

STARTING UNDER

"In The Beginning..."

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NETWORK DRAFT
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COLD OPENING

OVER BLACK: FADE UP SUPER: "STARTING UNDER"

(IT FADES)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

MUSIC CUE: "Night Owl" by Tony James

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHICAGO TRIBUNE PRINTING PLANT - NIGHT

SFX: BLACK AND WHITE

(MIDNIGHT. BERNIE IS IN THE MIDST OF THE GIANT MACHINERY OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE'S PRINTING PRESSES AS THEY CHURN OUT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF COPIES OF THE DAILY PAPER. SLEEVES ROLLED UP, ARMS SWEATY, HIS HANDS AND CLOTHES ARE COVERED WITH INK. HE'S CHECKING PROOFS TO BE SURE THE PRINT RUN IS CLEAN. BERNIE OPENS UP A HUGE PANEL ON THE GIANT PRESS AND REPLACES AN ENORMOUS CANISTER OF MAGENTA TONER. IT'S REMINISCENT OF CHAPLIN IN THE GIANT GEARS IN "MODERN TIMES." BERNIE CHECKS THE PROOF AGAIN)

(CU - NEWSPAPER PAGE WITH A COLOR PHOTO - WE'RE IN COLOR NOW - OF A SIGN ON A HOT DOG STAND. IT'S A HUGE STATUE OF A HOT DOG IN A TARZAN-STYLE LEOPARD SKIN, NEXT TO A HUGE HOT DOG GIRL IN A DRESS. IT'S "SUPER DAWG" AND IT'S BEEN A CHICAGO ICON SINCE 1948. THE HEADLINE READS, "SUPER DAWG: CHICAGO LANDMARK HITS SIXTY")

CUT TO:

INT. BERNIE'S CAR - DAWN

(BERNIE IS DRIVING BY THE FAMOUS HOT DOG SIGN. HE FLIPS IT OFF)

BERNIE

Next time you suck up all my magenta
toner, I'll kick your Tarzan hot dog
ass...

CUT TO:

COLD OPEN A

INT. BERNIE'S FLEABAG MOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

MUSIC CUE: "Playboy's Theme" by Cy Coleman (PLAYBOY AFTER DARK THEME)

(BERNIE ENTERS, EXHAUSTED, CARRYING SOME MAIL. HE CLOSES THE CURTAINS TO BLOCK OUT THE RISING SUN. HIS ROOM IS SMALL, MOSTLY A BED, A DRESSER WITH AN IRON ON IT, A TV, A TINY DESK, AND THERE'S A SMALL FRIDGE AND A MICROWAVE IN THE CORNER. THERE ARE REMINDER NOTES POSTED EVERYWHERE. ONE ABOVE HIS ANSWERING MACHINE SAYS, "CHECK MESSAGES." HE HITS "PLAY", THEN TURNS ON THE IRON. WHILE WE LISTEN TO MESSAGES, BERNIE OPENS SOME BILLS, STAPLES THE PAGES TOGETHER AND PUTS THEM ON A TALL STACK ON THE DESK. THERE'S A NOTE ON THE WALL ABOVE THE STACK THAT SAYS "DUE". THERE'S A SMALL PILE NEXT TO IT AND A NOTE SAYING, "PAID")

MAN'S VOICE (ON MACHINE)

This message is for Mister Bernie
Drake. Mr. Drake, your card number
ending in 1422 is now three months'
past due and we've contacted-

BERNIE

(HITS "SKIP MESSAGE") -the devil to
collect your soul. Then I'll end up
in hell. (LOOKING AROUND) Imagine
that.

(THE NEXT MESSAGE PLAYS)

WOMAN'S VOICE (ON MACHINE)

Bernie, this is Vernelle...

BERNIE

Ah, the devil.

VERNELLE (ON MACHINE)

I just got a call about my credit card. It was very embarrassing to explain that my ex-husband pays my bills and I'd appreciate you thinking about that, next time you-

BERNIE

(HITS "SKIP" AGAIN) -spend twenty-four years trying to make a marriage work with a woman who won't.

(NEXT MESSAGE, AS BERNIE STRIPS DOWN TO T-SHIRT AND BOXERS AND PULLS THREE LAUNDRY BAGS MARKED "CLEAN", "DIRTY" AND "POSSIBLE", FROM A DRESSER DRAWER.

BERNARD (ON MACHINE)

Hey, Dad, it's Bernard. It's Friday, actually Saturday now, and I'm just calling to confirm lunch at two tomorrow, really today, at 'The King's Crown' on Rush. Hope you haven't had a lot of fancy British food lately. (BERNIE'S LIKE, "WHAT?") It's a nice place so they might require a jacket. I hope that's not a hassle. Hope you had a good night. Hope you get this message. Hope... yeah. Bye. Oh, it's around midnight. No, actually twelve-oh-six, no, oh-seven...

