitch.

MITCH

Be good, Craig.

Dale doesn't even bother to correct him. He just walks off.

INT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - SCHOOL CLASSROOM - LATER

MRS. PARSONS (78, kind face) erases the BLACKBOARD.

MRS. PARSONS

It's just wonderful that one of our own alumni would want to do a story on the military base education system.

(turns, faces the class)

You say I had you for 4th Grade?

REVEAL: Dale sits at a kid's desk in an empty class.

DALE

Yup. Right here. For a whole year.

MRS. PARSONS

I normally remember all of my students. Maybe my age is finally catching up to me.

DALE

It's not your age.

Mrs. Parsons, lively for a 78 year old, sits near Dale.

MRS. PARSONS

So where do we start?

DALE

How 'bout with you? How long have you been here now, Mrs. Parsons?

MRS. PARSONS

Over sixty years. Principal for the past twenty, but always teach one course a semester, just to stay in fighting shape.

DALE

The students must mean a lot to you.

MRS. PARSONS

They mean the world.

DALE

Must've been hard for you recently, when Katie Kokinius passed away.

Mrs. Parsons' twinkle fades a bit - she's affected by this.

MRS. PARSONS

A military base is prepared for death - it's part of the job. Mothers and fathers know this when they sign on the line. But when it's a child...

She fades off, her eyes moisten a bit. Dale treads lightly.

DALE

Have you lost many students during your tenure?

MRS. PARSONS

Sadly... Katie was not the first.
(thinking back)

In the 60's a young boy had a moped accident, I remember that.

(MORE)

MRS. PARSONS (CONT'D)
There was a drowning once, a high
school student had a brain tumor the
year of my sabbatical, an honor roll
student had bladder cancer, a leukemia
case...

Dale's stopped taking notes, can't believe what he's hearing.

DALE
Didn't anyone ever find this unusual?
All these cancer cases.

MRS. PARSONS
Not that I know of. They were spread out
over a half-century - and it seems
cancer's everywhere nowadays. They say
we'll all get it if we live long enough.

DALE
But these kids *didn't* live long enough.

MRS. PARSONS
No... they surely *didn't*.

Dale can see how affected Parsons is - he switches gears.

DALE
You've got to be thinking retirement
soon, no? Spend time spoiling your
grandkids.

MRS. PARSONS
(reflects, bit painful)
Never had children of my own. We
wanted them - but there were many
miscarriages and our last try at it -
well... the baby I gave birth to, poor
dear was more flesh than child.
Doctors don't know why.

Dale takes this information in as Mrs. Parsons smiles.

MRS. PARSONS (CONT'D)
I guess God's plan was for the school
children to be my kids...

Dale leans in, puts his hand on Mrs. Parsons'...

DALE
And aren't they lucky for that.

INT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - HOSPITAL - NEXT DAY

YOUNG DOCTOR moves briskly down the hall, patients' charts in
hand, marking them with a pen, Dale on his heels...

YOUNG DOCTOR
And then after my residency, I
enlisted in the Air Force.

DALE
And what caused you to do that?

YOUNG DOCTOR
My Dad served. I mean, what kind of
man would I be if I didn't, right?

DALE
Right... so anyway, I really want my
piece to focus on the great medical
care our men and women in the Force
receive. Can you tell me the kind of
things you see here on the base --
(plays it real casual)
You know, from the mundane to the
rare. Maybe things that pop up over
the years you wouldn't normally
expect.

A passing NURSE hands the doc a chart. As he reads it...

YOUNG DOCTOR
Only been here 6 months - 'nother 6
and I'm in Germany. We get rotated
like tires so can't really speak to
any interesting history--
(perks up, re: chart)
But I got an Airman here who lost 3
toes in a lawn mower. That's kind of
crazy, right? Wanna talk to him?

OFF Dale - not really the kind of info he was looking for.

EXT. BASE PARK - LATER

Dale sits, eats a sandwich. Contemplative. A bird hops near
his feet. He feeds it sandwich crumbs, talks to it...

DALE
Even trade - food for information. Is
something going on around here?

Dale accidentally drops his note pad, scaring the bird which
flies off, landing on a PLAQUE on a fence. Something *clicks*
with Dale. He approaches the plaque, reads it aloud.

DALE (CONT'D)
*These South 40 Acres are dedicated to
the memory of Brigadier Robert F.*
(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)
Travis and his crew who perished in the August 5, 1950 crash of a B-29 on this very site as well as those who lost their lives on the ground. -- The United States Air Force - One Over All.

ON Dale, wheels spinning, an idea forming as we PRE-LAP...

VELMA (PRELAP)
 Earth to Dale. Come in Dale...

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Family dinner. Dale stares into space as Velma dishes food.

VELMA
 Dale, honey. I'm talking to you.

DALE
 Huh... I'm sorry. What?

VELMA
 Do you want sweet potatoes?

Dale nods. As Velma scoops some onto her son's plate...

VELMA (CONT'D)
 So where were you all day today?

DALE
 Walking the base. Thinking about doing a piece on the crash back in '50. Not enough people know about it.

DON
 Everyone knows about it - they got a plaque the size of your head.

DALE
 I mean *off* the base. People that don't live here should still know what happened back then.

PATTI
 What happened back then?
 (off Don's disapproving look)
I didn't grow up here.

DON
 Korean War's what happened. We were sending a bomber to drop some hurt on Kim Il-Sung but it crashed on takeoff. 13 men on board were killed, 6 on the ground from the fire. 60 injured bad.

PATTI
 Sixty? How big was the fire?

DON

Bigger than a bread box. Cluster bomb
 it was carryin' blew 15 minutes later.
 Packed a wallop. Blaze took out the
 trailer park... lucky didn't lose the
 whole base.

Dale thinks about it, then, with forced casualness...

DALE

Sure it was only a cluster bomb?

DON

Only a cluster bomb? That's 500 pounds
 of hold onto your ass.

DALE

Just sayin' -- we had deadlier weapons
 back then--

DON

--Boy, I've dropped more cluster bombs
 than you've dropped turds. Trust me,
 they get the job done. Hell, the '50
 crash shattered windows 10 miles away.
 Ground damage so bad there were rumors
 of several bombs on board. Some say
 their weight's what took her down.

Don continues eating. Dale stands, wheels spinning...

DALE

Thanks, mom. I'm full.

...and hurries into the living room where he fills his arms
 with several of Don's MILITARY BOOKS from the shelves. He
 hurries past them, drops a book, spills other books
 retrieving it, collects them up, hurries into the spare room.

Don watches this, shakes his head, turns back to his food.

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - SPARE BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Patti exits the bathroom, sexy in sweats and a tank top.
 Dale, in bed, pours through a 1/2 dozen military history
 books, jotting down notes.

PATTI

Hey bookworm... I said "Hey Bookworm".

DALE

(nose in book)

Dad was right.

PATTI

There's something I've never heard you
 say before.

DALE

And he was wrong.

PATTI

Ah, back to normal.

DALE

(as he shows her the book)
See. Right here. This section on
military accidents - there's only half
a page on the '50 crash - it says
windows shattered "*ten miles from the
impact site*". Like Dad said.

PATTI

If your father knows anything, it's
the history of this base.

DALE

But a conventional bomb - the kind my
Dad says was on that plane - the U.S.
had been testing them since the 30's
out in Nevada. Look, here...

(points to another book)

...and the testing facility was "*Two and
a half miles down a dirt, desert road to
allow scientists easy access to the
munition range*". So the scientists set
up their facilities less than 10 miles
from where conventional bombs were being
set off. They wouldn't do that if the
bombs would shatter their windows every
time they conducted a test. So...

He looks at Patti expectantly, waiting for her to catch on.

PATTI

So what you maniac?

DALE

So maybe the plane that went down here
wasn't carrying a "conventional" bomb.

PATTI

One - we've talked about air quotes.
And Two - then what was the plane
carrying?

Dale looks at her knowingly, raises his eyebrows, whispers:

DALE

Ask Japan.

PATTI

An atomic bomb?

DALE

It was a huge explosion. That's not in dispute. And people have gotten sick on this base -

PATTI

From radiation fallout?

DALE

I'm throwing out the possibility.

PATTI

How about this possibility? If an *atomic bomb* went off in the middle of California, someone would've noticed.

A defeated beat, then...

DALE

Presumably.

Patti climbs onto the bed, on her knees she faces Dale, presses her forehead to his, kisses him, lookin' for love.

PATTI

You're super-cute when you get all Walter-Cronkitey, you know that?

Dale kisses back, getting into it now - forget researching! As they kiss, more passionately, both a little breathless...

DALE

You wanna hear it?

PATTI

Damn right I do.

DALE

(Cronkite impersonation)
And that's the way it is.

PATTI

Take me Wally.

They tumble into the pillows. As they kiss...

DALE

We have to be quiet.

PATTI

It's okay. The beasts are asleep.

DALE

Ok, but what about our daughters?

Patti laughs. They rev up, she pulls on his shirt. But then:

PATTI
What's wrong?

DALE
It's just, even if there were multiple
conventional bombs in the plane --

PATTI
-- You gotta be kidding me... DALE
-- they'd all have to go off
at the exact same time to
create the force to damage
buildings that far away.

PATTI
I'm not gettin' any tonight, am I?

But Dale's already up, energized, gathering his books/notes.

DALE
(thinking aloud)
And they don't just rotate the doctors
on the bases; patients and their
records are constantly on the move
too, so no sickness patterns were
detected.

Patti, dumbstruck, grabs the remote, turns on the TV.

DALE (CONT'D)
(leans in, kisses her)
I'm sorry. But I might have something
here.

PATTI
(skeptical)
Another story?

DALE
Maybe. Not sure. Just wanna jot down a
few things before I forget them. But I
promise. When we get back home
tomorrow, no more bombs...
(trying to be sexy)
...except the giant Love Bomb I'm
gonna drop... and it's gonna
explode... all over you...
(off Patti's eeew face)
Kind of knew it was creepy as I was
saying it... Ok.

And he's out the door with his books.

EXT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

The minivan, full of luggage and the Julin family, drives off. Velma and Don watch them go. Velma waves.

EXT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

Dale pulls over, leaves the minivan running...

PATTI
What are you doing?

DALE
Just gotta run into the library for a second -- I'll be right back --

Dale hustles to the steps - slows as he sees Teddy walking several yards away. Teddy's broken, lost in pain. Dale takes him in a beat, then sprints up the steps into...

INT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Front Desk. Dale approaches the LIBRARIAN (50's, female).

DALE
Hi. I'm wondering if you can direct me to whatever information you might have on the 1950 crash here on the base.

LIBRARIAN
Certainly. I can get that for you myself. I'll be right back.

DALE
Wow. Thanks.

Librarian moves off. Dale's eyes land on a statue of General Travis in the middle of the library - he's handsome, stoic, brave. The plaque reads GENERAL ROBERT F. TRAVIS - 1904-1950.

DALE (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Forty-six years old.

LIBRARIAN (O.S.)
Here you go.

Dale turns to find Librarian handing him... a pamphlet.

DALE
What's this?

LIBRARIAN
Our data on the 1950 crash.

Dale stares at the thin pamphlet, then reads it aloud...

DALE

August 5, 1950. A B-29 carrying a weapon, but no capsule, experienced two runaway propellers and landing gear retraction difficulties on takeoff from Fairfield/Suisun AFB (Now Travis). The aircraft attempted an emergency landing and crashed and burned. The fire was fought for 12-15 minutes before the weapon's high explosive material detonated. 19 crew members and rescue personnel were killed in the crash and/or resulting detonations, including General Travis.

(to Librarian)

This is all you have?

LIBRARIAN

(totally clueless)

You can keep it.

INT. WAYNE'S OFFICE - DAY

TIGHT ON the pamphlet being held by an unimpressed Wayne.

WAYNE

It's a pamphlet.

DALE

Exactly! That crash was the defining moment in the base's history. Travis was re-named after the general who died in the accident for God's sake! But one little pamphlet is all the Air Force has ever issued on the subject? I'm telling you, Wayne, they're covering something up.

WAYNE

(deadpan)

And what would that be?

DALE

I think... maybe... a nuclear bomb.

WAYNE

Nuclear, you say?

DALE

Well, atomic with nuclear components-- it's semantics. Thing is, a nuclear bomb's the kind of thing you notice...

WAYNE

Usually.

DALE

But whatever it was it sure as hell
was stronger than a conventional bomb.

WAYNE

You know, Dale, this couldn't have
come at a better time. Just this
morning, I was reading viewer mail,
and they all said the same thing:
*Where are all the Korean War stories?
We want to hear more about Korea. Why
hasn't there been more in the news
lately about the Korean War?*

Dale stares back, doesn't appreciate Wayne's tone.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Can you tell I'm being sarcastic?

