

BOOMERANG

by

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Based on a story

by

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**For Educational
Purposes Only**

DE
FAX

Second Draft
August 22, 1991

EXT. THE LAKE IN CENTRAL PARK - DAY

A warm autumn day. The trees in the park are blushed with fall colors. Life couldn't be lovelier. On the lake, COUPLES glide by in rowboats. All kinds of couples. White couples. Black couples. Latino couples. Mixed couples.

We PUSH THROUGH the maze of couples to a spot way out in the middle of the lake where a solitary boat drifts aimlessly. It's lone occupant is MARCUS GRAHAM, a handsome young man who gazes at the lake, pensive, lost in thought. After a moment, he turns and SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO CAMERA.

MARCUS

I just messed up real bad. I lost the only woman that I ever really, really, really, really, really cared about. And all I can think about is how to get her back. I know a lot of sisters are saying...

(in a falsetto)

"Screw him. He deserve it. He ain't nothin' but a dog."

(back to his voice)

And they're probably right. It wasn't always like this. I used to never have problems with women. It used to be so easy.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT (CIRCA 1961) - DAY

Adorable BABY MARCUS is in his bassinet, flashing a cute smile, flirting with a group of admiring WOMEN NEIGHBORS.

MARCUS (V.O., CONT'D)

Ever since I was little, women have been attracted to me.

WOMEN

(ad libbing)

Hi, Marcus. Isn't he cute? ... Check out that smile ... That little boy is gonna be a lady killer.

MARCUS (V.O.)

And Lord knows, I was attracted to them.

MUSIC: "A.B.C." BY THE JACKSON FIVE

Opening CREDITS are SUPERIMPOSED over:

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS: BABY MARCUS and the WOMEN in his early life:

Baby Marcus is given a sponge bath by a CUTE COUSIN. As she swabs his ear, he reaches for her breasts.

A plump AUNT snuggles Baby Marcus to her chest as she sings a hymn in church. He grabs her heaving bosoms.

His Mom is riding the bus, holding Baby Marcus over her shoulder, unaware that he is groping for the huge breasts of the WOMAN PASSENGER behind them.

A buxom young BABY SITTER lifts Baby Marcus out of his playpen. He makes a two-handed grab for her breasts. The Sitter tries to brush his hands away, but Marcus hangs on for dear life.

INT. LUNCHEONETTE (CIRCA 1968) - DAY

A WAITRESS serves an ice cream soda to a cute SECOND GRADE GIRL who is sitting at a table with some GIRLFRIENDS. The waitress points to ...

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD MARCUS

sitting at a table across the way, flashing her his best lady-killer smile. He nods as if to say, "Yes, it's for you." His FRIENDS make fun of him for being interested in girls.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Playtime is over. The TEACHER calls the KIDS inside. Kids climb off the swings, slides, and merry-go-round. The Teacher calls again.

TEACHER

Marcus!

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD MARCUS comes out of the bushes with the same cute little GIRL he gave the soda to.

INT. GRADE SCHOOL GYM - DAY

The CAMERA moves along an endless line of SECOND GRADE GIRLS, all of them waiting to dance with Marcus. He slow dances with the lucky girl of the moment, as smooth as a pint-sized Cary Grant.

INT. SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY

A pretty LADY TEACHER opens her Christmas gifts from the class. She unwraps a fountain pen, thanking the proud LITTLE GIRL who gave it to her. She opens another box. It's a sexy see-through negligee. Little Marcus flashes her a bashful grin.

INT. GRAMMAR SCHOOL LUNCHROOM (CIRCA 1973) - DAY

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD MARCUS -- now sporting a big Afro -- moves down the cafeteria line with his best friend GERARD, a shy, skinny kid with glasses. Marcus schmoozes and flirts with all the CAFETERIA LADIES.

LADIES

Hi, Marcus.

They smile and titter and adjust their hairnets, pleased and flattered by Marcus' attention, loading up his plate with extra food. Marcus is the Warren Beatty of the canned-beans-for-lunch set. Gerard gets nothing.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

Marcus is at bat. The pitch! Marcus swings ... connects he takes off ... his classmates cheering him on. Rounding first, Marcus sees ...

A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL

riding her bike down the street. God, she's cute.

MARCUS

crosses second and keeps on going ... straight across left field, hopping the low fence, chasing after the girl.

GERARD

buries his face in his hands. He can't believe his friend is doing it again.

EXT. HIGH-RISE OFFICE BUILDING IN MANHATTAN (1991) - DAY

INT. LOBBY OF THE CHANTRESS COSMETICS COMPANY - SAME TIME

The gleaming elevator doors glide open revealing ...

MARCUS GRAHAM, now a handsome young man with a ready grin, trim, confident, stylishly dressed ... the epitome of a ladies' man.

The CAMERA TRACKS along with him as he strides confidently down the hallway. The place exudes glamour, elegance, sophistication. Marcus greets several of the GORGEOUS WOMEN who work here. It's like a bachelor's wet dream.

PRETTY RECEPTIONIST

Good morning, Marcus.

MARCUS

Morning. Is that a new dress?

The Receptionist smiles and nods. Marcus passes by another ATTRACTIVE WOMAN.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

Hi, Marcus. Are you ever gonna ask me out again?

MARCUS

You know I will.

Marcus strolls past a huge space filled with desks where a DOZEN YOUNG WOMEN are working. They all greet him warmly.

WOMEN

(AD LIBBING: "Good morning. Hi, Marcus. How are you?")

MARCUS

Damn ya'll look good. You give me reason to live.

We keep TRACKING with Marcus as he enters ...

HIS OFFICE SUITE

He speaks to his middle-aged secretary NOREEN.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Hi, Noreen. I need you to send a single long-stem rose to ...

(taking out a piece of paper)

Kerrie, Tracy, Miranda, Casandra, Allegra, Chanelle, and Mei Ling.

NOREEN

With the usual card?

MARCUS

Yes ... "thinking only of you."

NOREEN

Right. Don't forget you have the meeting with Lady Evelyn tomorrow at nine. Nelson's waiting for you inside. Also, Anita called.

MARCUS

Damn, I forgot all about her! Call her back.

Marcus enters ...

HIS OFFICE

Impressive, stylish. A sweeping view of Midtown Manhattan. On one wall is a bank of video monitors. A tall, severe-looking bald-headed man is holding a video cassette in his hand. This is NELSON, fashion photographer and director of TV commercials.

NELSON

I recut the Kissable spot.

MARCUS

Is it sexy?

NELSON

Hey, I got a boner.

MARCUS

Let's see it.

Nelson pops the cassette into a VCR. Noreen calls Marcus on the intercom.

NOREEN (O.S.)

Anita on line one.

As Marcus picks up the phone, he signals to Nelson who starts the tape.

MARCUS

(into phone)

Hey, Anita ... sorry I missed you last night, but I guess you heard what happened. I was coming over and a bus hit my cab. Tore up a water main. I'm surprised you didn't see it. It was on channel 4.

As he speaks to Anita, the commercial lights up the wall of video monitors, all displaying the same dazzling sexy images. It's a commercial for lipstick featuring ultra close-ups of women's LIPS eating various kinds of food. A pair of RUBY RED LIPS sucking a cherry.

More LIPS licking an ice cream cone ... a pair of plums ... an ice cube. A luscious woman's MOUTH biting into a ripe peach, spurting juice in slow motion. Another MOUTH engorging a banana. Marcus watches this with an expert eye as he continues to talk on the phone.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

No, I'm okay. My neck's a little stiff. Yeah, a massage sounds good. I'll be over around ten. I can't wait, either. Bye.

Marcus hangs up. The commercial is over.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

It's good, Nelson. I like the cherry, keep the peach, lose the plums and get rid of the banana.

NELSON

Really? I thought the banana had sort of a Bunuel quality.

MARCUS

It's too overt. If this is going to appeal to women, it's got to be subtle.

Nelson sighs, but concedes the point. Marcus BUZZES and Noreen enters.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What's next?

NOREEN

Casting for the body lotion spot.

Marcus crosses over to a window, pulls back the drape revealing ...

HIS POV -- A WAITING ROOM OUTSIDE

The room is filled with exquisite, long-legged MODELS preening, adjusting their hose, getting ready for their auditions. Marcus sighs.

MARCUS

Call the guys and tell 'em I'll be late for lunch.

EXT. GARDEN AT TAVERN ON THE GREEN - DAY

Marcus is having lunch with his best friends: a frenetic accountant named TYLER, and GERARD, who is still short, slight, and wears the same kind of glasses he wore in grade school.

TYLER

I saw something on cable last night ... really freaked me out. There's this woman lying there ... totally naked ... you can see everything ... but she's got a penis! It was a 976 number for hermaphrodites.

GERARD

(embarrassed)

Get outta here. Are there that many, that having their own 976 number makes sense?

MARCUS

Guys, you got it wrong. It's for regular people that are turned on by hermaphrodites.

TYLER

How regular is that? Sometimes I think there's a whole world out there I don't know about. Like that shit you read in Penthouse. Stuff like that never happens to me.

GERARD

It never happens to anybody. Except Marcus.

MARCUS

That's because you guys don't pay attention. Gerard, see that woman over there? She's checking you out.

They gaze at an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN across the way. Tyler tries to see, but a potted plant is blocking his view.

TYLER

Where? I can't see. How come when a brother eats at an outdoor restaurant, they always put us behind the bushes?

GERARD

Shut up, Tyler. Which one?

MARCUS
Over there in the blue. She's
making eyes at you.

GERARD
Aw, man. That's a contact lens
problem.

Sure enough, the woman is adjusting her contacts.

MARCUS
See. She was batting her eyes
at you so hard she blew out a
contact. You've gotta have more
confidence. Go talk to her.

GERARD
(shyly)
What would I say?

MARCUS
Whatever she wants to hear.

GERARD
You mean, lie?

MARCUS
Women want you to lie to them.
They expect it. It's all part
of the game. The trick is to know
what kind of lie she wants to hear.

GERARD
I can't play that. I've got to
be honest.

TYLER
Yo, that's why you don't get no
pussy.

GERARD
Why does it always have to come
down to sex? You know, there's
other things that are important
... like love ... and sharing
and commitment.

MARCUS
You sound like you've been listening
to Oprah too much.

GERARD
Don't you have any romance in your
soul?

MARCUS

Hey, man, there's no one more romantic than me. Every time I see a beautiful woman I think, "This could be her." Then I sleep with them ... and I lose interest.

The Woman in Blue passes by their table. She smiles seductively at Marcus.

WOMAN IN BLUE

Hi.

She walks away. Tyler is amazed.

TYLER

Aw man, how do you do it? Bitches never talk to me.

MARCUS

Maybe because you call them bitches.

The WAITRESS passes by. Tyler stops her.

TYLER

Excuse me? I ordered the duck. What vegetable comes with that?

WAITRESS

Asparagus spears.

She exits.

TYLER

Why doesn't she just come out and call me a jungle bunny? Asparagus spears. If I was white she would've said asparagus tips.

MARCUS

Shh.

Marcus' attention is suddenly riveted on

A YOUNG WOMAN

riding through the park on a horse ... a very handsome woman with fine, delicate features. Her pert derriere moves rhythmically as she posts with the horse.

BACK TO MARCUS

He is transported, his face frozen with rapture.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
See you later, guys.

Without another word, Marcus gets up and takes off after her.

TYLER
He'll never catch a horse.

GERARD
Fifty says he does.

Marcus leaps over a hedge and races into the park. But ...

THE WOMAN ON THE HORSE
has a good head start.

MARCUS

sees a bus passing by. He catches up with it, hopping onto the back bumper. A YOUNG WOMAN ON THE BUS recognizes Marcus. She shouts out the window.

WOMAN ON BUS
Marcus!

MARCUS
Hi, Cyndra.

WOMAN ON BUS
Are you ever going to call me again?!

MARCUS
You know I will.

As the bus turns, Marcus jumps off and races through the woods to a stone bridge. He vaults over the side, falling to the bridal trail below just as ...

THE WOMAN ON THE HORSE
rides out of the tunnel. The horse rears.

YOUNG WOMAN
What are you doing?!

Marcus melts. She is even more beautiful than he had imagined.

MARCUS

I'm sorry. I saw you go by and I just had to meet you. You're the most beautiful, perfect woman I've ever seen in my life. And now I've embarrassed myself. I'll go away and leave you alone.

Marcus turns and starts walking away, counting to himself under his breath ...

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Thousand one, thousand two ...

Then Marcus hears what he is praying to hear ... the Woman turns her horse and CLOPS slowly after him.

YOUNG WOMAN

Wait. That took a lot of courage. My name's Christie.

Marcus smiles. He's got her.

INT. MARCUS' PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

UPBEAT MUSIC underscores the master at work, getting ready for his date:

IN THE KITCHEN Marcus prepares an elaborate dinner, dicing, chopping, tossing food into the air with a saute' pan.

IN THE LIVING ROOM he adjusts a magnificent arrangement of flowers.

IN HIS DRESSING ROOM he slips into a handsome Italian sports jacket, shooting the cuffs of his silk shirt.

IN THE BEDROOM he tucks a condom up his sleeve, practicing a sleight-of-hand trick in the mirror. With a flick of the wrist he catches the condom between his thumb and forefinger, like a gunfighter refining his draw.

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

Marcus walks out on the terrace with its magnificent view of Central Park. He places a bottle of champagne in a silver bucket. YVONNE, a hostile woman in a robe, yells at him from the balcony of a nearby apartment.

YVONNE

Hey, Marcus. Who's the victim tonight?!

MARCUS
(annoyed)
Yvonne, don't start this again.

YVONNE
Why don't you tell her the truth
... that you're going to use her
and dump her like you did me!

MARCUS
Look, we only went out once and
that was three years ago. Get
over it.

YVONNE
I hope you get a disease and your
dick falls off.

MARCUS
Okay, I'm warning you. I've got
a court order that says you can't
disturb me.

YVONNE scowls and goes back inside.

EXT. THE TERRACE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Marcus and Christie have just finished a lavish meal. Though she looks gorgeous, Christie is a bit of a ditz.

CHRISTIE
There's not much to tell. I'm
a clinical psychologist and I work
with children. By the way ...
gold star for Marcus. Dinner was
yummy. How'd you learn to cook
like that?

MARCUS
You learn to cook for yourself...
(looking away pensively)
...when you're alone as much as
I am.

CHRISTIE
Really?

out of the corner of his eye Marcus spots ...

YVONNE

hanging a hand-painted sign from her balcony. It says:
"Don't trust him!!"

BACK TO MARCUS

MARCUS
It's getting a little chilly.
Let's go inside.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Marcus is at the keyboard of a baby grand playing a haunting Mozart sonata. Christie is enraptured.

CHRISTIE
That's beautiful, but it's so sad.

MARCUS
Maybe that's why I like it.

He stops playing, looking off into the distance with a wounded, sad expression.

CHRISTIE
Knock, knock ...

MARCUS
Who's there?

CHRISTIE
A scared little boy named Marcus and he wants to come out. He's been hurt, hasn't he? Tell me about him. Tell me all about Marcus.

MARCUS
Okay, I'll try. I haven't been out with a woman in almost four years. Not since Robin. I was so happy on our wedding day. When I got to the church, I knocked on her dressing room door, but Robin told me to go away because it was bad luck to see her. I opened the door anyway, and there she was ... on the floor with the best man ... and the priest.

CHRISTIE
You poor baby.

MARCUS
That's when I realized you can't trust anybody.

CHRISTIE
You can trust me.

