

I'm Dying Up Here

by
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8/2/15

EXT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - DUSK

CHYRON 1973 Los Angeles, California

MUSIC CUE: 'I'LL TAKE YOU THERE' by the STAPLE SINGERS

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

CLAY APPUZO, 26, good looking in an Al Pacino/Serpico kinda way, a little disheveled, a little scruffy, makes his way through the lobby carrying only an old gym bag and two six packs of Bud.

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - REGISTRATION DESK - CONTINUOUS

Clay pulls some crumpled cash from his front pocket. Smoothing out each bill, a smiling Clay pays the CLERK who looks on mildly annoyed.

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - ROOM - SHORT TIME LATER

Clay walks down the hallway to his room. The hotel is chaos. 70's ROCK AND ROLLERS with long hair and sunglasses saunter by with their GROUPIE CHICKS, smoking a joint as the BELLBOY tries to keep up. TWO FEMALE GROUPIES, one crying while the other comforts her, are blocking the door to Clay's room. He works around their histrionics, unlocking the door before disappearing inside.

WE SEE QUICK CUTS WHILE THE MUSIC CONTINUES TO PLAY getting louder and louder.

Clay ENTERING his room and throwing the gym bag onto the bed.

Clay GRABBING A BEER.

Clay OPENING the curtains as the late afternoon sun filters into the room.

EXT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Clay LOOKS OUT over Hollywood's famous Sunset Strip.

CLAY places the bottle cap against the lip of the railing and in one motion punches down on it. The cap flips off and we watch as it makes its way down to the parking lot fifteen stories below. Clay takes a swig as he leans his forearms on the railing, all of Sunset Blvd. spread before him.

END MUSIC CUE

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - SHOWER - LATER

Clay is taking a shower. He holds himself up as the hot water pours down over him shrouding him in steam.

FLASHBACK: 1972 eight months earlier

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - SHOWER - NIGHT

Clay stands in the shower washing CASSIE HARRINGTON'S back. 26, cute, a Texas girl with a bit of a Holly Hunter drawl that comes and goes depending on how tired she is, revels in her boyfriend's touch. Cassie's eyes glaze over as Clay's hands move down out of frame.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Clay lies on his back as a half nude Cassie straddles him, post coital smoking a joint. She leans down and shot-guns the smoke into his mouth. She sits back up, stoned, smiles.

CASSIE

What do you think happens to us
when we die?

CLAY

(chuckles, coughs)
Where the hell did that come from?

Cassie laughs. She climbs off Clay and lies on her back.

CASSIE

I don't know... grass makes me
introspective.
(playfully slaps his arm)
Don't make fun of me...

CLAY

Well... from what I've read... you
shit yourself... then I think it's
anybody's guess.

CASSIE

(laughs)
Jerk.
(then, jokingly)
They say when you orgasm you die a
little. Is that why you don't want
to come anymore? You afraid of
dying?

Clay laughs her off inquiry.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

It's not so crazy. You're family were church goer's, maybe you're afraid God might get mad at you for having sex out of wedlock and smite you... Your not coming is some kind of... fucked-up loophole.

Clay chuckles and takes the joint away from Cassie.

CLAY

No more Red for you.

CASSIE

I knew a guy who had so much God guilt about sex that all his masturbation fantasies were of him being forced to have sex at gunpoint or they'd kill his mother.

CLAY

Fear of God is not my issue. Fear Of irrelevancy... now that scares the shit out of me.

CASSIE

So, why don't you come with me anymore?

Clay relights the joint over the following:

CLAY

You know who Edmund Hillary is?

CASSIE

The guy who climbed Everest?

CLAY

Uh-huh. Took him years to prepare for that climb. He risked everything to reach the summit. When he finally made it, when he finally stood on top of the world, you know how long it was for? How long he stood there reveling in this culmination of his life's work?

Cassie shakes her head, no.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Fifteen minutes. All that excitement, anticipation, the blood, the sweat, the excruciating pain... all for a measly fifteen minutes. On the way down he and Tenzing, his trusty Sherpa, celebrated with soup. Fucking soup.

(beat)

It's the climb, Cassie.

He pulls her in for a kiss.

CLAY (CONT'D)

It's all about the climb...

CASSIE

(as they start kissing)

I sure hope the soup was good...

OUT OF FLASHBACK

INT. SUNSET TOWERS - CLAY'S ROOM - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

We're in front of a steamed up bathroom mirror. A HAND comes into view and wipes away the steamy film revealing Clay who stands naked staring at his reflection.

INT. GOLDIE'S - LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE ON A SWEAT SOAKED JOWLY FACED MAN hysterically laughing/coughing, cigarette in hand. We pull back to reveal a PACKED AUDIENCE laughing along with him. This is GOLDIE'S COMEDY CLUB, dark with its walls painted black, narrow hallways and dim lighting, it's packed for the Friday night show with not a seat to be had. Up on stage is BILL HOBBS, one of the club's favorite comedians. 28, dry, volatile in a Bill Hicks kind of way, is in mid set. The audience laughs throughout devouring his every word. Crackling with intensity, Goldie's is loud, raucous, a living breathing entity. Not much to look at, it is the soul of the LA comedy scene. In the main room, a blue cloud of smoke, much like the one hovering over LA itself, wafts thick over PATRONS who sit elbow to elbow respectfully whispering their orders to COCKTAIL WAITRESSES who make the rounds with assorted drinks, french fries and greasy chicken wings. On a small brightly lit stage, Bill continues his attack.

BILL

Congratulations ladies... big court win... abortion is now legal. Twenty-six weeks, gals. You've got twenty-six weeks to decide whether you want the baby or not.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

Basically the same amount of time
it takes you to pick out a living
room sofa.

The audience laughs, with the occasional boo's thrown in for
balance.

BILL (CONT'D)

How pissed are back alley
abortionists right now, huh?
There's six months of veterinary
school down the drain...

(more laughter, then)

My mom was totally against the
decision.

(as mom)

"What do we need legalized abortion
for when we have perfectly good
staircases pregnant women can throw
themselves down..." My mom had six
kids and according to her we were
all accidents. Six accidental
pregnancies. The fucking Three
Stooges didn't have that many
accidents. I mean come on, It's not
rocket science. We've pretty much
solved the penis vagina conundrum,
ma. Seriously, two mosquitos with
brains the size of atoms know how
fucking's gonna turn out. You think
the female mosquito turns to the
male a week later and says where
did all these maggots come from?!

INSERT: WE WATCH FROM THE CAMERA'S POV as it makes its way
through the crowd. COMICS lining the walls waiting to go on
fidget, smoke, drink, one shares a joint with a WAITRESS on
break. Their faces all light up as we now see the POV is from
GOLDIE HERSCHLAG, the clubs attractive 44 year old owner,
part angel, part cornered rat with a voice that sounds like
someone's perpetually twisting her arm. Goldie makes her way
toward two young comics, SULLY PATTERSON, A Second City guy
out of Chicago. Crazy, zany, Robin Williams over the top to
the point of tiresome, and ROB LEECH, 30, a hippie looking
comic with long hair and John Lennon glasses. Sully takes and
kisses Goldie's hand in what is only somewhat mock reverence.

SULLY

Mmmmm. Tastes like tens and
twenties...

Goldie smiles. Taking out her gold cigarette case, she
removes a cigarette and lights it over the following.

GOLDIE

Rob. Heard you killed at Ted's the other night?

Rob goes ashen. He stammers out an excuse.

ROB

I wanted to be here... the only spot open wasn't until after one...

GOLDIE

Lot of good comics go up after one.

ROB

I know... it's just I have to be up for work at seven...

GOLDIE

Believe me Rob, I understand.

(blows out smoke)

I just don't give a shit.

ROB

Goldie, it was one fucking night.

GOLDIE

I caught my ex getting a blow job in our office. Took a fountain pen and stuck it through his hand. That was one fucking night, too.

Goldie crosses off. Sully looks at Rob as if to say "I got this." He crosses to her.

SULLY

Goldie...

GOLDIE

Yeah, Sully?

SULLY

(seriously)

Rob made a mistake.

(beat, then quickly)

And though I find the punishment harsh I also find it just, so can I have his minutes?

Sully flashes a child like smile.

INT. GOLDIE'S - MAIN STAGE AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

CARL HODGE, a marginal at best talent manager, 60's, balding, wearing a somewhat dated suit and tie, approaches ARNIE BROWN, 30, bird-like, not a particularly funny comic but a Goldie lackey who does a little of everything at the club. Carl taps Arnie on the shoulder. Arnie turns, his face drops. Not this pain in the ass.

ARNIE
What's up, Carl?

CARL
Someone's sitting at my table's
what's up.

WE ANGLE ON: A YOUNG COUPLE sitting at a small two-top up front.

ARNIE
Fuck.
(then)
Can I sit you somewhere else? Just
this once?

CARL
You know who I'm meeting here
tonight? Charlie --

ARNIE/CARL
Callas...

CARL
That's right smart guy. You want to
tell an American treasure he's got
to sit in the back?

Arnie storms off to move the couple.

CARL (CONT'D)
(calling after)
I've had that table since the joint
opened. Should fucking know better.

INT. GOLDIES - BAR AREA - CONTINUOUS

A small black and white television set glows ghostly gray images at the end of the bar. Set away from audience this is where a lot of the comics hang between sets. Several mill around the set as 'THE TONIGHT SHOW' theme music starts up. At the other end of the bar is KAY, small, cute, early twenties as she gives orders to the BARTENDER.

