

the fisher king

by

Richard LaGravenese

REVISED DRAFT

Rev 6/31/90

[NOTE: THE HARD COPY OF THIS SCRIPT CONTAINED  
SCENE NUMBERS & SOME "OMITTED" SCENE SLUGS.  
THESE HAVE BEEN IGNORED FOR THIS SOFT COPY.]

FADE IN:

INT. DARKENED BEDROOM - DAWN

CLOSEUP ON RADIO/ALARM CLOCK reads 5:59 a.m. The digital numbers flip to 6:00 and the RADIO goes on: a talk show host speaks in a soft, soothing voice:

JACK (V.O.)

It's six a.m.... Ooooooo and that bed never felt sooooo goood... Mmmm, you linger in a warm, gentle dream state... ever so comfortable... ever so safe...

SFX: LOUD BATTLE NOISE

JACK (V.O.)

(continuing)

... But suddenly you realize it's Monday!

A woman SCREAMS... the D.J., JACK, speaks at a rapid fire pace... a HAND from O.S. tries to shut the alarm off in the dark.

JACK (V.O.)

(continuing)

... your hand races to shut off the alarm before your mind wakes up...

SCREAMS... the HAND knocks over a water glass and grabs the clock but can't find the off switch.

JACK (V.O.)

(continuing)

... But it's too late! If you don't get out of bed now, you'll never have enough time to blow dry your hair that special way... You'll never make that nine o'clock meeting that your partner will be early for... You will be late and everyone will notice!

The HAND bangs the clock violently...

JACK (V.O.)

(continuing)

... Rumors will fly about you losing your edge... Someone will casually mention they saw you downing shots of tequila at the Xmas party and before you know it, you're spilling your

guys to a Senate committee or selling  
yourself on street corners to middle  
aged men from the Midwest...  
Headlines flash across your mind --  
"Sleeping Investment Banker Guns D.J.  
Then Self -- Claimed -- 'I only  
wanted two more minutes!'"

SCREAMS... SILENCE... The D.J. (Jack) speaks in a normal  
voice.

JACK (V.O.)  
(continuing)  
... Hey, it's Monday morning, and I'm  
Jack Lucas.

The HAND rips the clock off the night table.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

A WOMAN in a bathrobe spoons the contents of a protein  
drink called Executive Protein Blast into blender...

WOMAN (V.O.)  
(upset)  
... I don't have to talk to you.

JACK (V.O.)  
Yes... Yes, you do because you see,  
today, you're our...

PRE-RECORDED ECHOING (V.O.)  
Spotlight Celebrity.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

A naked man shaves as he listens to the RADIO.

JACK (V.O.)  
And in the spirit of fairness, we  
want the public to hear your side of  
things. So, now... how long were you  
and Senator Peyton having this sleazy  
affair?

WOMAN (V.O.)  
(angry)  
I am tired of the public thinking  
they've got the right to invade a  
person's private life.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

A woman sensually applying lipstick and makeup as:

JACK (V.O.)

Oh please!... You had sex with a  
United States Senator in the parking  
lot of Sea World... You're telling me  
you're a private kind of person.  
No... you're our...

PRE-RECORDED ECHOING (V.O.)

Spotlight Celebrity...

WOMAN (V.O.)

That's still all anybody talks about.  
Nobody even thinks to ask whether we  
loved each other.

EXT. WALL STREET AREA - MORNING

Hordes of business people stampeding towards their  
jobs...

JACK (V.O.)

Because nobody cares about that,  
sweetheart. Nobody wants to hear  
about your romantic love. No. We  
want to hear about the back seats of  
limos... the ruined lives of people  
we want to be... new and exotic uses  
for champagne corks...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

People line up to buy coffee and danish.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Listen, I have been humiliated enough  
already!

JACK (V.O.)

Perhaps not -- We need those  
details...

The Woman hangs up...

JACK AND CREW

Ooooo...

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - MORNING

Escalators packed with people move like conveyor belts:

JACK (V.O.)

Hi, this is Jack Lucas and we're discussing personal pet peeves. Go ahead, caller.

CALLER (V.O.)

Okay... well... It's my husband...

JACK (V.O.)

Huh-huh.

GRAND CENTRAL - MAIN FLOOR - MORNING

Hundreds of people moving like ants in every direction:

CALLER (V.O.)

He drives me crazy. I'll be talking and he'll never let me finish a sentence... He's always finishing my...

JACK (V.O.)

(overlaps)

-- Finishing your thoughts. That's awful.

EXT. MIDTOWN NEW YORK - MORNING

Midtown traffic. Angry cab drivers yelling at pedestrians.

CALLER (V.O.)

Oh! It absolutely drives me...

JACK (V.O.)

(cuts her off)

-- Drives you crazy, huh? The scoundrel.

CUT TO:

EXT. 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA - MORNING

CALLER (V.O.)

Hello Jack. It's Edwin.

JACK AND CREW (V.O.)

It's Edwin!!!!

"HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN" plays then is abruptly stopped.

JACK (V.O.)  
(continuing)  
Edwin. We haven't heard from you in what -- a day?... I've missed you.

INT. EDWIN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

INTERCUT Edwin on phone.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - MORNING

OVERHEAD SHOT of radio host as he speaks, while he manipulates tapes, dials, switches, etc... at a breakneck speed...

EDWIN (V.O.)  
I've missed you too, Jack.

JACK AND CREW (O.S.)  
Awww.....!

SFX: "A SUMMER PLACE" -- THE NEEDLE IS SCRATCHED OFF

Edwin laughs, perhaps a bit over zealously -- He is a simple minded soul... a lonely child in the body of a lonely man.

JACK (O.S.)  
So, Edwin, baby, this is Sunrise Confession time... what have you got for us?

EDWIN (V.O.)  
I... I... went to this bar... this very, ya know -- hard-to-get-in place... called Babbitt's...

The HANDS of the radio host pushing buttons, bending a paperclip out of shape...

JACK (O.S.)  
Yeah, I know the place. It's one of those chic yuppie gathering holes.

EDWIN (V.O.)  
(simple minded laughter)  
Okay... I know but... I met this beautiful girl...

Host's HANDS pop in a tape "WEDDING BELLS," then a

NEEDLE scratching it off.

JACK (O.S.)

Now, Edwin, if you start telling me you're in love again, I'm going to have to remind you of the time we made you propose to that check-out girl at Thrifty's that you liked so much. Remember her reaction...

Another TAPE, another button pressed:

BLACK SEVENTIES GROUP (V.O.)

(sings)

"Mister Big Stuff... Huh... Tell me... Who do you think you are... Mister Big Stuff... you're never gonna get my love..."

EDWIN (V.O.)

(defensive)

I wasn't serious about her, Jack. That was just a joke for you guys... She was just a girl. This is a beautiful woman. She wears pearls.

CAMERA KEEPS MOVING about the studio and the host, but we never see his face:

JACK (O.S.)

Yeah, but does she swallow, Edwin?

EDWIN (V.O.)

I think she likes me... she gave me her number, but she must work a lot cause when I call she's never home... But I think we'll go out this weekend... I've...

JACK (O.S.)

Yeah, Edwin, sure... and Pinnochio is a true story... Edwin! Wake up! This is a fairytale...

The crew perform their duties with little enthusiasm.

EDWIN (V.O.)

No, Jack, no, it's not... She likes me.

JACK (O.S.)

She gave you the old brusheroo, kiddo... Believe me -- this tart will never make it to your desert plate...

EDWIN (V.O.)

(hurt)  
She likes me. She said for me to  
call!

MICHAEL MCDONALD (V.O.)  
(sings)  
"What a fool believes... He sees..."

EDWIN (V.O.)  
(over the song)  
Jack!

JACK (O.S.)  
Edwin... Edwin... Edwin... I told you  
about these people. They only mate  
with their own kind. It's called  
Yuppie-In-Breeding... that's why so  
many of them are retarded and wear  
the same clothes. They're not human.  
They can't feel love. They can only  
negotiate love moments. They're  
evil, Edwin. They're repulsed by  
imperfection and horrified by the  
banal -- everything America stands  
for. Edwin, they have to be stopped  
before it's too late. It's us or  
them.

Slight pause, as EDWIN considers this.

EDWIN (V.O.)  
(serious)  
Okay, Jack.

END CREDITS.

CAMERA PANS from a wall clock as JACK LUCAS winds up his  
broadcast:

JACK LUCAS (O.S.)  
Well, folks... It's been a thrill, as  
always.  
(false sincerity)  
"Have a perfect day"...

WE PAN several studio technicians making ready for the  
end of the broadcast to the talk show host Jack Lucas --  
handsome, aggressive, intelligent -- an underground media  
star.

JACK  
Everyone here on the Jack Lucas  
Morning Show says "bye".

CREW  
Bye!

JACK

This is Jack Lucas... So long...  
arriverderch... I'll be sure to send  
you a thought today as I lie in the  
backseat of my stretch limo, have sex  
with the teenager of my choice... And  
that thought will be: Thank God I'm  
me!

Jack motions to techy behind glass. Then leans back in  
his chair, as a RADIO COMMERCIAL begins.

His expression seems grave -- not one you would expect  
after a successful broadcast. He appears tired and  
annoyed. He sighs in relief that it is over. The studio  
team work around him in silence -- with no indication of  
the relationship they have "on air." Jack pulls out a  
bottle of aspirins and takes two.

JACK

(continuing; annoyed,  
to the room)

I want you all to know I'm getting  
sick again and it's because someone  
keeps forgetting to raise the  
thermostat before I come in here...  
My fucking ass is freezing for the  
first hour.

A techy makes mocking faces behind his back. Another  
techy suppresses a laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET/INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

CLOSEUP of a script entitled: "On The Radio," a situation  
comedy by Alan Siegal.

LOU ROSEN, Jack's agent, who sits in the backseat beside  
Jack, thumbing through the script and chuckling to  
himself. Jack stares in silence out the window.

LOU

You know some of this is very funny.  
Cheever told me they've even secured  
the rights to the Donna Summer song  
to play over the credits.

JACK

(deadpan indifference)

Ooooo, I have chills...

(deadpan interest)

Are you sure they want me? I won't

read unless I have an offer.

LOU

Jack, of course... Not even a question. When I spoke to him on the phone this morning, I could actually smell how much they want you for it. I could smell it over the phone.

A street bum, half dressed, walks in between the stopped cars, banging on the windows and asking for money. He BANGS on Jack's window. Jack stares at him through the tinted glass.

LOU

(continuing; looking through his pockets)  
I don't think I have any change.

JACK

(adamant)  
I am not opening this window.  
(looks at the bum)  
A couple of quarters isn't going to make any difference anyway.

The bum looks at the reflection of himself in the mirrored window.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

An expansive Tribeca loft. The modern, minimalist decor gives it a sleek, cold feeling. A space full of glass, angles and edges, with no place to feel safe and sound.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

The mirrored door closes revealing Jack's reflection --

He takes a good look at his face in the mirror -- admiring every contour, every pore. He mumbles as he's making coffee.

JACK

I hate my cheeks.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jack's girlfriend, SONDRA -- an artist with a beautifully sculptured face and body -- sleek, cold, like Jack's apartment, she is eating a bowl of cereal, studying the cereal box. Beside her is a sketchpad with an ink drawing of a stalk of wheat (similar to the cereal box) growing out of the belly button of a naked male-figure who's torso/pelvis is shaped like a map of America. Jack enters, toweling his hair.

JACK

Can I ask that when you clean your hands you wipe the ink off the inside of the sink before it stains the stainless steel.

SONDRA

(without looking up)

You can ask.

Jack exits.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jack has in his hand the television script entitled, "On The Radio."

SONDRA (O.S.)

Raoul called before. About dinner.

Jack quickly opens his eyes. Sondra crosses to the wall of closets and begins to undress.

JACK

About dinner as a concept or about dinner with...

(over-enunciating)

Raoul?

SONDRA

(deadpan)

You're so witty. I'm so jealous... I need to get out of here, Jack, and do something other than sit in this apartment and count how many funny lines you have per page.

JACK

You know, tomorrow's a very big day for me... It would be nice if you acted like you understood.

SONDRA

Fine. I'll say no.

JACK  
They're putting me on film tomorrow.

SONDRA (O.S.)  
(peevied)  
Fine.

JACK  
(deeply felt)  
... First time in my life I'll be a  
voice with a body. Do you know what  
that means? What this could lead to?

SONDRA  
(unsnapping her bra  
in the front)  
Jack, it's a sitcom -- you're not  
defining Pi.

JACK  
I'll remember that the next time you  
get excited by drawing pubic hairs on  
raisin bran.  
(lighting joint and  
inhaling)  
Want some?

SONDRA  
No, I have to work.

JACK  
How un-sixties of you.

SONDRA  
I was nine in the sixties.

JACK  
I used to think my biography  
would be JACK LUCAS - THE FACE  
BEHIND THE VOICE, but now it  
can be JACK LUCAS, THE FACE  
"AND" THE VOICE...or maybe just  
JACK - EXCLAMATION POINT...

JACK'S POV -

SONDRA slips off her top as she climbs the stairs.  
JACK eyes her sexy back. Feeling sexy, he rises and follows her.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT.

SONDRA leans over and turns on the shower.

JACK naked legs enters the bathroom behind her and closes

the door. CAMERA ON BATHROOM DOOR as we hear:

SONDRA (O.S.)

(unaffected)

Jack, I have work to do too.

JACK seduces SONDRA O.S.

SONDRA (O.S.)

...Can't we do this later?...

(PAUSE)

All right..well..If we do this now, can I have dinner with Raoul?

CUT TO:

BATHROOM FLOOR

CAMERA PANS a brown paper bag, a plate of half-eaten Chinese food, a bottle of beer into a bathtub where JACK languishes in a bubble bath studying his script. In the B.G. we hear Ella Fitzgerald singing, "I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING"...

JACK

"Hey...for-...

False start. JACK clears his throat, pauses, then tries again...

(sarcastic...insincere...)

"Hey! Forgiiiiive ME!"

CUT TO;

JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Alarm clock reads 11:15. JACK is still rehearsing, while the T.V. plays with no sound.

JACK

" HEY! Forgive MEEE!" ....

...FOR-GIVE-ME ...

Hey...forgive me!

(HE smiles and shuts the script:)

I have this...I really have this...

HE tosses the script aside and rubs his head. HE suddenly notices, on the soundless T.V., a picture of himself on a news broadcast. Confused, he raises the volume with the remote.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION - NEWS DESK - NIGHT.

A news broadcast: a REPORTER in mid-report.

JACK'S VOICE OVER

"...everything America stands for.  
Edwin, they have to be stopped before  
it's too late.... It's us or them."

REPORTER

It was Mr. Lucas's off-handed remark that  
seemed to have a fatal impact on Mr.  
Malnick...

CUT TO:

EXT. BABBITT'S - NIGHT.

REPORTER (V.O.)

An after work hot spot, Babbitt's  
is popular with single young  
professionals.

REPORTER ON SCENE (CONT'D)

Edwin Malnick arrived  
at the peak hour of seven-fifteen,  
took one long look at the handsome  
collection of the city's best and  
brightest - then removed a shotgun  
from his overcoat and opened fire.

JACK'S face turns white.

CUT TO:

INT. - BABBITT'S - NIGHT.

To be INTERCUT with JACK'S APARTMENT.  
The bar's glass has been blasted. Tables are overturned.  
Paramedics are running about.

REPORTER

Seven people were killed before  
Mr. Malnick ...

A PICTURE OF EDWIN MALNICK is shown as the REPORTER continues;

... turned the gun on himself and shot  
a hole through his head....

EDWIN MALNICK looked sad and harmless. JACK quickly grabs the  
PHONE and RE-PLUGS it. HE is about to make a call when he is  
stopped by the REPORTER mentioning his name...

...Representatives of radio cult personality  
Jack Lucas expressed regret, however  
no formal comment has been made. None of Babbitt's  
regulars had ever seen Edwin Malnick  
before....but tonight, few will  
soon forget this lonely man - who reached  
out to a world he knew only through the

radio - looking for friendship...and  
finding only pain...and tragedy...  
This is Marc Saffron...Channel Ten news.

JACK is frozen. His breathing grows heavy.  
HIS phone begins to ring. but JACK is unable to move.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIDEO STOP - DAY

CAMERA PANS DOWN from the tall skyscrapers to the tiny  
video store that sits as if in a valley between two  
mountains. PAN toward the store as we FOLLOW a customer  
through the door we SUPER: A YEAR or so LATER.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO POP - DAY

CAMERA TRACKS through variety of customers looking  
through the rentals, past the counter where employees are  
helping the clientele and into the:

INT. VIDEO POP OFFICE

Continuing to a CLOSE UP of the headline of a sensation-  
alist tabloid -- "WOMAN KILLS PLASTIC SURGEON THEN SELF,  
TOLD FRIENDS; I CAN'T BLINK WITHOUT PAIN."

The picture of a bug-eyed society woman is below the  
caption. A hand comes out from behind the paper,  
reaching for a bottle of scotch on the table. The bottle  
disappears behind the paper.

ANNE, the owner of the store, enters abruptly -- closing  
the office door behind her, a cigarette dangling for her  
mouth. Her desk is organized litter -- her walls are  
filled with porno tapes. She searches for one as she  
talks:

ANNE

These people are insane today.  
They took insane pills...

A bit about Anne as she searches for a video: Anne is in  
her mid-to-late thirties... and she is all woman! She  
has a raw, earthy, unmistakable sensuality. Her red  
lipstick matches her red nail polish like a hat and glove  
set. Inlaid on each nail is a rhinestone design of a  
little star. Her angora sweaters are tight and clinging,  
giving her breasts a decided lift and perkiness. Her  
backless pumps slap the ground. A half-smoked cigarette

hangs out of her mouth with great expertise -- a skill Anne obviously picked up in a high school bathroom. Her voice is thick with a delicious Brooklyn twang.

She is pure streetwise in attitude, philosophy and emotions. She turns and speaks to the man behind the tabloid.

ANNE  
(continuing)  
Hey! Mr. Happiness!

The man lowers the newspaper: it is Jack Lucas: no longer the aggressive radio star but more -- a man who looks like he hasn't slept in months. An intolerant, paranoid, self-pitying misanthrope. The outrageous articles fascinate him. Anne removes the paper and scotch bottle.

ANNE  
(continuing)  
Are we going to work today or what?

Jack stares back. Anne waits for an answer. Jack looks through the open office door and sees the store is packed with rush hour customers -- any one, a potential mass murderer.

ANNE  
(continuing)  
Hello!!!

Jack jumps a bit then rises and crosses out the door cautiously.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO POP - DAY

Jack's POV -- CAMERA MOVES "cautiously," taking in the crowd as they move about the walls of movies. Suddenly, the giant face of a FRUMPY SECRETARY -- POPS INTO FRAME.

FRUMPY SECRETARY  
(to JACK)  
Can you help me!...

Jack subtly shudders at the surprise. He stares deadpan.

FRUMPY SECRETARY  
(continuing)  
... I'm at an absolute loss. I've been looking for an hour -- I'm losing my mind.  
(overly dramatic,  
rambling on)

... I'm sort of in the mood for a Katharine Hepburny, Cary Granty kinda thing -- Nothing heavy... I couldn't take heavy. Somethin' zany. I need zany.

