

SAIL AWAY - CAMPBELL

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By

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SCENE ONE

The white noise of traffic fades in, settles at a hum which lies under the whole scene.

An automatic coffee maker drips noisily.

LIGHTS UP on the bedroom of a 10th floor East side Park Avenue apartment.

Rear projection of a terrific skyline view.

The telephone rings once. An answering machine picks up.

ANAIS'S V.O.

Hello, you've reached Anais Williman. If you'd like to call my office, the number is 2-1-2-8-3-7-4-6-4-7. I'm sorry I missed your call. Next time...

Partly dressed for work in an expensive camisole and slip, ANAIS, an attractive woman in her forties, enters from an offstage bathroom and closet during the machine's taped answer.

SHE wears a Bluetooth and listens intently to someone on the other end.

She talks into the Bluetooth throughout the scene.

The machine beeps.

MAN'S VOICE

Good morning, Anais, it's Michael Upland. I'd hoped I'd catch you before you left. I remember you said you had to be in court early.

ANAIS

Wait a minute, Sally. He's on the other line. Just listen to him...

MAN'S VOICE

(Breathing is slightly
labored)
I really can't remember when I've had a more enjoyable
evening.

ANAIS
He sounds like he's climbing Mount Everest.

LIGHTS up on another east side
apartment and the cluttered home
office/personal fitness center of
MICHAEL, the man on the ANAIS'S
answering machine.

Nearing 50, MICHAEL works out every
day to hang on to his forties even
as he plows past them.

For now, HE walks at a brisk pace
on his treadmill, keeping an eye on
the TV set hanging above the
treadmill.

MICHAEL
I really hope we can see each other soon.

ANAIS
What a load of crap.

MICHAEL
I find you a really fascinating woman...

ANAIS
Bullshit.

MICHAEL
I'll call you later, and ah... I'm sure you'll really blow
them away in court today.

MICHAEL winces, knows he blew that
message big time.

ANAIS
Did you hear how many times he said, "Really"? I think the
man has a slippery grasp on sincerity.

She pours herself a cup of coffee.

MICHAEL takes another phone call,
picks up the speed on his
treadmill.

MICHAEL
George, you won't believe this -- Nycroft is up two.

ANAIS
No, I don't have to be in court.

MICHAEL
I know. Unbelievable after that suit settlement.

ANAIS
I just needed an excuse to escape last night.

MICHAEL
I put a call in to Doug. He should know something.

ANAIS
(overlapping)
Please! The only *fascinating* thing about me is that I managed to stay awake while he droned on and on.

MICHAEL
Oh, and I just left Anais, that lawyer I met at the wedding, a really, really stupid message...

ANAIS
Oh, honey, you're my sister. I never think of you as someone who drones.

MICHAEL
Shit, I never should have called.

ANAIS
Honestly, you don't drone.

MICHAEL
Hell, I never should have asked her to dinner. I'm too tired after work to be coherent let alone scintillating.

ANAIS
Oh, it was practically a blind date, Sally. You know I don't do blind dates...

MICHAEL
Exactly. I just want to collapse in front of a Knicks game.

HE begins to run faster on treadmill, slowly building up steam.

SHE pulls on a skirt.

ANAIS
You met Ralph twenty something years ago. Believe me, the dating scene was different then.

She zips and adjusts the skirt,
checks the mirror.

MICHAEL

The problem is... she's one of those high-powered women. Who are used to calling the shots, and those broads scare the shit out of me.

ANAIS

Okay, fine. You're right. Twenty years ago, I was less critical. But that doesn't mean I'm wrong now.

MICHAEL

I consider myself as liberated as the next guy, but I've known too many women who treat a date like a performance review.

ANAIS

Oh, shit. My skirt's too tight. I swear I gained five pounds from that damn wedding cake.

SHE slips out of the skirt, hangs
it neatly on skirt hanger.

MICHAEL

Ha! Last night would have got me fired.

ANAIS

No. I don't think I'm being too hard on him.

MICHAEL

You know that Grand Canyon of silence that sometimes exists between a man and a woman?

ANAIS

Phooey. You should have been there last night.