She kisses him gently on the lips. Marcus pulls away.

MARCUS

Please ... I don't want to rush into this. Maybe I should take you home.

Christie is frustrated.

EXT. BROWNSTONE ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE - NIGHT

Marcus walks Christie to her door. They enter ...

THE HALLWAY

MARCUS

You've made me feel a lot better about myself. I can't thank you enough.

CHRISTIE

You don't have to thank me.

She kisses Marcus again, but this time hard, passionately.

CHRISTIE (CONT'D)

Marcus ... spend the night with me.

MARCUS

Well ... if you insist.

Marcus enters the apartment, closing the door behind him. We hear a body thrown against the door, then a plaintive voice...

MARCUS (O.S., CONT'D)

Please be gentle.

INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Christie lies in bed, peaceful and content after hours of love making. In the dim light, she sees Marcus getting dressed.

MARCUS

I wish I could stay, but I have an important meeting in the morning.

CHRISTIE

You'll call me again?

MARCUS
You know I will.

But we know he won't.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

It's late. Hardly anyone is on the street. Marcus looks at his watch and flags down a cab. He gets in.

MARCUS
(to the CABBIE)
Twelfth and Broadway, please.

INT. HALLWAY OF APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Marcus KNOCKS. Anita opens her apartment door wearing a nightgown, slightly pissed. She has obviously just gotten out of bed.

ANITA
What are you doing here?

MARCUS
(innocently)
I thought we had a date.

ANITA
Yeah. At ten. It's three in the morning.

Marcus hands her a long-stem rose.

MARCUS
Here, I got you something.

ANITA
Oh, is this supposed to make me forget all about it?

MARCUS
Listen, Anita, I've been working all night. I'm exhausted. But I didn't want to let you down. If you want me to leave, I will.

He starts to leave. She stops him.

ANITA
Well ... as long as you're here.

She takes him in her arms and leads him inside. It may only be sex, but damn it's good sex.

INT. CHANTRESS COSMETICS COMPANY OFFICES - DAY

Marcus emerges from the elevator dressed to kill. As he walks down the hallway, he is hounded by BONY-T, a guy from the mailroom who is under the mistaken impression that he and Marcus are friends.

BONY-T

Yo, yo, Marcus. You on your way to meet with Lady Evelyn, right? To discuss the merger and shit.

MARCUS

That's right.

BONY-T

Don't worry about it. All the homeboys in the mailroom say you definitely gonna be President of Marketing. One chump tried to say you weren't ... I almost had to kick his ass.

MARCUS

That really wasn't necessary.

BONY-T

No problem. I always back you up. You the best. It's indisputable. So, when you gonna git me in that executive training program?

MARCUS

Let's talk about it later, okay?

BONY-T

Get me a big ass office, my own posse, and git this motherfucker busy.

Marcus enters the massive doors leading to ...

INT. BOARDROOM OF CHANTRESS COSMETICS COMPANY - DAY

The room radiates power. A massive chair slowly turns around, revealing LADY EVELYN, the grand dame of the cosmetics industry. She is the bizarre portrait of a woman who is striving to be twenty, although she is now well into her sixties. Maybe even pushing seventy. It's hard to say. She is more pickled than preserved. Lady Evelyn has had so many face lifts, she almost looks Chinese. She greets him, her voice a gravelly purr.

LADY EVELYN

I'm Lady Evelyn, Mr. Graham. When I decided to acquire this company, I considered you a prime asset.

MARCUS

Thank you.

Lady Evelyn SNAPS her fingers and a PRETTY BOY ASSISTANT brings them both a glass of vile purplish liquid.

LADY EVELYN

Have some beet juice. It preserves the skin. And none of us is getting any younger.

MARCUS

Some women have a girlish quality that lasts a lifetime.

LADY EVELYN

(pleased)

They told me you were very good at beguiling women. My schedule is tight today. Why don't we meet tonight ... say ... at my house?

Lady Evelyn is about to pounce. And there's nothing Marcus can do but smile weakly and take a sip of the awful beet juice.

EXT. LADY EVELYN'S MANSION IN EAST HAMPTON - DUSK

Marcus gets out of a limo wearing a tuxedo, apprehensive about what is to come. He RINGS the bell of the baronial mansion.

INT. THE MANSION - CONT.

Lady Evelyn's Pretty boy ushers Marcus into the lavender splashed foyer. The furnishings are beyond rococo. Marcus looks up to see ...

LADY EVELYN

coming down the grand staircase to greet him, wearing a tight, sequined gown with slits all the way up her legs.

LADY EVELYN

(grandly)

Welcome to Lavender Hill.

Lady Evelyn starts down to meet him but, unfortunately, she is so decrepit and so hampered by the tight dress that she can barely negotiate the stairs without tripping. Her progress is agonizingly slow. Marcus' impulse is to reach out and help her, but the Pretty Boy gives him an admonishing glance. All Marcus can do is wait patiently as the aging seductress comes creeping down the staircase, one arduous step at a time.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Lady Evelyn sits in a throne-like chair overlooking a huge chess board laid out on the ballroom floor. Marcus is seated in an identical chair across the way. The chess pieces are trained dogs. Solid black dogs on Lady Evelyn's side of the board. Pure white dogs on Marcus' side. Marcus studies the canine playing pieces, clearly in trouble.

MARCUS

Knight to king's bishop four.

Marcus' "knight" gets up off his haunches to make the move.

LADY EVELYN

smiles serenely. She's got him.

LADY EVELYN

Queen takes knight. Checkmate.

Lady Evelyn shoots Marcus a sultry look of triumph. Marcus responds with a squeamish smile. He looks at the sidelines where two of the idled pawns -- a black poodle and a white one -- are fucking like crazy.

INT. LADY EVELYN'S BOUDOIR - NIGHT

Marcus is waiting in bed while Lady Evelyn prepares herself. He wishes he could be anywhere but here.

LADY EVELYN (O.S.)

I'm ready.

MARCUS

Just a second.

Marcus turns down the dimmer on the lights. Lady Evelyn appears wearing a diaphanous robe. Marcus dims the lights even more. She takes off her robe revealing a merry widow bustier. Marcus dims the lights completely.

IN THE PITCH BLACK

We hear the bed CREAK as they recline. Then Marcus says...

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Is this as dark as it gets?

INT. A CHINESE LAUNDRY IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

Marcus is picking up a suit on the way to work. The OLD CHINESE WOMAN behind the counter points out a problem.

CHINESE WOMAN
I got lipstick off the jacket...
(pointing to the crotch)
But couldn't get it off the pants.

Marcus is suddenly distracted as he looks out the window of the shop which is below street level. A WOMAN walks by with the most incredible pair of legs that ever walked the planet. Marcus must meet this woman!

MARCUS
That's okay ... just clean them
again. I'll pay for it.

Marcus takes off running after the owner of the beautiful legs.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Marcus hurries up the steps to the sidewalk, just in time to see the WOMAN disappear around a corner. He dashes after her, practically running over people.

EXT. STREET AROUND THE CORNER - CONTINUOUS

Marcus rounds the corner. Too late. The woman is nowhere in sight. Frustrated, Marcus walks to his office building.

INT. LOBBY OF THE OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Marcus stops by a news stand to pick up the Wall Street Journal. Then he notices the gorgeous legs again. The woman is going up the escalator to the mezzanine. Marcus hurries after her.

INT. THE MEZZANINE - CONTINUOUS

Marcus looks around. He sees the woman from behind. She is studying the directory by the elevators.

Marcus approaches her, his heart pounding.

MARCUS
Miss ... excuse me ...

She turns around, and she is absolutely breathtaking, a serenely beautiful, handsomely dressed woman who manages to be elegant without pretense. Her lips seem to be ever poised on the verge of a smile. Her eyes dance with a sense of humor. This is JACQUELINE.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I'm sorry to bother you ... but I saw you go by and I just had to meet you. You're the most beautiful, perfect woman I've ever seen in my life and...

Although she tries to suppress the urge, Jacqueline bursts out laughing. She walks away. Marcus follows.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Did I say something funny?

JACQUELINE
No ... no. It's just ... that was so pathetic.

MARCUS
No, it wasn't.

JACQUELINE
Come on. If I came up to you and said you were the most virile, handsome man I ever met, would you believe me?

MARCUS
Yes.

Marcus smiles. Jacqueline continues laughing.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Hey, at least I tried. Okay, how about this?

Marcus slackens his body, becoming very street.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Yo baby, you look so fly. The way you dress is stoopid. May I suggest we share some intimacies?
(back to his own voice)
No? Still no good.
(MORE)

MARCUS (Cont'd)
 (shifting into a deep
 bass voice)
 Oh, baby, oh, baby, oh, baby.
 I gots to have you, baby. You
 my life ... you my soul ... you
 the fuzz on a puppy ... you my
 mama's gravy ... you are
 evah-thang...
 (SINGING falsetto)
 ... to me-e-e-e.
 (as himself again)
 Is any of this shit working?

JACQUELINE
 (smiling)
 A little bit.

The elevator doors open. She enters ...

THE ELEVATOR

Marcus joins her. She gives him a look.

MARCUS
 I'm not following you. I work
 in this building.

She pushes the button for the eighteenth floor. The door
 shuts.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 I'm going to eighteen, too.
 (off her dubious look)
 I am ... I swear. What commercial
 are you up for?

JACQUELINE
 I'm not a model. I'm going to
 work for the company ... in
 marketing.

MARCUS
 You're kidding? That's my
 department. I'm Marcus Graham.

JACQUELINE
 (embarrassed)
 This is so funny for us to meet
 like this. I'm Jacqueline Broyer.
 I'm a big fan of your work.

MARCUS

And now we're going to be working together. Jacqueline, I like you. I'm going to let you in on a little secret. When this merger is settled, I'm going to be head of the marketing department.

JACQUELINE

You are? I'm afraid there's some kind of misunderstanding. I'm in charge of marketing.

MARCUS

That's impossible.

JACQUELINE

Sorry.

The elevator doors open. She walks out. Marcus follows...

MARCUS

But I'm the logical choice. I'm already Vice-President of Marketing for Chantress.

JACQUELINE

I know, but I'm Director of Marketing for Lady Evelyn ... and after all, we are acquiring you.

MARCUS

But I had a very good indication that the job was mine.

JACQUELINE

From who?

MARCUS

Lady Evelyn.

JACQUELINE

Oh, my God. Lady Evelyn doesn't make any decisions. She's just a name on the package.

MARCUS

What?

JACQUELINE

She hasn't run the company for fifteen years. All the decisions are made by the Board of Directors in Tokyo.

MARCUS

Lady Evelyn has no power?

JACQUELINE

None at all. She's very sweet.
Just a little ... detached from
reality ... the way she throws
herself at young men ...

(realizing)

Oops. Sorry if I struck a nerve.

MARCUS

(defensively)

Why'd you say that? It's not like
I'd ...

JACQUELINE

Of course you wouldn't.

Lady Evelyn walks by with a phalanx of PROMOTION PEOPLE.
As she draws near to Marcus, she whispers, a little too
loudly...

LADY EVELYN

I'm not wearing any underwear.

P.R. PERSON

Lady Evelyn ... this way, dear.

Lady Evelyn smiles a looney smile at Marcus who wishes he
were dead.

INT. HEALTH CLUB IN MANHATTAN - DAY

Marcus and his friends are swimming laps in an indoor pool.

GERARD

What's she look like?

MARCUS

She's beautiful. That's not the
point.

TYLER

That's right. The point is, every
time a black man tries to succeed,
a black woman is there to pull
him down.

GERARD

Tyler, you're so full of shit it's
a wonder you can float. How
beautiful?

MARCUS
It doesn't matter. That job should
have been mine.

TYLER
You gotta quit.

They reach the far end of the pool and push off, going under
water for an instant. They burst to the surface.

MARCUS
You're right.

EXT. DOCK ON THE EAST RIVER - TWILIGHT

A cocktail party is underway aboard a magnificent fantail
motor yacht. Marcus, Tyler and Gerard are among the elegantly
dressed PARTY GUESTS. Gerard and Tyler are overwhelmed by
all the gorgeous WOMEN. They look slightly nervous and
intimidated.

TYLER
They pay you to work around this?
I'd do it for free.

MARCUS
Will you both just chill out.

GERARD
I can't talk to beautiful women.
It's like my brain goes into vapor
lock. I say all sorts of stupid
stuff.

MARCUS
Just try not to drool.

A beautiful MODEL passes by.

MODEL
Hi.

GERARD
(weakly)
Hi-de-ho.

She gives him a quizzical look and keeps on going.

GERARD (CONT'D)
Did you hear that?

MARCUS
Hi-de-ho? Get it together, Gerard.
You sound like Cab Callaway.

Marcus spots Jacqueline in the crowd. She sees him and smiles. She looks stunning in a slinky black cocktail dress.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

There she is.

TYLER

(amazed)

That's her?! Man, you can't quit.

Jacqueline comes over.

JACQUELINE

Hi ... you look great.

MARCUS

Thank you. You, too.

They are interrupted by a sudden BUZZ of excitement from the crowd. A celebrity is coming.

JACQUELINE

Oh, good ... Strange' is here.

ON THE DOCK ...

Super model STRANGE' (pronounced Stran-zhay) parades down the dock, leading a full-grown panther by a leash. A bizarre, almost Amazonian woman, Strange' has a rapacious animal wildness about her, as though she is ready to pounce at any moment. Her outfit is outrageous ... somewhere between African and Venusian. Her ENTOURAGE follows her up the gangplank. A nervous YACHT CAPTAIN greets her.

YACHT CAPTAIN

Sorry, ma'am ... no animals aboard.

Strange' snarls at him, flashing her teeth. She's far more menacing than the big cat. She brushes past him, the panther leading the way.

BACK TO MARCUS AND JACQUELINE

MARCUS

What's she doing here?

JACQUELINE

We've signed her to introduce her own fragrance. And I want you to handle the whole thing.

MARCUS

We need to talk about this.

Ignoring Marcus, she greets Strange'.

JACQUELINE

Strange'!

Strange hands the leash of the panther to an ATTENDANT. She and Jacqueline hug, speaking to each other in French.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

This is Marcus Graham. The man
I was telling you about.

Strange sizes him up like he is some kind of prey. She makes a purring, growly sound of approval.

MARCUS

Nice to meet you. This is Gerard
... and Tyler. They're good friends
of mine.

Strange' gives Gerard and Tyler a withering glance.

STRANGE'

Why?

Suddenly a commotion breaks out. The panther has pounced on one of the catering tables. It gobbles down a chunk of rare roast beef, SNARLING at the frightened WAITERS. Strange' wades through the crowd, grabs the big cat and pulls him roughly off the table, cuffing him like a kitten. The panther cowers. Seeing that she is the center of attention, Strange' grabs the chunk of beef the panther was eating. As the PAPARAZZI snap photos, she gnaws on the meat like a depraved creature.

GERARD

Oy.

EXT. THE EAST RIVER - NIGHT

The stately yacht cruises beneath the Brooklyn Bridge which is aglow with lights.

The party is in full swing. Marcus presses his way through the packed crowd, looking for Jacqueline. ANGELA approaches, a cute young woman with a klutzy, endearing quality. Her clothes are kind of thrown together, but in an artful way. She looks slightly queasy. She feels her face and head to see if she has a fever.

MARCUS

Are you okay?

ANGELA

I think so. Does my face look like a balloon?

MARCUS

No. Why?

ANGELA

I just ate some shrimp dip ... only I didn't know what it was ... I'm allergic to shellfish. One bite and I blow up like a float in the Macy's parade. I'm Angela Tompkins.