JACK stares at her, at a loss. SHE gets an inspiration.

FRUMPY SECRETARY

...OH! OH! Do you have anything with that... comedian who's on that show? What's it - ON THAT RADIO! Ya know, the guy that says "HEY...FORGIVE ME...!"

JACK grins his teeth and stares like a madman while ANNE, aware of the affect this phrase has on him, throws a worried look from the cash register. The FRUMPY SECRETARY laughs:

FRUMPY SECRETARY

I get such a kick outta the way he says that...He's so adorable! Didn't he make a movie... I need something like that - a funny, no brainy kinda thing.

JACK stares at the woman manically then turns to the shelves of movies behind the desk. Selecting one, he hands it to her.

FRUMPY SECRETARY

Great...  
(reading box aloud)  
"ORDINARY PEEPHOLES"

THE WOMAN'S eyes go wide. JACK stares at her deadpan.

JACK

It's kind of a - Big Titty-  
Spread Cheeky kinda thing...

ANNE, who has heard this entire exchange, has to bite her lip to prevent herself from laughing...SHE pulls JACK away.

ANNE

...I'm sorry.  
(almost laughing)  
I need to borrow him for a moment.

As ANNE tugs at his sleeve, JACK eyes the WOMAN like a maniac being lead away from his prey.

INT. VIDEO POP OFFICE - DAY.

ANNE stands before JACK who leans against her office door.

ANNE

Are you in a mood today baby? Is this one of

those days when you're in ...whadda call it...  
an emotional abyss? Talk to me, cause I don't  
understand these moods.

JACK

Anne, they're MY moods. If you want to  
understand moods, have one of your own!

ANNE

Why don't you go upstairs... take the day off.  
All right?...I'll cook tonight.

SHE kisses him, then exits. JACK is not comforted in the least  
by this show of affection - especially when he notices her bra  
strap sticking out from her sweater.

JACK

Are you going for a specific look with this?

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT ABOVE VIDEO POP - NIGHT (RAINING)

Anne and Jack sit around a formica kitchen table in  
silence after eating dinner. Anne smokes a cigarette. A  
portable TV sits on a stand before them --

SITCOM ON TV (INTERCUT WITH ANNE'S APT.)

We hear a STUDIO AUDIENCE LAUGHING on the TV... Anne  
herself can't help but laugh. She snorts from trying to  
keep it in. Jack shoots her a dirty look.

ANNE

Well, it's funny! Whatta want from  
me?

JACK

It's not funny. It's... sophomoric  
and mindless... and dumb.

ANNE

Then why the hell do we watch all the  
time?

JACK

(in one breath)

Because it makes me feel good to see  
how not funny it is and how America  
doesn't know the first thing about  
funny which makes it easier not being  
a famous funny TV celebrity because  
that would just mean that I'm not  
really talented.

TV ACTOR (V.O.)  
Well forgiivvee meee...

APPLAUSE and LAUGHTER... Anne just stares at Jack.

ANNE  
You're a sick fuck... I don't know  
why you torture yourself.  
(she hits his head)  
Too many thoughts -- too crowded in  
there. You should read a book.

She picks up her paperback and begins to read.

JACK  
It's important to think. It's what  
separates us from lentils... and  
people who read books like...  
(reading her paperback  
cover)  
... "Love's Flower Bed."

He gets up to get a drink from Anne's makeshift bar.

ANNE  
(defensive)  
It happens to be a beautiful love  
story.  
(hurt)  
Ya know, you used to like that about  
me. You used to say you liked that I  
didn't make you think so much. That  
we could be together and not think...

JACK  
Yeah, well... suicidal paranoiacs say  
funny things sometimes.

Anne is deeply hurt by this. She gathers her dignity and  
exits into the bedroom, slamming the door behind her.  
Jack downs his drink as the sitcom returns to the TV O.S.

TV ACTOR (V.O.)  
I hope when I'm your age you're  
finally dead!

Big LAUGHTER.

JACK  
Madness.

Fed up, Jack throws his coat on, storms out and slams the  
door.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIDEO POP - NIGHT (RAINY)

Jack exits into the rain, tearing his coat on the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jack, depressed and wet, walks the streets of New York.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK'S OLD APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Jack stands before his old building, looking at it longingly.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT - RAIN

A wet Jack stops to watch the goings on at the entrance. He sees a limousine at the Plaza -- parked and awaiting its occupants. A handsome man in his forties exits the hotel and walks toward the limo. He is holding the hand of his six year old SON, who is carrying a two foot high plastic, smiling Pinnocchio doll. Both father and son are dressed in ties and jackets. Jack watches in envy. His ripped, wet clothes a shabby reflection of the man's. He eyes the limo with longing. As the man tips the doorman, a BUM approaches and asks for money. When the man refuses and turns his back to enter the limo, the Bum becomes aggressive and starts pulling at the man's jacket and yells:

BUM

Merry fucking Christmas... Happy  
fucking New Year!!

He continues to harass the man, who pushes his son away. The doorman comes to the man's rescue. As they both try to pull the Bum off the man, the six year old son notices Jack and walks calmly over.

Jack, mesmerized by the scene, doesn't notice the Boy.

BOY (O.S.)

Mr. Bum.

Jack looks down. The Boy stands directly before him.

Jack sort of smiles. The Boy extends his arms and offers the Pinnochio doll to Jack. Jack is confused but the Boy simply deposits the doll into his arms and walks back to the limo. By that time, the Bum is being held by the doorman, and both father and son enter the limo.

Jack holds the doll. He is surrounded by street people asleep or drunk on the sidewalk near the hotel. He angrily realizes there's not much difference between him and them.

JACK

Anybody here named Jimeny?

A drunk groans. Jack snaps the doll under his arm and walks O.S.

CUT TO:

STATUE NEAR PLAZA - RAIN

TIGHT SHOT of newspaper front page on sidewalk... Headline reads: "FIFTH HOMELESS MAN FOUND BURNED ALIVE"... CAMERA MOVES OUT to reveal that the paper is covering the head of a street person sleeping on the edge of the stone, flowered dividers on Park Ave... CAMERA PANS OVER to a drunken Jack, sitting on the sidewalk against the divider, having a conversation with Pinnochio beside him.

JACK

You ever read any Nietzsche?...

The smiling Pinnochio clearly has not.

JACK

(continuing)

... Nietzsche says that there are two kinds of people in this world... People who are destined for greatness like... Walt Disney and... Hitler... and then there's the rest of us... He called us the Bungled and Botched. We get teased. We sometimes get close to greatness but we never get there. We're the expendable masses. We get pushed in front of trains... take poison aspirins... get gunned down in Dairy Queens...

He drinks from his Jack Daniels bottle...

JACK

(continuing)

You wanna hear my new title for my biography, my little Italian

friend... "It Was No Fucking Picnic -  
The Jack Lucas Story". Like it?...  
Just nod yes or no...  
(tries it in Pig-Italian)  
"Il Nouva Esta Fuckin' Pinicko" --  
(he smiles)  
You're a good kid... Just say no to  
drugs...  
(he nods and drinks)  
Ya ever get the feeling sometimes...  
you're being punished for your  
sins...?

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST RIVER, NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

CLOSEUP of two feet standing beneath the railing overlooking the East River. Taped to one ankle is a brick. Taped to the other is a brick around a smiling Pinnocchio doll. An empty bottle of liquor drops to the ground and shatters.

Jack stands prepared to surrender his fate and make the final leap. He stares at the river, almost smiling. He has made his decision. He is calm and serene. He raises his foot over the railing.

The headlights of a car drive INTO FRAME, illuminating Jack. He turns to see:

LEATHER (O.S.)

What's going on?...

Two white upperclass JUEVENILE DELINQUENTS -- one wearing a leather jacket, the other a high school windbreaker -- get out of the car. Each is carrying a gallon of gasoline. Leather also carries a bat. Jack is drunk but he is immediately aware of the danger when he spots the gasoline cans.

LEATHER

I said what's going on?  
(walks up to Jack)  
What are you doing here?

Jack shakes his head and before he knows it, Leather shoves the bat into his gut, sinking Jack to his knees. Windbreaker places the gasoline cans on the bench and begins to unscrew them.

LEATHER

(continuing)  
You shouldn't hang around this  
neighborhood.

JACK  
(clutching his stomach)  
I... I was just leaving.

LEATHER  
People spend a lot of hard earned  
money for this neighborhood. It's  
not fair... looking out their windows  
to see your ass asleep on the  
streets...

JACK  
Yes... I... I agree...

LEATHER  
Good.  
(to Windbreaker)  
You believe this drunk?

Windbreaker shakes his head.

LEATHER  
(continuing)  
.....Me neither.

JACK  
No...No please...!

WINDBREAKER hands LEATHER the can, who raises it above JACK'S  
head. AS THE GASOLINE SLOWLY LEAKS ONTO A PETRIFIED JACK SEES A  
FIGURE MOVING OUT FROM THE DARKNESS.

FIGURE  
All hope abandon, ye who enter here!

Startled, THE YOUTHS TURN to the shadows.

LEATHER  
What the-....

AN ARROW with a rubber suction tip comes flying out of the  
dark and connects to WINDBREAKER's groin.

WINDBREAKER  
AHHH!

A FIGURE stands backlit - mysterious and powerful, noble and  
fearless. JACK, LEATHER and WINDBREAKER instinctually bond  
together in the face of this fourth unknown entity.

The figure turns out to be a BUM. Grimy face, tattered layers  
of clothing beneath a long over coat, a pork pie hat with a  
twig sticking out of it like a plume in a helmet of yore.  
Over his shoulder, a homemade bow and arrow set.  
Although clearly downtrodden, behind his beaten appearance, there

radiates a calm intelligence and strength. There is something distinctly attractive and confident about him. We learn later his name is PARRY; a combination of Don Quixote and Harpo Marx. PARRY stands before them absolutely delighted with himself - hand on hip - beaming with pride..

PARRY

Unhand that degenerate - you adolescent ass of a one balled donkey!

LEATHER

It's just a bum...You know, there's enough in here for the two of you.

PARRY

(a la Glinda)

Ha, ha, ha, ha rubbish...now begone...before somebody drops a house on you!...

LEATHER walks right up to PARRY.

LEATHER

You a fag too?

PARRY

Fag..a fag you say!?...  
"Curst wolf! Thy fury inward on thyself  
Pray and consume thee!"

LEATHER

Fuck you.

PARRY notices a pimple on LEATHER'S cheek.

PARRY

Oooo...that looks like it hurts.

HE presses the zit.

LEATHER

OWWW....What are you nuts?!

PARRY

BINGO! Tell the man what he's won!

WINDBREAKER grabs PARRY, pinning his arms behind him. WINDBREAKER laughs. PARRY just turns his head and stares into his eyes, causing WINDBREAKER to feel weird.

PARRY

I advise you to let us go.

LEATHER

You advise us!

PARRY

You're out numbered son.

PARRY glances over LEATHER's shoulder. LEATHER TURNS to see: A BUM pushing a shopping cart comes out of the darkness. HE is mumbling to himself incoherently. Another BUM, appears from the dark, unnerving WINDBREAKER. PARRY looks to a third BUM, stepping out of the dark, menacingly.

Taken by themselves, the BUMS would look harmless and pathetic. But in the context of their uncharacteristic organization - THEY appear frightening.

LEATHER and WINDBREAKER automatically whip out switchblades and take a "rumble" stance - as if protecting their catch, Jack. Jack sort of sides with them if for no other reason than - he's known them longer.

LEATHER tries to remain confident. HE laughs.

LEATHER

Come on! Go for it!  
What the hell are they gonna do?  
They can't do nothin!

PARRY

Nothing! They can do nothing!  
Gentlemen!

PARRY takes a few steps back and raises his hand.

JACK stands close to LEATHER and WINDBREAKER, who prepare themselves for attack.

PARRY lowers his hand which acts as a signal for the BUMS. The BUMS reach into their coats and each pull out a FLASHLIGHT, which they shine at each other as THEY SING:

THREE BUMS

I like New York in June...How about you?  
I like a Gershwin tune...How about you?

JACK, LEATHER and WINDBREAKER are at a loss. The BUMS aren't getting all the words, but they're definitely in sync.

PARRY lowers his hand proudly. The BUMS keep singing and turn their flashlights upon JACK, LEATHER and WINDBREAKER - blinding them to PARRY.

WINDBREAKER

Shit.

LEATHER brandishes his knife towards the dark spot where he thinks PARRY stands. But PARRY takes a flying step back. As he speaks, the Bums stop singing and hum the song.

PARRY

Son...There comes a time in  
every man's life...and you will  
learn this, if and when you become men...

From his hat, PARRY pulls a long tube sock tied at the  
end and filled with a softball at the bottom...

PARRY  
....That there are only three things in  
this world ya need...

HE begins to swing the sock over his head - centrifugally  
gaining force.

PARRY  
...Respect for all kinds of life,  
...the love of one other person who  
you can trust and pork on a regular basis  
...and a nice navy blazer...Oh, and one  
more thing....always... keep your eye....  
on the ball!

PARRY releases the "weapon".

The sock flies out of the darkness and, with amazing  
accuracy - beans LEATHER on the forehead between his eyes. HE  
drops his knife to rub his head. HE sinks out of camera:

LEATHER  
Ow...Ow....OW!

WINDBREAKER grows worried as PARRY reaches in to the lining  
of his coat, pulls out another "sock weapon" and starts swinging.

PARRY  
However, the ability to bean  
a shithead can be a fabulous advantage.

WINDBREAKER runs to the car and drives away.  
PARRY crosses to a speechless JACK.

PARRY  
(picking up LEATHER'S knife)  
Are you all right?

LEATHER  
(kneeling, rubbing his head)  
OWW...MAN...

JACK  
(disoriented)  
Please don't hurt me?

PARRY  
"OH beings blind! What ignorance besets you!

PARRY kneels down, pulls out some rope from his coat and proceeds to tie up LEATHER, who is disoriented and dazed. PARRY hands JACK LEATHER'S knife. Sickened by it, JACK flings it in the water.

LEATHER

You can't leave me tied up out here alone, you fucking faggot!

PARRY

(PULLS DOWN LEATHERS PANTS, EXPOSING HIS BUTT)  
You won't be alone for long.

PARRY pulls out a triangle and begins ringing it.

JACK

I need a drink.

PARRY

I know a great place.  
(Raising his hand HE calls to BUM 1:)  
...UH...WARREN!

BUMS (O.C.)

I like New York in June...How about-....

PARRY

(overlapping)  
NO..GUYS...GUYS....  
(to JACK)  
They're so proud.

CUT TO:

EXT. A LOT BENEATH THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE - NIGHT.

A violent explosion between warring factions of bums, who are defending territories and rights....

CUT TO:

Jack and Parry sit facing the three Bums from the previous scene - A Black, A middle-aged Irishman and an Ex-Hippy - and the Pinnochio Doll. The Foursome sit against the giant base of the bridge discussing the issues of the day as they pass a bottle. OTHER BUM CLIQUES are scattered throughout the lot.

BLACK

...There ain't no justice in life! There's just satisfaction. And the death penalty's just another violation of my constitutional right to satisfaction Goddamn it.

IRISHMAN

(a lit cigarette hangs from his mouth)  
I hate that.

HIPPIE

So, you mean if somebody like, killed  
your mother, you wouldn't want him dead?

BLACK

Sure I would. But I should get to kill him Goddamn it.

IRISHMAN

(explaining further)

He gets to kill him. That's democracy, see.

A LULL takes over as they all consider this.

JACK sitting the furthest apart from the group, looks like he's  
in the middle of a nightmare.

JACK

(mumbles to himself)

This is it. I'm in hell. Damned to  
an eternity of idiotic conversation.

PARRY

(leans in and smiles)

Great place huh?

The Irishman lets out a bloodcurtling scream:

PARRY

(responds)

AAAAHHHH!

JACK jumps. Irishman looks to PARRY & speaks in calm monotone:

IRISHMAN

How are you tonight?

PARRY

Fine John and you?

IRISHMAN

Can't complain.

The IRISHMAN absent mindedly flicks his cigarette ashes onto  
JACK'S SLEEVE, which is soaked with gasoline. The SLEEVE IGNITES  
JACK panics - waving his is arm, trying to get it out.  
PARRY is both amazed and impressed - seeing it as a sign.  
The bums talk casually as JACK tries to rip off his coat.

BLACK

Crazy fuck.

HIPPY

(to IRISHMAN)

So what do you think of the death penalty?

IRISHMAN

Death's definitely a penalty. Ain't  
no fucking gift. Life's too goddamn short.

With the fire out, JACK tries to leave, saying:

JACK  
I better be going...

IRISHMAN  
(thrusting the bottle at him)  
Have a drink...don't be shy!  
(JACK sits quickly)

PARRY  
I think they like you.

This worries Jack. PARRY retrieves him and brings him back to the group.

The IRISHMAN removes the bottle from his saliva soaked mouth and hands it to JACK, who is disgusted:

JACK  
Oh no that's all-

BLACK  
DRINK! GODDAMN IT!

JACK grabs the bottle and drinks - holding back his nausea.

PARRY  
Would anyone like a fruit pie?

THREE BUMS (O.C.)  
No thank you...Too sweet...to fattening...Goddamn it.

JACK feels sick as the cheap liquor running through him. IRISHMAN begins reciting a Chaucer passage in old English. The BLACK stares off, half listening. PARRY turns to JACK, his face beaming, he clasps his hands and says:

PARRY  
Et in arcadia ego.

HIPPY  
Man...Why did God invent mediocrity?

This remark acts like a slap in the face to JACK. The others consider it in silence - not really knowing what it means. The cheap liquor begins to take it's effect and from JACK'S POV, WE FADE OUT OF THE SCENE ON THE NEXT LINES - AS HE CLOSE HIS EYES AND SLIPS INTO A DRUNKEN SLUMBER.

HIPPIE (O.C.)  
You were phenominal tonight, Parry.  
(affirmations from the other two)

SUPER-BUM, man! Fucking Marvel Comics...

FADE-OUT.

FADE-UP ON:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT HIDEAWAY - MORNING.

JACK is asleep on a mattress beside a boiler spewing steam. HE is slowly awakened by water dripping on his cheek --  
- the first dull pangs of a mean hangover making itself known.

HE opens his eyes, confused -- not knowing exactly what happened.

CUT TO:

THE GIANT FACE OF PARRY

lying parallel beside him -- like a kid waiting for his parents to wake up Xmas morning.

PARRY  
(loud and cheery)  
How are you feeling?

Jarred, Jack nods suspiciously. He notices the surroundings --

JACK  
Have I died?

PARRY  
(friendly)  
Hahahahaaa... Nononono... Not yet...  
Hahahaha...

JACK  
(his head throbbing)  
If you're going to murder me, that's fine... just don't laugh.

He tries to focus his eyes and looks around the room: there is an extremely organized "living area" -- a make-shift kitchen with hot plate, a nail in a wall with clothes on hangers... There is also a dumpster sitting beneath a garbage chute -- The dumpster has planets and stars painted on its side.

