

BROADCAST NEWS

AARON: It's open. Sorry, was in the shower.

JANE: How'd it go?

AARON: You didn't see it or talk to anybody?

JANE: No.

AARON: Then it went very well.

JANE: Did it really go well?

AARON: Define your terms.

JANE: Do you feel good about it?

AARON: No.

JANE: Do others feel that you did well?

AARON: No.

JANE: Then what was good about it?

AARON: I lost six pounds.

JANE: Aaron. Will you tell me?

AARON: It was great. Reading my first rate copy. Sitting on my jacket. Punching my one thought.

Except I had this historic attack of flop sweat. They're never going to let me anchor again. Ever.

Oh, and I lost one of your shoulder pads -- I think it drowned. How was your evening?

JANE: What do you mean flop sweat? You're making too much out of this. I'm sure no one was even aware of it.

AARON: People phoned in.

JANE: Stop kidding with me. I want to know what happened.

AARON: I'm not kidding!

JANE: There were complaining phone calls because you were sweating?

AARON: No. Nice ones, worried that I was having a heart attack.

JANE: If all that happened, then why are you so chipper?

AARON: I don't know. I don't know. At some point it just went so off the chart bad that it just got funny.

My central nervous system was telling me something, Jane! Sweat pouring down my face! Makeup running into my eyes!

People around me with a fusillade of blow dryers on my hair! All so I could introduce other people who were covering the stories, which is what I like to do, anyway.

JANE: yes.

AARON: And I'm chipper because you finally showed up. I'm going to cook for us. Tequilla and eggs sound good?

JANE: I have to be someplace.

AARON: Now?

JANE: I told what's his name - Tom - that I'd meet him.

AARON: Call him up! It can wait, right?

JANE: I don't know. I may be in love with him.

AARON: I knew it. Get out of my house now. I want you out of here. I'm not kidding, get out of here.

You go to hell! Come back. Come back here, don't go.

[She turns at the last second]

JANE: This is important to me!

AARON: I think it's important for you, too. Come on. Sit down. Sit down.

JANE: What?

AARON: Give me one minute, please! This is tough! Okay. Let's start with the part that has nothing to do with me. Let me be your most trusted friend, here, the one who gets to say all the awful stuff.

JANE: I guess.

AARON: You can't end up with Tom, because it totally goes against everything that you're about.

JANE: Yeah, being a basket case.

AARON: I know you care about him. I've never seen you like this with anybody. So don't get me wrong when I tell you that Tom, while being a very nice guy, is the Devil.

JANE: This isn't friendship. You're crazy, you know that?

AARON: What do you think the devil is going to look like if he's around?

JANE: Oh, god...

AARON: C'mon! No one is going to be taken in by a guy with a big long pointy red tail! What's he going to sound like? I'm semi-serious here... He'll be attractive! He'll be nice and helpful! He'll get a

job where he influences a great, god-fearing nation. He'll never do an evil thing, he'll never deliberately hurt a living thing! He'll just bit by little bit lower our standards where they're important. Just a little bit, coax it along. Flash over substance. Just a tiny little bit. And he'll talk about all of us really being salesmen! And he'll get all the great women!

JANE: Aaron, I think you're the devil!

AARON: You know I'm not!

JANE: How do I know?

AARON: Because you and I have the kind of friendship where if I were the devil, you'd be the only person I'd tell!

JANE: Well you were awfully quick to run after Tom's help when...

AARON: Alright, fine! Yes! And if things had gone well for me tonight I probably wouldn't be saying any of this! I grant you everything! But give me this. He personifies everything you've been fighting against. And I'm in love with you. How do you like that? I buried the lead... I gotta not say that out loud. It takes too much out of me. I've never fought for anyone before. Does anybody win one of these things?

## **BROADCAST NEWS (Twentieth Century Fox, 1987)**

**JANE** is a television news editor, a compulsive perfectionist, passionate and obsessive about excellence. She loves her job and gives it two hundred percent. She meets **TOM** at a convention where she's just given a speech that bombed because it had integrity. **TOM** appreciated the speech. They go out that night and return to her hotel room. She's attracted to **TOM**, but now finds out more about him. **TOM** is trapped halfway between his feelings of inadequacy and his extreme narcissism.

INTERIOR. JANE'S ROOM – NIGHT

*A small good room – her working paraphernalia very much in evidence...the quality briefcase...the reams of well-organized notes, the thick contact book. JANE is sitting on the bed – TOM, not far away in the room's only chair. One lamp is on and it serves to place JANE in the shadows and cast TOM in an enormously flattering light. Music comes from her miniature portable stereo system.*

**JANE:** Come on...Even I'm not that hard on myself.

**TOM:** No, I really got this job on a fluke and wait till you hear where it ends up. I was doing sports at the station. The newspaper ran this untrue story that I was leaving and they got all these tons of protest mail – So they made me anchor.

**J:** So great – right?

**T:** Except I'm no good at what I'm being a success at.

**J:** How are you at back rubs?

*JANE shifts her position so that her back is to TOM...He is immobilized by the sudden turn. JANE waits – just a bit longer than it would take Tom to run from the chair to her side – before experiencing the ghost-like clutch of rejection. She moves briskly past the moment – grabbing a “good night” chocolate from the pillow and munching it as she returns to his agenda.*

**J:** It's sort of normal – the way you feel. In graduate school everyone thought the only mistake the admissions committee made was letting them in.

**T:** Listen to me. You keep thinking I'm somebody who lacks...confidence. That's not it. I know I can talk well enough and I'm not bad at making contact with people, but I don't like the feeling that I'm pretending to be a reporter. And half the time I don't really get the news I'm talking about. It isn't that I'm down on myself. Trust me, I stink.

**J:** I trust you.

**T:** I didn't even have the chance to get really good at sports. I wasn't bad. I thought I was starting to do interesting features but hockey is big at the station and...

**J:** (*interrupting*) What about the obvious remedy? Reversing things. Maybe getting a job on a newspaper.

**T:** I don't write. But that didn't stop me from sending out audition tapes to bigger stations and the networks.

**J:** Well, come on – it is your life. Nobody is tying you to the fast track. Did you go to college?

**T:** One year...almost one year.

**J:** So, you're not well educated and you have almost no experience and you can't write.

*He nods in agreement.*

**T:** And I'm making a fortune.

**J:** It's hard for me to advise you since you personify something that I truly think is dangerous.

**T:** Uh-huh.

**J:** I agree with you – you're not qualified. So get qualified. You can insist on being better prepared. You don't have to leave it at...(*mimicking him*) "I don't write. I'm not schooled. I don't understand the news I'm reading. But at least I'm upset about it, folks."

*A beat, then he mumbles softly to himself:*

**T:** Whoa, this was a mistake.

**J:** Just what do you want from me, anyway? Permission to be a fake? Stop whining and do something about it.

*He gets up to leave. She follows him.*

**J:** Well, you don't have to start right now.

**T:** I hated the way you talked to me just now...and it wasn't just because you were right.

*He exits.*