

GAS - FOOD - LODGING

A Screenplay by Allison Anders

SECOND DRAFT
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FADE IN

EXT. DESOLATE INTERSTATE-DAY

A DRIVING P.O.V. through a dusty windsheild of a barren desert landscape. We come upon an EXIT SIGN for "Deming, New Mexico" and the national blue symbols indicating "Gas, Food, and Lodging". A YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE-OVER plays over these images as the car takes the exit to the beckoning truck stop. She is SHADE EVANS.

SHADE (V.O.)

If it weren't for Elvia Rivero this story wouldn't even be worth telling. Whenever Elvia came to this dead ole town, well, it's like she woke the place up.

EXT. DEMING'S MAIN DRAG-DAY

A DRIVING SHOT of languid desolation and empty streets, contradicting the girl's description. The town has a timeless quality.

SHADE (V.O.)

My hometown, Deming, New Mexico, came alive.

We survey the town. Barely a pulse in the place.

SHADE (V.O.)

Elvia Rivero was the one who made me laugh when I needed to laugh. She gave me advice when I needed help. She even made me cry--but it was okay.

CLOSE ON

a pretty YOUNG GIRL, 15, as her face is spilled with tears. She has a curious combination of innocence and wisdom in her fresh face. Her clothes are simple, vintage. This is SHADE.

SHADE (V.O.)

But most of all, Elvia could put into words everything I was thinking.

REVERSE ANGLE

of a beautiful HISPANIC WOMAN speaking SPANISH. The words, slightly out-of-sync with her lips. Then, PULLING BACK, we realize we are watching a movie. The

actress in the film, ELVIA RIVERO, has soft brown eyes which are pools of emotions.

ANGLE ON Shade identifying with the woman on the screen.

SHADE (V.O.)

It was Elvia who first gave
me the idea.

DISSOLVE TO

ON SCREEN

A more youthful, spoiled Elvia. Dressed in Mexican period clothes, seated in a garden like a princess, she holds her head in the air stubbornly as her meek PARENTS try to reason with her. She folds her arms, shakes her head, snaps her fan at them. They present her with a series of photographs which she quickly thumbs through, tossing each one onto the ground.

Then, she fixes on one, which makes her burst into laughter. Then they start to laugh, happily. Their daughters' laughter dwindles to a soft affectionate smile at the photograph.

SHADE (V.O.)

It was decided then and there.

REVERSE ANGLE

of Shade overcome with stunned revelation. She sighs with deep contentment and smiles.

SHADE (V.O.)

I knew what was missing from my
life--a man!

A WIDER ANGLE of Shade in the dark ornate movie theater.

EXT. SPANISH MOVIE THEATER-DAY

A small old theater with fading charm specializing exclusively in SPANISH-LANGUAGE FILMS. Posters of Elvia Rivero's films are in the case. Shade walks out of the theater in a dream, the effect of the film lingering within her. Her long hair frames her face. She checks the time on her watch and panics.

SHADE

Oh shit!

She quickly waves to the MEXICAN WOMAN in the box office.

SHADE (cont.)
Gracias, Señora. Adios.

MEXICAN WOMAN
Buenos tardes, 'Chade'.

She smiles as she runs. Her VOICE-OVER kicks back in.

SHADE (V.O.)
Oh no, don't get me wrong.
Not a man for ME! For my Mom!
Then we could do all the dumb
normal stuff regular families do.

EXT. GAS/FOOD/LODGING ISLAND-DAY

A popular thriving oasis for serious truckers. Diesels and massive on-road machinery converge here to receive special care, while the TRUCKERS who drive them head for the PULL-OFF PLAZA COFFEE SHOP for their comfort.

ANGLE ON PULL-OFF PLAZA COFFEE SHOP

A SEXY BLONDE GIRL, about 17, waits impatiently outside the coffee shop. She wears tight clothes and is all attitude. She folds her arms and huffs as she looks across the miles of parking lots on the interstate island. The girl draws lascivious attention from every male who passes her way. While clearly dressed for effect, she has utter contempt for the gawking MALES who pass her. She is TRUDI.

Having had enough she snaps at the very guy who seems the most vulnerable--a YOUNG TRUCKER her own age.

TRUDI
Why don't you take a fucking
picture, loser?

The YOUNG TRUCKER is taken aback. His PALS laugh.

TRUCKER #1
Oohhh, she told you!!

YOUNG TRUCKER
A guy can't even look?

Trudi clutches her shoulder bag and paces impatiently.

TRUDI
(outloud)
Shade, where the FUCK are you?!

EXT. SIDEWALK-DAY

Shade runs in a hurry down the tiny MAIN DRAG of Deming. Xmas decorations are being taken down by STREET WORKERS. She runs past the windows of a THRIFT STORE and hears a KNOCK on the glass and the muffled SOUND of her name. She looks up to see DARIUS, a lanky ROCK KID living in a 70s time warp.

DARIUS
(calling from inside)
Shade!

SHADE
(lighting up)
Hi Darius!

He motions for her to come inside.

SHADE (cont.)
(apologetically)
Gotta go meet my stupid sister!

She shrugs sadly. The kid winces in disappointment. Then, he holds up a pair of AMAZINGLY AWFUL platform shoes. He holds up one finger, indicating a dollar. Shade opens her mouth wide in surprise. They both laugh without any sound coming out of their mouths.

She smiles affectionately and lingers in front of the window, then waves and runs away. Darius watches out the sheet of glass as she disappears down the street.

EXT. PULL-OFF PLAZA COFFEE SHOP

Trudi paces madly. She catches a GROUP OF TRUCKERS inside at a booth giving her the eye. She steps up to the glass leans against it seductively as if to plant a sultry kiss. The MEN look on in eager anticipation.

But instead of a sexy come-on, Trudi shoves her face against the glass and crosses her eyes, distorting her features in mockery of their expectations. Most of the MEN are good-humored and laugh. A few turn away, angrily. Then, Trudi's expression changes when she feels a hand on her shoulder. She raises up and turns around. It's Shade.

TRUDI
Uhh--it's about time!

SHADE
Sorry, but gahh--why can't you
ever go in and order without me?

TRUDI

Because of the scummy vultures
passing through this lowlife town
who'd scam hard on me the minute I'd
sit down alone, THAT'S why. But--

She says as they enter the coffee shop door.

TRUDI (cont.)

--I don't expect you to grasp
that. Let's sit by the window.

INT. COFFEE SHOP-DAY

Trudi walks past the HOSTESS and leads Shade to a booth.

SHADE

You always get your way about
where we sit. Maybe I hate
booths. Maybe I like the counter.

TRUDI

Don't worry about it--first
chance I get I'm outa here and you
can do whatever the fuck you want.

SHADE

Promises, promises!

The hostess hands them menus.

HOSTESS

I'll send your 'favorite' waitress
over soon as she finishes up the
big party in the back. Want something
to drink?

SHADE

Yeah--a Sprite, in a big huge
glass with lots of ice.

The hostess nods and turns to Trudi, who gazes dreamily
out the window at a CROWD OF TEENAGE BOYS gathered in
the parking lot. Shade kicks her under the table.

SHADE (cont.)

She's waiting--duhh!

Trudi looks at both of them like they're dense.

TRUDI

What? Diet Coke!

The hostess walks off and motions to a BUSBOY to take

drinks to the girls.

TRUDI (cont.)

(dryly)

So, where IS our 'favorite' waitress, anyway?

SHADE

Trudi, today, I got an amazing idea--okay, look it--

Just then, a YOUNG GOOD-LOOKING MEXICAN BUSBOY approaches the table nervously with a small round tray of drinks. He carefully sets down Trudi's Diet Coke in front of her. Shade's tall fat glass of soda teeters precariously but neither she or Trudi notices until--the inevitable.

Shade's Sprite with lots 'o' ice splatters all over the vinyl booth where she sits. The cold and wet is a shock that takes her breath away. Trudi bursts into laughter. The young busboy is horrified by his blunder.

BUSBOY

(softly in Spanish)

Lo siento! Me sabe mal...

SHADE

(reassuring him as she scoots away from the wet mess)

It's okay. It was an accident.

(in awkward Spanish)

'Accidente'.

He sighs heavy in gratitude for her sensitivity, but Trudi snaps at him coldly.

TRUDI

Well god, don't just stand there Wetback, get a towel and clean it up.

The boy is alarmed. Shade--appalled. He walks away.

TRUDI (cont.)

Glad he didn't spill it on me. I have a date later.

SHADE

Really? With who?

The busboy comes back with a clean towel and wipes the booth. He can't bear to look Shade in the eye, and she is every bit as uncomfortable as him.

TRUDI

Nobody you'd know--he's
popular, gorgeous, and he's
crazy about me.

When the busboy's through he tosses the towel over his
shoulder and turns to Trudi.

BUSBOY

(in perfect English)
By the way--the name is Javier,
not 'wetback'. My family has
been living in this town for
five generations.

The girls are both dumbfounded. Trudi, shot down, gapes
as he walks away confidently. Shade begins to chuckle.
Trudi snaps her menu closed and tosses it down, impatient.

TRUDI

Where is the bitch? I don't
have all night.

Suddenly a VOICE from behind her.

VOICE (O.S.)

The 'old bitch' is coming.

SHADE

(playfully)
She heard you! If I were
you I'd just keep my mouth
shut on your date tonight--
you're really blowing it!

TRUDI

Oh you idiot he isn't interested
in my fucking vocabulary.

A WAITRESS steps up to their table with no time for
bullshit. She is a SEXY BRUNETTE in her late thirties.
Life's left her cautious, with bouts of bitterness,
which she struggles to keep in check. She is NORA.

TRUDI

(smirking dryly)
I didn't say 'old'.

NORA

C'mon, girls, I'm snowed.
Make it quick.

SHADE

Why are you working 2 stations?

SHADE (cont.)
(to Trudi)
Unlike SOME people, I notice
these things.

NORA
(smiling affectionately
at Shade)
Yes, SOME people notice.
(changing tone)
Maria sprained her ankle in
the walk-in this morning.
So--what're you gonna have?

TRUDI
A dinner salad with bleu
cheese--no, no dressing,
just a lemon wedge.

NORA
That's it? No way! You're
having some protein, Trudi.

TRUDI
C'mon! I had protein once
already today.

NORA
Like what?
(Trudi sulks)
You're having the fish.

TRUDI
Fish?! Make me sick!
Fine. Bring it--I won't
eat anything then.

NORA
(blowing her off and
turning to Shade)
What do you want?

SHADE
(sheepishly)
BLT? With onion rings?

Nora jots it down with no reaction and walks off.

SHADE (cont.)
(calling out to Nora)
Mom--wait! Can I get a Sprite
in a big glass with lots of ice?

Nora nods to Shade and stops the hostess by the arm.

NORA

Where is Javier? I need my
station coffee'd, I need
tables bussed. Drinks.

HOSTESS

He walked.

NORA

He walked?! He just walked out?
Oh that's just great. Of all the
irresponsible--grrrrrr!

ANGLE ON the sisters as Shade leans forward confidentially.

SHADE

So, anyway, Trudi, I got
this great idea, see--

Trudi stares at her and we assume she's listening, but--

TRUDI

I'm not going to go out
with a beautiful boy smelling
like grease and fish! Fuck that!

She grabs her purse and gets up.

SHADE

Where're you going?

TRUDI

I'm not eating. Forget it.

SHADE

Well that's just great, Trudi.
So when Mom asks I'll tell her
you went to screw 'some guy'.
'But don't worry, Mom--he's
gorgeous, popular, and he's
crazy about her.'

TRUDI

Who gives a shit what you
tell her? Like she cares!
She doesn't even know I'm alive.

SHADE

She knows you're alive alright!
You make sure of that!

TRUDI

Ooohh please!

Trudi walks off to an onslaught of male attention as she exits. Nora stands wearily at the ticket wheel as she watches her unruly wild child parade off into the sea of concrete and big wheels.

NORA
(numbly to the cook)
86 the Red Snapper.

EXT. SHADE'S TRAILER-NIGHT

A modest, unstylized mobile home with a concrete patio and rusting awning. A single light is on in one of the back rooms.

INT. SHADE'S ROOM-NIGHT

A cramped space with two twin beds. On Shade's side of the room, books, records, and a poster of T-REX signed, "To Shade ('Oh Girl') from Marc B. ('Okay--from Darius') Androgenous Love!"

The rest of her wall space is dominated with pictures from Spanish magazines of Elvia, and a coveted movie poster which has Elvia dressed as a nun, her holy and woeful eyes lifted to the heavens.

But Shade sits on Trudi's bed pouring through a stack of Vogue, Elle, Madmoseille magazines. Trudi's walls bear a few Spanish fans arranged with a feminine touch, fashion photos from magazines, and an obligatory picture of a metal band.

Shade's VOICE OVER plays as we take inventory.

SHADE (V.O.)
The question was--what sort
of man would my mom go for?
I'd never seen her with a guy.
Not even my dad cause he walked
off before I could remember things.

Shade throws down the fashion magazines and speaks outloud.

SHADE
It's all girls in these
magazines! Why do girls
wanna look at other girls
so much???

Then, she spies some rock magazines. She investigates.
Shade's VOICE-OVER kicks back in.

SHADE (V.O.)
My mom needs a guy who works
with his hands.

ANGLE ON metal guitarist jamming hard on his axe.

SHADE (V.O.) (cont.)
A guy who does his own laundry.
(outloud)
Sorta leaves all these guys out.

She tosses that mag down, and comes across a GQ magazine.
She looks intently at the different type of male here.

ANGLE ON photos of male models, laughing.

SHADE (V.O.)
A funny man. A hilarious man.

ANGLE ON a psuedo-pensive pose.

SHADE (V.O.)
But...a little bit serious.
A thinker. A listener.

She picks up a RODEO magazine.

SHADE (V.O.)
A strong man who's well--

She considers a bronco rider, then opens the next magazine
which to her shock is all nude men. She immediately
slams it shut. It's a Playgirl magazine.

SHADE (V.O.)
--read.

Tiring of this difficult search she stacks the magazines
neatly, then collapses on her own bed. She reaches
inside her pillow case and takes out a small blue canister.
She lays back on her pillow and opens it. Inside is
a small roll of exposed Super 8 film. She takes the
tiny strip out and loses herself in the tiny sprocketed
frame. She holds it up to the light and squints.

SHADE (V.O.)
There was only one guy missing.

EXT. PULL-OFF PLAZA-NIGHT

Nora drags herself on aching feet to her car. Dead
tired, she has trouble unlocking her car door. Suddenly,
a MAN'S HAND reaches to help her. Then--the VOICE.

VOICE (O.S.)
Let me help you with that
Miss. Or is it--Mrs.?

Nora looks up to find the KIND FACE of a TRUCKER in his 30s. She is surprised and pleased. New energy vitalizes her face. He is RAYMOND.

NORA
Raymond...

He opens her car door for her and hands her the keys. She is gracious, then slips back into her sexy forever cautious, forever in control tone.

NORA (cont.)
And it's MISS Nora Steed.
Same as it has been for the
last twelve years. And how
about you, 'MR.' Hooper? The
English language is so protective
of men--you can keep your marital
status a mystery.

RAYMOND
I never did though, did I?

NORA
(softly)
No, you never did. Are you
still married?

RAYMOND
Yes. I am.

He walks a few steps, looking down at the pavement.

RAYMOND (cont.)
And I still think about you.
I think about you, Nora. And
I know--you must think about me.

Nora is washed with mixed emotions at she stands at her open car door.

NORA
I think...

He looks up into her face, full of expectation.
She sighs impatiently.

NORA (cont.)
I think we've been through
this a hundred times too many.

She gets in her car and shuts the door. He goes to her window.

RAYMOND

Wait, Nora! C'mon! Open up.
(tapping on the window)
Lemme talk t'ya'.

Nora rolls down the window. She looks up at him waiting.

NORA

What Raymond? What's to say?

RAYMOND

Well...just a drink, or a coffee.
Spend a little time together. Julie
never in all these years knew a thing.
We never hurt nobody.

NORA

I can't get it through your head,
that you are not the only one
with a family to protect! My
daughters are grown now! I can't
be messin' with a married man. I
have to set some kind of example.

RAYMOND

Seems to me if I make you
happy that's the type 'a'
example that might mean somethin'
to your girls. Better than their
role model bein' a lonely woman.

NORA

Well, yeah, so I get lonely. I
do. Big deal. Women are lonely
in the 90's. It's our new phase.
We'll live.

There is a long beat as she gazes out the windsheild
at the vast parking lots, gas stations, trucks.

NORA (cont.)

I've been lonelier.

He takes his hands away from the car. He backs off.
He forces a smile.

RAYMOND

You take care, lady. And take
good care of those little girls,
I would still like to meet them
one day.

Nora starts her car.

NORA
Nice to see you.

Then, she reaches for his hand. He rushes to her and they kiss passionately.

RAYMOND
Nora, Nora...you're so beautiful.

NORA
Ohh...I really gotta go.

She pulls him to her and kisses him deeply. Then, she pushes him away, collects herself and puts her car in gear. He stares painfully as she drives away.

INT. TRAILER/KITCHEN-NIGHT

ANGLE ON the tiny strip of Super 8 film which shows a YOUNG HANDSOME MAN smiling proudly frame-by-frame as he washes a black Impala. Shade's VOICE-OVER plays.

SHADE (V.O.)
The only man missing was John
Issiah Perion Evans. My dad.

The camera finds Shade stands at the wall phone. She mumbles outloud to herself as she dials.

SHADE
Let's try El Paso...and see...

She presses the phone to her ear. She waits.
We can hear the OPERATOR'S VOICE scratching through the distant wires.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
What city please?

SHADE
El Paso, please. Last name
Evans. First name John.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
I have a 'J' Evans.

SHADE
(excitedly poising her pen)
Okay, I'll take it!

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Hold for the number.

Shade jots down the number and hangs up the phone quickly. She takes a deep excited breath. She dials the number. Her eyes light up when a MAN'S VOICE answers the phone.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hello.

But HEADLIGHTS and the SOUND of Nora's car cause her to slam the phone down. She grabs her Super 8 film and phone number and scrambles off to her room.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Nora walks into the trailer. She picks up the mail next to the door. She drags into the kitchen to turn out the light, bitching in a low mumble and taking on her position, Shade's, and Trudi's.

NORA

"And be sure to turn out the lights," "I will",
"I did", "She's the one who was in there last".

She turns out the light.

IN THE HALLWAY

Nora stops when she sees the light on in the girl's bedroom. She reaches to turn the light off. Then--she does a double take on Shade 'passed out' with her clothes on. And--no Trudi.

NORA

WHERE is your sister?

Shade grumbles nonsense in her "sleep".

NORA (cont.)

Shade! Wake-up and tell me where Trudi is!

SHADE

God Mom! I don't know! I was having a good dream!

NORA

(turning out the light)
Go back to sleep.

Shade turns her back on Nora and curls up facing the wall, gathering her blanket around her. Nora walks on. Shade tucks her Super 8 canister in her pillowcase.

IN NORA'S ROOM

Everything is orderly and utilitarian. No indulgences. No frills. We want her to have more for herself.

Nora walks in and turns on the overhead light. She collapses on her bed and kicks off her waitressing shoes. She opens her mail. The first piece consumes her with further frustration.