BERNIE

No, Oh-CD...

SFX: BEEP

(NEW MESSAGE. MEANWHILE, BERNIE GRABS A SPORTS JACKET AND TRIES TO IRON IT ON TOP OF THE DRESSER, A BIG FLAT SLIPPERY SURFACE. IT'S LIKE TRYING TO IRON A CAT. HE'S CLEARLY A GUY WHO WAS A MARRIED "LIFER" AND IS HAVING A TOUGH TIME TAKING CARE OF HIMSELF)

VERNELLE (ON MACHINE)

-And I forgot to mention the house
payment's due. So unless you want me
to sleep on the street as a reward
for raising your son and cooking your
meals and being your-

(FRUSTRATED BEYOND REASON, BERNIE STOPS THE MESSAGES, GRABS THE STAPLER, AND STAPLES THE JACKET TO THE DRESSER. HE CONTINUES IRONING, THEN STOPS)

BERNIE

(TO JACKET) You tell the shirts and
pants what happened here today.

(BEAT) Don't give me that sad jacket
look. I got my own problems.

(HE CONTINUES IRONING, AND WE:)

DISSOLVE TO:

COLD OPEN B

INT. KING'S CROWN RESTAURANT - DAY

(IT'S A PUB. NO ONE'S DRESSED UP EXCEPT BERNIE AND HIS SON, BERNARD - A GOOD-LOOKING, UPTIGHT, 24 YEAR-OLD. THEY'RE WALKING TO A TABLE, IN THEIR JACKETS)

BERNIE

Stop apologizing. Never hurts a man
to dress up.

BERNARD

I feel bad.

(THEY SIT. BERNIE PICKS UP A MENU)

BERNARD

Why wouldn't their voice mail just say
"no jacket required", so people don't
worry? (NOTICING) There's a staple
in your lapel.

BERNIE

I like it there. And don't be so
sensitive. (OFF MENU) Kidney pie.
Let me check something...

(BERNIE PULLS OUT A WAD OF NOTES AND SCANS THROUGH THEM)

BERNIE

...emergency numbers... washing
instructions... setting the alarm
clock... here, allergies- (OFF
BERNARD'S LOOK) Your mother's idea.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Twenty-four years I had to pretend to
be helpless just so that woman could
feel needed.

(HE SHOOTS A LOOK AT THE ALLERGY CARD, AND QUICKLY PUTS THE
NOTES AWAY. BERNARD STARES AT HIM FOR A BEAT)

BERNARD

So living by yourself is going
alright?

BERNIE

(UPBEAT) Never better. Ever since I
left your mother, I got two roommates:
peace and quiet.

BERNARD

Right. So listen, I've been thinking-

BERNIE

(DODGING) How about you? You seeing
anyone?

BERNARD

Not really. It's been kind of quiet.
Then, about a month ago, it got
quieter. But I'm working a lot, so
it's not that important right now.

BERNIE

If you're a man, it's important. You
don't want your balls to dry up.

BERNARD

Yes, I'm a man and that is important.

(BEAT) So here's what I'm thinking-

BERNIE

You know my definition of a man? The kind of man that women are interested in?

BERNARD

(THE 1000TH TIME) I think so. Yes.

BERNIE

A man is strong and straightforward. A man gives back and he never steps back. You know how to find a man?

BERNARD

Yes-

BERNIE

(CUTTING HIM OFF) You don't have to find a man. 'Cause he's standing right there.

BERNARD

Thank you. Again. So here's my thoughts. You've been living alone for six months, and you're obviously doing great.

(MORE)

BERNARD (CONT'D)

(FINALLY HAS TO PULL THE STAPLE OUT)

But you're still pulling the graveyard shift you pulled when I was a kid, and now you've got your own expenses plus Mom's... so I have an idea.

BERNIE

I can't go back. I said some things to your mother that could be mistakenly taken as, you know, threats.

BERNARD

No. I just thought, now that I'm the sales manager at Friendly Spirits-

BERNIE

They made you sales manager? When?

BERNARD

Three months ago. I told you, they pulled me out of accounting because they liked my ideas. So listen-

BERNIE

How can you sell beer, youngblood?
You don't drink.

BERNARD

I don't have to. I just created a sales promotion based on a free keg "try-out" for micro retailers. That's why I went to business school. Don't you remember me telling you all this?

BERNIE

A lot of it doesn't stick. Your mother killed my listening.

