

FADE IN:

EXT. COAST HIGHWAY (SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA) - DAY

A green MGB convertible wends its way along, top down and heading fast toward the sinking sun.

INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY (MOVING)

Behind the wheel is TOM HANLIN (30s), a natural charmer with casual aplomb. He doesn't bother with any "hands-off" phone. Business for him is hands-on and personal, now more than ever:

TOM

-- But it's got nothing to do with me. If Peter wants to fire the party people, let Peter pay the party piper. I don't have enough time for proper due diligence as it is.

INT. POWERSERVE - AMANDA'S OFFICE - DAY

AMANDA MCKINLEY, V.P. Sales and Marketing, tall, beautiful, razor sharp. She paces while talking into her headset.

AMANDA

So you said in front of the board before throwing your little conniption. We all heard you, Tom.

INTERCUT:

TOM

Position, Amanda, I argued my position with passion and finesse. You used to like that.

AMANDA

You used to lead with passion and sense. The old you would never have freaked out liked that --

TOM

-- I did not freak out --

AMANDA

-- You freaked out while Peter kept his cool and now you --

TOM

-- Peter wants this merger --

AMANDA

-- You weren't at the meeting!
You're barely ever here anymore.
(more)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Even when you are it's like you're
someplace else. Where are you,
Tom?

TOM

Right here, Amanda, and still I'm
there for you. Why you doing this?

AMANDA

Bottom line, you're in charge of
the Snork! signing. It's business,
strictly and personally. That is
what you taught me, isn't it?

TOM

You're making it sound pretty less
personal to me.

AMANDA

Yeah, and you're being paranoid.

BLIP!--Amanda hangs up on him. Tom can't believe it.

TOM

Paranoid? How could I be paranoid
if I'm not paranoid about my own
paranoia? Who said that?

On which the cell CHIMES. Tom answers quick.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm not paranoid!

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

TIGHT SHOTS of a MYSTERY NERD whose face we cannot see--Birkenstocks
over socks, Band-Aids on several fingertips. He huddles over the
phone, speaks hushedly, disguising his voice:

MYSTERY NERD

(into phone; heavy voice)
Mr. Hanlin?

INTERCUT:

TOM

Who's this?

MYSTERY NERD

Call me...

His eyes dart about, searching--there's nothing but Snork!
paraphernalia everywhere. He regards the pliable squeeze-relaxer in
his free hand, a colorful chipmunk character.

MYSTERY NERD (CONT'D)

Call me, Alvin... ator.

TOM

What can I do for you, Alvinator?

A SNORK! BOSS drops a stack of papers in Alvinator's "In" box

SNORK! BOSS

On my desk before you leave.

ALVINATOR

(regular whiney voice)

Yes, ma'am, right away.

TOM

Hellooo?

Alvinator gives Boss a mean little finger behind her back, hunches into the phone again:

ALVINATOR

Tom, you still -- Are you there?

TOM

I'm thinking I'm not --

ALVINATOR

-- No, wait! It's about the Snork! deal.

TOM

What about Snork!?

ALVINATOR

We're -- they are over-valued.

TOM

And this would be news to?

ALVINATOR

Ten times over-valued.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Tom pulls over and climbs out of his car. Traffic whipping past makes it hard for him to hear.

TOM

No way. Two times, definitely, three maybe, not ten.

ALVINATOR

The books are cooked.