CLOSE ON letter from Deming High School stating "Dear Parent, This is to inform you that your child--" then written in the slot provided--"Trudi Evans--has accumulated an unusual number of unexcused absences."

ANGLE ON NORA

She lets out a heavy MOAN of her agony. She picks up a ceramic picture frame from her nightstand: inside the two oval slots are pictures of her daughters.

CLOSE ON PHOTOS

Trudi, in color, about 10, poses sassy showing off a new bike. Shade, in black and white, with sunburned cheeks and braids, about 8, focuses on a pinball game.

ANGLE ON NORA as she studies the familiar faces...faces she knows better than her own, and yet they can still keep her guessing. She studies. She searches for clues.

EXT. TRAILER-NIGHT

An hot rod pulls up in front of her trailer. Trudi is flushed with expectation as the BOY, BRETT, about 19 and JOCKISH, stares out the windsheild, blankly. Trudi is very sweet and coy. A side of her only boys can bring out.

TRUDI

This is where I live. But...
I guess you already know that.

The boy forces a gratuitous smile.

TRUDI (cont.)

Well...I had...fun.

BRETT

Yeah. You were--I mean--IT
was great!

Trudi beams. She waits for him to kiss her, but he is remote. He musses her hair with forced affection.

BRETT

You'd better go in now.

Trudi closes her eyes and strokes his hand on her hair. He looks at the girl with mixed emotion. He stares at her beautiful lips. He wants her, but something stops him. He gives her a quick kiss. A kiss that guys give a girl to get rid of her.

BRETT (cont.)

This was amazing, Trudi. You're really...amazing. I'll call you tomorrow, alright?

She lunges and kisses his mouth softly.

TRUDI

(excited, breathless)
Okay! Tomorrow!

BRETT

(affectionately)
Go! Get some sleep!

Trudi dashes out the door and disappears into the trailer. The boy drives off numbly.

IN THE TRAILER Trudi tiptoes in the dark. Suddenly--a light goes on in the hallway.

IN THE HALLWAY Trudi stands frozen against the dark space at one end of the hall. Nora stands at the lit end waiting for an explanation, holding the school notice in her hand.

TRUDI

Well, what? I had a date. So?

Nora speaks calm and direct to her daughter.

NORA

It's 2:30, Trudi. You haven't been to school in two weeks.

TRUDI

I have too!

NORA

Not according to to this.

(waving the notice)
This is bullshit. You're going to school tomorrow or you're getting your ass a job.

TRUDI
Fine. I'll get a job.

NORA
Doin' what?

TRUDI
I don't know, god, whatever's
around. Now would you please
lay off--I'm tired?

She starts for her bedroom door but Nora blocks her.

NORA
No! I'm not through with you!

Trudi slumps angrily against the wall.

NORA (cont.)
You don't come in at no
2:30 am as long as you're
living with me--got it?

TRUDI
I GOT IT!

NORA
(raising her voice)
And I don't know how you
piss the hours away but I
have a pretty good idea.

TRUDI
(screaming)
It is NONE of your business!

NORA
(screaming back)
Oh no?! Whose business is it
if you get knocked-up?

Trudi purses her lips and rolls her eyes.

NORA (cont.)
Or if you bring home a nice
little dose of the clap or AIDS?!

Trudi recoils in disgust. Nora continues to rant.

NORA (cont.)
Answer me, please, whose business
is it then?

TRUDI
(screaming louder)
Not yours!!! I wouldn't tell
you shit even if I were dying!

IN THE GIRL'S ROOM Shade GROANS and SHOUTS at them.

SHADE
I gotta go to school tomorrow!!

But the RANTING continues impossibly outside her door.
She sits up in bed, frustrated, preparing to wait this
one out all night.

CUT TO

EXT. DEMING HIGH SCHOOL-DAY

A still life of America's cleanest high school.

INT. HOME EC. CLASSROOM-DAY

A SLOW TRACK past one immaculate kitchen after another
with all the latest appliances smartly built-in. Each
kitchen counter has mixing bowls, eggs, flour, spices
laid out on the counter tops. A WOMAN'S slow DRAWL.

MRS. OLMQUIST (O.S.)
Ya' take yore egg outa yore shell
and separate the white from the
yella--
(brightly approving)
Yeah--ess!! Jist lack thatttt!

PANNING from the empty kitchens to the opposite side
of the room, we see a PREGNANT WOMAN, MRS. OLMQUIST,
standing before a classroom of STUDENTS. A YOUNG GIRL
and BOY stand next to her, properly demonstrating how
to separate egg whites. Behind them--magazine collages
of the basic food groups. Shade nods out at her desk.

ANGLE ON TWO GIRLS

Dressed in very contemporary good clothes (for a small
town), one girl nudges another, and points at Shade.

GIRL #1
Look at the brainiac on the nod.

The other girl looks and starts to smirk, then quickly
gets her attitude in check. A PRETTY GIRL in sporty
dress, she is TANYA MITCHELL.

TANYA MITCHELL
Quit picking on her. I like
Shade.

GIRL #1
Since when?

TANYA MITCHELL
I admire her. Shade is an
...original.

GIRL #1
Exactly...

A BOY next to them points at Shade as she falls forward.

GIRL #1 (cont.)
There she goes!

Poor Shade just barely catches herself from falling
face down on her desktop. As she jolts herself awake,
she looks up startled and sees the three of them looking
at her. Girl #1 and the boy both burst into giggles.

But Tanya Mitchell gives Shade a tender smile. Shade
looks in back of herself to see if this was really intended
for her. Then--realizing it is indeed--she returns
the smile to Tanya.

IMAGES of the students hitting the kitchens upon Mrs.
Olmquists' command: a CHICANO BOY beats eggs with speed
and finesse, TWO METALHEADS pour massive doses of spices
into their concoction, eggs slip from the hands of GIDDY
GIRLS and splatt on the pristine tile floor, while yet
another team measures 'very precisely'!

CLOSE ON SHADE assisting as her VOICE-OVER plays.

SHADE (V.O.)
You know the type: not
the smartest, not all that
talented, not the richest or the
prettiest or the best dancer or
swimmer or nothing.
(the BELL RINGS)
But for some reason that no one
can explain--the most popular.

ANGLE ON Tanya at the door surrounded by FOLLOWERS.

SHADE (V.O.)
That's Tanya Mitchell.

As Shade steps past Tanya's entourage, Tanya stops her.

TANYA

Hey Shade, I need to talk to you
after school. Meet me out front.

Shade's face softens. Tanya's friends look on with
curiosity and confusion as Shade nods and walks away.

IN THE SCHOOL HALLWAY

Shade disappears into a sea of KIDS, most of them in
PAIRS or CLICKS.

SHADE (V.O.)

I made up my mind in fifth
grade that I was never gonna
need anybody. It wasn't like
anyone let me down real hard. But
one night while I was laying on my
back studying the billions of stars
blinking in the desert sky--some of
them already burnt-out a thousand
years ago--leaving their ghosts behind
to trick us--I got the distinct feeling
of being a very small part of things.

CLOSE ON PAIRS AND CLUSTERS OF FEET walking. Even down
to their toes, they bond by dressing alike. Then--we
come to Shade's red suede low-cut VANS and little brown
socks walking solo.

SHADE (V.O.)

Oh--it's not like I was the
first girl on earth to realize
this...it hits everyone sometime
in their childhood, and that's why
they look for that place to fit in.
That's alright, cause that's one way
of doing it, of feeling less small.

CLOSE ON Shade's feet slowing as a PAIR of OUTRAGEOUS
purple and yellow PLATFORM SHOES walk into frame and
stop in front of hers.

SHADE (V.O.)

But there's other ways too.

TILTING UP we see Darius in full-on glammed-out glitter.
Shade looks up into his face and smiles.

SHADE

Darius! Your shoes! They're
so great!

DARIUS

Let's go to lunch and not eat!

They walk down the hall together. A GROUP OF JOCKS dampened their moods in a hurry as they harass Darius.

JOCK #1

Oh look at the little faggot's new shoes!

JOCK #2

(in high femme voice)

'Oh, ain't they perty?'

JOCK #1

(to Shade)

You'd better stop loaning your boyfriend your clothes.
'Less you wanna attend his funeral.

Darius drags Shade out of the scene. Darius turns to the jocks and blows them a pouty androgenous kiss.

INT. CAFETERIA-DAY

Darius and Shade isolate on the steps of the stage. Their classmates are lost in the sea of noise.

SHADE

(cautiously, tenderly)

That was really weird that he called you my 'boyfriend'.

Darius is oblivious to the significance of this to Shade.

DARIUS

Yeah--I'm your boyfriend, but I'm also a fag, right? Fucking jocks. In L.A. you can dress however the fuck you want and no one says shit. Or New York, or London. I gotta get outa this shithole!

SHADE

But Darius, you'd be so bored if people didn't notice your clothes!

DARIUS

Hey--that's not it! I don't dress for attention!

SHADE

But you're used to it. And

SHADE (cont.)
they'd miss you in Deming if you
left--seeing you dressed like that
makes them think about themselves.

Darius lights up. He takes her by the shoulders and
looks in her eyes. She looks back in nervous anticipation.

DARIUS
Oh freak mama! You're right!

He kisses her in a big impulsive smack right on her
closed lips. Then he retreats into existential space,
thinking affectionately about himself.

DARIUS (cont.)
'Negative attention'! I'm
like a catalyst or something?
It's sooo post-modern!! I love it!

Shade brings her fingertips to her quivering lips.
A smile delicately breaks through her fingers.

EXT. PULL-OFF PLAZA COFFEE SHOP-DAY

The noon rush--TRUCKERS and TRAVELERS are lined-up all
the way out the door as the harried hostess writes names
down on a pad and searches for seating.

INT. COFFEE SHOP-DAY

A BRASSY WAITRESS, THELMA, hands Trudi two water glasses.

THELMA
I can't imagine what in the
hell they do 'fore they git
here but them two fellers is
always as dry as a goddamned
salt mine.

P.O.V. of two TRUCKERS at a small booth.

ANGLE ON TRUDI holding the water glasses, timidly.

THELMA (cont.)
So always water 'em soon as
they get sittin'. But ever-body
else gotta ask for water. We're
in a drought situation in the
southwest. It's that goddamn
Greenhouse effect's what it is.

She trails off into a personal tirade as she ladles
dressings onto dinner salads.

THELMA (cont.)

You think that ole President gives a damn if we all burn up? No mam'. The water will all dry up, then the food will rot in the fields...the animals will all...

Trudi, realizing this woman is no longer with us, proceeds on to the table with the water glasses.

ANGLE ON TABLE as the truckers look up pleased.

THIRSTY TRUCKER #1

You new, doll?

Trudi sets the glasses down and nods.

THIRSTY TRUCKER #1 (cont.)

'Bout time they hired a pretty waitress!!

Another WAITRESS bats him on the back of the head with a menu. He throws his head back and laughs. Trudi laps up the flattery in her new vulnerable position.

THIRSTY TRUCKER #2

Yep! You'll be inspirin' all the good tips! Be careful not to make the other girls jealous!

THIRSTY TRUCKER #1

They got one other looker. Nora! Wooooohh.

Trudi's face drops to hear men cream over her mom.

THIRSTY TRUCKER #2

God Dog she's fine! Oohh weee.

TRUDI

Alright, let's go, boys-- what're you having?

A FAMILY OF SEVEN, upper middle class, enroute to someplace, anyplace but here is seated in the next booth. Trudi moves to their table. She and the DAUGHTER, about her age, check each other out, trying to size up who's prettier, cooler, sexier. Neither seem to come to a solid conclusion as they gaze upon each other intimidated.

BUBBLY MOTHER

We're gonna make it real easy. All we want are seven banana splits!

AT THE COOK'S WHEEL

The COOK wipes his brow and waves the ticket at Trudi who struggles to set up a cup of soup and a dinner salad.

COOK
(in Mexican accent)
I don't make!

TRUDI
What do you mean you don't make?

He shoves the ticket at her. She panicks.

TRUDI
Thelma! He won't make this order for me!

Thelma takes the ticket and looks at it.

THELMA
Honey--YOU do all your own desert orders.

TRUDI
What?! But--

Thelma stacks plates on her arm. Trudi stands in hopelessness as she looks out on her station filled with customers, their menus closed and all looking around for their waitress. Tears start to well in her eyes.

TRUDI (cont.)
Seven banana splits! I can't take this.

CLOSE ON a line-up of banana splits--several beginning to melt. Several with bruised, over-ripe bananas. Trudi puts one last scoop of ice cream in a dish while Thelma throws cherries on each one.

A WIDER ANGLE

as Thelma helps Trudi deliver her deserts. Thelma's VOICE-OVER training plays as the next images of Trudi's first mad day appear on screen.

THELMA (V.O.)
When you're comin' through with an armful of plates behind another girl, you always wanna yell real clear "BEHIND!" So they know not to turn around too quick cause-- what could happen?

AT THE COFFEE MACHINE Thelma shows Trudi how to make the coffee and stock the filled coffee filters. Trudi tries it out, bored.

THELMA (V.O.)

You got it--BAM! Over-easy all over your frontside and a side a bacon in your apron! So say it with me "BEHIND!"

IN THE WALK-IN Trudi shivers as she lugs two big containers of bleu cheese dressing out of the cold room.

TRUDI (V.O.)

(mumbling, embarrassed)

"Behind..."

THELMA (V.O.)

You gotta be louder than that, doll. C'mon now--loud! "BEHIND!"

IN THE STOCK ROOM Trudi has a package of napkins and a box of Sweet N' Low under her arm as she walks out.

TRUDI

(raising her voice, but unenergetic)

"Behind!"

BEHIND THE COUNTER Trudi cleans and condenses the ketchup bottles as the rush dies down. A crescendo of "BEHIND"'s plays on!

Thelma walks over to her as she finishes her 'side work'.

THELMA

I'm going on my break now. This gentleman here has a French Burger comin'. And table 6 has a Western Burger.

Trudi nods easy as she looks to the counter, then to table 6 where a YOUNG MAN sits alone. She pays no special attention to anything--she's dead tired.

IN THE RESTROOM Trudi puts on fresh lip gloss and wipes the mascara from under her eyes. She pins her uniform under her apron, so it's a little tighter around her hips. She looks up as the cook calls her name into the microphone.

COOK (O.S.)

Trudi, pick up please for T'elma.

IN THE COFFEE SHOP Trudi picks up two orders, both hamburgers, seemingly the same, with two separate checks. She carries one to the counter, and one to a booth where the young man sits alone, staring out the window. His presence is dark, and his looks compelling. His longish hair hangs lifelessly in front of his face. He is DANK SOUTHWORTH.

ANGLE ON DANK'S TABLE as Trudi delivers his order.

TRUDI

Can I get you anything else?

DANK

(in foreign accent)

This'll do, thanks.

Trudi listens to his accent curiously. Then--she checks out his clothes--a mix of eccentric and redneck--terribly confusing. Terribly intriguing. Then she looks at a STRANGE LANTERN he has placed on the table. She lays his bill face down on the table and walks off. Then--

DANK (cont.)

Uhh--miss--

(Trudi goes to him as he holds the top bun off his hamburger)

I ordered the French Burger.

TRUDI

(gasping)

Oh!! I'm sorry!! Just a sec'!

She rushes to the counter where the other customer sinks his teeth into Dank's sandwich. He looks up at her quizzically. Her expression sinks with hopelessness.

TRUDI (cont.)

Shit!

The man stops chewing and looks up at her, blankly.

TRUDI (cont.)

I gave you HIS burger.

You ordered the Western

Burger--that's the French--oohh--

She returns to Dank's table distraught.

DANK

Too late? It's okay.

TRUDI

Sorry. It's my first day--

DANK

It's cool. I'm from Australia.
We're used to bad service.

TRUDI

That 'sposed to make me
feel good or somethin'?

He laughs lightly as she walks off to the cook's wheel.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET-DAY

Tanya Mitchell leads Shade up a walkway to a pleasant
immaculate middle class dream home. It's all so perfect.
Shade looks up in surprise and tries not to stare.

INT. MITCHELL HOME-DAY

Shade is overwhelmed by the quiet and orderly home.

SHADE

Wow! What a lot of space!

TANYA

"Simplicity", my mom says, "is
the keynote." Whatever.
To me it just looks empty.

SHADE

I like it!

TANYA

Want something to drink?

SHADE

Alright.

IN THE MITCHELL KITCHEN Tanya opens the refrigerator.

TANYA

What would you like?

Shade is amazed--so many choices of everything! Stunned
and unable to make up her mind she chooses a Coke in
a can. Tanya opens a bottle of Sundance for herself.
Shade looks out the kitchen window, awed by the place.

P.O.V. of Tanya's backyard, a swimming pool, and a MAN
cleaning leaves from the water's surface. He is strong,
built, and in charge of his task.

ANGLE ON Shade, looking at him, intently.

SHADE

Is that your father?

Tanya looks over Shade's shoulder to the man.

TANYA

Yeah. He's retired. He's
okay. He does useful things.

SHADE

Retired? He looks so young.

TANYA

He is, I guess. I mean--he's
not OLD. He coulda become a
millionaire if he'd opened
a chain of video stores besides
the one he owns. But, he wanted
to stay home with us kids instead.

SHADE

You're lucky.

TANYA

I wish they were both dead.

REVERSE ANGLE of Shade turning to Tanya.

SHADE

Why?

TANYA

So I could do what I want.
Let's go to my room.

INT. TANYA'S ROOM-DAY

A spacious bedroom all to herself, Tanya's room is a
far cry from Shade's. Tanya explains her well-stocked
vanity.

TANYA (cont.)

I collect perfume bottles.
Kinda dumb, huh?

SHADE

No...they're really pretty.

Then, Shade looks up at all the snapshots of Tanya and
her popular friends taped around the mirror.

TANYA

I'm so sick of my friends.
They talk about the same things
over and over, and do the same
things over and over, and they all
like the same boys...it's so boring.
I mean--don't you get bored?

Shade sighs and thinks, then shrugs.

TANYA (cont.)

You don't. I knew it. You're
never bored, even by yourself.

Shade takes this in, then she smiles at Tanya. Tanya
smiles back and picks up an antique perfume bottle.

TANYA (cont.)

This one is really old. You
can have it.

Shade is touched and reluctant. She holds it in her
small hand in gratitude.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET-DAY

Tanya walks Shade out and says good-bye. Shade walks
off down the perfect street.

EXT. DUSTY ROAD/TRAILER PARK-DAY

Shade shuffles up the road to her trailer, disappointed
by what she sees. She opens the door and stares numbly.

INT. TRAILER-DAY

Shade is busy tossing into a box all the clutter of
ashtrays, dollies on coffee tables, nicknacks, dreadful
pictures on the walls, and slipcovers from the arms
of the sofa and chairs. She sings as she works.

Nora walks into the dinky living room, fresh out of
the shower, in a bathrobe, a towel on her head. She
gapes at the major change in the room. Shade smiles
proudly as her mother's expression sinks. Shade steps
back and takes a good look.

P.O.V. of the room. Without all that junk in the box
all of the problems stick out: holes in walls, age-old
stains, tattered furniture, a warped coffee table top.

ANGLE ON SHADE AND NORA as Shade attempts to explain.

SHADE

"Simplicity is the keynote."

Nora smiles at her sadly as she takes the towel off her wet head of dark hair.

NORA

Babe, it won't work here.

The realization crashes down on Shade. Then, suddenly Trudi opens the door and limps inside. Shade and Nora look at her stunned--Trudi is absolutely beat.

TRUDI

(to Shade)

Anyone call for me.

(Shade shakes her head no)

Are you sure? Think! Brett, maybe?

SHADE

NO ONE.

Trudi collapses on the sofa, dead tired. She lets out a soft GROAN of agony.

CLOSE ON NORA looking at Trudi in sympathy.

A WIDER ANGLE as Nora walks to Trudi. She kneels on the floor and unties Trudi's shoelaces. Trudi looks down at her mother, as though this is happening to someone else.

NORA

Not as easy as you thought.

Trudi pulls out a wad of dollar bills and a fistful of quarters. Smug. Shade's eyes grow big.

SHADE

Look at all that money!

Nora glances at it casually.

NORA

Don't worry...you'll get better.

Trudi stops gloating and slips her money back in her apron pocket.

TRUDI

I thought I was gonna scream if I heard another--"Oh Miss--"

NORA
(smiling)

"Oh Miss--when you get a chance--"

They begin to laugh. Nora massages her daughter's feet.

TRUDI
Or "All we want are seven banana
splits!"

NORA
Someone did that to you on
your first day! Poor baby!

SHADE'S P.O.V. of Nora and Trudi chattering, laughing.

CLOSE ON SHADE sadly left-out.

CUT TO

INT. LA REINA MOVIE THEATER-EVENING

ON SCREEN: a MAN, a WOMAN in an argument. The woman,
our beautiful Elvia, holds a baby girl on her hip as
she, in pain, tries to reason with a very stubborn man.
He waits for her to fall at his feet, but she doesn't.
It is he who falls to his knees, sobbing.

CLOSE ON SHADE absorbed, feeling all of Elvia's torment.

ON SCREEN Elvia's willfulness begins to crack. She
kisses her baby as she looks upon the man in empathy.
She can't take it anymore. She is about to reach for
him when suddenly the reel ends. The screen goes dark.

REVERSE ANGLE of Shade in the theater, the only patron.
She looks up at the projectionists' booth. She waits.
Nothing is happening. She gets out of her seat.

IN THE HALL Shade finds a door, partially open to a
stairway. She goes up the stairs.

IN THE PROJECTIONISTS' BOOTH Shade enters and sees the
reel spinning on the projector. The leader slapping
and splintering in small threads into the air.

SHADE
Hello...anyone...aqui?

No answer. Shade timidly approaches the projector.
She reaches her hand out cautiously to the spinning
reel. Then--a VOICE. A MALE VOICE.

VOICE (O.S.)
Don't! Stop!

Shade jumps. She withdraws her hand. Footsteps approach her. A BOY'S HAND reaches in front of her quickly and turns the projector off while turning the second one on. The melodrama continues on the screen below. Shade turns to see the boy is Javier, the former busboy!

JAVIER
You crazy, man? You could
lose a finger that way!

Then, they recognize each other.

JAVIER (cont.)
Oh--it's you! Done any Mex-
bashing lately?

SHADE
What?

JAVIER
Oh, sorry! You probably don't
remember me--I know we wetbacks all
look alike. Gringa.

SHADE
(defensive)
Hey--wait a sec', I didn't--
(changing tone)
As a matter-of-fact, I DO. I DO
remember you. You're the busboy
who walked out. Left my mom stranded
during dinner rush, Friday night.
Who could forget?

She walks to the door and turns as he rewinds the reel.

SHADE (cont.)
You don't seem to be any better
at this job. In case ya' don't
know--most projectors have a knob
for focus!

He starts to laugh at her hotheaded remark as she walks out in a huff. He watches her from the windows as she enters the theater below and grabs her coat from an empty seat. She heads for the door.

IN THE HALL Javier waits at the bottom of the stairs for her. She walks past him in a fury. He watches her, making no attempt to move toward an apology.

JAVIER
Bye...chula. Pretty girl.

CLOSE ON SHADE her back to him, her pace slows slightly. She squints her eyes in irritation. He laughs sweetly behind her as she walks out the door.

OFF-SCREEN, the VOICE of Darius speaks dreamily to the first odd notes of a vaguely familiar song just before we cut to the next scene.

DARIUS (O.S.)
She's sooo beautiful...

CUT TO

CLOSE ON OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN album cover, circa 1975, and the weird pop strains of her semi-hit, "Magic".

PULLING BACK we see Darius and Shade looking at the album cover together on the top bunk of bunk beds.

PULLING BACK FURTHER our sweet subjects are dwarfed in the full-on 70s glitter-pop cave: posters from the glitter drag era: Bowie, Bolan, Roxy Music, Japan.

DARIUS
I mean--the words, "Have to believe we are magic--" it's tripped-out! She's proposing some very weird, scary, and cool shit!

SHADE
(intrigued and awed)
Like...what?

DARIUS
That feminine shit--of going further than love. Further than sex--like--death--like "Don't Fear The Reaper".

Shade looks at him stunned and attracted as he explains his analysis of Newton-Johnism.

DARIUS (cont.)
The way I see it--chicks are the ones who wanna go to outer space. That's why they push so hard. Guys are content to sit in the Lazy-Boy with the remote and kick it. But chicks--they--

He turns and takes her by the shoulders and looks into

her eyes. Shade is about to melt as they connect.

DARIUS (cont.)

Well...like think about Adam
and Eve. He was fine groovin'
in Paradise. But Eve--she wanted
something scary...she wanted the
fucking edge. She wanted to walk
off cliffs just to see what it would
be like to fall. Risk. That's
what this song is all about, Shade.

CLOSE ON THEIR EYES so connected, so tantilized.

DARIUS (cont.)

That's what Eve wanted. That's
what Olivia wants. That's what
I want.

A WIDER ANGLE of Darius holding her shoulders then
releasing her and pressing his back against the wall.
They both look out--dazed as the song continues to play.

EXT. PULL-OFF PLAZA-NIGHT

The parking lot is lively: not just TRUCKERS filling
the roadside oasis, but PARTYING TEENS in jeeps and
semi-custom cars.

Trudi walks in a languid pace, dressed to kill. The
GIRLS in the crowd check her out in envy and contempt.
It is made very clear that Trudi is NOT accepted by
them. She ignores them and searches the crowd for Brett.
A group of BOYS notice her.

BOY #1

Hey--it's that chick, Trudi.
(to Trudi)
Wanna party with us?

BOY #2

(to other boys)
She'll party with anyone.

TRUDI

Have you guys seen Brett tonight?

The boys snigger to each other.

BOY #1

Who? Brett? Yeah...I think
I have seen Brett.

TRUDI
(excited)
Really? Is he here?

BOY #1
I think his 'fiance' is givin'
him head--ooopps sorry--that's
your job, ain't it?

BOY #2
He says you swallow, Trudi.
That true?

TRUDI
(shaken with humiliation)
Fuck you!!

She starts to walk away when one boy grabs her arm.

BOY #2
Hey, stick around. You want
Brett--there he is.

Trudi turns to see Brett getting out of his hot rod
with a GIRL (sorority material). Brett cuddles with
her when he looks up and sees Trudi's face drop. The
boys make lascivious gestures behind her back.

The couple get closer to Trudi. Brett tries to ignore
her. As they pass, Trudi's shame turns to rage.

TRUDI
"I'll call you tomorrow, Trudi."

Brett's eyes flutter in nervousness.

TRUDI (cont.)
"Oh Trudi! Yeah, baby, yeah!
No girl's ever made me--"

Brett, in anxiety, sends his would-be debutante off
to the crowd. The girl sizes her up. Brett confronts
Trudi.

BRETT
That was real cute. What're
you tryin' to do t'me?

TRUDI
What're YOU tryin' to do to ME?

BRETT
(coldly)
Nothin'.

Trudi's face sinks with hurt. Then, her shield of bitterness comes to her rescue.

TRUDI

You know, Brett, I'd kick you
in the balls--if you had any.

Trudi walks away confidently. Brett wimps off to his pale young thing.

INT. PULL-OFF PLAZA-NIGHT

Trudi sits at a booth by the window. In the far distance, the reveling teens. She sips a Coke while her french fries grow cold. Tears slide down her face.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW a dusty jeep with the paint peeling off, aged by the desert winds. In the driver's seat, Dank Southworth. He studies a map on his dash. Satisfied, he takes his strange lantern and turns on a switch. He puts his hand under the glow--it is a bluish light. He holds the lamp up in the jeep, trouble-shooting.

DANK'S P.O.V. through the blue glow of the lantern, he sees Trudi, softly sobbing to herself.

REVERSE ANGLE of Dank, looking. Something about a girl alone in a coffee shop, at night, especially if she's crying. Something about it gets to him. Turning the lantern off, he grabs his Thermos and walks inside.

IN THE COFFEE SHOP Dank walks up to the counter.

DANK

Could I get this filled?
Cream and lots of sugar.

He hands the WAITRESS his Thermos. She walks away. He looks around at Trudi.

P.O.V. as Trudi weeps and absent-mindedly devours a cold french fry in a series of small numb bites.

REVERSE ANGLE of Dank watching her--she is such a sight! The waitress sets his Thermos on the counter.

DANK

Thanks.

He lays down a few dollars and change on the counter. The waitress smiles as she pockets a dollar of it. Dank smiles at her and nods good-bye. He leaves.

ANGLE ON TRUDI as she continues to brood. Then--she turns and looks out the glass and sees Dank. He puts his Thermos on the hood of his jeep as he pries the rusty door open. He gets inside and starts the engine.

Trudi looks up, startled--he's left the Thermos on the hood. She raps on the window, but he doesn't look up. Unable to get his attention, she grabs her purse and runs out the door. From inside, we see her waving her arms and calling out, until he finally notices her and stops backing out of his parking space.

IN THE PARKING LOT Dank stops his jeep in reaction to her. Trudi walks over, takes the Thermos off the hood and hands it to him. His faces drops as he smiles, feeling a little foolish. Trudi smirks through her tear-battered face.

TRUDI

I know the coffee sucks here--
but that's a NICE Thermos.

DANK

My mind just walks away
sometimes.

They smile at each other. Trudi darkens.

TRUDI

Yeah well, that's what men
do...walk away.

DANK

Hey wait--can I give you a lift?

TRUDI

For what?

DANK

For you to explain that remark.

Trudi doesn't hesitate. She walks around to the passenger side of the jeep. Sure, she'd love to explain.

ON THE DARK HIGHWAY Dank's jeep is on the flat road. Trudi is on a tirade.

TRUDI (O.S.)

Their minds walk away. Their
emotions walk away. All the
things they say to you walk away.

INSIDE THE JEEP Trudi stares out and softly adds--

TRUDI (cont.)
Their promises walk away.

Dank looks out as he listens to her.

TRUDI (cont.)
Make a left up here.

She touches the lantern between them.

TRUDI (cont.)
You had this with you today.
What is it?

DANK
It's a mineral light. It's like
a lantern, only it has an ultra-
violet light in it. See--

He turns the switch on. The blue glow fills the jeep
and turns Trudi's hair and teeth to a glistening glow.
Dank's collar and bleach stains on his pants radiate.
Trudi is amazed.

TRUDI
Look at your shirt!

DANK
Look at your teeth!

Trudi looks in the mirror at her shimmering parts.

TRUDI
It's like those hippy lights!

DANK
Yeah--black lights.

TRUDI
(cooly)
So, what--is this your method?
Get girls in your car to show
them you can make their teeth
glow in the dark?

Dank doesn't crack a smile. He turns the lamp off.

DANK
It's a necessary instrument for
my work.

TRUDI
Make a right at the light.
What work is that?

DANK

Rocks.

TRUDI

Oh I knew it. Another musician,
great.

DANK

(amused)

Not ROCK. ROCKS!

He picks up a rock from the dash and hands it to her.

TRUDI

Oh!! Rocks!!

They both laugh softly.

AT TRUDI'S TRAILER Dank stops the jeep in front of Trudi's trailer. Trudi waits. She frowns as she sighs, anticipating the inevitable. She waits for him to collect for the ride.

Dank sits looking at all the trailers, taking it all in. Trudi fidgets, sighing heavy, twirling her hair. Dank surveys the trailer park, his eyes falling at last on Trudi. He smiles at her, deep in thought.

DANK

A girl who lives in a
mobile home...

TRUDI

Yeah--I can't wait to get
outa here, believe me.

Trudi lunges into his arms and kisses him hard on the mouth. Dank kisses her back, but is clearly startled.

TRUDI (cont.)

Look, thanks for the ride,
but that's the best I can
do. I'm tired.

Dank winds a few fingers in her hair and lets go.

DANK

Yeah...sure.

Trudi gets out of the jeep.

TRUDI

Have fun with your rocks.

He smirks as he looks off and nods.

A WIDE ANGLE as Trudi disappears into the trailer.

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES: Twilight. Shade asleep in her bed, the Olivia Newton-John album cover drops from her sleeping hand, Trudi settling into her bed, a bat circling a streetlamp in the trailer park.

EXT. DESERT-NIGHT

Dank tears into the side of the hill with a pick axe. He stops, holds his mineral light over the rubble and searches. Under the dust and debris, brilliant touches of color call to him. He reaches for a rock and smiles. It glows in glorious speckles of natural day-glo dust. Then, he swings his axe back into the side of the hill.

INT. TRAILER/NORA'S BEDROOM-CRACK 'O' DAWN

Nora sleeps. OFF-SCREEN, a DREADFUL CLANGING NOISE.

CLOSE ON Nora's sleeping face tortured out of her dreams by the racket outside. She grumbles and pulls the pillow over her head.

PULLING BACK we watch as she tosses and turns angrily, unable to escape the noise. She beats her fist on the headboard in time with the aggravating rhythm of the hammer. She climbs out of bed and pulls on her housecoat.

EXT. TRAILER-DAWN

Nora searches for the source of this nightmare. Under the hammering and clanging she hears a MAN SINGING along to a country song on the radio.

BEHIND HER TRAILER

Nora finds a MAN'S LEGS sticking out from under a ridiculously big satellite dish. He wails as he tinkers.

NORA

Excuse me.

(no response)

Excuse me!!

He stops singing. Stops tinkering. He eases himself out from behind the satellite dish. In a very awkward and surely uncomfortable position, a good-looking MAN in his late twenties, flashes a goofy grin. He is HAMLET.

HAMLET

Mornin'!!

NORA
Morning? No, it's not EVEN
morning yet!

She points up in the sky. He looks up at the moon,
back at her, and smiles dopey.

NORA (cont.)
Get my point? No, of course
you don't. Let me be direct. It's
my day off. Like most people, I
like to sleep in on my day off.
You following me?

He stares at her numbly.

NORA (cont.)
What in the hell do you
think you're doing making all
that racket at 5am?!

HAMLET
(grinning proudly)
Installing a brand new
Humphrey's satellite dish, ma'm!

NORA
I can SEE that! But I'd advise
you to pick a reasonable hour to
do it or I'll have to give MR.
Humphrey Satellite Dish a call
and complain.

HAMLET
But ma'm, I AM Mr. Humphrey!

Again--a fool's pride. Nora glares at him, annoyed.

HAMLET (cont.)
But tell ya' what--

He picks himself up off the ground. He's got a great
body, which even in her irritable drowsiness Nora can't
help but notice.

HAMLET (cont.)
--I'll stop working a spell
and go eat some breakfast.
Oh, you're welcome to join
me. There's a place out on the
highway. The Pull-Off--

NORA
--Plaza, no thanks. But I'll

NORA (cont.)
 give the cook a call and let
 him know you're coming. If he's
 in a good mood maybe he'll spit
 in your eggs for me.

The fool just laughs and laughs.

HAMLET
 Say--that was a good 'un.
 What's your name anyhow?

NORA
 Nora. So?

He stands proudly and pushes out his chest.

HAMLET
 Betcha can't guess what my
 name is. Go ahead--try.

NORA
 I dunno: Tom, Dick, Harry,
 Moose.

The guy grins goofy and shakes his head no.

HAMLET
 You'll never guess in a million
 years. Want me to tell ya'?

NORA
 Let's hear it.

HAMLET
 Hamlet!

Nora stares at him numbly.

NORA
 Hamlet? Hamlet Humphrey?

He nods his head, pretty pleased with himself.

NORA (cont.)
 That's pitiful.

She shakes her head and wanders sleepily into her trailer.

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM-DAWN

Nora throws off her housecoat and settles into her bed.
 Just as she's comfortable--one last clatter and a few
 hummed notes of a C & W song OFF-SCREEN. She tenses

in smoldering rage, when suddenly--as if he can see her, he stops. All is quiet.

NORA
Hamlet Humphrey!

DISSOLVE TO

IN THE GIRLS' BEDROOM-LATER THAT MORNING

Trudi is frantically tossing clothes out of her dresser drawer. She wears her waitress uniform.

TRUDI
(calling out)
Mom, you got a pair of hose
I can borrow?

She leaves the room, her shoes in her hand. Shade rummages through clothes strewn in the room on chairs, in baskets, on beds and tosses them into two separate laundry baskets.

SHADE
(calling out)
Mom! Do you want the sheets
and blankets too?

NORA (O.S.)
Of course!

Shade starts stripping her bed, unaware that her Super 8 canister has fallen out from her pillow case. Trudi walks back in with a pair of hose slung across her arm.

TRUDI
Would you move--I'm gonna
be late.
(to herself)
Where's my watch, goddammit...

NORA (O.S.)
And who used all the Tampax
and didn't buy a new box?

Trudi, rummaging through pockets and purses calls out.

TRUDI
Not me. I'm the dominant
female in this house. You're
both following MY cycle.

SHADE
Oh wow--you get your period
first--so you're all bad. Ooohhh.

Trudi shrugs with a confident smirk. Shade calls out.

SHADE (cont.)
I bought some. They're under
the sink!

Trudi searches the nightstand. Shade panics when she picks up the Super 8 film canister from off the floor.

SHADE
That's mine! Give it!

Trudi, intrigued by Shade's reaction, fondles the canister.

TRUDI (cont.)
Ooohhh, what's this? Birth
control pills?

Shade lunges for her, but Trudi is quick and raises the canister over Shade's head, out of her reach.

SHADE
Bitch!! I'm gonna tell Mom!

TRUDI
"I'm gonna tell Mommy on you."

Shade makes one more attempt to liberate her belonging. When Trudi continues to fuck with her head, Shade angrily kicks her. Trudi shoves Shade onto her bed. Shade's head slams into the headboard. She starts to cry.

SHADE
You stupid!! Owwww....

Trudi cups her hand over her mouth trying to conceal her amusement as she leans over to help Shade up.

TRUDI
Oooppss, I'm sorry...

But Shade's cries escalate as Trudi comes closer to her. Shade kicks threateningly at Trudi.

SHADE
Stop laughing, you jerk!

Which causes Trudi to smirk all the more.

TRUDI
I'm not...I'm--

Nora bolts in the door and looks on the scene angrily.

NORA
Trudi, why did you hit her?

TRUDI
I didn't. She fell.

SHADE
She pushed me!

TRUDI
After she kicked me!

NORA
(to Trudi)
I can always depend on you
to cause trouble.

Nora grabs a wad of sheets from Trudi's bed and leaves the room. Trudi shoots her a deadly glare. She tosses the Super 8 canister at Shade, bitterly.

TRUDI
Big baby.

As she walks out, Shade rubs her head and clutches her bundle against her. She gets up and stashes the Super 8 canister under her mattress and begins stripping the sheets off of her bed.

CUT TO

INT. LAUNDROMAT-DAY

CLOSE ON sheets being tossed into a washer. PULLING BACK we see endless rows of washers. Nora pours soap and bleach in each one as Shade fills the slots with quarters behind her and closes the lids. Nora hands Shade a few dollars.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT-DAY

Shade walks across the tiny stretch of road in the small cluster of buildings they call town.

ANGLE ON a blue, seen-better-days pick-up truck pulling into a parking space in front of a small market. A MAN gets out. In his mid-forties, his rugged face is etched and weathered--a craggy map of internal woes. His brow seems perpetually drawn into a sad ache. His clothes--basic near worn-out Southwestern redneck.

He seems to notice Shade as she walks into the market. The man walks in the store in a languid swagger. He is JOHN EVANS.

INT. MARKET-DAY

Shade walks up to the KOREAN SHOP KEEPER with a fat box of 'Bounce' fabric softener sheets.

SHADE
(to checker)
Is this the only size you have?

KOREAN SHOP KEEPER
Only size. Yea--this size
only size.

SHADE
Well, how much is it?

John sets down a few groceries on the counter in back of Shade: bacon, refried beans, crackers, milk. The checker runs the box across the computerized price.

KOREAN SHOP KEEPER
Two twenty-five. And tax.

SHADE
Aw! Bummer!

She looks at the two bills. John takes out some change.

JOHN
Here whaddaya need? Take it.

She looks up at him in hesitation, then gratitude.

SHADE
Oh thanks! I can pay you back--
my mom's at the laundrymat.

JOHN
No sweat.

The Korean man teases in his broken English.

KOREAN SHOP KEEPER
John big spender. Ladies Man.
(laughing at his own words)
Too young for you, Johnny.

JOHN
Yeah yeah make funna me.
(to Shade)
He's the guy you gotta watch
out for. Know what the girls
call him? Valentino.

Shade smirks in disbelief.

JOHN (cont.)
It's true.

KOREAN SHOP KEEPER
Yea, I Valentino to the ladies.
"Baby, are you lonesome tonight?"

Shade puts her hand over her mouth and bursts out laughing.
John starts to smile.

JOHN
What a technique, huh?

As her laughter dwindles, something in his face softens
as he looks at her. She is uncomfortable by his gaze.

SHADE
Well, I'll be right back
with the change.

JOHN
(softly)
Don't worry about it.

SHADE
I'll be right back.

Shade runs out the door.

JOHN'S P.O.V. of Shade running into the laundromat.
Then--Nora appearing in the window. He looks at both
of them sadly. Fondly. Nora doesn't see him at all
as she hands Shade change.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT-DAY

Just as Shade walks out the door, she sees John's truck
leaving the scene. She shrugs and pockets the money.

EXT. TRAILER PARK-DAY

Hamlet Humphrey is singing along merrily to a country
tune on the radio as he installs a satellite dish.

HAMLET
"You think I'm psycho, don't
you, mama? I just killed
Johnny's pup."

Nora drives up to their trailer. Nora stops to listen
a moment to the wailing of Hamlet.

HAMLET (cont.)
"If you think I'm psycho, mama,
better let 'em lock me up..."

She stares at him in disbelief--the guy's a loser.
She lugs the laundry baskets toward the front door.
Shade doesn't notice him. She looks up surprised.

ANGLE ON FRONT STOOP where Tanya Mitchell waits.

TANYA
Wanna go to the Mid Vale
Mall with me?

INT. SHOPPING MALL-DAY

The 'mall' consists of about 10 ancient shops which
saw their heyday in the Roaring Twenties, when such
enclosed walks were called 'arcades'. Shade and Tanya
stroll the mall, talking.

TANYA (cont.)
Is there a guy you like?

SHADE
Yeah...only I got one
problem--he's my 'friend'!

TANYA
Does he know you like him?

Just then--a GROUP of WASP GIRLS cluster around Tanya.
Beaucoup of purchases in their arms.

WASP GIRL #1
Tanya! Hey!

The girls all give Shade the once-over.

WASP GIRL #1
What's going on? Buy anything?

TANYA
No, we're just hanging out.

WASP GIRL #1
Look at this cute dress I got.
Isn't it cute?

Tanya nods sweetly. Shade stands thmre awkwardly.
The girls continue to eye her.

WASP GIRL #1
So Tanya--come shopping with us.

TANYA

Ummm, we're going to another place right now. They don't have what I want here.

WASP GIRL #1

They have EVERYTHING here.

Tanya shrugs and drags Shade with her. The girls watch in disbelief.

WASP GIRL #1

What's with her? I mean--
Shade Evans??

The other girls look down at their purchases with ambivalence as Shade and Tanya walk off.

INT. THRIFT STORE-DAY

Shade shows Tanya the ropes of thrift store hunting. Tanya gets a vintage 'very Shade' dress off the rack and holds it up for Shade's approval. Shade smiles. Tanya rushes to a curtained stall to try it on.

As Shade rummages through a rack, she looks up to see Darius at the counter paying for a huge disco ball covered in tiny mirrors. Shade looks upon him so attracted. He turns to see her there. She comes down to earth and waves. He waves back anxiously.

DARIUS

Check it out! A disco ball!

Tanya walks out of the dressing room--full of charm in her new style, though she still has traces of her former persona. Darius stares at her, looks at Shade puzzled, then drags his disco ball from the counter.

DARIUS (cont.)

Catch you later.

He casts a look at Tanya as he walks out the door.

SHADE

Bye...

TANYA

(smiling)

So he's the one.

Shade comes out of her trance and turns to Tanya surprised. She smiles at her new friend, then checks her out in her dress. Tanya twirls around. The bond is complete.

EXT. ROCK MUSEUM-DAY

Dank pulls his jeep up in front of a small log cabin off a desolate road. A SIGN above the door reads "Rock And Geode Museum". Dank takes a few rocks, tosses them into a bag, grabs his mineral light and walks inside.

INT. ROCK MUSEUM-DAY

As he opens the door, a YOUNG GIRL, about 17, appears from behind a plaid curtain. She wears hippy garb and sturdy hiking boots. Her smile is beautiful. She is PERSI. She opens her hand. Dank looks at her, puzzled.

PERSI

Admission for adults is one dollar.

Dank smiles and takes a dollar out of his pocket. She tucks the bill in a small woven pouch hanging from her belt. She throws a light switch and reveals a startling array of geodes, rocks, crystals in glass cases on the walls. Strange, cheesy ethnic pop MUSIC begins to play. She approaches a glass case and turns to Dank.

PERSI (cont.)

My name is Persi and I am pleased to be your guide today. One million years ago, this area raged with active volcanos and what you see before you are the fruits of nature at her most violent.

Dank leans forward and looks into the case. Then he takes her by the arm, cutting off her lecture.

DANK

Can you help me with some like this--

He reaches in his bag and pulls out a few specimens. The girl looks upon them, unenthused.

PERSI

Sheelite. Ordinary sheelite.

DANK

It's fluorescent sheelite.

He walks to the switch and turns the light off, then turns on his mineral light to show the day-glo rock radiating. The girl gasps and reaches to touch it.

DANK (cont.)
Mind if I search your cases
with my lamp?

PERSI
Nooo....please do...

She follows him as he points his light along the wall.
A few rocks do indeed glow fluorescent.

DANK
Did you find these in the area?

PERSI
(mesmerized)
The rocks belong to Cecil.

DANK
Could I talk to him?

PERSI
He's not into people.

DANK
Most rock hounds aren't.

Persi looks up and takes Dank by the hand.

EXT. BACK OF MUSEUM-DAY

A long-haired MAN, ageless, timeless, sits hunched over a rock saw. The saw makes a RACKET as he works on splitting geode eggs in two. He is CECIL. Persi puts her hand gently on his back. He stops his work, without looking up. She leans down and whispers in his ear. He sits and waits for Dank to present himself. Dank walks before him. Cecil doesn't get up so Dank kneels down to his level.

DANK
Hey. How's it goin'?

Cecil just looks at him.

DANK (cont.)
I wanted to talk to you about
the rocks--the fluorescent ones.

CECIL
I didn't know I had fluorescent
ones.

PERSI
Case 4, shelf B.

CECIL
Okay. So? Talk.

DANK
I was wondering if you found
them in the area.

CECIL
That particular haul came from
a quarry near Carlsbad. It
shut down a year ago.

DANK
Great. I know the place.
Thanks a lot. Here--

He hands Cecil and Persi each a rock.

DANK (cont.)
--for your trouble.

PERSI
Thank you...thank you very much.

But Cecil doesn't say a word. He turns his saw back
on and splits a rock. As Dank walks off, he stops.

CECIL
Do you use a short wave
or a long wave lamp?

DANK
Short.

Cecil nearly smiles as he lowers his head and bends
over his saw. Persi watches Dank drive off, clutching
the rock he gave her. She dabs a handkerchief on Cecil.

CLOSE ON sparkling crystals in a split geode egg.

CUT TO

INT. DARIUS'S BEDROOM-EVENING

CLOSE ON slowly spinning disco ball. PULLING BACK we
see Shade holding a ladder steady as Darius admires
his newly installed 70s icon in his glitter disco den.

SHADE
I mean--she's really okay.

DARIUS
She sucks hard, Shade. Tanya
Mitchell?! Get real!

Shade is hurt and disappointed by his narrow-minded reaction. But Darius doesn't notice.

DARIUS (cont.)
(pre-occupied now)
Okay...now...for the perfect
music to christen this event.
Evelyn Champagne King?

SHADE
Too obvious, but now "Japan"...

Darius is delighted and leans down to grab her hand.

DARIUS
Japan!! Pure genius!!

He makes his descent and quickly sorts through his records.

DARIUS (cont.)
Quick! Turn out the lights!

He puts on the essential Japan album, "The Quiet Life" and grabs Shade by the hand as they scramble onto the top bunk bed. The first dramatic notes of "Fall In Love With Me" plays as the couple are splattered with spots of light passing across their faces, hands, skin.

A CLOSE ANGLE as Shade looks down at her hand in his. Then, Darius sings the words to her.

DARIUS
"All night...fall in love
with me...all night..."

They look longingly at each other. Darius's face changes softly as he stops singing. He turns his head slowly and looks off humming along. Shade is mixed with disappointment and relief. She too looks away.

A WIDE ANGLE of them holding hands on the top bunk under the spotty glow of the disco ball.

EXT. PULL-OFF PLAZA-NIGHT

Trudi shoves her apron in her purse as she walks out the door of the coffee shop. In the parking lot--Brett and his friends. Trudi takes a deep breath. A flood of anxiety as she looks upon the mean-mouthed boys. And still a case of longing for Brett.

ANGLE ON Brett and his friends. The boys turning to see Trudi, get an eager look. Eager to humiliate her with remarks once again. One boy taps Brett. He turns

to look at her. Then, he turns coolly away.

CLOSE ON Trudi. Her face sinking with anxiety. When suddenly, from behind her, a warm hand on her arm. She turns to see Dank.

DANK

I was hoping it was you.

PULLING BACK Trudi looks to him in resigned gratitude. Dank takes Trudi's hand and walks her through the cesspool of gawkers to his jeep. The boys gape as they walk proudly past.

EXT. HIGHWAY-NIGHT

Leaving the Gas, Food, And Lodging island behind...

IN THE JEEP Dank looks at Trudi as he drives. Trudi plays with a hole in her stocking.

DANK

Am I taking you home?

TRUDI

Where are you going?

DANK

It's dangerous.

TRUDI

I wanna go.

DANK

You're not dressed for it.

TRUDI

I'm not?

Dank looks at her wrapping her fingers in her torn stocking. He looks at her face. He turns back to the road in front of him. He smiles. She looks out the window, smugly.

EXT. TRAILER PARK

As Shade walks up the dusty highway to the trailer park entrance HUMMING "Dancing Queen" in soft lingering romance, she hears a DRUNK MAN SINGING. Shade stops humming as she sees the man sitting alone on a log outside the trailer park. It's Raymond, Nora's old flame.

RAYMOND

(singing)

"Beautiful beautiful brown
eyes. I'll never love blue
eyes again..."

Shade stares at him curiously. At first, she's afraid.
But then, checking out his fancy western clothes--

SHADE (V.O.)

It's like he walked straight
out of the Elvia Rivero movie.

CUT TO

ON SCREEN: Elvia in elegant period clothes again, looks
at the photo and laughs. Then, DOLLYING IN CLOSE on
her face, we go into a FLASHBACK of their first encounter,
which is almost identical to the set-up with Shade and
Raymond. Elvia is being escorted to her hacienda by
a CLUSTER of GORGEOUS LATIN MEN when suddenly--the DRUNKEN
WAIL of a MEXICAN TROUBADOUR causes her to turn.

SHADE (V.O.) (cont.)

I could see he was no loser.
He had on the clothes of a
Teamster and boots from Spain,
or at least El Paso.

CUT TO

OUTSIDE THE TRAILER PARK Shade looks upon Raymond.
She paces around him, sizing up the situation, but he
is too drunk to even be aware of her as he continues
to sing.

SHADE (V.O.) (cont.)

A man who worked with his hands.
A funny man.

As the camera settles on Raymond in his condition...

SHADE (V.O.) (cont.)

A serious man. And he maybe
even did his own laundry.

Shade approaches Raymond. He lifts his booze-heavy
head to gaze up at her through bleary eyes.

SHADE

Looks like you could use
a home cooked meal.

The man nods softly.

SHADE (cont.)

But--not tonight. Tomorrow
night. Okay?

RAYMOND

Sweet 'a' you to take pity,
darlin', but what would yore
mama say if you dragged me in
the door?

Shade smiles. She thinks it over and shrugs.

SHADE

She'd be all nice. My mom...
she needs someone to talk
to that isn't a lady or a kid.

Raymond belches as he stares off nodding.

SHADE (cont.)

Someone besides those truckers
at the Pull-Off Plaza.

Raymond is still with surprise.

RAYMOND

She works at the truck stop?

Shade nods her head gently. Raymond smirks to himself.
The take is long as the two of them sit, staring off
into the night, nodding their heads--Shade with innocence,
Raymond with irony.

EXT. DESERT-NIGHT

The headlights of Dank's jeep carve the only light into
the bleak landscape. He gets his jeep as close as
he can to the side of a craggy canyon. Parks.

ANGLE ON JEEP as Trudi shudders looking out on the dark
expanse. Leaving the headlights on, Dank gets out.

DANK

Stay here a minute.

He takes equipment from the back of the jeep: a
geologists' pick, his mineral light, a flashlight, a
gunny sack, bottled water, luminous light sticks. He
packs all of these into the sack. Then, he grabs some
garments and tosses them at Trudi.

DANK (cont.)

These may fit you.

She looks at the army green khaki trousers and winces.

DANK (cont.)

You have to cover your legs.

Trudi puts the pants in her lap and pouts.

TRUDI

I'll stay here.

DANK

Okay. I don't know when I'll be back.

TRUDI

Like fifteen minutes?

DANK

Like hours from now.

TRUDI

Hours?!

He grabs his sack. He tosses a luminous light stick in front of the jeep. He walks to her side of the car. He brushes her lips with his knuckles.

Trudi reaches for him, desperately. But he eludes her. She withdraws from him, hurt, and quickly goes cool.

TRUDI (cont.)

Can I listen to the radio?

DANK

Well...I can't really risk the battery.

Trudi folds her arms and looks ahead into the darkness as he walks off. She suddenly looks entirely abandoned. She loses her poise and in every feature in her face and hands, she is a 'Little Girl Lost'. Dank is a fading silhouette as he tosses another luminous light stick behind him. Then, the SOUNDS of the desert taunt her. Frightened, she clutches the trousers under her chin.

TRUDI

I don't like this shit.

IN CANYON PASS Dank walks slowly, carefully in the dark. The beam of his flashlight. The purple hue of his ultra-violet lantern. The light sticks along the path he's carved.

He scans the wall of a cliff with his mineral light.

Fluorescent scorpions scatter along the rock, a radiant lime color. Dank seems accustom to the phenomenon. Behind him, he hears falling rock. He turns with his light. Running to him, in the khaki pants much too big for her, is Trudi. She is glowing literally as she runs to him.

DANK

Careful! Walk to me, slowly.

She slows her steps. He reaches for her. He squints as she gets closer to him--her hands are filled with the luminous light sticks. She hands them to him.

TRUDI

You dropped these.

Dank breaks into a grin and takes the light sticks from her. He kisses her face sweetly.

DANK

Thank you.

He drops them gently to the ground and holds her. Ultra-violet light falls in spots on her white uniform, on her blonde hair, the numbers on his watch as he runs his hands in her hair. He closes his eyes as she brings him closer against her. Their lips brush. They kiss deeply. He ends their kiss with affection and leads her along the path.

DISSOLVE TO

Dank lifts a stone to expose a cluster of dew-soaked wild flowers.

TRUDI

I always thought there was nothing here.

He pulls the flowers from their hiding place and hands them to her.

DANK

Nothing here? There's so much!

She clutches her flowers close to her. He waves his ultra-violet lantern across the ground.

DANK (cont.)

Like...those--

Fluorescent insects scatter under the light. Trudi

gasps as she watches the strange wonder which would ordinarily look like nothing at all.

They walk on. They come to a cliff wall. Dank swings his light along the dead-looking wall. Suddenly--veins of brilliant fluorescent colors burst out at their eyes like the roots of a tree.

DANK (cont.)
(awed)
Yeah...

TRUDI
(equally awed)
My god...it's too beautiful...

Dank sets his sack and equipment down. He takes his geologists' pick from the sack.

CLOSE ON Trudi's face, almost frightened as she watches.

CLOSE ON Dank swinging the hammer into the side of the cliff. He continues to chip away at the rock surrounding the veins of gleaming colorful rock which are now being carved out of the dead rock in thicker, craggier veins.

CLOSE ON Trudi impassioned by the glorious process.

ANGLE ON Trudi throwing herself into his arms. Dank throws the hammer aside and forces her against the cliff wall kissing her passionately. She grabs his hair and devours his mouth with hers. He slams her shoulders into the rock as he falls against her, kissing her mouth, face, neck.

As their intensity deepens, a slow steady trickle of fluorescent dust begins to fall around them from the exposed veins. They kiss harder. The day-glo dust becomes a rain of brilliant colors on the lovers. Their love-making is extremely naturalistic.

DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE ON dust clearing and a magnificent formation of fluorescent rocks gleams out from the cliff wall.

CLOSE ON the two lovers sweating faces as their breaths dwindle and recover. Her fingers lightly touch his hair and face as he rests against her. She smiles weakly. His eyes are closed. His lips grope for her cheek. They pull apart softly and look up at the astounding cluster of colorful rocks. Their mouths opened to awe.

IN THE JEEP-DAWN

The SOUND of Dank's jeep. We PAN from several scorpions in a jar which, without the black light, cease to glow, TO Trudi's fingers clutching Dank's hand, and the flowers he gave her which in normal light, also seem colorless and weed-like. TO smashed boulders of rock, which in the light of day do not radiate. TO Dank and Trudi.

TRUDI

There's something I gotta tell you. Do you wanna hear it?

DANK

Uh, I don't know--is it going to upset me?

TRUDI

(laughing)

No!

DANK

Is it going to make me sick? Feel like I wanna kill someone?

To each of these, she giggles, 'No'.

DANK (cont.)

Alright then.

EXT. TRAILER PARK-MORNING

As the jeep pulls into the trailer park, Trudi confesses.

ANGLE ON TRUDI as she searches for courage and words.

TRUDI

I mess around with guys a lot. Guess I'm one of those girls with a rep'.

Dank listens as she goes on.

TRUDI (cont.)

But I've never wanted to do it. Yet, I do. I even make all the first moves.

OUTSIDE HER TRAILER Dank stops the jeep as Trudi continues to talk, looking out the window.

TRUDI (cont.)

I've been thinking about it

TRUDI (cont.)
lately--and I've thought of why
I can't say no, why I have to
always do it. And I think it's
cause of my first time. These
guys just did what they wanted.

Dank is quiet as the implication of what she's saying
sinks in.

DANK
What are you saying?

Trudi breathes deeply. She twists her hair in her fingers.
She collects herself and just blurts it out.

TRUDI
They pulled a train on me.
They gang-banged me.

Dank looks at her troubled and stunned.

TRUDI
Oh--I didn't report it. Are
you crazy? Have the whole town
know about it? I never told anyone.
Not even my mom.

She continues to talk, detached, as if she were talking
about something that happened to someone else. Dank
listens. In his face, a terrible sorrow.

TRUDI (cont.)
I knew their names. Two were
brothers: Sonny and Dan
Richardson, and a Ralph
Ellison. Another guy they
just called Tex. They were
out of state truckers, from
Florida. I never saw them again.

Dank looks at her sadly and goes to hug her but she
resists. Not wanting to be touched.

TRUDI (cont.)
Don't.
(beat)
After that, I never said
no again. Why bother?
They'll just do it anyway.

She turns to him and reaches his hand to her face.

TRUDI (cont.)

This was the first time I
really wanted to. It was
the first time I felt anything.

INT. TRAILER/NORA'S ROOM-MORNING

Nora's ALARM CLOCK BLARES. She stirs in her sleep.
She looks at the time and gets out of bed.

AT THE GIRL'S BEDROOM DOOR she peers in and sees only
one daughter there sleeping.

EXT. TRAILER-MORNING

Dank holds Trudi close and looks into her face.

DANK

I have to go away for a
few days. There's a quarry
near Carlsbad that has some
rare species of rock. I want
to check it out.

Trudi's face sinks.

TRUDI

Oh...

DANK

What? It's not that far.
I'll be back by Wednesday.

Trudi quickly cools.

TRUDI

Yeah, sure. Whatever.

She gets out of the jeep.

DANK

Hey! Don't be like that!

He gets out and looks over the hood of the jeep at her.
Trudi turns to see his pleading face. He reaches a
rock across the hood to her. She smiles, despite herself,
and takes the rock from him.

DANK (cont.)

(softly)

Come here. Kiss me.

She leans across the hood. She takes his face in her
hands and kisses him madly.

DANK (cont.)
I'll dream about you. Dream
for me, Trudi.

She smiles at him gently as she walks away.

INT. TRAILER-MORNING

Trudi walks inside in a daze. Nora, dressed for work in her stocking feet, looks blankly at her daughter as Trudi walks in the door.

Nora grabs her keys, aggressively from the counter. She makes angry noise with each movement. Trudi feels the tension and tries to slip past the rage. Nora refuses to even look at her.

IN THE GIRL'S BEDROOM Trudi slips off her uniform and climbs into bed. Nora walks to the doorway and looks in, at Trudi who stares at the rock in her hand. Nora puts on her shoes.

NORA
You have one month to find
another place to live.

Trudi's jaw drops. Then, she hardens.

TRUDI
Fine.

NORA
Fine? It's fine, is it?!

TRUDI
Yes, it's fine! It's dandy.
Leave me alone, I'm tired.

NORA
Leave you alone? You bet I
will! Pay your rent alone--
see how you like that!

TRUDI
I won't be alone, Mom! Not
like you! I met someone and
he wants to be with me!

Shade GROANS and pulls the blankets over her head.

NORA
Yeah sure he does.

EXT. TRAILER-MORNING

Installing yet another link to air and sound waves is Hamlet. He whistles in the early glow of day, startled by the NOISE coming from Nora's trailer.

NORA (O.S.) (cont.)
One month, Trudi! I won't
deal with this anymore!

He hears the front door slam. Nora walks out, heads for her car. OFF-SCREEN, Trudi yells "BITCH!" Hamlet winces. Nora's face is racing with worry as she pulls her car out of the parking space, then stops. She folds over the steering wheel and bursts into tears.

ANGLE ON NORA as she sobs.

NORA (cont.)
You little bitch! Ungrateful.
Mean. Goddammit!

She cries. Her words repeating like a painful mantra. Suddenly, a hand reaches to her through the window. A monogrammed handkerchief, "H. H." Nora looks up as she takes the handkerchief. She smiles sad, grateful.

NORA (cont.)
Hamlet Humphrey! God--are
you still here?

HAMLET
Oh yes ma'm. I'm in for the
long haul.

NORA
Aren't we lucky?

She smiles through her sniffles and tears.

NORA (cont.)
Thanks. I'll wash it for you.

HAMLET
It can't be THAT bad.

Nora bristles in defensiveness.

NORA
How do you know? What if I
told you I'm dying of an incurable
blood disease--would that be BAD
enough for you?

Hamlet backs off.

HAMLET

Hey--just trying to cheer you
up. I wasn't out to minimize...

She shoves the handkerchief at him and tisks impatiently.
She drives away. Poor Hamlet throws his hands in the
air at this contrary woman.

INT. TRAILER/GIRLS' BEDROOM-DAWN

Trudi recovering from their fight turns over on her
side and stares dreamily at the gifts Dank gave her.
Shade turns over on her side to face Trudi.

SHADE

I don't want you to move out.

Trudi gives her sister an uncharacteristic warm smile.

TRUDI

Sorry we woke you up.

SHADE

What's that?

TRUDI

Looks like an ordinary rock, huh?

SHADE

Yeah. A plain old rock.

TRUDI

It's not. It glows bright
blue under a special light.

SHADE

Bullshit!

TRUDI

It's true! Oh Shadie--
(sighing)
I met the BEST guy!

Shade sighs too...only out of tedium.

TRUDI (cont.)

Deming is not so bad,
Shade. We went to the
desert, Dank and me. And he
showed me--it's alive out there!
It's not just nothing.

he grabs the bouquet of wild flowers.

TRUDI (cont.)

There are flowers, and colors,
and sounds...and when the sun
comes up, you wanna cry. When
Dank comes back--I'll make him
take you with us!

Shade raises up on her elbows excited.

SHADE

You're not embarrassed of me?

TRUDI

He's going to think you're
so sweet! Maybe he has a
little brother for you.

Shade thinks and cautiously approaches the subject.

SHADE

Trudi, I need your advice.
Well, see, there's a boy...
and he does all this stuff...
he touches my face, holds my hand
but then he acts like we're buddies.

TRUDI

You have to make a move.
What's his dream girl like?

Shade hands her the Olivia album cover.

TRUDI (cont.)

Oh this is gonna be fun!

CUT TO

IN NORA'S BEDROOM Trudi rummages through Nora's closet
to find a pair of 70s platform style heels. She tosses
them at Shade.

ANGLE ON SHADE as Trudi fixes her hair under an old
blonde wig and 70s make-up to resemble dream girl Olivia
Newton-John! PULLING BACK we see Shade--a 70s
glitter/disco fox! Trudi laughs, proud of their success.

EXT. DARIUS'S BEDROOM-AFTERNOON

Shade nervously approaches his window in her full-on
get-up. She knocks on the glass.

TRUDI (V.O.)

You DECIDE, that's all. That
you're going to have him, and
nothing can stop you. Throw him
down. Make him want you.

Darius raises the window in awe of his little friend.

DARIUS

Shade! You look...amazing...

She gulps in nervousness and smiles. She holds out
her hand and lets him drag her inside. Darius stands
back to check her out from her platform heels to her
blonde Olivia wig! Shade doesn't say a word. She walks
to the stereo. She puts on "Magic" by Olivia. Darius
begins to back away, not quite sure what's going down.
Shade walks toward him slowly.

SHADE

Know what I been thinkin'?

Darius backing away, swallowing nervously.

DARIUS

No...what?

SHADE

I've been thinkin' how bored
I am. How, how I wanna go to
some scarey deep place...

Darius stumbles into a KISS stand-up doll.

DARIUS

Yeah?

SHADE

Yeah. I want risk! I wanna
walk off cliffs! I wanna go
to another planet! I wanna lose
myself--

Darius falls back onto the bottom bunk of his bed.

DARIUS

That's some scary shit alright!

Shade kneels down on the floor. She climbs onto the
bed with him and looks into his face--petrified.
He looks back at her, equally terrified.

SHADE

Am I hurting your leg?

DARIUS
Naw...I don't feel a thing--

SHADE
Good.
(frowning)
I guess. Where was I?

DARIUS
(panicked)
Uhh...I can't remember.

SHADE
Oh yes!

DARIUS
Oh no.

She crawls up to the frightened boy.

SHADE
Magic, Darius. That's what
I want. That's what Olivia wants.
That's what Abba wants. That's
what I want. I wanna lose myself in you!

She forces a young kiss on the terrified boy who closes
his lips tight.

CLOSE ON Shade and Darius, face-to-face, lips-to-lips,
and as Shade's eyes flash open, eyes-to-eyes. Her face,
confused. His face, a wash of terror. She pulls away
from him slowly, feeling foolish. He breathes deeply
and collects himself. He smiles nervously and pats
her back. Platonically.

SHADE
Oh god, I'm so stupid.

DARIUS
No. C'mon. Why?

SHADE
Am I ugly? Gross?

DARIUS
Shade, get real. You're
a really beautiful person but--

SHADE
--but--I'm hideous.

DARIUS
Stop! I feel like a jerk!

DARIUS (cont.)
It's not you, it's me.

SHADE
That doesn't help.

She dashes off quickly, wanting to hide.

EXT. MAIN DRAG-LATE AFTERNOON

All the stores are closed. Shade walks the pavement, aimlessly. She doesn't cry. Her shame is too deep. She walks lost in a swarm. Her silly shoes hurting her feet, she sits on the curb, and takes them off. Suddenly, she hears a YOUNG CHICANA GIRL yelling angrily.

CHICANA GIRL (O.S.)
--that you been messin' up
on me with her--that's what's
up, baby!

A BOY'S VOICE tries to talk his way out of this one.

BOY (O.S.)
Woman, you're crazy! I barely
ever talked to that girl!

The angry GIRL, pretty, Hispanic, about 15, tears away from his grasp from the side of a building.

CHICANA GIRL
Mentirosos!! You're always
checking her out!!

Following her, trying to reason, is Javier.

JAVIER
I LOOK! That's it! Is it
against the law?

CHICANA GIRL
Si! Against MY law!
Against the rules of love!

JAVIER
Well, who says I give a shit
about the law anyways?

The girl spots a group of her GIRLFRIENDS across the drag. She WHISTLES to them and they turn to wait.

CHICANA GIRL
Wait up, esa!
She takes off a small cross and hands it to him.

JAVIER
Ah--are you serious?

CHICANA GIRL
It's over, Javier. Just
forget it and have a good life.

He clutches the cross and swallows down his hurt.

JAVIER
Okay, baby. You too.
Have a good one.

The crowd of girls 'mad-dog' Javier with wicked stares
as they walk away. He shoves the cross in his pocket.
He sees Shade sitting on the curb. At first, he doesn't
recognize her under the blonde wig, but with a double
take, he knows it's her.

JAVIER
It's the movie-lady! No
movies today? No matinees?

She shakes her head as she examines a nasty blister
on her heel.

JAVIER (cont.)
No? Just real life, eh?

She nods her head. He laughs sadly as he sits next
to her.

JAVIER (cont.)
Yeah...real life. What did
you do to your hair?

Shade looks at him blankly, forgetting she's wearing
the wig.

JAVIER (cont.)
Well...I don't like it.

Great. Just what she needs.

JAVIER (cont.)
And those are some lame ass shoes,
esa! Ouch--no wonder you got
blisters and shit, trying to
walk on those building blocks.

SHADE
Hey--who asked you, huh?

She breaks into a teary dialogue, a soft broken heart.

Tears fill her eyes.

SHADE (cont.)

You know, you dress pretty
silly, if you ask me--those
baggy 50s pants, and that dumb
little braid on the back of your
head--I mean, what's that for?

He laughs shocked at her diatribe. But she shakes her
head and cries, looking at the ground. Javier softens.

JAVIER

Naw, c'mon now. I'm just
joking with ya'. It's cause
I like how you usually dress,
that's why. I liked your hair
before--it was just fine.

She pulls off her wig. Her hair tumbles to her shoulders.

JAVIER (cont.)

Yeah--that's the stuff!

She smiles through her tears. He looks softly at her.

JAVIER (cont.)

Yeah--

Shade shyly looks down at her heel and winces.

JAVIER (cont.)

You better not walk on that.
You could die and shit.

SHADE

Not even!

JAVIER

Blisters? They're dangerous!
Big time! I'm serious! C'mon.
I'll give you a ride.

EXT. TRAILER PARK-DUSK

Javier speeds through the trailer park on a custom bicycle
with Shade's arms wrapped tightly around his waist.
She SQUEALS as they go over a bump in the road.

SHADE

Slow down--it's right here.

He skids in the dirt. She hops off the bike.

JAVIER
This your pad?

SHADE
This is it.

JAVIER
It's pretty firme.
(explaining his slang)
Cool. Firme-cool.

SHADE
Oh...well, thanks for the ride.

JAVIER
De nada. See you at the
movies, I guess. Oh hey--

He fumbles in his pocket and takes out the cross.

JAVIER (cont.)
Do you want this?

Shade is stunned by the gesture as she holds it in her hands. She looks up at him puzzled.

JAVIER (cont.)
It wouldn't mean anything.

Shade hands it back to him numbly.

SHADE
No...it's okay...

The boy puts it in his pocket and gets on his bike. She watches as he skids in the dust, to show off, and nearly creams. Then, she notices the sun beginning to fade. Suddenly--a LOOK of panic.

SHADE (cont.)
Oh no!! Dinner!!

She scurries off inside.

INT. TRAILER-DUSK

Shade frantically throws down her 70s shoes, purse, wig, and begins to bang pots and pans in the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO

A NICELY SET TABLE of mismatched plates, paper napkins, and plastic glasses. A Mexican candle, half burnt down, casts a soft glow from its small struggling flame.

TILTING UP to Shade's face brimming with satisfaction.

EXT. TRAILER PARK-NIGHT

A DRIVING P.O.V. of the rows of mobile homes, several with new satellite dishes, as Shade's VOICE-OVER plays.

SHADE (V.O.)

She's got beautiful brown eyes
and brown hair, like a Spanish
movie star.

INT. TRAILER/KITCHEN-NIGHT

Shade seats a perplexed Nora down to the sweetly set table. Nora wears tight jeans and a sweater, and a charmed frown--what on earth is her kid up to?

EXT. TRAILER-NIGHT

A Cadillac slowly approaches the trailer. Looking out to see if he's in the right place, Raymond.

SHADE (V.O.)

You can't miss the place.
There's a big ole ugly tree
with dirty leaves in the yard.

Raymond spots the tree. He parks.

IN THE TRAILER

Shade freezes in expectation as she hears the car door close. Nora sits patiently waiting for Shade to serve the food. The quiet still tone becoming too much--

NORA

Well, Shadie honey, are we
going to eat or what?

Suddenly--a KNOCK at the door. Shade bolts up out of her chair, as Nora looks on, confused. Shade smiles.

SHADE

Mom, I have a little surprise.

ANGLE ON door opening and a man, with a bouquet of grocery store flowers, giving Nora a surprise alright.

CUT TO

THE DINNER TABLE as Raymond and Nora pick at their food: macaroni and cheese with tuna and green salad. They carry on polite conversation. Shade sits on the sofa,

pretending to read a book, but all the while focused on the adults.

RAYMOND

So, what line of work are you in, Mrs. Evans?

NORA

(with dry sarcasm)

Oh please--call me 'Nora'.

He holds back a smirk as he whispers her name, "Nora, Nora, Nora..." She is unmoved by his amorous flair and swallows a bite of iceberg lettuce.

NORA (cont.)

I'm a brain surgeon, Raymond.
How about you?

Shade frowns at this remark. Then shrugs.

RAYMOND

Uhh...me? I'm a grave digger, myself. Digging my own as we speak. Rapidly.

NORA

Yeah well, that makes two things you do quick.

He takes the dig with a smile. They stare at each other with friendly irony.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. TRAILER-NIGHT

Shade shakes hands good-bye with Raymond, as he thanks her graciously for the wonderful dinner.

SHADE

Thanks for coming over. You sure you don't want another Pop Tart to take home with you?

RAYMOND

Oh darlin', I'm 'bout ta' burst as it is with all yore fine cookin'.

Nora smiles at him gratefully for his warmth toward her kid. Shade runs back in the house so Nora can say good-bye to him alone. Raymond stands at his car and beckons to her with his finger. Nora stands on the

stoop, her arms folded.

NORA

Go home to Julie, Raymond.

RAYMOND

That's a sweet little girl
you got there.

NORA

I'm lucky.

RAYMOND

So am I. To have known you
both. Well, I'll be cutting
out to Las Cruces now.

NORA

Stay well, Ray.

He smiles. She turns and walks inside.

INT. BATHROOM-NIGHT

Shade washes her face and looks curiously at her own
image in the mirror. Her VOICE-OVER plays.

SHADE (V.O.)

Things don't always work out
like you want them to, and in
my experience, it almost never does.
A lotta people say you are stupid
to have expectations on anything.
They're afraid of disappointment.

IN HER BEDROOM Shade takes down her Marc Bolan poster
and places it in a box, along with the Olivia Newton-John
record.

SHADE (V.O.)

Me--I'm more afraid of not
having any daydreams left.
Disappointment is easy. You
can get over it. But what do
you do with yourself, if you
can't imagine the future the
way you want it to be?

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY-DAY

Shade walks alone, searching the classrooms for Darius,
no sign of him.

SHADE (V.O.)

When someone rejects you--
they say it's not personal.
Who are they kidding? It's
as personal as it can get.
You can't help but take it
personal. You start thinking
you are the worst problem in
their life. You think you are
the reason for all their weird
moods, or for why they quit
coming to school.

Shade peers inside the cafeteria, searching for him.

INT. DRUGSTORE-DAY

Shade and Trudi argue over shampoo brands.

SHADE (V.O.)

Trudi felt bad that her advice
didn't work, but it wasn't her
fault. The good thing that came
out of it was that I started
spending more time with my sister.

Trudi tosses Shade's shampoo into the basket and slips
her brand into her purse. Shade's mouth flies open.
Trudi smugly moves on to the make-up shelf. She holds
up a few items to Shade and raises an eyebrow. Shade
breaks into an eager grin. Trudi smirks and slips them
in her bag.

Suddenly--a CASHIER walks past them. Shade nervously
picks up the first thing she sees on the shelf--MAALLOXX.
She reads the label very carefully as the cashier passes.
Once she's out of sight, Shade grabs items from her
cart and takes a deep breath. She looks at Trudi.

EXT. DRUGSTORE-DAY

Trudi walks out of the drugstore, cagey, looking over
her shoulder. Then, Shade follows out the door, casually.
The girls walk briskly, then break into a run.

IN A SMALL ALLEY the sisters duck into the crowded space
and examine the loot they've just shoplifted: make-up,
gum, shampoo, pens, hose. Trudi takes the Maaloxx,
frowns at Shade. They start to laugh. Trudi tosses
it into the street.

EXT. PULL-OFF PLAZA-DAY

Trudi, looking exquisitely beautiful, waits outside.

SHADE (V.O.)
Wednesday came, and she was
too nervous to even talk cause
HE was coming back to Deming.

EXT. TRAILER-NIGHT

Trudi is perched on the top stoop, waiting.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS-DAY

Trudi stands close to the tracks as a racing train passes.
The gust of wind blows her hair, forces her eyes shut.

SHADE (V.O.)
By Friday she'd gotten all quiet.

INT. BATHROOM-MORNING

Trudi, weak and somber, buttons her waitressing uniform.
Shade opens the door. She carries her backpack, dressed
for school.

SHADE
Can you had me some Tampax?
Quick, I'm gonna be late.

Trudi goes for the box, then, her face drops.

TRUDI
You have your period already?

SHADE
Yes...now hurry, gimme--

Trudi grabs a few tampons and hands them to Shade.

TRUDI
You couldn't. I get mine first.

SHADE
Maybe you're just not the
dominant female anymore.

She smiles and runs off. Trudi sinks.

CLOSE ON Trudi's sad distant face. Shade's VOICE-OVER
kicks back in.

SHADE (V.O.)
Come the next week, she couldn't
even get out of bed.

INT. TRAILER/GIRL'S BEDROOM-DAY

Nora bends down touching Trudi's forehead with her palm. Trudi leans over the edge of the bed, sick with grief.

SHADE (V.O.)

"He's never coming back, " she said, "He's never coming back."

IN THE KITCHEN Nora, worried, talks on the phone. She quickly hangs up and ushers sick Trudi out the door.

EXT. CLINIC-DAY

Nora walks out of the clinic, her face drawn in shock. Trudi walks behind her weak, sheepish, and timid.

EXT. DAIRY QUEEN-DAY

Trudi and Nora sit at an outdoor table eating. Trudi picks at her food, winces and pushes it away.

NORA

Who's the father?

TRUDI

I don't know.

NORA

Nice.

TRUDI

A guy, okay? A jerk.

NORA

Well, we need to sit down with this jerk and talk over the details.

TRUDI

If you can find him. I have nothing to say to him.

NORA

Be practical. He has to pay for it, it's only fair. You're the one who has to go through the abortion, it's the least he can do.

TRUDI

Abortion? I haven't even decided yet what I'm gonna do.

NORA

There's nothing to decide,
Trudi. You have no choice.

TRUDI

Bullshit! I have options!
You can't tell me!

Nora begins cleaning up the trash from the table.

NORA

You gonna finish that?

Trudi pushes the food, aggressively out of her face.

TRUDI

This is my body! You can't
tell me what to do!

NORA

I'm not even going to discuss
this with you.

Nora walks to the car. Trudi follows her, in a rage.

AT THE CAR Nora opens the car door as Trudi rants.

TRUDI

Guess you don't want me
to make the same mistake
you made--right? You wish
you'd had an abortion instead
of having me, right? Life woulda
been easier for you without me,
just fucking say it, Mom!

NORA

That's enough, Trudi!
Get in the car!

TRUDI

You probably even tried to
abort me, didn't you?

CLOSE ON Nora's face, anguished by her daughter's cruel
accusations. She gets in the car. She turns on the
engine and sits. She gets out of the running car, with
her purse and starts walking.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET-DAY

Nora walks the unfamiliar sidewalk, looking at each
perfectly manicured lawn, each mailbox that never gets
delivered a harsh blow. This is how she sees it.

She has no destination. Then--she sees a name 'STIGLER' on one mailbox. She thinks a moment then walks up the sidewalk.

EXT. BACKYARD-DAY

Thelma, in casual clothes, sits listening worried and empathetic to Nora. Thelma's husband, BUD, sets an iced tea in front of their distraught guest.

NORA

The thing is--I DID try to abort, Trudi. I was a kid, just like her. I was all set to do it and a girlfriend took me to an old woman's house in the desert.

Thelma looks her in the face, sorrowful, as she takes a packet of Sweet & Low and pours it in Nora's tea.

NORA (cont.)

Thank you. When we got there, the police had the place surrounded. I watched as they led her away in handcuffs. She had a kind, generous face.

Nora sips her tea. Thelma pats her hand.

NORA (cont.)

I knew marrying John was a mistake. He was a hell-raiser even then. Work was a dirty word.

THELMA

My first husband to a 't'!

NORA

But whatever hardships I faced with the girls, I never once regretted having them. Yet the idea of Trudi doing what I did--

THELMA

Well honey, you come to the right place cause I did all three; had one abortion, one baby I gave up, and one I kept and raised alone.

NORA

You're kidding?

THELMA

And every choice was just as hard to live with as the next. Nora, this is something she's gotta do alone. You need to stay out of it. Be there for her, that's all you can do.

NORA

I can't do that. She's my-- little girl.

THELMA

You have to let go or I feel sorry for both of ya'.

Thelma rubs Nora's hands sympathetically. Bud stands in the yard, consumed with the sad space in the air.

INT. TRAILER-DAY

Trudi packs a suitcase, and takes the fans and the Vogue pages down from her wall. Shade watches sadly unable to move from her own bed. Trudi picks up the rock Dank gave her and looks at it sadly. She tosses it in the trash along with the dried and faded wild flowers.

Over the following images, an EFFICIENT WOMAN explains procedure in good understandable and bland language.

EFFICIENT WOMAN (V.O.)

We'd like to congratulate you as a family for choosing open adoption as an alternative to terminating pregnancy. You are providing a valuable service to those who are unable to have children of their own.

EXT. HIGHWAY-DAWN

Trudi shivers in the early morning dew. Shade waits with her. An elongated taxi arrives up to the curb. In the distance--the Pull-Off Plaza.

SHADE

You won't be gone that long.

TRUDI

Naw--I'll be back before you can blink. So don't get too cozy having the room to yourself!

Shade shrugs lightly as tears start to fall. Trudi hugs Shade tightly, desperately. Trudi lets her go

and opens the taxi door. The VOICE-OVER plays again.

EFFICIENT WOMAN (V.O.)

Mrs. Evans, there is no need to worry over your daughter's safety. Camden House has been serving the needs of young girls just like Trudi for over two decades.

EXT. PULL-OFF PLAZA-DAY

Looking out the window, coffee pot in her hand, Nora.

ON THE HIGHWAY Trudi turns for one last look. She smiles brightly.

OUTSIDE THE COFFEE SHOP Nora shivers and waves both arms at her daughter.

ON THE HIGHWAY Trudi waves, gets in the car, and rolls down the window.

TRUDI

And Shade--that guy, Darius, he just got scared. It really wasn't you.

She throws her little sis' a kiss and rolls the window up. Shade watches the coach disappear down the long, unchanging road. And again, the VOICE.

EFFICIENT WOMAN (V.O.)

Know you are doing the right thing.

OUTSIDE THE DINER

Thelma puts her arms around Nora as they walk back inside.

INT. TRAILER KITCHEN-DUSK

Shade and Nora sit in agonizing silence as they eat dinner. Nora thumbs through mail as she eats. She looks over a bill. ALARM!

NORA

Goddammitt!! Who was Trudi calling in El Paso? That girl! Do you know anything about this?

Shade gulps sheepishly. She shrugs.

SHADE

It was probably some musician or rodeo guy Trudi met.

SHADE (cont.)
(working it up)
Some sort of 'on the road' guy.

NORA
(sighing)
I have a mind to call this
number and--

SHADE
(panicking)
No! I mean, Trudi is in
enough trouble.

Nora calms down and tosses the bill aside. Shade swallows
her relief. Nora turns her affections to Shade.

NORA
How's school goin'? Learning
anything fun?

SHADE
Not really.

Shade and Nora sit at the table, dead quiet.

SHADE (cont.)
Mom, what're we gonna do
without Trudi here? The
house is too quiet. You
and I don't talk.

Nora is stunned by her young daughter's frankness.

NORA
Guess we're gonna have to
learn how.

Shade nods her head, as if she can't see it. Nora picks
up her plate and takes it to the sink. She stretches
and looks out the window.

NORA'S P.O.V. of Hamlet throwing equipment into his
truck, packing it up for the day.

NORA (cont.)
Maybe we should get more TV.

REVERSE ANGLE of Nora at the window.

SHADE
Yeah. Mom, I wanna go
with Tanya to a dance tomorrow
night--would that be okay?

NORA

Sure. Wonder how many stations
you can get with one a' those...

IN THE GIRL'S BEDROOM Shade sits in the center of her bed. The room looks so empty. The walls are bare. She pulls the blankets around herself. Then she lays down and turns over on her side. Doing this, she sees something--

ANGLE ON the rock Dank gave Trudi, in the trash can. Shade retrieves the rock and the wild flower bouquet. She looks at them both thoughtfully and puts them next to her bed.

CUT TO

INT. TRAILER-NIGHT

CLOSE ON brochures of satellite dishes extroirdinaire!
Hamlet's VOICE plays OFF-SCREEN.

HAMLET (O.S.)

You get your network programming.
You get your cable programming.
But that's only the beginning.

ANGLE ON Hamlet offering his vision of tele-communications.

HAMLET

This is not just entertainment.

Nora folds her arms, not buying his rap.

NORA

Oh, now you're gonna get
philosophical on me? Spare
me the lecture and talk to me
in a language I can understand--
how much does it cost?

HAMLET

Now, now, you gotta hear me out
to make an informed choice, Nora.

She smiles when he calls her by name. She leans forward to look at the brochure with him.

NORA

Alright, alright...go on Ham'.

HAMLET

(very serious)
Hamlet.

NORA
Hamlet. Pardon me!

He sighs, satisfied, and chooses his words carefully as he looks off into Aristotelian space.

HAMLET
Satellites are our new missionaries. Only, they put forth ALL ideas, not just some. To all people, of all races, and all walks of life.

Nora raises an eyebrow as she listens.

HAMLET (cont.)
Why, I like to think of satellites like a big umbrella to shelter all of the earth's children. An instrument of brotherhood, and sisterhood too.

Hamlet lifts his head, dramatically.

HAMLET (cont.)
It's my personal crusade to link up the world to one system.

NORA
The Hamlet Humphrey system?

HAMLET
That's right.

NORA
How much is it gonna cost me to be one of those links in your personal vision, Ham'--I mean, Hamlet, dammit!

HAMLET
Just \$800 to be linked up with fellows all over the world.

Nora gapes and begins to laugh. She closes the brochures.

NORA (cont.)
I can't afford that!

HAMLET
Awww, a woman that works as hard as you do?

Nora is touched--yes, she does work hard. She gets

a hint of healthy self-pity in her face.

HAMLET (cont.)

You've had a tough go of it.

A fella's gotta admire that.

(beat)

Hey...you got some nice brown eyes on you, you know that?

NORA

(suddenly timid)

Thanks, but I still can't afford it.

Hamlet moves closer to her, pushing the brochure aside.

HAMLET

Maybe TV just ain't what you need, lady.

Nora's eyes flash open, startled, as Hamlet boldly moves in on her and kisses her mouth. She is at once passive, but in a surprise to herself, she surrenders to him and kisses him back softly. Then, the first strains of a raw electric guitar, and a rumbling bass...

CUT TO

INT. ARMORY-NIGHT

A grungy BAND tunes up on the too-big for grunge rock stage. The BAND MEMBERS look out on the crowd, wondering how on earth they wound up here.

THE CROWD

Deming YOUTH, all of them, are here. There are five kids against the stage: Tanya, Shade, and two SKATER BOYS and one NUEVO HIPPY. The rest all stand impossibly far away as they look at these odd types on stage.

TANYA

The redhead is FINE!

Shade smiles and nods her head enthusiastically. THE BAND begins to jam hard with very LOUD, very FAST ROCK. Shade and Tanya show their enthusiasm, and the boys against the stage begin to follow their leap of self-expression. Shade looks around and sees Darius, dressed in an early David "Japan" Sylvian persona: serious, without flash, and only a trace of lip color.

Her face takes a serious tone as they catch each other's eye. She forces a smile and waves at him. He waves back with a soft sad smile. Tanya sees the exchange.

TANYA (cont.)
You still working on him?

Shade shrugs softly.

CLOSE ON guitar being furiously thrashed in a fast, steady rhythm till it reaches a crescendo of raw notes. Then, abruptly ends with faint traces of lingering notes dwindling out.

CUT TO

INT. TRAILER/NORA'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

Nora's and Hamlet's sweating orgasmic bodies break apart. They lay on their backs. Nora stares up at the ceiling, her face both stunned and satisfied. Hamlet recovers, then turns to her, gently.

HAMLET
I'm sorry if I didn't...do
it for you.

Nora turns to him surprised.

NORA
Oh...oh it was great, really.
It really was...I mean it.

HAMLET
Well...I still got some ambition
left--I can make it better.

NORA
Oh, it's fine, really. It was
great. I...I just have to get
used to a man first before...I...
I think it has to do with
getting used to each others bodies
and positions and size.

Hamlet's eyes widen. Nora nervously tries to ease his doubts.

NORA (cont.)
But--the size is great!! The
body is great.

Hamlet pulls her on top of him.

HAMLET
Well, that just leaves 'position'.

Nora smiles down on him affectionately and he reaches

his lips to kiss hers.

INT. ARMORY-NIGHT

The band continues to thrash. The crowd has begun to fill the gap in the center of the room. Shade remains in the front against the stage, but Tanya has taken to the side of the stage where she gazes up the redheaded BOY in the first band. He leans down and speaks in her ear. Her eyes sparkle and she smiles. Seeing her alone, Darius slowly makes a start for Shade.

EXT. ARMORY-NIGHT

Javier is let out of a beautiful 50s custom car. A GROUP OF BOYS, slightly drunk, say good-bye to him.

BOY #1

Damn, ese. This is fucked-up.
This looks like punk rock or
some shit like that. Let's go
party, homes.

JAVIER

Naw, I told her I'd come, ese.
Can't let the lady down.

BOY #1

It's Friday night, Jav-eh. Can't
she kick down some slack on
Friday night?

JAVIER

She isn't making me do it,
ese. I'm doing it for her
cause I want to.

Javier grips the hand of one boy and shakes fists with him, pats the car and backs away.

JAVIER (cont.)

Arato!

INSIDE THE ARMORY

Javier wades through the crowd as he looks at the band, watching with careful scrutiny. He watches feet tapping or dancing in place on the floor. He watches people move to the music. He doesn't seem to be looking for anyone in particular.

But as he makes it to the front, he sees Shade. He taps her on the shoulder. Shade turns around, surprised. They try to talk to each other, but the music is too

loud. They pantomime that they'll talk after. Darius stands just a few rows of bodies behind them.

THE BAND'S SET ENDS and TAPED ROCK fills the air. Before Shade can say a word to Javier, Tanya races to her and grabs her by the arm, excitedly.

TANYA

Oh god--you won't believe it!
They've invited us to a party.

SHADE

Really? That's great!

Tanya sees Javier patiently standing next to Shade. Tanya frowns subtly at him, without doing it to his face, exactly.

SHADE (cont.)

Where?

TANYA

He's writing down the address.
They even have a record out!
In some towns he's famous!

Tanya dashes off to the 'famous' redhead bass player. Shade turns to Javier.

SHADE

So, how are you?

JAVIER

Alright. I thought that was
you. I looked--
(squinting his eyes)
'Yeah, that's her. Nobody
else in my town dresses like that.'

There's instant tenderness between them. They lock eyes.

ANGLE ON Darius watching the chemistry between Shade and Javier. He aches, then pulls himself together.

ANGLE ON Shade and Javier talking.

SHADE

Do you like this band?

JAVIER

Naw. I don't like rock that much.
I like oldies. Mary Wells,
Motown, Malo...crusin' music.

SHADE
Just came for something to do?

JAVIER
(laughing slightly)
No...I came for my mom.

Shade looks at him confused.

JAVIER (cont.)
She's a dancer, it's kinda
hard to explain. See--

Tanya runs up with the address written on a flyer.

TANYA
It's at the Pull-Off Plaza
Motel, Room 301.

Shade raises a shocked eyebrow. She looks over at the
redhead, then at Tanya.

SHADE
I don't know, Tanya...
my sister got into trouble
a couple of times partying
with rock musicians.

TANYA
(tisking dismissively)
YOUR sister would get in
trouble with anyone!

Shade takes this to heart. Javier catches it and frowns
at Tanya. But Tanya doesn't realize her effect.

SHADE
Well, I guess we could check
it out...
(to Javier)
Wanna come with us?

Tanya bristles as she hears this.

TANYA
Shade, no. We can't.
(to Javier)
It's not our place to invite
people to this party.

JAVIER
Hey, no need to explain,
alright? I gotta get on anyways.

He waves bye to Shade and walks off. Shade reaches out as if she wants a chance to mend the situation.

TANYA

Shade, you're crazy to talk to that boy. He's a cholo, you know! He's pure gangster. He's probably been out robbing pizza men, and stealing car radios all night.

SHADE

You don't know him, Tanya.

TANYA

Cholos are all the same, Shade. They deal dope. They kill each other for fun. They gang rape girls...that's how the girls are initiated into the gang.

Shade looks back at Javier, standing alone, waiting for the next band to go on. She turns back to her friend, assuming she knows more. But when she turns around, there in front of her--

DARIUS

Can I talk to you a minute?

SHADE

(numbly)

Sure.

Tanya smirks and encourages her to go off with him. Darius leads Shade out of the crowd.

EXT. ARMORY-NIGHT

Darius paces while Shade leans against the brick wall.

DARIUS

This is sorta hard...and I guess you already hate me.

Shade reacts, tenderly, but stops herself from speaking.

DARIUS (cont.)

You're the only person I'm telling--well, I'm leaving Deming, Shade. I'm going to L.A. I'm leaving tomorrow. I just can't hang here anymore.

Shade is in quiet shock.

SHADE
You're leaving?!
(then, with realization)
You are. You're really gonna
do it.

DARIUS
And about what happened...
I'm NOT gay, that's not it...

SHADE
I KNOW that.

Darius stops pacing. In relief, he walks to her.

DARIUS
Look, Shade...I'm not saying
I don't care. I'm not even
saying you went there alone.
But some guys aren't down for it.
They don't have follow-through.

Shade looks down. Her eyes begin to well with tears.

DARIUS (cont.)
For some guys, the dream of
the pure bliss of a girl like
you is all he can handle...the
reality is too much. He's too
weak to stand next to you.

Shade tries to quiet and hide her sobs but they spill
out. Darius takes her in his arms and hugs her tightly.

DARIUS (cont.)
Oh Shade--it's not that you're
wrong for me. Girl, don't you
see-- I'm so wrong for you.

He pulls gently back from her. He wipes her tears away.

DARIUS (cont.)
Do you believe me?

SHADE
Yeah.

DARIUS
Better write to me, freak mama!

She forces a soft chuckle.

SHADE
I will.

Then she hugs him desperately.

SHADE (cont.)
I'm gonna miss you, Darius!

Suddenly, TANYA'S VOICE OFF-SCREEN.

TANYA (O.S.)
Shade!! Let's get goin'!!

Then, Tanya comes round the corner and sees them breaking apart from their embrace. She puts her hand over her mouth and ducks back around the corner. Shade and Darius look at each other with sad fondness. Shade runs away.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

Tanya and a dazed Shade make their way to Room 301.

TANYA
Is there lipstick on my teeth?

Shade checks her out and shakes her head no.

TANYA (cont.)
You gotta tell me all about
you and the Bowie guy--later!

Shade smiles and nods her head, though not convincingly.

INT. MOTEL ROOM-NIGHT

A brazen BOY opens the door dressed in a towel.

BOY IN TOWEL
Gimme head!

Everyone laughs. He laughs at himself and steps aside. No one says a word to the girls. They look around.

A disaster in here. One guy nods while watching TV. TRUCKERS are partying with the rock musicians, sharing their good drugs with them in hopes of scoring with the GIRLS who have come with the band.

A steady trail of guys make their way to an adjoining room, as one comes out, another goes in. The boy in the towel talks to a boy walking out.

BOY IN TOWEL
She was gross. I wanted to
give it to her in the ass,
but there was a big line
behind me.

The two guys laugh. Shade overhears this, horrified. She and Tanya lean against a heater, not saying a thing. The Redhead comes out of the room. He looks at Tanya.

REDHEADED BOY

Oh hey. You made it. Cool.
Want a beer?

Tanya turns to Shade and shrugs.

TANYA

Okay.

The boy hands the girls each a beer. Shade declines.

SHADE

I'll share with her.

Tanya pops the top off the beer and sips it lightly. She hands it to Shade who declines. The redhead wastes no time moving in on Tanya. He starts kissing her and his hands search her body as tries to thwart his search of her flesh.

Shade is becoming uncomfortable as she stands passively next to them. The redheaded boy shoves Tanya's hand onto his crotch. She moves her hand away, frightened.

REDHEADED BOY

C'mon baby, it won't bite.

TANYA

(clutching Shade's arm)
We gotta go. Nice meeting
you. Thanks for the record.

The girls spirit each other out the door. But this only encourages the boy and his pals to chase them.

OUTSIDE THE MOTEL

A GROUP of DRUNKEN TRUCKERS are engaged in a game of poker on the hood of a car when they look up and hear the girls run out of the room and race down the stairs. The last drunk cuss to look up is John Evans.

The redhead and his pals chase the girls from the opposite stairway. The girls panic and run back up the stairway they're on, only to find the boy in the towel blocking their path at the top of the stairs.

The girls panic and tremble. The redheaded boy saunters cocky and slow down the steps.

Like a little chase, huh?
Come on. Back upstairs.

Tanya starts to back off from him as he reaches out for her. Shade simply freezes.

REDHEADED BOY (cont.)
May as well go willing. Cause
one way or another, you're
gonna do it.

Tanya begins to cry as she clutches Shade, who tries to remain rational.

SHADE
She doesn't have to do
anything with you!

REDHEADED BOY
Oohh really? Check out the
mouth on this one. I'd like to
find out what else your mouth does.

Suddenly, the redhead's eyes pop open in surprise.
He can walk no further toward Shade. A gruff MALE VOICE
behind him--

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
That's enough, pal.

PULLING BACK we see John's grip on the redheaded boy's
long locks. His pals make a start to help him, but
John's trucker friends step forward and the rock boys
back down.

CLOSE ON Shade's face of surprise to see this guy again.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET-NIGHT

John's truck winds down the cultivated street.

IN THE TRUCK Shade and Tanya are cramped in the small
cab of John's truck. Tanya is still shaken.

TANYA
This one right here.

JOHN
Alright.

He slows to the curb. Tanya opens the door and scrambles
out quickly. She looks at Shade, troubled, then runs
off. Shade calls out, confused by Tanya's behavior.

SHADE

Bye!

But Tanya just runs inside. John soothes Shade's worries.

JOHN
She's a little shook up.
But she'll be like new tomorra'.

SHADE
I hope so.

John puts his truck in gear.

JOHN
So, where're we takin' you?

SHADE
I live out on Route 40 at--

JOHN
The Lucky Clover Trailer Park.

Shade recoils in fear.

SHADE
How did you know that?

JOHN
Been tryin' to get the nerve up...

Shade scoots closer to the door indiscreetly. John drives, unaware of her panic.

JOHN (cont.)
...to come and see ya' since
I came back home to Deming.

Shade's courage springs back. She sits up straight.

JOHN (cont.)
How ya' doin', Shadie Lynne?

She's uncertain, but--

JOHN (cont.)
And how's your sister Trudi?
She okay?

She's beginning to understand.

JOHN (cont.)
And Nora. Dear sweet perty Nora.
How is your mama?
SHADE

John. John, do we have the same last name?

JOHN

I'm him. I ain't shit, but I'm your ole man.

CLOSE ON Shade searching his craggy face. Then, a wash of sadness. This is a crashing blow. This is simply not what she had in mind. Not at all. She looks away.

INT. TRAILER/GIRL'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

Shade lays in her bed, holding the strip of Super 8 film up to the glow of her lamp. She stares endlessly. The shock of his face still impacting on her.

INT. TRAILER-MORNING

Shade wakens to the SOUND of her mother HUMMING cheerfully. Nora peers in the doorway and smiles brightly.

NORA

How was the rock show, honey?

SHADE

I met my dad.

Nora's face drops as Shade sails past her.

IN THE KITCHEN Shade watches for her Pop Tarts to pop up out of the toaster while Nora grills her.

NORA

He moved back? That's the first I heard about it. When?

SHADE

I don't know, Mom. God, I was shocked alright? I didn't ask him nothin'.

NORA

Well there's a few things I'd like to ask him! No, it's impossible--I'd have known. This is a small town.

SHADE

He doesn't live IN town, he lives out near Rockhound Park.

NORA

Great...and he doesn't even
bother to get in touch...he
just stalks us, like the coward
he always was.

Shade grabs her Pop Tart from the toaster and nearly
burns her hand. She drops it on the counter.

SHADE
I knew I shouldn't have told you!
I mean, all along, I've been
trying so hard to help you find--

Nora winces at Shade's hurt feelings.

NORA
Here, let me put some aloe
vera it.

But Shade pulls away from her.

SHADE
It's all your fault!!

NORA
That you burned yourself?!

SHADE
That we don't have a FAMILY!
I think you just hate men.
I think that's it.

Shade storms out the door. Nora makes a start for her,
then stops, exasperated. We hold all her long as it
all begins to sink in.

CUT TO

EXT. TRAILER PARK/PHONE BOOTH-DAY

Shade is at the phone at trailer park entrance.

SHADE
Tanya, it's Shade. Listen--
I just had a fight with my mom.
You know Moms! Could you go to
the mall with me--well could you
just ask? Oh...

She sadly hangs up the phone.

CUT TO

CLOSE ON Shade's face, filled with anguish as flickering

images wash over her and Elvia's lyrical Spanish speaks to her.

REVERSE ANGLE ON-SCREEN of Elvia as a young peasant girl with a young MEXICAN BOY. A picnic is laid in the grass. She lays on her back, her eyes looking up at the blue sky as she talks. He listens and listens and listens, and doesn't force a move upon her.

CLOSE ON Shade softening and receiving comfort.

EXT. LA REINA MOVIE THEATER-DAY

Shade walks up to the ticket booth.

MEXICAN WOMAN

'Chade'! Hello!

SHADE

Hola, Señora.

(cagey)

Señora, es uno machaco,
umm...trabajar...aqui...

MEXICAN WOMAN

(amused by her lousy Spanish)

Si, a boy working here.

SHADE

Javier.

MEXICAN WOMAN

Si. Javier. He's my grandson.

SHADE

OH! Si? Well, is he here?

MEXICAN WOMAN

No, he's off today. They don't
have a phone. You go out toward
the salt mine and you'll come to
some little houses. He lives in 32A.

EXT. SALT MINE AREA-DAY

Shade walks, getting tired, across a barren expanse. Tiny colorful cottages sit on the horizon. She walks toward them.

ANGLE ON Javier's house as Shade walks onto the porch and knocks. A WOMAN comes to the door. She is instantly striking--tall, dark with very Indian features. She's ROCIO, Javier's mother. She looks out the screen door.

SHADE

Is Javier here?

The woman stands there without saying a word, squinting at Shade. Her eyes focused on Shade's lips.

SHADE (cont.)

Javier?

The woman now nods her head excitedly. She tries to gesture with her hands and makes a few awkward noises. Shade watches her, unsure what to make of it. Exasperated the woman opens the door and lets Shade come inside.

INSIDE JAVIER'S HOUSE

A sparse, small home. Very clean. Very charming. Rocio offers a seat to Shade. She sits. Rocio holds up a single finger to Shade as she walks away.

Shade looks around the room. Framed family pictures representing an entire heritage over the century adored the walls and tables. On one wall, a beautiful black and white portrait of Rocio as a dancer. And to her right, on the end table--Javier as he is now, next to a boyhood picture that makes her smile.

The SHUFFLE of feet. Shade looks up. Javier walks in with Rocio in barefeet, wearing only his baggy pants and no shirt. He's obviously just woken-up. His hair a mess, his eyes getting used to the light. Rocio stands back smiling gently at Shade. Javier lights up when he sees her.

JAVIER

Oh hey! What's up?

SHADE

I'm sorry. I woke you up, huh? God, I'm sorry.

JAVIER

Hey, it's alright.

He turns to Rocio and does some simple sign language.

JAVIER (cont.)

Mom, this is Shade. This is my mom, Rocio.

Shade smiles at the mute woman. She understands now. He sits next to her on the couch. Rocio leaves.

JAVIER (cont.)

What's up? How was the party?

SHADE
Terrible. I came to apologize.

JAVIER
No need.

SHADE
My friend, Tanya, she's a good person, but she judges people she doesn't know.

JAVIER
Like me? It's alright.
Doesn't bother me.

SHADE
She thinks you're--dangerous.

JAVIER
(smiling proudly)
Yeah?! Like what does she say?

SHADE
She says you're a cholo.

JAVIER
A 'cholo', huh? Ooooooh...

SHADE
(laughing)
She says you rob and even kill people.

JAVIER
(perfectly serious)
Why are you laughing?

Shade swallows her giggles and hushes in fear as he gives her a strong penetrating stare. Then, he breaks into a sneaky smile. She sighs in relief and smiles back, slugging his arm.

SHADE
Stupid!

JAVIER
(laughing at his prank)
Ohh shit! I had you goin'!

Rocio brings in cups of Mexican chocolate for them. Shade accepts graciously. Javier drinks his, smirks at Shade. She smirks back. Rocio watches tenderly.

Javier gets up and goes to the record player. He opens the record and puts it on the turntable. He and Rocio speak in sign language. She nods her head shyly, but he insists with her, obviously trying to persuade her about something. It appears she's going to give in. Javier waves the album cover at Shade--it's the band from last night.

JAVIER (cont.)
Watch your ears!

Rocio stands on the hardwood floor. Javier blasts the stereo. Shade gasps and puts her hands over her ears. Slowly she lifts them off as she watches Rocio searching for the vibrating pulse on the floor.

JAVIER (cont.)
(yelling in Shade's ear)
She can't hear the music but
she can feel the vibrations
loud rock makes on the floor.
That's why I went to check out
the band last night, see--for her.

Slowly the beautiful woman begins to move. At first, she's offbeat, but as she begins to feel the rhythm bleeding under her feet, she weaves a magnificent dance.

Shade is in awe as she watches. Then, Rocio invites her up to dance with her. Shade smiles, shyly declining. But Rocio and Javier insist. Rocio takes her hand and Javier joins them. The three of them dance on the floor from the heart to excruciatingly loud grunge rock.

Javier plays to his mom as they dance, then, Rocio takes Shade's hand and gives her a graceful spin on the floor. As she draws Shade back by the hand, she fluidly sends her right into the arms of Javier. His face fills with serious and soft desire as he holds her, dancing. They look into each others faces. They begin to lose the beat to the music and sway lightly in each others arms.

Rocio watches them warmly and leaves the room.

JAVIER
I can't believe I'm holding
you like this.

Shade flushes with nervousness as she can't unlock her eyes from his.

JAVIER (cont.)

You're my fantasy woman,
you know that?

Shade continues to listen in delicate desire.

JAVIER (cont.)
I used to watch you leave
the theater and...I don't know,
I wanted to follow you out--just
grab you. Take you in my arms.
Kiss you. But I thought no,
(laughing lightly)
she'll slap me.

SHADE
(stunned)
Is this...really true?

JAVIER
No need to lie about a thing
like that. I'm just confessing
a feeling, that's all. Any
questions so far?

They laugh together. Shade takes a breath.

SHADE
I thought you just saw me
as this weird girl...

JAVIER
Not weird--different. That's
what attracts me to you, I guess.

SHADE
(whispering)
Really?

JAVIER
Yeah. And Shade, you should
feel beautiful every single
day, cause you're so beautiful,
so warm inside.

She throws her arms around his neck and hugs him tightly.
He kisses her face.

JAVIER (cont.)
I want to kiss you in a
million different ways, in a
million different places. For days.

He covers her face in soft kisses.

JAVIER (cont.)

For months. For years.
For life. Por vida.

Shade is unable to bear it. She pulls him close to her. They burst into a deep soft passionate kiss.

EXT. DESERT-DAY

Javier and Shade climb the craggy cliffs together. They climb to a soft plateau and sit together, wrapped in each others arms, talking. Shade's VOICE-OVER plays over the following images.

SHADE (V.O.)

It was the same for both of us,
it was like we'd finally met
our twin. Can you grasp that--
here we were from two different
worlds and yet when we were alone,
together we made up the same person.

CLOSE-UPS of desert flowers, cacti, rocks.

ANGLE ON Javier on top of Shade, kissing her, stroking her face softly as she panics slightly. She takes a sharp breath. He watches her face with tenderness and caution. She closes her eyes and pulls him close.

A WIDE ANGLE of the desert at sunset.

ANGLE ON Javier handing Shade her dress, which she modestly clutches against her chest.

SHADE (V.O.)

In his arms, I knew who I was.
Shade. Just Shade. And I was
more than enough.

EXT. LA REINA THEATER-NIGHT

Javier locks up while Shade waits for him. They walk off with their arms around each other. On the street, Javier's ex-pals tease the young couple.

SHADE (V.O.)

It was the outside world
that caused us all our trouble.
He told me not to worry.

EXT. MINIATURE GOLF COURSE-NIGHT

Next to the K-MART in a pit of gravel are plain yet charming obstacle structures: a jail, a church, an expressionistic skyscraper. Shade and Javier play a

game, while Tanya, now dressed like her previous self, walks in with a group of her friends. When she and Shade make eye contact, Tanya becomes flustered and eases her friends outa this 'boring' place.

SHADE (V.O.)

I told him not to worry, but
we both felt bad for each other.
Sometimes we got in bad moods
over it and had arguments.

EXT. TRAILER-NIGHT

Shade sits on the steps, brushing her hair, sadly, when Javier appears before her.

SHADE (V.O.)

But we always made up.

ANGLE ON Javier taking the brush from her hand and brushing her pretty long hair for her.

INT. LA REINA THEATER-NIGHT

On the screen, before a scatter of PATRONS, Elvia Rivero as a nun in glorious black & white, comforts a weeping young nun against her breast. Her eyes in empathy.

IN THE PROJECTIONISTS' BOOTH-NIGHT

Javier sets up a Super 8 projector, pointed toward the wall. He takes the tiny canister from Shade. There on the wall, larger than life is her father, John Evans. Young, handsome, charming, he washes his black devil Impala. A tiny blonde Trudi, about 2, picks up the hose and hands it to him, splashing water all over the good-humored man.

SHADE (V.O.)

People who belong together
don't have a choice.

Then, Nora walks into frame with baby Shade, who tugs at the frilly bonnet on her head, irritated. John takes the baby girl from Nora and bounces her on his hip while he sings and sponges his car down.

EXT. DIRT ROAD/ROCKHOUND PARK-DAY

Shade appears at the edge of a dirt road which leads to a small old house. In front, a blue truck is parked on the tattered lawn. She looks down at the letter in her hand addressed to her from Trudi in El Paso.

SHADE (V.O.)

It was when I needed him
to really understand me,
that we broke up for goAT THE HOUSE

Shade knocks on the door. A thin, country woman with
a hard face appears at the door. She is KIM.

KIM

Yeah?

SHADE

I'm looking for John Evans.

KIM

What for? What's he done?

SHADE

Nothing...I'm just...

KIM

You one of his kids?

Shade nods her head yes. Kim smiles.

KIM

Oh well, for heaven's sake,
come in.

(calling out)

John! John--Trudi's here!

INSIDE THE HOUSE Shade walks into the den of heartbreaking
poverty.

SHADE

Shade, not Trudi.

KIM

(yelling)

Not Trudi, Shade!

John shuffles into the room. He smooths his hair back.

JOHN

Shadie Lynne. How're you?
Sit down. Kim, honey, get her
some pop. Want something to eat?

SHADE

I'm fine.

KIM

I'll fix her a BLT.

JOHN
Did you meet Kim?

KIM
Hi, I'm Kim.

SHADE
Nice to meet you.

Kim walks into the tiny kitchen where a yellow light
casts shadows on the walls.

JOHN
What a surprise. Never know,
do ya'?

SHADE
I need to ask a favor.
See--my sister Trudi is
away. And she sounds real
depressed--nothing for you to
worry about now--but I'd like
to go visit her. I could pay
you back, a little each week.

JOHN
I can't let you pay back.
How much you need?

SHADE
A lot. About fifty dollars.

John thinks a minute with his head down. He gets up.

JOHN
No problem. Wait right here.

He walks into the kitchen. Shade looks around nervously
at the dead environment. She hears bacon sizzling.
She hears the low murmur of arguing VOICES. She waits
uncomfortably long, then, finally walks out the door.

DOWN THE ROAD

Shade walks, no tears, but a deep disappointment.
Suddenly, in the distance, John's truck. He slows down
next to her. She looks at him and gets in the truck.

IN THE TRUCK John stares out the window as he drives.

JOHN
I'm so sorry. I haven't

worked in awhile--gals don't
like that in a man.

He pulls the money from his pocket and sets it on the
seat next to Shade.

JOHN (cont.)
Kim, she's alright. She
gets on my case, but I
deserve it. Let's go get
your ticket now.

Cautiously taking the money, Shade smiles at him.

SHADE
Thanks.

JOHN
Your ma's done a great job.
I...I wanted to see ya'll,
you girls...the more I waited,
the harder it got to face--

He looks at Shade's profile, then off into space.

JOHN (cont.)
Sure thought about you, though
Not a day's gone by--

Shade fidgets, uncomfortable.

JOHN (cont.)
Well, anyway. Glad I could help.

Shade smiles gratefully.

INT. LA REINA THEATER-DAY

ON SCREEN Elvia emerges from the sea and walks languidly
toward the shore. Her gown wet, her braids tangled
with seaweed. Her MONOLOGUE plays over the image.

IN THE THEATER Javier and Shade sit in separate rows,
facing the screen.

SHADE
My sister needs me right now.
I'm not leaving you out, it's
just something I have to do alone.

JAVIER
It's cool. Fine. Go on.

Shade leans over her seat to him.

SHADE

Now don't be like that!
Let's talk. Stop with the macho--

Javier turns around quickly. He glares at her.

JAVIER

Macho? Cause I'm Chicano you use that word, right? Maybe you're racist just like your sister. I haven't forgotten how she called me a wetback. Let's cut the bullshit-- you're ashamed of me. Yeah, we get along but there's a limit. And this is it--you're not gonna introduce your Mexican boyfriend to your sister. No way.

Shade is overcome with tears and surprise.

SHADE

How could you think that?

JAVIER

I offered to go with you, you said no, so let's just let it alone.

Javier gets up and starts away.

JAVIER (cont.)

Go by yourself, be by yourself.
But don't come around when you get back.

Shade turns around in her seat and faces the screen. The image of Elvia and her lyrical voice only open the floodgates of her feelings more.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY-NIGHT

Housed in a bunker and enshrined with bowling pins...

INT. BOWLING ALLEY-NIGHT

Hamlet does a little dance before letting go of his ball. Shade, suffering in silence, sits next to Nora who's keeping score.

SHADE (cont.)

Where did you meet this guy?

NORA

He owns a satellite dish company.

SHADE

That guy?? Oh brother.

Hamlet lets out a howl as he strikes. Nora wiggles up to the lane. Hamlet gently puts his arm around her waist as he sails past to keep her score. Shade eyes him suspiciously as he sits beside her.

HAMLET

Come bowling much?

SHADE

Never.

HAMLET

Aww, really? Why not--it's a hoot!

Shade shrugs.

HAMLET (cont.)

Naw, I know. You're one 'a' those matinee junkies.

Shade looks up, surprised. Then goes cool.

SHADE

How could I be? There's no movie theater in Deming.

HAMLET

Oh yes siree there is indeed. There's the La Reina where they show films made in Spanish--

He begins to mimic perfectly an out-of-sync movie with his lips moving ahead and behind his words.

HAMLET (cont.)

--and out-of-sync.

A smirk breaks on Shade's lips.

HAMLET (cont.)

like this--

(assuming a serious tone)

"Put back that gold".

His words and lips--out of time. Shade giggles.

HAMLET (cont.)
 Or Elvia Rivero--
 (a soft feminine voice)
 "...como si tal cosa..."

Again, out-of-sync. Shade's giggles turn to joy.

SHADE
 You know of Elvia Rivero??!!

HAMLET
 Oh si! Es muy romantica!
 Es muy bonita! Hermosa y
 sicaliptica! Es verdad?

SHADE
 Si!!!

HAMLET
 Your mama looks just like her.

Shade looks up at Nora, coaxing her gutter ball with her hands to no avail. She turns around and holds up her hands in a shrug and smiles warmly. Shade looks back at Hamlet's loving eyes on Nora.

NORA
 You're up Shade!

SHADE
 No!! I don't wanna bowl!

Hamlet lifts her out of her seat and onto the lane. Though she protests, Hamlet puts the ball in her hand and guides her swing. She lets the ball go--the SOUND of a few pins cracking together and a SQUEAL.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. TRAILER-DAWN

Shade, fully dressed, peers in to look upon Nora and Hamlet wrapped snugly in the cocoon of sleep.

EXT. HIGHWAY-DAY

A Greyhound bus cruises along the interstate.

SHADE (V.O.)
 He wasn't perfect, my dad, but
 he did come through for me this
 time. I couldn't tell Mom--she'd
 have freaked. The only thing
 worrying me was Javier--he just

SHADE (V.O.)
 didn't understand--there are some
 things in life a girl's gotta do alone.

EXT. EL PASO SCAPE-DAY

Not much of a cityscape, but impressive in comparison
 to Deming!

EXT. CAMDEN HOUSE-DAY

An old Spanish style residence. PREGNANT TEENAGERS,
 most seem cheerful, stroll the peaceful grounds.

INT. CAMDEN HOUSE/CAFETERIA-DAY

Shade looks over pleasant tables of girls talking, eating.
 Finally, she spots Trudi, sitting with a BEAUTIFUL GIRL,
 about 17, the only one here besides Shade who isn't
 pregnant. She is IVY. Everyone knows her. Pregnant
 girls pass and say hello, kiss her.

IVY
 I've already paid the first
 and last. It has a sauna and
 a rec' room stocked with fine
 young male action!

TRUDI
 Oh! I can't wait! Two
 more weeks till my due date
 and I'm outa here!

IVY
 IF you deliver on time. I was
 late 10 days, remember?

Trudi nods her head. Shade appears before her.

SHADE
 Hey.

TRUDI
 My god! Shade! What're
 you doing here?!

The sisters hug so happy to see each other. Shade is
 shocked to see how very pregnant Trudi is now. They
 look in each others faces and laugh.

TRUDI (cont.)
 This is my sister, Shade.
 This is Ivy. We're gonna be
 roommates soon as I get out.

Shade's face drops. She politely extends her hand.

SHADE

Oh...nice to meet you.

IVY

Yeah. Wow, you guys don't look a thing alike.

She gets up and collects several packages from clothes stores. She gives Trudi a faint peck on the cheek.

IVY (cont.)

Gotta dash. Hang in there.
You gonna feel so much better
to get rid of all that--
(she slaps Trudi's belly)
--and be able to wear cool
clothes again and lingerie!

The girls wave good-bye as Ivy struts out--a star!

TRUDI

Come on, let's go up to my
room. I wanna hear everything!

IN TRUDI'S ROOM

Trudi listens to Shade's story.

TRUDI (cont.)

Wow! My little sis' lost
her virginity! Does Mom know?

SHADE

I think she suspects.

TRUDI

No way! And she hasn't kicked
your ass?! Not fair!
(softening)
So, you really like this boy?

SHADE

No. I LOVE this boy.

TRUDI

Oh Shade, that's great.

SHADE

But he broke it off with me,
cause I wouldn't let him in
on this. I have a right to
a few private things.

Trudi is sympathetic. Then she grows dim and sulky.

TRUDI

At least he wants to be a
part of all of your life.
Nobody ever cared what I did.

SHADE

But a guy can't be everything.
I need you, Mom, and time alone.

Trudi frowns and shrugs. Her mood is suddenly sour.

SHADE (cont.)

Are you really gonna stay here
in El Paso, Trudi?

TRUDI

You bet I am. Ivy's a model.
She's great looking, huh?
Her agent's all excited about me.
She thinks I've got 'it'. Soon
as I have this baby--that's it.

SHADE

But, what about Mom and me?
We miss you, you know?

There is a strange stillness in the room.

TRUDI

Deming is a shit hole.
There's nothing there.

SHADE

Trudi, there IS something there!

TRUDI

Yeah, a lot of bad memories.

SHADE

The desert, Trudi...it's just
like you said. It's alive and
magic, it's not nothing.

Shade takes out the rock Dank gave Trudi from her bag.
Trudi looks at it scared as Shade offers it to her.

TRUDI

It was all bullshit, Shade.
This--

She grabs the rock from Shade. She slams it against
the wall. Pieces chip off and drop to the floor.

TRUDI (cont.)
 --is a fucking rock. A
 fucking ugly, pointless rock!
 Get it through your head!
 I'm not coming back, Shade.

Shade gets up, hurt. She walks to the door.

SHADE
 I gotta call Mom. She'll
 be worried.

TRUDI
 Yeah, tell her it didn't work.

SHADE
 She didn't send me.

TRUDI
 Yeah yeah.

SHADE
 Believe what you want.
 (turning to Trudi)
 So much has happened since
 you've been gone. Did you know
 Mom has a boyfriend? Oh, and
 guess who bought my ticket to come
 here--our dad. But as usual--you
 don't give a shit. As usual--you
 only care about yourself. What was
 I thinking?

Trudi stares down at her toes. Tears begin to well
 in her eyes but she doesn't dare show her vulnerability.
 Shade opens the door but just as she is about to walk
 out--a POPPING SOUND. Trudi gasps. Shade frowns and
 looks at her.

TRUDI
 Oh shit! Oh god--ummm,
 get me a towel like--quick!

Her bed is drenched in water. Shade races to the bathroom
 for a towel. She hurries back. Trudi soaks some of
 the water up from underneath her. The girls look at
 each other and laugh.

SHADE
 Now I really gotta call Mom!

Shade puts her hand on Trudi's belly cautiously. The
 sisters smile affectionately at each other.

TRUDI (cont.)
I'm so glad you're here.

EXT. HOSPITAL-NIGHT

Hamlet pulls his truck up in the driveway. Nora gives him a quick kiss.

HAMLET
Soo...I'll right here, huh?

Nora senses something in him, and deals with him the way she would a diner trying to decide menu items--direct, abrupt, impatient.

NORA
What?

HAMLET
This is...heavy. I mean I'm here, but it's heavy.

Nora impatiently gets out of the truck.

NORA
Look--my daughter's in labor, and YOU think it's heavy for YOU?

HAMLET
Hold on, goddammit!

She slams the door.

NORA
Maybe it's ALL too 'heavy' for you. Maybe you oughta just go on. Go.

Hamlet is furious. He gets out of the truck and runs after her.

HAMLET
You've just been waiting for this chance to run away. The minute things aren't rosy and I show I'm human--you're all set to throw me away. Is that your game, Nora?

NORA
Game? I don't have time for games, mister!

Hamlet swallows his rage and reaches out for her affectionately, but doesn't actually touch her.

HAMLET

Goddammit Woman, don't walk out on me. Now, I know you seen some bad times with guys, but don't set me up to pay for their ignorance.

Nora stops but doesn't look at him. Hamlet moves close to her carefully.

HAMLET (cont.)

It's about time you grow up, and stop bein' a victim of your past, lady. Don't walk out on me.

Nora lets down her guard. She turns to him, her eyes filled with desperate need for his comfort. He takes her in his arms and they hold each other tight, close, strong. She gently eases away and runs into the hospital.

INT. TRUDI'S HOSPITAL ROOM-NIGHT

Nora peers around the doorway to find Trudi, on her side, breathing with a hard contraction. She grips Shade's hand. Shade breathes with her and looks up and smiles at Nora. Trudi opens her eyes after her contraction subsides and reaches out--

TRUDI

Mommy!!!

Nora runs to her and holds Trudi in her arms. The moment is barely long enough when a WOMAN, Nora's age, and bearing a resemblance to her, runs in the door, out of breath. She is MS. MIRANDA. She moves into the room discreetly. Trudi looks up and smiles at her.

MS. MIRANDA

How you feeling, Trudi?

Trudi groans weakly, smiling.

NORA

Are you--?

MS. MIRANDA

I'm the adoptive mother, Mary Lou Miranda.

She smiles and offers her hand. Nora shakes it friendly.

TRUDI

This is my Mom, Nora.

(to Nora)

I picked Ms. Miranda to
take the baby cause she
reminded me of you.

Nora is unable to fight her tears now. She holds Trudi's
hand through a big contraction.

TRUDI (cont.)

Oh god, it hurts. I think it's
coming, Mom. I can feel it.

Shade looks on eagerly. Ms. Miranda leaps to her feet.

MS. MIRANDA

I'll go get the nurse!

NORA

You're doing great, honey.
Breathe deep, that's it.

TRUDI

It's coming, I gotta push.

NORA

Wait, Trudi. Don't push yet.

The NURSE walks in casual and smug.

NORA (cont.)

(to nurse)

She's got the urge to push.

NURSE

(patronizingly)

Well, well, it's not near time.

TRUDI

My baby is coming!

NURSE

Now Trudi, I just examined
you an hour ago and you were
only 4 centimeters dialated.

NORA

Lady, check her again, before
I check you! Got it?

Ms. Miranda smiles gleefully at Nora's spunk. The
nurse lifts the sheet off of Trudi. Suddenly--

NURSE

Well, come on girls, help her out! You--lift her from the back. And you each grab a leg. Okay Trudi--you're going to give me slow steady pushes...

But Trudi is on pure instinct and doesn't hear a word. She pushes with every muscle in body. Suddenly, GASPS and CRIES in the room.

SHADE

Oh my god!

NURSE

The head's out, Trudi. The baby has lots of black hair!

Trudi cries as she pushes one last push and then, the excited cries and the tiny SQUALL of a newborn BABY.

NORA

It's a girl!! A little girl!!

The nurse cuts the cord. Trudi reaches out for the baby. The baby is delivered to the arms of Ms. Miranda. Trudi swallows all her feelings down. Nora rushes to Trudi and holds her.

CLOSE ON Shade washed with the impact of this experience.

EXT. HIGHWAY-DAY

Hamlet's truck cruises along the highway. He sings mournfully to a lonesome country SONG. Suddenly, a little girls' VOICE sings with him.

IN THE TRUCK

Shade and Nora sit in the truck with Hamlet. Nora looks out on the road, unusually pensive and quiet as Hamlet and Shade sing mockingly with each other.

Then--Shade stops singing, as she reads a SIGN on the highway: NATURAL DAY-GLO ROCKS, 2 MILES.

SHADE

Day-glo rocks...that jerk!
That's the guy, Mom!

Nora looks at Shade puzzled.

SHADE (cont.)

The guy who ditched Trudi!

EXT. DUSTY ROAD-DAY

Hamlets' truck winds up the dusty road past yet another beckoning SIGN, boasting an array of day-glo minerals. In the distance--the rock museum.

OUTSIDE THE ROCK MUSEUM

Hamlet, Shade, and Nora get out of the truck.

NORA

What makes you think this
is where the guy is?

INT. ROCK MUSEUM-DAY

Shade barges in the door. Persi is bent over a table handwriting a map of the local terrain. Shade and the young girl check each other out. Then--Shade sees Cecil tending to a black light above a shelf of fluorescent rocks. She loses it.

SHADE

You monster!! You're the
one who ditched my sister!
He's the guy, Mom! He gave
Trudi a rock just like these.

Nora begins to fume. Cecil backs away from the angry women.

CECIL

I think that you got me
confused with someone else.

SHADE

Your name is Dank, right?

CECIL

No.

SHADE

Where did you get these rocks?

Cecil, unwilling to deal with confrontation, turns away from them. Persi takes over.

PERSI

They were given to us, sorta,
by an Australian rock hunter.

Cecil sits down before them, polishing rocks as he begins to tell the story in a detached tone. Shade, Nora, and Hamlet listen.

CECIL

We had just spent two days at Carlsbad, hoping to see the bats return to the caves from Mexico.

HAMLET

The bats migrate back in February.

CECIL

Yeah. Sometimes earlier. Well, they didn't show, so we split.

EXT. DESERT-DAY

Cecil and his girl drive their blue ragged sedan across the barren desert.

CECIL (V.O.)

Driving back we spotted this jeep parked at this abandoned quarry.

ANGLE ON Dank's jeep, indeed left here ominously.

CECIL (V.O.)

My lady said, 'Hey Cecil, it's the jeep of that fella who gave us the day-glo rock.'

ANGLE ON Cecil and Persi going through Dank's stuff.

CECIL (V.O.)

We went looking for him but it was empty out there. We liberated the rocks in the jeep before the cops came. Well, they would have just tossed them. They wouldn't have understood how precious these rocks are.

EXT. QUARRY-NIGHT

Dank cautiously climbs over a barb-wired fence, only to get nabbed at the knees by a smaller one mischievously placed below that one. His jeans are torn and blood trickles from his gashes. He walks on.

Dank walks carefully with his mineral light scouring the boulders and walls of rock abandoned here. He points his light along a stack of boulders and glinting brightly are beautiful fluorescent red, orange, gold rocks. Below the boulders is a mound of powdery dust. He moves in carefully. He wades through the dust. He is just about to reach for the first step of boulder when he begins to sink. He grasps, he reaches for anything,

but there is nothing to get hold of. His hands grab air. He is slowly swallowed up under a mound of powder.

CECIL (V.O.)

He had been there for a week
when they dragged him out of
the quarry. They sent his
body and everything but these
back to Austrailia.

IN THE MUSEUM Shade, Nora, and Hamlet sit there with
Cecil and Persi in reverent silence.

CECIL (cont.)

These rocks are selling good.
There are a lot of Deadheads
in the area who will buy anything
that glows in the dark.

SHADE

His girlfriend just had a baby girl.

PERSI

(sympathetic)

Oh...

Nora takes her young daughter's hand.

NORA

Come on, baby. We gotta run.

CECIL

Hey, here--take this. This
one has four different colors.

Shade clutches the rock and smiles at him. Hamlet puts
his arm around Nora and they walk out of the museum.

OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM

Cecil stands in the doorway. Persi's dress blows in
the wind. The landscape behind all of them. The big
big sky. Shade breaks the big silence.

SHADE

Mom, he didn't leave her.

NORA

No. He didn't. Not really.

SHADE

We have to tell her.

NORA

In time, honey. In time.

EXT. HIGHWAY-DAY

Inside the truck, Nora curls under Hamlet's warm, welcoming arm as they approach Deming. Shade stares out the window.

CLOSE ON Shade as she looks out on the unending landscape. She opens the window and leans her head out. The wind blowing her hair.

EXT. TRAILER-DAY

Hamlet's truck drives down the dusty trailer park road. Every trailer now has a Humphrey satellite dish in their tiny yard or corrugated roof. Nora comes home with a heaviness, with a new vulnerability, with so much more than she ever had before. They all get out of the truck, but Shade lingers behind.

ANGLE ON Hamlet opening the door of the trailer for Nora. She walks in first, and he is right behind her. He turns to look for Shade, then leaves the door open.

INT. LA REINA MOVIE THEATER-DAY

Shade sits in the empty theater and watches.

ON SCREEN Elvia with her eyes of deep melancholy, that eternal longing for something lost, looking out on the Rio Grande, the wind blowing her hair, her dress slapping against her ankles. Pure grace and nobility.

EXT. DESERT-DAY

In nearly an identical pose, the desert wind in her hair, Shade looks out on the desert. Then, she slowly walks the same terrain where her sister's baby was conceived. The same terrain where she lost her virginity. The same magic terrain where Dank found wonder.

In the distance, shooting bows from an arrow into the air--Javier. Shade runs to him. As they fall into each others arms, the desert begins to glow. Ordinary rocks slowly turn from blank stone to shimmering vibrant colors. Wild flowers bleed into vivid blossoms.

The sky--a million hues.

THE END