BERNARD

Dad, I'm trying to offer you a job.

BERNIE

You're what?

BERNARD

Please don't be offended. As a liquor rep, you could earn way more with commission. You're a natural salesman.

BERNIE

Yes, I am, but I'm not going to be a burden to you. How much commission?

BERNARD

You're not a burden and 8%. I also think you should get out of that motel and move in with me for a while so you can catch up.

(MORE)

BERNARD (CONT'D)

(OFF BERNIE'S SILENCE) Come on, this is the first time in my life that I'm able to do something for you. You don't know what a big thing this is for me.

(BERNIE LOOKS AT HIM FOR A COUPLE OF BEATS, WEIGHING IT)

BERNIE

A new job and move into your place. That's a big change. Big change. I like my life.

BERNARD

I know.

BERNIE

You got a nice place?

BERNARD

Pretty nice. You'd know if you ever came by.

BERNIE

You ever get rid of some of those books and make room for a TV?

BERNARD

Dad, books are the TV of the mind.

BERNIE

Now you know why I don't come by.

(BEAT) So you really want me to do this?

BERNARD

I really do.

BERNIE

(THINKS A BEAT) So basically, I'd be doing this for you.

BERNARD

Well, yeah, sure, that's one way to look at it...

BERNIE

So you need the old man's help to keep your job and you're lonely at home.

BERNARD

I didn't say that.

BERNIE

I understand. If you say it, it becomes too real for you. (THEN) Okay. I'm going to do this because I'm your father and you need me.

BERNARD

Yes, you are, and no, I don't.

BERNIE

This'll be good for both of us. I always felt guilty that I worked all night and slept through most of your childhood. Now I'll be right next to you in my room, the master bedroom-

BERNARD

Guest bedroom.

BERNIE

...that's good, stand up for yourself
-and we'll finally have the time for
me to teach you everything I've
learned about being a man. That's
going to be my gift to you. (OFF
MENU) I'll have the fish and chips.

(BERNARD JUST LOOKS AT HIM. HE'S BEEN HERE BEFORE)

BERNARD

Right. (THEN) I hope you understand,
but I can't say "thank you" right now.
It'll make it too real for me.

BERNIE

I understand.

(BERNARD SHAKES HIS HEAD AND CONTINUES LOOKING AT HIS MENU.
BERNIE EYES HIM, SMILES, AND WE:)

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

SCENE A

INT. BERNARD'S OFFICE - MORNING

(BERNIE ARRIVES AND CROSSES TO BERNARD'S SECRETARY, ROSA - EARLY 20'S, MEXICAN, VERY PRETTY. SHE'S READING "30 DAYS TO A BETTER VOCABULARY." SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH POORLY, BUT HAS AN INNATE SOPHISTICATION. THE OFFICE IS INSIDE A LIQUOR DISTRIBUTION WAREHOUSE)

ROSA

Can I help you?

BERNIE

You already did when you smiled,
darlin'.

ROSA

Because I don't know you, right? In
recepting people, I believe it is
important to express that you are
welcome in my face.

BERNIE

Okay, you've got to work on that.
Otherwise you're going to have a line
out the door. But good for you,
learning the language. (EXTENDING HIS
HAND) I'm Bernie.

ROSA

(SHAKING HIS HAND) Hi Bernie. Rosa.
You can tell, right? I'm also taking
three lessons a week to lose my
accent. Listen... (CAREFULLY)
"Uh-oh."

(SHE LOOKS TO HIM FOR HIS REACTION)

BERNIE

You killed that. You could be in
trouble anywhere in the United States.

ROSA

Thank you.

BERNIE

(LOOKING AROUND) Is Bernard here?
I'm supposed to start today.

ROSA

Bernard is in the warehouse. But I'm
his assistant.

BERNIE

Alright, then let's get my paperwork
going. I'll need a W-4 and an I-9.

ROSA

Certainly, of course.

(SHE HAS NO IDEA WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR, BUT SHE PRETENDS TO
LOOK. SHE FINDS SOME WD-40 AND HOLDS IT UP)

ROSA (CONT'D)

This is not right.

BERNIE

You must be new. A W-4 is for deductions, and an I-9 verifies that I can work in the United States. (OFF HER BLANK STARE) You've never filled out an I-9, have you?

ROSA

(BEAT) "Uh-oh."

BERNIE

(REALIZING) You're a damn illegal, aren't you? Does Bernard know about this? 'Cause you shouldn't be here.

ROSA

(CONTINUING TO LOOK FOR THE PAPERS)
He knows and yes, I should. I work hard.

BERNIE

So does the American whose job you're taking.

ROSA

I pay taxes. And social security, which I will never get back.