KAY

Three Michelobs and a Singapore
Sling. And ask the kitchen where
the fuck my chicken wings are?
(then to comics)
Somebody call me when Clay goes up.

A moment later Kay exits the bar and crosses through the middle of the main room chaos. With a tray of drinks and chicken wings, she darts through the patrons who seem to be spilling out into every available nook and cranny.

KAY (CONT'D)

Coming through...

We follow KAY OUT AND DOWN A HALLWAY. The deeper we go the quieter and emptier it gets until we enter a much smaller much more subdued space...

INT. - GOLDIE'S - THE CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Cassie is at the mic in the not-so-main-room of Goldie's known as the CELLAR. A direct contrast to the main room. The cellar is smaller, dank and looks like its name. It's where the overflow ends up when the main room fills. No one wants to be here including the comics. Part nursery, part elephant's graveyard, its inhabitants are usually green comics starting out or comics who've been around awhile but aren't good enough for the big room. Seating about a hundred, tonight there are about forty drunks in attendance. Goldie enters and watches from the back. At the mic, a bubbly Cassie is leaning heavily on her southwestern accent.

CASSIE

...I grew up in Wink, Texas. Wink is really small, really hot and really disgusting. It's like if your armpit could produce oil and field a High School football team.

MALE HECKLER

Show us your tits!

Cassie shields her eyes and spots a THREE-HUNDRED POUND, BEARDED DRUNK HECKLER sitting with some BUDDIES. His pals crack up encouraging him.

CASSIE

You first, Sir.

The room laughs at Cassie's comeback.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Looks like there's a buncha y'all.
What's the occasion?

MALE HECKLER
Bachelor party.

CASSIE
Well, what're you doing sitting
around here? That hooker in your
trunk ain't gonna bury herself.

MALE HECKLER
Hey, c'mere and suck my dick!

Again, the obese drunk heckler and his friends crack up.

CASSIE
Tempting but... what if there's a
cave in while I'm down there?

The audience cracks up. Even the heckler laughs and claps.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
It could be days before you even
realize I'm missing... just me
living off old grilled cheese
crumbs that got wedged under your
scrotum. I bet there's enough bread
mold down there to cure whatever
venereal disease it is you and your
buddies caught tonight from that
hooker in your trunk.

The audience continues laughing. Goldie, expressionless,
exits.

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - ROOM - LATER

Showered, shaved and dressed, Clay lets in room service as
the 'Tonight Show' with Johnny Carson plays in the
background. THE WAITER opens the lid revealing a LARGE STEAK
french fries and a slice of lemon merengue pie. Clay smiles,
and hands the man a ten spot.

WAITER
(pleasantly surprised)
Thank you, sir.

The waiter exits as Clay stretches out on the king sized bed
watching Johnny Carson while munching on a french frie. He
watches grinning as Carson introduces his next guest. Him.

JOHNNY CARSON

I'm glad you're in a good mood tonight as our next guest is a very funny comic making his first 'Tonight Show' appearance, a former Bostonian, please give a warm welcome to Clay Appuzo...

We see Clay walk out from behind the 'Tonight Show' curtains to the applause of the crowd as DOC SEVERENSON plays, 'That's Amore,' a nod to Clay's Italian heritage.

CLAY (ON TV)

Hi, everyone. Just to be clear I'm not just a Bostonian, I'm an Italian Bostonian. We still talk with our hands but we only use one finger.

(audience laughs)

I grew up Catholic, so naturally my parents being good Catholics had a big family... eight kids. That was until they discovered birth control... or as you might call it, television.

(audience laughs)

It turns out they didn't really want that many kids, there just wasn't anything else to do. It was either, "Should we go bowling or give Tommy that little brother he's been begging for?"

(audience laughs)

TV changed everything for my parents. I swear if "Gunsmoke" had been on eight years earlier there'd be a whole different comic standing up here right now. Contraception is taboo in the Catholic church, but my parents were convinced one episode of "Bonanza" and the Pope would've been, "Oh yeah. I can totally get behind this."

Angle on Johnny who's eating it up as Clay watches smiling under a shroud of cigarette smoke.

INT. GOLDIE'S - THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

About A DOZEN COMICS are now huddled around the little black and white seen earlier. All eyes are on Clay as he kills on the 'Tonight Show.' Though they've heard the jokes many times, they all laugh and support their friend's success, no one more so than his former girlfriend, Cassie.

A fellow comic, she beams, a mixture of pride and envy. Also there are comics, RALPH KING, African American, early thirties, as overweight as he is hilarious, and Sully. Bill rushes in from his set.

RALPH

You do know when Arnie flashes the lights it means get the fuck off the stage, right?

BILL

(eyes glued to set)
I get off the fucking stage when they stop laughing.

SULLY

(mock explaining to Ralph)
"Laughing" Ralph, is the noise people make when they hear something funny.

BILL

(off Clay)
How's he doing?

CASSIE

He's killing.

BILL

(clearly jealous)
Great.

RALPH

Bill man, that ain't no "great" face. That's a why-don't-Johnny-love-me-face.

BILL

Why couldn't they have shot you in Nam?

SULLY

Yeah Ralph, are black hippos sacred there or something?

Bill and the comics snicker.

RALPH

I was lean and mean in Nam. Charlie was terrified of me. Called me the black beast.

SULLY

Is it weird that's the same thing they call you at MacDonalds?

RALPH

Keep talking, Sully. When the revolution happens you're on your own mother-fucker.

CASSIE

Guys. I'm trying to hear Clay.

BILL

Hear what? His act's practically a sing-along.

CASSIE

Bill, I love you like a seven day yeast infection, but shut the fuck up.

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clay is watching himself on the television as a laughing Johnny beckons him over to the couch after his act.

JOHNNY CARSON

Come on. Have a seat.

Clay crosses and sits.

INT. GOLDIE'S - THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

All the comics react to Clay being asked to join Johnny. It's as though time has stopped.

CASSIE

Oh my God... He got the couch!

SULLY

Suddenly I don't feel so pretty anymore.

The other comics clap, cheering. Kay enters having missed it, but sees Clay sit next to Johnny.

KAY

(ecstatic)

Shit! Holy shit!

Bill gets up and leaves.

INT. GOLDIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Goldie's grin broadens as she watches Clay settle in next to Carson. Arnie stares at the set. Unabashed envy plastered across his mirthless face.

ARNIE

He got the couch... that's all she wrote.

GOLDIE

I told Frank Johnny'd eat him up.

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JOHNNY CARSON

Very funny stuff. So, do you get back to Boston much?

CLAY

I try to make it back for all the major funerals. You can fly free if someone dies so I plan all my vacation trips around dying relatives.

(mimes phone call)

Uncle Sal's not doing so good, eh? Yes, very sad. Any chance of him hanging in there till opening day?

The audience and Johnny laugh. We cut over to Clay lying on the bed, he smiles, pleased.

INT. GOLDIES - MAIN STAGE AUDIENCE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Goldie crosses through passing Carl's table. She puts her hand on his shoulder. Carl startles, takes it and kisses it.

CARL

Sit.

GOLDIE

Funny.

Goldie remains standing. This is obviously a courtesy stop.

CARL

Adam Proteau. What do you think?

GOLDIE

I think I've got more hair on my lip than he does on his nuts.

CARL
He's ready, Goldie.

GOLDIE
He's a sapling.

CARL
(sighs)
Can you stick him in the Cellar?

GOLDIE
Fleisher and Stevenson open mic'd
for over a year.

Defeated, Carl nods.

GOLDIE (CONT'D)
Trust me. If the ship builders put
in a little more time and sweat
into the Titanic, the word would
still just mean big.

Goldie stops Kay as she passes.

GOLDIE (CONT'D)
Another Rob Roy neat for Carl.

KAY
Got it.

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - LOBBY - SHORT TIME LATER

A WHISTLING Clay makes his way through the lobby headed to the exit. He smiles at the DOORMAN who opens the door for him. Clay slips him a five. The doorman nods in appreciation.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Clay stands at a red light on a corner of Sunset and takes a deep breath of air. Cars come to a halt as the 'WALK' sign appears. What people are there, cross while Clay waits and lights a cigarette. After a beat, the light TURNS GREEN and cars start to accelerate as the flow of traffic picks up. Just as a SPEEDING bus FLIES through the light, Clay flicks his cigarette into the street while simultaneously stepping off the curb directly into the path of the oncoming bus. The bus SLAMS into Clay sending him FLYING, he PINBALLS off an oncoming car before landing on the side of the road, DEAD.

CLOSE on Clay's LIFELESS BODY, eyes open as he stares blankly towards the night sky. A PROSTITUTE APPROACHES and screams.

PROSTITUTE
Somebody call an ambulance!

PEOPLE scatter to call for help. The prostitute then quickly starts rifling through Clay's pockets while we ANGLE BACK ON THE CROSSING SIGN that now FLASHES "WALK."

MUSIC CUE: 'IT'S YOUR THING' by the ISLEY BROTHERS.

