

M A R G A R E T

A Screenplay
By Kenneth Lonergan

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EXT. MANHATTAN. BROADWAY. UPPER 70s. DAY.

From across Broadway we see a little girl waiting at the curb. She steps off the curb toward us --

A TRUCK BARRELS into frame -- The long lens' flattened perspective makes it look like she's just been crushed.

But the truck flashes by and she's fine. More traffic passes to and fro through the frame.

CREDITS BEGIN OVER:

EXT. ANOTHER CORNER. DAY.

The LIGHT CHANGES and a crowded cornerful of New Yorkers step off the curb and into the crosswalk -- Before the first foot lands on the street we go to SUPER SLOW MOTION as the mid-day work crowd crosses the street.

MONTAGE -- Slow motion shots of New Yorkers, mid-day, all kinds, going all different ways, all over the city.

CREDITS END with some highschool kids with book bags, walking among the crowds.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM. DAY.

An 11th-grade math class at the Thoreau School, one of the few remaining Manhattan '60s-inspired progressive schools. About twenty kids, mostly white secular Jewish. A sprinkling of black and Hispanic kids.

The teacher, MR AARON, is a very handsome black man in his mid-twenties. He is returning test papers.

MR AARON

Abrams...Allende...

One after the other the students get up to collect their tests, glance at the results and drag themselves back to their chairs.

On LISA COHEN, just 17. Not the best-looking girl in her class but definitely in the top five. She listens listlessly, somewhat bad-temperedly.

MR AARON

Bernstein...Cohen...

At "Cohen" LISA gets up and heads for the desk.

LISA'S POV, closing in slowly on MR AARON who glances up at her as she approaches. Their eyes meet. Aaron has the classic handsome young teacher's no-nonsense expression on his face as she reaches out her hand --

LISA

Thank you, Mr Aaron.

She walks back to her seat looking at her grade. "B-" "SEE ME!" is written in the corner.

AFTER CLASS -- The last students head out as Mr Aaron gestures for Lisa to take a seat.

MR AARON

Take a seat, Lisa. I just wanna talk about your test for a minute.

LISA (Sitting)

Sure.

MR AARON

Now...I know you had a little help...

LISA

Well -- I mean -- I didn't cheat, if that's what you mean. I mean it was open book.

MR AARON

I'm just saying I know you had a little help.

LISA

A lot of people did.

MR AARON

Be that as it may --

LISA

I mean I'll take it over again if you want, but like, what would be the point? It's not like I'm ever gonna actually need to know this stuff in my daily life...

MR AARON

Well, Lisa, that's just not necessarily true. Haven't you ever developed an interest in something you didn't initially think you were going to develop an interest in?

LISA

Um, no, not really.

MR AARON

-- Haven't you ever been forced into a situation and forced to overcome its difficulties and found later on that you had acquired useful experiences or skills along the way?

LISA

No. I really haven't. No.

Mr Aaron looks down for a moment. Lisa looks at him with secret adoration. He looks up at her.

LISA

Anyway, it was open book. So what's the big difference between using a book, and like, I don't know, using somebody else's mind who's really good at math? It's not like this person did the whole test for me.

MR AARON

No?

LISA

No. I did some of it.

She looks at him and smiles. He has stopped smiling.

MR AARON

Well, next time I'd appreciate it if you did all of it.

LISA

You are so fair.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY. DAY.

TRACKING LISA from behind as she walks through the halls past her fellow students. It's a high-ceilinged old building not originally built for this purpose. A lot of kids sitting on the floor in the corners, a lot of student art on the walls; dark and warm rather than sterile and institutional.

She walks through a central student lounge, into a short hall, past boys' and girls' bathrooms, and into --

INT. THE BACK STAIRS. CONTINUOUS.

-- Where half a dozen kids are smoking cigarettes. There are buckets of sand for ashtrays and millions of butts on the floor. The walls are covered with graffiti. It's kind of cool.

Lisa goes to her friend BECKY and takes out her cigarettes. They are standing near a kid named KURT.

BECKY

What did he say to you?

LISA

Nothing. Mr Aaron and I have an understanding about my math problem.

Becky laughs. Lisa laughs.

LISA (Cont'd)

He is so appealing.

A long-haired kid comes in, followed by a somewhat preppier girl, KIRSTEN, and her look-alike friend LESLIE.

KIRSTEN

OK, Mr Ferrar is such an asshole.

KURT

What'd he do, call on you?

KIRSTEN

Fuck you, Kurt.

LESLIE

Kirsten is really upset.

KURT

I'm sorry.

KIRSTEN

Let me have one of those, will you?

Leslie gives Kirsten a cigarette and lights it for her.

BECKY

Kirsten, I didn't know you smoked.

KIRSTEN

I don't, I'm just really angry. (To Leslie again) Check out what he said to me last week.

She drops her voice. They whisper. Lisa watches them.

LESLIE

Are you serious?

Kirsten tosses her head and laughs.

LATER -- MONICA, an elegant 11th-grader, is talking to some other girls seated on the steps.

MONICA

I just don't think you can really know a guy until you've slept with him.

MONICA'S FRIEND

Mm.

Lisa, overhearing, is not so sure, but wouldn't know.

INT. AMERICAN HISTORY CLASS. DAY.

The class is taught by two teachers; MR KLEIN and MR LEVINE. Klein is in his fifties, beefy, emphatic, with a thick Brooklyn accent. Levine is young, tall and skinny with thinning curly hair, dressed in corduroys and a sweater. On the blackboard are scrawled the words "STRIKERS" "PINKERTONS" and "PREZ. MCKINLEY."

KLEIN (High-pitched, excited)

...So the President of the United States, William B. McKinley, authorized the use of private detectives to break the strike, and they went out there and shot them down! Just like they did in Virginia, and just like they did in Pennsylvania. Because they did not care! They did not care!

LEVINE (Low, rumbling)

And that's basically it...That's basically all there is to say.

KLEIN

All right? Go ahead, uhhhhh: Becky.

BECKY

Well, Mr Klein...I mean, was there ever a good President of the United States?

There is some laughter from the students.

KLEIN

I don't know, Becky. I think that's a good question. What do you think? You. Lionel. What do you think? Did we ever have a good President?

LIONEL

Um...I don't know. I guess most of them have just been totally corrupt.

LEVINE

Lisa?

LISA

Can I just say, I'm not necessarily like a big fan of all the Presidents of the United States, especially the current one, but I still don't think it's necessarily all that useful to categorize every President as universally corrupt, because that seems very general to me. Especially if you're going to judge them by the standard of -- whatever they're supposed to traditionally be like, in some mythical version of America that probably never existed to begin with.

ANTHONY, an intellectual smart-ass, leans back in his chair.

ANTHONY

Lisa has raised a salient point.

There are some laughs from the class.

EXT. THE SCHOOL. DAY.

School has let out. The front of the building is swarming with kids. LISA walks away from the building. A short, energetic, kid named DARREN falls into step with her.

DARREN

Hey, how'd you do?

LISA

Hey Darren. It was fine. Thank you so much.

DARREN

He didn't give you a hard time or anything?

LISA

Well, he knows I'm not planning to like, go into Mathematics or anything. He was totally cool about it. He's so cool.

DARREN

Oh yeah, everybody loves Mr Aaron.

LISA

What's that supposed to mean?

DARREN

Nothing. The man is very lovable.

They reach the corner of Columbus and 88th and stop.

DARREN

What are you doing now?

LISA

I was gonna go look for a cowboy hat.

DARREN

Why would you want to buy a cowboy hat?

LISA

Because my Dad is supposed to take me and my brother to this ranch in New Mexico to go horseback riding, and I don't think it would be right to appear on horseback in New Mexico without the appropriate equestrian paraphernalia, Darren. You wouldn't understand these things.

DARREN

That is a definite possibility.

LISA

Anyway...Thanks again...

DARREN

Before you venture forth on your bizarre quest for a cowboy hat...?

LISA

Yes, Darren?

DARREN

...what are you up to later? Like tonight.

LISA

I don't know.

DARREN

You wanna go to a movie?

LISA

What do you mean, like on a date?

DARREN

No, not on a date, just go to a movie. I don't know if it's a fuckin' date, I wanna go to the fuckin' movies.

LISA

All right. Calm down. What do you wanna see?

DARREN

I don't know, I don't even know what's playing. I just felt like going to the movies! I don't know if it's a date! Let's forget about it!

LISA

OK, take it easy, I was just asking!

DARREN

What if it was a date, anyway? Would that be so horrendous?

LISA

Oh my God. Are you like -- are you asking me out? (Pause) Are you? (Pause) Hello, Earth to Darren...

DARREN

I don't know. Yeah. I mean...I feel like we're already really close...

LISA

Oh my God...

DARREN

And I think we'd be a really good match -- What?

LISA

Nothing. It -- Nothing.

DARREN

So - Yeah. I would like to go out with you...

LISA

Well, I would definitely have to think about this...

DARREN

Absolutely. Give it some thought.

LISA

I mean...I'm really flattered...But I would definitely not want to do anything to mess up our friendship.

DARREN

I view this as a method of strengthening our friendship.

LISA

It would definitely change it...

DARREN

Well...Why don't you think it over and let me know.

LISA

OK, I will.

Pause. He is looking at her like he wants something.

LISA

Why do you look like that?

DARREN

Like what?

LISA

What do you want from me?

DARREN

Not a thing!

LISA

All right. I'll see you later.

DARREN

All right.

He turns and walks away. She walks off in the other direction. She is pleased by the conversation.

EXT. WEST 73RD STREET BETWEEN BROADWAY and WEST END. DAY.

Lisa goes into her slightly run-down pre-war apartment building.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

She lets herself into the narrow apartment. A long hall covered with framed pictures, photographs and play posters opens onto a cramped living room crammed with books, plays, and magazines. A stereo, TV and computer are stuck in the corners. Beyond this is the kitchen and another hallway leading to the bathrooms and bedrooms.

LISA

Hello...!

Lisa drops her bag and goes into the kitchen. She opens the refrigerator. Her brother CURTIS, 11, comes in.

CURTIS

Hi.

LISA

Is Mom home?

CURTIS

No.

Lisa gets out some cold chicken and sits down with it.

CURTIS

Use a plate.

LISA

Don't be such a little fuckin' goody two-shoes.

CURTIS

Fuck you.

She eats. He watches her.

CURTIS

Do you want to play a game?

LISA

No.

CURTIS

Please!

LISA

I don't feel like it, Curtis. Quit bugging me.

CURTIS

Can I have some chicken?

She gives him some of the chicken. He sits. They eat.

INT. LISA'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM.

Lisa rummages in her mother's desk, finds a small supply of cash and steals forty dollars.

EXT. BROADWAY. DAY.

POV LISA: Slowly passing by Broadway clothing store windows. No cowboy hats.

She walks down Broadway window-shopping, enjoying herself.

INT. ANTIQUE CLOTHING STORE. DAY.

Lisa shows an embroidered cowboy hat up for the SALESGIRL.

LISA

Hi, do you have any other cowboy hats besides this one?

SALESGIRL

Oh, I don't think so. Is that one not your size?

LISA

No, it fits. I just don't like all the embroidery...

SALESGIRL

I guess it's a little kitschy.

LISA

Exactly. It's a little kitschy. I'm supposed to go to this ranch with my family and ride a horse along the trail, and I know I'm gonna look like an ass, so I want to make sure at least I look like an authentic ass.

SALESGIRL

Definitely.

LISA

I've never even ridden on a horse.

SALESGIRL

Oh it's really easy. It's really fun.

LISA

Do you know any other stores in the neighborhood that might have one?

SALESGIRL

God, I really don't. Sorry.

LISA

That's all right. Thanks.

INT. ANOTHER STORE. DAY.

Lisa looks at some blouses while she's at it.

EXT. BROADWAY. SHOE STORE. DAY.

Lisa looks at some shoes through the display window.

REFLECTED IN THE WINDOW, behind her, a city BUS pulls up to a bus stop and wheezes as the doors open.

INT. BUS. SIMULTANEOUS.

The BUS DRIVER is wearing a cowboy hat. He is around 30 and kind of good-looking. Past the disembarking passengers we see Lisa's back as she scans the shoe store.

ON LISA -- She turns around and sees the Bus Driver. She sees his cowboy hat and just as the doors shut --

LISA

Hey!

The Bus Driver starts the bus, which lurches away. Lisa runs after it.

IN THE BUS -- CLOSE on the Bus Driver, oblivious to Lisa, who we can see out the door and window, falling behind.

ON THE STREET -- The bus falls behind a slow-moving car and Lisa catches up.

IN THE BUS -- Lisa appears at the bus doors, waving and calling out. The Bus Driver sees her, smiles and waves back.

ON THE STREET -- Lisa is running alongside the bus.

LISA

Hey! Where'd you get your cowboy hat?

IN THE BUS -- The Bus Driver can't hear her, but smiles at her with good-natured flirtatiousness.

ON THE STREET -- The LIGHT at the curb turns YELLOW.

THE SLOW-MOVING CAR in front of the bus floors it to make the light.

THE BUS DRIVER sees his way is clear and steps on the gas. He turns and waves goodbye to Lisa.

The LIGHT turns RED.

Still looking at Lisa, the BUS DRIVER lifts the hat off his head in a farewell salute as --

LISA sees the bus pass under the RED LIGHT --

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN holding a clutch of grocery bags steps off the curb to cross Broadway.

VERY FAST:

THE BUS DRIVER turns his head to look straight forward.

POV BUS DRIVER -- The Woman is directly in front of him.

POV WOMAN -- The bus roars up at her.

THE BUS DRIVER slams on the BRAKES.

POV LISA -- The Woman is clipped by the huge bus and pulled tumbling underneath.

LISA screams. Pedestrians all over turn around.

POV LISA -- The woman is pulled and crunched in a horrible twisting tumble.

Everything stops.

TRACKING LISA fast as she runs across the street toward the accident. As she gets closer she sees one leg sticking out from under the bus.

Then with some confusion, she realizes that the WOMAN herself is right in front of her, and that her blood is spreading everywhere.

The woman is reaching out vaguely, unable to speak. She is making choking sounds.

Lisa stands over her for a second, frozen. She crouches down and tries to do something but doesn't know what to do, where to put her hands. Other people start converging.

IN THE BUS -- The Bus Driver puts the bus in Park, opens the door and rushes out.

WE TRACK him as he comes around to where a crowd has already formed. He hangs back on the outside. We break through till we find LISA kneeling next to the disoriented WOMAN, holding her hand. They are both covered in blood. Several other people are shouting and talking all at once.

1ST MAN

Somebody call an ambulance! Call an ambulance!

KID

I'm calling one....!

The Kid starts running away.

1ST MAN

Get an ambulance!

2ND MAN

Someone just went to get one!

LISA

Ma'am, can you hear me? Can you hear me?

WOMAN

I don't know.

LISA
You're on Broadway and 75th
street in New York -- You
were in a bad accident --

1ST MAN
Don't try to talk!

WOMAN
What? Where am I?
I don't understand.

LISA
You were in an accident, a traffic
accident --

WOMAN
Who are you?

LISA
My name is Lisa.

WOMAN
Am I dead...?

LISA
No, no you're not dead. You were in a
traffic accident, but you're gonna be OK --

WOMAN
What do you mean? What happened?

LISA
You were run over by a bus.

WOMAN
You've got to be kidding me.

LISA (Almost laughs)
No -- !

WOMAN
So where am I now? Who are you?

LISA
We're on Broadway and 75th street in New
York City -- You don't know me --

WOMAN
I don't understand. Is it still
happening?

LISA
No -- I mean yes -- The accident is
over, but I think you're a little
confused --

WOMAN
I'll say I'm confused.

1ST MAN

Here, lemme try to --

He tries to detach Lisa's hand from the Woman's.

WOMAN

NO! Don't let go of me!

LISA

I won't. I'm not. I'm not.

2ND MAN

Is there a doctor anywhere? Is anyone a doctor?!?

WOMAN

What are they talking about? What's going on? Don't let go of me -- !

LISA

I'm not, I'm not gonna let go --

2ND MAN

She needs a tourniquet or she's going to die.

1ST MAN

OK, let me just ---

Grimacing, the 1st Man tries to look at what's left of the Woman's leg -- She SCREAMS unbearably --

WOMAN

Oh my God what's happening to me!

LISA

You're gonna be all right, the ambulance is on its way. Just hold on until they get here.

WOMAN

Thank you, honey. Just don't let go of me.

LISA

I won't, I swear.

WOMAN

I can't see anything. Are my eyes open or closed?

Lisa looks at the 1st Man crouched next to her. He shakes his head, panicked; he doesn't know what to say either.

LISA

They're open.

WOMAN (Starts to cry)
What do you mean?

LISA (Starts crying too)
You were in a terrible accident. But
you're going to be fine, so just hang
on!

She looks at the incredible amount of blood spreading
everywhere, all over the street, all over her.

LISA (Cont'd)
WILL SOMEBODY CALL THE FUCKING
AMBULANCE!?!

1ST MAN
Calm down! We already
called them! Just calm
down! Ma'am, can you
tell us your name?
(Generally) Is anybody
here a doctor?!?

2ND MAN
Take it easy!

Maybe we should try to
do something to stop
the bleeding --

KID
I called them two minutes
ago, and somebody else
probably called them too!

LISA
Well they're obviously
not coming fast enough
so maybe you should
call them again! Why
not call them again!

WOMAN
Could somebody call my daughter?

LISA
Yeah, we can call her. What's her name?
Tell me her name and her --

WOMAN
It's Lisa.

LISA
It's -- No -- that's my name. Is that
your daughter's name?

WOMAN
What?

LISA
I'm s -- I'm not trying to be confusing.
My name is Lisa: Is that your daughter's
name too?

WOMAN
Jesus Christ, could somebody call her?
Just call her!

LISA

I can't call her if you don't give me
the number --

The woman starts breathing a horrible rattling choking.

WOMAN

I don't think I'm gonna make it.

LISA

Oh no please hang on. The ambulance is
gonna be here any minute!

The woman dies.

LISA (Cont'd)

Oh please hang on! Please hang on!

The 1st Man tries to pull her away.

LISA (Cont'd)

NO! Let GO of me!

She holds onto the dead woman's hand and sobs.

WIDER on the crowd and the BUS DRIVER standing just beyond
it. O.C., a SIREN wails irrelevantly, stuck in traffic.

LATER -- There are several cop cars now, and an ambulance,
cops everywhere and a crowd of onlookers.

Lisa is giving a statement to DETECTIVE MITCHELL. She is
completely drenched in blood. Her boots, skirt, everything.
A few yards away the Bus Driver is giving his statement
to another cop. He is very shaken up, smoking a cigarette.
Lisa keeps looking over at him.

MITCHELL

OK, Lisa...Lisa...I just want to ask you
a couple of questions, OK?

LISA

OK, sure.

MITCHELL

Now, you were standing across the street --

LISA

I wasn't standing, I was running, I was
trying to catch the bus.

MITCHELL

OK, now just tell me where you were,
roughly. By the corner? Just show me.

LISA (On "corner")

I was crossing the street, from over there, and then I just saw the bus head right for her...

MITCHELL

So you were right over there...

LISA (Starts to cry)

Yes, right there. I was right over there, OK!?

MITCHELL

I'm sorry Lisa, but we have to ask you this while it's still fresh in your mind.

LISA

I understand. I don't mind. I'm just upset.

MITCHELL

OK, Lisa, hang in there. You're doin' great. Now I want you to tell me somethin':

LISA

Can somebody call my mother?

MITCHELL

We already called your Mom; but I'm gonna have 'em put another call into your mother right now, OK?

LISA

Yes. Please stop patronizing me.

MITCHELL

I'm not tryin' to patronize you, I'm just tryin' to get the information down while it's fresh in your mind. And I wanna try to get you taken care of at the same time, too. OK? I'm just tryin' to do my job.

LISA

I know you are. I just don't want to be patronized!

MITCHELL

I know some of these questions might seem like they don't make a lotta sense right now --

LISA

It does make sense. Just ask me!

MITCHELL

That's what I'm doin'. Now I'm gonna ask you: From where you're standing could you see the traffic light? (Pause) Could you see if it was red? Green? Yellow? Just picture it in your mind. What color was the light?

Lisa looks over at the Bus Driver. Their eyes meet.

LISA

I didn't really see it...I think it was just an accident.

Over his shoulder Lisa watches the paramedics carry the body into the ambulance.

LATER -- Everyone is in a different configuration.

MITCHELL

OK, Lisa. Detective Tomassino's gonna take down your information so we can get in touch with you, and then I'm gonna find an officer to escort you home.

LISA

That's OK. I can get home by myself. I only live three blocks away.

MITCHELL

Please. You're very shook up. I just wanna make sure you get home OK --

LISA

Oh when little black kids get shot to death in Bedford Stuyvesant do you walk all of them home afterwards?

MITCHELL

I don't wanna get into a big ideological discussion with you right now, Lisa --

LISA

I just have a hard time believing that's an actual rule.

MITCHELL

You don't have to believe anything, babe. You been through a traumatic event and somebody's gonna walk you home. The end.

LISA
But this is so dumb!

EXT. LISA'S STREET. DAY.

Lisa is being walked home by a big YOUNG COP.

YOUNG COP
You go to school around here?

LISA
Yes.

YOUNG COP
What's that, a private school?

LISA
Yeah, but I'm on a scholarship.

YOUNG COP
Scholarship! So you must be pretty smart, huh?

LISA
I'm a genius.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

Lisa comes in and walks deep into the apartment. The Young Cop stays in the hallway, not sure what to do. We follow Lisa into the living room. Curtis, watching TV, looks up and sees that she is covered in blood.

CURTIS
What happened to you?

LISA
Nothing: I saw a woman get her leg cut off by a bus.

She continues down the hall and goes in her room. JOAN, her mother, 40s, appears from the kitchen.

JOAN
Hello?

INT. LISA'S ROOM. DAY.

The room feels small and distorted. Odd. She starts to take off her blood-soaked jacket, but her purse is over her shoulder. She drops the purse and takes off the jacket.

She doesn't know what to do with it because she doesn't want to mess up anything in the room. She hangs it on the closet door.

She sits on the bed and then gets up and looks at where she sat. There's an imprint of blood on the bedspread.

LISA

Good one, Lisa.

She starts breathing heavily. She goes into her bathroom --

INT. BATHROOM. CONTINUOUS.

She kneels down next to the toilet and opens it. She waits. She throws up into the toilet. Joan knocks on the door.

JOAN

Lisa?

LISA

Just a second...!

Joan comes into the bathroom.

LISA (Cont'd)

Just a second!

She throws up again.

JOAN

Oh my God, what happened to you?!?

LISA

It's OK, Mom, it's not my blood...!

JOAN

What do you mean? Whose blood is it?
What happened?!

LISA

NOTHING!

Joan kneels down and tries to help her. Lisa screams and puts her arms around her mother and cries.