BERNIE

Nobody's getting that back. You need to swim home and get in line to come over like everybody else.

ROSA

Oh? Did your family come to America
with papers?

BERNIE

They didn't have time to get papers.
They were hunting a tiger when
somebody stuck them on a boat.

(BERNARD ENTERS)

ROSA

(UPSET, IN SPANISH, SUBTITLED) You
think I like feeling like a criminal?
I could go to jail!

BERNIE

Okay, I don't know what that means,
but keep talking and I'm going to drop
a dime on you.

BERNARD

Oh my God. What's going on here?

BERNIE

Son, did you knowingly hire an
illegal?

ROSA

Son? Oh Dios mio.

(ROSA EXITS)

BERNARD

Look, now you scared her.

BERNIE

I'll have the INS bring her flowers
during the sweep.

BERNARD

You don't know the whole story.
(CLOSING THE DOOR) She had a terrible
life in Guadalajara. To make money,
she had to slow dance with old men in
her underwear. (OFF BERNIE'S LOOK)
It's a cultural thing.

BERNIE

So is that the kind of behavior you
want coming across the border?
Because I'm fairly sure, but not
positive, I don't. As I get older, I
might.

BERNARD

Look, I like her. She's bright, she's
capable, so I'm giving her a chance.

BERNIE

And she's hot. Or are you giving some
ugly Mexicans a chance too?

BERNARD

(CALLING OUT) Ernesto!

(A WEATHERED MEXICAN WAREHOUSE WORKER WITH AN INTERESTING
CHARACTER FACE COMES IN)

ERNESTO

Yeah, boss?

(BERNARD GESTURES TOWARD HIM, INDICATING "SEE?")

BERNARD

Nothing, Ernesto. God bless you.

(ERNESTO EXITS)

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. FRIENDLY SPIRITS SALES BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

(THERE'S A SCATTERED GROUPING OF DESKS UNDER HANGING LIGHTS, IN THE MIDST OF THE LIQUOR WAREHOUSE. IT'S AN OASIS OF LIGHT AND ACTIVITY IN AN OTHERWISE DIM ROOM FULL OF PALLETS OF LIQUOR AND FORKLIFTS BUZZING BACK AND FORTH. BUSY AT THEIR DESKS ARE JADA, MID-TO-LATE 30'S, HOT, SINGLE, A TOUGH BLUE-COLLAR LIQUOR SALESWOMAN - TODD, EARLY TWENTIES, ATHLETIC, A RAGING ADOLESCENT - AND KEN, MID-TO-LATE 40'S, A SLIGHT POLISH ACCENT, STOUT AND GREGARIOUS. BERNIE AND BERNARD ENTER THE BULLPEN. BERNARD ACTS DIFFERENTLY AROUND THE SALES TEAM, MORE FORCEFUL AND "JOCK"-ISH)

BERNARD

Yo, team. How are the Friendly
Spirits this morning?

JADA/KEN/TODD

(THEY HATE THIS) "As friendly as the
law allows. Drink responsibly."

(TODD SUBTLY TAKES HIS MORNING BEER OFF HIS DESK AND PUTS IT
IN A DRAWER)

BERNARD

Okay. Before we start the sales
meeting, I'd like to introduce two new
people you're going to be working
with. Quickly...

(HE UNROLLS THE POSTER TO REVEAL A HOT, BIKINI-CLAD MODEL
HOLDING A BEER BOTTLE WITH BOTH HANDS)

BERNARD

Wow. This is Carmela. She's going to be helping you sell Rodz' new wide-mouthed, long-neck ale with the slogan, "So big it takes two hands."

JADA

Man, why doesn't someone just come out with a beer named "Big Fat Johnson" and get it over with?

(KEN STARTS TO JOT DOWN A NOTE)

JADA

No, Ken. Not a good idea.

(KEN NODS AGREEMENT, TOSSES THE NOTE, BUT CATCHES IT WITH HIS OTHER HAND AND POCKETS IT)

BERNARD

Well, I know I'm not speaking just for myself, when I say, (OFF POSTER) works for me. (ROLLS UP POSTER) Now, much more importantly, I'd like you to meet the newest member of the mighty Friendly Spirits sales force. Team, this is Bernie.

JADA/KEN/TODD

Hey. / Good to meet you. / Bring back Carmela.

BERNIE

Thank you.

BERNARD

(INDICATING EACH PERSON) This is
Todd, he just graduated from DePaul,
and he rocks most of our sports
concessions...

BERNIE

Cubs fan or Sox fan?

TODD

Whoever gives me free tickets. I also
pimp the Bears, Bulls and Blackhawks.