MICHAEL

(Overlapping)

Last night, me and my big mouth tried to fill that damn canyon.

HE presses a button, begins to slow
down.

ANAIS

You could have heard all about why his youthful marriage went sour. How his business was his life. Blah, blah, blah.

SHE exits to her closet offstage.

MICHAEL

I tried to open up, to reveal my feelings. That's what they want, isn't it?

ANAIS (O.S.)

Come on. He's a divorced, childless, stockbroker looking for meaning in his life.

MICHAEL

Shit, I made a damn fool of myself.

ANAIS

I wanted to run screaming from the restaurant.

MICHAEL

A guy will tell you to shut the fuck up, but a woman lets you go on and on until you're running on empty.

HE stops the treadmill, takes a long drink from his water bottle.

SHE reenters with several skirts.

ANAIS

The piece de resistance was when the check arrived, and your husband's sincere ole buddy, did not -- I repeat -- did not leap for the check.

MICHAEL

No, worse. When the check came, I was going to pick it up, and then I realized I'd probably offend her.

During the following, ANAIS will try on several skirts, rejecting them, hanging them up again.

ANAIS

What do you think? It pissed me off.

MICHAEL

Sure, I'm serious. Hey, pal, it's a new era.

ANAIS

He must be obscenely wealthy -- at least on paper.

MICHAEL

Powerful women have a real thing about a man assuming he should pick up the check.

ANAIS

No, it doesn't matter if I can afford it. That's not the point.

MICHAEL

What else could I do? I waited for some sign from her.

ANAIS

I couldn't believe he actually expected me to pay for the privilege of listening all evening.

MICHAEL

Hold on a minute. Got to take this.

ANAIS

That's the god damn point, Sally.

HE switches phone lines, continues to talk on Bluetooth as HE crosses to his computer, works quickly to bring up quote.

MICHAEL

Hey, Elliot, take a look at Gilpac this morning. It's a good time to cash 'em in.

ANAIS

No way was I going to pay that check. No way!

MICHAEL

Yeah, I know. I'm going to send you the prospectus on a new bio-diesel company.

HE grabs a prospectus, stuffs it into an envelope, sets it aside.

ANAIS

No, I didn't say anything. I kept trying to think of the perfect remark.

MICHAEL

Hey, your wife's right. 'Green' is definitely hot. So let me know about Gilpac. Great.

HE switches lines on his Bluetooth.

ANAIS

Me, too. I came up some terrific lines this morning in the shower.

MICHAEL

George, you there?

HE gets out a small handheld barbell and adjusts the weights on either end.

Throughout the following he does a series of exercises for biceps, one arm at a time.

ANAIS

But last night as the plot thickened, the brain thinned.

MICHAEL

The check? Well, she ignored it which could have meant I was free to pay the tab.

ANAIS

So I just let that check sit there between us like a large turd.

MICHAEL

Sure. Or...it could have meant she wasn't in a rush.

ANAIS

Then I couldn't figure out why he wasn't taking what I assumed was an obvious hint.

MICHAEL

I didn't want to insult her by implying I wanted the evening to end... even if I did.

ANAIS

So I suggested we have another drink.

MICHAEL

Next thing I know we're having another drink. God that was the last thing I needed.

ANAIS

I just couldn't let him win, could I?

MICHAEL

By then, my mouth was operating on automatic.

ANAIS

No, I don't remember a word he said.

MICHAEL

No, I don't talk just to hear myself blather on -- I was hoping she'd...

ANAIS

I just wanted to outlast him.

MICHAEL

No, I thought she'd offer something... reveal something about herself.

ANAIS

Yeah, exactly! It was like those no blinking contests we used to have when we were little.

MICHAEL

No. That's the amazing thing. She never lost her... veneer, that smooth cool veneer.

ANAIS

What do you mean I used to cheat? I never... how did I cheat?

MICHAEL

Sometimes she'd respond briefly -- make a remark, say something funny, but always with some bite to it, you know?

ANAIS

Trying to scare you was not cheating. Oh, you're such a wuss. That's how I won.

MICHAEL

Yeah, intriguing... and alienating.

HE begins a new series of exercises for his triceps.