Jack looks to the far wall and sees a handmade collage mural: pictures cut out and pasted in a haphazard manner, all medieval in origin; grassy landscape with castles, knights and maidens on horses, crests and symbols of the Crusades, and various renditions of the Holy Grail... One maiden stands out from the rest -- a frail looking doe-like creature.

On the adjacent wall, however, there are no pictures. Only frantic scribblings in red marker... Out of the scribblings we can see: an evil looking face with a bear amateurishly drawn... a large red horse drawn as if it hurt to get out the image... the style is violent and erratic.

Jack looks to the other wall and finds Parry's arsenal -- homemade "weapons" that also look medieval, like lances made from mop sticks, nets made of knotted rope, slingshots and a shield made from a garbage can cover with a rose painted on it. Against each wall are piled, what seems to be hundreds of books. Jack doesn't know what to make of all this. He is frightened.

JACK

Where am I?

PARRY

My abode... My domicile... My neck of the woods... Hungry? Breakfast? A fruit pie perhaps?

JACK

No... thanks... Listen --

PARRY

My name is Parry.

JACK

(realizes he's barefoot)

Hi... Where are my shoes?

PARRY

They're --

(suddenly stands)

-- What?

JACK

(jumps)

Where -- ?

PARRY

(to the air)

What!?

JACK

What?!

PARRY

Sshhhh!

Parry looks like he's listening to someone. Then he smiles broadly at Jack, which makes Jack worry even more.

PARRY  
(continuing; to the  
air)  
I knew it! I knew it last night!  
(beat; argues)  
I did too! He's the one!

He kneels beside Jack, which makes Jack lean up against  
the boiler.

PARRY  
(continuing)  
... Can you keep a secret?

Jack shakes his head.

PARRY  
(continuing)  
Do you know what the Little People  
just told me?

JACK  
The Little People?

PARRY  
They said you're The One.

JACK  
I'm the one what?

PARRY  
(stands abruptly)  
Oh shut up!!!

He picks up a can of wintergreen air freshener and starts  
spraying, with violent strokes, to shut "them" up... Jack  
gets more nauseous from the smell... Parry yells to the  
air:

PARRY  
(continuing)  
... I've got a right to say  
something. I mean, you're tying my  
hands here!  
(to Jack)  
They say you're not ready to know.

JACK  
I'm not...  
(to himself)  
Now, where are those shoes...

Jack makes a move to stand when Parry stops spraying and  
yells:

PARRY

Hheeyy!!

Jack sits back down. Parry whispers to the air:

PARRY  
(continuing)  
... You're frightening him!

Parry kneels before him. Jack presses against the boiler.

PARRY  
(continuing)  
... Do you know who I am?

JACK  
Uhh... I'm drawing a blank.

PARRY  
Take a guess...  
(shouts to the air)  
Let him guess!! Tch.

He goes for the air freshener but Jack's reply stops him.

JACK  
Uh... gee... well... you seem to be  
some kind of vigilante...

PARRY  
No, no... I mean that sort of happens  
along the way but no...  
(proudly)  
I'm on a very special quest.

JACK  
A quest?

PARRY  
But I need help and they sent you.

JACK  
(clarifying)  
The Little...

PARRY  
They work for Him.

JACK  
Him...?

PARRY  
(leans in to whisper)  
God... I'm the janitor of God.

Jack's face drops. Parry gets comfortable and explains

casually:

PARRY

(continuing)

... They came to me about a year ago. I was sitting on the john having one of the most satisfying bowel movements -- you know the ones -- where you just see God... And I saw them... just floating around... hundreds of these... cute little fat people... And they spoke. They said "I" was chosen to help them get back something very important they lost. But my part might be very dangerous. I said "Whoah".... slow down... ya start hearing voices from floating little fat people that tell you you're on a mission for God and you wind up in a mini-series. Then they said "Look in Architecture Today, Feb '88... page 33..."

Parry quickly crosses to a pile of magazines, grabs one and dives back to Jack, who keeps scanning for his shoes. Parry leafs through the magazine and opens to page 33.

PARRY

(continuing)

And there it was... plain as day.

He shows Jack a feature about Langdon Carmichael, a Malcolm Forbes type real estate baron. The five page pictorial depicts his ten million dollar restoration of an old N.Y. Armory into a palatial city home. Caption reads: "REAL ESTATE BILLIONAIRE LANGDON CARMICHAEL'S TOWER OF POWER"...

JACK

Langdon Carmichael?

Carmichael himself -- a dashing bachelor around fifty-five -- is shown standing in his private library beside a glass commode. Parry points to inside the commode, where a golden chalice is displayed.

PARRY

It's the Grail... The Holy Grail.

He indicates the pictures on the collage. Jack's losing it.

JACK

The Holy Grail? Some billionaire has the Holy Grail sitting in a commode on Madison Avenue?

PARRY

I know! You can't imagine how surprised I was. Who would think you could find anything divine on the Upper East Side.

JACK

(annoyed now)

Listen... I don't mean to be flippant or to enrage you or anything but... you're an imbecile. And I'm not The One... I'm not any One...

Parry tries to speak but:

JACK

(continuing)

I think you're a very nice... very nice psychotic man. I really appreciate what you did for me. It was a very brave and noble thing...

PARRY

Oh, please... you're embarrassing me.

JACK

(rising)

I wish you all the luck in the world. When you get the Grail, I'm sure I'll be seeing lots of you on various talk shows...

PARRY

(upset)

But I can't get it... He's...

He runs to the wall with the scribblings in red and indicates the evil face with the beard... He picks up a red marker and begins scribbling furiously -- adding to the face and the horse...

PARRY

(continuing)

He's out there... I don't know if... He's always out there, see... and...

He drops the marker and smiles to Jack...

PARRY

(continuing)

See, you don't know him... That's why you're the one... You can get it...

JACK

Listen, forget the shoes. I'll just

take a cab... Uh...

PARRY

Parry.

JACK

Parry... I'm Jack.

PARRY

I know...

Parry rushes to a corner and gets Jack's shows and Pinnocchio doll, then rushes to Jack and hands them over.

JACK

Thanks... You can keep the doll.

PARRY

Thanks a mill --

(like a corporate exec)

And I'll give you a buzz as soon as I hear from the people upstairs and we'll get this thing off the ground... Thanks for stopping by, Jack. Give my love to the wife and kids.

Parry grabs Jack's hand and shakes it.

JACK

I'm not married.

PARRY

Funny -- you look married.

Horrified, Jack makes a hasty exit.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWNSTONE HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Jack steps out of what appears to be the entrance to the basement. He walks down the hallway toward the front exit when suddenly an apartment door swings open. FRANK, a burly black superintendent with a hearing aid, steps out.

FRANK

Where you comin' from?!

JACK

Uh... basement I think...

FRANK

(yells to basement)

I tell him no visitors!!!

Jack's hangover sets off another explosion.

JACK

Sorry... I...

WIFE (O.S.)

Fraaaaaankkk! Who's at the door?!

Jack glances through the half-opened door and sees the bottom half of Frank's wheelchair bound WIFE: one leg is normal, the other is a pink prosthetic. Both, however, are wearing furry mules. Jack's nightmare doesn't seem to end.

FRANK

I'm talkin' to somebody. Ya gotta yell like a banshee?!!

WIFE (O.S.)

It's just my manner!

FRANK

(hard of hearing)

What?

WIFE (O.S.)

I said it's just my manner!!!

Jack's head is now nearly split down the middle.

FRANK

You a friend of Parry's?

JACK

No...

(trying to clear his  
vision)

He is supposed to live there?

FRANK

Yeah, well... I let him stay there.  
What else could I do after such a  
tragedy?

JACK

Tragedy?

FRANK

(dying to tell)

He and his wife was were at some bar  
..and some nut came in with a shotgun  
and blew the place apart. She was a beautiful  
girl...She never knew what hit her.

Jack goes numb. He can't believe his ears. HE leans

against the wall for support....CAMERA ON Jack as Frank continues O.S.

FRANK (O.S.)  
(continuing)  
....You must have heard about it. That nut who listened to the radio?

LIGHT CHANGE on Jack against the bare wall. (Perhaps even the scenery is moved behind him) as we fade out Frank's voice.

FRANK (O.S.)  
(continuing)  
Parry's not his real name. His real name's Henry Sa....

-- And fade in Anne's voice...

ANNE (V.O.)  
..Listen. I understand about open relationships. Please. I was a teenager in the sixties after all....I understand!

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO POP OFFICE - DAY.

Anne sits at her desk, surrounded by her shelves of porno tapes. Jack sits before her looking like death warmed over. Frank's voice reverbs in his head as he half listens to Anne.

ANNE  
....But when you care about somebody ya need more than an open relationship. Ya need a phone call.

Her intercom RINGS. Anne's tone immediately changes:

ANNE  
(continuing)  
WHAT!....

EMPLOYEE (V.O.)  
A guy wants to check out the pornos...

ANNE  
So send him back!  
(she flicks off the intercom and returns to Jack, softly)  
... Ya need to pick up the phone and tell me that you're not dead... that you haven't been attacked or raped or who knows. You disappear last night. I don't know what to think. I was up

all night. Look at you!

A meek, fiftyish BUSINESSMAN has entered and begins to browse through the porno videos discreetly.

JACK

I'm sorry.

ANNE

I smell gas... Do you smell gas...

She and the Businessman exchange glances. Jack is about to respond when Anne continues:

ANNE

(continuing)

I can't tell you how distraught I was. All night long. What the hell happened?

JACK

I was attacked.

ANNE

What!

JACK

Two kids tried to set me on fire.

ANNE

Oh my God... What did they do! My God!!!

She crosses to Jack and hugs him... The Businessman turns with a concerned look, having overheard. Jack indicates to Anne that he feels awkward in front of the Businessman. Anne confronts the Businessman with as little tact as possible.

ANNE

(continuing)

Are you almost done?!

BUSINESSMAN

(flustered)

Well...

ANNE

Whatta looking for -- a story!?

(makes a selection)

Here... "Creamer Versus Creamer"...

It won an award.

Jack hides his face so as not to laugh. Anne ushers the man out.

ANNE

(continuing)

You were attacked. My God. Should I call a doctor! Did you call the police...

JACK

No, I'm fine... really...

ANNE

You're all right... you sure...

Jack nods. So, Anne moves on to more important matters.

ANNE

(continuing)

... So... where did you sleep last night?

JACK

I... I stayed at a friend's. Listen, I --

ANNE

(puts up her hand)

Please... before you go on... let me talk... okay... We've had a wonderful time together... When we first met, you said this wasn't serious and I shouldn't get serious and then you moved in and we haven't been serious. And I just wanna say that I have no regrets. None. And don't wanna have any now so I want ya to be up front with me... I want the truth. If you're seein' somebody else, let me know... You don't have to pour gasoline on yourself and light a match just to break up with me. Just tell me the truth.

Jack looks to her -- somewhat admiring the bravery and integrity underneath the peasant stock.

JACK

I'm not seeing anyone else. I really was attacked.

ANNE

Okay.

(satisfied, she struts to her desk)

... I love you...

Jack smiles weakly.

ANNE

(continuing)

... You don't have to say it back...  
although it wouldn't kill you. I'll  
cook tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT ABOVE THE STORE - NIGHT

Anne and Jack have just finished eating dinner.

JACK

You know what the Holy Grail is?

Anne takes a long drag then puts it out in her leftover  
food. Jack is repelled by the habit.

ANNE

The Holy Grail? Yeah... I know that.  
It was like -- Jesus' juice glass.

Jack just stares at her.

ANNE

(continuing)

Oh, I used to be such a Catholic.

JACK

You still believe in God?

ANNE

Oh sure... Gotta believe in God.

(trying to be  
intellectual)

But I don't think God made man in his  
own image. No. 'Cause most of...  
the bullshit that happens, is because  
of men. No, I think man was made out  
of the devil's image and women were  
created out of God -- because women  
can have babies which is sorta like  
creating, and which also explains why  
women are attracted to men, because,  
lets face it, the devil is a helluva  
lot more interesting -- I slept with  
a few saints and let me tell you...  
Booooooring!!!... And so the whole  
point of life, I think, is for men  
and women to get married so the devil  
and God can live together and, ya  
know -- work it out...

(Anne moves to him and  
leans in for a kiss)

... Not that we have to get married.

Jack notices a brown spot on her chin and pulls away.

JACK

... You have a little... uh...  
something on your face...

ANNE

Oh, I got a pimple... This stuff is  
supposed to blend with my skin  
color... Like it really works, ya  
know...

Jack moves to the bar to fix a drink. Anne follows him  
and takes the drink out of his hand. Jack knows what  
this means.

JACK

I don't think I'm up to it tonight...

Anne massages his shoulders.

JACK

I had a very traumatic experience...  
I...

Anne nods but keeps massaging. As long as he wasn't with  
a woman, she doesn't care. Her massaging gets more  
intense -- moving up his head and contorting his face as  
he speaks.

JACK

(continuing)  
I think I'm getting sick...  
(trying to be  
forceful)  
I... I slept in a boiler room,  
Anne... I'm tired... I'm upset...  
I'm... just not in the mood!... Okay!

Anne grabs his face with both hands and pulls him into a  
kiss. She proceeds to climb onto his body as she  
utilizes a skill she picked up in high school make-out  
parties. She is a pro. Jack, against all his better  
judgement and will -- despite the pimple cream -- is  
rendered helpless by this woman's passion... He returns  
the embrace and guides her to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S LIVING ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Jack sits in his underwear on the living room floor  
before an open closet with a cardboard box between his  
legs. The box is filled with tapes of Jack's past radio

shows. He begins to sort through them... reading titles, remembering moments... then stops when he comes upon newspaper clippings of the murder at Babbitt's. Edwin Malnick's face stares at him from a yellowed front page. The memories sour. He moves to the bar. Anne exits the bedroom.

ANNE

Whatsa matter, hon -- can't sleep?

She sees the radio tapes.

JACK

I tell you something, Anne. I really feel like I'm cursed.

ANNE

Oh stop. Things will change. My Aunt Mary always said, there's a remedy for everything in this world except death and having no class.

JACK

I get this feeling like I'm... a magnet but I attract shit. Out of all the people in this city, why did I meet a man who's wife I killed?

ANNE

You didn't kill anybody. Stop.

JACK

I wish there was some way I could... just... pay the fine and go home.

Anne crosses to Jack and gently touches him. Jack turns and clutches her to him tightly. Lowering his head to hers, he cries...

ANNE

I know. I know, honey.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Jack is alone in the basement. He slowly walks around the room -- picking up little items here and there, as if trying to discover some clue to Parry. He scans the titles of the piles of books. All of them have something to do with medieval history or literature, myths, or the Crusades... He picks up one of the books and opens it... Page after page has been ripped out anywhere there might have been a picture or a diagram. He comes upon a large scroll that he unravels. It is a map, drawn by Parry, of

Langdon Carmichael's house and the surrounding blocks... He rolls it up... The Pinnocchio doll sits on a broken chair facing the wall with the nightmarish scribblings... acting like a sentinel.

He crosses to the prominent picture of the maiden with the long hair. He notices a small stand before the picture, with a candle. It is like a shrine with offerings: a flower, a small perfume sampler, a box of Jawbreakers candy and a dime store romance novel. Jack doesn't understand.

FRANK (O.S.)

Can I help you?

JACK

I'm... just looking for Parry...

FRANK

He's not here.

Jack is drawn to the scribblings on the wall and makes out the faint shape of a man on a horse.

JACK

What did you say his name used to be?

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSEUP - duffel bag of Parry's things before Jack.

FRANK (O.S.)

Hospital said it would be better if we kept certain things away from him.

Frank speaks O.S. as Jack looks through the items: ... a Master's degree in Medieval History... Another in Medieval Literature...

FRANK (O.S.)

(continuing)

... That's his real name -- Henry Sagan. He was a teacher over at Columbia. They kept him in some mental place on Staten Island... He did not speak for over a year then all of a sudden, he starts talkin' only now he's this Parry guy.

... A torn picture of Parry in a tux... his wedding ring... a thesis entitled THE FISHER KING, A MYTHIC JOURNEY FOR MODERN MAN... Frank continues:

FRANK (O.S.)

(continuing)

... He used to live upstairs with his wife, so when he got released they sent him here. I felt bad. He couldn't work. Nobody wanted him. So I let him stay in the basement. He helps out -- I give him a couple of dollars. People throw things away he gets them.

Jack holds a beautiful photographic portrait of Parry's wife:

FRANK (O.S.)

(continuing)

...She was a beautiful girl.  
He was crazy about her.

CUT TO:

EXT. A LOT BENEATH THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE - DAY.

The BLACK, the IRISHMAN and the HIPPIE are in their usual place. THEY lean against the wall, observing the afternoon life that walks by. JACK enters the scene and asks them where PARRY is. The HIPPIE begins to speak and points to his right. JACK nods in appreciation and hands them a couple of dollars.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNER OUTSIDE METROPOLITAN LIFE BUILDING-LATER THAT DAY.

JACK approaches PARRY from across the street; he is sitting on top of a car near a souvlaki vendor and eyeing A CLOCK TOWER across the street and to the left of the building. HE studies the time as he recites under his breath (we only hear excerpts);

PARRY

"Soveriegn princess of his captive heart  
what dire affliction has thou made me  
suffer, thus banished from thy presence  
with reproach, and fettered by thy rigorous  
command, not to appear again before thy  
beautiful face. Deign princess, to remember  
this thy faithful slave, who now endures  
such misery for love of thee"....

JACK

Parry!

PARRY smiles casually and, without looking at Jack, says:

PARRY

Hi Jack...

HE then returns his gaze to the clock which is approaching NOON.

JACK reaches in his pockets and pulls out some money.

JACK

Hi. Listen...I thought maybe you could use a-

THE CLOCK STRIKES NOON. PARRY grabs JACK...

PARRY

COME ON!

HE pulls JACK into the building.

EXT. MET LIFE BUILDING - NOON.

Several business men and women make their way out the elevators for lunch. PARRY and JACK position themselves with a clear view of the center elevator. The doors open and after several more aggressive co-workers exit, PARRY'S DAMSEL in distress appears out of a revolving door, but quickly gets "revolved" back into the building....

PARRY

She'll be back....

Finally, Lydia makes an exit.

PARRY

Isn't she a vision?

REACTION SHOT OF A BEWILDERED JACK as he looks at LYDIA - a dowdy, waif-like sparrow of a thing - makes her way through the lobby. SHE is torturously self-conscious, clumsy, formless and plain. She wears loose frocks that give her no shape and make her appear to be swimming in material. SHE wears no make-up; her unstyled hair is kept off her face by a single beret that keeps sliding down her head, and her contact lens are always dry, causing her to blink and use drops.

JACK

Yeah, gorgeous...Look, I'm going.  
I just wanted to give you...

Starts to dig in his pocket, but Parry is already off.

PARRY

Let's go.

JACK follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY.

Behind the glass in interior, we can see LYDIA sitting by herself eating lunch. CAMERA PANS OUT TO THE STREET where PARRY and JACK are sitting on the hood of a car, watching...

PARRY

She loves dumplings. It's her  
Wednesday ritual.