BERNIE

I love you like a son.

BERNARD

(A LITTLE JEALOUS) Thanks, Todd. And
this is Ken. He beats up the North
Side.

KEN

(PROUDLY) Little India, Korea Town,
the Polish Gold Coast, Ukrainian
Village, BoysTown and Jew Town. They
all drink for different reasons, I
know why.

BERNIE

I'll bet you do.

BERNARD

And Jada. South Side and Far South.
Simple black and white. Our strongest
territory.

JADA

That's right, I'm legendary. I'm like
Paul Bunyan or Johnny Appleseed. If I
spill beer, a bar grows. If I spill
vodka... well, get me home 'cause I've
got to be real drunk to spill vodka.

(BERNIE LAUGHS)

BERNIE

I'm going to be watching you then.

(SHE GIVES HIM A SMILE)

BERNARD

Another thing you should all know
about Bernie is that he is also...
my dad.

(A MOMENT OF AWKWARD SILENCE)

TODD

Holy crap.

BERNARD

I know this isn't conventional, but
he's a great guy and he really knows
beer.

(MORE)

BERNARD (CONT'D)

My mom always said, "Bernard, your father loves beer more than he loves me."

BERNIE

That's why beer and I are still together.

BERNARD

And you can also rest assured that my father is not going to be treated differently than anyone else.

BERNIE

And my boy does not lie, 'cause I whipped that out of him when he was five. Broke a good belt, but I thought it was important.

BERNARD

(MOVING PAST IT) Jada, I'd like you to take Bernie on your run today, show him how we do things.

JADA

...Sure.

(BERNIE'S HAPPY WITH HIS FIRST ASSIGNMENT)

BERNARD

And Ken, I'd appreciate it if you'd share your desk with Bernie.

KEN

No problem. Bernie and I are going to be great friends.

BERNIE

It's the best way to work.

KEN

Yes, but also you are divorced and I am divorced. We'll go out every night and get laid. I already have a line for us to use. "A Polish guy and a black guy walk into a bar..."

BERNIE

And I have the end of that line. "...looking for the HIV." But thanks for the offer. (TO BERNARD) I don't want to put anybody out. I'll be fine with a small office in the back somewhere.

BERNARD

We don't have offices. I prefer an open work space.

BERNIE

How do I take personal phone calls?
Your mother calls me damn near five
times a day and sometimes there's
screaming. (TO THE TEAM) Not the
friendliest divorce.

(BERNIE MOUTHES THE WORD "BITCH")

BERNARD

Rosa just collects up all the personal
messages and you can return calls
during lunch.

BERNIE

Fine, I'll just use your phone. I'm
not telling that woman she can only
yell at me once a day.

BERNARD

(MOVING ON) Okay, this is going to be
great. Let's skip this morning's
meeting so you guys can get on the
road. Go, Spirits.

(BERNARD EXITS. EVERYONE GOES BACK TO PREPARING FOR THE DAY.
BERNIE CROSSES TO JADA, WHO'S GRABBING HER COAT)

BERNIE

Ready when you are.

(SHE HEADS FOR THE DOOR, HE FOLLOWS)

JADA

(SOTTO) You know, this is going to be
pretty awkward.

BERNIE

(SOFTLY) I know. I felt it too. But
I need time.

JADA

I'm talking about working with my
boss' father.

BERNIE

I have no way to cover up what I just
said.

(THEY EXIT TO THE PARKING LOT)

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE C

EXT. FRIENDLY SPIRITS PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

(BERNIE AND JADA COME OUT OF THE BUILDING)

JADA

I'm sorry, but this is a damn mess for everyone.

BERNIE

What?

JADA

We make our living on commissions. How the hell do we compete with the sales manager's father?

BERNIE

You're not competing with anyone's father. You're competing with Bernie Drake.

JADA

Yeah, but who's Bernie Drake Jr. going to side with if there's a problem? Who's he going to give the best new accounts to?

BERNIE

We're not that kind of people.

JADA

I don't know what kind of people you are. Your son hasn't said two personal words to any of us since he started here. The minute you try to have a real conversation, he starts talking about team spirit and sales strategies.

BERNIE

Bernard's always been a little different. He spent a lot of time holed up in his room-

JADA

Now he's helping his daddy out by giving him a job. Nobody ever helped me. I've been on my own since I was seventeen. If my momma called me for money, I'd tell her to pull on some panty hose, paint on some eyebrows and find a busy corner.

BERNIE

I agree. But my son's not helping me. I'm helping him. (OFF HER DUBIOUS LOOK) I'm helping him.

JADA

You can call it what you want. But a grown man doesn't work for his son.

