

"SWINGERS"

by

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Third Draft

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

The soundtrack opens with Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon".

A HELICOPTER SHOT OF THE L.A. basin.

The pool of golden light disintegrates into the thousands of points which constitute it as we rapidly draw closer to the city.

We are just above the tops of the highest buildings as we approach Hollywood Boulevard. Below is neon and the icy thrust of search lights rotating on the corner of Hollywood and Vine.

We continue west, then quickly north.

There is the momentary appearance of the moonlit HOLLYWOOD sign as we pass the blinking red beacon of the Capital Records building and drop into Franklin avenue and over the 101.

Architectural remnants of Hollywood's past whip up. We are heading east at treetop level. A warm glow in the distance quickly grows into a modest commercial strip which includes cafes, bookstores, and a theater.

We drop to eye level as we spy through the plate glass showcase window of the "Bourgeois Pig" coffeehouse, which holds the translucent reflection of the full moon.

A cigarette wedged between knuckles smoulders. MIKE takes the last drag with great effort, then crushes it out. He

sits in the window sprawled across a red velvet couch that once perfectly complemented a faux spanish foyer.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. "BOURGEOIS PIG" COFFEEHOUSE - COUCHES AND TABLE IN FRONT OF WINDOW - NIGHT

ROB sits down next to Mike, pouring himself some tea.

MIKE

And what if I don't want to give up on her?

ROB

You don't call.

MIKE

But you said I shouldn't call if I wanted to give up on her.

ROB

Right.

MIKE

So I don't call either way.

ROB

Right.

MIKE

So what's the difference?

ROB

The only difference between giving up and not giving up is if you take her back when she wants to come back. See, you can't do anything to make her want to come back. You can only do things to make her not want to come back.

MIKE

So the only difference is if I forget about her or pretend to forget about

her.

ROB

Right.

MIKE

Well that sucks.

ROB

It sucks.

MIKE

So it's almost a retroactive decision.
So I could, like, let's say, forget
about her and when she comes back
make like I just pretended to forget
about her.

ROB

Right... or more likely the opposite.

MIKE

Right... Wait, what do you mean?

ROB

I mean first you'll pretend not to
care, not call – whatever, and then,
eventually, you really won't care.

MIKE

Unless she comes back first.

ROB

Ah, see, that's the thing. Somehow
they don't come back until you really
don't care anymore.

MIKE

There's the rub.

ROB

There's the rub.

MIKE

Thanks, man. Sorry we always talk

about the same thing all the time...

ROB

Hey man, don't sweat it.

MIKE

...It's just that you've been there.
Your advice really helps.

ROB

No problem.

MIKE

Rob, I just want you to know, you're
the only one I can talk to about
her.

ROB

Thanks. Thanks, man.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Close up on answering machine. Mike pushes the button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

Hello, you have five messages.

Mike's eyes light up. He paces in anticipation as the tape
rewinds.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(male voice)

Hey, baby. It's Trent. I hope you're
feeling better about your old
girlfriend. I hope my advice helped...

Mike fast-forwards to next message.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

Skipping message.

(male voice)

Whatsup, Mike. If you want to talk
some more about Michelle...

(synthesized voice)

Skipping message.

(female voice)

Mike, it's Chris. Feeling better yet
about...?

(synthesized voice)

Skipping message.

Tension grows with every inch of spooling tape. Did she leave
a message?

ANSWERING MACHINE

(female voice)

Hi, Mike. Did she call yet? If she
didn't then she doesn't deserve...

(synthesized voice)

Skipping message.

The last one. It's a long shot, but he's got the faith.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(elderly female voice)

Michael, this is Grandma. I want to
know if you got the part on that
television program. I told the whole
family and they're very excited to
know if...

(synthesized voice)

Skipping message. End of final
message.

MIKE

(lighting a cigarette,
defeated)

Shit.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

You have to put things in perspective.

MIKE

(unfazed by the
sentient appliance)

I know, I know.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(synthesized voice)
You've been through worse.

MIKE
You're right. I know.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(synthesized voice)
Ever since I've known you.

MIKE
I don't know about that.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(synthesized voice)
Moving here from New York was much
more of an adjustment than this.

MIKE
It didn't feel that way.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(synthesized voice)
That's because it was a challenge.
You has control over you're situation.
It was hard, but you rose to it.

MIKE
Okay. I'll think about that. Bye.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(synthesized voice)
You really should. Life, after all,
is really just a series of
challenges...

MIKE
(growing irate)
Enough. I've got to use the phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE
(synthesized voice)

Are you calling Her?

MIKE

No. Stop, come on.

The LED goes black as the machine beeps off. Mike picks up the phone and hits autodial.

Machine beeps off. Phone rings again, then is answered.

TRENT

(over phone)

Hello?

MIKE

S'up Trent?

TRENT

Lemme get off the other line, baby.

We hear the clicks of call-waiting-hold limbo. The silence is interrupted.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice

over phone)

You should call your Grandmother.

MIKE

Shuddup.

TRENT

(returning to line)

That was Sue. We got two parties tonight. One's for a modeling agency.

MIKE

I don't know...

TRENT

Listen to me, baby, there are going to be beautiful babies there.

MIKE

Trent, I don't feel like going out

tonight. I got shit to do tomorrow...

TRENT

Listen to you. I got an audition for a pilot at nine and I'm going. You gotta get out with some beautiful babies. You can't sit home thinking about her.

MIKE

I don't know...

TRENT

I don't know, I don't know – listen to you. We're gonna have fun tonight. We gotta get you out of that stuffy apartment.

MIKE

We're gonna spend half the night driving around the Hills looking for this party and then leaving cause it sucks, then we're gonna look for this other party you heard about. But, Trent, all the parties and bars, they all suck. I spend half the night trying to talk to some girl who's eyes are darting around to see if there's someone else she should be talking to. And it's like I'm supposed to be all happy cause she's wearing a backpack. Half of them are nasty skanks who wouldn't be shit if they weren't surrounded by a bunch of drunken horny assholes. I'm not gonna be one of those assholes. It's fucking depressing. Some skank who isn't half the woman my girlfriend is is gonna front me? It makes me want to puke.

TRENT

(beat)

You got it bad, baby. You need Vegas.

MIKE

What are you talking about? Vegas?

TRENT

VEGAS.

MIKE

What Vegas?

TRENT

We're going to Vegas.

MIKE

When?

TRENT

Tonight, baby.

MIKE

You're crazy.

TRENT

I'll pick you up in a half an hour.

MIKE

I'm not going to Vegas.

TRENT

Shut up – yes you are. Now listen to Tee. We'll stop at a cash machine on the way.

A long thoughtful pause.

MIKE

I can't lose more than a hundred.

TRENT

Just bring your card. Half an hour.

MIKE

Wait.

TRENT

What?

MIKE

What are you wearing? I mean, we should wear suits.

TRENT

Oh... Now Mikey wants to be a high roller.

MIKE

No, seriously, if you're dressed nice and you act like you gamble a lot, they give you free shit.

TRENT

Okay Bugsy. Twenty minutes.

MIKE

Wear a suit, I'm telling you it works.

TRENT

Be downstairs. You're beautiful.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIKE'S BUILDING - FRANKLIN AVENUE - NIGHT

Mike is dressed to the nines in classic vintage threads. He's trying to look at ease as he straightens his cuff links. He approaches Trent who suavely leans against his worn down ride. He's a tall, slim, good-looking cat. His sharkskin suit hangs well on his lanky frame as it tapers to his ankles. Sinatra's "Come Fly With Me" on the tape deck adds an elegance to the scene. They exchange an impish grin and depart without saying a word. Maybe this isn't such a bad idea.

CUT TO:

INT. TRENT'S CAR - DETAIL SHOT - SPEEDOMETER - NIGHT

The NEEDLE IS PINNED. The gauges are blurred by the vibration of the poorly tuned engine. The SHOT WIDENS to reveal that the "Oil" and "Service" dummy lights are both illuminated, causing an eerie red glow onto TRENT's white knuckles.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

Trent's car is red-lined. The SWINGERS are Vegas bound. Do not pass go.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TRENT'S CAR - NIGHT

MIKE

(counting bills)

I took out three hundred, but I'm only gonna bet with one. I figure if we buy a lot of chips, the pit boss will see and they'll comp us all sorts of shit, then we trade back the chips at the end of the night. You gotta be cool though.

TRENT

I'm cool, baby. They're gonna give Daddy a room, some breakfast, maybe Bennett's singing.

MIKE

I'm serious. This is how you do it. I'm telling you.

TRENT

I know. Daddy's gonna get the Rainman suite. Vegas, baby. We're going to Vegas!

MIKE

Vegas! You think we'll get there by midnight?

TRENT

Baby, we're gonna be up by five hundy by midnight. Vegas, baby!

MIKE

Vegas!

Mike twists up the Chairman of the Board as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRENT'S CAR - HOURS LATER

The two swingers are starting to fray around the edges but are unwilling to admit it to each other or themselves. Frank has been replaced by talk radio.

TRENT
Vegas, baby!

MIKE
Vegas!

The needle is still buried.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRENT'S CAR - MANY HOURS LATER

Sleep deprivation and desert static radio.

TRENT
Vegas.

MIKE
Vegas.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRENT'S CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mike is sleeping in the passenger seat.

TRENT
Wake up, baby.

MIKE
(stirring)
Whu?

TRENT
Look at it, baby. Vegas, baby!

Trent points out a mountain range. It is now the only thing separating them from their destination. The surreal glow of the desert sky is accentuated by the loud slashing of the cobalt and ruby lasers emanating from a source masked by the craggy peaks. Mike slowly stirs from his slumber. He is transfixed by this affrontation of nature. It is his first glimpse of the city without God.

MIKE
(in reverie)
Vegas.

CUT TO:

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

The shrill cry of Basie's fat brass section heralds the arrival of the young swingers. Their eyes drink every watt of golden light as Sinatra's crooning urges them on.

Mike has either had enough sleep or so little that it no longer matters. Either way, there's no turning back.

They roll up to a casino valet. TILT UP to a skull and crossbones which looms overhead.

CUT TO:

INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - NIGHT

The two guys walk and talk down a fluorescent hallway. It is well past midnight and the only patrons at this hour are tourists too drunk to sleep and compulsive gamblers who snuck out of their rooms without waking their wives.

It is a weeknight and it is beginning to become painfully obvious that our boys are overdressed.

The decor is nautical plaster. Castings of bearded men with primitive prosthesis clutching daggers between their teeth are everywhere.

All of ye olde promenade shoppes are closed.

MIKE

(the first budding of
crankiness)
Pirates of the fucking Caribbean.

TRENT

This is the hot new place, besides,
you love pirates. Tell me Mikey
doesn't love pirates.

MIKE

This is fuckin' post-pubescent
Disneyland.

TRENT

You gotta love the pirates, baby.
The pirates are money.

The corridor empties into the equally kitch CASINO.

MIKE

This place is dead. I thought this
was the city that never sleeps.

TRENT

That's New York, baby. You should
know that. Look at the waitresses.
I'm gonna get me a peg-leg baby.

MIKE

They're all skanks.

TRENT

Baby, there are beautiful babies
here.

MIKE

Tee, the beautiful babies don't work
Wednesdays midnight to six. This is
the skank shift.

TRENT

What are you talking about? Look at
all the honeys.

Trent contorts his face at a cute WAITRESS passing by with a

tray of drinks.

TRENT
Arrrrg!

The waitress cracks a smile as she crosses away. Mike is visibly embarrassed.

MIKE
Cut that shit out.

TRENT
She smiled baby.

MIKE
That's not cool.

TRENT
Did she, or did she not smile?

MIKE
It doesn't matter...

TRENT
I'm telling you, they love that shit.

MIKE
You're gonna screw up our plan.

TRENT
We're gonna get laid, baby.

MIKE
First let's see what happens if we play it cool.

TRENT
What? You think she's gonna tell her pit-boss on us?

MIKE
Don't make fun, I think we can get some free shit if we don't fuck around.

TRENT

Who's fucking around? I'm not making fun. Let's do it, baby.

MIKE

The trick is to look like you don't need it, then they give you shit for free.

TRENT

Well, you look money, baby. We both look money.

Mike points to a semi-curtained, semi-rope-off area near the baccarat tables. The clientele is classier, but they're still obviously overdressed.

MIKE

(pointing)

That's where we make our scene.

TRENT

You think they're watching?

MIKE

Oh, they're watching all right. They're watching.

CUT TO:

INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - THE CLASSY SECTION - NIGHT

Mike is at a blackjack table with Trent at his side. The game has paused to observe the newcomers as Mike draws a billfold out of his breast pocket. They're pulling it off with only slightly noticeable effort.

MIKE

I don't know, I guess I'll start with three hundred in, uh, blacks.

Mike tries to hand the DEALER a handful of twenties after counting them twice.

DEALER

On the table.

MIKE

Sorry?

DEALER

You have to lay it on the table.

MIKE

Uh, I don't want to bet it all.

The other players grow impatient.

DEALER

You're not allowed to hand me money, sir. You'll have to lay it on the table if you want me to change it.

MIKE

(hastily laying down
the bills)

Oh... right.

The dealer lays out the bills such that the amount is visible to the camera encased in the black glass globe overhead. Trent and Mike look up at it open-mouthed like turkeys in the rain.

DEALER

Blacks?

Mike's attention is recaptured by the dealer, but Trent continues trying to peer through the smoked glass.

MIKE

Huh?

DEALER

You want this in black chips.

MIKE

Sure, that'll be fine.

The dealer chirps out an unintelligible formality and the PIT BOSS chirps the response. Trent's focus whips away from

the camera as both he and Mike stare at the pit boss ten feet away. The dealer plunks down the measly THREE CHIPS which represent Mike's entire cash reserve. Not quite the effect he had hoped for.

The swingers stare at the chips. The players stare at the swingers. The dealer stares at the pit boss.

MIKE

Do you have anything smaller?

DEALER

Yes, but I'm afraid this table has a hundred-dollar-minimum bet. Perhaps you'd be more comfortable at one of our lower stakes tables.

The dealer indicates a FIVE-DOLLAR TABLE across the room where an Hispanic woman deals to a BLUEHAIR, a BIKER, and a COUPLE in matching Siegfried and Roy T-shirts.

The swingers look back to the dealer who is now flanked by the pit boss.

The tense silence is broken by...

WAITRESS

Drinks?

(then to Trent)

How about you, Cap'n?

Trent looks over to see that it's the same WAITRESS who flashed him a smile earlier. At first he begins to smile, then, remembering that he is locked in a high stakes battle of wills, subtly shakes her off. She smirks and starts to leave until she is interrupted by Mike holding up a finger. It's a balsy move, but everyone's watching. The kid's going for broke.

MIKE

(to the waitress, but never breaking eye contact with the dealer)

I'll have a vodka martini, straight

up, shaken not stirred, very dry.

Smooth. Trent is impressed, but masks his pride.

WAITRESS

(under her breath
cynically as she
writes it down)

One "James Bond".

Ow. She exits.

MIKE

(regaining composure)

No. Blacks will be fine.

Mike throws a chip in the circle. Trent is shocked. That's a hundred bucks. Mike and Trent share a look. The dealer and the pit boss exchange glances. Bets are all down and the cards are meticulously dealt.

The dealer has a two showing. Mike has been dealt a five and a six – eleven.

TRENT

(hushed tones)

Double down.

MIKE

(even hushed)

What?!?

TRENT

Double down, baby. You gotta double down on an eleven.

MIKE

I know, but...

TRENT

You gotta do it.

MIKE

...but that's two hundred dollars.
This is blood money...

TRENT

If we don't look like we know what
we're doing, then we may as well...

Everyone's waiting for them.

MIKE

I know.

The dealer, the pit boss, and all the players look on as
Mike drops ANOTHER BLACK CHIP in the circle with a barely
audible, yet deafening, thud.

MIKE

(with all the
nonchalance he can
muster)

Double down.

A bead of sweat.

The sharp snap of a dealt card.

It's a seven. Eighteen.

Disappointment twists their faces.

Finally the dealer flips over his card.

It's a king! Twelve. Here comes the bust...

Flick – four. Sixteen! Here comes the bust...

Flick – five. Twenty one. Groans all around, except for the
swingers who watch their chips slide away in silence.

Mike breaks the spell with a plucky smile from the pit of
his stomach.

MIKE

(to the pit boss)

Sure could use some dinner about
now.

SMASH CUT TO:

Trent and Mike are wedged between the BLUEHAIR and the BIKER
At the FIVE DOLLAR TABLE. They share a pile of red chips.

TRENT

I'm telling you, baby, you always
double down on an eleven.

MIKE

Yeah? Well obviously not always!

TRENT

Always, baby.

MIKE

I'm just saying, not in this
particular case.

TRENT

Always.

MIKE

But I lost! How can you say always?!?

In the meantime, the Bluehair has been dealt an eleven. This
captures the swinger's attention.

BLUEHAIR

Hit.

Four. Fifteen all together.

BLUEHAIR

Oh... I don't know... Hit.

Two. Seventeen. Dealer has a seven showing.

BLUEHAIR

What the hell – hit.

Four! Twenty one.

DEALER

(with a warm smile)

Twenty one.

Polite applause from around the table which the Bluehair humbly waves off. Mike looks at Trent. Daggers. Trent shrugs.

A different PIT BOSS approaches.

PIT BOSS

Would you care for some breakfast, ma'am?

BLUEHAIR

Well...? No, I shouldn't. Maybe later. Thank you, though.

MIKE

(to Trent, under his breath)

I'm gonna fuckinkillyou.

CUT TO:

INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - CASHIER'S WINDOW - NIGHT

Mike is presented a stack of twenties by the CASHIER, who counts them out. Trent looks on.

CASHIER

...eighty... one hundred... one hundred and twenty dollars. We hope to see you back on the high seas soon.

(polite smile)

Mike throws her a disgusted look, then turns to go. Trent struggles to cheer him up.

TRENT

What's that? One twenty? You're up twenty bucks, baby.

Mike throws him a disgusted glare.

TRENT

...Well, you know, not counting the

first table.

MIKE

Thanks for clarifying that.

TRENT

Hey, man, I'm down too, you know.

MIKE

Yea, how much?

TRENT

I don't know, what? Thirty, Forty maybe.

MIKE

Don't give me that shit. You know exactly how much you lost. What'd you drop?

TRENT

Twenty... but I was down at least fifty. I'm sorry, I got hot at the crap table.

MIKE

You won. There's nothing to be sorry about. You're a winner. I'm the fuckin loser. I should be sorry.

TRENT

Baby, don't talk like that, baby.

MIKE

Let's just leave.

TRENT

Baby, you're money. You're the big winner.

MIKE

Let's go.

TRENT

(condescending)

Who's the big winner?

Mike looks away, shaking his head in disgust.

TRENT

(lifting Mike's
reluctant hand from
the wrist like a
boxing champ)

Mikey's the big winner.

MIKE

(shaking his head to
hide a smirk)

What an asshole.

TRENT

Okay, Tee's the asshole, but Mikey's
the big winner.

The same WAITRESS from before approaches the swingers as they are about to leave.

WAITRESS

There you two are. I walked around
for an hour with that stupid martini
on my tray.

MIKE

Sorry. We got knocked out pretty
quickly.

CHRISTY

(sarcasm?)

A couple of high rollers like you?

MIKE

Could you believe it?

CHRISTY

Wait here, I'll get you that martini.

MIKE

Nah, I didn't really want it anyway.
I just wanted to order it.

CHRISTY

Can I get you something else? I mean, you shouldn't leave without getting something for free.

MIKE

No thanks. Why ruin a perfect night.

TRENT

(condescending)

Bring a James Bond for me and my boy Mikey, and if you tell the bartender to go easy on the water...

(holds up a half-dollar)

...this Kennedy has your name on it. Now run along, I'm timing you.

The waitress smiles in spite of herself, shakes her head, and walks away.

MIKE

What an asshole.

TRENT

That was money. Tell me that wasn't money.

MIKE

That was so demeaning...

TRENT

She smiled, baby.

MIKE

I can't believe what an asshole you are.

TRENT

Did she, or did she not smile.

MIKE

She was smiling at what an asshole you are.

TRENT

She was smiling at how money I am,
baby.

MIKE

Let's go. I'm not paying for a room,
and if we don't leave now we'll never
make it.

TRENT

Leave? The honey-baby's bringing us
some cocktails.

MIKE

What are you, nuts? You think she's
coming back?

TRENT

I know she's coming back.

MIKE

I don't think so.

TRENT

Baby, did you hear her? "You shouldn't
leave without getting something for
free." She wants to party, baby.

MIKE

You think so?

TRENT

You gotta give Tee one thing. He's
good with the ladies.

MIKE

I'm too tired for this. Let's just
go.

TRENT

Baby, this is what we came for. We
met a beautiful baby and she likes
you.

MIKE

She likes you.

TRENT

Whatever. We'll see. Daddy's gonna get her to bring a friend. We'll both get one. I don't care if I'm with her or one of her beautiful baby friends.

MIKE

I don't know...

TRENT

You gotta get that girl out of your head. It's time to move on. You're a stylish, successful, good looking cat. The ladies want to love you, you just gotta let them.

MIKE

That's bullshit.

TRENT

It's not. You're money. Any of these ladies would be lucky to pull a cat like you.

MIKE

It's just that I've been out of the game so long. Trent, I was with her for six years. That's before AIDS. I'm scared. I don't know how to talk to them, I don't know...

TRENT

You can't think like that, baby. It's hard, I know. I've been there. Not for six years, but I know. You just gotta get back out there.

MIKE

It's just tough, after sleeping with someone you love for so long, to be with someone new... who doesn't know what I like... and you gotta wear a

jimmy...

TRENT

...gotta...

MIKE

...and then I'm struggling to impress some chick who's not half as classy as my girlfriend, who I'm not even really attracted to...

TRENT

Oh fuck that. You don't have to try and impress anyone. You think I give a shit? You think I sweat that skanky whore waitress...

Tee is interrupted by the WAITRESS who, thank God, barely missed his comment.

TRENT

(recovering, looking at watch)

...One fifty-nine, Two minutes.

WAITRESS

Two vodka martinis, straight up, shaken not stirred, very dry, easy on the water.

TRENT

Beautiful. What time are you off...
(reads nameplate)
...Christy?

WAITRESS

Six.

Mike can't believe it. Tee is just making it happen.

TRENT

Call a friend and have her meet the three of us at the Landlubber Lounge at 6:01.

(Trent throws the

half-dollar on her
tray)

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - COFFEE SHOP - SAME NIGHT

Trent and Mike are looking at menus. They're smoking at the table because the can.

MIKE

That was so fuckin' money. It was like that "Jedi mind" shit.

TRENT

That's what I'm telling you, baby. The babies love that stuff. They don't want all that sensitive shit. You start talking to them about puppy dogs and ice cream. They know what you want. What do you think? You think they don't?

MIKE

I know. I know.

TRENT

They know what you want, believe me. Pretending is just a waste of time. You're gonna take them there eventually anyway. Don't apologize for it.

MIKE

I'm just trying to be a gentleman, show some respect...

TRENT

Respect, my ass. They respect honesty. You see how they dress when they go out? They want to be noticed. You're just showing them it's working. You gotta get off this respect kick, baby. There ain't nothing wrong with letting them now that you're money

and that you want to party.

The COFFEE SHOP WAITRESS approaches the table. She's cute, but not nearly as hot as Christy.

WAITRESS

Are you ready to order?

MIKE

Coffee...

(points to Trent, who
nods)

Two coffees. It says "Breakfast Any
Time", right?

WAITRESS

That's right.

MIKE

I'll have "pancakes in the Age of
Enlightenment".

It goes over like a lead balloon.

WAITRESS

And you?

TRENT

I'll have the Blackbeard over easy.

WAITRESS

I'll be back with the coffee.

She takes the menus and goes.

TRENT

(genuinely)

Nice, baby.

MIKE

I should've said Renaissance, right?
It went over her head.

TRENT

Baby, you did fine.

MIKE

(disgusted with himself)

"Age of Enlightenment". Shit. Like some waitress in a Las Vegas coffee shop is going to get an obscure French philosophical reference. How demeaning. I may as well have just said "Let me jump your ignorant bones."...

TRENT

...Baby...

MIKE

...It's just, I thought "Renaissance" was too Excaliber, it's the wrong casino. She would've gotten it, though...

TRENT

You did fine. Don't sweat her. We're meeting our honeys soon. You know Christy's friend is going to be money.

MIKE

I hope so.

(checks watch)

We gotta go soon.

TRENT

Baby, relax. It's just down the hall. She's gotta change... we'll be fine.

MIKE

We didn't do so bad after all.

TRENT

Baby, we're money.

Mike tries to catch the attention of their waitress, who is passing with a huge platter containing a BREAKFAST BANQUET.

MIKE

Excuse me. We're in a bit of a hurry.

WAITRESS

Hang on, Voltaire.

She passes their table and sets the ENTIRE FEAST in front of the BLUEHAIR from the casino who sits alone.

BLUEHAIR

I said two lox platters. This isn't thirty dollars worth of food. I have a thirty dollar voucher. This isn't my first time in Vegas, you know.

CUT TO:

INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - LANDLUBBER LOUNGE -
SAME NIGHT

Christy is at the bar wearing acid-washed jeans with a matching denim top. She's sexy in a pathetic mid-eighties sort of way. She's sitting next to a pretty brunette, LISA, dressed in a similar fashion.

There is something bizarre about her appearance. Her hair is tied into long pig-tails with powder blue ribbons. Her makeup job is almost theatrical, with bright pink/red lips. She can't be that out of it, or can she?

The girls have already been flanked by a herd of potential COURTIERS.

The SWINGERS saunter up to the girls in a smooth, SLOW-MOTION SHOT.

The girls notice them.

The courtiers sense their rejection and part like the Red Sea for the swingers in perfect slow-motion choreography.

CHRISTY

Hi, boys, we almost gave up on you.

TRENT

Oh, are we late? There are no clocks in this town.

CHRISTY

Well, no harm done. This is Lisa.
I'm sorry, I never got your names...

MIKE

I'm Mike...
(with contempt)
and this is my friend "Doubledown
Trent".

TRENT

(working the bit)
Stop.
(then to the girls)
Ladies, don't you double down on an
eleven?

CHRISTY

Always...

LISA

No matter what... like splitting
aces.

MIKE

Whatever.

TRENT

Hello, Lisa. I'm Trent. What a lovely
makeup job.

CHRISTY

Lisa works at the MGM Grand...

LISA

(apologetically)
I'm a "Dorothy".

TRENT

(trying to sell her
to Mike)
Oh... a Dorothy.

MIKE

Well... we're not in Kansas anymore.

Another lead balloon. Uncomfortable silence.

CHRISTY

What do you guys do?

MIKE

I'm a comedian.

More uncomfortable silence.

LISA

Do you ever perform out here? I'd love to see you.

MIKE

No...

LISA

You should. A lot of comics play Vegas.

MIKE

Well, I'm afraid it's not that easy...

LISA

Why not?

MIKE

There are different circuits... it's hard to explain... you wouldn't understand...

LISA

Who's your booking agent?

MIKE

(flustered)

Oh? You know about booking agents... I don't, uh, actually have a west coast agent as of yet...

LISA

Well, who represents you back east?

MIKE

Actually, it's funny you... I'm actually, uh, between...

LISA

What do you do, Trent?

TRENT

I'm a producer.

BOTH GIRLS

Wow... Oooh... Ahhh...

Mike rolls his eyes at how full of shit he is.

CHRISTY

Listen, I'm not really allowed to drink here. We should go someplace else. How's my place?

The swingers exchange a glance.

Beat.

TRENT & MIKE

Sounds good to me... Fine... Sure

CUT TO:

EXT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - EARLY MORNING

Establishing shot of an Airstream trailer dug into the desert on chocks. Trent's car and two El Caminos are parked out front.

INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - SAME

The foursome, now somewhat more intimate, sit huddled around the fold-out table.

They've been drinking whiskey and long-neck Buds, judging by the recyclables.

The pairings seems to be Trent/Christy, Mike/Lisa.

The cramped compartment is filled with secondary smoke and laughter.

TRENT

No... no... The worst was when I went in for this After-School special and I'm sitting in the waiting room with all these little kids. I see they're all signed in for the same role as me...

CHRISTY

They were auditioning for the same role as you?

TRENT

Wait... Wait... Listen... So, I check the time and place. I'm where I'm supposed to be. I call my agent... She says they asked for me specifically...

MIKE

What was the part?

TRENT

Oh... "I love you... I can't believe you're doing this... Drugs are bad..." Whatever. After-School bullshit. The role is Brother.

MIKE

"Big Brother", "Little Brother"?

TRENT

Wait... Wait... Just "Brother". So I go in. "Hello... Hi... We loved your guest spot on Baywatch... blah blah blah..." Whatever. So, I start to read, and, Mikey, I was money. I prepared for a week. It's a starring role. I'm crying... The casting director, she starts crying...

MIKE

No!

TRENT

Yes!

LISA

Oh my God.

CHRISTY

Did you get it?

TRENT

Wait... She's crying. I finish. I hold up my finger like "Wait a second". They sit in silence for, like, at least five minutes. I look up and they all start clapping, and now they're all crying. Even the camera guy.

MIKE

No! Not the camera guy!

TRENT

I'm telling you!

LISA

So what happened?

TRENT

So, I swear to God this is exactly what he said. The producer says to me... now he's still crying... he says to me that I was great, that that was exactly what they were looking for...

MIKE

...So give me the fuckin part...

TRENT

Right?... that I nailed it... Whatever. Then he says it's just that I'm a little old. I'm like "How

old is the Brother?". He's like, he says this with a straight face, I swear to God, he says "Eleven."

MIKE

So, what'd you say to him? "Double down."?

They all crack up even more.

TRENT

It's like, you looked at my tape. You saw my picture. Why did you call me in? You knew I was twenty-four.

CHRISTY

What an asshole.

MIKE

I believe it.

The room dies down. The girls settle into the arms of their men. There's a lot of body language and pheromones, but not a lot of words.

CHRISTY

How rude of me. I haven't given you the tour.

She gets up and leads Trent into the sleeping compartment to the rear. The door slaps shut.

Mike and Lisa, in all her made-up glory, look into each others eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - SAME

Trent is already at work. He's smooth. A cascade of stuffed animals tumble off the bed with every thrust. Clothes start to peel off.

Trent takes a breather. He takes a step to the door.

TRENT

Let me just check on my boy.

CHRISTY

Don't worry. He's in good hands.

Trent cracks the door and peers through. The light is dim, but he can make out that they're starting to neck.

He closes the door, satisfied.

CHRISTY

(coyly)

What a good friend. I can use a friend like you.

(she beckons him back to bed)

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - FRONT ROOM - SAME

What seemed like necking is actually Lisa and Mike huddled tight having an intimate conversation.

LISA

(reassuring)

I'm sure she'll call. Six years is a long time. You don't just break it off cleanly after six years.

MIKE

I know, but she did. She's with someone else now...

LISA

Already? You poor thing. It won't last.

MIKE

Why not?

LISA

It's a rebound.

MIKE

We were a rebound, and we lasted six years.

LISA

Yeah, but how long was the relationship she was rebounding from?

MIKE

Six years.

Beat.

MIKE

Can I check my messages? I have a calling card.

LISA

Sure, I guess. The phone's in the back.

Mike gets up and approaches the door.

MIKE

Sorry, it's just that...

LISA

I understand.

Mike lightly knocks on the door.

MIKE

Trent...
(knock knock)
Tee.

The door cracks.

MIKE

Sorry, man, I need...

Trent pokes a CONDOM through the door.

MIKE

No, man. I need to use the phone.

TRENT
What?

MIKE
I gotta use the phone.

TRENT
Baby, you'll check them tomorrow.

MIKE
Please, Tee. I have to use the phone.
Sorry, man.

TRENT
Hold on.

The door closes.

MIKE
(to Lisa)
I hope I'm not interrupting anything.
They weren't in there that long.

Lisa reassuringly shakes her head.

Beat.

Christy walks out wearing only Trent's sharkskin jacket as a robe.

Trent follows with a towel wrapped around his waist.

Trent glares at Mike as they pass. Daggers.

MIKE
(apologizing to Christy
as she exits)
I've got a calling card, there's no
charge to your phone.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - SAME

Mike dials.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - FRONT ROOM - SAME

Half naked Trent and Christy sit with fully clothed Lisa.

CHRISTY

(to Lisa)

The poor thing. Six years?

LISA

..And she's with someone else.

CHRISTY

The poor thing. I'll make some coffee.

Trent is not happy.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - SAME

Mike is on the phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

She didn't call.

Disappointment pulls at Mike's brow.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - FRONT ROOM - SAME

The girls clean up the bottles and ashtrays. The coffee is brewing. The shades are up. It's officially morning.

Trent's chin is in his hand. He radiates the blue tinge of glandular congestion. He'll have no part of any of this.

CHRISTY

He's so sweet. He really said that?

LISA

I believe it too. He really just
wants her to be happy.

CHRISTY

He is so sweet.

Mike enters.

The girls immediately stop their chatter and look at him in
anticipation.

Mike shakes his head "no".

The girls walk to embrace him in consolation.

BOTH GIRLS

Awwwww.

Trent just shakes his head. He'll have no part of any of
this.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Establishing shot of Trent's car heading back to L.A. on the
northbound I-15. The speeding car is dwarfed by the expansive
badlands.

EXT. TRENT'S CAR - DESERT ROAD - SAME

MIKE

She asked me what I was thinking
about? What should I have done? Lie?

TRENT

You didn't have to get into it, baby.

MIKE

Sorry about interrupting...

TRENT

Don't worry about me, baby. I just
wanted you to have a good time.

MIKE

Christy was nice...

TRENT

I didn't even like her, to be honest.

MIKE

She was hot.

TRENT

She really didn't do it for me, baby.
How'd you like Dorothy?

MIKE

I don't know. The whole Judy Garland
thing kind of turned me on. Does
that makes me some kind of fag?

TRENT

No, baby. You're money.

MIKE

She didn't like me, anyway.

TRENT

She thought you were money.

MIKE

I don't think so.

TRENT

I heard them talking. They both
thought you were money.

MIKE

Yeah, a good friend.

TRENT

Baby, you take yourself out of the
game. You start talking about puppy
dogs and ice cream, of course it's
gonna be on the friend tip.

MIKE

I just don't think she liked me in that way.

TRENT

Baby, you're so money you don't even know it.

MIKE

Tee, girls don't go for me the way they go for you.

TRENT

Michelle went for you, right.

MIKE

That was different.

TRENT

How?

MIKE

I was younger... It was college. You didn't go to college, you don't know what it's like. You screw chicks you have no business being with. They're young, they don't know any better.

TRENT

That's just plain silly. Your self-esteem is just low because she's with someone else. But thinking about it and talking about it all the time is bad. It's no good, man. You gotta get out there. The ladies want to love you, baby.

MIKE

I just need some time...

TRENT

Why? So you can beat yourself up? Sitting around in that stuffy apartment. It's just plain bad for you, man. It's depressing. You've come so far. Remember the first week?

After she told you? You couldn't even eat.

MIKE

Don't remind me.

TRENT

You just sat around drinking orange juice. Now look at you. Look how far you've come in just a few months. You got that part in that movie...

MIKE

...a day...

TRENT

...Whatever. It's work. You're doing what you love. What's she doing?

MIKE

Selling scrap metal.

TRENT

(smiles)

See? And what does this guy she's with do?

MIKE

He drives a carriage.

TRENT

What?!?

MIKE

(smiling)

I hear he drives a carriage around Central Park or something.

TRENT

Please. And you're sweating him? You're "all that" and you're sweating some lawn jockey?

MIKE

I hear she's getting real fat.

TRENT

Baby, she's the one who should be thinking about you. Sounds to me like you cut loose some dead weight. Trust me, Mikey, you're better off.

Trent cranks some Frank. "You Make Me Feel So Young".

Mike is finally, genuinely, smiling.

He turns down the music enough to talk.

MIKE

I'm gonna try. I'm really gonna try.

Trent just smiles and cranks Frank back up

EXT. DESERT ROAD - SAME

Trent's car drives off into the distance. A sign reads: "Los Angeles - 270 miles".

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PITCH AND PUTT GOLF COURSE - LOS FELIZ - DAY

Establishing shot of MIKE and ROB teeing off with nine irons.

Rob wears a Yale sweatshirt. Mike wears one from Queens College. A Mets cap shades his eyes. Neither have shaved and, odds are, neither showered. They each carry a loose nine blade and putter as they wander to their lie.

ROB

I don't think I'm gonna take it.

MIKE

It's a gig.

ROB

I mean, I need the money.

MIKE

You're an actor. Find the Zen in the

role.

ROB

It's definitely a step back for me.

MIKE

Look, there's not much of a call for Shakespeare in this town.

ROB

There's just something about being "Goofy". Any other Disney character would be fine. There's just this stigma associated with the character.

MIKE

What do you want? You're tall.

ROB

Do you realize how hard it's going to be to tell my parents? I still haven't told them I didn't get the pilot.

MIKE

You tested over a month ago. I'm sure they figured it out by now.

ROB

It's like "Hi, Mom. I'm not going to be starring in that sitcom and, oh by the way, I'm Goofy. Send more money."

They split up and both over-clip the green miserably.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUTTING GREEN - PITCH AND PUTT GOLF COURSE - SAME

Mike and Rob putt.

MIKE

Haven't you noticed I didn't mention Michelle once today?

ROB

I didn't want to say anything.

MIKE

Why?

ROB

I don't know. It's like not talking to a pitcher in the midst of a no hitter.

MIKE

What? Like, you didn't want to jinx it?

ROB

Kinda.

MIKE

I don't talk about her that much.

ROB

Oh no?

MIKE

I didn't mention her once today.

ROB

Well, until now. Tend the pin.

Mike pulls out the flag for Rob's putt. He misses.

MIKE

The only reason I mentioned her at all is to say that I'm not going to talk about her anymore. I thought you'd appreciate that.

ROB

I do. Good for you, man.

MIKE

I've decided to get out there.
(re: the ball)

Go ahead. Play it out.

Rob putts the "gimme". He misses by an inch.

MIKE

I'm not making any more excuses for myself.

Rob taps it in. He tends the pin or Mike, who misses.

ROB

Good to hear, Mikey.

Mike putts again, and misses.

MIKE

You want to hit the town tonight?

ROB

I shouldn't, Mike, it's a weeknight.

MIKE

What do you have? A Pluto call back?

ROB

Sure. Kick me when I'm down.

Mike plunks it in.

MIKE

Count 'em up.

The two of them count and recount as they re-visualize each shot in their head. Throughout the process they count under their breath and point to different parts of the fairway and green.

The two of them revolve, point, and mumble for an absurdly long amount of time until finally...

ROB

How many strokes?

MIKE

I don't know. Eight or Nine.

ROB
I'll give you an eight.
(writes score)

MIKE
What'd you get?

ROB
An eight.

MIKE
Looks like we're in a dead heat after
one hole. This is turning into quite
a rivalry.

Rob points to the far-off crowd of a dozen IRATE GOLFERS
Waiting to tee off.

ROB
You better replace the pin, Chi-Chi.
The natives look restless.

CUT TO:

INT. SUE'S APARTMENT - HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - EVENING

First of all, SUE is a guy, and a tough guy at that. He is wearing an L.A. Kings home jersey. His sweater bears the sacred number "99". Sue is lounging in front of the TV in army surplus khaki cutoffs and untied Doc Martin boots.

Sue brushes back a shock of straight, greasy, dirty blonde hair as not to obscure his view of the screen. His face glows with the reflection of the SEGA HOCKEY game on the set. Sue and TRENT are locked in a heavily contested battle of motor reflexes. Nothing moves but their eyes, thumbs, and mouths...

SUE
Bitch... You little bitch!

TRENT
Chelios to Roenick...!

MIKE looks on. He is more captivated with the simulated

sporting event than the Clippers game on the TV across the room.

Electric guitars blaze over the stereo.

The room, like the guys, could use a spring cleaning. Pizza boxes, beer bottles, and full, full ashtrays. You can taste the smoke.

SUE

You little bitch!

MIKE

Hey Sue. Gretsky's on his ass again.

TRENT

Because he's a bitch.

SUE

That's so bullshit. This is so bullshit.

MIKE

You should play another team. The Kings are bitches in this game.

SUE

Hey, man. I took the Kings to the Cup.

TRENT

...against the computer.

SUE

They're a finesse team...

TRENT

They're a bitch team... SCORE!
Roenick!

SUE

Fuck!!! That is so bullshit!

MIKE

Give it up, Sue.

The PHONE RINGS. Sue picks it up and balances it on his shoulder as he plays.

SUE

Hello?

(re: game)

Shit!

(back to phone)

Yeah. The elevator doesn't work.

(he lets the phone
drop. Then to Mike)

It's Pink Dot. Buzz him in – hit
nine.

Mike picks up the phone off the matted shag carpet. He pushes "9", listens, then hangs up.

TRENT

I wish the game still had fights so
I could bitch-slap Wayne.

MIKE

This version doesn't have fighting?

TRENT

No. Doesn't that suck?

MIKE

What? That was the best part of the
old game.

SUE

I don't know. I guess kids were
hitting each other or something.

TRENT

You could make their heads bleed,
though.

SUE

Yeah... If you hit them hard their
heads bleed all over the ice and
their legs convulse.

MIKE

No.

TRENT

Yeah.

SUE

It's kinda money, actually.

MIKE

Make someone bleed.

SUE

No, man, we're in the play-offs.

TRENT

I'll make Gretsky bleed, the little bitch.

The DELIVERY MAN knocks on the door.

SUE

Pause it.
(Trent pauses the game)

MIKE

Give me the money. I'll get it.

While Sue gives Mike the money, Trent UNPAUSES the game and checks Gretsky into the boards, leaving him writhing in a pool of red pixels.

SUE

You bitch!

Sue dives onto Trent. They wrestle a little too rambunctiously for indoors. Trent pulls the hockey sweater over Sue's head and starts wailing on his back.

Mike crosses. The CAMERA follows him down a shallow hallway to the door. He unlocks it.

A delivery man of eastern-hemispheric decent is out of breath from four flights of stairs. He hands Mike a twelve-pack of

Bud cans and three packs of Marlboro reds.

He can HEAR, but NOT SEE, the chaos ensuing in the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. SUE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Trent and Sue are flushed. They pause long enough to torment Mike.

TRENT

(feigning homosexuality)

Is he cute? Ask him if he wants to stay for a cocktail!

SUE

(following suit)

...Is he brown?

BACK TO:

INT. SUE'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mike forces an apologetic smile. He is embarrassed. The delivery man doesn't seem to understand any of this.

Mike, out of guilt, hands him a four dollar tip. This he seems to understand. He smiles and leaves.

Mike crosses back to the main room.

MIKE

You guys are such assholes.

TRENT

(continuing the gag)

Aww... He got away?

SUE

(untangling himself from Trent)

Gimme my reds. I've been jonesing for an hour.

Mike throws him a pack of smokes, which he unravels with surgical precision.

Cans of beer are tossed around and cracked.

MIKE

What time's this party tonight?

TRENT

It starts at eight...

SUE

...which means no one will get there 'til ten.

MIKE

So, what? Eleven?

TRENT & SUE

Midnight.

MIKE

I'm gonna bring an old friend who just moved out here.

TRENT

Who? Rob?

MIKE

Yeah. You met him once.

TRENT

(approvingly)

Yeah. He's a "rounder".

SUE

What's he do?

MIKE

He's trying to be an actor.

TRENT

What a surprise...

SUE
...How novel.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK ALLEY - OFF OF HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - SEEDY - NIGHT

MIKE and ROB walk down the dirty deserted alleyway. Mike is wearing baggy slacks, Doc Martin shoes, and an oversized Eisenhower-cut jacket with a vertical stripe inset. The collar is large and pointy, but definitely not seventies. His ensemble has more of an early sixties vibe.

Rob hasn't been at it quite as long. He's wearing worn-in Levis over worn-in boots and, the nineties standby, an untucked flannel.

Mike walks with purpose. He intermittently tries to pull open locked steel doors along the alley. Rob looks confused.

ROB

So, if the party starts at eight,
why are we first going to a bar at
ten?

MIKE

To get a drink before we meet the
guys for a bite at eleven.

ROB

Oh.
(beat)
Where is this place?

MIKE

(pulling handle)
It's one of these. For some reason,
cool bars in L.A. have to be very
hard to find and have no signs out
front.

ROB

That doesn't sound too good for
business.

MIKE

(pull)

It's kinda like a speakeasy kind of thing. It's kinda cool. It's like you're in on some kind of secret. You tell a chick you've been some place, it's like bragging that you know how to find it. The only way you could know where a place is is if someone who knows brought you there. You have to have someone come before. There is a direct line connecting you back to the original, unequivocally cool, club patrons. It's kinda like Judaism...

ROB

Sounds more like Aids...

MIKE

...That's probably a more appropriate analogy.

At this point they come upon an unmarked BLACK METAL DOOR, which Mike successfully pulls open to reveal...

INT. "THE ROOM" - HOLLYWOOD BAR - SAME

A smoke-filled, windowless, black-walled room. There are several round padded booths lining the walls. The place is packed, and the funk standard "Brick House" throbs over the P.A..

A HANDHELD SHOT as the two guys serpentine to the mirrored bar at the far end of the room. Enshrined in its center is a framed photograph of SINATRA smiling in approval as he presides over the evening's activities.

Mike proudly points out the photo to Rob.

MIKE

Kinda money, huh?

ROB

(smiling)

Classy.

Mike catches the attention of a cute female BARTENDER.

MIKE

I'll get a Dewars rocks...
(looks to Rob)

ROB

Bud.

MIKE

...A Dewars on the rocks and a Bud,
please.

She goes.

ROB

I can't get over how cute the girls
in this city are.

MIKE

I know. It's like the opposite of
inbreeding. The hottest one percent
from around the world migrate to
this gene pool.

ROB

Darwinism at its best.

MIKE

I've been around here six months and
I still can't get over it.

ROB

It's like, every day I see a beautiful
woman. I'm not used to that. I'm
used to seeing a beautiful woman, I
don't know, once a week. I can't
handle it.

MIKE

Wait till summer. I swear, you can't
leave the house. It hurts. It
physically hurts.

ROB

I can't wait till I actually get to touch one of them.

MIKE

Ah, there's the rub...

ROB

There's the rub.

The bartender serves them their drinks.

CHARLES (O.S.)

Whassup Mikey?

Mike turns to see CHARLES. A young black man with a tight Dolomite fro. He wears a black leather blazer over a black turtleneck. Just look up "cool" in the dictionary.

A handshake turns into a hug.

MIKE

Charles! What's up, man?

CHARLES

Oh. You know.

MIKE

Did you, um, did you get that pilot?

CHARLES

No, man. I know you didn't get it 'cause you wouldn't've asked me. It wasn't that funny anyway...

MIKE

...piece of shit. Listen, Charles, this is my friend Rob from Back East.

Shake.

CHARLES

Hi.

ROB
My pleasure.

MIKE
Charles and me went to network on
this pilot together.

ROB
I just tested for one...

MIKE
...yeah, a month ago.

CHARLES
Oh, I'm sorry. How'd your folks take
it?

ROB
I haven't heard an official "no"
yet.

CHARLES
You haven't told then, huh?

ROB
No.

CHARLES
I still haven't told my folks I didn't
get "Deepspace 9". You'd think
they'd'a figured it out by now, but
Mom keeps asking...

MIKE
...and boy does it hurt when they
ask.

CHARLES
I don't even tell them about anything
I'm close on anymore...

MIKE
...not until you book it...

CHARLES

...and even then...

MIKE

...you might get cut out.

ROB

I'm considering taking a job as a "Goofy".

CHARLES

Hey, man. At least it's Disney.

MIKE

You want to come with us to a party at the Chateau Marmont? They got a bungalow and lots of beautiful babies.

CHARLES

(yelling over the
roar of the wall to
wall crowd)

Why not? This place is dead anyway.

CUT TO:

INT. "SWINGERS DINER" - BEVERLY BLVD. - LATER THAT NIGHT

MIKE, TRENT, SUE, CHARLES, and ROB sit around the round scotch-plaid corner booth of the retro-hip coffee shop. All of our boys, with the exception of Rob, are classily dressed. They wear a lot of black, brown, and gray with a splash of gold and maroon.

The CAMERA REVOLVES around the table in a repeating "Reservoir Dogs" style over the shoulder 360 DEGREE PAN.

TRENT

...No, baby. I got a better one. You gotta admit the steadycam shot in "Goodfellas" was the money...

ROB

...through the basement of that restaurant...

MIKE

...the Copa, in New York...

TRENT

...through the kitchen...

CHARLES

...I heard it took four days to light
for that shot...

ROB

...Four days..?

SUE

...I don't know about four days...

CHARLES

...That's what I heard...

MIKE

...Maybe. I mean you gotta hide all
the lights...

TRENT

...It looked money.

SUE

...Not as money as the shot from
Reservoir Dogs...

ROB

...Which one?

SUE

...In the beginning. When they're
walking in slow motion...

MIKE

...How can you compare them? Tarantino
totally bites everything from
Scorsese...

SUE

...He's derivative...

TRENT

...You gotta admit, it looked money...

CHARLES

.... I heard they made that whole movie for ten grand...

ROB

...What's the big deal? Everyone steals from everyone.

MIKE

(checking his watch)

Well, let's hit that party.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - HEADLIGHTS AND NEON - NIGHT

The five swingers walk down the boulevard in a SLO-MO SHOT which is extremely "derivative" of the "Reservoir Dogs" credit sequence.

The scene is choreographed to Bennett's big band arrangement of "O SOLE MIO".

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT BUNGALOW - OUTSIDE THE PARTY - MIDNIGHT

Muffled music seeps through the door. The swingers turn the knob and enter...

INT. THE PARTY - CHATEAU MARMONT BUNGALOW - SAME

The huge sunken living room is packed with people congealed into circles of conversation and sipping cocktails.

EVERYTHING STOPS when they enter. The music, the conversations, all movement, everything.

Everyone in the room STARES at them standing in the doorway.

Beat.

The music starts back up and everyone returns to their conversations.

The swingers weave their way through the crowd to...

INT. THE BAR AREA - THE BUNGALOW KITCHEN - SAME

The swingers fix themselves drinks from an assortment of bottles cluttering the table. The shamelessly paw at the top shelf brands.

MIKE

Who threw this party, anyway?

SUE

Damned if I know...

TRENT

...Beats me...

CHARLES

...I came with you.

With that, the three of them peel off to work the room.

ROB

What's that guy's name? Sue?

MIKE

Sue. His dad was big Johnny Cash fan.

ROB

Oh, like that song...

MIKE

..."A Boy Named Sue". I think that's why he's such a bad cat.

ROB

Him?

MIKE

He's a mean dude. I've seen him smash

a guy's face into the curb. He knocked out his teeth... blood... He was just like Boom, Boom, Boom... fuckin nasty shit, man. He's a nice guy though.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BUNGALOW - SAME

Trent and Sue are scouting some LADIES across the room. One wears a FUNKY OVERSIZED HAT. Intermittent eye contact has been established.

TRENT

Oh, it's on, baby...

SUE

...It's on.

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BUNGALOW - SAME

Mike and Rob have come back into the room. They scout the terrain.

MIKE

There are so many beautiful women here.

ROB

It's unbelievable.

MIKE

I got to at least try once.

ROB

You're a better man than I am, Charlie Brown.

MIKE

No, I just promised myself I'd give it a try. I gotta get out there sooner or later.

ROB
Go for it, man.

Mike spots a pair of beautiful BLONDES in black. They're wearing stretch bell-bottoms and tops that expose their mid-drifts. The seventies never looked so good.

MIKE
(indicating the ladies)
I'm going in. Will you be my wing-man?

ROB
I'll be your winger.

They make the approach. With a great deal of effort, Mike catches their attention...

MIKE
Good evening, ladies...

...only to be interrupted by the party STOPPING to check another entrance.

Beat.

The party RESUMES and the blondes redirect their attention to Mike. He is a little put-off but, God love him, he gets back in there.

MIKE
How are you ladies doing this evening?

BLONDE
What do you drive?

MIKE
I'm sorry?

BLONDE
What kind of car do you drive?

MIKE
Oh... a Cavalier.

The blondes immediately enter back into their conversation as if they were never approached.

Mike and Rob exchange defeated glances.

One more try.

MIKE
...It's red?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

Trent and Sue are trying to look like they're not paying attention to the group of ladies they saw across the room.

TRENT
Is she looking at me, baby?

SUE
No.

TRENT
Now?

SUE
No.

TRENT
Is she looking now?

SUE
No! She's not looking at you. She hasn't looked at you once. Will you stop asking if... Wait, she just looked.

TRENT
See, baby?

Mike and Rob walk up to Trent and Sue.

MIKE

How you guys doing?

TRENT

It's on.

MIKE

Which one?

TRENT

(indicated the group
of girls with a subtle
head move)

Minnie Pearl.

Mike and Rob STARE DIRECTLY at the girls like a deer in the headlights... a big no-no.

MIKE

The one in the hat? She's cute.

Trent and Sue react with frustrated disappointment.

TRENT

What are you doing?

MIKE

What?

TRENT

You looked right at her, baby.

MIKE

She didn't notice.

SUE

Yes she did.

TRENT

Damn. Now I gotta go in early.

MIKE

I'm sorry.

TRENT

Don't sweat it, baby. This one's a

lay-up.

Trent crosses away.

SUE
How's it going for you two?

MIKE
Not well.

SUE
Rejected?

ROB
Shaqed.

Mike's P.O.V. of Trent passing near and the GIRL IN THE HAT. He says something, smiles, and points to her hat. She laughs.

SUE
Well, just watch the T-bone and learn.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - TRENT'S CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS

Trent is having a sensitive one-on-one with the girl in the hat.

GIRL IN HAT
...I've always wanted to be an actress, at least as long as I could remember. I went to...

Under Trent's affirmative response we hear the first haunting TUBA PULSE of the JAWS THEME:

TRENT
(nodding in agreement)
Uhhhh... Huuuhhh.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP of MIKE'S FACE as he looks on in HORRIFIED AWE from afar.

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - TRENT'S CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS

GIRL WITH CIGAR

...Then one day after class my drama teacher, the one who directed the play, said he thought I should...

The second TUBA PULSE accompanies Trent's sound of agreement:

TRENT

Uhhh... Huuhh.

BACK TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP of MIKE'S HORRIFIED EYES.

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - TRENT'S CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS

GIRL WITH CIGAR

...I met with an agent last week and I'm waiting to hear...

The third, and progressively faster, TUBA PULSE sounds under Trent's response as the JAWS THEME begins to speed up and fill out:

TRENT

Uh-Huh, Uh-Huh, Uh-Huh, Uh-Huh...

CUT TO:

Mike, Rob, and Sue look on.

SUE

Here comes the kill...

MATCH CUT TO:

The group's P.O.V. of the conversation.

The JAWS THEME reaches its violent crescendo as the girl looks into her purse.

Trent winks to the boys. Smooth.

She comes up with a pen and writes out her phone number.

Trent crosses back as the music dies away.

Using his body as a shield so the girl can't see, but so his boys can, he rips up and drops the number as he approaches them.

TRENT
Was I money?

MIKE
I don't know. It was kind of a dick move if you ask me.

TRENT
Why, baby? What'd I do wrong?

MIKE
You asked her for her number, and then you tore it up.

TRENT
She didn't see.

MIKE
That doesn't matter.

SUE
That was pretty cold, dude.

TRENT
What was cold about it?

The door opens. The party PAUSES to look, then RESUMES.

TRENT
She offered me her number. What should I have said? "No"? That would've hurt her feelings. This way she feels

like the winner.

Trent smiles and waves to her across the room. She coyly waves back and makes a "phone sign" with her hand. Trent nods and smiles.

TRENT

Tee can't roll with that, she's "business class".

ROB

"Business class"?

SUE

(explaining to Rob)

Big butt... you know, can't fly coach.

MIKE

I can't believe you.

Charles approaches the crew.

CHARLES

They're out of Glenlivet.

MIKE

What else is going on?

TRENT

We could hit the Dresden.

Overhead LONG SHOT of the swingers entrenched in the CROWDED PARTY.

SUE

Yeah. This place is dead, anyway.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - OUTSIDE THE CHATEAU MARMONT - NIGHT

The swingers have left the party and are heading to their cars. They are all parked in a row, one behind the other. They each climb behind the wheel of their own car. They pull

out in UNISON.

They travel like a train with their bumpers ALMOST TOUCHING.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREETS - NIGHT

SHOTS of the CAR-TRAIN driving and making turns.

"O SOLE MIO" reprise.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE DRESDEN - VERMONT AVE. - HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

The car-train BREAKS UP to nose-in park behind the bar.
They all "club" their steering wheels.

CUT TO:

INT. "THE DRESDEN ROOM" - SAME

The SWINGERS lounge in a booth against the cork-paneled wall, sipping cocktails. They watch MARTY and ELAYNE, the resident lounge act, perform a jazz fusion cover of "Staying Alive" on synth and upright bass. The seventies are alive and well here, but they're starting to yellow around the edges...

The room is busy, but not packed.

The swingers have all had a few.

CHARLES

I know what you're saying, man. I
don't know what to tell you...

ROB

...I mean, does it have to be "Goofy"?
I was playing Hamlet off-Broadway
two months ago, for crying out loud...

Trent and Sue are involved in a different conversation.
They are observing two HOT GIRLS at another cocktail table.

The girls are wearing short plaid skirts with black stockings pulled up to midhigh. It's the "catholic-school-girl-gone-bad" look.

The girls are a little too touchy-feely with each other, suggesting a certain sexual open-mindedness.

TRENT
It's on.

SUE
You think?

TRENT
Baby, I know it is. It's a black diamond trail...

SUE
...double diamond...

TRENT
...but it's worth the risk. True or false: It's worth the risk.

SUE
True.

As they get up to leave...

MIKE
God bless you guys.

They cross to the ladies.

Mike's P.O.V.

The girls seem at first cold, the receptive. Trent and Sue join their table and share some laughs.

Mike half-heartedly looks on. He is obviously not happy with where he stands on the bell-curve of masculinity.

Mike, looking for any kind of escape, crosses to the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - DRESDEN ROOM - SAME

Mike unsuccessfully tries to catch the attention of the middle aged BARTENDER.

MIKE
(to himself)
I can't even get this guy to notice
me...

A cute BLONDE sitting at the bar chuckles at his comment.

Mike is at first self-conscious, then pushes ahead.

MIKE
You like laughing at the misery of
others?

BLONDE
I'm sorry, I couldn't help it. Let
me make it up to you.

She raises her finger and the bartender immediately approaches.

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

MIKE
I'll have a Dewars on the rocks.

He goes to fix it.

MIKE
Thanks.

BLONDE
I've seen you somewhere... Where
have I seen you?

MIKE
You ever go to the Kelbo's? On Pico?

BLONDE

...maybe...

MIKE

...Monday nights? I host an open
mike...

BLONDE

You're a comedian?

MIKE

Yeah.

BLONDE

What's that like?

MIKE

(trying to bluff, not
an ounce of sarcasm)

Well, you know, it's tough. A lot of
traveling. A lot of hotels... but,
you know, it's a dream... and the
money's really good. I think I might
buy another really expensive imported
car after my next gig in Vegas...

BLONDE

(politely interrupting)

I know! Starbucks! I served you an
espresso at Starbucks.

MIKE

Are you sure? Maybe...

BLONDE

Yes! Remember? You asked me for an
application? I introduced you to the
manager?

MIKE

(trying to pull out
of the dive)

Oh, yeah... Boy, that must've been a
while ago.

BLONDE

I'd say about two weeks.

MIKE

Probably a little longer than that,
but, whatever.

BLONDE

(smiling at him)

You better pay the man.

Mike notices the bartender, who has been waiting patiently
with the drink.

MIKE

(fumbling with the
money)

Oh... Sorry.

She chuckles. He pays and throws down a two-dollar tip
apologetically.

MIKE

(tactical retreat)

Well, thank you...?

BLONDE

Nikki.

MIKE

Thank you, Nikki.

He walks away kicking himself. He is interrupted by Trent
and Sue, who both hold up cocktail napkins with scribbles.

TRENT

We got the digits, baby.

MIKE

What a surprise.

TRENT

What's wrong? I saw you talking to
that beautiful blonde baby.

SUE

She was cute.

MIKE

She didn't like me... I made a fool
of myself...

TRENT

Baby, don't talk that way, baby...

SUE

You are so money, and you don't even
know it...

TRENT

That's what I keep trying to tell
him.

(to Mike)

You're so money, you don't even
know...

MIKE

Please, don't mess with me right
now...

TRENT

We're not messing with you...

SUE

...we're not...

TRENT

You're like this big bear with claws
and fangs...

SUE

...and big fuckin' teeth...

TRENT

...and teeth... And she's like this
little bunny cowering in the corner...

SUE

...shivering...

TRENT

...And you're just looking at your claws like "How do I kill this bunny?" ...

SUE

...You're just poking at it...

TRENT

...Yeah. You're just gently batting it around... and the rabbit's all scared...

SUE

...and you got big claws and fangs...

TRENT

...and fangs... and you're like "I don't know what to do. How do I kill this bunny?" ...

SUE

...you're like a big bear.

Beat. Mike smiles.

MIKE

You're not just, like, fucking with me?

TRENT

No, baby!

SUE

...honestly...

TRENT

...you're money...

SUE

...you're so fuckin mmmoney.

TRENT

Now go over there and get those digits.

SUE
You're money.

TRENT
(pulling him aside,
dead serious)
Now when you talk to her, I don't
want you to be the guy in the PG-13
movie that everyone's pulling for. I
want you to be the guy in the rated
R movie who you're not sure if you
like.

Mike nods and, energized by the bombardment, crosses back to the bar and right into the fray.

Trent and Sue rejoin the other swingers.

Swinger's P.O.V. of Mike decisively engaging her in conversation.

She laughs.

Out comes the pen and the cocktail napkin. Bingo.

Mike crosses back to the swingers' table and, using his body to shield Nikki's view, pretends to rip the napkin. This breaks the guys up.

Mike sits down and, after admiring the blotchy numerals, delicately folds the napkin and pockets it.

TRENT
See, baby. It's not that hard.

CHARLES
818?

Everyone reacts favorably to this area code.

MIKE
How long do I wait to call?

TRENT
A day.

MIKE
Tomorrow?

TRENT
No...

SUE
...Tomorrow, then a day.

TRENT
...Yeah.

MIKE
So, two days?

TRENT
Yeah. I guess you could call it that.

SUE
Definitely. Two days. That's the industry standard...

TRENT
(to Sue. shop talk)
...I used to wait two days. Now everyone waits two days. Three days is kinda money now, don't you think?

SUE
...Yeah. But two's enough not to look anxious...

TRENT
Yeah, but three days is kinda the money...

MIKE
(interrupting
sarcastically)
Why don't I just wait three weeks and tell her I was cleaning out my wallet and found her number...

CHARLES

...then ask where you met her...

MIKE

Yeah, I'll tell her I don't remember and then I'll ask what she looks like.

(pause)

Then I'll ask if we fucked. How's that, Tee? Is that "the money"?

The guys laugh.

TRENT

Laugh all you want, but if you call to soon you can scare off a nice baby who's ready to party.

SUE

Don't listen to him. You call whenever it feels right to you.

MIKE

How long are you guys gonna wait to call your honeys?

TRENT & SUE

Six days.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DRESDEN - PARKING LOT - OUT BACK - NIGHT

The swingers are leaving through the back door. The doorway is congested with another group of guys who are entering.

A BALD GUY with a goatee brushes by Sue.

SUE

Watch where you're going, asshole.

BALD GUY

What'd you say, bitch?

SUE

I said watch where you're going,

bitch!

That's it. Now they're squaring off in the empty parking lot.

All the bald guy's boys fall in behind him. All the swingers fall in behind Sue. The swingers are not happy with Sue at all.

The two cliques contrast each other in every way.

The bald guys all have facial hair and multiple pierced extremities with the odd neck-tattoo thrown in for good measure.

Baggy denim and boots. Pot leaves and Pumas. Long, heavy key chains. Vintage 1994 whiteboy faux-gansta. They do, however, look big and mean next to our boys.

The early sixties style sweater jackets and blazers over button down shirts and tapered slacks don't quite have the same fear factor, but the boys do look classy.

The word "bitch" is growled out by the two of them a half dozen more times until...

Sue pulls a PISTOL out of his belt.

Everyone is SCARED. Especially the swingers.

SUE

Now what, bitch? Now who's the bitch, bitch?

The bald guys HOLD UP THEIR HANDS and slowly back up to their ride.

BALD GUY

Hey, man. I'm the bitch. I'm your bitch, okay? We're just gonna leave. Okay? I'm the bitch. I'm such a bitch, I can't even begin to tell you...

They jump in the car and SPEED AWAY.

Sue belts the gun and stands tall like Clint.

TRENT

What the fuck..?

MIKE

What an asshole. Didn't you see "Boys in the Hood"? Now one of us is gonna get shot.

SUE

He's a bitch. He ain't gonna do nothing.

MIKE

You asshole.

TRENT

You dick.

SUE

What'd you want me to do? Back down? He called me a bitch. We kept our rep.

CHARLES

Fuck rep, I've got a callback tomorrow.

Charles leaves.

ROB

Yeah, I gotta be up early tomorrow.

Rob leaves, shaken up.

MIKE

You asshole. Why are you carrying a gun? What? In case someone steps to you, Snoop Dogg?

SUE

Hey, man, you're not from here. You don't know how it is. I grew up in LA...

TRENT

...Anaheim...

SUE

...Whatever. Things are different here. It's not like New York, Mikey.

MIKE

Yeah. Here it's easier to avoid trouble. It's not like you like in Compton where bullets are whizzing by your head every day. Nobody's mugging you on no subway. In New York the trouble finds you. Out here you gotta go look for it...

SUE

...People get carjacked...

TRENT

...Oh, who would jack your fuckin K-car? He's right, Sue. You don't need no gat.

SUE

Listen. Just because I was the only one with the balls to stand up to them...

TRENT

...Oh yeah, like "Cypress Hill" was gonna do anything...

MIKE

You live in such a fantasy world...

SUE

What about you, Mikey? At least I got balls. You're always whining about some bitch who dumped you a year ago...

MIKE

...It was six months, and she didn't

dump...

SUE

...Whatever. You're like a whining little woman. Big deal. You got a fuckin' number. Whoopee! You'll fuck it up...

TRENT

...Sue...

SUE

Have you gotten laid once since you moved here? Did you fuck once?

TRENT

...Shut up, Sue...

SUE

I know for a fact you haven't, because you never shut up about it. You're like a little whiney bitch...

TRENT

Sue!

MIKE

No, Trent. He's right.

Mike walks to his car.

TRENT

Mikey!

It's too late. He's leaving.

Sue starts to open his mouth.

TRENT

Don't even talk to me.

(pause)

You asshole.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mike opens the door and flicks on the lights in his sparsely furnished single.

He drops his keys on the table and makes a bee line to the answering machine.

He pushes the button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

She didn't call.

Mike collapses into his futon and lights a smoke.

Beat.

He pulls out the COCKTAIL NAPKIN. He stares at the number.

He looks at the clock. 2:20 AM.

He looks at the napkin.

He thinks better of it, and puts the napkin away.

Beat.

He takes out the napkin and picks up the phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

Don't do it, Mike.

MIKE

Shut up.

He dials.

It rings twice, then...

NIKKI

(recorded)

Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.

(beep)

MIKE

Hi, Nikki. This is Mike. I met you tonight at the Dresden. I, uh, just called to say I, uh, I'm really glad we met and you should give me a call. So call me tomorrow, or, like, in two days, whatever. My number is 213-555-4679...
(beep)

Mike hangs up.

Beat.

He dials again.

NIKKI

(recorded)

Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.
(beep)

MIKE

Hi, Nikki. This is Mike, again. I just called because it sounded like your machine might've cut me off before I gave you my number, and also to say sorry for calling so late, but you were still there when I left the Dresden, so I knew I'd get your machine. Anyway, my number is...
(beep)

Mike calls back right away.

NIKKI

(recorded)

Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.
(beep)

MIKE

213-555-4679. That's all. I just wanted to leave my number. I don't want you to think I'm weird, or

desperate or something...
(he regrets saying it
immediately)
...I mean, you know, we should just
hang out. That's it. No expectations.
Just, you know, hang out. Bye.
(beep)

He hangs up.

Beat.

He dials.

NIKKI
(recorded)
Hi. This is Nikki. Leaves a message.
(beep)

MIKE
I just got out of a six-year
relationship. Okay? That should help
to explain why I'm acting so weird.
It's not you. It's me. I just wanted
to say that. Sorry.
(pause)
This is Mike.
(beep)

He dials again. There's no turning back.

NIKKI
(recorded)
Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.
(beep)

MIKE
Hi, Nikki. This is Mike again. Could
you just call me when you get in?
I'll be up for awhile, and I'd just
rather talk to you in person instead
of trying to squeeze it all...
(beep)

He dials yet again.

NIKKI

(recorded)

Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.

(beep)

MIKE

Hi, Nikki. Mike. I don't think this is working out. I think you're great, but maybe we should just take some time off from each other. It's not you, really. It's me. It's only been six months...

NIKKI

(Live, in person.

she picks up the

line)

Mike?

MIKE

Nikki! Great! Did you just walk in, or were you listening all along?

NIKKI

(calmly)

Don't call me ever again.

MIKE

Wow, I guess you were home...

(click)

She hung up on him.

He's frozen.

He hangs up.

Beat.

He pulls the comforter off the futon and curls up in the corner of the room.

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE FLASHBACK:

The following sequence is m.o.s. over Billie Holiday's "Maybe You'll Be There."

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - QUEENS COLLEGE - DAY

YOUNGER MIKE catches his first glimpse of MICHELLE. She doesn't see him looking at her. She is paying attention to the lesson.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDY HALL - QUEENS COLLEGE - DAY

Mike approaches Michelle for the FIRST TIME. She looks beautiful when she looks up at him for the first time.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FLUSHING MEADOW PARK - SPRING AFTERNOON

They're having a PICNIC with white wine, Cheese, prosciutto, and French bread. Mike plays a ukulele.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHEA STADIUM - QUEENS - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

CUT TO:

INT. SHEA STADIUM STANDS - SAME

Mike and Michelle sit with a lap full of food. They are laughing about something. Mike leans in for his first deep, passionate KISS. The crowd jumps up to cheer a Daryl Strawberry home run which the lovers don't notice. They stay seated, kissing, and are lost to the CAMERA in the crowd.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MIKE'S BEDROOM - NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT

Their first sexual experience. Mike is obviously nervous as he lies undressed under the covers. He sporadically adjusts

his hair and strikes poses as he waits for Michelle to come out of the bathroom. This is INTERCUT with shots of the closed bathroom door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - IN FRONT OF "RADIO CITY" - NIGHT

Mike and Michelle are Christmas shopping in the snow. It's like a story book.

A newspaper, barely noticeable on stand in b.g., reads "VITO CORLEONE FEARED MURDERED"

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK - NIGHT

Mike and Michelle lethargically lay across the couch. They half-heartedly watch a rented video as they shovel Chinese take-out into their bloating faces.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT - DAY

Mike and Michelle say good bye. They hug and cry. He boards a plane for L.A..

FADE TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

SHOT of answering machine.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Trent's voice)

...Pick up... Pick up, Mikey... Are you home?

He is.

He is sitting in the same corner, smoking, with a two day beard. He is surrounded by full ashtrays and empty Tropicana containers. Billie Holiday's "Maybe you'll Be There" draws

to a close on the C.D. player.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Trent's voice)

...I guess you're not home. Why don't you come out tonight, baby. We haven't seen you for two days. We're gonna play hockey at Sue's house til ten thirty then we're either going to the Lava Lounge for Sinatra night, or the Derby for the Royal Crown. We might also check out Swing Night at the Viper. If we're not there we'll be at the Three of Clubs. So come meet up with us. We'll see you there, gorgeous.

(beep)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He hasn't moved.

The PHONE RINGS.

He looks to the answering machine hopefully as it picks up after one ring.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Rob's voice)

Mikey...? It's Rob. Pick up, buddy.

His shoulders slack with DISAPPOINTMENT. It's not Her.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Rob's voice)

...I'm downstairs. Buzz me in. I know you're home. Your lights are on and your car's here. Come on, buddy. Open up...

Mike picks up the phone, pushes "9", and hangs up.

He lights a cigarette.

A knock at the door.

Mike opens it, and Rob walks in with a brown bag.

He surveys the scene. He's seen this before. He moves some laundry off an armchair and sits down.

He pulls a pepperoni and a loaf of seminola out of the bag.

He hands Mike a pint of orange juice.

MIKE

Thanks, man.

ROB

No problem, buddy. You eat anything today?

Mike shakes his head, "no".

ROB

Yesterday?

Mike shakes his head again.

ROB

You haven't been drinking, have you?

MIKE

No. Just O.J.

Rob cuts into the pepperoni with his Swiss army knife. Mike drinks his juice.

MIKE

Sorry about what happened at the Dresden. I had no idea...

ROB

Don't sweat it. Now I got an L.A. gun story. You should hear the way I tell to the guys back home. He had an Uzi. Mike half-smiles.

Beat.

ROB
You want to talk about it?

MIKE
What's the point?

ROB
It's been two days. You should call
that girl Nikki...

Mike grabs his head in pain.

MIKE
Uuuuugh!

ROB
Oh boy.

MIKE
I'm such an asshole.

ROB
She wasn't your type anyway.

Beat.

MIKE
I think I'm gonna move Back East.

ROB
Well, that's dumb.

MIKE
What's dumb about it?

ROB
Well, you're doing so well...

MIKE
How am I doing well? I host an open
mike and I played a fuckin' bus driver
in a movie. Big fuckin' deal. I'm
with an agency that specializes in

fuckin magicians. How good am I doing?

ROB

At least you didn't get turned down for Goofy...

MIKE

They turned you down?

ROB

They went for someone with more theme park experience. I woulda killed for that job.

Mike lets it sink in.

ROB

See, it's all how you look at it. If your life sucks, then mine is God awful. I mean, I moved out here partially because I saw how well you were doing. You got in the union, you got an agent. I thought if you could make it, maybe I could too...

MIKE

I didn't make it...

ROB

That's your problem, man. You can't see what you've got, only what you've lost. Those guys are right. You are "money".

Mike smiles, then...

MIKE

(starting to cry)

Then why won't she call...?

ROB

Because you left, man. She's got her own world to deal with in New York. She was a sweet girl but fuck her. You gotta move on. You gotta let go

of the past. The future is so beautiful. Every day is so sunny out here. It's like Manifest Destiny man. I mean, we made it. What's past is prologue. That which does not kill us makes us stronger. All that shit. You'll get over it.

MIKE

How did you get over it? I mean how long 'til it stopped hurting?

ROB

Sometimes it still hurts. You know how it is, man. I mean, each day you think about it less and less. And then one day you wake up and you don't think of it at all, and you almost miss that feeling. It's kinda weird. You miss the pain because it was part of your life for so long. And the, boom, something reminds you of her, and you just smile that bittersweet smile.

We see that Mike has been GNAWING AWAY at Rob's pepperoni and semolina as he listens intently.

MIKE

You miss the pain?

ROB

...for the same reason you miss her. You lived with it so long.

MIKE

Wow.

(finishing the loaf)

You wanna grab a bite?

ROB

(smiling)

Sure.

He helps Mike up.

ROB

By the way, the guys back home said she put on some weight.

MIKE

(smiling)

You always know the right thing to say.

CUT TO:

INT. SUE'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE THE DOOR - NIGHT

Trent opens the door. He sees Mike standing there dressed for trouble. His face lights up.

TRENT

Mikey! Guys, Mikey's here!

GUYS (O.S.)

(from the living room)

Mikey!

Mike HEARS the sound of a hotly contested SEGA MATCH.

SUE (O.S.)

Bitch! You little bitch!

The CAMERA follows Mike and Trent into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - SUE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike's JAW DROPS when he sees that Sue has been playing hockey against the BALD GUY from the Dresden.

BALD GUY

Bitch! You bitch!

The room is filled with the BALD GUY'S CREW. They greet Mike as they take hits off their forty ouncers.

SUE

Trent. Take over.

They do a high-speed "controller handoff."

Sue crosses to Mike.

SUE

I'm so sorry, man. You were so right.
I got rid of the gun

MIKE

What are they doing here?

SUE

We ran into them that night at
Roscoe's. Tee cleared it up, I
apologized, bought them some chicken
and waffles. They fuckin love Tee.
That boy can talk.

All the baldies howl and slap hands at something funny Tee
said.

SUE

But most important, man, I'm sorry
about what I said. I was drunk... My
adrenaline was going...

MIKE

Don't sweat it, man. I needed a kick
in the ass. We're better friends for
it.

SUE

Thanks, man.
(they hug)
I've been hating myself for the last
two days.

MIKE

Believe me, I know what that's like.
(then to Trent)
Yo, Double Down! What time are we
leaving?

TRENT

Five minutes, baby. Hey, it's been

two days. You should call Nikki and see if she wants to meet you there.

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE DERBY" - HOLLYWOOD NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The THREE SWINGERS are waved pass the line by the doorman in a Scorsese-style STEADICAM SHOT which continues up the stairs and through a curtained doorway into...

INT. "THE DERBY" - HOLLYWOOD NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

They enter the domed decco lounge and the full house parts for them and greets them in perfect Scorsese choreography.

They pass the billiard table and the circular brass rail bar.

The six piece swing band decked out in zoot suits wail on stage as the crowded dance floor whirls.

The swingers eventually settle into a dark curtained-off onstage booth.

Sue thrusts a scotch into Mike's hand.

INT. "THE DERBY" - MONTAGE - NIGHT

Montage of smoking, drinking, and carousing.

The parquet floor is packed with swinging hepsters dressed in Hollywood's take on forties threads. The dancing is full-blown overcrowded slam swing. The floor is full, and everyone is damn good. This definitely ain't amateur night.

INT. BAR AREA - THE DERBY - NIGHT

Mike steps up to the bar to refill his drink. He sees a BRUNETTE sitting at the bar.

She's cute.

Real cute.

She glows.

There's something fresh about her. She's dressed nice, but different. She definitely is not a regular.

She throws Mike a half-smile, then looks away.

He looks away.

Should he?

He shakes his head to himself. No.

Beat.

He looks over at her again.

Mike's P.O.V. of a WHITE BUNNY sitting on the bar stool.

He smiles, shrugs, and CROSSES TO HER.

When he gets to her she has reverted back to human form.

MIKE

Hi.

BRUNETTE

Hi.

MIKE

I'm Mike.

BRUNETTE

Hi, Mike. I'm Lorraine.

MIKE

Like the quiche?

BRUNETTE

(smiles)

Yes. Like the quiche.

MIKE

I like quiche.

BRUNETTE

I thought real men don't like quiche.

MIKE

My reputation seems to have preceded me.

BRUNETTE

Why? You're not a real man?

MIKE

Not lately.

MATCH CUT TO:

Trent points the conversation out to Sue from across the room.

Trent and Sue's P.O.V. of Mike and Lorraine having an unforced, enjoyable conversation.

TRENT

It's on...

SUE

...it's on.

MATCH CUT TO:

BACK IN THE TRENCHES:

BRUNETTE

...so I thought, what the hell, they make movies in L.A., not in Michigan, so I moved here.

MIKE

Just like that?

BRUNETTE

Well, it wasn't the simple, but yeah.

MIKE

How was it hard?

BRUNETTE

Well, I left someone very special behind.

MIKE

Tell me about it...

BRUNETTE

You too?

MIKE

Yeah.

BRUNETTE

(lights up)

I thought I was going to die.

MIKE

It's been six months and I'm just starting to get over it.

BRUNETTE

Oh, God. That's two more than me. Tell me it gets better.

MIKE

(smiles)

It does.

BRUNETTE

How?

MIKE

Well, it still sucks, but you start to see that there are advantages to being single.

BRUNETTE

(coyly)

Like what?

MIKE

What what? What advantages?

LORRAINE

You said there are advantages to being single. I want to know what the advantages are.

MIKE

(playing along)

Well... You can talk to a beautiful woman at a bar without worrying if anyone's watching you.

CUT TO:

Trent and Sue are watching from across the room.

TRENT

It's on.

SUE

...it's definitely on.

BACK TO:

BRUNETTE

What else?

MIKE

What else...? Let's see... You have complete freedom.

BRUNETTE

To do what?

MIKE

I don't know... To grow, to go out. Whatever you want.

BRUNETTE

Anything?

MIKE

Anything.

BRUNETTE

Like if I meet a handsome young man and I wanted to ask him to dance? I

can do that?

MIKE

Uh, if the guy wants to.

BRUNETTE

You don't think the guy would find me attractive enough to dance with?

MIKE

Yes. I mean, no. I mean, maybe he would find her, I mean you attractive. Maybe he doesn't like to dance. Maybe all he likes to do is just stand around and drink and smoke and look cool with his buddies who don't dance either...

BRUNETTE

Maybe it doesn't matter if he's a good dancer cause it's a slow song, if that's what he's afraid of.

MIKE

(smirk)

No... Maybe that's not the case. Maybe she shouldn't be such a smug little shit because she'd be surprised at what a good dancer he really is, but it's been a long time and he doesn't know if he's ready to...

BRUNETTE

Mike...

She gets up. She's beautiful. She is beautiful.

BRUNETTE

...Will you dance with me?

She's in great shape, and look how classy her vintage dress looks. A vision from the forties. She's too good for this place. She belongs on the nose of a B-52. What can he say, but...

MIKE
Sure I will.

He awkwardly leads her to the unusually empty dance floor. They START TO DANCE. It's a slow song and they boringly rock back and forth. Mike is self-conscious, but her touch. Oh her touch.

CUT TO:

Trent and Sue watching in disbelief.

SUE
It is on.

TRENT
...it is so on.

BACK TO:

The couple's dance is cut short as there were only a few bars left of the slow ballad. Mike smiles politely in relief and begins to lead Lorraine off the floor.

She pulls him back. He's not getting off that easy. She wants a whole song. He politely holds her, poised for another slow number. They're alone on the floor.

Much to Mike's dismay, the song begins with a DRIVING TOM TOM SOLO. This cues every hep cat in the Derby that the big one's coming. They all flood the floor for the last dance of the night.

Mike pleadingly shakes his head at Lorraine. It's too fast. Her eyes narrow as her grip tightens. No sympathy here.

The band breaks into the full-tilt swing number and the dance floor writhes around them.

They stand motionless for what seems like an eternity.

Gut check. Fuck it. Sink or swim.

Mike grabs her like a man grabs a woman. It's just a simple six-count swing step, but they're in perfect harmony.

Mike and Lorraine look into each others eyes. It's on, baby.

As Mike's courage grows, the moves start to flow. A spin at first. Then a double twirl. It's not long before he's throwing her through combinations that stand out even among the pros.

CUT TO:

Trent and Sue, mouths agape.

BACK TO:

Mike is whipping her smoothly through violent-looking combinations without a trace of hesitation, and, boy, can she follow.

The set ends with a flourishing crescendo. They're frozen in a final dip, panting through a glaze of clean sweat.

Mike and Lorraine smile and look into each other's eyes. The smile slowly disappears. Will they kiss?

They're close.

Really close.

Lips almost touching.

Mike tries to muster-up the courage, but it's been so long.

He can't do it. He lets her up.

The floor clears. Exhausted dancers push past them. Forget it. The moment's gone.

What the hell. They had a great time. What's the hurry?

SOFT CUT TO:

EXT. LA BREA AVENUE - OUTSIDE THE DERBY - NIGHT

Mike is walking Lorraine to her car. They come upon a parked Escort.

LORRAINE

Well... This is it.

MIKE

Listen. I had a great time.

LORRAINE

Me too.

MIKE

I would love to see you again
sometime.

LORRAINE

I'll be around.

MIKE

That's not good enough. I want to
make plans to see you.

LORRAINE

Let me get a pen out of my car.

(opens the door)

Do you have something to write on?

Mike hands her a business card.

LORRAINE

(looking at it)

You're a comedian?

MIKE

Yeah. And an actor.

LORRAINE

I'll have to come see you sometime.

MIKE

If and when I get a real gig I'll
call you.

LORRAINE

It's not going to well?

MIKE

When I lived in New York they made it sound like they were giving out sit-coms to stand-ups at the airport. I got off the plane in L.A. six months ago and all I got to show for it is a tan.

LORRAINE

Didn't you tell me to be patient with my career?

MIKE

...Yeah, but entertainment law isn't something you just jump into...

LORRAINE

Neither is acting. Not if you're serious about it.

(She writes her number on the card.)

Can I have one of these?

MIKE

Why, you like the duck with the cigar?
(hands her a card)

LORRAINE

Yeah. Nice touch. It's the logo from "You Bet Your Life", right?

MIKE

Good eye. Not one club owner got it. They all ask me why I got Donald Duck on my card.

LORRAINE

Hey, at least it's not Goofy.

Beat.

LORRAINE

Well, I should be getting...

MIKE

...It's really getting late.

LORRAINE

...home. It's getting late. Yeah.

Beat.

LORRAINE

Can I give you a ride to your car...?

MIKE

...Nah. I'm right across the street...

LORRAINE

...Which one...?

MIKE

...The red piece of shit over there...

LORRAINE

...well, it suits you...

MIKE

...get the hell outta here already...

Mike leans in and slowly gives her the sweetest, softest, most innocent kiss.

He backs up. She's got that goofy look as she unlocks her club and starts the car.

LORRAINE

Bye.

She drives off.

He watches her go.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Mike is driving Trent and Sue home in his car.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S CAR - SUNSET BOULEVARD - SAME NIGHT

TRENT

You were off your ass back there!
Where the hell did you learn to do
all that twirly whirly shit?

MIKE

I took a ballroom class with Michelle.
I never danced with anyone but her,
til tonight. That Lorraine chick is
good.

TRENT

You were good. Did you see how she
was vibing you?

SUE

Sorry man.

TRENT

Yeah. You probably coulda hit that
tonight if you didn't have to drive
us home.

SUE

...Definitely...

MIKE

It's not like that...

TRENT

Don't give me that! She liked you,
man.

MIKE

I know she liked me. I mean, it's
not like I wanted to do anything
with her tonight.

SUE

Good for you, man. He's being smart.

MIKE

She's really special, guys.

TRENT

The bear's got his claws back.

SUE

Be smart about it.

TRENT

I'm telling you. Wait three days...

SUE

You don't have to wait three days...

TRENT

...Okay, two...

SUE

...just be smart about it.

MIKE

Guys... Guys... I got it under control.

TRENT

Oh. He's got it under control...

SUE

...Well, then, I guess we don't have to worry about him anymore.

TRENT

Our little baby's growing up...

Trent and sue pretend to cry and hug each other.

Mike looks at them in the rear view mirror.

He smirks and shakes his head.

MIKE

You guys are such assholes.

BACK TO:

INT. MIKE'S CAR - SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Trent and Sue scream at the top of their lungs as they cruise down Sunset. Alcohol is a terrible drug.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike is standing in the middle of the room looking at LORRAINE'S NUMBER on the back of the BUSINESS CARD.

He looks at the clock.

2:45 A.M.

He looks back at the NUMBER.

Beat.

He thinks better of it. He wedges it into a crack in the answering machine and unbuttons his shirt for bed...

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

Good move.

Mike smirks.

FADE TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Mike wakes up and rolls out of bed.

He walks to the phone and pulls the CARD out of the crack.

He looks at the clock.

12:10 PM.

He sticks it back in the crack.

He makes an "x" on a day of his calendar.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S BATHROOM - MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mike brushes his teeth.

He looks at the card clipped into the frame of the bathroom mirror.

He turns the faucet, allowing exactly ONE DROP of his precious Los Angeles water supply to drip onto his toothbrush.

He resumes brushing.

CUT TO:

EXT. "BOURGEOIS PIG" COFFEEHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Mike sips espresso as he stares at the CARD.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike is playing solitaire with the CARD laying above all the playing cards.

The PHONE RINGS.

Mike rushes to get it, then forces himself to wait another ring and a half exactly.

MIKE

Hello?

FEMALE VOICE

Hi Michael.

MIKE

Michelle?

MICHELLE

How's it going? It's been a while...

MIKE

...Six months.

MICHELLE
How are you doing?

MIKE
Fine... I guess. You?

MICHELLE
Good.
(pause)
I think about things.

MIKE
Yeah?

MICHELLE
Yeah.

MIKE
What kind of things?

MICHELLE
You know, us.

MIKE
I thought you met someone else.

MICHELLE
It doesn't matter. I think about you
every day.

MIKE
Really?

MICHELLE
I miss you, Mike.

MIKE
Why didn't you call?

MICHELLE
I couldn't. Do you know how hard
it's been not to call you? I pick up
the phone every night. Whenever that
commercial comes on...

MIKE

...the Michelin commercial...

MICHELLE

...Yeah, with the baby in the tire.
One time I started to cry right in
front of Pierre...

MIKE

Pierre... That's his name? Pierre?
Is he French?

MICHELLE

No, he's not... Listen I don't want
to talk about him. That's a whole
other headache. I called because I
heard you might be moving back to
Queens...

The BEEP of Mike's CALL WAITING.

MIKE

Hang on. Let me get rid of this call.

He clicks to the OTHER LINE.

MIKE

Hello?

LORRAINE

Hi, Mike?

MIKE

Lorraine?

LORRAINE

Are you on the other line?

MIKE

Yeah, hold on.

LORRAINE

I can call back...

MIKE
No, no. Hold on.

He clicks back to the OTHER LINE.

MIKE
Hi.

MICHELLE
I heard you might be moving back...

MIKE
Yeah, uh, I don't think that's gonna be happening any time soon... Listen, can I call you right back? I gotta take this call...

MICHELLE
I'm not home and going out of town tomorrow for a week. Can't you talk for five more minutes?

MIKE
I really want to catch up with you, but I've gotta take this call. They're holding. I'll talk with you when you get back in town. Bye.

MICHELLE
Goodbye. I lov...
(click)

Mike SWITCHES LINES, cutting Michelle off mid-sentence.

MIKE
Hi. Sorry about that.

LORRAINE
You didn't have to get off the other line. I would've called you back.

MIKE
That's okay. I wanted to talk to you.

Mike holds his palm over the receiver and looks at the answering machine.

Beat.

MIKE

(to answering machine)

Do you realize that I've been waiting for that call for six months and I cut her off?

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

You're money, baby.

Mike smiles.

Back to Lorraine.

MEDIUM SHOT of Mike through his window as he looks down onto Franklin avenue and talks on the phone.

MIKE

Hi, Lorraine. Thanks for holding on.

LORRAINE

Listen, Mike. You really didn't have to get off the line. I just wanted to ask you one thing. I know I shouldn't have called, I mean, my friends said I should wait two days... Oh God, I probably sound like such a schoolgirl... It's just that it's tonight only... I mean, it's Sinatra's birthday and they have this thing every year at "The Room". Do you know where that is? It's impossible to find if you've never been there. I don't understand why none of the clubs in Hollywood have signs. Anyway, I'm so bad at this, if you're not busy I thought you might...

Mike smiles as the CAMERA PULLS BACK from the window and

backwards down Franklin Avenue in a reverse of the first shot of the movie. The soundtrack kicks in with Sinatra's "Here's To The Losers"

FRANK

Here's to those who love not too wisely, no, not too wisely, but too well... To the girl who sighs with envy when she hears that wedding bell... To the guy who'd throw a party if he knew someone to call... Here's to the losers... Bless them all...

...We rise and pass the glowing Hollywood sign. It's still a full moon...

FRANK

Here's to those who drink their dinners when that lady doesn't show... To the girls who wait for kisses underneath that mistletoe... To the lonely summer lovers when the leaves begin to fall... Here's to the losers... Bless them all...

...Past the blinking red beacon of the Capital Records building...

FRANK

Hey Tom, Dick and Harry... Come in out of the rain... Those torches you carry... Must be drowned in champagne...

...Up and over Hollywood Boulevard. High above the city...

FRANK

Here's the last toast of the evening... Here's to those who still believe... All the losers will be winners... All the givers shall receive... Here's to trouble-free tomorrows... May your sorrows all be small... Here's to the losers...

Bless them all.

...It's all just a pool of beautiful golden light.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END