Here and There

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FIRST DRAFT
March 9, 1990

FADE IN:

EXT UNION STATION -- LOS ANGELES DAY

Trains pull in and out of Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

CUT TO:

INT UNION STATION DAY

The waiting room of the station is from another era -- a lot of oak, tile floors, a big schedule board blaring over the gateways to the tracks.

WALTER STANLEY, thirtyish, waits on one of the benches, reading a book. Walter's trim, well-kept, with something about him that we instinctively like -- a kindness in his eyes that is inviting and comforting.

He looks up at the clock. One minute to three. He looks over at a large, wrapped gift, waiting beside him like a dog. He pats it.

He looks back up at the clock. The big hand TICKS over to three o'clock.

VOICE
(on p.a.)
Amtrak train 373 for Phoenix, Albuquerque, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Philadelphia and New York is now arriving on track 26. Passengers for train 373 have thirty minutes to board.

Walter closes his book. He straightens his coat, picks up his bag and present, and heads for the tracks.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET -- NEW YORK DAY

A mid-town street in New York, jammed with traffic.

There is a particularly vicious burst of horn HONKING as one taxi says to hell with everything and hauls it up on the curb, short-cutting over to a side street.

CUT TO:

INT TAXI DAY

Inside the taxi, the CABBIE white-knuckles the wheel as he BUMPS back onto the street.

A VOICE encourages him from the back seat.

TERESA
Big tip, huge tip, ENORMOUS tip!

TERESA VILLEGAS, the passenger, is about thirty. She's pretty as hell, American with a vaguely European bearing and a temperament New York has stretched as tight and thin as the skin of a balloon.

CABBIE
Can't be done. Can't make it. Never make it.

TERESA
What kind of attitude is that truck? TRUCK!!

The Cabbie snaps his head back just in time to see a truck pulling out of an alley in front of them. He locks up the brakes.

CUT TO:

EXT TRAIN PLATFORM -- L.A. DAY

WALTER is on the platform. A PORTER takes his bag and reaches for the wedding present.

WALTER
(pulling it back)
I'll take care of it.

He steps up close to the train, bends down, and looks up and down the track, as if inspecting the wheels and rails.

The Porter looks at him curiously.

Walter PATS the side of the train a few times. He nods to the Porter.

WALTER (cont.)
Looks good to me.

PORTER
We were hoping you'd like it.

Walter climbs on.

CUT TO:

INT AIRPORT NIGHT

TERESA is at an airline ticket counter.

TERESA
(to the CLERK)
Your airline can either find my reservation, put me in first class for free, or get its butt sued off by a lawyer with one hell of a sense of vengeance. Me.

CLERK
I promise you'll have a seat, okay?

TERESA
Okay. Thank you.
(a little guilty)
I'm not actually a lawyer.

CUT TO:

INT TRAIN DAY

WALTER settles into his seat on the train. The seat next to him is empty. He sets the wedding present on it.

CUT TO:

INT AIRPLANE DAY

TERESA settles into her seat on the airplane. The one next to her is vacant also.

She opens her briefcase, pulls out a sheaf of paperwork, and PLOPS it on the empty seat.

CUT TO:

INT TRAIN NIGHT

WALTER is relaxed in his seat, looking out the window, watching as the hills and trees and lakes whisk by in the dark.

CUT TO:

INT AIRPLANE DAY

TERESA works, papers spread out on both seats.

CUT TO:

EXT ST. LOUIS DAY

The Gateway Arch, a huge mass of stainless steel glittering in the sun, stands beside the Mississippi.

CUT TO:

EXT CHURCH DAY

Bells TOLL, STRAGGLERS hurry into a church as a wedding is about to begin.

A taxi pulls up in front. TERESA jumps out.

CUT TO:

INT CHURCH ENTRANCE DAY

TERESA hurries in the main entrance, where various WEDDING TYPES wait for her.

SOMEBODY shoves a bouquet in her hands, SOMEBODY ELSE grabs her by the shoulders and pushes her down the aisle.

CUT TO:

INT CHURCH DAY

The wedding, large and lavish, is now in progress. CLAIRE, the bride, and JEFF, the groom, both in their mid-thirties, stand at the altar, suitably attired.

TERESA stands to the bride's left, the maid of honor.

WALTER is to the groom's right, the best man.

Walter's nervous. With his right hand he fumbles with the wedding bands, holding them tight, checking every few seconds to make sure they're both there, putting them in his pants pocket, taking them out again.

The ceremony plows on, led by a BORED PRIEST.

Walter looks to his right, where a VIDEO CREW tapes the whole affair. This makes him more nervous.

He slips the rings into his pants pocket again, then decides once and for all he doesn't like them there and pulls them out. As he does, one of the rings snags on a thread and sticks, balancing for a second on his fingertip.

Walter snaps his hand shut, trying to grab it, but it bounces off his palm.

The ring hits the floor with a soft PING. No one but Walter seems to notice as it rolls away, making a graceful arc around the bride and groom before coming to rest at Teresa's feet.

Walter's eyes bug out.

He thinks. He looks over at the video crew, who so far are oblivious.

He thinks some more.

He clears his throat softly, trying to get Teresa's attention.

She doesn't hear.

He tries again, a little louder. The priest looks at him, irritated, and carries on with the ceremony.

Walter tries again. Now the bride and groom cast furtive glances over at him, but still nothing from Teresa.

Walter tries again, louder still. This time Teresa hears it and leans back a tiny bit, looking past the bride and groom. She gives Walter a Stern Look and faces forward again.

Walter tries one last time, this one a full-fledged cough.

Teresa snaps her head back, giving him a what-the-hell-do-you-want-and-can't-it-wait-anyway look.

Walter bobs his head, pointing down toward her feet with his eyes.

She sees the ring. She looks up at him in surprise.

He shrugs.

She doesn't know what to do.

He makes a kicking motion with his foot.

She understands. She edges forward, a few inches at a time, dragging the ring along with her foot until she has a clear shot.

The priest continues. Walter is getting desperate. He extends his right foot, making a blockade, begging for the ring.

Teresa moves her foot to the left of the ring and gives it a hard knock. It skids across the floor toward Walter, bumps into his shoe --

PRIEST
-- the eternity of love. May I have the rings?

-- and he scoops it up, passing both rings to the priest without a pause.

The ceremony goes on.

Walter looks back at Teresa, supremely grateful.

She smiles.

He smiles back and looks away.

She doesn't look away.

She notices him.

After a second, she turns and faces forward again.

Just as she does, Walter turns and looks at her.

He notices her.

CUT TO:

INT RECEPTION HALL NIGHT

A large wedding reception -- BRIDE, GROOM, bad BAND, big cake, DRUNK UNCLE or two.

TERESA is there, moving through the crowd, looking for someone.

CUT TO:

EXT RECEPTION HALL NIGHT

The reception room opens onto a terrace which overlooks the Mississippi River.

WALTER's on the terrace, PEOPLE and SOUND from the party drifting out toward him as he stares over the water.

VOICE (o.s.)
They want us to dance.

Walter turns. TERESA stands in the doorway to the reception.

TERESA
The photographer. You know -- best man, maid of honor. That whole thing.

WALTER
Oh. Sure.

CUT TO:

INT RECEPTION NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA take the dance floor, to scattered applause. The band plays a slow number and they dance.

WALTER
We never officially met. I'm Walter. Jeff and I went to UCLA together.

TERESA
Teresa.

WALTER
You weren't at the rehearsal dinner.

TERESA
Just got in this morning. Couldn't get off work.

The PHOTOGRAPHER steps up to them.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Can you dance a little closer?

WALTER
Closer?

PHOTOGRAPHER
I just need one shot.

They move closer together and he hoists the camera. He's about to snap the picture, but then suddenly drops to one knee.

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont.)
Reloading! Don't move!

Walter and Teresa continue to dance, very close, waiting for him.

WALTER
So what do you do?

TERESA
I work with Claire. I'm a turn-around consultant.

WALTER
A what?

TERESA
I work with overlevaraged companies, you know, helping them dig out from under debt so they can actually run the place instead of just being breakup bait.

WALTER
(no clue)
Oh, sure.
(pause)
Is it a good job?

TERESA
What do you mean, fast-trackwise?

WALTER
When you come in in the morning, can you put your feet up on the desk and read the newspaper?

TERESA
Uh, sure.

WALTER
Then it's a good job.

TERESA
(smiles)
I never thought of it that way.

Their eyes meet and part -- they're still dancing very close.

WALTER
(to the Photographer)
How's it going?

PHOTOGRAPHER
Charging flash! Don't move!

TERESA
(to Walter)
What do you do?

WALTER
I'm a counselor in a runaway shelter.

TERESA
Really? That must be very rewarding.

WALTER
Actually, the pay kinda sucks.

TERESA
No, I meant -- you know, emotionally rewarding.

WALTER
Contrary to popular belief, most children are like that kid in "The Omen."

TERESA
So why do you do it?

WALTER
They tell me I'm good at it.

She smiles, liking that answer. They're still practically cheek to cheek.

There is a bright FLASH as the photographer takes the shot.

Walter and Teresa blink as he dissolves back into the crowd.

They continue to dance, but don't pull back to a more comfortable distance.

WALTER (cont.)
We dance well.

TERESA
We're the right heights.

WALTER
They say that's the key.

TERESA
(pause, then casually)
So where are you based?

WALTER
Los Angeles. You?

TERESA
New York.

The song abruptly ends. They stop dancing.

WALTER
Oh.

TERESA
Yeah.

The band kicks into a faster number. DANCERS swarm onto the floor.

WALTER
Well -- thanks.

TERESA
My pleasure.

They smile and back away, retreating to opposite sides of the room.

Walter steps up to a bar.

WALTER
Bourbon and water.

The BARTENDER serves it and Walter gulps it down.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HALL,

TERESA steps up to another bar.

TERESA
Vodka tonic.

The BARTENDER serves it, but before Teresa can pick it up, CLAIRE, the bride, intercepts it and takes a good long belt.

TERESA (cont.)
There is no God.

CLAIRE
Tell me about it. I can't believe I let Jeff talk me into doing this in his home town.

TERESA
Did you see him smile? You see him smile and you have to smile yourself. You just have to. It's like a law or something.

CLAIRE
Who <u>are</u> half these people? I can't even feel my fake smile muscles any more.

TERESA
And he's not an investment banker or <u>anything</u>.

CLAIRE
If there's a next time -- Vegas. In and out. Boom.

TERESA
But he lives in Los Angeles!

CLAIRE
Who?

TERESA
That Walter person.

CLAIRE
Walter? He doesn't exactly fit the pattern.

TERESA
Exactly.

BACK ON WALTER'S SIDE OF THE ROOM,

Walter is still at the bar. JEFF, the groom, is next to him.

WALTER
So. You happy?

JEFF
Happiest God damn day of my life.

WALTER
No kidding?

JEFF
Walter, I'm so happy that if anybody fucked with me I think I'd kill 'em with my bare hands.

WALTER
Wow. That's pretty happy.

Jeff pulls out a cigarette.

JEFF
If you see Claire coming, cough or something.

WALTER
You married her and you still haven't told her you smoke?

JEFF
Never found the right moment.

He lights up and takes a deep puff.

JEFF (cont.)
What about you? How's Michele?

WALTER
Fine. She sends her regards. She had a "Young and the Restless" audition.

JEFF
You guys okay?

WALTER
Yeah. Sure. I mean, you know, we've got a place and everything.

While talking to Jeff, Walter has been keeping one eye on Teresa, who's still on the other side of the room. She walks, she talks, she laughs, she is beautiful.

JEFF
Well, I'm glad to hear that.

WALTER
(distracted)
I said we're fine, okay?

Jeff looks at him, curious. He follows Walter's gaze across the room to Teresa.

Teresa looks up from her conversation and locks eyes with Walter.

Separated by the expanse of the dance floor in between, they both look away.

CUT TO:

EXT VENICE NEIGHBORHOOD -- L.A. DAY

The Pacific Ocean is dotted by diamonds in the morning sun.

An alley runs parallel to the beach in a Venice neighborhood. It's alive with BEACH DWELLERS; there's a little community that thrives back here. There are a few houses and small brick apartment buildings without ocean views and far enough up the alley from the sand for the rent to be affordable.

One of the houses is a smallish two story with windows on the upper floor like eyes and a front porch like a smile. WALTER comes out the door and bounds down the steps.

A lunch wagon is parked just down the alley. The LUNCH GUY leans out as Walter approaches. He has a cup of coffee in hand.

LUNCH GUY
Hey! How's the world traveller?

WALTER
Glad to be home.

LUNCH GUY
I bet. Now, they speak English all the way out there in St. Louis, right?

Walter ignores that, taking his coffee and paying for it without breaking stride.

A MEXICAN WOMAN, about twenty-five, sits at the side of the alley doing a crossword puzzle. She has a tv table set up in front of her, sugary churros are for sale.

WOMAN
"Staircase part." Four letters.

WALTER
"Step."

WOMAN
Nope.

Walter stares at her, thinking. He drops a dollar in a box and takes a churro. He breaks off a chunk and drops it in his coffee.

He turns and walks away, eating and thinking.

Finally, over his shoulder:

WALTER
"Rail."

WOMAN
Rail!

She writes it down.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- L.A. DAY

The main room of the shelter has a few cheap couches and chairs, a ping pong table, a tv, and an enormous ashtray in the middle of the floor. The RUNAWAYS, kids from twelve to seventeen of both sexes, are spread around the room, some peaceful, most not. The COUNSELORS and THERAPISTS, in their mid to late twenties, do their best to keep the chaos controlled.

RUTH CARVER, fortyish, a bundle of nerves and caffeine, passes by the desk in the mostly shabby main office.

RUTH
Any calls? Any messages? Any reason to live?

VIVIAN, mid-thirties, terminally bored, looks up.

VIVIAN
Yes, yes, and sex.

RUTH
Speak for yourself.
(sets a newspaper on Vivian's desk)
This is a newspaper. Note how fresh and clean it is. Guard it with your life, I'll read it at lunch. And send Walter in as soon as he gets here.

She goes into the office.

WALTER comes into the main room of the shelter and heads toward the office.