LYDIA raises a dumpling to her lips with a pair of chopsticks.  
SHE then accidentally drops it into a dish of soy sauce and  
splatters her dress. Unnerved, she hastily wipes herself down,  
knocking over a glass of water when she removes the napkin.

PARRY

Isn't she sweet. She does that every time...

Jack squints at Lydia as if trying to see what Parry  
sees.

CUT TO:

INT. BOOKSTAND NEAR GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Jack and Parry have followed Lydia into a bookstore. She  
stands browsing through a revolving bookstand. They  
watch from a distance.

PARRY

She buys a new book every two days.

Lydia spins too hard, sending books flying off. She  
replaces the books, but keeps one called "Loves Lusty  
Longings"...

PARRY

(continuing; smiles with  
great affection)

She's into trash. Whadda you gonna  
do?

CUT TO:

EXT. MET LIFE BUILDING - DAY

Parry and Jack are following Lydia, when she stops at a  
newsstand.

PARRY

She's got a real sweet tooth. If  
anybody ever told me I'd be in love  
with a woman who eats Jawbreakers,  
I'd said they were nuts.

(reverentially)

But look at that jaw!

Jack doesn't want to look. If the Little People made  
Parry seem crazy, this infatuation confirms him as beyond

hope.

CUT TO:

EXT. MET LIFE BUILDING - DAY

Lydia buys some candy then turns and walks back toward her office building, once again waiting her turn to dive into the revolving doors. She disappears into the building.

JACK

Do you follow her every day?

PARRY

Huh-huh. I'm deeply smitten.

JACK

What's her name?

PARRY

I don't know.

A businessman, walking in the opposite direction, throws a candy wrapper on the street as he passes Jack and Parry. Parry suddenly stops, outraged, pulls out a slingshot and fires a stone at the man's head. The businessman is hit but doesn't know how, since Parry grabs Jack's arm and resumes walking casually in the opposite direction.

JACK

Why did you do that?

PARRY

Well, if every time someone did something offensive they hit in the head with a pebble, I think they might alter their behavior. What do you think Jack...

Before Jack can respond, PARRY spots a rummage find:

PARRY

Oh look! A cooler!

Parry spots an abandoned COOLER filled with junk and starts going through it. Things are getting weird again, so JACK seizes the moment to accomplish his initial task - he pulls out a fifty dollar bill and hands it to PARRY.

JACK

Here...I just would like to help you. I thought...maybe...you could use some money.

PARRY

Fifty dollars?

JACK digs deeper and hands him a twenty. PARRY is dumbfounded.

JACK

Here's another twenty. Will that do?  
(sorting through his change)  
I mean, what's it going to take!

PARRY

No..no, it's..I don't know what to say.  
This is so nice of you...Jack...

HE hugs him on the street which embarasses JACK to no end.

JACK

(pulling away)  
That's O.K.

PARRY

Can I take you to lunch?

JACK

No..I have to get back to work.  
Take care of yourself.

JACK walks away. CAMERA stays on JACK for a few yards until he turns around and sees:

PARRY handing the money to a BUM in a doorway, yelling into an imaginary phone.

BUM

SELL!....SELL!....SELL!  
(HE takes the money  
from PARRY)  
BUY!...BUY!...BUY!...

JACK

HEY!!...HEY!

JACK walks back to PARRY, who is explaining to the BUM, who is now talking gibberish:

PARRY

(as if he understands)  
Well, I think you should be realistic.  
Ya can't start an ad agency on fifty dollars!

JACK

What are you doing?  
(to BUM)  
Give that back!

The Bum screams in defiance... PARRY pulls JACK away...

JACK

But I gave it to you!

PARRY

Well what am I gonna do with it?

JACK

I don't know. But I gave it to you...to help YOU...not him.

PARRY

(beat, then smiles mischievously)  
You really want to help me?

A wary JACK, who's afraid to reply.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANGDON CARMICHAEL'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY.

On the Upper East Side, PARRY and JACK stand across the tree-lined street from the ten million dollar armory/house.

PARRY

Pretty impressive huh?...Don't let it scare you. I'll admit it's formidable but everything has it's weakness.

JACK

You can't just break into Langdon Carmichael's house. This man has done nothing.

PARRY

O.K...let me explain this one more time...The Holly Grail is in -....

JACK

All right! Listen - please...don't start drooling or...rolling your eyes when I tell you this but - You shouldn't do this..There is no Holy Grail.

PARRY

Of course there is, Jack. What do you think the Crusades were - a frat initiation? I don't think so...There has to be a Grail.

JACK

Look, you're only sort of insane, really. People like you can lead semi-normal lives. You could get a job...

PARRY

I don't need a job. I have a quest.

JACK

I take it back - you're fucking deranged...  
And you're going to get yourself killed  
trying to get in there!

PARRY

Tch. You are so sweet...Now I know  
why you're saying this.  
...You're afraid I'm in danger and  
you're trying to protect me.

JACK

No. I think you're a moron and  
I don't want to get into trouble.

Ignoring this, PARRY gets filled with emotion and hugs JACK.

PARRY

...You are such a great guy. First  
the money, now this.  
(to the LITTLE PEOPLE)  
Isn't he fabulous!?

JACK

(pulling away)  
Please don't hug me in public again, O.K.?

PARRY

(shouts)  
I LOVE THIS MAN...YA HEAR ME JADED CITY...  
(JACK is mortified)  
...I'M DAFFY ABOUT THIS GUY AND  
I DON'T CARE WHO KNOWS IT!!!

An COUPLE pass by, obviously not wanting to know it.

JACK

Will you shut-up!!!

PARRY

You're a true friend.

JACK

I'm not. Believe me. I'm scum.

PARRY

You're a real honest to goodness  
good guy.

JACK

I'm self-centered, I'm weak - I don't  
have the will power of a fly on shit...

PARRY

That's why the Little People sent you.  
Just like magic.

JACK

I don't believe in little floating people! THERE IS NO MAGIC!

PARRY

So what? You going to help me?

JACK

WILL YOU PLEASE... please listen to me ...

(HE GRABS PARRY by the shoulders)

You know none of this is true -  
the Grail, the voices...  
There's a part of you that  
knows this isn't true.  
I know who you are...  
or who you were.  
You don't belong on the  
streets. You're intelligent  
man...you're a teacher...  
You were a teach at Hunter College.  
Don't you remember?...

PARRY

Jack...  
Come on...what are  
saying...  
I know who you are..  
You're acting really-  
No, no, no, no...  
Jack...  
Jacck!...

(SCREAMS)

PARRY breaks away from him. HE falls back onto the ground.  
THE SCREAM STOPS and is replaced by an eerie SILENCE.  
As if sound were ripped out of space. JACK speaks but no  
sound comes out...We are in PARRY'S world for this brief  
moment...JACK leans over to help PARRY, but the latter inches  
away...fearful of the vision he sees: something out of sight,  
looming over JACK, breathing FIERY SMOKE...JACK tries to raise  
PARRY off the ground and, in doing so, the vision for PARRY  
comes into full view:

CUT TO:

A MAGNIFICENT BURNISHED RED STEED

stared down at Parry. On top of him sits the Red Knight.  
- a helmeted figure with a beard in a flowing red cap,  
holding a lance. He stares at Parry. Closing his eyes,  
Parry raises his hands to protect himself.

Jack looks around and sees nothing. He acts with great concern:

JACK

(Mouthing in silence)

Perry...you all right?

HE embraces PARRY by the shoulders. PARRY turns to him opening  
his eyes, then turns back to the KNIGHT to discover that:  
The HORSE and the KNIGHT have moved several feet away, and  
are continuing to back up...as if in retreat.

JACK speaks as the sound is returned.

JACK

Parry answer me...are you all right?

PARRY smiles in amazement.

PARRY

He knows who you are!

(amazed)

He's afraid! I can tell!

JACK (O.S.)

You're totally gone, aren't you?

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT

He pulls the reins back, forcing the horse up onto its hind legs. Then, he gallops off.

CUT TO:

PARRY AND JACK

PARRY

We've got'em... come on!!!

Parry runs O.S. in the direction of the Knight. Jack is not about to follow, until he sees -- Parry runs right into the intersection of 94th & Fifth almost getting hit hit by a cab.

JACK

Jesus.

Jack runs after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIFTH AVE. AND 74TH - DAY

Parry reaches where the Red Knight stood and looks.

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT

riding onto the sidewalk and into Central Park.

CUT TO:

PARRY, as JACK reaches him.

JACK

What is going o-

Before he can finish, PARRY is off again. JACK races after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY.

THEY climb the wall and run into the park. THEY dodge past women with strollers, runners, bikers, sun worshippers, etc....  
THEY run deep into an extremely woody section of Central Park. The RED KNIGHT appears first to the left, then re-appears to the right. PARRY darts about like a madman.

EXT. ROCK - CENTRAL PARK - DAY

The Red Knight is perched atop a rock. He and Parry exchange looks. The Knight and his horse rear up, two towering figures against the Central Park South skyline.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY.

Parry, uttering a war cry, rushes off again.

EXT. ROCK - CENTRAL PARK - DAY

JACK, exhausted and bedraggled, climbs the rock to follow. He reaches the top, panting.

JACK

Oh...Oh...Oh God...I'm dying.  
I can't breath and I'm dying.

HE finds PARRY sitting Buddha-like, on the top of the rock, calmly gazing out at the beautiful scenery before him.

PARRY

Isn't it great up here...  
He's gone now, but we had him on the run!  
We would've had his ass if we had horses!  
He's running scared!

JACK

WHO! WHO'S RUNNING?! WHO HAVE WE BEEN  
CHASING!?? CAN I ASK THIS QUESTION NOW!!!

CAMERA PANS BACK SLOWLY from behind Jack and Parry.

PARRY

I'm sorry Jack. I thought you saw him.

CAMERA reveals the head of a horse.

JACK

SAW WHO!!?

PARRY

The Red Knight!

JACK

The Red...?

(stares at him in wonder)

You're totally gone, aren't you?

Frustrated, JACK turns to leave but this time there is a sound - someone is crying O.S.

PARRY

.....Do you hear that?! Oh

"Heaven be praised, in giving me an opportunity, so soon of fulfilling the duties of my profession...These cries doubtless proceed from some miserable male or female, who stands in need of my immediate aid and protection"

And he's off....A reluctant JACK pauses before following.

JACK

This is too hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. - CENTRAL PARK; BRIDLE PATH - DAY.

The park's bridle path. A BEATEN MAN cries as he sits in the middle of the dirt bridle path - mumbling to himself, trying to bury himself in dirt....HE hears the two men coming.

GAY BUM

GET AWAY! GET AWAY!!.....

PARRY kneels down to him. JACK keeps a safe distance away.

PARRY

It's O.K...It's O.K...Lets me help you up.

GAY BUM

NO...I WANNA GO! I WANNA GO NOW!

PARRY

Come on now...You can't sit here.

GAY BUM

NO! I want a debutante on a horse to step on me. Leave me alone!!

JACK

(wanting to leave)

Parry...

PARRY

Buddy, the days of the debutantes  
are ... not what they used to be.

GAY BUM

(starts to cry)  
Isn't that awful? Poor Brenda Frazier.  
Poor Little Gloria. They ruined them!  
THEY ATE THEM ALIVE!

PARRY

(helping him up)  
It was a crime.

GAY BUM

Leave me alone...I wanna go...

PARRY lifts him up - he looks to JACK for help.

PARRY

Will you get the other side.  
(JACK hesitates)  
Jack?

The man's cuts and suicidal demeanor turn JACK off.

JACK

Listen, he just needs to sleep it  
off. Someone will take care of him.

PARRY

Who?

JACK

Well, maybe he wants to stay here.  
(to bum)  
Do...do you want to stay here?

GAY BUM

(suddenly lucid and pissy)  
Oh, yes, thank you - I really love bleeding  
in horseshit. How very Gandhiesque of you.

PARRY looks to JACK, who then begrudgingly helps the BUM up.

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER.

In a room at the end of the line of chairs, PARRY stands holding the GAY BUM. JACK stands a safe distance away, unable to take his eyes off the scene before him : seated against the wall are an assortment of derelicts, drunks, screaming withdrawal victims and jacketed schizophrenics. JACK has a hard time moving.

PARRY

(to JACK, referring to GAY BUM)  
Will you watch him for a minute?

Before Jack can respond, PARRY shifts the GAY BUM'S body into JACK'S arms, then moves about the room, introducing himself to the various patients as JACK watches. HE moves down the line...saying hello, wiping people's brows, holding the hands of an angry bag lady mumbling incoherently. Smiling and saying hello to each one, no matter how frightening they seem. HE appears to have a soothing affect.

GAY BUM

I wanna go...Just let me go...

JACK

Uh...Where...where do you want to go?

GAY BUM

(upset)

A real nice place I know...  
Ah...can't get there! Not tonight.

JACK

(being positive)  
Where? Maybe we can.

GAY BUM

(overlapping, crying)  
No...no...we can't...we can't..

JACK

(with more feeling)  
Come on...maybe we can...where do you want to go?

GAY BUM

Venice...Like Katherine Hepburn in SUMMERTIME.  
(The GAY BUM cries in frustration).  
....Why can't I be Katherine Hepburn...

JACK stares at him, at a complete loss for a response.

GAY BUM

I wanna die...I just wanna die...

JACK, against all better judgement, pats the BUM'S hand in comfort. Unexpectedly, the GAY BUM leans his head on JACK'S shoulder, and cries. JACK, wide-eyed with embarrassment, looks over to PARRY -

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

PARRY is teaching a song to a SCITZHO, A YUPPIE IN A STRAIGHT JACKET, and a paranoid BAG LADY...

BUM

O.K..everyone know their parts...

Here we go...

(sings)

"I like New York in June"...

HE points to the YUPPIE who replies:

YUPPIE

"How about you..."

PARRY

"I like a Gershwin tune..."

PARRY points to the SCITZHO, who stares at him blankly, drooling:

PARRY

...Good!.... "I like to read good books"

HE points to the BAG LADY, who is talking to herself:

BAG LADY

Where the hell am I gonna put the  
children? Goddamn daughter-in-law!  
Comes into my house looking for dustballs!  
GET THE FUCK OUTTA MY DINING ROOM...you ingrate!

PARRY

Tempo, people...tempo...

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

JACK, his arm around the despairing GAY MAN, is sharing his problems.

JACK

Can you tell me something? Did you lose  
your mind all of a sudden or was it a  
slow gradual process?

GAY BUM

(suddenly coherent)

Well,... I'm a singer by trade...  
Summer stock...nightclub revues...  
that kind of thing...It used to be  
what I absolutely lived for...God...I can do  
GYPSY backwards - every part- but, one  
night...in the middle of singing  
"Funny..... - it suddenly hit me...  
...what does all of this really mean?

(JACK nods in a knowing metaphysical agreement)

That, and the fact that all my friends are  
dead...God, I sound like a veteran.  
Dad would be so proud.

At that moment a PIZZA BOY enters, making a delivery:

PIZZA BOY

Pizza!

Suddenly, DOCTORS and NURSES appear out of the wood work and swarm around the delivery boy.

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM- DAY

PARRY notices the time, passing by the doctors and pizza.

PARRY

Jack, it's almost five. We're going to be late.  
We're going to miss her!

PARRY exits. JACK turns to the GAY BUM, exhaustedly.

JACK

Um...I've got to run. I've been doing  
this all day. Are you going to be all right?

GAY BUM

Oh please!...I was born a Catholic in Brooklyn...  
I've been to hell and back....  
I'll be fine...  
(adds quite sincerely:)  
....Thanks...You're a gem.

JACK nods, a little self-consciously, and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION: A BANK - RUSH HOUR

PARRY and JACK sit on the floor enjoying a cup of coffee.  
A VIETNAM VET in a wheelchair with no legs sits near the opposite  
wall, along with at least fifteen other homeless beggars.

Another MAN sits against a cash machine, crying. A WOMAN passes  
by and drops some change in the VET's cup without saying  
a word. The Vet, SID, smiles broadly.

SID

God Bless You... Have a nice day.

(to Jack and Parry)

Ya hear Jimmy Nickels got picked up  
yesterday...

Parry is too busy scanning the Grand Central main floor  
to answer. Realizing Parry isn't answering, Jack feels  
obliged to pick up the conversation.

JACK

Oh yeah?

SID

He got caught --

(passer-by drops coins in  
cup)

God bless... Have a safe trip home...

(to Jack)

-- Got caught pissin' on the  
bookstore. Man's a pig. No excuse  
for that. We're heading for social  
anarchy when people start pissing on  
bookstores!

Jack smiles at this observation. He then tries to get  
Parry's attention.

JACK

You'll never see her in this crowd.

Parry doesn't answer. He looks like a dog waiting for  
its master. People walk by Jack at a frantic pace. He  
sits uncomfortably against a wall. A man almost steps on  
him as he walks by and tosses a coin at Sid, missing the  
cup and forcing Sid to bend over... Jack picks the coin  
up for him.

SID

Bless you.

JACK

Asshole! Guy didn't even look at  
you.

SID

(takes coin)

He's paying so he don't have to look.  
What he doesn't know is, he's paying  
for a service. Guy goes to work  
every day and for eight hours, seven  
days a week, he bends over and gets  
it right up the ass till he can't  
stand...

Parry stands up and begins pacing before the main floor.

SID

(continuing)

... But one day, right before  
quitting time on Friday, his boss is  
going say something like "Say Bob --  
come into my office and kiss my  
ass"... and Bob is going think --  
"The hell with it! I don't care what  
happens. All I want right now is to  
see the expression on his face when I

stab him with these pair of  
scissors"...

Parry looks at the clock above the information booth --  
5:00.

SID

(continuing)

... But then he thinks of me -- "wait  
a minute!"... he says... "It's not so  
bad. At least I got two arms and two  
legs and I ain't beggin' for money."  
He puts down the scissors, and  
puckers up...

Jack is impressed with this man.

SID

(continuing)

... I'm what you call a moral traffic  
light. It's like I'm saying "Red --  
go no further."

O.S. a black woman begins to sing. Jack and Sid look:

SID

(continuing; smiles with  
respect)

Ah, Margaret.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - PHOTO LAB - RUSH HOUR

MARGARET, a black woman in a paisley kaftan, stands near  
a photo lab across from Jack and Sid. With a box in  
front of her for donations, she starts singing (SONG to  
be chosen). Some rush hour commuters stop to listen.  
Her VOICE is strong and soulful, she performs  
uninhibitedly.

SID

You have to admit though... Like at  
5:00 in Grand Central... Pretty  
breathtaking, don't cha think?

Jack looks around this mad rush hour scene, taking it in  
through Sid's eyes... Parry, however, keeps his gaze on  
the main floor. Suddenly, he spots her:

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - MAIN FLOOR

Hordes of people are moving in every which way, zigzagging across the floor... Lydia moves through the crowd, avoiding touching anyone...

PARRY

CAMERA PANS IN SLOWLY as we hear Margaret's SONG O.S. The closer the CAMERA gets to Parry the more her song changes... At first a blend of two melodies that sound disruptive, cacophonous... But as Parry smiles with joy, HIS SONG overtakes Margaret's... It is a WALTZ.