DALE

I can tell you're being a dick.

WAYNE

Wanna know how Ed McMahon's able to
sit on Carson's couch night after
night without blowin' his brains out?
Because he's accepted his lot in life.
Learn from Ed.

(hands back pamphlet)

Now there's a ten year old Spelling
Bee champ waiting for you and he isn't
Indian or Asian. Now *that's* news. So
get to work Brokaw.

Beat, then Dale turns and walks out, dejected...

DALE (PRELAP)

Good morning Fresno! It's 6:18 and 64
degrees...

INT. NEWS SHOW SET - MOMENTS LATER

Dale sits next to a ten year old, condescending NERD.

DALE

...and I'm sitting next to a young man
who's spelling prowess is phenomenal.
P-H-E-N-O-M-E-N-O-L. *Phenomenal.*

NERD

You spelled it wrong.

DALE

What was that?

NERD

It's A-L. You spelled it O-L. You spelled a level two word wrong.

DALE

(with a smile)

Well, we're not all spelling bee champs.

NERD

My sister can spell Phenomenal and she's six.

DALE

(trying to take high road)

Good for her. It's not an easy word.

NERD

Yes it is.

DALE

(losing composure)

No it isn't.

NERD

Is if you're smart.

DALE

How 'bout you K-I-S-S my A-S-S-H-O...

CONTROL ROOM - Producer Scott LUNGES for a panic button; an "Experiencing Technical Difficulties" card appears on the monitor.

STUDIO - Everyone, including Nerd, stares at Dale, who has snapped. OFF Dale.

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - LATER

Dale packs his stuff into a box. Wayne enters.

WAYNE

You're not fired, stupid.

DALE

I told a ten year old boy to Kiss My Asshole on television.

WAYNE

15 second delay button. No one saw shit. At worst it looked like you asked him to kiss you. Now sit down.

Dale does, surprised by this turn of events. Beat, then...

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Do you know why you're an idiot?

DALE

Not sure I agree with the premise of
your question--

WAYNE

--You're an idiot because you make
things hard on yourself. This is an
easy gig. Give the time and
temperature, read the prompter, keep
your hair nice, go home. But you
actually give a damn... and that's
more than I can say for most of the
meat-puppets... So... the affiliate's
starting a weekend afternoon news
program. It's yours.

DALE

To anchor?

WAYNE

More of a *correspondent*. It's a
magazine show - recap of the weeks
sexiest stories.

DALE

(enthusiasm gone)

So it's fluff.

WAYNE

It's a shot.

DALE

It's a summary of days-old
sensationalistic news for folks who
forgot to pick up this week's PEOPLE.

WAYNE

It's more money and more air time. Two
things you need. Upstairs gave me a
list with 15 Mexicans on it but I'm
offering it to you, muchacho. Do it or
don't. But let me know by tomorrow.

Wayne exits. OFF Dale, considering the opportunity...

INT. BALLET RECITAL - EVENING

Dale and Patti (holding Mara Mae and Daisy) watch Rosie dance
with other 4 year olds. They're all cute, but they all suck.

PATTI

(sotto)

Well, it's more money.

DALE

(sotto)

But it's a step back, not forward.

INT. MINIVAN - LATER

Drive home. Kids asleep in backseat, so they still whisper...

DALE

Mortgage doesn't pay itself. We really need the money.

PATTI

But it's a step back, not forward.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - ROSIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They tuck in a passed-out Rosie. Dale and Patti whisper across to each other, from opposite sides of the bed.

PATTI

Bottom line -- what do you want?

Beat. Dale looks up at her, they lock eyes...

DALE

I wanna find out what happened on that base... I want to be a reporter.

PATTI

(smiles, "go for it")

There's your answer.

EXT. SHITTY APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Dale knocks on a door. Roy answers.

DALE

Hey Roy. What are you doing?

Roy exhales a cloud of marijuana smoke into Dale's face.

ROY

Hangin' out with Buds McKenzie.

REVEAL Roy holds a SPUDZ MCKENZIE (80's Bud Lite spokesdog) statue, fitted with a BONG TUBE sticking out of his head.

DALE

Hate to interrupt your meeting, but wanted to see if you'd wanna help chase a story. Doesn't have Wayne's support so it'll be on the QT; long hours, could lose our jobs and we'll be going against the U.S. Government so we might piss off some powerful people... and I can't pay you.

Roy just stares back, doesn't respond. Dale keeps pitching...

DALE (CONT'D)
But meals on me. Whatever you want.
Sandwiches, burgers, burritos...

Beat... Roy raises an eyebrow, stoner-intrigued.

ROY
What kind of burritos?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S VAN - DAY

Roy and Dale EAT BURRITOS as Roy drives. With mouths full...

DALE
So the way the Air Force seems to be
covering up details of this crash, I
kinda thought it best not to ask
permission to do a piece on it.

ROY
How the hell we gettin' on the base?

DALE
Mom got us a drive-on. Told her I'm
making a surprise video for my Dad's
75th birthday. About him, his time at
Travis...

ROY
What if your Dad sees you on the base?

DALE
Thinks I'm doing a history segment for
the show.

ROY
We're doing history segments on the
show now?

DALE
(jesus)
No. That's what I'm telling my Dad
because he can't know about this
surprise birthday video.

ROY
(confused)
Ok... but when will we have time for
the stuff about the plane crash.

At wit's end, Dale just stares ahead. CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - FRONT GATE - MOMENTS LATER

DALE
Hey, Airman Battles.

AIRMAN BATTLES
ID please.

DALE
I was just here. Last week?... Don
Julin's other son?

AIRMAN BATTLES
ID please.

Par for the course. Dale digs into his wallet...

INT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - RECORDS ROOM - LATER

A MAZE of files - 10' high, 30' long. MAYBELLE (late 60's, stocky) leads Dale and Roy (with camera) through the aisles.

MAYBELLE
A birthday video is such a sweet
gesture. For my 60th, my son got me a
chia-pet. Not even the puppy. Got me a
fuckin' chia-ram.

They stop at one of the thousands of drawers. Maybelle opens it.

MAYBELLE (CONT'D)
(as she searches)
Sorted by year, then alphabetically.
Here ya go, Donald Julin - 1961. First
year on the base. Sorry I can't let
you look in it - confidential and all.

DALE
Just need a shot of the file.

Roy fires up the camera. Dale holds up the file.

ROY
And... *action*.

DALE (TOWARD CAMERA)
I have in my hand the preliminary file
of Lieutenant Donald Julin dated 1961.
Three decades ago a man who had served
his country proudly during World War
II embarked on another phase of his
career here at Travis Air Force Base,
where he not only became an integral
part of the community, but also raised
a family with his loving wife Velma.

(MORE)

DALE (TOWARD CAMERA) (CONT'D)
The file might be thin Dad, but that's
because it's only full of intake
forms. But if it were full of
memories... then you'd need one of
those really... big files... with the
rubberbands... that wrap around...

ROY
And... cut.

MAYBELLE
That was just lovely.

DALE
Thank you. We'd love to get some B-
Roll now if that's alright.
Establishing shots of the room - get
the *scope*. Real boring stuff. Won't
even know we're here.

MAYBELLE
Guess that's ok. But I'm closing shop
in 30 minutes.

DALE
More than enough time, Maybelle.

She walks off. As soon as she's gone, Dale spins to Roy...

DALE (CONT'D)
Turn the camera on.

Dale races down the aisle, scanning the file cabinets. Roy's
on his heels, readying the camera as he goes...

ROY
What are we doing?

DALE
Looking for the files from 1950.

ROY
Why?

DALE
'Cause I don't even know who the hell
was here when the crash happened.
It'll give me a place to start. *Here!*
(finds the right cabinet)
Once I open this drawer, we're
breaking the law. Are you cool with
that?

ROY
I have an ounce of weed in my
underwear right now.

Dale nods. Opens the drawer, full of personnel files. As Dale pulls them out, opens them, Roy films.

ROY (CONT'D)

You're turning the pages too fast. I need at least 20 seconds a page if you're gonna have time to write down all this info on playback.

DALE

No time. Just film and I'll freeze the image in editing and print it.

ROY

Wayne catches you, you're fired.

DALE

Wayne won't be there when I'm using it.

BEGIN: RUNNER OF DALE BUSTING HIS ASS ON THIS PROJECT...

Dale in Edit Bay - clock reads 3:15 A.M. He freezes film images of the files, hits print; the printer spits out paper. The name reads TUGGLE.

Dale in the O-Club - he and Roy interview old timer TUGGLE.

TUGGLE (INTO ROY'S CAMERA)

Happy Birthday, Don, ya old fart!

(to Dale)

So how's football season going?

DALE

...Gangbusters... but let's focus on the video. So you were stationed at Travis before my Dad, correct?

TUGGLE

Oh yeah. Since '48.

DALE

(playing it coy)

Man, so you were here when the plane crashed. What was that like?

POV OF ROY'S CAMERA as Toggle recalls the crash. We'll see that Dale is covertly putting together great footage.

TUGGLE

Explosion knocked me outta bed. I ran down - whole base was on fire. Looked like the end of the world...

OFF Dale, getting his story...

Back in Edit Bay - A different night. Clock: 4:07 AM. Tired Dale prints more images. Paper pours into the printer tray.

In Front of Air & Space Museum on Base - Dale stands in front of a B-29 display plane. Roy has camera ready. Dale looks around, coast is clear...

DALE

This is a B-29 warplane, identical to the one that crashed upon take off on August 5, 1950 --

Air Force personnel exit the museum; Dale deftly shifts gears.

DALE (CONT'D)

And on your birthday Dad, I like to think you're like this other Air Force relic beside me - weathered, but still standing and tough as ever...

Dale pats the plane as the personnel pass. That was close.

Dale's dining room table - covered in papers, late at night, Dale works away, reading/highlighting the records. Patti (in PJ's) hands him a coffee, kisses him good-night. TIGHT ON Dale pulling more files from a box from the floor. When he places them on the table it's now MORNING - the kids eat breakfast near him, Patti hands him another cup of coffee and he keeps at it... no rest for the weary...

Outside a Diner - Exhausted Dale in a CHEAP EATS segment. MID-CLOSE on Dale with a super-long hot dog in a bun in one hand.

DALE (CONT'D)

Today we'll visit The Hot Dog Hut, where you can get a weiner dog...

PULL BACK to REVEAL: A dachshund in Dale's his other hand.

DALE (CONT'D)

...as big as a weiner dog.

ROY

Cut. You got a Samsonite set under your eyes, Chief. You look like a basset hound holding a dachsund.

As the MAKE-UP LADY fusses with the bags under Dale's eyes...

MAKE-UP LADY

Jesus, hun, you gettin' your 8 hours?

Dale would laugh at the question except he's too damn tired.

Dale's House - Late night. Dale creeps in, looks at his sleeping girls. Halloween costumes/candy on the floor. Missed it all. Barely sees them anymore, misses the hell out of 'em.

Travis AFB - Administrative Offices - Dale pitches CLERK - 30, black, female, bureaucrat - doesn't wanna be bothered.

IN-TAKE OFFICER

Tie's always a nice gift. Photo of the
grandkids. That sorta thing.

DALE

Please. I just need the PR officer on
film a minute or two; he could talk
about some of the history of the base
and I could compare it to what my Dad
was doing in the air force during that
period. Time-line kind of thing.

IN-TAKE OFFICER

Coffee Mug - *World's Best Dad.*

DALE

C'mon. I can't tell the story of Lt.
Colonel Julin without telling the
story of the base.

IN-TAKE OFFICER

Don Julin's your father?

(considers this a beat...)

I'll see what I can do. But I'd think
about a golf shirt.

And Dale is out of there - taking "almost yes" for an answer.

Dale's Parents House - Thanksgiving. Everyone at the table
but Dale. As Don cuts the turkey...

DON

Who misses Thanksgiving dinner?

VELMA

You missed a few in your day, dear.

DON

I was fighting communists. Not doing a
story on the world's biggest bean bag
collection...

PATTI

Beanie baby.

DON

(*that's even worse*)
Jesus Christ.

Int./Ext. Roy's Van - NIGHT. Pass a sign: **FRESNO - 120 MILES.**
In the van: Roy sleeps, Dale at the wheel.

Int./Ext. Roy's Van - DAY. Pass a sign: **TRAVIS AFB/FAIRFIELD - 45 miles.** In the van: Dale sleeps, Roy at the wheel.

Int./Ext. Roy's Van - NIGHT. Pass a sign: **FRESNO - 60 miles.**
In the van: Roy sleeps, Dale at the wheel - *also asleep.*

The van drifts from frame - *Screech!* - then jerks back into frame. They both bolt awake, Roy bracing himself, terrified.