BERNIE

Stay out of my family business.

JADA

Any time I've heard of it, the son works for the daddy.

BERNIE

Stay out of my family business.

JADA

Your family business just became my business.

BERNIE

Stay out of my- (THEN) Have you noticed that while we're talking, I've had to say the same thing two or three times?

JADA

(GETTING INTO HER CAR) I'm just saying, it was bad enough when they brought in a twelve year-old to be our manager. Now we've got to work with his daddy. Don't be surprised if you and Bernard are the only Friendly Spirits left come Monday morning.

BERNIE

Whoa, nobody's going to be quitting on my boy. One thing you don't know about me: I'm a problem solver.

(BERNIE GETS INTO THE CAR)

JADA

You're part of the problem.

BERNIE

That's the challenge. That's why I took this job. I'm here to help him.

(ANOTHER DUBIOUS LOOK) That face is not helping us.

FADE OUT

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE D

INT. BERNARD'S FRONT ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

(BERNARD IS SEATED BY HIS WINDOW, PAINTING. HE HAS A STILL-LIFE SET UP ON A NEARBY TABLE, ILLUMINATED BY A LIGHT ON A STAND. HE'S LISTENING TO A CD)

MUSIC CUE: "ORINOCO FLOW" BY ENYA

(HIS APARTMENT, PROBABLY BUILT IN THE 40'S, REFLECTS GOOD TASTE. THERE'S A VINTAGE DESK AND CABINET UNIT ON ONE WALL AND BUILT-IN BOOKSHELVES TO THE CEILING, COMPLETELY FULL OF BOOKS, ON ANOTHER. THERE'S AN OVERSTUFFED VICTORIAN-STYLE CHAIR AND READING LAMP SET UP IN A PROMINENT SPOT, INDICATING THEIR IMPORTANCE. THERE ARE SOME NICELY FRAMED PHOTOS OF OLD CHICAGO AND A FEW FRAMED, OVERSIZED, FOREIGN FILM POSTERS. SUDDENLY, BERNIE BURSTS IN THE FRONT DOOR, CARRYING SIX-PACKS OF BEER AND GROCERY BAGS FULL OF SNACKS)

BERNIE

Hey, son. The key works. (CHECKING OUT THE PLACE) I always said your momma got knocked up by somebody in that book club.

BERNARD

Hey, there's nothing wrong with a little culture.

BERNIE

Culture. You say it like it's a damn vitamin. Where's the kitchen?

BERNARD

(INDICATING AN ARCHWAY) Down the hall. I thought you were bringing some clothes over so you could stay tonight.

BERNIE

(EXITS TO KITCHEN) I am. I had to get some help.

(WE HEAR BANGING FROM THE KITCHEN OFF-STAGE AS BERNIE GOES THROUGH CABINETS)

BERNARD

I was just working on my painting. You didn't have to pay movers.

(BERNIE RE-ENTERS WITH BOWLS AND SNACKS AND STARTS FILLING)

BERNIE

I didn't. While I was driving with Jada- by the way, the woman beats that company car like an unlucky crack baby- we started talking about things and the good news is, I convinced her not to quit.

BERNARD

Why would she quit?

BERNIE

We got into it a little. But we're starting fresh. She got Ken and Todd to help me grab some things from my apartment and then we're going to watch the game.

(BERNIE NEEDS ANOTHER BOWL, SO HE GRABS THE ONE FROM BERNARD'S STILL-LIFE SET UP AND FILLS IT WITH CHIPS)

BERNARD

(DISBELIEF) You changed the interplay of light and shadow. (THEN) Don't tell me you invited them here.

BERNIE

Yes, I did. Lesson number one on being a boss: Get to know your fellow workers. They're people.

BERNARD

Only when I'm not with them. A sales manager never gets too familiar with his team. What if I have to fire someone? They shouldn't even know where I live.

BERNIE

Well, this is where I live now too. So get used to having some company.

BERNARD

No, Dad. Call them right now and tell them you'll meet them someplace else.

SFX: KNOCK AT DOOR

BERNIE

You tell 'em.

BERNARD

You don't understand. I'm a different person at work. I have to be one of the guys or they won't respect me. They think my place is full of beer and posters of hot girls.

BERNIE

See? This is what you get for not being yourself.

BERNARD

(ANOTHER KNOCK) Oh God. I have to put away... (LOOKS AROUND)
...everything.

BERNIE

Too late. Smile and say very personal things.

(BEFORE BERNARD CAN SAY ANYTHING, BERNIE OPENS THE DOOR. TODD ENTERS FIRST WITH A BOX OF CLOTHES, THEN KEN WITH BERNIE'S TV SET, THEN JADA, WITH SOME HANGING CLOTHES)

TODD

Hey, Bernard. Did you see the place where your dad was living? It was a real crap-house. (LOOKING AROUND)
Hey, you're gay.

