

EYES ONLY!!!!



January 24, 1989

~~BOB BRASSEL~~
~~KIMBERLY BRENT~~
ROB GURALNICK
COURTENAY VALENTI
VAL LEVITT

PLEASE READ OVERNIGHT
AND DISCUSS WITH BB
9:30 AM WEDNESDAY 1/25
(in BB's office).

JOAN MICKLIN-SILVER TO
DIRECT.

BRUCE BERMAN

MR. WONDERFUL

Original Screenplay by
Vicki Polon and Amy Schor

Contact: Polon/Schor: Betty Films, Inc. 88 University Pl. NYC 10003
212/691-5743 WGA, East 1988

INT NIGHT LOU'S LIVING ROOM

A poker game in progress. Smoke, beer, overflowing ashtrays. MARTY, FRANK, BIBI, POPE and LOU, ranging in age from mid-thirties to late fifties, Italian and Jewish, play a hand. BIBI deals. POPE gets a second queen. OPENING CREDITS. The following dialogue is spontaneous, interrupting banter.

BIBI

Ladies, a pair. No help here. Bullet. Going downtown. And I get gornischt.

FRANK

Eighteen grand. We're talking peanuts.

BIBI

Bet the broads.

POPE

Buck on my trips.

LOU

I call your ass.

BIBI

Fold this garbage can. When does he need the cash?

BIBI folds and lights a cigarette. LOU, POPE and FRANK are in. MARTY wrinkles his nose.

MARTY

We got ninety days. What's that smell? It's coming from you, Bib.

POPE

Ninety days? You sure? Ninety days?

BIBI

(holding up his cigarette)

Celery. It's on the program.

LOU

Pot's right, Bib. Deal em.

BIBI

This time I'm gonna quit for good.

FRANK

I hope so. Cause I like taking your money.

POPE fingers an expensive leather jacket on the back of LOU's chair.

POPE

Nice.

LOU

For four hundred dollars you get nice.

MARTY

I'm telling you, we're getting a deal here. A fucking deal.

FRANK

It's a good deal, Marty. It's not a fucking deal. Everything's a fucking deal with you. Like the mail order turkeys. That was a fucking deal, too. We're gonna ship turkeys all over the fucking country. People are gonna celebrate Thanksgiving every week. Yeah, Marty, we got forty eight fuckin' turkeys sitting in our freezer because of your fucking deal. I ate turkey fucking salad for three months. You know what, Marty, you know what you did? You ruined my favorite holiday. If I see another turkey I'm gonna vomit. Now on Thanksgiving we gotta eat pork chops.

MARTY

It's a fucking deal, Mr. Sunshine. When was the last time you got a bowling alley, a laundromat and a pizza joint for ninety grand?

POPE

Sounds like peanuts to me. I'm in.
I'm in. I'm in. When opportunity knocks I
answer the door, I let him in. I seize the
moment.

BIBI

Two pairs bet.

POPE

Czech-o-slavakia. I seize the moment. You in,
Lou? Huh?

MARTY

It's chump change.

POPE

Yeah, chump change.

LOU puts his cards down.

LOU

Excuse me gentlemen. Eighteen grand is a
month in Miami, it's a Jap car, it's my
goddamn alimony. I'd like to be part of this
enterprise, in fact it's breaking my heart that
I can't but I got a bitch in Bensonhurst who's
breaking my balls.

He picks up his cards. FRANK gingerly touches his cheek with his
forefinger.

LOU

Check.

MARTY

You're breaking my heart, you who pisses it
away on four hundred dollar leather jackets.

LOU

I don't like second best.

FRANK

(points to his cheek)

Who does? Two bucks. (to Pope) Can you see something moving here? A twitch or something?

POPE

Call. (to Frank) I don't see anything.

LOU

Boot.

BIBI

Lou, we can't do this without you. It wouldn't be the same.

FRANK

Yeah, seventy-two grand ain't ninety grand. See the boot. Stop thinking about what it's gonna cost. Start thinking about how much you'll make. It could solve your problems, Lou.

LOU

I'm sorry, I don't have the money. If my ex should suddenly, God forbid, decide to be nice to me and drop dead, it would be a different story. But then if she was a nice person, I'd still be married to her.

MARTY

If she wasn't a fucking pig, you'd still be married to her.

POPE

Okay, I'll call the sandbag. Why don't you sandbag her?

BIBI

Pot's right. Vus machsta?

They show their hands.

FRANK

I'm low. Six smooth. He's got a wheel, I know it. But, I feel it twitching. You sure you can't see it?

POPE

I got two pairs. I couldn't fill the jerks. It's nothing, Frank. There's nothing there. I swear to God.

LOU

Well, my lovelies, I'm perfect.

His hand is a low straight. FRANK touches his cheek.

FRANK

How long's it been, Lou?

LOU

Too long.

MARTY

Ten years.

POPE

Jeez, Louise.

MARTY

That's...let's see...a hundred and eighty grand. Shit, that's alot of fucking money.

FRANK

It's not alot of fucking money, Marty. A million, that's alot of money.

LOU

It's alot of fucking money, Frank. Believe me.

POPE

A thorn in his side.

BIBI

Ten years and she's still not married? Ah, she's probably a dyke.

LOU

She's not a dyke. She's fat but she's not a dyke.

POPE

How do you know?

LOU

I was married to her.

BIBI

I rest my case.

FRANK

So what's the problem, tatala? Get her a man.

LOU

I don't hate anybody that much.

MARTY

I do.

BIBI

So, he can't do it. Let it go.

MARTY

C'est la fucking vie.

BIBI

So what if it's the chance of a lifetime? So what if it's right place, right time, right deal? So we won't see our name in lights. So, it's in the toilet.

FRANK

Star Lanes. Get it, Lou? A star has five points. Five, not four. A star with four points ain't a star.

POPE

What is it?

FRANK

It's a nothing! It wouldn't even stay in the sky. You ever hear of a four-leaf clover with three leaves?

BIBI

It woulda been so pretty. So, it won't be. I can live with that. So, like Marty says, c'est la fucking vie.

FRANK

Well, I can't live with it.

MARTY

I'm sick of making shit money at a shit job for a shithead!

POPE

Took the words right out of my mouth.

LOU

What do you want me to do? Kill her?

MARTY

Fuckin-a.

FRANK

Lou, read my lips. Find her a man. Get her married.

LOU

I should pimp for my ex wife?

FRANK

Yeah.

LOU

Whatdya nuts?

MARTY

And you got ninety days. Nine-oh.

BIBI pushes back his chair and gets up.

BIBI

Ah, I gotta go. Florence is waiting up for me.
She wants to smell my breath.

LOU

You okay, Bib?

BIBI

Don't worry about it, kid. Something else will
come down the pike. I'll probably be dead
but I can live with that. So, see ya next week.

LOU

Yeah, Bib.

POPE

I got to get some sleep.

LOU

You don't want to grab a beer?

POPE

Nah, I'm exhausted. Gotta go to bed. God, I
love to sleep. It's one of my favorite things in
life. You know why? Cause when I'm asleep, I
dream.

INT NIGHT BAR

MARTY and LOU face each other in a booth nursing beers. LOU fills in the
numbers on a lottery ticket. When he's done, he puts it up to his forehead,
closes his eyes for a second, then returns it to his pocket.

MARTY

Sandy's going in for surgery next week. She's
having her gall bladder taken out.

LOU

What's a gall bladder do?

MARTY

I don't know. But it's not working right so
they're taking it out. I hate hospitals.

LOU

I'll be there with you, don't worry. I'm sorry,
I'm sorry. I know how important this is for
you guys. I hate letting you down.

MARTY

Forget it.

LOU

I don't wanna forget it.

MARTY

Forget it.

LOU

But I feel like crap.

MARTY

Drop it.

LOU

I can't drop it. You guys are my best friends.

MARTY

Don't make me cry, Lou. I don't wanna cry.

LOU

She's killing me.

MARTY

Who told you fifteen years ago that she was
bad news Lou? I could smell it. But you went
and married her.

LOU

I was young.

MARTY

Fuck you. You were drunk. And when you're
drunk everything looks good.

LOU

I hate her. I hate her fucking guts.

MARTY

Not as much as I do. And I wasn't even married to her.

LOU

I'm sorry.

MARTY

Forget it.

LOU

Women.

Another customer, JIM, strolls by with a WOMAN. En passant...

JIM

This booth okay? You got real pretty eyes. Are they blue? I'm a little bit uncomfortable here, doing this sort of thing. It's the first time for me. I've never even been in this place before.

RITA (OC)

Hello, boys...

RITA, LOU's girl, joins them. She slides in next to him. They kiss.

LOU

Hey, baby.

MARTY

Hi, Rita. How you doing?

RITA

Not bad, Marty. You?

MARTY

No complaints.

LOU

How was school?

RITA

Almost over, thank God. Three weeks and I get paid to stick a thermometer in a stranger's mouth. Just think of it.

MARTY

Good for you. Well, I got to run, kids.

LOU

See you, Marty. I'm really sorry.

MARTY waves it off.

RITA

Bye.

He's gone.

RITA

What are you sorry about, hon?

LOU

Nothing.

LOU starts to nudge RITA out of the booth.

RITA

You're in a bad mood, I can tell. Why you in a bad mood, Lou? What did you do that you're sorry about?

LOU

Babe, what's a gall bladder do?

RITA

It's a muscular sac that stores bile.

LOU

That's what I thought. Come on.

RITA

Where we going?

LOU

My place. I got to get up early.

RITA

You know, this is what I love about us.

LOU

What?

RITA

You have your life and I have my life and then together we have our life. That's what I love about us. That we can be singular and plural at the same time.

LOU

Yeah.

RITA

You know what I was thinking, hon?

LOU

What were you thinking?

RITA

I was thinking maybe...I was thinking we should uh...we should maybe live together.

LOU

No problem. Why not?

RITA

You mean it?

He smiles, they hug.

RITA

You love me, Lou?

LOU

I love you as much as I can love anybody who will one day die on me.

RITA

So, what are you sorry about?

LOU

A mistake I made fifteen years ago. One I
will never repeat.

RITA

You were young.

LOU

I was drunk.

INT NIGHT LOU'S APARTMENT

RITA and LOU have just made love. The bed is a crumbled mess.

RITA

I hate my thighs.

LOU

Why?

RITA

When I run to catch the bus, I stop and they
keep moving.

LOU

Your thighs are fine.

RITA

Really?

LOU`

I love your thighs. They're yours.

He playfully kisses her thighs.

RITA

You make me feel so good, Lou. But I'm going
to have liposuction anyway.

LOU

What the hell is...?

RITA

Liposuction. They surgically remove
unsightly fat.

LOU

Lip...

RITA

It's a really simple procedure...

LOU

Lippy!!

RITA

Lipo, Lou.

LOU

Lippy. Nick Lippy!!! Is he still married?

RITA

His wife died last year. I don't think so.

LOU

I gotta call him.

He flies out of bed and into the kitchen.

RITA

Hon, don't you think it's a little late for a
condolence call? I sent him a card and signed
both our names.

INT NIGHT KITCHEN

LOU is talking into the phone, pacing back and forth.

LOU

(on phone)

So how's it going, Nick? Good, good. Good,
good. I don't mean to get personal and like
tell me if I'm getting too personal, but, Nick,
you got any company or you by yourself all
the time? You are? That's good. So what are
you doing this weekend? Well, listen. I know
someone I think you'd like. She's an old
friend and I'm going to give you her number
and I think you should call her. Yeah, she's
single. Nick, do me a favor. Don't tell her
where you got her number. She's shy.

RITA appears in the doorway.

LOU

So, I'll call you tomorrow. It's what friends are for. Right, bye.

He turns around and faces RITA as he hangs up the phone.

RITA

What are you doing, Lou?

LOU

I'm getting even. That son of a bitch underbid me on that motel job in Newark with non-union scum. I'm fixing him up with Jane. They're made for each, Nick and my ex. Two greedy dirtbags.

LOU reaches for an "OREO" cookie. He splits it open and licks the creamy filling.

RITA

They're made for each other. And they'll fall in love. And they'll get married. And you won't have to pay alimony anymore. And you'll get in on the bowling alley. Just like that.

LOU

You got it, babe.

RITA

(knowing)

Come to bed, Lou.

She turns and he follows her back to bed.

EXT MORNING CAR

LOU hops out and darts into a candy store, car idling.

INT MORNING SAME CANDY STORE

LOU holds a lottery ticket to his head, then hands it to MURRAY, the owner.

MURRAY

Luck, Lou.

LOU

Money, Murray.

EXT MORNING POPE'S HOUSE

He pulls up in front of POPE's house, honking. POPE emerges and trots to the car carrying a cup of coffee and tucking in his shirt. He gets in the car.

INT MORNING SAME CAR

POPE

Sorry, Lou. I overslept.

LOU

No problem.

They drive away.

POPE

I feel really bad about this deal, Lou. Really bad.

LOU

I'm gonna fix it. Don't worry, I thought it over. This is the one. This deal's getting me out of the hole.

POPE

Yeah, but Moe Fine, he wants in bad. He's got the dough and everything.

LOU

Moe Fine? That putz? What are you talkin he wants in? He can't get in.

POPE

He's got connections, Lou. Somebody he knows knows somebody in the Mayor's office. He can get in, Lou.

LOU

He ain't getting in, Pope, cause I'm in. Get it?

POPE

But, Lou, you said...

LOU

Don't tell me what I said. I'm gonna fix it. I said, I'm gonna fix it.

POPE

Lou, I feel bad. I feel bad. I don't even know Moe Fine. I don't want him in.

LOU

I can't believe it. That bitch. Now, I'm gonna kill her.

POPE

It ain't her fault.

LOU

You're right. I married her. But, tell me, Pope, if she was dead, would we be having this conversation? I think not.

POPE

What kind of after-shave do you use?

LOU

I don't.

POPE

What do you do when you wanna smell nice?

LOU

I gargle.

POPE

Oh. But if you did.

LOU

But I don't.

POPE

Let's just say you did. Which one of these would you pick?

POPE pulls two different bottles out of his pocket. He holds one under Lou's nose. LOU inhales.

POPE

You got it?

LOU nods.

POPE

Okay.

He puts the second one under his nose. LOU inhales, nods.

POPE

So?

LOU

Gimme the first one again.

POPE does.

POPE

Which one is more me?

LOU

Definitely the second one.

POPE

That's what I thought.

LOU

You know, some women like us without any of that crap. Just soap and water. Nice. Clean.

POPE

Yeah, but I need a little help. I want her to think about me when I'm gone.

LOU

Give her the bottle. What's her name?

POPE

Karen. She works with Lenny over at Macy's.

LOU

Yeah? Pope, how old is Lenny?

POPE

He's thirty six.

LOU

Really? That's a good age. He have a girlfriend?

POPE

No.

LOU

Good, good.

POPE

Not so good, Lou. I see where you're heading but you're on the wrong road. My brother don't date women.

LOU

What's he, like religious or something?

POPE

He don't like women, he likes guys.

LOU

No shit.

POPE

It's his hormones.

LOU

I always thought Lenny was one of the guys.

POPE

He is.

LOU

Huh. I always liked him.

POPE

And he really likes you.

LOU

Yeah. I gotta fix this.

INT MORNING CON ED OFFICE

A series of cubicles, office workers scurrying around, phones ringing, etc. LOU is in with CARLOS VENGA, a loan officer, who has LOU's file open on his desk.

CARLOS

You bought the car a year ago and you're three months behind on your payments. We're going to have to garnish your salary.

LOU

You can't do this to me, I've been with this company fourteen years. Doesn't that mean anything?

CARLOS

You know the rules, Casell.

LOU

What about a payment plan?

CARLOS

That's what this is.

LOU

What about a payment plan for my payment plan?

CARLOS

Get out of here. You got another thirty days.

INT NIGHT MARTY'S LIVING ROOM

MARTY and LOU watch a baseball game, eating chips and drinking beer.

MARTY

I can't fuckin believe this guy Santana. He don't know how to catch a ball, he don't know how to hit a ball. What kinda baseball player is that?

LOU

He's having an off night.

MARTY

Hey, Lou, when I got money on a game, I don't want a guy to have an off night.

SANDY (OC)

You boys need more chips?

LOU

No thanks, Sandy.

MARTY

Is he gonna put food on my table?

LOU

Marty, I don't like what I'm hearing.

MARTY

Wha?

LOU

About Moe Fine.

MARTY

Business is business. Look, you're plan A. You get the bucks, no problem. You don't, we go to plan B. Moe Fine...

LOU

...is plan B, I got it.

MARTY

Where is your plan B, Lou?

MARTY turns back to the ball game.

MARTY

Go, go go baby, go baby...all right, a triple! All right! You know, Lou, if she got married tomorrow, you wouldn't have the cash. Have you thought about a bank loan?

LOU

No, Marty. I don't think. I can't get a loan.

MARTY

You gotta start thinking about a rainy day. With you, everything is right now, right this second. If you could walk by the store instead of buying everything that's in the store, you'd have a little cushion. You'd get the best, Lou, you'd just have to wait a little longer. Ah, you're just like your old man.

LOU

Yeah, that's it. Now that we've straightened that out, now what?

MARTY

We move to plan C.

INT KITCHEN SAME

RITA and SANDY are putting away leftovers.

RITA

I'm telling you, it's nothing, Sandy. A little pain after, but not serious.

SANDY

It's not the pain I'm worried about. After five children, this'll be a breeze. I had natural childbirth before they called it natural childbirth. And what the hell is unnatural childbirth anyway? I'm worried about him.

She points, indicating MARTY in the other room.

SANDY

He acts tough around people but with me he's a little puppy dog. He gets so upset, he fusses over me. "Don't walk, Sandy, don't talk, Sandy, don't sit, Sandy, don't stand, Sandy, don't laugh, Sandy." I hate being fussed over. You know what I mean?

RITA

I like being fussed over. I wish Lou would do a little bit more fussing.

SANDY

Want to trade?

RITA

I love Lou.

SANDY

Love him less, Rita. Let him love you more.

RITA

Lou loves me in his own way.

SANDY

Is that enough?

RITA

For now.

SANDY

I got a bulletin. For now is for always.

RITA

He's just scared that what happened to him and Jane could happen to us.

SANDY

What did he tell you?

RITA

They fought all the time. They couldn't stand each other.

SANDY

Rita, there's three sides to every story. His, hers and the truth. You want to know the truth?

RITA

Will it make me love him less?

SANDY

No. (pause) She had an affair.

RITA

She cheated on him?

SANDY

He didn't want her to work. She was home. He hung out with his buddies. She cooked the meals. And she ate them. She got fat and she went nuts. Then she met someone who paid a little attention to her and boom. Didn't take much.

RITA

I can't believe he didn't tell me. His pride.

SANDY nods.

SANDY

And he loved her. You know who took it really bad? My husband. Like she did it to him.

RITA nods.

INT NIGHT CAR

RITA and LOU drive through the dark city.

LOU

Where we going?

RITA

Home, Lou. I want to go home.

LOU

Okay.

RITA

Alone.

He stops the car dead in the middle of the street.

LOU

Whatya mean "alone?"

RITA

I'm tired.

LOU

But I'm not tired, Rita.

Cars honk.

RITA

Lou, I just want to go home and go to bed, okay. Let's not argue about it, please.

LOU

What were you and Sandy talking about?

Cars keep honking and driving around them

RITA

Nothing. Would you pull over or something?

LOU

Bullshit. I know what women talk about when they get together. They talk about men, unlike men, who talk about sports.

RITA

Bullshit back. You talk about women all the time.

LOU

So, what did you two talk about?

RITA

Her operation.

LOU

For two hours.

RITA

Lou, I don't keep secrets from you.

LOU

You sure?

RITA

Lou..!

He starts driving again.

LOU

I mean you sure you want to go home alone?

RITA

I'm tired.

LOU

Okay, baby, no problem.

EXT NIGHT CAR LATER

LOU cruises down a dark empty street. He pulls into the parking lot of a rundown and abandoned bowling alley, the future site of Star Lanes. He turns off the car and gets out. Looking up at the building he sees an unlit neon sign, its wires hanging limply. He jumps up to grab them but can't. He tries again and fails.

He turns on his heel and pops open the trunk of his car. He retrieves his tool belt and a spool of wire. Near a stand of overgrown trees, he spots a utility pole. He shimmies up a tree and makes his way to the sign at the other end of the roof. He steadies himself and goes to work attaching the limp wires to the spool. He lets out slack and crosses to the tree, climbs down and opens the utility connection. Sparks fly as he attaches the wires. He fiddles until they die out. He looks over his shoulder at a bright neon glow. He turns and sees a thing of beauty; a brilliantly colored animated sign of a bowling ball repeatedly knocking down a set of pins. His face is lit by the brightness.

INT MORNING LOU'S BEDROOM

LOU enters wearing a towel, showered, clean-shaven, bits of tissue stuck to his face. From his closet he pulls out a sharp suit, shirt and shoes. He grabs a chair, stands on it, and rummages through the top shelf. He finds an old tie box, knocking a shoebox to the floor, its contents scattering. He gets off the chair and looks at an array of mementoes from his first marriage. He sits and hesitantly picks up a wedding photograph. A much younger Lou and Jane beam. He picks up another. He is lost in the moment. Minutes later he stands and gets dressed, saving the tie for last. He picks up the box, yellowed and crumbling, clearly another historical relic. He lingers, then opens it and puts on a beautiful but old-fashioned silk tie.

INT MORNING FASHION SHOWROOM

LOU waits in a small reception area. He nervously flips through fashion magazines.

RECEP

Mr. Casell, Mr. Eisner will see you now.

He rises.

LOU

Thank you.

A buzzer sounds as he opens a door to the offices.

INT MORNING SAME SHOWROOM

LOU enters girl heaven. Three very attractive MODELS saunter around showing off the fall line. One in particular gives him a shy, flirtatious smile. He responds in kind, following her with his eyes.

SAUL (OC)

Lou, sweetheart...

LOU turns.

LOU

Saul...

They hug. Saul fingers Lou's tie.

SAUL

Your pop had great taste in two things, ties and friends. Come with me.

SAME SAUL'S OFFICE

SAUL

Can I get you a little something? A soda? A scotch? The blondes' phone number? Lou, what do you need?

LOU

Eighteen grand.

SAUL

You know I'm a grandfather? Here Lou,
here's a cigar.

LOU

It was a boy, huh?

SAUL

Named after his Zehde.

LOU

Congratulations Saul. Saul, I wouldn't be here
if I didn't need it for a good thing. I'm in on a
good thing. My own business.

SAUL

You know Lenore and I got a place in Boca.
I'm retiring.

LOU

Saul, I'm telling you it's a sure thing.

SAUL

I can't wait to get out of the schmata business.

LOU

Are we gonna do a deal here?

SAUL

No.

LOU

Why not?

SAUL

I'll tell you why. Because I like you and when
you can't pay me back, I don't want to have to
put you in a wheelchair for the rest of your
life. I got enough tsurus.

LOU

Who says I'm not going to pay you back?

SAUL

Your pop said the same thing to me. And you know what? He dropped dead owing me ninety seven hundred dollars. I ate that ninety seven hundred, Lou. I ate it. And what young man came to me and said, "I will make good my father's debt. No problem." I never saw that young man again, until today. I think he's in this room right now.

LOU

That's right, he died, my father died before he ever got to see a grandchild, Saul. And all you care about is that he left you with a debt. He left me, Saul.

SAUL

I know you didn't have it easy. Mayonnaise sandwiches one week, lobster the next. It could make a kid a little meshuga. I understand.

LOU

So, you'll do it?

SAUL

No. Find yourself a rich girl, Lou. I did. I'm sure there's someone out there who has eighteen grand with your name on it.

LOU

You're right... —

EXT DAY HOUSE

LOU knocks on the screen door of a small house. He fidgets nervously. There is no response. He knocks again. Then tries the door. It's locked.

LOU

Hello...hello?

After a moment JANE appears. She's obviously slim and very attractive. She's also sniffing and sneezing and wearing sunglasses. She walks up to the door, peers over her glasses, sees LOU and turns away without a word.

LOU

Excuse me, miss...I'm looking for Jane Casell.
Is she here?

JANE (OC)

No.

LOU

Do you know when she'll be back?

JANE (OC)

No.

LOU

Could I give you a message for her, please?

JANE (OC)

Sure.

LOU

Could you tell her that her ex-husband has a
terminal illness and he needs surgery right
away?

In a moment, she's back at the door.

JANE

How terminal?

LOU

It's hideous. Excuse me, would you mind if I
used your toilet? I have a kidney problem on
top of everything else.

She reluctantly lets him in.

INT HOUSE SAME

LOU enters, JANE blows her nose. Something about her is familiar. He
stares hard, then shakes his head. She nods.

LOU

No.

She nods again. He's in utter shock.

LOU

Jane? What happened? You're a different person.

JANE

It's been a long time.

LOU

You look...good. Really good.

JANE

Thanks. It's over here.

She shows him the bathroom and walks away. He watches after her.

EXT BACKYARD SAME

He looks around a wild, lovely garden. She's not there and he's clearly uncomfortable. A small wrought iron table and chairs grace a corner.

JANE (OC)

Why don't you sit down and tell me about this disease of yours?

He turns and she saunters in, carrying a glass of iced tea. He stares after her as she does so.

LOU

Oh, yeah. You sure you want to hear this?

JANE

Absolutely.

LOU

Well, you see, I had this one thing and it was small, like a pimple. And it grew very rapidly, like overnight or something. So, I go to the doctor and he says it's very bad. And I ask, how bad? And he says, very, very bad. And he says, it's not one, it's two and it's right by my gall bladder on my left side, you know, the muscular sac where bile is stored? And they gotta replace that, too. So I'm waiting for a replacement from the Mideast and I have to have surgery, Jane.

JANE

Oh, you mean a transplant?

LOU

Yeah, that's it. I have to have transplant surgery in ninety...eight-six days and it's very costly.

JANE

How costly?

LOU

Who cares? You don't put a price on this kind of thing. Between seventeen and nineteen thousand.

JANE

This is the most amazing coincidence. You're not going to believe this. I had the exact same disease, but on my right side. The only difference, Lou is with mine, they didn't have to surgically remove my foot from my mouth.

LOU

You don't believe me, do you?

JANE

You haven't changed a bit, Lou. (closes her eyes) I close my eyes and it's 1975 again. I've heard all this before.

LOU

I've been supporting you for ten goddamn years! Enough is enough. That's it, not another dime. The milk train is stopping right here, right now.

JANE

I'm shaking. You know, between the taxes I pay on it, my job at Brooklyn College and night school, I can barely make ends meet. Divorce is expensive, Lou. Why do you think most people stay married when they're miserable? You cut me off and you end up in alimony jail.

LOU

I piss on alimony jail. There is no such thing.

JANE

Oh, no? Francie Schmidt's ex has been there for six months.

LOU

Ralph's in jail?

JANE

Uh, huh. Now he's playing poker with guys named Boom-Boom and Fish Face. You still playing? I'm sure they'll let you in after one of them dies from an ice pick in the back.

LOU

Okay, Jane, I'm nauseous now. You happy?

JANE

You didn't say anything about my garden, Lou.

LOU

You know something? You're in a world of your own. Plants always liked you.

JANE

You remember?

LOU

Sure.

JANE

Lou, you still eating Oreos before bed?

He nods shyly. She gets up and rummages through some plants. She returns with two fresh tomatoes and puts them in front of him.

JANE

Organic. No crap.

She sits.

JANE

Speaking of crap, would you stop giving my phone number to your brain dead friends?

LOU

Now why would I do that?

JANE

Because you would like me to get married.,

LOU

Don't you want to get married? Don't you like men?

JANE

Follow me down this path, Lou. I meet a nice guy, we go out on a date. He says, I want to see you again. I'll call you Monday. I feel good. And what happens? Monday comes, Monday goes. You with me? Okay. So, I go out with someone else. We have a really nice time. He says, I like you. I really, really like you. Let's get to know each other. I'll call you Tuesday. Tuesday comes, Tuesday goes. You want to know what happens Wednesday? Wednesday's child is full of woe. Should I tell you about the rest of the week?

LOU

What about the bicycle, Jane? You fall off, you get back on. They're not all like that?

JANE

No, they're not. I was seeing a man for a while and, Lou, was he on my case. Called me all the time, took me to dinner, little gifts. Made me feel special. "Anything you want," he says. "You name it, you got it." The minute I named it, he makes like Houdini and disappears. The guy promised me the world Lou, he couldn't even deliver New Jersey. A real Mr. Wonderful. I only got one heart. There's nothing worse then telling somebody what they want to hear when you don't mean it. Lou there should be some kind of jail for those bastards. After a while, I started thinking, Jane, what's the matter with you? Nothing. Nothing. Diane, Angela, Francie, the same exact story. Different men, same story. It's the diddle factor.

LOU

The diddle factor?

JANE

They diddle you and leave you hanging. Dreck, Lou. We're talking dreck. I love men but I don't like dreck. There are good ones out there, but so is Jimmy Hoffa. I don't know why I'm telling you this. Just forget about it, it's not your problem.

LOU

That's where you're wrong.

JANE

A man doesn't know the value of a woman's love until he starts paying alimony.

He trembles in pain.

LOU

I'm going to get you a man.

JANE

Don't talk foolish.

LOU

Someone that's going to make you happy.

JANE

You're getting grey, Lou...

LOU

Cause when you're happy, I'll be happy.

JANE rises.

JANE

Well, I got to water.

LOU

Tell me what you want, Jane. Please. What do you have to lose? I'll do all the leg work.

She turns on the hose and waters the garden.

JANE

You're crazy, Lou. Go home.

LOU

I'll find him!

JANE

And I'm wearing a tiara but you can't see it.

LOU

As usual, you don't believe a word I'm saying.

JANE

As usual, you're full of shit.

LOU

No, Jane, that's the old me. The new me, when I say I'm going to do something, I do it.

JANE

(mimicking him)

The new me, when I say I'm going to do something, I do it.

LOU

Go to hell.

JANE
Oooohhh...I'm bleeding.

LOU
You have no blood Jane, they left that out.

JANE
And they gave you a penis for a brain.

LOU
I'll show you. If it's the last thing I do I'm gonna find you a husband.

JANE
And when you don't?

LOU
I'll double your alimony.

JANE
You're on, bucko.

EXT CURB SAME

LOU gets into his car folding a piece of paper into his pocket. JANE waves from the curb as he pulls away.

JANE
What an asshole...

INT CAR SAME

LOU waves, looking in the rear-view mirror.

LOU
What an asshole...

INT DAY NEWSPAPER OFFICE

A sign overhead reads, "Personal and Classified Ads." LOU is reading from the paper to a STAFFER who jots it down.

LOU

"...health conscious, lover of nature, independent, debt-free and not under indictment. Seeks sane, low-key, non-compulsive/impulsive partner for maybe a commitment. No sons of bitches, please."

STAFFER

That's it?

LOU nods.

STAFFER

It's your money.

He pays her and starts to walk away. A WOMAN steps up to the counter. She leans in and whispers to the STAFFER.

WOMAN

I like him. What does he want?

STAFFER

A man.

INT NIGHT BAR

LOU and POPE sit in a booth drinking beer.

POPE

We're getting a hundred bucks a day? You sure? Just to re-wire a basement?

LOU is clearly anxious.

LOU

What did I say, Pope?

POPE

You said we're getting a hundred bucks a day to re-wire a basement. They got two-twenty?

LOU

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't think anybody's coming.

POPE

You're too negative, Lou. You're always looking at the glass like it's half empty.

LOU picks up his glass angrily.

LOU

Look, Pope. What do you think it is? What is it? Look. When you go to the gas station, do you say to the guy, "my tank is half full, fill her up?"

POPE

Hey, Lou, if she's so beautiful, how come you didn't fix her up with me? I'm no son of a bitch.

LOU

What is beauty?

POPE

Skin deep.

LOU

Karen's history, already? I forgot, you got a three week attention span.

POPE

Lou, if you don't keep the window open, nothing's gonna fly in.

MAN 1 (OC)

Excuse me, is one of you Mr. Casell?

POPE

This is Mr. Casell and I'm his associate Mr. Popelli.

MAN sits next to POPE.

LOU

Hello. You read the ad?

MAN 1

That's right and I'm your guy. I'm self-sufficient, nature-loving, have a great sense of humor and I don't smoke.

LOU

And you make more than eighteen grand a year.

MAN 1

Sixteen five.

POPE

You're not our guy.

POPE shrugs, LOU smiles weakly and a MONTAGE begins.

INDIAN

In my country we love the vegetarian way of life. This brings good karma.

LOU

How much do you make?

INDIAN

Twenty-two with benefits.

LOU hands him a slip of paper with Jane's number.

MAN 3

How big are her tits?

MAN 4

I have to say I prefer Oriental women but, hey, I'm flexible.

MAN 5

Sure, I like plants. When I came here from Uranus, the plants took me in until I learned to speak your language. You know who I had dinner with the other night? Dick Clark and...and...Rosemary Clooney.

MAN 6

Does she have a personal relationship with the Lord?

MAN 4

Two old men are walking past a cemetery and one says, "This is where my daughter lays." and the other one says, "Better she should be dead."

MAN 7

Listen, if it doesn't work out with her, would you like to get together sometime?

MAN 6

Who are you? Because I'm a little confused. Is this legal? Is she the only girl? Do I have to pay you?

RUSSIAN

I very much want a woman. I don't want to wait. All my life I wait. I wait, I wait, I wait. If I wait any longer, they send me back to my country. Where I have to wait; for bread, for shoes, for woman. I have money.

LOU

How much?

RUSSIAN

Enough. For bread, for shoes, for woman.

LATER

LOU hangs his head on the table. POPE leans, his chin in his hand.

POPE

I don't know, Lou. I don't know. This may not be as easy as...

LOU puts up his hand.

LOU

Don't talk, okay?

POPE

But, how...

LOU

Not to worry. I got it all figured out. I'm gonna shoot her.

INT NIGHT RITA'S KITCHEN

LOU sits in a chair while RITA practices making a gauze sling on him.

RITA

...I'm not covering your elbow because the injury is in the lower arm. Now if it was the upper arm, the elbow would have to be immobile. See? If it was a fracture, even a hairline fracture, you'd need a cast. So, you're lucky.

LOU

Are my fingers supposed to be numb?

RITA

Honey, you shoulda told me.

LOU

I can't feel anything.

RITA puts his hand on her breast.

RITA

What's this?

LOU

It's coming back.

He scoops her up in his arms and takes her to bed.

INT BEDROOM SAME

Mad kissing, mad passion, lots of sweat.

INT BATHROOM SAME

RITA and LOU are in the shower together.

RITA

How was it when you saw her?

LOU

It was nothing.

RITA

How'd she look?

LOU

Why you asking me? She looked okay, okay?
Can we not talk about her? Especially after
what we just did in there?

RITA

Cool your jets, Lou. I wanna know what's
going on with you. And if you don't want to
know that Lorraine's brother, Tony, today just
got out of the Navy and is looking to meet
someone, fine, we won't talk about it.

LOU

Why didn't you say so? Give him her
number.

RITA

I will. So, how is Jane?

LOU

I don't wanna...

RITA

Forget it.

LOU

I don't see the woman for ten years and in
five minutes, it's the same crap all over again.
She never even said, "Lou, how are you?"

RITA

She doesn't care about you.

LOU

Can we not talk about this any more?

RITA

Fine.

LOU

Baby...

RITA

I just don't know what's going on in your head. Forget it, I shouldna pushed.

LOU

You're just protecting your investment.

RITA

That's it. Speaking of which, we've got an appointment next week with a real estate broker. He's going to show us some apartments, Lou.

LOU

What's wrong with what we got?

RITA

I thought we should start fresh. Anyway, our places are too small for both of us.

LOU

Yeah.

RITA

I'm excited.

She kisses him.

LOU

Me, too.

RITA

You sure you want to do this, baby?

LOU

I said so, didn't I?

RITA

Next Friday night, okay?

LOU

Sure...

INT DAY BOOKSTORE

LOU peruses the "Self-Help" section, picking out books like, "How to Meet Men," "Rich Men, Smart Women," etc. He spots a MAN doing the same thing, but obviously looking for a way to meet women. LOU watches him, checks him out, smiles and approaches. He hands the guy a piece of paper.

LOU

Save your money.

LOU walks off, leaving the guy a bit confused.

EXT DAY STREET

LOU, in uniform and his Con Ed van, is at a red light. A van idles beside him with TWO MEN in the front. A sign on the side reads "Joe & Paul's Nursery, From Our Greenhouse to Your House." LOU looks over and smiles.

LOU

'Scuse me, fellows, could I ask you something?

JOE

Yeah?

LOU

Would you mind pulling over?

The TWO look at each other curiously but agree. The two vans pull over to the curb, LOU hops out of his and walks up to the other.

LOU

How you doing? Lou Casell.

He offers his hand. They nod.

JOE

We don't got all day, Lou. What do you want?

LOU

I see you boys like plants, huh?

They look at each other like he's nuts.

LOU

I bet you have nice houses with gardens and all? And your wives, they like to garden, too, I bet.

PAUL

I ain't married.

LOU

Are you Paul or Joe?

PAUL

Paul.

JOE

What do you want, mister?

LOU

I'm talking to Paul here. Excuse me, Joe. I have what I personally think is one terrific offer for you, Paul.

PAUL

Yeah?

JOE

What?

LOU

How would you like to go out on a date with one hell of a good looking woman?

PAUL

Yeah, I'd like that.

JOE

Shut up! You're more of a schmuck than he is! What's the matter with you? Can't you see that this fool's a pimp?

LOU

I'm no pimp. She's a friend who loves plants and I saw your truck and I thought...

JOE

What do you got girls in the back of your van? You lowlife creep. I'm going to report you, you nutcase. What planet are you from, buddy?

PAUL

Joey, maybe she's nice...

JOE

Shut up! Just shut up!

JOE guns it and speeds away leaving LOU in a cloud of dust.

INT NIGHT APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

The poker game is in progress. LOU is dealing. He overturns the fourth of five cards in the middle. It makes a pair of nines showing on board. FRANK has a band-aid on his forehead. BIBI chews on a celery stalk.

LOU

Happiness is the person with a pair of nines.
And it ain't you, Pope.

POPE

What are you talking?

LOU

You're under the gun, sweetheart. You got anything, Frankie?

FRANK

My wife's cousin, but he's sixty-five, Lou. I don't think we should count him in. (to Pope)
Is it swelling? Look close.

POPE

Check. (to Frank) I don't see anything, I swear.

MARTY

Count him in. We eliminate no one and no thing. Two bucks.

FRANK

It feels hot. It's throbbing.

MARTY

Maybe you should go to the hospital.

FRANK

It's not that bad.

BIBI

Raise.

LOU

Someone locked on the flop.

FRANK

And it ain't me, babe. I'm out. He's loaded.

LOU

Give him her number. Two back.

POPE

Fold.

He gives LOU a "look." LOU shrugs.

POPE

So what do I tell Moe?

LOU

You tell him to forget about it.

MARTY

Call.

BIBI

See the raise. We don't have alot of time, Lou.

LOU turns over the fifth and final card.

LOU

Could we please play cards? I didn't come here to discuss business. I came here to spend a pleasant evening sharing one of my favorite pastimes with my closest friends...

MARTY

And get the broad a husband.

LOU

Two bucks. You in, Marty?

MARTY

Four.

BIBI

Make it six.

LOU

I'll take the last one.

MARTY and BIBI throw their chips in to call the raises. They show their hands. LOU has a pair of nines, BIBI a perfect low.

MARTY

You did lock on the flop, ya bum.

BIBI nods as he and LOU split the pot.

LOU

And you can tell Moe Fine to back his fat ass right outta this deal 'cause I'm going to fix it.

They all look expectantly at LOU. BIBI takes a carrot out of his pocket and chomps on it.

LOU

I'm gonna get the bitch a husband!

He shuffles furiously.

EXT DAY PHONE BOOTH

As LOU talks on the phone in the BG is a huge hole in a city street. Con Ed men climbing in and out. It's lunchtime, guys are sitting outside eating, Schmoozing. Wearing jumpsuits over their clothes.

LOU

You got it Nick? Don't think Nick, just do...You gotta get out Nick, you gotta get back into the world...You'll feel better...

JOE SANDORS, a cohort walks by, downing a soda.

LOU

Excuse me Nick...Joe! Joe! Wait a minute...I gotta talk to you. Look, Nick, Call her. No big deal, do it for me. Okay Nick, take care. I promise you, you'll like her..Yeah..Goodbye.

He hangs up and runs up to Joe.

LOU

Joe, Joe, Joe...how you doing? Listen I want you to meet somebody, I know this great girl.

JOE

No thanks Lou.

LOU

What? You're involved?

JOE

Yeah, kinda. But thanks.

LOU

Hey, doesn't hurt to ask.

As LOU walks back to POPE he goes down the line of guys.

LOU

Harry, what are you eating?

HARRY

Egg salad.

LOU

You make it yourself?

HARRY

No, the wife...Wanna bite?

LOU

No thanks Harry.

As he continues...

LOU

Paul, you make that sandwich yourself?

PAUL

Nah, my girlfriend made it for me.

LOU

Huh.

He sees TONY eating fast food. He sits down.

LOU

Tony...Kentucky Fried, huh?

TONY

Yep.

LOU

So, your wife don't cook?

TONY

Yeah my wife cooks, my girlfriend don't.

LOU

Huh.

LOU gets up, continues.

LOU

Mike what are you eating?

MIKE

Meatloaf, Lou. Want half?

LOU sits down, totally deflated

LOU

Yeah, sure.

MIKE gives him half the sandwich.

MIKE

Good, huh?

LOU

Yeah, good. Real good. So, I guess your wife made it huh?

MIKE

Nope.

LOU

Your girlfriend then, huh?

MIKE

Nope.

LOU

Who made it Mike?

MIKE

I did Lou.

LOU

You did?

MIKE

I love to cook. I cook all the time. You should come to supper sometime, Lou.

LOU

I will, Mike.

MIKE

I love to dance, too. In fact, I love life, Lou. I really do.

LOU

How is it that such a nice guy like you doesn't have a wife or a girl, Mike?

MIKE

Well, Mom's old, Lou.

LOU

Yeah.

MIKE

She doesn't have alot of time left and I figure I do.

LOU

Well, what if you met somebody you really liked?

MIKE

Oh, that would be wonderful Lou. Mom would have to like her too, though.

LOU

Good luck.

MIKE

Lou, you want a sandwich tomorrow?

LOU

That would be nice, Mike. Thanks.

LOU finally finds POPE

POPE

Well?

LOU

Don't talk to me now. Just don't talk to me. I gotta think.

POPE resumes conversation with LARRY.

LARRY

- I don't get it. What am I, Quasi Friggin' Moto? Do I got a hump on my back here that I can't see?

POPE leans back to see.

LARRY

I don't know how to talk to women. They don't like me. I wanna meet somebody Pope. Somebody nice. I don't think it's ever gonna happen. I see a really beautiful woman and I wanna go up and say hello, but I can't because I think she doesn't want me.

POPE

Larry, for every pot there's a cover.

LARRY

Ah...I'd have better luck playing the lottery.

LOU leans over hands LARRY a slip of paper

LOU

Try this number.

INT. EVENING LOU'S APARTMENT

He enters, sweaty and exhausted. Popping open a beer, he settles momentarily in front of the tv. He starts to unbutton his Con Ed uniform. He goes through his mail distractedly. Phone rings.

LOU

(into phone)

Yeah? What? I can't understand a word you're saying. What? He what? You're kidding me. Jerk. Calm down, Jane. Hey, wait a minute here. Put a lid on it, I didn't stand you up. Jane?

He looks at the phone. A loud distinct buzz emits. He hangs up.

LOU

Shit.

EXT EVENING RITA'S BUILDING

LOU pulls up to the curb and gets out leaving the motor running. He's dressed very tastily. He sprints into the lobby. He buzzes her bell.

RITA (OC)

I'll be right down, honey.

LOU

No, Rita, wait! Rita?

Nothing. He paces.

SAME

RITA emerges, giddy and sweet. She kisses him.

LOU

Baby, I got a problem, I can't go see the apartment. Something came up, an emergency. It's business.

RITA

Emergency? What emergency?

LOU

Any other night but tonight, I mean it.

RITA

Uh huh. So, you're not coming to look at the apartment?

LOU

Baby, I'm really sorry but I just cannot get out of this thing.

RITA

This business emergency thing.

LOU

Right.

RITA

Fine.

LOU

Please don't be mad, Rita.

RITA

Look, Lou, you do what you got to do.

LOU

Baby...

RITA

And I'll do what I have to do.

She turns on her heel and slams back into her building leaving LOU standing there.

LOU

Shit.

EXT EVENING JANE'S HOUSE

Slightly tousled, LOU walks up to Jane's front door and knocks. In a moment she opens the door, sees him and slams it in his face. He looks to the heavens for guidance. He knocks again.

JANE (OC)

Go home.

LOU

Jane, don't do this to me. Let me in.

JANE (OC)

What's the magic word?

LOU

Please.

She opens the door. He enters.

SAME

JANE

Hmm, don't we look snazzy. Where you going?

LOU

I'm taking you out to dinner.

JANE

Hah!

LOU

He stood you up. I'm taking you out. We're not all animals. Get dressed.

JANE

I don't think so, Lou.

LOU

You got to eat.

JANE

I have a little something in the oven.

He nods then walks towards the kitchen, JANE on his heels.

KITCHEN SAME

LOU opens the oven, pulls out a small casserole dish and dumps it into the garbage pail.

LOU

Now you don't have a little something in the oven.

She looks at him.

JANE

I'll go get dressed.

INT NIGHT RESTAURANT

JANE and LOU sit in a quiet, dimly lit neighborhood joint.

LOU

You remember that night when Pop was thrown out of the house and came to stay with us? Ma had had it with the gambling.

JANE

Sure. He stayed in the bed, we slept on the couch.

LOU

(sexy)

I don't recall sleeping too much that night, do you?

JANE

(sexy back)

I liked that couch.

LOU

And then we had the peace conference over dinner, she wouldn't eat, she wouldn't talk...

JANE

She wouldn't touch my flaming chicken.

LOU

Until he pulls this little velvet box out of his pocket and plops it right on her plate.

JANE

What a couple of diamonds'll do for a woman, I tell you. Sure heals alot of wounds.

LOU

No matter what shit they pulled on each other, they hung in...they could roll with the punches.

JANE

They really loved each other.

LOU

He could give her diamonds but he couldn't pay the rent.

He offers her more wine.

JANE

I talked to your Mom when he died.

LOU

You did?

JANE

Sure. He was my family, too.

LOU

You were like his daughter.

JANE

I wanted to call you, Lou. But I just couldn't. I wasn't the one to comfort you. There was so much unhappiness still between us, you didn't need any more.

LOU

Some loss you never get over.

JANE

I'm sorry.

LOU

It's okay.

JANE

About us.

LOU

Forget it.

JANE

No. Listen to me, please. I was young, I was lonely. You were never there, Lou. I needed a friend.

LOU

What, friend? You had a husband.

JANE

I was just feeling things, not thinking about the consequences. That's what being young means. It probably doesn't matter much to you now, after all these years, but I'm sorry. I am. I hurt you and I'm sorry for that.

LOU

You did. But I could've been a better husband. I couldn't handle your disappointment. I can't handle my own.

JANE

You got a girl?

LOU

Yeah, I met her couple years ago, right after Pop died.

JANE

You love her?

LOU

Sure.

JANE

Roll with the punches, Lou.

LOU

Maybe this time.

JANE

Good. Let's eat.

EXT NIGHT JANE'S HOUSE

LOU

Can I use the phone?

JANE

Sure.

They go in.

INT SAME LIVING ROOM

JANE

Use the one in the bedroom. More privacy.

INT SAME BEDROOM

LOU sits on the edge of Jane's bed.

LOU

(on phone)

Baby, did I wake you?

He carries the phone to the door and closes it.

LOU

(on phone)

I didn't want you to go to bed mad at me.
You still mad at me? I promise I'll explain
everything tomorrow. And make another
appointment with that real estate guy, okay?

He looks curiously around the room. Leaning on his knees, he looks down and sees something poking out from under the bed. He pulls it out. A man's slipper. He holds it up. He puts it against his own foot, measuring the size.

LOU

(on phone)

What, Rita? Yeah, next week. No problem. I
got to go, baby. Sleep good.

He hangs up the phone.

INT SAME LIVING ROOM

LOU walks in and sits on the couch. JANE hands him a beer.

LOU

Thanks.

LOU crosses his legs and he's wearing the slippers.

JANE

Lou! What are you wearing?

LOU

You know, Jane, I remember you had real
small feet. I can't imagine why you'd want
such a big pair of slippers. Can you?

JANE

I like the way they fit. Would you mind
taking them off, please?

He pulls a ten-pack of condoms out of his pocket and lets them flop open.

LOU

How do you like the way these fit?

JANE

What the hell are you doing going through my drawers? How dare you?

He pulls a tiny mustache comb out of his pocket.

LOU

What's this?

He combs his hair. It's ridiculous.

LOU

Or am I using it wrong?

JANE

I think you better leave.

He combs under his nose.

LOU

Oh, I get it. Very clever.

JANE

Get out, Lou.

LOU

Where is he?

JANE

He, who?

LOU

The guy with the mustache that you're shacking up with, you lousy, lying bitch. You know, I really am a schmuck. Never missed a check, never late. No wonder you're not married. Why should he marry you? I'm supporting both of you shits. You're a fraud, Jane, people go to jail for less. And I'm gonna see to it that you do. You're a fraud and I'm a schmuck.

JANE

You don't understand, Lou...

LOU

Oh, I understand. all these years, you're taking me for a ride. It's unbelievable. You got a real problem, Jane. You got a split personality. A few hours ago, I was thinking, she's not such a monster, she has changed. This is a nice person that I'm sitting across from. And I'm thinking, she should have someone nice in her life...

JANE starts to cry.

LOU

Don't pull that on me.

JANE

Please, Lou...

He throws the slippers across the room.

LOU

I'm leaving, Jane, and I'm going to get myself a lawyer and you're going to hear from him.
(mumbling) I'm such an asshole.

He leaves.

EXT NIGHT STREET

LOU gets into his car. JANE follows carrying his shoes.

JANE

Lou, wait a second.

He pulls away from the curb only to return moments later. He stops, gets out, walks up to her, grabs his shoes, turns back to leave.

JANE

He's married.

LOU is taken aback, upset.

LOU

You're having an affair with a married man?

JANE nods.

LOU
I don't believe it. How long?

JANE
Four years.

LOU
Why, Jane?

JANE
He loves me.

LOU
Enough to leave his wife?

JANE
They're Catholic.

LOU
Well, then I guess you haven't learned
anything, have you?

JANE
You may not understand this, Lou, but when
you have no expectations, you're never
disappointed.

LOU
You're right. I don't understand.

JANE
He makes me happy.

LOU
You can lie to yourself, but you can't lie to me,
Jane. You never could.

JANE
I'm opening up my heart here.

LOU
And I'm running around like an idiot trying to
get you a man. For what? For nothing!

JANE

Not for nothing, Lou. Why do you think I went along with your craziness? I want to go out. Like normal. Four in the afternoon is not exactly ideal.

LOU

You're right. It's a dead end.

JANE

I know this has no future, and it hurts.
(pause) I wouldn't mind waking up with someone I love.

LOU

Aha. You see, you do have expectations.

JANE

Maybe...

LOU

Jesus, Jane. You're a beautiful woman. You're a good person. You deserve more.

JANE nods, genuinely touched.

LOU

You deserve better.

JANE

Keep telling me that, would ya?

LOU pulls JANE into his arms. She responds.

LOU

You do. I mean it.

JANE

Thanks...

EXT DAY JANE'S HOUSE

LOU, in his Con Ed uniform, is parked across the street in his car. He looks at his watch. It reads 3:55PM. He chomps on a greasy hamburger. After a few moments, a sedan pulls up and parks in front of Jane's. LOU suddenly

drops everything and comes to attention. A tall, lean, well-dressed MAN, visible only from behind, gets out and walks up to the front door. With a key, he lets himself in.

LOU

Bingo!

LOU scribbles down the license plate number and happily departs.

INT HOUSE LATER THAT DAY

Coming out from under the crawl space, POPE walks over to LOU who is wiring a socket in a basement.

POPE

She wakes me up to do it in the middle of the night, Lou. We did it in the closet at a party with the coats and everything.

LOU

No, shit.

POPE

And I don't need an alarm clock anymore. This morning, I swear, I thought I was having a heart attack. In the shower, Lou. Standing up. You were right about the soap and water.

LOU

Gimme some juice. So, we like this Karen.

POPE

She can't get enough of me. You know what she does? She puts her leg over my shoulder. And she spins. I don't know how she does it.

LOU

Maybe she's double-jointed.

POPE screws a fuse back into place. LOU plugs a radio into a dangling socket. Music blares.

POPE

I love this chick's ass.

LOU

See? Some dreams come true. A'right, my man. We're outta here.

LOU screws the plate on the socket.

POPE

Hey, Lou, you hungry? Wanna eat?

LOU

Can't. Got an appointment.

POPE

Oh yeah? With who?

LOU

Let's just say I got a business meeting, okay? Today, is the day, Pope. You know that tunnel with the light at the end of it? I'm there. At the end. I'm in Pope. A done deal.

POPE

Lou, you got the money? A'right.

They give each other five.

LOU

Well, 99 percent.

POPE

I wouldn't go counting your chickens, Lou.

LOU

You are a downer, you know that?

EXT. SAME STREET

LOU is dumping his tools in the trunk of his car.

POPE

I hope to God you get the money. I really do.

LOU

Don't fuck with my head. First you put the whammy on it and then you hope to God.

POPE

Be that as it may. That's how you get yourself in trouble, counting on something you don't have.

LOU

Thanks for the advice.

LOU gets into his car and drives away.

EXT DAY SUBURBAN JERSEY STREET

LOU cruises, looking for an address in particular. He spots the sedan from Jane's house and pulls up.

EXT DOORWAY

LOU, in his Con Ed uniform and carrying a clipboard, rings the bell. In a moment, a MAN with a large mustache answers.

STANLEY

Yes?

LOU

Excuse me, Mister...?

STANLEY

Hopper.

LOU

Right. First name...

He looks at his clipboard and makes a note.

STANLEY

Stanley.

LOU

Stanley, that's it. Here you are. Stanley Hopper. Mr. Hopper, I'm sorry to be bothering you on the weekend like this, but we seem to be having a switching problem in the neighborhood and we're trying to locate the source. May I see your fuse box?

STANLEY

Sure, come on in.

LOU looks around before he enters.

LOU

Nice house.

STANLEY

We like it.

INT SAME LIVING ROOM

LOU trails STANLEY through the house, checking it out as he goes. It's clearly upper middle-class, filled with knick-knacks, flowers, cozy sofas, pillows, etc.

INT SAME BASEMENT

They stand by the fuse box.

STANLEY

If you need anything, I'll be in the den.

LOU

Thanks.

STANLEY trots back upstairs. LOU walks around and sees a pool table, a bar, dart board, etc. He goes to the bar and pokes through the bottles, pulls one out and pours himself a drink. Leaning over the bar...

LOU

Stanley, I've got a deal for you. I know about your little secret. What secret? You and Jane. Does it matter how I found out? Exactly. Now, I think I have worked out what I consider a fair deal. Sure, I'll tell you. For me to keep my mouth shut and not tell the wife, um...fifty grand. I know it's cheap...seventy five you say?

He toasts the imaginary Stanley.

LOU

You're a prince. I knew it would be a pleasure doing business with you. Here's to you Stanley.

He slugs his drink. He puts the empty glass down on the bar.

LOU

Piece of cake.

INT SAME DEN

STANLEY is deeply engrossed in a baseball game. He smokes a pipe. LOU enters.

LOU

Excuse me, Stanley...I mean Mr. Hopper.

STANLEY

Just a minute, please. Bases are loaded. And it's two outs.

LOU looks over at the tv, trying to remain cool.

STANLEY

Sit down.

LOU

Thanks.

After a moment, the play is over and a commercial comes on.

STANLEY

Well, there goes twenty bucks. What's twenty bucks? So, did you locate the problem?

LOU

What?

STANLEY

The switching problem.

LOU

Oh, that. Look, I know about you and Jane.

STANLEY

Pretzel?

STANLEY holds out a basket of pretzels.

LOU

You and Jane. I know all about it. Four o'clock, every Thursday at her house. In her bedroom. I know.

STANLEY holds calmly sucks on his pipe.

LOU

Am I speaking English? Did you hear me?

STANLEY

Every word.

LOU

Good. Good. I've got a deal for you.

STANLEY

You must be the moron she was married to.

LOU

You must be the moron she's not married to...Now I have what I consider a fair deal. For me to keep my mouth shut and not tell the wife...Fifty grand.

STANLEY

Fifty grand? That's awfully cheap.

LOU

I knew that's what you'd say.

STANLEY

Fifty grand or you tell my wife?

LOU

It's only fair.

STANLEY

Blackmail, huh? I think I'll call the cops.

He goes to the phone.

LOU

Stanley, Mr. Hopper...wait a minute...don't do that, you really don't wanna do that.

STANLEY puts the phone down.

LOU

Twenty. And we'll call it a day.

STANLEY

And you won't tell my wife?

LOU

Absolutely.

STANLEY

(yelling)

Helen!

LOU

What are you doing?

STANLEY

Helen, please, come here.

LOU

What are you doing?

HELEN, Stanley's wife, appears in the doorway.

HELEN

What is it, sweetheart?

STANLEY

Helen, this gentleman has something to tell you.

LOU

This is ridiculous.

STANLEY

Go ahead. I'll back you.

LOU

You want me to tell her? I can't tell her.

HELEN

Somebody better tell me something.

LOU

You tell her, you scum.

STANLEY

He wants to tell you about Jane.

LOU

Not me, I wasn't going to say a word.

HELEN

Is she sick?

LOU

You know her?

HELEN

I know of her.

STANLEY

He wanted twenty grand to keep his mouth shut.

HELEN

Shame on you.

LOU

You are a very weird duo.

HELEN

Time for church.

HELEN leaves the room. LOU is freaked out.

STANLEY

(crossing two fingers)

Helen and the Pope.

LOU

I don't know what she sees in you.

STANLEY

I love her. I take care of her. I bought her the house.

LOU
I'm talking about Jane!

STANLEY
So am I.

INT NIGHT RITA'S

RITA, in a bathrobe, is stretched out on the couch. Her fingernails, and toe nails freshly polished. She blows on them, while LOU paces furiously.

LOU
I'm working two jobs, I'm working overtime,
off the books and what does it add up to? It
adds up to nothing. Like me. I'm a nothing.

RITA
You're not nothing, hon.

RITA gets up, and carefully lets her robe drop.

LOU
Where ever I turn, it's always straight into a
brick wall. Bam, right in the face. Why is it
with me, everything's the wrong time, the
wrong place. I can't do anything right.

RITA has slipped into her dress and backs up to LOU

RITA
Could you zip me up, please?

LOU zips up her dress.

LOU
Marty tells me I gotta have a few plans. If A
don't work, go to B. If B don't work go to
C...You know where I am Rita, I'm on friggin'
plan O. I'm watching my life go straight down
the toilet.

RITA
Maybe you're going about it the wrong way.

LOU

Oh, really?

LOU looks at her, realizing she's all dolled up.

LOU

Where you going?

RITA

Out. With the girls.

LOU

In that dress? You're real dressed up for just the girls.

RITA

You think I'm lying, Lou?

LOU

I'm sorry. I thought maybe we'd go out.

RITA

I already got plans. I don't break dates at the last minute.

LOU

I'm having a bad day. I need some company.

RITA

I'm sorry, hon, let's talk tomorrow. Okay?

LOU

I know. You're still pissed about the other night. Can't let go, can you Rita?

RITA

Good night.

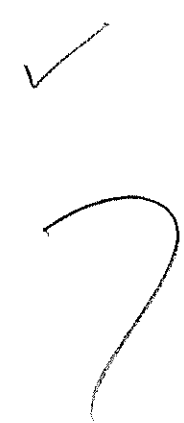
RITA sweeps out.

INT NIGHT BAR

LOU, his head down on the bar, signals PETE, the bartender for another.

JIM (OC)

I couldn't help but notice you. You really stand out. I think it's your hair, but now that I'm closer, you got really pretty eyes. Are they green? I'm a little bit uncomfortable here, doing this sort of thing. It's the first time for me. I've never even been in this place before.



LOU groggily raises his head.

LOU

You're so full of shit. I see you here all the time.

LOU drains his drink.

JIM

Why don't we move to a booth? More privacy.



LOU

Dreck.

JIM leads a WOMAN towards the booths. As JIM passes LOU, LOU toasts him.

JIM

Schmuck.

LOU downs another one.

LOU

You know what Pete, they all stink.

PETE

Who Lou?

LOU

Men. We all stink. We stink Pete. Pete, we stink. We're liars, we're two timers, we cheat. We stink Pete. I stink Pete. I don't know how I live with myself. I am such a nothing.

PETE

Nah. Lou, stop being so hard on yourself.
You're just having a bad day, that's all. We all
have bad days. Your friends are here.

LOU

I don't have any friends.

MARTY and POPE walk over.

POPE

How'd it go Lou?

LOU

Fuck you. You can call Moe Fine, okay? Count
me out. I'm out.

LOU passes out and tumbles off the stool to the floor.

INT MORNING MARTY'S LIVING ROOM

LOU is out on the couch, an afghan draped over him. ANGELA, one of
Marty and Sandy's kids, watches over him in her flannel nightgown. After
a few moments, his eyes crack open a slit.

ANGELA

Ma!

LOU

Oh, my head. Shoot me now, please.

ANGELA

Ma, he's up!

She turns away and flicks on the tv. SANDY enters carrying a steaming
cup of coffee. Cartoons jump in the background.

SANDY

Here, Lou. Drink this.

LOU

Nnnnn...

SANDY

Come on. Here's some aspirin.

He strains to take the mug and pills.

LOU

How you doing, Sandy? You got a scar?

SANDY

Let's put it this way, my bikini days are over.

She sits.

LOU

My life is over.

SANDY

If I want drama, I'll watch "Peoples Court."

LOU

Oh, God...my head...

SANDY

Angela, lower that, please.

ANGELA

But, Ma.

SANDY

We got company.

ANGELA

Lou's not company.

SANDY

Today he is.

ANGELA snaps off the tv and leaves.

SANDY

Rita called. She wanted to know if you were all right. Are you all right, Lou?

LOU

She called?

SANDY

She cares. Alot.

LOU

All the guys can do this thing. Not me.

SANDY

It's not so easy getting what you want. You want easy, get a parakeet.

LOU

I got an ex-wife.

SANDY

So? Marty's got five kids. Five kids we want to put through college.

LOU

So how the hell did he get the money together?

SANDY

We scrimped and saved. We did without.

LOU

I been doing without my whole life. I want more now, Sandy.

SANDY

Good. Knowing that and you're ahead of the game. But you gotta be practical. You didn't have to go out and buy a brand new car. Your car was fine.

LOU

It took a half hour to get started in the morning.

SANDY

Marty's not so hot in the morning. Should I trade him in?

LOU

Marty's not a car.

SANDY

And if you choose the right one and hold on to it long enough, it'll become more valuable.

LOU

I don't know. I don't feel so good right now.

SANDY

Have a little faith, Lou. Like I tell my kids, if you throw enough butter patties on the ceiling, one is bound to stick.

INT DAY BOWLING ALLEY

Deserted. The remains of a once active bowling alley. Sitting at a dust covered table; MARTY, FRANK, BIBI and POPE drink coffee from styrofoam cups. FRANK puts eye drops in his eye.

BIBI

So, what'ya think? Fluorescent pins, just in case there's a black out. They got it in Cleveland.

MARTY

But, Bibi, what about the balls. If they're not fluorescent, what good is it?

BIBI

Them too. It's a set, we can get a price. Another thing, we gotta be able to attract the leagues. We can make a bundle on those tournaments.

POPE

What about pizza?

MARTY

What about pizza? We discussed this already. The food is a concession Pope, we're renting the space out.

POPE

You're making a mistake Marty. We do it ourselves, we make more money.

BIBI

That's where you're wrong kid, believe me.

FRANK

You know something, I'm sitting here listening to you guys talking and I feel like shit. And you wanna know why?

POPE

Why Frank?

FRANK

(holding up his hand)

How many fingers I got on this hand?

MARTY

What's the point?

FRANK

Five fingers Marty. One for each one of us. Except today, we got four.

POPE

I thought we were a star?

FRANK

Hands, stars, shut up Pope. We're missing a finger. That finger is Lou, and I for one am not happy about it.

BIBI

That finger was Lou. Now that finger is Moe Fine. Business is business, tatala.

FRANK

Friendship is friendship. And you wanna be friends with Moe Fine? Because you can't be in business and not be friends. How did this whole thing start Bib?

BIBI

Ahhh...

MARTY

Lou is like my brother. My blood. Sure I feel bad too. But sometimes you gotta sacrifice the limb to save the whole body.

FRANK

I'm sorry. It just doesn't feel right.

BIBI

I respect what you're saying, Frank. Got any suggestions?

FRANK

What am I? The only one who thinks around here?

POPE

I'm thinking, I'm thinking.

MARTY

I'm impressed.

BIBI

(to Pope)

I'll give you a hundred bucks cash, right now, if you go out and buy me a pack of Camels.

POPE shakes his head.

BIBI

Two hundred.

MARTY

I'll go.

POPE

You ain't goin' nowhere. (pause) Don't we need a manager or something?

There is a moment of silence as they all think.

BIBI

Forget it.

MARTY

Come on.

BIBI

Hire Lou?

POPE

Why not?

BIBI

Are you nuts? He wants to be our partner.

FRANK

Hold it, boys. Maybe Pope's right. I mean, after all, we're all going to be working for each other. Am I right? Maybe we hire him, take a few bucks out of his pay every week until it adds up to eighteen grand. He'll be a partner, just not on paper. Not yet.

BIBI

Aaaahh. I don't know.

MARTY

Not bad.

FRANK

Not bad? It's brilliant.

FRANK holds up his hand, counting off the fingers.

FRANK

Pope, Bib, Frank, Marty...Lou!

POPE gives him five.

POPE

Gimme skin, Frankie!

MARTY

I like it. It works.

They bongo drum the table, excited.

MARTY

Pope, you tell him tomorrow, at work.

POPE

You try telling Lou that he's in but not really. But he's not out either. He's just working for us, temporary. You tell him.

MARTY

He's gonna eat it up. It's brilliant.

POPE

Thank you.

BIBI

Marty's right. He'll love it.

INT NIGHT CAR

RITA and LOU are driving.

RITA

Honey, I'm sorry I was such a bitch the other night.

LOU

Don't apologize. You're only human.

She kisses him on the cheek.

RITA

You remember Mr. Simon, that nice old Jewish man, my patient I told you about?

LOU

Yeah?

RITA

Right. He died, Lou.

LOU

Jeez, too bad.

RITA

Yeah. But you know what was really sad? He had no one. When he was alive, not a soul came to visit. And when he died, no one cared. Isn't that sad, Lou?

LOU

Yeah.

RITA

No wife, no family, no grandkids. No one should live like that. Honey, when's a good time for you to look at another apartment?

LOU

Baby, can we please put this off for like a month, until I get some things straightened out? I'm under alot of pressure right now. Okay?

Silence.

LOU

Baby?

RITA

Honey, if we were living together right now, your problems would be my problems. It would be our pressure.

LOU

You don't want my problems, Rita. I don't want my problems.

RITA

But that's what sharing is, Lou. The good with the bad.

LOU

Can't I have a little privacy?

RITA

If you let me know what the problem is, maybe I could help you get rid of it.

LOU

What are you, fucking Tinkerbelle?

RITA

You're never gonna change, Lou. It's gonna be the same crap forever. One excuse after another. You know what? You're gonna end up just like Mr. Simon.

LOU

Yatita, yatita, yatita.

RITA

That's right, Lou. No wife, no family. Alone.

LOU slams on the brakes in the middle of the street and gets out of the car. Cars honk and veer around them.

EXT SAME CAR

LOU marches around to Rita's window. He taps on it.

LOU

Yatita, yatita, yatita!!!

INT NIGHT CLUB

LOU and RITA wind their way through the noisy, crowded, smoke-filled club. Music blasts, PEOPLE laugh, drink and make merry.

RITA

I'll lend you the money, Lou.

He leads her to the bar and pulls her to a less crowded spot.

RITA

Did you hear me?

LOU

Now you listen to me. I don't want your money.

RITA

But, Lou...

LOU

It's real generous, baby, but I don't want to be in debt to you. Not you.

He turns to the bartender.

LOU

Two beers. (to Rita) But, thanks.

He peels a couple of bills off a wad and lays them on the bar.

LOU

Come on...

RITA

I gotta go to the ladies, I'll be right there.

She turns and makes her way through the crowd.

INT SAME LADIES ROOM

TWO TEENAGERS primp and chat. A toilet flushes and JANE emerges from a stall.

TEEN 1

I'm telling you, he's shy.

TEEN 2

Nobody that cute is shy. He's not interested.

TEEN 1

Mel Gibson is very shy and he's gorgeous.
Just ask him to dance, you dope.

JANE washes her hands.

TEEN 2

It's too aggressive.

JANE

Ask him. Guys love it. It'll give him
something to dream about.

The TEENS look at her.

TEEN 1

See?

They leave. In a moment, another flush and RITA comes out. At the sink next to JANE, who she does not recognize, she puts water on her eyes. She has obviously been crying. She dries her eyes and puts on some make-up. JANE observes quietly. As RITA heads for the door...

JANE

He's not worth it.

RITA leaves.

INT SAME TABLE

LOU is at a table near the dance floor. He is joined by TONY, a young, hot, buzz-cut boy. Real sexy.

TONY

I'm staying with Lorraine and Jack until I get my own place.

LOU

Good, good.

RITA returns to the table.

RITA

Tony! What are you doing here? How are ya?

They hug and she kisses him.

RITA

You look great, kiddo. Doesn't he, Lou?

She pulls at his short hair.

LOU

Yeah.

TONY

It'll grow. Hey, I'm out, right? A civilian.

RITA

Already out picking up girls, huh Ton?

TONY

Nah, I got a date. You know, some friend of yours, Rita...

RITA

Wha...?

JANE (OC)

Lou!

LOU

Jane!

RITA looks up and sees the woman from the bathroom.

RITA

Jane?

JANE

You must be Rita.

JANE offers her hand. They shake.

JANE

(soft)

Hi.

TONY

I thought you people knew each other.

LOU

We do.

RITA

Sort of.

JANE

We have a few things in common.

TONY

I don't get it but I'm not here to figure it out.
I'm here to dance. Jane?

He takes her hand and she turns to go with him. She turns back to LOU so Tony can't hear.

JANE

Stanley says "hello."

LOU

You know?

TONY tugs at her hand and pulls onto the dance floor.

RITA

Stanley? Do I know Stanley?

LOU

Never mind, Rita.

INT SAME DANCE FLOOR

JANE and TONY are having a great time.

INT SAME TABLE

LOU watches them while slugging back a beer.

INT SAME DANCE FLOOR

The music is slow and dreamy. LOU and RITA dance close. So do JANE and TONY. LOU watches as TONY rubs her back.

INT SAME TABLE

JANE and RITA are alone. Awkward.

JANE

What I said in the bathroom before, forget it.

RITA

I'm not so sure.

JANE

He's a good guy.

RITA

I didn't think you liked each other.

JANE

We don't. But he's still a good guy.

RITA

Can I ask you something?

JANE

Listen, I'm not exactly the best person to talk to about him.

RITA

Yeah, I know that, but you and he were together a long time. You were married. You knew him in a way that maybe I should.

JANE

I don't know Lou anymore. We were kids.

RITA

Yeah, but some things never change. Was he always making you promises?

JANE

Rita, I don't know what you want. We all make promises to people we love. Some we keep, some we can't.

RITA

It's the ones that get broken that hurt the most.

JANE

I know. So you either forgive, or you move on.

INT NIGHT LOU'S BEDROOM.

LOU and RITA lie in bed.

RITA

She is gorgeous Lou, and she's nice.

LOU

She's okay. Nothing special.

RITA

Please, did you see the way they were dancing? The way he looked at her? He's crazy about her.

LOU

He's half her age.

RITA

Look at Cher.

LOU

She's wasting her time and my money.

RITA

Oh, Lou, haven't you ever heard of romance?
I bet right now they are at her house and she
is giving him something to dream about
tonight.

LOU

What are you talking? Jane's not like that.
With all this crap that's going around. She
wouldn't do it on it on a first date.

RITA

Heaven and back, that's where they've been.

LOU

And where have you been tonight? Where
did I take you, Hoboken?

RITA

Lou, honey, don't you remember how we
were in the beginning? I'm not complaining,
it was wonderful. It's always wonderful, but...

LOU

They're not doing anything. Rita.

RITA

Fine. You know. Goodnight honey.

She kisses him, rolls over. LOU lies awake.

INT NIGHT KITCHEN LATER

LOU is sitting at the table, eating Oreo's, drinking milk. He can't sleep.

INT NIGHT JANE'S BEDROOM

JANE is up reading. The phone rings. She answers.

JANE

(into phone)

Hi Lou...How did I know it was you? Besides me who else cares about my sex life? What do you mean I don't have to get married? The deal is off? Lou...talk to me. Uh huh. Uh huh...There are two things that are very unattractive on a man; pantyhose and self-pity. I'm not letting you off the hook. But I will make it easier. You cut out the "poor me" act and I'll cut the debt in half.

INT NIGHT SAME KITCHEN

Covered in cookie crumbs, LOU is on the phone.

LOU

(into phone)

In other words, I don't have to double the alimony if I don't find Mr. Wonderful? You got a big heart, Jane. Faith in me? That's a switcheroo. Keep telling me that, would ya? Thanks. "Night.

He hangs up.

INT NIGHT SAME HALL OUTSIDE KITCHEN

RITA stands silently, leaning against the wall, having overheard.

INT DAY GREASY SPOON

Lunchtime. Crowded. LOU and MARTY sit in a booth, finishing their lunch. LOU nods, chuckles, amused privately.

LOU

A bunch of Einstein's, you guys.

MARTY

We thought so.

LOU

Let me see if I have this straight. I'm in, but I'm not in.

MARTY

Yeah.

LOU

And I'm a partner, but not really.

MARTY

Not on paper. Not yet.

LOU

Right. And I'll be working for you. An employee.

MARTY

Well, Lou, we'll all be working for each other.

LOU

But I'll be working for you. Let me put it this way, you won't be working for me.

MARTY

I don't think you got the point.

LOU

Marty, I already got a boss.

MARTY

But we're your friends. Wouldn't you rather be working for us?

LOU

I'm no charity case. Don't give me your hand me downs. What happened to your plan B?

MARTY

I decided. I don't wanna do this without you. All these years, we got history, you and me. That's what we got to work with.

LOU

We'll always be friends.

MARTY

Go to hell. Who wants a stupid friend? If I want a stupid friend, I'll go sit with Mike over there. That guy don't even have a goddamn brain. You ever talk to him?

LOU

You talking to me?

MARTY

No. I'm talking to Mr. Ketchup.

LOU

You calling me stupid? Did you ever hear yourself talk Marty? I know what's good for me.

MARTY

You wouldn't know what's good for you if you fell on it. You got this stupid pride crap. Well, you can take your stupid pride and shove it up your ass, Lou. Life is short. Period. Obviously you have better things to do. Fine. But, please, let me have a bowling ball especially engraved for you. It'll say "schmuck." You make me crazy.

LOU

That's cause you love me. How come you don't respect my decision?

MARTY

I don't agree with you. We're allowed to disagree, right?

LOU

Right.

MARTY

So you'll think about it? We got three weeks.

LOU

Sure.

INT DAY EMPTY APARTMENT

LOU stares out the the window of an empty apartment. RITA and a BROKER can be heard in another room.

BROKER (OC)

Don't worry about the cabinets. The landlord said he'll replace them when they paint.

RITA (OC)

This linoleum is a mess. Can he fix that, too?

LOU

Right.

MARTY

So you'll think about it? We got three weeks.

LOU

Sure.

BROKER (OC)

I'll ask.

RITA and BROKER enter the living room where LOU hangs out.

BROKER

Everyone has their own taste.

RITA

Could we have a few minutes alone?

BROKER

(to Lou)

Nice view, huh?

LOU nods.

BROKER

You know, if this place was across the river, an arm and a leg.

RITA

I know. I think we need...

BROKER

Look, why don't you two lovely people talk this over. Call me at my office. Just close the door behind you.

RITA

Thanks.

BROKER leaves. RITA walks over to LOU.

RITA

It's a great place, isn't it honey?

LOU

Yeah.

RITA

But not for us.

LOU doesn't respond.

RITA

What are you thinking, Lou? That maybe there's something better out there? You think that something else is gonna come around the corner? Something better? I got news for you, nothing's around the corner. It's already here. It's me.

LOU

Rita...

LOU tears up.

RITA

Why'd you make me believe this was gonna happen? Why'd you lie to me?

LOU

(emotional)

I didn't want to hurt you...

RITA hauls off and slaps him across the face.

RITA

Well I wanna hurt you. Coward!

RITA walks away, leaving LOU alone, crying. She opens the door. Pauses, turns around.

RITA

Those tears are the first honest thing to come out of you.

She leaves, closing the door behind her.

EXT NIGHT STREET

LOU, not feeling so hot, stops inside a pizza place.

INT SAME

Noisy, crowded, COUPLES, KIDS, TEENS, etc. People pushing, shoving. LOU makes his way through.

PIZZA MAN

Two, no anchovy...Next! Step up, step up, come on, next! Drinks over there. Who's next?

LOU

Once slice. Extra cheese, please.

PIZZA MAN

One, mucho mozza! Comin right up. Next!

EXT SAME STREET

LOU walks, eats. He's alone. He stops into an arcade.

INT SAME ARCADE

LOU plays pinball surrounded by KIDS at video games

INT NIGHT LOU'S APARTMENT

LOU is sound asleep on the couch, all his clothes on.

INT DAY SAME

LOU still asleep. The phone rings, waking him. He strains to answer.

LOU

(into phone)

Yeah...yeah, Pope, I ain't going in today. Yeah.

Right, I don't feel good. Yeah, bye.

He hangs up, rolls over, and goes back to sleep.

EXT DAY HOSPITAL PARKING LOT

Sitting in his car, LOU watches as RITA walks with another NURSE. She doesn't notice his car.

INT DAY FLORAL SHOP

LOU takes a bouquet from the FLORIST, pays him, exits.

EXT DAY HOSPITAL PARKING LOT

LOU stands outside his car, waiting. He looks a bit nervous. A few seconds later, RITA emerges from the hospital accompanied by a MAN. She notices LOU, gestures to the man and approaches.

LOU

How you doing?

RITA

Okay. You?

LOU

I could be better.

RITA

What are you doing here, Lou?

LOU

I'm not good at this cold turkey stuff.

RITA

I know. It's hard in the beginning. But...it'll get easier.

LOU

Rita, could we...

RITA

Lou, I got a class.

LOU

Okay, okay.

RITA

Take care...

He nods.

LOU

Yeah.

RITA nods sadly. She turns away. LOU watches after her, then gets back into his car.

INT SAME CAR

LOU sits, starts the engine, looks over at the bouquet on the seat next to him.

INT BAR NIGHT

LOU nurses a beer, the place is fairly empty. PETE is at the end of the bar schmoozing with a customer. In walks an attractive sexy WOMAN. She sits down a seat away from LOU. PETE slides over.

PETE

Howdy. What's your pleasure?

CLAIRE

Vodka rocks with a twist.

PETE

You got it.

PETE makes the drink as CLAIRE takes out her money. He puts it down in front of her and takes the cash. She picks up her glass, turns to LOU.

CLAIRE

Cheers.

He looks at her as she sips at her drink. Smiles, nods. She fishes a quarter from her change and slips off her stool. Passing LOU, she holds up the coin on the way to the jukebox.

CLAIRE

Any requests?

LOU watches after her then back to PETE. He winks. LOU shakes his head.

PETE

I think my friend wants to hear "Broken-Hearted Melody."

CLAIRE

I've heard that tune before. How about, "What's Love Got to Do with It?"

LOU

Fools rush in.

CLAIRE puts her money in, Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing" fills the room. She returns and perches on her stool.

CLAIRE

Now that was a loss.

LOU

Everything's relative.

CLAIRE

Someone hurt you bad?

LOU

Could be.

CLAIRE

Maybe you just need a little TLC.

LOU

Not tonight.

CLAIRE

Maybe some other time. You're a very attractive man.

LOU

I don't know what to say.

CLAIRE

Yes or no?

LOU

I've never done this before.

CLAIRE

Sounds like maybe. Sitting on a fence too long
can cut off your circulation.

She finishes her drink and scribbles her number on a napkin. She pushes
it toward LOU.

CLAIRE

Get some exercise.

She saunters out.

LOU

What the...?

PETE

Louis, I know you're down in the dumps, but
you gotta strike while the iron is hot. That
one was sizzling.

LOU

What? I'm supposed to go out and party?

PETE

Well I wish you would go somewhere, 'cause
now I'm getting depressed.

LOU

Thanks, Pete.

LOU finishes his beer. Gets up off the stool, heads for the door.

PETE

There's life after Rita.

LOU leaves. PETE takes the glass, wipes up the bar and holds up the
napkin.

PETE

Hello gorgeous...

INT CLUB NIGHT

Heeding Pete's advice, LOU cruises the club, beer in hand. He watches people in dancing frenzies as the music is deafeningly loud and throbbing. A punk young thing stops in front of him.

ALEX

Wanna dance?

LOU

No, thanks.

ALEX

Wanna watch?

She spins out onto the dance floor and dances alone in front of him. Sexy, hot. LOU's embarrassed and turns away.

LOU wanders to the bar. It's crowded, people jostle each other for a place to stand. LOU is smashed up next to a WOMAN.

LOU

Hi.

DANA

(cool)

Hi.

LOU

I'm Lou. What's your name?

DANA

Sorry, pal...

She turns her back on him.

LOU backs off and disappears into the crowd.

LOU walks toward the exit, something catches his eye; JANE and TONY dancing. The song ends and they head back to a table. LOU joins them.

AT THE TABLE

JANE and TONY are sweaty, out of breath and happy.

LOU

Hi guys.

JANE

Well, hello.

TONY

Sit down pal.

LOU

How you doing?

JANE

Working up a sweat.

TONY

Lou, I got my own place. You gotta come over. Jane helped me fix it up.

LOU

Is that right? I bet she filled the place with plants.

JANE smiles.

TONY

Jane really has a green thumb.

LOU

Has she made you her flaming chicken yet?
(to Jane) Have you?

JANE

Tony takes me out, Lou.

LOU

That's nice.

A WAITRESS comes over with a bottle of champagne.

JANE

Isn't Rita with you?

LOU
No. We're not...

TONY
I told you.

JANE
Sorry, Lou.

LOU
It's okay. What are you celebrating?

As TONY pops the cork...

TONY
Life, Lou, life. Want a glass?

LOU
Absolutely.

TONY starts to fill Jane's glass.

TONY
Say when.

LOU
When.

JANE
Fill it.

LOU
When.

JANE
Fill it, Tony.

LOU
It goes straight to your head.

JANE
That's my problem.

TONY
I'll take care of her.

JANE

No, I'll take care of me, thank you.

LOU

She can't hold her liquor.

She slugs down an entire glass.

TONY

Don't worry.

JANE

I'm a big girl.

LOU

Big, schmig. Is he going to surgically remove you from the floor?

JANE

Fill it up.

LOU

Oh, boy, I can see where this is heading.

JANE

Zip it Lou.

TONY

Wanna dance?

TONY stands up. Reaches for Jane's hand.

LOU

Great. She'll drink, she'll dance, she'll throw up.

JANE and TONY hit the dance floor. LOU slugs down the champagne, refills his glass. Sitting alone, he watches them dance.

DANCE FLOOR

TONY and JANE dance.

TONY

I don't want to be in the middle of your crap with him.

She puts her hand to his mouth.

JANE

Ssshhh...just ignore him, he'll go away.

LOU

Excuse me, could I cut in?

JANE

Sure.

JANE walks away leaving LOU and TONY

LOU

Dip me.

TONY

Dip yourself, Lou.

LOU grabs JANE.

LOU

Come on, Jane, one for the road.

JANE

And then you'll leave?

LOU

Is that a nice thing to say to a man with a broken heart?

JANE

No.

She puts her arms around him and they move together to the music. It's slow and sexy. They're at once shy and friendly. LOU takes a deep inhale next to her hair. Something is stirring that neither one of them is prepared for. They get lost in each others arms and the music. This lasts for several moments with varying expressions of fear, curiosity and tenderness. Then...

TONY (OC)

My turn...

JANE and LOU are bleary-eyed and uncomfortable with the intrusion but JANE willingly pulls away from LOU, smiles shyly and sails away in TONY's embrace.

EXT NIGHT STREET

Out on the street, LOU walks in the hot steamy night, under a star-filled sky. He comes upon THREE KIDS salvaging a trickle of water from a leaky hydrant. They splash playfully with the meager drips. After a moment, LOU walks over to them. He manages to twist the cap on the hydrant to create a wondrous spray of cool, refreshing water. They are ecstatic.

KIDS

(on top of each other)

Thanks, Mister...yeah...all right...

They romp and frolic, getting soaked as LOU watches. One KID teasingly splashes him. LOU splashes him back and gets drawn into the game. Everybody splashes him and he ends up soaked like them, carefree and playful. Happy.

EXT DAY CON ED VAN

LOU drives down a busy Manhattan street.

INT SAME VAN

POPE is in the passenger seat.

POPE

I dunno Lou, it feels pretty weird, but I think maybe I'm in love.

LOU

You think about her all the time?

POPE

Uh huh.

LOU

She makes you feel good about yourself?

POPE

Uh huh.

LOU
Wanna fuck her brains out?

POPE
Definitely.

LOU
That's it, you're in love.

POPE
That's what I thought. You been in love, Lou?

LOU
Yeah. Once.

POPE
Rita?

LOU
No.

POPE thinks about this.

POPE
Well then I guess you and Rita weren't meant to be.

LOU nods.

RADIO DISPATCHER (VO)
Number 68430, number 68430. Code 51 at 575 East 93.

POPE picks up the mike and responds.

POPE
This is number 68430. We've got a code 51 at 575 East 93.

DISPATCHER (VO)
That's a code four.

POPE
Four.

POPE puts the mike down. LOU accelerates.

EXT DAY VAN

LOU drives faster, swerving in and around traffic. They turn at 93rd Street and stop in front of a somewhat seedy tenement building. MARLON, the super, is out front, pacing anxiously as they pull up.

LOU and POPE hop out of the van to the street. LOU carries a small rectangular box, a CGI, Combustible Gas Indicator, to measure gas in the atmosphere.

MARLON

I smell gas in the basement.

LOU

Relax, we'll take care of it.

MARLON leads LOU and POPE into the building.

INT SAME BUILDING

With flashlights, they all go down a flight of stairs. The basement is dimly lit, dank and dirty.

LOU

Let's find the service.

POPE squeezes a bulb on the CGI and reads the meter.

POPE

It's not sewer gas. We got a leak.

MARLON

Over here.

They follow him down a narrow winding hall. They hear a coughing in the distance.

POPE

Who's down here?

LOU steps on something, bends down to pick it up. He retrieves a crack vial.

MARLON

Sometime they sneak down here, you know,
and do the drugs.

LOU

(yells)

Don't light any matches! The building's gonna blow!

As they turn a corner, THREE YOUNG MEN are hunkered over a crack pipe.

POPE

Don't!!!

Ignoring them, one of the MEN flicks his lighter. In a flat second, there is a huge flash of light and a loud explosion. The place blows. Dust, smoke, flames, falling timbers, screams, coughs. Sirens blare.

INT DAY EMERGENCY ROOM

Various medical PERSONNEL attend to LOU, who is fully conscious. A NURSE takes his pressure.

LOU

Where's Pope? Where's my friend?

She makes a note on his chart and removes the armband.

NURSE

You're a lucky man. You'll be fine. Just rest.

LOU

I want to know where he is.

NURSE

A doctor is with him.

LOU

Is he okay? I need to know.

NURSE

I'll try and find out. Calm down.

She turns away. He reaches out and pulls her back.

LOU

You got to find out for me, please.

NURSE

Okay, okay.

INT LATER ELEVATORS

The doors open and SANDY and MARTY step out. He's carrying a shopping bag. They walk to the nurse's station.

MARTY

We're here to see Lou Casell and Ambrose Popelli.

NURSE

I'm sorry, the doctors are still with them. Why don't you have a seat in the waiting room.

SANDY

Are they all right?

NURSE

I don't have their charts. Please have a seat. As soon as we know something, we'll tell you.

MARTY hands over the shopping bag.

MARTY

This is for Mr. Casell. Some clothes.

NURSE

I'll make sure he gets them.

MARTY

Thanks. How come nobody knows what's going on?

SANDY

Honey, please...

MARTY

I hate hospitals.

SANDY

Come.

WAITING ROOM

LENNY, Pope's brother, paces nervously.

SANDY

Lenny...

LENNY turns. They fall into each other's arms.

SANDY

He'll be okay.

LENNY

He's all I got, Sandy.

SANDY

I know, I know.

LENNY

Marty.

MARTY

How ya doin?

SANDY

Can I get you some coffee?

LENNY

No, thanks.

MARTY

I want some.

She gives him a "look."

MARTY

I'll get it. You want?

SANDY shakes her head as MARTY leaves. LENNY is tearful.

LENNY

He's still unconscious, they won't let me see him.

SANDY

They're taking good care of him, Lenny. You'll see him, don't worry.

INT SAME EMERGENCY ROOM

Tubes and machines everywhere, it's hard to see POPE amidst the tangle. NURSES flit around, sweeping in and out of the curtained cubicle. LOU appears, almost ghostly, out of nowhere. He takes halting, limping steps towards Pope's bed, bruised from his own injuries. As he nears, a NURSE stops him.

NURSE

I'm sorry, you can't be in here.

LOU

Is he going to be okay?

NURSE

Please wait outside.

LOU

Answer me!

NURSE

Are you family?

LOU

Yes.

NURSE

He's critical, but we're hopeful. Please.

LOU

Can he hear me?

She shakes her head.

NURSE

Please...

She steers him out.

WAITING ROOM

Empty styrofoam cups everywhere. BIBI is asleep, SANDY knits, LENNY talks quietly on the payphone, MARTY watches tv; a report of the accident is on the evening news. In a corner, a NURSE looks into FRANK'S ear.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

...half the building collapsed killing two crack users and critically injuring one Con Ed worker. Apparently a routine gas leak turned into a fatal explosion. The super was interviewed on his way to the hospital...

MARLON (ON TV)

They sneak in my building, they do drugs, I call the cops...stupid junkies...

EMERGENCY ROOM

LOU is being questioned by TWO COPS. One is taking notes, making a report.

LOU

...the next thing I knew, the place went boom. I wanna know something. What's gonna happen to these motherfuckers?

COP 1

Two of them are already out of the picture and one is critical. At best, he'll be charged with narcotics.

LOU

Out of the picture?

COP 2

D.O.A.

LOU

Yeah? And what if my friend goes out of the picture?

COP 1

Possibly criminal negligence. It's up to the DA. Look, they didn't intend to kill anybody, least of all themselves. They were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

LOU

That doesn't comfort me.

INT CORRIDOR

LOU hobbles sadly. From the NURSE'S STATION, RITA emerges. She walks over to LOU, she touches his hand. He nods, sighs.

RITA

Is there anything I can do?

LOU

Take good care of him.

RITA

Of course.

There's an awkward moment.

RITA

I'm so sorry, Lou...

FADE OUT.

INT HOSPITAL ROOM NIGHT

LOU lies in bed, distractedly watching t.v.. The bed next to him in the Semi-private room is empty. In a moment, the door opens, and in the dim light JANE is revealed.

JANE

I'm your sister and I just got off a plane from Topeka. Got it?

She approaches.

JANE

How you doing?

LOU shakes his head.

LOU

Not so good.

She pulls a chair up next to the bed and opens her purse. She pulls out a bag of Oreo Cookies. He smiles weakly. She puts the cookies on the night stand. Tears start sliding down LOU'S checks. She clasps his hand.

LOU

Oh, God, I'm afraid I'm gonna lose him.

JANE

I know, I know.

He sobs. She tenderly wipes his tears with her free hand.

JANE

Lou...

LOU

What if he doesn't make it?

JANE

He's gonna walk out of here. Lou.

A NURSE enters, carrying pills for LOU.

NURSE

Excuse me, what are you doing here? Visiting hours are over.

LOU

My sister from Topeka.

NURSE

I'm sure you love him very much, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

JANE

Okay.

She leans over and kisses him. LOU follows her with his eyes as she turns to go.

JANE

Do you think you could get him a glass of milk?

NURSE

Sure.

JANE

Thanks. (to Lou) Good night.

INT DAY HOSPITAL ROOM

POPE is still comatose, wires and tubes everywhere. LOU sits at his bedside, reading out loud from a book. There is a tap at the door. LOU turns. KAREN, young, cute and perky enters.

KAREN

Am I interrupting?

LOU

Come on in.

KAREN

I'm on my lunch break, it's the only time I can see him.

She touches Pope's hand gently.

KAREN

Hi, baby.

LOU watches with curiosity. She turns to him.

KAREN

Karen McKaye.

She offers her hand.

LOU

Lou Casell.

She smiles.

KAREN

Amazing what some men will do to avoid a commitment, huh? But I'm not letting this one get away. He's too important to me.

LOU

He loves you.

KAREN

He loves me good.

She tears up.

LOU

He's gonna walk out of here, you know that?

KAREN

He better, if he knows what's good for him.

INT EVENING LOU'S BATHROOM

Checking himself out from several angles, LOU primps. He seems somewhat nervous, expectant. There is a knock at the door.

LOU

Piece of cake...

INT SAME LIVING ROOM

LOU opens the door and JANE enters.

JANE

Hi...

LOU

Welcome to Casa Lou.

She looks around and sits on the couch.

LOU

Can I get you something? Beer? Juice? Tap water?

JANE

Yeah, tap water. That would be nice.

He goes to get it.

LOU (OC)

So what's so important you couldn't tell me on the phone?

JANE

Tony proposed.

The sound of glass breaking in the kitchen.

JANE

You okay in there?

LOU (OC)

Uh huh...

LOU enters carrying a beer for himself and nothing else.

JANE

What do you think?

LOU

What do I think? What do you think?

JANE

I think it's great.

LOU

Well, then great it is.

JANE

Yeah. He wants me to be the mother of his children.

LOU

Oh, you mean the ones he left behind in the Philippines?

JANE

I might say yes.

LOU

I don't know Jane. You hardly know the guy.

JANE

I thought you'd be happy Lou.

LOU

I'd feel a little better if there wasn't a history of mental illness in his family, but it's your life, right?

JANE

Don't you get it? No more checks, no more alimony.

LOU

Tony is about as hot to marry you as I am.

JANE

You don't trust anyone. You don't trust him,
you don't trust me...

LOU

Why should I trust you?

JANE

I knew you'd bring this shit up. With you
there's no forgive and forget. You know what
your problem is Lou? You can't let go of
things. You think if you don't talk about
them, they'll disappear.

LOU

Hey, I got you a guy, I came through. I said I
would and I did. I've changed. Your looking
at a different person.

JANE

Oh, really?

LOU

(mimics her)

Oh, really?

JANE

This is a happy day. You know why? Because
for you and me it's good bye for good. Have a
nice life. Adios.

LOU

You mean, no more of these wonderful get
togethers? Too bad. You love him, Jane?
Look me in the eye and tell me you love him.

JANE

You want me to get married. You don't want
me to get married. You want me to meet men
but no one's good enough. You think your so
smart, Dr. Lou on my life. The expert. Your
so sure what I need, you don't even know
what you need and if you did, you wouldn't
know how to get it.

LOU grabs JANE in his arms and kisses her passionately on the mouth. She goes limp. He let's her go, she can barely stand. As she hesitantly backs out of the apartment...

JANE

You make me crazy...

INT NIGHT MARTY AND SANDY'S HOUSE

A baseball game is in progress on TV. The nosheri is on the coffee table. BIBI and FRANK are trying to keep an eye on the tube while MARTY paces back and forth, racking his brains out. LOU lies on the couch, unsettled, agitated.

MARTY

I was up all night, thinkin, I didn't sleep at all, you can ask Sandy, cause I kept her up, didn't I, honey?

He looks at the kitchen.

SANDY (OC)

Yeah, honey.

MARTY

And then, like a fuckin flash, it comes to me, at seven o'clock this morning. This is going the way of the turkey deal.

BIBI

Wha?

MARTY

It's going in the toilet, Bib, it's going down the fuckin proverbial toilet! I don't mean to be morbid but we got to be realistic. Lou's useless...and Pope, he's in a fucking coma, God knows where he is. We can only pray he doesn't come out of this Mr. peas and carrots.

FRANK (TO TV)

Where's Mookie, you jerk?

BIBI

Great, two on, no outs. Great.

MARTY

From day one, I had a feeling. My gut instinct tells me from day one, something doesn't smell right. And what can I tell you? You got to go with your gut.

FRANK

Could you lower your voice, please?

MARTY

Aahh. Maybe in the next life. We gave it our best shot. So, we'll use the money for something else. There's always another deal. It wasn't meant to be, I could smell it. We were cursed.

LOU

What do you think now, some witch is sticking pins in some doll that looks like you?

MARTY

Could be, could be.

BIBI

C'est la fuckin' vie.

MARTY

End of story.

FRANK

So long as I don't have to keep the fucking bowling balls in my basement, I can live with it.

BIBI

Coulda been so nice, but...

FRANK (TO TV)

Base hit, base hit! All right!

Phone rings.

MARTY

I wonder where it went wrong.

FRANK

It didn't went anywhere, Martin.

SANDY (OC ON PHONE)

Oh, my God, oh, my God! Really? Thank you,
thank you...yes.

SANDY enters the living room.

SANDY

Pope's up.

Their heads all turn at once.

INT DAY HOSPITAL ROOM

MARTY squeezes POPE'S cheeks and kisses him on the mouth.

MARTY

A miracle, you're a fuckin' miracle!

LENNY stands by, elated.

BIBI

Siz a brucha fin Gutt.

MARTY

Back from the dead. It's a miracle!

SANDY

How you feel, darling?

POPE

A little tired. Lou, how are you, buddy? You
okay? You look okay.

LOU

I'm okay. Yeah.

FRANK

How can you be tired, you've been asleep for
a week?

BIBI

Gutt ut meir gaholfen.

LENNY

What are you saying, Bibi?

FRANK

He's talking kosher.

BIBI

It's a blessing from God, God helped me.

LENNY agrees.

MARTY

A fucking miracle.

FRANK

He wasn't dead, Marty.

MARTY

Oh yeah? What was he?

FRANK

He wasn't here and he wasn't there.

MARTY

Oh that says it all. Thank you Frank.

LOU

He was on the fence, Marty.

KAREN enters out of breath, bursting with joy. POPE beams at her sight.

POPE

Baby...

She tenderly kisses him. She turns and hugs Lenny.

MARTY

Wherever he was, he's not there anymore.
He's back. Am I right?

FRANK

You're right.

KAREN

(tearful)

I knew it. I knew we'd get a second chance.
Didn't I tell you Lou? Didn't I tell you I
wasn't gonna let him go?

LOU nods.

EXT DAY JANE'S HOUSE

LOU knocks on her door. In a moment, she answers.

JANE

Lou...

LOU

Listen, about the other night...can we talk?

JANE

Not now. Go home Lou.

LOU

It can't wait.

LOU brushes by her and walks in.

INT SAME LIVING ROOM

STANLEY sits, drinking a cup of coffee, his pipe resting on the ashtray next to him.

LOU

Hello Stanley.

STANLEY

Hello Lou.

JANE

Please, Lou.

LOU

Stanley, don't you have something else to do,
like be with your wife? Your family? Don't
you have a job?

JANE

Don't start.

STANLEY

Lou, I think you should leave.

LOU

Mm mm. Not today.

STANLEY puts his coffee cup down.

STANLEY

I can see you're upset.

LOU

Me, upset? Why should I be upset?

JANE

(hands to her temples)

I'm about to get a migraine.

STANLEY

Let me get you some Tylenol.

LOU

I'll get her the Tylenol.

STANLEY

You gave her the headache.

JANE

Why don't you both leave?

LOU

Fine. But not before I say what I came to say.
Sit down.

Resigned, JANE collapses on the couch.

LOU

You may not like this, Stan, but don't say I
didn't warn you.

STANLEY

Just say it, Lou. We don't have all day.

LOU

You know something, that's what I want to talk about. You don't have all day. All you can give her is a few hours. Now, I'm not one to judge, that may be a very special few hours. You're a nice guy, Stanley. You gotta be or else Jane wouldn't be so fond of you. What if she has a nightmare in the middle of the night? Are you there to comfort her? And Christmas eve, you decorating the tree together? (to Jane) And you, you don't know how to say 'no.'

STANLEY

I think we've heard enough.

LOU

Wait a minute, I just got started.

STANLEY rises.

STANLEY

This is my home and I want you to leave.

JANE

This is my home.

LOU

Look, I just want to say what I have to say and then I'll leave and the two of you can decide whose home this is.

STANLEY sits down.

LOU

I found you your guy. I mean, I really did this time.

STANLEY

Guy? What guy? What is he talking about?

LOU

It's me. I'm it.

LOU softens, walks over and kisses JANE.

STANLEY

Just what the hell is going on here?

LOU

I love her. (to Jane) I love you.

JANE

I guess my past is finally catching up with me.

LOU

And I'm going to marry her...(to Jane) Will you marry me? Again?

STANLEY

Jane, darling, this man is obviously deranged.

JANE

You're nuts.

LOU

That's the old me. The new me learns from his mistakes.

JANE

Oh Lou what I'm I going to do with you?

STANLEY

He needs help.

LOU

Don't fuck with fate, Jane. Take it from me. I'm an idiot who tried.

STANLEY

He needs a vacation.

LOU

Yeah. (to Jane) Wanna go somewhere? Miami? Paris?

JANE

Uh huh.

LOU

So you'll marry me?

STANLEY

He only wants one thing from you; money and sex.

JANE

He can have 'em.

LOU

Go home, Stanley.

way

JANE and LOU look up silently at STANLEY. LOU shrugs. STANLEY shrugs. JANE waves. Resigned, STANLEY leaves. LOU and JANE kiss sweetly, then passionately.

EXT SAME HOUSE

CAMERA moves from JANE's house as STANLEY pulls away, up into a starry night sky. On the soundtrack, the song, "Mr. Wonderful."

VOCALIST

Why this feeling? Why this glow? Why the thrill when you say, "Hello!"? It's a strange and tender magic you do. Mister Wonderful, that's you.

Why this trembling when you speak? Why this joy when you touch my cheek? I must tell you what my heart knows it true. Mister Wonderful, that's you!

CAMERA falls on one star in particular. Each of its five points glow in turn.

VOCALIST

And why this longing to know your charms. To spend forever here in you arms! Oh! There's so much more I could say, But the words keep slipping away; And I'm left with only one point of view: MISTER WONDERFUL, THAT'S YOU!

CAMERA pans down, back to earth and the brightly lit neon bowling sign seen earlier. A new sign reads, "Star Lanes."