MARCUS

Marcus Graham.

ANGELA

You look lost.

MARCUS

I'm looking for somebody. Jacqueline Broyer.

ANGELA

I think she just went upstairs. Why? You're interested in her, right?

MARCUS

Why do you say that?

ANGELA

Most men are. Why not? She's fantastic. I mean, if I was a guy, I'd probably be attracted to her. Not that I ever think that way ... but you know, didn't you ever look at a man and say, "There's a handsome guy?"

MARCUS

No. That's like stuff women do. They'll say.

(as a "woman")

"She's so fine. I wish I had her figure." Guys don't ever do that.

ANGELA

Aw, come on. You never looked at a movie and saw an actor and felt in a objective non-sexual way, "Hey, that's a good-looking guy"?

MARCUS
No.

ANGELA
Really?

MARCUS
Never ... alright, once. When
Billy Dee Williams came on in Lady
Sings the Blues. I thought he
looked fly. But don't ever tell
anybody, okay?

ANGELA
Don't worry.

MARCUS
You must be with the Lady Evelyn
group. What do you do?

ANGELA
Art director. Not the art director.
An art director. I mean, I'm only
one art director. Like how many
did you think I was, right? God
... I'm sorry. I'll shut up.
Jeeze, Angela. Nice.

MARCUS
You know ... there's somebody you
should meet.
(calling him over)
Gerard.

Gerard comes over, smiling bashfully.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
This is Angela. Me and Gerard
have been friends since third grade.
Excuse me.

Marcus starts up the stairs to look for Jacqueline, leaving
Gerard alone with Angela. They are both ill-at-ease and
self-conscious. Angela tries gamely to make small talk.

ANGELA
So ... you must have a lot of funny
stories to tell about Marcus.

GERARD
(painfully shy)
Yeah.

Angela looks at him expectantly, but Gerard says nothing.
He's afraid to open his mouth for fear of saying something
embarrassing.

EXT. THE UPPER DECK OF THE YACHT - MOMENTS LATER

The deck is deserted except for Jacqueline who is standing at the rail looking at the view. The scene is dreamily beautiful. She looks especially lovely in the moonlight with the lights of Manhattan shimmering behind her. She smiles as she sees Marcus approach.

MARCUS

What are you doing up here?

JACQUELINE

Something about the water helps me relax.

MARCUS

Is there anything I can do to help? I give a real good massage.

JACQUELINE

I bet you do. Are you excited about working with Strange'?

MARCUS

Listen ... that's what I want to talk to you about ...

JACQUELINE

Marcus, you're not going to quit on me, are you? You're a very talented, creative man. I need you.

MARCUS

Now who's massaging who?

JACQUELINE

Come here.

MARCUS

What?

JACQUELINE

You've got an eyelash on your cheek.

She leans close and gently brushes his cheek with her hand. She smiles at Marcus. God, she's beautiful.

MARCUS

Are you trying to seduce me?

JACQUELINE

I'm just trying to get you to stay.

MARCUS
Cause it felt like you were making
a move, rubbing your hand against
me.

JACQUELINE
When I'm making it, don't worry,
you'll know.

MARCUS
Is that a fact?

JACQUELINE
Yeah. So how am I doing? Are
you going to stay?

MARCUS
Well, I do like a challenge.

JACQUELINE
I'm sure Strange' will give you
one.

MARCUS
I wasn't thinking about her.

JACQUELINE
Marcus, I should warn you. I never
sleep with men I'm working with.

MARCUS
Then I'm definitely going to quit.

JACQUELINE
If you do that, you'll never have
a chance.

She walks away, leaving him alone in the moonlight. Marcus
has been seduced and he knows it. But he doesn't care.

INT. BROWNSTONE IN BROOKLYN - DAY

Marcus' seventy-year-old DAD is sitting in his wheelchair.
Although a stroke has left him partially paralyzed, his sense
of humor and joy of life are completely intact. He is singing
an old LaBelle song just to annoy his NURSE, a hefty, sour
woman in her sixties.

DAD
Voulez vous coucher avec moi ce
soir ...

NURSE
Why don't you ever sing something
decent?

Dad sings even louder just to goad her.

DAD
She's a brick house ... yeow.
She's so damn sexy ...

NURSE
 Aw, shut up.

Marcus enters.

DAD
 Thank God you're here, son. Fix my pillow. The Beast has got it stuck up the crack of my ass as usual.

NURSE
 (leaving)
 I'll be back at six.

She leaves, BANGING the door behind her.

MARCUS
 You shouldn't give The Beast such a hard time.

DAD
 Oh, she loves it.

EXT. TREE LINED STREET IN BROOKLYN - DAY

Marcus is pushing Dad along in the wheelchair.

DAD
 Guess who had a heart attack? Buster. His wife Essie called. Says he may not make it much longer. You know, I haven't seen him or even talked to him in over thirty years.

MARCUS
 This is the guy you ran the club with, right?

DAD
 That's right.

MARCUS
 What happened with you guys? What did you fight about?

DAD

Essie. He accused me of messing around with her. Can you imagine? Fool moved all the way to Phoenix to keep her away from me.

MARCUS

Well ... did you mess around with her?

DAD

Hell, no. I ain't ever laid a hand on her.

A plump MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN walks by. Dad gawks at her.

DAD (CONT'D)

Damn, like to have me a piece of that.

MARCUS

You ever stop looking at it?

DAD

Only when I met your mother. May she rest in peace. Didn't look at another gal for over six years.

MARCUS

But you were married twenty-seven years.

DAD

I know ... but she held the record.
(singing)
Papa was a rolling stone. Wherever
he left his hat, was his home.

INT. A NEIGHBORHOOD BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

Dad is holding a bowling ball in his one good hand, lining up a shot. Marcus is behind the wheelchair, exhausted.

DAD

Show some hustle, son. Come on, we're a team.

Marcus backs up the wheelchair and gets a running go. Just as they reach the foul line, Dad lets go and the ball rolls down the lane ... a strike.

DAD (CONT'D)

Yes!

(singing)

That's the way, uh-huh-uh-huh...
I like it.

INT. CHANTRESS COSMETICS LOBBY - DAY

Marcus walks out of the elevator. Bony-T catches up with him.

BONY-T

Yo, Marcus. Some of the guys was wonderin' about this new executrix. Exactly how long do you think it'll take you to bone her? I need to know because we're gettin' together an office pool.

MARCUS

Aw, Bony-T. That's crass, man. Miss Broyer and I are colleagues. I have a great deal of respect for her as a person.

BONY-T

So what you're sayin' is ... at least a week.

INT. HALLWAY AT CHANTRESS - DAY

Marcus skulks behind a potted plant outside Jacqueline's office. An effeminate MALE SECRETARY comes out, on his way to lunch with Jacqueline.

MALE SECRETARY

I know a place. Do you like Thai?

They walk away, chatting. Marcus sneaks into ...

JACQUELINE'S OFFICE

He searches through her appointment book. He finds the entry he's looking for, picks up the phone and dials. When the other party answers, Marcus goes into a dead-on impression of the effeminate secretary.

MARCUS

Yes, this is Todd calling from Jacqueline Broyer's office. She's sorry, but she has to cancel racquetball tomorrow.

INT. RACQUETBALL CLUB IN MANHATTAN - DAY

Jacqueline enters a court dressed to play racquetball. She is surprised to see Marcus, warming up, waiting for her.

JACQUELINE

What are you doing here?

MARCUS

Your friend Lorrie couldn't make it.

JACQUELINE

Why don't I believe you?

MARCUS

She's not here, is she? What? What are you looking at me like that for? Let's play.

Jacqueline slips out of her warm-ups. She looks fantastic in her shorts. Marcus can't help but notice. She hits a couple of warm-up shots.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You serve.

Jacqueline bends over to serve. Marcus gazes at her admiringly. She gives him a disdainful look.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What?

JACQUELINE

You're looking at my butt.

MARCUS

This is how the game is played. I can't look the other way. Then I wouldn't see the ball coming. Let's play fair.

JACQUELINE

Then you serve.

Marcus takes the ball. He bends over. Then looks at her.

MARCUS

Wait a second. Now you're looking at my butt.

JACQUELINE

Just play.

Marcus serves, hitting a soft shot. Jacqueline runs up court, past Marcus.

As she bends over to return the shot, Marcus can't help but admire her derriere. It's that mesmerizing. The ball ricochets off the wall and BONK! It hits Marcus in the eye.

INT. OFFICE AT CHANTRESS COSMETICS - DAY

Marcus and Jacqueline are overseeing a meeting with Strange' and the CREATIVE TEAM, including Angela and Nelson. Strange' is coiled like a cobra in a modernistic arm chair. A snippy CHEMIST shows her some fragrance samples. She sniffs the vial and frowns with disappointment.

STRANGE'

I hate it.

CHEMIST

But this fragrance tested very well.

STRANGE'

I said I wanted it to be the essence of sex.

CHEMIST

(defensive)
Well, I think this is it.

STRANGE'

You would.

Strange' reaches under her tight mini-skirt and wriggles out of her skimpy black silk panties. She flings them at the Chemist. The panties droop across his face.

STRANGE' (CONT'D)

That is the essence of sex.

The Chemist is deeply offended. He gets up, snatches the panties off his face and walks out without a word. Marcus follows him outside to ...

THE HALLWAY

Marcus catches up with the Chemist.

MARCUS

Lloyd, don't worry about it. The fragrance is fine. We're not going to change it.

CHEMIST

That woman doesn't deserve her own fragrance.

(MORE)

CHEMIST (Cont'd)
Do you think Liz Taylor would throw
her panties in my face?

MARCUS
I don't know. We can ask her.

The Chemist doesn't think this is funny.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Come on, Lloyd. You can't take
Strange' seriously. Let me deal
with her.

The Chemist nods, pacified. Marcus claps him on the back,
then goes back into ...

THE OFFICE

Strange' is storming around the room, pitching a fit. She
is holding a prototype for a perfume bottle that Angela has
designed. Angela is listening patiently as Strange' rages
on.

STRANGE'
I hate this.
(repulsed)
I mean ... look at this!

ANGELA
I'm sorry. It's just a prototype.

STRANGE'
What happened to my idea about
the broken glass?!

ANGELA
We can't let people cut their hands
on the bottle.

STRANGE'
Why not?! If that's what it takes.
Why are my concepts being ignored?!
I know what the public wants.
They want to be stunned ... shocked
... jolted. Here's a list of
names for the fragrance.

She takes out a list and reads from it.

STRANGE' (CONT'D)
Pus ... Pig Puke ... Afterbirth
... Steel Vagina ... Slash Your
Face. Well, what do you think?

She looks around the room for a response. Everyone is mortified, except for Nelson who is enthralled, nodding in agreement. Marcus speaks up.

MARCUS

They're fantastic. You're right. I like those names. But they're too tame. Whatever the name is, it has to provoke ... it has to incite ... it has to electrify. There's only one name in the world that can arouse that kind of passion ... 'Strange'. That's what we should call it.

STRANGE'

I like it.

She makes a dramatic exit. As soon as she's gone, Marcus shrugs and grins. Jacqueline is amused and pleased by his performance.

JACQUELINE

Ladies and gentlemen, I think that's the best line of bullshit I ever heard in my life.

MARCUS

(feigning modesty)
Thanks. I try.

Jacqueline grins and starts a round of applause. Everybody else joins in, filled with relief, laughing at the situation. Marcus pretends to bow, enjoying this minor triumph.

INT. HALLWAY AT CHANTRESS - MINUTES LATER

The meeting is breaking up. Angela passes by.

MARCUS

I liked your design.

ANGELA

Thanks.

Jacqueline joins Marcus. The two of them head down the hallway together.

JACQUELINE

We'll never be able to control 'Strange' at the press conferences.

MARCUS

Just let her be herself. We'll get more press that way.

JACQUELINE
 You're probably right. We've got
 a lot of work to do. We shoot
 in L.A. on the twenty-fourth.

MARCUS
 (casually)
 Let's talk about it tonight ...
 over dinner.

JACQUELINE
 (suspicious)
 Marcus ...

MARCUS
 What? What's wrong? We're business
 associates. Look, if we were both
 guys, it wouldn't be any big deal.
 You're the one trying to turn it
 into a man-woman thing.

JACQUELINE
 Just dinner?

MARCUS
 I swear.

INT. MARCUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marcus is making last-minute preparations for his dinner
 with Jacqueline, polishing a spoon, adjusting the centerpiece
 for the thousandth time. He is determined to make everything
 absolutely perfect. As he works, he sings a Whitney Houston
 song ...

MARCUS
Whatever you want from me, I'm
givin' you everything, I'm your
baby tonight.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Marcus hurries to answer it, stopping
 one last time at the hallway mirror to primp his hair and
 brush a tiny piece of lint off the lapel of his dashing
 Italian suit. He flashes his "killer" smile and opens the
 door. Jacqueline is standing there but, to his surprise,
 she is wearing jeans and a sweatshirt.

MARCUS
 Hi.

JACQUELINE
 Hey, look at you. You're all
 dressed up. I didn't think this
 would be so formal.

As she looks around the dazzling apartment she whistles, impressed.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

Nice place you've got here, slick.

MARCUS

Thanks. I was going to go with kind of a Jim Brown look ... lots of gold flake mirrors and velvet paintings of girls with big afros and giant breasts ... kind of a Slaughter's Big Rip Off motif.

She strolls out onto the terrace gazing out onto the majestic view of Central Park.

JACQUELINE

Great view. Look, you can see the ice rink from here. Ever go skating in the winter?

MARCUS

Yeah, sometimes.

JACQUELINE

I love to skate. When I was a little girl, I wanted to be in the Ice Capades.

MARCUS

Really? I'll get the champagne.

We FOLLOW him into the kitchen where he is preparing an elaborate gourmet meal. He takes out a bottle of Dom Perignon and heads back out to ...

THE TERRACE

To his dismay, Jacqueline is having a conversation with Yvonne, the crazy woman from across the way.

JACQUELINE

Yeah .. and what else will he do?

YVONNE

Oh, he's got a silver tongue. He'll sweet talk you ...

JACQUELINE

Really?

MARCUS

Don't listen to her.

He leads her back inside.

JACQUELINE
No, it's very interesting.

MARCUS
She's crazy.

Jacqueline starts to laugh.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I'm glad you think my life is so
damn funny.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - LATER

Marcus has served a meal worthy of the cover of Gourmet magazine. But Jacqueline is eating hurriedly, checking her watch.

MARCUS
I only use white truffles ...
they're very hard to find ...

JACQUELINE
I'm sorry. My mind is somewhere
else. The Knicks game starts in
a couple of minutes. Do you mind
if we eat in front of the TV?

MARCUS
(hurt)
No. That's fine.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

They are watching the game. Jacqueline is really into it, pounding on the coffee table. For all the attention she is paying Marcus, he might as well be out of town.

JACQUELINE
(shouting at the TV)
Aw come on, he hacked him!

MARCUS
Can I make you some espresso?

JACQUELINE
No, thanks. They've been fouling
Ewing all night and they don't
call a thing!

Marcus gets up, clearing the dessert dishes.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
Oh ... while you're up ... would
you get me a beer?

Marcus heads for the kitchen, feeling ignored.

INT. THE FOYER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jacqueline is leaving.

JACQUELINE
This has been an incredible evening.

MARCUS
Thank you.

JACQUELINE
Jordan's last shot! I mean, he
must've been at least sixty feet
out.

MARCUS
Sure you don't want me to take
you home?

JACQUELINE
No, I'll get a cab.

They walk into ...

THE HALLWAY

Marcus follows her like a hurt puppy.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
Thanks for everything.

She pecks him on the cheek.

MARCUS
Whoa ... wait a second. That's
it? That's all I get?

JACQUELINE
What were you expecting?

MARCUS
At least a real kiss.

JACQUELINE
Alright. You can kiss me till
the elevator gets here.

She pushes the button. They kiss. Marcus is much more into it than she is. Just as Marcus starts to get aroused ... PING ... the elevator door opens.

MARCUS
(frustrated)
Shit! I've waited for this goddamn elevator for as long as seven minutes. Tonight ... you push the button and it's like Star Trek...

She waves good-bye as the elevator doors close.

JACQUELINE
'Night.

Marcus leans against the door, frustrated.

INT. GYM AT THE YMCA ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE - DAY

Light streams in through the tall old-fashioned windows of the venerable gymnasium. Marcus and his friends are jogging around an indoor track overlooking the basketball court.

TYLER
She's got to be a lesbo.

GERARD
Just because she won't sleep with him, doesn't mean she's a lesbian.

TYLER
Look, man, it's been seven weeks.

GERARD
So?

TYLER
Personally, if I was chasing after something that fine, I'd wait eight, nine months.

GERARD
You could wait eight, nine years, you'd never get a woman like that.

TYLER
At least my wife didn't leave me for a Guardian Angel.

GERARD
Screw you.

TYLER

Still cringes every time he sees
a beret.

MARCUS

At least Gerard's had women. You
couldn't get laid with a gold card
at the Mustang Ranch.

TYLER

Why are you dissin' me? I'm trying
to help you out. All I'm saying
is if she won't give it up for
you, there's gotta be something
wrong with her.

MARCUS

There's nothing wrong with her.
She's just playing me ... I'm going
to forget about her.

GERARD

Lots of luck.

EXT. TERMINAL AT J.F.K. AIRPORT - DAY

A white Rolls Royce pulls up to the curb. The DRIVER opens
the door and Strange' gets out wearing an outlandish flowing
robe with a hood. PAPARAZZI are there to greet her, snapping
photos.

INT. TERMINAL AT JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Marcus is at the ticket counter speaking to a CLERK.

MARCUS

Has Jacqueline Broyer checked in
yet?

TICKET CLERK

No, Mr. Graham. She left a message
for you. She's running late and
will catch a later flight.

MARCUS

(dejected)
Great.

Angela enters followed by her boyfriend SOL, a cherubic,
curly-haired Jewish guy in his thirties. He is carrying
a small rug under one arm and a Koran in the other.

SOL

Can't we just talk about this?

ANGELA
Sol, please ...

They see Marcus.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Hi, Marcus.

Sol eagerly holds out his hand to Marcus, always happy to meet a black man.

SOL
Salaam Salekem, brother.

MARCUS
(not sure what to make
of this guy)
Hello.

ANGELA
Sol .. I've got to go.

SOL
I'm gonna miss you so much. When
you get to ...
(his watch BEEPS an alarm)
Oops. Does anybody know which
way east is?

MARCUS
(puzzled)
I think it's that way.

SOL
Thanks.

Sol rolls out his prayer rug, kneels and begins bowing and praying in Arabic. Angela is embarrassed.

ANGELA
Sol ... Sol ...
(no response; he's too
busy praying)
This is exactly what I am talking
about. You're in your own world.
Sol ... ? Oh, forget it.

She starts walking away, leaving an oblivious Sol praying in the middle of the terminal. Marcus catches up with her.

MARCUS
You okay?

ANGELA

Yeah. No, not really. He's been pretty weird since he joined that group.

MARCUS

What group?

ANGELA

Jews for Islam.

INT. SECURITY GATE AT THE TERMINAL - SAME TIME

Strange' approaches, still followed by the pack of photographers. She passes through the metal detector wearing her robe. The ALARM goes off. A GUARD stops her.

GUARD

Excuse me, miss. I'm going to have to ask you to remove any metal you might have on your person.

Strange' takes off her robe. She is wearing a see-through dress of chain mail with nothing underneath. She unzips the chain mail and lets it drop to the floor, then walks through the metal detector butt naked. PEOPLE around her GASP. The photographers start snapping like crazy.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Marcus is sitting in first class reading a magazine. Next to him is Angela, who is nervously drumming her fingers. Marcus looks up.

ANGELA

Sorry, I'll move.

MARCUS

That's okay.

ANGELA

I'm kind of a ... sort of a nervous flyer.

MARCUS

You know you're safer in a plane than you are in a bathtub.

ANGELA

Yeah, but I've never heard of a tub going down and killing 137 people. I'm sorry. When I get nervous, I start talking about horrible stuff ...

MARCUS
It's probably better not to think
about it.

ANGELA
I know.

MARCUS
A lot of people have irrational
fears. I'm scared of birds.

ANGELA
(muffling a laugh)
Birds? That's pathetic. I'm sorry.
(Marcus goes back to
his magazine)
What would be worse to you? A
sudden explosion ... so you died
instantly? Or a long, slow fall
where you knew you were gonna crash?
(slapping her own cheek)
Shut up, Angela. God.

MARCUS
Look at it this way. Can you fly
this jet?

ANGELA
No.

MARCUS
Then there's nothing you can do.
You're either gonna make it or
you're not. So you might as well
relax.

ANGELA
You're right.

They ride along in silence for a moment.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
But wouldn't it be funny if we
crashed and they took pictures
of us ... and we were just burned
up skeletons smiling at the camera?

MARCUS
If we go ... let's go like this...

Marcus grins like a skeleton while giving the finger with
both hands.

ANGELA

Or just before we crash, let's trade our jewelry, so they get our body parts all confused. Wouldn't it be funny if I had your hands and you had my leg or ... I'll shut up.

MARCUS

That's okay. You shouldn't put yourself down so much. That guy I met ... is he your boyfriend?

ANGELA

Yeah ... well, no. Kinda. But not for long.

MARCUS

Good. You should be going out with my friend Gerard.

ANGELA

Maybe I should. He was kinda cute.

MARCUS

If you dump this other guy, do it quick. It's not fair to lead a guy on and make him crawl.

ANGELA

Like Jacqueline is doing to you?

MARCUS

Shit. Does everybody know about this?

ANGELA

Sorry.

EXT. BEL AIR HOTEL - EVENING

It's a beautiful evening. The hotel grounds look lush and serene.

INT. MARCUS' SUITE - NIGHT

Marcus is lying on the bed with his jacket off watching TV, restlessly switching the channels. The PHONE RINGS.

MARCUS

Hello.

JACQUELINE'S VOICE

Hi. It's me.

Marcus sits up in bed, suddenly elated at the sound of her voice.

MARCUS
Hey. Where are you?

JACQUELINE'S VOICE
Right next door in Suite 17. Have you seen the press on Strange'? It's fantastic.

INTERCUT THROUGHOUT:

INT. JACQUELINE'S SUITE - SAME TIME

Jacqueline is getting dressed to go out. She takes a svelte evening gown from the closet and slips it on, all the while talking to Marcus on a speaker phone.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
We made page six ... Liz Smith ... even the New York Times. Great job. Congratulations.

MARCUS
Thank you.

JACQUELINE
I feel like celebrating. What do you think? Do you want to go out?

There is no mistaking the tantalizing tone of her invitation. Marcus is euphoric, but tries to hide his eagerness.

MARCUS
I guess so.

BACK TO JACQUELINE

as she zips up her slinky dress.

JACQUELINE
How soon can you get here?
(she pauses for a reply,
but there is none)
Marcus?
(still no answer)
Hello. Marcus?

Just that fast there is an eager KNOCK at the door. Jacqueline smiles and goes to answer it. Marcus is standing there wearing his jacket, straightening his tie. At the sight of Jacqueline, he melts.

She looks absolutely ravishing.

MARCUS

Hi.

JACQUELINE

Hi. We should hurry. I made a nine o'clock reservation at Geoffrey's out at Malibu. I'll drive. I rented a car.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANAAN DUME ROAD - NIGHT

Jacqueline is behind the wheel of a Mercedes 560 SL roadster with the top down, racing around the curves so fast the tires are SQUEALING. She's exhilarated, a little wild-eyed. Marcus is hanging on nervously.

MARCUS

Aren't you going kinda fast?

JACQUELINE

Oh, relax. I grew up in Sherman Oaks. I know what I'm doing.

EXT. GEOFFREY'S - NIGHT

They are having dinner on the terrace overlooking the shimmering Pacific which looks spectacular in the moonlight. So does Jacqueline. Marcus can't take his eyes off her.

JACQUELINE

Why are you staring?

MARCUS

You just look so ... wow ... I feel like Gerard. I can't talk.
(pretending to be tongue-tied)
I'm baffle-ded by the splendiferocity arf urrr ... feminine-nun-nous-ness.

She raises her champagne flute in a toast.

JACQUELINE

To us ... and a very exciting future. Let's make the most of it.

MARCUS

I hope to God you're not talking
about business.

They drink. Jacqueline notices some lights shining on the
beach below.

JACQUELINE

Oh, look. I wonder what's going
on. Waiter.

(the WAITER comes over)
What are all those lights?

WAITER

The grunion are running.

JACQUELINE

(seized by a sudden
impulse)
Oh, let's go! I haven't been to
a grunion run since I was a kid.

MARCUS

A what run?

JACQUELINE

Grunion. You'll see.
(to the Waiter)
Could we have the check please?

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

Marcus and Jacqueline approach several excited PEOPLE who
are wading in the surf catching grunion. Jacqueline calls
to a GUY WITH A BUCKET.

JACQUELINE

Hi. Can we join you?

GUY WITH BUCKET

Sure.

Jacqueline kicks off her shoes and hikes up her evening gown.
Marcus takes off his shoes and rolls up his pants.

JACQUELINE

They're tiny little fish. When
the moon and the tide are just
right they swim up on the beach
to spawn.

MARCUS

Let's leave 'em alone. Why are
we messing with their party?

JACQUELINE

It's the only time you can catch them.

MARCUS

I think they deserve some privacy. How would you feel if you were making love at a motel and a bunch of giant fish came knocking on the door with flashlights and threw your ass into a bucket with a bunch of other naked people having sex? Damn. Come to think of it ... that sounds kinda fun.

They wade into the water.

JACQUELINE

Here they come! Grab 'em.

They try to catch the tiny squirming fish in their hands. Marcus grabs one.

MARCUS

I got one.

JACQUELINE

Put it in the bucket.

MARCUS

I can't hold it. It's slimy.

The grunion wriggles free. Marcus makes another grab for it and loses his balance, falling to one knee, getting his pants wet.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Shit.

Jacqueline helps him up, laughing. He starts laughing, too.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE BEL AIR HOTEL - NIGHT

Jacqueline and Marcus pull up in the Mercedes. Jacqueline gives the keys to the VALET who raises his eyebrows when he sees them get out with their clothes wet and their shoes off. They laugh.

MARCUS

What's his problem?

They cross the bridge to the hotel, arm-in-arm.

EXT. WALKWAY LEADING THROUGH THE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

They walk along in the moonlight, feeling amorous. They pause outside Jacqueline's suite.

JACQUELINE
I had a great time.

MARCUS
Me, too.

She kisses him lustfully.

JACQUELINE
(looking into his eyes)
Maybe we should take this inside.

MARCUS
Good idea.

INT. THE SUITE - CONTINUOUS

They enter. Marcus takes her in his arms and kisses her again and again.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Jacqueline ...

JACQUELINE
Hmm ...?

MARCUS
I think I know how the grunion
feel.

They ease down onto the bed, their kisses more demanding, their passion increasing.

FADE

FADE IN:

INT. JACQUELINE'S SUITE - MORNING

Marcus wakes up and reaches for Jacqueline, but she is gone. He sits up and looks around. Jacqueline is on the terrace, already dressed, working on a laptop computer.

EXT. THE TERRACE OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marcus comes out wearing a terrycloth robe from the hotel.

MARCUS
Good morning.

JACQUELINE
Good morning. Sorry ... I had
some business to take care of.

Marcus looks at ...

THE POND

Two majestic SWANS paddle in unison across the sun-dappled pond, their necks entwined like lovers.

BACK TO MARCUS AND JACQUELINE

MARCUS
They mate for life you know.

JACQUELINE
Yeah. That's what I hear.
(pecking him on the cheek)
Gotta run. See you later.

She goes back inside.

ON THE POND

The swans are now bickering, making HONKING noises and pecking at one another.

EXT. A CAFE ON COLUMBUS AVENUE - DAY

Marcus and his friends are sitting at an outdoor table having espresso. A WAITER passes by. Tyler stops him.

TYLER
(to the WAITER)
Excuse me ... what do you have
for dessert?

WAITER
Do you like chocolate?

TYLER
(irate)
Why? Is there some particular
reason I should? Just bring me
some coffee.

(MORE)

TYLER (Cont'd)

(Waiter exits)

Would he assume all these white people like vanilla? It's like, "Oh, the niggers are here. Get out the Hershey's."

GERARD

Would you shut the fuck up? Marcus was just getting to the good part.

MARCUS

She's amazing. I've never felt like this about a woman before.

TYLER

Yeah ... but how's the pussy?

GERARD

Aw, man. That's crass.

TYLER

I'm just a realist. Cause if the pussy's good, everything else falls into place.

MARCUS

It's more than that. I admire everything about her. Her mind ... her spirit. I'm telling you, guys ... this is the one.

Tyler and Gerard exchange glances. They have never seen Marcus look this way before. He looks dazed, thunderstruck.

TYLER

Damn. The pussy must be real good.

INT. HALLWAY AT CHANTRESS - SAME TIME

Marcus is walking down the hall on cloud nine. Not even the sight of Bony-T heading his way can get him down.

BONY-T

Yo, Marcus.

(slapping his hand)

Congratulations! I hear you finally nailed her. Why didn't you tell me you was about to sex her up?

MARCUS

Because it's none of your business.

BONY-T
The hell it ain't. I coulda won
the office pool. We suppose to
help each other out.

Marcus enters ...

INT. JACQUELINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jacqueline is on the phone.

JACQUELINE
There's a lot riding on this.
I'm going to fly the entire creative
team to Barbados.

Marcus comes over and begins to kiss her on the neck.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
I'll have to call you back.

She hangs up. Marcus reaches for her. She gently resists.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
Marcus ... we shouldn't do this
at the office.

MARCUS
(amorously)
Then let's go up to the roof.

JACQUELINE
You're so bad.

MARCUS
No, I'm not. I'm serious. I've
been thinking about what happened
in L.A. What we've got going means
a lot to me.

JACQUELINE
Oh, no.

MARCUS
What?

JACQUELINE
I hope you're not going to be one
of those guys?

MARCUS
What guys?

JACQUELINE

Guys that get too serious. Look, I had a good time in L.A. Let's just not make more of it than it is.

MARCUS

(hurt)

Wait a second. Are you saying this was just some kind of ... of ... of fling?

JACQUELINE

I'm just saying we shouldn't get ahead of ourselves. Right now, business is a top priority for me. Let's take it slow. You know. Keep it fun.

MARCUS

Alright. I'm down with that. Let's start tonight.

JACQUELINE

I can't.

MARCUS

Then when? Let's do a night on the town. Maybe I can get some theater tickets.

JACQUELINE

I'm real busy right now. I'm going to be out of town a lot. I'll have to get back to you.

MARCUS

(slightly insulted)

Get back to me?

JACQUELINE

I'm sorry. I don't have my schedule. My secretary's in Atlantic City for a few days. He won some kind of office pool. I'll call you.

MARCUS

(trying to regain his pride)

Okay, but you better hurry. I have things to do too, you know. It's not like I'm sittin' around waiting for the phone to ring.

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - DAY

Marcus is sitting around waiting for the phone to ring.
It does. He grabs it.

MARCUS

Hello.

SECRETARY'S VOICE

Miss Broyer asked me to tell you
she's free the evening of the 12th.

MARCUS

That's three weeks from now!

SECRETARY'S VOICE

Sorry. That's her first opening.
Should I pencil you in?

MARCUS

(wimping out)

Yeah.

EXT. BROADWAY THEATER - NIGHT

The Marquee says, Miss Saigon. The show is about to begin
as the last THEATERGOERS hurry inside.

INT. LOBBY OF THE THEATER - SAME TIME

Marcus is on a pay phone, fretting. Jacqueline hasn't shown
up.

MARCUS

Yes. What time did flight 97 from
Toronto get in?

(beat)

Three hours ago?! Was there a
Jacqueline Broyer on board?

(testily)

Well, can you check?

An USHER interrupts him.

USHER

Sir, curtain's going up.

MARCUS

(irritably)

I'm waiting for somebody.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE THEATER - THREE HOURS LATER

A rainstorm has begun. Thunder RUMBLES. Rain pours down. Marcus is still waiting, pacing, freezing, his collar pulled up against the wind. Still no sign of Jacqueline. The doors open and happy THEATERGOERS come out, chatting about the show.

AN OLD LADY

Wasn't that wonderful? It was worth waiting eight months for tickets.

HER FRIEND

Yes. He was so good. I don't see what all the fuss was about. He looked Chinese to me.

Marcus is furious that he has missed the show. He tries to hail a taxi.

INT. MARCUS' APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Marcus is on the phone, worried sick.

MARCUS

Yes ... can you check to see if there's been any traffic accidents between J.F.K. and Midtown? Well, what the hell is 911 for?
(The door bell RINGS)
Never mind.

He hangs up the phone and hurries to ...

THE FOYER

He looks through the peep-hole ...

MARCUS' POV - JACQUELINE

is standing there, a little wet, a little tired, but still gorgeous.

BACK TO MARCUS

Going through mixed emotions. At first, relieved ... "She's okay!" ... followed by anger ... "How could she do this to me?" He opens the door.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 (curtly)
 Nice of you to finally show up.

JACQUELINE
 I'm sorry. Some meetings ran over.
 I had to take a later flight.

MARCUS
 Why didn't you call?

JACQUELINE
 I was going to, but they didn't
 have a phone on the plane.

MARCUS
 You left me waiting there. I paid
 \$200 for those tickets!

JACQUELINE
 I'm sorry.
 (reaching for her purse)
 Let me pay you for them.

She tries to give him the money. He refuses.

MARCUS
 It's not the money. I just wish
 you'd be more considerate. I was
 worried sick. I was calling the
 police. For all I knew you were
 lying on the side of the road
 somewhere.

JACQUELINE
 Oh, that's sweet. Look. I got
 you something.

She gives him a long-stem rose.

MARCUS
 Oh, is this supposed to make me
 forget all about it?

JACQUELINE
 Listen. Do you want me to leave?

MARCUS
 (weakening)
 No, no. Stay. Look at you ...
 you're all wet. Take off your
 coat ... you're gonna catch a cold.

She takes off her coat. Her blouse is soaked revealing the
 outlines of her lovely breasts.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You better take off your blouse,
too.

She kisses him. All of Marcus' anger fades.

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marcus is in bed, gazing at Jacqueline who is getting dressed.

MARCUS

Do you have to go now?

JACQUELINE

I have to make a big speech in
the morning to the Board of
Directors. This has been wonderful.
I was so tense when I got off that
plane ... this really relaxed
me.

(pecking his cheek)

I'll call you tomorrow.

And just as quickly she is gone. Marcus lies there feeling
cheap and used. He notices that she has left two
hundred-dollar bills on the vanity. He stares at the bills
in disbelief.

MARCUS' VOICE

I feel so cheap ... like she's
using me ...

CUT TO:

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - DAY

Marcus is confiding in Angela.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I swear, I think the only reason
she slept with me was so she'd
feel more relaxed when she made
her speech.

ANGELA

At least she's sleeping with you.
Maybe that's all she wants out
of the relationship.

MARCUS

Aw, come on ...

Nelson pokes his head into the office.

NELSON

When am I going to get the
storyboards for the commercial?

MARCUS

When we figure them out.

Nelson leaves.

MARCUS

(to Angela)

So, how's it going with you and
Gerard?

ANGELA

He's nice ... just a little awkward.

MARCUS

Gerard's a great guy. It just
takes awhile to notice it.

INT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT IN GREENWICH VILLAGE - NIGHT

A tiny space jammed with brightly-painted furniture and quirky
ceramic art. Marcus and his friends have gathered to
celebrate his birthday. Angela is out of the room.

TYLER

Yo man, where's Jacqueline tonight?

MARCUS

A Board of Directors meeting.

TYLER

How can she dis you like this on
your birthday?

MARCUS

It's not like that. Business is
a top priority for her right now.

Angela enters carrying a homemade birthday cake. They all
sing Happy Birthday to Marcus.

ANGELA

It's rum chocolate.
(handing him a gift)
And this is for you.

MARCUS

Thanks.

Marcus opens it. It's a strange looking ceramic jug with
a phallic snout.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What is it?

ANGELA

I made it. It's a Mayan fertility jug. It'll bring you love and happiness and many offspring. Blow on it.

MARCUS

I'm not blowing this. It looks like a dick.

ANGELA

It's supposed to.

GERARD

Go ahead and blow it.

MARCUS

You blow it.

GERARD

No way.

TYLER

Don't look at me.

INT. MARCUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marcus is all alone. He picks up the fertility jug and blows on it. It makes a soft, mournful sound.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jacqueline is hosting a cocktail party for the Board of Directors from Tokyo. She is chatting up a storm in Japanese, entertaining several JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN. Occasionally they laugh. Marcus brings her some appetizers.

MARCUS

Tempura?

JACQUELINE

No, thanks.

(Marcus takes a bite
of tempura)

Are you sure you need that? Seems like you're gaining a little weight.

MARCUS

(paranoid)

Really? Do you think I'm ...

JACQUELINE

Marcus, I'm talking business right now.

She turns and continues to speak in Japanese. Marcus feels slighted and left out. He crosses to the other side of the room where several prim JAPANESE WIVES are sitting, patiently waiting for their spouses.

MARCUS

Hi.

They smile and nod politely. They obviously don't speak English. A WAITER comes over bearing a silver tray loaded with gifts of Lady Evelyn cosmetics and perfumes.

WAITER

Gifts for the ladies.

One by one the Wives accept the presents. The Waiter offers the tray to Marcus.

MARCUS

(embarrassed)

No, thanks.

INT. JACQUELINE'S LIMOUSINE - LATER THAT EVENING

Jacqueline and Marcus are returning from the party. Marcus is pouting, but Jacqueline doesn't seem to notice.

JACQUELINE

I think it went pretty well.

MARCUS

Oh, now you want to talk.

JACQUELINE

Did I do something wrong?

MARCUS

You ignored me all night. I might as well have not even been there. I'm a person, too, you know. I have feelings.

JACQUELINE

(trying to snuggle up to him)

I'm sorry. Let me make it up to you.

MARCUS

I don't feel like it.

JACQUELINE
You like it in the limo.

MARCUS
Not tonight.

JACQUELINE
Fine.
(to the DRIVER)
The first stop will be Mr. Graham's
apartment.

MARCUS
That's another thing. You've never
once invited me to your apartment.
It's always at my place so you
can get up and leave. Just once
I wish we could cuddle.

JACQUELINE
Come on. What's really bothering
you?

MARCUS
You forgot my birthday! You didn't
even give me a card.

JACQUELINE
I'm sorry. Here. I got you this
in Philadelphia. I forgot to give
it to you.

She takes a jewelry case out of her purse and hands it to
Marcus. He opens it. It's a beautiful watch.

MARCUS
Wow ... a Rolex.

JACQUELINE
It's an antique. Put it on.
(Marcus puts it on)
It looks wonderful on you.

MARCUS
It's nice. Thanks.

Marcus is placated.

EXT. MARCUS' APARTMENT BUILDING - CONT.

The limo pulls up in front of the building. Marcus gets
out.

MARCUS

Would you like to come up for a drink?

JACQUELINE

If you're sure you want me to.

Marcus nods. Jacqueline gets out of the limo. She speaks privately to the Driver.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

I'll be down in about an hour.

The Driver nods. He knows the program.

INT. STEAM ROOM - DAY

Marcus is on the floor of the steam-filled room doing sit-ups. Dad is in his wheelchair, a towel draped over him.

DAD

Essie called.

MARCUS

Who?

DAD

Buster's wife. Said he had another heart attack. Man's on his last legs. He ain't gonna be around much longer.

MARCUS

Maybe you should go to Phoenix to see him.

DAD

Yeah. Hey, slow down. You're going to give yourself a stroke. What's your problem anyway?

MARCUS

Jacqueline says I'm putting on weight.

DAD

You look fine. Sounds to me like you're pussy whipped.

INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Marcus, Jacqueline and Strange' are having dinner. Jacqueline is ordering dessert.

JACQUELINE
I'll have the tarte tartin ...
with a scoop of ice cream.

MARCUS
Just coffee for me.

JACQUELINE
(to Strange')
So ... are you looking forward
to Barbados?

STRANGE'
I'm not sure I'm going.

JACQUELINE
Oh, you've got to. All the buyers
will be there. It'll be fun.
Would you excuse me? I've got
to make a call.

Jacqueline gets up, leaving Marcus alone with Strange'.

STRANGE'
So ... when are we going to fuck?

MARCUS
(shocked)
Excuse me?

STRANGE'
Jacqueline tells me you're great
in bed.

MARCUS
(shocked)
She what?!

Strange' starts flicking her tongue at his ear like a sex
starved serpent.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Hey ... hold it. What kind of
guy do you think I am?

STRANGE'
According to Jacqueline you're
a real pile driver.

MARCUS
(hurt and angry)
Take your hands off me. I'm not
a piece of meat. I decide who
I have sex with.

STRANGE'
 (disgusted)
 Then go fuck yourself.

She gets up and storms out. Marcus sits there fuming for a moment. The waiter returns with dessert and coffee.

MARCUS
 Never mind. Just bring me the check.

Jacqueline returns.

JACQUELINE
 Where's Strange'?

MARCUS
 (fuming)
 She left.

JACQUELINE
 Why?

MARCUS
 (righteously indignant)
 Because I wouldn't have sex with her. What do you expect me to do? Just lie down for business reasons?!

JACQUELINE
 You did for Lady Evelyn.

MARCUS
 That's cold.

The Waiter returns with the check.

JACQUELINE
 Oh, Christ. Pay the check. Maybe I can catch Strange'.

She leaves. Marcus quickly tosses some money on the table.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE - CONT.

Jacqueline catches Strange' as she's getting into her limo.

JACQUELINE.
 Strange' ... what's the problem?

STRANGE'
 I'm not going to Barbados.

Marcus comes over, out of breath.

JACQUELINE

(firmly)

Yes, you are. If you aren't on that plane I'll not only take back the million-two we're paying you ... I'll sue you for every goddamn dime you've got. Understand?

Strange' glares and slams the door of her limo behind her. The car takes off.

MARCUS

You know ... there's a mean side to you I never saw before.

JACQUELINE

This is business, Marcus.

MARCUS

Yeah ... well, I'm not for sale.

JACQUELINE

Oh, for God's sake. Come here.

She takes his arm and tries to pull him to a quieter spot. He resists.

MARCUS

Don't touch me. I feel dirty. I don't believe this shit is happening to me.

JACQUELINE

Nothing is happening to you. You're just getting all upset over nothing.

MARCUS

Nothing? Is that what sex is to you? Nothing? Whatever happened to love ... and sharing ... and commitment. Yeah, that's right. Commitment! It's an old fashioned word but some people still believe in it. It's over, Jacqueline. I don't think we should see each other anymore.

JACQUELINE

Okay. If that's how you feel.

MARCUS

I'm going home.

He walks away, slowly, hoping she'll say something to stop him. She doesn't. He looks back. Jacqueline gets into a cab and leaves. Marcus is heartbroken.

EXT. AIRPORT AT BARBADOS - DAY

The people from the marketing department are deplaning from a private jet. They are met by a STEEL DRUM BAND. Jacqueline leads the way looking pretty in a bright vacation outfit. Marcus, Angela and some OTHERS follow.

Last off the plane is Strange'. She is wearing what looks like a space-age bikini. It's actually only two clear plastic tubes filled with water, one barely covering her breasts, the other her crotch. Inside the tubes, live TROPICAL FISH are swimming around.

EXT. THE BEACHSIDE HOTEL BAR - EVENING

A heavenly tropical night. A jazzy calypso BAND plays as PEOPLE dance under a sky full of stars. The bare-chested lead singer is putting on quite a show. He is JOJO, a small man, but handsome and athletically built. He undulates his lithe body as he flashes a bright smile straight at Jacqueline. She watches him, smiling back.

Marcus is at the bar staring forlornly at Jacqueline, sipping a huge tropical drink in a hollowed-out pineapple. Strange' comes over, leering at him.

STRANGE'
Keeping a firm grip on your
chastity?

She reaches into his drink, pulls out a maraschino cherry, pops it into her mouth, then flicks the stem at his face. She leaves.

ANGELA

enters looking pretty and sexy in a fresh, brightly-colored tropical dress. Her hair is different. She looks very alluring. She walks up right beside Marcus, but he's too busy checking out Jacqueline. Finally Marcus turns around and sees her.

MARCUS
(surprised)
Hey. Look at you. You look great.
I like the dress.

ANGELA
Really? You don't think I look
like a salad bar?

MARCUS
No. I like your hair like that,
too.

ANGELA

Thanks.

We can see that she is pleased by this attention from Marcus. But he seems not to notice. He is still mooning over Jacqueline.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

I thought you were over her.

MARCUS

I am. The hell with Jacqueline. See ... there ... I said it. I'm fine.

ANGELA

I think you're better off without her. It never would've worked out between the two of you.

MARCUS

And why is that?

ANGELA

You're too much alike. For a relationship to work out ... you need yin and yang. You guys are yang and yang.

MARCUS

You make us sound like a Chinese law firm.

ANGELA

I mean ... you and Jacqueline are good people. But you're both kind of ego driven ... into self gratification.

MARCUS

Where'd you go to school ... the Joyce Brothers Institute?

ANGELA

I'm sorry. I'm trying to cheer you up ... and I'm making you feel worse.

MARCUS

It's okay. I'm used to it. It takes time to mend a broken heart.

ANGELA

Marcus, you're beginning to sound like a twelve-year-old girl.

Marcus looks across the room at ...

JACQUELINE

who is now on the dance floor with JoJo. Marcus winces. Angela can't help but notice.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Would you like to dance?

MARCUS
Sure.

Angela leads Marcus onto the dance floor. They begin to move to the music. To his surprise, Angela is a good dancer. Her movements are sensual. Marcus smiles. For the first time in days, he is having a good time. The MUSIC changes to something slow and romantic.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Do you want to sit down?

ANGELA
No.