(BERNARD SHOOTS HIS DAD A LOOK)

BERNIE

Bernard's not gay. He just likes the same things that gay people do.

KEN

(SOTTO) All the same things? 'Cause if he has to look over his shoulder to say, "I love you," he's gay.

(KEN PUTS THE TV SET ON THE READING CHAIR. BERNARD IMMEDIATELY PICKS IT BACK UP)

BERNARD

Alright, Dad, stop the kidding. (TO THE GANG) I'm not gay. It's a furnished apartment. I rent it from... an antique dealer. So please don't touch anything 'cause none of it is mine.

JADA

(NOTICING THE STILL-LIFE) Do you paint?

BERNARD

(QUICKLY) That's dad's.

TODD

You paint, Bernie?

BERNIE

No way.

BERNARD

Oh, then it's mine. I paint when I think about new sales strategies. I'm painting things that go with beer. Bowls of chips, an orange... a vase...

JADA

So where are all those posters you take home from work?

BERNARD

(AT A LOSS) Well, you know, work keeps me so busy...

BERNIE

(SEEING THAT BERNARD IS STRUGGLING)

All you people think about is work. I'm going to open your coffins, see if you got a laptop in there. Now let's put my things away and watch the game. Where's my room, son?

BERNARD

(NOT HAPPY) Far end of the hall, turn right.

(JADA, KEN AND TODD TAKE THE BOXES DOWN THE HALL. BERNIE AND BERNARD HAVE AN INTENSE, BUT WHISPERED EXCHANGE)

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Why are you doing this? I don't like them here. I'm a very private person.

BERNIE

A man doesn't have anything to hide. A man is secure in who he is.

BERNARD

How many definitions do you have for a man?!

BERNIE

A man knows all the definitions of a man.

BERNARD

Stop it!

(JADA, KEN AND TODD RE-ENTER, GRINNING)

TODD

Everything's in your room, Bernie.

JADA

Great apartment, Bernard. It really looks like a place where you can "think prosperous thoughts because you do deserve success."

TODD

But also a place where "you're strong enough to forgive yourself for lost sales." Let them go, Bernard.

(MORE)

TODD (CONT'D)

If they were truly yours, they'll come back.

BERNARD

Oh. You found... my affirmations.

KEN

Yes. And I agree that you're an "attractive, powerful man and any woman would want you." You are a catch.

JADA

(TRYING NOT TO LAUGH) Oh man, I'm sorry, but we went into the wrong room by mistake. Okay, I went in and I called the others in. You couldn't miss those notes all over the mirror. I hope you don't mind.

BERNARD

Me? No. I'm an open book.

BERNIE

There you go.

BERNARD

Actually, I was testing out a new motivational technique. I used a control group of affirmations that I already knew were true. And it works. I still believe them.

TODD

So you really think that if you "come to the edge of a cliff, either a road will appear before you, or the universe will give you wings to fly?" 'Cause that's a huge risk.

BERNARD

(BEAT) That's a tough one, Todd.

BERNIE

(JUMPING IN) Hey, the bar down the street has a 60-inch plasma screen and the beer's on me. Who wants to go? I know I do.

BERNARD

No, no. You guys stay here. I'm going to my room and finally get those posters up. (REALIZING) Hey, who put Enya on? (EJECTING THE CD AND FLIPPING IT INTO THE TRASH) 'Night.

(BERNARD EXITS)

BERNIE

The rest of the night we all stay in this room. And if you see anything you wonder about, don't ask. It's not his.

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE E

INT. FRIENDLY SPIRITS BULLPEN - NEXT MORNING

(BERNIE, KEN AND TODD ARE AT THEIR DESKS. THEY'RE HAVING COFFEE, GETTING THE MORNING STARTED. JADA ENTERS)

JADA

Bernard here yet?

KEN

He's in his office.

JADA

What kind of mood is he in?

BERNIE

Don't know. I got out of the house early to make one last run to the motel. I'm sure he's fine.

JADA

Anybody try the new Rodz ale? Is it any good?

TODD

(HANDS BOTTLE TO BERNIE) It tastes like ass.

(FIGURING THIS IS A TASTING RITUAL, BERNIE TAKES A SIP)

BERNIE

It does have kind of an "ass"ter-taste.

(ROSA ENTERS THE BULLPEN)

ROSA

Bernie, Bernard would like to see you
in his office. Now.

(EVERYONE "OOHS")

JADA

Uh-oh, daddy's going to get a
spanking.