CUT TO:

MAIN FLOOR - PARRY'S POV

The hordes of people continue their zigzagging for a beat then:

Suddenly, they pair up and waltz around the main floor, circling around the center information booth...

Only Lydia remains walking -- gliding through the dancers with grace and ease...

Parry watches in a state of rapture -- moving as she moves to keep her in eye view as long as possible.

CUT TO:

JACK

listening to Margaret's SONG, taking in the scene around him... watching people listen to her song, while others walk by as if they were deaf and blind...

Feeling strangely at ease, strangely apart of everyone around him -- a group of lost souls listening to a woman bare her soul in song. He looks to spot Parry, rises and crosses to him...

CUT TO:

MAIN FLOOR

Parry watches as Lydia exits the main floor (the waltz has ended) just as Jack speaks his line:

JACK

It's such a great song.

PARRY

(referring to his own  
song)  
It's a classic.

Jack looks in the direction of Parry's stare and sees Lydia exit.

PARRY  
(continuing)  
God. Just one night with her. I'd  
die happy.

Jack hears this as if a light bulb went off above his head.

CUT TO:

INT. LYDIA'S APARTMENT - DUSK

A door opens. Lydia enters with a bag of groceries she picked up on the way. She turns on the light to reveal an extremely neat, albeit modest, one bedroom apartment. She carries the grocery bag into the kitchen.

Out of the bag, she removes a Lean Cuisine, a giant bottle of cream soda and four giant bars of Chunky chocolate. She pops the Lean Cuisine into the oven and walks back into the living room to an old stereo. She turns the TURNTABLE on -- a record already set upon it. She stands by her coffee table, as if taking position:

Suddenly, we hear ETHEL MERMAN -- as Lydia lip-syncs every word with complete commitment -- giving a full out performance.

ETHEL/LYDIA  
Got no sunshine, got no rain  
Still I think I'm a lucky dame  
I got the sun in the morning  
And the moon at night...

Her attempts at hand gestures and choreography are awkward -- bumping into the coffee table, banging her hand against a lamp -- but, we see a part of Lydia that few (actually no one) sees. Her abandon, her joy... her smile. From upstairs, neighbors BANG for her to keep the music down. Lydia casually crosses to the stereo, turns off the turntable and heads back to the kitchen -- as if the neighbors interference were all apart of her nightly ritual.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anne sits alone at her formica table, smoking a cigarette. Two plates are set. She waits for Jack. She is hurt and pissed off. TONY ORLANDO AND DAWN play on her stereo.

TONY ORLANDO

Knock three times... on the ceiling  
if you want me... Twice on the  
pipes...

The song continues as the CAMERA SLOWLY PANS up to CLOSEUP of Anne, who is fighting with an imaginary Jack.

ANNE

Ya fuckin' bastard. I don't need  
this...

(emphasizing)

... I Do Not Need This! A woman my  
age... I am a person. This is kid  
stuff. You come! You go! And all I  
do is cook like a jerk! You're a  
waste of good cutlets... I don't need  
this... Find yourself another dope...  
ya fuckin' bastard...

She puffs on her cigarette.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - SHEEPS MEADOW - NIGHT

PARRY

What a beautiful night.

HE walks deeper into the open field. This makes JACK nervous.

JACK

Don't you think it's time to go now?  
Running around here during the day is  
one thing but at night we could be killed  
by a wide variety of people.

PARRY

Well that's stupid. This is my park  
just as much as it is theirs. You  
think it's fair they keep us out  
just because they make us think we'll  
get killed or something?

JACK

Yes. I think that's very fair.

PARRY takes off his pants and stands there naked.

JACK

(continuing)  
.....What are you doing?

PARRY  
Have you ever done any cloudbusting?  
You lie on your back and you  
concentrate on the clouds...and you try yo  
break them apart with your mind.  
It's wild.

Parry lies down.

JACK  
You can't do this! This is New York!  
Nobody lies in naked in a field in New  
York..It's...it's too Midwestern.

PARRY  
Come on, try it. Ya feel the  
air on your body - ya little  
fella's flappin' in the breeze.  
...everybody in the city is busy  
with their business and no one knows we're  
bare assed in the middle of it. Come on!

JACK  
NO! I will not! This is nuts!  
I'm leaving! I mean it...this is nuts.  
(freaked, walking OC)  
This is too nuts...I'm leaving. I mean it!

JACK starts walking away from PARRY, talking to himself -

JACK  
..Ha...Little fella? I mean  
the man talks to invisible people -  
he sees invisible horses - and  
he's naked in the middle of Central  
Park. I should be surprised? I'm  
not surprised. I'm fucking outta  
my mind to even be here!

PARRY (O.S.)  
Who are you talking to Jack?

JACK  
(turns back and yells)  
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND!!

PARRY (O.S.)  
Bingo!

HE walks O.C.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK: SHEEPS MEADOW - TEN MINUTES LATER - NIGHT.

JACK, fully clothed, lies next to PARRY looking up at the clouds.

JACK

They're not moving.

THEY stare up. JACK raises his head. HE unbuttons his shirt - maybe that will help...

JACK

What if some homophobic jogger runs by and kills us to get back at his overbearing father?

Parry remains focused on the sky - in his own world. Something about cloudbusting makes Parry behave in a way we haven't seen before...He is uncharacteristically quiet.

JACK

"JACK LUCAS FOUND DEAD - BESIDE A DEAD NAKED MAN...THE TWO WERE DEAD...HIS COMPANION WAS NAKED"...I hate when they use the word companion...It's so insinuating..Although, it'll probably boost my biography sales. The public loves stories about successful people falling into degenerate behavior. Makes them feel lucky to be boring and ordinary...People stink.

Parry suddenly speaks - as if talking to a lecture hall.

PARRY

Are there any questions?

JACK

What?

PARRY

Then let's begin with the story itself. It's a story of the Grail myth...And although there are several variations, my favorite begins with the Fisher King as a young boy... who had to spend a night alone in the forest to prove his courage... and during that night, he is visited by a sacred vision. Out of the fire, appears the Holy Grail - God's highest symbol of divine grace. And a voice says to the boy, "You shall be the guardian of the Grail, that it may heal the hearts of men"...But the boy was overcome ...Innocent and foolish, he was blinded by greater visions - a life ahead filled with beauty and glory, hope and power...Tears filled his eyes as he sensed his own... invincibility. A boy's tears of naive wonder and inspiration. and in this state of...radical amazement...he felt for a brief moment, not like a boy, but like God...

(Jack listens intently)

...And so he reached into the fire to take the Grail. And the Grail vanished. And the boy hands were left caught in the flames...leaving him wounded and ashamed at what his recklessness had lost him. When he became King, he was determined to reclaim his destiny and find the Grail... But with each year that passed, with each campaign he fought, the Grail remained lost, and this wound he suffered in the fire grew worse... He became a bitter man. Life for him lost it's reason. With each disappointment, with each betrayal... with each loss ... this wound would grow... Soon the land began to spoil from neglect and his people starved...Until finally, the King lost all faith in God's existence and in man's value...He lost his ability to love or be loved And he was so sick with experience... that he started to die. As the years went on, his bravest knights would search for the Grail that would heal their King and make them the most respected and valued men in the land, but to no avail. Pretty soon, finding the Grail became a ruthless struggle between ambitious men vying for the King's power, which only confirmed the King's worst suspicions of man, causing his wound to grow. His only hope, he thought, was death. Then one day, a fool was brought in to the King to cheer him. He was a simple-minded man... not particularly skilled...or admired... He tells the King some jokes...sing him some songs, but the King feels even worse...Finally, the fool says, "What is it that hurts you so much? How can I help?"...And the King says, "I need a sip of water to cool my throat"...So, the fool takes a cup from the bedstand, fills it with water and hands it to the King...Suddenly, the King feels a lot better. And when he looks to his hands, he sees that it was the Holy Grail the fool handed him...an ordinary cup that had been beside his bed all along...And the King asks, "How can this be?...how could you find what all my knights and wisest men could not find"? And the fool answers, "I don't know. I only knew you were thirsty."... And for the first time since he was a boy, the King felt more than a man - not because he was touched by God's glory...but rather, by the compassion of a fool.

JACK doesn't know how to respond. HE's never known PARRY to be eloquent. HE gets a glimpse of PARRY as he once was and the words come out of his mouth before he knows it:

JACK

I'm so sorry.

But PARRY seems far away. HE speaks like a professor:

PARRY

The Fisher King myth has alot of derivations...I remember I was at this lecture in Princeton once - and there was this one speaker...Henry Sa... Henry...uh...Henry...

HE stops. As if this memory escaped with any warning.

PARRY

(continuing)

....What was I saying?

JACK is as surprised as he is. PARRY'S face is frightened and confused again. There is panic in his voice.

PARRY

(continuing)

....What was I saying?

HE raises his head to look and sees:

EXT. SHEEPS MEADOW: SEVERAL YARDS AWAY - NIGHT.

THE DARK SILOUETTE OF THE RED KNIGHT UPON HIS HORSE. Staring - knowing exactly where PARRY lies even though it's dark.

PARRY looks frightened as he lays his head back down. JACK tries to snap him out of it by saying:

JACK

How come you've never asked that girl for a date?

PARRY looks back to see that the RED KNIGHT has vanished. HE snaps out of it somewhat.

PARRY

I can't ask for her...I have to earn her.

JACK

Parry, you don't have to earn a woman. It's the twentieth century.

PARRY

Maybe, when we get the Grail...

JACK

Well, see, I think she can help...You know women are great..they...they make homes and they..ya know, kill the livestock so the knights can go out and get Grails and...and slaughter villages with a clear head...I mean, where would Arthur be

without Guinevere...

PARRY

Happily married, probably.

JACK

Bad example. Just trust me. A woman who loves you keeps you going...gives you strength... Makes you feel like you can do anything...

PARRY

Is that what your girlfriend does for you?

JACK

(hesitates, then lies:)

Sure...

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY, MET LIFE BUILDING - MORNING.

JACK waits near the elevators as the nine-to-five crowd make their way into the building. HE looks like a bum - having stayed out all night with PARRY....HE'S so tired he can't keep his eyes opened as LYDIA walks with the crowd to the elevator... Just as the doors close, JACK spots her and jumps in between them - causing the inhabitants a jolt.

CUT TO:

INT. TWO HEARTS PUBLISHING - MORNING.

The elevator doors open. LYDIA gets off after two leggy businesswomen. JACK follows. SHE walks through two glass doors with the words TWO HEARTS PUBLISHING, INC. and enters the office. JACK waits until she had disappeared down a foyer, then enters the reception area.

JACK

Could you help me-- what was the name of that girl who just came in...

RECEPTIONIST

What girl? I didn't notice.

JACK

Uh... she was wearing a kind of... a flouncy kind of... uh... plain...

He makes big gestures with his arms to describe the dress, the stringy gestures with his fingers to describe her hair.

RECEPTIONIST

(winning at Charades)

Oh, Lydia!

JACK  
Lydia. Lydia what?

RECEPTIONIST  
God, I have no idea. She's worked here for fifteen years and I have no idea. I'll call her.

JACK  
No... no... that's all right... I thought I knew her... Thanks...

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO POP OFFICE - DAY

Jack is on the phone, with an open Yellow Pages beside him.

JACK  
Yes. Two Hearts Publishing? May I speak to Lydia please.

He waits. Anne enters. She is obviously very irritated with him.

ANNE  
Can I have my desk please.

JACK  
(to phone)  
Hello, I'd like to speak to Lydia?

ANNE  
Lydia?! Lydia who!?

JACK  
(to Anne)  
I don't know her last name... I'll be off in a second.

ANNE  
You're calling Lydia in my office. You must think I'm some dope. You fuckin' bastard... You...  
(she punches his arm)  
... stay out all night long...

JACK  
(overlapping, to phone)  
What... No... Lydia... I want to speak to... her name is Lydia... I...uh...

ANNE

(overlapping)

... I don't get a friggin' phone call. You stroll in here at noon. I got... two people out sick. Ya think I need this? I Do Not Need This!

JACK

...Forget it... Goodbye!

He hangs up.

Anne sits down at her desk. She is waiting for an explanation.

JACK

I was not with a woman last night. I was out with Parry.

ANNE

The moron?

JACK

He's not a moron.

ANNE

And who's Lydia?

JACK

Lydia is the girl Parry likes... And I thought, if I could get them together I...

ANNE

What? The curse'll be lifted? Will you please!

JACK

I... You're not going to understand this.

ANNE

Don't treat me like I'm stupid. It pisses me off.

JACK

All right... Sorry... I feel indebted to him.

ANNE

(pause)

What does that mean?

JACK

See, I told you!

ANNE

Well, what the hell does that mean?

JACK

I thought... if... if I can help him  
in some way... you know?... get him  
this girl he loves... Then...  
maybe... things'll start changing for  
me... My luck, ya know... Maybe...

(gives up)

Forget it... It's a stupid idea.

Anne looks at him incredulously. He sits down and  
breathes a sigh -- the absurdity of the idea hitting him  
as well. Anne softens -- feeling like she has unfairly  
taken the wind out of his sail.

ANNE

Oh, you poor kid... You're a mess.

Anne stands and buries Jack's face in her breast. She  
decides to be positive.

ANNE

(continuing)

... Well, listen... stranger things  
have happened.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT AFTERNOON.

Jack on the phone to Lydia. This time Anne is right  
beside him.

JACK

Hello Lydia?

LYDIA

(abrasively)

Yeah? Who is this?

Her abrupt manner surprises Jack. Jack uses his old,  
confident radio voice.

JACK

This is Jack Lucas and I'm calling  
from Video Pop video rentals.

INT. LYDIA'S OFFICE - INTERCUT PHONE CALL - DAY

LYDIA

Yes.

JACK

Yes well...

(guessing and hoping)

You are a credit card holder, are you not?

LYDIA

Huh-huh.

JACK

Well, congratulations Lydia, because out of several thousand card holders... in conjunction with several major credit card companies...

LYDIA

Which ones?

JACK

All of them... Which means you have just won a free membership at our store on Second Avenue.

He puts the reciever near a tape player and presses play. "HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN" plays for a moment, then he shuts it off.

LYDIA

(deadpan, not getting it)

How did this happen?

Jack is prepared for Lydia's, shall we say, reluctance to buy it!

JACK

Your name was picked.

LYDIA

(suspicious... and dense)

Well, I don't understand. What did you do -- did you pick my name out of a hat or... or... a list?

JACK

A list.

LYDIA

Well -- were there a lot of people in the room or just you or what?

JACK

(about to answer)

Well there....

(then)

What's the difference?

LYDIA

Well, I mean... I don't know you...  
This has never... I've never won  
anything and... I don't have a VCR.

JACK

You get a VCR with the membership.  
(ANNE hits him)  
... For a short time until you get  
your own. Listen, why don't you come  
down to the store and you can check  
it out. See if you're interested.

LYDIA

Did Phyllis in accounting tell you to  
call me?

JACK

(fed up)  
No! I told you! You won a contest!

Lydia hangs up. Jack turns to Anne.

JACK

(continuing)  
....This is going to be rough.

CUT TO:

INT. MET LIFE ELEVATOR - DAY.

JACK stands beside a costumed GAY BUM in a crowded elevator.  
The Bum warms up to the elevator's muzak. JACK shoves him to stop.

A somber looking BUSINESSMAN rides along side, reading a  
newspaper. The GAY BUM moves next to him and looks up:

GAY BUM

I'm Anne Morrow Lindbergh and I can't  
find my baby...

The BUSINESSMAN is stunned...HE laughs...

BUSINESSMAN

What?

GAY BUM

See, I knew I could make you smile...

CUT TO:

INT. TWO HEARTS PUBLISHING - DAY.

The elevator doors open. JACK stands beside THE GAY BUM who  
carries balloons marked VIDEO SPOT.

JACK  
(adamant)  
Remember. One chorus and out.

GAY BUM  
I'm a man with a mission, Jack.

THE GAY BUM walks to the office entrance. JACK pushes the down button. As the doors close, we hear him say to himself:

JACK  
I can't believe I'm on a first name basis with these people...

CUT TO:

THE GAY BUM enters the reception area, much to the surprise of the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST  
Can I ... help you?

GAY BUM  
Is there a mousy woman who works here named Lydia?

RECEPTIONIST  
Yes..if you'll wait here I'll...

GAY BUM  
This is a personalized message. I have to give it in person.

INT. TWO HEARTS PUBLISHING - MOMENTS LATER

THE GAY BUM strolls nonchalantly into the office and down the aisle relishing in the amazed expressions of the employees. HE approaches a cubicle on which he reads a small name plate - LYDIA SINCLAIR. LYDIA has her back to him, but slowly turns as she feels someone watching her. SHE lets out a tiny scream when she sees him standing there like a deranged clown. The GAY BUM take notice of her outfit - a cordoroy, forest green jumper with a lime green turtleneck -

GAY BUM  
You MUST be SHE.

LYDIA  
Huh?

THE GAY BUM begins to sing a SONG PARODY to the tune of a classical musical number. (Song to be chosen). After a big finish, the GAY BUM hands LYDIA a business card, drops the act and exits:

GAY BUM

(murmurs cynically)

Jesus...

Stunned, LYDIA looks down at the information card she holds frozen in her hand.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STOP - 5:30 THE NEXT DAY.

C.U. on ANNE, who is slighted repulsed by PARRY.

JACK PARRY; his hair slicked back, wearing a Video Spot T-shirt over his clothes. Jack hangs a car pine freshener around PARRY's neck to help with the smell...The bell on front door jingles.

LYDIA cautiously enters the store.

Behind the counter, JACK spots her immediately and nudges ANNE. SHE turns to look, her bra straps are visible. JACK fixes them.

LYDIA

Hello. My name is Lydia Sinclair.

JACK

Yes. Hi..Congratulations. Jack Lucas.  
Nice to meet you finally. This is Anne  
Napolitano, the owner of Video Spot.

ANNE

Hello....congratulations.

JACK

And this is our other..uh...co-worker..  
Parry..uh...Parry....

LYDIA

Parry Parry?

PARRY

No just Parry.

LYDIA

Oh...like Moses.

No one knows how to respond to this, so they don't.

LYDIA

(continuing; curt)

So how do we do this?

JACK

Well..um...you get an official  
membership card...

(takes one out)

Just sign that and we'll laminate it

right here... Parry? You want to laminate Miss Sinclair's card?...

Parry stands staring at her.

JACK  
(continuing)  
...Parry?

Parry snaps out of it and crosses from behind the counter to the laminating machine next to Jack.

ANNE  
This will last you one year after which you have the option to renew if... you like at a membership discount.

LYDIA  
(defensive)  
But now it's free, right?

ANNE  
Yeah.

Anne backs off. She stands next to an equally perplexed Jack as they watch Lydia fill out the card. Her abrasive demeanor is not what they expected. Lydia finishes the card and pushes it toward them.

LYDIA  
Now what?

JACK  
Uh... you... you can pick out up to ten movies...

LYDIA  
Free?

JACK  
Yes. They're free.

ANNE  
(butts in)  
Only the first ten. After that they're 2.99 a rental.

Lydia eyes Anne suspiciously, then turns to survey the shelves. Parry picks up her card and laminates it -- all the while, keeping his eyes fixed upon Lydia's every move. Anne and Jack, having set the trap, watch with interest.