ANAIS

No, I wasn't trying to scare him off. I just wanted him to pick up the damn check!

MICHAEL

Hell, I didn't know how to respond, so I just kept talking.

ANAIS

Out of desperation, I fell back on the oldest trick in the book.

MICHAEL

Then she went to the can...

ANAIS

Yeah. I was sure it would work...

MICHAEL

And I replied to a couple of emails.

ANAIS

Unbelievably, when I got back, the check was still decomposing on the table.

MICHAEL

She glanced at the check, and I figured it was okay for me to pick it up.

ANAIS

At that point I needed a new attack plan.

(Smiles seductively)

I laid my hand on the check.

MICHAEL

Suddenly she was smiling in a seductive yet oddly predatory way.

ANAIS

Slowly, I pulled the check to me.

MICHAEL

And I couldn't believe it...

ANAIS

Then I paused and let my lips part slightly.

MICHAEL

Because I'd seen her eyes glaze over any number of times.

ANAIS

And I breathed a little more rapidly...

MICHAEL

Did I mention she's a very attractive woman?

ANAIS

I know, I know... every cliché in the book! And then... then, I let my breasts brush gently against the table...

MICHAEL

All evening I'd been trying to reach her, and suddenly, out of nowhere, Houston, we have contact.

ANAIS

Now, here's the coup de grace. I slowly slid the check back across to him. And I said...

MICHAEL

Before I knew it, she's shoving the check my way...

ANAIS

(Softly, silkily)

Next time, you'll have to let me pick up the check.

MICHAEL

(overlapping)

She practically guaranteed there'd be a next time.

ANAIS

Oh, he paid happily. And I felt vindicated.

Finally, ANAIS settles on a skirt.

MICHAEL stops exercising.

MICHAEL

The thing is I'd like to feel I have something to offer a woman... besides sex.

(Listens)

No, I'm not being funny, George, I mean it.

ANAIS

God, no! No, I did not sleep with him. He was content with one polite kiss.

SHE exits into the closet.

MICHAEL

No, George. It isn't sex I'm after, that's what I'm telling you.

ANAIS

No, no, I don't care what I said.

MICHAEL towels off his face and neck. .

MICHAEL

No, she confused the hell out of me. I don't know what she wanted from me.

ANAIS (O.S.)

There will be no next time no how, no way, no sir.

SHE reenters with a jacket and scarves.

MICHAEL

For that matter, I don't know why I called this morning.

ANAIS

What do you mean he didn't stand a chance?

MICHAEL

I think I must like beating my head against a wall.

ANAIS

Don't start on me!

MICHAEL

It's a male thing, right?

SHE puts on the jacket.

ANAIS

This whole thing was your fault anyway. You and your "Open your heart, Anais, anything is possible crap."

MICHAEL

(Overlapping)

Forget about it. Game over.

HE grabs a packet of vitamins -- lots of them, opens it, downs them with water.

ANAIS

Give me a break! I had three glasses of champagne at the reception.

MICHAEL

I don't know why I asked her out? How the hell do I know?

HE sits, takes off his shoes and socks.

ANAIS

I remember the DJ was playing this dreamy song from the 80s. Oh, you remember it... I think it won a Grammy.

MICHAEL

Christopher Cross was singing his hit song. A great romantic oldie.

ANAIS

"The wind to carry me and soon I will be free..." Remember?

MICHAEL

Yeah, "Sailing..."

ANAIS

That's it. And I wanted to weep.

MICHAEL

And we were dancing.

ANAIS

One frigging dance with him and I wanted... oh, never mind.

MICHAEL

I just...thought she was...

ANAIS

No, I don't know what I was going to say.

MICHAEL

God, this sounds absurd in retrospect.

ANAIS

He was charming. That's all I remember.

MICHAEL

But she seemed funny and smart and... very warm.

ANAIS

It doesn't matter, Sally. Last night the spell was broken.

MICHAEL

Seemed being the operative word, I guess.

ANAIS

God damn weddings.

SHE starts fussing with scarves.

HE starts fussing with papers on his desk.

MICHAEL

I hate weddings.

ANAIS

No, I mean it.

MICHAEL

It's the truth! No, really. I'm serious.

