

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM -- MORNING

A man and woman, sprawled out on one side of a king-sized bed, arms wrapped around each other.

The morning sunlight filters through small cracks in the Venetian blinds. The LED changes from 5:59 to 6:00 and the clock-radio starts BLARING.

VOICE ON RADIO

In the world of professional golf, Masters champ Phil Mickelson added another major title to his resume yesterday with a two stroke victory over Ernie Els in the United States Open.

A hand reaches out, smashes the snooze button.

The woman snuggles closer to the man, giving him many affectionate kisses on the face, neck, chest.

WALTER ROMAN, 40s, haggard, anguished, fatigued looking, pulls away, sits up, GROANS, rubs his eyes, turns to the woman.

WALTER

In the entire history of this planet, there has never been a bigger fool than me.

NINA ROMAN, 40s, lovely woman, quickly buries her dejected look, gently rubs her hand on Walter's back.

NINA

Walter honey, we'll get through this just like everything else.

Walter flashes an appreciative but fleeting smile.

WALTER

I love you baby.

NINA

It's not good to work on an empty stomach.

WALTER

Just some Cheerios, thanks.

EXT. CITY STREET -- AFTERNOON

A driving rain pounds onto the congested downtown street. Windshield wipers running at full-speed. A sea of umbrellas. Bumper to bumper traffic, horns BLARING.

INT. TRUCK

Walter, handsome features obscured by anxiety, stares out the window at the log-jam of traffic. He sings along to the Rolling Stones song on the radio, taps his hand on the steering wheel.

WALTER

Time waits for no one, and it won't
wait for me. Time waits for no one...

The song continues to play. Walter glances at his watch, lays on the horn. HONK, HONK, HONK. He turns down the radio, rolls down the window, sticks his head into the downpour.

WALTER

Let's get moving people! This is
serious business! Eggs need to be
delivered!

A YOUNG MAN in a shiny new Lexus, rolls his window down.

YOUNG MAN

Lay off the horn dude. We're all in
the same boat.

Walter glares at him and his car with all of the disdain he can muster.

WALTER

Hey stock-option boy, if the
Metropolitan Grill is out of acorn
squash souffle tonight don't blame
me!

The young man flips Walter off.

Across the street, an old man with a red sweatshirt and a Red Sox hat looks at Walter, smiles, pulls out a small pad and makes a few notes.

EXT. CITY STREET

The delivery truck marked, "ROMAN EGG COMPANY", sits double-parked in the heavy traffic, causing more HONKING.

Walter stacks cases of eggs onto a hand-truck, oblivious to the rainfall and the irate drivers around him.

A MANAGER sticks his head out the door of a restaurant, smirks.

MANAGER

So Walter Roman finally has to work
for a living, huh?

Walter flashes a cheerful smile.

WALTER

I'm a goddamn workin' fool.

Walter wheels a large stack of boxes toward the restaurant. The manager holds the door open.

MANAGER

I need my deliveries by three. I've
warned you about this! You're not
the only egg company in town!

WALTER

Have you seen the traffic today?

Walter doesn't wait for a response, moves on with the hand-truck.

INT. TRUCK -- EVENING

Traffic at a standstill. Wiper blades can't keep up with the deluge. A sea of red tail lights as far as the eye can see. Off to the side a billboard reads: STUCK IN TRAFFIC? HATE YOUR JOB? VISIT US AT WWW.MICROSOFT.COM.

INT. ROOSTERS TAVERN -- EVENING

A smoke-filled tavern. A large jar of pickled eggs sits next to a computer monitor on the back counter. Several patrons mill about in the background, playing shuffleboard, shooting pool.

Walter stands at the bar, sips a beer, reads the SEATTLE TIMES newspaper. The front page headline reads: "GATES STILL WORLD'S WEALTHIEST MAN."

DEE DEE, early 50s, bartender, big hair, way too much makeup, grabs her nearly finished cigarette, uses it to light a new one.

Walter holds up the paper, stabs his finger into the headline.

WALTER

Look at this will ya? Bill Gates
was my best friend... all the way
through college--

DEE DEE

Yeah, yeah, I know... now he's the
richest guy in the world and all you
are is a frickin' egg peddler.

Walter gives Dee Dee a mock dirty look.

DEE DEE

I knew him too you know. You don't
hear me bitching about it.

WALTER

Warm beer and cold pizza, but the
truly pleasant conversation more
than makes up for it.

Dee Dee playfully sticks her tongue out at Walter, then
launches into an awful sounding smoker's hack.

WALTER

Jesus Dee Dee, you okay?

Dee Dee nods, finally stops coughing, takes a drag off of
her smoke.

DEE DEE

I bet he ain't even that happy.
Government up his ass all day long.
Who'd want that kinda crap?