Lydia surveys the film boxes, H-L. She spots one of interest and pulls it off the shelf -- causing two other

boxes to fall down on her. She catches one box and, as she replaces it back on the shelf, causes three more to fall. She catches two of the three.

Parry, Anne and Jack watching with an odd fascination. Jack nudges Parry to forget the laminating and go help her. Parry gathers up his nerve and moves from around the counter, up behind her.

PARRY

... Can... can I help you?

Lydia quickly turns -- she is uncomfortable by his closeness.

LYDIA

No. No... I can look myself...

She moves away abruptly -- like a fox terrier who pretends to ignore the mess she made on the living room rug.

Parry turns to Jack and Anne, as if to say "what do I do now?" Jack encourages him to keep trying. Parry organizes the boxes and picks one out.

PARRY

How about the "Hell Merchants"?

LYDIA

I don't like horror movies!

PARRY

(reads)

How about... Zbigniew Speizak's "The Purple Bread," an intensely portrayed tale of love and envy set against the sweeping background of a Polish bakery. In subtitles.

LYDIA

I don't like... uh...

(finding it hard to categorize)

Polish love stories...

(she turns her back on him, but adds)

... I like musicals.

PARRY

(encouraged)

Well, we have plenty of those. Right over here. We got the MGM series, Astaire and Rogers, the Judy Garlands...

LYDIA

Got any Ethel Merman?

He doesn't see any. He looks to Anne, who shakes her head.

PARRY

... Uh... we seem to be all out of Ethel Merman.

LYDIA

What a gyp.

PARRY

Yeah.

Jack nudges Anne to do something.

ANNE

You know, I think I... ordered some just the other day.

LYDIA

Well did you or didn't you?

ANNE

(pissed off)

Yes! They'll be in soon.

LYDIA

Well, I guess I'll come back then.

JACK

Here's your card.

Lydia walks back to the counter. As Jack hands her the card, she notices Anne's painted star fingernails.

LYDIA

I like your nails. Where did you get them done?

ANNE

Ah... I do them myself. I used to work in a beauty parlor.

Lydia keeps staring at them. She says blankly;

LYDIA

I like the stars.

Jack gets an idea.

JACK

You know, Anne does other people too. Sort of a sideline...

(Anne is surprised to hear this.)  
... If you want, she could do your nails.

LYDIA  
How much?

JACK  
Well, since you're a member, we could...

ANNE  
(interrupts)  
Twenty dollars.

Lydia considers the offer. Parry waits for the outcome.

LYDIA  
Okay... twenty dollars... When can you...

JACK  
Tonight! How's tonight?

Lydia thinks. Anne is ready to kill Jack. Parry smiles hopefully.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

Jack searches frantically through a closet. Anne and Parry sit opposite each other at the table. Parry is eating Anne's homecooking voraciously. Anne doesn't quite know how to take Parry, who smiles mischievously through his meal.

ANNE  
(to Jack O.S.)  
Getting your nails done is one thing but going to dinner with a bunch of strangers and him... She didn't even look at him.

PARRY  
Got any more bread crust?

As Anne resentfully rises and crosses into the kitchen, Parry focuses on her robust breasts bouncing beneath the sweater. Anne's expression, as she serves him, is a mixture of repulsion and fascination... She sits at the table.

JACK (O.S.)

We'll make it very casual... not like a date or anything. I just have to find something he'll look good in.

Anne looks at Parry as if this were an impossibility. Parry smiles back -- he likes Anne.

ANNE

I don't know... He's a little disgusting... Although some women go for that.

JACK (O.S.)

He just needs some clothes?

PARRY

Got any more starchy food?

Another opportunity to watch Anne's breasts in action, as she reluctantly rises to get him more macaroni. She returns with the pot.

ANNE

I mean, I've gone out with bums, but they were gorgeous. It's the only reason to go out with a bum.

PARRY

This food's delicious. You're a wonderful cook. And you have a lovely home.

ANNE

Jack, he's starting a conversation...

JACK (O.S.)

Well talk back. He won't bite you.

ANNE

(cool and polite)

Thank you very much.

PARRY

(enjoying the conversation)

Your welcome. You know, a beautiful woman like yourself -- your own business -- I'm surprised some guy doesn't snatch you up for his own.

Anne looks in Jack's direction, but replies to Parry:

ANNE

You're surprised!... But I guess I just never met the right guy. Whatta gonna do?

PARRY

I'm shocked. With a child bearing  
body like yours...

(Anne doesn't know how  
to take that)

... why a man would have to be out of  
his mind!

ANNE

Most men are.

PARRY

Why this is outrageous!...

Parry, getting overly heated, slams down his fork. Anne  
jumps.

PARRY

(continuing)

... A woman of your value going to  
waste before my eyes....

(rising intensity)

Come on! I'm yours! Let's go!

(clears the table with  
one move)

Come on -- let us go to that place of  
splendor in the grass.

He starts to unzip his pants.

ANNE

Jack!

Climbing over the table to her, he serenades.

PARRY

Holdin' my penis...  
What a lovely way of sayin' how  
Much ya like me...

ANNE

What are you, out of your mind!

Jack enters...

PARRY

Holdin' my penis...

JACK

Parry! Close your pants...

Parry stops singing and gets off the table. He bows to  
her.

PARRY

(kidding)  
You sure now?

Anne looks at him like she's going to belt him.

PARRY  
(continuing)  
... Well alright. But you let me  
know.  
(with great  
sincerity)  
You're too good a woman to go to  
waste.

Anne, in spite of herself, agrees with him. She looks to Jack to see if he agrees, but Jack is too busy inspecting Parry.

JACK  
What are you -- a 40 in a jacket?

Anne, frustrated with the two of them, exits.

EXT. VIDEO POP - NIGHT

Lydia walks up and RINGS the bell. BUZZED in -- she enters.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

Anne's opens the door to a cautious Lydia. Lydia nods, self-consciously, as if to say, "Yeah, I'm here".

ANNE  
Hello... welcome... Come in.

Lydia enters, subtly inspecting the apartment.

LYDIA  
I've never been in an apartment above  
a store. You always pass them on the  
street but you never think anyone  
really lives in them.

ANNE  
(raising an eyebrow)  
Can I get you anything...coffee...  
tea...a little tequilla?

LYDIA  
No, thank you.

LYDIA sits at the formica table, already set up with nail care paraphernalia - with the gleaming steel nail files it looks a bit like surgery equipment.

LYDIA

Will it hurt?

ANNE

(threateningly)

That all depends on you.

...Sure you don't want a drink?

LYDIA's a little nervous about this attempt at nail beauty.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT.

Jack is cleaning up Parry - perhaps applying a green mud treatment.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING.

ANNE is seated at her formica table opposite LYDIA. SHE delicately holds one of LYDIA'S hands, carefully applying the stars to her nails. LYDIA sips her tequilla with one hand. ANNE'S glass is almost empty as she talks non-stop;

ANNE

...So he says to me, "you'll never find another man like me"...I said, "please, men like you have one hand on their dicks and the other hand on their mother's leg... I said, there's the door - take a trip.

LYDIA

(paying close attention)

You threw him out?

ANNE makes a confident nod. LYDIA sips.

LYDIA

My parents were divorced.

ANNE

It's an awful thing, let me tell you.

My Aunt used to say,

(emphasizing)

"divorce is the sister-in-law of death".

ANNE nods knowingly. LYDIA squints as she considers this.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME.

JACK stands behind a seated PARRY in front of a mirror. PARRY'S hair is wet. JACK places a can of styling mousse in front of him. PARRY squeezes a ball of mousse in his hand, then applies it to his head....PARRY proceeds to experiment with a number of styles - adding more and more mousse as JACK watches in silence. PARRY molds his hair into a cone, then divides into two cones, then mashes it into a pompadour, then splits the pompadour - PARRY is having a wonderful time - applying enormous amounts to his head and eyebrows....Finally, JACK grabs the can out of PARRY'S hand.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER.

ANNE works on LYDIA'S other hand, as LYDIA sips her tequilla from a straw.

ANNE

...SO...anybody special in your life?

LYDIA

(defensive)

Do I look like I have someone special?

SHE moves to pick up her tequilla with the manicured hand but ANNE eyes her down.

ANNE

Well, don't say it like that. It's not so...ya know, crazy an idea. You are a healthy woman... You hold a steady job. Ya not crossed eyed or anything...

LYDIA

Well, there's nobody special!

ANNE

Fine.

LYDIA

(pause, then:)

I mean, it's not easy in this day and age.

ANNE

What?

LYDIA

Meeting ... people.

ANNE

Tell me about it. I've been dating

longer than I've been driving. I can't believe that.

LYDIA

I never really...went through a... dating period.

ANNE

It's a disgusting process. You haven't missed anything.

LYDIA nods in agreement, but her face tells us she feels she has missed a great deal.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

PARRY, cleaned and dressed up - his hair moussed back, the suit is too big. PARRY paces back and forth in the hallway as JACK tries to staple the sleeves of the suit shorter for PARRY's arms.

JACK

Will you stand still so I can do this!

PARRY

I'm sorry....I'm just so excited.

(JACK smiles)

You must have felt this way when you first met Anne, huh?

Where did you two meet?

JACK

In a bar called Hellfire.

PARRY

Tch...how romantic. Yeah. If I wasn't already committed to Lydia, boy. Except Anne'd never go for me though. She loves you too much. And you really love her, huh?

JACK

No. But that's not the only reason people get together or..stay together.

PARRY

What are the other reasons?

JACK thinks a moment, then answers plainly:

JACK

Survival.

PARRY puts his arm on JACK'S shoulder and speaks very sincerely.

PARRY

(earnest)

You love her alot Jack. You're ...  
crazy about her...It's just that,  
sometimes, you're a little bit of an asshole.

JACK is surprised by the remark and abruptly focuses on PARRY.

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER

LYDIA is a little more loose and talkative now as ANNE refills her glass, then takes LYDIA'S other hand to apply the stars.

LYDIA

(deadpan)

...My mother calls every week.  
Like a recurring nightmare.  
"So, have you met anyone?"..."No mom"..  
"So what's going to happen?"...  
"I don't know Mom"..  
I only thank God I moved out.

ANNE

I can't believe you lived with  
her for that long. If I had to live  
with my mother, I'd stab myself six times.

LYDIA

I think some people are meant to be alone.  
(she takes a slug)  
Maybe I was a man in a former life  
and I used women for pleasure so  
now I'm paying for it - which would  
be fine, if I could just remember  
some of the pleasure parts...  
(drinks)

ANNE

I don't understand you. What is the problem?

LYDIA

I don't feel like I make any impression on people...  
At office parties I spend my time  
re-arranging the hors d'oeuvres as people eat  
them, so the platters will always look full.  
I don't start conversations because I have  
no idea how to end them...I think I'm  
just meant to live in the background  
of things.

ANNE

That's not true...You gotta ease up...  
Conversations have a life of their own.  
You gotta just go with it...We're having  
a lovely conversation.

LYDIA

(bluntly)  
I'm paying you.

ANNE drops her hand. SHE's pissed.

ANNE

You know, let me tell you something!  
I'm not that kind of person. I don't  
do people favors. If I talk to you  
it's because I want to. So we're not  
all ...uh...Jerri Hall...Big deal...  
What a boring world if we were.  
You do the best you can with what you got.  
You're not so so invisible, ya know...  
You want make an impression? Try this;  
you can be a real bitch.

LYDIA

(her face lights up)  
Really?

ANNE

Yeah!

LYDIA smiles at the thought of having such an impressionable  
personality..

EXT. VIDEO POP - NIGHT.

JACK tries to calm PARRY down.

JACK

Come here...you're all crooked.  
(HANDS HIM WALLET)  
Here's my wallet, so you can pay for dinner?

JACK adjusts PARRY'S tie, then undoes it and re-ties.  
PARRY takes wallet, keeping his eyes on JACK, as JACK primps him.

PARRY

...You're a nice man, Jack.  
Doing all this for me...

JACK doesn't pay attention as PARRY'S expression grows pale and  
frightened. HE suddenly raps his arms around JACK and whispers;

PARRY

I'm scared Jack.

JACK, uncomfortable at the intimacy, tries to comfort him.

PARRY

...I feel so much for her...I  
feel like something awful is going to happen.

JACK

No. Nothing bad's going to happen.  
Anne'll be there. I'll be there.  
Nothing bad will happen.

PARRY

I'm still scared.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

ANNE and LYDIA share a drink....

ANNE

It's hard being a woman. I don't care what anybody says...People say we have choices - we have no choices...My grandma used to say that, for a woman in this world, behind every door there's either death...or husband.

LYDIA cracks up laughing.

LYDIA

"Sister-in-law of death"...That's wonderful.

SHE takes another sip as JACK knocks on the door and enters with PARRY.

JACK

Anne...!  
(to LYDIA)  
Oh hi? How's it going?

Lydia loses her smile and becomes self-conscious and protective.

JACK

Parry, it's Lydia Sinclair - our membership winner.

PARRY

I know!

JACK turns to find that PARRY is still outside the apartment.  
HE crosses to PARRY. The two whisper intensely....

ANNE

What are you two up to?

JACK

Well..everything's closed up.  
We thought we'd get some dinner.  
(overplaying it)  
Say!....Anybody up for Chinese?  
(to LYDIA)  
Have you eaten? Would you  
like to come along?

LYDIA  
(rises, uncomfortable)  
Oh, no..I have to get home...

ANNE  
The nails!! Watch the nails!!...  
(LYDIA sits back down)  
Listen, you still have to eat.

PARRY stands in b.g. with JACK, whispering....

LYDIA  
No really..I can't.

ANNE  
Hey? What did I tell you?  
Why don't you come? It's just dinner.  
You'll have something to tell  
your mother next time she calls.

LYDIA smiles as PARRY and JACK reach an agreement.  
All four turn to each other spontaneously and say:

ANNE, JACK, LYDIA, PARRY  
Fine.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT.

PARRY and LYDIA walk and talk. ANNE and JACK walk behind them.

LYDIA  
...I..uh..I get to read some of the books  
but mostly I..just calculate production  
costs from first edition hard cover  
publication to paperback. After  
paperback it's basically someone  
else's problem.

PARRY  
It sounds exciting.

LYDIA  
Why does it sound exciting? There's  
absolutely nothing exciting about it.

As Parry talks, he picks up a piece of garbage on the sidewalk.

PARRY  
Well, you're calculating costs that  
could have an affect on whether or  
not the book is published and if  
it is, it could be a book that...  
...might somehow change the way people  
think or act - a book can do that.

And you would be a part of creating  
a cultural shift that could change  
our society forever.

Parry drops the garbage in a garbage can and is almost  
about to browse through it when:

JACK

Parry!

Parry is alerted by Jack that this would be inappropriate.  
However, he does take a wire champagne cork wrapper, indiscreetly.

LYDIA

We mostly publish trashy romance novels.

PARRY

Well - empires have fallen  
because of trashy romances...

Parry seems to be fashioning something out of the wire.

PARRY

(continuing)

...Romance is romance no matter what kind  
it is...It could be a Victorian lady  
kidnapped by a viral sea captain  
with a hairy chest...or a horny pizza boy  
seduced by a housewife with a hairy upper lip.  
As long as there's heart, passion,  
and little bit of fantasy...romance is  
the stuff of dreams...there's always  
more to trash than meets the eye...

With this, Parry shows her his creation - a little wire chair  
made from the champagne wire. Lydia is impressed. Their  
eyes meet for a dangerous moment, until:

A LARGE MAN walks by, bumping into LYDIA without apology and  
knocking Parry's gift to the ground....

PARRY

...Hey!

The LARGE MAN continues walking as PARRY reaches to his back  
pocket to pull out his SLINGSHOT when:

JACK/ANNE

PARRY!

PARRY begrudgingly lets him go.

MARTIN (O.S.)

Parry!...Parry - is that you!

Parry spots a familiar homeless face, sitting on the curb.

PARRY

Hey Martin...!

MARTIN

Don't you look all duded up!

PARRY

This is Lydia!

MARTIN

Nice to meet you Lydia! Got a quarter?!

PARRY smiles proudly. A mortified LYDIA reaches in her purse and hands Martin a quarter...Anne and Jack watch in disbelief.

MARTIN

Thank you. God bless...

(to Parry)

Nice girl...Have you set the date yet?

Lydia hurries away. Parry follows....The walk continues:

LYDIA

How do you know him?

PARRY

We were neighbors for a couple for weeks on Sutton Place.

Lydia

You lived on Sutton Place?

PARRY

(proudly)

Yep! Right on it!

ANNE

(tries to save it)

Huh...the restaurant's just around the corner here...

They nod. After a beat, Lydia asks:

LYDIA

What do you do - for a living I mean?

PARRY

Well, I'm in search of the Holy Grail.

JACK smacks his own forehead, exasperated. ANNE gives up.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

ANNE and LYDIA sit opposite JACK and PARRY.  
THEY are served three large orders of dumplings.

ANNE

Oh..I could eat all of these

LYDIA is nervous about this. As everyone begins to eat, SHE eyes her chopsticks with reluctance.

PARRY looks at her and smiles encouragingly.

LYDIA forces a smile back, picks up her chopsticks and dives in. PARRY watches her in adoration. JACK subtly tries to get PARRY to stop staring. But PARRY is glued to his vision.

LYDIA, even more awkward now with her new nails, drops her first dumpling into her lap.

LYDIA

Oh..god...

To save her from embarrassment, PARRY drops his dumpling into his lap as well.

PARRY

Oh boy...

LYDIA takes her napkin and dips it into a glass of water. PARRY follows suit.

When LYDIA removes the napkin, her glass falls over. PARRY forces his glass over, as well.

ANNE and JACK are looking at this mirror exercise in fascination.

PARRY

(to LYDIA)

Can't take us anywhere, huh?

LYDIA can't help but smile - a little more at ease now. Grateful she is not the clumsy center of attention.

JACK leans over and whispers to ANNE:

JACK

What do you think?

ANNE

I think they're made for each other.  
And it scares me.

FADE TO:

LATER IN THE EVENING.

WE PAN the table as everyone eats their main courses.

LYDIA, we discover, has another eating idiosyncrasy. SHE unconsciously, but quite loudly, smacks her mouth when she chews.

LYDIA (O.C.)

SMACK..SMACK...SMACK...

WE HEAR THIS SMACKING OFF CAMERA as we begin on JACK; trying not to look at LYDIA but having difficulty enjoying his own meal. CAMERA moves to PARRY, staring at her, helplessly in love, not paying any attention to his own food; moving to LYDIA "SMACK, SMACKING" , beginning to accept PARRY'S attraction in her and, warming up to the idea, SHE throws a smile at him in between "smacks"; and finally ANNE, chewing quietly, staring at JACK with her eyes widened twice their normal size, indicating her disbelief at LYDIA'S vocal variety of noises.

CUT TO:

PARRY

gazing at his sweetheart, a song to serenade comes to mind and he softly begins:

PARRY

Lydia... Oh Lydia... That  
encyclopedia. Oh Lydia the tattooed  
lady...

His gentle voice counterbalances the odd lyrics and makes it sound like a love song.