DALE
(covering, groggy)
It's cool... possum.

Dale in Edit Bay - Clock: 5:13 AM. Dale's a zombie. He prints away. The printer OVERFLOWS. Roy enters, also exhausted.

ROY
Time for work, bro.

Dale stands, in a trance, collects his papers, walks out.

END OF RUNNER.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Patti cooks. Daisy flings food from her seat; Rosie colors at the table. Mara Mae, on the floor, bangs a pot with a spoon.

MARA MAE
Din-ner! Din-ner! Din-ner!

PATTI
Rosie- on the paper, not on the table.

Her sanity hanging by a thread, she snatches away Mara Mae's pot. Beat, then Mara Mae bangs the spoon on the floor...

ROSIE
Mom-my! Mom-my! Mom-my!

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

Dale, frazzled, on phone, finger in ear, trying to do an interview over the noise. He flips through reams of papers...

DALE (INTO PHONE)
Dr. Lubert, you said in... *Nuclear History: From Fat Boy to Armageddon...*
that higher than usual leukemia cases were found among troops at the Nevada "Smokey" Nuclear Test site in the '70s.

INTERCUT WITH DR. LUBERT, PROFESSOR, IN COLLEGE CAMPUS OFFICE

DR. LUBERT (INTO PHONE)
Yes, but those were *nuclear* weapons that were detonated. With a very high radiation fallout.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
 But what if that's what we're dealing
 with at Travis?

DR. LUBERT (INTO PHONE)
 So your theory is a nuclear weapon was
 detonated on U.S. soil by our own
 military? If that happened, I think
 I'd know about it.

As Dale carefully adjusts an autographed baseball in his
 dining hutch full of his prized S.F. Giants memorabilia.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
 What about... like... a *baby nuke*?

DR. LUBERT (INTO PHONE)
 The idea of small amounts of nuclear
 material detonated in a briefcase or
 knapsack has been floated by doomsday
 prognosticators for a while now. They
 call it a *dirty bomb* --

DALE (INTO PHONE)
 -- so it's possible --

DR. LUBERT (INTO PHONE)
 -- By a terrorist maybe. But you're
 talking about the US Air Force in
 1950. We'd already won a war dropping
 the big one. Why pack a plane with a
 pea shooter when you've got Bazookas?

A **SHATTER** from the kitchen grabs Dale's attention.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
 Dr. Lubert - I, uh, need to go. Can I
 call you again next week? Thanks.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Patti kneels, dust-pans broken glass from a fallen BLENDER.
 Mara Mae stands near, cries. Dale hurries in, scoops her up.

DALE
 What happened?

PATTI
 (at wit's end)
 The cord was hanging over the side,
 she pulled it...

DALE
 You ok, baby-girl?
 (off her nod)
 Ok, why don't you and Rosie watch a
 show while Mommy and Daddy clean up?

He puts her down away from the glass and they hurry off as Dale gets on his knees and starts picking up big pieces.

DALE (CONT'D)
It could've landed on her, you know.

PATTI
Are you *fuckin'* kidding me?

DALE
(looks up, surprised)
Watch the language in front of the baby.

PATTI
Daisy can't understand a *fuckin'* word I'm saying. And if you were smart, you'd watch what *you're* saying right now.

DALE
What does that mean?

PATTI
It means I've been raising these kids on my own for months now--

DALE
Let's not get dramatic--

PATTI
--19 hours. Eight here on Monday, slept at work Tuesday, six hours Wednesday, back at Travis Thursday and five hours today. 19 god damn hours you've been here all week. And it's been like this for months--

DALE
--I have to work-- PATTI
--"Work" means you get paid.

DALE
"Go be a reporter". You said that. We agreed I should do this.

PATTI
We never agreed you'd abandon us in the process. You're obsessed with breaking a story that might not even exist--

DALE
You want me to give it up? I won't do that. This is my last shot.

PATTI
To what? Make anchor at 45? Finally earn Daddy's approval?

DALE

You're a shrink now? I'm doing this for me - for this family. And you have no idea what it's like growing up under a bar you knew you could never reach. I won't apologize for wanting to finally be *something*.

PATTI

You already were. A husband and a father but you're barely either of those things now...

(hard for her to say...)

Last week Mara Mae asked me where you lived...

DALE

What?

PATTI

She wanted to go visit her Daddy.

Dale falls into a chair - this hit him hard as hell. Patti sits too... she's calmer now, but still resolute...

PATTI (CONT'D)

Christmas is in a few weeks - credit cards are maxed; you're spending a fortune on gas, long distance calls - and we just got this in the mail.

She hands him a letter from the bank. He scans it.

DALE

Foreclosure?

PATTI

Just a warning, but that train's gonna pull into the station soon enough.

A beat, Dale considers all of this, then...

DALE

I'll stop. If you want.

PATTI

I want to support what you want. What you need - because I honestly believe you need what you're doing right now... but I need some things too. A five minute shower without the kids banging on the door; some exercise once in a while; and god forbid a night out with my husband. Nothing fancy. I'd settle for Sizzler.

Beat. Dale looks at the bank letter...

DALE
We can't afford Sizzler.

Patti takes Dale in, then just gets up, exits. OFF Dale.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - LATE SAME NIGHT

Patti does laundry. Kids sleep. Dale comes up from behind, wraps his arms around her. Takes her hands, holds them up.

DALE
Mi-Ling's got her work cut out.

PATTI
(a bit distant)
Who's Mi-Ling?

DALE
From the nail salon. Just part of next weekend's Mommy Day. A mani-pedi at Mane Attraction, plus an appointment to get your hair-do did...

PATTI
(turns toward him)
We can't afford it.

DALE
I know. But this family can't afford to have an over-worked Mom. I'll take the kids Saturday, you take care of yourself.

PATTI
Thank you so much.

DALE
You still hate my face? 'Cause I saw some serious face-hating in the kitchen.

Patti sweetly curls in tight to Dale.

PATTI
It's passed.

DALE
Wanna prove it?... you know... by doing naked stuff... to my body...

PATTI
Kinda knew what you meant, but okay.

And as they kiss, we PRELAP a gruff voice...

VOICE (PRELAP)
Ya sure ya wanna do this?

INT. SPORTS COLLECTIBLE/BASEBALL CARD SHOP - DAY

Dale and MURRAY (Black, 60's, proprietor) across the counter from each other. Dale has a box full of his memorabilia.

MURRAY

Some of this stuff is real good, Dale. And I can't give you top dollar in this market.

DALE

You've always been fair, Murray. Just gimme the best price you can.

Murray nods, takes items from the box. Dale watches. PRELAP the opening guitar riff of JINGLE BELL ROCK as we CUT TO:

INT. MALL - DAY

Dale in full Santa Suit, on camera with mic.

DALE

(in Santa voice)

If you've been following me this week as I matriculated at Santa School, you'd know that I aced everything from Mistletoe to Ho-Ho-Ho. And I'm ready to put it all to the test today.

(in regular voice)

This sucks. There are no kids at the mall on a school day. I told Wayne...

ROY

Fat ass. Three o'clock.

ANGLE ON a heavy 6 YEAR OLD approaching with MOMMY.

DALE

Ho-ho-ho. What is your name?

Wide-eyed and terrified, the kid says nothing.

MOMMY

This is Frank.

DALE

Don't be shy Frank, come sit on Santa's lap.

(struggles to lift the kid in his Santa Chair)

Oh... seems Frank enjoys his *frank 'n beans*... So Frankie my boy, what would you like for Christmas this year?

FRANK

Aaaaaaaaaagh!

DALE

Oh, hey, come now, there's no reason to be scared of Santa... *Jesus Christ.*

Roy's cell phone rings. He answers...

ROY (INTO PHONE)
Go for Roy... oh, yeah, hold on...
(hands phone to Dale)
It's the Air Force.

Dale takes the phone, Frank on his lap, still hysterical.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
Sorry, did you say this afternoon? I
couldn't hear- what was that? Hold on.

Dale yanks Frank under his arm like a fat football and walks off the Santa set, fumbles him into shocked Mommy's arms, totally distracted, not looking at her, without slowing down.

DALE (CONT'D)
Well, I'm three hours away, can we
schedule this for another... no, no,
ok... I'll be there. Thank you.
(hangs up, to Roy)
Travis Public Relations will go on
film with us - *today*.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

NEEDLEDROP Chuck Berry's **RUN, RUN, RUDOLPH** as Dale (in Santa suit) and Roy **RUN** across the lot to Roy's van.

DALE
He's only gonna stay 'til 5. If we miss him, it'll be months 'til something opens up again.

ROY
(so PSYCHED)
I'll have to drive really fast!

INT. VAN - MOMENTS LATER

RUN, RUN, RUDOLPH continues as they speed down the freeway.

ROY

You can't just come right out and ask him about the bomb - he's a PR hack. He'll deny it.

DALE

No, he'll deny it *on film*. An official government denial recorded for posterity. Only thing more important than the smoking gun, is capturing the moment someone denies the gun exists.

ROY

But we don't have a smoking gun.

DALE

I know; but we'll find it. We have to. *Shit! I left my bag at the mall!*

ROY

What bag?

DALE

The bag with my clothes in it.

INT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - HANGER - DAY

TIGHT ON: A Watch reading 5:02. REVEAL ALONZO TATE (50's, handsome, razor-sharp), next to him is AIRMAN FIRST CLASS CLARK PETERS (20's, boyish). Tate looks up from his watch...

TATE

No good deed goes unpunished, Peters. Tell Mr. Julin I waited, then I left.

PETERS

Yessir.

As Peters notes this on his clipboard, Tate turns to go. He walks toward camera when, way behind him doors open and Dale (in Santa suit) and Roy run in...

DALE

Hey. Hi. I'm here. I'm here.

WIDE SHOT: Dale hurries across the expansive hanger. Silence save for his bells jingling/echoing in the space.

DALE (CONT'D)

Hi. Dale Julin. Sorry I'm late.

TATE

(unamused)

Sleigh break down?

DALE

Oh, this... I was doing another piece,
forgot my clothes, you know how it is.

Tate just stares back ... he doesn't know "how it is".

DALE (CONT'D)

Ok - well, let's get started.

TIME CUT TO... Dale sits across from Tate. Roy films.

TATE

Travis has expanded in both acreage
and personnel since your father first
transferred here. Back then we were
the 15th largest base in the U.S. Now
we're the 9th.

DALE

My father currently works in a
civilian capacity for Air Force alumni
relations. What role do those who
previously served on the base play in
present day Travis?

TATE

Our alumni are vital to this base.
They're family. Men like your father
are appreciated and respected for
their work, dedication and sacrifice.

Dale shifts in his seat, looks at his notes, readies for...

DALE

Speaking of sacrifice, this base was
originally called Fairfield-Suisun
before being renamed after General
Travis who died in a tragic 1950
crash.

TATE

That's correct. Suisun is Indian for
"where the west wind blows" after the
prevalent winds in the region. And
like those winds, we like to think the
strength of General Travis is always
around us.

DALE

(deep breath, into full
"reporter mode")

Regarding that crash, it is believed
by some that the bomb on board was not
conventional, but instead had nuclear
components--

TATE

--I'm sorry?

DALE

(a bit nervous)

I'm just looking for confirmation of what was on-board that plane. There have been some inconsistencies--

Roy keeps filming as Tate becomes more defensive/suspicious.

TATE

--I was told this was a courtesy for your father--

DALE

--Major Tate, is it possible it was not a conventional weapon--

TATE

("the pamphlet" by rote)

On August 5, 1950, a B-29 carrying a weapon, but no capsule, experienced two runaway propellers and landing gear retraction difficulties on takeoff from Fairfield/Suisun AFB--

DALE

--I've read the pamphlet, sir--

Tate gets more heated. So Roy keeps filming.

TATE

The aircraft attempted an emergency landing and crashed and burned. The fire was fought for 12-15 minutes before the weapon's high explosive material detonated.

DALE

(a bit more aggressive)

--But what was that high explosive material?

Continuing to recite, Tate stands.

TATE

19 crew members and rescue personnel were killed in the crash --

Dale, almost "out of body", springs up, pissed.

DALE

And people are still dying!

Dale really raised the volume. It surprised everyone there, even him. Beat - tense silence. Dale stares Tate in the eye, kinda scared as hell. He swallows hard but won't back down. Then Tate spins, steps hard to Roy, hand out...

TATE
Give me that tape.

ROY
Gimme's don't get.

Roy shoves the tape in his carry-bag. Dale jumps between them.

DALE
That's private property--

TATE
--It's a recording on federal land
made under false pretenses which makes
it a federal crime. You have 5 seconds
to hand it over or you're in the brig.
And I'll make sure you're buried in
enough red tape that it'll take *months*
before your lawyers can dig you out.