EXT. BOSTON COMBAT ZONE - CONCURRENT

CHYRON: Boston Massachusetts Combat Zone 1973 3:30 AM

CLOSE ON: The grotesquely frozen grin of A DRUNKEN HOMELESS MAN, as a body bag zips shut over his face. TWO PARAMEDICS lift him like a slab of meat and place him onto a stretcher. We PAN UP TO SEE A GIANT FLUORESCENT EYEBALL AND THE WORDS 'THE NAKED EYE', SPELLED IN NEON. The Naked Eye is a strip club in Boston's fabled RED LIGHT DISTRICT known to locals as THE COMBAT ZONE.

INT. NAKED EYE - BOSTON - 3 AM BOSTON TIME

The NAKED EYE, a beaten down strip club, where STRIPPERS AND PROSTITUTES ply their trade. Where PIMPS pop in periodically to collect money and give their girls whatever drug of choice gets them through their nights. On stage, CORA, A STRIPPER OF ABOUT FORTY-FIVE, complete with big sagging breasts, stretch marks, cellulite and a mound of pubic hair that looks like it could fill a lawnmower bag, works the pole. She finishes to a smattering of applause, flashes a smile to the crowd which immediately evaporates as she turns to leave.

EDDIE ZEIDEL, KNOWN AS 'Z', 25, quick, acerbic, self effacing and really funny, tries to rally some more applause.

EDDIE

Let's hear it for, Cora... Cora
everybody... lovely... Cora.

ANGLE ON: FELLOW COMIC, LARRY SHACK, ballsy, the same age as Eddie but that's where the comparison ends. He stands in the wings while Eddie tries to coax the DRUNKEN PATRONS to leave. Larry's getting a mirthless hand job from CAROL, ONE OF THE GIRLS.

LARRY

Carol... you are so incredible...

Carol rolls her eyes. She tugs him faster.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Can you put it in your mouth? Just
for a second...?

CAROL

No. You've got two minutes.

LARRY

"Two minutes?" What kind of going
away present is this?

CAROL

The you-not-in-my-mouth-two-more-
minutes-kind.

ANGLE BACK ON STAGE:

EDDIE

Drink up people. Time to go. Your
soul crushing existences await...

DRUNK PATRON

(calling out)

Fuck you, Jew.

EDDIE

Ahh, "Jew", Such a versatile word.
It's both a people and an insult.
So tell me pal, is there a Mrs.
Drunken Shit Head?

DRUNK PATRON

How'd you like a fucking beating?

EDDIE

Aren't you worried if your wife
sees blood on your knuckles she'll
think you're seeing another woman?

DRUNK PATRON

Cock sucker...

ANGLE BACK TO THE WINGS:

CAROL

(still tugging)

Tick-tock, Larry...

(then noticing)

I think Z's in trouble.

He is. Larry hurriedly zips his pants as the guy drunkenly
charges the stage, but before he can reach it, Larry jumps
down, pants partially undone, and punches the guy in the
stomach causing him to projectile vomit everywhere. Larry
takes a cocktail napkin and starts to furiously wipe his
shoes as the drunk lets loose another stream of that nights
intake.

LARRY

This is why you should take onion
rings off the fucking menu!

Eddie jumps down from the stage and slaps Larry on the back.

EDDIE

Wipe 'em in the cab. Our flight
leaves in two and a half hours.

CANTORS DELI- 2:30 AM LA TIME - THAT MORNING DAY (2
TECHNICALLY)

Cassie, Ralph, Sully, and Bill are in a booth as a WAITRESS places their sandwiches in front of them, except Ralph who sits in front of a big plate of pancakes.

SULLY

So Cass, should we talk about the
elephant in the room?
(then)
Not you, Ralph.

CASSIE

That being?

SULLY

Come on, it didn't singe your sissy
a little seeing your ex boyfriend
get the couch?

CASSIE

Sorry, but I'm not ten.

BILL

Yeah, but you're human.

CASSIE

Exactly. Thus I can transcend
pettiness and actually be happy for
someone and not always have to have
it reflect back on me and my
career.

RALPH

Did she just say, "thus"?

SULLY

Did she just say, "career"?

BILL

You're full of shit.
(off Cassie's look)
I'm jealous. I'm practically
shit-ting blood thinking about it
and you should, too.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

Every other comic's success, every set he kills, every Johnny, Merv, or Dinah-Fucking-Shore appearance another comic makes is one we didn't get. Each laugh should feel like a sharp poke in your eye. If it doesn't, get the fuck out. You don't care enough.

Both Ralph and Sully do the slow clap that builds.

RALPH

Now that's a 2:30 in the morning mother-fucking pancake speech.

BILL

Fuck you both...

SULLY

If I were queer, I'd so be sucking your dick right now. You know what... fuck it. I'm going in.

Sully starts to climb over the table to get to Bill.

SULLY (CONT'D)

Let me see it. I'm not afraid. A man that angry, how big can it be? Two? Three inches tops.

Sully goes head first into Bill's lap with only his legs appearing above the table. Cassie, Ralph and Bill all break up LAUGHING as Bill and tries to protect his cock from Sully's advances. With his ass now in the air, Ralph grabs Sully's exposed wallet and rips the cash out.

RALPH

Waitress! Check! Hurry the fuck up!

Sully struggles, reaching back futilely for his money.

SULLY

I can't believe you made this ugly.

EXT. CANTORS PARKING LOT - LATER

Cassie sits in the passenger seat of an old CHARGER. She's facing the driver's seat alone, lost in thought.

CUT INSIDE THE CAR

Cassie leans her head back against the passenger side window.

CASSIE

Do you think I'll ever play the
main room?

She KNOCKS on something between her legs out of frame.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Hey. I'm talking to you...

Suddenly Bill's pops up rubbing his head.

BILL

Jesus... didn't anyone teach you
basic cunnilingus protocol? No
rapping on the head of the guy
going down on you in a diner
parking lot. It's unseemly.

Bill sits up and lights a cigarette while Cassie zips up her
pants.

CASSIE

I want your opinion...

BILL

If the question is who do you need
to blow to get in the main room,
you're in the wrong car.

CASSIE

It's Goldie. She keeps saying I
need to do more "women appropriate
shit." What is that? Jokes about
tupperware and ring around the
collar?

Bill leans back and sighs exhaling a steady stream of blue.

BILL

What'd you think? That she was
going build you a fucking ramp to
the main stage? It's a meritocracy,
not a charity event.

CASSIE

Easy for you to say. You're a guy.

BILL

Goldie doesn't owe you shit. You're
not on the big room because you're
not ready -- and don't ever give me
that it's-easy-'cause- you're-a-guy
cop out. You're slightly better
than that.

Suddenly there's a loud POUNDING on the passenger side window. Both Cassie and Bill jump. Bill SQUEALS. It's Ralph. Cassie rolls down the window.

CASSIE

Jesus, Ralph. You scared the shit out of us. I think Bill just fractured his hymen.

Cassie can tell by Ralph's expression that something's terribly wrong. She looks at him, her own expression now matching his.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - HOLLYWOOD HILLS - MORNING

INT. A METICULOUSLY KEPT HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ADAM PROTEAU, boy-ish good looks, about 18, is trying to force a pull-out bed back into its frame while his MANAGER, Carl, holding two plates of eggs, watches him struggle.

CARL

Easy. It's a Castro Convertible. It'll glide into place if you stop trying to fuck it.

Adam goes gentle and sure enough the couch slides easily into place. They both sit as Carl hands Adam his eggs.

ADAM

You didn't answer me, Carl...

CARL

(hesitates)
She said ...yes.

ADAM

Finally --

CARL

-- In the near future.

Adam deflates.

ADAM

How fucking near?

CARL

Soon.
(off Adam's glare)
I don't know. Another six months?
She thinks you're not ready.

ADAM

Six month?! Are you fucking shitting me? I've been doing open mic for almost a fucking year. You think Johnny's sending scouts to amateur night? I came out here to do the 'Tonight Show' not entertain an audience of lab rats on fucking Mondays.

CARL

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You and every other pencil dick with five minutes. It's a marathon, kid. I keep telling you --

ADAM

You keep telling me all kinds of shit, Carl. You're my manager. Fucking manage me. If you can't get me up there then at least get me a paid gig.

CARL

What paid? It's a showcase. Goldie doesn't pay anybody.

(then)

What about that gig at the church I got you?

ADAM

Baby-sitting immigrant kids? That's not a gig. I need money, Carl. Real money. I want my own pad. Some place I can take girls without you wandering by in your boxers eating baked beans out of a pan.

CARL

Listen, it'll come. In the meantime you entertain the little beige tots for fifty bucks a week while honing your craft at Goldies until it's time.

ADAM

Yeah, and when's that?

CAROL

Goldie will let you know. Just like she let Prinze, and Walker and Clay Appuzo know.

INT. GOLDIES - BAR - LATER THAT MORNING

Cassie, staring off, snaps out her trance when Bill lays his hand on her shoulder. Eyes red, she places her hand over his letting her cheek rest on it. Sully, Ralph and a NUMBER OF OTHER COMICS huddle silently at the bar. Goldie and Arnie sit on stools a few feet away trying to make sense of things. A different place during the day, Goldie's is eerily silent except for a YOUNG BAR BACK who wheels a keg through, a reminder that this is still a place of business.

SULLY

Should we have some sort of a...
memorial service...?

TIM AWREY, 20's, starts to giggle. Everyone looks at him.

TIM

Sorry... sorry...