Anne eyes Jack to stop him.

Jack is about to make an attempt but can't seem to find the way, so he doesn't bother.

Lydia doesn't know how to respond either. At first she smiles politely, then she pretends to be too busy eating to listen -- but something about Parry's sincerity pulls her in. His face glows as he floats the lyrics across the table to her. Slowly, her "smacking" subsides, she lowers her fork, forgets her self-consciousness and listens to Parry -- slightly hypnotized; like a little girl watching a ballerina for the first time.

Jack is fascinated by Parry's complete adoration of this mess of a woman. He looks to Anne, who tries to continue her meal nonchalantly. He notices her bra strap hanging out from her sweater.

CAMERA CUTS BACK AND FORTH between the exposed strap and Jack, as Parry continues serenading O.S. Anne realizes Jack is staring at her and immediately thinks something's wrong. But Jack just smiles at her. His hand reaches across the table, not to fix her sweater, but to take her hand. Anne is in shock. She slips her hand into his and

smiles back, her eyes almost tearing.

When Parry finishes, he smiles.

PARRY

Would it be all right... I mean would you mind... if I walked you home tonight?

Lydia nods. From O.S., Parry's hand holds a napkin and gently dabs a stain of soy sauce on her sleeve.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIDEO SPOT - NIGHT.

ANNE

I tell ya, I'm very surprised. She seemed to go for him. Hmmm... There's somebody for everybody, huh?

JACK very pleased with himself.

JACK

You know, I can't believe I did it. You think it'll work out?

ANNE

Who's knows. My Aunt Marge used to say, "some matches are made in heaven, some are made in hell and some are made in hardware stores".

JACK

Nothing it's just...I begining to understand you.

ANNE

(smiles)

Well...I think you should feel very proud. You did a real nice thing for somebody else. I'm very proud.

JACK

You were great. Thanks alot.

HE kisses her hard and long. ANNE pulls away to catch her breath. SHE is surprised, to say the least.

ANNE

Your welcome.

JACK tenderly brushes her hair off her face. HE kisses her again,

ANNE

Oh my.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYDIA'S STREET - NIGHT.

PARRY and LYDIA walk - noticeably more comfortable with each other than before.

PARRY

Tell me more. I want to know everything.

LYDIA

There isn't any more to tell.

PARRY

Don't say that.

LYDIA

(genuine)

No, really..believe me - there isn't any more. This is it.

PARRY

Well, it's enough for me.

LYDIA

You don't have to say that.

PARRY

I never say anything I have to.

LYDIA

I mean you don't have to say nice things to me... That kind of thing is a little old fashioned for what we're about to do.

PARRY

What are we about to do?

LYDIA

Well... you're walking me home. I... I guess you're sort of... attracted to me and you'll want to come upstairs for... coffee...

PARRY

I don't drink coffee...

LYDIA

... and then we'll probably have a drink and talk and get comfortable with each other and... and we'll... then you'll sleep over and then in the morning...

(driving herself into a complex)

... you'll be distant and you won't be... able to stay for breakfast... you'll just have some coffee maybe...

PARRY

I don't drink coffee...

LYDIA

And then we'll exchange phone numbers and you'll leave and never call and I'll go to work and feel great for the first hour and then slowly turn into a piece of dirt by lunch. Why am I putting myself through this?

(to Parry, as she quickens her pace)

It was very nice... uh meeting you. Good night..

She walks quickly away. Parry stops, confused to say the least, then runs after her. Lydia is just about to enter the front door of her building when Parry stops her.

PARRY

Excuse me...

LYDIA

Listen, I'm not feeling well.

PARRY

Well, no wonder. We just met, made love and broke up all in the space of thirty seconds and I can't even remember the first kiss which is the best part.

LYDIA

Listen, you're very nice... b...

PARRY

So are you, but I think maybe you should shut up now...

(Lydia is surprised)

... I'm not coming up to your apartment. That was never my idea.

LYDIA

Oh... You mean you don't want to.

PARRY

(deeply sincere)

Oh no, I want to.

(sweetly)

I've got a hard-on for you the size of Canada... but I don't... want just one night. I have a confession

to make?

LYDIA

You're married.

PARRY

No.

LYDIA

Divorced.

PARRY

No, I...

LYDIA

You have a disease.

PARRY

Will you stop!...

(pause, he looks at her)

... I'm in love with you...

Lydia is about to speak when Parry puts his hand over her mouth.

PARRY

... It's not just from tonight. I've known you for a long time. I see you come out of work every day. I walk with you to lunch. I know what you order... I see you buy Baby Ruths before going back in...

(slowly removes his hand)

I know how you feel on certain days by whether or not you go into the bookstore...

(Lydia listens with fascination)

... I know you hate your job and you don't have many friends and you sometimes feel like you're not as... as wonderful as everybody else and you're a little uncoordinated

(Lydia begins to cry)

... and feeling like you're the only one who's as separate and... alone as you are... and I love you. I love you. I think you're the greatest thing since... spice racks and I would be knocked out several times if I even got just a first kiss. But I'll be back in the morning. And I won't be distant. And I will call if you let me... But I still don't drink coffee.

LYDIA

Shhh...

She kisses him, tentatively -- almost awkwardly. Parry feels a surge of emotion that makes his whole body tremble. Lydia separates from him and looks into his eyes. She pinches his cheek, hard.

LYDIA

(continuing; earnestly)

You are real, aren't you?

They kiss again. Then Lydia quickly pulls away...

LYDIA

(continuing)

... You can call...

She runs into the building, afraid to linger and ruin the moment. Parry stands transfixed, his eyes following her.

Lydia pauses briefly to look back. She is so excited. She smiles and turns toward the elevator... her skirt spinning with her.

CUT TO:

INT. LYDIA'S BUILDING - ELEVATOR - SECONDS LATER

She re-enacts the entire love scene in her mind, to make sure it went as well as she thinks.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYDIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

PARRY is standing frozen... We don't know whether he's looking ahead of him or in his mind's eye... He appears anxious and frightened as he steps back, away from Lydia's building... He senses someone is watching him. Parry smiles. But suddenly it is as if everything has gone into SLOW MOTION. His eyes focus on her skirt as it swirls around as she turns... His expression grows dark: O.S. we hear a horse's HOOVES moving in slowly as CAMERA moves to CLOSEUP. He slowly turns his head and looks down the block to the corner to see:

The Red Knight. He sits upon his horse as if waiting for Parry. The street lamps cast a glow around his imposing figure. The night air lifts his cape up around his massive shoulders.

Parry, vulnerable, in love, whispers plainly:

PARRY

Let me have this.

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT

silent, unforgiving, unrelenting.

Parry begins to move away, taking a step back and then another and another... until he is running down toward the opposite corner.

The Red Knight shifts his horse into Parry's direction and begins to charge. Parry runs through deserted city streets -- running for his life; the sounds of the Red Knight GALLOPING grows closer. The Red Knight, looks like a surreal figure hunting his prey.

As Parry runs, IMAGES/MEMORIES begin to flood his mind uncontrollably;

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An ambulance arriving at a hospital... his wounded wife being moved on a stretcher.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. LYDIA'S STREET - NIGHT

Parry running away from the Knight.

CUT TO:

INT. BABBITT'S - NIGHT

Parry and his wife at the side bar. He is making her laugh uncontrollably. He sees Edwin in the doorway, making nothing of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Parry still running.

PARRY

Sstttoppp!!!

Passers-by on the street witness the familiar sight of a bum screaming at thin air then turn away. We hear the

GALLOPING getting louder.

Parry runs, mumbling incoherently. People on the street get out of his way or snicker behind his back. The Red Knight gallops toward PARRY, as he runs; his face wet with tears -- yet contorting with angry, incomprehensible reprisals. People on the street pay no attention.

CUT TO:

EXT. BABBITT'S - NIGHT

A bar with broken glass surrounded by police and spectators.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Parry and his wife waltzing. CLOSEUP on their clasped hands as Parry maneuvers a ring on her finger.

INT. BABBITT'S - NIGHT

His wife's lifeless hand lifted onto the stretcher.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Surprised, Parry's wife stops dancing to look at the ring. Parry smiles. It is his proposal...

EXT. BABBITT'S - NIGHT

Ambulance driving away with Parry holding his wife's hand in the back...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Dancing, his wife embraces him as she accepts.

INT. TV NEWS STATION - NIGHT

Jack's face on a TV news broadcast with a reporter commenting.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST RIVER PROMENADE - NIGHT

Parry has run all the way to the promenade along the

river.

PARRY

Come on!... Where are you!!! Where  
are you!!

(softer, dropping to his  
knees)

Where are you...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE END OF THE PROMENADE - NIGHT

The two juvenile delinquents, Leather and Windbreaker, come strutting down the promenade, in SLOW MOTION. Parry looks toward them, as if surrendering.

Through PARRY'S POV we see the two youths are being lead by the Red Knight on his horse.

Parry, tear-stained face, rises to meet them. The Youths reach Parry and surround him. Leather flicks open a switchblade.

LEATHER

... We're tired of looking at you  
people...

Parry stands before them, surrendering to his fate.

Through his POV, the Red Knight is pointing a sword at him in front of Leather and his switchblade. He slashes at Parry's chest as we...

CUT TO:

WIDE ANGLE OF PROMENADE

as Parry sinks to his knees... The youths close in around him.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Outside the bathroom door, we hear the toilet FLUSH. Anne exits in an imitation silk kimono, feeling very much the satisfied woman. She crosses into the living room and finds Jack, on the phone in mid-conversation, beside his open box of radio tapes. She hugs him from behind as he talks, still warm from their all night lovemaking...

JACK

(excited, very "on")  
... Well, ya know, I'm feeling good,  
Lou... I don't know how else to put  
it... I... I had some personal things  
to work out and... and I have and...  
(listens, then:)  
Yeah... Well, the thing is... I want  
to work again... I want to get back  
into it... you think that's possible?

Anne releases her hug -- looking surprised, pleased,  
impressed... she stands by, waiting to ask Jack what's  
up!

JACK  
(to phone)  
I understand...  
(obedient)  
I am... I won't... I will...  
(beaming)  
Great! Thanks a lot, Lou...  
Tuesday's fine.  
(listens)  
Okay... Thanks...

He hangs up the phone elated... Anne can't wait to  
hear...

ANNE  
So what's going on? Who's Lou again?

JACK  
(disappointed she doesn't  
remember)  
My agent. I called my agent.

ANNE  
You're kidding! What did he say?

JACK  
He says if I want to get back to  
work, no problem. He wants me to  
come in and talk and... and... that's  
it!

ANNE  
Whoah! Oh, honey, that's terrific!

She gives him a big hug. Jack is first to break away.

JACK  
(organizing tapes)  
I've got to put these tapes in some  
kind of order... and... Oh, I should  
get my sports jacket cleaned...  
(he crosses to the closet)

... There's coffee if you want...

ANNE

You made coffee?... You're going back to work and you made coffee?... I love this!

Jack does not respond as he looks through the closet. Anne gets her coffee and sits -- watching Jack move about so full of energy and focus...

ANNE

(continuing)

It's so great to see you like this, honey... I can't tell you.

JACK

(looking at jacket)

Thanks.

ANNE

(she smiles and drinks)

Ya know, I'm thinkin' -- with another income coming in, I would love to get a bigger place.

Jack stops organizing for a beat.

ANNE

(continuing)

... I don't want to rush things -- you have to get a job first, but I'm so sure that's gonna happen I'm not even thinking about it.

Jack brings out his sports jacket, then returns to his tapes, hoping he can avoid having to respond.

JACK

Ugh, these tapes are a mess. I don't know where to begin...

ANNE

... I would love to start looking at least. You know, maybe a two bedroom or even, maybe the top floor of a house -- like in Brooklyn or Staten Island...

Jack looks at her, not knowing what to say.

ANNE

(continuing)

... What?... You don't want to commute?

JACK

No, it's not... Come here...

He turns her around and cuddles her up in his arms, with her back to him.

JACK

(continuing)

You're an incredible woman Anne...

Anne breaks away suddenly and looks at him, sternly.

JACK

(continuing)

What?

ANNE

"I'm an incredible woman?" What is this, a death sentence?

JACK

No, I... I think we should talk about this.

ANNE

(aware and suspicious)

You want to talk? Come on, Jack... Did I cross the line by mentioning the future or what?

JACK

No... it's just...

Anne shifts her body to face him directly.

JACK

(continuing)

... Listen, so much has happened and I think it would be a good thing for both of us if we slowed things down a little.

ANNE

Slowed things down? Where have I been? Have we been going fast!?

JACK

Right now, I'm just not sure about... making such definite plans.

Pause. Anne stares at him like he's speaking Dutch.

ANNE

I'm lost. What are you saying?

Jack sits them both down, takes her hand in his, takes a

breath:

JACK

It's been a real... real difficult time for me... The past year or so... And now, for the first time, Anne, I feel like I'm above water. I feel like I know a lot more than I did, and I don't want to make any mistakes so... I think what I need is some time... to make the right choices. And... I think that maybe... I need to be alone for awhile.

Anne is speechless -- for the moment.

JACK

... I'd like to focus on my career - - now than I can, now that everything's all right... Parry's taken care of... and... Like I said, I feel like I know a lot more now and I don't...

ANNE

(interrupts)

First of all, let me tell you something -- you don't know shit. Second of all, as far as we go, what time do you need? What have we been doing here, except time? Have I ever... ever pressured you!?

JACK

No.

ANNE

No. So what time do you need? I love you -- you love me -- you want to get your career going, great! I'd like to be a part of it -- I think I deserve that! So what do you need to figure out alone!?

Jack doesn't answer. Pause. Anne is afraid she knows.

ANNE

(continuing)

All right. I'm going to ask you one question.

(summoning up all her strength)

Do you love me?

Pause.

JACK

I don't know.

She slaps him.

ANNE

You can't even give me that?! What were you gonna do, Jack?... Just gonna organize your life...

(indicates the box)

... walk out that door, move in by yourself and what -- drop the news when you find somebody else? What were you planning to do, Jack?

JACK

I didn't know. I just said all I want is some time.

ANNE

(fighting back tears)

Bullshit! If you're going to hurt me, you hurt me now -- not some long... drawn out hurt that takes weeks of my life because you don't have the balls!

JACK

(pause, then:)

All right... I'll pack my stuff tonight.

Anne slaps him again.

ANNE

What have you been doing here! Huh!  
I wanna know! What have you been doing here?!

JACK

Listen! We both got something out of it, all right!

ANNE

Oh yeah? What did I get? What did I get I couldn't've gotten from somebody with no name any night of the week? You think your company is such a treat? Your moods, your...

(sarcastic)

"pain", your problems... You think you're entertaining?

JACK

Then what do you want to stay with me for?

ANNE physically attacks him...

ANNE

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU!...STUPID!...FUCKIN!...

JACK blocks her blows and holds her arms. ANNE surrenders to her tears. HE is about to embrace her, when she pulls away.

ANNE

No....You don't get to be nice now.  
I'm not gonna play some game with you  
where we act like friends so you can  
walk out here feeling good about yourself.  
I'm not a liar. If you're gonna leave me  
then that's what we call it.

The phone rings. JACK answers it.

JACK

Hello?...Yeah...My wallet? What do you  
mean?....(his face drops) What?....What?

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - NIGHT.

PARRY lays in bed - his face bandaged, his arms in a cast, his chest tightly rapped. HE has been severely beaten. JACK and ANNE stand at the foot of the bed in shock. A DOCTOR appears. The DOCTOR is young, dedicated and inexperienced enough to still feel compassion.

JACK

Parry?

DOCTOR

He can't hear you.  
(JACK and ANNE turn)  
Hi...I'm Dr. Weintraub....  
(shakes hands)  
I was on duty when they brought  
him in...I've been going over his record...  
He was brought in once before I understand...  
(reads)  
..."catatonic stupor"...condition rendered  
him non-verbal for a period of -...

JACK

Yeah so? The guy's beat up - he...he  
probably has a concussion or something, right?  
(DOCTOR doesn't reply)  
He'll snap out of it?

DOCTOR

I'm afraid not ... Then again, I'm not sure.  
The beating's bad but it's not the problem...  
It seems he's.. re-experiencing the catatonia...

So, like before, he could snap out it in an hour or in thirteen months or thirteen years...  
....I don't know. There's no way to tell.

JACK

But..How could that happen?

DOCTOR

Well, it's not unusual in his case...  
Sometimes victims of tragedies are subject to the brain's replay system. The brain never loses anything - it just stores it up and waits. A person could actually re-experience the full effect of a tragedy, long after the event took place. Are you relatives?

(JACK shakes his head)

Well, it doesn't matter. We'll take care of it. He'll have to be sent back to the same institution..

(HE checks the record)

JACK

What if I was a relative?

DOCTOR

You'd have the option to care for him at home but my advice is it wouldn't be the best thing for him. He needs hospital care. I just thought you could sign the release forms, but the city can do that. I wouldn't feel responsible in any way. There's really nothing you can do. I'm sorry.

With that, the DOCTOR EXITS. JACK and ANNE face PARRY.

ANNE

Just like a guy. Finds the woman of his dreams then falls into a coma...  
Poor Lydia...

(SHE looks at JACK)

...Some women just have no luck, huh?

Including herself in this remark, and having cried all she could cry, She and JACK exchange one final look. SHE turns and, with all her dignity, walks out of the ward. After a BEAT:

JACK

Anne....Anne...I'll call you O.k...?

But ANNE doesn't stop or turn - she keeps walking. JACK stares at PARRY. CAMERA MOVES IN TO C.U. - His face hardening, a mixture of hurt, rage and resignation.

SUPER - SIX MONTHS LATER.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - DAY

CAMERA PANS the studio as JACK signs off his broadcast:

JACK

Well, I'm gone-... Have a perfect weekend and remember on Monday, we have as our studio guest, Ben Starr - star of the recently defunct hit TV show ON THE RADIO - it's the rise and fall story of one of televisions brightest stars ruined by charges of sodomy in an Atlanta airport mens room. If you often wonder, "what IS sodomy exactly?", Ben'll have that answer and many more for you on Monday's show...Until then, don't do anything that will break your pattern of being the selfish scum sucking race you are. From one of the Botched to all of your bungled cats out there, I love ya and right back at cha!. Over and out!

HE flicks his monitor off as a commercial takes over. The CREW work in silence behind him. HE rubs his tired face and sits there.

CAMERA PAUSES on JACK for a moment as he sits in silence. HE looks neither happy nor said, neither satisfied nor unsatisfied. HE looks blank...emotionless...as if he knows something is lacking but he hasn't the strength or interest to find out.... THE PHONE RINGS - breaking the silence. JACK picks up.

JACK

Yeah...Yeah Lou....

(no excitement, no energy until:)

Lou, I said I want an offer or they can forget it... Well, tell them I'm meeting with the cable people about a talk show and...What?... Beth's father set it up...No, he owns it. ...Fuck you Lou...And if the network is ready to make an offer and I see a script, then fine... otherwise, forget it...

HE hangs up.

BETH (OC)

Hi...