Marcus takes her in his arms. They move very well together, naturally, easily, like they've danced together all their lives. She rests her head on his shoulder and when they turn around, we can see from her expression that this is a special moment for her. But when they turn around again, we see that Marcus isn't thinking about Angela. His eyes are on...

JACQUELINE

who is leaving the dance floor, sneaking away arm-in-arm with JoJo, headed in the direction of the beach.

BACK TO MARCUS

He's alarmed. He stops dancing.

MARCUS
Excuse me.

Marcus hurries out after Jacqueline, leaving Angela hurt and disappointed. She is falling in love with Marcus. She knows it. We know it. But Marcus is unaware of it.

EXT. THE BEACH OUTSIDE THE HOTEL - NIGHT

A bright Caribbean moon shines through the palms. JoJo and Jacqueline are laughing as they run through the sand with their shoes off.

MARCUS

watches them from a distance behind some bushes, overcome with jealousy. Their LAUGHTER mocks him. Jacqueline and JoJo disappear into the darkness. Marcus follows them stealthily.

ANOTHER PART OF THE BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Marcus has lost sight of them. Then he sees their footprints in the sand. He follows them.

EXT. EDGE OF THE BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Marcus is still hot on the trail. He follows the footprints to ...

A BEACH SHANTY

This is where JoJo lives. It is more of an elaborate hut than a house. Wind chimes JINGLE. Marcus sneaks up to the front door. He can hear Jacqueline's soft LAUGHTER from inside. He leans closer to peek through a window. Suddenly a strange creature SCREECHES at him. Marcus spins around. It's a PEACOCK, fanning its tail, strutting a warning. Marcus cringes, his fear of birds coming out. The bird SHRIEKS again.

MARCUS

Shh.

INSIDE THE HUT - SAME TIME

Jacqueline and JoJo are sitting on the edge of a bed. They stop laughing as they hear the peacock.

JOJO

(with a thick Caribbean
accent)

Don't worry. It's just Simon.

JoJo pours her some wine. They clink glasses.

BACK OUTSIDE

Marcus sneaks around to the other side of the hut, keeping a wary eye out for the peacock. He peers into a window.

MARCUS' POV - INSIDE THE HUT

All he can see is a partial view of Jacqueline and JoJo's legs and feet. They are obviously reclining on the bed in the early throes of passion. Jacqueline wriggles her bare toes in ecstasy. Marcus is incensed. He tries to get a better view, but can't see from here. He looks up. A shaft of light is emanating from the thatched roof of the hut. There must be some kind of skylight up there. Marcus climbs up onto ...

THE ROOF

He creeps along, clinging to the poles that support the fragile palm fronds. Very carefully he inches his way to the edge of the skylight. He looks down ...

MARCUS' POV - JOJO'S BED

Jacqueline and JoJo are wrapped in a torrid embrace.

BACK ON THE ROOF

Marcus is furious. But before he can decide what to do, he is attacked by the SCREECHING peacock. Marcus rolls over to protect himself from the bird's thrashing talons. He crashes through the roof, plunging headlong into ...

THE BEDROOM

Marcus crashes onto the bed. Jacqueline SCREAMS. JoJo is astonished.

JACQUELINE

Marcus ...!

JOJO

Hey, mon, Jojo ain't into no tree-way ting.

JACQUELINE

What are you doing?

MARCUS

I was uh ... uh ... trying to pick a coconut.

MARCUS

who straggles behind, frazzled, barely able to move. He looks like a man who has been fucked to within an inch of his life.

INT. MARCUS' OFFICE - DAY

Marcus is on the phone planning a surprise for Jacqueline. Nelson is working on a storyboard, trying to get his attention.

MARCUS

(into the phone)

Tell them to park the trucks around the corner. It's got to be a surprise.

NELSON

Can we please talk about the Strange' spot. I'm shooting next week.

MARCUS

(covering the phone)

Nelson, I'm busy here.

NELSON

I need your attention.

MARCUS

Just shoot whatever you want.

NELSON

Thank you.

Nelson leaves.

MARCUS

(into the phone)

That's great. We'll be there at seven. She's gonna love it.

EXT. CHANTRESS COSMETICS BUILDING - NIGHT

Jacqueline comes out of the building and gets into a waiting limousine.

INSIDE THE LIMOUSINE

JACQUELINE

I'm going to 77th between Park and Lex.

The Driver turns around. It's Marcus.

MARCUS

Let me take you somewhere else first.

JACQUELINE

Marcus, what's going on?

MARCUS

I want to apologize for what happened in Barbados.

JACQUELINE

Forget about it.

MARCUS

I don't want to forget it. I want to make it up to you. You're gonna love this. I swear.

EXT. A WAREHOUSE ON THE WEST SIDE - NIGHT

Marcus and Jacqueline get out the limo.

MARCUS

Cover your eyes.

Against her better judgement, Jacqueline does as she is told. Marcus leads her ...

INSIDE THE BUILDING

It's an ice skating rink. Marcus leads Jacqueline onto the ice. She's still holding her hands over her eyes.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Watch your step.

JACQUELINE

How long do I have to do this?

MARCUS

Okay ... now!

She opens her eyes ...

THEIR POV

Spotlights sweep the ice. From out of the darkness comes a CHORUS LINE from the Ice Capades, dressed in dazzling costumes. They glide around Jacqueline weaving huge scarves in an intricately choreographed number as ...

LUSH ORCHESTRAL MUSIC PLAYS

Marcus beams. Jacqueline is dumbfounded.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Is this great, or what? You said
you always wanted to be in the
Ice Capades.

(offering her a pair
of new skates)

Here, try these on.

JACQUELINE

I don't want to. Marcus ... please.
This is embarrassing.

As they argue, the SKATERS twirl around them, smiling cheerfully.

MARCUS

(undaunted)

Look, you had your fling in
Barbados. I had mine. Fine.
But if we're going to make it as
a couple, we've got to be faithful.

JACQUELINE

You've got to be kidding.

Jacqueline tries to leave, making her way through the swarm of skaters. Marcus follows her, sliding unsteadily on the ice.

MARCUS

I've never said this to a woman
before ... but ...

(solemnly)

I love you, Jacqueline.

JACQUELINE

No, you don't. You just think
you do because I won't have you.

She walks off the ice and out the door.

MARCUS

Sure ... you feel that way now
... but you'll change your mind!

EXT. JACQUELINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

MUSIC: We HEAR a quartet of STREET SINGERS singing "a cappella" ... a silky sweet rendition of Stevie Wonder's My Cherie Amour. But the words have been changed ...

SINGERS
My Jackie Amour ... Lovely as
a summer day ...

The MUSIC continues as we ...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OF JACQUELINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We see the SINGERS: Four young black guys, impeccably dressed. Marcus is with them, carrying a dozen red roses.

SINGERS (CONT'D)
My Jackie Amour Distant as the
Milky Way ... My Jackie Amour Pretty
little one that I adore.

IRATE NEIGHBOR
 (yelling from O.S.)
 Shut up. It's after midnight.

MARCUS
 Hey, I'm serenading my girl. Don't
 you have any fuckin' romance in
 your soul?!

INT. LIVING ROOM OF JACQUELINE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Jacqueline comes out of her bedroom, pulling a robe over her negligee.

SINGERS (O.S.)
You're the only one my heart beats
for ... How I wish that you were
mine.

JACQUELINE
 This isn't fair.

BACK IN THE HALLWAY

The Quartet continues serenading ...

SINGERS (CONT'D)
La, la, la, la, la, la ...

The door opens. Jacqueline is seething mad. The Quartet continues SINGING throughout the rest of the scene.

JACQUELINE
 Marcus. Enough. Go home.

MARCUS
Can't I just come in and talk to
you ... ?

JACQUELINE
No!

JoJo, her diminutive Caribbean lover, steps into view wearing nothing but his underwear.

JOJO
Mon, don't you understand de lady?
She don't want you!

MARCUS
What's he doing here?! How can
you sleep with this guy?! He looks
like a fuckin' elf!

JOJO
(angrily)
Okay ... dat's enough now.

MARCUS
No, it ain't enough. I'm gonna
kick your Keebler ass all the way
back to Barbados.

Marcus puts up his fists. Out of nowhere JoJo lands two quick punches, followed by a swift kick to Marcus' jaw. Marcus hits the floor and stays there, rubbing his chin.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
(impressed)
Damn.

Jacqueline and JoJo go back inside, shutting the door behind them. Marcus is left lying on the floor while the quartet continues to SING ...

SINGERS
La, la, la, la, la, la ...

MARCUS
cut that shit out.

INT. CHANTRESS COSMETICS - DAY

A remorseful Marcus walks down the hallway, his jaw slightly swollen. Bony-T passes by.

BONY-T

Man, you lettin' everybody down
the way you prostrate yourself
for her. Where's your pride?
You think Malcolm X died so you
could pull some chump shit like
this?

MARCUS

I don't want to hear it, Bony-T.

BONY-T

Hey, I'm not the one that got beat
up by some Caribbean Munchkin.

Marcus walks on down the hallway. Up ahead he sees Jacqueline talking to some CO-WORKERS. Marcus is ashamed to see her. Jacqueline tries to pretend that everything is normal.

JACQUELINE

Good morning.

MARCUS

(embarrassed)

Morning.

Marcus keeps going without another word. Jacqueline watches him go, concerned.

INT. MARCUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lights are low. Marcus is sitting in the living room nursing his jaw, listening to Barry White drone on about lost love. The DOOR BELL RINGS. He looks through the peep hole. It's Jacqueline. He fumbles to turn off the stereo, not wanting to be caught listening to Barry White. He opens the door.

JACQUELINE

Hi. Can I come in?

MARCUS

Sure, I guess so.

She enters. Marcus is pouting, acting cool towards her.

JACQUELINE

How's your jaw?

MARCUS

Better.

JACQUELINE

Marcus, we've got to talk. This thing has gotten way out of hand. How can we work together when we're feeling like this? We've got to show the Strange' spot to the board and ...

MARCUS

Is that why you came over here? To get on my good side so you can get some work out of me?

JACQUELINE

Marcus, I wouldn't be here if I didn't care about you. How did things get so screwed up between us?

MARCUS

Because I want a commitment and you don't.

JACQUELINE

You don't want a commitment. You're just jealous that I go out with other men.

MARCUS

That's right. Because I love you.

JACQUELINE

Why does it have to be serious? I wish we could just have fun like we used to.

MARCUS

Me, too.

(weakening)

I'm sorry I broke up with you.

They embrace. Marcus clings to her like he never wants to let her go. Jacqueline kisses Marcus gently on the lips. Marcus kisses her back, the old feelings returning.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Just do me one favor. Spend the night ... the whole night.

JACQUELINE

Sure.

They head off towards the bedroom.

INT. THE OFFICE HALLWAY - MORNING

Marcus enters, on top of the world. As he passes by Angela's office, he sticks his head in the door. Angela looks up from her art table.

MARCUS

Hey. Guess what. You don't have to cheer me up anymore. I made up with Jacqueline.

Angela tries hard to appear happy, but her heart isn't in it.

ANGELA

That's good.

Marcus goes off down the hall, whistling. Left alone, Angela is despondent.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - NIGHT

A pop fly is caught. The inning is over.

IN THE STANDS

Marcus and Jacqueline are sitting in box seats. Marcus is fawning over her, anxious to make her happy.

MARCUS

God, this is great. Aren't you having fun? I thought you loved baseball.

JACQUELINE

(getting up)
I do. But right now, I have to go to the ladies' room.

MARCUS

You can't go now. The fourth inning's about to start.

JACQUELINE

Nothing's happening. The pitcher's warming up.

MARCUS

That's the best part.

Suddenly people around them BUZZ with excitement. A LADY next to them tugs at Jacqueline's sleeve.

LADY
Look! It's you!

The woman points up at

THE SCOREBOARD

Jacqueline's face is on display, forty feet high on a giant video screen. Jacqueline blushes, self conscious. Suddenly letters appear on the scoreboard spelling out, "JACQUELINE, WILL YOU MARRY ME? MARCUS."

BACK TO JACQUELINE AND MARCUS

Jacqueline is mortified. She can't believe the spot Marcus has put her in.

JACQUELINE
Are you crazy?!

MARCUS
You said I wasn't ready to make
a commitment. I am! Marry me.

JACQUELINE
No. No. No way!!

BACK ON THE HUGE VIDEO SCREEN

Jacqueline is berating Marcus, shaking her head. Marcus pleads but she scolds him even more. He persists, trying to hug her. She hits him and orders him to leave. Marcus is humiliated. And it's all on display for the amusement of fifty thousand FANS.

BACK IN THE STANDS

The HUGE CROWD LAUGHS at him. People start doing the wave.

MARCUS

walks down the ramp and slinks out of the stadium, a totally defeated man, as the thunderous LAUGHTER mocks him.

FADE

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

The Board of Directors from Tokyo and Lady Evelyn have assembled to see the eagerly anticipated Strange' commercial.

Jacqueline is making a speech.

JACQUELINE

This is a very exciting moment for us. After months of hard work by our creative team, we're about to see the commercial that will launch our eighteen million-dollar push for the new Strange' fragrance. So, if you'll dim the lights ...

As an ASSISTANT dims the light, Jacqueline crosses over to Marcus and Nelson.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

How is it?

MARCUS

(sheepishly)

I haven't seen it yet. Nelson did it by himself.

NELSON

It's my vision. And it's fucking fabulous.

The lights dim.

ON THE SCREEN

As beautiful ethereal MUSIC PLAYS ...

FADE IN ON:

A placid, shimmering lagoon in the midst of the forest primeval. The smooth reflective surface of the water is broken as a figure slowly rises through the mist. It's Strange' ... nude ... her back to the CAMERA ... her body glistening with water as she rises like a water nymph from the dark depths of the lagoon ...

ANNOUNCER

(like the voice of God)

You are witness to the birth of a new fragrance ... Strange' ...

Strange' whirls around. The CAMERA PUSHES IN. Her face is disfigured, her flesh rotting carrion, crawling with maggots.

Strange' squats like she's going into labor. Through SPECIAL EFFECTS, it appears that she is giving birth to the bottle of fragrance. It comes out glowing like it's radioactive.

As the smoke clears, the CAMERA LINGERS on the glowing bottle, and the announcer intones ...

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
'Strange' ... It Stinks So Good.

IN THE BOARDROOM

The lights come on. The Japanese are in shock. Even Lady Evelyn in her advanced state of senility realizes that this is dreadful.

LADY EVELYN
Oh, my God.

INT. JACQUELINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jacqueline is behind her desk, breaking the bad news to Marcus.

JACQUELINE
The board of directors wanted to fire you. But I convinced them to give you another chance.

MARCUS
As an employee, I thank you for saving my job. As your lover, I thank you for ruining my life.

JACQUELINE
Marcus, I didn't ruin your life. You did. You're letting this obsession get the best of you. I think you should take a few weeks off.

Marcus doesn't protest. He knows she's right.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A MOVIE SCREEN

We watch scenes from an ACTION FILM starring a bare-chested HERO. His rippling muscles gleam with oil as he stalks down an alley carrying a huge gun. We can't hear the sound of the movie, only Marcus' DAD TALKING LOUDLY to the characters on the screen.

DAD (O.S.)
Watch it now ... here they come
... uh-oh.

Several BAD GUYS open fire. The hero snarls as his cannon THUNDERS, blowing them to bits.

DAD (O.S., CONT'D)
Man! Did you see that shit?!

A SEXY WOMAN runs into the arms of the Hero.

PULL OUT to reveal ...

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Marcus and his Dad in their seats on an airplane, watching the in-flight movie. Several PEOPLE around them are annoyed.