TWO BOYS, twelve or so, wrestle in front of the tv.

WALTER
No body slams, Mario.

He reaches Vivian's desk, scoops up the newspaper, and plows into Ruth's office without knocking.

VIVIAN
(long after he's gone)
Hey --

CUT TO:

INT RUTH'S OFFICE DAY

RUTH is at her desk, drinking a cup of coffee and smoking a cigarette like it's morpheine.

WALTER is stretched out on her sofa, ripping through her newspaper, dumping each mangled section on the floor as he finishes with it.

WALTER
Did you see I got four foster placements on Friday? That's got to be some kind of record.

RUTH
Do you remember that seminar in Chicago?

WALTER
I'm still working on Anthony. If I place him, you owe me a raise. Not that you don't already.

RUTH
You remember? The one I dragged you to in Chicago?

WALTER
Sure, I remember. That's where you met Richard.

RUTH
Yes, correct, that's where I met the scum-sucking pig.

WALTER
Ruth, <u>you</u> broke up with <u>him</u>.

RUTH
That's beside the point. The scum-sucking pig has now found another aspect of my life he can destroy.

WALTER
What are you talking about?

RUTH
He offered you a job.

She picks up a letter from the desk and hands it to him.

RUTH (cont.)
Came on Friday.

WALTER
(reading)
Wow. They pay that kind of money in Chicago?

RUTH
Apparently so. I hope the son of a bitch has a coronary by Thursday. Don't do it, Walter. This place would go into the crapper without you.

WALTER
Relax. Why would I want to move?

He gives her back the letter.

WALTER (cont.)
This is home. Ash.

He leaves. She looks at him curiously, not understanding that last remark.

Her cigarette ash drops into her lap.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET -- N.Y. DAY

A six story apartment building roosts over one corner of a block on West End Avenue up in the mid-eighties. The place is in good shape, well-tended flowers growing in boxes on the window sills.

People live here.

TERESA pops out of an alley, riding a red bike. She stops in front of the building and hops off. She chains the bike to a cast iron gate and heads into the building.

A BICYCLE THIEF wanders past, suspicious as can be. Teresa gives him a Downtown Look. He puts his hands up innocently and backs away.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S APARTMENT DAY

A big, rambling, pre-war apartment, the kind you have to watch the obituaries to find. It's packed with every object its occupant has ever obtained in his entire life.

TERESA comes in. She looks both ways.

TERESA
Hello?

No reply. She goes immediately to the kitchen. She opens a cupboard over the sink. Two cans fall out, but she has positioned her left hand to catch them. She pulls a garbage bag out of the cabinet, shoves the cans back in, and slams it shut.

She reaches under the stove, finds a box of Hostess Cupcakes, and tosses them in the garbage bag.

She goes into the living room and reaches under the couch, feeling for a place she knows is there. She finds it and pulls out a carton of cigarettes.

Suddenly a BOOMING VOICE thunders from the doorway to the apartment.

VOICE (o.s.)
Bruja! Sali, bruja!

Teresa looks up. MAXIMO VILLEGAS stands in the doorway to the apartment, mortified. Maximo's in his mid-sixties, a big old Argentine lion of a man, more European than Latin looking.

TERESA
Excuse me. Was I out of the room when the cardiologist recommended cigarettes?

MAXIMO
(he speaks in Spanish, which is subtitled)
They're mine! I paid for them in cash! This is America, damn you!

TERESA
Speak English.

She goes to the chimney and reaches up inside.

MAXIMO
(Spanish, subtitled)
No. I don't have to. Dying men do what they want.

TERESA
You're not dying.

She pulls another carton of cigarettes out of the chimney.

TERESA (cont.)
But if you want to so bad, there are faster ways.

MAXIMO
(Spanish, subtitled)
What gives you the right to come into a man's house and steal his possessions!?

TERESA
I'm family. I also have the right to borrow money and not pay it back.
(kisses him)
Wish me luck. I have an actual, real-live date.

MAXIMO
(English, and from now on he speaks it)
Who is he?

TERESA
Just some guy.

She heads for the door.

MAXIMO
Tere, would you possibly mind -- no. Forget it.

TERESA
What?

MAXIMO
Never mind. Go on your date. Have a nice dinner. God bless.

TERESA
Come on, Max, what is it?

MAXIMO
I'm just a little faint.

TERESA
Why?

MAXIMO
It's breakfast.

TERESA
What about it?

MAXIMO
I haven't eaten it. Or lunch. Or dinner, to be perfectly honest.

TERESA
Max.

MAXIMO
I'll just go to bed. Don't give it two thoughts.

She looks at her watch.

TERESA
What if I make some empanadas?

MAXIMO
No. Honestly. You'll miss your date.

She drops her bag and heads for the kitchen.

TERESA
No I won't. Chicken or beef?

MAXIMO
Beef.

TERESA
No problem. Take me five minutes.

MAXIMO
With diced onions, green olives, and those little raisins they have at the market on eighty-third.

She leans out the kitchen door and looks at him.

MAXIMO (cont.)
I can't eat them otherwise!

She comes back into the room, picks up her bag, and heads for the door.

MAXIMO (cont.)
No! You'll miss your date!

TERESA
I won't miss anything. I'll just -- postpone. Olives, right?

MAXIMO
Green!

She leaves. He smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- L.A. NIGHT

Nighttime. WALTER, on his front porch, watches as the neighborhood puts itself to bed.

He taps the porch light, which has a short in it, and the bulb flickers to life.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE NIGHT

The inside of the house, which we see now for the first time, is tastefully if a bit eccentrically decorated. It's a family homestead mingled with a bachelor haunt -- an afghan hangs over the couch and a basketball hoop over the empty dining room.

WALTER comes into the house, puts out a light, and heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM NIGHT

MICHELE, mid-twenties, pretty like a mannequin and with the same emotional range, is in bed. She sleeps on her back, in perfect repose, an eye shade over her eyes.

WALTER's putting away his clothes. He hangs his pants on the rack, on the empty bar next to Michele's.

He puts his shoes in the closet, in the empty slot among Michele's.

He puts himself in the bed, in the empty space next to Michele.

He looks over at her.

He props himself up on one elbow and leans over for a kiss.

MICHELE
(from behind the eye shade)
I've got a "Knots Landing" audition at seven-thirty.

He stops in mid-pucker.

WALTER
Sorry.

He moves back to his side of the bed and turns out the light.

The room is pitch black for a moment, then there is the muted RUSTLING of sheets.

MICHELE
It's a recurring role.

WALTER
Sorry.

The rustling stops.

CUT TO:

INT TAXI NIGHT

TERESA rides in the back of a taxi with A GUY, mid-thirties, a smarmy looking corporate type.

TERESA
Sorry about my dog. I forgot to tell you business suits frighten him.

GUY
He didn't break the skin.
(new subject)
So you work with Claire, Teresa?

TERESA
It's pronounced "Teraysa."

GUY
Tereesa.

TERESA
Teraysa.

GUY
(winks)
Gotcha.

Pause.

GUY (cont.)
So, we live in the same neighborhood!

TERESA
You live close by?

GUY
Couple blocks.

TERESA
Well. Well.

GUY
Convenient, huh?

TERESA
Yes, I guess it is.

GUY
(winks)
Gotcha.

Teresa sighs.

CUT TO:

EXT OFFICE BUILDING -- N.Y. DAY

A midtown office building in Manhattan.

CUT TO:

INT HARRIMAN BROWN CONFERENCE ROOM DAY

TERESA is in the conference room of Harriman Brown, a Respectable Consulting Firm. Seen through the windows, a meeting is breaking up, LAWYER and MBA TYPES pack up their briefcases and head for the door.

TERESA is met in the hallway by CLAIRE, the bride from the wedding. They walk together.

TERESA
Thanks for the set-up with Dr. Hell. My dog and I ordered pizza.

CLAIRE
Oh, Christ. How are you supposed to get to know anybody if you won't actually eat a meal with them?

TERESA
He kept saying "gotcha."

CLAIRE
Don't be so choosy. I read in Harper's once that for every person in the world there are fifty thousand perfect matches.

TERESA
Yeah, well, none of mine live in New York.

CLAIRE
Did you hear about Walter?

TERESA
Walter who?

CLAIRE
Jeff's friend. His girlfriend got a part on a tv show.

TERESA
I'm delighted for her.

CLAIRE
So was she. She moved out on him while he was at work one day.

Teresa stops.

TERESA
When was this?

CLAIRE
Couple months ago. Jeff just heard.

Teresa thinks for a second, then starts walking again.

TERESA
Nah. He lives three thousand miles away.

CLAIRE
So what? You'll be out there for the merger meetings, you should get together with him.

TERESA
Oh, right. What am I gonna do, just call him up and say "remember me?"

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. DAY

WALTER sits on his front porch, talking on the telephone while he bats a ping pong ball back and forth with a BEACH GUY.

WALTER
Sure I do! From the wedding, right? How are you?
(pause)
You are? Well, you sure got nice weather.
(pause)
Oh yeah? Hang on a second, let me check my schedule.

The ping pong ball hits him in the head.

WALTER (cont.)
Looks good.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- BATHROOM DAY

WALTER is in a bathroom, staring into a mirror. He's nervous, screwing with his hair, trying to get a particularly independent cowlick to stay in place.

After several attempts, he succeeds.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- RUTH'S OFFICE DAY

WALTER comes out of the bathroom and pokes his head in Ruth's office.

WALTER
I'm gone.

RUTH looks up from a staggering amount of paperwork.

RUTH
What?

WALTER
I've got a Very Important Lunch Date, remember? You're taking my group? I told you several times yesterday, then again this morning?

She looks at him blankly.

WALTER (cont.)
I left the little Post-It? I put the memo on the computer? None of this is ringing a bell?

RUTH
Who are you?

WALTER
Ruth, please. I've got a Very Important Lunch Date.

He leaves. VIVIAN drops more forms on Ruth's desk.

RUTH
(to Vivian)
What's a "date?"

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- MAIN ROOM DAY

WALTER comes into the main room of the shelter. From down the hall, an UNHOLY RUCKUS breaks out -- a kid SHOUTS, other kids SCREAM.

WALTER
(looking at his watch)
Jesus, not <u>now</u>.

There is the sound of many feet THUNDERING down the hall toward the main room. Walter heads that way. He reaches the mouth of the hallway, where ANTHONY, fifteen or so, is backing away from a group of COUNSELORS and KIDS who pursue him from a safe distance.

WALTER (cont.)
(annoyed)
Look, I've got a Very Important --

RITO, late twenties, a counselor, SHOUTS to Walter.

RITO
Keep back, Walter, he's got a knife!

Anthony whirls, brandishing the knife.

WALTER
-- Lunch Date.

Anthony looks around, panicky. He's trapped in the middle of the hallway, the Crowd at one end, Walter at the other.

ANTHONY
You heard him, man! Back off!

WALTER
Take it easy, Anthony.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM,

away from all the commotion, the front door opens. TERESA pokes her head inside.

She takes a few steps into the room and stops, noticing the action.

BACK AT THE HALLWAY,

Anthony takes an aggressive step toward Walter. Walter looks closely at the knife in his hand.

ANTHONY
I'll cut you, man! I will!

WALTER
Actually, I don't think you can.

ANTHONY
You bet your ass I can!

WALTER
I'd be willing to bet money you can't.

ANTHONY
Why the hell not?

WALTER
'Cause that's a butter knife.

ANTHONY
Keep back!

WALTER
Anthony, it's a butter knife.

ANTHONY
So what?!

WALTER
So what are you gonna do? Spread me all over the floor? Give it to me.

ANTHONY
Fuck off!

WALTER
Okay. Make your demands.

ANTHONY
Huh?

WALTER
Money, a parachute, release of political prisoners -- that sort of thing.

ANTHONY
I'm pissed off, man!

WALTER
Well, what's up?

Anthony looks at him, a bit taken aback by this frontal approach.

ANTHONY
(thinks)
Well -- they won't listen to me. I get too much quiet time. I don't want to be quiet! I got shit to say.

WALTER
Yeah? I think somebody'd probably listen to you, if you gave me the knife.

Rito takes a step forward.

RITO
I'll talk to him. Anthony, I'll talk to you, man.

WALTER
See? Rito'll talk to you. Come on, give me the knife.

Anthony softens. He'd kind of like to hand the knife over, but he looks around at the crowd watching him.

ANTHONY
I can't just give it to you.

WALTER
Okay. Sell it to me. I give you five bucks, you give me the knife.

ANTHONY
Say what?

Walter digs a five out of his pocket.

Anthony looks at him suspiciously. Walter holds out the money. Anthony snatches it.

Walter puts out his hand, asking for the knife.

Anthony gives it to him and the crowd relaxes.

Teresa, watching from the other side of the room, is impressed.

WALTER
(jabbing Anthony with the butter knife)
Next time you come on my street, you're margarine.

Anthony smiles. Rito steps forward and Walter turns Anthony over to him.

As the crowd disperses, Walter turns around and sees Teresa standing over near the door, lit by the afternoon sun coming through the window.

ANOTHER KID passing by Walter looks Teresa up and down and lets out a low whistle.

Walter gives him a hard elbow in the ribs.

CUT TO:

EXT A RESTAURANT -- L.A. DAY

WALTER and TERESA are eating lunch at a patio restaurant in Walter's neighborhood.

WALTER
Oh, I didn't actually buy the house. Couldn't on my salary. It was my family's. I grew up in it.

TERESA
So you live with your parents?

WALTER
No, I live alone.

TERESA
I don't understand. Your parents -- passed away?

WALTER
Divorced. Retreated to neutral corners. Seattle and San Diego. They were too polite to go to court over the house, and I was going to college here, so I stayed in it. And I just kept staying, I guess.

TERESA
You never wanted to leave L.A.?

WALTER
Well, I think my family likes the idea that I kinda keep the light in the window, you know? They've got a lot of stuff in the attic. And besides, I like L.A.

TERESA
Um hm.

WALTER
You don't?

TERESA
I think it's really -- bright.

WALTER
That's a new one. Usually it's "nothing's open very late," and "you have to drive everywhere."

TERESA
Well, those were next.

WALTER
Poor L.A. Everybody makes fun of it, then they move here and take all the good parking spots.

TERESA
Well, I don't think anybody actually moves here out of choice.

WALTER
You lookin' for a fight?

TERESA
Come on, Walter, honestly. If you had your choice of living in New York or Los Angeles --

WALTER
New York?! The streets blow up!

TERESA
Have you ever been there?

WALTER
No, but I've seen "The Equalizer."

TERESA
At least we don't have drive-in shootings.

WALTER
That's "drive-by."

TERESA
Whatever. How can you live in a city so convenient you don't even have to get out of your car to kill somebody?

WALTER
You're definitely looking for a fight.

TERESA
No I'm not, I'm just suggesting that as a city like New York, L.A. is a complete and utter failure.

WALTER
You wanna see somethin'?

CUT TO:

EXT LAKE HOLLYWOOD DAY

WALTER and TERESA are in a park of some kind, walking on a service road that cuts through the foothills.

TERESA
Where are we going?

WALTER
You'll see.

He cuts off the service road and ducks through a hole in a high fence that runs right through the trees.

TERESA
What's that?

WALTER
Come on.

She follows him through. They make their way down a narrow path.

TERESA
What is this place?

WALTER
Patience ain't your long suit, is it?

He leads her through a break in the trees, and all at once they see it --

-- Lake Hollywood, a big, shimmering body of water surrounded by forest and hills that looks like it should be in Oregon, not in the heart of the city.

WALTER (cont.)
You know the lake Raymond Chandler wrote about in "Farewell, My Lovely?" This is it. It's a reservoir now. See, you can't think of L.A. in terms of New York, 'cause it's just something else entirely. Check it out. Mountains up there, ocean down there --

TERESA
What ocean?

WALTER
(pointing)
That ocean.

TERESA
I can't see an ocean.

WALTER
It's right there.

TERESA
All I can see is a big, thick layer of lemon cake frosting.

WALTER
Past that.

TERESA
There is no past that.

WALTER
Well, at least admit the mountains are beautiful.

TERESA
What mountains?

WALTER
Are you accusing me of wearing smog-tinted glasses?

She laughs. He smiles.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- RUTH'S OFFICE DAY

RUTH is at her desk, on the phone.

RUTH
Walter, where the hell are you? It's four o'clock. What? I can hardly hear you. The rest of the afternoon? Absolutely not. What the hell for? You're doing that whispering thing again, Walter. Okay, okay, if it's important, just be in by nine tomorrow. Hey! I know what it is! You're with the girl, aren't you? It's okay, it's cool. Use code. If you scored, just say "the eagle has landed." Hello?

He's hung up.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S HOUSE DAY

The end of the afternoon. TERESA is sitting on Walter's porch, which overlooks the alley behind his house. WALTER comes out with two beers; he gives her one.

He sits down next to her.

A few seconds pass.

A COUPLE walk by.

GUY
Hiya, Walter.

WALTER
Hi, Tom. How you doin', Cathy?

Walter takes a sip of the beer.

WALTER (cont.)
You sure you don't have to get back?

TERESA
No, it's okay.

Walter nods.

A BEACH GUY walks by.

BEACH GUY
Yo, Walter. Little volleyball?

WALTER
Thanks, Bobby, not just this second.

Walter takes another sip of beer.

TERESA
Uh -- what exactly are we doing?

WALTER
Nothin'.

TERESA
Oh.

She studies him. She puts her feet up on the rail like his are.

TERESA (cont.)
(pause)
Uh -- for exactly how long?

WALTER
You've got to learn to relax. See? This kind of peace and quiet you just can't get in New York.

A dog BARKS. Another dog joins in. Suddenly a CAR ALARM goes off in the street, followed quickly by a second and a third. There is a low RUMBLING and a JOLT shakes the porch, RATTLING the beer bottles together, sending the hanging plants swinging.

Teresa leaps to her feet, wide eyed.

The jolt dissolves into a RATTLE, then stops.

TERESA
What was that?

WALTER
What was what?

TERESA
(points to a swinging plant)
That!

WALTER
(shrugs)
Could have been anything.

TERESA
For anything, it felt amazingly like an earthquake!

WALTER
Nah. Probably just a heavy truck going by.

A GUY calls from offscreen.

GUY (o.s.)
Hey Walter, you feel the quake?

Teresa looks at Walter accusingly.

WALTER
Technically, it was just an aftershock.

TERESA
Oh my God.

WALTER
We had the bigger one yesterday.

TERESA
Oh my God!

WALTER
Well, don't overreact. Think of it as a load settling.

Another, smaller aftershock BUMPS the porch.

Teresa throws her arms around Walter.

WALTER (cont.)
Or the earth ripping in half. Whatever works for you.

CUT TO:

EXT BEACH NIGHT

Nighttime at the beach. A few glasses are stuck in the sand, a wine bottle next to them.

Footprints head off away from the bottle, up to where WALTER and TERESA are walking in the sand.

WALTER
Watch the oil spill.

She stops.

WALTER (cont.)
Joke.

They continue.

WALTER (cont.)
It's just that I feel like hell. I had the whole day and I haven't shown you one thing you like.

TERESA
(looks at him)
Sure you have. All day.

They pause, he looks at her --

-- and they continue walking.

An awkward moment passes.

TERESA (cont.)
That was a pretty good one.

WALTER
What?

TERESA
A pretty good moment for a first kiss. In fact, they don't get much better than that.

WALTER
I know. Look -- today was great. Really great. You don't know. But that's kinda the problem. We kiss, you know what happens next, then the next day you get on a plane, I stay here, and you've ruined me for anybody else.

TERESA
I know. You're right. The same thing would happen with me.

WALTER
Who needs that kind of heartache?

TERESA
It would be suicide.

WALTER
We're doing the mature thing.

TERESA
You're absolutely right.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA make love.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN DAY

WALTER and TERESA are at his kitchen table, eating breakfast. It's The Morning After; they're slightly uncomfortable.

WALTER
More juice?

TERESA
Thank you.

He pours some.

WALTER
Toast okay?

TERESA
Just fine.

WALTER
Good.

Pause.

TERESA
So I'm really glad we had sex and everything.

He smiles, waving his fork at her disapprovingly.

WALTER
You're not supposed to come out and say that.

TERESA
What am I supposed to do?

WALTER
I don't know. Feel an inner glow. Wink surreptitiously at me when we're out in public. That kind of thing.

TERESA
(smiles)
I'll try to remember that next time we're in public.

That comment raises The Issue. They break their gaze.

TERESA (cont.)
Do you want to get together next time I'm in L.A.?

WALTER
Sure. When's that?

TERESA
November.

He looks at her.

WALTER
(a little cold)
Fine.

TERESA
Did I say something wrong?

WALTER
Nope.

Pause.

TERESA
Hey, you're not one of those guys who keeps everything in and then just explodes one day because of the way somebody licks envelopes or something, are you?

WALTER
(exploding)
WHY?! HOW THE HELL DO YOU LICK ENVELOPES?!

She laughs.

CUT TO:

INT AIRPORT -- L.A. DAY

WALTER is in the terminal at LAX, staring out a window as a plane pulls away from the gate.

A NEGATIVE GUY stands next to him. He CHUCKLES, loud enough for Walter to hear.

Walter ignores him, so the Negative Guy CHUCKLES again.

WALTER
What?

NEGATIVE GUY
She from New York?

WALTER
Who?

NEGATIVE GUY
The broad.

WALTER
Oh. Yeah.

NEGATIVE GUY
(nods toward the plane)
Mine too.

Walter GRUNTS and goes back to staring out the window. The Negative Guy CHUCKLES again.

WALTER
What?

NEGATIVE GUY
These long distance relationships are the worst.

WALTER
Well, it's not exactly a rela --

NEGATIVE GUY
Absolute, posi-fuckin'-tively the worst.

Walter looks back out the window, hoping to end this conversation.

The Negative Guy CHUCKLES a third time.

WALTER
What?

NEGATIVE GUY
You'll see.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- RUTH'S OFFICE DAY

RUTH sits at her desk. WALTER comes in. She doesn't look up from her work.

Walter SIGHS and drops dramatically onto the couch.

RUTH
Oh God. What?

WALTER
What do you mean, what?

RUTH
What's with the tragic flop?

WALTER
Can't a man lay on a couch?

RUTH
Not like that, he can't. What's bugging you?

WALTER
She's nice.

RUTH
Oh, Walter, please don't do this. Why can't you just have sex and then wish they'd go away like a normal person?

WALTER
She's honest, she's straightforward, she says what she thinks --

RUTH
Then she's totally wrong for you. Walter, you have been given God's greatest gift, a fling with someone who had to leave the next day. Just take it for what it's worth and please don't get all weird on me.

WALTER
She lives in New York.

RUTH
Yeah, I remember.

WALTER
She lives in New York.

RUTH
Yes, Walter. You told me that.

WALTER
(with finality)
She lives in New York.

RUTH
You're making the right decision.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET -- N.Y. NIGHT

Maximo's apartment building.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S APARTMENT -- HALLWAY NIGHT

TERESA stands outside a bedroom door, waiting. The door opens and MAXIMO comes out, pulling on a bathrobe. The room is dark behind him.

MAXIMO
(whispering)
What's wrong?

Teresa leans around him and looks into the bedroom.

TERESA
Hey! The waitress from Lucky Dan's!

He pulls the door shut.

MAXIMO
What's wrong?

TERESA
Sorry I woke you up.

MAXIMO
I have one daughter; she has one life. Tell me what's going on.

TERESA
Buy me a drink.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S KITCHEN NIGHT

TERESA and MAXIMO sit at the kitchen table, a bottle of bourbon and two glasses between them.

TERESA
I thought you were seeing that nice woman from the park.

MAXIMO
I lied.

TERESA
Dad.

MAXIMO
I was dreaming aloud. I forgot to tell you. You know, if you truly loved your father, you'd set me up with that friend of yours I always see at the market.

TERESA
Claire? She's married to Jeff. Besides, she's too young for you.

MAXIMO
Thank you very much. For your information, I don't have to get out of bed to be insulted these days.

TERESA
Listen to me. I met a nice guy.

MAXIMO
You met a shit.

TERESA
And how exactly do you know that?

MAXIMO
Men are shits.

TERESA
Men are not shits.

MAXIMO
I'm a man. I'm a shit. Men are shits. What's his name, this shit?

TERESA
Walter Stanley.

MAXIMO
Which?

TERESA
Both.

MAXIMO
Kind of wasteful, isn't he?

TERESA
He's wonderful. He's a social worker. I like him.

MAXIMO
So smile when you say it. It's not so common, this feeling. Embrace it with your two hands.

TERESA
He lives in Los Angeles.

MAXIMO
Dump the stiff.

TERESA
I told you, I like him. So what if he lives in L.A.?

MAXIMO
Ooooh, listen to you. Listen to my little eight year old who wants the red bike in the window.

TERESA
Not this again --

MAXIMO
Any other bike in the store I can afford, I say, but not the one in the window.

TERESA
It had really cool wheels.

MAXIMO
Please, Tere, I say. I don't have the money. What other one you want? "The red one."

TERESA
(gestures)
The handlebars turned up like this.

MAXIMO
So I scrimp and I save and I mark up men's slacks until I should be put in prison and the key thrown in the garbage can and we go back -- and it's gone. The damn thing is gone. "No other bike," she says. "Not for me. Not ever." So my kid is the only one on the block without a bike.

TERESA
What's a kid in New York need a bike for anyway?

MAXIMO
Listen to me, my little eight year old. We can't always have what we want. Get used to it.

TERESA
Max, did you ever notice what color my bike is now?

He smiles. He kisses her.

MAXIMO
Buena suerte. Good luck. You'll need it.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S BALCONY -- L.A. DAY

WALTER is on his balcony, on the phone.

WALTER
Well, thank you. I'm flattered.

INTERCUT WITH:

TERESA is on the phone in her apartment.

TERESA
I just thought, you know, since you've never seen the city. If you have some time off, ever.

WALTER
I'd like to. I really would.

TERESA
But -- ?

WALTER
No. But nothing.

TERESA
Okay.

WALTER
It's just, I don't think it's very responsible of me to take a week off of work right now.

TERESA
So come for a weekend.

WALTER
That's not exactly possible. See, I usually travel by train.

TERESA
Oh. Well -- take a plane?

WALTER
(not at all convinced)
Sure. Um hm. Could do that. Could do that.

TERESA
Listen, Walter, I feel like I'm pressuring you here.

WALTER
No. I want to come. I really do. I just -- don't fly a great deal, that's all. It's kind of complicated, isn't it?

TERESA
Not really. You just get on a plane and go.

WALTER
Aren't there a lot of forms to fill out?

TERESA
Have you ever flown, Walter?

WALTER
You mean actually, like, "flown?" On an airplane type thing?

TERESA
Yeah.

WALTER
Let me see, let me see, let me see -- no.

TERESA
Oh, that's so cute.

WALTER
Yeah, thanks. Listen, I gotta go.

TERESA
No, I'm sorry. Wait. Honestly, Walter, it's the simplest thing in the world. Nothing could be easier.

CUT TO:

INT LOS ANGELES AIRPORT DAY

WALTER is at the ticket counter at the airport. There is a huge line behind him and a SNOTTY CLERK in front of him.

WALTER
Delayed for how long?

CLERK
Four hours and thirty-seven minutes, sir.

WALTER
Four hours and -- ?! I worked a graveyard shift last night so I could leave early so I could be in New York for the evening.

CLERK
I guess your little plan backfired.

Walter looks at him.

CLERK (cont.)
Sir.

CUT TO:

INT AIRPLANE NIGHT

WALTER is on an airplane, jammed into a seat in the middle of a row. The PASSENGERS on either side seem only inches away and it makes him nervous.

The plane hits a little turbulence, which doesn't help. A VOICE comes on the P.A.

VOICE (o.s.)
This is the Captain speaking. We've encountered a little turbulence up here and from the looks of things I'm sorry to report we're gonna be goin' down in a twisted fireball of flesh, metal and glass.

The Passengers GROAN in annoyance. Walter is seemingly the only one who finds this distressing.

VOICE (o.s.)
Smoke 'em if you got 'em.

A number of the Passengers shrug ruefully and light up cigarettes.

The plane is socked with a particularly hard jolt and Walter awakens from the daydream. The plane is landing.

VOICE (o.s.)
-- correct New York time is ten fifty-eight.

CUT TO:

INT AIRPORT NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA are walking through the crowded terminal of Kennedy Airport, arm in arm, kissing each other occasionally, happy to be together. She wears light, cool clothes.

WALTER
Sorry I was so late.

TERESA
Don't worry. Claire and Jeff are meeting us at the restaurant.

WALTER
(looking around the terminal)
So this is New York. Looks a lot like L.A.

TERESA
Listen, I have to tell you -- we're having a bit of a heat wave.

WALTER
Oh, I'm used to that.

TERESA
You're sure? It gets pretty hot here.

WALTER
I can take it. L.A.'s a desert, remember?

Ahead of them, the automatic doors slide open and they step outside. Walter recoils, as if hit in the face by a board.

WALTER (cont.)
Jesus!

TERESA
See?

WALTER
Oh JESUS!

TERESA
I told you it was hot.

WALTER
Yeah, but it's, like, weird how hot this is.

TERESA
I have a fan.

WALTER
I didn't know it got this hot. I mean, I thought there were limits.

TERESA
You'll get used to it.

She slips an arm around his waist.

WALTER
AHH! Back sweat! Back sweat!

TERESA
(pulling her arm away)
Sorry.

She steps to the curb and signals for a cab.

WALTER
Look at me. I'm completely wet already. This is phenomenal.

TERESA
TAXI!!

TWO TAXIS SQUEAL to a stop in front of them at roughly the same time. Walter and Teresa climb into the closer one.

INSIDE THE TAXI,

TERESA
(to the DRIVER)
Manhattan. West fourth and Barrow.

The Driver nods and the cab pulls away with a lurch.

WALTER
Can we get to a phone? I have to apologize immediately to everyone I've ever made fun of for saying "it's the humidity."

The other cab that pulled up suddenly races alongside them, its DRIVER screaming at the Driver of Walter and Teresa's cab in Italian.

WALTER (cont.)
What's he want?!

TERESA
Oh, he probably thinks we're his fare. Just ignore him.

They attempt to do just that, but the Driver of their cab will have no part of it. He SCREAMS right back, a string of obscenities, also in Italian.

The Driver of the second taxi takes offense and BANGS into the side of their cab.

The two Drivers SCREAM back and forth as the cabs continue their bumper car ride from the airport.

Teresa shakes her head in mild annoyance.

TERESA
These Italians are so demonstrative.

Walter is wide-eyed.

CUT TO:

INT RESTAURANT -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA are at dinner in a toney Manhattan restaurant. They seem uncomfortable.

The source of their unease is across the table from them -- JEFF and CLAIRE, the bride and groom from the wedding. Jeff and Claire kiss, they coo, they whisper, they generally seem intent on further consummating their marriage vows here and now, oblivious to all else.

WALTER
(to Teresa)
So the marriage is okay, then?

TERESA
Far as I can tell.
(looks at Claire and Jeff)
Kind of like reading a medical textbook, isn't it?

Walter nods. He picks up his menu and opens it. He does his best to keep his eyes from bugging out as he looks up and down the column of prices.

A low breath escapes him.

WALTER
(to himself)
What are these, in lira?

Jeff suddenly looks up from The Clinch and picks up his menu.

JEFF
Let's eat. Company buys, right Walter?

Walter swallows.

CUT TO:

EXT NIGHTCLUB NIGHT

The two couples are in line outside a downtown nightclub, JEFF and CLAIRE first, then TERESA and WALTER.

A THUGGISH BOUNCER walks down the line, looking people up and down, pointing to PATRONS here and there.

BOUNCER
You. You. You.

As they are chosen, they break from the line and head into the club.

WALTER
Oh, no. Oh, I don't like this.

TERESA
I know it's bullshit, but once you're in this is a great club.

WALTER
Yeah, but first I'm made to feel like crap by someone I don't know.

TERESA
He'll pick us. Just be cool.

WALTER
That's just the thing. I'm <u>not</u> cool. Now, I'm perfectly comfortable with that, but sometimes <u>other</u> people have a problem with it.

TERESA
Act like you hate him. He'll respond well to that.

The Bouncer comes to them. He points to Jeff.

BOUNCER
You.
(to Claire)
You.
(to Teresa)
You.

She starts to walk and Walter starts to follow her, but the Bouncer puts a big hammy hand in the middle of his chest, stopping him.

BOUNCER (cont.)
Not you.

WALTER
What?

BOUNCER
Not you.

WALTER
(pointing to Teresa, who's going through the door)
But I'm with her.

BOUNCER
Not any more, Sport.

WALTER
Why not?

BOUNCER
Fire regulations. Out of my hands.

The Bouncer continues on, naming every single MAN and WOMAN in line behind them, dissolving the line, leaving Walter standing on the sidewalk alone.

After a moment, the door to the club opens and Teresa comes out again. She sees Walter.

TERESA
You didn't act like you hated him, did you?

WALTER
Could we possibly get mugged next?

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA come into her apartment at the end of the night, Walter still with his bag.

TERESA
Just give me two minutes. You can dump your stuff in there!

She heads for the bathroom, pointing to the bedroom as she goes.

Walter walks down the short hallway to the bedroom and goes in.

He sets his bag on a chair and unzips it.

He pulls an extra pair of shoes from the case and puts them neatly under the chair.

He unpacks two shirts and hangs them in the closet.

He takes his bathroom kit from the suitcase and sets it on a window ledge. Just as he does, there is a SCREAM from outside. Walter parts the curtain a tiny bit, enough to see THREE MEN racing down the street at top speed, involved in some drama.

Walter closes the curtain and moves the kit over to safer ground, the dresser top.

He turns in a little circle in the room.

He sits on the edge of the bed rather stiffly.

A GROWLING sound comes from the doorway. Walter looks up.

BOB, a dog, is there, facing him, hair on end, teeth bared.

Walter ignores him.

Bob advances a few steps and GROWLS louder.

WALTER
What? You gonna start somethin'?

Bob is surprised. He looks behind him.

WALTER (cont.)
Yeah, I'm talkin' to you.

CUT TO:

INT BATHROOM NIGHT

TERESA, in front of the mirror, hears the sound of muffled BARKS from offscreen.

TERESA
Oh shit, Bob!

She hurries out of the bathroom, into the hallway.

TERESA (cont.)
It's not you, Walter. He hates every --

She stops in the hallway, a few steps from the bedroom. Through the doorway, she can see Walter on the floor, wrestling with Bob.

WALTER
Come on, Mr. Tough. Mr. Badass New York City Dog.

Teresa smiles, watching them.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S BEDROOM NIGHT

A few candles burn in Teresa's bedroom. WALTER lies in bed, on his back, asleep. TERESA is next to him, up on one elbow.

Looking at him.

She THUNKS him on the chest with her finger.

TERESA
Walter.

He doesn't move. She THUNKS harder.

TERESA (cont.)
Walter.

He MUMBLES in his sleep.

TERESA (cont.)
WALTER!

He opens his eyes.

TERESA (cont.)
Oh, did I wake you? You can't go to sleep yet. You didn't do it.

WALTER
I certainly did. Several times. I remember distinctly.

TERESA
Not that. You promised.

WALTER
Promised what?

TERESA
You promised you'd tell me something you liked about New York before you went to sleep.

WALTER
They take dollars.

TERESA
Seriously.

WALTER
I get to leave soon.

TERESA
Walter.

He puts his hand in her hair.

WALTER
You live in it.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S OFFICE -- N.Y. NIGHT

CLOSE ON the side of a globe, turned to the United States.

A FINGER traces the bumpy path from New York out over the Rockies and all the way to L.A., then gives the globe a good hard spin.

TERESA, owner of the finger, is at her desk, on the phone. It's late, but there is still activity in the office.

TERESA
Third row? Walter, that's terrific! Oh, so what if it's short notice, this weekend is --

An unseen hand drops an enormous stack of files on her desk with an echoing THUD.

TERESA (cont.)
-- fine for me.

CUT TO:

EXT SKY NIGHT

A plane flies west.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S BEDROOM -- L.A. NIGHT

TERESA and WALTER are in bed in Walter's bedroom. Teresa is working on a stack of paperwork, reading glasses perched on her nose.

Walter is perched on Teresa, working on her. He kisses her neck as she tries to make notes, not seeming to mind her distraction.

CUT TO:

EXT SKY DAY

A plane flies east.

CUT TO:

INT HARRIMAN BROWN -- N.Y. DAY

A meeting DRONES ON in the conference room of Harriman Brown.

TERESA is there, her chin in her hand in a pose of professional absorption. The LAWYER to her left does a double take, noticing she is in fact fast asleep.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S PORCH -- L.A. NIGHT

WALTER is on the phone on his porch.

WALTER
So what? I'll be a little tired, that's all. Come on, you're always after me to be spontaneous. If I couldn't afford it, I wouldn't do it. Don't you know me by now?

CUT TO:

INT AIRPORT TICKET COUNTER NIGHT

WALTER stands at the airline ticket counter. The same SNOTTY CLERK faces him.

WALTER
Excuse me?

CLERK
Eleven hundred and forty-two dollars, sir.

WALTER
I don't want to buy it, I want to ride on it.

CLERK
Yes, sir. Very humorous, sir.

Walter slaps a credit card on the counter. The Clerk snatches it up.

WALTER
Why do I get the feeling you're enjoying this?

CLERK
I love my work, sir.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT -- N.Y. NIGHT

TERESA leads WALTER into her apartment, propping him up, an overnight bag over his shouler. He is near-comotose from fatigue. She leans him against a wall while she takes her coat off.

She moves him over to the couch, drops him on it, and starts to kiss him.

He SNORES.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. DAY

WALTER goes through his mail. He stops at an envelope with the "MCI" logo on it, swallows, and rips it open.

WALTER
Big. Very big.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

The front door to Walter's house kicks open and WALTER comes in, carrying a fast-asleep TERESA in his arms, her overnight bag looped around his neck.

He heads up the stairs with her.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. DAY

WALTER rips open an American Express bill.

WALTER
Extremely large.

CUT TO:

INT HARRIMAN BROWN -- N.Y. DAWN

Dawn breaks outside the windows of Teresa's office. TERESA is at her desk, asleep face-down in a pile of papers.

A CLEANING WOMAN knocks softly on the door and Teresa sits bolt upright, suddenly shuffling papers around as if caught at a tiny catnap. She looks out the window, at the sun.

TERESA
(to the Cleaning Woman)
Tell me that's not coming up.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. DAY

WALTER rips open a Visa bill.

WALTER
Really, really, quite extraordinarily huge.

CUT TO:

INT AN AIRPORT NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA have a teary goodbye as Walter gets on a plane.

CUT TO:

INT AN AIRPORT NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA have a joyous reunion as Teresa gets off a plane.

CUT TO:

INT AN AIRPORT NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA have another teary goodbye. Teresa heads for the gate.

Walter grabs her by the arm, points her in the other direction, and gets on the plane himself.

CUT TO:

INT HARRIMAN BROWN -- N.Y. NIGHT

TERESA is in the reception area of Harriman Brown. CLAIRE is leaving, pulling on her coat.

TERESA
Hey Claire, you wanna get some dinner?

CLAIRE
Can't. Jeff's folks are in town.

She leaves. Teresa turns to another LAWYER who is leaving.

TERESA
John?

JOHN
Got a date with my ex-wife.

He goes out. A MAILROOM GUY hurries through the office, his arms stuffed.

TERESA
Hey Tito, you like Chinese?

TITO
Nope. Don't like Japs either.

CUT TO:

EXT USED CAR LOT -- L.A. DAY

WALTER is at a used car lot, standing between his car and a SALESMAN.

WALTER
But you said if I ever wanted to trade down for cash, this would hold its value!

SALESMAN
Well, excuse me for making a mistake, Mr. Perfect.

WALTER
How much, then?

The Salesman writes down a number and shows it to Walter.

WALTER (cont.)
You have a fabulous sense of humor.

CUT TO:

INT HARRIMAN BROWN -- N.Y. DAY

TERESA is hurrying out the door of the office. CLAIRE is coming in.

CLAIRE
Lunch is over, sweetheart. Back to work.

TERESA
Got a flight. Tomorrow's Walter's birthday.

CLAIRE
I thought he was coming here for his birthday.

TERESA
At the last minute he couldn't. I'm surprising him.
(rushing out)
Sorry, if I don't get on this flight I'll miss the connection!

CLAIRE
Lucky guy!

TERESA
(over her shoulder)
He loves surprises!

CUT TO:

INT MINNEAPOLIS AIRPORT DAY

At an unfamiliar-looking airport, PASSENGERS stream off a flight and head for their connections.

A P.A. announcement greets them:

VOICE (o.s.)
Welcome to Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. Passengers for Northwest flight --

-- and drones on. TERESA is one of the passengers. She stumbles off her flight and hurries up to one of the red-jacketed AIRLINE REPS.

TERESA
Where's the connection for flight twenty-two for Los Angeles?

REP
Gate twenty-six, blue concourse.

Teresa nods and hurries off toward the blue concourse. Just as she rounds a corner, someone brushes past her, coming the other way in just as big a hurry.

If she looked up, she'd notice it was WALTER.

He races up to the Airline Rep.

WALTER
Flight twenty-one for New York?

REP
Just got in. Boarding in fifteen minutes.

Walter nods and sits down to wait. He smiles contentedly, delighted with himself.

CUT TO:

EXT TERESA'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER bounds up the steps to Teresa's apartment building, flowers in hand. He BUZZES her apartment.

No answer.

He BUZZES again. Still no answer.

He thinks. He checks his watch. He shrugs and sits down on the front step.

The weather has changed in New York, now that of early winter. Walter pulls his jacket in tight against the cold.

He waits.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

TERESA KNOCKS on Walter's front door, but gets no answer. She sits down on the porch to wait.

CUT TO:

EXT TERESA'S BUILDING -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER is still waiting on the steps of her building, now shivering with cold, his teeth CLACKING.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

TERESA is still on the front porch, her feet now up on the rail. A COOL BREEZE blows from the ocean. She runs her fingers through her hair, enjoying it.

CUT TO:

EXT TERESA'S BUILDING -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER is jumping up and down on the front steps of the building.

WALTER
Must maintain . . . consciousness. Must . . . maintain . . . consciousness.

Struck by an idea, he hurries over to the buzzer panel and pushes another button.

VOICE
(from speaker)
Manager.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

TERESA's getting bored. A BEACH GUY walks past.

BEACH GUY
Waitin' for Walter?

TERESA
Yeah.

BEACH GUY
Try the back door. Always open.

TERESA
Thanks!

She hurries around to the back of the house.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S BUILDING -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER is in the hallway outside Teresa's apartment, standing next to her MANAGER, a creepy looking guy of about fifty.

The Manager is poking through Walter's wallet.

WALTER
-- and that's my voter registration card, and my library card, and my Red Cross donor card --

MANAGER
I really can't do this.

WALTER
-- and that's a twenty dollar bill --

MANAGER
'Course, I'm not a rules fanantic.

He unlocks her door.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

TERESA is watching tv from Walter's couch, bored stiff, drinking one of his beers.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER sits on her sofa, leafing through an issue of Business Week. He sees an item that interests him, tears the page out, and shoves it in his pocket.

He tosses the magazine aside and picks up another one. Fortune. He makes a face and tosses that aside too.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

TERESA is on her feet, poking through the shelves in Walter's living room. She finds an old high school yearbook, smiles, and opens it.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT -- N.Y. NIGHT

WALTER checks his watch and rolls his eyes. He picks up Teresa's phone and dials a number.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

TERESA is squinting, trying to read a handwritten note in Walter's yearbook. The phone RINGS and she instinctively SLAPS the book shut and shoves it back into the bookcase.

The phone RINGS again. She looks at it, unsure.

It rings a third time. She picks it up.

TERESA

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

WALTER is on the phone in her apartment.

WALTER

Hello?

TERESA

Walter!

WALTER
Oh good, you're home.

TERESA
What?

WALTER
(confused)
Wait --

TERESA
Walter?

WALTER
Hello?

TERESA
Yeah, it's me.

WALTER
Didn't I call my number?

TERESA
Where are you?

WALTER
In your apartment. Where are you?

TERESA
(sighs)
In yours.

WALTER
What?!

TERESA & WALTER
What are you doing in New York/L.A.?

WALTER & TERESA
I wanted to surprise you!

WALTER
Oh God. Oh no. Tell me this isn't happening.

TERESA
You said you couldn't come!

WALTER
So did you!

Pause.

Teresa, in spite of herself, begins to laugh.

TERESA
Happy birthday, Walter.

WALTER
Thank you, darling.

CUT TO:

EXT HOTEL -- MINNEAPOLIS NIGHT

A plane ZOOMS low overhead, RATTLING the windows of the "Hotel Minne-Apple," an airport cheapo with a plywood skyline cut out over the main entrance.

CUT TO:

INT HOTEL ROOM NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA have shoved two single beds together in the hotel room. They're in bedclothes.

WALTER
Good news. I have movement in my toes.

TERESA
I bet secretly you always wanted to celebrate your birthday in Minneapolis.

WALTER
Sure. And I always wanted to be called "Stumpy" too.

TERESA
Now, Walter -- what have we learned from this little experience?

WALTER
I give up, Miss Villegas. What did we learn?

TERESA
I don't know about you, but aside from the general bullshit, the last few months have been really wonderful for me. And tonight I was sitting in your apartment and even though you weren't there I could feel you -- and I felt warm. Comforted.

WALTER
Why? You put on my underwear or some shit like that?

TERESA
I'm trying to say I love you, shithead.

WALTER
(suddenly uncomfortable)
Oh. I see. Well. Okay. Good.

He starts to get up. She grabs his arm and pulls him down.

TERESA
Hey, wait a minute. Don't act like I'm pulling some middle-aged-psycho-dependent-biological-clock stunt. I don't deserve that. It's been a couple months here. That's a decent period. And besides, I didn't even ask you to say it.

WALTER
You're right. I'm sorry. I want to say it. I have wanted to. It's just -- I'm having trouble with it.

TERESA
Why?

WALTER
(pause)
Maybe because for once I feel like I really mean it.

He looks at her.

TERESA
(melted)
Awwww.

They kiss.

WALTER
Wow. We went and said it, didn't we?

TERESA
Actually, I said it, you intimated. But close enough.

WALTER
So what do we do now?

CUT TO:

INT HOTEL ROOM NIGHT

A WATER GLASS is set at each end of a table in the hotel room.

A YELLOW LEGAL PAD PLOPS down next to each of the glasses.

SHARPENED PENCILS slide into place on the pads.

TWO CHAIRS SQUEAK as they are pulled out and slid in.

WALTER and TERESA sit at opposite ends of the table, staring at each other. Crumpled yellow pages surround them. Walter reads from his notepad, which has some scratchings on it.

WALTER
Okay. "A -- we love each other. B -- we're not happy so far apart."

TERESA
Right. And three --

WALTER
That should be "C."

TERESA
I didn't agree to that.

WALTER
We said letters, not numbers. It's right here, in my notes.

She looks at him dubiously and erases her number three.

TERESA
"C -- one of us is going to have to make the sacrifice of moving and we will abide by the decision of this conference."

WALTER
Right.

TERESA
Right.

WALTER
I mean, Jeff moved from St. Louis and he and Claire are happy.

TERESA
Right. Exactly. So, then. There's three issues. First issue -- family. That one's gotta go in my favor. You don't have family in L.A.

WALTER
Do so. My mother's down in San Diego.

TERESA
San Diego is not L.A., it's San Diego. And you never go anyway.

WALTER
Yes I do!

TERESA
No you don't. And my father's only forty-five blocks from me.

WALTER
So?

TERESA
So the family category goes to me.

She gleefully makes a note.

TERESA (cont.)
That's one for me, none for you. Next. Property.

WALTER
Got you there. I got the house. You don't own the apartment, do you?

TERESA
No.

WALTER
Good! So it's one apiece.

TERESA
Not necessarily. You could sell the house and buy one like it in New York.

WALTER
Oh, hardy har har.

TERESA
Well, sort of like it.

WALTER
Give it up. It's my category.

Teresa sighs and makes a check in Walter's column.

TERESA
Fine. One apiece. Doesn't matter anyway, because the third one's profession and that has to go to me.

WALTER
Why?

TERESA
Why? Because if I play my cards right I could make junior partner. And don't give me any yuppie shit, you know that's a good thing.

WALTER
Sure it is. But what about me?

TERESA
What about you? You're overqualified for what you do. You've got degrees up the wazoo, you can get a job anywhere.

WALTER
Not in my field in New York and still pay my bills. I couldn't afford it.

TERESA
What about the money from the house? That'd pay rent for years.

WALTER
It's not my money. It belongs to the whole family. I can't just take it.

TERESA
Well, then I could help you. I make enough.

WALTER
Sorry. Can't accept that.

TERESA
Why not?

WALTER
Guy Rules. Nothing I can do about it.

TERESA
That's ridiculous. Come on, Walter. Do you honestly want me to leave Harriman Brown just when I'm starting to move up?

WALTER
What about the new branch office they're opening in Los Angeles?

TERESA
(faking)
Branch office?

Walter reaches into his pocket and pulls out the crumpled Business Week article he read in her apartment.

WALTER
Business Week, November 28th, page thirty-one.

She picks up the article.

WALTER (cont.)
In the third paragraph they talk about how it's understaffed.

TERESA
(realizing her ship is sinking)
Walter! Did you tear this out of one of my magazines?

WALTER
Nice misdirection, but hardly the point. Profession to me. Two to one. Welcome to L.A., toots.

He leans over and kisses her.

TERESA
Oh God. What have I done?

CUT TO:

EXT RESTAURANT -- L.A. DAY

WALTER eats lunch alone at the same patio restaurant in his neighborhood that he and Teresa ate at earlier.

He looks over the menu.

VOICE (o.s.)
Have you had a chance to decide?

Walter looks up. MICHELE, his ex-girlfriend, stands above him with an order pad, wearing a waitress's uniform and a "Kimberly" name tag.

WALTER
Michele!

MICHELE
Oh, Walter. Hi.

WALTER
What are you doing here?

MICHELE
Got rabies.

WALTER
Excuse me?

MICHELE
My character. Died. I'm off the show.

WALTER
Oh, I'm sorry. I -- didn't know.
(noticing her name tag)
Who's Kimberly?

MICHELE
It's for my self-esteem. "Michele" is not a waitress.

Michele lowers her voice slightly, suddenly becoming enormously Tender and Caring.

MICHELE (cont.)
Listen, I'm sorry about the way our whole thing happened.

WALTER
Don't worry. It was a long time ago.

MICHELE
No. No, I should have left a longer note. I realize that now.

WALTER
I got the gist of it.

MICHELE
Are you seeing someone?

WALTER
Yeah, as a matter of fact I am.

MICHELE
Good for you! You know, this little setback in my career has really helped me evaluate myself. I'm a much deeper, richer person and now I can really see your shortcomings. I can see that you need me. And to leave you was wrong.

WALTER
Oh. Well, actually --

MICHELE
Especially when you have that extra room.

WALTER
Look, Michele --

MICHELE
Think about it, Walter. Don't bother ordering, I know what you want.

She turns to go.

WALTER
Michele, she's moving out here.

MICHELE
(smiles)
Sure she is.

She winks and is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET -- N.Y. NIGHT

A semi-enclosed fruit and vegetable market on the upper West side.

CUT TO:

INT MARKET NIGHT

MAXIMO picks through the avocadoes, looking for good ones. He also checks out every living female being that passes.

Looking for good ones.

He sees a particularly nice behind, bent over the tomatoes.

He sucks in his breath in admiration.

The behind turns around, becomes a front. It's CLAIRE.

Maximo carefully maneuvers over in her direction and brushes up against her lasciviously.

She turns, annoyed.

MAXIMO
Oh. Excuse me.

CLAIRE
Maximo?

MAXIMO
Claire? How are you? I didn't see you.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek, which he almost dies for.

CLAIRE
Finding everything you need?

MAXIMO
(with meaning)
The tomatoes are excellent today.

CLAIRE
I'll keep that in mind.

MAXIMO
The best I've seen in years.

He tries to make eye contact. She avoids it, smiling.

CLAIRE
So what do you think about your little girl?

MAXIMO
I think she's not so little. What am I supposed to think?

CLAIRE
Well, you know -- going to the land of sun and fun and all that.

He doesn't understand. Claire realizes.

CLAIRE (cont.)
I mean -- you know, for weekends. It's -- nice for her. Is what I meant.

She is backing away. Maximo grabs her by the arm.

MAXIMO
You're a lousy liar.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET -- N.Y. NIGHT

The street outside Teresa's apartment building, fairly still in the middle of a winter night.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

It's dark. The phone RINGS. TERESA, in bed, wakes up and answers.

TERESA
Hello?
(pause)
Oh Jesus.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET -- N.Y. NIGHT

TERESA, dressed in sweats, gets out of a taxi in front of Maximo's building. She hurries inside.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S APARTMENT NIGHT

CARMEN, a nurse in her late forties, holds the door to the apartment as TERESA steams in and heads back toward the bedrooms.

TERESA
Where did it happen?

CARMEN
I don't know. He said the paramedics came --

TERESA
Why the hell isn't he in the hospital?

CARMEN
He says he wants me to take care of him.

TERESA
No offense, Carmen, but you're not a doctor.

CARMEN
That's what I told him!

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S BEDROOM NIGHT

MAXIMO is in bed in his bedroom. TERESA comes to his bedside and takes his hand.

He opens his eyes and looks at her.

MAXIMO
I think I'd like oak with satin lining. And I want to be wearing my blue serge suit.

She takes his hand.

TERESA
You don't own a blue serge suit.

MAXIMO
Oh, let me overreact. Everyone else is.

TERESA
Quiet. Why aren't you in the hospital?

MAXIMO
It was just a little heartburn. Indigestion, I told them.

TERESA
You should have gone to the hospital.

MAXIMO
Thank you, doctor. If they wanted me in the hospital, they'd have taken me.

TERESA
I want to talk to the paramedics. Didn't they give you a report or something?

MAXIMO
They don't give reports for bad seafood. Now calm down and send Carmen in here. I want to see if it still works.

TERESA
Go to sleep. I'll call them tomorrow.

She kisses him and heads for the door.

MAXIMO
Tere?

She stops.

MAXIMO (cont.)
If you wanted to stay here tonight, it's fine with me. I know how you worry.

TERESA
(smiles)
Thanks, Max. I appreciate that.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S LIVING ROOM NIGHT

It's the middle of the night. Maximo's apartment is dark. TERESA is lying on the couch in the living room, but she can't sleep.

She gets up and goes down the hall, toward the bathroom.

She sees strange shadows flickering on the wall at the end of the hall, near Max's room. She heads that way.

In the doorway to his room she sees MAXIMO, out of bed, standing near the window, stretching in the moonlight.

TERESA
(sharp whisper)
Max!

He turns around, as if caught at something.

TERESA (cont.)
Get back in bed!

He does, guiltily.

TERESA (cont.)
(tucking him in)
Are you nuts? You shouldn't even be awake, much less jumping around out of bed. I'm definitely taking you to the cardiologist. This is 1990, for God's sake, you need real medical care.

He looks up at her, smiling as she fusses over him.

MAXIMO
They always say you're so much like me, but I'll be damned if I'm not looking up at my wife right this very moment.
(she smiles)
It's good to have you here, Tere.

She doesn't want to look at him.

TERESA
It's good to be here, Max.

MAXIMO
I always had a suspicion I'd end up old and alone. But I thought it would be much more romantic.

TERESA
Don't talk like that.

MAXIMO
Why not? It's true. I live in the real world.

Finally, she looks at him, hiding the guilt and regret that sweep over her.

TERESA
You're not alone.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S LIVING ROOM NIGHT

TERESA sits at the end of Maximo's couch, staring into the dark, thinking. Making a decision, she picks up the phone and dials a number.

It rings several times.

TERESA
Walter? Did I wake you?
(pause)
No, he's fine. Okay, anyway.
(pause)
Walter, I -- I need you to think about moving here.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM NIGHT

WALTER is on the phone, in bed, absorbing those last words.

WALTER
Yeah, I'm still here.

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S HOUSE -- PORCH NIGHT

The light on Walter's porch, the one with the short in the wire, fizzles and winks out for good.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT WALTER'S PORCH -- L.A. DAY

WALTER sits on his porch in the middle of the afternoon.

Thinkin'.

A TAXI pulls up in front of the house. Walter looks at it, curious. The door opens and a tall, well-dressed BUSINESSMAN of about sixty gets out, expensive leather travel bag over his shoulder.

Walter breaks into a grin.

WALTER
Dad!

He gets up as his father comes up the porch steps. The taxi stays in the alley, motor running.

WALTER (cont.)
Why didn't you call?

MR. STANLEY
I did. You're never home. Good to see you, kid!

They embrace, a bit reservedly.

WALTER
I've been out of town a lot. What are you doing here?

MR. STANLEY
Ah, the usual. Changing planes.
(of the house)
Looks all right. Could use a little paint.

WALTER
Where you headed?

MR. STANLEY
Tokyo. Only place I ever go these days. Hey, I brought a camera, I'd love to get a shot of us.

WALTER
Stay put, I'll get you a beer. What time's your connection?

MR. STANLEY
Don't ask. Forget the beer, I just have to grab something. Come on, talk to me. What's going on?

He heads into the house. Walter follows him.

IN THE LIVING ROOM,

Mr. Stanley starts going through piles of photo albums in the bookcase.

WALTER
You know, I'm glad you're here. I want to ask your opinion about something.

MR. STANLEY
How's your mother?

WALTER
Good. I haven't been down to see her in a little while, but I talked to her the other day. She's fine.

MR. STANLEY
She's okay for money, you think?

WALTER
Oh, yeah. Fine. What are you looking for?

MR. STANLEY
The old album with the shots of my grandparents in it. Jenny wanted to see it.

WALTER
Bottom shelf.

MR. STANLEY
I got a card from your sister and Mike. They sent it to the old address, damned if I know why. Ah!

He finds the book he was looking for and pulls it out.

WALTER
They're okay?

MR. STANLEY
Oh, hell yes. Envelope had one of those change of address tags. My own kid. I know I gave 'em the new one.

They head back out onto the porch.

ON THE PORCH,

WALTER
Ah, it's not you. Everybody moves around so much these days . . .

Mr. Stanley pulls a small camera from his coat pocket.

MR. STANLEY
We should ask somebody to take the shot. I'd love to have a picture.

WALTER
You guys all did, anyway. You up to Seattle, Mom down to San Diego, Karen and Mike out to Miami --

MR. STANLEY
I'm sure I gave them the new address.

WALTER
In fact, that's kinda what I wanted to talk to you about.

MR. STANLEY
God damn yellow tags.

The taxi HONKS. Mr. Stanley checks his watch.

MR. STANLEY (cont.)
You're gonna hate me, but this was the bad news. Plane was late as hell, I gotta run.

WALTER
I'll ride with you.

MR. STANLEY
Naw, that's okay.

He looks at Walter and it's clear from his face that this short visit was far worse than none at all.

MR. STANLEY (cont.)
I'm sorry, this was shitty. What was it you wanted to ask me about?

WALTER
Nothing. Good to see you, Dad.

MR. STANLEY
Good to see you.

He bounds down the steps, to the cab.

Walter stands there for a moment, watching his father walk to the cab. He turns to head into the house, then a VOICE calls from behind him.

MR. STANLEY (o.s.)
Walter!

Walter turns around. His father is coming back, a big grin on his face and the TAXI DRIVER in tow. Mr. Stanley bounds up the steps of the house and puts his arm around Walter.

The Driver SNAPS a photo with Stanley's camera.

Mr. Stanley hugs his son.

MR. STANLEY
I love you, kid.

WALTER
You too, Dad.

MR. STANLEY
(to the house)
And I love you, you old son of a bitch.
(to Walter)
Don't let it go to hell.

WALTER
Promise.

CUT TO:

EXT RESTAURANT -- N.Y. NIGHT

An uptown New York restaurant, busy on a Saturday night.

CUT TO:

INT RESTAURANT NIGHT

TERESA and WALTER are having dinner with JEFF and CLAIRE, who sit on opposite sides of the table.

JEFF
If you're coming uptown, you gotta take Houston, do that little jog to the West Side Highway, and try to time the lights. You have to. How can you possibly argue with that?

CLAIRE
Look, Jeff, you're from St. Louis, okay?

JEFF
What the hell does that mean?

CLAIRE.
I tell the cabbie to take the Park Avenue underpass to forty-sixth, drive over the grass to the museum service road, and zip through. Drops you right at 102nd street.

JEFF
That's the most ignorant thing I've ever heard in my life.

Walter and Teresa exchange an uncomfortable glance.

JEFF (cont.)
For sheer speed, you might as well just take the double R from Canal to 59th, then get off and grab a cab from the line at the Plaza. If you can't see that, I feel sorry for you, I honestly do.

CLAIRE
(furious)
I have to go to the bathroom.

TERESA
I'll come with.

She gets up and follows Claire.

WALTER
(to Jeff)
What's with you two? What are you arguing about this bullshit for?

Jeff drains a nearly-full glass of scotch.

WALTER (cont.)
And why are you drinking so much?

JEFF
I have never been more misesrable in my entire life.

WALTER
What?

JEFF
It's affecting my work. I haven't drawn a line in weeks.

INTERCUT WITH:

CLAIRE and TERESA are in the bathroom, at the sink. Claire is crying.

TERESA
I don't understand, everything seemed fine! What is it?

CLAIRE
Him. Me. Everything!

TERESA
Claire, he's the same man you married.

CLAIRE
No he's not! I married a very sweet impressionist painter who took every other weekend off, came to town on Friday night and left on Monday morning.

AT THE TABLE:

JEFF
Everything was so great when I was in St. Louis. No problems. Now I move here and I find out I'm married to this whole psychotic lifestyle.

IN THE BATHROOM:

CLAIRE
He doesn't like to go to clubs, he doesn't like my friends, he doesn't like my family, we don't like to do any of the same things.

AT THE TABLE:

JEFF
So suddenly I have to kiss my whole personality goodbye?

WALTER
Jesus.

JEFF
You don't know how lucky you are. You and Teresa. This long distance thing.

WALTER
Yeah, well, it's got its drawbacks.

IN THE BATHROOM:

CLAIRE
It's the most romantic thing in the world. Don't give it up for anything. Promise me that.

TERESA
Come on, Claire.

AT THE TABLE:

JEFF
PROMISE ME!

WALTER
Take it easy.

JEFF
You know, I'm thinking of asking for a divorce.

IN THE BATHROOM:

TERESA
You're what?!

CLAIRE
It's time we faced it. All the little shit is indicative of larger problems.

AT THE TABLE:

JEFF
I say it's better to get out early, before we have kids and really screw everything up.

IN THE BATHROOM:

CLAIRE
Don't say anything to Walter, okay?

TERESA
Of course not.

AT THE TABLE:

WALTER
My lips are sealed.

Pause.

JEFF
So what's with you guys?

Walter swallows.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA come into her apartment. He goes to the refrigerator and takes a bottle of beer.

She sits in a chair. He sits on the sofa. Both are blase as hell.

TERESA
Well, that was fun.

WALTER
Um hm.

He drinks his beer.

TERESA
Is there something on your mind?

WALTER
(yes)
No.

A few seconds go by.

Walter SIGHS heavily.

TERESA
What?

WALTER
Nothing.

Pause.

Walter SIGHS again.

TERESA
What is that?

WALTER
What's what?

TERESA
That sigh you keep doing. Does that mean something?

WALTER
No.

Pause.

Walter SIGHS.

TERESA
Yeah, see, there it is again. Is it about the you-moving-to-New-York thing? Is that it?

WALTER
No.

TERESA
Because we were supposed to talk about that this weekend, remember, and I've been trying to wait for you to bring it up, but you haven't brought it up, so I'm wondering if maybe this is your way of bringing it up.

WALTER
No. It isn't.

TERESA
Oh.
(pause)
Well, do you have any idea when you may be bringing it up? I mean, I'd hate to be out of the room or something.

WALTER
(holding his temper)
I am just about arriving to the point where I am ready to consider bringing it up.

TERESA
Fine.
(pause)
I'll just wait here, then.

WALTER
You do that.

Pause.

TERESA
Jeff was certainly drunk tonight.

WALTER
Well, maybe he's got something to drink about.

TERESA
What does that mean?

WALTER
Nothing.

TERESA
Is this how you fight? All sideways like this? This is how you fight, isn't it?

WALTER
I'm not fighting. I have nothing to fight about.

TERESA
If you are -- if this is how you fight -- well, that would make me really, really mad.

WALTER
I told you, I'm not fighting.

TERESA
I can see you're not fighting. But is something bothering you?

WALTER
No. Nothing. I don't even know how this conversation started. Technically, I don't even think it <u>is</u> a conversation.

TERESA
Okay. That's it. Now I'm mad.

WALTER
Well, that's your problem.

He gets up and walks toward the bathroom, MUMBLING to himself.

There is a low WHIRRING sound. Before Walter can even react, his beer bottle EXPLODES off the wall in front of him, inches to the right of his head.

WALTER (cont.)
<u>WOW</u>!

TERESA
Don't you mumble under your breath at me!

WALTER
<u>WOW</u>!!

TERESA
Tell me what's bothering you.

WALTER
You coulda killed me!

She picks up a water glass and cocks her arm.

TERESA
TELL ME WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU!!

WALTER
I <u>told</u> you, nothing! Okay?

TERESA
Tell me what it is!

WALTER
There is <u>NOTHING</u> bothering me, okay?! And it's not important anyway.

TERESA
So there is something?

WALTER
No. That was a slip of the tongue. There's nothing.

They stare at each other for a minute.

TERESA
Well, I'm not going to stand here and argue all by myself.

She sets down the glass and sits on the couch.

He goes into the bathroom.

TERESA (cont.)
Shit.
(to herself)
Way to keep your cool, babe.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S BEDROOM NIGHT

TERESA and WALTER lie in bed, butt to butt, a clear dividing line down the middle of the bed. Walter's wide awake, staring into the dark.

Teresa's wide awake too, staring at the wall.

More than a few seconds go by.

Finally:

WALTER
I don't want to move.

Teresa sits up.

TERESA
What?

WALTER
I don't want to move.

TERESA
I'm sorry I threw the glass. That was out of line.

Walter sits up too.

WALTER
It's not that. I've lived there all my life. It's me. It's what I am. I love you, Teresa, but I don't want to change that. I don't want mail with little yellow labels on it.

She looks at him.

WALTER (cont.)
Don't you have anything to say?

TERESA
What would you like me to say?

They stare at each other.

She rolls over. She stares at the wall.

He slides under the covers. He stares at the dresser.

Stalemate.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S APARTMENT -- N.Y. NIGHT

MAXIMO and TERESA are drinking at his kitchen table. She has a bottle of bourbon in front of her. He's in a bathrobe and has a bottle of something brown.

MAXIMO
How am I supposed to give fatherly advice if you won't tell me what the problem is?

TERESA
We're having a disagreement, that's all.

MAXIMO
Ah, I see. A disagreement. Now it's all clear. Well, one of you must come to agree.

TERESA
It's not that simple.

MAXIMO
No? And here I thought I understood the situation so completely.

TERESA
Just drink with me, will 'ya? Have some more apple juice.

She pours him some from his bottle, then pours herself a glass of bourbon. He watches her glass, licking his lips.

MAXIMO
You are a true sadist.

TERESA
Then I play well to your masochist. I talked to your cardiologist. You missed your appointment again, didn't you?

He waves her off, yawning and casting an apprehensive look toward the bedroom.

TERESA (cont.)
(catching the look)
What? The waitress from Lucky Dan's?

MAXIMO
Yes and no.

TERESA
What does that mean?

MAXIMO
Yes a waitress, no from Lucky Dan's, okay?

TERESA
Doesn't it make you feel depressed?

MAXIMO
It makes me feel alive. You should worry about your own heart. Tell him. Boom. Goodbye.

TERESA
What about true love, Dad?

MAXIMO
Something the florists made up.

TERESA
Oh really? Was Mom something the florists made up?

MAXIMO
Excuse me very much if I do not allow you to compare my wife to your young man with two names. If he feels such true love, why isn't he here to drink with you?

She looks at him. That stung.

MAXIMO (cont.)
I'm sorry.

TERESA
Don't be. You're right.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Maximo's bedroom is dark. MAXIMO comes in, closes the door, and sits at the foot of the bed, thinking.

A WOMAN's voice comes from behind him, from the deep shadows at the other end of the bed.

WOMAN
You don't like him?

He turns around and looks at her, annoyed.

WOMAN (cont.)
You left the door open. You don't like him?

MAXIMO
No man who wants what I have is my friend.

WOMAN
He's not trying to take her away from you.

MAXIMO
(hard)
You're not family. You don't talk to me about family.

She quiets.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- L.A. DAY

WALTER comes up the stairs and into the main room of the runaway shelter, which is in its usual state of pandemonium.

Walter heads for the office, but is immediately intercepted by ANTHONY, the kid who wielded the butter knife earlier.

ANTHONY
Hey, Walter, you think you could beat up my dad?

WALTER
I don't know, Anthony. Is your dad in a wheelchair?

ANTHONY
No.

WALTER
Then I don't think I could.

ANTHONY
What if I scored you some plastic pipe filled with sand?

WALTER
Not today, okay?

ANTHONY
When are you gonna <u>place</u> me, man? I know every dead roach in this place.

WALTER
Not <u>today</u>, all right?

ANTHONY
Sor-ree.

Walter keeps walking, to Ruth's office.

WALTER
(to VIVIAN)
Ruth in?

Not waiting for a reply, he goes into the office and closes the door. After he's long gone:

VIVIAN
She doesn't want to be disturbed.

CUT TO:

INT RUTH'S OFFICE DAY

RUTH is behind her desk, poring over paperwork. WALTER is on the sofa again.

WALTER
This back and forth to New York is killing me. I'm living like I make sixty thousand dollars a year, you know?

RUTH
(distracted)
Uh huh.

WALTER
I can't even afford to talk to her when I want to. I had to sell some of my furniture, did I tell you that?

RUTH
(still distracted)
Sheesh.

WALTER
I couldn't believe it as I was doing it. The guy asked what I needed the cash for and I said "gambling" because I thought I'd look less stupid.

Ruth looks up, confused.

RUTH
You gamble?

WALTER
No. Forget it.

He starts to get up. She puts down her pen.

RUTH
Wait a minute. I'm sorry. Sit down.

He does.

RUTH (cont.)
I've stayed out of this because other people's genitals aren't really my responsibility, unless they're paying me.
(thinks)
Let me start over. You know I went out with the scum-sucking pig from Chicago for about a year, right?

WALTER
Ruth, he's not necessarily --

RUTH
Well, after a year I asked myself the same question you are. Do I want to move? Does he? And we didn't. Case closed. I got out, and I'm happy.

WALTER
You are?

RUTH
Sure. I'm still single, but maybe I'm supposed to be. You've never made the hard decisions when you had to, Walter, but now it's time. Get out.

WALTER
I love her.

RUTH
Do you? Pain like this is a sign something's wrong. These long distance things are flawed in conception. Ask anybody on the street -- nine out of ten of them tried it, and nine out of ten of those didn't work.

WALTER
What if mine does?

RUTH
Does it feel like it does?

He looks at her.

CUT TO:

INT LOS ANGELES AIRPORT DAY

TERESA stands in the terminal at LAX, pacing near a gate that is long since deserted. Waiting.

WALTER comes racing down the corridor, out of breath.

WALTER
I'm so sorry, traffic was hell.

TERESA
That's okay.

But it's really not. They embrace and kiss, a bit stiffly.

They head back down the corridor. Walter reaches for her bag.

TERESA (cont.)
No, I got it.

CUT TO:

EXT LAKE HOLLYWOOD -- L.A. DAY

WALTER and TERESA are eating a picnic lunch up at Lake Hollywood, the same spot they sat in when she was first in Los Angeles.

They don't say much. After a moment:

TERESA
I think Continental has some new super-saver thing, if you stop in Denver.

WALTER
Oh, yeah?

TERESA
Yeah. Gotta stop in Denver, though.

WALTER
Should look into that.

TERESA
Um hm.

They eat.

WALTER
Continental.

TERESA
Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S APARTMENT NIGHT

WALTER is in the bathroom of his apartment, washing his face, getting dressed to go out. He looks at himself. He's not happy.

From the other room, he can hear TERESA on the phone.

TERESA (o.s.)
Oh God, not again!

Walter opens the door a crack to hear better.

TERESA (o.s.)
Is he all right? Well, who saw him? Oh, Jesus. Yeah. Yeah, it's only seven here, that shouldn't be a problem. Stay there, will you?

She hangs up. Walter opens the door and goes into the bedroom.

Teresa already has her overnight bag on the bed and is packing rapidly.

WALTER
What happened?

TERESA
My father had another angina attack.

WALTER
Is he okay?

TERESA
I think so. He insists on staying at home, the idiot.

WALTER
You're going back?

TERESA
I think I'd better, don't you?

Pause.

WALTER
I'll take you to the airport.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S CAR NIGHT

WALTER and TERESA are in his car. It's raining, hard, and both of them are morose. They're near the airport, which is congested with traffic.

TERESA
Since when does it rain so much here? What the hell happened to perpetual sun?

WALTER
Always rains in January and February.

TERESA
(grumbling)
And it probably quits at two a.m.

Pause. The car comes to a stop in the traffic.

WALTER
Don't worry. We'll make your flight.

TERESA
I can't take much more of this thing. It's like a roller coaster.

WALTER
Maybe this time he should go to the hospital.

TERESA
I didn't mean him.

Walter looks at her.

WALTER
Oh.

TERESA
I mean, where are we going?

WALTER
What do you mean, going? I thought we were in love.

TERESA
Yeah, but for how much longer this way? I can see the future, Walter, and the midnight flights and cheap hotels in the middle of nowhere just aren't funny any more. It's just so selfish.

WALTER
Yeah.

TERESA
But, if you refuse to move, you refuse to move. Why don't you honk the horn?

WALTER
Wait a minute. I meant <u>we</u> were selfish.

TERESA
Oh come on, Walter. Do you honestly expect me to move? With my father and all? This is your doing. Would you honk the horn already?

WALTER
That isn't fair! After all I've given up for us, I think you could be just a little more understanding.

TERESA
After all you've given up?!

WALTER
Yes! I'm obviously the one expected to move, I'm the one expected to go broke --

TERESA
I offered to help you! You refused!

WALTER
That's not the point. I'm tired of doing all the work, only to --

TERESA
All the work?! You haven't had to initiate anything in this relationship! I moved everything along while you sat back and played it safe. I asked you out, I said I loved you --

WALTER
You're shouting.

TERESA
I know I'm shouting! I like to shout!

She reaches over and leans on the horn. He pushes her hand away.

WALTER
This is my horn. I decide when to use it.

Teresa bangs her head against the window.

TERESA
God, you are repressed.

WALTER
Look, I'm trying to keep calm here.

TERESA
Well, don't keep calm! Take a position, for once in your life!

WALTER
Don't you think you're overreacting?

TERESA
No, Walter, I'm reacting. People do it when they're upset. Just not out here, I guess. Here they sit on hills and put their feet on rails and rot from the inside out.

WALTER
(the first real anger we've seen from him)
You know what? Looking at you right now I wouldn't dream of asking you to move. You're loud, you're violent, you get in my face -- New York was made for you.

TERESA
You're right, Walter. It was. So keep the fuck out.

She grabs her bag and gets out of the car, into the pouring rain. She SLAMS the door behind her and trudges through the sea of brake lights ahead.

WALTER
Hey!

He opens the window and YELLS.

WALTER (cont.)
Teresa!

He lays on the horn.

A few seconds go by. He hits the horn again, long and hard.

The door opens and she gets in, soaking wet.

She is calmer, but still upset. She stares straight ahead, brushing water from her eyes.

TERESA
I'm sorry I said that.

WALTER
Look, Teresa, we can still work like this. We can make it work like this. Just this afternoon you were talking about this Continental super-saver --

TERESA
(more sad than angry)
It's so mediocre. Can't you see it? I don't want to have a compromise. I left guys stuck in taxis and on curbs because I didn't want compromises. I hoped we were better than that.

WALTER
You're asking me to leave my home.

TERESA
Yes. And you're asking me. And it looks like we're both saying no.

Pause.

TERESA (cont.)
So there it is.

She leans over and kisses him. She pulls her bag in tight and opens the door again.

WALTER
Wait a minute, wait a minute. Did you just end this?

TERESA
That, Walter, is a matter of perspective.

She gets out and closes the door.

He doesn't go after her.

CUT TO:

EXT NEW YORK NIGHT

The street outside Maximo's building.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S BEDROOM NIGHT

TERESA pokes her head in the door to Maximo's room, carrying a glass of juice and two pills. MAXIMO is in bed, trying to sleep.

She goes to him. He sits up a little to take the juice.

She stares, saddened by more than just his condition.

He senses it. He reaches up and puts his hand to her cheek.

MAXIMO
If you want to cry, Tere, I'll look the other way.

She doesn't, but looks at him gratefully.

He raises his glass, toasting her with it.

MAXIMO (cont.)
(taking the pills)
Por la familia.

TERESA
Por la familia.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT -- N.Y. NIGHT

TERESA, in blue jeans and a sweatshirt, is throwing stuff into a garbage bag -- photos of her and Walter, letters, a Disneyland sweatshirt -- anything that reminds her of him.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. NIGHT

More letters and photos are flying into a garbage bag, in fact it could even be the same one --

-- except one of the items is an N.Y.U. tee-shirt. WALTER's doing the same housecleaning, and he does it with a vengeance.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- L.A. DAY

Walter's house is by now practically devoid of furniture, except for a couch. WALTER comes home, soaked; we can hear the rain outside. He tosses his jacket and mail on a table.

He goes out on the porch, protected from the rain by the overhang.

He looks out over the alley, deserted and wet.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT VENICE DAY

WALTER eats lunch at a restaurant, not the one he and Teresa once ate at. He's alone.

A WOMAN walks past. He recognizes her.

WALTER
Michele!

She stops. She's not dressed as a waitress anymore, and her demeanor, unlike last time she saw him, is cool as hell. She keeps looking apprehensively to the other side of the restaurant.

MICHELE
Walter, hi.

WALTER
How are you? I haven't seen you around.

MICHELE
I quit. I'm back on the show.

WALTER
What about the rabies?

MICHELE
Turned out to be somebody's dream. You know, like that one "Dallas?"

WALTER
That's great. Congratulations.

MICHELE
Yeah. Listen, if some people from "Us" magazine call you, can you just pretend you don't know me?

WALTER
Uh, sure.

Michele nods. She looks over to the other side of the restaurant again, wishing she were there.

MICHELE
(out of obligation)
So are you still seeing that person?

WALTER
No, actually, we broke up a month or two ago.

MICHELE
Hmm. I guess it was kind of bound to happen, wasn't it?

WALTER
What do you mean?

MICHELE
Well, you were obviously on the rebound from me.

WALTER
No, I --

MICHELE
Listen, I'm with someone now, so let's not have an embarrassing thing here, okay?

WALTER
Excuse me?

MICHELE
I mean, why did you come to this restaurant? You know I eat here.

WALTER
You never eat here. They have meat here.

MICHELE
Don't be pathetic, Walter.

WALTER
I'm not. I eat here. I showed you this place.

MICHELE
It's over, Walter.

She turns to go.

WALTER
Michele --

She turns back.

WALTER (cont.)
Suck my dick.

Michele looks at him, shocked. She turns on her heel and fails to execute a properly dramatic exit.

Walter giggles, surprised with himself.

CUT TO:

INT BEACH BAR -- L.A. NIGHT

WALTER and JEFF are sitting at the bar in a local dive somewhere in Venice. They're drunk.

WALTER
So I'm sitting in my apartment, right?

JEFF
First of all, let me just say there is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

WALTER
I mean, it's my place, you know? And I'm sitting in it. I choose to sit in it.

JEFF
No one could argue. No one could possibly argue.

WALTER
I need you to back me up on this.

JEFF
You're backed. You're totally backed.

WALTER
And I get this phone call from Teresa.

JEFF
What a bitch.

WALTER
No, not yet.

JEFF
Oh. Sorry.

WALTER
And we're talking and talking and yadada-yadada, and all of a sudden she comes out and says "So how are you doing? I mean emotionally."

Jeff doesn't react.

WALTER (cont.)
Now.

JEFF
What a bitch.

WALTER
Tell me about it. Is it too much to ask that she not do that?

JEFF
You're God damn right.

WALTER
I mean, once you break up, is a man entitled to have his thoughts to himself or what?

JEFF
You are one hundred percent on the nose with this.

WALTER
And besides, I'm fine.

JEFF
No, now you're fucked up.

WALTER
What?

JEFF
You're totally fucked up.

WALTER
I thought you were backing me up here?

JEFF
I was, but now you're fucked up.

WALTER
Why?

JEFF
'Cause you're not fine. You miss her.

WALTER
You see one tear on this face? You see one tear? I don't miss her.

JEFF
Sure you do. She was the best thing that ever happened to you. She had an effect, for Christ's sake. You think you would have said that to Michele if Teresa wasn't talking inside you?

WALTER
What are you doing? I mean, are we havin' a beer or what?

JEFF
Yeah.

Pause.

JEFF (cont.)
(his turn)
So I get this divorce, right?

WALTER
God damn right.

JEFF
And I go to L.A. and I sit in my old college bar and have a couple drinks with my old college buddy.

WALTER
As well you should, as well you should.

JEFF
And suddenly I look around this dive that used to be so great and I realize it <u>is</u> a dive. And it used to be funny, and now it's kinda pathetic. And I'm thinking maybe home doesn't sit still.

WALTER
This story started out so great --

JEFF
And I further realize what I should be doing is getting my butt back to New York and fixing what I fucked up.

WALTER
Wrong, wrong, wrong. Look, I'm a trained therapist, I know what I'm talking about. You were in pain in that marriage. Pain is a sign something's wrong.

JEFF
Yeah. Or that you're growing.

Walter looks at him.

CUT TO:

EXT TERESA'S APARTMENT -- N.Y. NIGHT

Teresa's apartment building, early evening.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

TERESA and CLAIRE are sitting at Teresa's kitchen table, working on a bottle of wine.

CLAIRE
You know what I hate the most?

TERESA
What?

CLAIRE
The idea that I am the object of such good gossip. I mean, a divorce after six months isn't even at-the-office-on-Monday gossip, it's more like leave-a-message-on-the-machine-at-all-hours gossip.

TERESA
You've never cared what people thought before, don't start now.

CLAIRE
I don't care what they think. They care what they think, that's what pisses me off.

TERESA
I talked to Walter the other day. He didn't even ask how I was doing. You know -- emotionally.

CLAIRE
What a bastard.

TERESA
He sounded so calm.

CLAIRE
Jeff keeps calling me, but I won't call him back.

TERESA
What's he want?

CLAIRE
I don't know. Probably his Beatles CD's. But he's not getting 'em.

TERESA
Isn't that a little petty?

CLAIRE
Don't knock petty. Petty's all that keeps me going sometimes. Did I tell you I found out he smoked? Can you believe that? It's like buying a used car and finding out they fucked with the odometer.

TERESA
You think they're sitting somewhere saying awful things about us right now?

CLAIRE
I would guess it's more about women in general. Screw 'em. Let's look on the bright side.

She pours another couple glasses of wine. There is a long pause while they look for the bright side.

CLAIRE (cont.)
Well, at least Maximo can quit worrying about you moving to L.A.

TERESA
Oh, he never really knew I was even thinking about it.

CLAIRE
Actually, he did.

TERESA
What?

CLAIRE
I was afraid to tell you before, but -- I kinda spilled the beans.

TERESA
You what? When?

CLAIRE
(thinks)
About a month ago? Yeah, yeah, I remember, 'cause it was right before his first attack. But it doesn't matter now, right?

Teresa is overcome with a Sudden and Terrible Thought.

CLAIRE (cont.)
Right?

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S APARTMENT NIGHT

MAXIMO is in his robe, making something to eat. A key SCRAPES in the lock, the front door opens, and TERESA comes into the apartment.

MAXIMO
I know, I know. I shouldn't be up. But I have my appetite back.

TERESA
There's something.

MAXIMO
What?

TERESA
There's something I want to ask.

MAXIMO
In what way does it involve me, a man with food on the stove?

TERESA
How come I could never find the paramedics' report?

MAXIMO
(defensive)
What?

TERESA
Why did they have no record of treating you?

MAXIMO
I don't know. You know how these things are.

TERESA
Yeah, I do. Not like this. Why didn't they take you to the hospital?

MAXIMO
Well, maybe they --

TERESA
It's standard practice, Dad. Why wouldn't they do it?

MAXIMO
Do you want a drink?

TERESA
No, I don't want a drink. How could you do this to me? Jesus, you trust you parents, you trust them --

MAXIMO
Tere, stop talking like this. You're just worried. I'm fine now, I swear.

TERESA
You faked it, didn't you? You found out from Claire I was thinking of moving and you cooked up a little scheme and you faked the whole God damn thing.

MAXIMO
Tere, wait.

TERESA
And to drive it home you pulled it a second time when I was in L.A.

He doesn't look at her.

TERESA (cont.)
Tell me it's not true.

No answer.

TERESA (cont.)
Dad, I would very much like you to tell me this isn't true.

He swallows.

MAXIMO
I can explain.

If she wasn't sure before, this cements it.

TERESA
Oh Jesus, Max, do you know what you did? Do you have any idea what you did? I broke up with him. And aside from that, what about the pain you put me through? Did you think about that? What did you hope to accomplish? What could you possibly want?

Maximo looks at her, shaking his head, a rage growing inside. He mutters in Spanish.

TERESA (cont.)
In English.

He continues, rambling in Spanish.

TERESA (cont.)
In English, Dad!

MAXIMO
(shouting)
I want my family back!

She looks at him. His iron will begins to melt.

MAXIMO (cont.)
(softer)
I just want a family.

She goes to him and embraces him.

TERESA
But so do I, Dad.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S OFFICE -- N.Y. DAY

TERESA stares out the window of her office. CLAIRE is behind her, reflected in the glass.

CLAIRE
I'm so sorry.

TERESA
It wasn't your fault.

CLAIRE
What are you going to do now?

TERESA
Nothing. The point isn't whether or not one of us can move -- it's if we're both willing to. And he's not.

CUT TO:

EXT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- L.A. DAY

The runaway shelter at midday.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER DAY

WALTER walks through the main room of the shelter, looking for someone.

He goes down a hallway and pokes his head in a bathroom.

WALTER
Anthony?

Nobody there.

Walter goes to a room with a "14" on the door, knocks a few times, and pushes the door open.

WALTER (cont.)
Yo, margarine head.

The room is empty, the bed made up tight.

CUT TO:

INT RUTH'S OFFICE DAY

RUTH is at her desk. WALTER comes in.

WALTER
Have you seen Anthony? The little punk split without signing out again.

RUTH
Anthony?

WALTER
Yeah, DeSanto, Anthony DeSanto. In fourteen.

RUTH
Oh, yeah. I placed him.

WALTER
You what?

RUTH
Last week. He left this morning. Didn't I tell you?

WALTER
No, you did not tell me.

RUTH
Oh. I thought I put a memo on the board.

WALTER
You thought you put a memo on the board?

RUTH
I expected you to be happy. It was a terrific placement. The father owns a stereo store in Canoga Park.

WALTER
Canoga Park? That's the middle of fucking Siberia from here.

RUTH
Would you take it easy?

WALTER
This is so typical. This is so -- flighty. We can't be like this. We can't just spread these kids out like this.

RUTH
Yeah, Walter, we can. In fact, it's what we do, remember? Are you okay?

Walter turns and leaves, upset.

RUTH (cont.)
Walter?

CUT TO:

EXT WALTER'S HOUSE DAY

WALTER comes home at the end of the day. He stops and gets his mail from the box at the base of the porch. One of the items is a large manila envelope.

He opens it. He pulls out a photograph. It's a blow up of the shot of he and his father taken by the taxi driver. It's a surprisingly good shot, with both of them smiling, looking each other full in the face.

Happy to be together.

Walter looks up. The picture had an effect.

He goes up the steps of the porch and sits down.

Suddenly he stand, picks up the beach chair, and SMASHES it against the railing, breaking it in half and throwing it into the alley.

He sits down, pulling his knees up to his chest.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S BEDROOM -- N.Y. NIGHT

TERESA is asleep in bed. The phone RINGS. She wakes up and answers it.

TERESA
Hello? Claire? Where are you? You sound far away.

A smile spreads slowly across her face.

TERESA (cont.)
Well, I'll be damned.

CUT TO:

INT TERESA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

TERESA is in her apartment, packing a bag. She does so carefully, calmly, folding things, taking her time.

CUT TO:

INT TAXI -- N.Y. NIGHT

TERESA is in the back of a cab heading smoothly uptown.

TERESA
No rush. I'm early.

CUT TO:

INT TRAIN STATION -- N.Y. NIGHT

TERESA wheels her suitcase through the old-fashioned train station.

CUT TO:

EXT TRAIN PLATFORM DAY

A PORTER takes Teresa's bags. She tips him. He looks at the bill.

PORTER
Thank you.

Teresa smiles and gets on the train.

CUT TO:

INT TRAIN NIGHT

TERESA is settled into her compartment on the train, staring out the window, watching the country whizz by.

It's peaceful, relaxing, melodic --

-- and she's depressed as hell.

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER -- L.A. DAY

WALTER hurries up to VIVIAN's desk, where a phone is off the hook; a call waiting for him.

WALTER
Hello? Jeff? Stop babbling, what's going on?
(pause)
Reno? No, of course I can't. Why?
(pause)
Get the fuck outta here!

CUT TO:

INT RUNAWAY SHELTER DAY

WALTER paces in RUTH's office; she sits behind her desk.

WALTER
I am asking for two days off and five hundred dollars. That's <u>it</u>.

RUTH
Walter -- you're in a healing period. You just have to ride it out. Trust me, I've been through it.

WALTER
Yeah. Look, I gotta go to Reno, now. Yes or no?

RUTH
Would you just relax? Would you just be a tiny bit conservative? Would you just be <u>Walter</u>, for God's sake?

WALTER
Hell, no! Walter's so conservative he's just about the most dangerous person I know. I wouldn't touch Walter with a ten foot pole. Will you give me the time off or not?

RUTH
No. For your own good, no.

WALTER
Fine. I quit.

He turns to go.

RUTH
You're making a big mistake.

WALTER
No. You made a big mistake, and I can't believe you're sitting there telling me to make exactly the same one.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

INT WALTER'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM DAY

WALTER upends a dresser drawer into a suitcase and runs for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT FREEWAY -- L.A. DAY

WALTER's car blasts through traffic on the 405, headed for the airport.

CUT TO:

INT AIRPORT -- L.A. DAY

WALTER waits at the head of the ticket line. A light flashes in front of him, indicating an available window.

Walter walks in that direction --

-- straight toward the SNOTTY CLERK. Walter takes a deep breath, shakes the tension out of his shoulders, and goes up to the counter.

The Clerk sees him and breaks into a cagey smile. He and Walter speak like opponents, circling each other.

CLERK
Good afternoon.

WALTER
Good afternoon.

CLERK
What can I do for you today?

WALTER
Do you have a flight to Reno?

The Clerk types a few commands into the computer.

CLERK
Certainly. It leaves in forty-five minutes.

WALTER
How fortunate. Are there seats available?

The Clerk types again.

CLERK
An abundance.

WALTER
This is really my day. And how much would that be?

The Clerk types again.

CLERK
Oh dear.

WALTER
Trouble?

CLERK
Unfortuatenly, our super-saver, maxi-saver, and ultra-saver rates are all booked.

WALTER
That <u>is</u> a setback.

CLERK
But as I say, there are an abundance of seats.
(enjoying it immensely)
In first class, if it's in the gentleman's --
(looks him up and down)
-- price range.

He gives Walter a smarmy smile.

WALTER
You're good. You're very good.

CLERK
Thank you.

WALTER
But I'm better.

Walter reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a fistful of documents. He SLAPS them on the counter one at a time.

WALTER (cont.)
(SLAP!)
Frequent flyer certificate.
(SLAP!)
First class upgrade.
(SLAP!)
Free beverage coupon.

The Clerk looks up at him, face pale.

WALTER (cont.)
Ring it up.

CUT TO:

EXT DEBBIE 'N MONICA'S WEDDING CHAPEL -- RENO DAY

Debbie 'n Monica's Wedding Chapel is a cement block building painted entirely pink that stands on the edge of town where Reno gives way to the desert.

There are a couple of cars parked in front.

A taxi races up and SCREECHES to a halt.

CUT TO:

INT WEDDING CHAPEL DAY

DEBBIE, a justice of the peace, maybe two month over eighteen, stands at the front of the room, chewing gum and flipping through a wedding manual.

DEBBIE
Okay -- so you took him and she took you and blah-blah-blah, blah-blah-blah, I filled out the pink thingy and I think we're cool here. Cool!

She looks up at the BRIDE and GROOM.

DEBBIE (cont.)
Okay -- do you, like, have any questions?

The Lucky Couple are JEFF and CLAIRE, looking embarrassed and eager to get the ceremony over with. TERESA stands to Claire's left.

JEFF
Yeah. Are you sure you're licensed to do this?

DEBBIE
Okay, that's like really really confrontational 'cause I took the whole course and if you want to see my certificate --

JEFF
That's okay. Sorry.

DEBBIE
Okay -- my best friend Monica has to notarize the dealy.

Behind them, the door to the chapel opens. They all turn.

WALTER hurries in the door and fills in the spot on Jeff's right, exchanging a quick glance with Teresa.

DEBBIE
Cool! Your best man. He's gotta sign it too.
(shouting)
Monica!

No answer.

DEBBIE (cont.)
Wait here.

She flounces into the other room.

Walter, Jeff, Claire, and Teresa all stand awkwardly, none of them feeling particularly chatty.

JEFF
Well, I feel like a dick.

CLAIRE
Oh, great start, Jeff.

JEFF
That's not what I meant and you know it.

DEBBIE
(o.s., screaming)
MONICA!!

CLAIRE
(to Walter and Teresa)
Thanks for coming, you guys.

Walter tries to get Teresa's attention. Pissed, hurting, she turns and walks out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT WEDDING CHAPEL DAY

TERESA stands on the edge of the parking lot, looking out at the desert. A shadow falls on the ground in front of her. She turns.

WALTER is standing behind her. She turns back.

Pause.

TERESA
No offense, but could you get out of here? Having you stand next to me hurts.

WALTER
Then we're in a lot of trouble.

TERESA
What?

WALTER
Because I feel more at home right this minute than I have in my entire life. Home isn't places, it's people. I'm so sorry it took me until now to see that. But it's true, it's honestly true, and it means my home really is in L.A.

TERESA
What?

WALTER
Or New York. Or Minneapolis. Or Austin, or Bismarck, or Portland, or wherever you are, Teresa.

She looks at him, squinting one eye suspiciously.

WALTER (cont.)
Did you like how I kinda had you going there at the end? I practiced that all the way.

She thinks.

WALTER (cont.)
Come on. Talk to me. Will you have me?

TERESA
You know, I took the train here.

WALTER
Yeah?

TERESA
I thought I needed to become a more relaxed person. You know what it is about trains?

WALTER
You get to see the country.

TERESA
No. They suck. That's what it is about trains. Half the time it's night and you can't see a thing, they take a lot longer, and it's boring.

WALTER
Teresa.

TERESA
Honestly, Walter, you have problems.

WALTER
Teresa.

She looks down at the ground. They're about six feet apart.

TERESA
Come here and kiss me.

Walter checks out the distance. Fast as hell:

WALTER
You come here.

TERESA
You come here.

WALTER
You come here.

TERESA
You come here.

At the same moment, they both break, moving toward each other, coming together smack dab in the middle, falling into a kiss.

Debbie's VOICE belts from offscreen, sounding a lot like a voice someone named Debbie might have.

DEBBIE (o.s.)
YOU GUYYYYYYYYS!

WALTER
They want us to sign the pink thingy.

TERESA
I'd be delighted.

He puts his arm out. She takes it. As they walk toward the chapel:

TERESA (cont.)
You don't actually have to move to New York. I just wanted you to offer. I'll move to L.A.

WALTER
No, I said I would. I want to.

TERESA
Well, so do I.

WALTER
Okay, you move to L.A., I'll move to New York.

TERESA
Great! Continental has this new super-saver thing --

CUT TO:

EXT STREET -- N.Y. DAY

The street outside Maximo's building at midday.

CUT TO:

INT MAXIMO'S BUILDING DAY

MAXIMO comes out of his apartment and locks his door. A VOICE calls from behind him.

VOICE (o.s.)
Mr. Villegas?

He turns. RUTH is there, dressed in a business suit.

MAXIMO
Yes?

RUTH
My name is Ruth Carver. I know this is strange, but you're the only Villegas listed in Manhattan. Do you have a daughter, Teresa?

MAXIMO
That blessing is mine.

RUTH
Then you know Walter? Walter Stanley?

MAXIMO
Know him? I'm teaching the son of a bitch Spanish.

RUTH
Could you give him a message for me? Tell him I was in town and I wanted to say -- I wanted to say I thought about it and I'm glad he didn't make my mistake. He'll understand.

MAXIMO
A message such as this I have a duty to pass on.

RUTH
Thanks. Thanks a lot.

She turns to go. He looks her up and down, quickly.

MAXIMO
Just a minute.

She turns.

MAXIMO (cont.)
Do you work here in the city?

She smiles.

FADE OUT.