JACK turns to see his new improved girlfriend, BETH - a tall, statuesque redhead in a smart Chanel outfit. BETH crosses to him and they kiss...When they kiss, all the lights in the surrounding studios booths go out, as the crew heads home. JACK'S STUDIO is now surrounded by blackness...After the kiss, JACK gets right to business...

JACK

Hi..Did you talk to your father?

BETH  
(hiding good news)  
Yeeesss...

JACK  
(slightly annoyed by her coquettish game)  
Weeeelllll!

BETH  
Well, Daddy said...and this is word for word...  
He said...that he thought... that you were a home run.

JACK knows this must mean a great deal - especially to BETH -  
but he just can't get the steam up....HE smiles weakly.

JACK  
Great.

BETH  
Really. He thinks you'll be a phenominal  
success...and he says the cable people  
are very excited about the meeting...  
I said I always knew that and I  
really think it was like the first time  
he really respected me...So thank you for that.

JACK nods "it was nothing" as his hands move up her body.

Oh and I called him later to thank him but  
I really think you should send him a note...  
He wants to take us out to dinner tonight.  
The car's picking us up at seven...

JACK nods and watches BETH'S BREASTS pressing against her  
dress. Turned on, JACK moves to her and begins fondling  
her, as he kisses her neck. BETH giggles.

BETH  
Jaaack...what are you crazy? They're  
people all around us?

JACK flips a switch that send his studio into darkness and  
continues kissing and fondling. BETH giggles some more.

BETH  
Jaack..I can't do this...

JACK begins to ease her to the floor. BETH stops him.

BETH  
What is this thing you have with the floor?

THEY lower O.C....We hear BETH continue OC:

BETH

Oh it's cold...I'm cold...honey...  
Jack, can we please do this after dinner..  
in bed?...like normal people?...I really want  
you but I'll want you more, late. O.K. I promise.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIDTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY.

A STREET BUM, whose face we cannot see, is busy asking people for change. But no one is stopping... A SECURITY GUARD exits the building and starts yelling at the BUM to leave. A CAB pulls up and out steps JACK and LOU. THEY start walking toward the building when the BUM recognizes JACK...

BUM

JACK!....JACK!....

JACK turns as the BUM starts for him. Simultaneously, the SECURITY GUARD intercepts the BUM, who JACK recognizes as the GAY BUM from Central Park...

GAY BUM

JACK!...JACK! IT'S MEE...REMEMBER ME...YOU KNOW ME!

GUARD

GET OUTTA HERE I SAID!!...

LOU tries to usher JACK into the building, but JACK stands frozen for a moment, as the GUARD pulls out a club and starts poking the GAY BUM away...JACK doesn't know what to do...

LOU

You KNOW that guy!?  
(JACK doesn't answer).

GAY BUM

JACK...JACK...PLEASE CAN I TALK TO YOU?  
I JUST..I NEED TO TALK TO YOU, JACK...I...

But the GUARD keeps at him...JACK realizes people are watching him and he enters the building with LOU as the GAY BUM screams:

GAY BUM

JACK..PLEASE..JAAAAACCKKK!!!!  
JAACCK!...WHY WON'T ANYBODY....WHAT'S THE MATTER...

But JACK disappears inside. THE GAY BUM is blocked by the GUARD. HE throws his arms up and starts muttering to himself helplessly.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - NETWORK OFFICES - DAY.

A hyperkenetic T.V. EXEC. is pitching JACK, who sits next to LOU.

T.V. EXEC.

It's a weekly comedy about the homeless.

JACK can't believe his fate. HE looks to a coffee table and sees a magazine front page: LANGDON CARMICHAEL BUYS VAN GOGH'S ROAD WITH CYPRESSES FOR 20 MILLION DOLLARS. CAMERA PANS TO C.U.

...But it's not depressing in any way.  
We want to find a happy, upbeat way of bringing the issue of homeless to television. There are three wacky homeless characters but they're wise...they're wacky and they're wise... And the hooks is, they love being homeless. They love the freedom...they love the adventure... It's all about the joy of living...not all the bullshit we have to deal with...the money, the politics..the pressures... And we're gonna call it HOME FREE...

LOU

Oooooo... I got a rush...

Suddenly, Jack stands up and bolts out of the room.

TV EXEC

What?... Where is he... Lou, is this another disappearing act with this guy or what?

LOU

(overlapping)

I'm sure it's nothing... He probably had to go to the bathroom... I'll find out...

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING (101 PARK AVE. SO.) - DAY

Jack rushes out of the building to find the Gay Bum, but he's gone.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT - DAY

Jack walks around. He looks at the wall of weapons and the mural of the medieval scene. He looks through the maps, ropes plans for the robbery. He finds the Pinocchio doll still keeping guard before the Red Knight wall of scribblings.

EXT. A LOT BENEATH THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE - DUSK

Jack approaches the entrance to the lot from the street, carrying an open box of assorted deli food and coffee... He stops in the entrance and looks at the deserted lot.

Gone are the little cliques of homeless, once scattered throughout the place. Gone is the magic and danger that night cast upon the surroundings. All Jack sees is garbage and decay.

Suddenly, SIRENS from an ambulance pulls his his attention away. At the same time, the Black and the Irishman (from that same first night with Parry), come running out from between the two giant foundations of the bridge and bolt out of the lot. Jack smiles in recognition as he moves to block them:

JACK

Hey! Hey, guys!... Remember me...

But the Black and the Irishman push him out of the way...

BLACK

Let me the fuck alone, goddamn it...

IRISHMAN

(overlapping)

Move it, for Christ sakes.

Move...!!!

The Irishman shoves Jack against the fence and runs, with the Black close behind. They disappear underneath the highway as Jack turns and sees an ambulance pulling up to the sight. PARAMEDICS wheel a gurney from the ambulance, past Jack and into the lot between the giant foundations. Jack approaches with great trepidation. He moves into view just in time to see the Paramedics lift the body of the Hippy bum onto the stretcher...

JACK

Hey... Hey... Hey wait, I know him...

The Paramedics stop... Jack approaches the gurney... The Hippy eyes are opened and glazed.

JACK

(continuing)

Hey... hey, remember me... Marvel Comics, right?... Remember Parry... Superbum? Remember you guys saved my ass...

PARAMEDIC

Mister, he's dead.

Jack realizes the glazed eyes are actually dead eyes.

The Paramedics wheel him away;

CUT TO:

INT. OAKBROOK INSTITUTE - THAT NIGHT

Jack approaches the nurses' station when he spots a familiar face. Lydia.

We can see a change in her; the self-consciousness replaced by a self assurance, the insecurity replaced with a maturity. She wears a handsome tailored suit. Jack hides from her and listens:

LYDIA

(to NURSE)

Excuse me but I brought new bed sheets for him last week. They were lime colored with little watermelons on them...

NURSE

Oh yes... I'm sorry. They're being cleaned. The doctor had a little accident with a hypo.

LYDIA

All right... Make sure he gets them, okay. Thank you.

Jack watches her exit.

INT. PARRY'S WARD - NIGHT

Jack enters a room lined on both side with beds and patients.

The various patients -- all men -- are confined to their beds. Some are mumbling inaudibly to themselves, others are rocking back and forth, others just stare off into space. Parry sits in bed -- his eyes are dead, his body unresponsive. Jack stands at the foot of his bed. Parry does not respond.

JACK

Hi!... It's Jack... How are you doing?... You look good... You do.

Parry remains the same. Other patients look at Jack as if he's nuts talking to a catatonic person. Jack moves closer to him. He picks up his hand and holds it. Then shakes it.

JACK

(continuing)  
... Hey... You gonna wake up for me?  
Huh?...

No response. Jack leans closer into him. His tone changes:

JACK  
(continuing)  
... This isn't over is it?... You think you're going to make me do this, don't you?...  
(sternly)  
Well, forget it! No fucking way!... I don't feel responsible for you, or for any of them! Everybody has bad things happen to them... I'm not God. I don't decide... People survive.  
(beat)  
Say something!?

The other patients stop their mumblings and watch, as if Jack were an interesting TV show... Jack paces before the bed.

JACK  
(continuing)  
... Everything's been going great! Great! I'm... I'm gonna have my own cable talk show, with an incredible equity I might add... I... I... have an... an incredibly gorgeous fucking girlfriend... I... I am living an incredible fucking life!!!... So don't lay there in your comfortable little coma and think I'm about to risk all of that because I feel responsible for you!  
(to the other patients)  
I am not responsible!  
(to Parry)  
And I don't feel guilty... You've got it easy.  
(intensely)  
I'm out there every day. Every day trying to figure out what the hell I'm doing... why, no matter what I have, it feels like I have nothing... So don't think I feel sorry for you! It's easy being nuts! Try being me!...  
(beat)  
So I won't do this. I do not believe in this. And don't give me that stuff about me being the one! There is nothing... Nothing special about

me! I control my own destiny -- not some overweight fairies. I say what I'm going to do and I am not risking my life to get some fucking cup for some fucking vegetable...

And even if I did do this, I want you to know it wouldn't be because I had to! It wouldn't be 'cause I feel guilty or cursed or .. or...bad or responsible or anything....

The tears come. JACK gently pushes the hair off of PARRY'S face.

JACK

(continuing)

Aw shit...If I do this...and I mean, IF!... It's because I want to do this... for you. That's all!! For you!

(HE kisses PARRY'S forehead)

Don't go anywhere...huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. CARMICHAEL TOWNHOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

JACK stands on the deserted block. HE looks around at the neighboring houses - all the New Yorkers safely locked away behind their doors, intentionally oblivious to what goes on around them. JACK is holding a rope with a self-made hook. HE looks up the at building, takes a gulp, then throws the rope up. IT MISSES and falls back toward him - scaring him to the side and making an awful sound when it lands. JACK tries again. IT CATCHES. HE tugs a bit. HE begins to climb up the building.

JACK

Thank God I live in a city where nobody looks up...

HE places a foot on the wall and begins to climb, mumbling:

JACK

What the hell am I doing? Can't fuckin believe this is my life! ...(imitates a whiny Parry)... "Oh Jack you're the one...we have to get the Grail" I'll give ya Grail, ya stupid dingbat! Climbing up walls in the middle of the goddamn city- in the middle of the goddamn night while that schmuck lays in bed dreaming about Camelot! I live through this and I'll be the King of the Idiots...What a fucking honor!

HE pulls and steps, pulls and steps...climbing up to a BALCONY mid-way between the street and the roof. JACK climbs over, falling into some exterior lighting that lines the balcony.

A light is jarred loose, falling to the ground making an awful SOUND and lighting a stained glass window. JACK raises his

eyes and sees THE RED KNIGHT standing six feet tall, as pictured in the design of the stained glass window. HE stares until HE HEARS THE SOUND OF A HORSE GALLOPING....HE freezes, then cautiously looks toward the street - but the street is vacant. The galloping stops. An eerie silence hangs in the air.

JACK

Oh great. This is great. I'm hearing horses now. Parry will be so pleased.

(HE picks up the rope and  
throws it to the roof)

RADIO PERSONALITY TURNS SCREWBALL  
ON MISSION FROM GOD...I just hope  
when they put me away they find me  
a bed right next to his!

HE begins to climb from the balcony to the roof....Suddenly, JACK hears SIREN IN THE DISTANCE and freezes, closing his eyes.

SUDDENLY, THREE POLICE CARS come barreling down the street - sirens blasting, they screech to a halt. A dozen cops hit the streets with rifles and spotlights aimed at JACK. A REPORTER faces a news camera. (THE SAME REPORTER FROM EDWIN'S T.V. NEWS REPORT)

REPORTER

A crazed radio personality dangles from  
the townhouse of billionaire...

ANNE jumps out of a police car and runs to the townhouse - her face full of love and concern.

ANNE

Jack!

JACK OPENS HIS EYES:

POV - The street is empty. The siren was from an ambulance that drives off in the distance. There are no cops, no spotlights...and no Anne.

JACK

(quietly)

Anne.

A ball of sweat, he takes a breath and continues his climb.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARMICHAEL TOWNHOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

Jack reaches the roof and climbs over. He pulls the rope up and quickly moves to the skylight. He looks down into it and sees a dark void. He takes a breath and pulls out

some masking tape. He makes three big tape loops and applies them to the glass. He then takes out a glass cutter and begins to cut a pane. The SOUND, at first, is starting. An O.S. VOICE says:

VOICE  
You're being too loud.

Jack's heart stops. He looks into the darkness of the roof but sees nothing. He tries to slow down his heart and shake away thoughts of demons in the dark. He continues cutting. When he finishes the entire pane, he replaces the cutter in his pocket then plasters his arm against the tape. He gently bangs the pane and it comes loose, sticking to the tape. He is impressed. He places the pane on the roof and, fastening one end of the rope to a pipe, lowers the other end down.

CUT TO:

INT. CARMICHAEL TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack eases himself down into a pitch black room. But the rope doesn't reach the floor. He dangles for a moment, fearful of falling until he realizes it is the only way to get down. He takes a breath and releases, falling to the floor with a THUD!... The room is dark. The moonlight barely illuminates the austere, castle-like surroundings. Jack pulls out the page from the Architecture Today and lights a lighter. The "Grail" is in the library on the first floor. Jack cautiously makes his way out.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY OF TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack looks down the dark hallway. At the far end he can see the top of a staircase. He heads towards it until he sees something that makes him stop dead in his tracks.

Slowly, a shadow holding a shotgun emerges up the stairs against the back wall... Jack is paralyzed. He closes his eyes. The shadow reaches the top of the landing. It is EDWIN MALNICK... Wearing the same expression we saw on the TV broadcast -- sad and harmless. Jack's heart is bursting out of his chest. Edwin calmly raises the gun, cocks it and FIRES: the shot BLASTS down the hallway, deafening Jack. But when he opens his eyes to see if he has been hit, there is no blood, no wound... and when he looks up, no Edwin. He pulls himself together and continues:

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST FLOOR OF TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack enters Carmichael's library carefully. A small lamp is lit on a small table beside a large Chesterfield chair, which is turned facing the fireplace. Jack spots the antique commode and crosses to it... Within the commode, sitting innocently behind two small glass doors, is the "Grail"... Jack gently opens the doors and takes out the goblet. He holds it reverently for a moment, then, noticing an inscription, reads:

TO LITTLE LANNIE CARMICHAEL  
FOR ALL HIS HARD WORK... P.S. 247 CHRISTMAS PAGENT 1932

Jack can't help but smile. He takes the chalice and turns to leave, when suddenly he notices:

The bare foot of a man barely sticking out from in front of the Chesterfield chair. Jack slowly moves around the large back of the chair to the front and sees, to his amazement: LANGSTON CARMICHAEL, wearing only his silk pajama bottoms, asleep in the chair. On the table beside him is an empty bottle of vodka and an empty bottle of pills.

Jack doesn't know what to do, when it suddenly strikes him that Carmichael hasn't moved at all. At first, he thinks it is another hallucination, but then he notices the pill bottle. He takes a step toward it, the floor SQUEAKING beneath him but Carmichael remaining unconscious. He reads the bottle: Seconal. Jack looks at Carmichael's limp body and checks his heart. It is very faint. Scared, Jack slowly starts backing out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jack is panicked. He wants to run away. He looks to the front entrance and sees an alarm system indicated by a tiny beam of light that sits a few inches above the floor. Suddenly, Jack feels calm. He has an idea. He knows what he is going to do.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARMICHAEL TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack exits out the front door, setting off a slight BUZZ from the alarm. He checks to see that no one is around, then quickly runs down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S WARD - NIGHT

Parry lies asleep in a sea of lime green and watermelons. Jack places the "Grail" in Parry's lifeless hands. He pulls up a chair beside the bed and sits.

JACK

Okay... I did my side of the bargain... You gonna wake up now? Huh?...

(no response)

Want to think about it a little more...? Okay.

Jack props his feet up on Parry's bed and settles in to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S WARD - DAWN

CAMERA CLOSE on a newspaper headline being read by an orderly: "ACCIDENTAL SUICIDE THWARTED BY NIGHT PROWLER... Thief Didn't Know Anyone Was Home, Escapes Empty Handed"... CAMERA PANS PAST several beds until it ARRIVES at Parry's. Jack is asleep in a chair beside him. CAMERA ON Parry's hands as they gently come to life and grasp the chalice. Parry opens his eyes, raising the chalice to him. He sees Jack sleeping beside him and smiles.

PARRY

(whispers)

I had this dream, Jack.

Jack remains asleep.

PARRY

(continuing)

I was married. I was married to this beautiful woman.... And you were there too...

(pause)

I really miss her, Jack. Is that okay? Can I miss her now?

Jack, his eyes closed, only pretends to be asleep, but in truth he hears every word. A tear rolls down his cheek. Parry extends one hand, placing it on Jack's shoulder while cradling the chalice with the other.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKBROOK INSTITUTE - DAY

Lydia makes her way down the corridor, pushing her way through the swinging doors into Parry's ward. She is stopped in her tracks by what she sees:

Parry has gathered all the patients to the center of the room, and is teaching them to sing "Groovin'". Jack is watching. Although most are not getting it, all are having a good time. When one of the patients turns to look at Lydia, Parry turns as well... His face lights up as he says:

PARRY

Hiya, sweetheart! Where you been!?

Lydia loses control and begins to cry through her smile. Parry approaches and wraps his arms around her.

PARRY

(continuing)

Don't cry... Hey...

Lydia throws her arms around him.

PARRY

(continuing)

... Are you my girl?... Are you my girl...?

Lydia sobs and nods in his shoulder. Parry holds her tighter.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO POP - DAY.

ANNE sits in her office, a cigarette dangling from her mouth, going over receipts. There is a knock at the door. A beat of silence. ANNE raises her head to discover JACK, holding a bouquet of flowers. HE smiles. ANNE looks shocked, then - pulling herself together...THEY both are frozen in silence:

ANNE

Well! What do you want me to do - applaud?

JACK

How have you been?

ANNE

(coldly)

Terrific. Going on alot of dates ... seeing lots of men... lots of dates..

JACK nods. HE is uncharacteristically nervous.

ANNE

(sincere, vulnerable)

Jack please...I'm having a bad month.

I'm not up to this. What are you doing here?

HE takes a breath, looks at ANNE and pushes the words out of him.

JACK

I love you.

For once, ANNE is speechless. She slowly rises from behind her desk in such a way that JACK takes a step back in fear. ANNE up to him. She has no intention of making this easy.

ANNE

Excuse me, I didn't get all that...

Won't you run it by me again.

JACK is dying. HE could hardly say it the first time.

JACK

I think..(quickly corrects himself)

I...I realized...I love you.

ANNE

Huh-huh....You son of a bitch!

SHE hauls off and cracks him a slap across the face that stuns him - his knees giving out, lowering him to the floor. SHE quickly grabs his face with her hands and plants a passionate kiss on his lips, that slowly causes him to rise back up. HE drops the flowers and grabs her. SHE mounts his body and begin to undo his suit. THEY go at it with such passion, they both fall to the floor.

ANNE (O.C.)

Jesus. What rock hit YOU in the head?

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT.

CAMERA PANS DOWN PARRY and JACK, lying naked, cloudbusting.

PARRY

Beautiful night huh?

JACK

Yeah.....Hey they're moving....

(pause)

Am I doing that?

THE END