Dale and Tate are eye to eye. Dale doesn't blink.

TATE (CONT'D)
Five. Four --

ROY
Does brig mean prison?

TATE
Three. Two...

Dale stands his ground. Roy, not so much...

ROY
'Cause I've seen prison movies, and
very bad things happen in the showers.

TATE
One. Airman Peters, call the MPs --

ROY
Here ya go.

Roy shoves the tape at Tate. Dale can't believe it.

TATE
Now get the hell off my base.

INT. ROY'S VAN - LATER

Roy drives super fast down the freeway. Dale fumes.

ROY
Man, that guy was a *beast*. *Officer and a Gentleman* my ass--

DALE

--Slow down. Bad enough you folded like a card table back there, don't kill us on the ride home.

ROY

Just wanna get as far away from the base as possible before he watches that tape.

Dale turns to Roy, curious...

DALE

Why?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. TATE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

TIGHT ON TV: Fat Frank cries on Santa Dale's lap. REVEAL Tate and Peters watching. **Roy switched the tapes!** Tate burns.

TATE

We're dealing with one slick sonuvabitch.

CUT TO:

INT. DALE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dale (in tiara, wig, jewels) dances/sings for his girls.

DALE

I'm a pretty, pretty princess - watch me dance. I'm a pretty, pretty princess - I live in France.

The kids laugh/squeal. Patti enters, ready to leave.

PATTI

Ok. Rosie's snacks are in the fridge door; Mara Mae only wants Sesame Street and Daisy will need a nap in a few hours. You can handle this?

DALE

Why're you still here? We don't need ya. Beat it. Go Mommy-Day your ass off.

They exchange kisses/"love ya's". Patti leaves. Beat, then...

DALE (CONT'D)

Who wants to review documents with Daddy?

INT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Daisy on Dale's lap; he feeds her mush as he reviews papers covering the table. Rosie stands on a chair, puts make-up on him. Mara Mae sings *C is for Cookie* playing on a counter-top TV. It's kind of madness. As Dale high-lites a document...

DALE

(high-liter cap in mouth)

Chronic exposure to radiation can result in "Stochastic" health effects.

(grabs dictionary)

Stochastic... Stochastic -- Of or pertaining to a process involving a randomly determined sequence of observations each of which is considered as a sample of one element from a probability distribution.

(to himself/Daisy)

What the shit? Daddy's in over his head.

Phone rings. He balances Daisy as he answers.

DALE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Yeah.

SECRETIVE VOICE (OVER PHONE)

Is this Dale Julin?

As Dale fights off Rosie who tries to put lipstick on him...

DALE

(to Rosie)

Not when Daddy's talking...

(into phone)

I'm sorry. Yeah, this is Dale.

SECRETIVE VOICE (OVER PHONE)

I have a file you might want to see.

About the crash.

Holy shit. Dale freezes. Rosie uses this opportunity to drag the lipstick sloppily across his lips/face.

DALE

Who is this?

VOICE

Meet me in the bottom level of the parking garage at the public library near your house.

DALE

How do you know where I live?

VOICE

You have one hour.

Click. OFF Dale, smeared lipstick, in the middle of kiddie madness, clock ticking on the break he's been hoping for.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - LATER

Darkness. Shadows. Dale's car's parked far in the back, barely visible. He moves slowly toward camera, obscured.

DALE
Hello? Anyone here?

SECRETIVE VOICE (O.S.)
That's far enough.

From a dark corner appears a SHADOWED FIGURE. He stays away enough to remain UNIDENTIFIABLE. He holds something...

DALE
Is that the file?

SHADOWY FIGURE
Yes it is.
(beat, confused)
Is that a baby?

Dale steps from the shadows, Daisy hangs from a BABY BJORN.

DALE
Yes it is.

A beat, then the file's slid across the ground to Dale. Dale opens it, scans the contents.

SHADOWY FIGURE
The Response Team roster from the night of the crash.

DALE
(*holy shit!*)
These are all the firemen - they saw everything. The explosion, the fire...
(looks up from file)
Who are you?

SHADOWY FIGURE
It doesn't matter. My identity can't ever be known--

FLASH! The headlights of Dale's minivan turn on - illuminating young AIRMAN PETERS in bright light.

PETERS
Come on!

DALE
(spins to the minivan)
Girls! I told you no buttons!
(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)
Now get in the back or it's Time Out!
(turns back to Peters)
Sorry 'bout that. Hold on - you're the
guy, Tate's guy... Peters!

PETERS
Please. I could lose my job. Or worse.

DALE
I won't say anything. I promise... But
why are you doing this?

PETERS
Because I've never seen Tate react to
anything like he did when you brought
up that crash. Never seen him scared
before. Never seen anyone stand up to
him before either. I tried to find
anything I could on the plane but it's
like it never happened. Only found
that file 'cause it was buried in some
fire safety binders. Powers That Be
must've forgot it was there... now I
need you to forget I was here.

DALE
You have my word... and thank you.

Dale moves to his car, straps in Daisy. Peters watches, it
affects him. Dale's a regular guy, a dad. As Dale gets
seated, Peters approaches the car window.

PETERS
Be careful, Dale. You're exposed now.
Tate knows you've been asking around.
Dangerous men will be watching you.

Dale, in his seat, puts on his best tough guy look/persona...

DALE
I'm not scared of dangerous men.
Dangerous men should be scared of me.

He starts up the engine and "**C is for Cookie**" blasts on the
radio. *God dammit!* Dale fumbles the knobs, makes it louder,
eventually turns it off. Humiliated, he drives off.

EXT. DALE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dale pulls up to find Don's car parked in his driveway...

ROSIE
Grampa's car!

DALE
(not happy about this)
Yes it is.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The kids race inside to Don, seated at the kitchen table.

DON
My little pilots.

As he hugs/kisses his girls, Dale shares a look with Patti. She gives him a look that says "This is not good."

DON (CONT'D)
Okay. Here's some coins. Now go count it up. Get it right and Grandpa has more for you.

PATTI
C'mon girls, I'll help you.

Patti ushers the kids out. Dale watches, not wanting to be alone with Don. As soon as the kids are gone, Don changes.

DON
A *birthday video*? What the hell were you thinkin'?

DALE
Dad, it wasn't my intention to get into--

DON
--don't give a *rat's ass* what your intention was. Alonzo Tate is a respected figure at Travis. We have mutual friends. *I respect the hell out of the man*. And you ambush him with ghost story bullshit?

DALE
I'm believe it's more than a ghost story--

DON
--*Family takes care of its own*. If there was something on that plane that was dangerous, the Air Force would've said something--

DALE
--I'm not condemning the *whole Force*, Dad. I love the Force. I think just a few people decided to cover this up and the lie's been handed down, decade after decade--

DON
--You think? You're Edward R. Murrow all of sudden? You interview magicians for Christ's sake.

This stings Dale. A lot. He's a bit stunned from the venom.

DON (CONT'D)
There's talk of taking me off Alumni
Relations.

DALE
What? Why?

DON
Seems they don't appreciate my own son
trying to slander them in the press.
Air Force is funny that way. I lose my
job, I gotta leave the base--

DALE
--Dad, I'm sorry--

DON
I mean, what the hell do you have?
Other than a *theory*? How many people
have you spoken to?

DALE
Fair amount.

DON
Anyone confirm your hypothesis?

DALE
No.

DON
You have any hard evidence?

DALE
No.

DON
Well at least I won't lose my home
over nothing.

DALE
Dad, I wasn't trying to hurt you. Or
the base. Travis was my home too--

DON
--Was your home. It is my life. The
name Julin means something at Travis.
No thanks to you--

DALE
(softly)
...Dad...

DON
--And I'm not about to have
you drag it down even more--

DALE
(this really hurts)
...I'm sorry...

DON

When I'm in the bar and that show of yours comes on, I tell 'em to put on the sports channel before anyone even has a chance to see--

PATTI (O.S.)

--*That's enough!*

REVEAL Patti in the doorway, protective. A beat of silence...

PATTI (CONT'D)

You need to leave my house now.

A beat, then Don stands, empties coins onto the table for the kids. He walks past Dale, exits. A beat, then, softly...

DALE

He's right. I haven't proven anything.

PATTI

Dale...

DALE

All I've done is hurt him... he's embarrassed because of me... he embarrassed of me.

He drops the folder he just got from Peters in the garbage, exits. Patti watches him go, heart breaking for her husband.

INT. DALE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

4:30 AM. Alarm sounds. Dale does the same uninspired routine from the top of the film: shower, coffee, etc...

INT./EXT. DALE'S CAR - EARLY MORNING, STILL DARK

Dale drives to work. At the stop sign, the same cop at the corner but Dale comes to a complete stop, drives on - the fight has been taken out of Dale Julin.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dale tosses all of his research into boxes... he's done.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Christmas. Kids play with toys. Dale/Patti shove torn wrapping paper into a garbage bag. Phone rings. Dale answers.

DALE (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH A HESITANT TEDDY KOKINIUS AT PAY PHONE...

TEDDY (INTO PHONE)
Dale. Hey. It's Teddy. From the base.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
Yeah, Teddy. Of course.

TEDDY (INTO PHONE)
Sorry to bother you on Christmas, but
I heard a rumor you were looking into
some stuff on the base, stuff that
may've made my girl sick. Wondering
what you may've found out...

DALE (INTO PHONE)
Yeah, well, I'm, uh, not really sure
I'll ever really crack that thing. Was
never able to get anything concrete.

TEDDY (INTO PHONE)
Oh. Ok.

ROSIE (O.S.)
Daddy, can you put this together!

TEDDY (INTO PHONE)
Sounds like you're busy over there.
I'll leave you be.

DALE (INTO PHONE)
Hey, listen, Teddy--

Click. But Teddy has hung up. OFF Dale, affected.

INT. NEWS SHOW SET - MORNING

Dale finishes up another uninspiring segment...

DALE
And remember Blackjack, the playoff
picking Boxer? Well, for the 5th year
in a row she accurately called the NFL
Division champs based on where she
sprinkles on the sports page. And to
think some said her picks were "all
wet." I'm Dale Julin and we'll K-See
you tomorrow, Fresno.

PRODUCER SCOTT
And we're out.

Dale's forces a smile/nod to the crew and is off.

INT. STUDIO BACK HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dale walks down the hall. As Wayne passes, head in folder.

WAYNE

Great job Dale. You're more focused
past few weeks. Keep it up.

Wayne doesn't even slow, passes by. Dale turns into...

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dale moves to his desk. Knock at the door. Roy enters.

ROY

Got a second?

Roy enters. Dale steps to him.

DALE

What's up?

Roy SLAPS Dale across the face.

ROY

That's up bitch.

DALE

What the hell, man.

ROY

What's wrong, Dale? Is Daddy a little
disappointed in you? Welcome to my
world, sweetheart.

He SLAPS Dale across the face again.

DALE

Cut it out!

ROY

That's five fingers worth of *Grow Some
Pubes*. When I was 9 my dad asked me
what football position I wanted to try
out for. I told him I wanted to be
cartoonist. He didn't ask me another
question for four years.

DALE

Look, it's complicated--

ROY

--No, it's simple. You start
something. You finish it.

DALE

Really? How's that *Hooked On Ebonics* idea you had a few years ago?

Roy stares back at Dale a beat, then...

ROY

It be comin' along.

DALE

We're done.

Dale moves to leave the room but Roy steps in front of him.

ROY

No. This isn't fair. You think I was happy sitting at home getting high all night, watching porn and Alf reruns? Only a lot of the time. But then you asked me to be part of something important - for the first time someone asked for my help - someone thought I was more than a camera monkey. I haven't gotten stoned in *months* because I wanted to do a good job for you. And for myself. You can't just take it away from me now...

(throws a file at Dale)
Especially since I've been doin' all the damn work lately.

DALE

What the hell's this?

ROY

Patti was worried about you. Came to see me. Man, such a great ass--

DALE

She gave you the file I got from Peters?

ROY

Tracked down everyone I could. Look at this...

(points to his file notes)
Gavin McCreary. Died. Lung Cancer.
Lawrence Sands. Died. Abdominal Cancer. Norman Clay - the base Fire Chief at the time - died at 44 of cancer - symptoms started right after the crash. His daughter sent me a copy of his death certificate.

Dale picks up the Death Certificate, reads it...

DALE

Cause of Death: Radiation exposure.
Roy, this is amazing work.

ROY

If you're clueless enough, people let
their guard down 'cause they think
you're an idiot. Learned from watching
you... so, is that our smoking gun?