WALTER

Gimme sixty billion and I'll take
all the crap they can dish out...
with a smile on my face.

Walter takes a long swig from his beer.

A few seats down sits SPANGLER, the old man with the Red Sox
hat, 70s, sporting a white pony tail and the same red
sweatshirt, takes notice. He moves closer to Walter.

Walter looks over, makes eye contact with Spangler.

WALTER

Check this out pal. Summer of seventy-five. Gates and I are cruising around in his brand spankin' new Mustang... that his old man paid for, mind you.

Spangler hangs on every word.

EXT. BURGER JOINT -- EVENING (FLASHBACK)

A bright blue, Mustang convertible races into the parking lot, comes to a SCREECHING halt.

Walter, 22, hair flowing to his shoulders, sits on the passenger side next to BILL GATES, 22, soon to be the world's wealthiest man, but now just another pimply-faced kid with long red hair and oversized glasses.

Bill fires up a joint, takes a long hit, passes it to Walter.

BILL

You've got a degree in marketing, man. I need a guy like you.

WALTER

My dad wants me to take over the egg company when he retires. He makes damn good money off it too. Damn good.

Bill, incredulous look on his face, slowly shakes his head.

BILL

Computers are a little more challenging than cheese omelets.

Walter takes a few drags off of the joint.

WALTER

I don't know jack-shit about programming.

Walter passes the joint to Bill. Bill takes a hit.

BILL

Leave that to us smart guys. All you have to do is sell.

WALTER

Computers are for the Army and the C.I.A. and like that. Shit, everyone eats eggs.

BILL

And everyone will own a personal computer some day... and Microsoft software will make them all run, lightning fast.

Bill becomes dead serious.

BILL

This is a screaming opportunity for you and this is the last time I'm gonna ask. Are you in or out?

Walter takes a huge hit off of the joint.

WALTER

I'm out man. I am the eggman.

INT. ROOSTERS TAVERN

Walter takes a long swig of his beer, looks Spangler in the square in the eye.

WALTER

I'm out man. I am the eggman. That's what I told him. In one hazy, pot-induced moment I made the single worst decision in the history of mankind.

SPANGLER

Well you've done fairly well for yourself in spite of your seemingly unfortunate career decision.

Walter glares at Spangler, his mood suddenly turns sour.

WALTER

Do I know you?

SPANGLER

Not exactly but--

WALTER

Then don't tell me how well I'm doing
because I know how well I'm doing
and I ain't doing worth a shit!

Walter chugs the rest of his beer, slaps a buck on the bar,
hurries toward the door.

EXT. ROOSTER'S BAR

Walter wipes sweat from his forehead.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

If it isn't the one and only Walter
Roman.

Walter turns to see LARRY MORIARITY, mid 40s, GQ look, not a
hair our of place. They shake hands.

WALTER

Hey Larry.
(awkward pause)
So... how's Andrea?

Larry CHUCKLES.

LARRY

As long as she gets her alimony check
on time she's fine.

Walter's face becomes flushed.

WALTER

Sorry man, I hadn't heard.

LARRY

Don't be sorry for me. I'm on wifey
number four now, but this one's a
keeper. Bod that won't quit. Nothing
but legs and boobs. A real looker.
Nice chick too.

Larry's gaze suddenly shifts as he follows the shapely body
of a female passerby. He finally looks back at Walter.

LARRY

You still with Nina?

WALTER

(proudly)
Comin' up on twenty.

Larry playfully grabs Walter, puts him in a headlock.

LARRY

I never shoulda let her get away,
you son of a bitch. You ended up
with the finest piece of grade A
prime beef in town.

Walter, visibly annoyed, breaks away.

WALTER

I see you haven't lost any of your
famous charm.

Larry flashes a cocky smile.

LARRY

Got me where I am today.

WALTER

Where would that be?

Larry beams with pride, hands Walter a business card.

LARRY

I sell Microsoft every goddamn stick
of furniture they buy. Chairs, desks,
filing cabinets... floor mats...
everything.

Walter has a look of total defeat.

EXT. PORCH -- EVENING

Walter knocks on the door. Moments later the door swings
open revealing TOM ROMAN, 70s, Walter's father.

INT. TOM'S KITCHEN

Empty cans everywhere. Sink filled with dirty dishes. Trash
can overflowing. Walter buzzes through the room filling
trash bags.

Tom sits hunched over at the kitchen table, typing away at a
keyboard.

WALTER

We all miss mom, but for Christ's
sake you can't live like this.

TOM
(without looking up)
It's not like I'm overwhelmed with
dinner invites.

Walter rolls his eyes, then spies Tom's computer.

WALTER
How's the computer working out?

TOM
I love this AOL. They even have a
dating service for old farts like
me.

Tom reads from the screen.