BILL

The whole thing is so fucked up.
One minute he's killing on Carson --

Tim snorts, breaking up laughing. Everyone looks at him annoyed.

TIM

I'm sorry, I dropped two hits of blotter at 3 AM so I'm still fucked up. But this is terrible... please go on with your memorial arrangements for Clay.

Tim dissolves into another fit of giggling.

TIM (CONT'D)

(regaining control)

I'm sorry... sorry.

CASSIE

I'm picking Clay's parents up at the airport in a couple hours. I'll see if they're open to us having some sort of... ceremony or --

Tim starts giggling again.

BILL

Jesus, wait out fucking-side will you, Tim?

TIM

I didn't know Clay died when I took the shit. I thought I'd be baby-sitting my nephews now. We watch H. R. Puffenstuff together on Saturdays...

Sully gets up and walks the giggling Tim out.

SULLY

Come on, Timmy... Let's go get you that 'Uncle of the Year' mug.

GOLDIE

Maybe we can all say a few words... have a little food...

ARNIE

Should I get us a church?

GOLDIE

(tamps out cigarette)
Fuck no. We're in one.

INT. CASSIE'S DODGE DART - THAT AFTERNOON

Cassie is driving CLAY'S PARENTS, GUY AND ANGIE APPUZO. Guy is on the passenger side while Angie sits in the back. Both in their 60's, they are obviously distressed and sleep deprived as Cassie drives them to Clay's apartment. From her rear view mirror she sees CLAY'S APPARITION smirking from the back seat. Cassie comes to a stop on at a light on Sunset. Guy spots TWO PROSTITUTES standing on the corner. They both wink and wave. Guy rolls up his window, disgusted.

GUY

God willing... some day all this will be ashes.

Clay's apparition chuckles.

CLAY'S APPARITION

You know they hate you, right? The only thing they hate more than you is the idea of driving around Los Angeles lost.

EXT. 101 HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

A YELLOW CAB makes its way down the 101.

INT. CAB - LA - CONTINUOUS

Eddie and LARRY sit in the backseat of the cab. The cab takes the VINE STREET EXIT.

LARRY
Is that Vine Street as in
"Hollywood and Vine?"

The CABBIE looks at them half awake having pulled a double.

CABBIE
Tourists?

LARRY
Comics. From Boston.

The Cabbie chuckles.

LARRY (CONT'D)
What?

CABBIE
Nothing.

LARRY
Come on, let us in on the joke.

CABBIE
At the risk of blowing my dime tip,
I'll tell you. Ever since Carson
moved his outfit from New York to
here, every asshole who thinks he
can tell a joke is circling Burbank
like a fucking vulture.

LARRY
Nice to meet you too.

CABBIE
You asked.

EDDIE
Where'd you pick us up?

CABBIE
Airport. Is this a bit?

EDDIE
The airport. Not in the middle of
nowhere, not some podunk shit can
town... You picked us up at the
airport because that's where the
work is. Same difference.

INT. LADY OF THE PALMS CHURCH - LATER

Adam is juggling for a group of IMMIGRANT TODDLERS. They're all laughing and trying to grab the balls from Adam who plays along with them. He's a natural. From the back FATHER JACOB, mid 30's watches.

INT. LADY OF THE PALMS CHURCH - FATHER JACOB'S OFFICE- LATER

Father Jacob counts out the fifty bucks as Adam watches.

FATHER JACOB

You certainly have a way with children, Adam.

ADAM

Is it me Father, or do little kids smell? It's like there's a... "tang" to them.

Father Jacob smirks, hands him the fifty bucks. Adam takes the money and counts it while Father Jacob studies him.

FATHER JACOB

You religious, Adam?

ADAM

Too young. I figure I'll find Jesus after I'm drafted or while careening off an overpass.

FATHER JACOB

A conversion based on fear isn't a conversion, it's insurance.

ADAM

Nice, Father. If the Catholic Church starts doing fortune cookies I think you're their man.

(then, off money)

Any chance you get to talk to the powers that be about my raise?

FATHER JACOBS

Sorry Adam.

ADAM

You sure there's no way they could throw a little more bread my way?

Father Jacobs studies Adam a beat. Then:

FATHER JACOB

There are... other ways of supplementing your income here.

ADAM

Done. What and how much?

FATHER JACOBS

It's not for everybody, Adam. It comes at a great personal compromise. For everyone.

ADAM

I'm still waiting on the figure.

FATHER JACOB

Two-hundred.

ADAM

Dollars?

FATHER JACOB

It pays a lot Adam, because it costs a lot.

Off Adam, his curiosity piqued...

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Cassie, along with Clay's parents, look around the apartment. Cassie is barely holding it together, hanging back she lights a cigarette. Clay's mother fights back tears, every artifact a conduit. His father moves slowly, stoically, refusing to remove his winter jacket. Angie opens the refrigerator, it's practically empty.

ANGIE

(to herself)

He wasn't eating.

(to her husband)

He wasn't eating.

She shuts it and moves out of the kitchen.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Guy wanders into Clay's bedroom. Small, poorly lit, he opens a dingy shade to let light in. The bed is unmade. Angie enters with Cassie following and instinctively starts making the bed. Guy grunts as he pulls open a window. In the middle of making the bed, Angie stops. She pulls the sheets up close to her face. She inhales them then buries her face in them, crying. The reality of it all hitting her head on, she lets it all out while Guy sits next to her and holds her.

Cassie shifts uncomfortably before crossing and gently resting a hand on Angie's shoulder not sure if it's welcome or not. From outside we hear a loud knock on the door.

EXT. HALLWAY CLAY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Cassie answers the door revealing Eddie and Larry with overnight bags, she looks at them blankly.

EDDIE

Yeah, hi. Clay here?

CASSIE

Who are you?

EDDIE

We're friends of his out from Boston. He said we could crash with him when we came to town. So... here we are.

(holds out his hand)

I'm Eddie Ziedel, and this is my friend, Larry Shack --

Too exhausted and emotionally drained for tact:

CASSIE

I'm sorry... Clay's dead.

Eddie and Larry exchange a look. Is she kidding?

EDDIE

Excuse me?

CASSIE

He died last night. There was an accident... on Sunset.

EDDIE

(reeling)

He... he was on Carson last night... we talked...

LARRY

He got the fucking couch...

Cassie glares at Larry, then decides to let it go.

CASSIE

I'm sorry.

Cassie goes to shut the door but it's stopped by Larry.

LARRY

We've come a long way. Is this some kind of brush off or... joke?

CASSIE

Yeah. Fucking hilarious, isn't it?

Guy comes to the door and looks menacingly at the two comics who've shown up unannounced. Even in his 60's he looks like he could tear a phone book in two.

GUY

I think it's best you boys made other arrangements.

Cassie reenters the apartment as Guy shuts the door in Eddie and Larry's faces. The guys stand in the hallway stunned.

INT. GOLDIE'S - LATER

Sully is comforting Kay, the waitress from earlier, who dabs her eyes between sobs.

SULLY

Of course Clay loved you.

KAY

Two months. Hardly a romance for the ages.

SULLY

Who wouldn't be crazy about you? You're pretty, kind, you never mess up my drink order...

Kay sniffs and laughs despite herself.

KAY

Vodka and tonic. That GED's paying for itself.

A long silence between them. After awhile, Kay taps on Sully's wedding band with her forefinger.

KAY (CONT'D)

What's that like?

SULLY

It doesn't burn if that's what you're asking.

KAY

I'm serious.

Sully goes to say something. Stops. Tries again.

SULLY

A lot like here. There are nights you kill... nights you bomb. But for some fucked-up reason... you keep coming back.

Kay smiles and squeezes Sully's hand. They look into each other's eyes. Then Kay, sadly resigned:

KAY

We're going to fuck, aren't we?

Sully is thrown by Kay's frankness.

SULLY

Are we?

KAY

You're gazing into my eyes. That's how it starts. Question is... will you still be gazing into them after we screw?

SULLY

After good sex, couples gaze into each other's eyes. After great sex... they avert them. Here's to not looking at you, kid.

Sully smiles as does Kay, albeit weakly.

KAY

Don't.

SULLY

Don't what?

KAY

Don't be funny. Don't... charm me. I'm just a different pussy than the one you brush your teeth next to before bed, I know that. So, just for today let's... be who we are. You can pretend again when you go home to her.

There's a beat as Sully takes her hand and holds it. He nods, touched by her words. Then:

SULLY

So, where do you want to do it?

INT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - CLAY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cassie enters Clay's hotel room escorted by the MANAGER.

MANAGER

There's not much really... a change of clothes... half a pack of cigarettes... hardly worth you coming over here but it's hotel policy.

On top of the change of clothes is a postcard. Cassie picks it up and reads it. It's a postcard of NAPLES ITALY from Clay ADDRESSED TO CASSIE. On it are just two words: "Fa Napoli."

INT. GOLDIE'S - LATER

The place is nearly empty. Arnie sits at the bar going over the liquor list for that night. Eddie and Larry enter in mid conversation.

EDDIE

What kind of God does something like that? You work your ass off, kill on the 'Tonight Show,' get the fucking couch, then that very night you're hit by a bus?

LARRY

Your friend got hit crossing against a green. That's not God, that's either Darwin or Budweiser.

EDDIE

You're real cunt sometimes, you know that?

Larry smiles at Eddie as they approach Arnie.

LARRY

S'cuse me? Who do we talk to about stage time?

Arnie jerks his head toward the north end of the bar.

ARNIE

Amateur night's Monday. Sign up sheets by the register.

LARRY

We don't do open mic. We're pros.

ARNIE

That's different. Richard Pryor's coming Thursday. I'm sure he won't mind if we bump him for a couple pros.

EDDIE

He didn't mean any offense. We're working comics from Boston. We came out to stay with a friend who was gonna set us up here, but unfortunately he... uh... died last night.

ARNIE

Clay?

EDDIE

Clay Appuzo, yeah.

LENNY

-- Anyway, we've got no place to crash and we spent everything to get out here, so if you could just help us get some stage time...

ARNIE

You some kind of Rowan and Martin?

EDDIE

No. Separate acts.

ARNIE

Amateur nights the best you're gonna do. No one plays the big room without Goldie's blessing. Even open mic's got a three week wait.

LARRY

Fuck.

ARNIE

In the meantime if you need a place to crash, I might be able to help.

Eddie and Larry look at one another. Finally, a break.

BILL'S APARTMENT - SHORT TIME LATER

Cassie knocks urgently on Bill's door. A half awake Bill answers as Cassie barges through.

BILL
It's the middle of the fucking
night...

CASSIE
It's four o'clock in the afternoon.
Read this.

Cassie hands Bill the postcard. He rubs his eyes reading it.

BILL
"Fa Napoli?"

He flips it back and forth looking to see if there's anything
else written. He hands it back to her.

BILL (CONT'D)
Next time just mail it. It's a
postcard not a telegram.
(then)
I'm going back to bed...

CASSIE
It's a suicide note. From Clay.

Bill stops. He looks at Cassie. She's serious. He takes it
back from her and looks at it again.

BILL
How is this a suicide note?

CASSIE
It's a Goethe quote. "See Naples
and die." Clay said it all the
time. It meant after seeing Naples
there was nothing left to do but
die because nothing would ever
compare to that moment.

Bill contemplates this a beat before handing it back to her.

BILL
It's a postcard, Cass.

CASSIE
...That he left on a nightstand at
the Sunset Towers Hotel. Why would
he even stay at a hotel he lived
two blocks away from?

BILL
I don't know... Look, you want to
play Mod Squad, fine. Pull this
shit with someone else.

CASSIE
Pull what shit?

BILL
The shit where you put up a fucking statue to a guy who basically wiped his feet on your ass for two years.

CASSIE
I came here as a friend --

BILL
I understand. Clay died. It's a fucking tragedy. I get it. It's this fond revisionist bullshit that makes me want to puke -- make Clay puke too.

CASSIE
Fuck you --

BILL
(angry now)
-- Face it Cass, Clay works much better as a memory than he ever did as a reality. You wanna sweep all his dick-ish qualities under the rug and magically turn the silent asshole at the end of his name into a, "There'll never be another like him," go for it. But you're going to have to re-write history with some other shmuck.

Cassie stares at him incredulous. Speechless, she heads out. Bill, immediately regretting what he's said, rushes to the door and calls out to Cassie who is now making her way down Bill's apartment staircase.

BILL (CONT'D)
He dumped you! I'm here! I'm right fucking here!

Cassie reaches the bottom step to find Clay's apparition standing there. As she passes him:

CLAY'S APPARITION
He does make a pretty good fucking point.

INT. GOLDIE'S OFFICE - LATER

MUSIC CUE: 'TIME HAS COME TODAY,' BY THE CHAMBERS BROTHERS

The music swells as A WELL MANICURED HAND holding a rolled up hundred dollar bill works its way down a line of coke. We tilt up to see it's Goldie holding it. She sniffs hard before handing the folded bill to MITCH BOMBADIER, mid 50's, who follows suit. Mitch is one of the producers from the 'Tonight Show.' The scene should move back and forth as though the camera were drifting between them, never locked, with both Goldie and Mitch always a little out of frame. The music should be loud, so that they're almost yelling over each other at times. It should feel frenetic, a little crazy.

GOLDIE

This is fucking bullshit Mitch. You know that, right?

Mitch straightens up after doing his bump.

MITCH

Look, Johnny liked your boy. Had him come and sit next to him... now this thing with the bus... rumors that he was upset with Johnny and the 'Tonight Show'... Drugs...

GOLDIE

So, rumors are the rule of the day now? He was out celebrating, had too much to drink and fell in front of a bus. Carson had him take the couch, who wouldn't tie one on?

MITCH

People there said he saw the bus. Walked right in front of it. The police are still investigating --

GOLDIE

So fucking Johnny's punishing me?

MITCH

It's the fucking sponsors, okay? If anybody's being punished it's us. Look, Johnny feels bad, but I think we're gonna go with more established comics for awhile... see how this all shakes out.

GOLDIE

"Established?" What, you gonna dry clean Red Skeleton and send him out there? Good luck.

(then)

How long we talking?

MITCH

Four... five months. Then we'll bring the kids back in --

GOLDIE

Fine, you want to re-treads, be my guest. Merv and "The Midnight Special" can have first shot at my kids. I got more producers and agents packing this place every night than Telly Savalas has lollipops. Because if you're waiting for them to act stable you've got a loooong fucking wait. They got mother issues, daddy issues... they're about as stable as a Middle East cease-fire. But that volatility, that pain, that... willingness to walk in front of a fucking bus an hour after killing on Carson -- if that's what he did - - that's the fucking price of brilliance. That's what makes millions of your fucking viewers stay up to the ass crack of dawn waiting to see them. You think they're gonna stay up to watch Henny Youngman try not to piss himself while he fiddles? These are tortured fucking souls who leave it all out there every night.

MITCH

And here I thought we were talking about comedians.

Mitch does another line of coke.

GOLDIE

You want genius? You come here. You want Catskill or some green kid shitting walnuts on national television, then zay gazunt.

MITCH

(wiping his nose)
Goldie the King maker.

GOLDIE

Damn straight. You wanna know what these kids get from me they don't get anywhere else?

Goldie lifts her blouse revealing her naked breasts.

MITCH

Whoa! What's with the props --

GOLDIE

-- These fucking babies. I nurse these fucking kids. They latch on and don't let go until I tell them it's time to get off. So when they go on your show they knock it the fuck out of the park. It's called trust, Mitch. They trust that when I know they're ready, that's when they're ready. That's when I call you shmendriks.

Mitch leans back, smiles. She's tough but he likes her.

MITCH

Unman the torpedoes. I get it.

Goldie lowers her blouse.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Look, we both know those other shows don't mean shit to these kids. It's Johnny or nothing... Let's give the sponsors a little time to let their pants dry and I'll see what I can do.

GOLDIE

Yeah. Maybe we can hold hands and buy the world a fucking coke, too.

MITCH

(beat)

Not for nothing. Nice tits.

Goldie lowers her head to do another line.

GOLDIE

Fucking took you long enough.

INT. APARTMENT CLOSET - LATER

Arnie stands with Eddie and Larry.

ARNIE

What do you think?

EDDIE

I think we're standing in the middle of a closet.

We widen to reveal they are indeed standing in a closet.

LARRY

You can't even fit one bed in here,
never mind two.

ARNIE

Yeah, but you can fit two sleeping
bags. Plus you have access to a
toilet, a shower and a kitchen. All
semi-functional.

EDDIE

We'll take it.

LARRY

You fucking serious?

EDDIE

We need a place to crash.

ARNIE

I'll need rent up front. Sixty
bucks cash.

Larry sighs as he and Eddie dig into their wallets.

ARNIE (CONT'D)

Three other people live here so you
gotta put your name on all your
food. If you don't that means it's
up for grabs.

They hand Arnie the money.

ARNIE (CONT'D)

Also, this is the closet to my
bedroom, so if Maggie and I --

LARRY

Who's Maggie?

ARNIE

My girl. One of the roommates,
which, by the way, hands off. If
we're screwing while you're in
here, then you got to stay in here
until we're done.

LARRY

And how will we know when that is?

EDDIE

Yeah. What does that cocktail of degradation and self loathing sound like when it's finished? Is it sobbing, a single gunshot...?

Larry starts laughing.

ARNIE

Funny. Enjoy your closet.

He exits shutting the door behind him.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Angie is asleep, wrapped up in her son's bed covers while Guy goes through his son's scrapbook. He leafs through the pages. In it are clippings of Clay's performances over the years. His eyes well as he turns one page after another. Mixed in with the write ups are photos of Clay and Cassie. Page after page until suddenly they stop. He then turns the blank pages that will never be filled. He quietly closes the scrapbook, takes it to a trash bag and dumps it. Guy sits back into his chair, opens his Bible and begins to read.

ESTABLISHING SHOT: INT. LADY OF THE PALMS CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

A nervous looking Adam is lead by a Father Jacob from earlier down a small hallway. They come to two large wooden doors. Father Jacob knocks. After a beat, the door is opened by ANOTHER PRIEST, FATHER GLASS, early forties.

WE ENTER A DYING MONSIGNOR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

In bed on oxygen and barely breathing is A DYING MONSIGNOR. Obviously on his last legs, the Monsignor is propped up with pillows by the two other priests. They turn up the oxygen on his nasal cannula, it's hiss now audible. Once comfortable, they move silently out of the way. They all three then look to Adam whose eyes dart back and forth between them clearly uncomfortable and not sure how to proceed.