DALE

(still scanning doc)

Close. Government will say he must've
been exposed to radiation someplace
else. We still need someone to confirm
what was on that plane.

ROY

We? That mean you're putting your big
boy pants back on, Baby Pants?

DALE

Doesn't even make sense.

ROY

Totally does. We can debate it on the
way to Mr. Connors house.

DALE

One of these guys is still alive?

ROY

Yup. Joe Connors, lives close... but
he wouldn't talk to me.

DALE

Why not?

ROY

He's scared to death.

EXT. WEATHERED FARMHOUSE BACKYARD (NOT ON BASE) - DAY

JOE CONNORS (70's, tough) in warm jacket/gloves pries metal
from a rusted HARVESTER with a crowbar. Dale/Roy approach.

DALE

Mr. Connors?

Joe turns to them, still holds the crowbar.

JOE

Yeah?

DALE

Name's Dale Julin. Wondering if I
could have a minute of your time?

JOE

What for?

DALE

Was hoping to ask you a bit about your
wartime service--

JOE

(steps to them, ornry)
You're the fella, called last week.

ROY

No sir, that was me.

JOE

Told ya I didn't have nothing to say.
Now you get the hell off my land
before I take my crowbar to you--

DALE

We know men you served with died of
cancer from radiation exposure--

JOE

--I said get offa my land--

DALE

--Please, you were there. We
just want to know what was on
that plane--

As Joe moves hard at Dale, raising the crowbar to strike--

JOE

*God dammit, I didn't ask for any of
this--*

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Joseph!

Joe stops in his tracks. REVEAL behind him, on the back
steps, his wife, MARIE (70's). The men all freeze...

MARIE

It's been more than 40 years. What can
they do to you now?

A beat, off Dale looking at a torn Joe Connors. TIME CUT TO:

INT. WEATHERED FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Marie puts coffee mugs on the table between Joe (in an easy
chair) and Dale (on sofa). Uncomfortable silence as Roy
enters with his camera and tripod. Joe sees this and...

JOE

No.

Dale shakes his head at Roy. Roy puts the camera down.

JOE (CONT'D)
No film. I'll tell you what happened.
If anyone asks, I'll deny it all.

DALE
Ok.

Joe looks to Marie who nods, puts her hand on his forearm.
After a long/painful beat, he begins to talk, reliving it...

JOE
Those damn Suisun Winds, fanned the hell outta the flames that night. I'd been a firefighter 25 years, never seen a blaze whip up like that. We knew there were bombs on board, so we kept our distance, but after about 15 minutes or so...

He trials off, eyes moist...

DALE
After 15 minutes or so, what?

Joe rolls up his sleeves, shows brutal scars up both arms.

JOE
I was one of the lucky ones. Water truck shielded me. Crawled outta a crater, like an ant outta a fruit bowl -- hole hadda be 6' deep, 30 yards wide -- know it sounds crazy, surviving an atomic blast...

Dale and Roy share a look - holy shit.

DALE
What do you mean an "atomic blast"?

JOE
That's why you're here, ain't it?

DALE
We're here to figure out what happened. I know a conventional bomb couldn't have done that damage, but an atomic weapon would've taken out several miles--

JOE
--Son, a mushroom cloud size of God himself clear blew out the trailer park - killed 'bout a dozen folk right there. Next day, cleanin' the debris, I break my ankle. Sent me to the hospital in San Francisco; orderlies there said they heard the explosion. 45 miles away.

DALE

Did anyone from the Air Force ever
tell you it was an atomic bomb?

JOE

Didn't have to. They sent docs to see
us for weeks with those machines with
them badges to check for radiation.
Precautionary Measure's the line they
fed us. Said we'd lose our jobs, go to
jail if we told anyone. State Secrets
Act. So we kept our mouths shut. Now
they're just waiting for the last of
us to die, so the truth dies with us.

Dale takes in the way Marie squeezes Joe's arm. Realizes...

DALE

Are you sick Mr. Connors?

A beat, he looks away, angry, emotional...

JOE

Breast Cancer. God damn lady disease.
Now I gotta sell scrap metal so I can
leave *somethin'* for Marie...
(as he stands...)
I'm done talkin'; don't come back here.

Dale watches Joe walk outside, the screen door slams...

EXT. DON JULIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Patti knocks. Don answers.

DON

Patti?

PATTI

I know you're mad at Dale for doing the
story. But he was making two videos.
(hands him a cassette tape)
This is how he sees you.

She walks back to her car. OFF Don as we TIME CUT TO:

INT. DON JULIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Don's alone, watches the video. Dale has used a lot of the
footage Roy shot to make an actual birthday video for his
father. In it Dale stands proudly next to the kind of plane
his Dad flew; holds up his Dad's file, etc. and finally,
outside the house where they lived on the base...

DALE (ON VIDEO)
 The houses on Travis are standard issue, all identical. All except ours, because of this one rope swing here. You knew how much I wanted it, so you put it up even though it violated regulations. Your son vs. The Air Force -- and I won out. That always made me feel special. Being Don Julin's son always made me feel special. So thanks for everything Dad. And Happy 75th Birthday.

OFF Don watching the video, taking it in...

INT. ROY'S VAN - NIGHT

Roy drops Dale off in the otherwise empty K-SEE parking lot. As they finish off fast food, they debate--

ROY
 If we don't have enough now, then we'll never have it. Size of the blast, the cancer, the testing for radiation--

DALE
 --Can all be explained away. And Joe Conner won't go public.

ROY
 But everything he told us--

DALE
 We promised we wouldn't repeat. We can't run this story 'til we--

DALE (CONT'D) Find the smoking gun. ROY (so tired of saying it)
 Find the smoking gun.

DALE (CONT'D)
 Alright. See you tomorrow.

Dale exits the van, turns back to Roy...

DALE (CONT'D)
 Hey. Smartest thing I did with this story was bring you on board. You're more than a great camera monkey... you're a great best friend.

Roy doesn't know what to say. He smiles slightly, nods.

DALE (CONT'D)
 See you tomorrow.

Roy drives off. Dale moves to his car, then -- BAM! He's clocked from behind by an unseen assailant. He falls to the ground, is instantly kicked in the stomach many times. Dale curls up. The attack is fast, efficient. It ends. Dale coughs for breath. In front of him are two shoes, all he can see...

VOICE (FROM ABOVE DALE)
If you weren't Don Julin's son, this would be worse. Keep it up, it will be worse.

Dale's POV as the shoes walk off. His eyes close as we FADE TO DARKNESS.

INT. DALE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Patti asleep. Dale enters quietly. Steps on a kid's toy - electronic lights and sounds go off. Patti stirs...

PATTI
Baby?

DALE
Go back to sleep. I'll be in a minute.

He enters the bathroom, closes the door, gingerly lifts his shirt to reveal large bruises.

PATTI (THROUGH THE DOOR)
Are you mad at me for going to Roy?

DALE
No.

PATTI
I just know how important this is to you. Didn't want you to give up unless it was for a really good reason.

Dale looks at himself in the mirror - *is getting your life threatened a good enough reason?*

INT. WAYNE'S OFFICE - DAY

Wayne watches a news reel. Dale enters.

DALE
Wanted to see me?

Wayne pauses the reel. He seems serious, subdued.

WAYNE
Yeah. Why don't you have a seat, Dale.

Dale sits - clearly thrown by Wayne's demeanor.

DALE
What's goin' on?

WAYNE
Got a call from Travis Air Force Base.

DALE
Lieutenant Tate.

WAYNE
That would be the irate gentleman I
spoke to... I told you Dale... I told
you to just be happy doing your job...
And now you don't have a job.

Wayne takes no pleasure in this.

DALE
They're making you fire me?

WAYNE
Federal Government? The FCC? Kinda
important around here.
(runs hand through hair,
frustrated)
Sneaking around the base. Throwing out
accusations. You've got three kids.
What the hell were you thinking?

DALE
That I'm right.

WAYNE
(angry now)
Great. Put that fourth on your list
behind Unemployed, Poor and Unhireable.
Better yet, put it on your tombstone.
Here lies Dale: He was Right.

DALE
(just as pissed)
*They have been hiding this thing for
decades--*

WAYNE
--Give it a god-damn rest, Silkwood!
There's no cover-up and you're neither
Woodward nor Bernstein--

DALE
--If I'm fired, I don't have to listen
any more--

Dale slowly gets up out of the chair, winces--

WAYNE
 Why start now?
 (re: Dale's slow movement)
 --what the hell's wrong with you?

Dale turns, raises his shirt to show his bruises.

DALE
 (fuck off)
 It's nothing. Just part of their non-cover up.

Dale turns to go. Wayne stops him, suddenly concerned.

WAYNE
 Hold on. That's from you poking around?

DALE
 Don't tell anyone. I don't want Patti finding out.

Wayne takes this in, grasps that Dale might really be right.

WAYNE
 Ok. As far as the affiliate's concerned, we have no idea you're still looking into this. But if you need some time to dig or access to the editing bays... I look the other way.

DALE
 Thought the government wanted me fired.

WAYNE
 I don't remember those dickholes buying any ad time on my air. Now be careful, stupid.

Dale smiles, exits. OFF Wayne, watching him go.

INT. DALE'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Dale pours through research, the kids watch a show. Patti enters from outside with a bag of groceries and the mail...

PATTI
 Hey ladies. And gentleman.

She pecks Dale's head, sits. He's focused on the papers.

PATTI (CONT'D)
 Found a store with Double Coupon Tuesdays. Cross town but now we can have vegetables... well, the kids can have vegetables. How'd the show go?

DALE
 (engrossed in his work)
 Covered the Central Valley hot-air
 balloon races.

PATTI
 Sounds like an uplifting story.
 (off Dale's look)
 Sorry. Couldn't help it. Any progress
 with Travis?

Dale pushes the papers away, frustrated.

DALE
 Nothing. I'm at a dead end.

He tosses his pen to the table, rubs his forehead...

DALE (CONT'D)
 I'm just so damn close. I know it's
 right in front of me but I just can't
 grasp it. It's like Mr. Miyagi and the
 fly - with the chopsticks...

PATTI
 (tries to encourage)
 But Miyagi caught the fly.

DALE
 Ralph Macchio caught the fly.

Dale drops his forehead to the table, totally spent...

DALE (CONT'D)
 I'll never be Ralph Macchio.
 (looks up, worked up)
 And you know who'd really hate this?
 More than anyone?
 (lifts book with photo of...)
General Travis. West Point. 35 combat
 missions against the Nazi's.
 Distinguished Flying Cross. He was a
 man of integrity and honor and he'd be
 lit up if he knew his name hung over
 the archway of a lie. What they're
 doing - it dishonors him. Dishonors
 anyone who ever served.

Patti cups his face, loves his passion.

PATTI
 Man of integrity and honor? Bet he
 woulda liked you.

She kisses his forehead, takes the groceries to the kitchen,
 leaving the mail behind. Dale flips through it: Collection
Notice; Past Due; etc.

He opens one from **FRESNO SAVINGS & LOAN**: Dear Mr. Julin; Delinquent, Foreclosure Sale Scheduled, etc.

He's losing his home. He takes the letter, folds it, shoves it in his pocket. Fuck. He spots an envelope made out to Dale -- **the Post Mark is from the Travis Post Office**. Dale tears it open. He PALES. We don't see what was in the envelope...

ON PATTI in the kitchen, cleaning vegetables. Dale races past without slowing down, waving the letter over his head...

DALE
I'll be back later!

PATTI
Where are you going?!

DALE
I caught the fly! I'm Danielsan!

And he's out the door. OFF Patti.

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - LATER

TIGHT ON the letter being slammed onto the desk. **FLIGHT MANIFEST: AUGUST 5, 1950: TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE**. There are alphabetized names with check marks and phone #'s/addresses next to them. Dale, energized, explains to Roy...

DALE
It's the crew list from the flight.
Four have check marks. Assume that means they're still alive.

ROY
Sweet Mother's Milk. Who sent this?

DALE
Post-marked from the base. Airman Peters strikes again.
(grabs Roy)
These guys were on the goddamn plane.
With whatever weapon was in there.

BEGIN MONTAGE: Dale/Roy calling the crew members on Speaker. Via JUMP/BLEND cuts we see Dale taking notes as he talks...

DALE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Hi, Mr. Longo. I'm doing a piece on the 1950 crash...

CUT TO:

DALE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
...a member of the Rescue Team has already spoken with us...

VOICE #1 (OVER PHONE)
Yeah. Who was that?

DALE
I'm sorry, Mr. Tressler, I'm not at liberty to say but--

Click. He hung up on Dale. CUT TO:

DALE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Do you recall what kind of weapon you were carrying that night, sir?

VOICE #2 (OVER PHONE)
Oh, most likely a standard Tarzon, maybe radio-controlled, what we'd been droppin' on 'em the whole time.

CUT TO:

Dale/Roy, despondent, listen to the phone ring. An answer...

VOICE #3
Hello?

There is NOISE in the background - sounds like a party...

DALE
Hi; I'm looking for Mr. Alberto Perdomo.

AL
This is Al? Who's this?

DALE
This is Dale Julin--

AL
--Who? Speak up a bit--

DALE
Dale Julin. I'm a reporter doing a piece on the 1950 Travis crash and I got your name from the manifest. I was hoping I could talk to you...
(beat, silence...)
Mr. Perdomo? You still there?

AL
You think I'm gonna let you guys lay the blame on me again? You can take it to hell, Mr. Julin.

DALE
(confused)
The crash was from mechanical failure.
Why do you think I'd blame you?

AL
Because that's what they did to me.
They always crucify the pilot.

Roy mouths to Dale: ***The fuckin' pilot!*** Roy slaps Dale's arm, motions for him to keep talking.

DALE
Just hear me out, sir. I'm a war pilot's son. I'm not looking to hurt you... I just wanna talk. I see you live just outside of Modesto. I can come over now... please...

A tense beat - they wait for an answer. Then an unsure...

AL
Ok... but dress nice...

Al hangs up. Roy turns to Dale.

ROY
Did I hear Mariachi music?

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. AL PERDOMO'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

A MARIACHI BAND PLAYS. It's a *Quinceanera* for Al's granddaughter. Backyard's full of family, food, drink, dancing. Lights string from the house to the fence. Festive.

TIGHT ON: a hand plunges into a tub of ice, pulls out 3 beers. AL (70's, Latin, grandfatherly) pops the tops, hands a beer to Dale (in suit) and Roy (in plaid sports coat).

AL
Let's sit away from the music.

Al walks with a limp; Dale and Roy follow.

AL (CONT'D)
This hitch in my giddyup, courtesy of the crash. 12 surgeries. I'm lucky. Most of the others weren't.

DALE
You were close with your crew?

As they sit at a picnic table Roy notices, down at the other end, a HEFTY GIRL in her 20's - she smiles, eyeballs Roy up and down. He nods back with an uneasy smile.

AL
(difficult for him)
Like brothers.

DALE

I spoke with some of them today. Not one of them blamed you for the crash.

AL

Tried like hell to keep that bird right -- couldn't get her straight.

DALE

The fact that anyone survived that crash is a testament to your ability as a pilot.

AL

Not according to the guys they sent.

ROY

What guys?

AL

(still hurts years later)
I'm in the hospital, banged to hell, and they come there to tell me I gooned up the ride... I did my job that day. I avoided every building on that base--

Al, emotional, catches himself. The band begins playing a slow, soulful, latino version of *Billie Jean*. It's sexy, romantic and melancholy all at once. Al realizes...

AL (CONT'D)

This was a mistake.

(as he stands)

Sorry you came all this way.

Dale can't believe it's over. Roy, desperate, buying time, motions to Hefty Girl at the end of the table.

ROY

Who's, uh, that pretty young lady over yonder?

AL

That's my grand-niece, Veedee.

ROY

I don't mean to be too forward, but you think I could ask her to dance?

AL

You want to dance with Veedee?

ROY

(no he doesn't)
Boy howdy I do.

Confused, Al motions "go ahead." Dale watches in awe as Roy walks to Veedee, puts out his hand and she happily moves with him to the dance floor. As they sway together...

DALE

Guess we have a few minutes.

Al looks from Roy/Vedee to Dale, sits, drinks his beer, eyeballs Dale, unsure, sizing him up...

AL

How do I know you're really Air Force?
From Travis?

DALE

All the houses had military green and gray furniture. Every day, at 5 pm we stopped wherever we were for the lowering of the flag. My mom used that heavy blue starch the base sold that made my pants so stiff I could hardly bend my knees. And when my Dad was gone running missions I'd pray so hard at Chapel One that those knees would wear out ... So... what men were sent to see you, Mr. Perdomo?

Al takes in Dale... believes he can trust him... then...

AL

Government boys. Told me I nosed up too hard on take-off, angled the landing gear retraction. Said they didn't want me getting the brig for *Reckless Homicide* so they promised to blame it on prop failure and such so long I kept my mouth shut if anyone asked me anything about the crash.

DALE

They lied. That crash was mechanical failure.

AL

(still not certain of that)
I know that.

DALE

Listen to me. It was not your fault. They didn't want anyone talking about the crash because they loaded something a lot more dangerous than a standard bomb on that plane. Something that gave off radiation and made people sick. I need to know what that something was.

(reads Al's face, realizes)

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)
You didn't know about the bomb, did
you?

AL
(stunned, dazed...)
I was just the pilot. They told me to
fly to Guam, those were my orders. You
sure? About all this you're tellin' me?

Dale nods reassurance. Al's eyes grow wet...

AL (CONT'D)
I've spent my whole life wondering...
if I'd done something... thank you.

DALE
Thank you for your service... I'll let
myself out.

As Dale stands to go...

AL
You should see if you can find Lou
Giordano. He'd definitely know what we
were carrying.

Dale stops.

DALE
Who's Lou Giordano?

AL
The Bomb Commander - he's the one who
loads the damn thing. You've got the
manifest, right?

Confused, Dale takes the manifest from his pocket, shows it
to Al who runs his finger down the **LIST OF LAST NAMES...**

AL (CONT'D)
Last I heard, Lou was still kickin'.
Right here. His name should be here -
between Ferro and Gustavson...

Dale studies the space between the two names.

DALE
I think his name was there.

Dale touches his finger to his tongue and rubs a small black
smudge on the paper... it doesn't come off - it's from a
white strip being put over a name before copying a document.

DALE (CONT'D)
(realizing)
They redacted his name.

ON Roy/Veedee dancing, their heads on each other's shoulders. Roy is actually diggin' it. But Dale pulls him by the arm.

DALE (CONT'D)
We gotta go.

ROY
In the middle of something here, boss.

DALE
We found him!

ROY
Who?

DALE
The smoking gun.

As Dale moves off, Roy turns to Veedee...

ROY
I just would been trouble, baby.

... and he hurries after Dale.

INT. K-SEE STUDIO STAGE - DAY

Dale sits on the Host Desk, the whole team around him: Stephanie (weather girl), Burt (traffic), Dr. Katharti (Indian medical correspondent) and Jay (black sports guy). Roy stands next to the Host Desk.

DALE
And that's what I've been doing these past months. And now I need your help.

JAY
Un-fucking-believable.

ROY
Bet your black ass it is...
(off Jay's death stare)
My bad, playa.

DR. KATHARTI
This all started with that call you made to me, about your friend's daughter?
(off Dale's nod)
My goodness.

STEPHANIE
You said you needed our help?

DALE
Right. This whole thing turns on finding Lou Giordano--

JAY

Pump the brakes there, partner.

(to Wayne, pissed)

How come he can run around doin' this story when I been askin' for years to look into McGwire and Canseco--

WAYNE

--For the last time, they're *baseball* players. Football players do steroids... Canseco lifts weights.

(to Dale)

Okay, wrap it up...

DALE

Giordano. No idea where he lives or if he's even alive. But if he is, he knows what he loaded into that B-29. Roy and I called every NBC affiliate in the country and asked them to send copies of their phone books-- some have 2 or 3 versions of the White Pages, and I asked for back issues in case he was listed a few years ago but isn't any more... so we're expecting upwards of 900 volumes over the next few weeks--

JAY

--how you get them to do that?

DALE

Said we were doing a story on telemarketers.

ROY

My boy's wicked good at makin' shit up.

WAYNE

So, here's the deal. 1) Upstairs can't know about this; 2) ***Upstairs can't know about this;*** and 3)... Let's help Dale find this guy.

BEGIN MONTAGE... over score we see...

- DALE'S HOME (NIGHT): Dale/Patti at the dining room table, eat take-out, surrounded by phone books, searching...

- K-SEE STUDIOS (DAY): Stephanie in Make-Up, scans a phone book, no Giordano. She marks the cover with an black X.

- Dr. Katharti cuts open a bunch of boxes, hands phone books out to Burt and Wayne...

- Roy, with ALF on the TV, pours through stacks of phone books. Buds McKenzie is next to him but it's a VASE now.

- Jay, in his office, full of phone books, his eyes land on a page... and go W-I-D-E...

JAY
Motha-fucka, I got you!

He springs from his chair and races down the hall with the phone book under his arm like a football...

JAY (CONT'D)
I got him! I got the Italian sonuvabitch!

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone's cramped inside. Dale sits at his desk, staring at the phone book page, nervous...

STEPHANIE
You really think it's him?

JAY
Even has the same middle initial. *I'm telling you, it's the guy.*

DALE
(looks at the cover)
Covers Cocoa Beach. Lotta vets retire there 'cause it's near Patrick Air Force Base.

BURT
So call him.

DALE
This book's 2 years old. How do I know he's not dead?

DR. KATHARTI
Medically speaking, if he answers the phone, he's not dead.

Dale hesitates.

ROY
Maybe we should let Dale make this call alone.

Everyone filters out; as Roy closes the door behind him...

ROY (CONT'D)
Good luck, pal.

Dale nods. Exhales. Dials. The phone rings. A man answers.

VOICE (OVER SPEAKER)

Hello?

DALE (INTO PHONE)

Yessir. My name is Dale Julin. I'm hoping to speak to a Mr. Louis Giordano.

VOICE (OVER SPEAKER)

This is Lou.

SLOWLY PUSH IN ON Dale as he takes it that he's talking to the man with THE ANSWER.

GIORDANO (OVER SPEAKER)

How can I help ya, Dale?

Dale hesitates, makes the sign of the cross, then...

DALE (INTO PHONE)

(please God let this work)

Well... sir... I'm a reporter for K-SEE in Fresno, California and I'd like to talk to you a bit about the Travis Base Crash in 1950. Specifically, as the bomb commander, I'm looking for information about the exact kind of weaponry that was on that flight. Do you think you could help me with that, Mr. Giordano?

Long beat of tense silence. Dale sweats it out. Then...

GIORDANO

I've been waiting 44 years for this call... Have you ever been to Florida, Dale?

OFF Dale - stunned but thrilled. CUT TO:

INT. GARY GABRIELLE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Gary stands in front of a mirror, practicing/enunciating...

GARY

The mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing has been identified by the FBI as Ramzi Yousef ... Rrrrr-amzi Yousef ...

Dale barges in, winded.

DALE

I need you to cover for me for tomorrow morning.

GARY
The Sunshine Show? Don't think so, papi.

DALE
C'mon, man. I have to interview
someone for a story. Biggest story of
my life. Wayne asked for you to cover.

GARY
Wayne asked?

DALE
(lying)
He said the only thing better than
Gary Gabrielle once a day is Gary
Gabrielle twice a day.

OFF Gary absorbing the compliment -- it worked... CUT TO:

INT. DALE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Patti watches Dale pack furiously as Roy sits cross-legged on the floor, coloring with Rosie - each has their own book.

DALE
Where are my black pants?

PATTI
The nice ones or the ones from the
mall?

DALE
*The nice ones. I'm not doing the
interview of my life in mall pants. I
can't find the nice pants anywhere.*

PATTI
For the love of God...

As Patti bends over to open the bottom drawer, Roy's eyes lock in on her ass, mesmerized. Dale notices.

DALE
Don't even.

Roy raises an eyebrow, gives Dale a thumbs-up. Patti turns, throws black pants to Dale who catches them.

PATTI
Nice black pants.

DALE
We're barely gonna make the red-eye.

ROY
(holds up grocery bag)
Don't blame me. I'm packed.

PATTI
Assuming the station is picking up the
air fare?

Dale spins from his bag to Patti as he opens a draw,
frantically grabs some ties to compare in the mirror...

DALE
(sheepish)
Know what happens when you assume.

PATTI
A last minute cross-country flight? We
can't swing that...

DALE
Correct. But our credit card company
doesn't know that yet.

PATTI
You charged it?

ROY
Both of 'em.

Patti turns to Roy who looks up from his coloring and waves.

PATTI
Seriously?

DALE
I need him there. We can't have
another Mr. Conners situation. We have
to get this on film.
(leans in to her, sotto)
And Roy doesn't even have a credit
card. You should see how he lives.

ROY
Like an animal.
(off Rosie's giggle)
What are you laughing at? ... your
coloring sucks. All over the place.

Patti pulls Dale into toward their bathroom.

PATTI
A word.

INT. DALE'S BEDROOM BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patti closes the door.

PATTI
I know this is it. Bottom of the
ninth. Overtime. Hail Mary. All that
shit. But I got a call from the bank--

Dale's expression falls.