TOM
(reading)
Curvy, vivacious, retired nurse seeks
financially secure gentleman for
companionship and possibly more.

Tom looks up at Walter, then back at the screen.

WALTER
You're not gonna start dating?

Tom's look becomes very solemn.

TOM
Your mother made me promise not to
die alone.

Walter LAUGHS.

WALTER
You know she didn't mean it.

Tom smiles.

TOM
I know.

WALTER
Come over tomorrow. It's Fiona's
last night in town.

A twinkle in Tom's eye.

TOM
If Nina's cooking I'll be there.

Walter continues to clean. Tom stops typing, looks up.

TOM
Couple of the old customers gave me
a ring. They tell me your head ain't
in the business like it should be.

WALTER
The demand for eggs ain't there.
Not a lot I can do about that.

TOM
Maybe you oughta getcha one of them
there fancy websites.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- EVENING

Walter, in his circa 1985 Toyota, pulls into the driveway of a modest but well kept home. A white picket fence surrounds a front yard lined with rhododendron bushes. Smoke curls up from the red brick chimney.

INT. LIVING ROOM

A pained looking Walter sits at a small desk, goes through a stack of unpaid bills, all of them marked "PAST DUE" or "FINAL NOTICE." He tosses them onto a larger stack of unpaid bills.

INT. DINING ROOM

Walter, Nina, and FIONA ROMAN, 17, sit at the dinner table, eating in silence. Nina reaches down, lifts and proudly displays a framed sign.

FIONA
What's that?

NINA
It's the Irish proverb that hung in
Gram's hallway for years. "May those
that love us love us; And those that
don't love us, may God turn their
hearts--

WALTER
How's Grams doing?

Nina looks slightly annoyed to be interrupted.

NINA
Cranky. Lonely. Same old same old.

A few moments of silence follows.

NINA
Oh, it looks like I'm catering the
Vandenberg wedding after all. Three
hundred guests. Sit down dinner. The
works.

Nina smiles, rubs her fingers together indicating large
amounts of cash.

FIONA
That's awesome, mom.

Fiona wipes her face with a napkin, tosses it on the plate.

FIONA
Gotta finish packing.

Fiona jumps out of her chair, scampers off. Nina smiles.

NINA
Where that kid got her talent is one
of the great mysteries of the
universe.

Walter smiles proudly.

WALTER
You were a pretty amazing Maria in
"West Side Story."

NINA
That was thirty years ago and I
couldn't carry a tune in a bucket.

Walter CHUCKLES.

WALTER
Speaking of thirty years ago I ran
into your old boyfriend today.

A wistful look from Nina.

NINA
Larry?

Walter nods with resignation.

WALTER

Even that moron got rich off of Gates.

NINA

He must not have been afraid to pick up the phone and call him, like some people I know.

Walter's face tightens, turns red.

WALTER

Maybe you should have married him.

NINA

Larry or Bill?

WALTER

Either one. At least Fiona would be going to the New England Conservatory.

NINA

Will you pulleezze give that a fucking rest?

Walter and Nina both pick at their food.

WALTER

You deserve a husband that didn't get his car and his house from his parents?

Nina tries to lighten the mood.

NINA

When you're not being a major league, certifiably, nut bird, you're a pretty sexy guy.

Walter rolls his eyes.

WALTER

I feel so sexy.

NINA

No rhubarb pie for you if you don't knock that shit off.

Walter continues to pick at his food, face filled with despair.

NINA
Have I ever blamed you for what
happened?

Walter pouts, shakes his head.

WALTER
I stopped over at pop's tonight.

Nina takes a bite of food, does not respond.

WALTER
When was the last time you stopped
over there?

NINA
I have so much free time on my hands
these days--

WALTER
I'm just saying--

NINA
Nothing I do anymore is good enough
is it?

WALTER
Your rhubarb pie's awesome.

Nina slaps her hand on the table.

NINA
I'm sick and tired of working twelve
hour days and coming home to you
doing nothing but crying the blues
about Bill Gates and your shitty,
little life.

Nina gets up, storms out of the room.

WALTER
I'm sorry.

Too late, the door SLAMS.

INT. HALLWAY

The melody of Schubert's "Ave Maria" filters through the wall. Walter pushes open a partially open door, revealing Fiona, sitting at her piano, singing beautifully. Fiona sings like an angel.

INT. FIONA'S BEDROOM

Walter walks in with an apron around his waist, dish towel over his shoulder. Fiona stops singing and playing, turns, looks concerned, confused.

FIONA
Were you and mom fighting?

WALTER
Nothing serious.

Walter sits on the bench next to Fiona.

WALTER
Honey, I've known that this was coming since the day you were born, but I'm still not ready for you to move away.

Walter starts to choke up.

Fiona puts her arms around Walter, kisses him on the cheek.