ADAM

So what, I should just...?

The two priests say nothing. Adam takes a deep breath. How the fuck did he get here. Adam stares at Jesus on the crucifix hanging over the Monsignor's bed.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Take that down.

The two priests glance up at the Jesus on the cross.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'm fucking serious.

FATHER JACOB
Language, Adam. Please.

ADAM
"Language?" Really?

Father Glass goes about removing the crucifix while Adam slowly undoes his belt buckle, unzips his pants, and off camera, starts to MASTURBATE in front of his RAPT AUDIENCE, fulfilling a dying monsignor's last wish.

ADAM (CONT'D)
So... anybody here from out of town?

INT. GOLDIE'S - LATER THAT NIGHT

MATCH to the FACES OF ANOTHER RAPT AUDIENCE as they watch Tim, the guy on acid earlier, in mid performance.

TIM
...I'm just saying, Shirley Temple was a racist. A tiny, curly haired, patronizing member of the Kute Klux Klan. Watch 'The Littlest Rebel' again. It's 'Birth of a Nation' with pouting and tap dancing.

The audience laughs as we widen to reveal Bill's there as well as Eddie and Larry who stand at the opposite end of the bar getting the lay of the land. Eddie notices Cassie entering the club.

LARRY
I gotta use the head.

Eddie nods says nothing, keeping his eyes on Cassie.

ANGLE ON:

Cassie, as she makes her way through the bar area, sees Bill but doesn't break stride. He reaches out and gently grabs her arm. Cassie takes her arm back.

CASSIE
I need to talk with Goldie about Clay's memorial service tomorrow.

He takes her arm again. Again she pulls it back.

BILL
 Look, I fucked up. I'm an
 antisocial asshole... A...
 narcissistic douchebag --

CASSIE
 Congratulations. You just named
 that tune in three sentences.

Cassie crosses off as Bill watches. Cassie continues her
 cross passing Eddie.

EDDIE
 Hey.

Cassie looks at him, remembers where she knows him from and
 stops. A little out of politeness, a little out of guilt.

CASSIE
 Clay's friend, right?

EDDIE
 Eddie Ziedel.

CASSIE
 (they shake hands)
 Cassie Harrington.

EDDIE
 I just wanted to apologize for
 yesterday --

CASSIE
 No... I'm sorry --

EDDIE
Don't, please don't. Couple of bums
 show up to crash on your
 boyfriend's couch... not the best
 comedic timing.

Cassie reacts to the word, "boyfriend."

CASSIE
 We weren't... well, hadn't been for
 awhile anyway.
 (off Eddie's look)
 Boyfriend/girlfriend...

EDDIE
 Oh. Sorry, I just --

CASSIE

I'm helping his parents get things in order. They don't really know their way around here.

(beat)

I mean we were... a couple, but... ended awhile ago, two years together. But...

Cassie's voice trails off. No longer having the energy for garbled small talk. Eddie can sense this and tries to revive the conversation. There's something about her...

EDDIE

We found a place.

CASSIE

Cool.

EDDIE

It's great. It's got all the comforts of an abandoned stationwagon.

Cassie chuckles.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Wonderful view. On a clear day you can see all the way to where the bums defecate between parked cars.

Cassie laughs. A brief, welcome respite for her. We pull back to reveal they're being watched by Bill who tugs on a bottle of Bud as he glares at the two of them. WE STAY WITH BILL AS Sully approaches, frantic.

SULLY

Kay here?

Lost in his own misery, Bill looks at him but says nothing.

SULLY (CONT'D)

Kay? Waitress Kay? Clay's Kay?

Bill snaps out of it.

BILL

How the fuck do I know?

SULLY

She gave me crabs.

BILL

Really? What'd you get her?

SULLY
I'm fucking serious, man.

BILL
So, get some Quell --

SULLY
I slept with Betty last night.

BILL
(oh shit)
Nice knowing you.

SULLY
She's already hormonal being six months pregnant... She's gonna kill me when she sees I've turned her panties into a fucking aquarium.

Bill looks up suddenly noticing that Cassie's gone. He glares at Eddie who watches the comic on stage, unaware.

INT. GOLDIE'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER

Goldie is seated behind her desk holding Clay's postcard. Cassie sits across from Goldie, watching her expectantly.

GOLDIE
So, you think he killed himself?

CASSIE
Yes.

GOLDIE
And this postcard-suicide note says that?

Cassie, sensing the skepticism in Goldie's voice, digs in while taking back the card.

CASSIE
I know Clay.

Goldie takes this in. She does know Clay.

GOLDIE
You show this to anyone else?

CASSIE
Bill.

GOLDIE
Anyone who cares? His parents...?

CASSIE

No. But I'm going to. They deserve the truth.

Goldie produces a gold cigarette case. She offers one to Cassie who declines before taking one for herself.

GOLDIE

Nobody "deserves" the truth, sweetie. It's not a reward.

Goldie lights a cigarette, draws in the smoke...

CASSIE

Wouldn't you want to know if it were your son?

Goldie shrugs, blows out the smoke and says nothing. After a beat she holds up her gold cigarette case.

GOLDIE

My Dad gave me this on my twenty-first birthday.

(then)

Talk about your "To be's or not to be's..." Poor bastard. Treblinka. Eight months before he was finally liberated.

Cassie looks puzzled, not sure where Goldie's story's headed. Goldie indicates a photo on her desk, obviously him.

GOLDIE (CONT'D)

He said a Star of David was hung above the gas chamber entrance. Painted in Hebrew on a purple curtain were the words, "This is the Gateway to God. Righteous men will pass through." They even lined the gas chamber entrance with flowers... The train ramp to Treblinka was disguised to look like a regular railway station with signs, timetables and even a clock painted on the wall.

CASSIE

Why are you telling me this?

GOLDIE

My father knew the truth. He knew where he was going. And when he got there, where he was... what that acrid smell in the air was...

(MORE)

GOLDIE (CONT'D)
 but the truth wasn't going to let
 him sleep at night. It seldom does.

CASSIE
 His parents should know.

GOLDIE
 Say you're right. They're Catholic.
 So you're pretty much damning their
 son to hell. You tell them "the
 truth" and they'll never have
 another decent nights sleep again.

CASSIE
 So, I shouldn't say anything?

Goldie looks at the old photo on her desk.

GOLDIE
 The flowers at Treblinka...? My
 father said they were the most
 beautiful he'd ever seen.

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

EXT. CLAY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NEXT MORNING - DAY (3)

Quiet, empty, not a hooker or homeless person in sight.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angie is asleep in her son's bed. Guy is asleep in the chair
 next to it, Bible in lap. Angie starts to scratch her
 eyebrows, lightly at first, then waking up, scratches harder.

ANGIE
 Guy...? Guy.

Guy startles as she sits up and continues to scratch...

INT. DRUGSTORE - SHORT TIME LATER

A half awake Cassie and Guy watch as A DRUGGIST places
 ointment into a bag as Guy impatiently holds out cash. The
 druggist takes it before slowly counting out the change to a
 scowling Guy.

EXT. DRUGSTORE - SUNSET BLVD - SHORT TIME LATER

Guy and Cassie head out of the drugstore and up the street.

CASSIE
 I'm sorry...

GUY

For what? My dead son's accident or
his giving his mother vermin?

They stop at Cassie's car.

CASSIE

Mister Appuzo...

Cassie hesitates before producing the postcard from her bag and handing it to him. Guy takes it and looks at it. Then back at her, puzzled.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Clay left it at the hotel he was
staying the night of his...
accident.

GUY

"See Naples."

(beat)

What? Why are you showing me this?

CASSIE

The bus... I think Clay may have...

The words stick in her throat. She looks at him, her face conveying what it is she both fears and believes. He looks back at her, a slow dawning that turns into a full realization. A look of horror spreads across his weathered face. The words sputter out.

GUY

It was an accident. My boy... he
had an accident. He'd been
drinking...

Cassie says nothing. Guy stares at the postcard, his anger catching up to his fear.

GUY (CONT'D)

Do you understand? An accident.

(then)

He was, he was... drinking and,
and, and... he fell in front of
that bus in this God forsaken hell
hole. My poor boy he fell... he...

Guy throws his arm across his eyes in a child like attempt at hiding his pain. Cassie places her hand on his shoulder. Suddenly he tears the postcard in pieces before tossing it onto the sidewalk, kicking at the pieces as though trying to make them go away.

GUY (CONT'D)

Here! Here's your memorial. Here
are his ashes. Scatter them all
over this Gomorrah that killed him!

Cassie doesn't flinch. Her heart open, broken, she wants to hold this destroyed old man but knows he'll never let her. Guy suddenly turns and heads down the street on foot.

CASSIE

(calling after)

You're right, Mister Appuzo, it was
an accident! I'm so sorry. Please
let me drive you back to the
hotel... Mister Appuzo...!

Cassie watches him head off as Clay's last words blow silently across the pavement.

INT. EDDIE AND LARRY'S CLOSET APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Eddie, half awake staggers into the kitchen. Standing at the stove is MAGGIE, 20's, wearing oven mitts while cooking bacon in skillet. She's wearing no pants, just a tank top and a smile.

MAGGIE

Morning roomie.

EDDIE

(thrown)

Morning...

Maggie takes a piece of bacon and bites into it. She looks at Eddie checking him out. A flirtatious smile on her face.

MAGGIE

Do you like bacon, or are you the
other kind of Jew?

On a flummoxed Eddie...

EXT. MEN'S STORE - LATER THAT MORNING

Adam and Carl exit the Men's Store.

CARL

It's a memorial service. No one's
going to say boo.

ADAM

Arnie's not gonna let me in there
without you.

CARL
 Guy's got his head so far up
 Goldie's ass he could draw her last
 meal.

ADAM
 I'm serious, Carl --

CARL
 My hands are tied, Charlie's got
 this brunch --

ADAM
 You say the words "Charlie or
 Callas" and I swear to Christ I
 will take this five dollar tie that
 you've generously agreed to pay
 for, and hang you with it.

CARL
 Just to be fair, Charlie did pay
 for ten percent of that. Look, you
 want Carson? Take Carson. Get in
 there with the big boys. Let them
 see you. It's all about
 relationships in this business.
 Mingle for Christ sake.

ADAM
 "Mingle?" At a memorial service?

CARL
 I got on the Colgate Comedy Hour by
 chatting up Eddie Cantor at a
 urinal. You do what you gotta do.

ADAM
 You know you're the worst fucking
 manager ever.

CARL
 Maybe. But I believe in you. And
 you know it.
 (then)
 We're having pork chops tonight. If
 you're late and they're dry don't
 blame me.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT BATHROOM - THAT MORNING

WE ARE CLOSE ON A PAGE IN VARIETY THAT READS: 'FREDDIE PRINZE
 SIGNS SIX FIGURE DEAL WITH PEACOCK,' A big smiling photo of
 Freddie Prinze next to it. We pull back to reveal Bill's
 reading it while on the toilet, his head about to explode.

BILL
 Are you fucking kidding... fuck
you! Fuck you, you unburdened by
 talent shit burrito! How the fuck
 do you get a deal?!

Bill violently tears the page from Variety and starts to vigorously wipe his ass with it. (his hands out of frame)

BILL (CONT'D)
 You want a deal? Here's your
 fucking deal...

Bill flushes the toilet, a beat later water starts to overflow onto the floor.

BILL (CONT'D)
 Fucking shit!

EXT. GOLDIE'S - LATER THAT MORNING

Arnie and some of the other comics mill out front, smoking a joint while others file in solemnly. Arnie snuffs out the joint on the bottom of his shoe when CASSIE'S DODGE DART pulls in. Both Cassie and Angie get out and head inside.

Adam approaches on foot dressed in his new clothes, a rust colored corduroy suit with a white shirt and rust colored tie. He's stopped by Arnie.

ARNIE
 What do you want?

ADAM
 Hey Arnie, I've come to pay my
 respects.

ARNIE
 Really? You a friend of Clay's?

ADAM
 Yeah.
 (beat)
 Sort of. He bought me a slice of
 pizza once after my set.

ARNIE
 "Pizza?" Fuck, you're practically
 best buds. Screw kid.

Sully approaches having overheard.

SULLY

(to Adam)

Heeeeeeey! My date's here.

(cliche gay guy voice)

You look fabulous. Arnie, you should get a suit like this, rust would go so well with your jokes.

ARNIE

He's just trying to finagle stage time. He doesn't know Clay.

Sully drops the gay affectation.

SULLY

Neither do you if you think Clay would really give a shit.

(then)

He's my guest.

The two of them pass a pissed off Arnie.

INT. GOLDIE'S - CONTINUOUS

Inside, there are sandwiches, pasta salads, drinks, all spread out on a long banquet table. Sully enters with Adam.

ADAM

Thanks.

SULLY

Forget it. There's only one rule in this business, and so far no one's figured out what it is yet. So welcome to the wild, wild west. Enjoy the egg salad.

Sully pats Adam on the back before heading over to Ralph and Bill. Once there:

RALPH

Betty coming? I heard she's bringing the seafood.

Ralph mimes crab pinchers with his fingers.

SULLY

She's meeting her mother this morning to pick out a crib. She's going to stop by on her way back.

BILL

And the krill in her skivvies?

SULLY

I told her I got them from the Y.

RALPH

Well, technically you did.

SULLY

I called the YMCA this morning and blasted them while she was in the next room. Told them I had a pregnant wife and now she probably had them, that I was going to take them to court.

BILL

And she bought that?

SULLY

Hook, line and sinker. I even canceled my membership which sucks because I loved working out there. It's inexpensive and truth be told, really clean.

(then, to Bill)

Why are your sneakers wet?

RALPH

Freddie Prinze clogged his toilet.

SULLY

Really? I didn't realize you guys were that close where you let him shit in your apartment.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Guy sits watching the MIKE DOUGLAS SHOW on Clay's old black and white. TODIE FIELDS (or whatever comic guest footage we can get) is joking with Mike. Guy watches them banter as the audience laughs.

INT. GOLDIE'S BAR AREA - LATER

We are close on Angie laughing while dabbing her eyes, her eyebrows thick with crab ointment. The comics are all laughing as Ralph finishes up a story about him and Clay.

RALPH

...So Clay introduces us and the girls ask how we know each other. Clay tells them totally straight faced, "We're cousins through rape."

Everyone cracks up.

Then he went on giving a history lesson about how the Moors who were black, invaded, raped and pillaged Sicily. But it was in the past and now we're one big happy family.

(beat)

Neither of us got laid that night.

Everyone laughs including Angie as Ralph crosses and hugs her.

EXT. GOLDIE'S - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Guy, on foot, approaches. The sound of laughter coming from the club a knife in his heart.

INT. GOLDIE'S - CONTINUOUS

Eddie has now taken center stage.

EDDIE

I know none of you know us... me and my friend, Larry... but I knew Clay from back in Boston when his first name was still Calogero. We were both kids making pizzas at Romero's, an authentic Italian restaurant owned by my Jewish uncle.

A titter of laughter.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Later, Clay got a job in the Combat Zone doing comedy at a strip club. I'd drive into Boston and watch him. I was probably the only guy not there to see the strippers, but to watch Calogero -- Clay -- perform. He'd be up there telling these jokes about his family, about growing up in a small town... but they weren't jokes... they were these - I don't know - secrets about himself.

Eddie and Cassie make eye contact. Her eyes brimming as she smiles, watching him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

One night after closing, we sat at the bar for a beer.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I asked him, how does he get up in front of all these drunks and make them laugh at the most embarrassing, shameful... painful moments of his life? He said it was easier to confess to a room full of drunken strangers the truth about himself than it was to the people he really loved.

Eddie again makes eye contact with Cassie.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

He was beautiful.

It's silent. Angie gets up from her chair crosses to Eddie and hugs him.

ANGIE

Thank you.

GUY (O.C.)

Angelina.

Everyone turns to see Clay's father, expressionless, standing at the door.

ANGIE

Guy... come in. You should hear their stories about Calogero...

GUY

We're leaving.

GOLDIE

Mister Appuzo, please... have a seat.

Guy ignores Goldie and instead walks to the center and looks around at everyone.

GUY

My son is dead. He was a child. He was always a child. You... are all children. You think you can joke your way out of everything. Pain? Heartbreak? Life? Go ahead, then what? It's all still there waiting for you. Waiting to be dealt with. You're children closing your eyes thinking no one can see you. I see you. I see right through you.

Guy then unceremoniously takes his wife's hand and they exit.

EXT. GOLDIE'S - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

As Clay's parents are leaving, they cross by A YOUNG, OBVIOUSLY PREGNANT WOMAN CARRYING A BASEBALL BAT as she starts SMASHING the windshield of a car that's parked in the lot. The comics come to the door when they hear the commotion. Sully sees this.

SULLY

Oh shit...

Sully runs out and tries to grab the bat. Betty swings at him and misses.

SULLY (CONT'D)

Honey... what are you doing?! You know the doctor said no destruction of property until after the baby.

A crying Betty rips a piece of paper from her pocket and throws it at him. Sully bends over to pick it up.

BETTY

It's the receipt for your crab lotion! If you found out this morning, then why is the receipt from two days ago you sonofabitch?!

Again Betty comes down on Sully's windshield with her baseball bat. At the door Kay and Goldie watch. After a beat.

KAY

Mind if I grab a beer?

GOLDIE

I'll join you.

The two women head inside passing Adam who girds his loins and stops Goldie.

ADAM

Goldie? Hi... Adam Proteau.

GOLDIE

I know who you are.

ADAM

I know this isn't the time --

GOLDIE

I said I know who you are. Quit while you're ahead.

Goldie continues back inside her club.

INT. CASSIE'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Cassie sits on a beat up sofa smoking a cigarette. She stares off blankly. Beside her, Clay's Apparition puffs away on a cigarette also.

CLAY'S APPARITION

Where are you in all this, Cass?
 (fake southern accent)
 All those stories about your mom
 and how hard it is being a single
 gal from Wink Texas trying to make
 it in big ole LA...

Clay's apparition leans back blowing out smoke rings a beat.

CLAY'S APPARITION (CONT'D)

It's shit, Cass. Jokes. Fuck, the
 bartender can tell jokes. Real
 laughter... it's... cathartic. It's
 the current that runs through an
 audience when some truth about who
 you are -- who they are is
 revealed. Trust me, you've got to
 go out there and put your arms
 around that messy part of yourself
 and...