INT. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Joan is collecting Lisa's bloody clothes. Lisa is sitting on the bed in a bathrobe.

JOAN

I don't know if I'm going to be able to
get these clean again.

LISA
Just throw them out.

JOAN
Well, let's see if we can get them
clean.

LISA
Why? Just throw them out.

INT. SHOWER. DAY.

Lisa stands under the faucet getting the blood out of her hair and hands. She looks very young; little feet and face.

INT. JOAN'S BATHROOM. SIMULTANEOUS.

Joan scrubs at Lisa's boots, trying to get the blood out.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Joan, Lisa and Curtis eat dinner.

JOAN
Does anybody know who she was?

LISA
I don't know. I guess she lived around here. She had these Fairway grocery bags.

CURTIS
What did they do with her leg?

LISA
I have no fucking idea.

JOAN
Hey! Come on...

INT. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa is getting made up to go out. Joan knocks and comes in.

JOAN
How you doing, sweetie?

LISA
I'm OK. Don't you have to go to work?

JOAN
No no, honey, I called in.

LISA

You don't have to do that, Mom.

JOAN

I know, I just thought you might want some company.

LISA

Oh, no, thank you, that's really sweet. But I'm supposed to go see Becky anyway. I'd rather go out than sit here all night thinking about it. Go to work. I'll be alright.

INT. MOVIE THEATER. NIGHT.

Lisa, Darren and Becky sit watching a movie, the changing light flickering on their faces. Darren is mad that Becky is there. Becky is sort of enjoying their discomfiture. Lisa is having trouble concentrating. She gets up and walks out. Darren and Becky look at each other -- not sure if she just went to the bathroom or left altogether.

INT. THEATER. NIGHT.

An upscale 400-seat Off-Broadway theater. Well-attended by mostly affluent New Yorkers. The cast, which includes JOAN, is taking a curtain call. The audience applauds.

INT. BACKSTAGE. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM. NIGHT.

Joan is taking off her makeup in a small dressing room. There's a KNOCK on the door.

STAGEHAND (O.C.)

Joan? You got some flowers.

JOAN

Can you bring 'em in?

INT. THEATER LOBBY. NIGHT.

The audience is mostly gone. Some friends are waiting for the actors. Joan comes out.

JOAN'S FRIENDS

You were so great!

JOAN

I can't believe I didn't know you guys were here...!

A stout, 45ish, interesting-looking man in a suit and coat is waiting in the middle of the room. This is RAMON.

A MOMENT LATER -- Joan breaks away from her friends, who go out, and goes over to Ramon.

JOAN

Hi -- are you Ramon?

RAMON

Yeah, hello, you were wonderful -- again.

JOAN

You're so sweet, thank you. And thank you for the beautiful flowers...!

RAMON

Oh you're very welcome. I hope you don't mind...

JOAN

No, I just -- No, I was very flattered. And you've seen the show before?

RAMON

Yes, three times.

JOAN

Gosh. That's very -- That's a lot!

RAMON

Would you allow me to buy you a drink? There's a nice place right next door...?

Joan sees Lisa sitting across the room waiting.

JOAN

Oh -- No -- thank you. I can't. I'm just on my way home.

RAMON

OK. Well. Thank you again for the wonderful performance. Maybe we meet some other time.

JOAN

It was nice to meet you.

Joan smiles noncommittally and goes over to Lisa.

JOAN (Cont'd)

I thought you were at the movies...!

LISA

Yeah. I was just around the corner...

JOAN

Hi, Sweetie...!

She kisses and hugs Lisa, squashing her a little. Lisa gets a little tearful. Joan squeezes her tighter.

INT. BAR/RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Lisa is out with Joan and some of the other actors from the show. They are laughing and having a good time.

VICTOR (To Joan)

Do Shirley Temple! Shirley Temple!

Joan does a very excellent Shirley Temple imitation. Everyone laughs. Lisa laughs and smiles proudly. Joan glances at her, checking to see if this frivolity is really helpful or not such a good idea.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

At the door, Lisa is ready to go to school. Joan, in a bathrobe, kisses her goodbye.

LISA

'Bye Mom.

JOAN

I love you.

LISA

I love you too.

Lisa goes out. We stay with Joan, who looks fretful.

EXT. BROADWAY. DAY.

Lisa walks down the street. She looks at the faces of the people coming at her. She passes through a gang of boys who hassle her and make comments as she goes by.

INT. HUMANITIES CLASS. DAY.

Lisa sits in class listlessly. The class is reading paperbacks of King Lear. The teacher, JOHN, is a rather high-strung slightly harsh enthusiast with glasses and a beard. Like History class, this class has chairs in a semi-circle around the blackboard.

JOHN

Matthew, if you would read France...And Anthony, you read Burgundy...And I guess I'm gonna hog the part of Lear again...

A MOMENT LATER -- John is walking back and forth, reading aloud.

ANTHONY

"Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than hath your highness
Offer'd, nor will you tender less."

JOHN

"Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;
But now her price is fall'n."

INT. UPPER WEST SIDE DINER. DAY.

Lisa and Darren sit in the diner eating club sandwiches. Two ELDERLY LADIES sit in a booth nearby. A man in a drab suit reads the newspaper by himself in another.

DARREN

If you didn't want to go the movies
alone with me Friday, you could have
just told me that. You didn't need to
bring Becky along as your bodyguard.

LISA

I didn't bring her as a bodyguard.

OLD LADY 1

Oh he's wonderful. He drives all the way
down to see her every Saturday.

DARREN

Then why did you?

OLD LADY 2

That's a long drive.

OLD LADY 1

You know he has three sisters?
The older ones don't speak.
They haven't spoken in four-
teen years.

OLD LADY 2

You don't say.

OLD LADY 1

Every since the father died.

OLD LADY 2

Oh that's terrible.

LISA

I forgot I told Becky I
would do something with her
Friday night so I invited
her along. I didn't think
it was gonna sully our
whole relationship.

DARREN (Mutters)

What relationship?

LISA

What are you muttering?

DARREN

Nothing...I'll try to
improve my diction. (Pause)
What's the matter...?

OLD LADY 1

He has a little dog that used to belong to the father, and the whole family was in love with that dog.

OLD LADY 2

My sister's got a dog now. It's a what-do-you call it. A bull terrier. It's got a very ugly face. But does she love that dog.

OLD LADY 1

What's the name of it?

OLD LADY 2

It's called a bull terrier.

OLD LADY 1

No, the dog. What does she call him?

OLD LADY 2

Oh I don't know. I can't remember. But it's got a very ugly face. When I saw him I said that's the ugliest dog I ever saw. She says good! Nobody'll steal him. She buys the dog because she's afraid of getting robbed. Now she's afraid somebody's gonna steal the dog.

OLD LADY 1

Who's gonna steal him?

OLD LADY 2

That's what I said.

The old ladies keep talking.

LISA

So I've been thinking about your suggestion...

DARREN

Yes...?

LISA

I guess I don't think it's a very good idea.

LISA

I just had a bad weekend.

DARREN

Do you want to talk about it some more?

LISA

Not really.

DARREN

Maybe you should. You've been through a really traumatic event...

LISA (Low)

I hate my life.

DARREN

Why?

LISA

Everything's just fucked up.

DARREN

Like what?

LISA

Just everything.

DARREN

But what specifically is fucked up?

LISA (Very low)

Nothing.

DARREN

Why not?

LISA

I guess I don't feel that way about you.

DARREN

But those kinds of feelings can develop.
I definitely feel like there's a
connection there.

LISA (Very low)

I know there is.

DARREN

I just think you're scared... (Pause)
What's the matter? (Pause) What's the
matter?

She won't look at him. O.C. AUDIENCE APPLAUSE takes us to:

INT. BAR/RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Joan and Ramon are having a drink at a small table.

RAMON

My family are from Colombia...

JOAN

Uh huh...?

RAMON

...My father worked for the diplomatic
service...

JOAN

Really. Wow. And what do you do, Ramon?

RAMON

I have a company -- We design computer
software to help companies in South
America that will use a different system
to talk to each other...

JOAN

Uh huh...? God.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

Ramon stands by as Joan looks for a cab.

RAMON

Can't I give you a lift?

JOAN

Oh, no thanks. I'm just gonna grab a cab. But thank you.

RAMON

May I call you sometime?

JOAN

OK, sure, that would be great. Yeah...!

She flags an approaching taxi. It slows and stops.

RAMON

May I have your telephone number?

JOAN

Oh my God, I'm sorry, of course. Duh!

RAMON (Smiling)

Don't worry...

She writes down her number, smiling, embarrassed and pressured by the waiting cab.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Joan lets herself in to the dark apartment. Everyone seems to be asleep.

INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Joan lies in the dark, restless. She starts masturbating. She gets hot and kicks off the covers and hikes her nightgown up. As she gets close to coming, there's a knock on the door and it partly opens.

LISA

Mom...?

JOAN (Startled)

Just a second!

LISA (Opening the door)

Can I come in?

JOAN

Just one second, honey. Hold on!

She covers herself up and straightens herself out.

JOAN (Cont'd)
Come in...What's up, sweetie?

Lisa comes in and sits on the edge of the bed.

LISA
Can I talk to you?

JOAN
Sure. What's up?

LISA
How was the show?

JOAN
It was OK. Are you all right?

LISA
Not really.

JOAN
Well, what's wrong?

LISA
Mom, I have to tell you something.

JOAN
OK.

INTERCUT -- FROM ACROSS THE STREET, a slow pan across the building with windows lit up here and there. We pick out Lisa talking to Joan in one little window.

BACK IN JOAN'S ROOM -- They sit there. Long pause.

LISA
So what do you think I should do?

JOAN
Well...it doesn't sound like it was anybody's fault...

LISA
But don't you think I should say something to the police?

JOAN
I don't know, sweetie. I mean that bus driver probably has a family to support ...He could probably lose his job...So I think you should really think about that before you say anything...

Lisa was not expecting this response.

LISA

OK...

INT. HISTORY CLASS. DAY.

ANGIE, a Middle Eastern-looking American girl, has her hand up.

KLEIN

Think of the implications of what you're saying! I'm saying what is the frame of reference for the average Arab on the street? Angie!

ANGIE

Yeah, my family is from Syria? And I just want to say that Americans have no idea how much people hate them all over the world. OK? And all my relatives in Syria think that what we did in Afghanistan was terrorism. Not to mention Iraq...

ANTHONY

Syria is a military dictatorship.

ANGIE

Um, no it's not: Sorry.

ANTHONY

Syria is not a military dictatorship?

LISA

Um, I think we have a pretty good idea how much people hate us now actually, Angie.

ANGIE

No we don't.

LEVINE

One at a time --

LISA

They blew up our city, OK? I think we have a pretty good idea, and personally I don't give a shit.

There is some laughter from the class.

ANGIE

You should!

LISA
 -- because the people who blew up the
 World Trade Center were a bunch of sick
monsters --

ANGIE
 Oh they were monsters?

LISA
 Yes!

ANGIE
 Why? Because they're Arabs?

KLEIN
 Hey, hey, one at a time...!

LISA
 No, because they killed three thousand
 people for no reason.

KLEIN
 OK, one at a time.

ANGIE
 Maybe they think they had a reason!

LISA
 Like what? They didn't
 even have any demands!
 They just wanted to kill
 people!

What do you think we
 should've done?

THE CLASS
 We were at war! They don't
 care about civilian casualties!
 Osama bin Laden wants to
 destroy our country!

LEVINE
 Come on, one at a time!

KLEIN
 Angie!

ANGIE
 No, forget it.

KLEIN
 Hey, hey, hey!

ANGIE
 Why did we drop bombs
 on innocent people in
 Afghanistan? We're still
 doing it! Why did we
 invade Iraq?

BECKY (On "we're")
 Because they declared war
 on us, Angie!

ANGIE
 No they didn't! Iraq
 didn't declare war on
 anybody! They didn't do
 anything to us!

KLEIN

Go ahead with what you were saying!

ANGIE

No! Why should I?

LISA

Why are you defending somebody who murdered three thousand people?

ANGIE

Why are you defending a country that supports the Israeli occupation of Palestine?!

The class ROARS.

LISA

Oh give me a break!

ANGIE

-- and drops bombs on innocent women and people, and knocks down their houses!

ANTHONY

Innocent women are people.

There is some laughter.

ANGIE

-- and then calls other people terrorists for doing the exact same thing!

KLEIN

OK -- OK --

LISA

Because it's not the same thing!

ANTHONY

Innocent women are people.

ANGIE (Corrects herself)

OK! Women and children.

KLEIN

Lionel! Go ahead.

LIONEL

Yeah, I just want to ask like why is it OK to drop bombs on men, but it's not OK to drop bombs on women and children? Isn't that just reverse sexism?

Lisa rolls her eyes.

KLEIN

I don't know. That's an interesting point. I agree it's a bullshit term.

LISA

This is totally stupid.

KLEIN

Uhhhh...Monica!

MONICA

Yeah, I think this whole class should apologize to Angie, because all she did was express her opinion about what her relatives in Syria think about the fact that we bombed the shit out of a practically medieval culture --

ANGIE

Thank you!

MONICA

-- and everybody started screaming at her like she was defending the Ku Klux Klan!

LISA

They were the Ku Klux Klan! They used to throw acid in women's faces!

MONICA

Who did? The Afghanistans? Afghanies? The Iraqis?

ANGIE

Why don't you drop bombs -- Why don't you drop bombs on the Ku Klux Klan? Because they're white?

ANTHONY

The correct term is Afghans.

LISA

Yes! No! The Taliban!

MONICA

So Lisa, do you agree with everything our government does?

LISA

No, not at all. But defending your country against a terrorist attack is not the same as terrorism! The Taliban were partners with Al Qaeda!

KLEIN

Hang on -- let her -- hang on Lisa, raise your hand --

LIONEL

There's six people with their hands raised before you, Lisa!

MONICA

But I'm not even saying I disagree with you! I'm only saying I think it's pathetic the way people in this class treated Angie just for saying something they didn't happen to agree with.

KLEIN

Because that's copyright, right? Right?

MONICA

Yeah! (A joke:) Right on!

LISA

It's not censorship...!

ANGIE

Thank you...!

ANTHONY

That's not technically true....

LEVINE

It's censorship.

LISA

This class is not the government...! (To LEVINE)
Oh my God, no it's not!

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

Lisa is sitting in the living room, ready to go out. Joan enters, coat on, purse in hand.

JOAN

Ready?

INT. POLICE STATION -- INTERVIEW ROOM. DAY.

Lisa and Joan sit in an interview room with Detective Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Could you describe what you saw to me in your own words?

Lisa glances at Joan. Joan smiles at her encouragingly.

LISA

She just stepped out in the street...

EXT. STREET. DAY.

Lisa and Joan walk away from the police station toward the busy avenue.

EXT. KARL'S HOUSE -- SANTA MONICA. DUSK.

WIDE: A small shabby low-ceilinged bungalow house off the beach highway in Santa Monica. The phone rings inside. Through the grubby sliding door we see KARL pick up.

He is 45ish, in white pants and bare feet, with longish graying hair. A displaced New Yorker who has never really calmed down. We CUT BETWEEN HIM AND LISA.

KARL

Hello.

LISA

Hi Dad!

KARL

Hey, baby!

LISA

How are you?

KARL

I'm great. I'm looking at a beautiful sunset over the ocean. It was an absolutely beautiful day today...How are you?

LISA

I'm OK.

KARL

Practicing your horseback riding?

LISA (Laughs)

Oh yeah, I'm really riding a lot. I'm gettin' these really bad saddle sores.

KARL

I would actually seriously recommend you go to Claremont Stables on 89th Street and ride around the Park a few times before we go; you'll be extremely glad you did.

LISA

Yeah, I was really thinking about doing that.

KARL

So how's it going, baby doll? How's school?

LISA

School's OK. I'm kind of fucking up in geometry --

KARL

Oh?

LISA

Yeah, but my teacher's really cool, so I guess it's not too serious...How are you?

KARL

I'm fine. I'm good. Things are getting busier, which is good...How's your mom?

LISA

She's OK.

KARL

How's her show?

LISA

I don't know. I haven't seen it yet.

KARL

Uh huh? Uh huh? And how are you? How's the boyfriend situation?

LISA

The same. They're all kind of the same.

KARL

Well, next time you come out here I'll try to hook you up with some more interesting people.

LISA

Thanks, Dad, I don't really go for the California type.

KARL

Yeah, me neither...Well, that's about all on my end, baby. I'll give you a call in a week or two. Give my love to Curtis and say hi to your mom.

LISA

OK. I can't wait for our trip.

KARL

Yeah. Yeah. I think we're gonna have a really great time.

LISA

I hope so.

EXT. KARL'S HOUSE. DUSK.

The call is over. Karl comes onto the small deck and looks at the ocean.

INT. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa lies on the bed next to the hung-up phone.

INT. THEATER. NIGHT.

Joan is onstage with Victor.

JOAN

It's true. Two years of college. Two years
in journalism school. Two years with you.
(Bursting into tears) I'm kind of a two-
year gal....!

IN THE LAUGHING AUDIENCE -- Lisa watches, unamused.

INT. TAXI (MOVING). NIGHT.

Lisa and Joan are in the jostling cab. Lisa is surly.

JOAN

What did you think of the play?

LISA

It was OK.

Silence.

JOAN

Well, thank you, honey.

LISA

What do you want me to say?
I thought it was OK!
Next time I'll lie!

JOAN

Nothing! You said it!

JOAN

Don't come next time.

LISA

I won't.

INT. SCHOOL. BACK STAIRS. DAY.

Lisa sits at the apex of a group of kids on the stairs.

LISA

Did I tell you I saw a woman get her leg
cut off by a bus?

KIDS

What? You did? Oh my God....!

LISA

Check it out, there's still blood on my boots.

Becky, nearby, is upset she wasn't told about this first.

INT. SCHOOL THEATER OFFICE. DAY.

Some kids are hanging around PAUL, a tall, droll good-looking senior. His feet are on the desk. He is smoking.

PAUL

Yeah, like I would be in a movie, and I would be acting in the movie, only I would be doing exactly what I'm doing now; like I'd be sitting here and smoking a cigarette, and talking to you, and I'd have my feet up on the desk, but the camera would be on me and I'd just be acting, except I wouldn't do anything differently from how I'm doing it right now.

Becky and Lisa are looking at the AUDITION sign-up sheet for "GUYS AND DOLLS."

BECKY

Are you gonna audition?

LISA

I might do lights or something. But I'm not gonna make a fuckin' ass out of myself parading around in a play so I can ask everyone how great I was for three years afterwards like my fuck-ass mother.

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Joan and Ramon are having dinner at a fancy restaurant.

JOAN

You do know I have two kids, right?

RAMON

Yes, I'd like to meet them.

JOAN

You are really smooth.

RAMON

I would love to meet your kids. I have two boys myself. I'm not smooth.

INT. RAMON'S CAR. NIGHT.

Joan and Ramon get in his car.

RAMON

Would you like to have a nightcap?

JOAN

Oh, God.

INT. BECKY'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Becky and Lisa are smoking a little pot. They are dolled up to go to a party..

BECKY

Nothing. I just feel like we used to be really close -- like up until a few days ago, and I'm not really getting that from you anymore.

LISA

Becky. Give me a break.

BECKY

I can't believe you just said that to me. That was really hard for me to say.

LISA

Can we just go please?

BECKY (Sarcastic)

Fine. Would you like to smoke any more of my pot before we leave or have you had as much as you want now?

LISA (Sarcastic back)

Oh I'd like to have a little bit more.

BECKY

Fine. Get fuckin' out of my house.

LISA

Fine. But this is totally stupid because we're both going to the same party.

INT. PARTY HOUSE -- BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Loud party music is coming from behind the bathroom door. The door opens and we catch a glimpse of a big party in a brownstone full of circulating kids. LISA and PAUL cram into the tiny bathroom and shut the door again.

A MOMENT LATER - She is sitting on the toilet. He is on the hamper unscrewing a small vial of coke.

LISA

It's very hard to be cool under these circumstances.

PAUL

All you have to do is snort it up your nose.

LISA

I know...

PAUL

And if your head starts going like, whaaaaaa -- don't freak out, it's just a bad trip, it's nothing to worry about.

LISA

OK.

He gives her the spoon. She snorts it.

PAUL

And then you wanna do the other nostril because you always want to be symmetrical. Very important.

She snorts some up the other nostril.

PAUL (Cont'd)

Symmetry...

He does two hits and closes the vial.

LISA

So what do we do now?

PAUL

Now we make out.

LISA (Blushing)

Paul...! What about your girlfriend?

PAUL

I'm sorry. It just sounded like you just asked me about my girlfriend.

LISA

Oh never mind...

They make out. He immediately starts feeling her up. She pushes his hand away.

PAUL
You're not serious.

LISA
Oh...No.

He moves his hand back. She lets him.

INT. PARTY HOUSE. NIGHT.

Lisa comes down the stairs at a mellow drunken pace. She sees Darren sitting by himself on the floor at the end of a dark hallway. She looks at him and tilts her head. She walks to him a little unsteadily and crouches down.

LISA
Hey...

DARREN
Hey.

LISA
You know I really love you, right?

DARREN
Not really...

Pause. She kisses him softly and they make out for a minute.

LISA
I guess I'm not very consistent.

DARREN
I don't mind.

He kisses her again, but she draws back and rests her forehead against his.

LISA
I gotta go home...

INT. RAMON'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Joan is alone in Ramon's bathroom, sitting on the toilet, naked, hair tousled, smoking. She's a little overwhelmed, excited and confused. Ramon KNOCKS. She jumps.

RAMON (O.C.)
Joan? Are you all right?

JOAN
Yes! Fine! Be out in a sec.

She tosses the cigarette into the toilet bowl, flushes it, looks in the mirror, tousles her hair, snaps off the light, opens the door and steps into the bedroom.

INT. GEOMETRY CLASS. DAY.

Lisa watches as Mr Aaron writes on the blackboard.

AFTER CLASS -- The last students file out except for Lisa. Mr Aaron is erasing the blackboard.

MR AARON

Yes, Becky? Um -- Lisa?

LISA

Are you still mad at me about the test?

MR AARON

What's going on, Lisa?

A FEW MINUTES LATER -- Lisa and Mr Aaron sit at his desk.

LISA

...Because maybe my mother is right and the bus driver is completely devastated as it is. And I'm just gonna be this little rich white girl who calls up the cops to ease her conscience and then ends up ruining somebody's life when I'm the one who was distracting him in the first place.

MR AARON

What's your being rich or white have to do with it?

LISA

You know what I mean.

MR AARON

No, I don't.

LISA

Oh my God, don't get offended at me right now. What does it mean I'm racist if I like, mention what color I am?

MR AARON

I didn't say anything about anybody being racist, or anything like that. I asked what your being rich or white has to do with what you do or don't want to tell the investigating officers about the accident you witnessed.

LISA

Nothing I guess.

Two kids open the door. There's a small crowd behind them.

MR AARON

Jordan? Tamara? It's gonna be five minutes.

JORDAN

I just thought you'd want to know there's like fifty people out here and it's getting kind of hard to breathe.

MR AARON

You better close that door now, Jordan.

Jordan closes the door.

MR AARON (Cont'd)

All right: I have to let those guys in. I don't want to leave you hanging...If you're really hurtin'...We could get a cup of coffee after school --

LISA (Promptly)

I'd do that.

Mr Aaron sighs a little.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM -- Lisa comes out, somewhat smugly.

LISA

It's OK to come in now.

She holds her arms up to deflect against the flow of kids streaming past her as she pushes away from the classroom.

EXT. DINER. DAY.

In the diner window we see Mr Aaron and Lisa in a booth. Lisa is earnestly pretending to discuss her situation.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa is watching TV. Joan comes in dressed for the opera.

JOAN

Does this make me look fat?

LISA

Um, a little.

JOAN

Well, there's nothing I can do about it.

LISA

Where are you going?

JOAN

The opera....!

LISA

Why are you going to the opera?

JOAN

It turns out he's a really big opera fan...! Anyway, don't you think it's kind of fun? We should all go sometime.

LISA

No thanks.

JOAN

Why not? I bet you'd like it.

LISA

I don't like that kind of singing.

JOAN

But you like classical music.

LISA

Yes. That's true. But I don't like opera singing.

JOAN

But when have you --

LISA

It's like their entire reason for existing is to prove how loud they can be. I don't really find that very interesting.

JOAN

Yeah...I know what you mean. I don't like that really loud opera singing either. But it's not all like that... You like The Magic Flute --

LISA

OK. I guess I'm wrong. I guess I do like opera singing. I just didn't realize it.

JOAN

What is the matter with you?

LISA

Why are you pushing this? I don't want to go to the opera!

JOAN

Yes! OK! It's called an invitation. I'm not pushing anything! All you have say is "No thanks!"

LISA

I did! And then you were like, "Why not?" So I told you, and then you like, started debating me, like you assume I've never thought this through for myself -- which I really have. Many times!

JOAN

OK, well, that was a really contemptuous assumption on my part. I don't actually like opera that much myself, but I'm trying to expand my mind... Maybe that's wrong. I'm sorry. I guess I'm a little nervous about you guys meeting Ramon --

LISA

Why? What's the big deal? Why are you so influenced by what me and Curtis think? What Curtis and I think.

JOAN

Because obviously if I'm seeing somebody new, it would be important to me that you guys would like him and that he would like you. Why wouldn't I be nervous about that?

LISA

I guess you would. Withdrawn.

Lisa watches the TV. Joan stands there looking at her.

JOAN

Are you coming to my opening night?

LISA

I will if I have to.

Pause.

JOAN

You're a little cunt, do you know that?

LISA

Yes. You're a big cunt.

JOAN

OK. Let's not start talking to each other that way.

LISA

You're the one who called me a cunt, Mom.

JOAN

OK. I'm sorry I said that. But if you're really --

LISA

Why? It's refreshing!

JOAN

-- If you're saying you're not aware that you've been really annoyed with me or really irritable with me -- and it doesn't matter if I express it exactly accurately, because you know what I'm trying to say --!

LISA

Not really.

JOAN

-- If you're saying you're completely unaware of that, then I have to say I don't think you're being honest about it. Now, maybe I'm doing something really horrible to you without being aware of it, but I have a show opening in two weeks, I'm very nervous about it, I'm seeing a new person and I'm obviously anxious about you and Curtis liking him -- whether you think I should be or not! -- You were involved in a horrible traumatic accident, you're going on this crazy horseback riding trip with your father --

LISA (Overlapping)

Oh my God!

JOAN

-- which sounds like a recipe for disaster to me. And on top of everything else, Lisa, ever since I told you about Ramon you've been treating me like I'm insane.

LISA

I think you're exaggerating slightly.

JOAN

Now what am I supposed to do?

LISA

Just --

JOAN

What am I supposed to do!

LISA

Just stop whining about everything! It doesn't matter. None of that matters at all! Your play doesn't matter, your boyfriend doesn't matter, except to you, I don't care about going to New Mexico because I don't even want to go, and to tell you the truth I'm probably not even going --

JOAN

What do you mean?

LISA

-- and you want to know something else, Mom? There are more important problems in the world than our relationship! There's a whole city out there full of people who are dying, so who cares if I like your fucking boyfriend? Who cares if I have a bad time in New Mexico! It's so trivial! Why are you bothering me about all this? It doesn't matter!

The buzzer buzzes. Joan hesitates.

LISA

Get the buzzer. Go on your date. Please!

JOAN

Well -- should I have him come up now...? Or should I have him wait downstairs...?

LISA

Do whatever you want. I don't care.

JOAN

I don't even know what we're talking about.

LISA

I know you don't. That's the problem.

JOAN

Oh give me a break.

EXT. LINCOLN CENTER. NIGHT.

Ramon and Joan walk toward the Metropolitan Opera House.

RAMON

Everything all right?

JOAN

Oh, yeah. I'm so excited to be going to the opera! I don't think I've really gone more than one or two times!

RAMON

Well, I wish it wasn't Norma but it's still fun to go.

JOAN (A joke)

What if we just went to see something else instead?

RAMON

Don't you want to hear Norma?

JOAN

No -- I don't mean that. I just meant wouldn't it be funny if we just walked into one of the other events, like if we just went to see the Richard Greenberg play instead.

RAMON

I think you'll enjoy this.

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA. NIGHT.

As Norma sings, Joan leans in toward Ramon and whispers:

JOAN

It's beautiful...!

RAMON (Smiling at her)

Shhh.

INT. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa dials a phone number off a slip of paper.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Paul's groovy room is littered with cigarette butts and so forth. Lots of his own artwork on the walls. Some graphic art stuff. WE CUT BETWEEN THEM.

Yo. PAUL (Answering the phone)

Hey, Paul. LISA

Hey. PAUL

It's Lisa Cohen. LISA

Yeah, how's it going? PAUL

OK...What have you been up to? LISA

Seeing some movies. Not finishing my college applications. What have you been doing? PAUL

Nothing. Vegging out. LISA

Sounds good. PAUL

So...I was just thinking...This is gonna sound really queer, but...by any chance would you want to meet somewhere and like, take away my virginity? LISA

All right. To what do I owe this incredible honor? PAUL

Actually, it's because of my deep passionate feelings for you, Paul... LISA

That's what I figured. PAUL

Great. LISA

Do you want to come over here? Should I come over there...? PAUL

LISA

Well...are your parents home?

PAUL

Yeah, but that doesn't really matter.
I'm pretty much the master of my domain.

LISA

Well, my Mom just went out for like
a four and a half hour evening, so
there's nobody here...Except my little
brother's coming home at some point, so
I can't actually go out, come to think
of it, because I'm supposed to be here
when he gets home.

PAUL

All right. What's your address?

INT. DARREN'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Darren lies on his bed in a deep depression. He rolls over
and goes to the computer. He checks his e-mail. No mail.
He picks up the phone and dials.

LISA (On the phone)

Hello?

DARREN

Hey.

LISA

Hey.

DARREN

What are you up to?

LISA

Nothing. Writing my King Lear paper.

DARREN

I've never known you to be so devoted to
your studies before.

LISA

Well, I don't want to fail Humanities.

DARREN

You're not gonna fail Humanities.

LISA

No, probably not.

DARREN
So what did you do tonight?

LISA
Actually, Darren...I don't really feel
like talking right now.

Pause.

DARREN
OK.

LISA
OK?

DARREN
Yeah. I'll talk to you later.

LISA
OK.

DARREN
OK, bye.

LISA
'Bye.

Darren hangs up and starts crying.

INT. HALL. NIGHT.

Lisa, dressed up a little and wearing some makeup, opens
the door for Paul. He's not dressed up at all. He's smoking.

PAUL
Hey.

LISA
Hey, come in.

She steps aside. He passes her and comes in. As they head
toward the living room --

PAUL
I think I just alienated one of your
neighbors by smoking in the elevator.

LISA
Oh really? What did they say?

PAUL
She basically said there was no smoking
in the elevator.

LISA

That's original...So this is the living room.

PAUL

Very livable.

LISA

We like it. My Mom hasn't read any of these books, by the way...

PAUL

Have you?

LISA

Some of them. Not all of them.

Paul pulls out The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich.

PAUL

This is a very cool book.

LISA

Yeah, I think the Third Reich may be a little bit too much for me right now.

PAUL

It's pretty hard to put down once you get started.

LISA

Do you want anything to drink?

PAUL

I'd take a beer.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Lisa gets two beers out of the fridge while Paul waits.

LISA

OK, I have no idea where the bottle opener is.

PAUL

Here, lemme have them.

He takes the beers and opens them on the edge of the counter. He makes two marks in the counter doing this.

LISA

Thanks.

PAUL

Whoops. I think I just permanently damaged your kitchen counter. Sorry.

LISA

Oh -- that's OK. Don't worry about it.

PAUL

Won't your Mother be Upset?

LISA

How come everything you say always sounds so ironic? You don't even have to do anything and it just comes out sounding like, totally ironic and funny.

PAUL

It's a gift.

She laughs nervously. They drink beer.

LISA

So...do you want to see my room?

PAUL

Sure.

INT. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

They come into her room. She closes the door.

LISA

This is my room. Ta da.

PAUL

Very nice.

She realizes she has some stuffed animals on the bed.

LISA

And these are my stuffed animals.

PAUL

Always important to meet the stuffed animals.

LISA

These are some drawings I did...Not that I should be showing them to you, because I know you're like a really good artist, right?

PAUL

I would like to be a really good artist.

PAUL (Cont'd)

At this point I think it would be more accurate to say I'm good at drawing.

LISA

Yeah, I just do it for fun. But I've always really liked it...

He looks at her pictures with what appears to be genuine if laid-back interest.

LISA

So...can I ask you a question?

PAUL

Yes?

LISA

This is probably gonna sound very immature, but how can you be so relaxed, knowing what we're about to do? Or is it just like no big deal to you? (Pause) OK, that was a really stupid question and I'm like totally embarrassed right now. I'm actually more embarrassed than I've ever been in my life. If you want to go home now that's totally OK.

PAUL

Don't be embarrassed. It's basically the greatest thing in the world, but it's not actually worth getting nervous about.

LISA

Yeah: I don't usually get nervous because I think it's worth it: I usually get nervous because I can't help the way I feel. Although I do think that if anything is worth getting nervous about, it's this. But maybe that's just really idealistic of me.

PAUL

There is that philosophy.

LISA

You are so funny...!

PAUL

Do you have an ashtray?

LISA

Oh you can just chuck it out the window.

Paul struggles to open the window and tosses out his cigarette. He closes the window and comes across the room to kiss her.

LISA

Are we starting now?

PAUL

I was thinking about it, yeah.

LISA

And am I being really dorky now?

PAUL

I wouldn't say you were being particularly spontaneous.

LISA

I'm sorry. I guess I'm a little nervous. Please ignore.

PAUL

Don't be nervous. I promise this is gonna be a great experience for you.

She laughs. He kisses her. They make out.

PAUL (Cont'd)

OK, let's talk about your kissing.

Lisa collapses with her face in the bed out of shame.

PAUL (Cont'd)

Don't panic. It's just a technical thing.

LISA

What are you like the nicest guy in the world?

PAUL

No...

LATER -- It's dark. Their clothes are off, but we don't see much. She is giving him a handjob.

LISA

Like that?

PAUL

Yes.

LISA

Am I supposed to go really fast at the end or something?

PAUL

Yeah, but we're gonna move on before that.

LATER -- He is trying to go down on her.

LISA

Maybe I should take a shower first.

PAUL

No it's fine.

Pause. She slides up away from him.

LISA

Don't do that, OK? I'm just embarrassed. Let me do it to you.

PAUL

All right.

LATER - He is positioning himself on top of her.

PAUL

Are you ready?

LISA

Yeah.

PAUL

OK. This is a little tricky: It's probably gonna hurt a little, at first, but then it's gonna get better...Just be patient. There are certain technical difficulties on my end that have to be addressed or it's not gonna happen.

LISA

OK: You sound insane.

They laugh.

PAUL

OK, ready?

LISA (Suddenly frightened)

Yeah.

PAUL

OK?

LISA (In pain)

Mm hm.

PAUL
OK, hang on...

LISA
Ow!

PAUL
OK -- There we go. Does it hurt now?

LISA
Kind of, yeah.

PAUL
OK, just try to relax. It'll get better
in a second...

LISA
Did you bring a condom?

PAUL
Uh huh...

LISA
Shouldn't you put it on?

PAUL
I will in a second.

LISA
This is really kind of hurting.

PAUL
OK -- one second.

LISA
I love you.

PAUL
What?

LISA
Nothing.

PAUL
OK -- hold on -- Shit --

LISA
What?

PAUL
OK, one second -- Ohh! Sorry -- Sorry --
He comes inside her. Silence. He carefully rolls over.

PAUL (Cont'd)
Sorry about that...Hold on --

LISA
Did any of it get inside me?

PAUL
I don't know.

She feels around with her hand.

LISA
I think it did.

PAUL
Sorry. Kind of got away from me.

She brings up her hand.

LISA
Yeah, it definitely did.

PAUL
Honest to God? It's probably OK. The odds are overwhelmingly that it's OK.

O.C. the doorbell rings.

LISA
That's my little brother.

She gets a bathrobe and goes out. We TRACK HER through the whole apartment. She opens the door for CURTIS.

LISA
Hi, Curtis.

CURTIS
Hi.

She goes back to her room and closes the door. PAUL has put on his underwear and is smoking a cigarette.

PAUL
Hey.

LISA
Hey. (Sits down) Can I have a drag?
(Takes a drag of his cigarette) I'm actually kind of mad at you.

PAUL
Why? (Pause) Why? Because we didn't use birth control?

LISA (Muted)

I guess so.

PAUL

It was at the ready...

LISA

Well, I don't really want to get AIDS, you know? And I really don't want to have an abortion, because when you have one at my age it can make it really hard to get pregnant later on, and I definitely want to have children some day.

PAUL

Try to listen to me. Right about now is when you're traditionally supposed to freak out. But you're not gonna get AIDS, because I don't have AIDS --

LISA

How do you know? Have you been tested?

PAUL

No, but I'm pretty sure I don't have it, because of my demographic. And the odds are you're probably not gonna have to have an abortion either. And since this was your first time, it might as well be a basically happy memory, instead of a shitty one.

LISA

I'm sorry. I'm not completely in control of my emotions. (Pause) Anyway...Thank you for deflowering me.

PAUL

You're welcome.

LISA

Did it freak you out that I said I love you?

PAUL

No...It didn't freak me out.

LISA

You don't have to say it back, because I know you probably have like no feelings at all for me.

PAUL

I think I just proved I have some feelings for you.

LISA

You should probably go now.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa walks Paul past Curtis who is watching TV.

PAUL

Yo.

LISA

That's my brother.

PAUL

What's up?

CURTIS

Hi.

Lisa walks Paul to the front door and steps out in the hall with him. She comes back in, walks back through the living room and goes into --

LISA'S ROOM -- She changes into her pajamas.

LISA'S BATHROOM -- She washes her face and brushes her teeth.

LIVING ROOM -- She comes out in her pajamas and sits down next to Curtis to watch TV.

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA. NIGHT.

The audience applauds the opera cast thunderously. Near Joan and Ramon an male opera enthusiast is standing.

OPERA FAN

Bravi! Bravi!

EXT. LINCOLN CENTER. NIGHT.

Joan and Ramon walk arm in arm away from Lincoln Center.

JOAN

Oh, I loved it! It was so exciting!

RAMON

Good! We should go again!

JOAN

But how about those people yelling
"Bravi!" and "Brava!"

RAMON

How do you mean?

JOAN

It's just so overblown. "Bravi!" "Bravi!"
Why can't they just say "Bravo?"

RAMON

Well, it's the plural...

JOAN

I know --

RAMON

It's the plural of bravo, it's what they
say to the whole cast --

JOAN

No, I know, I know it's correct, it just
-- don't you think it's just a little
pretentious?

RAMON

Pretentious?

JOAN

I don't mean they didn't really enjoy
it...But you know how you can really be
enjoying something, but you're also kind
of looking around out of the corner of
your eye because you know people are
watching you enjoy it...? Does that make
sense at all?

RAMON

Yes, yes. But I wouldn't say that was
pretentious. In Italian you would say
"Bravo" for a man and "Brava" for a
woman, and "Bravi" for the whole company...

JOAN

Uh huh? OK, I see what you mean.

RAMON

You use the masculine for the male
singer and the feminine for the female
singer...

JOAN

Yeah...Anyway, I really enjoyed it.
Thank you.

RAMON

We'll have to go again.

JOAN

It was so glamorous!

They walk on into the busy night.

INT. SCHOOL THEATER -- LIGHTING BOOTH. DAY.

Lisa is on a headset in the booth. Far below we see a kid named MATTHEW rehearsing on the stage.

MATTHEW (Sings)

"My time of day is the dark time..."

LISA

Cue thirty-six, go.

GARY THE THEATER TEACHER (O.C.)

OK, hold up a second.

LISA (Into headset)

OK, we're gonna do that one more time
please. Let's back it up please...

MATTHEW

Why are we stopping?

INT. LIBRARY. NIGHT.

The rest of the building is dark. All the kids in the show are sitting or standing more or less in a circle. Those who smoke are smoking, using soda cans as ashtrays. GARY the theater teacher, 30s, has the floor.

GARY

We open this show in ten days. We have not gotten through it once without stopping. Now I know there's been a lot of shit going on between a lot of the people in this room. But I wanna tell you something: You've worked too fucking hard for this show to be derailed now by the kind of bullshit I know has been going on around here. Now, I'll bet you there's not one person working on this show who hasn't got somebody they want to say something to, including me. So I'm gonna start. Matthew?

MATTHEW (Slowly)
By "Matthew," I assume you mean me?

GARY
Yes. I mean you.

Matthew comes slowly into the middle of the circle.

MATTHEW
Yes?

GARY
You are probably one of the most talented kids who's ever performed at this school. But you're too Goddamn lazy, you think you can just waltz through this part, and it's pissing me off. Because this show cannot come together until you learn your fucking lines. OK?

MATTHEW
So...you'd like me to memorize them.
Everyone laughs, including Gary.

GARY
Yes, I'd like you to fucking memorize them. Now. (Brightly) Your turn!
Gary withdraws.

MATTHEW
But I'm not mad at anyone. I just want everyone to think I'm a great guy.
Everyone laughs.

DISSOLVE TO:
BECKY is in the circle with LISA. They are both crying.

LISA
But I'm jealous of you...!

BECKY
Why would you be jealous of me...!

LISA
Because of everything! Because you always get such good grades and your family never has to worry about money,

LISA (Cont'd)
and your parents are still together and
you always seem so confident and I'm
really jealous of your other friends!

BECKY
Well, I'm really sorry if I hurt you!

LISA
Me too!

They embrace tearfully. Many of the kids are moved. Some are not. Becky leaves Lisa in the circle. Lisa wipes her eyes.

LISA (Cont'd)
Darren...?

Darren unglues himself from his perch on a folding table and sits in the circle with her.

LISA (Cont'd)
I know that I'm not who you want me to
be to you. And I know how much I've hurt
you. But I still can't believe it means
we can't be friends anymore! So much has
been happening to me this semester --

DARREN (Understandingly)
I know. I know.

LISA (In tears)
-- and it's like I can't even talk to
you about it because I hurt you so bad!

DARREN
Yes you can. Of course you can. You can
talk to me about anything.

They hug and cry.

LISA
I'm sorry I hurt you! I don't love
anybody more than you, you're my best
friend!

DARREN
I love you too. I really do...!

LESLIE raises her hand.

GARY
Leslie?

LESLIE

Can I just say, I think this show is like two and a half seconds away from being fucking amazing, and if we could all just work together, instead of being at each other all the time, I think we could all just be incredible.

Everyone applauds. Except ANGIE, who raises her hand.

ANGIE

Yeah. (Long crazy pause.) Yeah. I'm gonna say it. I feel really fucked over by some of the people in this room. I'm not saying I'm not gonna do my job, but for some reason, a lot of the actors in this show seem to think that this whole show is about them. And I think I speak for a lot of the techies when I say that I feel really unappreciated and basically fucked over. And I don't know if I can get over it. I don't. That's all.

Nobody says anything. TOM, a somewhat hipper, tougher kid, raises a hand.

GARY

Yes, Tom?

TOM

Yeah, I'm just playing in the band, you know? This is high school. I don't really feel a strong need to like, all be on the same team with everybody, you know? I just want to come to rehearsals, do the show, go up on the roof and smoke some pot, and then like, go on home. I don't really wanna cry and hug anybody.

There are laughs and some cheers.

GARY

Oh you wanna hug me a little, don't you Tom?

TOM

OK, Gary, man, I'll give you a little hug. No kissin' though.

Gary charges over and hugs Tom. Everyone laughs and claps. Gary grabs Tom's face and kisses him on the cheek. Everyone is laughing.

LISA looks at DARREN. He is looking at her with the unwelcome gaze of love. She looks away. His heart hardens against her.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

Lisa is at the breakfast table, looking through a stack of The New York Times. She finds the item she wants:

UPPER WEST SIDE WOMAN KILLED IN BUS ACCIDENT. Monica Patterson, a long-time Upper West Side resident was struck by and killed by a bus Friday afternoon as she attempted to cross Broadway at 75th Street. The driver, Gerald Maretti did not appear to be at fault, police said...

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

Afternoon. Lisa is on the phone. Curtis is watching TV.

MITCHELL

Accident Investigation. Detective Mitchell.

LISA

Hi, my name is Lisa Cohen. I was a witness in a bus accident case a few weeks ago...

MITCHELL

Yeah, hi, Lisa, what can I do for you?

LISA

Well, this is probably gonna sound a little weird, but are you allowed to tell me how to get in touch with that woman's family? Because I really wanted to go to the funeral or send some flowers. But --

MITCHELL

Yeah, I can --

LISA

Or is that like classified information?

MITCHELL

No no. Let me see what I got...Family's been notified, so...

LISA

She mentioned she had a daughter...

MITCHELL

Let me find her file...How you doin',
all right?

LISA

I'm OK.

MITCHELL

Hold on a second. (Pause) OK...Decedent
was Monica Patterson...I don't have
anything for a daughter...The only
contact I have is a cousin, Abigail
Berwitz. I got a number in Arizona...
480-938-0394.

LISA (Writing)

...0394.

MITCHELL

OK?

LISA

Yeah. Also -- would you have a phone
number for the bus driver? 'Cause I also
wanted to send him a note or something,
because he seemed really upset, and just
tell him --

MITCHELL

No, you're gonna have to call the bus
company for that --

LISA

Oh, OK.

MITCHELL

-- we can't give that out. You know, you
wouldn't want us givin out your number --

LISA

No no, I understand. So, did you have
the trial or whatever, or did you make
the -- did they have a ruling yet?

MITCHELL

Yeah, it was No Criminality found. OK?

LISA

No Criminality.

MITCHELL

Right.

LISA

Wow. That's a -- great system you got.
OK. Wow. Thanks.

MITCHELL

OK?

LISA

Yeah. Thanks.

MITCHELL

You're welcome.

INT. LISA'S ROOM. DAY.

Lisa is on the phone. We stay on her the whole conversation.

LISA

Yes, I'm trying to reach Abigail Berwitz?

ABIGAIL

This is Abigail.

LISA

Hi, my name is Lisa Cohen. You don't
know me...I...

ABIGAIL

Yes? Hello?

LISA

Hi. Sorry. Yeah. I was actually calling
about your cousin, Monica Patterson?

ABIGAIL

Mm hm?

LISA

I was actually there when she had --
during the accident. I didn't know her,
but I was the one who was with her when
she died...

ABIGAIL

Oh...?

LISA

Yeah. I was sort of holding her hand at
the time...

ABIGAIL

OK...?

LISA

Yeah...Anyway, I saw her obituary in the paper but I didn't see anything about a funeral. So I was wondering if there was one, because --

ABIGAIL (Overlapping)

No. As far as I know --

LISA

I'm sorry, and I was also wondering -- She said something about her daughter? She wanted someone to get ahold of her daughter, but when I talked to the police --

ABIGAIL

No. No. Her daughter --

LISA

Yeah?

ABIGAIL

Monica did have a daughter, but she passed away many years ago.

LISA

Oh my God. Was she sick? Or was it --

ABIGAIL

She had leukemia.

LISA

Oh my gosh. And -- do you mind if I ask: Was her name Lisa?

ABIGAIL

Mm hm.

LISA

OK, see, that explains it. See, I think she thought I was -- God...

ABIGAIL

Could I just interrupt? How did you get this number?

LISA

Oh -- the police -- I asked the Accident Investigating investigator who to contact if I wanted to ask about the funeral...

ABIGAIL

Well they really shouldn't be giving out my number. (Blurts out) This is harassment....!

LISA (Shocked)

I'm sorry! I'm not trying to harass you --

ABIGAIL

I have been getting calls about this all week! One of Monica's neighbors gave the police my number and all of a sudden I am the focal point for all these arrangements! And I gotta tell you people, I didn't have any kind of relationship with Monica whatsoever, unless you want to count the fact that she held up my children's inheritance for fifteen years. I guess we're just supposed to forget all about that, but there is no reason in this world I should be subjected to this kind of harassment! The person you people should be calling is Emily Morrison, who was Monica's friend and is the person who has been dealing with all of this in New York. But it has nothing to do with me.

LISA

I'm sorry! I didn't really know who to contact --

ABIGAIL

Now, I can give you her number, but I would very much appreciate it if the calls would stop.

LISA

Yes -- Please. Can you hold on while I get a pen?

ABIGAIL

Yes, all right.

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT. DAY.

EMILY MORRISON, 40s, is on the phone in her Upper West Side apartment. She's on the phone with Lisa.

EMILY

I guess it would be all right...

LISA

Well I would really like to come...

EMILY

It's only going to be a few close friends.

LISA

Were you really good friends with her?

EMILY

Yes I was.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

Joan is reading a script. Lisa passes through, dressed somberly.

JOAN

Where you going, sweetie?

LISA

I'm going to that woman's funeral.

JOAN

Are you sure you don't want me to come?

LISA

Why? I don't even know her.

JOAN

Well, I would be coming for you.

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT. DAY.

The doorbell rings. EMILY opens the door for LISA. In the b.g. there are about twenty people gathered in the spacious Upper West Side apartment; a few more women than men.

EMILY

Are you Lisa?

LISA

Yeah. Thank you so much for letting me come.

EMILY

Why don't you come on in? We're about to start. Do you want anything to drink?

LISA

Oh -- Um -- no thanks.

EMILY'S LIVING ROOM -- Everyone is seated around the room on Emily's chairs and borrowed chairs.

EMILY

Well...thank you all for coming.

WOMAN MOURNER

Thank you for doing this, Emily.

THE MOURNERS

Yes, thank you, Emily.

EMILY

As you all know, Monica was not a religious woman, and anybody who ever went to a wedding or a funeral with her knows how she felt about formal occasions. So Harry and Elise and I, when we were talking about this, decided we would just have everyone over and let anyone who wanted to talk about Monica just talk about her, maybe share some remembrances of her with her other friends. Some of us know each other, some of us don't. But we're all here -- (She stops, gets ahold of herself.) -- because we loved Monica. And because we want to pay tribute to her in a way that wouldn't make her too mad.

Everyone laughs.

EMILY (Cont'd)

So. I want to talk a little bit about the first time we met. We were nineteen. Even though it's hard for my children to believe I was ever that young...!

Her college-age son and daughter smile indulgently.

LATER -- Everyone is milling around. Lisa is talking to Emily.

LISA

Emily, thank you so much for letting me come.

EMILY

Don't be silly, honey. You were sweet to come by.

LISA

Didn't she have any family?

EMILY

She did, sure. But she was the last one. Except for some cousins in Arizona.

EMILY (Cont'd)

You spoke to Abigail, didn't you? She's the one who gave you my number...

LISA

Yeah...

EMILY

Well she's a real pain in the ass. They never got along at all. It's a long story.

WOMAN MOURNER

Excuse me. Good bye, Emily. Thank you for doing this.

EMILY

Listen...I still can't believe this is happening...! (She starts crying) She always had rotten luck...! Always...! She always said she wished she had died when Lisa died. She never got over that. Never. And after all that with her father, and then her mother, she gets hit by a fucking bus. That's Monica. Always the worst luck. The worst. (To LISA) OK, sweetheart, thank you for coming. You're very sweet.

LISA

Thank you so much for having me. (To Woman Mourner) Goodbye.

WOMAN MOURNER

Good bye.

As Lisa goes out:

WOMAN MOURNER (Cont'd)

Who is that?

EMILY

That's a girl who was passing by at the time of the accident. She was right there when she died and she wanted to come to the funeral. I told her there was no funeral, but she wanted to come anyway. She's a nice girl. I wouldn't have done that at her age, would you?

WOMAN MOURNER

No...

INT. EMILY'S ELEVATOR. DAY.

Lisa descends in the small, paneled, rattling elevator.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST. DAY.

Lisa and Becky are walking along.

LISA

Becky, it was so incredibly lame...I am not religious at all, but when I die I do not want a bunch of left-wing Jewish intellectuals sitting around a living room with African artifacts in it telling lame-ass stories about me. I want a big-ass fuckin' church packed to the fucking rafters with sobbing, grief-stricken people, praying to the Creator of the Universe for some relief from their anguish like he actually gives a shit that I ever existed. You know what I mean?

BECKY

So, you don't believe there is one in any form?

LISA

Dude, I was seven years old before I even found out Jesus Christ was a person and not just an expression.

They both laugh.

EXT. BROADWAY. DAY.

Lisa and Becky walk along the avenue.

BECKY

So what were you doing in the bathroom with Paul Weiss at Julia's party for forty-five minutes?

LISA

Nothing. He gave me some coke.

BECKY

That's all?

LISA

We made out a little.

BECKY

Oh my GOD!

LISA

But dude, you can't tell anyone. He has a girlfriend.

BECKY

What else did you do with him?

LISA

Nothing.

BECKY

You're lying!

LISA

No I'm not!

They both laugh. A BUS goes by slowly. LISA sees with a jolt the BUS DRIVER is driving it.

LISA

Oh my God. That's him.

BECKY

Who.

LISA

That's the guy who was driving the bus.

BECKY

Oh my God, really?

POV FROM THE FRONT OF THE BUS, wheeling past Lisa who stands staring at him. He doesn't see her.

IN THE STREET - The bus goes by. It's got a BIG AD for JOAN'S PLAY on the side of it.

EXT. MTA DEPOT. DUSK.

Busses go in and out of the depot. The day-shift drivers are coming out, smoking cigarettes. Lisa stands across the street as discreetly as she can.

She sees the Bus Driver, GERRY MARETTI, come out with two friends, talking. She starts following them, parallel to them across the street. Maretti stops to light a cigarette. She keeps going, afraid he'll see her, ducking her head.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS. DAY.

Lisa is very disengaged from the discussion. John is walking back and forth, reading aloud from King Lear.

JOHN (Reading)

"We are to the gods as flies to wanton boys. They kill us for their sport."
(Pause) We are to the gods as flies to wanton boys. They kill us for their sport. What do you make of that? Lisa? Lisa?

LISA

I don't know.

JOHN

You know what, Lisa? That's not good enough. That's not good enough. Shakespeare wrote something: What's your response?

LISA

Sorry. I don't have one.

JOHN

Take a stab. What do you think Shakespeare is saying about human suffering here?

LISA

I don't have a lot to say. It seems pretty self-evident to me.

JOHN

Matthew?

MATTHEW

I think it is self-evident. I think he's saying that human beings don't mean any more to the gods than flies do to little boys who like to torture them for fun. Like as far as the gods are concerned we're just ants. Nothing. (Like a newscaster turning to his colleague) Darren?

The class laughs.

DARREN (Responding in kind)

Thank you, Matthew. Yeah, I agree. Only it's not Shakespeare saying it: It's Gloucester. Maybe another character would have a different point of view.

JOHN

OK, that's a valid point. Just because Shakespeare has one of his characters say it doesn't mean he personally agrees with it. David?

DAVID

Yeah, maybe Shakespeare isn't saying the gods don't care about us. Maybe he's saying there's a higher consciousness that we can't see. That the gods' perception of reality is so much more developed than ours that compared to their perception, our perceptions are like comparing flies to boys.

JOHN

OK...I don't think that's what he's getting at...I think what he's getting at here is a very dark view of the arbitrary nature of human suffering.

DAVID

But maybe he's not. Maybe he's comparing human consciousness to divine consciousness, and he's saying that that's like comparing flies to boys. Maybe what he's saying is that even though it seems to us that human suffering is just arbitrary, that's just because we're limited by our viewpoint, but that there's a higher purpose to it that we can't see.

JOHN

Well -- let's look at the lines: Let's test David's hypothesis. "We are to the gods as flies to wanton boys. They kill us for their sport." I have to agree with Matthew, that seems pretty unambiguous.

DAVID

Yeah, because he's saying there's a higher purpose that we can't see. He's saying that what seems like them killing us for sport could just be because we only see it that way, because our consciousness isn't developed enough to see what the higher wisdom of their killing us is.

JOHN

OK, but -- I still don't think that's what he's trying to say.

DAVID

No, like if you say they kill us for their sport, when our perception of the gods is so meager that we can't even tell what they're doing, then how can we

DAVID (Cont'd)

be so arrogant as to think that they would bother to kill us for their sport?

JOHN (Lost)

OK...Um -- Monica?

MONICA

I don't think that's what he's saying at all. I think he's saying the gods don't give a shit about human beings and they just kill and torture us for fun --

MATTHEW

Yes. Much like flies to wanton boys.

MONICA

Yeah....!

DAVID

But if the gods' consciousness is so much more developed than ours that we seem like flies to them, then how can we be sure what they have in mind for us or why they do anything?

JOHN

David, I think you've made your point. But it's not what Shakespeare meant. Scholarly opinion is pretty consistent that he's trying to say something about human suffering here --

DAVID

Scholarly opinion....!

JOHN

And in this particular play what I think he's trying to say is pretty black -- pretty bleak --

DAVID

But what are you saying? A thousand Frenchmen can't be wrong?

JOHN

No, I'm not saying that. But I would like to move on --

DAVID

I think he is saying that, because he's comparing human consciousness to flies, and he's saying that we can't see the truth around us because our consciousness is undeveloped.

JOHN

No David, that's not what Shakespeare meant! He says it somewhere else in the play, but I don't want to get hung up on this any more because it's not what Shakespeare meant, and I want to move on!

David laughs and squirms in his chair.

INT. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa puts a new cowboy hat in her luggage. She tries to zip the bag but it won't zip.

LATER -- Lisa is asleep. The room is dark. She stirs. She realizes JOAN is sitting on the edge of her bed, her back to Lisa.

LISA

Mom? What's wrong?...Did you have a bad show? What time is it?

Joan turns around, opens her mouth and BLOOD pours out.

LISA WAKES UP, breathing hard short breaths. The room is dark and quiet. She calms down and gets up.

IN THE BATHROOM -- She comes in without turning on the light. She turns on the faucet. In the dim bathroom the water looks strangely dark. She switches on the light --

BLOOD is streaming out the faucet and filling the basin.

She looks up. MONICA the dead woman is standing behind her in the mirror. Lisa jumps --

LISA WAKES UP SCREAMING. She's drenched in sweat and breathing hard. Pause. Joan KNOCKS on the door.

JOAN (O.C.)

Lisa?

LISA

What?!

INT. LISA'S ROOM. DAY.

Lisa is dialing the phone. The telephone book is open next to her. She has circled the name GERALD MARETTI.

MARETTI (On the phone)

Hello?

She hesitates, then hangs up.

INT. SUBWAY (MOVING). DAY.

Lisa is on the subway. It stops at Bay Ridge Avenue. People get on and off. The doors shut and the train moves on.

EXT. BAY RIDGE. DAY.

Lisa walks through unfamiliar streets. The Verrazano Narrows Bridge dominates the background. Little kids play in the street. She checks the address on the piece of paper.

EXT. MARETTI'S HOUSE. DAY.

She rings the doorbell. Inside she hears kids playing. The door opens. It's MRS MARETTI, around 30.

MRS MARETTI

Yeah?

LISA

Hi. I'm sorry to bother you. My name is Lisa Cohen. I was involved in the same accident that Mr Marette was involved in a few weeks ago...

MRS MARETTI

Oh yeah?

LISA

Yeah...I was just wondering if I could talk to him for a minute. Is he home?

MRS MARETTI

Yeah, come in.

INT. MARETTI'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.

Lisa follows Mrs Marette into the small apartment. Two kids are running around. MARETTI is watching TV. Mrs Marette goes over and speaks to him, low. He sees LISA and slowly gets up.

LISA

Hi, I'm really sorry to bother you...We never met. My name is Lisa Cohen...

MARETTI

Yeah, what can I do for you?

LISA

Well...do you remember me? From the bus accident?

MARETTI

I don't know...What's this about?

LISA

Well, would it be OK if I talked to you for a minute?

MARETTI

What do you want to talk about? I don't understand.

LISA

I'd just like to talk about the accident for a minute. I don't want anything, and I'm not here to do anything bad. I just wanted to talk to you about it.

MARETTI

How did you get my address?

LISA

It's in the phone book. I was gonna call first...

MARETTI

Well, it woulda been better if you woulda called. We're about to sit down...

Mrs Maretti has drifted back toward them.

MARETTI (Cont'd)

I don't get what, uh...Yeah all right. Let's go outside.

LISA

I'm sorry: Could I use your bathroom?

MARETTI

No, let's go outside now.

MRS MARETTI

Oh Gerry, let her use the bathroom.

MARETTI

No, I don't want her to use the bathroom. I don't understand what this is.

MRS MARETTI

It's right over there, honey. (Turning)
Will you kids settle down, please! I'm not kiddin'!

Lisa goes in the bathroom.

MARETTI

What's the matter with you?

MRS MARETTI

Who is she?

MARETTI (Cont'd)
She's some girl who was at
the accident --

MRS MARETTI (Cont'd)
Nothin's the matter with
me, let her use the fuckin'
bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

Lisa latches the door of the cluttered little bathroom.
She sits on the toilet and tries to pee. After a minute a
tiny amount of pee comes out.

A MOMENT LATER -- She comes out. The Marettis are waiting
for her as before. The little boy comes up to her.

MARETTI BOY

Who are you?

LISA

My name's Lisa. Who are you?

MARETTI BOY

I can climb up doors!

LISA

Really?

MARETTI

Hey, Jackie, she don't wanna see you
climb up the door right now.

LISA

That's OK.

MARETTI

Let's go outside for a second, OK?
Please.

EXT. MARETTI'S HOUSE. DAY.

Maretti, Mrs Maretti, and Lisa come out.

MARETTI (To MRS MARETTI)

Honey, just do me a favor, wait inside.

MRS MARETTI

No, I wanna hear what this is.

LISA

Well...If it's OK, I'd rather talk to Mr
Maretti in private.

MRS MARETTI

No it's not OK.

MARETTI

OK. We're just tryin' to...OK: What?

Lisa looks at them, wishing Mrs Maretti would leave.

LISA

OK. I hope this isn't going to insult you too much...

The Marettis look at each other.

LISA (Cont'd)

I was just wondering if you felt bad at all about what happened.

MARETTI

What do you mean? The accident?

MRS MARETTI (Softening)

You know, honey? Are you just upset about the accident...?

LISA

Yes! I'm upset about the accident! I'm very upset about the accident and I wanted to talk to you about it for a minute! Why is that so strange!?

MRS MARETTI

Gerry...

LISA

Could I please talk to you alone?

MRS MARETTI

OK, what is goin' on here?

MARETTI

Nothin's goin' on here. So whyn't you calm down? Look: Go ahead inside. Let me find out what this is. Meantime whyn't you make sure those kids aren't killin' each other, all right?

MRS MARETTI (Shrugs)

All right.

As Mrs Maretti goes inside:

MARETTI (More jovially)

No, you know what? Let 'em kill each other. Give us all a rest. (To LISA) All right. "Lisa." What.

LISA

I just...Well, I just want you to know...

MARETTI

Yes? What? Speak!

LISA

Well...you probably already know, obviously, that I told the police on the police report that I thought the whole thing was an accident...

MARETTI

Uh huh. Right. Because it was an accident.

LISA

Well, I know it wasn't -- I know you didn't do it on purpose...But it wasn't like...

MARETTI

What. Speak. Talk. What.

LISA

Well...I mean...We were looking at each other...

MARETTI

Who was looking at each other...? You and me?

LISA

Well...Yeah...I mean...not like...
romantically or anything...

MARETTI

What?

LISA

OK, scratch that.

MARETTI

Romantically...!

LISA

No, forget that. 'Cause that's not even...

MARETTI

You're not comin' through very clearly...

LISA

OK. I can see the way this is.

MARETTI

The way what is? What! Speak to me! What?

LISA

I am -- !

MARETTI

Don't drag me outta my house on a Saturday afternoon, and make a big deal how you wanna talk to me and then make me stand here pullin' teeth to find out what the hell you're talkin' about. I got my kids inside -- You're an attractive young girl -- you show up at the house -- Please! Get to the point or go home. What do you want? What? What is it? What?

LISA

All right, well...The way I remember the accident is that you were wearing this cowboy hat --

MARETTI

Yes, it's my cowboy hat that I wear sometimes to amuse myself on the bus, yes. I was probably wearing my cowboy hat, yes. What.

LISA

If you could just let me -- From my point of view, I was waving because you -- I was out that day trying to buy a cowboy hat and you were waving back at me...And from my point of view, even though I told the police I thought it was an accident, and I know they already decided it was No Fault, or No Criminality or whatever they call it --

MARETTI

No Criminality, that's right.

LISA

-- they decided that, I guess, because of what I told them, partly at least. They asked me if you ran, or if the bus ran a red light, and I said I didn't see...But I don't know if you saw it or not, because you were looking at me -- or wherever you were looking -- I'm not saying I'm so utterly irresistible that you were necessarily looking at me, it was more like we were joking around --

LISA (Cont'd)

But anyway, I did see the bus go through a red light. And that's when it hit that woman.

MARETTI

Uh huh?

LISA

And the reason I came here today was because I know I was distracting you and that's why you didn't see the light. But nobody said that to them. And I just wanted to like, acknowledge with you that that's what happened.

MARETTI

OK. First of all, I don't really know what you mean by wavin' at you...What, were you tryin' to catch the bus...?

LISA

No...Yes. But I wanted to ask about your --

MARETTI

Maybe I was wavin' at you like, wavin' to say, you know, "Step away from the bus," because if the bus was in motion, I would've waved you away for your own safety, but that's all that would be. So I take your word for it, but --

LISA

You don't remember looking at me and waving at me?

Mrs. Maretti comes out again.

MARETTI

No. Not really. No.

LISA

Well, I think we think something different happened.

MRS MARETTI

Your brother's on the phone.

MARETTI

Tell him I'll call him back.

Mrs Maretti goes back inside.

LISA

I'm not trying to get you in trouble.

MARETTI

I know you're not, because you couldn't get me in trouble, because I didn't do anything wrong. But it's a concern to me, because the light was not red. And even if I did wave at you, like sayin' "Back away from the bus," that was a misinterpretation on your part. There's no criminality found. The report is, uh, final. So that's it. Um, I don't know what else to say to you. I gotta get back inside to my family.

LISA

So you're just gonna leave it?

MARETTI

I'm gonna leave it, because that's all that it was. If it was something else, if something else would have happened, I'd take it to whatever that was. It was tragic, it was a tragedy. But there's only a certain speed the brakes can react. You know? That's a physical limitation of the machine. I don't know what else to tell you. It was a shock. It's shock. But that's it. Can't bring her back. Cannot bring her back.

LISA

I'm not talking about bringing her back. I'm talking about telling the accident investigators what really happened.

MARETTI

If there's something you didn't tell them, I think you should tell them.

LISA

Well, I was kind of hoping that you would want to go with me.

MARETTI

Go with you?

LISA

Yeah. (Pause) Because --

MARETTI

But you already talked to them.

LISA

Yeah --

MARETTI

So what do you want to do?

LISA

-- but I lied.

MARETTI

You lied.

LISA

Yes. And I can understand if you don't want to get in trouble, but I don't know why you're telling me you didn't wave at me, because we were both waving at each other for what I remember as having been a really long time...And then you went through the light.

MARETTI

Then how come nobody else saw that?

LISA

I can't help what other people saw --

MARETTI (On "help")

You would think somebody else would see it.

LISA

I just know what I saw.

MARETTI

Then why didn't you say something right then?

LISA

Because when they were asking me, it seemed to me...

MARETTI

What?

LISA

It seemed to me that when the police were asking us what happened, you were kind of looking at me, and we were kind of looking at each other like we were saying, "Let's not say anything about what happened."

MARETTI

Oh, now I really don't know what you're talkin' about.

LISA

I can't prove that you were doing that --

Mrs Maretti comes back outside.

MARETTI

What, did I say anything to you? Did I threaten you?

LISA

No, it wasn't like that, and I am not blaming you for any of this!

MARETTI

Hey, I'm the one behind the wheel! So if you start goin' to the cops and sayin' I was lookin' at you and scarin' you with looks, and I'm wavin' at you so I ran the red light, that's gonna sound to them like somebody's blamin' me!

LISA

All I'm saying is that I didn't really tell the cops what happened and I didn't want to go back without --

MARETTI

But you told 'em what you saw! And so did I! They don't care about who looked at who and who was looking at one person out of ten thousand people for some reason wants to open up the whole thing when it's not gonna do anything, and say I ran a red light when there was a million witnesses all said I didn't run one! I been drivin' that bus for three years!

MRS MARETTI

Gerry -- Gerry --

MARETTI

No, it's all right. Leave it alone. You wanna ruin my life, start tellin' 'em about looks, and you waved at me and I had on my cowboy hat, go ahead: I got a wife and three kids. You're gonna go back and do your homework and I'm gonna lose my job and who's gonna feed my kids? You gonna do it? Are you? And for what!

LISA

I just want to say what really happened.

MARETTI

Hey do whatever the fuck you want.

MRS MARETTI

Gerry --

MARETTI

But those cops are gonna laugh in your fuckin' face because this was not my fault!

LISA

It was both our fault.

MARETTI

What'd you say?

LISA

It was both our fault.

Maretti scrambles in his pocket for a pen.

MARETTI

Yeah. Don't say that to me again without a lawyer. Gimme your phone number.

MARETTI

What's your number? Gimme your number. OK, you come to my house, you wanna come to my house like some anonymous person, I can't get in touch with you? What's your fuckin' number?

LISA

Why? No!

MRS MARETTI

Gerry! Take it easy!

LISA

No! I don't know why you would want it!

MRS MARETTI

Gerry!

LISA

Fine! It's -- um -- 212-787 --

MARETTI (Writing)

Hold on. (Writes) 787 --

LISA

3972.

MARETTI

OK. Gimme your last name.

LISA
Why do you need it?

MARETTI
Could I have it please?
Could I have it please?

LISA
Yes! Fine! It's Cohen. C O
H E N. Why do you need it?

MARETTI
You do whatever you're gonna do. I hope
you got a good lawyer.

LISA
I don't know why you're --
Maretti turns and goes in the house.

MRS MARETTI
You know this was very traumatic for him.

LISA (Furious)
Yeah! It's almost as bad as getting your
leg cut off!

MRS MARETTI
Does your mother know you're here?

LISA
Yes.

INT. SUBWAY (MOVING). DAY.

Lisa sits in the corner of the car. Some kids roughhouse
very loudly nearby.

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN. DAY.

Emily sits with Lisa at the kitchen table.

EMILY
Why didn't you say anything before?

LISA
I guess I was afraid. I didn't know what
to do.

EMILY
You didn't know what to do? The woman is
killed right in front of you and you
didn't know what to do?

LISA
I know it doesn't sound very impressive.

EMILY

Well...You're very young. I know you're trying to do the right thing now. What does your mother say?

LISA

My mother hasn't really been that helpful.

EMILY

What do you mean?

LISA

I mean she's got a lot going on right now and she just hasn't been that interested, I guess.

EMILY

What could she possibly have going on?

LISA

Her show is opening.

EMILY

What do you mean, her show? What show?

LISA

She's in a play.

EMILY

My friend is dead because some guy ran a red light and you lied to the police about it, and your mother can't be bothered because she's in a play?

LISA

Well, it's kind of a big deal for her. She has a really big part...We don't really relate to each other that well.

EMILY

I'm sorry. I don't know your mother, but that is pretty shocking.

LISA

I guess she's really worried about getting a bad review or something.

EMILY

OK. I'm gonna talk to my friend who's a lawyer, and I'm gonna call Monica's cousin -- you talked to her -- And you're gonna go talk to the police. Do you want me to go with you?

LISA

No thanks.

EMILY

Do you think maybe you should ask your mother to go with you?

LISA

I think I can handle this part myself.

EMILY

OK. You're a brave girl. Oh, I am so angry. I am so angry. That motherfucker.

LISA

He didn't do it on purpose.

EMILY

Fuck him. Fuck him. I'm gonna accidentally run him over in the prime of his life because I was looking at some guy's ass, and then tell the cops I didn't do it and then coerce some teenage girl into lying for me about it. Fuck him. He deserves to fry, and he's gonna fuckin' fry.

INT. LISA'S ROOM/KARL'S HOUSE. DAY.

Lisa is on the phone with Karl. We cut between them.

KARL

Hi, baby doll.

LISA

Hi Dad.

KARL

Yeah. How's everything going?

LISA

Um, OK.

KARL

Great. Great. I'm sitting here listening to the St. Matthew Passion, which is absolutely beautiful. It's one of my favorite pieces of music. I'm having a glass of McNulty's Golden Ale and catching up on a little reading.

LISA

That sounds pleasant.

KARL

Yeah. Yeah. How are you? How's the boyfriend situation?

LISA

It's OK. There's this one guy I sort of had something going with, but --

KARL

Uh huh? That sounds promising.

LISA

Yeah, but it's actually a little complicated --

KARL

Uh huh?

LISA

Yeah. He kind of has a girlfriend, and he's a little older...

KARL

How much older?

LISA

He's eighteen, I guess? Or maybe in the upper seventeens? Anyway --

KARL

Aeons. Aeons older.

LISA

Yeah, I know --

KARL

There's a chasm of time between you.

LISA

I realize I'm --

KARL

It's a little hard to imagine what you two could even find to talk about.

LISA

I realize I'm incredibly mature for my age --

KARL

I'm hoping you're not too mature.

LISA

No...

KARL

OK. Good. That was a good answer.

LISA

I'm just saying it makes a big difference if your competition's in the twelfth grade. I realize I'm incredibly enthralling --

KARL

You are: You're very lucky: You're a very beautiful girl.

LISA

Oh yeah.

KARL

And you've got brains. Which makes you doubly dangerous...

LISA

I guess.

KARL

I'm not kidding: This girl's gotta watch her ass.

LISA

Well, I do think it's a pretty longstanding relationship --

KARL

Then you know what? Do nothing. You do absolutely nothing, and one of two things will happen: Either you'll drive the guy crazy because he can't get your attention, and he'll start doing back flips to get you to pay attention -- forget his girlfriend -- or you'll send him a crystal clear signal that if he doesn't do back flips he's not gonna get your attention. OK?

LISA

Well, I think he already knows I like him.

KARL

Uh huh? OK...

LISA

...I think I might have spilled the beans on that one a little --

KARL

That's OK. Because now, if now you stop acknowledging him, you just suddenly give him nothing, he's gonna go crazy. And I guarantee you that's gonna get his attention but quick. Unless he's just not interested. In which case you gotta take your lumps. You know? Which is tough.

LISA

Well, thanks, Dad. I'll be sure to try out the technique next time I see him.

KARL

Yeah. Lemme know how it goes.

LISA

I will.

KARL

All right. Well, everything's OK here... A little slow --

LISA

I actually called because -- I want to hear how things are with you in a minute -- but I have something kind of serious I want to ask you about. I'm actually... I'm kind of soliciting people I respect for their views on this...

KARL

Uh huh? What's up?

INTERCUT: WIDER, THROUGH THE GLASS DOORS of Karl's bungalow as he listens to the story.

LISA

...so I'm just not sure what I should do now. I realize I'm pretty far down the list as far as life crises [sic] go...

KARL

OK: Let me --

LISA

...but do you think I should go back to the police, or what?

KARL

I think before you do anything you should let me talk to a lawyer,

KARL (Cont'd)
just to get some idea of what some of
the ramifications would be.

LISA
You mean to protect myself before I go
back?

KARL
There's nothing wrong with knowing what
you're getting into. I wouldn't mention
you by name --

ANNETTE, Karl's 40ish girlfriend, lets herself into the
bungalow, waving.

LISA
Well, I appreciate your taking charge
and everything, but --

KARL
That's OK: I just want to
call my friend Lorne...
(To ANNETTE) Hey, honey.
(To LISA) Sorry. Annette
walked in...
No: I'm gonna talk to
him --

ANNETTE
Hey....!

LISA
Actually, Dad? Please don't
call anybody. Seriously:
I just want to -- Please
don't! I really want to
figure this out for myself!

ANNETTE
Talk to who? Who is that?

KARL
It's Lisa -

ANNETTE
Will you please ask her --

LISA
Hello?

KARL
Hold on a second, Lisa.
Hold on one second.
(Covers the phone)

ANNETTE
Will you ask her if there's anything we
don't know about that she won't eat? For
the trip? I have to tell the ranch, because
they do all the meals ahead of time --

KARL
Yes. I will. We're just in the middle of
something --

ANNETTE

Karl, I was supposed to call them last week.

KARL

You know what?

ANNETTE

And if there's anything she can't eat and they put it in the hampers she's not gonna get any dinner. The last time she came out here we went to three different places and she couldn't eat anything on the menu.

KARL

Uh huh? OK. I'm gonna ask her. I will.
(Into phone) Sorry, honey:

LISA

That's OK. I know I just asked your advice, and I definitely want to know what you think, but I don't want anyone but me to do anything right now, because -- I guess I would just like to know later on that I would have done the right thing by myself, if you see what I mean. Because I don't think I have so far. Not that I'm trying to make this woman's horrible death into my own personal moral gymnasium...

KARL

Uh huh. Yeah. Shaw.

LISA

What?

KARL

Shaw. The quote: "The Englishman sees the world as expressly designed to be his private moral gymnasium..." I'm paraphrasing slightly. I think it's in one of those wonderful Prefaces...

LISA

I don't remember where I read it.

INT. THEATER -- BACKSTAGE/ONSTAGE. NIGHT.

Joan waits in the wings. The red CUE LIGHT goes ON. We hear the actors onstage O.C. The CUE LIGHT goes OFF. We track Joan onstage as she enters.

JOAN (Sharp)

Hey! Let me tell you something, Eliot --

She is interrupted by entrance APPLAUSE.

JOAN (Cont'd)

You want to fire me, go ahead and fire me. Only don't tiptoe around me like some kind of deranged ballerina every time I see you in the fucking hall! Now: Do you have anything to say to me, Eliot?

VICTOR

Um -- you're not fired...?

This gets a pretty big laugh.

JOAN

Oh. (Abashed, friendly) What are you guys talking about?

Another big laugh.

IN THE AUDIENCE -- LISA, CURTIS and RAMON sit together, dressed up for opening night.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM. MORNING.

Lisa is heading for the computer. Joan follows her.

JOAN

No, because if they were any good somebody would have called me by now, Lisa!

LISA

Well, I can't take this anymore. What do you care what they say about you anyway?

JOAN

I don't. It's just a lousy feeling. Can't you understand that? If they wrote mean things about you in the newspaper you wouldn't like it, even if you didn't agree with it, or base your self-esteem on it. Why can't you understand that?

LISA

I do understand it, because we have this conversation every time! But you're great in the play, you're a great actor, everybody thinks you're great, everything about you is great --

JOAN

Oh shut up.

Lisa finds the review online and starts reading.

LISA

Don't look over my shoulder if you don't want to know what it says.

JOAN

Did you find it?

LISA (Reading)

Yes.

JOAN

Is it bad?

LISA

Let me read it. (She reads) OK, it's really good.

JOAN

It is?

LISA

Oh my God. Listen to this:

JOAN

Don't read it to me.

LISA

Oh my God. "Joan Carroll is nothing short of extraordinary in David Holmes' witty new examination of the behind-the-scenes politics of a national news magazine --

JOAN

Really?!?

LISA

OK, this is the best review I've ever read.

JOAN

For everybody or just for me?

LISA

No, he likes the play, but the main thrust of it's basically what a genius you are.

JOAN

Fuck him! What does he know? (Noel Coward-esque) Nothing short of extraordinary, eh?

LISA

Oh my God, you're a huge star!

JOAN

Oh my God!

The PHONE RINGS.

LISA

There they are!

JOAN (Picks up the phone)

Hello? ... I know, can you believe it?!

INT. ENGLISH CLASS. DAY.

John and the class are reading from a paperback poetry anthology. On the blackboard it says "19TH CENTURY POETS -- GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS -- 1844-1889." We PUSH IN on Lisa slowly.

JOHN

"Margaret are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leaves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Ah! as the heart grows older
It will come to such thoughts colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie,
And yet you will weep, and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sorrows springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for."

Silence.

JOHN (Cont'd)

Any thoughts? Lisa?

Lisa looks up.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Lisa is watching the news. There is footage of a young Arab woman being led away by Israeli soldiers.

NEWSCASTER

-- when the seventeen year-old
Palestinian was stopped by Israeli
police from boarding a school bus
yesterday carrying forty pounds of
explosives under her jacket --

EXT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

Lisa gets herself together and goes into the police station.

INT. A.I.S. (ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION SQUAD) OFFICE. DAY.

Lisa stands before the desk of a different DETECTIVE.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

Could I help you?

LISA

Um, yeah. Is Detective Mitchell here?

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

No he's not. Could I help you with
something?

LISA

When do you expect him back?

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

What's this about?

LISA

I was involved in an accident a few
weeks ago --

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

Uh huh?

LISA

And I filled out a report with Detective
Mitchell, but wanted to amend the
report, so I thought I should --

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

You want to amend the report?

LISA

Yeah.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

What do you mean amend the report? How
do you want to amend it?

LISA /

Well, there was something I didn't tell him, and I wanted to tell him, because I think it's probably pretty significant.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

So wait, I don't understand. You wanna change your statement?

LISA (Impatiently)

Yes. Yes. I want to change my statement.
(Calmer) Yes.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

Normally you'd talk to the investigating detective on the case...

LISA

Do you know when he'll be --

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

You remember the case number?

LISA

No. Sorry. It was that woman Monica Patterson who got run over by the bus, on Broadway -- it was in a lot of the newspapers...

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

OK, yeah, sure OK. So what do you want to change? Sit down, sit down.

LISA (Sitting)

I want to --

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

You know the case is closed.

LISA

I didn't. I figured it was, but part of the reason it's closed is because of my statement. And the statement I gave --

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE

Because of your statement?

Another male detective walks by, behind LISA. The two men exchange a glance referring to Lisa being a cute girl.

LISA

Yes.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE
What do you mean it was closed because
of your statement?

LISA
I mean --

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE
The DA's office closes the case. You
don't close the case. The DA's office
closes the case.

LISA
I'm sure it does. I obviously didn't
mean I personally closed the case, like,
legally. I meant that what I said was
probably instrumental in getting the
case closed, because I was the --

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE
What's your name, honey?

LISA
Lisa Cohen.

2ND DETECTIVE
OK --

LISA
Don't call me honey, OK?

Pause.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE
OK.

LISA
Are you not gonna help me now that I
said that?

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE
Look -- what's your name?

LISA
Lisa Cohen.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE
OK Lisa, first thing, you're gonna calm
down --

LISA
I'm calm right now.

2ND A.I.S. DETECTIVE
OK. Just checking. Second thing -- Oh!
Here he is: Your knight in shining armor.

MITCHELL has just come in. LISA gets up.

MITCHELL
This guy been givin' you a hard time?

LISA
No...

MITCHELL
What's this guy been sayin' to you?

LISA
Nothing. I don't know if you remember me...

MITCHELL
Sure I do.

LISA
Yeah --

MITCHELL
What's up?

LISA
I want to change my statement.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER -- MITCHELL'S DESK. Mitchell is listening to Lisa.

LISA
...and that's when he hit that woman.

MITCHELL
So now you're sayin' he ran the light.

LISA
Yes.

MITCHELL
And you saw this? You could see this
from where you were standing?

LISA
Yes. And I guess I was trying to get his
attention...

MITCHELL
OK, that part doesn't matter.

LISA

I think it matters. It's not like he just glanced at me. He was totally looking at me, like rolling along and waving at me. I'm not trying to get anybody in trouble, I'm honestly not --

MITCHELL

I understand --

LISA

But you've been given a false police report, and I don't think this guy should be driving a bus.

She sees he's waiting for her to shut up.

LISA (Cont'd)

I'm sorry.

MITCHELL

That's O --

LISA

I'm not trying to tell you how to do your job.

MITCHELL

Listen to what I'm saying. You talked for a while: Now I'm gonna talk. First of all, let me ask you something:

LISA

Please do!

MITCHELL

You have a relationship with this guy?

LISA

What?

MITCHELL

I mean do you have a relationship with him?

Not necessarily --
Keep your voice down!

LISA

You mean a sexual relationship? No! I don't even know him!

LISA

Why?!

MITCHELL (Sharp)

Because you're in my squad room and you're gonna keep your Goddamn voice down. That's why.

LISA (Much subdued)

OK. I'm sorry.

MITCHELL

OK: So there's no connection there, you don't know this guy.

LISA

No. That's completely absurd.

MITCHELL

So what was he lookin' at you for? Were you doin' something to distract his attention?

LISA

Yes. I was. That's what I'm trying to tell you.

MITCHELL

What were you doing?

LISA

I was just waving at him, because he was wearing this cowboy hat --

MITCHELL

He was wearin' a what?

LISA

A cowboy hat. It's not an important part of the story. I was trying to get his attention, because I wanted to ask him where he got it, and so he started waving back, for whatever reason.

MITCHELL

Why do you think he was wavin' back?

LISA

What's the difference? He was.

MITCHELL

Was he tellin' you to get back? To get away from the bus? If the bus was movin'...

LISA

No, he was waving at me because he thought I was cute! He was flirting with me, if you want to put it that way.

MITCHELL

Thank you. Now I get the picture. So he's flirtin' with you, you and this guy are waving at each other and he runs the light, the vehicle hits the decedent... Cops show up, everybody tells us a bunch of lies, says he didn't run the light. Then somewhere in there you turn around, decide the guy belongs in jail.

LISA

I don't have any control over if he goes to jail or not. I certainly have my hopes. I just want to set the record straight so that if he gets away with this I won't have been a part of it.

MITCHELL

OK. Well. Before we do any of that, Lisa, I gotta tell you, even if I took a new statement and reinterviewed this guy and he confirmed your story, which I would imagine is probably pretty doubtful, anybody will tell you that just because he ran a red light is not a criminal offence. Even if --

LISA

Even if someone is killed?

MITCHELL (Overlapping)

Even if you cause an accidental death, that's right. He could be charged with reckless driving and fillin' out a false police report, which, that's no joke --

LISA

But he's not liable to be prosecuted for manslaughter or second degree murder?

MITCHELL

No. But I will tell you --

LISA

That's unbelievable. What does he have to do? Kill her on purpose?

MITCHELL

Yes. Because that's the definition of murder. Killin' somebody on purpose. You're not sayin' he ran her over on purpose, are you?

LISA

No.

MITCHELL

OK. Why don't I, uh, take another statement, and, uh, we're gonna look into it.

LISA

You're kidding.

MITCHELL

No. I'll go over it with my sergeant, probably pull this guy in again. Re-interview him. Put a little pressure on him. See what he says.

LISA (Very grateful)

Thank you...!

INT. GYM CLASS. DAY.

Lisa and her co-ed gym class are listening to BONNIE, the tall, beautiful gym teacher.

BONNIE

We're just gonna start with a simple cartwheel. OK?

She does an elegant cartwheel. Lisa notices all the boys looking at Bonnie longingly.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK. DAY.

Lisa is walking through the park, enjoying the sunshine. Far away she sees MR AARON approaching on a bike. He sees her, bikes up to her and stops.

LISA

Hi, Mr Aaron.

MR AARON

How are you, Lisa?

LISA

I'm pretty damn good. How are you?

MR AARON

I'm all right. I'm all right...Tell me something. Whatever happened with that situation?

LISA

Oh...I'm working on it. I'll tell you all about it sometime...(Squinting at him in the sunshine) Hey, what kind of a bike is that?

MR AARON

Um, a Trek.

LISA

I'm supposed to go to this ranch in New Mexico with my father over Spring Break and go horseback riding. I've never really ridden a horse before. Does it bear any resemblance to riding a bicycle?

MR AARON

As far as I know, no, it doesn't, no.

LISA

I am actually thinking of getting one of these. Can I try it? Just for one second?

MR AARON

All right...

He gets off the bike. Lisa gets on, but the seat is too high.

LISA

Thanks. Does this remind you of that book Lolita? Just kidding. God, you are so easy to tease! I'm sorry. I'll stop. I know I'm making you uncomfortable.

MR AARON

You can adjust the seat --

LISA

No thanks. This is good. It's kind of turning me on. Just kidding. I'm kidding!

Wobbling badly at first, she bikes away from him, arcs around awkwardly and then bikes back toward him.

LISA

I like your bicycle...! Can I have it?

MR AARON

No!

She tries to stop, but skids into him. He has to stop her with some force.

LISA

Sorry.

MR AARON

OK. Off.

LISA

I said I was sorry.

She gets off, swinging herself toward him instead of away.

MR AARON

I'll see you tomorrow.

LISA

Can I just ask you how is it possible that I am totally in love with you and you have almost no interest in me whatsoever?

MR AARON

Lisa...!

LISA

What are you so scared of? You're an adult. I'm a teenager. You should be totally in command of this situation.

MR AARON

I'm not aware of any situation that exists for me to be in charge of.

LISA (Lowers her voice)

It's not like I'd ever say anything. If you ever deigned to like, you know, be with me or anything. I'm not a virgin or anything. Far from it.

MR AARON

I can't even be having this conversation with you.

LISA

Yeah, you keep saying that, but I notice you're still standing here.

MR AARON

You're absolutely right. Goodbye.

He gets on his bike.

LISA

I can't help it if I revere you as a god.

MR AARON

I'll see you in class.

She watches him bike away.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Lisa comes in as Joan is putting on her coat.

JOAN

Hi. Where have you been? I didn't know if you wanted dinner.

LISA

Oh -- no thanks. I'll order something.

JOAN

Someone named Emily called. And Detective Mitchell called from the Accident Investigation Squad. Is that the one you talked to?

LISA

Yeah, did he say anything about the case?

JOAN

He said to call him tomorrow. What's going on?

LISA

I'd rather not talk about it when you have one foot out the door. I'll tell you later, if that's OK.

JOAN

Of course it is. Who's Emily?

LISA

She's the friend of the woman who died, the one who had the funeral...

JOAN

Oh yeah. Well, she left a number, it's right next to the phone in the kitchen.

LISA

OK. How's Ramon?

JOAN

Oh -- God -- I don't know. I like him.
He's really nice...I just feel kind of
lonely when I'm with him. You know?

LISA

You feel lonely when you're with him?

JOAN

Yeah. You never felt that way when you
were with someone?

LISA

I guess so. I feel that way all the
time. You get used to it.

JOAN

Well...I don't know how serious I want
to get with somebody who makes me feel
that way.

LISA

So don't get serious. That's my advice.

Pause.

JOAN

All right. I'm gonna go.

LISA

Have a good show.

JOAN

Thank you. (Calling) Goodbye Curtis!

IN THE LIVING ROOM -- Curtis, on the computer, his face
lit up by the screen, doesn't answer.

BACK IN THE HALL -- Joan shrugs it off.

JOAN

'Bye sweetie.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY. NIGHT.

She hits the elevator button. Sees her reflection in the
little round elevator window. She looks old to herself,
and haggard. She touches under her chin.

INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT.

Joan gets in. The door shuts. She leans her head against the
wall and bursts into tears. The elevator stops with a DING.
She wipes her eyes quickly. A woman NEIGHBOR comes in bulkily.

NEIGHBOR

Hello.

JOAN (Smiles)

Hello.

NEIGHBOR

Congratulations on the show...!

JOAN

Thank you.

NEIGHBOR

I see the ads everywhere.

JOAN

Yeah, it's going well. Knock wood.

The Neighbor smiles. They ride down in silence.

EXT. LUNCH RESTAURANT -- COLUMBUS AVENUE. DAY.

Lisa, Emily and Emily's 30ish lawyer friend DAVE are at an outdoor cafe.

EMILY

Lisa, Dave is one of my best friends. He's a terrific lawyer and if he doesn't know what to do himself he'll certainly know someone we can talk to.

LISA

OK, great.

EMILY

So Dave, just tell Lisa everything you told me, if you don't mind repeating yourself --

DAVE

Not at all. I love to repeat myself.

LISA

Are you guys gonna order something?

EMILY (To a BUSBOY)

Yeah. Could you ask our waiter to come by?

LATER -- They are drinking cappucinos. Lisa is smoking.

DAVE

When someone is killed it's what you call a Wrongful Death Suit, which is a statutory case, which just means there's

DAVE (Cont'd)
a statute passed by the legislature
which gives you the right to bring the
case.

LISA
As opposed to what?

DAVE
As opposed to common law, which is law
made by judges. Which is why the damages
are limited.

LISA
I don't understand.

EMILY
Look, just skip that part. We don't care
about that.

LISA
I thought we were trying to get the
police to arrest this guy --

DAVE
No -- The police --

EMILY
Dave doesn't think --

LISA
They told me they were
gonna look into it again --

DAVE
I'm sure they did, but I still really
doubt they're gonna recommend the DA
charge this guy. Which is why --

LISA
So what can we do?

DAVE
Well, I'm --

LISA
Sorry.

DAVE
That's OK --

EMILY
That's OK, honey...

DAVE
I'm just getting to that. You can't do
anything unless you're a relative --

EMILY
She didn't have any relatives --

DAVE

Or -- hang on a minute -- unless you're executor of her estate --

EMILY

I am the executor of her estate.

DAVE

-- which is Emily.

EMILY

So good.

DAVE

Yes. This is good. Because the executor of the estate can bring a wrongful death suit, so let me explain about that. In a wrongful death suit you can sue for Pain and Suffering, Pecuniary Losses, Loss of Support or Services...Also what's called Care, Comfort and Society:

Lisa and Emily are listening very closely.

DAVE (Cont'd)

Let's say a father of three dies: They say, How long was he gonna live, what was his life earning capacity...Sometimes they'll give you something for the future services you've lost -- like advice, counseling of the parent that the kids aren't gonna get anymore...

LISA

You can really sue for that?

DAVE

Sure.

LISA

So -- I don't understand. Who are we suing? The bus driver?

DAVE

Well usually you would probably sue everybody. The driver, the bus company and hope something sticks. The person who pays will be the MTA's insurance company.

LISA

And do you think the driver would get fired?

DAVE

No, not necessarily.

LISA

Even if all the facts came out at the trial?

DAVE

Maybe. I don't know.

EMILY

What kind of money would you try to get?

DAVE

OK. Just give me...I -- it's not a lot of fun asking this, but just as an example, if she was alive in great pain for an extended period of time, they give more money for that --

LISA

I'd say she was alive for ten minutes.

DAVE

And I gather in a lot of pain?

LISA

Her leg was cut off.

DAVE

Mm hm? And she was conscious? Awake, the whole time?

LISA

I'm sorry, Emily. (To DAVE) Yeah, awake.

EMILY

That's OK.

DAVE

Well, if she was in a lot of pain for that long...I don't know...Maybe 300,000 or a half a million dollars to get a sustainable verdict...? But the truth is, Lisa, after all's said and done, it's not a very good case.

LISA

Why not?

DAVE

Because it's your word against his, and because you already lied on your first deposition. A red light case is a fifty-

DAVE (Cont'd)
fifty proposition already, and with only one eyewitness with two conflicting statements...I wouldn't take that case.

EMILY
Nobody really cares about getting a lot of money here.

DAVE
I understand that --

EMILY
We just want this prick to suffer and we want the bus company to take responsibility for hiring this guy.

LISA
What about settling out of court?

DAVE
Well...Usually the insurance company has in-house lawyers, so the longer they drag things out the more money they know I'm laying out, and the more they hope I'll lower the settlement. But no matter how you slice it, the fact that Lisa lied on her first statement is a disaster for your lawyer.

LISA
Can't I explain why I lied the first time? It's not like I'm trying to get any money for myself...

DAVE
That's true...The only thing I could think of, it is the MTA. So they're not gonna want a lot of publicity --

LISA
Anyway, the whole point is to get this guy out from --

EMILY
Is to fucking get this guy!

LISA
No, it's to get him out from behind the wheel of a bus!

DAVE

Did she know she was dying? I only ask because the terror of knowing you're dying raises the damages.

LISA

I think she had a pretty good idea.

DAVE

If she had lived for a couple of days it would make the case better...I know this sounds horrible, but this is what it comes down to...

EMILY

I know, we know, Dave, that's OK.

DAVE

Let me make a couple of calls and get back to you. I did have one more thought that might, uh...Let me call around a little.

EMILY

I would just like somebody to take responsibility for what happened.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

Emily and Lisa walk along toward Emily's house.

LISA

I just think it's so fucked up that the only way to address this situation is to try to get money for it. What good is that gonna do anybody? Plus who would be getting the money anyway?

EMILY

Monica's nearest relative, I guess.

LISA

Who? That cousin from Arizona?

EMILY

I would imagine...

LISA

But she didn't even like her.

EMILY

Look honey, you can moan and groan about the lack of a perfect solution or you can pull up your little bootstraps and try to do whatever you can do.

LISA

I'm actually really aware of that, Emily.
I just happen to think it's fucked up.

EMILY

You're right. It is fucked up. But it's
that or nothing.

LISA

I just think it would be nice to get a
break on this fucking case.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Lisa is on the kitchen phone.

LISA

Yes, Detective Mitchell please? ... My
name is Lisa Cohen? ... Cohen ... C O H
OK. (On hold) Fuck you ...

INT. SQUAD ROOM. DAY.

Mitchell picks up the phone. WE CUT BETWEEN THEM.

MITCHELL

Detective Mitchell.

LISA

Oh, hi, it's Lisa Cohen calling.

MITCHELL

Hi Lisa, what can I do for you?

LISA

Well, I was just wondering what ever
happened, if anything, with the case.
You said you might re-interview the bus
driver...

MITCHELL

Yes, we did, we brought him back in --

LISA

You did? What happened?

MITCHELL

Well, he basically stuck to his original
representation, and that was pretty much
it. I brought it up with my sergeant,
but he agrees with me we still don't
have enough to charge this guy, so
there's really not a lot more we can do
at this point.

LISA

But did you...I don't -- I'm not telling you how to do your job, but I just wonder, I mean if you just asked him if he wanted to change his statement, that's not -- I mean he's probably not gonna change it if you just ask him, like really politely: Why would he? We already know he's a liar...

MITCHELL

First of all, Lisa, you gotta trust I been doin' this a long time. I told him we had another witness with a conflicting statement --

LISA

Yeah, but how did you ask the questions?

MITCHELL

Hey, you know, Lisa, in the old days we'd just throw him in the back with a rubber hose and we'd get whatever kinda answer we wanted out of him, but fortunately we don't do that kind of thing anymore --

LISA

Yeah: Not to white people.

MITCHELL

Excuse me?

LISA

You don't do it to white people. Anyway. Forget it. Isn't there some kind of middle ground?

MITCHELL

We don't do it to who?

LISA

Oh my God...

MITCHELL

Let's back up a second. First of all, I don't know why you're bringin' the guy's race into it. There's forty thousand cops in this city --

LISA

Yes, thank you, yes.

MITCHELL

...and I hate to disillusion you, but most of 'em are pretty good guys, just tryin' to do their job. Now I asked this guy six different ways did he run the light and he says no --

LISA

Of course he said No!

MITCHELL

-- Bottom line is the DA's not gonna take this case. Now you could talk to my sergeant if you want to, but --

LISA

Yes, I would.

A MOMENT LATER -- We follow Joan down the hall to come around the door frame and watch LISA on the phone:

LISA (On the phone)

So there's no way to appeal...

SGT (On phone)

There's nothin' to appeal.
There's no case.

JOAN

What's going on?

LISA

But how do you know Detective Mitchell interrogated him aggressively enough if you weren't there?

EXT. STREET NEAR RAMON'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Joan and Ramon are walking down the street.

JOAN

So funny: it's the same show, but now they all read how great it is, we get these big standing ovations every night, and it's the exact same show as before!

RAMON

But why do you put yourself down? It's a wonderful show and a wonderful performance.

JOAN

No, it's just the audience...always reacts differently if they've been told it's good. A lot of actors have that experience.

RAMON

Mm hm?

EXT. RAMON'S TERRACE. NIGHT.

Joan and Ramon are outside having a drink looking at a great view of the Upper West Side. Joan is smoking.

JOAN

I love this view...(Pause) You know, Ramon...This may sound very stupid to you, but do you ever worry that we don't have very much in common?

RAMON

What do you mean?

JOAN

Well, I don't mean to sound dissatisfied, but I feel like we're always misunderstanding each other. Do you feel that way at all? Or am I just completely off the beam?

RAMON

I don't think we should talk about that, Joan.

JOAN

You don't? Well...I think it's kind of important or I wouldn't have brought it up.

RAMON

Joan...I like you very much. But let's not talk about what you're like and what I'm like. That never leads anywhere. Talk about it with your friends.

JOAN

My friends....!

RAMON

Yes.

He sips his drink. Joan doesn't know what to say.

RAMON (Cont'd)

May I show you some pictures of my boys?

JOAN

Sure, why not...? Just don't tell me what they're like.

INT. RAMON'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Ramon and Joan are in his modernistic, scrupulously clean carpeted living room, on the sofa, looking at pictures.

RAMON

That's Rodrigo, when he was seven years old...

JOAN

Oh...sweet...

RAMON

I feel sorry for people who don't have children. You don't like to say it because it's not very polite, but... (Turns the album page.) That's a little place we used to go on holiday, two hours outside of Cartagena...It's terrible what's happening to the country...

JOAN

I haven't really been following it...

RAMON

Well, it's civil war, is what it amounts to...It's a big mess.

JOAN

Do you still have family there?

RAMON

Oh yes, everyone is there, except that Rodrigo is in London and Hector is in Geneva. Last year we found an organization to work with children whose families have been killed -- we pouring the money in, but there's only so much we can do. You don't like to say it's hopeless, but it's hard to see the solution.

JOAN

Yeah...God...I wish I knew more about it. (Pause) Do you mind if I ask you something?

RAMON

Of course not.

JOAN

Why are you interested in me?

RAMON

You think I shouldn't be?

JOAN

Well...I just feel kind of ignorant about your whole world...Computers, business, politics...

RAMON

You think it would be better if we knew about all the same things?

JOAN

Not really, not exclusively. It's just unusual. Don't you think it's unusual?

RAMON

Not for me.

JOAN

I guess you travel a lot. I've only been out of the country a few times in my whole life.

RAMON

You should travel more.

JOAN

I know. I've always wanted to. It's hard when you're in the theater...And with two young children...

RAMON

Still, you should try. For your own sake. It's a big world. You're an artist. You should see more of it.

JOAN

I know. You don't have to keep saying that. I've always wanted to travel. It's just a little difficult with two kids and no husband. It's a miracle I've been able to have any career at all. I was on a television show a few years ago and I soaked away some money, and my ex-husband --

RAMON

Karl.

JOAN

Karl, yes, you remembered, very good -- Karl is very generous with the kids, but he's struggling too. He's a director, he directs TV commercials, and now he's trying to produce them...Anyway, I'm not ignorant because I enjoy it.

RAMON

I don't say Would you like to see a picture of my mother?

JOAN

Sure.

Ramon leafs through the album.

RAMON

These are all my aunts and uncles...See? Big family...

JOAN

Mmm.

Joan looks at the pictures. Glances at Ramon with increased interest and respect.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY. DAY.

A vast modern lobby milling with people. Lisa enters, spies Emily across the marble floor and goes to her.

INT. DAVE'S LAW OFFICE. DAY.

Lisa and Emily sit in Dave's office.

DAVE

So after I talked to you guys I called this PI I know and I asked him to --

EMILY

You called a what? A what?

DAVE

Private Investigator -- to see if he could find anything out about your bus driver --

LISA

Really?

DAVE

Yeah: So he --

EMILY

That's -- Dave!

DAVE

Wait, let me tell you what he said! So he called this guy he knows who used to be a cop for the MTA -- you know the MTA have their own police, the MTA police --

EMILY

Yeah? Yeah? Yeah?

DAVE

And -- just a minute!

EMILY

Jesus Christ!

DAVE

-- So this guy got someone to let him sneak a look at your guy's file. And it turns out he's had two previous accidents, less than a year apart --

EMILY

What?

DAVE

-- and that he's never been cited or disciplined, just moved around to different shifts --

EMILY

Are you fucking kidding me?

LISA

Why does this not shock me?

DAVE

Because Surprise Surprise his brother-in-law is a very big muckety-muck in the Transit Workers Union --

EMILY (I.e., "I get it")

OK!

DAVE

-- and since they're going through a protracted labor dispute at the MTA right now, according to my PI the management doesn't want to aggravate the situation by firing this guy -- especially since the police have concluded he was not at fault.

LISA

This is making me sick.

DAVE

I know, but what it means, Lisa, is that we have a case.

LISA

We do?

DAVE

What it means, in fact, is that we have a very good case, because we can sue for what's called "Negligent Retention." Which means they should have known the guy was a bad risk and was irresponsible and they negligently retained him until he finally killed somebody.

EMILY

And you can prove that?

DAVE

Sure, because we can subpoena their personnel records, which we already know contain damaging information, because my investigator got a look at them beforehand. Which you're not supposed to do, but we did it anyway.

LISA

You're awesome!

EMILY

And that means...

DAVE

That means we're in great shape and I think we should go in there and sue their fuckin' asses off.

LISA

This is amazing!

EMILY

But you wouldn't be our lawyer, right?

DAVE

No no.

LISA

Why not?

DAVE

I'm not a personal injury litigator. I don't know enough about it. I would lose.

EMILY

It's not his --

EMILY

But you could recommend someone...?

DAVE

Sure. I know a guy who's very good. His name is Ronald Deutch. He's not a sleazebag. Let me give you his number...

EMILY

Dave, thank you so much.

LISA

Really. My God.

DAVE

Oh, buy me dinner sometime.

EMILY

A really nice dinner. (To LISA) You're coming too.

LISA

Oh, that's quite all right...

EMILY

No it's not, Lisa. None of this would be happening if it wasn't for you.

DAVE

But you gotta get that crazy cousin on board because she's gonna be your beneficiary.

EMILY

She's not gonna want to come to New York, I can tell you that right now.

DAVE

If you win she gets anywhere from three to five hundred thousand dollars.

EXT. MIDTOWN. DAY.

Lisa and Emily walk down the busy street.

LISA

What's with Monica and her cousin?

EMILY

Oh, Monica's father left some money to Abigail's kids and he made Monica the executor of the estate, because he didn't want Abigail and her idiot husband to get their hands on the money before the kids were grown up.

EMILY (Cont'd)

For which Abigail rewarded her by badgering her about it on the phone for fifteen years: Trying to borrow money against the estate, accusing her of making lousy investments with it, nasty phone calls, nasty letters, every month for fifteen years until Abigail's daughter turned twenty-one and got married. Then Monica goes to the wedding, in fucking Arizona, and Abigail won't speak to her. She's a dream.

LISA

So that's who we're getting the money for?

EMILY

It's not who we're getting it for, it's who we're getting it from.

INT. DEUTCH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Emily and Lisa sit with RONALD DEUTCH, 50s. His law office is slightly smaller and less nice than Dave's.

DEUTCH

First thing we do is file a summons and a complaint against the MTA. They get twenty days to respond, and when they do we can make our Discovery requests: Accident reports, personnel records, et cetera. But you gotta realize it's gonna take some time. The law says you have to get a court date within a year. Usually it takes about six. Depending.

LISA

Six years!

EMILY

Now, I mentioned to Dave I have a friend who writes for The New York Times...

DEUTCH

Yes. Now this, if it could really happen, this changes everything in our favor. If they think there's gonna be adverse publicity, especially in The New York Times, they're gonna want to settle right away, soon as possible, and as quietly as possible --

EMILY

So they'd make it a condition that...

DEUTCH

It's usually done, you get the money but you can't talk about it. Nobody knows the terms.

LISA

So what good does that do?

DEUTCH

You get the money. (Pause) Is that bad? I thought that's what we're all here for. This is how our society punishes people for doing bad things.

LISA

By getting money from their employers' insurance companies?

DEUTCH

Yes. It's called Punitive Damages.

Pause.

LISA

Could we insist they fire the driver? As part of the settlement?

DEUTCH

Yeah, sure, why not?

LISA

But is that something people do?

DEUTCH

Sure. It's one of your conditions.

EMILY

Great.

LISA

And you think we're gonna win? They're gonna settle?

DEUTCH

Oh they're gonna settle.

LISA

This is --

Emily and Lisa take hands and squeeze.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Lisa comes in. Joan is looking at Lisa's REPORT CARD.

LISA

Hi.

JOAN

I want to talk to you.

LISA

What'd I do now?

JOAN

Are you aware that your grades are slipping?

LISA

No, I wasn't.

JOAN

Are you aware that if your grades slip any more you will lose your scholarship?

LISA

Yes. I've been kind of involved with something that you have no interest in --

JOAN

I'm interested in the fact that you are going to get kicked out of that school if you don't start doing your homework.

INT. EMILY'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Emily opens the front door for Joan and Lisa.

JOAN

Hi. I'm Joan. It's nice to meet you.

EMILY

Nice to meet you too. Come on in.

LISA (Sardonically)

Hi Emily.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Emily, Joan and Lisa are settling down on the sofa and chairs.

JOAN

I had a friend who used to live on this block, at 262...?

EMILY

Oh...?

JOAN

Yeah, I don't know if you know her.
Cheryl Rowan? She's a physiotherapist?
She and her husband lived right across
the street, on 86th street...

EMILY

No, I don't know her.

LISA

I think about a thousand people must...

JOAN

What?

LISA

Nothing...

EMILY

Lisa says you're in a play, Joan?

JOAN

Oh -- Yeah...

LISA

You should go see it, it's really good.

JOAN

Well, the play is great, and it's a
really nice cast...

LISA

She's just being modest. She's getting
nominated for every award in New York.

JOAN

Oh --

EMILY

I don't go to the theater very much.

JOAN

Well, it doesn't matter; it's just nice
because you can work a long time in the
theater and play really good parts
without getting a lot of recognition --
and even though you don't necessarily do
it for that as your primary motive, it
is very nice when people do notice
something you've done.

EMILY

Uh huh...

JOAN

I was on a television show a few years ago, and I had been doing theater all my life, and suddenly all my relatives started calling me up to congratulate me because they thought I finally Made It. And it was really just this dumb show that paid the bills for a while --

LISA

That show was so stupid.

JOAN

It wasn't that bad...But my point is... Anyway: I realize this is horribly embarrassing for Lisa, but I really wanted to meet you, Emily, because you've frankly become such a big part of Lisa's life. And I don't want to be intrusive, but this whole court case seems to be suddenly dominating everything and I can't get Lisa to tell me anything about it --

LISA

That's not true...!

JOAN

Well, I can't....! And I want you to know, Lisa, that I'm very, very proud of you for pursuing this the way you have. But I can't let you pursue it to the point where it's taking over your life or interfering with your school work. (To EMILY) It's really come down to a question of homework. Lisa is on a half-scholarship at her school. And I know she feels a real sense of responsibility about what happened --

LISA

Yeah, I do.

JOAN

I know you do. I know you do. But you can't not do your homework, and you can't throw away your scholarship because of it.

LISA

I'm not. My grades slipped a little. They'll get better. Anyone can do their homework. You just sit down and do it. I've been distracted. I'll stop.

JOAN

All right --

LISA

We didn't need to have a big conference about it.

JOAN (Embarrassed)

It's not a big conference, I just want to know what's going on. And I wanted to meet Emily... (To EMILY) I know it's a little awkward!

EMILY

Don't apologize. Please. I have two kids myself. If Lisa hasn't been keeping you apprised of what's been going on, I think she should. You should.

LISA

There's nothing to keep her apprised of. We're just waiting for them to schedule the Discovery conference.

JOAN

Now what is that?

EMILY

A Discovery conference is a meeting with the court where they sign an order authorizing our lawyer to begin getting the personnel records, interviewing witnesses, talking to Monica's cousin...

JOAN

OK, now where does she fit in?

EMILY

She gets the money.

EXT. AIRPORT -- TAXI STAND. DAY.

ABIGAIL, 40s, comes out of the terminal with her matching luggage and looks for a taxi.

INT. DEUTCH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Abigail sits with Deutch, Emily and Lisa.

DEUTCH

How would you describe the relationship overall? Did you talk on the phone a lot? Were there a lot of visits --

ABIGAIL

I would say we talked on the phone a couple of times a month at least. Sometimes more than that...I would call her, she would call me...

DEUTCH

And what were the nature of these conversations?

ABIGAIL

Oh, family stuff, mostly. Her kids, my kids...

DEUTCH

And she would advise you about your family, stuff like that?

ABIGAIL

Oh, I would say so, yes.

DEUTCH

Do you have any phone records...? Or --

ABIGAIL

I have all my phone bills, if that's what you mean. I didn't record the actual conversations...

DEUTCH

No, I understand that...

ABIGAIL (Produces files)

I dug up as many as I could find -- you'll see we talked on the phone quite frequently.

DEUTCH

OK, that's terrific. I see you came prepared...!

ABIGAIL

Well I wanted to bring everything. Coming to New York is not cheap, so I hope this all comes to something.

DEUTCH

It will.

INT. DEUTCH'S OUTER OFFICE. DAY.

Lisa and Emily sit in Deutch's waiting room. Emily is looking at a magazine.

INT. DEUTCH'S OFFICE. SIMULTANEOUS.

Abigail is now being deposed by Deutch.

DEUTCH

Can you describe your relationship with the decedent?

ABIGAIL

Yes. We may have lived in the same -- in different cities -- Would it be all right -- can I start over?

DEUTCH

You can just keep going -- just answer the question in your own words...

ABIGAIL

All right. (Composing herself) We may have lived in different cities --

INT. LUNCH RESTAURANT. DAY.

Lisa, Emily and Abigail eat lunch. Abigail and Emily are drinking white wine. Lisa is drinking a coke.

ABIGAIL

Now, Emily, where did you find this lawyer?

EMILY

He was recommended by a friend.

ABIGAIL

And have you made a commitment to him?

EMILY

I don't know what you mean by a commitment.

ABIGAIL

Has he been paid?

EMILY

He's on a contingency. He keeps a third of the settlement --

ABIGAIL

I'm asking because my husband knows a real good New York lawyer. He says this guy really knows his stuff. And I'm not entirely comfortable with someone that no one has ever heard of --

EMILY

My friend's heard of him. He says he's very good.

ABIGAIL

I'm sure he does, but I have a responsibility in this situation and I would feel a whole lot more comfortable with somebody who didn't just drop in out of the clear blue sky...

EMILY

He didn't drop in out of the clear blue sky. He was recommended by my friend. But even if we switched lawyers we'd still have to pay him. It all comes out of the settlement anyway. So it's really up to you.

ABIGAIL

No, if you all think he's good...

EMILY

I don't know whether he is or not. My friend thinks he is.

ABIGAIL

All right...Now Lisa, what's your involvement in all this? What's your angle?

LISA

I just wanted to...I was just there.

INT. EMILY'S LIVING ROOM. DAY.

There are some unpacked boxes stacked in a corner. Emily and Lisa sit on the sofa looking through Monica's stuff -- photographs, belongings.

LISA

Is that you?

EMILY

Uh huh...

LISA

Oh, is that her daughter?

EMILY

Uh huh, that's her.

LISA

She's the one who died, right?

EMILY

Yes.

LISA

What happened, she had leukemia?

EMILY

Yes.

LISA

How old was she?

EMILY

She was twelve.

LISA

Oh my God, that's terrible.

EMILY

Yes. It was terrible.

LISA

You know Monica asked about her when she was dying?

EMILY

No, I didn't.

LISA

Yeah. I think she got me confused...I think she was confused, like she thought I was her daughter for a minute. And then she was asking me to call her, like to tell her what happened: You know, like she didn't remember she was dead.

EMILY

What do you mean? What did she say?

LISA

She just asked if somebody could call her daughter. But then it got confusing because I said, "Sure, what's her name?" And she said her name was Lisa. And I said, "No, that's my name." Because it took me a minute -- I didn't realize we had the same name...

Silence.

LISA (Cont'd)

But I couldn't tell if what I was saying was registering with her.

Silence.

LISA (Cont'd)

So I was gonna go find her daughter.
Like, after it was over I had this idea
I was gonna dedicate myself to finding
her daughter and telling her that the
last thing her mother said to her -- the
last thing her mother said was "Where's
my daughter? I want my daughter."

EMILY (Briskly)

Well, now they're both dead.

LISA

But how can you say it like that?

EMILY (Sharp)

Because this is not an opera.

LISA

What? (Pause) You think I think this is
an opera? You think I'm making this into
a dramatic situation, because I think
it's dramatic?

EMILY

I think you're very young.

LISA

What does that have to do with anything?
If anything I think it means I care more
than someone who's older, because this
kind of thing has never happened to me
before!

EMILY

No, it means you care more easily!
There's a big difference! Except it's
not you it's happening to!

LISA

Yes it is! I know I'm not the one who
was run over --

EMILY

That's right, you weren't. And you're
not the one who died of leukemia, and
you're not the one who just died in an
earthquake in -- Algeria! But you will
be. Do you understand me? You will be.
And it's not an opera and it's not
dramatic --

LISA

I'm well aware of that!

EMILY

And this first-blush phony deepness of yours is worth nothing.

LISA

Oh, wow.

EMILY

Do you understand? It's not worth anything, because it'll be troweled over in a month or two. And then when you get older and you don't have a big reaction every time a dog gets run over, then we'll find out what kind of a person you are! But this is nothing. I'm sorry: I didn't start this conversation and I don't play these games.

LISA

I am not --

EMILY

And don't look so outraged! Because I'm not saying anything very outrageous! I'm telling you to knock it off! You have every right to falsify your own life, but you have no right to falsify anyone else's. It's what makes people into Nazis. And I'm sorry, but it's a little suspicious that you're making such a fuss about this when you didn't know her, and you're having troubles with your own mother --

LISA

Oh my God!

EMILY

But this is my life we're talking about, much more than it is yours, because it's my real friend who got killed, who I'm never going to see again, really, whom I have known since I was nineteen years old myself. OK? And I don't want that sucked into some kind of adolescent self-dramatization! I just don't!

LISA

I'm not fucking dramatizing anything --

EMILY (Not having it)

OK --

LISA

I was there, and you weren't. And if I happen to express myself a little -- hyperbolically, Emily -- that's just the way I talk! I can't help it if my mother is an actress! Why are you being so fucking strident?

EMILY

Strident?

LISA

Yeah.

EMILY

OK. Um, you should leave.

LISA

Why? Because I called you strident?

EMILY

Yeah: Strident? You should leave. Thanks. I don't wanna be called strident and you're deliberately misunderstanding me.

LISA

No I'm not. You're insulting me enough as it is: You don't have to call me stupid too.

EMILY

Well, I can't stop you doing this so I think you had better go.

LISA

OK! I will.

EMILY

Now!

LISA

OK! Let me get my purse!

Lisa grabs her purse and coat. Emily half-walks, half-drives her toward the door.

LISA

Does this mean we're dropping the whole inquiry?

EMILY

It means you're leaving. I don't know what else it means.

LISA

All I meant by saying you were strident was that you were being emphatic -- I obviously misused the word!

EMILY

Look it up when you get home.

LISA

Jesus Christ. You're amazing.

EMILY

Yeah. Uh huh. I'm amazing.

LISA (Crying)

Why are you doing this...!

EMILY (Softening a little)

Lisa, I'm not doing anything! I'm a human being! Monica was a human being! So was her daughter! And so is your mother! We are not supporting characters in the fascinating story of your life!

LISA

I never said or thought you were...! And I really didn't mean to call you strident. I misused the word...!

EMILY

All right, as long as you know that...!

LISA

I do know that, Emily, I really do. I feel so bad about what happened and I'm trying so hard to do something about it, and I don't understand why if I say something wrong you can't just give me a break! I'm not trying to dramatize anything, Emily. I'm very aware of that trend, I really am, and I really don't think I've been doing that.

EMILY

OK. And look up "strident."

LISA

I will.

They kiss and make up, but it's still a little ugly.

INT. DRAMA DESK AWARDS. NIGHT.

Joan sits in the audience, very dressed up, with Ramon by her side. Two theater stars are at the podium.

STAR 1

The nominees for Best Performance by an Actress are Cherry Jones in Orsino...

STAR 2

Kate Burton in Up and Down Again...

STAR 1

Patricia Clarkson in Blind Tiger.

STAR 2

Joan Carroll in Controversy...

STAR 1

...and Jane Atkinson in The Corn Is Green.

STAR 2

And the Drama Desk goes to...

STAR 1

...Joan Carroll for Controversy!

Applause. Ramon kisses Joan. Interrupted by hugs from her playwright, director, etc, she goes to the podium.

JOAN

Gosh....!

QUICK MONTAGE -- Joan winning other awards: Ramon in the audience each time.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Joan, Lisa and Curtis are having dinner. Joan is serving.

JOAN

Lisa? Do you think Emily would like to come see the play?

LISA

I don't know.

JOAN

I thought you could both come and then maybe we could go out afterwards.

LISA

All right. Let me ask her.

JOAN (Sitting)
Dig in everybody...

They start eating.

LISA
I was thinking about spending next year
with Dad.

JOAN (Shocked)
Oh?

LISA
Yeah. (Pause) You're all worried about
my scholarship, and I'm really rethinking
living in New York, and the year after
that I'm gonna be at college anyway, and
maybe it would be fun to just spend a
year in a different city. They have good
public schools in Santa Monica and if I
officially lived with him, you wouldn't
have to worry about my scholarship.

JOAN
Have you talked to him about this?

LISA
We've had some general discussions.

JOAN (To Curtis)
Do you want to go too?

CURTIS (Surprised)
Me?

JOAN
Yeah. Do you want to move to LA too?

CURTIS
No.

JOAN
Well, just let me know if you do.

LISA
Why are you being like this?

JOAN
Why am I being like what?

LISA
Why are you about to start crying?

JOAN

Because it's your intention to make me start crying!

LISA

No it's not --

JOAN

You want to move to LA. Move to LA.

LISA

But why can't this even be mentioned without you taking it personally? I'm just introducing a possibility.

JOAN

OH!

Joan upsets everything on the table and starts to go. She comes back and upsets more things on the table.

JOAN (Cont'd)

Here's a possibility that you can make your own fucking dinner! Here's a possibility that you can do whatever you want to do, because I don't even care anymore, you heartless little fuckin' bitch!

LISA

Jesus Christ!
What is with you?

LISA

Fine! Keep it up! It really makes me want to stay here!

JOAN

You think you're so fucking perfect!?

She breaks something else and walks out.

LISA

No.

CURTIS

Good one.

LISA

Shut up.

INT. HISTORY CLASS. DAY.

On the blackboard Klein finishes writing: SHOULD TEENAGERS RULE THE WORLD? YES OR NO?

KLEIN

OK. Go ahead: Kirsten. Lionel: Put your drum away.

Lionel stops drumming on his desk with his fingers.

KIRSTEN

I think that teenagers should definitely rule the world, because teenagers aren't corrupted by adult life yet. And I know a lot of people feel that teenagers are really naive, which they are, many of them, but I still think in a way they're the best qualified to rule the world, because they're idealists and they care, and they haven't had a chance to get burned out by the disappointments and the harsh realities of learning how to play the game. So yes, I would vote yes..

KLEIN

All right: Lisa?

LISA

I would tend to agree with all of that, except I do think that teenagers don't always necessarily think things through very carefully, and they're very easily swayed by other people. And they don't have enough experience of their own to know what the right thing to do is all the time. I also think teenagers tend to adhere to ideologies really easily without having actually bothered to think them through for themselves --

LEVINE

Such as what?

LISA

Such as what? Such as the Hitler youth?

KLEIN

OK...

LISA

Or what about these teenage Palestinian suicide bombers? Not that I want to get into the whole Palestinian thing again, but assuming you don't think suicide bombing is a good thing, wouldn't you say that's an example of being idealistic without using your critical facilities?

LISA (Cont'd)

And maybe running the risk of having your youthful enthusiasm be co-opted by adults for purposes of their own that you might not even ultimately agree with?

Angie's hand shoots up, among several others, including Lionel and Monica.

LEVINE

OK, Angie?

ANGIE

Yeah, I don't want to get into the whole Palestinian thing again either, because I realize I'm completely outnumbered --

ANTHONY

Not unlike the Palestinians themselves.

ANGIE

That's not really funny, Anthony.

KLEIN

Segal: cut out the comedy.

ANGIE (To LISA)

-- and I'm not even going to comment on the fact that you just compared a 19-year old Palestinian to a member of the Hitler youth, which I personally find so offensive I don't even know where to start -- Oh, it's not because they've been occupied and humiliated and bombed out of their homes for the last fifty years?

LEVINE

Come on, guys...

ANGIE

If anyone's acting like Nazis -- If anyone's acting like Nazis it's the Israeli government!

ANTHONY

I thought it was funny...

LISA

That's right! Because they both like to kill Jews!

KLEIN

Hey! Hey! Lisa! Hey!

LISA

No, because there's a million Palestinians who don't blow up children on buses because they're so "frustrated!" Gee, I'm really frustrated! Think I'll blow up some three year olds on a bus! That'll really make the world a better place to live in!

LEVINE

OK, OK! Monica?

MONICA

Well, I don't know if this is good or bad, but speaking of ideology it's interesting that the suicide bombers -- just for example -- care enough about what they believe in to sacrifice their lives for it, whereas --

ANGIE

Yes. Yes!

LISA

I think it's fine if you want to sacrifice your life for what you believe in. It's a little different when you're willing to sacrifice someone else's life. You know? I don't personally think that's such a big ideological achievement!

ANGIE

Um, even if there's no other way to get you out of my country?

LEVINE

Raise your hands!

ANGIE

Yes they have!

LISA

They haven't tried any other ways! And it's not like killing civilians is their last resort. It's their first resort! Because it's easy and they like it!

ANGIE

Oh they like it? They're just bad people and they like it?

LISA

Yes! There are bad people in world, and I think they liked blowing up the World Trade Center! They kill their own sisters when they get raped! It's called barbarism!

MONICA

Who kills their own sisters?

LIONEL

You guys are not the only ones in this class!

LISA

It's practically all people do is kill each other! If they didn't like it they wouldn't do it! Period!

KLEIN & LEVINE

Hey!

Silence.

LEVINE

If you ladies can't make your points without yelling or interrupting each other or raising your hands, I'd say it was a pretty good argument for "No."

LISA

Why, adults don't yell and interrupt each other?

LEVINE

Lisa!

LISA

Sorry.

LEVINE

All right. Let's try to put this in a broader perspective. The question was not, in fact, who is to blame in the Arab Israeli conflict --

ANGIE

The Israelis.

LISA

OK, you're a moron.

LEVINE (He's had enough)

Lisa!

ANGIE

You're not even Jewish, Lisa!

LISA

I'm fuckin' half Jewish and who cares what I am? I'm anti-Murder, not pro-Israel.

KLEIN

The next Goddamn person who opens their mouth without raising their hand is outta this class!

LEVINE

Lisa? Lisa -- ?

LEVINE

-- you can leave!

LISA

Fine. Thank you.

Lisa passes the blackboard, grabs some chalk and checks "NO."

LISA (Cont'd)

By the way, she just proved my point.

ANGIE

No I didn't.

LEVINE

Lisa, GO!

Lisa leaves. Levine turns to the class.

LEVINE

Now:

An O.C. burst of APPLAUSE takes us to --

INT. THEATER LOBBY. NIGHT.

Ramon APPLAUDS as Joan comes out to greet him, Lisa and Emily.

RAMON

That's the best show I've seen yet!
It's amazing. Every time it's a better
performance.

JOAN

God, thank you! Hi, Emily, thanks so
much for coming...

EMILY

Oh -- Thank you for the tickets.

Joan waits for Lisa or Emily to say something about the show.

JOAN

Shall we go...?

INT. RESTAURANT/BAR. NIGHT.

Joan, Lisa, Emily and Ramon are having drinks.

LISA

-- and I guess I lost my cool a little,
but I just love it when people start
comparing the Israelis to Nazis...

JOAN

But who is running these discussions...?

RAMON

Well, but Lisa, you have to remember,
it's always easy for the dominant side
to be content with the status quo.

JOAN

Mmm.

EMILY

How do you mean, Ramon?

RAMON

I mean that the oppressor is always in favor of law and order because it's his law and his order. He uses violence to maintain his position and calls it the rule of law. But when the person underfoot uses violence to change his status he's called a criminal and a terrorist, and the violence of the state is called upon to put him down, and once again it's called the rule of law. In Colombia --

EMILY

I see. And what would you like them to do?

Pause.

RAMON

"They" meaning --

EMILY

The Jew oppressors. What would you like them to do?

Pause.

LISA

Um, I just spent the whole day arguing about this: I didn't really mean to bring it up again.

EMILY

Don't handle me.

LISA

I'm not handling you.

JOAN

What did you think of the play?

RAMON

I think it's ironic in extreme that the victims of Nazis find it essential -- find it essential to use the Nazi tactics to sustain their state.

LISA

Don't bother, Mom.

EMILY

If the Israelis were like Nazis there wouldn't be any Arabs left, and I'm leaving.

LISA (Agreeing with Emily)

That's what I think!

As Emily tries to unhook her purse from the back of her chair --

JOAN

That seems excessive, Emily, come on --

RAMON

That's the response. That's the Jewish response. You don't like what I am saying or what I do --

EMILY

That's my Jewish response.

Emily throws her drink in his shirt and walks away.

JOAN

Oh my God...!

RAMON

It's all right... (Wiping off his face)
That's all right... It's a perfect little
...encapsule. It's the Jewish response.

There is a horrible silence as they watch Ramon clean his shirt.

INT. CAB (MOVING). NIGHT.

Lisa and Joan ride in silence in the rattling cab.

INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa watches Joan get undressed at a clipped, brittle pace.

JOAN

I spoke to your father today. If you're serious about going to LA next year you're gonna have to figure out what school you're going to, and we have to get them transcripts and whatever else it is, and make sure your credits all transfer, and you also have to find out about taking the California Regents... So I think you should really sit down and think about it, because it's a big move and we would have to get moving pretty quickly.

LISA

All right. (Pause) Sorry about all that tonight...

JOAN

Yeah. Your friend is a delight.

LISA

She's a really passionate person. She really cares about things.

JOAN

She's rude, Lisa. Ramon was my guest, not hers. And so was she, as a matter of fact --

LISA

Why is it so important that people be polite all the time? Why is that the priority?

JOAN

No -- I'm not ar -- I'm not arguing with you about this. I'm not interested in an exchange of ideas. As it happens, Ramon said a few things I wasn't too crazy about either, so...I guess that's the end of that.

LISA

Is that supposed to be Emily's fault too?

JOAN

I don't want to talk to you right now.

INT. MIDTOWN RESTAURANT. DAY.

Joan is in a booth with Ramon. He's in his business suit.

JOAN

I'm not even religious, you understand...

RAMON

I understand. As a matter of fact, I am religious...Joan, I won't defend myself. All what I meant was that was the typical response you will get from someone who will take that position that woman was taking. But if you like to break up with me because I have used the wrong adjective, what I'm going to do about it? I'm not going to beg you.

JOAN

OK, well, thanks for clarifying.

INT. COHEN KITCHEN. NIGHT/KARL'S HOUSE. DAY.

Joan is making dinner. Lisa comes in, takes a carrot from the fridge and starts munching on it. Silence.

LISA

Well? How's that anti-Semitic piece of shit Ramon?

JOAN

Oh God, I don't know.

The PHONE RINGS. Lisa picks up.

LISA

Hello?

KARL

Yeah. It's Dad.

WE CUT BETWEEN THEM.

LISA

Hi, Dad, how are you? I'm really looking forward to our horseback riding trip...

KARL

Yeah. That's why I'm calling. I don't think it's going to happen.

LISA

Really? What's the matter?

KARL

Nothing's the matter. Nobody seems to really want to go and I don't really feel like spending three thousand bucks on something nobody has the slightest interest in. So I think it's obviously better for everyone if we just cancel.

LISA

I never said I didn't want to go.

KARL

Well, I can't seem to get a straight answer about what anybody wants to eat, um, Annette is giving me a hard time about her schedule, I talk to Curtis and all I get are monosyllables, so --

LISA

I think he's really looking forward to it --

KARL

Well, you know, that hasn't really been my impression. OK? Um, I also -- I think it would be good to shelve the idea of your coming out here next year. Um,

KARL (Cont'd)

it looks like things are really gonna start picking up for me in the Fall, which means I'm not gonna be around all that much, and since you and Annette detest each other, I don't, uh, I don't think that's what I want to come home to after a fourteen hour day --

LISA

We don't detest each other --

KARL

Mm hm. Well, it doesn't strike me as something you're that serious about anyway, so what do you say we just table it for the time being?

LISA

OK.

KARL

OK. So tell Curtis, uh, that New Mexico's off...Ummm, and I will talk to you, um, whenever.

LISA

OK. So long.

KARL

Yeah.

They hang up.

JOAN

What's wrong?

LISA

Dad's cancelling the trip.

JOAN

What? Why?

LISA

He says nobody wants to go and he doesn't want to spend the money.

JOAN

Did you say you didn't want to go?

LISA

No. I made two jokes about six months ago about not knowing how to ride a horse.

JOAN

Oh boy.

LISA

I know there's some problem with Annette about arranging for food because I don't eat dead animals, but I didn't think it was going to wreck the whole trip. I can't believe they don't have to pack vegetarian lunches occasionally for people at that ranch. I truthfully didn't even want to go horseback riding.

JOAN

Well, I think it's too bad.

LISA

I thought you said it sounded like it was going to be a disaster. Personally I'm relieved. I'm not moving out there, either, by the way, obviously. Which is fine too.

JOAN

Yes.

INT. KARL'S HOUSE. DAY.

Karl sits holding the phone in a savage depression.

EXT. SCHOOL. DAY.

Lisa waits outside. Kids flow out of the building. PAUL comes out with his girlfriend and gives Lisa a friendly, impersonal salute. DARREN passes by with some guys, pointedly not looking at her. She's very wounded. BONNIE the gym teacher passes by, smiling and friendly.

INT. MR AARON'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Lisa sits on a sofa with a cup of coffee in the small neat apartment.

LISA

Thank you for letting me come up...I don't know who else to talk to.

We see she's talking to MR AARON, who looks very uncomfortable.

MR AARON

That's all right...

LISA

You've always been very sympathetic to my craziness and I may not show it all the time, but I actually really appreciate it.

MR AARON

It's no problem, Lisa. What's been going on?

LISA

I just need to talk to somebody for five minutes who doesn't completely misunderstand who I am. Or not even who I am necessarily, but even what's going on around me. Sound confused enough? Anyway...for whatever reason, I always felt like we understood each other on some level. I figure even though you're a math teacher you probably don't judge people exclusively on the basis of their mathematical abilities.

MR AARON

No. I don't. I judge them on...

LISA

On what? What do you?

MR AARON

Sincerity...Whether they're an open-hearted person, I suppose...Kindness -- Whether a person is sensible...Although, I'm not that sensible myself...

LISA

You seem pretty fuckin' sensible to me. Like that seems to be your leading feature. I mean you obviously have a lot of pretty deep feelings...So when you're sensible -- just to finish my thought -- it's like this really interesting way of governing yourself. Because it implies there's a lot there to be governed. And you don't have to get all uncomfortable again. I'm not talking about what you think I'm talking about, because I know that subject is off-limits. I'm talking your soul, I guess, and how you feel you have to keep it in check all the time by being sensible. Do you know what I'm saying at all?

MR AARON

Well...We all have feelings, Lisa. I happen to believe that who you are comes out of the choices you make to deal with those feelings. Somebody makes you mad, you don't just pick up a gun and shoot them. Or if you do, that says something about who you are, and how you've been raised...

LISA

Well, I don't want to disillusion you, but we happen to be living in a world where that is what people do. More often than not.

MR AARON

That's not true, Lisa. I think it's very sad that you see it that way... There's eight billion people alive in the world and you think they don't all want to kill someone once in a while? But they don't. Or they see some person...I think most people do try to be civilized by some standard. Even if it's a standard you and I might not agree with...

LISA

No, I get it. That's actually the most hopeful thing anybody's said to me for a long time. I don't know why I take such a dire view of things, I really don't.

She removes her jacket. She's wearing a small clingy T-shirt.

LISA (Cont'd)

Just a little hot...A little warm...Is this all right?

MR AARON

Sure.

LISA

Do you allow smoking in your apartment?

MR AARON

You can smoke.

She gets her cigarettes out of her bag. He gets up to bring her an ashtray. They meet at the sofa and sit.

LISA

I like your apartment.

MR AARON

Thank you.

She lights up. Waves the smoke away from his face.

LISA

Sorry.

MR AARON

That's all right.

LISA

This is terrible.

MR AARON

What is? What's terrible?

LISA

I just like you so much... (Smooths her ash on the ashtray) Sorry. What a moron.

MR AARON (Taking her hand)

Hey. Lisa. I'm your friend. And that's not gonna change. That's not gonna change.

LISA

Thanks. Thank you.

She kisses his hand a couple of times.

MR AARON

Lisa...

LISA

Please just let me for a second. I like you so much. I like you so, so much.

She kisses his hand more elaborately. He lets this go on. She lifts her head up and they kiss for real. After a moment she slides her hand onto his leg.

MR AARON

OK...Come on...

They kiss some more. She bends down to unzip his fly.

MR AARON (Cont'd)

Lisa, no.

LISA

Just let me for one second...

She goes down on him. He lets her. After a moment she comes back up, pulling her underwear off under her skirt.

LISA

Hang on...

MR AARON

What are you doing...?

LISA

It's OK, I'm on the pill.

She tries to straddle him. It's a little awkward.

LATER -- They are have having sex on the sofa. She freezes up and starts freaking out.

MR AARON

What's the matter?

LISA

Nothing. It's OK.

MR AARON

Are you all right?

LISA

Yes. Keep going.

MR AARON

Let's stop.

LISA

No...!

MR AARON

I think we should stop.

LISA

No, keep going...!

She keeps pushing against him till he comes and is instantly flooded with guilt and shame. Pause.

MR AARON

Are you all right?

LISA

Yes. Yes. You don't have to keep asking me.

AT THE DOOR - A few moments later. She is leaving.

LISA

All I can say is I better get a pretty fuckin' good grade in geometry this year. (Pause) Lighten up! I'm kidding.

MR AARON

Sorry...I really didn't expect anything like this to happen...I'm not sure how to react.

LISA

Don't worry. I'm not gonna tell anybody if that's what you're worried about. I totally initiated the whole thing. And if anybody ever did find out about it that's exactly what I would tell them. Anyway it's just sex. You're acting like a little kid. I'll see you in school.

She walks out. He is very flummoxed.

INSERT: A NEW YORK TIMES METRO SECTION ARTICLE:

DRIVER IN BUS CRASH HAD RECORD OF
PREVIOUS ACCIDENTS.

The driver of a city bus which killed an Upper West Side woman last month had two previous driving violations on his record, according to --

INT. DEUTCH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Lisa and Emily sit in the office with Deutch.

DEUTCH

Well, they want to settle.

LISA & EMILY

They do...?

DEUTCH

I've got a meeting with their lawyer this afternoon, and they want to discuss a settlement. We should get Abigail on the phone and talk about what we're gonna do...

EMILY

Fantastic.

Lisa gets tears in her eyes and smiles, embarrassed.

LISA

Sorry.

EMILY

That's OK.

LATER -- They sit around the SPEAKER PHONE. Abigail's husband, ROB BERWITZ, is also on the other end.

ABIGAIL

Mr Deutch? Mr --

DEUTCH

I'm right here.

ROB

I just had the thought --

ABIGAIL

Mr Deutch -- I'm just gonna give my husband the floor because he had a few questions --

ROB

Mr Deutch, I had the thought, if they're willing to settle so quickly, maybe we're better off waiting a little bit, rattling the sabre a little bit more --

ABIGAIL

Yes, if they're so quick to agree...

DEUTCH

What you gotta realize --

ABIGAIL

...then they -- hello?

DEUTCH

Yeah, I'm right here --

ABIGAIL

I'm just saying -- we're not lawyers, but if they're so quick to agree to a settlement on this basis --

ROB

Maybe we're cuttin' our own throats here.

EMILY

Abigail, Ronald doesn't think -- My friend had a lot of trouble getting the one story placed in the paper as it is --

DEUTCH

If I could jump in --

ABIGAIL

But if they responded so strongly based on one story, I really think we've got them on the run...

ROB

Oh, we've got 'em on the run...

DEUTCH

If I can just interject: They are reacting to the story in the paper --

ABIGAIL

...That's just common sense.

DEUTCH

I understand what you're saying, but what you gotta understand is they're offering to settle now because they want to get the story out of the paper. But if six months goes by --

EMILY (On "But")

That's why Ronald thinks --

LISA (On "But")

Besides, the main point is not to jack up the price.

ABIGAIL

I'm sorry --

ROB

-- We didn't hear that last.

DEUTCH (To EMILY and LISA)

Ladies, lemme just -- Abigail. Rob. If I could finish my thought. If we wait, we run the risk of losing a lot of our momentum here, because they're jumping at the bait right now. That's why we oughta take this meeting, I'm gonna hit them very hard, I guarantee you. We're gonna talk about the terms -- that's why I wanted all of us together on the phone, so we could talk about your other terms besides the damages. We're gonna be very tough on them, I can assure you both --

ABIGAIL

What other terms would there be?

ROB

What do you mean, like some kind of a fund?

DEUTCH

A what?

ROB

Some kind of fund for the kids or something?

DEUTCH

I don't understand what you mean by a fund...

ROB (To ABIGAIL)

What does he mean, "besides the damages?"

ABIGAIL

Mr Deutch? Do you mean some kind of trust fund, a fund that would be set up by the bus company for our kids? For tax purposes? To avoid the taxes?

EMILY

What fuckin' fund?

LISA

These people are retarded.

ABIGAIL

Because I have to tell you we have just lived through that nightmare with Monica and our children, and it was not a pleasant experience. We just want a clean, straight -- damages is fine. A regular payment. We'll pay the taxes on it. At least we'll have something in our hand...

DEUTCH

I don't really know what kind of fund you're talking about...

LISA

We're not talking about --
Hi, this is Lisa? We're talking -- We're talking about -- Hello?

ABIGAIL

Hello, Lisa.

ABIGAIL

We're still here.

LISA

We're talking about the driver, getting the driver fired --

ABIGAIL

Oh, yes --

LISA

-- as part of the conditions.

EMILY

Yes, Abigail, it's very important to us that the company know that's an absolute pre-condition to making any kind of settlement whatsoever --

ABIGAIL

Oh yes. Absolutely. If you think he's at fault --

ROB (On "If")

Yes -- as long as -- were you finished?

ABIGAIL

Yes.

ROB

Just as long as they don't think they can buy us off just by gettin' rid of this guy. You see what I mean?

DEUTCH

Absolutely.

ROB

What we're most concerned about here is the amount.

EMILY

Yes, we're getting that, Rob.

ROB

But you see what I mean?

DEUTCH

Yes -- Rob? Yes I do.

ROB

I just want to go on record as saying I think this whole meeting is premature.

ABIGAIL

Absolutely. We're not lawyers --

DEUTCH

Abigail -- ? Rob -- ? I just wanna make something clear. I'm workin' for you. One conversation doesn't commit you to anything, I'm not gonna agree to anything without consulting you. But if you're telling me not to take the meeting I'm not gonna take the meeting.

ABIGAIL

No. We're not saying that.

ROB

No, no -- Go for it.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

Lisa has just come in. Joan is on the sofa.

LISA

The bus company wants to settle.

JOAN

Really? Lisa, I'm really proud of you!

LISA

Thank you.

JOAN

Really, really proud...!

LISA

Thank you.

Pause. Joan gets to her feet and starts tidying up.

LISA

Are you upset about something...?

JOAN

No. This house is really beginning to get to me...And I'm a little confused what to do about Ramon. He defended himself pretty well when I talked to him, but I don't know...I mean, you were there: What do you think?

LISA

Uh, gee, Mom maybe you should really think about it some more. Because it would probably hurt Ramon's feelings if you broke up with him and I think you better think about it before you do something like that to him.

JOAN

What are you talking about?

LISA

I don't know. I just think you better just think about it.

JOAN

I know I'm supposed to understand what you're doing right now, but if there's some kind of hidden message here I'm not getting it.

LISA

No shit. You're on your own, Mom.

JOAN

Thanks a lot.

LISA

You're welcome.

The PHONE RINGS. Joan picks it up.

JOAN (Into phone)

Hello? ... Yes ... WHAT DO YOU MEAN??

(She listens, a knuckle in her mouth)

Yes? ... Yes? ... (To LISA) Ramon had a heart attack.

LISA

What? Is he gonna be --

JOAN

Quiet!

CURTIS appears. They both watch Joan at the phone. Instead of dissolving, Joan listens, straightens up and calms down as the person on the phone talks.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR. DAY.

A Manhattan funeral parlor sits between a diner and a clothing store. Mourners are going inside.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR. DAY.

Joan and Lisa look around the room. There are a lot of good-looking women, some of whom are crying a little too hard. Lisa and Joan look at each other.

A very handsome slender kid, around 20, comes up to Joan. This is RODRIGO.

RODRIGO

Excuse me. Joan?

JOAN

Yes. You must be Rodrigo. Oh my God, I'm so sorry.

She impulsively embraces him. He immediately breaks down. Pulls himself together and straightens up.

JOAN

Rodrigo, this is my --

RODRIGO

I want to tell you, Joan, my Dad talked about you all the time.

JOAN

He did?

RODRIGO

Yes. The night he met you, he called me in England and woke me up to tell me about it, he was so excited. I never heard him talk about anyone like that since my mother died.

JOAN

Really?

RODRIGO

I don't know if this is appropriate...

JOAN

No it's OK....!

RODRIGO

...He went out a lot. Do you know? But the last time I spoke to him he told me from the moment he met you he knew he wanted to marry you, because for the first time since he lost my mother he finally met a woman he could really connect with.

Joan has no idea what to say to this.

JOAN

Well, he was a very sweet man...And I know he loved you and your brother very much.

RODRIGO (Getting tearful)

Yeah, I know he did. Thank you.

INT. LISA'S ROOM. DAY.

Lisa is typing at her computer. Joan comes in the doorway.

JOAN

Thanks for coming with me today. I really appreciate it.

LISA

Oh, you're welcome.

JOAN

I don't want to be macabre, but Ramon and I were supposed to go to hear The Tales of Hoffman the week after next and I still have the tickets. Would you be interested in going? Or should I give them away?

LISA

Um, I'll go.

JOAN

OK. It's Monday night. We can dress up.

LISA

OK.

JOAN

What did you make of that...?

LISA

Oh brother.

MR AARON

Why do you say that?

LISA

"You're gonna come forward." And do what? You didn't kill anybody. You just had sex with me, after I practically begged you to. You're a guy. "I'm gonna come forward."

MR AARON

Well, that's what I'm comfortable doing.

LISA

Suit yourself. I'll deny everything and you're gonna look like a total psycho. And then my Mom'll have you arrested and then spend the rest of her life feeling bad about it. So why don't we just skip the whole thing and forget about it?

MR AARON

I'm not sure I know how to do that.

LISA

You'll learn.

INT. LISA'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Lisa looks at a pregnancy test stick. Both lines are red. She's pregnant. Pause.

INT. JOAN'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Joan looks up as Lisa comes in.

LISA (Ironically)

Good news!

INT. LISA'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

Joan and Lisa are looking at the little stick.

JOAN

OK. What do you want to do?

LISA

What do you mean? Aren't you going to tell me what to do? (Half-laughing) Baby...?

JOAN

It's your body. It's your baby. What do you want to do?

JOAN

Yes. Who is the father?

LISA

It could be a lot of people.

Joan looks at her. Lisa holds her ground haltingly. Joan takes a sympathetic step toward her. Lisa shrinks back. Joan stops. Her expression hardens.

JOAN

Who.

LISA

I'm never gonna tell you, Mom. It's against my principles -- such as they are.

JOAN (On "such")

No, but you want to send that bus driver to jail for running a red light! And you won't tell me about these boys?

INT. ABORTION CLINIC WAITING ROOM. DAY.

Joan waits. She looks around the small room. There are two couples and two lone women. A NURSE appears.

NURSE

Mrs. Cohen?

INT. CLINIC HALLWAY/RECOVERY ROOM. DAY.

Joan follows the Nurse down a hall.

NURSE

...she's still a little woozy from the anaesthetic...

Joan goes into the recovery room. Lisa is on the table in a crumpled paper robe, looking like a small crumpled piece of paper herself. Joan sits down.

LISA

Hi.

JOAN

Hi honey.

LISA

I'm sorry, Mom.

JOAN

We can talk about it later.

Joan looks at her. Lisa holds her ground haltingly. Joan takes a sympathetic step toward her. Lisa shrinks back. Joan stops. Her expression hardens.

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JOAN

Hi honey.

LISA

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INT. DEUTCH'S OFFICE. DAY.

Deutch sits with Emily and Lisa. The Berwitzes are on the speaker phone.

EMILY

Abigail? Rob? If we could just listen to what Ronald has to say, and then talk about it once he's told us the whole story and given us his recommendation...

ROB

Yes. Sorry. Fire away.

DEUTCH

I was gonna say I know there was a concern after our last call that we were jumping the gun a little bit --

ROB

That's OK --

ABIGAIL

We were just --

EMILY

Would you let him talk please?!

DEUTCH

It's OK.

ABIGAIL

We're sorry, Mommy.

DEUTCH

I want to tell you I think it's a very good offer. I think they're very anxious to settle, but I also think at this moment they're under the maximum amount of pressure we can really bring to bear, and I don't believe they're gonna go any higher. In other words, I'm recommending that you take the offer, because in my professional judgement it's the best you're gonna get.

ABIGAIL

Hey. Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars...

ROB

OK, now let me just --

ABIGAIL

...that's nothin' to sneeze at.

ROB

I just want to introduce the thought --

ABIGAIL

Now, I think -- Can you all hear me?

DEUTCH, EMILY, LISA

Yes!

ROB

Yes. Sorry. Fire away.

DEUTCH

I was gonna say I know there was a concern after our last call that we were jumping the gun a little bit --

ROB

That's OK --

ABIGAIL

We were just --

EMILY

Would you let him talk please?!

DEUTCH

It's OK.

ABIGAIL

We're sorry, Mommy.

DEUTCH

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ABIGAIL

Now, I think -- Can you all hear me?

DEUTCH, EMILY, LISA

Yes!

ABIGAIL

Yeow! Was that everybody? OK:

LISA

What about --

ABIGAIL

-- Emily? What do you think?

EMILY

I think it sounds like we should do it.
But I'd like to discuss --

ABIGAIL

Hey, if that's the vote...

ROB

Unless you think there's something to be
gained from holding out for more.

DEUTCH

I think it would be a big mistake.

ABIGAIL

Robbie, what do you think?

They confer in lowered, muffled voices. Then:

ROB

Sold!

ABIGAIL

Sold!

DEUTCH

OK. Now the only down side to this as it
stands -- and the reason I asked Emily
and Lisa to be here is because I know
this may be a wrinkle for you all -- is
that the bus company absolutely will not
discuss the removal of the driver.

LISA & EMILY

What?

LISA

What do you mean?

ROB

The driver?

LISA

Then forget it. Tell them to
forget it.

DEUTCH

Please. Ladies. Let me
finish what I'm saying.

EMILY

What do you mean they
won't discuss the removal
of the driver?

ROB

Whoa -- hello!

ABIGAIL

It's just a blast in our ears.

EMILY (To LISA)

Let him finish.

LISA

Finish what? Forget it!

DEUTCH (To EMILY)

Thank you. I want you to understand I pressed them very hard on this, but they will not discuss disciplining of a company employee as part of the settlement because it could be seen as an admission of guilt on the part of the MTA --

LISA

What does giving us three hundred thousand dollars mean?

DEUTCH

Settling out of court does not imply an admission of guilt. It simply does not carry the same stigma. On top of that, you may not know they're involved in a very tricky labor dispute at the MTA right now --

LISA

Yeah, we know all about that! Just tell them to forget it.

DEUTCH

I know that's your reaction...

LISA

It's the only reason we're here.

ROB

Can I jump in here? Ronald?

ABIGAIL

Somebody!

DEUTCH

Yes. Please.

ROB

If I understand the situation --

DEUTCH (To LISA)

...but it's really not your decision.

ROB

Ronald? You guys still with us?

LISA

It's Emily's decision.

EMILY

No.

ROB

Hello?

LISA

It's not?

ABIGAIL

They're not listening,
Robbie.

DEUTCH

It's Abigail's decision
because she's the next of
kin.

LISA

But she didn't even know about it!

EMILY

That doesn't matter --

ABIGAIL

Could we get back in this
conversation please?

DEUTCH

Yes. Sorry. Obviously there's some strong
feelings going either way on this --

ABIGAIL

Listen, Emily? I don't know what you're
thinking, but Rob and I are thinking we
should take Ronald's recommendation
while we can. Because if they won't fire
the guy, they're not gonna fire him, and
what can we do about it? Because six
months or a year from now we're gonna --

ROB

Exactly.

ABIGAIL

-- we're gonna be in a situation where
we're beggin' them for half this much,
which is gonna hurt 'em half as much as
now, and they're still not gonna fire
this guy, or maybe he'll have already
quit and the whole thing will be a moot
point by then. Do you follow my reasoning?

LISA

The entire point of the lawsuit was to
get the guy fired so he doesn't kill
somebody else -- !

DEUTCH

Lemme just clarify --

LISA

-- it was not to get you three hundred and fifty thousand dollars you didn't know you were entitled to for somebody you didn't even like....!

ABIGAIL

This is a distortion --

LISA

And the only reason you're getting the money at all is because I started this whole fucking thing in motion! I'm sorry for swearing, but you should be willing to trade in all the money for getting this guy off the street --

EMILY

For getting him, Abigail!

ABIGAIL

Well I'm sorry, but I have a responsibility to Monica and I take that responsibility very seriously. You are talking about pie-in-the-sky, and I am talking about an offer that is gonna be withdrawn if we don't do something about it right now. And rather than being abused over the telephone and cursed at for having the courtesy to involve you in these discussions, Lisa, I would hope you would be guided by our judgement. Unless I'm wrong about that.

LISA

None of that matters --

ABIGAIL

Unless I'm wrong about that. Just what is your interest in this?

LISA

Because I'm the one who killed her! I'm the one who killed her! But at least I know I did it, and that guy has no idea! And he's wandering around blaming everybody else and all I want is for somebody to let him know that what he did was wrong! And if they won't fire him and all you want is the money and the police won't do anything,

LISA (Cont'd)

how is he gonna know he's wrong? You can't take the deal, Mrs Berwitz. It wasn't so you could get any money, it was because we wanted to get him fired. It doesn't matter about the money! You wouldn't have gotten it before!

ABIGAIL

Well it may not matter to you, but where we come from three hundred and fifty thousand dollars is an awful lot of money, and to my mind is a positive result of all this tragedy and not just negative. Not just getting someone fired for one mistake, no matter how bad it was --

LISA

Oh SHOVE IT UP YOUR ASS!

She knocks the speaker phone off the desk and runs to the door in floods of tears.

DEUTCH & EMILY

Lisa!

LISA

You sleazy fucking lawyer! And you're a moralistic cunt!

She runs out.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

TRACKING in front of Lisa as she walk-runs down the busy street. A city bus appears behind her and goes by. She cranes to see the driver. It's not her guy. She keeps going.

EXT. SCHOOL. DAY.

Lisa stands against a car, smoking, watching the kids flow out of the building. Mr Aaron comes out, talking earnestly with Bonnie. Lisa hurries to catch up with them.

BONNIE

Hi, Lisa. What's up?

LISA

Hey, did you guys know I had an abortion last week?

Pause.

MR AARON

No. I didn't know that.

LISA

Yeah, it cost four hundred dollars.

BONNIE

Um, should I...

MR AARON

No, no, don't go anywhere.

LISA

What do you want, a witness?

Bonnie doesn't know what to make of this. Mr Aaron looks steadily at Lisa.

MR AARON

Do you want to tell us about it?

LISA

Yeah. I do.

MR AARON

OK. Go ahead.

LISA

Well...

She doesn't speak.

BONNIE

Do your parents know about this, Lisa?

LISA

Yes.

MR AARON

Have you told the father?

LISA

No...There's a couple of people it could be.

MR AARON

I think you better tell them. Whoever they are.

LISA

No...No...Never mind...I'm sure he's sorry anyway, whichever one he is.

MR AARON

I don't see what difference that makes, if he's sorry. And I think whoever it is should know about this.

LISA

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have brought this up. Please don't tell anyone.

BONNIE

We're not gonna tell anyone. But you're gonna have to --

LISA

That's OK. I gotta go. Thanks for listening. It's -- It doesn't matter about the father, because the whole thing was my fault. I'm sorry....!

She shakes her head and runs away.

BONNIE

What was that...?

Mr Aaron doesn't answer.

INT. COHEN APARTMENT. DAY.

Lisa comes in. Curtis is doing his homework at the table.

CURTIS

Mom's looking for you.

LISA

What for?

CURTIS

She thinks you're going out with her tonight.

LISA

Where are we going?

CURTIS

I don't know.

Lisa heads for her bedroom. Joan appears in the hall, half-dressed.

JOAN

Lisa? Honey? Did you forget we're going to the opera?

JOAN

Come on. We're gonna miss the curtain.

EXT. METROPOLITAN OPERA -- OUTDOOR TERRACE. NIGHT.

Lisa is out on the terrace smoking a cigarette, looking out over Lincoln Center. Joan is next to her, but Lisa won't look at her or interact.

JOAN

Well, so far it's not the greatest opera I ever heard.

LISA

What do you mean? It's OK.

The end-of-intermission chimes sound. People start going in. Joan turns and goes in too. Lisa keeps smoking.

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA -- ORCHESTRA. NIGHT.

Joan is alone in their seats, looking through her program. The audience is filing back in. She cranes her neck wondering where Lisa is.

The LIGHTS DIM. The audience applauds the entering conductor. The MUSIC starts as Lisa hurries down the long aisle. She picks her way past the other patrons in the row, whispering "Excuse me" and takes her seat just as the curtain rises. Joan looks at her. Lisa stares straight ahead.

On stage, the two women start singing the barcarole "Belle Nuit." It's very beautiful.

Joan looks next to her at Lisa. Lisa is trying not to cry, but tears are dripping slowly down her face. She sniffs and wipes them away, but they keep coming.

Joan looks at her again, but Lisa still won't look at her. Joan takes Lisa's hand and Lisa breaks down completely, clutching Joan's hand back, squeezing it hard. Joan starts crying too out of sympathy.

As the duet goes on they sit side by side holding hands, Lisa crying and holding on and wiping her eyes with her free hand and Joan crying too, but not as hard, grateful finally that the spell has been broken.

The duet ends and we CUT TO BLACK.

THE END