BERNIE

You know what? Shut up when you talk
to me.

(BERNIE CROSSES PAST ROSA)

ROSA

Be careful. He's wearing a belt
today.

BERNIE

Keep it up. I got the INS on speed-
dial.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE H

INT. BERNARD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

(BERNARD IS AT HIS DESK. BERNIE ENTERS)

BERNARD

Please sit down.

BERNIE

I've only been asked to sit down once
in my entire work life. I was
eighteen and the boss was about to
fire me and he wanted a head start.

(BEAT) Are you about to fire me?

BERNARD

As an employee, no. As my father,
possibly.

BERNIE

(SITTING) Be careful. This
conversation can go both ways.

BERNARD

I've been careful with you my whole
life. When I was little and you said,
"I'm going to kill that kid"... I
believed you.

BERNIE

I never laid a hand on you.

BERNARD

You broke a belt.

BERNIE

That's not a human hand. It might have been a cow's hand. And you turned out fine.

BERNARD

Did I? I can't tell. My dad never gives me credit for anything I do.

BERNIE

Name one thing.

BERNARD

You didn't listen when I told you I got promoted, you never really appreciated that I was trying to help you, you don't recognize my position as sales manager, you don't even see me as a grown-up.

BERNIE

One thing would have made your point.

BERNARD

How could you bring the team to my apartment without asking me?

BERNIE

Because they needed to get to know us.
Not just me, you. That's one of the
reasons Jada was threatening to quit.
I was just trying to help.

BERNARD

I don't need that kind of help. Now
they know all about my personal life.
I'm not the boss any more, I'm the guy
who likes Enya and thinks he can fly
off a cliff. What were you thinking?

BERNIE

I'm your father. You don't talk to me
that way. I may have slept through
half your childhood, but the other
half, I raised you. I wiped poop off
you. If I don't see you as a grown-up
now, maybe it's because I'm not done
looking at you as a child. I missed
out on a lot. But don't you ever talk
to your father like that. (BEAT)
I'll talk to you the way I want.
Because I was always there for you.

(BERNARD LOOKS AT HIS DAD FOR A LONG BEAT)

BERNARD

I accept your apology. But I still have a credibility problem with my sales team. What am I supposed to do about that?

BERNIE

You go out there and talk to them. Straight up. You tell them who you are, that you're fine with who you are, and that you are in charge. You let them know that you're not just a man, you're a hell of a man -- a mean and serious soup.

BERNARD

(BEAT) Sounds painful. (THEN) Fine. I might as well do it now.

BERNIE

I'll be right there with you.

BERNARD

Thanks. (THEN) So you really see me as a man now?

BERNIE

You're a man. You're just a different kind of man. We'll work on it.

BERNARD

Okay, but as a man, understand that I
can still worry about my father from
time to time.

BERNIE

Don't worry about me, worry about your
mother. She just got her credit card
cut off.

(THEY EXIT INTO THE WAREHOUSE)

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE J

INT. FRIENDLY SPIRITS BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

(EVERYONE'S THERE, INCLUDING ROSA. BERNIE AND BERNARD ENTER)

BERNARD

Okay, team. Before we start the sales meeting, I have a couple of things to say about last night.

(EVERYONE AD-LIBS "NO, NO, IT WAS OUR FAULT", "YOU DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE COMING," "WE SHOULDN'T PRY", ETC.)

BERNARD

No, it's okay. First -- I'm sorry I wasn't a better host. I do like you guys. Second -- this does not mean the door is open to ask me about personal stuff. I know I'm not your typical liquor distribution sales manager. To be completely honest, I don't even like beer. I don't like alcohol period. And I think those beer girl posters are demeaning and misleading.

TODD

You were okay up to there.

KEN

Here, here.

BERNARD

But I'm your sales manager. And I do believe in providing the best product and service to those good people who do like those things. My job is to motivate you so we can make money and most importantly, you can make money. There's a "man" in manager and you don't have to look for that man, 'cause he's standing right here.

(THERE'S A SMALL ROUND OF SINCERE APPLAUSE. BERNIE WIPES A TEAR FROM HIS EYE)

JADA

You okay?

BERNIE

For a moment there, he sounded just like Obama.

JADA

I know.

BERNIE

(MORE WEEPY) But he listens to Enya...

JADA

I know.

(JADA PUTS A COMFORTING HAND ON BERNIE'S SHOULDER)

BERNIE

(SOTTO) I told you it was too soon.

Starting Under

2/28/08

49.
II/J

(JADA SMACKS BERNIE AND CROSSES AWAY. AS BERNIE SMILES, WE:)

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW