

"GARBO TALKS!"

By

Larry Grusin

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FADE IN:

TITLES begin on:

AERIAL SHOT - FLUSHING, NEW YORK - NIGHT

The shot starts very high. There is no sound. All we see is lights, small as pinheads, and the city shimmering in a summer night's heat.

CAMERA begins to slowly CLOSE IN. Gradually we hear night sounds: a HORN honking here, BRAKES screeching there.

CAMERA continues to move in on the city: it's dark, it's late, and the place is mostly asleep.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS CAMERA

slowly PANS down a commercial street. The shops are closed, secured and dark.

SEE a man unloading newspapers from a truck on the corner, the papers landing with a thud. The business establishments are locked, save for a bright neon-lit doughnut house with a few customers at the counter.

CAMERA PANS down the street slowly, away from the business area and onto residential streets full of apartments.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS CAMERA PANS

an upper floor of an apartment building, it passes an open window through which we HEAR the sound of heavy SNORING.

CAMERA passes another window. We see the shadows of the TV bouncing off the walls and we hear:

CONTINUED

TOM SNYDER (o.s.)

Good morning, America. Yesterday in Cleveland, Ohio a group of grade school students returned from the three-day weekend holiday to find their victory garden had been pulled up by the roots by vandals.

CAMERA begins to move again, and Snyder's voice begins to fade.

TOM SNYDER (o.s.)

It was only plants, you say, hardly the stuff of a nationally televised show....

It passes another window, from which we hear:

SLEEPY WOMAN (o.s.)

Where you going?

SLEEPY MAN (o.s.)

To the bathroom.

SLEEPY WOMAN (o.s.)

Why didn't you do it before you went to bed?

SLEEPY MAN (o.s.)

I did.

HEAR him crawling across the bed and his wife. He steps on her and she screams.

SLEEPY WOMAN (o.s.)

Oh!

(a beat)

Don't step on Precious!

As CAMERA moves away from the window, HEAR a DOG SCREAM and a man crashing to the floor.

CAMERA continues to PAN past a couple more windows: some have curtains, some have shades, and the next one, from which we hear voices, has Levelor blinds:

MAN #1 (o.s.)

Not tonight, Frank.

MAN #2 (o.s.)

Oh, come on.

CONTINUED

MAN #1 (o.s.)

I'm not in the mood.

CAMERA continues to PAN more windows. From one we hear more SNORING, from one a loud BELCH, from one the sound of a TOILET FLUSHING.

Begin to hear:

MARGUERITE (o.s.)

Help me! I'll brush my hair. Get me some rouge, I beg you!

NANINE (o.s.)

You don't think he cares how you look? He knows you've been ill.

MARGUERITE (o.s.)

Oh, you always said he'd come back, didn't you, Nanine?

NANINE (o.s.)

Sit here, sit here. Here are all of your things.

HEAR the sound of a WOMAN CRYING from the next open window, and SEE blue TELEVISION SHADOWS shifting their light on the wall.

MARGUERITE (o.s.)

I'll even have camellias! I'll be beautiful again and I'll be well again! I can't wait, call him now! Call him now!

NANINE (o.s.)

Yes.

(goes to the door)

Monsieur?

ARMAND (o.s.)

Marguerite!

MARGUERITE (o.s.)

Armand! It's you, it's not a dream!

ARMAND (o.s.)

No, it's not a dream! I'm here with you in my arms at last!

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

CAMERA moves inside the bedroom and PANS the room, a nicely furnished bedroom, rather stylish. HOLD on the TV set: the voices we've been hearing are from Garbo's "Camille."

ARMAND

You're weak.

MARGUERITE

It's my heart, it's not used to being happy.

ARMAND

I've been down in the street half the night, walking back and forth under your window, just as I did when I first met you. Wanting to come up but not daring to, I felt so guilty. I didn't know how ill you were. I've been everywhere trying to forget how much I loved you. When I came back a week ago I was still determined to forget how much I loved you. Forget you? As if I could. Forgive me.

Continue to HEAR a WOMAN CRYING gently in b.g.

MARGUERITE

Forgive you?

PAN to SEE the bedside clock. It reads 1:05 a.m.

ARMAND

And to think I couldn't see into this heart I know so well and see that it was sacrificing itself for me. No good can ever come to either of us without the other. I know that now.

CAMERA PANS in and HOLDS on ESTELLE WOLF, who's sitting in bed in her housecoat and crying profusely as she watches the end of the film.

ARMAND (o.s.)

Let's go to the country! The sun will take care of you. We'll go today!

MARGUERITE (o.s.)

Take me to the country where we were happy all one summer! Where's Nanine? I must dress!

CONTINUED

ARMAND (o.s.)

Nanine!

CAMERA PANS BACK to "Camille" on TV:

Nanine enters.

MARGUERITE

We're going to the country!

NANINE

To the country -- today?

MARGUERITE

Yes! Don't stand there staring at me,
do as I say.

Marguerite, in Armand's arms, stands and walks a few steps
before collapsing:

MARGUERITE

Oh, I can't! I can't!

HEAR Estelle CRYING.

ARMAND

Get the doctor, Nanine, quick!

Armand holds Marguerite in his arms.

MARGUERITE

If you can't make me live, how can he?

ARMAND

Be quiet. Don't talk. Tell me you'll
live. Tell me it can't happen.
We'll be happy again, we will!

Marguerite dies in his arms.

ARMAND

No, no, don't leave me! Marguerite,
don't leave me! Come back!

Estelle continues to cry.

MUSIC, and "The End."

Estelle turns off the TV. She throws the well-used kleenex
that's crumpled in her hand, into a wastebasket.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

Estelle is fiftyish, a handsome woman with salt and pepper hair that's been recently styled, perhaps even today. We sense a certain strength about her, even in her silence. This is not a timid or shy lady, though obviously a sensitive one, judging by her total and emotional involvement in Garbo and "Camille." This is not a demure woman, either: Estelle is someone who laughs heartily, always chooses bright red lipsticks, and who would have instilled some organization into the Titanic rescue.

HOLD for another beat as the film ends. Estelle turns off the TV, the lights, and goes to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY

It's morning and the place is jammed with people going to work. It's shoulder to shoulder for blocks.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ON GILBERT WOLF

He's an average-looking man, a little on the studious-looking side. He's dressed well in a natty tweed jacket, foulard tie, good slacks. He carries a briefcase under his arm. Gilbert is the kind of man who was never the first to raise his hand when the teacher asked a question. He was never a sports hero, never an honor student, but rather the kind of person who tried to "blend in well," who didn't have the daring it takes to stand out in a crowd.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SUBWAY

As a train comes through the tunnel and stops. The doors open and the throng, like a billion sardines, pushes its way inside. Gilbert just about gets to the train door when it slams shut in his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY - THE MID 50s

HOLD on a subway exit with hundreds of people pushing out up the stairs, with Gilbert in the crowd.

HOLD on Gilbert as he walks down the street looking harried; it's as though the trip to work itself has worn him out. He

CONTINUED

just showered a half hour ago and he's already on his way to perspiration stains.

As he walks down the street he gets bumped into here and there, until he finally comes to the entrance to a skyscraper. But he's on the wrong end of the sidewalk to enter it.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FULL - AS GILBERT

tries to make his way across the sidewalk to the building's entrance, but it's not easy; it's an obstacle course to cross this ocean of people without hitting anyone.

CLOSE - GILBERT

Making his way across the sidewalk, he runs into a couple of pedestrians who don't stop long enough to give him a dirty look.

He succeeds in this maneuver, only to get jammed into a revolving door with an older gentleman. Both men share the cubicle meant for one, and they are forced to walk in little Chinese-like baby steps to keep pace with the circling door.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - OFFICE BUILDING

As Gilbert and the older man squeeze out the revolving door.

CUT TO:

ELEVATOR BANK - ANOTHER CROWD

waits here for their final morning's destination. An elevator door opens and Gilbert, with maybe twenty others, jams into the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - ON GILBERT

He stands for a beat, then smells something -- maybe perfume -- that nauseates him. The slow movement of the elevator, stopping as it does on almost every floor, is no friend.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE LOBBY

A large sign over the receptionist's desk reads "Miller and Paul, Certified Public Accountants."

The elevator doors open and Gilbert exits.

ANOTHER ANGLE - GILBERT

Once off the elevator, he steps to the side of the room to just catch his breath, his head leaned back against a wall.

CUT TO:

INT. CORPORATE OFFICES - HALLWAY

This is one of those giant accounting firms that employs hundreds. Gilbert walks down a hall toward his office.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL OFFICE CUBICLE

with a beautiful view of New York City through the window. The office has a desk, phones, calculator, plants.

Gilbert enters, goes to his desk, and takes off his sport-coat. But after a beat or two, he senses something is wrong:

GILBERT

Where's my coat rack?

CUT TO:

ANGLE - OUTSIDE GILBERT'S OFFICE

As he comes out looking very confused.

GILBERT

Elaine, have you seen my coat rack?!

But Elaine isn't to be found.

He moves into an adjoining office.

GILBERT

Elaine, have you ---

CUT TO:

ANGLE - ADJOINING OFFICE

Gilbert walks in, but the girl behind the desk isn't Elaine.

GILBERT
You're not Elaine.

GIRL IN OFFICE
I'm Harriett.

GILBERT
Where's Elaine?

GIRL IN OFFICE
I don't know.

CUT TO:

INT. GILBERT'S OFFICE

He comes back in and, confused, sits down at his desk. His mind wanders for a moment, then he takes the cover off his calculator.

GILBERT
This isn't my calculator.
(looks at the
typewriter)
This isn't my typewriter.

He looks at a silver picture frame holding the photographs of two young children.

GILBERT
Who are they?

In a quick gesture, to make sure he's not crazy, he opens the top desk drawer to see that the contents are definitely not his.

He sits in stunned silence for a beat, when ROGER KELLERMAN enters:

KELLERMAN
You were moved down the hall, Wolf.

CLOSER - ON GILBERT

Digesting the news, with no more understanding than before. He's baffled, bewildered.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS GILBERT

collects his coat and his briefcase and gets up to leave. Kellerman moves around to the desk, sits down, and smiles a somewhat asshole-grin at Gilbert.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY

Gilbert walks down, looking for his name on the door. He finds it and steps in.

CUT TO:

INT. GILBERT'S NEW OFFICE

It's about the same size as the old office, but with one important difference: it's an inside space with no window. It's dark and depressing. No plants, bulky furniture, cramped.

Gilbert switches on the light, and even that's harsh. It illuminates the room but doesn't make it any cozier. The only warm touch in the room is a colorful white-framed graphic on the wall.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS GILBERT

sets his briefcase down on the desk. He sits down for a moment but he doesn't relate to the place. He's edgy.

CUT TO:

ANGLE - HALLWAY - GILBERT

exits his cubicle and spots ELAINE, an office worker, in the hall.

GILBERT

What's going on?

ELAINE

Kellerman got a promotion. They moved him into your office.

Gilbert indicates his new space:

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT

I'm supposed to work here?

Elaine shrugs her shoulders.

GILBERT

It doesn't have a window!

Elaine looks in the room for a beat, notices the graphic:

ELAINE

It's got a Rauschenberg.

GILBERT

Oh, no! I can't work in here! It's too dark!

A silent beat, as though he's waiting for Elaine to sort things out. She doesn't; she can't.

ELAINE

I just handle the xerox, Gilbert.

CUT TO:

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - FULL SHOT

Elegantly appointed. FRED THORPE, Gilbert's boss, sits at a steel and glass desk. Gilbert enters.

GILBERT

Mr. Thorpe, I came in this morning ---

THORPE

We moved your office. We needed the space for Kellerman. I knew you'd understand.

GILBERT

Mr. Thorpe ---

THORPE

Kellerman's peculiar. Things like offices mean a lot to him. He's a... little too image conscious.

(fatherly)

He's not like you, Gilbert. You could do a fine job anywhere. You could balance ledgers in the middle of Sardi's.

CLOSE - GILBERT

Not knowing how to take this. It's a compliment that he's paid a high price for -- his window.

THORPE

Tell you what. I'm working on a raise for you. If we get it, you can take me to Sardi's.

Gilbert just stands there.

GILBERT

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - GILBERT

is returning to his new quarters. He starts to go inside when he spots a girl, JANE MORTIMER, in the office across the hall.

GILBERT'S POV - JANE MORTIMER

To put it simply, she's the most gorgeous thing since Catherine Deneuve, and Gilbert stops cold in his tracks. Anyone would. She has blond hair, piercing blue eyes. She's not a cold beauty: there's a certain warmth and availability about her. She's friendly, not aloof. She must know she's beautiful, but she doesn't milk it.

ANGLE - GILBERT

He's staring at her as though he was having a religious experience, as though Jane were a haunting museum piece.

ANOTHER ANGLE - JANE

looks up to see him staring at her.

JANE

Hello.

GILBERT

Hello.

JANE

I'm Jane Mortimer.

CONTINUED

GILBERT

Gilbert Wolf.
(a beat)
Are you new?

JANE

I used to be up on twenty-seven but
they moved us around.

GILBERT

I'm across the hall.
(a beat)
Nice to meet you.

Jane smiles at him. He leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. GILBERT'S OFFICE

He returns. He's still obsessed with Jane.

GILBERT

God.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - UPPER WEST SIDE - THAT AFTERNOON

A plain, not too fancy establishment of the soup and salad variety. Gilbert enters, looks around, spots LISA WOLF, his wife, already seated at a table. Lisa is pretty, but not original looking. Her clothes and hair are conservative. She has little humor about her. She's tight and controlled. "Proper." She would never make a wrong move at a party, never drink too much, never offend anyone -- which is pretty offensive. There's a hitch in her voice which is just slightly too high-pitched.

Gilbert sits opposite her.

GILBERT

Honey, what's wrong?

LISA

Can't I call to meet you for lunch
without something being wrong?

GILBERT

Well...sure.

CONTINUED

GILBERT

How was your day?

LISA

I went to the health club. I wanted to get some sun. I took off my clothes, put on a towel --

(with heaviness)

-- I went up to the sundeck, took my reflector like a good girl. I laid down. It felt so good, you know.

CLOSE - GILBERT

Bored, but listening as though it were a scintillating story.

TWO SHOT - GILBERT AND LISA

LISA

Then all of a sudden the sun disappears behind the RCA Building. So I said, 'Lisa, don't get upset, wait awhile.' I make a little conversation with one of the other women. All of a sudden, maybe half an hour, guess what --

(makes a full, round gesture with her arms)

-- The sun comes back! So I turn around because now it's to the west. Then maybe fifteen minutes later it goes behind the Chrysler Building. So I said, 'Lisa, don't get upset --- "

(with vehemence)

-- Don't forget, I'm from California. So I lay there and then it comes back, and I turn my towel a little. By this time I'm facing Chicago or somewhere. Then it goes behind the U.N.

(pause)

I couldn't be flexible any longer. I got dressed and left.

GILBERT

Do you want a sandwich?

CONTINUED

LISA

Gilbert, I want to go home to Los Angeles! I want both of us to go!

GILBERT

I thought we'd settled that.

LISA

I talked to Dad. He'll give us the money ---

(a beat)

Okay, he'll lend it to us. And he's offered you a job with his company.

GILBERT

No.

LISA

There's so much to do in California!

Gilbert shakes his head no.

LISA

The beach, the mountains! Skiing! Anything you could ever want in life is an hour's drive away!

GILBERT

No, Lisa.

LISA

Gilbert, you remember the Bel Air fire? The earthquake? Both over-rated. Oh, sure, they got a lot of press. How do you beat an earthquake for a human interest story? Trust me, they got the fire out in sixteen hours and the earthquake didn't last a full minute! Not sixty seconds!

(a beat)

It makes you wonder about our priorities.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

Gilbert and Lisa walking after lunch.

CONTINUED

GILBERT
I've got to get back to work.

LISA
How was your day?

GILBERT
They moved my office.

LISA
Oh?

GILBERT
It's like a dungeon, it's so dark.

LISA
I'll buy you something for the wall.

GILBERT
It's got a Rauschenberg.

ANGLE - FAVORING LISA

Her face lights up. It's clear she's up on her art and familiar with the name.

LISA
Well!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GILBERT'S OFFICE - ON GILBERT

He's working at his new desk. His coat rack has been found and is in the corner. He looks up now and then, surveying the room, which is as inhospitable as before.

The PHONE RINGS.

GILBERT
(into phone)
Gilbert Wolf.
(a beat)
Yes, sir. Yes, sir.
(a beat; his face drops)
Oh, no! Right away.
(he hangs up)
Oh, shit!

CONTINUED

He hangs up, turns off his calculator, grabs his coat from off the rack, exits.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - AS GILBERT

exits, Elaine is standing in the hall with an armful of papers. She sees Gilbert is in a terrific hurry and a lousy frame of mind.

ELAINE

What's the matter?

GILBERT

My mother's in jail.

ELAINE

Again?!

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - ON ESTELLE WOLF

She wears a smart green two-piece suit. She's immaculately groomed, dressed, made up. In the retention cell are several other females, young and old, prostitutes, drunks, etc. Estelle looks like a nun in a whorehouse.

ESTELLE

(screaming at the
top of her lungs)

I'm thirsty!

She gets no answer.

ESTELLE

I said, I'm thirsty! Who do you
have to vote for to get water
around here?!

PRISON MATRON

No water.

ESTELLE

I'd understand if we were in the
desert. I wouldn't push for water.
I'd accept the given fact.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

(screaming)

But this is New York City, we are at 100th and Broadway, and I'm sure there's a paper cup and a leaking hydrant somewhere in the neighborhood!

WHORE IN JAIL

They don't give you nothing in detention.

ESTELLE

Not true. I was arrested last month in Brooklyn. They gave me a sandwich and cigarettes. They got class in Brooklyn.

(a pause)

It was mozzarella cheese. I don't like mozzarella cheese.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT STATION - FRONT DESK

Gilbert enters. He's embarrassed and self-conscious. He goes to the front desk.

GILBERT

I'm here for Estelle Wolf. I'm her son.

The OFFICER rises, looks through some papers.

OFFICER

Bail's five hundred dollars.

Gilbert hands him some papers. He scrutinizes them as Gilbert paces the floor, waiting.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as he moves to a drinking fountain, pulls a cup, fills it with water and drinks. In a few moments Estelle is escorted out boisterously.

ESTELLE

I told you I didn't want you to come anymore! I can take care of myself!

CONTINUED

GILBERT

Mother! What am I supposed to do?
They called me at the office!
They left a message with the recep-
tionist! Do you know how embarrassed
I was?

ESTELLE

No need to be.
(a beat)
There's nothing in life to ever get
embarrassed over. I've always taught
you that.

GILBERT

Mom, you live in a world of your own.

ESTELLE

I got company. Maybe not you.

FAVORING ESTELLE

She spots the drinking fountain.

ESTELLE

Water, water everywhere and not a
drop to drink ---

FAVOR GILBERT

having lost his patience some time ago. His mother is an
obvious pain to him and, worse, he can't even talk to her.

CUT TO:

EXT. 5TH AVENUE AND 95TH STREET - DAY - LONG SHOT

Estelle and Gilbert walking.

GILBERT

What did you do?

ESTELLE

I stole a box of frozen zucchini
from the market. They caught me
when I left.

GILBERT

Why did you do that?

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

They were changing the prices of toilet paper that was already on the shelf. I said to the manager, did you make a pricing mistake? He said no, prices had gone up. I said, but not for the paper already on the shelf.

(a beat)

I was planning to buy four packages and the difference was sixty-four cents. The zucchini was sixty-four cents. How much was bail?

GILBERT

Five hundred dollars.

FAVOR ESTELLE

She's unfazed by the entire incident.

ESTELLE

I'll give you a check.

CUT TO:

INT. UPPER WEST SIDE RESTAURANT - GILBERT AND ESTELLE

Estelle is reading the menu. She's wonderfully calm and collected for a woman who's just been sprung from the tank.

The restaurant isn't too busy; it's late afternoon, but there are a few others at the tables.

ANGLE - GILBERT

He's in a catatonic state. He stares at his mother incredulously.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS A WAITRESS

comes over.

WAITRESS

Hello.

ESTELLE

I'll have the chicken salad plate.

CONTINUED

The waitress writes it down.

GILBERT

Just coffee.

ESTELLE

(to waitress)

You don't reserve the right to refuse service to anyone. That's very nice.

FAVOR WAITRESS

She hasn't the slightest idea what Estelle is talking about. Estelle sees her consternation and explains, pointing to the bottom of the menu:

ESTELLE

In the south, restaurants used to print, 'We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone' on the bottom of menus. ---

ANGLE - GILBERT

Convulsing in his chair with embarrassment:

GILBERT

Mother, for Godssake!

FAVOR ESTELLE

She ignores him.

ESTELLE

They did this to keep black customers out. They would lie and say it was to keep out drunks, but everyone knew differently. You still see it on menus today. It's nice to see it's not on yours.

WAITRESS

(after a speechless beat)

Anything else?

MEDIUM - ALL

Estelle shakes her head. The waitress leaves.

ESTELLE
You're not hungry?

GILBERT
I had lunch with Lisa.

The mention of Lisa's name causes the slightest of reactions on Estelle's face. And not a positive reaction, at that.

ESTELLE
How's Lisa?

GILBERT
Fine.

ESTELLE
Still talking about California, her father the Beverly Hills contractor?

GILBERT
Mother!

ESTELLE
He cheats on his income tax.

GILBERT
You don't know that!

ESTELLE
He wears tinted glasses!
(a beat)
She still wants to go back to Los Angeles?

Gilbert nods.

ESTELLE
The sun brings out the best in her.

GILBERT
Mother, you never liked Lisa.

ESTELLE
Tennis is one way to get through life.
(a beat)
How's your father?

CONTINUED

GILBERT
Fine.

ESTELLE
Claire?

GILBERT
We're going there tonight for dinner.

ESTELLE
Claire still make... 'cakes?'
(a beat)
I love you very much.

GILBERT
Mom, you know you're so strange.
When I was in grammar school, my teachers used to say how weird you were. I heard them talk about it among themselves under their breath.
(a beat)
Always crusading. Always making trouble. You wouldn't let me go on a field trip to a steel mill....

ESTELLE
There was a strike against it!

GILBERT
Everybody else got to go but me. Everybody came home with a little box of nails, but me.

ESTELLE
What did you miss?

GILBERT
That's not the point!

ESTELLE
Are buildings going to fall down because you don't know how they make steel? The Statue of Liberty going to keel over....?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY - UPPER WEST SIDE

Gilbert and Estelle are walking. The streets are busy,

CONTINUED

people passing as they go.

GILBERT

Lisa and I are looking at a house
in Woodmere on Sunday.

FAVOR ESTELLE

As they walk. She's not terribly interested in what Gilbert is telling her. He's looking at her and she's looking around the streets.

GILBERT

It took some convincing. The last
thing in the world she wants is a
house. Here.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FULL SHOT

A bustling, busy New York street.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AT THE CORNER

Going up is a huge skyscraper, the steel girders some thirty-five stories into the air. Each floor is full of construction men walking back and forth.

ANGLE - GILBERT AND ESTELLE

Waiting at the light on the corner. A very sexy, shapely girl in skin tight white sweater and white pants and long red hair stands next to Gilbert, waiting for the light to change.

GILBERT

Anyway, we don't have to buy.
We'll just see what the prices
are like.

As Gilbert talks, he notices the girl. One couldn't help but notice the girl. The girl, however, looks rather oblivious to everything.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FULL

The light changes, the people cross.

CONTINUED

HEAR the sound of MEN WHISTLING at a pretty girl, cat whistles.

FAVOR ESTELLE

She looks up.

HER POV

Two construction men twenty stories high are staring at the girl in tight clothes and whistling catcalls at her.

BACK ON ESTELLE

She seems to find the men's behavior excessive. She lets it pass.

GILBERT

I got a new office today....

CONSTRUCTION MAN #1 (o.s.)

(yelling to the girl)

Hey! Softball tits! Come up and sit on my face!

CONSTRUCTION MAN #2 (o.s.)

I got an electric tongue and it never gets tired!

(a beat)

Smother me with it and collect on my insurance!

The girl in tight clothes hasn't even noticed this. Estelle, however, stops in her tracks and looks up.

MEDIUM - ESTELLE AND GILBERT

GILBERT

Mother, come on!

FAVOR ESTELLE

She yells like a foghorn twenty stories up:

ESTELLE

How'd you like me to come sit on your face?!

FAVOR GILBERT

He turns white as a corpse.

GILBERT

Oh, my God!

MEDIUM - ESTELLE AND GILBERT

ESTELLE

You better go back to work.

She gives him a kiss but he's too catatonic to respond. A slight breeze would knock him over.

Estelle moves onto the construction site with great determination.

GILBERT

Oh, my God.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM - MOVING CONSTRUCTION ELEVATOR

Totally open on all four sides, save for the handrail. Estelle is on it and it's moving up fast.

CUT TO:

FULL - 25TH FLOOR - BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION

As Estelle alights from the elevator. She walks out onto the floor, an open, dangerous panorama of New York around on all sides.

As she walks, everything slowly comes to a halt. There are maybe a hundred men on this floor alone, and when they see Estelle, they freeze.

FULL SHOT - ESTELLE

stands her ground for a long beat until everyone, to a man, stops what he's doing to take an incredulous look at her.

ESTELLE

Who wanted a girl to sit on his face?!

CONTINUED

There is numbed silence, as though they were at a funeral.

PAN - CONSTRUCTION MEN

They are all looking at Estelle in stunned awe: Black, White, Puerto Ricans, big men, little men, all in shock.

ESTELLE

Come on! One of you wanted someone to sit on your face so bad you screamed it all the way to the pavement. So who was it?!

Silence. All you can hear are the street sounds from twenty-odd stories below.

ESTELLE

I've got all day and I can come back tomorrow!

FULL SHOT - THE CONSTRUCTION SITE

Estelle stands amidst this sea of dust, concrete and steel without moving. The lull is finally punctuated by a man near an outside girder:

CONSTRUCTION MAN #1

(with trepidation)

You mean, who whistled at that girl?

ESTELLE

That's what I mean.

She walks over to the man, who's scared to death.

CONSTRUCTION MAN #1

Yeah, that was me.

ESTELLE

Well, that girl couldn't come. She was late for an appointment. I came instead. Hope it's okay.

(a beat)

Which one of you's got the electric tongue?

CLOSE - CONSTRUCTION WORKER #2

He looks like someone just drained all sixteen pints of blood

CONTINUED

out of his great big body.

CONSTRUCTION MAN #2

Uh, I guess that was me.

ESTELLE

Do you plug it in or does it run
off batteries?

A shocked moment of silence.

TWO SHOT - CONSTRUCTION WORKER AND ESTELLE

ESTELLE

(to 1st worker)

You want me to sit on you here?

(to 2nd man)

You want to do it together, or one
after the other? What's your
pleasure?

The other construction workers begin to smile and laugh at
their colleagues "caught in the act" -- but it's anything
but funny to them.

CONSTRUCTION MAN #1

Listen, I...uh....

ESTELLE

You what?

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1

It was...just a joke.

ESTELLE

You don't really want to do it?

CONSTRUCTION MAN #1

Maybe...with her.

All the men laugh.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ESTELLE

turns to all the men gathered.

ESTELLE

You think you've got some special
right to act like animals because
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

ESTELLE (cont'd)
you build buildings? Big deal!
We don't have enough filth on the
streets without your obscenities?
Any reason you can't exercise the
same degree of dignity the rest
of us do...or try to? You think
because you work up high you're
exempt from showing a little class?
You looking for someone to sit on
your face, roll up your car windows
and scream it on the freeway, and
stop demeaning yourselves in public!
If your head is in the toilet, at
least don't blow bubbles.

She surveys them with an admonishing look they'll never forget, and walks off.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MEDIUM

About an hour later. Estelle is walking alone. She's done some shopping and carries a shopping bag.

She walks on for a moment or so when her eye is suddenly caught by something she sees in the window of a bric-a-brac/memorabilia shop.

ESTELLE'S POV - SHOP WINDOW

To see an old framed black and white photograph of Greta Garbo set amidst a windowfull of old furniture, movie posters, art deco furniture, etc.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIC-A-BRAC SHOP - ESTELLE

enters. The shop proprietor, a man in his sixties, is sitting in an overstuffed chair reading. He hardly looks up at Estelle.

ESTELLE
I'd like the photograph of Garbo
in your window.

CONTINUED

SHOP OWNER
(with casual
indifference)
Are you buying or looking?

ESTELLE
I'd like to buy it but you have
to get it first.

The man gets up and goes into the window for the photograph.
He returns with it and hands it to her.

SHOP OWNER
It's from Grand Hotel.

ESTELLE
It's from Mata Hari.

SHOP OWNER
Grand Hotel. I own the shop.

FAVOR ESTELLE

Looking at the photograph. She wouldn't have a warmer look
if it was a picture of her own son.

ESTELLE
It's from Mata Hari; the scene in
the jail cell where she has a reun-
ion with Rosanoff just before she's
taken to a firing squad and executed!
Look at the costume! Mata Hari.

FAVOR SHOP OWNER

He intuits he has a customer for the photograph no matter
what the price.

SHOP OWNER
Thirty-five dollars.

ESTELLE
This isn't rare. I've seen it
before.

SHOP OWNER
Then buy it before.
(a beat)
The frame makes it higher.

MEDIUM - BOTH

Estelle holds up the frame: it's a simple dime store frame and it's broken, at that.

ESTELLE

I'll take it without the frame.

SHOP OWNER

I don't sell it without the frame.

FAVOR ESTELLE

She knows he's ripping her off.

SHOP OWNER

Thirty-five dollars.

FAVOR SHOP OWNER

He's not budging, not giving an inch.

MEDIUM - BOTH

Estelle counts out thirty-five dollars and gives it to him, and she's not at all happy about it: she knows she's being swindled.

He puts the photograph into a bag and hands it to her.

She walks to the door, turning back.

ESTELLE

I hope another shop like yours opens up. Next door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING IN FLUSHING - A LONG, WELL-LIT HALLWAY - THAT NIGHT

Estelle knocks on a door. It opens to reveal VASIK GOLACINSKI. He is about sixty and wears the paint-smeared overalls of a carpenter-painter.

MR. GOLACINSKI

Mrs. Wolf, you want the rent?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

ESTELLE
It's the first, Mr. Golacinski.

MR. GOLACINSKI
Come in.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT

The apartment is neat but on the dingy side, in need of a good redecoration.

ESTELLE
How is Mrs. Golacinski?

MR. GOLACINSKI
(looking for
his wallet)
She's visiting our daughter in
Cherry Hill.

ANGLE - FAVORING ESTELLE

looking at the apartment, the cracks in the walls, the stains on the ceiling.

ESTELLE
How long you lived here?

MR. GOLACINSKI
Six, seven years, who knows.

FULL SHOT

He returns and gives her a small stack of bills. She begins writing out a receipt, handing it to him.

CLOSER - ESTELLE AND MR. GOLACINSKI

She returns some of the cash to him with the receipt.

ESTELLE
Here's a hundred dollars. Buy some
paint, fix the place up.

FAVOR MR. GOLACINSKI

He's not shocked at her generosity -- Estelle is like this -- only surprised at the gift, which was totally unsolicited.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - ON ANNA TINSTIN

A very old lady, about ninety. She sits motionless in a chair, staring out the window. HEAR a KNOCK on the door. Mrs. Tinstin doesn't react.

ESTELLE (o.s.)
Mrs. Tinstin, it's Mrs. Wolf.
I'll let myself in the way I always
do?

There is a brief moment. HEAR a KEY in the door and it opens. Estelle comes in and moves to Anna Tinstin. The apartment looks like a room preserved from a previous century.

ESTELLE
How are you?

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Mrs. Tinstin finally looks at Estelle. There is not the slightest glimmer of recognition.

ESTELLE
It's the first of the month. Did
the social worker leave me a check?

Mrs. Tinstin doesn't answer. Estelle moves around the room. On a table she sees an envelope with her name on it. She puts it in her purse.

ESTELLE'S POV - PANNING SHOT

to SEE photos on the wall, old snapshots, many of them obviously taken in some Eastern European country.

ESTELLE
God, how depressing. Don't you
think it's time to let the old
country be? What's it doing for you
now, Mrs. Tinstin?

ANOTHER ANGLE

But Mrs. Tinstin sits catatonic in her chair; she doesn't react.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - ON WALTER WOLF (GILBERT'S FATHER)

Gilbert and Lisa sit on either side of the table. WALTER is almost sixty, a tall, lean, gray-haired man. His manner is soft and easy-going.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as CLAIRE enters from the kitchen with a platter of food. Claire is fiftyish, attractive, thin and stylish. She's physically and psychologically demure. A polar opposite of Estelle.

LISA
(upon seeing
the platter)
Oh, how beautiful! It smells so
good.

ANGLE - ON CLAIRE

as she sets it down and begin serving.

CLAIRE
Shrimp Wilshire.
(beaming)
It was in an article on California
cooking.

WALTER
It's delicious.

LISA
The best I've ever tasted!

CLAIRE
(to Gilbert)
Your father likes shrimp. I try
to make him happy.

LISA
I spoke to my parents. They send
their regards.

CONTINUED

LISA

(a beat)

My father's dying for us to move
to Los Angeles. He's offered
Gilbert a fantastic job.

GILBERT

Lisa!

LISA

Gilbert doesn't want to take it.

GILBERT

I have a job and I like it.

CLAIRE

(to Lisa)

You know, so often in life we have
to do what makes someone else
happy. It's called give and take.
You know my philosophy? It doesn't
cost me anything to give a little
joy to someone else.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - CLAIRE AND LISA

cleaning up after dinner. They are putting the dishes in
the dishwasher.

CLAIRE

Walter and I have an anniversary
coming up. Next month, our tenth.
We're having a party at the Villa.
We'll let you know.

LISA

That's wonderful.

CLAIRE

My friend Rena Benstrom is going to
Los Angeles next week. Her cousin's
having a house warming. The house
didn't get finished in time so she's
having it at the Sportsman's Lodge.
Do you know it?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

LISA

Do I know it?! My parents live
just a few miles away!

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - GILBERT AND WALTER

with the television going on low volume.

WALTER

Lou Brock asked about you. Remember
Danny, his son? Danny's a stock
broker, works down on Wall Street.
(pause)
How's work?

GILBERT

No complaints.

WALTER

Good money?

GILBERT

Not bad. It'll get better the
longer I'm there. They're good
to their people.

CLOSE ON WALTER

He's struggling with a thought. Something's on his mind. He
takes a deep breath, looks casually around the room and,
trying to act very nonchalant:

WALTER

How's...your mother?

GILBERT

She's been having migraine head-
aches.

FULL SHOT - BOTH

WALTER

She got arrested this afternoon.

GILBERT

How'd you find out?

CONTINUED

WALTER

We still know the same people.

(pause)

Shoplifting.

GILBERT

It wasn't...exactly shoplifting.

WALTER

What do you call it? They caught her with beans in her pocketbook.

GILBERT

Zucchini.

WALTER

What did she have to do that for? She's got money, she has the building in Flushing.

GILBERT

She cited an injustice.

FAVOR WALTER

WALTER

Are you a lawyer?

Gilbert is silent.

WALTER

You're a good boy.

(pause)

Claire and I are having an anniversary next month. Ten years. It's a long time.

GILBERT

Dad, what made you fall in love with her?

WALTER

Claire?

GILBERT

Mother.

WALTER

It was the way she danced. I met her at a party. We were teenagers.

CONTINUED

GILBERT

How did she dance?

WALTER

It's hard to describe. She danced with everything, her whole body, her...whole mind. When she danced, she didn't think about anything else but dancing.

(pause)

She still watching her weight?

GILBERT

Yeah.

WALTER

She was always watching her weight.

(a beat)

God, we had fun.

(a beat)

The day we got married, we went down to the courthouse to get the license. We stood in line. They sent us to a clerk, his name was William Albert. Your mother wouldn't let him write the license. She said she never trusted men with two first names; it was bad luck.

(pause)

God, we had fun.

A long silence.

WALTER

I don't know, we started drifting apart.

(more angrily)

She was always outraged at one thing or another, she couldn't take life as it came. I got tired, that's all. I worked hard, I wanted peace and quiet. She wouldn't give me that! The damn fool! So we got a divorce. If she'd only changed...a little! If she'd only met me halfway! We had a son!

A silence; Walter calms down.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

WALTER

Claire's a good person. She's a good wife. Worships the ground I walk on. What more can a man ask for?

FULL SHOT - BOTH

WALTER

She still wear orthopedic shoes?

Gilbert smiles and nods.

WALTER

She always had lousy feet.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUTOMOBILE - MOVING SHOT - THAT EVENING

Lisa and Gilbert en route home. There's a RATTLE above the engine hum.

LISA

What's that rattle?

GILBERT

I had it fixed last week.

LISA

I still hear it.

Gilbert nods. Lisa turns on the radio and tries to get a station but only gets static.

LISA

I guess it's the weather.

GILBERT

The antenna isn't working.

LISA

You just had it installed.

GILBERT

It doesn't work.

LISA

Do you think I ought to look for a job?

CONTINUED

GILBERT
If you want to.

LISA
I'm bored.
(a beat)
What would I do?

GILBERT
I don't know.

LISA
I have a degree from UCLA. That
should open doors.
(a beat)
Do you think my working would
threaten your masculinity?

GILBERT
I...don't think so.

LISA
I think about that, you know. I
guess I'm not very modern.
(a beat)
Well, then, I'll have a look in
the paper tomorrow.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Lisa cuddles up closer to Gilbert affectionately.

LISA
You know what attracted me to you
the first time we met?

GILBERT
What?

LISA
You had this...quiet reserve. When
you were in Los Angeles for that
convention.
(dreamily)
The first time I saw you was in the
hotel lobby. Remember? You were
sitting on a chair near the banquet
room and we kept looking at each
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

LISA (cont'd)

other until I finally came up and said hello. You just kind of sat there quietly, keeping your thoughts to yourself. I was very impressed by that.

(a beat)

What did you like about me?

GILBERT

Everything.

LISA

No, there has to be one thing. The very first thing you notice on somebody.

GILBERT

It would have to be...your hair.

LISA

My hair?

GILBERT

It was the silkiest hair I'd ever seen. It was like a million long, thin strands of gold.

LISA

You never told me that.

(a beat)

Gilbert, I love you!

(pause)

It makes you believe in God.

GILBERT

What?

LISA

Life.

(a beat)

The fact that you're a CPA and your company sent you to a convention in Los Angeles, and it was the very same day Helene Bitterman was getting married at the Hilton.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GILBERT'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

It's after five o'clock and he's getting ready to go home.

EXT. OFFICE

Gilbert exits and runs into Jane.

JANE
Hi. Going home?

GILBERT
Yeah.

JANE
Which way you going?

GILBERT
East End Avenue.

JANE
I'll walk you to the bus.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING - DUSK

Once again, the streets are full of people going home from work. Bumper to bumper traffic is the norm.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS GILBERT AND JANE

exit and walk down the street.

GILBERT
You've been up on the twenty-seventh floor for six months. Small world.

JANE
Big company. Where'd you go to school?

GILBERT
Columbia. How about you?

JANE
Wharton.

Gilbert's impressed.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS THEY

turn a corner and continue walking. Gilbert doesn't see it immediately, but up ahead, in front of the entrance to the corporate offices of Global Oil, a demonstration is in progress.

CONTINUED

JANE
Is Thorpe your boss too?

GILBERT
Yeah.

JANE
He's a shmuck.

ANGLE - GILBERT

He doesn't answer, but it's as though Jane has casually said something he's been wanting to say for a long time and couldn't.

Suddenly Gilbert spots the demonstration up ahead and has a sudden, desperate urge to change the direction of their walk.

GILBERT
We should cross over!

JANE
We're going the right way.

GILBERT
Let's go down to fifty-fourth street!

JANE
I thought you were going uptown.

ESTELLE (o.s.)
Gilbert!

FAVOR GILBERT

He stops in place, trapped by his mother's voice. No place to hide.

ESTELLE
Gilbert!

GILBERT
Never mind.

JANE
Someone's calling you.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT
(with a sense of
quiet doom)
I know.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ESTELLE

comes out of the picketing demonstration and over to Gilbert and Jane:

ESTELLE
I thought I might see you today!

GILBERT
Mother, this is Jane Mortimer.
We work together. Jane, this is...
my mother.

JANE
Hello.

ESTELLE
Happy to meet you.

She gives both of them a handout:

ESTELLE
Global Oil reported profits today
of two hundred eighteen percent
over last quarter. Two hundred
eighteen percent! That is the most
horrifying thing I've heard in a
long time.

ANGLE - JANE

She's clearly not very interested in a political discussion
at this moment.

JANE
I'll see you tomorrow, Gilbert.
(to Estelle)
Nice meeting you.

Jane disappears in the crowd.

ANOTHER ANGLE - GILBERT AND ESTELLE

GILBERT
Can you come to dinner?

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

Tonight?

Gilbert nods.

ESTELLE

I have a doctor's appointment at six and I'm having my hair done at eight.

GILBERT

Mother, why don't you relax?

ESTELLE

I am relaxed! I'll come by Sunday.

GILBERT

Okay.

ESTELLE

Six o'clock? I have to go now.

She gives him a quick kiss and walks back to the demonstrating crowd.

GILBERT

(referring to
the demonstration)

Do you think anyone really cares?

Estelle doesn't answer his question; she shoots him a quizzical look.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GILBERT'S APARTMENT - SUNDAY

Gilbert, Lisa and Estelle sit around the table.

ESTELLE

That was very good, Lisa.

LISA

It's the first time I've done Chinese. It took me three hours.

(a beat)

Why don't you go into the living room and I'll serve coffee?

ANOTHER ANGLE - LIVING ROOM

As Gilbert and Estelle enter.

ESTELLE

Three hours? She could have read
War and Peace.

(pause)

Gilbert, where's my purse?

She holds her head as though in pain.

ESTELLE

Look in the hallway, on the table.

Gilbert exits, then re-enters with the purse.

ESTELLE

Would you bring me some water?

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Estelle digs into her purse, retrieving a bottle of pills.
Gilbert returns with water. She takes the pills. She lies
back comfortably on the couch.

GILBERT

Are you all right?

No answer.

GILBERT

Mom, are you sick?

ESTELLE

I'm getting a headache.

GILBERT

Stay here tonight.

Estelle shakes her head no.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GILBERT'S OFFICE - ON GILBERT

at his desk, alone in the room. After a beat his boss, Fred
Thorpe, enters.

THORPE

These are cost analyses. I need
them by Friday. I know you're
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

THORPE (cont'd)
busy but I wouldn't trust them to
anyone else.

GILBERT
Mr. Thorpe, I don't know when
I'll get the time.

THORPE
Stay later just for a couple of
days. I'll see to a raise when your
review comes up.
(a beat)
You're the only one who'll do them
right.

He pats Gilbert on the back in a very fatherly sort of way,
and exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSEUP - GILBERT

An hour later. The office is empty. His clock reads 6:15
and the office is deadly quiet. The PHONE RINGS.

GILBERT
(answering)
Gilbert Wolf.
(a beat)
Doctor Asher. Yes, how are you?
(pause)
Good, good. I just didn't expect
it to be you. I thought it was...
my wife.
(pause; with
great concern)
What is it?
(pause)
One o'clock? Yes, I'll be there.

CUT TO:

ON X-RAY PROJECTOR

to SEE X-rays illuminated on a wall. Gilbert watches as
DR. ASHER explains.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

DR. ASHER

The first tumor is located here, in the pineal gland region. It's the size of a dime. It's the one causing the headaches and it's generating pressure on the optic nerves. The second and third tumors are on the corpus callosum. They tend to develop more slowly. Gradually, they'll cause her to lose control. Hearing, touch.

(pointing to the
larger spot)

This is a bitch here. Glioblastoma.

GILBERT

You can't operate?

DR. ASHER

There's no way.

GILBERT

That's what I thought.

(breathes heavily)

You wouldn't have called me here on my lunch hour...if you could operate.

DR. ASHER

You can get other opinions. But there's nothing to be done.

FAVOR GILBERT

An inevitable helpless beat, then:

GILBERT

That's an attitude she won't understand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ESTELLE'S APARTMENT - FULL SHOT

Gilbert enters with a key. Through a doorway SEE Estelle lying down, clothed, in bed.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ON GILBERT

GILBERT

Mother?

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - FULL SHOT

As Gilbert enters, Estelle opens her eyes. Next to her bed, on the nightstand, is the picture of Garbo, reframed.

GILBERT

Mother?

ESTELLE

What are you doing in Flushing?
It's the middle of the afternoon.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ESTELLE'S LIVING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

There is a marked change about her -- as though she'd been hit by a ton of bricks. As a matter of fact, she has.

ESTELLE

Why didn't Dr. Asher tell me himself?!
Does he think I'm made of butter?

FAVOR ESTELLE

She is pale, ashen. For a moment, all the spirit we've been seeing has vanished, and she's a solitary, poignant woman with the worst possible prognosis.

ESTELLE

Estelle Wolf? Not Estelle Wolf!
(pause; gently)

I know everyone has to die, but I really, truly thought I'd be the first historical exception to the rule.

GILBERT

Dr. Asher wants you to go in the hospital. I told him to make arrangements.

He sits next to her and holds her around the shoulder.

FAVORING ESTELLE

With the slightest possible motion, she shakes her head no.

GILBERT

Lisa's father knows a neurosurgeon
in Beverly Hills.

ESTELLE

I've got Doctor Asher.

GILBERT

The man is a leader in his field.
He works miracles.

ESTELLE

I don't believe in miracles.

GILBERT

You've got to have hope.

ESTELLE

I have hope. I don't believe in
miracles, I believe in now.

(pause)

You work with what you have. You
don't always win.

(a beat)

I have always accepted the accom-
plished fact.

HOLD ON GILBERT

for a moment, then the PHONE RINGS. Gilbert rises and moves
to answer it.

GILBERT

(into phone)

Hello?

(a beat)

Hello, doctor.

(a beat)

Yes? Just a moment.

(to Estelle)

He's gotten you a room at Lennox
Hill Hospital. He wants to know
if you can be there by two o'clock.

ESTELLE

I won't go to Lennox Hill; their
dietitians have walked out.

MEDIUM - BOTH

He registers frustration.

GILBERT

Mother!

ESTELLE

No!

GILBERT

(into phone)

Could you get her into someplace
else?

(a beat; then,
making an excuse)

She doesn't like Lennox Hill. I...
don't know why.

(a beat)

Yes? Okay.

(a beat)

I see. Yes, we'll be here.

He hangs up. He stands in place for a moment, as though
collecting himself and his patience. Then:

GILBERT

Doctor Asher wants to start cobalt
treatments.

ESTELLE

I know all about cobalt.

GILBERT

You don't feel a thing.

ESTELLE

That's not what I mean.

(pause)

My hair! My hair!

GILBERT

There's a chance it will come out.

ESTELLE

I just had it dyed..

CUT TO:

INT. ESTELLE'S BEDROOM

She enters. She couldn't feel any worse than she does at

CONTINUED

this very moment. She's numb, in a state of shock and disbelief, as though what she's just heard isn't even real.

She goes to the closet and takes out an overnight bag, setting it on the bed and opening it. But instead of packing, she sits down next to it and stares blankly ahead.

ESTELLE'S POV - THE PHOTOGRAPH OF GARBO

sitting on the nightstand.

MEDIUM - ESTELLE

She stares at the photograph for an interminable beat. There's a longing in Garbo's face which is now matched by a longing in Estelle's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - GILBERT

waits outside the room. There's the usual bustle in the hallway, with nurses moving back and forth. A patient on intravenous is being pushed down the hall on a stretcher, etc. In b.g. at the end of the hallway is a busy nurse's station.

A nurse comes out of the room.

NURSE

(to Gilbert)

You can go in now.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - ESTELLE

is in bed. She's dressed in a white gown. She looks different -- no makeup, hair unset, very pale, very ill. She's not the dynamic lady of before. There are flowers and cards on the dresser.

FAVOR GILBERT

The sight of his mother like this is startling and horrifying to him. We see the reaction in his face, though he tries to conceal it.

MEDIUM - HOSPITAL ROOM - ESTELLE

ESTELLE

Why do hospital rooms have to be so white? How come you never see a bright red room with pretty sheets? How come?

Gilbert has no answer for her.

GILBERT

Mr. and Mrs. Gofacinski called. They wanted to know if you felt like visitors. I told them ---

CLOSER - ESTELLE

She's not listening to Gilbert. Her mind seems to be a million miles away.

GILBERT

-- that it might be better if they waited a few days, give you a chance to settle in, get comfortable. He said he'd look after the building, keep an eye on things ---

ESTELLE

Gilbert, I want to meet Greta Garbo.

ANGLE FAVORING GILBERT

reacting with total disbelief at what he's heard.

ESTELLE

I want to meet Garbo.

A long, incredulous pause, then:

GILBERT

Are you kidding?

MEDIUM - ESTELLE AND GILBERT

Estelle shakes her head no.

GILBERT

Mother...that's impossible.

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

It's not impossible. She lives
right here in New York City.

GILBERT

Mother...why trouble yourself?
Why don't you concentrate on get-
ting better?

ESTELLE

I want to meet Garbo.

GILBERT

(after an im-
probable beat)

Why?!

ESTELLE

I'm dying. Why shouldn't I?

FAVOR GILBERT

Of all the crazy things he's known his mother to do, this
one surely takes some sort of prize.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - ON GILBERT

as he exits the room and meets Lisa. Lisa sees his strained
look.

GILBERT

She wants to meet Greta Garbo.

ANGLE FAVORING LISA

She's just as incredulous as he is.

TWO SHOT - GILBERT AND LISA

GILBERT

It's like...a last wish.

ESTELLE (o.s.)

(loudly)

It's not my last wish! I have a lot
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

ESTELLE (cont'd)
of others! But I'm short on time!
They never give you enough time
when you die!

CUT TO:

EXT. THIRD AVENUE - DAY - ON GILBERT

walking aimlessly. He's got a head full of thoughts and he
doesn't understand any of them. He finally stops at a corner
pay phone. Someone is using it, and when they finish he
takes it and inserts a dime.

OPERATOR (o.s.)
Information.

GILBERT
Yes, in New York City ---
(he stops)

OPERATOR (o.s.)
Yes sir?

GILBERT
(taking a
deep breath)
Greta Garbo.

OPERATOR (o.s.)
Greta Garbo?!

GILBERT
Yes.

OPERATOR (o.s.)
I'm sure she's not listed.

GILBERT
Would you check, please?

OPERATOR (o.s.)
I'll check, sir.
(a beat)
She's not listed.

GILBERT
Well...yes...thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY - MAIN READING ROOM -
ON GILBERT

He sits reading a book with several periodicals also at his side. Across the wide oak table sits a GIRL in her late teens. Every few beats she looks up at Gilbert.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As Gilbert senses her glance, he looks up at her. She smiles. She is wearing braces. Great big shiny braces.

GIRL IN LIBRARY
You're gritting your teeth.

GILBERT
Sorry.

GIRL IN LIBRARY
It's a sign of anger.

Gilbert, preoccupied, gets up and walks away, taking a seat at another table.

CLOSE ON GILBERT

looking through a book on Garbo. He turns the pages. There are a lot of photographs but they don't help him any. Finally he has a slight idea: he turns the book sideways, then upside down, examining the tiny photo credit in the corner.

GILBERT
'Angelo Dokakis.'

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - OUTER ROOM - GILBERT

is checking a telephone book against the name he's written on a piece of paper -- Angelo Dokakis.

CUT TO:

INT. TELEPHONE BOOTH - GILBERT

dials a number and waits.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

RECORDED VOICE

The number you have called is out of service. Please check your telephone directory ---

GILBERT

I just checked the telephone directory!

RECORDED VOICE

--- and make sure you are dialing correctly.

He hangs up.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST (GREENWICH) VILLAGE - DAY

It's a residential neighborhood and the streets are full of mothers and children playing. Gilbert passes a sandbox in which some youngsters are playing.

Suddenly he's hit in the face with a shovel full of sand. He looks to see who did it.

GILBERT'S POV

To SEE the culprits -- some children no older than three or four -- laughing at him.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER STREET - GREENWICH VILLAGE - DAY - GILBERT

stops in front of an apartment building, number 110. He looks at the paper in his hand, also number 110. He checks the mailboxes outside.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Gilbert knocks. In a moment, an overweight man in his sixties opens the latched door. The man is a real slob: his wiry hair is unwashed and uncombed, his shirt has food stains on it, he's got an ugly beer gut.

CONTINUED

GILBERT
Angelo Dokakis?

ANGELO
Who wants him?

GILBERT
I do.

Gilbert digs in his wallet and finds a business card. He gives it to Dokakis, who reads it.

ANGELO
I don't need an accountant. I use the short form.

GILBERT
Are you the same man who took photographs of Greta Garbo?

ANGELO
She can't sue, I stood fifty feet away. I know the law. You can't deprive a man of his livelihood.

GILBERT
I've got to talk to you. It's a matter of life and death. My mother is dying. She's in New York Hospital right now, room 808. She has a brain tumor and she wants to meet Garbo.

ANGLE FAVORING DOKAKIS

ANGELO
You think I'm going to say something wise-ass, don't you? I'm not going to say anything wise-ass.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Dokakis closes the door in his face.

FAVOR GILBERT

His expression lightens. He sighs, thinking Dokakis is unlatching the door. Gilbert waits, but the door doesn't open. Gilbert knocks.

CONTINUED

GILBERT
Mr. Dokakis! Please!

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Dokakis opens the door again, still latched. He hands Gilbert a slip of paper.

ANGELO
You want something, call my agent.
Dokakis slams the door in Gilbert's face.

GILBERT
Oh, shit!

CUT TO:

EXT. SUTTON PLACE - DAY

Gilbert is looking for an address.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT

A very stark, sleek steel and chrome living room, the kind out of a home magazine, very stylized.

ANGLE - DORIS BABALONIA

A very nervous Elaine May-type in her late forties. She is constantly mobile, uses her hands and arms a lot, mostly flinging them about. She looks like someone opened a cage and let her out. There are a million certified crazies in New York, and Doris must certainly lead the pack.

DORIS
Angelo's a brilliant photographer.
All of Eisenstadt's style and none
of his reserve.

(pause)
What is it you want him to shoot?

GILBERT
I don't want him to shoot anything.
I just want to talk to him.

CONTINUED

DORIS

About what?

GILBERT

I need to find someone.

DORIS

Who?

GILBERT

Greta Garbo.

DORIS

I see.

(pause)

I began using my home as my office
last month, after my divorce. I'm
paying my husband alimony.

(pause)

What will they think of next?

ANGLE FAVORING GILBERT

He's anxious: there's not much time and her babbling is cloy-
ing to him.

GILBERT

I'll do anything. I don't care
about the cost.

DORIS

Mr. Dokakis works per diem. Two
hundred fifty dollars a day plus
expenses. Any travel involved is
strictly first class.

GILBERT

I'll write you a check.

DORIS

Garbo?

Gilbert nods his head.

DORIS

Of course it's none of my business.
Yes. Yes, it's none of my business.

Gilbert writes out a check.

CONTINUED

DORIS

When I bought this furniture, no one told me how I'd...come to loathe it in six months.

Gilbert hands her a check.

DORIS

I don't make much from my clients, only ten percent. It hardly buys Drambuie.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Doris escorts him to the door.

DORIS

This Garbo thing. If there's a story in it, a human interest story, my most unforgettable experience sort of thing, I might be able to place it for you.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 50TH STREET (NEW YORK CITY) - LONG SHOT - ON GILBERT AND DOKAKIS

They stand in a doorway gazing across the street at the entrance to a building. It is raining heavily.

ANGELO

That's where she lives. Tenth floor.

(a beat)

I've never been inside.

GILBERT

You took pictures of her there.

ANGELO

I took them with a telescopic lens from over there.

He indicates a hotel room directly across from the apartment in question.

ANGELO

I rented a room. She has several rooms. They're mostly empty.

CONTINUED

They stand in silence.

GILBERT

Is this it? You just wait...and wait, all day? Hoping she'll come out?

ANGELO

If you're lucky, all day. Sometimes you wait weeks. I followed Princess Grace a month. I leased a yacht and followed her around the Mediterranean. I finally caught her sunbathing on deck without a top.

(a tinge of regret)

If she'd turned sideways, I'd be a millionaire today.

Another long beat.

ANGELO

What's your mother like?

CLOSE ON GILBERT

He doesn't want to get into a description of Estelle...he wouldn't know how to get into a description of Estelle.

ANGELO

Quiet?

GILBERT

Yeah.

ANGELO

Mine too. How long's she been sick?

GILBERT

A few weeks. She started getting headaches, sometimes she'd lose her step, little things.

ANGELO

Yeah.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SHOT - LATER (EARLY EVENING)

Both men are still waiting outside the building and nothing

CONTINUED

has happened.

ANGELO

Listen, Wolf, I can't promise you anything. For all I know, she's not even here. She spends a lot of time in Spain.

GILBERT

Spain?!

ANGELO

And France and Antigua.

GILBERT

Oh, shit!

Dokakis looks at his watch.

ANGELO

It's five o'clock. I could meet you again tomorrow, but I don't want to take your money. You know where she lives.

Dokakis extends his hand. They shake.

ANGELO

Sorry about your mother. Sounds like a nice lady.

(a beat)

Keeps to herself, does she?

GILBERT

Yeah.

ANGELO

Sorry.

FULL SHOT

as Dokakis strides off in the rain.

CLOSE ON GILBERT

After a few beats, he opens an umbrella and walks across the street to the apartment.

He has barely a second to look at the mailbox names when a forbidding looking DOORMAN appears.

CONTINUED

DOORMAN

Can I help you?

ANGLE ON GILBERT

startled and nervous.

GILBERT

Miss Garbo?

DOORMAN

There's no one here by that name.

GILBERT

I know for a fact ---

DOORMAN

There is no one here by that name,
sir.

Gilbert's eyes quickly divert to the mailbox. He sees a
name and selects it:

GILBERT

Well, actually, I'm here to see Mrs.
Goldstein. Apartment 812.

DOORMAN

There is only a Mr. Goldstein in
812 and he's in Taiwan.
(pause; with
severity)
Making shoes.

CLOSER - ON GILBERT

dejected but trying not to show it. He has no choice but
to leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - ON ESTELLE - THAT NIGHT

The room is all the more depressing because it's dark and
rainy outside. Estelle seems weaker than before.

ESTELLE

It's been raining cats and dogs.

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

(pause)

I saw the Goodyear blimp, it passed
by. Right through the window there.
The Mets beat Pittsburgh, four to
two!

(beat)

You're gritting your teeth.

CLOSE ON ESTELLE

There is a sly glint in her eye.

ESTELLE

I want an eclair. Will you bring
me one?

He nods.

ESTELLE

I seem...to be having trouble
holding...things.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GILBERT'S OFFICE

He's working at his desk when Jane pops her head in. She
looks as beautiful as ever, maybe even more so in this cling-
ing silk dress.

CLOSER - GILBERT

He looks up at her, as though the Messiah had come in for a
chat.

JANE

Cat got your tongue?

GILBERT

What?

TWO SHOT

JANE

I'm going for a sandwich. Want to
come?

FAVOR GILBERT

He's reticent; he feels some sort of inner conflict.

GILBERT

I probably should tell you, Jane...
I'm married.

FAVOR JANE

JANE

I invited you to eat a sandwich.
I didn't invite you to eat me.

GILBERT

Oh.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - GILBERT AND JANE

are alone.

CLOSE - GILBERT

He's nervous and maybe it's the close proximity to Jane that
he's in.

CLOSE - JANE

JANE

I think elevators are very sexual,
don't you?

CLOSE - GILBERT

Without missing a beat:

GILBERT

Absolutely.

JANE

I have this fantasy that I'm in an
elevator, alone with some man I've
never met in my life, and he's
staring at me.

GILBERT

Oh.

CONTINUED

JANE

Suddenly he reaches out and touches my breasts. I think it's inappropriate but I don't stop him.

GILBERT

Oh, God!

JANE

Why do you say 'Oh, God' all the time?

Gilbert opens his mouth to answer her but nothing comes out but a stutter:

JANE

The elevator moves very slowly...
We're in the World Trade Center.
And he keeps touching me. We're at the thirtieth floor and he's feeling my waist. We're going up and his hands are going down.

(a beat)

It's just a fantasy.

(a beat)

By the time we are at seventy we are actually having relations. By the top floor it's over and he leaves without even telling me his name.

ANOTHER ANGLE - GILBERT

is plastered against the elevator wall when the doors open. Jane exits, looks back to see Gilbert in a catatonic state.

JANE

Gilbert, we're here.

He unglues himself, then exits.

CUT TO:

ANGLE AT LUNCH COUNTER - GILBERT AND JANE

It's a busy coffee shop. Gilbert and Jane are crowded in like sardines, with many people standing behind them waiting for vacant stools.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

JANE

You like working in that dark
little room?

GILBERT

It's not that bad.

JANE

I'd get claustrophobia.
(a beat)
I'm going back to school.

GILBERT

Oh?

JANE

I enrolled in a night class at NYU.
French history.

GILBERT

French history?!

JANE

What's wrong with French history?

GILBERT

I just...didn't figure you for
that.

JANE

You didn't figure me for account-
ing, either.

GILBERT

People like you shouldn't have to
work.

JANE

Oh, Gilbert, you're prehistoric.
(a beat)
I'd like to be kept but I'm not the
type.

GILBERT

I'd like to keep you but I don't
have the money.

ANGLE - FAVORING JANE

JANE

One day -- when I'm very rich -- I'm
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

JANE (cont'd)
going to stay home all the time
studying Louis de Rouvray, Duc de
Saint-Simon, and ordering oyster
white veal from Gristede's.

(pause)

Louis de Rouvray is Louix XIV and
Gristede's is where the very, very
rich buy their tomatoes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

A bewildered Gilbert leaves work, turns down Third Avenue
and walks. HEAR the noise of automobile HORNS, BRAKES
SCREECHING, etc.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Gilbert tries to work his way across a street. He doesn't
move in time and a van screeches to a halt, missing him by
inches.

DRIVER

Wanta get killed?!

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Gilbert gets to the other side, harried, out of breath.
He looks back at the van.

GILBERT'S POV

The van drives off. On the side is the logo: "GRISTEDE's."

CUT TO:

EXT. 50TH STREET - ACROSS FROM GARBO'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Gilbert stands again in the doorway. He stares silently.
Under his arm is a newspaper and a couple of magazines, all
probably well read. Several times.

GILBERT'S POV - 50TH STREET APARTMENT BUILDING

as a chauffeured black limousine pulls up. A couple in mink

CONTINUED

and black tie emerge from the lobby, greet the doorman, get in the car. It drives away.

BACK ON GILBERT

He's a man with no options. He could be standing there for the next several years, for all he knows now.

GILBERT'S POV - APARTMENT BUILDING

as a delivery van drives up, sets its blinking hazard lights. The van reads "GRISTEDE'S." A delivery man with an armful of bags and boxes gets out, greets the doorman and moves inside.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - AN OFFICE - GILBERT

sits across from a white-haired man in his fifties, MR. MORGANELLI. Mr. Morganelli is reading over an employment form that Gilbert has already filled out.

MR. MORGANELLI

Gilbert...Wolf...aged twenty-four...
East End Avenue...BS in Business
from...um...

(impressed)

...Columbia. Very good.

(reading)

Summa cum laude, valedictorian...

(more impressed)

Very good. Scholarship to graduate
school, University of Michigan...

GILBERT

I never used the scholarship.

MR. MORGANELLI

Why not?

GILBERT

I...wanted to get out and see what
it was like in the real world.

MR. MORGANELLI

(incredulously)

Why?

CONTINUED

GILBERT

I'm looking for something part time. As you can see, I have a regular job from nine to five.

MR. MORGANELLI

Cost accountant for the firm of Miller and Paul.

(a beat)

You're aware this job pays minimum wage.

GILBERT

Yes, yes. I've made my peace with that.

MR. MORGANELLI

You supply your own uniforms.

GILBERT

No problem. No problem at all.

MR. MORGANELLI

You can buy Guthrie's clothes. You're about the same size.

GILBERT

Fine. I'll speak with Guthrie.

MR. MORGANELLI

Guthrie's dead.

GILBERT

Oh.

MR. MORGANELLI

You don't harbor any resentments toward the upper class, do you, Wolf?

GILBERT

No.

MR. MORGANELLI

Good. We don't tolerate rudeness.

(a beat)

There's still a place for the rich in New York City.

CUT TO:

INT. GILBERT'S APARTMENT - FULL - ON LISA

She is in a state of shock and agitation.

LISA
Gilbert, are you crazy?!
(a beat)
I don't believe it! What's happening
to me?! What's happening to my
life?!

PULL BACK to REVEAL Gilbert standing all decked out in a
Gristede's uniform with the name "Guthrie" printed across
the shirt.

Lisa turns her back to him and closes her eyes.

LISA
I won't turn around until you take
that off.

GILBERT
Try and understand!

LISA
I won't be a part of this circus
anymore! Sick or not, it's time
your mother acted her age!

She turns around suddenly.

LISA
(touching the
uniform)
I didn't marry this! I married a
suit!
(a beat)
Am I being unfair? If I'm being
unfair, just tell me so!

GILBERT
You're not being unfair.

LISA
Oh, Gilbert! The least you could
do is tell me I'm being unfair!
(a beat)
This is too much. You're making
me a nervous wreck!
(a nervous beat)
I'm starting to ovulate, Gilbert.
I can feel it.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM - GRISTEDE'S - 51ST AND MADISON - LATE AFTERNOON

Gilbert, Morganelli and EDWARD are loading groceries in the back of the van. Edward is a tall Black man, about 20, and he looks and acts like he's stoned out of his mind. Morganelli goes over the delivery list with Gilbert.

MR. MORGANELLI

Mrs. Jacobs is at 51st and Madison.
Mrs. Harrison is in the same building, one floor down. Fifty-second and Park, Mr. Blaustein.
Then double down to 49th, the St. Regis, Miss Moore has an apartment there. We send her biscuits and pate every Tuesday.

(a beat)

Jacobs, Harrison, Blaustein, Moore.
Always get a signature. Don't forget that.

GILBERT

Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVING GRISTEDE'S VAN - ON GILBERT AND EDWARD - AFTERNOON

Gilbert is driving. Edward has a nonchalant, who-could-care look on his face.

Edward digs into one of the orders, takes out the liver pate and crackers, spreads pate on the cracker and offers it to Gilbert.

EDWARD

Hors d'oeuvre?

GILBERT

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

EDWARD

You ain't me.

ANOTHER ANGLE - INSIDE MOVING VAN

After a beat, Edward digs into another order, takes out a bunch of celery, breaks off a stalk, cleans off the string

CONTINUED

with a pocketknife and chunks down on it.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - ON GILBERT

Both arms full of bags and boxes, he stops in front of 6-B, exhausted and short of breath. He hasn't done this kind of physical work in -- well, ever.

He rings the bell. There is no reply. While he stands, HEAR the audible GROANING of two people having sex.

CLOSE ON GILBERT

Recognizing the noise but stuck in the situation. He's got to make the delivery. He waits a moment longer and rings again.

WOMAN (o.s.)

Yes?

GILBERT

Gristede's.

WOMAN (o.s.)

Leave it by the door.

ANOTHER ANGLE

He's interrupted by a dollar bill she slides under the door. While he's about to ring again to get the required signature, HEAR CONJUGAL SOUNDS again. Gilbert takes the pencil, puts it in his left hand and, with some difficulty, signs the name "Jacobs" to the bill.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVING VAN

All the deliveries have been made. The back of the van is empty. Gilbert, soaked in perspiration, is asleep as Edward drives.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - FULL ON ESTELLE

She's in bed. There's been even more of a deterioration.

ESTELLE

Rita Martinez came to see me today.
She gave me a manicure.

(holds up
her hands)

See?

ESTELLE'S POV - BLURRY SHOT

For the first time we see that her eyesight has become impaired. Everything is fuzzy, out of focus.

GILBERT

Mom, I'm trying to find her.

ESTELLE

You think...she really might come?

GILBERT

I'm doing...what I can. I can't
promise anything.

ANOTHER ANGLE - REGULAR LENS

ESTELLE

Come give me a kiss.

Gilbert goes to Estelle, gives her a kiss, then lays his head down on her. She holds him.

ESTELLE

I'm going to miss you. I'm going
to miss you very much.

GILBERT

Don't be afraid.

ESTELLE

I'm mad. I'm mad I won't get to
know who the next President of the
United States will be. Me! Of all
people, I have a right to know!

(a beat)

I don't like the dark and the pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRISTEDE'S - A FEW AFTERNOONS LATER - ON GILBERT

loading groceries into the van. In a moment, Mr. Morganelli appears with a list in his hand.

MR. MORGANELLI

Krebs on 56th, Detweiler at 2nd
and 55th, Bluttman next door on
55th, Kronhauser on 53rd, Cavaléri
on 53rd, and Brown on 50th.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Morganelli moves a bit closer to Wolf, as if to share some
monumental secret.

MR. MORGANELLI

Wolf...this order for Brown on 50th.
(more intimately)
When you arrive, you tell the door-
man, 'I'm from Gristede's and I have
the order for Brown.'

ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING GILBERT

Not understanding the secrecy. It baffles him.

MR. MORGANELLI

Then look at him and ask, 'Are you
from Oslo?'
(pause)
Do you understand?

GILBERT

I say I'm from Gristede's and I
ask him if he's from Oslo.

MR. MORGANELLI

No. You've got to do it exactly as
I say.

GILBERT

'Good afternoon, I'm from Gristede's...'

MR. MORGANELLI

There's no 'good afternoon.' You
say, 'I'm from Gristede's and I
have the order for Brown.'

(looking Gilbert
in the face)

'Are you from Oslo?'

CONTINUED

MR. MORGANELLI

(a beat)

You won't get in otherwise and I'll have to send someone else. I don't want to make two trips.

GILBERT

Yes, sir.

MR. MORGANELLI

Don't ask me to explain.

(a beat)

One day, maybe...when I know you better.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK AVENUE - DAY

It's after five and cars are bumper to bumper. Stuck in the middle of it all is the Gristede's van.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN - GILBERT AND EDWARD

are making this afternoon's deliveries. Edward is driving. He reaches into a sack in the back, takes an apple, and starts eating it.

GILBERT

(checking the list)

Cavaleri on 53rd and Brown on 50th.

EDWARD

Oh, shit. Not Brown again.

(mocking)

'I'm from Gristede's and I have the order for Brown.'

(pause; eyes plunging out)

'You look like a cousin of mine.'

GILBERT

I do?

EDWARD

That's the password.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT
'Are you from Oslo?'

EDWARD
Born and raised in Detroit.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNER - DAY - LONG SHOT

as the van rounds a corner to 50th Street.

CLOSER ON GILBERT

casually looking out the window. But in an instant, his face freezes.

GILBERT'S POV

as Edward pulls the van in front of the building.

GILBERT
20 East 50th Street!

CLOSE ON GILBERT

looking back down at the delivery sheet.

GILBERT
'20 East 50th....'
(pause; very
nervous)
Oh, my God. This is it!

Edward shoots him a bewildered look. Edward doesn't know what he's talking about. Edward doesn't care what he's talking about.

CUT TO:

EXT. VAN - AT 50TH STREET APARTMENT

The street is quiet. Edward hands Gilbert two boxes, which Gilbert stations under his arms.

EDWARD
Tenth floor.

CONTINUED

GILBERT

I know!
(a beat)
Give me your glasses!

EDWARD

Why?

GILBERT

Give me your glasses! Don't ask any questions!

EDWARD

Buy your own glasses.

ANOTHER ANGLE - TWO SHOT

Gilbert huddling behind the open van door so the doorman won't see him. Gilbert digs in his pocket, comes up with a five-dollar bill and shoves it into Edward's hand.

EDWARD

Five bucks, sure!

Edward takes off his glasses, hands them to Gilbert, who puts them on in an effort to disguise himself.

GILBERT'S POV

The glasses are so strong that everything looks acutely elliptical.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVOR EDWARD

He makes his way back to the front of the van by running his hands around the car like a blind man might do.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE TO BUILDING

The same doorman that Gilbert met earlier is again on duty.

TIGHT ON GILBERT

Very nervous but trying to conceal it, he walks up to the doorman.

ANGLE ON DOORMAN

He looks somewhat skeptically at Gilbert, as though he thinks he recognizes him. But before the doorman can put anything together:

GILBERT

I'm from Gristede's and I have the order for Brown.

(a beat)

Are you from Oslo?

DOORMAN

Ten-oh-two. Elevator's to your left.

CUT TO:

INT. PLUSH ELEVATOR - ON GILBERT

who has broken out into a cold sweat. The boxes are on the floor in front of him.

GILBERT

(to himself)

Miss Garbo...I mean Miss Brown, you don't know me...I'm Gilbert Wolf... please, please don't close the door, please, I'm not some maniac, please! ...It's a matter of life and death! ...Please!

The elevator doors open.

GILBERT

Oh, shit!

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - TIGHT ON GILBERT

He walks to 1002 and rings the bell. After a beat, the door opens to REVEAL a pretty blond MAID in uniform. She is in her 20s and speaks with a distinct Scandinavian accent.

MAID

Gristede's?

GILBERT

This order is for Miss Brown.

CONTINUED

MAID

Thank you.

But Gilbert doesn't hand it over.

MAID

I'll take it.

GILBERT

You're not Miss Brown.

MAID

I work for Miss Brown!

GILBERT

'Are you from Oslo?'

MAID

How did you know? Most people automatically assume I'm from Copenhagen!

She reaches for the groceries. Gilbert holds back.

GILBERT

Mr. Morganelli told me distinctly these were to go to a Miss Brown, and no one else!

MAID

It's quite all right, believe me!

ANGLE ON GILBERT

holding his ground. He won't hand over the groceries.

MAID

You'll have to give them to me!
Miss Brown is on the island this week!

FAVOR GILBERT

His whole face sinks in despair.

GILBERT

What island?

The maid tries to push the door shut. Gilbert struggles with her and wedges his foot in to keep it open.

CONTINUED

GILBERT

I'd like to leave a note for Miss Brown.

MAID

Get out!

GILBERT

Let me explain!

She grabs the two sacks and tries to close the door on him. She manages to close and lock it. Gilbert knocks and rings the bell. He begins banging on the door furiously, maniacally.

While Gilbert bangs on the door the doorman, obviously having been summoned by the maid, appears. He goes to Gilbert, takes him by the shoulder and physically pushes him down the hall to the elevator.

DOORMAN

What's wrong with you people? Always acting out your fantasies?

CUT TO:

EXT. 50TH STREET - OUTSIDE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Edward waits in the van, drowsing.

REVERSE SHOT

to SEE the doorman physically ejecting Gilbert. When Gilbert returns to the van, Edward rustles himself up.

EDWARD

Forget your lines?

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT - ON GILBERT

He's frantic. It's so loud outside he can hardly hear, and he's screaming to be heard.

GILBERT

(into phone)

Doris, this is Gilbert Wolf. I've got to find Dokakis!

INT. APARTMENT - ON DORIS BABALONIA

on the phone.

DORIS

Darling, I can't talk to you now.
Really, I can't. I'm giving a
cocktail party in ten minutes.

INTERCUT between Gilbert at pay phone and Doris in her apartment.

GILBERT

I've got to talk to Dokakis!
Where is he?

DORIS

I truly can't talk now, I'm doing
the food myself!

ANGLE ON GILBERT - IN PHONE BOOTH

HEAR Doris CLICK off.

GILBERT

Goddamn it!

He puts in another dime, dials. The phone rings but she
isn't answering it.

CUT TO:

INT. DORIS' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

To SEE four people -- Doris, Dokakis, a dowager-type older
lady and her escort, a young man -- having drinks. There
is a KNOCK on the door, then a BANGING on the door.

DORIS

Excuse me. Help yourself to
canapes.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM SHOT - FOYER OUTSIDE DORIS' APARTMENT

as Doris opens the door. SEE a frazzled Gilbert. He looks
like he's been through the washer and not the dryer.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT

I've got to find Dokakis. It's urgent!

ANGLE ON DORIS

She has little choice but to let him in. In fact, he pushes his own way in.

DORIS

He's in the living room.

Gilbert strides past her.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - FULL

When Gilbert enters, he displays some self-consciousness at barging in. His tattered, sweaty clothes are a sharp contrast to the elegance of Doris' guests.

GILBERT

Sorry for barging in.

Doris enters after him.

FAVOR GILBERT

assessing the four people for a moment. He seems confused.

GILBERT

I thought you said you were having a cocktail party?

DORIS

I am. I just...stopped inviting people who don't matter.

GILBERT

(to Dokakis)

Can I speak to you privately?

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Dokakis rises and moves to the side with Gilbert.

CONTINUED

ANGELO

What is it?

GILBERT

I've got a great tip for you!
Garbo's on the island! Right now!
I have it on the best authority.

ANGELO

You do?

GILBERT

What island?

ANGELO

(confused)

Huh?

GILBERT

What island? What island does she
go to?

ANGELO

She sometimes goes to Fire Island.

GILBERT

(with a sigh
of relief)

Fire Island, of course! All I could
think of was Long Island and Elba!

(a beat)

Well, let's go!

But Angelo makes no move.

GILBERT

Don't you want pictures?

ANGELO

No.

FAVOR DOKAKIS

He's an old man, an unsuccessful man. Success has eluded
him and he's not willing to try anymore.

ANGELO

I'm tired of chasing people, rent-
ing hotel rooms, helicopters. The
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

ANGELO (cont'd)
way they look at me...It just...
doesn't make sense to me anymore.

ANGLE ON GILBERT

as he looks at Dokakis for a brief, understanding moment,
then

CUT TO:

INT. ESTELLE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MEDIUM SHOT

It's a sunny day outside. More flowers decorate the room,
more cards sit on the dresser and are taped to the walls.

A young Puerto Rican NURSE is taking her blood pressure.
They seem fairly chummy.

NURSE
You've still got a pulse, Estelle.

The nurse begins changing the bottle of intravenous fluid
that's feeding Estelle. She replaces the empty bottle with
a full one.

ESTELLE
What do they pay you?

NURSE
Seven-ten an hour.

ESTELLE
How do you live on that?!

NURSE
I got three boyfriends.

ESTELLE
Why don't you ask for more?

NURSE
It's all in the contract.

ESTELLE
When's the contract over?

NURSE
One year, two years.

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

You want to keep making seven-ten
an hour?

NURSE

Are you kidding?!

ESTELLE

Nobody's going to change it but you.

NURSE

Me?! I'm Rosa Elbina Maria Gonzalez
Martinez from San Juan. I got two
kids and I live in Queens in an
apartment I share with my sister.
Who's going to listen to me?

ANGLE - NURSE

She stops for a beat and thinks, really thinks, about what
Estelle has just said.

CUT TO:

HOSPITAL NURSE'S STATION - MEDIUM

Several nurses go about their duties. The Puerto Rican nurse
comes over and begins marking some charts. Next to her is
a male orderly.

NURSE

Hey, Sanchez, when is our contract
up?

SANCHEZ

What contract?

NURSE

We have a contract, stupid.

Sanchez shrugs. The nurse turns to a second nurse.

NURSE

When's our contract up?

2ND NURSE

What contract?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

NURSE
Jesus!

CUT TO:

INT. PHONE BOOTH ON LONG ISLAND DOCK - DAY - ON GILBERT

It's a glorious summer day. In b.g. is the ferry to Fire Island. There are perhaps two, three hundred people waiting to board the ferry. They're predominantly gay. There are also a lot of dogs about to make the trip -- everything from Great Danes to tiny poodles.

INTERCUT ANGLES - GILBERT'S APARTMENT - ON LISA
as she speaks on the phone to Gilbert.

GILBERT
Lisa, I'm going to Fire Island.

LISA
Gilbert, what's gotten into you?

GILBERT
The ferry's about to leave.

LISA
I'm making dinner!

GILBERT
I'll try and be back.

LISA
You'll try?!

ANOTHER ANGLE

In b.g., HEAR the ferry's HORN. The people begin loading onto the ferry.

LISA
Gilbert, I don't know you anymore.

GILBERT
We'll talk later!

LISA
I know there's not another woman
in your life.

CONTINUED

A silence. Gilbert is lost in his own thoughts.

LISA

Is there?

GILBERT

Is there what?

LISA

I said I know there's not another woman in your life and you didn't say anything.

GILBERT

There's not another woman in my life.

LISA

Those things happen. I wasn't born yesterday. People change, lose interest. I know that; I'm from California.

The FERRY HORN SOUNDS again.

GILBERT

I've got to go!

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT - FIRE ISLAND FERRY

It's a gorgeous day and the boat is sailing through the water.

ON DECK - GILBERT

is seated, looking around him. It's a virtual floating gay parade. Though he's looking around, he has a rather aimless, blank expression on his face. He's totally caught up in his own thoughts.

MAN'S VOICE (o.s.)

The dog is peeing on your leg.

Gilbert doesn't hear or respond.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SEE A MAN

BERNIE WHITLOCK, standing in front of Gilbert. While Gilbert

CONTINUED

is off in a world of his own, a dachshund has lifted his leg and is peeing on Gilbert's trousers. Bernie touches Gilbert on the shoulder, jolting him back into reality.

BERNIE

Your pants have piss all over them.

(a beat)

Unless you're into that.

The dog finishes and moves on.

Bernie is about 35, gay but with no obvious, flagrant characteristics. He's a gentle, sensitive-looking man and not the handsomest guy in town. He has a shy, tentative manner, unobtrusive.

BERNIE

You want a pair of shorts?

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM ON FERRY

Gilbert changes into Bernie's shorts and throws his own trousers away.

GILBERT

Thanks.

BERNIE

I'm Bernie Whitlock. You can't beat getting pissed on for an opening line.

(a beat)

I'm shy about talking to strangers.

GILBERT

I'm Gilbert Wolf.
(realizing the
situation)

I'm...I'm not gay.

BERNIE

I am.

GILBERT

I guess the whole boat is.

BERNIE

With rare exceptions.

CONTINUED

BERNIE

(a beat)

What do you do?

GILBERT

I'm an accountant.

(pause)

The last time I looked.

BERNIE

I'm working my way up from the mail-room at Bloomingdale's.

(seeing Gilbert's consternation)

That was a joke.

GILBERT

Oh.

BERNIE

I work in the men's department at Sears.

(a beat)

Sometimes I lie and say Bloomingdale's. It depends on what crowd I'm in.

MATCH CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

In b.g., SEE the dock at Fire Island. The ferry has begun to slow and the deck is full of people anxious to get off and begin the weekend.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT - VILLAGE OF CHERRY GROVE

The little shops, the throngs of people in street clothes, beach clothes, etc.

ANGLE ON BERNIE AND GILBERT

BERNIE

This is my third summer on the island. The people are friendly.

CONTINUED

BERNIE

(a beat)

The older I get, the less I care
about sex. I'm looking for someone
I can talk to. That's hard to find.
Sometimes I think I should get one
of those inflatable rubber dolls and
call it a life.

(a beat)

What about you?

GILBERT

What about me?

BERNIE

What are you looking for?

Gilbert doesn't answer yet.

BERNIE

We're all looking for something.

ANGLE - FAVORING GILBERT

For the first time, he turns into the conversation. As they
walk, a continuous throng of people pass by.

GILBERT

You're not going to believe me.

(a beat)

I'm looking for Greta Garbo.

BERNIE

You're looking for the Garbo?!

A beat, then:

GILBERT

Yes.

BERNIE

Is this a joke?

GILBERT

No.

BERNIE

I thought I was having a bad streak.

(a beat)

Do you mind if I ask why?

ANGLE - GILBERT

He'd like to explain but, frankly, he doesn't have the energy. He doesn't even know where to begin.

GILBERT

It's a long story.

BERNIE

It's got to be.

GILBERT

She's somewhere here, that much I know.

BERNIE

I saw her last summer walking on the beach. She wore a big hat and sunglasses and a long cotton cape.

(a beat)

She was walking in a light rain, without an umbrella. I don't think anybody knew who she was. All of a sudden she disappeared into a house and I never saw her again.

FAVOR GILBERT

Suddenly excited, as though he's gotten a new clue to go on.

GILBERT

Would you remember the house?

CUT TO:

EXT. STRIP OF BEACH ON FIRE ISLAND - SUNSET

Gilbert and Bernie are looking for the house. Couples, straight and gay, are walking and lying on the beach, enjoying the sunset.

BERNIE

It was along here somewhere. I didn't take that good a look.

GILBERT

It's really important.

Bernie looks again.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

BERNIE
Would you have dinner with me to-
night?

GILBERT
I don't think I can.

BERNIE
I hate to eat alone.

GILBERT
My mother's alone. She goes to a
restaurant, looks to see who else
is alone, and if they look interest-
ing she asks if she can join them.

BERNIE
What if they say no?

GILBERT
She asks somebody else.

BERNIE
One rejection and I lose my appetite.
(pointing to
a house)
It might have been that one there.

THEIR POV

to SEE a neat white beach house in the distance.

TWO SHOT - GILBERT AND BERNIE

stopped on the sandy beach.

GILBERT
Thanks. I wish...I could stay, but
I can't.

BERNIE
Can I ask you a question? Why are
you looking for Garbo?

ANGLE - GILBERT

He takes a deep breath, then:

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT

My mother wants to meet her.

ANGLE - BERNIE

He can't quite put the pieces together, but one thing he's certain of:

BERNIE

Your mother is a trip.

GILBERT

Yeah.

BERNIE

I thought you were doing it for an autograph.

MEDIUM - BOTH

Gilbert shakes his head no.

BERNIE

Good.

Gilbert starts to go, then turns back.

GILBERT

What about the shorts?

BERNIE

A present.

Gilbert shakes his head.

GILBERT

Thanks. I'm...going to go now.

BERNIE

Goodbye.

FAVOR BERNIE

A sad, rather forlorn look, as though he really doesn't want Gilbert to leave.

BERNIE

(with poignancy)

If your mother ever wants to meet me,
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

BERNIE (cont'd)
I'm at the 10th Street branch in
Manhattan.

Gilbert nods and starts walking toward the beach house Bernie pointed out.

CUT TO:

EXT. MODERN STEEL AND GLASS BEACH HOUSE - FRONT DOOR -
ANGLE ON GILBERT

as he knocks. There is no answer. He tries again. Still no answer. Hanging on the door is a pad and pencil. He takes it, starts to write a note, crumbles it, starts a second one and crumbles it also. He moves around to the side of the house looking into the windows, but there's no sign of any-one there.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON BEACH - ON GILBERT

with beach house behind him. He sits on the sand, arms over his legs, statue-like. The sun is setting. He stares at the beach house.

CUT TO:

MATCH SHOT - GILBERT

on the sand an hour later. It's almost sunset and he's still watching the house.

GILBERT'S POV - BEACH HOUSE

A light in an upstairs room comes on.

ANGLE ON GILBERT

He begins running to the house. He knocks feverishly on the front door, which is answered by a gray-haired MAN in his seventies. The gentleman is casually dressed but quite elegantly so: silk shirt, silk ascot, etc.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT
Miss Garbo, please.

ANGLE - OLDER GENTLEMAN

He looks at Gilbert with skepticism. In a straightforward, business-like fashion (and with difficulty in knowing if he's telling the truth):

MAN
There's no one here by that name.
This is the Diebold residence.

GILBERT
I've got to talk to her!

MAN
There is no Garbo here.

ANGLE - GILBERT

His fury rises almost uncontrollably, and he grabs the man violently.

GILBERT
She's here, I know she's here! Let
me in or I'll kill you!

Gilbert breaks under the tension.

GILBERT
I didn't mean that. I...I'm very
sorry.

MAN
I was telling you the truth. She
isn't here. I took Miss Garbo to
the ferry a little while ago.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Gilbert is running as fast as he can down the beach. He is straining to catch his breath. He's no athlete, and he hasn't run like this since high school track.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOCK - SUNSET - FULL SHOT - ON GILBERT

Completely out of breath, he arrives at the dock. A cordon is up and the ferry has just steamed out. It's about forty-five feet away from the dock.

REVERSE SHOT

to SEE the ferry now about a hundred feet out in the water and getting further away.

TIGHT ON GILBERT

His face is empty. He's faced nothing but disappointments, and this is yet another. He's getting nowhere. And the ferry sails gently into the sunset.

GILBERT'S POV - THE FERRY

to SEE the back of a woman leaning against the rail on the top deck. She wears a long brown cape that flutters when it catches the breeze. She stands erect and motionless. Her head never moves; all we see is the fluttering cape and the airy, silken straight hair.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FERRY - NIGHT

Gilbert goes to the FERRY CONDUCTOR in a little booth.

GILBERT

What time is the next ferry?

FERRY CONDUCTOR

Seven o'clock in the morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - GILBERT

is asleep on the beach, his folded jacket a pillow, his arms folded under him for warmth.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GILBERT'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Gilbert enters. He moves through the living room, stopping

CONTINUED

at the kitchen door. He is unshaven, disheveled, dirty. His clothes are sweaty and wrinkled.

ANGLE IN KITCHEN

There are pots on the stove from last night's uneaten dinner. Gilbert opens one: it's full of rice. He opens another: a fish stew, untouched, cold, and uninviting.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MEDIUM

Gilbert enters. Lisa is sitting up in bed in a negligee. She wears no makeup and her eyes are puffy, tired.

When she sees Gilbert there's a cold, dead silence. Her anger has reached a point that's beyond fury, beyond reconciliation, beyond communication.

GILBERT

Have you been up all night?

LISA

Yes.

GILBERT

I slept on the beach.

LISA

You look awful.

GILBERT

Yeah.

LISA

Mr. Thorpe called yesterday.

(a beat)

You didn't go to work.

GILBERT

That's right.

LISA

You didn't call to say you weren't coming.

GILBERT

I forgot.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - ANGLE ON GILBERT

as he splashes water on his face. Lisa appears in the doorway.

LISA

I visited your mother last night.

(a beat)

Her hearing is worse. She can hear some things, but she misses others. I've never seen her look so tired.

(a beat)

She didn't recognize me. I couldn't tell if it was intentional or not.

ANOTHER ANGLE - CLOSER ON LISA

becoming even more serious.

LISA

Gilbert...I spoke to my mother and dad. They're concerned about me. They said I've seemed unhappy to them lately, that it even came through on the phone.

(a beat)

They're right.

(a beat)

They want me to come home. Dad offered to come here and get me and take me back. Naturally that isn't necessary. I'm a big girl now.

GILBERT

What did you say?

ANGLE - LISA

There's a lovely softness in her we haven't seen much of. She's a shrewish, one-note woman, but at this moment a layer of caring emerges.

LISA

I said I couldn't leave until...

(she takes a
deep breath)

...after Estelle...

GILBERT

That's very nice.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

LISA

I try and do the right thing,
Gilbert. I don't always succeed,
but I do try.

ANGLE FAVORING GILBERT

He finds her grating and hypocritical, and at this moment he sees her with more clarity and more definition than at any time since he met her. And perhaps for the first time in his life, Gilbert is about to stand up to a situation he doesn't like instead of quietly letting it pass.

GILBERT

I've got to tell you something, Lisa.
Oh, shit, I don't know if it's my
fucking business or not, but I don't
give a shit anymore! When she first
met you, Mother didn't like you.

(a beat)

She said you were affected and pre-
tentious and had no sense of values.
She said, if Gucci's sold tombstones,
you'd have one in every color, and
that New York would go in the black
the day of your arrival.

LISA

The feeling was mutual! My parents
have never been so embarrassed in
their lives! Your mother wouldn't
cross the picket line for her own son's
wedding!

GILBERT

The bartenders' union was striking
the Beverly Wilshire!

LISA

We offered to get her in through the
laundry room, but she wouldn't
budge ---

GILBERT

She doesn't cross picket lines!

LISA

Her own son's wedding?!

A long, difficult beat.

CONTINUED

GILBERT
That's the way she is.

MEDIUM - BOTH

LISA
Why did you marry me, Gilbert?
(a beat)
Don't tell me it was my golden hair!

GILBERT
I felt I owed it to you.

LISA
Owed it to me?!

GILBERT
You're the first girl I...ever...
went...all the way with.

LISA
'All the way?!'

GILBERT
You're the first girl I fucked!
(a beat)
I guess I got carried away.

LISA
(incredulous)
I...was the first girl you ever
fucked?!

Gilbert nods. Lisa laughs self-depricatingly.

LISA
That's very funny.
(a beat)
I...almost didn't let you.

GILBERT
If you want to leave, don't wait
around for her to die.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVING CAR - DAY - ON GILBERT AND LISA

Lisa is dressed in a silk suit. There are suitcases in the

CONTINUED

back seat and a makeup bag on her lap.

LISA

One good thing about New York: you
can always find the sheets they
advertise in magazines.

(a beat)

The rich and poor share Central
Park. That's a nice touch.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMERICAN AIRLINES TERMINAL - KENNEDY AIRPORT - FULL

The airport is mobbed with cars and taxis. Gilbert tries
to get his car over to the curb but it's not an easy maneu-
ver.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN AIRLINES TERMINAL - WAITING AREA

Lisa and Gilbert are seated. They don't speak to each other.
They would, perhaps, like to talk, but neither can really
think of anything to say.

Around them is a throng of passengers, all waiting for the
same flight. Finally:

LOUDSPEAKER

American Airlines flight 3, nonstop
to Los Angeles, now boarding
through gate 33.

LISA

That's me.

(a long beat; she
looks at Gilbert)

I'll come back if you want me to.

GILBERT

I think it's better this way.

(a beat)

We'll talk.

He gives her a kiss.

LISA

I feel really sad.

CONTINUED

He touches her on the shoulder, trying to comfort her. She fights back tears.

LISA

We could have had a perfect marriage, but you wouldn't cooperate. I want a house and children and security, and if I stayed with you it would be one surprise after another. I don't want surprises, Gilbert.

(a beat)

I want the kind of marriage they sold me.

ANOTHER ANGLE - GILBERT

hands her the ticket. In b.g. are two gates, one marked "FIRST CLASS," the other "TOURIST." Lisa moves to the tourist gate. The agent there examines her ticket, sees that it's first class, and re-directs her to the other line.

CLOSE - LISA

She's confused: she thought she had a tourist ticket. She looks at Gilbert, a few feet away.

GILBERT

I paid the difference. I didn't want your father to think I was a schmuck.

LISA

He will anyway.

She stares at him for a long, inevitable moment, then walks through the gate and disappears.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - ESTELLE

lies in bed. Her eyes are closed. The Puerto Rican nurse from the earlier scene is there. The nurse comes over to the bed.

NURSE

Estelle?

CONTINUED

Estelle opens her eyes.

NURSE

Can I get you anything?

Estelle shakes her head no.

NURSE

Our contract is up the first of the year. They want to raise us from seven-ten an hour to seven-ninety.

(a beat; with confusion)

None of us knows what to do. We don't want to make waves.

ESTELLE

Make waves!

NURSE

I mean, we don't want to start something.

ESTELLE

Start something!

The vehemence of Estelle's suggestion throws her into a state of confidence:

NURSE

Okay!

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE - MOVIE SCREEN - NINOTCHKA

is playing. We come in on the scene between Ninotchka (Garbo) and Leon (Melvyn Douglas) at Pere Mathieu's restaurant in Paris. They are sitting at a table talking:

LEON

Oh, Ninotchka, who wants to talk business? If you win the suit, fine. If we win the suit, better. You do me an injustice. When we went to my apartment, did I have the slightest idea that you had any connection with this deal?

NINOTCHKA

But you have now, and I know now that
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

NINOTCHKA (cont'd)
you are a man who employs business
methods which in Russia would be
punished by death.

LEON
Death! Death! Always so glum! What
about life, Ninotchka? Do Russians
never think of life? Of the moment in
which we are living? The only moment
we really have? Don't take it all so
seriously, Ninotchka. Nothing is worth
it. Please...relax...I beg you, Ser-
geant, smile!

NINOTCHKA
What?

LEON
Will you smile?

NINOTCHKA
Why?

LEON
Just smile.

NINOTCHKA
At what?

LEON
At anything. At the whole ludicrous
spectacle of life. At people being
pompous and taking themselves seriously
and exaggerating their own importance.
If you can't find anything else to
laugh at, you can laugh at me and you.

NINOTCHKA
Why?

LEON
Because we are an odd couple.

NINOTCHKA
Then you should go back to your table.

ANOTHER ANGLE - DARKENED THEATER - GILBERT

turns in his chair while "NINOTCHKA" continues to play on

CONTINUED

screen. His face is glued to the film, but after a moment he looks around to see the rest of the audience.

We continue to hear the film:

LEON (o.s.)

No, I can't leave you. I won't.
Not yet. Not until I've made you
laugh at least once.

NINOTCHKA (o.s.)

Ha! Ha! Now go back.

LEON (o.s.)

That's not a laugh! I mean a laugh
from the heart. Now let's see. I'm
going to tell you a funny story.
Just a moment...I've got it! Well,
it seems a couple of Frenchmen went
to America....

NINOTCHKA (o.s.)

On which boat?

GILBERT'S POV - THE DARKENED THEATER

The room is full, every seat taken. The viewers range from
nine and ten year olds to men and women in their seventies
and eighties.

BACK ON GILBERT

He has a blank look on his face. Watching the movie gives
him no clue whatsoever to finding Garbo.

LEON (o.s.)

Well, er, let's drop it. I don't
think you would care for that one.

NINOTCHKA (o.s.)

Probably not.

LEON (o.s.)

Do you like Scotch stories?

NINOTCHKA

I have never heard one.

Gilbert finally gets up to leave. He has to work his way
through a row of people who are annoyed that he is leaving

CONTINUED

in the middle of the film, and disturbing them.

LEON (o.s.)

Two Scotch men met on the street
and I don't know the name of the
street and it doesn't matter. Well,
anyway, one's name was McIntosh and
the other's name was McGillicuddy.
McIntosh says to McGillicuddy, 'Hello,
Mr. McGillicuddy,' and McGillicuddy
says to McIntosh, 'Hello, Mr. McIntosh,'
and then McIntosh says to McGillicuddy,
'How is Mrs. McGillicuddy?' and then
McGillicuddy says to McIntosh, 'How is
Mrs. McIntosh?'....

NINTOCHKA (o.s.)

I wish they had never met.

Gilbert exits the screening room.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART LOBBY - ON GILBERT

as he exits the museum screening room and wanders about.
People are looking at paintings, exhibits, etc. Behind him,
on the walls, are posters of the current film festival
which include many of Garbo's most famous films.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSEUM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

It is raining. Gilbert stands just inside the door, waiting
for the rain to stop. Most of the other people have left.
He is alone with a bespectacled young female TICKET TAKER,
an intense, homely looking girl who turns to him and begins
a conversation as though they were old friends.

TICKET TAKER

I think Elizabeth Rennick was every
bit as good as Garbo.

GILBERT

Who's Elizabeth Rennick?

TICKET TAKER

The scene in the embassy. She's one
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

TICKET TAKER (cont'd)
of the Russian officials. She was
in a lot of the Garbo films. Little
parts.

(pause)

You know how some actresses get bits
and work their way up? She did just
the opposite.

(pause)

I don't have any heroes anymore.
Just little people who turn me on in
different...little ways.

(pause)

She comes here to watch her old films.

FAVOR GILBERT

Showing sudden renewed enthusiasm at the possibility that
Elizabeth Rennick could be a link to Garbo:

GILBERT

Do you know her?

TICKET TAKER

Sure. She took me to lunch. She
paid for it in dimes, poor thing.

GILBERT

I've been trying to find her for
weeks!

TICKET TAKER

Oh, you mean Garbo. I'm talking
about Miss Rennick.

(a beat)

She's very old. She wears those
funny fur things around her should-
ers, the ones with the head biting
the ass.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRED THORPE'S OFFICE - MONDAY MORNING

Gilbert enters.

GILBERT

Excuse me.

CONTINUED

THORPE

Oh, good morning, Wolf.

GILBERT

Good morning, Mr. Thorpe.

(a beat)

Mr. Thorpe, I have a favor to ask.

THORPE

Where were you on Friday?

GILBERT

Oh, Friday. I can explain.

THORPE

We have policies here, Wolf. We have a reason for them. We have telephones for a reason, too.

GILBERT

Yes, sir. That's what rules are for in an organized society. Yes, you're right, there's no room for disagreement.

(a beat)

Mr. Thorpe, I have to go to New Haven today. I'm leaving on the noon train. I need the day off.

THORPE

You've used up your days off. You've used up sick time, personal days, and vacation.

GILBERT

I thought I could use a day from next year's vacation.

(a beat; with difficulty)

It's urgent.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Thorpe takes out a book and studies it.

THORPE

You've used up next year's vacation already. Do you realize, you've been at work four days in the past month?

CONTINUED

THORPE

(a beat)

I don't know what's happened to you. All of a sudden you're a different man. Insolent. Inefficient. Slovenly.

(a beat)

I can't give you a day off. I'm sorry. I have a company to maintain.

GILBERT

Have you got a small cock?

ANGLE - ON THORPE

He looks up, speechless. His mouth drops open.

GILBERT

Is your dick small, medium, large, or one size fits all?

ANGLE - GILBERT

Experiencing a kind of confidence that's altogether new to him. It's as though he felt potent for the first time in his life, and it happened at this very instant.

GILBERT

I have this theory. Well, really it's my mother's theory, give credit where credit is due, that men who use their work position as a power base do so to cover certain insufficiencies -- which can extend from sexual matters -- i.e., small cocks, premature ejaculation, impotency, to a lack of physical activities at home, i.e., your wife is balling someone else and she doesn't know you know it, to plain and simple constipation. I'm worst on the days I can't take a shit.

A beat. Thorpe is even more dumbfounded.

GILBERT

I realize I'm overstepping my province in opening such a dialogue
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

GILBERT (cont'd)
with you, but sometimes we must
overstep our bounds in the name
of better communication.

(a beat)

You shoved me in an office with
no window and didn't tell me. You
promise me raises I've never got-
ten. You keep me working overtime
at no extra pay. You've got thirty
accountants and I'm doing all the
work. And you never took me to
Sardi's.

(a beat)

You never bought me a cup of coffee.

(a beat)

I've taken all the crap I'm going
to from you. I will not allow you
to stick your fear-ridden cock into
my make-believe vagina anymore.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVING TRAIN - ON GILBERT

standing at the bar, having a drink. A CONDUCTOR walks the
length of the compartment.

CONDUCTOR

New Haven! New Haven, five minutes.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW HAVEN THEATER - DAY - MARQUEE

to SEE "A New Production of Romeo and Juliet" and then the
cast's names, which become smaller in descending order of
importance. At the very bottom, in small letters, SEE the
name "Elizabeth Rennick."

GILBERT

Oh, God.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER - WINGS - ON GILBERT

As he enters, a group of actors are in the middle of rehearsals

CONTINUED

for "Romeo and Juliet." Gilbert tiptoes in so as not to disturb anyone. He is carrying a bouquet of flowers.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Gilbert approaches one of the STAGEHANDS.

GILBERT

I'm looking for Elizabeth Rennick.

STAGEHAND

Who?

GILBERT

Elizabeth Rennick.

The stagehand shakes his head, shrugs his shoulders. He doesn't know who Gilbert is talking about.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Gilbert moves toward the stage. Someone catches his eye.

GILBERT'S POV

to SEE ELIZABETH RENNICK, in her 80s, sitting in a chair in a darkened part of the stage. She is wearing a dark dress, out of style, a hat, and a mink piece about her shoulders with the heads still attached, biting each other. She looks bored or dead. Next to her sits a black maid, AUGUSTA, who is also in her 80s. Augusta wears a black uniform and a starched white hat on her head.

ANOTHER ANGLE - GILBERT

walks quietly across the back of the stage toward her.

GILBERT

Miss Rennick?

CLOSE - MISS RENNICK

as she looks up at him. She doesn't know him from Adam.

GILBERT

Well, of course you're...Elizabeth Rennick!

CONTINUED

She stares at him intently. Then, without so much as a word, she looks away.

GILBERT
That's a beautiful mink.

He hands her the flowers.

ELIZABETH
Thank you.
(a beat)
Chrysanthemums are for funerals.
Here, Augusta.
(handing Augusta
the flowers)
You must know somebody who died.
(a beat; to
Gilbert)
Are you the new Romeo?

GILBERT
My name is Gilbert Wolf. I came
all the way from New York City just
to see you.

ELIZABETH
(deadpan)
Why?

GILBERT
You made films with Garbo.

ELIZABETH
(haughtily)
Garbo made films with me.
(a beat)
They're looking for a new lead.
Romeo came down with hepatitis.
(a beat)
There's been nothing but problems
with this show.
(a beat)
Augusta and I don't have a dressing
room. I have to change behind that
shower curtain over there.

AUGUSTA
Times is awful and getting worse.

GILBERT
I'm looking for ---

CONTINUED

ELIZABETH

I should be home in my room.

(a beat)

Do I know you?

GILBERT

I'm looking for Miss Garbo. Can you help me?

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the DIRECTOR appears. If his harried demeanor is any indication, everything has gone wrong with this show.

DIRECTOR

Miss Rennick, we're ready for your scene.

ELIZABETH

(getting up)

Excuse me.

AUGUSTA

Break a leg, Miss Rennick.

ELIZABETH

Not yet, Augusta, we're still in rehearsals.

(to Gilbert)

Do you think you could get her a drink? She's always dry.

DIRECTOR (o.s.)

Miss Rennick?

ELIZABETH

I'm coming!

(to Gilbert)

Talk to her. Tell her about the carriage and the six white horses pulling it.

She moves to the stage.

DIRECTOR

(to Elizabeth)

Stand here.

(placing her)

Fine. Good.

CONTINUED

DIRECTOR

(a beat)

Please try not to wobble.

CLOSE ON GILBERT

Feeling terribly sorry for this senile old lady who's so poor she has to take jobs like this just to make ends meet.

LADY CAPULET

'Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth to me.'

ELIZABETH

'Now...by my maidenhair....'

DIRECTOR

'Maidenhead,' Miss Rennick, not 'maidenhair!'

ANOTHER ANGLE - GILBERT AND AUGUSTA - IN THE WINGS

Looking out on stage.

AUGUSTA

She's been making that same mistake all day.

(a beat)

I met Eleanor Roosevelt backstage in 1948.

(a beat)

God, she was ugly.

BACK ON STAGE - ELIZABETH RENNICK

She's more frustrated than ever: she can't get anything right.

ELIZABETH

I want to cut that line, that 'What ladybird' line.

DIRECTOR

We can't cut it!

ELIZABETH

Why not?

DIRECTOR

Because Shakespeare wrote it!

CONTINUED

ELIZABETH

I don't want to be in this play
anymore.

DIRECTOR

(frustrated;
more kindly)

Why don't you go over your lines
once more. You did want this work
very much...when we first met last
week.

ANOTHER ANGLE - MISS RENNICK

as she walks off the stage. Gilbert goes to assist her.
She seems preoccupied.

ELIZABETH

Work is scarce these days.
(a beat)

I'm not thinking so much of myself
as I am of Augusta. She's been
with me for years. Christ, is she
a burden!

GILBERT

Getting back to Miss Garbo ---

ELIZABETH

I've never had this trouble before.
I haven't been on the stage since
1948. Eleanor Roosevelt came back
to meet me.

(a beat)

God, she was ugly.

The director comes into the wings.

DIRECTOR

Would you like to try again?

Miss Rennick moves back out on stage. The director turns
to Gilbert:

DIRECTOR

I wanted to cast it with a younger
woman.

(a beat)

Someone who had a chance of living
through opening night.

CLOSE - DIRECTOR

He's reacting to something: above the voices of the actors onstage, another noise is distracting him. HEAR the SOUND of GRITTING TEETH.

DIRECTOR'S POV - ELIZABETH RENNICK

The two mink heads around her neck are biting her. But they aren't gritting their teeth.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE - GILBERT - IN WINGS

As he watches, unconsciously gritting his teeth.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATER - DAY - FULL

as Elizabeth and Augusta exit. Both ladies are so infirm they help each other down the stairs. Gilbert is behind them in anxious pursuit.

CLOSER - ELIZABETH

She reaches the bottom of the stairs and pauses. She looks around for something that isn't there.

ELIZABETH

I don't see my car.

GILBERT

Let me help you.

ELIZABETH

Where's my driver?

GILBERT

Why don't I take you to lunch?

ELIZABETH

Thank you, but we stopped eating out many years ago.

GILBERT

Then let me get you a cab.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

ELIZABETH

Oh, no, dear. They're much too expensive.

(a beat)

Who did you say you were?

She takes a brown paper bag from her purse and takes out some sandwiches.

CLOSE - GILBERT

a look of sadness on his face. This poor old actress, who should by all rights have some comforts in her late years, is forced to eat out of a paper bag.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Gilbert, Elizabeth and Augusta are eating sandwiches on the bench. Gilbert looks anxious and agitated:

GILBERT

Miss Rennick, please! I need your help!

ANGLE - CLOSER ON ELIZABETH RENNICK

as she adjusts her fur piece about her shoulders.

GILBERT

Are you and she still friends? Do you ever see her?

ELIZABETH

Well...I did...see her last year. On the street, that was all. She's not much for small talk!

GILBERT

Would you call her for me?

ELIZABETH

I don't believe I have her phone number.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT

Maybe you could get it from someone -- a friend?

AUGUSTA

Miss Rennick's friends are dead.

ELIZABETH

Augusta, you forgot your flowers!

GILBERT

Miss Rennick, time is running out!

ELIZABETH

Well, I'm awfully sorry. We've been out of touch for so long and I really couldn't interfere.

She packs their trash back into the brown bag, adjusts her fur piece, and rises to leave. Once again, she looks around for something that's apparently not there.

ELIZABETH

Where's my car? Where is my chauffeur?

GILBERT

I'll get you home.

ELIZABETH

I only took that part to give the play presence. I don't like Shakespeare.

(a beat)

Nobody talks like that anymore.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Elizabeth Rennick takes out a gold compact from her purse. It catches the sun and gleams. She shows it to Gilbert:

ELIZABETH

She gave me this.

(a beat)

You know the flea market on Sixth Avenue? You might look there.

She always loved a bargain.

Miss Rennick looks around again. She smiles:

CONTINUED

ELIZABETH

There he is!

GILBERT'S POV

to SEE a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce drive up for Miss Rennick.

BACK ON GILBERT

reacting with shock: this was no poor woman after all. She may have paid for lunch with dimes, she may eat out of a brown bag, but she's loaded.

FULL SHOT

Elizabeth Rennick and Augusta climb into the back of the shining car.

ELIZABETH

What did you say your name was?

GILBERT

Gilbert Wolf.

ELIZABETH

If you see her, tell her I said hello. She borrowed five dollars from me in 1931 and she never paid it back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 6TH AVENUE FLEA MARKET - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

It's Sunday, and it looks like all of New York has turned up for this swap meet. Long tables full of various sorts of merchandise line the area row after row, shaded by trees. The area is crowded with shoppers, mostly lookers.

ANOTHER ANGLE

to SEE a WOMAN from the back. She wears a large, floppy hat, large sunglasses, and a long flowing cape. She moves

CONTINUED

from table to table, picking up bric-a-brac, looking at it, setting it down again and moving on.

We see her only from the rear. For a beat here and there, we see a bit of cheek, of nose, but never the face itself. Always the hair, always the dark glasses.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the woman stops at a table of small antique boxes. She holds one up, examining it.

SALESLADY

That's Georgian silver from England.
A hundred years old.

The woman in cape looks at another.

SALESLADY

Limoges porcelain from France.
Please be careful, ma'am, it's quite
brittle.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the woman in the cape moves on to another table, also filled with antiques, objets d'art.

CLOSE ON 2ND SALESLADY

reacting with awe at the sight of the lady in the cape.

2ND SALESLADY

Ah! Ah! You're...you're...
(controlling herself)
I'm sorry.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The woman in the cape holds up a small silver creamer.

2ND SALESLADY

That's solid sterling. One hundred
seventy-five dollars.
(a beat)
I can give you a discount, you
haven't worked in so long.

CONTINUED

The woman in the cape sets it down and walks on.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER PART OF THE FLEA MARKET - ON GILBERT

as he enters the area of tables. He moves slowly, aimlessly: a man with no options, looking for a needle in the world's largest haystack.

REAR ANGLE SHOT - WOMAN IN CAPE

As she moves along, she stops at a third table laden with Indian jewelry. The MAN behind the table is in conversation with another man, a conversation which comes to an immediate halt when the woman in the cape looks over the jewelry, holding a few pieces up for a better look.

CLOSER - MAN BEHIND TABLE

keeping a close, suspicious eye on the woman in the cape. After a beat, the woman moves on.

MAN

(to 2nd man)

You've got to watch 'em. They'll steal you blind.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON GILBERT - ANOTHER PART OF THE FLEA MARKET

Still meandering, looking around. He looks at face after face after face and...nothing. Suddenly he sees someone who stops him cold.

CLOSE - GILBERT

His face is frozen. His eyes don't blink.

GILBERT'S POV

to SEE the back of the woman in a cape. The same cape, the same hair, the same huge sunglasses she wore on the Fire Island ferry.

BACK ON GILBERT

He picks up his step.

WIDE ANGLE

as Gilbert starts pushing his way through the crowd of strolling shoppers. When someone won't move aside, he plows his way through them. Gilbert has probably never acted so brusque in his life.

GILBERT

(to people he's
pushing aside)

Sorry, sorry!

(elbowing his way)

Excuse me, please! Excuse me!

Goddamn it!

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE - HIGH SHOT

As Gilbert gets closer and closer to the woman in the cape. The crowd is so large, however, he could lose her altogether if he lost sight of her for even a moment.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Gilbert gets closer to her. The crowd is still an impediment, however.

ANGLE OVER THE WOMAN'S SHOULDER

as Gilbert reaches her, moves in front of her, blocking her, and faces her. He's so out of breath he can barely talk:

GILBERT

It's you!

(a beat)

It is!

(a beat)

Please! Can I have a minute of
your time? I've got to talk to
you!

The lady tries to move away but he blocks her.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT

I'm not a reporter or anything!
It's about my mother. You've got to
listen! Please!

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - FULL SHOT - WALTER WOLF

comes down the hallway and stops at the nurses' station.

WALTER

I'm looking for Estelle Wolf.

The NURSE comes around the station to him.

NURSE

Mrs. Wolf is resting. She's not sup-
posed to have visitors.

WALTER

I won't stay long.
(emotionally)
I'm her husband.
(catching himself)
Ex-husband.

The nurse looks at him, sees his anguish.

ANOTHER ANGLE - HOSPITAL DOORWAY

The nurse looks inside, then:

NURSE

You have to make it short.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - ON ESTELLE

asleep in bed. She doesn't look good at all. She's pale,
lifeless, her face is ringed with shadows, her lips are
white.

CLOSE ON WALTER

as he stands staring at her. He is numb.

REVERSE - ESTELLE

asleep, motionless in bed.

FULL SHOT

For several long moments, Walter doesn't move. He stares at her, tears filling his eyes and streaming down his face. He stands, he cries, he can't move forward, he can't move backward. Moments pass in the quietness of the room, interminable moments, until finally:

CLOSE ON WALTER

Tears streaming down his face:

WALTER
(in an angry whisper)
You damn fool.

And after a beat, he moves to the door and goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - DAY - FULL

The woman in the cape comes through the glass doors. We see her, again, from the rear.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST FLOOR - HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

The woman walks toward the elevator bank, pushes the button. When it arrives, she enters. Just as she turns around inside the elevator, the doors close before we see her from the front.

CUT TO:

INT. EIGHTH FLOOR - SIDE ANGLE SHOT

The elevator doors open, and the woman in the cape exits.

ANOTHER ANGLE - CORRIDOR

The woman strides assuredly down the hall, the wide cape flowing behind her.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AS THE WOMAN

passes the nurses' station. There are seven or eight nurses working, and as each sees the woman, they freeze.

CUT TO:

INT. ESTELLE'S ROOM - ON ESTELLE

It's solemnly quiet. It's beginning to get dark outside: we see it through the window. Estelle lies still and silent. She doesn't appear to be in pain.

The woman in the cape enters quietly. At first Estelle doesn't even hear her.

FULL SHOT - ROOM

As Estelle lies in bed. The woman moves slowly toward the bed. The woman stands there. She makes no attempt to rouse Estelle.

CLOSER ON ESTELLE

The way we sense another's presence, she senses the woman in her room; and gradually her eyes open.

ESTELLE'S POV - THE WOMAN

Her vision is quite blurred. We SEE the woman from the front, but she is virtually indistinguishable through Estelle's failing sight.

WOMAN IN CAPE

How do you do?

CLOSE ON ESTELLE

With what bit of energy she has left, her eyes gleam in a way we've never quite seen before. It's as though some kind of miracle has happened, some incredible God-like circumstance.

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

You came! I can't believe it, it takes some getting used to.

(a beat)

It is you!

The woman in the cape touches Estelle's hand.

ESTELLE

I'm not at my best. If I knew you were coming I'd have...at least had a manicure, someone in to fix my hair.

(smiles)

You met my son.

The woman in the cape nods.

ESTELLE

He's a good boy. He works very hard, always has a nice word for everybody.

(a beat)

I don't...know what to say. You're here, and I don't have...words. It must be thirty, forty years at least!

(a beat)

I bet you've heard it from people till you're blue in the face, I've been in love with you ever since the very first time I saw you. I can't remember, we were living...we were living in Flatbush, that's in Brooklyn, Church Avenue, four rooms, eight people.

(a beat)

My father gave me ten cents so...Wanda Sternhagen, my girlfriend, and I could go to the movies. The Loew's State was two blocks away.

(a beat)

It was a treat to go to the movies. My father didn't have anything, a dime to him was...well, a lot of money. A loaf of bread, or a fish. He had six children to feed.

(a beat)

We saw 'Flesh and the Devil.' You played Felicitas Van Kletzingk, remember? What a name! It stuck in my mind, I've never forgotten it.

(cont'd)

CONTINUED

ESTELLE (cont'd)

Movie names don't usually stay in your mind.

The woman in the cape nods.

ESTELLE

I sat in the balcony of the Loew's State in Brooklyn with Wanda, and I was 'Estelle Garbo.' Really! Eating a corned beef sandwich from a brown paper bag, and Wanda kept going 'Ssssh!' because the bag was crackling.

(a beat)

Being Estelle Garbo is easy when you're in the balcony of the Loew's State in the dark, where nobody could see...

(she laughs)

...my big nose and my eyes set too far apart -- not like yours! And I probably shouldn't have been eating a sandwich, anyway. I was a heavy kid. I needed to lose weight. But show me anything from a delicatessen... especially corned beef...

(she laughs)

...You had me in the palm of your hand! Every time you moved, I sighed. You'd cross from one side of the room to the other and it was like your feet weren't touching the ground.

(a beat)

Wanda and I saw every movie you made.

(a beat)

There's so much to say!

(a beat)

You know, it's funny how you are as kids. I think after awhile, Wanda got jealous of you. Anytime something stays good for too long, people get afraid. One day she said, 'Sure, she's beautiful, but she's got big feet.'

(a beat)

I got very angry. I defended you. I told Wanda, 'Why pick at the bad when there's so much good?' I told Wanda to get mad at the bad things.

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

I get angry at a lot of things; I always have. Life's full of little injustices. They either bother you or they don't. Me -- they bothered.

(a beat)

I defended you. Maybe it's because I had big feet, too, size ten, and I was only going on twelve. Wanda moved away, her father got another job in Trenton. Before she left I took her to lunch and to the movies. We saw 'Wild Orchids.' We sat through it twice because we didn't know how to tell each other goodbye.

(a beat)

I wrote you a letter once. I never wrote to any other movie star but you. I didn't get an answer. That's all right, that's all right, I didn't take it personally.

(a beat)

You're not going to believe this, but it's true, I promise. I married my husband in 1940. We had a small wedding. It was at home. My mother cooked for weeks, my Aunt Becky cooked for weeks, everybody came. Then Walter and I took the train to Atlantic City. Our honeymoon. Big honeymoon! Two whole nights! That's all we had money for. I didn't think about things right. Female times, you know, so there we were in Atlantic City, on our honeymoon, and I couldn't do anything. I was a virgin, Walter was a virgin, and we had to stay that way a little while longer.

(a beat)

We didn't have anything to do so I got a newspaper. 'Anna Christie' was playing. I'd never seen it. It's the only one you did I hadn't seen.

(acting out)

'Garbo talks!'

(a beat)

'Gimme a whiskey, chinger ale on the side. An' don' be stingy, babie.'

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

ESTELLE

(a beat)

Walter and I had Gilbert. When I came out of delivery and woke up, the TV was on. I was so tired I could hardly move. I could hardly open my eyes. 'Camille' was on.

I kept looking at the skirt of your gown going back and forth, back and forth, that heavy satin skirt, back and forth.

The woman holds her hand.

ESTELLE

Walter and I got a divorce.

(a beat)

The world's a crazy place to live, isn't it?

(a beat)

He thought I was eccentric.

(a beat)

I guess in a way I understand how he felt. I wouldn't do what he told me to do. Nothing personal. I think he felt insulted.

(a beat)

When I got home from the lawyer, I cried all day. I wandered around the house all day, I couldn't find a place to sit. I took three baths. I felt so lonely. You love someone, you have a child, then it's over. Why? Who knows? I turned on the TV. They were showing 'Queen Christina.' That closeup of your face at the end. I thought it would never end! God, how I hated you!

(a beat)

I really hated myself. I thought if I looked like you, if I had that face, if I had those eyes, I wouldn't be so alone! And your arms! Those long thin arms that keep on going, that never come to an end.

(a beat)

I would have been jealous of anybody pretty that day. It was just your luck they were showing 'Queen Christina.'

(a beat)

God, I was in love with you! And I
(cont'd)

CONTINUED

ESTELLE (cont'd)

used to think, 'I bet if I knew her, she'd be as much fun as the next girl.' As much fun as Wanda.

(a beat)

There're so many things I want to do. I've lived in the same apartment for seven years: three rooms that don't have a stitch of furniture! I'm embarrassed to even tell it.

(a beat)

You care anything about baseball?

The woman in the cape shrugs -- not yes, not no.

ESTELLE

The Mets beat St. Louis. I saw it on the blimp. I'm not entirely happy about that. When it comes to sports, I strongly believe in revenge.

(a beat)

I saw a picture of you in a magazine a few years ago. You were in Paris. You were walking in a park in a black hat. You've probably got a million hats.

(a beat)

I've been to Paris. Twice. You've got nothing on me there.

(a beat)

Of course, you were with Aristotle Onassis and I was on a tour.

The woman in the cape laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - ON GILBERT

A little later. He is sitting quietly and alone on a bench in the hallway, his head buried in his arms.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE WOMAN IN THE CAPE

exits from Estelle's room. Gilbert looks up and sees her, but makes no attempt to talk to her again. She walks briskly and determinedly ahead, reaches the elevator, signals it. When the doors open, she disappears inside.

INT. ESTELLE'S ROOM

as Gilbert enters. He moves closer to the bed and watches his mother in silence.

She reaches out and takes Gilbert's hand.

ESTELLE

You know what she told me? She said her father was very poor, just like mine. He worked in a factory in Sweden. Made auto parts or something.

(a beat)

She likes delicatessen, only she likes cold chicken better than corned beef. To each his own.

(a beat)

She hated biology. God, how I hated biology. She was embarrassed about her size. She said she always felt too tall.

(a beat)

You think I've got problems -- she's got five rooms at home that are empty.

(a beat)

She never made a movie about war. She doesn't like war or violence. And her living room...

(with excitement)

...is red.

(a beat)

She said that she and I...are very much alike.

ANGLE - GILBERT

He's silent, he's tired. He's losing his mother and he loves her very much.

ESTELLE (o.s.)

Except for the feet. She doesn't have big feet at all. She has a size 7AA. She showed them to me.

(a beat)

She's got it all over me there.

HOLD TIGHT ON GILBERT

holding Estelle's hand. He and Estelle look at each other

CONTINUED

in silence.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY - FULL SHOT

It's overcast and gloomy. A large group of people are gathered. A coffin lies ready to be lowered into the ground.

CLOSE ON GILBERT

A quiet look of repose on his face. He's not tearful; he is, perhaps, accepting.

PANNING SHOT

to SEE Mr. and Mrs. Gorcinski, Estelle's tenants, and several of the people we've seen marching with Estelle in picket lines, plus other friends, etc.

In a moment the coffin begins to lower into the ground.

CLOSER - GILBERT

Still watching, still quiet. HOLD for a pensive beat, then:

CUT TO:

EXT. THIRD AVENUE - DAY - FULL

About four-thirty in the afternoon. Gilbert is walking with the usual throng of people finishing work.

CLOSER - ON GILBERT

In a natty suit and tie, dodging people. We HEAR:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Gilbert!

At first he doesn't hear.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Gilbert!

CONTINUED

He stops and turns around.

REVERSE ANGLE

to SEE Jane down the block and running toward him.

JANE

Gilbert!

MEDIUM SHOT - JANE

as Gilbert waits for her to catch up.

JANE

Long time no see!

GILBERT

Yeah.

JANE

At least you could have called!

GILBERT

I thought about it...in elevators.

JANE

You just left and don't tell anyone
goodbye?

GILBERT

I figured you'd be married by now.

JANE

(she thinks this
is rather funny)

To whom?

GILBERT

Somebody rich.

JANE

Rich men are peculiar. They always
order California wine and then de-
fend it.

(a beat)

Does your office have a window?

GILBERT

Two.

CONTINUED

They begin walking down the street.

JANE

Fred Thorpe left the week after
you were fired.

GILBERT

I wasn't fired; I quit.

JANE

(responding to the
authority in his
voice)

Excuse me.

(a beat)

He'd been interviewing for another
job for some time.

GILBERT

Where are you going?

JANE

I have a class tonight.

GILBERT

How about a drink first?

JANE

Sure your wife won't mind?

GILBERT

We're separated. She's in Califor-
nia. She's very lonely and very tan.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE - STREET - DAY

Gilbert and Jane turn the corner. It is starting to get
dark. It's a balmy summer night and everyone is out on the
street.

JANE

Nothing's much changed. Rhoda
Baumann quit and Tony Metetsky
took over Thorpe's job. I'm still
in the same place.

(a beat)

You're gritting your teeth.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

GILBERT

Sorry.

As they go, Jane suddenly stops to look into Gristede's window.

JANE

One of these day's I'm even going
to buy my Q-tips here.

FAVOR GILBERT

A knowing look on his face. He did work there, after all.
But he withholds all comment.

Gilbert and Jane continue on their walk.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as they walk TOWARD CAMERA for a silent moment, looking in
shop windows, etc.

JANE

Gilbert! Look! Down the street!

CLOSE - JANE

Her face freezes. She turns white at something she sees.

REVERSE SHOT

to SEE the woman in the cape, also window shopping, walking
aimlessly, enjoying the night, then turning and walking to-
wards them. We do not clearly see her face from this distance.

BACK ON GILBERT AND JANE

JANE

Do you know who that is?!
(a beat; in an awed,
reverential whisper)
It's Greta Garbo!

Jane can't move; she's glued to the spot. It's as though
if she looked away for even an instant, the woman in the
cape would disappear into thin air.

CONTINUED

JANE

She's coming this way! Oh, Gilbert,
I can't look! I can't!

ANOTHER ANGLE

to SEE the woman in the cape from the rear, walking towards
Gilbert and Jane. When she reaches them, she stops.

WOMAN IN CAPE

How do you do, Gilbert?

GILBERT

Fine, thank you.

She stands for a brief moment, says not a word more, nods,
and mysteriously moves on.

ANGLE - FAVORING JANE

She is frozen and speechless. Hitting the biggest jackpot
in Las Vegas history couldn't stupefy her more than this.

JANE

I don't believe it! I don't be-
lieve it!

FAVORING GILBERT

He looks at Jane for a moment, smiles without answering,
takes her arm.

GILBERT

Have a drink with me?

But Jane can still barely talk. She starts a sentence but
stumbles over it. She tries again -- still no luck.

JANE

You know, Gilbert, you're something
else.

FULL SHOT

as they move down the street. ROLL CREDITS and ---

FADE OUT

THE END