DAD (CONT'D)
Think those tits are real? They
stuff 'em now you know.

MARCUS
(embarrassed)
Dad ... you're talking too loud.

Dad takes off his headphones. An attractive STEWARDESS walks by.

DAD
Damn. She's cute. You should
make a move on her.

MARCUS
I'm not interested right now.

DAD
When I was your age I was steady
after that stuff.

MARCUS
That's your problem. If you'd
kept your pecker in your pants,
you and Buster would still be
friends.

DAD
I never touched Essie. I may be
low, but I never laid a hand on
a friend's wife... their sister
maybe ... but not their wife.

EXT. STREETS OF PHOENIX - DAY

A cab drives through town, desert mountains looming in the distance.

DAD (O.S.)
 (singing)
By the time I get to Phoenix, she'll
be rising ...

(talking)
 Damn, it's hot. Why would the
 motherfucker want to live in a
 rotisserie oven?

MARCUS (O.S.)
 Essie said she'd meet us at the
 hospital.

INT. A PHOENIX HOSPITAL - DAY

Marcus wheels Dad down the corridor. ESSIE waves to them.
 A sweet and demure old lady about forty pounds overweight,
 she is hardly the type to set hearts on fire.

DAD
 Yonder she is.

MARCUS
 You're kidding. That's the woman
 ya'll have been fighting over for
 thirty years?

DAD
 (correcting him)
 Thirty-two. You shoulda seen her
 back then. She was a fan dancer
 ... hot as a pistol.

Essie joins them.

DAD (CONT'D)
 (greeting her warmly)
 Hello, Essie. You're as lovely
 as ever.

ESSIE
 (shyly)
 Good to see you, Luther.

MARCUS
 I'm Marcus. How's Buster doing?

ESSIE
 Not too well.

They reach Buster's room.

DAD
 Let me go in on my own power.

With some effort Dad rolls his wheelchair into ...

BUSTER'S HOSPITAL ROOM

BUSTER, an ancient, hard-faced old man, is lying in his hospital bed. Although he has tubes sticking out of his nose, he is wearing his best suit. The two old men glimpse each other for the first time in thirty years.

DAD

Hey, Buster.

BUSTER

What happened to you? Can't you walk no more?

DAD

Had a stroke.

BUSTER

(proudly)
Shit, I had three. But I can still move.

DAD

Yeah, then why don't you get up and tap dance? Why you so dressed up?

BUSTER

Man comes three thousand miles to see me ... don't seem right to greet 'em in my pajamas. I was surprised you asked to see me.

DAD

I ain't asked to see you. I thought you asked to see me.

BUSTER

Must be Essie's doing. Is your boy with you?

DAD

Oh, yeah. You should see him. I'm real proud of that boy. Got a real flair for the ladies. Just like me.

BUSTER

I heard that. We had our share, didn't we? Back when we was runnin' the club.

DAD

How many women do you reckon you had? Did you ever count?

BUSTER

One hundred and thirty-three.

DAD

Six hundred and fifteen.

BUSTER

Aw, man. I ain't talking about how many times you did it. I'm talking how many different women.

DAD

Nigger, I understand the question. I've had six hundred and fifteen women.

BUSTER

Bullshit. Ever do a white gal?

DAD

At least a baker's dozen.

BUSTER

A Chinese?

DAD

Ah, so.

BUSTER

How about a Latin?

DAD

Si, si, senor.

BUSTER

Bet you never had an Eskimo.

DAD

Man, you never had no Eskimo.

BUSTER

I did too. That gal could do things with her nose you wouldn't believe.

The two old men laugh.

DAD

You always had a wild imagination.

BUSTER

You're just jealous. Always was. How long you in town for?

DAD
Just a few days.

BUSTER
Where you stayin'?

DAD
Over at your place.

BUSTER
(suddenly enraged)
With Essie?! You just couldn't
wait for me to pass, could you?
Just got to get your hands on her!

DAD
I'm in a goddamn wheelchair ...
what the hell can I do?

Buster attempts to raise himself up in the bed, shaking with
furious indignation, huffing and puffing.

BUSTER
Been waitin' 32 years like a snake
in the grass. Couldn't wait to
shack up with her, you low-down
sleazy buddy fucker!

DAD
Fuck you.

BUSTER
Fuck you!

CUT TO:

EXT. A CEMETERY IN THE ARIZONA DESERT - DAY

Marcus is with his Dad at a graveside ceremony. Essie is
with some other MOURNERS in the background.

MARCUS
He probably would've died anyway.
It's not your fault.

DAD
(affectionately)
Hard-headed son-of-a-bitch.

INT. MARCUS' APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Marcus is in a funk. He drifts into the living room from
the kitchen, unshaven, barefoot, wearing a scruffy robe.
The apartment looks messy, too.

He plops down on the sofa, staring aimlessly at a soap opera on TV. The DOOR BELL RINGS.

Marcus walks listlessly to the door. He opens it. It's Angela, full of energy, wearing jogging shorts and a Bennett College T-Shirt.

MARCUS
I'm not going.

ANGELA
I don't want to hear it. You need to get out. Now come on. Let's go jog.

MARCUS
I heard it might rain.

ANGELA
It is not.

MARCUS
It is too.

ANGELA
Then you'll get wet. Stop being so morose.

MARCUS
I can't help it. I've been kicked in the butt by love.

ANGELA
You know, you're not the first person to get dumped on. It happens to some people all the time. You just have to get up and get going again. Believe me, I know the drill.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Marcus and Angela are jogging along the lake. The sky is overcast.

MARCUS
So ... you've been hurt by a lot of guys?

ANGELA
Not a lot. A few.

They stop jogging and rest for a moment by the lake.

MARCUS

A few. How many times have you been in love?

ANGELA

None. Let me tell you something I've figured out. There's two kinds of love ... phoney, make-believe romantic bullshit love ... which keeps you all torn up and in pain all the time ... and real love which makes you feel good and happy. If you don't know if you're in love or not ... here's a clue. If you're happy and laughing ... you're in love. If you're hurtin' ... it's bullshit.

Suddenly the lake is pelted by huge drops of rain. Marcus stands up and pretends surprise. He throws his arms up to the heavens.

MARCUS

What's this? Could this be rain? No, excuse me. Angela said this wouldn't happen.

The downpour quickens. Marcus and Angela are getting soaked. They run for shelter.

INT. MARCUS' APARTMENT - DAY

Marcus walks out of the kitchen looking worse than before because now he's suffering from a bad cold. He SNEEZES. The DOOR BELL RINGS. It's Angela, carrying a small paper sack.

ANGELA

I got you Comtrex and some orange juice. I'm sorry. This is my fault.

MARCUS

Yes, it is. Yesterday I was depressed, but at least I was healthy.

ANGELA

Aw, come on ...

MARCUS

If I die from this, I want my tombstone to say, "Here Lies Marcus Graham, Killed By Good Intentions."

ANGELA

If you don't need my help, I guess you don't want to hear my idea. I think I know how to save the Strange' commercial.

MARCUS

How?

ANGELA

Cut together actual news footage of Strange' doing all that crazy stuff. Like a documentary. That's what people like about her. They wish they had the guts to do things like that.

MARCUS

Maybe. We can try it.

INT. AN EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a video monitor. Black and white NEWS FOOTAGE of Strange' taking off her chain mail dress by the metal detector in the airport. The image is moving frame-by-frame in SLOW MOTION.

ANGELA (O.S.)

Now slow it down.

MARCUS (O.S.)

There.

ANGLE TO REVEAL

Marcus and Angela working at an editing console with a tired OLD EDITOR. Marcus looks alert and excited, his old self again.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What do you think?

ANGELA

I like it.
(noticing something)
Wait. I see nipple.

MARCUS

That's a shadow.

ANGELA

No, it's a nipple.

EDITOR

I'll blow it up.

He pushes a button on his console and the image blows up. Now it's even harder to tell.

MARCUS

I don't know. What do you think?

EDITOR

I think it's a shadow of a nipple.

Marcus and Jacqueline start laughing at the absurdity of what they're doing.

EXT. THE WEST FORTIES - DAWN

Marcus and Angela come out of the editing house into the bleak light of morning after working all night. They are tired, but happy.

ANGELA

I think it's going to be okay.

MARCUS

I think it's great.

(looking at his watch)
It's five in the morning. We're never gonna get a cab.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAWN

The city is deserted. The morning light reveals the grimness of the gritty, filthy streets. Just a few bums lie here and there. Marcus and Angela walk along the cracked, littered pavement.

MARCUS

Ah, what a town. The glamour of Broadway really comes alive this time of day, doesn't it?

ANGELA

There's a taxi.

MARCUS

Quick. Look friendly.

Marcus hails the cab, smiling.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Hi. We're a friendly black couple and we're not going to mug you.

To their relief, the cab stops. Marcus opens the door for Angela.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You take this one. Hey, Angela
... thanks. I really appreciate
this.

He hugs her warmly.

ANGELA

It was fun.

MARCUS

Yeah.

She starts to get in. Suddenly Marcus doesn't want her to leave.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Hey, I have an idea. Why don't
you come up to my place and I'll
fix breakfast for you.

ANGELA

I'm pretty tired.

MARCUS

You're right. Goodnight.

ANGELA

Good night, Marcus.

She gets in the cab. The cab drives away leaving Marcus standing in the cool morning light. He watches the car get smaller, thinking about Angela and how much he cares for her.

INT. DAD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Marcus is dropping by to see his Dad. As he makes his way down the hall he sees the Nurse coming out, fuming, carrying her suitcase.

MARCUS

Mrs. Sims, where you going?

NURSE

I refuse to live with this kind
of hanky-panky! It's wicked.

She clumps off down the hall. Marcus enters ...

THE APARTMENT

MARCUS

Hey, what's wrong with The Beast?

DAD

She's got a vulgar-ass mind. It's none of her business.

MARCUS

What are you talking about?

Essie -- Buster's widow from Phoenix -- walks out of the other room. She smiles sweetly as she sees Marcus.

ESSIE

Hello.

MARCUS

Essie?

ESSIE

I'll fix you some iced tea.

Essie exits.

MARCUS

What's she doing here?

DAD

Moving in with me.

MARCUS

Buster was right. You were screwing around with his wife.

DAD

Aw, come on, son. I never touched her back then ... but now that we're both single ... all is fair in love.

MARCUS

How can you do this to Buster?

DAD

Shit. Buster's dead. What's he care?

MARCUS

It's not right.

DAD

You know, son, not everybody's as screwed up about women as you are. Let me explain something. You get to a point where you have to take love wherever it comes from. The first half of your life it's like, "I've got to find somebody to love." But eventually, it gets down to, "I better find somebody that will love me." Know what I'm saying?

Essie returns with glasses of iced tea. Dad smiles at her affectionately.

DAD (CONT'D)

Thank you, Essie.

(singing)

Unforgettable ... You are ...

She smiles back at him.

INT. MARCUS' APARTMENT - DAY

It's the Fourth of July. Tyler, Gerard, Dad and Essie have come over for dinner.

DAD

(calling to Marcus in
the kitchen)

Where's my catfish?

MARCUS (O.S.)

It's coming. Keep your shirt on.

IN THE KITCHEN

Marcus and Angela are cooking up a storm. Pots and pans are everywhere. It's hard work, but they're having fun.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Every Fourth of July he has to have fried catfish ... hush puppies ... greens cooked with fatback. It's like, "God bless America. Pass the cholesterol."

Angela offers him a taste of the potato salad she's making.

ANGELA

What does this need?

MARCUS
 (tasting it)
 Nothing. Damn. That's good.

EXT. THE TERRACE - LATER

They're all watching the fireworks explode over Central Park. We can hear the distant sounds of the Philharmonic playing the 1812 Overture. Everyone is silent, dazzled by the beauty of the moment. Marcus looks at his Dad who is holding hands with Essie. Then Marcus gazes at Angela who has never looked lovelier. Gerard has his arm around her.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - LATER STILL

The fireworks are over. Tyler and Gerard are leaving with Dad and Essie.

GERARD
 Great dinner.

MARCUS
 Thanks. Sure you don't mind dropping them off?

GERARD
 No problem. It's on the way. Angela, you coming?

ANGELA
 Go ahead. I'll stay and help Marcus clean up this mess.

TYLER
 Later. Let's stop on the way. I need a Bromo Seltzer.

They exit. She and Marcus head for the kitchen, already dead tired from cooking all day.

MARCUS
 Sure you want to do this?

ANGELA
 How bad can it be?

They enter ...

THE KITCHEN

And it looks like the galley of hell itself. A mountain of dirty pans and dishes. Marcus and Angela sigh and start cleaning.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

They finally emerge from the kitchen, exhausted.

ANGELA

I need to sit down.

They sink on the couch together and turn on the TV. An old Honeymooners episode is on.

MARCUS

Oh, good. They're running a Honeymooners marathon.

It's the "Chef of the Future" episode. Marcus and Angela watch the show, sleepy but content. They are so at ease with one another they could be a married couple.

EXT. THE APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

An early spring moon slips behind some clouds over Central Park.

BACK INSIDE THE APARTMENT

Time has passed. The Honeymooners marathon is still going on. Norton is sleep walking, calling, "Lulu, Lulu."

ON THE SOFA

Marcus and Angela are both fast asleep. She's resting her head against his shoulder. He stirs and slowly wakes up, finding himself face-to-face with Angela. He kisses her affectionately on the cheek. She opens her eyes. She smiles at him and kisses him gently on the lips. He returns her kiss. They kiss again. Then again.

MARCUS

(whispering)

Angela ...

ANGELA

(dreamily, as she kisses him)

Hmm?

MARCUS

What are we doing?

ANGELA

I think we're kissing.

As they whisper, their kisses become more and more insistent.

MARCUS
We're not supposed to.

ANGELA
Why?

MARCUS
We're friends.

ANGELA
Friends can kiss.

He kisses her hard. She throws her arms around him. They both groan with excitement. Suddenly they can't get at each other fast enough. Marcus fumbles with her blouse, unbuttoning it as fast as he can. He tries to unfasten her bra from behind, but can't find the snap.

MARCUS
Angela?

ANGELA
(oblivious)
Hm?

MARCUS
If you're really my friend, you'll help me with this.

She unsnaps her bra from the front. He buries his head into her breasts. There is no stopping them now.

INT. MARCUS' KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Angela is in the kitchen making breakfast. Marcus enters, feeling awkward and confused about the night before.

ANGELA
(cheerfully)
Hi. I'm making Belgian waffles.
Want some?

MARCUS
Yeah.

As they speak, Marcus starts to help, slicing strawberries while she pours the batter.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
What do you think ... about what happened?

ANGELA

I think it was great. A little awkward at first, but people have to get used to each other sexually. I thought by the third or fourth time, we got it down pretty good.

MARCUS

Yeah. But I feel like it was wrong. Like we shouldn't have done it at all.

ANGELA

Why?

MARCUS

You know. We're supposed to be friends.

ANGELA

So what? Haven't you ever slept with women you were friendly with before?

MARCUS

Yeah, I have. But you're more than that ... you're like my sister ... I feel guilty for seducing you.

ANGELA

First of all, you didn't seduce me. I seduced you. Do you really think I hung around to do the dishes?

The Belgian waffles are almost ready. She adds a big dollop of whipped cream to each one. He tops them with strawberries. They do this reflexively, without thinking, like they've done it all their lives.

MARCUS

But you're special ... I like you too much to be ... you know ...

ANGELA

What?

MARCUS

"Doing it" with you.