PATTI (CONT'D)
When were you going to tell me?

DALE
I was hoping I wouldn't have to.

PATTI
(softly)
You didn't think I'd notice being
thrown out of my own house?

Dale rubs his eyes - this has all been so hard.

DALE
(looks at her, ashamed)
I just thought - I hoped maybe if I
broke this story, things would turn
around or something. Maybe more work
would come of it, or I'd get to anchor
- a bit more money... I don't know...
Thought maybe I'd be able to take you
out for Sizzler one night...
(beat then...)
It's just -- people got sick, people
died -- I couldn't just walk away from
it... Foreclosure - Jesus. Never
thought I'd become that guy.

A beat. Patti takes him in. Heart breaks for him.

PATTI
Well guess what? You are.

Dale looks up at her...

PATTI (CONT'D)
You are that guy. The guy who has the
balls to take a chance. Not just for
himself. For other people.

Dale brightens.

PATTI (CONT'D)
So go to Florida. Get your smoking
gun. And when Mr. Giordano tells you
about the nuclear weapon, it'll all be
worth it.

DALE
(hesitant)
Yeah. Well. He wouldn't really confirm
that over the phone. Said he wanted to
look me in the eye when we talked.

PATTI
(incredulous)
You're doing all this and you don't
even know what he's going to say?

Beat, then...

DALE
Kinda.

PATTI
(*I just might kill you*)
You should go now.

DALE
Okay. Best wife ever.

He quickly pecks her cheek and races out.

EXT. FLORIDA AIRPORT/SKY - MORNING

A 747 touches down at Jacksonville International Airport.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Dale hustles out of the airport, throws change on a news stand, grabs a LOCAL PAPER. Roy is on his heels...

ROY
We can't just show and ask for their
equipment...

DALE
Over there.

Dale hustles toward the rental cars as he quickly flips through the paper. Roy is still harping...

ROY
Wayne said no trail back to him. So
how the hell are we gonna get WTLV to
loan us five figures worth of cameras
and lights?

Dale's eyes land on something in the paper. He stops, spins it to face Roy... it's a news story with a PHOTO of MODERN DAY NATIVE AMERICANS DANCING AROUND A CEREMONIAL CAMPFIRE.

DALE
With the help of these guys.

VOICE (PRELAP)
The Timucuan Indians?

INT. WTLV OFFICES - LATER

Dale and Roy sit across from WTLV STATION MANAGER...

WTLV MANAGER
Why the hell does the *Fresno* affiliate
care about them?

DALE
Well, they have a sister tribe in the
Central Valley.
(pulling it from his ass)
The Un-too-choc-tow. *Untoochoctow*.

ROY
It's a tongue twister. Un-choc-two...
I can't say it...

DALE
We want to do a piece for Native
American History Month.

WTLV MANAGER
That's November.

Beat, then...

ROY
We're late...

DALE
Look, we couldn't bring all our stuff
on the plane... I promise to have the
equipment back by end of day...

WTLV MANAGER
Ok. But, you break it, you buy it.

QUICK CUTS: Equipment loaded into the rental car trunk. Truck
slammed. Ignition turned. The car flies down the interstate.

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME TIME

Dale drives. Quiet, then Roy becomes reflective...

ROY
This is it, huh? All comes down to
this.

Dale registers this fact...

ROY (CONT'D)
All the time. The work. The cost.

Dale begins to pale...

ROY (CONT'D)
 Everyone startin' to think you might have
 something here. Not to mention the
 foreclosure - sorry, I was listening...

Dale now looks sick...

ROY (CONT'D)
 If this guy doesn't come through --
 might as well baste us, we are cooked.

DALE
Take the wheel.

Roy GRABS the wheel as Dale VOMITS out the window.

EXT. ENCLOSED BACK PORCH - DAY

CLOSE ON: Camera/lights being set. A chair being placed. An older man's forearm with a USAF tattoo seeping a tea bag.

DALE
 (anxious)
 Okay. Ready to begin?

REVEAL Lou Giordano (79). Cracked-leather tough, kind eyes.

GIORDANO
 If you're ready, I'm ready.

Roy rolls film. Dale looks to Roy - a moment between them; all they've been through comes to this. Roy nods, Dale can begin. Dale turns to Mr. Giordano, deep exhale...

DALE
 Mr. Giordano. On August 5, 1950, a B-29 bomber crashed at then Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base. A weapon on-board detonated. Was it a conventional weapon or was it something else?

GIORDANO
 No foreplay? Just gonna stick in it dry, huh?

DALE
 Thought it best to get to the matter at hand.

GIORDANO
 Man after my own heart.

Giordano deliberately steeps the tea, then sips it. He's pushing 80, so there's no rush. Dale watches. Tense. Seems like an eternity. He puts the cup down, looks at Dale, then:

GIORDANO (CONT'D)

There was an atomic bomb on that aircraft.

ON Dale taking this in... he finally has the answer! Roy's hand grips the camera tighter; he swallows and pushes in.

DALE

(voice almost shaking, but
still professional)

And how do you know this?

GIORDANO

I was the bomb commander. I was the one who put it on that plane.

Dale can't help but audibly exhale relief.

DALE

Can you please elaborate? Because wouldn't an atomic weapon have caused devastation similar to what happened in Japan in World War II?

GIORDANO

If it had a plutonium capsule in it - hell, woulda changed the map of California. But the capsule was on another plane. The B-29 that went groundhog that night - it was carrying the bomb's *tamper* - the casing for the nuclear core; *made out of Uranium 238*.

DALE

How much?

GIORDANO

Hundreds of pounds. And the shell had thousands of pound of TNT. When it went up... Pssssshuuuu.... all that Uranium went up with it...

Dale takes in the magnitude of what he's hearing. Then...

DALE

Mr. Giordano, we've learned that other veterans were threatened not to talk about the crash. Why are you speaking up today, after all this time?

TIGHT ON Giordano, repeating what he said earlier...

GIORDANO

(with pained guilt)

I was the bomb commander. I was the one who put it on that plane.

PULL BACK to REVEAL we are watching Giordano ON TAPE in...

INT. WAYNE'S OFFICE - DAY

ENTIRE K-SEE staff watches Dale's fully produced story. As Dale "signs off" on the story, Stephanie whispers to Roy...

STEPHANIE
You worked with him on the entire piece?

ROY
Um... yeah.

STEPHANIE
Wow. That's really impressive.

Roy swallows hard. Dale stops the tape.

DALE
That's it. That's the story.

A beat of silence, then...

DR. KATHARTI
Holy fucking shit.

Wayne springs into full carnival barker mode; he's great at it.

WAYNE
Ok. We're gonna run non-stop 48 hour promos on this thing. Call it THE ATOMIC BOMBSHELL. Then we run it prime-time. Top story. The whole damn thing.

PRODUCER SCOTT
It's 30 minutes long.

WAYNE
Don't give a fuck. Anyone have a problem trimming their segments?

The team shakes their heads, they're happy to do it.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Dale, this is... I don't know what to say. I'll kiss your ass later.

Dale is just so damn happy ... and excited ...

WAYNE (CONT'D)
But for now you need to bunker up with Gary and prep him on everything. Gary, you gotta know this stuff backwards and forwards before goin' live.

ROY
What do mean before he goes live?

WAYNE

(doesn't get it)

He's our news anchor. Gary will present it in studio and we'll tape some transitional stuff to splice in over Dale's appearances in the piece--

DALE

--*I killed myself for this thing. I turned down paying work to do this -- I'm getting thrown out of my house--*

WAYNE

You'll get credit for the reporting--

DALE

--*It'll be Gary on air. It'll be Gary everyone remembers.*

GARY

Wayne, it's Dale's story. I don't wanna do this.

WAYNE

Thank God I'm not in the "What Gary Wants" business.

(off everyone's disgust)

Guys. Even if I thought it was a good idea for Dale to run with this story - you think upstairs is going to let the morning show Time & Temperature guy go prime time? I'm sorry. Just how it is.

Wayne grabs the tape. As he walks out, passing Roy...

ROY

(quietly)

Eat a dick, Wayne.

WAYNE

Fuck you.

Everyone turns to Dale, who is crushed. A beat, then he walks out, dejected. They can't do anything but watch him go.

EXT. DALE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dale sits on the stoop, drinking a beer. Patti exits, sits next to him. She has a beer too. Dale just stares off.

PATTI

Remember in Albany, you saw that guy steal a car radio, and you chased him even though he was twice your size and three times as fast... I'm even prouder of you now.

DALE

(I'm a loser)

I slipped on ice and broke my arm. He got away. Just once I'd like to avoid the ice.

HONK! HONK! A CAR races toward them, down the cul de sac, lights flashing, skids to a stop in front of the house. Jay races out, full of energy...

JAY

Get your drink on later, DJ. We gotta go.

DALE

Jay? It's late. I have neighbors--

JAY

--Upstairs won't let you carry the ball 'cause they don't think you can do the job. So we're just gonna show 'em your reel, baby.

(notices beautiful Patti)

This your wife? Yo, she's fine...

DALE

My reel is just morning show schtick.

JAY

Not the reel we're gonna make.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Dale follows Jay in to find the entire gang (except Wayne) setting up lights, cameras, etc. Gary (in a suit) rigs cables with Stephanie. Dr. Katharti (in civvies) puts on an apron.

ROY

Finally. Get him ready.

Make-Up Lady throws Dale into a chair, begins working on him. The SCORE carries us through the making of DALE'S FAKE REEL.

- ON Gary at the Anchor Desk in his suit.

GARY

We now take you to on-the-scene reporter Dale Julin who's in the heart of the riots as we speak...

CUT TO Outside. Night. Dale interviews "shop keeper" Katharti (in apron/moustache). Burning garbage can in the background.

DALE

Thank you Gary. I'm with deli owner Abeye Singh. Mr. Singh, can you tell me what happened to your store?

DR. KATHARTI
 It was overrun. By loads of black
 people...

ON Jay, who's holding a light - *What the fuck?* CUT TO:

- Dale on STAGE, across from Stephanie, a serious one-on-one interview. ON THE MONITOR her face has been "blurred-out".

DALE
 And what kind of services did you
 provided the senators?

STEPHANIE
 Solo shows. Group sex. Sex with woman
 while they watched...

ON Roy, mouth agape, rapt. CUT TO:

- Outside. Night. ANGLE UP, looking at Dale in a helicopter. Burt flies it. Dale shouts over the sound of the blades...

DALE
 I've just spotted the presidential
 motorcade. It's got traffic stopped
 all the way down the 41. If you were
 planning on getting home for dinner,
 change your order to bacon and eggs.
 (looking down)
 You got it?

REVEAL Roy on his back in the parking lot, points the camera up at Dale in a GROUNDED helicopter. Roy gives a "thumbs up".

BURT
 (deadpan)
 We should put the helicopter back now.
 This is the kind of thing that gets
 people fired.

EXT. LARGE, UPSCALE HOME - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

CARTER SOLOMON (late 60's, rich, brusque) leaves his home, heads toward his luxury car. Dale pulls to a hard stop in his car, hurries to Solomon, tapes in hand.

DALE
 Mr. Solomon? Mr. Solomon, sir.
 (as Solomon turns to him)
 I'm Dale Julin. I host the morning
 show for your K-SEE affiliate.

SOLOMON
 My corporation owns over 50 media
 concerns Mr. Julin, I don't know
 everyone who works at them. Why are
 you in my driveway?

DALE

To give you these.

(hands over the tape)

It's my reel and an exposé I just did
that's airing tomorrow. Your execs
think a morning show host can't be the
face of the story. I think they're
wrong.

Solomon hands the tapes back to Dale, slides into his car...

SOLOMON

Our news stories are handled by our
investigative journalists. I'm sorry.

DALE

I am an investigative journalist. I
mean, your number's not listed, your
home isn't listed - but I found you,
didn't I? Here I am... in your
driveway... of your house that's owned
by an off-shore Cayman account...

(off Solomon's look)

...that I won't tell anyone about.

A beat, Solomon sizes him up, then puts out his hand. Dale
quickly hands him the tape.

DALE (CONT'D)

Thank yo--

But Solomon slams the door. Dale watches him drive off...

EXT. K-SEE STUDIOS - PARKING LOT - NEXT DAY

Dale stands alone, surrounding by sky and field, and paddle-
balls. Whap-whap-whap-whap. Thinking. Stressing. Hoping.

INT. K-SEE STUDIOS - SAME TIME

REVEAL: Roy watching Dale from the window, worried for his
pal. A hand on Roy's shoulder from behind - it's Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

How's he doing?

ROY

Stopped counting at a thousand..

STEPHANIE

I hope he gets to do it. He took a
shot, he should be rewarded.