ANAIS

Weddings are over-produced tribal rituals designed to push everybody into coupling.

MICHAEL

I feel a hell of a lot better after a funeral.

ANAIS

Oh, Sally, no, I didn't mean it that way. The wedding was lovely. Valerie and Hank were lovely. The food was lovely. You were lovely...

MICHAEL

(Overlapping)

Look, no question, weddings are great for the families of the couple. When your Susie gets married, you'll shell out a bundle, and I'll still envy you.

ANAIS

Truly. I will always have a very fond memory of my darling niece saying to me, oh-so-seriously, "Nobody's ever been in love like this before."

MICHAEL

Hell, I saw the way the bride looked at her father. Whatever that spectacle cost, it was worth it.

ANAIS

I'd give ten years of my life to feel like that. Is it any wonder I accepted a date?

MICHAEL

And that young couple was so in love...everything seemed possible for them.

ANAIS

Now if she can just keep from getting pregnant till they finish grad school, they can starve together and be happy...

SHE rejects the scarf idea.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but for us single boobs, a wedding is like an indictment.

HE throws down the papers in his hands, flops in his desk chair.

ANAIS

I'm surprised I didn't make a complete ass of myself. My god, the air reeked romance, heavy musky romance...

MICHAEL

I go to a wedding and the last thing I want is to be alone.

ANAIS

Listen, under those raging hormonal circumstances, I would have been willing to shag him under the dinner table. In fact, I would be willing to wager my 401 that more was going on in those locked bathrooms than mere peeing.

SHE puts on earrings.

HE picks up a tennis ball, squeezes it repetitively.

MICHAEL

Aw, come on, everything I read keeps harping on the 'fact' that married men lead happier, healthier lives. You, my lucky friend, will undoubtedly outlive me.

ANAIS

Well, that's what I've been saying. Of course, I don't want to be alone the rest of my life.

MICHAEL

Well, sure, I'd like someone to grow old with.

HE gets to his feet, paces, still squeezing the ball, moving it from hand to hand.

ANAIS

If I could just find someone...

MICHAEL

Someone...

ANAIS

Enjoyable to be with.

MICHAEL

Who's caring.

ANAIS

And healthy.

MICHAEL

Intelligent.

But still... ANAIS

Sexy. ANAIS/MICHAEL

No, not younger. MICHAEL

ANAIS rejects one pair of earrings,
tries another pair.

ANAIS
Definitely not. I'm too tired to keep up with some young
stud.

MICHAEL
God, no. I want someone who knows what the hell I'm talking
about.

ANAIS
And I don't want to support one.

MICHAEL
Someone who remembers the thrill of watching men land on
the moon.

ANAIS
I want someone who drank coffee before there was a
Starbucks.

MICHAEL
Find me somebody who gets the jokes.

ANAIS
Somebody rich enough to be able to afford whatever child
support or alimony he's paying and still have a life.

MICHAEL
Anais? Yeah, okay, I
thought she might be...

ANAIS
Michael? For a moment
I thought so...

MICHAEL
Except I really blew that.

ANAIS
Hey, I'm a big girl. I know Prince Charming is extinct.

She fusses with her hair.

MICHAEL

What do you mean how do I feel? I feel like wet kitty litter. Hell, talking about my 'feelings' is what got me into this funk.

ANAIS

Okay, deep, deep down, I want to feel the same way you feel about Ralph whenever he goes on one of his rants about congress or buying a windmill so he can live off the grid.

MICHAEL

All I really want is to be with someone and ...stop straining to be...I don't know... something I'm obviously not.

ANAIS

Oh, Sally, you should see your face. You get this amused, slightly proprietary look about Ralph.

MICHAEL

Why the hell can't I just say what I believe without worrying what she'll think?

ANAIS

I know exactly what you're thinking. There he goes again, you're thinking. And you shake your head and you grin.

MICHAEL

You nailed it, buddy, I want to stop trying to impress. That's it.

ANAIS

I think it's wonderful because it's all so familiar and comfortable. Well, that's what I want.

MICHAEL

Hell, yes, I want to stop having to suck in my gut every time I get up from a chair.

