

FADE IN:

1 INT. DR. MELFI'S WAITING ROOM /- DAY 1

THOMAS SOPRANO/ 40/ sits and waits. Uneasily. Staring confusedly at a Bejeweled Skull . Inner door opens. DR. JENNIFER MELFI (attractive/ 35) appears.

MELFI

Mr. Soprano?

Melfi gestures Tommy to a choice of seating.

MELFI

Have a seat.

She seats herself in a facing armchair. She looks at him with a polite expectant gaze. He stares back, waiting. There is utter silence. Nothing happens. Such is psychotherapy. Finally-

MELFI

My understanding from your family physician. Dr. Cusamano, is you collapsed? Were unable to breathe? Possibly a panic attack?

TOMMY

They said it was a panic attack - because all the neurological work and blood came back negative. They sent me here.

MELFI

You don't agree you had a panic attack?

He laughs - too loud.

MELFI

How are you feeling now?

TOMMY

Now? Fine. I'm-back at work.

MELFI

What line of work are you in?

TOMMY

Waste management consultant.

She keeps that psychiatric poker-face. Yet there was a reaction. After silence...

MELFI

Any thoughts at all on why you blacked out?

Tommy shrugs. Fidgets. Then -

TOMMY

I don't know. Stress/ maybe?

MELFI

Stress? About what?

TOMMY

Well, I once heard some guy use this expression, 'The sun setting over the empire...?'

TOMMY

That morning of the day I got sick? I'd been thinking: it's good to be in a thing from the ground floor. I came too late for that/ I know. But lately I'm getting the feeling I might be in at the end. That the best is over.

MELFI

Many people, I think, feel this.

TOMMY

Take my father. He never reached the heights like me. But in ways he had it better. He had his people - they had their standards. They had pride. Today what dowe.got?

MELFI

Did you have this feeling of loss more acutely in, the hours before you collapsed?

TOMMY

I dunno. Couple months before all this these two wild ducks had landed in my pool. Amazing. From Canada or someplace, I don't know. It was mating season.

11 INT. DR.MELFI'S OFFICE - DAY 11

TOMMY

This isn't going to work. I can't talk about my personal life.

MELFI

It's hard for everybody.

TOMMY

You don't understand.

MELFI

Finish telling me about the day you collapsed.

TOMMY

I rode to work with my nephew, Christopher...he's learning the business.

TOMMY

he's and example of what I was sayin before -

There is an uncomfortable pause

TOMMY

there was an issue of an outstanding loan -

MELFI

Let me stop you a second.

TOMMY

Sure.

MELFI

I have no idea where this story is going...but there are a few ethical ground rules we should quickly get out ofthe way.

He waits.' She smiles nervously.

MELFI

You said you were in waste management...

TOMMY

Recycle. The environment.

MELFI

Dr. Cusamano, besides being your family physician, is also your next door neighbor. See what I'm saying?

TOMMY

I get it. Yeah.

MELFI

(dry mouth)

What you tell me in here falls under doctor/patient confidentiality.

Except - if I was, for example, to hear that a...say a...murder?...was about to take place - (quickly)

- not that I'm saying - but, if.. Well, anything like that...where a patient tells me someone is going to be hurt? I'm supposed to go to the authorities. Technically.

TOMMY

(long beat) Oh.

MELFI

I don't know what happened with this Mahaffey fellow. I'm just saying.

TOMMY

I see.

(beat)

Nothing. We had coffee.

Tommy and Melfi are looking at each other in the psychiatric silence.

MELFI

So you had coffee.

TOMMY

Right.

MELFI

Go on.

TOMMY
Next? Let's see, I had a breakfast
meeting.

THE END.