ANGELA

"Doing it?" You know, when it comes to stuff like this, you're really retarded.

MARCUS

It's not like we're ... you know
... in love.

ANGELA

Listen to yourself. You just said
that we're friends ... that you
care about me ... and the sex is
great. Did it ever occur to you
that this could be love?

Marcus considers it. She's right.

MARCUS

What about Gerard?

INT. BILLIARD PARLOR - NIGHT

Marcus and Gerard are trying to play a game of eight ball.
Tyler is in the middle of a harangue.

TYLER

It's a racist game. Think about
it. The white ball dominates
everything. It knocks the shit
out of the yellow ball ... the red
ball. And the game is over when
the white ball drives the black
ball completely off the table.
Now why do you think that is?

GERARD

I don't know. But I'm sure you'll
tell us.

TYLER

Because of the white man's fear
of the sexual potency of black
balls.

MARCUS

Will you shut the hell up and get
us some beers?

TYLER

Okay. But ya'll hurry up. I'd
like to play sometime tonight.

Tyler leaves Marcus and Gerard alone. Gerard lines up a
shot.

GERARD

Man, he's getting worse. We gotta
find him a woman.

Gerard sinks a ball. He lines up another shot.

MARCUS

Yeah. So ... how are you and Angela getting along? Are you serious about her?

GERARD

No, we slept together a couple of times ... but we decided it would be better if we were just friends.

MARCUS

So it wouldn't bother you if she went out with other guys?

GERARD

No. Why? You thinking of fixing her up with Tyler?

MARCUS

No.

Gerard stops playing.

GERARD

Why do you want to know?

MARCUS

I'm just curious.

Gerard is suspicious. He tries to make eye contact with Marcus, but Marcus looks away, suddenly ill at ease. Gerard can sense what is going on.

GERARD

Aw, Jesus.

MARCUS

What?

GERARD

You know what. You're sleeping with Angela ... aren't you?

MARCUS

Yeah.

Gerard is more hurt than angry.

GERARD

How come you always have to have all the girls?

MARCUS

It's not like that. A minute ago you said you wouldn't care if she went out with other guys. But because it's me, you're upset. That's hypocritical.

GERARD

I know.

MARCUS

So, why can't you be happy for me?

GERARD

Because you're going to play her ... you're going to use her and then you're gonna leave her.

MARCUS

No, I'm not. I really care about her.

GERARD

You better. Because if you don't, I'm gonna stick this cue stick so far up your ass, your tongue will be blue from the chalk.

MARCUS

So ... you're okay with it?

GERARD

I guess so.

MARCUS

You sure?

GERARD

Hey, I'm not doing cartwheels over it. But I'll get over it.

Tyler returns with the beers.

TYLER

Aw, man. The balls are right where they were when I left. Come on, Gerard. Put him out of his misery.

They resume playing.

INT. JACQUELINE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Marcus and Angela are playing their new Strange' commercial for Jacqueline.

POUNING MUSIC underscores a SERIES of QUICK news shots of Strange' doing bizarre things in public. It ends with a FREEZE FRAME as she takes off her clothes at the airport.

SINGER (V.O.)

Do Something Crazy ... Strange'.

JACQUELINE

(pleased)

I think it works. Good job, Marcus.

Marcus puts his arm around Angela.

MARCUS

Thank Angela. It was her idea.

JACQUELINE

Nice going.

Marcus and Angela smile at each other, sharing a moment of pride. Jacqueline notices that they seem to be close.

INT. BATHROOM OF MARCUS' APARTMENT - DAY

Marcus is taking a shower, feeling relaxed and playful. He's singing an old Delfonics song.

MARCUS

La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la,
la ... I love you.

Angela pokes her head into the shower.

ANGELA

(anxiously)

Marcus!

MARCUS

(startled)

What?!

ANGELA

A bird flew into the living room.
Help me get it out.

MARCUS

Shit. I hate birds.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As we glance around the room, we realize that Angela has moved in. Some of Marcus' sleek "playboy" furniture has been replaced by Angela's colorful things, including several ceramic pieces.

A pigeon is sitting on top of the drapes. Angela is on a step ladder, trying to get it down.

Marcus enters wearing a towel around his waist.

MARCUS
What are you doing?

ANGELA
Trying to get it to fly. Catch it in the trash can.

MARCUS
I'm not gonna touch that thing. They carry all kinds of nasty diseases.

ANGELA
Alright, I'll catch him.

MARCUS
No. I'll reason with him.
(shouting in a "street" voice)
Hey, motherfucker ... that's right ... you!

The bird takes off, flying around the apartment, knocking into walls and lamps. It almost hits Marcus. He ducks.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Shit!

Marcus retreats to the hall closet. After a moment he reappears, wearing a batting helmet and carrying a lacrosse stick. The bird is still flying around. Marcus approaches it warily, turning his face away, fending off the bird with the stick. He looks ridiculous. Angela starts laughing.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Shoo ... shoo.

The pigeon flies out of the room, onto the terrace. Marcus slams the doors, breathing a sigh of relief.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
(with false bravado)
I guess I showed him.

ANGELA
(still laughing)
Oh, you were very brave.

The PHONE RINGS. Angela answers it.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Hello.

(pause)

Sure. He's right here.

(handing Marcus the phone)

It's Jacqueline.

Angela exits with the stepladder.

MARCUS

(on the phone)

Hi.

(pause)

Not much. Just a typical Sunday.

(pause)

Oh ... that was Angela.

(pause)

Nothing. She just dropped by.

IN THE HALLWAY

Angela has overheard Marcus lying. She's hurt, but keeps it to herself.

MARCUS (O.S., CONT'D)

(on the phone)

That's great!

(calling to Angela)

Our spot tested through the roof.

Angela goes back into ...

THE LIVING ROOM

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Sure. That'll be fine. Looking forward to it. Thanks. Bye.

Marcus hangs up.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Jacqueline's having dinner Tuesday night with the board of directors. She wants me to come with her and show them the spot.

ANGELA

(trying to conceal her apprehension)

That's good.

MARCUS

Listen ... do you want to come?
Because I'll call her back and
tell her.

ANGELA

It's okay. You two go.

INT. LOBBY OF THE SHERRY-NETHERLAND HOTEL - NIGHT

Jacqueline and Marcus are saying goodnight to the Board of Directors who seem quite pleased. As the Japanese get into the elevator, one smiles at Marcus, giving him the thumbs up. The elevator door closes. Jacqueline couldn't be happier. She takes Marcus' arm and squeezes it.

JACQUELINE

They loved it. I'm really proud
of you, Marcus. Do you have time
for a drink?

MARCUS

Sure.

INT. BAR AT THE SHERRY NETHERLAND - NIGHT

Jacqueline and Marcus sit at a small table in the corner. He can't help but notice how wonderful she looks.

JACQUELINE

You know, I think the time we spent
apart was the best thing that ever
happened to us.

MARCUS

Why?

JACQUELINE

You're different. You've changed.

MARCUS

Do you think it's possible for
people to change?

JACQUELINE

Sure. For awhile there you were
so desperate and unsure of yourself.
I was really worried about you.

MARCUS

I was kinda pathetic.

JACQUELINE

But now, look at you. You're relaxed. More confident ... like you were when I first met you. I like that. I find it very attractive.

Jacqueline kisses Marcus tenderly. He's a little overwhelmed by this unexpected show of affection. Old feelings well up in him.

MARCUS

What was that for?

JACQUELINE

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that. It's the champagne. I know you're involved with Angela.

MARCUS

It's okay. It felt good.

JACQUELINE

It's good to have you back, Marcus.

She's playing Marcus like a well-hooked trout. And he's falling for it.

INT. BEDROOM OF MARCUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marcus slips into bed, careful not to disturb Angela who is turned away from him. He looks at her, feeling troubled and confused. He rolls over to go to sleep.

On closer view we see that Angela is still awake. She's been waiting for Marcus to come home. She closes her eyes and tries to sleep.

EXT. TERRACE OF MARCUS' APARTMENT - MORNING

Angela is having coffee on the terrace. Marcus joins her, feeling miserable.

ANGELA

Want some coffee?

MARCUS

Yeah, I need some.

ANGELA

So how'd it go last night?

MARCUS
(noncommittal)
Okay.

ANGELA
Just okay? Must have gone pretty
good. You didn't come home till
real late.

MARCUS
I spent a long time walking around
... trying to sort things out.

ANGELA
(knowing what's coming)
Oh, shit. You think you're still
in love with her.

MARCUS
I can't help it. I saw her and
all those old feelings came out.
I didn't want it to happen. I
was happy with you. I was. I
swear. Don't ever think you weren't
important to me. You were. I
owe you. Jacqueline says I've
changed. I'm a lot more confident.
And it's because of you.

She SLAPS his face.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
(calmly)
You've got every right to feel
that way.

She SLAPS him again.

ANGELA
Don't tell me how I feel.

MARCUS
I didn't want to hurt you. But
there's nothing I can do about
it. There's certain things a man
can't control.

ANGELA
Like what?

MARCUS
Like love.

ANGELA

Oh, give me a break. I'm sick of men blaming everything on love ... like it's some kinda disease you catch.

(mocking him)

"Yo baby, I'm sorry I hafta leave you and the kids here to starve, but ... what can I say? I fell in love. And there's nothing I can do about it." To hell with that. And to hell with you, Marcus. I thought you were better than that.

Angela grabs her purse and heads for the door. Marcus goes after her into ...

THE HALLWAY

She pushes the elevator button.

MARCUS

Where're you going?

ANGELA

I'm leaving. I'll get my things later. You know, Marcus, Jacqueline's wrong. You haven't changed. You still do your thinking below the waist.

The elevator arrives.

MARCUS

I'm not thinking with my dick!
It's my heart!

The PASSENGERS in the elevator look away, embarrassed. Angela gets in. The elevator doors close leaving Marcus alone, feeling bad about what he's done.

INT. JACQUELINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marcus and Jacqueline enter her apartment after an evening out.

MARCUS

You know, this is the first time I've ever been in your apartment.

JACQUELINE

This is the first time in our relationship I've felt really comfortable. We're not playing games with each other. We can be ourselves. It's nice.

She kisses him. He responds.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

Let's go to the bedroom.

Marcus nods. Neither of them wanting to say anything to ruin the moment. They silently enter ...

JACQUELINE'S BEDROOM

They fall on the bed, kissing fervently, clinging to one another as their passion swells. They begin undressing each other. Suddenly they are interrupted by an annoying BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. Jacqueline breaks away, reaching for her pager.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

Sorry. I've got to call this guy.

She picks up the phone and starts dialing.

MARCUS

(frustrated)

Can't this wait?

JACQUELINE

No. He's leaving town and it's real urgent.

(into the phone)

Mike? Jacqueline. Listen ...

I know you've got to catch a plane, so let's settle this thing.

In the middle of her business discussion, Jacqueline realizes that Marcus is feeling neglected. To appease him, she opens her blouse, revealing a very lovely breast. Without missing a beat on the phone, she gestures for Marcus to kiss it.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I know, but you're going to have to eat the printing costs. Well, get over it.

(pause)

No. No way.

She glances over at Marcus who is not responding. She SNAPS her finger to get his attention, then points to her breast again. Marcus can't believe it.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Give up, Mike. You're not going
to win this one.

Without a word, Marcus gets up and starts putting his clothes
on.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hold on a second.

She covers the mouthpiece of the phone.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
(to Marcus)
What's wrong?

MARCUS
What am I -- a trained dog?

JACQUELINE
What do you mean?

MARCUS
You snap your finger like, "Here.
You can kiss this while I'm on
the phone!"

JACQUELINE
Will you keep your voice down?
(to phone)
Mike, I'll call you right back.
(she hangs up; to Marcus)
What's your problem?

MARCUS
Nothing.

JACQUELINE
You're upset because I had to make
a call?

MARCUS
We were making love! No, I take
that back. What we were doing
had nothing to do with love. I
must have been an idiot to fall
for this crap again!

JACQUELINE
I just want to have a good time.
What's wrong with that?

MARCUS
You only sleep with me when it's
convenient.

JACQUELINE
Stop being so pious. You're no
different than me.

MARCUS
Yes, I am. I used to treat women
the same way. But not anymore.

JACQUELINE
Are you through?

MARCUS
Yeah. Goodbye, Jacqueline.

JACQUELINE
Goodbye.

And with that, Marcus is gone. Jacqueline sits pensively
for a moment. Then she picks up the phone again and dials.

JACQUELINE (CONT'D)
Mike? Where were we?
(beat)
Oh, nothing. Just something
personal.

INT. MARCUS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marcus comes home to a dark apartment. He turns on the light.
Angela has moved out, taking all her things. Marcus walks
out onto ...

THE TERRACE

He looks out at the view. Yvonne, the crazy woman, calls
to him from her balcony across the way.

YVONNE
She left you, huh?

MARCUS
Yeah.

YVONNE
Serves you right. I guess I should
feel happy, but I don't. I hate
to see another person in pain.

MARCUS
Thanks, Yvonne.

YVONNE

So ... would you like to come over
for a cup of coffee?

MARCUS

No, thank you.

YVONNE

Some motherfuckers are so blind
they can't see a good thing when
it's staring them in the face.

EXT. CHANTRESS COSMETICS BUILDING - DAY

People are leaving for the day. Marcus is hanging around
outside, anxiously waiting for Angela to appear. She finally
comes out of the revolving doors, on her way home. Marcus
joins her as she walks down the sidewalk.

MARCUS

Hi.

Angela keeps walking.

ANGELA

I don't want to talk to you.

MARCUS

I have to tell you something.

ANGELA

I already know. You broke up with
Jacqueline.

MARCUS

Who told you?

ANGELA

Bony-T.

MARCUS

That guy knows everything.

Angela picks up her pace, walking ahead of him.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Wait up. I know what I did was
wrong. I'm sorry.

ANGELA

That's not good enough.

MARCUS

I don't love Jacqueline. I never
did. I love you.

ANGELA
Marcus, please don't.

MARCUS
Look, it's easy to find somebody to love you when things are going great. I want somebody to love me when I don't feel so good about myself. When I have doubts and feel insecure ...

ANGELA
Then get a dog.

MARCUS
That's not fair. I want us to be together the rest of our lives. I want to grow old together like Dad and Essie. I want you to help me get out of the tub. I want to help you read those tiny little numbers in the phone book. I want us to be there to stop each other when somebody tries to sell us encyclopedias. Come on ... can't we start over?

ANGELA
No. I don't want to be hurt again.

MARCUS
I won't do that. I swear. I've been lying to women for so long, I know it's hard for you to believe me. But I'm telling you the truth.

ANGELA
Marcus, if you really love me, you'll leave me alone.

She keeps on walking. Marcus stays behind, realizing he's lost the only woman he's ever loved.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. THE LAKE AT CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Marcus is sitting alone in the rowboat as he was at the start of the story. He turns and looks to CAMERA.

MARCUS

I really screwed up. I lost the only good thing I ever had. Angela taught me a lot of things. For instance, you have to like somebody before you love them. Otherwise it doesn't count. I guess it's all part of God's plan. We get thirsty because God wants us to drink. We get hungry because he wants us to eat. We have sex because he wants us to multiply. And we fall in love because God thinks it's funny to play with our heads. I've got to get Angela back. And if she doesn't want me now, then I'll wait till she does. Because some things are worth it. I just have to be patient, that's all.

Marcus sits quietly for a few moments. But he can't wait a second longer. He takes out a cellular phone and quickly dials a number.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Hello, Angela.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END