FIONA
I'll be home at Thanksgiving, Christmas and every summer.

Chin quivering, fighting back tears, Walter nods, smiles weakly.

FIONA
Daddy, I'm gonna love it at Northern State. It's a really cool place.

Walter smiles faintly.

WALTER
Make sure you sign up for Lying 101. You need the practice.

INT. PARKING GARAGE -- MORNING

Walter, Nina, and Fiona climb out of Walter's Toyota.

EXT. CITY STREET

A gorgeous, sunny day. People scurrying in all directions. A mixture of old buildings and modern skyscrapers make up the skyline.

Walter, Nina and Fiona head toward the entrance to BON MARCHE, a venerable Seattle department store. Fiona rushes ahead of her parents. Nina stops walking, puts her hand on Walter's shoulder.

NINA
Are we gonna stay married?

WALTER
What kind of question is that?

NINA
One that deserves an answer.

WALTER
I love you. I don't want a divorce.

Nina pauses.

NINA
Then we've got a lot of work to do.

Walter looks startled, frightened.

NINA
I'd like a reasonable facsimile of
the man that I married. Funny, laid
back, not obsessed with money... and
horny more than once a month.

Walter nods, leans in, kisses Nina on the cheek. He points to a sign across the street that reads, STARBUCKS.

WALTER
I'll get better, I promise.

Nina smiles.

WALTER
I'm gonna hang over there.

NINA
Do you have a dollar limit in mind
for the coat?

WALTER
Eighty bucks?

NINA
Right price, wrong decade.

EXT. STARBUCKS

Several tables line the sidewalk in front of Starbucks. Walter, latte in hand, positions his chair so that he has a view of BON MARCHE across the street. He puts on a pair of sunglasses, leans back in his chair, PROMPTLY DOZES OFF.

Spangler, the old man from the bar, wearing the same red sweatshirt and Red Sox hat, takes a seat next to a SNORING Walter.

Spangler has a paperback book in his hand titled "GATES, MICROSOFT, AND THE INFORMATION AGE."

WALTER SUDDENLY WAKES UP, removes his shades, notices Spangler's hat.

WALTER
Red Sox fan huh?

SPANGLER
I'm afraid that's an exercise in
futility.

WALTER
They look pretty solid this year.

Spangler shakes his head.

SPANGLER
Won't matter. The Curse of the
Bambino lives on.

Walter smiles.

WALTER
You believe in that?

SPANGLER
Babe Ruth believed it. Told me so
himself.

Walter looks quizzically at Spangler.

WALTER
They woulda won it in eighty-six if
it wasn't for Buckner's error.

SPANGLER
Ahh yes, young Mister Buckner.

Spangler sets the book down, breaks into a big grin, extends his hand.

SPANGLER
Spangler's the name. In case you've forgotten, we happened upon each other at ROOSTERS the other day.

Walter shrugs his shoulders.

SPANGLER
You shared your rueful tale of Bill Gates and missed opportunities.

Walter glances at the book, points at the cover.

WALTER
Thanks for rubbing it in my face.

SPANGLER
If you had said yes to young Mr. Gates that night you might have missed out on some real jimdandies.

Walter picks up the book, starts to thumb through it.

SPANGLER
Your lovely family for instance.

Walter looks up, glares at Spangler.

WALTER
(sarcastically)
They'd do just fine without me.

Spangler moves closer to Walter, looks around, makes sure that no one is listening.

SPANGLER
If you could go back to that one moment in time... that evening at the burger joint... and say yes to Mr. Gates instead of no... would you do it?

WALTER
In a heartbeat.

SPANGLER
Knowing that you might lose everything that you have? Even Nina and Fiona.

Walter considers this for a moment.

WALTER

Why would I lose Nina. I'd become filthy rich and be the provider she deserves.

Nina and Fiona emerge from the department store. They wave to Walter.

Walter waves back, stands up.

WALTER

Fantasyland is in Anaheim, not Seattle, right?

Spangler notices Nina and Fiona, becomes flustered.

SPANGLER

I guess I better skedaddle.

Spangler quickly gets up, leaves his book behind, scampers across the busy street.

Walter grabs the book, hurries to the curb.

WALTER

You forgot your book!

The traffic noise drowns out the conversation. Spangler, now approaching Nina and Fiona, turns back to Walter, shouts.

SPANGLER

I'll check in now and then.

Walter slips the paperback into his back pocket, steps into the street.

A truck marked "ROMAN EGG COMPANY" cruises down the street.

WALTER

What?!

A HORN BLARES. People SCREAM. Walter jerks his head to see the front end of the egg truck inches from his face.

THE TRUCK SMASHES INTO WALTER, SENDS HIM HURTLING THROUGH THE AIR. HE LANDS FACE DOWN IN THE STREET, TWENTY FEET AWAY.