Clay mimes as though squeezing it in a deep hug, then releasing it with an, "Ahhhhhhhh."

CLAY'S APPARITION (CONT'D)

Family cares too much, Cass. Only
 strangers can handle the truth.
 Only they can set you free. So
 figure out what it is you really
 want to say, then go out there,
 open a vein... and say it.

Cassie continues to stare off as she brings the smoldering cigarette to her lips.

INT. GOLDIE'S OFFICE - LATER THAT WEEK

Goldie, cigarette dangling, is counting out cash. There's a knock, as Cassie pokes her head in. Goldie keeps counting.

GOLDIE

Come in, Sweetie.

Cassie enters and sits as Goldie continues counting.

GOLDIE (CONT'D)

You look tired. You need a bump?

CASSIE

I want to go up tonight.

GOLDIE

The Cellar's yours. Name the time --

CASSIE

Not the Cellar. The big room.

Goldie stops counting her cash and studies the determined looking Cassie. She tamps out her cigarette, staring.

GOLDIE

What are you?

CASSIE

What?

GOLDIE

I have no idea what the fuck you are.

CASSIE

I'm a comedian --

GOLDIE

No, what are you? You're funny I'll give you that. Phyllis Diller, I know what she is. Joan Rivers I get, Moms Mablee... but you? Not a clue. You've got no point of view. You're all over the map. You're sexy -- which is not a plus. They don't hear half your jokes because they're too busy staring at your tits. You go a little blue sometimes and when you don't you're all awe shucks and cow shit. I have no idea what your female perspective is.

CASSIE

There is no one female perspective just like there's no one guy perspective.

GOLDIE

We're not them, honey. Look, you wanna go on the "Tonight Show?" Then let me help you. Find a voice that women can relate to...

(MORE)

GOLDIE (CONT'D)

That sheds light on our mutual experiences, then I'll stick you on the main stage front and center, my right hand to Carson.

Cassie sits back.

CASSIE

Is Kaufman like Letterman, or Leno like Pryor?

GOLDIE

That's not my point --

CASSIE

Yet they all fit up there on your stage. Why are women different? There's room for me, too. I just need your stage to prove it.

GOLDIE

When you're ready.

Cassie lights a cigarette over the following.

CASSIE

Word has it the 'Tonight Show's' laying off young comics for awhile. That the circumstances surrounding Clay's death has got them re-thinking things.

GOLDIE

Your point?

CASSIE

The LA Times is doing an interview with me tomorrow about Clay. About his death. They want me to set things straight. The truth.

GOLDIE

And what is the truth?

CASSIE

You tell me.

Goldie smirks at Cassie. She leans in with her own cigarette and lets Cassie light it. She sits back.

GOLDIE

Well, at least now I know what you are.

CASSIE

Clay used to always say... most leaps of faith are often preceded by a shove.

INT. GOLDIE'S - MAIN STAGE - NIGHT

Bill, Eddie, Larry, Adam and Carl are all in attendance. The place is packed. All are performing (except Adam). Ralph is emceeing. A MANIC Sully is at the mic. The audience laughs throughout his routine.

SULLY

Looks like with the Vietnam War close to an end the draft will soon be over. Which is nice because it means a lot of comedians will be coming home... from Canada. Comics aren't big on bravery. We can make a white flag out of anything. We're like those guys who make balloon animals at fairs.

Sully mimes twisting balloons, then waving an imaginary white flag:

SULLY (CONT'D)

Welcome to Italy!

(then)

We're not fighters. We come out of the womb handing over our lunch money... "Here you go, Doc, just please stop slapping me." Can you imagine if comics stormed Normandy?

Sully mimes being on a walkie-talkie.

SULLY (CONT'D)

"Ike, yeah... hate to be a downer but can we storm someplace else? With all the barbed wire and land mines, there's no place to put our blankets down. Plus it's cloudy... really not really a beach day.

(then)

Excuse me, Ike... what Kevin? Sand fleas?! That's it. I'm ordering everyone back on the boat. This is bullshit, we are not storming here for another minute..."

Off to the side Cassie stands waiting to go on. We hear the wild applause as Sully waves and exits as Cassie tentatively makes her way to the stage. She passes Bill, his baby finger hooking hers briefly.

RALPH

Fuck self-esteem, let's hear it for Sully Patterson ladies and gentlemen. Our next comic is a real treat. It's her first time on the main stage, and all I can say is it's about fucking time! Easy on the eyes and funny as hell. Give it up please for Cassie Haaaarrington!

The audience claps as Cassie makes her way on stage and takes the mic from Ralph. Cassie shields her eyes for a second while looking out at the audience. She's bright and perky.

CASSIE

(exaggerated twang)

Hi Y'all. That's right, I'm from Texas. We say y'all. Y'all is Texas shorthand for, we will shoot you. All a you.

The audience laughs as Goldie enters the room unbeknownst to Cassie and edges her way over to Bill and the other comics.

BACK UP ON STAGE:

Cassie holds the mic absently swinging its cord.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

You know what's fun about being single in Texas? Making out in pick-up trucks. Oh, girls you haven't lived until you're in the front seat of one of those babies, trapped under a farm boy who just spent his day watching his daddy's cows hump...

The audience laughs along, amused. Cassie again looks out into the audience. She stops when she sees Clay's apparition in the back, arms folded. A beat as she stands there unsure. THE CAMERA PANS AROUND to the audience's faces, polite, smiling, as amused by her as any other comic that night... until it gets quiet. Her body language changes. She deflates a little, her smile disappears. Gone is Cassie's perky, upbeat demeanor. She stares out at the audience.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 You ever have life pull a trick on
 you that you never saw coming?

Cassie's twang now a soft southwestern afterthought.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 You're just walking along all happy
 and stupid... Doot-dee-doot-dee-
 doot... then wham. Without any
 warning life just... bends you over
 and tucks it straight up your ass?

The crowd chuckles not sure what it is they're seeing. Cassie
 looks out unsure also and sees Clay's apparition watching,
 smiling.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 That's what happened to me. I...
 lost a friend recently. An ex
 boyfriend actually.

Cassie's eyes well with emotion.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 Man, did I ever love him. He was
 Italian, swarthy, had big brown
 eyes and was so... so kind, not
 that he couldn't be a dick, too.

ANGLE ON GOLDIE AND BILL.

GOLDIE
 Get her the fuck off the stage.

Bill holds out his hand stopping her. Something's happening.

ANGLE BACK ON STAGE.

CASSIE
 Here I was some failed psych major
 from Wink, Texas. A town that's
 major export is people getting the
 fuck out of Wink...

The audience laughs. Cassie rides this a little.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 I knew I was overmatched from the
 start. You know you're overmatched
 when you end up blowing a guy on
 your first date.

The audience laughs hard, especially the women, not used to hearing this type of humor from one of their own. Goldie, brow furrowed, stands watching, concerned but not unaware of the audience's response.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Seriously... I have no idea how it even happened. One minute I'm smiling and listening to him tell me about how growing up he'd have lasagna for Thanksgiving instead of turkey, the next I'm blowing him in the front seat of his Valiant wondering what our kids are going to look like.

(imitating giving head)

"If ish a boy e'll name him 'Arry, if ish a girl, Cahndish..."

We see Eddie and Larry laughing along with the audience.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

What happened to me?! I didn't blow guys in Wink. I'm out in LA one month and I'm sucking the dick of a guy my father would have shot for smiling at a white woman.

More laughter from Sully, Ralph and the crowd.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

If my father knew I was blowing an Italian, that'd have been the end of it.

(deep drawl)

"That's it, you're out of the will. As soon as I get something worth leaving to you, I'm leaving it to your brother instead... Can't believe you're sucking an Eye-talian's dick when you've got perfectly good cousin dick right ch'ere in Wink..."

The audience howls with laughter as this new emerging voice makes her presence known.

ANGLES ON:

Sully, Ralph, Eddie, Larry, Adam and Carl also clap wildly while Bill smiles at Cassie, a witness. Goldie watches the audiences overly enthusiastic response. She takes in the laughter before pulling out her gold cigarette case.

She removes a cigarette and lights it, then leaning back exhales, the comedy landscape and her club irrevocably changing as the laughter gets louder. Up on stage, Cassie drinks it in.

INT. EDDIE AND LARRY'S CLOSET APARTMENT - LATER

Eddie and Larry are in their sleeping bags. The sounds of sex a murmur through the door.

LARRY

Great. I gotta take a piss. When's this prick gonna blow his nut?

We hear more noises from the other side of the door.

EDDIE

You know Lenny Bruce's first paying gig was twelve dollars and a free plate of spaghetti?

LARRY

(rubs empty stomach)
I love spaghetti.
(beat, then)
Z?

EDDIE

Yeah?

LARRY

Where the fuck are we?

From outside the closet door we hear the sounds of lovemaking intensifying. Loud and shrill from the Maggie, low and guttural from Arnie as they orgasm. Eddie smirks at Larry.

EDDIE

Hollywood brothaaa.

As the two men start to laugh...

INT. CANTERS LATE THAT NIGHT

Cassie sits alone in a booth as a WAITRESS places a bowl of soup in front of her. Cassie smiles wanly.

CASSIE

Thank you.

As Cassie starts to eat her soup...

MUSIC CUE: As RINGO STARR'S 'YOU KNOW IT DON'T COME EASY'
swells, we...

CUT TO BLACK

THE END