ANAIS

I don't want your house in Evanston. I don't even want your precious hybrid.

MICHAEL

Right and from there, it's just one more step to smug and self-satisfied. Damn, that sounds good to me.

ANAIS

I want my own somebody who'll love me even when I fart in front of him.

MICHAEL

So much for easy answers.

ANAIS

What do you mean I don't let it happen? That's crazy.

Her land line telephone rings.
She glares at the phone.

MICHAEL
Hey, I apologize for going on about this. It seems to be a tendency of mine...

ANAIS
Wait, I've got another call.

MICHAEL
No, hey, I'm fine, really. Thanks for letting me crash with you in Chicago. It was great to see you and Millie. I enjoyed being there.

ANAIS
I'll let the machine get it.

The machine picks up. She walks over to the machine.

ANAIS'S V.O.
Hello, you've reached Anais Williman. If you'd like to call my office, the number is 2-1-2-8-3-7-4-6-4-7. I'm sorry I missed your call. Next time...

MICHAEL
Hell, yes. It's the only town that makes me appreciate New York. Given your weather and the Cubs, I know I made the right decision.

SECRETARY'S V.O.
Ms. Williman, this is Brandy.

MICHAEL
Same to you fella.

ANAIS
It's the office. Sally, hold on a minute.

MICHAEL
Okay, I'll think about it.

ANAIS picks up the telephone.

MICHAEL takes off his Bluetooth, stares thoughtfully at his computer.

He shuts down the computer, turns off the TV.

ANAIS
I'm here. What's up?
(Listens impatiently.)

Of course he's nervous. He's a wimp.
(Listens)
So what does Halloran want me to do? Hold his hand?
(Listens)
Oh, shit. When?
(Glances at her watch)
Jesus. All right. Tell him I'll be there as soon as I
get there. He buys breakfast and picks up my cab.
(Hangs up, back to
Bluetooth conversation)
Sal, I have to go. Give my love to Valerie. And tell
Ralph I think the windmill is a great idea. Talk to you
tomorrow...bye.

MICHAEL picks up his land line,
dials.

The phone rings in ANAIS'S
apartment.

SHE takes off her Bluetooth.

SHE grabs phone.

During the following conversation
-- MICHAEL and ANAIS both do
absolutely nothing but talk and
listen to each other.

ANAIS (CONT'D)
(Into phone)
Hey, I'm on my way...

MICHAEL
It's not who you think...

ANAIS
Michael?

MICHAEL
Yeah. You're there.

ANAIS
I'm on my way out.

MICHAEL
I thought you'd be in court.

ANAIS
No. I'm sorry. I...I lied.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

ANAIS
For what?

MICHAEL

For being honest.

ANAIS

Well, that's what I'm saying. I wasn't honest. I lied.

MICHAEL

I mean now. Because I don't blame you. I was obnoxious last night. I couldn't stop going on and on. I was just trying to... impress you, I guess.

ANAIS

Why?

MICHAEL

(Beat)

I'd felt something at the wedding. Some connection...

ANAIS

We were the only New Yorkers...

MICHAEL

No, it was more than that.

ANAIS

It was a wedding. People get feely at weddings. They go all soft and mushy.

MICHAEL

True. But that's not always a bad thing.

ANAIS

I guess not. Not necessarily.

MICHAEL

I wanted that feeling again last night.

ANAIS

(Beat)

You can't force it.

MICHAEL

You're right. Maybe that was my problem.

ANAIS

Maybe.

MICHAEL/ANAIS

We could...

MICHAEL

Sorry. What were you going to say?

ANAIS

Nothing.

MICHAEL

Well...I was hoping you would give me another chance... to get to know you... not to force anything, of course, but... to see if maybe... if I don't try so hard. Who knows?

ANAIS

Or... if I try a little harder...

MICHAEL

What do you mean?

ANAIS

Look, I have to run...

MICHAEL

Of course. Sorry, I don't want to hold you up.

ANAIS

I have a meeting now. It should take about two hours. Then I need to stop by my office. How about lunch?

MICHAEL

Really?

ANAIS

(Smiles, a slightly amused
knowing smile)

Really. My treat.

The LIGHTS FADE to BLACK.