Stephanie leaves. But Roy turns, stops her with a commanding:

ROY
Hey... Weather Girl.

She turns back. He steps to her, all business, grabs her and plants one helluva kiss right on her lips.

ROY (CONT'D)
That's just me, takin' a shot.

Then she kisses him back. The camera RACKS FOCUS to pick up Wayne walking to Dale. We see them talk. Can't hear it. Wayne turns and walks back out of frame. Beat... *what's the verdict* - then Dale EXPLODES jubilantly into the air and begins running around the parking lot like a mad man! TIME CUT TO:

INT. NEWS SHOW SET - ANCHOR DESK - NIGHT

We're live! Gary introduces Dale's piece. Dale at his side.
CHYRON: JULY 8, 1992.

GARY
Tonight, a K-SEE exclusive uncovers a radioactive accident that's been hidden for over four decades - right here in the Central Valley. Our own Dale Julin brings us his story.

DALE
Good evening. This report revolves around Travis Air Force Base, an institution that's home to countless brave Air Force personnel, an institution that was once my home.

The piece begins. CUT TO people watching the News Report.

- Patti and home with the girls on the couch/in her lap...

PATTI
Look. Look what Daddy did.

- The pilot, Al Perdomo, watches Dale mention his name...

- Second Lt. Tate burns as he watches the moment where he demands the tape from Roy...

- Dr. Lubert - the college professor Dale spoke to - watches his interview about U238 and radioactivity...

- Don watches at the bar - a packed house watches along.

AGGRAVATED PATRON
Blaming the Air Force for all that nonsense... Turn this shit off--

DON
 (to the bartender)
 Don't touch it.

And that's all Don has to stay - it's staying on. OFF Don, watching his son on the screen, breaking the story...

BACK TO THE STUDIO...

GARY
 Thank you Dale for that incredible investigative work. And *this just in*, K-SEE just received word from Second Lt. Alonzo Tate, PR liaison for Travis, stating he will hold a Press Conference in two days to refute the aforementioned report which he claims is "overstated", "erroneous" and "irresponsible". Do you have any response to their allegations, Dale?

Beat, as Dale takes in this new development... Then...

DALE
 I stand by my story.

EXT. HANGER - TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

CHYRON: JULY 10, 1992

TATE (PREPRELAP)
 Yes, there was Uranium 238 onboard.
 But the existence of radioactive material was not covered-up by the Air Force at anytime...

INT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

Press Conference. Hanger full of press, Roy (camera rolling), Wayne, others. Dale's parents and Patti and the kids in the audience. Scores of Residents from the base. It's an EVENT.

Alonzo Tate stands at a podium. An uneasy Airman Peters sits to his right at a table.

TATE
 --In fact, we felt, and still believe, that the risk, if any, of U238, as opposed to the much more volatile Uranium 235 - which actually makes up the core of an atomic bomb, was indeed *de minimus*. If the reporter in question had cared as much about research as he did ratings, his work would have bore that out.

Dale raises his hand.

TATE (CONT'D)
Of course, Mr. Julin. You have a question?

DALE
Um, yes... I did do the research. According to Dr. Bruce Lubert of the University of Colorado - an expert in atomic and nuclear weaponry, U238, can become quite dangerous when exposed to high temperatures. A massive fireball kind of fits that bill...

ANGRY RESIDENT OF THE BASE stands, points finger at Dale.

ANGRY RESIDENT
You're trying to turn our home into some kinda Superfund site so you can get rich prancin' around on TV?! Why don't you go back up to Fresno!

Angry cheers erupt. Dale's Dad silently takes it all in.

DALE
I'm not trying to hurt anyone, and I'm not rich. My information was gathered by the very people who served on this base--

TATE
Glad you brought that up, Mr. Julin. Because, with a few exceptions, the names of those parties are classified. I'd like to know how you obtained them? Because you, and whoever provided it to you, might be facing federal criminal charges.

Dale looks to a wide-eyed Peters. ON Wayne, to Roy...

WAYNE
If you guys get arrested, our ratings go through the roof.

DALE
I have sources that I refuse to reveal - I gave them my word - and anonymous sources I have yet to ascertain--

VOICE (O.S.)
I sent him the damn crew list.

Everyone turns to find Don Julin standing up in the crowd.

DON

As alumni supervisor, I've got access to lots of old records; things that have been "stashed away" for whatever reason.

TATE

So you shared it with a civilian?

DON

I'm a civilian, Alonzo. Retired before you learned to piss straight. So if I can see these papers; how the hell are they classified?

(to the crowd)

You all know me, what Travis means to me. But when it comes to all this, you can question my son's findings if you want... but don't question his motives, or his character. You attack him... you attack me.

A beat as he seems to stare in the eyes of everyone there, finally locking eyes with Dale who, dumbstruck, nods thanks to his father. Don sits; Velma puts her hands on his.

TATE

Alright. Then let's just judge his findings. You all have, under your chair, a soil report from Alliance Environmental - an independent concern whose reputation is beyond reproach.

RUSTLING as everyone takes out one of these reports.

TATE (CONT'D)

You'll see soil samples taken from the crash site just two days ago were benign. The conclusion is there's no radiation, no toxicity, no danger. Mr. Julin, if the soil's not contaminated, how can these decades worth of alleged ailments be blamed on the 1950 crash?

Murmurs through the crowd as Dale flips through the report.

TATE (CONT'D)

Mr. Julin. I'm waiting?

DALE

I haven't had a time to fully digest what's in here...

TATE

I frankly don't think you've had time to fully digest the ramifications of the defamatory report your affiliate aired. I'll ask again.

(MORE)

TATE (CONT'D)
How can people get sick from
contaminants that don't exist on the
site?

VOICE (O.S.)
Because they moved the soil.

Dale looks up. Joe Connors (the firefighter with breast cancer who refused to go public) walks down the center aisle.

DALE
Mr. Connors?

TATE
I'm sorry sir. Who are you exactly?

JOE
Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Connors.
Travis Air Force base - 1938 through
'60. I was there when it happened...
(hard to say)
The day after the crash, they came
with bulldozers...

Tate's face falls - can't believe this is happening...

JOE (CONT'D)
Took off the top few feet of soil and
got it out of there. I helped 'em. And
now I'm dying for it.

DALE
Joe. Where'd they put the soil?

JOE
Don't know. But I know this - those
dozers never left Travis. Can only
guess they spread it around the base.

The room ERUPTS. Dale spins back to Tate.

DALE
(over the din)
Lt. Tate. Lt. Tate...
(the room quiets, waits
for Dale's question)
Was the Air Force aware that the
contaminated soil has been moved?

TATE
(hesitates, stunned...)
It's our position... at this time...

He stops, at a loss of what to do/say...

DALE
(cocky now)
You might as well say it. You know
I'll just find out eventually.

TATE
(a beat, then...)
Yes... this press conference is concluded.

The room erupts again as Tate exits the podium/room. Airman Peters nods respectfully at Dale who nods back. Reporters share notes, residents buzz as Dale collects his things. He then stops, leans against his chair and just EXHALES...

EXT. DALE'S PARENTS HOUSE - LATER SAME DAY

As Patti, Dale and his parents pack up the kids/the car...

DON
So traffic shouldn't be so bad now.

DALE
No. Should be ok.

DON
Back left tire's low. Check that. Most
important part of a car is the tires.

Dale opens the door to the car. Stops, turns...

DALE
Thanks. For sending the crew list. It
broke it all open for me.

DON
No big deal. You were working hard on
this thing - I respect that ...
(looks Don in the eyes)
I respect the hell outta you.

Dale is floored by the ultimate compliment Don Julin could give. He's waited his whole life to hear this.

DALE
Thank you, Dad.

DON
(hard to say)
Just because I sometimes didn't...
understand you... doesn't mean I
didn't... I'm very proud of you.

He puts his hand out to shake. They shake. Then Don pulls Dale in, hugs him. Dale hugs back. Patti watches, moved.

DALE
(choked up but hiding it)
Okay, let's go troops...

They get in the minivan and drive off... TIME CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE - FRONT GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Dale approaches the gate. Slows down, sees something...
REVEAL Teddy Kokinius standing at the gate, waiting... Dale
stops the car, Teddy moves to the open side window...

TEDDY
So that's it. It's over.

DALE
Seems that way. They'll have to do
something about it now.

Daisy drops her small bunny out the window. Teddy picks it
up, hands it back to her, gently touching her hand with his
finger, remembering his own daughter's touch. Dale notices.

DALE (CONT'D)
You gonna be ok, Teddy?

TEDDY
No... but I'll be better... see you
'round, Dale.

Dale puts the car in drive but Teddy stops him with...

TEDDY (CONT'D)
It had been driving me crazy since we
sat in that bar - that I couldn't
place you - but then I remembered when
all the shop kids accidentally burned
down the trade school garage. Everyone
made fun of us dummies... but you
started a fund raiser, right? So we
could rebuild, still graduate on time?

DALE
Yeah. That was me.

TEDDY
Yeah. I remember you now, Dale. You're
the guy who helps people.

Teddy turns, walks off. Dale watches him go...

DALE
Think things will really get better
for him?

PATTI
I do. I think things will change for
the better for all of us.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. DALE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING, STILL DARK

TIGHT ON: Alarm clock flips from 4:29 AM to **4:30 AM**. CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dale in shower, head down, just like the beginning of our story except now the music sounds like shit because the shower radio still hangs from when Dale smashed it. CUT TO:

- KITCHEN - **4:47 AM** - glassy-eyed coffee and bagel. CUT TO:
- QUICK CUTS - kiss, kiss, kiss - on the foreheads of Rosie, Daisy, Mara Mae ... but Patti isn't in bed... CUT TO:
- LIVING ROOM - Dale enters to find Patti packing boxes...

PATTI
Hey. Figured I'd get a jump on it.
Moving day's in one week.

DALE
It's not a bad apartment, right?

She steps to him, optimistic, she has to be.

PATTI
It's adorable. The girls are excited
to share a room. It's gonna be great.

DALE
Ok -- it's just -- I'm sorry. I
thought the story would fix things for
us, I thought--

She puts her fingers to his lips, kisses him.

PATTI
You think too much. We'll be fine.

INT. DALE'S CAR - MORNING

5:03 AM. Dale drives, scans station, stumbles across...

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...Weeks after the Air Force admitted an atomic bomb detonated on Travis Air Force base decades ago and the fallout, no pun intended, continues. The EPA has now called for extensive testing on site's groundwater--

INT. NEWS SHOW SET - MORNING

Dale hosts - his guest? A TRAINER and skateboarding bulldog, streaking across the stage, pushing with his little legs.

DALE

Wow, would ya look at that! Now lemme ask you, is he good at any other sports, like surfing?

TRAINER

No. Of course not.

DALE

(to camera)

Of course not. Because a *surfing* bulldog would be ridiculous. I'm Dale Julin and we'll be back in just a doggone moment!

Producer Scott calls "We're Out" and Dale's shoulders fall. He's back to doing the same old shit.

INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Wayne and Roy approach Dale. Wayne has a MANILA ENVELOPE.

WAYNE

Good show, big fella.

DALE

My favorite part was when I stepped in shit.

WAYNE

Mine too. Here, this just came in for you. You might want to read it now.

Roy is a Cat with the Canary as Dale removes the contents.

DALE (READING ALOUD)

Mr. Julin, it is our pleasure to inform you that you have won this year's Peabody Award for journalistic excellence...

(looks up, wide-eyed)

If you guys are fuckin' with me...

ROY
(proud grin)
Don't need to. I'm fuckin' the Weather Girl.

WAYNE
It's real, Dale. Now listen dummy. I got a dozen requests this morning for you for speaking gigs, real money - so get on that 'cause I'm not your fuckin' agent. Also, the affiliate's gonna pimp your ass like an Atlantic City hooker so drop a few pounds 'cause you're goin' up on billboards--

DALE
--I gotta go.

Dale sprints down the hall. Roy and Wayne watch him, happy--

WAYNE
There ya go. Run some laps.

INT. DALE'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Dale, on the phone, frantically paces. It rings. Patti answers.

PATTI (OVER PHONE)
Hello?

DALE
Hey. Baby. It's me.

PATTI (OVER PHONE)
Dale what's going on? You're out of breath.

DALE
I ran... Everything's fine... Great...
I just wanted to ask you something...

PATTI (OVER PHONE)
Ok...

Dale swallows, eyes wet, everything's gonna be okay for him, his girls, and his beautiful, supportive wife. As we PUSH IN tight on our hero's face, his journey over, a smile...

DALE
(voice catches a bit)
I love you... and I thought maybe tonight... do you wanna go to Sizzler?

HARD CUT TO BLACK... THE END.